Acknowledgements

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage within this municipality and acknowledges the Gunung-Willam-Balluk of the Wurundjeri as the Traditional Custodians of this land.

The development of the Hume Early Years Action Plan was made possible through the commitment and participation by members of the Hume Early Years Partnership, other service providers, Council staff, and importantly families and children living in Hume. Acknowledgement and thank you for sharing your knowledge, experiences and expertise in the development of the Hume Early Years Framework, which was the basis upon which Council developed this Action Plan.

The photographs in this Action Plan have been professionally sourced or have the appropriate permissions attached to them from the relevant community members.
Introduction and Context

The Hume City Council Early Years Action Plan 2014-2018 (Action Plan) is Hume City Council’s enactment of the Hume Early Years Framework 2014-2018 (Framework). The Framework has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including children and families, to ensure it is relevant and responsive to community aspirations.

The Framework has also been informed by current initiatives and programs operating within the Hume municipality, current research pertinent to the child and family services sector, and key legislation and policies at the international, national, state and local level.

Both the Framework and the Action Plan have been informed by the context of the Municipal Early Years Plan Review (MEYP) (MAV, 2011) as well as the review of Hume City Family and Children’s Plan 2008-2013. The development of the Framework marks a change in direction from the previous Hume City Family and Children’s Plan 2008-2013, where an over-arching strategic Framework has been formulated with a separate Action Plan for Council. Both the Framework and the Action Plan build on the strengths and successes of the previous plan and takes into consideration the key findings from community and stakeholder consultations.

The Action Plan, alongside the Framework, demonstrates Council’s leadership role in promoting improved outcomes for children from birth to 12 years, and their families in Hume City, now and in the future. The Framework details the vision and strategic direction of the Hume based child and family service sector. The Action Plan describes the specific steps to be undertaken by Hume City Council in achieving outcomes that are under its realm of influence and responsibility. It also includes performance measures that will be used to measure the implementation of actions across the five year lifespan of the plan.

The development of the Framework enables service providers across the education, care, health, and wellbeing sectors to develop their own action plans that align to the vision and strategic directions detailed in the Framework. In this way, it is envisaged that all services across all relevant sectors will work together and in their areas of expertise and influence, to ensure all children from birth to 12 years and their families have the best possible opportunities available to them.
Role of Hume City Council in early years services across the municipality

Local government plays a critical role in the development, delivery and support of a range of child and family services across their municipalities. There are a diverse range of ways in which Local government is involved in the children and family sector, including service planning; direct service delivery; infrastructure planning and development; cluster management; advocacy and resourcing. Collectively, such approaches aim to deliver accessible, high quality, affordable and responsive early years programs.

Direct delivery of early years services:

Positive early years experiences establish a foundation for a broad range of skills and learning capacities within a child, which are used later in life. International research shows that children before five years of age require learning and development opportunities to promote brain development for sensory, language and higher cognitive functions. In recognition of this, Hume City Council has a longstanding commitment to the delivery of early year services and therefore is uniquely placed to contribute to positive outcomes for all children.

It is the largest provider of early years services within the municipality. Council presents a strong service delivery platform from which it provides a continuum of education and care to children and families, including the direct delivery of immunisation; occasional care; three year old programs; four year old preschool; long day care; and maternal and child health. Council also provide a range of child and family support programs, such as inclusion and support; parent support; Best Start and Babies in Hume. Details of Council’s early years services can be found in Appendix A.

Direct planning role in early years infrastructure:

Council undertakes a direct role in the planning and delivery of early years services, which are accommodated in early years centres or in community hubs. Council also upgrades existing infrastructure to ensure that facilities and programs reflect contemporary pedagogy and comply with the relevant regulations.

Indirect delivery of early years services and infrastructure:

Council provides a range of community services and infrastructure that support learning and development opportunities for children and families in Hume City. These include outdoor infrastructure (parks, reserves and playgrounds); leisure services (leisure and aquatic centres, including programs and activities such as learn to swim, kinda gym and dance); library services (Global Learning Centres and local libraries, including programs and activities such as Bilingual Story Times; and homework clubs); and health and wellbeing programs (Healthy Together Hume project).
Direct and indirect role in community strengthening, advocacy and partnerships:

In addition to service delivery, Council supports other providers and agencies across the municipality through a range of actions including:

- Research and advocacy (such as submissions to the Victorian Government or representation on project reference groups).
- Professional development (such as hosting the Family and Children Services Conference and the AEDI forum).
- Networking opportunities (such as the support for the Hume Early Years Partnership and participation in Growth Area forums, Family Violence Prevention networks and early intervention meetings).
- Resourcing and support, (such as community grants to organisations and community groups to deliver early years programs like playgroups and inclusion projects).
- Events and forums (such as support provided for the National Playgroup Day and open sessions for families at children services).
- Project partnerships (such as Supporting Parents Developing Children, Communities for Children, and Best Start).

The development and release of the Framework is one initiative of Hume City Council in supporting the responsiveness and development of the child and family services sector across the municipality. Council’s lead role in the funding, facilitation and dissemination of the Framework is a demonstration of its ongoing commitment to the broader early years sector.
Community Consultation

Community consultation: The development of the Framework and the Action Plan has been informed through a series of consultations with families, children, service providers and staff. This was undertaken through direct one-on-one interviews, group discussions and surveys.

Most families who took part in the community consultations said they felt confident in being able to provide their children with a good start in life, and were generally happy with the different services available to them. Some families said that having more information about what’s available within their local community would help them make better choices as parents, and to become more involved in community events. Families also said it was important to them that services showed respect for their culture and background, and asked about their ideas and opinions when providing programs and activities for them and their children.

Children participating in the community consultations said their family was important in helping them lead a healthy and happy lifestyle. It was also important to children that they could get to local services and facilities easily from home and school. This was particularly important for keeping healthy and physically active.

Children also wanted to know what was available in their local community so they could make better choices about where to go and what to do. This helped children feel that they belonged in their local community. It also allowed them to share their ideas and interests with others, and to make new friends.

People who support families and children were keen to work better together to ensure they provided the best service possible. This included looking at different ways to get information to families when they needed it and about what services were available for families and children. They conveyed making sure they made every effort to get to know families’ stories and what they want and need. It also included making sure all families could receive the kind of service they wanted, when they wanted it, regardless of where they came from or what was happening in their life.

Staff who participated at a workshop indicated that play was an important part of the learning and development in children, and that programs and infrastructure were required to enable this, particularly in the rapidly growing residential areas. Staff also highlighted that a strength-based approach was critical in the development of confident and resilient families across Hume and that a ‘strong, not what’s wrong’ approach should be followed. Working with other Council departments and service providers was seen to be key in the delivery of more inclusive outcomes for children and families, as was embedding of knowledge and learnings into practice. Staff were also mindful that Hume City has to face a number of challenges moving forward with early years services into the future, including rapid growing demand for services; timely supply of infrastructure and services; addressing a complexity of needs and vulnerabilities of families; and the implementation of the remainder of the National Reforms (more details on the changed early years contextual environment can be viewed under Appendix B).
In the development of the Framework, the following vision, values and strategic direction were developed and endorsed through the community consultation process:

Our Vision
A supportive community and responsive service system that upholds human rights and embodies social justice values.

