

City of Greater Dandenong First Nations Community Space

Feasibility Report June 2021

Alex Zurawski and Lucy Moodie

The lower half of the page features a large, abstract graphic design. It consists of several overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of pink, magenta, and purple. A large, light pink circle is partially visible in the bottom left corner. A dark purple rectangle overlaps the circle and extends towards the center. To the right, a bright pink triangle points downwards, overlapping the purple rectangle. The background is a solid, medium purple color.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Glossary of Terms	5
Acronyms	6
Summary	7
Introduction	7
Background	7
First Nations community centres	7
Research	8
Methodologies	8
Limitations	8
Stakeholder engagement	9
Residents	9
Registered Aboriginal Parties	10
City councils	10
State Government departments	10
Service providers	10
Consultation Outcomes	11
Residents	11
Registered Aboriginal Parties	12
City councils	12
State Government departments	13
Models of Victorian First Nations Community Centres	13
Enablers and principles of successful First Nations community centres	13
First Nations community centre models	14
Site-specific hub	14
Multi-location model	15
Activity-based outreach network	15
Shared, temporary spaces	16
Governance Structures	16
Auspice	16
Benefits	16
Potential Risks/Weaknesses	16
Partnership	17
Benefits	17
Potential Risks/Weaknesses	17
Independent	17

Benefits	18
Potential Risks/Weaknesses	18
Recommendations	19
Appendix	20
References	27

Acknowledgements

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We acknowledge the time and contributions of all those who have participated in consultations, particularly those who allowed the opportunity to delve deeply into their views and experience through their participation in interviews.

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: When referring to Australia’s First Nations peoples, Karabena Consulting prefers the terms ‘First Nations peoples’, ‘First Nations’ or ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’. Some Victorian Government departments prefer to use ‘Aboriginal’ to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples collectively. In this report, the term ‘Aboriginal’ will only be used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples collectively where it is part of a quote.

Community Space: While ‘gathering place’ is a common terminology used to refer to First Nations community spaces, this term is contested, with evidence that the preferred terms of Victorian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are ‘meeting place’, ‘belonging place’ or ‘healing centre’. For the purposes of this report, Karabena Consulting employs the term ‘community space’, in line with the terminology selected by the City of Greater Dandenong. For the avoidance of doubt, wherever this report refers to a ‘community space’, we are specifically referring to First Nations community spaces.

City of Greater Dandenong/Greater Dandenong City Council: The City of Greater Dandenong refers to the Local Government Area, whereas the Greater Dandenong City Council is the entity that governs this Local Government Area.

Acronyms

ACCHO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
CGD	City of Greater Dandenong
CHSP	Commonwealth Home Support Program
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services (Victorian Government)
DIN	Dirrawarra Indigenous Network
GDC Council	Greater Dandenong City Council
GPRG	Gathering Place Reference Group
HACC PYP	Home and Community Care Program for Younger People
HICSA	Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association
IHEU	Indigenous Health Equity Unit
LGA	Local Government Area
MMIGP	Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
WWAA	Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association

Summary

This report draws on the views and experiences of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents of the City of Greater Dandenong (CGD) and surrounding Local Government Areas (LGAs), as well as other key stakeholders identified by the Greater Dandenong City Council (GDC Council). Additionally, demographic projections were considered in making the recommendations of the report.

This report advocates not for the establishment of a new First Nations Community Space within the CGD, but to instead form partnerships with surrounding LGAs, and invest in transportation options and promotion of existing First Nations sites, events and services to support residents to better engage with what has already been established.

Introduction

Background

The City of Greater Dandenong is located in Melbourne's south-east and is home to approximately 491 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, with a further 3825 First Nations people across Melbourne's south-east region (GDC Council 2017:9). The Greater Dandenong City Council has acknowledged that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is 'facing considerable challenges and it is widely reported they experience health and wellbeing outcomes well below that of other community members' (GDC Council 2017:9). In an attempt to close the gap in health and wellbeing outcomes, the GDC Council implemented a Reconciliation Action Plan aiming to improve the 'health and wellbeing, educational, and employment outcomes' of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, as well as encourage 'inclusion and engagement' within the CGD (GDC Council 2017). As part of the Reconciliation Action Plan, the GDC Council planned to investigate the feasibility of meeting spaces that celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' heritage and culture.

In February 2021, the GDC Council commissioned Karabena Consulting to undertake a feasibility study looking into the potential establishment of a First Nations Community Space in Victoria. The research aimed to understand the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the region. This involved:

- assessing whether there is a community need for a community space in the first instance;
- looking at the options and types of preferred community spaces within the CGD;
- examining whether existing community spaces in the local area meet the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Greater Dandenong; and
- developing a final report that draws on the literature review, surveys, interviews and other engagement strategies to assist the GDC Council in making an informed decision.

First Nations community centres

In 2016, the Indigenous Health Equity Unit (IHEU) and Gathering Place Reference Group (GPRG) released a report that analysed 13 community centres across Victoria which had received funding from the Victorian Government's *Koolin Balit* strategy (IHEU & GPRG 2016). The primary focus of the report was to assess the impact that community spaces have on the health and wellbeing of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The report determined that community spaces have a 'substantial impact on [improving] the health and wellbeing of the community members who attend their sites, from a social, cultural, emotional and physical holistic view of health' (IHEU & GPRG 2016:17). Further, the report found that community spaces provide a safe and inclusive space to connect, support the sharing of knowledge, and empower people through social, cultural and healing activities (IHEU & GPRG 2016). In support of this, specific reference was made to the positive impact that community spaces have on:

- food security;
- physical health;
- social and emotional wellbeing;
- cultural and spiritual benefits;
- healing benefits; and
- health promotion and prevention.

