Inclusive Economy Strategy 2026-2031



Banyule
City Council

Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

A strong and inclusive local economy is one that recognises, values and supports the ongoing cultural, social and economic contributions of Aboriginal people. Banyule City Council proudly acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Council operates. We pay our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, who have resided in the area and continue to shape the region through their cultural, social and economic contributions.

As this strategy focuses on strengthening a local, inclusive and resilient economy, Council recognises the enduring role of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people in Caring for Country, sustaining community, and contributing to economic systems grounded in connection and responsibility. This Inclusive Economy Strategy acknowledges that economic participation, including employment, enterprise and Aboriginal business development, is a key contributor to wellbeing and self-determination. Addressing structural barriers to participation is essential to creating inclusive economic opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and for all who live and work in Banyule.

Uluru Statement from the Heart

Banyule City Council is also proud to acknowledge our commitment to endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full. Council is committed to taking practical action to advance its core components: Voice, Treaty and Truth Telling.

Diversity Statement

Banyule is a diverse community, made up of people from different cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, ages, sexualities, genders and identities. We are committed to inclusion, access and equity for everyone. These principles foster cohesiveness, empower people, and improve the wellbeing of the Banyule community.



Image: Yuloo Aboriginal Dance Group Member - Storylines Exhibition Opening 2026

Cover Image: The Good Brick, Social Enterprise, Greensborough



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Image: C2A - Social Enterprises 2026



Mayor's Message

The Inclusive Economy Strategy 2026–2031 provides a clear, coordinated framework for how Banyule City Council will support a strong, inclusive and resilient local economy over the next five years. It brings together Council's economic development, local jobs and social enterprise priorities into a single strategy focused on participation, opportunity and long-term sustainability.

Banyule's economy is undergoing significant change. Growth in health care, education and professional services is reshaping employment patterns, while cost-of-living pressures, retail disruption and limited employment land continue to impact local businesses and workers.

These local shifts are occurring within a broader context of global volatility since 2020, including the rise of remote work, growth in home-based businesses and increased reliance on local activity centres. This period has underscored the importance of agility and preparedness for future disruptions. At the same time, some residents experience persistent barriers to economic participation. These dynamics prompt a practical, place-based response.

The strategy defines Council's role as an enabler, connector and leader. It focuses on how Council can use its influence, assets, partnerships and systems to create the conditions for businesses to grow and for people to access meaningful employment. A strong emphasis is placed on delivery and financial sustainability, with actions designed to better align and strengthen existing programs rather than rely on significant new funding.

Five focus areas guide implementation:

1. A strong and connected business community
2. Workforce skills and inclusive employment pathways
3. Vibrant precincts and activity centres
4. Social enterprise leadership
5. Enabling business growth, investment and future employment

Over the life of the strategy, Council has committed to delivering 4,000 inclusive economic opportunities, including jobs, pathways to employment, business support, professional connections, social enterprise and Aboriginal business growth and local business promotion.

Clear outcomes, measures and annual targets will guide delivery and reporting, ensuring progress is transparent, accountable and responsive to changing economic conditions.

Banyule City Council is confident that our Inclusive Economy Strategy will strengthen local businesses, support inclusive employment pathways and enable broader participation in our vibrant local economy.



Image: Connected Business Networking Event Nilumbik



Introduction

This strategy reflects a bold commitment to reimagine how the local economy works and to ensure Banyule continues to be a place where people and businesses can participate, prosper and belong.

By inclusive, we mean an economy that values people as much as profit: one that prioritises fairness and community wellbeing, values diversity, nurtures social enterprise, creates pathways to meaningful local jobs, and supports Aboriginal economic participation and self-determination. It is about ensuring growth is not concentrated in the hands of a few, but woven into the fabric of our neighbourhoods, businesses and communities. The strategy brings together economic development, social enterprise and local jobs initiatives, recognising that a thriving local economy and community wellbeing are deeply connected.

Banyule has a strong track record of turning ambition into action. In recent years, Council has supported thousands of inclusive economic opportunities for residents facing barriers to employment, partnered closely with one of the strongest networks of trader associations in Victoria to activate local centres, and positioned social enterprise as a distinctive and valued part of the local economy. These strengths set Banyule apart and provide a solid foundation for the work ahead.

The Inclusive Economy Strategy has been designed with a strong focus on financial, social and environmental sustainability. Aligned with the Banyule Plan's commitment to sound financial management, value for money and long-term community wellbeing, the Strategy builds on existing programs, sharpens our focus where needed, and leverages Council's influence, assets and partnerships. This approach ensures we can deliver meaningful, sustainable outcomes while remaining fiscally responsible and continuing to support those in our community who need it most.

Strategy on a page

This Strategy on a Page provides a highlevel overview of our Inclusive Economy Strategy,

Focus Areas	1. A strong and connected business community	2. Workforce skills and inclusive employment pathways
Key Objectives	**1.1** Create a business-friendly Council that makes it easier to start, operate and grow a business in Banyule. **1.2** Build business capability and connections through accessible professional development, mentoring, networking and targeted business-focused communication. **1.3** Support business growth and adaptation through targeted grants, incentives and tailored support. **1.4** Support sustainable and future-ready businesses through practical guidance, tools and resources that improve efficiency and reduce energy costs. **1.5** Promote, recognise and celebrate local businesses.	**2.1** Use data and evidence to guide the design, focus and prioritisation of Council's inclusive employment actions. **2.2** Support inclusive pathways into employment and economic participation. **2.3** Build job readiness and capability for priority jobseekers through Council's leadership, coordination and partnerships within the local employment system. **2.4** Lead by example in inclusive employment through Council's own practices.
Measures of success	A more business-friendly Council, reflected in streamlined processes and improved business experience. A thriving, well-connected business ecosystem, shown through strong participation in business development, mentoring and grants programs. Growth in inclusive economic opportunities, with 2,963 opportunities created across local businesses and social enterprises.	Evidence-driven employment initiatives, informed by clear workforce needs and improved outcome visibility. Greater job readiness and access to pathways, supported by strong participation in capability-building programs and partnerships. Growth in inclusive economic opportunities, with 760 opportunities created for priority jobseekers.

with full actions, outputs and measures detailed in the Inclusive Economy Action Plan.

