

# **Submission to:**

Royal Commission into  
Family Violence 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF  
HUME CITY COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION

May 2015



## **Introduction:**

Hume City Council welcomes the opportunity to submit comments to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. This submission has been prepared in response to the Commission's invitation to comment on its Issues Paper released on 31 March 2015.

Council's submission has been informed by Council's knowledge and experience in working with local communities, its advocacy, planning and preventative role on behalf of local communities, and the information contained in Council's strategic documents.

Hume City Council's submission is presented in six parts, including; Hume's local context; the prevalence of family violence in Hume; the risk factors in Hume that underpin family violence; Council's response; the barriers of access to services; and matters for consideration by the Royal Commission.

## **Hume City: Local Context:**

Hume City is a rapidly growing, vibrant and multicultural community located on the urban-rural fringe, 20 kilometres north-west of the centre of Melbourne.

The population of Hume City is estimated at just over 185,000 in 2014. By 2036 the population is projected to exceed 316,000. The population of Hume City is expected to grow at an average annual growth rate of 2.4% during this time.

According to the 2011 Census Hume City has a youthful age structure, with a substantially large proportion of the population aged under 18 years (27.5% of the City's total population) and a small proportion in the post retirement (65+ years) age group (9.1% of the City's total population). Families living in Hume City are largely two-parent families with dependents (46.0% of all households).

Hume is a culturally diverse area with one third of residents born overseas (32%) from more than 160 different countries, and two out of five residents (41%) speaking a language other than English at home.

Hume City has a score of 951.8 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage. This score is ranked 12th out of 79 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Victoria and is in the 2nd decile (top 20%) of most disadvantaged LGAs in Victoria. In metropolitan Melbourne, Hume City is ranked 3rd out of 31 LGAs and is in the 1st decile (top 10%) of most disadvantaged LGAs.

Hume City Council is one of Melbourne's ten Interface Councils, located at the edge of the metropolitan area and the rural shires. Not only are the interface councils characterised by rapid residential growth, but also for the significant challenges they face in terms of poor public transport networks, time lags in the delivery of social infrastructure and community services, fragile and isolated families, at risk youth and poor health and wellbeing outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

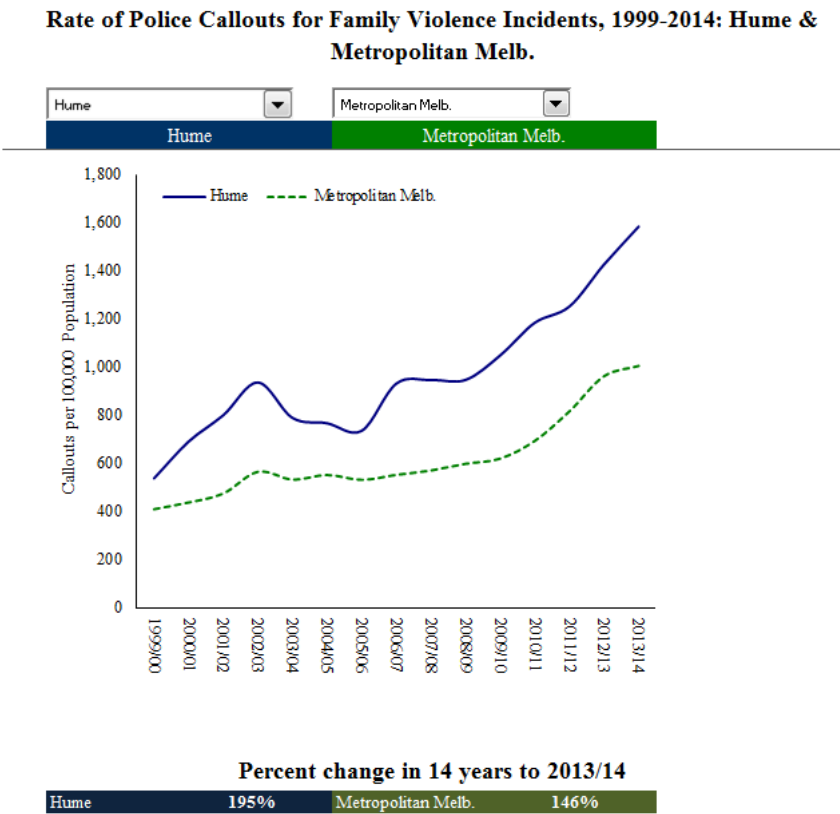
## **Hume City's prevalence of family violence:**

On average in 2013/14, 56 incidents of family violence were reported to police each week in Hume City (21 per week where children were present). The rate of family violence per 100,000 population in Hume City (1,587.3) is higher compared to the North West Metropolitan Region (1,119.0) and Victoria (1,129.2). Hume City has the second highest rate

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<sup>1</sup> VCOSS (2014) In Sight: *On the fringes: Tale of two cities*, Issue 10.

of family violence incidents per 100,000 population across Metropolitan Melbourne, behind Frankston City at 1,773.0.<sup>2</sup>



Source: City of Greater Dandenong: Statistical Data for Victorian Communities

In Hume City, reports of family violence incidents have been increasing each year, up from 2,555 in 2012/13 to 2,909 in 2013/14, showing a 14% increase in the number of reported incidents<sup>3</sup>. This indicates that in 2013/14 the Hume municipality exhibited the second highest number of reported incidents in Victoria, behind that of the City of Casey (with 3,752 incidents reported). The number of incidents in Victoria increased at a lower rate in comparison to Hume, increasing from 60,550 in 2012/13 to 65,393 in 2013/14 (7.4%).

In 2013/14 there was a combined total of 921 family violence intervention orders and family violence safety notices issued in Hume, giving a rate of 502.6 per 100,000, in comparison with 332.7 in the Northern Metropolitan Region and 295.3 in Victoria.<sup>4</sup>

**Hume’s high risk factors underpinning family violence:**

While there is no single cause that leads to family violence, there are a number of risk factors associated with perpetrators and victims of family violence, such as age, low academic achievement, low income or exclusion from the labour market, social

2 Victoria Police, Crime Statistics – Family Incident Reports, 2009/10 - 2013/14.

3 Victoria Police, Crime Statistics – Family Incident Reports, 2009/10 - 2013/14.

4 Women’s Health in the North, Violence Against Women: Information and Facts 2013/2014.

disadvantage and isolation and exposure to, or involvement in, aggressive or delinquent behaviour as an adolescent<sup>5</sup>.

This prevalence of risk factors and high incident rates makes this municipality uniquely different from other municipalities, some of the differences have been highlighted below:

**Unemployment** levels within Hume City are consistently higher than the average unemployment levels of Greater Melbourne, with some Hume suburbs being higher than that of the Hume average (9.7%), for example Broadmeadows (25.7%); Campbellfield (22%) and Meadow Heights (21.8%).

**Vulnerable employment:** In 2011, a higher percentage of Hume residents were employed in low skilled industries, which traditionally attract lower wages and can be vulnerable to global fluctuations. The 2011 Census showed a larger percentage of persons in Hume were employed in positions such as Machinery Operators and Drivers (10.5% compared to Greater Melbourne average of 5.9%) and Labourers (11.3% compared to Greater Melbourne average of 8.0%).

**Immigration and lack of family support:** Hume City is home to many newly arrived migrants, of which a significant proportion entered Australia under the Humanitarian Migration Stream – some fleeing war torn countries and having little or no family/social connections in Hume. From 2005 to 2011, 2,170 migrants from Iraq settled in Hume, equalling 24.1% of its total migrant population over that period in comparison to Victoria with 3,657 migrants (1.3% of all recently arrived migrants to Victoria from 2005 to 2011).

**Problem gaming:** The Productivity Commission estimates that for every **problem gambler**, up to seven other people are affected (such as family members, friends or colleagues)<sup>6</sup>. The Commission also found that this can lead to relationship breakdown through a lack of trust, increased arguments, stress and financial hardship. Hume shows a significantly higher gaming expenditure per adult, \$737 in comparison to the State's average of \$544. This is 35.5% higher than the State's average adult expenditure (and is 28.4% higher than the metropolitan average).

**Mental health Issues:** The 2007 National Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey revealed that there was an overwhelming link between gender violence and key indicators of women's mental health and wellbeing.<sup>7</sup> The vulnerability of the Hume community is of particular concern for many of the incident cases contained in the Burden of Disease Report<sup>8</sup> for Hume City indicate that mental illness is responsible for 21% of the burden of disease in Hume City.

**Disability:** It is evident through research that persons suffering from physical or mental health issues can be vulnerable to family violence – or even perpetrators of family violence - due to factors such as social isolation, dissociative behaviours, distorted perceptions or having the inability to be responsible for their behaviours or actions. The 2011 ABS Census data showed that a higher proportion of Hume residents (5.3%) required assistance with their core activities<sup>9</sup> when compared to Greater Melbourne (4.5%).

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<sup>5</sup> Morgan and Chadwick (2009): Key issues in domestic violence, Research in practice no. 7, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, S.7

<sup>7</sup> Creagh (2011): Repeat violence can boost women's mental health risk to almost 90%, The Conversation, <http://theconversation.com.au/repeat-violence-can-boost-womens-mental-health-risk-to-almost-90%>.

<sup>8</sup> Victorian Department of Health, Burden of Disease 2001.

<sup>9</sup> This population is defined as people with a disability who need assistance in their day to day lives with any or all of the following core activities - self care, body movements or communication.

(<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/statementspersonassnp?opendocument&navpos=430>)

**Lower education levels:** Hume City demonstrates almost double the amount of residents who did not go to school than those in Greater Melbourne (2.4% vs 1.3%). In addition, the 2011 Census data shows higher levels of residents within Hume who attained year 8 or below, having 9.2% of the total number of residents 15 years and over having year 8 or less, compared to that of Melbourne at 6.3%.

**High birth rates/pregnancy:** The ABS survey into Personal Safety in 2006 identified that women may be at increased risk of family violence during pregnancy and in the period immediately after the baby is born. In 2013, the Hume birth rate for 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years is significantly higher than those for Greater Melbourne and Victoria – with Hume having 2.1 births per 1,000 women, compared to 1.7 for Greater Melbourne and 1.8 for Victoria.

**Lack of services:** In recognition of the high levels of family violence in Hume City and the lack of resources, the municipality was earmarked for funding as part of two specialist programs under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. The aim of the funding was to assist stakeholders (Berry Street, Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria, Child Protection Services, Northern Hospital and Centrelink) to meet for the purposes of sharing information for the creation of action plans pertaining to family violence cases (The Age 27 March 2014).

**Interface Council:** It is reported that many of the Interface Councils experience a concentration of risk factors associated with family violence including: pregnant women with young children, lack of social support services, and housing stress.<sup>10</sup> The continuance of building within the outer suburbs without the necessary social infrastructure and community services is greatly cautioned, including the need for schools, health and social services, and emergency housing.<sup>11</sup>

## Council Responses:

Hume City Council prides itself in having a strong commitment to social justice and human rights, which are embedded in its Social Justice Charter, which was first developed in 2001. The Social Justice Charter commits Council to advancing a fair and just society, promoting respect for its citizens, encouraging community participation in civic life, strengthening community wellbeing and reducing the causes of disadvantage.

Within this Social Justice approach, Council has undertaken a number of responses to family violence. The following are a few highlights of the work undertaken by the Hume City Council (details are contained in the submission):

### Corporate Commitments:

- **Social Justice Charter** commits Council to advancing a fair and just society, promoting respect for its citizens, encouraging community participation in civic life, strengthening community wellbeing and reducing the causes of disadvantage.
- **Hume City Council Community Safety Strategy 2009-2013** addresses Family Violence and Women's Safety as one of its five key areas of action. The **Draft Hume City Council Safety Action plan 2015-2019** continues with this strong response to family violence.
- **Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement (No. 5) 2013-2017:** A key objective of the Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement (No. 6) 2013–2017 demonstrates Council's commitment to supporting employees experiencing family violence and ensuring a harmonious employee relations environment.

<sup>10</sup> Whitzman (2014) *Better urban planning can reduce the tragedies of domestic violence*, The Conversation.

<sup>11</sup> Whitzman (2014) *Better urban planning can reduce the tragedies of domestic violence*, The Conversation.

**Programs/activities/projects:**

Council is an active participant in addressing risks, issues and victims of family violence through its services, programs and targeted projects.

- **The Community Grants Program** in 2014 awarded a total of \$342,900 to community groups and service providers for them to create sustained and positive change within their communities and to further build respect, community inclusion and wellbeing.
- **Hume Moreland Fathering Project:** A fathering project has been successfully implemented in Hume, which strengthens couple and parent relationships by promoting gender equality and respectful non-violent relationships so that parents are able to safely and positively deal with parental and relationships stress and challenge.
- The **'Love Bites'** Program is a vital program available to young people (15-17yrs) and is a school based and community program. The program addresses family violence/domestic violence and sexual assault.

**Partnerships:**

- **Family Early Learning Partnership:** The Family Early Learning Partnership is a program developed to address the needs of the most vulnerable children within the municipality of Hume City Council. It consists of a relationship between Hume City Council Family and Children Services, Hume Moreland Integrated Family Services – Child FIRST, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies and all early childhood services within Hume City.
- Council is a partner with **Women's Health In the North (WHIN)** in the implementation of the *"Building a Respectful Community – Preventing Violence Against Women - A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011 – 2016"*. This is a very important partnership for Council in addressing address family violence. Council is currently working with WHIN to deliver gender equity training to staff across Council.

**Planning and infrastructure:**

**Early Provision of community infrastructure:** Council is exploring opportunities for the timely delivery of community infrastructure, where residents can obtain early years and community services as well as have places where they can 'meet-and-greet' and develop social connections. This is of particular importance for residents in new residential estates which are 'disconnected' from the existing urban fabric and existing community services, programs and activities.

**Barriers of access to family violence services:**

Victims of domestic violence can face a multitude of barriers in accessing support services. These can be both personal/cultural barriers in fearing the repercussions of their disclosure of abuse, to systemic barriers in the form of securing a timely appointment with a support service to information and knowledge regarding their legal rights.

- Specific **personal/cultural barriers** Hume residents may experience in accessing family violence services include a lack of familial and social networks due to migration. This experience of **social isolation** can prevent many from being able to access support services.
- **Women with a disability** can also face additional difficulties in accessing family violence support services.
- Women may often **fail to recognise domestic violence as a crime** or do not seek help for **legitimate fear of reprisal**.
- Residents living in Interface Councils, where it is common to experience significant **time lags in receiving infrastructure and community services**.
- **Infrequent and non-direct transport** and its costs to services may be prohibitive.

- **Difficulties in accessing information** about the service, where to find it, how to make an appointment, understanding their rights around informed consent, confidentiality and privacy; and the difficulty in navigating the complex 'service support system'.
- Many family violence **services are over subscribed and there is a lack of alternative accommodation** for women and children seeking emergency accommodation and safety.
- **Difficulties to leave:** Some women lack the resources or connections to access alternative accommodation in order to escape the family violence situation.

