

City of Casey

CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY PLAN

2023-2027



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Casey proudly acknowledges the traditional owners, Casey's Aboriginal communities and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we work and live.



Image Credit: "Many Journey's, One Community" Merindah-Gunya Art

COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION

The City of Casey is committed to reconciliation and to strengthening respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Building on the foundations established through this work to date, we are embedding reconciliation across our systems, leadership and service delivery.

Guided by the Casey Aboriginal Gathering Place, we will continue to support cultural connection, build community capacity and work in partnership to achieve lasting, positive outcomes.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The City of Casey is a welcoming and inclusive community, we celebrate all people with their many different stories and experiences.

We believe a strong community is built on respect, belonging and shared responsibility for each other.

We are committed to ensuring everyone in Casey feels valued, supported, and able to fully participate in community life.

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CITY OF CASEY'S COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Casey is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children from abuse, harm and neglect is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of Council, its employees, contractors and volunteers.

Council acknowledges the contribution of Casey's children, young people, and families into the development of this plan. The City of Casey is committed to empowering children and young people through their participation in decisions that impact them.

CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES CHARTER

The City of Casey is proud to be a Child Friendly City, endorsing the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter. This means we are committed to:

- Acting in the best interests of children and young people in our community.
- Empowering children and young people to share their opinions and include them in decisions that affect them.
- Ensure equity for children and young people in our community based on their needs.

CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY VISION

Support and strengthen children, young people and families to maximise their potential as they participate and grow in the Casey community.

Introduction

Childhood and adolescence is a critical time for children, young people and their families. It is a time of rapid growth and development, with the acquisition of cognitive, social, and emotional skills that will shape their future, and therefore, our future.

City of Casey plays a critical role in supporting the development of children, young people and their families. Council achieves this through a range of mechanisms, from advocacy and partnerships through to service provision, such as Maternal and Child Health, kindergarten programs, playgroups, and youth services.

City of Casey aims to support and empower children, young people, and their families to reach their potential as they grow through opportunity, participation and connection in the Casey community.

Purpose

The purpose of this Child, Youth and Family plan is to articulate how Council works within funding, legislative, and policy parameters to plan for, support, and advocate for the social and emotional growth and development of children, young people and their families in the City of Casey.

It aligns with the Council Plan 2025-2029, which includes Casey's *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan*, as well as the *Child Youth and Family Strategic Service Plan*. These key policy documents provide a framework for Casey's citizens from birth to twenty-five and their families, and articulate Council's four-year plan to ensure services are designed and resourced to meet community outcomes, and sustainably and effectively meet current and future demand.



City of Casey operates under conditions of increasing population growth, high demand for services, and policy and legislative reform.

Demographics

The City of Casey is located on the southeast fringe of the Greater Melbourne metropolitan area and covers 409 square kilometres from Endeavour Hills down to the southern coastal villages of Western Port Bay.

Casey is well known for its recent growth and development, with significant well established urban areas and townships, making Casey a vibrant and diverse city.

Casey remains one of the largest growing regions in Australia with a current population of 444,654, forecast to grow by almost 40% to 614,075 by 2046.

More information on Casey's demographics can be found on our website.

Child, Youth and Family focusses on providing services to children and youth aged 0-25 years and their families, particularly new families. The service mix and delivery model are driven by population metrics.



45% of all Casey households are families*



5,236 were placed in Kindergarten under the Central Enrolment and Registration Scheme (2025)***



More than a third of Casey's population are aged 0-25*



More than 120 different birthplaces are represented among Casey's population, including children and young people*



Approximately 103,000 are aged between 10 – 25 years old*



Casey has the second largest population of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders in Greater Melbourne*



5,705 babies were born in Casey in 2025**

*Sourced: Community profile and population forecast from profile.id.com.au/casey

**Sourced: City of Casey dataset (from the Maternal and Child Health Child Development Information System)

***Sourced: City of Casey dataset (from the Casey Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme)

COUNCIL'S ROLE IN CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

City of Casey has an important role to plan, promote, and provide for the needs of children and young people through direct service delivery, infrastructure, and advocacy, as well as create an enabling environment through partnerships, policy and planning.

Facilities and Infrastructure

City of Casey manages an integrated and connected infrastructure network to deliver Child, Youth and Family services that reach the diverse population and vast area of our municipality. Infrastructure is influenced by growth and demand, community needs, and requires a flexible approach to meet children, young people and their families in the places where they live, work and play.

Council provides the physical infrastructure from which the following services operate:

	2026	2027
Casey-managed kindergartens	43	39
Early Years Manager kindergartens	5	11
Community-based kindergartens	3	3
Maternal and Child Health centres	42	45
Youth Information Centres	3	3
Outreach Mobile Youth Information Centre	1	1

As a department, Child Youth and Family also fulfil a consultative role in the development of council infrastructure such as parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities. This infrastructure supports the social and physical development of children and young people.

