

Compassionate
Albany Charter
REPORT

Compassionate Albany Charter

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Charter is to guide and encourage our community, service providers, businesses, organisations, groups and clubs to work together to create a more compassionate Albany; an Albany that is resilient, responsive and understands we can't get through difficult times on our own.

As WA Primary Health Alliance's strategic partner in the Compassionate Communities project, the City of Albany has a shared vision of a compassionate and connected community.

“ *I have listened to the members of our community while developing this Charter and I have been reminded how much our community cares. This Charter celebrates the things we already do well in Albany and shows how together we can make Albany an even more compassionate place to live.*

I want Albany to be a place where we don't cross the street to avoid someone going through a hard time, but a place where we reach out and show we care. Where people will stop for a stranger and ask 'are you okay?'

City of Albany Mayor - Dennis Wellington

Compassionate Communities is a global movement that 'traditionally' encourages communities and neighbourhood networks to play a much stronger role in supporting people, their families and carers at the end of life. It comes from a public health approach that encourages people to adopt an understanding that health is everyone's responsibility, not just their doctors or health services.¹

When listening to our local community they felt compassion was about much more than end of life. They believe compassion should be embedded in all aspects of everyday life and that everyone has a responsibility to support each other through hardship. Whether this be supporting someone facing the end of life or any of the other challenges life often throws at us.

“ *Let's ask ourselves, what can I do for my community? In my street, my neighbourhood, at school or work, at my club, in my town...*

Participant Community Faith Groups and Not-for-Profit Organisations Workshop

The Charter outlines six key aspirations our community and stakeholders believe will guide us toward being a more compassionate community.

“ *We have never seen a greater need for compassion in our community than we have since the recent impact of the coronavirus. People within our community have been reaching out to each other by checking in on neighbours, helping people access supermarkets, donating food and staying in regular contact with people who are vulnerable or isolated.*

Lesley Pearson, Regional Manager, WA Primary Health Alliance

¹ Allan Kellehear, *Compassionate communities: end-of-life care as everyone's responsibility*, QJM: An International Journal of Medicine, Volume 106, Issue 12, December 2013, Pages 1071-1075, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qjmed/hct200>

OVERVIEW

The City of Albany, in partnership with WA Primary Health Alliance, has developed the Compassionate Albany Charter to guide the community towards being more compassionate.

This Charter represents a commitment by the Albany community to embrace a view of health and wellbeing that encourages empathy and support for each other throughout life, and especially during hardship, illness, loneliness, death and grief. The role of the City of Albany is to be the custodian or holder of the Charter on behalf of the community.

The City of Albany and its Elected Members with WA Primary Health Alliance are choosing to embrace compassion in our own lives and are agreeing to work together with the community, service providers, businesses, organisations, groups and clubs to pursue the aspirations outlined in the Charter.

The Charter has been developed with the community, service providers, businesses, organisations, groups and clubs that connect and support our communities. It has been developed using an asset-based approach that focuses on the existing strengths and opportunities within the community.

Strategic Context

This Charter is part of a global shift to a more equitable, accessible and affordable health system that is outlined in the *World Health Organisation Framework on integrated people-centred Health services*.² The Charter aligns with:

Strategy 1: Engaging and Empowering people and communities.

This Charter seeks to help to build confidence, trust, mutual respect and the creation of social networks, because people's physical and mental well-being depends on strong and enduring relationships. It seeks to strengthen the capacity of our communities to organise themselves and generate changes that benefit everyone.

The WA Government *Sustainable Health Review*³ also recognises the need for more proactive health interventions that acknowledge the importance of having a safe place to live and the benefits of social participation, prevention and early intervention in good healthcare. The Charter aligns with the following strategies outlined in the Review:

1. *Commit and collaborate to address major public health issues*
2. *Great Beginnings and a dignified end of life.*

This Charter is closely aligned to the *City of Albany's Community Strategic Plan* and vision 'to be Western Australia's most sought after and unique regional City to work, live and visit.'⁴

Theme 4: Community Health & Participation:

4.1 To build resilient and cohesive communities with a strong sense of community spirit.

4.2 To develop and support a healthy inclusive and accessible community. There is a strong desire to ensure a sense of belonging and a positive connection between our rural and urban communities. It is important that we know and respect our neighbours, live in communities which support us, and have safe, accessible places to gather and meet. People want to feel welcome, valued and connected.

