

Community Service Organisations

GROWTH AND ATTRACTION FRAMEWORK

2024-2027



DRAFT

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Review Date:	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Responsible Department:	Active Communities
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Statement of Acknowledgement

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.

Diversity Statement

The City of Casey is home to a remarkable diversity of cultures, languages, faiths, identities, landscapes and stories. From our First Australians to our recent arrivals and every wave between, the City of Casey welcomes and represents all community members and their respective ambitions to live healthy, rewarding and happy lives. These intersecting and overlapping community stories from Casey's collective identity contribute to its evolving, rich history. We recognise this diversity as our strength and we aim to share, nurture and celebrate it.

GLOSSARY

Key term	Definition
Council	means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 2020
Councillors	means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council
Council officer	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
Community Facility	means a building that acts as 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
Community Service Organisation (CSO)	CSOs are not for profit organisations accountable to a governing body that are established to provide support and assistance to individuals, families, and groups to maximise their potential and enhance community wellbeing. These CSOs provide psychosocial, physical, educational, financial, and other support services, strengthen community ties, and build healthier and stronger communities.
Interface Councils	means municipalities at the interface of metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria, that share aspects of both urban and rural communities. Interface areas account for most of the population growth in Victoria. The City of Casey is one of 10 interface councils that form a ring around outer metropolitan Melbourne, along with Cardinia Shire Council, Hume City Council, Melton City Council, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, City of Whittlesea, Wyndham City Council and Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

LGBTIQA+	An abbreviation which is used to describe lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex people collectively
Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)	Refers to people from a range of countries and ethnic and cultural groups. It includes people of non-English speaking background as well as people born outside Australia but whose first language is English and encompasses a wide range of experiences and needs.
Mortgage Stress	means the financial burden experienced by homeowners who spend a disproportionate amount of income paying off a home loan. Generally, it's thought that mortgage stress kicks in when more than 30% of a household's pre-tax income goes to its mortgage
Psychological distress	Means a state of emotional suffering characterized by symptoms of depression (e.g., loss of interest; unhappiness; desperateness) and anxiety (e.g., restlessness; feeling tense).
Growth areas	Means areas on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne that are designated for large-scale change, over many years from rural to urban use. Melbourne has seven growth areas – Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mitchell, Whittlesea and Wyndham.
Casey Futures Partnership	A structured network of local agencies representing a wide range of services that work collaboratively and in the spirit of shared leadership to improve the provision of human services for Casey residents.

INTRODUCTION

Community Service Organisations (CSOs) are not-for-profit organisations accountable to a governing body that are established to provide support and assistance to individuals, families, and groups to maximise their potential and enhance community wellbeing. These CSOs provide psychosocial, physical, educational, financial, and other support services. They also play a vital part in building healthier and stronger communities. Collectively, these highly capable and resourceful agencies form Casey's community services sector and generate around 15,000 local jobs per year.¹

Casey is a diverse, vibrant, growing community that will reach over 500,000 people by 2050. This makes Casey the most populous Local Government Area (LGA) in Victoria and the sixth most populous across Australia. It is one of 10 municipalities that are placed at the interface of metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria, forming a ring around outer metropolitan Melbourne.

This rapid growth brings both opportunity and challenge to build a bold, resilient, connected community. There is significant social need within the City of Casey, with increasing socioeconomic disadvantage, and declining health and wellbeing outcomes. Casey's community services sector is unable to meet not only the volume of service demand, but also the diverse needs of emerging populations and the complexity of their needs. Increased demand is resulting in long waiting lists, service rationing, short-term solutions and the most vulnerable missing out.

As with other Interface Councils, this rapid population growth in Casey 'is creating unprecedented challenges for infrastructure and service delivery, especially in the growth areas, where infrastructure and services of all types are limited and lag behind population settlement.'²

The Framework sets out a new and dynamic approach to building sector capacity and leading coordinated advocacy efforts to attract funding and specialist services to Casey where they are most needed.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Figure 1 below provides a broad snapshot of some of the specific social challenges facing Casey residents that are driving increased demand for community support services. They underline the necessity of a coordinated and partnership approach to sector growth and development.

