

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Social Justice Charter 2026



Hume
Proud



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Acknowledgement of Country

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung, which includes the existing family members of the Gunung-Willam Balluk clan, as the Traditional Owners of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.



Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of Hume City Council, I'm proud to introduce the refreshed Social Justice Charter for public exhibition.

This year marks 25 years since Hume first adopted a Social Justice Charter. While much has changed over that time, what hasn't changed is our commitment to fairness, inclusion and the belief that everyone in our community deserves the opportunity to thrive.

Hume is one of the most diverse and fastest growing communities in Australia. That diversity is our strength, but it also means we must continue to listen, learn and respond to the different experiences, needs and challenges across our community.

Some people in our community face barriers that make it harder to access opportunities - whether that's language, cost of living, health, discrimination, or simply not feeling seen or heard. This Charter recognises these realities and sets a clear direction for how we, as a Council, work alongside our community to address them.

Social justice is not just an idea - it's something we shape through our everyday decisions. It's reflected in how we plan our city, deliver services, support our most vulnerable residents and create spaces where people feel safe, respected and connected.

This updated Charter is about being honest about where we are, ambitious about where we want to go, and accountable in how we get there.

At its heart, it's about people - ensuring that everyone who lives, works or visits Hume feels valued, included and able to participate fully in community life.

I encourage our community to take the time to read the Charter and share your feedback. Your voice matters, and it will help shape a fairer, more inclusive future for Hume.

Together, we can continue to build a community where everyone belongs.

Moore

Cr Carly Moore
Hume City Mayor



Social Justice in Hume

Hume City Council's dedication to the advancement of social justice is something we are incredibly proud of. Our first Social Justice Charter was adopted in 2001, making us the first Local Government Authority to do so. 2004 saw the addition of the Inaugural Bill of Rights, and 2005's Hume Citizen Bill of Rights put us ahead of the Victorian Government's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006).

Our Council is also dedicated to peace, order, and good governance – a responsibility shared with other parts of a three-tiered democratic system including local, state and federal governments. Through our Charter, we encourage active and interactive participation in this system and play a role in the ongoing encouragement of our residents to actively exercise their right to participate in public life.

Since its adoption the Social Justice Charter has been put into action, tested, and during this time been found to have maintained its relevance, influence and value as a guiding policy position for Council, and the Hume community. Our Charter provides a policy platform from which we can deliberately work to address disadvantage in all its forms and make practical improvements to the lives and livelihoods of our residents.



Purpose

This Social Justice Charter (Charter) defines Hume City Council's commitment to social justice and articulates the guiding social justice principles that influence all Council initiatives.

“Social Justice” simply means the belief that all people have the same human rights and that these rights are respected, protected, and promoted. Social Justice is a commitment to the advancement of a fair and just society. This is also a commitment to the democratic process and social cohesion.

At a local level, our Charter aims to promote respect for every person, encourage community participation and collective problem-solving, increase resilience, improve wellbeing, and celebrate culture, while reducing the causes of disadvantage.

The Charter recognises that people experience systems of advantage and disadvantage in different and overlapping ways (referred to as “intersectionality”) and that meaningful social justice requires attention to these intersecting forms of inequality. This includes factors such as cultural identity, race, gender, sexuality, or ability. These can combine compounded barriers to participation and wellbeing.

The Local Government Act (2020) requires that Hume City Council give priority to “achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations”. An intersectional approach supports this obligation by ensuring that Council policies and actions respond to the diverse realities of community members rather than assuming a one size fits all solution.

By doing so, we acknowledge our role in reducing cumulative disadvantages and minority stress by creating the systems and supports that make it easier for everyone to participate. When this occurs, the foundation for a socially cohesive community strengthens. A socially cohesive community occurs when relationships, trust, and a sense of belonging are strong. Cohesive communities are ones where people feel connected, respected and included, and where differences are valued rather than feared.