## Considerations for the Royal Commission:

### Recommendations for Consideration:

In response to of the family violence issues prevalent in Hume City, the following recommendations have been developed for consideration by the Royal Commission:

#### It is recommended that the Commission consider:

1. *Building the capacity of service responses to family violence, with particular focus on the enablement of responses at the local level in scale of delivery, complexity and appropriateness.*
2. *Investing in campaigns by State and Federal Government that promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women. Including more media coverage, campaigns, and programs in a variety of settings.*
3. *Increasing the systematic sharing/transference of knowledge of successful whole-of-community models/programs/actions and research, which addresses family violence along the continuum of responses – potentially through a common online portal.*
4. *Redressing family violence through long term commitment and an appropriate level of resources (both service development and capital investment) that reflects the magnitude and complexities which underpin issues of family violence, particularly in preventative measures.*
5. *Enhancing the empowerment of communities to appropriately respond to the prevention of domestic violence and address local family violence issues experienced by victims of violence, perpetrators and the community in general.*
6. *Acknowledging that local governments and communities have different capacities to respond to family violence issues given their limited resources and expertise and in turn may require different levels of support.*

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## Introduction

Hume City Council welcomes the opportunity to submit comments to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. This submission has been prepared in response to the Commission's invitation to comment on its Issues Paper released on 31 March 2015.

Hume City Council's submission has been informed by Council's knowledge and experience in working with local communities, its advocacy, planning and preventative role on behalf of local communities, and the information contained in Council's strategic documents that inform and underpin its approaches, including:

- Hume Horizons 2040
- Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Social Justice Charter 2014
- Hume Early Years Plan 2014-2018
- Hume Community Safety Strategy 2009-2013 and Draft Hume Community Safety Plan 2015-2019.

**Hume City Council's submission is presented in six parts:**

### **Hume City: Local Context**

**Hume City's prevalence of family violence:** This section provides a brief snapshot of data pertaining to family violence in the municipality.

**Hume's high risk factors that underpin family violence:** Hume exhibits a number of risk factors that underpin or exacerbate family violence. These factors will be highlighted because they underpin Hume's unique difference within the family violence environment.

**Hume's response to family violence within its communities:** Providing a brief overview of the actions taken by Council in the light of family violence in the community, including; setting a strong policy framework and corporate commitments; promotional and preventative programs, partnerships; funding community efforts and tracking trends.

**Barriers of access to family violence services:** This section provides a brief overview of the barriers faced by some community members in accessing services.

**Matters for Consideration:** This section highlights additional matters which the Royal Commission may want to consider as part of its inquiry into family violence.

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### Hume City: Local Context

Hume City is a rapidly growing, vibrant and multicultural community located on the urban-rural fringe, 20 kilometres north-west of the centre of Melbourne. It occupies an area of approximately 504 square kilometres. Land uses within the municipality are extremely diverse and include established residential areas, industry, vast rural areas, and areas committed for future urban growth.

The population of Hume City is estimated at just over 185,000 in 2014. By 2036 the population is projected to exceed 316,000. The population of Hume City is expected to grow at an average annual growth rate of 2.4% during this time.

According to the 2011 Census Hume City has a youthful age structure, with a substantially large proportion of the population aged under 18 years (27.5% of the City's total population) and a small proportion in the post retirement (65+ years) age group (9.1% of the City's total population). Families living in Hume City are largely two-parent families with dependents (46.0% of all households).

Hume is a culturally diverse area with one third of residents born overseas (32%) from more than 160 different countries, and two out of five residents (41%) speaking a language other than English at home.

Hume City has a score of 951.8 on the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage. This score is ranked 12th out of 79 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Victoria and is in the 2nd decile (top 20%) of most disadvantaged LGAs in Victoria. In metropolitan Melbourne, Hume City is ranked 3rd out of 31 LGAs and is in the 1st decile (top 10%) of most disadvantaged LGAs.



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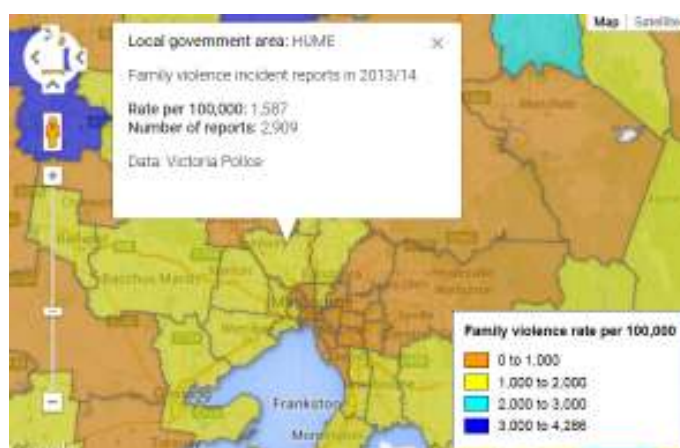
### Hume City's prevalence of family violence

#### The Statistics:

On average in 2013/14, 56 incidents of family violence were reported to police each week in Hume City (21 per week where children were present). The rate of family violence per 100,000 population in Hume City (1,587.3) is higher compared to the North West Metropolitan Region (1,119.0) and Victoria (1,129.2). Hume City has the second highest rate of family violence incidents per 100,000 population across Metropolitan Melbourne, behind Frankston City at 1,773.0.<sup>1</sup>

In Hume City, reports of family violence incidents have been increasing each year, up from 1,760 in 2009/10 to 2,909 in 2013/14.<sup>2</sup> This indicates that the Hume municipality exhibits the second highest number of reported incidents in Victoria, behind that of the City of Casey (with 3752 incidents reported). The number of incidents in Victoria increased at a lower rate in comparison to Hume, increasing from 60,550 in 2012/13 to 65,393 in 2013/14 (7.4%).

Many people experiencing family violence do not report this to the police, therefore official figures are likely to underestimate the extent of the problem.



Source: The Age: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/family-violence-rates-higher-in-victoria-country-areas-20150303-13th4x.html>

Three quarters of family violence victims are female (75%), with the majority of perpetrators being male (78%). Three out of four victimized women are aged between 15 and 44 years (73%).<sup>3</sup> Children are present at more than one third (37%) of reported family violence incidents.<sup>4</sup> Family incident reports resulting in charges being laid occurred at a rate of 792.8 per 100,000 population in 2013/14, higher than the North West Metropolitan Region (518.2) and Victoria (507.7) and also the highest across Metropolitan Melbourne (Frankston was 656.6).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Victoria Police, Crime Statistics – Family Incident Reports, 2009/10 - 2013/14.

<sup>2</sup> Victoria Police, Crime Statistics – Family Incident Reports, 2009/10 - 2013/14.

<sup>3</sup> Women's Health in the North, Violence Against Women: Information and Facts 2013 - 14 Hume City.

<sup>4</sup> Victoria Police, Crime Statistics – Family Incident Reports, 2009/10 - 2013/14.

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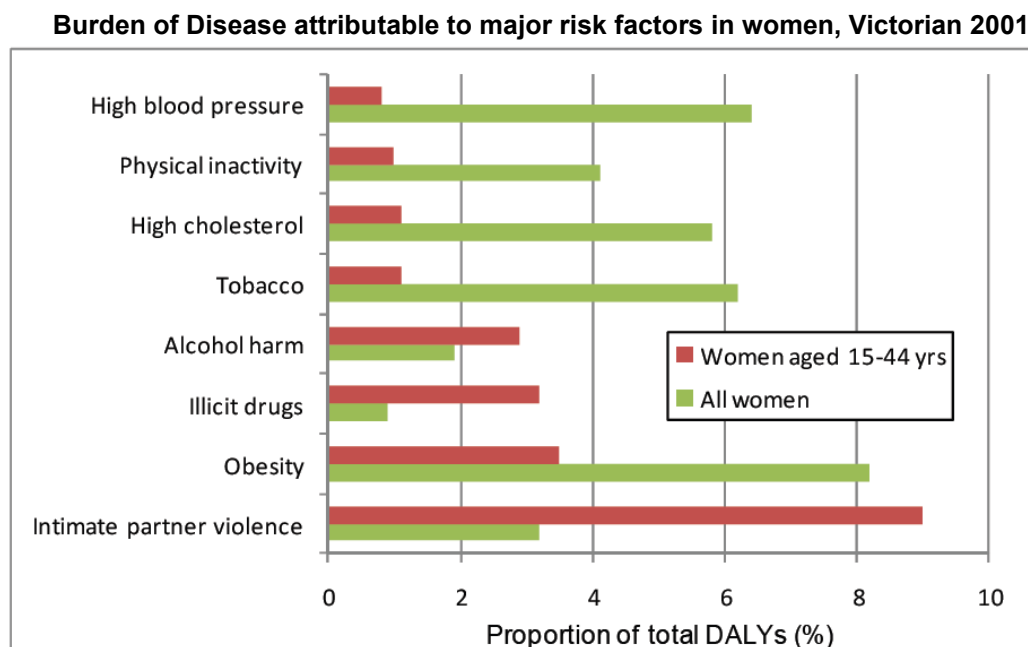
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In 2013/14 there was a combined total of 921 family violence intervention orders and family violence safety notices issued in Hume, giving a rate of 502.6 per 100,000, in comparison with 332.7 in the Northern Metropolitan Region and 295.3 in Victoria).<sup>6</sup>

When Victoria Police family violence statistics are limited to Intimate Partner Violence (defined as “persons with relationship: married, defacto, separated, divorced or boyfriend/girlfriend”), in four out of every five incidents, the perpetrator is male (84%) and the victim female (84%).<sup>7</sup>

### Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Intimate partner violence has a greater impact on the health of Victorian women under the age of 45 than any other risk factor. While intimate partner violence accounts for 3.2% of the total disease burden for females across all ages, it accounts for 9.0% of the burden in women aged 15–44 years. The burden contributed by this form of violence is greater than that for many other risk factors such as obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and illicit drug use.<sup>8</sup>



Source: Victorian Department of Health, Burden of Disease, 2001

The known health impacts of violence against women include death, physical injuries, poor mental health (particularly depression and anxiety), chronic pain, substance abuse, and sexual and reproductive health morbidities. The greatest health impact of intimate partner violence is for mental health problems (65% for depression and anxiety combined), followed by suicide and tobacco use, which is indicated in the following graph.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Women's Health in the North, Violence Against Women: Information and Facts 2013/2014.

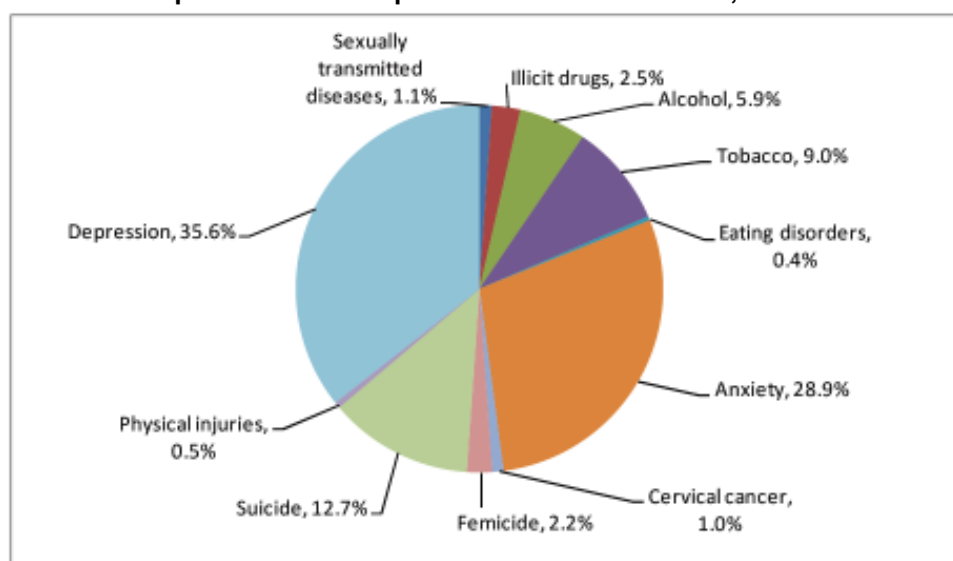
<sup>7</sup> Women's Health in the North, Violence Against Women: Information and Facts 2013 - 14 Hume City.

<sup>8</sup> Hume Health Snapshot, 2011

<sup>9</sup> Hume Health Snapshot, 2011

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Health impacts of intimate partner violence in women, Victoria 2001



Source: Victorian Burden of Disease Study 2001

### What Communities have told Council:

- Council facilitated the development of a **Rooming House Report** on behalf of the Hume Moreland Emergency Relief Network in 2012/13. This research included interviews with a number of Hume residents living in Rooming Houses for the purposes of gaining a deeper understanding of their lived experiences and causes. Two out of the seven participants interviewed were in rooming houses after fleeing from family violence. Of the five agencies which offered reflections of their experiences of working with rooming house residents, three had mentioned that family violence, amongst other contributors, were causes of homelessness and need for rooming house accommodation. Agencies also reflected that victims of family violence were then often exposed to continued vulnerabilities and threats of violence from owners of rooming houses or other rooming house tenants.
- As part of the development of Council's **Draft Community Safety Action Plan in 2014**, an extensive program of community engagement was conducted to ensure that relevant organisations, community groups and businesses were given an opportunity to influence the strategies and actions that will shape community safety for Hume over the next five years.

In regards to family violence, the following responses were received from residents through an online survey process:

- Physical violence, sexual abuse and verbal abuse were the three behaviours most associated with family violence according to respondents.
- Almost half of the respondents (45%) thought family violence was 'fairly serious' across Hume City; 62.9% thought it was very important for Hume City Council to undertake initiatives to reduce family violence; and another 65% were aware of the Council's White Ribbon initiatives.

Furthermore, residents who attended a community forum pertaining to family violence and women's safety in 2014 indicated the following:

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- The need to expand upon existing community awareness raising activities and projects to prevent family violence e.g. White Ribbon Day (especially outside the Broadmeadows area).
- Delivery of culturally appropriate solutions, such as engaging with community elders to discuss family violence, along with using religious leaders to speak out about family violence and women's safety.
- The need to protect children from family violence through strengthening the role of men as fathers, as well as providing families with community support and information sooner; with an emphasis on Children's Hubs.
- Continue to deliver and expand upon family violence training and education programs for teachers, youth, child care and allied health workers.

### Experiences of staff:

**Youth Services:** Data from 2013/2014 illustrated that of the younger people seeking assistance from youth counsellors (105 in total), 30 (28.6%) had presented with family violence issues and 32 (30.5%) with relationship issues. Relationship and family issues include reports of abuse (psychological, emotional, verbal, social, cultural, and gender). In addition, data recorded against mental health issues (63.8% of the total number of young people counselled) demonstrated a correlation between family violence and mental/emotional wellbeing of young people – with depression, anxiety and anger management being of the top three mental health issues experienced.

Of the 105 young people assisted in 2013/2014, 26 received assistance in regards to grief and loss, which are strongly linked to family separation as a result of the Department of Human Services – Child Protection intervention/involvement or due to family violence or parental neglect.

It has been the experience of staff that young people are affected by family violence on a regular basis. Staff often observed in their counselling that many young people have experienced abuse/family violence as children prior to accessing counselling. Some had received prior supports as children, while others are sharing their trauma and being supported for the first time.