Our Values
Communities in Hume valued:

- The diversity evident across our community and view this as a strength to be affirmed and celebrated.
- A focus on service provision and settings that are welcoming, inclusive, culturally respectful and responsive to children and families.
- The need for the child and family service system to be collaborative, responsive, evidence-based and accessible.
- A commitment to working better together, recognising the value of combining our efforts to ensure the greatest impact and best possible outcomes for children and families.
- The significance of creating communities that are well-connected, supportive and sensitive to all its members.
- The potential of community-led initiatives to strengthen community connectedness, ownership and confidence.
- Life-long learning, and the diverse approaches, styles and settings to facilitate quality learning and development for all.
Strategic Direction and Priorities

The strategic direction for the Hume City Council Early Years Action Plan is informed by six strategic priorities that were developed for the Framework in partnership with the Hume Early Years Partnership and endorsed through further consultations with children, families, service providers and Council staff.

The strategic priorities are:

1. A holistic approach to health and wellbeing.
2. Enhancing capacity amongst families and children.
3. A strong and connected community led by community.
5. A responsive family and child-centred seamless service system.
Strategic Priority 1:

A holistic approach to health and wellbeing

Prioritising the health and wellbeing of the community is essential for a thriving, connected and happy community. It is also a shared focus of all levels of government.

Councils play a critical role in this endeavour, and are required by law to develop and implement a four-year Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan for this purpose.

The Hume City Council Early Years Action Plan is an opportunity to identify and implement action steps towards targets which complement existing plans, and have a more specific focus on the priorities and needs of children from birth to twelve, and their families. This requires an inclusive approach that considers families’ diverse backgrounds, histories, cultures, languages, experiences and life circumstances. This approach also recognises and addresses the needs of community groups at greater risk, and current inequities noted in specific suburbs.

Outcome:

• Families and children live healthy and active lives, and are connected, happy members of the community.

Strategic objectives:

• To ensure ease of access to facilities, services and programs promoting a healthy, active lifestyle, in and around the community.

• To support children, families and communities to develop healthy, respectful relationships with each other.

Performance measures:

• Increase level of visitation of family households with children to local parks, ovals or green spaces once a month or more.

• Increase rate of overall satisfaction of life and personal circumstances with family households with children.

‘Children’s learning and development is holistic, advancing simultaneously in areas of health, cognition, personal and social development and wellbeing.’

Strategic Priority 2:

Enhancing capacity amongst families and children

Building capacity amongst families acknowledges the critical role of parents and other family members in the lives of children. It is an active and ongoing process that recognises and builds on families’ existing knowledge, skills and capabilities, to foster and sustain positive change. Building capacity utilises a strengths-based approach that encompasses awareness, understanding and respect for families’ diverse backgrounds, histories, circumstances and aspirations. A strengths-based approach recognises families as experts in their own lives. This means that with access to the appropriate resources and supports, families are best-placed to determine their own solutions to their current situation (McCashen, 2005).

‘Good parenting leads to great outcomes for children and is a critical element in helping children achieve against the odds of disadvantage. We know that communities around parents shape expectations and support….we will build on these approaches to improve parents awareness and understanding of evidence-based ways to support their children’s development.’


Outcome:

• Families and children are supported to grow and develop to their potential.

Strategic objective:

• To support a strengths-based approach to capacity building, where the expertise of everyone involved is valued, respected and utilised.

Performance measures:

• Increase the percentage of family households who feel they have a ‘real say’ on issues that are important to them.

• Increase the percentage of family households who rate their local facilities and services good to very good (such as shops, childcare, schools, libraries).

• Decrease the proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains (AEDC data).
Strategic Priority 3:
A strong and connected community led by community

A strong and connected community facilitates a sense of place and belonging and promotes interdependence and active participation. A strong and connected community is developed in response to the identified aspirations, strengths, needs and interests of all community members. It requires opportunities for people to come together to build relationships, share information, and provide mutual support and trust. This requires safe and easy access throughout the community to ensure children and families can connect with others and participate fully in all aspects of community life. It also requires easy access to information about what is available and where to go to access the full range of community services, programs and facilities.

Outcome:
- Families and children make a purposeful and positive contribution in their community.

Strategic objectives:
- To promote opportunities for the community to come together through community events, festivals and activities.
- To ensure children and families are consulted in the planning and delivery of services, programs and facilities relevant to them and their lives.

Performance measures:
- Increase the level of volunteering offered by family households to community groups or services (including school or parents groups or health or welfare services or special events).
- Increase the rate of satisfaction within family households of feeling part of their community.
- Increase the rate of satisfaction within family households of the level of consultation and engagement with them on key local issues requiring decisions by Council.

‘Children who have a sense of belonging in their community have been shown to improve in school performance, prosocial development and wellbeing. Positive connections with family, friends and community are important for families because they provide a sense of belonging and support. Social networks are extremely important to parents’ wellbeing and general family functioning, and are also extremely important for children’s development.’

McDonald, M (2011): What role can child and family services play in enhancing opportunities for parents and families? CAFCA Practice Sheet. Australian Institute of Family Studies, Communities and Families Clearing House Australia.
Strategic Priority 4:
A rights-based and social justice approach

Hume City Council plays a pivotal role in actively promoting a fair and just society that embodies respect, equity, community inclusion and active participation for all. This is reflected in the Hume City Council Social Justice Charter (2007) and associated action plans. These documents provide a structure and framework for upholding human rights and working for social justice, according to the current areas of need pertinent to the community. The Hume City Council Early Years Action Plan presents an opportunity to address significant social justice issues impacting on children from birth to twelve, and their families. This ensures all children and families are treated fairly, with respect and dignity, regardless of their family background, culture, history or circumstance.

Outcome:
• The rights and dignity of all children and families within the municipality are upheld.

Strategic objectives:
• To uphold a rights-based and social justice approach in all our undertakings with children and families.

Performance measures:
• Increase the percentage of family households that believe it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people of different cultures.
• Maintain the rate of satisfaction of family households of their standard of living.
• Increase the rate of satisfaction of family households with Council’s level of lobbying of Federal and State Government on key issues that affect local communities.

‘Long have we known from early childhood theories, research and practice that children are active constructors of meaning, with voices to be heard and the capacity to express their views with wisdom and insight. Children are key informants and experts on their own lives and, indeed, are our best source of advice for matters affecting them.’

Professor Pauline Harris (University of South Australia): Engaging with children’s voices, Every Child Magazine vol 18 no 2, 2012, Early Childhood Australia.
Strategic Priority 5:
A responsive family and child-centred seamless service system

There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the benefits to children and families when services work better together in an integrated service system. In striving to work together in an integrated way, service providers need to be clear about what outcomes they are trying to achieve and how an integrated approach will promote these outcomes. Effective leadership is critical to this way of working (Press, Sumsion & Wong, 2010). Hume City Council is well-placed to demonstrate its leadership role in enacting the Hume Early Years Framework and supporting its community partners to do the same. It is envisaged that such coordinated and collaborative efforts will promote improved outcomes for families and their children from birth to twelve years of age.

