



**Australian
National
University**

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20 June 2024

Parents of children in on campus community childcare services

Dear parents,

We recently wrote to you about the University's plan to invest in two new purpose-built facilities to replace the four ageing heritage-listed buildings that house our community childcare centres. The University has worked closely with the four centres for many years and takes great pride in the outstanding work done by the staff in each centre.

Nonetheless, we made the decision to construct new childcare centres because we want the families, the staff in the centres, and the children who spend their days there, to have modern and excellent facilities. The quality of the buildings should match the wonderful standard of the care offered in the centres – and it is important to emphasise that our decisions are about buildings. We have nothing but praise for the staff in the centres and the work they do. Feedback from the community has shown us again how valued they are.

We need new facilities because the centres are currently based in heritage-listed buildings. Heritage regulations mean we are severely restricted in the improvements we can make to their structures inside and out. These buildings were designed and built in a different era, and while we maintain them diligently, the buildings are showing their age and will in the coming months require closure to carry out hail remediation work that is becoming increasingly necessary.

As you are aware, there have been many disruptions to the centres because of their age and the fact they were not purpose-built childcare facilities. The University strives to meet its responsibilities to maintain the buildings, at its own expense, and in response to the needs of each centre. As an example, in January, the University carried out extended maintenance work in one of the centres due to possible lead paint contamination detected following testing we routinely carry out to assure safety in the facilities. While risk of contamination is carefully monitored and managed, it is a reality in heritage buildings of this kind and makes modern, purpose-built facilities attractive.

For these reasons, the University has chosen this moment, seven months ahead of the expiry of the existing community childcare centre licences, to engage on how we will manage childcare provision in the new centres beyond January.

We indicated our intention to run a fair procurement process to determine operating rights in the two new facilities. However, the value many ANU families place on the four community centres has become crystal clear and we appreciate the feedback from so many of you. It is also clear that the values of the centre operators and the consistency of staffing are very important.

So, we have today invited the four community childcare centre operators to negotiate directly and exclusively with us about ways they might operate the two new centres. We hope this will enable ANU to offer the childcare services we all clearly value in excellent new facilities from January.

Should we be unable to find agreement after these negotiations, we will need to move to a formal general procurement process from 22 July so that we can ensure childcare continues to operate on campus from the expiry of current licences.

We also take this opportunity to reassure that existing ANU families using the four heritage childcare centres will have priority place in the new facilities, which are anticipated to have enough places to meet the current ANU demand. Please continue to consult our FAQs [<https://services.anu.edu.au/human-resources/diversity-inclusion/families-and-carers/new-childcare-facilities-on-campus-faqs>], and in the meantime, please know that we want to deliver excellent childcare in excellent facilities and will work hard to achieve that.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christopher Price', written in a cursive style.

Christopher Price
Chief Operating Officer
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