The Charter plays a crucial role in guiding Councils actions and services to progress the Community Vision 2045 aiming to create a *thriving, inclusive and well governed city where residents feel a strong sense of belonging.*

Intersectionality and community responsiveness

Hume’s communities demonstrate strong cultural leadership, care networks and civic participation. Like many fast-growing and diverse cities, residents can also experience pressures that affect access and wellbeing, prosperity and quality of life. Council puts our Guiding Principles into action to address entrenched and emerging issues and trends by embedding social justice thinking across all our services, plans and programs.

To do so, we draw on evidence and lived experience, to identify the most challenging barriers that impact people’s ability to engage in community life. These barriers are not fixed; they can shift over time and often overlap with one another and with bias and discrimination.

Current society-wide issues and barriers that impact people or cause social distress in Hume include:

- Access to recreation
- Addiction - alcohol, other drugs, gambling harm
- Affordable and accessible transport
- Affordable Health options/Health equity
- Climate resilience: impacts of climate change that disproportionately affect marginalised people.
- Community safety
- Digital access and literacy
- Disability access issues
- Engagement in employment and barriers to economic participation
- Geographic disadvantages such as neighbourhood equity, insufficient access to transport, and transport affordability.
- Housing stress
- Lack of access to education and training
- Literacy challenges
- Low incomes
- Social isolation and lack of social connection

Additionally, some members of the community are more likely than others to face barriers in these critical areas of everyday life. This is due to a range of factors, including historical disadvantages, inter-generational poverty, discrimination, and poor public policy.

This is particularly the case for people who are part of one or more of the cohorts below:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Carers (with or without government support)
- Children and young people
- Culturally and racially marginalised
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+) people
- Newly arrived migrants
- Older People
- People facing access barriers to government funded services
- People facing health inequities (for example, chronic health issues, neurodiversity)
- People facing homelessness and housing insecurity
- People who live with disability
- People from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds
- People impacted by family & intimate partner violence
- People who have temporary or insecure visa status
- Survivors of institutional child abuse
- Women and girls

In some instances, Council adopts specific policies and plans to address the needs of specific cohorts in the community. However, people's lives do not fit neatly into categories. A social justice approach asks us to think about intersectionality and how we can best support all people through all our policies, plans, and services.

Examples



A young Aboriginal woman with a toddler with a disability lives in Kalkallo and faced barriers to accessing child health support for her baby's vaccinations because of location and trust in the system.

Using the Guiding Principle of Access and Inclusion, Council addresses barriers such as medical discrimination, geography and finances by providing culturally responsive staff who run outreach programs and flexible service delivery. This has meant our 2024/25 immunisation rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under age 3 is 100% vaccinated. The culturally responsive staff were also able to support the mother to navigate the health system to access disability support services for her child.



A recently arrived migrant was having trouble gaining employment because they didn't have strong digital literacy and access to the internet.

Using the Guiding Principles of Access and Inclusion, Engagement and Participation, and Human Rights, Equity and Fairness, our Libraries team helped them book a computer at the local branch and supported them to look up our Economic Development team's Hume Joblink which links local jobs with local people.



Examples

A woman who migrated with her family from Iran as refugees found support and life-changing assistance through their local Community at Holy Child Primary School Hub which is co-delivered with Hume City Council. The mum was initially supported participate in activities and volunteering in school events, which expanded her social networks and sense of belonging. Hub staff then supported her through the permanent residency process, navigating the system to access medical support for her child and when she decided to apply for citizenship, Hubs staff helped her practice her English. They also encouraged her aspiration to work as a support worker in the NDIS, identifying specific areas of focus as part of her English activities, and helping her successfully approach agencies for work; she started her first job in Australia one week after her citizenship ceremony.

This shows the unique and valuable role our 15 Community Hubs play in tailoring supports to people who face multiple barriers to full participation in local life.



