

0.0 MAYORAL MINUTE - SUPPORT TO BALRANALD EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

File Number: D25.114180

Reporting Officer: Hodi Beauliv, Executive Manager: Community and Governance

Responsible Officer: Peter Bascomb, Interim Chief Executive Officer

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the short-term provision of Council staff, to provide the role of a nominated supervisor up to 10 hours per week for a period of 2 months, so the Balranald Early Learning Centre can continue to operate with the contribution to be considered a donation.

POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF THE BALRANALD EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

The Balranald Early Learning Centre (BELC) is the only provider of early learning services in Balranald. They provide a vital service to our local families. Without this service, many parents would be unable to work, placing even further pressure on our local economy and workforce.

In mid-August the BELC advised parents that due to critical staffing shortages their ability to operate a full service was severely compromised. Council staff met with the BELC Committee Chair on 20 August to discuss the issue and were advised if they could not find a nominated supervisor, the service would cease to operate from Thursday 28 August 2025.

Council's Librarian has the relevant qualifications to be able to fill the position of nominated supervisor. The statutory requirements of this position can be completed in 10 hours per week. The Librarian is happy to fulfil this role on a short-term basis, to allow the Centre to stay open.

The BELC Committee advised they were in discussions with a childcare provider to take on the management of the Centre. The Committee has its Annual General Meeting in October, at which time they hope to have a more permanent solution in place.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

At the Council workshop held on 21 August 2025 on the Bidgee Haven Hostel, this issue was briefly discussed with the Mayor and Councillors in attendance, to seek their advice. Councillors present were supportive of Council providing the service in the short-term, if the cost to Council could be managed within the existing budget. As this was not a formal meeting of Council, no decision was made at this meeting.

During a discussion between the Mayor and the Interim CEO, verbal authorisation was provided by the Mayor to provide this service outside the scope of Council's traditional service delivery model in line with the Local Government Act 1993:

s.226 (d) to exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the council between meetings of the council

This minute is provided to seek Council endorsement of that decision.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total cost to Council to provide this support will be approximately \$3,000. Library services will be reduced to offset this cost, so it has nil impact on Council's budget.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil