



Strategic Plan

2025 – 2029

Introducing Our New Strategy

This Strategic Plan sets out Wingate Avenue Community Centre's priorities for 2025–2029. It reflects what we've heard from our community, partners, and stakeholders, and responds to the changing social, economic and policy context in which we operate. The plan is focused on strengthening the Centre's long-term impact and sustainability. It outlines clear strategic objectives, specific actions, and a commitment to ongoing evaluation and improvement to ensure we remain responsive, community-driven, and true to our values.

Contents

Introducing Our New Strategy	ii
Who We Are	1
What We Do	1
Planning for Our Future	2
Our Mission	2
Our Aim	2
Our Values	2
Our Focus	2
Strategic Priorities and Objectives	3
Actions and Measures	4
Monitoring and Evaluation	8
Strategic Risks and Enablers	9
Appendix: Research Underpinning the Strategic Plan	10
Value of Neighbourhood Houses	10
Policy and Funding Environment	10
The Community	10
Participation	13
Other Local Services	14
Partnerships and Networks	15
Consultation and Engagement	15

Who We Are

Wingate Avenue Community Centre is a busy and vibrant neighbourhood house, that is an active part of the Ascot Vale community. Based in the heart of the Ascot Vale public housing estate, it is an easy to access, familiar and trusted environment for community members experiencing disadvantage and barriers to social and economic participation. We provide place-based services, programs and activities, with a strong focus on removing social barriers to participation, building connections with others, and increasing agency. We have a strong connection with community, built over 40 years, enabling us to develop services that meet community needs. As a result, we are the place people come to when in distress as well as during times of celebration.

We serve a diverse community, with people from over 30 countries participating in events, activities and programs each year. They connect with training, education and employment pathways, access information and services, learn a hobby or skill, volunteer and share their knowledge with others, and build lifelong friendships.

One of our widely acknowledged strengths is the way we partner with other organisations and our community. We believe partnerships and collaboration are critical to meeting the needs of our community, to using our resources in the most effective way, and to support the capability of our community, the wider community and education sector. We are proud to partner with the many different organisations supporting people living in and around the Ascot Vale area. In 2024, Wingate Avenue Community Centre partnered with over 70 different agencies and organisations.

What We Do

Area	Programs and Services
Children and Youth	Occasional childcare, school holiday activities.
Community Activities and Groups	Community singing, drop in art, library on the move, men's group, stitching and patchwork, women's group, gardening group, yoga, end of year celebration, Deloitte's volunteer day.
Education (for Adults)	Accredited language classes and pre-accredited vocational courses such as cleaning, family home cooking, office skills, and digital literacy courses.
Employment, Training and Education	Skills First Reconnect – education, training and employment pathways.
Food Relief	Emergency food relief, Foodbank Farms to Families Markets, Meals with Impact, Share the Dignity
Social Support	Form support program, light touch support and individual case work.

Planning for Our Future

In developing the Strategic Plan (the Plan) we have consulted widely and reflected critically on our role and activities, and on community needs. We have considered the complementary work of other organisations and reviewed our resourcing capacity. The Plan aims to position the Community Centre to be a place that is welcoming of everyone, and a forward thinking and agile organisation which is responsive to community needs.

Our Mission

We are committed to being a centre that focuses on social justice, advocacy and action on behalf of local people who are experiencing barriers to participation in education, employment and community life. We believe this commitment will lead to improved quality of life and empowerment for all in the local community.

Our Aim

To be aware of and responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of local residents, particularly those experiencing barriers to participation.

Our Values

Compassion Compassion is the daily practice of recognising and accepting our shared humanity so that we treat ourselves and others with kindness and take action in the face of suffering. Being compassionate promotes social connection, is related to increased happiness and higher levels of wellbeing. Compassion and empathy often intersect - compassion is a daily practice and empathy is a skill set that is one of the most powerful tools of compassion.	Quality Quality is the standard of something, measured against things of a similar kind. We believe our commitment to be focused on social justice, advocacy and action will lead to improved quality of life and empowerment for all in the community. Quality of life is the level of enjoyment, comfort, health and agency someone has in life. We strive to deliver quality services and programs that the community needs.
Inclusion Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve or gain agency.	Diversity Diversity is what makes each of us unique. Differences in our background, personality, life experiences and beliefs shape who we are, our view of the world, and how we interact with the world.

Our Focus

Supporting people in our community most in need	• People experiencing financial disadvantage. • People living in public housing. • People experiencing social isolation. • People from diverse cultures and backgrounds. • People experiencing barriers to participation in education, training and employment.
Through	• Delivering programs for children and young people. • Education, training and employment programs and pathways. • Providing opportunities for social connection. • Delivering social support programs. • Supporting the provision of material aid. • Supporting and promoting opportunities for volunteering.

Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Our strategic priorities reflect the core areas where Wingate Avenue Community Centre will focus its energy and resources over the next four years. They respond directly to what we've heard from the community, the changing needs of the local population, and the broader policy and funding environment in which we operate.

Each priority is underpinned by a set of objectives that guide our work and ensure our programs, partnerships and operations are purposeful, inclusive and sustainable.

Strategic Priorities	Objectives
Connected and Accessible	Support and facilitate opportunities for community members to come together and build, maintain and/or grow social connections.
	Support community members to connect to services through the provision of place-based services.
	Provide accessible information to the community about the Community Centre, the services and programs we offer, and how to become involved.
Responsive to Community Needs	Regularly review the programs and services we offer to ensure they are viable and responsive to community needs.
	Build our connections with policy makers, funders and influential stakeholders to advocate for the needs of vulnerable people.
	Support the community to advocate for their needs and aspirations.
Agile	Deliver services and programs that are consistent with our skills, capabilities and resourcing capacity.
	Maximise efficiencies by continuously improving our policies, processes, systems and infrastructure.
	Explore income streams and growth opportunities that align with our mission and build to our financial stability.
Collaborative	Collaborate with the community to bring about new initiatives and drive positive change.
	Be a leader in partnership opportunities that are consistent with our mission and deliver tangible benefits to both our community and organisation.
	Share our knowledge, experience and successes to grow the capacity of the wider service system.

Actions and Measures

The following section outlines the key actions we will take to deliver on our strategic priorities, along with measures to track progress and impact. These actions will be reviewed annually, and updates will be agreed by the Committee of Management to ensure the Plan remains responsive and relevant.

To support implementation over the life of the Plan, each action is allocated a delivery horizon. The three horizons (H1, H2, H3) represent whether it is intended for the early, middle, or later stages of the four-year strategy. This helps ensure activities are phased appropriately in line with organisational capacity, need and priority.

Strategic Priorities	Objectives		Actions	Delivery Horizon	Measures
Connected and Accessible	1.1	Support and facilitate opportunities for community members to come together and build, maintain and/or grow social connections.	Continue to design, deliver, and build micro and macro community engagement initiatives in line with our Community Development Framework (CDF).	H1	- Number and range of initiatives being delivered (per year) % of initiatives aligned to CDF pillars - Number of participants engaged in CDF-aligned initiative
	1.2	Support community members to connect to services through the provision of place-based services.	- Sustain friendly and welcoming entry points into the Centre. - Provide services, programs and activities that the community want and need. - Sustain a person-centre approach to service delivery, across all services.	H1	- Community Needs Assessment conducted at least every two years. - Number and type of enquiries received at reception - Range and level of services accessed - Person-centred approach professional development and action plan
	1.3	Provide accessible information to the community about the Community Centre, the services and programs we offer, and how to become involved.	- Develop targeted and relevant communication materials and distribute these through appropriate platforms. - Promote and support opportunities for volunteering.	H2 – H3	- Number of communications published (e.g. flyers, emails, social media posts) per quarter - Number of volunteers (per quarter) - Number of volunteer hours contributed per quarter

Strategic Priorities	Objectives		Actions	Delivery Horizon	Measures
Responsive to Community Needs	2.1	Regularly review the programs and services we offer to ensure they are viable and responsive to community needs.	Evaluative practices that enable continuous improvement, assess viability, and support future innovation.	H1 – H2	% of programs with basic monitoring activity completed (e.g. attendance tracking, survey, or reflection notes) - Number of services reviewed annually for usage, relevance, and outcomes - Number of evaluations made about services
	2.2	Build our connections with policy makers, funders and influential stakeholders to advocate for the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people.	Identify key influencers, grow relationships, and share relevant materials aligned to our mission.	H2 – H3	- Instances of engagement with stakeholders - Number of targeted communications, info packs and/or presentations developed or delivered to partners and influencers annually
	2.3	Support the community to advocate for their needs and aspirations.	Grow activities that give voice to the community about their needs and aspirations.	H2 – H3	- Number and type of community engagement activities - Feedback from community
			Be an ally to individuals and community who are advocating for themselves and their needs.	H2 – H3	Number of community-led or co-designed advocacy events, campaigns or initiatives each year

Strategic Priorities	Objectives		Actions	Delivery Horizon	Measures
Agile	3.1	Quickly adapt service and program delivery so that it is responsive to our skills, capabilities and resourcing capacity.	Regularly monitor service and program demand, participation levels, and financial viability to inform decision-making.	H1 – H2	% of programs reviewed at least annually for demand and cost (e.g. attendance + basic cost tracking)
			Develop and apply a simple viability assessment framework to guide decisions about continuing, expanding, or retiring programs and services.	H1 – H2	- Viability framework created and formally adopted (yes/no milestone) - Use of viability framework
	3.2	Maximise efficiencies by continuously improving our policies, processes, systems and infrastructure.	Continuous Improvement Plan that outlines priorities for improving policies, systems, processes, and infrastructure.	H2	Continuous Improvement Plan developed and endorsed by Committee annually (yes/no milestone)
	3.3	Explore income streams and growth opportunities that align with our mission and build to our financial stability.	Develop and apply a structured process to identify, prioritise and assess the feasibility of revenue growth opportunities.	H2 – H3	Number of new revenue ideas assessed using a defined framework or tool

Strategic Priorities	Objectives		Actions	Delivery Horizon	Measures
Collaborative	4.1	Collaborate with the community to identify solutions and drive positive change.	Engage community members where appropriate and feasible to deliver programs and services.	H2 – H3	Number of community-led initiatives supported annually
			Support community-led initiatives through mentorship, space provision, or auspicing.	H2 – H3	Number of community members involved in planning or delivery roles
	4.2	Be a leader in partnership opportunities that are consistent with our mission and deliver tangible benefits to both our community and organisation.	- Support our partners to deliver vital services for our community by sharing our space, supporting co-design, and collaborating on activities that benefit our community. - Develop tool to assess the value of partnerships	H1 – H2	- Number of active partnerships maintained or developed annually - Number of programs/services co-delivered with partner
	4.3	Share our knowledge, experience and successes to grow the capacity of the wider service system.	Increase visibility and engagement through sector forums, media, peak body involvement, and hosting relevant visitors.	H2	Number of sector contributions (e.g. presentations, submissions, hosted events) per year

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will play a key role in keeping this Strategic Plan relevant, actionable, and aligned with community needs. It will help us to track progress, learn what's working, and adapt where needed.

Our Approach

We take a practical, proportionate approach to monitoring and evaluation. Our focus is on capturing reliable and rigorous data that supports good decision-making, continuous improvement, evaluation, and accountability to our community, partners, and funders.

Each action in this Plan is supported by a small number of measures that are:

- **Simple and trackable**, using tools we already have (e.g. attendance sheets, partner logs, surveys) and develop
- **Meaningful**, helping us understand delivery, impact and viability
- **Reviewed annually**, to inform service planning and reporting to the Committee of Management

How We Will Monitor Progress

- **Quarterly internal check-ins** to reflect on progress, identify issues early, and adjust priorities if needed
- **Annual progress review** against each strategic priority, supported by a short internal report or dashboard
- **Annual review of performance measures**, to ensure indicators are still relevant and feasible
- **Input from the community and partners**, through informal feedback, short surveys, or co-reflection sessions

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Staff and Volunteers** will contribute data and reflections on program delivery as part of regular practice
- **The General Manager** will lead monitoring activities, with support from relevant team members
- **The Committee of Management** will review progress annually and support prioritisation of actions for the following year

Business Performance Indicators

We also track core organisational performance indicators to meet funder obligations and support long-term viability. These include:

- Financial health (e.g. liquidity, solvency, income diversification)
- Compliance with statutory reporting and funding requirements
- Governance and risk management systems
- Delivery against funding body outcomes
- Progress on policy, process and infrastructure improvement initiatives

Strategic Risks and Enablers

Delivering on this Strategic Plan will require navigating a range of challenges while leveraging our strengths. As a small, community-based organisation operating in a complex environment, Wingate Avenue Community Centre must remain agile, transparent, and responsive to emerging risks.

Key Strategic Risks

Risk Area	Description	Potential Impact
Funding uncertainty	Reliance on short-term or project-based funding from multiple sources (government, philanthropic, fee-for-service).	Disruption to program delivery; inability to plan long-term.
Workforce capacity	Limited staff and volunteer resourcing, and growing demand for services.	Staff burnout, reduced service quality, or inability to scale up.
Service duplication or gaps	Evolving service landscape with other providers operating in the same catchment.	Confusion for community members; inefficient use of resources.
Infrastructure limitations	Ageing building, constrained space, and limited digital systems.	Inability to expand offerings or deliver services efficiently.
Policy and regulatory change	Shifting requirements for compliance, reporting, and delivery (e.g. education, child care).	Increased administrative burden and service withdrawal risk.

Enablers for Success

To manage these risks and deliver on our strategic goals, we will draw on several key enablers:

- **Strong community trust and participation**, built over decades of local service
- **Collaborative partnerships**, with over 70 organisations that extend our reach and capacity
- **Experienced staff and governance**, with a clear values-driven culture and strategic leadership
- **Place-based model**, offering flexibility to respond quickly to local needs
- **Monitoring and evaluation practices**, helping us learn, adapt, and demonstrate impact

We will continue to monitor these risks through regular Committee of Management oversight and embed them into planning and operational decisions. Where needed, we will escalate emerging risks and update mitigation approaches.

Appendix: Research Underpinning the Strategic Plan

Number of people attending a Neighbourhood House each week	177,374
Their value in creating community connections	\$856 million
Value produced for every \$1 of income received	\$3.52
Active partnerships in any given month to deliver on community needs	6,300+
Community groups supported by Neighbourhood Houses	4,607
Neighbourhood House staff working to support their communities	5,540
Volunteer hours each week	28,402

Table: NH 2024 Survey Impact

Value of Neighbourhood Houses

Neighbourhood Houses are highly valued delivering services and programs which respond to community needs and aspirations and build community capacity. The annual Neighbourhood Houses 2024 Survey conducted by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria Inc identifies the scale and impact of neighbourhood houses and centres across Victoria.

Policy and Funding Environment

The funding and policy environment in which the Centre operates is dynamic and challenging. Funding sources are becoming limited and uncertain with changes in government priorities and increasing demand for services.

Key sources of funding are:

- Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFE)
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (State Government)
- Melbourne Polytechnic
- Department of Education (Federal)
- Dept of Families, Fairness and Housing (State)
- Moonee Valley Council (Local Government)
- Leasing fees from tenants

The Community

The primary catchment for Wingate Avenue Community Centre is the Ascot Vale public housing estate, but those from other public housing estates in Melbourne's inner north-west can use the service. The Centre also attracts residents from surrounding suburbs including North Melbourne, Essendon, Moonee Ponds, Avondale Heights, Keilor East, Maribyrnong and Flemington.

Key Characteristics of Ascot Vale public housing estate (2021 Census)

Wingate Avenue Community Centre plays an important role in supporting residents of the Ascot Vale public housing estate. The needs of this community are complex and growing, with many on low incomes, disengaged from education and employment, experiencing trauma or violence, having a disability or long-term health condition, and/or from a non-English speaking background.

