



# Kindy Left to Sink Over Lead

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# Kindy left to sink over lead

by TIM LAKE

NORTON Street Long Day Care Centre in Ashfield could close if the \$79,000 necessary to lead-proof it is not found.

This follows a recommendation last week by Ashfield Council that it could not fund the urgent work from its current budget.

A study it commissioned last August found there was a problem with lead in paint on internal walls, architraves and skirting boards, in soil and also in vacuum dust from the building.

Council deferred a decision to sell the property before Christmas.

But last week it said funds were not available for full remedial work, and that the Kindergarten Union Children's Services (KUCS) which operates the centre should be asked if it wished to remain in the building "under its present conditions".

Forty-two children could now be looking for other long day care facilities.

Council works manager Greg Piconi said tests had shown "moderate to high"



Ashfield's Norton Street Long Day Care Centre lead levels in eight of 12 samples.

He said although the paint posed little problem to adults the main danger was to children who might pick up flakes and eat them.

Mr Piconi said the \$79,000 was the all-up cost of making the building safe.

However, he said councillors believed council should not bear the full cost, particularly as KUCS paid only a peppercorn rent.

He said council could do cheaper interim work and would be prepared to contribute to the full cost if other sources of funds could be found, such as from the

government. However, ward councillor Helen Hughes said council should make all the money available.

"Such an expense for such a large building being used for an essential community purpose is small," she said.

"Rather than simply kick the Kindergarten Union out and show their true colors the council is suggesting they stay there if they want with the premises in their present polluted condition."

Cr Hughes said Norton St was the only long day care centre in Ashfield.

The KUCS did not wish to comment on the matter.

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