

Mustard Seed – Port Kembla Preschool Information Evening

4 August 2026

Background

History

Preschool was founded by the church 60 years ago and subsequently run by the church for 40 years. Big Fat Smile was engaged to run the Preschool approximately 20 years ago when it became untenable for the church to continue to do so. A few years ago, the church decided if the right circumstances arose that they would like the site to run as a Christian Preschool again.

About Mustard Seed Early Education provider

Mustard Seed are a not-for-profit early childhood education provider that run early childhood centres at church sites. They became an entity out of an existing childcare centre run in collaboration with Oatley Anglican Church since 2008; Arndu Preschool. Their mission is to partner with other churches to run the childcare facilities located within their church site.

Questions

What type of Service will be provided by Mustard Seed?

Long Day Care Centre catering for ages 2-6, with the same 24 spots, lunchbox requirement and classroom set up as there is today under Big Fat Smile. Cost of the service is expected to be similar to Big Fat Smile today but there is not an exact figure at this stage.

Mustard Seed will shut public holidays and between Christmas and New Year. Our service is currently considering shutting all sites the week following Easter but this is not expected to occur in 2027.

When will Mustard, Seed commences operation? Plan is to commence operating once the licence is transferred on 24th December 2026. Target opening date for the service is currently 4th January 2027.

How does the waitlist and enrolment occur? Published waitlist will be provided soon, as there are still a few legalities before the service can be published on the Mustard Seed website. In the interim the waitlist can be accessed via the church website <https://www.pkw.org.au/>

Parents of children at the current Big Fat Smile service are requested to identify that in the comments section so we ensure your enrolment can continue in our new service. We follow the specific criteria the Government has set out for prioritising waitlist applications.

Is a minimum number of days for children to attend?

Our waitlist is currently split, so you nominate 2-3 days, for your child to attend. Either M-T, W, Th-F. If you are interested in an alternate combination, please include that in the comment section. If you are only interested in 1 day attendance for your child, please indicate this in the comment section. This has been accommodated at our current service, but we find we can support children better who are at the service multiple days.

What does a Christian service mean practically?

We will be saying grace prior to meals, celebrating Christian celebrations (Easter, Christmas) and approximately half an hour of Christian teaching a day.

Why did the church decide to take over the preschool now?

It was opportune timing as the lease agreement with Big Fat Smile to operate the site was expiring and we had recently been communicating with churches in the area about our service.

Will there be a separation of church staff and childcare staff?

There will be a separation of church staff and childcare staff. The Preschool will operate as its own service. They may come on site from time to time as part of a visitor organised with the Director.

What should we expect from the staffing at the new service? Will any current employees be retained?

Big Fat Smile want to retain their staff, so retention of current staff is not a part of the transfer. If current staff want to continue at the site, they can apply for the roles at Mustard Seed. We have not employed any educators yet but will be commencing that process. There will always be a minimum of 2 educators onsite with a diploma / degree.

Are you expected to employ any male staff?

We are an equal opportunity employer so everyone can apply for educator positions at our centres. If we have any male staff employed on any basis, we will inform parents that it is occurring, so you are aware who is caring for your kids on a given day.

Is there a pre-requisite for staff to be a Christian?

The pre-requisite for our staff is that they must be an educator either Certificate 3, Diploma or Degree qualified. At Mustard Seed we encourage our staff to increase their training and support them to do so. As we are an equal opportunity employer, it is not a pre-requisite that they are a Christian. We do ask all staff to sign and be willing to adhere to and support our mission and purpose statements (available on the Mustard Seed website), and to uphold and support Christian ethos and values.

Will there be a school readiness program, excursions and partnerships in the community?

We will be running a school readiness program at the site and investigate connecting this program in with local primary schools.

Our current services run various excursions in the community, and we will seek to do the same with this new service.

Will there be an open day prior to the commencement?

We would love to have a full open day prior to the commencement of the service but do not expect to be able to do so due to the limited handover window which we will be using to complete some minor renovations. However, we will arrange a time to meet the new Mustard Seed team who will be working at the service late November / early December.

Are there any plans to renovate the space?

We will do some minor renovations / fixes to the site initially. Any significant renovations would delay the site opening planned for 4th January 2027. We may do renovations in the future but would like to utilise the site first and understand how we use the space.