



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR
INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE



The provision of research and consultation for the delivery of an intergenerational program in the City of Wanneroo

Attention: City of Wanneroo Council

Names of project members: Katrina Radford, Anneke
Fitzgerald, Xanthe Golenko, Gabriela Di Perna

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Intergenerational programs have increased in popularity over the past 15 years as the world contends with an ageing population, increased care responsibilities, increased migration, and the decreased connection between older and younger people (Jarrott & Lee 2022; Kamei, et al., 2022). This study examined the enablers and barriers to creating intergenerational programs and explored the role that local government plays in ensuring the sustainability of intergenerational programs.

Intergenerational programs are defined as activities that foster cooperation, interaction and exchange between two or more generations (Kaplan & Sanchez, 2014). Typically, the programs involve interactions that promote social growth and learning between the young and the old. Key features of these programs are that they are:

- Non-familial
- Purposeful
- Ongoing
- Reciprocal
- Mutual respect
- Cohesive integrated communities
- Planned to meet a particular outcome

Importantly, intergenerational practice is not:

- Short once off visits – like a morning tea
- Non-interactive visits – like a visit to the place of care (without planned interactivity)
- Unplanned casual engagement
- Programs that include all ages without an intentional connection between the generations.

These activities should instead be termed “age inclusive activities.” After an initial search, only two formal ongoing programs within Wanneroo local community were identified as active during this study (Ashford Secondary School & Playgroup WA). Therefore, the scope of this study extended to also examining programs within the wider Perth region to answer the questions posed.

In total, this study conducted a documentation review of existing literature and census data (including ProfileID data), before conducting three focus groups with three groups (1) community gardening group, 2) a program involving teens and older adults, 2) and council leaders (19 people involved made up of participants, teachers, coordinators and leads) and 29 one-on-one semi structured interview with organisational and participant representatives of the groups identified in the Greater Perth Region.

Overall, this study found there was a demand for both intergenerational and age inclusive programs within the City and that these programs can be developed to address social isolation and loneliness more broadly, but also be used to improve English language, literacy, employability, and life skills amongst the general population. This study also found that programs in this area were currently run in a face-to-face delivery mode but there were opportunities to expand these to virtual modes to meet a broader community need.

Local government's role in the delivery intergenerational practice was found to be in leading the capacity building of communities around them and enabling external organisation to directly run intergenerational programs. In fact, intergenerational programs were found to be successful when communities took ownership of those programs after capacity development support was provided by local councils. This included the City taking a leading role in providing capacity development support in the form of marketing, assisting with finding and retaining volunteers, providing pilot program funding, event or networking evenings and supporting professional development activities. Thus, investing in resources within the city to enable communities allows communities to take ownership of the program, which is a pillar to successful sustainability of these programs across Australia. Therefore, it was recommended that local governments facilitate this role through the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Strategic Link*
1. Provide seed funding up to \$7,000 for community groups to start intergenerational programs. Noting that one program costs between \$6,000-\$16,000 depending on the number of participants. However, the community members interviewed agreed \$7,000 was a fair amount to pilot one intergenerational program in their area.	Priority 1.1 Value the contribution of all people Priority 6.1 Advocate in line with community priorities
2. Provide access to venues at low or, no, cost to encourage these programs to grow.	Priority 1.2 Value public places and spaces Priority 1.3 Facilities and activities for all
3. Provide marketing services to the wider community about the programs.	Priority 1.1 Value the contribution of all people Priority 7.4 Promote offerings, opportunities and initiatives
4. Provide monthly community networking events to share learnings and knowledge about how to create intergenerational and age inclusive programs in the City of Wanneroo.	Priority 1.4 Bringing people together Priority 6.3 Build local partnerships and work with others
5. Provide an information pack and infographics including hosting an online training program (on demand) on the available resources and how to start.	Priority 1.4 Bringing people together Priority 1.4 Learning and discovery choices

6. Provide professional development funds to employees and community members to upskill on what is intergenerational practice and what is not.	Priority 1.5 Learning and discovery choices Priority 3.4 Develop local jobs and skills
7. Take a leading role in providing intergenerational services to its community by adding intergenerational practice to the portfolio of a staff member within the city of Wanneroo to assist with the start-up, community building and sustainability of intergenerational practices.	Priority 1.1 Value the contribution of all people Priority 1.4 Bringing people together
8. Council advocate on behalf of the community to other decision-making organisations such as federal and state government, for additional funding and the delivery of intergenerational programs	Priority 6.1 Advocate in line with community priorities

*Strategic Priorities came from the Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031 (https://www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/info/20003/your_wanneroo/522/strategic_community_plan)

Overall, intergenerational practice was found to have a place and is cost-effective way of address the social isolation, loneliness, and community need to improve literacy, English language skills, cyber-safety and life skills as well as improve age friendliness within the broader community. By facilitating these programs within the local community through the above methods, local governments play a significant role in ensuring ongoing sustainability of these programs.

REPORT OVERVIEW

- 1. It is evident that there is demand for community activities such as intergenerational practice in the City of Wanneroo for the benefit of local residents.**
 - a. The city is home to the highest number of children under 18 years compared to Greater Perth (Profile ID, 2024).
 - b. Almost 49.3% of people aged over 80 in the City of Wanneroo report needing help in their daily activities, with more people aged over 65 reporting this need for help than the greater area of Perth (Profile ID, 2024)
 - c. 8.3% of the City of Wanneroo population report having a mental health condition, and 29% of residents reported having at least one long term health condition (Profile ID, 2024)
- 2. Intergenerational programs are defined as purposely designed activities that foster cooperation, interaction and exchange between two or more generations for mutual benefit.**
 - a. These programs typically involve interactions that promote social growth and learning between the young and the old.
 - b. The key features of these programs are that they are planned to meet a particular outcome and are non-familial, purposeful, ongoing, reciprocal, mutual-respect, and cohesive integrated communities.
- 3. Intergenerational programs can have significant benefits to both individual residents and the wider communities in which they live, suggesting that they should be considered as ‘wise to do’ rather than just ‘nice to do’.**
 - a. Older adults that participate in intergenerational programs experience improvements in quality of life, enhanced physical and mental wellbeing, a sense of purpose and reduced depressive symptoms.
 - b. For children, studies have found that these programs lead to improve attitudes and understanding towards older generations, increased motivation and social skills, as well as learning competencies such as improved reading, language and artistic skills.
 - c. Intergenerational programs have also been considered “social vehicles” to promote mutual understanding of populations to reduce stereotypes and attitudes towards ageing and ageism.
- 4. Intergenerational programs are best run by external community driven organisations.**
 - a. Despite the benefits, several challenges can arise when running these programs such as transport, staffing concerns, during periods of outbreaks, and concerns about safety and mobility.
 - b. Participants in this study supported these concerns, however they noted some of these challenges have been overcome by the council through their capacity development support system such as marketing, seed funding and spaces to host events.

- c. The difficulty of finding volunteer facilitators or participants to run the programs has been noted as particularly difficult due to scheduling or cost of living difficulties.
- 5. This study has found that community led initiatives are more likely to be sustainable than organisational led initiatives.**
- a. Looking at best practice intergenerational programs, the most common activities include singing, games, reading, craft, reminiscence, life stories, conversations, dancing, celebrating special events, knowledge sharing, food and exercise.
- 6. Across Australia there are over 61 programs registered within the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice, however only two formal programs were identified within the City of Wanneroo.**
- a. The formal intergenerational programs identified within the City of Wanneroo are the Ashdale Secondary College's Community Tech Team, and Playgroup WA's Intergenerational playgroups in Madeley.
 - b. 22 additional activities which organically connect ages have also been identified within the City of Wanneroo.
 - c. Existing programs are heavily reliant on government grants and run by volunteers.
- 7. Findings suggest that the strategic value of councils remains their in-depth capacity building abilities through understanding and connections within the community to local organisations, as well as the marketing and training they can undertake to connect, facilitate and sustain local community events.**
- a. This aligns strongly with a number of the goals and priorities in the *City of Wanneroo Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031*, particularly Goal 1 – an inclusive and accessible city with places and spaces that embrace all.
 - b. As many smaller community organisations do not have their own spaces, the City of Wanneroo can also play a significant role through providing access to council venues.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Intergenerational programs have increased in popularity over the past 15 years as the world contends with an ageing population, increased care responsibilities, increased migration, and the decreased connection between older and younger people (Jarrott & Lee 2022; Kamei, et al., 2022). Intergenerational programs aim to build meaningful connections and relationships between two or more generations (Jarrott, et al., 2021). Research on the effectiveness of intergenerational programs has had a resurgence since 2017, with most exploring the impact of the program on satisfaction (Kamei et al., 2022), and social, emotional, and behavioural outcomes (Cohen-Mansfield & Muff, 2021; Lee, et al., 2021; Jarrott, et al., 2021).

A recent review of intergenerational support found that “in order to facilitate intergenerational mutual help into the local community, it is necessary to create opportunities for older adults to provide support to young and middle-aged people and, in return, create a mechanism to prompt support from young and middle-aged people for older adults” (Muruyama et al., 2022, p1). These initiatives have highlighted the importance of intergenerational programs as one way of breaking down ageism stereotypes (Lytle et al., 2022); improving adolescents’ self-efficacy scores (Murayama et al., 2021); improving the reading outcomes in children (Rebok et al., 2004) and decreasing the likelihood of children participating in deviant or delinquent behaviour later in life (Ohmer, 2022).

