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Acknowledgement

Wyndham City recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the First Custodians of the lands on which Australia was founded. Council acknowledges the Wadawurrung, Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands on which Wyndham City is being built.

For tens of thousands of years, the Werribee River has been a significant meeting place for Aboriginal people to build community, exchange resources, and share responsibilities for its land.

Council pays respect for the wisdom and diversity of past and present Elders. We share commitment to nurturing future generations of Elders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Council recognises that supporting social inclusion and economic development in Aboriginal households is key to Reconciliation in Wyndham.

Message from the Mayor

Year on year the numbers tell the story of Wyndham's population growth. As one of Australia's fastest growing and most diverse communities, this Council and its residents continue to come face to face with the challenges brought on by this rapid development. And yet, within those numbers, Wyndham is the story of a city emerging. Wyndham continues to welcome new residents from all corners of the globe and with 58% of the population under the age of 35, the question is, how will we secure a social and economic future and build a place where everyone can flourish?

Perhaps more than any event in Wyndham's history, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how our economic future is bound to our social, emotional and physical health and wellbeing. The virus has impacted Wyndham's hard-working population through the loss of work and income and taken away valued ways of connecting through sports clubs, community centres and libraries. The way out will require investment in key infrastructure of regional significance in Wyndham and across the West, but also the introduction of a more suitable social safety net so that people are able to lead healthier and longer lives, no matter their socio-economic status.

As a Council, Wyndham has always dreamed big in its ability to deliver on what matters most to people. We've heard clearly from our community that jobs matter a great deal and the ability to participate in the economy impacts how people feel connected and included in a community. As the level of government closest to the people, a Council should have the greatest capacity to deliver the most meaningful initiatives. We have before us now a once in a generation opportunity to rebuild, renew and reimagine our economy in a way that also strengthens our social ties. This is the promise of an integrated and inclusive social and economic response, which I'm proud to say is the first of its kind in Australia.

The challenge before us is to harness our collective community spirit, bring business and community together to develop the skills of a future workforce and lay a new foundation of equitable growth for the generation that is coming of age in a pandemic and a city defining itself as a place of promise in Melbourne's West.

Cr Josh Gilligan
Mayor

Introduction

Over the past 30 years Australia has experienced an enviable record of economic growth and development. At the same time, according to recent reports from the University of New South Wales and the Committee for Economic Development Australia, there has also been growing inequality and continued disadvantage, highlighting that some in society are still excluded from the opportunity that should be made available to all.

The reasons for this are complex and include social and economic factors. From an economic perspective, a lack of jobs, gaps in required skills or changes in labour market demand can stop people from accessing employment and financial stability.

From a social perspective, poor physical or mental health, housing insecurity, family violence or a lack of social networks can limit participation in the broader community as well as negatively impact the ability of a person to hold down a job.

Social and economic stresses and shocks are interconnected and impact on the ability of individuals and families to participate in work and community life. Assuming barriers to participation based on single factors (e.g. country of birth, race, household structure, age, gender, etc.) is problematic. There is no single cause of social disadvantage or economic inequality, but there is a case to be made for stronger, more integrated policy in this area.

There are policies that would simultaneously reduce inequality, heal some of the divides in our societies, and strengthen our economies.

- **Joseph Stiglitz, Economist**

Wyndham's geographical and population factors provide important context.

Wyndham enjoys a growing population of young professionals and families looking to establish their careers and build a good life. Avalon Airport, on Wyndham's doorstep, is home to Melbourne's 2nd international airport, solidifying Wyndham's connection to Oceania and Asia. The Western United A-League bid and resulting stadium precinct promises to be a state-of-the-art sporting facility and vibrant city centre, offering urban amenity and local jobs. Additional inbound investment and other commercial activity in Wyndham's current and emerging major activity centres will provide jobs and business opportunities.

As these opportunities begin to be realised, Wyndham City Council is undertaking work to ensure that local people receive the benefit of this economic growth and development. This involves addressing inequality, facilitating better links between business and community and planning for social and economic inclusion in an integrated way.

Introducing this Social and Economic Inclusion Framework is a first step in paving the way for a new era of inclusive economic growth over the short-term, to 2040 and beyond.

