

**MM-2 MAYORAL MINUTE: SUPPORT INCLUSIVE PLAY WORKER
PROGRAM FOR LIVVI'S PLACE FIVE DOCK**

Department Executive Services

Author Initials: AT

REPORT

I am saddened to report that over the past few years there has been an escalating number of incidents of intolerance for children with disabilities at Livvi's Place playground. Council and the team from the Touched by Olivia Foundation have been working together to tackle these behaviours and recognise that their current program needs to go beyond Facebook posts and signage.

I propose to support this work with funding for a 12 month trial of a play worker to be based at Livvi's Place. This project will be undertaken in partnership with the Touched by Olivia Foundation. The purpose of appointing a play worker is to design inclusive play experiences for children and their carers which addresses concerns and enhance understanding of learning difficulties and disabilities to promote a better understanding of the benefits of inclusion and how to share play spaces.

The principle of the program is that developing relationships are more effective than rigid rules in creating a positive environment. The play worker would address inclusion concerns and develop programs aligned with Livvi's Place objectives. Programs would offer opportunities such as learn to bike ride sessions which create positive experience for children of all opportunities and direct discussions about inclusive behaviours. Daily group activities will be considered during vacation periods and weekends as per an agreed schedule. The program launch would be spring this year.

The play worker would also work with volunteers in the friends of Livvi's Place to create a range of play volunteers and resources. This training will enable Touched By Olivia and the Friends to sustain the interventions after the program. Volunteers currently run story time in the park and this has delivered many benefits for local residents who enjoy the free weekly program offered by the volunteers in the park. The effectiveness of the program will also be tracked and evaluated to share across the network of Touched By Olivia Playgrounds in Australia.

The model for the program would be based upon European Play Yards of facilitating play and learning in playgrounds. Council has documented and considered the development of Play yards for a number of years and it has been included in the Rhodes Parks Plan of Management as an opportunity. However, given the problems at Livvi's place and the opportunities to work longer term with volunteers this is seen a preferable pilot.

The long term sustainability of this program is through the volunteers programs at Livvi's Place and to look at similar training in parks in Rhodes.

In 2017 the teams have sought to identify grants that could be used but with no success. The project could be funded from within the operating budget of the Place Team for a part time worker and programs for \$20,000. An agreement to fund the worker through the Touched By Olivia Foundation would be established.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT this minute be received and noted.

2. THAT a report about the outcomes of this program be brought to Council at the end of the project.