Merri-bek City Council

COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday 11 November 2026

Commencing 6.30 pm

Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic Centre,
90 Bell Street, Coburg

Language Link

This is the Agenda for the Council meeting. For assistance with any of the agenda items, please telephone 9240 1111.

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D26/494864

Acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the City of Merri-bek

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek, and pays respect to their elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Information about Council Meetings

These notes have been developed to help people better understand Council meetings. All meetings are conducted in accordance with Council's Governance Rules.

WELCOME The Mayor, who chairs the meeting, formally opens the meeting.

APOLOGIES Where a Councillor is not present, their absence is noted in the minutes of the meeting. Council may also approve leaves of absence in this part of the meeting.

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS INTERESTS A Councillor has a duty to disclose any direct or indirect financial or other interests, they may have in any matter to be considered by Council that evening.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES The minutes of the previous meeting are put before Council to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS At each Council Meeting provision of 10 minutes will be made in the Agenda for the Mayor and Councillors to acknowledge and recognise achievements of local individuals and organisations; and raise matters considered important to Council.

PETITIONS Council receives petitions from citizens on various issues. Council formally accepts petitions at Council meetings.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME This is an opportunity (30 minutes), for citizens of Merri-bek to raise questions with Councillors.

COUNCIL REPORTS Council officers prepare detailed reports, which are considered by Councillors and a Council position is adopted on the matters considered. The Mayor can invite firstly Councillors, secondly Officers, and then citizens in attendance to identify Council reports which should be given priority by the meeting and considered in the early part of the meeting.

NOTICES OF MOTION A motion which has been submitted to the Chief Executive Officer no later than 12 pm (noon) 10 business days prior to the meeting which is intended to be included in the agenda. The motion should outline the policy, financial and resourcing implications.

NOTICE OF RESCISSION A Councillor may propose a motion to rescind a resolution of the Council, provided the previous resolution has not been acted on, and a notice is delivered to the CEO or delegate setting out the resolution to be rescinded and the meeting and date when the resolution was carried. If a motion for rescission is lost, a similar motion may not be put before the Council for at least one month from the date it was last lost, unless the Council resolves that the notice of motion be re-listed at a future meeting.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS This is an opportunity for Councillors to raise items proposed to be submitted as Notices of Motion at future meetings.

URGENT BUSINESS The Chief Executive Officer or Councillors, with the approval of the meeting, may submit items of Urgent Business (being a matter not listed on the agenda) but requiring a prompt decision by Council.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS Whilst all Council meetings of Council are open to the public, Council has the power under the *Local Government Act 2020* to close its meeting to the public in certain circumstances which are noted where appropriate on the Council Agenda. Where this occurs, members of the public leave the Council Chamber or Meeting room while the matter is being discussed.

CLOSE OF MEETING The Mayor will formally close the meeting and thank all present.

NEXT MEETING DATE The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 December 2026 commencing at 6.30 pm, in Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg. The next Planning and Related Matters meeting will be held on Wednesday 25 November 2026 commencing at 6.30 pm.

WELCOME

1. APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

2. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTE CONFIRMATION

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14 October 2026 and the Special Council Meeting held on 28 October 2026 be confirmed.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

5. PETITIONS

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

7. COUNCIL REPORTS

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9. NOTICE OF RESCISSION

Nil

10. FORESHADOWED ITEMS

11. URGENT BUSINESS

7. COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 2026-27 FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Financial Services

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the 2026-27 First Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 30 September 2026, including operating performance and capital performance at Attachment 1.
2. Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of $4.7 million and the increase to operating expenditure of $5.2 million arising from the 2026-27 First Quarter Financial Review.
3. Endorses a decrease of $1.1 million to the Significant Projects Reserve in 2026-27 to fund additional expenditure relating to the 2026-27 Capital Work Program.
4. Endorses the below outer year budget implications to offset point (4) ensuring no overall change to the Significant Project Reserve by 2031:
    a) Removing the William St/Major Road Roundabout Improvements (scheduled for 2028-29 for $201,304) from the 4-year capital works program;
    b) Increase the transfer to Significant Project Reserve by $201,304 in 2028-29;
    c) Removing Jackson Reserve Gender Inclusive Changeroom Refresh (scheduled for 2030-31 for $900,000) from the 4-year capital works program; and
    d) Increase the transfer to Significant Project Reserve by $900,000 in 2030-31.
5. Notes the status of the Capital Works Program for 2026-27 and that the full-year capital expenditure forecast includes an increase of $1.4 million from the adopted program ($89.1 million) to $90.5 million (details in Attachment 2 of this report), which includes:
    a) Reflecting the additional $2.9 million of additional carry forwards from 2025-26 into 2026-27 (as per report 7.1 - September Council report);
    b) Inclusion of 10 new projects totaling $2.5 million;
    c) Additional budget across 30 projects in the current year (23 existing projects and 7 projects which were scheduled to be complete in the prior year) totaling $3.1 million;
    d) Bringing forward funding from 2027-28 into 2026-27 for 1 project ($1 million);
    e) Savings across 31 projects totaling $5.3 million in 2026-27 as a result of:
        i. 1 project deferred from 2026-27 ($0.6 million) and funding set aside to be delivered in a future financial year;
        ii. 6 projects deferred from 2026-27 ($1.5 million) that are unfunded in future financial years;
        iii. Declared savings across 12 projects in the current year ($1.2 million);
        iv. Reduction in scope across 8 projects in the current year ($1.1 million);
        v. 1 project rephased into 2027-28 ($0.4 million);
        vi. 3 projects removed from the current year ($0.4 million).
    f) Carrying forward 2 projects totaling $2.1 million from 2026-27 into 2027-28;

g) Adjustment relating to 6 multi-year projects ($0.7 million) relating spend occurring earlier than anticipated in the prior year.

6. Notes officers will continue to work on the 2026-27 capital program delivery program and will provide further updates to Council in early 2027 and to the Audit and Risk Committee.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The First Quarter Financial Report gives an overview of Council's performance through delivery of the budget. It compares the actual revenue and expenditure with the budgeted revenue and expenditure year to date (YTD) and assesses the financial performance in the first quarter to determine a forecast outcome for 30 June 2027.

A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation in October 2026 to form the 2026-27 First Quarter Financial Review (Q1 Forecast). This process provided Council the opportunity to review its YTD performance and reallocate available financial resources to maximise the delivery on its strategic objectives. The results of this review are included in this report as the Q1 Forecast.

For the three months ended 30 September 2026, Council has achieved an operating surplus result of $163.9 million which is $5.4 million (3%) more than the YTD budget of $158.5 million. It is important to note that the operating surplus does not convert to immediately available cash to Council. Surplus funds are used to fund important community infrastructure projects like the Coburg Library & Piazza Development.

As described above, significant amounts of surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

Council's forecast adjusted underlying surplus of $9.1 million is $3.1 million less than the adopted budget of $12.2 million. This result is important as it measures Council's ability to generate a surplus in the ordinary course of business – excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions, and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from net results. Although the Q1 underlying result remains a surplus, the lower surplus compared to the adopted budget indicates a decline in the operating position.

After budgeted transfers to reserves, a minor surplus unrestricted result of $0.3 million has been forecasted.

Council has spent $12.3 million on capital expenditure as at the end of September which is $2.6 million (18%) less than the YTD budget of $14.9 million, with $76.8 (86.3%) of the adopted full year budget remaining.

After a detailed review of the capital works program, there is a forecast increase of $1.4 million from the adopted budget of $89.1 million to $90.5 million. This is due to:

a) Reflecting the additional $2.9 million of additional carry forwards from 2025-26 into 2026-27 *(as per report 7.1 - September Council report)*;

b) Inclusion of 10 new projects totaling $2.5 million;

c) Additional budget across 30 projects in the current year (23 existing projects and 7 projects which were scheduled to be complete in the prior year) totaling $3.1 million;

d) Bringing forward funding from 2027-28 into 2026-27 for 1 project ($1 million);

e) Savings across 31 projects totaling $5.3 million in 2026-27 as a result of:

   i. 1 project deferred from 2026-27 ($0.6 million) and funding set aside to be delivered in a future financial year;

   ii. 6 projects from 2026-27 ($1.5 million) that are unfunded in future financial years;

   iii. Declared savings across 12 projects in the current year ($1.2 million);

iv. Reduction in scope across 8 projects in the current year ($1.1 million);

v. 1 project rephased into 2027-28 ($0.4 million);

vi. 3 projects removed from the current year ($0.4 million).

f) Carrying forward 2 projects totaling $2.1 million from 2026-27 into 2027-28;

g) Adjustment relating to 6 multi-year projects ($0.7 million) relating to spend occurring earlier than anticipated in the prior year.

Subject to Council approval, the revised capital works forecast is $90.5 million, leaving approximately $78.2 million to be spent over the remaining nine months.

Achieving this forecast will require a substantial increase in expenditure compared with the first quarter. Continued monitoring of construction milestones, outstanding approvals and project expenditure will be important to identify further delivery risks and update the forecast promptly.

Previous Council Decisions

2025-26 Financial Statements and Performance Statements – 9 September 2026

That Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee, and having considered Council's Financial and Performance Statements for 2024-25 Statements at Attachments 1 and 2 to this report:

…

4. Carries forward the $1,303,592 of tied operating funding that were not spent as of 30 June 2026.

5. Carries forward the $41,147,401 of capital project funds into the 2026/27 Capital Works Program.

…

1. Policy Context

The 2026-2030 Budget was adopted by Council on 22 June 2026. The Budget sets out the resources required to deliver the Council Plan, Services and Capital Works Program for the 2026-27 financial year.

This report supports Council's continuing commitment to open and accountable management of the financial resources of Merri-bek on behalf of its ratepayers.

2. Background

Section 97 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires that the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a quarterly budget report is presented to Council at a Council meeting which is open to the public after the end of each quarter of the financial year.

The purpose of this report is to compare the actual and budgeted results to date and provide an explanation of any material variations. This report also includes the Q1 Forecast which assesses the financial trends that have occurred in the first quarter of the 2026-27 financial year to determine a forecast outcome for 30 June 2027.

3. Issues

Table 1 - Operating Performance Summary

The below table shows the year-to-date actuals compared to the year-to-date adopted budget, as well as the Q1 Forecast.

	Year to Date			Full Year		
	Actual	Adopted Budget	Variance Fav / (Unfav)	Adopted Budget	Q1 Forecast	Variance Fav / (Unfav)
	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)
Income / revenue	230,636	229,786	850	300,447	305,105	4,658
Expenditure	66,709	71,244	4,535	260,879	266,079	(5,200)
Surplus / (deficit)	**163,927**	**158,542**	**5,385**	**39,569**	**39,026**	**(542)**
Adjusted underlying surplus	**160,619**	**155,810**	**4,809**	**12,188**	**9,140**	**(3,047)**
Unrestricted result	**143,619**	**136,314**	**7,305**	**266**	**280**	**14**

Year to Date Result (against adopted budget)

For the three months ended 30 September 2026, Council recorded an operating surplus of $163.9 million which was $5.4 million (3%) more than the year to date (YTD) budget of $158.5 million.

Revenue of $230.6 million was $0.9 million (0%) more than the YTD budget of $229.8 million and expenditure of $66.7 million was $4.5 million (6%) favourable compared to the YTD budget of $71.2 million.

The main drivers for the YTD favourable variance compared to the adopted budget are timing variances detailed below:

Revenue

- Other Revenue ended $0.9 million favourable due to earlier than anticipated receipt of state contribution for the administration of the emergency services volunteer fund (ESVF) levy and higher than anticipated interest received as a result of high cash balances.
- Grants – Capital ended $0.8 million favourable due to receiving milestone payment for Cole Reserve Lighting Upgrade of $0.5 million earlier than budgeted.

Expenditure

- Contracts, Materials and Services ended $3.3 million favourable due to temporary timing differences in the project delivery of Council's digital transformation program ($1.1 million), community grant programs ($0.4 million), and organisational utility usage ($0.3 million), as well as timing recognition of operational carry forwards ($0.9 million).
- Employee Benefits ended $0.9 million favourable due to a timing difference in recognition of leave provision growth for both annual and long service leave.

Forecast Year End Result (forecast movement)

Council adopted the 2026-27 budget projecting a surplus of $39.6 million in June 2027.

Following a detailed review across the organisation in October 2026, Council has completed a revised forecast with full year projections now showing a surplus of $39.0 million, an unfavourable movement of $0.5 million.

Revenue

The forecast for revenue is an increase of $4.7 million, comprising of:

- Capital Grants are forecast to increase by $2.1 million primarily due to additional carry forwards from 2025-26 of $0.9 million as well as additional grants. The additional grants relate to $0.7 million for Coburg Lake Toilet, announced as part of the State Government's election commitments, and the successful funding application for Safer Crossing for Chapman Ave & Clovelly Ave;
- Other Revenue is forecast to increase by $1.0 million primarily due to higher than anticipated interest on investments.
- Rates and charges is forecasted to increase by $0.7 million primarily due to higher than anticipated supplementary property growth (additional properties);
- Operating grants are forecast to increase by $0.7 million due to a higher-than-expected uplift in Maternal & Child Health funding ($0.5 million).

Expenditure

The forecast for expenditure is an increase of $5.2 million, comprising of:

- Employee Benefits are forecast to increase by $3.1 million due to a combination of higher than anticipated parental leave payments ($0.9 million), higher than anticipated staffing costs for service delivery of our five libraries ($0.6 million) and aged care services ($0.3 million), fringe benefit liability costs ($0.3 million) as well as lower organisation-wide vacancy rates than anticipated.
- Contracts, Materials & Services are forecast to increase by $1.5 million primarily due to recognition of operational carry forwards from 2025-26 ($0.9 million) and an anticipated increase in costs associated with maintaining Council's ageing building infrastructure ($0.5 million).

Council's forecast adjusted underlying surplus of $9.1 million is $3.1 million less than the adopted budget. This result is important as it measures Council's ability to generate a surplus in the ordinary course of business - excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions, and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from net results.

A surplus or increasing surplus suggests an improvement in the operating position. Although the Q1 result remains a surplus, the lower surplus compared to the adopted budget indicates a decline in the operating position.

Table 2 (Significant Project Reserve) –

The below table shows the movement as recommended by officers over the next 5-years in the Significant Projects Reserve, confirming that by 2030-31 the balance of the reserve remains unchanged from the adopted budget position.

Balance at 30 June	2026-27 ($'000)	2027-28 ($'000)	2028-29 ($'000)	2029-30 ($'000)	2030-31 ($'000)
Adopted Budget	22,091	27,823	29,236	15,164	22,516
Q1 Forecast	20,990	26,722	28,336	14,264	22,516

Table 3 - Capital Performance Summary

The below table shows the year-to-date actuals compared to the year-to-date adopted budget, as well as the Q1 Forecast.

	Year to Date			Full Year		
	Actual	Adopted Budget	Variance Fav / (Unfav)	Adopted Budget	Q1 Forecast	Variance Fav / (Unfav)
	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)
Property	5,714	2,872	(2,842)	20,477	22,488	(2,011)
Plant and equipment	1,139	1,234	95	10,432	11,366	(935)
Infrastructure	5,417	10,744	5,326	58,207	56,646	1,560
Total capital works	**12,271**	**14,850**	**2,579**	**89,116**	**90,501**	**(1,386)**

As part of the Q1 Forecast, Officers reviewed all projects with requests for additional budget. Responsible Managers then reviewed their portfolios to find savings from other projects within the same asset class. This was achieved through declared savings, deferral of projects to future years and through removal of projects no longer proceeding.

