

# Childcare growth gets mixed minds

By Pat Stringa

ROCKDALE Council will allow Kinderroos Childcare Centre, Bexley North, to increase its numbers from 40 to 71, amidst neighbours concerns about traffic safety in the area.

The council agreed at its June 22 meeting to allow the increase at the New Illawarra Road centre.

The council allowed the centre to open seven months ago, with only 40 children, although the Department of Community Services (DOCS) had allowed it to provide care to 76 children.

Owner Hassan Awada said the centre was very successful and 60 families were on its waiting list.

Trisha Fisher, a Kinderroos committee member, said the centre was "highly regarded" and "good childcare was always in demand".

But neighbour Jenny Atherton objected to an increase because of safety and traffic concerns.

"If the numbers increase traffic speed and volume needs to be looked at . . . safety is a paramount factor against this facility," Mrs Atherton said.

Neighbour Steve Varoutsos said he had seen six accidents near the centre. "Councillors, reject this and put the children first," he said.

Councillor Bill Saravinovski supported the change because there "is a critical shortage in childcare places" in the area.

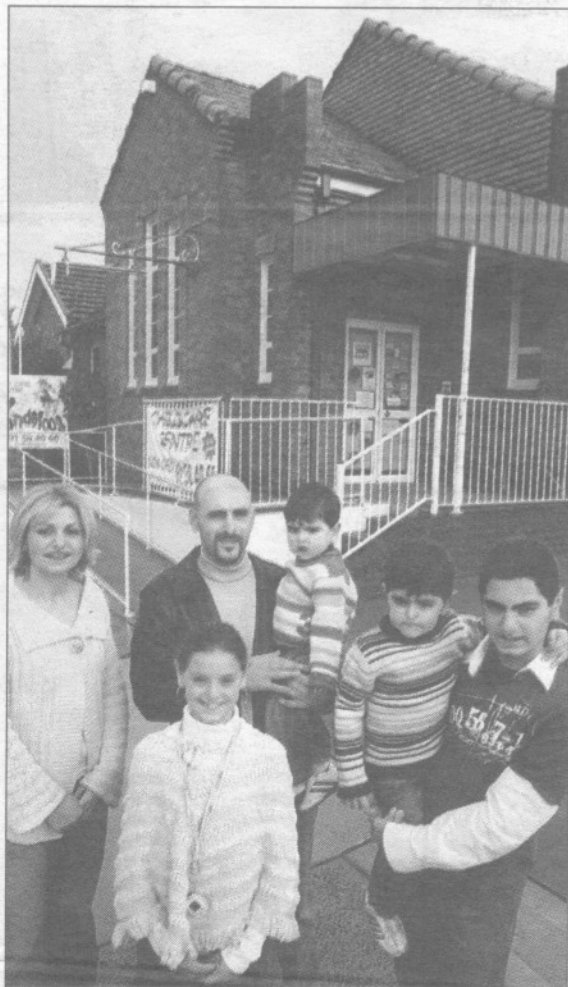
"We have not been inundated with complaints about the centre since it opened," he said.

Councillors Yvonne Bellamy and Gary Green's suggestion to allow a smaller increase in numbers was shot down by other councillors.

"I've never heard any more idiotic notion than this," Counsellor Shaoquett Moselmane said, describing the proposal of allowing five, 10, then 15 extra places.

"You are simply plucking figures out of the air," Cr Moselmane said.

Councillor John Ajaka said councillors had no idea what a smaller change in place numbers would have on the centre.



**More children:** Hassan and Sue Awada and children, Sally, Jacob and Adam with Ali at their childcare centre, which the council will allow more children to attend. **Picture:** John Veage