3. Vibrant precincts and activity centres	4. Social enterprise leadership	5. Enabling business growth, investment and future employment
3.1 Strengthen place-based partnerships and trader-led initiatives to increase visitation and economic activity in activity centres. **3.2** Create vibrant, culturally inclusive and welcoming activity centres that invite people to stay and connect. **3.3** Invest in well maintained, safe and universally accessible activity centres and public spaces.	**4.1** Demonstrate leadership and influence to support the growth and uptake of social enterprise and Aboriginal business. **4.2** Strengthen the social enterprise ecosystem through strategic partnerships and regional collaboration. **4.3** Strengthen Aboriginal economic development through partnership, exploration and the alignment of Council's economic initiatives with self-determination principles. **4.4** Embed social enterprise and Aboriginal business across Council through shared value opportunities, including the strategic use of Council-owned assets. **4.5** Increase opportunities for social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and local businesses through sustainable procurement.	**5.1** Plan for business growth and future employment through coordinated land use planning, place-based investment and evidence-led, inclusive economic decision-making. **5.2** Strengthen advocacy, intelligence and regional collaboration to support business growth and employment.
More active, well-supported precincts, shown by increased visitation and stronger trader engagement. More welcoming and vibrant centres, reflected in precinct activations, reduced vacancies and improved community connection. Growth in local economic activity, demonstrated by increased local spend.	More purpose-led businesses, shown by an increase in social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses in Banyule. Stronger impact through partnerships and procurement, reflected in more shared value initiatives and sustainable procurement outcomes. Growth in inclusive economic opportunities, with 277 opportunities created through partnerships, procurement and capability-building.	Stronger foundations for business and jobs growth, demonstrated through ongoing industry analysis and updated planning to ensure adequate employment land. Greater regional influence and collaboration, shown through active advocacy, intelligence sharing and engagement with major economic precincts and partners. Growth in business activity, reflected in increasing new business registrations across Banyule.

Key Indicators

To understand how Banyule's economy is evolving over the life of the Inclusive Economy Strategy, Council will track a set of key indicators that reflect economic performance, participation, equity, and community wellbeing. These indicators draw on established data sources including Economy.id, Census data, Spendmapp, Banyule's annual Community Survey, and local business and employment datasets.

Where data is available, indicators will be updated annually and reported through Council's Achievements Report. Together, they provide a snapshot of how Banyule's economy is functioning, and how inclusive it is for all residents. The following baseline indicators have been collected as of April 2026.

Economic Performance

Gross Regional Product (GRP) Ending June 24
$8.08B

Local jobs
56,441

Employment self-sufficiency 2023/24
(number of local jobs to employed residents)
0.77%

Workforce Participation & Inclusion

Employment rate
(Dec 2025)
95.7%

Unemployment rate
(Dec 2025)
3.2% Banyule
8% Heidelberg West

Employment outcomes for priority groups (2021):

People with disability
88.8%

Young people (15 – 24 years)
89.6%

Older workers (50 -59)
96.9%

Women
96.1%

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities
94.5%

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents
89.4%

Low income households
73.5%

Business Activity & Economic Diversity (2025)

Number of local businesses total
11,433

Top 3 industries:
Construction **19%**
Professional Services **16%**
Healthcare **12%**

Number of social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses
36

New businesses opened in last 12 months
359

Local Spending & Economic Leakage
(April 2026) (Last 12 months):

Total local spend
$5.8b

Total escaped spend
Residents spending outside Banyule
$4.1b

Activity Centre Vitality
(April 2026) (Last 12 months)

Vacancy rates in key shopping strips
4.9%

Economic context and drivers

This section draws primarily on analysis from the Banyule Economic Resilience Report (Banyule City Council and .id (informed decisions), November 2025).

Overview of Banyule's economy

Banyule generated $8.1 billion in economic output in the 2023/24 financial year and has grown steadily over the past five years, outperforming the metropolitan average. Growth has been driven primarily by health and construction. Healthcare is Banyule's largest employer, providing around one in three local jobs, with demand increasing due to population ageing, rising need for specialist services and major upgrades at the Austin and Warringal hospitals. Construction activity has also expanded, supported by the North East Link Project and significant development across health, education and residential precincts, particularly in Heidelberg West and Ivanhoe.

Banyule is a mature, largely built-out municipality with limited land available for new large-scale commercial development. As a result, overall business growth has been slower than the Melbourne average. However, there has been steady growth in small businesses and sole traders, particularly in professional and financial services, reflecting a shift towards knowledge-based and service-oriented activity. These trends highlight the importance of supporting existing businesses to adapt and grow, and of planning carefully for future employment land and investment.

Headline indicators mask important differences within the municipality. While unemployment remains low at 2.9% and the workforce is highly skilled, with 44% of residents holding a bachelor degree or higher, some areas experience higher unemployment, lower workforce participation and lower incomes (refer to infographic below). These place-based disparities point to the need for targeted, inclusive approaches to workforce development that address structural barriers and support local residents to access emerging job opportunities.

At the same time, parts of Banyule's economy are under pressure. Retail employment has declined due to cost-of-living pressures, online retail and automation. Some industrial areas are experiencing churn, with reductions in repair and maintenance services, wholesale trade and automotive retail. These changes are affecting the vitality of activity centres and employment precincts, reinforcing the importance of precinct activation, safety, maintenance and adaptive reuse.



Image: Grow. Social Enterprise



Image: HotHaus. Heidelberg West Business Park

Economic structure, risk and opportunity

Banyule's strong health and social assistance sector is a significant asset, but reliance on a narrow set of industries presents long-term risks. There are opportunities to attract and grow a more diverse mix of professional services, creative industries, innovation-driven businesses and social enterprises to strengthen economic resilience. Demographic change will also shape future demand, with growth in the population aged 75+ increasing demand for health and care services, and growth in the 35–49 age group driving demand for local jobs, services and well-functioning activity centres.

These dynamics underline the need for a coordinated approach that supports businesses, strengthens workforce pathways, plans for future industries and investment, and ensures Banyule's precincts remain active and attractive places for economic and community life.

Population

131,931

Population forecast by 2046

161,397

Catalysts for change

Several major projects will shape Banyule's economy over coming decades. The Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct (NISP), spanning La Trobe University and the Heidelberg health precinct, presents a significant opportunity to grow jobs in education, health, research and innovation. The North East Link Project will improve connectivity and support business growth and precinct renewal, while La Trobe University's University City development will bring long-term investment, research activity and employment growth to the region.

Realising the benefits of these investments will require deliberate alignment between land use planning, workforce development, business support and precinct activation. Without this coordination, there is a risk that growth may bypass local residents and businesses or exacerbate existing inequalities.

Macro trends shaping Banyule's future economy

Broader trends will continue to influence Banyule's economy. Demand for health, aged care and allied health services will rise, alongside growing need for skills linked to the transition to a circular, low-carbon economy. Digital capability is increasingly essential across industries, while advances in medical technology, advanced manufacturing and automation are reshaping skill requirements and employment pathways.

These shifts are occurring within a global environment that has been highly volatile since 2020, marked by rapid changes in work patterns, the expansion of remote and homebased businesses, and greater reliance on local activity centres as community behaviours evolve.

First Nations economic participation

Nationally, 55.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25–64 were employed in 2021, compared with Banyule's overall employment rate of 97.1%. While Victoria has seen improvement, significant structural barriers to participation persist, including limited access to culturally safe workplaces, education pathways and business support. At the same time, the Indigenous business sector is growing strongly, with Indigenous businesses now contributing more than $16 billion to the Australian economy, employing over 116,000 people and paying $4.2 billion in wages.

