

## WHAT IS REQUIRED

All families with children from birth to eight years of age have local access to government funded programs and health services to ensure that children have optimal health and development outcomes.

### Specifically:

- Land allocation and funding to build and operate one child and parent centre between Butler and Two Rocks to service the growing population of young families.

## BACKGROUND

As a large, outer metropolitan growth local government, the City of Wanneroo has a high proportion of families and young children aged 0-9 years of age. In 2021, children aged 0-9 years made up 12.6% of the overall WA population but represented 14.7% of the City's population. WA Tomorrow population forecasts show this difference widening slightly in the future with 0-9 year olds forming around 12% of the total WA population and 15.5% of the City's population by 2031. Similarly, by 2031 0-4 year olds will make up around 5.9% of the WA population but 8.2% of the City population. The average birth rate in Australia is 1.58 per woman, however the City average sits at around 2.11.

The City has been proactive in facilitating positive outcomes for local families, launching our first Early Childhood Strategy in 2014. The City created and leads the Wanneroo and Surrounds Early Years Network (WASEY), a driving force for positive early childhood outcomes and also created, piloted and evaluated the award-winning It's All About Play (IAAP) program. Our Early Childhood Strategic Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20 built on these successes through expansion of programs such as IAAP, a number of partnership projects and relationships with key local and State stakeholders. The City is continuing our commitment to early childhood support through our holistic Community Development Plan 2021/22 – 2025/26.

The City's 2021 Community Wellbeing Survey showed only a quarter of parents and guardians felt the needs of young children are being met, with residents living in northern suburbs from Clarkson to Two Rocks being more likely to rate this as poor. Additional parenting programs, resources and support, local child development support and social programs for parents and children were all considered priorities by over 30% of parents and guardians of young children.

Family support services are commonly delivered by Parenting Connection WA and Child and Parent Centres (CPCs). The Department of Education manages the funding, and has oversight of the CPCs which are operated by a suitable NGO. The State Government has recently committed to a 10 year partnership with the Minderoo Foundation and Telethon Kids Institute to pilot and evaluate a new Early Years Initiative in four partner communities in regional WA.

## ALLIANCES

### Primary Advocate:

- City of Wanneroo

### Secondary Advocates:

- Telethon Kids Institute Origins Project
- WA Police and Community Youth Centres (PCYC)
- WA Department of Communities Joondalup District
- Playgroup WA
- WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS)



## KEY ISSUES

There are 13 Child and Parent Centres (CPCs) in the Greater Perth region. While the City of Wanneroo is the largest metropolitan local government by area at 685.1 square kilometres, only two CPCs are located within the City; Banksia Grove and Girrawheen. The furthest north is Banksia Grove which is funded to service Banksia Grove, Clarkson and Merriwa.

The Department of Education considers a number of factors in determining location of CPCs including data on developmentally vulnerable children from the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), population and diversity demographics, and whether other suitable substitute services including local Commonwealth initiatives (e.g. Communities for Children; Home Interaction Program for Parents with Youngsters) are available. There are none of these initiatives currently located in the north west sub-region of Perth.

The AEDC data for 2021 shows that the suburbs of Alkimos, Butler, Merriwa and Yanchep all have high percentages of developmentally vulnerable children (category of Vuln1). The percentage of children in the Vuln1 category across the whole of WA is 20.3%, while Alkimos has 24.2%, Butler 22.6%, Merriwa 24.7% and Yanchep 21.1%. Butler, Merriwa and Yanchep also have significantly higher percentages in the language category. This equates to a large number of families in the region that would benefit from a CPC located in the northern area of the City. The statistics on developmental vulnerability are likely to increase with the rapid population growth of young families in the region.

Family and parenting support services have reported being challenged or unable to meet demand in 2021. The dedicated mental health service for pregnant families and those with children aged under 2 years 'Pregnancy to Parenthood Clinic' ceased operating early in 2022.

This service was a 'one of a kind' for families in the City but was not able to be sustained in its existing model and has now transitioned to a not-for-profit service. At the end of 2021, the clinic faced waitlists of up to five months. The Child Development Centres located in Clarkson and Koondoola have waitlists of over 12 months for many services.

## ROLE

### City of Wanneroo role is to:

- Advocate for the service in partnership with others
- Provide localised data and other relevant information
- Act as a connector to local organisations and stakeholders

### The State Government's role is to:

- Provide land
- Fund and maintain a suitable facility
- Fund operations
- Appoint a provider to deliver the service

## CURRENT STATUS

There is an identified need and demand for government-funded programs and health services delivered through a CPC in the northern suburbs of the City. The City is unaware of any State Government plans to build and facilitate new CPC's within the needed areas of the City.

## EXPECTED COSTS

- \$1.75M in establishment costs<sup>1</sup>
- Ongoing operational costs of approximately \$330,000 per annum tendered to a respected NGO to deliver the service on behalf of the State Government

## FUNDING STATUS

No land or funding has been allocated to this project to date.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on this project contact: [connectwanneroo@wanneroo.wa.gov.au](mailto:connectwanneroo@wanneroo.wa.gov.au)



<sup>1</sup> Figures are based on the cost of the latest CPC built in Arbor Grove, Ellenbrook