

**Latrobe City
Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG)
Terms of Reference
2023**



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Acknowledgement of Country

Latrobe City Council would like to acknowledge the traditional land of the Brayakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

Recognition of Lived Experience

Latrobe City Council acknowledges the lived experience of individuals and communities who are living and have lived with mental ill-health, as well as those who have loved and cared for them. These contributions and lived experience of all kinds, when generously shared, enable us to collectively build a stronger community.

1. Background

The Victorian Government established the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and developed 65 recommendations. The recommendations set out to reform the mental health system within Victoria over 10 years. The reform focuses on centring community, inclusion and promoting adaptable and contemporary programs.

The Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) is based on recommendation 15, 'supporting good mental health and wellbeing in local communities.' This recommendation discusses the importance of diverse community members working collectively to promote social inclusion opportunities. Latrobe City Council is one of the first five local government areas to establish the initiative.

2. Purpose

The Latrobe City SIAG will deliver an ongoing commitment, supported by the Department of Health, to reduce social isolation and loneliness within Latrobe City. It aims to improve mental health by supporting initiatives that provide inclusion opportunities and encourage connection.

The SIAG will centre the unique needs of the community. Community members will contribute their expertise and provide recommendations to increase social inclusion through place-based programs within Latrobe City. The group membership will include priority groups that are disproportionately impacted by social exclusion.

Latrobe City SIAG will provide recommendations to Latrobe City Council for funding of projects delivered by community organisations and deliver feedback on those projects. Projects will improve social inclusion based on evidence and lived experience, with a focus on local needs and collective impact. SIAG and the projects will reinforce the objectives set out in Latrobe City Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP).

As a State Government initiative, the delivery of SIAG is subject to change in accordance with future funding agreements.

2.1 Objectives

The objective of SIAG is to further the collaboration between the community, organisations and groups by:

- Identifying community needs and current gaps for inclusion within Latrobe City.
- Using place-based coordination to support initiatives that reduce social exclusion and support community inclusion, involvement and connection.
- Promoting continuous improvement of connection and social inclusion within Latrobe City to prevent poor mental health outcomes.

2.2 Outcomes

The SIAG aims to ensure that Latrobe City feels connected and valued by promoting the voices and needs of the community built on its strengths. This community contribution will provide advice on funding a range of social activities through the Local Social Investment Fund within Latrobe City and support mental health. Outcomes of the SIAG will be:

- A representative group of local lived experience members including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will form the SIAG.
- SIAG members are provided meaningful opportunities to learn, share their experiences, provide advice and support project funding.
- A variety of initiatives are funded to develop, support and sustain social inclusion within Latrobe City that reflect the needs of the community.
- Community members feel an increased level of social inclusion, wellbeing and connection.

3. Membership

The SIAG will be comprised of up to 15 members total, including a reserved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stream which is intended to hold up to five total members (subject to recruitment outcomes). All members will have equal voting rights.

Members may belong to priority groups or have lived experience of social exclusion, including people who have supported someone that identifies with a priority group or has lived experience. Members may also be selected for their passion or expertise of social inclusion and mental health and wellbeing. Priority groups have been identified in the MPHWP and SIAG guidelines from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotions Office (MHWPO) as having lower levels of social inclusion and aligns with the Latrobe City Community Inclusion and Access Policy.

Priority groups include but are not limited to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, queer/questioning, intersex or asexual (LGBTQIA+).
- People with a disability.
- People from culturally diverse communities.
- Aged between 18-25.

- Aged over 65.
- Single people or single parents.
- People who have experienced hardship or adversity including addiction, mental ill-health, family violence, experience of or at risk of homelessness, or similar circumstances that have contributed to reduced social inclusion.

