

Children's Services
in
The Melbourne Municipality
1900 to 1980



This draft was prepared by Ruth Crow from the reports by
to the Council by the City Health Officers.

The Crow Collection Association is planning to publish this
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HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL

1890-1980

The preparation of this submission has provided the opportunity to review the history of children's services provided in the Melbourne City Council. Most of the information in this section of the submission has been obtained from reports to the Melbourne City Council Health Committee from 1913 to 1980. (Footnote 1)

A study of these reports show that there were four distinct periods.

1. From 1914 until the mid 1930s when the main concern was with physical hygiene and the main council children's service was the Infant Welfare Centre (Baby Health Centre).

The history of this period is reviewed under the heading "Keep the Well Baby Well". This was the slogan chosen by Dr. Vera Scantlebury (Brown) who was the first Maternal and Infant Welfare Visiting Medical Officer for the Council. She was appointed to this position in 1920. (Footnote 2)

2. From the mid thirties to the end of the 1940s when the main concern was with mental hygiene and Melbourne City Council was the leading municipality in establishing kindergartens. The history of this period is reviewed under the heading of "A Child Life That is Magical". These were the words used by Dr. John Dale who was the Medical Officer for the Melbourne City Council from the early 1930s to the end of the forties. (Footnote 3)

3. From 1950 to the beginning of the seventies was a period that can best be described with the heading "We Gather Strength as we go"; (The motto of the Melbourne City Council). This was a period of consolidation of services but the Melbourne City Council relinquished its pioneering role.

4. During the 1970s the Council has been seeking social solutions. The Melbourne City Council is once again asserting its capacity to pioneer new types of human services and new forms of community support for services. The words from the Melbourne City Council Strategy Plan are appropriate as a heading for this section. They are "The opportunity to have a Full Life".

Footnote 1. This history has been compiled by a member of the North and West Melbourne Children's and Youth's Committee who has had more than sixty years of fairly continuous association with children's services. In the early twenties she visited Baby Health Centres with her mother who was one of the first committee members of a Centre. Thus the time line of the history has been cast from personal knowledge.

Footnote 2. Dr. Vera Scantlebury (Brown) was the visiting Medical Officer for the Melbourne City Council from 1920 to the early 1940s. She was later the first Director of the Maternal Health and Child Hygiene Branch of the Victorian Health Department until her death at the end of the 1940s. She was regarded as the main person responsible for ensuring that the 1944 Pre-school Act and Amendments to the Local Government Act would result in more State funding for Infant Welfare and Kindergartens.

Footnote 3. Dr. John Dale was the Medical Officer for Health for twenty years from the early thirties until 1950. He took a lively interest in a variety of social movements. His compassion and enthusiasm can be gauged from some of the quotes in this report.

1890 to 1914 When the Council was not involved in Children's Services

The Melbourne municipal area has been the location where the earliest creches (day nurseries) and kindergartens were established. For example, by the turn of the century there were three creches (North Melbourne, Carlton and the City). These were located where emerging secondary industries (clothing, food preserving and boot-making) were being established as most industry in that period was in or near the city. At the turn of the century the inner areas were mainly inhabited by impoverished families. The first effort to alleviate slum conditions through the opening of kindergartens was when the Carlton, Bouverie Street Free Kindergarten was established by the Baptists Church. Later other free kindergartens were established in the municipality.

At first the Council had no involvement with creches and kindergartens. They were mainly administered and financed by philanthropic committees, the well-to-do members of which lived in far distant suburbs.

In recent years some of these centres have become the direct responsibility of the Melbourne City Council, for example the Council is now fully responsible for the Ethel Nielson and Howard St. North Melbourne creches (now called day nurseries) and assists and supervises all kindergartens in the municipality whether they are administered by the churches or by other community organisations.

Scourge of Infectious Diseases: The years before 1920

The reports from 1914 to 1920 of the Melbourne City Council Health Committee are mainly about infectious disease, inspection of food premises, smoke nuisances, condemnation of houses, noxious trades, disinfecting premises, rat infestation, registration of hospitals and other matters to do with hygiene. The establishment of Baby Health Centres was a direct result of this grave concern about infectious diseases.

For example in the 1919 epidemic 8,678 cases of pneumonic influenza were reported and "this was thought to be only a proportion of the cases that actually occurred. Death numbered 464, equivalent to 4.36 per 1,000 of the population". (M.C.C. Health Committee's Report 1919.) In the same year 25 children under one year of age died of diarrhoea, there were 298 cases of diphtheria with 22 deaths (and this was reported as being a considerable improvement on the reports for 1918), 84 cases of scarlet fever with 3 deaths and 100 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were reported.

