

## 6.4 MOTION TO THE STATE COUNCIL MEETING OF MAV – MIDDLE YEARS FUNDING

Submitting Councillor: Cr Josh Fergeus

### **MOTION**

*That Council:*

- 1. Supports the motion to the Municipal Association of Victoria May 2018 State Council requesting that the MAV advocate to the State Government for additional funding to support the primary school age group, particularly the 5-10 year group.*
- 2. Endorses officers to work in partnership with the Eastern Melbourne Councils to commence a joint advocacy campaign.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of my motion is to seek Council's endorsement to submit a motion to the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) May 2018 State Council (see Attachment 1) requesting support to commence a State-wide advocacy campaign to secure funding for services, such as engagement programs, early leadership programs, cyber safety, body image, self-esteem and mental health topics such as anxiety, to be provided to primary school aged children.

### **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

It can appear that services for children and young people are well supported by funding provided by State Government through early years funding for children aged 0-5 years and for young people aged 10-25 years. However, there is less funding available for children of primary school ages aside from direct funding for education.

Council is committed to providing services to children, young people and their families demonstrated by the provision of a variety of programs such as playgroups, childcare, kindergarten infrastructure, kindergarten central enrolment, maternal and child health, immunisation, parent education, Victorian Youth Week, Engage!, Freeza and School Focused Youth Service (10-18 years) among others.

While there is some cross over with Monash Youth Services supporting young people in the primary school age group, there is a clear gap for children aged 5-10 years.

This gap in services is not only one caused by a lack of funding, but also limited best practice models, research and an appropriately trained workforce.

In 2011, MAV and DET released a report *Victorian Local Government Support for Children, Young People and Their Families* which identified major concerns held by councils including a lack of programs, insufficient funding/resources, lack of strategic service planning and transition to secondary school being problematic for some young people. Very little has changed since 2011.

Anecdotal evidence through the School Focused Youth Service suggests that the issues and challenges which, historically, have been experienced by young people in their adolescence are now appearing earlier and affecting the development, health and mental health of children in their middle years. In 2017, Council offered two sessions for parents in our parent education program titled "Does your child suffer from anxiety?". Ninety parents attended the sessions with a higher than expected number of parents with primary school aged children. The health and wellbeing of primary school aged children is becoming an increasingly important issue within the broader community.

As reported in the Australian Child Wellbeing Project "*Are the Kids Alright? Young Australians in their Middle Years*" (February 2016), a significant number of young people in the primary school age group have reduced health and wellbeing, therefore missing out on opportunities at this crucial time. This can be seen through:

- High levels of health complaints;
- Increased experience of bullying;
- Low levels of engagement at school;
- Low levels of subjective wellbeing; and
- Low levels of social support.

#### **PROPOSAL**

Given the above, I propose that a motion be put forward to the Municipal Association of Victoria requesting a state wide advocacy campaign for funding to provide services to children of the primary school age group.

#### **CONSULTATION**

Advice was sought from Council officers in the Children, Youth and Family services team.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

MAV State Council Motion  
Officer Response to NOM