

City of Whittlesea

# Connected Community Strategy Action Plan 2026-28



City of  
Whittlesea

Whittlesea  
**2040**

*A place for all*



Artwork © Mandy Nicholson, 2017

## Acknowledgement

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

The lands along the Birrarung River and its tributaries - the Merri, Edgars and Darebin Creeks and the Plenty River were home to the Wurundjeri Willum and Taungurung Peoples. This Country offered more than just sustenance; it provided fresh water, food, shelter and a thriving environment rich with fish and birdlife.

For countless generations, Country offered places of living and gathering. Cultural ceremonies, trade and important business were conducted at sacred sites - places that continue to hold deep cultural and spiritual significance today. More than seventy of these sites remain in the City of Whittlesea, along with many scarred trees, standing as living testaments to an enduring connection to Country.

In acknowledging this heritage, we honour the knowledge, resilience and custodianship of the Traditional Owners, whose care for this land stretches back tens of thousands of years and continues today.

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# Purpose of this document

The Connected Community Strategy Action Plan 2026-28 (Action Plan) sets out the actions Council will focus on delivering to support the implementation of the Connected Community Strategy 2023-33 (Strategy).

The Action Plan outlines how Council will translate the Strategy into a practical and deliverable program of work over the identified period. The Connected Community Action Plan summarises what Council will do to drive better community outcomes by building social cohesion, community health and safety, and community participation and achieve the intended outcomes.

Actions are organised under three Key Directions, showing how they contribute to the outcomes of the Strategy. The Action Plan draws on key actions from plans that fall under the Connected Community goal.



## Key direction 1: A socially cohesive community

### Outcomes

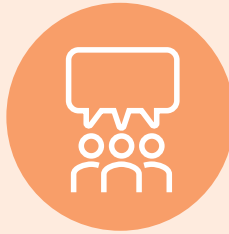
- Our community values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and celebrates their rich diverse cultures.
- Our community shares stories and learns from one another.
- Our community strengthens connections between diverse cultures.
- All members of our community feel that they belong, are valued and respected.



## Key direction 2: A healthy and safe community

### Outcomes

- Our community is healthy, well and physically active.
- Our community can live independently and safely.
- Our children and young people are supported to thrive.
- Our community experiences financial wellbeing.
- Our community feels safe and supported.
- Our community experiences healthy, equal and respectful relationships, and live free from abuse and family violence.
- Our community is prepared and able to respond and recover from emergencies.

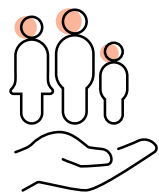


## Key direction 3: A participating community

### Outcomes

- Our community values and acknowledges volunteering.
- Our community is empowered and enabled to participate in decision-making.

# Council's role



## Deliverer/ provider/partner:

Council directly delivers services and infrastructure, either on its own, or in partnership with other levels of government, the community or private organisations.



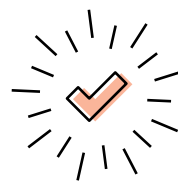
## Regulator/statutory authority/monitor:

Council enforces laws, policies and regulations that maintain public safety, health and wellbeing.



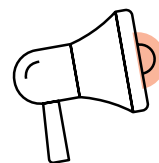
## Funder/enabler:

Council provides financial and/or in-kind support to organisations that are better positioned to manage or deliver specific services or infrastructure.



## Facilitator:

Council facilitates partnerships, connects stakeholders and ensures that local needs are heard and addressed.



## Advocate:

Council represents the interests of the community to other levels of government or other stakeholders. This could involve making the case and negotiating funding, policy changes or programs that benefit the local community.



## Planner:

Council develops and implements plans that ensure sustainable, well-organised and quality growth and change in the community. This includes land use, housing, transport, town centres, business precincts and community facilities.

## KEY DIRECTION 1

# A socially cohesive community

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Council's Role                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Outcome 1.1: Our community values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and celebrates their rich, diverse cultures</b>                                                                  |                                |
| Increase Council's contribution to Closing the Gap targets by delivering place-based, community-led initiatives that improve health, wellbeing, and social outcomes for First Peoples in the City of Whittlesea. | Deliverer/<br>provider/partner |
| Continue the implementation of City of Whittlesea's Aboriginal Action Plan.                                                                                                                                      | Deliverer/<br>provider/partner |
| <b>Outcome 1.2: Our community shares stories and learns from one another</b>                                                                                                                                     |                                |
| Provide a program of professional development, networks, and opportunities to support artists and the creative industries.                                                                                       | Facilitator                    |
| Review and assess the spaces and places required for creative activation, arts, culture and events; conduct feasibility studies on select sites.                                                                 | Planner                        |
| Provide opportunities for individuals and groups to develop and share their creative voices.                                                                                                                     | Deliverer/<br>provider/partner |
| <b>Outcome 1.3: Our community strengthens connections between diverse cultures</b>                                                                                                                               |                                |
| Deliver creative experiences and festivals that allow the community to enjoy, connect and enrich their lives.                                                                                                    | Deliverer/<br>provider/partner |
| Create a clear Community Infrastructure Roadmap that plans for the spaces and facilities needed now and into the future.                                                                                         | Planner                        |
| <b>Outcome 1.4: All members of our community feel that they belong, are valued and respected</b>                                                                                                                 |                                |
| Deliver funded Commonwealth Home Support programs services that help keep older residents independent, connected and supported.                                                                                  | Deliverer/<br>provider/partner |