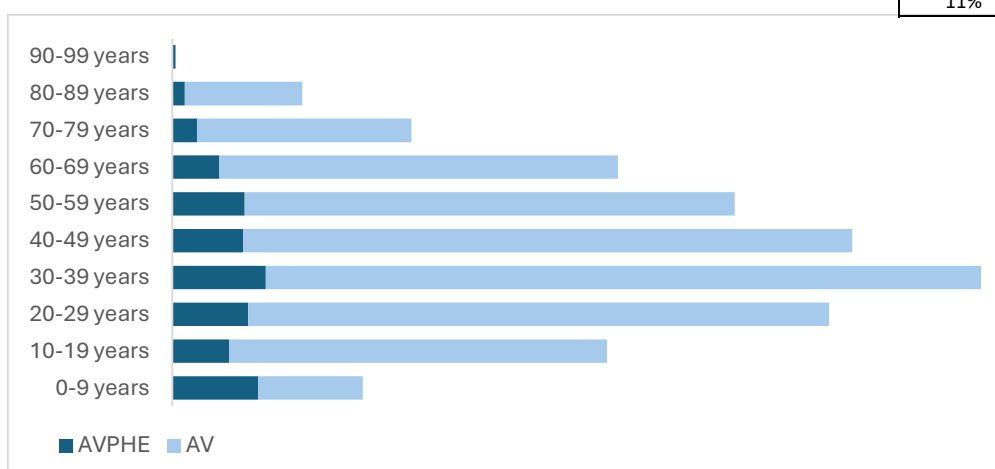
More than 50% of the population are born overseas with most from Sub-Saharan Africa, South-East Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. Very few have attained education of year 12 or above.

Key Characteristics of wider Ascot Vale community (2021 ABS Census)

AVPHE Population	1,812
Ascot Vale Pop	15,191
	11%

AGE

90-99	11
80-89	42
70-79	83
60-69	158
50-59	243
40-49	237
30-39	313
20-29	255
10-19	191
0-9	288



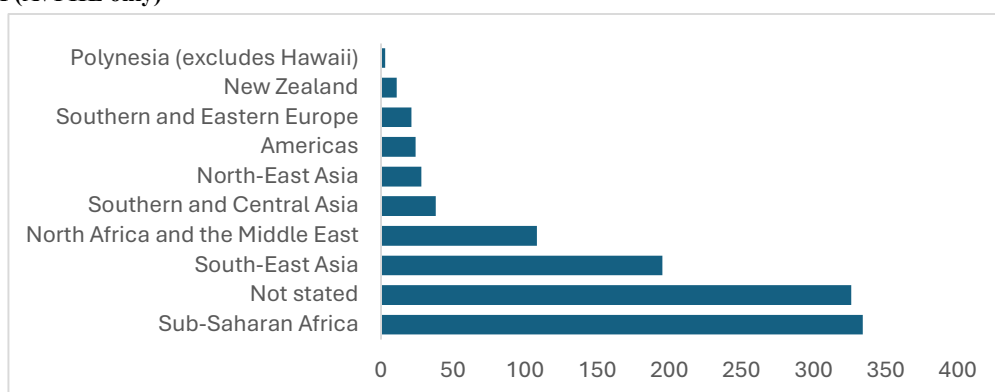
SEX (AVPHE only)

Female	908
Male	904
Total	1,812



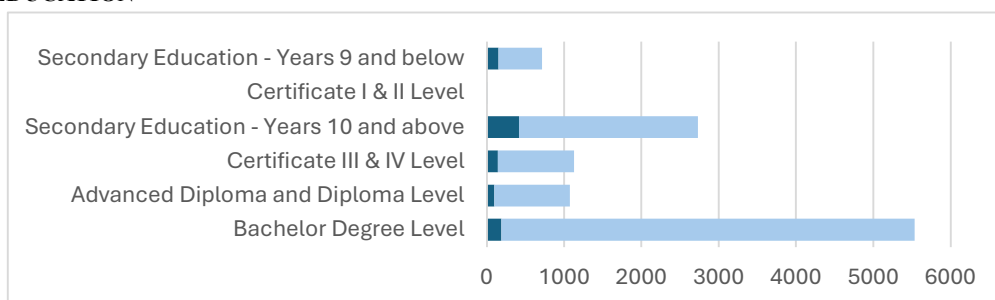
COUNTRY OF BIRTH (AVPHE only)