In addition to facility-based services, Child, Youth and Family delivers flexible and responsive outreach and pop-up programs in community settings. Services such as youth outreach, playgroups and Dads Matter activities are provided in locations where children, young people and families naturally gather, including community facilities, parks, playgrounds and other local spaces, improving accessibility and responding to local needs.

Advocacy

Council plays a crucial role in advocating for conditions under which children, young people and their families can thrive. Child Youth and Family has a key role in ensuring the voices of young people are heard and represented in decision making processes.

Council works with various stakeholders, including health services, education, and community organisations to address local issues, improve wellbeing, and promote the rights of children and young people. Council also plays a crucial role in the advocacy of services, infrastructure, and funding that supports the development and wellbeing of children and young people.



Service Delivery

Casey's Child Youth and Family service provides programs, events, support and other services to children, youth and families, with an aim to facilitate their health, wellbeing, safety, education and connectedness. Child, Youth and Family is made up of five distinct subservices.

What Council Provides	What the community sees
Maternal and Child Health	
A child health service for families accessing Universal and Enhanced Maternal and Child Health.	• Key Age and Stage (KAS) consultations from newborn until 3.5 years of age, with support for families of children up to six years of age • Support through Enhanced Maternal and Child Health for families experiencing vulnerability • Central intake and booking service • Referrals and linkages to additional support services • Deliver and facilitate support services for families, such as first-time parent groups, sleep and settling sessions, introducing solid food sessions and outreach visits • Lactation support service
Kindergarten	
Develop and manage partnerships and the Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES), to support access to kindergarten.	• Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (CRES) for both City of Casey managed and non-City of Casey managed providers of sessional kindergarten • Management of contribution fees from EYMs operating out of Council owned buildings • Coordination and delivery of two years of funded sessional kindergarten for eligible children
Provides programs that support each child's growth and development through play-based learning opportunities.	• Safeguard children through strong child-safe policies, procedures and staff practices • Coordinate School Readiness funding • Supporting community kindergarten providers and Early Years Managers through partnerships
Youth Services	
Delivers a range of services and programs to enable access and participation, while strengthening health and well-being of young people aged 10-25 years.	• Programs, information, safe spaces and connection opportunities for young people, with direct service delivery focused primarily on young people aged 12–18 years • Broader support for young people aged 10–25 years through partnerships, referral pathways, sector collaboration and advocacy • Free counselling and youth support delivered by Latrobe Community Health Services, with Youth Services supporting access through referral and partnership pathways • Programs, activities and events that support connection and belonging, life skills, wellbeing and personal development • Opportunities for young people to access safe, welcoming spaces through Youth Information Centres and the outreach Mobile Youth Information Centre
Early Years	
Activities and support for family and community with a focus on emerging and or vulnerable populations.	• Best Start partnership, a collaboration of local service providers who address local issues to enhance access to services such as playgroup and kindergartens • Dad's Matter program, which promotes the important role of fathers and father figures through a range of activities and programs for fathers and their children • Support for community led playgroups • Supported playgroups for eligible children • Early learning events, programs and parenting support for children aged 0-12 years and their families
Child Safe	
Implementation of the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards to safeguard all children and young people who attend services, programs, and events delivered by, and spaces owned or managed by the City of Casey.	• Council wide compliance to the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards and 50 compliance indicators • Safe spaces for children and young people • Services, programs and events that promote the safety and autonomy of children and young people • Policies, guidelines and procedures that promote a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse • Opportunities for children and young people to have a say in council decision making

COUNCIL'S ROLE IN CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Context and Conditions

The internal and external environment has a significant impact and influence on the Child Youth and Family strategic service. From changes to policy direction and program funding to managing population growth, partnerships and advocacy. The three most significant factors are the political, economic, and social conditions.



POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT



Kindergarten Services

With many of the programs and services delivered by Child Youth and Family strategic service funded through State Government, changes to policy and political parties can have a significant and often unexpected impact on service delivery, partnerships and advocacy. Of particular significance is the Victorian Government's **Best Start, Best Life (BSBL) reform** for early childhood education.

The BSBL reform includes 15 hours of 3-year-old kindergarten by 2029 and up to 30 hours of 4-year-old kindergarten by 2034. This reform will have a significant impact on Council's kindergarten infrastructure planning and provision, and the service delivery model.

Casey is currently one of the largest local government Early Years Manager (EYM), managing 43 kindergarten sites in 2026, within one of the fastest growing Local Government Areas in Australia.

