



AGENDA APPENDIX
Council Meeting
Wednesday 28 October 2015

AGENDA ITEM FOR SEPARATE DISTRIBUTION TO COUNCILLORS AND
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E.5 CORNER INLET KINDERGARTEN INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW

Appendix 1 – Corner Inlet Kindergarten Infrastructure Review

Early Years Infrastructure Review:

Satellite Kindergarten Services of Corner Inlet

August 2015



Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction	4
Background	5
Consultation.....	6
Census Data.....	7
Maternal & Child Health Birth Notifications.....	8
Current Infrastructure.....	9
Costs	9
Total usage per year	10
Government Direction	10
Discussion.....	11
Proposal	12
Risks & Opportunities	13
Financial Implications.....	14
Conclusion.....	14
Recommendations	14
Appendix 1 Additional Data	15
Appendix 2	16
Groups Consulted.....	16
Summary of Consultation.....	16
Appendix 3 Census Maps and Data	21
Appendix 4 Government Direction	26

Executive Summary

The current and future demands for Early Years services in Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek have been investigated in order to plan for the long term infrastructure needs in Corner Inlet.

All kindergarten services in Corner Inlet are managed by Prom Coast Centres for Children (PCCC). PCCC is committed to continue to offer kindergarten services from the three satellite facilities with numbers not expected to increase significantly, according to population predictions. Playgroups will continue to run from the facilities with high attendances at Welshpool, in particular, and PCCC is investigating opportunities for expansion of programs through additional early childhood programs in the satellite centres such as before and after kindergarten care and school holiday care.

The satellite kindergarten programs of Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek operate from ageing infrastructure built in the 1960/70's. While the size of the buildings will continue to accommodate future demand, in terms of numbers of children enrolled in kindergarten, the dated floorplan and design of the building presents a challenge in all three buildings when implementing National Quality Framework (NQF) standards.

Population predictions support the provision of a kindergarten program in Fish Creek and the need for only one kindergarten program for the Toora and Welshpool communities. The PCCC along with the Toora and Welshpool communities challenge the proposal of one facility for two communities. Recently PCCC took over delivery of early year's services in the Corner Inlet with a commitment to the community to retain kindergarten services at all three satellite sites (Fish Creek, Toora and Welshpool). The community believe closing the service will have a direct and adverse impact on the social cohesion of the region including a decline in school enrolment, community connection and a downturn in the local economy.

Council has made provision in its capital works program for upgrades of the Toora and Welshpool kindergarten buildings over the next 5-10 years. \$168,195 has been allocated to toilet and kitchen upgrades at the Welshpool kindergarten in 2019/20 and \$1,060,422 has been allocated in 2020/21 for renewal of the Toora kindergarten. However, based on the current levels of service provided from both facilities, population projections and plans by PCCC for the expansion of services, a significant capital works investment in the two facilities cannot be justified.

This review recommends that Council:

- Continue to maintain and improve the existing facilities at Fish Creek, Toora and Welshpool for a minimum of 5 years.
- Collaborate with Prom Coast Centres for Children to identify functionality requirements across the three satellite kindergartens (Toora, Welshpool & Fish Creek) and invest the allocated \$168,195 based on agreed priorities over the next 5 years.
- Investigate, in consultation with the community, the development of one integrated community hub to meet the service requirements of a 22 place kindergarten and ancillary services for Toora and Welshpool in the next 5-10 years.
- Plan for the upgrade of the Fish Creek kindergarten in the next 15-20 years.

Introduction

South Gippsland Shire Council has investigated the current and future demands of kindergarten services in Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek.

The review supports both Council's key strategic and planning documents and the State Government's strategic direction regarding early years' infrastructure and programming including:

- **Early Years Infrastructure Policy Framework 2013.**
 - That identified one facility could address the current and projected kindergarten and playgroup needs for the Toora and Welshpool area. The framework recommended further investigation and consultation prior to the investment of future funds.
- **Council Plan 2013-2017**
 - *3.1 Deliver affordable modern community services and facilities through an integrated approach to planning and infrastructure development.*
- **The Blueprint for Social Community Infrastructure 2014-2029**
 - Aims to guide the delivery of a sustainable and equitable network of multipurpose and quality community facilities located in strategic and accessible locations across the Shire.
- **Municipal Early Years Plan 2012-2016**
 - 8.1 Increase the level of co-operation and collaboration in the planning, governance and delivery of services, activities and infrastructure for families and children.
- **Building Asset Management Plan 2012**
 - To provide acceptable standards of service in a cost effective manner.
- **National Quality Framework for Education and Care (NQF)**
 - 3.1.3 Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use and interaction between indoor and outdoor spaces.

Council has consulted Prom Coast Centres for Children Committee of Management, parents, members of the broader community, service providers, schools, Department of Education and Training (DET), and internal Council departments to:

- identify the future needs of service provision,
- explore a range of service delivery options,
- ensure infrastructure meets the needs of the services to be delivered out of Council buildings.

Background

Prior to the Kennett Government and competitive tendering, kindergartens were managed by South Gippsland Shire Council. Today, kindergartens in the Shire are managed by external organisations including the YMCA, Uniting Care Gippsland and community based committees.

In 2011 a new integrated service was built. Prom Coast Centres for Children (PCCC) was established, providing long day care, kindergarten and maternal and child health services at the Foster site and continued kindergarten programs at the satellite centres of Fish Creek, Toora and Welshpool.

In 2014, the sudden withdrawal of Uniting Care Gippsland, as operator, led to a local campaign to save the Corner Inlet service from closure. Over many months of hard work and determination, a community based committee of management was appointed to continue the provision of services, with a strong commitment by PCCC to retain services at all three satellite centres. PCCC continues to operate in 2015 as a financially viable integrated service.

Currently the satellite kindergarten programs of Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek operate in ageing infrastructure that will require major upgrades in the next 10-15 years (*Early Childhood Services Building Assets Policy Framework 2013*). While the existing facilities meet the functional space requirements of program delivery, the design and/or layout of the buildings make programming a challenge in order to meet the Commonwealth Government's National Quality Framework for education and care services.