Outcome:
• Increased family engagement and satisfaction through an integrated service delivery system.

Strategic objectives:
• To attain an integrated approach to service delivery across the continuum child and family services.
• To strengthen network connections within and across the child and family service sector.
• To ensure access to services through timely and responsive infrastructure and service provision, particularly in identified growth areas.

Performance measures:
• Increase the number of successful funding applications and level of funding received on early years matters.
• Increase in percentage of families with children who do not experience challenges in accessing services.

‘The existing service systems are unable to respond promptly to the emerging needs of all parents and communities, partly because of the lack of effective channels of communication. For service systems to become more responsive, improved forms of dialogue between communities and services are needed.’

Strategic Priority 6: 
An educated community through life-long learning

In promoting life-long learning, there is overwhelming evidence of the value of quality early childhood education from an early age (Nores & Barnett, 2010). This is reflected in a number of federal and state initiatives. The Hume City Council Early Years Action Plan is an opportunity for Council to build on and complement existing programs promoting life-long learning for children from birth to twelve years. This includes paying attention to areas of greater need in specific suburbs across the municipality where developmental vulnerability is higher than the Hume municipality and state and national figures (AEDI, 2012). It also includes a focus on parents’ life-long learning, paying attention to their learning styles, preferences and needs. This enhances their capacity and confidence as parents, supporting their child’s ongoing learning and development. This includes the development of children’s first language, and early exposure to English.

Outcome:
• Families and children value and benefit from life-long learning.

Strategic objectives:
• To support families to realise their own learning and development needs and aspirations, within and outside of their parenting role.

Performance measures:
• Increase the rate of satisfaction of family households of achievements in life.
• Increase in the number of pop-up playgroup opportunities run by Council.

Note: It should be noted that the performance indicators identified in the Framework and the Action Plan will be measured using data which is available externally, or otherwise collected via regular surveys. The data may not be available annually or over the life of the Framework and Action Plan. It should also be noted that Council will continue to identify appropriate indicators and data sources as they become available.

‘How can parents and teachers provide conditions that will most effectively promote growth and change in our children’s nerve cells with their branching dendrites? Dendrites are like the trees of the mind, growing like poplars in the sun. How can parents help a child to develop his or her full potential and set a pathway of lifelong learning? Parents and teachers should create a climate for enchanted minds to obtain information, stimulate imagination, develop an atmosphere to enhance motivation and creativity and discover the value of a work ethic.’

Early Years Action Plan for Hume City Council

The Framework’s strategic priorities, which were developed with and endorsed by community and service provider groups, have been used to form the basis upon which the Hume City Council Early Years Action Plan was developed.

Actions to be undertaken by Council during the financial years of 2014/15 and 2018/19 are shown in detail under the next section of this Action Plan. The implementation of actions is spread across the various departments within Council over the five-year period.

The actions strengthen what Council is currently doing within the sector, addresses gaps or weaknesses and responds to opportunities and challenges facing children and families living in Hume City. The Action Plan also links with other partners across the sector, where collaborated efforts are required to achieve the best outcomes for children and families, as the diagram opposite shows.

Diagram 1: How the Framework relates to the Action Plan

Hume Early Years Framework
1. A holistic approach to health and wellbeing.
2. Enhancing capacity amongst families and children.
3. A strong and connected community led by community.
5. A responsive family and child-centred seamless service system.
The Framework and the Action Plan are important plans that are aligned with, and complement, other strategic documents of the Hume City Council. Some of the actions within the Action Plan will inform service plans of Council’s various departments, and will be embedded into the staff’s work objectives and work plans.

The systematic translation of Hume Early Years Action Plan into other strategic plans of Council will ensure the systematic implementation of the identified early year actions over the next five-year period.
Action Plan

Strategic Priority 1:
A holistic approach to health and wellbeing

Outcome: Families and children live healthy and active lives, and are connected, happy members of the community.

Objectives:
1. To ensure ease of access to facilities, services and programs which promote a healthy active lifestyle, in and around the community.
2. To support children, families and communities to develop healthy, respectful relationships with each other.
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<th>Council Role</th>
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<th>Output timing</th>
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| **Strategy 1.1**<br>Whole-of-Council approach to the planning, development, and implementation of high quality services, programs and infrastructure in early years services across Hume City. | Establish, where appropriate, Interdepartmental Project Reference Groups for the planning, design and delivery of future new community hubs and upgrades of existing services:  
- Newbury (2014/15)  
- Jacksons Hill (Sunbury) (2014/15) (masterplan)  
- Activity Centre 1 (Southern Craigieburn) (2014-2019)  
- R3 (Greenvale West) (2015-2019)  
- Lockerbie South (2015-2019)  
- Rembrak preschool (2016/17) (upgrade)  
<p>| | Undertake evaluation of the Newbury Child and Community Centre design, build and servicing so that learnings can be transferred to the planning and development of future hubs (link with project debriefing sessions). | Social Development Organisational Performance and Engagement | Aged Services and Public Health Capital Works Engineering and Assets Family and Children Services IS Leisure and Youth Services Parks and Open Space Sustainable Environment | Planning and research Infrastructure development Service provision | Evaluation framework created and completed. Lessons reported on and documented to transfer to other hubs. | 2015-2017 |
| | Create environments (built and natural) that support healthy and active lifestyles in early years services and communities across Hume. | Parks and Open Spaces Leisure and Youth Services Urban Places | Aged Services and Public Health Family and Children’s Services Social Development Strategic Planning Sustainable Environment | Infrastructure development Planning and research Service provision | Incorporation of appropriate design elements in public infrastructure that decrease sedentary behavior and promote health and wellbeing. | Ongoing |</p>
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<td><strong>Strategy 1.2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop design and operational guidelines to underpin integration and a continuum of care for children in Council services.</td>
<td>Undertake an evaluation of existing integrated early years hubs for the development of design, operational and governance principles/guidelines/templates/models to inform future integrated hubs.</td>
<td>Social Development&lt;br&gt;Family and Children Services&lt;br&gt;Organisational Performance and Engagement&lt;br&gt;Parks and Open Spaces</td>
<td>Capital Works&lt;br&gt;Engineering and Assets&lt;br&gt;Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Planning and research&lt;br&gt;Infrastructure development&lt;br&gt;Service provision</td>
<td>Development of evaluation framework, complete evaluation and formulate design and operations matrix/templates/guidelines.</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td><strong>Strategy 1.3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Timely response in the delivery of early years services in growth areas, and review existing facilities in established areas.</td>
<td>Undertake an audit of playgrounds at Council’s early learning facilities in order to ensure they reflect contemporary early childhood education and care practices.</td>
<td>Social Development&lt;br&gt;Parks and Open Space</td>
<td>Family and Children Services&lt;br&gt;Social Development</td>
<td>Planning and research&lt;br&gt;Infrastructure development&lt;br&gt;Service provision</td>
<td>Development of auditing tool. Assessment undertaken. Priority listing made for implementation of plan (funding sought).</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Explore models and opportunities for the early or interim delivery of community services to new communities, including early years services where appropriate.</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Capital Works&lt;br&gt;Family and Children Services&lt;br&gt;Leisure and Youth Services&lt;br&gt;Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Advocacy&lt;br&gt;Community strengthening&lt;br&gt;Infrastructure development&lt;br&gt;Partner and facilitator&lt;br&gt;Planning and research&lt;br&gt;Service provision</td>
<td>Models investigated. Opportunities explored and implemented where appropriate.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Undertake an assessment of preschool provision to inform both the delivery of new services and the operations of existing services.</td>
<td>Social Development&lt;br&gt;Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Organisational Performance and Engagement</td>
<td>Planning and research</td>
<td>Assessment of required preschool places with recommendations for provision.</td>
<td>2014 and 2015</td>
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<td>Participate in Growth Area networks and planning forums.</td>
<td>Social Development&lt;br&gt;Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Advocacy&lt;br&gt;Infrastructure development&lt;br&gt;Planning and research</td>
<td>Participate in meetings.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td><strong>Strategy 1.4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Promote, protect and support breastfeeding practices.</td>
<td>Continue to action strategies within Hume’s Breast Feeding Strategy.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Advocacy&lt;br&gt;Community strengthening&lt;br&gt;Partner and facilitator</td>
<td>Systematic implementation of actions in Breast Feeding Strategy.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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**Strategic Priority 2: Enhancing capacity amongst families and children**

