

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

Dear Paul.

We write to express our interest in hiring the Wollongbar Community Hall on an ongoing basis from January 2014. We would like to use the hall as a temporary facility for the Alstonville Community Preschool while a permanent site is being developed at Crawford Park. With a lack of other suitable venues within Alstonville or it's surrounds 75 families will be without a preschool service if a venue is not found. For this use we would require use of the hall from Monday through to Friday between the hours of 8am till 4pm during school term times only. The following dates serve as a guide for proposed use:

	2014	2015				
Term 1	Tuesday, 28 January to Friday, 11 April	Tuesday, 27 January to Thursday, 02 April				
Term 2	Monday, 28 April to Friday, 27 June	Monday, 20 April to Friday, 26 June				
Term 3	Monday, 14 July to Friday, 19 September	Monday, 13 July to Friday, 18 September				
Term 4	Tuesday, 07 October to Friday, 19 December	Tuesday, 06 October to Friday, 18 December				

In line with Department of Education and Communities Legislative requirements as well as the use of the main hall we would need the use of an office space during times of operation to allow for confidential discussions with parents and administrative work. We would also require access to two of the storage rooms to each side of the main hall. So as to ensure the safety of children we would be required to barricade the stage and/or the stairs on each side leading to the stage. We would also need to have telecommunications (ie phone and fax line) installed and would be happy to pay for this. No other amendments would need to be made at this stage.

In terms of the outdoor area of the hall the size and upkeep of the premises provides an excellent basis in line with the legislative requirements we would need to adhere to. There are a few areas that we would be required to address according to NSW Department of Education Assessment and Compliance which are as follows:

 The side perimeter fencing would need to be replaced to meet regulations as there are divisions that could be used as footholds.





There would need to be moveable children's play equipment and a Cubby House in the outdoor
play area as well as a sandpit/ digging patch and a shed to the left of the outdoor area to store
outdoor play equipment in.

ACP would be happy to make these amendments and meet the cost incurred.

As the facility would be used as an education and care facility we would also need to restrict the times of access to the community garden to outside of operational hours. We are however excited by the environmental and sustainable education opportunities the community garden presents and would hope down the line to perhaps co-ordinate more structured involvement of the community.

From a licencing perspective Alstonville Community Preschool Inc. would need a letter of confirmation that we would have a right to occupy the premises for the proposed times and dates. We would propose initially a two year agreement, in anticipation of the development for the new site taking some time to complete.

ACP has recently applied for capital funds for this project from both the Community Building Partnerships Grant and the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) Capital Projects Grant. If successful ACP will be advised of these grants in December 2013 and would anticipate completion of the project by March 2015.

ACP has made every effort to communicate and work collaboratively with the neighbouring Wollongbar Community Preschool in our suggested use of the community hall. On the 5th February 2013, when we first investigated the possibility for use, we met with the Wollongbar Preschool Committee to discuss the proposal. We were then made aware of Wollongbar Community Preschools intention to oppose our use of the public facility by a Family and Community Services representative. From that time we have done everything we can to source another venue to alleviate any community conflict. In May 2013 we again approached Wollongbar Preschool Committee with a proposal to operate just 3 days a week from the Wollongbar Hall and 2 days a week from another venue (Appendix 1). Again the proposal was met with opposition.

While we are aware and recognise the preschools concerns regarding traffic management, parking, noise, management of the adjoining fence and enrolments we do feel that all of these areas are workable and can be resolved successfully for both parties with collaborative consultation. Possible solutions we could implement are as follows:

Traffic Management and Parking

- All teachers to park offsite to alleviate the number of cars accessing the surrounds. Car pooling could be encouraged providing environmentally sustainable transport.
- ACP could operate on extended hours from 8.30 3.30 or 4.00pm, so that there was very little
 overlap of vehicles at drop off and pick up times.
- The 5 car parking spaces directly in front of the hall could be utilised for 5 minute 'drop off' and
 'pick up' points for parents only.
- All other parents of Alstonville Community Preschool to park on the street in the existing car
 parking spaces toward Wollongbar Primary School and utilise the footpath access to the Hall which
 is at a distance less than or equal to the existing preschool access.