Although Berry Street offers support for families in Hume, they are located in Heidelberg and may not be accessible for some community members. In addition, there is a lack of local teen-specific programs or support groups to support young people who have lived through, or are living, in family violence situations. Young people's experiences can often be exacerbated once they are over 15 years of age for they are no longer covered under child protection laws or supports. The only legal supports are through the police, which are rarely accessed by young people.

### Specialist Intervention projects in Hume:

In recognition of the high levels of family violence in Hume City, the municipality was earmarked for funding as part of two specialist programs (RAMP) under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness. The aim of the funding was to assist stakeholders (Berry Street, Victoria Police, Corrections Victoria, Child Protection Services, Northern Hospital and Centrelink) to meet for the purposes of sharing information for the creation of action plans pertaining to family violence cases (The Age 27 March 2014).



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### Community taking action:

The **Oorja Foundation Inc.** successfully gained \$5,000 from the Council Community Grants program to engage, create awareness, discuss and provide support to Hume's Punjabi community.

Council partnered with the Oorja Foundation to host the ***Way Forward to Harmony Event*** in March 2015. The event's focus was to raise awareness about the serious issue of family violence, with a particular discussion focussing upon the Indian and Punjabi local community. Members of Council's White Ribbon Team joined 160 community members and service providers from Hume City at this event. Representatives from Victoria Police, State Government and the Indian Consulate also attended. A key note address and a panel of leading professionals responded to a number of critical questions relating to family violence in Hume. It is envisaged that the Oorja Foundation will be making a submission to the Royal Commission.

**Sunbury Sportsmen's Night.** The Family Violence Network and the Sunbury Community Health Centre held a sportsmen's night in November 2013 to raise awareness of family violence. With the support of Victoria Police, the event was aimed at educating men and women of the issue of violence against women and funds raised from the night were donated to the national White Ribbon Foundation.

**Craigieburn Basketball Association White Ribbon Round.** In May 2014 the Craigieburn Basketball Association initiated the White Ribbon Round with the support of the Hume City Council White Ribbon Action Team. This initiative involved the Association designating a round of their season towards raising awareness of family violence and the promotion of the prevention of violence against women through the White Ribbon campaign to the players and their families.

**Council and Kangan Institute** formed a strong partnership in 2012 which resulted in the Kangan Institute student participation in White Ribbon Day events and the establishment of ten Kangan Student Support and Recreation Activity events to provide information about the campaign and encourage student and staff involvement across all their campuses (Broadmeadows, Essendon, Richmond and the Docklands).

### Hume's high risk factors that may underpin/exacerbate family violence

The causes and consequences of violence against family members, in particular women, are complex and multifaceted. There are often individual, community or societal explanations as to the reasons why family violence happens. To minimise or eliminate these causes requires responses that operate in a variety of settings and are targeted towards a variety affected persons. This requires collaborative 'whole-of-community' partnership approaches that deliver integrated solutions to a problem that is both structural and systemic. Overall the key determinants and contributing factors to the perpetration of violence against women are:

- The unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women;
- An adherence to rigidly defined gender roles; and



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- Broader cultures of violence.<sup>10</sup>

Expert bodies recommend an 'ecological' approach to grasp the causes of violence against women. This approach shows how violence occurs because of complex factors that operate within and across three 'nested' levels of causality.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, there is no single element of causality that leads to family violence, there are a number of factors associated with perpetrators and victims of family violence, such as age, low academic achievement, low income or exclusion from the labour market, social disadvantage and isolation and exposure to, or involvement in, aggressive or delinquent behaviour as an adolescent that increase the potential risk of family violence<sup>12</sup>.

Additional factors have been identified in the *Background Note on Domestic Violence in Australia* (2011) including: alcohol and drug use, victim's experience of child abuse, pregnancy and separation, financial stress, personal stress, and lack of social support. The following diagram provides an illustration of the ecological approach pertaining to the linkages between the key determinates of violence against women and the potential causes:



Source: Women's Health in the North 2011, Building a Respectful Community: Preventing Violence Against Women a Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne.

<sup>10</sup> WHIN 2011: Building a Respectful Community: Strategy for Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011-2016.

<sup>11</sup> VicHealth, 2007, Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria,

<sup>12</sup> Morgan and Chadwick (2009): Key issues in domestic violence, Research in practice no. 7, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

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Hume City has a large number of identified risk factors associated with family violence, potentially underpinning or exacerbating incidents of family violence in the municipality. Hume City also has the second highest number of reported family violence incident reports in Victoria in 2014.

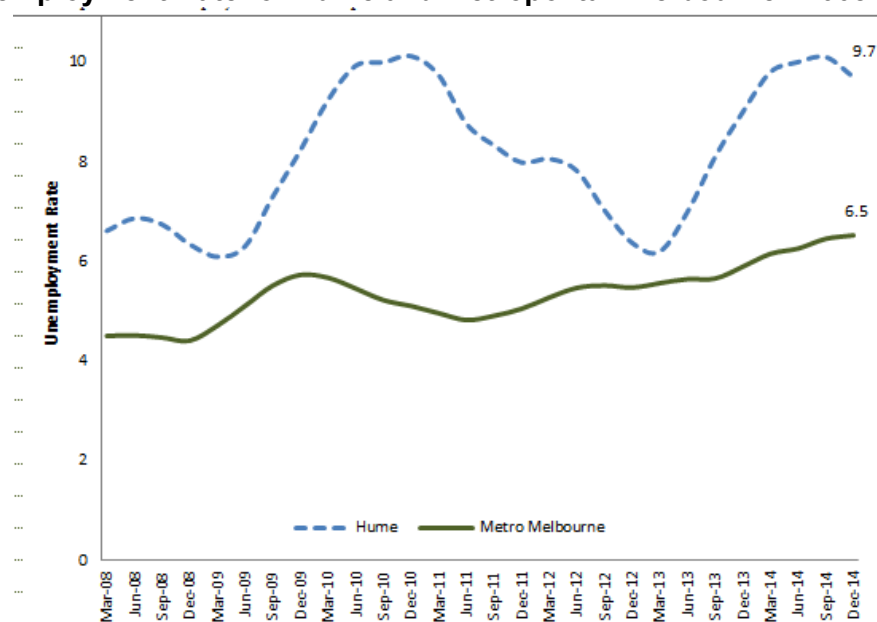
This prevalence of risk factors and high incident rates makes this municipality a point of difference from other municipalities. It is also important to note these risk factors, because they can be primary causes of violence within the family, or can be a consequence of it, which creates a cycle of increasing the gender inequity gap.

### Risk Factors underpinning family violence in Hume:

#### Financial stress:

- **Unemployment** levels within Hume City are consistently higher than the average unemployment levels of Greater Melbourne, as indicated by the graph below:

**Unemployment Rate for Hume and Metropolitan Melbourne: 2008-2014**



Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Some suburbs within Hume City are yet again higher than that of the Hume average (9.7%), for example Broadmeadows (25.7%); Campbellfield (22%) and Meadow Heights (21.8%).

- The percentage of couple families with children under 15 and **having jobless parents** is significantly higher in Hume City (5.5%), when compared with Greater Melbourne (1.7%).
- In 2011, a higher percentage of Hume residents were employed in **low skilled industries**, which traditionally attract lower wages and can be vulnerable to global fluctuations. For instance, 13.9% of residents were employed in the manufacturing field compared to 10.8% for Greater Melbourne. Moreover, a larger percentage of persons in Hume were employed in positions such as Machinery Operators and Drivers (10.5% compared to Greater Melbourne

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average of 5.9%) and Labourers (11.3% compared to Greater Melbourne average of 8.0%).

- The Productivity Commission estimates that for every **problem gambler**, up to seven other people are affected (such as family members, friends or colleagues)<sup>13</sup>. The Commission also found that this can lead to relationship breakdown through a lack of trust, increased arguments, stress and financial hardship. Research has found evidence that problem or moderate risk gamblers experience divorce and separation as a result of gambling<sup>14</sup>. Although Hume City has a similar EGM density to that of the State it shows a significantly higher gaming expenditure per adult, \$737 in comparison to \$544. This is 35.5% higher than that of the State's average adult expenditure (and is 28.4% higher than the metropolitan average).

### **Lack of family/community connections:**

Research suggest that more than four out of five women who experience lower rates of domestic violence do not contact specialised support agencies, but are more likely to contact friends and family. There is also evidence that men with strong social networks are less likely to be perpetrators of family violence.<sup>15</sup>

- **Lack of community support and services:**

Rapidly growing residential areas tend to experience time lags in the delivery of social infrastructure for the accommodation of community services and programs. In addition, new residents tend to be focussed in establishing themselves into their new neighbourhood and thus are time poor to start up new community groups and activities. There is a lack of 'meet-and-greet' opportunities and in turn a lack of opportunities to create social networks.

For example: Mickleham will be experiencing rapid growth (set to grow by 664% over the next 10 years) and of these many residents will be situated with no access to community facilities or services for the first number of years of their residency. This is of concern, given the isolated nature of some of the residential estates.

- **Immigration and lack of family support:**

Hume City is home to many newly arrived migrants, of which a significant proportion entered Australia under the Humanitarian Migration Stream – some fleeing war torn countries and having little or no family/social connections in Hume. From 2005 to 2011, 2,170 migrants from Iraq settled in Hume, equalling 24.1% of its total migrant population (9,019) over that period in comparison to Victoria with 3,657 migrants (1.3%). out of a total of 288,614 migrants.

### **Mental health issues:**

A study undertaken by the University of NSW (2007 National Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey) revealed that there was an overwhelming link between gender violence and key indicators of women's mental health, wellbeing and risk of suicide attempts.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, S.7

<sup>14</sup> Gambling Research Panel (2004) *Problem Gamblers, Loved Ones and Service Providers* (New Focus Research).

<sup>15</sup> Morgan and Chadwick (2009): Key issues in domestic violence, Research in practice no. 7, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.

<sup>16</sup> Creagh (2011): Repeat violence can boost women's mental health risk to almost 90%, The Conversation, <http://theconversation.com.au/repeat-violence-can-boost-womends-metal-health-risk-to-almost-90%>.

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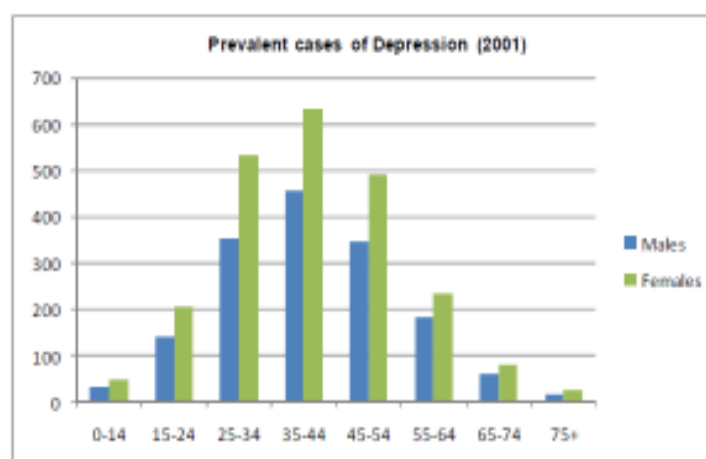
- The vulnerability of the Hume community is of particular concern for many of the incident cases contained in the Burden of Disease Report<sup>17</sup> for Hume City indicate that **mental illness** is responsible for 21% of the burden of disease in Hume City.
- **Alcohol abuse, social phobia and depression** are the largest contributors to mental disability amongst females between the ages of 15 and 34.

### Prevalent causes of mental diseases for females in Hume by age: 2001

	0-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Total
Depression	46	206	534	634	492	233	81	25	2,252
Generalised Anxiety Disorder	10	97	310	492	436	233	129	56	1,764
Alcohol abuse/dependence	0	297	634	430	194	53	12	0	1,624
Social phobia	41	213	436	408	264	115	54	23	1,556
Borderline personality disorder	0	88	180	127	64	22	9	0	494
Bipolar disorder	0	16	96	97	63	26	12	0	314
Schizophrenia	0	9	48	69	59	29	16	8	237
Dementia	0	0	0	0	0	13	49	164	231
Heroin abuse/dependence	0	20	38	28	12	0	0	0	107

Source: Victorian Department of Health, Burden of Disease, 2001

- **Depression** is the second largest contributor to prevalent cases due to mental diseases, accounting for 20.6% of all cases. Depression is particularly prevalent within the female population as the following graph represents:



Source: Victorian Department of Health, Burden of Disease, 2001

### Disability:

The need for assistance can be due to physical or mental health problems or permanent disabilities. The 2011 ABS Census data showed that a higher proportion of residents in Hume City required **assistance with their core activities**<sup>18</sup> when compared to Greater Melbourne. It was found that 5.3% of all residents in Hume required assistance in comparison to 4.5% for Greater Melbourne.

Persons suffering from physical or mental health issues can be vulnerable to family violence – or even perpetrators of family violence - due to factors such as social

<sup>17</sup> Victorian Department of Health, Burden of Disease 2001.

<sup>18</sup> This population is defined as people with a disability who need assistance in their day to day lives with any or all of the following core activities - self care, body movements or communication.  
(<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/statementspersonassnp?opendocument&navpos=430>)

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isolation, dissociative behaviours, distorted perceptions or having the inability to be responsible for their behaviours or actions.

### **Lower education levels:**

Hume City has almost double the amount of residents who did not go to school than those in Greater Melbourne (2.4% vs 1.3%). In addition, the 2011 Census data shows higher levels of residents within Hume who attained year 8 or below, having 9.2% of the total number of residents 15 years and over having year 8 or less, compared to that of Melbourne at 6.3%.

### **CALD community:**

Hume City is widely considered to be a culturally diverse municipality, 41% of the population speak a language other than English. In Melbourne, by contrast, 29% of the population speaks a language other than English. Research illustrates that culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) may be at risk of family violence due to limited language skills that undermine family violence messages or having limited access to culturally appropriate community support services. Some research indicates that women from CALD backgrounds are less likely to report family violence to police or access mainstream services.<sup>19</sup>

### **High birth rates/pregnancy:**

The ABS survey into Personal Safety in 2006 identified that women may be at increased risk of family violence during pregnancy and in the period immediately after the baby is born. Other research showed that pregnant women to be at greatest risk were among those women with lower levels of education, from disadvantaged communities and with unwanted or unintended pregnancies.<sup>20</sup>

In 2013, the Hume birth rate for 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years is significantly larger than those for Greater Melbourne and Victoria – with Hume having 2.1 births per 1,000 women, compared to 1.7 for Greater Melbourne and 1.8 for Victoria (see graph below). This provides an indication of the number of women who maybe at greater risk of family violence.

