

# CONNECTED COMMUNITIES 2014-2018



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## Executive Summary

The City of Albany's Community Development Strategy will direct the activities in the Community Development area for the City over the next four years. Based on the principles of Asset-Based Community Development methodology, the Strategy has been developed to build on the community's strengths and opportunities, utilising existing facilities and services to strengthen community capacity and wellbeing.

The Strategy development involved a process of research and extensive community consultation in the first quarter of 2014. Feedback was provided through 322 surveys, 65 quick ideas 'postcards', nine focus groups/workshops comprising 92 people in total, and seven written submissions from stakeholders.

Results from the consultation identified that the City's community value the natural environment, the lifestyle, the climate/weather and the peaceful, friendly atmosphere. The community development priorities the community want the City to concentrate on have been arranged into the following Key Focus Areas:

- ➔ Safe Communities
- ➔ Inclusive Communities
- ➔ Connected Communities
- ➔ Sustainable Communities

An Action Plan has been developed with specific strategies to fulfil the community's priorities. The Strategy adopts the principles of Asset-Based Community Development as the methodology to guide implementation. This methodological approach utilises the community's strengths and opportunities, and builds on existing facilities and services to strengthen community capacity and wellbeing.

For this Strategy to be successfully implemented, partnerships with stakeholders and the broader community, together with relevant departments within the City will be essential. Supporting communities to reach and sustain their potential is consistent with the City's strategic vision to be Western Australia's most sought-after and unique Regional City to live, work and visit.

# Links to City Community and Corporate Plans

How this Strategy links to the City's Community Strategic and Corporate Plans is illustrated in Figure 1 as follows:



Figure 1: City of Albany Integrated Planning Framework

# City of Albany Community Profile

The City of Albany is the administrative and service centre for the Great Southern Region. It is located around 400 kilometres south east of Perth, and is bounded by the Shires of Plantagenet and Gnowangerup in the north, the Shire of Jerramungup in the north east, the Southern Ocean in the south east and south, and the Shire of Denmark in the west. The City of Albany encompasses a rural area surrounding a regional township. Rural land is used mainly for agriculture, particularly sheep and cattle grazing, timber production and farming and fruit and vegetable growing. Tourism is an important industry.

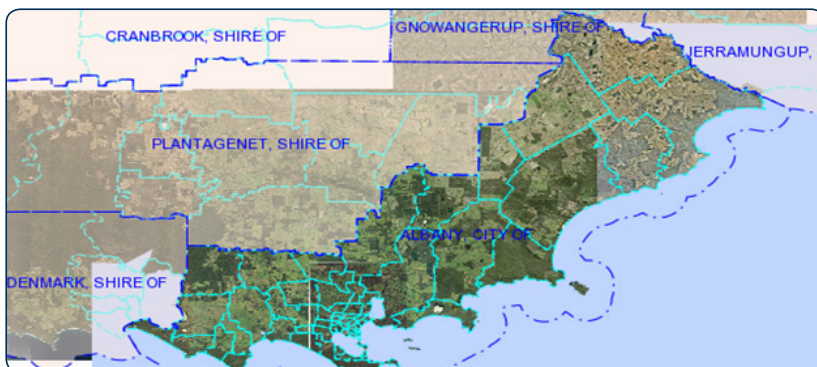


Figure 2: City of Albany Boundary Map

## SEIFA Index

The Socioeconomic Index for Area (SEIFA) measures the relative level of socioeconomic disadvantage based on a range of contributing factors, including income, employment and educational attainment. It is designed to give an indication of how disadvantaged an area is, compared with other areas around the country. High scores on the index mean a lower level of disadvantage for that area, whereas a lower score indicated a higher level of disadvantage.

The City of Albany has a SEIFA index of 987. Compared with surrounding local government areas, The City of Albany is more disadvantaged than the Shires of Denmark, Jerramungup and Gnowangerup, but with lower disadvantage than Plantagenet. In relation to other WA local governments, the City is roughly in the middle on the SEIFA index.

## Community Profile

### Residential:

The City's population has grown from 33,446 in 2006 to 34,579 in 2011, with an estimated population of 36,262 in 2013 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

The City has a higher proportion of unoccupied dwellings than the state average. This is attributed to a large number of Albany holiday homes which are not utilised on the rental market.

