

Proposal to sell 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda			
Please type your submission below	Do you have anything else you'd like to share with us about the proposed sale of this property?	To what extent do you agree/disagree with the	
		Council provided me with access to information to enable me to meaningfully participate in this process	Council actively supports community involvement in decision making
<p>The pending sale of 17 Eildon Road really concerns me as a parent and a member of the community. The proposal creates many barriers to attending childcare and kindergarten.</p> <p>Travel and Distance barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no way nearby centres can absorb all the children Eildon Road services, when it closes. Families will have to travel further afield to find care. For many, this will mean a car trip. Form my family, if we had to travel to Port Melbourne or South Melbourne to access childcare, we would have to buy another car.</li> <li>- Many of the 'closest' centres are serviced by the old style trams on Brighton &amp; St Kilda Roads and Carlisle St. It is impossible to get a double pram on these trams. They just don't fit.</li> </ul> <p>Financial Barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The low cost care, that Eildon Road provide to families, means that more women are able to participate in the workforce. I can't afford to spend an additional \$30 per day at a private centre. It would mean I would need to reduce the number of days I work. Forcing people to find places more expensive centres will mean some parents reduce their participation in the workforce.</li> </ul>		Strongly disagree	Disagree
	This submission applies to all 3 buildings not just 17 Eildon road	Neutral	Neutral
<p>Dear Council Officers, Councillors &amp; Mayor,</p> <p>I ask the CoPP to recognise the need and desire for community-run early childhood centres in the municipality. The decision to close ERCK, a well-managed, viable and valuable community-managed kindergarten and children's centre is out-of-step with what the local community wants and expects from Council. ERCK is independent and financially viable. As a not-for-profit organisation, any operating surplus is reinvested into the centre to benefit local children, not paid to commercial owners or shareholders which is in stark contrast to the majority of other local early childhood services available.</p> <p>There has been insufficient consultation with the local community and there has been a lack of transparency and accountability by Council in relation to the upgrades required to 17 Eildon Road, and Council's decision-making process.</p> <p>I have been living for 12 years in CoPP and I love the community and the bonds I have formed here but I have been deeply disappointed in the Council's behaviour in this process and the lack of respect they have shown towards the centres and the families attending there.</p> <p>My trust in the council to work in the best interest of the community has been completely shattered and I am left wondering how they use the taxpayer money and in the interest of whom.</p> <p>Even more than the intent to sell what I would like to see reviewed is the process. If council had any respect for community-led organisation, they would have engaged with a fair and respectful collaboration with the centres, working together to manage both the issue of an ageing building but the continuity of provision of a great and valuable service.</p> <p>I hope that all the demonstration by the CoPP residents will be received and considered and that the process will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>A CoPP resident asking for accountability of rates use.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I vehemently oppose the sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda as it plays an essential role in the community. Both of my children attended Eildon Road from before their first birthdays. It was a special place, given its size and location within the local neighborhood. Both the children and parents created lifelong bonds. As both my husband and I are from the US, we ended up moving back to California - and while we ultimately found a small Montessori preschool with a similar ethos and community there - by and large we missed Eildon Road and St Kilda! So we returned, and the kids have gone on to attend St Kilda Park Primary School (SKIPPS), and our son is now at Albert Park College (APC).</p> <p>I was on the Management Committee at Eildon Rd and served as Treasurer for a time, so understand the pressures of a small childcare operation that's not very scalable. I wonder if there could be some thinking outside the box and sharing of resources or efficiencies to be gained between the 3 local centres in question?</p> <p>As a local parent living and raising children in Port Phillip, and specifically St Kilda, I can say that to us as parents, as well as to our children, Eildon Road Childcare &amp; Kindergarten, The St Kilda Adventure Playground, SKIPPS, and the local parks (Botanical Gardens, Catani, Peanut Farm, Middle Park Wooden Playground, etc) are among the best parts of living here. These unique local resources help create the fabric of this community. Eildon Road has helped "grow" many generations of local children and provides not only high quality care, but is centrally located near public transport and two local primary schools. To discontinue this service and sell the property without considering the wide-ranging potential impacts - such as attracting fewer young families - is extremely short sighted and will almost certainly have negative knock on effects. Please listen to the local community members and change tack on this plan to sell Eildon Road. Instead, recognize the value of this critical local resource to the local community, and help provide support so the Centre "grow" many generations and local leaders to come.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>██████████</p>		Neutral	Disagree
	It is fulfilling a biased agenda long on the table. It is not simply a real-estate decision	Neutral	Disagree
	We strongly oppose the recommendation made to Council on 1 December 2021 to sell the property at 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, and sincerely hope to be able to engage constructively with Councillors and Council Officers to talk through the numerous options outlined in our response.	Strongly disagree	Disagree

<p>I do not support the sale of council property in the west St Kilda area. This area is already stressed and under extreme pressure due to societal factors and neglect by council to drive significant investment and change.</p> <p>Whilst this property may not meet childcare needs at the desired level further investment is warranted in council property to avoid the commercialisation of assets with no return to the local community. This proposed sale will remove a council asset with no direct reinvestment in this west stkilda locale. This is not acceptable as this area is a major residential area with high density living with a number of differing social /economic factors and not managing or replacing this type of social facility will have a detrimental impact and a failure of council representation to the base. The west Stkilda area has been a major residential and entertainment beachside resort for well over 100 years contributing substantially to the high regard of the suburb which is being whittled away by actions by council since the amalgamation to City of Port Phillip.</p> <p>This proposal fails on the strategic value of council land disposal as there is no localised benefit and given the land values in west st kilda will be no replacent in future for local open space play space or community meeting space for older peoples, people living in higher density seeking social or educational space or meeting space in a non commercial environment. Any disposal of this site will lead to further development and the impacting traffic and associated environmental factors with no direct benefit to the current local residents and the clients to the childcare centre. Further commercial does not lead to improved social outcomes in this highly fragment area.</p> <p>Creating localised community engagement through local council amenities builds the social fabric to reduce anti/social behaviours and lifts community surveillance to drive down street issues and improve outcomes across the acland grey Fitzroy and Barkly st precinct and disposing of key assets doesn't align with further investment in this important area in greater St kilda. I do support investment in the North ward <del>but this should not be predicated on the related sale of existing property in the currently challenged west stkilda area.</del></p>	<p>This seems a commercial decision driven to dispose of council property at the very time that assets should be recycled for the betterment of the local people, the amenity of this area and support of local early learning</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>I strongly disagree with the sale of 17 Eildon Rd, St Kilda.</p> <p>I find it hard to believe the building is suddenly no longer suitable for use as a child care centre. Surely it would've been subject to regular routine accreditation inspections which would've highlighted issues for repair/upgrade. The service would've paid council rent to use its premises. Why couldn't some of these fees be used for repairs/upgrades to stay ahead of the game rather opting to sell now it's too late?</p>	<p>The closure of Eildon Rd Children's Centre will cause stress and disruption for families. Children will be removed from their familiar, secure care environment while parents will be forced to find an alternative - possibly at a higher cost. I note council's suggested alternate care centres are about a 20-minute walk away from Eildon Rd. Not everyone drives or finds the prospect of taking small children on public transport appealing. More stress. How long will it be before the revamped centre at Nth St Kilda can take new children?</p> <p>If the building is sold to a private childcare service it will be an enormous bonus for the council: money from the sale plus having the new owner pay for an upgrade to a heritage building which should've been cared for properly in the first place. Please don't sell a valuable community asset!</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>This community managed centre provides more than early learning for birth to 5 year olds and enabling parents' employment. Connections vital to healthy communities sprout and grow. Families, as well as children, share their knowledge and skills, develop friendships and support networks, learn new skills, and contribute to their neighbourhoods. While for-profit services support some of this development, their business structures deny families meaningful input into how centres operate; decisions are made with the need to make a profit for owners/shareholders, not what's in the best interest of families and local community. CoPP's involvement in community managed ECEC services is an investment in community development, social cohesion and collaboration, it empowers families to make decisions that directly effect them and encourages them to consider their community's needs and aspirations, not just a bottom line.</p> <p>Sale of the 3 centres will deprive local families of ECEC centres within pram walking distance and as CoPP's plan states there will be 79 fewer ECEC places when proposed works are finalised. A mix of ages keep the municipality vital, this is in every resident's interest and lack of suitable ECEC could result in young families moving away.</p> <p>The centre is financially viable, council has the funds, and has been informed that state funding is also probable, to attend to the main reasons CoPP cites for the sale.</p> <p><del>This is bad policy.</del></p>	<p>Refer uploaded file</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am deeply concerned about your proposal to sell the 3 childcare centres, in particular 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda.</p> <p>My partner and I are from Germany and moved to Australia. Initially we only intended to stay for 3 years but because we have good jobs and like living here, we decided to stay. One year ago, we bought our first property in St Kilda. Our main reasons for choosing this suburb was the proximity to the bay/beach and also the excellent childcare centre, which our daughter is attending. It may be hard to understand that this was a big criterion for us, but because we don't have any family support in Australia and also have very demanding jobs, which we love, it is of high importance for us that our daughter is being well cared for and also receives good education at an early age. We love that ERCK is located in an old building but also allows the experience of natural outdoor space away from the highway. Moreover, we love the community of our centre, which allowed us to make many friends, who were essential in the last 2 years, especially because we have no family support.</p> <p>My career was experiencing a huge disruption because of my maternity leave, which was followed by the pandemic. The possible closure of 17 Eildon Road is causing a lot of distress and anxiety for my family. Council is suggesting that we can just change to one of the other centres. But none of the suggested centres is fulfilling our requirements/needs. Because of council's proposal to sell we placed our daughter on a waiting list for a comparable centre, which is requiring us to drive to the centre instead of walking or cycling. However, the new centre has a substantial waiting list and we may not be offered a spot for all 5 days of care, which we require to work full-time. My partner is earning more money than I do, which means that I will be the one who will need to care for our daughter if we can't get 5 days of care in a centre of our choice. This is very frustrating, because it will cause another disruption in my career.</p> <p>I understand that council needs to investigate the state of the buildings. However, the way the proposal is handled by council officers is deeply concerning to me. I am a new rate payer and after observing how this proposal is handled, I have no trust in how council operates. The proposal and even the reports uploaded at the Have your say website are very biased and also include errors. Moreover, there is no true engagement with the COM of the centres. It seems council is only seeing the properties as 3 old buildings and do not account for the value of the community services which are delivered within these walls. If council truly values community-run or council -run childcare/kinder centres, I would have assumed that also different departments than the property group were engaged in the process, and that reports would also include the value of the provided services towards our children and our community. As a mum, resident and rate payer, I am urging council not only to stop this very biased proposal, but also to initiate an <del>opening into council operations to rebuild trust with their residents.</del></p>		<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>I DO NOT support the sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda nor that of the two other small, local child care centres in the City of Port Phillip. In fact we are strongly against the idea of the Council selling off the CHILD CARE CENTRES and other assets.</p> <p>Local community run child care is one of the cornerstones of community, it is a major role of Council to support community - real community connections and promote this at a deep level. Heading down the path of privatization will lead to enormous problems, as we are currently seeing in Aged Care.</p> <p>Large commercial centres, where people drive from other suburbs promotes the opposite of community, not to mention parking problems and all other associated problems.</p> <p>Small community run centres have been shown in research studies to have far better outcomes for children and families. Commercial centres do not have the socio economic diversity that small centres can accommodate. See the report that the Council commissioned over three years ago.</p>	<p>We think it is shocking that the council wants to sell off its assets, one by one, in this case 3 at a time. What has happened the City of Port Phillip that they no longer want to support the community?? This has been in evidence of late for example, trying to get of half of the Book clubs run through the library, inappropriate nature strip guidelines. The St Kilda Council used to be a stron supporter of community and would engage with the locals meaningfully.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>As an employer the impact of loss of appropriate childcare makes it harder for me to hire staff at a time when the pandemic has already had a significant impact. This proposal will result in the loss of 160 childcare places. This could be 160 people unavailable for work and contributing to the local economy.</p> <p>As a resident I also want to attract families to the area - which adds vibrancy and contributes to safer communities. Families increase connection and contribute to a healthier community.</p> <p><del>The private sector can not be relied upon to consider these important impacts on our community.</del></p>	<p>It is short sighted to do this for economic reasons. Affordable childcare allows parents to work, increases available income which is then fed into local business and the local economy.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

I do not support the sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda and subsequent closure of Eildon Road Children's Centre.		Agree	Agree
The importance of small scale community-run early childhood education cannot be overlooked here. The centre is financially viable and is an important place for the community to come together. Closing this (and the other two within Port Phillip Council) will reduce the number of affordable childcare places in the area.			
I believe that the council wants what is best for the community, and therefore should keep Eildon Road Children's Centre and Kindergarten open.		Disagree	Disagree
		Neutral	Neutral
	The proposed sale of Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten, Elwood Children's Centre and The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten is causing families and staff at each of the centres a huge amount of stress and anxiety. This document aims to illustrate how much of a negative impact the process to date has had on those living and working in the City of Port Phillip.	Neutral	Strongly disagree
	We wish to note that this submission considers issues relevant to all three centres proposed for sale. As there appears to be no other option, we have uploaded the submission three times, once for each centre.	Disagree	Disagree
	As demonstrated in the protest outside the Town Hall, the narrowly informed proposal to sell this property is highly unpopular and reflects a failure of Council to develop a proper implementation plan for childhood services in Port Phillip.	Disagree	Disagree
Finding childcare was incredibly difficult in 2021. I had my name on the list since before my daughter was born and I was only just lucky enough to get one of the last spots. I know many many parents who missed out which means that often the mother as primary caregiver cannot return to work which is removing a large percentage of the workforce. How can the council go ahead with selling childcare facilities when there is not an existing facility in place to take the children that would usually attend there. Furthermore the redevelopment of the site at North St kilda will displace many families for many years to come until that work is completed. <u>Poor planning on the behalf of the council not thinking about the large majority of parents who require childcare. Not to mention the staff and community that are also involved.</u>		Neutral	Strongly disagree
Selling off such a successful and highly regarded childcare centre - especially without replacement facilities ready - is incredibly short sighted. When community facilities like Eildon Rd disappear a little piece of our community goes with it.	Selling these facilities is contrary to the culture of the area. We should foster community facilities not sell them to the highest bidder.	Neutral	Disagree
I am very disappointed in the CoPP management of this project. You have got the structure, strategy and messaging wrong: 1. Instead of focusing on the property and costs - focus on the quality of service to be provided. that is the key driver of parents involved in these centers. 2. Leaving 160 odd places vacant while the build is happening is ignoring the need for service [follow the trend of the demand surveys] - develop a way of providing service to this quantity. A dreadful misstep in developing this project. 3. Leaving the service delivery 79 places short represents a lack of insight into what drives the support for this sector. I was hoping the CoPP officers could be more creative in supporting the citizens of CoPP. 4. Instead of 'dropping' thoughts about the property as your motivational drivers, undertake co-development - not post-fact [that's the message your positioning tells the parents] 'consultation.' 5. Lack of understanding of your community. there may be 40 odd private providers in the city - but that is not a reason for Council to depart the field. We are a proud community that supports each other - this way of developing and presenting the project is destructive - unnecessarily so. 6. A lack of a 'big picture' view of the EY's program in CoPP. Did you consider setting up local community lead organisations to undertake the service delivery? There are Inc already existing Inc; to use as an example.	I want you to consider the whole picture. Not just each property on its own. A divide and conquer tactic I assume to 'manage' the community contribution.	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
I don't support the sale of Eildon Rd childcare service or the sale of The Avenue or Elwood childcare centres. Predominantly this is because having small, hyper-local childcare centres that are community run foster's community connections. If you live very close to one of these places, it is both more convenient and more conducive to forming relationships between families (so important in our age or disconnection and loneliness) to send your child there, rather than a larger centre that may be further away. Upgrading these facilities to ensure longevity and accessibility is the answer, not selling them off		Agree	Agree
I would urge, in the strongest possible way, that this childcare centre is not sold and remains, for many years to come, the comforting focus for many families past, present and future. Listening to the many parents who have sent their children to this centre, one understands the huge beneficial impact it has had on these families and the fond memories they hold.. Like many other older establishments in St Kilda, the Eildon St childcare centre is a serious part of the social fabric of the area. It is iconic. Closing down such services and onselling the property to developers is doing a disservice to the many longstanding residents of the area.		Neutral	Disagree
I dont support the sale of 17 Eildon road. My own son attended this facility, I would like it to continue for other children Council should concentrate on upgrading this community facility... I feel this council is way too corporate, paying lip service to community wants and needs... how many council officers actually live in St Kilda? A little more soul and much less spin please.	council have not convinced me in any way that this property should be sold It is collectively 'ours' and should not be sold and the same goes for the other 2 properties up for sale	Agree	Neutral
I am greatly concerned by the proposed sale of each of the three early learning services. I am troubled that the council has incorrectly stated that the centres are not eligible for state funding when there are grants available that have not been applied for. The fact that there is also a \$5.6 million dollar maintenance fund available should also be considered and accessed. Port Phillip is a diverse area. Even if privately run facilities will "eventually" make up the difference to places, they will cost more and it will be a big financial strain in low income families and potentially leave more vulnerable children at risk. <u>These centres should not be closed, but certainly shouldn't even be considered for closure before alternatives are completed.</u>	This process has been flawed, and at the very minimum should be started again with correct information provided to the community.	Disagree	Disagree
Good morning. I'm writing to submit my opposition to the sale of 17 Eildon Road. Although my son is now in High School I believe that community childcare centre fulfill an essential role in childcare in Port Phillip. This property and those of Elwood Childcare at Tennyson Street and the Avenue St Kilda East offer something quite different to the larger privately run childcare centres. They are unique in their style and for some families and ultimately very young children are perfect. Also please consider the lower costs for parents, single parent families and families on lower incomes that these centres offer. I believe State Government have pledged funds to help in the upgrading of these existing centres, which also pay maintenance funds to Council themselves. These centres are a big part of the local communities and sale/development is also opposed by residents in the street/s. I'm also unsure why they would be sold when there haven't been new centres built?		Neutral	Neutral

<p>I do not support this proposal to sell a fantastic community resource. My son attends the centre and I have nothing but positive things to say about the educators and the way the centre is run. I felt extremely lucky when he secured a spot having been less than impressed with the Private centres in the area. These Private centres operate to line shareholders pockets and the children's best interests are not a priority. Clearly Port Phillip council is not prioritising the best interests of our children and youngest community members either. Instead of depriving children and the local Community of this fantastic resource you should be looking at ways to support them.</p> <p>The closure of this centre would leave us without affordable and adequate childcare in the area and mean we would likely need to invest in a second car in order to drop and collect our son each day. At the moment we enjoy the 10 minute walk there and back and appreciate the quiet and safety of Eldon Rd.</p> <p>With a second child due and Private care fees set considerably higher and the cost of a second car we would have to work out if it's even feasible to keep sending our children and potentially look at reducing our working day.</p> <p>The centre is self sufficient and should be let continue to operate in the manner it does today without interference.</p> <p>As a council you should be focusing your efforts and attention on addressing the many problems and challenges in our community and leaving the centres alone.</p> <p>I've read all the available information issued by the council on this and in summary it is a [REDACTED]</p> <p>I don't support this move... bit of a joke isn't it? Saying the building is to far gone? How about you put some money back into it? If you think the land is worth a good bit of money because a developer is in your ear just remember it will be worth a hell of a lot more if you hold onto it for another 50 years.</p>		Agree	Neutral
	<p>I was part of the consultation years ago, which feels like a sham now. These centers are important and council has the funding from these centres it has been collecting and should and can still make this work. Council needs to take into account those meetings and the strong feedback at those meetings. The co-funding for these building has been collected and must be used. Council has not operated in good faith collecting this funding but not using it as agreed.</p>	Strongly agree	Disagree
<p>Local families are disappointed and exhausted with the situation where OUR council want to sell off OUR local community run childcare centres. A couple of years ago funding cutbacks were proposed supposedly for the benefit of disadvantaged children and now its about building costs. Many local folks do not want to send their children to be educated and cared for in expensive and inferior corporate childcare centres. Childhood education is a service that should be delivered in a high quality manner with fairly paid (largely) female staff for the benefit of society, not by big businesses with shareholders. Just looks what's happened in the aged care sector. The proposal disadvantages women who are already effectively taxed at higher rates and will have even less income after these higher priced corporate fees are paid. Please find a solution and don't just walk away from your obligation to provide this critical service to local kids and families. Kids are people too and they deserve better.</p>		Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I am strongly against the sale of this much-loved and highly valued childcare centre. The staff go above and beyond to care for our children, the centre has deep roots in the community, and the children are well cared for and happy.</p>	<p>As a family where both myself and my wife work and having only one car, relocating to another centre will cause huge disruption to our daily lives. It might not sound like a major problem to travel to a centre a few kms away, but when you are travelling on foot with a baby in a pram and a toddler walking - and you have to cross Nepean Hwy - it takes a significant amount of time.</p> <p>My wife does the daily drop off to Eldon Road, which is a 3-4 minute walk through quiet backstreets from our home. She then catches the 96 tram into work, which stops just a few hundred metres from the centre. Having to take our children to North St Kilda and then travel back to Fitzroy Street to catch the tram will add 30-40 minutes both morning and evening - a total of 60-120minutes a day. This will have a huge impact on the lives of two working parents and two small children who are already tired at the end of a long day.</p> <p>Please, consider the real needs of local families and let us keep Eldon Road.</p>	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>My child attends Eildon Road and we chose this centre for the primary reason that it is small and community-run. There are already very few centres like this in the Port Phillip area, so taking this away from our community will result in many families like mine losing the only centre easily accessible to them that can deliver on key values.</p> <p>If Council goes through with plans to sell this centre and redirect the children to a council-run mega site, you'll likely find a great deal of push back from families. Like myself, I know that many of the parents who enrol their children at Eildon Road would rather move their child/ren to a centre outside of the Port Phillip area in order to retain a small, community-run atmosphere.</p>	<p>I urge you to seriously re-consider selling this property. There is so much more at stake than money. This affects the lives of many local families and children who rely on small room sizes to give adequate care to young babies and children who don't do well in crowded environments. Once centres like these are gone it's almost impossible to get them back again. Please make the right decision and protect our community-run centres.</p>	Strongly disagree	Disagree
<p>Three child care centres have been allowed to run down to the point of no return. This is common behaviour for the CoPP, I am recalling their unnecessary destruction of The Greyhound Hotel several years ago. That was openly due to a lack of foresight on the part of the council, it is well documented. St. Kilda, in all its divisions, is experiencing an overdevelopment of housing yet the council thinks now is the time to condense all childcare into one, the North St. Kilda Child care centre. Money drives the council, instead of the community, which is evident by the various employees I speak to, they are professional business people with no interest in my interests. Look after the shopping strips, the streetscapes, the few amenities we have. Acland Street could use a good clean of the pavement, all footpaths could be addressed for safety purposes and general housekeeping of the suburb, these things would give the appearance of a council that respected the space and its inhabitants.</p>	<p>Eildon Road Child Care should be refurbished. It just should. There is no reason that it cannot be, other than the council cannot be bothered with the effort it would take to do so. Why should this once great suburb be continually left to decay till it is pulled down as a safety hazard? I hear 'kaching' when I see a notice such as this. What will CoPP spend the money on?</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I would like to lodge my objection to the proposed sale of 17 Eildon Rd by Port Phillip Council. As a resident of St Kilda for the past 20 years at 19 Eildon Rd and a neighbour to the current kindergarten and child care centre, I believe that the sale of the site and any subsequent re development would greatly detract from the character of our street. Furthermore, with appropriate government funding, it would be possible to upgrade the existing facility to meet any outstanding compliance issues. This would allow the children of the area to continue their care in a centre with character and period features, rather than a bland modern anonymous facility.</p> <p>Kind regards, [REDACTED]</p>		Agree	Neutral

<p>Thank you for allowing us to comment on the proposed sale of 17 Eildon Rd, St Kilda. I have been a resident of St Kilda all my life ( I even went to St Kilda Road Primary School ) and in particular a resident at 19 Eildon Road St Kilda for the past 22 years. I strongly disagree with the proposed sale on the following grounds: 1. The current child care centre provides a special cultural and diverse experience to the children in that it is not a big cold, concrete building but rather a historic location with a family type of atmosphere. The workers and parents feel the unique experience when they enrol their kids there. Port Phillip Council should be a leader in providing this kind of diverse and special experience rather than follow the example of other more standardised models. Any required infrastructure could be added and at times, decisions are required for the greater good not just a balance sheet. I note the council allocated huge funds for solar panels that will not return a financial gain for many years to come. 2. If the sale gives the opportunity of new major construction, it is not compatible with this "no through road" which already experiences problems with parking and traffic. 3. The council should have a proactive policy of heritage building restoration and promote it. 4. In the future there will always be a need for child care centres. Keeping this one does not stop the council from adding further facilities within future budgets Yours sincerely,</p>		Agree	Neutral
		Neutral	Neutral
	Dont do it.	Neutral	Neutral
<p>The selling of public property assets in growing urban densities risks being shortsighted and kicking problems down the road. What considerations did the council give to evaluate the potential for shared use facilities? Multipurpose utilisation has the potential for optimising the sharing of costs, moreover can attract other forms of income/funding. And surely the diversity in amenities and an engaged local community brings broader positive spillovers?</p>	<p>Community Use of Schools — Hiring, Licensing and Community Joint Use Agreements <a href="https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/community-use-schools-hiring-licensing-and-community-joint-use-agreements/guidance-0">https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/community-use-schools-hiring-licensing-and-community-joint-use-agreements/guidance-0</a> Access over ownership – a typology of shared space <a href="https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/F-11-2014-0094/full/html">https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/F-11-2014-0094/full/html</a></p>	Agree	Disagree
<p>The disability compliance issues identified by the council are capable of being fixed for a reasonable price. The Elwood centre pays the council enough rent per year to complete maintenance and capital works. Council did not engage your consult with the committee before announcing their intention to sell. Council has not sought state or federal government funding despite Grants existing for these works. Please listen to the community, do not sell these valued childcare facilities.</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>Should the proposed sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda were to proceed, Kinderclub Childcare at 35 Crimea Street, St Kilda are more than willing to help with the transition for some families and Early Childhood Educators. Of course, how many we can help will depend on availability at the time. We are a community and family focused Early Learning Centre with the same or similar values often found in community managed centres. Our setting is very similar, a converted Victorian styled house most likely to be over 100 years old with a maximum capacity of 45 places. We are often overlooked but always surprised by those who come for a centre tour. For those who are budget conscious, we are open to discuss. Thank you P.S. We have an integrated 3 to 5 years old Kindergarten Program that is bi-lingual.</p>		Strongly agree	Strongly agree
<p>terrible idea. Council has a responsibility to support children, families and committee run community-based services and should be doing everything possible to support small services that provide much higher quality care.</p>	no	Agree	Disagree
<p>While it is nice to have the child care centre in the neighbourhood, I have some sympathy for the issues surrounding the ongoing suitability of the building for this purpose. However, if the property is to be sold by the Council I urge you to ensure that you use planning powers to ensure that the property is not demolished and an eyesore apartment building constructed in its place. That would detract from the surviving heritage value of the area.</p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>I believe that the council can do more to support the continued running and maintenance of this community centre. There is a lack of quality community run early learning centres already and this would be detrimental both to the local and to the wider community if it closed. Please properly consult with the users of the service and exhaust all options before you decide to close them.</p>		Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>I object the sell of the property. Child care is all about the convenient location in our neighbourhood, within walking distance. Although the north st kilda child care will become a modern centre, it is too far away from our neighbourhood. Even distribution is important. Would love the council to seek solution to improve the current facility rather than delete them. Cheers</p>	<p>if you can find a better place in the same area, within 5 mis walking distance, a replacement is acceptable. Please do not reduce the numbers.</p>	Agree	Agree
<p>There is no need to sell this property or close the centre as the State Government has said it will provide assistance and funding to upgrade this childcare centre. Take up the offer and do not close the centre which will disadvantage local families who rely on this centre.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Don't sell this - we need local, small and community run childcare not big private facilities</p>		Agree	Agree
<p>It is very important to maintain this site for child care. It is central. It has a long history. It is very popular. The site should be renovated and upgraded. The site should not be sold for private use.</p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>Council has already decided to sell this property - see the intention to sell letter I received today in my letter box. I find this consultation totally deceitful and sorry to say very disappointing. The CoPP has been wanting to sell 17 Eildon Road for many years (including when I was on Council) but the officers pushing for it had to wait for the "right" group of Councillors to actually close this highly loved community managed childcare centre and sell the building. The question to ask the community is not about the "intention to sell" but "do you want to keep a great childcare centre at 17 Eildon Road". Same with the other 2 properties. And my answer is a loud NO, don't sell!! As the government has offered help, ask for help and make the building compliant. Don't sell!!</p>	<p>Nothing to add, don't sell! We need childcare centres in the city, including community centres run by parents. Not just big centres run by council or commercial entities.</p>	Agree	Strongly disagree
<p>I am firmly opposed to selling the building currently operating as a child care centre at 39 The Avenue, Balaclava. My feelings are that the community or the council has a responsibility to provide child care to local residents and that this centre should remain open. I oppose the transition of councils to divest themselves of community responsibility in areas such as child care and aged care. This leaves these services open to privatisation where tax payers government support is syphoned off as profit. I believe that the rates that we pay should be able to maintain these centres and keep them running as community child care facilities.</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>I support the sale of these properties as they are not safe to operate as child care centres in their current condition as the Victorian health minister has failed to provide adequate funding to maintain these properties. If they were sold off to private enterprise the incoming landowner can improve the value of their asset by refurbishing/redeveloping the property and maintaining the property as it's in their best interest particularly if they are an owner occupier.</p>	<p>Should be sold to a private local child care centre operator so the number of places in our area is not reduced.</p>	Agree	Neutral
<p>My children attended Eildon Road Children's Centre in its early days. We really valued the fact that it was housed within a domestic property and felt family-like and intimate. Many custom-built facilities feel very institutional which is alienating for small children, and can be quite confronting at an early age. We were also able to walk to the centre and this was a very pleasant family time. I do not know of any other childcare facilities within the central St Kilda area. I believe Council should be encouraging walking as a sustainable method of transport that instils good habits in children from an early age.</p>	<p>The community management of the centre also gave us a sense of ownership and fostered community engagement that has continued to this day.</p>	Neutral	Neutral

<p>Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten is my work place, but it is definitely more than just that! I have been working at Eildon Road for a number of years now and have helped young children grow, develop and learn. I have witnessed countless "firsts", first steps, first words, first friendships. I have met many families along the way and Eildon Road has been able to offer them a sense of community, a second home, a place to make new friends, a place share joy, excitement, worries and sorrows. Eildon Road is a small centre, we all know each other, families as well as educators. Due to the size of the service we are able to create such community and stay in close contact with all our families. It is hard for me to imagine having such a close-knit community feeling in an over 140- place centre. It sounds almost impossible to get to know all the families and children in a larger service. I personally have no interest in working in a larger service and if Eildon Road will be sold I have no intention in working for any of the from the council suggested alternative services. I personally don't believe that my place is with a large private childcare provider. I believe that's sad and disappointing, because the early childhood industry is already struggling and the proposed plan to sell the small community run centres will give educators in the Port Phillip council area even less choices, which most probably results in leaving the industry and therefore contributing to the national industry crises. Please find a proper suitable alternative for Eildon Road and make sure our little community doesn't die off.</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>If it means keeping the child care centre open then maybe council should make that the highest priority and consider overlooking the heritage overlay - instead opting to demolish/renovate the building to get it to the required standard for a continued care facility... Decentralising the child care centres will remove the ability of families to walk to and from the facilities which is an integral part of the accessibility of the facilities. Not everyone can drive to or walk for long periods to get to the proposed more limited choices of care facilities</p>		Disagree	Neutral
<p>I wish to register my protest over the possible sale and subsequent closure of the Eildon Rd Child care Centre and Kindergarten. in St Kilda. WHY? Why remove a centre that has appeared to me to be very successful and causes no problems to local residents. I have lived in this locale since 1973. Consequently I have seen many changes. That is the nature of St Kilda. One thing has been very noticeable since the 1990's is the increased numbers of young families and children. These families need accessible amenities they feel confident about because they have a good reputation. It attracts them to the area. I thought it rather sad when the playground in the back corner of Church Square was dismantled. It used to be a happy playground for toddlers and their parents. I know that is a separate issue but in a way it's allied. It was close by and parents sat around minding the kids. Happiness is the only way I can describe it. My point is DONT remove what works very well. The centre is a good size for toddlers; homely and secure.. Health and Safety issues are important but they can be so pedantic and restrictive they can take the pleasure and learning experience out of life. I recommend you trust the staff. Finally I would comment that these young families are the future of St Kilda.</p>		Neutral	Agree
<p>I am opposed to the sale of this childcare centre. It is a small, community managed childcare centre which allows for a very personal level of attention to the children who attend. Problems identified in the site audit Accessible Parking - The clients of the childcare centre have two dedicated car parks for their use during drop off and pick up Monday to Friday. However, most parents attending the Centre choose to walk or ride with their children to the Centre and so the lack of dedicated all day parking has never been an issue for the families using the Centre and exemption from this requirement has been provided to the Centre in the past. Instead, the families have benefitted from the slow start to the day and the gentle exercise afforded by the walk/cycle to the Centre. With global concern about climate change and the recognised benefits of exercise on human quality of life, it seems out of step for Council to be highlighting parking as an issue and promoting the use of vehicles to deliver children to the Centre. Disability access - The changes required to satisfy disability access standards may require the broadening of doorways, relocation of door handles and installation of sloping ramps into and out of the building. These changes are achievable with a relatively small investment. These changes have been successfully undertaken at the St Kilda Town Hall so that an old and historic building could continue to be useful to the ratepayers of St Kilda. I believe the same willingness to invest in other historic buildings should be displayed with regard to this centre and the other two that are proposed for sale. This Council has been given a mandate by the ratepayers of Port Phillip to close these Centres just because the Centres required investment to keep them compliant with regulations. The State and Federal governments have each indicated they would be willing to assist with grants for the upgrade of these buildings so that they could become compliant and I believe Council should be working to continue to maintain the model of small, family run day-care, recognised as providing the best individual care and charging well below the market average for childcare in Melbourne. Access to the second level. Space could be found for a small lift access to be installed internally to the second level. Such a renovation is undertaken by families all over the western world to assist in keeping older people in their homes once mobility becomes an issue. Again state and federal grants would be available for this upgrade. Access to the second level would only be required by staff, as parents and children do not need to access the second level as all childcare is provided on the ground floor and so the lifts would not have to be of the size and capacity as, say, the lifts installed in the Town Hall. Ambulant M/F toilets - all toilets available in the building could be converted to unisex toilets and one could be designed to be ambulant compliant. With the current national debate on gender discrimination, I do not think it is necessary to designate toilets male or female. They should all be unisex and updated to ensure accessibility is not an issue. Again these upgrades would have taken place in Council Chambers for the comfort of workers and councillors - why is a similar investment in a childcare facility seemingly impossible.</p>	<p>The St Kilda Council has, in the past, led the way in investment in community based childcare. The Eildon Road Centre has provided a nurturing community-operated childcare model that has been loved by the many families that have used it over the decades. The Council that bought the buildings did so to support the provision of care in a small individualised building, nestled in its community. They used rates revenue to make these purchases. The current Council seems to be attempting to dismantle this engagement with their community. It is unclear whether this is driven by a desire to "cash in" on a heated property market, an unwillingness to be involved with childcare now that commercially operated (and more expensive) models are being touted to the Council or because it has all got too hard and assisting local families is not seen as valid as it was seen in the past. However, the provision of affordable, reliable, effective and close neighbourhood-based childcare should be considered just as valid now as it was 30 years ago when these Centres were seen as things the Council was proud to have invested in. Good quality childcare is an investment in the future citizens of Port Phillip and Australia. Literacy and numeracy have declined over recent years in Australia, leading to many more children leaving school unable to read and write adequately. Centres, such as Eildon Road, which provide individualised approaches to learning for the children in its care should be supported, not closed because of the cost of lowering some door handles.</p>	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Living in Eildon Rd for many years this site has been a life saver for many people I've known. It's in the perfect spot for a small, well run facility and furthermore what maintenance has council done at huge cost to the centre. It's difficult for parents to travel to childcare centres and then to work... and same at end of day. Having the facility close to home is ideal. Reduces stress on parents AND children. Just spend the money on fixing the areas that need attention. Our rates would be better spent that way. In this throw away society it would be shameful to do otherwise. 3 small facilities better than 1 big facility. It's always a pleasure to walk past and hear the children.</p>	<p>It's a complete waste of time, energy, resources .....just fix what's there. It's a charming old building and children love it.</p>	Agree	Neutral
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>We are currently researching the private interest and the council's conduct on this matter to ensure proper legal procedures have been followed .</p>	Neutral	Disagree
<p>I understand that Council is planning to sell three properties currently occupied by community managed childcare centres in the City of Port Phillip. I am opposed to the sale of all of these properties, however the focus of this submission is 17 Eildon Road St Kilda, currently occupied by Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten. My children attended Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten (then Eildon Road Children's Centre or ERCC) between 2006 and 2013. ERCC was fundamental to my children's development, and a critical part of that development was the way in which ERCC allowed us to build a strong connection with community and a sense of belonging within our local area. This connection and sense of belonging have stayed with our family through our children's journey to primary and secondary school, and continue to this day. I believe that the philosophy of community management and the unique environment that ERCC provided for our family were critical to this fostering of a strong sense of community. The character of the building at 17 Eildon Road provided ERCC with an atmosphere of our children being cared for in a home rather than an institution. The scale of the building was domestic and relatable, the children could see and connect with the activities of the kitchen, and they could play in the front garden where they had a connection to the activity of the street. The quirky layout of ERCC allowed our children to build relationships with other children across diverse age groups that provided them with an opportunity to develop unique, respectful and engaged friendships. The integration of ERCC into the neighbourhood of St Kilda meant that our journey to and from the centre could take place on foot, rain or shine, and this again provided a way to connect deeply with the local area and its inhabitants. When we attended ERCC it had an atmosphere that felt domestic, loving and very real and I doubt that any new-build childcare centre could provide the intangible benefits that it provided! In my experience the management of the centre by the parent community created a passionate parent group. This group was deeply invested in the quality of childcare received by their children. Working together to fund raise, attend committee meetings or conduct working bees brought the families that attended the centre closer together and cemented bonds within the community. These personal connections that are built around community-managed childcare are vital to the building of strong local communities. The nature of the building at 17 Eildon Road, the centre's location, and the community involvement through the management of the centre made my children's experience at ERCC rich and meaningful - and a natural extension of their life at home. Community childcare provides an invaluable service to the community and should be protected at all costs! So I am writing to ask Council to retain 17 Eildon Road - and provide the funding for the upgrades that the building requires. I remember in 2013 as my youngest child was leaving ERCC the centre was anticipating imminent upgrade works by Council. However I understand that these works were never undertaken. Please invest in 17 Eildon Road, and retain it along with the other community-managed centres. That way these centres can continue to provide quality childcare and build strong local connections and communities. Yours faithfully, [REDACTED]</p>		Neutral	Agree

<p>I write to express my horror at the proposed closure of three magnificent and essential child care facilities within our municipality. Firstly I find it very hard to understand how early learning and taking care of our little ones in the community is not a priority of this council. What is a bigger priority than the future of the children? Childcare is currently already very hard to access in this area and the closure of three centres will only further exacerbate this problem. Due to such long wait lists my wife and I were forced to juggle work, with child minding, including between night shifts. The closure of these centres will force young families to leave the area.</p> <p>The proposal of waiting for the market to rectify the problem; of supply matching demand, is outrageous. It shows a lack of understanding and care. What are families supposed to do in the meantime? Hoping that someone will provide a solution to a problem that council has only helped to create is not why we elect councillors for this area.</p> <p>With the centres paying large maintenance funds and receiving next to no maintenance, it is hard to comprehend how a council can then say the buildings are outdated and expensive to fix. Especially when added to the amount of money/ grants that have been made public that are available.</p> <p>From a member of the community who values and understands how important these centres are it, [REDACTED]</p> <p><u>I urge councillors to listen to the members of this community and realise what an awful proposal this is.</u></p> <p>Selling these centres is shortsighted and will deny the community and much-needed service. Council has been remiss not exploring all funding support options with state and Commonwealth government, both of which have funding to support Childcare. We have four young children two of whom currently in enrolled at the centre and will be very disappointing if it closes.</p>		Agree	Neutral
		Agree	Neutral
<p>I dont support the sale of elidon road daycare centre.</p> <p>My son attends the day care and has done since he was 4 months old. He is now 4.</p> <p>I went to several and couldn't compare elidon daycare centre to any other.</p> <p>Remember when you used to climb trees, maybe eat dirt, make a mud pie, you remember being a kid and feeling safe.</p> <p>I feel like our current world is so wrapped in bubble wrap that kids miss that it's okay to fall over, it's okay to scrape your knee climbing a tree, it is actually okay to eat dirt and realise it's disgusting. But the point is, you tried all those things because, well, you are a kid. You were a kid, you felt safe to do all of these things.</p> <p>You had the world ahead of you, you could do anything.</p> <p>Eldon is that. It's exactly that. It's the old school way of growing up. It's culture. It's history. It's love. It's genuine love.</p> <p>Sell this, and your selling history, culture, a home away from home, a safe secure structure of love and play. How can you put a price on that?!</p> <p>When I go back home, I drive past my daycare, the daycare I was at when I was my sons age. It's still there. Same paint, same tree, same basketball hoop. Kids playing in the front, painting a wall that has been painted a million times before.</p> <p>You know what it could probably be sold for a few million, possibly more. You could build apartments on it. Yeah probably a real money maker. But you know what we should know by now, what we should have all learned, getting older and especially in the last few years, our history, our culture is our identity and if we keep selling to the highest bidder, what are we, who are we?</p> <p>I'm literally sitting here at work in tears of desperation that I may have to tell my kid when he wants to drive past his daycare with his kids when he's my age. What do I say</p> <p>"The council who is supposed to support your community. Didn't. They didn't. A pay cheque meant more than any effort to save your memory. Your early years. Your safe home. Your daycare. And I'm sorry that other kids couldn't have the community and love you had in a world where they probably needed it the most. I'm sorry"</p> <p>Do the right thing. You know what that is. And if you don't, you probably shouldn't be sitting where you are and that is truly sad.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>Selling these buildings comes at a huge disadvantage to the community. Specifically young famies who want to send their children to community run centres which are catered toward child education and development as opposed to profits. There will also be not enough private spaces to accommodate these children who are left high and dry. [REDACTED]</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>I am local resident and rate payer. My husband and I have resided in St Kilda for the past five years. We have an 8 month old daughter who attends the Eldon Road Childcare &amp; Kindergarten (ERCK). I do not support the proposed sale of 17 Eldon Road, St Kilda. I work as a lawyer and I returned to work full-time when my daughter was 5 months old. I was only able to do so because of the wonderful, caring service provided by ERCK. I felt comfortable sending my daughter to childcare at such a young age because ERCK is a small, community-run centre that feels like a 'home away from home'. We are greeted each morning with friendly and familiar faces who care for my daughter in a kind, caring and supportive environment. I would not have felt comfortable sending my daughter at such a young age to a larger, privately run centre where she would have been just another face amongst many. Council's proposal fails to consider the fact that St Kilda is a high density area comprised of many older style apartment buildings that have no off-street parking. Many families in the area do not own vehicles. ERCK is located a 10 minute walk from our home. Council's proposal suggests that there are other childcare centres in the area, however, these are further away. To attend a centre that is a 30 minute walk from our home would mean spending 2 hours each day transporting my daughter to and from childcare (1 hour round trip each way). This is completely unfeasible. Many of the alternative centres proposed by Council would be accessible only by public transport, most forms of which are not pram friendly (such as older style trams and buses). Ultimately, the closure of ERCK would mean that I would be required to leave the workforce (at least to some extent) to remain at home to care for my daughter. My daughter would be deprived of the social, cognitive and language benefits of early childcare education. I would be deprived the opportunity to participate in the workforce in a career that I love. Children's early education should be considered a priority by Council and not a burden. This is a terrible proposal and I do not support it.</p>		Disagree	Neutral
		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
		Agree	Neutral
<p>I live with my partner in the area and would be torn if this place was taken away from the community. Having access to childcare professionals in the area is SO important to the livelihood of many families especially those like us who are planning to have children soon.</p>	Please invest in the places the community actually cares about and deeply values.	Disagree	Disagree
<p>My partner and I live in the area and have delayed having children due to the pandemic. Closing this childcare center will impact our ability to use our local childcare centre over the next few years now that we are planning on having children.</p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>Fewer local childcare spots in the area will encourage us to move.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>Hi,</p> <p>I'm a mum of two that used Eldon Road Children Centre for years. It was an incredible support for my family. As part of the committee, I was a witness to the several pleas we made to the council for the upgrade of the building, obtaining quotes etc. There was no continuity or support for these demands.</p> <p>I hope the council can see that closing and selling three community centres will not solve the shortage of childcare. The building of a super centre will not provide what's needed.</p> <p><u>There are other solutions that simply closing and selling, such as finding another suitable building whilst keeping the character and heart of these community centres</u></p>		Neutral	Disagree
<p>As a former parent, I know how important and valuable community-run early childhood and kindergarten centres like Eldon Road Childcare &amp; Kindergarten are. These centres foster children's development, support families and build the community. In fact, research shows that not-for-profit childcare services provide higher quality education and care in Victoria.</p>	I believe this will have long term effects on the st kilda community should this property be sold and not stay as a child care centre.	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Both my children and I benefited so much from this community-run centre that I could not imagine not having it around for other families.</p>			

<p>I support a community based child centre model as opposed to the 'for profit' corporate models. Of course facilities in a community based child care centre must safe, clean and fit for purpose, but all child care centres do not need to follow a design cookie cutter mould - there is room for diversity. Council needs to commit to community based child care for the LONG TERM and apply for govt funding for the disability compliance issues. Bring in local architects like Brearley Architects or Grant Amon who were involved in the Pride centre and make the facilities world class. Our children deserve this, and child care workers need a lovely working environment. Make community child care a priority for the City of Port Phillip and do not sell off these council owned facilities.</p>	<p>Two of my children attended Eildon Road Child Care Centre and I believe the community based model is the best model for child care. My third child attended a community based child care centre outside of the city of port Phillip. I am a great supporter of this model. Without doubt the centres would all benefit from assistance with management, funding for disability compliance and maintenance - but the model must be supported.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>I am not in favour of consolidating childcare centers because I believe:  1) Small, local and intimate centres are better for children and communities. Children are better able to connect and be comfortable in smaller groups.  2) Geographic proximity benefits everyone. The closer to home their place of care, the more likely they will be able to walk/scoot/cycle (good for the environment, health, road safety, traffic management). Our children attended Eildon Road 15 years ago, and many of their best friends and our best friends we met at Eildon Rd Childcare. I don't believe this would have happened at a larger center. A critical part of building community is developing friendships that are local.  This applies to the other two neighbourhood centers and so I also oppose consolidating them into a bigger center.  We did experience a bigger center that drew from a larger area (Treehouse) and while care was adequate, they lacked intimacy and community. Our children were much more fearful of leaving us to attend there and have very positive reflections on the eventual shift to Eildon Road, where we were waitlisted for awhile. Ostensibly Treehouse had better facilities as a new (at the time) purpose build centre, but the scale was discomforting for kids and parents. (It was perhaps 2 to 3 times the size of Eildon Road).  One of the primary reasons cited for this proposal is poor disability access in the existing centers. Of course disability access is important and desirable, but to shut three centers because they lack disabled facilities doesn't make sense. Disabled children would have the same choice if one small center were made accessible as they would if one large center were made accessible, and the disabled children likewise would benefit from the intimacy of a smaller centre.</p>	<p>It's not in the interest of the broader community, children or anyone to close local centres and consolidate them into a larger one. Please invest in children's wellbeing.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>My daughter attended Eildon Road from the age of 3 1/2 months old through to the age of three. Finding it so difficult to find a childcare centre close by that had spaces, and ones that did leave us in dire financial need, we turned to community/council-run facilities, landing on Eildon Road.  Without this facility, our daughter would not have had the start to her learning that every child deserves, helping her now excel going into the start of Grade 1. Eildon Road Childcare is a vital part of the community and helps families immensely to access affordable childcare, alleviating many stresses in other parts of their lives.  To lose this facility would be to the detriment of dozens of families, leaving them out of pocket at privately-run childcare facilities.</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p>My daughter attended this community run centre in 2016 and it was such a warm inclusive space. All the staff were unbelievable and so caring. When we moved out of the area my daughter was in a large privately owned centre and she did not thrive at all. We were lucky to finally get a spot in another community run centre 5 months later and she was so loved by everyone there. I think community run centres care about the children, their well being and really are like an extended family. I would always choose a small community run centre than a large private institution hence why all three of my children have gone or are attending one.</p>	<p>It's a shame to lose a well respected centre.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>This is more than a childcare place is part of the community. The way they operate, they have become part of the fabric of the neighbourhood. The old building and whole set up they have at Eildon road is such that it blends in with the area seamlessly. New modern centres stand apart from the community and look like prisons. Selling this building is a terrible idea it would rip out a vital part of the community. Taking with it a safe, sharing and inclusive learning environment. The care this centre provides is of the highest standard and every member of the staff is invested in the children there as if they were their own kids. The building is as much a part of the learning for these kids as the staff and the wonderful program/care they provide. To sell this building would rip the soul out of the centre and leave countless families heartbroken. New is not better its just new. St Kilda is already suffering from so much gentrification and loss of its community. It definitely does not need anymore. It takes a lot to be able to build such a wonderful supportive community childcare and the building is the literal and figurative home of this place. Families have enough stress these days without the added threat of the council selling off their much loved childcare centre for a quick buck. The title may be in the councils name but the true owners of Eildon road are the wonderful staff and families that have built it up to the amazing community that it is. So please don't sell the building.</p>		<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>Eildon Road is an incredibly important part of the local community, bringing families in the area together.  There is as you well know nothing comparable in the area.  It is well run and deserves to be celebrated, not removed. My children no longer attend and we have left the council area, but I know well what a detriment to the area this sale would be.</p>		<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>I don't agree with the council closing Eildon Rd childcare! It's such a beautiful community center with wonderful caring staff and taking it all away from the children will be detrimental to the community.</p>	<p>The st kilda area is also under staffed with childcare. How is taking away 3 centres to fund 1 bigger one going to fit all the children and carers in and give them all places and jobs</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Great staff and culture in childcare centres take time to develop. Like any great team, it takes huge effort and time from all involved to nurture. The culture fostered within these community centres over decades is something worth saving. I've heard from current parents, past parents, carers, and the local community just how important the community-run centres have been to the children who attend them and how much they contribute to the sense of community residents feel where they live. Keeping the centres open is not just about the kids, this is about women and families too. We need to support women in ensuring all levels of childcare are an option for them and to maintain the jobs these centres create for women. The City of Port Phillip claims the buildings that these three centres operate from do not meet modern building and accessibility standards for childcare centres, and that it's too expensive and difficult to bring them up to standard. After lobbying from myself and other local MP's a letter has been sent to Mayor Marcus Pearl from Ingrid Stitt MP, Minister for Early Childhood that confirms that these centres are not excluded from applying for state funding grants to support required works. The council have created undue stress for parents, staff, volunteer committee members and the community before they have fully explored and applied for available state funding. This stress comes at a time when parents, staff and volunteer committee members are dealing with huge Covid surges in the local community and need to be focusing on how best to keep children and staff safe and healthy through this extremely difficult time. It has become clear that the council has put solving the issue at hand - 3 buildings that require upgrades - into the too hard basket and have decided to begin the process of selling these buildings prematurely. This was decided without prior consultation with the centres, without creating a costed and staged plan to upgrade the buildings and without applying for available state and federal funding. Sketches provided include unnecessary works such as extensions, additional capacity and compliance items that are not compulsory. The documentation provided to the community has consisted of long lists on why finding a solution will be "difficult", but no evidence of a series of realistic plans being fully explored. I'm urging that the council vote down the motion to sell these centres at the next council meeting and explore fully all available funding and solutions. This needs to include, renovating the existing centres without extensions, rebuilding the centres or moving these treasured community services to a new home. The community that is built around the Elwood Children's Centre (located at 46 Tennyson Street) is something special. Elwood Children's Centre (ECC) has been serving its community for over 35 years. Staff and children have found a home where they feel supported and connected. Children have access to outdoor play, on the earth and surrounded by trees away from the noise and traffic pollution of main roads. The centre supports play-based learning, connection to country and appreciation for the environment. All rooms have a 1:4 staff to student ratio providing local families options if their child requires more hands-on support than other centres can provide. ECC builds community through parent involvement in the running of the centre and the daily fee remains one of the lowest in the CoPP ensuring access to high-quality childcare for the most vulnerable of families.</p>	<p>Despite a motion requesting the council to engage in advocacy for funding, the Councillors have been unable to provide me with a finalised costing of what it would take to save the centres. This is surprising given that a costing would be essential analysis for deciding to sell them.</p>	<p>Disagree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Dear councillors,  Pirt phillip is a beautiful area that thrives because of its community. It is accessibility to all demographics that gives our area rich diversity and makes it a wonderful place to live. Local affordable community childcare is a testament to this, and these centres are at the heart of our community. The charming buildings that house these centres represent a homely welcome, where affordable care is received. Children being able to walk to centres is good for the environment, their own wellbeing not to mention an enjoyable thing for families.</p>	<p>I soak as a mother with a child at eildon road. as a neighbour, i adore the charming old buildings that were constructed with skill and care to last a long time. please dont sell this land so another soulless apartment block can appear in our neighbourhood.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>Disgraceful</p>	<p>Council are suppose to nurture community needs.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>



