

Mechanics Institute Hall Proposal Expansion

Mechanics Institute Hall Proposal Expansion, June 2013

To be read in conjunction with the original proposal entitled

**A PROPOSAL FOR THE ONGOING USE OF
THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE HALL**

AN INVESTMENT IN FRANKSTON'S FUTURE

by Sandi Walters and Melinda Shelley, April 2013.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal – The Need

The Frankston community is desperately lacking a community centre that is operated using a mixture of innovative and traditional methods that are true to the well-being of the community.

We propose that a new team be appointed to manage the Frankston Mechanics Institute, and that team develops a centre that is volunteer managed and operated by the community for the community.

Ideally we will appoint a casual staff member at a later date, when financially possible, to ensure the ongoing development and success of the facility, but this is not a requirement to open the facility successfully.

We have a proven track record with the successful relocation, operation and growth of the Frankston Toy Library and we are volunteering our services to ensure the success of this venture.

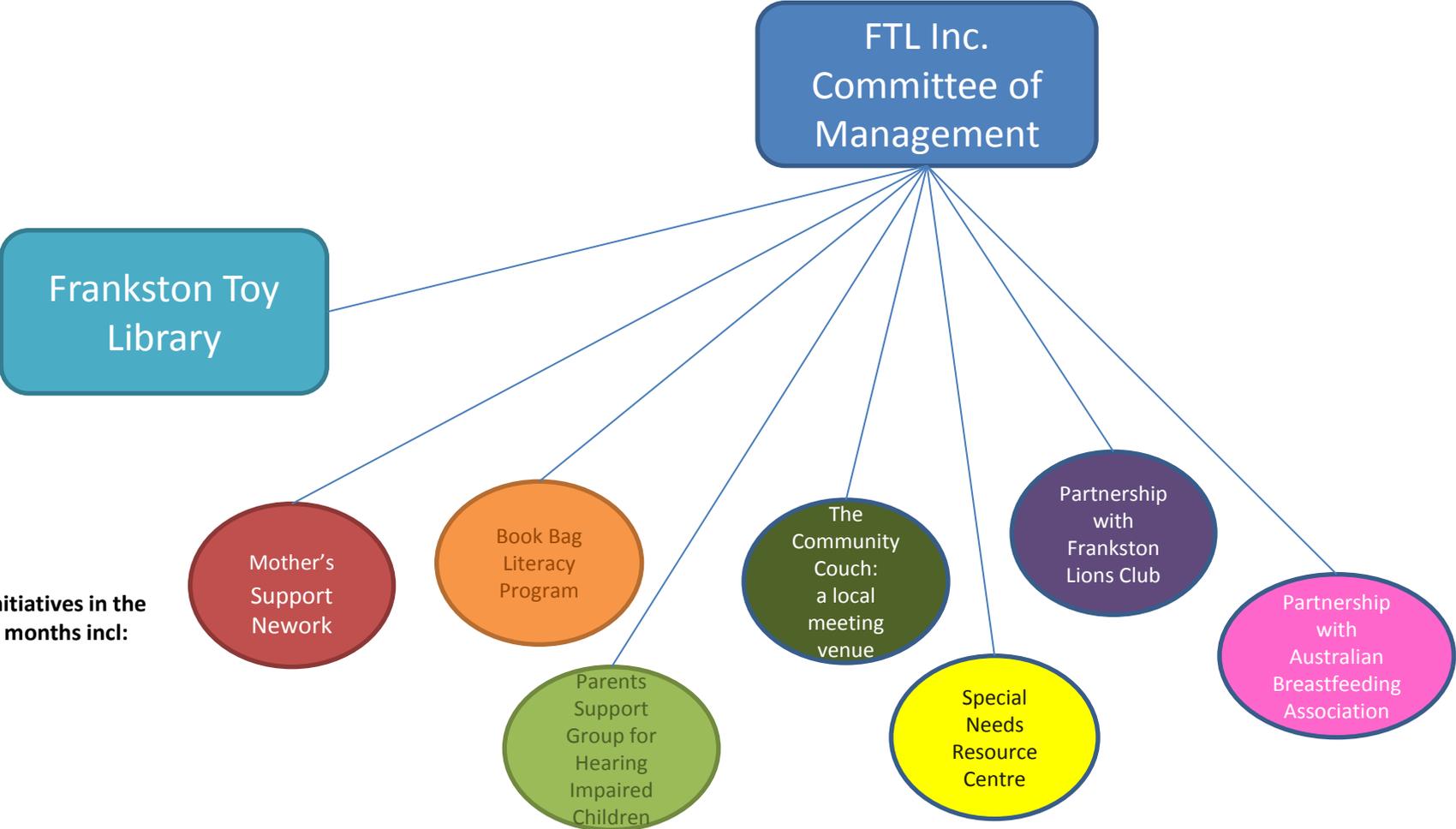
Use of the Mechanics Institute Hall for a community centre would in no way be exclusive to our group, in fact, we aim to make the opposite true.