**Outcome:** Families and children are supported to grow and develop to their potential.

**Objective:** To support a strengths-based approach to capacity building, where the expertise of everyone involved is valued, respected and utilised.

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| **Strategy 2.1**<br>Promote new and existing early years services to Hume’s communities with emphasis on the importance of early childhood development. | Promote new and existing Council services to the community through a range of regular actions, such as:  
- Council events  
- Online and on-hold messages  
- Printed materials  
- Soft entry points (eg library)  
- Open evenings at services | Family and Children Services | Aged Services and Public Health  
Learning Community  
Marketing and Communications | Advocacy  
Community strengthening  
Infrastructure development  
Partner and facilitator  
Planning and research  
Service provision | Promotional opportunities explored and undertaken. | Ongoing |
| **Strategy 2.2**<br>Develop an engagement methodology and tools in order to hear and respond to the 'voices of children' (VOC tool) on matters which affect them. | Develop and pilot the ‘Voices of Children’ tool to inform/or review early years projects and programs and link it with Council’s Community Engagement Framework. | Best Start Facilitator  
Organisational Performance and Engagement | Family and Children Services  
Social Development | Advocacy  
Community strengthening  
Planning and research | VOC tool developed.  
Implementation and utilisation of VOC process in identified projects. | 2015/2016 and ongoing |
| **Strategy 2.3**<br>Provide information to families that underpin informed choices for the best learning and development outcomes for children. | Provide enhanced opportunities for families to receive information about services and learning programs. | Family and Children Services | Learning Community | Community strengthening  
Planning and research | Opportunities identified and information disseminated to families. | Ongoing |
Strategic Priority 3:

A strong and connected community led by community

Outcome: Families and children make a purposeful and positive contribution in their community.

Objectives:

1. To promote opportunities for community to come together through community events, festivals and activities.
2. To ensure children and families are consulted in the planning and delivery of services programs and facilities relevant to them and their lives.
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| **Strategy 3.1**  
Create new, and reinforce existing, welcoming, inclusive and culturally respectful spaces for families and children to come together to learn, share and support one another. | Continue to deliver and expand on the Babies and Boorais in Hume programs, particularly to link in new families in the growth areas. | Family and Children Services | | Community strengthening Partner and facilitator Service provision | Participation in Babies and Boorais in Hume promoted and new opportunities explored. | Ongoing |
| | Continue to support eligible community groups in the delivery of community-led early years activities and programs, through the Community Grants and the SPPI processes. | Social Development Family and Children Services | Community grant panel DEECD Playgroup Victoria | Community strengthening Partner and facilitator | Grant processes completed and grants awarded and acquitted. | Ongoing |
| | Identify appropriate community events for Family and Children Services to have a presence, including significant Hume-wide events such as National Playgroup Day and Children’s Week. | Family and Children Services | HEYP | Community strengthening Partner and facilitator | Events identified and planned. | Ongoing |
| **Strategy 3.2**  
Continue to participate in early years partnerships across the municipality, and where absent assist in the establishment of new partnerships. | Facilitate the implementation of the actions in the Best Start Plan, including the development of an annual plan. | Family and Children Services | HEYP | Community strengthening Partner and facilitator Planning and Research | Implementation of the actions in the Best Start Plan. | Ongoing |
<p>| | Facilitate and collaborate with the Hume Early Years Partnership. | Family and Children Services | HEYP | Community strengthening Partner and facilitator | Facilitate executive and membership meetings when required. | Ongoing |
| | Explore the development of regional networks (such as the Sunbury Transition Network) with partners across universal, secondary and tertiary services to support and strengthen community-identified development and learning outcomes for children in Hume. | Family and Children Services | Learning Community | Community strengthening | New networks established in regions where there is a lack/no networks. | 2016/2017 |</p>
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<td><strong>Strategy 3.3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Work in partnership with other early years providers and specialists to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families.</td>
<td>Monitor community feedback received via Council consultation sessions/surveys on early years and family services and support to identify potential trends, emerging issues or matters requiring attention.</td>
<td>Social Development Organisational Performance and Engagement</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Community strengthening Planning and research</td>
<td>Relevant community feedback provided to Family and Children services in timely manner.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Seek out opportunities with project partnerships that will address local issues and build sustainable and transferable early years outcomes, particularly for vulnerable families and children in existing and growth areas.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Community strengthening Partner and facilitator Service provision</td>
<td>Opportunities sought and enacted upon where applicable. Continued work on existing initiatives such as Access to Early Learning project.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue with partnerships at the community hubs to provide early years programs and services that respond to the needs of vulnerable families and children.</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Family and Children Services Community Hubs</td>
<td>Community strengthening Partner and facilitator Service provision</td>
<td>Continue with the programs and services that were established via the SPDC project.</td>
<td>2014-2017</td>
</tr>
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</table>

‘We need plenty of interesting activities so [young children] grow into healthy, caring, and involved citizens.’