I do not believe this centre should be sold. I live on the same road and it is a well kept service that the community obviously needs.	Please don't.	Neutral	Neutral
Don't support - this suburb has far greater issues than the smiles and laughs of happy children learning.		Strongly agree	Agree
I support the provision of appropriate services for young kids learning and development and the wellbeing of working families. This proposal is at odds with both. Why are we proposing to decrease services at a time when the community needs support. We have been hit hard enough with Covid, lockdowns and isolation from our usual social interactions without creating more stress.		Disagree	Disagree
I oppose selling of the property and subsequent impact on closing the childcare centre. Particularly at a time when families have been hit hard, and working mums are returning to the workforce. A highly critical service run by passionate and community minded people, caring for and teaching our young kids, and the health and wellbeing of families and extended community.		Neutral	Neutral
Please rather commit to improving existing spaces that give children local and personalised care rather than fewer spaces at impersonal and far centres all on the other side of St Kilda road. Eildon road is a wonderful space where children and parents can walk to care - making it more community oriented and less institutionalised. This is so important for the well-being of families and adjustment of young toddlers. Invest in what we have and preserve heritage rather than sell and become for profit.	As very local residents we oppose to the sale of this and the potential development.	Neutral	Neutral
I'd like to refute the sale of eildon road childcare and kindergarten. It shouldn't be sold but should be refurbished or maintained to safety guidelines by the council so it can continue to provide childcare services to the community. Based on the points below: - this disability compliance (the council has said the childcare centre doesn't meet) is easily remedied by the council at a reasonable cost. Previously the council said the centre would receive funding for these works and has never sought the funding on behalf of the centre to complete the works. The council to keep its morale integrity should fulfill this promise. - the council has not engaged with the management about building upgrades. The council developed the proposal to sell the building before inquiring or engaging contractors. This is abhorrent. - the council despite being paid \$100,000 a year to complete maintenance has only provided minimal maintenance (never in an appropriate and timely manner) but is unable to show evidence of expenditure (over the last few years) over said maintenance works despite being asked multiple times by the the centre. It is clear the council has used these funds for other purposes and therefore it's the council's duty to provide the necessary maintenance and upgrades to this property. - the council is not providing adequate alternative childcare if they do sell this centre. They are only proposing to start redevelopment of the new childcare centre after the sale of eildon road centre and the other two. This would leave families destitute. It would mean 160 less childcare places in the area forcing families to live out of the community to find the childcare they need at an affordable price. I am absolutely disgusted by the lack of integrity and clarity shown by the council meeting the proposals of these centres and even more shocked by how the council has allowed the centres to fail required compliances but not keeping the building to adequate standards. This is entirely the councils fault and they should be provided the correct maintenance and upgrades as soon as possible not proposing to sell the properties.		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
My son has been going to Eildon road for 1 year. He has just moved up to the kinder room. I had planned to send my daughter (currently 3 months) when I return to work. Eildon is a wonderful centre. It is smaller than others and has a wonderful community feel. I didn't want to send my children to a large centre. There will be limited council run options if Eildon and others close. Eildon rd retains good staff which is invaluable to the children attending. Larger, private centres have larger turn around of staff. Children in general benefit greatly from continuity of their carers. My son was on the wait list for too long to begin with. With 3 centres closing the waitlist for my daughter will expand and prohibit me from returning to work. The closure of these centres affects the parents ability to return to work greatly. This is more important than ever in the current climate. I am an essential healthcare worker and wish to return to work following my maternity leave ending. Private is more expensive and may leave many mothers and fathers from not returning to work.		Disagree	Disagree
I am planning to have a child this year as a single mother by choice. As I live around the corner from this centre I had been planning on applying, as this is the most convenient location for me. It would make life so much harder for me, and I know a lot of other single mothers in the area to close the centre down.		Neutral	Disagree
I am grateful that both of my daughters had the opportunity to attend Eildon road 15 years ago. It was a connected and vibrant community which remained independent from the For Profit Sector. The COPP is committed to the positive impact of community wellbeing and connectedness, community owned and run day care centres such as Eildon Road contribute to these values and markers of an healthy community. It is false economy to sell these centres and replacing both their physical and community worth would only be possible at a much higher economic and social cost.		Agree	Neutral
Dear Councillors, I am writing to object to the proposed sale of Elwood Children's Centre at 46 Tennyson St, Elwood and offer my feelings and concerns about this proposal. Elwood Children's Centre has been in operation for over 35 years. It is Elwood's much-loved community run childcare centre offering personalised and unique child care not available at other large and privatised centres in the area. This proposal has caused much distress to families and staff of Elwood Children's Centre and the neighbouring community. I don't believe this proposal has been thought about properly, planned and communicated to the staff of ECC and CoPP residents. My understanding from the Council meeting is that the building has concerns and needs to be made compliant. There is agreement from all in that the building should be made compliant and ECC staff, families and residents of CoPP wish to work with Council members to improve the building and satisfy the compliance. Elwood Children's Centre offers unique and personalised care for children of the community and in particular children with special needs. The type of care that this centre provides is NOT offered in other child care centres and closing the centre would be a great loss to residents of CoPP. As a parent of a child attending Elwood Children's Centre, I can verify that the level of personalised care offered to children with special needs does not even compare to other centres in the area. My son has been diagnosed with 'severe restrictive eating disorder' and has extreme anxiety and ongoing treatment for feeding, toileting, anxiety, speech therapy and other developmental concerns. I am a single mother who works full time and without the support and dedication of the staff at Elwood Children's Centre I don't believe my son would be making progress. There is no other centre in the area which provides specialised and personalised care like ECC. Further to this, this is a Community run centre which has the best interests of the children at heart. Other privatised centres in the area do not offer this level of personalised service and staff are disengaged and decisions are driven by profit. Selling the land which houses ECC would mean a loss of much needed child care places in Elwood. These places are needed for people like me (full time working single mothers) who have no option and rely on trusted child care. The proposal to sell the land and use the funds to improve the other centre in St Kilda does not make any sense because it does not consider the child care places lost and the time frame needed to improve the other St Kilda centre and increase capacity. Child care places are already in short supply and closing down ECC would be putting many families at risk. Full time working single mothers would be forced out of the workforce in order to care for their children, ultimately losing their jobs and potentially losing housing. The planning of this proposal simply does not make sense and is not in the best interests of the residents of CoPP. Elwood Children's Centre is also only one of a few centres offering affordable child care. Unlike other privatised centres driven by profit, the quality of the service remains at a high level whilst affordability is maintained. Losing a centre like ECC would be forcing single mothers out of the area to try and find other affordable child care options. In addition to the above-mentioned points, Elwood Children's Centre has been in operation for over 35 years and closing it down would mean	a loss of jobs to a dedicated and specialised team of Educators and Staff (some of whom have been working at the centre for over 20 years). This team of staff and educators are like a family and it would be devastating and a shock for all to be left unemployed. This team of staff and educators go above and beyond their normal job description and are an asset to the centre and to the CoPP. Lastly, I would just like to point out that this proposal to sell the land which houses ECC could not have come at a worst time. The past 2 years have been tough for all. Families have been affected mentally and financially by the stress of Covid and the impact it has taken on their lives. I don't believe the proposal to sell the land is in the best interests of the residents of the CoPP but instead it is an opportunity to profit. Whilst I strongly object to selling 46 Tennyson St, Elwood, I agree that solutions should be looked at to make the building compliant. I ask that Council share the building compliance requirements so that ECC staff and a team of professionals can work with Council on this. I urge all Councillors to reconsider the proposal to sell the land which houses Elwood Children's centre at 46 Tennyson St, Elwood. I ask you to stand in the shoes of a full-time single working mother with a child who has special needs and requires personalised care. Please do not choose profit over the needs and basic rights of residents of CoPP. In these difficult times we need to stand together to support one another. I ask that you support the Elwood community who need Elwood Children's Centre for people like me. Should you wish to contact me personally I am available on [REDACTED]	Neutral	Neutral
Hello Council, I am a new stkilda resident. I moved to the area only two years ago during the first of Melbourne's lockdowns, looking for a change of scenery and for a place to put down roots with my partner and to have children. A large part of the reason we selected the property we did was for its proximity to the Eildon road childcare you are proposing to sell off. I would like to submit my strong opposition to this proposal and stress what a massive draw having this facility is for the local area. The Eildon road childcare facility also acts as a community nexus point with families coming in and out of the space for drop off and pick up, interacting with each other, stopping for a chat, getting coffee. Removing this facility would devalue the area, would damage the local community and would make young families or those looking to start them far less likely to consider stkilda a home. Kind regards, [REDACTED]		Disagree	Neutral
[REDACTED] responsibility of childcare to private industry is not in the public interest. Council officers have labelled Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten (ERCK), along with other Centres, as "incurably obsolete" (CoPP Meeting, 1 Dec 2021, Item 2.9). This overstatement does not accurately reflect the view expressed by Council's own consultants, which indicate that the building can indeed be renovated into a more suitable and compliant centre (Yield Scheme document for ERCK, Conclusion, final paragraph). Rather than simply selling the property and abandoning childcare to private interests or purchasing a new property to build a large-scale centre, Council needs to take into account the history of the centre, along with the community's expressed views on the advantages of small community-run centres such as ERCK. These advantages have already been presented at Council meetings, for example, see Minutes of Meeting held on 4 September 2019, Item 9.1.		Disagree	Strongly disagree

<p>Dear Council</p> <p>My wife and I own an apartment on Acland St and send our three old son to the Eildon Rd centre and we recently had a baby and we're planning to send her to Eildon Rd also. We are completely against the closure of the centre.</p> <p>We waited a full year to be able to get our son into childcare and with closure of Eildon Rd and the other two centres it will be very difficult to get our children into a centre where we are paying an affordable rate and we don't have travel a significant distance. With the closure of the centre we will likely have to send our children to private centres where they have a high turnover of staff. I don't see how this is in line with Council's supposed commitment to providing childcare.</p> <p>The staff at Eildon Rd provide great care, support and education to the children. The centre provides a place for families in the local community to meet each other and form ongoing friendships where we have been able to support each other during the difficult times of the pandemic.</p> <p>The centre is an essential part of the St Kilda community and selling the centre will be destroying an essential part of the community.</p> <p>Demographics of St Kilda are changing with more young families moving. The closure of schools, kindergartens and childcare centres does not look to the current or future needs of the community.</p> <p>We implore you to reconsider the closure of the Eildon Road centre.</p> <p>Kind regards</p>		Disagree	Neutral
<p>I have read the letter from [redacted] about the council's intention to sell 17 Eildon Road, St.Kilda. I own and live in a property on Eildon Rd and after reading the four points outlined in the letter, but omitted in council's letter prior to Christmas, would like to express my opposition to the sale of the property. I believe the childcare centre is of great benefit to the community, and greater efforts should be made to investigate upgrades and maintenance to the property so it can continue in its current role.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I DO NOT support the proposed sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda.</p> <p>I have lived in this wonderful neighbourhood for 6 years, after previously being in Middle Park for 6 years. Over the years I frequently walked pasted 17 Eildon Rd and loved seeing the children and families coming and going from the centre. There was always lovely laughter and chatter coming over the fence and it adds such a delightful element to living in this neighbourhood. I have always been attracted to the diversity of St Kilda - the busy main streets mixed in with the quiet residential streets - and having a childcare centre made it feel more like a connected community where families were welcome.</p> <p>In 2020 our eldest son started at 17 Eildon Road after previously attending Coventry St Childcare in Sth Melbourne. To say we have been blown away by the quality of care and education he has been provided at Eildon Rd is an understatement. The small and homely feel of the centre has made him and us feel so comfortable and provided a safe and encouraging space for him to learn and grow. We compare this to the care that is provided at larger and/or privately run childcare centres that our friend's children go to and we have realised how very very special it is to have access to Eildon Rd childcare. And this benefit extends far beyond the physical walls of the centre...we now know so many local families and as a result we feel more connected to the community we live in. The ability to run into families and friends in local parks, playgrounds, beaches and cafes and have the feeling of connection has never been as important as it has been during the last two years.</p> <p>Eildon Rd Childcare centre means so much to our family and would be a tremendous loss to us. Even if the wonderful staff were to move to a different childcare centre I do not believe the magic of Eildon Rd could be replicated. The small environment, the feeling of warmth from it being like a house, and the fact that it is in a residential street all contribute to making it a very special place.</p> <p>I implore you to listen to the voices from our neighbourhood and cancel your plans to sell this property.</p> <p>Thank you</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I object to the sale of this property.</p>	<p>I object to the sale of this property.</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>It is a great pity to lose any "Not for Profit" childcare centre here in City of Port Phillip.</p> <p>As a parent having lived here in St Kilda for 40 years I do know the difference between big centralised childcare centres that operate for profit and small decentralised "Not for Profit" centres like this one. I doubt you would find many or any parent that would not prefer a centre such as the one at 17 Eildon Rd.</p> <p>Please don't close this one down just because it require some extra maintenance which appears could be funded by the State Government anyway.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>Quality childcare has been an issue for years in our area. Parents are working at home, going back to travel for work and life has changed, Childcare hasn't adaption to these changes, however the need for quality childcare hasn't changed! Private childcare centers DO NOT offer the same support for children as the Council/Parent led centers. I spoke with Martin Foley many years about this, he promised the world and hasn't delivered. If we are serious about diversity in the workplace, in the community and supporting ALL families in society, we need these centers to stay open and move away from massive, privately run centers. Different families = different needs.</p>	<p>Its avoidable. Lobby the State Government for more funding, not everything needs to be shiny and new. Older buildings may need a spruce up but we continuously go back to 'health and safety' and that risk is up to the parents. If the places were falling down and were deemed unsafe by the parents, they'd move their children. However the community desperately WANT all 3 of these centers to stay open!</p>	Neutral	Disagree
<p>I think this little school is important for the local community. I live close by and love to hear the laughter and the children as I walk by. I have heard that this property was bequeathed to the council for the purpose of child care. Shouldn't this be upheld. The loss of this school will be devastating for parents, children and staff. Another David and Goliath story which will ruin the character of the neighborhood. It will be devastating for the community. I don't have children but I am well aware of the importance this center has for everyone.</p>		Agree	Disagree
<p>I do not support the sale of Eildon Road Childcare Centre</p> <p>I'm signing because I believe in community run childcare, what is the saying "it takes a village" it absolutely is true. When did WE as people, community, family become so disgustingly savage that we stop thinking of anything other than money. This centre is not just a property that can be sold. It's a home for these kids, it's a support network for parents and don't even get me started on it being a female dominated industry where we have already seen such industries being constantly shoved to the side through covid.</p>	<p>[redacted]</p>	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree
<p>My child attends Eildon Road Children's Centre. It was a long process to secure a spot for her, which started by going on a waitlist when my wife was 4 months pregnant. We toured a number of centres and did a lot of research, and Eildon Road came out on top for many reasons. This centre is in close proximity to our home, it has a wonderful feeling of community, it offers indoor and outdoor spaces, and it is small and community run, which is really important to us. We didn't want to send our child to a corporate facility that operates as a franchise business. Eildon Road is the only centre in the area that ticks all the boxes for us. Since my child started attending Eildon Road my wife and I have been very happy with the small groups, caring atmosphere, focus on learning through play, and personal attention given to our child and family. I have friends who have sent their children to some of the other centres in the area - including those listed as options for redirecting children from Eildon Road - and they have been very disappointed by the level of care, facilities, and attention shown to their children.</p> <p>Should Eildon Road close, we feel that we have no choice but to seek care outside of St Kilda, which would be a major upheaval for our child and whole family. I urge council to remember that local families are the cornerstone of our community. Air bnb apartments, backpackers and sharehouses are transient, but it's the property owners and rate payers who are invested in, and committed to, sustaining a safe and fulfilling community in St Kilda. We can only do that if council continues to support us with access to family-friendly services.</p>	<p>Redirecting children from a child care centre where they have strong bonds and an established routine is not an easy task. It means a break of trust between children and carers, which can compromise attachment with future carers. It also means upheaval for parents - many of whom have worked hard to secure hours of employment around the days that their children are in care. A new centre can't necessarily honour the days and hours of care offered by the previous centre, so the affect on families extends from emotional to logistical and financial. I ask that council seriously assesses the impact the sale of Eildon Road will have on local families. It's not as easy as simply moving children on to the next centre.</p>	Strongly disagree	Disagree

<p>My 7 month old daughter attends Eildon Road Children's Centre and the sale of this property would have a profound affect on her and our family. After much consideration, research and tours of child care centres in the St Kilda area, we chose Eildon Road for its small size and community focus. There are no other centres in the area that prioritise small groups, independent learning and personalised programs for young babies. The long waiting list to get into the centre is testament to the demand there is for it.</p> <p>Redirecting the children from Eildon Road to other centres in the area will result in breaking relationships and trust between young children and their carers, which takes a long time to build; upheaval for families who have secure hours and days of care locked in at Eildon Road; and over crowding at other centres, which will have a flow of affect for the children and parents who rely on those centres.</p> <p>It is a time consuming process to integrate a child into a new centre with new peers and carers. This orientation process requires parents to take additional time off work to facilitate the transition over weeks or even months - and that's assuming places are readily available at other centres on the same days as children attend at Eildon Road. If the same days cannot be secured, the working days and hours of parents will be at risk.</p> <p>As a property owner and rate payer in St Kilda, I urge council to reconsider the sale of this much loved child care centre. It provides a tangible, valuable and essential service to many local children and families who would be greatly impacted by its demise.</p>	<p>St Kilda doesn't need more property development or commercial projects. St Kilda needs more community. The fallout from COVID and resulting degradation of Fitzroy and Acland Streets have shown us the importance that local families and long term residents make to this area. These are the people who are dedicated to the safety of the area, who continue to support local businesses, and who contribute to the local community. Without centres like Eildon Road that provide safe spaces for local children and families, St Kilda is at risk of losing that feeling of community. We need to protect these spaces to preserve the services and facilities that make St Kilda a family-friendly place to live.</p>	<p>Disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>This is more than a childcare place is part of the community. The way they operate, they have become part of the fabric of the neighbourhood. The old building and whole set up they have at Eildon road is such that it blends in with the area seamlessly. New modern centres stand apart from the community and look like prisons. Selling this building is a terrible idea it would rip out a vital part of the community. Taking with it a safe, sharing and inclusive learning environment. The care this centre provides is of the highest standard and every member of the staff is invested in the children there as if they were their own kids. The building is as much a part of the learning for these kids as the staff and the wonderful program/care they provide. To sell this building would rip the soul out of the centre and leave countless families heartbroken. New is not better its just new. St Kilda is already suffering from so much gentrification and loss of its community. It definitely does not need anymore. It takes a lot to be able to build such a wonderful supportive community childcare and the building is the literal and figurative home of this place. Families have enough stress these days without the added threat of the council selling off their much loved childcare centre for a quick buck. The title may be in the councils name but the true owners of Eildon road are the wonderful staff and families that have built it up to the amazing community that it is. So please don't sell the building.</p>	<p>There is much more to be said for keeping this building and the community it supports than selling it off.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>Hi, I would like to ask you to consider keeping the Eildon Road Childcare Centre (ERCC) open. I am a specialist at the Alfred Hospital and I send my daughter Otway to ERCC. Under the care at this centre my daughter has thrived learning new skills and developing. The care at this centre is better than any alternatives as the staff ratios are higher and the staff are also selected so well that they all care about the children. You can tell that the staff really "give a shit" about the children unlike other childcare staff that are there to do a job and clock off at the end of the day. I also think that the building is wonderful, it has a warm, homely, family feel to it as opposed to the crass bright coloured (or white) sterile and artificial alternative centres. The ERCC is an absolute asset to the St Kilda community. I will not be prepared to send my daughter to any of the alternative childcare centres given the care is unparalleled and if ERCC shuts down I would then cease my days that I work at the Alfred Hospital and only do my regional neurology work. shutting the centre down would mean a loss of a public neurologist alongside the best childcare centre that has ever existed and I hope to make this clear to the community when 1000 multiple sclerosis patients have to find a new physician</p>	<p>Please do the right thing and support the ERCC to stay open</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>It is critical that a replacement childcare centre, which is close to Eildon St, is fully operational meeting all required standards and has places available to meet childcare demand, is completely available BEFORE the current centre at Eildon Road is sold.</p> <p>What are the current timelines for the sale and for its replacement?</p>	<p>What are the constraints for any redevelopment of 17 Eildon Road after the sale?</p>	<p>Strongly agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Hello, City of Port Phillip,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this important matter. As a long term resident of St.Kilda, I feel equipped to object to the closing of Eildon Road Childcare centre. Over twenty years ago I made a conscious choice to send my daughter to a local childcare centre that was within walking distance to our home and offered personalised care, organic meals and a family-friendly environment. I was not looking for a big, templated approach to childcare which I believe the North St.Kilda centre would adhere to.</p> <p>It is incredibly important to offer our community the ability to walk to a childcare centre to create a sense of neighbourhood and community, this helps build a sense of safety in the community. In my mind, the centre offers a learning opportunity for children to feel safe walking in their neighbourhood and shows us that we can have service provision without the additional traffic generated by cars as many will have to drive if three centres are closed and all parents are diverted to one single childcare centre. Children are our future and how we treat children in St.Kilda will be reflected in the future society that we create.</p> <p>Eildon Road has always offered a strong transition pathway to St.Kilda Park Primary school and this should not be overlooked as once again, it helps to create a community focus for children and families in our neighbourhood. Port Phillip Council is letting public services like the St.Kilda Library, rot away when it is an incredibly used service with high foot traffic of children and families. Letting key assets be sold off when they are heavily used by the public is a shame, these decisions must be reversed to put people and the community ahead of profits.</p> <p>If we have learnt nothing else from the pandemic, we have learnt the importance of staying connected to each other and our community, this should be a key focus for Council going forward in keeping us together and finding ways to build community rather than selling off key community spaces. It is time to invest in community spaces for the future and spend the needed money upgrading them to be able to support the children of St.Kilda for years to come.</p> <p>I trust that you will seriously consider this objection and that this is not a window-dressing exercise.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>My name is [REDACTED] and I do not support your closure and sale of Eildon Road childcare centre. I attended Eildon Road childcare centre as a child, I am 25 now and I still have incredibly fond memories of this place that always employed excellent staff, created an incredibly welcoming and safe environment for children and parents and always ensured that no child was left behind. Being such a centrally located childcare centre, I and many of the children and parents attending the kindergarten would often walk to the centre each morning because the site is accessible walking distance to many residential blocks in St.Kilda. The Kinder is also only a short walk from St.Kilda Park Primary school which is ideal for parents looking to drop two kids off in the morning, particularly those without access to a car, making public education accessible for all residents of this community, with or without a car.</p> <p>The newly developed 'North St.Kilda' centre does not accommodate the needs of centrally located St.Kilda residents who need to be able to support the needs of their children through walkable and accessible local childcare. It would be a disgrace and nonsensical to shift all residents here when they are only a single facility and close all other centres when childcare in St.Kilda is incredibly difficult to source, let alone publicly funded childcare.</p> <p>Eildon Road is a crucial part of the community here in St.Kilda. The Council seem intent on selling off land for their own gain rather than continuing to provide childcare for future generations of this community. Closing these centres would be a disgrace and a foolish move only meant to line the pockets of an incredibly wealthy Council. The City of Port Phillip is one of the richest councils in Victoria and yet they continue to fund initiatives that local residents do not reap the benefits of, including loud live music on the foreshore and festivals with drunken tourist patrons littering in our parks.</p> <p>There are few services that the Council spends money on that directly impact the community as much as childcare does, the renovation and continuation of Eildon Road should be a top priority for Council in 2022, you have an opportunity here to create a long-lasting impact on the future generations of St.Kilda, please do not waste it.</p> <p>Thank you for listening,</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		<p>Agree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>DO NOT SUPPORT</p>		<p>Strongly agree</p>	<p>Strongly agree</p>
<p>Myself and my family do not support the sake of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda. As residents of the area, we believe Eildon Road Childcare Centre offers a unique approach to childcare services that support the local community. The house itself may be old, but it offer character that a lot of families living in apartments can't offer their children. Seeing and hearing the children playing in the garden brings so much joy to the local community. We will be sending our daughter to this centre next year, and have heard nothing but incredible feedback about the centre, the staff and the services offered. To have childcare a few steps away from home is so important as it illuminates the need to drive and add to road congestion. We strongly oppose the sale of this property as we believe it is not in the best interest of the local community.</p>		<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

<p>I am very saddened to hear of this proposal, both of my daughters have attended Eildon Road daycare, with my youngest only having a few more days until her finishing and moving on to SKIPPS. This daycare is an amazing "home away from home" for many children and it gives the family feel making the children feel safe and secure as its physical makeup is an old residential property. The property is worn and in need of repair but making a concrete jungle daycare focusing on numbers per square meter (or whatever the method) to maximise numbers I dont think is the answer. There are many children that would not develop and grow in a large daycare environment (my youngest is one), where Eildon Road daycare caters to this need exceedingly well. In the coming years I recognise that there will be a need for more daycares, I think my family was very lucky to get the spot as its extremely difficult to find local spots in daycares. I cannot deny another large daycare being built is not a good idea; it is. Local daycares are a must in my opinion, and traveling for 15-20 minutes in normal traffic is not something I'd want to do when traffic turns "crazy" in peak hour. I struggled to do pickup and dropoff being 10 minutes away and get to work on time, but the staff at eildon road are always understanding and accommodating. I should mention the staff, who are an amazing group of diverse people. We love how it is so multi-cultural. Including the food!</p> <p><u>Please reconsider this proposal and change it into a re-development plan for the daycares modifications. Eildon road deserves it for caring for the communities children for so long.</u></p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>I'm writing to oppose the sale of 17 Eildon Road St Kilda. This site has been a childcare centre serving the local community of St Kilda for over 30 years. Currently over 70 families use this Centre for childcare including kindergarten. Both my children have attend Eildon Road Childcare and Kinder for the past 6 years. It is a community centred childcare with a loving and nurturing focus. We chose ERCK because it was small and felt our children would get the care they needed with smaller room sizes than other centres we visited in the area; which has been the case. It services mainly families in walking distance and the fees are much cheaper than other centres in the area and especially private centres which are very expensive. This allows for people of all socio economic backgrounds to afford local care. If we were to move to North St Kilda childcare most families wouldn't be able to access the centre easily; some families rely on public transport. I feel the Council has let the building fall into disrepair over the years despite us paying yearly levies. The Centre is financially viable with a strong leadership from the Coordinator and Committee. It feels like the Council is only selling for financial gain and complete disregard to the wellbeing and current need of the local St Kilda community. Most families would be left without care and also a wait time of close to 4-5 years for a rebuild of North St Kilda just isn't a viable option. I believe the issues with the building can be fixed if State and Federal funding were sought. Please re consider this sale and think of the community in which you're there to serve.</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>My partner and I choose to live in the Eildon Road area because of the proximity to the childcare centre we trust for our daughter. You probably heard about why this centre is so appreciated by the parents. This time I'd like to focus why we are against one bigger centre instead of three smaller ones. We choose to live in St Kilda, because of its accessibility by public transport and possibility of not owning a car. Three little centre create nice hubs in smaller community area. Most of the parents walk kids there and it creates special bonding experience. Even though a potential bigger centre might offer more capacity, it would encourage parents to use cars. If parents decide to walk their kids, most of the parents would need to cross Neapen highway, what is absolutely not a nice experience. Getting to the centre from St Kilda West and Elwood currently is not option by public transport either. I generally welcome the idea of creating more capacity of childcare places, because it is really needed in the community. However, the talking about closing the three older ones should start only when there are solid and advanced plans with certain - not estimated - children's capacity.</p>	The proposal was outrageously announced on the day of the meeting without informing the involved parties.	Disagree	Neutral
<p>Hello there, I can only hope that 17 Eildon Road will not be sold to a developer, who may want to demolish the property, or render it architecturally unrecognisable. A developer would also have little, probably no, regard to the trees/bushes which adorn this property and make such a contribution to the greenery of this street. Eildon Road, in which elegant Victoria, Edwardian (such as no 17), Art Deco architectural styles predominate, needs to maintain its heritage. Any loss undermines the consistency/presentation of the street scape. <u>For this reason, I hope the property is sold to an individual who will respect the building, and its history, its garden, and how this supports the house and the local environment.</u></p>		Strongly agree	Strongly agree
<p>We don't support the sale of 17 Eildon Road St Kilda as it would mean the closure of the current childcare facility. We chose this childcare centre due to its community/house look and feel and that it didn't feel like a big modern office complex like some of the newly built facilities. It is in close proximity to our house and many of our neighbours. The children love the facilities and the staff and community are fabulous. Please don't merge us with another larger facility or we will completely lose the reason people love the centre in the first place</p>		Agree	Agree
<p>I oppose the proposed to sell this centre. There are insufficient council run child care centres in the local area to service families in need as is with wait lists exceeding 2 years. The district needs accessible safe and affordable childcare for local families particularly with the current unregulated nature of the private sector. This will continue to promote encouraging local women returning to the workforce that contribute to the local economy. This also encourages young families to stay in the area instead of moving.</p>		Agree	Agree
<p>I think the council has a responsibility to provide childcare. Many in the community pay high rates, and receive little in return - childcare is one thing we do have access too.</p>		Agree	Disagree
	Eildon rd provides essential childcare to local community which is extremely limited. The wait lists alone demonstrate the severe lack of facilities which in turn prevents mothers within the community returning to work or have to move elsewhere which isn't an option. My children attended this centre and received exceptional care. The children absolutely love it and the small close community within it see children progress from baby all the way up beside their peers which allows them to settle. This is an essential childcare providing exceptional service and should not be closed. The close nit community cannot be replaced by larger private centres which cost more and there aren't any around. They all have their own wait lists. Even the cbd is at capacity or prices too high.	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I am writing to oppose the sale of the children's centre at 17 Eildon Road. There are increasingly less and less affordable childcare options in the city of Port Phillip. This centre is one of the few that helps many parents be able to be more active in the local area stimulating the economy and bringing back life to what many consider dying neighbourhood in comparison to previous years. As a council owned property surely the responsibility of the repairs needed to make building up to "contemporary standards" falls upon the local council. So why has this been ignored? Further explanation of why the council has failed this centre and others that are up for sale should surely be explained to the people of Port Phillip. This leads to the idea of regeneration. A big part of recent actions by the council to regenerate Fitzroy street and Acland street so why can this not be applied to the childcare centre? Surely this ethos can be applied in this situation. I fear, that I'm sure many other residents do, that the sale of the centre will be turned into overpriced apartments similar to the ones that have gone up all over St Kilda. With the life of our suburb having visibly disappeared over the past 5 years, it seems madness to sell something on for the sake of raising money for the council where the funds cannot clearly be seen as helping such an important community centre as the Eildon Road Childcare centre.</p> <p>Kind regards, [REDACTED]</p>		Agree	Disagree
<p>Dear port Phillip council I'd like to oppose your selling of Eildon road childcare centre. This is the most affordable childcare centre in st kilda. This is a life line for many parents who can not afford other childcare centres within the area (such as the Elwood nest) which is incredibly expensive and unaffordable for many parents. In a day an age where many rent and can't afford to pay bills let alone buy their own homes in the area due to extortionate house prices, parents have to chose between buying amenities and paying for childcare. Having an affordable childcare centre near us makes the burden of paying rent in such an expensive area ( we can not afford to move as we have to be close to family) easier if the childcare is more affordable. However not only is it one of the most affordable child care centres in st kilda it's also incredibly important to have a centre that is easily accessible to working parents. By consolidating 3 centres into one you are making child care more inaccessible to working parents who will have to travel further to get their child to the centre. Travelling further is increasing fuel consumption and increasing congestion within the port Phillip area. We know this is not good especially with a climate crisis happening. Having smaller and closer centres around st kilda also helps promote other methods of travel as it allows adults and children alike to walk or cycle to the centre decreasing pollution and congestion in the area. This also helps promote a healthier lifestyle for the children. During this time when covid is an issue research has shown huge gatherings of children spread the virus quickly. By having smaller child care centres you are actually helping prevent such an easy spread of the virus. We understand the need to make the centre safer but this is a more economical than rebuilding an entire new centre. It also means this beautiful and historic building can be enjoyed by generations to come.</p>	Do not sell the property	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree

Ensuring that families and children have access to affordable childcare and facilities is vital for the wellbeing of our community. We aren't just a party central tourist destination but a place with housing available for all socio economic groups including families. If we continue to ignore that families make St Kilda their home we will end up living in a dormitory.	Just no without a viable and meaningful alternative..	Disagree	Disagree
These are community based childcare centre that support families and children in an affordable childcare. These services are essential in getting the best out of our community and growing the foundation blocks for the next generation		Strongly disagree	Disagree
Please gift all Council owned childcare properties to community run not-for-profit operators; -> if they are community run centres, donate them to those community (not-for-profit) groups. -> if they are Council run centres, then ask for a new not-for-profit community group to be created that can then take over the centre. This will enable more targeted subsidies by Council, if needed in addition to significant State and Commonwealth funding in this area, to be directed to the children of residents (yes, must be residents) who need it the most. At the moment, there is a broad-brush subsidy to all childcare users who may be well-off and therefore not need it. This is immoral. And the childcare users may not even be residents of the City of Port Phillip! The recent Council reporting from about 18 months ago confirmed that Council run centres do not provide better childcare than community run centres. They were assessed as providing an equal standard of early education. I have had two of my children in a Port Phillip Council run centre and subsequently a community run centre (property owned by Port Phillip Council). It was my experience that the Community run centre provided a far better standard of care for my children than the Port Phillip Council run centre. I understand that a sample size of 1 is not statistically significant, and others may have different experiences with different centres.		Neutral	Strongly agree
	I do not support selling this property. It's one of the few parts of the suburb that help it have a inkling of what a great neighbourhood it was, Before overrun with druggies and violence. I would be so upset for St Kilda and it's future if This property was lost to history.	Agree	Disagree
Child care capacity in the area is already insufficient to meet the demand. Working parents are essentially having to sacrifice someone working and the subsequent economic contribution where they cannot obtain a child care place. This approach is dereliction of the council's duty to provide and maintain child care facilities. The attitude that private practice will step in to provide facilities in the future does nothing for the short and medium term demand which places unfair burdens on parents. This is a desperately rushed decision that has no consideration of the practical realities and needs of the community. As a new parent, finding affordable childcare is already a hard task. Why would you get rid of a centre that is required in the area which is highly utilised?		Agree	Disagree
		Agree	Disagree
My family and I have lived in St Leonards Avenue, the street parallel to Eildon Rd for the past 21 years. My 3 children all attended Eildon Rd Childrens Centre over a total period of 5 years and I was on the parents committee for a number of years. The highlights of this period of our life was a childcare Centre that was small and personal and walking distance from home. During the last couple of years the houses in our street have started to change hands again to families with babies who mainly appear keen to utilize a Centre that is small and close to home, enough that there is a waiting list. Many of them are trying to live without cars and a big Centre across the Nepean Highway would not suit their needs. The other wonderful aspect of the Eildon Rd Childrens Centre has been their commitment to simple play, no plastic, nutritious organic food. I feel this would be difficult to achieve at a larger Centre I do not support the proposed sale of 17 Eildon Rd St Kilda. This is an integral part of local community, our families and kids benefit greatly from the community Kinder and Childcare.		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
		Neutral	Neutral
I do not support the proposed sale of 17 Eildon Road St Kilda, and would instead support the upgrading of this property to ensure that the local community has access to a high quality childcare service for many years to come. I am a single parent and have two children that I have to drop off every morning without a transport vehicle. There are no other childcare centres within this area and having Eildon Road Childcare Centre has been a real blessing not only for its wonderful staff and kinder program, but for its location being far from busy roads, near local park & playground and close to several residential streets. I believe sale & closure of this center will have a significant detrimental effect to the local community, particularly overworked parents who are already stretched to the limit with various pandemic related challenges.		Agree	Agree
My child attends this centre. It is a wonderful environment which is at the core of our local community. The staff do a beautiful job with all the children and it is clearly financially sustainable. The centre itself is in very good working order and is certainly fit for purpose. The children love it and so do all parents and staff. It would be completely against the values that the City of Port Phillip stands for and enshrines to get rid of this centre, which is operating without issue and indeed is thriving. I am most disappointed by this proposal and in my view it would create unnecessary, far reaching and incurable distress and inconvenience to all staff, parents, and most importantly children.		Neutral	Neutral
<b>Proposal to sell 39 The Avenue, Balaclava</b> Thankyou for the opportunity to make a submission. Prior to making a submission I had sought the following information from City of Port Phillip to the designated Council Officer: To make an informed submission can you please forward through: 1. The demographic evaluation done regarding the proposed reinvestment from the sale to validate the removal of this facility and greater investment in the North St Kilda facility. 2. The extent of Council land sales and funds received over the previous 10 years in the suburbs of Balaclava, St.Kilda East and Ripponlea and how the money has been reinvested or placed into cash reserves. 3. The extent of any identified Council land that may be surplus to requirements in the suburbs of Balaclava, St Kilda East and Ripponlea that may be considered for future sale. 4. The extent of money held in cash reserves collected by Council through development contributions under the Subdivision or Planning and Environment Act and any projects in its current long term financial plan or existing strategies that it has identified to expend this money. 5. The extent of any land covered by Public Acquisition Overlay in favour of Council or identified for purchase by Council in the suburbs of Balaclava, St Kilda East and Ripponlea. Upon receipt of this information I will be better placed to provide an informed response. The reason for requesting this information (which was not received) was to make an informed view regarding the implications associated with selling land a scarce Council resource to use the proceeds to reinvest I do not support the sale of 39 The Avenue. Keeping The children's centre is critical to offering parents diversity and choice in the type of service they can access. The avenue offers a community based family environment. Some children thrive in that setting rather than large services.	Council needs to consider the sale of land holistically prior to reinvesting the proceeds of land sales into areas far from the catchment. Substantive capital investment has occurred in other parts of the municipality and very little investment has occurred in Ripponlea or Balaclava and land sale proceeds must address these inequities not further compound them.	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
	Please work with the state department of education and training's regulatory authority to seek an exemption to the regulations where appropriate.	Agree	Agree
I do not support the proposed sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava! Port Phillip always bangs on about their Community yet they do not seem to be listening to their Community. They are just letting their Community down in every sense! Not just the voters but the children of the area as well. We had a choice of where we sent our daughter for childcare and we chose The Avenue because of what it is a no frills fancy state of the art centre. It is rough and ready but the most warm and friendly environment anybody what want their child to be part of. It is small and intimate and everybody knows your child what more could you want for your child. Home from home! It deeply saddens me the council feel they need to sell this rustic and beautiful centre! Just to make a \$ or 2! Our son when to a fancy state of the art centre and it did not compare to the support and love our daughter has with the staff who have been working at the same centre for years on end and who generally care about the kids! The amount of 1 on 1 time the kids have with the educators is incredible and is very important for so many kids to have that small group environment to support them in their growth!	Why would you sell a property with so much character to it? What exactly are you doing with \$\$\$ Just use the \$\$\$ and put it into the current centre!	Disagree	Disagree

<p>Our family lived in Balaclava for almost a decade, and for the majority of that time, The Avenue also became a part of our family. Community childcare centres like The Avenue are more than just childcare, they are true community hubs bringing families, staff, local businesses and the wider community together. The Centre is not flashy, it is not run by a faceless corporate head office and it is not running for the sake of profit. It is a home away from home for its children, a treasured workplace for its staff and a place where local parents can leave their children in a safe, happy and caring environment - allowing them to work, run businesses and contribute to the community.</p> <p>It is run by a dedicated Committee of parents and staff who give their time to make sure the Centre runs well, the children are gaining the most from their experiences there and that the staff are happy and fulfilled in their work. And it shows. Staff retention is like nothing seen in the privately run for-profit childcare services - The Avenue has multiple staff who have worked there for 10 years or more. It is common for families to see one, two and three children through the Centre, being a part of this special place for years. Parents contribute throughout the year, there is a sense of togetherness and community spirit fostered at every working bee, every fundraising event, every Disco night and every Christmas party in the park where - each year - one of the Dads accepts the role of Santa, delighting the children and making the day so special. As a member of the Committee of Management for five years, I know first-hand that all of this has been achieved with little help or guidance from the Council. In fact, year after year, like other Council run Centres in the area thousands and thousands of dollars poured from our budget into a "maintenance fund" - in return The Avenue was left with lengthy delays for repairs, extremely low investment back into the Centre's infrastructure and maintenance and a back and forth bureaucratic nightmare for the Centre's Manager every time something needed to be fixed - even the changing of a light bulb took months.</p> <p>The Avenue has remained in a strong financial position due in no way to the Council's ownership of the building and land it sits on. It is entirely due to the hard work and passion for the Centre from the staff and the parents who love it, who run it and who will be left devastated if it is closed. Not to mention the loss to the community of a true icon of how childcare centre should be; small, affordable, happy, like home and full of beautiful, dedicated staff.</p> <p>Women are time and time again set back from returning to work, from contributing to their family's income, contributing to the wider economy and fulfilling their lives. They are held back from progressing their careers and gaining the personal fulfillment and mental health benefits of working outside the home whilst raising a family. The barriers are enormous already. But with affordable, local childcare the barriers are broken down and the transition back to work is made possible. By closing The Avenue this barrier will rise once again for so many women and families. Council will be directly taking away so much from so many women, now and in the future.</p> <p>It is for these reasons that I wholeheartedly object to the sale of The Avenue and all council-run centres in the City of Port Phillip. This entire circumstance has been directly brought about through the utter</p>		Agree	Strongly disagree
<p>I do not support the proposed sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava, because The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten is an integral part of the local community, providing a vital service that contributes to the well-being of a large number of children and their families each year.</p> <p>People should come before profit, period.</p>	<p>The Council's Intention to Sell letter dated 02/02/2022 was, in my view, too thin on detail. It should, at least, have also included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten ever offered to pay the costs to have disability compliance issues rectified and, if yes, whether or not the offer was rejected by Council, and reasons why.</li> <li>-The amount, if anything, that the Council has received on average each year (for the last 5 years) from The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten to complete maintenance and capital works, and how much the Council has spent on average each year (for the last 5 years) to complete maintenance and capital works at 39 The Avenue, Balaclava.</li> <li>- To what extent, if any, the Council has sought to engage with The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten about this matter in order to reach an amicable solution (not involving the sale of said property).</li> <li>- If state or federal government funding grants exist to help the Council meet 'contemporary standards of functionality and accessibility' at 39 The Avenue, and whether or not the Council has ever sought to apply to access any such grants for this purpose. If such grants do exist, but the Council opted not to apply to access, reasons why.</li> </ul>	Strongly disagree	Neutral
<p>I am strongly against the sale of the Avenue children's centre and kindergarten.</p> <p>The centre is unique in providing genuinely local and affordable childcare and kinder for children in Balaclava, allowing for more families to access care for their children and especially supports local working mothers. This cannot be replicated in a more expensive private centre, which will be located further away from local families.</p> <p>The quality of care for our children at the centre is outstanding and is why parents keep coming back and a reason that staff stay here so long. This is something that can't be transported in to a new location.</p> <p>Further to the importance of the centre for local children and families, early education staff and the community, I believe that updating the current building is more cost effective and sustainable than the demolition and new building involved in creating new centres.</p>		Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I exhort the Council not to sell The Avenue Childcare Centre.</p> <p>The quality of care that my children received there was exemplary, the staff showing the highest engagement and motivation.</p> <p>The facilities (during my kids time there) there were excellent, charming, quirky, homey, welcoming. (The outdoor playground was remade late in their period of attendance).</p> <p>Council run not-for-profit childcare is an ethically superior programme to the franchise-styled centres that are run as profitable businesses, which typically charge families a lamentable profit margin, and commonly offer employees unfavourable rostering conditions such as shorter than reasonable shifts.</p> <p>Retaining this facility and others like them should be an obvious council priority. The Avenue is held in the highest regard by its community. Its continuity should be respected Disrupting this service is the antithesis of Family-oriented Council Policy.</p> <p>I believe similar sentiments see the other two centres that the Council has slated for sale attracting strong support for their retention from their communities.</p> <p>The elected Councillors and their employed officials should abandon this unpopular outrage as quickly possible.</p> <p>sincerely,</p>		Strongly agree	Agree
<p>Dear Council, I oppose the plan by Council to sell 39 The Avenue, Balaclava, which would result in the closure of the community run childcare centre. I also oppose the plans to sell Eildon Road and Elwood Children's Centre. My child currently attends The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten in the three-year-old kindergarten program. We were so excited when we finally got a place at the Avenue, as it reflects our family's core values and focuses upon fostering inclusive relationships between children, staff, families and the community. We love that The Avenue is a small, not-for-profit community run childcare centre and that parents can have an active role in the management of the centre. If early childhood centres like The Avenue were not available for our family, we would consider moving to a different area that can meet our family's needs. The reason for my opposition to this proposal are as follows: 1) The Avenue, Eildon Road and Elwood Children's Centre provide a valuable service to the local community, and the closure of these centres will result in the loss of 77 childcare places. The closure of The Avenue alone will impact more than 120 local children and their families. This, in turn, will discourage young families from moving to the area thereby reducing financial injections into local businesses. For example, it is estimated that The Avenue contributes more than \$35,000 each year to the local economy to support small, local business. 2) It appears that Council has already formed its views on the proposal and has not engaged in a transparent and appropriate feasibility process. There has also been ineffective communication with The Avenue and the other two centres. 3) The justification for the proposal appears to be that it is too expensive and difficult to maintain the buildings to ensure the centre complies with regulations. However, The Avenue's offers to address compliance issues have been rejected without consultation. 4) Council receives regular annual payments for maintenance and capital works, which have not been implemented effectively to rectify compliance issues.</p> <p>5) There is an opportunity for Council to apply for State or Federal Government funding grants to upgrade The Avenue so it meets modern building and accessibility standards.</p> <p>6) Council has a duty of care to support the community in the City of Port Phillip. Council should continue to support a good cross-section of types, sizes and models of early childhood centres within the municipality, including supporting the smaller community-run centres to survive and thrive. Rather than focus on short sighted financial and regulatory goals and the monetary cost of providing services, Council should recognise the value those services to the community and invest in their continued success.</p>	<p>I implore you to consider entering a lease-to-own arrangement, outright purchase, or a divestment by Council to the community to give The Avenue certainty and allow it to focus on what it does best - educating and caring for local children and supporting families in our local community. There is a need and desire for community-run, not-for-profit early childhood centres in the municipality. The decision to close The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten, a well-managed, independent, financially viable and valuable community-managed early childhood centre, is out-of-step with what the local community wants and expects from Council. As a not-for-profit organisation, any operating surplus is reinvested into the centre to benefit local children, not paid to commercial owners or shareholders which is in stark contrast to the majority of other local childcare services available. In conclusion, this proposal goes against Council's stated position in support of access to early learning and care for all children in the municipality. Selling and forcing the closure of the three community-run kindergarten and early childhood centres will reduce the number of affordable options for local families and make it even harder for carers, particularly women, to work. It will impact the ability for many members of the Port Phillip local area to work and the quality of care our children receive. Thank you for considering this submission.</p>	Disagree	Strongly disagree

		Agree	Disagree
Both my children attended the Avenue children's Centre over the years. I loved how it was small, well run and that their wasn't a high turn over of staff. Several staff members have worked there for over 10 years. The area needs small community childcare. My son attended one of the large, private run daycares for 2 years. I found them expensive, impersonal with different staff each time I picked him up. I'm glad my kids are now attending school if that would be the options. I'm disgusted that the council would sell these gifted buildings which THEY have failed to upkeep. It shows that greed and money is more important than community and education.	The Avenue has offered on numerous occasions to help fund the upkeep and renovations of the property to no avail. So disappointed with the council and will keep this in mind come election time.	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I absolutely do NOT support the sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava. My son attended the childcare centre there at a crucial time in his early development (from about 15 months old) in 2015. There is no other childcare centre in the area I would have considered for him, and I visited a few, including the then "state of the art" one run by the council near St Kilda Library. What 'The Avenue' offers children is a home-like, intimate layout, and room numbers which are tolerable for children to get to know one another without complete overwhelm. All early childhood studies show that institutionalising children in impersonal surroundings and large, ever-changing crowds of peers, not to mention everchanging staff, denies the child any possibility of developing the ability to make friendships, to feel safe, and develop meaningful relationships with carers. This inhibiting of the child's development emotionally directly impacts their ability to develop intellectually. Essentially, depriving children of more personalised environments at an early age is asking them to become psychopaths. We need more safe houses like the Avenue, not less. We also need the Council to buy more real estate, not sell it, and create more small green spaces in residential areas. This is what quality of life in the city, with or without children, requires. The council cannot cry poor, when it allegedly taxes every development for "green space". Please consider quality of life, not just quantity and perceived convenience. Please keep our community childcare centres!!!		Neutral	Disagree
I do not support the sale of 39 The Avenue. The planning and building reasons provided by Council to support the sale are not accurate and do not provide an adequate reason to sell the centre. The sale of the centre will not result in net community benefit and does not adhere to Council's stated policies.		Neutral	Neutral
The closure of The Avenue will mean a great loss to the local families and community that rely on good quality childcare and continuity of care. It is a fantastic centre and our child has benefited from the high standard of care. We oppose the sale of the property and leave our family without a childcare option locally. This will impact on our family greatly.	It is our understanding that there is funding available to the centre for upgrades and repairs and, levies accrued for this purpose. We hope that the council uses this funding appropriately to save the childcare centre and inject funding to keeping quality childcare going in Port Phillip.	Neutral	Neutral
		Disagree	Disagree
The location of the centre is perfect as we drop my son who attends Ripponlea Primary School just up the road. I am opposed to the council selling this centre. The centre has a really personal and intimate feel (a large reason why we chose it) and the space feels homely and welcoming.	Don't do it!	Disagree	Disagree
My 2 daughters attend The Avenue. Both of my daughters have shown significant mental progression within weeks of commencing and I believe the reason for this is the smaller, community feel of the centre. To commence in a babies room with a maximum of 8 babies provides opportunity for individual advancement without the feeling of being just a number. In addition to this the staff at the centre are all long term so the children can build a familiarity and rapport with them. Regardless of who is looking after my daughters, when I arrive for drop off or pick up all of the staff know who I am, and who my children are. If the proposal to sell The Avenue (and the other 2 centres) is to proceed then the effect is to push more families into privately run daycare. Having toured a number of these centres, and from talking to other families in there, the differences are chalk and cheese compared to a community run centre, not to mention the significant increase in cost. The families of these 3 centres will end up paying more for an inferior product. My understanding is that The Avenue pays in broad terms \$90k to \$100K as levies per year for the property which assists the council in maintaining the property. The spreadsheets that you attached show that back to 2006 (16 years ago) there has been a total of \$663K spent in capital and maintenance. That certainly sounds like a significant sum but over the equivalent period there would have been the order of \$1.6m in levies paid to the council by the Centre. It would appear that a profitable, well run centre is being punished for either the failings of other centres, or the levy funds being spent elsewhere.		Agree	Neutral
As a long time resident, I am just so confused and disappointed by this. Port Phillip has always been community minded... this is a chance to show that we have not lost that, that we can come together to keep community childcare open and nurturing the community minded citizens of the future. There has been proven funding available and more importantly a will of the people. Surely this can be saved?		Neutral	Strongly disagree
		Agree	Neutral
I do not support the sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava because the childcare centre currently on the site provides an essential service to the community.	-Bask the CoPP to..... - Stop the sale of 39 The Avenue and begin working with the Committee of Management, and state and federal governments to secure funds to upgrade the centre so it meets modern building and accessibility standards. -Instigate a long-term lease arrangement to give the centre certainty and allow the centre to focus on what it does best - educating and caring for local children and supporting families in our local community. -Recognise the need and desire for community-run, not-for-profit early childhood centres in the municipality. The decision to close The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten, a well-managed, viable and valuable community-managed early childhood centre is out-of-step with what the local community wants and expects from Council. The Avenue is independent and financially viable. As a not-for-profit organisation, any operating surplus is reinvested into the centre to benefit local children, not paid to commercial owners or shareholders which is in stark contrast to the majority of other local childcare services available.	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
	My submission applies to the proposed sale of all three community childcare centres	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		Neutral	Neutral

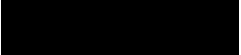
		Neutral	Neutral
	The proposed sale of Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten, Elwood Children's Centre and The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten is causing families and staff at each of the centres a huge amount of stress and anxiety. This document aims to illustrate how much of a negative impact the process to date has had on those living and working in the City of Port Phillip.	Neutral	Strongly disagree
I am writing to oppose the selling off of the three Council Properties (childcare centres) and specifically The Avenue, Balaclava. Whilst I understand the Council is between a rock and a hard place in relation to upgrading the centres, its imperative Council understand what is at stake. I also understand the emotion that surrounds childcare but that should not be misinterpreted. As a ratepayer I am asking Council to reconsider the direction you are headed. Small childcare centres must be kept within a community who value this care. My children and grandchildren have all benefited greatly from small cooperative childcare. It has provided all the children with a premium start in education and enhanced their well-being. It must be part of the mix for Port Phillip children in the future. The one-size-fits-all approach to childcare, meaning larger homogenised centres does not meet the needs of all families in terms of quality care. Personally I feel this approach is similar to the Aged Care approach we have seen where bigger is better and supposed cost effectiveness, but clearly has not come close to providing the care and outcomes first thought. The Aged Care sector has become a disgrace with all it's badly managed outcomes for the people it is meant to care for. Childcare can be compared to this model, where private centres pop up and expand, very often with inexperienced staff being paid base rates, cheap food and fancy technology which pastes over the basics required in quality care. The profits from selling off the properties will net the Council around \$6 million plus. I don't believe the intention to build a new one-size fits all centre will cost this and will not meet the required places. Council must rethink its approach. Small community based childcare is what this community is asking for. I appreciate the Council provides a good centres and a choice is important. Council has always been progressive and I am proud to be have been a ratepayer for 30 years. I ask sincerely that you rethink your way forward and work out a way to take onboard small centres with community leadership.	Neutral	Agree	
	We wish to note that this submission considers issues relevant to all three centres proposed for sale. As there appears to be no other option, we have uploaded the submission three times, once for each centre.  Convener Progressive Port Phillip	Disagree	Disagree
Submission to City of Port Phillip Council re Proposed sale Child Care Centres Summary 1. Some of the background information used to develop this submission has been provided by the management committee of The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten. I have also been able to bring to bear experience as a visitor to the centre, and my observation of the positive impact of the centre on three of my grandchildren over more than a decade. 2. A level of distrust has been developed between the Council officers and the centres regarding this sale proposal, particularly in regard to sharing of information. It is therefore essential that Councillors have greater involvement this important decision, and that the centres are involved in discussions/negotiations with the State government. 3. The sale process should be suspended immediately. 4. The Council should initiate a joint Council/Centre/State government process to investigate funding and governance arrangements, including potential development of long-term lease arrangements with each centre. 5. Acknowledge the primacy of Council's role in promoting community wellbeing and amenity. 6. Every effort should be made to preserve the significant community assets which have been developed in these centres. If the centres are sold the council will be destroying flourishing community assets which have been built up over 5 decades for no gain other than the financial windfall arising from disposal of assets which have a productive use (sometimes described as selling the silverware). The Avenue ● I am the grandfather of four children who have attended The Avenue from 2010 to 2022 and expecting this to continue until 2026. ● I have learned both directly as a visitor to the centre, by observation of its positive impact on my grandchildren, and of their warm regard for the centre, that it provides a wonderful caring environment in which the children have been looked after and developed as people. ● The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten (The Avenue) is a small, not-for-profit, community run childhood education and care service in Balaclava. ● The Avenue educates and cares for more than 60 local children each year. ● The Avenue opened in 1975 and has operated from 39 The Avenue, Balaclava for 46 years. ● Since 1975 more than 2,500 children have been educated and cared for by dedicated and passionate staff from The Avenue. ● The Avenue is managed by a dedicated group of staff and a volunteer committee of parents. ● The Avenue employs 13 full time equivalent, and several casual team members in childhood education, management and support roles. ● The Avenue has very low staff turnover. Many team members have been with the Centre for more than a decade and one has completed more than 30 years of service.	The Avenue community managed centre has some of the lowest fees of any early childhood education centre in the City of Port Phillip. Its fees are significantly lower than those of private centres in the surrounding area, which make up the majority of alternative options for the Centre's families. There are significant funds available from the State government, the Council should urgently, with the involvement of representatives of each of the three centres, enter discussion with the State government to explore the purposes for, and conditions under, these funds are available. The Council should, again with the involvement of representatives of each of the three centres, explore options for sale or lease of the properties to community organisations based on the current management committees of the three centres and explore management options for these possible new bodies. Conclusion The Council should: ● Stop the sale process immediately ● Invite the management committees to provide representatives for a joint Council/centres working party to: o Develop options for the continuation of the three centres as community-based organisations o Negotiate with the State government regarding the provision of funding for community-based child care and governance issues. ● In consultation with the Centres, promulgate a time-line for completion and move to new arrangements by May 31 2022.	Neutral	Strongly disagree
I have been a resident and ratepayer in the City of Port Phillip since 1980, first in East St Kilda from 1980 - 1983, then Elwood from 1983 - 2007 and then in Ripponlea from 2007 until now. During that time, other than garbage collection, the replacement of a dead tree outside our house in Ripponlea and the Library, the only Council service which has been of great benefit and much appreciated has been the childcare provided by the Avenue Child Care Centre in Balaclava. Since 2010, three of my grandchildren have been through the Centre and a fourth is enrolled to commence later this year. He will be there until 2026 I hope. I have visited the Centre on numerous occasions during that period to pick the children up, for grandparent days, Mothers Day celebrations, end of year concerts etc. I have seen first hand the love and care provided by the staff, the happiness and contentment of the children in an environment which they clearly love and in which they have clearly thrived. To think that Council is planning to sell such a beautiful and happy space is just heart breaking. It is a small Centre which is definitely one of its advantages. It has provided enormous benefit to the community over the years. I well remember meeting a young mother in the park opposite our house in 2019. I was there with my granddaughter, she with her daughter. We started chatting and I discovered she was newly arrived in Melbourne from Sydney with her daughter and husband. They knew no one in the area and I think she was quite lonely. She had just been successful in getting a job at Monash, Caulfield and was searching for childcare. I told her about the Avenue where my granddaughter attended. She and her husband ended up enrolling their daughter there and she became friends with local families who helped make their transition to life in Melbourne much more rewarding. These are some of the intangible benefits of a local, small Centre where connections are more readily made and built. On a more concrete basis I understand that the stated reasons for the sale relate to building non compliance with regulations. I must say that over the 12 years I have been a visitor to the Centre the only upgrade work I have seen undertaken has been the redoing of the back yard playground and a new fence. If the Council had been undertaking regular maintenance then the costs to upgrade now would almost certainly be considerably less. To sum up, I am disgusted by this decision. Council should immediately reverse it and put in train the upgrade work necessary for the ongoing operation of this vital Community service.	I was shocked to see the advertisements for the sale of the property prior to a proper community consultation occurring. Cart before the horse? Why was this not done last year and if the community was shown not to be in favour of the sale, then the ad should never have been placed. A community protest outside St Kilda Town Hall a few weeks ago indicates there is strong sentiment against the proposed sale. Council should take note.	Disagree	Neutral
The Avenue must not close, it's complete and utter money grab by the Council and it's a disgrace. This centre provides our daughter with hands down THE BEST early learning, it has built the most incredible community. Community is more important than money!	Shame on the council. You can't even have the dignity to be honest about the reasons to close it, we all know it's for money. Instead looking for sketchy reasons like not meeting minimum places and facilities (which you are meant to maintain).	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The disability compliance issues identified by the council are capable of being fixed for a reasonable price. The Elwood centre pays the council enough rent per year to complete maintenance and capital works. Council did not engage your consult with the committee before announcing their intention to sell. Council has not sought state or federal government funding despite Grants existing for these works. Please listen to the community, do not sell these valued childcare facilities.		Strongly disagree	Disagree