The evidence clearly demonstrates that community spaces have become important places for the community to engage in activities that address their social, physical, cultural, and emotional health and wellbeing needs (IHEU & GPRG 2016; Victorian Government 2012).

Research

Methodologies

Informed consent: Participants were asked to complete consent forms to let people know their participation in the exercise was voluntary and that they could withdraw their consent at any time. This is in line with the guidelines issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Surveys: Introductory phone calls were made to key stakeholder contacts in the first instance, as provided by the GDC Council to Karabena Consulting. The purpose of this initial step was to ensure that the proposed approach was suitable for, and supported by, the stakeholder, with key contacts agreeing to circulate the survey within their professional networks. Targeted surveys were developed for each stakeholder group, with links then sent to the key contacts. A public access survey was housed on the website of the GDC Council and promoted on their Facebook page.

Semi-structured interviews: Key contacts who were not willing to complete the survey were given the option of proceeding directly to a semi-structured interview, and survey respondents were given the opportunity to opt in to being interviewed at the end of the survey. An interview guide was developed and shared with the GDC Council for feedback which was then utilised to direct the interviews.

Literature review: A literature review was undertaken, focusing on existing Victorian First Nations community space models and associated health and wellbeing outcomes. The literature we reviewed was limited to that published within the last five years.

Limitations

Challenges encountered in conducting this study stem largely from the socioeconomic context within which the project was undertaken. The ongoing social and economic impacts of the 2019–2020 Victorian bushfires and the COVID-19 global pandemic on the population of Melbourne specifically, and Victoria more broadly, are significant and difficult to quantify. The slow reopening of Melbourne following an extended lockdown has allowed a great number of postponed projects to commence, meaning there is a lot of consultation occurring within the community, contributing to consultation fatigue.

Stakeholder engagement

Key stakeholder groups identified in cooperation with the GDC Council included:

- Residents of GDC Council and surrounding areas (regardless of Indigenous identity);
- Local Registered Aboriginal Parties;
- City councils (Greater Dandenong, Cardinia and Casey);
- State Government departments with an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander meeting models; and
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers delivering within the south-east Melbourne region.

Residents

From a total of eight local residents who completed the survey, five identified as Aboriginal, one as Torres Strait Islander and three as non-Indigenous.

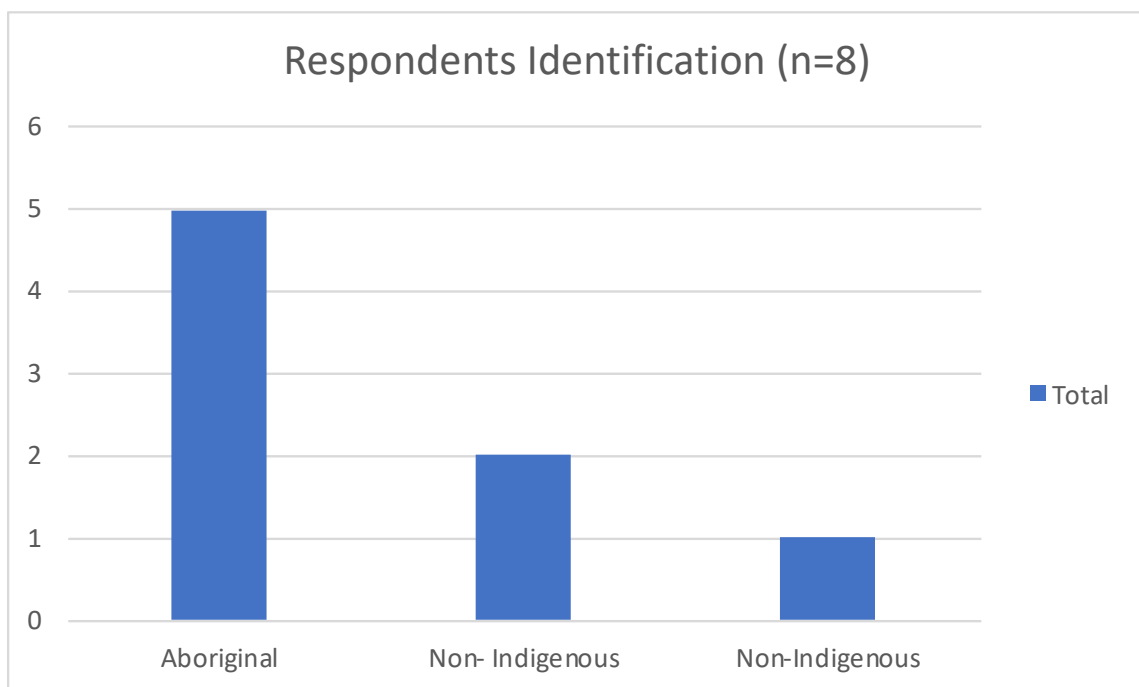


Figure 1: Respondents' Identification

The majority (three) resided in the CGD, with two residing in the City of Casey and two in the City of Cardinia. There was one respondent who resided in the City of Kingston.