This process resulted in a net change in the overall program from $89.1 million to $90.5 million. This is contrasted with previous years where this review process would have often resulted in additional budget being added to the program, without reducing the size of the program and ultimately resulting in under delivery. A further review will be undertaken as part of the Q2 Forecast.

Year to Date Result (against adopted budget)

For the three months ended 30 September 2026, Council's capital expenditure of $12.3 million was $2.6 million (18%) below the YTD budget, with $76.8 million (86.2%) of the full year budget remaining.

Delivery milestones during the quarter included the award of 8 capital works contracts above $800,000. These contracts relate to approximately $16.6 million of expenditure anticipated to be incurred this year across a number of projects including Balfe Park sport ground upgrade, McDonald Reserve hockey pitch and sports lighting works and Fawkner netball courts upgrade.

Forecast Year End Result (forecast movement)

A detailed review of the program was undertaken in October to reassess project budgets and delivery timeframes. This review has resulted in the capital works program to increase by $1.4 million from the adopted budget of $89.1 million to $90.5 million.

Table 4 below shows a summary of the movement with the detailed project listing under each category included in **Attachment 2.**

Capital Works Program	# projects	$'000	Impact on 2026-27	Reference in Attachment 2
Adopted budget		89,116		
Plus				
Additional carry forwards from 2025-26		2,855	Increase program size	Report 7.1 from September 2026 Council meeting
Adopted budget + final carry forwards into 2026-27		**91,971**		
Movement				
New projects requiring funding	10	2,465	Increase program size	Table 1 (Attachment 2)
Existing projects requiring additional funding	23	2,967	Increase program size	Table 2 (Attachment 2)
Existing projects (from prior year) requiring additional funding	7	141	Increase program size	Table 2 (Attachment 2)
Bring forward from 2027-28	1	1,000	Increase program size	Table 3 (Attachment 2)
Deferred (Funded)	1	(573)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Deferred (Unfunded)	6	(1,545)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Declared Savings	12	(1,224)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Reduction in scope	8	(1,145)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Projects rephased	1	(420)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Projects removed	3	(353)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Projects carried forward into 2027-28	2	(2,053)	Decrease program size	Table 5 (Attachment 2)
Adjustments relating to prior year	6	(730)	Decrease program size	Table 6 (Attachment 2)
Q1 forecast	**80**	**90,501**		

Subject to Council approval, the revised capital works forecast is **$90.5 million**, leaving approximately $78.2 million (87%) to be spent over the remaining nine months.

Achieving this forecast will require a substantial increase in expenditure compared with the first quarter. Continued monitoring of construction milestones, outstanding approvals and project expenditure will be important to identify further delivery risks and update the forecast promptly.

Fuel price, supply chain and impacts on project delivery

Tender prices for some capital works projects are coming in above budget, requiring consideration of scope adjustments and seeking approval for additional funding before contracts can be awarded. Supply chain constraints, including the availability of materials, specialist equipment and contractors, can also extend lead times and affect construction schedules. These pressures can delay the commencement of works and shift expenditure into later reporting periods, contributing to underspending against planned timeframes without reducing the expected cost of delivery.

Table 5 - Financial Position Summary

The below table shows the year-to-date actuals compared to the year-to-date adopted budget, as well as the Q1 Forecast.

	YTD Actual	Adopted Budget	Q1 Forecast	Variance Fav / (Unfav)
	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)	($'000)
Cash and investments	86,244	73,196	71,819	(1,377)
Net current assets	280,810	63,506	61,675	(1,831)
Net assets and total equity	3,129,683	3,068,272	3,067,730	(542)

Year to Date Result

The financial position at 30 September 2026 shows a cash and investment balance of $86.2 million which is $10.2 million decrease on 30 June 2026 cash levels, mainly due to the timing of when the rates instalments fall due.

Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors, including the timing of rates instalments as well as payment of suppliers and employees.

Forecast Year End Result (forecast movement)

The forecast financial position for 30 June 2027 is a cash and investment position of $71.8 million (a decrease of $1.4 million) and net current assets of $61.7 million (a decrease of $1.8 million). These decreases are primarily due to a forecast increase in the capital works program (excluding grant funded projects) of $1.4 million.

Cash and cash equivalents compared to current liabilities are forecast to be 117.2 per cent at 30 June 2027. This indicator measures whether a Council can generate sufficient cash to pay its commitments on time. Overall cash levels (both restricted and unrestricted) have remained consistent over the past few years, however, the split between unrestricted (less than 90 days) and restricted (greater than 90 days) has shifted to gain the best investment opportunities.

Table 6 - Council Resolutions included in the Q1 forecast

The below table shows a summary of which Council resolutions have been included in this quarterly forecast.

Council Report	Council Meeting	Source	$
7.6 Carbon Offsets Update	June 2026	Rates	Funded with existing budget
7.8 Contract Award: RFT-2026-10 - Balfe Park, Brunswick East Sports Ground Upgrade Works Note: The Council resolution states a shortfall of $49,461, this amount has since been revised.	August 2026	Rates	82,600

Council Report	Council Meeting	Source	$
7.10 Contract Award: RFT-2025-53 - Construction of De Chene Reserve Pavilion: Gender Inclusive Changerooms	September 2026	Rates	101,367
Rates funded resolutions			**183,967**
Nil	N/A	Grants	-
Grant funded resolutions			**-**
7.2 Tate Reserve - Conflict Resolution Outcome	August 2026	Reserves	122,850
Reserves funded resolutions			**222,850**
Total additional funding required			**306,817**

Table 7 and 8 - Key Definitions

Key definitions used throughout this report and attachments are summarised in Table 7 and 8.

Table 7 -

Term	Description
Surplus	Surplus is reported based on the Australian Accounting Standards and includes all operating income and expenditure recognised in the financial period, including gifted subdivisional assets (non-monetary), developer contributions, and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the surplus is not a cash surplus. It does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.
Adjusted underlying surplus	Adjusted underlying surplus is the surplus for the year adjusted for non-recurrent capital grants and contributions. It is an accepted measure of financial sustainability as it is not impacted by non-recurring or once-off items of revenue and expenses that can often mask the operating results.
Unrestricted result	Unrestricted result is the net funding result after considering the funding requirements to meet loan principal repayments and transfers to and from reserves

Table 8 below includes the definitions used when adjustments are made to the capital works program via the quarterly forecasting process.

Definition	Impact on 2026-27	Description:
New project	Increase program size	The addition of a new project that was not included at the time of budget adoption. This may include unplanned grant funded projects, emergency or reactive projects and/or projects endorsed by resolution for inclusion in the budget.
Additional funding	Increase program size	Increasing the funding for an existing project (that was included in the adopted budget).

Definition	Impact on 2026-27	Description:
Bring Forward	Increase program size	A project has commenced and a contract has been awarded. The project has additional funding in future budget years. Part or all of the futures years funding is brought forward where it is reasonably assumed that additional expenditure will be required in the current or future financial year.
Deferred (Funded)	Reduce program size	A project that has not commenced. The project and budget is moved to a future financial year. The project will be delivered in the future year.
Deferred (Unfunded)	Reduce program size	A project that has not commenced. The project only is moved to the following financial year. The project will be considered for inclusion in the following years budget and will be prioritised against other projects (not automatically included in future capital works programs). The funds are available for redistribution within the current financial year.
Declared savings	Reduce program size	A project that has commenced. The project has either been completed and there were savings at the completion, or the tender process has indicated that the project can be delivered for less than the budget allocation. The funds are available for redistribution within the current financial year.
Reduction in scope	Reduce program size	A project may or may not have commenced. A decision is made to reduce the scope of the project including to reduce a total funding envelope for a program. The funds are considered Declared Savings.
Rephased	Reduce program size	A project that has commenced. It is known that the project will not be delivered within the original time frame, or within the budget envelope for the current financial year. This is a planning decision to move only part of the budget to another financial year.

Definition	Impact on 2026-27	Description:
Carry Forward	Reduce program size	A project has commenced. A contract has been awarded. The project at Q2 was planned to be delivered by the end of the financial year. For unforeseen reasons, the project has not or will not be completed within the financial year. This is an unplanned outcome. The funds are transferred to the following financial year to allow for completion of the project.
Removed	Reduce program size	A project that has not commenced. The project is removed from the program completely and is no longer planned to be delivered at all. The budget allocation for this project is considered Declared Savings.

Solvency Assessment

Council officers have reviewed Council's liquidity (Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities), and the revised forecast is 4.6. The Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) recommends that this ratio be 1.5 or higher. This is a positive result and shows that Council is solvent.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. There are no Human Rights impacts.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Community consultation and engagement was not required for this report as it reflects the performance against the budget and delivery of the capital works program.

Advice was sought from officers across Council to provide performance results for the First Quarter Financial Review.

Affected persons rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views.

There are no individual rights or interests affected.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The overall corporate objective is to deliver the 2026-27 budget with the best possible outcome for Council and the community, and in line with the approved revised forecast targets.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's decision, the matters outlined in the First Quarter Financial Report will be implemented.

The financial position of Council will continue to be monitored and managed. The progress of the capital works program will continue to be monitored and managed.

Attachment/s

1⇩	Council Q1 Financial Management Report - September 2026	D26/464386
2⇩	Capital Works Program - 2026-27 First Quarter Financial Review	D26/457969

Merri-bek City Council

Council Quarterly Financial Management Report

3 Months Ended September 2026

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Executive Summary

Operating Performance

For the three months ended 30 September 2026, Council recorded an operating surplus of $163.9 million which is $5.4 million (3%) more than the year to date (YTD) budget of $158.5 million. This comprises total revenue of $230.6 million which is $0.9 million (0%) more than the YTD budget of $229.8 million and total expenditure of $66.7 million which is $4.5 million (6%) favourable compared to the YTD budget of $71.2 million.

Income Statement	YTD Actuals $'000	YTD Budget $'000	YTD Variance $'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget $'000	Annual Forecast $'000	Annual Variance $'000
Total Revenue	230,636	229,786 ▲	850 ▭	0%	**300,447**	305,105 ▲	4,658
Total Expenses	66,709	71,244 ▲	4,535 ▭	6%	**260,879**	266,079 ▼	(5,200)
Surplus/(Deficit)	**163,927**	**158,542** ▲	**5,385** ▭	**3%**	**39,569**	**39,026** ▼	**(542)**

Adopted budget -

Revenue - YTD favourable variances are primarily driven by timing of recognition of capital grant revenue ($0.8 million) and greater than anticipated interest on investmentsy ($0.3 million) as well as earlier than anticipated receipt of a state government contribution to the cost of administering the emergency services volunteer fund levy ($0.2 million).

Expenditure - YTD favourable variance in expenditure of $4.5 million is primarily due to temporary timing differences for contractors & consultants delivering projects in conjunction with Council ($3.3 million) and recognition of leave liabilities ($0.9 million).

Annual Forecast -

The annual forecast is projecting a surplus of $39.0 million, which is an unfavourable movement of $0.5 million from adopted budget.

Capital Works Program

Council has spent $12.3 million on capital expenditure to 30 September 2026, which is $2.6 million (17%) less than YTD adopted budget, with $76.8 million (86.2%) of the full year budget remaining.

Capital Works Program	YTD Actuals $'000	YTD Budget $'000	YTD Variance $'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget $'000	Annual Forecast $'000	Annual Variance $'000
New asset expenditure	3,737	717	(3,021)	(421%)	**6,309**	7,633	(1,323)
Asset renewal expenditure	5,709	9,251	3,542	38%	**49,837**	50,466	(628)
Asset expansion expenditure	-	-	-	0%	**-**	-	-
Asset upgrade expenditure	2,825	4,882	2,057	42%	**32,969**	32,403	567

Capital Works Program

Adopted budget -

The variance is driven by underspends in Roads projects ($2.1 million) and drainage projects ($1.3 million).

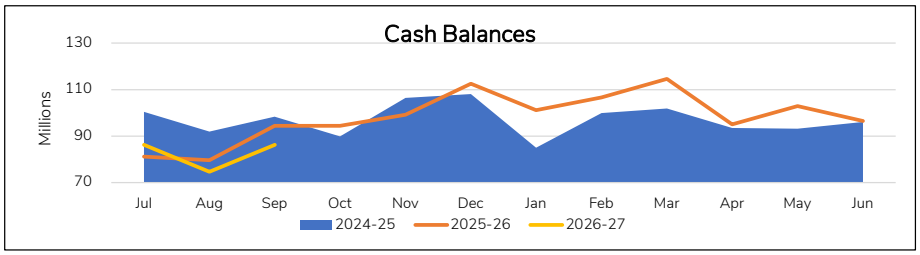
Annual Forecast -

The capital works program is forecast to increase by $1.4 million from the adopted budget of $89.1 million as a result of additional carry forwards from 2025-26 of $2.9 million, 40 projects requiring additional or new funding of $5.6 million, 1 project with $1.0 million brought forward from future years, project savings of $5.3 million, projects overspent in 2025-26 resulting in 2026-27 budget reductions of $0.7 million and 2 projects carried forward to 2027-28 of $2.1 million.

Cash & Investments

Cash assets are $86.2 million as at 30 September 2026. This is a decrease of $10.3 million on 30 June 2026 cash levels, mainly as a result of the timing of when rates instalments fall due. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors, mainly due to the timing of when the rates instalments fall due and the delivery of Capital Works projects.

The portfolio is in compliance with Council policy which requires at least $20.0 million to be convertible to cash and green investments to make up greater than 70% of all investments.



Operating Performance

Income Statement

YTD Variance ($)		YTD Variance (%)	
▲	> $500k	▲	> 10%
▬	< $500k & > ($500k)	▬	< 10% & > (10%)
▼	< ($500k)	▼	< (10%)

Income Statement	Notes	YTD Actuals $'000	YTD Budget $'000	YTD Variance $'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget $'000	Annual Forecast $'000	Annual Variance $'000
Revenue								
Rates and charges		212,835	212,775 ▬	60 ▬	0%	**213,777**	214,508 ▲	731
Statutory fees and fines		5,141	5,284 ▬	(143) ▬	(3%)	**20,013**	19,835 ▬	(178)
User Fees		1,361	2,071 ▼	(710) ▼	(34%)	**10,424**	10,776 ▬	352
Contributions - Monetary	1	2,794	2,732 ▬	62 ▬	2%	**9,840**	9,681 ▬	(159)
Grants - Operating		5,069	5,170 ▬	(101) ▬	(2%)	**21,568**	22,314 ▲	746
Grants - Capital	2	790	- ▲	790 ▲	100%	**17,304**	19,442 ▲	2,138
Other Revenue	3	2,640	1,753 ▲	887 ▲	51%	**7,285**	8,312 ▲	1,027
Asset Sales		6	- ▬	6 ▲	100%	**236**	236 ▬	0
Total Revenue		**230,636**	**229,786** ▲	**850** ▬	**0%**	**300,447**	**305,105** ▲	**4,658**
Expenses								
Employee Benefits	4	33,918	34,820 ▲	902 ▬	3%	**124,678**	127,808 ▼	(3,130)
Contracts, Materials & Services	5	20,131	23,462 ▲	3,331 ▲	14%	**86,456**	87,959 ▼	(1,502)
Depreciation		11,422	11,852 ▬	430 ▬	4%	**45,230**	46,146 ▼	(916)
Amortisation		84	84 ▬	(0) ▬	(0%)	**336**	336 ▬	(0)
Bad and doubtful debts		717	768 ▬	51 ▬	7%	**3,071**	3,020 ▬	51
Net loss on disposal of assets		282	- ▬	(282) ▼	(100%)	**-**	(280) ▬	280
Finance Costs		63	74 ▬	12 ▲	16%	**297**	297 ▬	0
Other Expenses		92	183 ▬	91 ▲	50%	**811**	794 ▬	17
Total Expenses		**66,709**	**71,244** ▲	**4,535** ▬	**6%**	**260,880**	**266,079** ▼	**(5,200)**
Net Result		**163,927**	**158,542** ▲	**5,385** ▬	**3%**	**39,570**	**39,026** ▼	**(542)**

Year to Date Result

Revenue

2. Grants - Capital ended $0.8 million (100%) favourable due to recognition of capital grant revenue earlier than phased.