<p>I DO NOT support the proposed sale of 39 The Avenue Balaclava.  Significant funds per annum are paid to the council for maintenance and facility upgrades (circa \$100,000 per year) - to date the council have not used these funds to upgrade or maintain our facility as they should have;  The disability compliance issues identified by the council are capable of being remedied for a reasonable price - we have had this work costed and have even offered to pay for these works ourselves;  Council have never sought to engage meaningfully with the Avenue Committee in relation to the building upgrades - they rejected our offer of funding these works without even meeting to discuss and subsequent discussions have been shut down without any real consideration;  Council have never sought state or federal government funding for these works despite grant programmes existing for these types of upgrades;  The proposal to close these centres will result in a net loss of 77 daily places in the municipality - as far as we can tell there is insufficient capacity in either the council/community or private centres to meet this demand;  Private centres do not offer a perfect substitute for community managed centres both in terms of service offering and cost; and  Pushing our families to expensive private centres will inevitably lead to a reduction in utilisation by families of early childhood services and a consequent reduction in workforce participation.</p>		Agree	Agree
<p>I am strongly opposed to the selling of this property. My 2 (soon to be 3) children attend this centre and it is nothing but a positive experience for ourselves, our children, and local community. This building was gifted to council to be used for its current purpose and to sell it for a quick profit is disgraceful. The centre earns the council money, yet the council gives nothing back to the centre. The council will not even allow the centre to contract third parties to amend the issues the council has raised in relation to accessibility.  The selling of this building, and the other two proposed centres, will put money in the council coffers whilst eliminating dozens of jobs (mostly women) and impact hundreds of families who want to send their children to a non for profit education focused centre. The impact to young families in need of education and care for their children will be devastating, there are not enough centre in the area to cater for the loss of these three centres. Families will be forced to look for centres outside there local area putting more pressure on them.</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>I am strongly opposed to the selling of this property. My 2 (soon to be 3) children attend this centre and it is nothing but a positive experience for ourselves, our children, and local community. [REDACTED] The centre earns the council money, yet the council gives nothing back to the centre. The council will not even allow the centre to contract third parties to amend the issues the council has raised in relation to accessibility.  The selling of this building, and the other two proposed centres, will put money in the council coffers whilst eliminating dozens of jobs (mostly women) and impact hundreds of families who want to send their children to a more affordable education focused centre. A dire move for this supposed 'progressive' community. Utterly shameful.</p>		Disagree	Neutral
<p>I am the grandmother of two Children who attended The Avenue, Balaclava. As an infants' teacher and a college lecturer, I am very interested and informed in the area of early childhood education.  I was able to see this wonderful organisation every week, as I collected the children each Monday...it was an outstanding example of what should be happening with young children. Part of the success was due to the fact that the premises were rather quirky, and allowed all sorts of projects and activities...one was the training of the children to perform acrobatics...this resulted in an amazing concert for parents and friends.  I truly believe that The Avenue building was integral to the ongoing success of this facility, and I beg the Council not to take a short-sighted view and just think of the monetary value of the site...you cannot put a value on this unique and precious facility for little children.  Thank you,  [REDACTED]</p>	<p>There are some times when we must stop and wonder if it is more important to make money rather than support excellence. Here you have a chance to ensure that The Avenue continues in its present form and in its present location to truly serve the local families who treasure this special pre-school. Please think hard before you decide to sell off a precious and locally important facility. After all, what use would a new house on the site be to all the local families?</p>	Agree	Neutral
<p>I sent my son to The Avenue Children's Centre from 2018 to 2021. I choose to send him there because of the quality of care, warm neutering environment the centre provided and because I consciously wanted my child to attend a community-managed centre that was substantially more affordable than other for profit centres in our area. I would have been forced to work less had my childcare costs been more expensive. My son thrived at The Avenue and our family was embraced by the community of carers and parents - to us it was like a second family and my son has already stated he misses it as he goes off to school this year. I joined The Avenue Committee of Management in 2019 and witnesses first-hand the funds that centre paid to the City of Port Phillip for maintenance. Maintenance that was never completed, despite frequent requests. I also witnessed The Avenue offer to pay and complete the maintenance themselves and how it was rebuffed by the City of Port Phillip as not possible, despite it not adding any cost to The Council. Selling the property that The Avenue Children's Centre operates from is short-sighted at best. It is an asset to our community and our children and there are some very clear solutions to the issues the City of Port Phillip have stated are the reasons for selling, namely there is funding available and the The Avenue has been contributing close to \$100,000 per year to a maintenance fund that has never been used.  Can you image what that centre would be like if \$100,000 a year was spent on it?</p>	<p>This is against the wishes of the community and will deprive more working families of quality community childcare when they are in desperate need of more of it, not less.</p>	Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>I disagree with the council selling land which is only going to increase in value, to try and cover up for the deficit. I also disagree with reducing affordable local childcare options.</p>	<p>I disagree with it</p>	Neutral	Neutral
		Neutral	Neutral
<p>I wish to object to the proposed closure of the three childcare centres including The Avenue Children's Centre. I myself don't have children so I don't have a personal incentive here. Firstly I'm always reading that there is a shortage of childcare so it seems like a bad idea and just strange to close three established centres with no plan to replace them. Secondly I believe that smaller, more personal childcare facilities are to be preferred to larger commercial enterprises, as are established ones to brand-new ones.</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>Selling this centre would be a great loss for the community. Some of the staff have been working there for so long which shows the level of care involvement towards the kids. I cannot begin to tell you how much my daughter has been learning over the last 3 years there. From the babies room all the way to kinder room, the care is amazing, children are nurtured, not in a big environment like other centres who are all the same now. So I strongly encourage you to not sell any of the wonderful community centres, for the kids, for the staff, for the parents</p>	<p>Please instead help them improving what needs to be improved but do not seek the avenue !!!</p>	Agree	Neutral
<p>My kids live in the area &amp; like the convenience of the family friendly child minding that they will be using in the next year</p>	<p>There are many young families in the street alone</p>	Neutral	Neutral
<p>I do NOT support the proposed sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava.  Unfortunately our beautiful area of Port Phillip is becoming inundated with negative outside forces. These negative forces are including drug addicts, antisocial and disturbing people, petty theft and criminals, and many, sadly, are coming from increasing government housing properties.  The crèche in this street is the only wholesome part of Balaclava at present!! To take this away will simply be adding more apartments to an already highly dense population.  I live in this street and cannot begin to tell you how frequently the police are here at night. That must be putting such a strain on the st Kilda police department and all of their resources. On several occasions I have needed to call the police in the evening and had to wait hours until they came due to being so busy.  Having the children here during the day brings somewhat of a peaceful and wholesome environment, and people on their best behaviour. Without the crèche here, I am gravely concerned about what will happen to the street.</p>	<p>I am very concerned in general about the state of Balaclava. It is becoming more and more dangerous, dirty and crime ridden.  This needs to be taken very seriously.</p>	Agree	Disagree

<p>To whom it may concern.</p> <p>I am particularly worried about the sale of this proposed childcare facility. I own [REDACTED] and we have already had approval from the council for a high-rise apartment complex that was built at 43 The Avenue which has removed our natural light into the bedrooms of my ground floor unit. [REDACTED] removed the privacy from my unit as well. For another multi level unit complex to be built on the other side of my unit is going to remove all the light and privacy from my unit.</p> <p>My tenants have recently moved out after putting up with the development and construction a [REDACTED] over the last 2 years (this is still proceeding), another development on the other side will make the flat difficult to rent to prospective tenants.</p> <p><u>It is also disappointing that the council is removing 3 childcare centres from the area and I would expect that this would be a major inconvenience for all the families involved.</u></p> <p>The disability compliance issues outlined are all fixable. It seems an extreme and short sighted solution to sell the property.</p> <p>A community is its people and facilities NOT cash in the bank.</p> <p>You are proposing to sell off a loved community facility - one gone it can never be bought back.</p>	<p>Please consider the sale and the proposed development as it will personally impact every-one at 41 The Avenue. As specified above, we have already put up with a development over the last year at [REDACTED] and to have a further development on the other side of a multi level apartment complex will leave our 2 story apartment complex stuck in the middle and my ground floor flat with no light or no privacy and possibly no tenants.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p>Excellent community childcare centre, which acted as an extension of our family for many years whilst my two kids attended. It has produced two happy, friendly, community loving children. It taught our family the value of community, it really does "take a village" to run kids. Long standing staff provided great continuity/security for my children and myself.</p> <p>As a mother of 2 daughters who had no immediate family support around me to watch over my children when I went back to work, I came across The Avenue. Belma and her team were a blessing. I always felt warmly welcomed and believed the centre was run with such care and leadership I wouldn't have received the same at other centres. Also having the actual community sitting on the board made a huge difference on the impact I had with volunteering and feeling apart of the community.</p> <p>I was on the port Phillip childcare register from when I was 6 months pregnant. Not once in 2 years of being on there could anyone find me a place at a private/council/community run centre. I ended up having to ring around to find a place myself. I believe you taking away a valuable community run service such as this away will only be of detriment to the community at large.</p> <p>I also believe the council has to take some responsibility for the lack of maintenance. I know the building fund was paid into as required from the centre and services were not delivered for the upkeep. It feels as if council put it in the too hard basket and can't be bothered having to maintain it. What good is paying into a service that you don't see that service maintained.</p> <p>There is so much more value in smaller community run centres then mega huge childcare centres because the child isn't overwhelmed and just a number. I strongly believe if you try and sell these centres you are only doing the council/people who live here a disservice.</p> <p>I am vehemently opposed to the sell off!!!</p>	<p>The point of council is to support, and enhance community facilities - not sell them off.</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I agree that the provision of suitable childcare is important to our community, and therefore support making this more accessible to parents.</p> <p>If the sale of the property at The Avenue will increase access to parents, such as through more affordable childcare or increased capacity, then I think this is positive.</p> <p>However, The Avenue is becoming increasingly built up with modern apartment buildings adversely affecting the charm of the street. I believe a condition of the sale should be to maintain the facade of the 100 year old property, an architectural heritage that is rapidly disappearing in Melbourne.</p> <p>Regards,</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		<p>Agree</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p>I oppose the sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava. Community and council run centres are a key piece of infrastructure that supports young families living in the area. These centres are important to maintain the appeal of the area to young families. The loss of these childcare places is a blow for the area.</p>		<p>Disagree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>As a local resident I would like to strongly oppose the proposal to sell 39 The Avenue, a valuable, long-running childcare facility and true asset to early education within Port Phillip.</p> <p>The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten Management Committee went to the effort to investigate costs to retro-fit the facility in order to comply with current disability compliance code and even offered to pay for these works, and I believe Council should first engage with this offer, having rejected it when submitted without any engagement.</p> <p>I understand there may be a range of issues to be addressed to make this historical building comply with modern building codes, but the Management Committee, who pay close to \$100,000 a year to maintain the building and grounds should first be engaged by Council to look at building upgrades before the final decision is made to go ahead and sell the property.</p> <p>This decision would create significant immediate strain on young families within our area, with a net loss of 77 daily childcare places in our municipality from the closure of this and the other 2 childcare centres proposed for sale.</p>		<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>The issues highlighted in the site audit report seem minor. I understand that The Avenue Children's Centre pays around AUD 100,000 to the council. This seems appropriate to address the short-comings described in the audit report, definitely if stretched over several years.</p> <p>There is value having small childcare centers in local neighborhoods.</p> <p>So I oppose the idea to sell this property.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		<p>Agree</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p>Hi There,</p> <p>We strongly oppose the sale of the kindergarten at 39 The Avenue, Balaclava.</p> <p>We purchased our home nearby with the view to sending our children to the kindergarten in future. This will remove part of the community aspect which drew us to the area in the first place.</p> <p>Centres and community hubs, such as this, improve the liveability of an area – this should be the sole purpose of a council. Our additional concern is that the remaining options will be further away (not waking distance) and run by larger corporations; with a larger focus on profit.</p> <p>Please stop the sale of this wonderful community owned/run asset – as it is the product of decades of other people's hard work and commitment and will be near impossible to establish it again.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>		<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>The loss of the Avenue childcare sender will put more undue pressure on other child care facilities around the area if removed. The wait for childcare centers around the suburb is at maximum, with wait times exceeding over 12 months.</p>		<p>Disagree</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
<p>This is a valued community service and it would be very sad if it was to go. Also having a net loss of childcare spaces will be a huge loss for the neighbourhood. More work needs to be done with the committee of management around finding a compromise to manage the capital works/maintenance needed to be done to the property.</p>		<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>I am against the closing of this property.</p>	<p>it seems unfair and unnecessary I disagree totally</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

<p>Dear Council,</p> <p>I oppose the plan by Council to sell 39 The Avenue, Balaclava, which would result in the closure of the community run childcare centre. I also oppose the plans for the two other centres in St Kilda and Elwood.</p> <p>The reason for my opposition to this plan are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) It appears that Council has not engaged in a transparent and appropriate feasibility process. There has been very ineffective communication with the business that is operating there.</li> <li>2) The justification for this plan appears to be that it is too expensive and difficult to maintain the building in order to ensure it complies with regulations.</li> <li>3) Offers to address compliance issues appear to have been made by the childcare business that currently operates in the building and these have been rejected without consultation.</li> <li>4) Council has been receiving regular annual payments for maintenance and capital works which apparently have not been implemented effectively.</li> <li>5) There is an opportunity, I believe, to apply for state or federal government funding grants.</li> <li>6) The business operating there provides a valuable service to the local community and the closure of these centres will result in the loss of 77 childcare places. This in turn will discourage young families from moving to the area thereby reducing financial injections into local businesses.</li> <li>7) Council has a duty of care to support the community in the City of Port Phillip rather than focusing on short term and short sighted financial and regulatory/compliance goals.</li> </ol> 		Strongly disagree	Disagree
<p>To the City of Port Phillip relevant officers and Councillors,</p> <p>As a parent and Committee member of The Avenue Children's Centre I would like to make the following submission.</p> <p>The Avenue pays significant funds per annum to the council for maintenance and facility upgrades (circa \$90,000 per year) - to date the Council have not used these funds to upgrade or maintain our facility to a level that they should have. I have seen the Council have mentioned the figure of \$1m invested in these three buildings in the past five years but that falls short of the money paid by the three centres and the levels of money spent quoted by Council at the recent council meeting and associated rates are more than double what would have been available on the open market if all works did not have to be completed by council..</p> <p>It was great to see the updated disability compliance report which I note was only completed after the most recent council meeting. The inspection only being taken a few days before looks very reactive and how you can take these compliance issues as the main reason for selling the building without an updated report is mind bogging.</p> <p>The issues identified by the council are capable of being remedied for a reasonable price - I believe that the Committee of management have had this work costed and have even offered to pay for these works. How has this not been considered an option before you go and make the whole community worried about the proposed closure of the centre when the issues can be resolved? These families have all gone through a very rough period the last two years and this added stress and timing is not putting families first. With one of the centres only have 12 months left before potential closure the lack of certainty provided to the communities of all centres has been awful.</p> <p>When reading through the recent site audit report I did find it very concerning that the recently installed front gate and intercom installed by Council both managed to fail the audit. The fact that Council installed a gate which is far too heavy to move and totally out of place in a childcare centre for parents carrying babies and pushing prams, and have done nothing to rectify this for months even after it being highlighted by the centre shows the disregard that the maintenance of the centre has received.</p> <p>Why have council have never sought to engage in meaningful dialog with the Avenue Committee in relation to the building upgrades? Council have rejected an offer of funding these works without even a single meeting to discuss proposals to remediate the issues and to bring the centre in to compliance. This is not a new issue and Minister Martin Foley also mentioned this when he visited the centre recently. He has been fighting for the rights of small community run centres for many years and we have yet to find a suitable solution for anyone involve especially the centres which have all been neglected just enough (with no effort to resolve the known compliance issues) to make the case for closing them down a little easier.</p>	<p>I was shocked to hear that council had never sought state or federal government funding for these works despite grant programmes existing for these types of upgrades. It was only due a late addition from one of the Councilor's at the last council meeting putting in a clause to try and seek support via these potential grants from state and federal governments.</p> <p>The proposal to close these centres will result in a net loss of 77 daily places in the municipality - as far as we can tell there is insufficient capacity in either the council/community or private centres to meet this demand. I believe that private centres do not offer a perfect substitute for community managed centres both in terms of service offering and cost. By pushing our families to expensive private centres this will inevitably lead to a reduction in utilisation by families of early childhood services and a consequent reduction in workforce participation especially from working mothers.</p> <p>Please work together with The Avenue to enable this much needed and much wanted Centre to continue to operate. It is not too hard, nor is it outside of the realms of financial possibility.</p> <p>Kind regards,</p> 	Strongly disagree	Disagree
<p>To Whom it may concern</p> <p>I received a letter in the my letterbox about the potential sale of 39 The Avenue Balaclava.</p> <p>As a resident and owner occupier in the area, I strongly disagree with the sale of this property due to the following reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This child care centre is a great community amenity which families in the area rely on</li> <li>- Not knowing what will be replaced once sold (probably knocked down for development of apartments) it will ruin the aesthetics of the quiet street we have. There are already enough apartments on this street and adding any more will create more traffic and thoroughfare, noise and activity which as residents of The Avenue enjoy and why we like to live here.</li> <li>- In addition to my second point, increased noise, traffic and higher density population will also disturb the wildlife that live in the area, we have many birds which helps create a relaxed lifestyle.</li> </ul>		Agree	Neutral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*I do not wish for this property to be put up for sale as it is a 100 year old building that should be remain.</li> <li>*There are far too many old house being pulled down in the area, making balaclava loose its appeal and demographic.</li> <li>* This building should be heritage listed so that it cannot be pulled down</li> <li>* If sold, I request that there are conditions placed on its sale (eg cannot be pulled down and replaced with apartments.) THERE ARE ALREADY FAR TOO MANY APARTMENTS IN THE AREA (THE AVENUE, GOURLAY STREET, HOTHAM STREET ETC) causing difficulties with residential parking, types of tenants in the area etc.</li> </ul> <p>Im tired of seeing the landscape of old architecture change and be destroyed, only to be replaced with new building that look like cheap/ nasty cement blocks.</p> <p>PLEASE, PLEASE PRESERVE OUR HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE!!!</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>Please gift all Council owned childcare properties to community run not-for-profit operators;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-&gt; if they are community run centres, donate them to those community (not-for-profit) groups.</li> <li>-&gt; if they are Council run centres, then ask for a new not-for-profit community group to be created that can then take over the centre.</li> </ul> <p>This will enable better-targeted subsidies by Council, if needed in addition to significant State and Commonwealth funding in this area, to be directed to the children of residents (yes, must be residents) who need it the most.</p> <p>At the moment, there is a broad-brush subsidy to all childcare users who may be well-off and therefore not need it. This is immoral. And the childcare users may not even be residents of the City of Port Phillip!</p> <p>The recent Council reporting from about 18 months ago confirmed that Council run centres do not provide better childcare than community run centres. They were assessed as providing an equal standard of early education. I have had two of my children in a Port Phillip Council run centre and subsequently a community run centre (property owned by Port Phillip Council). It was my experience that the Community run centre provided a far better standard of care for my children than the Port Phillip Council run centre. I understand that a sample size of 1 is not statistically significant, and others may have different experiences with different centres.</p>		Neutral	Strongly agree
<p>What the council have proposed is pure greed. These centres were left to the council as Childcare Centres for the community.</p> <p>It has been tried in the past and they will continue again in the future.</p> <p>This must stop, we need to invest for education for the future generation.</p> <p>Council would rather spend 3.07mil on St Kilda Festival and St Kilda Film Festival bring in short term prosperity over long-term prosperity of the residence and the future of the community.</p>	<p>specifically in relation to the avenue, No maintenance had been upgrade these facilities, and significant funds per annum are paid to the council for maintenance and facility upgrades (circa \$100,000 per year) due to the compliance issues raised, council are capable of fixing these issues with the funds paid to council for the facilities.</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree

<p>Hi as a parent and local community member of the Avenue Childcare Centre I would like to make the following submission.</p> <p>The Avenue pays significant funds per annum to the council for maintenance and facility upgrades (circa \$100,000 per year) - to date the council have not used these funds to upgrade or maintain our facility to a level that they should have. I have seen the council have mentioned the figure of \$1m invested in these three buildings in the past five years but that falls short of the money paid by the three centres and the levels of money spent quoted by council at the recent council meeting and associated rates are more than double what would have been available on the open market if all works did not have to be completed by council.. It was great to see the updated disability compliance report which I note was only completed after the most recent council meeting. The inspection only being taken a few days before looks very reactive and how you can take these compliance issues as the main reason for selling the building without an updated report is mind boggling. The issues identified by the council are capable of being remedied for a reasonable price - I believe that the Committee of management have had this work costed and have even offered to pay for these works. How has this not been considered an option before you go and make the whole community worried about the proposed closure of the centre when the issues can be resolved? These families have all gone through a very rough period the last two years and this added stress and timing is not putting families first. With one of the centres only have 12 months left before potential closure the lack of certainty provided to the communities of all centres has been awful. When reading through the recent site audit report I did find it very amusing that the recently installed front gate and intercom installed by council both managed to fail the audit. The fact that council installed a gate which is far to heavy to move and totally out of place in a childcare centre for parents carrying babies and pushing prams, and have done nothing to rectify this for months even after it being highlighted by the centre shows the disregard that the maintenance of the centre has received. Why have council have never sought to engage in meaningful dialog with the Avenue Committee in relation to the building upgrades? Council have rejected an offer of funding these works without even a single meeting to discuss proposals to remediate the issues and to bring the centre in to compliance. This is not a new issue and [REDACTED] I mentioned this when he visited the centre recently. He has been fighting for the rights of small community run centres for many years and we have yet to find a suitable solution for anyone involve especially the centres which have all been neglected just enough (with no effort to resolve the known compliance issues) to make the case for closing them down a little easier. I was shocked to hear that council had never sought state or federal government funding for these works despite grant programmes existing for these types of upgrades. Having viewed the full council meeting that discussed the potential sale of these three buildings I was amazed that it was only via a late addition from one of the council members who wanted to propose this.</p>	<p>This thankfully resulted in an addition to the original resolution to try and seek support via these potential grants from state and federal governments. With the two local MPs publicly opposing the closures of the centres this seems like a very promising option which had been fully overlooked.</p> <p>The proposal to close these centres will result in a net loss of 77 daily places in the municipality - as far as we can tell there is insufficient capacity in either the council/community or private centres to meet this demand. I believe that private centres do not offer a perfect substitute for community managed centres both in terms of service offering and cost. By pushing our families to expensive private centres this will inevitably lead to a reduction in utilisation by families of early childhood services and a consequent reduction in workforce participation especially from working mothers.</p> <p>regards [REDACTED]</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I do not support the proposed sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava.</p> <p>A main reason we moved to Port Phillip over two years ago was for it's reputation for having excellent small community childcare centres, local schools and park space. However, it took us 1.5 years to get into a community childcare centre. This meant we were paying \$189 a day (standard fee for privately owned childcare centres) for care until we got into the Avenue which costs \$129 a day. I have two children so the additional costs made a big impact on our budget and meant I could only return to work for two days a week, instead of our desired four days.</p> <p>The Council is proposing to close three small centres (around 40 children at the Avenue) and encourage locals to attend larger, private centres (up to 150 children in a centre). Our children have really flourished in a small centre and are close with all the children and staff.</p> <p>I'm also very angry that Council's main excuse to sell the centre is that the building is not compliant. However, they have not spent any of the \$100,000 annually generated maintenance fees from The Avenue to Council to undertake any maintenance works in eight years. That is over \$800,000 in levies received by Council that has not gone back into maintenance for our centre. Regular maintenance would have ensured that our centre was compliant without having to endure long closures for large renovations. For Council to now threaten to close our beloved centre, stating building 'non-compliance', after not maintaining the property using the delegated maintenance fund seems offensive and calculated.</p> <p>I would also like to remind Council that the property was left to Council solely for the purposes of childcare, not to line Council pockets.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my submission.</p> <p>Kind regards, [REDACTED]</p>		<p>Disagree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p><b>Proposal to sell 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood</b></p> <p>Small community based childcare centres offer the best learning outcomes for children. There is no logical reason why the centre should be sold. If it doesn't meet standards, then it should be renovated to meet the standard.</p> <p>Port Phillip can afford to keep this centre.</p>	<p>Closing this centre would be criminal.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
	<p>Please see attached for an Alternative Solution Based DDA Assessment Audit &amp; Report.</p> <p>Council have not engaged their own Access Consultant with the correct brief should their priority have been mitigating costs of upgrade works or relevant operational access compliance achievement for such a service. Councillors have been advised otherwise.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>I am against the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street because it clearly ignores the importance of community-run childcare centres. The impact they have is enormous and selling the property would kill the amazing work that the centre does for the community. As a parent of a child that attended the centre last year, I can vouch for the incredible work done there by the educators and the leadership team. I know that my son would never get the kind of attention in a private centre. Stop this ludicrous idea while there is still time.</p>		<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>I don't support the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street. The property houses a child care that provides invaluable services to the local community.</p> <p>Elwood Children's centre is rated as Exceeding the National Quality Framework Standards and provides excellent care and education to its young learners. Being a not-for-profit organisation, all the income generated is reinvested in the quality of the services provided, ensuring high staff ratios, great investment in professional development, and weekly planning days allocated to the staff in all the rooms, which ensures the centre's young learners get the best education, for the best possible start to their lives.</p> <p>The state government has guaranteed there is funding available to invest in renovations and that no extra places would need to be created for that, which demonstrates there are alternatives to dealing with concerns about the building other than selling and closing the centre.</p> <p>Not every child and family can adapt to a larger service, with more children and more rooms. There has to be a wide variety of options so that families can make their own choices. As a mother, I do not want to send my child to any of the other options available, which the council states can absorb the demand for child care in the area. I want to be a part of this community, and I want my child to be in a centre that feels like home. There are no other options in the area that meet this criteria.</p>		<p>Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

	<p>I am a CoPP resident and early childhood education expert with qualifications and over 25 years' experience in the area. I helped my sister hand-pick one of these centres when she was looking for somewhere with quality care and education and a "home-like" feel for her children. I am appalled that the Council are considering selling the 3 childcare centres rather than using our rates to improve the buildings to support small, sustainable, community owned education and care for local children and families into the future. Childcare is not only an economic issue, but a women's issue and a children's rights issue. Women have the right to work in paid work outside the home while their children are not being "supervised", but while they are being educated and supported to grow and learn in loving environments. Although I no longer require childcare myself, throughout my career I have spent many years advocating for children's rights to be heard and to contribute to their communities. Children have the right to a range of early childhood experiences that support their development and help them and their families to be, belong and become the community contributors of the future. Please do not sell these centres and instead support them with local rates to continue serving our community.</p>	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Greetings, I am at 56 Tennyson Street Elwood and 60 year old who is disgusted at the proposal to sell 46 Tennyson Street. The child care centre operates almost all year round and serves the local community. Your paragraph in the letter to residents starts with "Council is committed to ensuring high-quality, affordable and accessible childcare..." I laughed when I read this. I worked in government for 40 years and drafted letters for Ministers and departmental heads using exactly the same words - The Department/Minister is committed to ensuring high-quality, affordable and accessible...add what you like here, it's all about making it sound good without any substance. Your letter does not demonstrate how the people within the immediate area who use the centre are going to have better access, how it will be more affordable and how the current centre is of less quality than the alternative. It also fails to explain how the sale will assist working parents if they need to travel further and and will the costs be the same? Either way, please register me as totally against the sale and will make a note of this for the next council elections.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I don't support the sale of 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood for the following reasons:  - Selling and closing the centre will result in a loss of affordable available childcare places in Elwood  - Elwood Children's Centre fosters life-long community bonds between parents, children and educators. I have made life-long friends through getting involved with the centre, and have discovered the true meaning of community.  - The council have not fully researched and costed all alternative options for keeping the centre open. There has been minimal effort put into finding a solution that doesn't involve a sale. All costings supplied on the Have Your Say site for building upgrades or renovations are loose estimates at best, and are based on worst-case scenario building works.  - State and Federal funding has not been fully explored prior to proposing the sale. How can the council propose a sale when they haven't fully explored these options for funding building upgrades to keep the centres running?  - The council have not invested in the maintenance and upkeep of the properties for at least the past 10 years. The infrastructure and maintenance levies charged to the centres well exceed the funds spent on maintaining them. Only 57% of funds paid have been spent on the maintenance of 46 Tennyson Street.</p>		Disagree	Neutral
	<p>Provision of quality childcare increases work productivity and enables people (especially women) to escape the poverty trap whilst also lessening the break in their working life. Community child care is an alternative to private child care and Council run childcare and encourages parent participation is the provision of this type of service encouraging skill development and community involvement.  <u>providing an alternative means of childcare can only benefit the community generally.</u></p>	Neutral	Neutral
<p>Provision of quality childcare increases work productivity and enables people (especially women) to escape the poverty trap whilst also lessening the break in their working life. Community child care is an alternative to private child care and Council run childcare and encourages parent participation is the provision of this type of service encouraging skill development and community involvement.  <u>providing an alternative means of childcare can only benefit the community generally.</u></p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>Hello,  My family &amp; I strongly oppose the sale of our beautiful Elwood Children's Centre.  The families &amp; staff at Elwood Children's Centre are like extended family to us and such a huge part of our community in Elwood.  My family spent a year in Adelaide during COVID over 2020/21, where our 1 &amp; 3 year olds attended a large private daycare. Our children took a very long time to adjust because of the sheer volume of students &amp; staff in such a large facility. They were completely overwhelmed, took months to form connections as the staff turnover was so high (which seems to be the case in these larger facilities as people are just there to work instead of being part of a community).  Coming back to Elwood Children's Centre was the best thing we could have done for our children &amp; our family. Being part of this beautiful small Centre where the teachers all have longstanding positions, take the time to engage with our children and nurture their individuality and personal preferences is such a rare thing to find.  They are so happy to go off to daycare instead of crying at my feet (not exaggerating!), as they feel so comfortable and at home in these surroundings with a compassionate group of teachers that are there for them.  Without these smaller, Council run Centres - all children all forced to attend large Centre's with high volumes of children which I believe is not suited to the personality of every child.  I am also on the Elwood Children's fundraising committee and thoroughly enjoy being able to play my part in the Centre and help raise funds to put towards keeping our beautiful centre running smoothly.  Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.  ██████████</p>		Neutral	Disagree
<p>This community managed centre provides more than early learning for birth to 5 year olds and enabling parents' employment. Connections vital to healthy communities sprout and grow. Families, as well as children, share their knowledge and skills, develop friendships and support networks, learn new skills, and contribute to their neighbourhoods. While for-profit services support some of this development, their business structures deny families meaningful input into how centres operate; decisions are made with the need to make a profit for owners/shareholders, not what's in the best interest of families and local community. CoPP's involvement in community managed ECEC services is an investment in community development, social cohesion and collaboration, it empowers families to make decisions that directly effect them and encourages them to consider their community's needs and aspirations, not just a bottom line.  Sale of the 3 centres will deprive local families of ECEC centres within pram walking distance and as CoPP's plan states there will be 79 fewer ECEC places when proposed works are finalised. A mix of ages keep the municipality vital, this is in every resident's interest and lack of suitable ECEC could result in young families moving away.  The centre is financially viable, council has the funds, and has been informed that state funding is also probable, to attend to the main reasons CoPP cites for the sale.  This is bad policy.</p>		Neutral	Disagree
<p>It's critical to community building that community lead childcare options are retained within the council. The extra cost to move to private childcare is not going to be manageable by some families within the catchment.  The council has not been maintained the property inline with their responsibilities to do so... while continuing to accepting maintenance fees from the centre. The council has not upgraded the property inline with requirements, and it's own duty of care to do so.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree

<p>I do not support the proposal to sell 46 Tennyson St Elwood.</p> <p>As a parent who has 2 children at Elwood Children's Centre the proposed sale directly impacts my children and myself.</p> <p>Council has had years to implement an upgrade path to the property to bring it to code using the funds provided by the parents who pay a maintenance levy. It is the responsibility of Council to use the tax payer funds they have been allocated for the purpose for which they were intended.</p> <p>Selling off the property with no detailed plan and no community support indicates mismanagement of funds and mismanagement of Office.</p>		Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Dear Councillors</p> <p>They may not want Council to be "in" childcare services, but your residents do. Community run childcare is a key component providing parents and/or a childcare arrangement options.</p> <p>Council officers are telling you that it is too expensive to save these centres, but I, along with thousands of others, are telling you this is a good investment. This is an investment in strengthening community, in children's futures, in connecting and supporting families. This is an investment in volunteering, in walkable cities, in a social safety net.</p> <p>As representatives of the people of the City of Port Phillip, please listen to the residents, to the parents and families and children telling you that these centres are valuable and worth saving.</p> <p>Council officers are telling you that the only solution is to sell these centres, now. Of course that's not true. Stop the sale of these centres, take the time necessary to seek available State Government funding, and work with the centres on solutions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staged maintenance works</li> <li>• Lease to own arrangements</li> <li>• Mortgage on the value of the land to be repaid by the centres</li> <li>• Sell one to save two (resulting in a net loss of 35-40 places, rather than 79)</li> </ul> <p>The indicative works presented are the worst case, highest cost scenario. But these works have not been contextualized to the needs and usage patterns of individual centres. Furthermore they were based on the false premise of needing to expand to 66 places to meet State Government funding requirements. This is not black and white and there is still work to be done in identifying possible solutions.</p>	<p>The process has been managed poorly, with poor communication with the centres prior to the announcement of the intention to sell, and throughout this formal consultation process. Council has not provided relevant and important information with residents in a timely fashion, and the entire proposal was built upon a false premise of there being no State Government funding available, and the false need to expand the centres to 66 places.</p>	Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>I do not support the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson street, Elwood</p>	<p>This is not just a property, it is a children center! And it's an amazing center! It is so precious to have small community run centers, not big machines with hundreds of children. We know and trust the staff, we are involved in it, the children feel like home!</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Hello, The purpose of my submission is to strongly oppose the sale of the 3 properties listed in the council proposal at Eildon Road, Tennyson st and the Avenue.</p> <p>It is my view that the council has not conducted sufficient due diligence and has engaged in what can only be described as a sham consultation process. I reach this conclusion based off a number of experiences which show a consistent pattern of council officers engaging in the following: 1) Failing to commission appropriate assessments prior to the submission being made public and then retrofitting evidence to support their case 2) Stonewalling and delaying providing key documents which would allow community members time to fully review the proposal, while representing in council meetings that these same documents would be available "immediately" 3) Providing documentation and historical records that are substantially incomplete (eg maintenance and capital works records) 4) Cherry picking information to publish on HYS, and providing "worst case" cost modelling to perpetuate the narrative "that the costs to bring the centres up to acceptable standard and compliant with the DDA act are prohibitive" (eg cost modelling published includes substantial works which exceed what would be required to meet DDA compliances and remediate building issues to an acceptable standard for ongoing operation) 5) Failing to explore avenues available to secure state government funding prior to release of the submission, which included wrongly asserting that "only centres exceeding 66 places were eligible" 6) Providing an unacceptably short period for consultation and engaging in consultation in poor faith 7) Continuing to spread misinformation to justify a very self-serving narrative (example - council officers continued to assert that state government funding was only available for centres over 66 places, despite having received public communication from the state government themselves that this was incorrect) Furthermore, in a meeting of the ECC committee, council officers and councillors 3 days after the submission was made public in December, [redacted] asserted that "it was with deep regret that the council had explored all other options prior to making the submission public, and none were deemed feasible". It was communicated that council was unilaterally left with no other option than to move ahead with consultation to sell, as exploration of all other options had been exhausted and deemed unfeasible. It has subsequently come to our attention following numerous requests to see the feasibility assessment of other alternatives (other than sale of the 3 properties), that not only has this not been exhausted, but it would appear it has not been explored at all. The document that was provided by [redacted] which shows supposed consideration of other options contains a matrix on unsubstantiated commentary, and not one piece of quantitative analysis, or any sort of comparative assessment. This is appalling - not to mention is an example of the blatant misrepresentations being made by council officers.</p> <p>Finally, the submission acknowledges that following closure of the 3 centres and operationalisation of the new proposed centre in North St Kilda, that there will be a net loss of places. The rationale provided around this is that "the market mechanism will compensate with increased fees".</p>	<p>It is absolutely inexplicable that council could be of the view that proposing an initiative which will knowingly increase fees - thereby removing access to some families from affordable childcare - is in any way acceptable. This is a disgrace, and is an affront to families on low-middle incomes, and even more so single mothers, whom will be affected by this more than any other group. In summary, I am deeply disappointed by the process CoPP has undertaken in bringing about this proposal. Every part of the process has been compromised and lacks integrity, and seemingly shows a flagrant disregard for good practice, let alone the responsibility that comes with public office. If council fails to show meaningful action to remedy their actions, by choosing not to proceed with the sale, and instead going back to the drawing board to genuinely explore all options, then it will only serve to reinforce that this process has been a thinly veiled smoke and mirror game designed to disguise an agenda which has been to sell off the 3 sites all along. The CoPP deserve better, and councillors should be asking themselves real questions as to their integrity if they choose to proceed.</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Don't sell! just find them another home! Or at least try and properly explore all the other options first before even considering sale.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I strongly disagree with the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street Elwood. My 4yo daughter has been in attendance at ECC since early 2018. The small size of the childcare has been integral to her personal, emotional and physical development. As she suffers from febrile seizures it was important for her to be in an environment where she could be closely monitored. She suffered a brain seizure one year and it is very hard to detect. Because of the small nature of the rooms the educator was able to immediately identify this episode and we rushed her immediately to her doctor. In addition to the outstanding service ECC provides to our local families and immediate neighbourhood, it has organically become a major contributor for the development of fostering community cohesion (one that does not cost council a cent) - which was especially evident during the Covid pandemic years of 2020 to today. During my family's 4+ years at ECC, the centre has hosted community fundraising movie nights, and publicly-attended trivia nights at the Bowls Club, Sailing Club and this year at the St Kilda RSL (supporting local economy and clubs) as well as hosted fundraising BBQ's at Elwood St Kilda Neighbourhood House multiple times over the years. ECC has also produced fundraising scavenger hunt/ bingo games available to all local families to engage with the local flora and fauna (not just ECC families) during the pandemic which fostered community wellness and environmental awareness. The volunteer run BBQ's especially (held on Tennyson St) - brought together the general Elwood public and neighbourhood into contact with others in an organic and spontaneous way during the pandemic and greatly increased mental and emotional morale with the centre Educators, Administrators, ECC families, children as well as our Elwood neighbours - you cannot manufacture or buy this sense of wellness or give people an appreciation of being part of a local community from a childcare that is located miles away from Elwood as the council proposes. None of these community-focused activities will be possible if Elwood loses its childcare as well as its volunteer Committee of Management, Fundraising Committee members and Educators (who also volunteered their time multiple times throughout the year for fundraising!). Through activities such as these, we have brought and continue to bring together families and community members from all walks of life, regardless of gender identity, age or ethnicity. By removing ECC from the local Elwood community, council would be removing another foundational pillar that is not only essential to the local neighbourhood's early childhood development but also a major community social connector and contributor that is absolutely essential in these uncertain times. In addition to the outstanding service ECC provides to our local families and immediate neighbourhood, it has organically become a major contributor for the development of fostering community cohesion (one that does not cost council a cent) - which was especially evident during the Covid pandemic years of 2020 to today. 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<p>The three community run childcare centres that are currently proposed to sell should not progress. These centres are exemplarily models of what childcare should look like. The Council should be doing the opposite of what they are doing, you as a Council work for the people of your constituents and I ( a constituent) fail to see how the sale of these three centres services this in anyway?  The Council is failing to account for the true value of the centres, they are real and tangible success stories in creating a sense of community, it is ironic that local Councils constantly look at ways to bring people together through events, community centres etc. Here you have three of the most effective community hubs that only from a property portfolio perspective make sense to sell off.  I challenge the Council to see the real opportunity here, the fact that these centres and the sense of community they create provide far greater value to the suburbs they are in, they make them highly desirable places to live and they present a unique opportunity to the Council to foster this. Personally, my previous perception of Port Phillip Council is it is a progressive, innovative and considered Council, but in this instance it is way off.  I hope the Council see the true value here, embrace these centres and look to implement more so that this type of care is available and celebrated for many generations to come.</p>		Neutral	Disagree
<p>My 2 year old son is at ECC. After attending Goodstart down the road (a profit based centre) for several months and still saying he was 'didn't want to go', we were so lucky to get a place at ECC after 2 years on the waiting list for council/community run centres in Elwood. Within 2 weeks all of the staff knew us and our son was thrilled to attend each day. Please do not take these precious facilities away from us.</p>		Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>This property provides an essential function for the residents of port Phillip - the choice of community childcare in a small scale setting. My two children have both been to the centre and I have seen in practice what the research already tells us - community based childcare provides exceptional, better, outcomes, for families.  Your decision to sell is more about your own business needs, than the needs of your residents. I will not vote for this council and its councillors at the next election .</p>		Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I object to the sale of 46 Tennyson street, Elwood and other council properties that operate community day care centres.</p>	<p>The closure of this property and others that results in the net loss of community childcare places is unacceptable is not in the best interests of rate payers and the local residents.</p>	Disagree	Disagree
<p>Don't sell! It is clear this process has been flawed from the start. Council need to start again, so that any decision made cannot be undermined and questioned.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Put a stop to this motion immediately. It is WRONG. In the years leading up to this debate, council NEVER mentioned sale as an option. Council have never meaningfully engaged with us to explore other options. And then all of a sudden we are informed you have intentions to sell. WHAT?!?!?! How did we get here? How can council get this so completely wrong? I feel so disappointed by this whole process. Council have missed an amazing opportunity to work COLLABORATIVELY with us to explore options. We could have partnered and found an alternative option, but instead we were tricked. When our lease was renewed with a much shorter timeframe we were told "don't worry, this is just so all our current leases are on the same timeframe, it just helps administratively." But it is clear that council officers have been positioning themselves for this moment long ago. Shame on council. And then to all of a sudden announce plans to 'maybe' sell - CRAZY! no notice to the centres. Did anyone actually think of the repercussions of this decision?</p>	<p>We are outraged. We feel let down by this process. We have lost all trust for the council officers who spearheaded this proposal. And we are saddened that we have a group of councillors who are making decisions based on the ineptitude of council officers. I get it. You guys are probably sick of us. You just want to sell these buildings because you can't justify the headache they cause you. But you are only looking at these buildings as bricks and rubble and assets that burn a hole in your pockets. They are more than that. And you have underestimated the benefit these buildings bring to the community. How can you be so blind? To make our centre DDA compliant you have quoted a ludicrous amount. But you fail to mention that we could just do the minimum required. You didn't mention this to councillors did you?</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>We are appalled to learn that this beautiful Children's centre is having to fight for its location and home. It is a centre which provides families with community care and ties the neighbourhood together. It is sad that these aspects are being overlooked for a price tag. The centre provides such beautiful care and at the core of this all, it is the children who will be most affected in having to find new spaces that can offer equal and excellent community centred care.</p>		Neutral	Disagree
<p>Both my grandchildren attend the centre and run in with joy each morning. My very articulate granddaughter is distressed that the centre might close and can't understand why. We don't really have a good answer for her. So the council can make a quick buck?  The alternative facility for her is a generic, soulless centre on a main road that she wouldn't be able to scoot too. It will completely change her experience of childcare in a negative way.  She also told me that the 'kids taps don't work' and that she has to use 'the grow-ups taps which are hard to reach'. In looking into this, it seems the centre requested maintains work but the Council dismissed the request. <u>It is your strategy to neglect the centres to strengthen your case to sell them?</u></p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>I don't think council should sell these centres. It appears council officers haven't done any proper research on this issue to be able to put forward a well considered proposal to councillors. How can councillors make an informed decision if they haven't been given the right information? Any plans to sell should be put on hold until all options have been canvassed properly. To not do so would be poor governance.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I oppose the sale of 46 Tennyson street and propose that the Council reinvests in the Elwood Children's Centre. My child attends this centre and closing of the centre would be a great loss to families and the community that has been created there. <u>The displacement of children and staff must be avoided.</u></p>		Agree	Agree
<p>Closing the centre will destroy a part of the community that so many parents and families hold dear.  It took a year on a waiting list to get a spot at the ECC and we planned my wife's back to work dates around when we could get a place. After hoards of tours in other centres, ECC had the best feel and reputation and its absurd to me that Council wants to close it down.  The general feel from the community is that our local Council is more interested in short term profit and long term community building, and that the voices of the families aren't being heard. There's a passionate group of parents that are willing to work with you on options to keep the centre running. <u>Please listen to them.</u></p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>Walking my children to the Elwood Children's Centre is my favourite thing about living in Elwood. Because the other families also live mere blocks away from the centre, there's a really special community feel we all share when all the kids get there bike foot and scooter each morning, and the kids all love bumping into each other on the way. Little kids feel so proud to be able to ride to day-care, and bundling them up in the car to travel to a larger soulless centre on a main road sounds pretty awful.  We visited 7 centres when choosing childcare for my first child, and ECC had the warmest most welcoming feel to it vs. the larger brand new generic ones we toured. Precisely because it's an old charming house is why my children both love it and call it 'the big house' when I drop them off. I'm so grateful that the room sizes are small, the house is beautifully kept, and there is such an inclusive community feel to it.  Please keep it going!</p>	<p>Once this centre is gone, it's gone forever. A quick sale and an appealing profit on your bottom in 2022 won't mean anything to the Council a year later, but a little piece of Elwood's heart and soul will be lost forever.   Please listen to the parents. The sadness that the centre might close runs deep. Please don't destroy this special place for a short-sighted gain.</p>	Disagree	Disagree
		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree



<p>I do not support the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood. I fully understand that in its current state the building Elwood Children's Centre occupies does not have future. However I urge council to do everything it can to revive and restore the building on this site and allow Elwood Children's Centre to continue to be an important part of the community and to continue to provide the highest quality education and care for the children of the City of Port Phillip. The document titled "Yield Scheme With Costs" shows that there is an alternative to selling this site, and in pursuing this alternative Council would demonstrate that it does value and does have a commitment to childcare like it claims that it does. There is a choice now not to turn your back on community childcare and to instead invest in the future of community-run childcare. I know you have heard how devastated our community of families are, the children I teach and care for each day are upset at the news that their centre may close, and the educators feel uncertain about their future in this profession knowing that Council is moving away from smaller community-run childcare centres and moving towards larger centres or relying on the private centres in the area to pick up the slack. Speaking for myself, finding a position at Elwood Children's Centre has been life-changing. After working at many privately owned centres and seeing how these for-profit services value dollars over all else was heartbreaking. Finding a small community-run service opened my eyes to what childcare could be and what quality education and care could look like, the relationships with families and the connection to community are incredible and it is not something you can replicate or reproduce down the road by building a brand new, state-of-the-art, fit-for-purpose building. I urge you to reconsider this proposal and not sell 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood.</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>This comment applies to ALL 3 childcare centre properties council propose to sell. I have lived in Elwood for the last 10 years and recently purchased a place to live to start my family, with our first due in less than a month. I attended the community demonstration at St Kilda Town Hall at the start of this month to show my support to the childcare centres and to gain more information. The speakers were passionate about each of the three centres and it's clear the centres have provided a huge amount of community value over the decades they have been operating. I was very disappointed to learn that the council: 1) Had not approached state or federal governments for grants that are available for renewal of childcare centres 2) Expects current enrollees to simply enrol in a different childcare without consideration of the fact these places may be a) already full, b) too far to travel, or c) too expensive 3) Have not met with the childcare centres in advance of their strong direction to close the centres to see if alternative solutions could be found (of which they have ideas) I have read the short report (who wrote this? There is no author listed?) now available on the council's HaveYourSay page about Supply and Demand, which does not seem accurate if it currently argues there are a "surplus" of places, considering waitlists are currently years long. It also does some creative accounting to suggest that through "change mgmt" you can turn a single place into 2.5 places. This seems incredibly and ridiculously optimistic. The report talks about how the use of nannies as carers in the area is higher than the national average, but does not consider this may be a case of the tail wagging the dog; if parents cannot get childcare on the days they need, they will have to consider other options. There is a likelihood that childcare places demand is therefore higher than the report states. The report highlights there will be a shortfall concentrated in the south of the municipality, however council has done nothing to indicate they will increase in childcare places in this area commensurate with what is being taken away (~150 places lost through the three centres, and about 40 gained in upgrades to the St Kilda centre but only in 2-3 years time). Council's assumption that the private run centres nearby have capacity was refuted by the speakers at the picnic rally - there are not enough places to take up the ~150 places shortfall, nor can we assume all parents could afford to relocate their child to a private (more expensive) childcare, possibly resulting in parents (often women) having to stay home to care for children and remove themselves from the workforce. Furthermore, most parents don't want to have to drive across suburbs to take their kids to childcare - being able to walk to a local centre is immensely valuable and is a necessary provision to serve a diverse community. For example, low income parents may not have cars. St Kilda in particular is well connected PT-wise and isn't particularly car-friendly, which actively helps council's Climate Change Plan goals, however means that the loss of Eildon Road will be heavily felt in that area considering it's the only centre in that location. Also, children are all different and have different needs. The assumption that all kids are the same and will be fine in larger centres is unrealistic, and again does not serve the needs of a diverse community. Some children need smaller, less busy centres that provide lower educator-child ratios and smaller settings in order to thrive.</p>	<p>Having services that serve a range of needs in the community is council's remit - no one wants homogeneity. It's also frustrating to consider the future of these buildings in terms of council's argument that the heritage etc overlays would make it too difficult to conduct rectification works. The most realistic outcome of these sales will be to developers, who will likely knock the place down and build a brand new block. Does council plan to prevent the developer from knocking these buildings down due to heritage concerns? I highly doubt they would. Therefore, why couldn't the council take on this project themselves to upgrade the sites into modern childcare centres? The council has project managers and this could be turned into a capital renewal project instead of throwing the assets in the "too hard basket". Could council not provide temporary locations for these childcare centres to continue to provide services in the meantime, which would also preserve continued employment to the many loyal childcare staff (again, majority of which are women, who would suffer redundancy if centres closed), and allow them to continue providing "excellent" or "exceeding" care. Finally, I am still yet to see real costs on how much it would be to upgrade these facilities - only that council say it's "prohibitive". The community clearly value these centres and want them to be preserved; if that costs a few million dollars then that may be perfectly acceptable from their perspective. Considering that council thinks their \$50M proposal to upgrade to the foreshore over the next 10 years a financially wise investment, then what's a few million on community childcare centres? For the record, I would much prefer significant investment in the childcare centres considering their massive impact over generations, vs a complete overhaul of the currently functional foreshore precinct for a huge price ticket and disruptive construction for a decade. If all three centres go, they will never come back and the entire area will be poorer</p>	Neutral	Neutral
<p>I think the closure of this Children's centre would impact greatly on the community spirit that we have in Elwood. Both my children attended this centre from one year old until they commenced primary school (also locally). I believe the small centre had a fantastic family feel, with not too many kids within each age grouping. I felt that my children were nurtured in this lovely environment; they had familiar carers who were assigned to particular rooms, age-appropriate activities; when relief carers were required, the coordinator ensured that the substitute carers were people who were familiar to the centre, and to the children. I thought this was a wonderful caring attitude. And because, I was so happy with the centre, I decided to volunteer to work on the parent committee, and put my time back into the centre. I was part of the committee for about 4 years, staying on a year after my second child finished at the centre. Our centre had annual voluntary working bees, which my husband and I also worked on. As a family, we made good friends with other families, who were also using the centre; some of these connections we still have today, 17 years after my second child finished at the centre.</p>	<p>My family and I would be very sad and disappointed if this centre was closed. Closing down three smaller children centres, and replacing them with "super" centre, doesn't thrill me at all. I recognise that this may be a more profitable venture, but I think the council has lost its sense of what "community" means to community.</p>	Agree	Neutral
<p>Dear Councillors I write to you regarding the City of Port Phillip's intention to sell three community-run, not-for-profit kindergarten and early childhood services - forcing the closure of Elwood Children's Centre, The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten and Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten. Firstly I wish to point out, I have nothing to personally gain from encouraging the council to rethink their intention to sell these buildings. I have closed the door to any more children and my daughter will already be in school before our centre's proposed closure date. What I do have is first-hand experience with 4 centres in the City of Port Phillip. My family had significant issues with our first childcare centre, and through this experience, I became an unofficial expert in childcare. I have estimated that over the past 5 years I have had over 200 conversations with parents and childcare staff about childcare. You have made it clear that it's important for you to consider value for money, and I hope sharing my on the ground experiences helps you to better understand the intangible value of community-run childcare. Value that more parents should have access to - not less. I hope my words help you to understand why the community is so determined to keep these centres running. And I hope you can encourage the council to solve the building maintenance and upgrade issues through investment not divestment. To allow these childcare centres to remain open by whatever means makes the most financial sense, but not by simply closing them down to improve a balance sheet. Valuing the intangibles The childcare industry is in crisis. There are currently huge staff shortages. Early learning operators had positions vacant equivalent to 9.5 per cent of the entire workforce. I have spoken to a number of ex-early learning teachers who all say the same thing - pay is low, stress is high and many centres have poor staff culture. There are many childcare centres with multiple vacant positions and agency staff changing on a daily or weekly basis. Staff move due to poor culture or a better offer from another centre desperate for staff. All staff at Elwood Children Centre (ECC) speak very highly of the staff culture and their own sense of community. Many have suggested that if ECC was to close they would likely leave the sector. Children need stability to stay mentally well and support good brain development. Studies show that instability in early years can create "learned helplessness", affecting children's trust in their caregivers and a multitude of other negative effects on their relationships, behaviours and brain development. High staff turnover creates instability in an environment where children spend a large proportion of their waking lives. Amidst an industry staff crisis, a global pandemic and now the threat of closure from the council, ECC has maintained an exceptional culture and continues to have exceptional staff and family retention. We all know that organisational culture requires decades to strengthen to a level where they can withstand this type of external pressure. 30+ year-old institutions with such cultural strength have value well beyond the cost required to upgrade their sites. The replacement value is immeasurable. Early childhood centres are not there to teach reading, writing and maths like a school environment. They are teaching children about concepts such as relating to others, negotiation, social skills, emotional regulation and community. Some children will thrive in a large centre, some will need a smaller centre to learn how to relate to a group care setting. Some families will prefer newer facilities, others a long-standing community-run centre. Some families will want short days, others long. Some families want the opportunities for connection that a community centre brings, others want a kiss and go service. Considering future childcare needs for the City of Port Phillip requires more than just modelling the number of places. A variety of options need to be available to best equip children with the skills they need - including small community-run centres. Community-run childcare centres are sought after. Thousands have signed a petition suggesting that these centres are needed and wanted. There are currently over 300 families in Elwood waiting for a place at only a couple of small community-run centres. Many families are forced into the private sector due to limited spaces - despite community-run centres being their first preference. We waited a year to get a place and needed to use the private sector while waiting. Councillors have assured residents that the City of Port Phillip are not aiming to reduce their involvement in childcare, however, Anthony Savenkov said "Private sector providers play an increasing role in the provision of childcare in the municipality, and have expressed interest in the proposal, including in absorbing enrollments and staff should Council sell the properties." There is a clear disconnect between the council's recommendations to close these centres - with a net loss in community-run places - and the Council's childcare policies. Parents build better community connections at community-run centres - contributing to their own wellbeing. At a community-run centre like ECC, there are welcome picnics, fundraising events, working bees, Christmas parties and opportunities to be on the committee of management to further create bonds in the parent community. Because the community</p>	<p>This is an additional submission as all information was not provided by council upfront. Please consider both my first submission and this submission. I have been extremely disappointed in the nature of how this situation has been handled. I feel the council has gone into this situation with an end goal in mind of financial gain, not continuation of the services. Especially after council tried to lower their financial contribution to the centre just a few months earlier. There are many things about this situation that I have felt particularly uneasy about. I have not included them in my submission as I wanted to ensure my most important solution-focused points were heard.</p>	Disagree	Strongly disagree