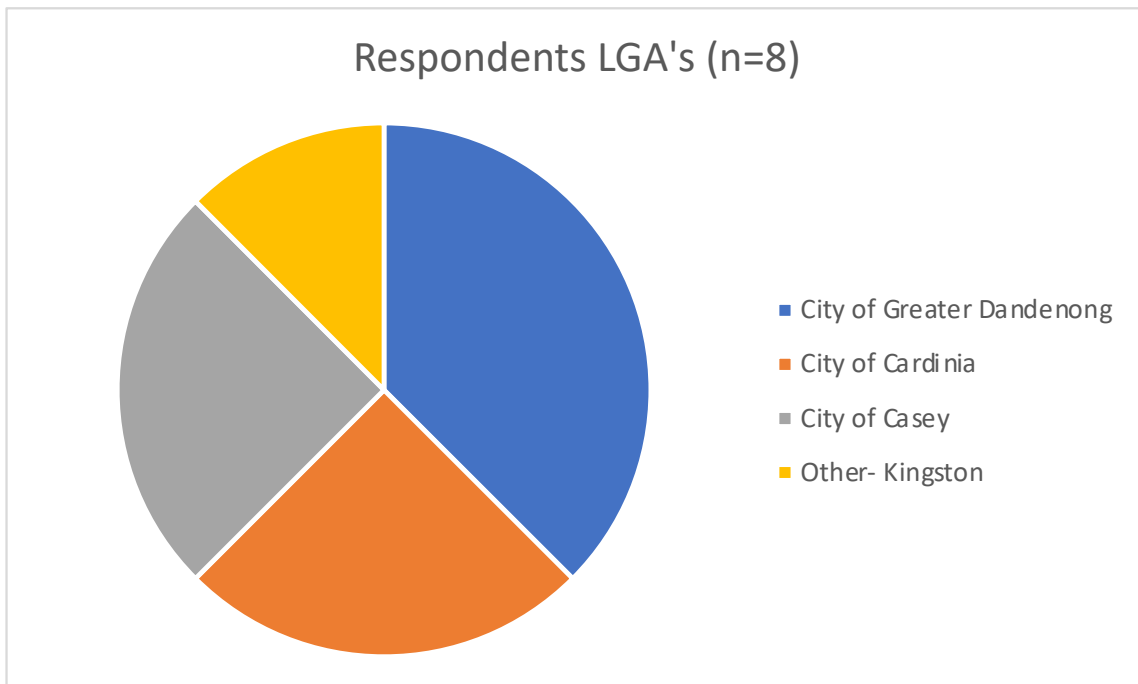


Figure 2: Respondents' LGAs

The age of respondents was quite evenly spread, with 44.44 per cent in the 19–34 age range, and 55.55 per cent in the 45–74 range.

Four survey respondents opted in to participating in a semi-structured interview, though only one of these interviews took place due to the other three failing to respond to attempts to contact them.

Registered Aboriginal Parties

Representatives from the local Registered Aboriginal Parties, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation were interviewed.

City councils

There were only two respondents to the survey targeted at city councils: one from the GDC Council and the other from the Casey City Council. Both respondents identified as Aboriginal. Of these, one respondent opted in to be interviewed which successfully went ahead.

State Government departments

Of the five state government respondents to the survey, all identified as Aboriginal. Three of these opted in to participating in an interview, though only two were able to be reached and interviewed. An additional state government employee was interviewed but did not complete the survey.

Service providers

Despite initial buy-in and enthusiasm from service providers in response to the initial introductory email, no service providers responded to the survey nor responded to attempts to schedule interviews.

Consultation Outcomes

The following consultation outcomes are drawn from both the survey responses and interviews undertaken.

Residents

The majority (55.55%) of respondents felt little to no connection to the local First Nations community, with only one person responding that they felt very connected, and another two somewhat connected. Common ways of connecting with the local First Nations community was through cultural events, family gatherings and political rallies. Several respondents also had opportunities to connect with their community through their work. Aside from family homes, public events and online forums were common sites of interaction. Corhanwarrabul (Dandenong Ranges) was named as a site of cultural significance in the area.

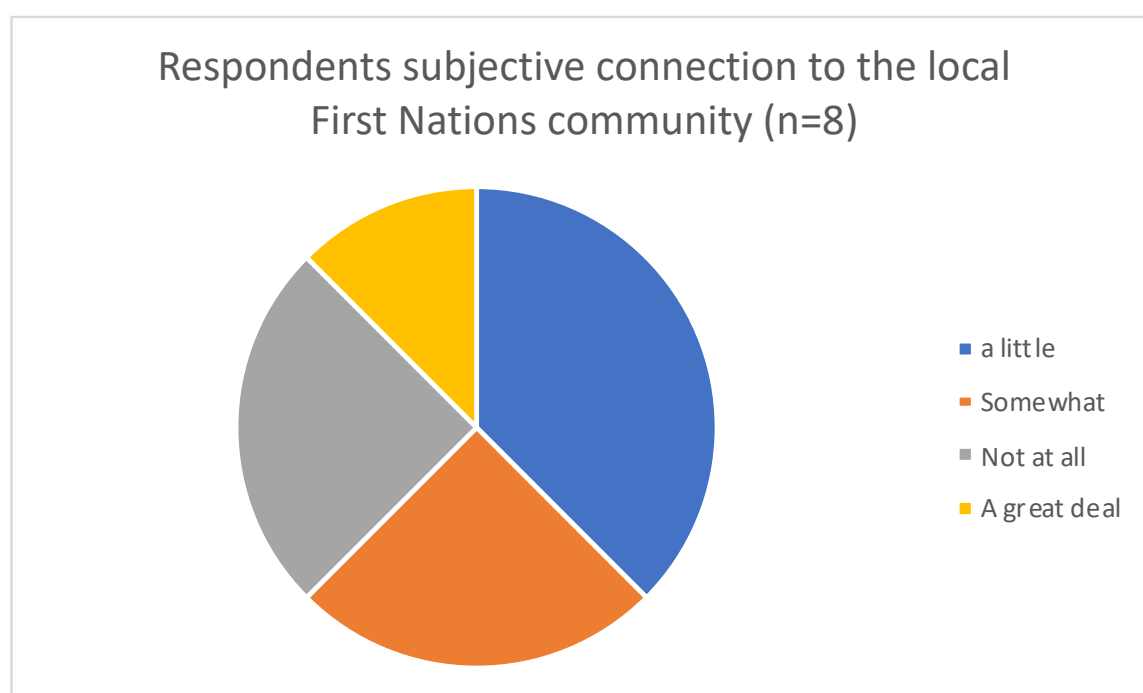


Figure 3: Respondents' subjective connection to the local First Nations community

