

Welcome to WDN September 2026 Community Meeting





City of
Whittlesea



Acknowledgement

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

Today's Agenda



- **10:00** Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country & Housekeeping, Jafar Hussein
- **10:05** Council Update, Jafar Hussein
- **10:15** Early Years Services and Inclusion, Michelle Rilen and Anneke Harris
- **10:30** Active Whittlesea Disability Inclusion, Belgravia Leisure Ryan Mifsud

- **10:55** Social Inclusion Action Group • Kathy McCormack, Michelle Buhagiar, Anthea, Bettina, Subina
- **11:10** Group Discussion, Jafar Hussein
- **11:40** Morning Tea
- **12:05** Report Back on Group Discussions
- **12:25** Wrap Up & Next Meeting

Making today comfortable and accessible

Accessible participation

Please participate in the way that works for you. Take a break or move around if needed.

Toilets



Emergency



If an evacuation is required, follow staff instructions and use emergency exit

Respect & privacy

Listen to each other, allow time for people to speak and respect personal information shared in the room.

If you need support at any time, please speak with Jafar or with Whitney

Council Update – New CEO Appointed



Welcome to our new Chief Executive Officer

Dan Hogan

Commenced 1 September



Dan Hogan has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of the City of Whittlesea.

He brings more than 20 years of local government experience across large and complex portfolios.

Emergency Services Expo

30th annual Blessing of the Emergency Services Fleet

Saturday 3 October 2026

10 am – 1 pm

PRACC • 35 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



Come along and show your support

A special multi-faith ceremony brings emergency services, faith leaders and the community together to wish our local heroes well for the season ahead.

Community event • Everyone is welcome

Connect, create and celebrate



Bookings are essential

1–31 October 2026

**A month of activities supporting active ageing,
participation and social connection.**

Affordable

A range of free and low-cost events at
locations across the City of Whittlesea.

Early Years Team and Supports for Families

Date: Tuesday, 22 September 2026

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM



Early Years Teams Introduction



Child and Family Health

- MCH
- EMCH
- Immunisation

Early Years Services and Inclusion

- Education and Engagement
- Family Engagement Team
- Family Day Care
- Playgroups
- Kindergarten

Family Engagement Team



- Information and support for families with young children aged 0-6
- Our service is FREE.
- Families from all cultural backgrounds are welcome
- Free interpreters available including Auslan

We can help with:

- Kindergarten
- Childcare
- Maternal and Child Health
- Playgroups
- Family services
- Parenting information
- Local community services

We Can:

- Explain services
- Help you complete forms
- Help you make appointments
- Connect you with local services
- Answer your questions



Immunisation



Funded sessions available for:

- babies, toddlers and young children
- secondary school students
- individuals under 20 years of age who require catch-up immunisations
- pregnant women
- medically at risk and other vulnerable people.

- Free immunisation services
- Book and manage appointments online



For additional information: Email: immunisation@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

<https://whittlesea.book.vitavo.com.au/available-appointments>

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH)



- Service is a free health service. It offers inclusive, community-based support to all Victorian families and carers with children from birth to school age.
- The Enhanced MCH program provides free extra support hours to Victorian families with children from birth to age 3 who are facing extra challenges that impact their role as a parent or carer.
- Email : mch@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Playgroups



Community run and Supported playgroups

- Supported playgroup run by council facilitators and incorporate parenting program called Small Talk
- Community playgroups are run by individuals or services
- 5 dedicated playgroups for families and children with additional needs

Playgroups

Bond and Bloom Playgroup

A supportive group offering a warm environment for children with Autism and special needs

- Phone: [0403 787 934](tel:0403787934)
Email: info@amazingparents.org.au
When: Every Sunday during school term 10am - 12pm

PlayConnect

Facilitated play-based program for preschool children with ASD or ASD like behaviours

- Phone: [0431 891 541](tel:0431891541)
Email: cpane@playgroup.org.au
Cost: Free
When: School calendar- Every Thursday morning 10am - 12pm

Venue: Carrington Children's Activity Centre - 62 Carrington Blvd Thomastown



Bond & Bloom

A supportive group offering a warm environment for children with diverse needs

WHY YOU'LL LOVE IT

- ✓ Build friendships
- ✓ Improve social skills
- ✓ Participate in creative and sensory activities
- ✓ Enjoy a sense of belonging

PROGRAM DETAILS
Sunday, 18 May 2025 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Frequency: Every Sunday during Victorian school terms
Duration: 40 weeks
Venue: 62 Carrington Blvd, Thomastown VIC 3074
(Approx. 15-20 mins walk or short bus ride from Thomastown Station)

WHO CAN JOIN?
Children with autism and other special needs.

