

FIRST STEPS COUNT INC. CHILD AND COMMUNITY CENTRE
Taree, Manning Valley, NSW

Establishment Chronology

June 2008 -- Early Childhood Service providers and advocates meeting agreed on need for integrated service provision in a one-stop-shop facility.

- Community consultation process commenced -to be maintained throughout the life of the project

2009-

- 'First Steps Count' confirmed as name for the entity.
- First Steps Count (FSC) Management Committee established
- Management agreement formalised between Child Care Services Taree and Districts (Lead Agency) and First Steps Count Inc.(the Project Partner)
- FSC Reference Group established
- FSC Constitution drawn up
- Land provided by Greater Taree City Council (GTCC) for centre construction in Myall Avenue and Mudford Street, Manning Gardens
- \$18,000 donated by Architects Without Frontiers (AWF) for preparation of a Master Plan for a purpose built community facility... the First Steps Count Child and Family Centre .

2010-

- First Steps Count incorporated as an association
- Pidcock Architects undertook the task on behalf of AWF
- Application for building funds to Regional Development Australia (RDAF) Round 2 (unsuccessful)
- Community consultation process ongoing including with Aboriginal community-meetings, guest speaker events, information events, regular news-sheets

2011

- First Steps Count Foundation confirmed as a separate entity with DGR status and income tax exemption
- Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) donated almost \$50,000 towards completion of a Development Application (DA) for First Steps Count Child and Family Centre.
- Local community raised \$30,000 towards preparation of the DA and design development
- Pidcock Architects were appointed to prepare the DA and Design Development for FSC

- Informal partnerships established with service providers, philanthropy, business and community groups

2012-

- Greater Taree City Council confirmed (May) a formal resolution providing for 'the allocation of land to First Steps Count Inc. in order that an early childhood centre can be established'
- Business /Governance Plan prepared and approved by Management Committee
- VFFF promised \$1million towards centre establishment dependent upon a contribution of some government funding
- Application for building funds to Regional Development Australia (RDAF) Round 4.with assistance of VFFF (unsuccessful)
- 0.8 hectares of land belonging to Department of Education (NSW) declared necessary to satisfy Asset Protection Zone (APZ) requirements.
Negotiations undertaken between GTCC and DEC
- Pidcock Architects commenced work on the DA
- Project Manager Rod Illidge appointed
- Funding proposal prepared with assistance from Early Childhood Education Advisory Group (facilitated by Global Access Partners (GAP).
- Adoption of the 'Living Building Challenge'by Pidcock Architects - a 'standard which is a visionary path to a restorative future. This building will be an exemplar for national and international design'.

2013-

- Requirement for Asset Protection Zone to be added to FSC site. This land belonging to NSW Department of Education and Community (DEC) was transferred to GTCC after more than 12 months negotiation.
- The DA preparation resumed second half of the year
- Fundraising efforts continued with proposals to both state and federal governments and philanthropic organisations
- Ongoing consultation with Aboriginal community representatives re service provision and artistic design for building and landscaping
- Future partnership with University of Wollongong " Early Start" project under negotiation

2014-

- DA lodged with council in January

- Council request for 2 additional reports -Traffic Report and Social Impact Assessment (SIA). Both for completion by end May
- Fundraising efforts continue (federal government submissions unsuccessful)
A proposal put to NSW government by state Member for Myall Lakes Stephen Bromhead MP on behalf of FSC, seeking cross portfolio funding over a two year period.
- Discussions continuing re Uni of Wollongong 'Early Start' project
- Formal partnership with University of Wollongong confirmed for research and participation in the Early Start Engagement Centre network which focuses on teaching and community engagement.

2015-

- DA unanimously approved by Greater Taree City Council at its April meeting
- FSC is now 'shovel ready'
- UnitingCare Burnside registers interest in working with FSC with prospect of co-location
- FaCS NSW registers interest in collaborative association with FSC
- ARACY confirmed interest in a partnership with FSC to establish a trial site for the Nest Action Plan, Right at Home nurse home visiting program and the Common Approach strategy for reducing the incidence of child abuse and neglect
- FSC Business/Governance Plan under review
- Both federal and state government funding opportunities under negotiation
- Local fundraising continues in anticipation of costs incurred by imposition of DA conditions
- ARACY partners with FSC in revised proposal for funding to include a major research project from day one of centre operations

2016-

- Greater Taree City Council approved FSC application to modify the Development consent with extension to October 2017
- FSC Business/Governance Plan revision completed
- Funding efforts continued with assistance from Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY)
- Federal Minister for Education the Hon Simon Birmingham MP seeks FSC input to assessment of Taree as possible site for

testing the government's new Connected Beginnings program, modelled on WA's Challis Early Learning & Parenting Centre which is funded by the Forrest family.

- FSC represented on GAP (Global Access Partners) Early Childhood Education Taskforce hosted by the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet.
- Greater Taree City Council amalgamated with Great Lakes and Gloucester Councils, to create new MidCoast Council. FSC gained assurance from MCC Administrator for continuation of support for our project.