To ensure our community has access to free 3-and-4-year-old-kindergarten Council is continuing to advocate to the State Government and other political parties for infrastructure funding, Kindergartens on School Sites, and a funding model that reflects and acknowledges the challenges faced by a large growth Council. In 2025/26 meetings have been held with Department of Education representatives, Councillors and local Ministers of Parliament to advocate on behalf of our community.



Maternal and Child Health

The City of Casey's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service continues to operate within a challenging workforce environment, with recruitment and retention of qualified MCH nurses remaining a significant issue across Victoria. While workforce pressures continue across the sector, Casey has restored service delivery and is focused on strengthening workforce sustainability through initiatives such as the Maternal and Child Health Graduate Nurse Program and expanded recruitment pathways.

The Maternal and Child Health sector is entering a period of substantial reform at a state level. Key developments include the ongoing negotiation of a revised Maternal and Child Health Memorandum of Understanding between local government and the Department of Health, an upcoming review of the Key Ages and Stages (KAS) Framework, and changes to funding arrangements for Sleep and Settling services. Together, these reforms have the potential to influence future funding models, service expectations and performance measures across Victoria.

As one of the state's largest and fastest-growing municipalities, the City of Casey will continue to advocate for sustainable funding and service models that ensure Maternal and Child Health services remain accessible, responsive and aligned to the needs of a growing community.



ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Economic Conditions

Inflation is having an impact on Council service delivery both directly and indirectly. Council works within a rate capping environment and are managing increased cost of service, and a consequently increasing funding gap to provide services to one of the fastest growing communities within Victoria.

Youth Services and playgroup development are primarily funded by Council, leaving these services vulnerable to these economic conditions under which Council is operating. The City of Casey community, like many others, are experiencing increased levels of financial stress due to increased cost of living. This in turn leaves people unable to pay rates and infringements, and at increased need for material aid and support.

Rising oil prices linked to ongoing tensions in the Middle East can place further financial pressure on Casey families by increasing the cost of fuel, transport and everyday goods. Higher petrol and diesel prices affect households directly through more expensive commuting, school drop-offs and family travel, and indirectly as businesses pass on increased freight and delivery costs through groceries, essential items and services.

For families already managing cost-of-living pressures, these increases can reduce disposable income, limit participation in community activities and increase demand for free or low-cost Council programs, material aid and family support services.

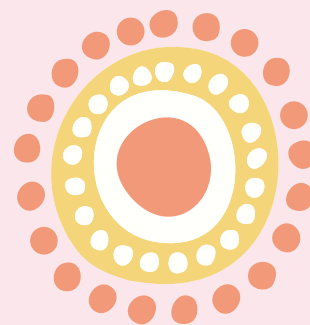
Currently, state government funding cannot sustain population growth, creating an increasing gap between the demand for services and the resources available to deliver them.

As the Casey population increases, the need for services and infrastructure expands, but the allocated funding remains insufficient to meet these demands. Without adequate funding adjustments, the ability to effectively support a growing population becomes increasingly challenging.

Kindergarten Programs, Maternal and Child Health services and Supported Playgroups are predominantly funded by the state government. The current state financial situation will likely impact these services, leading to reduced funding, which may affect the accessibility of services, particularly in vulnerable and high-demand areas.

The cost of maintaining infrastructure is rising, with expenses for maintenance continuing to increase. At the same time, the cost of building new infrastructure is also escalating due to factors like material shortages and inflation.

These financial pressures are compounded by a decrease in available funding opportunities, making it increasingly challenging to keep up with both the maintenance of existing infrastructure and the demand for new projects. This creates a significant strain on budgets.



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders

Casey is home to an estimated 2,305 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders.

This is the second largest population in Greater Melbourne.



Cultural Diversity

The top three countries of birth for residents are:

- India
- Sri Lanka
- Afghanistan

The most spoken languages at home other than English are:

- Punjabi
- Sinhalese
- Hazaraghi



SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Social Conditions

Child Youth and Family services are free for the community to access, which has become increasingly critical in the current cost-of-living crisis. As Casey families continue to face rising expenses and financial stressors, accessing these services and programs without the burden of additional costs is vital, which has led to an increase in demand. Community needs have changed dramatically over the past few years, with families and businesses still recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns.

The Casey community, like many other communities, are dealing with increasing cost of living pressures as well as ongoing impacts to mental health and wellbeing. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, with increasing supports required to support their social, emotional, and developmental wellbeing.

Council is continuing to innovate and design service models that enhance community connection and wellbeing for our diverse population in a post-COVID-19 world. Services need to be flexible and ready to adapt to evolving community needs. Often, the growth in City of Casey is rapid and the evolution of services needs to be agile to match the pace and decrease the risks of social isolation and disconnection.

The rapid population growth forecast for the municipality is expected to drive at least proportional growth in service demand. The largest cohort in Casey is people aged birth to four years old, while almost half of all households within the municipality are couple families with children. This places stress on Maternal and Child Health and Kindergarten services, though it has an indirect impact on a variety of services, including transport, sport and recreation and youth programs.