Fish Creek Kindergarten is licensed to provide 28 places. Current programs operating at Fish Creek include a 4 year old kindergarten program, an integrated 3 year old program and a community run playgroup. Enrolments at Fish Creek over the last 4 years have remained consistent with 22-27 children attending kindergarten each year (see Appendix 1 Additional Data).

The kindergarten program for Toora and Welshpool is combined as a result of low enrolments at both sites. Toora kindergarten is licensed to provide 22 places and Welshpool kindergarten is licensed for 23 places. The joint kindergarten program provides a 4 year old and an integrated 3 year old program on a fortnightly rotational basis. Children attend 3 days per fortnight at Toora and 2 days per fortnight at Welshpool. The same children attend both kindergartens, requiring families to travel. This has been an historical arrangement to meet the needs of the community and reduce barriers to participation. Kindergarten enrolments at Toora/Welshpool over the last 4 years range between 12-17 children each year (see appendix 1 Additional Data). A separate community playgroup is conducted at both Toora and Welshpool facilities one day per week. The Welshpool playgroup is well supported with 26 families attending. Toora playgroup has up to 5 families attending.

Fish Creek and the combined Toora/Welshpool service each operate one kindergarten program. There is capacity for a second kindergarten program at each facility, thereby increasing the available places for kindergarten in the area.

Both Toora and Welshpool kindergartens have been allocated funds for upgrades in Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP). Toora Kindergarten has been allocated \$1,060,422 for a renewal/upgrade in 2020/2021. Welshpool kindergarten has been allocated \$168,195 for toilet/kitchen upgrade in 2019/2020. The challenge for Council is to balance the cost of investing resources into two facilities that provide one program and plan sustainable early year's services for the Toora and Welshpool communities into the future. It is important to note that although Fish Creek faces the same design lay-out constraints as Toora and Welshpool no capital works are planned for this building in the next 5 years, something that the PCCC has expressed concern about.

Consultation

Consultation for this review included face-to face interviews, community meetings, distribution of surveys and phone contact with parents, schools, educators, service providers and committee members at Prom Coast Centres for Children. The community was provided with a discussion paper which included the capital works allocation in the Long Term Financial Plan of \$1,060,422 for the upgrade of the Toora kindergarten and \$168,195 for the toilet/kitchen upgrade at Welshpool. (See Appendix 2 Summary of Consultation).

The clear message from the consultation process was that the community wanted to retain all three facilities and that the closure of the Welshpool kindergarten would have a significant impact on the life and economy of the Welshpool community. Prom Coast Centres for Children supported the community's position stating that they took on the role of managing early years' services in Corner Inlet with a commitment to the community that they would continue to provide service from all three satellite kindergartens and had structured their service delivery and business model on that basis.

Retain Fish Creek, Toora and Welshpool kindergartens

The Welshpool and Toora community were passionate in their view that all three kindergartens be retained. The community do not want to see the expansion or retention of one kindergarten at the expense of another.

Public meetings were held at the Welshpool hall with 60 people attending and the Toora hall with 30 people attending. Both communities presented a unified view to retain both kindergarten services at the existing two sites. Welshpool families strongly advocated for the continuation of a kindergarten program at the current location. They did not see the need for significant infrastructure improvements to the current facility and indicated a willingness as a community to contribute towards improvement costs.

Closure of a kindergarten will have direct impact on the social cohesion of the community

Community representatives believe that closing the service at Welshpool will have a direct and adverse impact on school attendance, community connection and a decline in the local economy.

Welshpool is a growing population

Community representatives challenged the statistics stating that families had moved into the Welshpool area recently and therefore would not be identified in Council statistics. They highlighted the fact that a robust active playgroup operates in Welshpool with up to 26 families attending weekly, and the majority are Welshpool families. The Welshpool playgroup is looking to start an additional session due to the increasing numbers attending and on waiting lists.

Commitment to retain kindergartens at Fish Creek, Toora & Welshpool

The Prom Coast Centres for Children Committee of Management expressed concern about the timing of the review. They reiterated their commitment to retaining services at all 3 locations, a position they had strongly articulated one year ago at the time of taking over the operation of early childhood services in Corner Inlet. The community-based volunteer Committee has been in operation for less than a year and their focus has been on ensuring the doors of the service remain open to families. Their current focus is on consolidating and evaluating the services they currently provide before launching into expanding services at the satellite centres. They stated they intended to develop a strategic plan in the next twelve months with the potential for service development that had been identified as part of this review, for example before and after kindergarten care and school holiday programs.

Impact on financial viability of the service by closing a facility

In the first year of operations, PCCC, through strong financial management and many volunteer hours, made a modest profit. This was in contrast to the previous managers of the service, Uniting Care, who exited from early years' service provision in Corner Inlet because they could not operate the services as a financially viable entity. PCCC is currently applying for cluster management funding for the four kindergarten locations. Closure of one site would reduce the cluster management grant by \$9,500 per annum which would adversely impact on their operating model.

Collaborate on upgrades

Educators stated the potential of any future infrastructure upgrades needs the input of staff to ensure any money spent will enhance the programs delivered from the building. The benefits of a new building with an open layout and space for multi-use consulting including maternal & child health and the potential for youth access clinic and intergenerational activities were acknowledged.

Census Data

2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics population data and the Maternal and Child Health birth register (table 1) have been used to compile a demographic profile for this review. (See Appendix 3 Census maps and data).

Toora and Fish Creek data showed similar numbers in the 0-4 age bracket of 44 and 45 respectively. Whereas Welshpool had 11 children in the 0-4 age bracket – 75% less than Toora and Fish Creek.

