

Connected Communities Advisory Committee

Background

In the period between 2015 and 2024, Council convened a range of separate committees (LGBTIQA+, Multicultural, Disability and Age Friendly) to focus improving the liveability of the Banyule community for those who face barriers to equity and inclusion. These committees successfully contributed to making Banyule a more inclusive and accessible place to live and informed Council in the development of key frameworks and action plans including:

- Ageing Well in Banyule 2024-2030
- Inclusive Banyule 2022-2026
- Disability action plan
- LGBTIQA+ action plan
- Multicultural action plan

In December 2024, Council received a report on Advisory and Population Committees Achievements. Report analysis identified common matters discussed by the LGBTIQA+, Multicultural, Disability and Age Friendly committees and these included:

- Respect- The importance of respect and upholding human rights across life stages and the importance of addressing ageism, discrimination, racism, abuse and oppression.
- Social connection – Committees consistently spoke about collaboration to design community connection opportunities, and supporting harder-to-reach people to connect.
- Inclusion- The committees discussed the need to make public places and spaces and council communications more inclusive to support participation.

In 2025, Council's new health and wellbeing priorities set the agenda for uplifting community health and wellbeing between 2025 and 2029. These priorities are:

1. Social connection with purpose
2. Every body active
3. Building respectful communities
4. Lifelong healthy habits
5. Healthy Planet, Healthy People.

Key to achieving better outcomes is working with our community to plan, implement and evaluate actions aligned with these priorities.

The Connected Communities Advisory Committee was established after consideration of Council's legislated health and wellbeing planning requirements, commitment to promote access, equity, participation and rights, common themes, efficient use of available resources, the value of taking an intersectional approach, and the success of 2024 Banyule Think Tank's approach to diverse representation.

The mission of the Connected Communities Advisory Committee is to champion the values of respect, inclusion, understanding, and unity by guiding Council's inclusive practices and supporting the celebration of the rich tapestry of backgrounds and perspectives that make our Banyule community unique.

Purpose

Guided by social, cultural, and human rights-based approaches to health and wellbeing and supported by a diverse group of Banyule residents—this committee references lived experience to understand common issues around access, equity, and rights. It provides advice to Council on how to improve services and supports, with a focus on:

- Improving community cohesion and connections, supporting all people to feel welcome and part of the community.
- Improving equitable access, addressing barriers to equitable use of Council services, community facilities, public spaces and community events.
- Build respectful communities, protecting everyone's basic rights and freedoms and eliminating all forms of discrimination.

Committee objectives

With active input from the Champions groups (**see Appendix 1**), this committee:

- Reflects on the lived experience of residents and identify opportunities to improve the liveability of the Banyule community for people across life stages and geographical locations, with a focus on the needs of people with disability, LGBTIQ+ communities, multicultural communities, older adults, young people and people who are experiencing socio-economically disadvantaged.
- Provides advice to Council on ways to improve community cohesion and connection, equitable access and building respectful communities.
- Supports and engages in the development of submissions on broader State and Federal Government social policy and strategy reviews and relevant legislation changes.
- Informs and supports joint advocates campaigns by speaking up for the needs and rights of diverse communities
- Champions diversity and inclusion by supporting Council to highlight the impact of inequity and supporting actions that address barriers to inclusion.
- Improves communication by providing advice on how Council can better communicate, engage, consult and work with diverse communities.
- Co-designs solutions to common issues faced by diverse communities by collaborating with Council to develop annual health and wellbeing actions, inform implementation approaches and provide analysis of benefit for diverse communities.

Key priorities of the committee term

- Building inclusive and respectful communities: protecting against all forms of discrimination.
- Social Connection: Purposeful, meaningful and inclusive opportunities for people to meet and form supportive community connections.
- Communication: Communicating with communities in respectful and inclusive ways. Acknowledgement: Highlight and raise awareness of the contributions diverse communities make to the Banyule community.
- Employment: Provide advice on pathways to local employment and promote civic leadership opportunities.
- Fit for people: Inform ways to increase the accessibility and inclusiveness of Council's community facilities through embedding inclusion principles including Universal Design.

Membership

Membership will consist of up to 20 members. All members will be Banyule residents.

To achieve a membership with diverse representation, applicants will be invited to share how they identify across the following attributes:

Banyule suburb	Cultural background	Gender	Employment status
Age	Country of birth	Sexuality	Education
Family status*	Australian residency / Visa status	Complex mental health	Housing tenure
Person with caring responsibilities	Disability	Long term illness	

*(single person, couple without children, single parent with children (under school age/ primary school age/ young people), couple with children (under school age/ primary school age/ young people), couple with adult children, other.

To form a committee of members with intersectional identities, with best efforts made to include:

- o 5 members who identify as older adults (60+)
- o A member from each life stages from 16 to 59 years.
- o 5 members who identify as having a disability
- o 5 members who identify as LGBTIQ+
- o 5 members from one of Banyule's top ten (10) cultural background
- o Two members per Banyule precinct
- o 5 members who identify with characteristics consistent with low socio-economic status (such as housing tenure, employment, education, residency status)

There is a preference for a First Nations representative to hold a position on this committee.