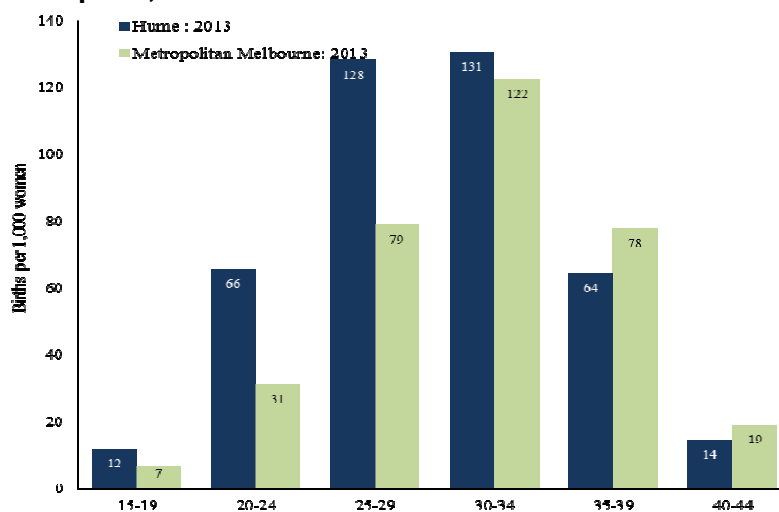
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<sup>19</sup> Mitchell (2011) *Background Note: Domestic Violence in Australia: an overview of the issues*, Department of Parliamentary Services, Parliament of Australia.

<sup>20</sup> Taft (2002): *Violence against women in pregnancy and after childbirth: Current knowledge and issues in health care responses*. Issues paper no. 6. Sydney. Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House.

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**Births per 1,000 women in Hume and Metro Melbourne:2013**



Source; ABS 'customised data': Birth by maternal age, 2013

### Young parents:

"Young people's vulnerability to intimate partner violence is increased by sexist and traditional gender role attitudes, peer culture, inexperienced and attitude supportive of violence that can be shaped by the media, pornography and early exposure to aggressive behaviour by parents or role models".<sup>21</sup>

From April 2014 to March 2015, approximately 16.5% of the total number of births in Hume City were to women of 25 years and under. This is a significant proportion of births to younger women.

### Interface Council

Hume City Council is one of Melbourne's ten Interface Councils, located at the edge of the metropolitan area and the rural shires. Not only are the Interface Councils characterised by rapid residential growth, but also for the significant challenges they face in terms of poor public transport networks, time lags in the delivery of social infrastructure and community services, fragile and isolated families, at risk youth and poor health and wellbeing outcomes.<sup>22</sup>

It is reported that many of the Interface Councils experience a concentration of risk factors associated with family violence including: pregnant women with young children, lack of social support services, and housing stress.<sup>23</sup> The continuance of building within the outer suburbs without the necessary social infrastructure and community services will in high probability exacerbate family violence issues. "Outer suburbs are critically lacking in the kinds of social support services – health, legal, emergency shelters, family counselling – that might make a life-and-death difference."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Flood and Fergus 2008 in Morgan and Chadwick 2009: *Key issues in domestic violence*, Research in Practice no. 7, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, page 3.

<sup>22</sup> VCOSS (2014) In Sight: On the fringes: Tale of two cities, Issue 10.

<sup>23</sup> Whitzman (2014) Better urban planning can reduce the tragedies of domestic violence, The Conversation.

<sup>24</sup> Whitzman (2014) Better urban planning can reduce the tragedies of domestic violence, The Conversation.

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### Council's response and impacts to family violence within its communities

Since 1996, Hume City Council has been designated as a World Health Organisation International Safe Community. This international accreditation demonstrates Council's commitment to safety promotion and injury prevention across the municipality with an ultimate goal of enhancing safety and perceptions of safety and to coordinate actions to reduce crime by 2030.

Hume City Council also prides itself in having a strong commitment to social justice and human rights, which are embedded in its Social Justice Charter, which was first developed in 2001. The Social Justice Charter commits Council to advancing a fair and just society, promoting respect for its citizens, encouraging community participation in civic life, strengthening community wellbeing and reducing the causes of disadvantage.

The following section below demonstrates Council's responses in addressing the risk factors of family violence and in supporting members of the community who are victims/or at risk of family violence.

#### Corporate commitments

- Hume City Council's long term community plan, **Hume Horizons 2040**, outlines measures that address safety in the community and in the home.
- One of the **Hume Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017** strategic objectives "promote and develop safe and gender equitable communities, culture and organisations where relationships are equal, respectful and non-discriminatory".
- **Social Justice Charter 2014** commits Council to advancing a fair and just society, promoting respect for its citizens, encouraging community participation in civic life, strengthening community wellbeing and reducing the causes of disadvantage.
- **Hume City Council Community Safety Strategy 2009-2013** addresses Family Violence and Women's Safety as one of its five key areas of action. The **Draft Hume City Council Safety Action plan 2015-2019** continues with this strong response to family violence.
- **Hume Early Years Framework and Action Plan 2014-2018** incorporate a vision: "A supportive community and responsive service system that upholds human rights and embodies social justice values". The strategic directions in both the Framework and the Action Plan underpin holistic approaches to health and wellbeing in children and families as well as upholding the rights and dignity of children and families.
- As part of the implementation of the **Hume City Council Leisure Strategy 2013 – 2018** there will be an increase the participation of women and girls in sporting clubs and leisure activities as well as the provision of opportunities for women's and girl's leadership and achievement.
- **Youth Strategy 2011-2014:** This strategy informs the holistic approach which Council has taken in working with younger adults, ensuring that staff understand the environment in which younger adults live, work, and play and the importance of these and their relationships to them being healthy, positive, valued and valuable.
- Council has a **Positive Aging Strategy 2014-2024** where one of the key strategic directions underpins a population health approach, which focusses on promoting physical, social and mental wellbeing and function. Under this approach Respect and Social Inclusion has been identified as a priority areas,

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where strategies for combating ageist stereotypes and attitudes will be undertaken.

### **Programs/activities/projects**

Council is an active participant in addressing risks, issues and victims of family violence through its services, programs and targeted projects. The following is not an exhaustive list, however provides the Royal Commission with a range of initiatives implemented from Council:

- **Addressing disadvantage:**

**Community Grants:** The Community Grants Program is underpinned by Council's Social Justice Charter to ensure a human-rights based approach in Council's decision making process. Council's Social Justice Charter recognises that every citizen has the right to a quality of life that allows them to freely realise their potential. The Charter seeks to advance a fair and just society and to promote respect for every citizen, encourage community participation, strengthen community wellbeing and reduce the causes of disadvantage. The Community Grants Program in 2014 awarded a total of \$342,900 to community groups and service providers for them to create sustained and positive change within their communities and to further build respect, community inclusion and wellbeing.

**Sporting Club Development:** Through the club development program Council is committed to delivering education sessions on preventing violence against women targeted at Hume sports club members. Sports clubs are a place where males congregate and as such can be a good location to implement targeted education programs. In addition Council is working to increase opportunities for female participation in sport and recreation by encouraging clubs to field junior and senior female teams and offering targeted programs where these opportunities are not available.

- **Gender Equity:**

Council embarked on a Gender Equity Project in 2014, which is a strategic approach to addressing gender equality in Hume City. The project seeks to sponsor innovation by engaging community members, key stakeholders and community leaders to develop and implement activities to raise public awareness of gender equality and address the causes of family violence.

The project aims to prevent and reduce the incidence of family violence and promote healthy and respectful relationships. The project objectives are:

- To inform Hume City Council of key issues relating to gender equality in Hume by building upon an existing evidence base;
- To bring together Council and key agencies who are currently working on gender equality projects locally and nationally to build stronger working relationships and capacity to understand, identify and respond to gender equality issues in Hume; and
- To use the VicHealth 'Preventing violence against women: A framework for action' to promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women to reduce the incidence of family violence.

The outcomes of this project align with the Council Plan's Strategic Objective 3.1: "To undertake initiatives which increase social, civic and economic participation by individuals and groups in Hume community life to support individual fulfilment



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whilst strengthening a culturally rich, cohesive and respectful community". The project outcomes include:

- Building stronger networks and links for women and men across their communities in promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women; and
- Increasing Council and community capacity to engage in partnership, advocacy and actions relating to gender equality in Hume, with the aim of reducing the incidence of family violence.
- **Enhancement of children and family outcomes:**  
**Early Years Enrolment Policies:** It is recognised that not all children have equal opportunities in accessing early years services. Council's Enrolment Policy ensures that children who are at most risk of 'missing out' on accessing early year opportunities (indigenous, newly arrived and children known to child protection) are given priority access to Hume's services, including preschool, long day care and three-year old activity groups.

**Babies in Hume incorporating the Hume Moreland Fathering Project:** The transition into parenthood is a significant event in the relationship lifecycle and families can be vulnerable at this time due to an increase in stress and deterioration in their relationship<sup>[1]</sup>. Moreover there is an evidence base that identifies gender inequality as a determinant of family violence<sup>[2]</sup>. Linking the project with this evidence based framework positions the Hume Moreland Fathering Project as a model for the prevention of Family, or Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).

The core focus of the *Fathering Project* is to:

- Build strong responsive relationships between all family members;
- Promote gender equitable and respectful non-violent relationships for couples transitioning into parenthood when there is an increased risk of IPV; and
- Strengthen infants' health, safety, stability and well-being.

The project aims to do this by:

- Working together with maternal and child health nurse teams and early years services to promote father-inclusive practice, gender equality and respectful relationships;
- Strengthening professionals' capacity to both identify the early warning signs of the presence of risks to young infants and to engage with parents, and especially with fathers including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families;

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<sup>[1]</sup> Doss, Rhoades, Stanley & Markman (2009). *The Effect of the Transition to Parenthood on Relationship Quality: An Eight-Year Prospective Study*. J Pers Soc Psychol, 96(3) pp.601–619. Retrieved from:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2702669/pdf/nihms-100109.pdf>

<sup>[2]</sup> 'People who hold traditional views about gender roles or who have lower levels of support for gender equality are more likely to accept violence against women than those who hold more egalitarian beliefs. Men are more likely than women to hold traditional gender role attitudes (Flood & Pease 2006). These relationships are well-established in international research (Taylor & Mouzos 2006) and were confirmed in the Victorian survey of community attitudes toward violence against women (VicHealth 2006)', cited in VicHealth (2007, p. 34). *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs: a framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Carlton. Retrieved from:

[http://www.dvvic.org.au/attachments/2007\\_vichealth\\_pvaw.framework.pdf](http://www.dvvic.org.au/attachments/2007_vichealth_pvaw.framework.pdf)

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- Increasing new parents awareness, knowledge and skills to respond to their infants' needs<sup>[3]</sup> and build strong infant-parent attachment and bonding; and
- Strengthening couple and parent relationships by promoting gender equality and respectful non-violent relationships so that parents are able to safely and positively deal with parental and relationship stress and challenge.

Hume City Council Babies in Hume (First Time Parents Program) has conducted family nights, where fathers have attended with their partner and child. The objectives of the evenings have been to facilitate social interaction among new fathers, promote positive father involvement and to promote parent-infant communication and communication between couples.

**Maternal and Child Health Key Age and Stage appointments:** The Hume City Council Maternal and Child Health Universal Service offer 10 Key Age and Stage, (KAS), visits to all families with young children across the municipality. These visits occur over a period of 3.5 years at designated times. Family violence questions can be raised at any of these visits but particularly the 4 week KAS visit. This visit focuses on all aspects of maternal health including physical, emotional and relationship health for that mother. Family violence including maternal safety in and around the home is discussed; safety plans reviewed when applicable and appropriate referral pathways established. The family violence component of this visit is not raised if the partner is present at this visit, but is followed up at the next available opportunity as per recommendations within the Maternal and Child Health Standards. Over a 9 month period in 2014/15 MCH nurses conducted 6,072 family violence information sessions with clients and 54 referrals to family violence service providers.

**Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting Service:** The Enhanced Maternal and Child (EMCH) service conducts home visits to support the more vulnerable families experiencing parenting challenges. Over the past 4 years there has been a significant increase in the number of families experiencing family violence and mental health issues at the point of referral. Over a 9-month period in 2011/12 there were 11 family violence issues identified at point of referral, equalling 10.7% of the total number of referrals over that period by EMCH staff. In 2014/15 this family violence figure increased to 41.5% of the total number of referrals made by EMCH staff. The EMCH team regularly liaise and refer to family violence services when supporting families.

**The Parent Support Team** support the identified parenting needs of families and use a strength-based approach to responding to individual family circumstances, building the capacity of parents. The team provide supported playgroups for vulnerable families as well as facilitating the Babies in Hume First Parent groups.

**The Young Parent Engagement Workers** are employed to engage vulnerable young parents under the age of 23 years in to community and early years services, reducing social isolation, building confidence and parenting capacity. Specific "Young and a Mum" playgroups are held in Sunbury, Craigieburn and Broadmeadows.

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<sup>[3]</sup> Discussions with *Caring Dads* (behaviour change program) providers revealed that many abusive men are willing to address their attitudes and behaviour towards their children before they are willing to address their attitudes and behaviours towards their partner. The Caring Dads Program "uses the men's role as a father to motivate them to change their behaviour and thereby reduce the risk of further harm to their children through domestic abuse." <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/evaluation-of-services/caring-dads-safer-children-interim-report.pdf>

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**Boorais and Beyond** is a program funded by Communities for Children to build a sense of belonging and community connectedness with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The group meets regularly to share a meal and have a yarn. The Boorais playgroup has an informal parenting component where parent child attachment is fostered and families can come together in a safe and welcoming environment.

**Access to Early Learning Program:** Access to Early Learning (AEL) Program is a funded for 3 years by the Victorian Department of Education and Training aimed at improving the participation of vulnerable 3 year old children in quality universal early childhood education and care programs. Two thirds of the families participating in the AEL program have experienced family violence.

The AEL facilitators assist the family to enrol and sustain engagement in an early childhood education and care programs, they work with the family to identify and address barriers to participation; they work with the family in their home, or other community space to build the capacity of the parents/carers as their child's first educator.

The AEL facilitators also support early childhood education and care services to offer quality, inclusive programs and environments and support professionals and educators to develop the skills and knowledge to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and families.

**Supported Playgroups:** Council employs two Playgroup Support Officers to facilitate family and community engagement, reduce social isolation in the early years and promote a connected and informed community.

- **Enhancement of young adult outcomes:**

**Youth counselling service:** The youth counselling service is a generalist service that provides confidential individual counselling to young people who work, live, study and/or have connections in Hume. The service provides 10-15 counselling sessions, appointments are scheduled at Council's Youth Centres. The service also offers counselling to Schools (Craigieburn Secondary College and Gladstone Park Secondary College at present).

Counselling offers a safe space and confidential setting to clients (ages 12-24yrs); counsellors support young people who are experiencing and/or have experienced violence/abuse (i.e. Safety Plans and Escape Plans are devised; emergency services are identified; screening and risk assessments are performed). Referrals are completed to relevant family violence specialised services with the young person's knowledge/awareness. Council staff also advocate and support young people with information on Intervention Orders (Police notifications, application process and Court processes) and perform notification to DHS – Child Protection, where required (in accordance to mandatory reporting). The young people are involved in each process mentioned in hope of empowering them through their 'recovery journey'.

The '**Love Bites**' Program is a vital program available to young people (15-17yrs) and is a school based and community program. The program addresses family violence/domestic violence and sexual assault. 'Love Bites' was piloted at Mount Ridley College (Craigieburn) in November 2014. Facilitators of the program received the relevant training on family/domestic violence; sexual assault and trauma prior to the pilot. Facilitators include youth workers;

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counsellors; wellbeing staff; school nurses; social workers; and family violence liaison officers.