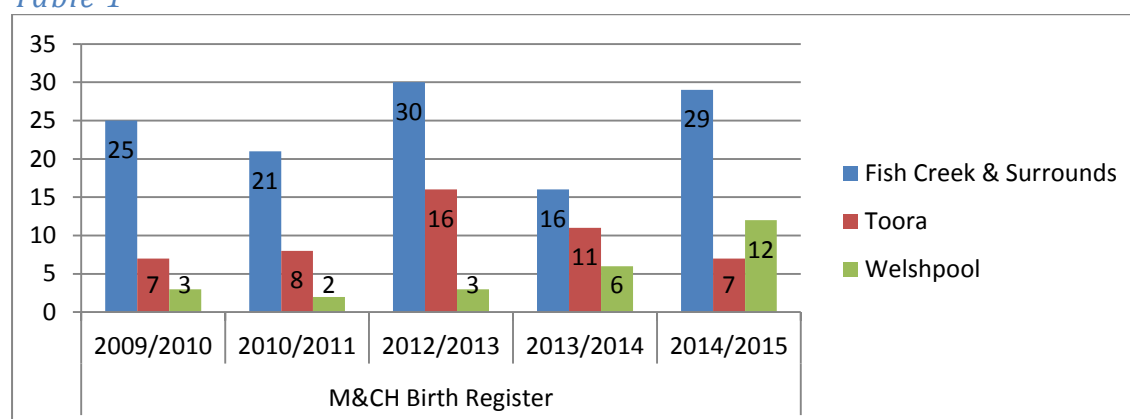
Fish Creek population data does not include the coastal villages of Sandy Point, Waratah Bay and Walkerville. To include these areas would increase the 0-4 year population by 29 children.

Maternal & Child Health Birth Notifications

It is a Commonwealth Government regulation that hospitals notify Maternal and Child Health of every child born. These statistics are the most current and accurate data available to predict kindergarten enrolment rates over the next four years. However, they cannot account for a family who has moved into or out of the area after their child has been born.

South Gippsland Shire has an average of 315 births per year with the Corner Inlet area averaging 52 births or 16.5% of births for the Shire.

Table 1



**Surrounds include: Sandy Point, Waratah Bay, Walkerville, Yanakie & Tarwin*

Please note 2011/2012 figures have not been added due to data not being available.

Birth rates show Fish Creek and surrounds has the highest number of births followed by Toora then Welshpool. In 2013/2014, Fish Creek and the surrounding areas birth rate dropped. This was consistent with a lower than average (44) birth rate for the Corner Inlet area. Welshpool's birth rate has increased in the last two financial years, with more births in the 2014/2015 year than Toora.

Table 2

Predicted Kindergarten places required				
	Licensed Capacity	2017	2018	2019
Toora	22	19	17	19
Welshpool	23			
Fish Creek	28	30	16	29
Foster	27	23	18	26

Table 2 shows the number of kindergarten places required based on the maternal and child health birth register for the corresponding kindergarten year.

Toora and Welshpool kindergartens have the licensed capacity to meet the predicted kindergarten demand.

Fish Creek kindergarten enrolments exceed the licenced capacity of 28, however; the statistics are drawn from a wide area, where not every child will attend Fish Creek.

Foster kindergarten draws from the Corner Inlet area due to the integration of before and after kindergarten/school care and long day care options. The population predictions only represent those children in the township of Foster. PCCC provide one kindergarten program in Foster that is currently operating at capacity. Foster kindergarten does not have the capacity to accommodate the closure of a kindergarten service in Fish Creek or Toora/Welshpool. The rationalisation of kindergarten facilities in the Corner Inlet is at odds with the commitment made to the community by the Prom Coast Centres for Children when it voluntarily took over the management and operation of the early years services in Corner Inlet.

Population forecasts (forecast.id) indicate there will be no growth in the 0-4 year old age group in the next twenty years.

Current Infrastructure

Council owns the kindergartens in Fish Creek, Toora and Welshpool. The facilities are over 40 years old and the *Early Childhood Building Assets Policy Framework 2013*, rate Toora and Welshpool's condition as 'fair' and Fish Creek's condition as 'good'.



Welshpool built 1965



Toora built 1970



Fish Creek built 1975

Costs

The cost of maintaining Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek kindergartens over the last 5 years has been \$134,774 (see table 3). This includes a \$3,000 per year maintenance grant to the service provider to address small maintenance requirements as they occur. There has been no capital improvement undertaken in the last 5 years.

Fish Creek has received the majority of funding over the past 5 years with expenditure on new linoleum in toilets, replacement of fascia, veranda posts and painting. Welshpool has been painted and had a new split system air conditioner installed. Major works carried out on Toora have included the installation of a split system air conditioner and replacement of exterior doors.

Table 3

Infrastructure costs over past 5 years			
	Toora	Welshpool	Fish Creek
Annual Maintenance Grant \$3,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Annual Essential Safety Measures Inspection	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,500
Operational - Programed and Reactive maintenance	\$10,352	\$29,530	\$43,392
Total	\$27,352	\$46,530	\$60,892

Total usage per year

Table 4 illustrates the number of hours the building is utilised by early year's services at each location. The utilisation of two buildings in Toora and Welshpool to operate one kindergarten program accounts for the low usage rates of those buildings compared to Fish Creek.

Table 4

	Days per week	Days used per year	Hours per week	Hours used per year
Fish Creek	4	160 days	15hrs Kinder 2hrs playgroup	680 hrs per year
Toora	2.5	100 days	9hrs Kinder -average 2hrs playgroup	440 hrs per year
Welshpool	2	80 days	6hrs Kinder –average 2hrs playgroup	320 hrs per year

Government Direction

Across Victoria, Local Government plays a key role in strategic planning, and the delivery and coordination of early childhood services at a local level. Councils implement a range of initiatives that improve the quality and access to kindergarten for all children while also driving the State Governments strategic direction on education and care. (Refer Appendix 4).

Prom Coast Centres for Children are regulated under the National Quality Framework (NQF) for Early Childhood Education and Care. The NQF brings together seven key Quality Areas and sets the benchmark for early childhood and care services in Australia. Council plays a key role to ensure Council owned facilities meet Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment. Key Standards include:

- 3.1 The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of the service.

3.1.3 Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, an interaction between indoor and outdoor spaces.

