Community Hubs Framework

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Contents

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Community Hubs Framework is to establish a shared understanding of community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong. Community hubs reflect the outcomes of the combined elements of place, function, social networks, and relationships, that come together, and are brought to life through the activation of community spaces to form the foundation of strong neighbourhoods.

The Framework outlines Council's commitment to supporting the participation, access, and equity of all residents, including the most vulnerable, in community life and to improving their quality of life regardless of age and diversity of experience through the development of community hubs. The Framework also includes the objectives, principles, and approach to guide Council's various roles and involvement in the development of community hubs, in recognition of how these spaces vary depending on the unique location, physical or virtual, as well as the diversity of local needs across the community.

A shared understanding of community hubs will help Council to take a place-based community development approach in leveraging assets and responding to community needs at a local and municipal level, as well as determining the fluid and adaptable role that community hubs will play in supporting the achievement of Council's vision for a safe, vibrant city of opportunity for all.

The Community Hubs Framework is guided by the Diversity, Access and Equity Policy that provides direction for an integrated policy framework that also includes, The Community Engagement Framework and The Community Development Framework. The Framework informs Council's involvement in community hubs across the municipality, recognising that a community hub may look, feel and function differently in every community.

2. Background

Community hubs are vital for service delivery, place-making and social interaction for all residents, including the most vulnerable, regardless of age and diversity of experience. They offer a space for people to meet and participate in community life, while enlivening neighbourhoods and supporting the social, physical, and emotional health and wellbeing of the local community.

Greater Dandenong City Council works with its residents to facilitate positive outcomes for the community through the provision of services, funding community programs, facilities, open spaces, and development initiatives that allow the community to socialise, recreate, learn and develop.

Across both state and local government policy there is a strong desire to provide multi-purpose and integrated community spaces through optimising the use of existing and new facilities, while reducing maintenance costs of community assets and increasing opportunities for communities to connect. There is also a drive for greater community access and co-location of community infrastructure with primary and secondary school facilities such as kindergartens, libraries, meeting spaces and recreational facilities.

Community hubs are favoured by the Victorian State Government as a method for local, integrated service delivery which aids Council in securing State Government funding. Community hubs are also reflected in the following Greater Dandenong City Council policies, strategies, and plans.

Imagine 2030 Community Plan provides the overarching strategic direction for Council and the community for the long term, articulated through a series of vision statements. Particularly relevant to community hubs is the vision statement for Sense of Place, One City Many Neighbourhoods. Creating a place where people of all backgrounds and circumstances are respected and included in community life; and a harmonious community where people respect themselves and each other is a key part of this vision statement and is central to community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong.

The Council Plan 2017-21 sets the strategic direction of the Greater Dandenong City Council and describes how the community's vision of a safe, vibrant city of opportunity for all will be achieved. Community hubs respond to the objectives relating to:

- a vibrant, connected and safe community,
- a creative city that respects and embraces its diversity, • a healthy, liveable and sustainable city,
- a city planned for the future,
- and a diverse and growing economy.

Community hubs are central to achieving Council's Community Wellbeing Plan 2017-21 key priorities to improve health and wellbeing outcomes so that residents can live rewarding, healthy and socially connected lives.

An integrated policy framework

The Community Hubs Framework forms part of an integrated policy framework guided by The Diversity, Access, and Equity Policy, and including The Community Development Framework and The Community Engagement Framework. These policy documents are designed to work together to support community participation in social, civic, and economic life and help realise Council's vision for a safe, vibrant city of opportunity for all.

Table 1 shows the integrated policy framework for supporting community participation in social, civic, and economic life.

