



# Local Investment Plan

September 2026





Photo: Emily Attard

SIAG Brimbank respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters in and around Brimbank. We pay respect to Elders, past and present, and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage, and connection to land as a proud part of our shared identity.

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# Introduction: Welcome to SIAG Brimbank

Social Inclusion Action Groups are community-led advisory and funding decision-making groups established to guide the allocation of the Local Social Inclusion Investment Fund. They exist on a simple principle: communities are the experts in their own experiences, needs, and the solutions that will work for them.

We are a group of dedicated community members who bring a diverse range of lived experiences and a deep commitment to this place. Between us we hold knowledge of Brimbank that no report can capture - what it is like to arrive here and know no one, to care for someone, to grow older here, to grow up here. We have navigated systems, we have needed to reach out for support, and we have played an important role in supporting others. We give our time because we want this to be a community where everyone belongs.

That knowledge is what drives this work. We have worked over the past few months to identify what our community needs, and this plan comes from identifying where we think investment is most important.

*The vision of SIAG Brimbank is to create a welcoming, safe and well connected Brimbank community, where everyone is respected, included, and valued.*

## **SIAG Brimbank has five aims:**

- Identify local needs, gaps, and strengths in the Brimbank community.
- Work with local organisations, community members, and local government to respond to identified needs and support a range of place-based initiatives that strengthen community voice, participation, inclusion, safety and connection.
- Promote social connection, inclusion, belonging and wellbeing in the community.
- Draw on and strengthen SIAG members' skills and knowledge about social inclusion to support their decision-making.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of SIAG-supported initiatives to ensure they are genuinely improving social inclusion in Brimbank.

## About this Plan

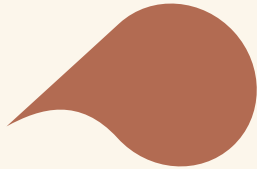
This is the first Local Investment Plan for SIAG Brimbank. It sets out what we have heard, what we have chosen to prioritise, and how we will invest.

It is written to guide investment over time, not to make a single round of funding decisions. The priorities in this plan describe the changes we want to see in Brimbank, and the kinds of work that will get us there. Individual decisions about what to fund will be made against these priorities as opportunities come forward.

We also expect to learn as we go. Some of what we fund will work better than we hoped, and some will not work the way we expected. We have built reflection into how we operate - reviewing what is happening, listening to the people affected by it, and being willing to change our approach. This plan is a starting point, and we will keep improving it as we learn what makes a real difference for our community.

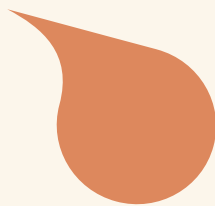
# How this Plan was developed

## Forming



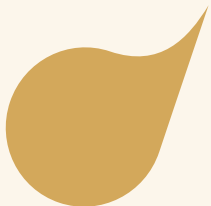
**April and May 2026:** We started by getting to know each other – exploring what social inclusion means to us and establishing how we would work together through our decision-making principles and our Terms of Reference.

## Listening



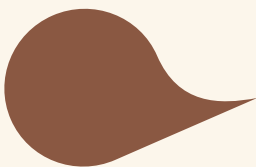
**June 2026:** We looked at what the data in the Needs Analysis says about Brimbank and met with different people across Council to really explore what already exists, what works well, and where the gaps are. That gave us a clearer picture of the needs, and of where our investment could be most valuable rather than duplicating what is already here.

## Prioritising



**July 2026:** We worked through what mattered most and why – knowing not everything can be funded, we had to weigh things up and make choices about our agreed priorities.

## Designing



**August 2026:** Once we knew our priorities, we needed to work through who makes decisions, how different community organisations and groups can be involved, what we will look for when we fund projects and how we'll know it is making a difference.

## Learning



**September 2026 onwards:** Next comes putting this Plan into action and reflecting on how it is going as we go. We know some things will work better than we expect and others won't, so we have built in time to learn from what emerges and adapt — keeping this Plan responsive to what our community needs.

## Our investment priorities

### **Welcoming locals**

Support residents to know what is available in Brimbank and to access it, so they can take part in groups and activities — including people who miss out when information is only online or only in English.

