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Communities for Children is funded by the Department for Social Services

# **Communities for Children Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019**

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# **Families and Communities Programme Communities for Children Facilitating Partner Community Strategic Plan**

## **The Communities for Children Facilitating Partners (FP) Sub-activity**

Facilitating Partners (FPs) are place-based and develop and facilitate a whole of community approach to support and enhance early childhood development and wellbeing for children from before birth to 12 years. FPs build on local strengths to meet local community needs and create capability within local service systems, using strong evidence of what works in early intervention and prevention as identified by the Families and Children Expert Panel. They collaborate with other organisations to provide a holistic service system for children and families. FPs fund other organisations (known as Community Partners) to provide services including parenting support, group peer support, case management, home visiting services and other supports to promote child wellbeing.

## **The Community Strategic Plan**

The Community Strategic Plan (the Plan) supports FPs to set out a vision for their service area. It identifies the key needs and service gaps in the community, develops ways to better coordinate and collaborate and outlines priority areas and strategies to address need and improve outcomes for children and families.

The Plan should build on the extensive knowledge that FPs and their Committees have gained in working with their communities, often over long periods of time. This new Community Strategic Plan presents an opportunity to critically reflect on what is changing and what continues to be the strengths and challenges for your local community.

The Plan also reflects the Australian Government's commitment to civil society and an acknowledgement that it is only through everyone in a community working together that true change in outcomes and trajectories can be achieved. This includes governments, non-government organisations, academia, business and community members.

The Community Strategic Plan should be developed with the aim of achieving the Families and Children Activity Outcomes and the Communities for Children FP objectives. The objectives of the Communities for Children FP are outlined below, including the new objective around school transition and engagement.

- To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:
  - Healthy young families — supporting parents to care for their children before and after birth and throughout the early years;
  - Supporting families and parents — support for parents to provide children with secure attachment, consistent discipline and quality environments that are stable, positive, stimulating, safe and secure;
  - Early learning — provide access to high quality early learning opportunities in the years before school; provide early identification and

support for children at risk of developmental and behavioural problems;  
assist parents with ways they can stimulate and promote child  
development and learning from birth; and

- School transition and engagement - support children and families to make a smooth transition to school and work with local schools to assist children and families with their ongoing engagement with school.
- To create strong child-friendly communities that understand the importance of children and apply this capacity to maximise the health, well-being and early development of young children at the local level.

# 1. Executive Summary

## COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019



### Family and Children Connect

This strategy is focused on ensuring all families have the knowledge, confidence and capacity to provide a supportive and caring home environment where children can develop to their full potential.

It is about increasing family functioning, reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors. The focus is on engaging and responding to parents, carers and children 0-12 years and supporting the transition to parenthood.

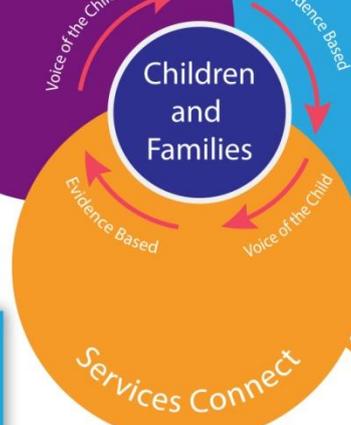
### Early Years and Schools Connect

This strategy focuses on supporting parents and children to engage with early childhood services and schools while assisting parents to seek employment or training.

It is about maximising educational opportunities for children by ensuring smooth transitions and enhancing connections between families, early childhood services and schools.

Family and Children Connect

Early Years and Schools Connect



### Services Connect

This strategy focuses on strengthening and building the existing service system to develop a coordinated response across the community to improve family functioning and child wellbeing.

It is about collaboration, partnerships and information sharing across adult, family and children's services.

#### DSS OUTCOMES

- Improved child, adult and family well being
- Increased economic engagement
- More cohesive communities

#### COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN OBJECTIVES

- To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:
  - Healthy young children
  - Supporting families and parents
  - Early learning
  - School transition and engagement.

- To create strong child-friendly communities that understand the importance of children and apply this capacity to maximise the health, well-being and early development of young children at the local level.

#### Our Vision

Children will reach their potential by being heard, valued, protected and their development supported.

#### Our Priorities

- Priority Area One: Families and Children Connecting with Community
- Priority Area Two: Early Education and Parenting
- Priority Area Three: Stronger, Safer Families

#### How we will do it

To build upon and develop the strengths of the Altone, Bullsbrook, Ellenbrook and Midland communities to ensure continued development, connection and support between children, families, communities, schools and services.

#### Our Places

- Altone
- Bullsbrook
- Ellenbrook
- Midland

## 2. Community-Informed Service Mapping

### 2.1 Mapping and Gap Analysis

In 2014, the Swan Alliance analyzed the community assets and the gaps existent in the Communities for Children (CfC) site and produced a report *Community Asset and Gap Analysis 2014: "Who Cares?: What Children Think..."*<sup>1</sup> which complements this Strategic Plan and is available to all local services and organisations. The Swan Alliance embraced 'listening to children's voices' as paramount to the integrity of the document.

The processes that informed the document included:

- Examination of Community Profiles (via City of Swan, Population ID, ABS, AEDC, NAPLAN data);
- Desktop research and literature review of all relevant documents;
- Examination of initial planning done by Communities for Children Plus in 2011;
- Online survey of service providers had 28 responses;
- Community Engagement surveys were completed by 132 people across all four places;
- 15 Community Partners<sup>2</sup> provided detailed feedback on identified gaps in area;
- Voice of the Child Consultations with 246 children.