Half of the local residents who responded access existing First Nations community spaces, with 33.33 per cent rarely, and one (11.11%) respondent never, accessing the spaces. The major barrier identified to accessing existing community spaces was proximity and access to transport, with some expressing that they did not know where to find existing local First Nations community spaces. Of those services that are being accessed through existing community spaces, the majority are of a cultural or health-related nature.

Two-thirds of respondents felt that they were not appropriately connected to First Nations service providers, with the major barriers being proximity or lack of awareness. Respondents reported that when engaging with mainstream services and requesting referral to First Nations service providers, mainstream services did not know where to refer them.

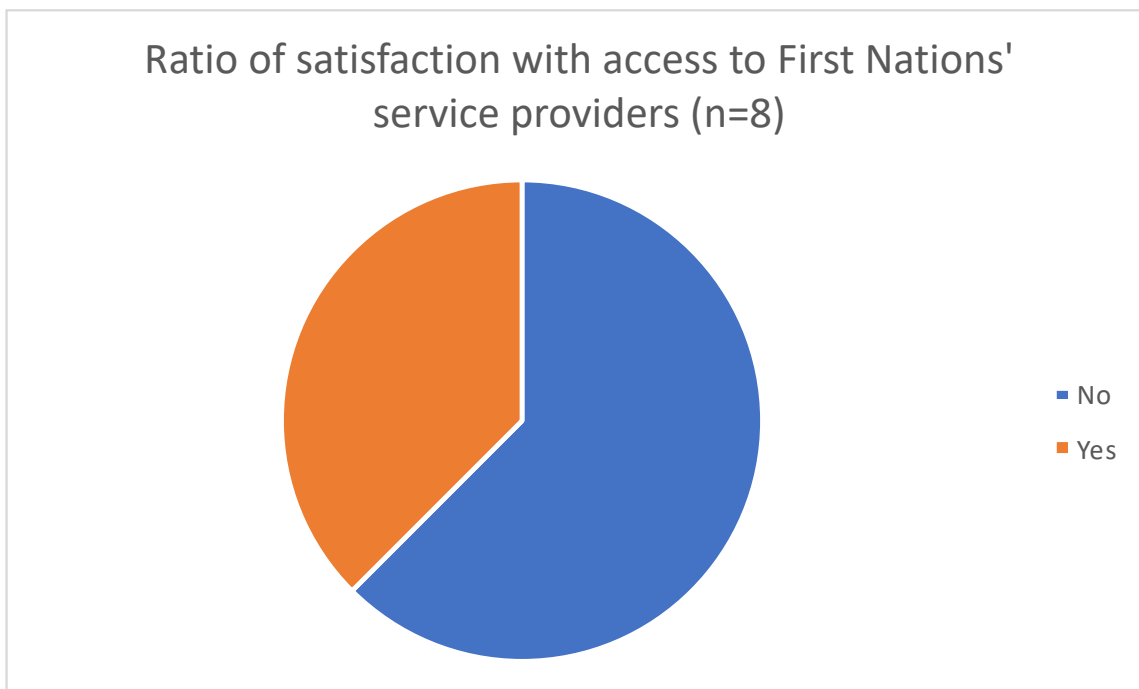


Figure 4: Ratio of satisfaction with access to First Nations service providers

Local residents indicated that they would like greater access to cultural and health and wellbeing services, gardens or natural spaces, and family-focused services such as kinder groups and libraries. Some reflected that the Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Ltd was once a vibrant place of community coming together through barbecues and Elders in residence, though these are understood to no longer occur, potentially as a result of the establishment of the Casey Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Having access to culturally informed spaces (such as offering gender-specific programs) that are led and staffed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was important in ensuring local First Nations residents felt culturally safe within a service context.

Registered Aboriginal Parties

Representatives of the local Registered Aboriginal Parties were not aware of their members regularly accessing established First Nations community spaces in the region, with outdoor spaces being understood as being of greater significance to their membership. The Dandenong Police Paddocks Reserve and scarred trees along Dandenong Creek were highlighted as local sites of significance to the Bunurong and Wurundjeri peoples.

An important consideration raised was the need to assess the implications that any newly offered programs or services would have for those already established in the region, such as Baluk Arts, Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association (WWAA) and Nairm Marr Djambana Aboriginal Association.

City councils

Of the two city council respondents who completed the survey, there was a feeling that existing First Nations community spaces were not being fully utilised, with transportation issues being highlighted as a potential barrier to the local community accessing spaces in surrounding LGAs.

There was an opinion that more could be done to highlight the Aboriginal history of the CGD, and a reflection that the premises of Dandenong and District Aborigines Co-operative Ltd was no longer fit for purpose. Limited employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at the GDC Council, beyond traineeships, was seen as a potential barrier to funding any new First Nations-specific premises.