### **Intercultural connection**

Bring people together through language, culture and engagement so culturally diverse residents feel connected, safe, and confident - opening the door for cultural exchange and increased sense of belonging.

### **Intergenerational connection**

Strengthen intergenerational connection between young people and the adults in their lives — parents, elders, guardians and others — so all feel safe to talk about their concerns and pressures.

### **Youth participation**

Create activities designed for young people that help them feel safe, supported, and genuinely engaged while they build practical skills, increase confidence and have more positive role models who support their aspirations.

## Welcoming locals

*Support residents to know what is available in Brimbank and to access it, so they can take part in groups and activities — including people who miss out when information is only online or only in English.*

### Why this matters

There are many different activities and programs running in Brimbank. Council runs almost 400 programs a year across 37 venues, and community groups run many more. But many people don't know what is available, and even when they do, taking the first step to get involved can be hard.

When it comes to finding out what is available, people can miss out on opportunities, services and social connection when information is difficult to find, only available online, not in their preferred language, or when limited digital skills make it hard to access. Those most at risk of missing out are often the people who are already the most disconnected, such as older residents, people who aren't online, and people who have recently arrived. Research tells us that people usually find out about local activities through someone they know and trust: a neighbour, a community leader, a familiar face at the neighbourhood house or library. This means that local, word-of-mouth networks are one of the best ways to make sure information reaches everyone.

When it comes to getting involved once people know what is available, research shows that the hardest part is the beginning, when someone is uncertain and doesn't yet know if a group is for them. Before they feel confident to join in, people need to know they will be welcomed. That is where a trusted person makes the difference, and it is what this objective sets out to support.

This objective is about making sure what already exists in Brimbank actually reaches people, including those who have lived here for years but never found a way in. That means using the networks and trusted people already in place, and making sure someone is on hand to help people feel welcome when they want to get involved.

### What the Needs Analysis showed

Lack of awareness was one of the most consistent issues raised in consultation. People described information about local activities as mostly online and mostly in English, and said it was not reaching the community leaders and local networks that people actually hear things through.

Other relevant data from the Needs Analysis included:

- 29% of Brimbank adults experienced loneliness in 2023, compared with 25% across the Western region and 23% in Victoria. More opportunities to take part, and more support to take them up are clearly linked to this data.
- Brimbank has recorded the highest poker machine losses in Victoria for over a decade (\$171 million in 2023–24), and the risk of gambling harm is higher for people experiencing loneliness. Brimbank also has the second highest rate in the Metro West Region of ambulance attendances for illicit drug use. Connection to local people and activities can help protect against these harms.
- Information about what's on is not consistently reaching people who aren't digitally connected, who don't speak English as a first language, or who rely on word of mouth through their own networks.
- Newly arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are often unfamiliar with how local systems work.

- 7% of Brimbank adults have no close family or friends to talk to. This is highest among older adults, newly arrived migrants and people under housing stress. These are the same people least likely to hear about a local activity from someone they know.
- Volunteering has fallen to 7%, well below Greater Melbourne's 12%. That means fewer people in the informal local roles that connect neighbours to what's happening around them.

Consultation also pointed to what works: community connectors, word of mouth, multilingual materials, and trusted local places like libraries and neighbourhood houses. People move from not knowing anyone to feeling they belong through a process, and having someone guide them through it makes the difference.

### Ideas aligned to investment categories

These are illustrative only. The SIAG welcomes other ideas across all investment categories and will work with the Partnership Roundtable to identify suitable projects.