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, prospective members must demonstrate:

- Residency in Latrobe City or an otherwise strong connection to Latrobe City.
- The ability to participate in meetings.
- The ability to be remunerated for their time (subject to 5.1).
- Lived experience as outlined above or passion for the promotion of social inclusion or mental health.
- A collaborative and positive approach to SIAG activities.
- Respect of all lived experiences and opinions.
- Commitment to upholding the Latrobe City Staff Code of Conduct.
- Confirmation of a satisfactory Police Check and Working with Children's check following selection.

3.2 Exclusion Criteria

- A person who is not a resident or has no strong connection to Latrobe City.
- An employee or Councillor of Latrobe City Council.
- A person representing an organisation or agency outside. Designated organisational partnerships are a separate matter for which participants are not entitled to remuneration.
- A person who does not have the ability or circumstances enabling attendance and participation in SIAG meetings.
- A person who is not able to adhere to the Latrobe City Staff Code of Conduct.
- A person who poses a risk to the emotional, psychological, financial, cultural or physical safety of others.
- A person who is not willing to engage with a variety of topics, initiatives, worldviews or who does so without consideration for the groups involved.
- A person who is not willing to embrace credible information or promotes misinformation.
- A person who is unable to make timely, evidence-based decisions.

3.3 Assessment Criteria

Applicants will be assessed out of 100 by the following criteria. Eligibility criteria and total assessment score will be considered in making membership recommendations.

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Applicant demonstrates motivation to reduce social exclusion, improve social connection and mental health in Latrobe.	20
Applicant demonstrates an understanding of the current needs and resources in Latrobe regarding social inclusion and mental health.	20
Applicant demonstrates experience or ability to participate respectfully and effectively with others in a diverse group setting.	20
Applicant demonstrates alignment to Council values and how they relate to SIAG participation.	20
Applicant demonstrates ability to assess, discuss and use information to make decisions in a group setting.	20

3.4 Nomination, Selection and Appointment of Members

A selection panel will be comprised of the Social Inclusion Project Officer, a Coordinator or Team Leader from the Business Unit and an HR representative. Applicants will be shortlisted following submission of Expressions of Interest and invited to participate in an interview process. Membership offers will be made based on responses provided in the Expression of Interest, interview and the needs of the SIAG. Applicants' publicly available information such as social media posts or previous engagements with Council may be considered as part of the application process.

The Coordinator Social Policy and Inclusion will present compiled application outcomes including eligibility, Expression of Interest and interview commentary to Councillors via email for information in advance of making membership offers. Applicants will be notified of their outcome via email or preferred method of communication, with feedback provided to all shortlisted applicants.

3.5 Reasonable Accommodations

Latrobe City Council advocates for equitable access and inclusion. Latrobe City Council welcomes any reasonable accommodations throughout the Expression of Interest and interview process or during a person's membership. These may include:

- Considering applications and interviews that may not follow traditional expectations.
- Submitting an expression of interest form through the Social Inclusion Project Officer (in person, over the phone, etc).
- Bringing a support person to interviews and meetings.
- Providing interview questions in advance.

- Providing information in alternatively written, visual, translated formats, or in advance.
- Adjusting for sensory needs.
- Ensuring the Social Inclusion Project Officer is available to take questions throughout the process.
- Any other reasonable request that is communicated to the Social Inclusion Project Officer.

Further information can be found in the Latrobe City Workplace Adjustment Policy.

3.6 Additional SIAG Participants

The following persons may attend meetings but will not be considered as members, nor hold voting rights.

3.6.1 Latrobe City Councillors

Councillors are invited to attend SIAG meetings.

3.6.2 Latrobe City Council Advisory Committees and Community Engagement Groups

Members of Latrobe City's Community Engagement Groups and Advisory Committees may be invited to participate on an as-needed basis.

3.6.3 Local Organisations and Stakeholders

Organisations and stakeholders may be invited to participate on an as-needed basis.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Members

The role of a SIAG member is to participate collaboratively with other members and support the improvement of social inclusion within Latrobe City. Members must participate in induction workshops covering the below duties and responsibilities, delivered through the onboarding process and during meetings. Attendance at additional induction workshops may be requested by Latrobe City as the need arises.

