

Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) Priorities 2025



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Purpose

The Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) is an evidence-based initiative focused on improving mental health by boosting social connection and inclusion. SIAG funds local projects that address Community needs in Latrobe City and aims to create lasting, meaningful change.

This document outlines the SIAG priorities for 2025, explaining how and why these priorities were selected. It also serves as a guide for community members seeking to apply for SIAG Community Connection Grants, helping applicants align their projects with SIAG's goals to improve mental health in Latrobe City through social inclusion and connection.

Definition of Key Terms:

- **Social Connection:** Feeling cared for, valued, and a sense of belonging within a group or community.
- **Social Inclusion:** Ensuring everyone feels valued, has equal opportunities to succeed, and has their voice heard, while breaking down barriers to prevent exclusion.

Guiding Principles

When creating the 2025 priorities, SIAG used evidence from a range of resources including formal research and data, as well as lived experience from a range of community members.

SIAG's purpose is to target primary prevention strategies for mental health. Primary prevention is about stopping something before it starts. This allows SIAG to focus on key priorities that can support mental health throughout the whole community.

Evidence shows that some groups are disproportionately affected by social exclusion. SIAG is dedicated to improving equity for priority populations which is reflected within the 2025 priorities.

Grant Projects

SIAG is excited to fund a variety of different projects. Some effective methods that support the goal of improving social inclusion and connection to improve mental health and well-being are listed below.

Research

SIAG aims to identify and address gaps in Latrobe City's data and knowledge to improve social connection and inclusion. There is a lot of data that looks at topics from a state or country perspective, some data could be expanded by focusing directly on people of Latrobe City. This could include identifying barriers, testing current interventions, or looking for more effective interventions.

Advocacy, Promotion and Education

Promoting understanding for different experiences is vital to achieve social inclusion and belonging. By recognising, celebrating and learning about different cultures and life experiences, we are able to support each other and create strong bonds in our community. Through these methods we can reduce negative views and make everyone feel like they belong and are valued.

Skill Building

Skill building is an effective way to increase social connection and inclusion to create more positive mental health outcomes. Providing a safe space to practice new skills is a crucial step in building confidence and empowering people in their own lives. This allows people to grow and contribute to the larger community.

Priority Areas

Based on local data and lived experiences, SIAG has identified key priority areas to guide initiatives that promote social inclusion, connection, mental health, and wellbeing across Latrobe City. These priorities focus on building meaningful relationships, celebrating diversity, and ensuring everyone has access to opportunities to connect and contribute. Each priority represents a critical component in creating a more inclusive and resilient community.

Building Strong Relationship Foundations

Strong, long-lasting relationships are key to mental health and wellbeing, particularly in challenging times. To build these relationships, we need skills that help us connect, communicate, and support each other in meaningful ways. This could include:

- Respectful communication skills.
- Creating and sustaining boundaries.
- Raising emotional intelligence and awareness.
- Conflict resolution skills.
- Developing and maintaining friendships.

Celebrating Diversity and Lived Experience

Appreciating and honouring diverse cultures and lifestyles broadens our perspectives, fosters empathy, and contributes to a safer, more inclusive community. By celebrating diversity, we strengthen our sense of belonging and mutual respect. Projects in this area could focus on:

- Exploring and understanding different cultures and lifestyles.
- Building empathy and respect for different perspectives.
- Celebrating different world views and experiences.

Unique Opportunities and Approaches

Everyone in our community should have access to opportunities that align with their interests and allow them to connect with others. Removing barriers to participation and creating innovative ways for people to engage ensures that no one is left out. At the same time, encouraging individuals to give back through volunteering helps strengthen community ties. This could include things such as:

- Creating unique opportunities to cater to various interests.
- Inviting disconnected individuals to participate.
- Removing barriers to attendance.
- Expanding pathways to give back to community.

These priorities provide a framework for building an inclusive, vibrant, and connected Latrobe City where everyone feels valued and supported.