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>Accessible facilities &amp; places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pop-up welcome desks at shopping centres, markets, gyms, libraries and community events, connecting residents with local opportunities.</li> <li>• Neighbourhood houses as trusted local hubs where residents can find out what's on and get support to take part, including through community connector programs.</li> <li>• Electronic billboards and noticeboards in waiting spaces, sharing information about what's on.</li> <li>• Sporting clubs as trusted places where cultures, generations and communities already come together.</li> <li>• Inclusive programs at local facilities, drawing on examples such as the Brimbank Aquatic and Wellness Centre inclusive communities program.</li> </ul> |
|  | <p><b>Skills &amp; knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital literacy programs that help people navigate unfamiliar systems and know which information can be trusted.</li> <li>• A local welcome pack and regular "get to know your area" tours for anyone wanting to find out what is available in their suburb, whether they are new to Brimbank or have lived here for years.</li> <li>• Information about local services, groups and activities shared with settlement organisations, so they can pass it on to newly arrived clients.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|  | <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure people can reach out via various channels – e.g. email, phone, text and online chat.</li> <li>• A buddy system where a community connector or volunteer goes with someone to their first activity.</li> <li>• Local volunteers who help people sign up for activities in person.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|  | <p><b>Social inclusion &amp; participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community connector programs that find out what kind of group a person is looking for, contact the group and make sure someone is there to welcome them. This helps residents move from receiving information to taking part and belonging.</li> <li>• Community "try it" days where residents can attend activities without needing to commit or register long-term.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|  | <p><b>Influencing policies &amp; norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multilingual and easy-read information in places people already visit, such as libraries, GPs, schools, gyms, supermarkets and community centres.</li> <li>• A central, regularly updated directory of local activities, available by phone, SMS and in person as well as online.</li> <li>• Groups and clubs nominating a "welcome person" to greet and support new members.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

## Intercultural connection

*Bring people together through language, culture and engagement so culturally diverse residents feel connected, safe, and confident - opening the door for cultural exchange and increased sense of belonging.*

### Why this matters

Brimbank's diversity is one of its defining strengths. More than 160 languages are spoken here, and long-established and newly arrived communities live alongside each other across every suburb.

But living in the same place is not the same as knowing each other, talking to each other or doing things together. Consultation told us that people often connect within their own community, but rarely across cultures in any meaningful way. Without that connection, trust is harder to build, and experiences of racism and exclusion, which are reported at higher rates in Brimbank than across Melbourne, are more likely to go unchallenged.

We also need to recognise that cultural diversity exists within communities, not only between them. Sharing a cultural background does not mean sharing the same experience. Age, length of time in Australia, language, disability and socioeconomic circumstances all shape how connected someone feels, and people can be on the edges of their own community as well as the wider one.

This objective is about creating occasions for residents of different backgrounds to make meaningful connections, so they feel safe and part of the wider community. Shared meals, projects, celebrations and learning give people the chance to meet, but we know that one-off occasions are not enough on their own. Regular, repeated activities are more likely to build real relationships, trust and understanding over time. These relationships build the confidence that makes everyday participation possible. Stronger connections across communities can also open up employment and professional opportunities.

### What the Needs Analysis showed

Brimbank is one of the most culturally diverse municipalities in Melbourne, and the consultation showed that this diversity does not automatically translate into connection between communities. Barriers of language, experiences of discrimination, and stigma all limit how comfortably people take part in community life alongside people from different backgrounds.

- 57% of residents speak a language other than English at home and 48% were born overseas, compared with 34% and 36% across Greater Melbourne.
- 19% of Brimbank adults reported experiencing discrimination in the previous 12 months, higher than metropolitan Melbourne (16.3%) and Victoria (15.8%). Consultation participants described rising racist commentary online and discrimination in public spaces.
- Language was consistently named as the single biggest barrier — affecting confidence, communication and the ability to navigate local systems, not just comprehension.
- Some communities are being missed altogether. Newly arrived Pacific Islander communities and smaller cultural groups were identified as falling outside mainstream programs. A key gap was culturally specific outreach: programs designed with and for a particular community to support its safety and wellbeing.
- Stigma around mental health, disability and family violence, combined with mistrust of government and support services, further limits participation for some communities.

Consultation also pointed to what works: bringing diverse groups together to work on shared projects and find common experiences (including around racism) was identified as a way to build inclusion.

### Ideas aligned to investment categories

These are illustrative only. The SIAG welcomes other ideas across all investment categories and will work with the Partnership Roundtable to identify suitable projects.