*(Parent)*
Strategic Priority 4:  
A rights-based and social justice approach

**Outcome:** The rights and dignity of all children and families within the municipality are upheld.

**Objective:** To uphold a rights-based and social justice approach in all our undertakings with children and families.

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Partner</th>
<th>Other Partners</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Output timing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Implementation of a range of initiatives that increase awareness, knowledge and inclusion of a rights and social justice approach across the community.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support vulnerable families and children through policies and procedures that enhance their engagement and participation in Council services.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services Social Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community strengthening Planning and research</td>
<td>Continued commitment to the inclusion and support for vulnerable families as a priority in policies and procedures.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue to implement audit recommendations in regards to Council’s buildings, to meet access standards as per Building Code, as well as the preservation of the dignity of children.</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Capital Works</td>
<td>Community strengthening Infrastructure development</td>
<td>Systematic implementation of infrastructure upgrades at Council buildings.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitor use and outcomes achieved through the Quiet Room at the Newbury Child and Community Centre and explore the potential development of other such facilities in other integrated early years hubs.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Community strengthening Planning and research Service provision</td>
<td>Induction on the use of Quiet Room. Review of use of the Quiet Room and transfer learnings.</td>
<td>2015-2017</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Investigate the barriers which impact families’ access to services and programs. Identify strategies to overcome these barriers.</td>
<td>Social Development Family and Children Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy Community strengthening Planning and research Service provision</td>
<td>Assessment of barrier of access and develop strategies to address them.</td>
<td>2016/2017</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue to address actions identified through the Early Years Service Delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Project.</td>
<td>Social Development Family and Children Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy Community strengthening Planning and research Service provision</td>
<td>Implementation of improvements and actions identified in the project.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead Partner</td>
<td>Other Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lead by example to ensure children are active citizens.</td>
<td>Explore the development of a ‘State of Children’s Report’ which highlights the learning and development of children in Hume, particularly vulnerable children.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocacy&lt;br&gt;Community strengthening&lt;br&gt;Planning and research&lt;br&gt;Service provision</td>
<td>Explore resources to develop a State of Children’s Report.&lt;br&gt;If successful, develop the Report.</td>
<td>2015/2016</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Undertake professional development amongst staff that underpins enhanced cultural competencies as well as greater understanding of diversity and difference of service needs from families in Hume.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Other relevant departments</td>
<td>Community strengthening&lt;br&gt;Planning and research&lt;br&gt;Service provision</td>
<td>Identification of training needs for staff.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Advocate State and Federal Government on matters pertaining to a fair and just society.</td>
<td>Influence and appropriately respond to State and Federal Government policy changes, inquiries and commissions on family and children matters when required.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Advocacy&lt;br&gt;Planning and research</td>
<td>Development of submissions or advocacy documents.&lt;br&gt;Participation on working groups.&lt;br&gt;Continue the roll-out of the required operational responses to the COAG Reforms</td>
<td>When required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 4.4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Support vulnerable or at risk children or families across the early years services in Council.</td>
<td>Undertake programs and initiatives that strengthen learning opportunities for vulnerable families and children including:&lt;br&gt;Specifically targeted programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.&lt;br&gt;Specifically targeted programs to support CALD families.&lt;br&gt;Identify and develop a feasibility plan for services that support children with additional needs.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>HEYP</td>
<td>Advocacy&lt;br&gt;Planning and research&lt;br&gt;Service provision</td>
<td>Continued implementation of existing programs.&lt;br&gt;Explore way to increase participation of vulnerable or at risk children and families in early years programs.</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategic Priority 5:
A responsive family and child-centred seamless service system

**Outcome:** Increased family engagement and satisfaction through an integrated service delivery system.

**Objectives:**
1. To attain an integrated approach to service delivery across the child and family service sector.
2. To strengthen network connections within and across the child and family service sector.
3. To ensure access to services through timely and responsive infrastructure and service provision, particularly in identified growth areas.

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<th>Strategy</th>
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<th>Other Partners</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Output timing</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Undertake service planning for new and existing neighbourhoods.</td>
<td>Undertake demographic analysis, research (including Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) and AEDI), service planning and infrastructure planning to inform new/existing facilities, including: Jacksons Hill (Sunbury) Activity Centre 1 (southern Craigieburn) R3 (Greenvale West) and existing services when required.</td>
<td>Social Development Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Organisational Performance and Engagement</td>
<td>Infrastructure development Planning and research</td>
<td>Service and infrastructure planning undertaken and completed.</td>
<td>2014-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 5.2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Seek and source funding that supports the continuum of care and education for children and families in Hume.</td>
<td>Undertake a review of school data (annually as a minimum) to inform DEECD’s school priority listings and land acquisitions.</td>
<td>Social Development Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Organisational Performance and Engagement</td>
<td>Infrastructure development Planning and research</td>
<td>Education data reviewed and provided to DEECD.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop funding applications for new and existing community/early years infrastructure in preparation for State and Federal funding rounds.</td>
<td>Social Development Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Grants Co-ordinator</td>
<td>Infrastructure development Planning and research</td>
<td>Funding applications completed and submitted.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop or facilitate partnerships, project plans and funding applications that address early years service gaps in Hume City, when the need/opportunity arises.</td>
<td>Family and Children Services</td>
<td>Planning and research Service provision</td>
<td>Project plans and funding applications completed and submitted.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead Partner</td>
<td>Other Partners</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
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| **Strategy 5.3**  
Strengthen or develop new collaborations for better outcomes for children and families in Hume City. | Explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration within early years services, as well as with other Council departments, in order to attain improved outcomes for children in Hume City. | Family and Children Services           | Leisure and Youth Services  
Aged Services and Public Health  
Parks and Open Space  
Social Development  
Capital Works  
Organisational Performance and Engagement | Planning and research Service provision | Enhanced collaboration between departments. | Ongoing                      |

‘We need to keep the younger children active and involved in the community, so they don’t become disengaged and lose focus.’  

(Parent)
Strategic Priority 6:
An educated community through life-long learning

Outcome: Families and children value and benefit from life-long learning.

Objective: To support families to realise their own learning and development needs and aspirations, within and outside of their parenting role.
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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead Partner</th>
<th>Other Partners</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Output timing</th>
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</table>
| **Strategy 6.1**  
Create opportunities for the development of confident learners in the early years of life. | Ensure that the importance of play, as part of the learning and development process for children, is supported through structured and non-structured programs and infrastructure across the municipality. | Family and Children Services | Parks | Advocacy  
Community strengthening  
Partner and facilitator  
Service provision | Demonstration at National Playgroup Day and Children’s Week.  
Enhanced opportunities for families to engage in Hume’s parks and open spaces. | Ongoing |
| | Explore, develop and supply soft entries into learning opportunities for children, particularly with families that may be hard-to-reach or disengaged in community life: eg the development of pop-up playgroups in shopping centres. | Family and Children Services | Aged Services and Public Health  
Social Development  
Leisure and Youth Services Libraries | Advocacy  
Community strengthening  
Partner and facilitator  
Service provision | Increase in the number of pop-up playgroups across Hume City. | 2015 |
| **Strategy 6.2**  
Affirm and build parent’s/carer’s roles as first educator and acknowledge the household as an important context for learning. | Provide opportunities for families and children to access and actively engage in Hume’s parks and reserves. | Parks and Open Spaces | Family and Children Services | Community strengthening  
Partner and facilitator  
Service provision | Continue the support and implementation of the ‘Big Play Out’ with families. | Ongoing |
| | Continue to strengthen parents’ capacity to make informed decisions though the engagement and participation processes such as Parent Support Work; Aboriginal Parent Engagement Work; Babies and Boorais in Hume program, Preschool Field Work; Supporting Parents, Developing Children project. | Family and Children Services | | Community strengthening  
Partner and facilitator  
Service provision | Increased family participation in Family Services programs. | Ongoing |
| | Build families’ capacity through life-long learning programs and activities via Hume’s libraries, school hubs, leisure centres, volunteer gateways and address barriers of non-participation. | Learning Community | Family and Children Services | Community strengthening  
Partner and facilitator  
Service provision | Increased family participation in Learning Community programs. | Ongoing |
| **Strategy 6.3**  
Foster continuous improvement in the delivery of early years services through the development and enhancement of staffs’ collective suite of skills. | Explore professional development, career pathways and secondment opportunities to strengthen the skills and experience, collaboration, innovation and leadership skills of staff in Council. | Family and Children Services | Human Resources | Community strengthening  
Partner and facilitator  
Service provision | Staff progressing into leadership positions across Council and services improve in practice and quality. | Ongoing |
| | ‘Early Years Champions’: Explore opportunities for joint professional development that will underpin Council’s values and strategic directions within early years, as well as enhance the expertise of staff in early childhood development and learning. | Family and Children Services | Other departments | Community strengthening  
Partner and facilitator  
Service provision | Increased training and development opportunities for staff across Council in regards to early years matters. | Ongoing |
References