In addition, research from Australia found that these programs improved communication between children, was cost effective, and may serve as an attractive bridge for both aged care and childcare workers (Radford et al., 2019). Further, a recent study in India found that interactions between the older adult and young children enhanced well-being among the older adult and contributed to the holistic development of children's attitude toward the older adult (Dsouza et al., 2023). They further stated that these interactions should be encouraged between schools and aged care services (Dsouza et al., 2023). Globally, the evidence demonstrates that intergenerational programs benefit different population groups in different, but meaningful ways (Cohen-Mansfield & Muff, 2021; Lee et al., 2021; Jarrott et al., 2021).

While over the past 11 years, our research to date has produced educational guides and supports to professionals (Radford et al., 2020) and summarised existing evidence across each age range (Cronen, Fitzgerald, Radford, & Di Perna, 2023; Radford, Fitzgerald, Vecchio, Cartmel, Gould, Kosiol, 2022; Laging, Slocombe, Radford, Liu & Gorelik, 2022; Kirsnan, Kosiol, Golenko, Fitzgerald, Radford, 2022; Kirsnan, Kosiol, Golenko, Radford, Cartmel, Fitzgerald, 2020; Kenning et al., 2021; Lim et al., 2024; Radford, Gould, Vecchio, Fitzgerald, 2018; Whitten, Vecchio, Radford, Fitzgerald, 2017; Radford, Oxlade, Fitzgerald, Vecchio, 2016; Cartmel, Radford, Bell, Golenko, & Fitzgerald, 2019; Cartmel, Radford, Dawson, Fitzgerald, Vecchio, 2018; Vecchio, Radford, Fitzgerald, Comans, Harris & Harris, 2018; Cartmel, Radford, Fitzgerald, Golenko &

Dawson, 2021; Peters et al., 2021; Golenko, Radford, Fitzgerald, Vecchio, Cartmel & Harris, 2020).

There is no known evidence pool that details the elements of best practice intergenerational programs across the age ranges: infants and toddlers 0-3 years, preschool 3-5 years, early school 5-8 years, early adolescence, middle adolescence, late adolescence, adulthood, seniors. Therefore, this study answers this call and builds on the knowledge received to date on the advantages and disadvantages for running programs across age ranges to build a best practice summary of evidence on the key elements of each program. In addition, this study answers the question of what role local government plays in running intergenerational programs.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of this study was to identify the advantages and disadvantages for running programs across age ranges to build a best practice summary of evidence on the key elements of each program. Additionally, this study aimed to examine the role local government plays in intergenerational practice.

1.3 Scope

This study examined the enablers and barriers to creating intergenerational programs and explored the role of local government in ensuring the sustainability of intergenerational programs. Only two programs within Wanneroo local community were identified as active during this study (Ashford Secondary School & Playgroup WA). Therefore, the scope of this study extended to examining programs within the wider Perth region.

1.4 Research Aims

This study addressed the following research aims:

- Identify current and future community need / demand for intergenerational programs within the City with consideration to varying population demographics and need
- Identify and describe the key essential elements of best practice intergenerational programs, including but not limited to connecting generations to differing development profiles; infants and toddlers 0-3 years, preschool 3-5 years, early school 5-8 years, early adolescence, middle adolescence, late adolescence, adulthood, seniors.
- Identify successful intergenerational programs that currently exist both in the City of Wanneroo, Perth metro area or other locations across Australia or internationally, including comment on:

- What outcomes has the program achieved?
- Why these programs are successful?
- Who funds the program?
- What is the local government role Investigate and describe differing delivery methods, including but not limited to:
 - Through service providers
 - Through schools
 - Through playgroups
 - Community-led
- Investigate and describe differing delivery methods, including but not limited to:
 - Through service providers
 - Through schools
 - Through playgroups
 - Community-led

This study also aimed at identifying and describing the advantages and disadvantages of each service model, and the ability to comply with required legislation and Child safe practices. Moreover, consideration to the role/involvement of local government for each of the models is required. Finally, this project provides high level comment on the social, wellbeing, economic implications, and financial viability of each service model to provide a recommendation on the overall benefit and value of externally provided intergenerational programs, opportunities for the City of Wanneroo to consider and the City's role within these opportunities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Designed to foster meaningful relationships and increase interaction, understanding and support between generational groups (Sanchez et al. 2018), intergenerational programs have become increasingly popular over the past 15 years (Jarrott & Lee 2022; Kamei, et al., 2022). Within Australia, a study of 572 residential facilities found that 18.2% had an active intergenerational program within their facility, 44.4% had a program that was suspended during the period of 2020-2022, and only 14% of aged care homes studied had never previously offered an intergenerational program (D'Cunha et al., 2023). Although, of the homes that had never previously offered such a program, most reported they were interested in beginning one. Thus, the uptake of intergenerational programs within Australia is increasing. However, the sustainability of these programs beyond single offered trials, is still largely unknown.

Both in the UK and Australia, grass roots organisations are created to assist sustain these initiatives however they are funded largely on grants and/or philanthropic organisations (Pach, Sakure, Roberts, Green & Howson, 2024). In Australia, Intergenerational Australia is funded by organisations per program mostly through philanthropic donations or grants received by community organisations. Similarly, all programs across Australia continue to operate under government, voluntary, research or philanthropic funding. Despite research indicated that participants would be willing to pay for the initiative (Vecchio et al., 2015). Thus, further research is needed to explore the economic viability of these programs long term in Australia.

Intergenerational programs across Australia are burgeoning. A recent review led by Dr Xanthe Golenko, sponsored by the Australia institute of Intergenerational Practice, found 17 studies that were conducted in Australia; that involved an intergenerational practice intervention; and some form of evaluation or assessment including process and outcome evaluation was conducted between 2006 to 2023. Table 1 presents these studies and maps them with the level of engagement scale produced by Kaplan (2024) (see Figure 3 on page 29 for the full scale).

Table 1: Summary of intergenerational practice interventions, study participants and level of intergenerational engagement in selected papers

IG Program /Intervention	N papers	Study participants		Level of IG engagement
		Older adults	Young persons	
Men's sheds	6	Older men living in the community	Middle adolescence (14 – 17 years)	6
Intergenerational playgroups	3	Older adults	Infants and toddlers (0-3 years)	6
Intergenerational Care Project	2	Older adults in residential care, retirement villages and community	Preschool (3-5 years)	5
Live-in student program	1	Older adults in residential aged care	Late adolescents (18 – 21 years)	7
School-based Dementia education program	1	Older adults living with dementia	Early adolescence (10 – 13 years)	1
Intercultural learning	1	Older adults	Middle adolescence (14 – 17 years)	5
Primary school and U3A arts-based	1	Older adults attending U3A courses	Early adolescence (10 – 13 years)	5
Undergraduate student biography program	1	Older adults in residential aged care	Late adolescence (18 – 21 years)	5
Varied – Case studies in Australia	1	Varied	Varied	Varied

This review identified that intergenerational programs can be beneficial for all participants who are directly involved in the programs as well as the broader community. McCallum (2010) summarised these benefits in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: summary of benefits of intergenerational exchange programs by McCallum (2010).

TABLE 1 Summary of Benefits of Intergenerational Exchange Programs

Older people	Younger people	Broader community
• Increased self-esteem and motivation • Increased perception of self-worth • Better mood, more vitality • Increased ability to cope with physical and mental illness • Escape from isolation • Opportunities to learn • Development of skills, especially social skills, and the use of new technologies • Renewed appreciation for their past experiences • Reintegration in the family and community life • Friendships with younger people • Receipt of practical help, such as for shopping or transport • Time with young people that combats feelings of isolation • Sharing of experiences with an audience that appreciates their achievements • Respect, honor, and recognition of their contribution to the community • New learning about young people • Transmission of traditions, culture, and language • Enjoyment of physical activities • Exposure to diversity • Increased strength to cope with adversity	• Increased sense of worth, self-esteem, and self-confidence • Less loneliness and isolation • Better health • More optimism • Access to adult support at difficult times • More positive perception of older persons • Greater awareness of the heterogeneity of older persons • More practical skills • Better school results • Better reading habits • Less involvement in violence and drug use • Strength in times of adversity • Enhanced sense of social responsibility • Increased sense of civic and community responsibility • Learning of own history and origins and the history of others • Building one's own life history • Enjoyment and fun • Gaining of respect for achievements of adults • Support for professional career development • Alternative leisure activities to cope with problems, particularly drugs, violence, and antisocial conduct	• Development of sense of community • Construction of a more inclusive society • Breaking down of barriers and stereotypes • Enhanced social cohesion • Strengthening of culture • Relief of parental pressure • Building of social networks • Challenging of stereotypes • Provision of civic behavior models • Building or revitalization of community and public infrastructures • Public art production • Volunteer work development • Encouragement for people to work with others in community groups • Creation of common stories • Environmental care

Other benefits identified from the review include: learning from each other (Huang, 2017; Mahoney, 2020; Radford, 2019; Rosa Hernandez, 2022), tradition and the handing down of life experience (Wilson, 2013), reciprocity (Skropeta, 2014), appreciating experience in the moment (Rosa Hernandez, 2022), and meaningful engagement and connection through play (Lai 2023; Rosa Hernandez, 2022). The importance of this cannot be understated when we consider the severity and prevalence of loneliness and social isolation experienced by all generations, with older and younger generations being particularly vulnerable.

Social isolation, loneliness and chronic illnesses are each critical health challenges in Australia (AIHW, 2023) which cost the Australian public between \$2.9 - \$6.7 billion dollars per year (Duncan et al., 2023). Social isolation, loneliness and chronic illness also lead to higher levels of social disconnection (Talmage et al., 2021), depression (McHugh et al., 2020), mental disorders (Gyasi et al., 2021), lower quality of life (Ward, McGarrigle, & Kenny, 2019), lower self-rated health scores (McHugh & Lawlor, 2013), perceived wellness (Hodgkins, Warburton & Hancock, 2018) metabolic dysfunction (Shiovitz-Ezra & Parag, 2019), and acute inflammation (Koyama et al., 2021), resulting in greater levels of chronic illness over time. Thus, interventions directly designed to reduce loneliness, social isolation and improve the management of chronic illnesses are urgently needed in retirees.