The ever present tragedy of infant deaths is shown in the statistics of the Health Department Reports. In 1898 one child in nearly five died at birth. The infant death rate was 188 per 1,000 births. This was gradually reduced to one in ten, or 100 per thousand in 1910 and still steadily dropped to 72 in 1919.

A large proportion of births took place in very small cottage hospitals and thus sanitary inspectors would have some knowledge of the conditions under which many children started life.

"KEEPING THE WELL BABY WELL"EMPHASIS ON PHYSICAL HYGIENE - 1914 TO MID THIRTIES

The establishment of Baby Health Centres (Infant Welfare Centres) ushered in a new period in municipal history.

1. Up to this time the Council had been mainly concerned about serving properties and the money available was from rates from properties.
2. The Council became responsible for a social service.
3. The Victorian Government made a subsidy to the Councils for the Infant Welfare Centres.
4. The Councils became custodians for money raised from taxes as well as from rateable properties.
5. An existing Council service, sanitary inspection, was extended to include a new type of service.

The natural way Baby Health Centres (Infant Welfare Centres) developed from sanitary inspection of condemned houses with infectious disease and private hospitals, the acquisition of subsidies from the State Government for welfare services, and the development of relationships with other municipalities through the Baby Health Centre Association, can be traced easily through the reports of the Health Committee from 1914 to the mid twenties. Here are some facts:
(Footnote 4)

Maternal and Infant Visitations 1914

In 1914 the Melbourne City Council initiated a scheme for "maternal and infant visitation". The report for that year states: "The visitation of mothers of newly born children commenced during the year marked an important extension of the scope of the Health Work of the City. The addition of an Assistant Sanitary Inspector to the Staff of the Office, whose main duty was to take over the work of visiting Infectious Disease, liberated the Female Inspector (Mrs. A. Kemp) for this work, the importance of which has been greatly emphasised within recent years." (Footnote 5)

Footnote 4. In the Health Committee Report for 1914 inspections were made to 36 private hospitals. Twenty six of these were for midwifery patients. Most of these took only two or three or four patients and the largest private hospitals took thirteen or fourteen.

Footnote 5. It appears from the reports that there was only one Female Inspector responsible for all the visits in the municipality, at least until 1918. In 1918 the "Report of the Special Inquiry to the Melbourne City Council" stated, "There were 3,425 babies born in 1918 and it can therefore be assumed that Mrs. Kemp visited about three and a half thousand homes in one year. (If she visited one each and every day of the year she would have to make ten home visits each day.)"

The Idea of Baby Health Centres 1916

In 1916 there were 2,090 homes of new-born children visited and the idea of "Baby Health Centres" was proposed. Here is a quote from that report:

"The experience of other countries and cities shows that a great deal of good is achieved by means of regular revisits and by encouraging mothers to attend a centre at which a 'Baby Clinic' is established. The object in view at a clinic is essentially a preventative one and children are periodically brought for examination. The more or less continuous oversight exercised over children is found to cause a high reduction in the amount of serious illness amongst them. At the same time the knowledge imparted to the mothers is of great assistance to them in the care and rearing of their children. The ultimate issue in all such measures is in the direction of reducing Infantile Mortality".

By 1919 three "Baby Health Centres" had opened and a system of supplying milk at reduced prices was introduced.

Subsidies from Victorian Government - 1921

By 1921 there were four Baby Health Centres in the City. These were: South Carlton at the Women's Hospital, at North Melbourne in the Municipal Building, at Kensington in the Municipal Building and at North Carlton at 680 Rathdown Street. Appreciation of the work of Dr. Vera Scantlebury (appointed in 1920) as a visiting medical officer is recorded. The report states, "This medical inspection is an important element in preventive medicine. By means of its early detection of malformation or illness can be secured, and early correction of dietetic error made. It also safeguards the health of the expectant mother". The Victorian Government contributed 125 pounds per annum to each Baby Health Centre provided that the municipality provided an equivalent amount.

Each Health Centre had its own committee and the four centres in the Melbourne Municipality were joined together through a City Health Centre Committee on which the Council was represented.

The Victorian Baby Health Centre Association was formed also, during this period. This linked together other municipalities which were emulating the Melbourne City Council's example. This was a new way for municipal councils to co-operate on the development of welfare/health services.

The government subsidies enabled each of the Baby Health Centres to employ a nurse, thus making more frequent home visits possible. (Footnote 6)

Footnote 6. The Victorian Government grant and the Council grant would most probably have covered the salary for the nurse. Mrs. Kemp for example received 165 pounds per year.