Findings based upon this process across the four places – Altone, Bullsbrook, Ellenbrook and Midland – that comprise the Swan Alliance Communities for Children site include:

### 2.2 Altone Place (Beechboro, Caversham, Lockridge, Kiara)

- A significant percentage of children are developmentally vulnerable (AEDC);<sup>3</sup>
- Highest proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds within the City of Swan;<sup>4</sup>
- Barriers to access:<sup>5</sup>
  - Limited public transport;
  - Social isolation of mothers due to language and cultural barriers;
- High proportion of Aboriginal families;<sup>6</sup>
- High incidence of family violence;<sup>7</sup>
- Impact on services from rapid population growth in adjacent 'Urban Growth Corridor';<sup>8</sup>
- Need for accessible 'soft entry' services within walking distance, for families with children under 5 years;<sup>9</sup>
- Children want to feel and be safe inside and outside their home;<sup>10</sup>
- Engage CaLD families in the early years in local parenting and support services;<sup>11</sup>
- Cultural sensitivities and understanding between service providers and families need strengthening;<sup>12</sup>
- Children are ready for school and the transition to school is seamless and positive for children and families;<sup>13</sup>
- Children aged 8-12 years are engaged in appropriate out of school activities;<sup>14</sup>
- Aboriginal families in the early years are engaged in local parenting and support services.<sup>15</sup>

### **2.2.1 Existing Support Services in Altone**

There are five key support services for families and children in the Altone area:

- *Meerilinga*<sup>16</sup> – provides positive parenting through integrated services including parenting support; home visiting, school readiness programs including Kadadjiny Playgroup for Aboriginal families and the early learning program for children aged 3-4 years.
- *Child Australia*<sup>17</sup> – provides an early childhood centre for families with children 0-5 years and out of school hours care for children 5-12 years.
- *Brockman House*<sup>18</sup> – is a community based neighborhood community centre providing a variety of parenting workshops and early childhood programs. It is an accredited child care and out of school hours care centre.
- *Djooraminda*<sup>19</sup> – provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families being reunified with their children.
- *City of Swan*<sup>20</sup> – provides a variety of youth and community development activities. The City provides after-school activities for children aged 9-12 years at the leisure centre.
- *Stand By Me*<sup>21</sup> – provides after school activities for children over 11 years.

In addition, a new free after school activity will be provided by *Fair Game*<sup>22</sup> that targets children living in Caversham and surrounding suburbs within the Swan Valley Growth corridor.

### **2.2.2 Identified Gaps - Communities for Children focus 2015-2017**

- Accessible and culturally secure 'soft entry' parenting services, within walking distance, for Kiara and Lockridge families with children under 5 years;<sup>23</sup>
- Accessible and culturally secure services for primary school aged children to address the identified need of children wanting to feel safer at home and within their community.

### **2.3 Bullsbrook Place (suburb of Bullsbrook)**

- Barriers to access including transport;<sup>24</sup>
- Rural locality with isolation issues;<sup>25</sup>
- Lack of suitable venues for parents to socialise e.g. coffee shops;<sup>26</sup>
- Limited local employment;<sup>27</sup>
- Lack of childcare;<sup>28</sup>
- Family violence and mental health issues (including PND and suicide);<sup>29</sup>
- Projected population increase (growth corridor) and need for locally based services;<sup>30</sup>
- Parenting support for isolated and vulnerable families with children under 12 years;<sup>31</sup>
- Support for young families with children under 2 years due to limited availability of child health nurses;<sup>32</sup>
- Support for families who have children with disabilities;<sup>33</sup>
- Support for foster families;<sup>34</sup>
- Out of school activities for children of all age groups;<sup>35</sup>
- Low cost or free activities due to financial pressures.<sup>36</sup>

### **2.3.1 Existing Support Services in Bullsbrook**

There is a small number of local sporting and social activities (e.g. scouts, dancing, and football) that children can access after school and a vibrant community playgroup. *Meerilinga* provides a parenting service based at the school one day per week and a 'drop in' morning for community members at Lowery Park. The *City of Swan* facilitates after-school activities for youth, activities for young children in the library and community development services on a part-time basis. Plans are under way for a new community centre due for completion in 2017. A *WA Health Department* Child Health Nurse is available 2.5 days per week and the *Pearce Airbase* provides a toy library two days per week. *Parenting WA* provides parenting education on an 'as requested' basis. The *Department of Child Protection and Family Services* and the counsellor from the *Shire of Mundaring* provide outreach support for families as needed. A new child care centre opening in April 2015 will ease the lack of child care in the area. The *Bullsbrook Residents and Ratepayers Association* are active in providing events and other opportunities for families to socialize.

### **2.3.2 Identified Gaps - Communities for Children focus 2015-2017**

- Accessible service to support parents with babies<sup>37</sup> under 12 months of age which complements, and adds value to, the Child Health Nurse;
- Accessible and secure activity for primary school aged children<sup>38</sup> addressing the identified need of responding to children with disabilities;
- Supporting parents<sup>39</sup> with children aged 0-12 years to access existing community based and outreach services through the provision of ongoing emotional support.

### **2.4 Ellenbrook Place (suburb of Ellenbrook)**

- Extremely high birth rate (75 births/month);<sup>40</sup>
- Mental Health issues (including PND and suicide); stigma is a barrier to access;<sup>41</sup>
- Lack of services based in, and outreaching to, Ellenbrook;<sup>42</sup>
- Highest number of domestic violence incidents reported in the CfC area;<sup>43</sup>
- Lack of affordable rental space for services and accessible community facilities for families;<sup>44</sup>
- Lack of public transport to access family services in Midland (where most services are located);<sup>45</sup>
- Social isolation of families, particularly those who have a parent working away;<sup>46</sup>
- Impact from population growth in Ellenbrook and adjacent 'Urban Growth Corridor'.<sup>47</sup>
- Parenting support for families with children under 5 years;
- School readiness and quality early education for young children transitioning to school;
- Support for increasing number of Aboriginal families in the early years;
- Support for increasing number of CaLD families in the early years;
- Support for children transitioning from primary to high school.