Intergenerational practice is one program that allows these needs to be addressed equally across all ages. Thus, this study presents an important opportunity to explore the advantages and disadvantages for running programs across age ranges to build a best practice summary of evidence on the key elements of each program. In addition, it is the first of its kind to examine the role that local government plays in intergenerational practice programs within the community.

3. METHODOLOGY

a) Inception meeting

After signing the contract, a start-up meeting was held between the research project team and the project team to define and clarify project deliverables, potential risks to the project, and plan stakeholder consultation. This meeting was used to develop a more detailed understanding of project requirements and establish appropriate communication channels.

b) Desktop review

We conducted a narrative literature review to summarise and map existing evidence, models, and research options. This involved searching the academic and grey literature databases for best practice in intergenerational practice models involving infants and toddlers 0-3 years, preschool 3-5 years, early school 5-8 years, early adolescence, middle adolescence, late adolescence, adulthood, seniors. We were able to break down the age years to these periods to cover the different interventions that may exist for pairing these age brackets with older people. It is acknowledged that best practice looks differently depending on the cohort experiencing the program. Once the literature was scoped, we then explore the data available from the city council to better capture the specific needs of the population involved. This allowed for the recommendations to be tailored to the City of Wanneroo. Other data sources include the census data, and any publicly available data sets on the population in Wanneroo.

c) Ethics application.

Ethics approval was obtained from Griffith University's Human Research Ethics Committee (GU 2024/299) to undertake the data collection beyond publicly available sources.

d) Qualitative data collection: *Focus Groups and Interviews*

Design: To adequately understand best practice initiatives for each population we need to conduct focus groups of each stakeholder population.

Procedure: Both the City and the research team engaged their networks along accessing experts through the council network to participate in the focus groups. Only two formal programs were identified as active within the City of Wanneroo. Therefore, it was decided to widen the scope to the City of Perth. Following this, there were 14 programs were identified in the greater Perth region (See Table 2).

Table 2. Overview of identified programs for the project.

Age Range	Program
Early childhood (infants and toddlers 0-3 years & preschool 3-5 years),	• Playgroup WA, • Curtin University Early Learning Centre; • Oryx's Claremont branch the Queenslea • Early Learning Heathridge & MercyCare • Kogarah Community Services – GrandPals, OSCH & Playgroups • City of South Perth Library
Primary school (early school 5-8 years and early adolescence	• Kogarah Community Services - GrandPals OSCH & Playgroups • Mercy Place Lathlain (Mercy Health) • Ed Connect
Middle adolescence & late adolescence	• Ashdale secondary students • Youngster – Lakeland • St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls & Dorothy Genders Village in Amana Living (GenConnect) • CraigCare Ascot Waters & Bob Hawke College • Ed Connect
Adulthood	• Pingelly Somerset Alliance - Western Australia • Raise

Upon further exploration, an additional 20 organisations were identified that were engaging all ages but may not have met the formal definition of an intergenerational program. Each program was written to and invited to participate in an interview or focus group either in person or online. Leading to the researchers interviewing 48 participants in total across three focus groups and 29 individual interviews.

Focus groups: Focus groups involved experts from each population group. These were with community stakeholders, including service providers, subject matter experts and relevant government agencies. We held 3 focus groups of local programs and experts. The first focus group included one older participant, four younger participants, and two coordinators of a community intergenerational program (n=7). The second focus group included two experts (n=2) from the secondary schooling sector to understand the program needs of that group. Both experts were professionals running the program. The third focus group included ten leaders (n=10) within the City of Wanneroo Council to gain their perspective of the effective running of these programs and the role that council played in intergenerational practice. Total sample size of individuals involved in the focus group was 19.

Interviews: Due to the availability of stakeholders and the scope of the intergenerational practice identified, the researchers agreed to also undertake 7 interviews in person and 22 interviews online (n=29 interviews in total). Interviews were recorded where consent was obtained. When consent to record was not obtained, extensive notes were taken by the interviewer. Interviews lasted between 15 minutes and 1 hour each.

The general questions asked across both focus groups and interview included:

1. What is the value of intergenerational programs in your context?
2. What do you think the current and future need for intergenerational programs will be within the City?
3. What are the benefits that you have seen of intergenerational programs?
4. What have been the challenges?
5. What would you consider the key elements of your program were? (prompt: staffing, programming, timing, location, travel, funding)
6. What were the key outcomes of your program?
7. Why do you think your programs were successful?
8. What further support do you think you would need to make it sustainable and successful long term?
9. How do you think intergenerational programs are best run?
10. What role do you see the local government playing in running intergenerational programs?

Consent: All participation with this project will be voluntary and all participants and stakeholders were asked to provide written or verbal consent to participate.

Sensitivity and bias considerations: Interviews continued with participants until saturation. Triangulation was achieved through the documentation analysis of interviews, focus groups and documentation review.

Analysis and reporting: The data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), to explore the participants' views on best practice within their population of interest.

4. RESULTS / FINDINGS

This study examined five key aims. This section will report individually on each aim using the data received from the literature review, documentation analysis, and the primary data collected for this study.

Aim 1: Identify current and future community need / demand for intergenerational programs within the City with consideration to varying population demographics and need

Community Need

The City of Wanneroo is home to over 209,100 people and is one of the largest, diverse, cities in greater Perth (ProfileID, 2024). This included 49.2% Males and 50.8% females, and just under half of the population were employed (n=104,598). Furthermore, 40.8% were born overseas (with the top five countries being; 14.9% from UK, 3.4% from New Zealand, 3.2% from South Africa, 2% from India, 1.8% from Vietnam, closely followed by 1.3% from Philippines, and 1.0% from Ireland).

The city also hosts the highest number of children aged under 18 years compared to Greater Perth. To cater to this population, there are 24 retirement/lifestyle facilities, two disabilities support services, five senior citizen centres, 58 primary schools, 16 secondary schools, and 63 kindergartens (See Minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting research report). Not surprising then, the top five industry/sectors worked in by its citizens are health and social care (14%), construction (11%) retail trade (10.3%), education and training (7.9% and mining (6.3%). In addition to this almost 11.5% of citizens reported volunteering in the local community.

Interestingly, while on average only 4.4% of the total population reported needing help in their daily activities due to their disabilities, this percentage was much higher in the older population, with almost 49.3% of people aged over 80 reporting the need for help. Moreover, the City of Wanneroo hosted more people aged over 65 that reported the need for this help than the greater area of Perth (ProfileID, 2024). While a significant portion of the population lived with their partner or their children (62.3%), 18.5% lived alone, which was one of the largest changes in the city of Wanneroo since the 2016 census (ProfileID, 2024).

At an Australian population level than 42% of youth aged between 15-24 years, and 32.7% of people aged 25-34 years, reported being psychologically distressed in 2021 (Wilkins, Vera-Toscano & Botha, 2024). This group was also the highest group of people living in Australia reporting feeling lonely. Although first nations people reported greater average loneliness scores than non-First nations Australian born, indicating a particular need for connection in this sub-group overall (Wilkins, Vera-Toscano & Botha, 2024). Within the City of Wanneroo alone, almost 8.3% of the population reported having a mental health condition and 29% of the population

reported having at least one long term health condition. These statistics indicate the significant need for social interventions, such as intergenerational practice, within the city of Wanneroo.

A study by the City of Wanneroo in 2021 found that barriers to participate across population groups included a lack of time, limited knowledge about the activities, physical health, anxiety, not feeling welcomed/included and scheduling conflicts. Yet the study also highlighted the significant value that programs and activities within the community have on the broader community (City of Wanneroo, 2023). Moreover, that report highlighted that addressing social isolation and loneliness within communities is a public health concern that the city has a role in addressing.

Combined, these findings highlighted that there is demand for community activities such as intergenerational practice however, there is a need to define what intergenerational practice is to address the knowledge gaps that exist.

Upon reviewing intergenerational programs that existed in the City of Wanneroo, this study has found that intergenerational activities and age inclusive activities both have a place within the Wanneroo area. Where age-inclusive activities are designed to benefit all and may be one off in nature, intergenerational practice is purposely designed programs that impact knowledge from one generation to the other for mutual benefit.

Interestingly, upon interviewing programs that were commissioned by state, federal or local city councils to deliver engaging community activities, it appears in some cases, intergenerational programs do not meet the wider community need. For example, one program manager reflected:

“We tried to do an Intergenerational program with the library last year, but now we just go and visit... and whoever joins us, joins us...we don't give it a name anymore and we're finding that we do get a lot more people participating from it”

When asked to reflect on why that may be, the manager reported:

“I don't know what turns them off about that. Maybe it could be purely because they don't want to interact with children, but they're not realising that there might be younger adults, or you know (people) 20 years younger than you.... I think it's because (the term: intergenerational practice) is thrown around a lot and without actual meaning to it.”

Similarly, another program manager was highlighted the importance of being age inclusive over purpose built intergenerational programs in their region, and reported:

“I think that's one of the benefits of being (in our program) is that we can market to all those different ages because they can relate to the things that they see in there and especially as the older generation do like to share their stories as well. I guess in being creative, it's about that Community ownership, right?”

These programs were funded to run community inclusive events however, which may have played a role in the response from community around participation.

Importantly though, upon enquiry, all interviewees could see the value in running intergenerational practice programs within the wider community, by community-based organisations.

Why intergenerational practice?