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>Accessible facilities &amp; places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood houses, libraries and community centres as shared spaces where different cultural groups can meet and run activities together.</li> <li>• Community gardens that bring together residents from different cultural backgrounds.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|    | <p><b>Skills &amp; knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English language programs that build confidence and independence.</li> <li>• Language exchange and cultural learning, such as classes where residents teach each other their language, cooking or traditions.</li> <li>• Cultural safety training for community groups, clubs and volunteers.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|   | <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular community meals or cooking programs where people from different backgrounds prepare and share food and recipes from home.</li> <li>• Casual social sport and recreation, such as walking groups, soccer or badminton, where people don't need to speak the same language to join in.</li> <li>• Intercultural arts, music and creative projects, including street art or music days run by several cultural groups together.</li> <li>• Storytelling projects where residents share migration, family and local experiences.</li> </ul> |
|  | <p><b>Social inclusion &amp; participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural mentoring or buddy programs connecting newly arrived residents with longer-established residents.</li> <li>• Warm referrals, where community connectors introduce residents to activities and help them take the first few steps.</li> <li>• Local tours and activities where residents share their cultures and learn about each other.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                          |
|  | <p><b>Influencing policies &amp; norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small grants that fund community groups to collaborate with another cultural group over time, rather than running separate or one-off events.</li> <li>• Support for local organisations to collaborate on social inclusion initiatives, including shared projects that address racism.</li> <li>• Opportunities for communities to connect as a way to support mental health earlier in culturally diverse communities, in line with the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.</li> </ul>               |

## Intergenerational connection

*Strengthen intergenerational connection between young people and the adults in their lives — parents, elders, guardians and others — so all feel safe to talk about their concerns and pressures.*

### Why this matters

Brimbank is a family-oriented community, with larger households than most of Melbourne and a growing number of older residents. Many households hold several generations under one roof, and often several languages and cultural expectations as well.

Young people told us they are navigating pressures their parents and elders did not face, and that language and cultural differences within their own families can make those pressures hard to talk about. Older residents, for their part, described their own isolation and the loss of places to gather. Both groups stand to gain from stronger connection. Young people can support older residents with technology skills and links to contemporary community life, while older residents can offer experience, guidance and perspective.

This objective is about strengthening the everyday relationships between young people and the adults around them, both within and beyond their immediate families. Parents, grandparents, elders and guardians are central, but community mentors, neighbours, sporting clubs and cultural organisations can also connect young people with trusted adults. This is especially important where young people do not have strong intergenerational connections at home. It means building on the relationships young people already have, and helping them form new ones, so that concerns are raised early with someone they trust, rather than not at all.

### What the Needs Analysis showed

The Needs Analysis shows both older and younger residents feeling disconnected, but for different reasons - and it shows local programs almost always addressing them separately.

- Existing programs are largely organised by age group - separate offerings for young people, families, adults and seniors. There is little that brings generations together, which misses opportunities to build understanding across age groups and address isolation at both ends.
- The Resilient Youth Survey 2024 identified language differences within families and the pressure of navigating more than one cultural identity as significant concerns for young people in Brimbank.
- Older residents described feeling isolated, particularly after the Brimbank Senior Social Group closed, and consultation raised the lack of ethno-specific and bilingual support for older people.
- Younger family and community members often already bridge language and cultural differences for older people, and activities that bring the generations together can build on that.

Bringing these groups together addresses both. Older residents gain the regular contact and sense of purpose that reduces loneliness. Young people gain stronger relationships with the adults in their own families, and with adults outside them who take an interest and can offer perspective on what they are navigating. Consultation supported this directly, pointing to intergenerational events, storytelling and shared meals as ways to build connection — and Brimbank already has the settings for it in libraries, neighbourhood houses, community gardens and Men's Sheds.