The Health Centre Committee would be composed most probably of women from more well-to-do parts of the metropolis. They raised money through bridge parties and garden parties and helped organise rosters of voluntary helpers to attend the Baby Health Centre to weigh the babies.

Combating Infectious Diseases - 1924 and 1925

Despite the Baby Health Centres infectious disease epidemics continued to concern the Council, especially diphtheria and poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis).

In 1924 Diphtheria Prevention Clinics were established in North Melbourne, Princes Hill and South Carlton and Dr. Anne Hensley was appointed to conduct a campaign against this disease. Children were immunised against it. In this campaign the Council had the co-operation of the Education Department, the Victorian Railway Commissioners, the Post Master General's Department, private schools and public hospitals.

A year later there was considerable concern about the rise in the number of cases of poliomyelitis as the recorded cases were the highest on record since 1913. Dr. Jean McNamara was appointed by the Council to initiate a metropolitan wide organisation to combat the disease. The State Government contributed 1 pound for each 1 pound from the municipalities.

This is another example of how the Council began to be responsible for money raised by the State Government. Both these campaigns also indicate that the Melbourne City Council was reaching out to other Councils in the metropolis and thus becoming less parochial in their responsibilities. Subsequent reports from the Health Committee showed a dramatic reduction in both diseases. The 1926 Council Health Committee Report states, "It is considered that the intensive work carried out under the scheme in 1925 greatly contributed to the much reduced incidence in 1926".

"CHILD LIFE THAT IS MAGICAL"

EMPHASIS ON MENTAL HYGIENE

MID THIRTIES TO END OF FORTIES

1938 marks the beginning of the Council's involvement in pre-school education. The Council Reports set out a very clear philosophy on the value of pre-school education. The following quotes are all from Dr. John Dale's Reports to the Health Committee:

1. "Kindergarten or nursery schools secure a new order of child life that is almost magical". (1938)
2. "The ideal situation for a kindergarten will be within walking distance of all toddlers." (1938)
3. "Kindergarten construction constitutes a very effective effort of re-housing which 're-houses' under ideal conditions those citizens-to-be upon whom the conditions of existing housing tend to press most heavily". (1939)
4. "The ideal place (for children of working mothers) would be a kindergarten/ creche where the staff would consist of trained nursery school teachers and a trained infant welfare sister working together". (1940)
5. "The formation of the Advisory Committee for the care of pre-school children in the city, consisting of delegates from all organisations in the city interested in children of kindergarten age, has also materially improved co-operation". (1940)
6. "Reports on the value of the 'Oslo Meal' as a means of supplying a substantial lunch of protective foods for children attracted considerable attention during the year - this should be widely advocated". (1940)

7. "Probably the best way in which mothers in the City could be helped (during illness and stress) would be by the provision of suitable residential creches, in which young children could be cared for during the mother's period of incapacitation or necessary rest." (1944)

New Types of Children's Services 1938

The year 1938 was a year when significant changes took place in pre-school education. Some examples of these innovations for 1938 are:

1. The Free Kindergarten Union, the City Council and the Federal Government collaborated on plans for a Model Pre-school Centre (to be called the Lady Gowrie Centre when it was established).
2. The Council planned to construct an Infant Welfare Centre and a Dental Clinic at the Model Centre (Lady Gowrie Centre) and thus to provide a more comprehensive service at the one location.
3. Plans for the first Municipal Kindergarten (later to be known as the Lady Huntingfield Kindergarten) were made by the Council (this was also to include a dental clinic and infant welfare centre).

The Role of Local, State and Federal Governments 1940

The 1940 Melbourne City Council Health Department Report departed from its usual staid character by including some illustrations of pre-school services to illustrate the relationships between the three tiers of government - Commonwealth, State and Local Governments. One photo is of the then recently opened Lady Gowrie Centre which had depended on Commonwealth grants plus some other subsidies from the Council. Another photo is of the new Children's Home in Parkville which had then been constructed by the Victorian State Government. (Footnote 7)

The third set of photos is of the first Council kindergarten - the Lady Huntingfield Centre in North Melbourne. The estimated cost of this centre was 3,400 pounds. The report states "The opening by the three governmental authorities of such model institutions serving similar ends is surely of the most encouraging significance."

The Turning Point in Pre-school Services 1944

The widespread community interest in children's services in the late 1930s and early 1940s helped to bring in legislation in the State Parliament.

Footnote 7. Child welfare provided through children's homes had been, almost exclusively, the responsibility of church and charity organisations until the State Government built the "New Children's Homes" in Park Street now known as "Turana".

It is also interesting to note that in co-operating with the State Government over the erection of the "Home" the Health Committee Report states, "Our relationship with Dr. Ingram and the staff of the Home, with whom we co-operate, especially in respect of infectious disease, have been of the happiest."