² World Health Organisation. *Framework on integrated people-centred Health services*. 2016. Accessed 6 May 2020 <https://www.who.int/servicedeliverysafety/areas/people-centred-care/framework>

³ Western Australian Department of Health, *Sustainable Health Review: Final Report to the Western Australian Government*. Perth WA Department of Health, Western Australia. 2019

⁴ City of Albany, *Albany 2030 Community Strategic Plan*. Accessed 4 March 2020 [https://www.albany.wa.gov.au/documents/201/community-strategic-plan-albany-2030-\(as-amended\)](https://www.albany.wa.gov.au/documents/201/community-strategic-plan-albany-2030-(as-amended))

BACKGROUND

Partnership - City of Albany and WA Primary Health Alliance – Great Southern Compassionate Communities Project

As the first line of connection to people where they live, local governments play an important role in contributing to the social wellbeing of communities. The City of Albany undertakes critical functions in community services, social planning, and delivery of human services at the local level which influence people's sense of connectedness to their community, and overall community wellbeing.

WA Primary Health Alliance's role is to simplify and improve access to primary care and work with partners such as the City of Albany to ensure a health system that works for people, ensuring they can access excellent care closer to home.

A partnership between the two organisations provides an opportunity for services to be better integrated with each other and the community.

The City of Albany entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the 25 May 2018 to partner with WAPHA on the Compassionate Communities Project. This included locating a Project Officer (0.6) with the City of Albany until 30 October 2020 to develop the Charter.

The Compassionate Albany Charter is a key deliverable of WA Primary Health Alliance's Great Southern Compassionate Community Project which is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health - Greater Choice for at Home Palliative Care measure.

The MOU was amended to include an additional Community Connector position between 1 July 2019 and 30 June 2020. The MOU has since been amended to extend both positions until 30 October 2020.

Greater Choice for at Home Palliative Care Measure

WA Primary Health Alliance was funded by the Greater Choice for at Home Palliative Care Measure, Australian Government Department of Health in September 2017 to undertake the Great Southern Compassionate Communities Project.

Great Southern Compassionate Communities is one of the 11 projects funded nationally through the program.

The program provided funding to improve coordination and integration of end-of-life care across primary, secondary, tertiary and community health services to support at home palliative care through funding Primary Health Networks.

Compassionate Communities

Compassionate communities are described as 'community and neighbourhood networks which play a much stronger role in the care of people at end of life and their families and carers'⁵. Compassionate communities are a core part of public health approaches to palliative care, end of life care and bereavement.

Through the community and stakeholder engagement process the scope was broadened beyond end of life to include all hardship, both social and economic.

The incorporation of this broader notion of compassion within the Charter is timely as we move forward and continue our recovery from COVID-19.

5 Abel, J, Kellehear, A and Karapliagou, A, 'Palliative care – the new essentials', *Annals of Palliative Medicine* 7(Suppl 2) 2018.

COVID-19

Since the recent impacts of COVID-19 there has been increasing evidence and recognition that asset-based community development programs, such as Compassionate Communities, are essential for both community wellbeing and for our care systems to function effectively. COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of empowering local communities to work not only together, but in partnership with service providers.

The Charter has the potential to harness the capacity of our community and service systems to come together quickly and 'act as one' to achieve a common goal. The Charter also has the potential to draw upon this same collective energy to drive community recovery from hardship, including the economic and social impacts of hardship.

Why do we need a Charter?

The networks and support that we call upon in times of hardship are usually ones we already have, which is one of several reasons why social connection and belonging is so important. We know that social connection is also a key health determinant. People who have strong social networks are more likely to have better health outcomes.

Albany has a very strong sense of community, as we learnt through the engagement process for this project. Despite this however, when faced with hardship many of us still often struggle to ask for and accept help. We also feel uncomfortable approaching people to offer help.⁶ There are also many people in our community who, for a range of reasons, social, financial or health, do not have the informal networks people rely on in hardship.

“ *Not everyone has a sense of belonging, they don't have family or contact with different groups on a day to day basis - it's just important to have that sense of belonging within your community.*

Participant Sporting & Business Workshop

It is well documented that one of the greatest challenges people face when they become seriously ill is offering, asking for and/or accepting help. It is estimated when someone becomes seriously ill, less than 10 percent of their time is spent with formal services, while the remainder of their time is spent being supported by networks, friends, family, clubs etc.⁷

“ *What we rejoice in is the circumstances of someone who is loved in their community, whose community feels that they have the capacity to step forward and that person and their family are able to accept that love and care and then things [caring for someone dying] actually work beautifully.*

Associate Professor Dr Kirsten Auret, Palliative Care Specialist

If the Coronavirus has taught us anything, it is that we are '*All in this Together*'. This Charter seeks to harness and build upon the collective action, good will and the neighbourhood networks we have seen develop in response to this crisis.