### **2.4.1 Existing Support Services in Ellenbrook**

The *Salvation Army* provides a low-cost shop and social and recreational activities for families. There are a number of child care centres (including out of school care) and a parent network for families who work away from home (*FIFO families*). A range of sporting clubs, community clubs (e.g. Lions), community playgroups and church groups also provide support. A small number of services including the *Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre*, *Midland Women's Health Care Place*, *Parenting WA* and *Ngala* outreach to Ellenbrook. The *City of Swan* provides community development, youth activities, in partnership with the *Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC)*, three evenings a week and activities for young children in the library.

### **2.4.2 Identified Gaps - Communities for Children focus 2015-2017**

- Accessible Activities, including supporting CaLD families, that develop parenting skills and focus on attachment between parents and children under 5 years of age;
- Supporting parents<sup>48</sup> with children aged 0-12 years to access existing community based and outreach services through the provision of ongoing emotional support.

### **2.6 Midland Place (including suburbs of Koongamia, Midland, Middle Swan, Midvale, Stratton)**

- Highest proportion of vulnerable Aboriginal children and families in the City of Swan;<sup>49</sup>
- Major issues identified include: child abuse and neglect<sup>50</sup>, mental health<sup>51</sup>, family violence<sup>52</sup>, incarceration<sup>53</sup>, and lack of knowledge of available support services;<sup>54</sup>
- Low immunization rates<sup>55</sup>, low NAPLAN<sup>56</sup> and AEDC<sup>57</sup> results;
- Highest proportion of low income households across City of Swan;<sup>58</sup>
- Highest level of disadvantage across City of Swan;<sup>59</sup>
- Increasing number of CaLD children and families moving into area;<sup>60</sup>
- High levels of public housing, housing stress, unemployment and underemployment.<sup>61</sup>
- Accessible activities targeting disadvantaged Aboriginal families;<sup>62</sup>
- Support Aboriginal fathers in raising their children;<sup>63</sup>
- Transition to parenting and early parenting support;<sup>64</sup>
- Supporting Aboriginal families in transitioning children to school;<sup>65</sup>
- School attendance and engagement;<sup>66</sup>
- Children want to feel and be safe inside and outside their home;<sup>67</sup>
- High number of young parents seeking support;<sup>68</sup>
- Out of school activities to engage children in the middle years.<sup>69</sup>

### **2.5.1 Existing Support Services in Midland**

As the district centre, Midland is a regional hub and has a range of adult, family and children services available. However, many of these services are unable to meet the demand while for others there are barriers for families accessing mainstream services<sup>70</sup>. Since CfC commenced in Midland there have been a number of significant initiatives and programs implemented in the area, including:

- Swan Children and Family Centres
- St John of God Hospital
- Debarl Yerrigan Health Service
- Headspace
- Medicare Local
- Ngala Indigenous Parenting Support Program
- Swan Extended School Hub Project (The Smith Family, Fogarty Foundation, Swan View SHS, Middle Swan, Clayton View and Swan View Primary Schools)
- Talk It Out (Arafmi & Clan WA) for children at risk of developing mental health issues

These new initiatives, together with the strong early childhood services provided by the Shire of Mundaring combine to address many of the needs directly impacting on children and families in the area. However, due to the high needs in the area identified gaps still exist.

### ***2.5.2 Identified Gaps - Communities for Children focus 2015-2017***

- An inclusive and accessible activity for young teenage parents<sup>71</sup> that develops parenting skills and focuses on attachment between parents and children under 5 years of age;
- Accessible and culturally secure out of school Activities for primary school aged children addressing identified needs – namely disadvantaged Aboriginal families, children feeling safe at home and in the community;
- Activities providing emotional and social support for families, including fathers, with children aged 0-12 years.

## 3. Community Engagement

### 3.1 Governance

#### 3.1.1 Facilitating Partner

*Ngala Community Services*, on behalf of the *Swan Alliance*, is contracted by the Australian Government Department of Social Services as the *Communities for Children Facilitating Partner* within the Swan area focusing on the suburbs of Beechboro, Bullsbrook, Caversham, Ellenbrook, Kiara, Koongamia, Lockridge, Midland, Middle Swan, Midvale and Stratton. The Swan Alliance is a partnership between Ngala, Mission Australia and Anglicare WA. All three organisations have equal decision making authority.

#### 3.1.2 Community Partners

Community Partners are organisations sub-contracted by the *Swan Alliance* to deliver direct services, to families and children, which meet the outcomes in the Community Strategic Plan.

#### 3.1.3 Community Committee

The Community Committee forms the ‘backbone’ of the Communities for Children (CfC) initiative and is made up of representatives from local business, service providers, schools, clients parents and caregivers. The Community Committee assists the *Swan Alliance* to plan, guide and support the Communities for Children initiative.

#### 3.1.4 Frameworks and Models

The Swan Alliance, and its Community Partners, uses sound community development principles and practice in the implementation of the Communities for Children Community Strategic Plan. Our work is inclusive of the following frameworks and models:

##### 3.1.4.1 National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children<sup>72</sup>

This COAG Framework provides a commitment by all levels of government and the non-government sector to protect children and work together to reduce child abuse and neglect. It is based on the belief that ‘protecting children is everyone’s business’.

##### 3.1.4.2 Australian Early Years Learning Framework<sup>73</sup>

Fundamental to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), developed by COAG, is the view that, from before birth, children are connected to family, community, culture and place. It recognises families as ‘children’s first and most influential educators’ and provides a direction for all early childhood settings inclusive of playgroups, crèches and other early intervention services.

##### 3.1.4.3 Closing the Gap<sup>74</sup>: National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development

This COAG initiative concentrates on improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It contributes to the following overarching outcomes:

- Indigenous children are born and remain healthy;

- Indigenous children have the same health outcomes as non-Indigenous children;
- Indigenous children acquire the basic skills for life and learning; and
- Indigenous families have ready access to suitable and culturally inclusive early childhood and family support services.

#### **3.1.4.4 Assets Based Community Development <sup>75</sup>**

Asset-based community development “affirms and builds upon the remarkable work already going on” in local communities. It provides a model for services to complement community efforts and not substitute them.