## Ideas aligned to investment categories

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|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>Accessible facilities &amp; places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs delivered in places older residents already know and feel comfortable in, such as libraries and neighbourhood houses.</li> <li>• Venues close to public transport, so participants can get there without relying on driving.</li> <li>• Young people and older residents working together on projects that improve shared local places.</li> </ul>                                                                                                             |
|    | <p><b>Skills &amp; knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill swaps where young people help older residents with phones, computers, apps and online services, and older residents teach cooking and life skills.</li> <li>• Informal placements for students to build skills in community development through intergenerational activities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|    | <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational mentoring that builds young people's confidence and a positive vision for their future.</li> <li>• Storytelling projects where young people interview older residents and record local, cultural and family history.</li> <li>• Older residents visiting local secondary schools to share their lived experience and encourage students to raise concerns with someone they trust.</li> </ul>                                                                                 |
|  | <p><b>Social inclusion &amp; participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaxed drop-in sessions, including cultural activities, where young people and the adults in their lives can talk through things like family expectations and mental health without pressure.</li> <li>• Workshops for young people and their family members that build trust and practical ways to talk about concerns.</li> <li>• "Adopt a grandfriend" programs pairing isolated older residents with younger community members.</li> </ul>                       |
|  | <p><b>Influencing policies &amp; norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging services and groups to design programs for mixed ages, rather than separate offerings for each age group.</li> <li>• Research to better understand the challenges between young people and adults in Brimbank.</li> <li>• Opportunities for young and older residents to take part in local decision-making together.</li> <li>• Building trust between families and social services, so young and older residents feel confident seeking support.</li> </ul> |

## Youth participation

*Create activities designed for young people that help them feel safe, supported, and genuinely engaged while they build practical skills, increase confidence and have more positive role models who support their aspirations.*

### Why this matters

Young people in Brimbank have clear views about what would improve their lives and their community, and a track record of organising things themselves when given the space. What they lack is not motivation but opportunity. Cost is often the first barrier. When activities, events and sport come with fees, young people from low-income households are the first to miss out, even when the interest is there. Aside from affordable activities close to home, they also need adults who encourage and support them, and a real say in the decisions that affect them.

When those opportunities are missing, the effects show. More young people in Brimbank are disengaged from education, employment and training than across Melbourne, and young people aged 18 to 24 are among those at higher risk of gambling harm. Without positive pathways close to home, other things fill the space.

We also recognise that 'young people' are not one group. Younger teenagers, older teenagers and young adults may need different approaches, as may young people from culturally diverse communities, LGBTQIA+ young people and those experiencing financial or social disadvantage. What feels safe and welcoming to one group may not to another, so activities need to be shaped with the young people they are for.

This objective is about creating activities designed around young people's needs, where they feel safe and supported, build practical skills and confidence, and connect with adults and peers who support their goals. It is also about who shapes those activities. Young people should have real decision-making power, rather than only taking part in activities designed by adults. That means involving them from the beginning: identifying problems, designing activities, deciding what is funded and evaluating whether projects worked. When young people help shape what is on offer, activities are more likely to reflect what they want, and young people build skills, confidence and a stronger stake in their community along the way.

### What the Needs Analysis showed

Young people in Brimbank are engaged and have clear views about what would help them, but the consultation showed real gaps between what they want and what is available to them locally.

- 9% of young people aged 15 to 24 are not engaged in education, employment or training, compared with 7% across Greater Melbourne.
- Young people aged 18 to 24 are also among those at higher risk of gambling harm.
- The Resilient Youth Survey 2024 found young people here have clear views on what would support their wellbeing and connection and raised their concerns about the shortage of culturally safe spaces.
- Young people report feeling their voices are not heard by decision-makers.
- Cost is a direct barrier. Activity, event and sports fees were named repeatedly in consultation, in a municipality where 25% of households are low income.
- LGBTQIA+ young people face a particular shortage of safe, affirming and affordable local spaces, alongside long waitlists for specialist mental health support.

Consultation also pointed to what works: youth-led initiatives already running locally, including Come & Try Roller Derby and youth magazines produced by and for queer young people, show that grassroots, youth-driven activity is both feasible and valued in Brimbank.

### Ideas aligned to investment categories

These are illustrative only. The SIAG welcomes other ideas across all investment categories and will work with the Partnership Roundtable to identify suitable projects.