Link to National Quality Framework:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx>

Discussion

The dated floorplan and design presents a challenge in all three buildings when implementing National Quality Framework (NQF) standards. The NQF identifies the importance of learning opportunities that arise between a well-connected outdoor and indoor environment. This can mean children are free to choose their activity whether it's inside painting or outside in the digging patch. The NQF requires toilets and hand washing facilities to be accessible from indoor and outdoor areas and allow for adequate supervision, a design challenge for all three buildings. The challenge for service providers is providing adequate visibility when supervising children and flexible environments to implement the NQF in buildings built for kindergarten programs in the 1960's/70's. Currently additional staff are required to ensure adequate supervision at an increased cost to PCCC. Structural changes are required in all three buildings to bring them into the 21st century for service delivery.

Over the last 4 years Fish Creek kindergarten enrolments remain consistent ranging from 22-27 children attending each year. Toora/Welshpool presents a different scenario as there is only one program that is run out of two separate buildings. Over the last 4 years kindergarten enrolments at Toora/Welshpool range between 12-17 children attending each year. Population predictions do not indicate any significant increases in Fish Creek, Toora or Welshpool.

The 2015 Jesuit Social Services report - *Dropping Off The Edge – Persistent communal disadvantage in Australia* identifies the townships of Toora and Welshpool as disadvantaged. Access to quality early childhood programs such as kindergarten play an important role in addressing this disadvantage by giving children a positive start in life learning. Research indicates that providing extra support for families and appropriate early interventions are effective ways to break the cycle of disadvantage.

The challenge is whether there is a need for two buildings to provide one kindergarten service. The *Early Childhood Building Assets Policy* Framework identified only one facility was required to meet current and future population projections in Toora and Welshpool which is supported with current population data and licensed capacity of the kindergartens. The framework provided the following parameters for the provision of early year's services:

- Those living in small towns should be within a 20 minute drive of a town with full range of early year's services.
- Any new services should be located on or near a primary school.
- All facilities meet service requirements and current license and DET regulations and policy.

In addition to the framework the Blueprint for Social and Community Infrastructure states any new or significantly upgraded early year's facility should be multi-purpose.

The ongoing cost to Council to maintain all three buildings cannot be based on numbers alone. Fish Creek is rated in good condition using Councils Asset Management tools and is well supported with consistent enrolments. There is an ongoing need to provide kindergarten in the Fish Creek area as the population continues to grow, particularly in the coastal villages of Waratah Bay, Sandy Point and Walkerville where the majority of families will access Fish Creek kindergarten.

Toora and Welshpool's buildings are rated as in fair condition using Council's Asset Management tools. There are structural issues with the building at Toora and Council's Property Department has determined renewal of the building is the most cost effective option for the long term. Welshpool Kindergarten is in need of an upgrade to continue to maintain kindergarten service levels. However, even with the upgrade at Welshpool, the issues around design and layout will still see an old building with limitations to implementing the NQF. A new building to replace the ageing infrastructure of Toora and Welshpool will require a licensed capacity for 22 children to meet population projections and government regulations of staff to child ratio's. The community will benefit from a multi-purpose facility that not only meets the NQF, but will allow for ancillary services that will support vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families in the community.

The community are resolute in their desire for continued kindergarten facilities in Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek. The closure of any community infrastructure was seen to have a direct negative flow on effect to the local economy, schools, social cohesion and community connection. PCCC stated that the closure of one site would impact on their operating model with a reduction in their cluster management grant.

Community sentiment at the consultations was supportive of a new centre; however those in attendance did not want a new building at the expense of closing a kindergarten. The Welshpool community feel there has been a significant population change in recent years that would not be identified in Census and Maternal and Child Health data which they believe is demonstrated by the strong playgroup attendance currently operating out of the Welshpool building. Recent planning approval for the expansion of the Toora milk factory may see employment growth with an estimated increase from 20 employees to 40 employees. This may see families moving into the Toora community.

Proposal

This review recommends that Council:

- Continue to maintain and improve the existing facilities at Fish Creek, Toora and Welshpool in order to meet the National Quality Framework standards for a minimum of 5 years. This will enable Prom Coast Centres for Children to continue to deliver the current and predicted future levels of early year's services to the three communities.
- Collaborate with Prom Coast Centres for Children to identify functionality requirements across the three satellite kindergartens (Toora, Welshpool & Fish Creek) and invest the

allocated \$168,195 based on agreed priorities that will best support the early years programming across all sites over the next 5 years.

Investigate, in consultation with the community, the development of one integrated community hub to meet the service requirements of a 22 place kindergarten and ancillary services for Toora and Welshpool in the next 5-10 years. A community hub will have the capacity to provide after school and school holiday care, playgroup, maternal and child health, early years specialist consultants and the potential of incorporating youth services and intergenerational activities.

- Plan for the upgrade of the Fish Creek kindergarten in the next 15-20 years.

Risks & Opportunities

Risks

In the short-term the risk of Fish Creek kindergarten not meeting future demand is low. However, if Council does not plan for its future upgrade the gap between Education Department National Quality Framework standards and community expectations will increase.

Opportunities

- PCCC continue to provide programs and investigate opportunities to expand programs.
- Collaborative budgeting based on agreed priorities to best support early years programming.
- Long-term plan for renewal – enabling PCCC to strategically plan for the future services in Fish Creek.

Risks

The risk of either the Toora kindergarten or the Welshpool kindergarten not meeting future demand is low. However the potential cost involved in meeting Education Department requirements for both facilities in the longer term is difficult to justify. There is a high risk that investing in one new facility will generate high levels of community dissatisfaction.

Opportunities

- Continue to operate out of Toora and Welshpool kindergartens during planning and construction of new building.
- Collaborative budgeting based on agreed priorities to best support early years programming.
- An independent feasibility study with community input identifying location, design and services for a new building,
- PCCC can strategically plan for future services.
- An expanded early years services, including consulting space for visiting early childhood services,
- Council's capital works allocation for the renewal of Toora can be used to leverage Government funding for a new building
- National Quality Framework guidelines met.

Financial Implications

Budget provision has been made in the Long Term Financial Plan through the operational and capital works budget to maintain the three satellite kindergartens and to invest in capital improvements.

Conclusion

Council faces a challenge in determining the future of early year's infrastructure in Corner Inlet. The size of the current buildings will continue to accommodate future demand of kindergarten enrolments at all 3 kindergartens. However the dated floorplan and design presents a challenge to implement the National Quality Framework.

