

Neighbourhood House Policy

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Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

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Initial Draft			
Second Draft			
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Approval			

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Neighbourhood House Policy

Scope

This policy applies to Neighbourhood Houses located in the Macedon Ranges that are funded through the Victorian Government Neighbourhood Houses Coordination Program. The policy also recognises emerging Neighbourhood Houses eligibility as per the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP) Guidelines 2016¹.

It applies to the following Neighbourhood Houses:

- Kyneton Community House
- Lancefield Neighbourhood House
- Macedon Mount Macedon Neighbourhood House
- Macedon Ranges Further Education Centre, Gisborne
- Riddells Creek Neighbourhood House
- Romsey Neighbourhood House
- Woodend Neighbourhood House

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Council's support to Neighbourhood Houses located within the municipality. Council recognises and supports the benefits Neighbourhood Houses provide to local communities, and their role as a significant contributor to community development. This policy is underpinned by the community development principles of access, equity, participation, human rights, partnership and diversity.

Background

¹ [Neighbourhood-House-Coordination-Program-Guidelines-2016-2019](#)

Neighbourhood Houses are stand-alone, not-for-profit organisations that work to deliver community development outcomes for their communities. In the Macedon Ranges Shire, they operate in Kyneton, Woodend, Macedon and Mount Macedon, Gisborne, Riddells Creek, Lancefield, and Romsey.

Neighbourhood Houses are responsive to the needs of their community. The services offered by each house are shaped by the community they serve and are influenced by the skills and knowledge of the governing boards / committees and staff.

How this policy was developed

This policy was developed in consultation with Council and our staff, Neighbourhood House staff, board members and volunteers and the community, as part of a review of the previous policy, which was adopted in 2018.

Council will review this policy every four years to ensure that it continues to reflect the expectations of the community, Councillors, and staff.

Policy statement

Council recognises and supports the benefits to the community of Neighbourhood Houses in providing programs, services and venues for community development, as well as avenues for informal support and opportunities for resident participation in the planning and delivery of services at a local level.

This policy has been developed to provide guidance in the support of Neighbourhood Houses.

Implementation

Financial support

1. Council will provide:
 - a) Funding annually for each Neighbourhood House via a four-year agreement (to coincide with each new Council Plan) to be acquitted annually. The funding amount will be reviewed as part of Council's annual budget process, prior to the commencement of a new four-year agreement.

- b) For Neighbourhood Houses that occupy all or part of a Council owned building, in-kind funding to the value of the market rate of rental for their premises, with an annual peppercorn contribution required from Neighbourhood Houses.

2. Council, where appropriate will:

- a) Assist with sourcing and applying for external funding to support Neighbourhood Houses.
- b) Collaborate and partner with Neighbourhood Houses for external funding where Council is the lead and Neighbourhood Houses are ineligible to apply (Council staff to consult with Neighbourhood Houses when preparing applications).

Communication

1. Council's Community Partnerships Officer is the key contact between Council and Neighbourhood Houses for communication and correspondence.
2. Council will provide regular updates to Neighbourhood Houses to communicate important information including, but not limited to events, programs, consultations, training and funding opportunities.

Partnerships

1. Through Council's Community Partnerships Officer, Council will provide induction and support internal staff wishing to engage with Neighbourhood Houses.
2. The Community Partnerships Officer or delegated proxy from Council will regularly attend Neighbourhood House Network meetings.
3. The Neighbourhood House Network can request attendance from other Council officers when possible and as deemed relevant.
4. Council and Council officers will participate, when possible, in Neighbourhood House programs proactively or by invitation.
5. Council will promote and recognise Neighbourhood Houses via;
 - a) promotion on Council's website;
 - b) promotion of special events where Council is a partner;

- c) annual advertisement of Neighbourhood House Week, included in Council days of recognition calendar;
 - d) enabling an annual presentation from the Neighbourhood House cluster to Councillors;
 - e) ensuring promotional material and media releases for projects, partnerships and collaborations between Council and Neighbourhood Houses clearly identify the partnership between Neighbourhood Houses and Council.
6. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Council and Neighbourhood Houses will be used for special projects, partnerships and collaborations that sit outside of standard funding arrangements.

Advocacy

1. Council will advocate to state and federal governments to increase funding for Neighbourhood Houses in the Macedon Ranges.
2. Council will advocate to volunteer support organisations to assist with Neighbourhood House volunteer recruitment.

Recognition of new Neighbourhood Houses will occur on receipt of funding through the NHCP or a Council resolution recognising the new Neighbourhood House as meeting eligibility as per DFFH NHCP Guidelines (page 7, DHHS, 2016) or updated Neighbourhood House Guidelines.

Gender Impact Assessment

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted in relation to the subject matter of this policy.

Based on findings from the gender impact assessment, which evidenced an over representation of women in Neighbourhood House, it is recommended that, as far as is practical, action is taken to ensure that:

- Gender impacts are reviewed as part of the policy review process;
- The Community Partnerships Officer will monitor the gender impact as part of their regular interaction with Neighbourhood Houses.

Specifically, it is recommended that the following key elements be embedded and/or considered in the implementation of the Neighbourhood House Policy:

- Engagement;
- Promotion/ marketing;
- Physical access – mobility, transport options;
- Safety – cultural, emotional, social, physical, privacy;
- Caring responsibilities;
- Family composition;
- Communication – language, accessibility, available options; and
- Stakeholder management – internal and external.

This recommendation will support more inclusive and accessible Neighbourhood Houses within their local community.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Neighbourhood House	Also commonly known as community centres, learning centres, community houses or neighbourhood centres, these inclusive community-based organisations welcome people of all ages, abilities and walks of life, creating opportunities for people to enrich their lives through connections they might not otherwise make.
Community	Can refer to the Macedon Ranges Shire community as a whole or: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● community of place (based on geographic location e.g. the Gisborne community) ● community of practice (based on common interests and activities e.g. the bike riding or gardening community) ● community of identity (based on an individual's shared perspective e.g. Aboriginal heritage, language speakers,

	residents of public housing, particular age groups or a religious community).
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. Always includes internal decision makers and implementers of decision outcomes.
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	A memorandum of understanding is an agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document.

References

- > Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH)
- > DFFH Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP)
- > Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic)
- > The Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community Houses (RANCH)

Related policies

- > Council Plan 2021-2031
- > Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- > Community Grants Policy

Related legislation

- > Local Government Act 2020