Duties and responsibility include:

- Attending and actively participating in SIAG meetings in a manner that upholds the Latrobe City Staff Code of Conduct.
- Being prepared for meetings and following up actions in alignment with the timeframes communicated by Council Officers.
- Notifying the Social Inclusion Project Officer if unable to attend in advance of any scheduled meeting.
- Respectfully considering and learning about a range of views and needs that may extend beyond individual lived experience or interests to make informed assessments.
- Participating productively in discussion and assessing initiatives.

- Promptly alerting the Social Inclusion Project Officer of any changes that may impact participation or eligibility.

4.2 Rotating Co-Chair

Members will have the opportunity to co-chair SIAG meetings with the Social Inclusion Project Officer.

Duties and responsibilities include:

- Consulting with the Social Inclusion Project Officer before meetings to finalise the agenda.
- Managing meeting functions including timekeeping, ensuring conversation is relevant to agenda items and encouraging group collaboration.

4.3 Minute Taker

A Council Officer will minute all SIAG meetings. Members will have the opportunity to support minute taking for skill building opportunities.

Duties and responsibilities include:

- Accurately recording the contents of the SIAG meetings.
- Ensuring minutes are distributed and stored correctly.

4.4 Coordinator of Social Policy and Inclusion

The Coordinator of Social Policy and Inclusion will oversee the operation of SIAG.

Duties and responsibilities include:

- Providing strategic oversight, guidance, support and leadership to staff and members engaged with SIAG.
- Managing communications and reporting to the MHWPO and Councillors.
- Leading dispute resolutions.
- Supporting approvals and funding delegations.
- Overseeing implementation, evaluation and program development.

4.5 Social Inclusion Project Officer

The role of the Social Inclusion Project Officer is to support and manage the administration of the SIAG.

Duties and responsibilities include:

- Organising the coordination of meetings, agendas, and minutes for SIAG meetings.
- Attending and chairing meetings.
- Facilitating communication between SIAG members, community members, organisations and Latrobe City Council.
- Providing training, skill building opportunities and general support for SIAG members.
- Overseeing implementation of the Local Social Investment Fund.
- Overseeing remuneration and general SIAG procurement.

- Leading respectful and safe operation of the SIAG.

If unable to attend the meeting, another Council Officer will stand in. If a replacement is not found the meeting will be rescheduled.

4.6 Administration Officer

The role of the Administration Officer is to support the Social Inclusion Project Officer, the SIAG and Members where appropriate.

Duties and responsibility include:

- Assisting with SIAG meetings including recording and sharing minutes.
- Providing support to SIAG applicants and members.
- Arranging remuneration and general SIAG procurement.
- Supporting implementation of the Local Social Investment Fund, particularly in relation to administration duties.
- Supporting respectful and safe operation of the SIAG.

5. Member Benefits

5.1 Remuneration

Remuneration is a right of all members for their participation in ordinary meetings according to MHWPO guidelines. Additional remuneration may be available for extraordinary meetings, training, or similar opportunities with prior written approval by the Social Inclusion Project Officer. Individuals representing an organisation are not eligible for remuneration.

Remuneration will be deposited into member's bank account unless alternative arrangement has been approved in writing by Latrobe City Council. Latrobe City Council recognises that while providing financial autonomy is best for many individuals, some may be disadvantaged through this method. Latrobe City Council respects barriers to participation and will work to provide the best possible option for the individual that is reasonable in the circumstances.

The rate of remuneration will be advertised through the Expression of Interest period, aligned with the membership structure as outlined in the current Terms of Reference and SIAG guidelines provided by the MHWPO.

Latrobe City Council is unable to provide prospective or current SIAG members financial advice and encourage applicants and members to seek independent financial advice to discuss their personal circumstances.