Research shows that Indigenous businesses are up to 100 times more likely to employ an Indigenous person than non-Indigenous businesses, underscoring the importance of procurement and business support as pathways to First Nations economic participation. Council's commitment through the Marrageil Strategy is to ensure that economic development in Banyule actively supports Aboriginal economic self-determination.



Image: Trendgosa, Heideberg West business Park.



Image: Council overview video NBAA 2025

Together, these trends reinforce the need for an inclusive, future-focused economic strategy that supports businesses to adapt and grow, builds workforce skills aligned to demand, strengthens precincts and employment land, and embeds social enterprise and inclusive employment as core elements of Banyule's economic development approach. They also highlight the importance of remaining agile, anticipating global shocks and applying place based solutions that respond to the unique strengths and needs of Banyule's communities and ensures that Aboriginal economic participation and self-determination are recognised as integral to Banyule's economic future.

Focus Area 1

A strong and connected business community

Supporting local businesses, including social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses, to grow, adapt and thrive in Banyule

Community consultation highlighted strong demand for Council to reduce barriers and make it easier to do business in Banyule, alongside calls for practical, accessible business support, clearer pathways to information and a more visible Council role in strengthening the local business environment. Reducing red tape was the most consistent message, reinforcing the need for clearer processes and a more responsive approach to how businesses interact with Council. This focus area responds by combining practical barrier reduction with targeted capability-building, meaningful connections and clear, business-focused communication aligned to real-world needs.

Effective engagement is central to this work. By providing timely, relevant information, promoting opportunities and sharing local business stories, Council can strengthen participation in programs, build confidence and celebrate the contribution of businesses to Banyule's economy and community wellbeing. Council also recognises that support for Aboriginal businesses must be distinct from mainstream approaches, co-designed with Aboriginal organisations and delivered in culturally safe ways.

Together, these approaches position Council as a trusted partner in helping businesses start, operate and grow in Banyule, while fostering a strong, connected and inclusive local business community.



Image: Women in Business 2025

Did you know?

Banyule's economy is powered by 11,433 businesses, spanning sole traders, small enterprises and larger employers across key sectors including health care and social assistance, construction, education, retail and professional services. These businesses are central to local jobs, vibrant precincts and community wellbeing. Council is committed to supporting business sustainability, adaptation and collaboration to strengthen a resilient and inclusive local economy.

Key Objectives	Key Commitments
1.1 Create a business-friendly Council that makes it easier to start, operate and grow a business in Banyule.	• Provide clear information and support to make it easier to do business in Banyule, including improving internal processes to streamline the end-to-end experience of engaging with Council. • Review Council regulatory processes, fees and charges to identify and reduce unnecessary barriers, improve efficiency and ease cost pressures for local businesses. • Maintain Council's commitment to the Small Business Friendly Charter.
1.2 Build business capability and connections through accessible professional development, mentoring, networking and targeted business-focused communication.	• Apply business insights and participation data to design and deliver professional development, mentoring and networking initiatives that are inclusive, responsive and reflective of Banyule's diverse business base. • Deliver regular, targeted communication about Council programs, resources and opportunities for businesses to strengthen business-focused communication and engagement. • Review existing business support programs to ensure they are accessible and culturally safe for Aboriginal businesses and reflect self-determination principles.
1.3 Support business growth and adaptation through targeted grants, incentives and tailored support.	• Deliver financial support to support business growth in Banyule. • Deliver advisory services for social enterprises. • Actively promote Council's grants and support services to Aboriginal businesses and organisations. • Ensure business support mechanisms remain responsive to evolving socio-economic conditions and market dynamics over the life of the strategy.
1.4 Support sustainable and future-ready businesses through practical guidance, tools and resources that improve efficiency and reduce energy costs.	• Provide information and resources to support businesses to adopt environmentally sustainable practices and transition to a low-carbon, circular economy.
1.5 Promote, recognise and celebrate local businesses.	• Promote local businesses through buy local campaigns and initiatives. • Deliver and participate in business awards programs to recognise and celebrate local business achievement.

Detailed actions supporting these commitments are set out in the Inclusive Economy Action Plan 2026-2031.

Key Partners

- Local businesses
- Social enterprises
- Aboriginal businesses
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- Neighbouring councils
- Business Victoria
- Victorian Small Business Commission
- NORTH Link

Key Outcomes

- Businesses experience Council as responsive, accessible and easy to deal with, with reduced barriers to starting, operating and growing a business in Banyule.
- Improved business capability, connection and participation, with strong awareness of opportunities and engagement with Council support.
- A resilient and future-ready business community, able to adapt to economic, market and sustainability challenges.
- A diverse, inclusive and visible local business community, recognised for its contribution to local jobs and community wellbeing.



Image: Women in Business 2025



Focus Area 2

Workforce skills and inclusive employment pathways

Building skills, removing barriers and connecting people to meaningful economic opportunities

Banyule's economic future depends on local businesses being able to access skilled and ready-to-work talent, while ensuring residents facing barriers to employment can connect to meaningful job opportunities. Consultation and data highlight the need to address barriers such as education, transport, digital access, mental health and language, which disproportionately affect young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disabilities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many residents experience multiple, intersecting barriers that compound disadvantage and limit workforce participation. Community feedback also reinforced that different cohorts and life stages require different approaches, and that non-traditional pathways such as creative practice, freelance work and micro-enterprise should be recognised and supported alongside conventional employment.

This focus area adopts a place-based approach to workforce development, starting with employer and industry demand and working backwards to build skills, work readiness and clear pathways into employment. Council recognises that employment pathways for Aboriginal people must be culturally safe and developed in partnership with Aboriginal communities and organisations, consistent with the Marrageil Strategy. By aligning inclusive employment with economic development, Council can better leverage relationships with employers, training providers and community organisations to strengthen participation and long-term economic inclusion for all residents facing barriers to employment.

Key Objectives	Key Commitments
2.1 Use data and evidence to guide the design, focus and prioritisation of Council's inclusive employment actions.	• Strengthen the use of workforce data and insights, including from relevant Aboriginal organisations, to identify priority skills needs, employment gaps and participation trends, guiding the design and prioritisation of inclusive employment actions.
2.2 Support inclusive pathways into employment and economic participation.	• Work with key partners to support and connect people into employment pathways and jobs. Recognise and support non-traditional pathways into economic participation, including creative practice, freelance work and micro-enterprise.
2.3 Build job readiness and capability for priority jobseekers through Council's leadership, coordination and partnerships within the local employment system.	• Deliver and support capability-building initiatives that strengthen skills, confidence and work readiness for priority jobseekers, designed to respond to the different needs, cultural backgrounds, strengths and life stages of priority cohorts. • Strengthen coordination across the local employment system through partnerships, events and forums that connect employers, education providers, employment services and jobseekers.
2.4 Lead by example in inclusive employment through Council's own practices.	• Deliver Council-led employment programs and pathways, including the Inclusive Employment Program, First Nations Traineeship Program, place-based employment services and student pathways, ensuring culturally safe approaches consistent with the Marrageil Strategy. • Strengthen inclusive and equitable workforce practices within Council, including through diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and equitable approaches to recruitment.