Diversity, Access and Equity Policy	Community Development Framework	Community Engagement Framework	Community Hubs Framework
• Council's acknowledgement of, and respect for, the diversity of backgrounds, abilities, values, beliefs and lifestyles of all residents • Guides Council's efforts to address discrimination, promote inclusiveness and partnership, and foster community participation in social, civic and economic life	• Guides a flexible, approach for working in partnership with stakeholders and the community to identify and respond to the issues that are important to them • Ensuring those impacted by outcomes, including those most vulnerable within the communty, are represented in community development processes is a priority	• Recommends the level of community participation based on the type of decision being made and the process • Provides the tools and methods to tailor approaches to support inclusive and engaging participation of all residents in decision making, democratic processes, and social and civic life	• Guides Councils role in the planning, design, delivery, support, advocacy, and facilitation of the places and spaces where people gather in the community, physical and virtual, the various functions of these places and spaces, and the relationships and partnerships associated with these spaces

Table 1: Integrated Policy Framework

3. Scope

This Framework applies to all Councillors, Council staff, contract staff and volunteers.

This Framework should be applied to Council's various roles and involvement in the planning, design, delivery, support, advocacy, and facilitation including:

- the places and spaces where people gather in the community, physical and virtual, including, but not limited to:
    - Council-owned facilities including sports pavilions, leisure centres, libraries, early years facilities, neighbourhood houses, community centres, community arts centres, senior citizens centres, youth spaces, open spaces, community gathering spaces, public halls, community meeting spaces, community arts and activity spaces, men's sheds, community gardens, aquatic centres and local pools
    - non-Council-owned facilities such as primary and secondary schools, community health centres, churches and places of worship
    - local business and activity centres
    - virtual spaces
- the various functions of these places and spaces
- the relationships and partnerships associated with these places and spaces both now and into the future
- the future development of community hub designs and planning for future improvements to local spaces, including facility upgrades, improvements to existing public space, reenergising underused areas, and support for community-led initiatives.

The application of this Framework should be fluid, adaptable and responsive to the ever changing, complex and diverse needs of the community. As a result, a community hub may look, feel and function differently in every community.

Council will continue to advocate and support all the places where people gather, as well as any community hubs in the future as necessary in response to local emerging needs.

This framework does not provide a statutory control over community-based organisations seeking to establish community hubs, although it may be used as guiding document for work associated with planning approvals or facilities.

4. Policy statement

Council is committed to supporting the participation, access, and equity of all residents in community life, including the most vulnerable, and to improving their quality of life regardless of age and diversity of experience through the development of community hubs. These important community spaces have a unique role to play in delivering outcomes for different local areas and diverse communities.

4.1 Defining community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong

Greater Dandenong City Council's definition for community hubs is unique. Tailored to the local context, Council's definition is informed by local knowledge and expertise, evidence-based practice, and reflects the diversity of the community.

Council recognises that community hubs are more than a cluster of services, activities, and the buildings or spaces in which they are delivered. For the City of Greater Dandenong community hubs reflect the outcomes of the combined elements of place, function, social networks, and relationships, that come together and are brought to life and strengthened through the activation of community spaces to form the foundation of strong neighbourhoods.

The definition of community hubs for the City of Greater Dandenong reflects the complex interplay between each of the elements of place, function, social networks, and relationships. These elements are defined in Table 2 below.

Place	Function	Social Networks	Relationships
• The space, indoor, outdoors, physical or virtual where people gather in the community	• The role the space plays for the people who use it in delivering the objectives of community hubs • The services and activities that address the social, physical, and emotional health and wellbeing of the community	• A social structure made up of as individuals and/or organisations	• Connections and interactions between people, organisations and services that allow them to feel supported and connected, but still feel independent • Communication and boundaries are the two major components of strong and productive relationships

Table 2: The elements of community hubs

Each of these elements are interrelated and must be considered in combination when contemplating the role of community hubs in addressing the social, physical, and emotional health and wellbeing of individuals, families and groups who make up the local community.

When each of these elements are combined and brought to life through the activation of community spaces their impact is strengthened, and residents are inspired to become more involved in community life.

