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Media release for immediate distribution

C&K vision for nature in early childhood breathes new life into the old Ithaca TAFE site

Utilising the outdoor natural environment at the old Ithaca TAFE site at 29 Nathan Avenue Ashgrove, C&K plans to establish an early childhood training facility as the key feature of the C&K Centre for Excellence.

C&K Chief Executive Officer, Barrie Elvish, said that the nature kindergarten approach was well established in Germany and Scandinavia and was a growing influence on early childhood education thinking in the United Kingdom and North America.

“There’s lots of evidence that being outdoors benefits children both in terms of physical health and their general wellbeing,” Mr Elvish said.

“The plans we have for the early childhood centre at the C&K Centre for Excellence will incorporate the indigenous flora and fauna in a large space that encourages children to explore and climb, make their own special places, cook their own produce and possibly even have sleep-outs with their parents overnight.

“The childcare centre will be part of a wider early childhood training facility at the C&K Centre for Excellence that will service the sector throughout Australia and internationally” Mr Elvish said.

In addition to the Australian first early childhood training facility, the C&K Centre for Excellence will include the C&K College of Early Childhood, training facilities, research and innovation unit and administration.

Work began in May 2012 cleaning up the site, removing asbestos and diseased vegetation before beginning the substantial refurbishment of the existing buildings. Rejuvenating the grounds and gardens is a key priority.

The existing C&K head office located at 14 Edmondstone Street, Newmarket since 1977 has been sold. The office spaces are no longer viable for an organisation that manages almost 400 early childhood services across Queensland.

C&K and the Hear and Say Centre signed an agreement to be co-owners of the site late last year. The C&K Centre for Excellence will span across five buildings on the site.

C&K expects that the building project will be completed by April 2013.

A community information session was held on site on Saturday 16 June 2012 for local residents to meet with C&K representatives, view plans of the project and enjoy a sausage sizzle to help raise funds of the Australian Literacy & Numeracy Foundation “Wall of Hands 2012” campaign.

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