Detailed actions supporting these commitments are set out in the Inclusive Economy Action Plan 2026-2031.



Image: Careers in Healthcare Expo - 2025 Ivanhoe

Did you know?

Between 2020 and 2025, Council supported the creation of more than 1,400 inclusive economic opportunities for people facing barriers to employment. Building on this foundation, Council is committed to strengthening workforce skills and inclusive employment pathways that connect residents to real job opportunities and support long-term economic participation.

Key Partners

- Employment service providers
- Community service organisations
- Local businesses
- Social enterprises
- Aboriginal businesses
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- Banyule Nillumbik Local Learning and Employment Network
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
- Education providers, including universities, TAFEs and vocational training institutions

Key Outcomes

- Local employment and economic participation opportunities are more diverse, inclusive and accessible.
- Residents facing barriers to employment have clearer pathways into work, training and volunteering, supported by improved skills, confidence and readiness.
- Stronger connections across the local employment system support workforce participation and community wellbeing.
- Residents are supported to sustain employment in workplaces that equitably accommodate diverse needs.

Focus Area 3

Vibrant precincts and activity centres

Creating welcoming, attractive and active places that support businesses, communities and wellbeing

Banyule's activity centres and precincts play a critical role in supporting local businesses, community connection, economic participation and wellbeing. Consultation and economic data highlight strong community support for place-based investment, activation and well maintained public spaces, alongside a desire for centres that feel welcoming, culturally safe, lively and reflective of local identity. Council is committed to supporting the vibrancy of these centres. In addition to the $690,000 raised through Special Rate and Charge Schemes, Council contributes almost $570,000 each year to support 11 Trader Associations across the municipality, strengthening their capacity to deliver improvements and activation initiatives. This is complemented by Council's dedicated Economic Development team, who work closely with the Traders Associations to provide ongoing support.

As part of strengthening Banyule's activity centres, Council will take a more strategic, place-based approach to increasing visitation and local economic spend. This includes positioning Banyule as a destination of choice, working closely with Trader Associations to clarify roles and shared priorities, and setting clearer objectives and measures to track visitation, activation outcomes and economic impact over time. This also includes recognising the cultural significance of these places as Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country and ensuring Aboriginal culture, enterprise and creative practice are visible and valued within activity centres. This coordinated focus brings together investment in inclusive placemaking, infrastructure, activation and ongoing maintenance, supporting local businesses, trader groups, creative practitioners, visitors and residents, while recognising that each centre plays a different role and requires a tailored approach.

Key Objectives	Key Commitments
3.1 Strengthen place based partnerships and trader led initiatives to increase visitation and economic activity in activity centres.	• Strengthen activity centres through the delivery of Special Rate and Charge schemes and partnerships with trader associations that support initiatives to increase visitation and local economic activity. • Facilitate targeted activities to support smaller and emerging activity centres to grow foot traffic, visibility and local spending.
3.2 Create vibrant, culturally inclusive and welcoming activity centres that invite people to stay and connect.	• Activate activity centres through arts, culture and the creative use of vacant and underutilised spaces. • Work with businesses, trader associations and Aboriginal organisations to build activity centres that are culturally safe, inclusive and welcoming, where safety and respect are actively promoted.
3.3 Invest in well maintained, safe and universally accessible activity centres and public spaces.	• Deliver streetscape upgrades and placemaking projects across activity centres, which include accessible features that invite people to stay and connect. • Enhance the connections between active transport routes and activity centres. • Support consistent standards of presentation, cleanliness and amenity across activity centres.

Detailed actions supporting these commitments are set out in the Inclusive Economy Action Plan 2026-2031.



Image: East Ivanhoe - Streetscape

Did you know?

Banyule is home to 11 active Trader Associations, operating through Special Rate and Charge Schemes and supported by Council. Council is proud to partner with and support Trader Associations, which sit at the intersection of local business, community life and placemaking. They provide a unified voice for local businesses, strengthen community and business connections and play a vital role in activating precincts and supporting vibrant, well-connected activity centres.

Key Partners

- Traders Associations
- Local businesses
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung

Key Outcomes

- Activity centres and precincts are welcoming, accessible and well cared for, strengthening local identity, community connection and wellbeing.
- Activity centres attract increased visitation and economic activity through coordinated, place-based destination initiatives.
- Improved amenity and coordinated investment support the long-term vitality and use of activity centres by businesses, residents and visitors.
- Increased local spending within Banyule and its activity centres, including reduced escaped spend and stronger circulation of expenditure in the local economy.

Focus Area 4

Social enterprise leadership

Embedding social enterprise as business as usual and strengthening Aboriginal economic participation

Banyule has a strong track record of leadership in social enterprise, and recognises the growing importance of supporting Aboriginal economic development as a pathway to self-determination, consistent with the Marrageil Strategy. This focus area strengthens Council's role in supporting and enabling social enterprise and Aboriginal business as a core part of the local economy, recognising them as viable, purpose-led businesses that deliver social, environmental and community benefit alongside economic activity. While many of the supports and systems in this focus area benefit all purpose-led businesses, Council recognises that approaches to Aboriginal economic development must be distinct, co-designed with Aboriginal organisations and delivered in culturally safe ways, consistent with the Marrageil Strategy.

This focus area is centred on leadership, advocacy and integration. By embedding social enterprise and Aboriginal economic development considerations into everyday decision-making, partnerships and systems, and by strategically using Council's influence, procurement and assets, Council can strengthen the local social enterprise ecosystem, support Aboriginal businesses and encourage broader adoption of purpose-led business across Banyule and the region.



Did you know?

Social enterprises occupy a distinctive place in Banyule's local economy, combining commercial activity with social and community impact. This Strategy builds on Council's previous Social Enterprise Strategy, shifting from program-based support to embedding social enterprise as business as usual. This progression will strengthen social enterprises' ability to create meaningful jobs and deliver place-based responses to local needs over time.