The successful passing of the 1944 legislation was due, to a large measure, to the role played by the Melbourne City Council.

The Council contributed to the upsurge of interest in infant and pre-school services both through popularising the needs of families and also by the practical example of providing services which effectively met some of those needs.

1944 was a turning point for the following main reasons:

1. The State Government passed the Pre-school Education Act which resulted in the Branch of Maternal and Child Welfare becoming part of the State Health Department.
2. The State Government amended the Local Government Act to authorise local authorities to fund pre-school centres.
3. The State Health Department appointed a number of supervisors to help Infant Welfare Centres and pre-school centres.
4. The State Health Department agreed to fund pre-school centres 4 pounds per annum for each child in a kindergarten where the building, equipment and staffing reached an approved standard. (Footnote 8)

More than half the States Kindergartens 1943

There were 16 kindergartens in the Melbourne Municipality in 1943. This represents more than half of the kindergartens for the whole of Victoria. (Footnote 9)

There were 29 kindergartens in Victoria and 3 of these in the country.

In addition to establishing the very first municipal kindergarten, the Melbourne City Council seemed to have encouraged other groups (churches and the Free Kindergarten Union) to locate in the municipality.

A contributing factor would be the sub-standard dwellings in some parts of the area, but there were also vast areas of sub-standard dwellings and over-crowding in Richmond, Collingwood, Fitzroy, South Melbourne and Prahran where poor families congregated and there were fewer kindergartens.

Footnote 8. The new method of funding by the State Government meant that more pre-school services could be provided. Previously the State Government had given a lump sum of money which was mainly distributed through the Free Kindergarten Union. The limited funds meant that any expansion of kindergartens would reduce the amount available for those already being funded.

Footnote 9. The 16 kindergartens were the Lady Gowrie, the Lady Huntingfield, 5 church of England, 5 Roman Catholic, 2 Presbyterian and 2 Free Kindergarten Union. By 1949 the Council had opened 2 new Council kindergartens, the Hopetoun Kindergarten in Flemington and the Fawcner Park Centre in South Yarra.

The statistic for the number of kindergartens in Victoria and in the metropolis has been taken from the research booklet "Australian Women at War" published 1943 and edited by Mollie Bayne.

A unique type of pre-school centre had been established at Princes Hill Primary School by the Education Department in 1929. (Footnote 10) The Council began to take more responsibility for this nursery school in 1945 when the Education Department and the Council co-operated to improve the Nursery and to include an Infant Welfare Centre in conjunction with it.

The Melbourne City Council helped all kindergartens in its area through providing annual medical inspections of all children. The Council also assisted with subsidised foodstuffs, particularly milk, and, on some occasions, helping with building renovations.

Training Kindergarten Teachers 1946

The community interest in pre-school education and the possibility of State Government grants to approved kindergartens if they employed an appropriately trained teacher meant that there was a great demand for trained kindergarten teachers. The Kindergarten Training College had to charge considerable fees to students and there were very few scholarships available.

The Melbourne City Council campaigned for the extension of the Kindergarten Training College and in addition, it awarded two scholarships each year to enable students to train as pre-school teachers at the College. On completion of their training these teachers were employed by the Melbourne City Council thus ensuring that the Council pre-school centres were staffed by trained teachers and were therefore, eligible for the State Government subsidy. The Melbourne City Council was the first Council to give this assistance to students: but later the Sunshine Council followed this example.

New Drugs and More Immunisation - 1946

By 1946 the use of sulpha drugs and penicillin were a welcome new development; and in addition immunisation could then be used to prevent a greater variety of diseases.

By 1946 the immunisation programs were beginning to bring results, especially in the control of such diseases as tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria and whooping cough. The infantile death rates had steadily decreased. 72 per 1,000 in 1919, 51.7 per 1,000 population in 1931, to 23.1 per 1,000 in 1946. The seriousness of infectious disease for children can be gauged by the statistics for 1946 when 30% of the scarlet fever cases reported were for children under five years. The Commonwealth Government helped subsidise immunisation programs. This is another example of Commonwealth funds to Local Government. (Footnote 11)

Footnote 10. The Princes Hill Nursery School began when a group of mothers started a story group at that school. This story group also helped to usher in the State School Mothers Clubs. The Princes Hill Nursery School was established by the Education Department in 1929. This responsibility was relinquished by the Department and assumed by the Council in 1969.

Footnote 11. The immunisation programs were subsidised by the Commonwealth Government. This is one of the first examples of the commonwealth's involvement in a recurring Local Government responsibility. (The Lady Gowrie Centre was an exception, that did not directly affect local government generally).