Long-term options for the Fish Creek community need to be investigated with any significant investment in infrastructure or renewal being considered in the context of government policy and potentially relocating onto the primary school grounds.

Council has made provision in its capital works program for upgrades of the Toora and Welshpool kindergarten buildings over the next 5-10 years. However, based on the current levels of service provided together with population projections, a significant capital works investment in the two facilities cannot be justified.

The proposal of one facility for two communities is challenged by the Prom Coast Centres for Children and the community. They are unified in their position that both kindergarten services in Toora and Welshpool be retained.

This review has highlighted the opportunity to work with Prom Coast Centres for Children to identify the functional requirements of the three facilities, to prioritise and plan for improvements at all three centres in the short term and to investigate and plan for the capital upgrade of two kindergarten facilities in Corner Inlet in the longer term.

Recommendations

This review recommends that Council:

- Continue to maintain and improve the existing facilities at Fish Creek, Toora and Welshpool for a minimum of 5 years.
- Collaborate with Prom Coast Centres for Children to identify functionality requirements across the three satellite kindergartens (Toora, Welshpool & Fish Creek) and invest the allocated \$168,195 based on agreed priorities over the next 5 years.
- Investigate, in consultation with the community, the development of one integrated community hub to meet the service requirements of a 22 place kindergarten and ancillary services for Toora and Welshpool in the next 5-10 years.
- Plan for the upgrade of the Fish Creek kindergarten in the next 15-20 years.

Appendix 1 Additional Data

Kindergarten enrolments for past 5 years

Enrolments for 4 year old kindergarten program	2015	2014	2013	2012
Fish Creek	18	15	14	18
Toora / Welshpool	11	10	17	12

Enrolments for 3 year old program	2015	2014	2013	2012
Fish Creek	8	7	11	9
Toora / Welshpool	1	3	0	0

Fish Creek Service Operation	Days	Hours	No. of children enrolled
4 year old kindergarten program PCCC	Monday, Wednesday & Thursday	10.00am - 3.00pm	18
3 year old program PCCC	Monday	10.00am - 3.00pm	7
Community run Playgroup	Tuesday	10.30am -12.30pm	Limited numbers at present.*
Welshpool Service Operation	Days	Hours	No. of children enrolled
4 year old kindergarten program PCCC	Fortnightly Monday, Tuesday	9.45am - 3.45pm (6 hours)	11 (children attend both Centres)
3 year old program PCCC	Fortnightly - Tuesday	9.45am - 3.45pm (6 hours)	2
Community run Playgroup	Wednesday	10.30-12.30	26 Large increase over past few years.*
Toora Service Operation	Days	Hours	No. of children enrolled
4 year old kindergarten program PCCC	Fortnightly Monday, Wednesday, Thursday	9.45am - 3.45pm (6 hours)	11 (children attend both Centres)
3 year old program PCCC	Fortnightly - Monday	9.45am - 3.45pm (6 hours)	2
Community run Playgroup	Friday – Toora	11am-12.30	Limited numbers at present.*

Consultations stated the size of playgroups vary depending on the enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteers running them. Welshpool won playgroup of the year in 2014 and as such has gained a great reputation. They have families from all over Corner Inlet attending. Some years ago both Toora and Fish Creek were the largest playgroups, particularly Toora when it was facilitated.

Appendix 2

Groups Consulted

Groups consulted	Type of consultation
Parents <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish Creek• Toora• Welshpool	Face- to Face Surveys Community Meeting
Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish Creek• Toora• Welshpool	Face to face
Playgroups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish Creek• Welshpool	Face- to Face Surveys – electronic and hard copies
Educators	Face to face
Bush Link	Face to face
Department of Education & Training	Phone Call
Uniting Care Gippsland	Phone Call
Noah's Ark Specialist Children's Services	Face to face
Prom Coast Centres for Children	Meetings
Internal Council Departments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternal & Child Health• Building Operations• Social Planning• Property	Meetings

Summary of Consultation

The community sentiment at all consultation sessions was consistent in a view that all three kindergartens be retained by Council. The community did not want to see the expansion or retaining of one kindergarten at the expense of another. The Corner Inlet communities were overwhelmingly satisfied with the programs being offered and could see the potential for additional services and/or programs utilising the buildings to improve usage rates. All the consultations requested that maternal and child health services return to the towns on a visiting basis and the need for before and after kindergarten care.

Welshpool families were the most vocal and were adamant the kindergarten programs need to be continued in their town. Welshpool presented a community perspective with the belief the scaling back of services in small communities would have a direct impact on businesses. The Welshpool community have already seen the closure of many shops and believe if the kindergarten closes, the school may be next. It was stated that community infrastructure helps to maintain social cohesion and community connection. The Welshpool community is committed to assisting wherever possible with ongoing maintenance, fundraising and anything else that would see the kindergarten retained. Welshpool families disputed the statistics presented in the discussion paper and queried the currency of data. Community representatives stated that many families had moved into the Welshpool area recently and therefore would not be counted in Council statistics. It was stated a robust active playgroup operates in Welshpool with up to 26 children attending weekly, of these, 16 children are local to the Welshpool area. The Welshpool playgroup is looking to start

another playgroup due to the large numbers attending and a waitlist exists. It was argued this will increase the utilisation of Welshpool kindergarten building. Playgroup attendance is seen as an indicator for increased numbers for the Welshpool Primary School 2016-2021 predicting student numbers to grow from 24 to 30 in the next 5 years.

At the request of the Welshpool community an additional meeting was held in June enabling members of the community to attend. There were approximately 60 people in attendance from the Welshpool district. The community requested a guarantee from Council officers that Toora and Welshpool would not close. It was stated that if Toora was offered a new building, the Welshpool community would work with Council to maintain and retain the current infrastructure in Welshpool. It was raised that Council needs to consider the low socio-economic status of the area along with ensuring there is a high standard of education accessible to the children in the area. Council needs to work with the community to build the capacity of the facilities and invest in the children growing up in the area. The community stated that activity around town is improving particularly with the robust playgroup operating and looking at starting a second playgroup. Individuals spoke directly to Council staff at the conclusion of the meeting stating that although they want to support Toora/Welshpool kindergarten, the need for before and after kinder care may force them to seek services in Foster. Another community member stated they would like to see more than before and after kindergarten care extended to long day care and school holiday programs.