COVID-19

In March 2020 the COVID-19 Pandemic reached Australia and had a severe impact on Australia's economic position. The long-term impacts of this pandemic are slowly being understood. Clearly, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social and economic fabric of Wyndham will be significant.

From an economic perspective, business applications for JobKeeper show that two Wyndham postcode areas (3029 and 3030) are two of the three highest application counts in Victoria, behind postcode 3000 (City of Melbourne). The number of Wyndham residents on JobSeeker and Youth Allowance also increased significantly from March 2020 to June 2020, with close to 10,000 people added to those payments as a result of the pandemic.

While not imagined with COVID-19 in mind, the events of 2020 have further highlighted the importance of planning for social and economic inclusion in an integrated way. Wyndham's approach brings together local community organisations, employment services and social support services combined with Council-led industry engagement to develop dedicated pathways to local employment opportunities and recognises that business, community and government need to work closely together to create and sustain pathways for local people to fully participate in work and community life.

This approach will continue to feature as Wyndham emerges from the pandemic and works to address the challenges of getting local people back to work and caring for their families.

While the context that informed this draft document has shifted, the principles that underpin this framework remain current and the resulting directions aim to position Wyndham in the resilience and recovery effort.

Wyndham 2040

Wyndham 2040 is a long-term, community vision for Wyndham. It is based on 2,040 stories collected from community members in 2015 reflecting on what people love about Wyndham now and what they hope for the future.

Wyndham 2040 provides the critical authorising environment for transformational change and demonstrates the commitment of Council to address challenges in a way that supports the creation of strong neighbourhoods, liveable suburbs and a flourishing Wyndham. At the core of each commitment within Wyndham 2040 is a strong ambition to engage local residents in all aspects of community life. These commitments are embedded within the specific policies, strategies and frameworks that support Council in further community engagement and decision-making.

Wyndham 2040 describes a welcoming, connected city that is known for listening to and learning from the diversity of its residents. Additionally, Wyndham 2040 promotes varied and plentiful local employment options and thriving networks of businesses of all sizes. These themes are drawn together as a vision for a socially and economically inclusive Wyndham.

Creating the conditions for socially and economically strong communities is at the core of Local Government's mandate. As the level of government most embedded in community, the capacity for Council's to influence local stakeholders towards this mission is significant. This is also reflected in the 2017-21 Wyndham City Plan as a commitment to delivering on the Wyndham 2040 vision:

- 1.2.5 Council will celebrate the cultural diversity of our City, actively support social inclusion and tackle inequalities by ensuring all residents have access to services and building social connections in our local communities.
- 3.2.4 Council will commit to developing a diverse range of quality education opportunities, thereby improving career prospects and, in turn, the emotional health and social wellbeing of residents.

Social and Economic Inclusion

The concepts of inclusion and equity assume that not everyone has the same access to opportunity. The evidence supports this.

A 2018 report released by the Committee for Economic Development Australia identified that young people, women and indigenous Australians did not experience the economic gains that should be expected given Australia's performance over the past 30 years. This report also highlighted that rates of long-term unemployment continue to rise, with young people and people living with mental illness experiencing particular isolation from places of employment, study and social wellbeing.

In response to this programs and services are provided within certain health and wellbeing contexts and are typically designed for specific population groups that are seen as 'vulnerable', 'disadvantaged' or 'underprivileged'. As an example, Jobs Victoria employment services, delivered in Wyndham, have specific population group targets with the aim of ensuring that social inclusion through economic participation aims are met.

When designing programs and services, identifying who should benefit directly helps to ensure relevance and assess effectiveness. However, a singular or narrow focus often doesn't account for the complexity of how people identify as being a part of a specific group or the harmful effects of labels and deficit-based approaches. To build a socially and economically inclusive community, labels like 'vulnerable', 'disadvantaged' or 'underprivileged' are not helpful because they focus the problem on the person and largely ignore what can be done in a person's environment to create better conditions for success.

The opportunity is to focus on effective programs and services to provide immediate short-term assistance, building on a person's strengths and abilities, while also addressing systemic barriers like racism, community attitudes or perceptions, and a lack of access to technology and education that emerge from intergenerational poverty. These barriers to inclusion exist across broader population groups and need to be removed in order to support a more sustainable, enduring and equitable uplift for all.

