



AGENDA

Late Reports

General Committee Meeting

Date: Monday, 8 September 2025

Time: 5.30 pm

**Location: Cowra Council Chambers
116 Kendal Street, Cowra**

**Paul Devery
General Manager**

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6 LATE REPORTS

6.1 Business Assistance to Cowra Early Childhood Services

File Number: D25/I748

Author: Paul Devery, General Manager

INTRODUCTION

In relation to report 3.1 on the agenda for this meeting, it has been brought to my attention that a submission has inadvertently been omitted from the report and attachments.

Please find at Attachment I. the submission omitted, from Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre.

This submission should be considered in conjunction with report 3.1

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

ATTACHMENTS

I. Cowra Information & Neighbourhood Centre - Email dated 7 September 2025 [↓](#)

2025/25956

Lee Redgrave

From: Fran Stead <corporate@cinc.org.au>
Sent: Thursday, 7 August 2025 12:48 PM
To: Cowra Council
Subject: Regarding Business assistance public notification - CECS

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Dear Cowra Council,

I am writing to seek clarification regarding the recent public notification concerning application of financial assistance to Cowra Early Childhood Services (CECS), specifically the partial refund of \$36,000 for a development application fee related to the construction of a new preschool on Short Street, Cowra.

I would appreciate further information on whether this decision sets a precedent for other not-for-profit organisations. Specifically, can other not-for-profits expect similar support via refunds from Council, funded through the Business Assistance Reserve? Many of us operate under similar financial pressures and contribute meaningfully to the Cowra community.

I also wish to clarify a point raised during the Council meeting on 28 July. It was mentioned that there are five or six not-for-profit organisations operating in the area, yet the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) lists 38 registered charities in the 2794 postcode. While these organisations vary in size and scope, many may wish to build or expand in future. This may warrant further consideration in decisions involving sector-wide support.

I want to emphasise that I fully support the refund sort from CECS and commend the exceptional work they do in our community. My grandchildren attend both their mobile preschool and family daycare programs, and I am genuinely excited about the development of a new facility.

While new builds and infrastructure investment are welcome, I believe it is equally important for council to consider the broader challenges facing the sector—particularly the acute staffing shortages currently affecting several local early childhood services. Some centres in our community are unable to operate at their licensed capacity due to the lack of qualified staff, despite strong community demand and long waitlists at each centre. This is not a reflection of poor management or personal preferences, but rather a systemic workforce issue.

With this in mind, I respectfully encourage Council to explore opportunities to invest in workforce attraction and retention strategies that support all early childhood services in Cowra. Such an approach would promote sector-wide sustainability and deliver greater long-term benefits to the entire community. Without a coordinated, community-level response, new buildings risk simply shifting the existing workforce between centres rather than creating the additional capacity urgently needed to allow more families to return to work or come to town.

In fact, this was seen recently in Cowra with a new childcare service being built to meet demonstrated demands for care in Cowra. They then staffed this centre by employing majority of staff from an existing centre operating in Cowra, this resulted in closing down two rooms overnight, so the new build created no

additional spots instead it created a monumental level of stress for families that were left scrambling to find suitable childcare.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

regards

Fran Stead
Chief Executive Officer



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Neighbourhood Centre

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We acknowledge the land on which we are gathering and pay our respects to our Elders, past, present and future.

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