State Government departments

The primary focus of engaging State Government departments was to identify funding opportunities and potential barriers to the establishment of a First Nations community space in the CGD. Projections indicate that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is growing at a faster rate in the outer growth corridors, such as Cardinia and Casey, with Casey having a current Aboriginal population substantially higher than the CGD. Cardinia may also be investigating the establishment of an Aboriginal family space. These points may present a challenge to securing State funding for the establishment and sustainability of a First Nations community space within the CGD.

There is no policy avenue through which funding may be sought to establish First Nations community centres, with funding directed towards the delivery of programs and services more specifically. Further, funding for Indigenous-specific programs and services is most commonly awarded to Aboriginal organisations rather than LGAs, though this potential barrier may be addressed through the establishment of an Aboriginal Advisory Group within the GDC Council to advocate for and lead submissions for funding.

Models of Victorian First Nations Community Centres

Enablers and principles of successful First Nations community centres

In addition to looking into the effects that community spaces have on health and wellbeing, IHEU & GPRG identified the key enablers and principles for the successful operation of a community space. Enablers, as defined in the report, are 'the key supports that are needed to create the conditions for a successful gathering place. Enablers provide the structure around which specific and local answers can be tailored to suit each gathering place' (IHEU & GPRG 2016:45). The major enablers defined in the report are:

- **Community:** Community ownership, community drive and a committed community of staff and volunteers. Having firm support from the community, as well as community engagement, was identified as being one of the critical elements for successful development.
- **People:** A welcome and open community that facilitates and enables learning and education. This was identified as being a two-way process: 'a connected and open community can create the foundations for a successful gathering place, but a gathering place also contributes to the conditions that create a connected community' IHEU & GPRG (2016:46).
- **Place:** Careful consideration is required when determining the place and location of the community space. A site that is culturally appropriate, accessible and welcoming is vital to the long-term sustainability of the community space: 'A sense of place is fundamental

to a sense of belonging and a key enabling factor for creating a connected community and a successful gathering place' (IHEU & GPRG 2016:47).

- **Programs:** The 'ability to understand, consult with and respond to the needs of community through appropriate programs', as well as being 'flexible and adaptable' in the supply of services and programs (IHEU & GPRG 2016:48).

Moreover, the report found the key principles to the long-term success of a community space were (IHEU & GPRG 2016:6):

- respect for First Nations people's cultural knowledge, protocols and practices, as well as holistic models of health and wellbeing;
- self-determination – particularly the importance of community control;
- strong governance;
- advocacy for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- a flexible approach (delivery of culturally appropriate services and programs);
- pathways to other organisations;
- capacity building; and
- mechanisms for sustainability (long-term thinking, planning and funding).

The successful community space model that was conceptualised in the report implemented the enablers and principles identified above.

First Nations community centre models

The Port Phillip Gathering Place Report 2020 highlighted the need to consider the governance structure of a community space in the early stages of planning (City of Port Phillip 2020). Further, the report suggests that governance 'must understand cultural aspects of such a setting', and that 'links to the Traditional Owners is essential' (City of Port Phillip 2020:15). This sentiment is similarly reflected in the IHEU & GPRG report (2016:54) which strongly advocates for the early planning of the governance structure to build the foundation of a successful community place.

The four distinct community space models identified in the IHEU & GPRG report included:

- a site-specific hub;
- the multi-location model;
- the activity-based outreach network; and
- a shared spaces model.

Individual community spaces often display multiple aspects of these models.

Site-specific hub

Site-specific hubs were identified as having (IHEU & GPRG 2016:19):

- one or two long-term fixed site locations;
- quality infrastructure;
- continuing community engagement and capacity;
- several staff members;
- a number of activities and programs;
- established relationships with mainstream service providers;

- strong community governance mechanisms in place; and
- strong community control and ownership.

The following site-specific hubs were identified as fitting this structure:

- Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Ltd (Ringwood);
- Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association (Healesville);
- Goranwarrabul House (Seymour);
- Minajalku Aboriginal Healing Centre (Thornbury);
- Well Women's Health Check (Portland); and
- Willum Warrain (Hastings).

Multi-location model

The multi-location model community space was identified as having no fixed location, as well as multiple sites and options to suit the needs of the community. This can include having 'strong partnership networks with other agencies' (which can increase the likelihood of having access to other services) and the sharing of venues with other agencies (IHEU & GPRG 2016:19).

In this model, a community space is dependent on (IHEU & GPRG 2016:19):

- the availability of appropriate venues;
- costs, which can sometimes be restrictive;
- its location and infrastructure; and
- the governance arrangements (which are generally more complex).

Community spaces that follow this structure include Urban South Gathering Places – Peanut Farm and Our Rainbow Place (St Kilda).

Activity-based outreach network

In an activity-based outreach network, community spaces are defined by 'activities with groups or individuals and are not reliant on location' (IHEU & GPRG 2016:19).

This includes (IHEU & GPRG 2016:20):

- semi-regular organised gatherings based around an activity, such as women's, men's and youth groups;
- activities involving food, which is often provided and is frequently the reason for the gathering activity;
- community spaces that are not as extensive as others, and have fewer opportunities for interaction between other groups;
- community spaces that are reliant on devoted staff driving the programs, which has the potential to lead to increased burnout;
- activities that might be considered outreach work, with an aim to bring people together; and
- community spaces that are usually not Aboriginal community-controlled, and have strong connections to mainstream services.

Community spaces that follow this structure include: Central Hume (Benalla) and Parkies WomenSpace (Fitzroy).

