

# Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres Policy

**Version:** 4.3

**Date updated:** 19 March 2018

**Responsible Department:** Active Communities

## 1. Purpose

Council is committed to supporting Casey's Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres (NHCLCs). This policy defines Council's position and provides a consistent approach to the assistance Council gives to the City of Casey NHCLCs.

## 2. Definitions

<b>Council</b>	means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989
<b>Councillors</b>	means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council
<b>Council Officer</b>	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
<b>Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres (NHCLCs)</b>	not for profit organisations where each house or centre is a legal entity as an Incorporated Association, or auspiced by a legal entity, and has a formal membership base. They are governed by a voluntary committee of management (COM) and are funded through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Neighbourhood House Coordination Program.
<b>Committee of Management (COM)</b> (Also known as a Board of Management or a Committee of Governance)	comprises elected volunteers from the membership of the organisation to determine the overall focus and strategic direction of the organisation, and is responsible for the financial viability, endorsement of policy and compliance with all legislative and statutory requirements.
<b>Community Facility</b>	a building that is a focal point for community interaction; a place where people can build relationships and a community identity; where residents can meet and carry out activities, a place that strengthens the life of a community; and where residents can access community services.

*Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy at [www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies](http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/policiesstrategies) to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.*

### 3. Scope

The policy extends to NHCLCs in the City of Casey that are funded through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Neighbourhood House Coordination Program and adhere to the Neighbourhood Houses Coordination Program Funding Guidelines operating from a community facility.

This policy is relevant to the following NHCLCs operating within the City of Casey:

- Balla Balla Community Centre
- Berwick Neighbourhood Centre
- Blind Bight Community Centre
- Brentwood Park Neighbourhood House
- Cranbourne Community House
- Doveton Neighbourhood Learning Centre
- Endeavour Hills Neighbourhood Centre
- Hallam Community Learning Centre
- Hampton Park Community House
- Merinda Park Learning and Community Centre
- Narre Community Learning Centre
- Oakgrove Community Centre.

This Policy does not apply to Council owned and managed community facilities.

### 4. Context

The City of Casey will be home to over 514,800 residents by 2041. With significant population growth across the municipality, relationships and connections people have with others can be affected. City of Casey values the work the NHCLCs do across the municipality and supports the provision of community development programs and activities that lead to community strengthening outcomes (as identified in the aims of the *Neighbourhood Houses Coordination Program Funding Guidelines*) highlighted below:

- Support diversity and promoting community participation and inclusion
- Facilitating community development and capacity building in support of individuals and groups within communities
- Supporting lifelong learning opportunities for people to improve their access to training and employment pathways
- Undertake community development processes to address locally identified priorities and needs through:
  - community consultation
  - development of agreed community responses to identified priorities and needs
  - identification of partners and funding sources
  - facilitating and evaluating responses to identified needs and priorities.

Key strategies of the Council Plan (2017 – 2021) aligned to this policy include:

- Enhance the health and wellbeing of all residents
- Build neighbourhoods that are safe and foster community connection
- Create community partnerships and support other agencies in the delivery of high quality local services
- Encourage residents to be active and engaged in their community
- Promote and support participation in artistic, cultural, sporting and leisure opportunities.

This policy is underpinned by the following City of Casey policy documents and external documents:

- Council's *Community Service Organisation Guiding Principles* of funding, advocacy, facilities, information, partnerships, business support, promotion and referral.
- *Community Development Principles* of inclusiveness, collaboration, capacity building, equity and responsiveness.
- *Community Facilities Planning Principles* highlighting Council's commitment to ensuring a transparent, equitable and consistent approach to the planning and development of new and existing multipurpose community facilities.
- *Victorian Child Safe Standards*.

## 5. Policy

The City of Casey is committed to supporting NHCLCs to provide services to Casey residents. This will be done through the following:

### 5.1. Funding

#### 5.1.1. City of Casey Funding Requirements

Council facilities and funding are made available only to NHCLCs that comply with the conditions outlined in each City of Casey *NHCLC Funding and Service Agreement*. Financial support is not provided for the primary purpose of delivering programs subsidised by State and/or Federal Government including:

- Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)
- State and/or nationally recognised pre-accredited and accredited courses (Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma)
- Courses which are the responsibility of other levels of government and adult education courses subsidised through the VET Fee HELP scheme.

### 5.1.2. Council's Annual NHCLC Funding and Service Agreements:

- Clarify the purpose for which funding is provided by Council to NHCLCs
- Detail the delivery of funds to NHCLCs
- Specify reporting obligations and accountability of the NHCLCs, e.g. copies of strategic plans and annual reports
- Assign the attendance required at Council managed NHCLC Manager/CEO and Committee of Management network meetings.

### 5.1.3. Base Operational Subsidy

A direct contribution to supplement the normal day to day operational costs such as administration, utilities and equipment.

### 5.1.4. Coordination Grant

A recurring grant that subsidises DHHS funding up to a total of 35 hours NHCLC coordination hours per week based upon the adopted DHHS funding rate allocated under the *Neighbourhood House Coordination Program*.

### 5.1.5. Additional Grants

NHCLCs can apply for other grants offered by the City of Casey that support like-minded community groups and organisations. NHCLCs are also encouraged to apply for funding from State and Federal Government, philanthropic groups/organisations and trust funds.

## 5.2. Lease Agreements

All NHCLCs identified in this policy operate from a Council facility on a lease agreement which is an agreement used for exclusive occupancy (the tenant has sole use of the premises).

As a condition of this agreement the NHCLC must:

- a) Comply with the Child Safe Standards, including any act done, or practice engaged in by its employees and agents; and
- b) Immediately notify Council where it becomes aware of a breach of sub clause (a) by the Contractor, Committee Member or its volunteers.

Council reserves the right during the term of the agreement to conduct an audit to ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards in relation to the operation of the agreement. This audit may be carried out by Council or an authorised party. The Committee must respond to all reasonable requests in a timely manner for Council to conduct the audit.

### 5.3. Advocacy

Council will advocate to government and other entities to enhance the support already provided to the NHCLCs and increase their opportunities to meet the growing needs of Council's community.

### 5.4. Facilities

Council provides community facilities to NHCLCs that satisfy the conditions of the lease agreement and makes them available for community use.

### 5.5. Information

Council will provide information to NHCLCs about the municipality's changing demographics and needs to support effective service planning.

### 5.6. Partnerships

Council will work in partnership with NHCLCs to develop and resource local communities. Council will work in partnership with Committees of Management, DHHS, Community House Network Southern Region Inc. and the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres to develop and resource local communities and strengthen service delivery.

### 5.7. Promotion

Council will commit to the creation of opportunities for NHCLCs to promote their services to the Casey community to increase awareness and facilitate access to NHCLCs.

### 5.8. Referral

The provision of relevant and up to date information to residents about available services across the NHCLCs within the City of Casey will support individual connections with NHCLCs.

## 6. Administrative Updates

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

## 7. Review

The next review of this document is scheduled for completion by 30 June 2022.