ENROLL NOW

Visit our website for more details and registration forms:
www.amazingparents.org.au
Subina
info@amazingparents.org.au
0403 787 934

 Proudly supported by  City of Whittlesea

Early Learning Group

Supported Playgroup for the deaf and hard of hearing.

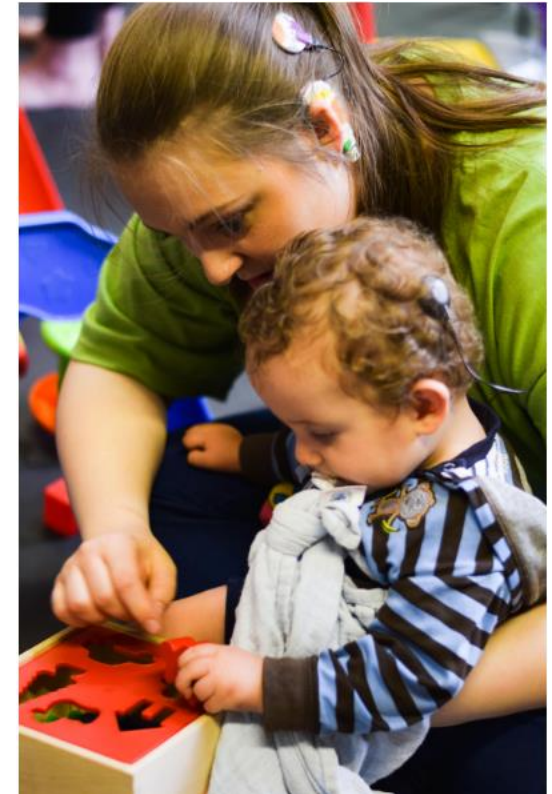
Contact: Catherine Stevenson

- Location:
Carrington Children's Activity Centre
62 Carrington Blvd

Phone: [0408 544 856](tel:0408544856)

Email: Catherine.stevenson@education.vic.gov.au

When: Fortnightly Friday 10am-12noon



Playgroups



My Time – Epping

MyTime is for parents and carers of a child with a disability, chronic medical condition or other additional needs including developmental delay.

- Contact: Louisa Sheahan
Location:
Oakbrook Kindergarten
36 Holroyd Drive Epping
Phone: 0466 237 634
Email: louisas@mytimevic.com.au
- Cost: Free
When: Wednesdays fortnightly 9:30am - 12.00pm
- For additional information:
Email: playgroups@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or [MyTime website](#)



MyTime: A chance to share with others
who have similar experiences

Playgroups

Free to be me

- An inclusive support group for parents, carers and their children aged 2-6 that require additional support. Free to Be Me provides opportunities to be connected to local supports and services, gain skills and knowledge to further support their child and socialise with fellow families on a similar journey. Sessions will include sensory based play opportunities.
- **Cost:** Free to attend
- **When:** Wednesdays 10:00am-11:00am (during school term)
- **Contact:** Zoe [0482187190](tel:0482187190)
- Visit the [Jindi Family and Community Centre website](#) for further information.



Free to be Me

**18 months to 6 years:
Wednesdays 10 am -11 am (during school term)
Jindi Family and Community Centre, Mernda**

Are you caring for a child with additional needs?

Free to be Me is an inclusive support group, free from judgment for parents, carers and their children that require additional support.

Free to be Me provides opportunities for families to be connected to local supports and services, gain skills and knowledge through play and socialise with families on a similar journey.

This group is facilitated by a qualified Early Years Practitioner and is **FREE** to attend. Registration is essential.
To best connect with local services, we prioritise Mernda residents.