- Recent traffic surveys conducted by ACP (Appendix 2) indicate that there are plenty of spaces
 available in these areas during peak times of preschool operation and prior to the traffic from the
 primary school arriving.
- Alstonville Community Preschool would conduct a regular Road Safety Program with children and
 parents and parking and access expectations for the service would be clearly communicated at
 orientation and in our enrolment and policy information.

Noise and the Adjoining Fence

A simple brushwood fence or similar, could be fixed to the Community Hall side of this fence to
block noise and vision of the adjoining preschool yard. A collaborative approach to programming in
utilising the outdoor space at different times of the day could ensure that and noise and
supervision were addressed.

Enrolments

Alstonville Community Preschool, while operating out of area temporarily, would of course
prioritise enrolments from the Alstonville and surrounding areas. We would not wish to encroach
on enrolments that would naturally fall to Wollongbar Preschool and would be keen to have a
memorandum of understanding around this. As our longer term mission is to develop a permanent
site for the preschool in Alstonville it is important that preschoolers from the area are prioritised.

We would hope that we could work collaboratively with the Director and the Management Committee of Wollongbar Community Preschool as well as Ballina Shire Council in addressing these areas.

In the recent DEC Expression of Interest for their Capital Funding Program the eligibility criteria for application stipulated that applicants must be 'Centre Based' in order to apply for funding – meaning we are only able to operate from one location. Therefore the idea of operating from a split location is now not possible – hence our application to occupy the premises temporarily for 5 days. (Appendix 3).

While our anticipated start date would be January 2014 we would request approval for this agreement as soon as possible. Once approval has been granted to lease/hire the premises Alstonville Community Preschool Inc need to apply for a Service Approval Licence for the premises. The processing time for Licence Approvals is 3 months from submission to approval. It is not until the licence is approved that a transfer of funding can be sought from the DEC and transition negotiated with the current preschool provision. A Transfer of Service Agreement will need to be signed by both providers and submitted to DEC by the 5th November in order to transfer the funding. The Transfer Agreement is provisionally based on an approved licenced facility. In anticipation of these factors we appreciate your timely consideration on this matter. We understand that this matter will go to a meeting of council for councillors to vote and would request a deputation at that meeting if appropriate.

Thank you and Kind Regards,

Katherine Buckley President





APPENDIX 1 - Letter to Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee

27th May 2013

To Members of the Wollongbar Preschool Committee,

We write regarding our request to reconsider our proposal to hire the Wollongbar Hall public facility for 3 days a week. In an effort to provide more information we felt it best we write to update you as to the most recent advice received from the Department of Education regarding the situation facing our preschool communities.

As your committee will be aware the current Alstonville Baptist Community Preschool will close in December this year. Having given 18 months notice of their intention to close the Baptist Preschool this week signed their new DEC funding agreement again providing formal notification of their intention to close in December. The DEC Director of Funding Sarah Morgan also confirmed this week that the <u>only way</u> in which a transfer of the operational funding is possible is if there is 'mutual agreement' between the Alstonville Baptist Fellowship (ABF) and Alstonville Community Preschool (ACP). The funding must transfer from the existing provider (ABF) to a new provider (ACP) prior to the termination of the agreement and that that transfer MUST occur <u>on the existing site/ facility of the preschool</u>.

The transfer must happen on the same site for the operational funding to remain in Alstonville according to DEC guidelines. This means the Baptist Church agreeing to transfer the operational funding and the service to ACP with a rental arrangement on the current facility. Sarah Morgan, has also clarified that there is no set time period in which the transfer need happen as long as it is on the same site and prior to the termination of the Alstonville Baptist Community Preschool contract.

