



MANSFIELD SIAG
Local Investment Plan
2026 - 2027

Photo Credit: Yooralla Mansfield



“Mansfield Shire Council was selected to receive funding from the State Government of Victoria to initiate a Social Inclusion Action Group to support inclusion, and address isolation and loneliness through grass roots initiatives. We commend our group members in volunteering their time in support of this program and recognise their aspirations in developing this workplan. Nobody knows our community like local people do, and we’re grateful to those who have stepped up and take a leading role in partnership with SIAG. The group has been empowered by Council to make the decisions on what project and activities are funded and we are excited to see how this plan will bring those aspirations to fruition.”

Mayor Steve Rabie

Mansfield Shire Council acknowledges the Taungurung people as the traditional custodians and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. Council extends that respect to all members of our community.

Supported by:



Department
of Health



**Mansfield
Shire**

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*We acknowledge the Taungurung people as the traditional owners of the land on which our offices are located.
We pay respect to the Taungurung Elders, past, present and future and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*



Introduction

Overview

The Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) is a community-driven initiative focused on enhancing social connection and inclusion within the broader Mansfield community.

Selected by the Victorian State Government to pilot community-based inclusion programs, SIAG is supported by the Mansfield Shire Council and guided by a diverse group of community members and organisational members representing various local perspectives.

Local Investment Plan Purpose

The Local Investment Plan outlines how the Mansfield SIAG will prioritise and allocate funding to initiatives that strengthen social inclusion across the community.

This plan is informed by local insights, community voice, and identified needs, and provides a clear framework for decision-making, investment priorities, and evaluation of impact.

It is a living document that will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect emerging needs, learning, and outcomes.



Values

The SIAG operates on a foundation of core values that guide our interactions, decision-making and community engagement. These values were collaboratively developed by our SIAG members at the project's inception.

They encapsulate our commitment to creating a welcoming, respectful and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and heard.



Inclusivity

We embrace inclusivity by actively inviting community members from diverse backgrounds to participate in discussions and by ensuring their voices are heard. We provide resources in multiple languages and create safe spaces for open dialogue, respecting all viewpoints.



Connection

We foster connection by organising community events that encourage active interaction and work toward building meaningful relationships. Through platforms like social media groups and newsletters, we highlight personal stories and successes to inspire a sense of belonging and to strengthen community ties.



Collaboration

We live collaboration by partnering with local organisations to co-create programs and events that achieve shared goals. By facilitating joint projects and regularly aligning our strategies with our stakeholders, we maximize our collective impact and strengthen community ties.



Empowerment

Through the provision of financial support we empower individuals and groups to develop community initiatives that increase social connection and inclusion. We celebrate their contributions and encourage them to share their stories and ideas, fostering a vibrant and engaged community.



Wellbeing

We emphasise wellbeing by regularly evaluating community needs to inform our support for programs that enhance mental health awareness and provide outreach for all community members. Our holistic approach includes support for physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

Our Ways of Working

The SIAG adopts the following approaches to ensure meaningful and effective investment:

1. **Collaborative Partnerships:** Foster strong relationships with local organisations, community groups, and stakeholders to share resources, knowledge, and best practices.
2. **Community Engagement:** Actively involve community members in decision-making processes, ensuring their voices and perspectives shape initiatives and programs.
3. **Inclusive Programming:** Design and support programs that cater to the diverse needs of all community members, promoting accessibility and participation for everyone.
4. **Continuous Feedback:** Implement mechanisms for ongoing feedback from participants and stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of initiatives and adapt as needed.
5. **Empowerment and Capacity Building:** Provide training, resources, and support to local groups and individuals, enabling them to expand their programs and foster new ideas.
6. **Innovation and Flexibility:** Encourage creative thinking and be open to new approaches that address emerging challenges in social inclusion and connection.
7. **Celebration of Diversity:** Promote events and activities that celebrate the unique contributions of all community groups, fostering a culture of respect and appreciation.
8. **Resource Sharing:** Facilitate access to funding, tools, and materials that empower local initiatives and enhance their impact.
9. **Sustainability Focus:** Prioritise long-term sustainability in all initiatives, ensuring that programs can continue to thrive and evolve over time.
10. **Holistic Approach:** Consider the interconnectedness of social, mental, and physical well-being in all initiatives to create a more comprehensive support system for the community.



Photo Credit: Harmony Day Festival 2026

SIAG Members

The SIAG is comprised of dedicated community members representing Mansfield's diverse population. Each member brings unique perspectives and lived experiences, working collaboratively to identify local needs and develop initiatives that promote social inclusion and connection. Their role involves actively participating in planning, implementing and evaluating projects, ensuring that the SIAG's efforts are community-driven and responsive to the voices and needs of all residents.

