



**Report on proposal for a child care service at:**  
2 BACHELLE AVE LIDCOMBE

**Written on behalf of Raad Property Acquisition No 10 Pty Ltd**

**by Lynda Campbell**



19<sup>th</sup> September 2024

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## About the author

Lynda Campbell is an Early Childhood Teacher with over 35 years experience in the children's service industry. This included several years as a validator with the National Child Care Accreditation Council (NCAC) where she travelled to many long day care services across Australia to assess quality practices.

She founded Early Education Solutions in 2012 to assist services to transition to the National Quality Framework and now consults on design and quality practices to achieve exceeding quality services for the Early Childhood Industry.

## Introduction

This report has been requested to respond to specific points from the Request for further information letter received from Cumberland City Council 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 in regard to DA2023/0775 that are within my area of expertise.

## Sufficient Unencumbered indoor space

The Education and Care Services National Regulation 107 – Space Requirements Indoor space allows for this calculation to be done across the whole service and not area by area. Architectural plans initially lacked detail to show there would be a child proof barrier to prevent children using the shared bathrooms as a thoroughfare. There were no other passageways between play rooms. The updated drawing DA251(B) identifies firstly that childproof barriers are provided at this thoroughfare. Secondly, the drawing confirms that each room meets the unencumbered space requirements and has been appropriately measured.

## Sufficient Unencumbered outdoor space

The Education and Care Services National Regulation 108 – Space Requirements Outdoor space allows for this calculation to be done across the whole service and not area by area.

The Education and Care Services National regulation 108 also does not exclude door swings for outdoor areas recognising that once children move through the door an educator may set up a mat in this space for children to sit and play.

Notwithstanding, The architectural plan drawing DA 251 confirms there is 764sqm provided when the requirement is 742sqm for the proposed number of 106 children.

## Ventilation & Natural Light

Additional windows have been shown on the plans. Drawing DA254 has been provided confirming compliance with the NCC for both light and ventilation requirements for the play rooms.

Due to their use, cot rooms are typically provided with mechanical ventilation.

## Premises designed for supervision

Design has been amended to merge the two separate play rooms 1 and 2 to now form one larger room and nappy change area and bottle preparation area have been re-configured to provide better lines of sight and improve supervision by educators not having to completely leave the room. Amended architectural plans show these changes.

An external door has been added into the nappy change room for easy access to the outdoor area.

Viewing windows have been provided into bottle preparation area, cot room and children's bathrooms.

There will be a child proof barrier to stop children from playroom 5 and 6 entering the bathroom unsupervised, and likewise between playrooms 3 and 4.

## Emergency & Evacuation Procedure Other Matters

Whilst the RFI notes that lifts cannot be used in a fire, we understand that the proponent has engaged a BCA consultant and a fire engineer to determine a bespoke evacuation strategy which sees lift 2 becoming an emergency evacuation lift in the event of an emergency. This strategy considers FRNSW's advice on elevated child care centres.

If the lift is able to be used then non mobile children would be placed in emergency and evacuation cots (which are able to be used as regular cots) and these cots have durable wheels that can go over rough terrain if required. Up to 4 infants are placed in a cot and the educator can push it.

Additionally, there are two flights of fire stairs (one a double set) available to the child care service.

The non – mobile children would be placed on an emergency evacuation mattress if the emergency evacuation lift was not able to be used (as shown below at appendix one).

The emergency evacuation plan has been amended in light of Councils comments and has now proposed an amended emergency & evacuation muster point along Bachell Ave on the grass verge. This would not require children to cross the road.

## Other Matters

Educators would arrive by 6.45am and be ready to open the service for parents who arrive from 7am. If these parents drive they would arrive into the car parking from 6.50am however the service doors would not be open until 7am.

If the lift is not functioning there is an alternate lift or fire stairs would be used.

The Plan of Management reference to assisting neighbours was an error. Children would not leave the facility unless there was a planned excursion and all relevant authorisations had occurred. The plan of management has been updated

There was concern regarding the location of a child care facility near potential businesses that sold liquor. I am of the understanding that there will only be restaurants that may be licenced to sell liquor to customers who are dining in.



The child care centre is on a different level to these restaurants and so this would mean that there is no potential conflicts with patrons who would typically be eating or drinking outside of the service peak operating hours.

Any parent and child who is using the common areas near the restaurants would be no different to any other parent and child walking along a road with adjacent restaurants.

