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CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

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Submissions close on 16 April 2009

I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings to be held between Monday 11 May 2009 and Monday 18 May 2009.

Are you completing this submission:

On behalf of a group or organisation

If you are representing, how many people do you represent?

Name:

Sherryl Wilson

Organisation Name:

Canterbury Westland Free Kindergarten Association Incorporated, trading as Kidsfirst Kindergartens

Organisation Role:

Provider of Early Childhood Education across Canterbury and the Westcoast

Contact Address:

P O Box 8089
Riccarton
Christchurch

Postcode:

8011

Daytime Phone:

03 338 1303

Evening Phone:

Email:

sherryllw@kidsfirst.org.nz

Email Address for copy of submission:

sherryllw@kidsfirst.org.nz

Date:

16 April 2009

Your Submission:

Re: Christchurch City Council (CCC)
Statement of proposal for the future of the council's involvement in three early learning centres.

The Council of Canterbury Westland Free Kindergarten Association, trading as Kidsfirst Kindergartens, understands the issues facing the Christchurch City Council in the development of the long term Council Community Plan covering the next ten year year period.

Whilst we would be supportive of the Christchurch City Council retaining the three centres we understand the realities facing the Council of "defining and protecting core services and facilities, maintaining and improving infrastructure as well as providing a platform for the city to continue to prosper."

Therefore we endorse the CCC's proposal to:

- (a) outsource the operation of the QEII Preschool and Pioneer Learning Centres
- (b) sell the Tuam Street Early Learning Centre as a going concern, including or excluding the relocation of the current building by the purchaser. A lease would be offered on the land until such time as the Council or subsequent owner needed the site. If a sale cannot be achieved then the proposal is to close the Tuam Street Early Learning Centre.

Early childhood education in Christchurch today is a dynamic, rapidly

changing and strongly competitive sector with a large number of players in the market.

Gone are the days when early childhood education provision was solely the domain of organisations such as Playcentres, Kindergartens and other community based organisations (such as the Christchurch City Council).

We strongly believe, however, it is important that centres designed to serve the community should remain under the umbrella of a not-for-profit organisation and remain true to the objectives for which they were initially established.

Kidsfirst Kindergartens is such a not-for-profit community-based organisation with a long history of providing accessible, affordable, high quality early childhood and care.

Our experience and expertise has seen Kidsfirst become the largest provider of early childhood education in the South Island, catering annually to over 5,000 local children and their families through more than 60 kindergartens.

While still very much at the heart of the communities we operate in, we balance the accessible, historical and neighbourhood aspects of kindergarten with a well proven infrastructure of governance, management, administrative and educational skills - adding a level of professionalism and service co-ordination to the warmth and excitement of what is kindergarten.

We have been able to provide to generations of kiwi kids high quality early childhood education for nearly 100 years and we intend for this proud tradition to continue.

Sherrill Wilson
Chief executive