Intergenerational programs have been found to benefit participants' mental health and wellbeing, connections with community, socialisation, generativity, physical health and learning new skills (D'Cunha et al., 2023). In addition, these programs have been considered "social vehicles" to promote mutual understanding of populations to reduce stereotypes and attitudes towards ageing and ageism (Belgrave, 2011). Interestingly, people with higher levels of well-being have been found to be less likely to develop dementia (Willroth, Pfund, McGhee, & Rule, 2023). Suggesting that programs, such as intergenerational practice go further than just connecting generations, and indeed these programs move from 'nice to do' to 'wise to do'.

A recent meta-analysis of intergenerational outcomes globally has found that older adults experience improvements in quality of life, enhanced physical and mental wellbeing, a sense of purpose and reduced depressive symptoms (Peterson, 2022). For children, studies have found an improved attitudes and understanding towards older generations, increased motivation and social skills and learning competencies such as improved reading, language and artistic skills (Martins et al 2019).

Programs addressing the wellbeing of the community are needed, as one program manager reported their intergenerational program addresses multiple problems for the community, for example:

"we found young people spend too much time on their devices and you know, there are many reports out there that not only the seniors are feeling lonely, but also the youngsters are feeling lonely"

Upon enquiring into the benefits, majority of participants reported knowledge transmission as the most important benefit to both age groups but also the value in connecting with each other.

For older generations, one manager reflected

"The older generation come in and they want to come in. They want to be here and so it means that we're offering something that that they are receiving joy from, yes."

In addition, an older participant of a program reflected that, *"it keeps me young and connected"*

Another older participant also reflected that:

“the wonderful thing is to seeing the kids bond with you like because they were actually watching gardening and then they would basically start engaging and then they’ll start doing little things with you.”

For younger generations, there seemed unanimous value in connecting with older people to engage and connect with other people. For example, one manager of an intergenerational program involving older and younger children noted:

“We have a lot of Asian children here, in particular Chinese children and their grandparents are in China so (the program) gives them an opportunity to mix with an older generation that they wouldn’t otherwise have the opportunity to do.”

A parent participant also commented that

“It’s nice to see my kids get to make friends with like-minded people. The socialisation of this program across ages is important, not just sticking to their own age groups”

In addition, participating in an intergenerational program forced participants of an English learning school to improve their English language skills, where a coordinator reflected:

“The (students) often speak their own language in class. But because we were there, they could not speak their own language, so they were actually forced to speak English ... and they improved as a result”

Moreover, another program manager reflected that the impact is strong on older people’s behaviour as well as their connectedness:

“We actually had one resident that came for her first visit with us and the site manager warned us about this person’s language use and behaviour prior to the visit but when she was in our service, she was a completely different character.”

However, despite the benefits, challenges also arise when running these programs. The literature reports that challenges can include maintaining the program during periods of outbreaks (D’Cunha et al., 2023), staffing concerns (Gibson, 2022), transport (D’Cunha et al., 2023), concerns about safety and mobility ((D’Cunha et al., 2023). These concerns were also support by the participants in this study, however they saw some of these being overcome by the council through their supports (discussed later in this paper). Moreover, some programs added the difficulty of finding volunteer facilitators or participants to run the programs due to scheduling or cost of living difficulties.

For example one program manager reported:

“I think in terms of volunteering, which is so essential, we need it in this world, but because of the cost of living people, I'm having to stay at work for longer and they've also got a lot of career duties with children... that's become a real challenge and I'm having to kind of modify quite drastically modify my program so that I'm not reliant on volunteers.”

Another program manager reported:

“(volunteers have) always been a slow trickle...so for us, as a small organisation it is our most challenging area.”

Similarly, a teacher reported that:

“Getting new people in and explaining that they cannot just hang out with (their related family member) as part of the program is difficult.. most people just want to spend time with their (family members)”

Consequently, considering the sustainability of programs beyond the use of volunteers is critical. Thus, the City's role in this could be expanded, as this study highlights an opportunity to hold professional development programs on how to attract and retain volunteers throughout the council to help facilitate these programs long term.

Common across all programs is the need to engage community champions to sustain these programs – regardless of age.

Community Champions are needed, with one participant reporting:

“But if you don't get the whole community come often, it's not a sustainable project or can't be delivered because you don't have the quantity and the people paying their fees to attend to cover the cost”

Two other program manager's also reflected:

“This (program) really took off when the community got involved and ran with it”

“We do require some Community champions to help us to activate the seniors, to know about the service, and so we also create jobs for some senior people in the Community and somebody who is retired and wants to be part of it.”

Indicating the key to success is community champions and volunteers. Interestingly, to find volunteers word of mouth is critical in the community.

“Oh word of mouth is our biggest strength, so our volunteers will then go speak to others in their community and you know, encourage them to come through “

In conclusion, this study found that there was a community need for intergenerational programs and age inclusive programs. Furthermore, this study found that community led initiatives were more likely to be sustainable than organisational led initiatives.

Aim 2: Identify and describe the key essential elements of best practice intergenerational programs, including but not limited to connecting generations to differing development profiles; infants and toddlers 0-3 years, preschool 3-5 years, early school 5-8 years, early adolescence, middle adolescence, late adolescence, adulthood, seniors.

Recent studies have found that the most common activities across programs include singing, games, reading, craft, reminiscence, life stories, conversations, dancing, celebrating special events, knowledge sharing, food and exercise (D’Cunha et al., 2023). However, to further detail these, this section breaks up the current knowledge gained into age ranges.

Infants and toddlers 0-2 years

In purpose build intergenerational centres, activities should be both planned and spontaneously created by participants for the best outcomes (Generations United & The Eisner Foundation 2019). There are no known siloed academic studies on intergenerational programs on this group, with most studies being produced in the preschool environment 3-5 years, beyond those using playgroup as an intervention. This is likely due to the risks involved with this cohort.

However, programs involving 0-2 years do run as part of larger initiatives like community gardens, playgroups and many day care centres are beginning to think about how they integrate these cohorts into intergenerational initiatives. For example, the Grubs and Bubs Program in Victoria Park operate as an intergenerational playgroup program with babies and older adults. Originally set up as an intergenerational program in the community from a government grant, this program is successful within the wider Perth region involving 0–2-year-olds due to the community involvement.

Other playgroup activities used to run in some residential aged care facilities throughout the Greater Perth and Wanneroo areas. For example the Baptist care Gracewood intergenerational playgroup, 68 Waverly Intergenerational playgroup, and the Barridale Lodge intergenerational playgroup used to run however were recently closed due to a lack of volunteers and the impacts of COVID.

Preschool 3-5 years

An Australian study found that there were five critical components to a successful intergenerational program between older adults and younger children. These were (1) participant characteristics such as age, temperament and personality types. (2) Facilitators, as they influenced the engagement levels of all participants. (3) The type of activity, noting that the strongest engagement occurred with paired activities which were less structured and more conversational. (4) having the right equipment and materials at the right time. (5) the environment or space/place where the activities were held, where it was found that pairing the right activity with the right place was key (Kirsnan, Kosiol, Golenko, Radford, & Fitzgerald, 2023). These findings were also supported by Kamrudeen, Star & Rosendal (2024) in their study of a co-located intergenerational program in Southeast Queensland.

Internationally, a study of an intergenerational program run between pre-school children and older adults in Taiwan similarly echoed the need to ensure activities that fostered caring and love traits were integrated into the pedagogy behind these programs to be the most successful (Shih, 2024). Similarly, in Greece involving grandparents in intergenerational practices in pre-school was found to improve bonds, creativity and attitudes towards others (Tympa, Karavida, Kanellopoulou, & Nousia, 2023).

A scoping review of the value of a letter writing program between kindergarten children and older adults found that these programs improve literacy as well as parents' beliefs and expectations about their children's capabilities in their early literacy outcomes. In addition, these programs were found to improve academic skills of writing but also bonds and relationships with older community members, suggesting programs can improve academic and mental wellbeing outcomes for all (Markowski, Kalacsanyiova, & Essex, 2024).

Moreover, programs in the Wanneroo and Greater Perth area focus on social connectedness and meaningful transmission of information between generations. Thus, programs involving 3–5-year-olds improve creativity, bonds, attitudes towards others, ageism, and literacy outcomes. These programs also strongly align with best practice within the Early Learning Framework within an Australian curriculum, and as such facilitation of how we encourage intergenerational practice throughout early learning centres through education and training, supported or provided by either the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice or the City of Wanneroo enables the sustainability of these programs long term.

Early school 5-8 years

Intergenerational programs were found to provide strong opportunities for children to develop social and emotional competencies, such as self-management, social-awareness, empathy, social acceptance, responsible decision making and relationship development (Banks, Frydenberg & Liang, 2024). Similarly, a systematic review of the literature on the psychosocial effectiveness on intergenerational learning on primary school children (aged 6-12 years) and older adults (65+ years) found positive outcomes. In particularly studies reviewed identified significant gains in attitude changes for children (Tsiloni et al., 2024). Intergenerational programs also fit well within the Australian school curriculum. Thus, encouraging visits and programs, such as the Wanneroo museum and the RSL museums, that align to the curriculum allows for a purpose driven intergenerational and/or age inclusive programs to be sustainable and embed knowledge throughout generations to come.

Early adolescents 9-13 years

Globally, programs involving youth have been found to reduce ageism (Belgrave, 2011; Whiteland, 2016). Furthermore, programs such as "Positive Ageing Digital Storytelling Intergenerational program (PADSIP), based out of Melbourne, has found continual improvements in connections, attitudes and understanding among participants over many iterations (Silver & Lee, 2023). The PADSIP program was developed as part of Swinburne University's wellbeing clinic for older adults and offers nine programs with weekly meetings, across community and residential aged care between older adults and high schoolers (Years 7-12) (Silver & Lee, 2023).

