

## Media Release

Friday 9 July 2021

### **New Early Learning Centre for the Shellharbour LGA**

In response to the growing demand for high quality long day care places in the Shellharbour area, CatholicCare propose to open an Early Learning Centre in early 2022.

A popular choice for young families, the Shellharbour LGA is experiencing ongoing residential growth, which is projected to continue until 2041. The expected increase is 24,385 people and 1,522 0-4 year-olds, from 2016 to 2041.

After extensive research and consultation, CatholicCare recognised an important unmet need for long day care places in the Shellharbour area. The consultation has led to the proposed DA currently before Shellharbour Council.

Located within the precinct of All Saints Parish and Nazareth Primary School, the new 60 place long day care centre will provide a high-quality early education experience for children and families, supporting a seamless transition to school.

"We're delighted to announce CatholicCare plans to provide a new long day care service for working families in the Shellharbour LGA, pending government approvals", said Director Michael Austin.

"There is a highly compelling evidence base that investment in early years education has a profound impact on the positive life trajectories of children throughout their lives, he said.

"We already operate Out of Hours School Care services in local primary schools, so this service is an extension of the support we provide working parents who need quality education and care for children aged 2-5 years", he continued.

We are consulting with local schools and parent groups to understand how we can best meet the needs of the community.

"Once the DA and other government approvals are finalised, and the engagement is complete, we aim to have the service up and running in early 2022. We will open up an expression of interest in September for families looking to secure a placement", said Mr Austin.

Highly qualified educators will deliver pre-school programs, catering for each child's needs and development, supported by a framework to guide and build strong early learning foundations so the children can thrive. Families using the centre will benefit from access to an extensive suite of CatholicCare family wellbeing services, including counselling and parenting workshops.

The service is open to all families in the local community. To find out more call 42271122 or [enquiries@catholiccare.dow.org.au](mailto:enquiries@catholiccare.dow.org.au).

**Media Contact: Pippa Spence 0408 272 759**