

MERENDA HEALTH AND WELLBEING HUB

Bringing essential services and local jobs to **Mernda**

To make the hub a reality

The City of Whittlesea is seeking Victorian Government commitment to:

- Work with key stakeholders to develop a business case including concept design, operational model options and governance structure – **Cost \$755,000**
- Fund the construction of the facility in partnership with stakeholders by 2022.



Everyone should be able to access local jobs and the services they need to live a happy life. But rapid population growth has meant people living in developing areas like Mernda do not have access to essential community services, and spend hours commuting to work every day.

The **Mernda Health and Wellbeing Hub** could create more than 300 local jobs and provide essential community services in the heart of the new Mernda Town Centre.

This exciting opportunity to provide a multi-storey facility adjacent to Mernda train station and retail centre will bring together a range of community services to support people and families, such as:

- community information and activities
- library and arts
- community education and vocational training
- health services – such as allied health, counselling, occupational health, physiotherapy
- youth services
- family support services
- maternal and child health services
- child care
- co-working spaces and business incubator.

SUPPORTING A LARGE AND GROWING COMMUNITY

Over the past five years Mernda and Doreen has experienced some of the largest rates of annual population growth in Australia.¹ The current population is 49,500, and will peak in 2028 with 64,000 residents.²

Estimated Residential Population – Mernda/Doreen²

YEAR	POPULATION
2013	29,241
2018	49,431
2023	60,746
2028	64,147
2033	63,841
2038	62,454



Change in population from 2013 to 2038
33,213 or **%114**



By 2038, the number of 50-59 year olds in Mernda will increase by approx **113%** and 70-84 year olds, by **190%**

Mernda has a higher proportion of children and young people compared to the average for Greater Melbourne, however there is also expected to be significant growth in older age groups which will put increasing demand on local services.

New services and infrastructure in Mernda will play an important role regionally, attracting people from surrounding areas such as Donnybrook, Whittlesea Township and Yan Yean.



SIGNIFICANT GAPS IN SUPPORT SERVICES

Access to support services is fundamental to the liveability of a community and people's overall health and wellbeing. But in the growing areas like Mernda there is a lag between the development of housing and the provision of services and facilities.

Local agencies have identified significant unmet demand for health and human services, including:

- support for families and children, including early intervention programs and family violence programs
- youth support, services and activities
- culturally and linguistically diverse services
- services for people with refugee status, people seeking asylum and newly arrived migrants
- disability services and support
- transport services, particularly for older and people with a disability
- activities and facilities for older adults
- housing services and
- mental health services.

People are being turned away, put on long waiting lists, or are forced to travel considerable distances to access the services they need.³

Mernda Health and Wellbeing Hub will help provide the infrastructure needed to accommodate a range of community support services, in a convenient central location.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Residents in growth areas like Mernda indicate that, while they embrace the opportunity to be part of an evolving community, some families experience significant challenges and vulnerabilities.

Current challenges



Service providers identified significant issues around **family violence** and the need for additional family support and counselling³



Households experience financial stress exacerbated by higher costs of living – transport, food and utilities, in these areas³



More than one in ten young people living in Mernda are **disengaged from study and employment**⁴



24% of the population spend **90 mins** or more traveling to and from work – impacting their health and quality of life⁵

Residents from newly developed areas like Mernda should be able to access the essential health and human services needed to prevent issues like those above from arising, to enhance positive life experiences, and to have access to support if challenges emerge.

LOCAL JOBS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Everyone should be able to put food on their table AND be home in time to enjoy it with their friends and family. But many people living in Mernda travel more than an hour each way to get to work putting strain on their health and reducing their time with family and friends.⁵

One third (32.8%) of residents from Mernda are dissatisfied with their current employment situation, with the primary reason being a long commute.⁵

Mernda Health and Wellbeing Hub will provide local jobs to an already skilled workforce; the most common industry of employment for residents of Mernda is Health Care and Social Assistance⁶ with 65 per cent of these residents travelling outside the municipality for work.⁷

The economic benefits of the Health and Wellbeing Hub would be significant, with an estimated:



+330 jobs including:

- 200 social assistance jobs in the City of Whittlesea
- 57 jobs in related industries in the City of Whittlesea
- 74 jobs outside the City of Whittlesea⁸



\$47.54m increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the Australian economy including:

- **\$18.6m increase** in GRP for the City of Whittlesea⁸

The Hub would also create flow on jobs in industries with significant job shortages in the City of Whittlesea including Financial and Insurance Services and Information Media and Telecommunications. Currently more than 4,100 residents employed in these industries travel outside the municipality for work.⁹



The Hub has the potential to house co-working spaces for public and private sectors and a business incubator to foster local economic growth.





The Mernda Health and Wellbeing Hub will create and support local employment for women and grow the local economy while providing essential community services to the region.



IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH LOCAL JOBS FOR WOMEN

The Mernda Health and Wellbeing Hub could create local jobs for women through direct employment at the hub, co-working spaces and a business incubator.

Research shows that a lack of local jobs means highly skilled women living in growth areas like Mernda are sacrificing their career to take lower skilled jobs closer to home to enable them to fulfil caring responsibilities.¹⁰

Limited local employment for women can be a barrier to women's participation in the workforce, reinforcing rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity, which are key drivers of violence against women.¹¹

Currently, many skilled women with a Bachelor degree or higher are working full time in lower skilled roles such as in administrative/clerical or sales (20-25%). Only 50% of women living in the City of Whittlesea with a Bachelor degree or higher earn over \$1,000 per week.⁵

The hub will match local skills and qualification of women from Mernda; the most common industry of employment is Health Care and Social Assistance⁶ and the most common qualifications are business and commerce, health and society and culture.¹²

Increasing employment and expanding the breadth of local jobs on offer for women can promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships, foster positive personal identities and improve community attitudes to gender equality.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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- ⁵ profile.id (2018), *City of Whittlesea Community Profile*, citing Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016, [accessed May 2018]
- ⁶ economy.id. *City of Whittlesea Residents Place of Work*, [accessed June 2018]
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- ¹¹ Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015), *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*
- ¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016, *Field of qualification, QALFP – 2 Digit Level by SEX Sex by SSC (UR), Mernda*