**“Be the Hero”** is another successful and effective school based program that is offered to young males in hope of providing relevant education on violence/abuse; unacceptable behaviours and an opportunity to explore emotions (anger, aggression, and grief). The program offers young males an opportunity to learn healthy behaviours in an attempt to express emotions with the aim of ‘generational change’. Both the *Love Bites* program and the *Be the Hero* program are imperative in building community awareness to our young people in hope of reducing future reports of family violence.

Youth Services also participate in the White Ribbon event (annually) **‘Violence against Women – Hume says NO!’** This event encourages Schools and young people and the community as a whole to unite and stand strong in their message ‘No to Violence’. Youth Services also has a Young Leaders Program (Youth Central Broadmeadows), the program encourages young people to take on Leadership opportunities in the communities, with the slogan “have a voice, be the change, make a difference”.

- **Enhancement of older person outcomes:**

**Suspected elder abuse:** Between 4% and 6% of older people experience elder abuse.<sup>25</sup> In recognition that elder abuse may arise in the Hume community, Council is guided by the Elder Abuse Prevention and Response Guidelines in terms of choosing activities to increase awareness of Elder Abuse in the community.

All staff are provided with elder abuse training in various forms. Currently, Assessment Officers and Case Managers are undertaking a revision of elder abuse awareness training. Through the Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership (HWPCP), an Elder Abuse response document was created, which was based on the Victorian State Government’s document *With Respect to Age-2009*. The HWPCP document reflects the local response and outlines staff’s Duty of Care to their clients, including the reporting of suspected elder abuse.

Through Hume’s Home Care Packages and our HACC Short Term Case Management, staff have the capacity to work with clients who are experiencing family violence and wish to make a change in their living arrangements or support networks. This may include assisting the client to contact Senior Rights Victoria to discuss legal assistance or applying for Guardianship when the client does not have the capacity to make a decision on their own.

- **Enhancement of staff’s knowledge and support regards family violence:**

**Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement (No. 5) 2013-2017:** A key objective of the Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement (No. 6) 2013–2017 demonstrates Council’s commitment to supporting employees experiencing family violence and ensuring a harmonious employee relations environment. The clause provides additional paid leave (up to 20 days) in support to employees experiencing family and domestic violence that may affect employee’s attendance or performance at work. In addition, specialist training has been provided to approximately 30 employees who will be responsible for supporting other staff members affected by family violence.

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<sup>25</sup> Senior Rights Victoria, Fact Sheet, June 2013.

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**Corporate Induction:** Corporate Inductions are organised for new employees of which a major component of the corporate induction refers to Council organisational values and cross-organisational initiatives, including White Ribbon Team participation. The corporate induction also discusses the Enterprise Agreement and key leave entitlements (for example support for employees in emergency situations of family or domestic violence).

**Organisational values and link to White Ribbon:** Since 2010, Hume City Council has been delivering White Ribbon Day events and activities on the prevention of violence against women initiatives across the whole Hume community. Council provides extensive information to new employees about its organisational values, the role of the White Ribbon Team and its commitment to this program.

**Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):** Council is committed to providing counselling and support to employees and immediate family members through Council's Employee Assistance Program. EAP is easily accessible, voluntary and provides support on a range of personal and work related issues (for example relationship and marital problems). The support can be face to face, online, and over the telephone.

**Family Violence Training (organisational-wide):** Council has recently implemented organisational wide training to employees, Managers and specialist staff assisting them to manage and support employees in emergency situations of family violence. Over 100 employees have attended this training to date with more training organised for June/July 2015. Council has provided extensive training to EEO Contact Officers, Union Delegates, members of White Ribbon and Council's Consultative Committee enabling them to provide additional support and guidance to employees experiencing family and domestic violence. The training covered broad understanding of family violence, workplace implications, responding to disclosure, and resources and referrals.

### Partnerships

- Council is involved in and provides support to regional and local prevention of violence against women (PVAW) and family violence networks.<sup>26</sup> An example of the collaborated efforts of the partnership is the development, funding and dissemination of the *Northern Region Women's and Men's Family Violence Help Cards*, which are available in 14 community languages. The cards were developed to provide an information and referral resource for women who have experienced, or who are at the risk of experiencing, family violence, and for men who use or are at risk of using family violence. They provide relevant referral

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26 Seven local governments in Northern Melbourne including Hume, three Primary Care Partnerships, five community health services (Plenty Valley Community Health Service, Dianella Community Health Service, Sunbury Community Health Service, Co-Health Community Health Service, Darebin Community Health Service), hospitals including the Austin Hospital, and the Northern Hospital, Berry Street, Northern CASA, Whittlesea community Connections, Good Samaritan.

Members of the Integrated Family Violence Service system includes Aboriginal specific services such as VACA, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service, Dardi Munwarro – Men's Behaviour Change Program (for Aboriginal Men), Homelessness services including North East Housing service, and HomeGround Homelessness service. Women's refuges which is about three in the Northern area. Salvation Army FV Services. Anglicare, and Kildonan Family Support Services,

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information from each local government area in Melbourne's northern region in regards to where help and support can be obtained.

- Council is a partner with Women's Health In the North (WHIN) in the implementation of the *"Building a Respectful Community – Preventing Violence Against Women - A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011 – 2016"*. This is a very important partnership for Council in addressing address family violence. Council is currently working with WHIN to deliver gender equity training which has been made available to staff across Council.
- The family early learning partnership (FELP) is a local government initiative funded by Hume City Council (HCC) for the period July 2013- December 2015 with a focus on vulnerable families who are currently involved in Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Protection/Child FIRST systems. The program is an intensive 10-week home visiting program delivered in the parent's home to strengthen the parent child relationship, promote early learning strategies for the child, provide a positive approach to engage with parents and to ensure that 'every child has the ability to learn and develop.

The FELP is a program developed to address the needs of the most vulnerable children within the municipality of Hume City Council. It consists of a relationship between Hume City Council Family Services, Hume Moreland Integrated Family Services – Child FIRST, Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies and all early childhood services within Hume City.

### **Planning and infrastructure**

- **Early Provision of community infrastructure:** Council is exploring opportunities for the timely delivery of community infrastructure, where residents can obtain early years and community services as well as have places where they can 'meet-and-greet' and develop social connections. This is of particular importance for residents in new residential estates which are 'disconnected' from the existing urban fabric and existing community services, programs and activities. Such facilities can be of a permanent nature (such as the Newbury Child and Community Centre) or temporary through the use of purpose built relocatables. Such a temporary model is under investigation for Donnybrook Road, Kalkallo. Facilities have been also been planned to accommodate other non-Council specialist services through the use of 'hot-offices' or the hiring of community meeting spaces.



## Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015

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### Barriers of access to family violence services

Victims of domestic violence can face a multitude of barriers in accessing support services. These can be both **personal/cultural barriers** in fearing the repercussions of their disclosure of abuse, to systemic barriers in the form of securing a timely appointment with a support service to information and knowledge regarding their legal rights.

These barriers can apply to all women experiencing domestic violence but are often more acutely experienced by women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. Hume City is home to a vast and varied **CALD population**, with 27.9% of its total population born overseas in non-English speaking countries, the top three of which are Iraq, Turkey and India (Census of Population and Housing, 2011). Further, **women with a disability** can also face additional difficulties in accessing family violence support services. According to the 2011 Census, 5.3% of Hume's total population reported needing assistance with core activities (an indicator of disability) compared with 4.5% for Greater Melbourne.

Specific personal/cultural barriers Hume residents may experience in accessing family violence services include a lack of familial and social networks due to migration. This experience of **social isolation** can prevent many from being able to access support services

Another significant barrier to help seeking is the **legitimate fear of reprisal** if the victim reports the abuse to the police or a support service. Further, studies show that "women from CALD backgrounds are reluctant to report violence against them because of the threat of deportation" (Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, 2011: 5). Many hold immigration visas with limited rights to income support and labour force participation.

Women may often **fail to recognise domestic violence as a crime**. Even if they do recognise the abuse as a crime, the social stigma attached to being the victim of domestic violence (the fear of being disbelieved, blamed and shamed) can prevent them from disclosing and accessing services.

Residents living in isolated areas may experience challenges in accessing support services, particularly so in Interface Councils. Over the last ten years, Hume City has experienced rapid residential growth with the release of Greenfield sites in northern Craigieburn and the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary in 2008. As such, many housing developments have been established, but experience a **significant time lag in receiving services and infrastructure** to these new communities.

This lack of access to local services is further exacerbated through lack of access to regional services and support due to **distance** (from the actual service and from the support of family and friends); **infrequent and non-direct public transport; the transport cost** of public transport and the use of using a private mode of transport.

Together with the personal, cultural and geographical barriers discussed above, Hume residents could also experience systematic barriers in accessing support. These pertain to **accessing information** about the service, where to find it, how to make an appointment, understanding their rights around informed consent, confidentiality and privacy; and the difficulty in navigating the complex 'service support system'. This is made more difficult if women struggle to access information

## Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015

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in their first language or not being able to access a service which is culturally sensitive or a practitioner from the same cultural background.

A women faces an increased risk of being killed or seriously injured which she leaves or is separated from an abusive partner.<sup>27</sup> This fear of potential reprisal or threats to children's safety (coercive control) places a burden on the victim and allows a means of control to limit their freedom and independence, thereby making it **difficult for the victim to leave** and access support.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, some women lack the resources or connections to access alternative accommodation in order to escape the family violence situation.

Victims of family violence do not always refer to their experiences of trauma as 'victims of family violence', particularly with young people where the language typically used falls under 'family issues' and/or 'relationship issues'.

Other problems of **under reporting** can be found amongst older persons where an individual is experiencing symptoms of dementia or when clients do not want to acknowledge that they are experiencing abuse. It has been the experience of Council staff that their clients feel a tremendous amount of guilt and often feel that they are somehow responsible for the behaviour of the perpetrator (*if only I had raised them better*). In some situations, so many older persons would otherwise be left to live alone, they allow the abuse to continue because so they don't have to be alone or feel they are putting their relative out if they remove them from the home.

Many family violence **services are over-subscribed and there is a lack of accommodation**. A report indicated that Berry Street Victoria, which services the Hume municipality, received 2089 family violence referrals from police in 2009-2010. The number of referrals had more than doubled by 2013, when it reached 5010, and 2014 was seeing yet again another increase to 5700 in March 2014.<sup>29</sup> This is but one snapshot of services working with victims of family violence, where Hume lacks services for current and future residents within the municipality.

In addition, there is a lack of accommodation for women and children to access if other family/friend or private alternatives are not available to them. As was illustrated in the Rooming House Report, Hume residents need to access rooming houses when fleeing domestic violence situations (if emergency accommodation is not available to them).

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<sup>27</sup> Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, Fact Sheet, 2015

<sup>28</sup> Wendt 2014: Why doesn't she leave: The reality of escaping domestic violence, University of South Australia, The Conversation.

<sup>29</sup> The Age 27 March 2014.



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### Matters for Consideration

It is widely recognised that there is no single cause of family violence, “rather it appears to arise from a complex interaction between individual attitudes towards women, and social and cultural practices and values across our society and communities”.<sup>30</sup> In addition it is also recognised that a continuum of collective responses are required to address family violence in the long term, ranging from violence prevention and education, capacity building, early intervention, direct responses to victims and actions against perpetrators.

As demonstrated through the Hume City Council’s submission, Council, along with other Local Governments are well placed in addressing family violence through early prevention, education and capacity building initiatives. Although some of the initiatives form part of Council’s long term commitment to addressing family violence (such as Corporate Induction, Youth Counselling Services, Community Grants program and early years services), and thus forms part of its recurrent costs, many initiatives are project based that rely on external funding or short term internal funding.

Given the high proportion of family violence risk factors present within this municipality and also given that Hume is the second highest in reported family violence incidents and rates per 100,000 population, more services and programs are required to address the family violence issues across communities over the long term.

It is encouraging to note that the recent release of the Victorian State Government 2015/16 Budget provides targeted resources (\$57.9 million in 2015/16) towards the prevention of family violence and for the support of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Nonetheless, it is noted that the lion’s share of the budget is directed towards family violence services and intervention. It is hoped that through the findings of the Commission that pre-prevention (addressing social and economic development factors) and prevention would receive greater attention as part of the continuum of responses to family violence and in turn receives increased levels of resources in the immediate future.

### Recommendations for Consideration:

In response to the family violence issues experienced in Hume City and the various actions required in addressing them, it is recommended that the following themes be considered by the Royal Commission in its inquiry into Family Violence:

#### 1. It is recommended that the Commission consider:

***Building the capacity of service responses to family violence, with particular focus on the enablement of responses at the local level in scale of delivery, complexity and appropriateness.***

This consideration responds to the municipality’s need to:

- Seek additional resources to meet growing demand for services due to current undersupply of services and in the context that Hume is a Growth municipality;

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<sup>30</sup> DHS, Victorian Government, 2012: Victoria’s action plan to address violence against women and children, 27.

## Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015

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- Deliver a range of wrap-round services that reflect the complexities experienced in family violence matters;
- Attract and locate additional and new service providers or out-reach programs within the municipality;
- Enhance accessibility and proximity of services to those requiring services (mobility and transport issues);
- Deliver more culturally appropriate services; and
- Enhance the local referral system and opportunities for collaboration between services to provide greater level of seamless services.

### 2. It is recommended that the Commission consider:

***Investing in campaigns by State and Federal Government that promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women. Including more media coverage, campaigns, and programs in a variety of settings.***

This consideration responds to the municipality's need to:

- Increase the availability of resources for appropriate social marketing campaigns to enable consistent and frequent messages (similar to the successful national 'slip-slop-slap' campaign, it is uncertain whether 1800 RESPECT has gained a similar public profile);
- Enhance and expand on mechanisms to overcome the lack of understanding within the community about what constitutes family violence; highlights one's rights and need for gender equality; and addresses shame factors.

### 3. It is recommended that the Commission consider:

***Increasing the systematic sharing/transference of knowledge of successful whole-of-community models/programs/actions and research, which addresses family violence along the continuum of responses – potentially through a common online portal.***

This consideration responds to the municipality's need to:

- Gain a greater understanding of what is 'working well' in the response to family violence, which could in turn inform Council's own projects/programs/services and training programs;
- Increase opportunities for partnerships or referral systems that will leverage the best outcomes for residents;
- Collaborate in opportunities that secure funding opportunities for targeted programs/services/projects within family violence matters within the municipality;
- Increase evidence-based actions in addressing family violence issues. (It is noted that the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House has transitioned into the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, which would not provide the same informational support as the former clearing house in regard to family violence).

## Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015

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### 4. It is recommended that the Commission consider:

***Redressing family violence through long term commitment and an appropriate level of resources (both service development and capital investment) that reflects the magnitude and complexities which underpin issues of family violence, particularly in preventative measures.***

This consideration responds to the municipality's need to:

- Secure funding which extends beyond short term projects into those that leverage sustainable local community outcomes, such as the need for additional funding to resource the Fathering Project and to potentially embed this as an ongoing program;
- Overcome barriers of under reporting and the lack of project/program evaluation, which in turn will capture the magnitude and complexities of family violence issues within the municipality;
- Increase capital investment in support services, such as refuges/emergency accommodation for those fleeing violence, which are absent from the Hume municipality; and
- Increase the programisation of successful pilot projects, such as the RAMP project, so that they become part of the State's ongoing budget line items.