ACP have discussed this possibility with the Baptist Fellowship previously and while they have refused to rent the current facility they have always stated verbally that they would be happy to transfer funding and discuss equipment, resources and staff once we have a licenced facility. Therefore ACP feel that the best chance that we have of the Baptist Fellowship agreeing to transfer the operational funding on their site is if we have somewhere to go immediately after.

With this in mind we are now revisiting all possible venues. Wollongbar TAFE has a space that would meet regulations available 2 days - Thursday and Friday. The only other possible venue that would meet compliance and is available is Wollongbar Hall - hence our request for your committee to reconsider our proposal. We would envisage a 3 day hire on the hall starting from September 2013 or January 2014 depending on the speed at which the venues can be licenced and the funding transferred.

ACP has been invited to apply for the DEC Early Childhood Capital Funding Program available in July of this year and intend on making an application for Crawford Park. While we anticipate that a new build may not meet the guidelines for funding we are prepared to be flexible with this and will look at cheaper and easier alternatives ie moving an existing building or a demountable onto the site. Our aim is for the unmet need of Alstonville families to be fulfilled by a local preschool and so then envisage our stay in Wollongbar to be only temporary.





The closure of Alstonville Baptist Preschool without a transfer of funding will have dramatic implications for families in both our towns. Preschool provision for 3-4 year olds may well become non existent. The only way in which we can retain the operational funding in our area is to transfer the funding. In order to transfer the funding we need a licenced facility that meets requirements and availability. Wollongbar Hall is our last chance at securing an immediately available site and therefore the transfer of funding.

While we recognise that there may be some issues with respect to parking we would hope that with some consultation and co-operation workable solutions could be found. With the implications for our young families now imminent and DEC being completely inflexible in their guidelines and regulations we would hope that we could work as a community to find a solution to this problem. The preschool futures of 30 children a day, 6 early childhood staff and many, many families who will struggle to obtain early childhood education in both our areas hang in the balance. We have exhausted all other opportunities. Wollongbar Hall is our last possible hope at retaining a provision in the immediate future and we implore your committee to please think on the broader consequences for the community if this does not go ahead.

We appreciate both your time and consideration in this matter and are more than happy to answer any questions you or your parents may have.

Thank you and Kind Regards,

Katherine Buckley

KER weley

On Behalf of Alstonville Community Preschool Inc.





<u>APPENDIX 2 – Traffic Survey</u>

Estimated Maximum Parking Capacity

Side Parking Hall Ct15Parking in Front of Hall5Street Parking Simpson Av13

At least 4 cars daily are Wollongbar Preschool teachers

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						1in		3 out	
					3.10pm		9	3	3
						5in		3 out	
					3.15pm		8	3	6
						1 in		1 out	
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10.3 <u>Temporary Occupation - Wollongbar Community Hall.DOC</u>



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APPENDIX 3 – Department of Education and Communities Capital Grant Program Eligibility Criteria See 3.1 (c)

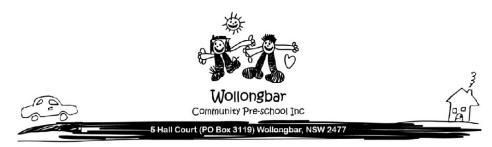
Expression of Interest Part A - Overview