We believe that the facility would be used more often and by more members of the community than the current situation.

We would bring families back to the area that has been avoided due to the former strip club location and provide a service that could address the numerous issues facing our community.

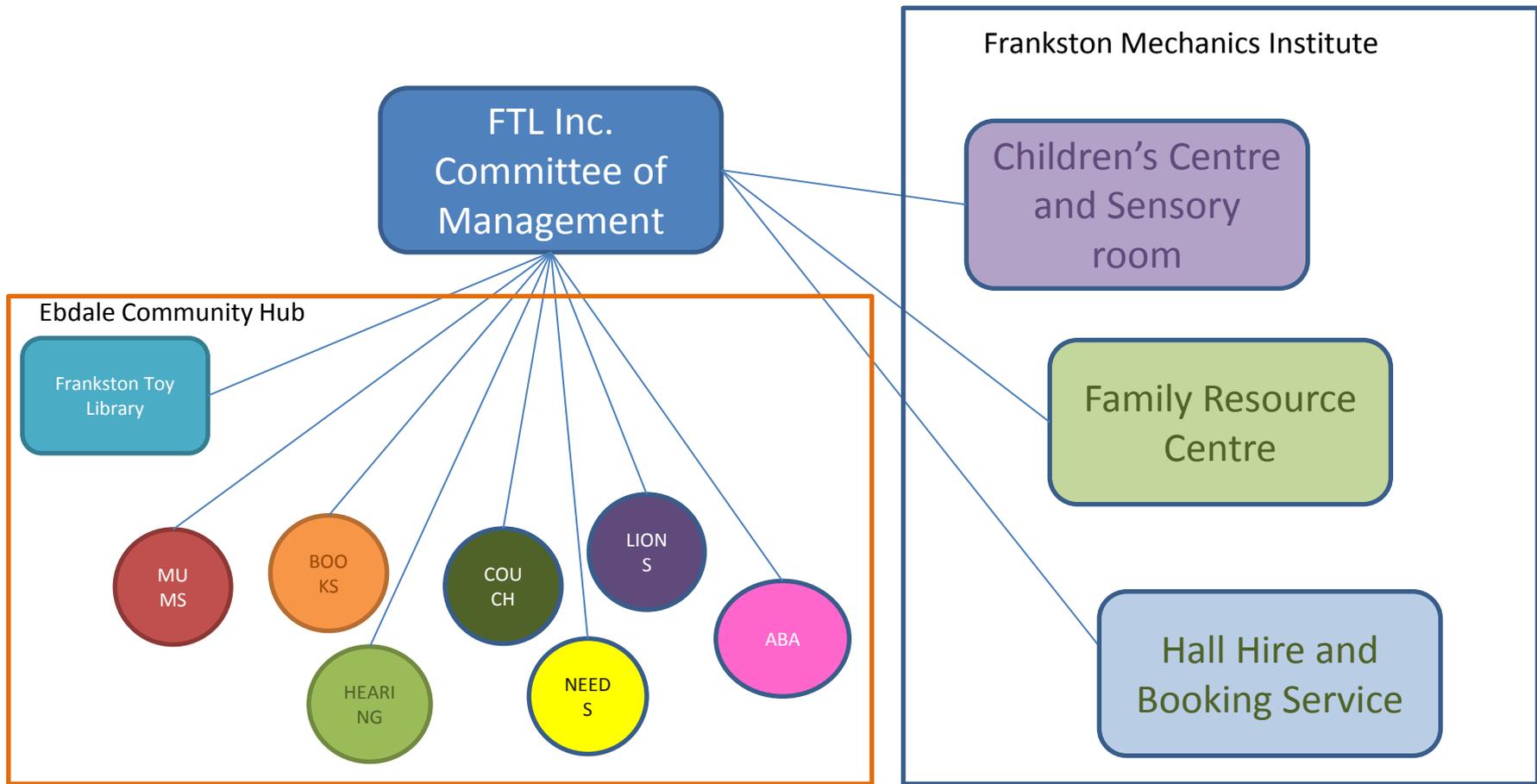
We are willing to work with other groups currently using the hall to ensure everyone is happy the transition.