Toora and Fish Creek Primary Schools both indicated willingness to partner with early years services and see the benefits of being co-located for the children, families and educators.

Transport was identified as a barrier to participation particularly in the Welshpool and Toora area. A possible solution identified by a school principal was the utilisation of the school bus system to support parents with transport issues to get children to and from kindergarten.

Consultation with the Prom Coast Centres for Children Committee of Management stated they were disappointed with the timing of the review as the Committee has been in operation for less than a year and their focus has been on ensuring the doors remain open. Their current focus is on consolidating and evaluating the services they currently provide before launching into expanding services at the satellite centres. They stated they were not in a position to have developed a strategic plan but would be looking at this in the next twelve months with the potential for service development that had been identified as part of the review, for example before and after kindergarten care. The Committee stated if there was another challenging situation imposed on the committee “ *our valuable people, will walk-away and then Early Childhood Services in Corner Inlet would be in peril*”.

Overwhelmingly the committee were clear in their view to retain all three kindergarten sites in Toora, Welshpool and Fish Creek and forms part of their philosophy and commitment to the community. The committee stated the building at Welshpool is at an acceptable standard and does not require money spent on it. In discussing the possibility of building a new centre at Toora, this was seen as a positive with opportunities for a multi-purpose building and services that would make a difference in the community. The committee was adamant in their view of retaining Welshpool kindergarten even if a new centre was built at Toora and could see possibilities of replicating services offered in Toora at Welshpool.

PCCC is currently applying for cluster management funding of all four kindergarten locations. Closure of one site would reduce the cluster management grant by \$9,500 per annum and it was stated that this would impact on the operating model.

Educators stated the potential of any future infrastructure whether it be a minor upgrade or a refurbishment needs the input of staff as this will value-add to the building and ensure any money spent will enhance the programs delivered from the building. Educators stated that the current infrastructure was built for how kinder programs were delivered 50 years ago and although there have been some modifications, it is challenging for staff to meet National Quality Standards.

Educators stated that a new building with an open layout and space for multi-use consulting space including maternal & child health, youth access clinic and intergenerational activities would allow and encourage vulnerable families' access in a safe and non-threatening environment. This was also supported by staff at the specialist children's services of Noah's Ark and Bush Link.

Educators and Children's service providers acknowledged there are challenges of operating one program from two different venues with the biggest challenge being the ability of some children to attend both sites. The educators try to assist with car-pooling, however, this can be challenging with car capacity and parents not wanting to impose on other parents. The educators state it is generally the more vulnerable children that will not attend all sessions at the site not in their town. Whilst it is better that these children are receiving some services it is not optimal for their development.

Fish Creek	
Disappointed no upgrades listed	
Playground needs a revamp – looking tired	
Room needs to fully open up to outdoor play area	
Access to toilets from the outside	
More Storage	
Functional kitchen that will allow for children to engage in cooking activities	
Infrastructure doesn't allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision of indoor/outdoor programs • access to toilets from outside 	This is managed through the employment of additional staff to ensure children are supervised at all times.

Toora	
Building is adequate but does not accommodate new framework or meet accreditation standards	
Buildings need to be more multi-use allowing for a range of groups to utilise	Maternal & Child Health Youth Assist –(currently operating out of Foster)
There is a change in how Early Years programs are delivered, with more indoor/outdoor activities. The current infrastructure makes this difficult to manage	Discussions identified the building were built for how services were delivered over 50 years ago.
A new building in Toora makes sense due to larger population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise current site. • Outdoor play space needs to be retained.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to school site via school gym.
Need to further investigate partnerships with different groups to utilise building more effectively	Ideas around partnering with youth services and intergenerational groups
Infrastructure doesn't allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision of indoor/outdoor programs • access to toilets from outside 	This is managed through the employment of additional staff and an awareness of where children are at all times

Welshpool	
Land donated and kindergarten built by the community. Do not believe the kindergarten is a Council Asset	Land was transferred to Council in 1961 for £250
Facilities meet the need now and for the next 10-15 years	
Welshpool kindergarten attracts additional funding – due to rural location, more so than Toora & Fish Creek.	Kindergarten guidelines 2014 states <i>The small rural rate is paid for each eligible child.</i> The rural rate is per child not centre.
The scaling back of services in small communities has a direct impact on businesses. Welshpool have already seen the closure of many shops	
The ongoing viability of both buildings will be challenging	
Infrastructure doesn't allow for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision of indoor/outdoor programs • access to toilets from outside 	This is managed through the employment of additional staff and an awareness of where children are at all times
Buy property next door and expand playground and services	
PCCC and community want the Welshpool to continue to operate	
Community believe in the future in the eastern end of shire. If they take away infrastructure they doom or make a sad end for the eastern end of shire	
PCCC Cluster Management of 4 centres – the money is required to continue economic viability of PCCC	
Welshpool is a low socio-economic area – need to build the capacity and Shire owes the area to invest in children growing up in this area.	
Expanding services operating out of Welshpool including; before and after kinder care, long day care and school holiday programs	
Welshpool community wanting to work with Shire to help maintain and retain infrastructure even if Toora gets a new building.	
Wants a statement from Council that Toora and Welshpool will not close.	
Playgroup investigating having an additional session due to large numbers	

Prom Coast Centre for Children Committee of Management	
Committed to retain all 3 kindergartens as part of philosophy and vision	
Welshpool does not require additional funds and building is at an acceptable standard	
Many years ago Toora kindergarten was going to be relocated onto school site. This didn't eventuate due to red tape	
Community willing to assist with any works to be carried out	
It would be good to provide additional services but priority is to ensure services are maintained in each community	
Any closure will see a flow on effect to schools	
There is an opportunity for a multipurpose building. How can we contribute ideas to make a difference to our communities?	
Toora and Welshpool need early learning support	
Will it make a difference if Welshpool was further utilised?	Council maintains 900 buildings. Many are under-utilised and Council is investigating ways to provide more integrated facilities.
Need to replicate new building in Toora at Welshpool	
Priority is for services at Welshpool and Toora to continue	
Know rotating services is not ideal but it is the best with the current numbers	

