

Terms of Reference

Early Learning & Childcare Reference Group

1. Preamble

The District Council of Robe (Council) recognises the importance of accessible, inclusive and high-quality early learning and childcare services for children, families and the wider community.

The Early Learning & Childcare Reference Group (Reference Group) will provide a practical forum for families, community members, Council and relevant stakeholders to share ideas, provide feedback and help inform the ongoing improvement of early learning and childcare services across Robe, Beachport and Kangaroo Inn.

2. Purpose and Responsibilities of the Reference Group

The purpose of the Reference Group is to provide advice, feedback and community perspectives to the Council on matters relating to early learning and childcare services.

Specific responsibilities include:

- providing feedback on the needs, experiences and priorities of children, families and carers;
- identifying opportunities to improve access, inclusion, communication and service delivery;
- providing input into relevant service plans, policies, procedures and improvement initiatives, where appropriate;
- supporting communication and collaboration between Council, CCOWS, families, host schools, community organisations and other relevant stakeholders;
- identifying emerging issues, barriers or opportunities affecting early learning and childcare across Robe, Beachport and Kangaroo Inn;
- providing community perspectives to assist Council's advocacy and strategic planning relating to early learning and childcare; and
- ensuring advice and feedback provided to Council reflects the paramount consideration of children's safety, rights and best interests, together with their wellbeing, inclusion and participation

The Reference Group is not responsible for the day-to-day management of CCOWS, staffing matters, individual enrolment decisions, complaints, regulatory matters or financial decisions. These matters remain the responsibility of Council and authorised Council employees.

3. Delegations

The Reference Group has no formal delegations of authority and is advisory only. All formal decisions, financial approvals and operational matters remain the responsibility of the Council.

4. Membership of the Reference Group

The Reference Group will comprise of a minimum of seven (7) appointed members:

- one (1) Council Member; and
- a minimum of six (6) family and community representatives.

Family and community representatives may include parents, grandparents, carers, service users and other community members with an interest in early learning and childcare.

Membership should, where possible, reflect the communities and service locations of Robe, Beachport and Kangaroo Inn.

Council employees, CCOWS educators, host school representatives, specialists and other relevant stakeholders may attend meetings where their knowledge or expertise would assist the Reference Group.

The Council Member of Council will act as Presiding Member, unless otherwise determined by Council. If the Presiding Member is unavailable, members present may appoint a member to preside over that meeting.

Membership is voluntary. Members are expected to contribute constructively, respect differing views and consider the broader interests of children, families and the community.

5. Term of Appointment

The Council Member will be appointed for the remainder of the current Local Government electoral term.

Other Reference Group members will be appointed for a term of either one (1) or two (2) years, as nominated and approved at the time of appointment.

Members whose term has expired may reapply or renominate for a further term.

Council may review the membership, structure and ongoing need for the Reference Group at any time. Where a vacancy occurs during a member's term, a replacement member may be appointed for the balance of that term.

6. Meetings and Procedures

Meetings, workshops and information sessions will be held as needed, generally up to four (4) times each year.

Meetings will be informal and focused on sharing information, discussing ideas and providing practical feedback to Council.

Council will provide reasonable administrative support, including meeting arrangements, agendas and meeting notes.

Meeting notes will record key discussion points, recommendations and agreed actions.

7. Paramount consideration

In undertaking its role, the Reference Group will ensure that the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all discussions, advice, recommendations and considerations.

Members are expected to contribute in a manner that:

- prioritises children's safety, wellbeing, rights and best interests;
- is consistent with the service philosophy and commitment to providing a child safe environment;
- recognises and respects the individual needs, circumstances and experiences of children and families across each service location; and
- supports a culture in which child safety is understood as a shared responsibility.

Reference Group members will be supported to understand how the paramount consideration applies to their role and the scope of the Reference Group. This does not transfer or replace the statutory responsibilities of Council as Approved Provider, the Nominated Supervisor, Persons with Management or Control, educators or other authorised persons.

8. Reporting

Relevant feedback, recommendations and actions arising from the Reference Group will be communicated to Council through the appropriate reporting process.

Meeting outcomes may also be shared with families and the community where appropriate, subject to privacy, confidentiality and Council requirements.

9. Review and Amendment

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant to the needs of children, families, the community and Council.

Any amendments to these Terms of Reference must be approved by Council.

Adopted by Council at the 9 September 2026 Ordinary Meeting (Res. 90/2027).