Image: Reground. Social Enterprise

Key Objectives	Key Commitments
4.1 Demonstrate leadership and influence to support the growth and uptake of social enterprise and Aboriginal business.	• Advocate with other Councils and institutions to promote policies, practices and partnerships that enable social enterprise and Aboriginal business growth. • Develop and share case studies that highlight the social and environmental impact of purpose-led businesses, including Aboriginal businesses, recognising that Aboriginal business storytelling also contributes to celebrating and sharing Aboriginal culture and economic self-determination.
4.2 Strengthen the social enterprise ecosystem through strategic partnerships and regional collaboration.	• Maintain and grow partnerships that support social enterprise capability, collaboration and sector development.
4.3 Strengthen Aboriginal economic development through partnership, exploration and the alignment of Council's economic initiatives with self-determination principles.	• Explore, in partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Aboriginal organisations, how Council can strengthen its role in supporting Aboriginal economic development, aligned to the Marrageil Strategy. • Work with Aboriginal partners to explore and develop dedicated business support programs for Aboriginal businesses, co-designed and delivered in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
4.4 Embed social enterprise and Aboriginal business across Council through shared value opportunities, including the strategic use of Council-owned assets.	• Work with internal Council teams to identify opportunities where social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses can respond to Council and community needs. • Use Council-owned investment properties to create affordable, enabling spaces
4.5 Increase opportunities for social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and local businesses through sustainable procurement.	• Implement and embed Council's Sustainable Procurement Policy and Framework, building internal capability and cultural awareness to increase procurement from social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and local businesses. • Review procurement practices and track spend to reduce barriers and measure progress in procurement from social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and local businesses.

Detailed actions supporting these commitments are set out in the Inclusive Economy Action Plan 2026-2031.

Key Partners

- Social enterprises
- Aboriginal businesses
- SENVIC
- Heidelberg District Community Enterprise
- Social Traders
- Social Enterprise Australia
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung
- Supply Nation
- Kinaway Chamber of Commerce

Key Outcomes

- A strong, diverse and sustainable social enterprise and Aboriginal business ecosystem in Banyule, with growth in the number of businesses and wider uptake of purpose-led business practices.
- Social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses embedded throughout Council, generating shared value through collaboration, sustainable procurement and access to affordable spaces.
- Social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and other purpose-led businesses are more widely recognised and understood for the social, cultural and environmental impact they generate.
- Council has a clearer understanding of how it can support Aboriginal economic development, informed by partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and other Aboriginal partners.

Focus Area 5

Enabling business growth, investment and future employment

Strengthening Banyule's economic precincts and creating the conditions for business growth and jobs

Banyule's economy is evolving, with growth in health care and social assistance, education, and professional and knowledge-based services reshaping employment patterns, while parts of the retail and industrial economy continue to adapt to changing market conditions. At the same time, demand for well-located employment land and commercial space is increasing, placing pressure on existing precincts and reinforcing the importance of coordinated planning, place-based investment and proactive industry engagement.

This focus area focuses on the structural conditions that support business growth and employment across Banyule, with a particular emphasis on nurturing and strengthening the municipality's economic precincts as hubs of innovation, employment and industry collaboration. It recognises the contribution businesses make to employment, economic activity and Council's rate base, and the importance of ensuring Council's regulatory and planning settings continue to support a business-friendly environment. By improving coordination between land use planning, infrastructure investment and economic development, and by advocating for investment in major economic precincts, this focus area supports existing and emerging businesses and helps position Banyule for sustainable employment growth over time.

Key Objectives	Key Commitments
5.1 Plan for business growth and future employment through coordinated land use planning, place-based investment, and evidence-led, inclusive economic decision making.	• Use data-led and community insights to guide how Council supports business growth and investment attraction across Banyule. • Ensure adequate and appropriate employment land to meet current and future business and jobs needs. • Implement the Heidelberg West Business Park and Bell Street Mall Masterplans through coordinated planning and investment. • Ensure Council's regulatory and planning settings continue to support a business-friendly environment across Banyule.
5.2 Strengthen advocacy, intelligence and regional collaboration to support business growth and employment.	• Advocate for State Government planning and investment in major economic precincts, including the Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct. • Leverage Council's membership of NORTH Link to support advocacy for jobs, skills and investment. • Monitor and engage with major economic and employment projects, including La Trobe University City, to inform Council planning and business support.

Detailed actions supporting these commitments are set out in the Inclusive Economy Action Plan 2026-2031.



Image: Artist's Impression of Oriel Square

Did you know?

Banyule's key economic precincts, including the Heidelberg West Business Park and Bell Street Mall precinct, are focus areas for coordinated planning and investment. The Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct, spanning La Trobe University and the Heidelberg health precinct, represents a significant long-term opportunity to grow jobs in education, health, research and innovation in Melbourne's north.

Key Partners

- Local businesses
- Heidelberg West Business Park
- Bell Street Mall
- NORTH Link
- Victorian State Government
- Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct
- La Trobe University City

Key Outcomes

- Banyule attracts business investment and employment growth across a diverse range of industries, supported by well-planned economic precincts and coordinated land use planning.
- Employment precincts are well-functioning, attractive and aligned to business needs, supported by coordinated land use planning, infrastructure investment and place-based development.

Targets

Council's earlier strategies demonstrated that ambitious, measurable targets can accelerate impact and deliver meaningful inclusive employment outcomes. Under the Social Enterprise and Inclusive Local Jobs Strategies 2020–2025, Council committed to creating 1,000 jobs for people experiencing barriers to work. This was an ambitious commitment at the time, reflecting a strong focus on equity, participation and community wellbeing. The target was achieved a full year ahead of schedule, with more than 1,400 jobs created over the life of the strategies. This nationally recognised achievement has strengthened Banyule's reputation as a leader in inclusive employment and demonstrated the value of coordinated action, strong partnerships and sustained investment.

Building on this success, Council has developed the Inclusive Economy Strategy with a renewed focus on accelerating and embedding long term impact. The strategy sets a more ambitious and comprehensive target, reflecting both the scale of opportunity and the need to support a broader range of people and businesses to participate fully in Banyule's economy.

Council has set an overarching target of delivering 4,000 inclusive economic opportunities over the life of the strategy. An inclusive economic opportunity is defined as any action that meaningfully supports people or businesses to participate in the local economy.

These opportunities span a wide range of activities, including:

- **Jobs and pathways:** Inclusive Employment Program, First Nations Traineeships, career expos, employment pathways with businesses
- **Business support:** Grants, mentoring, workshops, permit assistance, Small Business Bus
- **Connections:** Women in Business, professional development and networking events, mentoring programs
- **Social enterprise & Aboriginal business support:** Social Enterprise Growth Fund, Social Enterprise Support Service, Social Enterprise Partnership Program, use of Council assets to support social enterprises & Aboriginal businesses
- **Promotion and recognition:** Buy Local campaigns, Best Biz Awards, Northern Business Achievement Awards, case studies
- **Systems change:** Sustainable procurement, shared value initiatives

These 4,000 opportunities will be delivered through actions across all focus areas of the strategy. Opportunities will be counted based on participation, outcomes or support delivered, with consistent internal reporting to ensure accuracy, avoid duplication and track progress toward the overall target.