Figure 1 on the following page illustrates the Greater Dandenong City Council's definition of community hubs and shows how the elements combine to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all the community.
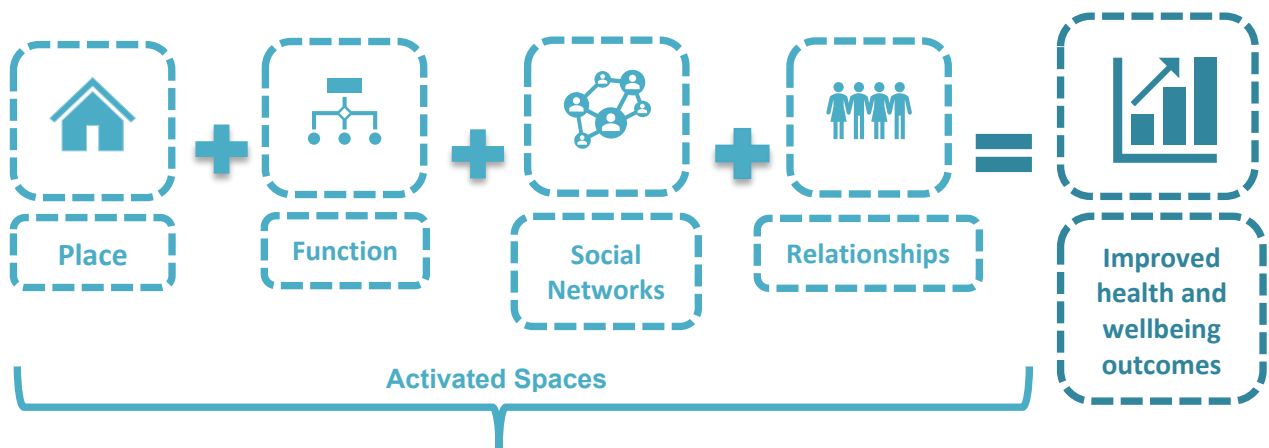
Figure 1: Defining community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong

4.2 Community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong

Community hubs play an important role in achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the community by providing diverse settings to deliver locally based services, community development opportunities and space for the formal and informal development of social networks and relationships. Community hubs can provide a valuable link and central location for residents to access local services, activities, support structures, learning options, community information and provide opportunities for social and civic participation.

Community hubs can be large and contain services (Council and non-Council), which serve a local community or neighbourhood, or they can be smaller in size and cater for smaller areas. They may include indoor and outdoor spaces for a wide range of accessible, inclusive, and appropriate services and activities. They may also include informal places where the community gathers and be virtual or physical.

A snapshot of community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong where Council is involved is outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A snapshot of community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong

4.3 Objectives for community hubs

The objectives for community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong are to:

1. Promote a consistent understanding and approach for the development and activation of community spaces to inform decision making, build relationships and strengthen communities
2. Realise sustainable social, physical, and emotional health and wellbeing outcomes that benefit the community and reflect their involvement and participation in community spaces, with a key focus on the most marginalised and vulnerable communities
3. Build belonging, social connections, networks, and relationships so residents can live rewarding, healthy and socially connected lives.

4.4 Principles for community hubs

The principles for community hubs have been designed to guide the Greater Dandenong City Council's involvement through the development and activation of community hubs.

Principle	Practice
Multi-purpose space	• Providing support to deliver locally based services and activities by Council, volunteer community groups and not-for-profit organisations to maximise utilisation and improve access to facilities for all groups in the community
Integrated and connected	• Building connections between services and organisations to work together as one to deliver services and activities that are more comprehensive and cohesive, as well as services that are more accessible and responsive to the needs of the community
Equitable and fair	• Developing and activating spaces where all community members, including vulnerable communities, can access services, activities, and information, have something to do, and feel connected to their community free of discrimination and according to need • Priority should be given to people in the most marginalised or vulnerable situations who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights to access resources
Flexible and adaptable	• Responding to the ever changing, complex and diverse needs of all the community • Plans and approaches are nimbly revised to incorporate new innovations, overcome challenges, and utilise opportunities as they emerge
Partnerships	• Prioritising shared visions, values, transparency, mutual accountability and encourage autonomy and independence. Ensuring roles and responsibilities are agreed • Sharing learning and agreed outcomes amongst all partners. Opportunities to share resources are maximised.
Vibrant, inclusive, appropriate	• Working with the community to create appealing, welcoming spaces that everyone can use, that encourage formal and informal interaction between residents • These community centred spaces will meet the diverse local needs and aspirations of all community members regardless of their age, culture, interests, economic position, and experience
Driven by the community	• Engaging with the community in a genuine and meaningful way and involving the community, including vulnerable communities in all aspects of community hubs • Responding to community needs and aspirations identified through consultation and engagement. • Enabling the community to work together, with support, encouragement, and guidance, to identify its needs and find solutions.

