

SOCIAL JUSTICE CHARTER

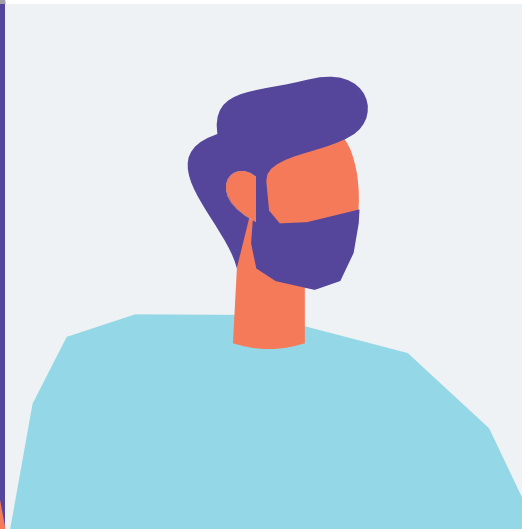
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HUME CITY COUNCIL

Social Justice Charter



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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

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

In the spirit of reconciliation, Council acknowledges the role past federal and state government policies have played in the social, cultural and economic dispossession of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the ongoing intergenerational trauma experienced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a result of this, the impact of racism on this trauma and the ways in which these forces combine to reinforce entrenched disadvantage, poor health outcomes, increased contact with the justice system and economic disadvantage.

Council acknowledges the importance of self-determination, meaning that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold the knowledge and expertise about what is best for themselves, their families and their communities, and have the right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Council plays a role in healing and building positive relationships between Council and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as educating the broader community about the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, cultures and history.



Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of Hume City Council, it is with great pride that I introduce the revised Social Justice Charter.

2021 marks twenty years since Hume City Council adopted its first Social Justice Charter, I am proud to reaffirm Council's commitment to social justice and the pursuit of a community where all people are free and equal in dignity and rights.

Every citizen of Hume City is entitled to a quality of life that allows them to reach their full potential. This principle has been entrenched in the activities and services of Council since the adoption of the first Social Justice Charter in 2001.

As our community grows it becomes more diverse, therefore the opportunities and challenges of pursuing social justice for all are just as relevant and important today. Council is committed to fostering development at an individual, community and organisation level to secure a sustainable and healthy future for all citizens.

Working alongside the community, Council, guided by the Social Justice principles, provides services and programs that aim to address the hardships and the barriers some community members face in living a healthy, prosperous life and participating fully in their community.

Through our planning, services and programs we are excited to contribute to a respectful community where we can celebrate our differences, and all enjoy equitable opportunities.

In this way, this Charter guides Hume City Council's efforts to nurture a fairer society for all.



Cr Joseph Haweil
Mayor of Hume City



Purpose

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

The Charter seeks to advance a fair and just society by promoting respect for every citizen, encouraging community participation, improving wellbeing and reducing the causes of disadvantage.

The Local Government Act (2020) requires that Hume City Council give priority to “achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations”.

Likewise, Community members have consistently responded positively to social justice indicators in Council's engagement¹.

This Charter identifies the pursuit of social justice as a key means of improving the livelihoods of all people, particularly those experiencing barriers to participation in the Hume community.

Australians rightly expect full access to human rights. This Charter, and the linked policy and strategic documents, provide a practical approach to actively considering Human Rights and addressing disadvantage and support opportunities to ensure citizens actively exercise their right to participate in public life.

Statement of Commitment

Social Justice is a central basis for policy and service planning at Hume. Through this commitment Council supports justice, fairness, accountability, as well as economic and social participation.

Council has 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 will:

- Improve standards of **access and inclusion** for all residents.
- Deliver policy, programs and services that support **equity and fairness**.
- Nurture opportunities for **engagement and participation**.
- Measure the advancement of social justice across Hume's policies, services and programs to support **rights and accountability**.