FTL Management Committee
- current achievements



New initiatives in the last 12 months incl:

FTL Management Committee
- Frankston Mechanics Institute
Management Proposal



There are currently 106,860 children under the age of nine in the City of Frankston and neighbouring areas. While other community centres are in existence, none are capable of diverse offerings as that of the Mechanics Institute. We are so excited about the possibilities of utilising this facility to support the Frankston Community.

The services would be promoted to residents within the City of Frankston and created for these residents and their needs. However, the facilities we are proposing, such as a sensory room, could attract visitors from surrounding suburbs. It would be our intention to make this centre a highly desired facility that leads the way in community development and well-being.

Our aim would be to provide activities for children and families during the day, outside of hours the hall could be loaned to community groups with a key focus on groups that are inclusive of other community groups and community well-being. Effectively we would manage the facility and ensure its ongoing use and ability to play a key role in the City of Frankston. We foresee that it would be used every day by several groups of people. We would ensure it is accessible to all age groups and abilities.

While the sensory room would be a key attraction at the facility it would not be the only attraction and could be developed over time.

The sensory room would be for visual and auditory stimulation, cause and effect, tactile experiences and calming benefits this would appeal to a range of sensory needs for all ages.

There is an opportunity to involve local therapy students in the development of this room. A sensory room is of benefit to children with anxiety and disabilities, children in general, adults with depression and it is proven to also benefit the elderly.

The operation would be primarily managed by volunteers in return this will save council time, effort and finances. Many of our existing buildings are managed by the council which significantly drains community funds. We are asking that you consider the possibility of allowing an extremely capable committee of volunteers to manage one building for the benefit of the community.

The building which has had extensive funds spent on renovating it would be utilised more frequently providing a much loved community facility with infectious community spirit.

The services that would be provided would be anything relevant to children, including but not limited to:

- music,
- craft,
- literacy,
- Playgroup,
- exercise,
- nature and
- family well-being.

The management team would also encourage community groups to engage with the children for example Kananook Creek Association, local theatre groups, aboriginal groups, etc who could work with the children to encourage awareness of their various programs and encourage mutually beneficial relationships.

Such groups may also use the facility for meetings and fundraising.

The venue would be available for hire and accessible by local community groups.

The facility may also be used to address community issues as they arise such as provide free self-defence classes for women as we are one of the highest risk areas facing domestic violence, parent education classes, a meeting venue for various community groups and other uses as seen fit by the committee.

We would be keen to work with council to determine the areas of need and develop an action plan as to what the facility could do to counteract the issues and proactively challenge them.



Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal – The Leadership and Vision

To make this exciting venture a reality we would simply need the council to commit and entrust the Frankston Toy Library team under the direction of President Sandi Walters to take over management of the building.

Services would quickly commence and the sensory room would be developed as funding becomes available.

