

## **Spirit of Play Community School Executive Summary April 2017**

### **Key message**

Spirit of Play Community School is striving to expedite its transition to its new site.

### **School Background**

Spirit of Play Community School has operated from the Old Post Office Building since 2003. The School has been supported in operating at this site by the Shire of Denmark. The School has expanded from a Kindergarten to Year One facility to a K-Year 4 facility in 2017.

The School community has grown in this time to currently accommodate 59 students from 38 families (plus a waitlist of 11 students), an additional 12 families in our affiliated playgroup, contracted school staff of 13 (plus 4 additional subcontractors) and 84 voting members of the Spirit of Play Association.

There are currently three families from Perth waiting for a confirmed place for their children before they move to Denmark.

### **School operations**

Spirit of Play has grown to be a financial contributor to the Shire of Denmark. The Spirit of Play has an operating turnover of in excess of \$750,000 per year. Spirit of Play paid salaries of over \$500,000 to local teachers, teaching aids and staff in 2016.

Spirit of Play contributed to the local community through expenditure in excess of \$250,000 in the construction of classrooms, hiring tradesmen, rent and local shop accounts. The School currently pays an annual rent of approximately \$15,000 to the Shire of Denmark, plus services.

### **Search for a New Site**

Spirit of Play School Council has been actively seeking a new site for the School for four years. This has included exploring the purchase of private land, an option on the ERR development, renting land and overtures to remain at the current site.

Despite regular requests from the school community to remain at the Old Post Office Site, the current School Council has actively sought to move the school to a new site.

### **Lot 5 South Coast Highway**

Following a meeting with Shire of Denmark CEO and Director of Planning and Sustainability in September 2016, the School Council became aware of a potential site within the Heath Development's Lot 5 South Coast Highway Development.

Spirit of Play School has worked incredibly quickly to evaluate the new site, while engaging professional planning services and building advice to ensure that a move to a new site is sustainable, bush fire compliant and a sound financial decision – all the while acknowledging the time pressures relating to the current site and other stakeholders.

As of March 1, 2017, the School Council has selected a site within the Lot 5 Development and are in direct negotiations with Heath Development to purchase this exact site and move the school as soon as physically possible.

### **Movement to a new site**

The Spirit of Play of School's ability to move its entire operation, including classrooms and site facilities to the yet to be developed site is dependent on the speed of the developers and the planning process. Since becoming aware of this development, the Spirit of Play has done everything within its powers to expedite its decision on a) whether to move to this site, b) the financial implications of doing so, and c) which area within the site we are to move to.

Heath Developers have intimated that we would be likely to obtain a title for our preferred site by early 2019.

The School is advised on building is that the site build can be completed on the new site, within twelve months of receiving the title (Appendix A: Timeline). All effort to expedite this process will be taken by the school.

To bridge this gap in our time lines, the Spirit of Play requires additional time on its current lease agreement.

### **School future**

The Spirit of Play Community School is in the process for applying for approval to educate students through to Year 6. The School currently linked to the national and international "Nature Play" movement and is creating a hub for Professional Development for educators.

The student population continues to grow, as does demand for places.

The School has a new Principal on an extended contract to manage this transition. The Principal is an experienced educator that has moved from Perth to take this position and its challenge.

### **Non-extension of lease**

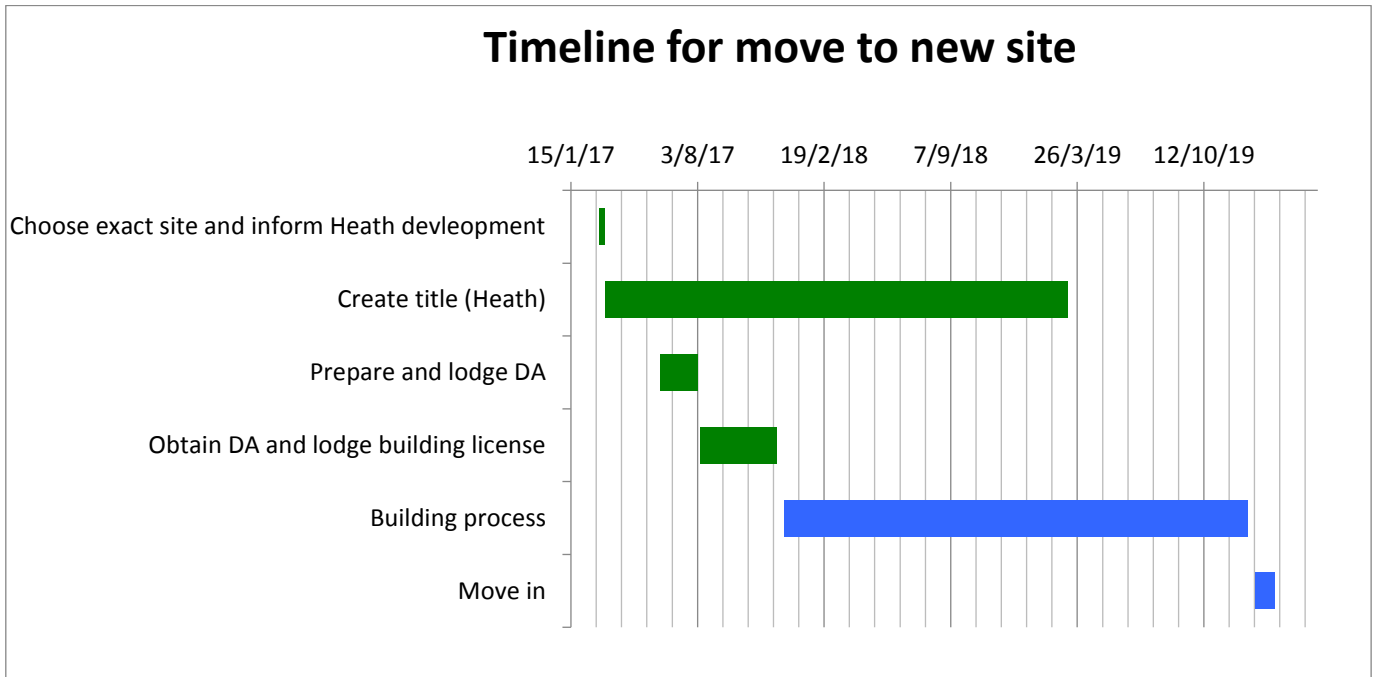
The non-extension of the Spirit of Play Community School's lease will leave the school short in its proposed transition, placing any move and in effect, the entire future of the school in significant jeopardy.