### 5. It is recommended that the Commission consider:

***Enhancing the empowerment of communities to appropriately respond to the prevention of domestic violence and address local family violence issues experienced by victims of violence, perpetrators and the community in general.***

This consideration responds to the municipality's need for:

- Recognition of the role that local government plays in the continuum of responses to family violence, in the case of Hume - ranging from pre-prevention (such as social, economic and cultural development, including infrastructure development); prevention (such as Fathering programs, sports development, gender equity and social justice), support of responses in a range of settings (such as Enterprise Agreement, White Ribbon, early learning and youth support, and community grants) and intervention (such as Enhanced Maternal Child Health referrals). Increasing resources will be required now and into the future due to Hume being a Growth municipality, where there is a likelihood that demand for support will increase as the population increases;
- Increased community capacity to undertake local responses to local issues and thereby create sustainable solutions in normative environments, such as Council successfully funding the Oorja Foundation Inc to undertake a local forum in support of the Punjabi community;
- Availability of adequate support services and infrastructure to enable victims of family violence to choose to safely address or leave the situation, including the supply of alternative accommodation or legal advice;
- Increased levels of support to community services that are in support of Hume's diverse community, such as targeted programs (such as anger

## Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015

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management sessions); culturally appropriate services, interpretive services, and printed materials which reflect the diversity of languages.

### 6. It is recommended that the Commission consider:

***Acknowledging that local governments and communities have different capacities to respond to family violence issues given their limited resources and expertise and in turn may require different levels of support.***

This consideration responds to the municipality's need for:

- Communities at the Interface experience a concentration of risk factors that underpin family violence and in turn require a heightened level of assistance to overcome them or minimise their affects.
- Different funding or programming models may be required in order to acknowledge differences in delivering family violence programs, for some communities require more intensive collaborative efforts due to complexities (such as distance, lack of transport, shift work, and proficiencies in English).

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<b>REPORT NO:</b>	HE018
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence
<b>SOURCE:</b>	Kristine Mueller, Social Policy & Early Years Planner
<b>DIVISION:</b>	City Communities
<b>FILE NO:</b>	HCC
<b>POLICY:</b>	Hume Community Safety Strategy 2009-2013
<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:</b>	2.2 Strengthen community safety and respectful behaviour.
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Executive Summary - Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence</i></li> <li>2. <i>Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence</i></li> </ol>

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**1. SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

- 1.1 On 31 March 2015 the Royal Commission into Family Violence released its Issues Paper on Family Violence.
- 1.2 The Royal Commission is seeking written submissions from those either directly affected by family violence, organisations which have come into contact with people affected by family violence or from others whose experiences or ideas may assist the work of the Royal Commission. Due date for submissions is the 29 May 2015.
- 1.3 A submission has been prepared by Social Development, in collaboration with various Departments (Aged Services and Public Health, Executive, Family and Children Services, Human Resources, Leisure, and Youth Services).
- 1.4 The submission highlights Hume's family violence statistics, the prevalence of family violence risk factors within the municipality, Council's and community responses to family violence, barriers of access to services by those affected, and six recommendations put forward to the Royal Commission for consideration.

**2. RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council:**

- 2.1. **Endorses the Submission, including the Executive Summary, and forwards it for consideration to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.**

**3. LEGISLATIVE POWERS:**

- 3.1 The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (section 24) and the Local Government Act 1999 (section 3c & 3d) mandate Councils' role to act as representative, informed and responsible decision makers in the interests of their communities.
- 3.2 Councils are bound by the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which aim to eliminate discrimination and promote gender equality in our community.
- 3.3 Compliance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires Councils to uphold human rights, including the rights of women, as an essential component of a democratic, equitable and inclusive society.

**REPORT NO: HE018 (cont.)**

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no financial implications in respect to this report.

**5. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:**

There are no environmental sustainability implications in respect to this report.

**6. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS APPLICATION:**

6.1 The development of this submission has been under pinned by:

- 6.1.1 Hume Social Justice Charter (2014) which encourages community participation to celebrate the achievements, contributions and diversity of women.
- 6.1.2 The Hume City Citizens Bill of Rights which acknowledges the equal rights of men and women.
- 6.1.3 The Human Rights Charter and the United Nation's Convention of the Rights of the Child have been taken into consideration in relation to the development of Council's submission on Family Violence.

**7. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:**

- 7.1 The development of the submission to the Royal Commission was developed through two internal workshops held on 20 April 2015 and 5 May 2015, which were attended by the following Departments: Aged Services and Public Health, Family and Children Services, Human Resources, Leisure and Youth Services, and Social Development.
- 7.2 Research and evidence was collected to inform the submission and included information collected from Council service providers and non-Council service providers (such as Women's Health in the North).

**8. DISCUSSION:**

- 8.1 On 31 March 2015 the Royal Commission into Family Violence released its Issues Paper on Family Violence calling for submissions by the 29 May 2015.
- 8.2 The purpose of the Royal Commission into Family Violence is to improve their understanding of:
  - 8.2.1 Gaps and problems within the system in response to family violence;
  - 8.2.2 Possible solutions to such gaps/problems; and
  - 8.2.3 Short and long term solutions to family violence issues.
- 8.3 In response to the information needs of the Royal Commission, Council's submission highlights the family violence statistics in Hume City, such as: In 2013/14 Hume City Council had the second highest level of reported family violence incidents per 100,000 within metropolitan Melbourne (1,587.3) and the second highest number of reported incidents within Victoria (2,909).
- 8.4 It also acknowledges the prevalence of risk factors which may underpin family violence within the municipality, such as financial stresses; lack of community connections and services; mental health issues; disability; lower education levels; cultural diversity; high birth rates; young parents; potential elder abuse; and Interface Council specific issues.
- 8.5 The submission illustrates the wide range of responses which are being undertaken by Council from pre-prevention (social, economic, cultural and infrastructure development), prevention and education (fathering program, sporting development, gender equity, and White Ribbon) to support in direct responses (Enhanced Maternal and Child Health referrals), participation in projects, partnerships and networks.

**REPORT NO: HE018 (cont.)**

8.6 In response to the family violence issues prevalent in Hume City, the system's current responses and the barriers faced by those affected, the following recommendations have been proposed for consideration by the Royal Commission into Family Violence:

- 8.6.1 *Building the capacity of service responses to family violence, with particular focus on the enablement of responses at the local level in scale of delivery, complexity and appropriateness.*
- 8.6.2 *Investing in campaigns by State and Federal Government that promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women. Including more media coverage, campaigns, and programs in a variety of settings.*
- 8.6.3 *Increasing the systematic sharing/transference of knowledge of successful whole-of-community models/programs/actions and research, which addresses family violence along the continuum of responses – potentially through a common online portal.*
- 8.6.4 *Redressing family violence through long term commitment and an appropriate level of resources (both service development and capital investment) that reflects the magnitude and complexities which underpin issues of family violence, particularly in preventative measures.*
- 8.6.5 *Enhancing the empowerment of communities to appropriately respond to the prevention of domestic violence and address local family violence issues experienced by victims of violence, perpetrators and the community in general.*
- 8.6.6 *Acknowledging that local governments and communities have different capacities to respond to family violence issues given their limited resources and expertise and in turn may require different levels of support.*

**9. CONCLUSION:**

The causes and consequences of violence against family members, in particular women, are complex and multifaceted. There are often individual, community or societal explanations as to the reasons why family violence happens, including key determinates of unequal power relations between men and women; gender stereotypes and broader cultures of violence.

To minimise or eliminate these causes requires whole-of-community responses that operate in a variety of settings and are targeted towards a variety of affected persons. Hume City Council's submission highlights the critical importance for prevention measures to family violence and of the significant role that Council plays in the delivery of such measures.

It is hoped that through the findings of the Commission that pre-prevention and prevention measures would receive greater attention as part of the continuum of responses to family violence and in turn receive increased levels of resources in the immediate future.



# HUME CITY COUNCIL **SOCIAL JUSTICE CHARTER** 2014

[www.hume.vic.gov.au](http://www.hume.vic.gov.au)





# MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Council recognises that every citizen of Hume City is entitled to aspire to a quality of life that allows them to freely realise their potential. The Social Justice Charter goes 'beyond words' to promote a fair and just society. Council is committed to advancing social justice and to address the social, cultural, economic and other factors that impact on the aspirations of its citizens.

As Mayor of Hume City Council, it is with great pride that I am able to bring to you the 2014 Social Justice Charter, incorporating the Hume Citizen's Bill of Rights. This 2014 edition of the Hume City Council Social Justice Charter, reiterates our commitment to recognising that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Social justice is the key to building a brighter future for our community. Local government is the level closest to the people and is in a perfect position to work towards enhancing community wellbeing by providing essential services, facilities and support networks. Council recognises that only long term sustained investment and support from all levels of government will improve the social and economic wellbeing of our community.

The attainment of social justice has been at the heart of Hume City Council's vision for many years - with Council making its major public commitment to Social Justice through the adoption of its original Charter in 2001. Significant action has been taken by Council since the original adoption. A range of innovative programs, services and infrastructure have been delivered to help this community reach its full potential.

The Broadmeadows Community Hub, the delivery of the Global Learning Centre in Craigieburn and the redevelopment of the Boardman Stadium in Sunbury are infrastructure projects that aim to facilitate learning, healthy lifestyles and community connections.

Council programs such as the Supporting Parents and Developing Children program, with a focus on literacy, language and learning helps to build community cohesion, encourages participation and strengthens community wellbeing. The development

of the Jobs and Skills Task Force aims to improve employment and training opportunities for Hume residents. We are also about to embark on a new project: 'Together 3047' which will focus on the 3047 postcode area of Broadmeadows and work with that community to improve pride, prosperity and connectedness in the community.

The outcomes we seek through this Social Justice Charter can only be done in partnership with community and stakeholders. Council's Social Justice Actions Plans place this City on a unique path towards strengthening the foundations upon which to build a just and inclusive City for all. It further commits Council to promote respect for every citizen, encourage community participation, strengthen community wellbeing and reduce the causes of disadvantage.

Hume City Council is on a journey to create a city in which all our diverse communities will be able to participate - without any distinction or discrimination of any kind.

**Cr. Casey Nunn**  
Mayor of Hume City

# HUME CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL JUSTICE CHARTER 2014

## PREAMBLE

Council pursues its vision to be a leader in achieving social and environmental outcomes with a common goal of connecting our proud community and celebrating diversity. The *Social Justice Charter*, incorporating the *Citizens' Bill of Rights*, realises this vision. A city in which its citizens, together with those who work within and visit Hume, experience the highest quality of life, a commitment to enhancing the social, economic and environmental prosperity of our community through vision, leadership, excellence and inclusion.

Since 2001, Hume City Council's commitment to social justice and human rights has been illustrated and embedded through the Social Justice Charter. As a 'living document', this Charter builds on the 2007 Social Justice Charter which was developed after extensive review, community consultation and consideration of *The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC)*.

The 2014 edition of the Hume City Council Social Justice Charter was shaped by community consultations conducted for the review of the Charter, the development of Action Plans (Disability Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan and the Multicultural Action Plan) and the Community Plan: Hume Horizons 2040.

## 1. PURPOSE

This Social Justice Charter seeks to advance a fair and just society and to promote respect for every citizen, encourage community participation, strengthen community wellbeing and reduce the causes of disadvantage.

Australians rightly expect full access to our 'human rights'. This Charter defines 'social justice' in an endeavour to improve the experience of citizens and visitors, particularly those experiencing disadvantage.

The Local Government Act 1989 requires that Hume City Council seek to "*achieve the best outcomes for the local community*".

Hume City's population profile shapes Council's approach to social justice and research suggests that location specific responses are the most appropriate when approaching social justice.<sup>1</sup> This Charter, and the linked Strategies, Frameworks and Action Plans, provides a grass roots and practical approach to addressing disadvantage in the City.



1. Vinson, T (2007) *Dropping off the edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia. A report of Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia*. Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia: ix

## 2. SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY FRAMEWORK

*“We are all custodians of human rights and we must find our own way to do what is required”* Mary Robinson<sup>2</sup>

This Charter is a Social Justice Policy Framework underpinned by the concept of Social Justice with four inter-connected and overlapping elements:

**Principles** — influence the process and actions.

**Rights** — The Citizens Bill of Rights, incorporating *The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic).

**Actions** — includes Social Justice Action Plans and other strategic documents.

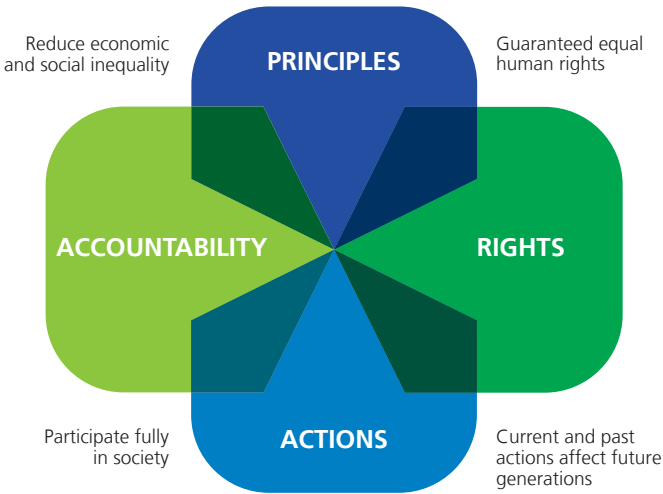
**Accountability** — monitoring of progress and Annual Reporting.

The Social Justice Framework detailed in this Charter assists Councillors and officers to apply the guiding principles in making policy and providing services to the Hume City community in the conduct of their responsibilities.

Social Justice means:

- Every effort should be made to reduce economic and social inequality.
- All people should be guaranteed equal human rights.
- All people should be enabled to participate fully in society.
- A just society understands that actions and experiences of the past and current decisions and activities affect future generations.

FIGURE ONE:  
SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY FRAMEWORK



2. Mary Robinson is the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and former President of Ireland.

### 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

What Council does and the actions and decisions it makes, matters. Council plans for, and promotes and protects the enjoyment of human rights by taking action within the resources and opportunities that are reasonably available. Council will implement actions under the Guiding Principles of the Charter.

Council has and continues to act within the Social Justice Framework and guided by the following principles. Council will:

- Represent and advocate on behalf of Hume City's citizens.
- Adopt a proactive role in supporting community initiatives.
- Create incentives that promote social and economic growth.
- Strive to strengthen community pride.
- Connect citizens with each other and their neighbourhoods.
- Foster development at individual, community and organisational level to secure a sustainable and healthy future for citizens.
- Recognise, welcome and build upon diversity of communities.
- Invest in community building.
- Promote partnership and collaborate in innovative ways to benefit and strengthen the community.

Hume City's Community Plan: Hume Horizons 2040, is the foundation to Council's corporate planning framework and is a plan for the whole community that has been developed in consultation with the community and within the policy framework of social justice and sustainability.