Domestic and overseas migration is the biggest driver of population growth in the City of Casey, with multicultural communities accounting for 42%* of the population. More than 16%* of the population of the City of Casey are new arrivals to Australia, making our community of children, young people and their families culturally vibrant and diverse. However, in some cases this brings with it increased vulnerability, increased need for support services, lower literacy levels, and difficulty speaking English.

For children in early years services, Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) captured a significant increase (0.4 AEDC score increase) in vulnerability in the 'language' developmental domain for children starting school from 2024 compared to 2021**.

This places additional pressure on Council services being able to cater for the demand of children, young people and their families who need to be prioritised for a service.

Workforce shortages

Workforce shortages continue to be experienced across the early years sector, impacting the capacity of services to meet growing community demand.

The kindergarten and early childhood education sector faces significant workforce pressures driven by population growth and increased participation resulting from the Best Start, Best Life reforms. Shortages of qualified teachers and educators, combined with ongoing recruitment and retention challenges, continue to affect service delivery, workforce sustainability and opportunities for future growth. Similarly, the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) sector continues to experience workforce shortages across Victoria and Australia. The limited availability of qualified MCH nurses presents ongoing challenges for local government services, particularly in rapidly growing municipalities such as Casey. High demand for services, including support for families with complex and diverse needs, places additional pressure on an already constrained workforce.

Despite these sector-wide challenges, the City of Casey has made significant progress in strengthening workforce capacity through targeted recruitment and retention initiatives. This includes the introduction of a Maternal and Child Health Graduate Nurse Program and the successful recruitment of eight graduate nurses. These initiatives have supported the restoration of MCH service delivery and improved access for families.

However, workforce shortages across both kindergarten and MCH services remain a key risk, highlighting the need for continued investment in workforce development, recruitment pathways and retention strategies to ensure sustainable, high-quality services for children and families.

*Sourced: Community profile and population forecast from profile.id.com.au/casey

**Sourced: Australian Early Development Census 2024



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN CASEY

Safeguarding Children in Casey

Safeguarding children is essential to ensure their safety, well-being, and protection from harm, abuse, and neglect. It creates a secure environment where children can thrive, learn, and develop with confidence.

There are two significant levels of control to safeguard children who access any of Council's services or facilities.

The first level is Council's Child Safe team, ensuring Council meets its legislative requirements under the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The team provides information to the community on Council's reporting process and available supports. The internal measures that are in place to safeguard children include:

- **Robust recruitment practices** to ensure child safety is prioritised through screening, interviews, and mandatory background checks for all staff and volunteers.
- **Mandatory child safety training** provided to all employees and volunteers during induction and every two years, with additional workshops for kindergarten staff and leaders.
- **Clear reporting guidance** displayed at all Council kindergarten facilities to support community awareness and action on child safety concerns.
- **Ongoing compliance monitoring** conducted through monthly checks of Working with Children Checks to ensure staff credentials remain current.
- **Thorough investigation of conduct** is carried out by the Internal Response Team for all reportable allegations, ensuring compliance with legal obligations.

The second level of control is in Council's child facing service delivery roles, such as the kindergarten program. Council's kindergarten services are all required to have a service approval to operate which is managed by the Department of Education. The Department of Education assess all services against the legislation through an Assessment and Rating visit and unscheduled compliance visits.

All of Council's kindergarten services have been assessed by the Department and are compliant with the National Quality Standards. As a part of this assessment, Council needs to demonstrate compliance to the Child Safe Standards, including having appropriate guidelines in place to support child safe practices.

Casey's commitment to safeguarding children is embedded across all levels of Council operations—from rigorous internal protocols to externally regulated service delivery. By prioritising child safety through proactive measures, ongoing compliance, and community engagement, Council ensures that every child accessing its services is protected, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Following the release of the Victorian Rapid Child Safety Review in August 2025, the Casey Kindergarten Program has undertaken significant work in response to the requirements of the regulatory reforms.

Across Casey kindergartens, this has included further review and strengthening of child safety systems, governance arrangements and compliance processes. Key areas of focus have included enhanced workforce registers, stronger recruitment practices, and supporting staff to complete mandatory national child safety training. This work ensures our kindergarten staff are clear about their obligations to prevent, identify and respond to risks to children.

PROGRAM UPDATES

City of Casey's Response to the Best Start, Best Life Reform

The City of Casey has continued to support the staged roll-out of the Best Start, Best Life reforms across the municipality, progressively increasing program hours for children in the years before school. All Council managed 3-year-old kindergarten programs now deliver 15 hours per week and 4-year-old kindergarten hours range from 15 up to 22.5 hours per week for eligible children.

