

Caulfield Community Toy Library

Registration No. A0012095T
ABN 65 962 771 523



"Learning Through Play
Learning Is Fun"

7 June, 2010

Budget Submission
Glen Eira City Council
PO Box 42
CAULFIELD SOUTH VIC 3162

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft budget for Glen Eira council for 2010-2011

Background

Caulfield Community Toy Library (CCTL) has been located in the Caulfield Memorial Swimming Pool building for the past decade. At the time CCTL moved into these council premises we had approximately 100 members and the site met our needs. Over the past decade CCTL membership has more than doubled in size to 260 member families living in the Glen Eira region. We have been successful in securing a number of grants to increase our toy collection to meet this growing community demand. However the inability to properly house the growing collection has created a serious Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) risk to our volunteers, staff and families. Many of the larger toys are lined up in a make-shift aisle, creating a tripping hazard, or stored on the top shelves, creating a fall hazard when parents and children visit our premises to borrow/return toys.

Our concern is that we have outgrown our current site. In 2009 spatial consultants 'Space Matters' were engaged by CCTL to conduct an analysis of our current premises. They made the following findings:

- The Caulfield Community Toy Library has run out of space, and the lack of space is impacting the functionality, quality and range of services, as well as the safety of members and visitors;
- Toy member libraries are dissatisfied with the difficulties caused by the lack of space
- Existing toys are in inaccessible positions and hence are not being borrowed
- The lack of space is stopping the library from purchasing large outdoor toys that members wish to have access to.

- The services that the library can offer to both its members and the wider community are limited, due to there being no space for people to sit down to learn about child development and the library, and to connect with other members of the community
- The width of the circulation space is unacceptably narrow stopping those with prams, wheelchairs or walkers from using the library.
- The narrow width of circulation also means the safety of people navigating the space is severely compromised.
- The lack of space means that large toys are stored on the floor, which further impinge on circulation
- Toy library members can't easily view the items available to borrow.
- There is congestion when waiting to borrow and return items.
- The lack of space means that the library environment has become a cluttered, unwelcoming space at odds with the espoused values of the library which are to create an inclusive environment.
- Children are encouraged not to touch or play with toys as there is no space in which to do so, thus losing the recognised developmental opportunity to select their own toys to borrow.

The consultants suggested the following solutions:

1. Remain in existing space and expand

Move an existing non load-bearing wall allowing CCTL to extend its current space currently allocated to the pool building.

2. Occupy a new / larger space

A move to a new space may allow for a more appropriately sized environment to allow for the library to perform functionally and reflect and address the needs of the library and its members.

Why toy libraries and play matter:

Toy libraries are an important part of the early years community services in any community as they provide the following:

- Increased support for children's education and brain development, including children with special educational needs.
- Improvements in family bonds and parent-child relationships.
- Increases in a child's experiences of play.
- Opportunities for parents to play an active part in the service.
- Opportunities for children to gain independence and responsibility by choosing and borrowing toys.
- Opportunities for children to communicate with their parents/carers through toys.
- Parents learning about child development, especially first-time parents.
- Increased socialisation opportunities.
- Improved parenting skills and more playing with children at home.

Toy libraries play a vital role in supporting children's play. Play is essential for a child's development and has many benefits, including:

- Play is seen as vital to the development of the child.
- Children learn how things work through play
- Play can have a significant impact on a child's mental and physical health.

- Play helps them to develop essential social skills through activities such as making friendships and dealing with challenges.
- Play is also recognised for its ability to develop children's creative imagination and understanding of the world

For further information on the importance of our Toy Library please see the attached sheet 'Benefits of a Community Toy Library Service'.

Links to Glen Eira Municipal Early Years Plan

The work of the CCTL supports many of the **principles** of the Glen Eira *Municipal Early Years Plan*, including:

- Children have a right to opportunities that will maximise their health, learning, growth and development.
- Children and families are integral for a happy and thriving community.
- There is a shared community responsibility for promoting the health wellbeing, education and safety of children and families.
- Families should be made aware of and provided with timely access to services.
- Communities should be actively engaged in decisions which affect the social infrastructure and health and wellbeing of members

The ongoing work of the CCTL is also strongly aligned to the **vision** of the Glen Eira *Municipal Early Years Plan*:

- All children in Glen Eira will have access to environments and opportunities that promote and protect their health, safety, learning, development and well-being.

What the future holds

We anticipate our membership base to continue to grow steadily in the foreseeable future. The toy library allows families to have a regular supply of new toys *without the expense* of purchasing toys, making CCTL a sought after and essential community service in today's climate of economic instability and poor housing affordability. The service we provide also goes beyond lending toys - we are a place for local parents and children to meet, talk, learn and share experiences in an informal and relaxed environment.

As you can see CCTL is a strong community organisation that boasts wonderful community support. The committee plan to do everything we can to continue to meet community demand for our service.

Council support

Council has supported CCTL since its inception 25 years ago through the provision of our current accommodation at Caulfield Memorial Swimming Pool, and through ongoing grants and professional advice.

We note the comparison of other Council's budget on page 4, and the ongoing low operating costs of council. We consider it important that CCTL makes a significant contribution to the cost of running the organisation. We continue to self-fund 1.5 full-time positions to ensure the smooth and professional operation of CCTL. But we

need some additional Council support to assist us to meet community demand by helping us grow and fulfill our accommodation needs.

We ask Council to assess the inclusion of the CCTL on the capital budget for 2010-2011 and beyond. Any funding support for CCTL fits within the Themes outlined in the draft budget Strategic Objectives including:

- *Theme 3 - Open Space, Recreation and Leisure*
- *Theme 4 - Community Facilities and Assets*
- *Theme 5 - Community Building* (in particular the strategy which "Further develops those aspects of Council Early Years services, such as play groups and new mothers' groups which have an important role in developing a connected community")
- *Theme 7 - Services for Children, Youth, Families and the Aged*

The options outlined below will allow the CCTL to continue operating and provide Council with an extremely reasonable investment in the future of children and families in the area.

Budget Proposal

We would like to propose two capital investment options to address our immediate accommodation issues.

Option 1 \$7,500

- Extend the current premises of the Caulfield Community Toy Library into the existing storage space of the swimming pool (*see diagram on page 6*)
- This figure is based on our 2009-2010 community grant submission to extend our current facility.
- CCTL would raise funds to fit-out and furnish the facility.

Option 2 \$180,000 approx

- Construction of demountable building on the grounds of Caulfield Memorial Swimming Pool.
- Based on 144 square metre demountable building, connection to services and floor coverings.
- It would be similar, but on a smaller scale, to the building funded by the City of Glen Eira and the State Government for the University of the 3rd Age
- CCTL would raise funds to fit-out and furnish the facility.

This expansion or redevelopment of CCTL will have a number of positive, long-term, benefits for CCTL including:

- increased safety for volunteers, staff, adult members and children;
- a comfortable space for adults and children to peruse the ever-growing toy collection;
- a socially inclusive meeting place; and

- opportunity for further expansion of toy catalogues to include more multicultural, gender-neutral, wooden and educational toys.

We have attached a report undertaken by spatial consultants 'Space Matters' and would like it tabled with our submission. It provides an excellent overview of our spatial requirements and current safety breeches.

We would welcome the opportunity to present to the special council meeting on the budget submission on 22 June 2010. Should you have any questions in relation to this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Rowlands
Committee Secretary
On behalf of the Caulfield Community Toy Library



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