### Workforce:

The City has relatively similar proportion of its population in employment, compared with the rest of the state. Its unemployment rate is 4.9% compared with 4.7% statewide. Youth unemployment in the City of Albany is 10.9%, higher than for regional WA.

### Household:

The City has seen significant growth from 2006 to 2011 in the number of lone person households, corresponding with increases in population aged 60+ years. Growth has also occurred in the 20-24 year age bracket (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

While the City has a larger proportion of people who speak English only, between 2006 and 2011 the City experienced growth in the population who speak Filipino/Tagalog and Afrikaans (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

A higher proportion of the City's households experience housing stress, defined as households in the lowest 40% of equivalised incomes, who are paying more than 30% of their usual gross weekly income on rent or mortgage payments (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). This is particularly evident among renters more so than home owners.

# What is Community Development?

There are many definitions of 'Community Development', however the United Nations articulates the concept as "a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiative" (as cited in Braden & Mayo, 1999). Effective community development harnesses the participation of those who represent a range of interests, and the government and non-government sectors to work together with groups (Jackson, Mitchell, & Wright, 1989; Frank & Smith, 1999; Brennan, Frumento, Bridger, & Alter, 2013).

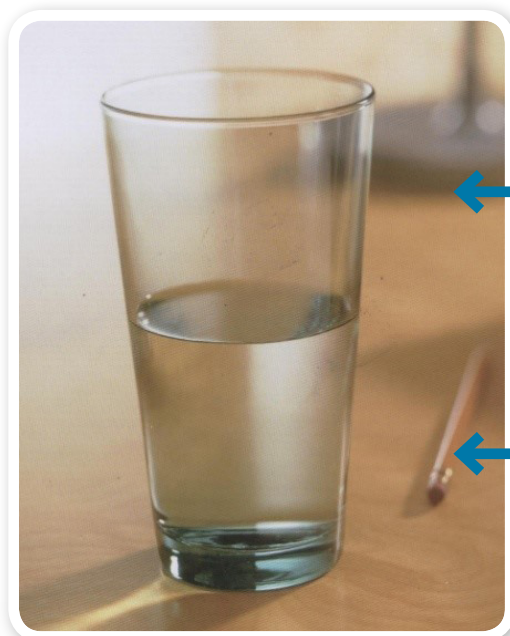
Community development is not an activity, but is a process, or a set of principles that is used to enable communities to grow and change according to their own needs and priorities. It is inclusive, and focuses on groups who are often disempowered due to economic hardship, disability, ethnic background or age. Community Development is a grass roots approach to resolving issues identified by the community (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996; Toomey, 2011).

As there are many approaches to Community

Development, the City of Albany Community Development team has adopted the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) methodology. ABCD utilises the strengths, capacities and resources as a means for developing sustainable communities. This is opposed to the more traditional approach to community development which begins with problems, weaknesses and deficiencies (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). ABCD empowers community to create positive and meaningful change from the inside out rather than top down.

The assets within a community include:

- Gifts, passions and skills of individuals;
- Land, building, equipment and parks within a community;
- Community groups;
- Agencies – government and non government;
- Local businesses;
- Local stories, history and values.



**Traditional Community Development:**

"Communities have deficiencies and needs"

**Asset-Based Community Development:**

"Communities have capacities and assets"

Figure 3: 'Asset-Based Community Development'. Cited in Kenyon, P, accessed [www.bankofideas.com.au](http://www.bankofideas.com.au) September 2014

# Community Development at the City of Albany

Government activities in community development play an important role in contributing to the physical, psychological and social capacity of its community. Often referred to as the government closest to the people, local government is arguably best placed to identify and respond to the unique needs of the local community, including its diverse populations. Further, community development in local government helps to build a strong and self-reliant community, and helps councils be responsive to community needs (Mowbray, 2011; Pugh & Sagers, 2007; Cavaye, 2000).

At the City of Albany community development activities occur across its various departments and business units (see Figure 4), and have included:

- ➔ Engagement and participation – involving people in decision-making to improve outcomes;
- ➔ Advocacy – representing the issues and interests of the community to the various levels of government and key stakeholders;
- ➔ Capacity building – building the skills, networks and knowledge of and within the community;
- ➔ Access, inclusion and equity – removing barriers to participation in civic and community life.

## Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin Asset-Based Community Development, and will therefore underpin this Strategy:

### Partnerships

With the community and community leaders  
With government agencies  
With service providers  
With schools

### Inclusion

A 'whole community' focus, with an emphasis on increasing community control over decision-making that impacts their lives

### Sustainability

Integrated, multi-disciplinary approaches to increase the likelihood of ongoing success and resourcing of programs and services



# Community Development at the City of Albany



Figure 4: City of Albany Community Development Activity



# What the Community Said

The City undertook extensive consultation in the process of reviewing the Community Development Strategy. This included 322 surveys submitted, 65 quick-ideas postcards returned, nine focus groups comprising 92 participants in total, and seven stakeholder submissions received. In addition, the City had consultation 'stalls' at various events and in public places including the Albany Farmers Markets, Albany Public Library, various community activity groups such as playgroup days, and at three rural outdoor movie nights the City co-hosted with Progress Associations in the Bornholm, Wellstead and Redmond townships.

Residents were asked a range of questions about what they like about their community, when they last felt enthusiastic about doing something for their local community, what their ideal community looked like, and what issues they would prioritise in order to realise this ideal community.

Please list the three words which you feel best describe your community.

- Beautiful
- Quiet
- Peaceful

What has brought you to this community, or kept you here?

- Lifestyle
- Family

What people, facilities, services and other resources do we have that could help achieve your ideal community?

- Many community facilities like halls and meeting spaces – just increase their use
- More local playgrounds
- Albany Public Library

Achieving your ideal community

- More activities for young people
- Improved cycle and footpaths
- More community-based activities and events

What does your ideal community look like?

- Improved connection (to information, services, local events, transport, spaces and places)
- An inclusive community which values people of all ages, abilities and diversity
- Increased use of the community's natural environment and green spaces

# Key Focus Areas

The consultation generated significant amounts of community feedback, more than expected, which necessitated considerable time to sort through. This feedback was initially coded according to emerging and then recurring patterns of responses. At the conclusion of the data analysis, four consistently recurring 'themes' were evident.



# Objectives and Strategies

The Strategy covers four key focus areas representing community priorities. Objectives and strategies have been developed to address each focus area, with key stakeholders and timelines for completion identified. Additionally, the Strategy identifies anticipated outcomes and resources required.



# Safe Communities

Rationale: The City is committed to increasing community safety, and currently has a number of direct responsibilities in local emergency management, public health and public safety. The City recognises that when people feel safe in their community they are more likely to be involved in community and civic life.

This focus area addresses Community Strategic Plan Objectives:

3.3: To develop vibrant neighbourhoods which retain our local character and heritage, and;

→ 4.3: To develop and support a healthy, inclusive and accessible community.



Objective	Strategy	Key Stakeholders and Partners	Outcome
1.1 To be perceived as a safe community to live and work.	1.1.1 Add questions relating to community safety in the City's bi-annual community perception survey.	WA Police Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry CBD Businesses	Regularly captured data will provide a baseline to measure the impact of activity in this area.
	1.1.2 Increase awareness of Albany's crime statistics.	WA Police Media outlets	The perception of crime in Albany aligns with the actual crime statistics.
1.2 To engage youth in positive activities.	1.2.1 Continue to support the Strike II youth drop-in service.	Albany PCYC WA Police Amity Health	A reduction in the number of reported juvenile offences.
	1.2.2 Develop and implement programs for youth at risk of offending.	Albany PCYC WA Police Albany Youth Support Assoc (AYSA) <i>Recreation Services</i> <i>Vancouver Arts Centre (VAC)</i> <i>Albany Public Library</i>	
1.3 To increase knowledge of emergency preparedness among vulnerable members of the community.	1.3.1 Develop and implement education and awareness initiatives to increase knowledge of emergency preparedness.	Department of Fire and Emergency Services St John Ambulance Disability Service Providers Seniors services groups Albany Migrant Resource Centre <i>Emergency Services</i>	Increased awareness of emergency preparedness among vulnerable community members.
1.4 To increase knowledge and awareness of transport-related safety.	1.4.1 Participate in White Ribbon Day each year.	RoadWise Office of Road Safety	Bi-annual perception survey results indicate transport-related behaviours are less of a community safety issue.
	1.4.2 Develop and implement a pedestrian safety awareness campaign.	Cycle user groups Skate park users Walking Groups Over 50s Recreation Assoc Schools	

# Inclusive Communities

Rationale: The City supports inclusive communities which are welcoming and embracing of diversity, supportive of people who are socially and/or financially disadvantaged, and which reduce barriers to participation in community life.