Principle	Practice
Safe, welcoming, and accessible	• Where feasible community hubs will be in places where people already visit • Community hubs will be intergenerational spaces, services and activities that celebrate the diversity of our community and meet community needs • Fostering the use of public transport, walking and cycling, and encourage transport choice to enable the community to access community facilities within a 20-minute journey
Good governance and sustainability	• Establishing governance structures and management models that represent the interests of the community and stakeholders • Ensuring mechanisms and processes for decision making and accountability are in place • Practice and decision making will be environmentally responsible and promote long-term economic, health and wellbeing benefits

Table 3: Principles for community hubs

5. Approach

Council's approach for community hubs is comprised of four stages that are essential to achieving Council's objectives for community hubs. They are: local needs, develop, activate and sustain. These stages are described below.

Local needs

Understanding the local needs is an essential first step in the approach for community hubs. This includes undertaking a needs analysis to determine the strategic intent for the community hub; evaluating the recent and longer term demographic profile of the local community; assessing the current service and facility provision; and the current and future demand for community services, activities and spaces.

Engagement with the community to identify local needs and assets, inclusive of the diversity of the population, is a priority, with efforts made to engage with the disadvantaged population. Outcomes should reflect the diversity of aspirations and hopes for the future.

Establishing an appropriate governance structure, including the management model, that involves the community and other stakeholders, such as not-for-profit organisations and volunteer groups, are important aspects of this first stage.

Beginning with this first stage, the approach will enable the community to work together, with support, encouragement, and guidance, to identify its needs and find solutions. The process is fluid, flexible and tailored to the needs of individual communities.

Council believes that better outcomes are achieved by working in partnership with the community, ensuring the views of its diverse community are heard to help guide decision-making processes for community hubs. Council will also take a people-centred approach by working with specific age groups within our diverse community, including children, young people, and older people to ensure their unique needs are appropriately and adequately reflected in community hubs.

Develop

Based on the needs analysis this stage will consider the feasibility of a range of options and make recommendations for a community hub model that best responds to identified local needs and harnesses the strengths and assets of the community.

The development of partnerships with the community, while continuing to build relationships with not-for-profit organisations and volunteer groups is a priority as it is at all stages of the approach. These partnerships and relationships will form a central part in the co-design of a shared vision for the recommended community hub model. Once the vision is agreed, effort can be focused on determining the appropriate level of integration and the operating model that will help realise the vision.

At this stage it will be important to secure resources and support and determine the appropriate funding mix to ensure the viability of the community hub.

Activate

This stage involves designing and establishing the variety of ways to inspire and involve local people in community hubs. As for each stage, the community's views, and contribution to decisions regarding service and activities, as well as the look and feel of the space is essential. This will be informed in part by the needs' analysis, but regular and ongoing engagement and involvement of the community will ensure services and activities remain relevant and responsive. This will help Council to better translate the needs, aspirations and ideas of residents and stakeholders into practical solutions.

Council's Community Engagement Framework will assist in selecting and implementing the most effective methods to maximise appropriate levels of community participation in planning, decision making and project implementation.

While the look and feel of a physical space is important, the programming or incidental interactions provided for by a space are often considered the most important to building community connections and social cohesion.

Sustain

Evaluation provides important information to understand how well a community hub is achieving its objectives. All aspects of the community hub should be assessed and measured against the achievement of improved health and wellbeing outcomes, with a focus on vulnerable communities including, but not limited to: governance, management, operating model, level of integration, partnerships, community participation and engagement; services and activities; funding mix; and the approach to community hubs itself.