Get in touch with us

 JindiEarlyYears@bsl.org.au  bsl.org.au/jindi

  **Scan me to enquire** 

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Kindergarten



- Kinder is available for children 3 and 4 years of age
- 2 years before first year of School
- Kinder hours are free for all children
- Kinder in Long Day Care settings – fees are subsidised
- Funding is available for additional support and resources if a child has additional needs or delay



<https://www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-inclusion-support-kis-program-specialised-equipment-trial-set>

Kindergarten

Sessional Kindergarten Programs

- when applying provide as much information as possible
- modifications can be made to Council buildings
- Teachers and Educators will work with families to provide additional support
- Long Day Care Centres may be privately run or administered by a community organisation or committee.
- Can provide inclusion support and there will be an offset to fees for kindergarten hours



More info: Email: keo@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Children & Families



THANK YOU

Any Questions?

Active Whittlesea Disability Inclusion

Whittlesea Disability Network Forum 22 Sept 2026



WE ACKNOWLEDGE, WE RECOGNISE, WE SUPPORT

Belgravia Leisure respectfully acknowledge and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Traditional Custodians of Country and pays respect to their cultures and Elders past, present and emerging. Belgravia Leisure proudly welcomes, supports and includes all people into the facilities, programs, services and employment it offers to communities across Australia and New Zealand.

Acknowledgement



WE ACKNO WLEDGE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land known as Australia on which we meet and work.

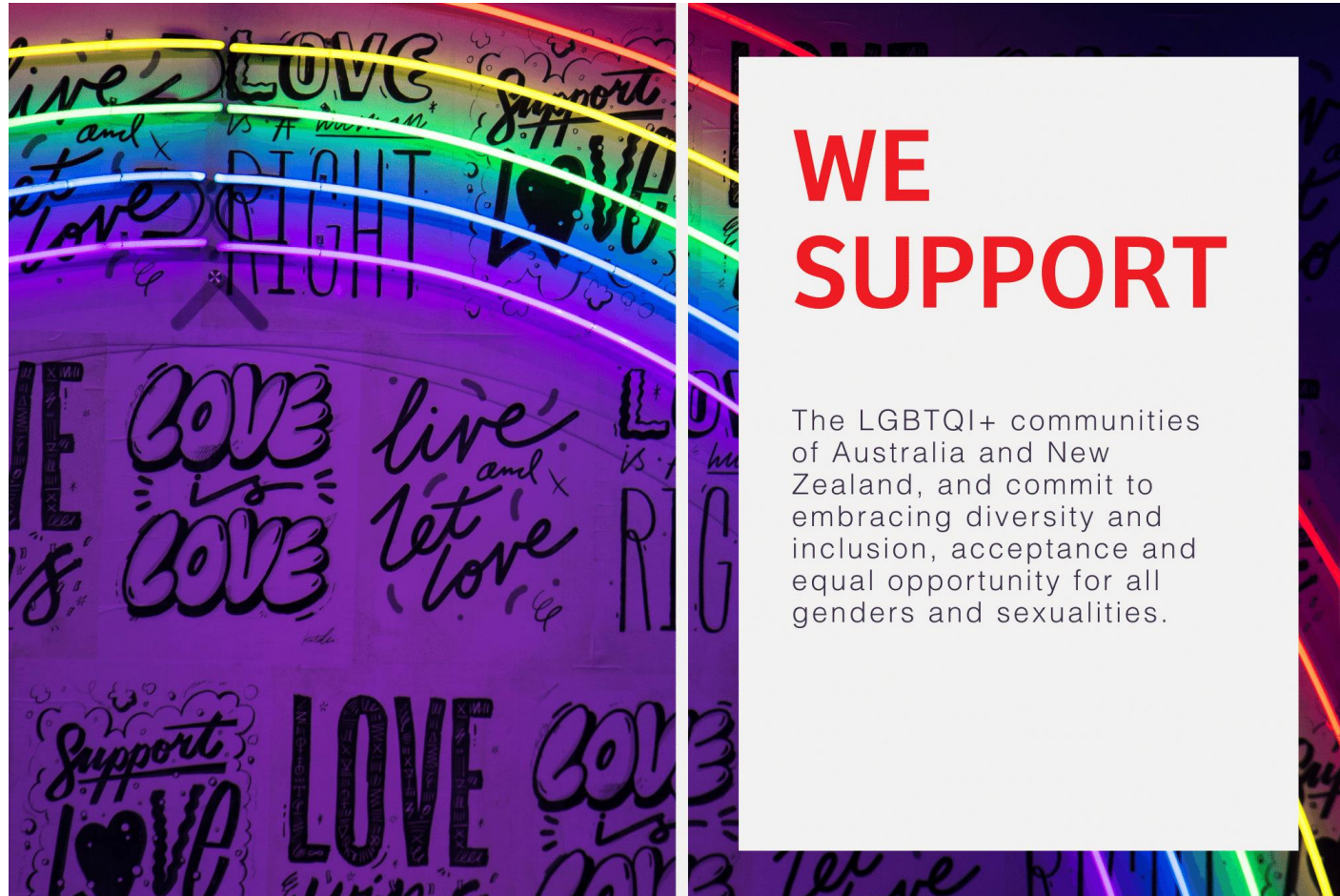
We recognise their continuing connection to land, place, water and community.



