

Yarra City Council and Neighbourhood Houses Partnership Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2021

Introduction

This partnership strategy was formulated by Yarra Neighbourhood Houses and representatives of Yarra City Council. It provides a partnership approach to addressing identified needs in the community. By working collaboratively, all parties can draw on each other's strengths and leverage resources.

Yarra is home to 89,710 people. About 19% of Yarra residents were born in non-English speaking countries and 23% speak a language other than English at home. The municipality is undergoing rapid change with many new housing developments and the population is expected to grow by 30% over the next 20 years.

The Yarra Neighbourhood Houses and Yarra City Council have a mutual goal to engage with the Yarra community in determining the provision of equitable recreational, social, vocational training environmental and other health and well-being opportunities. In order to work in a truly collaborative manner Yarra City Council and Yarra Neighbourhood Houses signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). A key element of the MOU is the Annual Action Plan. Yarra City Council and Yarra Neighbourhood Houses have developed this Action Plan based on the objectives in the Council Plan 2017 – 2021. Priorities for collaborative work were identified together and actions were developed.

The Annual Action Plan will be reviewed annually to maintain responsiveness and flexibility.

Vision

Council and Neighbourhood Houses collaborating with trust and respect to foster a cohesive, resilient, empowered and engaged community.

Partnership Structure

The following mechanisms are in place to support the partnership to achieve its vision.

- Memorandum of Understanding
- Neighbourhood House Funding
- Annual Planning day with Yarra City Council and Neighbourhood Houses
- Monthly meetings of the Yarra Neighbourhood House Network

Four of the strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2017 – 2021 were chosen as a focus for the Council and Neighbourhood House Partnership Strategy. These objectives are:

- *A healthy Yarra: Community Health, Safety and well-being are a focus in everything we do;*
- *An inclusive Yarra: Inclusion Diversity and Uniqueness are welcomed respected and celebrated;*
- *A sustainable Yarra: Council leads on sustainability and protects and enhances its natural environment; and*
- *A prosperous Yarra: Local businesses prosper and creative and knowledge industries thrive.*

1. A healthy Yarra: Community Health, Safety and Well-being

Community well-being is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural and political conditions that enable people to flourish and fulfil their potential.

Neighbourhood Houses provide opportunities to connect people across cultural and socio-economic divides thus building bridges between diverse groups. However, there is scope to expand the reach of neighbourhood houses. This can be achieved by reviewing activities and events that neighbourhood houses already run and plan ways to increase participation from diverse groups.

2. An inclusive Yarra: Inclusion, diversity and uniqueness are welcomed, respected and celebrated

Creating a safe place where people of all ages, genders, sexualities, abilities, cultures and backgrounds feel welcome and connected is a priority for Council.

Neighbourhood houses already make a significant contribution to this objective of the Council Plan through:

- Gathering spaces
- Cultural groups
- Food sharing
- Social enterprise development
- Mentoring
- Accessible education programs
- Family violence/ elder abuse awareness campaigns
- Celebrations and events that foster cultural exchange
- Provision of safe spaces

3. A sustainable Yarra: Council leads on sustainability and protects and enhances its natural environment

Protecting our natural environment and supporting our community to reduce its environmental footprint will continue to be a priority for Council.

Neighbourhood Houses actively promote sustainability through a range of programs and activities. Some neighbourhood houses are also demonstration houses showcasing strategies to improve energy efficiency. There are opportunities for neighbourhood houses to build on their role in sustainability leadership.

4. A prosperous Yarra: Local businesses prosper and creative and knowledge industries thrive

Supporting local businesses and creative industries not only contributes to Yarra's economy, but also increases employment opportunities, enhances street life and fosters community connectedness.

Many neighbourhood house participants are looking for work and employment opportunities. By working closer with the Economic Development team at Council there is potential to develop a range of employment pathways and business development opportunities.

Areas for Action - 2018

1. A healthy Yarra: Community Health, Safety and Well-being

Community well-being is the combination of social, economic, environmental, cultural and political conditions that enable people to flourish and fulfil their potential.