¹ Hume City Council, Community Indicators Survey, 2019/2020

Key achievements

Over the last 20 years Council has achieved a number of significant outcomes to advance social justice in Hume City including:

- Ongoing focus on reconciliation action with Hume's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including annual Welcome Baby to Country events, Narrap Team working on Country, cultural burns, a Truth Telling session, and planning for the establishment of a Stolen Generations Marker.
- The development of three Hume Global Learning Centres, the Hume Multiversity Program and the Hume Education Scholarship to foster lifelong learning.
- Supporting refugee and newly arrived communities through the refugee immunisation project, supporting diverse communities (COVID) project and ongoing support for Hume's 15 Community Hubs across the city.
- Community safety and prevention of violence against women initiatives, including targeted training and skill development and ongoing accreditation as an International Safe City (membership maintained since 1996).
- Supporting community access to services through establishing the Maternal and Child Health mobile service and new community facilities across the city.
- Delivering a range of community energy programs targeting Hume's most vulnerable households, reducing energy bills, greenhouse gas emissions, and improving thermal comfort.
- Supporting improved social outcomes through the adoption of the Affordable Housing Policy, home retrofit programs to improve thermal comfort, and dedication of resources for homelessness pathways support.
- Ongoing advocacy for gambling harm minimisation including specific grants to minimize gambling harms in the community and the Libraries After Dark initiative.
- Fostering capacity building and local economic participation through the Local Jobs for Local People program, Passport to Work, the Hume Jobs and Skills Taskforce, StartNorth and the Hume Volunteer Gateway.
- Empowering the Hume community through delivering capacity building initiatives such as the Community Change Makers program, Health Champions and the Hume Enviro Champions.

Today, if you want to find vibrant, ambitious, transformative leadership for human rights, go urban. Go local. Go close.

– United Nations Deputy High Commissioner Kate Gilmour



Social Justice explained

Social Justice is about everyone getting a fair go. This is achieved when human rights, freedom, respect, dignity and equality are protected for all people.

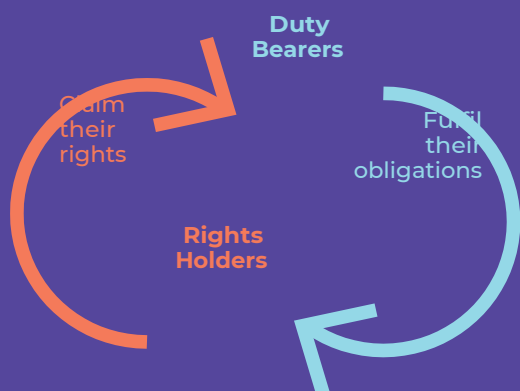
For everyone to have a fair go, all of us (including governments and institutions) need to address the unique barriers community members face to participating fully in society.

This includes discrimination and other unfair treatment because of a person's race, ancestry, ethnic identity, ability, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status, family status, migration status, political affiliation, religious affiliation, level of literacy, language, or socio-economic status.

Addressing these barriers requires respect and understanding, but also systemic change to improve opportunities in everyday life such as improved and equitable access to health, housing, education and employment.

As 'duty bearers' within a human rights framework, Council has an obligation to protect and champion human rights. Likewise, as 'rights holders' residents can claim their rights and hold Council accountable.

Council's commitment to social justice means everything we do is directed towards improving the wellbeing of Hume residents, their socio-economic and environmental conditions, and their participation in the community.



Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide a shared blueprint and collective approach to reduce global inequality. Hume City Council's Social Justice Charter supports efforts to build a just society where human rights are respected, human dignity is protected, human development is facilitated, and the environment is respected and protected.



Role of Council

Hume City Council has long been a leader in pursuing human rights at the local level. Council has clearly defined roles in supporting social justice in Hume's community.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

Council has a legislated responsibility under Victorian Law to act in ways that are compatible with human rights². Council also has responsibilities compatible with the pursuit of social justice under Commonwealth Law including the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and other anti-discrimination legislation³.