Evaluation also helps determine what works well and what could be improved for the community hub. Evaluation results can be used to:

- Demonstrate the improved health and wellbeing outcomes that have been achieved
- Suggest improvements for continuous improvement and ongoing efforts
- Provide evidence to seek additional support to further develop, or continue the services and activities; or to validate the benefits of funding
- Gather information on the approach that can be shared with others and inform practice
- Help determine if an approach would be appropriate to replicate in other locations with similar needs

Figure 3 below provides an illustration of the approach for community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong.

Figure 3: Approach for community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong

6. Roles and responsibilities

Council has a variety of ways they are involved in the provision of services and the development and activation of community hubs in the City of Greater Dandenong including:

Provide	Advocate	Facilitate
•Council directly funds and delivers services and hubs •Council currently provides services as well as capital funding annually to build, renew or upgrade community hubs	•Council advocates on behalf of the City of Greater Dandenong community for funding and delivery of services or hubs •Council commonly advocates to State and Federal Governments to fund infrastructure	•Council facilitates outcomes for the community through co-investment, building or brokering partnerships, promoting opportunities and building the capacity of community members and organisations

7. Victorian Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter 2006 – Compatibility Statement

All matters relevant to the *Victorian Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter 2006* have been considered in the preparation of this policy and are consistent with the standards set by the Charter.

8. Review

The review period for this framework is four years from the date of endorsement.

9. References and Related Documents

- Adopted at the Ordinary Council Meeting on XXXXXX
- Supersedes policy number. XXXXXX

The following policies, strategies, procedures, legislation, or guidelines relate to the implementation of this policy.

9.1 Applicable Legislation

- Child Safety Act (2015)
- Commission for Children and Young People Child Safe Standards
- Equal Opportunity Act (2010)
- Public Administration Act (2004)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)
- The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)
- Victorian Local Government Act (2020)

9.2 Council plans, strategies and policies

Plans

- Best Start Action Plan (2014-15)
- Children's Plan (2015-19)
- Council Plan (2017-21)
- Community Safety Plan (2015-22)
- Community Wellbeing Plan (2017-21)
- Disability Action Plan (2017-23)
- Imagine 2030 Community Plan
- People Seeking Asylum and Refugees Plan (2018-21)
- Reconciliation Action Plan (2020-2023)
- Springvale Community Hub Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Strategies

- Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategy
- Cycling Strategy (2017-22)
- Housing Strategy (2014-2024)
- Local Economic and Employment Development Strategy (2011)
- Library Strategy (2018-23)
- Make Your Move Physical Activity Strategy (2020-2030)
- Neighbourhood Houses Strategic Directions (2016)
- Playground Strategy (2013-23)
- Positive Ageing Strategy (2017-25)
- Walking Strategy (2015-23)
- Youth Strategy (2020-25)

Policies

- Activity Centre's Placemaking Framework
- Community Development Framework
- Community Engagement Policy and Framework
- Diversity Policy
- Disability Policy
- Indigenous Policy
- Multipurpose Use of Community Facilities Policy

9.3 References

- AECOM, Community Hubs, International Research Project, Final Report (2015), https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/resources/chaps/community-hubs-international-research-report-aecom-opt.pdf
- Baw Baw Shire Council, Connecting Communities Through Spaces, Aspirational Community Hubs Strategy (2019), https://www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/Our-Community/Connecting-Communities-Through-Spaces
- Department of Planning and Community Development, A Guide to Governing Shared Community Facilities (2009), https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/48625/Guide-to-Governing-Shared-Community-Facilities.pdf
- Knox City Council, Community Facilities Planning Policy (2019), https://www.knox.vic.gov.au/files/CityDev/Community_Facilities_Planning_Policy.pdf