Shared, temporary spaces

Shared, temporary spaces 'have the support of other community groups, shared resources and administrative costs and more flexibility for groups to choose appropriate spaces for activities' (IHEU & GPRG 2016:20).

As outlined in the report, features of these spaces include (IHEU & GPRG 2016:20):

- less ownership over space (no requirement for incorporation);
- restricted time and access to use spaces;
- connections to other services and semi-regular organised gatherings that are based around an activity (such as women's, men's and youth groups); and
- shared temporary spaces that are reliant on committed staff for the delivery and coordination of programs.

Examples of shared, temporary spaces include: Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre and Urban South Gathering Places – Peanut Farm and Our Rainbow Place (St Kilda).

Governance Structures

Governance structures were further explored in *Our Own Place - Feasibility Study for a Gathering Place in Wangaratta* (O'Kelly 2017). The consultancy firm contracted to undertake the study, All-iN Productions Pty Ltd, conducted a workshop with Wangaratta's Local Aboriginal Network known as the Dirrawarra Indigenous Network (DIN). The workshop aimed to explore three different types of governance scenarios, looking at their structure, strengths and weaknesses. The governance scenarios that were workshopped include: auspice, partnership and independent.

Auspice

In an auspice arrangement, 'a larger organisation assists a smaller organisation to fund a grant activity or event', whereby the larger organisation is referred to as the auspice organisation (Victorian Government [n.d.]). In the workshop, the auspice was identified as retaining 'legal, reporting and financial accountabilities', as well as appointing community space coordinator and administration roles (O'Kelly 2017:36). The scenario identified in the workshop specifically looked at using an auspice for community space capacity building and business planning support (O'Kelly 2017).

Benefits

- Governance and administration systems are already established, such as contracts, human resource management, programs and services;
- A strong auspice should bring its own experience in strategic and operational planning, investment brokerage, and relationship building for the developing organisation; and
- Individual and organisational capacity and skills can be strengthened due to the additional time an auspice arrangement provides (O'Kelly 2017:36).

Potential Risks/Weaknesses

- A community space can lose a sense of independence, identity and self-determination;
- While community spaces require flexibility, they instead may be required to adapt to the host organisation's ways of working; and

- A community space can become too caught up in the business of the auspice, risking losing wider connections and relationships (O'Kelly 2017:36).

Additionally, the study found that a community space that operates solely on an auspice agreement requires (O'Kelly 2017:36):

- high levels of trust, cultural sensitivity and competence (from both parties);
- genuine commitment to capacity building with a clear transition plan and goal to build community control; and
- an agreement in relation to cultural protocols, including a cultural safety plan.

Partnership

A partnership is a formal arrangement between two or more parties to manage and operate a business, including the sharing of the profits (Victorian Government 2021). The governance scenario identified in the feasibility study looked at a community space seeking a lead partner for an interim period while an incorporated not-for-profit body became established.

Benefits

- A partnership has the ability to establish strong local Aboriginal leadership;
- It puts the community space and its partner on a more equal footing;
- Encourages shared accountabilities and responsibilities – however, more responsibilities can be transferred over to the community space as they build their capacity;
- Has the ability to build the cultural safety and competence of the partner organisation. This would, in turn, improve the experience and services offered to community members; and
- There is potential for partnership program opportunities and co-funding bids (O'Kelly 2017:37).

Potential Risks/Weaknesses

- Funding is required for the establishment of the governance structure;
- Ongoing base-line funding is needed, including for a coordinator;
- The coordinator needs to focus on partnership/capacity building outcomes (alongside services/programs); and
- To grow and participate in the partnership equally, the community space entity needs fundraising, administration and legal/financial support (O'Kelly 2017:37).

The study determined that for this arrangement to be successful, 'a "trusted" partner with a commitment to capacity building and collaboration to establish base-line funding for the Gathering Place entity' (as well as an immediate appropriate level of service delivery) is needed (O'Kelly 2017:37).

Independent

An independent community space is where a standalone, incorporated organisation is 'established immediately and space for interim operations agreed' (O'Kelly 2017:38). The community space can also decide whether to establish itself as a charity, which means that the organisation can 'attract donations from shared values investors' (O'Kelly 2017:38).

Benefits

- It provides a clearly identified local Aboriginal community-controlled organisation and identity;
- Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations can provide advice on the incorporation process;
- The community space can focus on providing support to community members, as identified in the community plan and feasibility study;
- The community space can take charge of obtaining funds to instigate new standalone services/activities, as well as adapting existing services to better suit the community;
- It can become the primary organisation for the community and service providers to visit, and for service providers to link and operate their services from; and
- It builds local leadership and succession for the community space and community more broadly (O’Kelly 2017:38).

Potential Risks/Weaknesses

- Without startup capital, the Board and coordinator (who may be volunteers) are at risk of burnout if funding isn’t secured;
- Inadequate funding can result in ad hoc short-term service delivery; and
- There is potential for a standalone entity to be perceived as competing for already stretched resources (mainstream and ACCHO) (O’Kelly 2017:38).

The study suggests that it is essential for an independently run community space to have a ‘highly skilled group’ of leaders and Board members who are trusted and respected by community members (O’Kelly 2017:38). According to the study, the requirements for the successful operation of an independent community space include (O’Kelly 2017:38):

- a highly motivated coordinator who has both administration support and a realistic level and type of service delivery to start operations;
- a community that has confidence in the leadership and governance of the organisation, including when it comes to confidentiality;
- somewhere that is understood as welcoming to all community members, efficiently governed, transparent and not involved in politics, and
- directors with experience, a solid relationship with the community and a balance of skills.