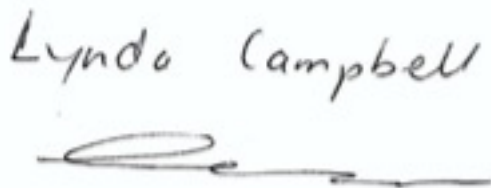
## Conclusion

It is my expert opinion that with proposed amendments to the Plan of management the child care service will be able to meet all the requirements to obtain a service approval and be compliant with all relevant National Education and Care Services Regulations.

I certify that I have been engaged as a child care expert to prepare and be been provided with documents to prepare this report in accordance with the Expert Witness Code of Conduct set out in Schedule 7 to the Uniform Civil Procedure Rules 2005 (NSW) (UCPR).

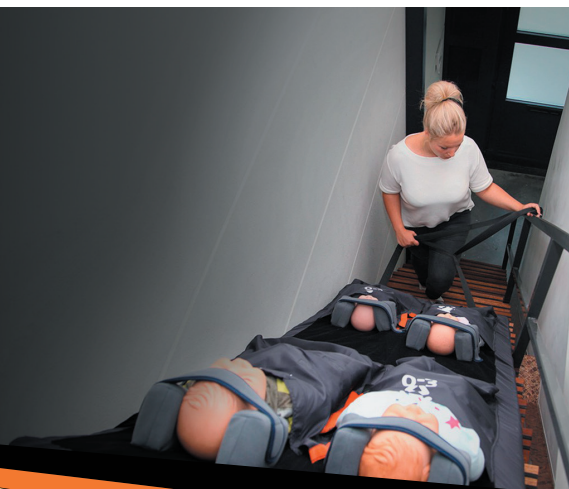
I acknowledge that I have read the Expert Witness Code of Conduct set out in schedule 7 of the NSW Uniform Civil Procedures Rules 2005, and I agree to be bound by it. I have made all inquiries which I believe are desirable and appropriate (save for any matters identified explicitly in the report), and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant, have, to my knowledge, been withheld from the report.

Signed



Lynda Campbell

Appendix 1: Evacuation devise for non- mobile children to go downstairs



## S-CAPEKIDS Evacuation Mattress *for Childcare and Healthcare*

As the head of a maternity/ children's department or childcare centre, you are responsible for the safety and well-being of all of the children. You work every day to ensure they are well cared for, but what do you do in an emergency? What if the worst happens, and a fire breaks out? How will you get all of the children to safety quickly?

In the case of an evacuation, you can only carry two kids at a time down the stairs and out to safety. Time is of the essence, and the more time you spend going back and forth, their safety could be in danger.



**Designed for childcare centres,  
maternity departments and  
children's hospitals**

Using the S-CAPEKIDS, one carer can evacuate four or five babies. In combination with a baby carrying bag, the carer also keeps one baby on the back shoulder or at the front side. The device allows you to evacuate up and down the stairs.



**EvacuLife Evacuation Products**  
[www.evaculife.com.au](http://www.evaculife.com.au)

## Appendix 2: Revised Emergency Procedures

Prior to commencement of operation of the centre, a risk management plan will be prepared to assess the likelihood of possible emergencies and develop a range of emergency procedures in line with these risks.

These procedures will include emergency evacuation and lock down.

Regulation 97 requires emergency and evacuation procedures to be rehearsed at least every 3 months. Rehearsals should take place at various times of the day and week to ensure that everyone at the service has the opportunity to rehearse. These drills are to be documented to allow for reflection on their effectiveness.

The service will conduct emergency drills more often than required under the Education & Care Services National Regulations as these will be done on a monthly basis.

This proposed procedure has been prepared in accordance with AS 3745:2010

### Emergency Evacuation Plan

Prior to commencement of operation of the centre, a comprehensive Emergency Evacuations procedure will be prepared by a licensed and accredited fire expert. Fire evacuation plans will be installed around the centre as per the expert's recommendations. This plan and the procedures will be checked by DET before a license to operate the centre is issued.

All play rooms and the outdoor play area will have an emergency pack which includes whistles for teachers, roll call list, emergency contact details, a torch, water bottle. Staff will take this should an emergency evacuation be necessary.

All rooms will also have the relevant evacuation equipment for each age group including an emergency evacuation cot (used for children who cannot walk yet); grab and go straps for the toddler age group and rope with straps for the preschool aged children to hold on to.

Management will ensure staff are appropriately trained in the use of fire safety equipment and fully understand the evacuation procedures in the case of a fire emergency. In addition, practice fire drills will occur at least every 3 months to ensure that all staff and children are proficient in the procedures.