⁶ International Foundation for Integrated Care (2019), Realising the True Value of Integrated Care: Beyond COVID-19, Downloaded 20 May 2020 <https://integratedcarefoundation.org/realising-the-true-value-of-integrated-care-beyond-covid-19>
⁷ Grindrod, A., & Rumbold, B. *Healthy End of Life Program (HELP): offering, asking for and accepting help. Creating an End of Life Collaborative Community Culture*. 2016 La Trobe University Palliative Care Unit, Melbourne, Australia.
⁸ Professor Allan Kellehear in discussion with Christine Grogan, WAPHA, Compassionate Communities, Thursday 19th July 2018 at Bradford University.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHARTER

The Compassionate Albany Charter is informed by the Compassionate Community movement and reflects the values of our local community. The Albany community have been engaged throughout the development of this Charter and in this way it is unique to our community, its strengths and the ongoing spirit of the community to care for each other.

The project began with a review of literature and case studies of other communities and local authorities who have adopted the Compassionate Communities movement and developed their own Compassionate Charters.

Compassionate Communities Steering Committee

The Great Southern Compassionate Communities Project has a Steering Committee to provide strategic guidance and oversight to the overall project.

This Committee has the following membership:

- WA Primary Health Alliance - Regional Manager
- City of Albany - Manager Community Development
- WA Country Health Service - District Health Advisory Council
- Albany Community Hospice
- St John Ambulance
- Great Southern Palliative Care Service
- Creative Albany – Community representative
- Carers WA
- General Practitioner

The Charter has been endorsed by the Compassionate Communities Project Steering Committee.

The Community and Stakeholder Engagement Process

The community engagement process for the Charter commenced in November 2019 in accordance with the Community Engagement Plan.

Six workshops were facilitated in November 2019 with 107 participants in total. The two-hour workshops were delivered using a world café format, with written feedback collated from small group discussions.

The workshops began with an overview of the Compassionate Communities concept and a audiovisual presentation from the *Limerick Compassionate Communities project, Ireland*. The participants were then asked the following three questions:

1. What are we already doing well in our community?
2. What could we do to build on this?
3. What do we need to create a more compassionate community?

The workshops were advertised using the following methods:

Newspapers:

- 14/11/19 Full page advert in the Albany Advertiser.
- 21/26/11/19 Quarter page advert in the Albany Advertiser.
- 14/11/19 Full page advert in the Weekender newspaper.
- 21/11/19 Quarter page advert in the Weekender newspaper.

Social Media:

- City of Albany Facebook Page 20/11/19 at 8am. The post reached 1.4k people.
- City of Albany Facebook Page 25/11/19 at 12.30pm. The post reached 1.7k people.
- Additional listings in the City of Albany community newsletter for several weeks and was also uploaded to the website listed under Events.
- WA Primary Health Alliance, Primary Health Exchange
- Great Southern Compassionate Communities webpage listing including workshop dates and venues - from 30 September.

Direct invites were sent to:

- ALAC direct email invitations to sporting clubs and associations network.
- Individual, business and community groups direct email – 186 including Friends of Groups, Ratepayer Associations and interest group networks, Faith Groups, Social Services Youth Advisory Council.
- ACCI – Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry – 2 direct email invitations to 739 subscribers. Opened respectively by 254 of 737 recipients and 274 of 739 recipients.
- Compassionate Communities Project Stakeholder list inclusive of government organisations, businesses, community services, community groups, clubs, churches and faith groups.
- Invites were sent to special interest groups and in partnership with key stakeholder organisations: ACTIV, Albany Migrant Resource Centre, WA Primary Health Alliance's Regional Clinical Committee Chair (Primary Health), Albany Early Years Network, Youth Advisory Council.

Special Interest Focus Groups

An additional 5 workshops were facilitated in February to March 2020 with 37 participants in total. The two-hour workshops were delivered using a world café format, with written feedback collated from small group discussions.

Strategic Workshop

The elected members of the City of Albany participated in a workshop discussion. They viewed a video of the community and stakeholder workshops and then responded to the following question:

- As civic leaders what do you see is needed to make Albany a compassionate city?

The following is a schedule of workshops that were held:

Type of Engagement	Method of Engagement	Engagement Dates	Participation (Number)
Inform and Consult	Workshop Community members	27 November 2019	20
Inform and Consult	Workshop Sporting Clubs and businesses	27 November 2019	24
Inform and Consult	Workshop Government and Service Providers	28 November 2019	14
Inform and Consult	Workshop – Early Years Network	28 November 2019	3
Inform and Consult	Workshop – Youth Advisory Council	29 November 2019	12
Inform and Consult	Workshop – Community/Faith Groups and Not-for-Profit organisations	4 December 2019	34
Inform and Consult	Strategic Workshop - City of Albany Elected Member	18 February 2020	11
Inform and Consult	Focus Group - Primary Health (GP's)	26 February 2020	8
Inform and Consult	Focus Group – People living with Disability (in partnership with ACTIV)	20 February 2020	6
Inform and Consult	Focus Group Aboriginal Community	27 February 2020	3
Inform and Consult	Focus Group Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (Karen Community)	27 February 2020	9

Summary of Engagement Process

The following six key themes emerged from the analysis of the engagement data:

- **Shared Humanity**

Living by the values of kindness, compassion, acceptance and care. Reaching out to others in our daily activities.