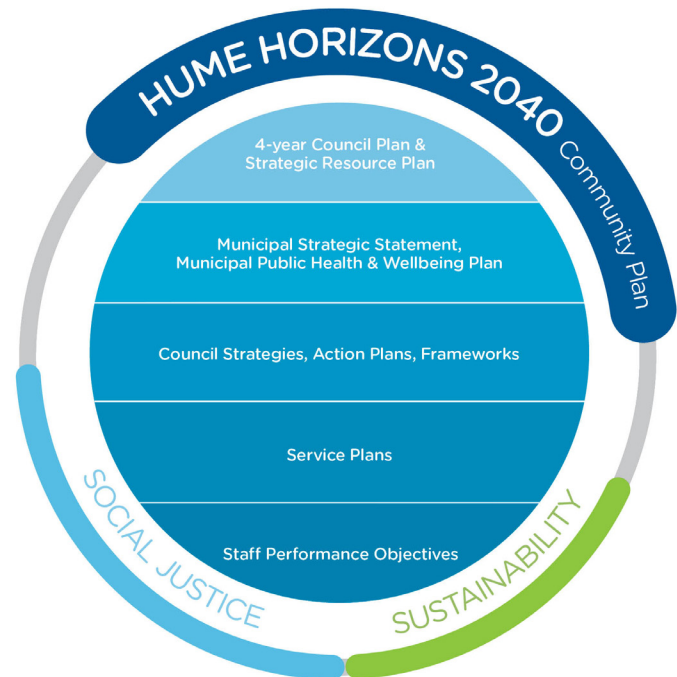


FIGURE TWO:  
SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY FRAMEWORK – PRINCIPLES



## 4. HUME CITY CITIZEN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

*'The equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'*<sup>3</sup>

Every citizen of Hume City is free and equal in dignity and in rights and is entitled to aspire to the quality of life that allows them to freely realise their potential.

Hume City Council affirms that each and every one of our citizens and people who work or visit Hume City, have universal, inalienable human rights. These rights are recognised under international, Australian and Victorian law, to varying degrees, including those rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

From 1 January 2008, all public authorities, including local councils, are obliged to act compatibly with the Victorian Charter Act. Hume City Council has a legal obligation to act compatibly with human rights in the way they go about their work and deliver their services.

In practice, this means that local councils must:

- Give proper consideration to human rights when making decisions
- Ensure that actions, policies and services are compatible with human rights
- Interpret and apply local laws consistently with human rights
- Ensure that people who work on their behalf, including third parties, do so in a way that respects human rights.<sup>4</sup>

### 4.1 HUMAN RIGHTS

Hume City Council is charged with the promotion of the peace, order, and good governance of Hume City: a responsibility shared as part of a three tiered system of local, state and federal governments; a responsibility that is only met in partnership.

Hume City Council recognises the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*<sup>5</sup> which also guides the development of Council policy, plans and strategies. The Victorian Charter outlines the human rights and responsibilities of all Victorians and visitors to our State, based firmly in the international covenants of human rights, with similar spirit and commitment as this Social Justice Charter.

To support our community's aspirations for tolerance, dignity and quality of life, the following rights and responsibilities are expected to be upheld and exercised by all members of the Hume City community, including Council, service providers, local businesses, community groups and our residents:

- The equal rights of men and women.
- The right to a standard of living which ensures the dignity of each and every person.
- The right to access adequate food, clothing, housing and health.
- The right to learning throughout life.
- The right to work.
- The right to participate in public life.
- The right to participate in the cultural life of the community.
- The right to rest and leisure.
- The right to liberty and safety.
- The right to income support and social support.
- The right of everyone to enjoy freedom of expression.
- The right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.
- The right of protection for children and families.
- The right to be respected as an individual and a member of the community without distinction or discrimination.
- The right to have access to a healthy and safe natural environment.

3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Preamble)

4. Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission; <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/the-charter-and-local-government/charter-obligations>

5. Referred to as the Victorian Charter Act subsequently



## 4.2 PARTICIPATORY RIGHTS

Council acknowledges that the spirit and vigour of democracy and human rights is founded in partnerships and participation with Hume communities. Hume City Council simply cannot achieve full human rights and responsibilities for our citizens without the active participation of its residents, visitors, workers and stakeholders.

Council firmly supports and affirms the rights and responsibilities of Hume's citizens to participate in the community and acknowledge the following Participatory Rights:

**The right to political representation** – citizens have the right to stand for election and support the person of their choice. Council will continue to:

- Promote awareness of its citizens' right to stand for election and be involved in government at a local (or other) level.
- Ensure that electoral processes are, as far as practicable, appropriate to the abilities of Hume City's diverse communities.

**The right to vote** – under the Local Government Act 2003 citizens have the right to vote in local government elections. This is an essential foundation in a healthy democracy and one which we actively encourage. We will continue to encourage participation in this right and:

- Promote awareness of the right to apply to enrol to vote, particularly for young people and those from a non-English speaking background.
- Assist applicants to successfully enrol to vote.

**The right to participate in public life** – it is important that citizens actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Hume City Council will continue to support this right through:

- Consultation on major policies, plans and projects, including ensuring consultations at times are reasonably convenient and in venues that are accessible.
- Support for and active engagement with advisory networks, forums and Taskforces.
- Adhering to Council's Community Engagement Framework and Planning Guide.

**The right to access information** – it is important that citizens access information about policies, programs and decisions that affect them and their wider community. Hume City Council will continue support this right by:

- Open and accessible Ward and Council meetings, that are well advertised and at times/places that are accessible.
- Timely and accessible publication of meeting agenda and minutes, plans, policy, reports and budgets.
- Regular publication of relevant and useful information through newsletters, public notices, the local newspaper, social media and the Council's internet site.

**The right to accountability** – it is important that citizens can hold decision makers accountable for their decisions and that decisions made are transparent. Council will support this right by:

- The Annual Council Report incorporating a progress report on the implementation of the Social Justice Action Plans;
- Annual report to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights and Commission (VEOHRC) on the operation of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and responsibilities.
- Demonstration of consideration of Human Rights in Council decision making through the Council reporting process.

All Hume citizens are free and equal in dignity and in rights, and are entitled to aspire to the quality of life that allows them to freely realise their potential.

Each and every one of our Hume City's citizens, and people who work or visit Hume City, have universal, inalienable human rights.

These rights are recognised under international, Australian and Victorian law, to varying degrees, including those rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Hume City Council is charged with the promotion of the peace, order and good governance of Hume City: a responsibility shared as part of a three-tiered system of Local, State and Federal governments and supported by Hume's community. This is a responsibility that is only met in partnership, and one in which Hume City Council strives to take a strong civic leadership role.

## 5. COMMITMENT TO ACTION

*‘in pursuit of a fair and just society’<sup>6</sup>*

Hume City Council acknowledges that both targeted and general actions are needed to encourage participation, strengthen community wellbeing and address disadvantage.

The Commitment to Action responds to social justice issues that have been identified through community consultation, the development of the Hume Horizons 2040 Community Plan, and analysis of the Hume social profile data.

Social justice issues can be viewed as either a group of interconnected circumstances , or determined by the characteristic of the person. Social Justice issues relevant to the Hume community are:

- Social distress
- Respect for difference
- Health
- Low income
- Community safety
- Access to recreation
- Economic
- Education
- Affordable housing
- Disability
- Social connectedness
- Transport
- Alcohol, other drugs, problem gambling

### 5.1 SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION PLANS

The Social Justice Charter takes sustained action on a set of social justice issues through strategic plans to enhance community wellbeing. The plans developed demonstrate appropriate concern of issues of social justice, inclusion and community wellbeing by “going beyond words” to implement strategic responses in the pursuit of a fair and just society.

Targeted Action Plans have been developed under this Charter with a focus on participation in opportunities that promote and protect community wellbeing, social justice data collection and performance measurement.

In addition, the objectives of the Social Justice Charter are driven by actions included in the following Council Plans and Strategies.

#### ACTION PLANS:

Disability Action Plan 2012 - 2016
Multicultural Action Plan 2014 - 2018
Reconciliation Action Plan 2013 - 2017

#### STRATEGIC PLANS:

Hume Horizons 2040 Community Plan
Hume City Council Council Plan 2013 - 2017
Hume Municipal Strategic Statements
Hume Health & Wellbeing Action Plan 2013 - 2017
Hume City Council Youth Strategy 2011 - 2014
Community Engagement Framework & Planning Guide 2011
Hume Integrated Growth Area Plan
Broadmeadows Structure Plan
Economic Development Strategy 2030
Learning Together Strategy 2030
Hume Integrated Land use and Transport Strategy (HILATS)

6. Vinson, T. op cit.

The Action Plans have a consistent structure comprising:

1. Actions grouped into themes of:
  - **Information** — Two-way communication between Council and the community is crucial to ensure the principles of social justice are achieved and the community's access to appropriate, timely and easy to understand information from Council is improved.
  - **Access and Participation** — Access to services, programs, venues and cultural activities are central to achieving social justice delivered through engagement or partnership with the local community and other stakeholders.
  - **Advocacy** — Advocacy is crucial in achieving social justice as it aims to raise awareness beyond the municipality of the needs and challenges faced by the Hume community. Advocacy is not driven by Council alone, but is generally achieved in partnership with the local community and other stakeholders.
2. Include performance measures/indicators which – as best as practicable – are designed to be outcome-oriented (as opposed to output or activity measures); and
3. Will be implemented over a four year period with a progress report on implementation of each action plan included in the Annual report to the community.

## 5.2 POLICIES, STRATEGIES & PLANS

To enhance social justice outcomes in other areas (eg learning, transport and employment), there will be a general plan or strategy. These and other Council plans will specify the relationship with the principles, rights and desired social justice outcomes.

Council will:

- Take targeted and general approaches to addressing social justice issues.
- Refer to Social Justice principles, rights, outcomes and the obligations of the Victorian Charter Act in the development of future policies, strategies and plans.

Key responsibilities, in accordance with our Federal system of Government for the provision of transport, education, health services and housing reside with other levels of government. Hume City Council will work with our colleagues at all levels of government, corporations, business and community organisations in pursuit of a fair and just society.

FIGURE THREE:  
SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY FRAMEWORK -  
SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION PLANS





## 6. COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY

*“Let there be justice for all” Nelson Mandela<sup>7</sup>*

Hume City Council considers that accountable governance has occurred when there is a review of activities that includes evaluation of effectiveness of the program and regular and transparent reporting of actions and decisions. In this Charter, accountability is acknowledged as a right and an element of the Social Justice Policy Framework.

When assessing social justice actions, indicators of community wellbeing provide a multi – dimensional measure for evaluation and accountability.

### 6.1 ANNUAL SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORT

Council is committed to publishing an annual progress report on the achievements and key outcomes of the Social Justice Charter and Action Plans. The pledge that the Charter be a ‘living’ document ensures the continued evolution of the Charter to reflect the community experience and be responsive to emerging issues. This shall occur through ongoing community participation and engagement through the implementation of the Action Plans

The annual reporting on the delivery of actions includes the collection of participatory data. There will be an annual progress report to Council for the following plans:

- **Reconciliation Action Plan**
- **Disability Action Plan**
- **Multicultural Action Plan**

### 6.2 SOCIAL JUSTICE REVIEW

Hume City Council will use the principles of social justice and human rights to evaluate all of our policies, strategies and plans. Through comprehensive assessment and review, we will ensure that our policies, strategic plans and programs include universal, inalienable human rights for our citizens or visitors in Hume City.

This is a ‘living’ Charter that evolves through ongoing dialogue with our citizens, in response to their emerging needs. Council commits to ongoing review to ensure reflection and response to community aspirations and experiences.

The Action Plans are supported by internal and external groups who provide oversight of the implementation and operational elements and monitor progress to ensure the plans are meeting their objectives.

These groups are:

ACTION PLAN	COUNCIL (INTERNAL)	COMMUNITY (EXTERNAL)
Disability Action Plan (DAP)	Disability Social Inclusion Committee	Hume Disabilities Issues Group
Multicultural Action Plan (MAP)	Multicultural Social Inclusion Committee	MAP Working Group
Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)	Reconciliation Social Inclusion Committee	Hume Reconciliation Action Group

Figure Four below illustrates accountability as an element in the Social Justice Policy Framework.

FIGURE FOUR:  
SOCIAL JUSTICE POLICY FRAMEWORK –  
ACCOUNTABILITY



7. Independent on Sunday (14 May 1994) Nelson Mandela, South African Statesman and former president.

## 7. COMMITMENT TO DEMONSTRATE

### 7.1 PUTTING PARTICIPATORY RIGHTS INTO ACTION

Council has developed a Social Justice Guide for Action and Implementation. The purpose of this document is to provide practical tools and support to individuals and organisations that seek to implement social justice outcomes into the work that they do in a systematic and supported way.

The guide describes what assets and elements that must be paid attention to in order to be an effective and sustainable social justice organisation. Also contained within the guide are examples of the types of behaviours and philosophies that an organisation committed to social justice will display.

Through the provision of descriptions, examples, tips and tools the guide seeks to empower Council and all our partners committed to promoting social justice and putting into practice human rights policy and principles.