Appendix A:
Early Years Services at Hume City Council

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<tr>
<th>Family Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immunisation</td>
<td>Children usually have their immunisations first at six weeks then at four, six, 12, and 18 months, and four years of age. Council conducts day and evening immunisation sessions at many venues across the municipality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal and Child Health (MCH)</td>
<td>The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service is a primary health service, free for all Victorian families with children from birth to school age. The MCH Service supports families in the areas of parenting, health and development; promotes family health, wellbeing and safety; gives referrals and helps link families with local communities. The service is offered via ten Key Ages and Stages consultations, and further support, assistance and referrals for those who need it. The Outreach MCH service conducts Key Age and Stage Assessments in childcare centres, playgroups and pre-schools. The Enhanced MCH service responds to the needs of children and families at risk of poor outcomes, in particular where there are multiple risk factors. It provides an intensive level of support, including short-term case management in some circumstances. The Enhanced MCH service also provides specialist support for Aboriginal families, with an Aboriginal Parent Engagement worker and a MCH nurse who offers home visits for Aboriginal families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion and Parent Support</td>
<td>The Parent Support Worker (PSW) program offers individual families support in their capacity to provide a safe, caring and developmentally appropriate environment for children from birth to six years. The PSW team also facilitates specialist playgroups, and offers universal programs such as Babies in Hume. The Babies in Hume Program is a support and education program for all residents with new babies. Provision of a State Government Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program supports all early childhood services that receive State Government preschool funding to support the inclusion of children with additional needs. The Inclusion Support Program aims to build the capacity of all Commonwealth-funded early childhood services to include children with additional needs and from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Best Start is a Victorian Government early years initiative. It supports families, caregivers and communities to provide the best possible environment, experiences and care for young children in the important years from birth through to school. It has a strong emphasis on prevention and early intervention.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s Services</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Services: Child Care, Preschool, Three Year-Old Activity Groups and Occasional Care</td>
<td>The provision of a range of early childhood programs for families with children from birth to six years which provide care and education in all areas of development and support families in their child care practices. Three Year-Old Activity Groups provide opportunities for three year-olds to participate in development and learning programs prior to their preschool years. Preschool provides a developmentally appropriate play-based program for children from four to five years, which encourages children to challenge themselves and develop a positive self image. Long Day Child Care is a centre-based form of child care service. Long Day Care services provide quality all-day or part-time care for children from birth to six years of working families and the general community. Occasional Care program provides for children from birth to five years for short periods of time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Sunbury</td>
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<td><strong>Suburbs</strong></td>
<td>Sunbury</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rolling Meadows</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bulla</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preschools</strong></td>
<td>Dobell Avenue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learmonth Street</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McEwen Drive</td>
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<td>Stewarts Lane</td>
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<td>Sunningdale</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Three year old activity</strong></td>
<td>Elizabeth Drive Child and Family Centre</td>
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<td>Sunningdale</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Childcare</strong></td>
<td>Sunningdale Avenue Children’s Centre</td>
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<td><strong>Occasional care</strong></td>
<td>Sunbury Aquatic and Leisure Centre</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Drive</td>
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<td><strong>Maternal and Child Health</strong></td>
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Appendix B: 
The Changing Early Years Environment

Positive early year experiences establish a foundation for a broad range of skills and learning capacities in a child, which are used in later life. According to international research into childhood development, it shows that children before the age of five require positive experiences to promote brain development for sensory, language and higher cognitive functions. Development grounded in early years increases social and educational outcomes in children and equips them to confidently progress and participate later in community life.

1. Policy setting:

- One of the main drivers of the Australian Government’s Early Years Reform is the recognition that that learning is most effective when it begins at an early age, and that it underpins the development of a productive workforce and participative community. Investment in human resource development is becoming more important with the emergence of new technologies and complex social environments, where there is an increasing demand for highly skilled workforces and socially and civically engaged communities. In order to obtain skilled and engaged communities, international research is pointing in the direction of earlier investment in children’s learning and development.

The National Early Years Reforms have been systematically rolled out across the early year services in Australia since 2010. The next stage is the change in staff to child ratio for children three years and over (from 1:15 to 1:11) by 2016, which will have significant implications for Council’s early years services. In addition, the Abbott Government made an announcement on 5 September 2014 that it will continue to fund the additional five hours of the 15 hours preschool during 2015, however it is unknown if the five hours will be funded by the Federal Government beyond December 2015.

- The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has been working in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) to undertake a review of MCH services in Victoria. This partnership has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and action plan for 2012-2015, which will address aspects of the service such as: the modification of the service; continued improvement of key age and stage participation, particularly for vulnerable families, and building the capacity within the workforce.

In March 2014 the DEECD released a discussion paper on the future directions of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services within Victoria. Hume City Council formulated a submission to the Department in May 2014 and was still awaiting a final report at the time of writing this Action Plan.
A Victorian inquiry into vulnerable children in 2012 (Cummins Inquiry) highlighted that increased participation of vulnerable families in universal services would reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect in the community. In response to the findings of the Cummins Inquiry, the Victorian Government released in May 2012 a Directions Paper entitled: Victoria’s Vulnerable Children: Our Shared Responsibility and later released a subsequent strategy in 2013. The strategy recognises the key role for learning and development services in improving outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families. It highlights education as a key factor in breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage for children and families. ‘Often lacking a positive home learning environment, and with more health and developmental problems, vulnerable children and young people face greater risk of educational disengagement and poor learning and development outcomes’.


Hume City Council, along with its early years partners, has a long-standing commitment in supporting and optimising the development of all its citizens, including children and families. Nonetheless, within some communities there are reasons for concern due to the lack of beneficial conditions that are required to support early childhood development.