As evidence grows that more equal societies produce longer-term social and economic prosperity for everyone, locally-led inclusive economic development will grow in importance. As Wyndham responds to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that local employment opportunities are made available to local people has the opportunity to amplify new investment and boost an economic recovery.

Wyndham's Growth and Diversity

Wyndham's demographic and socioeconomic context continues to be dynamic.

Wyndham is the third fastest growing municipality in Australia, and sees its population increase by 15,000 people every year. With 288,212 residents in 2020, Wyndham is forecast to reach 512,591 residents in 2041. This growth is not uniform and has seen a growth in the diversity of people living in Wyndham, especially through overseas arrivals.

- The most recent 2016 census indicates that Wyndham has a high proportion of people who were born overseas (42%), especially when compared with Greater Melbourne (34%). This marks an increase from the 2006 census when around a quarter of Wyndham's population was born overseas (25.2%). Conservative projections indicate that by the next census more than half of Wyndham's population will have been born overseas, and in some suburbs close to two-thirds of residents will have been born outside of Australia.
- Wyndham is also a key area for refugee intake. The most common countries of origin include Myanmar, Thailand, Iraq, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Congo (DR) and Kenya. Wyndham is among six local government areas in Victoria that receive the largest number of settlers on humanitarian visas.
- Over half of Wyndham's residents are families with children under the age of 15. Literacy and numeracy capabilities of year 3 and 5 students are lagging against national averages, requiring a focused support for families. Wyndham will experience very fast growth in the number of young people aged between 12 and 17. As a group, the young people of Wyndham City are more culturally diverse than the rest of Melbourne. Wyndham's young people face particular barriers to entering the workforce. With 1 in 10 young people between the ages of 15 and 25 disengaged from both education and employment, there is an urgent need for specific strategies focused on socially and economically excluded young people.

Social and economic inclusion aims in Wyndham have to consider the opportunity to mobilise a young, culturally diverse population by taking family-focused approaches, whilst broadening the scope of these opportunities to include people encountering particular barriers to access, such as people living with a disability and the long-term unemployed.

Wyndham's Policy Context

The Wyndham Reconciliation Action Plan describes Council's role in Reconciliation with Australia's First Peoples and outlines principles at the heart of inclusive practices:

- **A Rightful Place** for Aboriginal communities to exercise power in their own matters and determine a future in which their children flourish.
- **Justice** that addresses wrongs of the past and delivers equity so that Aboriginal communities have access to achieve the same outcomes as all Wyndham City residents.

In developing an approach to social and economic inclusion there is a leveraging effect of a range of strategies and approaches across service areas including: Smart City; Learning Communities and Libraries; Economic Growth; Volunteering; Multicultural Policy; Child, Youth and Family Plans; Sports Strategy; and Procurement as well as considering actions within the Accessibility Action Plan and the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Opportunities to join-up with Wyndham's established strategy across these areas include:

- The role of the **Smart City Strategy** in seeking to address city-based problems and local challenges including key issues affecting social and economic participation such as transport, congestion, access to technology and environmental management;
- The focus of the **Learning Communities Strategy** on personal growth embeds a key component of social inclusion by building personal pride, fostering resilience, enabling a strengths-based approach to skill and knowledge development, and emphasising the inherent strengths of cultural diversity;
- The partnerships and collaborations embedded in the **Economic Growth Strategy** will drive development across education and employment sectors, ensuring Wyndham's residents are skilled and prepared for the future workforce needs of the region. This strategy also speaks to the drivers of economic growth in Wyndham, which is a pre-cursor for thinking about ways to connect growth to local people.
- Wyndham's commitment through the **Volunteering Strategy** to investing in local volunteers, creating a strong pathway into both social and economic inclusion.
- Cultural barriers to engagement are actively addressed through the **Sports Strategy** with a strong focus on improving cultural safety and accounting for cultural sensitivities that may prevent participation. These are important commitments for the improvement of the health and well-being of culturally diverse community members – a key indicator for social and economic inclusion.
- The **Environment and Sustainability Strategy** provides a guiding principle in developing strategy targets which directs decision-making to be balanced through triple bottom line assessment to achieve quality of life outcomes. This triple bottom line assessment considers economic, sustainability and social considerations.
- Social sustainability as outlined in the **Wyndham Procurement Policy** seeks to develop social value and positive social outcomes through Council's purchasing activities to strengthen social equity, social cohesion, well-being and livability within the City.

