

Case Study

Clayton Community Centre

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Community Hubs and Partnerships

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Case Study 4: Clayton Community Centre



Victoria, Australia

Overview

Clayton is a culturally diverse community in the City of Monash, with large Greek and Chinese representation. With many new arrival residents and pockets of high unemployment, Clayton is one of the most disadvantaged communities in Monash.

In response to a range of persisting social challenges such as crime, violence, alcohol and drug misuse, and significant social disadvantage, the Clayton Community Centre was established in 2008. This project was seen as an aspirational and practical response, taking the opportunity to decommission and relocate the existing unsafe and undesirably located Library. The aim was to create a safe and welcoming community space to act as the heart of Clayton. The centre comprises a range of previously disconnected government services, along with a number of other community providers.



Source: City of Monash

Context/setting



Service mix



Education, including a preschool with playgroups¹
Health, including a maternal and child health centre¹
Community infrastructure, including a library, meeting rooms and theatrette¹
Community services, including youth and family services¹
Wellbeing, including an aquatic and health club¹
Commercial, including a café¹

Level of integration

The collocation provides opportunities for interaction and collegiality among services, however, consultation identified that there is currently only a modest degree of service integration

Site characteristics



Brownfield, purpose built facility, however, this was an expansion of an existing Council site (the Clayton Fitness Centre)¹; the previous library building was decommissioned
Urban

Funding



Public, including different levels of government such as council, state government and sale of land^{2,3}

Partners (inc. lead agency)

Lead agency: Monash City Council
Partners: Clayton Aquatics and Health Club, Clayton Children's Services, Clayton-Clarinda Arts Inc., Monash Youth Services, Link Health and Community¹

Foundations for success

This hub exhibits four key success factors that were identified in the literature review.



Focus and vision



Collaborative and detailed planning



Measurement



Governance and culture

Focus and vision

The Clayton Community Action Plan identified a range of development areas for the community, which set out the vision of the hub². This outlined five areas including a focus on communicating and learning; community wellbeing; the natural environment; community safety; access and amenity; and recreation and leisure.

Collaborative and detailed planning

Community representatives are not directly involved in the steering committee. However, they are extensively involved through four resident groups, who meet regularly with the steering committee on an ongoing basis². Other community engagement channels were also deployed, such as the display of newsletters in the public library, holding community forums, and establishing community development and services directorate networks. The facility is located in close proximity to public transport and the main shopping area, which increases accessibility for members of the community³.

Measurement

An evaluation was undertaken for the hub jointly, with two other hubs in the adjacent City of Kingston (Clarinda Community Centre and Melaleuca Community Hub) in 2013². A Participant Survey was undertaken on participation across the hubs and outcomes of the project. Results are summarised in the following section.

Governance and culture

Governance was led by a steering committee, with representatives from State government, Monash and Kingston Councils, along with other stakeholders².

In addition, there was a project working group that met weekly throughout the entire planning and building stage of the project. The project working group comprised of Director City Development and Manager Information and Arts from the City of Monash, representatives from Link Health and the aquatic centre, urban designers and architects, as well as project management coordinators.

There was a strong sense of collegiality and goodwill among the project team, which is generated from the common belief that this project was going to bring significant positive change and impact to the community. This has created a high level of enthusiasm and engagement from different project team members.

Outcomes

Service awareness and access

The evaluation study of the three hubs found that there has been increased knowledge and use of services, with 93% of respondents reporting that their use of local services has increased, specifically in relation to the Clayton Community Centre². This has been shown by a sustained increase in library visits of almost 30%.

Being located next to an aged care facility was also reported to have increased access for these residents, particularly services relating to health and wellbeing.

Community networks, cohesion and engagement

Through partnering with and supporting a range of targeted programs, the Clayton Community Centre has contributed towards promoting community inclusion and encouraging community participation. One example is the "Monash Woman Building Bridges" project, which is aimed at increasing and building migrant and refugee women's leadership and social networks. The project provides training as well as the option for participants to become a 'champion' and help deliver workshops for other woman².

Connecting culturally diverse populations

The centre has served as the venue for a number of themed community nights. A community night with Chinese and Vietnamese theme in 2013 attracted over 500 local residents. These nights are supported by volunteers from the project theme groups. In a survey, two thirds of respondents indicated that they are a part of a local group as a result of the project². Moreover, 73% of respondents felt that they had improved their networking skills as a result of the project². Community nights have also led to a local Indian and African community group organising their own events and showcasing their culture at the Clayton Community Centre.

Educational outcomes

The centre offers a Cert 3 course in Aged Care and Home and Community Care, targeted at culturally and linguistically diverse populations. This is a successful program, with over 80% of graduates gaining employment².

There is also the opportunity for different community groups using the theatre to collaborate with each other and share learnings.

Safety

The project has reduced the opportunity for anti-social behaviour, graffiti and crime. Perceptions of safety have increased, with 84% of respondents indicating that they felt an improvement in safety².

Lessons

- The library and aquatic centre served as an anchor service of the centre, which invited general public/community access. The library was seen as the “lounge room of the community”.
- Wide consultation with the community over both the planning and operational phase of the centre is key to success. The centre has been particularly successful in bringing the community along for the journey, letting them have their say and maintaining lines of communication.
- There was reported initial resistance from an incumbent user group for the opening up of a particular facility to a broader user group. Equitable access was eventually secured for all user groups, achieved through extensive and persistent negotiation with the incumbent to demonstrate the benefits.
- Partners must have a shared understanding of the vision to address community needs.

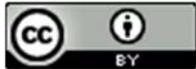
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1. City of Monash, 2017, Clayton Community Centre, <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/Leisure/Community-Halls-Centres/Community-Centres/Clayton-Community-Centre>
2. City of Kingston and City of Monash, 2013, Strengthening Clayton, Clayton South and Clarinda, Project Evaluation Report
3. Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, 2009, Getting it Together: An Inquiry into the Sharing of Government and Community Facilities

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