3. Other Revenue ended $0.9 million (51%) favourable due to earlier than anticipated receipt of the state contribution relating to the emergency services volunteer fund levy administration ($0.2 million) and higher than anticipated interest received as a result of high cash balance.

Expenses

5. Contracts, Materials & Services ended $3.3 million (14%) favourable due to temporary timing differences in expenditure relating to the project delivery of Council's digital transformation program ($1.1 million), community grant programs ($0.4 million) and utilities ($0.3 million).

Forecast Year End Result

Revenue

1. Contributions - Monetary are forecast to increase by $1.2 million due to the anticipated receipt of contribution to Kendall/Harding Footbridge works contribution from Darebin City Council.

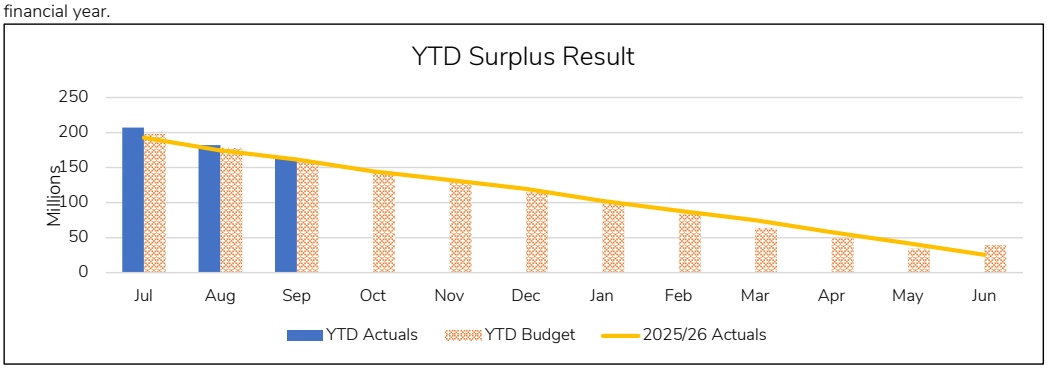
Expenses

4. Employee Benefits are forecast to increase by $3.1 million due to a combination of higher than anticipated parental leave payments, higher than anticipated staffing costs for service delivery of our five libraries and aged care services, increased fringe benefit liability costs as well as lower organisational-wide vacancies than anticipated.

5. Contracts, Materials & Services are forecast to increase by $1.5 million primarily due to recognition of operational carry forwards from 2025-26 ($0.9 million), an anticipated increase in costs associated with maintaining Council ageing building infrastructure ($0.5 million).

YTD Operating Result

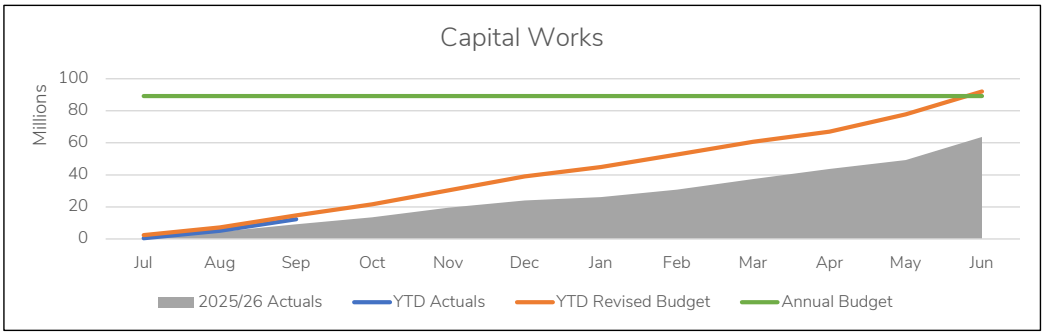
YTD surplus result is impacted by total rates being recognised in July and the surplus will reduce progressively over the course of the financial year.



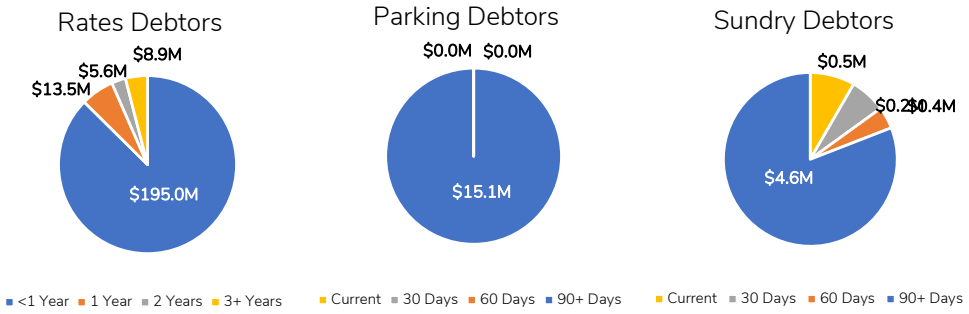
Capital Works

YTD - Council has spent $12.3 million on capital expenditure to 30 September 2026 which is $2.6 million (18%) lower than the YTD budget, with $76.8 million (86%) of the full year budget remaining.

Annual Forecast - The capital works program is forecast to increase by $1.4 million from the adopted budget of $89.1 million as a result of additional carry forwards from 2025-26 and First Quarter Financial Review movements.

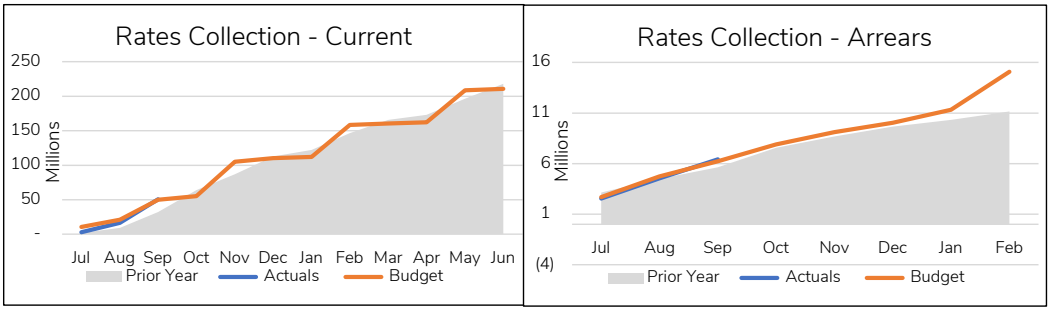


Debtors



Rates Collection

Rates cash collections are on budget and will be monitored over the upcoming months for impact on the forecast cash balances.



Investments

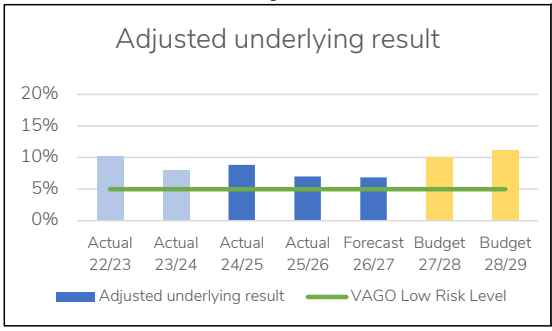
Of the $86.2 million cash assets, $45.6 million is convertible to cash in less than 60 days and $41.0 million (91%) of term deposit investments are held in green investments. The portfolio is in compliance with Council policy which requires at least $20.0 million to be convertible to cash and green investments to make up greater than 70% of all investments.

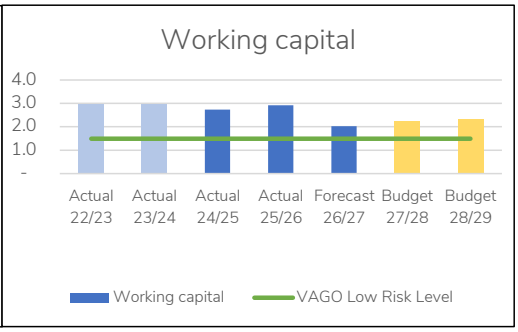
Bank	Maturity Date	Green %	Interest Rate %	S & P short term rating	Amount $'000	Ratio %
Minor Cash*	N/A		N/A	N/A	141	
Westpac	N/A		4.20%	A-1+	30,627	
Westpac	N/A		4.30%	A-1+	10,477	
ME Bank - 2	18/11/2026	100%	4.90%	A-2	5,000	11.1%
Bendigo Bank - 2	20/11/2026	100%	4.90%	A-2	5,000	22.2%
Bendigo Bank - 2	21/12/2026	100%	5.05%	A-2	5,000	
Suncorp - 3	21/12/2026	100%	5.03%	A-1	10,000	22.2%
IMB - 3	25/11/2026	100%	4.90%	A-2	10,000	22.2%
Westpac - 6	9/10/2026		5.13%	A-1+	4,000	22.2%
Westpac - 6	23/12/2026	100%	5.17%	A-1+	6,000	
Total		91%			**86,244**	**100.0%**
Green					**41,000**	**91.1%**

** Minor cash includes NAB holding account and Petty Cash*

Financial Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Ratios



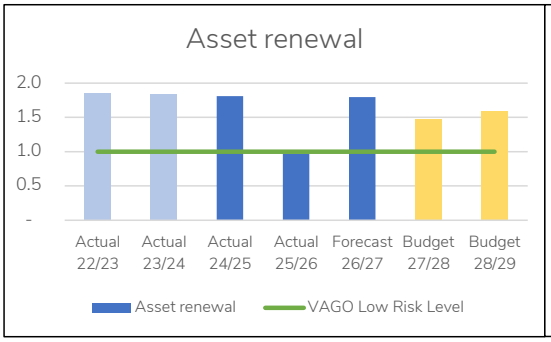


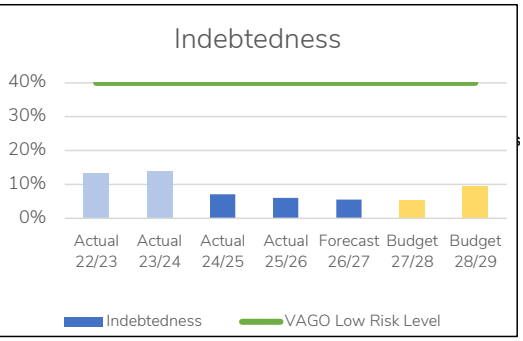
Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / adjusted underlying revenue

This ratio measures an entity's ability to generate its own cash. A positive result indicates a surplus, and the larger the percentage, the stronger the result. The result highlights Councils challenges in generating enough cash to fund future capital works without borrowing.

Current assets / current liabilities

Compares current assets to current liabilities, which provides a measure of the ability to pay existing liabilities in the next 12 months. This year's result expected to be in the low-risk range.





Renewal & upgrade spend/ depreciation

Ratios higher than 1.0 indicate that spending on existing assets is faster than the depreciation rate. This year's result is expected to stay in the low-risk range.

Non-current liabilities / own-source revenue

Measures Council's ability to pay the principal and interest on its borrowings as due from the funds it generates. This year's result is expected to stay in the low-risk range.

Treasury Corporation of Victoria (TCV)

TCV loan requirements		Target	Forecast
Interest Cover	EBITDA/Interest Expense	**> 2**	▲ 286
Interest Bearing Loans	Interest Bearing Liabilities/Own Source Revenue	**< 60%**	▲ 5%

TCV financing is conditional upon the Council maintaining a sustainable financial position when measured by the interest cover and interest bearing loans ratios. Forecast results indicate that the Council is meeting the minimum requirements. TCV loan requirements are well within target given limited borrowing compared to own source revenue and liability obligations.

Standard Statements

Comprehensive Income Statement

Comprehensive Income Statement	YTD Actuals $'000	YTD Budget $'000	YTD Variance $'000	Annual Budget $'000	Annual Forecast $'000	Annual Variance $'000
Revenue						
Rates and charges	212,835	212,775	60	**213,777**	214,508	731
Statutory fees and fines	5,141	5,284	(143)	**20,013**	19,835	(178)
User Fees	1,361	2,071	(710)	**10,424**	10,776	352
Contributions - Monetary	2,794	2,732	62	**9,840**	9,681	(159)
Contributions - Non-monetary	-	-	-	**-**	-	-
Grants - Operating	5,069	5,170	(101)	**21,568**	22,314	746
Grants - Capital	790	-	790	**17,304**	19,442	2,138
Other Revenue	2,640	1,753	887	**7,285**	8,312	1,027
Asset Sales	6	-	6	**236**	236	0
Total Revenue	**230,636**	**229,786**	**850**	**300,447**	**305,105**	**4,658**
Expenses						
Employee Benefits	33,918	34,820	902	**124,678**	127,808	(3,130)
Contracts, Materials & Services	20,131	23,462	3,331	**86,456**	87,959	(1,502)
Depreciation	11,422	11,852	430	**45,230**	46,146	(916)
Amortisation	84	84	(0)	**336**	336	(0)
Bad and doubtful debts	717	768	51	**3,071**	3,020	51
Net loss on disposal of assets	282	-	(282)	**-**	(280)	280
Finance Costs	63	74	12	**297**	297	0
Other Expenses	92	183	91	**811**	794	17
Total Expenses	**66,709**	**71,244**	**4,535**	**260,879**	**266,079**	**(5,200)**
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	**163,927**	**158,542**	**5,385**	**39,569**	**39,026**	**(542)**

Underlying Result	YTD Actuals $'000	YTD Budget $'000	YTD Variance $'000	Annual Budget $'000	Annual Forecast $'000	Annual Variance $'000
Surplus for the Year	**163,927**	**158,542**	**5,385**	**39,569**	**39,026**	**(542)**
Other Comprehensive Income						
Net asset revaluation	-	-	-	**-**	-	-
Total Comprehensive Result	**163,927**	**158,542**	**5,385**	**39,569**	**39,026**	**(542)**
Non Operating Income and Expenditure						
Net loss on disposal of assets	276	-	276	**(236)**	(516)	(280)
Contributions Capital (cash & non-monetary)	(2)	-	(2)	**(1,394)**	(1,482)	(87)
Grants - Capital	(790)	-	(790)	**(18,665)**	(19,442)	(776)
PRRLF Reserve	(2,792)	(2,732)	(60)	**(7,084)**	(8,446)	(1,362)
DCP Reserve	-	-	-	**-**	-	-
Net asset revaluation	-	-	-	**-**	-	-
Total Capital Income	**(3,308)**	**(2,732)**	**(576)**	**(27,380)**	**(29,885)**	**(2,505)**
Underlying Result	**160,619**	**155,810**	**4,809**	**12,188**	**9,140**	**(3,047)**
Less						
Loan Principal Repayments	537	537	-	**2,169**	2,169	-
Additional Rates Funded CAPEX	(2,952)	(2,952)	-	**(9,242)**	(11,809)	2,567
Transfers to Reserves - Operating	17,504	20,000	2,496	**20,892**	19,791	1,101
Transfers from Reserves - Operating	-	-	-	**(1,897)**	(3,200)	1,304
Carry Forwards processed into FY27	1,911	1,911	-	**-**	1,911	(1,911)
Total Transfers & Other	**16,999**	**19,495**	**2,496**	**11,922**	**8,861**	**3,061**
Unrestricted Surplus/(Deficit)	**143,619**	**136,314**	**7,305**	**266**	**280**	**14**