5.2 Opportunities for Skills-Development

The SIAG is intended to provide an inclusive stepping stone for members to share existing and build new skills and experience. Opportunities include:

- Building connections and networking.
- Gaining further knowledge of Latrobe City's needs, resources and strengths.
- Capacity building and formal training related to public health and wellbeing, group participation and community programming.

6. Term of Appointment

The standard appointment term will be 24 months, aligned with the calendar year. Members will have the opportunity to apply for an additional 24 months for a maximum term of 48 months.

Expressions of Interest will be advertised biannually at the end of the calendar year in preparation for the new year. To achieve a second term, an applicant would need to demonstrate how they and the community would benefit from a second term.

6.1 Resignation

Members can resign their membership of the SIAG at any time. Resignation of membership must be confirmed in writing and acknowledged by the Social Inclusion Project Officer.

6.2 Termination

Termination of membership may occur at any time under the following conditions:

- Member meets any of the exclusion criteria.
- Member is no longer able to fulfill the duties of the role.
- Member engages in improper conduct defined by Latrobe City Staff Code of Conduct, Latrobe City Privacy Policy, and any other applicable policies.
- Member communicates inappropriately, disruptively or is disrespectful.
- Member has a Conflict of Interest that cannot be managed.
- Credible evidence regarding a member's conduct is provided which poses a risk to the operation of SIAG, or reputation of Latrobe City Council.

If any of the above conditions occur, Council Officers will inform the member in writing along with a notice of warning or termination, as deemed appropriate. Members will be given reasonable opportunity to respond to the notice where safe to do so. Further actions or appeals on behalf of the member will be handled in line with Latrobe City Council's Complaints Handling Policy.

6.3 Filling Vacancies

Vacancies that occur during a term may be filled within the determined period of appointment. Where a vacancy is filled, the appointment will be limited to the remainder of the period of the original appointment.

Applicants who are not successful in gaining SIAG membership may be offered the opportunity to be put on a reserve list to fill subsequent membership vacancies. Applicants who have made an application or interviewed within the last 24 months, will not need to resubmit their application.

7. Meetings

SIAG will hold 10 ordinary meetings per calendar year with the option of extraordinary meetings to be determined on an as-needed basis.

Agendas and minutes will use the Latrobe City Council template. The agenda will be provided to SIAG Members no later than seven days prior to the meeting and minutes will be provided within two weeks of the last SIAG meeting.

8. Local Social Investment Fund

The mechanism through which the SIAG will achieve its purpose is by providing recommendations to Latrobe City Council for Local Social Investment Fund grants to community organisations. These grants will support projects targeted at increasing social inclusion and mental health promotion activities. The fund is divided into two streams, general and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. A minimum of 20% will be used to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives.

8.1 Aboriginal Partnership

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives will be solely assessed by SIAG Members who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, supporting the principle of self-determination.

Where less than three SIAG Members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, further consultation will be sought from Latrobe City's Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer and local Aboriginal organisations.

8.2 Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility for the Local Social Investment Fund will be managed according to the principles outlined in Latrobe City Council's Community Grant Program Governance Policy.

An applicant eligibility exemption applies for Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations.

8.2.1 Application funding

Application funding will be managed according to the principles outlined in the Community Grant Program Governance Policy.

8.2.2 Auspice

Auspice arrangements will be managed according to the principles outlined in the Community Grant Program Governance Policy.

8.2.3 Insurance

Insurance requirements will be managed according to the principles outlined in the Community Grant Program Governance Policy.

8.2.4 Acquittal

Acquittal requirements will be managed according to the principles outlined in the Community Grant Program Governance Policy. This includes provisions for:

- Lost and misplaced proof of purchase records/receipts.
- Funding variations.
- Unspent funds.

- Event cancellation.

8.3 Assessment Criteria

The Social Inclusion Project Officer will complete an eligibility check against all applications before sharing relevant application details to SIAG Members for consideration.

