

## Day Care Policy

### Objective

The Council Day Care Policy is to guide the City of Albany's role in ensuring Albany residents have access to Day Care services and ensuring equitable and appropriate allocation of City of Albany resources.

Council recognises the important role of early year's services in setting the foundations for life opportunities for individuals and a cohesive community.

A range of principles guide the implementation of this policy, with the aim of providing for best quality early years services for children and families in the City of Albany.

### Scope

This Policy outlines the City of Albany's roles and responsibilities in the context of providing and supporting **Day Care** services within its municipality.

It provides clear parameters for:

- The City of Albany to operate a Day Care service; and
- The Council to make decisions on service delivery and allocation of resources.

The following principles underpin the City of Albany's approach to Day Care services and are to be considered when implementing this Policy:

- Early years services directly improve a child's social, emotional, learning and employment opportunities throughout different life stages;
- **Quality** is critical to achieving the broader benefits of early year's services;
- A diversity of providers including City operated, 'for-profit' and/or not-for-profit organisations underpin a robust Day Care system;
- **Access** to Day Care services is essential to support the participation of the many families who are in the workforce;
- Delivering best practice service provision ensures high quality care and learning outcomes; and
- Identification of relevant social trends and emerging community needs through research and community engagement to ensure service delivery is robust and evidence-based.

### Policy Statements

- A.** The City of Albany will provide and support Day Care services in Albany to meet the **Need** of the community through the following key roles:
- Assessing planning applications from other service providers;
  - Providing a Day Care service where appropriate and applicable based on the principles and scope of this policy;
  - Support training and education; and
  - Provide support to not-for-profit service providers where applicable.
- B.** The City of Albany Day Care service will:
- Be sustainable;
  - Offer choice;
  - Offer quality;
  - Be accessible – culturally, geographically and financially;
  - Provide opportunities for the education and training of early childhood educators;
  - Integrate and partner with other relevant services and providers that complement child and family support services, including for culturally and linguistically diverse families and newly arrived migrants;
  - Open at times that align with community need;
  - Respond to the needs of children with additional needs within the parameters of mainstream programs and funding constraints; and
  - Undertake programs and initiatives that strengthen learning opportunities, including for vulnerable families and children.
- C.** Council will conduct reviews of the delivery of the City of Albany's Day Care service at its discretion or subject to market changes, with the aim of improving service delivery and ensuring resources are allocated appropriately. On occasion, this may lead to a change in service delivery.

- D. Council may consider reducing delivery of Day Care services if a review of its services determines that:
- The City of Albany's Day Care Policy objectives can be better achieved by transitioning the City's Day Care service to an appropriate not-for-profit or community-managed model;
  - An alternative service delivery model with other providers would allocate the City a modified role in service delivery without compromising the objectives of this Policy; or
  - Where the City's Day Care service is not **Viable** and demand can be met by suitable alternative providers.
- E. The City of Albany will respond to community need for Day Care services within the limitations of this Policy.

### Legislative and Strategic Context

The legislative and regulatory context that governs the provision of Day Care services in the City of Albany includes:

- The Local Government Act enables Councils to plan and provide for wellbeing within the community and respond to community needs;
- The Federal Government has primary responsibility to ensure that childcare is accessible, affordable and of a high quality;
- The National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care aims to improve health, safety, early learning and wellbeing of Australia's children.

The licensing and operation of children's services in Western Australia is regulated by the Federal and State Governments.

The City of Albany's Day Care is responsible for ensuring compliance with:

- Education and Care Services National Law Regulations 2012 (Cth); and
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2012 (WA).

The City of Albany is the responsible authority for assessing planning applications for the establishment of childcare facilities in the City of Albany in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2005.

The City of Albany Strategic context (Community Strategic Plan) that provides the broad framework within which this Policy operates and/or with which it needs to comply:

- **Strategy:** Strategic Community Plan 2032
  - **Pillar:** People
  - **Outcome 1:** A diverse and inclusive community
  - **Objective 1.1:** Provide facilities and services to meet the needs of families and young children.
- **Corporate Business Plan 2021-25:**
  - **Pillar:** People
  - **Outcome 1: A diverse and inclusive community**
  - **Objective 1.1:** Provide facilities and services to meet the needs of families and young children.
  - **Action 1.1.2:** Facilitate improved access to child development, care and support programs for families.

### Review Position and Date

This policy is to be reviewed by the Document Owner every three years.

### Associated Documents

The following documents that have a bearing on this policy and that may be useful reference material for users of this policy, follow:

- City of Albany Strategic Community Plan 2032
- City of Albany Corporate Business Plan 2021-25
- City of Albany – Albany Regional Day Care Business Analysis prepared by NAJA Consulting Services 2021

## Definitions

Key terms and acronyms used in the policy, and their definitions:

- **Day Care** means centre-based child care for children from birth to six years. A Day Care centre operates extended hours to provide support to families who work or study and respite care. In partnership with families, Day Care centres support a child's development through guidance and extensive opportunity for play.
- **Viable** means a model of service delivery that allows the service to operate in a financially sustainable way without Council subsidy.
- **Access** means providing places in a child care centre that provides quality early childhood education program.
- **Quality** means providing a service in accordance with the National Child Care Quality Standards.
- **Need** means the level or extent of services required by the community. This can be determined from time-to-time through market changes or trends, or through reviews of service delivery standards. This could be achieved through regular compliance audits, or consultation with community and stakeholders.

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