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position	YTD Actuals $'000	30/06/26 Actuals $'000	Movement Inc/(Dec) $'000	Annual Budget $'000	Annual Forecast $'000	Annual Variance $'000
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	41,244	44,572	(3,328)	89	4,212	4,123
Trade and other receivables	236,992	48,282	188,711	45,793	45,826	33
Other financial assets	45,000	52,000	(7,000)	73,107	67,607	(5,500)
Inventories	526	526	-	659	659	-
Prepayments	6,231	3,897	2,334	2,429	2,429	-
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	25,153	25,153	-	-	-	-
Other assets	3,666	3,635	31	2,208	2,208	-
Total current assets	**358,813**	**178,065**	**180,748**	**124,284**	**122,941**	**(1,344)**
Non-current assets						
Unlisted Shares	2	2	-	2	2	-
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	2,824,664	2,824,167	497	2,983,191	2,983,941	750
Right-of-use assets	436	461		128	128	-
Investments	38,675	38,675	-	36,024	36,024	-
Total non-current assets	**2,863,776**	**2,863,304**	**497**	**3,019,345**	**3,020,095**	**750**
Total assets	**3,222,589**	**3,041,369**	**181,245**	**3,143,629**	**3,143,036**	**(593)**
Current liabilities						
Payables						
Payables	46,562	25,302	21,261	18,753	18,753	-
Revenue Received in Advance	4,936	4,168	768	6,898	6,898	-
Provisions	22,958	23,059	(100)	27,110	27,059	(51)
Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings	2,169	2,169	-	2,172	2,172	-
Trust Funds & Deposits	1,302	6,104	(4,802)	6,384	6,384	-
Lease liabilities	75	102	(27)	-	-	-
Total current liabilities	**78,003**	**60,904**	**17,099**	**61,318**	**61,266**	**(51)**
Non-current liabilities						
Provisions	2,851	2,851	-	2,603	2,603	-
Interest-bearing liabilities	10,960	10,772	188	11,437	11,437	-
Lease liabilities	367	364	3	-	-	-
Trust Funds & Deposits	726	726	-	-	-	-
Total non-current liabilities	**14,904**	**14,713**	**191**	**14,040**	**14,040**	**-**
Total liabilities	**92,907**	**75,617**	**17,290**	**75,358**	**75,307**	**(51)**
Net assets	**3,129,683**	**2,965,752**	**163,931**	**3,068,272**	**3,067,729**	**(542)**
Equity						
Asset revaluation reserves	2,048,920	2,048,917	4	-	-	-
Other reserves	59,833	68,943	(9,111)	2,151,921	2,151,268	(653)
Accumulated surplus	1,020,930	847,892	173,037	916,351	916,462	111
Total equity	**3,129,683**	**2,965,752**	**163,931**	**3,068,272**	**3,067,730**	**(542)**

Statement of Cashflows

Statement of Cash Flows	YTD Actuals $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	Annual Budget $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	Annual Forecast $'000 Inflows (Outflows)	Annual Variance $'000 Inflows (Outflows)
Cash flows from operating activities				
Rates and charges	21,000	210,570	211,302	731
Statutory fees and fines	4,999	19,012	18,835	(178)
User fees	813	10,215	10,567	352
Grants - operating	5,069	21,568	22,314	746
Grants - capital	1,558	18,665	19,442	776
Contributions - monetary	2,794	8,479	9,681	1,203
Interest received	903	-	3,706	3,706
Trust funds and deposits taken	35,807	49,941	49,941	-
Other receipts	2,438	7,285	4,606	(2,680)
Net GST refund/(payment)	1,245	-	-	-
Payments to Employees	(34,556)	(122,022)	(125,152)	(3,130)
Payments to Suppliers	(31,008)	(86,412)	(87,915)	(1,502)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(8,545)	(49,333)	(49,333)	-
Other payments	(92)	(811)	(811)	-
Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities	**2,424**	**87,158**	**87,183**	**25**
Cash flows from investing activities				
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(12,305)	(93,886)	(95,288)	(1,402)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	178	92	92	-
Payments/(Proceeds) for investments	7,000	4,993	4,993	-
Net cash used in investing activities	**(5,127)**	**(88,801)**	**(90,203)**	**(1,402)**
Cash flows from financing activities				
Finance costs	(60)	(816)	(816)	-
Proceeds from Borrowings	-	4,000	4,000	-
Repayment of borrowings	(538)	(14,212)	(14,212)	-
Interest paid - lease liability	(3)	-	-	-
Repayment of lease liabilities	(24)	(20)	(20)	-
Net cash used in financing activities	**(625)**	**(11,048)**	**(11,048)**	**-**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	**(3,328)**	**(12,691)**	**(14,068)**	**(1,377)**
Cash at beginning of period	44,572	40,889	44,572	3,684
Cash at end of period	**41,244**	**28,198**	**30,504**	**2,307**

Cash Position				
Non-restricted Cash at 1 July 2026	44,572	40,889	44,572	3,684
Other Financial Assets at 1 July 2026	52,000	78,100	52,000	(26,100)
Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	**96,572**	**118,989**	**96,572**	**(22,416)**
Non-restricted Cash at end of financial period	41,244	89	4,212	4,123
Other Financial Assets at end of financial period	45,000	73,107	67,607	(5,500)
Cash & cash equivalents at end of financial period	**86,244**	**73,196**	**71,819**	**(1,377)**

Statement of Capital Works

Statement of Capital Works	YTD Actuals $'000	YTD Budget $'000	YTD Variance $'000	Annual Budget $'000	Annual Forecast $'000	Annual Variance $'000
Property						
Land	3,023	-	(3,023)	**4,000**	4,000	-
Buildings	2,078	1,366	(712)	**11,354**	12,681	(1,327)
Building Improvements	613	1,506	893	**5,123**	5,807	(684)
Total property	**5,714**	**2,872**	**(2,842)**	**20,477**	**22,488**	**(2,011)**
Plant and equipment						
Plant, machinery and equipment	720	933	213	**8,279**	9,200	(920)
Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture	21	31	10	**98**	98	-
Computers and telecommunications	12	-	(12)	**883**	897	(14)
Artworks	-	20	20	**89**	89	-
Library books	385	250	(135)	**1,082**	1,082	-
Total plant and equipment	**1,139**	**1,234**	**95**	**10,432**	**11,366**	**(935)**
Infrastructure						
Roads	2,783	4,911	2,129	**11,211**	11,745	(534)
Bridges	14	263	249	**3,353**	1,203	2,150
Footpaths and cycleways	218	869	651	**5,840**	5,569	271
Drainage	364	1,660	1,296	**3,986**	3,457	528
Recreational, leisure & community facilities	893	1,524	632	**20,743**	21,173	(430)
Waste management	5	-	(5)	**2,259**	2,308	(50)
Parks, open space and streetscapes	1,136	1,516	380	**10,566**	10,941	(375)
Other infrastructure	5	-	(5)	**250**	250	-
Total infrastructure	**5,417**	**10,744**	**5,326**	**58,207**	**56,646**	**1,560**
Total capital works expenditure	**12,271**	**14,850**	**2,579**	**89,116**	**90,501**	**(1,386)**
Represented by:						
New asset expenditure	3,737	717	(3,021)	**6,309**	7,633	(1,323)
Asset renewal expenditure	5,709	9,251	3,542	**49,837**	50,466	(628)
Asset upgrade expenditure	2,825	4,882	2,057	**32,969**	32,403	567
Total capital works expenditure	**12,271**	**14,850**	**2,579**	**89,116**	**90,501**	**(1,386)**

Capital Works Program - 2026-27 Q1 Financial Review

Capital Works Program	# projects	$'000	Impact on 2026-27	Reference in Attachment 2
Adopted budget		89,116		
Plus				
Additional carry forwards from 2025-26		2,855	Increase program size	Report 7.1 from September 2026 Council meeting
Adopted budget + final carry forwards into 2026-27		**91,971**		
Movement				
New projects requiring funding	10	2,465	Increase program size	Table 1 (Attachment 2)
Existing projects requiring additional funding	23	2,967	Increase program size	Table 2 (Attachment 2)
Existing projects (from prior year) requiring additional funding	7	141	Increase program size	Table 2 (Attachment 2)
Bring forward from 2027-28	1	1,000	Increase program size	Table 3 (Attachment 2)
Deferred (Funded)	1	(573)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Deferred (Unfunded)	6	(1,545)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Declared Savings	12	(1,224)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Reduction in scope	8	(1,145)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Projects rephased	1	(420)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Projects removed	3	(353)	Decrease program size	Table 4 (Attachment 2)
Projects carried forward into 2027-28	2	(2,053)	Decrease program size	Table 5 (Attachment 2)
Adjustments relating to prior year	6	(730)	Decrease program size	Table 6 (Attachment 2)
Q1 forecast	**80**	**90,501**		

Table 1 - New projects requiring funding

Project	Adopted Budget + CFs $	Additional Funding $	Q1 Forecast $	Grants/ External $	Reserves $	Council $
Coburg Lake Toilet	-	700,000	700,000	700,000		
Velodrome Emergency Repairs	-	600,000	600,000			600,000
Safer Crossing for Chapman Ave & Clovelly Ave	-	530,000	530,000	530,000		
Central Coburg (Victoria Mall) Project	-	138,784	138,784	138,784		
30 km/h Trial	-	138,337	138,337	138,337		
Tate Reserve - Dog Walking in Merri-bek	-	122,850	122,850		122,850	
Sinkhole Emergency Works	-	100,000	100,000			100,000
Blackspot Project - Barrow St & The Avenue, Coburg	-	94,050	94,050	94,050		
Glenroy Activity Centre (Morgan Court) Project	-	27,000	27,000	27,000		
Brunswick Town Hall Arts Storeroom	-	14,180	14,180			14,180
Total	**-**	**2,465,201**	**2,465,201**	**1,628,171**	**122,850**	**714,180**

Table 2 - Existing projects requiring additional funding

Project	Adopted Budget + CFs $	Additional Funding $	Q1 Forecast $	Grants/ External $	Reserves $	Council $
Drainage, West Street (Everard Street To Hilton Street)	1,400,000	450,000	1,850,000			450,000
Wheeler Street - Retaining Wall	912,900	444,076	1,356,976			444,076
Electricity Capacity Upgrades at Hadfield Depot	314,850	419,737	734,587			419,737
Road Reconstruction, OHea St From Lonsdale St to Clifton Gr	437,490	236,511	674,001			236,511
Road Reconstruction, Northumberland Rd From Arndt to Crowley	808,687	202,086	1,010,773			202,086
Wombat Crossing - Dawson St at Melville Road, Brunswick	133,985	180,000	313,985			180,000
West Street Intersection and Streetscape	1,412,519	130,000	1,542,519			130,000
DeChene Reserve - Gender Inclusive Facilities	2,312,692	101,367	2,414,059			101,367
Charles Mutton Res East & West Sports Field Lighting	82,484	100,000	182,484			100,000
Minor Plant Replacement Program	-	100,000	100,000			100,000
Balfe Park Sportsfield Redevelopment	1,017,721	82,600	1,100,321			82,600
Shore Reserve - Football & Cricket	35,569	80,000	115,569			80,000
JP Fawkner West, Drainage and Irrigation Upgrade	59,716	77,759	137,475			77,759
Mitchell Pde Retaining Wall	530,894	77,291	608,185			77,291
Electric Vehicle Chargers	170,000	76,368	246,368	76,368		
Dunstan Reserve South: Sports Field Redevelopment	45,000	56,460	101,460			56,460
Fran Street IWM Project	16,327	32,110	48,437			32,110
Sportsfield & Ovals Minor Capital Program	369,843	30,157	400,000			30,157
James Martin Reserve (former Pigeon Club)	47,674	26,563	74,237			26,563
Road Reconstruction, Ellenvale Ave From Winifred To Hillview	250,000	24,655	274,655			24,655
Corporate Mobile Phone Purchases	-	14,463	14,463			14,463
Urquhart Street from Alva to Keith, Road Reconstruction	85,000	12,265	97,265			12,265
Moonee Boulevard IWM Project	29,214	12,110	41,324			12,110
Total existing projects requiring additional funding	**10,472,563**	**2,966,578**	**13,439,142**	**76,368**	**-**	**2,890,210**

Existing projects requiring additional funding cont.

Project	Adopted Budget + CFs $	Additional Funding $	Q1 Forecast $	Grants/ External $	Reserves $	Council $
Projects completed in 2025-26 with additional expenditure in 2026-27						
Road Reconstruction - 106 Bindi Street Intersection	-	41,790	41,790			41,790
Glenroy College - Open Space	-	39,620	39,620		39,620	
Park Renewal - Sewell Reserve	-	38,179	38,179		38,179	
Braemar Street from Melville to Reynard, Road Reconstruction	-	15,933	15,933			15,933
Park Renewal, Ivan Page Reserve (Design and Construction)	-	2,544	2,544		2,544	
Lizards with Bikes: Revitalising the Coburg Velodrome	-	2,132	2,132			2,132
Improving Gilpin Dog Park	-	1,054	1,054		1,054	
Total projects completed in 2025-26 with additional expenditure in 2026-27	**-**	**141,252**	**141,252**	**-**	**81,397**	**59,855**
Total	**10,472,563**	**3,107,830**	**13,580,394**	**76,368**	**81,397**	**2,950,066**

Table 3 - Projects requiring a bring forward

Project	Adopted Budget + CFs $	Bring Forward $	Q1 Forecast $	Grants/ External $	Reserves $	Council $
Bring forwards from 2027-28						
Brunswick Early Years Hub	5,147,851	1,000,000	6,147,851			1,000,000
Total	**5,147,851**	**1,000,000**	**6,147,851**	**-**	**-**	**1,000,000**

Table 4 - Projects with savings

Project	Adopted Budget + CFs $	Savings $	Q1 Forecast $	Grants/ External $	Reserves $	Council $
Deferred (Funded)						
Newlands Road Heritage Bridge (BR-0140) Restoration	572,505	(572,505)	-	(572,505)		
	572,505	**(572,505)**	**-**	**(572,505)**	**-**	**-**
Deferred (Unfunded)						
Drainage, Sheffield St To Chambers St To Harding St	960,000	(960,000)	-			(960,000)
Breese Street Improvements	240,000	(240,000)	-			(240,000)
Hope Street Improvements	140,000	(135,350)	4,650			(135,350)
Munro St Corridor - Streets for People Project	254,722	(100,000)	154,722			(100,000)
Park Renewal, Volga Street/Middle Street (Design)	99,353	(95,000)	4,353		(95,000)	
Park Upgrade, Mitchell Reserve (Design)	32,000	(15,000)	17,000			(15,000)
	1,726,075	**(1,545,350)**	**180,725**	**-**	**(95,000)**	**(1,450,350)**
Declared Savings						
Drainage & resurfacing works, Kinross St, O'Hea to Gaffney	798,000	(250,000)	548,000			(250,000)
Road Reconstruction, Northumberland Rd From Crowley to Rhodes	600,985	(202,086)	398,899			(202,086)
Road Reconstruction, Grover Street From Gaffney St	944,733	(200,000)	744,733			(200,000)
Wallace Reserve: Sports Field Lighting Upgrade	1,444,003	(200,000)	1,244,003			(200,000)
Bob Hawke Community Centre - Kitchen Refurbishment	110,343	(110,343)	-			(110,343)
Dunstan Reserve Childcare	1,588,161	(100,000)	1,488,161			(100,000)
Brunswick Baths Gym Expansion	50,000	(50,000)	-			(50,000)
Road Closures	145,768	(47,904)	97,864			(47,904)
Wombat Crossing - West Street	435,158	(30,000)	405,158			(30,000)
Improve Link between Pentridge Blvd & Merri Creek	15,000	(15,000)	-			(15,000)
Minor Park - Tate Reserve (Removal)	54,325	(11,712)	42,613			(11,712)
Park Renewal - McCleery Reserve	96,122	(6,716)	89,406		(6,716)	
	6,282,598	**(1,223,761)**	**5,058,837**	**-**	**(6,716)**	**(1,217,045)**
Reduction in scope						
Planning, Design and Eval of Transport Projects	550,000	(350,000)	200,000			(350,000)
Victoria St - Streets for People	2,046,851	(300,000)	1,746,851			(300,000)
Urban Forest Strategy - Tricky to Plant Areas	464,858	(150,000)	314,858			(150,000)
Footpath & Bikepath Renewals	2,165,141	(100,000)	2,065,141			(100,000)
Heavy Vehicles Replacement Program	6,073,829	(100,000)	5,973,829			(100,000)
Dawson Street Child Care Co-Op Upgrade and Extension	240,000	(50,000)	190,000			(50,000)
Early Years Upgrades (Various)	595,000	(50,000)	545,000			(50,000)
Breese Street Masterplan	57,187	(45,000)	12,187			(45,000)
	12,192,865	**(1,145,000)**	**11,047,865**	**-**	**-**	**(1,145,000)**
Project/s rephased						
Accommodation changes to meet service demand	905,784	(419,737)	486,047			(419,737)
	905,784	**(419,737)**	**486,047**	**-**	**-**	**(419,737)**
Project/s removed						
Raised Crossing - Everett St & Moreland Rd (SLRSP)	184,000	(180,450)	3,550	(180,450)		
Integrated Water Management Design and Implementation	167,500	(167,500)	-			(167,500)
Sylvester St Oak Park Land Slide	10,000	(5,000)	5,000			(5,000)
	361,500	**(352,950)**	**8,550**	**(180,450)**	**-**	**(172,500)**
Total	**22,041,328**	**(5,259,303)**	**16,782,025**	**(752,955)**	**(101,716)**	**(4,404,632)**