No Info	326
Aussie	661
O/S	762



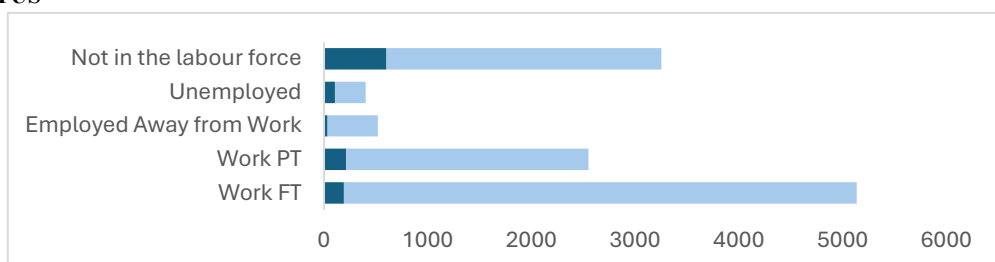
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Yr 9 <	152
--------	-----



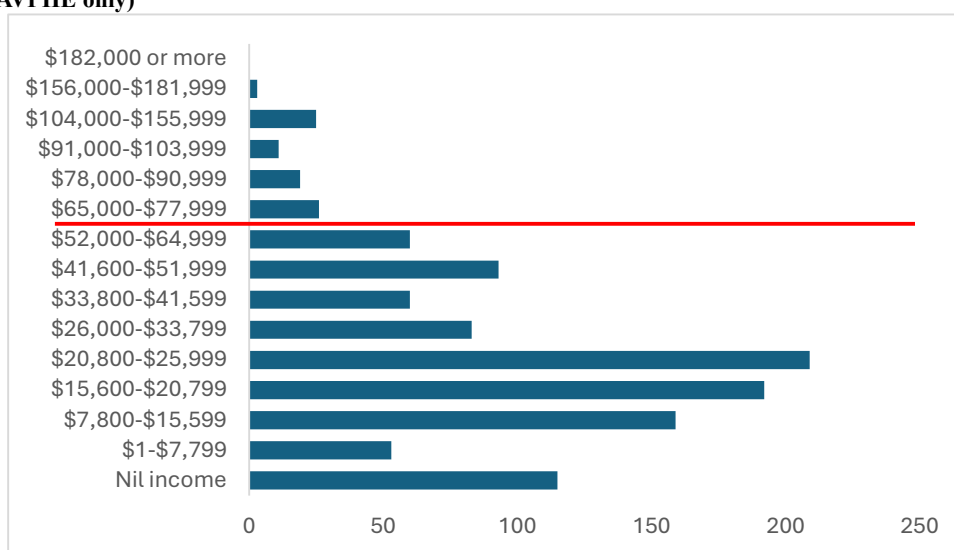
EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Not In	601
Unemp	105
Away	33
PT	214
FT	192

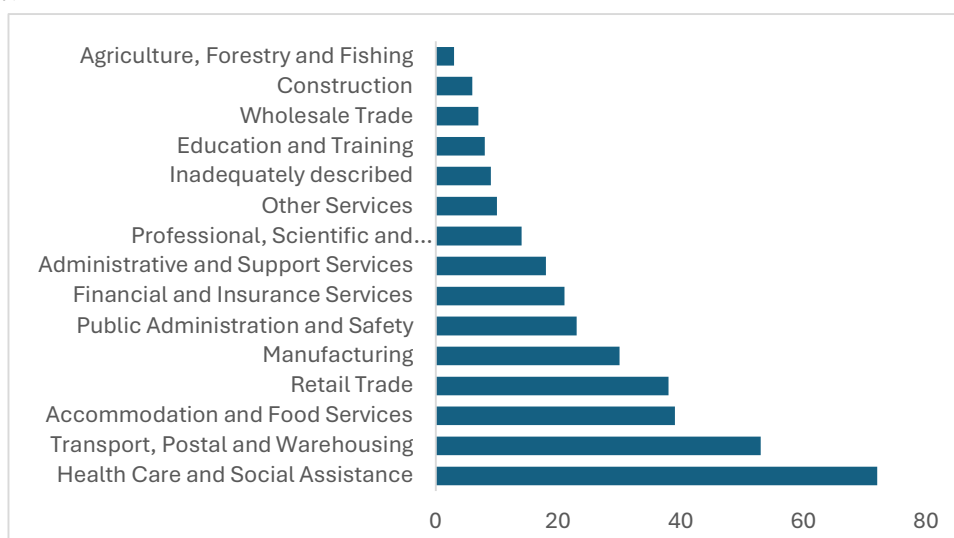


PERSONAL INCOME (AVPHE only)