As outlined in the feasibility study, the preferred governance structure elected by DIN was to begin with a partnership governance model, while building towards an independent, community-controlled organisation.

Recommendations

Considering the projections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations within the south-east Melbourne region, and the challenges and enabling factors associated with establishing and sustaining a First Nations community centre, Karabena Consulting advocates for an interjurisdictional commitment to supporting existing First Nations programs, services and community centres through partnerships, promotion and investment in transportation.

Based on the consultations and literature review, Karabena Consulting recommends the following:

Undertake a mapping of existing First Nations community centres, programs and services in Melbourne's south-east

Understanding the First Nations-specific offerings throughout the region will be critical to ensuring that the Greater Dandenong City Council is able to appropriately promote and link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents to the types of existing programs and services they wish to engage with.

Invest in transport options for access to First Nations cultural sites, events and services

Investment in dedicated transport options can support the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to access existing First Nations cultural sites, events and services within the region. A dedicated service may also be utilised to promote First Nations sites and history for those residents wishing to become more engaged.

Form partnerships with surrounding LGAs to support strengthening of First Nations community connection across the region

The consultations suggest that the existing offerings throughout the region have been successful, yet under-utilised, and residents of the CGD show a desire to engage with those offerings and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Therefore, the establishment of a regional Aboriginal Advisory Board could be utilised to advocate for funding to support the increased engagement of First Nations programs, services and community centres across the LGAs of Greater Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia. Such a partnership may also see that those existing providers within surrounding LGAs are able to deliver programs, services and events within the CGD, particularly at sites of significance to local Traditional Owner groups that are not limited by local government borders.

Appendix

Case Studies

The analysis (presented in the table below) looks at the location, governance structures and funding arrangements of each community space, as well as its services and programs. The information gathered is from publicly available literature, government websites and community space websites. This analysis seeks to understand the factors that contribute to the success and longevity of community spaces in Victoria.

Table 1: Case Studies

Name of Community Space	Location	Governance Structure	Funding	Services and Programs
Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) (est. in 2005)	3 Croydon Way, Croydon VIC 3136. Approximately 1.5kms away from the train station and town centre.	<p>MMIGP is a site-specific hub. The community space operates on the concept of a neighbourhood house model. It is a not-for-profit, independent Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (MMIGP [n.d.]a).</p> <p>MMIGP has six Board members (currently 100% of Board members identify as Aboriginal) and nine staff members, with over half the staff identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (MMIGP [n.d.]b).</p>	85.34% of the total gross income for MMIGP - which was reported as \$1,076,009 - is from government grants. The remainder comes from other revenues, donations and bequests, goods and services, and income investments (Commonwealth of Australia 2018a).	<p>Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elder’s Group Women’s Group Men’s Group Youth Group Yeng Gali Mullum (singing and storytelling group) Ochre’s Program (workshops, conversation and lived out examples that display what respectful relationships are) Mullum Pantry Access and Support Homework group (MMIGP [n.d.]c). <p>Services:</p> <p>MMIGP hires access and support staff. The support staff assist with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral and application to Aged and Disability services: for people under 50 (NDIS or HACC PYP) and for people over 50

				<p>(My Aged Care - CHSP, Home Care Packages, Respite, Residential aged care).</p> <p>These services assist with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal care and health services (nursing and allied health) • Shopping, cooking, domestic assistance (e.g. cleaning). • Home maintenance and modifications, assistive aids and equipment (e.g. shower chair or rails) • Social support groups • Transport • Link to services and support to fill in forms (e.g. Legal services, Centrelink, Health services, Housing, Half price taxi cards etc.) • Organise, attend and transport to appointments • Support to make informed decisions and receive medical treatment (MMIGP [n.d.].d).
<p>Oonah Health and Community Services Aboriginal Corporation (Oonah), previously known as Healesville Indigenous</p>	<p>1A Badger Creek Road, Healesville VIC 3777.</p> <p>Located in Queens Park (green space), approximately 1.5 kms from the main train</p>	<p>A feasibility study was undertaken prior to the establishment of Oonah. It was funded through a philanthropic donation gained by the Interim Reference Group. It is argued that</p>	<p>Oonah (previously HICSA) was granted \$197,400 in Closing the Health Gap funding over three years to establish the community space. 'The grant was</p>	<p>Health promotion programs</p> <p>Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing them Home Program - helps clients to find their family history/mob