Table 5 - Capital carry forwards into 2027-28

Project and Delay Reason	Expected Completion Date	Adopted Budget + CFs $	Carry Forward $	Q1 Forecast $	Grants/ External $	Reserves $	Council $
Kendall/Harding Footbridge over Merri Creek Delays have occurred due to design modifications required to address Friends of Merri Creek concerns. Construction is expected to commence in February 2027 at the earliest, with the first construction payment anticipated in March. Based on the revised program, approximately 15% of the total construction cost is forecast to be spent this financial year.	Oct-2028	2,755,243	(1,552,682)	1,202,561	(142,066)		(1,410,616)
Glenroy Activity Centre Upgrade - Wheatsheaf Rd Wheatsheaf Road Shopping Strip construction commenced in mid 2025 and was put on hold due to Department of Transport Planning (DTP) approval. Agreements were being sought with DTP since then and construction will recommence. Based on the most recent Streetscape PCB discussion, (and permit only received last week) the remaining project budget will need to be carried forward into 2026-27. The project is now scheduled for completion by August 2027, approximately two months later than originally forecast. A budget carry forward of $500,000 is expected into FY 2027-28.	Aug-2027	3,198,050	(500,000)	2,698,050			(500,000)
Total		**5,953,292**	**(2,052,682)**	**3,900,610**	**(142,066)**	**-**	**(1,910,616)**

Table 6 - Projects with a bring forward into 2025-26*

Project	$	Grants/ External $	Reserves $	Council $
Brunswick Early Years Hub	(332,149)			(332,149)
Brunswick Baths Outdoor Pool Re-tiling	(208,208)			(208,208)
Minor Plant Replacement Program	(90,000)			(90,000)
Drainage Investigations/Design	(43,103)			(43,103)
Sportsfield & Ovals Minor Capital Program	(30,157)			(30,157)
Brunswick Baths Shade Sail Replacement & Repairs	(26,810)			(26,810)
Total	**(730,427)**	**-**	**-**	**(730,427)**

*These projects ended 2025-26 with an overspend, which has been offset by a reduction to the 2026-27 budget. Where other forecast adjustments apply, this reduction is reflected in the 'Adopted Budget + CFs' figure.

7.2 YEAR 2 COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2026-27 - FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026-27 – First Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).
2. Endorses the proposed withdrawal of *Action 88 – 'Facilitate the Brunswick Baths Gym Expansion'* from the Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2026–27, noting that the works will be incorporated into the detailed design phase scheduled for 2027–28.
3. Endorses amending Action *95 – 'Deliver a risky play playground at ATC Cook Reserve as part of the 2026–27 parks upgrade program'* to reflect the relocation of the project to Harmony Park, Coburg North. The amended action will read: *'Action 95 – Deliver a risky play playground at Harmony Park as part of the 2026–27 parks upgrade program.'*

REPORT

Executive Summary

The First Quarter Performance Report (Attachment 1) provides an overview of Council's progress in implementing the Council Plan 2025–2029, highlighting key achievements and monitoring delivery of the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27.

The Council Plan establishes five strategic themes and 51 initiatives and priorities that guide Council's work over the four-year period. These commitments are implemented through annual Council Action Plans, supported by Council's adopted strategies and action plans, which provide further direction for delivering longer-term priorities.

Of the 83 actions in the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27:

- 97% (80 actions) are in progress and on track for delivery.
- 2% (2 actions) have not yet commenced.
- 1% (1 action) is proposed for withdrawal.

Overall, the results indicate that the majority of actions are progressing as planned during the first quarter, with key achievements across Council's five strategic themes outlined in the Issues section of this report.

Two actions have not yet commenced: *Action 68 – Redesign grants program to support more opportunities to create, learn and connect* and *Action 87 – Review and develop the Recreation Strategy*. Both are scheduled to commence later in 2026 or early 2027.

One action, *Action 88 – Facilitate the Brunswick Baths Gym Expansion*, is proposed for withdrawal, with the works to be incorporated into the detailed design phase in 2027–28. Subject to Council endorsement, the total number of actions will reduce from 83 to 82.

An amendment is also proposed to *Action 95 – Deliver a risky play playground at ATC Cook Reserve as part of the 2026–27 parks upgrade program*, to reflect the relocation of the risky play playground to Harmony Park, Coburg North. The amendment is subject to Council endorsement.

Further details of the proposed withdrawal and action amendment are outlined in the Issues section of this report.

Previous Council Decisions

Year 1 Council Action Plan 2025–26 – Fourth Quarter Performance Report – 12 August 2026

That Council:

1. *Received and notes the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026-27 – First Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Endorsed the proposed withdrawal of Action 68 – 'Redesign grants program to support more opportunities to create, learn and connect,' noting that this action is proposed to be included in the Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2026-2027.*

Year 1 Council Action Plan 2025–26 – Third Quarter Performance Report – 13 May 2026

That Council:

1. *Received and notes the Year 1 Council Action Plan 2025-26 – Third Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Noted that Action 68 - Redesign grants program to support more opportunities to create, learn and connect is currently behind schedule.*
3. *Endorsed withdrawal of Action 12, (relating to expanding Council's practice to ensure Council buildings and infrastructure are environmentally sustainable) noting that this action is proposed to be replaced by two specific actions in the proposed Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2026-2027 to improve clarity and strengthen intended outcomes.*

Year 1 Council Action Plan 2025–26 - Second Quarter Performance Report – 11 February 2026

That Council:

1. *Receives and notes the Year 1 Council Action Plan 2025-26 – Second Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Endorses to place on hold Action 53 - Deliver the Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement project.*

Adoption of the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025–2035, Merri-bek Council Plan 2025–2029 and Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025–2026 – 10 September 2025

That Council:

1. *Adopts the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035 (provided as Attachment 1) in accordance with legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.*
2. *Adopts the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025–2029 (provided as Attachment 1) in accordance with legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, noting that it incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029.*
3. *Adopts Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026 (provided as Attachment 2) as the first year of actions to deliver against the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029, with an additional action to be added under Theme 2: Healthy and Inclusive Communities, at initiative 2.9. to read: "Explore, including though partnership arrangements, ways to improve health, access and inclusiveness in public & private spaces for people in precarious housing such as access to toilets and bathrooms, seating under shelter, showers, lockers and a place to heat food as well as improved access to services."*

4. *Authorises the Director Business Transformation to finalise the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035, Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 and Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026, including any minor administrative changes, professional design of the documents and online versions, for distribution and implementation.*

5. *Advises submitters that Council has considered their submissions relating to the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 and that the submitters be advised of the outcome of the consideration, as it relates to their specific submission through this council report (provided as Attachment 3), and they be thanked for their contributions.*

6. *Thanks, the members of the Community Panel and Community Youth Panel for their contribution and advise them in writing of the outcome of Council's decision.*

1. Policy Context

In accordance with sections 88 and 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council adopted its revised Community Vision 2025–2035 and Council Plan 2025–2029 in September 2025.

The Council Plan established five strategic themes and 51 initiatives and priorities that guide Council's work over the four-year period. Implementation is supported by annual Council Action Plans and Council's adopted strategies and action plans, which provide further direction for delivering longer-term priorities.

The Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27 identifies specific actions to be undertaken during the second financial year of the Council Plan. These actions are resourced through the 2026–27 Annual Budget, which forms part of the broader 2026–2030 Budget.

2. Background

This report presents the first quarter performance results for the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27, providing an assessment of Council's progress in delivering the second year of the Council Plan 2025–2029.

3. Issues

At the end of the first quarter, 80 of the 83 actions (97%) in the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27 are in progress and on track for delivery. Two actions (2%) have not yet commenced, and one action (1%) is proposed for withdrawal. No actions are reported as off track or critical.

An amendment is also proposed to Action 95 – Deliver a risky play playground at ATC Cook Reserve as part of the 2026–27 parks upgrade program, to reflect the relocation of the project to Harmony Park, Coburg North. This amendment is subject to Council endorsement and will not affect the total number of actions.

Key achievements and progress across the five strategic themes of the Council Plan are summarised below, highlighting service delivery outcomes and significant project milestones. Detailed first-quarter performance updates for individual actions are provided in **Attachment 1**.

Theme 1: Care for nature and climate resilience

Key achievements and progress during the first quarter included:

- **Community greening:** More than 500 residents participated in nature-focused activities, including three community planting days and Council's largest National Tree Day event to date. A further 38 trees were planted at Moomba Park Primary School through an activity co-designed by the Junior School Council.

- **Household energy efficiency:** Supported 13 solar installations and 10 home thermal upgrades for low-income households and distributed 160 energy-efficient electric throw rugs to residents at risk of energy poverty.
- **Waste reduction:** Delivered a Brunswick clothing exchange attended by 73 people and zero-waste education activities reaching 11 multicultural community groups.
- **Community climate resilience:** Partnered with Fawkner SES to deliver a flood preparedness forum for leaseholders in flood-affected areas.
- **Council fleet electrification:** Increased the number of electrified vehicles in Council's fleet from 47 to 52 during the quarter, out of a total fleet of 232 vehicles.

Theme 2: Healthy and inclusive communities

Key achievements and progress during the first quarter included:

- **Youth spaces and engagement:** More than 500 surveys helped inform planning for additional spaces for young people to connect, with Fawkner and Brunswick identified as priority areas.
- **Youth programs:** Developed new pilot programs for delivery from Term 4, including expanded activities at Fawkner Community Sports Hall, female boxing, barbering, and mentoring initiatives.
- **Food security:** Continued providing affordable fresh produce through Merri Food Hub at an average of 20% below supermarket prices, supported by Fawkner Food Bowls supplying 50 varieties of culturally diverse fruit and vegetables.
- **Early years services:** Commenced construction of the Brunswick Early Years Hub, which will bring together childcare, kindergarten, maternal and child health services, and community playgroup spaces.
- **Social housing and homelessness:** Commenced construction of 39 new social housing units in Brunswick on Council-contributed land, committed funding for Assertive Outreach through to June 2029, and continued coordinating responses to rough sleeping through the Merri-bek Zero project. Homelessness Week activities also helped raise community awareness.

Theme 3: Beautiful and liveable city

Key achievements and progress during the first quarter included:

- **Parks and open spaces:** Progressed community consultation and design across eight parks and playgrounds as part of the 2026–27 Park Upgrade Program. Released a draft concept design for a new park at 568 Sydney Road, Brunswick, for community feedback.
- **Sustainable transport:** Provided 120 e-cargo bike subsidies to local families through the Ride & Stride program, helping reduce transport costs. One-third of Merri-bek primary schools registered for the October Biketober campaign.
- **Safer and more accessible streets:** Secured Council endorsement of the Hope Street and Breese Street projects, with design underway. Progressed Victoria Street towards construction in 2026–27 and commenced community consultation for Harding Munro Street.
- **School travel safety:** Developed concept designs for Merri-bek's first School Transport Precinct at Merri-bek Primary School, with community engagement scheduled for October.

- **Electric vehicle infrastructure:** Installed a new electric vehicle charger at The Grove in Coburg, pending connection and activation, and completed procurement for a fast charger on Sydney Road.

Theme 4: Thriving economy and culture:

Key achievements and progress during the first quarter included:

- **Business support:** Delivered 10 business events, including networking and skills workshops, supported approximately 50 businesses through the Business Approvals Merri-bek (BAM) permit concierge service, and commenced a three-month mentoring program with 40 participants.
- **Shopping precinct improvements:** Completed a shopfront improvement project in Victoria Mall, Coburg, and progressed construction of the West Street Streetscape Improvement project in Hadfield, scheduled for completion in December 2026. Progressed multicultural business precinct revitalisation projects in Coburg and Glenroy.
- **Creative industries support:** Delivered the Brunswick Design District Open Studio Series in partnership with RMIT University and Creative Victoria, providing opportunities for local designers and creative businesses to showcase their work.
- **Libraries and community spaces:** Finalised the concept design for the Coburg Library and Piazza, with schematic design underway, and engaged designers for the Fawkner Library redevelopment ahead of community consultation in January 2027.
- **Arts and cultural activities:** Progressed planning for Ramadan Nights in Bonwick Street and new public art projects, including murals, artwork at Coburg Library and two installations in Fawkner.

Theme 5: Engaging and responsible council:

Key achievements and progress during the first quarter included:

- **Customer service and digital transformation:** Completed the first design phase of Council's multi-year Elevate Transformation Program to modernise digital systems and improve access to services, alongside continued development of the Customer Experience Strategy.
- **Grant funding:** Secured $968,750 in Victorian Government funding for the Greening Creek to Creek project, Tree for Me Schools Program and Fawkner Library redevelopment, alongside $14,000 for library social cohesion programs.
- **Advocacy:** Continued advocacy for community priorities, including the Victorian Government's $80 million commitment to progress duplication of the Upfield train line between Gowrie and Upfield stations. Refreshed Council's Victorian State Election Advocacy Priorities.
- **Climate risk and financial planning:** Completed a review of climate-related expenditure from 2020 to 2025 to inform future budgets, asset management planning, and Council's response to the financial impacts of climate change.
- **Infrastructure funding and planning:** Progressed updated open space and developer contribution models, with public exhibition scheduled to commence in October 2026.

In progress (on track)

A total of 80 actions (97%) are on track to deliver the outcomes of the Council Action Plan. Detailed performance updates are provided in **Attachment 1**.