The City will work in partnership with marginalised, disadvantaged, and culturally and linguistically diverse groups to develop community-driven initiatives that increase social inclusion and participation in community and civic life.

The City recognises the importance of housing as a key determinant of health and wellbeing and will advocate and work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to respond to the issue of homelessness.

This focus area addresses Community Strategic Plan Objective 4.3: To develop and support a healthy, inclusive and accessible community.



Objective	Strategy	Key Stakeholders and Partners	Outcome
2.1 To be an age-friendly community.	2.1.1 Develop and implement an Age Friendly Communities Plan for the City.	Aged and community care sector Seniors and seniors groups WA Country Health Services (WACHS) Department of Transport Mental health services Disability services sector Albany Local Planning Scheme stakeholders Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC)	Age Friendly Communities Plan adopted by Council and implemented.
	2.1.2 Review the Youth Advisory Committee to determine its effectiveness as a representative model for youth engagement.	Schools Department of Local Government and Communities	The City has a representative youth engagement model.
2.2 To be an inclusive and accessible community.	2.2.1 Support community groups and clubs to make their facilities and activities more accessible and inclusive to all.	DSC External funding agencies DSR City of Albany Access and Inclusion Working Group (AIWG) Community groups and clubs Albany Regional Volunteer Service (ARVS) Disability services sector	Community-based facilities and clubs are accessible and inclusive of all abilities and backgrounds.
	2.2.2 Work in partnership with identified CaLD communities to reduce barriers to participation in community life.	Rainbow Coast Neighbourhood Centre (RCNC) Office of Multicultural Interests CaLD communities	People from CaLD communities feel welcomed and included in their local neighbourhoods.
	2.2.3 Work with retail and small business stakeholders to increase awareness of barriers to physical access to their premises.	Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry DSC Individual small business 'champions' Various networking groups	Physical access in retail and small business outlets is improved.
	2.2.4 Continue to ensure the initiatives in the City's Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017 are implemented.	AIWG <i>City of Albany</i>	The Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017 is implemented as a whole of council Plan.
2.3 To contribute to the development of local responses to housing stress.	2.3.1 Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to develop effective programs and services to support those vulnerable to housing stress.	Department of Housing Shalom House Prospect House AYSA Women's Refuge Albany Community Legal Service Great Southern Regional Homelessness Forum	Appropriate activities are developed and implemented.
	2.3.2 Increase the capacity of the City to advocate for diverse housing developments that are accessible to a variety of household types, lifestyle choices and income levels.	Department of Housing Planning Commission Retirement Village Companies Great Southern Homelessness Forum <i>Planning and Development Services</i>	A diverse range of housing options to meet a variety of lifestyle and income needs.

# Connected Communities

Rationale: This key focus area centres on bringing people together, and connecting people with local activities, events, City information and services and existing community spaces and places.

The City recognises the importance of an inter-connected transport networks in enabling people to come together and to participate in community life. The City will advocate for improved transport options, including public transport, and increased opportunities for walking and cycling.

This focus area addresses Community Strategic Plan Objective 3.1: To advocate, plan and build friendly and connected communities.