In planning for longer-term social and economic inclusion, Wyndham would also benefit from a broader-based approach with a wider definition of inclusion, considering more than young people and their families or people who have been born overseas. In the same way that Wyndham is integrating planning for life-stages across a life-course framework there is an opportunity to integrate planning for diverse community groups and look at inclusion policies that help people overcome a broader range of barriers.

Recognising that this is a first for Local Government in Australia, this framework is being put forward as a guide to initiate social and economic inclusion activities in response to funding received from State and Federal Government. This is a platform-setting policy to grow and develop and further embed in coming years. However, as outlined above, there is plenty within the current and emerging policy environment to form a fully-fledged action plan to support this framework.

Multicultural Policy

In 2014 Council adopted the Wyndham Multicultural Policy and Action Plan, to be delivered over a 4-year period until 2018. It was an iteration of previous similar policies and was intended to promote social cohesion through the celebration of identity and the building of better understanding and stronger connections in the community.

The policy recognised that the municipality's growing cultural diversity required different strategies and highlighted the then City Plan's aim to foster a more inclusive City and encourage greater participation in community life. These themes are also reflected in the current 2017-2021 City Plan.

The Social and Economic Inclusion Framework builds on the Wyndham Multicultural Policy and Action Plan and seeks to continue to position Wyndham's multicultural identity as a source of pride.

Welcoming Cities

Welcoming Cities is an international network of cities, shires, towns and municipalities who are committed to fostering local communities where everyone can belong and participate in social, cultural, economic and civic life. Welcoming Cities recognises that, of all tiers of government, local councils are best placed to understand the complexity and diversity of their communities. Wyndham joined the Welcoming Cities Network in 2018.

In 2019 a Welcoming Cities Standard was drafted to help guide Councils in their practice in working with culturally diverse communities. The standard supports Councils to:

- Benchmark their cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation
- Identify where and how further efforts could be directed; and
- Assess progress over time.

The Welcoming Cities Standard is organised around 6 categories. Each category contains principles, criteria and indicators that can be applied by a local council through existing or new policies and practices. The standard includes social and economic principles and is aligned to the principles and outcomes outlined in this Social and Economic Inclusion Framework.

The Standard is also framed around the local council as a facilitator of community stakeholders. It is expected that criteria will often be met through the support of, or in collaboration with, local partners. Coordination of local stakeholders is a key activity undertaken by the Social and Economic Inclusion Department and is integral to providing stronger pathways to participation.

Social and Economic Inclusion Framework

In 2019, in response to funding provided by State and Federal Government, Council established the Social and Economic Inclusion Department to work across, business, community and government to provide local people with better connections to work and community life. As part of that establishment, community and business stakeholders were engaged along with Council's Cultural Diversity Portfolio Committee to help Council better understand the opportunities in Wyndham that related specifically to social and economic inclusion concepts.

This engagement explored four questions:

- What helps people feel welcomed?
- What helps people to build social networks and connections?
- What could be improved so that people can find employment and education opportunities?
- What skills do people need for career development and success?

3 main principles emerged from the conversations with community.

Economic Participation

Developing a career or owning a business is a difference-maker in helping to build a good life.

Residents aspire to be engaged in work through employment or business ownership. Local institutions and businesses have the capacity to implement strategies around local and social procurement, investment attraction and in developing strategies that build and support a local workforce.

Diversity as an Asset

Wyndham's multicultural identity is a source of pride and a competitive advantage. Cultural diversity within local organisations brings greater innovation through diverse thinking and global perspectives and better connects local organisations to the community that it serves.

Inclusive Community

Inclusion and liveability are linked. Increased social connections and tighter-knit communities are a benefit to all residents. The ability of local relationships to connect people to work and community life is more effective over the long-term with social and economic support services, programs and initiatives provided when needed.

The following objectives also reflect the themes that emerged from business and community stakeholders and are arranged to reflect the 4 domains that are represented in Wyndham 2040 and the City Plan.

