

# Minutes Connected Communities Advisory Committee



## Meeting details

|                          |                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Date of meeting</b>   | Thursday, 6 November 2025                                                                       |
| <b>Time</b>              | 6:00pm to 7:30pm                                                                                |
| <b>Venue</b>             | Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, 275 Upper Heidelberg Road Ivanhoe<br>Community Meeting Room 2 |
| <b>Chair/Facilitator</b> | Cr Mary O'Kane                                                                                  |
| <b>Minutes</b>           | Vicki Martinez                                                                                  |

## Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

"Banyule City Council is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as Traditional Custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history."

## Diversity Statement

"Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. We are committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone: principles which empower, foster harmony and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community."

## Attendees

| <b>Attendee name</b> | <b>Affiliation/Organisation</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cr Mary O'Kane       | Banyule City Council            |
| Andrew Clarke        | Committee member                |
| Dominique Loulie     | Committee member                |
| Chloe Cooper         | Committee member                |
| Evander Hearne       | Committee member                |
| Paul Byrne-Moroney   | Committee member                |
| George Tsetinis      | Committee member                |
| John Monument        | Committee member                |
| June Anderson        | Committee member                |
| Jy Sandford          | Committee member                |
| Kerrie Chapman       | Committee member                |
| Megan Burke          | Committee member                |
| Remy Abraham         | Committee member                |

|                 |                      |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Cr Alicia Curry | Banyule City Council |
| Cr Alida McKern | Banyule City Council |

## Council staff

| Attendee name      | Affiliation/Organisation                   |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Joseph Tobacco     | Director Community Wellbeing               |
| Georgie Meyer      | Manager Inclusive and Creative Communities |
| Sherryn Prinzi     | Coordinator Community Impact               |
| Vicki Martinez     | Social and Community Impact Officer        |
| Govin Jega         | Community Insights Lead                    |
| Michael Beattie    | Coordinator Engagement and Insights        |
| Felicity Hamerston | Advocacy Lead                              |

## Apologies

| Name               | Affiliation/Organisation   |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Cr Elizabeth Nealy | Banyule City Council       |
| David Landis-Morse | Committee member           |
| Judith Craze       | Committee member           |
| Fatima Ramtoola    | Committee member           |
| Anna Conostas      | Committee member           |
| Marcello D'Amico   | Committee member           |
| Pranjali Sehgal    | Committee member           |
| Sara Sinada        | Committee member           |
| Glenn Frish        | Coordinator Communications |

## Items

### Introduction

Chair, Cr O'Kane opened the meeting at 6.06pm, read the Acknowledgement of traditional custodians and Diversity Statement, then welcomed all participants.

Apologies were noted via PowerPoint presentation, Cr Nealy and seven members unable to attend.

### 1. Actions from previous meeting

Cr O'Kane noted that the minutes of the previous meeting were distributed by email 27 August 2025 and published online <https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/About-us/Community-advisory-committees>

Cr O'Kane also noted the Terms of Reference approved by Council September and stated that these can be viewed online.

No questions from members.

## Action log

| Meeting date  | Number | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Completion date          |
|---------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7 August 2025 | 1.1    | Officers to incorporate proposed changes to the draft Terms of Reference and provide a copy of tracked changes to Council for consideration.                                                                             | August 21                |
| 7 August 2025 | 1.2    | Members will review the frequency of meeting in August 2026.                                                                                                                                                             |                          |
| 7 August 2025 | 1.3    | Officers to connect Advisory Committee representatives to the Champion contact officers and invite them to the Induction and ongoing meetings.                                                                           | 26 <sup>th</sup> August  |
| 7 August 2025 | 1.4    | Officers to prepare a schedule of Champion group meetings and distribute to all members                                                                                                                                  | 15 <sup>th</sup> October |
| 7 August 2025 | 1.5    | Officers to prepare an overview of how the Health and Wellbeing Priorities were developed and what evidence was used.                                                                                                    | 15 <sup>th</sup> October |
| 7 August 2025 | 1.6    | Officers to prepare a draft project outline for each of the Advisory Committee's priority areas and identify meaningful and timely opportunities to influence system and process level changes in the way Council works. | 15 <sup>th</sup> October |

## 2. Standing items

### 2.1 Champions Group Updates

Connected Communities Advisory Committee Champions representatives were invited to report on key discussion points raised at the first Champions group meetings. Each champions group were asked to discuss their experiences participating in Council services, programs and events.

#### Discussion

The Disability Champions representative reported the need to focus on the access and inclusion needs of people with disability. Specifically, general accessibility in physical spaces, transport, inclusive information, event comfort, staff training to understand hidden disabilities, and improved accessibility services.