Actions not started

Two actions (2%) have not yet commenced in Quarter 1 of the 2026–27 Council Action Plan. Further details, including reasons for the delays and anticipated commencement timeframes, are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Action not started

Action #	Action Description and Update	Directorate
68	**Redesign grants program to support more opportunities to create, learn and connect** The Grants Guidelines Review has been rescheduled to commence in November/December 2026 following a reprioritisation of work within the program.	Community
87	**Review and develop the Recreation Strategy** Planning for the Recreation Strategy review will commence later in 2026, with a project brief to be developed ahead of the review and development of the new Strategy commencing in early 2027.	Community

Proposed withdrawal

One action (1%) under the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27 is proposed for withdrawal, as outlined in Table 2 below. Subject to Council endorsement, the action will be withdrawn, reducing the total number of actions in the 2026–27 Council Action Plan from 83 to 82.

Table 2: Action proposed for withdrawal

Action #	Action Description and Update:	Directorate
88	**Facilitate the Brunswick Baths Gym Expansion** Proposed Withdrawal of Action: Following a review of project timing and priorities, it is recommended that this action be withdrawn from the 2026–27 Council Action Plan. The proposed works will instead be incorporated into the detailed design phase scheduled for 2027–28, ensuring better alignment with the broader project delivery timeline.	Community

Proposed amendment:

One action under the Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27 is proposed for amendment to reflect a change in project location, as outlined in Table 3 below.

The action remains on track for delivery and is included in the 80 actions reported as on track. Subject to Council endorsement, the action description will be updated, with no change to the overall number of actions.

Table 3: Proposed action amendment

Action #	Action Description and Update:	Directorate
95	**Deliver a risky play playground at ATC Cook Reserve as part of the 2026-27 parks upgrade program**. **Proposed action amendment:** Council approval will be sought to amend the action name to reflect the relocation of the risky play playground project from ATC Cook Reserve, Glenroy to Harmony Park, Coburg North. **Progress update:** The risky play playground project has been relocated from ATC Cook Reserve, Glenroy to Harmony Park, Coburg North. ATC Cook Reserve will still be upgraded as part of a separate project. A draft concept plan for the Harmony Park project was shared with the community for feedback during September 2026.	City Infrastructure

Community impact

Community impact is addressed throughout the Council Plan 2025-2029 but primarily under strategic objective 5: Engaging and Responsible Council - A responsive and engaged Merri-bek that prioritises excellent service, embraces engaging communication methods, advocates community needs, and continues to uphold sustainable financial management and accountable governance that builds trust and collaboration with the community.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability considerations are embedded throughout the Council Plan 2025–29. These objectives are proactively addressed under strategic objective 1: Care for Nature and Climate Resilience - To create a flourishing and climate resilient Merri-bek by improving wildlife and nature connectivity, greening and cooling for healthier streets and public realm, and engaging the community in meaningful climate action. In addition, there are broader climate, health and environmental implications reflected across the plan as a whole.

Economic sustainability implications

Economic sustainability is addressed across the Council Plan 2025–29, with key focus under strategic objective 4: Thriving Economy and Culture - A lively and inclusive Merri-bek where the economy supports local business and industry growth, celebrates artistic and creative expression, and connects the community through vibrant cultural experiences; and strategic objective 5: Engaging and Responsible Council. These objectives together promote economic resilience by supporting local economic activity while maintaining strong governance, financial sustainability, and accountability in Council decision-making.

Legal and risk considerations

The Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-35 and Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 and processes associated with the development of these documents have been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

Human rights considerations

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Community consultation and engagement was not required for this report, as it reports on performance against the Council Plan 2025–2029.

Affected persons' rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views. There are no individual rights or interests affected.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

All actions documented in the Council Action Plan 2026-27 are resourced through the 2026-27 annual budget (included in the 2026-2030 Budget).

7. Implementation

The first quarter Council Action Plan 2026–27 performance results will be published on Council's website.

Attachment/s

1⇩ Council Action Plan Report 2026-27 - Progress Report Q1 D26/454072

Merri-bek Council Action Plan

2026-27

Quarter One Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

Executive Summary

This First Quarter Performance Report provides an overview of Council's progress in implementing the Council Plan 2025–2029 for the period 1 July to 30 September 2026, highlighting key achievements, monitoring delivery of the Council Action Plan 2026–27 and identifying areas requiring further attention.

In accordance with sections 88 and 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council adopted the revised Community Vision 2025–2035 and Council Plan 2025–2029 on 10 September 2025.

The Council Plan established five strategic themes and 51 initiatives and priorities that guide Council's work over the four-year period. These commitments are implemented through annual Council Action Plans, supported by Council's adopted strategies and action plans, which provide further direction for delivering longer-term priorities.

The Year 2 Council Action Plan 2026–27 identifies 83 actions to be undertaken during the second financial year of the Council Plan. These actions are resourced through the 2026–27 Annual Budget, which forms part of the broader 2026–2030 Budget.

The status of the 83 actions is summarised below:

Number	Percentage	Status	Definition	Traffic Light
0	0%	Achieved	Completed, achieved	✔
80	97%	In Progress	On track	●
0	0%	Off Track	Behind Target	●
0	0%	Critical	Action is significantly delayed	●
1	1%	Proposed Withdrawn	On hold or removed	●
2	2%	Action Not Started	Yet to commence	●

The remainder of this report provides a detailed progress update for each action, including:

- A description of the action
- The current delivery status, represented by a traffic light indicator.
- Officer commentary outlining progress, key achievements and any issues affecting delivery.

Together, these updates demonstrate how Council's annual activities contribute to the broader initiatives, priorities and strategic objectives of the Council Plan 2025–2029.

Theme 1: Care for nature and climate resilience

1: To create a flourishing and climate resilient Merri-bek by improving wildlife and nature connectivity, greening and cooling for healthier streets and public realm, and engaging the community in meaningful climate action.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
2	Implement 'Tree for me' pilot and review outcomes to reduce impacts of urban heat and increasing heatwaves through collaborating to get more shade trees in places like schools, retirement villages and backyards.	●	Place and Environment	Students, parent volunteers and Merri-bek staff planted 38 trees at Moomba Park Primary School on 24 July for National Schools Tree Day. The planting activity was co-designed with the Junior School Council. Residents at Levande Gowanbrae retirement community are also planning to plant eight trees with Council support. The Tree for Me pilot is currently being evaluated, including based on the feedback of program participants.
3	Continue to facilitate the native understorey planting trial project.	●	City Infrastructure	Since July, six sites have been planted as part of the native understorey planting trial, including Moomba Park, Edgars Creek Parkland, Park St Linear Reserve, KW Joyce Reserve and Kernan Reserve. These sites have now moved into the maintenance phase. Planning is underway for the next phase of sites to be planted during the 2027 planting season.
4	Continue to facilitate the biodiversity and climate change resilience top-up research grant program.	●	City Infrastructure	Officers are continuing to develop a transparent process for the biodiversity and climate change resilience top-up research grant program, with work focused on establishing the approach and requirements for the grants process.
6	Continue to deliver key stormwater harvesting and wetland projects as outlined in the Integrated Water Management Action Plan.	●	Place and Environment	The A.G. Gillon and Reaburn Reserve stormwater harvesting project is progressing, with the tender process commencing in September. Construction is planned to commence in early 2027, subject to Council awarding the contract.
8	Continue to promote and support an inclusive energy transition, including solar and thermal subsidies for low-income households.	●	Place and Environment	Highlights include: • Continued delivery of the Home Energy Subsidy Program, supporting the installation of 10 thermal upgrades, including insulation and draught-proofing, and 13 solar upgrades for low-income households. • Hosted a hands-on home energy efficiency and draught-proofing workshop for women and gender-diverse community members, with 18 attendees. • Completed distribution of 160 energy-efficient electric throw rugs to residents at risk of energy poverty through internal and external networks. • Welcomed the Victorian Parliamentary inquiry report on renewable and affordable energy for apartments, with 16 of the report's 25 recommendations aligning with Merri-bek's submission.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
9	Continue to deliver circular economy community initiatives and prepare for roll-out of fortnightly rubbish service.	●	Place and Environment	Highlights this quarter included: • A Clothing Exchange event in Brunswick with 73 participants, a cloth nappy workshop, and promotion of the reusables subsidy at Fawkner Festa. • Promotion of events through the Circular Campus to Community collaboration with RMIT, and development of a new How to Host a Clothes Swap with Friends guide. • Delivery of outreach sessions to 11 multicultural community groups, focused on zero-waste behaviours and Council subsidies. • Review of preparations for the rollout of the fortnightly rubbish service in response to project risks associated with the upcoming State election.
10	Continue to increase awareness and capacity of the Merri-bek community on heat and flood risks to support resilience building	●	Place and Environment	Council and Fawkner SES hosted a Facilities Forum with Council leaseholders in flood-affected areas in September, focusing on flood risk and preparedness actions. Council is also preparing a summer heat health campaign in partnership with Holstep Health.
11	Complete Oak Park aquatic centre electrification and plant room renewal.	●	Community	Works to electrify the Oak Park Aquatic Centre are progressing, with commissioning and completion scheduled for late October 2026.
13	Continue to reduce emissions from Council's heavy and light commercial fleets through application of Council's Fleet Selection Policy (2024), which mandates the switch to zero emissions vehicles where these meet our operational needs.	●	City Infrastructure	Council is continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its vehicle fleet by transitioning to electric vehicles, exploring lower-emission fuel alternatives and implementing lower-emission transport solutions. - Currently, 52 of Council's 232 vehicles have been electrified, up from 47 as at 1 July 2026. The proportion of electric vehicles will continue to increase as vehicles are replaced through Council's Asset Replacement Program and suitable electric vehicle options become available. Council is also working with vehicle manufacturers to address performance issues associated with early-adopter technologies. - During 2026-27, Council will progress the renewable diesel project to reduce emissions from vehicles that cannot yet be replaced with electric alternatives. Where a zero-emission alternative is not currently available, vehicles are replaced with lower-emission alternatives where possible. - Council is exploring alternative transport and route optimisation solutions, including fleet subscription services, expanding the e-bike fleet and telematics, to reduce the total kilometres travelled annually.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
15	Continue to promote the delivery of more climate resilient, less carbon intensive and more nature-inclusive private developments through providing clearer guidance for environmentally responsive design, promoting, and negotiating improved outcomes through the planning permit application process and subsequent proactive enforcement of planning conditions.		Place and Environment	State Government planning reforms have severely limited Council's impact on planning and compliance with regard to climate resilience and sustainability. Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) requirements and initiatives remain strong; however, other crucial aspects of climate resilience and net zero, such as indoor environmental quality, energy efficiency and embodied carbon, have stalled or regressed. Highlights this quarter include: - Merri-bek finalised planning-related sustainability advocacy asks for the State Government. These asks mirror those of the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE), with key asks of the State Government relating to climate resilience, net zero and circularity in buildings. - Proactive enforcement is continuing to ensure sustainability initiatives committed to in planning permits have been correctly incorporated into the construction of dwellings.
80	Review and develop the Urban Forest Strategy.		City Infrastructure	Review and renewal of the Urban Forest Strategy is underway. Work to date has included a review of the existing 2017-2027 Strategy, development of a renewed strategic framework, and preparation of a supporting implementation program and governance arrangements.
81	Plant and nurture suitable trees in tricky places, parks, and streets, including significant trees program.		City Infrastructure	Annual Tree Planting: The 2026 planting season is nearing completion, with only a handful of trees remaining to achieve the target of 2,800 trees across Merri-bek. The program prioritised increasing canopy cover and shade within parks and open spaces, supporting improved environmental outcomes and enhancing the liveability, comfort and amenity of public areas. Tricky Spaces Program: Detailed analysis has been completed, considering road reserve width, existing canopy cover, urban heat index, alignment with other projects, permeability and proposed tree cut-out locations. This has informed the development of a prioritisation tool for the ongoing Tricky Spaces Program. Community engagement and preliminary design have also been completed for the Brown Street, Coburg streetscape upgrade. The project, which includes new tree planting, is on track for delivery this financial year. Community Engagement and Pilot Programs: The inaugural Tree for Me pilot program planting event was held at Moomba Park Primary School, with participation from more than 200 students, teachers and family members. The program website and Phases 2 and 3 are scheduled for delivery later in 2026-27. The Urban Forest team also participated in community outreach events, gathering insights from children across Merri-bek's northern suburbs about what they value about the urban forest.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
				Internal Initiatives: As part of delivering the 2026 tree planting program, the team coordinated a cross-departmental tree planting day for the City Development team.
82	Create and deliver an annual program of nature-based activities to engage residents in learning about and valuing the natural environment.	●	City Infrastructure	During Quarter 1, more than 500 community members participated in nature-focused events and activities, supporting community involvement in protecting and enhancing Merri-bek's natural environment. Key activities included: - Three community planting days, including Council's largest National Tree Day event to date. - An Indigenous Garden activity with Glenroy College at Oxygen Youth Centre. - A Gardens for Wildlife activity delivered as part of Fawkner Festa. These activities provided opportunities for community members and young people to participate directly in local biodiversity, greening and environmental stewardship initiatives.
83	Support and celebrate Wurundjeri culture and land management in partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and community groups (e.g. Merri-Murnong Harvest Festival and Ballerrt Mooroop Cultural Site).	●	City Infrastructure	In-kind support continued for the Merri Murnong and Ballerrt Mooroop cultural sites and associated events, supporting the celebration of Wurundjeri culture and land management in partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and community groups. Support was provided as required, including assistance with site and event-related activities.
84	Deliver climate vulnerability improvements to the following Council owned facilities; Fawkner Maternal Child Health, Yooralla Community Hub and Newlands Senior Citizens Centre.	●	City Infrastructure	The scope for the 2026-27 Climate Vulnerability initiatives at Fawkner Maternal and Child Health, Yooralla Community Hub and Newlands Senior Citizens Centre has been developed and agreed with stakeholders. Council is now progressing the engagement of a design team to develop detailed documentation for the proposed works.
85	Develop and implement a whole-of-program capital works prioritisation framework that integrates asset condition, service need, climate vulnerability, social, economic, disability, inclusion and environmental considerations.	●	City Infrastructure	Work has commenced on developing a holistic capital works prioritisation framework to support investment decision-making. The principles have been drafted, with further work required to develop the framework into a working system and embed the process and rules into Council's technology and tools to support consistent application.