#### **3.1.4.5 Collective Impact <sup>76</sup>**

The term collective impact refers to the collaboration of key stakeholders from different sectors committing to a common agenda to address complex social issues. It emphasises the need for a shared vision and action; mutually reinforcing activities; effective communication; shared measurement systems and a separate ‘backbone’ organisation to support the initiative.

### **3.1.5 External Evaluation**

Since inception of the *Swan Alliance Communities for Children* initiative, previously known as *Midland Communities for Children Plus*, Curtin University has been engaged to provide formative and summative evaluation of the project. This process of ongoing evaluation of the initiative will be continued until the end of the Contract period in June 2019.

## **3.2 Community Feedback**

### **3.2.1 Parents and families**

Seeking meaningful partnerships with local parents and families is a priority for the Swan Alliance. This needs to be multi dimensional, so that all perspectives can be considered, including extended family and the wider community. This has been done and will continue through practical processes such as face to face discussions with parents at local services and programs, Community Partner Activities, schools, community forums and various community events and festivals e.g. Early Years Festivals, NAIDOC etc. In addition to this, online surveys have been developed and questionnaires have been filled out by parents who engage in services and also those who are not currently attending services. The Swan Alliance will continue to prioritise partnerships with parents as a key mechanism to ensure that programs provided evolve in response to the needs of children and their families in our community.

### **3.2.2 The Voices of Children**

Through the implementation of the ‘Communities for Children’ initiative over the next five years, we have the opportunity to shape activities based on meaningful two way processes with children and their families through formal<sup>77</sup> and informal<sup>78</sup> methods. The Swan Alliance is committed to partnering with local children so that programs and services respond to, and indeed advocate for, the needs of children within our community. Importantly, this acknowledges children as citizens in their own right and listens to their views directly and

authentically. The Swan Alliance has already begun to engage with children significantly through confidential 'real time' audience participation handsets where answers can be submitted anonymously and simply, without issues such as literacy being a barrier. The Swan Alliance will work with local children and the City of Swan to encourage the establishment of a children's reference group or council and to design and implement a children's forum.

### **3.2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families**

In addition to the Aboriginal Reference Group, families from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are represented on the Swan Alliance staff, the Swan Alliance Leadership Group and the Communities for Children Community Committee. The Swan Alliance and our Community Partners have a strong commitment to 'walking alongside' Aboriginal families and is committed to regularly yarning with parents, Elders and families to identify community needs and improve service delivery. Our commitment is articulated in the Swan Alliance's cultural protocols document, *Connecting to Aboriginal Culture and Community*<sup>79</sup> and works in conjunction with this Community Strategic Plan.

### **3.2.3 Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families**

Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) families, including refugee families, are represented on the Swan Alliance staff, the Swan Alliance Leadership Group and the Communities for Children Community Committee. During 2015-2019 effective mechanisms will be developed to consult further with CaLD families to ensure this diverse group's opinions are represented in planning and programme development. These mechanisms will be developed based on the recommendations of the Office of Multicultural Interests (2010) in their document *Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally*.

### **3.2.4 Community Groups and Services**

The Swan Alliance and our Community Partners are committed to staying connected with local community groups and services through:

- Participating in community events and activities;
- Maintaining regular contact with other adult, children and family services;
- Membership on community interagency groups;
- Connection with other networks, e.g. North East Youth Organisations Network (NEYON) and the East Metropolitan CaLD Network;
- Membership on local resident associations;
- Maintaining an ongoing relationship with local government, state and federal government departments;
- Surveying local community groups and services.

### **3.2.4 Identified Gaps in Communication with Key Stakeholders**

Over the next five years this 'circle of support' will be further developed to include:

- Government departments, particularly Centrelink and Department of Housing;
- Local businesses and the Swan Chamber of Commerce;
- Church groups and religious affiliations.

### **3.2.4 How will Community Engagement Occur?**

The Swan Alliance will implement community engagement strategies based on the *Platforms Service Redevelopment Framework* (see summary Appendix 2) which provides the ‘how’ to implement an Assets Based Community Development model. Each Swan Alliance Community Development Officer has been trained in *Platforms’* and it is anticipated that our Community Partners will complete training in the Framework over the next few years to create a consistency of service delivery across the Communities for Children site.

*Platforms’* is a nationally recognized framework (developed with FaCHSIA support), “designed to assist local communities refocus services for children and families, and strengthen the capacity of communities to promote positive outcomes for children”.<sup>80</sup> The Platforms Framework outlines four key phases:

- Raising awareness;
- Community engagement and planning;
- Implementing;
- Monitoring and evaluation.<sup>81</sup>

Importantly, *Platforms* clarifies issues such as the differences between engagement and consultation and guides processes such as: who we will engage with; the purpose of engagement; and the strategies we will use.

The Framework, together with other research outlined in the Swan Alliance document “*Background Information: Communities for Children Community Strategic Planning 2015-2017*” provides the foundation for programs developed for the *Community Activity Work Plans* and complements this Strategic Plan.

## **4. Service Area Vision**

### **4.1 Vision**

All children will reach their potential by being heard, valued, protected and their development supported.

### **4.2 Mission**

To build upon the strengths of the Altone, Bullsbrook, Ellenbrook and Midland communities to ensure continued development, connection and support between children, families, communities, schools and services.

### **4.3 Strategies**

To meet the objectives of the Communities for Children initiative and the DSS Families and Communities aim to “support, families, improve children’s wellbeing and increase participation of vulnerable people in community life to enhance family and community functioning” three core strategies are implemented across the Swan Alliance site:

- Family and Children Connect
- Early Childhood and Schools Connect
- Services Connect

Embedded within these strategies is evidence based practice and hearing the voice of the child. Community Partner Activities support each of the strategies within the Community Strategic Plan.