<p>is so well connected, at drop off and pick up you can always join a conversation between parents to build relationships within your local community. Most parents know every single parent and child and you are almost guaranteed to run into someone at the park on the weekend. We have not experienced this at the 3 private centres we attended before gaining a position at ECC. These are the kinds of connections that allow parents to build their village and seek out support if they are in need. And to feel connected to where they live. Young children are easily susceptible to catching bugs and viruses. At smaller, community centres I have found we caught substantially fewer bugs. When you have a relationship with the community, it's easier to trust and encourage everyone to stop the spread by keeping sick kids home. When you have fewer personal connections at a private centre it's easy to fall into the vicious cycle of running out of carers leave so you give up and send your sick kids in - which perpetuates the cycle for everyone else. Sale should not be on the table while there is \$6.2m worth of funds specifically set aside for upgrading these facilities as well as state funding. The quality building levy was funded by the very centres you are considering closing down, and others like them. These centres agreed to pay maintenance and infrastructure levies in good faith that these funds would go towards their own centre if needed. It is not in good faith of these agreements to sell the centres while keeping the funds they contributed that could solve the building issues. It is also inappropriate to suggest that these contributions can be "cancelled out" against rent and wage subsidies. Rent and wage subsidies are a service that the council provides to all community-run centres as a part of their service to the community. Your decision is not a financial one, it's a community, employment and child wellbeing decision. Considering removing services that have a proven track record of supporting families and child wellbeing and expecting future families to instead enter the private sector while the industry is in crisis should be an absolute worst-case scenario.</p>			
	<p>The proposed sale of Eildon Road Childcare &amp; Kindergarten, Elwood Children's Centre and The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten is causing families and staff at each of the centres a huge amount of stress and anxiety. This document aims to illustrate how much of a negative impact the process to date has had on those living and working in the City of Port Phillip.</p>	<p>Neutral Neutral</p>	<p>Neutral Strongly disagree</p>
<p>I want to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, the people of the Kulin Nations, on which we work, worship and play and I pay my respects to Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land. I also want to express that in writing this submission today this causes deep personal anxiety and trauma. I have spoken publicly at council meetings and to the media not because I want to or ever intended to, its because if myself and others do not speak out against the sale of the 3 properties, our centre, Elwood Children Centre as well as The Avenue and Eildon Road, will no longer exist. I do not support the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson street, Elwood. My name is [REDACTED] and I sit on the COM at Elwood Children's Centre a community managed childcare centre on Tennyson street. I am a Mum to a 5 and 2yo. My son attended ECC for 5 years, this is my daughters 3rd years at ECC. Im also a working Mum and have been living in Elwood for over 9 years. We have no family living nearby to us. Without ECC I would not be able to participate in the workforce reducing our family to a one income family we would not be able to provide a bright future and wider opportunities to our young children. ECC has served the CoPP, its families and their children for over 35 years. The Centre was established in 1984 by a group of committed parents to provide a service that allowed for affordable, quality childcare. ECC continues today as an alternative to the larger, and mostly privately-run centres popping up in the CoPP. ECC allows a diverse range of families to be involved in the running and say of the centre. ECC creates and maintains community and our daily fee remains one of the lowest in the CoPP ensuring access for the most vulnerable families, including ours. We could not afford, for example, the \$165 daily fee most private centres close to us charge, which your proposal recommends we do. Council needs to support a good cross section of types, sizes and models of childcare centres within our municipality. They should be supporting the smaller community managed centres to thrive and survive. This is where community begins. This is where the lifelong friendships and are made for both parents and the children. So it will come as no surprise the entire ECC community is against the proposed sale of the building our children, educators and staff occupy. The end of ECC would also be the end of employment for 18 childcare educators at our centre all of whom are women and a majority of who are from CALD backgrounds. Our Educators are also one of the most vulnerable of our workforce. Keeping the centre open is not just about the kids. This is also about women. Working Mums, Single Mum's, Stay at home Mum's, Mum's looking to re-enter the workforce. We need to support women in ensuring all levels of childcare are an option for them and their families. Your proposal to sell the building has been poorly managed and maintained. Clumsy and thoughtless. There has been little regard to the families, staff and children. The CoPP is discriminating against our model of childcare. Furthermore most concerning is the misinformation CoPP decisions are being made, the lack of transparency regarding the building maintenance money the centres pay to CoPP and what funding and alternative options are there available seems not to have been properly explored or if it has, this has not been shared. Spending rate payers money in a Have Your Say and letterdrop (each letterdrop costs \$5,000 I note there have been two letterdrops = \$10,000). This entire process is costly in the CoPP time, money, resources. Its disappointing the money being spent on the Have Your Say isn't being spent on our early childhood centers and desperately needed resources. I also will add that as landlords CoPP is both negligent and complicit in the current situation CoPP finds themselves in. Indeed there are CoPP staff managing the finance and property portfolios and they are being paid for their time and have access to the necessary resources to do their work. You are asking me what should we do? You are asking me to give my time, expertise and energy gratis. I note the inequitable situation the three centres and their families are in and ask you to take pause on this for a moment. Here's some solutions you should consider: 1. Redevelop the current site, seek state &amp; federal funding. ECC also fundraise. 2. Sell the current site and with the money redevelop the Neighbourhood Centre on Tennyson street. Make it a childcare and toy library site. Seek state &amp; federal funding as well. 3. Allocate land from the St Kilda Botanical Gardens to build a new ECC. Money from the sale of the previous ECC site. Seek state &amp; federal funding as well. This is what they did for Poets Grove. The land was originally part of the local primary school. Our community childcare services are special places for us and our community. We want to thrive and survive. We need to celebrate these communities and the centres at large not eliminate and alienate them. We look forward to working to find solutions.</p>	<p>Since councils decision to move to put on notice the sale of our building I would like to share that: *We have had families decline placements at our centre because of the potential looming closure and perceived lack of continuity of care. This is lost income and families coming into our community centre. *We have had families leave the centre for the same reason, thus reducing our income. *I would like to report high stress and anxiety among staff and families. *I would like to report that the CoPP waitlist managers have been telling families not to put ECC on their preference lists and that the waitlist is too long. *I would like to report that CoPP were sending trades people to our centre in December to undertake site visits for building assessments and tree arbor assessments of the property during business hours when the children and staff were at the centre. The optics had a damaging effect. We had to push back and request that these assessments were undertaken out side of hours. Again just displaying the little regard the CoPP have to our children, educators and staff.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
	<p>We wish to note that this submission considers issues relevant to all three centres proposed for sale. As there appears to be no other option, we have uploaded the submission three times, once for each centre.</p> <p>Rhonda Small Convener Progressive Port Phillip</p>	<p>Disagree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>
<p>I am opposed to the council's proposal to sell Elwood Children's Centre. I live nearby on Milton street and have small children. I know from experience it is difficult to secure quality care, and kindergarten places are at a premium. Currently there is a baby boom in Port Phillip and I am perplexed why a service focused solely on Children's welfare is deemed 'too difficult' for the council to continue to oversee. The blame for deficiencies in the property lay solely with the council, as I am to understand yearly levies have been collected with very little maintenance carried out. Do better. Find a way to work around the accessibility issues. On this note, the Council's heritage overlay concerns are perplexing. I can identify a number of recently demolished buildings of more aesthetic and social history worth. Having a Children's centre within walking distance to home makes such a huge difference to families' lives. It makes it simpler for women to get to work and home again without losing their minds; it embeds a sense of community in the children; and, as is the case for Elwood Children's Centre, being community run creates opportunities for parents to work together. It does seem short sighted to sell all this off to fund redevelopment of another centre, when state funding is available such a purpose.</p>		<p>Disagree</p>	<p>Neutral</p>
		<p>Agree</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>This childcare centre has been an important part of the community in Elwood. Selling the property and not proposing an alternative in Elwood, especially at this Tennyson site is not something that should be considered. Give the people of Elwood the chance to have affordable childcare close to home. Compliance issues identified can be resolved - all hope is not lost, we just need investment in the building. The centre already pays the council \$100k each year for maintenance works. No engagement with centre committee was done prior to announcing intention to sell. Council did not seek state or federal funding despite grants existing for required works.</p>	<p>There is a surplus of property developed in the city already. Why sell these childcare centres to build more. They are more valuable to the existing local community as childcare centres</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Disagree</p>

Local families are disappointed and exhausted with the situation where OUR council want to sell off OUR local community run childcare centres. A couple of years ago funding cutbacks were proposed supposedly for the benefit of disadvantaged children and now its about building costs. Many local folks do not want to send their children to be educated and cared for in expensive and inferior corporate childcare centres. Childhood education is a service that should be delivered in a high quality manner with fairly paid (largely) female staff for the benefit of society, not by big businesses with shareholders. Just looks what's happened in the aged care sector. The proposal disadvantages women who are already effectively taxed at higher rates and will have even less income after these higher priced corporate fees are paid. Please find a solution and don't just walk away from your obligation to provide this critical service to local kids and families. Kids are people too and they deserve better.		Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am against selling this property. It is a community asset and should remain so. I, as many people have, have used this facility many times- for classes, Children's parties and other activities. Selling public assets to private entities has shown that the long term benefits actually goes backwards. This short term solution to raise capital is near-sighted.		Agree	Agree
I do not support the sale of this property. The council should take the lead and show the local community how they help to preserve the heritage streetscape of this suburb. Selling this property and not investing the adequate funds to restore/ make code compliant is the easy way out and give developer an opportunity to continue to destroy this community's character.	No	Neutral	Neutral
I vehemently oppose the sale of this property. As a Southey Street Elwood resident and expectant father, the sale of the property and removal of it's purpose as a child care facility would be detrimental to our community. We are registered for / on the waiting list for 2 local child care facilities and this facility is one of the 2. One of the main reasons we enjoy living in Elwood is the sense of community and shared local smaller scale facilities which incorporate the elements we appreciate in a close-knit community-minded setting. We don't want to send our child to a large child care facility. We want to continue to be able to establish and maintain relationships with other local parents as we have already begun to do in this area. We want local community facilities. Our neighbour and close friend who is a childcare and early learning administrator in the area, very highly recommended this particular facility to us, having had both her children attend there. We would be negatively impacted and inconvenienced by the sale of this property.	I would like to be advised and kept up to date on the progress of this proposal. I would be happy to attend any local forum regarding this proposal in order to have a chance to speak against this proposal.	Agree	Neutral
		Neutral	Neutral
I oppose this proposal, along with proposal to sell the two additional childcare centres listed at Eildon road and the Avenue. Childcare centres such as this provide an integral local option for childcare within the community, with the community engagement that comes from local and accessible community bins. Closure would mean families forced to travel potentially 30 minutes on foot to access similar facilities proposed at north st Kilda, out of reach for families without a car, that need these services most. If the properties are unable to be developed to a suitable atandard, Council should seek closer alternatives than those proposed.	I fear that sale if the properties will allow unscrupulous property development and further downgrading of the local nature of property stock into residential or commercial stock not in keeping with the character of the suburb. If any sale was approved, I would want to see safeguards ensuring sympathetic development, and not more luxury apartments of poor quality build.	Agree	Agree
This is an integral community facility and fills a need not met by large providers in commercial type premises.	This should not be sold.	Disagree	Agree
These centres should be kept for child care or at least in community ownership, Not sold off to developers.	Dont do it.	Neutral	Neutral
The disability compliance issues identified by the council are capable of being fixed for a reasonable price. The Elwood centre pays the council enough rent per year to complete maintenance and capital works. Council did not engage your consult with the committee before announcing their intention to sell. Council has not sought state or federal government funding despite Grants existing for these works. Please listen to the community. do not sell these valued childcare facilities.		Disagree	Disagree
Should the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood were to proceed, Kinderclub Childcare at 35 Crimea Street, St Kilda are more than willing to help with the transition for some families and Early Childhood Educators. Of course, how many we can help will depend on availability at the time. We are a community and family focused Early Learning Centre with the same or similar values often found in community managed centres. Our setting is very similar, a converted Victorian styled house most likely to be over 100 years old with a maximum capacity of 45 places. We are often overlooked but always surprised by those who come for a centre tour. For those who are budget conscious, we are open to discuss. Thank you P.S. We have an integrated 3 to 5 years old Kindergarten Program that is bi-lingual.		Strongly agree	Strongly agree
terrible idea. Council has a responsibility to support children, families and committee run community-based services and should be doing everything possible to support small services that provide much higher quality care.		Agree	Disagree
I dont support the sale of this property. It is wrong that council sell a community run child care facility to make a profit which forces the children into a corporate, privately owned facility.	As a resident of Elwood, I find it appalling that local council are selling off community assets for their own profit. Instead of providing funding to help the centre 'meet contemporary standards'	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
The loss of Elwood Children's Centre would be DEVASTATING to our community and for future families. If the conditions of the building doesn't meet the standards anymore that should be solved by the council with other ways like repairing, renovating or rebuilding the Children's Centre.		Agree	Agree
I don't support the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood. Selling this property would mean the disruption of the Children's and Staff's lives. The council should be striving to create more communities like the one at Elwood Children's Centre, not destroying them. This is a place where children go to first learn how to interact with people outside of their families, where they learn learn social skills and behaviour, the helps them become happy and successful members of the wider community. The council should be encouraging this.	As a voter, I will be very disappointed in the council if the sale of this property goes forward.	Disagree	Disagree
I am firmly opposed to selling the building currently operating as a child care centre at 39 The Avenue, Balaclava. My feelings are that the community or the council has a responsibility to provide child care to local residents and that this centre should remain open. I oppose the transition of councils to divest themselves of community responsibility in areas such as child care and aged care. This leaves these services open to privatisation where tax payers government support is syphoned off as profit. I believe that the rates that we pay should be able to maintain these centres and keep them running as community child care facilities.		Agree	Neutral
I do not support the proposed sale of the Elwood Children's Centre at 46 Tennyson St. My children attended Elwood Children's Centre and it was the only community childcare option in Elwood that I could access at the time. If council is truly committed to high-quality, affordable and accessible childcare in the local area how could they possibly consider shutting down this Centre. Councils letter outlines using the proceeds of the sale to re-develop a North St Kilda childcare Centre - this is not local to residents of Elwood. The children who attend Elwood Children's Centre often then go on to primary school together and the connections between families fostered through the Centre contribute to the sense of community in Elwood. My children still have friends in the local area that they met through Elwood Children's Centre. Councils proposal also does not outline whether the proposed alternatives such as North St Kilda will be re-developed to take on the 50 children that attend ECC each day and whether this would be completed prior to the date Elwood Children's Centre would be closed. With the very high rates paid by families that live in Elwood the very least that can be expected is that the council is 100% committed to providing community childcare for these families. Shutting community childcare is not supporting mothers in Elwood to return to work and continue their careers. If not for Elwood Childrens Centre my return to work post maternity leave would have been very difficult to manage. I don't think any local residents would believe that the functionality & accessibility of the centre cannot be brought to standard. I would feel this was a very good use of my rates - much better than many other projects that the council undertakes.		Disagree	Disagree
I strongly object to the sale of this property which has served in the past as a neighbourhood activities and learning centre for all locals. This function is necessary to remain since there is no plan for its replacement. Tennyson St has been massively developed recently and provides increased funding to council via rates. An asset sale provides Elwood with no compensation or benefit. No local facilities exist to support activities, the rear yard could become a community garden in a street rapidly losing green space. Do not sell this valuable facility for no gain for the Elwood area!!		Disagree	Disagree
I disapprove. Needed for community use		Neutral	Neutral

I don't support the sale. It is a beautiful community centre and is a important part of Elwood.		Agree	Neutral
I am a long time Elwood resident. I have no young children or grandchildren but I value the diverse community of Elwood and I believe that ensuring the availability of good quality local childcare is an important responsibility of the council. Selling a property containing a long term child care centre in Elwood and putting the money into a childcare centre in North St Kilda does not fit with this responsibility. We need childcare centres in Elwood for Elwood residents. This is one way residents build relationships within our local area and hence a strong sense of community. We also need to be able to walk to our local services not to be forced to take a car. Doesn't the council pay lip service to fighting climate change? Living locally is a part of the answer. If this property is sold then it is very likely that it will be bought by a developer and the current building replaced as is continually happening throughout Elwood. Like most of the current development and due to planning laws which show lack of foresight, every piece of vegetation will be razed and a structure built that covers almost 100% of the land with non permeable heat absorbing surfaces. This increases the flooding risk in Elwood, increases local ambient temperatures and decreases habitat for local wildlife. From every viewpoint, the sale of this property will decrease local amenity and will not address community needs. I am not anti-development, but I believe that long term impacts of development on the local community should be considered and it is the council's role to help shape our communities so that they meet resident's needs. I am tired of council publishing a whole lot of policies that look good on paper but in practice are ignored in the day to day council decisions.		Agree	Disagree
As a grandfather of grand children who have attended this fabulous, creative, community involved childcare centre and a ratepayer of this progressive city i am totally dismayed by the proposal to sell this and two other similar centres but in particular by the way it has been handled by council and their officers in two specific areas relating to adopted council policies. Community Engagement : I cannot believe that council would adopt a report and its conclusions without any discussion with those bodies and communities effected nor exposing the facts and the basis of this decision to discussion and assessment. Best Practice Community Consultation does not work that way. It involves true / factual exchanges before decisions are reached, not afterwards. not advertising the propertied for sale. Public Transparency ; This council policy is very clear. It promises to make available all reports, data, assessments, evaluations used in reaching conclusions and making decisions. The committees of management have sought to see this information asking valid questions over the past 6 weeks and despite promises few answers have been provided. if you are truly seeking Community Engagement this process of transparency is vital. One vital piece of miss information involves the officers incorrect assessment of state government support. In Conclusion. Council should postpone this proposal indefinitely and commit to a meaningful exchange with these affected communities as intended by your adopted policies Regards ██████████		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
I don't support the proposed sale of Elwood Childrens Centre. The council should be taken responsible for voluntary non-maintenance of public property in order to carry out a financial operation to the detriment of the community and damage to the future of future generations. There are inconsistencies and discrepancies between: A) the good intentions displayed by the Council in terms of the philosophy of life in St Kilda, and B) the realities of everyday life ... supporting evidence with the current situation and the fees that were paid by ECC but not used by the council all over those years to maintain the building in good conditions.	Elwood Children's Centre pays the Council almost \$90,000 a year to complete maintenance and capital works and Council has not fully utilised this funding to complete required maintenance.  The council is accountable and should make public the use of the fees over those years.	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
The Elwood Childrens and community centre is vital to this community. Connection is one of the few things we have and it is here that so many beautiful friendships and relationships have formed, as well as serving the community and those in need day after day. Please consider other ways of continuing the funding and location of this centre. Thank you		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
This is such a tragic loss for the community that this unique style early childhood centre is been sold and merged into a bulk bland centre. I am opposed to the sale of this property. The money should be invested in establishing another style small community childcare centre within the area.	I do not support the sale	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
I am not supporting this proposal and would ask kindly the council to review their decision to sell. I understand fully the reasons why the council wants to sell, however I think the community would loose a great place to take care of children and see them growing. My husband and I moved to Elwood in June 2019. With the Covid restrictions, we were not able to be part of the community the way we wanted. We became pregnant with our first child last year and I am currently in my 9th month of pregnancy. The building we live in has a very strong community amongst the tenants and we share a common backyard. They are all very excited for us and advised us to our our name down for this childcare center on Tennyson St. as their own kids went there etc. So we did of course and lately we are notified with this intention to sell which is quite upsetting to say the least. Unfortunately money rules most of the world, but we like to think that there are still little pockets of paradise such as Elwood where the community force is stronger and is able to change things for the good of its peoples who live in the area. You put down it as heritage, but sell the land and no care of the building the most likely will be pulled down by raising a new modern building that will wipe out history. It is only a promise to new facilities to the children. Nothing is there when all the kids are thrown out after the sale. This is just about money, not any care is taken for these children that represent the future of Australia. I think they should be considered first. If it means keeping the child care centre open then maybe council should make that the highest priority and consider overlooking the heritage overlay - instead opting to demolish/renovate the building to get it to the required standard for a continued care facility...	Don't sell the land. Instead make the centre more viable for the future children and families to come.	Strongly agree	Agree
I don't support the sale of the property. Elwood Children Centre is an essential service for our community.	These two last years have been hard and it is not over. It is time humanity is taken care of and especially small children and their families.	Neutral	Neutral
I don't support the sale. It's an indispensable community service. Council's job is to provide such services, not play monopoly with our tax money.		Disagree	Disagree
As I understand it the property on which the Tennyson Street centre is located is to be sold without a guarantee that the funds raised will be used to develop an up-to-date alternative children's facility in the neighbourhood. Without such a guarantee and an agreed minimum allocation the proceeds may be diverted to other council projects and local kids and parents will miss out.	The council should engage with the Elwood Children's Centre Committee and clearly articulate a plan for a future centre and the council's commitment to its funding.	Agree	Agree
Feedback from the local residents I have spoken to is consistent and clear. There are no cost impediments to maintaining the property in council's hands. The information gaps on costs and defects has now been filled in by the occupier of the property and it is abundantly clear that Council has started with a conclusion and is now backfilling to justify the outcome sought (by council). At face value it is a clear attempt to capitalise on a hot property market (witness the fact 3 properties are being set up for sale) with no valuation of the true cost/benefit provided both to council and the community by the continued existence of the centres in question. This is the sort of behaviour more often seen in a corporate environment where the pure asset value is being sought as the gain, without any real attempt to measure and recognise the true benefits being felt by the community.		Neutral	Neutral
		Disagree	Disagree
		Disagree	Neutral

<p>The Elwood Children's Centre provides an excellent community service &amp; must not be sold. Therefore please:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remedy the disability compliance issues</li> <li>2. Use the \$100,000 a year you receive from the centre to complete maintenance &amp; capital works</li> <li>3. Engage &amp; consult with the centre's committee before making any decisions</li> <li>4. Seek state &amp; federal funding</li> </ol> <p>I am appalled by election promises about childcare &amp; now you're proposing to close long well established services.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I object to this proposal. It's fundamental we have quality early learning resources to support families in the area. All avenues should be explored before they are sold. This has not been done. Council has not sought funding from state or federal governments despite the ability to do so. Further the centres been consulted in this process.</p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>[REDACTED]</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>[REDACTED] ennyson st is starting to look ridiculous with all the ultra modern looking apartments going up and a few duplex looking dwellings that look absolutely absurd in the street and Elwood for that matter. The street is losing its appeal. If they were to develop apartment blocks that fit in with the feel of the area it would be more accepted. People move into Elwood because it has old school charm. If you keep allowing these ridiculous looking developments in an area that doesn't suit, you are going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. Stop ruining Elwood.</p>		Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>Please don't sell childcare centres just for profit without replacing them. Community child care centres are the lifeblood of the community and bring families together. They are run by people who love their jobs and the children and aren't just there for the wage. My 2 children went here and loved every minute of it. So did over 50 of our local friends children. Stop privateering child care.</p>	It's wrong. Use our rates to keep the 3 centres and upgrade them.	Neutral	Strongly agree
<p>[REDACTED]</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>I am strongly opposed to the selling of all 3 preschool centres. Selling these buildings comes at a huge disadvantage to the community. Specifically young families who want to send their children to community run centres which are catered toward child education and development as opposed to profits. There will also be not enough private spaces to accommodate these children who are left high and dry. An incredibly short sighted and self serving proposal in an apparent 'progressive' community.</p>		Disagree	Neutral
<p>[REDACTED]</p>		Agree	Neutral
<p>I do not support the closure of Elwood Children's Centre. My son has attended the centre for 4 years and my daughter has recently begun attending. We did not take the decision to entrust our children in this centre lightly, having looked at numerous others in the area we decided to go with Elwood Childrens Centre because we felt that it offered a level of care and service a level above any other centre we had found. We believe the closure of this centre would be a massive loss not only to those families who utilise it but to the community as a whole.</p>		Agree	Agree
<p>Dear Sir/Madam, I do not support the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson St. The ECC provides an invaluable service to the local rate-payers and provides a level of diversity and choice that will evaporate if it is closed. The scale and amenity were perfectly suited to my two children who wanted a 'home' feel that the house provided, quite distinct from other more corporate options. It's availability was a major determinant in my wife and I choosing Elwood to raise our children and feel it would be a huge loss to the local community.</p>		Agree	Agree
<p>I don't support the sale of this centre. My second child is now enrolled in the centre and will be there for the next 4/5 years. My first child left 3 years ago but I have come back to this centre because of how great it is and how much it Means to the Elwood community. I'm a single parent With no family here and this place really is another extension of home for my children.</p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>Do not sell. This is a vital and special community resource.</p>		Disagree	Neutral
<p>To whom it may concern, I have two children who attend Elwood Children's Centre, both of which who have attended since their first days of childcare. I am also a resident of Wimbledon Avenue - a street which resides directly behind the centre. I am writing to express my distress on the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street (Elwood Children's Centre). It is clear that the sale of this property by City of Port Phillip is a cost-cutting exercise at the expense of our children. After more than two years of covid-19 lockdowns and at times of uncertainty and stress for our family, Elwood Children's Centre remained one of the constant factors which got our family and many others through. I cant emphasise enough the quality of care this centre and it's staff provides. It is unimaginable to us how a price can be put on such an asset to the Elwood community. If this centre closes, what alternative are you providing? Council's proposal suggests that families from our centre can simply move to nearby centres - most of them privately run, significantly more expensive, and clearly have their own agenda to make money. The required maintenance of the three buildings comes after years of neglect from the Council. As a community, the parents of the centre undertake voluntary working bees to upkeep the centre ourselves. This shows you how much we as a community care for this not-for profit organisation and will do anything possible to keep it going for current families and future who also deserve the change to send their children to such a centre. Personally, the closure of this centre will mean removing affordable childcare for my family. It will cause me to reconsider my desire as a women to return back to work and I'm saddened to say our ability as a family remain in the much loved suburb of Elwood. I ask that councillors, you reconsider and vote against the proposal to sell Elwood Children's Centre. Work with the centres committee, state and federal governments and the community behind this centre to develop a long term plan for this valued service. Some sort of certainty to allow the centre to focus on educating and caring for our children, instead of installing uncertainty and fear in their jobs. Please please reconsider. Kindest, [REDACTED]</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I'm an so saddened to hear of the proposed closure to Elwood Children's Centre. I think it's so very important to have as many options as possible when it comes to childcare centres what are the local people going to do. Being able to have this local centre is so important. It sounds like the council hasn't made any effort to disclose the amount of money it takes to keep the buildings on standard compliance whilst happily taking \$90,000 in rate money??? There are lots of centres. My daughter went to this one &amp; we found the actual building beautiful, historic and was part of the whole charm of the area. Maybe in the newer built areas they need conformity but I think Elwood needs this ECC and it's staff they are incredible.</p>	It unfortunate that the council can commit to their needs without really giving due notice or offering any proof of their reasons.	Agree	Neutral

<p>Dear councilors,</p> <p>I want to express my deep sadness, disappointment, and frustration, around the news that the City of Port Phillip Council, you, are planning to sell three buildings that are currently being used for community-run childcare. I have a son and daughter that attends one of these centres, Elwood Childcare Centre (ECC), and they both are flourishing in the smaller capacity centre. We have previously had our children in one of the many larger childcare centres and our children did not flourish like they do at ECC. I am saddened to hear that the proposal of selling the three centres and to build one large centre will be the aim of the council and this feels like a financial based decision rather than a quality-of-care decision. It's very sad to see that it appears the council are looking at financial gains regarding the education and safety of the children of Port Phillip rather than quality care.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the impact that making this announcement for consultation – which appears to be a box ticking exercise rather than a genuine consultative process – will damage the ability to attract new families to the centre and retain the ones that are here. It will also have families looking elsewhere, leaving the centre, and impacting the ability to maintain the staff currently employed. It feels like it will be slow bleed that we will not be able to stem.</p> <p>I also wonder about the support that will be offered to families while the centres close and building works commence. While there are other childcare facilities within the city of Port Phillip, many of these exceed our budget in which ECC meets.</p> <p>I feel strongly about continuity of care for my children in their early learning years and if anything, I would like to ask this council, to extend this timeline and hopefully find alternative option and engage in a <del>genuine consultative process</del>.</p>		Disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>The centre provides an amazing community for children and parents and it will be sad to see this go. It is a great asset for the elwood community.</p>	<p>It would be a great loss to our community.</p>	Agree	Agree
<p>My children both attend the Elwood Childrens centre. It is a very special an unique part of the fabric of the CoPP. I moved out of the area a couple of years ago and was incredibly home sick. My family have made some massive financial sacrifices to move back into the area we love so our children can grow up in the community we love. The ECC is the foundation of this. Its like our second family. Please find a way to keep the centre open.</p> <p>As a working mother it means so much to me to know that my children are not just a numbers is a large child care conglomerate...</p> <p>Second to this to knock it down and build some more modern townhouses will be a real shame. The architecture in the area is another part of what makes Elwood so special... Every time a period property is allowed to be demolished - Elwood loses a bit more of its charm.</p>	<p>Please find a way to keep the ECC open. There is some very generous funding available to support the modernisation of the centre. It is not restricted to centres over 66 places. I beg you to look at other options. If it can not be done please do not close it before alternative places in community run centres have been established - don't sell it before the new centre has been opened. And consider a way to replace the three closing centres with an equal number of places in other community or council run facilities.</p>	Neutral	Disagree
<p>I strongly oppose the sale of this and the other two properties, which just further dilutes the availability of high quality, accessible, affordable childcare in the local area. These properties were originally purchased for childcare and have provided generations of local children with an outstanding start in life.</p> <p>Community childcare engages kids and families in a way that most council services don't - increasingly, council sees residents as clients, or customers, or recipients of service. Community childcare means families get involved with the running of their service, providing many hours for management, governance, and maintenance.</p> <p>The small group option of centres like Tennyson St (and Eildon Rd and the Avenue) are a critical option for some children, and a welcome alternative to more modern sites - providing much needed choice.</p> <p>Your proposal to sell simply further penalises working families in the local area.</p>	<p>You tried this 20 years ago when my kids were at Tennyson St. Depressing that two decades on, you're back to the same solution.</p>	Neutral	Neutral
<p>Please do not sell.</p>		Neutral	Disagree
<p>I am against the sale of 46 Tennyson street for the following reasons:</p> <p>Tennyson street is already a busy street, with chronic parking shortages already a problem for the residents, myself included. Selling the property to property developers will inevitably result in more, high density housing on the street, exacerbating the parking issues, and also contributing to increased noise in the local area.</p> <p>The Elwood Childrens centre at 46 Tennyson street provides a valuable service to the immediate, and greater Port Phillip area, in a comfortable, quiet setting, and helps create a strong sense of community in the local area.</p> <p>The age of the building provides Tennyson street with added character, something that is fast disappearing from the Elwood area.</p> <p><u>The attached reports on the building fail to properly assess the costing a required to remedy the disability compliance issues.</u></p>		Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>This centre is an integral part of our community. My daughter attended this centre and it is needed in our community.</p> <p>We do not need any more development.</p>	<p>Do not do it</p>	Disagree	Disagree
		Agree	Neutral
<p>I have lived at 13 Tennyson Street for over thirty years. My three children, all grown up now, attended both 46 Tennyson Street. Indeed, I was President for my spell.</p> <p>The positive environment and encouragement provided by the outstanding staff have been fundamental in my children's growth and wellbeing.</p> <p>I have observed generations of children graduate from Centre all the better for their experience and fully prepared for their primary education. My eldest daughter Etta met her friend Nelly there and remain very best friends to this day nearly thirty-year later. and are now considering their own childcare needs.</p> <p>The Centre is much more than simply a childcare centre. It is a community hub where families meet, bond and form lifelong relationships.</p> <p>The same can be said for all three centres. They are the foundation for our community. Their demise, leaving only over-priced private childcare that most cannot afford, would be a sad reflection on our council and its priorities, particularly a sale to property developers that further undermines the fabric of our community and puts further pressure on our infrastructure.</p> <p>This should be a matter of social responsibility, not fiscal management.</p> <p><u>I strongly resent that the Council is even considering this proposal and voice my anger and concern as a resident and ratepayer.</u></p>		Neutral	Neutral
<p>As a local resident of Elwood and a past committee member of Elwood Childrens Centre I am deeply saddened to hear that the City of Port Phillip is looking to sell this building that has been a second home to many families (including my own) over the past 30 plus years.</p> <p>The Elwood Childrens Centre offers a unique service that is intimate, high quality (high staff to child ratios) and is managed by the community (the parents who want to have a say in their child's care and education).</p> <p>While the building has its challenges, council as the landlord has not maintained the building to the best of its ability and as a result it has deteriorated and needs some TLC. It would be greatly appreciated if council can agree to work with the ECC management and committee to work through a series of options that would allow this centre to still remain in Elwood, and of a similar size. If the current building is no longer deemed feasible what other options are there in Elwood? What has council already explored? I would like to know what steps council will take to ensure it goes above and beyond to assist and work with this centre to find a new home. There needs to be a place and an option for families within the community to choose these smaller community run centres that offer a unique service. While larger fit-for-purpose centres have their place so too do the smaller ones like ECC. They should not be discriminated against because of their smaller capacity which doesn't tick the box for state funding. As a local council (that works for the community) please advocate to state government to make a change in its requirements where a centre is exceeding in all areas but may not meet the allocated number of places for a service to warrant state funds.</p> <p>On another note, as a local rate payer it would be deeply upsetting to see yet another heritage frontage property sold off and turned into a block of apartments, please put measures in place to not allow this to happen.</p>	<p>Work with the community and listen to them.</p> <p>Show them that you have heard and will work with them.</p>	Agree	Neutral
<p>The more we invest in early childhood education, the better start in life our local kids will get. I went to Elwood Community Centre as a child in the 90s - we could not have afforded private childcare as my Mum was a single parent. I strongly oppose the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street Elwood and would support a renovation of the building for continued use as a not for profit children's centre.</p>		Disagree	Neutral
<p>Investing in early childhood care and learning would be preferable to selling property.</p> <p>The community would lose a treasured centre. Please consider investing rather than offloading.</p>	<p>I'm interested to see that this feedback forum is being 'listened to' by CoPP property portfolio manager rather than childhood services.</p> <p>What research into benefits of community-run childcare will be considered in decision-making about a commercial opportunity to boost CoPP coffers?</p>	Neutral	Neutral

<p>My name is [REDACTED] My family purchased a house in Elwood in January 2019. We were moving from South Melbourne where we had experienced 2 daycare centres with poor cultures and high staff turn. Through this we watched our daughter become a shell of her former outgoing self. She would cry on both drop off and pick up and when I watched her through the window she would be very disengaged. After researching all the centres we went on the Poet's Grove and Elwood Children's Centre waitlists. We were informed by the council that the waitlists were extremely long and the centres were difficult to get into.</p> <p>We spent a year at the St Kilda South Guardian (also known as treehouse) but no children in her class was zoned to Elwood Primary School so we were not able to create the community we had hoped. At the large centre our daughter was still not herself and wasn't engaging socially. After a year on the waitlist we were offered a place at Elwood Children's Centre. After 2 years Poets Grove had only been able to offer us a 1-day position when we needed 3 days.</p> <p>We moved to Elwood Children's Centre in January this year and it's been better than we could have hoped for. After just weeks our daughter was back to her outgoing self. She is always talking about friends she had made in her own class as well as the younger and older rooms. She loves all the teachers and will happily go into the centre on her own. We have met many parents at the multiple social activities the staff and committee organise which has been great for our own sense of community.</p> <p>Due to Covid we needed to reassess our living arrangements and we decided to stay in the Elwood postcode but downsize to a small apartment purely because we wanted our daughter to stay at the centre. Even though our own child will have moved to primary school by the scheduled close down date I have taken time out of a family holiday to address the council today. That's how rare I believe this centre is and how important it is to young families in the area past, present and future. In summary we have found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elwood community centres are extremely hard to get into, so closing any would cause stress to families in the area.</li> <li>- The small format centre has been instrumental in our daughters social development and recovery from 2 centres that had extremely poor culture and staff turn over.</li> <li>- A great centre culture is very hard to come by in the city of Port Phillip in our experience. Centres need to have long standing positive culture to attract and keep good staff and allow children to thrive.</li> <li>- We urge the council to find a solution that maintains the small format and a continuation of service, centre culture and staff at Elwood Children's Centre.</li> <li>- We love living in Elwood for the community, and the smaller community centres are what makes that possible for young families.</li> </ul> <p>Respectfully, councillors...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you do want to support the centres to become Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant, please commission the creation of a clear plan to do so, one that doesn't also include increasing childcare places and one that is staggered to ensure funding can be reasonably obtained.</li> <li>- If you do want the centre to be updated but council don't have the funds, commit to spending 24 months working with the centres to apply for state and federal funding.</li> <li>- If you care about the voices of young families in the area, please undertake a letterbox drop for the entire postcode of Elwood, not just the street the centre is on.</li> <li>- If you believe the community isn't in desperate need of these centres, please share with the public the current waitlist numbers for all community childcare centres in the Elwood postcode and how many places are available at these centres.</li> <li>- If you think an upgraded facility in North St Kilda will provide sufficient places for Elwood residents, survey your residents to find out how many young families walk/ride to childcare, how many can afford two cars, how many would struggle to make their commute from home to childcare to work in heavy traffic if they were to attend a centre outside their postcode.</li> <li>- If after all this, you're still concerned about liability and don't want to support community childcare centres any longer, allow each centre 24 months to raise funds to buy these buildings themselves, at the cost the council originally paid when they were purchased. Council should not be monetarily incentivised to close centres, so please take the temptation of profit out of this decision.</li> </ul>	<p>I do not see enough evidence within this documentation to show that there has been a plan created for what it will take to save the centre, what that will cost, and what funding has been sought to achieve this.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>I live in Elwood and have three children under five. I know first hand how difficult it is currently to find quality care, having inspected all childcare options in the area. Rather than close three council run centres we need to provide more. I love that you will build a large modern centre, but the notion that you will close three before you even begin work on the alternative will be devastating for our community. Also people need childcare to be nearby for ease of access to transport, work, dropping older siblings etc. In Elwood families walk every where, which is fantastic for health and road congestion. Which is why you need options across the council. Families deserve access to quality not for profit care and lower cost care where they can trust the educators and ratios. This is the most important investment for our children's future and Bubup and Poets grove are strained as it is.</p>		<p>Strongly agree</p>	<p>Strongly agree</p>
<p>We have lived in Elwood for 8 years and have always planned on sending our kids to the ECC. It embodies all the values of the local area and is the most highly recommended place to go. We were devastated when we found out we did not get in this year, and really struggled in general to find local childcare due to the large number of babies born in the area last year. Given the increase in babies born, and the known family quality of Elwood, it boggles the mind the council are planning on removing childcare places. Doing so will force people to move out of the area and this will impact Elwood's community and value. I truly hope the council reconsider this decision.</p>		<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>Please don't sell this beautiful centre. The staff are one of a kind, the quality of care extraordinary, and the small size is a huge community asset. When the children's services policy was being developed (pre-COVID) the size of a childcare centre wasn't really significant. But a lot has happened since then and we have been living through a public health disaster for much of the past 2 years. The size of a centre is now a public health issue. Less children means less illness transmission. In the entire pandemic, ECC has only had to close once. After a person on site tested positive. This did not lead to an outbreak or cluster of cases. It only ever became 1 case. ECC is an amazing centre, with fewer spots and dedicated staff who have implemented an amazing array of procedures to limit the spread of the virus. Being managed by a responsive committee of parents has also meant that policy and procedure changes happen rapidly. This is how they have largely remained open during this pandemic. Other centres cannot say the same. If you need to sell the building, fine. BUT FIND AN ALTERNATIVE HOME FOR ECC. Our grandchildren attend the centre. You shut the centre, and then we will have to care for the children. The impacts of your decision not only impact the children staff and parents, but older generations too. The modelling that your staff have provided in terms of ample supply of places nearby is just not true. The nest is a large centre, yes, but they are having trouble finding staff and so cannot accept children.</p>	<p>Find another home for the centre, and then sell. Please do not rip the carpet from under their feet.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>
<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am writing to object to the proposed sale of Elwood Children's Centre at 46 Tennyson St, Elwood and offer my feelings and concerns about this proposal. Elwood Children's Centre has been in operation for over 35 years. It is Elwood's much-loved community run childcare centre offering personalised and unique child care not available at other large and privatised centres in the area. This proposal has caused much distress to families and staff of Elwood Children's Centre and the neighbouring community. I don't believe this proposal has been thought about properly, planned and communicated to the staff of ECC and CoPP residents.</p> <p>My understanding from the Council meeting is that the building has concerns and needs to be made compliant. There is agreement from all in that the building should be made compliant and ECC staff, families and residents of CoPP wish to work with Council members to improve the building and satisfy the compliance. Elwood Children's Centre offers unique and personalised care for children of the community and in particular children with special needs. Children with mental and health concerns, children with autism and children with disabilities attend the centre. The type of care that this centre provides is NOT offered in other child care centres and closing the centre would be a great loss to residents of CoPP. As a parent of a child attending Elwood Children's Centre, I can verify that the level of personalised care offered to children with special needs does not even compare to other centres in the area. My son has been diagnosed with 'severe restrictive eating disorder' and has extreme anxiety and ongoing treatment for feeding, toileting, anxiety, speech therapy and other developmental concerns. I am a single mother who works full time and without the support and dedication of the staff at Elwood Children's Centre I don't believe my son would be making progress. There is no other centre in the area which provides specialised and personalised care like ECC. Further to this, this is a Community run centre which has the best interests of the children at heart. Other privatised centres in the area do not offer this level of personalised service and staff are disengaged and decisions are driven by profit.</p> <p>Selling the land which houses ECC would mean a loss of much needed child care places in Elwood. These places are needed for people like me (full time working single mothers) who have no option and rely on trusted child care. The proposal to sell the land and use the funds to improve the other centre in St Kilda does not make any sense because it does not consider the child care places lost and the time frame needed to improve the other St Kilda centre and increase capacity. Child care places are already in short supply and closing down ECC would be putting many families at risk. Full time working single mothers would be forced out of the workforce in order to care for their children, ultimately losing their jobs and potentially losing housing. The planning of this proposal simply does not make sense and is not in the best interests of the residents of CoPP. Elwood Children's Centre is also only one of a few centres offering affordable child care. Unlike other privatised centres driven by profit, the quality of the service remains at a high level whilst affordability is maintained. Losing a centre like ECC would be forcing single mothers out of the area to try and find other affordable child care options. In addition to the above-mentioned points, Elwood Children's</p>	<p>Please provide proof of the purchase of the land by council. It has been noted on many occasions that the land was gifted to Council, however Council have stated that they purchased the land. Please provide proof of this.</p>	<p>Strongly disagree</p>	<p>Neutral</p>

<p>Centre has been in operation for over 35 years and closing it down would mean a loss of jobs to a dedicated and specialised team of Educators and Staff (some of whom have been working at the centre for over 20 years). This team of staff and educators are like a family and it would be devastating and a shock for all to be left unemployed. This team of staff and educators go above and beyond their normal job description and are an asset to the centre and to the CoPP. Lastly, I would just like to point out that this proposal to sell the land which houses ECC could not have come at a worst time. The past 2 years have been tough for all. Families have been affected mentally and financially by the stress of Covid and the impact it has taken on their lives. I don't believe the proposal to sell the land is in the best interests of the residents of the CoPP but instead it is an opportunity to profit.</p> <p>Whilst I strongly object to selling 46 Tennyson St, Elwood, I agree that solutions should be looked at to make the building compliant.</p> <p>I ask that Council share the building compliance requirements so that ECC staff and a team of professionals can work with Council on this.</p> <p>I urge all Councillors to reconsider the proposal to sell the land which houses Elwood Children's centre at 46 Tennyson St, Elwood.</p> <p>I ask you to stand in the shoes of a full-time single working mother with a child who has special needs and requires personalised care.</p> <p>Please do not choose profit over the needs and basic rights of residents of CoPP. In these difficult times we need to stand together to support one another. I ask that you support the Elwood community who need Elwood Children's Centre for people like me.</p> <p>Should you wish to contact me personally I am available on [REDACTED]</p> <p>Sincerely, [REDACTED]</p>			
<p>My wife [REDACTED] and I strongly oppose your proposed sale of ECC. The education system in Elwood (ECC and Elwood Primary) was the driving factor for us moving here recently. We wanted to ensure our daughters receive a fantastic education and all we've learnt has been amazing stories of both locations. To learn of this development regarding ECC is extremely disappointing. Childcare is an incredibly hard thing to do right and we can't wait to start our daughter Florence there in early 2022. Please reconsider your decision to sell the property and lose a piece of Elwood that not only supports the local community, but actively promotes it outside the CoPP.</p>		Disagree	Neutral
<p>Hi, We are currently thinking about moving to Elwood as the area seems to fit our life style. Having a 2 year old toddler, we are very concern about the 3 childcare centre closures. Childcare waitlists tend to be very long and waiting for private centres to fill up the shortfall will take years so there will be a bigger shortage in the short term. As we are both working, that is not something we can compromise on. Therefore we will reconsider our options in the light of this information. Thanks for reading me, [REDACTED]</p>	<p>The title for this article is very revealing: "Proposal to sell three council properties". I think you really understand the closure is against the community best interest: you make it look like it's a real estate operation when in fact it's the closure of much needed community service and you only mention that in the small prints. It's very disturbing coming from community elected leaders. I wonder if that's the message you sent during the last council election campaign...</p>	Disagree	Disagree
<p>Hello I'm very disappointed and sad hearing the news of the council's decision want to sell Elwood's childcare centre because this is the place where I used to work and I absolutely loved the atmosphere. I didn't think there could be such a small and private spot for children to grow and learn, in Melbourne. I, myself, have been in a small childcare (overseas) myself when I was a child and I think it was the best choice my parents made when they put me there. I was able to get attention of the educators when I needed it and more, everyone was there for you. I was able to make friends that I still have because there were small groups what made it like a second family. It's about noticing the humans you're working with not only when it's needed but always. Not everything can be better in big company built childcare's and not everything should be about money, when the sad truth is it often is. I hope you reconsider the decision and if anything then maybe renovate the one that is already there. Keep what is real, please!</p>		Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>100% reject this proposal</p>	<p>I reject this proposal as this will displace my child's care and education options in this area who I intended to enrol next year. There will also be many more children that also miss out on education opportunities if this proposal goes ahead.</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>I don't support seeking this property when it's current use as a childcare centre is vitally important</p>	<p>Don't sell the property &amp; lose a fabulous childcare centre which will impacts local workers wanting childcare that's not available</p>	Neutral	Disagree
<p>Community childcare is important. It allows families to connect with other local families. I DO NOT support the sale of 46 Tennyson Street in Elwood. My children, who are now 17 &amp; 19 years old, attended Elwood Children's Centre many years ago. It was a wonderful welcoming environment, perfect transition to school. We still live in Elwood and have lived here since 1995.</p> <p>I do not agree with the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson St Elwood, nor the other 2 childcare centres the council are proposing to sell.</p> <p>The reasons for this are multifold:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Elwood has a brilliant reputation for its choice of community run childcare centres, as well as schools. These were a big reason why we decided to purchase our first home in Elwood last year and to start a family. By removing these centres rather than supporting them or finding solutions (e.g. finding an alternative building) the council are not upholding the values that the community hold dear.</li> <li>2) The Tennyson St centre is listed as "exceeding" national guidelines. The council should be investing in these assets due to their excellent performance, rather than close them down.</li> <li>3) With their long wait lists the centres clearly fill a strong demand for affordable, local, community-driven Childcare. We need more community-centred low-cost childcare options, not fewer.</li> <li>4) The council plans to redevelop another centre, but this will take 2 years and would only be able to take on "some" of the children from the closed centres. What will families do with their children in the meantime or moving forward? This is not a sustainable model of childcare provision.</li> <li>5) The centres have been providing significant sums every year to pay for "maintenance" of the buildings, which from their account has not been reinvested into the sites. The council should demonstrate where these funds have been spent, and, if the funds have not been supporting the upkeep of the properties, must explain why.</li> <li>6) Leaving childcare to the private sector to "fill in demand" will simply pass higher costs to new parents, which generally results in fewer mums re-engaging in full participation of the work force and a worsening of pay gaps etc. Nor do these centres provide the same quality of childcare as community-led centres. This will only weaken the attractiveness of Elwood and surrounding suburbs as families look for suburbs that can satisfy their needs.</li> </ol> <p>Covid has shown us how much people value their local amenities. Selling off cherished and high-performing childcare centres for a fast profit because the buildings require investment should not be the answer. Once gone, these types of places are essentially gone forever. Does council have any plans to establish new and equivalent community-run low cost childcare centres in the local area? What about the staff who have dedicated decades working at these centres making them what they are today?</p> <p>The council must work to find a compromise that preserves community-run childcare centres. This may include purchasing alternative buildings in the area and relocate the existing staff and childcare places to a new centre, or seeking additional funding from other sources to manage the costs (fundraising, state or federal gvt grants etc).</p> <p>Does the council have a plan and have in place provisions to support transition to a new arrangement of centres to satisfy local need for low cost community childcare to back up this proposal? If the proposal is simply to remove these centres citing "cost", and not replace with equivalent/additional low-cost childcare places in the area then the council does not understand the broader value of these centres that transcend 'cost' alone.</p>	<p>My question is why does the property need to be sold? Why can't it continue as a childcare centre?</p>	Neutral	Disagree
<p>ECC is an important and community focused centre which has fostered engagement for little people and big people. It has a fabulous ethos, one which is made better in its current space. Kids and adult alike live the quirky layout- so much better than the modern sterile kids centers. Please keep this centre here in its current form. You just can not replace a place like this!</p>	<p>Please don't sell. It's an asset to all the people of port Philip.</p>	Neutral	Disagree



<p>I am 21 weeks pregnant and 4 weeks ago I put my UNBORN child on a wait list for childcare in the neighbourhood for January 2023. I was told I may not get the 4-5 days that I require. As I am a solo parent I must return to work in order to support us. This area needs more community based care for our children. The council's inability to manage these properties over time to avoid such a closure is inexcusable. What other solutions are you providing? If you are opening new centres these should be opened and operational at the time of closures to compensate and not leave the community at a loss. This council does not think enough about the needs of the community. This is clearly an excuse to sell the property to make money.</p>		Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>This childcare centre is incredibly well rated and there are no other community centres realistically nearby. The proposal to consolidate to the central location is not practical given the distance it is from this centre. These facilities are vital to enable working mums to get back into the workforce and need to continue being supported.</p>	<p>If my understanding is correct the property was bequested to serve as a childcare centre - therefore council does not have the right to sell it.</p>	Neutral	Agree
<p>Childcare should remain with arental in ut and not be rivatised</p>		Neutral	Agree
<p>Please gift all Council owned childcare properties to community run not-for-profit operators;  -&gt; if they are community run centres, donate them to those community (not-for-profit) groups.  -&gt; if they are Council run centres, then ask for a new not-for-profit community group to be created that can then take over the centre.  This will enable more targeted subsidies by Council, if needed in addition to significant State and Commonwealth funding in this area, to be directed to the children of residents (yes, must be residents) who need it the most.  At the moment, there is a broad-brush subsidy to all childcare users who may be well-off and therefore not need it. This is immoral. And the childcare users may not even be residents of the City of Port Phillip!  The recent Council reporting from about 18 months ago confirmed that Council run centres do not provide better childcare than community run centres. They were assessed as providing an equal standard of early education. I have had two of my children in a Port Phillip Council run centre and subsequently a community run centre (property owned by Port Phillip Council). It was my experience that the Community run centre provided a far better standard of care for my children than the Port Phillip Council run centre. I understand that a sample size of 1 is not statistically significant, and others may have different experiences with different centres.</p>		Neutral	Strongly agree
<p>Local childcare matters to families, their children &amp; labour force participation. If property is sold (some portion) of proceeds should go to funding alternative local services.  Lowering labour force participation (esp. of women) lowers demand for other local services which may then not survive. Please model these 'negative externalities' (as the economists call them) so an informed decision can be made.  Current child care centre might be able to generate more income if it's land and/or some portion of its facilities could be used for other activities.</p>		Disagree	Agree
<p>The community desperately needs community based childcare in familiar surroundings and longevity of care. This is critical for the well-being of children and their education, for families who need to work.  Affordable Childcare raises broader community living standards, by allowing full economic participation of adult family members and long term education prospects for children. How does this correspond with the closure of multiple sites? Private sector provision is too expensive for many and has an entirely different focus. There are also not enough of those either.  Is it true that the facility pays \$100k a year for maintenance and none has been done? This is a disgrace and should be rectified rather than selling. Selling only benefits the council bottom line, fixing and supporting the community fits with what council is supposed to do and would be better for the long term.  Fix the problem, don't sell it off.</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed sale of the Elwood Children's Centre(ECC) building.  My 3 year old daughter attends the ECC and it is a wonderful local resource for families living in and around Elwood. We moved her from another childcare centre in Elwood last year and have found the ECC to be excellent. The staff and culture at ECC is very caring and nurturing and I would like to advocate against this proposed sale.  Kind Regards,</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>Where is your site audit for ECC. You have provided an access audit for the two other centres but no additional documents for this centre.  As a local parent who's children do not go to this centre I find it appalling that the council is removing almost 80 daily childcare spaces at smaller community run centres. Private centres do not offer a substitute for community managed centres both in terms of the service offered and a significant cost difference. Pushing families to expensive private centres will inevitably lead to a reduction in utilisation by families of early childhood services and a consequent reduction in workforce participation especially from working parents.  I do not support the proposed sale of 46 Tennyson Street.</p>	<p>If you are going to sell this centre first I would make more sense to put some of the proceed in to the remaining council centres in the area</p>	Disagree	Disagree
<p>Elwood Children's Centre provides a unique and vital service to the Elwood community. It is heartbreaking to learn of its potential closure. While my 4 year old daughter is about to start school and we will not require the service soon, I am so saddened to think that other families will not be able to experience what the ECC has to offer.  Our family came to ECC when we moved to the area this year. Moving during a pandemic, is challenging and we knew our daughter needed a nurturing environment to support her learning and development. At ECC we got exactly that. After experiencing 3 years at a large private daycare provider, the difference in care was astonishing. The quality of care at the ECC is second to none. The ECC staff are dedicated and provide the highest standard of care, and learning opportunities. They have made us feel like part of the family and a part of the broader Elwood community.  ECC plays such an important role in this community, it provides quality, affordable childcare places in Elwood. It allows parents to have a say, (even with the best of intentions this is not something private centres can provide). Parent's should have choice in what type of care is available to them and the loss of collaborative centres in the Port Philip area is a real blow to the choices available to us.  As a working mother, finding quality daycare can be a challenge, and I am disappointed that a council that claims to support women in the work force, may be forcing women out of the workforce, as a result of these daycare closures.  I ask that the council reconsiders their plans to sell 46 Tennyson Street.</p>		Strongly disagree	Disagree
<p>Community childcare centres support our community and provide affordable childcare. Our community needs this childcare centre to support the significant female population of Elwood and their families, many of whom are single mothers who need affordable childcare so they can work and support themselves and their families. . Please don't put profits ahead of our community needs.</p>		Disagree	Disagree
<p>We need community centres and open space for all to enjoy. My whole family has enjoyed using the space over the years. Why is council selling everything what's wrong with u guys.</p>		Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>I object to this proposal</p>	<p>So many people rely on and benefit from this centre. You lot need to reassess your priorities and put decisions into the hands of locals</p>	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
<p>Child care is extremely NEEDED.  I Don't think much more needs to be explained . It's common-sense.</p>	<p>Common-sense should be used .  Child care is very needed.</p>	Neutral	Strongly disagree
<p>I live in [redacted] hich is close to Tennyson - I totally disagree that this property is sold!!It is a community hub - many gather with their children and friends.</p>	<p>I would love to know the reason for the sale of this property- I'm astounded that this can be even considered where else in Elwood can the community gather ? - close to the school and kindergarten.. is this just a money making venture?</p>	Disagree	Strongly disagree

## SUBMISSION IN RESPECT OF PROPOSAL TO SELL 46 TENNYSON STREET ELWOOD

respectfully submit as follows:

1. We own and occupy Elwood.
2. We have owned and occupied our property since before 46 Tennyson Street was converted to a childcare centre (as such premises were then called).
3. The childcare centre has never had sufficient parking, the council having issued itself a permit with severely reduced parking and subsequently modified its own permit to allow zero parking, to cope with rising standards of open space.
4. The childcare centre does not have a “drop off” area, such as the one at the nearby Goodstart Early Learning Centre at 35 Tennyson Street.
5. One result of the absence of both parking and a drop off area is that, during morning peak traffic times, parents with young children park on the opposite side of Tennyson Street and cross the road through the peak hour traffic, creating an unsafe mixture of vehicles and pedestrians.
6. Recognising the traffic safety problem, at the instigation of users of the childcare centre, the council has installed traffic control items in the form of a series of central traffic islands, defining a broad centre area of the road which can be used as a pedestrian refuge and, by narrowing the carriageway, is designed to have the effect of keeping vehicles to the 40kph speed limit (this is only partially effective in our experience).
7. Unfortunately, these traffic control measures have adverse consequences for cyclists, “squeezing” them between the parked cars and the passing traffic, increasing the chances of “dooring” and other mishaps.
8. The traffic control measures also create conflicts with passing traffic, when residents are entering or leaving their driveways and difficulties when refuse collection is in progress.
9. Over that last 30 years, this part of Tennyson Street has experienced an increase in flows of both vehicular traffic and cyclists.
10. Closure of the childcare centre would enable a modified traffic control plan, more friendly to passing and resident motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.
11. When the childcare centre opened, there was a changing demographic in the area, with a small but growing number of families with young children (including our own).
12. When the childcare centre opened, there were few childcare operators, with most centres being operated by small enterprises with one or two centres and by municipal councils. While the sector today still has small enterprises operating somewhat less than half the centres, there are also large enterprises, such as not-for-profit Goodstart Early Learning (655 centres) [35 Tennyson Street], G8 Education Limited (ASX GEM) (470 centres) [46 Dendy Street], Guardian Childcare and Education (120 centres) [45 Brighton Road], Greenleaves

Early Learning (50 centres). Further, many schools also offer after-hours care or a full early education service. As a result, there is much less likely now to be the situation of market failure which, it could be argued, existed at the time the childcare centre at 46 Tennyson Street was opened, necessitating public provision of childcare.