Area		Action	Who	Budget	Outcomes/Outputs	Timeframe
<i>NH Programs</i>	1.1	Neighbourhood houses to learn about Results Based Accountability and Collective Impact Framework	Cheryle Grey	existing	Increased awareness of how success can be measured	March 2018
<i>Partnerships</i>	1.2	Neighbourhood Houses and Libraries to work together to build and strengthen relationships and increase collaborative activities.	All houses and Yarra Libraries	existing	Yarra Library staff member to attend Yarra NH Network meetings One person from a NH to go on library advisory committee One shared activity per year with each NH Finbar – Urban Filed Day FLN – Harmony Day 23 March RCLC- Community Connections Day at Richmond Holden Street – Movies in the Park ACC – Book bike and story time Railway House – BANH -	2018

<i>Consultations</i>	1.3	Neighbourhood Houses to participate in the consultation process for the development of Council's key strategies e.g. Volunteering, open spaces, urban agriculture	Community Planner to inform Network of consultations by council	existing	NHs are represented in all relevant council consultations.	2018
<i>Open spaces</i>	1.7	Council to work with NHs to activate small scale, under-utilised open spaces to foster opportunities for local connection.	All NHs Council Open space Unit	existing	Houses to identify spaces and feedback to Council Open Spaces department	2018

2. An inclusive Yarra: Inclusion, diversity and uniqueness are welcomed, respected and celebrated

Creating a safe place where people of all ages, genders, sexualities, abilities, cultures and backgrounds feel welcome and connected is a priority for Council.

Area		Action	Who	Budget	Outcomes/Outputs	Timeframe
<i>Gathering spaces/celebration</i>	2.1	NHs and council to actively collaborate in support, promotion and delivery of on-going celebrations and festivals e.g. Harvest Festival, Harmony Day, Sustainability Week, fetes.	All NHs and council	existing	Bringing people together Strengthening community connections Breaking down barriers that isolate	2018
	2.2	NHs and council to partner in an annual NH Network event e.g. Music from the Heart and identify opportunities to build on the success of past events.	All NHs Council	existing	A happy and inclusive event that celebrates all that the Yarra Houses can achieve	2018
<i>Skills Developing/Skills Harnessing</i>	2.3	Neighbourhood Houses to learn about Asset Based Community Development	Cheryle Grey	existing	Presentation in March 2018	March 2018
<i>Safe Spaces</i>	2.4	Identify professional development for neighbourhood staff and volunteers on how to listen and provide information about what is available in the community. Explore options for council to support professional development for example: Mental Health First Aid	All NHs NENHN	existing	One person from each neighbourhood house to have attended Identifying Family Violence	2018

		training, Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF). e.g. Link in with Council's Skills Training, Women's Health in the North or other networks			training through Northern Integrated Family Violence Services	
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3. A sustainable Yarra: Council leads on sustainability and protects and enhances its natural environment

Protecting our natural environment and supporting our community to reduce its environmental footprint will continue to be a priority for Council.

Area		Action	Who	Budget	Outcomes/Outputs	Timeframe
<i>Information and education</i>	3.1	Neighbourhood houses to generate list and description of all sustainability activities and share with sustainability officers at council – include information about demonstration sites e.g. low water use gardens and learning clubs and best practice compost	All houses Council Sustainability Unit	existing	Improved sharing of information More people will find out about what is available	2018
	3.2	Council's Living Sustainably pages to link to neighbourhood house sustainability initiatives and programs	Council Communications Unit All NHs	existing	Improved sharing of information More people will find out about what is available	2018
<i>Reduce waste to landfill</i>	3.3	Council to support neighbourhood houses to be recycling drop-off points (for nonorganic and no hard waste items) e.g. mobile phones and batteries	All NHs and sustainability team.	existing	Reduction in waste going to landfill More people delivering the message around reducing waste	2018
	3.4	Develop Neighbourhood Composting Education and engagement (e.g. War on Waste screening)	Council Waste Management Unit and all NHs	existing	Reduction in waste going to landfill More people delivering the message around reducing waste	2018

<i>Facilitate Urban Agriculture</i>	3.5	Continue to strengthen the relationship between neighbourhood houses and Urban Agriculture at Council and explore urban agriculture initiatives e.g. community orchard, fruit squad, food swap, seed swap	Sustainability Unit and all NHs	existing	Increased community connection Increased awareness around food production in an urban context Greater collaboration between community groups	2018
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4. A prosperous Yarra: Local businesses prosper and creative and knowledge industries thrive

Supporting local businesses and creative industries not only contributes to Yarra's economy, but also increases employment opportunities, enhances street life and fosters community connectedness.

Area		Action	Who	Budget	Outcomes/Outputs	Timeframe
<i>Employment pathways and micro business and social enterprises for economically disadvantaged.</i>	4.1	Meet with Economic Development Unit from council to understand what services they provide, and how neighbourhood house participants can access these resources and services. Explore the potential for partnership opportunities e.g. NHs to promote or host council's Lunchbox Learning series of seminars.	Eco Development Unit NH Network	existing	Increased understanding by the Houses of the services provided by Council 's Economic Development Unit	April 2018