Emergency evacuation procedures that are based on the service's floor plans will be prominently displayed near each emergency exit. The Emergency Evacuation Procedure will detail the steps to be taken in the event of an evacuation including specific roles that need to be carried out by staff.

The service will maintain an up-to-date and compact register of emergency telephone numbers that must be taken in an emergency or evacuation.

Emergency telephone numbers will be displayed prominently throughout the service near all telephones.

The service will ensure educators are provided with training on how to use fire extinguishers, fire blankets and other emergency equipment.

Fire extinguishers, fire blankets and other emergency equipment will be tested as recommended by the manufacturer by recognised authorities. All tests must be documented.





Emergency and evacuation procedures will be discussed with families and regular information will be provided to families.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all educators, including relief educators and staff members, are aware of the service's policies and procedures relating to Emergency Management and Evacuation.

Informal games and discussions will be used to familiarise children with the service's evacuation and emergency procedures.

The service has a range of evacuation equipment to cater to the various ages and mobility of children. This will include 'grab and go' straps and evacuation ropes. Part of the evaluation process when evacuation practices are done is to determine any issues or challenges that need to be addressed.

### Proposed Evacuation Procedure

Evacuation and emergency procedures will be finalised with consultation from expert prior to service approval.

Evacuation signal will be a whistle blown for 3 seconds and repeated as necessary until all areas are aware of need to evacuate.

Whom ever blows the whistle will also call where emergency is within the building.

Upon hearing the signal the educator in the area will gather the group of children and tell them where they are walking to. For example "Let's hold hands and walk to the front door"

The responsible person on duty will collect the sign on sheets from reception area (or tablet if electronic sign in) and the emergency evacuation bag/phone on the way out. They will call emergency services.

If the responsible person is supervising a group of children another educator who is close by will take over supervision of those children.

#### Evacuation Stairs

Where an evacuation route involves the use of stairs, the youngest age grouping of children will enter the evacuation stairwell first with the remaining age groupings following youngest to oldest. Employees will space themselves along the balustrading and railings to act as a physical guard and barrier between children and railings and assist children down the stairwells moving down with the children to the bottom, where possible

Children will muster near evacuation lift 2 or fire stairs (depending on route out) for a head count before proceeding out of the building.

When all children and staff are assembled the responsible person will call the roll to ensure everyone is at the assembly area.

Egress evacuation point is out the front of the site and then the emergency evacuation safe haven meeting point is the grass verge adjacent to the centre on Bachel Ave.

Children will be seated at the evacuation area and sing songs/have stories until the all clear to return to the play rooms is given or await collection from the parent.

The service has a supply of food available on site should an emergency occur that prevents children leaving the site.

#### *Draft Lock down Procedure:*

Whilst many emergency situations will require staff and children to evacuate from the Service, there are potential situations that will require the Service to go into 'lockdown'.

Within early childhood services there are two types of lockdown that may be required:

- **'Full lockdown'** indicating that there is a potential threat outside that you wish to prevent from entering the building. For example:
  - Potentially dangerous unwanted or uninvited intruder
  - Potentially dangerous person due to intoxication or substance abuse
  - Receiving an emergency services warning about a reported incident or civil disturbance
- **'Shelter-in-place'** which generally will be required when there is a real or perceived threat to health or safety. For example:
  - Severe storms
  - Extreme smoke from a local or distant bushfire
  - Chemical or hazardous substance spill
  - Gas leak / atmospheric hazardous substance
  - Flood outside of the service
  - Unidentified dangerous animal or insects

Lockdown means that all windows and external doors are locked, and where possible internal doors are locked, and blinds closed.

For a 'Shelter-in-place' lockdown children are able to participate in the usual experiences and activities: However, for a 'Full lockdown' children and adults must be moved to a room/position that does not allow them to be viewed.

Risk assessment in possible emergency situations:

Type of emergency	Issue	Risk	Control strategies
Any evacuation	Child wanders off	Possible	Younger children have grab and go straps. Older children hold the rope.
Any evacuation	Traffic	Possible	Responsible person will have a safety vest and stop traffic if required.

Any emergency	Child distress	Likely	Have regular practice drills and discussions about how the children will be kept safe. Regular visits from emergency services such as fire brigade to assist children become familiar with sirens/lights.
Any evacuation	Children may be asleep when evacuation occurs	Possible	Have practice drills during these times.
Any emergency	Phone line is cut	Possible	Responsible person to take alternate phone such as mobile.