Council has maintained its service delivery model which includes delivering programs that meet local demand within current workforce capacity, while gradually relinquishing some Council-managed sites to alternative providers as the reform requirements expand. Over the past 12 months new Early Years Managers have been engaged to operate both new services and those divested by Council, providing families with greater choice and helping meet local access to kindergarten programs for Casey families.

Through strong training partnerships over a period of 12 months, the Casey Kindergarten Program together with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, have nurtured the development of the Casey workforce ensuring the provision of inclusive, culturally responsive and trauma-informed support, benefiting children, families and the broader Casey community.

Council has continued to improve kindergarten infrastructure through change bench upgrades and targeted facility works at Hunt Club and Ramleigh Kindergarten, creating additional licensed places and supporting safe, accessible kindergarten programs for children and families.

Council remains a key player in the sector and will continue to support kindergartens through service delivery, growth infrastructure provision, and management of the Central Registration and Enrolment Service.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Community Connection Through the Early Years

The City of Casey continues to improve outcomes for children and families through the delivery of high-quality early years programs, events and initiatives that strengthen connection, participation and wellbeing. In a fast-growing and diverse municipality, these programs provide inclusive and accessible opportunities for families to engage with Council services, build relationships and participate in community life.

Large-scale community events such as *Spring into Play*, *PlayDaze Nature Play* and the *Playgroup End of Year Celebration* create welcoming spaces for families to come together and part take in a range of learning and play experiences. Beyond attendance these events support children's rights, physical activity, connection with nature and opportunities for families to build relationships while accessing educational and recreational experiences, as well as connecting with local services.

Council's targeted early years programs also play an important role in building community capacity and strengthening family relationships. Programs such as Dads Matter, Pop Up Playgroups and Supported Playgroups provide practical, place based opportunities for fathers, parents, carers, and children to build confidence, strengthen peer connection and access support in community settings.

Together, these initiatives show Council's commitment to delivering responsive, inclusive services that build family resilience, strengthen community connection and support positive outcomes for Casey's children and families.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Youth Services - Moving Toward a More Connected Service Model

Building on the Youth Services review and community engagement undertaken in 2025, Council is moving toward a more connected and flexible service model that better reflects what we heard from young people, families and the broader sector.

Through engagement in late 2025, we heard from more than 1,100 young people about their experiences, priorities and what helps them feel connected, supported and recognised in community. This feedback is helping shape how Youth Services will evolve through 2026, with a stronger focus on meeting young people where they are.

This means increasing outreach, strengthening relationships with community service organisations and education settings, and helping create more coordinated, connected responses across Youth Information Centres, community spaces and other places young people already access and trust. It also means using what we continue to learn from young people, families and partners to shape services that are responsive to local needs.

The new service model includes:

- more outreach and place-based support across Casey
- partnering with community service organisations to deliver services and programs from Youth Information Centres
- Latrobe Community Health Service delivering free counselling and support for young people from Youth Information Centres
- stronger sector collaboration and referral pathways
- more opportunities for young people to participate, lead and have their voices heard
- further opportunities to recognise and celebrate young people's contributions in community
- a stronger role for Council in advocating for the services, spaces and supports young people and families need.

This approach keeps Council's investment in youth services while adapting how services are delivered, so support is more visible, accessible and connected to young people's everyday lives.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Enhancing Access to Maternal and Child Health Services Through Partnerships and Innovation

During 2025/26, the City of Casey strengthened partnerships with developers Mirvac and Balcon to improve access to Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services in Casey's growth communities. Through these partnerships, MCH services continued to operate from Smiths Lane Community Hub in Clyde North and expanded into Orana Community Place, bringing services closer to families while reducing pressure on existing centres operating at capacity.

To support increasing demand in areas experiencing the highest birth rates, MCH expanded Lactation consultation sessions, drop-in clinics and one-to-one appointments. This has provided more opportunities for families to access timely support during important stages of early feeding, including breastfeeding, introduction to solids, transition to bottle feeding and parent wellbeing.

Importantly, this growth has not reduced access for families in other parts of Casey. Lactation services continue to be delivered across the municipality, ensuring all families can access timely support and advice close to home. This approach supports equitable access to services while maintaining continuity of care and positive experiences for families.

During the year, the introduction of the Genesys phone system further enhanced the way families access MCH services. The new system provides a more responsive customer experience, enabling calls to be answered more efficiently and offering families the option of a call back rather than waiting on hold. This reduces waiting times, improves accessibility and supports more timely access to appointments, information and support. Modern callback technology is recognised for improving customer satisfaction, reducing frustration associated with long wait times and creating a more efficient service experience during periods of high demand.





Supporting and strengthening children, young people and families to maximise their potential as they participate and grow in the Casey community.