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - PART A - OVERVIEW

Background On 21 March 2013 the Minister for Education announced a \$5 million investment in capital works projects to support the creation of new preschool piaces. This initiative will be targeted to areas of regional and rural NSW where data show that that the level of need is high and where construction of additional preschool infrastructure would be an effective. 1.1 Funding for this project will be prioritised to services in those areas identified as suitably regional or remote where there is also an undersupply of preschool spaces. A list of eligible areas is included within Part D – Statement of Requirements. Interested eligible services will submit an Expression of Interest using a template downloaded from the Department's website. Services will initially need to satisfy the eligibility criteria prior to being invited to submit an application for funding. Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding contract with the Department. 2 Objectives The aim of this request for Expressions of Interest (EOI) is to: Invite responses from eligible not-for-profit community based preschool providers which have the capability and interest to undertake the construction of additional physical preschool infrastructure works; and Advise of the selection orderia which will be utilised to shortlist providers which may then be selectively invited to submit a detailed grant application for specific works. 2.1.2 Eligibility Services in eligible areas must meet the following mandatory ofteria: Compilance with the requirements of the Early Childhood Education and Care National regulations, including Provider Approval b) Community based, not for-profit preschool service c) Centre-based service Scope of EOI 4.1 Requirements A detailed description of the Requirements is described in the Statement of Requirements (EOI, Part D). NSW Government Requirements The successful Respondent must comply with the codes, guidelines, and Standards listed in the NSW Government Code of Practice for Procurement. 5 EOI Structure 5.1 Interpretation 5.1.1 Definitions of terms used in Parts A to D are contained in clause 1 of Part B. This EOI comprises 4 Parts as follows: Overview - Part A



10.3 <u>Temporary Occupation - Wollongbar Community Hall.DOC</u>



Submission to Ballina Shire Council Meeting 22nd August 2013

Re: the proposal by Alstonville Preschool to relocate on a temporary basis to Wollongbar Community Hall, Hall Court, Wollongbar NSW 2477

Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee acknowledges Alstonville Community Preschool and their concerns to remain a viable early childhood education and care service. With due respect to Alstonville Community Preschool and the endeavours they have undertaken to ensure the viability of their own service; the proposal to temporarily lease Wollongbar Community Hall, in the Wollongbar Area and away from their original client base in Alstonville, requires deliberation. The Wollongbar Community Preschool management committee has prepared the following statement for consideration by Ballina Shire Councillors and Ballina Shire Council Officers.

Wollongbar Community Preschool background:

Wollongbar Community Preschool has been operating in Wollongbar for over 25 years, first operating as a part-time preschool from Wollongbar Community Hall and after fundraising built the current preschool which was opened in 1991.

Wollongbar Community Preschool is a state funded preschool and provides not for profit, early childhood education for 3-5 year olds. A volunteer management committee, made up of parents and local community members, provide the management and governance structure for the preschool. They are also known as approved service providers and have legal responsibility to ensure the preschool operates within the Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 No 104 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations under the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2013 under the Education and Care Services National Law. The preschool is operated on a small business model.



Wollongbar Community Preschool Operational Information:

The preschool is licensed for 29 children per day, 5 days per week and employs more than ten staff members. We currently have 70 children enrolled at the preschool.

Wollongbar Community preschool operates for 40 weeks a year, in alignment with NSW public school term times, and is licensed to operate from 8.30-3.30 every day. From 8.30-9.00 and 3.00-3.30 are considered extended hours and currently 20 families use these hours every week, and approximately 40 families have used this option over the preschool year thus far.

We currently have families from 15 SEIFA (socio-economic index for areas) suburbs represented at the preschool, Wollongbar, Alstonville and the surrounding areas.

This operational information forms the basis of the Wollongbar Community Preschool's service approval to operate and is non-negotiable due to legal operational requirements.

Car parking and access to Hall Court

Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee on behalf of the preschool community opposes the relocation of the Alstonville preschool to Wollongbar Community Hall on the basis of safety, health and wellbeing of the children and families commuting to and attending the additional early childhood service.

The lack of car park, public footpath and inadequate access road, does not meet the requirements of Roads and Maritime Services and Ballina Shires Developmental Control Plan 2012, which state there should be one allocated car park for every four children attending the service. The Management Committee holds concerns about safety for existing families and children without 29 other families accessing another service in the vicinity.

The preschool has set in measures to alleviate traffic, an informal arrangement with residents of Hall Court to not park in the tarmacked area at the top of Hall court after 8.30am and before 3.30pm.