Council’s policy position to learning and development is embedded in many of its strategic policy documents including Hume Horizons 2040, Social Justice Charter 2014, and Learning Together 4. These policy positions underpin Council’s strong role in the delivery of universal and targeted services, such as MCH, preschool, enhanced MCH, parent engagement support and facilitated playgroups. It also demonstrates Council’s commitment to the delivery of community infrastructure that facilitate the delivery of place-based services, that in turn create community focal points for newly established residents.

2. Demographic and social changes in Hume City:

- Community profiles need to be taken into consideration when analysing community need for family and early years services.

Social and economic transformations are posing serious challenges for families and service providers. Households are facing complexities in their efforts to strike a balance between spending time with their children, securing their economic needs, addressing rapidly changing social circumstances; and protecting their children from the many risks within and beyond the home. Some of these complexities are discussed in more detail below.

2.1 Rapid residential growth:

Hume City is a rapidly growing municipality, which is experiencing growth on a number of residential fronts, including Craigieburn North, Greenvale West, Craigieburn West and Sunbury. This has implications for the planning, development and delivery of early years services for the new communities. The following are some statistics in relation to the residential growth within the City:

- The estimated number of residents in Hume City in 2014 is 185,555.
- Hume has experienced an annual average growth rate of its total population of 2.6% over the past 10 years.
- Projected total population for 2034 is 302,567 (growth of 63% from 2014).
- In 2034 there will be 22,824 children aged 0-4 years (a growth of 65%) (2014 – 13,825).
- In 2034 there will be 31,561 children aged 5-11 years (a growth of 66%) (2014 – 18,960).
- Largest growth will be in the suburbs of Mickleham-Kalkallo, Sunbury, Craigieburn, Greenvale and Broadmeadows.
- Persons aged less than 18 years will live predominantly in Craigieburn (21%), Sunbury (21%), Roxburgh Park (15%) and Mickleham-Kalkallo (15%).
2.2 Growth in the number of 4 year-olds in Hume City

The rapid growth in the number of 4 year-olds is taking place in the growth area suburbs. In Craigieburn from 2011 to 2036 there will be an estimated 49.5% increase in the number of 4-year-olds, increasing from 613 children in 2011 to 916 in 2036. The increase in 4 year-olds peaks at 1,034 children in 2024, with northern Craigieburn providing the larger contribution in comparison to southern Craigieburn.

In Greenvale, the growth is less rapid than Craigieburn and reaches a lower peak of 422 children in 2029 and 2030. The number of 4 year-olds increase by 147.5%, from 162 4 year-olds in 2011 to 401 in 2036.

The number of 4 year-olds increases very rapidly in Mickleham/Kalkallo from 2018 onwards, increasing over 9,000% from 2011 (with 11 four year olds) to 2036 (with 1008 four year olds).

Sunbury shows a 120% growth in the number of 4 year-olds, increasing from 464 in 2011 to 1022 in 2036. See Graph 2 below.

Graph 2: Number of 4 year-olds in Hume City suburbs (2011-2036)
2.3 Hume’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Hume City has the fifth highest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in metropolitan Melbourne, equalling 0.6% of Hume’s total population. The community has a young profile with 45.5% of residents being under the age of 19 years, compared to 28.7% for non-indigenous residents.

Whilst under-utilisation of early years services can be linked to a range of barriers and complex needs of Aboriginal families, it is also important to maintain perspective of the richness and strength of Aboriginal culture and communities, and to acknowledge that many Aboriginal children, families and individuals are also successful, healthy and well-engaged members in their own and the broader community. The DEECD report, The State of Victoria’s Children 2009 identified in its overall findings that:

‘Many Aboriginal children are getting the best start in life, with the majority of Aboriginal women having antenatal check-ups and breastfeeding their babies; many main carers engaging in informal learning activities, such as regularly reading to their children; and a high proportion of children are being immunised.’

The report also identified some areas where Victorian Aboriginal children and young people lead the non-Aboriginal population, such as:

- Having greater face-to-face contact with family and friends on a daily basis.
- Undertaking the recommended amount of daily physical activity.
- Identification, participation and engagement with their culture – essential to the development of strong and resilient Aboriginal children and young people.

These strengths provide key insights into the manner in which families and children can be engaged and encouraged to participate in early year services.

Generations of Aboriginal children have been disadvantaged through their experiences of the ‘Stolen Generations’. The forced removal of children was initiated by governments, churches and welfare organisations where children were fostered out to families and brought up in institutions.

The Bringing them Home Report found that the policies and practices of removal had multiple and profoundly disabling effects on individuals, families and communities, including across generations.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (2008) identified a higher number of Victorian Aboriginal people removed from their families compared to other states and territories. In Victoria approximately 9% of Victorian Aboriginal people between the ages of 15-24 that had been removed from their natural families, and 13% aged 25 and older.

This increases substantially to an estimated 41% and 51% for the 15-24 years and 25+ years respectively when considering relatives removed from natural family as shown in the next graph. The Bringing them Home Report identifies that these children lack positive role models and experiences for which to begin parenting themselves.

**Graph 3:** Aboriginal people aged 15 years and over in households with children ages 0-17 years, relatives removed from natural family, Victoria and Australia, 2008
2.4 Hume’s diverse communities:

Hume City is a culturally rich and diverse community, with over 32% of residents being born overseas, and the majority of those being from non-English speaking countries (27.9%):

- Top countries of birth – Iraq (4.3%), Turkey (3.8%), India (2.4%), UK (2.3%), Italy (2.1%).
- 41.0% of residents speak a language other than English at home.
- Top languages spoken – Turkish (8.1%), Arabic (7.8%), Italian (3.9%), Assyrian (2.4%), Chaldean (1.9%).
- 38.4% of Hume new arrivals come under a humanitarian program compared to 9.7% for metropolitan Melbourne (2009-2013).
- Of the total number of humanitarian migrants who settled in metropolitan Melbourne, almost 18% settled in Hume (2009-2013). Greater Dandenong had a greater share, being 20.6% of humanitarian migrants to Melbourne.
- Arrivals in Hume were mainly from Iraq, India, Turkey, Sri Lanka, and Lebanon.
- Between 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013 there were 1,107 settlers arrived in Hume from birth to five years. Of these more than one third (37.1% or 411) were through the Humanitarian stream.
- Comparing across the three SLAs of Hume, more than half (53.5% or 270 people) of from birth to five years new arrivals to Broadmeadows SLA are through the humanitarian stream.
2.5 Vulnerable families and children:

Not all children have access to the same positive living and learning environments. Poor environments place children at higher risks of potential social and economic failure, and remediating such effects at later stages of life often becomes prohibitively costly. Research shows the importance in investing in children from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to overcome such adverse environments and increase their capacity to learn and develop.

Hume City exhibits social and economic characteristics that make it more likely to have higher levels of vulnerable families and children than the metropolitan and state averages, including:

- Hume is the third most disadvantaged Local Government Area in metropolitan Melbourne (following Greater Dandenong and Brimbank) (2011).
- Broadmeadows Statistical Local Area is the most disadvantaged in Victoria (2011).
- Hume has five out of the 10 most disadvantaged suburbs in metropolitan Melbourne (for the Index of Disadvantage), those being Broadmeadows, Campbellfield, Coolaroo, Dallas and Meadow Heights.