13. Finally, the council should be considering the best use of its capital. The property at 46 Tennyson Street has a value in the vicinity of \$3m - \$3.5m. The council must consider whether this capital can be better used than deployed to provide a small childcare centre, at premises which cannot be brought up to desirable standards, particularly with regard to traffic and parking.
14. In conclusion, it is our submission that the council should proceed with the disposal of the property at 46 Tennyson Street, as this is in the wider interests of the community.

## **SUBMISSION TO THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP'S INTENTION TO SELL THE PROPERTY AT 39 THE AVENUE (THE AVENUE CHILDREN'S CENTRE AND KINDERGARTEN)**

The Committee of Management (COM) of The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten (The Avenue) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposal to sell three Council properties, and focuses in particular on The Avenue, located at 39 The Avenue, Balaclava.

The Avenue is a community-run early childhood centre in Balaclava, operating since 1975 in a converted residential home in the Avenue. The Avenue has 40 places for children aged between six weeks and school age, offering 20 kindergarten places (3 and 4 year old programmes) and 20 childcare places for younger children. It offers long day-care, all meals are provided, and there are separate rooms for Babies (0-2years), Toddlers (2-3years) and Kindergarten (3-5years). The Avenue offers a unique, safe and nurturing environment for the children, and one that aims to meet their specific social, emotional and educational needs.

Our not-for-profit, community-managed centre has provided an invaluable kindergarten and early childhood service to local residents and the wider community for more than 45 years. The Avenue is managed by a dedicated group of staff, one of whom has been at The Avenue for more than 30 years, and an experienced volunteer committee of parents.

The Avenue's COM is made up of 10 current parents. It is a long standing Committee that provides effective governance and stability to The Avenue and consistent involvement in the day-to-day running of the centre. More generally, our entire parent cohort is very committed and engaged in the management of the centre and welfare of the attending children.

The Council should remain committed to supporting a range of early childhood services to the families who live and work in the local area. We understand that the existing building does not meet required disability access standards, and this needs to be addressed - as it needs to be in many buildings in the City of Port Phillip. That said, we are more than just a building.

**The purpose of this submission is to highlight to the Council the immense value of The Avenue and community-run early childhood centres and offer viable solutions to ensure the retention of The Avenue for future generations.**

### **VALUE OF COMMUNITY-RUN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES**

The value of community-run early childhood centres cannot be understated. Services such as The Avenue sit at the heart of our local area and contribute greatly to creating strong, connected, resilient and active local communities. Research shows that community-owned children's services are delivering some of the highest quality education and care in Australia.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cccinc.org.au/advocacy/why-choose-community-owned-not-for-profit>

The proposal to sell three community-run, not-for-profit kindergarten and early childhood centres - forcing the closure of Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten, Elwood Children's Centre and The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten - **will result in the loss of more than 120 local kindergarten and childcare places.**

**These three centres currently offer a total of 67 funded kindergarten places.** The Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) agreed upon by the City of Port Phillip in April 2021 shows that Port Phillip has not achieved universal access for four year old children living in this city, with only around an 85% participation rate. Council's proposal will reduce available kindergarten places, further impacting the participation rate of 4 year olds in the municipality. Capacity to accommodate 3 year olds in the roll out of three year old kindergarten programmes will be even more difficult following the closure of these three centres.

Community-owned and run education and care services like The Avenue are fundamental to the development of a civil society and the maintenance of the highest quality, community shaped care. They support the wellbeing and development of children and families in our community.

## **VALUE OF THE AVENUE**

The Avenue is a special place, a home away from home for our children, their families and our staff. Our centre operates with above mandated carer-to-child ratios and has been graded overall by the Federal government website 'Starting Blocks' as meeting national quality standards.

The Avenue does not exist to make a profit. Notwithstanding, it is independent and financially viable. As a not-for-profit organisation, any operating surplus is reinvested into the centre to benefit local children, not paid to commercial owners or shareholders.

Since opening in 1975, more than 2,500 children have been educated and cared for by dedicated and passionate staff from The Avenue. In a recent survey of our current families, the quality of care, atmosphere of our centre and the location of the centre within a quiet side street were identified as the most important attributes. Families also place significant value on The Avenue being a not-for-profit community-managed centre, with over 75% of respondents indicating this was a very important attribute. Almost 95% of respondents identified the sense of community fostered by The Avenue as the attribute they would miss the most if the centre was closed by the Council.

The Council's proposal suggests that families from The Avenue can simply move to nearby centres, most of them privately run, significantly more expensive, and many with a lower rating against the national quality standards. This shows no regard or understanding for the needs of families. Nor does it consider the years-long waiting lists that exist at many of the existing centres.

In a survey conducted of current families, more than half The Avenue's current families indicated that they walk or ride to our centre to drop off and pick up their children. More than

80% of respondents live within 20 minutes of The Avenue. Almost 50% of families indicated that if fees were to rise by around \$20 per day this would become unaffordable for their family. If fees were to rise by more than \$35 per day, which many private centres in the area currently charge, almost 80% of families indicated that their current utilisation of early childhood services would be unaffordable and they would have to reduce their utilisation of these services. In the event this happened, 50% of families indicated that one parent would need to delay their return to work or reduce their work hours.

See Appendix 1 which includes responses received from current families in relation to their experience at The Avenue and how the Council's current proposal is impacting them and their children.

### **WHAT WILL BE LOST IF THE AVENUE IS FORCED TO CLOSE**

The loss of The Avenue will have major and widely felt impacts on the Port Phillip community:

- 40 daily childcare places, including 20 funded 4-year old kindergarten places, and the ability to offer funded 3-year old places in the future. The closure of the Avenue will remove these places permanently. Such a move by the Council comes at a time where the State Government has committed over \$5billion over the coming decade to deliver a three-year old kindergarten program, creating over 6000 jobs across the state.
- The loss of employment for 13 FTE and several casual staff members. The Avenue has very low staff turnover and many of the team members have been with the centre for more than a decade and one has completed more than 30 years service. Of the three kindergarten room educators, two are Bachelor Qualified and one is Diploma Qualified.
- The removal of a tight-knit local community and sense of place for both past and present families. In its 46 years, The Avenue has created a community through the many social events and parent run working bees. The value of the community created by The Avenue is immeasurable for many of our families.
- Local care that is accessible for all. All families from the local community have access to The Avenue. A big part of many families' decision to come to The Avenue is its local accessibility (walkable) and small size. The loss of The Avenue will remove that diversity in choice from the community.
- The Avenue has a strong history of operating as an inclusive centre, and has consistently cared for children with special needs and vulnerable members of our local community. Our track record at accommodating these children has made us a centre of choice for many families seeking care.
- The closure will push families into private centres, all of which have a substantially higher daily fee than The Avenue and do not provide the intimate family environment that is integral to a small community run service. This increased cost and potential

inaccessibility of these centres, will ultimately lead to families ceasing to use early learning facilities and lower workforce participation (the brunt of this likely to be borne by women).

- A loss of more than \$35,000 annually to the local economy as well as significant indirect contributions from families attending the centre. The Avenue supports many local small businesses when purchasing food and supplies for the centre, and regularly takes children to local cafes and shops as excursions.

## **COUNCIL MUST FOCUS ON THE INHERENT VALUE OF THE AVENUE - NOT ITS LAND VALUE**

The purpose of local governments is to provide services to their community. The Avenue is one of many community services supported (through the provision of the building) by the Council. It is unclear how the sale and permanent closure of The Avenue, and the other two centres, fulfils the Council's purpose of providing valuable and needed services to the community. To date, the Council has focused on the cost of upgrading the buildings.

In our view, the value The Avenue has provided the community has and will be an enormous return on investment. If the value is viewed more holistically and not merely as a line item on a report, additional investment overwhelmingly serves the public interest. It's not just a building, it's a home, a place of learning and growth and an entire community. It is also an excellent example of the Council having a positive impact on the community and potentially a demonstration of the Council's commitment to the local area.

## **BUILDING WORKS**

There are two distinct but connected issues with the building occupied by The Avenue. The first is its compliance with accessibility requirements. The second is modernising the facilities to meet the education and care standards expected by the community. Modernising buildings is by its very nature a subjective task, and it remains unclear to the COM of The Avenue what exactly the Council means when it states that the building must meet 'contemporary standards of functionality.' Both issues are dealt with below.

### Funding of maintenance and capital works

Prior to working through the costs of the works, it is important to acknowledge the financial contribution by The Avenue to the Council. The Avenue makes quarterly contributions to the Council in the form of two levies, the maintenance levy and the infrastructure levy. In total, The Avenue pays the Council circa \$90,000 per year. In return, Council is supposed to utilise that money to pay for day to day maintenance and capital works when required. Despite the significant contribution to Council, on average the Council only spends around \$30,000 per year on The Avenue.

We have previously sought to engage with the Council in relation to the various inefficiencies in the provision of maintenance services at the Avenue. Maintenance requests are often not completed in a timely manner, and we regularly have to make more than one request before work is done. Further, there is seemingly little oversight of contractors employed by the

Council, which often results in contractors attending multiple times to fix one small issue (presumably charging each time they attend the centre). At times, the safety of the children and staff are potentially jeopardised by the mismanagement of maintenance at our centre. We again seek to engage with Council in relation to the management of maintenance at our centre and reiterate our desire to cease paying the maintenance levy and take control of maintenance ourselves.

Despite repeated attempts to engage with Council about accessing the Infrastructure Levy funds to complete required upgrade works at our centre, Council has failed to complete any of the upgrades required. This failure by Council to upgrade the building over time has led to neglect, non-compliance and ultimately increased costs to remedy the situation. In 2017 and 2019, we raised whether we could be responsible for maintenance and stop paying the maintenance levy - this was rejected. Similarly, attempts to engage with Council about using funds in the Infrastructure Levy Reserve have been consistently rebuffed without clear explanations.

(a) Accessibility Requirements:

The Avenue acknowledges that the existing building on site is not fully compliant with accessibility requirements. That said, the accessibility requirements can be addressed. Reports have been conducted in relation to compliance with the various legislative requirements, and builders have been engaged to quote in completing the required works.

The Council and The Avenue have both commissioned reports, which have identified a number of areas where the building fails to comply with access legislation. However, it appears that Council's most recent report on the costings for The Avenue does not include addressing all of the accessibility issues.

The Avenue has however had all of the accessibility issues costed and a copy of this quote from a registered builder is attached at Appendix 2. Based on our preliminary discussions with this builder, we understand these works are able to be done without significant service disruption.

In addition, the State Government has committed to providing additional funding. Funds paid by The Avenue via the Infrastructure Levy are also available. The total pool of money available in the Infrastructure Levy Reserve is currently \$6.22m. In our view, there is more than adequate funding available to complete the required works. However, based on our current understanding, these funding options have not been fully investigated nor considered and for reasons unknown, there is a reluctance to do so. It is our expectation that all options would be considered before deciding to close the centre and selling the building.

(b) Modernising and Maintenance of the Centre

The concept of 'contemporary standards of functionality' is by its very nature harder to define, as this concept, created by the Council, is nebulous. It is therefore harder to determine exactly what would need to be done to meet this undefined standard consistently referred to by the Council. Seeking to achieve this could potentially result in endless renovations and works. The costs associated with achieving this 'standard' are therefore



harder to outline, however we have sought to analyse the works identified by Council, and the costs of those works, below.

In addition to the accessibility issues, we acknowledge the building is in need of proactive maintenance and upgrades to modernise some of the facilities. Instead of proactive and constructive engagement with us about these works, we are faced with slow and reactionary maintenance, and a refusal to engage on what is actually desired and needed in terms of upgrades.

We again ask the Council to engage constructively with us in relation to the upgrade works we actually need rather than many of the upgrade items proposed by the Council. As outlined in further detail below, many of the upgrades proposed by the Council would be nice to have in a perfect world but are in actual fact completely unnecessary for the centre to continue to function as an education and care facility for our local community.

### *Council's plans for the building*

In 2016 and 2017 the COM of The Avenue participated in various meetings and discussions with the Council in relation to the *Children's Centres Improvement Project*. During this period plans were put forward by the Council that proposed extensive renovation of the building. This included:

- Restumping
- Fixing the accessibility issues
- Creating
  - A reception area (in addition to the foyer)
  - A much larger staff meeting room and separate planning area
  - A larger office space (for up to four staff to be seated at desks)
  - An additional toilet and shower room for staff (in addition to creation of an accessible unisex toilet)

In our discussions with the Council we sought to engage in relation to the above works, pointing out that some of the proposed works might be nice to have but were certainly not essential. For example, we do not need a reception area. We do not have a receptionist and never will have. While we acknowledge the staff room and office are in need of modification, the significant expansion of the office and staff room as proposed by the Council unnecessarily consumes a significant amount of floor space. Instead, we remain of the view that modifications are able to be done within the existing footprint of the centre or with a small expansion that would not impact our capacity. Despite our attempts to engage on these plans, Council insisted that these works were necessary and proceeded to get the works costed accordingly. We understand that it is these plans that Council have recently re-costed and uploaded to the Have Your Say website on 31 January 2022.

### *Costs of the Council's plans*

In 2017, the total costs to achieve full compliance were estimated at \$981,582.<sup>2</sup> As can be seen in Council's own document (Appendix 3), it was stated that for this cost the building

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<sup>2</sup> See Council's *Children's Centres Improvement Project: Building information*, dated July 2017.

would achieve “full compliance.” We are not aware of any significant changes to legislation since that time that would require further works to be conducted to achieve “full compliance.” That said, we acknowledge that due to Council’s neglect in the last 5 years, the cost of remediation works required will have increased.

In July 2017 when those costings were provided, we were not provided with a breakdown of the costs, but expect that many of the contingencies and other unnecessary costs detailed below were likely included in this figure.

The 31 January 2022 costs were estimated at \$1,000,628. We note the most recent costings uploaded by Council on 31 January 2022 included:

- \$83,000 in consultants fees
- \$83,000 in project risk/contingency
- \$26,000 in design contingency
- \$63,000 in construction contingency
- \$55,000 in management support fees
- \$85,000 in construction cost escalation (given the project is projected to take 31 months)

If many of these contingencies were stripped out or reduced and the project was managed efficiently and effectively, the building costs, as costed by the Council’s own contractor, are estimated at just over \$600,000.

Council has indicated that if work was to be done at The Avenue it would require closure of the centre for two years. While this may be the case if a total demolition and rebuild was done, it is simply not true that renovating the centre to make the centre compliant and improve functionality would require closure for such a long period. As Council would be aware, works can and are done at early learning centres (see eg. Bubup Nairn, which has had a rolling schedule of works completed since its initial construction to fix a myriad of issues), schools, hospitals and other facilities without closing. Builders regularly complete works in stages in order to minimise disruption to businesses and ensure that complete closure is only necessary for a short period of time.

#### *Exclusions from the Council costings*

Noting the above, we were concerned and surprised that the costings appear to exclude enacting various recommendation items in the accessibility report prepared for Council in November 2021. Given the issues focussed on by council officers in their 1 December 2021 report, namely the lack of compliance with access legislation, it is concerning that Council appear not to have had those works costed. Despite Council’s apparent failure to have those works costed, The Avenue COM has engaged a registered builder to cost the access works and other necessary works such as rewiring and painting. The details of those costs are outlined further below.

## ISSUES WITH THE PROPOSAL TO SELL

The Avenue strongly opposes Council's proposal to sell the building from which we currently operate. The process undertaken to date by Council lacks rigour and appears to have been commenced under the misguided pretence that the works are either (or a combination of):

- too expensive;
- unable to be partly or wholly funded by State Government; and/or
- incapable of being done due to heritage or some other reason proposed by council officers.

At the time Council voted on the intention to sell the three centres and to commence community consultation, Council had not undertaken a costing exercise to determine the likely cost of upgrading the existing centre to be accessibility compliant. **Despite this work not having been done, council officers have stated in their report to Councillors that the works will be too expensive to complete.** Further, based on statements made by council officers to the COM of The Avenue on 15 February 2022, Council have not obtained, and appear to be reticent to obtain costings to bring the building up to full compliance in addition to modernising certain aspects of the centre. Without doing this work, it is unclear how Councillors could support the recommendation of the council officers to sell The Avenue, or any of the other centres currently being considered. Note that as at the date of this submission, despite seeking clarification from Council officers, we are still unclear whether Council has had both the compliance and functional upgrades costed.

The Avenue has undertaken its own costing works to determine the likely cost of upgrading the Centre to a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) complaint state. As per this assessment, a figure of less than \$500,000 is likely required to complete the required upgrades.

### *Past attempts to engage the Council on works required*

In August 2017, the COM offered to partly fund or pay for those works in their entirety, however this offer was rejected less than a month later without even discussing or engaging with us. (See Appendix 4 a copy of our letter to the Council and the response received).

In 2019, we again sought to engage with council officers in relation to the potential acquisition of the building. (See Appendix 5 a copy of our letter to the Council) In March 2020, we were told this matter was being further considered internally however no outcome was ever communicated to us. (See Appendix 6)

### *Government funding for upgrades*

Council have erroneously stated that no State or Federal Government funding is available to assist with such upgrade/accessibility works. To date, no evidence has been provided that Council have tried to secure this funding. We refer to the letter we understand was sent to the Mayor on 21 January 2022 from the Minister for Early Education, Minister Stitt, which outlined the funding available and completely refuted the repeated misleading statements made in relation to government funding by the Council.

With State Government funding and the Council Infrastructure funds (currently \$6.2 million) it is clear that the accessibility issues and other essential works can be addressed for our centre and the other two facilities.

Finally, arguments that the works required could not be done because of heritage restrictions or car parking availability are untrue and provide insufficient justification for Council's proposal. In particular, we note that The Avenue site is not covered by a Heritage Overlay and the site also enjoys existing use rights (Clause 63.01 of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme).

## **A WAY FORWARD**

Outlined below are three key potential solutions the COM of The Avenue have identified as alternatives to the sale and permanent closure of our valuable community service. There are however a few key steps that the Council should take immediately:

1. Council should meet with the State Government together with the COMs of The Avenue, Elwood Children's Centre and Eildon Rd to examine all sources of funding with the aim of retaining these centres in our community. For too long council officers have sought to keep the three centres at arms length in these discussions.
2. Council should cease the process currently underway, which could result in the sale and closure of these three centres. Councillors should immediately vote to stop this current process and direct Council to engage in a good faith exploration of all of the available options for the three centres.
3. Council should provide long-term leases for the centres while government funding from both State and Federal sources are explored and building plans and costs are finalised in partnership with each of the centres.
4. Council should commit to supporting small community based childrens' services in recognition of their value to the community and their importance for the early education of young children.

It is important for Council to understand and appreciate that the value of The Avenue is far more than bricks and mortar at 39 The Avenue, Balaclava. The value of The Avenue lies in its educational service, the wonderful and dedicated staff and the critical role it plays in developing a strong and connected local community. We see no reason for this service to disappear purely due to the age and condition of the building.

### **Option 1 - Allow for a transfer of ownership to the community**

As proposed by The Avenue in 2019, we would like to reiterate our desire to take ownership of, and therefore responsibility for, The Avenue from the Council. This could be in the form of a lease-to-own arrangement, outright purchase or a divestment by the Council to the community. We understand that this would not be the first time that the Council disposed of an asset back to the community (e.g. the Elwood St Kilda Neighbourhood Learning Centre in Tennyson St, Elwood), and we are aware of numerous other examples of communities purchasing assets from councils elsewhere in the state under such arrangements. Given the important service we provide to the community, we believe it would be in both Council and the community's interest to pursue this option.

As a small community-run, not-for-profit centre, The Avenue has been successful in achieving ongoing financial viability through careful management, retention of staff and families, particularly at the kindergarten level where there is increased competition throughout the Council. We have done this while maintaining consistently low fees, beneath council-managed centres and significantly below the rates charged by for-profit centres in the municipality. We strongly believe that as one of the more viable centres in the Council, we can continue to operate at an optimal level as an independent not-for-profit centre.

As a COM, we consider the proposed purchase of the building from the Council solves many issues by taking away the financial responsibility the Council has for the building yet maintaining a small, community-run centre within the municipality that will continue to offer a vital and desired service to local residents and families.

We have previously sought to engage with Council about lease to own or purchase of the building, though it is apparent that these discussions were not seriously entertained by Council. We believe this is the appropriate time to genuinely reinvigorate those discussions. We consider that any arrangement whereby the COM purchases the building should also take into account the significant financial contribution made by The Avenue to the Council for maintenance and infrastructure upgrades, which have not been completed.

### **Option 2 - Building Works / Upgrades**

Under this option, the Council, in partnership with The Avenue COM, would undertake the necessary works to extend the life of the existing building at 39 The Avenue by a minimum of 50 years. Coupled with this, we seek long-term leases of 10+ years, which will provide certainty to our staff, families and community.

The Accessibility Report commissioned by Council provides a list of required upgrades. Despite this, the quote obtained by Council appears to exclude many of these works and instead focuses on works that the council officers have decided, without consultation with us, are necessary. As a result, the COM have commissioned an independent builder to quote for these accessibility works.

Appendix 2 is a proposal from a certified builder we have engaged to conduct the works identified both in a DDA report we commissioned and the DDA report commissioned by Council. The Avenue wishes to work in partnership with the Council to complete these works. We again reiterate that the works can and should be done in a partnership between Federal, State and Local Government and the COM of The Avenue. We are ready and willing to work with the Council to find the best solutions for The Avenue and the community more broadly.

### **Option 3 - Potential New Premises**

It is important for Council to understand and appreciate that the value of The Avenue is far more than bricks and mortar at 39 The Avenue, Balaclava.

The value of The Avenue lies in its educational service, the wonderful dedicated staff and the critical role it plays in developing a strong and connected local community. We see no

reason for this service to disappear purely due to the age and condition of the building. The Avenue could be accommodated within a new premises in the local area. We understand that this option is both costly and will take time, however it must be acknowledged as a potential solution. To date, the Council have not explored whether there are relocation opportunities available in the local area.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Council should continue to support a good cross-section of types, sizes and models of early childhood centres within the municipality, including supporting the smaller community-run centres to survive and thrive. Rather than focus on the monetary cost of providing services, Council should recognise the value those services give to the community and invest in their continued success.

The proposal to sell (and therefore close) these three community-run early childhood centres cuts at the heart of what makes our local communities so connected, inclusive and desirable. This proposal is a cost cutting exercise at the expense of our children but it does not need to be.

As outlined within this submission there are potential and viable solutions available to Council to ensure this important service is not lost.

The Avenue is very happy to work closely with Council, and State and Federal governments, in a collaborative manner to find a solution that works for all parties and future generations.



## DDA Compliance – Accessibility Audit/Brief

**Project:** Elwood Children's Centre - DDA Audit

**Location:** 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood, VIC

**Client:** Elwood Children's Centre

**Attention:**

██████████  
T: ██████████  
E: ██████████

**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**JOB No:** 00237-22

Stakeholders				
Name	Company	Contact	Consultation	Date
Ciaran Wilcox	Elwood Children's Centre	T: ██████████ E: ██████████	Brief sent	17/02/22
██████████ Access Consultant	Before Compliance	██████████@beforecompliance.com.au ██████████	Author on behalf of BC	17/02/22
██████████ Director	Before Compliance	██████████@beforecompliance.com.au ██████████	Brief sent	17/02/22
Comments				
<b>DAPS 2010 Parts 2 &amp; 3</b> <i>Building certifiers, developers and managers to ensure buildings comply with the Access Code</i>				

## PROJECT SCOPE

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The Elwood Children's Centre located at 46 Tennyson St Elwood, VIC project is a DDA audit/review of an existing 2X level building comprising: -

- Ground Level – provides but not limited to, a gated entry from footpath in to front shade sail play area with entry further down side into main foyer. Connecting corridors provide access to children's rooms, kitchen, laundry, bathroom and access out into rear multi-decks and play area.
- First Floor provides stair access to a landing and staff room, store, office and planning rooms.

## SUMMARY

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- Audit conducted 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- In consultation with stakeholders the following assumptions, clarifications and issues are identified:
  - Class 9b Early Childhood centre
- The audit review is to assess building access alignment to the Disability Discrimination Act 1993 (DDA), utilising the Disability Access to Premises Standards 2010 (DAPS 2010), and highlights relevant Australian Standards namely:
  - AS1428.1 2001 & 2009 Design for access and mobility - General requirements for access - New building work
  - AS1428.2 1992 Design for access and mobility Enhanced and Additional Requirements
  - AS1428.3 1992 Requirements for Children and Adolescents with physical disabilities
  - AS 1428.4.1-2009 Means to assist the orientation of people with vision le ground surface indicators
- Due to the age of the building, upgrade to DAPS 2010 Access code provisions and Building Code of Australia (BCA) provisions are only triggered where new works are proposed. The existing building provides services and access that can be managed to ensure access is provided aligning with the spirit and intent of the DDA. The client may be subject to a DDA complaint risk where suitable access is not provided or suitably managed.
- DAPS 2010 part 2.1 Scope of standards - Access is required to the affected parts being:
  - the principal pedestrian entrance of an existing building that contains a new part; and
  - any part of an existing building, that contains a new part, that is necessary to provide a continuous accessible path of travel from the entrance to the new part
- Where an upgrade is proposed, DAPS 2010 Part A3 Access Code provisions may be satisfied by satisfying Part D Performance Requirements – The performance requirements can be satisfied with performance solutions or Deemed to satisfy Solutions (DtS) or a combination of both.
- **Performance based design briefs are provided where a performance solution will support existing conditions where they depart from deemed to satisfy provisions:**
  - **ISSUE 1: Principal Entry Gates** – reduced doorway circulation clearances, more than 20N of force to open and landings steeper than 1:40
  - **ISSUE 2: Door Hardware** – Handles and snibs outside of 900-1100mm height range
  - **ISSUE 3: Doorways** – 30% luminance contrast not provided between door and wall or frame
  - **ISSUE 4: Corridor and doorways circulation clearances**, doorways with less than 850mm clear opening to active leaf and reduced latch side circulation clearances
  - **ISSUE 5: Doorways** – corridor and doorway circualtion clearances.
  - **ISSUE 6: Switches and Controls** – light switches outside of 900-1100mm Height range and within 500mm of internal corners.
  - **ISSUE 7: Amenities** – Existing amenities provide a facility with pan, basin shower without accessible features and child facilities with open compartments
  - **ISSUE 8: Threshold and Step Ramps** – step ramps steeper than 1:10, and doorway threshold ramps rising higher than 35mm,
  - **ISSUE 9: Stair Access to offices** – Stair only access to offices and stairway with reduced width, gates, newel posts, handrails wider than 50mm and without TGSI



- **Brief assessment method and acceptance criteria to be acknowledged by owner/operator or their representative and any design change, comments or feedback to be provided for preparation of final performance solutions report for Issue 1-9.**
- **Confirmation of managed solution and practices to be confirmed to support performance solution.**

## **CORRESPONDENCE SCOPE & APPENDICIES**

This accessibility and DDA compliance audit/brief is specific to existing as built Stage.

APPENDIX 1: A full listing of drawings and documentation

## **DDA COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

Before Compliance (B4C) can ensure the Design Development Stage plans combined with the DDA Performance solutions can provide compliance according to the spirit and intent of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The proposed Design Development Stage indicates it can comply to the Access Code of the 2010 Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards(DAPS 2010) and Access Provisions of the NCCBCA 2019 Volume 1 Amendment 1 Performance requirements that will be satisfied by Deemed-to-Satisfy Solutions and/or Performance Solutions.

<b>DAPS/NCC DTS Clause</b>	<b>Clause Title</b>	<b>Will Comply with DTS Requirements</b>	<b>To Comply to Performance Solutions Conditions of Construction</b>
<b>D3.1</b>	<b>General Building Access Requirements</b>	To be confirmed in Supporting Evidence	<b><i>stakeholder to acknowledge Brief assessment and acceptance criteria</i></b>
<b>D3.2</b>	<b>Access to Buildings</b>	To be confirmed in Supporting Evidence	<b><i>stakeholder to acknowledge Brief assessment and acceptance criteria</i></b>
<b>D3.3</b>	<b>Parts of a Building required to be accessible</b>	To be confirmed in Supporting Evidence	<b><i>stakeholder to acknowledge Brief assessment and acceptance criteria</i></b>
<b>D3.5</b>	<b>Accessible Car Parking</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>D3.6</b>	<b>Signage</b>	To be confirmed in Supporting Evidence	<b><i>stakeholder to acknowledge Brief assessment and acceptance criteria</i></b>
<b>D3.7</b>	<b>Hearing Augmentation</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>D3.8</b>	<b>TGSI</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>D3.9</b>	<b>Wheelchair Seating Spaces</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>D3.11</b>	<b>Ramps</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>D3.12</b>	<b>Glazing on Access ways</b>	To be confirmed in Supporting Evidence	N/A
<b>E3.6</b>	<b>Passenger lifts</b>	N/A	<b><i>stakeholder to acknowledge Brief assessment and acceptance criteria</i></b>
<b>F2.4</b>	<b>Sanitary Facilities</b>	To be confirmed in Supporting Evidence	<b><i>stakeholder to acknowledge Brief assessment and acceptance criteria</i></b>

DDA compliance is not limited to the above DAPS/NCCBCA Access provisions, compliance to the spirit and intent of the Disability Discrimination Act requires equal, independent, and dignified access to goods and services and places of employment.

## DAPS 2010 & NCCBCA D3.4 EXEMPTIONS

This assessment is carried out in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and where applicable NCC 2019 Clauses Part A2 clauses A2.0, A2.1, A2.2 & A2.3 & A2.4, Section D Part D3 Performance Requirements DP 1 to DP9 and Clause D3.4 Exemptions of the NCC.

**D3.4 exemptions** may be applied: First Floor Offices and storage, Kitchen, Staff toilet.

Location:	Details of reason D3.4 exemption is applied
Commercial Kitchen, services and storage	Deemed an area where access would be inappropriate because of the particular purpose for which the area is used and is an area that would pose a health or safety risk for people with a disability.
Services corridor	a path of travel providing access only to an area exempted under clause D3.4.

## DAPS 2010 & NCCBCA PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

### National Construction Code Series 2019 Vol1 Amdt 1: Building Code of Australia 2019 Class 2 – 9 Buildings

Performance Requirement
<p><b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable-               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) People to-                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Approach the building from the road boundary and from any accessible carparking spaces associated with the building; and</li> <li>ii. Approach the building from any accessible associated building; and</li> <li>iii. Access work and public spaces, accommodation and facilities for personal hygiene; and</li> </ol> </li> <li>(b) Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Limitation: <i>DP1 Does not apply to a Class 4 part of a building</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>DP2 Safe movement to and within a building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So that people can move safely to and within a building, it must have-               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Walking surfaces with safe gradients and</li> <li>(b) Any doors installed to avoid the risk of occupants-                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Having their egress impeded; or</li> <li>ii. being trapped in the building; and</li> </ol> </li> <li>(c) Any stairways and ramps with-                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Slip resistant walking surface on-                       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Ramps</li> <li>B. Stairway treads or near the edge of the nosing; and</li> </ol> </li> <li>ii. Suitable handrails where necessary to assist and provide stability to people using the stairway or ramp; and</li> <li>iii. Suitable landings to avoid undue fatigue; and</li> <li>iv. Landings where a door opens from or onto the stairway or ramp so that the door does not create an obstruction; and</li> <li>v. In the case of a stairway, suitable safe passage in relation to the nature, volume and frequency of likely usage.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>FP2.1 Sanitary and other facilities</b> - Suitable sanitary facilities for personal hygiene must be provided in a convenient location within or associated with a building, to the degree necessary, appropriate to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the function or use of the building; and</li> <li>(b) the number and gender of the occupants; and</li> <li>(c) the disability or other particular needs of the occupants.</li> </ol>

**PERFORMANCE BASED DESIGN BRIEF (PBDB) NCCBCA A2.2(4) (a)**

From the NCCBCA deemed-to-satisfy(DtS) access provisions, departures have been identified and are proposed to satisfy performance requirements utilizing a combination of performance solutions and DtS solutions with following assessment methods as permitted by NCCBCA clause A2.2c&d; being **Expert judgement**, and **comparison** to relevant deemed-to-satisfy provisions. These assessments will use quantitative, qualitative, and comparative analysis to demonstrate compliance with the relevant performance requirements DP1, DP2, DP4, DP6, DP8, DP9, EP3.4 & FP2.1.

**Relevant Stakeholders** are to acknowledge **Assessment Method** and **Acceptance Criteria** below.

DAPS 2010 NCCBCA Ref.	Performance Based Design Brief
<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> D3.1, D3.3, <b>Performance Requirement:</b> DP1,</p>	<p><b>ISSUE 1: Principal Entry Gates</b> – reduced doorway circulation clearances, more than 20N of force to open and landings steeper than 1:40, a departure from DtS provisions D3.1, D3.2, D3.3 and AS1428.1 2009 clause 13 Doorways doors and circulation spaces at doorways</p> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b> Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable people to approach the building from the road boundary and access work and public spaces and Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> <li>• <b>DP2 Safe movement to and within a building</b> - So that people can move safely to and within a building, it must have walking surfaces with safe gradients and any doors installed to avoid the risk of occupants having their egress impeded or being trapped in the building and ramps with slip resistant walking surfaces, suitable landings to avoid undue fatigue and landings where a door opens from or onto ramp so that the door does not create an obstruction</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>DP1 &amp; DP2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A series of entry gates are provided for the security and safety of children and are suitably managed to accommodate access for carers and children.</li> <li>• The series of four entry gates are over a walkway ranging between 1:20 and 1:50 accessible gradients and crossfalls.</li> <li>• 1:40 landings are provided to all gates with the exception of the mid gate where the landing is 1:30 grade to one side and the gate is provided without a latch side clearance. With intercom control mounted at a high level and in a corner location with 15mm diameter button. 25mm diameter exit button is above 1500mm and is not raised above surrounding shroud surface</li> <li>• The Front Entry Door provides a step and a ramp abutting the doorway which pose a barrier to access.</li> <li>• Gates have hardware mounted above 1500mm meeting the Access provision of the building code D3.1 outdoor play spaces and GP1.5 outdoor play spaces in early childhood centers - Any outdoor play space in a Class 9b early childhood centre must be enclosed on all sides with a barrier which complies with AS 1926.1.</li> <li>• Early childhood centre doorways and gates are excluded from the accessible mounting height provision as described NCCBCA D2.21 Operation of latch and AS1428.1 2009 clause 13.5.3 Location. And the current location of controls above</li> </ul>

1500mm high and within 500mm of internal corner locations is within current code requirements.

- Gates provide a luminous contrast to the background path surfaces in lieu of to adjacent walls or fences providing acceptable identification of gate location for people with vision impairments and comparable D3.1 provision for visual indicators on glazing.
- Initial gate required greater than 20N of force to open
- The staff manage access via an existing intercom, code pad and push to exit button and provide assistance with remotely opening gate. Gates can be provided with manual assistance by staff on request and as occupants schedules and abilities would be known to staff arrangement can be made for assisted access for children or careers with disabilities for access through the series of current gates.
- Before Compliance uses expert judgment and comparison to confirm providing access via existing gates and pathways and rear yard to a building entry is acceptable as paths are accessible grades gate controls meet access provisions for the security and safety of children and staff are trained and will continue to manage and provide direction and assistance with access through gates and doorways

**Recommendations:**

- Provide access signage indicating the access to the main building is via the gates to the rear yard play space, signage to include the international symbol of wheelchair access in white on aquamarine with raised contrasting and tactile braille, text and symbols. Include intercom instruction where provided. Sign between 1200-1600mm AFL with braille and tactile component between 1250-1350mm AFL
- Primary entry Gate to maintained in a open position at drop off an pick up times, or specifically at times a career with a disability is scheduled to arrive.
- Relocate intercom/keypad to an accessible location to accommodate ease of contact to staff for entry. Mount 900-1200mm AFL and no closer than 500mm to an internal corner.
- Exit button Mount at 1500mm and remove shroud so unlatching is activated before being fully depressed. Provide contrasting braille and tactile sign indicating Push to Exit set 1250-1350mm AFL
- Remove 1:6 grade ramp from front entry door.

<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> D3.1, D3.3, <b>Performance Requirement:</b> DP1, DP2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ISSUE 2: Door Hardware</b> – Door handles and snibs outside of 900-1100mm height range, a departure from DtS provisions D3.1 General Building Access Requirements and AS1428.1 2009 clause 13 Doorways doors and circulation spaces at doorways</li> </ul> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b> Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable people to approach the building from the road boundary and access work and public spaces and Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> <li>• <b>DP2 Safe movement to and within a building</b> - So that people can move safely to and within a building, it must have walking surfaces with safe gradients and any doors installed to avoid the risk of occupants having their egress impeded or being trapped in the building</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>DP1 &amp; DP2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early childhood centre doorways and gates are excluded from the accessible mounting height provisions as described NCCBCA D2.21 Operation of latch and AS1428.1 2009 clause 13.5.3 Location. And the current location of controls above 1500mm high and within 500mm of internal corner locations is within current code requirements.</li> <li>• Staff supervision and assistance is required for children and door can be managed by staff such that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Doors may be left open for access.</li> <li>○ Staff can assist with doors for access and egress</li> <li>○ Doors typically provide D lever type handles</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Before Compliance uses expert judgment and comparison to confirm maintaining door controls at existing heights as occupants will be familiar with their environment and location and use of door hardware and access and egress can be managed by staff and carers providing direction and assistance</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> D3.1, D3.3, <b>Performance Requirement:</b> DP1,</p>	<p><b>ISSUE 3: Doorways</b> – 30% luminance contrast not provided between door and wall or frame, a departure from DtS provisions D3.1 General Building Access requirements and AS1428.1 2009 clause 13.1 Luminance Contrast</p> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b> Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable people to access work and public spaces and Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>DP1</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All doorways shall have a minimum luminance contrast of 30% provided between door leaf and door jamb, door leaf and adjacent wall, architrave and wall, door leaf and architrave, or door jamb and adjacent wall. The minimum width of the area of luminance contrast shall be 50 mm.</li> <li>• Existing doors typically are the same colour or similar luminance contrast as adjacent walls or frame</li> <li>• Doors typically provide glazing panels and doors can be recognized by contrasting hardware or contrasting background surfaces through the glazing comparable to the D3.12 Visual indicators on glazing</li> <li>• Occupants will be familiar with their environment and location of the doors</li> <li>• Before Compliance uses expert judgment and comparison to confirm maintaining access doors is acceptable because occupants will be familiar with their environment and location of doors and staff provide supervision, direction and assistance for children and visitors and existing conditions and management practices provide access appropriate to and to the degree necessary to facilitate access and egress including access and egress for people with disabilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm managed solution to provide supervision, direction, and assistance with access egress for children and visitors and include:</li> <li>• Provision for upgrade to doors to provide luminance contrasting door to frame or wall a minimum of 50mm wide now or in the future, with provision in maintenance budget and/or if a carer or child with a vision impairment presents at the centre</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> D3.1, D3.3, D3.8, <b>Performance Requirement:</b> DP2</p>	<p><b>ISSUE 4: Corridor and doorways circulation clearances</b>, doorways with less than 850mm clear opening to active leaf and reduced latch side circulation clearances, a departure from parts D3.1 General Access requirements, D3.3 parts of building requiring access and As1428.1 2009 clause 13 Doorways doors and circulation spaces at doorways</p> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b> Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable people to approach the building from the road boundary and access work and public spaces and Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> <li>• <b>DP2 Safe movement to and within a building</b> - So that people can move safely to and within a building, it must have walking surfaces with safe gradients and any doors installed to avoid the risk of occupants having their egress impeded or being trapped in the building</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>DP2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double doors that provide less than 850mm clear opening to an active leaf will provide in excess of 850mm with both leaves open, which can be managed by staff either by leaving in the hold open position or providing assistance with doors.</li> <li>• Single Doorways can be modified to provide suitable width for a child or carer with a mobility aid such as a wheelchair, such that less than 850mm clear opening can accommodate a 90-percentile wheelchair of 800m wide or 80 percentile wheelchair 750mm wide as described in AS1428.1 2009 clause 2 application figure 1 footprint of an occupied wheelchair</li> <li>• Access can be managed such that accessible rooms and play spaces are scheduled or allocated for care group with group member with disabilities.</li> <li>• Before Compliance uses expert judgment and comparison to confirm maintaining access doors is acceptable because occupants will be familiar with their environment and location of doors and staff provide supervision, direction and assistance for children and visitors and existing conditions and management practices provide access appropriate to and to the degree necessary to facilitate access and egress including access and egress for people with disabilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm managed solution to provide supervision, direction, and assistance with access egress and schedule accessible rooms for care groups with children or carers with a disability and include:</li> <li>• Provision for modification to doorways now or in the future to widen openings, with new or removing door leafs and doorstops to achieve suitable clear openings.</li> <li>• Remove two central corridor door leafs and jamb stops to provide clear access from front to back of premises and ensure a minimum 820mm clear opening is provided to both doorway openings.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> D3.1, D3.3, D3.8, <b>Performance Requirement:</b> DP2</p>	<p><b>ISSUE 6: Switches and Controls</b> – light switches outside of 900-1100mm Height range and within 500mm of internal corners, a departure from parts D3.1 General Access requirements, D3.3 parts of building requiring access and As1428.1 2009 clause 14 Switches and other controls</p> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b> Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable people to access work and public spaces and Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>DP2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Switches are managed and controlled by staff and typically set at the start of the day and switched off at the end of the day and access and active use is not required by children and visitors.</li> <li>• Switch locations are appropriate to be maintained.</li> <li>• Large format toggle switches are not required under Access code provisions with the exception of accessible amenities if wall plate switching is provided</li> <li>• Fire extinguishers are within a function reach range of a corner location to access in an emergency and staff can manage fire extinguisher use and evacuation in the event of a fire.</li> <li>• Before Compliance uses expert judgment and comparison to confirm maintaining switched and controls in current locations is acceptable because occupants will be familiar with their environment and location of switches and other controls and staff will typically set lights and temperature controls at the start and end of the working day such that use by people other than staff will not be required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm managed solution/practices for light switching, thermostats and fire extinguishers</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> F2.1, F2.4, 4.5 Toilet Concession <b>Performance Requirement:</b> FP2.1</p>	<p><b>ISSUE 7: Amenities</b> - Existing amenities provide a facility with pan, basin shower without accessible features and child facilities with open compartments, a departure from Access code DtS provision F2.4 sanitary facilities and AS1428.1 2009 clause 15 Sanitary facilities</p> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FP2.1 Sanitary and other facilities</b> - Suitable sanitary facilities for personal hygiene must be provided in a convenient location within or associated with a building, to the degree necessary, appropriate to, the function or use of the building and the number and gender of the occupants and the disability or other particular needs of the occupants.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>FP2.1</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The centre provides facilities suitable for the current cohort of children and</li> </ul>



	<p>carers, as currently there are no occupants with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of an accessible facility would be triggered by enrolment of a child with a disability or carer with a disability that may require access to an accessible amenity or new building works to bathrooms</li> <li>• The existing arrangement can be managed by staff/carers such that staff provide supervision and assistance with personal hygiene for children such as toilet training, and assistance with washing if required in the case of a mishap.</li> <li>• Such that a child with a disability may be assisted with personal hygiene activities within existing facilities</li> <li>• A DAPS 2010 Part 4.5 toilet concession may be applied to existing amenities such that they may be modified and upgraded to AS1428.1 2001 clause 10 Sanitary facilities where they meet minimum circulation requirements of the pervious code in lieu of upgrading to 2009 circulation requirements which would require larger space than is currently provided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade existing facility pan and basin and doorways to AS1428.1 2001 clause 10 sanitary facilities and provide suitable corridor and doorway access on path to the sanitary compartment.</li> <li>• Provide a bath, shower or shower bath for washing of children to align with NCCBCA F2.3-Facilities part H – and outside of the accessible circulation zones or elsewhere in the centre</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> D3.1, D3.3, <b>Performance Requirement:</b> DP1, DP2</p>	<p><b>ISSUE 8: Threshold and Step Ramps</b> – step ramps steeper than 1:10, and doorway threshold ramps rising higher than 35mm, a departure from Access code DtS provision D3.3 Parts of Buildings to be accessible and AS1428.1 2009 clause 10 walkways ramps and landings.</p> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b> Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable people to approach the building from the road boundary and access work and public spaces and Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> <li>• <b>DP2 Safe movement to and within a building</b> - So that people can move safely to and within a building, it must have walking surfaces with safe gradients and any doors installed to avoid the risk of occupants having their egress impeded or being trapped in the building and ramps with slip resistant walking surfaces, suitable landings to avoid undue fatigue and landings where a door opens from or onto ramp so that the door does not create an obstruction</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>DP1 &amp; DP2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing doors sills provide a threshold/step with a rise up to 50mm and a threshold ramp is required to facilitate access for a person with a mobility aide such as a wheelchair.</li> <li>• A 1:8 ramp rising 50mm over 400mm will provide functional access and maintain door hardware within an accessible reach range as described in AS1428.2 1992 clause 22 reach ranges. Staff may also provide assistance with doorways.</li> <li>• The front yard provides a steep 1:6 ramp up to an internal doorway where a</li> </ul>

	<p>DtS step ramp would be no steeper than 1:10 rising no higher than 190mm over 1900mm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a 1:8 grade ramp rising 190mm over 1520mm comparable to a AS1428. 12009 kerb ramp would provide suitable access. Staff can provide assistance with the doorways or through alternate access from the gate off the entry path.</li> <li>• The front door provides a step to a steep 1:5 ramp abutting double door doorway. The accessible entry is via the gate to the rear yard and accessible entry. Remove 1:6 grade ramp from the doorway and replace with a sill/step</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide access signage at the gate indicating access through to the rear yard.</li> <li>• Remove 1:5 ramp abutting Double doors and reinstate door sill/step</li> <li>• Replace 1:6 ramp in front yard with a 1:8 grade ramp rising no higher than 190mm over 1520mm</li> <li>• Provide threshold ramps at doorways no steeper than 1:8 grade rising nominally 50mm over 400mm. R12/P5 slip resistance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deemed to Satisfy:</b> D3.1, D3.3, D3.8, D3.4</p> <p><b>Performance Requirement:</b> DP1, DP2</p>	<p><b>ISSUE 9: Stair Access to offices</b> – Stair only access to offices and stairway with reduced width, gates, newel posts, handrails wider than 50mm and without TGSI, a departure from Access code DtS provision D3.1, General Building Access requirements, D3.3 Parts of Buildings to be accessible and AS1428.1 2009 clause 11 stairways</p> <p><b>Performance requirement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DP1 Access for people with a disability</b> Access must be provided, to the degree necessary, to enable people to access work and public spaces and Identification of accessways at appropriate locations which are easy to find.</li> <li>• <b>DP2 Safe movement to and within a building</b> - So that people can move safely to and within a building it must have any stairways and ramps with slip resistant walking surface on treads or near the edge of the nosing and suitable handrails where necessary to assist and provide stability to people using the stairway and suitable landings to avoid undue fatigue and landings where a door opens from or onto the stairway or ramp so that the door does not create an obstruction; and suitable safe passage in relation to the nature, volume and frequency of likely usage.</li> <li>• <b>D3.4 Exemption</b> Deemed an area where access would be inappropriate because of the particular purpose for which the area is used and is an area that would pose a health or safety risk for people with a disability including a path of travel providing access only to an area exempted under clause D3.4.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment method:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Judgement, Comparison and Qualitative &amp; Comparative Analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Acceptance Criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A combination of performance solution and deemed to satisfy solutions will demonstrate access is provided appropriate to and to the degree necessary to satisfy performance requirement <b>DP1 &amp; DP2 &amp; D3.4</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion on requirement for performance solution:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff require abilities to assist with access and egress for children and visitors, set up an storage of play equipment, preparation and assistance with of food and drinks, toilet training, changing of nappies and other child washing and clothing reequipments putting children to bed, cleaning, duties which correspond to the condition for a D3.4 exemption which may be applied to the first floor staff only offices and access stairs.</li> <li>• A managed solution can be provided to accommodate office functions on the ground floor in an equivalent suitable space in the event a staff member</li> </ul>

	<p>acquires a temporary or permanent disability or meeting with carers/parents with a disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing stair provides functional handrails to both sides of the stair and suitable width for access for a person with an ambulant disability as the stair is wider than a comparable ambulant compartment doorway clearance of 700mm.</li> <li>• The gate is required to be maintained to restrict access to staff only, of the safety of children and staff will be familiar with their environment and use of the gate</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide signage to Stair gate and staff toilet indicating staff only</li> <li>• Managed solution to be confirmed to provide office, meeting functions in an accessible area on the ground floor</li> </ul>
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**SUPPORTING EVIDENCE - REQUIRED TO BE CONFIRMED AND/OR COMPLETED**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>D3.1 General Building Access requirements</b></li> <li>• <b>Brief assessment method and acceptance criteria to be acknowledged by owner/developer or their representative and any design changed comments or feedback to be provided for preparation of final performance solutions report, for issues 1-9</b></li> <li>• <b>Accessways &amp; Circulations from pedestrian entrances required to be accessible to and into common areas and spaces</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AS1428.1 2009 clause 6 Continuous accessible paths of travel</li> <li>○ AS1428.1 2009 Clause 7 ground surfaces on continuous accessible paths of travel</li> <li>○ AS1428.1 2009 clause 10 walkways ramps and landings</li> <li>○ AS1428.1 2009 clause 11 stairways, 11.2 stairway handrails and 12 handrails</li> <li>○ AS1428.1 2009 clause 13 doorways doors and circulation spaces at doorways</li> <li>○ AS1428.1 2009 clause 14 Switches and general-purpose outlets (power points)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>D3.2 Access to Buildings</b></li> <li>• <b>An accessway must be provided to a building required to be accessible.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ from the main points of a pedestrian entry at the allotment boundary and</li> <li>○ from another accessible building connected by a pedestrian link and</li> <li>○ from any required accessible carparking space on the allotment.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>In a building required to be accessible, an accessway must be provided</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ through the principal pedestrian entrance, and:</li> <li>○ through not less than 50% of all pedestrian entrances</li> <li>○ in a building with a total floor area more than 500 m<sup>2</sup>, a pedestrian entrance which is not accessible must not be located more than 50M from an accessible pedestrian entrance except for pedestrian entrances serving only areas exempted by clause D3.4.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Where a pedestrian entrance required to be accessible has multiple doorways:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ if the pedestrian entrance consists of not more than 3 doorways not less than one of those doorways must be accessible and</li> <li>○ if the pedestrian entrance consists of more than 3 doorways — not less than 50% of those doorways must be accessible.</li> <li>○ an accessible pedestrian entrance with multiple doorways is considered to be one pedestrian entrance where all doorways serve the same part or parts of the building and the distance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

between each doorway is not more than the width of the widest doorway at that pedestrian entrance and a doorway is considered to be the clear, unobstructed opening created by the opening of one or more door leaves

- Where a doorway on an accessway has multiple leaves, (except an automatic opening door) one of those leaves must have a clear opening width of not less than 850 mm in accordance with AS 1428.1.

- **D3.3 Parts of a Buildings to be accessible**

- **In a building required to be accessible:**

- every ramp and stairway, except for ramps and stairways in areas
- exempted by clause D3.4, must comply with:
  - for a ramp, except a fire-isolated ramp, clause 10 of AS 1428.1 and
  - for a stairway, except a fire-isolated stairway, clause 11 of AS 1428.1
  - for a fire-isolated stairway, clause 11.1(f) and (g) of AS 1428.1
- every passenger lift must comply with clause E3.6;
- accessways must have:
  - passing spaces complying with AS 1428.1 at maximum 20 m intervals on those parts of an accessway where a direct line of sight is not available and
  - turning spaces complying with AS 1428.1 within 2 m of the end of accessways where it is not possible to continue travelling along the accessway and at maximum 20 m intervals along the accessway and
  - an intersection of accessways satisfies the spatial requirements for a passing and turning space and a passing space may serve as a turning space;
- a ramp complying with AS 1428.1 or a passenger lift need not be provided to serve a storey or level other than the entrance storey in a Class 5, 6, 7b or 8 building containing not more than 3 storeys and with a floor area for each storey, excluding the entrance storey, of not more than 200 m<sup>2</sup>.