The staff currently park from the top unit's driveway down, until where the grassed area dramatically slopes and cars become bogged in wet weather. Two staff members are regularly forced to park in front of the hall in their parking area, or during days of high visitor numbers to the service, in Simpson Ave.



Many families choose to come before 9.00am or 3.00pm or come as late as 9.30am to avoid traffic congestion.

There are concerns regarding the Alstonville Preschool's proposal to move traffic to the Wollongbar Streets of Rubiton and/or Robindale and walk to access the relocated Alstonville Preschool service. These suggestions for parking cannot be policed or enforced.

The fact that all families will need to drive to the service from surroundings suburbs will only further increase traffic issues in the surrounding streets. Wet and rainy days will mean that traffic is likely to increase for existing services. By the nature of families to care for their children; they will elect not to walk across parks and ovals in the rain, preferring to drive. Extra vehicles in the vicinity will cause chaos and it is highly likely accidents will occur.

Young children by their very nature are:

- smaller and harder to see
- less predictable than other pedestrians
- unable to identify places to cross the road
- tend to act inconsistently around traffic
- are easily distracted and focus on only one aspect of what is happening
- · cannot accurately judge the speed and distance of moving vehicles
- cannot accurately predict the direction sounds are coming from
- are unable to cope with sudden changes in traffic directions

As a result, of our concern around car park and traffic issues, Wollongbar Community Preschool's Management Committee has written a policy about road safety and endorsed an action plan.

Jodie Hewitt, Roads and Traffic Officer, has visited the site and has written a report for her Manager.

The preschool management committee has surveyed families about the car park and access to the service and has plans to work with Jodie Hewitt and Wollongbar Public School to investigate traffic and parking arrangements.



The management committee plans to work with Ballina Shire Council, Ballina Shire Councillors and the Roads and Traffic Officer towards a solution around traffic management in the short term.

The Management Committee will write a submission around scheduling of funds to complete the \$50,000 car park development at the preschool; for consideration in Ballina Shire future budget plans.

Even if temporary, to increase traffic and pedestrians in this area would be unsafe and families and children will be placed at risk.

Service Liaison

The Wollongbar Community Preschool management committee is aware of a letter to the Alstonville Community Preschool from Ballina Shire Council in June 2013, where they were instructed to communicate with Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee. The preschool management committee has had no contact with the Alstonville Committee over their proposals to relocate to the Wollongbar Community Hall venue. Due to this fact, Wollongbar preschool contacted Community Connections Solutions Association (CCSA) and spoke with the operations manager John Gunn on 23rd July 2013. John Gunn has agreed to facilitate any meeting to be held between the two management committees. Ms Buckley was duly contacted; and a meeting date was rejected due to the pursuit of other possible venues in Alstonville.

Therefore, should the Council seek to give approval for the Alstonville preschool to operate in temporary accommodation at Wollongbar Community hall, that part of the condition to access, is that both parties need to work together and that a formal memorandum of understanding be drawn up between the two services.

Changes to State Government funding and provision of preschool places

From January 2014, preschool places in community based preschools will only be funded for children in the year before school; that is children who turn 4 or 5 before the 31^{st} July of that year. 3 year olds will only be funded if they are disadvantaged; that is children who are Aboriginal or whose family hold a health care card.

This is a change to preschool funding and operations. Currently we are expected to prioritise children who are in the year before school. The 3 year old intake usually supports the enrolment and financial yiability of the preschool for the following year.

02 6628 3800 WWW.wollongbarpreschool.com.au

02 6628 3232

wollps@bigpond.com

Currently 75% of Wollongbar Preschool's children are in the year before school category.