Number of Inclusive Economic Opportunities delivered each year





Image: Banyule BestBiz Awards 2025

Community Engagement approach and processes

Community voices have shaped the Inclusive Economy Strategy through extensive engagement undertaken over two years. Between June and October 2024, Council delivered 12 engagement activities involving 161 participants, including people with lived experience of employment barriers, social enterprises, local businesses, service providers, advisory committees and Council staff. These sessions explored inclusive employment and social enterprise priorities, Council's role as an enabler and connector, and opportunities to strengthen local partnerships and employment pathways.

In October 2025, Council undertook a further three engagement activities with 57 participants from the local business community and broader public to inform the economic development components of the strategy. This engagement focused on business support needs, communication and responsiveness, place-based investment and future opportunities for inclusive economic growth.

In March 2026, the draft strategy was publicly exhibited for four weeks via the Shaping Banyule platform. Council received 27 survey responses and two written submissions, including feedback from Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on Aboriginal economic development. This feedback reinforced key themes from earlier consultation, particularly around reducing barriers for businesses, and identified opportunities to strengthen the strategy's approach to Aboriginal economic participation, social procurement accountability and tailored employment pathways.

In total, 247 contributions across 15 engagement activities, a public survey and written submissions have informed the Inclusive Economy Strategy, ensuring it reflects local insights and aspirations for a more inclusive, resilient and thriving local economy. Full consultation findings are documented in the Inclusive Economy Strategy 2026-2031 Engagement Report.

A Gender Impact Assessment was completed in April 2024 on the social enterprise and inclusive local jobs components of the strategy. The assessment's recommendations have been considered and incorporated into the strategy where appropriate.



Image: Hustle & Thrive

Reporting and Monitoring Cycle

The local economy is dynamic and fastmoving, shaped by changing community needs, market conditions, and emerging opportunities. To remain responsive and effective, this Inclusive Economy Strategy will be reviewed annually. At the end of each financial year, Council will publish an Achievements Report on the Banyule website, outlining progress against targets and updating the Action Plan where needed to stay responsive to community priorities and economic change.



Image: Whispers. Social Enterprise. Ivanhoe Library

Appendix 1:

Banyule Community Vision 2041

“We in Banyule are a thriving, sustainable, inclusive and connected community. We are engaged, we belong, and we value and protect our environment.”



The Inclusive Economy Strategy supports all six Community Vision Priority Themes, recognising that economic participation is closely connected to place, wellbeing, sustainability and community life:

Our Inclusive, Healthy and Connected Community — by supporting a local economy where people feel connected through working, volunteering or learning locally, doing business locally and engaging with local enterprises as employees, customers or suppliers, with opportunities that reflect the diversity of people who live in Banyule.

Our Sustainable Environment — by supporting businesses to transition to more sustainable, zero-waste and low-carbon practices, build environmental capability and respond to climate-related risks and opportunities.

Our Well-Built City — by contributing to the planning and delivery of fit-for-purpose places for business, work and investment, ensuring activity centres and employment precincts support local businesses, social connection, cultural safety and long-term economic stability and growth.

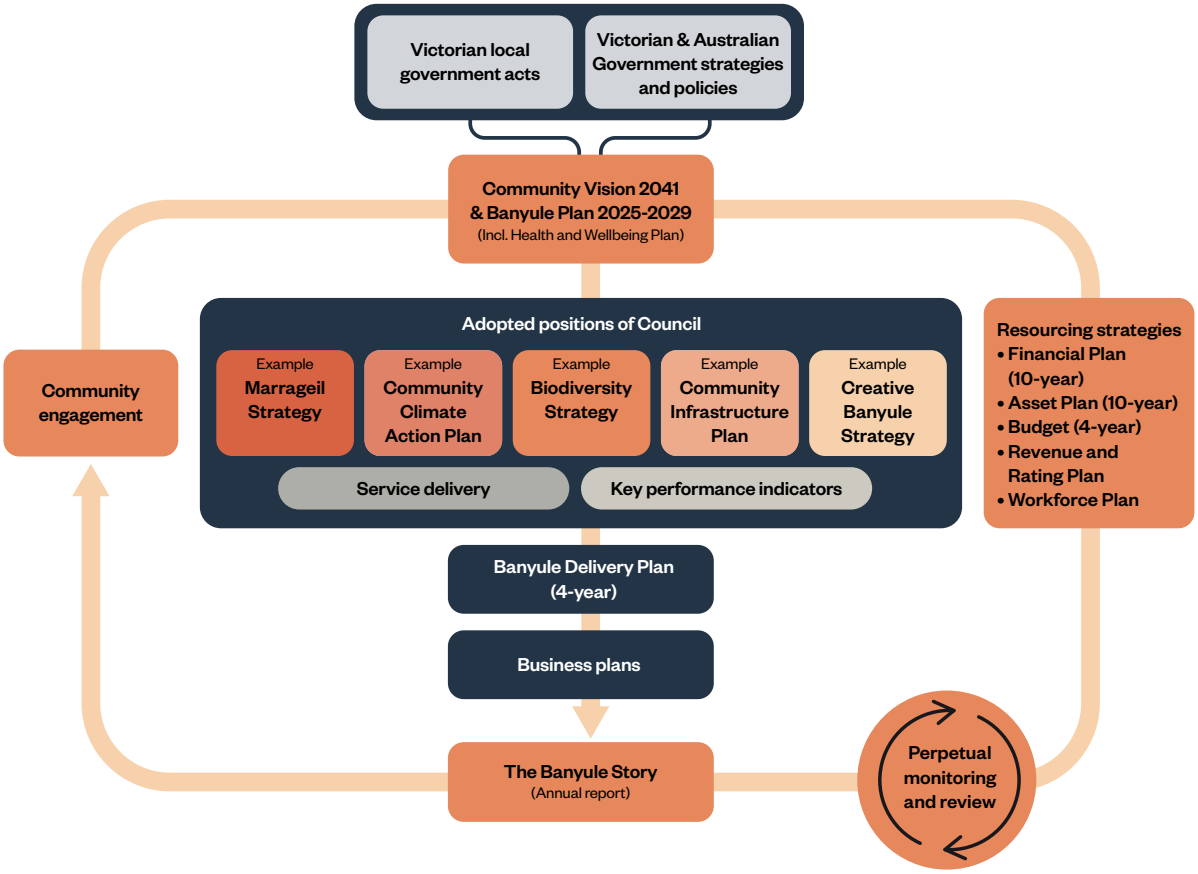
Our Valued Community Assets and Facilities — by using Council-owned assets and facilities to support inclusive economic participation, including access for social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and priority jobseekers, through affordable, culturally safe spaces for learning, work and social connection.

Our Thriving Local Economy — by supporting a business-friendly, inclusive and socially responsible local economy that enables local businesses, industries, and purpose-led businesses to grow, addresses barriers to employment, creates diverse and flexible local jobs, fosters innovation and partnerships, values volunteering, and strengthens long-term economic resilience and community wellbeing.

