

## A better future for Port Phillip children



The City of Port Phillip is facing many challenges for children and families, and Council is looking to work with the community to tackle them together.

Along with challenges come opportunities. This is an exciting opportunity for you to share the future of children's services in our City.

The first stage of community engagement will be the development of high level policy objectives. Later in the year, we will have another round of community engagement when we will invite you to comment on the service response report guided by the agreed policy objectives.

We appreciate that there is rich knowledge, skills and experience

in our community and we look forward to drawing on your expertise to develop a forward thinking, robust policy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernadene Voss'.

Bernadene Voss  
Mayor City of Port Phillip

### Why do we need a new policy?

The substantive Childcare Policy was adopted in 2006. This outdated policy does not meet the expectations of our community, the changing legislative framework, population growth statistics or trends in contemporary practice.

Aligned with the Council Plan 2017-27, Council is committed to "providing access to children's services that support the health and well-being of our growing community". One of Council's priorities over the next four years is to "complete the review of children's services to determine Council's role in early childhood education and care".

The aim of the new policy is to improve health, wellbeing and educational outcomes for children and their families in the City of Port Phillip.

### The benefits of good early years education

Quality early years education produces higher cognitive, language and social development. Play promotes the development of language and literacy, sociability and mathematical ability. Kindergarten assists all children to become 'school ready'.

## What are the challenges?

Some of the challenges we are looking to tackle together include:

- **Changing community needs** such as supporting children from disadvantaged backgrounds, with additional needs, experiencing vulnerability, or without English as their first language. Port Phillip also has one of the lowest kindergarten participation rates in Victoria.
- **Population growth** – in addition to the growth experienced throughout Port Phillip since the Childcare Policy 2006 was adopted, an estimated 80,000 people will move into Fishermans Bend over the next 30 years.
- **Changes to Federal and Victorian Government legislation** include the Victorian Children Friendly Cities and Communities Charter and reduced access to Australian Government subsidies for families who don't meet the Activity Test.
- **Ageing buildings** – the average age of buildings in Port Phillip is 64 years; many of them need updating to ensure accessibility and provide flexible programs that meet contemporary practice.

## What services does Council provide?

Council currently provides:

- five Council-run childcare centres (long day care)
- eight community-run centres supported by Council through facilities and subsidies:
  - facilities for four kindergarten centres
  - subsidies for 10 kindergarten centres
- a combination of facilities and subsidies for four toy libraries
- support staff and facilities for approximately 80 playgroups per year

## How does Council currently support playgroups?

- Connection to Maternal and Child Health – encouraging new mothers to join a playgroup
- Playgroup coordination – providing advice, assistance and referrals to playgroups
- Facilities – providing community groups with free access to space in Council buildings

## How does Council currently support toy libraries and kindergartens?

Council supports toy libraries and kindergartens with facilities, discounted rent and subsidies.

## Who operates childcare in Port Phillip?

	Council-run	Community-run	Private	Independent / Not-for-profit
Centres	5	8	14	1
Places	362	580	1,148	55
Average fees	\$125	\$123.75	\$145.33	\$137
Cost to Council	\$2.072M <sup>1</sup>	\$1,078,520 <sup>2</sup>	\$0	\$0

<sup>1</sup>Indicative as of May 2018

<sup>2</sup>This figure is indicative. Costs for community-managed-centres are associated with Quality and Affordability Studies

## How can I get involved?

Download and read the Information Pack on our website [portphillip.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay](http://portphillip.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay) for a more comprehensive look at the issues relevant to developing a new Children's Services Policy.

You can also find information on our website about how you can have your say online, attend a workshops or discussion group, drop-in sessions, or fill in a postage paid postcard at Council's three town hall ASSIST counters.

## More information

Contact ASSIST via:

- [www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/contact\\_us.htm](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/contact_us.htm)
- 03 9209 6777

Email us at [children@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:children@portphillip.vic.gov.au)

You can also visit our website

- [www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/haveyoursay)