

Neighbourhood House Policy



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Related legislation:	Local Government Act 2020		
Related strategic documents, policies, or procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan 2021- 2025 • Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Guidelines 2016-2019, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, 2016. 		

Date	Version Number	Details of Version	Modified by
19/06/2023	2	Reviewed	Inclusive Communities Coordinator
14/10/2019	1	New Policy	Manager Community Partnerships

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Mount Alexander Shire Council's (Council) commitment to supporting Neighbourhood Houses within Mount Alexander Shire. Council recognises and values the contribution of Neighbourhood Houses and acknowledges their capacity to strengthen the resilience, connectivity and inclusion of the local community.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to current and future Neighbourhood Houses in the Mount Alexander Shire that are recognised by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing under the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program and adhere to the Neighbourhood Houses Coordination Program Funding Guidelines operating from a community facility. Community Lunches are excluded from the scope of this Policy.

3. Policy

Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to supporting Neighbourhood Houses to provide services and support to the local community.

To support this commitment Council will apply the following principles:

- Clarify the way in which Council supports Neighbourhood Houses within Mount Alexander Shire.
- Recognise the importance of Neighbourhood Houses' role in the local community.
- Reinforce the partnership between Council and the Neighbourhood Houses.

Council will demonstrate the key principles in the following ways:

3.1. Advocacy

Council will:

- Create greater awareness of the role Neighbourhood Houses have within the local community.
- Promote the services and achievements of the Neighbourhood Houses within the Shire to the community, Councillors and Council Officers.
- Support Neighbourhood Houses with external funding applications, where appropriate.

- Maintain relationships with the *Department of Families, Fairness and Housing* and *Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community Houses* to continue to understand how to best support Neighbourhood Houses.

3.2. Funding

Subject to its annual budget approval processes, Council will allocate funding to each Neighbourhood House to acknowledge their contribution to the local community.

Each Neighbourhood House will be allocated the same funding amount.

The funds will be allocated under the terms and conditions of a Memorandum of Understanding and are to be used to support projects that align with Council plans and strategies on the basis that:

- A relationship of mutual respect is maintained and upheld throughout the term of the Policy.
- Neighbourhood Houses receive no additional funding from Council's Annual Operating Budget however may receive funds for projects funded by an external party for a specific project.
- A copy of an Annual Report (including audited financial statement) is provided to Council by each Neighbourhood House every year.
- A copy of a Strategic Plan is provided to Council by each Neighbourhood House.
- Council is notified of the Annual General Meeting of the Neighbourhood House Committee of Management.

3.3. In-kind Support

Council will provide in-kind support to Neighbourhood Houses for the following:

- Promotion of activities, events and programs via Council's website, social media and intranet.
- Participation in relevant in-house training opportunities made available via Council's Corporate Training Program.
- Identify opportunities to partner with Neighbourhood Houses to deliver projects that align with the objectives of both Council and the Neighbourhood Houses.
- Provide assistance with governance to the Committees of Management of each Neighbourhood House, as required.
- Facilitate quarterly Neighbourhood House network meetings.

3.4. Acknowledgement

Neighbourhood Houses acknowledge the financial and in-kind support provided by Council in all relevant media and promotions via use of the Council logo or by stating the following: *'Proudly supported by Mount Alexander Shire Council'*.

3.5. Use of Council Facilities

Where a Neighbourhood House is located within a Council owned and managed facility, an appropriate lease or licence arrangement will be considered.

The arrangement will be subject to the formal approval by Council at a Meeting of Council.

3.6. Implementation

This Policy will be implemented through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding between Council and each Neighbourhood House.

Council will work collaboratively with Neighbourhood Houses to determine any individual arrangements required to implement this Policy to ensure the outcomes are beneficial to both parties.

4. Breach of this Policy

Any reported breaches of this Policy will be subject to an internal review. Should a breach be proven, Council will take appropriate action to manage the breach and to prevent reoccurrence.

5. Definitions of Abbreviations Used

A table of terms and their definitions as they relate to the policy

Term	Definition
Neighbourhood House	May also be known as: Community Centre, Community House, Neighbourhood Centre, Community Learning Centre
Neighbourhood House Coordination Program	The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing provides funding to neighbourhood houses and neighbourhood house networks across Victoria to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the provision of community development programs and activities which lead to community-strengthening outcomes• Support community development processes to address locally identified priorities and needs

6. Human Rights Statement

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006).

7. Gender Equity

It is considered that this policy goes towards promoting gender equity principles as outlined in the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and does not contribute in the promotion of inequalities. Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to meeting its obligations as stated in the Act and to further promote the right to equality as set out in the Charter of Human Rights.

8. Child Safety

Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. We recognise our legal and moral responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe from harm and promoting their best interests. All children who come in contact with Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers from the organisation have a right to be and feel safe. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place to support employees, volunteers and contractors to achieve these commitments. We create environments where all children have a voice and are listened to, their views are respected and they contribute to how we plan for, design and develop our services and activities.