The Social Inclusion Project Officer will ensure that all Members have sufficient information to provide recommendations and provide training and resources where necessary.

Members will be required to score applications and provide commentary to support their recommendations. Applications will be ranked accordingly.

Applications will be assessed and scored out of 100 according to the below criteria. An overview of recommended applications and commentary will be compiled for recommendation to Council Officers per section 9.

Assessment Criteria	Weighting
Alignment with Latrobe City's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and Latrobe City's SIAG Priorities.	20
Demonstrated ability of project to address local needs, improve equity and address barriers to participation.	20
Demonstrated level of community engagement undertaken or planned as part of the project.	20
Evidence supporting the effectiveness and impact of the project to support social connection and mental health.	20
Demonstrated organisational capacity to deliver the project, including plan for long-term sustainability.	20

9. Decision Making

SIAG Members

The SIAG is a community-led group providing social inclusion and mental health expertise and thus the SIAG, and its Members have no delegated decision-making authority. Members decision-making powers pertain to providing recommendations to Council Officers related to:

- Operational and logistic elements of the SIAG.
- Priorities of the SIAG and definitions of local needs, particularly regarding addressing social inclusion and mental health promotion.
- Local Social Investment Fund applications.
- Increasing inclusion and embedding of lived experience in funded Local Social Investment Fund projects.
- Evaluation and impact measurement of funded Local Social Investment Fund projects.

For a formal position of SIAG to be adopted, a quorum (50% plus one) must be present. If at any meeting, a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the start time, the meeting may be adjourned. All positions and recommendations of the SIAG are provided for consideration by Council Officers, with decision making at their discretion. The SIAG has no authority to authorise or make decisions outside of the above scope.

Council Officers

Council Officers are responsible for implementing the recommendations of SIAG in accordance with the SIAG guidelines from the MHWPO and in compliance with Latrobe City Council Policies and Procedures and delegated authority.

Recommendations for the Local Social Investment Fund will be compiled by Council Officers including SIAG scoring and commentary for consideration through CEO delegation. This information will be made available to Councillors for information in advance of final approvals. Funding approval will be provided in writing per funding rounds scheduled in applicable guidelines.

Councillors

Councillors will be informed of the recommendations and activities undertaken by the SIAG per the process outlined (see Reporting). Councillors have no formal decision-making role, however, may provide relevant information to support the SIAG's operations and recommendations.

10. Record Keeping

All relevant documentation will be stored in the appropriate manner including the Latrobe City Council corporate filing system (Ci Anywhere or superseding system) or within the online portal for Local Social Investment Funding. Relevant documentation includes but is not limited to:

- SIAG agendas and minutes.
- Expressions of Interest, scoring, decisions-making and outcomes for membership.
- Local Social Investment Funding applications, scoring, decisions-making and outcomes for funding.
- Breach of SIAG membership responsibilities.
- Confirmation of resignation or termination of membership

11. Reporting

The Social Inclusion Project Officer will present an annual report to Council containing an overview of the SIAG's activities, achievements and expenditure over the previous 12-month period as well as a summary of any adjustments to the program for the upcoming 12-month period.

The Coordinator of Social Policy and Inclusion will also provide a report to the MHWPO quarterly.

12. Evaluation

The SIAG will undergo internal and external evaluation. Latrobe City Council will evaluate measures that relate to social inclusion within the community and factors that impact SIAG mechanisms such as:

- Community engagement levels.
- Member engagement and evaluation.
- Impact of funded initiatives on community inclusion opportunities including engagement levels, and meeting community needs.
- Demographic data related to social inclusion and mental health in Latrobe City.

All SIAG's will be evaluated by the MHWPO, which will assess how the SIAG upholds recommendation 15 of the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health.

13. Code of Conduct

The SIAG and its Members will abide by the Latrobe City Staff Code of Conduct.