Middle and late adolescents 14-18 years

A study by Dorris et al., (2024) found that participating in an interactive, intergenerational music program reduced adolescents' felt performance anxiety, enabled their ability to think on their feet and improved connections with older generations. A key feature of that program was the ability to just come and connect without pressure of rehearsals, within a supportive environment that reduced the stress of all participants.

Herscu-Kluska & Pe'er (2024) conducted a study of university students and examined how assessments focused on watching two TV documentaries about older adults. The first assessment focused on watching and responding to episode 1 of the Old Peoples Homes for 4 year olds documentary. The second assessment focused on the documentary "You can't ask that – older adults." The study examined students' attitudes towards older adults pre and post assessments and found significant changes in their attitudes and perceptions towards older adults.

A recent scoping review on activities that provide the most impact on adolescents by De Bellis, Gregoric & Grant (2023) found that there were a range of academic and personal benefits for those involved in these activities. These benefits included: improved communication, teamwork, interpersonal skills, self identity, increased engagement, and perceptions towards the elderly and ageing in general. In addition, that study found that adolescents displayed personal growth by being involved as well as a sense of meaning. Upon reviewing the activities that underpinned current research, De Bellis, Gregoric & Grant (2023) found that intergenerational programs could be designed to provide deeper opportunities to improve career related skills, living history and better adjustments to school, depending on the curriculum, but all created deep value to those involved.

However, programs involving teens are not limited to social outcomes.

One program in the broader Perth region involved year 10 technical core students as part of their curriculum, and the program involved them interviewing seniors before designing a product to help them live at home. They had to meet them weekly then do a presentation at the end of the program to sell the product to the seniors. They later broadened the program to include the hospitality team who cooked scones for the program. The program manager reflected that the whole program was a success with some seniors even wanting to buy the fictional product.

"There were four groups, so they designed four products and they had to that it created all to the point where two of the residents had asked, "where do we go to buy this?" And then I had to say to (the residents), that this was actually just a part of an assignment. At the moment it's not available to hopefully with entrepreneur and will be on the market one day soon."

Another program in the Wanneroo area focused on year 9-10 students who were at times socially disengaged from their peers and would benefit from making new friends and concentrated on teaching the elderly technology skills, whereas the elderly taught them social skills and how to address a letter. The teacher reflected that the program is so successful, she has some students continuing in the program for multiple years. When reflecting on the highlight or benefit of this program, she reported that even though the program only lasted 4 weeks, it's enough to see the benefits:

"You see both of their faces sort of light up in terms of really happy to interact .. they start to build real connections that they with their Favorite person ... by the end of the session, like in the last 15 minutes, I'm not doing anything, I'm just watching them"

These programs are also important to build the reputation of the school in the wider community.

"this is just another element of really building that positive relationship with (the broader community) so that they can contact us"

The wider ongoing benefit of these programs are that they open doors to new careers, with one facilitator reporting:

"we're looking for opportunities to, I guess promote and provide pathways for students and some of that, you know, some of the engagement is around, you know looking for post school pathways in terms of occupations"

Another program also reported their driving force was addressing youth employment in the greater Perth region and as such, offers paid opportunities to connect with seniors

"The major driving force is to create more jobs for young people... (so).. We also offer a paid job opportunities for students who are in the holidays and outside of the school programme...so when the youngsters complete 10 sessions, they are eligible to receive a something called Google Career Certificate that allows them to access additional courses online. When they complete those, they can apply for jobs as soon as they are 18, they can apply for jobs with Google, Canva, Optus, Woolworths, and the Australia Post.. and if there's job opportunities within (the aged care) sector that we open up the eyes to the youngsters, they can explore those pathways and we act as referees and we encourage them to set up the LinkedIn profiles"

Suggesting that intergenerational programs focused on mid-late adolescents meet more than the social wellbeing need, they can also address youth unemployment, career development and workforce integration strategies for the future of Australia. All of which are key strategic advantage points for the future of Australia.

Adulthood (18+)

An innovative study in Sydney, Australia, by Angelou, McDonnell, Low & Du Toit (2023) found having live-in allied health students on site at a residential aged care facility provided stronger

training opportunities, meaningful engagement and improved person-centred care outcomes, as well as new friendships. Although, a strong orientation and boundary management program is needed to ensure positive outcomes remain and professional boundaries are not crossed.

University level programs involving tertiary students and older adults have also found successful outcomes in reducing stereotypes and attitudes in Australia (van der Veen, Robson, & Curin, 2023) USA (Lokon, Mehrotra, Murali & Oakman, 2024) and in Spain (Gonzalez, Estevez-Moreira, Delgado-Castro & Perez-Jorge, 2023).

In Perth, the Youngster Program provides opportunities for adults and all ages from 16+ to connect to local community members in paid employment. Those aged 18+ can apply to be a Youngster and there is no age barrier for involvement. In addition, Curtin University Early Childhood Sector is open to student volunteers that may enrich their university or life experience.

Seniors

Intergenerational programs have been found to provide an opportunity to create opportunities for older adults to achieve “generativity” (or a legacy of self). Programs focused on life stories and reminiscences such as the 100 project in Australia, offer older adults the ability to share their wisdom and experiences with others (Pratt, 2013) which often leads to improved quality of life (Low et al., 2015; Peterson, 2022).

A scoping review by De Bellis, Gregoric & Grant (2023) found that residents also improved their interactions, engagement, and sense of purpose as well as their mental health by participating in these programs. Although for the best outcome that study stressed the importance of employing trained professionals to deliver the program.

Similarly a systematic review on outcomes of programs with primary school children found for older adults found improved mental wellbeing in the form of reduced depression and loneliness and improved self-confidence and general wellbeing (Tsiloni et al., 2024). Moreover, that study found intergenerational programs the opportunity to expand their social interactions outside of the program (Tsiloni et al., 2024).

In a study of older mentors of health professionals, Ihara et al (2024) found that intergenerational mentoring relationships were able to provide an opportunity for older people’s voices to be heard and to reduce ageist attitudes as well as improve quality of outcomes for the professionals involved.

Similarly, Bartlett and colleagues (2023) examined the impact that different intergenerational programs in a psychology class at universities with seniors had on student learning. They found that providing opportunity for intergenerational relationships to grow, through service-learning programs, at university allowed students to improve their attitudes towards older adults, with programs with more extensive interaction showing higher levels of reduced ageism than others (Bartlett et al., 2023).

Table 3 presents these findings in summary form.

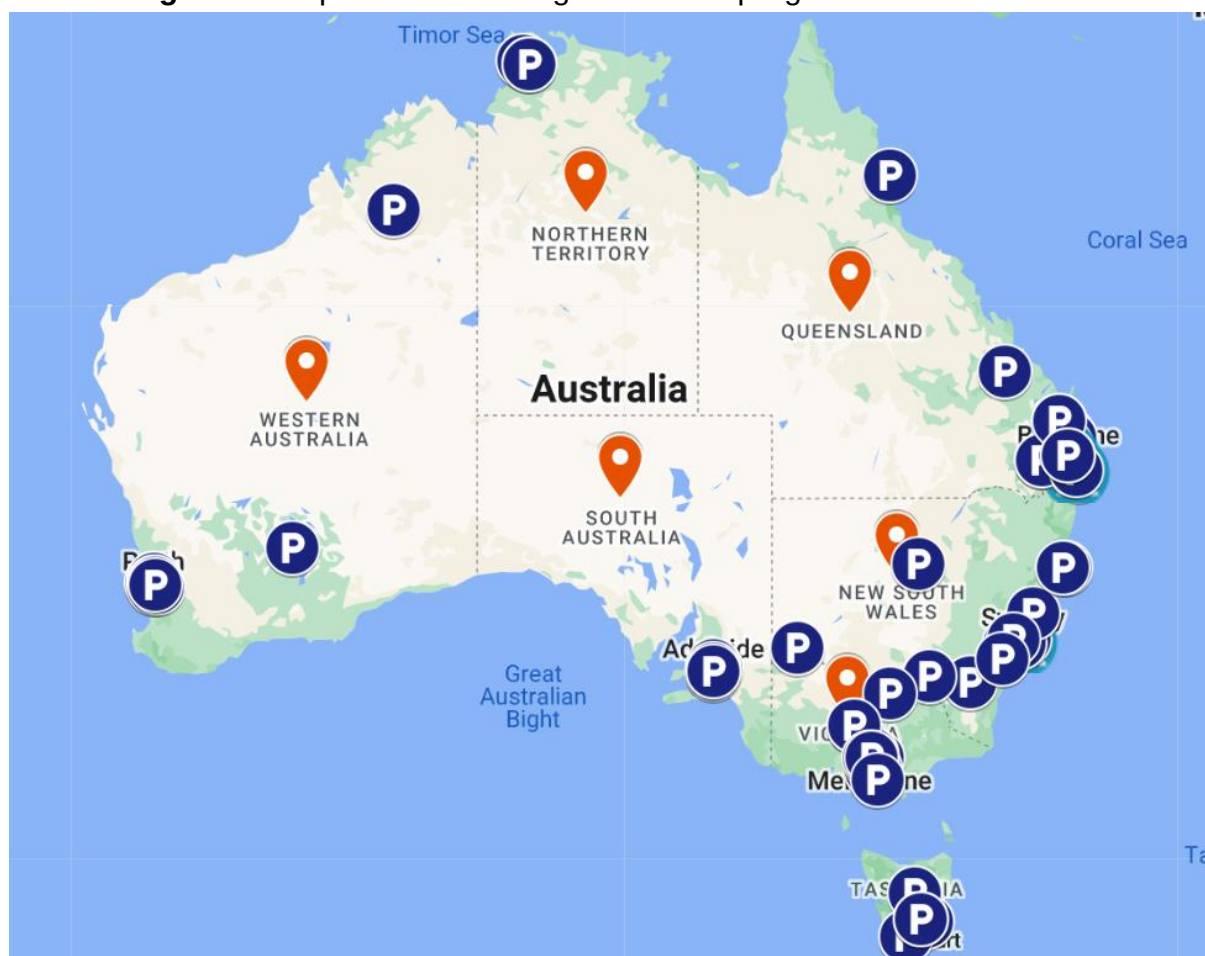
Table 3: Summary of key features of programs across the years