- **D3.5 Accessible Car Parking – N/A**

- Accessible carparking spaces must be provided in accordance with Table D3.5 in:
  - a Class 7a building required to be accessible; and
  - a carparking area on the same allotment as a building required to be accessible

- **D3.6 Signage**

- In a building required to be accessible braille and tactile signage complying with Specification D3.6 and D4 must incorporate the international symbol of access or deafness, as appropriate, in accordance with AS 1428.1 clause 8 and identify each:
  - (common) sanitary facility
  - space with a hearing augmentation system; and
  - identify each door required by BCANCC E4.5 to be provided with an exit sign and state “Exit”; and “Level descriptor” on the side of the person seeking egress
  - Remote door operation device indicating use
- Directional signage incorporating the international symbol of access in accordance with AS 1428.1 must be provided to direct a person to:
  - the location of the nearest accessible pedestrian entrance where a pedestrian entrance is not accessible and
  - to an accessible sanitary facility where a bank of sanitary facilities is not provided with an accessible unisex sanitary facility

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>D3.8</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>TGSI – N/A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide TGSI to road crossing points, head height collision points below 2.0M, stairs and ramps compliant with AS1428.4.1 2009 TGSI</li> <li>○ Provide 600m deep TGIS to the upper and lower landings set 300mm from the ramp/landing transition</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>D3.7</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Hearing Augmentation – N/A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hearing Augmentation systems must be provided where inbuilt amplification is provided in Class 9b (assembly) building auditoriums, conference rooms, meeting rooms or regular rooms and where inbuilt amplification is provided to ticket offices, tellers booths, reception areas or the like where the public is screened from the service provider.</li> <li>○ Confirm areas to be provided with inbuilt amplification and hearing augmentation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>D3.11</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Ramps – N/A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On an accessway - a series of connected ramps must not have a combined vertical rise of more than 3.6 m and a landing for a step ramp must not overlap a landing for another step ramp or ramp.</li> <li>○ Refer to AS1428.1 2009 clause 10 walkways ramps and landings and Appendix 2 part D3.2</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>D3.12</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Glazing on Access ways</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any glazing capable of being mistaken for a door or opening, and all glazed doors and sidelight panels shall be provided with a minimum 75mm indicator strip extending the full width of the glazing panels. The strip shall be mounted between 900 to 1075mm above FFL and achieve a minimum 30% luminance contrast to the floor within 2m of the glazing.</li> <li>○ Indicator strips are required to be solid, no cutouts are permitted and are required to be non-transparent.</li> <li>○ To Comply with AS1428.1 2009 clause 6.6 Visual indicators on glazing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>E3.6</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Passenger lifts – N/A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lifts to comply to As1735.12 lifts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lift dimensions to be 1400mm x 1600mm minimum. Where stretcher use indicated (in at least one lift for lifts travelling &gt;12m) provision of 2000mm length is required.</li> <li>• Lift doorway clearance to be 900mm</li> <li>• Fitout out of lifts to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handrail 600mm (min) length; at height between 850-950mm.</li> <li>• Tactile and Braille symbols on control buttons and panels.</li> <li>• Automatic auditory information detailing lift stops.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure 1500mm X 1500mm clearance space in front of external lift controls. Controls to be installed at height between 700-1250mm. At lift landings controls to be located 500mm clear of any obstruction with 1450mm circulation space in front of controls. This is inclusive of side walls.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Low rise platform lifts to comply to AS1735.14/15/16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lift dimensions to be 1100mm x 1400mm minimum</li> <li>• Lift doorway clearance to be 900mm</li> <li>• Fitout out of lift to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dual sided controls, Automatic door operation, Bilateral handrails.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>F2.4</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Sanitary Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide public/common area accessible facilities compliant with AS1428.1 2009 clause 15 sanitary facilities.</li> <li>○ A Part 4.5 Toilet concession may be applied where existing facility meets circulation clearances to AS1428.1 2001 clause 10</li> </ul>

## ASSESSMENT METHOD

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The assessment method uses A2.2 Performance Solutions Clause A2.2 (2)(c) Expert Judgment in conjunction with clause (2)(d) Comparison with the NCC Deemed-to-Satisfy provisions to determine compliance with the Performance Requirement.

## AUTHOR'S DETAILS AND CREDENTIALS

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**Associate/Access Consultant – Assisting Before Compliance – PTY LTD.  
Associate Member Accreditation – Access Consultants Association Australia  
Accredited Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) Assessor Course(Access Institute) 2020  
Livable Housing Australia Design Guidelines Assessor Course(Access Instit)  
Performance Solutions for Access (Access Institute) 2018  
Certificate IV Access Consulting (Access Institute) 2018  
Bachelor of Architecture- (Deakin University) 1997**

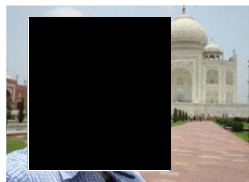
## AUTHOR'S DETAILS AND CREDENTIALS

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**Accredited Access Consultant and Associate Members for the Association of Consultants in Access Australia**  
Before Compliance is qualified to provide expert opinions set out in this report on the basis of:-

Qualifications and members of the Association of Consultants in Access Australia

14 Years' Experience DDA and accessibility consulting on associated designs and built environments within Australia and Internationally.



**Director**

**Accredited Access Consultant and Accredited Member of Association of Consultants in Access Australia (ACAA),  
BSc. (Nursing, Biology); B.A. Hons (Media Arts);  
Grad.Cert (Arts & Entertainment Management)  
Cert IV Workplace Training & Access Consultant**

## DECISION

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The Brief and final Performance Solutions provided above will meet the NCC 2019 Performance requirements and also will provide functional DDA compliance in the spirit and intent of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTENANCE

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N/A



 Before Compliance - Director

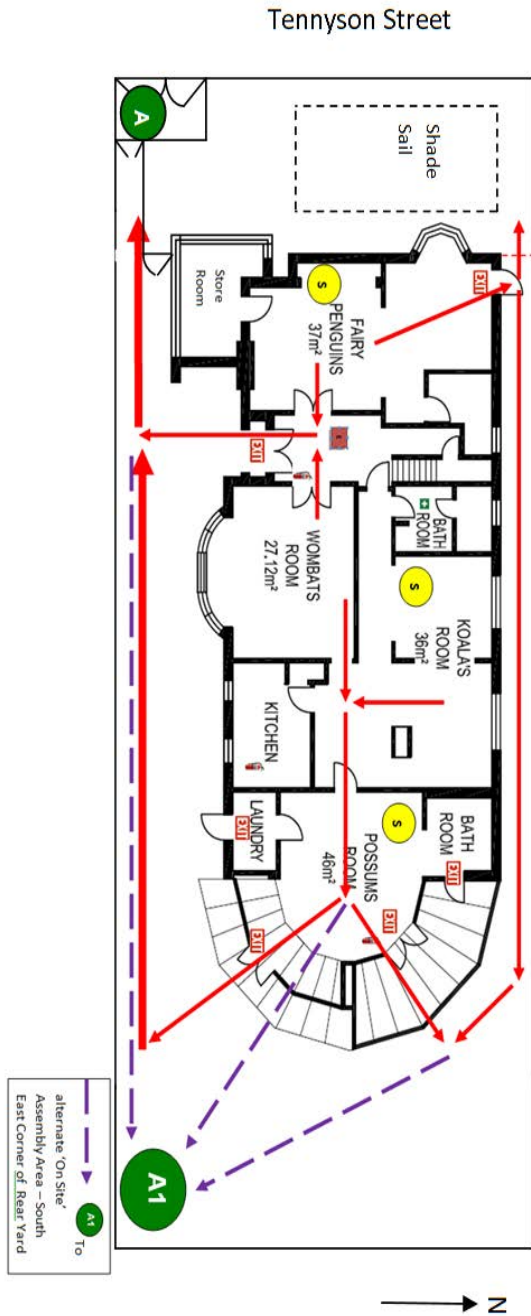
APPENDIX 1

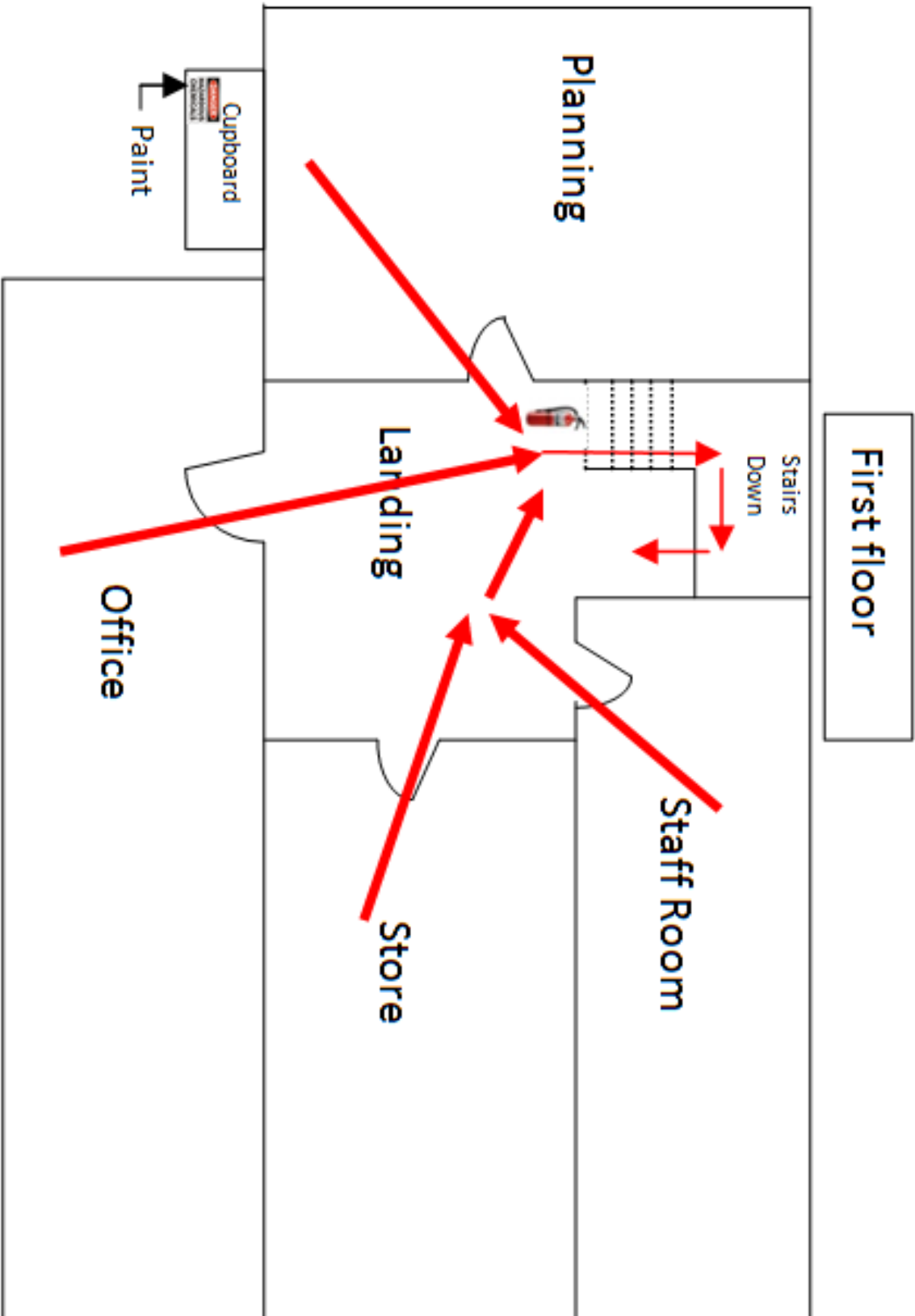
CORRESPONDENCE SCOPE:

Specific Drawings and Documentation associated with this compliance sign off document are:

i. Associated Documentation:

Document	REVISION	TITLE
Access Audit	19 December 2021	Functional Access Solutions Elwood Children's Centre – 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood







Attention: Head of Real Estate Portfolio  
City of Port Phillip  
Private Bag 3  
PO St Kilda VIC 3182

3 February 2022

Dear [REDACTED],

**UNITED WORKERS UNION SUBMISSION REGARDING PROPOSAL TO SELL THREE  
CHILDCARE CENTRE PROPERTIES**

The United Workers Union (the Union) strongly rejects the proposal to sell the council properties which are currently leased by Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten, Elwood Children's Centre and The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten.

As the council is aware, the sale of these properties would mean that the aforementioned centres would no longer be financially sustainable. As such, selling these properties will result in either the closure or privatisation of these services.

Local councils are integral to the provision of accessible and high-quality early childhood education and care. Residents have the right to access services that are subsidised by their local council.

The Union's most recent report, *Unsafe and Non-compliant: Profits above Safety in Australia's early learning sector*, shows that the overall quality ratings of for-profit centres are lower than other management types and that safety breaches are more likely to occur in for profit centres than not-for profit centres.

The City of Port Phillip must continue to support centres that deliver high quality and safe learning environments. These three centres currently provide such an environment to over two hundred children.

The closure of these centres will result in the loss of jobs for more than 45 people, many of whom are local residents. Early childhood educators are some of Australia's lowest paid professionals. They deserve stable, well-paid jobs, which these centres currently provide.

Further, closures will directly impact the many working parents who live locally. These parents are benefiting from access to services that are not seeking to profit off the education of their young children.

The council's historical failure to maintain these buildings should not result in the sale of the properties. It is now incumbent on the council to invest in these buildings and ensure they



**BIGGER, STRONGER, UNITED.**

TIM KENNEDY SECRETARY  
JO SCHOFIELD PRESIDENT

are fit for purpose. An investment in local early childhood education is an investment in the local community.

██████████  
Director – Early Childhood Education  
United Workers Union

## Save your community-run early childhood centres and kindergartens change.org petition update

28 February 2022

In response to the City of Port Phillip's proposal to sell three community-run, not-for-profit kindergarten and early childhood services - forcing the closure of [Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten](#), [Elwood Children's Centre](#) and [The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten](#) - a petition objecting to the sale was created by the affected centres on 10 January 2022.

**As of 28 February 2022 - when the Have Your Say portal closes - the petition has received 2,534 signatures.**

People from near and far to the centres have thrown their support behind the petition. From parents of children attending the three impacted centres; to grandparents; to neighbours and concerned community members, every signature is a statement to the City of Port Phillip that the community doesn't want it to sell-off the three community-run early childhood services.

**The petition will remain open and will be presented to Councillors and council at a later date.**

Meantime, this submission provides an update on the petition's progress and includes some examples of the reasons why people from the community are supporting the petition and broader campaign to object to the sale of the three community-run, not-for-profit kindergarten and early childhood services.

- *I believe that not-for-profit, community-owned children's services offer the best early education and care for children and the best support for families and communities. CoPP has a long, proud history of supporting community-owned children's services - this history should be continued into the future - [REDACTED]*
- *The community run childcare is part of the essential fabric of this community - [REDACTED].*
- *I have worked in both privately owned and community based children's services. In fact I was the Co-ordinator at Eildon Road CC for over 10 years. Community based centre's offer so much more for the children, parents, educators and the local community purely through the sense of connectedness, ownership and belonging for all. You really cannot put a price on that! - [REDACTED]*
- *Quality early learning should be protected and celebrated, not sold off. Shame on the Council for even considering such a move - [REDACTED]*
- *I worked in one of those childcare centres and it has been the best place I have ever worked. The community feel is the best and the standard of care and education is*

*excellent. It would be a shame to see it closing, because of bad politics that focus on money. It would be a shame for the children, the staff, the families and the community! Please don't! - [REDACTED]*

- *The council has been irresponsible with levy fees, they have not kept up the maintenance and now the community will suffer. It's not acceptable - [REDACTED]*
- *I'm a local healthcare professional and my colleagues and I use all 3 centres because we are not satisfied with the substandard care private alternatives. Closing these centres will have huge ramifications as we withdraw and cut back our professional health care services. Cannot believe that the local council is putting profit before children, community and care. Who the hell do they think they work for? - [REDACTED]*
- *Local government should put the community first - [REDACTED]*
- *Not another real estate development to boost local council tax profit instead of building meaningful facilities to cater the local community - [REDACTED]*

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Parent and Committee Member from The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten

## Community Run Childcare Survey to Affected Centre Families

We put the following question to families whose children attend one of the three centres affected by the proposal.

*“How is the council’s proposal to sell The Avenue/Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten/Elwood Children’s Centre impacting you right now?”*

Here are their responses

### Elwood Childrens Centre

“Distressing and upsetting”

“It's causing stress for our family in a time post covid where we are trying to get back into a routine of work and life. We do not know what our children's care will be for the future.”

“ It is incredibly stressful managing the uncertainty around the proposed closure. Do I need to find alternative care for my child? Can I afford a place at a private centre? Will my child be on a waitlist for months, and will this mean I have to cut back on work to look after her?”

“Stress, anxiety and uncertainty about our daughters care.”

“It’s unsettling and frustrating when the council are not listening and have the funding approved to invest but are not doing anything.”

“It’s sad. My mum worked there & knows families who use to go there in the local community. I’ve met these families who are extended family. This place is a connecting melting pot that brings like minded people together and who care for one another”

“Disappointing”

“It is causing stress and anxiety.”

“It is extremely disappointing and distressing. We hate to think that the centre will not be available in the future and hate to think about any reliance on profit-based centres.”

“Stressful as we have to think about other care requirements, costs, travel, assessing the suitability of another centre etc etc”

“Our child is due to finish up at the centre this year, so the impact is minimal.”

“Council’s proposal makes me think they need to pull their fingers out and realise what a special place they have for families.”

“The proposal has meant we've felt anxious for the future of our children, but also has built some resentment and mistrust in the local council. We're very aware of new/existing day care centres operating in the area and we do speculate that there is has been lobbying by the private centre owners to the local councillors to increase attendance at the local centres. Divestment in community day care centres (citing operating cost reasons) suggests this is councils response to being lobbied, without considering the impact to the community. Councillors should be listening to and prioritising the communities needs, and the resounding negative response to this proposal.”

“Stressful, a feeling of outright betrayal.”

“Causing anxiety, stress and uncertainty for our family and also community.”

“Stress and worry”

“My son is aware of the proposed sale and keeps asking when his centre will close. I’m anxious about the future and what this means for my family and my return to work. I’m volunteering to support the campaign to stop the sale and it’s like a part time job. I feel like we are doing the council’s job for them in exploring options and nudging them to do things correctly. It’s exhausting and infuriating.”

“It is distressing, frustrating and seems so short-sighted and financially driven, without care for the community which it is supposed to represent.”

“It’s very stressful as whilst my daughter will be there until the end of 2023, I am deeply gutted for the staff who have worked so hard to build such a beautiful center.”

“I’m about to have my second child. Knowing this may impact us directly and our community we have just joined will actually devastate me. I don’t use these words lightly. I feel anxious for myself as a mother but all families and staff this may impact.”

“There is a huge emotional and time burden on all parents right now due to this proposal, and in particular on those parents directly involved in responding to the proposal. I am astounded that so many parents have had to fight Council on this years before, and that Council are once again putting their residents through this. I am concerned for the staff and the families, but I am most concerned for my child and his continuity of care.

“Having just started at ECC and my child being so young- I had hoped to be at ECC for many years. The uncertainty has made me question my employment opportunities into the future”

“This has caused me significant stress and financial concern. I won't be able to commute to another centre and I won't be able to afford it.”

“One of the reasons we chose to move to the CoPP when we were pregnant with our second child was the larger number of smaller, not-for-profit early childhood centres. It took us a long time to get a place at Elwood Children’s Centre. Settling a baby or toddler into an early learning centre takes a significant effort - for all parties! The child needs to form a bond with their educator, and this takes time. The parent/s need to feel comfortable and trust the educators to care for their child - this also takes time. This time is an investment for children, families and educators. The investment pays off for all parties. Children feel a sense of belonging and connection, and in this they thrive. The parents feel confident in leaving their children and properly focussing on work/study. And the educators are able to use their bond with the child to help them learn. The council’s announcement to sell has brought anxiety and stress to our family. We have had to look for alternate early childhood centre options. These are not easy to find! Many centres have a lower rating on the national quality standards. Many are up to \$30 per child, per day more expensive. For our family with two children, this price difference is prohibitive. And then there are the long waitlists for anywhere that has good quality education and care. Some of these waitlists have already been open for a year for the intake we would need. We have to consider the likelihood that our children may end up at different centres, which adds extra stress to a family with one car and two working parents. And even if we were to find a suitable place for our children, which doesn’t seem like it will happen, we then have to re-invest in building those bonds to

enable us to leave our children confidently. We have been dealing with the anxiety and uncertainty of the Covid pandemic for two years. Elwood Children's Centre has been an oasis of calm and routine for our family, particularly our little ones, and now we feel like the Council has cast a shadow over our oasis."

"Genuine sadness that a little piece of Elwood's heart will be ripped out and lost forever for a quick buck."

"Cause anxiousness as a parent of what my child's early learning will look like."

"Unsure about how to organise work for the future when my now 1 year old will have to move centres"

"It has created a lot of stress for us thinking that not only will it impact our family but all the families and children that will not have the opportunity to be a part of such a beautiful, loving and genuine centre."

"Its making us sad and stressed. Our youngest is 7 months and we thought she would be at the ECC for the next 5 years. I feel worried and sad for her and for all the other families that may miss out of the opportunity to experience life as an ECC family"

"Depression"

"I'm extremely distressed by it."

"It will add so much stress to our family already commuting to work and school. Also knowing that we will loose the community connections and spirits is devastating."

"The proposal means I, as a parent and a voter, am forced to consider changing the environment where my child feels safe, comfortable and happy. Not only does this make me worried for my childs wellbeing but the friendships families are forming with one another and the staff are all at risk. In addition, the proposal impacts my families financial situation and therefore mental health."

"It is creating much distress to our family"

"Distress and anxious about what this means for my kids, family and the community."

"Elke may do another year of 4yo kinder being so close to the cut-off date which could effect her next year should she need to change centres. It's causing unnecessary stress and worry for all families and the staff who all desperately wish for the centre to remain open."

"Leaving aside the stress associated with potentially having to move our daughter elsewhere from a place where she is so happy, the potential closure makes me sad. I'm sad at the thought of the potential loss of connection to this wonderful community. We don't have a lot of family support because one set of grandparents live in the UK and another set are elderly. ECC is an extended family for us. I'm also sad of the connections that our daughter may lose with her friends and educators. I'm sad she may not receive the level of education, care and development that she has received at ECC. I'm also sad that the staff are facing a potential closure of a workplace that they love and are passionate about. There are enough people in this world who don't love what they do, it would be a real shame for the team at ECC to lose the place where they love coming to work."

"Incredibly distressing. It makes me so sad. They have completely surprised us with this. I don't think we have been engaged in a meaningful way at all, to find other alternatives."

"Very stressful"

“Very stressful, we feel like our child and families wellbeing is being dismissed for financial gain. We feel extremely let down by council and councillors.”

### **The Avenue Childcare & Kindergarten**

“It makes me angry”

“It’s causing my family distress, as the centre, it’s staff and families are an extension of our family. We love this place and value the difference it makes to our family. I want that for others in our community for many more decades.”

“I find it distressing that a community that we have been a part of can be so callously sold for what amounts to very facile reasons. This has seemed to be a heartless land grab and the lives, care and futures of our children should be protected from such machiavellian politicking.”

“We are highly stressed about the proposal. We would have to move to a different suburb which would have a massively detrimental effect on our families sense of belonging.”

“VERY STRESSFUL”

“My family strongly feels that the council has not considered the importance of this centre in our local community. We feel very sad as the idea that other neighbourhood children and families may miss the opportunity to experience this type of early childcare experience.”

“Causing stress”

“It is deeply frustrating as it is clear there are alternative options but the council don’t seem interested.”

“Loss of community”

“We are concerned for the staff, the loss to our sense of community in Balaclava and the removal of affordable, high quality care for families in the future”

“Outraged. The avenue embodies what community is built on”

“very inconvenient and distressing; feels very council focussed as opposed to community focused”

“This feels like a completely unnecessary step taken by the council. The Avenue is an integral part of the community and development of children in the Balaclava area. The community centric centre is so unique and would leave a gaping hole if it were to close.”

“Looking elsewhere as a backup. If council's decision goes ahead, staff are likely to start to leave and even less will be spent on the centre, resulting in a lack of continuity of care for our children because agency staff will be relied on more often.”

“I'm incredibly dissapointed the council seems to be more willing to give up than find a solution for such a critical commuity service.”

“It’s shocking that it’s even being considered. A decision that is clearly only being considered for financial reasons, benefiting only the council whilst leaving a huge dent in the community. It’s an incredibly short sighted proposal, counterintuitive to what the community needs. There is a childcare shortage in the wider community, finding good community care is next to importable. We do not receive any subsidy from the government, we rely on the lower fees of community centres”

“We feel sad that the community will loose such an important childcare centre and families



will miss out on the opportunity to send their children there in the future.”

“Our family is experiencing uncertainty and fear regarding where our children will be able to attend childcare in the future. There will be a lack of childcare places across the CoP with the closure of The Avenue and other centres, creating ambiguity about not only where our children will attend childcare but what sort of care they may be forced into care models that are not suitable for our children and family nor align with our values (ie for-profits, agency staff where there is little to no continuity or care). Our son benefits from a small, community run childcare centre where he knows the carers and there is a continuity of care, community and familiarity. We fear that he is not suited to larger childcare centres and this was a key reason we chose The Avenue. Community run childcare centres are so vital in providing an exceptional level of care and education and ensuring children feel respected, nurtured and that their emotional well-being is prioritised. We also intend to send our daughter to The Avenue when she is old enough and the thought of having to potentially change childcare centres when she is close to school age is very unsettling as it is so important for us to make sure that foundational year (pre-school) she isn't disrupted and moving to a new childcare centre which would be very unsettling and disruptive.”

“It is very stressful. At a time that we are all under increased stress.”

“Overwhelming concern of having to look into alternative options.”

“I'm concerned about my child's access to community run childcare and disillusioned by that CoPP is not seeking to retain such an amazing Centre for the community.”

“Very stressful”

“Distress cause by uncertainty about the centre”

“It's created stress and worry about cost, waitlists, impact on our family and finances. This centre also offers a amazing professional care, where all staff know each child and their families (something that surprised me when I transferred my first child from a larger centre) and the difference in care and support is tenfold. This is a unique centre. Please do not sell, it will be a massive loss to the community and families.”

“Frustration”

“Frustration at the proposal, anger and disappointment in the council! Anxious about the future, particularly as I have a young baby that I would like to attend the Avenue.

“It's distressing knowing that they are so careless as to selling a place that has been so amazing for our child. The care given is absolutely fantastic. I can't even start to think where our daughter would go if this closes. This is inconceivable!”

“As I have an 18 month old it is very stressful given that she will most likely have to change childcare centres. Whilst the Council are proposing closing the centre is a while off I am worried the staff who are great will leave before then and the centre won't be able to run because new people will not enrol their children if the centre is scheduled to be shut down.

“This proposal is concerning because The Avenue is a home away from home for my children. The council have looked for reasons and opportunities over many years to close The Avenue”

“Added stress during a pandemic”

Providing uncertainty as to whether our children will be able to finish their pre school at the

centre, or whether we should be looking elsewhere as a backup.”

“It is causing a low level of constant stress, which after the pandemic is so so awful for myself and my family. Certainty and stability are what we all need right now. I am also angry and frustrated with Council and how they have dealt with this whole situation. The timing, the lack of discussions with the Centre are just unfathomable.”

“We are lucky that the centre is not going to impact us as a family. However it is really sad to see the effects on staff with no security in the future. It is sad to see that other kids will have to leave a place that is basically second family to your child and you entrust in their Care.”

### **Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten**

“The uncertainty around the future of the centre has been incredibly stressful for us as a family, and for our extended family of Eildon Road. All the parents I speak to are worried about what the future holds and unsure whether to seek alternative arrangements. I'm also shocked at the decision by council to recommend the sale and closure of our centre. It is completely out of touch with modern society. Everywhere else in the world the focus is entirely on providing more options for quality accessible care to help women return to work, and here in a 'progressive' city like Port Phillip the focus is on closing centres and taking options away! It doesn't make any sense to me. I'm feeling really disillusioned.”

“I am very worried that Eildon road will close and I will be forced to find somewhere else that would be significantly harder for me to access as someone with a chronic illness. This childcare centre is vital for our family as it provides enrichment for our son and allows me precious time to use without supervising a child.”

“Uncertainty for my child, stress about moving. Worries that I won't be able to access such good quality care with passionate educators and a great environment”

“Added stress and worry we would no longer have affordable and accessible child care, be unable to work fulltime and endure financial hardship”

“Causing stress, been using this centre for 11yrs”

“The entire process causes severe anxiety for us. I (mum) just accepted my first senior position for which I worked so hard after returning to work from parental leave. The private centres suggested as replacement options are all located at a highway, offer a lower educator to child ratio, higher fees and are no alternative for us. The non-for-profit centres in our area require longer commuting, have very long waiting lists and also shorter operating hours. There is a high risk that we have no or only limited access to a 5 day spot in a comparable centre. We are both working 5 days/week fulltime. My partner (dad) is earning more than I am (mum), which means that I would need to provide care and have another care related setback in my career if ERCK is closing and we are unable to find a spot (5 days) in a comparable centre with long operating hours. Our families are living overseas, so ERCK is the only support we have. Our work in healthcare requires us to work relatively long hours and our child is often the last one collected. Our colleagues often tell us how difficult it is for them to collect their children so late and that they often cry because they are the last ones. When we collect our daughter, she is always happily engaged with one of

the educators and runs towards us telling us that she is the "lucky last". We are very worried to lose this quality of care, which allows us to work and provides joy and education to our daughter."

"It has added in necessary stress due to the uncertainty, and not being able to confidently plan ahead. It has also prompted me to consider the value of our local community in being able to unite in opposition to this proposal."

"Would be hard for me to get to another childcare in morning as it would be out of my way"

"Very stressful to move to another centre. This is the only centre in the heart o St Kilda. It provides high quality, affordable care in smaller sizes - perfectly suited to my child and our family situation. We previously had to send our daughter to a private centre and we were unhappy with the impersonal nature of it, high turnover of staff and hefty fees."

"This is stressful on top of an already stressful COVID context"

"My child loves the centre, his friends, the teachers and moving centres now would be so hars for him.

"We are very distressed at the thought of losing the sense of community and friendships our son has formed at ERCK. We love the centre with all our heart - our son is delighted to attend each day, and the quality of personalised care he receives is exceptional. Being forced to attend another daycare if ERCK were to close would have a significant negative impact on both our son and our own lives."

"Concerning"

"Not positive"

"I feel really sad that we will lose a part of the connection we have with our local community. At ERCK, we get an oppotunity to get involved and meet new families through volunteering at fundraising events, (i.e. Bunnings BBQ) and working bees. We wouldn't get that at a private centre."

"Anxious due to the uncertainty."

"Distressing"

"I am anxious about the closure and uncertain about the future of my child"

"The centre brings value to the families who's children attend by being a warm, bright, nurturing space to learn sand grow. It brings value to the carers who work there by giving them employment and career opportunities. It gives the businesses nearby foot traffic as the parents walk past everyday. Everyday without fail someone will smile, wave or say hello to my daughter on our way to the center contributing to a sense of community. I now know names and faces of the people who live near me because we have this small center in our neighborhood. If a council was told they could bring an area that much value just by purchasing a house, they probably would. So why are they selling it for a couple million dollars just to get a few apartments in return. I put my child on the wait-list 7 months in advance and I went back to work early so that we would be part of the January intake and I got the last full time spot. I had my name down on every port Philip council center just in case and I only got the one offer."

"Would more than likely have to move from the area of it was to be closed"

"I do really hope no because the staff who work there it is amazing , an extended family I

should say”

“It is really stressful for our entire family, it is extremely difficult to find days at any daycare let alone one that is so wonderful and has the best interest of your kid as their main goal. If this center closed it would be devastating for our family.”

“Creating a great deal of stress to my young family.”

“Anxious and upset I might not be able to return to work when planned/want”

“It is causing significant stress for our family as we try to get back to 'normal' post the COVID related disruptions to work and education over the last 2 years. The prospect of disrupting our children (again) is not one that we are equipped to deal with at this time.”

“It will remove any childcare on the beach side of Nepean Hwy impacting a huge community of parents and children.”

“Our child has settled in so well, it's heartbreaking to think she might have to move. Our experience has been brilliant and we love that it's right on our doorstep. All the other centres are a 20min walk, minimum, there is nothing in central St Kilda. If ERCK closes that will impact our commuting time.”

“The uncertainty and short timeframe around the closure are stressful”

“I really don't understand why they would consider closing the centre, My child looks forward to going to daycare and that is purely because of the great staff and facilities they have. We need to keep this centre open for the community”

“It is highly stressful. I am worried that my daughter has settled in so well at ERCK and we will have to move her to a larger centre where she will not enjoy as much. ERCK is the only centre within a walking distance to our home. If we move we will be forced to drive twice each day to drop off and collect. Living inner city we don't have off street parking and avoid driving wherever possible. It will make our days significantly longer as we will need to leave much earlier in the morning and collect her later to make it to work on time. So it will have a significant impact on our family time together.”

“The certainty is very stressful. We have another baby and due and I know trying to find another centre to take 2 children and settle them in would be very challenging. I also was not impressed with what I know about other private centres locally.”

“It is causing me a great deal of anxiety as it is now uncertain whether my daughter will have childcare available to her in future. This is impacting my job. I'm reluctant to take on advancement opportunities when I don't know if I will be able to continue to work full-time.”

“The worry of having to find a new centre next year, causing upset to my already happy settled children

“It is extremely frustrating and takes the focus for staff at the centre away from their daily duties

“Causing some anxiety”

“devastating- the impact on not having high quality childcare with a sense of community and belonging in walking distance will have an impact in our family that doesn't bear thinking about. we have no other family support and will probably have to move to be in walking distance to care”

“Not happy and feeling let down by the council”

“Extremely distressing. Knowing my sons care that he has been in since he was 4 months old (now 4 years old) could just be sold to the highest bidder makes me sick and I loose hope in the community that I thought “had our backs”. The council even thinking of this disgusts me. I’m sad that wolfe won’t be able to visit the daycare where he once spent most of his early life. History has just gone. I plan to have another child and the plan is Eildon daycare centre. I feel unsettled, stressed and deeply saddened that my children won’t have the same care. Especially with the years we have had with covid, More than ever kids needs stability. Shame on the council. I have sent numerous declarations and signed up to several “save the centre” petitions. I’m worried the council are not listening. A huge amount of upsetting emotions!!!! I was even thinking of holding my son back one more year because we love eildon so much.”

“Severe anxiety. Profit ran centres is not an option for us so closure would mean moving away and leaving my job as a health care profession”

“Taking up a lot of my time!”

## **Submission to City of Port Phillip Council regarding the proposed sale of The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten and two other community-run childcare centres**

### ***Our family***

We have two children who attend The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten (The Avenue). Our eldest daughter has been attending since she was one, progressing from the Babies' Room to the Toddlers' Room and she is now in 3 Year-Old Kinder. Our youngest daughter started in the Babies' Room when she was 14 months old last November.

We have only had positive experiences in our 2+ years of using The Avenue, and we wish not only for that to continue for our family, but for many other local families to have the opportunity to experience the same.

### ***Much more than a 'babysitting' service***

Until we started using The Avenue, we weren't aware of what 'daycare' actually was; it is far more than simply caring for children; it really is **early childhood education in a community-focused environment**. Our daughters are fostered and challenged every day to develop their social and physical skills in ways that we simply can't offer them at home, and their involvement in the community – especially for the kinder children – is an important part of their experience.

### ***Why we chose The Avenue***

We nominated The Avenue as our first choice on the City of Port Phillip's childcare waiting list because we liked the care, room size, location and feel of the centre, which is a reflection of the community-run not-for-profit model of The Avenue.

We love the community run childcare model, and find it works really well for our family. Our daughters thrive in the rooms because they are not overwhelmed with so many other children due to the small room sizes, and all the educators know our daughters, no matter which room they work in. This is a reflection of the employment status of educators at The Avenue; there is the **Holy Grail of continuity of care** that can't be provided by centres that rely heavily on agency staff. The Avenue also offers long-day care, in addition to the structured sessions during the main part of the day, enabling us to drop off from 7.30am and collect until 6pm.

The focus on education is exceptional, and is based on play-based pedagogy that enables our daughters to learn and build on their skills every day. There is a strong emphasis on community and experiencing many different cultures, ensuring our daughters have the foundations of open-minded, kind and welcoming individuals who respect others and learn from questioning and experiencing. These are traits we value strongly in our family.

### ***Accessibility to the workforce***

Financially, the not-for-profit model works for us, too. We pay just under \$130/child per day, before government rebate. This is \$20-30 cheaper than many private facilities. Conceivably, it would cost us about an extra \$200/week to send our daughters to another centre, and this extra would not attract any government rebate nor result in a better outcome for our daughters. At this point, it would be a fine line

whether it was worthwhile financially for both of us to work, which is something we both want to do and we are both currently employed.

### **Possible impacts on The Avenue pre-2026**

While our youngest daughter will finish at The Avenue by 2026 when Council has flagged its closure, we foresee the imminent closure will likely have a detrimental impact on our daughters over the next four years. These include:

- permanent staff leaving for more secure work, resulting in an increase in reliance on agency staff and a decrease in continuity of care and employee investment in their place of work
- even less money being spent on the facility, resulting in a poorer level of care and service for our daughters, and
- our daughters will lose many of their friends as parents relocate children to other daycare providers where there is a guaranteed level of service and care.

### **Additional reasons why Council should reconsider the closure and sale of The Avenue**

The Avenue was gifted to Council for the explicit purpose of providing childcare services. It should not now be seen as a cash cow due to property inflation. Unfortunately, despite paying about \$100,000 to Council every year for maintenance and facility upgrades, most of these funds in recent years have not been reinvested in The Avenue, leading to its current state of disability access non-compliance. The Avenue Committee of Management has had these compliance issues costed and have also offered to pay for the works, but Council has not agreed to apply for State and Federal funding grants specifically created for this purpose, nor had any meaningful conversation with the Committee of Management about addressing the issues. We would love to see The Avenue be even more inclusive, which it would be able to do if these disability access issues were addressed.

The proposed closure of the three daycare centres will result in a net loss of 77 daily places in the municipality. There are three types of daycare currently provided in the municipality: private, council-run and community-run. To say an increase in the private sector will be able to pick up the slack is missing the many points made in this submission.

### **What we are asking of Council**

We chose the community-run model because we like that it's not-for-profit and we're so closely involved. We don't want to send our children to a large Council-run centre where they will feel overwhelmed, nor to a private centre where decisions are made with profit rather than our children in mind. What we want is for the Council to continue to offer The Avenue for daycare, and to upgrade its facilities so it is disability compliant and inclusive for all. The Avenue has been offering daycare services since 1975, and we hope many more families will have the opportunity to participate and experience its wonderful service for many more years.

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I am rather perplexed to find that separate submissions are required for each of the community child care centres when I object to the proposed sale of all three centres.

I am dismayed that the people 'listening' are the Head of Real Estate Portfolio and the Property Development Associate.

This is not a real estate issue and the fact that the current City of Port Phillip sees it as one is further deepens my despair. It reveals to a shocking degree just how neo-Liberalism has the council by the throat.

The issues at stake are the care and education of the young children of Port Phillip, the rights of their parents to work and pursue careers, and the equality of women. Without childcare, women's lives are extremely limited.

I live opposite The Avenue Children's Centre and work from home. My days are filled with the happy sounds of children. Many of parents arrive on foot or by bicycle.

One of the great advantages of community childcare is that is local, and community-based.

Closing The Avenue Children's Centre – and the other two centres – will mean that parents will have to travel further, more often by car – and that it is if they can find alternatives.

The current proposal means an overall loss of 79 places at a time when the council should be boosting, not slashing, childcare provision.

I am shocked that the council has not availed itself of State Government funding or the \$6.2 fund which childcare centres have contributed to.

All this seems to indicate a lack of real commitment to childcare on the part of the council. It seems to indicate that the council would rather see such services in the hands of private enterprise where the main object is making a profit. There is far less support for low-income earners.

I expected more – a lot more – from the City of Port Phillip. Please do not proceed with this flawed and unfair proposal.





**SUBMISSION TO THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP'S INTENTION TO SELL THE  
PROPERTY AT 17 EILDON ROAD, ST KILDA**

***(EILDON ROAD CHILDCARE & KINDERGARTEN)***

**PREPARED BY THE EILDON ROAD CHILDCARE & KINDERGARTEN COMMITTEE OF  
MANAGEMENT, 28 FEBRUARY 2022**

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# Introduction

The Committee of Management (COM) of Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten (ERCK) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposal to sell three Council properties currently occupied by community run, not-for-profit kindergarten and early childhood service centres, and focuses in particular on ERCK, located at 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda.

The COM acknowledges the City of Port Phillip's (CoPP) long and proud history supporting the provision of quality and accessible early childhood services to the community, but we are deeply concerned by this proposal. The sale and likely subsequent closure of ERCK as outlined in the proposal would see the removal of essential (family) services from the heart of St Kilda and a permanent reduction in childcare & kindergarten places for the CoPP. We are particularly disappointed by council officers' unwillingness to date to engage with us in exploring viable alternatives.

The COM understands that the existing building does not currently meet required accessibility standards and this needs to be addressed. We are eager to work together with CoPP to determine a long-term, viable solution. The CoPP's own Children's Services Policy says council is committed to 'working with partners to ensure children have access to affordable, safe, accessible, and quality early year's services'<sup>1</sup> and outlines a commitment to advocate to other levels of government to increase investment in quality children's services<sup>2</sup>, but this has not been our experience to date. Instead, we've seen a public report presented to Council containing critical information that has since been found to be incorrect. We've learned that council officers did not 'advocate to other levels of government to increase investment'<sup>3</sup> in our centres and encountered council officers unwilling to engage with us as partners<sup>4</sup> to ensure that children have access to quality and affordable early childhood services.

The purpose of this submission is to highlight the immense value ERCK offers to families, and the CoPP community more broadly, and present viable alternatives that should be thoroughly explored.

We ask that City of Port Phillip Councillors vote against selling Eildon Road Childcare and Kindergarten, Elwood Children's Centre and The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten and work with each centre's Committee of Management, and the state and federal governments to develop a sustainable, long-term plan for these valued services and ensure a city that is inclusive, liveable, sustainable, vibrant and well-governed.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p9

<sup>2</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p10

<sup>3</sup> See note 2

<sup>4</sup> See note 1

# The Value of Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten

ERCK was established in 1988, funded as part of a joint Federal and State government initiative to develop community-based childcare. We are proud of our continued community focus and estimate the centre has provided care for more than 1600 children during its three decades of operation.

It has a licensed capacity of 44 children, caring for children from eight weeks, up to and including school age. The centre offers long day-care, as well as 3yo and 4yo kindergarten programs. All meals and nappies are provided, and there are separate rooms and outdoor spaces for Babies (0-2years), Toddlers (2-3years) and Kindergarteners (3-5years).

ERCK is the only early childhood centre and kindergarten in an area of CoPP that covers almost 4km<sup>2</sup> and it is the only kindergarten service to fall within the St Kilda Park Primary School Catchment area. It provides education and care, a sense of community, and a place of employment. It brings further indirect contributions to the local economy with more than 50 families and 12 staff attending the centre each day.

The proposal supporting this sale places no value or even consideration of the role ERCK plays in the community, focusing only on property upgrade costs and the reallocation of sale proceeds to North St Kilda Children's Centre. The following information outlines some of the key areas in which ERCK provides value to the City of Port Phillip. We hope Councillors will give each element the consideration it deserves as part of their decision-making process.

## ERCK PROVIDES AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE FOR FAMILIES

ERCK provides an essential service for 54 families whose children currently attend the centre offering affordable, quality long day care, kindergarten education and all meals.

The centre helps CoPP deliver on its commitment to ensure 'parents, carers and families are supported to increase their capacity and capability'<sup>5</sup> by providing affordable, quality childcare located close to home, which makes it possible for both parents of young children to return to work and education.

According to the St Kilda Strategic Plan<sup>6</sup>, one third (32.9%) of people living in the St Kilda Major Activity Centre (MAC) Precinct are aged 25-34. Given the average age of first-time mothers in Australia is 29 years, and almost two thirds of all first-time mothers in Australia in 2019 were aged between 25- 34 years<sup>7</sup>, we can expect demand for childcare services to remain high in this local area.

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<sup>5</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p6

<sup>6</sup> City of Port Phillip, *St Kilda Strategic Plan*, 2021, p3

<sup>7</sup> Australian Institute of Health & Wellbeing, SOURCE <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mothers-babies/australias-mothers-babies-data-visualisations/contents/demographics-of-mothers-and-babies/maternal-age>> accessed 24 Feb 2022.

The St Kilda Strategic Plan also found local residents believed more emphasis should be placed on ‘living locally’, and that improving local economy and amenity were some of the greatest opportunities for the area<sup>8</sup>. Early childhood services must be considered an essential amenity for this community.

ERCK FAMILY SURVEY FINDINGS	
●	63% said closing ERCK would mean a delayed return to work or a need to work less
●	41% said sending their child to an alternate centre would cause financial distress
●	70% said they would find commuting to another centre difficult

Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022<sup>1</sup>

### ERCK IS WELL LOCATED

ERCK is the **only** kindergarten and early childhood centre in an area covering almost 4 square kilometres stretching from Middle Park to Elwood on the western side of St Kilda-Brighton Road. It is also the only kindergarten within the St Kilda Park Primary School catchment zone providing an important educational connection for families with young children in the area.

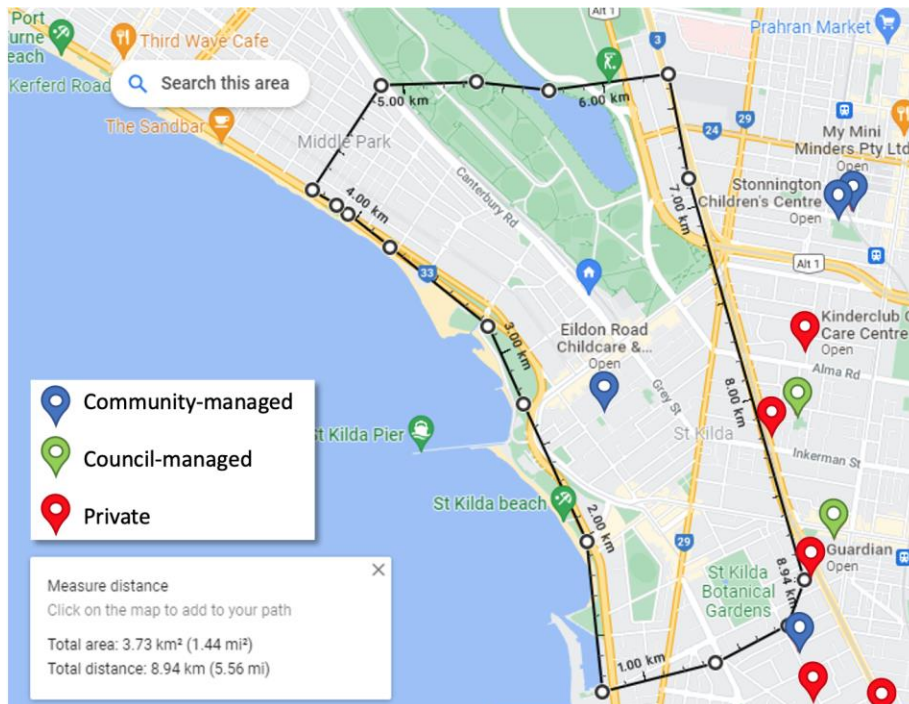


Figure 1: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten is the only early learning centre and kindergarten in an area spanning 3.7km<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> City of Port Phillip, *St Kilda Strategic Plan*, 2021, p4

The CoPP’s proposal suggests that families from our centre can simply move to nearby centres – most of them privately run, significantly more expensive, and located 1.3 km or more from where their child currently attends care or kindergarten. This shows no regard or understanding for the needs of families.

The ‘nearby’ centres cannot possibly absorb the almost 60 children who will be displaced if ERCK is to close at the end of 2022. Its closure will result in families having to accept early childhood places further afield in the municipality, (e.g. Port Melbourne and South Melbourne), or remove their children from care entirely.

95% of families<sup>9</sup> said the location of our centre was a key consideration when making the decision to send their children to ERCK ensuring a safer, shorter, more convenient and more sustainable commute for time-pressed, working families.

Research conducted as part of the CoPP’s *St Kilda Strategic Plan* shows 78% of residents in this area live in flats or apartments and walking and public transport is the preferred method of transport<sup>10</sup>.

<b>ERCK FAMILY SURVEY - WELL LOCATED</b>	
●	<b>71% walk to and from the centre each day</b>
●	<b>10% ride to and from the centre each day</b>
●	<b>76% enjoy a travel time of 10 minutes or less</b>
●	<b>95% said ERCK’s proximity to home was an important</b>
●	<b>70% said they would find commuting to another centre difficult</b>

*Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022*

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<sup>9</sup>Eildon Road Children’s Centre Family Survey, February 2022.

<sup>10</sup> City of Port Phillip, *St Kilda Strategic Plan*, 2021, p16.

## ERCK IS AFFORDABLE

As a not-for-profit, ERCK endeavours to charge some of the lowest fees of any long day care centre in the municipality. As illustrated in Table 1, our fees are almost **\$12 a day less** than the average daily rate charged by other childcare centres within CoPP. ERCK is up to \$33 per day less than the most expensive centres which are privately owned and operated.

**Table 1: CoPP Early Childhood Centre Fee Comparisons (as at February 2022)**

COPP EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE	DAILY FEE
The Avenue Children's Centre & Kindergarten	\$129.00
Poets Grove (March 22)	\$135.00
CoPP run centres	\$137.00
<b><i>Eildon Road Childcare &amp; Kindergarten</i></b>	<b><i>\$137.00</i></b>
Elwood Children's Centre	\$140.00
Kinderclub Childcare Centre	\$144.00
Elwood Nest	\$159.00
Guardian Childcare & Education St Kilda North	\$168.00
Guardian Childcare & Education St Kilda South	\$169.00
Evoke Early Learning Albert Park	\$170.00
<b>Local Centre Average Daily Fee</b>	<b>\$148.80</b>
<b>ERCK Daily Fee vs Local Centre Average Daily Fee</b>	<b>- \$11.80</b>
<b>ERCK Daily Fee vs Local Centre Highest Daily Fee</b>	<b>- \$33.00</b>

Lower fees mean childcare is accessible for more families. Even nominal increases to the daily rate of care can mean the return to work for some parents is no longer financially viable, forcing them to reduce their work hours to reduce the number of days of care. In some instances, fee increases mean one parent (usually female) drops out of the workforce altogether to care for children they can no longer afford to send to childcare. Lower priced childcare options allow more women to return to the workforce and play a critical role in ensuring and reducing the barriers to maintaining employment.

Research has demonstrated that maintaining employment assists individuals and families to break the cycle of vulnerability. When parents drop out of the workforce due to higher childcare fees, they are often forced back into the cycle of vulnerability.

We know our centre's lower fees were an important consideration for 80% of parents when making the decision to send their children to ERCK.

ERCK FAMILY SURVEY - AFFORDABILITY	
●	<b>80% said lower fees were an important consideration</b>
●	<b>41% could no longer afford to have their children in care if fees increased to \$147* per day</b>
●	<b>80% could no longer afford to have their children in care if fees increased to \$168** per day</b>
●	<b>70% said they would find commuting to another centre difficult</b>

*\*\$10/day increase*

*\*\*Daily rate at Guardian Childcare & Education St Kilda North*

*Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022*

## ERCK IS FINANCIALLY VIABLE AND WELL-MANAGED

Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten is independent and financially viable. The centre has delivered a financial surplus for multiple years and is in a strong financial position - at 31 January 2022 the centre has more than \$700,000 equity.

As a not-for-profit organisation, any operating surplus is marked for reinvestment into the centre, directly benefiting the children rather than being paid out to commercial owners or shareholders. The COM is eager to invest in improving our centre's facilities, resources and capability. This includes new landscaping and play equipment for the kindergarten play area which had been scoped and costed with works scheduled to commence from January 2022 however this activity has now been temporarily put on hold given CoPP's notice of its intention to sell.

ERCK has also identified numerous grants available at a community, State and Federal level. We are eager to work with CoPP to secure funding through the Building Blocks Program but Council officers have been unwilling to engage with centre management and we know our current status makes us ineligible due to the short term nature of our lease.

ERCK pays annual maintenance and infrastructure levies of approximately \$100,000 per year but has seen minimal reinvestment from CoPP in terms of maintenance and upgrades during the past 5 years. Records uploaded by council officers to the Have Your Say portal in February 2022 show that in the last 16.5 years the average maintenance and capital expenditure has been \$43,367 per annum, and has never exceeded \$71,000 in any given year. Utilising the unspent funds and future maintenance and infrastructure levies can support financing the required upgrade of our centre.



ERCK is committed to our staff. Our employees are paid above the award rate and our low turnover rate is regularly commented upon by families whose children have started at ERCK after attending other centres.

From an education perspective we meet or exceed all quality standards against the national framework and our team is committed to a program of continuous improvement across the centre.

## ERCK OFFERS QUALITY CARE

As noted above, from an education perspective ERCK meets or exceeds all quality standards against the national framework.

Research by the Community Childcare Association shows that not-for-profit childcare services do provide higher quality education and care in Victoria. Their study found 47% of Victorian not-for-profit services exceed the National Quality Standard for education and care services, compared to only 12% of for-profit services in the state<sup>11</sup>.

91% of respondents in the ERCK Family Survey said the quality of care offered at ERCK was very important when making the decision to send their child to the centre.

Our staff are our most valued assets and we aim to provide a working environment that promotes respect and values their passion, knowledge and skills. We are committed to keeping our team inspired and up to date with the latest research, regulations, and legislation and supporting their professional development.

ERCK also provides children with access to the outdoors, an experience that is greatly valued by our families, particularly those who live in nearby flats and apartments with no gardens or balconies. Research conducted as part of the CoPP's *St Kilda Strategic Plan* which shows 78% of residents in this area live in flats or apartments<sup>12</sup>, and this reflects the living situation of many of our families.

The opportunity for children to play in a natural environment is a stated objective in the Children's Services Policy<sup>13</sup>. Yet many of the centres identified as alternative options for our families cannot offer this due to their location in high density, commercially zoned areas.

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<sup>11</sup> Source <<https://www.cccinc.org.au/advocacy/accs-trends-in-community-childrens-services-survey-ticcs>>, accessed 9 February 2022.

<sup>12</sup> City of Port Phillip, *St Kilda Strategic Plan*, 2021, p16

<sup>13</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p9

ERCK FAMILY SURVEY - QUALITY OF CARE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>91% said quality of care was very important when deciding to enrol at the centre</b></li> <li>● <b>76% said quality of care would be most missed if forced to find an alternative centre</b></li> </ul>

*Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022*

## ERCK OFFERS COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

One of the most important aspects of ERCK is the sense of community and connection the centre provides for families. More than 70% of our families do not have family support in Melbourne, so ERCK and its community has become an important support network. 89% of parents surveyed said they would miss the sense of community provided by ERCK if they were forced to find an alternate centre.

ERCK FAMILY SURVEY - COMMUNITY & CONNECTION
<p><i>"We are from Ireland, our family in Melbourne we met at Eildon Road. This centre has been the best thing for us in moving to Australia."</i></p> <p><i>"Without family living in Victoria, the community we have formed at ERCK has become like a family to us and our son."</i></p> <p><i>"We are very distressed at the thought of losing the sense of community and friendships our son has formed at ERCK."</i></p>

*Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022*

Research by the Community Child Care Association has found that community run centres provide opportunities for informal and formal links with the community<sup>14</sup>.

As a community run-centre, our families influence decision making providing input into the decisions and policies that affect the care and education of their children. Our families also influence the financial management decisions to ensure that all resources are used to maintain quality care.

### **A note on Community & Volunteering in the City of Port Phillip**

The CoPP is rightfully proud of the strong sense of community that runs throughout our unique municipality. Much of this can be attributed to the amazing work carried out by volunteers who work selflessly and tirelessly to enrich the experiences of those living in and visiting our city.

Community run early childhood centres are grassroots organisations that foster this sense of community and introduce many to the experience of volunteering. Upon enrolling their child at a community run

<sup>14</sup> Source <<https://www.cccinc.org.au/advocacy/why-choose-community-owned-not-for-profit>>, Accessed 10 February 2022.

centre such as ERCK, parents become involved in voluntary initiatives such as working bees and Bunnings sausage sizzles. Through these experiences new relationships are forged and parents become empowered when they realise the difference their contribution makes.

Many gain confidence to volunteer their time to serve on the Committee of Management and continue to serve the centre until their children leave to start school. These parents then go out into the wider community and continue to volunteer their skills and experience to serve other community run organisations, including local school councils and sporting clubs.

Closing community run early childhood services will have a significant impact on the pipeline of new volunteers and damage the unique fabric of our city.

## ERCK SUPPORTS COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO MAKE KINDER UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE

ERCK's 20 daily kindergarten places have been accounted for in the CoPP's KISP, a document designed to estimate current and future demand for State Government funded kindergarten places in the municipality.

Allowing the centre to remain open presents a more time and cost-effective<sup>15</sup> route to delivering funded kindergarten places in the CoPP, **in the areas that need it most**. As noted above, ERCK is uniquely located in a pocket of CoPP that has **no other** early childhood education services nearby - the closest alternate centre is located 1.3 kilometres away. Removing ERCK and its kindergarten places will make it harder for many children to access essential early childhood education services, and ensure CoPP fails in its bid to make kindergarten universally accessible across the municipality.