#### **Family and Child Connect**

This strategy is focused on ensuring all families have the knowledge, confidence and capacity to provide a supportive and caring home environment where children can develop to their full potential. It is about increasing family functioning, reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors. The focus is on engaging and responding to parents, carers and children 0-12 years and supporting the transition to parenthood.

#### **Early Years and Schools Connect**

This strategy focuses on supporting parents and children to engage with early childhood services and schools while assisting parents to seek employment or training. It is about maximising educational opportunities for children by ensuring smooth transitions and enhancing connections between families, early childhood services and schools.

#### **Services Connect**

This strategy focuses on strengthening and building the existing service system to develop a coordinated response across the community to improve family functioning and child wellbeing. It is about collaboration, partnerships and information sharing across adult, family and children’s services.

## 5. Priority Areas

### Priority Area One: Families and Children Connecting with Community

#### Rationale

Connecting families and children with community resources and one another is a key need identified within the mapping and gap analysis. For many families there are barriers to accessing services and engaging with others. A key priority for the Communities for Children site is to reduce barriers to participation. All Community Partners are expected to contribute to addressing this priority in the implementation of their Activity.

#### Contributing to DSS Outcomes

- Improved child, adult and family well being
- More cohesive communities

#### Communities for Children Objective

- To create strong child-friendly communities that understand the importance of children and apply this capacity to maximise the health, well-being and early development of young children at the local level.

#### Strategies

- Provide Activities which:
  - Are inclusive and enable children and families to engage with community;
  - support children, parents and families to make new friends and increase social connections;
  - facilitate 'warm and active' referral processes to other services;
  - are free and are based on sound research of 'what works';
  - provide a secure space where children and families feel safe and welcomed;
- Promote key early childhood messages and advocate on behalf of local services, children and families;
- Continue to implement the *Voice of the Child*<sup>62</sup> project with the aim providing timely responses to the needs identified by children;
- Provide activities which are developed in consultation with, and based on feedback from participants;
- Continue to liaise with the *Midland Leadership Council*<sup>63</sup> to develop a cohesive, collaborative strategic direction to meet the needs of families and children within the Swan LGA;
- Work in partnership with the *City of Swan* to provide strategic direction for families with children under 12 years, particularly those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable;
- Seek funding from other sources<sup>64</sup>, on behalf of the community, to support local community activities and events;
- Continue to partner with the *Australian Manufacturing Worker's Union* to facilitate culturally appropriate celebrations and activities which encourage families and children to connect;
- Facilitate opportunities for community members and staff from a wide range of

sectors to develop positive working relationships through shared activities and learning together;

- Liaise with the *Midland Chamber of Commerce, Ellenbrook and Districts Business Association* and other business networks to develop a relationship for potential reciprocal collaboration;
- Encourage staff and the families with whom they work to attend community events and activities celebrating a 'sense of community'.

### **Measurement**

- In partnership with External Evaluator, Community Partners to complete a Program Logic for each Activity;
- Community Partners to develop evaluation tools so as to identify progress against goals;
- Client outcome measures through observation, surveys and DSS Data Exchange;
- Evaluate the success of the CfC initiative using Results Based Accountability.

### **Key Stakeholders**

- Children
- Families, parents and community members
- School, groups and community organisations
- City of Swan and Midland Leadership Council
- Government and non-government services
- Other funding bodies and philanthropists.

## **Priority Area Two: Early Education and Parenting**

### **Rationale**

Support for early parenting has been identified as a key need across the Communities for Children site. In particular, the provision of parenting support for new parents with babies and young children; and, 'soft entry' universal and accessible services to meet the needs of local families. Each of these needs has a strong research base to support the priorities identified in community consultations.

### **Communities for Children Objective**

To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:

- Healthy young families — supporting parents to care for their children before and after birth and throughout the early years;
- Early learning — provide access to high quality early learning opportunities in the years before school; provide early identification and support for children at risk of developmental and behavioural problems; assist parents with ways they can stimulate and promote child development and learning from birth;
- School transition and engagement - support children and families to make a smooth transition to school and work with local schools to assist children and families with their ongoing engagement with school.

### **Contributing to DSS Outcomes**

- Improved child, adult and family well being
- More cohesive communities

### **Strategies**

- Provide Activities where parents develop knowledge, confidence and capacity and build on parent/child attachment;
- Provide inclusive Activities which are culturally appropriate and welcoming so as to reduce barriers to access;
- Provide activities with a focus on school transition;
- Provide activities consistent with the *Early Years Learning Framework*;
- Provide activities which support parents to access schools, libraries, community playgroups, support services and other community resources.

### **Measurement**

- Community Partners to develop appropriate tools as pre and post evaluation to identify progress against goals;
- In partnership with External Evaluator, Community Partners to complete a Program Logic model for each Activity;
- Client outcome measures through observation, surveys and DSS Data Exchange;
- In partnership with External Evaluator and the Facilitating Partner, Community Partners explore opportunities to develop, implement and assess effective evidence

based programs which meet the requirements of the Department of Social Services.

**Key Stakeholders**

- Parents and children
- Child Health Nurses
- Maternity departments, antenatal services and parenting programs
- Early Learning and Development Centres and other early education services
- Community Playgroups
- Local primary schools
- Other adult, children and family services

## Priority Area Three: Stronger, Safer Families

### Rationale

Mapping and Gap Analysis has identified the need to provide stronger, safer families where children are safe and nurtured. It particularly focuses on providing support for families 'at risk' of entering the child protection system. These more targeted activities focus on developing protective strategies for increasing the well-being of children.

