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Kindy Play proposal: parental feedback

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KINDY PLAY PROPOSAL: PARENTAL FEEDBACK

WHAT IS THE KINDY PLAY PROPOSAL?

The *Kindy Play* proposal is an innovative idea to establish a drop-in centre within the Lismore CBD for parents/carers and their children (primarily aged 0–5 years) as part of a more holistic approach to supporting parents and encouraging them towards behaviours and practices to enhance their own and their children's physical and emotional wellbeing. Establishing *Kindy Play* would require a collaborative effort between many local agencies (government and NGO) and local parents/carers. Therefore, it would also serve as a mechanism to strengthen inter-agency relationships and to build on existing social capital and community engagement.

While the community development and partnership approach could see the project evolve in a variety of ways, the currently proposed core functions and activities are:

- Indoor play activities for children aged 0-5 years: floor activities for babies, soft play activities for toddlers and a story time and/or music session for all ages, run in conjunction with the library and conservatorium.
- Breastfeeding-friendly cafe or eating area for parents/carers, where they could get reasonably-priced drinks and nutritious snacks, or bring their own food and drinks.
- Family-friendly, clean, free facilities (eg: toilets, changing areas, etc).
- Comprehensive and current information about the many services available to and for families locally.
- Formal and informal access, in one place, to representatives from various government and NGO services.
- Informal social interaction / networking opportunities for parents/carers and children.
- Designated support or educational programs for children or parents/carers, based on demand.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The *Kindy Play* proposal was developed in response to a range of needs expressed by some parents at the YWCA's *Communities for Children* public meeting (November 2004) and was inspired by the *Kindyland* business that ran in the Lismore CBD about six years ago and was well attended by parents/carers and their children. The proposal excited a number of the organisational key stakeholders and, before progressing further, we felt the need to assess parents'/carers' reactions to it. This report presents the results from a survey of a convenience sample of parents/carers of young children.

WHO WAS SURVEYED?

During December 2004, we gathered feedback from 69 parents/carers, including 15 men and nine Indigenous parents/carers, in various settings, with only three refusals (from people visiting or about to leave the area), including:

- 38 attending Lismore and Goonellabah Immunisation Clinics: about one third non-Indigenous males, two Indigenous women and rest non-Indigenous women – as the main respondent, although often they were with partners and/or other family members.
- 12 intercepted at the Goonellabah Toy Library, Lismore Library and in Keen Street: included two men (one Indigenous, one non-Indigenous) and ten women (all non-Indigenous).
- 13 via two focus groups held at Goonellabah Play Group: all non-Indigenous women.
- 6 via a focus group held at a Kindy Orientation Session in Deegan House: all Indigenous women.

Most feedback was gathered in the form of interviews but some parents/carers self-completed written surveys, depending on the circumstances.

KEY POINTS FROM FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The following key points emerged from the parental feedback received. Please see Appendix 1 for a more detailed summary of parents'/carers' responses to each question and Appendix 2 for the actual survey instrument.

- **The CBD location was appropriate (see Q1)**
 - 76% of individuals and all focus group participants visited the CBD at least once or twice a week, with 18% visiting at least three times a week.
- **There was a high level of need (see Q2)**
 - 52% of individuals and all focus group participants found it fairly or very difficult to get around the CBD with young children.
- **The main barriers to visiting the CBD with children (see Q3)**
 - Lack of appropriate, family-friendly facilities (eg: toilets, baby feeding/changing areas) – 41 comments;
 - Difficulties with access (eg: parking, limited room to manoeuvre) – 36 comments;
 - Children not being welcomed, encouraged or stimulated – 19 comments; and
 - Safety concerns for children around traffic – 5 comments.
- **The main things that would encourage visiting the CBD with children (see Q4)**
 - Providing family-friendly facilities – 59 comments; and
 - Improving ease of access – 36 comments.
- **There was strong support for the Kindy Play concept (see Q5)**
 - 86% of individuals and all focus group participants considered it a “great idea”.
- **There was strong demand for the Kindy Play concept (see Q6)**
 - 82% of individuals and all focus group participants were “definitely” interested in using it.
- **The main wishes for a Kindy Play facility (see Q7)**
 - Access to govt and NGO services & information – 26 comments;
 - Fun & stimulating for children – 20 comments;
 - Easy to access & welcoming – 16 comments;
 - Safe, clean and secure – 15 comments;
 - Professionally staffed and operated – 11 comments;
 - Various specific facilities and services (eg: childminding, café, different spaces, toilets, playgroup, etc) – 22 comments; and
 - Advice &/or educational programs – 6 comments.
- **The main potential barriers to using a Kindy Play facility (see Q8)**
 - Safety and security concerns, especially around cleanliness – 34 comments;
 - Ease of access issues (eg: aesthetics, spaciousness, cost, parking, etc) – 30 comments; and
 - Professionalism issues – 9 comments.
- **There was a high level of willingness to help (see Q9)**
 - 30 individuals gave their contact details and many others were happy to contact us if we presented these results in the media and called for parents to get involved.