## ERCK SUPPORTS CoPP's VISION FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE CITY

ERCK's location in the heart of St Kilda means it is well situated to service the many young families living on the beachside of the Nepean Highway. We know the vast majority of our families (81%) travel to and from the centre on foot or by bike each day, supporting CoPP's Strategic Vision for a sustainable city with fewer cars on the road.

ERCK FAMILY SURVEY - SUSTAINABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>71% walk to and from the centre each day</b></li><li>● <b>10% ride to and from the centre each day</b></li><li>● <b>75% enjoy a travel time of 10 minutes or less to the centre each day</b></li></ul>

*Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022*

<sup>15</sup> Department of Education & Training, *Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan: City of Port Phillip*, 2020, p13

As with most early learning centres, typical drop off and pick up times for children occur during traditional 'work-week peak hours', when roads across the municipality become overwhelmed with traffic and even short-distance commutes by car can become lengthy due to congestion. Should ERCK close, many families would be forced to take their children to and from their new centre by car.

*Early-stage modelling to illustrate how this would affect traffic future traffic levels in CoPP:*

Assuming only two thirds of the 44 families who currently walk or ride were required to drop off and collect their children by car, 29 families would now be required to make two extra car trips per day. That's an extra 58 car trips each day, or 289 extra car trips each week. In addition to the increased financial burden and impact on families' well-being this represents an extra **28 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>**<sup>16</sup> being released into the CoPP each year.

## Issues with the Proposal to Sell ERCK

The ERCK COM strongly opposes Council's current proposal to sell the building at 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda. The sale and likely closure of ERCK would leave a large area of the CoPP without easy access to essential early childhood services and result in a net loss of early childhood and kindergarten places in Port Phillip, even once the redevelopment of North St Kilda Children's Centre is completed.

The following pages outline our key concerns with the proposal. We hope Councillors will give each element the consideration it deserves as part of their decision-making process.

### NET LOSS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND KINDERGARTEN PLACES IN THE CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

The report proposes to use the funds from the sale of 17 Eildon Road to redevelop the council-owned North St Kilda Children's Centre into a larger operation. Despite this redevelopment, the closure of the three community-managed centres would result in a **net loss of 79 daily childcare places** across the suburbs of St Kilda, Elwood and Balaclava.

Under the proposed timeline of closures, there will also be a two-year period (2024 & 2025) where this specific area of the municipality will have **160 fewer daily childcare places** (see Table 2 below).

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<sup>16</sup> Figures calculated using [https://co2.myclimate.org/en/car\\_calculators/new](https://co2.myclimate.org/en/car_calculators/new) and based on average 5km trip with a vehicle consuming 8L/100km

**Table 2: CoPP Proposed Timeline of Centre Closures and Net Loss of Childcare Places**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Daily places</b>	<b>Net loss of daily places</b>
<b>2023</b>	Closure - Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten (Dec '22)	-44	-44
<b>2024</b>	Closure for redevelopment - North St Kilda Children's Centre (Dec '23)	-77	
	<b>Closure - Elwood Children's Centre (Dec '23)</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>-160</b>
<b>2025</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-160</b>
<b>2026</b>	Reopening - North St Kilda Children's Centre	121	-39
<b>2027</b>	Closure - The Avenue Children's Centre & Kindergarten (Dec '26)	-40	-79

It is disappointing that Council Officers should openly take the position, as outlined in the report, that market forces will fix the structural undersupply of Childcare and Kindergarten places (caused by Council) by allowing demand to be tempered by higher fees and limited places.

#### LACK OF ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

The proposal put to council on 1 December 2021 was prepared by council's Head of Real Estate Portfolio with only peripheral input from Children's Services and presents the sale of our building as the only possible option. No alternatives were presented to Councillors or the public, and only in a late effort to justify the proposal, was any supporting detail hastily gathered. It is impossible to rule out an element of bias in the proposal, perceived or otherwise, given the report was developed from this perspective.

#### LACK OF CONSULTATION & TRANSPARENCY DURING THE PROCESS

The CoPP Children's Services Policy outlines a commitment from Council to 'work with partners to ensure children have access to quality early year's services'<sup>17</sup> and to 'advocate to other levels of government to increase investment'<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p9

<sup>18</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p10

Disappointingly, there was no attempt by council staff to engage with the centre to discuss alternatives prior to the presentation of this report to Council, and it is now clear that Council staff had also failed to engage with the appropriate State Government departments to discuss available funding opportunities. The initial consultation period presented of just 6 weeks, was described as 'generous' and serves to reinforce a lack of intent in healthy engagement between CoPP Council Officers and ERCK.

The COM argues that tabling a report with only one viable option in a public setting is not a constructive way to reach a good outcome for the community, and the ensuing uncertainty has been damaging for our centre in particular, given the short timeline for sale and closure outlined in the report. It has driven insecurity of the workforce (attrition), forced families to begin exploring alternative options, and created great levels of anxiety among families and staff.

The report states that **'the standards for childcare centre buildings have changed since the centres first opened'**, and that bringing our centre up to standard would require **'a large investment'** and the centre **'would need to close to complete the work.'**

At the time of making this statement, Council staff had not commissioned the appropriate building and accessibility reports to give the centres an understanding of the scope of works required. It was only *after* the proposal was put forward for the December 1 meeting that these reports were commissioned.

Despite our direct request to the property team to access this information, when the relevant reports were completed, these were not shared directly with centres, but rather were uploaded to the HaveYourSay portal throughout January. No one from CoPP made contact to notify us that the documents were now publicly available, and CoPP have made no effort to seek input from us on the reports being procured or published, nor sought to discuss those documents with us in a constructive manner.

We also believe estimates uploaded to the HaveYourSay portal in January for the remedial works required to bring 17 Eildon Rd to the required DDA, Building Code and 'contemporary functionality' are flawed in that they've taken an absolute approach to a full rebuild and subsequently reached an overstated estimate that suits an argument. That approach has had no consultation with ERCK, gives no consideration to phasing or interim solutions, nor any consideration of any performance or management solutions.

Some reports uploaded to the HaveYourSay portal include incorrect information, such as images incorrectly incorporated into ERCK documentation taken from the other centres.

Our leadership team, including the Committee of Management (all volunteers) and our Operations team are professional and passionate about the long-term success of our organisation. We strive to provide these valued services long into the future and expected CoPP would welcome that contribution. We acknowledge the need for a longer-term plan for our building and expected to have an opportunity to collaborate constructively with the team at CoPP on that plan.

To be told by Council Officers on numerous occasions that "it's never going to be popular to close a childcare centre" as our concerns were being legitimately tabled in facilitation workshops was disrespectful and highlights that to date the consultation process has been all process and no consultation.

Since our first facilitated workshop we have seen a slight improvement in information sharing however we would like to see a more genuine commitment to consultation in the process moving forward.

## INCORRECT INFORMATION PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

The report advised CoPP Councillors that the three centres were not eligible for funding from the State government for facility improvement because they do not meet a minimum threshold of 66 places, or expandability by 22 places. This appears to be one of the main reasons behind the unanimous vote to commence the community consultation process at that meeting.

We understand this misinformation has since been corrected by the Minister for Early Childhood but the assertion has been damaging to our cause, and to our relationship with council officers tasked with improving the centre. Further to this, CoPP has made limited effort to clarify in its initial proposal that the assumption made, published, and distributed widely within the community through the consultation process has subsequently been found to be incorrect.

## CONCERNS WITH EARLY EDUCATION DEMAND MODELLING

At the CoPP Council Meeting on 1 December, 2021 and in subsequent discussions, council officers justified the net loss of 79 daily places by referring to modelling from the CoPP KISP that suggested a surplus of kindergarten places until 2028 in the St Kilda Area.<sup>19</sup>

When presenting updated modelling to the affected centres in February 2022<sup>20</sup> Council officers acknowledged that a lack of access to reliable data meant the forecasting was likely to be unreliable beyond the first few years<sup>21</sup>.

Good modelling has the power to estimate the effect of different variables on the demand for early education and childcare services in the City of Port Phillip. Given the recommendation to sell we are surprised that current modelling makes no account for the potential loss of places across the three Community Run Centres and St Kilda North in its demand estimates.

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<sup>19</sup>Department of Education & Training, *Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan: City of Port Phillip*, 2020, p17.

<sup>20</sup>City of Port Phillip, *Modelling Demand for Early Education and Care in the City of Port Phillip*, 2022, p9

<sup>21</sup>City of Port Phillip, *Modelling Demand for Early Education and Care in the City of Port Phillip* Online Presentation, 18 February 2022

Comparative modelling to illustrate how supply and demand would be affected by the loss of places from these centres would have provided Councillors with a better understanding of the potential impact of their closure, even if based on suboptimal data.

## REDUCED ACCESSIBILITY TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES

A decision to close ERCK would see CoPP deviate from the commitment outlined in its Children's Services Policy, to take 'a place-based approach to planning, funding and infrastructure investment, as well as the coordination and delivery of services for children and families' <sup>22</sup>.

The report's recommendation to sell the property at 17 Eildon Road will make it more difficult for hundreds of families residing in Port Phillip to access childcare. With few alternative options available within walking distance, many families will be forced to drive their children to other centres located across the municipality to suburbs such as South Melbourne and Port Melbourne which have a higher proliferation of services or even remove their children entirely from care.

As the revised February 2022 modelling indicates, childcare and kindergarten places in central St Kilda and the western side of St Kilda, will remain in high demand and undersupplied through to 2028 <sup>23</sup>. Removing ERCK leaves no other early childhood or kindergarten services in a large area of the municipality, and this will undoubtedly have a negative effect on future kindergarten participation rates and children from vulnerable settings are most at risk.

Local government has a statutory and social responsibility to plan for its local community. Ensuring the long-term provision of essential early childhood education services, distributed appropriately throughout the municipality will be critical to ensuring the long-term liveability of the city

Removing ERCK from its current location with no local alternatives would see CoPP fail to deliver this obligation.

## LIMITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO RETURN TO THE WORKFORCE

Forcing the sale of ERCK and removing childcare and early learning services from the immediate vicinity will impact the long-term career prospects for many local women. Countless studies at a local and international level have found access to affordable childcare is critical to improving female participation in the workforce. The current Federal government reinforced the validity of these studies by boosting its investment in childcare in a bid to increase the childcare rebate for low- and middle-income earners, in a

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<sup>22</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p8

<sup>23</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Modelling Demand for Early Education and Care in the City of Port Phillip*, 2022, p8



bid to 'help remove the barriers for parents, particularly mothers, to return to the workforce or to increase their hours, as their family grows'<sup>24</sup>.

A 2020 report by The Grattan Institute shows the number one barrier to women returning to full time work is the cost of childcare and the poor financial payoff from taking on more paid work<sup>25</sup>. The second barrier is the availability and quality of childcare <sup>26</sup>.

Forcing families from ERCK and other community centres to find alternate care that is more expensive and located further from their homes will see women scale back professionally or remove themselves entirely from work. Working reduced hours or dropping out of the workforce results in fewer, and often delayed opportunities for career development, promotions and pay rises.

By contrast affordable access to childcare supports reduced career breaks and improves economic security for women particularly, in the short and long term.

By closing down ERCK without a proper contingency plan in place, CoPP is going against its duty to follow the The Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020<sup>27</sup> that requires local governments to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality, and to promote gender equality in its policies, programs and services.

ERCK FAMILY SURVEY - WOMEN AND WORK
<p><i>"I (mum) just accepted my first senior position for which I worked so hard after returning to work from parental leave ... My partner (dad) is earning more than I am which means I would need to provide care and have another care-related setback in my career..."</i></p> <p><i>"This is impacting my job. I'm reluctant to take on advancement opportunities when I don't know if I will be able to continue to work full-time"</i></p>

**Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022**

## MENTAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation to sell ERCK has had a significant impact on the mental health of our families and staff, many of whom have reported experiencing increased levels of stress and anxiety as they attempt to manage further uncertainty in their lives.

<sup>24</sup> SOURCE <<https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/josh-frydenberg-2018/media-releases/making-child-care-more-affordable-and-boosting>> accessed 26 February 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Grattan Institute, *Cheaper childcare: A practical plan to boost female workforce participation*, 2020 p11

<sup>26</sup> Grattan Institute, *Cheaper childcare: A practical plan to boost female workforce participation*, 2020 p12

<sup>27</sup> State Government of Victoria, *Gender Equality Act 2020*

The timing of the recommendation was particularly ill-conceived, delivered at the end of two years of COVID-19 related lockdowns which led to major interruptions to family routines, limited access to early childhood care and education, and stressful separation for long periods of times from direct family members for many (as a reminder, 70% of our families have no family support in Victoria). Our families have told us the situation and uncertainty surrounding the future of ERCK has caused a great deal of distress and anxiety.

ERCK FAMILY SURVEY - MENTAL HEALTH
<p><i>"(The situation) is causing significant stress for our family as we try to get back to 'normal' post the COVID related disruptions to work and education over the last 2 years. The prospect of disrupting our children (again) is not one that we are equipped to deal with at this time."</i></p> <p><i>"I am anxious about the closure and uncertain about the future of my child."</i></p> <p><i>"This is stressful on top of an already stressful COVID context."</i></p> <p><i>"It is really stressful for our entire family."</i></p> <p><i>"Severe anxiety. Profit run centres are not an option for us so closure would mean moving away and leaving my job..."</i></p>

**Source: Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey, February 2022**

However, the COM is most concerned about the potential impacts the centre’s closure would have on the children who attend ERCK. A 2021 UNICEF report has found children and young people could feel the impact of COVID-19 on their mental health and well-being for many years to come <sup>28</sup>. Additional research by the Murdoch Children’s Research Institute supports this, confirming that the indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children are as substantial, if not more so, than the direct effects of COVID-19 infection <sup>29</sup>.

When considered in this context, we see the decision to target assets that support young children as unacceptable and likely to have further significant lasting impacts on their development.

### LIMITS CHOICE

One of the objectives outlined in the CoPPs Children’s Services Policy is to ensure families have access to services so they can make choices appropriate to their needs. Our families care about the smaller intake

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<sup>28</sup> UNICEF, *State of the World’s Children 2021; On My Mind: promoting, protecting and caring for children’s mental health*, 2021, p1

<sup>29</sup> Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, *The indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and adolescents, Brief Number 4, Version 1*, Jan 2022, p1

of children at ERCK (93%) and value the fact we are not for profit and community managed (91%), these were important considerations in their decision-making.

Our parents are passionate about the important selection they've made for the care of their children, and will advocate for community run childcare. We are passionate about the community centric service we offer and the care we provide.

We understand that parents make selections for many reasons and most will be passionate about the centre they have selected. But we believe our model has a critical role to play in providing a healthy mix of options for parents, and ERCK has proven its an option that is both valid and viable.

## NEGATIVE IMPACT ON AN ALREADY STRUGGLING ST KILDA

Removing ERCK from its current site will have wider implications for the local community. St Kilda's Fitzroy Street and Acland Street commercial precincts have experienced ongoing levels of decline in the past 5 years, and these have been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

High vacancy rates, public safety concerns, low daytime foot traffic and a lack of local amenity have been identified by the CoPP as key issues for Fitzroy Street. We understand initiatives such as Renew Fitzroy Street and the Retail Curation strategy will go some way to addressing these, but it will take several years. ERCK families and staff provide regular foot traffic to this struggling street on their daily commute to and from the centre. Families shop at the local supermarket and buy meals from the hospitality outlets along the strip on their way to or from ERCK. The decision to remove ERCK and early learning services will adversely affect this pocket of St Kilda and must be considered in this context.

We note with enthusiasm that The St Kilda Strategic Plan has identified an opportunity to provide diverse and affordable work and enterprise spaces to attract and support new industries to the area<sup>30</sup> - surely the continued provision of early learning and kindergarten services for this growing workforce should be considered as essential infrastructure for the future vision of St Kilda?

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<sup>30</sup> City of Port Phillip, *St Kilda Strategic Plan - Vol 1 The Plan*, 2021, p8

# For Consideration: Viable Alternatives

The Committee of Management at Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten has always been prepared and willing to work with the CoPP to address our building's issues. We firmly refute the assertion made in the report that the sale of our building is the only viable option.

The COM remains optimistic that given an adequate opportunity to collaborate authentically with CoPP, viable alternatives can be reached. The consultative process flaws as described have prevented us from being able to engage constructively to date but we look forward to planned engagement sessions in coming months. The COM agrees that several of the alternatives presented by council are not viable, for example not taking any action or acquiring neighbouring sites. However, we do believe many viable alternatives remain on the table and must be considered more diligently.

To illustrate and also validate those alternatives, the COM has explored alternatives across a number of categories. While we hope this work can be shared in detail and will be valued in upcoming consultation sessions we also understand that having this work done independently to CoPP is counter-productive and counter-intuitive. We'd all be better served by working through these alternatives in partnership, and all parties being afforded adequate time to investigate, prepare and scrutinise those options.

The options the COM consider still to be viable are: Full renewal, Phased upgrades, Relocation and Off market sale. We are very clear that our own business continuity relies on partnering with CoPP to develop a strategy and management plan for our facilities that spans the next 40 years and acknowledge that a combination of the below viable options (or other options as they may present) may be required for us to provide services well into the future.

FULL RENEWAL	PHASED UPGRADES	RELOCATION TO PURPOSE BUILT/EXISTING PREMISES	OFF MARKET SALE TO ERCK OR CHILDCARE OPERATOR
Full Access, building and contemporary functionality can be realised with grants available and co-funding options. ERCK will manage disruption, and the 'asset' can achieve a further 40 years of life	Majority of access issues resolved with targeted works (grants available), critical maintenance addressed with existing funds available to CoPP/ERCK and approved Mgt plans to address the shortfall with performance solutions. Reasonable extension of the lifecycle of the 'asset'.	CoPP and ERCK work together to identify options for relocation to secure the long-term provision of services. ERCK manages the disruption and CoPP includes a new site in its St Kilda Strategic Plan. Phased works considered as interim	CoPP sells 17 Eildon Rd off market or provides a Lease-to-Own arrangement allowing CoPP to divest the asset (and liability), however ERCK/other operator works independently to retain provision of valued services and upgrade the facility.

## 1. FULL RENEWAL

It is clear the upgrades required to make the building DDA compliant will require significant investment and the COM is eager to commence work in *partnership* with CoPP to secure the necessary funding that would make this option even more viable.

We understand there is a significant pool of funding available through the Victorian Department of Education's Building Blocks Program, but believe there are also other avenues to explore including a range of community grants available to not-for-profit and community organisations through corporate entities, as well as Federal grants relating to disability improvements, and upgrading existing community facilities.

To date, our efforts to access grants and other funding to upgrade our building, resources or operations have been hindered by our inability to reference a long-term lease agreement, so this will need to be quickly addressed by CoPP.

The COM has sought independent consultation with architects, estimators and disability access consultants on the plans and assessments CoPP had prepared and published in January 2022 to bring the site to full DDA and Building compliance (along with addressing some of the contemporary functionality deficits identified which we'd argue should not be considered mandatory upgrades). In receiving that advice, ***we believe the costs outlined in the 'Revised Preliminary Cost Plan' prepared for the CoPP by DDS Surveyors on 24 January 2022 are overstated.***

ERCK agrees that the investment would be significant, however we argue the investment is worthwhile, and we've identified many opportunities in that plan to reach a similarly compliant outcome with significantly lower costs. We'd welcome an opportunity to work with CoPP and the architects CoPP have engaged to improve those plans and reduce costs.

CoPP have stated numerous times that the disruption to services to ERCK would be too great to embark on such a project. ERCK would like to make clear that if CoPP is unable or unwilling to support those arrangements, then we would take on the coordination and cost of a temporary relocation should this scenario eventuate.

ERCK itself is in a strong financial position with \$700,000 in equity. The COM would like to explore co-funding of some aspects of the upgrades with CoPP, requesting CoPP match our contribution with funds drawn from the Quality Building Levy, monies that have been collected from us and other community run centres for the express purpose of replacing and renewing existing places.

## 2. PHASED UPGRADES

A phased upgrade solution would allow CoPP and ERCK to achieve significant inroads into the most pressing building and access deficits, but more rapidly, with reduced upfront investment and less

disruption. We expect that in partnership, ERCK and CoPP can prepare a robust long-term plan that appropriately balances:

- The continuity of the valued services ERCK provide
- Safety for staff, parents and the children we provide services to
- Required improvements to access
- Upgrades to address the 'contemporary functionality' in the building
- Addressing pressing maintenance concerns
- Value for Investment, including consideration of both the funding streams available, and Extension of Life for the Asset

ERCK recognises that such a plan, may indeed not be able to achieve a 30 or 40 year extension in the life of 17 Eildon Rd, but rather serve as an appropriate plan to ensure successful continuation of services at 17 Eildon Rd before a smooth transition into a longer term plan of either a full refit or relocation to a nearby site.

The COM has engaged an architect, estimator and access consultant to provide feedback on the review completed to date and explore the works that would be required to make appropriate upgrades to 17 Eildon Rd in order to extend its useful life in consideration of published site audits, plans and recommendations.

Based on their findings the upgrades we believe should be prioritised are:

- Replacing and redesigning the front gate and a new side gate with an additional barrier and improved access.
- Modification (replacement) of the existing entry path (ramp) to provide DDA access, front and rear.
- Modification of the existing doorway between the baby room and lobby.
- Modification of the existing doorway(s) between the toddler room and kinder room.
- Replacement of glass door and adjacent window frame leading onto the rear deck.
- Construction of a new DDA compliant toilet suite at the rear of the dwelling (brick veneer construction with stumps bearers and joists and Klip-Lok roofing).
- Replace the decking, balustrade and pergola to the rear and side (east and north) of the property (Silvertop Ash or similar decking material).
- Retrofit 'D' pulls on existing doors for DDA compliance.
- Tactile indicators to be installed.

We believe these works would not trigger any further building compliance requirements, and we're advised that they'd significantly improve access to the building. Specifically there would be clear pathways of access for visitors, parents, children and staff across entry points, all of the main childrens rooms, play areas and sanitary facilities. Remaining deficits would be addressed inside an approved building access management plan with performance solutions.

**In total, including a 20.7% contingency, these works have been estimated at \$374,000 Ex GST.**

To put this value into perspective, in just the last 3.5 years, the deficit in what ERCK has paid and what it received from the Maintenance and Infrastructure Levy would have covered **more than half** of that work. It is also just **17.2%** of the estimated cost of a full refit to Eildon Rd.

As per a full renewal, ERCK understands grants are available to fund works that upgrade our facilities to improve functionality, resolve some of the access deficits we experience today and also address selected building defects. In fact the advice provided to us from our Access Consultant is that (subject to a more detailed design review, stakeholder engagement with a group of people with lived experiences and subsequent preparation of an action plan with management systems), the works we have proposed would be a reasonable approach to achieve a significantly more inclusive and accessible space.

These works would be easily phased to minimise disruption and again, ERCK would assume responsibility and any cost, if CoPP requires it, for any temporary relocation.

In conjunction with these works, the ERCK funded playground upgrade (that had already been designed and budgeted for FY22) would extend access further and provide a significant functional upgrade to the outside play spaces. This would be achieved without any external financial support.

We note that there are also a number of minor defects (not critical to be addressed at this point), and several defects that are more important to address but which do not represent significant works. Some of these would be resolved inside the above scope, however, we consider the majority of the remainder can easily be addressed from within existing Maintenance Levy payments over time. ERCK would be prepared to engage with the CoPP property team on which of those defects (that have clearly not been considered worthy of repairing before now) might be prioritised in future repairs/upgrades. In addition to that, there may be other minor works to improve the 'contemporary functionality of the building' that ERCK and CoPP would like to take on and ERCK would also be pleased to engage with CoPP on those, including how they may best be funded.

### 3. RELOCATION TO NEW OR EXISTING FACILITY

As argued throughout this submission, there is a genuine need for early childhood and kindergarten services in the St Kilda MAC, and the removal of ERCK from this location will leave many local families without the option of affordable and easily accessible care. We firmly believe provision of early childhood services, including 3yo & 4yo kindergarten places should be added to the St Kilda Strategic Plan.

If applications for State Government funding for upgrades prove unsuccessful, it is critical the CoPP finds an alternative site and this could be via the adaptation of an existing council facility, government owned site, or as part of a new development.

We acknowledge relocation of the service to a new site will encounter significant barriers to entry including significant costs for approvals and redevelopment. As outlined in the CoPP KISP:

*“As an inner Melbourne LGA with 90% of the entire municipality already medium to high density, land for new builds is scarce, existing services are land locked and there are many heritage overlays to comply with.”<sup>31</sup>*

Against this backdrop, ***ERCK’s existing use privileges on the site at 17 Eildon Road must be given due consideration in any cost benefit analysis.***

However, we are confident that if given a reasonable period of time, and with a shared strategy and genuine commitment to consultation, ERCK and CoPP could identify suitable existing properties or sites, or optimise private/public developments to rehome ERCK so that it can continue to provide its valued services.

For example:

- **Albert Park Pavillion at Oval One**

We note that construction of a new pavilion at Oval One in Albert Park has commenced. Could a childcare & kindergarten facility be temporarily or permanently accommodated within, or alongside this space? The location is adjacent to an existing school, offers space for outdoor, nature-based play and is easily accessed with existing infrastructure. Peak periods for usage here are unlikely to overlap with a Childcare setting.

- **Christ Church Complex, St Kilda**

We understand a proposal to develop Christ Church Square and introduce a privately operated childcare centre was raised in 2019. Key objections from the community related to the proximity of an existing childcare centre (ERCK), and the loss of open space currently available to the public. A council-led development of this site could be sympathetic to those concerns and ensure that the public open spaces so valued by neighbours are preserved.

- **Jackson Street Carpark Ground Lease**

We are not privy to the submissions received by council for the potential private lease arrangement for this site however its size, and close proximity to our current location make it a strong candidate for a replacement site and even multi-use development.

- **Major redevelopments in local Fitzroy Street Precinct**

We encourage CoPP to explore conversations with property developers who have recently taken over existing sites on Fitzroy Street regarding the provision of community service and opportunities for PPP. Examples include 99 Fitzroy Street, recently bought by Gurner Property.

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<sup>31</sup> Dept. of Education & Training, *Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan City of Port Phillip*, April 2021, p8



### CoPP St Kilda Strategic Plan (December 2021)

CoPP should also ensure the provision of purpose-built early childhood facilities is added as a priority to the St Kilda Strategic Plan and considered within the context of any future upgrades and developments within the St Kilda Major Activity Centre.

## 4. OFF-MARKET SALE

To date, the position of CoPP has been that only an open market sale for the highest price will be an acceptable outcome. The CoM believes this approach seriously devalues the services ERCK provides to the community, and completely disregards CoPP's obligations as stated in its own Children's Services Policy. A viable alternative, an off-market sale would allow CoPP to:

- Continue to ensure local families have access to 'affordable, safe, accessible, quality Early Years services'<sup>32</sup>
- Reduce future obligations to those assets it no longer values highly. Specifically, it will not be required to manage or fund
  - o Upgrades,
  - o Refits
  - o Maintenance, or
  - o Replacement

The COM has identified a number of off-market sale options that warrant further investigation, including:

1. Sale to the incorporated association ERCK.
  - o ERCK is financially viable and has a strong balance sheet. By definition, our Not For Profit is prepared to reinvest in our future.
  - o CoPP has stated on numerous occasions it does not believe ERCK could afford to purchase the building however we've not been consulted on that matter, nor received any information from CoPP on the value the organisation would seek from ERCK in such a purchase arrangement.
  - o ERCK would also consider a Lease-to-Own as is commonplace in these scenarios, allowing a transfer of title to take place over a period of time.
  - o ERCK would need to operate under changed commercial conditions (added mortgage and maintenance obligations, removed Maintenance Levy to CoPP) but believe that there are viable options here. We'd also flag that ERCK's 'unused' contribution to CoPP's Infrastructure and Maintenance funds should form part of such a transaction.
2. Sale to a public body
  - o We believe there may be other Government bodies that could be willing to purchase 17 Eildon Rd and subsequently provide ERCK with a long-term lease over the property
  - o Maintenance, and potentially upgrades would then become the responsibility of ERCK
3. Sale to a private person or company
  - o We understand that CoPP has been approached by private enterprise, current providers of child care services inside the municipality, to purchase each of the 3 properties from CoPP.

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<sup>32</sup> City of Port Phillip, *Every Child, Our Future: Children's Services Policy*, 2020, p8

- We also understand that the provider has contacted the centres in question, inspected the sites and provided preliminary information on their intent.
- A private entity would remain eligible for upgrade funding and also be in a position to more seamlessly manage any upgrade disruption between the centres.
- Further consultation would be required to identify a satisfactory operating model and a structure that ensures improvements to the site, stability, and longevity, however ERCK believes such an option should not be dismissed by CoPP and is worth due diligence.

## CONCLUSION

The COM understands that following further investigation of each of the many options detailed above, some may indeed be found to be unviable. However, we remain confident many more will prove to be genuine alternatives that can deliver real and positive outcomes for the community.

ERCK and its COM is capable, flexible and determined to ensure the continuity of service to families living and working in CoPP for the long term. In all of these scenarios, productive consultation and time will be required to ensure we can navigate to an outcome that is good for CoPP, good for ERCK and most importantly, good for local families. We urge the CoPP to stop this unproductive and one-sided process, and begin to engage with us in good faith to determine the best possible solution for all.

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<sup>1</sup> All findings from the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Family Survey can be made available on request.

## Submission – Elwood Children’s Centre - Have Your Say on Closure

We are writing this submission as parents whose eleven month old daughter attends the Tennyson Street centre. The centre has made us feel like we are part of a community in Elwood. When you walk in, you can feel the love and the positive energy in the bricks and mortar. The staff are wonderful, and it’s been a privilege to be able commence our daughter’s education journey at the centre. There are perhaps only be a handful of services I have received, in my forty years on this earth, that I would describe as exceptional. This is one of them, and Council should be proud.

The solution seems to have landed on Council’s table in the form of State Government funding. State Government has said the money’s there, ready for the taking. We’ve recently learnt that the minimum threshold of 66 spaces necessary to claim the funding, previously quoted by Council, is incorrect. And the Mayor has said openly in interviews that he’s eager to work with State and Federal government to secure funding.

The whole premise to the closure seems to stem from the conclusion that the three centres are *‘incurably obsolete,’* to use words from the 1 December 2021 OCM agenda. To quote the report: *‘they have ‘no capacity to meet future needs without rebuilding and that even if were cost effective to do so, there was little space to expand on site, once heritage restrictions and planning controls are taken into account.’*

This is not a fair representation of the advice. The building report from Adams notes that, while works such as re-stumping do need to be undertaken, the *‘building itself,’* to quote the report, *‘is generally in good condition.’*

In terms of expanding the site, both the planning advice from Ratio and the heritage report from Extent Heritage support a double storey rear extension. The site is deep enough, at 46 metres, to permit two storeys towards the rear while still complying with the 10 degree sightline in Council’s heritage policy. Any proposed addition could also meet the garden area requirement of the NRZ, as Ratio acknowledges, as well as the various ResCode amenity objectives, particularly given the fairly robust apartment development to the south and to the east. It is simply not true that there is little space to expand.

I am not sure how the reports have been interpreted to conclude that the building is incurably obsolete. The works would be expensive, admittedly, but that’s a different argument altogether - and one which brings us back to funding.

We ask that Council does everything it can to secure the necessary funding to keep these three daycare centres open. The passion we are throwing at this fight comes from an unwillingness to lose an exceptional service for our kids, to lose some wonderful educators and to lose the community that flows naturally from each centre.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Elwood

27/01/2022

## **Letter to Council re: proposed sale of Elwood Children's Centre**

The Elwood Toy Library is a not-for-profit association that has been loaning toys to families in Elwood and surrounding suburbs for more than 35 years. On behalf of the committee, we write in opposition to the closure of Elwood Children's Centre on Tennyson Street, Elwood.

We believe that shutting this longstanding and cherished service will have a deleterious effect on early childhood education in the City of Port Phillip.

As members of a child-centred community association, we feel moved to highlight the unique value provided by community-run child care services like the Elwood Children's Centre, which represent irreplaceable social capital built up over many years of ongoing work, trust and relationships.

The general direction being taken by the current council towards large consolidated child care centres runs counter to the wishes of many parents in Port Phillip who value smaller community-run services – both for the high level of care and education they provide in this crucial period of a child's development, and for the connections they foster for families who use the service.

One of our grandparent committee members was on the steering committee for Elwood Children's Centre and has noted its successful and stable continuation since 1985. Local community management provides important civic learning and relationships, which in turn enhance the early learning experience of our young citizens.

In Elwood's small-scale, medium density streetscape there are no obvious opportunities for a large centre, but there is a need for locally based community-managed child care. Which is why the centre is as it is. It was the inspired employment by the City of St Kilda of Janet Alewood all those years ago that brought together citizen involvement with the need for local child care and created this productive community asset.

We ask Council to seek constructive solutions for community-run assets to continue to be safe and accessible, rather than making executive decisions to sell the properties on which they operate. The cost of realising funds should not be the demolition of decades of community development.

We believe that much would be lost should the Elwood Children's Centre and other community-run child care centres disappear from Port Phillip. Large centres by definition cannot provide the same sense of connection and community as smaller centres that are run by families and have been done for generations. We urge Council to reconsider and act to save, not destroy, this valuable community asset.

Sincerely,

Elwood Toy Library Committee

[REDACTED] (President)

[REDACTED] (Coordinator)

[REDACTED] (Treasurer)

[REDACTED] (Secretary)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Closure of child Care centre at 17 Eildon Rd St Kilda

I am putting this in as a submission against the proposed selling of Eildon Road Child Care Centre. I would be very disappointed to see council take the decision to sell the building in which the Eildon Road Childcare Centre (ERCC) is housed.

The centre has a long and rich history in the city when it comes to providing a unique offering in the childcare market.

It is very easy just to see it as a problem for council because it is a property asset that has been poorly maintained but to do that overlooks what it offers the community.

The points I raise address a number of items detailed in the meeting report of the 1<sup>st</sup> December.

### **Executive summary item 2.3 Seventeen are owned by Council.**

The council does not own Eildon Road Childcare Centre. The council owns the property. The childcare operation is owned by the families and run by the committee. The license and all legal risk in terms of operating the centre is held by ERCC. Council is landlord and has responsibilities in line with that. This is true of any childcare centre for which the council does not hold the licence.

### **4.16 All have a maximum operating capacity significantly less than typical current generation competitors. This constrains their service offering and cost efficiency, and thereby financial sustainability. This has a flow-on impact for Council, as each operator has a financial model that relies on financial sponsorship by Council.**

Absolutely, ERCC as all community models do, relies on council support. That support fits firmly into the vision of councils' inclusion, diversity, community agendas. Some years ago, when council looked in to supply of childcare and decided to remain in the business and so built the large centres, ERCC and multiple rate payers proposed that council shift their support away from running centres themselves to facilitating community not for profits. Instead at the time council chose to open new council run centres and go into competition with the community.

The business model of ERCC relies on the council providing the building at minimal cost – just like council does to many private business operators currently operating out of Council owned properties. The difference is that the service being provided here is not that of a restaurant or café but is all about supporting families. ERCC has been a viable centre for a long time with the only down times in its history linked to council interference such as demand that ERCC use a central waitlist which significantly impacted enrolments because the waitlist was mismanaged. When operated independently ERCC was always at capacity and functioned well.

Of course, all consideration should not be simply economically driven, if it was council should never have been in the childcare business. There is a place in the market for small centres. My personal experience was that I did not want to send my son to a centre that had significant number of children. The aim was to find a place he was loved and noticed. ERCC provided that and still does to many others.

Community led centres have a strong history with ERCC being the first in the Port Phillip area. There is significant research that show that community led centres provide high quality services which leads to good outcomes. Community led centres are designed to develop meaningful partnerships with families that are vital to the development of children as strong and active members of society. When my son moved from ERCC to the local primary school it was noted by the principal that the

ERCC kids had more confidence and school readiness than many of their counterparts. This remain true today and is because of the significant attention and education they received.

The whole premise of a community-based service is to bring families and neighbourhoods together. They provide invaluable community links. ERCC like other community owned services are unique because families have direct input into decisions and policies that affect the care and education of their children and also influence the financial management decisions to ensure that all resources are used to maintain quality.

The centre is well placed to provide informal and formal links with the community and because the management is drawn from the community, local issues are understood and can be responded to.

**7.5 A disciplined retirement of those assets will provide funds for reinvestment in other properties in Council's childcare portfolio, by replenishing the Quality Building Levy reserve to the extent that it is drawn down for the construction of the new facility.**

**7.6 Underperforming properties consume resources that could better be used elsewhere**

The only reason the property is underperforming is the Councils lack of care of the property. According to this point, the money and time that has been put in to this centre will be divested in to other centres? That may make for a good financial argument and no doubt please the other centres but is deeply unfair and disrespectful to the ERCC community who have paid significant \$ to the centre and its upkeep. Families over the years have raised money and spent time doing gardens, paving, painting, cleaning, building play equipment and storage, lobbying Council for restumping, lobbying council for new windows, lobbying council for roof and flooring repairs most of which have never occurred. There are many 100 year old buildings in the neighbourhood that have been kept intact. Council has let the community down with its upkeep of this centre.

**4.18 It is acknowledged that community members can have strong affinity with Council owned properties, including kindergartens and childcare centres, this sometimes manifesting in an understandable reluctance for the properties to be changed or replaced.**

This is a rather patronising statement. Council owns multiple properties in the city and have all kinds of rental arrangements. Some are commercial some are peppercorn rents with very little return to the community. Sea Baths; West beach Pavilion to name 2. ERCC has operated successfully as a child care and kindergarten since its beginning in the 80s. The only problem has been the council has not kept its assets well looked after. If council had a fit for purpose residence that the ERCC could operate from that was in the vicinity the families would happily discuss that. IT is not an affinity with the property we have it is an affinity with the operation of a wonderful centre.

**4.25 As noted this intervention will disrupt the operations of the three centres. It will also likely inconvenience some customers of those centres, and result in flow to competing centres.**

**4.26 Examples of nearby centres are listed ....**

- **Star Child Care & Day Care St Kilda 1.3km (16 minute walk)**
- **Kinderclub Childcare Centre 1.3km (17 minute walk)**
- **Guardian Childcare & Education St Kilda South 1.7km (21 minute walk)**
- **Guardian Childcare & Education St Kilda North 1.9km (24 minute walk)**
- **Middle Park Civic Kindergarten 2.2km (27 minute walk)**

**4.27 Some customers will be more inconvenienced than others, as – like with any infrastructure – geographic availability of childcare options is not perfectly even across the City. Also, the preferences and needs of children and their parents/guardians vary, and so do the offerings of the centres listed above.**

There is only one kindergarten listed that is not privately owned and operated and it is the furthest from ERCC. There are NO childcare centres listed. There are poor options for parents who choose not to go to a for profit operator.

**4.5 Separate from its policy position regarding childcare provision, Council has a role as a prudent landlord to manage the performance and risks of its portfolio – including by ensuring that Council assets are maintained to an appropriate standard and are compliant with building regulation and legislation.**

**4.6 City of Port Phillip charges its childcare centre lessees a Quality Building Levy, to help Council renew and replace its childcare facilities.**

This is the most important part of the issues raised in the report as it would seem the proposal to sell the building is only occurring because of the lack of maintenance of the building which has led to disrepair. What is now called a quality building levy used to be called a maintenance levy.

As mentioned above, when it comes to ERCC council support has been very poor. The centre has paid significant maintenance fees to COPP and maintenance has been less than adequate. As a previous President of ERCC I have multiple historical email between the then council officers and the centre pointing out the lack of infrastructure support and the need for varying degrees of maintenance.

Finally, I believe the council should listen to the community and work through other potential options for ensuring ERCC can maintain operations as a centre whether in the building it currently occupies or another one.

With thanks

██████████



[REDACTED]

To: The Mayor and Councillors,

I write as a former Mayor of St. Kilda [REDACTED] to express my deep disappointment and dismay to learn that the current Port Phillip Council is proposing to sell three properties which are used as early childhood centres.

When I was elected to Council in [REDACTED] it was on the promise to get St. Kilda a library and to promote other NECESSARY community needs like childcare centres. When I left Council later in [REDACTED] after being elected to the Victorian Parliament I had succeeded in getting the library and promoting childcare centres.

Early childhood centres are as necessary and integral to a community as are health care services, libraries and sports facilities. Indeed, more so in contemporary times.

So, I would sincerely hope that Council will reconsider its current proposal and instead creatively look for the best way to allow the continued use of the properties as early childhood centres.

Failure to do so would stand as an unfortunate indictment of Council not understanding its obligations as a responsible service provider.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]



*Response to the proposed sale  
of three community early childhood learning centres by the City of Port Phillip  
February 2022*

Six Recommendations

1. Council should embrace the centrality of publicly owned and managed high quality local early learning services, rather than provide and support these services as a last resort - as per current policy.
2. Council should increase its investment in and express an intention to grow community and Council owned and managed early childhood learning centres (CCOMECLC).
3. Council should withdraw its intention to sell the three community managed centres and discontinue the sale process at this time.
4. Council should initiate a process of genuine engagement directly with the committees of management, staff and parents of the impacted early childhood centres with a view to exploring all possibilities for future preservation of the centres, led by the section of **Council responsible for fostering community and Council governed children's services** (and not via consultants). Alternatives to the December 2021 Council recommendations, including strategies to repair and maintain the current buildings and an examination of potential alternative sites if necessary, should be considered and a report completed by June 2022.
5. In approaching the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments for funding, Council should flag that it is prepared to invest the \$9.2m currently held in its cash-backed childcare infrastructure fund and to borrow, noting that these community facilities will deliver inter-generational benefits for Port Phillip residents over many years.
6. By December 2022, Council should develop a properly costed ten-year vision and strategic plan for its investment in community and Council owned and managed early childhood learning centres, noting the importance of early learning to the development of children and adults and the vital role of the sector in developing a stronger community in Port Phillip.

What is at stake?

These centres have distinctive cultures and distinctive communities of practice. They are places for the socialization and education of children through a collaboration between parents and early childhood expert practitioners. They are an outcome of the movement begun in the 1970s, primarily by women – a new way of meeting the conflicting demands of work, family life and the call of autonomy.

Parents in placed based communities have formed democratic governance structures and practices to mediate the relationship between tiers of government and employment relations of workers to provide a sheltering setting for loving childrearing.

The relationship of local government to the centres should be one of immense respect and **humility. As one of the speakers said at Council's December meeting, these institutions** are a primary foundation for building community. **The idea of community is Council's source of** legitimacy, trust and authenticity – mess with it at your peril.

The Council may own the buildings (and even then it does so only on behalf of the community) but it does not own the institution. It is crucial to make this distinction between buildings and dynamic flourishing institutions. It is only if the value of these centres as outstanding communities of practice is recognised that the real issue can be posed. This is: how can these cultures be maintained and supported by Council while also addressing any facility maintenance or rebuilding issues?

Council's **description of** the centres as **'buildings', 'fleets' and 'assets'** is utterly reductive. The report authors provide no sense of the shared public responsibility for the development and learning of children. So **the 'childcare place'** then becomes the essence of the institution, a commodity that can simply be interchanged in the marketplace. This approach is at odds **with Council's own policy adopted in 2019** – reference to the Policy is minimal in the December 2021 report – and signals a complete blindness to the *real* value of these institutions.

And if early learning places are the currency of the debate, at the end of the proposed process close to net 80 places in the community and Council sector will be lost. As places are shared across many families this will force hundreds of families into a more expensive private market focused on profit as a primary objective.

Is this what Councillors really want to see?

### **Council's role as a model landlord**

**A lack of prioritisation of early learning in the City is reflected in Council's role as the owner** and landlord of these centres. The physical infrastructure of the centres has declined while their social infrastructure has thrived.

Council has known of the risks attached to centres not being DDA compliant for a number of years, but it has failed to act. Ironically, improved disability access is meant to open up community facilities to more people; in this case it is being used to close centres down.

All of this has occurred despite Council having the wherewithal to improve the centres through maintenance and repair levies imposed on the centres over many years.

Council itself says that three Council owned and managed early learning **centres 'require significant upgrading or redevelopment'** and in the community managed sector, only one

**centre is considered to be 'future ready'**. Sustained capital investment and a longer term plan for the CCOMECLC sector is needed.

**Council's failure to plan and invest** in this sector has implications for many other Council owned facilities – aged care centres, sporting clubs, community centres, libraries, social housing and other early childhood learning centres as mentioned above.

Failure to consult

We note that the proposed sale is a significant change in **Council's property** portfolio and approach to the community sector which was not publicly flagged in the 2021 Council Plan. Officers now say that terminal defects with the centres are long standing. The Plan and **Budget is Council's premier consultation vehicle. What faith can residents have in this** process if decisions like the proposed sale are executed without transparency and decent community engagement?

The sale option has been put out to public consultation with minimal notice to the centres and with responses expected over the Christmas-New Year period. So of course, many **residents are sceptical about Council's good faith** in this process.

What are the possible ways forward?

There are several important principles and actions that should take place. A menu of short-term solutions is required now and a properly costed ten-year vision and strategic plan for the community and Council owned and managed early childhood learning in Port Phillip is needed to provide certainty for parents, staff and the community.

**The lack of coherent planning is evident in Council's 2019** proposal to transfer Council centres to the community sector – which we now know faces considerable physical **challenges to be 'future ready'; and the sale of the York Street centre in 2020 and** subsequent loss of capacity to provide transitional early learning places as other centres are renewed or rebuilt. Continuing community uncertainty as to the future of the St Kilda Adventure Playground adds to the sense of drift in the delivery of children's services in Port Phillip.

The way forward will involve:

- Genuine consultation with the affected centres and the whole childhood early learning sector in Port Phillip
- Placing childhood early learning infrastructure reserve funds on the table to attract State and Commonwealth Government contributions and flagging a willingness to borrow in order to meet capital upgrades and relocation if necessary
- Examination of relocation options if the centres, following detailed and genuine consultation with Council, deem that moving to new sites may be necessary and desirable. Without limiting options and without knowing availability or feasibility, sites could include

- Some sites in **Council's asset portfolio**, such as the Triangle and Lower Esplanade, St Kilda and Elwood Foreshore. We note [Council's plan](#) to shift tennis courts for car parking at the Elwood Foreshore reserve, could it possibly prioritise a place for children and families too?
- Negotiation with civil society, Victorian and Commonwealth Government partners, around sites such as Christ Church Square, St Kilda; the heritage listed [St Kilda Artillery Orderly Room and Drill Hall](#) site, Chapel Street; and primary school sites.

Therefore, we recommend:

- Council should embrace the centrality of publicly owned and managed high quality local early learning services, rather than provide and support these services as a last resort - as per current policy.<sup>1</sup>
- Council should increase its investment in and express an intention to grow community and Council owned and managed early childhood learning centres.
- Council should withdraw its intention to sell the three community managed centres and discontinue the sale process at this time.
- Council should initiate a process of genuine engagement directly with the committees of management, staff and parents of the impacted early childhood centres with a view to exploring all possibilities for future preservation of the centres, led by the section of **Council responsible for fostering community and Council governed children's services** (and not via consultants). Alternatives to the December 2021 Council recommendations, including strategies to repair and maintain the current buildings and an examination of potential alternative sites if necessary, should be considered and a report completed by June 2022.
- In approaching the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments for funding, Council should flag that it is prepared to invest the \$9.2m currently held in its cash-backed childcare infrastructure fund<sup>2</sup> and to borrow, noting that these community facilities will deliver inter-generational benefits for Port Phillip residents over many years.
- By December 2022, Council should develop a properly costed ten-year vision and strategic plan for its investment in community and Council owned and managed early childhood learning centres, noting the importance of early learning to the development of children and adults and the vital role of the sector in developing a stronger community in Port Phillip.



<sup>1</sup> City of Port Phillip, [Every Child Our Future](#), 2019: *Council provides facilities where there is evidence of a community need that can't be met in any other way.*

<sup>2</sup> City of Port Phillip, [Council Budget and Plan 2021-22](#), Vol 2, p87



### **Submission re proposal to sell 3 council properties**

unChain inc. submits that the proposal of council to sell properties leased to 3 community based childcare centres is overlooking the value these centres provide to the communities they service. This is not just a proposal to sell real estate but is actually a proposal to put 3 Childcare centres out of business.

We submit that the issues with the building are not natural life stage issues but are due to COPP mismanaging the maintenance and upkeep of these assets. Rather than close down centres the Council has a responsibility to its citizens to remedy the situation with poor performing buildings immediately or find an alternative solution for housing the childcare operators.

It is our understanding that COPP operates 5 early childhood centres and maintains the buildings for the 8 community managed centres. We submit that COPP should be transparent as to what the costs to ratepayers are for COPP to own and operating a centre versus supporting the community model.

The good intent of the child services policy is noted but it needs to include a transparent process for the model of support of the community centres. This should detail exactly what COPP will/does support (buildings, maintenance); what the agreements with the Community managed centres and what is expected of them in return. (for example forced use of the council waitlist).

We do not suggest that it is Council's responsibility to ensure the community managed centres remain financially viable as operators and holders of licenses to operate childcare and kindergartens however councils decision to sell the 3 buildings and thereby close these centres and then use the proceeds of the sale for council centres appears self-interested.

If COPP consider the cost to repair or upgrade the 3 buildings to be prohibitive then part of the process should be to explore opportunities to allow these centres to operate. unChain submit that COPP should be actively exploring support from state and federal governments to ensure these 3 centres can continue to operate.

Rather than close down centres the Council has a responsibility to its citizens to remedy the situation with poor performing buildings immediately or find an alternative solution for housing the childcare operators.

unchain Inc.

contact: [REDACTED]

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on CoPP's decision at 2 December 2021 council meeting regarding the potential sale of 3 Community Child Care centres located in. The Avenue, Eildon Road and Tennyson St.

As a long term resident of City of Port Phillip, the fact that council supported the running of these 3 Community Child Care Centres was notable and impressive. Many families and children throughout the years have benefited . The last 20 years has, however, seen a growth in privatized child care to support women returning to the workforce. The models of care between community run and private operator run seem quite different.

Since the Council meeting, I have become aware of different information that indicates that Council may be considering different strategies regarding its long standing commitment to community managed child care centres. Ostensibly the plan to sell these 3 sites was based on the assessment that none of these 3 centres was disability compliant.

As an outsider to the child care issue, there seem to be some contradictions in the assessment of disability compliant modifications needed, and the apparent unwillingness to use funds to complete these capital works. I understand that the capital works levy is available for these 3 centres to make an application for funds, and yet funds have not been released. There are also funding mechanisms available from the Victorian Government for the upgrade of facilities and I do not know whether council has made applications to secure the funds for disability access upgrades/modifications.

The council decision to sell these 3 properties with the view to extending the capacity of Eildon Rd will lead to the net reduction of 79 child care places at a time when pressures on families are immense and the need for high quality child care at an affordable cost has never been greater.

Good quality early education and support to children is essential in assisting in children's social, physical, emotional and cognitive development and requires properly trained staff and appropriate ratios of staff to children.

There are many issues to consider but my request to councillors is to consider the following:

- The benefit of a community child care centre where parents are known, participate and contribute to the running of the centre.
- The quality of early childhood education and support to children of all ages- pre school.
- Compare the richness in the above model of care with those run by private operators who are profit driven.

Parents need to have a choice as to where to enrol their children and have a wealth of information from other parents who have used any of these 3 community based child care centres

There are mutual benefits for parents and children in being connected to The Avenue, Eildon Rd and Tennyson St centres. Parents contribute in a host of different ways and many become actively involved in the management of a centre.

I urge you to listen to this local community and to work with the 3 centres to achieve the appropriate disability access modifications and not proceed with your plan to sell the sites and create a resultant loss of child care places.

Yours sincerely

██████████

██████████

I do not support the sale of 17 Eildon Rd. – nor that of the two other small, local child care centres in the City of Port Phillip.

Save our centres!

An envelope containing 2 letters announcing the ‘Intention to sell Council land’ arrived in our letter box – not once but twice. Well, it was actually 2 envelopes!

Such duplication displays inefficiencies and wastage in council procedures which, if addressed, could make for a more streamlined system, thereby opening up more funds to be able to assist in tackling any issues in buildings, such as the child care centres, with remediation rather than the destruction of a much loved facility.

One letter states that the ‘Council is committed to ensuring affordable and accessible childcare...’

It is my understanding that the existing centre at 17 Eildon Rd. is affordable - and more so than any large and possibly privately run centres are, or would be.

It is also my understanding that any issues of accessibility can be fully addressed, as they have been in, I suspect, many a council building and that there are relevant funds available from state, if not also federal funds to assist.

The letter also references a ‘modern, fully accessible and purpose built facility with expanded capacity’. Apart from any other questions of the comparative value of modern over heritage, or small versus large facilities, this point totally ignores a question of timing.

Where are the children going to be cared for in a possible two year lag time in any redevelopment of facilities?

Is there even a North St. Kilda or is this a figment of an imagination?

The other letter references the ‘feasibility of bringing up to standard...(its) functionality and accessibility’, under dot points of

- Heritage – the heritage of the local area is actually enhanced by a local community based and run enterprise. A love of older architecture can even be imbued in children.
- Size of land – such a smaller venue is precisely one of the benefits of a smaller centre, where the numbers of enrollees needs to be limited, to some extent.  
On a connected point, where are the child care expert reports in relation to the welfare of children in smaller versus larger centres?
- Planning scheme – it seems that the priorities may be out of line here with the community. Rather than an emphasis on the best care of children in a community, those seemingly making decisions, or plans at least, are from the ‘Real Estate Portfolio’ and the ‘Property and Assets’. One must question whether the priorities of these positions are diametrically opposed to those which should be paramount in looking to care of our youngest children.



- Residential location – once again, this is the idea of a community based centre. It is accessible to many locally. In a time of global warming and fractured world communities, surely we should enhance any opportunity for families to feel connected easily to their centre, whether by being able to walk or ride children to it. That being the case, traffic would be minimised and staggered.

Any alternative to a residential location, begs the question of what that would mean? Industrial? Lacking in vegetation? Remote for families?

- Cost – refer to previous answers – availability of state and federal funding and ability of keeping costs low for families.

In conclusion, it seems that the main question of CARE of young children has totally been left out of the equation. This should not be a matter of accounting and figures, at the expense of what has been a much loved and well functioning set of centres, supported by a dedicated, knowledgeable and very passionate group of families, staff and their allies who understand the importance of local connection for personalised care and welfare.

I would suggest that recent lessons from problems with larger, institutionalised and privatised facilities of care, such as in aged care, may be of benefit in this instance. Please take heed.

Thankyou. [REDACTED]. Local resident of nearly [REDACTED] years.

City of Port Phillip  
Via have your say portal

28<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Council Officers,

RE: PROPOSAL TO SELL 39 THE AVENUE, BALACLAVA

I write to object to the sale of 39 The Avenue, Balaclava and the effective closure of The Avenue Children's Centre and Kindergarten.

Both of my children attended The Avenue for childcare and kindergarten and received extraordinary care. Whilst I am not a resident of the City of Port Phillip, local childcare facilities were a key factor in my search for employment. The Avenue was a key deciding factor when I accepted a position based in St Kilda (where I remained working full time for over 10 years, supporting the local community through visitation to retail outlets, restaurants and paying for parking).

My eldest child commenced at The Avenue when [REDACTED] years old, following our relocation from the United Kingdom back to Melbourne. [REDACTED] had not attended childcare previously and was very displaced from our move. The team at The Avenue were so supportive of [REDACTED] and built a routine to help [REDACTED] settle and thrive. We met children at The Avenue who then continued on to school with our [REDACTED]. My second child commenced at The Avenue when [REDACTED] was less than [REDACTED] of age – he again received beautiful, individual care and thrived at The Avenue.

