

COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

(Open to the public)

Monday 11 April 2022

Council Chamber, 8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell.

Commencement 8.13pm

Attendance

Councillor Jane Addis (Mayor)
Councillor Jim Parke
Councillor Felicity Sinfield
Councillor Victor Franco
Councillor Wes Gault
Councillor Di Gillies
Councillor Lisa Hollingsworth
Councillor Cynthia Watson
Councillor Susan Biggar
Councillor Nick Stavrou

Apologies Councillor Thompson (Leave of Absence)

<u>Officers</u>	Phillip Storer	Chief Executive Officer
	Christine White	Acting Director Places and Spaces
	Carolyn McClean	Director Community Support (Via Video Link)
	Gail Power	Acting Director Community Support
	Scott Walker	Director Urban Living
	Mans Bassi	Director Customer and Transformation
	Amy Montalti	Chief Financial Officer
	Ashlee Camm	Acting Executive Manager People Culture & Development
	Adele Thyer	Acting Manager Governance and Legal
	Tina Bourekas	Manager Library Services
	Michelle Forster	Active Ageing Lead
	Elizabeth Manou	Senior Governance Officer

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2. Declaration of conflict of interest of any councillor or council officer

Refer to Item 3.1 - Aged Services Reform - Councillor Hollingsworth

3. Presentation of officer reports

3.1 Aged Services Reform

Purpose

On behalf of the Australian Government, Council is contracted to provide a range of in-home services including domestic assistance, personal care, respite care, meal preparation, property maintenance and property modifications. The purpose of this report is to present the results of the client consultation undertaken in relation to a proposal to transition clients receiving these services to an alternative provider as nominated by the Australian Government, by 30 June 2022, the end date of the current contract with the Australian Government. As 98 percent of CHSP clients support the proposed transition, this report seeks an in principle Council resolution to transition these specific CHSP program components to the Australian Government's nominated provider.

The proposed transition of these program components to a provider who is registered with the CHSP for all of these program components and who possesses the expertise and capacity to accept all of the current CHSP clients will ensure client continuity of care during an imminent period of substantial and rapid change to the provision of community aged care in Australia resulting from the Australian Government's aged care reforms.

Background

The Australian Government's aged care reform agenda is now gathering significant momentum in preparation for the entirely new, open market, consumer driven **Support at Home** program from 1 July 2023.

The **Support at Home** program will place greater emphasis on the unique needs and circumstance of individuals to support them to remain living independently for longer. Providers will need to flexibly deliver a wider range of services based on an individual's needs, rather than the current fixed suite of services which is the basis of the CHSP. **Support at Home** providers will need to be in the position to accept aged care clients who have varying complexity of needs, which will range from clients with low level to high level care needs. Clients with higher care needs will require appropriate clinical support to ensure duty of care is appropriately exercised to meet clients' needs. This will require specialist services such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy, nursing support and the provision of technologies to help with day-to-day activities. Council only provides services to clients with low level needs and does not have expertise or experience to deliver to clients with high care needs. Should Council approve this proposed transition, the provider nominated by the Australian Government has the expertise and personnel to be able to provide services for all levels of aged care clients' needs.

Council cannot continue to provide the current suite of in-home services under the new model due to:

1. The subsidy which Council currently pays towards the operational costs of CHSP will be seen as anti-competitive in an open market and in breach of the National Competition Policy.
2. The suite of in-home services Council currently provides are the basic entry level aged care services. Council does not have the capacity nor the expertise or skill base to deliver the range of personalised services expected to be available to clients under the new **Support at Home** program.

To assist Council's decision-making and enable meaningful consultation with clients on the potential transition of in-home CHSP services to an alternative provider, a request was made of the Australian Government to identify a potential suitable alternative provider. Following a due diligence process undertaken by the Australian Government, the Australian Government identified *mecwacare*, a local not-for-profit aged care provider who has provided care to the Victorian community since 1959, as the potential new provider.

Key Issues

- Delaying the potential transition of in-home CHSP services until 1 July 2023 will jeopardise the continuity of care for clients as the bulk transfer of clients would no longer be possible and Council would be unable to recommend a provider to clients as the sector moves to a fully commercialised model. Furthermore, Council would be unable to provide a careful and considered handover of clients to the alternative provider. Any delay would reduce the likelihood of a seamless transition and certainty into the future for clients, as it is expected there will be a degree of turbulence in the industry due to the introduction of many changes in the service system leading up to 1 July 2023.
- Consultation with clients on the proposed transition of in-home CHSP services to *mecwacare* has been undertaken and the proposal has been well received by clients. Council staff contacted 98% of regular CHSP service users individually by phone and 1,144 property maintenance clients received an information pack. Only 2%, or 41 clients, indicated they would prefer to transition to a provider other than *mecwacare* if the proposal were to proceed. Seventeen of these clients (<1% of all clients) were against the proposal. The remaining 24 clients had either other arrangements in place or would like to be supported to access services from a different provider. Officers would support these clients to move to the provider of their choice before 30 June 2022, via My Aged Care. The most frequently reported feedback is that clients wish for a seamless transition to take place between the two providers.