Members will bring relevant skills, experience and passion to accelerate progress and create impact for diverse communities. To form an empowered committee, all applicants will be assessed on:

- Commitment to upholding the rights of all people and improving the liveability of Banyule for all diverse communities
- Expertise or passion in social justice and health and wellbeing equity matters
- Demonstrated connection and ability to engage with relevant diverse community groups, peak bodies or sector organisations
- Understanding of the role of local government and/ or experience in community advocacy, and influencing local, State or Federal government policy
- Commitment to adhering to the Banyule Committee Policy and Code of Conduct
- Commitment to active participation in at least 60% of meetings per year
- Commitment to sharing responsibility (over the committee term) to co-facilitate a identify aligned Champion's group.

Meeting frequency and duration

Meetings will be held quarterly for a duration of 1.5 to 2 hours, held in a location accessible to public transport and with adequate accessible parking in the suburbs of Watsonia, Greensborough or Ivanhoe.

Chair and supports

The meeting will be chaired a Councillor delegate.

The Councillor delegate will be supported to run effective and aligned meetings by the Manager Inclusive and Creative Communities and the Coordinator Community Impact. Additional relevant Council officers may be invited during the term to provide information and support.

Appendix 1: Champions groups

A Champions group is a dedicated assembly of residents with a shared identity, committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion for the benefit of that community identity group. Some champions groups may elect to include advocacy and community organisation representatives to ensure diverse representation of community needs.

The Champions groups for 2025-2029 are:

- Age Friendly Champions, supported by the Community Connections Team Leader and team
- LGBTIQA+ Champions, supported by the Community Impact Team
- Multicultural Champions, supported by the Community Impact Team
- Disability Champions, supported by the Community Impact Team.

Purpose of Champions groups

The Champions groups will be convened via informal meetings to gather knowledge and insights from residents with lived experience and provide advice to the Connected Communities Advisory Committee on matters important to that group, and where appropriate, provide support for the planning and implementation of key Council initiatives.

Objectives

- Provide a platform for community members to informally meet to discuss local inclusion and equity matters and emerging opportunities.
- Invite contribution from relevant advocacy and community organisations to represent the views of people without capacity to contribute to a Champion's group.
- Identify and discuss the unique ways that issues impact people from specific identity groups and identify how emerging opportunities would benefit a group of people.
- Generate ideas on ways to uplift the liveability of Banyule for the specific community.
- Make suggestions to the Connected Communities Advisory Committee.
- Where relevant, support Council to plan and implement key initiatives.

Specific requirements of Champions groups

Age Friendly Champions focus

The Age Friendly Champions group will invite participants over 60 years of age to:

- Co-design and deliver age friendly events and programs that encourage older adults to stay active, improve social connection, and promote health and wellbeing.
- Assist Council in the promotion of age friendly events and programs to community and personal networks
- Promote positive ageing and identify opportunities to improve the quality of life for older people.
- Participate in an Age Friendly Champion Group:
 - a. Community Connection Working Group- to plan Age in Focus content and editions, and plan older adults' recreations programs
 - b. Major Events Working Group- to co-design Council's events and forums for seniors
 - c. Age Friendly Strategy Working Group- to inform annual actions to implement the Ageing Well in Banyule Framework.

LGBTIQA+ Champions focus

The LGBTIQA+ Champions groups will invite participants who identify as LGBTIQA+ to:

- Discuss and recommend ways to support the safety, inclusion and success of normalise the inclusion of LGBTIQA+ communities across community settings in Banyule
- Discuss and recommend ways to safeguard the rights and protections for LGBTIQA+ communities in a dynamic geo-political landscape
- Discuss and make recommendations on ways to affirm and support LGBTIQA+ individuals to live as their full, authentic selves in safe and inclusive environments, connect with like-minded people and celebrate the rich diversity of LGBTIQA+ communities, including their histories, voices and contributions.

Disability Champions focus

The Disability Champions group will invite participants with a disability or long-term health condition, or who have a role in representing these groups to:

- Discuss and recommend ways to improve meaningful local social connection opportunities
- Discuss and recommend ways to address barriers in vocation and employment settings and improve representation in leadership positions
- Provide advice and recommendations for accessibility improvements in Council's public space
- Represent the disability community on Council's major infrastructure development projects
- Discuss and recommend ways to improve inclusion practices for people with disability in Council facilities and across community services, events and activities

Multicultural Champions focus

The Multicultural Champions group will invite residents from diverse cultural backgrounds to:

- Discuss and share ideas on building respectful communities by discussing racism, discrimination and ways of reporting
- Discuss and share ideas on how to empower community groups to share and celebrate their culture across community settings
- Discuss and recommend ways to address barriers in vocation and employment settings and improve representation in leadership positions
- Discuss and recommend ways to support isolated and people new to Banyule to form meaningful local connections.
- Support the development of effective networks to improve information dissemination and exchange and invite diverse participation in community engagement activities.
- Provide advice and recommendations to enhance equitable access and inclusive participation in Council facilities, programs, and services.

Champion groups participation

The number of participants at each Champion group meeting will not exceed 20 people at any one time, excluding a representative from the Connected Communities Advisory Committee.

Councillors are invited to participate in any Champions group meeting, upon prior arrangement with the Manager Inclusive and Creative Communities.

To register interest to participate in a Champions group, each person will:

- Register as a Council volunteer
- Agree to abide by the meeting Code of Conduct prior to attending their first meeting

- Agree to participate with a genuine desire to make a positive impact for the Banyule community.