The Age Friendly Champions discussed frequent participation in council services, programs and events, with overall positive experiences. Suggested improvements included improved social connections through activities, improved visibility of older adults in Council communications, and an enhanced focus on accessibility and safety in community spaces, such as lighting, seats and shade.

The Multicultural Champions representative reported that some multicultural residents avoided public spaces due to safety and inclusion concerns. The Champions advocate for improved education and explicit community statements to counter racism in public settings, improved representation in communications, focus on what unites people, not just what differentiates them, and better access to free, accessible spaces for multicultural gatherings. Proposed use of community leaders to promote opportunities and engage communities.

The LGBTIQA+ Champion representative noted the need for improved visibility and prominence at events and other Council activities. They called for explicit display of inclusion commitments to counter discriminatory behaviours in public settings, gender specific programming and improve used of inclusive symbols. It was noted the community were experiencing inclusion fatigue, after intense advocacy with little tangible changes.

## 2.2 Ivanhoe Train Station advocacy

Felicity Hamerson, Advocacy Lead presented an opportunity for the Committee to form a working group to advocate for accessibility improvements across the Banyule train network.

### Discussion

Banyule train network is not fully accessible

Watsonia Station has poor accessibility, amenity and not well connected to village

Ivanhoe Station doesn't meet Australian standards- pedestrian bridge with stairs

There are no known pipeline projects to address these issues

The Committee were asked to consider joining a working group to progress advocacy across the Banyule Train Network. This includes learning more about community advocacy, interviews of residents on 14<sup>th</sup> November, with interviews being shown on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, International Day of People with Disability, and planning next advocacy steps.

Discussion on potential conflict of interest for two members with a direct relationship with Metro Trains and Department of Transport. One member has direct conflict, already declared with employer. The other member has no direct conflict and can participate as a Banyule resident.

### Action

Action 1: Committee support establishment of a working group. Kerrie, June, John and Dominique are working group members.\* Working group members to be contacted to discuss next steps.

\* Advisory Committee members were contacted after the meeting to review and confirm working group participation.

## 2.3 Proactive, inclusive communications

Glen Frisch, Communications Coordinator presented an opportunity via video for the Committee to form a working group to inform the development of a Diverse Communications Framework.

### Discussion

The development of the Framework is a Communications Strategy 2025-2029 action and aims to better communicate with underserved, emerging, multicultural and younger audiences.

Champions spoke about visibility in publications, accessible, approachable and inclusive language, and the need for specific messaging and symbols to feel welcome.

Members discussed who this framework will benefit and advocated for an intersectional lens to be applied, ensuring groups including First Nations people and young people are specifically engaged. A focus on new migrants and established older migrants will also be important.

Members discussed what the Framework will influence, and it was noted that the Banyule Banner, Shaping Banyule and social media is included in the scope. The Framework could also apply to signage and wayfinding across the community.

Members noted the need to explore broad reach and impact, as there is constant messaging that people are not getting enough information, and people want to relate and see themselves in communications.

### Action

Action 2: Committee support the establishment of a working group. Andy, June, Dominique, George, Remy and Jy are working group members.\* Working group members to be contacted by Glenn to discuss next steps.

\* Advisory Committee members were contacted after the meeting to review and confirm working group participation.

## 2.4 Collaborate to improve Banyule's Community Engagement policy, toolkit and resources

Govin Jega, Community Engagement Lead and Michael Beattie Community Engagement Coordinator presented an opportunity to form a working group to refresh guidance in the Community Engagement Toolkit to ensure best-practice approaches for engaging diverse cohorts using tip sheets.

### Discussion

Council has a legislated responsibility to facilitate meaningful, accessible engagement to inform decisions and support governance. The refresh of the Community Engagement Toolkit will involve understanding barriers, the lived experience of residents and other considerations, including reframing the term hard-to-reach.

Members discussed the interrelationship between the communications project and this project and suggested they could be delivered together. Members agreed that the opportunity to influence better community engagement, influencing thinking and the development of new tools will safeguard against a one size fits all approach.

### Action

Action 3: Committee support the establishment of a working group. Kerrie, Dominique, Megan, Chloe, George, Remy and Andrew are working group members.\* Working group members to be contacted by Govin Jega and Michael Beattie to discuss next steps.

\* Advisory Committee members were contacted after the meeting to review and confirm working group participation.

## 2.5 Physical and cultural accessibility of community facilities, spaces and places

Vicki Martinez, Community and Social Impact Officer presented an opportunity to form a working group to consider the development of a new set of standards that could be applied to community buildings, places and spaces to ensure best-practice design to support equitable use by people.

### Discussion

Residents want community buildings that promote equitable use, inclusion and safety and physical accessibility. Legislative requirements and existing building standards apply. Council know there are opportunities to improve accessibility and cultural safety within community facilities, spaces and places.