SERVICE PROVIDER:

Council provides services and makes critical social justice decisions relating to health, housing, education, the environment and safety.

FACILITATOR:

Council facilitates, partners and undertakes planning with a range of other agencies and service providers to support and promote social justice.

ADVOCATE:

Council advocates on behalf of the community to other levels of government and service providers to support social justice. For example, Council advocates to other tiers of government for investment in public transport, schools, healthcare and social services which are all of critical importance to the achievement of social justice.



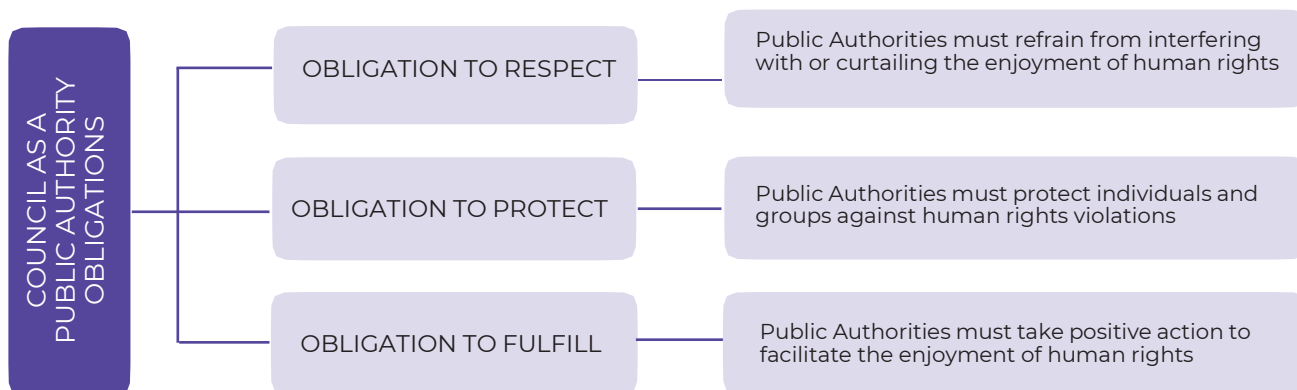
² Victorian Government, Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, 43/2006, available from <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/charter-human-rights-and-responsibilities-act-2006/014>; Victorian Government, Equal Opportunity Act 2010, 16/2010, available from <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/equal-opportunity-act-2010/021>

³ Australian Government, Racial Discrimination Act 1975, 52/1975, available from <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00089>

Legislative Context

VICTORIAN CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006

The Victorian Charter on Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, requires Council and all public authorities to act in ways that are compatible with human rights. The Charter also offers a comprehensive guide to international human rights including binding expectations and standards.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2020)

The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 provides direction on the relationship between communities and local government. Among the Act's five Principles community participation and ownership are given a high priority. The act defines Councils' responsibilities to conduct community engagement and strategic planning in a manner which is accountable to communities. The strong sense of community ownership evident in the Local Government Act (2020) is consistent with the guiding principles of social justice outlined in this Charter.

ADDITIONAL STATE LEGISLATION

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Disability Act 2006
- Multicultural Victoria Act 2011
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Gender Equality Act 2020

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984



Community Profile

Hume residents come from



Hume residents speak



Female residents in Hume



Male residents in Hume



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in Hume



35.7%

Residents born overseas



44.5%

Speak a language other than English



49.8%

Hume residents that identify as Christian



24.4%

Hume residents that identify with faiths other than Christian

1,463

Melbourne's Indigenous population living in Hume



684

Melbourne's Indigenous population occupy dwellings across Hume

33%



2011-2016 Increase in Hume's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community in Hume

WHO LIVES IN HUME

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities accounted for 1,463 (2016) and occupied 684 dwellings across Hume. The rest of the Hume population is diverse with 35.7% of the population being born overseas compared to 33.8% across Melbourne Metro. Language proficiency, which does impact on access to information is another area, that influences

planning around access. 44.5% of Hume residents speak a language other than English at home, compared to 32.2% across Melbourne metro. Faith and belief systems also influence uptake of programs, and or integration. While 49.8% of Hume people identify as Christian, there a considerable population of people of different faith (24.4%).