Theme 2: Healthy and inclusive communities

2: To support accessible facilities, programs, services, housing that promote community wellbeing, and connection for all ages, abilities, genders, and cultures, fostering a safe, inclusive, and thriving Merri-bek community.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
16	Continue to Investigate possibility for renewal of Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool		Community	The investigation into the renewal of the Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool has been aligned with the broader 20-year Aquatic and Leisure Strategy and the investment required over the next 10 years to maintain Council's six aquatic and leisure centres. Short-term actions have also been implemented in preparation for the coming summer season.
17	Continue to review progress of the 20 years Aquatic and Leisure Strategy		Community	Progress on the 20-year Aquatics and Leisure Strategy continues, with work focused on aligning the Strategy with Council's Capital Works Program and 10-Year Financial Plan to guide future investment across Council's six aquatic and leisure centres.
18	Continue to Facilitate support for the Youth Holistic Outreach Program		Community	A new model and Partnership Agreement were developed to ensure vulnerable young people have access to intensive case management support, coaching and advocacy to access appropriate support services. The Partnership Agreement was signed and executed, and the first partnership meeting was held on 17 September 2026.
20	Progress the identification of scoped options to create additional free third spaces for children, young people, and families		Community	Youth Services completed research, benchmarking and extensive engagement with young people and key stakeholders to inform options for additional third spaces. This included more than 500 surveys, targeted consultation and a Third Spaces Summit. A report capturing the key findings has been prepared and will inform the feasibility study, with Fawkner and Brunswick identified as priority areas. Pilot programs have also been developed for delivery from Term 4 and over the next 12 months, with initial activation across priority sites in Fawkner and Glenroy. Developed in consultation with Fawkner's Future, these include expanding activation of the Fawkner Community Sports Hall from one to three days per week, Fawkner Fastbreak, a new female boxing program, and a barbering and mentoring initiative delivered with Calm Youth. The pilots will test approaches to activating community-focused third spaces.
21	Continue to progress the development of the Brunswick Early Years Hub		Community	Construction has commenced on the Brunswick Early Years Hub, with the project on track for delivery within agreed timelines. The Hub will provide co-located services for infants, young children and families, including maternal and child health, community playgroup space, childcare and sessional kindergarten.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
25	Deliver programs addressing food security through local markets, referral, and voucher systems, strengthening and local procurement and logistic	●	Community	The VicHealth-funded Merri-bek Community Alliance 2025-26 progress report highlighted progress towards increasing access to affordable and culturally appropriate produce for communities experiencing food insecurity. Council coordinated and connected Alliance partner services, including: - Twice-weekly Merri Food Hub markets, providing fresh produce at an average of 20% cheaper than supermarkets and employing local people with lived experience of food insecurity. - Fawkner Food Bowls supplying the markets with 50 varieties of customer-preferred, culturally diverse fruit and vegetables. - CIS Merri-bek supporting people experiencing food insecurity to access and choose fresh food through Merri Food Hub gift cards. Council and Open Table also designed and delivered the first in a series of cook-and-share focus groups with five culturally diverse women with lived experience of food insecurity, to build relationships and learn from their strengths and food practices.
26	Develop and implement a new Social Cohesion Plan that algins with Human Rights Policy	●	Community	This quarter, key activities included: - The Hume Merri-bek Anti-Racism Network held workshops with community members to develop an anti-racism action plan focused on building skills to speak up against racism, strengthening partnerships and improving information about racism and discrimination. - Through the STAND project, Council formed a working group with First Peoples and reconciliation groups and engaged with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders to identify harmful narratives about First Nations communities. The project aims to develop positive narratives that share First Nations histories and cultures. - The Merri-bek Interfaith Network commenced planning an end-of-year gathering with neighbouring councils and the development of posters for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign.
27	Develop and implement a new Human Rights Policy	●	Community	This quarter, Council engaged with more than 1,400 community members and service providers to help shape the new Human Rights Framework 2026-2036. Participants included First Nations peoples, multicultural communities, people with disability, young people, older people, women and LGBTIQA+ communities. Key findings highlighted the importance of First Nations rights, truth-telling and recognition; safe and accessible places where people feel they belong; valuing diversity; community-led decision-making; additional support for groups experiencing inequity; and better-connected services. These findings will inform the draft Human Rights Policy, ensuring it meets

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
				legislative requirements, reflects community expectations and aligns with the Council Plan, and will help shape future human rights work in Merri-bek.
28	Implement the Library of Things Plan	●	Community	The Library of Things Working Group continued to progress implementation of the Library of Things Plan, with work focused on building and developing the collection in line with the priorities identified in the Plan.
29	Continue to deliver the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan including Functional Zero and Assertive outreach	●	Community	Actions undertaken to deliver the Homelessness Strategy this quarter included: - Council committed funding for Assertive Outreach through to June 2029. - The Merri-bek Zero project continued through weekly Service Coordination meetings and fortnightly Hotspots meetings. - The Merri-bek Zero Executive Group met in August 2026 to commence development of a Community Action Plan to guide collaboration. - Staff education, rough sleeper engagement and a public education exhibition were delivered during Homelessness Week in August. - Council process documents were updated, including the Rough Sleeping Protocol, with input also provided into the Unauthorised Rooming Houses protocols.
30	Advocate for systemic changes to enable a socially just and climate resilient Merri-bek	●	Place and Environment	Advocacy highlights for the quarter included the Victorian Parliamentary inquiry report on renewable and affordable energy for apartments, with 16 of its 25 recommendations aligning with Merri-bek's submission seeking to support lower energy costs, improve access to renewable energy and transition away from fossil gas. Through cross-sector partnership building, the new national Electrify Australia campaign is calling for federal funding for local councils to electrify priority households. Council also made a submission to Victoria's draft Adaptation Action Plans 2027-31 and sent letters to the Federal and State governments, calling for new funding and stronger adaptation actions to help communities and local governments respond to increasing climate risks and support a fair transition.
31	Build the Library Social Work Program	●	Community	Library Social Worker hours have been reduced in line with the available budget. The service continues to be available one day per week at Brunswick, Coburg and Glenroy Libraries.
33	Develop and Implement a Gender Equality Community Plan (incorporating family violence prevention and response) in alignment with the Human Rights Policy	●	Community	Preliminary engagement commenced with internal and external stakeholders, including the Gender Equality Community Reference Group, to inform gender equality priorities for the next two years. The priorities will align with Council's Human Rights Framework and be informed by recent community feedback and other evidence.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
34	Continue to deliver an annual Tobacco education program	●	Place and Environment	The annual tobacco education program is on track, with a total of 82 tobacco education visits completed during the quarter.
35	Continue developing and implementing a First Peoples self-determination strategy	●	Community	A Cultural Audit will inform the development of the First Peoples Strategy. A Request for Quotation has been released to engage a First Peoples consultant or consultancy to undertake the Cultural Audit.
36	Continue to implement services that promote and improve access to Council's Aquatic and Leisure Centres addressing a range of barriers for Aboriginal Victorians	●	Community	Significant work has been undertaken to establish and strengthen relationships with relevant stakeholders. The focus is now on maintaining and further developing these relationships to support ongoing collaboration and identify and address barriers to participation and engagement.
37	Continue to Report the achievements of negotiated voluntary social and affordable housing outcomes through planning process in Quarterly Planning Permit Activity reporting to the Planning and Related Matters Council meeting	●	Place and Environment	In the first quarter of the 2026–27 financial year, one social and affordable housing outcome was achieved through the planning process: a $580,000 cash contribution to the Homes Victoria Social Housing Growth Fund. This outcome will be reported in the City Development Activity Report to the November Planning and Related Matters Council meeting.
38	Continue to progress the plans and projects to revitalise and improve central Coburg	●	Place and Environment	Following Council's endorsement of the Central Coburg Framework in June 2026, work progressed on implementation planning, including consideration of delivery priorities and approaches for progressing projects in line with the Framework's vision. Further decisions on implementation and delivery will be made as the program progresses.
39	Review, evaluate and renew the Merri-bek Affordable Housing Action Plan	●	Place and Environment	Implementation of the Merri-bek Affordable Housing Action Plan continued through advocacy, strategic planning and partnerships with government agencies and housing providers. On 11 September 2026, Council joined Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd, Unison Housing and the Victorian Government to mark the start of construction on a 39-unit social housing project in Wilkinson Street, Brunswick, on land contributed by Council. As the Action Plan concludes in 2026, work is underway to evaluate outcomes from its four years of implementation and inform refreshed affordable housing policy options for Council to consider in 2027.
40	Facilitate relationships between local First Nations peoples, Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage	●	Community	Work continued to build and strengthen relationships with First Peoples communities, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs),

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
	Aboriginal Corporation and Council to deliver Ballerrt Mooroop as requested by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.			through ongoing engagement, collaboration and listening. These relationships support Council to better understand community needs and inform the delivery of accessible and culturally appropriate facilities, programs, services and community initiatives for First Peoples across Merri-bek.
86	Develop the four-year Active Merri-bek Aquatics and Leisure Strategic Plan (Programs and Services)		Community	Community engagement was undertaken to inform the four-year Active Merri-bek Aquatics and Leisure Strategic Plan, including Community Network Forums held in July and August. Feedback and key themes were reviewed to inform the draft Strategic Plan, which is progressing towards finalisation by 30 October 2026.
87	Review and develop the Recreation Strategy		Community	Planning for the Recreation Strategy review will commence later in 2026, with a project brief to be developed ahead of the review and development of the new Strategy commencing in early 2027.
88	Facilitate the Brunswick Baths Gym Expansion		Community	Proposed Withdrawal of Action: Following a review of project timing and priorities, it is recommended that this action be withdrawn from the 2026–27 Council Action Plan. The proposed works will instead be incorporated into the detailed design phase scheduled for 2027–28, ensuring better alignment with the broader project delivery timeline.
89	Facilitate a six-month trial of a youth drop-in program in Fawkner		Community	Planning is underway to expand drop-in pilot programs, guided by young people and members of Fawkner's Future. This includes increased activation of the Fawkner Community Sports Hall from one to three days per week, with Fawkner Fastbreak now operating on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Further pilots, including a new female boxing program and a barbering and mentoring initiative delivered with Calm Youth, are scheduled to commence in Term 4.
90	Facilitate free band programs for young people at Oxygen (Coburg).		Community	A new service agreement with Fair Music will be developed to support the planning and delivery of free band and music programs for young people at Oxygen Youth Space.
91	Facilitate a family engagement program across two proposed locations		Community	The Family Hubs Operational Working Model has been developed, establishing the scope and approach for the family engagement initiative. The next step is to recruit staff to support its delivery.
92	Scoping and delivering a pilot exercise program for older adults in Merri-bek		Community	Early scoping and stakeholder engagement commenced, including stakeholder mapping and initial consultation with CB Smith Reserve service providers and Belgravia Leisure.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
93	Develop and implement a new LGBTIQA+ Plan that algins with Human Rights Policy		Community	During this quarter, work continued on development of the new LGBTIQA+ Plan, including reviewing engagement data from the Human Rights Framework and consulting with the LGBTIQA+ Reference Group and community stakeholders to develop initial actions. Internal engagement also commenced with Children's Services, Maternal and Child Health, Youth and Age Well teams to identify opportunities for partnership. Advocacy included a written submission to the Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into anti-LGBTIQA+ hate crimes. Council officers also attended a healthy masculinity conference in Whittlesea, focused on LGBTIQA+ inclusion and supporting young men to be active allies.

Theme 3: Beautiful and liveable city

3: Create safe, accessible streets and public spaces that support vibrant communities, active travel, rest and relaxation, and community pride, while ensuring development and growth are well managed, local character is celebrated, and Merri-bek remains a welcoming, liveable and connected place for all.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
41	Deliver additional public toilets in parks & reserves as part of the Capital Works program: •New Public Toilet - Fran Street Reserve, Glenroy •New Public Toilet - Cox Reserve, Coburg North		City Infrastructure	Delivery of additional public toilet facilities is progressing through the Capital Works Program at Fran Street Reserve, Glenroy and Cox Reserve, Coburg North. The designs have been completed and procurement is underway, with both projects expected to be completed by the third quarter of the 2026-27 financial year.
42	Deliver Park priorities		City Infrastructure	The 2026-27 Park Upgrade Program is on track, with community consultation and design progressing across a number of park and playground projects, including Calder Reserve, Hallam Reserve, Duggan Reserve, Methven Park, McCleery Reserve, Tate Park, Sewell Reserve and Ivan Page Reserve. Construction is scheduled to commence in late 2026 for projects where design was completed in late 2025 and early 2026. Work also progressed to address gaps identified through Council's Park Close to Home framework, including development of the draft concept design for the new park at 568 Sydney Road, Brunswick, which was released for community feedback in September.
45	Commence implementation of the community engagement outcomes for the Stage 2 Pilot - Dog Walking in Merri-bek initiatives		City Infrastructure	The project is focused on completing the permanent implementation of Stage 1 during 2026-27. Stage 2 will progress following completion of Stage 1, with timing to be confirmed as planning for the next phase develops.
47	Continue to engage the community in the review and update of the Local Laws		City Infrastructure	Work to review and update the Local Laws progressed during the quarter, including internal consultation and legal review. Further community consultation is planned for the second quarter of the 2026-27 financial year.
49	Continue to deliver the Streets for People Plan priority projects		Place and Environment	Progress across the program this quarter included: - Victoria Street remains on track for construction during 2026-27. - The Hope Street and Breese Street projects were endorsed by Council, with civil engineering design underway. - Tree planting along Hope Street will be delivered earlier than planned, supported by grant funding. - Community consultation commenced for Harding Munro Street. - Community consultation for Albert Street is scheduled for early 2027.
50	Deliver community-focused sustainable transport initiatives that improve options for people walking and		Place and Environment	Implementation of the School Transport Precincts Program progressed, with the first project focused on Merri-bek Primary School. Concept designs were developed to

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
	riding across Merri-bek, with a key focus on school precincts and school communities.			improve safety and accessibility for people walking and riding, with community engagement scheduled to commence in October 2026. Development of the broader School Transport Precincts Plan also commenced, using travel behaviour, traffic, road safety and community data to identify priority school precincts and establish a coordinated pipeline of future projects across Merri-bek.
51	Continue to deliver the Ride & Stride behaviour change program plus priority infrastructure upgrades around schools, to foster safe and active travel to and from school	●	Place and Environment	Highlights this quarter included: - The National Open Streets Toolkit for Local Governments was launched in August in partnership with Kingston City Council, sharing learnings from five years of delivering the program. The toolkit recorded 150 downloads globally within its first six weeks. - The largest e-cargo bike subsidy round delivered through Ride & Stride to date was completed, providing 120 subsidies to local families to help reduce transport and fuel costs. - One-third of Merri-bek primary schools registered to participate in the Biketober campaign during October. - Concept designs for Merri-bek's first School Precinct at Merri-bek Primary School were prepared, with community engagement scheduled for October.
52	Continue to support the expansion of the Electric Vehicle charging network across Merri-bek	●	Place and Environment	A number of projects progressed this quarter to support expansion of the electric vehicle charging network: - A slow charger was installed at The Grove, Coburg following delays, with connection and activation expected by the end of 2026. - Procurement was completed for a fast charger at 797-801 Sydney Road, with installation scheduled by November 2026. - Planning progressed for a fast charger at Belair Avenue Carpark, Glenroy, with community engagement to commence shortly. - Council approved an initial tranche of pole-mounted chargers to be owned and operated by private operators, with licence agreement negotiations underway. - The nine-month home-to-street electric vehicle charging trial with the Victorian Community Solar Alliance (VCSA) was evaluated and a report prepared for presentation to Executive in October.
53	Finalise the delivery the Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement project	●	Place and Environment	Planning for the Wheatsheaf Road Shopping Strip Upgrade in Glenroy progressed during the quarter, with Council working with the Department of Transport and

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
				Planning to secure the necessary approvals. Construction is expected to commence once final approvals are received.
56	Continue to ensure the review of the Merri-bek Planning Scheme leads to a framework that supports great housing, employment, and liveability in Merri-bek		Place and Environment	The Planning Scheme Review 2026 was completed during the quarter and will be considered by Council for adoption in October 2026. The Review establishes priorities for future planning scheme changes to support housing and employment growth, liveability, environmental outcomes and the protection of Merri-bek's valued neighbourhood and cultural character. Amendment C235mbek also progressed during the quarter, proposing an increase to the public open space contribution rate to support public open space and infrastructure associated with growth. Following adoption of the Planning Scheme Review, Council will progress identified actions and continue advocacy for the infrastructure, services and planning outcomes needed to support well-managed growth across Merri-bek.
94	Implement the “Cool Playgrounds, Safe Kids: Sun-Smart Shade for our Parks” program in alignment with the parks upgrade program		City Infrastructure	Planning for the installation progressed during the quarter, with potential locations being assessed against project and site requirements. This will inform selection of the preferred location, followed by due diligence to confirm the site is suitable for the proposed installation. The project remains on track for installation in early 2027.
95	Deliver a risky play playground at ATC Cook Reserve as part of the 2026-27 parks upgrade program.		City Infrastructure	Proposed action amendment: Council approval will be sought to amend the action name to reflect the relocation of the risky play playground project from ATC Cook Reserve, Glenroy to Harmony Park, Coburg North. Progress update: The risky play playground project has been relocated from ATC Cook Reserve, Glenroy to Harmony Park, Coburg North. ATC Cook Reserve will still be upgraded as part of a separate project. A draft concept plan for the Harmony Park project was shared with the community for feedback during September 2026.
96	Deliver an awareness and education campaign for the new cat containment program		City Infrastructure	The development of the communications and engagement plan for the new cat containment program was completed during the quarter. The plan will guide community awareness and education activities to support implementation of the program.
97	Implement safety improvements on Connolly Avenue		City Infrastructure	Design work progressed during the quarter and is approximately 50% complete. Project delivery is scheduled for the 2027-28 financial year, in line with the adopted budget.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
98	Deliver new picnic tables across neighbourhood parks through the 2026-27 parks upgrade program.		City Infrastructure	Preliminary planning progressed during the quarter, including assessment of potential locations. Once a preferred location is identified, site investigations and due diligence will be undertaken to confirm suitability and installation requirements. Installation is expected in early 2027, subject to the outcomes of this work.
99	Prepare new Merri-bek Planning Scheme		Place and Environment	The Planning Scheme Review 2026 has now been completed and will be considered by Council at its October 2026 meeting for adoption. The Review provides a strategic framework for future planning scheme work, including actions to support well-managed housing growth, employment, liveability and high-quality built form outcomes across Merri-bek. Council will continue to progress planning scheme amendments and associated strategic planning work arising from the Review, as well as advocate for appropriate State planning reforms and outcomes that support high-quality development and growth while protecting local character and amenity.