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2.6 Children with jobless parents

- In Hume, one in 10 families (9.5%) have children under 15 years of age living with jobless parents. This is compared to 4.7% for metropolitan Melbourne.
- Hume is ranked first in both metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria.
- The suburbs in Hume where one in five families have children under 15 living with jobless parents are Dallas (21.0%), Broadmeadows (20.6%) and Coolaroo (19.9%). These three suburbs are ranked first, second and third across metropolitan Melbourne (out of approximately 495 suburbs).

Map 2: Families with children under 15 years who live with jobless parents

2.7 Hume 2012 AEDI results by domain

- More than one quarter of children in Hume are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain and around one in seven children are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.
- One in three children in Hume City are developmentally vulnerable or developmentally at-risk in communication skills and general knowledge (32.9%), followed by social competence (26.7%); physical health and wellbeing (24.5%); language and cognitive skills (24.5%) and emotional maturity (23.9%).
- Across all 31 metropolitan Councils Hume is ranked second behind Greater Dandenong (19.8%) for two or more domains.
- Across all 31 metropolitan Councils Hume is ranked third behind Greater Dandenong (37.1%) and Brimbank (27.7%) for one or more domain.
- Hume has the highest proportion of children developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains and in two or more domains across the nine outer metropolitan local government areas.

Graph 5: AEDI domains within Hume City 2012
2.8 Children with additional needs identified through AEDI survey

- Information about children with additional needs status is not included in the AEDI results because of their already identified substantial developmental needs.

- However, the survey did identify that approximately one in eight children (12.2%) are arriving at school still requiring further assessment. Additional findings indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Children with additional needs identified through the AEDI 2009 and 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children with special needs status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(chronic physical, intellectual and/or medical needs that require special assistance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5.7%)</td>
<td>(5.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children who attend an early intervention program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>129</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5.9%)</td>
<td>(5.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children identified by teachers as requiring further assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(eg. medical and physical, behaviour management, emotional and cognitive development)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>256</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11.7%)</td>
<td>(12.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.9 Family violence

Hume City experiences a higher than average rate of family violence, which is 1,429 incidences per 100,000 compared to 1,071 for Victoria. The rate of family incidents reported per 100,000 population has steadily increased over the last five years. This trend is statewide and could be due to increase number of incidences or increased levels of reporting.

Graph 7: Number of family incidences of violence for Hume and Victoria from 2008 to 2013

2.10 Breast feeding

From 2005/06 to 2011/2012 Hume City experienced consistently lower breast feeding rates compared to Victoria and Northern metropolitan Melbourne.

Graph 8: Breast feeding rates for Hume, Northern metro and Victoria for 2005/06 to 2011/2012
2.11 Hume City at the Interface:

Hume City is one of Melbourne’s Interface Councils. The Interface Councils lie at the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria, sharing aspects of both urban and rural communities. The circumstances facing the Interface Councils create a number of unique challenges for newly established communities.

Communities at the Interface experience a range of challenges, which may include:

- Lag times in the provision of services, social infrastructure and public transport options.
- Increased costs in living due to travel costs, travel times and limited local options in social and economic opportunities.
- Pockets of socio-economic disadvantage, reduced social participation and social cohesion.
- Poor access to medical, health and support services as well as poorer health outcomes.
- With an initial attraction to live in the outer suburbs due to affordable housing, are under mortgage stress due to higher costs of living (less disposable incomes on discretionary expenditure).
- Families tend to be younger than the metropolitan average, as families with young children are attracted to the lower house prices.
- A higher than metropolitan average of youth who are at risk of disengagement and have higher levels of self-harming behaviours and depressive symptoms.

In recognition of these issues facing communities, it becomes particularly important for the early and appropriate placement of key places for interactions around common local interests (such as schools, community hubs, heath care centres) – and those factors that enable them to function effectively, such as accessible, safe, affordable transport. The early placement of key local facilities and services provide real, and repeated, opportunities to build and strengthen individuals and local communities.
2.12 Urban Renewal in existing neighbourhoods

Over the past decade there has been mounting evidence presented on the levels of disadvantage experienced by Hume residents and for the need for increased levels of health and wellbeing services and infrastructure in the City. In direct response to the Jesuit Social Service report in 1999, Hume City Council made a commitment to work with the community to address the levels of disadvantage and the social, cultural and economic imbalances within the City, including supporting the inclusion of all residents in city life by focussing on access and equity issues (Hume City Social Justice Charter 2001).

Collaborative efforts have been made over the years to increase the level of infrastructure and services into Hume City in order to, among other things, address the levels of disadvantage and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes of Hume residents. A high level of collaboration has been achieved amongst health and community wellbeing service providers in Hume City – including Best Start and Communities for Children.

In addition, providers have also recognised that integrated local planning solutions are required to decrease the inherited legacy of poor public and private investment levels.

Historical legacies of disadvantage do also occur within geographical locations. This is best illustrated through the Jesuit Social Services studies into disadvantage. Suburbs within Hume City have consistently been identified as areas with high levels of disadvantage. The latest Jesuit Social Services study ‘Dropping off the Edge’ (2007), placed postcode 3047 (Broadmeadows, Dallas, Jacana) within Band 1 of Victoria’s 40 highest-ranking postcodes regards to disadvantage – and postcode 3061 (Campbellfield) within band 4 (six bands were used to categorise the 40 postcodes).

Broadmeadows is one of the oldest suburban areas in Hume City, dating from the 1950s as one of the former Housing Commission’s most ambitious development projects. The high concentration of public housing creates a unique challenge, with 47.8% of the occupied private dwellings being rented falling under State or Territory authorities, in comparison to 18.5% in Hume City and 11.0% in metropolitan Melbourne (2006 Census). In recognition that Hume experiences concentrations of disadvantage, Council has embarked on a project that will address issues within the Southern part of Hume via the Together 3047 Project.

‘Learning starts in infancy, long before formal education begins, and continues throughout life… Early learning begets later learning and early success breeds later success…’

(Heckman, 2000, p.3)
Appendix C: Membership of the Hume Early Years Partnership as at October 2014

Banksia Gardens
Berry Street
Broadmeadows Primary School
Broadmeadows Uniting Care Lentara
Broadmeadows Valley Park Primary School
Broadmeadows Women’s House
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Centre for Community Child Health
Commonwealth, Department of Social Services
Coolaroo South Primary School
Dallas Brooks Community Primary School
Dallas Primary School
Dianella Community Health
Family Mediation Services
Family Relationship Centre
Foundation House

Holy Child Primary School
Hume City Council
Hume Valley Special School
Hume/Moreland Integrated Family Services Alliance
Hume-Whittlesea LLEN
Meadow Heights Primary School
Melbourne City Mission
Salvation Army
St Dominics Primary School
Sunbury Community Health
The Smith Family
VICSEG New Futures
Victoria State, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Victorian Arabic Social Services
Victorian Government, Department of Human Services