*"Social Justice is fundamental to everything we do. Not just Council but the whole community. We all have a role to play in ensuring people are treated fairly and with the highest level of respect."*

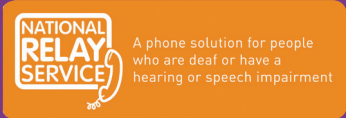
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Community member, Hume Horizons 2040 consultations 2013

# HumeLink

Hume City Council's  
multilingual telephone information service.  
**General enquiries: Telephone 9205 2200**

للمعلومات باللغة العربية	9679 9815
معلومات باللغة البوسانية	9679 9809
Za informacije na <b>bosanskom</b>	9679 9816
Za informacije na <b>hrvatskom</b>	9679 9817
Για πληροφορίες στα <b>ελληνικά</b>	9679 9818
Per avere informazioni in <b>italiano</b>	9679 9819
За информације на <b>српском</b>	9679 9820
Para información en <b>español</b>	9679 9821
<b>Türkçe</b> bilgi için	9679 9822
Muốn biết thông tin tiếng <b>Việt</b>	9679 9823
For other languages...	9679 9824



## Hume City Council

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[www.hume.vic.gov.au](http://www.hume.vic.gov.au)



# Creating Liveable Communities in the **Interface**

profiling our communities





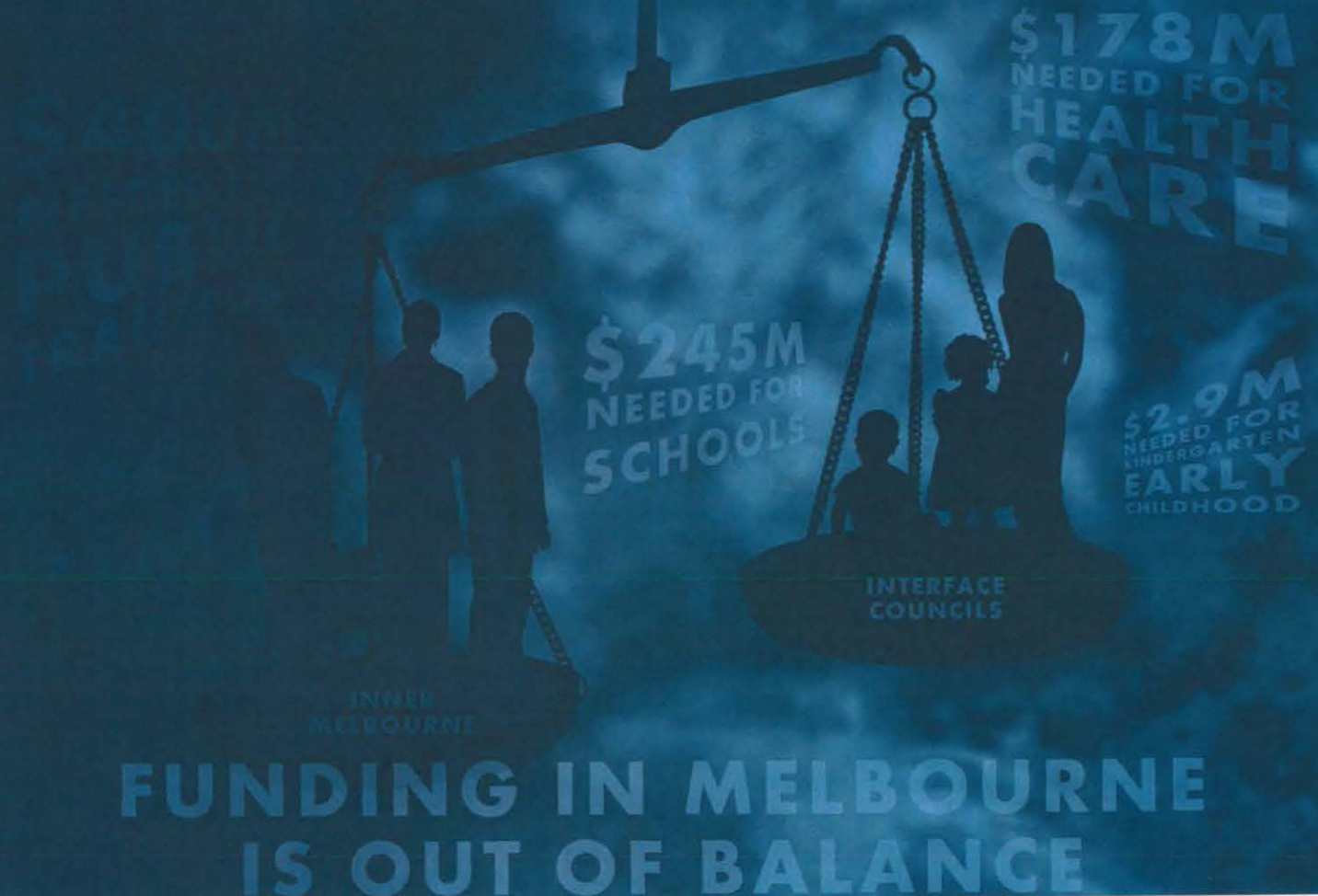
## Interface Councils

The Interface Councils of Melbourne are comprised of the ten municipalities that form an arc around metropolitan Melbourne and incorporate both the green wedge and the urban growth boundary. They bridge the gap between metropolitan Melbourne and rural Victoria, sharing characteristics of both urban and rural communities.

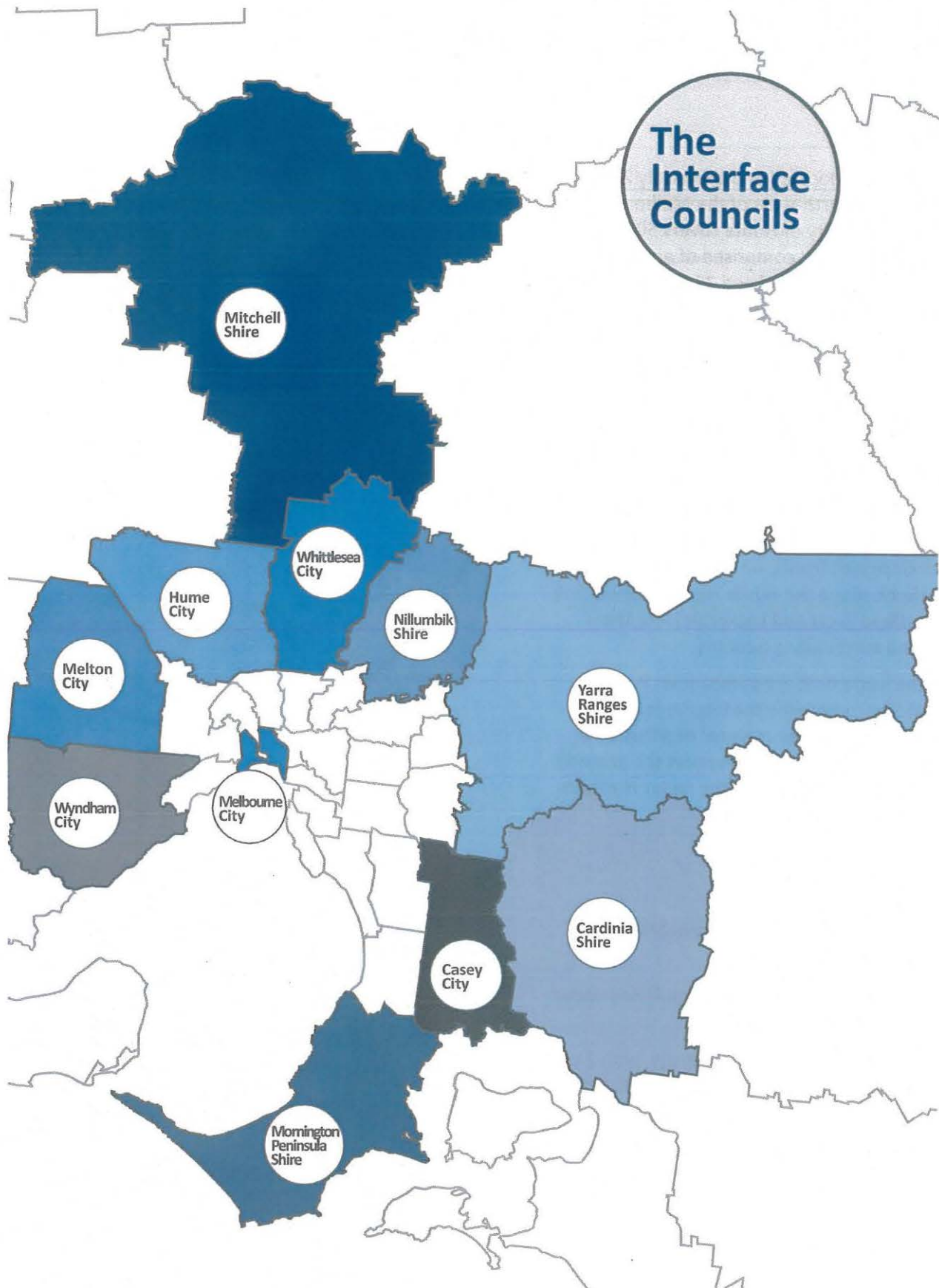
The Interface Councils include the Growth Councils of Melton, Mitchell, Wyndham, Whittlesea, Cardinia, Casey and Hume - some of which contain the largest and fastest growing suburbs in Australia. At the same time, some of the most environmentally sensitive areas are also located at the Interface.

Municipalities such as Nillumbik, Yarra Ranges, Mornington Peninsula, and Cardinia contain important water catchments for metropolitan Melbourne, significant agricultural land and forest areas necessary to offset the carbon footprints of the City.

The purpose of this document is to highlight the particular challenges being managed now by Hume City Council and to make a case for increased government investment into specific infrastructure and service provision challenges and priorities.







# Hume City Council

## Location

Hume City is located approximately 20 kilometres north-west of the Melbourne City centre. The City of Hume covers 504 square kilometres and is comprised of approximately 65 per cent rural land and 25 per cent urban land, 10 per cent is taken up by Melbourne Airport

It is defined by two existing urban areas, the township of Sunbury and the Hume Corridor (including Broadmeadows, Greenvale, Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn), which are clearly separated by the Melbourne Airport and a large piece of the Green Wedge land.

Growth is located across two greenfield development fronts, one in the north section of Hume along the Hume Highway (including Merrifield West and Lockerie) and the second surrounding Sunbury.

At the same time Broadmeadows is expected to become the largest activity centre and premier regional destination in northern Melbourne to support the growing population in Hume and the wider Northern Metropolitan Region.



## Our People

- High proportion of households with children – 57.7%.
- High proportion of our population under 25 years of age – 38%.
- High level of cultural diversity, with 2 out of 5 residents speaking a language other than English.
- High proportion of new arrivals from refugee backgrounds, representing 17% of Melbourne's migrants from the Humanitarian stream.
- Fifth highest ATSI population in metropolitan Melbourne.





## Current growth

- Amongst the fastest and largest growing Local Government Areas (LGA) in Victoria and across Australia.
- 50 new births per week
- 32 immigrants arriving to Hume City each week
- 57 occupancy permits per week
- 49 residential building permits per week
- 5 commercial /retail permits per week representing \$180M investment in Hume City during 2013.

## Growth to 2033

- 62.6% increase in the overall population
- 125.0% increase in aged population (70+)
- 62.0% increase in couple families with children
- 83.2% increase in couples without children
- 89.9% increase in lone person households
- 65.8% increase in one parent households
- 71.5% increase in total households

## Population Forecast City of Hume 2013 to 2033

Year	2013	2033	Change	% Change
ERP Growth	181,886	295,713	113,827	62.6%
0-9	26,834	44,465	17,631	65.7%
10-24	40,673	62,412	21,739	53.4%
25-49	66,470	106,828	40,358	60.7%
50-69	36,406	56,126	19,720	54.2%
70+	11,503	25,882	14,379	125.0%







## Fragile Families

- High proportion of households with children – 57.7% of households with children.
- Third most socio-economically disadvantaged LGA in metropolitan Melbourne - with pockets of very high disadvantage – Dallas, Broadmeadows and Campbellfield are three of the most socio-economically disadvantaged suburbs in Victoria.
- In 2012/13 the number of children born was 3183.
- High rates of family violence – 1,429 per 100,000 compared to 1071 for Victoria.
- In 2012/13, 761 family violence incidents in Hume City were reported to the police.
- Lack of local employment opportunities – 49.1% of residents travel outside the municipality to work.
- Higher rates of developmentally vulnerable with 27.2% of children considered developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDI.
- From 2001-02 to 2011-12 Hume has consistently had lower rates of fully breastfed babies compared to Victoria and the Northern Metro Region.
- Problem gambling: in 2011/12 gaming machine expenditure per head of adult population was \$795 compared to \$613 in Victoria. Hume City is ranked 6th highest in metropolitan Melbourne.

### Fragile Families – local solution - services

Enhance Allied Health Services focusing on strengthening parenting practice in the early years.	\$600,000 over 3 years.
Employment of Community Capacity Building workers to support new communities to enhance community wellbeing and strengthen social cohesion.	\$400,000 for the employment of two community capacity workers over a three year period and the provision of some community initiative funds to support the delivery of some community engagement activities.
Provision of Community Transport in both Lockerbie and Merrifield West developments until Public Transport Infrastructure is established.	\$150,000 Lease and operation of Community Buses over the next 4 years.

### Fragile Families – local solution - infrastructure

Contribution towards the early delivery of Community Infrastructure to support the arrival of new residents to geographically isolated communities e.g. Merrifield and Lockerbie	\$600,000
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## Poor Health Outcomes

- Close to one-third of children in Hume City aged over 12 years are overweight or obese, while almost two thirds of adults and more than half of older persons are overweight or obese.
- Higher rates of high or very high levels of psychological distress (15.9%) than Victoria (11.1%).
- Lower weekly household income at \$1,214 compared to metropolitan Melbourne at \$1,333.
- High rates of mortgage stress – at 26.4%, compared to Victoria 20.4%.
- In 2011 there were an estimated 870 homeless persons living in Hume City and an additional 1,052 marginal residents in caravan parks and crowded / improvised dwellings (a rate of 108.6 per 10,000 of the general population, significantly higher than metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria - 75.4 and 71.1 respectively).
- Hume City has a lower rate of participation in regular physical activity by adults (55.2%) compared to Victoria overall (63.9%).
- Hume City has a lower proportion of adults reporting themselves to be in 'excellent' or 'very good' health (39.8%) compared to Victoria (46.6%).

### Poor Health Outcomes – local solution - services

Building respectful relationships and family resilience to combat Domestic Violence	\$300K
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### Poor Health Outcomes – local solution – infrastructure

Contribution to the delivery of the Regional Aquatic and Sports Facility in Craigieburn	\$15M
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## At Risk Youth

- By 2033, the 10-24 age group will increase by around 21,739 residents.
- High rates of youth disengagement (at 12.8% compared to 8.0% for metropolitan Melbourne and 8.8% for Victoria).
- High percentage of year 9 students without minimum writing standard – 14.9%, compared to 10.6% across the State.
- High percentage of 15-17 year olds drinking alcohol – 46.5%, compared to 24.7% across the State.
- High percentage of 15-17 year olds smoking – 52.2%, compared to 12.9% across the State.
- Hume City had the second highest proportion of total births to mothers younger than 20 years in 2011/12 (2.63%), of all LGAs in the North and West Metropolitan Region.
- High percentage of adolescents who do not have a trusted adult in life – 19.1%, compared to 13.9% across the State.
- Higher percentage of adolescents who are not satisfied with their quality of life – 25.2%, compared to 22.9% across the State.

### At Risk Youth – local solution - services

Promote Multiversity to young people across the municipality, linking them into employment and pathway programs	<p><b>\$400,000</b></p> <p>Employment of an Education Pathways officer to help support the planning and promotion of the multiversity program to young people at risk over the next 3 years. Includes the provision of funds to help with Marketing and Promotion.</p>
Expansion of the Hume City Council's Moving Forward for young people, aged 15-19 years, who have disengaged from education / employment	<p><b>\$600,000 over 3 years</b></p>
Expansion of the Youth Counselling Service aimed at young people aged 12-24	<p><b>\$500,000</b></p> <p>Employment of 3 staff for 3 years.</p>

### At Risk Youth – local solution - infrastructure

Contribution towards the construction of the Sunbury Hume Global Learning Centre	<p><b>\$5 M</b></p>
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## Isolated Aging

- The aged population (65+ years) which generally accounts for the largest uptake of health care services is forecast to grow by 150% from 2011 to 2036.
- Hume City is experiencing dual pressures caused by the double impact of growth and an aging population.
- The life expectancy in Hume City at birth, at age 50, and at age 65, is lower compared to metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria for both males and females.
- Primary health care initiatives will need to focus on keeping elderly people healthy and active so they can remain at home longer.

### Isolated Ageing – local solution - services

Enquiry into understanding the social health needs of older citizens across the municipality including piloting innovative programs and activities

**\$200K**

### Isolated Ageing – local solution - infrastructure

Contribution towards the delivery of a multi- purpose community facility in Craigieburn (Mt. Aitken) to support the delivery of social programs and activities for older citizens

**\$2M**