	0-2 years	3-5 years	5-8 years	9-13 years	14-16 years	17-18 years	Adulthood	Seniors 65+
Key aims	Playgroup activities to connect parents, babies and older adults, community gardens.	Improve bonds, creativity and attitudes towards others early literacy outcomes academic skills of writing academic and mental wellbeing outcomes	Develop social and emotional competencies, such as self-management, social-awareness, empathy, social acceptance, responsible decision making and relationship development	Reduce ageism, improve connections, attitudes and understanding	Performance anxiety, enabled their ability to think on their feet and improved connections	Improved communication, teamwork, interpersonal skills, self-identity, increased engagement, and perceptions towards the elderly and ageing in general	Professional skills development, wellbeing, stereotypes and attitude reduction	Social isolation, loneliness, mental wellbeing, generativity, stereotype and attitude reduction
Activities	Playgroup Activities, gardening, music, art, and food.	Play based activities – varied from arts, painting, stories, role play and food.	Play based activities, interviewing, reading, writing, pen-pals, and food, school curriculum visits to museums and/or local community organisations	Role plays, reading, history lessons, digital storytelling, tutoring, yoga, food, school curriculum visits to museums and/or local community organisations	Ballet, Drama, Music, art, storytelling, history, school subjects, tutoring, yoga and food	Professional skills mentoring, social skills, friendship, trivia games, yoga and food	Workplace mentoring programs, art, cooking, building things, tutoring, social skills, trivia games, food and yoga.	Life stories, mentoring, games, technology safety, digital learning, trivia, chair yoga, music and food.
Time	1 hour	1-2 hours	1 hour	1 hour	1-2 hours	1-2 hours	1-2 hours	1-2 hours
Alignment	N/A	Aligned within the Early Years Framework Regulation	Activities aligned within the Australian School Curriculum and International Baccalaureate Program	Activities aligned within the Australian School Curriculum and International Baccalaureate Program as well as the Duke of Edenborough Awards	Activities aligned within the Australian School Curriculum and International Baccalaureate Program as well as the Duke of Edenborough Awards	Activities aligned within the Australian School Curriculum and International Baccalaureate Program as well as the Duke of Edenborough Awards	Work Integrated Learning programs through TAFE and Universities, work-ready certificates	No formal alignment with policy or regulations, however it Assists with the social and wellbeing lifestyle activities required to minimise behaviours, and maximises the quality of life outcomes of older adults.

Aim 3: Identify successful intergenerational programs that currently exist both in the City of Wanneroo, Perth metro area or other locations across Australia or internationally, including comment on: What outcomes has the program achieved? Why these programs are successful? Who funds the program?

Across Australia there are over 61 programs registered within Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice. The below map displays a live offering of the current available programs across Australia and can be viewed at: <https://aiip.net.au/about-us/intergenerational-programs-in-australia/>.

Figure 2: Map of current intergenerational programs across Australia



In addition to this, a study by Dr Nathan D'Cunha and colleagues (2023) found over 18.2% of residential aged care facilities were offering an active intergenerational program, but an additional 44.4% had suspended the programs during 2022-2023 period. An additional 59 of the 572 aged care homes surveyed across Australia were aware of plans to re-introduce or introduce a program soon.

Within the City of Wanneroo, only two formal programs were identified. These are identified in case studies below.

Ashdale Secondary College's Community Technology Team

This program was inspired by the ABC television show Old People's Home for Teenagers and begun as the program leader and technology teacher, Rachel Farnay, saw an opportunity to better connect their school with the community and help their students form friendships.

The program was initially funded by a seed grant, which covered the cost of transport, however, is now not funded and instead the school provides the students a small snack before they walk over the retirement village across the road once a week for four weeks in terms 1 and 3. Students may re-enrol in the program, and a few have been coming since its inception, and it is a volunteer program designed to assist students develop soft skills. Students teach retirees at Brightwater's Kingsway Court Retirement Village the latest in technology, helping them feel more confident with their mobile phones, while the seniors share their own knowledge, soft skills, and lost skills such as how to write and post a letter, as well as relics from past technologies.

This program is successful because it is low cost and focuses on building meaningful relationships between students and older adults in the community. A secondary benefit is the building the reputation of the school within the wider community and allows its student population to benefit from employability skills they wouldn't have gathered traditionally, such as empathy as well as access to knowledge about career opportunities in aged care.

Playgroup Western Australia Intergenerational Playgroups in Madeley.

This program was an offshoot of the already existing playgroup session run at Madeley Primary School where family members are welcomed to join into these sessions, in addition to the usual playgroup run on Thursday mornings.

The sessions include all the usual playgroup activities as well as time for chatting and catching up. Families do not need to be related to the seniors; they just need to be open to making new friendships and having fun together.

The program relies heavily on volunteers and focuses on building communities within communities. Without volunteers, these programs do not exist and a number of playgroups have closed as a result of cost of living pressures. Playgroup sessions are funded by parents who pay an annual fee of \$35 to Playgroup WA and a small contribution fee weekly to the program.

Note: programs run outside of the Wanneroo region are discussed in other sections of this report.

In addition to these formal programs there are programs, within the Perth Region, that exist which organically connect ages. Table 4 provides an overview of these organic age-inclusive programs.

Table 4: Organically formed age inclusive programs

Activity	Overview
Wanneroo RSL Sub-Branch	Currently host tours of their museum to school groups Monday to Friday.
Cycling Without Age Perth	Quinns Beach Chapter – engaging disabled people and seniors though have branched out to Education Support Centres at schools to activate youth engagement.
BeConnected Seniors Computer Literacy - Hepburn Centre	Free Government Initiative helping older Australians get online.
Circle of Friends	The object of the choir is to bring women of all ages and nationalities together to form community, encompassing social activities, along with sharing the joy of singing.
Surf Life Saving Clubs (Yanchep, Quinns, Alkimos)	Provide children and youth development programs.
Scout Groups (Alkimos, Carramar, Mindarie, Wanneroo etc) -	helping young people to flourish; to grow in all facets of development and become better people and citizens in our community.
North Coastal Women's Shed	The North Coastal Women's Shed is open to women of all ages and nationalities inspiring connection and healthy friendships.
Quinns Rocks Emergency Services Cadets	The Cadet 'Unit' is managed under the leadership and guidance of volunteer Adult Leaders with mentoring and activities from Emergency Services personnel.
Connect Groups	Peer support network targeting socially isolated members from disability.
Kenyan Community in WA	This group has individual groups such as a youth, women's, men's and seniors' group. These groups then come together to share their culture to the next generation. The Community Funding Program supports their annual Cultural Extravaganza event.
Local bands and community groups	Naturally connect people through passions regardless of ages.

Eritrean	Cultural group focusing on social inclusion and activities across the ages.
Girrawheen Senior Citizens Centre	Has a younger volunteer come in regularly to work with the seniors in their activities
North Coast Art Club	Group of artists or people interested in exploring their artistry and has members of all ages
Portuguese Australian Women's Association	Social club for women across generations
Swan Friendship Group	Engages with lots of generations who volunteer to provide social activities to young people and young adults with a disability
Rainbow Community Church	Church based activities involving all ages
Encounter City Church	Church based activities involving all ages
Purple Fig Wellbeing	Small business who hosts support sessions and workshops
Achiever's Club	Volunteers provide one on one weekly out of school mentoring and tuition with the aim of building self-confidence, trust and a sense of achievement.
12 Buckets	Mentoring group for young people in schools
Edmund Rice Foundation	Provides a variety of programs to help build capacity for women regardless of age

Of the intergenerational programs that are running within the Greater Perth region, most of them rely on volunteers, except for one. The exception being Youngster, who is run as a for-profit company and offers paid employment opportunities for their youngsters. However, the difficulty sourcing volunteers and resources were discussed by both intergenerational programs and organically formed age inclusive programs and the provision of support to these organisations around volunteering remains key to the ongoing sustainability of these programs.

In addition, there are five purpose built intergenerational practice facilities across Australia. The Queenslea by Oryx's Claremont branch in Perth, TLC Healthcare in Mordialloc, Maranatha Gunyah house in Wellington, NSW, Echoes in Modbury South Australia and The Herd, on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria. These facilities used a combination of organisational, federal government, local and state funding to support the build of these sites and embed their funding into the childcare and aged care funding existing across Australia. Table 5 presents an overview of these programs in more detail.