### Contributing to DSS Outcomes

- Improved child, adult and family well being
- Increased economic engagement
- More cohesive communities

### Communities for Children Objective

To improve the health and well-being of families and the development of young children, from before birth through to age 12 years, paying special attention to:

- Supporting families and parents — support for parents to provide children with secure attachment, consistent discipline and quality environments that are stable, positive, stimulating, safe and secure;

### Strategies

- Provide activities inclusive of families with disabilities, Aboriginal families, vulnerable and disadvantaged families, men and fathers, CaLD families, teen parents, young parents and families at risk of abuse and neglect;
- Provide culturally secure activities to support parents in meeting the needs of their family, develop parenting confidence and competence, and access appropriate family support services, including education, training and employment opportunities;
- Provide activities targeting 'at risk' families that develops parenting skills and focuses on attachment between parents and children under 5 years of age;
- Provide accessible and culturally secure community-based after school activities to support primary school aged children increase their sense of safety, security and belonging;
- Provide activities consistent with the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*;
- Provide activities with opportunities for participating families to be involved in program design and implementation; and, policy and strategic planning so as to ensure the best possible outcomes for children.<sup>85</sup>

### Measurement

- Community Partners to develop culturally appropriate tools as pre and post evaluation to identify progress against identified goals;
- In partnership with External Evaluator, Community Partners to complete a Program Logic model for each Activity;
- Develop and refine Activities in consultation with, and based on feedback from, participants;
- Client outcome measures through observation, surveys and DSS Data Exchange;

- Partner with academic institutions to further develop the research and evaluate program outcomes.

***Key Stakeholders:***

- Parents and children
- Adult services – mental health, drugs and alcohol, family violence, family court
- Department of Child Protection and Family Services
- Other children and family services
- Accommodation services
- Centrelink and employment services
- Community Elders, grandparents and members of the extended family
- Education Institutions including primary schools, secondary schools, TAFE and universities.

## APPENDIX 1 – AEDC and SEIFA

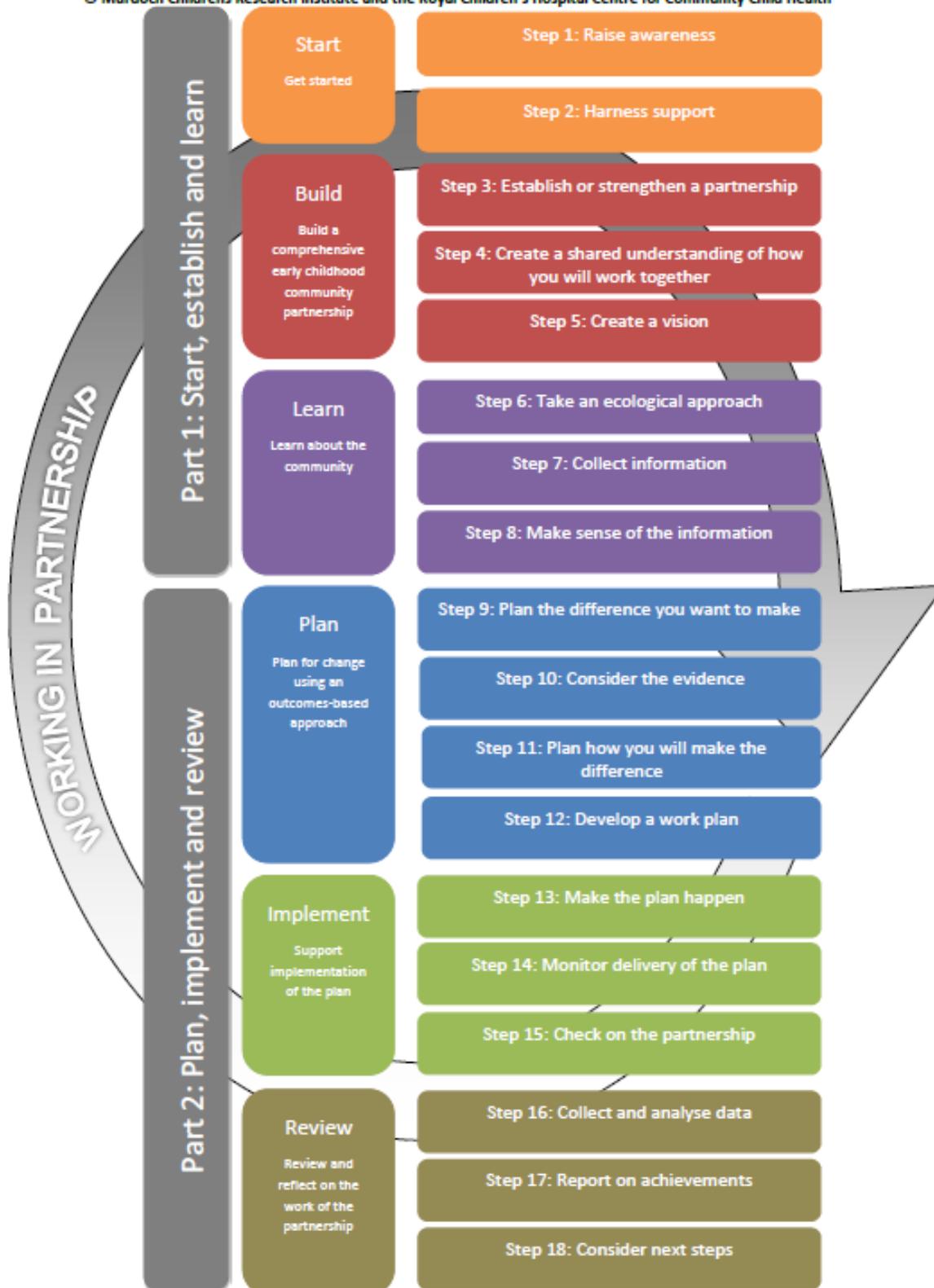
| Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)<br>Swan community 2012 <sup>1</sup> | Number of children | Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable (%) |                   |                    |  |  |  |  | SEIFA Score <sup>^</sup> |
|--|--------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------------------|
|  |                    | Physical health and wellbeing †                       | Social competence | Emotional maturity | Language and cognitive skills (school-based) | Communication skills and general knowledge | Vulnerable on <b>one</b> or more domains of the AEDC | Vulnerable on <b>two</b> or more domains of the AEDC |                          |
| <b>Australia</b>   | 289,973            | 9.3   | 9.3               | 7.6                | 6.8  | 9.0  | 22.0   | 10.8   | A N/                     |
| <b>Western Australia</b>   | 32,158             | 9.8   | 8.4               | 8.3                | 8.6  | 9.1  | 23.0   | 11.2   | A N/                     |
| <b>Swan community</b>  | 1,625              | 8.6   | 8.9               | 6.3                | 9.3  | 10.2                                       | 22.7   | 10.9   | A N/                     |
| Local Community  |                    |   |                   |                    |  |  |  |  |                          |
| Beechboro  | 214                | 3.3   | 9.5               | 5.3                | 10.9   | 11.4                                       | 21.4   | 10.9   | 986.34                   |
| Bellevue (Koongamia/Clayton View)  | 26                 | 26.1  | 8.7               | 8.7                | 8.7  | 21.7                                       | 43.5   | 17.4   | 969.96                   |
| Bullsbrook   | 58                 | 5.5   | 5.4               | 1.8                | 1.8  | 1.8  | 8.9  | 3.6  | 1023.11                  |
| Caversham/West Swan  | 57                 | 5.5   | 7.4               | 9.3                | 16.7   | 13   | 26.4   | 18.5   | 1024.51                  |
| Ellenbrook   | 482                | 9.7   | 6.6               | 6.1                | 8.8  | 8.7  | 21.5   | 10   | 1052.98                  |
| Kiara  | 30                 | 10  | 10                | 6.9                | 6.7  | 3.3  | 17.2   | 10   | 1011.53                  |
| Lockridge  | 52                 | 5.9   | 11.8              | 11.8               | 11.5   | 11.5                                       | 25.5   | 15.7   | 894.52                   |
| Middle Swan/Viveash/Woodbridge   | 49                 | 4.3   | 8.7               | 4.4                | 6.5  | 2.2  | 17.8   | 4.3  | 986.53                   |
| Midland  | 48                 | 16.7  | 14.3              | 4.8                | 7.1  | 14.3                                       | 28.6   | 19   | 896.76                   |
| Stratton   | 66                 | 9.5   | 27                | 17.7               | 14.3   | 17.5                                       | 36.5   | 23.8   | 944.15                   |

