



Mr Cameron Woods
CEO
Town of Bassendean
35 Old Perth Road, Bassendean, WA 6054

RE: Development Approval Application – 94 West Road, Bassendean

Dear Mr Woods

It is with pleasure that we present our development application for a bespoke, family owned and operated Early Learning Centre at 94 West Road, Bassendean.

94 West Road presents a number of advantageous features, specifically suitable for an early learning centre, such as the lot size (1,239sqm) and location, being the closest and largest lot, to the primary school (approximately 150m from the subject site) that sits on a corner site (favourable for acoustic assessments) on two Local Distributor Roads. The Early Learning Centre is a complementary land use, with a café across from the school (commercial activity), and within close proximity to the town centre (approximately 620m), and train station (1.3km). We highlight the comments from the Design Review Panel report which stated *“The Panel commended the applicants on their vision for the use of the site as a childcare centre, and the contributions this use will bring in respect to economic and social benefits to the community.”*

In support of our development application, we provide details below of the current childcare service gap that currently exists within Bassendean, the benefits of increased childcare options, and the appropriateness of the particular location adjacent to the primary school.

Childcare needs

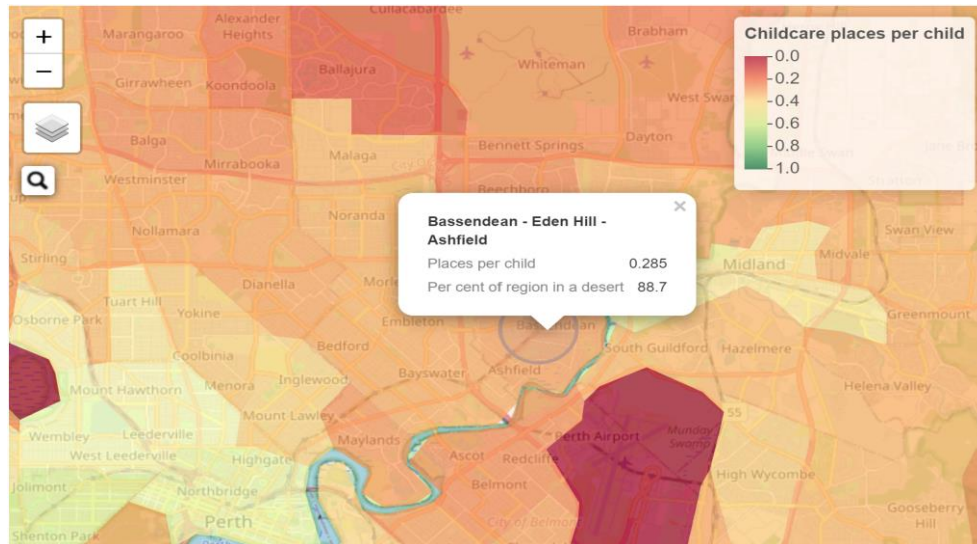
A recent extensive child needs assessment undertaken by *The Mitchell Institute for Education and Health Policy* at Victoria University (Assessment) confirmed that Bassendean has a shortage of long day care child care places. The Assessment reviewed the supply of childcare across Australia and compared this to the potential demand, being the number of children living in each neighbourhood. This revealed where in Australia the demand for spaces in early childhood education and care outpaces local capacity to provide services, areas they termed as ‘childcare deserts’.

Per the Assessment, deserts *‘is a term that comes from the early learning research literature and refers to areas where childcare is most scarce’*. As identified below, over 88% of Bassendean / Eden Hills / Ashfield area is classified as child care desert¹, meaning areas where childcare is most scarce.

¹ Hurley, P., Matthews, H., & Pennicuik, S. (2022). Deserts and oases: How accessible is childcare? Mitchell Institute, Victoria University.

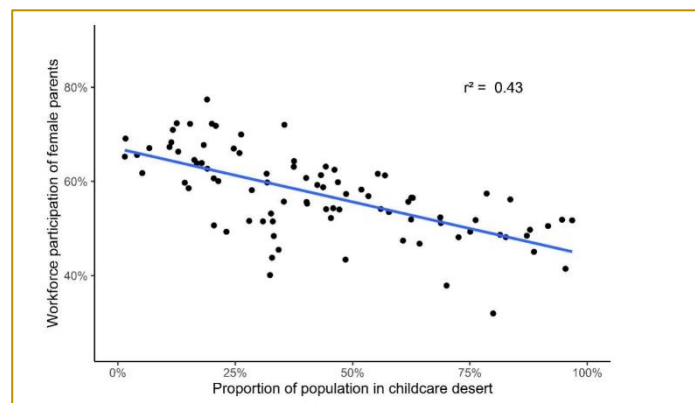


It is noted as at May 2024, the *Wind in the Willows* Early Childhood Education day care centre, is showing no vacancies through Careforkids².