For further information, please contact:

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APPENDIX 1: DETAILED SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Q1: How often do you visit downtown Lismore (CBD) with your 0 – 5 year old kids?

	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Focus Groups</u>
Once a month or less	5	0
2-3 times a month	7	0
1-2 times a week	29	3
3+ times a week	9	1

Q2: How easy do you find getting around downtown Lismore with young kids?

	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Focus Groups</u>
Very easy	6	0
Fairly easy	18	0
Fairly difficult	17	1
Very difficult	9	2

Q3: What are the main things that stop you visiting downtown Lismore with young kids more often?

<u>Options</u>	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Focus Groups</u>
Nothing stops me	6	0
Lack of clean, free, stroller-friendly public toilets	28	2
Trouble parking where I want to	23	0
Kids get bored as little for them to do	9	2
Kids always nagging me to buy stuff	5	0
Places I need to go are too spread out	3	0

Other Comments (with number of times said individually & in focus groups)

LACK OF APPROPRIATE FACILITIES

- Lack of breastfeeding / milk warming facilities (x5)
- Lack of clean, free baby changing facilities (x4 + 1FG)
- Lack of amenities / toilets (x1 + 1FG)
- Getting tired easily with the children / nowhere to sit and rest (x1)

CHILDREN NOT WELCOMED / ENCOURAGED

- Shop/cafes are not small-child-friendly / fun for kids (x2 + 1FG)
- Having children with special needs (x2)

EASE OF ACCESS ISSUES

- It's all too crowded – needs to be more spread out / difficulty manoeuvring a pram (x4)
- Lack of shaded parking / shade generally (x1 + 1 FG)
- Not having a car (x1)
- Don't know it well (x1)
- Difficulty getting in and out of the car (x1)
- Living too far away (x1)

SAFETY / SECURITY ISSUES

- Too much / busy traffic (x3 + 1FG)
- Nowhere safe for kids to run around (1FG)

Q4: What are the main things that would encourage you / make it easier for you to visit downtown Lismore with young kids more often?

<u>Options</u>	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Focus Groups</u>
Nothing, don't have any problems as it is	5	0
More clean, free, stroller-friendly public toilets	26	3
More shaded parking	20	0
Something cheap & fun for kids to do	13	3
Somewhere safe & supervised to leave kids while doing errands	11	1
Being able to do different things in the same place	9	0
Better transport	3	0

Other Comments (with number of times said individually & in focus groups)

PROVIDING FAMILY-FRIENDLY FACILITIES

- Nappy changing facilities / mothers' toilet / parents' room (x4 + 1FG)
- Somewhere to feed my baby (x3)
- Another Kindyland (1FG)
- A rest area (x1)

IMPROVING EASE OF ACCESS

- Pram-friendly streets and shops / wider footpaths (x1 + 1FG)
- Parent & child only car parks (x1)
- More shaded streets (x1)

IMPROVING SAFETY / SECURITY

- Cleaner toilets / changing areas (x1 + 1FG)

Q5: A group of local government & community services are thinking about setting up a family-friendly centre in Lismore CBD – to provide a safe & stimulating space where carers can entertain their 0-5 year old children, relax with a tea/coffee/snack, see various government & other services, meet with other parents, etc. How does this general idea sound to you?

<u>Options</u>	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Focus Groups</u>	<u>Other Comments</u>
Great idea	43	3	• OK for when children are older but not babies (x2)
Sounds OK	7	0	• Wouldn't leave children (1FG)
Can't see the point	0	0	• HURRY! (x1)

Q6: Would you be interested in using such a place?

<u>Options</u>	<u>Individuals</u>	<u>Focus Groups</u>	<u>Other Comments</u>
Definitely	41	3	• Oh YES! (x1)
Maybe	9	0	• Live too far away (x1)
Not really	0	0	
Definitely not	0	0	

Q7: What would you most like from such a place? This could be government and other services, programs, resources, any ideas at this stage? *(with number of times said individually & in focus groups)*

ACCESS TO GOVT & NGO SERVICES / INFORMATION

- To clinics / doctors / nurses / dentists / ECNs / counsellors / health service (x15)
- To Centrelink (x4)
- Information for parents / information board (x1 + 1FG)
- To midwives (antenatal) (x1)
- To govt services / advisors (x1)
- To DET (x1)
- To Medicare (x1)
- To Toy Library (x1)

FUN / STIMULATING FOR CHILDREN

- Fun / stimulating things for children to do / age-appropriate toys & equipment / child-friendly (x9)
- Things to help child development (x3)
- Services for children with special needs (x2)
- Having lots of toys / save having to carry own around (x2)
- Clean areas for young babies to lay / crawl (x1)
- Having organised activities (x1)
- An outdoor play area (x1)
- Having fun child-friendly music in the background (x1)