WE RECO GNISE

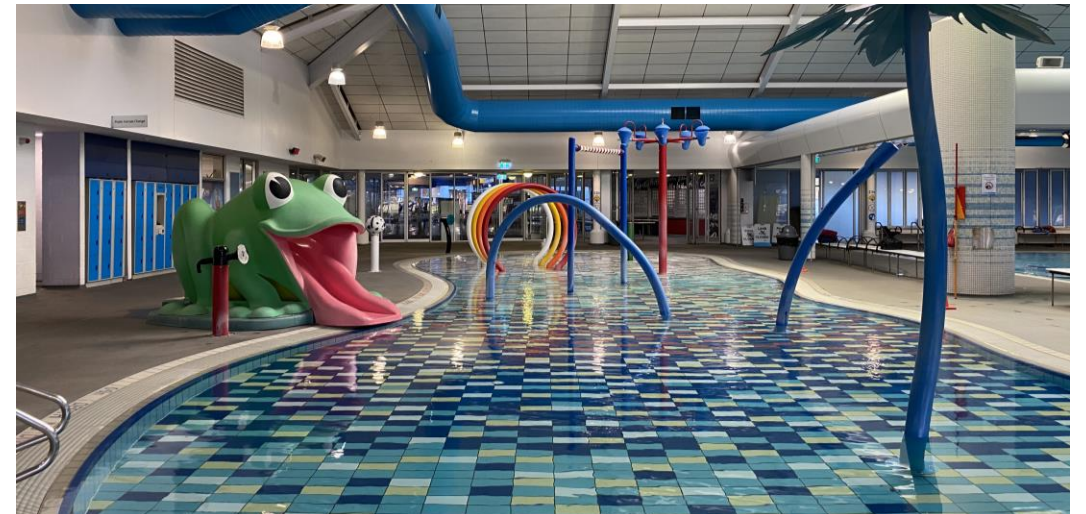
The unique role of the Māori as Tangata Whenua and embrace Te Tiriti o Waitangi recognising Maori as tino rangatiratanga of Aotearoa / New Zealand while embracing the three guiding principles of the Treaty - Partnership, Participation, and Protection.

Statement of Support



Introduction to Active Whittlesea

- Who we are and what we do
 - TRAC, Mill Park Leisure and Whittlesea Swim Centre.
 - Belgravia Leisure
 - Inclusion is embedded across staff training, facility design, customer service, partnerships, programs and events.
 - Creating welcoming, accessible and inclusive leisure opportunities for everybody



Access and Inclusion

- Access and inclusion is a priority for Belgravia Leisure and City of Whittlesea
- Belgravia Leisure's 5 Year Access & Inclusion Plan
- Active Whittlesea Plan 2019-2028
- Whittlesea Disability Action Plan 2025-2029



Our Inclusion Approach



- Goal: Ensure everybody feels welcome, safe, valued, active and included.

- Dedicated Access & Inclusion Officers support participants, carers, families, support workers and organisations.