Objective	Strategy	Key Stakeholders and Partners	Outcome
3.1 To create inclusive and dynamic community spaces for linking people, activities and events.	3.1.1 Undertake an audit of the community spaces within the City's municipal boundary, and promote these facilities to the public.	Community groups Progress Associations Community halls DSR <i>Club Development Officer</i>	Audit completed, and listing made available to the public.  Existing community facilities are well utilised.
	3.1.2 Ensure information relating to City programs, services and events is available and easily accessible to the community.	Media outlets AIWG CaLD community Senior Citizens Centre <i>Information Services</i> <i>Mayoral Liaison</i>	City community programs, services and events are widely accessed by all sections of the community.
	3.1.3 Develop, implement and review the establishment of neighbourhood 'hubs' activities to link residents to their local community.	Progress and/or Residents Associations Local shops and businesses Local schools Community groups and members Sporting clubs ARVS DCLG WA Police <i>Library</i> <i>Communications Team</i>	Communities are livelier, engaged, and people feel more connected to their neighbours and local activities.
	3.1.4 In partnership with relevant Progress Associations, deliver events in at least two rural communities each year.	Progress Associations Rural communities and businesses DCLG Rural Women's Network Wellstead CRC Mens Resource Centre	People living in rural communities are able to access locally-based events.
3.2 To improve connection between people and places within the City.	3.2.1 Work with relevant stakeholders to increase opportunities for active transport across the City.	Department of Transport Main Roads Schools and tertiary education facilities Population Health DSR Community groups Albany Bike Users Group Albany Cycle Club Skate park users <i>Recreation Services</i> <i>Works and Services</i> <i>Major Projects</i>	People have greater opportunities to walk and cycle to their destinations.
	3.2.2 Advocate for improvements to Albany's public transport system so it provides a reliable, convenient and accessible way for the community to move around the city.	Department of Transport Main Roads Schools and tertiary education facilities Local Members of Parliament (MPs) Seniors interest groups Disability service providers <i>Chief Executive Officer</i> <i>Mayor/Councillors</i> <i>Communications Team</i>	Albany's public transport network is reliable, convenient and accessible, operating at times when people need it.

# Sustainable Communities

Rationale: Sustainable communities provide a better quality of life for the whole community without compromising the wellbeing of other communities. Sustainable communities seek environmental, economic and social benefits.

The City is committed to becoming a 'clean, green and sustainable' City, and supporting the community to have greater ownership of its natural assets, parks and gardens. The City recognises that clean, healthy environments enhance wellbeing, and will develop strategies to increase connection to its green spaces and parks.

Furthermore, the City will also help improve the capacity of various clubs and community groups to increase their sustainability.

This key focus area relates to Community Strategic Plan Objectives:

- ➔ 2.3: To advocate and support 'green initiatives' with our region, and;
- ➔ 4.1: To build resilient and cohesive communities with a strong sense of community spirit.



Objective	Strategy	Key Stakeholders and Partners	Outcome
4.1 To promote the uptake of low consumption lifestyles and environmentally aware practices.	4.1.1 Promote availability of purpose funding and other schemes designed to increase community uptake of renewable energy and water sources.	Media outlets Stakeholder networks Relevant govt agencies <i>Communications Team</i>	Increased community awareness of available funding sources, leading to an increased uptake of funding for renewable energy installations.
	4.1.2 Promote and increase awareness of existing community gardens and associated facilities.	RCNC Mills Park Group King River Rec Club <i>Communications Team</i>	Increased awareness and utilisation of existing community gardens and associated facilities.
	4.1.3 Promote and support opportunities for the community to connect with local producers, market gardeners and farmers.	Farmers and Boatshed Markets Progress Associations RCNC Email distribution lists <i>Communications Team</i>	Increased awareness of local producers, market gardeners, farmers and available produce.
	4.1.4 Encourage local community groups to enter awards recognising environmental sustainability.	Relevant awards bodies ARVS <i>Communications Team</i> <i>Club Development Officer</i>	An increase in the number of local nominations for relevant awards.
4.2 To increase community use of the City's developed reserves and parks.	4.2.1 Work in partnership with the Developed Reserves team to coordinate an audit of the facilities available in the City's parks and make this information available to the public.	<i>Developed Reserves Coordinator</i> <i>Communications Team</i>	Increased community awareness of the various City parks and gardens and their facilities, leading to an increased community use of these assets.
4.3 To increase the governance, planning, program delivery and volunteer management capacity of community groups and organisations within the City.	4.3.1 Develop and implement an annual program of capacity building workshops for community groups and clubs.	ARVS DSR Community groups Corporate community <i>Club Development Officer</i>	A program of capacity building activities for community groups is developed and implemented and is accessible to community groups and clubs.
	4.3.2 Review and update the Community Funding and Event Sponsorship program to continue the policy beyond 2015-16.	Previous applicants for City Funding and Event Sponsorship	Community Funding and Event Sponsorship continues beyond 2015-16.
	4.4.3 Promote the services of local community groups and clubs to help increase membership.	Media outlets <i>Communications Team</i>	Increased awareness of community groups and clubs.

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