

FIRST STEPS COUNT INC.

The Project in Brief- 2015

What is planned

- A one stop shop community hub providing a range of co-ordinated early childhood services for children and their families and working to close the gap towards reconciliation with the Aboriginal community in the disadvantaged Manning Valley and wider Mid North Coast NSW.
- The financially and environmentally sustainable facility will provide a warm and welcoming environment for the entire community
- A Conference venue and associated facilities will be accessed for professional training and early childhood related workshops and sensitive landscaping will offer respite areas, yarning circles, bush tucker garden and more.
- PidcockArchitect's adherence to the 'Living Building Challenge' promises an exemplar project both nationally and internationally- a great boost for the community and wider region.

Partners and supporters include

- Local and regional Early Childhood Service providers including special needs and disability services, allied health services, Greater Taree City Council (donated land & DA approved April 2015), community service clubs, Manning Gardens Public School, Girrawong Preschool, & Child Care Services Taree & Districts as resident service providing federally funded programs including Communities for Children.
- A formal partnership with University of Wollongong's \$44million Early Start project for participation in the Early Start Engagement Centre Network
- Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) start up funding and promise of \$1million towards centre establishment if government support is forthcoming
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) for trials of The Nest Agenda action plan, Right at Home nurse home visiting program and adoption of the Common Approach strategy to help reduce child abuse and neglect.
- UnitingCare Burnside with probable co-location.

Financial sustainability is ensured by

- Resident services rental fees from Child Care Services Taree & Districts and *UnitingCare Burnside *under negotiation
- Occasional rental by allied health and specialist consultants

- Conference venue hire –for child related conferences, workshops and training programs

Management

- A Business/Governance Plan was approved 2012 and is under review 2015
- First Steps Count Inc. Management Committee supported by a Reference Group is responsible for the development stage to commencement of building
- A qualified Project Manager appointed 2012 will oversee the facility building stage

Funding required for provision of one stop shop services for families is \$2.5million in addition to the \$1million promised by VFFF if government helps!