Sandi has a professional background in Fundraising, Public Relations and Marketing for non-profit organisations which later led to lecturing at university.

She has strong managerial skills and a passion for doing her part to make a difference in our community.

Sandi commits to this project with passion and will personally oversee its development.

Service costs would vary. The aim would be to provide as many free or low cost services as possible to be inclusive to low income areas whilst remaining cost neutral.

Activities that are of cost and attractive to parents of higher income would also be provided to ensure use by all members of the community and ensure some financial flow through the facility to maintain operational costs incurred.

The Mechanics Institute Hall is perfectly positioned to reach the broad spectrum of high and low income residents.

The facility would be run as a non-profit facility by the community for the community.

We are very excited that many needs of the community that could be addressed through this facility and the incredible attraction it could become. It is rewarding to know that once again families could be drawn to a long avoided part of town.

We are long-time residents, passionate about our community, proven to effectively manage community facilities and we believe that we could make the Mechanics Institute Hall hold a proud place on the map of our City once again.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal

Children's Centre
and Sensory
room

- Focus on activities and facilities for all children, from birth to 9+.
- Encourage physical and social development
- Will include music, craft, playgroup, exercise, nature and family wellbeing.
- Sensory Room, for both disabled and not, to explore their world through their senses.
- Special resources for those with disabilities and learning disorders.
- A Centre of Excellence that will draw visitors from across the eastern, south eastern and peninsula regions, at least.
- Revenue via carer groups and organisations using the facilities

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal

Family Resource
Centre

- Operated by local families for families
- A true community centre
- Reclaim the area for the community
- Target: the x families within the city.
- Will engage with local groups e.g. Kananook Creek Assn., Kananook Canoe Club, local theatre groups, art groups, etc. to encourage mutually beneficial partnerships for children and parents, and grandparents / carers.
- Self defence, parent education, domestic violence, divorce, and a host of other courses and resources coordinated with other groups and bringing them all under the one roof.
- A one stop community centre focussed on families.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal

Hall Hire and
Booking Service

- We propose a centre that is volunteer managed.
- Operated by the community for the community on a Not For Profit basis.
- Focussed on maximising the use of the venue by as many community groups as possible.
- Both day and evening operations, 7 days a week.
- Experienced Management Committee with a proven track record.
- All volunteers will have Working With Children clearance, and adhere to National Standards of Volunteering.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal – The Financials

Start up costs for the facility includes the \$35k required for the purchase of equipment for the development of a sensory room. We would seek support from council discretionary funds, state government, federal government, local business, donations and grants.

We could start the facility quickly, even without the sensory room, and develop the room as finances allow. Based on feedback already received, we believe this would occur quite quickly once word of our project spread.

The venue itself could be used to hold a fundraising event for the specific purpose of building the sensory room.

We have had significant interest from various groups about the facility already.

Purchasing equipment suitable for a sensory room can be quite costly but as we have recently introduced a special needs resource section at the Frankston Toy Library, we are able to source these purchases in the most cost effective manner.

As the facility would be a volunteer managed community facility, the council would be need to meet all running costs including utilities, building maintenance to maintain safety, and waste disposal.

A report on the project costs associated with this is being developed by council staff for your consideration.

Grant applications would be submitted on a regular basis to seeking financial support for any additional expenses.

As the facility would support children, families, the disabled and the elderly it would be eligible to apply for grants across a broad spectrum.

To make this exciting venture a reality we would simply need the council to commit and entrust the Frankston Toy Library team, under the direction of President Sandi Walters, to take over management of the building.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal – Revenue Streams

Revenue Streams.

