

9.5 Lennox Head Cultural and Community Centre - Playgroup

Mr Paul Hickey
General Manager
Ballina Shire Council
PO Box 450
Ballina NSW 2478



Lennox Head Playgroup
PO Box 112
Lennox Head NSW 2478

30 September 2011

Dear Paul,

On behalf of the Lennox Head Playgroup we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ballina Shire Council (BSC) for developing the new Lennox Head Community & Cultural Centre (LHCCC) for the residents of Lennox Head & surrounding areas.

From the Playgroup's perspective, it is wonderful to be back in the Lennox Head village after being temporarily displaced to other venues whilst the LHCCC was being built. We are enjoying the new facilities & the support from the LHCCC Staff. We would love to commit to a long term home at the LHCC but we need to address a couple of issues before we can.

Firstly when the consultation process begun regarding the new LHCCC, we reiterated in our correspondence dated 3 August 2007 (please see attached) that the outdoor area for the children's area needed to be increased. However the outdoor fenced area was not increased. We raised our concerns again with the Manager of the LHCCC, Jordan Robinson, before we started to use the facility & he appreciated that the outdoor area was quite small. However we agreed that we would commence using the children's area "to see how it would go".

So in good faith, we started to use the children's area at the start of Term 3 to hold our Playgroup sessions. As we expected, the number of families attending our playgroup sessions has increased due to the move to the LHCCC which has been fantastic, however this has meant the limited area outside is now starting to become a safety issue for the committee & parents of the children. Therefore we are now more than ever concerned about the lack of outdoor fenced area. We appreciate that the Ballina Shire Council has limited funds to make capital changes to the LHCCC. Fortunately the Lennox Head Playgroup committee made a strategic decision a few years ago to fundraise in anticipation of the move into the new LHCCC. The Committee would like to contribute financially towards the cost of extending the current outdoor fenced area as we would like to make the LHCCC our Playgroup "home" for many years to come. Therefore we are requesting that BSC explore the possibility of extending the external fence of the Children's area.

Although we have some money set aside for the move to the LHCCC, we would like to discuss a reduced rate for the rent or an alternative method of rent for the children's area going forward. The ongoing viability of the Playgroup is at risk due to the current rental fees structure. Based upon the current hourly rent being charged for each session, our playgroup session fees are just covering the rent. We would like to increase our members per session but as mentioned above, we currently cannot do this due to insufficient outdoor area. Therefore our hands are effectively tied, as the only way we can continue playgroup to increase our session fees significantly. Therefore we are asking if the Council could donate towards the cost of the rent, as historically the council donated the use of the old hall to the Playgroup for all our sessions (rent free). As a committee we try to keep our session fees & costs to a minimum as Playgroup is a place for parents/ guardians & children to meet & play. Lennox Playgroup has been running for over 30 years & we are hoping to continue to provide this service for many more years to come.

Therefore in summary we are requesting your approval for the following:

1. Extend the Children's Area Exterior fencing of the LHCCC
2. Make a donation towards the rent of the LHCCC on behalf of the Lennox Head Playgroup.

If you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to call me on 6687 5360.

Yours Sincerely

Debbie Watts
President Lennox Head Playgroup