Research and Inspection and Education 1939

Through its medical officers the Melbourne City Council examined children at pre-school centres in the municipality as well as examining babies at the Infant Welfare Centres.

From time to time the Council officers were able to compile some very useful statistics which on analysis could show where improvements were needed.

For example in 1939 Dr. Hilda Kincaid prepared some material for the Federal Government's Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry on Social Security (Child endowment). Her analysis was based on 5,235 observations of weight and height of pre-school children during the years 1935-1939.

In her submission to the Enquiry she stated, "the results do lend considerable support to the obvious assumption that as the size of the poor family grows it becomes increasingly difficult to supply the children with the essentials of health and the observations may I think be used as a strong argument in favour of child endowment".

The presentation of this report to the Government Enquiry on Child Endowment is of historic interest as it shows that the Council used legitimate channels to act as an advocate for the community groups for more income and therefore better health.

The research was much discussed by a wide variety of social reform groups. (Footnote 12.)

The Council provided opportunities for informal education to parents through both the Infant Welfare Centres and the Pre-school Centres. In addition the Council provided lecturers to run courses in mothercraft at secondary schools. These were attended by students from 11 State and Private schools in the municipality.

Footnote 12.

The result of the research was published in the Australian Medical Journal and by the United Nations.

It was also reported in the booklet "Food and Health - a study of Nutrition in Australia" edited by Marjorie Coppel and contributed to by Dr. John Dale (Health Officer of City of Melbourne), Dr. Betty Wilmot (later Director of Maternal and Infant Welfare in the Dept. of Health), Dr. Mona Blanch (Medical Officer for the Free Kindergarten Union), Miss Ruth Hoban (Social Worker for the Victorian Housing Commission), Prof. Geoff Leeper (Melbourne University Agriculture Dept.) and Mrs. Ruth Crow (who was then doing research on malnutrition).

Newspapers of the period reported the evidence Dr. Dale gave at the Select Enquiry on Child Endowment (see exhibit 1).

There was widespread discussion on whether malnutrition was caused by lack of money or lack of caring parents.

Early in April 1983, 90 year old Miss Doris McRae recalled how in 1939 Dr. Dale attended the Social Questions Group of The Victorian Teachers Union and called for support for child endowment. In 1939 Miss McRae was principal of Flemington Girls School (now Debney Park High School) and a vice-president of the Victorian Teachers Union.

We gather Strength as we Go
Emphasis on Consolidation 1950-1973

From 1950 to the beginning of the seventies the Reports of the Council Health Committee have a different character from that of the earlier periods. The missionary zeal which was so evident in the reports of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s seems to have evaporated. Although there is steady progress in consolidating social services the Council does not appear to have been in the forefront of any group that was pioneering human services at local government level.

There were considerable changes in the population during this period.

1. Emergency housing at Camp Pell from 1946 to 1956 provided temporary homes for hundreds of families. (Footnote 13)
2. The population of the Melbourne Municipality dropped from 101,350 in 1952 to 77,000 in 1962 and a further drop to 74,877 in 1972.
3. The shrinking population in the Melbourne Municipality as compared to the whole metropolis can be indicated by the figures 2,003,100 in 1963 and 2,497,993 in 1973.
4. The movement in and out of the Municipality can be realised from figures in 1958 when it was reported by the Health Committee that 42% of the children recorded at the Infant Welfare Centres had moved out of the district, and 26% had moved in during that year. When figures from kindergartens were added the movement into the area rose to 33%.
5. The construction of 4 large Housing Commission estates of flats in the Municipality (including a high proportion of high-rise flats) resulted in a concentration of families facing strange, new living conditions.
6. A large proportion of migrants found their first homes in the Melbourne municipality and then later moved to other suburbs. 59.5% of children born in the municipality in 1959 had one or both parents who were not British born.
7. There was an increase in the number of parents, who had young children, entering the workforce.
8. There was an increase in the number of single parent families living in the municipality mainly concentrated in the H.C.V. flats.

Footnote 13. Camp Pell was an American Army Camp located at Royal Park during the Second World War. It was used for emergency accommodation for families suffering housing problems during the post-war housing shortage. The army huts were divided into flats to make homes for hundreds of families (many families of ex-servicemen). At its peak, towards the end of the 40s Camp Pell was home to about 1,000 children.

Camp Pell families used the schools and community services in North Melbourne.

The 1954 Council Report states that over 300 children, living at Campbell, were treated for pediculosis, scabies or impetigo.