Appendix 3 Census Maps and Data

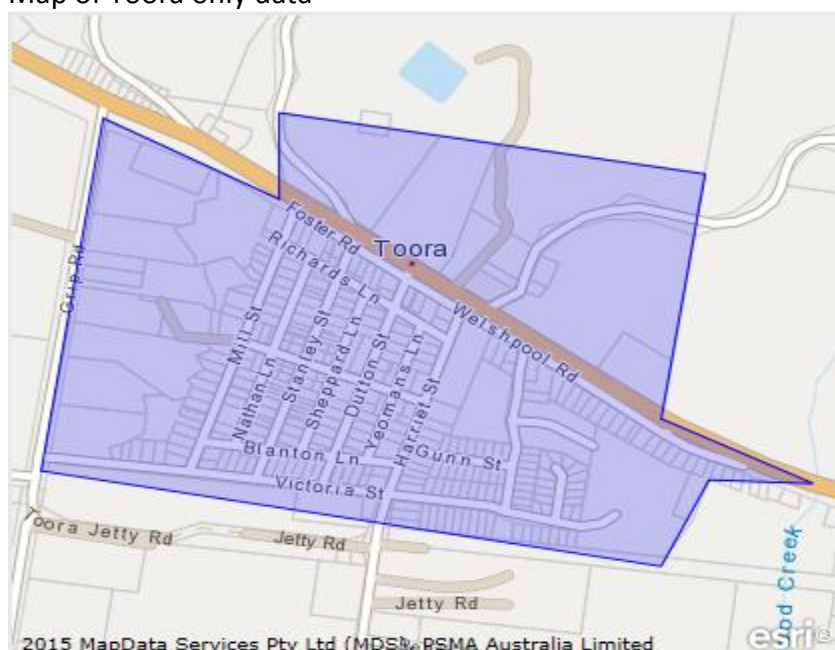
Population by Age Group

No. of people	Toora/Port Franklin	Welshpool / Port Welshpool	Fish Creek
0-4 years	44	11	45
5-14 years	83	64	110
15-24 years	88	58	74
25-34 years	66	41	58
35-44 years	89	65	92
45-54 years	124	93	113
55-64 years	159	120	148
65-74 years	120	116	111
75-84 years	73	38	31
85 + years	40	13	9
TOTAL	886	619	791

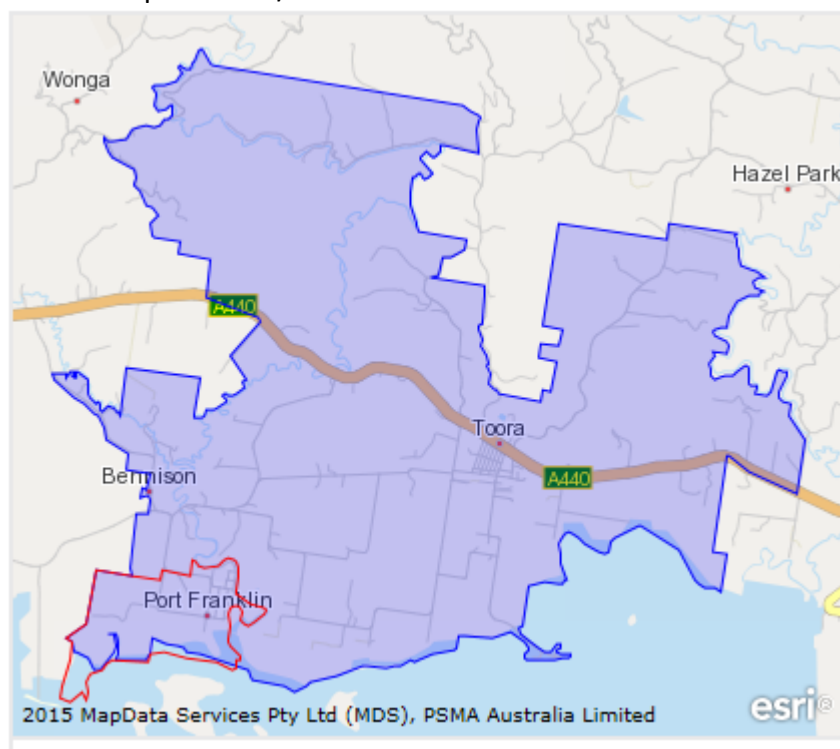
Source: 2011 Census

The combination of Toora and Port Franklin data was used because this data encompassed the surrounding farming area of Toora whereas Toora data alone only accounted for people living in the actual township of Toora (see Appendix 2 Census Maps and Data). It should be noted that in general, Port Franklin people access services and programs in Foster not Toora. The Port Franklin township accounts for 125 people, however, the census data does not show an age breakdown. Using Maternal and Child Health birth registry to cross reference births in Port Franklin during this period showed there were 2 births for the 0-4 age bracket.

Map of Toora only data



Map of Toora/Port Franklin Data



Port Franklin stats (only limited with no age breakdown) from 2011 Census is a population of 125 people.