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>Accessible facilities &amp; places</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe spaces outside school and home where young people can hang out, be themselves and help run things.</li> <li>• Pop-up youth spaces in different suburbs, so young people don't have to travel.</li> <li>• Free drop-in nights at local recreation centres with gym access, sport and free food.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                |
|    | <p><b>Skills &amp; knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free practical workshops in areas such as first aid, barista training, resume writing, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, cooking, technology and creative skills.</li> <li>• Programs that help young people practise making decisions about their own lives.</li> <li>• Tours and visits where young people explore different fields, meet professionals and build confidence.</li> </ul>                                            |
|  | <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring that matches young people with adults from fields they're interested in.</li> <li>• Youth-led community events, media, arts and cultural projects.</li> <li>• Free youth festivals and street events, such as video gaming, hip-hop classes and sport.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           |
|  | <p><b>Social inclusion &amp; participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free or affordable evening and weekend activities, including sport and recreation.</li> <li>• Pathways from participation into volunteering, employment or further education.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|  | <p><b>Influencing policies &amp; norms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A youth advisory group with a real role in designing and evaluating funded projects.</li> <li>• Youth-led grants where young people decide how funding is used, including small grants to run their own events such as gaming tournaments.</li> <li>• Better ways to collect, communicate and act on youth feedback.</li> <li>• Training for adults and services on youth development and working with young people.</li> </ul> |

# Our investment approach

We have chosen to invest through a partnerships roundtable approach where we bring together a small group of partners who work with us, and with each other, over the life of this Plan.

We chose this for three main reasons:

- **Our priorities need more than one organisation.** The things we want to change are complex and far-reaching. No single organisation holds all the knowledge, relationships or reach required. A roundtable lets us draw on different expertise and networks at once, and work on several aspects of the same issue together.
- **It asks organisations to work together rather than separately.** Partners can share ideas and expertise, refer and bring in other organisations who can help, and larger organisations can support and mentor smaller ones.
- **We think it will lead to more sustained outcomes.** Concerted, collective effort over time is more likely to create lasting change than a series of individual activities that each end when the funding does. We want to build something that continues.

## Partnership Roundtable structure

The Partnership Roundtable will be a core group of approximately four to six partner organisations, recruited through an open Expression of Interest process and appointed for a two-year term. Roundtable partners will work directly with SIAG Brimbank to develop and deliver projects under this Plan.

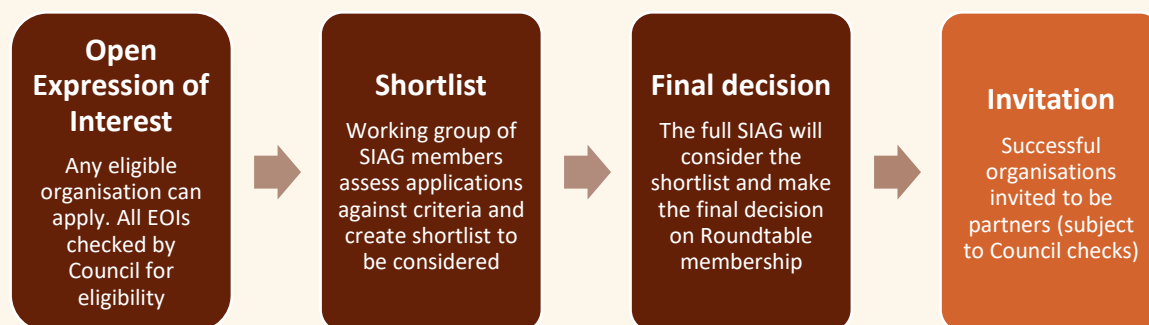
## Roles and responsibilities

- **The Partnership Roundtable** develops potential projects and investment proposals that respond to this Plan's priorities.
- **SIAG Brimbank** endorses project proposals and continues its oversight of the Local Investment Plan.
- **Brimbank City Council** is responsible for funding administration and contractual arrangements.

Where possible, Roundtable partners will lead the projects they develop, but this is not guaranteed. It depends on the projects selected and which organisation is best placed to deliver them. Appointment to the Roundtable therefore does not guarantee funding. Project funding can only be provided to incorporated or auspiced organisations, and remains subject to SIAG endorsement, available funding, Council due diligence and an executed funding agreement.