Our Community

Population growth

(Id Forecasts)



278,200

2025

411,700

2046

Household growth

(Id Forecasts)



91,500

2025

140,700

2046

Age groups

(ABS 2021 Census)



More than

1 in 4 people aged under 18 years

1 in 9 people are 65 years or older

Over the next 20 years the largest increase (number) in population will be in the 45-49 (12,124 people) and 50-54 (11,061 people) year age groups. However, the largest growth (% change) will be in the 85+ (160.7%) and 80-84 (122.9%) year age groups.

Mickleham and Sunbury will experience the largest growth over the next 20 years.

(Id Forecasts)

 **7.7%**

of people responding to the Victorian Population Health Survey in Hume City identified as **LGBTIQA+**

(compared to 11% of respondents across Victoria)

(2023 Victorian Population Health Survey)

 **1,870**

residents are **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

Our city is home to the fifth-largest Indigenous population in Greater Melbourne, with the largest communities residing in Craigieburn and Sunbury.

(ABS 2021 Census)

 **49%**

of residents speak a language other than English at home

speaking over 155 languages.

(ABS 2021 Census)

 **40%**

of residents were born overseas, coming from **170 different countries**

(ABS 2021 Census)

 **74%**

of residents identify with a religion

(compared to 56% in Greater Melbourne)

(ABS 2021 Census)

 **Almost 1 in 4**

residents are new migrants

(arrived in Australia 2000-2021)

(ABS 2021 Census)

Our city is home to one of Australia's most culturally diverse communities. It has the largest population of people born in Turkey in Australia, and the second-largest population of those born in Iraq. India is the birthplace for the largest percentage of our population born overseas (6.7%) and is the birthplace experiencing the largest growth in the last 5 years (7,816 people).

(ABS 2021 Census)

Our city has the third largest number of permanent migrants across all Victorian councils, with two in five (40.6%) entering Australia under the Skilled Program and more than one in three (34.0%) under the Humanitarian Program. Our humanitarian migrant population is the largest in Victoria (accounting for 20% of Victoria's total humanitarian intake) and the second largest in Australia.

(Dept of Home Affairs, Settlement Data)

Guiding Principles

We are committed to democratic processes and have an ethical duty and a legal obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of our residents, and to hold ourselves accountable for human rights outcomes.

In the pursuit of social justice, Hume City Council follows the Guiding Principles:

- Improve standards of **access and inclusion** for all residents.
- Nurture opportunities for **engagement and participation**.
- Deliver policy, programs and services that uphold **human rights**, and the values of **equity and fairness**
- Be **accountable and transparent** by measuring the advancement of social justice across Hume's policies, services, and programs.

Guiding Principles = Social Justice in action



Access and inclusion



Engagement and participation



Human Rights, equity and fairness



Accountability and transparency





Access and Inclusion

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access information, services and spaces, and participate fully in community life regardless of capability. We consider the diverse needs of all people and design for inclusion as standard practice. This includes recognising and addressing potential barriers and ensuring our communication, services and environments are usable, welcoming, and equitable for all. We lead by example and embed inclusive thinking across everything we do.



Collaborating with Jesuit Community College, the Youth Central Training Café (YCTC) is targeted at young people aged 18-24 connected to Hume who are interested in gaining new skills for potential employment in the Hospitality industry.

We partnered with Kids' Own Publishing to co-create a children's book with children and their families from the Good Samaritan Community Hub in Roxburgh Park. This project focused on developing English language skills, helping kids relate to each other, addressing social isolation and raised the voices of children's from migrant and refugee backgrounds, a particularly under-represented and marginalised communities.

Titled *Look! Magic is All Around*; the book was developed over six workshops. Children and their families led the process, collaboratively developing the storyline and producing the illustrations. A launch event was held to celebrate the book's publication, with all participating children credited in the final copy.



The Active Living team offers dedicated and inclusive swimming sessions for children on the autism spectrum, creating more accessible and welcoming pathways to participation.



