



general
purpose
committee

3
section

organisation
and
resources

GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE - ORGANISATION & RESOURCES

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ITEM: 60 Windsor Pre-School - Request for Funding**FILE NUMBER:** GP060/002 PT3/CSV/OGF25LBX.C10

REPORT:

The Management Committee of Windsor Pre-School Association Incorporated has made representation to Council seeking financial assistance to replace its current natural soft fall playground surface with a more suitable alternative.

The Committee has researched available options to satisfy its obligations of occupational health and safety for playground surfaces and to provide a cost effective pre-school service. The Committee concluded that the current natural soft fall surface is inadequate as it requires constant maintenance from current staff, it costs approximately \$4,000.00 (four thousand dollars) per year to maintain the current soft fall. The current soft fall is contained by a small barrier of logs that creates a tripping hazard to children.

A number of quotes have been obtained by the Windsor Pre-School Association and they have recommended that a combination of synthetic grass and rubber be provided. This combination includes synthetic grass with rubber provided at entry and exit points and the rubber to be provided for the high impact areas. The cost of this option from quotes received is approximately \$17,000.00 (seventeen thousand dollars).

Each of the alternatives examined by Windsor Pre-School Association has a high initial cost but provides a more permanent surface and reduces the high ongoing maintenance of the current soft fall on an annual basis. The Pre-School is concerned in regard to the initial outlay for installation and is investigating financial options through proposed loans, grants or alternative financial arrangements.

Like most childrens' services that operate from Council facilities, Windsor Pre-School is faced with the problem of responding to licencing and regulatory requirements imposed on them by funding bodies, in an environment where their revenues have been put under pressure by changes to child care funding arrangements.

Council staff work with community based organisations to complete capital and maintenance works to the buildings from which these services operate. In 2001/2002 Council allocated over \$30,000.00 (thirty thousand dollars) to fund improvements to the Windsor Pre-School (including installation of air conditioning, ceiling installation and drainage works). These works were programmed into Council's Building Maintenance and Improvement Program. While Council staff can work with Committees to address child care licencing requirements by seeking funding from the Government it would not be prudent for Council to accept a direct responsibility for financing such improvements as this would create an expectation that Council would meet all costs associated with licencing provisions.

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Whilst it would not be prudent to provide a loan, alternative financing arrangements may be possible by utilising funds set aside within the Windsor Pre-School organisation for employee leave entitlements. In recent times Council has had requests for financial assistance from both the Hobartville Child Care Centre and the North Richmond Child Care Centre. These financial difficulties however were due to a change in the demographics of each area respectively. In the case of North Richmond Child Care Centre Council agreed to provide an assurance to the Management Committee that it would underwrite the payment of employee leave entitlements should the Centre cease to operate.

Under the current circumstances, it would seem reasonable for Council to underwrite the use of approximately \$17,000.00 (seventeen thousand dollars) of their employee leave entitlements held by way of interest bearing deposit for the purposes of providing replacement soft fall as investigated by the Committee. As at 20 May 2002 the Committee held in excess of \$58,720.00 (fifty eight thousand seven hundred and twenty dollars) for existing employee leave entitlements. It is recommended that Council underwrite the payment of employee leave entitlements so that the Centre can purchase the proposed soft fall in the immediate future. The proposal for underwriting of these employee leave entitlements would expire four years from the date of purchase.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council agree to provide an assurance to the Management Committee of Windsor Pre-School Child Care Centre that it will underwrite the payment of employee leave entitlements should the Centre fail to meet these financial requirements during the next four years.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

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