Figure 1 Social challenges in Casey



FRAMEWORK PURPOSE

Our purpose in developing this Framework is to establish the foundations for shared agreement and collective action so that CSOs can grow both individually and collaboratively and Council decision-makers know what to focus on and when to act.

OUR VISION

In partnership with CSOs across Casey, our vision is that all community members will have access to the community services they need from agencies best placed to deliver them, now and into the future.

OUR COMMITMENT

The City of Casey is committed to building a stronger community services sector. We need a mix of services in Casey that will improve the health and wellbeing of residents who are currently under-served. External funding for our community services sector has not kept pace with Casey’s rapidly growing population and diverse community needs.

Council is committed to growing the capacity of existing community service organisations and attracting new specialist services to Casey to address the resultant priority service gaps. Where there is alignment with Council priorities, strategies, resources and community needs, Council will consider options to advocate, fund, accommodate, collaborate, and partner with relevant CSOs to achieve this in a fair, equitable and transparent way.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PARTNERSHIP FOCUSED	Work with CSOs as equal partners to assess and respond to community need.
INNOVATIVE AND FUTURE ORIENTED	Support CSOs to innovate and adapt to meet changing community needs.
IMPACTFUL	Direct resources to where they produce the best outcomes for people in immediate need; have the greatest impact over time; and address underlying causes of inequality.
NEEDS BASED AND INFORMED	Bring into focus the demand CSOs are experiencing and the lived experience of residents who use their services.
REVIEWED	Measure outcomes and adjust to new opportunities as they present.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2025 identified that a market-driven approach to service provision was resulting in a perpetuation of service gaps in Casey and a business-as-usual approach would not meet residents’ needs into the future.

Through an intensive and targeted consultation process, Council has identified four goals that it commits to implementing over the next three years in partnership with CSOs, government agencies, private enterprise and philanthropic organisations.

GOAL ONE: LOCAL DATA WE CAN ACT ON

Co-design a Casey-specific data resource for determining service needs and priorities that will inform decision making by CSOs and Council together about where we put our resources and focus our advocacy.

This includes:

- Collecting data about service demand, wait lists, service referrals, eligibility barriers and individual case studies.
- Tracking health and wellbeing trends through Council's new annual Household Survey to capture the experience of people not using services as well as those who do.
- Identifying barriers experienced by people with multiple disadvantages to using support services, particularly those whose voices are not usually heard.
- Aligning data analysis with the four-year cycle of the Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy to inform Council decision-making.
- Establishing a steering committee of Council, CSO, and community representatives to oversee the collection, analysis and sharing of data.

Why this goal is important

Co-designing a shared data resource with CSOs will generate richer local and individual level data, capture a plurality of local perspectives, and provide a more complete story of social need in Casey than what has been possible in the past.

The scale and complexity of community need, together with a constrained fiscal environment, makes it important to have a unified data source to underpin priority setting.

In consultations to develop this document, CSOs have asked for service mapping. They want a better understanding of what services already exist as well as where the strengths, gaps and duplications are across the sector. They want local data that they can use.

How we will know we have achieved this goal



GOAL TWO: A THRIVING COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR

Create the conditions for a highly functioning and collaborative community services sector that can respond to growing community demand.

This will be done by:

- Launching and resourcing the Casey Futures Partnership to strengthen Council and sector collaboration, address sector issues and become a united advocacy voice.
- Providing a new targeted funding stream to complement existing grant programs that enables Council and CSOs to innovate and test new service models together.
- Identifying under-utilised Council facilities and vacant land that could be made available for priority services.
- Improving utilisation of facilities by removing current barriers and identifying design principles that can be incorporated into existing and new builds.
- Supporting the development of new, emerging, and non-traditional service models including flexibility of service hours and locations to meet community need.
- Providing a digital resource that facilitates information exchange and efficient communication with the community services sector.
- Building the capacity of CSOs to meet the need of under-served residents and attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Why this goal is important

CSOs have told us that a lack of integrated service planning results in duplication of effort. This includes volunteer based CSOs who lack opportunities and resources to drive broader sector collaboration.

Agencies are not adequately resourced to undertake collaborative service planning and explore alternative and complementary delivery methods.