KEY DIRECTION 2

A healthy and safe community

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                             | Council's Role             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Outcome 2.1: Our community is healthy, well and physically active                                                                                                                                   |                            |
| Increase participation in Council’s Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP) for diverse communities cohorts including young people and First Peoples.                         | Facilitator                |
| Continue the Let Everyone Actively Participate (LEAP) programming to ensure people aged 50+ have access to active ageing, health and wellbeing opportunities.                                       | Facilitator                |
| Refresh the Active Whittlesea Plan to reflect local needs and improve fair access for women and girls.                                                                                              | Planner                    |
| Outcome 2.2: Our community can live independently and safely                                                                                                                                        |                            |
| Undertake planning and feasibility to support the implementation of the Commonwealth Support at Home Program ensuring continuity of service for older adults in City of Whittlesea.                 | Planner                    |
| Outcome 2.3: Our children and young people are supported to thrive                                                                                                                                  |                            |
| Partner with the Victorian Government and stakeholders to implement the Best Start, Best Life Reform, including free kindergarten for 3- and 4- year old children and extending kindergarten hours. | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Develop a Kindergarten Plan that outlines Council's actions in the rollout of the Victorian Government Kindergarten Reform.                                                                         | Planner                    |
| Review and update the Maternal and Child Health service delivery model to ensure improved local access and greater flexibility in how services are provided.                                        | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Investigate options for outreach Maternal and Child Health service delivery to further engage with community.                                                                                       | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Continue to deliver and trial local place-based programs and events for children and families in partnership with stakeholders.                                                                     | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Implement the Children and Families Plan that outlines key priorities and Council's role in the service system to support children and families to thrive.                                          | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Commence implementation of the Youth Plan 2026-29 informed by community engagement and local, State and national data.                                                                              | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Increase access to middle years programs (for ages 6-10) for diverse communities throughout the municipality.                                                                                       | Facilitator                |

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Council's Role             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Outcome 2.4: Our community experiences financial wellbeing                                                                                                                                                                 |                            |
| Deliver additional Informal Recreation infrastructure within public open spaces that provide free spaces for community to be fit and healthy.                                                                              | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Work with neighbourhood houses to renew service agreements so they continue to meet local community needs.                                                                                                                 | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Outcome 2.5: Our community feels safe and supported                                                                                                                                                                        |                            |
| Develop a plan that guides and strengthens Council's work on Health and Wellbeing priorities, including homelessness, gambling harm and family violence.                                                                   | Planner                    |
| Increase community awareness of local services and programs by hosting community information and services events at the Epping Community Service Hub, in partnership with local not-for-profit organisations.              | Facilitator                |
| Enhance and improve our care and service delivery governance model to support the rights of people accessing Ageing Well.                                                                                                  | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Outcome 2.6: Our community experiences healthy, equal and respectful relationships and live free from abuse and family violence                                                                                            |                            |
| Continue external stakeholder partnerships to support families experiencing family violence.                                                                                                                               | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Outcome 2.7: Our community is prepared and able to respond to and recover from emergencies                                                                                                                                 |                            |
| Continue to participate in community events and festivals to deliver emergency awareness and preparedness education.                                                                                                       | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Continue delivering and expanding Council's heat resilience programs with an increased focus on community education, preparedness, and accessible tools.                                                                   | Deliverer/provider/partner |
| Develop and promote practical guidance to help residents create their own household “cooling spaces,” and extend support to community groups to help them establish safe, resilient spaces during periods of extreme heat. | Facilitator                |

KEY DIRECTION 3

A participating community

| Actions                                                                                                                                                                             | Council's Role              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Outcome 3.1: Our community values and acknowledges volunteering                                                                                                                     |                             |
| Increase community awareness, participation and diversity of volunteer program within Council's Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP).                      | Facilitator                 |
| Implement strategies to increase both the number of volunteers and the variety of opportunities for volunteers to improve social connection and wellbeing of people aged 50+.       | Deliverer/ provider/partner |
| Outcome 3.2: Our community is empowered and enabled to participate in decision-making                                                                                               |                             |
| Continue to work with the City of Whittlesea Youth Council to support and enhance opportunities for young people to engage with the Council and have their voices heard.            | Deliverer/ provider/partner |
| Continue delivering the community leadership program, with a focus on better supporting the long-term sustainability of local residents leading community initiatives and projects. | Deliverer/ provider/partner |





#### **COUNCIL OFFICES**

Civic Centre  
25 Ferres Boulevard  
South Morang VIC 3752

#### **Opening hours**

Monday – Friday, 8.30am–5pm

#### **Whittlesea Services Hub**

63 Church Street,  
Whittlesea VIC 3752

#### **Opening hours**

Monday – Friday, 9.30am–5pm

#### **Telephone** 03 9217 2170

National Relay Service 133 677  
(ask for 9217 2170)

#### **Postal address**

Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC, VIC 3083

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