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Interim Lease Solution For Willetton Child Care Centre?

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton, called on the City of Canning and the Department of Communities to issue an Interim Lease to the Willetton Child Care Centre to operate during the period that the Council is undertaking its facilities audit to allow the Centre to proceed with its \$132,000 upgrade.

"I believe the Council and the Department of Communities could issue an Interim Lease to the Centre to let them operate at least until the Council's review of its facilities audit is completed in August 2012," said Dr Nahan.

"The stumbling block for the Centre has been that as it does not currently have a lease, Lotterywest cannot give them the \$132,000 funds they have been awarded."

"By issuing an Interim Lease for a set period, it would allow the Willetton Child Care Centre to access the Lotterywest funds and get on with its much needed upgrade to its kitchen and wet areas. It would also allow Council time to complete its audit in due course."

Dr Nahan said it is appropriate for Councils to undertake a facilities audit from time to time but he was disappointed that the City of Canning had so far failed to expedite the Centre's lease.

"The council should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. It should be able to speed up some matters like this one that are time critical while reviewing the majority as a whole. I urge Council to consider the Interim Lease option."

Dr Nahan said the Council's inaction has left 100 or so local young working families and their children who use the Centre in limbo.

"They are totally hamstrung by this situation. In the meantime, a child care licensing inspector could visit the facility at any time and declare its kitchen and wet areas non-compliant. The place would have to close, leaving these working families with no child care facilities for their young children to go to," said Dr Nahan.

"The State Government, through the Department of Communities, has put more than \$200,000 into the centre over the last two years. It has a further \$50,000 earmarked for it and together with the \$132,000 Lotterywest grant; it would have seen the facility become a vibrant, well equipped and modern child care centre."

"In contrast, the City of Canning has invested little or no funds into the Centre over the last two decades. I would be gravely disappointed if this whole issue is just an asset grab by the council. This matter should be about securing a need in the community not leaving the community in the lurch. By issuing an Interim Lease, it would be a win-win situation all round."

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