Limited and uncertain grant funding as well as stressful work environments make it difficult for CSOs to attract and retain experienced staff who can support residents with challenging and complex needs.

The Casey Futures Partnership will provide the most effective mechanism through which Council partners with the sector to implement Framework initiatives.

How we will know we have achieved this goal



GOAL THREE: ATTRACTING INCREASED RESOURCES TO CASEY

Attract funding and critical services to Casey so that under-served groups have access to the services they need.

This will be done by:

- Providing practical incentives for priority CSOs to establish successfully in Casey, including access to funding, facilities and collaborative partnerships.
- Putting mechanisms in place to fast-track timely and mutually advantageous co-investment opportunities with CSOs who have significant funding to contribute.
- Advancing an annual advocacy agenda with CSOs based on major service gaps and high priority issues identified through local data.
- Partnering with CSOs, philanthropic organisations, private enterprise and other levels of government to attract investment to the community services sector.
- Supporting the establishment of satellite services in Casey’s growth areas

Why this goal is important

Some population groups are missing out on the services they need because programs are not tailored to their needs. This includes Casey’s culturally and linguistically diverse residents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Casey has the highest population in South East Metro Melbourne) and those who identify as LGBTIQ+ (representing around 15,000 residents).

Casey has difficulty attracting new specialist services due to a lack of purpose-built facilities, financial outlay required and Casey’s distance from the Melbourne CBD.

Government expectations around funding sustainability put CSOs under pressure to attract philanthropic and corporate funding and service reforms result in CSOs having to adapt service models with less funding certainty.

How we will know we have achieved this goal



GOAL FOUR: CONTINUOUS EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Understand which actions are achieving desired outcomes and measure the tangible difference they are making.

This includes:

- Applying social impact measures to assess the value of key initiatives to Council and the community.
- Analysing crucial population data to assess the impacts of these initiatives on community health and wellbeing.
- Supporting CSOs to demonstrate and document the value of their services and programs to government, the private sector and philanthropists.
- Seeking regular and timely feedback through the Casey Futures Partnership.

Why this goal is important

This is the first time that Casey has made such a concerted attempt to support the whole CSO sector to meet increasing and changing community needs and proactively attract priority services to the municipality. We need evidence of social impact to know whether our initiatives are working in the way we intended and adapt them as necessary.

CSOs seldom have the resources to evaluate their programs to the extent that they would like in order to justify ongoing funding and expansion.