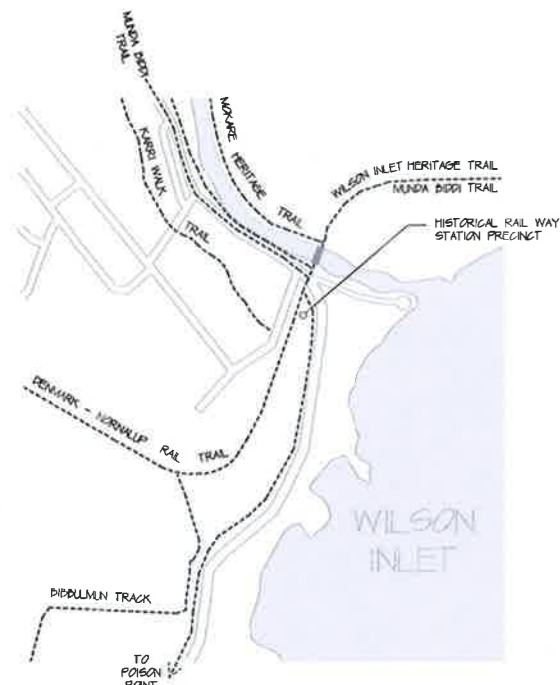
This has major implications on the educational and wellbeing outcomes of the 59 current students, and additional flow-on effects to their families and the staff employed by the school and the wider community.

### **Key Recommendations**

- The Shire of Denmark extend the Spirit of Play Community School lease at the Old Post Office Site to ensure the long-term future of the school.
- Spirit of Play and the Shire of Denmark work with other stakeholders that have an active interest in the site to ensure their long term needs are met.
- The Spirit of Play Community School continues to expedite its transition to Lot 5 South Coast Highway.

**APPENDIX 1**





TIMBER EXPORT



TIMBER LOGGING



WORKMAN & HORSES



DENMARK 1900



DENMARK RAILWAY STATION



DENMARK RAILWAY STATION 1980



REMNANT RAILWAY RAMPS & BRIDGE PIERS

LOCATION PLAN & TRAIL MAP  
NTS

### DENMARK RAILWAY STATION PRECINCT

THE FORMER DENMARK RAILWAY STATION WITH ITS RAILWAY LINES LEADING TO ALBANY AND NORNALUP FORMS AN IMPORTANT PART OF DENMARK'S HISTORICAL HERITAGE. IT PLAYED A LEADING REGIONAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TIMBER INDUSTRY AND IT WAS A VITAL PART IN PEOPLE'S LIVES UNTIL ITS FINAL CLOSURE IN 1987. THIS CONCEPT PLAN PORTRAYS THIS RICH AND INTERESTING HISTORY THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS.

- A LANDSCAPED PARK ADJACENT TO THE EXISTING MACHINERY SHED WITH EXHIBITION SPACES FOR HISTORICAL MACHINERY AND ARTIFACTS
- THE RELOCATION OF THE OLD RAILWAY STATION BUILDING TO THE SOUTH WEST OF THE PRECINCT WITH AN OPTION FOR COMMUNITY USE
- THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATURE PLAY SPACE WITH PICNIC FACILITIES ALONG HOLLINGS ROAD.
- THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION SYSTEM THROUGHOUT THE RAILWAY STATION PRECINCT AND EXTENDING ALONG THE HERITAGE RAILWAY TRAIL.

**TRAIL HUB**  
THIS AREA HAS A NATURAL CONVERGENCE OF WALKING, CYCLING AND BRIDLE TRAILS, WHICH ADDS SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE LIFESTYLE AND RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE AREA. THIS CONNECTIVITY IS A GREAT ASSET FOR THE FACILITY.