When selecting childcare – we looked at numerous centres within the City of Port Phillip and closer to home – none compared to The Avenue. As a community centre the care is not comparable to centres run for commercial profit. I believe The Avenue is a valuable and important community asset – which far outweighs the short-term gain from the sale of the property.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

## The Avenue Closure Proposal

I strongly object to the proposal for Port Phillip Council to close The Avenue Childcare Centre

These are the reasons for my objection:

- the centre is small, well run with a friendly family feel. This has the effect of making children and families contented, engaged and part of a community
- Council should continue to fund these Childcare Centres as part of their commitment to the Community. It should not withdraw from their obligation to support this vital community need. Privately run centres need to make a profit.
- significant funds per annum are paid to the council for maintenance and facility upgrades (circa \$100,000 per year) - to date the council have not used these funds to upgrade or maintain our facility as they should have
- the disability compliance issues identified by the council are capable of being remedied for a reasonable price - we have had this work costed and have even offered to pay for these works ourselves
- council have never sought to engage meaningfully with the Avenue Committee in relation to the building upgrades - they rejected our offer of funding these works without even meeting to discuss and subsequent discussions have been shut down without any real consideration
- council have never sought state or federal government funding for these works despite grant programmes existing for these types of upgrades
- the proposal to close these centres will result in a net loss of 77 daily places in the municipality - as far as we can tell there is insufficient capacity in either the council/community or private centres to meet this demand
- private centres do not offer a perfect substitute for community managed centres both in terms of service offering and cost
- pushing our families to expensive private centres will inevitably lead to a reduction in utilisation by families of early childhood services and a consequent reduction in workforce participation

28 February 2022

**Attention:**  
Port Phillip City Council

C/o Head of Real Estate Portfolio  
City of Port Phillip

Submitted via:

<https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/proposal-sell-council-properties/proposal-sell-17-eildon-road-st-kilda>

To Port Phillip City Council,

## **INTENTION TO SELL COUNCIL LAND – 17 EILDON ROAD, ST KILDA**

### **1. Introduction:**

This submission is in response to Port Phillip City Council's (**Council**) call for submissions regarding the sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, from which the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten operates. Its focus is the sale of the 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, property only. It does not consider the sale of two other Council owned properties on which childcare centres operate (i.e. 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood, (Elwood Children's Centre) and 39 The Avenue, Balaclava, (The Avenue Children's Centre & Kindergarten)).

This submission is written in support of Council's proposal to sell 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, and the sale proceeds be used to fund further improvements of Council's childcare centre portfolio as "*part of Council's long term strategy of renewal, upgrading and replacement to achieve a fully fit for purpose and future ready portfolio of childcare facilities*".

The reasons for support include the childcare centre land use on 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, within a residential precinct in narrow residential cul-de-sac streets is inappropriate, including because the childcare land use generates significant volumes of conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements, and significant noise. The significant volume of conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements represents risks and impacts the amenity of the place. Examples of the conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements and significant noise are detailed below at Item 7.1 *Traffic, Transport and Car Parking* and Item 7.2 *Noise*.

### **2. Council's Report:**

At its meeting on 1 December 2021, Council considered a report prepared by Council officers titled '*Portfolio Improvement: Childcare Centre*' (**Council Officer's Report**)<sup>1</sup> – its purpose was:

To: (a) seek approval to carry out the community engagement processes under Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* regarding an intention to sell 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood, and 39 The Avenue, Balaclava, being Council owned properties currently leased as childcare centres; and (b) inform of the intention to develop a contemporary, expanded childcare centre on the site of the existing North St Kilda Children's Centre.

The Council Officer's Report:

- states (Item 4.1): "*Council is involved in providing childcare and kindergarten services occurs through:*

<sup>1</sup> [REDACTED] *Portfolio Improvement: Childcare Centres*. Meeting of the Port Phillip City Council 1 December 2021. [Internet] (cited 14 January 2022) Retrieved from: [https://hdp-au-prod-app-pp-haveyoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/4416/4127/7688/Council\\_Report\\_1\\_December\\_2021\\_Council\\_Meeting\\_Portfolio\\_improvement-childcare\\_centres.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-pp-haveyoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/4416/4127/7688/Council_Report_1_December_2021_Council_Meeting_Portfolio_improvement-childcare_centres.pdf)

- *direct ownership and management of childcare centres – Council owns and directly manages five childcare centres; and*
- *financial support for committee managed childcare – Council owns twelve childcare facilities and/or kindergartens managed by community committees as social enterprises.”*
- highlights Council owns seventeen/ less than half of the over forty existing kindergartens and childcare centres within the municipality. The seventeen Council owned childcare centres compete within a broader childcare market.
- highlights that the over forty existing kindergartens and childcare centres within the municipality “*are important community infrastructure, serving valuable social and economic purposes*”. However, “*Council’s fleet*” of childcare centres is “*suffering from aged related decline, functional obsolescence and non-compliance with regulations/legislation*”.
- highlights that Council has developed four “*modern centres over the past decade or so*” and another is planned – the redevelopment of the North St Kilda Children’s Centre, as “*the first Council owned centre fully compliant with disability access legislation*”. North St Kilda Children’s Centre currently has a licenced capacity of 77 child places, and Council’s detailed assessment confirms that a centre of up to 121 child places is feasible on the site – adding 44 child places.
- highlights, of the twelve Council owned committee managed facilities, four have no capacity to meet future needs, and three of these four, “*all former houses over 100 years old*” – including the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten – “*have ‘no capacity to meet future needs without rebuilding’ and that even if were cost effective to do so, there was little space to expand on site, once heritage restrictions and planning controls are taken into account*”. The shortcomings of the three facilities, and associated sites, deem their development “*economically and technically impractical*”.
- “*proposes to divest three childcare properties that are incurably obsolete*”, including 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, 46 Tennyson Street, Elwood, and 39 The Avenue, Balaclava, and use the sale proceeds to fund further improvements of Council’s childcare centre portfolio as “*part of Council’s long term strategy of renewal, upgrading and replacement to achieve a fully fit for purpose and future ready portfolio of childcare facilities*”.
- states (Item 4.27): “*Some customers will be more inconvenienced than others, as – like with any infrastructure – geographic availability of childcare options is not perfectly even across the City. Also, the preferences and needs of children and their parents/guardians vary, and so do the offerings of the centres listed above*” [Item 4.26 of Council’s Report lists four Council owned childcare centres’ proximity to other childcare centres].
- states (Item 4.30): “*Joint estimates of the City of Port Phillip and the Victorian Department of Education and Training (Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan, 2021 ...) suggest that all new demand for kindergarten places, in all suburbs of City of Port Phillip, could be accommodated by existing centres, for at least the next four years. This is even without considering the supply provided by the two private new centres that have just opened, and others in the pipeline.*”
- highlights that Council considered whether and in what way it should remain as a childcare centre market participant as part of its children’s services policy review of 2019, which culminated in Council’s *Every Child, Our Future: Children’s Services Policy* – it came into effect on 1 July 2020. To achieve this policy’s objectives, Council committed (Policy Commitment 13., first dot-point) to:
  - Implement a long-term strategy in consultation with service providers to ensure facilities can meet current and future demand for children’s services in Port Phillip. This strategy will ensure:
    - Council provides facilities where there is evidence of a community need that can’t be met in any other way.
- states (Item 5.5): in relation to consultation and stakeholder engagement and the sale of the three subject properties, “*The fundamental question of the engagement is: ‘Are there any reasons why a sale should or should not proceed?’*”

This submission’s focus is the existing childcare land use of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, and the observance of good land use planning and transport integration objectives, principles and practices, to try to ensure a high quality and high amenity sustainable city that meets community’s needs and values, and that facilitates safe and convenient access and movement for all. It attempts to contribute to the debate surrounding the sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, by highlighting some of the impacts of the current childcare land use has on the local community’s needs, values, safety and amenity.

Council's webpage in relation to the matter of the sale of the three properties is titled "*Proposal to sell three Council properties*"; it states:

Council hasn't made a decision to sell these properties, and is undertaking a statutory process in relation to this proposed sale in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*. All submissions received will be considered by Council prior to a decision being made.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. Quality early childhood education – a good investment:**

No one could argue with the philosophical value that investment in high quality early childhood education, and making it accessible to all, ensures a better start in life for the children that benefit from the investment. The evidence is clear regarding the correlation between investment and associated outcomes; the greater the investment the better the outcomes for children and their community.

All children should be provided with the opportunity and access to the best possible contemporary high standard childcare. Children should not be denied the opportunity or disadvantaged in accessing it because they live with a physical disability, use a wheel chair or mobility device or have a cognitive disability/ intellectual disability.

These values appear not to be in question in relation to the possible closure of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten, the sale of the property, and the investment of the proceeds of the sale to fund further improvements of Council's childcare centre portfolio. Unfortunately the shortcomings of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten, and the associated site, as presented in information Council has made available to the community deem its development "*economically and technically impractical*", particularly to develop a contemporary high standard childcare centre that meets legislation/ regulations and is accessible to all.

Council's "*long term strategy of renewal, upgrading and replacement to achieve a fully fit for purpose and future ready portfolio of childcare facilities*" is responsible planning. In making its decision Council must consider the future care and education of all local children, including children of all abilities and neurodiverse children, and the totality of the local community's needs, values, safety and amenity.

### **4. A sustainable city:**

Good land use planning and transport integration objectives, principles and practices are well established. Land use planning and transport planning are interdependent. Changes in transport infrastructure can alter the demand for different types of land use. Similarly, land use planning (e.g. community infrastructure siting) can change transport patterns, and positively or negatively impact access, the amenity of a place, and the safety of users of a place.

When reviewing existing and planning future community infrastructure, including childcare centres, access should be considered, including existing and proposed transport infrastructure to facilitate the best possible access to and from it for all abilities, access within the community infrastructure, and potential barriers to access. It should include consideration of all modes of user transport to access it, including active transport (e.g. walking and cycling), public transport, private vehicles, and vehicles that assist the community infrastructure's operation by facilitating the provision of goods and services. Sustainable transport modes, such as active transport and public transport, should be given priority, to ensure the development of a sustainable city. The siting of community infrastructure can encourage or inhibit active transport and public transport use, as it can encourage or inhibit private vehicle use, and the amenity of a place.

Consideration should include major existing and future transport flows/ movement of people, including transport flows/ movement of people to and from major employment hubs, activity centres, education facilities, and other community infrastructure. It should also include the possible collocation of infrastructure/ services in locations to maximise sustainability and land use and transport integration objectives. Without consideration of these and other factors, and the ranking of all factors, the past imprudent siting of childcare centres may continue to encourage the current heavy reliance on private vehicles for parents/ guardians dropping-off/ picking-up children and impacts on residents. It's important to stress the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten is located outside the Fitzroy Street Activity Centre's boundaries – an activity centre that has struggled for decades and requires activation – nor is it collocated with other infrastructure/ services.

In proposing the redevelopment of the North St Kilda Children's Centre, 71 Argyle St, St Kilda, consideration should be given to the potential geographic barrier Nepean Highway/ Brighton Road

<sup>2</sup> Port Phillip City Council. *Proposal to sell three council properties*. [Internet] (cited 14 January 2022) Retrieved from: <https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/proposal-sell-council-properties>

represents for people who live west of it in St Kilda/ St Kilda West to access childcare centres located east of it, including access via active transport modes (i.e. walking and cycling), public transport and private vehicles. However, consideration should also be given to other geographic factors (e.g. the existence of Port Phillip Bay/ comparatively low population catchment in St Kilda/ St Kilda West and no catchment west of these suburbs), St Kilda/ St Kilda West's demographics/ demand for childcare centres, other nearby childcare centres/ number of licenced child care places and their location (including north and south), financial, benefit and other factors. Regardless, the *balance* of all factors will never suit everyone. The sale of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, may encourage the broader childcare market to develop a centre in St Kilda/ St Kilda West, west of the Nepean Highway/ Brighton Road, if there is demonstrated demand. The above and other matters should be explored, mapped and documented/ discussed to ensure a full understanding by all and associated decision-making.

Council has made available documents to the community in relation to 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda/ Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten; downloadable from the **Document Library** on Council's *Have Your Say on Port Phillip's future* webpage (i.e. <https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au/proposal-sell-council-properties>), including an access audit, heritage assessment, planning development assessment, building condition assessment, geotechnical assessment, asbestos & hazardous materials assessment, and others.

There is some discussion in these documents about the geographic concentration of childcare centres in the proximity of the proposed North St Kilda Children's Centre redevelopment, including, for example, it being "*in a hotspot of socio-economic disadvantage*", "*It is also reasonably proximate to one of the centres proposed for closure* (i.e. The Avenue Children's Centre & Kindergarten – low/ 44 child places)" and it currently has a licenced capacity of 77 child places, with development capacity of 121 child places – adding 44 child places. This discussion should be expanded to inform decision-making. For example, are these childcare centres in major existing and future transport flows/ movement of people and comparatively high population catchments of young family demographics/ high demand for childcare centres now and into the future?

##### **5. Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten – an example of poor land use planning & transport integration:**

The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten occupies 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda (**the Property**). The Property is located on the west corner of the intersection of two residential streets – Eildon Road and Inverleith Court – two cul-de-sac streets (**the streets**).

There is significant evidence in the information Council has made available to the community to indicate the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's infrastructure, a retrofitted residential building ("*Early 1900's with renovations and converted to a child care centre in 1980's (as advised)*"<sup>3</sup>), and the Property, do not facilitate the best possible quality care and education for all children of all abilities now and into the future, regardless of staff skill and effort, and presents challenges and risks to users.

Council has commissioned numerous studies in relation to the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's infrastructure and the Property, which reinforce this, as evidenced by documents downloadable from the *Document Library*. These studies indicate many aspects of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's infrastructure and the Property do not comply with applicable regulations. And, the constraints to develop the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten make development infeasible and costly – not an optimum use of community resources – primarily a function of the building being a historic retrofitted residential building on a constrained site located within residential development.

The focus of these studies appears to be development opportunities and constraints; they do not include a comprehensive assessment of the current childcare land use on the Property. It is understood Council has no intention to develop the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten. Regardless, a review of the Property's existing childcare land use is long-over-due, as the childcare land use generates risks to residents and users of Eildon Road and Inverleith Court, and impacts the amenity of the precinct.

The studies undertaken to date appear not to include a comprehensive traffic, transport and car parking assessment (refer below) and noise audit to enable a comprehensively considered and balanced decision by Council. This submission to Council tries to address, in-part, these omissions,

<sup>3</sup> Redd Zebra, *Condition Assessment: 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, Vic.* 10 January 2022 for City of Port Phillip. [Internet] (cited 14 January 2022) Retrieved from: [https://hdp-au-prod-app-pp-haveyoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5916/4179/1753/building\\_condition\\_17\\_Eildon\\_Rd\\_St\\_Kilda.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-pp-haveyoursay-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5916/4179/1753/building_condition_17_Eildon_Rd_St_Kilda.pdf)

and highlight why the childcare land use on the Property is an example of poor land use planning and transport integration – albeit a function of organic decisions over time rather than active planning.

Residents and users of the streets are ongoingly negatively impacted by the current incompatible childcare centre land use of the Property. The childcare centre land use on a property within a residential precinct in narrow residential cul-de-sac streets is inappropriate, including because the childcare land use generates significant volumes of conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements, and significant noise. The significant volume of conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements represents risks.

The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten centre relies solely on on-road vehicle parking, which contributes to and exacerbates the unsafe and conflicting traffic/ transport movements generated by it and associated risks. The Property's front and rear open spaces are used as children's play areas; they are small/ constrained, limiting play, and are not noise attenuated. All adjoining and surrounding properties are developed residential.

#### **6. Ratio Consultant Pty Ltd's Planning Development Assessment Report:**

Ratio Consultant Pty Ltd, planning and engineering consultants (**Ratio**), was engaged by Council "to assess the planning potential for the expansion of the existing childcare facility". The outcomes are detailed in a document titled *Planning Development Assessment*, dated 22 December 2021 (**Ratio's Planning Development Assessment Report**). Ratio's Planning Development Assessment Report includes the following; bold, italicised and underlined font emphasis has been added:

The assessment has considered the opportunities and constraints to development presented by both the physical context and the planning control of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

...

We have proceeded on the basis that the existing child care centre has been operating on the site for many years and **there is no existing planning permit in place for the use and development**. It is assumed that the child care centre have existing use rights under the planning scheme and this will need to be formally confirmed.

...

- The land is within the General Residential Zone, Schedule 1 (GRZ1) and is affected by the Design and Development Overlay, Schedule 6 (DDO6) and the Heritage Overlay, Schedule 5 (HO5).
- Under GRZ1, Child care and Kindergarten land uses are nested under the Education centre land use. **Education centre is a Section 2 (permit required) use in the zone. A permit is also required for building works associated with a Section 2 use pursuant to Clause 32.08-9.**
- In addition to the policy framework, a relevant purpose of the GRZ is to allow educational and a limited range of other non-residential uses to serve local community needs **in appropriate locations**. Relevant decision guidelines for non-residential use and development are at Clause 32.08-13.

...

Under DDO6, the preferred character for the precinct in summary is a high-quality residential heritage area set on St Kilda Hill, which has a leafy, **tranquil** and urbane character and consists of a high-standard but varied architecture and a mix of residential types reflecting the varied eras of the precinct.

...

- It is understood that the child care centre use of the site is long-standing and no existing planning permit applied to the use. It is likely that the use of the site benefits from existing use rights under Clause 63.01 if continuous use of the land for 15 years can be established.

...

- **Clause 18.01-1S 'Land use and transport integration' seeks to facilitate access to social, cultural and economic opportunities by effectively integrating land use and transport.**

...

- Objective 5 within Clause 21.04-1 'Housing and Accommodation' **seeks to minimise amenity conflicts between residential and non-residential uses. The strategies include discouraging non-residential uses from locating in residential areas, except where a net community benefit to the local community can be demonstrated and the amenity of the area will not be adversely affected.**

...



- **The policy also seeks to ensure that non-residential uses do not subject neighbouring residential properties to unreasonable noise**, vibration or impacts associated with hours of operation, music, plant deliveries, waste collection, dust and light spill. ...

Ratio's Planning Development Assessment Report lists many planning controls and key planning policy applicable to the Property and the current childcare land use should development be considered. However, it does not provide an assessment of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten and childcare land use in the context of the listed applicable planning controls and key planning policy – presumably this was not part of its brief.

Without duplicating the *Planning Controls* and *Planning Policy* sections of Ratio's Planning Development Assessment Report (Pages 3 to 8 inclusive) here, and providing an assessment against each, it is evident the existing childcare land use and facility would not meet many applicable planning controls and key planning policy. Even in consideration of the provision of childcare services, in the simple quantitative relationship between Planning Controls/ Key Planning Policy and Benefit (i.e. the ratio), the existing childcare land use and facility appear not to provide a net community benefit to the local community. The non-residential childcare land use and the existing facility negatively impact the local community and the amenity of the precinct.

Whilst there is significant support within the Port Phillip Planning Scheme and various Council policies/ strategies for development that encourages the use of active transport and sustainable transport over the use of private motor vehicles, a comprehensively considered and balanced decision by Council in relation to its intention to sell the Property requires it to address the existing childcare land use and facility in the context of all applicable planning controls, key planning policy and other regulations. For example, Council's *Move, Connect, Live - Integrated Transport Strategy 2018-28* seeks to integrate land use and transport planning, and associated decision-making, that can have a significant impact on transport, but ensure the liveability and safety of streets:

This Strategy is a long-term plan to ensuring that as a community we can adapt to the increasing number of trips and the challenges associated with increased congestion, while creating travel choices, prioritising effective and equitable access to transport options, and **ensuring the liveability and safety of our streets**.

...

To achieve the highest level of connectivity for our community, we are aiming to create 10-minute walking neighbourhoods through integration of land use with transport planning. This means locating the increased residential density and jobs growth close to existing (or soon to be completed) high quality pedestrian routes and frequent public transport services that connect to key destinations like schools, employment, shops and community facilities.

...

#### **Outcome 1**

##### **Our Priority Actions**

1. Review and update the Port Phillip Planning Scheme and Municipal Strategic Statement to ensure effective integration of land use and transport planning.<sup>4</sup>
2. ...

**(Bold, italicised and underlined font emphasis added)**

#### **7. Traffic, Transport and Car Parking and Noise:**

As indicated above, Council's *Document Library* suggests that there are at least two primary assessment omissions regarding the Property, and the existing childcare land use, that will not enable a comprehensively considered and balanced decision by Council – they being a:

- Traffic, Transport and Car Parking Assessment; and
- Noise Audit.

A document titled *Traffic/ Transport Due Diligence Assessment 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda*, dated 22 February 2022 – completed six (6) days before community submissions close and subsequently uploaded to the *Document Library* – also prepared by Ratio (**Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report**), is downloadable from the *Document Library*. It states that Ratio was engaged by Council "to undertake a

<sup>4</sup> Port Phillip City Council. *Move, Connect, Live - Integrated Transport Strategy 2018-28* [Internet] (cited: 18 January 2022). Retrieved from: [https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/media/oozdyyioq/copp\\_move-connect-live\\_integrated-transport-strategy.pdf](https://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/media/oozdyyioq/copp_move-connect-live_integrated-transport-strategy.pdf)

*Due Diligence Assessment with respect to Traffic and Transport matters for a potential increase in childcare places to the existing childcare centre located at 17 Eildon Road in St Kilda”.*

However, it is very limited in scope, relies heavily on anecdote without independent impartial survey/ investigation to validate and substantiate the anecdote, and provides no qualifications in relation to the anecdote and other study limitations – some examples highlighting this are discussed below. Disregarding its limited scope, anecdotes and other limitations, the description of *Existing Conditions* (Section 1 – Pages 1 to 9 inclusive) has numerous key omissions, which alone will not enable informed discussion by all, and will not enable fact-based, informed and responsible decision-making by Council.

In the absence of a comprehensive traffic, transport and car parking assessment and noise audit, the following attempts to fill some information gaps regarding these issues, and highlight why the existing childcare land use on 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, is a poor land use planning and transport integration example. It is hoped it also informs action by Council to immediately mitigate Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten’s impacts on/ risks to residents/ users of the streets and the amenity of the precinct.

The observations in this document are *everyday* observations only; they endeavour to be objective and dispassionate. Independent impartial survey/ investigation is required to validate and substantiate them, and comprehensive investigation is required to identify a more extensive complement of issues. Independent impartial survey/ investigation to validate and substantiate any anecdote should be undertaken in a manner to try to ensure any factors that might bias findings are removed, particularly given the highly emotive nature of the matter – the possible closure of a childcare centre.

### 7.1 Traffic, Transport and Car Parking:

7.1.1 Eildon Road and Inverleith Court are cul-de-sac streets. That is, they are closed at one end; they are *dead end* streets. There is no thorough road or exit road; they are roads with only one inlet/ outlet.

The no through nature of Eildon Road is clearly signed at the intersection of Eildon Road and Church Square, with *No Through Road* signage on both sides of the road pavement (i.e. the street reserve that is provided for the movement and parking of vehicles measured from kerb-to-kerb), and signed to a lesser extent on the north side of the intersection of Eildon Road and Acland Street, both west of/ on the approach side of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten.

The cul-de-sac/ no through road nature of Eildon Road requires specific movements for vehicles entering it, which does not have access to off-road parking, to exit. It is required to undertake a 3-point turn, within the road carriageway (i.e. the street reserve that is provided for the movement of vehicles excluding the parking of vehicles)/ within the road pavement where vehicles are not parked/ private residences’ crossovers, and/ or reverse, to enable exit in the same path it entered/ travelled the street.

Extraordinarily Ratio’s Traffic/ Transport Report does not mention the cul-de-sac/ no through road nature of Eildon Road and the associated vehicle movements required to exit the street.

Better signage is required on both the north and south sides of the intersection of Eildon Road and Acland Street to deter traffic that enters Eildon Road looking for an exit route from the precinct, only to find a 3-point turn/ reversing and the retracing of its route is required to exit the street/ precinct.

7.1.2 Whilst the Eildon Road street reserve remains constant, at the intersection of Eildon Road and Church Square the width of the road pavement changes. West of this intersection there are footpaths, but no nature strips, on both sides of the road pavement, consequently a two-laned bidirectional road carriageway with adjacent parallel parking on both sides is accommodated – tree planting is at intervals within the on-road vehicle parking. East of this intersection there are foot paths and nature strips with tree plantings, consequently only a one-laned bidirectional road carriageway with adjacent parallel parking on both sides is accommodated (i.e. the road pavement narrows). Inverleith Court also has a one-laned bidirectional carriageway with parallel parking on both sides.

From east of the Eildon Road/ Church Square intersection and within Inverleith Court vehicles are required to pull to one side, either into a private property’s entrance crossover or a vacant car park (if one exists) to allow oncoming traffic to pass. Generally traffic stops at either the Eildon Road and Church Square intersection or the Eildon Road and Inverleith Court intersection to allow oncoming traffic to pass between Church Square and Inverleith Court.

Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report states the following (Page 3):

In the vicinity of the site [Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten], Eildon Road is provided with a road reserve of approximately 15 metres; comprising a carriageway width of approximately 8 metres which allows for two way traffic. Parallel parking is permitted on both sides of the road **[within the approximately 8 metres, thereby narrowing the road carriageway to one lane]**; in instances where a vehicle is parked on both sides of the road, traffic flow is restricted to a single direction at a time around the parked vehicles.

Ratio's above-quoted description, and similar description of Inverleith Court (Page 4), may confuse the reader – the above bold text within the square brackets tries to provide clarification. Typically vehicles are parked on both sides of Eildon Road and Inverleith Court throughout the day and night, including in the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces within the Eildon Road road pavement adjacent to the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's south-east property boundary. Therefore, typically Eildon Road east of the Eildon Road/ Church Square intersection and Inverleith Court are one-laned bidirectional carriageway roads, with parallel parking on both sides.

7.1.3 Typically vehicle park spaces in Eildon Road and Inverleith Court are utilised by the following – particularly the unrestricted/ unlimited hours, of which there are many, and 2-hour vehicle park spaces – in addition to Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten staff/ users/ suppliers and Eildon Road/ Inverleith Court residents/ residents' visitors:

- people who work in Fitzroy Street and Acland Street Activity Centres;
- people who dine and shop in Fitzroy Street and Acland Street Activity Centres;
- people who play within the Fitzroy Street and Acland Street Activity Centres, and surrounding precincts, including to access the foreshore and Catani Gardens (including to access/ attend the many regular and varied cultural and recreational/ sporting events);
- construction workers in nearby sites; in recent years there have been many major developments within the broader precinct, including the Fitzroy Street and Acland Street Activity Centres;
- back packers; many back packers who utilise the numerous back packers' accommodation within the Fitzroy Street and Acland Street Activity Centres park their vans; and
- many other non-childcare and non-resident users.

It's important to stress Eildon Road traffic/ vehicle parking has changed very significantly over the past two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. People have been working from home – many still are – children attended school online, for long periods people were not allowed to travel beyond five kilometres from their home to exercise and access dining options, events/ festivals within the Fitzroy Street and Acland Street Activity Centres and adjacent precincts were halted/ have been very limited, and tourism, including international visitors (e.g. back packers), has been limited. These and many other factors have significantly changed (i.e. reduced) the traffic and demand for parking within the precinct. Typically, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, vehicle movements were far greater and on-road vehicle parking demand in Eildon Road was very competitive, and often difficult to secure.

Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report was prepared February 2022, yet there are no qualifications in this regard. Only now is the *return to the office* principle starting to come into effect, and other changes to the above-referred limitations are starting to happen, which may return vehicle movements and vehicle parking demand to pre-Covid-19 levels. Many cafes/ restaurants and retail outlets have closed within the Fitzroy Street and Acland Street Activity Centres as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. Access to vehicle parking, including long-term vehicle parking for staff, with good public transport and the provision of good active transport infrastructure, are key to their reestablishment/ revitalisation.

7.1.4 The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten generates a significant volume of car and a reasonable volume of truck/ van, pedestrian and cyclist movements throughout its operating hours (i.e. 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM Monday to Friday) and beyond. The volume of car and truck/ van movements generated is inappropriate for and incompatible with the narrow residential cul-de-sac nature of Eildon Road and Inverleith court. The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten centre also generates car and truck/ van movements outside its operating hours, as maintenance and repairs are undertaken outside its operating hours so not to impact childcare operations.

Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report includes many statements and associated conclusions in relation to Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's staff and user movements to and from the centre; these are summarised in Section 2 *Existing Staff Childcare Travel Mode Surveys* (from Page 9). The statements and conclusions were deduced from parent/ child surveys and staff surveys undertaken in February 2022; "A total of 40 parents and 4 full-time staff responded to the surveys". The reported parents/ guardians travel modes to and from the centre are indicated as follows (Table 2.1; Page 10):

Travel Mode	Travel Mode TO Childcare		Travel Mode FROM Childcare	
	Number	Percent (Of Responses)	Number	Percent (Of Responses)
Car	7	17.5%	9	22.5%
Walk	29	72.5%	28	70%
Bicycle	4	10%	3	7.5%
Public Transport	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

The numbers reported travelling to the centre via car (i.e. 7 No.) and from the centre via car (i.e. 9 No.) do not accord with casual observations of vehicles dropping-off and picking-up children on a typical day, including in recent periods as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Casual observations suggest that they are far higher than the reported numbers. Notably no travel was reported via public transport. Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report does not include any independent impartial survey/ investigation to validate and substantiate the reported numbers (i.e. anecdote) in the parent/ child and staff surveys.

Further, Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report provides no qualifications, including, for example: the user surveys were undertaken on a day in February 2022/ in the middle of summer (i.e. weather strongly influences travel mode); the impact of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions (e.g. parents/ guardians possibly working from home and not travelling to and from work and dropping-off/ picking-up children on those journeys); and the user surveys were undertaken during a very emotional debate and associated public campaign to save childcare centres in the City of Port Phillip.

The conclusions deduced from anecdote outlined in Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report, without independent validation and substantiation, are extraordinary and possibly misleading. As stated above, independent impartial survey/ investigation to validate and substantiate any anecdote should be undertaken in a manner to try to ensure any factors that might bias the findings are removed, particularly given the highly emotive nature of the matter.

- 7.1.5 AM and PM peak time childcare centre vehicle movements are evident Monday to Friday. However, vehicle movements associated with the childcare centre are constant throughout its operating hours, including possibly because many parents/ guardians do not engage their children in full-day programs, and deliveries and services are provided throughout its operating hours.
- 7.1.6 The narrow cul-de-sac nature of the streets result in a significant number of conflicting and unsafe vehicle movements (incl. car, truck/ van, cyclist, skateboarder/ motorised scooter movements and pedestrian crossings).
- 7.1.7 No staff or user/ visitor off-road parking is provided on the Property. The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's operation relies solely on on-road vehicle parking. There are two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces adjacent to the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's south-east property boundary within the Eildon Road road pavement. They also accommodate vehicles delivering goods and providing services, many goods and services are delivered in small trucks and vans – some in very large trucks.

The two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces are not able to service the volume of private vehicles dropping-off/ picking-up children and delivery/ service vehicles at peak times. Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report ignores the goods delivery and services provision aspect of the centre's operation, including the associated vehicle movements and vehicle parking.

The two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces are signed/ marked with the following:  $\frac{1}{4}$  P CHILD CARE USERS ONLY MON – FRI. They are used by residents/ visitors and users of the broader precinct, including Monday to Friday, outside the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's operating hours. This is a practical use of them; it is recommended

that the signage be modified to reflect this, including to allow/ acknowledge Monday to Friday use by the broader community outside the centre's operating hours.

- 7.1.8 Due to the non-existence of off-road parking and the narrow cul-de-sac nature of Eildon Road and Inverleith Court, when arriving/ departing, parents/ guardians in vehicles dropping-off/ picking-up children and vehicles associated with the delivery of goods and services, are required do a 3-point turn as described at Item 7.1.1 above to exit. Larger vehicles either reverse up Eildon Road and into Church Square before driving off or do a 3-point turn at the intersection of Eildon Road/ Church Square. This adds to traffic congestion and an unsafe environment for motorists and cyclists and pedestrians crossing the streets.
- 7.1.9 The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten has a 44 child places/ per day licence capacity. Ratio's Planning Development Assessment Report states (Page 5):

Clause 52.06 'Car parking' [of the planning controls provisions] requires that the number of car parking spaces based on a rate of 0.22 spaces per child must be provided to the satisfaction of Council. Where a reduction or waiver of car parking requirement is required, a planning permit is required pursuant to Clause 52.06-3.

Thus, in the absence of a planning permit and associated reduction or waiver, the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten requires 9.68 on-site (i.e. off-road) vehicle park spaces (44 places x 0.22 = 9.68) — to comply with the planning controls provisions. However, if the same calculation is applied to the alleged maximum capacity, under the *1987 Planning Permit* under which the centre opened, it would require 7.7 on-site (i.e. off-road) vehicle park spaces (35 places x 0.22 = 7.7).

A letter to neighbours from the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten dated 21 January 2022 states, the centre "*educates and cares for more than 60 children each year*". This may include multiple children who attend less than a full day and who are collectively *counted* as a single child place/ per day as part of the licence capacity. Thus, possibly increasing the per day number of vehicle movements and associated demand for vehicle parking.

- 7.1.10 Because the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces cannot accommodate the demand for parking, particularly at peak times, many Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten users park illegally, including in permit parking (without a permit) and in non-marked car parking spaces, ignoring *No Standing* signs, in front of/ behind marked vehicle park spaces – including protruding into the Eildon Road/ Inverleith Court intersection. Some park and *off-load* in front of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's primary pedestrian entry, adjacent the Eildon Road/ Inverleith Court intersection kerb. These actions create traffic congestion, traffic conflicts and an unsafe environment for motorists, cyclists, and skateboarders, and pedestrians crossing the streets.

These observations are contrary to the following statement in Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report (Page 10): "*Parents who dropped their children off in the morning all indicated that they utilised the 15 minute car parking spaces at the Eildon Road frontage*".

Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report also states (Page 9), it "*acquired car parking occupancy surveys conducted in the vicinity of the site on Thursday 26 July 2018*" and "*Of the available supply, the car parking occupancy data showed there to be 2 car parking spaces available at 8am. At all other times of the survey, there were found to be a minimum of 4 car parking spaces available on Eildon Road*".

Ratio's Traffic/ Transport Report does not identify where the available vehicle park spaces were, and their proximity to the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten – text not quoted here could imply that they may have been located anywhere along Eildon Road. Eildon Road from Acland Street to the point where it is *blocked* (at Eildon Court), to try to manage traffic, is approximately 234 metres in length. From Eildon Court to Grey Street Eildon Road is approximately 194 metres in length. Unless the available vehicle park spaces were very close to the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten, they were unlikely to have been utilised by users of the centre, particularly if users were on a journey to/ from work in peak traffic times.

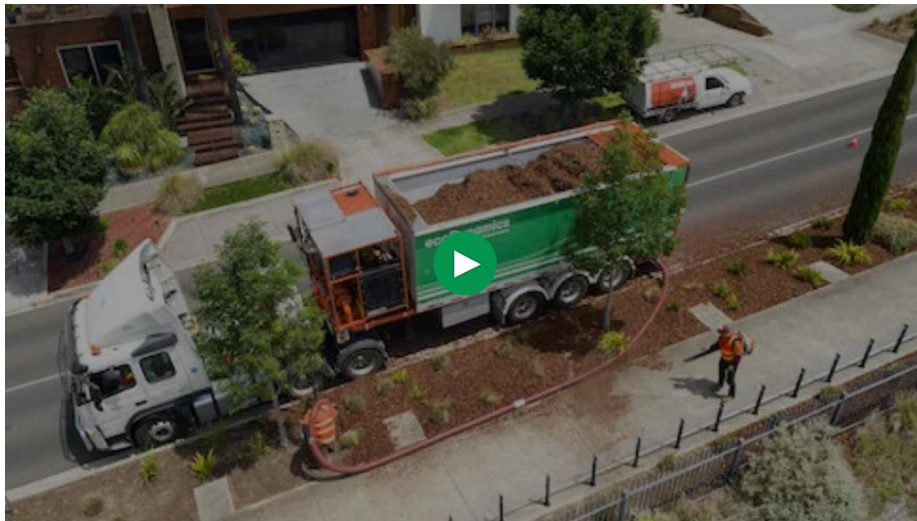
- 7.1.11 Parents/ guardians *juggle* getting children out off/ into vehicles, many from vehicle doors furthest from the kerb, bags (presumably containing children's needs), toys and other items, whilst trying to monitor and avoid vehicle movements, and include crossing Eildon Road/ Inverleith Court where users park on the street side furthest from the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten.
- 7.1.12 The traffic congestion and unsafe environment for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians crossing the streets are significantly exacerbated when large vehicles (e.g. weekly garbage collection,

delivery vehicles, service authority vehicles, emergency vehicles and others) are entering/ departing the streets.

- 7.1.13 Because of the cul-de-sac nature of the streets, large vehicles use the intersection of Eildon Road/ Inverleith Court, the site of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's primary pedestrian entrance and a significant volume of vehicular and pedestrian movements, to turn and reverse down Inverleith Court and Eildon Road north-east of the Eildon Road/ Inverleith Court intersection to access properties within these streets.
- 7.1.14 For example, on a Thursday morning, garbage trucks (two number; waste and recyclable garbage) enter Inverleith Court and then reverse around the intersection and down Eildon Road to access properties north-east of the Eildon Road/ Inverleith Court intersection. They do a similar movement from Eildon Road to enable reversing down Inverleith Court to access properties in Inverleith Court. The first garbage truck's collection generally coincides with the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's AM peak drop-off. Other large vehicles also reverse up and down Eildon Road and Inverleith Court to access or depart from these streets and access Rowland S Howard Lane.
- 7.1.15 The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten staff generally place its garbage bins on the nature-strip adjacent the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces within the Eildon Road carriageway on a Wednesday afternoon and re-store them on a Thursday afternoon. From the time they are placed on the nature-strip and re-stored, parents/ guardians picking-up/ dropping-off children who park in the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces, negotiate the rubbish bins – including at times in the presences of a garbage truck that pulls up aside vehicles dropping-off/ picking-up children to empty the bins.
- 7.1.16 Not infrequently large trucks park in the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces within the Eildon Road carriageway to undertake Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten maintenance and provide services/ deliver goods including the frequent delivery of groceries and other items. The following are two recent examples, of a significant number, that were undertaken during the period this submission was written:

- a) A number of times a year soft-fall material/ mulch is pumped from large trucks parked in the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces into the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's outdoor play areas. These trucks exceed the space of the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces and impede traffic. The operation takes significant time, over a number of hours, and is exceedingly loud/ noisy as the material is pumped from the truck and *blown* into position. Pedestrian access along the north side of Eildon Road is prevented/ prohibited during the operation.

This last occurred on Tuesday 18 January 2022, when Ecodynamics undertook this task from approximately 7:30 AM, during the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's AM peak drop-off period. Thus, the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces were not available to centre users. Below is an image from Ecodynamic's webpage<sup>5</sup> of an identical truck that undertook the operation.



<sup>5</sup> Ecodynamics. *Blowing*. [Internet] (cited 18 January 2022). Retrieved from: <https://www.ecodynamics.com.au/blowing/>

Due to the narrow cul-de-sac nature of Eildon Road, to depart, the driver reversed the truck westward along Eildon Road and into the next street intersection, Church Square, also a cul-de-sac street, before departing Eildon Road.

- b) On Friday 21 January 2022 ASG Industrial, an environmental and industrial provider, undertook works at the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten. Their truck occupied the kerbside space directly in front of the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces and protruded into the Eildon Road and Inverleith Court intersection. An accompanying service truck occupied the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces. These works were carried out between 7:30 and 11:00 AM, and were noisy due to the pumping of material. Again, the pedestrian access along the north side of Eildon Road was impeded. The trucks departure was via a 3-point turn in the intersection of Eildon Road and Inverleith Court.

- 7.1.17 Some parents/ guardians access the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten with their children on a bike – active sustainable transport – either carrying their child on a rear/ front mounted child seat, a front load cargo box/ rear trailer or a child harness attached to their body.

Some travel on-road, and manoeuvre through the vehicular traffic and associated above-described conflicting/ unsafe traffic movements with their *precious* cargo. Others, appearing to acknowledge the traffic volumes and associated conflicting/ unsafe traffic movements, travel off-road on pedestrian paths and conflict with pedestrian movements. There are no bike parking facilities associated with the centre.

The closure of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten will presumably mean many of these users may no longer cycle to access childcare, unless a new centre commences operation nearby. However, in the precinct where existing centres increase their child care spaces (e.g. North St Kilda Children's Centre) and where new centres commence operation there will be an increase in users accessing the centres via cycling. There should be similar losses and gains, and therefore no net loss.

- 7.1.18 Some parents/ guardians access the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten on-foot (i.e. walk) with their children. This is also an active and sustainable mode of transport for parents/ guardians that are located close by.

The closure of the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten will presumably mean many of these users may no longer walk to access childcare, unless a new centre commences operation nearby. However, in the precinct where existing centres increase their child care spaces (e.g. North St Kilda Children's Centre) and where new centres commence operation there will be an increase in users accessing the centres via walking. There should be similar losses and gains, and therefore no net loss.

- 7.1.19 Eildon Road is a significant cycle route and pedestrian route connecting Acland Street and Fitzroy Street, via Rowland S Howard Lane. Due to the narrow nature of the road dedicated cycle lanes cannot be accommodated. Cycle and pedestrian movements negotiate the above-described volumes/ types of traffic and the associated conflicting/ unsafe vehicle movements, generated by the childcare centre.

- 7.1.20 The location of the childcare land use within the narrow residential cul-de-sac streets means there is no positive integration of land use and associated childcare generated transport; land uses and transport are in direct conflict.

## 7.2 Noise:

- 7.2.1 The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten generates significant noise throughout its operating hours (i.e. 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM Monday to Friday) and beyond. This is in conflict with the residential nature of Eildon Road and Inverleith Court.

The noise comprises different types, including for example, childcare centre staff leading outdoor play activities and shouting instructions and encouraging clapping and other activities that generate noise, the playing of loud music outdoors (if neighbours did the same it would not be tolerated), children screaming and crying, and maintenance/ services equipment. Some Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten users who walk to the centre with their children, often walk with their pet dog. Some tie their dog at a street sign outside the centre and are left barking incessantly for up to 20 to 30 minutes. As described above, a number of times a year large vehicles park in the two dedicated 15-minute drop-off/ pick-up vehicle park spaces and undertake works of a long duration that require pumping and other activities that is extraordinarily loud/ noisy.

- 7.2.2 The volume of the traffic generated by the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten, the constant banging of vehicle doors, and associated movement of the childcare centre's users, service

providers and goods suppliers as they arrive and depart, including children crying and protesting, parents/ guardians socialising, and the constant banging of the centre's primary entrance gate creates significant noise. The constant banging of the centre's primary entrance gate is very significant; a function of a heavy gate with an automatic closure mechanism that slams shut behind people entering/ exiting. It often starts from 6:00 AM and continues outside the centre's operating hours; throughout the night security service's personnel come and go, with the gate slamming shut behind them.

- 7.2.3 Maintenance associated with the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten is regularly undertaken on weekends; obviously to avoid conflict with its child care operating hours. This creates significant noise at a time neighbours in the precinct hope to get some relief from the noise generated by the Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten Monday to Friday. The nature and volume of noise within the precinct on weekdays when the centre is operating compared to weekends (when there are no maintenance works being undertaken at the centre) is very dramatic.
- 7.2.4 The Eildon Road Childcare & Kindergarten's security/ safety alarm sounds frequently and regularly after hours. It has sounded for hours in the middle of the night before it is disarmed. It seems disproportionately loud; for residents close by it's impossible to hold a conversation, listen to a radio/ television without significantly increasing the volume, and sleep when it sounds in the night. Residents' alarms within the precinct are not known to sound at all.

### **8. Conclusion:**

This submission is written in support of Council's proposal to sell 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, and the sale proceeds be used to fund further improvements of Council's childcare centre portfolio as "*part of Council's long term strategy of renewal, upgrading and replacement to achieve a fully fit for purpose and future ready portfolio of childcare facilities*".

The reasons for support include the childcare centre land use on 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, within a residential precinct in narrow residential cul-de-sac streets is inappropriate, including because the childcare land use generates significant volumes of conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements, and significant noise. The significant volume of conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements represents risks and impacts the amenity of the place as demonstrated above at Item 7.1 *Traffic, Transport and Car Parking* and Item 7.2 *Noise*.

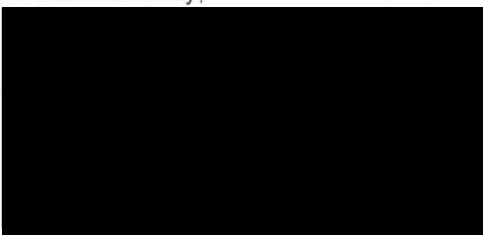
This submission also implores Council to undertake appropriate planning and design of its existing and future childcare centre portfolio to ensure the:

- provision of the best possible access, care and education of children within the City of Port Phillip;
- provision of a safe and accessible environment for all attending children, staff, parents/ guardians and other users;
- integration of measures to add value to the precincts childcare centres are located and the sustainability of the City of Port Phillip, and mitigate potential negative impacts on precinct users.

Further, this submission is an appeal to Council to undertake an urgent appropriate review of the existing childcare land use of 17 Eildon Road, St Kilda, and the immediate:

- mitigation of risks associated with the significant volumes of conflicting and unsafe traffic/ transport movements generated by the childcare land use; and
- mitigation of impacts on residents and users of Eildon Road and Inverleith Court as a consequence of the childcare land use.

Yours faithfully,







child rearing. The value of this cannot be quantified in dollar terms. Council must take this into account in making their decision. This is not just about buildings, it's about what happens in those buildings, the loss of which cannot be justified.

The Report to Council in December 2021 focused entirely on the state of the buildings and the cost to make them compliant with Disability Access requirements as well as other upgrades seen to be necessary. But with \$9.2 million available in the most recent budget in the Child Care Infrastructure Reserve, the question must be asked as to why Council has not used some of it to undertake the work required. It should be noted that this Reserve has been built up over time through levies paid to Council by these Centres and by other Children's Services Centres that have use of Council buildings.

Documents provided on the Have Your Say web page show indicative costings for upgrading the three centres to be in the order of \$5mill. Council has the funds available and should be investing in the necessary upgrades to keep these much-valued services operating.

As the landlord Council has a responsibility to ensure its properties meet legal requirements and are properly maintained. It would appear that the three Centres identified to be sold and closed down have not been properly maintained. This is in breach of Council's own Children's Services Policy *Every Child, Our Future* (2020) which commits Council to ensuring that: "Council-owned facilities are fit for purpose and meet legislative and building compliance requirements." (p11)

In addition, it has become clear in recent weeks that Council had not actively explored opportunities for State Government funding to support upgrades for these three centres, again in breach of its own policy commitment, to ensure: "All appropriate funding opportunities for upgrades or redevelopment of children's services facilities are pursued." (p11)

CAPP notes further that the Report to Council for its meeting on 2 March 2022 'CHILDCARE CENTRES IMPROVEMENT - ADJUSTMENT TO SALE TIMEFRAME', (published on Friday 25 February 2022), while recommending an extension of the Intention to Sell process for Eildon Road Children's Centre to allow time for adequate exploration of alternate options to sale, also raises what appear to be new claims about the structural integrity of the building which might bring about its early closure. Yet investigation of this is still to be completed. Again, what this appears to highlight is that Council has not adequately maintained the building in recent times.

Finally, CAPP notes that Council's Children's Services Policy, *Every Child, Our Future* (2020) concludes with the statement that an Implementation Plan is to be developed. To our knowledge this is still to occur, and is surely now overdue. The absence of an implementation plan to achieve the Policy's objectives appears to have led to the Council failing to understand the serious implications of the current proposal. If implemented, the loss of valued services and education and childcare places in the community sector will undermine the whole spirit and vision of the Policy:

"A children's services environment that honours diversity, builds creativity and social connections and encourages all children and families to maximise their development outcomes now and in the future." (p1)

CAPP remains hopeful that a sound implementation plan will be developed and will invest in and expand our community managed and Council-run early childhood education and care centres to ensure high quality, affordable and accessible services for all, and particularly for those families most in need.

CAPP proposes the following:

- That Council does not proceed with the sale of the three Centres.
- That Council releases funds from the Child Care Infrastructure Reserve to enable necessary maintenance and upgrade work on the Centres to commence.
- That in addition to its own funding contributions, Council immediately commences negotiations with State and Federal Government to access capital funds for the building work needed at the three Centres. This should be undertaken in close consultation with the parent committees of management.
- That Council should also identify existing properties and land in the vicinity of the three Centres that could be developed for Children's Services. Council should consider purchasing buildings if necessary. There should be no closures of existing Centres until alternative suitable facilities are developed.
- That Council should develop a ten-year plan of investment in improving access to affordable, not-for-profit (community- and Council-managed) early childhood education and care services throughout the municipality.

## KEY MESSAGES

- Elwood Children's Centre (ECC) has been in operation since 1985 and provides high-quality and affordable care and education to more than 50 families per year.
- ECC is a financially viable (not-for-profit) service that also contributes to the City of Port Phillip.
- ECC provides the CoPP with variety, in terms of model (community-run) and scale of centre.
- ECC provides a hub of community connectedness and support for families.
- ECC also delivers on a wide range of Council's policies and strategies.
- ECC and Council agree that the centre's building should be compliant and accessible.
- The value of ECC is independent of the building at 46 Tennyson Street.
- There are viable alternative options for Council to avoid the closure of ECC.
- Funding options do exist that would allow ECC to continue to thrive and serve the CoPP.

*"ECC is more than just a daycare centre,  
it's our children's second home."*

## About ECC

- In operation for 37 years
- Licensed for 39 places
- Includes 25 kindergarten places
- Exceeding the national quality standards
- Community-managed service
- Employs 18 staff (almost half reside in CoPP)

## What ECC does differently

- Above required educator to child ratios (children with special needs accommodated)
- Small-scale, only 39 children per day (caters for children's individual needs)
- No charge for holidays and staff PD days (families only pay for days care provided)
- No extra for incursions and excursions (vulnerable families don't miss out)
- Protected planning time for educators (children benefit from quality improvement)

*"ECC provides something different to larger for profit centres."*



### ECC is financially viable

- ECC makes a small profit each year which is reinvested into the centre.
- Management of the service is conducted free-of-charge by parent committee.
- ECC pays levies to council that are shown to be comparable to market rent.
- Council has made a profit from these levies (over \$250K in the last 7 years alone).
- ECC receives a salary/wage subsidy from Council (which amounts to ~\$50K pa).
- Council's support of ECC means it can provide high-quality care and education for a lower cost to families than private (which are around \$30 per child, per day more).

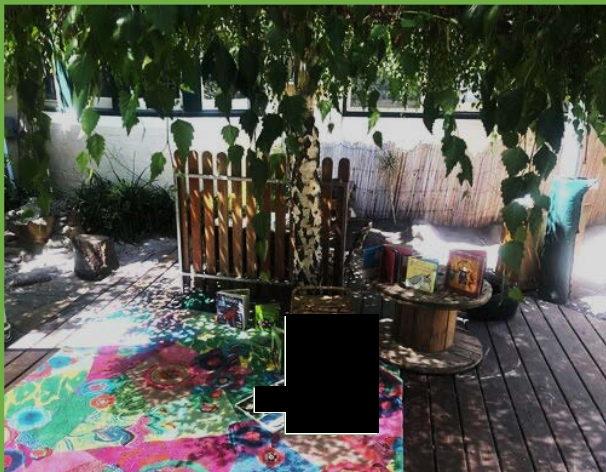
*"It has one of the most magical gardens for children to play in, these spaces should be treasured as they are few and far between."*

*"The small groups are unique and invaluable."*

*"The limited children numbers has been a big drawcards for us."*

### ECC delivers unique aspects of the 'Every Child, Our Future' policy

- One of few small-scale centres in CoPP (meeting the strong support for small centres seen in this policy's engagement process)
- A community-run centre (again meeting the strong support seen for such models in the community engagement process)
- Has a genuine commitment to ensuring children access to natural environments (natural outdoor play spaces, regular excursions)
- Helps families experiencing hardship to access additional support (e.g. waiving fees for families in vulnerable circumstances, particularly during pandemic)
- ECC has initiated two local support networks for service providers (meeting policy commitment no. 9, for council to provide such networks, at no cost to council)



## ECC builds community connection, a key long-term indicator of the 'Every Child, Our Future' policy

- ECC builds strong connections between families and children through:
  - Quality education and care for children.
  - Numerous community building events, such as welcome picnics, end-of-year celebrations, fundraising events and working bees.
- ECC builds connections to the local community through initiative, such as:
  - Sausage sizzles and bake sales, utilising local businesses and products
  - Community movie nights and publicly attended trivia nights at local venues
  - Work-experience and educator placements
  - Free food pantry, also open to local residents
- The strength of the connections built by ECC and other small-scale centres has been demonstrated through:
  - 17 submissions by ECC families and staff at the 1 Dec 2021 Council meeting
  - Hundreds attending the picnic rally
  - Thousands of people signing a petition

*"Our time at ECC has been the most connected to community we have experienced in our 15 years in Melbourne"*



*"Knowing we were part of the ECC family played a major role in our decision to have a second child. The ECC is our village."*



## Other CoPP initiatives that ECC helps council to deliver, include:

- Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan
  - KISP and Council modelling shows places provided by ECC needed to meet demand.
- Move, Connect, Live Strategy
  - ~60% of families walk, bike or use PT to ECC
  - ~75% of families are within 10 min travel
  - ~80% of families strongly value proximity
- Reconciliation Action Plan
  - ECC has a strong RAP embedded in all aspects of curriculum and professional development.
- Sustainable City Community Action Plan
  - Sustainability is embedded at all levels at ECC
  - Children help maintain the centre's vegetable garden and worm-farm
  - Children use individual hand-towels and staff make natural baby wipes
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  - ECC promotes strong community connections, which is the first objective and vision for health and well-being in the CoPP

### **Closing ECC would be detrimental:**

- To the children
  - Children need security and stability now more than ever (after 2+ years of pandemic).
  - Significant rupture in their continuity of care.
  - Many alternate options have lower ratings on national quality standards.
- To the families
  - Lack of places in nearby centres, particularly for families with more than one child.
  - 90% of current ECC families unable to afford the cost of private centres (avg. \$30 per child, per day more).
  - Lack of certainty of childcare leads to lower participation in the workforce.
- To the staff
  - Almost half the staff are live in the CoPP, so this will mean job losses for residents.
- To the community
  - Not meeting demands for childcare or kindergarten places.
  - Lower participation in workforce, leading to less spending in local economy.
  - Losing a long-time and positive contributor to the sense of community in Elwood.
  - Loss of valuable land that could be used to provide services to the CoPP.

*"A little piece of Elwood's heart will be ripped out and lost forever"*

### **How can council fund this investment?**

- Utilise part of the \$6.2M in the Quality Levy Building Reserve, to which ECC has contributed through levies paid.
- Apply to the State government for available funding through Building Blocks.
- Lobby the State and Federal MPs/candidates for commitments in up-coming elections.
- Undertake a staged renewal process, and continue using levies from ECC over an extended time-frame.
- Consider a public-private partnership with ECC to fund the works.

*"Good childcare is difficult to find. You shouldn't be closing good childcare centres. You should be doing everything in your power to keep them running!"*

*"The proposal [to sell] means I, as a parent and a voter, am forced to consider changing the environment where my child feels safe, comfortable and happy."*

### **What are the options?**

- Reduce estimated costs by fixing the compliance and access issues of the current building, utilising appropriate exemptions and without unnecessary expansion or functional changes.
- Renew the current building completely and consider modest expansion and functional upgrade within current site.
- Purchase / find an alternate site for redevelopment of centre that meets size requirements for significant State funding for a new build, and once built, sell current site to recoup costs (if needed).
- Return the building to the community under ECCs social licence for early childhood services.
- Transition to a public-private partnership with ECC as a not-for-profit service.

*"We will lose the connection with the community which is so important to us and a reason why we love living in Elwood."*

*"ECC is a place the council should be incredibly proud to have in their municipality."*

*"Elwood Children's Centre is worth the investment!"*

Please work *with* ECC to:

- explore and confirm available funding, and
- design a funded option which meets compliance and also fits the true functional needs of the service.

#### **Notes.**

- Quotations from the Elwood Children's Centre Survey of Families, February 2022 – responses to 'Council need a reason to invest. Can you tell us why ECC is special?', 'How is Council's proposal to sell impacting you right now?' and 'Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences at ECC?'.
- Data regarding the travel mode, time and importance of proximity also come from the Elwood Children's Centre Survey of Families, February 2022.