## How we will identify and recruit partners

We want the Roundtable to be open to any organisation doing relevant work in Brimbank, not just the ones we already know about. We aim to bring together a mix of established organisations and smaller grassroots and community-led groups, so that together the Roundtable covers all of our priorities and reflects the diversity of Brimbank's communities. SIAG Brimbank, supported by Council, will invite expressions of interest and assess eligible applications against published selection criteria. The process will be simple and clear, so that smaller groups with limited time and resources are not put off from applying.



As shown in the graphic above, Council will first check each expression of interest for eligibility, so that SIAG members only assess applications that meet Council requirements.

A working group of SIAG members will then assess eligible applications against the selection criteria, and may request further information from applicants if needed. The size of the working group will depend on the number of expressions of interest received, so that no member assesses more than ten applications. The working group will put forward a shortlist of no more than 15 organisations to the full SIAG, which will make the final decision on Roundtable membership. Appointments are subject to Council completing the required probity, risk and due diligence checks.

Council can provide advice throughout the process, including on eligibility, probity and contracting requirements, but the decision on partners rests with the SIAG.

### Conflicts of interest

At both the working group and full SIAG stages, members will declare any conflicts of interest, for example where they work for, volunteer with, receive services from, or have a close relationship with an applicant organisation. Where a conflict exists, that member will step out of the discussion and decision on that application. All declared conflicts will be recorded.

### Organisations not selected

Organisations not selected for the Roundtable will be invited to join the wider network. This means being kept informed about SIAG activities, invited to take part in projects where appropriate, and considered if a Roundtable partner withdraws.

## Eligibility Criteria

Applicants do not need to be incorporated to join the Partnership Roundtable. Incorporated organisations, unincorporated community groups, or social enterprises can all apply. To be eligible, applicants must:

- be based in Brimbank or deliver services to the Brimbank community
- operate primarily in service of the community and show a clear commitment to diversity and inclusion in how they work
- operate in line with Child Safe Standards
- have no affiliation with a political party, and no ties to the gambling, alcohol or tobacco industries
- be in good financial and administrative with standing Council.

## Partnership Roundtable selection criteria

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Points |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Willingness and ability to work in partnership</b><br>Evidence of working with other organisations, readiness to share expertise and contribute to collaborative work with the SIAG and fellow partners.                                        | 30     |
| <b>Connection with Brimbank communities</b><br>Depth of the applicant's existing relationships and trust with communities relevant to the Plan's priorities, and their ability to reach people who are currently underrepresented or disconnected. | 30     |
| <b>Alignment and relevant experience</b><br>How clearly the applicant's work connects to the Plan's priorities. Their experience or potential to achieve social inclusion outcomes, including through inclusive and accessible practice.           | 25     |
| <b>Capacity to deliver</b><br>Whether they have the skills, people and systems to do the work, including how they manage risk and insurances.                                                                                                      | 15     |

# Developing and funding Projects

## How the Roundtable operates

Roundtable partners will meet regularly and work with SIAG Brimbank and Council to develop potential projects and programs that respond to the objectives in this Plan. The wider network will be kept up to date on the Roundtable's work and, where relevant, invited to contribute expertise, join discussions or take part in project delivery.

Council will provide ongoing secretariat and administrative support to the Roundtable, including scheduling, venues and minutes, and will record recommendations, conflicts of interest, project decisions and agreed actions. To begin with, Council will set meeting agendas in consultation with SIAG members. Once the Partnership Roundtable is established, we will talk with partners about who is best placed to lead meetings, and whether a Chair is needed. Council's secretariat role will continue whether or not a Chair is appointed.

Up to three SIAG members will attend each Partnership Roundtable meeting. Their role is to act as a link between the Roundtable and the full SIAG, keep project development aligned with the Plan's priorities, and report back on discussions and project progress. They do not make endorsement or funding decisions on behalf of the full SIAG. This role will rotate so that different members have the opportunity to take part.