>\$91,000	1,069
\$65k - \$77,999	39
NA/Not Stated	704
<\$1,150	1,812
--- Living below the poverty line	

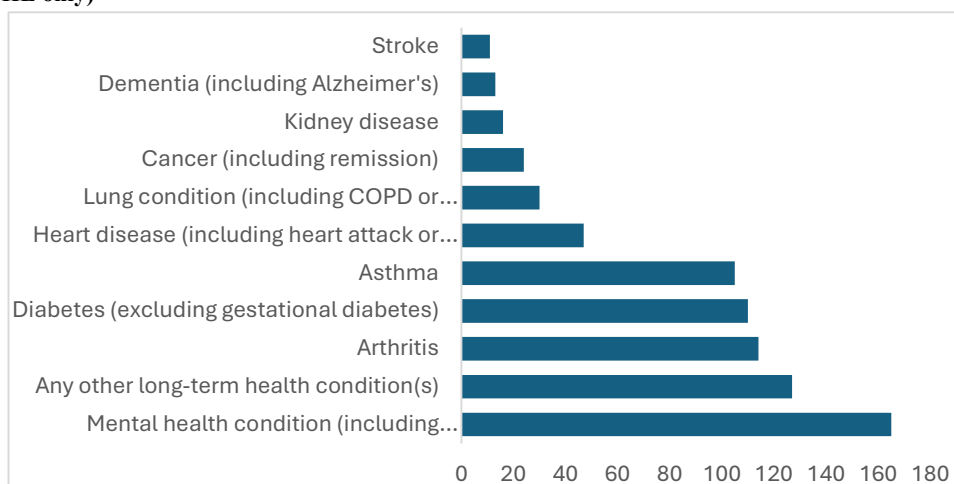


INDUSTRY (AVPHE only)



HEALTH STATUS (AVPHE only)

Yes	762
Not Stated	387
None	942



Participation

Participation data for the year ended June 2024 highlights the Centre's reach into the community.

Childcare

- 3.5 Average sessions attended per week by a child
- 87 Individual children enrolled and regularly attending occasional care
- 4,015 Sessions attended this year

Community

- 9 Community members volunteered at the centre
- 17 Deloitte's staff volunteered for working bee day
- 48 Young community members attended school holiday activities
- 500+ Community members attended 2022 EOY Celebration
- 716 Attendances at regular activities (includes repeat visits)

Education

- 17 Unique pre-accredited courses delivered
- 205 Students enrolled in one or more pre-accredited courses
- 18,558 Hours of learning delivered for pre-accredited courses
- 239 Unique students enrolled in EAL accredited courses
- 172 Individual and Placement Assessments (and PTAs) completed (EAL accredited)

Education, Training and Employment

- 6 Reconnect participants supported into employment
- 14 Reconnect participants supported into pre-accredited courses
- 20 Reconnect participants supported to enrol in accredited TAFE courses
- 80 Participants in Skills First Reconnect program this financial year
- 744,159 Recycling containers through our Over the Counter Container Scheme site

Food Relief

- 100 Share the Dignity bags and backpacks distributed
- 300+ Families accessed our food relief program weekly
- 461 Community members attended Farms to Family Market
- 210 Holiday leg of lamb distributed in December 2023
- 1,257 People feed through Farms to Family Market
- 1,725 Meals With Impact pre-cooked halal meals distributed
- 2,310 Food parcels collected
- 5,928 Individuals feed through our food relief program (includes return counts)

Social Support

- 240 Community members supported in weekly Form Support Clinic
- 320 Community members supported in single session/short term case support
- 550 Community members supported in individual (light touch) support

Other Local Services

There are a number of community centres, neighbourhood houses and other agencies located close to Wingate Avenue Community Centre, many of whom we partner with and provide referral pathways to or from.

