Knox Children and Family Centres

About the new centres

Council-run child care facilities are undergoing substantial improvement to co-locate and integrate a range of early learning and family support services to better support children and their families.

From 2019, Council’s five long day care and occasional care services are being consolidated into two new early years hubs. Each centre will include:
- Maternal and child health
- Four-year-old sessional preschool
- Playgroups
- Long day care

The centre in Wantirna South will also house Council’s occasional care service.

This means that in 2019 the following services will be relocated to the new centres:
- Long day care currently at Birchfield Crescent Children and Family Centre
- Long day care currently at Rowville Children and Family Centre
- Long day care currently at Coorie Avenue Children and Family Centre
- Long day care currently at Talaska Children and Family Centre
- Occasional care currently at Tyner Road Children and Family Centre
- Long day care currently at Park Crescent Children and Family Centre

Playgroups and Maternal and Child Health Service will remain at Park Crescent Children and Family Centre.

These specially designed centres will be located at 81 Argyle Way in Wantirna South (formerly the Knox Gardens Preschool site) and 41 Phyllis St in Bayswater (formerly the Blue Hills Children and Family Centre site).

The centres will modernise the facilities and provide improved services to young children and their families in Knox.

Everything under one roof

Outdoor play spaces will be shared by infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Shared play spaces help all children and staff to get to know each other and help to build a sense of community. We know that multi-age groups can promote:
- The development of leadership skills in older children
- Enhanced social participation for younger children
- Self-regulation
- Complex play situations for younger children that are created by older children
- Skills in conflict resolution
- Cognitive development through ‘novices and experts’ in the same play situation
- Enhanced communication skills
About the new centres

Careful consideration is being given to the landscape design of these outdoor play spaces to make sure that they meet the needs of all children, including providing safety for younger children as well as challenging older children.

Benefits to families

The new centres will bring together different kinds of services for children and their families in one space to offer options for parents that are high quality, flexible and coordinated.

A big benefit to families is improved communication about their child. With many services under the one roof and with parents’ permission, families will not have repeat discussions with staff about their child’s development.

Other benefits are:
- Better access to occasional care
- Great environment to give children the best care and early learning
- A choice of early education and care services to suit needs of the family
- Increased awareness of the different types of Council services available
- Opportunities to feel part of a special community
- Flexibly designed building to cater for Knox’s changing demographics over the next 100 years

Benefits to children

- Improved quality of services, leading to improved learning
- Continued support of established individualised learning programs when children transition between groups as all staff and children know each other
- A setting that invites children and their families to actively engage in positive early years development
- A new sustainable building … good for our environment, good for our children
- Children will learn, discover, explore and play in spaces that specifically cater for their growing needs

Clever design

Designing facilities that will provide quality programs and services for our ever changing community needs are very important to Knox City Council.

The new design will incorporate an open flexible layout that could successfully allow multi-uses and accommodate diverse functions and changing community needs. It will also incorporate environmentally and economically sustainable design principle to significantly lower overall lifecycle and operating costs for the facility particularly in terms of water and energy use.

The design will also embrace the principles of Universal Access to enable members of the community and users of the facility to have unrestricted access.

The centres will be light, open spaces with connecting indoor and outdoor learning environments and are intended to have:
- 48 x 300 watt panels with 12,000 amp/hr storage capacity which is anticipated to result in our external power consumption to nil
- No running costs (using passive heat exchange technologies)
- Operational costs (excluding staff costs etc) reduced by around 85%. This includes an estimated 95% reduction in energy costs, an 80% reduction in lifecycle maintenance and an 80% reduction in water costs.
- Water tanks with capacity of 200,000 litres will provide 80% of our water requirements
- 7+ star energy rating
Why has Council made this decision?

There have been significant changes to child care over many years, and it is difficult for Council to provide an affordable service, whilst meeting all requirements, including its obligations under the National Competition Policy.

Families have told us they value having the choice of Council-operated long day care services, and that our occasional care service meets the needs of many families because it is the only occasional care service of its type in the Knox municipality.

Co-located and integrated early years services can help achieve better outcomes for children and families, and Council wants to invest wisely in facilities that better support the community now, and into the future.