Table 5: Overview of the five purpose built intergenerational practice facilities across Australia

Site	Year Opened	Age Range	Outcomes	Funding Source	What makes them “successful”?
Maranatha Gunyah house in Wellington	2020	Residents living in Retirement Living and Residential Care as well as children attending the childcare aged 0-5 years.	Educational (childcare standards), literacy and health. No formal evaluation is public information yet. Delayed intergenerational program start to 2021 due to COVID.	Embedded in the Childcare Fees from Parents and Residents living in the retirement and aged care facilities. No additional fees for the program	These programs run organically and encourage interaction 5 days a week (M-F) when childcare is open. There is daily integration across age ranges 5 days a week.
The Queenslea	2021	Residents living in Retirement Living and Residential Care as well as children attending the childcare aged 0-5 years.	Educational (childcare standards), literacy and health outcomes for all. No formal evaluation is public information yet.	Embedded in the Childcare Fees from Parents and Residents living in the retirement and aged care facilities. No additional fees for the program	These programs run organically and encourage interaction 5 days a week (M-F) when childcare is open. They allow residents to volunteer their time and have integration within all ages in child care (0-5 years)
TLC Healthcare in Mordialloc	2023	Residents living in Retirement Living and Residential Care as well as children attending the childcare aged 0-5 years.	Educational (childcare standards), literacy and health. Research project is ongoing with no findings yet.	Embedded in the Childcare Fees from Parents and Residents living in the retirement and aged care facilities. No additional fees for the program.	These programs run organically and encourage interaction 5 days a week (M-F) when childcare is open. There is daily integration across age ranges 5 days a week.

Site	Year Opened	Age Range	Outcomes	Funding Source	What makes them “successful”?
Echoes in Modbury South Australia	2022	Residents living in Residential Care as well as children attending the childcare aged 0-5 years.	Educational (childcare standards), literacy and health. No formal evaluation is public information yet.	Embedded in the Childcare Fees from Parents and Residents living in the retirement and aged care facilities. No additional fees for the program	Intentional program visits are scheduled however organically run program runs alongside. There is daily integration across age ranges 5 days a week.
The Herd Intergenerational Learning centre	2023	Residents living in Residential Care as well as children attending the childcare aged 0-5 years.	Educational (childcare standards), literacy and health. No formal evaluation is public information yet. Waitlist is currently 1-2 years to attend childcare service.	Embedded in the Childcare Fees from Parents and Residents living in the retirement and aged care facilities. No additional fees for the program.	Intentional program visits are scheduled and There is daily integration across age ranges 5 days a week.

All of the intergenerational programs that run remain competitive and successful largely due to their volunteers and when volunteers run dry, the programs tend to pivot to community needs.

To further assist these programs, the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice, as the peak body in Australia for intergenerational initiatives, was founded in 2022 as a not-for-profit membership-based organisations and is funded by its members to provide support, assistance and mentorship to those interested in creating and sustaining intergenerational practice in their communities. In addition, it provides professional development courses to the communities, short workshops and consultation with the purpose of sustaining standards in intergenerational practices. It serves as a vehicle to connect programs for support and assistance as well as to ensure quality evidenced-based programs are run across the country. However, many do not know about this organisation (yet) and there is an opportunity to further support the marketing of this organisation within the wider Perth region.

Aim 4: What is the local government role in intergenerational practice?

Across all programs – both intergenerational programs and age inclusive programs- this study found that all participants agreed that the local council's role was identified as a capacity building through the provision of seed funding, marketing, connections to other organisations and transport options. As one program manager reports:

"I believe that Council's role is to build the capacity not to do but to enable, because otherwise you'll spend your next 50 years paying ratepayers money to do stuff and believe that it would have to be just as good, just as good as our Community, that there are a lot of people." (Program manager)

Seed Funding

Across all programs interviewed, there was resounding agreement that seed funding was essential. One program manager reported:

"But I think for us, the town, the city role is important in that initial seed funding, It allowed us to try new and different things. So that, yeah, so it allowed us to (be funded as an employee) to run it and it allowed us to be able to buy some supplies to be kept here. ... It was really good to be able to have the support of the town to be that, to allow us to be an incubator of these kinds of projects. And then the community just took over and ran with it."

Another also commented:

"It's like five, six, seven thousand dollars is right, but at least gets you off the ground to do stuff, which is always good and then they can offer you spaces like the halls and activities for free."

However, access to these grants was seen as sometimes difficult as the paperwork and system involved was seen as convoluted and difficult at times particularly by multicultural organisations and those relying predominately on volunteers to access the funds.

Venues for running these programs were critical, as while some organisations have their own spaces, the smaller community organisations do not, and as such they rely on council buildings to deliver their services.

Connections and Marketing

Another program manager agreed that the council role is to connect but the driving role of the partner remains in community organisations.

“Someone from the Council who shares the idea... helps make a connection between, say, a school and a retirement village, or whoever and is there for the initial stages, but once that partnership is created, it then is over to the two parties to groups involved.

“In all these kind kinds of ideas of starting up new programs in the community it they felt if they'll local government gets in behind it just in spreading the word it it, it makes things much more successful”

This was then supported by another program manager who reported:

“The most important part is the connectivity...You know, tertiary education schools, which they have and also the senior organisations, so they have like the organisations listed mostly on the website but active promotion, getting them their involvement”

This connectivity also extends to community canvassing for new programs as well as information sharing and networking is key, as another program manager discussed:

“Speak to the people in the community about what they actually want to be doing and what that could possibly look like and just seeing who we can network with to make it happen... so connecting organisations... (and) what councils have is they do have a big they're able to market that they've got the funds to do these things, it's just they're not sure how to do it, where to do it.. And there's other people like me and other, maybe even community members, who want to jump in and be like, hey, I've heard on the Grapevine that they would like something like this because obviously we all hear different things as well... so connecting us is important.”

Another program manager also agreed with this:

“So rather than us sort of recreating all these different school holidays activities, what we're doing is we're working with them to see what they're doing and to support our young people to access them.

Interestingly, one program manager reported that:

“Community-based events and workshops are essential to provide communities a place as when they feel connected to their place they are connected to their health”

Finally, another manager reported:

“Councils role should be to assist small businesses come together and collaborate to make meaningful interactions between the young and the old within the wider community”.

They underscored the importance of this networking and collaboration network that allowed organisations to work together in a common space to achieve a greater goal together, that is to connect communities.

Transport assistance

Another way of assisting community organisations is to fund transport for these programs. For example, in one region having a fleet local organisation can borrow to transport people to activities is key:

“there’s no public transport here, so if you need to go anywhere you, we’ve got a community car that people can book for medical appointments and stuff.”

In addition, one organisation reported transport was a barrier for them and they have been trying to get local council to assist:

“We have been trying to get them on board to provide the bus for our children to go over there for the next visit. Obviously because we’re not for profit and we’re a charity, we don’t have a lot of money to be able to and we don’t want to put that cost on to the families as well because they’re all struggling with the cost-of-living pressures.”

Although this program was outside of the Wanneroo area, the City’s community bus was not brought up as a resource any program knew about or pointed to, within the Wanneroo area identified. Therefore, it is recommended to advertise this service to these community organisations where appropriate.

Consequently, the provision of transport options would assist engage more community organisations deliver intergenerational and age inclusive programs to the most socially isolated and lonely populations. This was also identified in the literature where transport was consistently seen as a barrier for access to services in older populations or vulnerable populations (Radford et al., 2022).

Information and Resources

Some participants reported that it would be great to have more information on how to start and the key ingredients or recipe for success when creating intergenerational practice programs. This may be in the form of an on-demand training workshop video or an info graphic and information

package. Provision of this training is also in line with international research, a lack of planning was found to hamper the long-term sustainability of these programs (Vieria & Sousa, 2016; Radford et al., 2022). This extends to ensuring intergenerational practice is embedded in the future planning for growth, government, social care reviews of education, childcare, outside school hours care, health and aged care reforms to ensure the red tape is minimised for these programs to run effectively.

“it would be great if the government could put together a little infographic or workshop on how to set up and run intergenerational practice programs”

While the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice holds professional development workshops that can assist sustain these programs (See JOY courses offered by AIIP), there is a role in council to market and provide infographics on how to start and sustain intergenerational practice and age inclusive initiatives together.

Thus, these findings suggest that the strategic value of councils remains their in-depth capacity building abilities through understanding and connections within the community to local organisations, as well as the marketing and training they can do as a result, to connect, facilitate and sustain local community events. Together these are the key to ensuring sustainable programs as well as connecting people to these local organisations to assist drive age friendly communities.

Aim 5: Investigate and describe differing delivery methods, including but not limited to:

- Through service providers
- Through schools
- Through playgroups
- Community-led

Intergenerational programs run in Australia in a community space where both community living older adults and preschool children come together are feasible (Lim et al., 2024). However, consideration is needed to the specific details of delivering these across these environments in Western Australia. There are many ways to implement intergenerational practice and across all ranges. Table 6 presents an overview of all programs in the City of Wanneroo and Greater Perth area that meet the definition of intergenerational programs and breaks down their activities and delivery methods.

Table 6: List of Intergenerational Programs within City of Wanneroo & Greater Perth Region

Program	Delivery Method	Age Range	Area Servicing	Outcomes
Ashdale Secondary School	Face to Face	13-15 years + older adults	Wanneroo	Social skills, Technology cyber safety
Playgroup	Face to Face	0-5 years, Parents & Older Adults	Greater Perth Region	Social skills, play
Meerilinga Kingsley	Face to Face	0-5 years & Older Adults	Kingsley	Social skills, play
Meerilinga Woodvale	Face to Face	0-5 years & Older Adults	Woodvale	Social skills, play
Curtin University Early Learning	Face to Face	0-5 years & Older Adults	Bentley	Social skills, role play, literacy
Early Learning and Development Service	Face to Face	0-5 years & Older Adults	Claremont	Social skills, role play, literacy
Early Learning Heathridge	Face to Face	0-5 years & Older Adults	Heathridge	Social skills, role play, literacy
Kogarah Community Services	Face to Face (multiple programs)	All ages + abilities	Greater Perth Region	Social skills, role play, literacy, disability inclusion, reducing ageism, school programs related to curriculum, English language development
Youngster	Face to Face	16 and above years + adults + older adults	Greater Perth Region	Technology assistance, cyber security, social and life skills
St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls & Dorothy Genders Village in Amana Living (GenConnect)	Face to Face	13-18 years + older adults	Perth	Curriculum outcomes, social and life skills

CraigCare Ascot Waters & Bob Hawke College	Face to Face		Ascot Waters	Curriculum outcomes, social and life skills
Ed Connect (prev SVP)	Face to Face	All ages	Greater Perth Region	Literacy, life skills and social skills
Achiever's Club	Face to Face	6-18 years + adult volunteers	Wanneroo and Greater Perth region	Literacy, curriculum outcomes and social skills
Intergenerational Learning Australia	Virtual	6-18 years + older adults	Greater Perth Region	Literacy, curriculum outcomes, and social skills

Best practice for intergenerational practice involves implementing purposely developed programs that integrate contact in different ways. Figure 3 below presents three keyways intergenerational practice could be implemented in practice as recommended by Kaplan (2004).