Engagement and Participation

We are committed to addressing systemic challenges that drive exclusion in community life and decision making, particularly for people who have been historically under-represented. This means we work collaboratively and deliberately with people and groups, removing barriers that limit participation to create opportunities for meaningful engagement.



In 2024, community members from Hume's LGBTQIA+ community raised concerns that they weren't being meaningfully engaged and requested the provision of an advisory group to inform inclusive practice. We set up a working group with community members to guide the development of strategies for better participation and recognition across Council's policies, programs and services which we are now in the process of embedding.



Council works with the Hume Interfaith Network to deliver initiatives that encourage participation and interaction between community members from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds. In partnership with local places of worship, we host visits where faith leaders share insights into their beliefs, rituals, and significant celebrations. Through interfaith dialogue and shared learning, community members build understanding, strengthen connections, and foster greater respect and harmony across the community.

Hume City is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia and has one of the highest settlement rates of migrants and newly arrived people with 40% of our residents being born overseas. Using an intersectional lens, we know this means some people don't know what services and supports are run by Council or local organisations that they could access and benefit from.

To address this, we run the Welcome to Hume program. Collaborating with local community groups and organisations, and an accredited interpreter, we take residents on face-to-face excursions across the various services, spaces and places in the municipality. The program reduces barriers, improves understanding of services, and help culturally diverse residents participate more fully and equitably in community life.

We partnered with Outdoors Victoria to deliver the active travel initiative, Park IT, with the Westmeadows Primary School community. Park IT encourages car-dependent families to drop their kids off at a nearby park and walk, engaging in "play on the way" to and from school with their friends and family.

Westmeadows students helped design the active travel pathways that guide the walk to/from the park and school. Subsequently family were engaged to get active and ready to learn, and grows community connections amongst families, while also reducing traffic congestion and improving safety around schools.



Human Rights, Equity and Fairness

While all people are equal under the law, not everyone has equal access to rights that advance their ability to fully participate and active participation in community life. Council has an ethical duty and legal obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of our residents.

Equity means providing support for those facing the most barriers, to help create equality. Likewise, fairness isn't everyone getting the same thing; fairness is our obligation to be as impartial and unbiased as possible. This means we make sure our decisions are well-considered and balance the impact of our actions against our obligations to uphold all human rights.

We deliver policy, programs and services with an active consideration of equity and fairness and work to balance the Human Rights of all people.



We run English language classes in our Community Hubs program to support refugee and recently arrived women with children to build their confidence and language skills. While English classes are available elsewhere, we recognise that some face extra barriers to accessing them. By offering classes in familiar, local settings and alongside other supports, we help remove those barriers and make it easier for people who need it most to take part.



Hume City has a higher-than-average population of people living with disabilities, including children. This means that some children couldn't use the play equipment at our playgrounds, which reduced the opportunity for socialising with other children, and negatively impacted kids' physical and mental health, and sense of belonging.

Over recent years, our Open Spaces team have embedded universal design principles into our design, and we now have eight playgrounds that feature accessible swings and other play equipment, continuous pathways, accessible entries to playgrounds and parking close by. This shows how the principles of Access and Inclusion, Engagement and Participation, and Human Rights, Equity and Fairness work together.

Everyone in our community deserves a safe, secure place to call home. Homelessness is a human rights issue that impacts health, wellbeing, and social inclusion. It is not limited to any one group, and anyone can be at risk. Data shows that the number of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in our city continues to grow. In response, Council works closely with VincentCare, our local specialist homelessness service, to support people sleeping rough across our city. Through this coordinated approach, Council connects some of our most vulnerable community members with the critical support and services they need.

