

Primary Schools for the Twenty First Century

Submission from

Coogee Care Centre Management Committee

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Submitted to:-Committee Secretary Senate

Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee

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About the submission writers?

Coogee Care Centre Management Committee representing the family members of the service. There are currently 263 members of Coogee Care Centre, which is about 62.5% of the Coogee Public School population.

About the organisation

Coogee Care Centre is an incorporated, not-for-profit community based organisation. The organisation has been in existence for **24 years** providing care and play opportunities for children of primary school age Before/after School and during the school holidays.

Location & facilities

The centre is located in the grounds of Coogee Public School and operates in a lovingly restored enclosed weather shed. The children and families feel very attached to this facility and have spent a significant amount of funds (\$38,000) upgrading the premises including recently installing a new kitchen, air conditioning, and bubblers. The school recently installed a new COLA immediately outside the centre and we were about to create a garden/play environment in the immediate area surrounding the centre.

This building is now about to be **demolished** as part of this funding and it incongruous that a job stimulus package could affect working families and their capacity to work.

Approved by the Federal Government

CCC is an approved service by Federal Government who has provided this funding to Department of Education & training NSW for facilities in schools. We strongly believe that there should have a stipulation within the guidelines to ensure that childcare services were not affected by this funding and adequate funding provided to compensate services with new facilities (according to the National Standards) & loss of assets and relocation cost

The 263 family users demonstrate the value place on the service within the school community and whilst separate entity from school CCC has become the "**community hub**" the funding guidelines talk about creating. It is an integral part of the school community

Many parents have chosen the school based on the excellent reputation of Coogee Care Centre and the high quality service it provides. The service like the school continues to grow and there is an ever-increasing demand from new kindergarten parents.

Meeting the needs of CHILDREN

Onsite before/after school facilities we believe retain students in public education and have an enormous benefit on the social capital of the community. During a term time children can spend up to 20 hour per week at the service, which is nearly as much time as they spend at school. And during school holiday's children can spend even longer with some children spending up to 50 hours per week. This is a significant amount of time and requires

adequate facilities allowing for quality programmers, which fosters children's individual growth & development. The centre is has become very much the community playspace for this generation of children and provides huge benefits including connections to their community, a safe place to play, a place to be with friends.

The service is also vital to working parents and gives them peace of mind knowing that their children are well cared for whilst at work.

The centre is CCB approved and participates in the quality assurance system where is has proudly gained high quality in all areas.

The Management Committee believes that this community effort and hard work is now under threat due to the BER funding. It is hugely concerning that the centre will be demolished without adequate consultation, planning or future consideration of needs of the centre and an inadequate building put in it place. The new building will not meet National Standards for Out of School Hours care and does not provide for the needs of families

Appearing before a hearing.

Yes representatives form the committee would be happy to do so.

Submission purpose

To highlight the experience of CCC in relation to this funding in hope that we might be able to gain a better outcome for the families at CCC.

CCC welcomes the government's initiative to invest in public schools providing much needed facilities however; this cannot be achieved successfully without adequate planning & consultation. The one size fits all models do not work out on space-deprived sites that are complex site and with historic significance.

The submission will make reference to:

(i) The conditions and criteria for project funding,

In NSW the use of templates buildings does not take into consideration sites that are difficult and historic. CPS is a growing school with an issue of overcrowding which means that outdoor space and indoor space are currently at a premium. The community is already concerned about the lack of play space. There has been NO proper site assessment to ensure that this development considers the future needs and growing population of the school.

This lack of forward thinking will not benefit the school community in the long term. A template design restricts the right outcome for the school and could lead to a potential whit elephant being developed.

The proposed school hall development has implications for Coogee care centre, which has been situated in a school building for the past 24 years. CCC is about to have its building demolished and a inadequate space being proposed which is not taking into consideration the purpose and needs of its

users.

(ii) The use of local and non-local contractors,

(iii) The role of state governments

(iv) Timing and budget issues, including duplication,

Timing

CPS community welcomes the funding and the community has talked for many years about a potential school hall however, the timing is unrealistic for consultation, adequate planning and realistic decision-making, School principals have limited knowledge and experience in this area however, they are making decisions about locations, buildings and future planning without adequate community consultation.

The CCC committee recently hosted a public meeting to discuss the issue for the parent community and there was overwhelming community support to consider another site location within the school community.

Recommendation

We implore the government to fully investigate an alternative site so that Coogee Care Centre can be retained providing an essential service to the school community

Budget

The Coogee Public School project is already over budget for a facility that will not meet the needs of current student populations or future student populations,

Coogee Care Centre has a estimate relocation and other expenses budget of \$220,00 – this includes relocation cost X2, off site storage, building works to temporary venue not included in budget, loss of potential income and staff salaries loss plus loss of significant assets.

At the recent public meeting it was explained to the school community that the current school hall was 127 square meters and the new school hall was 247 square meters a gain of 120 square meters of indoor space meaning that each additional square meters cost \$25, 833.333

Duplication

Coogee Public School does have a school hall, which is currently unable to accommodate the whole student population. It will end up with yet another school hall unable to accommodate the whole student population. How is this good use of government funds?

There is a nearby public school (Maroubra Junction Public School) that managed to build a school hall combined with an excellent before and after school care facility attached to the school hall. This is forward thinking.

Recommendation

Coogee Care centre should at least end up with the same facility as Maroubra Junction Public School

Unique environment – Coogee Public School is currently on a sloping site combined with limited space. The CCC members who represent 62.5% of the school families believe that CCC should be retained and a recent survey demonstrated that 97% of families did not want the centre to be demolished. I have also attached this survey as an appendix to this document.

The users of the space

The facilities required

The location

(v) Requirements for school signs and plaques,

The CCC Committee believes this to be a waste of money, time and resources.

(vi) The management of the program;

We believe that the overall management of this programme restricts proper consultation and planning. The use of large contracting company restricts the use of local builder and architect who are familiar with the community.

(b) Other related matters.

Prior to the public meeting the CCC committee also did an online survey Number of responses: 97. This is very high response rate considering the survey was sent without notice and only open for less than 24 hours. The survey sample size is likely to produce highly accurate results

Greater than 75%

- Disagree with the demolition of the existing CCC facilities
- Believe consultation on the project has not been adequate.
- Believe that CCC users should have a say in the location of the new hall

To sum up as one parent stated at the meeting.....

“The BER is intended primarily as an economic stimulus package. But if it does not meet the long term needs of the school, if it compromises the space and quality of facilities offered in before & after school care and if it is implemented with insufficient consultation with the community, then surely the third option is to reject the funding altogether and publicise the fact that the actual needs of the children are secondary to a self-serving government and bureaucratic quick fix.”

Parent at Public meeting - Coogee Public school
27.10.09