How we will know we have achieved this goal

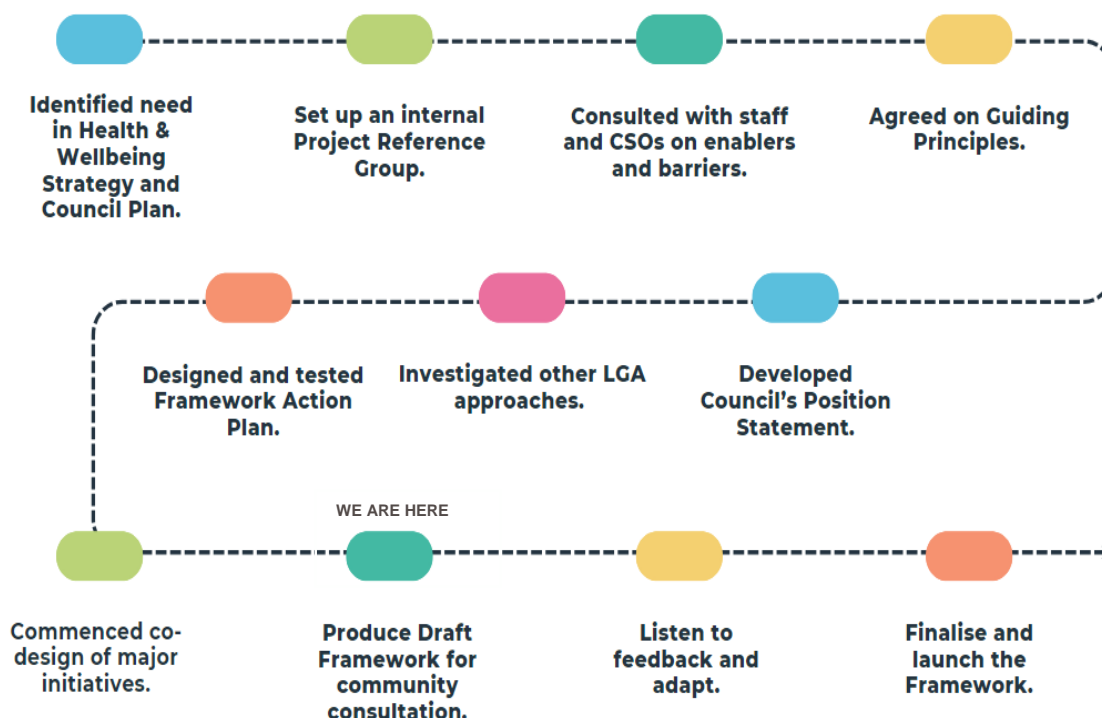


FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

A flexible three-year action plan will be developed in consultation with the community services sector to deliver on these four goals. Several initiatives are already underway as a result of internal collaboration and consultation with our CSO partners.

The implementation of actions within this Framework will be reviewed and reported annually.

APPENDIX 1: How the CSO Framework was developed



The initiatives proposed in this Framework emerged from workshops in October 2022 with Casey's community services sector and with staff from several Council departments. These workshops provided valuable perspectives on what was enabling and preventing the growth, retention, and attraction of community services in Casey and how we could identify and address community need together.

CSOs and Council staff were in alignment about what they collectively wanted a Framework to achieve.

Table 1: Stakeholder expectations of the Framework

Casey CSOs	Council officers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector integration and collaboration. Increased sector capacity and leadership. United effective advocacy. A voice for marginalised residents. Better access to facilities. Strong and equal working partnerships. Collaborative practice. Evidence-based service planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector integration and collaboration. Streamlined internal processes. Aligned purpose, effort, and resources. Actionable data. Strong advocacy. Interventions to address market gaps. Transparent priority-setting. Better access to Council facilities.

Over the following 12 months, an internal Project Reference Group comprising 8 Council business units co-designed and tested a select number of integrated and collaborative initiatives that would underpin the successful implementation of the Framework.

During this time, conversations also took place with the CSO Relief and Recovery Network about the potential to transform this highly successful informal CSO network convened in response to the COVID-

19 pandemic into a more structured formal and impactful partnership model. An online forum helped shape draft Terms of Reference for what has become known as the Casey Futures Partnership.

Council's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) endorsed a Commitment Statement on Council's role in supporting the community services sector to meet the needs of Casey's rapidly growing and highly diverse community.

Finally, a consultative forum was held with CSOs in October 2023 to gain endorsement for the overall Framework. The forum further identified the external factors impacting on CSOs and commenced the co-design of foundational partnership initiatives.

APPENDIX 2: Framework alignment with Council strategies



The objectives of this Framework align with the community outcomes Council is looking to achieve and supports the following Council strategies, policies and plans:

- City of Casey Council Plan 2021-2025
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2025
- Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025
- Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2025
- Transformation Strategy 2021- 2025
- Environment Strategy 2021-2025
- A Safe and Equal Casey: Gender equality and prevention of violence against women Strategic Plan 2022-2032
- Priority of Access Policy 2023-2027
- Living and Ageing Well Action Plan 2023-2025
- Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2021-2025
- Community Safety Strategy
- Grants Policy 2021-2025
- Innovate Action Plan 2024-2026
- Digital Equity Framework 2021-2025
- Alcohol Harm Prevention Action Plan (in progress)
- Climate Adaptation Plan (in progress)
- LGBTIQ+ Action Plan (in progress)

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Contact the City of Casey:

Web: casey.vic.gov.au
Email: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au
Phone: 03 9705 5200
Post: PO Box 1000, Narre Warren VIC 3805
NRS: 133 677 (for the deaf, hearing or speech impaired)

Customer Service Centres:

Narre Warren: Bunjil Place, Patrick Northeast Drive
Cranbourne: Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre
ABN: 43 320 295 742



TIS: 131450 (Translating and Interpreting Service) المترجم الفوري 翻译 مترجم شفاهى ਦੁਆਰੀਆ ਯਥਾ ਚਰਚਾ

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