GOALS AND INITIATIVES

The Child, Youth and Family Plan has five goals that have been developed to respond to community needs and support children and young people aged 0 – 25 and their families.

- 1 CYF services and programs are delivered to the community to improve developmental outcomes for children and young people, are high quality, innovative and adhere to legislative requirements
- 2 Positive outcomes are delivered to children and young people in the City of Casey through advocacy and enhanced partnerships with external organisations.
- 3 CYF supports the organisation's Stronger Community outcome through the effective engagement of children and young people in the services and programs we deliver, and on decisions we make that impact on them.
- 4 CYF balances the competing demands of population growth, policy changes, and a constrained funding environment, ensuring a focus on financial efficiencies.
- 5 All children and young people who attend Council services, programs, and events, in a Council facility or space, feel and are safe.



Design, build, and update CYF facilities.

Goal	Description	Benefits / Impact	Funding Required	Change Complexity	Year
4	Design the Hardy's Road Family and Community Centre to support community access to services and facilities in the Clyde growth corridor.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	Grants	Low	24/25
4	Construct Hardy's Road Family and Community Centre to support community access to services and facilities in the Clyde growth corridor.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	Grants	Low	25/26
4	Design the Ballarto Road Family and Community Centre to support community access to services and facilities in the Clyde growth corridor.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	Grants	Low	24/25
4	Construct Ballarto Road Family and Community Centre to support community access to services and facilities in the Clyde growth corridor.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	Grants	Low	25/26
4	Advocate for investment in infrastructure that enhances access to safe spaces, and inclusive opportunities for young people.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	No	Low	26/27
4	Investigate future community infrastructure needs in Endeavour Hills.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	No	Low	2026
4	Support the design, construction, and renewal of infrastructure that improves community access to CYF services and programs.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	Grants	Low	26/27

Ensure systems, processes and facilities enhance the safety and well-being of children, young people and their families.

Goal	Description	Benefits / Impact	Funding Required	Change Complexity	Year
5	Undertake a scoping exercise for MCH facilities to ensure their design meets the needs of contemporary service delivery.	Facilities continue to be fit for purpose.	Yes	Low	23-27
4	Review the change table facilities at Council owned kindergartens and develop and implement a program to upgrade facilities, where required.	Facilities continue to be fit for purpose.	Grants	Low	23-27
5	Develop volunteer management system and facilitate Child Safe Workshop training for all volunteers.	City of Casey delivers on its commitment to creating a child safe organisation.	No	Low	23-25
5	Review and implement the Child Safe Champions program.	City of Casey delivers on its commitment to creating a child safe organisation.	No	Low	23/24
5	Implement the Child Safe Audit Tool, in consultation with the Child Safe Culture Working Group, on an ongoing basis.	City of Casey delivers on its commitment to creating a child safe organisation.	No	Low	24-27
2 5	Work with internal and external stakeholders to continue to implement the 11 Child Safe Standards.	City of Casey is compliant with its legislative responsibility under the Child Safe standards.	No	Medium	23-26
5	Elevate voices of children and young people in decisions that impact them through the development and implementation of organisational processes resources and training.	City of Casey supports the CFCC charter principles and staff are aware of our commitment to the principles City of Casey delivers on its commitment to creating a child safe organisation.	No	Low	23-26

Service innovation and improvement

Goal	Description	Benefits / Impact	Funding Required	Change Complexity	Year
1 3	Implement the Central Registration Enrolment Scheme (CRES) system to enable equitable access to kindergarten for children and families.	A more positive customer experience when enrolling in a kindergarten program.	No	High	23/24
1	Implement the PSFO funding hand back to support CSO sector and Council sustainability.	CSO sector to continue to have access to the PSFO service. Council delivers service efficiencies, where appropriate.	Yes	High	23/24
1 2	Support access to 3- and 4-year old kindergarten through the implementation of Year 2 of Casey's new kindergarten service model.	City of Casey is responsive to changes in policy through efficient service model enhancements. City of Casey ensures families and children have access to two years of kindergarten, ensuring children feel connected.	Yes	High	24-26
1	Support access to youth programs that address social connection and wellbeing through implementing the outcomes of the Youth Services review.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	Yes	High	24/25

Service innovation and improvement (continued)