EASY TO ACCESS / INVITING / WELCOMING / COMFORTABLE

- Comfy breastfeeding chairs / space (x4)
- Being open as often as possible / all day (x3)
- Being cheap / free to use (x1 + 1FG)
- Being close (short walk) to CBD (x1 + 1FG)
- Wide doors – to fit double prams (1FG)
- Air-conditioned inside (1FG)
- Somewhere comfy to sit where can watch children playing (x1)
- Friendly staff (x1)
- Having its own parking (x1)

PROFESSIONALLY STAFFED / RUN

- Qualified staff / carers (x5 + 1 FG)
- Having enough staff / adequate supervision (x4)
- Knowledgeable Coordinator – who could chat / tell about services (1FG)

SAFE, CLEAN AND SECURE

- Being safe for children / safe play areas (x5)
- Being clean (x4)
- Sign-in book for parents (x1 + 1FG)
- Enclosed play areas (x1 + 1FG)
- Having a security door (x1)
- Being non-smoking (x1)

SPECIFIC FACILITIES / SERVICES

- Childminding service (x4 + 1 FG)
- A coffee shop / café (x4)
- Needs big and small areas / plenty of space (x3)
- Shade trees / shaded outdoor area (2FGs)
- Clean, free, stroller-friendly toilets / changing rooms (x2 + 1 FG)
- A playgroup (x2)
- Access to hot water / microwave for heating babies' bottles (1FG)
- Having basic supplies (eg: nappies, bottles, milk, baby foods, etc) available – maybe for sale (x1)
- Company (x1)

ADVICE / EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Parenting advice / support (x2 + 1FG)
- Advice – on sleeping (x1)
- Programs for adults – eg: job/computer skills (x1)
- Programs for children (x1)

Q8: What would put you off using such a place? *(with number of times said individually & in focus groups)*

SAFETY / SECURITY ISSUES

- If it wasn't clean (x19 + 1FG)
- Strange people hanging around / people without children (x3 + 1FG)
- Lack of security (x2)
- If there were sick children (eg: colds, flu, etc) there (x2)
- Inadequate shaded areas (1FG)
- Spraying pesticide on toys – happened at Kindyland (1FG)
- Not being safe – eg: sharp objects (x1)
- If there were pests / insects / spiders (x1)
- Graffiti (x1)
- Inadequate fencing (x1)

PROFESSIONALISM ISSUES

- If it wasn't properly run / had poor staff (x6)
- Unhygienic food / selling junk foods/lollies (x1 + 1FG)
- Inadequate supervision of children / not stopping bad behaviour (x1)

EASE OF ACCESS ISSUES / NOT WELCOMING

- If it was too crowded / not enough space (x5 + 1FG)
- If it wasn't aesthetically pleasing / welcoming / inviting (x3 + 2FGs)
- If it was too expensive to use (x3)
- Difficulty parking (x2 + 1FG)
- Unfriendly staff (x2 + 1FG)
- If it was too noisy (x2)
- Being untidy / messy (x2)
- If it was too posh (1FG)
- People from low socioeconomic backgrounds using it (x1)
- Lack of transport (x1)
- Inconvenient opening hours (x1)
- Inconvenient location (x1)
- If it wasn't stimulating for children (x1)

Q9: Any other comments?

- Sounds great / good (x4)
- It's really needed / need it now, now, now (x2)
- How can we help more? (1 FG)
- Could decorate walls with Koori motifs, books, etc (1 FG)
- Fantastic idea (x1)
- Will there be a booking system? (x1)
- Will there be a limit, in terms of numbers? (x1)

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Please write other comments here

1. How often do you visit downtown Lismore (CBD) with your 0 – 5 year old kids?

- Once a month or less
- 2-3 times a month
- 1-2 times a week
- 3+ times a week

2. How easy do you find getting around downtown Lismore with young kids?

- Very easy
- Fairly easy
- Fairly difficult
- Very difficult

3. What are the main things that stop you visiting downtown Lismore with young kids more often?

- Nothing stops me
- Lack of clean, free, stroller-friendly public toilets
- Trouble parking where I want to
- Places I need to go are too spread out
- Kids always nagging me to buy stuff
- Kids get bored as little for them to do

4. What are the main things that would encourage you / make it easier for you to visit downtown Lismore with young kids more often?

- Nothing, don't have any problems as it is
- Better transport
- More shaded parking
- More clean, free, stroller-friendly public toilets
- Being able to do different things in the same place
- Something cheap & fun for kids to do
- Somewhere safe & supervised to leave kids while doing errands

A group of local government & community services are thinking about setting up a family-friendly centre in Lismore CBD – to provide a safe & stimulating space where carers can entertain their 0-5 year old children, relax with a tea/coffee/snack, see various government & other services, meet with other parents, etc.

5. How does this general idea sound to you?

- Great idea
- Sounds OK
- Can't see the point

6. Would you be interested in using such a place?

- Definitely
- Maybe
- Not really
- Definitely not