In 1955 it was noted that "there was again a high incidence of infectious diseases amongst the residents of the Emergency Housing Settlement in Camp Pell, due to poor personal and public hygiene, and it is hoped that the promised closing of this settlement at an early date and the rehousing of the occupants will

Responses to Changes 50s and 60s

The Infant Welfare Services and Kindergartens responded to some of the challenges arising from these changes.

1. Kindergartens and Infant Welfare Centres were established on the Housing Commission flats.
2. The shrinking attendances at kindergartens was met by extending the hours at some of the kindergartens (1958).
3. A Children's Nursery was established in the city for occasional care in 1959.
4. The Melbourne City Council accepted full financial responsibility and control of the North Melbourne Day Nursery (1957).
5. A "Home Help" service was established in 1956.
6. In 1969 the Council assumed responsibility for the Princes Hill Nursery and improved the facilities provided.
7. The Council approved the Health Act regulations governing the conduct of child minding centres and noted that registration regulations were not always understood by child minders (1969).
8. The staff of the Health Department was increased. For example in 1959 there were 10 Infant Welfare sisters. This was increased to 13 by 1973 and the number of dental nurses was increased from 1 to 2.
9. The number of kindergartens and day nurseries increased, and so also the number of attendances at these centres. In 1959 there were 5 Council kindergartens and 2 day nurseries catering for 415 children. By 1973 there were 10 kindergartens and 3 day nurseries catering for 747 pre-school children. (Footnote 14)

Footnote 14. The preface of the Report of the Melbourne City Council Health Committee for 1959 outlines the organisation of the Department. There is a similar preface in every report up to 1958. The stability of the Department's work can be assessed from a study of these prefaces. The content of each preface are practically the same. A change was introduced in 1969 when a short paragraph noted that a social worker was employed.

With this amendment the preface was again very much the same until 1974. A comparison of the statistics in the prefaces indicate some of the changes that took place. Here are the main differences in statistics:

Population:	<u>1959</u>	88,900 in Melbourne Municipality
		1,777,700 in Greater Melbourne
	<u>1973</u>	76,900 in Melbourne Municipality
		2,497,993 in Greater Melbourne

Increase in Staff of Maternal Welfare Division

<u>1959</u>	a medical officer, 1 pre-school child development officer, 10 infant welfare sisters, 1 dental officer, 1 dental nurse and an organiser of the Home Help Service.
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By 1973 the staff had increased by 2 more infant welfare sisters (13 and 1 more dental nurse).

The number of kindergartens and day nurseries had increased.

<u>1959</u>	5 kindergartens and 2 day nurseries accommodated 415 pre-school children
<u>1973</u>	10 kindergartens and 3 day nurseries accommodated 747 pre-school children

The Opportunity to Live a Full Life"
Emphasis on Community Participation 1973

In the early years of the 1970s 2 reports were prepared which were to have a profound effect on the way human services are to be delivered by the Melbourne City Council. These Reports were:

1. The Report of the Consultative Council on Pre-school Child Development which was the result of the Victorian Health Department Enquiry in 1972/1973.
2. The Melbourne City Council Strategy Plan prepared by Interplan Pty. Ltd. for the Melbourne City Council during 1972/73 which was adopted in principle by the Council in 1974. (Footnote 15)

The impact of these two reports is not directly recorded in the reports of the Melbourne City Council Health Committee so this part of the history of children's services in the Melbourne Municipality is not based entirely on information from the Council Reports.

Community Participation in the Consultation on Pre-school Child Development 1972

1. About 150 submissions were made to the Consultative Council from a wide variety of organisations and from individuals from all over Victoria.
2. Eight submissions were made by organisations or individuals in the Melbourne Municipality. These were - the Melbourne City Council (but no mention of this seems to have been recorded in the Reports from the Health Committee), the North Melbourne Association, The Kensington Resident Action Group, the Inner Suburban Education Action Committee, Kindergarten Teachers at Inner Suburban Kindergartens, Sister Kath Kehoe of the Holland Park (Kensington) Infant Welfare Centre and Mrs. A. Williamson, a mother of young children living in a high-rise housing commission flat.
3. Several urban action groups in the Melbourne Municipality held a number of public meetings to discuss their submissions; both before and after the Consultation was held.
4. One of the recommendations from the report (12.7) stated, "The actual delivery of services to the community is planned on a regional basis in an integrated way with local community participation. For this purpose the Consultative Council recommends the setting up of Early Childhood Development Complexes in a municipality or group of municipalities to provide a number of facilities for preventative health care, the education of young children, day care and varieties of these facilities. They should be multi-discipline units located in close proximity to the community they serve, and should in general be available all the year around".

Footnote 14 (contd.).