Goal	Description	Benefits / Impact	Funding Required	Change Complexity	Year
3	Support the engagement of new parents in the MCH service by providing a consistent service/experience for the first 0-8 week Key Age and Stage (KAS) visits.	Improved customer experience in the MCH service. Greater participation at KAS visits.	No	High	23/24
1 2	Develop an MCH clinical education and governance framework and facilitate educational programs.	MCH staff are supported and highly skilled leading to improved community outcomes. Increased staff retention.	No	Medium	23-25
1 3	Evaluate how CYF programs engage and support fathers, ensuring they remain future ready and relevant.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	No	Medium	26/27
3	Evaluate how CYF supports the social connection of parents and children through community playgroups, ensuring they remain future ready and relevant.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	No	Medium	26/27
3	Lead the ongoing refinement of the MCH digital phone queue system, with defined measures to increase response times and support improved customer service outcomes aligned with Council expectations.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	No	Medium	26/27
3	Lead the coordination, and delivery of the state-determined MCH IT program, working in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure alignment with sector changes and Council requirements.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	No	Medium	26/27
4	Develop and implement a MCH workload index framework to inform and support evidence-based infrastructure planning, capital development, and asset renewal decisions.	Facilities are adequately planned, delivered and maintained to meet future demand.	No	Medium	26/27
3	Renew the Child Youth & Family Strategic Service Plan.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	No	Medium	2027

Develop and maintain strong internal & external partnerships with key stakeholders to support the delivery of the Stronger Communities outcome.

Goal	Description	Benefits / Impact	Funding Required	Change Complexity	Year
2	Develop a partnership framework to support the delivery of the Stronger Communities Outcome.	City of Casey supports the delivery of services and programs through effective partnerships.	No	Medium	24/25
2	Partner with Best Start Partnership stakeholders to develop and implement an annual logic model that clearly defines goals, outcome and priority actions.	City of Casey can respond to and meet current and future community needs through partnerships. Improved participation in MCH and Kindergarten for vulnerable children/families.	No	Low	23-27
2 4	Lead the kindergarten strategic project planning and collaborate with key stakeholders to plan for and deliver sector policy reforms and meet Council requirements.	City of Casey supports the delivery of services and programs through effective partnerships.	Yes	Low	26/27
2 4	Work with EYM stakeholders to address barriers to access to two years of funded kindergarten in Casey.	City of Casey supports the delivery of services and programs through effective partnerships.	No	Low	26/27



Lead advocacy and engagement to empower children, young people and their families.

Goal	Description	Benefits / Impact	Funding Required	Change Complexity	Year
3 5	Develop and deliver Voices of Children and Young People online toolkit to support capacity building within the organisation in engaging children and young people.	City of Casey delivers on its commitment to creating a child safe organisation.	No	Medium	23-25
2 3	Deliver the annual Youth Summit to support young people and capture their voices on issues affecting them.	Services and programs are designed for those who will utilise them.	Yes	Low	24/26
3	Develop and implement a co-design best practice model to inform service and program delivery.	Children and young people have opportunities to have a say in decisions that impact them. Services and programs are designed for those who will utilise them.	No	Medium	23-26
1 3	Increase access to youth (10-25 years) programs that address social connection and wellbeing, through improved coordination and delivery of services.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	No	Medium	26/27
1 2	Deliver initiatives that support children and their family's health and wellbeing, within the Maternal and Child Health Program.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs. City of Casey supports the delivery of services and programs through effective partnerships.	No	Low	26/27
1 2	Improve men's social connection and wellbeing by creating opportunities to strengthen peer connection and positive fatherhood experiences.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs. City of Casey supports the delivery of services and programs through effective partnerships.	No	Medium	26/27
1	Promote the MCH service through digital platforms and diverse media channels to boost visibility, engagement, and participation.	City of Casey delivers efficient services and programs that are responsive to the community needs.	No	Medium	26/27
2 3	Convene a youth mental health roundtable to build evidence, identify local needs, and inform collaborative responses to emerging priorities.	Children and young people have opportunities to have a say in decisions that impact them. Services and programs are designed for those who will utilise them.	No	Medium	26/27

Strengthen CYF workforce.

Goal	Description	Benefits / Impact	Funding Required	Change Complexity	Year
2	Commence implementation of the MCH Workforce Strategy, with clear processes, milestones and measures in place to track progress toward the City of Casey being an employer of choice.	Increased staff retention. Improved customer experience in the MCH service.	No	Low	23-27
4	Deliver CYF Induction program to build connections and collaboration across the department.	Improves connection with the CYF department. Improved staff retention.	No	Low	23-27
2	Develop and implement a Kindergarten Workforce Strategy that establishes the City of Casey as an employer of choice in the sector.	Increased staff retention, with City of Casey continuing to be an employer of choice in the sector.	No	Low	23-26
2	Review the Kindergarten Workforce Strategy to reflect the current operating model and sector reforms.	Increased staff retention, with City of Casey continuing to be an employer of choice in the sector.	No	Low	26/27



WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED SO FAR

2023–2026

Goal	Achievement	Year
5	100% of Casey Child Youth and Family staff have completed Child Safe e-learn modules to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people at Casey managed services.	23/24
3	Implementation of the Continuity of Care Model for the Maternal and Child Health service.	23/24
1 3	Implementation of our new Kindergarten Enrolment and Registration system.	23/24
2 3 5	Multiple opportunities across Council for children and young people to participate in decision-making on issues that affect them.	23/24
2	Increase in staff retention across Child Youth and Family services.	23/24
1	Achieved a 91% customer satisfaction rating from 844 responses, using Voice of Customer data to drive service improvements and enhance customer experience across CYF programs.	24/25
1	A major review was undertaken of the Youth Services program and the team continued to implement the first year of the new Kindergarten Service Model.	24/25
2	Developed targeted workforce strategies for MCH and Kindergarten programs to enhance service quality and improve staff recruitment and retention.	24/25
3 5	Delivered the Voices of Children and Young People toolkit to support capacity building within the organisation in engaging children and young people on decisions that impact on them.	24/25
4	Opening of a new MCH consult room at Smiths Lane Community Hub, offering vital maternal and child health services to families in Clyde North amid rapid population growth and limited infrastructure.	24/25
5	Facilitation of Child Safe Workshops for local supporting clubs in February, with two more delivered for McArthur agency kindergarten staff in March and May, all maintaining the Voice of Customer average satisfaction rate of 94%.	24/25
5	Leading the statewide introduction of positive fatherhood imagery in early years services, promoting gender equity in parenting and fostering inclusive environments that support children's development.	24/25

Goal	Achievement	Year
4	Completion and opening of the Clyde Township Family and Community Centre as part of the Child Youth and Family infrastructure program, significantly increasing access to kindergarten and MCH services in this key growth area.	23-25
4	Completion and reopening of Narre Warren North Kindergarten extension, including two new MCH offices.	24/25
1	A high staff retention rate of over 97% across Child Youth and Family in 2024/25.	24/25
3	During 2024/25 there were 43 opportunities for children and young people's voices to be heard in decisions that impacted them through such activities as <i>Shape Your City</i> consultation, Children's Week event, Warm Safe Home project in kindergartens, and participation in Committee's (FreeZA, Youth Action Committee and Youth Summit Peer Leaders).	24/25
1	Participation in the MCH service in 2024/25 increased by over 26%.	24/25
1	Increased participation in Council's MCH service, with participation rates among Aboriginal children and their families rising by over 44% in 2024/25.	23-25
1	Completed the implementation of the Youth Services Review, establishing a stronger partnership-focused service model.	25/26
2 4	Strengthened partnerships and access to services through a three year funding agreement with Latrobe Community Health Service to deliver youth counselling and mental health supports.	25/26
2	Implemented a new Child Youth and Family Partnership Approach to strengthen collaboration through shared principles, clear expectations, and a focus on achieving community-driven outcomes.	25/26
3	Delivered the Voices of Children and Young People Toolkit, embedding children's voice and participation into service design and delivery across the organisation.	25/26
4	Progressed the MCH Interim Site Project, improving service readiness and accessibility. These sites included Smiths Lane and Orana in Clyde North, along with Ercildoune in Cranbourne West.	25/26

Goal	Achievement	Year
1	Increased hours of kindergarten provided to eligible Pre-Prep children across Casey in line with the roll out of the Best Start Best Life reform timeline.	25/26
2	Strong partnerships with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Alannah and Madeline Foundation have strengthened cultural and trauma-informed practice across our kindergarten workforce, supporting more inclusive, responsive and quality experiences for children and families.	25/26
1	Increased access to kindergarten through a single point of access in the Central Registration and Enrolment System, achieving over 7,000 registrations and 6,136 placement offers.	25/26
4	Supported planning, transitions and operational readiness for the continued expansion of kindergarten services across Casey, working with Early Years Managers and independent providers to respond to demand, growth and future service delivery requirements.	25/26
1	Delivered Smalltalk playgroups supporting 452 vulnerable families and 578 children, including 52 home visits, improving engagement and developmental outcomes.	25/26
2	Increased parent confidence and social connection, with vulnerable families demonstrating increased participation in broader community events such as PlayDaze.	25/26
5	Delivered large-scale early years community events including <i>Spring into Play</i> , <i>PlayDaze</i> , <i>Campfire Night</i> and <i>Man With a Pram</i> engaging over 4,000 participants, promoting play-based learning, community participation, healthy relationships, fatherhood and stronger family connections across Casey.	25/26
5	Hosted the inaugural <i>Forum for Men and Fathers</i> bringing together 120 men from diverse backgrounds to explore wellbeing, healthy relationships and fatherhood.	25/26
5	Supported more than 1,200 children and families to access Pop Up and Supported Playgroups increasing social connection, parenting confidence and supporting play-based learning.	25/26



Contact City of Casey

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NRS: 133 677 (for the deaf, hearing or speech impaired)



TIS: 131450 (Translating and Interpreting Service)

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