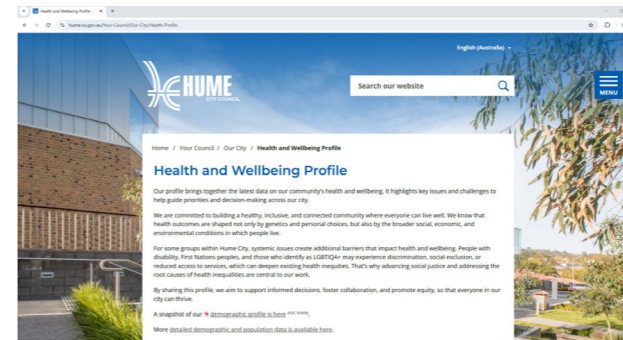




Accountability and Transparency

We are committed to respecting and protecting the human rights of everyone in our community. We hold ourselves accountable by being open about what we are trying to achieve, how we are progressing, and where we need to do better. We regularly share updates with our community about what has changed, what hasn't, and why.

We combine community voices and lived experience with data and local knowledge to understand what is working and what needs to improve. We use this feedback to shape our actions and adjust our approach so that our work stays relevant, transparent, and responsive to community needs.



Our website has a dedicated section called the Health and Wellbeing Profile. This brings together the latest data on our community's health and wellbeing. It highlights key issues and challenges to help guide priorities and decision-making across our city. We share this publicly to support informed decisions, foster collaboration, and promote equity, so that everyone in our city can thrive.



The Multicultural Communications Advisory Group (MCAG) was established in 2024, and advise Council on communications preferences, priorities and cultural sensitivities of our multicultural communities to improve communication, consultation and information sharing between our multicultural communities and Hume City Council.

The Multicultural Communications Advisory Group is made up of members from the language communities that will most benefit from communications support. This includes Arabic, Assyrian, Farsi, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Mandarin, Nepali, Punjabi, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Legislative Context

Our Social Justice Charter aligns with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the Victorian Charter). Our Guiding Principles support the implementation of the act by providing a framework to view and balance the Rights outlined in the Act.

The *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Victorian Charter) set out the basic rights and freedoms of all Victorians and requires public authorities - including councils, government departments, police and service providers - to respect and uphold those rights.

The Victorian Charter provides the legislative framework that guides Council in promoting, protecting and fulfilling human rights.

Our Social Justice Charter aligns with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (the Victorian Charter). Our Guiding Principles support the implementation of the act by providing a framework to view and balance the Rights outlined in the Act.



Victoria Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission's role is to protect and promote human rights in Victoria. We do this through a range of functions and services under Victoria's human rights laws.

For more information visit www.humanrights.vic.gov.au

Your Rights Under the Victorian Charter

Under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, everyone in Victoria has basic rights that protect their freedom, safety, and dignity.

These include the right to:

- Equality and fair treatment
- Safety and protection from harm
- Have your life respected
- Freedom from torture, cruelty or degrading treatment
- Freedom from forced labour
- Move freely and choose where you live
- Have your privacy protected
- Hold your own beliefs and practice your religion.
- Express your opinions and participate in peaceful gatherings or groups
- Have your family protected
- Take part in public life, like voting
- Have your culture respected, including Aboriginal cultural rights
- Own property
- Be safe from arbitrary arrest
- Be treated humanely if detained
- Ensure children are treated appropriately in the justice system
- Have a fair hearing if you go to court
- Be presumed innocent until proven guilty
- Not be punished twice for the same offence
- Not be charged under laws that did not exist at the time

Importantly, the Act also includes a statement that means that other Rights that are recognised in other laws such as International law (for example a Right included in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights) or Commonwealth law, are also protected through this legislation, even if it's not listed in the Victorian Charter.

Council's Role in Social Justice

As a public authority, Council is a 'duty bearer' in the Victorian Charter. This means Council must:

- Act consistently with human rights
- Consider human rights in every decision
- Create policies, programs and services that are fair, inclusive and accessible

Under the Victorian Charter, people in Victoria as 'rights holders', can claim their rights, hold Council accountable, and share responsibility for respecting the rights of others. This means that you have rights that should be respected, including by Council, but you also have a responsibility to respect the rights of others.