<p>Community Services Association (HICSA) (est. in 2009)</p>	<p>station and town centre.</p>	<p>the feasibility study was the foundation for the success of the community space as it led to a governance and employment structural plan being prepared before the establishment of the community space (Oonah Belonging Place 2021a; Urbis 2014).</p> <p>Oonah is a site specific-hub. Previously called HICSA, the organisation 'based their governance model on the approaches used successfully within the Koorie Heritage Trust and Wuchopperen Health Service, that is, as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO)' (Urbis 2014:12).</p> <p>Oonah is governed by a Board - 51% minimum must be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. Oonah also adopts a reconciliation</p>	<p>complemented by additional funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Department of Health' (Urbis 2014:12).</p> <p>Oonah operates as a charity. Oonah's total income, as outlined on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website on the 17th of December 2020, was \$1,596,961, with 88.05% of Oonah's total income coming from government grants (Commonwealth of Australia 2018b).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadly Driving & Safe - driving classes • Young Women's Group • Youth Club - after school program • Tucker Bag Program - assisting with providing stable food • Earth, Heart & Spirit - holistic wellness program bringing together Elders, adults, young people and families (Oonah Belonging Place 2021c). <p>Additional services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts program at the community space • A monthly community lunch (attendance 40-70 people) (Urbis 2014:12-13) <p>Service Providers:</p> <p>Oonah has partnerships with local service providers, including financial and housing services, and a range of health services (Urbis 2014:13).</p> <p>Examples of health services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides NDIS support • Osteopathy service at no charge, partnership with Vic University. • Pediatrics • Audiology • Optometry
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		<p>model whereby 'Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff are appointed based on merit, work experience, personal attributes and cultural knowledge or experience' (Urbis 2014:12). Currently, Oonah employs 20 staff, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (Oonah Belonging Place 2021b).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychiatry • Counselling • Social and Emotional Wellbeing (Oonah Belonging Place 2021d).
<p>Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association (WWAA) (est. in 2014)</p>	<p>10c Pound Road, Hastings VIC 3915.</p> <p>Approximately 1.2 kms away from Hastings train station and town centre.</p>	<p>WWAA is a site specific-hub managed by a community-led Board, all of whom are volunteers, responsible for all aspects of the Association's operations (WWAA 2021a). Willum Warrain hires 17 paid staff members.</p>	<p>WWAA receives support from the Mornington Peninsula Shire and funding from the Closing the Gap program (Mornington Peninsula Shire 2021). It runs as a charity that relies on a combination of volunteers, philanthropic funding and government support (WWAA 2021b).</p> <p>In December 2020, it was reported that 77.69% of WWAA's total gross income - which was recorded at \$696,597 - was from government grants</p>	<p>Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men's group • Women's group • Deadly Kids • Bush Play Group • Community drop in and gardening day • Supporting our Mob • Cultural immersion tours (WWAA 2021c).

			(Commonwealth of Australia 2018c).	
<p>Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre Incorporated (Bubup Wilam) (est. in 2010)</p>	<p>76 Main St, Thomastown VIC 3074.</p> <p>Bubup Wilam signed a 50 year lease with the City of Whittlesea.</p> <p>The community space is located in Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre which has access to plenty of green space.</p> <p>Less than a kilometre to Thomastown train station and main road.</p>	<p>Bubup Wilam is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Education, Health and Wellbeing organisation (Bubup Wilam 2020a).</p>	<p>Bubup Wilam operates as a charity, with 96.3% of total gross income from government grants. The total gross income, as outlined on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website on the 5th of January 2021 was \$2,891,217 (Commonwealth of Australia 2018d).</p>	<p>Programs/Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Education • Health and Wellbeing (wrap around services, health checks, specialist therapies and interventions for Aboriginal children with developmental delays or disability, allied health services, child maternal health nurse) (Bubup Wilam 2020b; Bubup Wilam 2020c).
<p>Nairm Marr Djambana Aboriginal Association (Nairm Marr Djambana) (est. in 2016)</p>	<p>32 Nursery Avenue, Frankston VIC 3199.</p> <p>It backs onto plenty of green space.</p> <p>The community space is approximately 1km from the train station and close to the town centre.</p>	<p>Nairm Marr Djambana is a site- specific hub consisting of 100% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board members and four staff members - half identifying as Aboriginal (Nairm Marr Djambana 2021a; Nairm Marr Djambana 2021b).</p> <p>Nairm Marr Djambana is a</p>	<p>There is limited information available on the funding arrangements for Nairm Marr Djambana.</p>	<p>Programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play group • Women’s group • Men’s group • Youth group • Cooking workshop • Community Garden Project • Excursions • Festival and Events (Nairm Marr Djambana 2021d).

		<p>not-for-profit community organisation and is an Incorporated Association. It has an active Aboriginal Board of Management with the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting and monitoring the organisation’s strategic direction; • ensuring that legal and regulatory requirements are met; • recruiting senior staff in leadership roles; and • overseeing operational, financial and risk management (Nairn Marr Djambana 2021c). 		
<p>Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre</p>	<p>19 Communal Road, Wyndham Vale, Vic 3024.</p>	<p>There is limited publicly available literature as Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre is a relatively new community space.</p> <p>The ‘first of its kind’ centre includes an Aboriginal Community Centre, Integrated Family Centre and a Neighbourhood Community</p>	<p>The co-located Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre was established in 2021. Wyndham City Council offered \$13.2 million and the Victorian Government \$3.16 million (Wyndham City Council [n.d.]).</p> <p>The breakdown of the state</p>	<p>Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal community centre • Community meeting spaces • Three kindergarten rooms • Five consulting rooms • Indoor/outdoor gathering space (Wyndham City Council [n.d.]). <p>Balim Balim Kindergarten in Wyndham is a part of the centre. It offers:</p>

		<p>Centre (One Tree Community Services 2020).</p> <p>According to a news report written prior to the opening of the Wunggurrwil Dhurrung Centre, it was to be 'operated under a tri-party model, consisting of Wyndham council, the Koling wada-ngal Committee and One Tree Family Services' (Star Weekly 2019).</p>	<p>government's contribution is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1.5 million grant made available through the Victorian Government's Growing Suburbs Fund. • \$1.6 million grant from the Department of Education and Training's Children's Facilities Capital Program • \$60,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services' Men's Shed Program (Wyndham City Council [n.d.]). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 hours of 4-year-old kindergarten • 3-year-old kindergarten for eligible children • Long day kinder sessions and half day kinder sessions • Maternal and child health • Youth support and other services focusing on improving health and education outcomes for children and families (One Tree Community Services 2020).
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