Towns in Time 2011

Timeseries data from 1981-2006 Censuses - Enumerated population from Census 2011

Spatial Analysis & Research

A Branch of the Department of
Transport, Planning & Local
Infrastructure

PORT FRANKLIN (MB)

South Gippsland (S) LGA

Area 2006: 0.69 km²

Area 2011: 0.52 km²

Location: 58km south of Traralgon

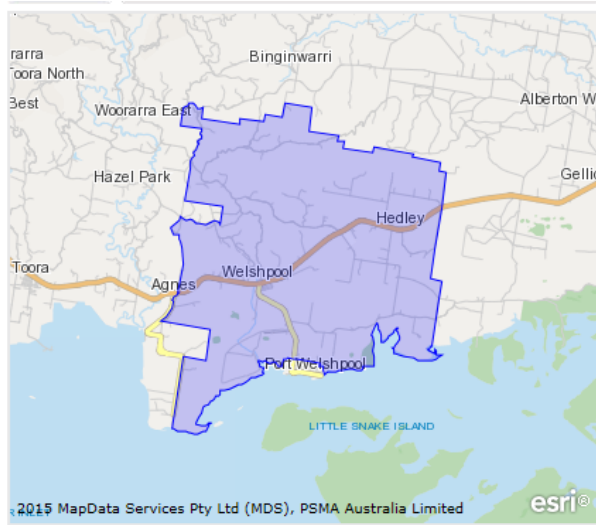
Defined in 2011 as: Mesh blocks

In 2011, the only data available is from the meshblock counts of
usual resident population and total dwellings



Summary data	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Total population (enumerated)	126	154	133	117	126	115	125
Male: Female ratio*	117	103	108	92	103	98	
Visitors on Census night	2	4	0	0	0	0	
Population in non-private dwellings	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Occupied private dwellings	51	56	57	54	58	52	
Unoccupied private dwellings	12	17	20	22	20	26	
All private dwellings	63	73	77	76	78	78	80

Welshpool Map



Port Welshpool Map



Welshpool and Port Welshpool data was combined and encompasses the Welshpool region

Fish Creek Map



Fish Creek data took in the farming area around Fish Creek but did not include Sandy Point, Waratah Bay and Walkerville. To include Sandy Point, Waratah Bay and Walkerville in the Fish Creek statistics would see 29 additional 0-4 year olds.

As you can see Fish Creek does not encompass the towns of Walkerville/Waratah Bay and Sandy Point with populations of 207 and 197 respectively.

Age	Walkerville (Vic.)		Victoria		Australia	
People		%		%		%
0-4 years	14	6.7	344,733	6.4	1,421,050	6.6
5-9 years	11	5.3	326,121	6.1	1,351,921	6.3
10-14 years	9	4.3	327,939	6.1	1,371,054	6.4
15-19 years	5	2.4	345,339	6.5	1,405,798	6.5
20-24 years	8	3.8	375,108	7.0	1,460,673	6.8
25-29 years	4	1.9	388,669	7.3	1,513,236	7.0
30-34 years	11	5.3	372,214	7.0	1,453,775	6.8
35-39 years	15	7.2	383,415	7.2	1,520,138	7.1
40-44 years	16	7.7	391,197	7.3	1,542,879	7.2
45-49 years	12	5.7	372,367	7.0	1,504,142	7.0
50-54 years	16	7.7	354,110	6.6	1,447,404	6.7
55-59 years	17	8.1	317,438	5.9	1,297,244	6.0
60-64 years	25	12.0	293,812	5.5	1,206,116	5.6
65-69 years	8	3.8	224,911	4.2	919,319	4.3
70-74 years	15	7.2	177,316	3.3	708,090	3.3
75-79 years	8	3.8	140,338	2.6	545,263	2.5
80-84 years	12	5.7	114,020	2.1	436,936	2.0
85 years and over	3	1.4	104,995	2.0	402,681	1.9
Median age	51	--	37	--	37	--

The median age of people in Walkerville (Vic.) (State Suburbs) was 51 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 16.3% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 23.0% of the population.

In the 2011 Census, there were 197 people in Sandy Point (L) (Urban Centres and Localities) of these 50.8% were male and 49.2% were female. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 0.0% of the population.

Age	Sandy Point (L)		Victoria		Australia	
People		%		%		%
0-4 years	15	7.6	344,733	6.4	1,421,050	6.6
5-9 years	6	3.0	326,121	6.1	1,351,921	6.3
10-14 years	10	5.1	327,939	6.1	1,371,054	6.4
15-19 years	13	6.6	345,339	6.5	1,405,798	6.5
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45-49 years	15	7.6	372,367	7.0	1,504,142	7.0
50-54 years	10	5.1	354,110	6.6	1,447,404	6.7
55-59 years	13	6.6	317,438	5.9	1,297,244	6.0
60-64 years	14	7.1	293,812	5.5	1,206,116	5.6
65-69 years	21	10.7	224,911	4.2	919,319	4.3
70-74 years	18	9.1	177,316	3.3	708,090	3.3
75-79 years	11	5.6	140,338	2.6	545,263	2.5
80-84 years	9	4.6	114,020	2.1	436,936	2.0
85 years and over	4	2.0	104,995	2.0	402,681	1.9
Median age	54	--	37	--	37	--

The median age of people in Sandy Point (L) (Urban Centres and Localities) was 54 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 15.3% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 29.6% of the population.

Appendix 4 Government Direction

The Department of Education and Training has developed the *Early Years Strategic Plan Improving outcomes for all Victorian children 2014-2020* that aim to improve outcomes and better support all Victorian children with a focus across three areas:

- A. Supporting parents and communities to give children a great start
- B. Early and sustained support for those who need it most
- C. All children benefiting from high-quality early learning.

Victoria has signed a *National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education* with the following aims:

- maintain universal access to a quality early childhood education program for all eligible children in the year prior to formal schooling for 600 hours
- deliver the kindergarten program by a qualified early childhood teacher who meets National Quality Framework requirements
- offer a program that meets the needs of children, parents and communities and ensures that cost is not a barrier to participation
- focus on participation by vulnerable and disadvantaged children, regardless of the setting in which programmes are delivered
- ongoing commitment to ensure that every Indigenous four year old in a remote community has access to a quality early childhood education programme.

The Victorian Government funds 10 hours of kindergarten per week with the Commonwealth Government funding the remaining 5 hours per week.

Kindergarten services are required to:

1. Work towards achieving high-quality in all seven quality areas defined in the National Quality Standard (NQS): Educational program and practice
 2. Children's health and safety
 3. Physical environment
 4. Staffing arrangements
 5. Relationships with children
 6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
 7. Leadership and service management
- Implement the practice principles of an approved learning framework, such as the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, which describe the most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together with children and families to facilitate learning and development, consistent with framework outcomes.

Link to National Quality Framework:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqf.aspx>