Our Trusted and Responsive Leadership — by operating as a Business Friendly Council, coordinating action across Council, advocating for inclusive economic development, and using Council’s influence and assets to shape fairer local economic opportunities.

Appendix 2:

Integrated Planning



Banyule has an integrated strategic approach to planning and delivering service outcomes for the community and to meet requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

The Inclusive Economy Strategy is guided by the Banyule Community Vision 2041, informed by Banyule's place-based approach, and aligned with the objectives of The Banyule Plan 2025–2029.

Banyule Health and Wellbeing Priorities

In accordance with the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, Banyule's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan is integrated into The Banyule Plan. It identifies five priority areas to promote health equity across the municipality:

recognised as key social determinants of health. The Inclusive Economy Strategy directly contributes to these health and wellbeing priorities by strengthening inclusive employment pathways, supporting social enterprise and Aboriginal business development, fostering vibrant local precincts and addressing structural barriers to economic participation.

Actions in the Inclusive Economy Action Plan that directly contribute to one or more of the five Health and Wellbeing priorities have been identified and flagged throughout.

Building Respectful Communities

Lifelong Healthy Habits

Every Body Active

Healthy Planet, Healthy People

Social Connection with Purpose

Vision

All Banyule residents enjoy their highest attainable level of health and wellbeing at every stage of life.

Our aim

Improve health equity by providing responsive, inclusive, prevention-focused, culturally safe services that are discrimination-free.

Life stages

Healthy start Pre-natal – 2 years

Healthy children 3–11 years

Healthy young people 12–26 years

Healthy adults 26–59 years

Healthy ageing 60+ years

Foundations for a healthy life

- Cultural determinants of health
- Social determinants of health
- Human rights based approach to health

Priorities

Building Respectful Communities

- First Nations inclusion and cultural safety
- Address family and gender-based violence
- Identify and eliminate discrimination
- Develop and improve social infrastructure
- Address barriers to employment and civic participation

Lifelong Healthy Habits

- Partner with local First Nations groups to improve health outcomes
- Address barriers to health equity
- Foster wellbeing throughout life
- Support a great start to life
- Address modifiable risk factors through health promotion

Every Body Active

- Make benefits of active living accessible for all bodies
- Diversify the range of free/affordable, inclusive and accessible choices
- Improve wayfinding and promotion to help people connect
- Support people to exercise socially and safely
- Increase tree canopy cover

Healthy Planet, Healthy People

- Put Caring for Country principles at the centre
- Strengthen neighbourhood ecosystems to enhance capacity and resilience
- Invite people to connect with and care for our natural environments
- Foster eco-wise practices and further climate action
- Enhance biodiversity, waterways and green open spaces

Social Connection with Purpose

- Actively support First Nations self-determination
- Support for people to form relationships and express themselves
- Targeted social connection and belonging initiatives
- Intergenerational, intracultural and intercultural connections
- Enhanced vocational and volunteering opportunities

Aboriginal Economic Self-Determination

Council's Marrageil Strategy 2024-2031 recognises that supporting Aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs, and promoting their participation in local economic activities, is a critical pathway towards self-determination. The Inclusive Economy Strategy is aligned with the Marrageil Strategy across several of its focus areas, in particular increasing economic opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Building on foundations already in place, including Council's First Nations Traineeship Program, existing support for Aboriginal businesses through the Social Enterprise Partnership Program and Growth Fund, and efforts to include Aboriginal businesses within Council's procurement and supply chain, this strategy strengthens the commitment to Aboriginal economic self-determination. Council acknowledges that doing this well will take time, genuine partnership and sustained commitment. The approach set out in this strategy reflects a starting point, not an endpoint.

Over time, Council's aim is to work with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Aboriginal organisations to determine the most effective partnership and governance arrangements for Aboriginal economic development in Banyule, and to progressively strengthen Aboriginal economic participation.

Appendix 3:

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Council plays multiple, interconnected roles as an enabler, connector and leader in delivering an inclusive local economy. Central to this is our commitment to supporting businesses that contribute positively to community wellbeing. Through these roles Council leverages its influence, resources and relationships to strengthen local businesses, create employment pathways and promote long-term economic participation.

Enabler	Creating the conditions for businesses to operate and grow by providing clear information, access to support services, capability building, networks and practical guidance.
Connector	Facilitating connections between businesses, social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses, community organisations, service providers, training providers and job seekers to strengthen collaboration and pathways to employment.
Promoter	Recognising, celebrating and sharing local business success stories, innovation and positive economic, social and cultural impact.
Leader	Leading by example through Council's own practices and influencing broader system change in inclusive economic practices.
Advocate	Championing investment in Banyule, particularly in future-focused areas such as emerging industries, skills development and local job creation.
Funder	Supporting businesses to grow and adapt through targeted grants and strategic funding programs, tailored to recipient needs.
Partner	Collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders to design and deliver place-based initiatives that strengthen local economic participation and resilience.
Customer	Using Council's purchasing power to engage local businesses, social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses within Council's supply chain where appropriate.

When referring to businesses, this includes social enterprises, Aboriginal and other purpose-led businesses.

Appendix 4:
Glossary

Aboriginal business / Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander business - A business that is at least 51 per cent owned by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. These businesses operate across all industries.

