**Gum Scrub Creek Kindergarten**

CONTEXT AND VISION

**Background**

Gum Scrub Creek Kindergarten is located in the Cardinia Shire and is integrated with Gum Scrub Primary School. Combined, these services will complement the overall Officer Education Precinct, located adjacent to the site shared by Officer Secondary College and Officer Specialist School.

This unique facility is a fully integrated child and family centre within a school setting. The early learning spaces have been constructed inside the school’s Prep learning community building, facilitating full integration of early learning and primary schooling. This will support professionals to collaborate and deliver enhanced learning, development and wellbeing opportunities for every child and family.

The child and family centre comprises a Kindergarten catering to 66 children and an occasional care/community space along with consulting rooms for Maternal and Child Health and visiting practitioners.

**Educational Vision**

The integrated Gum Scrub Creek Kindergarten and Primary School is part of a ground breaking precinct that will be the embodiment of lifelong learning and community ownership. At the heart of this facility, it is recognised that the child is a competent learner from birth and this will drive professionals to deliver opportunities that encourage children to expand their capacities and deepen their understanding of the world with high expectations for every child.

Cardinia Shire has been instrumental in establishing support for this type of joined up approach. As a fully integrated facility, it will allow for first contact at birth with the provision of fully operational Maternal and Child Care Health services, continuing through the availability of a range of parenting support programs including community playgroups, new parents groups, Kindergarten, and specialist services such as speech and language, paediatricians, early intervention Out of School Hours Care and primary schooling.

Teaching spaces allow for full implementation of a professional leaning community approach. Integrated planning and delivery, reflecting on the impact of teaching practice, professional interaction and activation of student voice using evidence-based, high impact teaching and learning strategies are all central to the educational vision. Learning Communities are designed around modifiable spaces that accommodate multiple learning approaches and can flexibly respond to the requirements of students and teachers, creating a sense of shared ownership, inclusion and everyday learning.

Children and teachers will utilise easily accessible technology to achieve collaboration, research and creation. Incorporating a seamless curriculum design and implementation across the child and family centre and primary school will be a high focus.

**OPERATING MODEL**

The opportunity at Gum Scrub Creek is to design an operating model that can overcome traditional barriers and create an integrated practice that supports learners from birth through to the end of primary schooling. A shared practice of this nature will also position the school to engage parents in supporting the learning of their child through the whole learning journey. Local community, cultural events, spaces and their accessibility will reinforce a sense of belonging and wellbeing for every child and their family.

**DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

In June 2016 a Planning Committee was established to develop the education specification and pedagogical vison for the facility. Facilitated by the SEIL and Cardinia Shire, the group engaged Network principals, Education Improvement Leaders, DET facilities personnel, Cardinia Shire and parent community members in the development of a pedagogical plan for the school.

The final specification identified the following key elements that would be incorporated into the school ethos and design:

**Community: Context and Culture**

Establishing a sense of place and community; a framework for the development of an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable urban structure, empowering strong, diverse communities

**Commitment to Whole of Life Learning and Living**

An understanding that life-long learning is most successful when it is inclusive of: children, parents, neighbourhoods, wider communities and global citizenship. It must reflect the values, vision and aspirations of all members of the endeavour.

**Collaboration Between Stakeholders**

Early Childhood Management Services has formed an active partnership with Cardinia Shire in achieving this vision. In turn, Cardinia Shire has collaborated with early learning and community service providers, other schools, with parents, students, business and industry, the community and the DET allowing for better return on investment, better implementation, interaction and ideas.

**Integrating Evidence-based Knowledge of High Impact Learning and Teaching Research and Strategies**

Integrating the Kindergarten and Primary School creates opportunities to privilege seamless planning, professional interaction and student engagement in learning. Encourage quality professional learning opportunities and the conditions for capturing practice, building practice excellence, knowledge sharing and collaboration through team structures, collaborative design, planning and teaching and peer observations and feedback.

**THE OPPORTUNITY**

Gum Scrub Creek Kindergarten and Primary School's design and location within the Officer Education Precinct represents a unique opportunity to truly integrate whole of life learning. The incorporation of a fully integrated child and family centre completes the learning arc across the site but also promotes the capacity to partner with Cardinia Shire to ensure that the school is a pivotal place of community connection. The design and intent of learning spaces will facilitate a professional learning community approach enabling educators to collaborate, implement high-impact-teaching strategies and reflect on the impact on learning in a continuous improvement culture.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH CARDINIA SHIRE**

Cardinia Shire has been instrumental in establishing support for an integrated approach to lifelong learning, and Early Childhood Management Services are privileged to be a partner in this unique design and approach to education. The Gum Scrub Creek Learning Precinct will provide an excellent example of collaboration that delivers a full service early learning and primary school context, Maternal Child Health Centre, Community Meeting Spaces and a primary school setting.