More broadly, Council has clear roles in supporting and strengthening social justice in Hume's community. This means that you have rights that should be respected, including by Council, but you also have a responsibility to respect the rights of others.



Statutory Authority

Council must follow Victorian and Commonwealth laws that protect human rights and prevent discrimination (see list below). These laws guide how Council makes fair and inclusive decisions.

Service Provider

Council delivers services and makes decisions that impact people's daily lives, including health, housing, education, the environment and safety.

Facilitator

Council works with local organisations and service providers to plan, coordinate and support actions that promote social justice.

Advocate

Council speaks up for the community and calls on other levels of government to invest in public transport, schools, healthcare and social services - key areas needed to reduce inequality and support social justice.

Other Legislative Context

In addition to the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 we have a role in upholding other laws including:

Victorian Local Government Act 2020

The Local Government Act 2020 sets out how councils and communities should work together. It places a strong emphasis on community participation and community ownership. The Act requires councils to engage with their communities and conduct strategic planning in ways that are transparent and accountable. This focus on community involvement supports the social justice principles outlined in this Charter.

Additional Victorian Laws

These laws help promote fairness, safety and inclusion in Victoria:

- Disability Act 2006
- Equal Opportunity Act 2020
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Justice Legislation Amendment (Anti-vilification and Social Cohesion) Act 2025
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2011
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Statewide Treaty Act 2025

Federal Laws

National laws that support equality and protect people from discrimination include:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984

Further Information and Support

If you want to learn more about the Victorian Charter or believe you have experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation or vilification in Victoria, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission can provide advice and support.

More information is available on the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission: <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/legal-and-policy/victorias-human-rights-laws/the-charter/>

Phone: 1300 292 153

Email: enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au

Advocacy

Our community is proud, inclusive, and resilient in the face of social challenges and barriers, many of which are beyond any one organisation or Local Government's ability to fix alone. As such, we are proud to play a role in advocating on behalf of the community.

We do this on an issue-by-issue basis, but also through our membership of national and local networks and peak bodies such as:

- Australian Local Government Association
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- National Growth Areas Alliance
- Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action
- Northern Councils Alliance
- Northern Health Primary Care and Population Health Advisory Committee
- Outer Melbourne Councils group
- Refugee Council of Australia's Leadership Group
- Refugee Welcome Zone
- The Mayoral and Councillor Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum
- Victorian Local Government Association
- Welcoming Cities

We maintain strong relationships with all levels of Government to seek the best outcomes for our community, and have developed a Partnership Framework to guide how we work with organisations who have the same or complementary strategic goals, express a commitment to shared social, environmental, or economic outcomes and are willing to work collaboratively to support the people and communities in Hume City.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Under the Guiding Principle of Accountability and Transparency, we monitor and evaluate the Social Justice Charter. We provide updates in multiple formats so that everyone in Hume can understand how Council is performing.

To do this we draw on a mix of qualitative and quantitative information, local knowledge and lived experience as well as data from trusted sources, to build an accurate picture of people's needs and our social justice impact.

As we are responsible for the delivery of a wide range of policies, services and programs, we will develop relevant tools to help varied parts of Council apply the Guiding Principles in their decision making, planning and budgeting processes. This will also help define the expected social justice impacts of our work.

To report on our performance, we make use of existing Council and sector reporting tools, including:

- Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) indicators
- Hume business planning tools and frameworks
- Council Annual Action Plan and Annual Report



Language support

Arabic | العربية

Assyrian | ܐܘܪܝܝܢܐ

Farsi | فارسی

Ελληνικά | Greek

हिंदी | Hindi

Urdu | اردو

Italiano | Italian

नेपाली | Nepali

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ | Punjabi

Türkçe | Turkish

简体中文 | Simplified Chinese

Tiếng Việt | Vietnamese



For language support visit
hume.vic.gov.au/translate or call
9205 2200 to speak to our team.

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