Community Members

Community members of the Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG) play an essential role in identifying and creating opportunities for greater social connection and inclusion within their local communities. With their unique insights and firsthand experience, they help pinpoint areas where social barriers exist and propose practical solutions to bridge those gaps. Their contributions are key to shaping programs that foster deeper connections, reduce stigma, and create a more inclusive environment for all members of the community.

Organisation Members

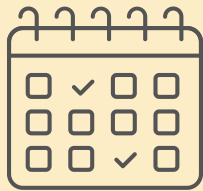
Organisation members of SIAG are dedicated individuals who help to drive the group's mission forward by developing and implementing initiatives that promote social inclusion. They collaborate with community members to design programs that address local needs and encourage active participation. These members bring their expertise and passion to facilitate meaningful change, ensuring that the voices of community members are heard and that the group's efforts result in tangible improvements in social connectivity and inclusivity.



Photo Credit: Jamieson Autumn Festival 2025



Priorities

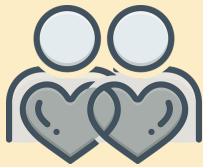


Opportunity

Increasing opportunities for people to come together and connect



- Events
- Enhancing established events to make them more inclusive, more accessible and more impactful
- Support people with great ideas



Belonging

Creating a strong community, building belonging and pride



- Building a sense of belonging
- People feel valued, seen and heard
- Strengthening the community through cultural connection



Accessibility

Creating a safe, welcoming and accessible community



- Physical access of places
- Safety - psychological and physiological
- Addressing economic disadvantage and access
- Environmental sustainability and access



Knowledge

Building knowledge, skills and understanding



- Training
- Listening and learning
- Information sessions
- Scoping
- Networking
- Shareable information



Communication

Inclusive communication and wellbeing promotion



- Promote the importance of inclusive participation and communication
- Ensure access to information (eg: languages, where information can be accessed)
- Connecting with key organisations and people

SIAG Investment Categories

Funded initiatives will align with one or more of the following categories:

1

More accessible facilities and places

Improving the availability and accessibility of safe and inclusive facilities and public places (e.g., sporting facilities, parks, ovals, blue and green spaces, art and cultural spaces, public transport hubs, schools, farmers markets, community clubs and halls).



2

Improving skills and knowledge

Increasing the understanding and capabilities of SIAG and community to promote community participation and connection (e.g. social inclusion, belonging, leadership, governance).



3

Enhancing opportunities for connection

Supporting local communities and organisations to bring people together in welcoming and inclusive environments.



4

Strengthening social inclusion and community participation

Supporting inclusive practices to enhance opportunities for participation, shared purpose and places where people feel valued and safe to contribute meaningfully.



5

Influencing policies, practices and social norms

Strengthening the capability and commitment of local government, local organisations, businesses and communities to drive systems change for socially inclusive and connected communities.



Agency & self determination

- Funding ideas that are designed by the people for the people.
- Building local leadership and capacity.
- Allowing flexibility so communities can adapt projects to their needs.

Empowerment

- Acknowledging the value individuals bring to the community.
- Supporting leadership and shared decision-making.
- Strengthening voices through knowledge and support.

Social Connection

- Enable members to actively participate in decision-making planning.
- Encouraging co-design to amplify community voice.
- Creating environments where diverse voices can share experiences and stories.

Citizen participation

- Partnering with local organisations to co-create initiatives that reflect community needs.
- Implementing mechanisms for ongoing input and dialogue between citizens and local leaders.
- Support active community involvement.

People likely to experience social exclusion

Groups of people who are more vulnerable to social isolation, disconnection and exclusion.

- Elderly (65+)
- Young people (0-24)
- First Nations and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- LGBTIQ+ community
- Persons with a disability
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Remote locations
- People seeking asylum & recently arrived migrants
- People with long term mental health conditions
- Single Parents
- Priority Regions - areas with high rates of socioeconomic disadvantage

Intersectionality

How different aspects of a person's identity and experiences combine to shape their sense of self and engagement with the community.

Other important intersections:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Citizenship
- Education level
- Neurodiversity
- Ability & mobility
- Physical health
- Mental wellbeing
- Culture
- Language Spoken

Decision-making processes

Eligible applications will be reviewed by Council staff, then assessed by the SIAG members using these criteria:

- **What:** What is the project about?
- **Who:** Who will benefit from from the project?
- **Why:** Why is this project needed?
- **How:** How will the project be delivered and promoted?

Based on the questions answered above, SIAG members will determine which traffic light category the project falls into from the options listed below.

Category 1: Worthy of funding.

Place projects in order of priority for funding.

Category 2: Needs improvement, work with applicant.

Group coordinator to follow up with applicant and ask any questions that SIAG members need confirmation about the project.

Category 3: This project does not align.



Photo Credit: Plant and Pick

References

1. SIAG Terms of Reference 2026
2. Mansfield Shire Community Needs Analysis 2023
3. SIAG Charter of Commitment 2024



For more information on SIAG or the initiatives they support, please reach out to Coordinator - SIAG at siag@mansfield.vic.gov.au .