The National Quality Framework and Regulations state that a preschool program must be offered at every early childhood and care facility and that this program must be overseen by an Early Childhood Teacher. This includes preschools and Long day care services (LDC). The State Government will direct its funding support to long day care services from January 2014 at employing teachers to oversee this program. Currently these services offer a preschool program which also target the same age demographic from the same geographical locations as Wollongbar Preschool's current enrolments:

A preschool program is operated from all of these local services:

- Nestle Inn Alstonville (LDC)
- Possum Place Alstonville (LDC)
- Little Angel's Wollongbar (LDC)
- Nestle Inn Goonellbah (LDC)
- Bright Horizons Tintenbar (LDC)
- Good Start Goonellabah (LDC)
- Richmond Hill Preschool
- Goonellabah Preschool
- Blue Hills pre-kindy will run a full year pre-kindy program from the beginning of 2014
- Summerland Christian College building a purpose built pre-kindy
- St Joseph's Catholic School proposal to offer a preschool program from school premises
- The new Aboriginal child and family centre yet to open at Porter Park. (LDC)
- The council is proposing a child care facility at the old drive in site in Wollongbar. (LDC??)

There are many places within the shire and the adjacent shire that can offer preschool places to families with children in their year before school. The changes to funding in 2014 will affect the viability of the preschool in future years with the many options available to families locally.

Therefore, consideration must be given to any decision to sanction, a community based preschool such as Alstonville Preschool, to operate in an adjacent building to an existing service, such as Wollongbar Community Preschool without any date for removal or plans of recourse should Alstonville Preschool's other relocation plans fail.

Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee question the viability of two separate community based services, who will be seeking enrolments from the same geographical locations and



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demographic being able to operate independently side by side, regardless of the intentions for Alstonville Preschool to relocate to Crawford Park.

Consequently, should Council seek to give temporary approval to the Alstonville Preschool to lease Wollongbar Community Hall; Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee seeks assurances from Council that parameters for a temporary lease are set and up-held.

Conclusion:

Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee wishes the Alstonville Community Preschool well in finding accommodation for its service. Due thought and consideration must be given to Wollongbar Community Preschool Inc, the current established early childhood education and care service that has been operating in the adjacent building to the community hall for 22 years as well as the impact Alstonville Community Preschool temporary relocation will have on Wollongbar Preschool and its ability service to the Wollongbar Community.

Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee

13th August 2013.



Attachment:

Wollongbar Community Preschool Development Application and Strategic Planning:

Wollongbar Community Preschool holds an approved development application DA 2011/191. The development application is concerned with alterations and additions to the preschool building. The project manager for the build is Peter Turner, of Peter Turner Building Designs, Ballina. In March 2013, the preschool received \$20,000 from the Community Building Partnership Program to ensure equitable access to the preschool building. Alterations to the entrance will be completed by the end of February 2014. The total cost for this part of the DA is \$30,000.

The preschool has put in an expression of interest for the NSW Preschool capital building grant. This is to complete the next stage of the DA, a closed play space, staff room and storage. The expression of interest concerns growing places. The preschool application states that upon completion of the extension we could offer a further 10 preschool places.

Information about the ability to apply for the grant should be available by the 22nd August 2013 and any information will be made available to council at the earliest opportunity.

Should Wollongbar Community preschool be invited to make an application, we would be asking for a State Government contribution of approximately half the cost of the build, approximately \$85,000, with other funds being provided by the preschool.

The Management committee at a meeting March 2013 proposed that the preschool should look to auspice a playgroup to operate two hours, twice per week, from 10.00am until 12.00pm. The play group was to support families and link families to services in the area, through the means of accessing qualified early childhood educators. The preschool is currently in correspondence with playgroups NSW with reference to funding and is applying for grants for equipment. The location of choice was Wollongbar Community Hall.

Wollongbar Community Preschool Management Committee will be seeking a development application to replace the signage on Simpson Ave, to ensure the on-going viability and visibility of the service.



10.3 <u>Temporary Occupation - Wollongbar Community Hall.DOC</u>