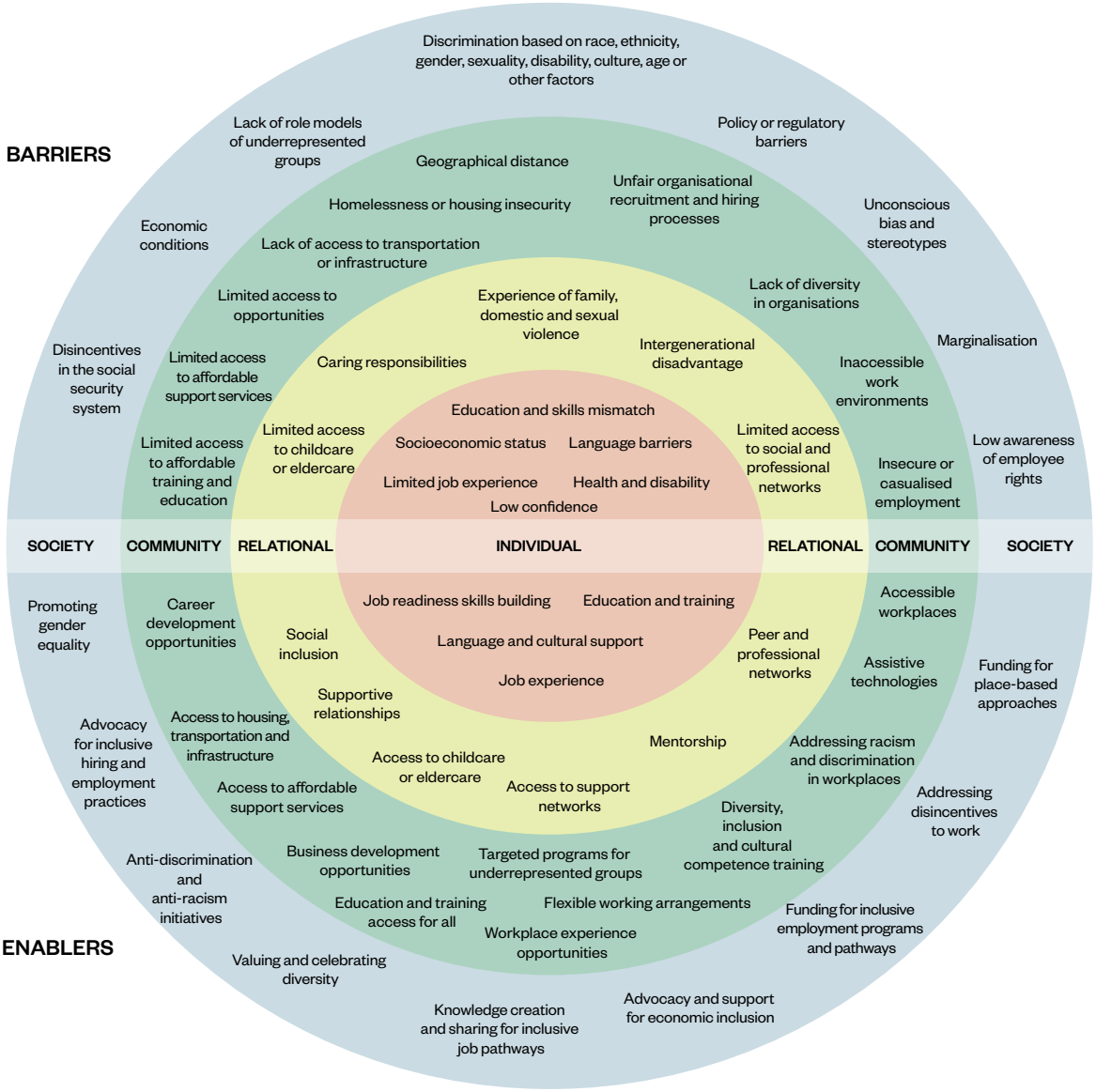
Activity centre - A designated area that serves as a focal point for retail, services, employment and community activity, supporting access to jobs, goods and services. In a local government context, activity centres play a key role in creating vibrant and economically active neighbourhoods.

Barriers to employment - Factors that make it harder for a person to find, get or keep a job. These factors can be personal, social or structural, and often overlap, creating greater challenges for some people. (Refer to Figure 1.)

Businesses - All types of businesses, which includes social enterprises, Aboriginal, disability and other purpose-led businesses.

Economic development - In a local government context, economic development refers to Council's role in supporting a strong, resilient and diverse local economy

Figure 1: Barriers and enablers of employment through an ecological levels perspective



by enabling business growth, investment and employment. It focuses on creating the conditions for sustainable economic activity that contributes to community wellbeing.

Inclusive economic opportunity - Any action that meaningfully supports people and businesses to participate in Banyule's local economy. This includes job creation and employment pathways, business support services, professional networking opportunities, capability building programs and supporting the growth of social enterprises and Aboriginal businesses.

Local Economy - The team within Banyule City Council responsible for delivering this strategy.

Job / Job outcome - Paid employment, including apprenticeships and paid traineeships.

Job pathways / Pathways to employment - Activities designed to lead to paid employment, such as study, training, volunteering, work experience, internships (unpaid), student placements and structured workplace learning.

Social enterprise - A business that exists primarily to achieve a social, cultural or environmental purpose, and reinvests most of its profits back into that purpose. It operates in the market, earning income through trade while creating positive community impact.

Traders association - A member-based group of local businesses within a defined centre or precinct that works collectively to promote the area, support traders and advocate on local business issues. Associations typically collaborate with Council and other partners on place activation, events, marketing and economic vitality.



Image: July 2025

Contacting Banyule City Council

We're here to support our community. For any enquiries or information about Council services, please reach out:

Telephone: (03) 9490 4222
Email: enquiries@banyule.vic.gov.au
Website: banyule.vic.gov.au

Accessibility support:

If you have difficulty hearing or speaking, you can contact us through the National Relay Service.
Call 133 677 (TTY) or 1300 555 727 (voice) and ask for 9490 4222.

Postal address:

PO Box 94, Greensborough VIC 3088

Council service centres and opening hours:

Greensborough: Level 3, 1 Flintoff Street – Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm

Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub: 275 Upper Heidelberg Road – Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Need an interpreter?

If you need an interpreter, call 131 450 and ask to speak with Banyule Council on 9490 4222. This is a free service provided by TIS National.

中文 (简体) :
如果您需要口译员，请拨打 131 450 并要求与 Banyule 市议会通话，电话是 9490 4222。这是 TIS National 提供的免费服务。

Italiano:
Se hai bisogno di un interprete, chiama il 131 450 e chiedi di parlare con il Consiglio di Banyule al numero 9490 4222. Questo è un servizio gratuito fornito da TIS National.

中文 (繁體) :
如果你需要傳譯員，請致電 131 450 並要求與 Banyule 市議會通話，電話是 9490 4222。這是 TIS National 提供的免費服務。

Ελληνικά:
Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, καλέστε το 131 450 και ζητήστε να μιλήσετε με τον Δήμο Banyule στο 9490 4222. Αυτή είναι μια δωρεάν υπηρεσία που παρέχεται από το TIS National.

العربية:
إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مترجم، اتصل على 131 450 واطلب التحدث مع مجلس بلدية Banyule. هذه خدمة مجانية مقدمة من TIS National على الرقم 9490 4222.

हिन्दी:
यदि आपको दुभाषिए की आवश्यकता है, तो 131 450 पर कॉल करें और Banyule काउंसिल से 9490 4222 पर बात करने के लिए कहें। यह TIS National द्वारा प्रदान की गई एक निःशुल्क सेवा है।

فارسی:
اگر به مترجم نیاز دارید، با شماره 131 450 تماس بگیرید و بخواهید با شورای Banyule صحبت کنید. این یک سرویس رایگان است که توسط TIS National ارائه می‌شود. به شماره 9490 4222

Tiếng Việt:
Nếu bạn cần thông dịch viên, hãy gọi 131 450 và yêu cầu nói chuyện với Hội đồng Banyule theo số 9490 4222. Đây là dịch vụ miễn phí do TIS National cung cấp.

Soomaali:
Haddii aad u baahan tahay turjubaan, wac 131 450 oo weydii inaad la hadasho Golaha Banyule lambarka 9490 4222. Tani waa adeeg bilaash ah oo ay bixiso TIS National.

Español:
Si necesita un intérprete, llame al 131 450 y pida hablar con el Ayuntamiento de Banyule al 9490 4222. Este es un servicio gratuito proporcionado por TIS National.