

# Come play, stay for a look

So much has happened behind closed construction fences, but when the doors finally open to the First 5 Years Early Childhood Education Centre, everyone is invited to see the magical spaces created to entrance, stimulate and promote the development of small minds.

"This is the opposite of who we are, and our values," First 5 Years managing director Melissa Webster said with a laugh.

"We are all about inviting the community in.

"Even though it has been happening behind closed fences, this has been a community effort and we thought it was time to introduce our beautiful space to the Emerald community.

"Maybe you've been driving past wondering what that building is, so now is the time to open the doors and let everyone in to have a look at what the talented people of Emerald can do."

From 9.30-11am on Saturday, 20 May, the centre will welcome the Emerald community inside, with First 5 Years chef Mariana on hand to whip up some delicious snacks.

"So come, play, stay and sample the goodies," Ms Webster said.

It's taken a village of tradies, businesses and design experts to give life to the Retro Street centre, and it's been a journey that has made Ms Webster one of Emerald's biggest fans.

"I love Emerald, and that comes from my heart," she said.

"From day one I've just had the most wonderful experience here from stopping families in the street and talking with them about their frustrations, their needs, their desires," she said.

"The first person I spoke to was (real estate agent) Clinton Adams and he was amazing. He put in the car, he took me around and I could tell he was so proud of Emerald and that was infectious.



Tradies and the First 5 Years team on site at the Retro Street early childhood education centre that will open its doors to the community on 20 May.

"He was instrumental in helping me secure this site, and he introduced me to (Cardav Constructions centre builder) Peter Davey and I could tell from day one Peter would be fantastic to work with.

"He's about to celebrate 30 years of his company on 19 May and it was those 30 years of relationships that meant we could get this centre built in the time that we're building it.

"We've gone from a vacant block of land to an open childcare centre in one year and I could not have done that without everybody in the community, without Peter and Clinton and all the wonderful people I've met through them."

Ms Webster said, just for fun while they wait for one final step in Department of Education Service Approval, her team had been doing a few calculations on the construction of the centre.

"Mel has received over 4838 emails, not counting the ones she deleted, relating to the building and opening of the centre," she said.

"We have a team of over 10 engineering companies and consultants from all over Central Queensland.

"There has been at least 50 individual tradespeople who have worked on-site to make this a reality, and, we have 80 children enrolled from over 80 families."

On a more serious note, Ms Webster said the economic benefit to Emerald could not be under-estimated.

If Australian women had the same participation rates and opportunity to work fulltime as Nordic women, she cited, Australia's GDP would be some \$132 billion higher per year.

"A new centre in Emerald means more women can choose to re-enter the workforce, and-or work more hours," Ms Webster said.

"This supports families in growing their future, building superannuation and provides a healthy injection into the Emerald economy."

## First5Years

You are invited to  
**First5Years**

# Community Open Day

Saturday 20th of May, 9.30am to 11am  
42 Retro St, Emerald

Stay, play, taste our chef's delicious treats

Come and see our beautiful new centre