Further, the Assessment considers the correlation between the accessibility of childcare and female workforce participation.

As represented on the chart extract from the Assessment (to the right)³, those in a childcare desert have lower levels of workforce participation for females who have a child aged under five in the household. The presence of an Early Learning Centre therefore, has the potential to facilitate increased female workforce participation.



We agree with the Assessment conclusions that ‘Access to quality childcare has enormous impacts on the current and future lives of Australians,’ and that ‘children need a system that meets their needs so that they can have the best start in life, regardless of where they live or the income of their parents’. It is our goal to deliver exceeding rated Early Learning options to support the family as a whole, particularly in areas where current provision is scarce. As acknowledged through the Covid-19 response, child care is an essential service, widely recognised as enabling families to work and/or study, and as stated by Tony Stuart (CEO UNICEF Australia) “.. the first 2,000 days in a child’s life have a significant bearing on health, development, and educational attainment, and the services provided by ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) supports this.”⁴

² <https://www.careforkids.com.au/child-care/pm3j1/wind-in-the-willows-early-childhood-education-bassendean-6054>

³ <https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/early-learning/childcare-deserts-oases-how-accessible-is-childcare-in-australia>

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org.au/media-release/early-childhood-education-care-an-essential-service>



Synergy with the adjacent primary school and the importance of early childhood education

The proposed centre's program will be based on the Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia (EYLF or Framework)⁵, developed by the Australian Government Department of Education for the Ministerial Council *"to support early childhood providers, teachers and educators to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school"*.

The Framework⁶ *"draws on robust Australian and international evidence that confirms early childhood is a vital period in children's continuing learning, development and wellbeing."*

In addition to the benefits and importance of early childhood education, there are widely recognised advantages of co-location of children's services facilities with primary schools. Convenience is offered to parents of children attending both facilities with reduced trips, and increased walkability, while *'interaction between the two services provides a smooth transition for children entering the primary school system'*. Sense of community is also strengthened and established early, as is a sense of Place.

A number of Local Councils including but not limited to City of Stirling, City of Wanneroo, City of Belmont, City of Melville and City of Rockingham, and the Shire of Mundaring highlight their preference for childcare centres to be located adjacent to educational facilities in their childcare policies.

Local WA family-owned centre

We fully appreciate the close-knit and engaged community that exists in Bassendean. As a local family-owned childcare provider, having sister centres under the brand of Studio 64, we take pride in our bespoke operations, and have been rated as one of the first in WA to achieve *'Exceeding'* under the new National Quality Standards.

Of particular note was our Exceeding Quality Report for our Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities. In South Perth for example we:

- Have regular Local aged care provider visits to engage in activities with our children
- 'Edible Laneway' initiative where herb gardens were planted with our parents and the community
- Local Library fortnightly reading sessions with our children
- Local foreshore pram walks with the children so they can experience the local community and amenities
- Local collaborations with schools (e.g. mural artwork with Perth Modern, School readiness collaboration with South Perth Primary)

We are delighted and exceptionally proud to confirm that in May 2024, we have retained and increased this Exceeding rating against the backdrop of the increasingly higher expectations of the WA regulatory body.

⁵ <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf>

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We rely on word of mouth and adapt each carefully selected centre to the immediate environs and community, rather than developing imposing generic/commercial structures. We have put extensive thought into the 'white cottage' & garden style design (with residential look and feel) to provide high quality care in a 'home away from home' environment.

Our proposal seeks to respect the and contribute positively to the identity, character, and aesthetic of Bassendean, and our design respects and reflects the Character Area 22 desired design responses. Our efforts in this regard have been recognised by the Design Review Panel⁷ who awarded a 'green' evaluation of the context and character, and provided the following comment in the report and recommendations *"The design direction of the proposal contributes to the local area in using a traditional and character driven solution. The proposal is appropriate in terms of height, bulk and scale; and sympathetic to the streetscape and residential context and character of the area."*

New jobs

The Centre will bring additional job prospects to the community of Bassendean.

We are more than happy to meet to discuss further, are excited to invest in the Town of Bassendean and hope to receive the Town's support for this much needed service.

Kind regards

Kelly Chapman

Director – Briscola Pty Ltd and Studio 64 Group

⁷ Meeting with DRP held 9th February 2024