<sup>1</sup> ~ The maps are coloured in five shades of blue, representing the range of developmental vulnerability. The blue shading shows how a community is doing relative to the rest of Australia. Areas shaded in darker blues have higher proportions of developmentally vulnerable children. <sup>^</sup> Every geographical area in Australia is given a SEIFA score that ranks the 'disadvantage' of an area, compared with other areas in Australia. Lighter orange has greater disadvantage.

## Appendix 2

### Platforms Framework Roadmap 2012

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## Notes and References

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- <sup>1</sup> Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..*
- <sup>2</sup> Via written report in April 2014 and face to face interviews with representatives from the Swan Alliance, External Evaluator and Community Committee community volunteers;
- <sup>3</sup> Australian Early Development Census. See Appendix 1 for detailed information on the Swan CfC site.
- <sup>4</sup> Census data: <http://profile.id.com.au/swan/about?WebID=100>.
- <sup>5</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014 and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>6</sup> Census data: <http://profile.id.com.au/swan/about?WebID=100>.
- <sup>7</sup> Police data from Good Neighbourhood Project Meeting, December 2014.
- <sup>8</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014, Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014 and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>10</sup> Voice of the Child Swan Alliance consultations 2014.
- <sup>11</sup> Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..*
- <sup>12</sup> Service Provider surveys and Community Partner feedback 2014.
- <sup>13</sup> Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..*
- <sup>14</sup> Service Provider surveys and Community Partner feedback 2014.
- <sup>15</sup> Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..*
- <sup>16</sup> Meerilinga website: <http://www.meerilinga.org.au/>.
- <sup>17</sup> Child Australia website: <https://www.childaustralia.org.au/>.
- <sup>18</sup> Brockman House website: <http://www.brockmanhouse.net/>
- <sup>19</sup> Centrecare website: <http://www.centrecare.com.au/services/metropolitan-services-metro/indigenous-specific-metro/indigenous-reunification-metro/>
- <sup>20</sup> City of Swan website: <http://www.swan.wa.gov.au/Lists/Venues/Facilities/Altone Place Office>.
- <sup>21</sup> Stand By Me Youth Services website: <http://www.standbymewa.org.au/>.
- <sup>22</sup> Fair Game website: <http://www.fairgamewa.org/>
- <sup>23</sup> Meerilinga and Brockman House provide services to Beechboro families;
- <sup>24</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014 and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>25</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014.
- <sup>26</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014.
- <sup>27</sup> Census data: <http://profile.id.com.au/swan/employment-status?IBMID=30&BMIndigStatusID=0&es=2&WebID=120>.
- <sup>28</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014 and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>29</sup> Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>30</sup> Population increase: <http://forecast.id.com.au/swan/residential-development?WebID=120>.
- <sup>31</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014.
- <sup>32</sup> Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>33</sup> Census data: <http://profile.id.com.au/swan/assistance?es=2&WebID=120> and Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014.
- <sup>34</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014.
- <sup>35</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014.
- <sup>36</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys, Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014.
- <sup>37</sup> Other groups in the area focus on older children, their is a need for groups to support families with babies, particularly for mothers suffering issues around attachment and PND
- <sup>38</sup> Existing services support able bodied children and are predominantly located outside Bullsbrook involving significant travel for parents
- <sup>39</sup> The Shire of Mundaring counselling service focuses on children over 12 years of age and the Department of Child Protection and Family Services focuses on children 'known to' the department to

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prevent children entering care. There is a gap in service delivery for parents in need of additional support from that provided by playgroups and parenting groups.

<sup>40</sup> Information and data provided by WA Health Department Child Health Nurses, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Information and data provided by Eastern Region Domestic Violence Service Network Inc.