People and Community

Objective 1: Families who are new to Wyndham are welcomed with respect to culture and language and are connected in with the networks and relationships that will help them contribute to work and community life.

Wyndham's demographic context is significant. As a growth area that receives thousands of residents every year – from all corners of the globe – welcoming people to the community provides an important inclusion message. The creation of personal relationships and connections between newer and older residents takes time. Investing in initiatives that speed up this process delivers long-term dividends.

Places and Spaces

Objective 2: Wyndham's cultural diversity is visible and represented in how we plan for, design and build the city. Public spaces serve as vibrant centres for building a local identity that reflect Wyndham's past, present and future population groups.

The nature and pace of growth in Wyndham brings exciting opportunities for the redevelopment of older public spaces and facilities and the development of new places and communities. How the diversity of the community is represented in these places and spaces impacts on feelings of belonging and acceptance.

Earning and Learning

Objective 3: Education and training providers work closely with employers to make it easier for people to find the learning opportunities that lead to local jobs and entrepreneurship.

More than 60% of Wyndham residents travel outside the municipality for work and in some areas unemployment remains higher than the Victorian average. There are local employers and particular industries who need improved access to a workforce and there is also a need for a better mix of industries that match the workforce that already exists. Making better links between local workers and local businesses will help employees build their careers and support entrepreneurs to continue to innovate.

Leadership and Participation

Objective 4a: Wyndham residents are confident and resilient; developing skills for leadership in business and community.

Soft skills like confidence, resilience and emotional intelligence are in high demand in the workplace. Employers readily provide training for technical skills and there are opportunities for on the job learning. Supporting the development of soft skills also benefits the establishment and strengthening of community groups and organisations and has wider application in helping people to build a good life.

Objective 4b: Employers are recognised for their role in developing local talent and contributing to community outcomes.

Community organisations and businesses can develop Wyndham’s future workforce together with recognition for employers who deliver social benefit in addition to growing their bottom line. Businesses that can demonstrate their commitment to environmental, social and local economic outcomes position their quality goods and services more firmly in the minds of consumers and build a brand that reflects broader community values.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In May 2019, Wyndham City Council established the Wyndham Social and Economic Inclusion Taskforce. This taskforce brings together local representatives from business, community and government to provide governance to a series of initiatives designed to foster social and economic inclusion.

In addition to the taskforce Wyndham has engaged the Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre to develop an evaluation framework for social and economic inclusion initiatives.

Evaluation Question 1

Has Wyndham City Council engaged in the development and enhancement of policies, programs and practices that cultivate social and economic inclusion within Council? In what ways do they impact community perceptions of social and economic inclusion in Wyndham?

Indicators include:

- Existence of social and economic inclusion policy.
- Existence of social and economic inclusion program.
- Increased number of impactful social and economic inclusion initiatives – enabled by organisational planning.
- Increased community satisfaction with the cultural, economic and recreational opportunities in the Wyndham municipality.
- Evidence of sustainability in the social and economic inclusion initiatives over time.
- Evidence of increased social and economic inclusion by residents living in the Wyndham municipality.

Evaluation Question 2

How have the partnerships supported by Wyndham City Council influenced coordination, fostered support and sustained the development of economic and social inclusion across the municipality?

Indicators include:

- Wyndham City Council and key stakeholders and networks coordinate efforts to develop economic pathways for community members.
- The taskforce showed demonstrated effectiveness in building and fostering economic inclusion in Wyndham.

- Evidence of a common agenda around social and economic inclusion for industry/employment partners.
- Evidence of Wyndham City Council strategies, policy and practice to promote social and economic inclusion.
- Increased number of key stakeholder collaborative agreements and employment opportunities for community members.
- Increase in resource capacity to assist stakeholders to employ community members.

Evaluation Question 3

To what extent have employers improved their knowledge, practice and capacity to foster, manage and promote sustainable inclusion in the workplace?

Indicators include:

- Employers evidence improved social and economic inclusion in workplace policy and practice.
- Employers feel supported to develop and manage social and economic inclusion in the workforce.
- Employers are willing to invest in resources for the management and promotion of inclusion in workplaces.
- Employers experience an improvement in the level of job readiness amongst (previously) disengaged community members and have improved visibility to their ability.

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