Guiding Principles

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Hume City Council's standards for access and inclusion support all residents to be well-informed, connected, and able to participate in community life.

We consider the needs of all people, including possible barriers they may face, how they access information, utilise services and engage in spaces.

We lead by example and ensure inclusive thinking is standard practice.

EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

Hume City Council delivers policy, programs and services with an active consideration of equity and fairness.

We prioritise fairness in all initiatives, including a fair assessment of the unique and sometimes overlapping challenges community members may face, whether that is on the basis of age, ability, gender, religion, socio-economic status, sexuality and gender identity or nationality.

We provide targeted policies, programs and services for specific cohorts in the community to foster equitable outcomes.

ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

We nurture opportunities for engagement and participation.

We will engage with individuals and communities to work collaboratively and deliberatively to facilitate and encourage community involvement.

Council seeks to address systemic challenges that may prevent or limit participation in community life and decision-making processes, particularly those faced by people who have been historically under-represented.

RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Council has an ethical duty and legal obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of our residents and to hold ourselves accountable for human rights outcomes.

Council will measure the advancement of social justice across Hume's policies, services and programs.

We will maintain robust measurement and evaluation mechanisms so that the community can hold Council accountable for the delivery of social justice outcomes.

Here in Australia, we're fortunate enough to have one of the richest and oldest continuing cultures in the world. This is something we should all be proud of and celebrate.

– Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

Targeted Action

Council puts these Guiding Principles into action by embedding social justice thinking across all of our services plans and programs.

As a champion of social justice, Council must deliver effective initiatives to address a range of social justice barriers. In Hume these include:

- Social distress
- Lack of respect for difference
- Affordable Health options
- Low income
- Community safety
- Access to recreation
- Economic participation
- Education
- Affordable housing
- Disability
- Social connectedness
- Affordable and accessible transport
- Alcohol, other drugs, problem gambling

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 disadvantage, inter-generational poverty, 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
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual (LGBTIQA+) people
- People from refugee backgrounds
- Women
- People with disabilities
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Young people
- People who are unemployed or in insecure employment
- People living with mental health issues
- People who experience homelessness or at risk of homelessness
- Older people living alone
- Carers
- People living in community housing

In some instances, Council adopts specific policies and plans to address the needs of specific groups in the community. However, people's lives do not fit neatly into categories. A social justice approach allows Council to understand and seek to address the overlapping and sometimes interrelated barriers to participation faced by Hume's community.

The role of the Social Justice Charter is to ensure that all people, regardless of their circumstances and lived experience, enjoy equal rights and equity of opportunity.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Through established processes of evaluation, three broad categories will be used to assess Council's achievements against the Social Justice Charter:

REPORTING

- To what extent did Council initiatives achieve their intended outcomes in relation to the Social Justice Policy Framework?

CONTRIBUTION / ATTRIBUTION

- To what extent did Council initiatives provide opportunities for the community to ensure external accountability and internal assessments using the Most Significant Change technique⁴?
- What was the contribution / attribution of community round-tables?

EVALUATION

- Impact – to what extent did Council initiatives contribute to building capacity in the community to monitor Council's commitment to Social Justice?
- Effectiveness – to what degree did Council initiatives contribute to building an ongoing dialogue and a true partnership between Council and the community?
- Efficiency – to what extent did Council initiatives help in encouraging the community to learn about a human rights culture?



⁴ Most Significant Change is a methodology that invites the people directly impacted by an initiative to identify the most significant changes they have witnessed as a result. It relies on deliberation, participation and captures the richness of impact beyond a purely quantitative measure.

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