## How projects are endorsed and funded

Project concepts developed through the Partnership Roundtable will go through three stages before funding is provided: endorsement by SIAG Brimbank, due diligence by Council, and a formal funding agreement. Each stage has a distinct purpose. Together, they make sure that funded projects reflect the priorities of this Plan, are delivered by suitable organisations and meet funding requirements.

Projects will be developed collaboratively by the Partnership Roundtable, based on the Local Investment Plan, and then brought to the full SIAG for endorsement. SIAG members will have the chance to ask questions and make recommendations before a decision is made. Where the SIAG needs more information, or would like changes made to a proposal, it can request these before deciding.

As with partner selection, members will declare any conflict of interest before a project is considered, including where they work for, volunteer with, receive services from, or have a close relationship with

an organisation involved. Members with a conflict will step out of the discussion and decision on that project, and all declared conflicts will be recorded.

Once the SIAG has endorsed a project, Council will undertake the required due diligence, including eligibility, probity and risk checks. Where these requirements are met, and subject to available funding, Council will enter into and administer a funding agreement with the eligible organisation responsible for delivering the project. Council will keep the SIAG informed of progress, so that the SIAG can continue its oversight role across the life of the Plan.

### **Responding to the objectives**

Every project must respond to at least one of the objectives in this Plan.

We would like to see investment across all four objectives, but we recognise this may not be possible every year. In any given year, our investment will cover at least two of the four.

### **Types of funding**

We will consider projects at any stage of development, including:

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Seed Funding</b>         | New ideas to test, prototype and learn from a new approach.                                                                                                          |
| <b>Expansion Funding</b>    | Initiatives that have shown early promise and are ready to grow, reach more people or deepen their impact.                                                           |
| <b>Replication Funding</b>  | Spreading a proven initiative to different locations within Brimbank, or adapting it for a different priority community.                                             |
| <b>Continuation Funding</b> | Continuing initiatives that are delivering strong outcomes and where there is a clear case for ongoing investment while the initiative builds other funding sources. |

## Review and learn

A key part of the SIAG model is building our understanding and improving our approach as we go.

Every round of investment teaches us something. We are committed to carrying that learning into the next round, and to sharing it with our partners and others across Brimbank — so what we learn contributes well beyond the projects we fund.

We think about this as a cycle of learning with four stages.



Our cycle of learning looks through three lenses, which together show how SIAG Brimbank keeps evolving to meet the needs of the Brimbank community:

- **What changed for participants** – how the funded projects have shaped participants' sense of connection, social inclusion, health and wellbeing.
- **What the projects tell us** – how successful the partners and projects were in achieving our objectives and sustained outcomes for the Brimbank community.
- **What we learn about ourselves** – the outcomes for the SIAG Brimbank members and how this contributes to learnings for future groups and community-led decision-making practices.

The evaluation approach will be shaped by SIAG members and the Partnership Roundtable, and will combine qualitative and quantitative measures to build a full picture of outcomes and learning. Detailed evaluation measures will be finalised once the Roundtable is established and funded projects are confirmed.

Council will formally establish and monitor reporting requirements for funded projects. Contractual reporting and acquittal requirements will be set out and administered through Council's funding agreements, and will align with Council's TAKSO reporting requirements and the State Government Evaluation Framework.

## Cycle of learning timeline

| When                           | What happens                                                                                                                            | Who is involved           |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| From the start of each project | Participant questions, attendance, and notes - collected as the project runs, not written up at the end.                                | Funded organisation       |
| Halfway through a project      | A learning conversation - what is working, what needs to change now rather than later                                                   | Partnership Roundtable    |
| End of a project               | Final reflection, story of change, and participant responses                                                                            | Partnership Roundtable    |
| Every six months               | We look across all the projects together. What are we hearing? Does anything need to change now?                                        | SIAG                      |
| Once a year                    | Our learning day – examining the evaluation outcomes, along with our Partnership Roundtable, the partners network and community members | SIAG, partnership network |
| End of the investment cycle    | A full review of this Plan. We test our priorities against what we have learned and decide what changes                                 | SIAG and Council          |

This Local Investment Plan was developed with the support of Public Value Studio  
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