- YouMeUs Disability Inclusion
- Guest First customer service
- MHeLP mental health awareness
- Special Olympics learnings and partnerships



- Venue Access Key
- Website accessibility tools.
- Cérge accessibility app platform
- Accessible parking
- Wheelchair access
- Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK)
- Accessible change rooms
- Brail on doors
- Ausland support – Aqua Aerobics

Pool hoists
Ramp entries
Aqua wheelchairs
Hearing loops
Sensory Hour*
Companion Card
Carer's Card
Communication board - TRAC

Inclusive Programs & Events (Free)



- We Are The Champions (IDPwD) - Tues, 1st December 2026 at TRAC Stadium.
- All Abilities Fun Hour – Mill Park Leisure (Every Tues at 11.30am-1pm)
- All Abilities Fun Hour / Disco – TRAC – 1st Thurs of every month
- All Abilities Walking Group – Mill Park Leisure & Heart Foundation (Every Friday at 11.30am-12.30pm)
- Carers Week activities (11-17 October 2026) - Mill Park Leisure & TRAC offer carers a choice of one group exercise session of their choice
- Lets Move Dance – TRAC & Thomastown Neighbourhood House (Every Monday)
- Walking Football – TRAC on Tues, Mill Park Leisure on Saturday mornings (Fee)
- NDIS-friendly participation opportunities
- **Sensory Hour**

What we offer - **photos**

- Health Club
 - 750sqm Gym
 - 30 Day onboarding
 - Active Whittlesea App
 - Exercise Physiology
 - Group Training Space that can cater to up to 20 people
 - 4 recline bikes
 - 5 Arm ergometers
 - Medical grade treadmill



What we offer

- Group Exercise
 - 130+ Live Group Exercise Classes
 - Virtual Classes in Main Studio and Spin Studio
 - Strength, Wellbeing, Cardio
 - Multi purpose spaces during downtime



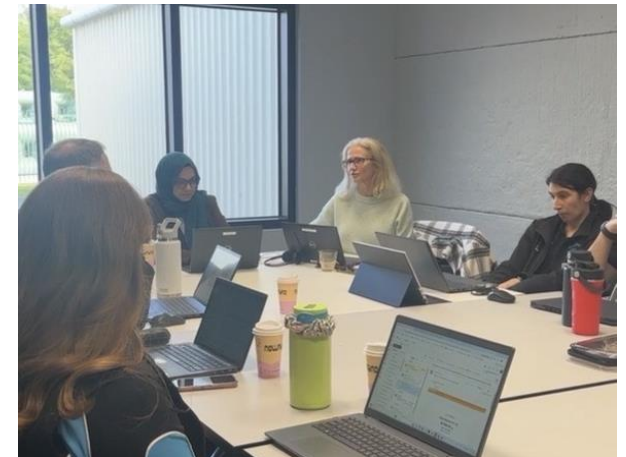
What we offer

- Aquatics
 - Medical grade Hoist sSystem
 - 2 MLAK changerooms
 - Hydrotherapy
 - Warm Water Aqua Aerobics
 - 25m Pool
 - Warm Water Pool
- LTS
 - 1:1 and 4:1 options available



What we offer

- Multipurpose Spaces
 - Childcare
 - Program Room 4
 - Boardroom



What we offer

- Outdoor Area



Case Study: "We Are the Champions" IDPwD

- We Are The Champions (International Day People with Disability Day)
- Tues, 1st December 2026 at TRAC Stadium.
- TRAC Stadium
- Now in its 5th year
- Last year the event attracted:
 - 400 participants
 - Numerous performers, singing & dance troupes, fashion parade, drumming, demonstrations, etc
 - 19 agency information stalls
 - Mayor's opening
 - Snacks

