



# MINUTES

## EARLY YEARS PARTNERSHIP

held on 22 July 2021 at 10.00am, online – MS Teams

**Present:**

**Appointed Members**

Cr Vandenberg, Councillor  
V Sharma, Community Member  
A Brand, Community Member  
E Sfameni, Melton Christian College  
S O'Kelly, BPA Children's Services  
E Kay, Brotherhood of St Laurence – PROXY attended for M Boyd  
J Galvin, Noah's Ark  
G Callander, Western Health  
C Owens, Western Health  
H Zwick, VICSEG New Futures  
C Reich, City of Melton  
S Prestney, City of Melton

**Observers**

B Nguyen, Department of Education and Training  
J Taylor, Department of Education and Training  
M Miltiadous, Department of Family, Fairness and Housing  
A Holmes, Tweddle Child & Family Health Service  
K O'Toole, Community Member  
B Ball, City of Melton  
K Curson, City of Melton – (ex-officio)  
L Xerri, City of Melton – (minute taker)

**Guests:** Nil

**Quorum:** A minimum of 5 appointed members will form a quorum for each meeting.

**Chairperson:** G Callander, Western Health

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**1. Welcome**

The Chairperson welcomed all attendees to the meeting and proceeded with the Acknowledgment of Country. *'Melton City Council acknowledges that the land it now occupies has a history that began with the Indigenous occupants, the Kulin Nation. Council pays its respects to the Kulin Nation people and their Elders and descendant's past and present. Council extends this respect to the Elders of other Aboriginal groups here today.'*

**2. Apologies**

Cr Deeming, Councillor  
D Clark, Community Member  
A Connor Simon, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)  
J Weber, Caroline Chisholm Society  
M Boyd, Brotherhood of St Laurence  
M Costa, Melton West Primary School

**3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests**

Nil.

**4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting****Noted**

Moved: Cr Ashleigh Vandenberg    Seconded: Maria Miltiadous

**5. Business Arising**

There were two actions from the last meeting which will be discussed in agenda items 6.7 and 6.8 today.

**6. General Business****6.1 Speed Networking**

Opportunity provided for Committee members to network in small groups.

**6.2 Best Start Update**

K Curson shared that 18 Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles completed to date for this year, with seven of these identifying families that have not attended 3.5-year-old Maternal and Child Health checks across the service sector, and the others looked at supporting access to kindergarten and playgroups.

Council has been successful in obtaining an ongoing grant from Department of Education and Training (DET) for the Access to Early Learning (AEL) Program. AEL is a high intensity program supporting families experiencing high levels of vulnerability to engage with Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) and support the in home learning environment of children. To accommodate the AEL program and governance requirements some of the Best Start funding has been reassigned to appoint a Best Start Facilitator.

**6.3 Department of Education and Training (DET) update**

Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) for children known to Child Protection identifies if they or any of their immediate family members is or has ever been known to Child Protection. This includes:

- unsubstantiated notifications to Child Protection
- children who have received protection services from Child Protection
- children who are or have been on a protection order
- children in Out-of-Home Care



## MINUTES

- where Child Protection involvement relates to a sibling. This involvement can pre-date the child's birth
- Child Protection being consulted as part of initial intake or a referral to another agency such as Orange Door or Child FIRST

B Nguyen noted the development of new Early Years Managers (EYM) Improvement Framework, which includes funding will move from a financial year to a calendar year payment schedule. Dates for the 2021 Early Childhood Beginning Teacher Conferences have been released.

The deadline for the Building Blocks Capacity grants for round 2 has been extended to 29 August 2021.

New Child Safe Standards have been released, services will need to comply with the new Standards by 1 July 2022.

### Action

B Nguyen to share information with K Curson to be shared with the Committee.

#### 6.4 Department of Family Fairness and Housing (DFFH)

The current caseload for Brimbank Melton Child Protection (CP) is 1119 clients with 15 unborn reports. Within the Melton LGA there are 452 clients, of these: 357 are aged 12 years or under and 172 are aged 5 years or under and there are approximately 183 cases in Out of Home Care. Currently there are 103 Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander clients, of these 39 are aged 5 or under and 75 are aged 12 years or under.

A site has been identified for the Brimbank Melton Orange Door. This main hub will be in Sunshine, there will be outpost hubs in Melton. It is expected to be operational in 2022.

Challenges continuing around staffing levels. Changes to Integrated Family Services are being implement and focus on early intervention services such as the SafeCare<sup>1</sup>. M Miltidous also highlighted the gaps in service provision for families not meeting eligibility for support due to the visa they are on.

#### 6.5 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) update

E Kay advised the wait time for families accessing National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is currently not lengthy. Longer NDIS plans are being approved to ensure continuity of service resulting from prolonged wait times in initial access to services.

#### 6.6 Sharing of updates discussions

K Curson has spoken to Council's Governance team and members who regularly provide an update and it has been identified that including the detailed updates to the agenda, this would give members the opportunity to review and consider updates prior to the meeting.

### Action

K Curson to work with members who provide regular updates to share with the agenda.

Members who provide regular updates to provide updates to K Curson in on the Monday in the week before the meeting.

#### 6.7 Terms of Reference (TOR) review

The Terms of Reference (TOR) were suggested changes were: updating membership to reflect the new name of Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, clarification

<sup>1</sup> <https://safecare.publichealth.gsu.edu/>

*MINUTES*

of a quorum, inclusion of online meetings and addition of the Access to Early Learning Program.

**Action**

K Curson to record changes to the TOR and submit to the Policy Review Panel for approval.

**6.8 Early Years Strategic Planning (continued from previous meeting)**

K Curson shared data from the Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS) portal and the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) Community Profile 2018. Discussion continued on important considerations for strategic planning for children, families and the early years sector.

**7. Other business**

Cr Vandenberg advised of a Councilor Initiative Endorsement for an Early Childhood Transport Model. K Curson updated the committee of the progress of this work.

**8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is to be held on 16 September commencing at 10am, location to be confirmed

**9. Close of Business**

The meeting closed at 11.55am