<sup>42</sup> Analysis of existing services providing support to Ellenbrook families, Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..*

<sup>43</sup> Information and data provided by Eastern Region Domestic Violence Service Network Inc.

<sup>44</sup> Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..* , Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014. and discussions with local real estate agents.

<sup>45</sup> Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014 and Service Provider surveys 2014. Community Partner feedback and various community consultation reports outlined in Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..* , Bus timetables Ellenbrook to Midland, Transperth <http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/>.

<sup>46</sup> Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014.

<sup>48</sup> Swan Alliance. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..* . There is very little existing support for families with older children in Ellenbrook. Service providers identified that parents lack awareness of what is currently available.

<sup>49</sup> This is based on SEIFA, income and housing stress, concentration of public housing and AEDC results.

<sup>50</sup> Department for Child Protection and Family Support - Midland office (2015) *Percentage of Aboriginal Children in Care 2014. (Midland compared to metropolitan average.*

<sup>51</sup> Service Provider surveys 2014

<sup>52</sup> Service Provider surveys 2014 and information and data provided by Eastern Region Domestic Violence Service Network Inc.

<sup>53</sup> Incarceration rates are based on anecdotal feedback and also an extrapolation of the rates of imprisonment and Aboriginal population density in Midland. [www.CreativeSpirits.info](http://www.CreativeSpirits.info), Aboriginal culture - Law & justice - Aboriginal prison rates, retrieved 22 April 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Service Provider surveys 2014

<sup>55</sup> National Health Performance Authority (2014) *Healthy Communities: Immunisation rates for children in 2012–13*. p.6. Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>

<sup>57</sup> Australian Early Development Census. See Appendix 1 for detailed information on the Swan CfC site.

<sup>58</sup> <http://forecast.id.com.au/swan/population-age-structure?WebID=160>

<sup>59</sup> This is based on SEIFA, income and housing stress, concentration of public housing, unemployment rates and AEDC results.

<sup>60</sup> <http://atlas.id.com.au/swan#MapNo=10017&SexKey=3&datatype=1&themtype=1&topicAlias=non-english-speaking&year=2011>

<sup>61</sup> <http://profile.id.com.au/swan/about?WebID=160>.

<sup>62</sup> 3.0% of the City of Swan's population is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent compared to 1.6% in Greater Perth. The areas with the highest percentages are: Swan View (4.8%) (which includes Stratton), Midland (4.7%), Altona (4.0%) (Beechboro, Lockridge and parts of Caversham), Swan Valley (2.9%) (which includes Middle Swan and parts of Caversham)

<http://atlas.id.com.au/swan#MapNo=10020&SexKey=3&datatype=1&themtype=1&topicAlias=aboriginal-torres-strait-islander&year=2011>

<sup>63</sup> Ongoing concerns about engagement with Aboriginal community, including young Aboriginal parents, Aboriginal fathers and activities for middle years (8-12 year olds). Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..*

<sup>64</sup> Existing services are beginning to address the need, particularly with the implementation of activities associated with the Swan Child and Family Centres.

<sup>65</sup> Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014

<sup>66</sup> Midvale Primary School has an attendance rate over 92% however other schools require additional support to assist families to access the primary school. Attendance rates are a key performance indicator for the Swan Supported School Hub being implemented by The Smith Family at Clayton View PS, Middle Swan PS and Swan View PS.

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<sup>67</sup> Voice of the Child Swan Alliance consultations 2014.

<sup>68</sup> Waitlists for the Midland Young Parents Program. Community Partner feedback and Service Provider surveys 2014.

<sup>69</sup> *Community Asset and Gap Analysis -: Who Cares?: What Children Think..*

<sup>70</sup> Anecdotal feedback from parents, particularly Aboriginal families. Swan Alliance parent surveys 2014 and Service Provider surveys 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Older parents are currently catered for through the provision of other early childhood and parenting services in the area. The Midland Young Parents program is currently supported by the Department of Education and Polytechnic to provide an education for young parents, the Shire of Mundaring provides a crèche however there is no agency currently providing parenting support for these young parents aged from 15-21 years. There is a current wait list for this service.

<sup>72</sup> Council of Australian Governments (2009) *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*. Commonwealth of Australia.

<sup>73</sup> Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments (2009) *Belonging, Being and Becoming The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Attorney-General's Department.

<sup>74</sup> Council of Australian Governments (2009). *Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development*.

<sup>75</sup> Kretzmann, J. McKnight, J.P (1996) *Assets-based community development*. National Civic Review. Winter96, Vol. 85 Issue 4, p23. 7p. 2 .

<sup>76</sup> Kania, J. & Kramer, M., 2011. *Collective Impact*. Stanford Social Innovation Review, Winter, pp. 36-41.

<sup>77</sup> The Swan Alliance has embarked on a project of developing a 'child-friendly' community and during 2014 we consulted with 246 children and 132 parents<sup>77</sup> to obtain feedback.

<sup>78</sup> Maintaining regular and ongoing communication with local families through visiting Community Partners, other services and local events and activities.

<sup>79</sup> Swan Alliance Communities for Children. (2015). *Connecting to Aboriginal Culture and Community*.

<sup>80</sup> Murdoch Children's Research Institute. (2009) *Platforms a Service Redevelopment Framework – Communities Improving Outcomes for Children*. Centre for Community Child Health, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> The Voice of the Child has been successfully implemented by the Swan Alliance over the last two years. It provides an opportunity for children to provide feedback 'face to face' and electronically to Swan Alliance staff.

<sup>83</sup> The Midland Leadership Council has a membership of the three tiers of government to work together to address needs within the local area

<sup>84</sup> For example, in 2014 the Swan Alliance applied, on behalf of the community, for Midland to become a HIPPPY site. The outcome of this application is still unknown;

<sup>85</sup> Based on Hilton Davis evidence based Family Partnership Model (FPM) (Davis et al, 2002; Davis & Rushton, 1991) developing a partnership between professionals and families characterised by shared expertise and active collaboration in order to achieve shared, meaningful outcomes.