Champions spoke about the need for free and accessible spaces to gather and physical accessibility and cultural safety upgrades.

It was proposed that working group is established in 2026 to gather insights and experience and research best practice to provide recommendations to Council on the development of new standards.

Members recognised the importance of designing for people and ensuring that spaces are safe, welcoming and culturally inclusive. Members discussed a space can be deemed accessible but may not be inclusive or create a sense of belonging for all. Members noted the importance of clarification between culturally inclusive and cultural inclusion.

### Action

Action 4: Committee support the establishment of a working group. Kerrie, John, George, Evander, Chloe and Dominique are working group members.\*

\* Advisory Committee members were contacted after the meeting to review and confirm working group participation.

## 2.6 Targeted, community led social connection initiatives

Sherryn Prinzi, Community Impact Coordinator presented an opportunity to form a working group to gather new targeted, community led social connection opportunities.

### Discussion

Council's Health and Wellbeing plan includes the priority to develop Social Connection with Purpose opportunities. People need spaces that promote connections, but they also need activities and people to

activate these spaces and amplify connections. Research shows that facilitating activities that include working on purposeful tasks offer the best chances for people to meet, build relationships and trust.

This project invites members to gather evidence, review community needs and expectations and best practice and make recommendations on the development of new social connection and belonging initiatives. The project will consider how we can add value to activities in our facilities and programs, better understanding what is available and what else needs to happen to invite people in.

Members discussed the interrelationship between spaces and places and what opportunities are offered to people. It was noted that a space can be incredible, people don't always feel like they belong or included.

Members noted the importance of informal spaces where people may want to connect eg parks or open spaces/natural environments and activating these, including opportunities to learn more about local culture and history to help create a sense of local belonging.

#### Action

Action 5: Committee members support the establishment of a combined working group with the physical and cultural accessible community facilities, spaces and places project. June, George, Dominique, Anna, Chloe, Andy, Evander and Kerrie are working group members\* Working group members to be contacted by Sherryn and Vicki to discuss next steps.

Action 6: Each working group project will be listed as standing agenda item. A committee representative from each working group will be nominated to report back to the CCAC at each meeting.

\* Advisory Committee members were contacted after the meeting to review and confirm working group participation.

## 3 New business

### 3.1 Inclusive Banyule 2022-2026

Sherryn Prinzi, Community Impact Coordinator discussed the review and next iteration of the Inclusive Banyule Plan 2022-2026.

#### Discussion

Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve their community. We need environments where everyone feels welcome and safe. We need systems that promote fair practices and representation across all Council activities. We need to ensure all voices are heard in decision-making.

Inclusive Banyule is strategic document to guide Council's inclusion priorities. Feedback from the working group projects will be used to inform this plan.

Members discussed the importance of an overarching approach and discussed the role of all committee members in informing the plan.

#### Action

Action 7: Committee members support the establishment of working group. Andy, Dominique, Jy, Paul, Sara, Kerrie and Megan are working group members\* Sherryn to send Terms of Reference and establish working group meetings, first being in December 2025.

\* Advisory Committee members were contacted after the meeting to review and confirm working group participation.

### 3.2 Community campaigns

Sherryn Prinzi, Community Impact Coordinator provided a brief overview of Council's draft new approach to recognising religious, cultural and awareness days.

#### Discussion

Council sought up to 10 advisory committee members to review the draft and provide feedback by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

### Action

Action 8: Megan, Dominique, Paul, Kerry and Andrew volunteered to provide feedback. Sherryn to provide copies of draft days of significance approach via email and members to provide feedback by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025. Sherryn to provide gift voucher of \$60 to thank members for their time.

## 4 Any other business 7:20-7:25pm

Cr O'Kane invited members to raise any new business

### Discussion

A member noted the value of the inclusion projects outlined in the meeting and commented that these were important to deliver. However, a member raised the importance of considering inclusion from system level, holistic perspective, noting how important it is to community to see evidence that Council is walking the talk. For example, seeing people that represent the diversity of the community, especially diverse and marginalised people, in paid employment positions in Council and in decision making positions such as Councillors. Another example that should be considered is the inclusion of diverse, marginalised people being represented and actively involved in delivering events and community programs.

### Action

Action 9: The Inclusive Banyule Plan working group to consider these comments through their deliberations.

## 5 Close and date of next meeting 7:25-7:30pm

- Next meeting will be held on Thursday 5th February 2026.
- Proposed meeting location is the new Rosanna Library. The location will be confirmed as soon as practicable, noting the library will not be opened until January 2025.

### Action

Action 10: Sherryn to send meeting request to all members. Members asked to please RSVP by 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026.