13.1 Membership Conflict of Interest

Per the Code of Conduct, a Member or prospective Member must promptly identify any Conflict of Interest with the Social Inclusion Project Officer. Members who have a Conflict of Interest will be excused from any involvement regarding the conflict.

13.2 Local Social Investment Fund Assessment and Approval

When a Conflict of Interest is declared, the relevant person must not have any involvement in discussions or decisions relating to the specific application. The Social Inclusion Project Officer will provide information to support Members to identify conflicts and the opportunity to declare conflicts before each Local Social Investment Funding assessment.

Any conflicts of interest will be managed according to the Local Government Act 2020 and Latrobe City Council's Conflict of Interest Operational Policy, overseen by the appropriate Council Officer and documented appropriately.

14. Confidentiality and Privacy

Members must treat information they encounter in their role, including information discussed by other Members as confidential unless otherwise advised, and in particular be aware of the requirements regarding confidential information within the meaning of the *Local Government Act 2020* Information received by Members in the course of their role must only be used for the purpose it was intended. Members have an obligation not to disclose any materials or information that is not available to the public. The SIAG and its members will abide by the Latrobe City Council Privacy Policy.

15. Media

SIAG members must comply with Latrobe City Council Policies and Procedures applying to public relations, communications and use of social media. Members are entitled to make comment on matters in their capacity as a member of another organisation or as private citizens; however, it must be clear that those views are not expressed on behalf of the SIAG or Latrobe City Council. Members of the SIAG may not speak or purport to speak on behalf of or represent the SIAG or Latrobe City Council without permission.

16. Complaints and Feedback

The Social Inclusion Project Officer will work with Members when opportunities arise to increase Members' interpersonal skills and find mutually beneficial resolutions where safe to do so.

When managing complaints, the SIAG will follow the Complaints Handling Policy outlined by Latrobe City Council.

Complaints can also be made to the MHWPO via email: mhwpo@health.vic.gov.au

17. Document Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every four years, or as deemed necessary by the SIAG and Latrobe City Council.

18. Definitions

Auspice – An auspice agreement means that an organisation with a legal not-for-profit status takes responsibility for ensuring grant funds are used as specified in the grant allocation. Auspice agreements are commonly undertaken for community organisations or applicants that are not legally constituted as a not-for-profit entity.

Acquittal – Acquitting a grant means accurately reporting on the funded activities and the expenditure of the funding. Acquittals are required upon completion of the project, within the period specified within two months of the specified project completion date.

Equity – Making sure everyone has what they need to be successful, no matter their background or circumstances. In equity, people are given the support and resources they require to have equal opportunities and access to a good quality of life.

Lived Experience – A person who is currently or has previously experienced low levels of social inclusion or a person who has supported or cared for someone with low levels of social inclusion. In regard to SIAG, this includes priority groups who have been identified as experiencing higher levels of social exclusion.

Place-Based – Tailoring approaches to the unique characteristics, needs, assets and strengths of that place.

Mental Ill-Health – A state of decline or suffering related to mental or emotional well-being.

Royal Commission – An inquiry into a matter that relates to Commonwealth responsibilities to provide insight onto a particular topic.

Self-Determination – The method by which a person makes decisions regarding their own life.

Social Connection – Feeling cared for and valued within a group of people.

Social Exclusion – When people feel that they do not have a connection to a community.

Social Inclusion – The capability, resources, opportunities to learn, work, engage and be heard within a community.

19. Related Documents

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotions Office SIAG Guidelines
Latrobe City Staff Code of Conduct
Latrobe City Privacy Policy
Latrobe City Procurement Guidelines
Latrobe City Conflict of Interest Operational Policy
Latrobe City Complaints Handling Policy
Latrobe City Community Grants Governance Policy
Latrobe City Community Inclusion and Access Policy
Latrobe City Workplace Adjustment Policy
Latrobe City Recruitment Procedure
Latrobe City Working with Children Checks Operational Policy