**LANDSCAPE**  
PLANTINGS WITHIN THE PRECINCT ARE TO BE INDIGENOUS SPECIES WITH AN EMPHASIS ON COLOURFUL WILDFLOWERS WHICH WOULD BE AT THEIR BEST IN SPRING. INDIGENOUS COLOURFUL WILDFLOWERS AND SMALL SHRUBS INCLUDE: *Acacia saligna*, *Boerhaavia aquilina*, *Boerhaavia gracilis*, *Chenopodium species*, *Hovea stipularis*, *Hibbertia species*, *Kanoodia coccinea*, *Lechenaultia biloba*, *Oxylobium capillatum* and *Tymalium floribundum*. FEATURE TREES WITHIN THE PRECINCT COULD BE *Corymbia foliolosa* KNOWN FOR ITS SPECTACULAR RED BLOSSOMS OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS.

THE VIEWING PLAY TOWERS LOCATED WITHIN THE PRECINCT COULD FEATURE INDIGENOUS CLIMBING PLANTS SUCH AS *Clematis pubescens* (OLD MAN'S BEARD) AND *Hardenbergia comptoniana* (NATIVE WISTERIA) WHICH FLOWER IN SPRING. CONSIDER FORMATION OF A FRIENDS OF DENMARK HISTORICAL RAILWAY STATION PRECINCT TO TACKLE THE REMOVAL OF WEEDY SPECIES IN PARTICULAR *Rubia pseudococcinea* WHICH ARE CURRENTLY DOMINATING THE VEGETATION ALONG THE HERITAGE RAILWAY TRAIL. SUCH A GROUP COULD ALSO BE INVOLVED IN REVEGETATING THE EXISTING CREEK BED WITH RUBUS AND SEDGES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BUFFER AND GREEN PLANTINGS WITHIN THE PRECINCT.

**HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION FOR CHILDREN**  
CHILDREN ARE NATURALLY HIGHLY INTERESTED IN THEIR SURROUNDING WORLD AND LOVE DISCOVERING AND LEARNING ABOUT ITS HISTORY. THEREFORE THE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION IN PLAY AREAS WILL BE CHILD SENSITIVE, INTERACTIVE AND FOLLOW THE TOUCH AND FEEL BASED 'LEARNING THROUGH PLAY' PHILOSOPHY. THE DELIVERY OF HISTORICAL FACTS TO CHILDREN IN PLAY AREAS COULD BE ACHIEVED THROUGH SCULPTURES, HISTORICAL MACHINERY & STRUCTURES AS WELL AS THE USE OF MATERIALS & TEXTURES REFLECTING UPON THE LIFE DURING THE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY IN DENMARK, AT THE 'MILLAR' TIMBER MILLS, THE TRAIN STATION AND THE TIMBER LOGGING AREAS. MACHINERY AND TOOLS LOCATED IN PLAYSPACES SHOULD BE MADE ACCESSIBLE FOR EXPLORATION, ADVENTURES, LEARNING & PLAY.

**'NATURE PLAY'**  
'NATURE PLAY' IS A WORLD WIDE MOVEMENT TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S PLAY OPPORTUNITIES AND TO DEVELOP STIMULATING PLAY ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN.

'NATURE PLAY' IS BASED ON RESEARCH INTO CHILD HEALTH AND WELLBEING, WHICH HAS REVEALED THAT A VARIETY OF FACTORS SUCH AS THE STANDARDIZATION OF PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS, DIMINISHING CONTACT WITH NATURE AS WELL AS THE INCREASE OF COMPUTER BASED ACTIVITIES MAY HAVE CAUSED PROBLEMS AND DEFIENCIES (SUCH AS OBESITY, SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR AND DEPRESSION) FOR SOME CHILDREN WHILE GROWING UP DUE TO A LACK OF STIMULATION, LACK OF UNSTRUCTURED PLAY AND LACK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES.

**THE VALUE OF NATURAL PLAYSPACES**  
RESEARCH HAS ALSO SHOWN THAT UNSTRUCTURED PLAY IN NATURAL OR SEMI-NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS ENHANCE CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT, INTEREST, IMAGINATION AND CONNECTION WITH NATURE. NATURAL SPACES ALSO SPONTANEOUSLY STIMULATE HIGH LEVELS OF PHYSICALLY ACTIVE PLAY IN CHILDREN AND IT ALSO INCREASED THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL INTERACTION, COOPERATION AND ACCEPTANCE IN BETWEEN CHILDREN.

**NATURAL PLAY ENVIRONMENTS**  
NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS ARE DYNAMIC, CONSTANTLY CHANGING IN SPACE AND TIME AND CONSIST OF A VARIETY OF HIGHLY COMPLEX HABITATS. THESE SPACES OFFER CHILDREN A MULTIPLICITY OF ENCOUNTERS AND SENSATIONS, A DIVERSITY OF TOPOGRAPHY, TEXTURES AND A VARIETY OF CHILD-SIZED SPACES, HIDEAWAYS AND HOLES TO EXPLORE AND INHABIT.



PRECINCT PLAN  
SCALE 1:1000