Figure 3: Different levels of intergenerational connections.



Adapted with permission from Kaplan, M, *Toward an intergenerational way of life*, Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences, 96 (2), 5-9, 2004.

This study has found that of the intergenerational programs running in the community, most were successful in obtaining key outcomes for participants by being purposive and met the criteria 5-7 above. However, while majority of the programs ran in a face-to-face manner, there were limited virtual programs run. This led to the question: *Are Face to Face or Virtual Programs better?*

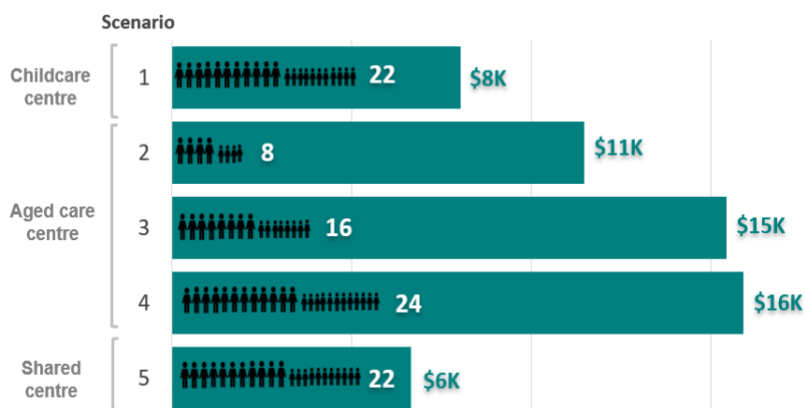
Evidence globally on the effectiveness of virtual vs face to face interventions are mixed. A study of intergenerational programs in Spain found face to face programs to be the most successful, as there is a requirement for virtual programs to be successful for all participants to have their devices (Gonzalez-Afonso et al., 2023). However, evidence from Australia found benefits in

providing virtual intergenerational activities (Cronan et al., 2023; Day & Kervin, 2024). Similarly, an intervention held with both face to face and virtual sessions in Perth, during 2022, between a secondary school and a retirement village, found that while participants preferred face to face interactions, and reported developing more meaningful and deep relationships, positive outcomes were still found (Fitzgerald et al., 2022). Similar outcomes were also found in a mixed program between a secondary school and residential facility in Melbourne during covid (Laging & Radford, 2022).

These findings suggest that perhaps for Australia, both offerings are valid, but careful consideration is needed to developing relationships early in the program, then attention needs to be given to maintaining these later in the program. This study also revealed that both programs have a role, and the delivery method is not as important the community connections. While majority of the programs found in Perth were run in face-to-face mode, on the balance of evidence, this study still supports the delivery of intergenerational programs across the age ranges by community organisations.

In terms of the cost of these programs, while there are no updated findings internationally on the cost, the only study available was done in our earlier research based on 2016-2017 data (Vecchio et al., 2018; Radford et al., 2020) found that the costs of intergenerational practice initiatives varied by participants however ranged between \$8k-\$16k per program (this is priced at 1 session a week for 16 sessions). Figure 4 presents these figures below.

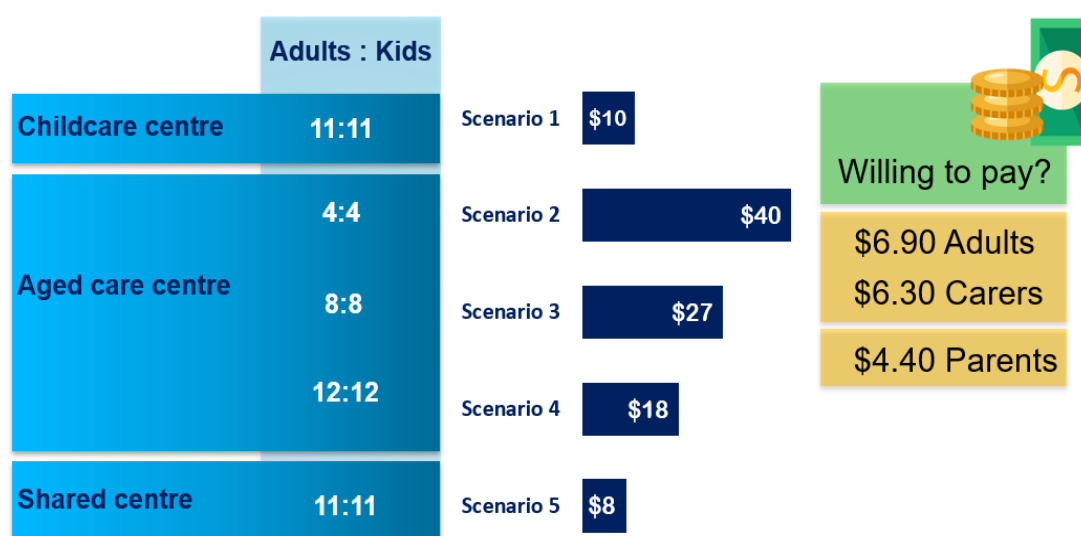
Figure 4: Total Costs of Programs.



Note: Scenario 1 is 11 adults coming to the childcare centre (adults travel) whereas in scenario 2, 3 & 4 children travel to the community centre or aged care facility (children travel) and scenario 5 hosts a shared centre where they both exist on the same site eliminating the need for travel.

Broken down by scenarios and participants, this meant that the smaller the program, the more cost per participant. Figure 5 presents these costs per participants (Vecchio et al., 2018).

Figure 5: Costs per participants.



However, these costs were modelled off childcare (0-5 years) and residential or community aged care settings, as well as a study of willingness to pay within the community. There is no evidence available internationally in the literature on the cost of high school programs. In addition, the rising costs of living are likely to inflate these figures today from when the data was collected in 2017. Therefore, future research is needed into the current costs of running intergenerational programs across Australia, by age range.

Combined however, this study supports the delivery of intergenerational programs by community organisations, to encourage community ownership. Furthermore, it supports additional work to evaluate the economic demand and value that these programs bring Australia.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the advantages and disadvantages for running programs across age ranges to build a best practice summary of evidence on the key elements of each program. Additionally, this study aimed to examine the role local government plays in intergenerational practice.

After undertaking a documentation review, three focus groups (n=19) and 29 interviews, this study found that intergenerational programs benefit participants' mental health and wellbeing, connections with community, socialisation, generativity, physical health and learning new skills.

In addition, this study highlighted that there is merit to provide both intergenerational practice and age inclusive activities throughout the city. Intergenerational programs however are best run by community organisations outside of the council, and council's role is to provide the capacity building activities to support these programs.

Therefore, this report provides seven key recommendations to council to further support the capacity building activities in intergenerational practice.

Recommendation	Strategic Link*
9. Provide seed funding up to \$7,000 for community groups to start intergenerational programs. Noting that one program costs between \$6,000-\$16,000 depending on the number of participants. However, the community members interviewed agreed \$7,000 was a fair amount to pilot one intergenerational program in their area.	Priority 1.1 Value the contribution of all people Priority 6.1 Advocate in line with community priorities
10. Provide access to venues at low or, no, cost to encourage these programs to grow.	Priority 1.2 Value public places and spaces Priority 1.3 Facilities and activities for all
11. Provide marketing services to the wider community about the programs.	Priority 1.1 Value the contribution of all people Priority 7.4 Promote offerings, opportunities and initiatives
12. Provide monthly community networking events to share learnings and knowledge about how to create intergenerational and age inclusive programs in the City of Wanneroo.	Priority 1.4 Bringing people together Priority 6.3 Build local partnerships and work with others
13. Provide an information pack and infographics including hosting an online training program (on demand) on the available resources and how to start.	Priority 1.4 Bringing people together Priority 1.4 Learning and discovery choices

14. Provide professional development funds to employees and community members to upskill on what is intergenerational practice and what is not.	Priority 1.5 Learning and discovery choices Priority 3.4 Develop local jobs and skills
15. Take a leading role in providing intergenerational services to its community by adding intergenerational practice to the portfolio of a staff member within the city of Wanneroo to assist with the start-up, community building and sustainability of intergenerational practices.	Priority 1.1 Value the contribution of all people Priority 1.4 Bringing people together
16. Council advocate on behalf of the community to other decision-making organisations such as federal and state government, for additional funding and the delivery of intergenerational programs	Priority 6.1 Advocate in line with community priorities

*Strategic Priorities came from the Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031 (https://www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au/info/20003/your_wanneroo/522/strategic_community_plan)

Future research should explore the cost of these programs in more detail to address the economic value these programs have in the broader community. This service can be provided also by the AIIP for a fee.

Overall, this study provided a valuable updated insight into the benefits and challenges of running intergenerational practice programs within the community.

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Contact: admin@aiip.net.au

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