These organisations along with other agencies provide complementary and contrasting programs and services to those delivered by Wingate Avenue Community Centre and are typically targeted to respond to the needs and interests of their local catchments. Table 2 below identifies the Neighbourhood Houses, Community Centres and agencies providing complementary programs in the area.

Education – Migrant English Classes	Carlton North Language Centre	Fitzroy Local Learn
	Kanga Institute Moonee Ponds	Prace RMIT
	Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network	
	North Melbourne Language and Learning	Victoria University, Footscray
Education - ACFE	AMES Australia	Australian Romanian Community Welfare
	Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre	Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learn
	Kensington Neighbourhood House	
	North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre	
	The Centre Connecting Community in North Melbourne	
Community Development, Social Support	Moonee Valley Libraries	MiCare
	CoHealth	Salvation Army
	Kensington Neighbourhood House	Djerring Flemington Hub
Job Networks	MatchWorks in Flemington and Footscray	WorkSkill Australia, Flemington
	Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley Local Learning and Employment Network, Kensington	
	WISE Employment, North Melbourne	AMP, Flemington
	Hays Recruitment Agency, Moonee Ponds	
Employment	Asuria, Footscray	CVGT Australia, Sunshine and Werribee
	Jesuit Social Services, Sunshine	OCTEC, Footscray, Sunshine
	WCIG, Footscray, Sunshine	
	Brotherhood of St Laurent, Moonee Ponds, Melton and Sunshine	
Childcare	Goodstart Guardian Kindergarten	Family daycare
	Sparkways	Mini Monsters
	Nido	Care for Kids
Community Centre and Neighbourhood Houses	Wingate Ave CC participates in the Inner North Cluster which includes:	
	Carlton Neighbourhood Learning Centre	Farnham Street NLC
	Kensington Neighbourhood House	North and West Melbourne NHC
	North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre	

Table: Complementary and contrasting programs and services delivered by neighbourhood houses, community centres and other agencies in the area

Partnerships and Networks

Wingate Avenue Community Centre actively pursues partnership opportunities with other organisations recognising the value and increased capacity which comes from working with others to respond to community needs. In 2024, the Centre had 71 active partnerships.

Consultation and Engagement

The consultation and engagement activity sought to understand views about the quality and appropriateness of programs offered by Wingate Avenue Community Centre, how they respond to community needs, key challenges, and possible areas of focus for this Plan. The consultation and engagement program included:

- Strategic planning workshops with the Committee of Management and key staff
- A workshop with key partners of Wingate Avenue Community Centre
- An online community survey completed by 64 community members.

Key themes identified from the consultation were:

Increasing demand for services and supports being experienced by WACC and other agencies	• Help with technology and online forms. • Food relief and other emergency relief. • Training and employment programs and pathways. • Wrap around supports in relation to legal, mental health, family violence, family support, family health.
Issues impacting the sector	• Community-development approaches are being eroded with a move towards a model more focused around service-delivery. • The cost of running organisations is increasing, there is less funding available, but much higher demand for services. • Local Government support is varied across the west. • Neighbourhood Houses have stopped delivering occasional care and operating as registered training organisations due to increased compliance requirements and reduced resources.
Strengths of Wingate Avenue Community Centre	• Co-location with Moonee Valley Legal Services. • The range of programs and services offered. • Partnerships and connections with the local community and referral pathways. • Inner City Neighbourhood Houses partnership. • Staff are helpful, welcoming, approachable, friendly. • WACC offers great services and facilities, opportunities to meet other people and to learn.
Opportunities identified for the Centre	• Improved relationship with Moonee Valley Council. • Service provision opportunities e.g. virtual wrap around services and place-based service provision, free hot meals and more social activities. • Resident led initiatives. • Increase networking across key roles. • Increasing use of the kitchen at Wingate Ave Community Centre. • Co-design process for strategic opportunities. • Improved infrastructure including a more modern building and improved security.