Two scholarships to kindergarten teachers were awarded in 1959 but awards had ceased by 1973.

The Children's Occasional Care Nursery in the city increased its accommodation.

1959 62 children could attend at any one time and there were two playrooms

1973 Accommodation for children had been increased to 100 children at any one time and there were four playrooms

Footnote 15/ see over

Research and Assessment in the Seventies

A number of research projects were undertaken in this decade. Some of these projects were funded by the Commonwealth Government. Most of the research was centred on social and community aspects of children's services. This is in contrast to the research efforts of the 1930s and 1940s when information on physical and mental health were the main fields being investigated.

The distinction between research and community participation became blurred when such projects as the Community Consultation was being carried out.

New Community Awareness Concepts in Council Reports 1976

The 1976 Report from the Health Committee indicated that new concepts were beginning to guide the work of the Health Department. The report states a number of important facts which had not been stated in the previous years. Here are some quotes from the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. J. Griffin:

1. "Medical progress in the control of disease, technological advances and major environmental changes, have caused a shift in emphasis from the preservation of life and health towards the need to improve the quality of life."
2. "In the implementation of this 'quality of life' concept, it has become necessary for more and more government involvement and this is particularly evident in the areas of Health and Welfare."
3. "During 1976 it was clear that the Commonwealth Government's 'New Federalism' policy envisages a devolution of many responsibilities to the States in the areas of health and welfare."
4. "In this process of devolution, local government is seen in many cases as being the appropriate service delivery agent for local community programs."
5. "One of the correlators for point 4 (above) is stated as 'local government continues to expand mechanisms for liason and communication with local community groups and organisations'."

From 1976 onwards there was a very conscious effort by the Health Department towards developing community participation.

Members of staff are encouraged "to become involved as ordinary members or members of committee of management action planning and advice" in various community organisations. In 1977 the Medical Officer for Health, Dr. J. Griffin, used the following words in a Health Committee Report, "the ordinary citizen should have a real part in planning and implementing of health and welfare services. No longer can a benign and well intentioned authority impose what is 'good' for them on a grateful populace. The success of various programs, particularly those concerned with health and welfare depends on welding together of the expertise of the bureaucrat, the drive of the community leaders and the participation of the ordinary citizens".

Thus, by the end of the 1970s, the Melbourne City Council Health Committee was receptive to the approaches which were made to it by the Melbourne Municipality Early Childhood Development Complex Committee. (Footnote 17.)

Footnote 17. The Melbourne Municipality Early Childhood Development Complex Committee was an organisation of residents concerned about the Victorian Health Department's plans for an Early Childhood Development Project for the Melbourne Municipality.

Community Participation in the Preparation of the Strategy Plan 1973

1. The Planners called for widespread participation in planning and took measures to involve urban action organisations and social services (for example the Victorian Council of Social Services) in this project as well as the Council.
2. The Strategy Plan defines social services in the following words: "those which enhance personal growth of all people and contribute to the enjoyment of life".
3. The Strategy Plan recommended "the development of the necessary mechanisms for community participation in creating and amending social services".
4. Another recommendation was that District Community Resource Centres be established in neighbourhoods to co-ordinate social services.

New Services and Federal Funding in the 70s.

New services were introduced during the 1970s. A Family Planning Clinic was established in the Kensington Municipal Building in 1971. Federal funding enabled the Council to subsidise the Family Day Care program.

Federal funding direct to community groups enabled new types of co-operative centres to be opened in the municipality, for example the Women's House in McCracken Street, Kensington, the Robertson Street Child Care Co-op in Kensington and Wimble Street Child Care Co-op in Parkville and the Curzon Street Children's Centre in North Melbourne. The Council assisted these community groups financially but also on some occasions assisted as an advocate for funds from other sources. (Footnote 16)

Footnote 15. The preparation of the Strategy Plan enabled widespread participation to take place right throughout the municipality and also with State Government Departments and instrumentalities.

Special efforts were made to involve the newly emerging urban action groups in the Melbourne municipality. These were drawn together in the combined City of Melbourne Association to enable ideas from all neighbourhoods to be presented together.

The reports of the planners were distributed and discussed during the preparation of the plan and some local organisations prepared comprehensive reports to present to the planners.

Participation in planning is an on-going affair and the report recognised the importance of this method of planning as part of community services.

There is no evidence in the Health Department Reports of 1972, 1973, 1974 and 1975 of this new possibility of the Council and the community planning together.

The 1976 Report does recognise importance of community participation and the 1978 Report gives pride of place on the frontispiece to a quote from the Strategy Plan - "The opportunity to lead a Full Life".