- **Children's Centre:**
 - 16,321 children under 9 in Frankston Municipality.
 - 106,860 under 9s in Frankston, Kingston, Casey, Greater Dandenong and Mornington Peninsula
 - Facility Capacity is 35,000 (50 children x 2 sessions / day x 7 days pw x 50 weeks pa)
 - Preference to offer low cost / no cost programs where possible
 - Revenue estimate: \$70,000 (35,000 @ ave \$2.00 per child per visit)
- **Sensory Room**
 - Special programs for carer groups and organisations
 - 4 children at a time in the room for 1 hour maximum; 2 sessions / day, 1 day / week.
 - \$500.00 (100 sessions @ \$5.00 per child)
- **Family Resource Centre**
 - Course fees: 45 weeks pa, 4 evenings pw, = 180 sessions per meeting room@ \$5.00 ph equates to \$900 per meeting room.
- **Hall Hire and Booking Service**
 - Room hire for other approved events:
 - Management fee (% basis) to manage bookings , receipts, etc on behalf of other groups using the facilities on a regular basis.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal

Financials: Expenses

- **Management team**
 - volunteers initially,
 - a casual ,paid position to be created when financially viable.
- **One Off, Start Up Costs**
 - \$35,000 for specialist equipment to set up the Sensory Room
 - Support being sought via FCC, State and Federal Governments, local businesses, philanthropic organisations and private individuals and events.
 - These sources will be approached when we know we have FCC approval for the project to go ahead.
- **Ongoing:**
 - to be self funding, augmented by grants and donations.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal

- **Frankston City Council**
- **Expenses / Costs:**
 - 10 year lease of premises to Frankston Toy Library Inc @ \$1.00pa, with the Management Committee having the right of renewal.
 - Nominal 'loss' of hall hire revenue.
 - Running costs of the facility including water, electricity and gas.
 - Ongoing maintenance costs to maintain OH&S and public liability standards.
 - Waste removal services
 - 3 parking permits for management on site.
- **BENEFITS**
 - Savings in \$\$, resources and time due to the facility being managed by experienced volunteers.
 - Better utilisation of the facility than currently, with the Management Committee focussed on maximising local involvement and use.
 - Increased revenue from car parking in the area.
 - Increased community participation
 - Community renewal of the area, away from adult entertainment precinct.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal – The Provider

We would ensure that all service providers hold their own public liability insurance and a copy would be kept on record.

All volunteers working in the facility will be required to obtain a working with children check and adhere to the National Standards of Volunteering as per the volunteering guidelines of the Frankston Toy Library committee.

Insurance of the Mechanics Hall will be covered by the Frankston City Council.

We believe that we have proven our ability to manage a community service, expand quickly to achieve desired levels of service, effectively communicate with the council and other community groups through our effective management of the Frankston Toy Library.

When we took on the Toy Library two years ago it was close to shutting down.

It is now one of the largest facilities of its kind in Australia not only due to the building provided by council but due to the membership numbers we have been able to generate and the innovative decisions we have made.

In the past 12 months alone we have launched:

- a mother's support network,
- a literacy program,
- a hearing support group for parents with hearing impaired children,
- a community couch for various community meetings,
- partnerships with the Lions and the Australian Breastfeeding Association
- and the development of a special needs resource section.

We are not just in the business of loaning toys and we have completely overhauled every aspect of the Frankston Toy Library.

We now receive phone calls and visits from people around the country wanting to know what we are doing in Frankston to create such an amazing service.

Frankston Mechanics Institute Management Proposal – The Facilities

The building has had significant renovations done and no further construction or works are required to implement this proposal.

As the renovations are current the facility complies and is ready for immediate use.

We propose that the council leases the building to Frankston Toy Library Inc. indefinitely without cost.

The committee agrees in writing to leave the facility in excellent condition for any future tenants of the property.

The car parking zones around the facility are four-hour zones which makes it perfect for our purposes, although three parking permits will be required for those running the facility.

The increased visitation to the area would generate income for council through the paid parking meters.

A concern was raised regarding the entrance being too close to the road and a potential risk for children. We do not see this as an issue at all. We would install a child safety gate on the hall door and the foyer door is quite heavy it would be extremely difficult for any child to get out.

If they did they would exit the building on the side door which enters a car park and is orientate away from the road.

Safety concerns for children are greater at Ebdale Hub than this facility.

We have inspected the venue and we are confident that it would suit our purposes perfectly.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

For further information, please contact:

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