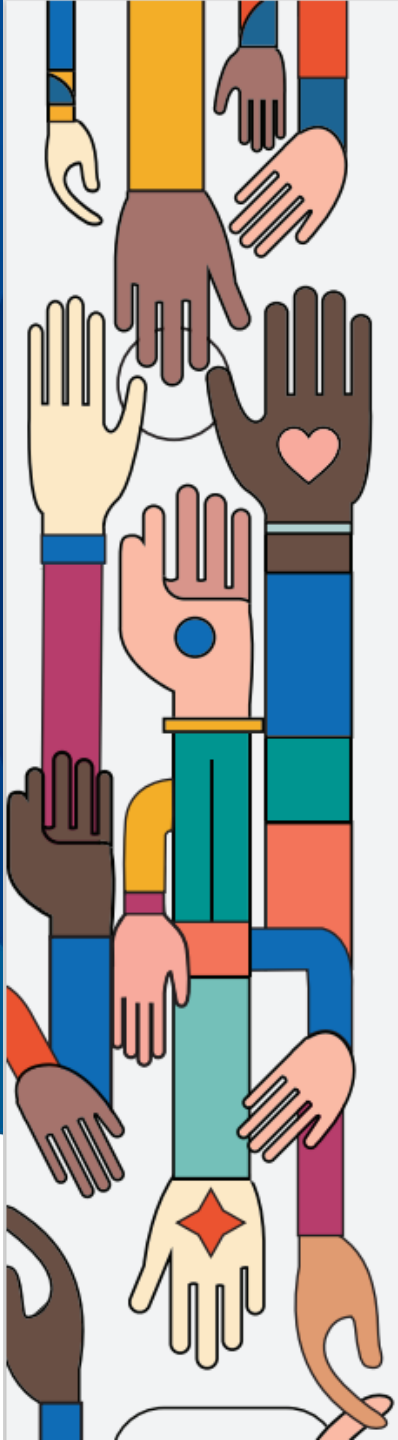


Case Study: MPL All Abilities Fun Hour

- Free weekly social program launched July 2026.
- Activities include wheelchair boccia, indoor bowling, board games and group activities, karaoke, discos, arts & crafts.
- Attendance typically 18-35 participants per week.



Wrap up and summary of ideas

A vertical illustration on the left side of the slide shows a series of hands of various skin tones and colors (yellow, orange, brown, pink, blue, green, purple) reaching upwards. Some hands have symbols on them, like a heart or a star. The background of the slide is dark blue with large, overlapping, lighter blue circular shapes.

City of Whittlesea Social Inclusion Action Group (SIAG)

Whittlesea Disability Network Presentation
22 September 2026



SIAG Background

As part of the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system, recommendations were made for the Victorian government to:

Establish 'community collectives' for mental health and wellbeing prevention in each local government area

and

Support each community collective to bring together a diversity of local leaders and community members to guide and lead efforts to promote social connection and inclusion.



SIAG Background

The SIAG is:

Funded by the State Government



Facilitated by the City of Whittlesea



Led by local community members.



Who are the SIAG Members and What Do They Do?



- The SIAG is a made up of 15 people who live in the City of Whittlesea, with group members from a diverse range of backgrounds and lived experiences
- The group meets together monthly to make decisions about the project

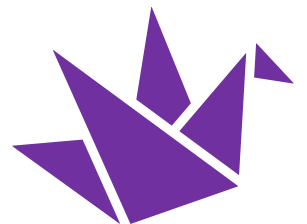


- Members are paid to take part in the group, with transport and childcare paid for to support their participation
- The places the group meets have been chosen in consideration of people's accessibility needs

SIAG Purpose Statement

“The SIAG is a community driven, evidence – based initiative that brings together diverse people with lived experience to distribute State Government funds and support local initiatives that enhance wellbeing and inclusion across the City of Whittlesea.

Through strengthening social connections, fostering trust, and reducing barriers to participation, the SIAG aims to create lasting, positive impact for all community members.”



Local Social Inclusion Investment Fund



Money will be allocated through the Local Social Inclusion Investment Fund to community groups and organisations.

As part of this funding, there are two options:

Grant funding of up to \$7,000

Partnership funding of up to \$20,000



A First Nations Fund is also available to local Aboriginal groups/ organisations, with activities to be determined by First Peoples based in the City of Whittlesea.

Thinking about how Council listens, connects and responds

1

How should people with disability influence Council decisions?

2

How can Council better connect with people with disability?

3

What would make you feel heard, valued, and informed about how your feedback influences Council decisions?

Discuss • Listen • Capture your table's key ideas

Morning Tea Break



Morning tea & connection

25 Minutes



Please enjoy the break

Refreshments are available.

Use this time to connect with other WDN members, speakers and Council staff.

We will let you know when the meeting is about to restart.

We'll resume shortly — please return to your table when prompted.

What did your table hear?



Next WDN Community Meeting



Tuesday 17 November 2026

Fountain View Room, Civic Centre,
10am – 12:30pm

Registrations Open Now

Please register by scanning the QR code
below



Closing



THANK YOU