From 1978 onwards the Health Dept. Reports show a growing recognition of the need for community involvement and participation in the human services provided by the Council.

Footnote 16. In 1944 the Health Committee welcomed the new funding arrangements by the State Government with overwhelming enthusiasm. The entry of the Federal Government as a source of funds for childrens services was barely mentioned in the reports of the Health Committee until 1977 yet the Office of Child Care had been formed by the Federal Government in 1976.

In reporting on the submission from this Group Dr. Griffin commented in the 1973 Report of the Council Health Committee:

"as there was a definite need for more Council involvement with the community and for more co-ordination and integration of services provided, it was essential that this submission received careful consideration. Its significance will be far reaching."

Planning for the Eighties the Community Consultation

A community group of parents, residents and workers from all over the municipality (who had come together around their concern over the way the E.C.D.C. was being set up in the area) continued to meet and developed a proposal which was submitted to the Council, on the need for a community consultation on childrens services in the area. It was proposed that this consultation be jointly sponsored by the Council and community groups formed to participate in such an exercise.

The Council agreed to this and at the end of 1979, public meetings were held to launch the consultation in all the neighbourhoods. A Central Committee and 4 neighbourhood committees were formed to carry through the Consultation, and the Council appointed a Project Officer to assist these community groups.

In 1980 the Consultation presented six reports to the Council. These were the Report on Participation and Decentralisation, the Report on Childrens Services in the Melbourne Municipality and the four reports from the neighbourhoods - from Kensington, North Melbourne (West Melbourne and Parkville), Flemington and Carlton. These reports were adopted by the Council and are now being implemented.

The whole process of lobbying for the Consultation to be carried out, working out a framework and developing the resource materials, actually doing the consulting, drafting up the Reports, and finally reporting back to Council took approximately 18 months from mid 1979 to early 1981. This process is documented in sections 3 and 4 of this submission and was certainly another major FIRST for the Melbourne City Council and the local community groups who worked so hard for it.

At the end of 1980 State Government announced that the elected Councillors were to be dismissed in 1981 and the boundaries to be reduced. Although a central childrens services committee and neighbourhood groups continued to work for the implementation of the policy during the two year's absence of an elected Council, a lot of energy was directed to getting an elected Council back and to preventing the previous State Government from breaking up the municipality as it announced it was going to do.

Implementing the Consultation..... Three Initiatives

At the end of 1982, the Commissioners were removed and Council elections held. The majority of the new Council is publicly committed to supporting the principles and policies of the Consultation Reports, as these were embedded within the ALP Melbourne City Council policy document, and also publically endorsed by a number of independent candidates.

Also towards the end of 1982, the Central Childrens Committee was trying to formulate a more appropriate participating co-ordinating structure for childrens services that would be capable of really developing a proper strategy for the implementation of the policies of the Reports, and then being active advocates for this. As a result of these deliberations, the following three new initiatives were recommended and put to a public meeting in March 1983.

- (i) That a new city-wide association of community-based childrens services be created.

- (ii) That regular quarterly forums be held to enable in-depth information exchange and discussion of major childrens services issues.
- (iii) That the new association become the Council's advisory body on family and childrens services.

The public meeting of March 1983 endorsed these proposals and the new Association is now launched.

The Way Forward

Will an historian in 2050 (in 70 years time - the same time span as 1913 to 1983), be able to trace how Melbourne City Council once again pioneered human services?

The attached summary and chart clearly show the past two turning points:

1920s - the Baby Health Centre movement

1940s - the Pre-school education movement

There are also welcome indications of the beginning of a turning point in the 1980s after the long gap of a generation from 1950.

The conditions for change in Council direction were laid in the early seventies by a combination of several factors. Firstly, there was the growth in community-based groups and initiatives. Secondly there was the new consciousness of the universal need for child care created by the women's movement. Thirdly, there were the important new initiatives being taken out that time by all three levels of government, including:

- the M.C.C.'s participating development of a Strategy plan for the whole municipality (1973)
- the State government's Consultation Report on Early Childhood Services (1972)
- the Federal government's introduction of the Child Care Act (1971)

However in relation to childrens services, the Melbourne City Council did not really begin to move on and/or respond to these changing conditions until 1979 when it committed itself to sponsoring the childrens services consultation in conjunction with community groups.

Today the indications are that we are at the turning point for a challenging third 'pioneering movement' for the municipality in the childrens services field.

This is a movement concerned with:

- (a) 'resurrounding' the nuclear family by creating strong neighbourhood communities, and
- (b) close Council/community co-operation in the planning and provision of services across the municipality.

Elected Councillors, Council staff, and local community groups and facing this challenge with enthusiasm.