

## Resolution of Council

**14 December 2020**

### **Item 12.3**

#### **Juanita Nielsen Childcare Centre, Woolloomooloo**

Moved by Councillor Phelps, seconded by Councillor Scott –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the City of Sydney offers six after school and vacation care programs for primary school aged children in the local area, as part of the City's Outside School Hours Care services, supported by the NSW Government's Before and After School Care commitment;
- (ii) the City of Sydney currently offers an after school and vacation care program for primary school aged children at Juanita Nielsen Community Centre in Woolloomooloo, primarily for nearby Plunkett Street Public School, which does not currently have on-site facilities for an external before/after school care;
- (iii) prior to 2017, the City of Sydney's program in Woolloomooloo was a free service for vulnerable families who met income and vulnerability thresholds;
- (iv) in 2017, the City of Sydney expanded its contribution to include a fee-based service for families who did not meet the criterion. However, this fee is not supported by any childcare subsidies and as a result is more expensive than other similar services in our local government area;
- (v) the Federal Government's Child Care Subsidy (CCS) offers eligible families access to fee reduction using Occasional Care services, Before School Care, After School Care and Vacation Care (Outside School Hours Care Services). The Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to the service provider. Families pay the amount owed after the Child Care Subsidy has been applied to the service fee – this is often referred to as the "out of pocket" or "gap" fee;

- (vi) to receive the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payment on behalf of families, childcare providers must be registered with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment; and
  - (vii) the Juanita Nielsen Childcare Centre is not registered to provide the Childcare Subsidy (CCS) to families;
  - (viii) the City does not currently offer before school care as part of Woolloomooloo's Children's Program at Juanita Nielsen Community Centre;
  - (ix) the Juanita Nielsen Community Centre offers 45 places in it's after school service. It is currently under capacity with 15 to 20 children per day. Over 90 per cent of the attendees receive free care;
  - (x) all other schools in the surrounding City of Sydney area have access to before/after school care that is eligible for childcare subsidies. Working families in the Woolloomooloo community are financially disadvantaged as the cost difference that they incur over the year is considerable;
  - (xi) the NSW Government has previously committed to spending \$120 million to expand access to before and after school care (BASC) for all parents with children at NSW public primary schools; and
  - (xii) parents of Plunkett Street are requesting that the City of Sydney utilise the NSW Government before and after school care commitment so that the centre can be better supported, and that this is enabled by ensuring that the centre is first approved as a child care subsidy eligible provider. It is currently limited as the government states that a centre cannot offer both a free service and a subsidised service for low income families;
- (B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) register the Juanita Nielsen Childcare Centre with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment so that eligible families can benefit from the Child Care Subsidy (CCS);
  - (ii) investigate obstacles that may be preventing Woolloomooloo Children's Program, and other services like this, from receiving subsidies through the Child Care Subsidy Scheme while offering a fully subsidised care service, with the goal of offering both services;
  - (iii) investigate how the City of Sydney might offer before school care as part of Woolloomooloo Children's Program at Juanita Nielsen Community Centre as soon as possible; and
  - (iv) approach the NSW Government Before and After School Care Reform Team to discuss options for grant support for a before/after school service for Plunkett St Primary School families run through the Juanita Nielson Centre; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to:
- (i) write to the NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning requesting advocacy to the Department of Education to support appropriate before and after school care (BASC) at Plunkett Street and advocate to the Federal Government to undertake a review of Family Assistance Law to allow the City of Sydney to

offer the Child Care Subsidy Scheme while also offering a fully subsidised care service; and

- (ii) write to the Federal Minister for Education requesting a review of the Family Assistance Law and make any necessary changes to enable services, such as Woolloomooloo Children's Program, to offer the Child Care Subsidy Scheme while also offering a fully subsidised care service.

The motion, as varied by consent, was carried unanimously.

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