It should be noted since 1 January 2022, six councils have resolved to exit CHSP services, bringing the total number of councils in Victoria to have publicly announced their exit from these services to 23. This also highlights another risk that with many more councils likely to exit CHSP over the coming months, Council could miss the opportunity to have a highly controlled transition for clients to a well-regarded not-for-profit provider with the capacity and expertise to take on all current Council CHSP clients should those clients agree.

- This proposal does not impact on the community-based aged care programs and services provided by Council. Council will continue to focus on and provide services unique to local government, and which are available to a far greater number of older people, including, but not limited to:
 - o Community Transport, including the municipal-wide community bus
 - o Social Support group excursions and activities
 - o Library and Arts events
 - o Library at Home service for vulnerable and isolated people
 - o Funding support for seniors' centres and U3A's
 - o Recruitment of volunteers to support services for seniors
 - o Provision of grants to seniors' groups and programs
 - o Functional exercise and recreational programs
 - o Add Life to Your Years - Over 55's digital hub which lists all available activities in Boroondara
- By Council deciding to accept the proposed transition to the Australian Government's nominated provider from 1 July 2022, and not waiting until the introduction of the **Support at Home** program which will be fully commercialised and driven by consumer choice on 1 July 2023, clients will have the security of being serviced by a well-established local community provider which has the capacity and expertise to provide the full suite of aged care services. Additionally, if they so choose, CHSP clients will be able to remain with *mecwacare* after the introduction of **Support at Home**. These are important considerations as, when the Australian Government changes funding arrangements on 1 July 2023 to a system similar to the NDIS, it is expected there will be a degree of turbulence in the industry due to the introduction of many changes in the service system.

This report is informed by the staff consultation process, during which 61 directly impacted staff and 6 indirectly impacted staff (and their representatives) were consulted regarding the proposal and the potential impact to their role at Council.

Confidential information is contained in **Attachment 1**, as circulated in the confidential section of the agenda attachments, in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) and the definitions of 'confidential information' in Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020. The information relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

The item has been included in the public agenda to facilitate transparency and accountability in Council's decision making.

If discussion of the confidential information in the attachments to this report is required in order for Council to make a decision, this item will be deferred to the confidential section of the agenda.

MOTION

Moved Councillor Franco

Seconded Councillor Parke

That Standing Orders be suspended.

CARRIED

Standing Orders were suspended at 8.40pm.

Council heard submissions from representatives of the following organisations:

- Bob Stensholt - Samarinda
- Craig Bardrick - BASS Care
- Emma Bagg - Australian Services Union

MOTION

Moved Councillor Parke

Seconded Councillor Stavrou

That Standing Orders be resumed.

CARRIED

Standing Orders were resumed at 9.12pm.

Councillor Stavrou left the chamber at 9.16pm.

Councillor Stavrou entered the chamber at 9.17pm and resumed his seat.

Councillor Hollingsworth declared a general conflict of interest in accordance with section 127 of the Local Government Act 2020. Councillor Hollingsworth declared the nature of the interest is “my mother is a resident of BASS Care”.

Councillor Hollingsworth left the meeting at 9.21pm before the consideration and vote on this item.

MOTION

Moved Councillor Gault

Seconded Councillor Watson

The Officer’s recommendation is that any Council resolution be made only on an in principle basis because there is a dispute between Council and the Australian Services Union about compliance with the consultation provisions in Council’s enterprise agreement (with such dispute currently being before the Fair Work Commission).

That Council resolve (on an in principle basis) to:

1. **Transition the in-home CHSP services of domestic assistance, personal care, respite care, meal preparation, property maintenance and property modifications, by 30 June 2022 to the Australian Government's nominated provider.**
2. **Work with the Australian Government and mecware to ensure the smooth transition of Council's current in-home CHSP clients by 30 June 2022.**
3. **Support any client not wishing to transition to mecware to transition to an alternative provider by 30 June 2022.**

CARRIED

The meeting concluded at 10.10pm

Confirmed

Chairperson

Date