- Liverpool City Council, Community Facilities Strategy, A Blueprint for a Modern Network of Community Facilities, https://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/council/corporate-information
- Melbourne City Council, Community Infrastructure Development Framework (2014), https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/building-and-development/urban-planning/community-housing/Pages/community-infrastructure-development-framework.aspx
- Moonee Valley City Council, MV 2040 Action Pan, Community Facilities, https://mvcc.vic.gov.au/my-council/what-we-do/planning-for-our-future/
- Queensland Government, Socio-Economic Assessment Report, Community Hubs and Partnerships Program (2018), https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/resources/report/chaps/chaps-report-02-socio-economic-assessment-report.pdf

10. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Access	Fair and equal opportunity for all residents to use Council services and participate in its programs.
Activation	The variety of ways that inspire and involve local people in community hubs.
Activities	Developed and performed to meet a community need. Can form part of a service or be delivered as standalone, independent events.
Community	- People who live in the City of Greater Dandenong - People and organisations who are ratepayers in the City of Greater Dandenong; and - People and organisations who conduct activities in City of Greater Dandenong - Community of place (based on geographic location) - Community of practice (based on common interests and activities such as cultural, conservation, the environment, bike-riding) - Community of identity (based on an individual shared perspective such as particular age groups or a religious community).
Community development	Involves a community working together, with support, encouragement, and guidance, to identify its needs and find solutions. The process is flexible and tailored to the needs of individual communities.
Community engagement	Community engagement is about involving the community in decision making processes, which is essential in the

Term	Meaning
	successful development of acceptable policies and decisions in affecting local government and the community.
Community facilities	Community facilities refers to buildings that are owned by Council or where Council is the Committee of Management, that support community services or provide community benefit, and include health, individual, family and community support, education, arts and culture, information, community development, employment and training, and active and passive recreation opportunities.
Community hubs	Community hubs reflect the outcomes of the combined elements of place, function, social networks, and relationships, that come together and are brought to life and strengthened through the activation of community spaces to form the foundation of strong neighbourhoods.
Council	Greater Dandenong City Council.
Councillors	Person who has been elected to the office of "Councillor" of Greater Dandenong City Council and surrounding municipalities if appropriate.
Council staff	A current member of Greater Dandenong City Council staff with the authority to engage in activities on behalf of Council.
Government	State and Federal Government departments, Offices and Agencies, Local Government Sector, Federal, State and Local Members and politicians.
Inclusive	To comprise and welcome a broad range of backgrounds and interests, considering issues of language, ethnicity and culture, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, and disability.
Integrated services	Services and organisations working together as one to deliver services and activities that are more comprehensive and cohesive, as well as services being more accessible and responsive to the needs of the community.
Methods	Refers to the many types of engagement that can be employed such as online or in person, public meetings and community panels, surveys, ideas boards, public competitions, focus groups, interviews.

Term	Meaning
Not for profit organisations	Types of organisations that do not earn profits for its owners. All the money earned or donated to a not-for-profit organisation is used to continue carrying out its mission.
Partner	An individual, organisation or sector that forms a partnership to work with Council.
Partnerships	Occur when two or more people or organisations work together to realise or achieve a goal. Partnerships provide opportunities for mutual benefit and results beyond what any single individual, organisation or sector could realise alone.
Placemaking	Placemaking is the process of creating places that people inherently understand, participate in, and feel ownership of.
Residents	• Owners and renters – residential and business • Residents streets, suburbs, or wards • Resident and ratepayer representative groups.
Services	A group of programs and projects primarily focussed on external recipients, which collectively provide support or guidance to the community to achieve the objectives of Greater Dandenong Council's Vision and Council Plan. A combination of tangible and intangible benefits that can be produced and consumed.
Stakeholders	• Sections of the community involved in engagement because of impact, interest, or responsibility to deliver on an outcome • Can also refer to external organisations, and other levels of government involved in a decision • Also includes internal decision makers and implementers of decision outcomes.
Volunteer	Formally recognised, unpaid member of the public who assists with the provision of Council services e.g. Visitor Information Centre, Library.
Volunteer organisations	An organisation which relies on occasional or regular volunteers for its operations and may or may not have paid staff.