

Minutes

Families and Children Advisory Committee



Date	Wednesday, 18 February 2026
Time	10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Location	Collingwood Town Hall – Wurundjeri Room
Chair	Deputy Mayor, Cr Sarah McKenzie
Minute taker	Kayley Wilson (FY&CS Branch Business Administration & Project Support Officer)
Content Manager Reference	D26/0102235

Statement of Recognition of Wurundjeri Land

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

Attendees

Councillor/s	Deputy Mayor, Cr Sarah McKenzie
Committee members	Ali Duncan, Brielle Pope, Alex Payne-Billard, Claire Franz-Flack, Ryan Carters, Jane Furphy, Stephanie O’Collins,
Council Officers	Deanne Halpin (Acting Family, Youth and Children’s Services Branch Manager), Jesse Grubb (Family Services Coordinator & Families and Children’s Advisory Secretariat), Kayley Wilson (FY&CS Branch Business Administration & Project Support Officer)
Guests	Sonali Murage (Family Programs and Inclusion Team Leader)
Apologies	Cr Meca Ho, Lauren Streifer (Committee Member), Hayden Oberin (Committee Member), Angela Morcos (Council Officer) Carmen Cappello (Guest)

Item number	Item title or subject	Minute notes
1.	Welcome	Deputy Mayor welcomed the Committee Members and Acknowledged Country.
2.	Adoption of the minutes from the previous meeting	Approved. Deputy Mayor mentioned she made a variation on the time she left.
3.	Business arising from the previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action: Terms of reference to be resent to committee members. This Agenda item can now be closed. Action: Health and Wellbeing Snapshots from Council’s Health and Well-being to be circulated to committee members. This Agenda item can now be closed.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Committee members to be kept up to date with child safety reforms. This Agenda item has been added as a standing item • Action: Committee members to be notified of upcoming engagement opportunities. This Agenda item can now be closed
4.	Child Safety Reforms	<p>An overview of the item was provided by the Acting Manager of Family, Youth and Children’s Services which outlined the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and Procedures • Compliance • Training • Reporting Process • Staffing & Workforce Challenges <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Child Safety Update presentation to be circulated with the minutes.
5.	Children’s Service Priority of Access Policy & Kinder Reform Update	<p>An overview of the item was provided by the Acting Manager of Family, Youth and Children’s Services which outlined the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority of Access Policy: Committee members agreed the policy is clear and appropriate. • Kindergarten Reform Update: Beginning this year, as defined by the Victorian Government, Priority Cohort 1 children are eligible for up to 25 hours of funded kindergarten, regardless of whether they attend sessional kindergarten or integrated kindergarten in long day education and care services. From 2028, this entitlement will extend to Priority Cohort 2 (also as defined by the Victorian Government), enabling children with concession cards to access the same 25 hours of funded kindergarten. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members to email if they have any further feedback on this agenda item.
6.	Agreement on the 2026 Workplan and potential invitees for future meetings	<p>An overview of the item was provided by the Families and Children’s Advisory Committee Secretariat which outlined the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat invited further discussion on the workplan from the previous advisory meeting. <p>Matters raised by the committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee members agreed the themes and comments presented by the secretariat were correct and valid. • A need for more play options for crawling infants at playgrounds and requests for additional holiday programming

		<p>for toddlers, not only school-aged children was included as feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Acting Manager of Family, Youth and Children’s Services reminded all committee members that feedback can be submitted via “Have Your Say.” <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Families and Children’s Advisory Committee Secretariat will collect the notes made from the committee members and record the additional comments.
7.	Child Friendly Cities Presentation	<p>The presenter of this presentation was an apology.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be scheduled for a later meeting.
8.	Supported Playgroups and Parent Education Programs Presentation	<p>An overview of the item was provided by the Team Leader for Family Programs & Inclusion which outlined the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported Playgroups Community Playgroups Parent Information Sessions Accessing Playgroups and Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families can contact the Playgroups team by emailing playgroups@yarracity.vic.gov.au. Information about Parent Information Sessions is available on the Yarra City Council website. <p>Matters raised by the committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee raised interest in future topics of parent information sessions to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neurodivergence Developmental milestones Pre-birth preparation Parenting boundaries and discipline Inexpensive toys/equipment Parental burnout The committee raised suggestions on how to better consult the community, which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More targeted outreach (grandparents, dads, CALD communities) Using social media platforms and tapping into local online groups The committee raised suggestions on how to improve meeting community needs, which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing barriers for fathers (timing, representation, male facilitators, creating an agenda to reduce social awkwardness) Providing skills-based or interest-based playgroups Reducing information overload Sharing hotlines ex: PANDA, Virtual ED, Medicare 24/7. Concerns were raised regarding engagement gaps affecting some communities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yarra has strengthened its reach by engaging bicultural workers, many of whom are former program participants, to better connect with diverse communities. ○ Timing of programs and sessions remains a consistent challenge due to varying family routines and lifestyles. ○ The Committee suggested developing factual summaries to support families who are unable to attend sessions. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any further feedback from committee members to be sent through via email.
9.	Other Business	<p>The following matters of general business were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential invitees for future meetings: The Deputy Mayor noted that this item was part of Agenda Item 6 but had not been addressed and therefore raised it under “Other Business”. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This item will be progressed offline.
Meeting closed		The meeting closed at 11:54 pm
Next scheduled meeting		The next meeting will be scheduled for 06 th May 2026.