- **Community Mindedness**

Harness the collective energy and goodwill of the Albany community, encourage people to look out for each other and provide support. Strengthen existing volunteer networks and street/ neighbourhood communities.

- **Community Services and Initiatives**

Continue to value and support existing services e.g. Albany Community Hospice and Hawthorn House. Support and build upon community initiatives that address social isolation and vulnerability at any age. Build resilience and connection.

Compassionate Places and Spaces are created that facilitate and recognise compassion e.g. compassion café, memorial gardens, community information hubs and events.

- **Compassionate Places and Spaces**

Create places and spaces that facilitate and recognise compassion e.g. compassion café, memorial gardens, community information hubs and events.

- **Communication and Information**

Provide information in different formats, for example, in person, in print and digital. Communicate in a way that links people, services and support networks. Information sharing needs to have a physical presence where people can connect with someone, for example a hub or concierge.

- **Leadership, Mentoring and Advocacy**

Compassionate action takes strong leadership from our civic institutions, organisations, workplaces, schools, clubs, faith groups and families. Identify, recognise and support existing community champions. Develop/add to existing training and capacity building programs for schools, clubs, workplaces, organisations.

THE CHARTER

The *Compassionate Albany Charter* has been developed from the key themes that emerged from the analysis of the community engagement data. The key themes have been developed into aspirations for the purpose of encouraging a guiding community and stakeholders toward the common goal of being more compassionate.

COMPASSIONATE ALBANY CHARTER

Introduction Statement

I belong to a community where everyone recognises we have a part to play in supporting each other during life's toughest experiences, especially during times of hardship, illness, loneliness, death and grief.

We are all touched by these challenges at some point in our lives.

Let's have conversations about living well and dying well and supporting each other emotionally and practically along the way.

Shared Humanity

Compassion comes from the heart and starts with me.

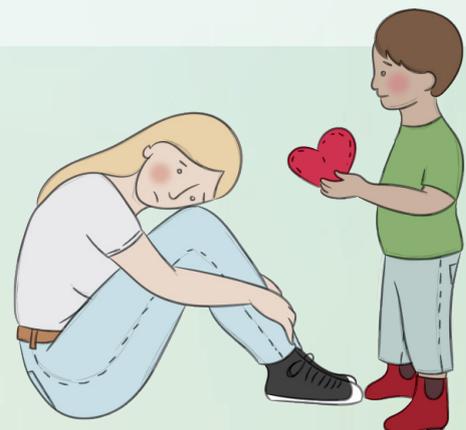
A community where people show kindness, understanding and compassion towards everyone.

“ *More understanding about the different ways people cope with loss - some talk, some are quiet, some like distraction. We are not all the same.*

Participant - Youth Focus Group

“ *Listening in an open way, don't judge quickly our differences and tell us to 'just get over it'. Respect our beliefs and connection to country, be open to learning a different way of seeing.*

Participant - Noongar Focus Group



Community Mindedness

Let's ask, what can I do for my community?

People creating opportunities every day to:

- Ask are you OK?
- Stop to listen
- Offer and accept help
- Be kind



“ *The little things. It's the help that doesn't cost people a lot of time – taking the bin out, the cooked casserole or sitting with someone so they can go and get their hair done.*

This means the world to a carer, to give them the opportunity to get out or do what the average person can do.

Participant – Community Workshop

Compassionate Organisations

Let's grow, recognise, reward

A Community growing more compassion in our businesses, schools, workplaces, clubs, community groups and institutions. Recognising and rewarding compassionate action.

“ *We need to be more inclusive outside of our clubs or organisations and think of the wider community and what we can do.*

Participant - Sporting Club and Business Workshop

Compassionate Places and Spaces

Let's use our places and spaces more to connect and belong.

Create a sense of belonging in all the places we meet, work and play.

“ *Not everyone has a sense of belonging, they don't have family or contact with different groups on a day to day basis - it's just important to have that sense of belonging within your community.*

Participant Sporting and Business Workshop

Communication and Information Sharing

Let's Listen.
Let's Ask.
Let's Talk.
Let's Share.

Information is easy to find and understand.

Provide clear information on all aspects of support for hardship, illness, loneliness, death and grief for all ages and abilities.



“ *A compassionate community is a community that is connected, where people talk to each other face to face. There is so much on social media and online which doesn't actually connect all of the community from the young to the old.*

Participant - Community Workshop

Leadership and Advocacy

Let's lead by sharing what we've learnt and listening with our hearts

We are willing to be bold and be the change we want to see. Leadership is about compassion, inclusion, care and respect.

“ *Everyone can be a leader. Everyone that knows about it [supporting people compassionately through loss] can spread the word - it's too much for one person, it's got to be a community responsibility.*

Participant - Community Workshop