Theme 4: Thriving economy and culture

4: A lively and inclusive Merri-bek where the economy supports local business and industry growth, celebrates artistic and creative expression, and connects the community through vibrant cultural experiences.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
57	Continue to develop the Brunswick Design District in partnership with RMIT University and Creative Victoria, with a focus on supporting economic opportunities and job growth in design-related businesses	●	Place and Environment	During the reporting period, Council: - Partnered with RMIT University and Creative Victoria to deliver a Brunswick Design District Open Studio Series event at CAMVAN in Brunswick East. Planning and promotion also commenced for the next event at The Hen House in October 2026. - Updated the Brunswick Design District signature brochure and designed and delivered a complementary postcard to promote the precinct and its creative industries.
58	Deliver transport safety and amenity improvements across Merri-bek, guided by development of Council's first Road Safety Plan.	●	Place and Environment	The draft Road Safety Plan is nearing completion, with community consultation scheduled for early 2027. Road safety improvements also progressed across Merri-bek during the quarter, including speed limit changes, speed hump installations and capital works projects.
59	Complete the Belair Street, Glenroy, on-street garden bed	●	Place and Environment	The Belair Avenue streetscape project moved into the delivery phase during the quarter, following community engagement and detailed design completed in 2025-26. Procurement commenced, with the project remaining on track for delivery. The project will enhance greening and improve the amenity of the precinct.
60	Finalised the delivery the West Street Streetscape Renewal Project	●	Place and Environment	Delivery of the West Street Streetscape Improvement project is continuing as planned, with works focused on enhancing the amenity, safety and appearance of the shopping strip. Construction is on track with delivery remaining on schedule for completion by December 2026.
61	Planning and delivery of coordinated approach to public art and street murals (year 1 of Public Art Policy)	●	Community	Planning commenced for delivery of the 2026-27 Public Art Program. Work includes planning for mural sites across Merri-bek and public art at the new Coburg Library, as well as finalising the installation of two new public artworks in Fawkner.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
62	Deliver the Merri-bek Economic Development Action Plan - Year 3 Actions	●	Place and Environment	During the reporting period, the Economic Development Unit commenced delivery of Year 3 actions under the Economic Development Action Plan, including: - Held several meetings with Yarra Trams and affected businesses to advocate on behalf of businesses affected by the Brunswick Tram Depot works. - Delivered ten business events including business networking events and business skills workshops. - Delivered a Brunswick Design District open studio series business and creatives networking event - Continued implementation of Business Friendly Council service improvement initiative, including coordinating the Implementation team and their actions (ongoing during 2026). - Continued support to Sydney Road Brunswick and Central Coburg business associations, including regarding their proposed respective renewals. - Completed a Shopfront Improvement project in Victoria Mall, Coburg, as part of a State Government grant funded project; - Delivered ongoing social media support to West Street shopping strip during the Shopping Strip Renewal works. - Facilitated ca. 50 Business Approvals Merri-bek (BAM) permit concierge processes for businesses. - Progressed two State Govt grant funded Multicultural Business Precinct Revitalisation projects in Coburg and Glenroy. - Commenced planning for a CSIRO / NorthLink Circular Economy forum to assist businesses to explore regional opportunities for circular business practices. - Commenced a three month, 40 participant, business mentoring program. - Met with businesses and the operators of the Brudi business hub - a government owned facility leased to a lead tenant and sub-tenant for the purposes of local economic development.
63	Continue deliver priority actions from the Places for People Plan	●	Place and Environment	Merri-bek's Places for People Plan is Council's long-term strategy for creating high-quality public spaces that enhance the vibrancy, sustainability and liveability of shopping strips and activity centres across the municipality. Council has commenced delivery of several high-priority projects identified in the Plan. Construction is underway for the streetscape improvement project in West Street Streetscape, Hadfield. In September 2026, Council started a

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
				second round of community engagement seeking feedback on concept designs for streetscape improvements to Post Office Place, Glenroy, and for the new park at 568 Sydney Road, Brunswick.
66	Establish three community venues for increased performance and arts usage	●	Community	Community venues were assessed for their viability as performance spaces, with findings to be reported to Council in November 2026 as part of Action 102. The work has focused on identifying opportunities for artists to use venues free of charge, providing greater flexibility to respond to artists' specific site and performance needs.
67	Community engagement and partnership planning to develop a refreshed festival program	●	Community	Community consultation on the proposed refreshed festival program has been completed, providing community feedback to inform the future approach to Council's festival program. The feedback will be considered alongside broader program planning to develop final recommendations, which are scheduled to be presented to Council in February 2027.
68	Redesign grants program to support more opportunities to create, learn and connect	●	Community	The Grants Guidelines Review has been rescheduled to commence in November/December 2026 following a reprioritisation of work within the program.
69	Planning and preparation for Fawkner Library redevelopment including interim library offering.	●	Community	Designers have been engaged to develop the concept design, with community engagement planned for January 2027 to inform the next stage of the project. The building tender is scheduled for April 2027, ahead of construction in the following financial year. Funding for the project has been secured through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program.
70	Undertake a detailed design process including community engagement for the Coburg Library and Piazza development.	●	Community	The concept design has been finalised, with the design team now progressing schematic design, including surrounding public realm works and sustainability initiatives. Planning for future activation and service delivery is also underway in collaboration with the design team and key stakeholders.
100	Facilitate the Ramadan Nights community event at Bonwick Street	●	Community	The Expression of Interest process progressed, with two information sessions held to support local groups and organisations interested in applying. Applications closed on 23 September 2026 and will now progress through the assessment process.
101	Deliver program to activate Brunswick Town Hall	●	Community	Initial planning is underway, with work focused on developing the approach and next steps for future activation.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
102	Facilitate subsided access for the Merri-bek artists to Council spaces for rehearsal, development and presentation.		Community	Following the community budget allocation, a process was established to enable artists to access Council's community venues and town halls free of charge for a range of arts-related activities. The program is now operational, with bookings being received from artists across Council venues.

Theme 5: Engaging and responsible council

5: A responsive and engaged Merri-bek that prioritises excellent service, embraces engaging communication methods, advocates community needs, and continues to uphold sustainable financial management and accountable governance that builds trust and collaboration with the community.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
71	Continue to Develop Customer Experience Strategy	●	Community	Development of the Customer Experience Strategy is progressing. A second Leadership Network session is scheduled for September to further inform the Strategy, ahead of presentation to the Executive Leadership Team in mid-October.
72	Continue to deliver advocacy activities that support council priorities	●	Chief Executive Office	Council continued engagement with local State and Federal Members of Parliament and key advocacy partners, including the Northern Councils Alliance, Melbourne 9, the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment, the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action and the Mayoral Taskforce for People Seeking Asylum. Key activity included the release of Melbourne 9's, Investing in Growth: Funding Essential Infrastructure report, associated stakeholder and ministerial roundtables, and a transport forum in the Pascoe Vale electorate with the Metropolitan Transport Forum. Council refreshed and republished its 2026 Victorian State Election Advocacy Priorities and shared them with local Members of Parliament and candidates, with meetings offered with the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer ahead of the November 2026 election. Key advocacy outcomes included the Federal Government's announcement that the Commonwealth Home Support Program will be extended until 30 June 2029 and remain a standalone program, and the Victorian Government's $80 million commitment to progress duplication of the Upfield train line between Gowrie and Upfield stations. Council also made submissions on the Victorian Government's draft Adaptation Action Plans 2027-31, State Disability Plan and Victorian Autism Plan. Council also secured $968,750 in Victorian Government funding for the Greening Creek to Creek project in Brunswick, Tree for Me Schools Program and Fawkner Library redevelopment, as well as $14,000 from the Australian Library and Information Association for library social cohesion programs.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
76	Continue to integrate climate risk into Council processes and systems, focusing on risk management, finance and asset management and capital works planning.	●	Place and Environment	The public expenditure review component of the Climate and Financial Risk project was completed, identifying climate-related costs incurred by Council between 2020 and 2025. This includes costs associated with reducing carbon emissions, improving climate resilience, direct loss and damage, and activities supporting climate action. Findings are now informing future budget processes and asset management planning.
77	Continue to update Merri-bek's open space and developer contribution models	●	Place and Environment	Work progressed to prepare the updated open space and developer contribution models for public exhibition. Public exhibition commenced on 1 October 2026, with submissions to be reviewed and considered before a report is presented to Council in December 2026 to determine the next steps.
79	Finalise designs for the Breese Street precinct improvements	●	Place and Environment	Concept designs were endorsed by Council, with civil engineering drawings now being prepared. The project remains on track for construction in the 2027-28 financial year.
104	Develop and implement a new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan that algins with Human Rights Policy.	●	Community	Development of the new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), aligned with the new Human Rights Framework, progressed as planned. Community engagement findings for the Human Rights Policy and DAIP were summarised and will inform the final plan. Actions carried over from the previous DAIP also continued to progress. Key achievements included: - Three Disability Pride Month events were held in July, including a music concert featuring performers with disability attended by more than 150 people. - Council made a submission to the Victorian Government on the Disability Plan and Autism Plan. - Disability human rights training was delivered to Community Connectors. - A 30-metre section of bluestone footpath on Nicholson Street, Brunswick was replaced with a smooth concrete path to improve accessibility.
105	Improve the customer experience by transforming the digital systems Council uses to enhance service delivery and communication channels.	●	Business Transformation	Council has commenced the Elevate Transformation Program, a multi-year program to modernise the digital systems that support the delivery of services to the community. During quarter one, the first phase reached a significant milestone with completion of the design stage, establishing the foundations for future improvements to service delivery and enhanced customer interactions. Work is now progressing to the build stage, marking the next step towards more responsive, connected and efficient services for the community.

Action No.	Action	Status	Directorate	Comments
106	Review and update the Community Engagement Policy and Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy		Community	Progress on the review and update of the Community Engagement Policy and Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy is on track. As part of the review process, consideration is being given to whether the Accessible and Inclusive Communications document would be more appropriately developed as guidelines rather than a policy.

7.3 OPEN COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS REPORT

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Open Council Resolutions Report provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Open Council Resolutions Report provided as Attachment 1 has been prepared to inform Councillors and the community of the actions taken to date to implement Council resolutions that are open and not yet finalised.

As at 30 September 2026, there were 37 open Council resolutions, with 21 relating to Council officer reports and 16 relating to Notices of Motion.

Previous Council Decisions

Open Council Resolutions Report – 12 August 2026

That Council receives and notes the Open Council Resolutions Report provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

1. Policy Context

Section 46(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states:

(a) That the Chief Executive Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the decisions of the Council are implemented without undue delay.

(e) When requested by the Mayor, reporting to the Council in respect of the implementation of a Council decision.

This report also supports Council's continuing commitment to transparent management of resources on behalf of ratepayers, key stakeholders and the broader community.

2. Background

The purpose of the Open Council Resolutions Report, provided as **Attachment 1**, is to inform Councillors and the community of the actions taken to date to implement the Council resolutions that are currently open.

3. Issues

The Open Council Resolutions Report (shown at **Attachment 1**) outlines the open resolutions as at 30 September 2026. There was a total of 37 open Council resolutions, with 21 relating to Council officer reports and 16 relating to Notices of Motion. Each open resolution in **Attachment 1** includes a target date for completion.

The table below details the allocation of open items-Petitions, Council Reports, Notices of Motion, and Urgent Business-across each Directorate:

Directorate	Petitions	Council Reports	Notices of Motion	Urgent Business
Business Transformation	-	1	-	-
City Infrastructure	-	-	1	-
Community	-	2	6	-
Place and Environment	-	18	9	-
Total	**0**	**21**	**16**	**0**

Attachment 1 excludes resolutions relating to Confidential Items and items relating to Planning and Related Matters.

An Open Council Resolutions report is presented to Council on an ongoing basis, to promote the transparency of how Council resolutions are implemented.

Community impact

Community impact is addressed through the Council Plan 2025-2029 under strategic objective 4: Act with transparency and accountability in all financial and governance practices, setting the standard for integrity and building trust within the community.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

There are no climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications associated with the preparation of this report.

Economic sustainability implications

There are no economic sustainability implications associated with the preparation of this report.

Legal and risk considerations

There are no legal and risk implications associated with the preparation of this report.

Human Rights consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Community consultation and engagement are not required for this report as it reflects the status of the implementation of Council Decisions that have been previously made.

Affected persons' rights and interests

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council must identify whose rights may be directly affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey those views regarding the effect on their rights and consider those views. There are no individual rights or interests affected.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

Any financial implications associated with the preparation of this report have been met within existing resource and budget allocations.

7. Implementation

The reporting of the Open Council Resolutions will continue on an ongoing basis, with the next report to be presented to Council in February 2027.

Attachment/s

1⇩	Open Council Resolutions Report for period ending 30 September 2026	D26/441046

Open Council Resolutions Report

For period ending 30 September 2026

Merri-bek City Council

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Officer Reports

Director Place and Environment	Council 11/10/2017	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/12/2026	No

DCS59/17 PROPOSED LAND SWAP WITH DARUL ULUM COLLEGE OF VICTORIA - EVANS RESERVE, FAWKNER

That Council, having given public notice and having considered the submission received, in accordance with sections 189 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*:

1. Determines to exchange part of its land at 20 Victory Street, Fawkner, with land currently owned by Darul Ulum College of Victoria at 21 and 23 Marjory and 16 and 18 Victory Streets, Fawkner, as shown in the negotiated plan at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Authorises the Director Corporate Services to do all things necessary to affect the exchange of land of part of its land at 20 Victory Street, Fawkner as shown in with land owned by the Darul Ulum College of Victoria at 21 and 23 Marjory and 16 and 18 Victory Streets, Fawkner, as shown in Attachment 1 to this report, including the execution of all relevant documentation.
3. Authorises the Director Corporate Services to commence the subdivision of approximately 2,393 square metres from the Evans Reserve, shown as the red hatched area on Attachment 1 to this report, and remove its drainage, sewerage and recreation reserve status pursuant to section 24(A) of the *Subdivisions Act 1988*.
4. Requests authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare a planning scheme amendment in accordance with section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to rezone 21 and 23 Marjory and 16 and 18 Victory Streets, Fawkner, to Public Park and Recreation Zone and rezone the land to be sold at 20 Victory Street, Fawkner, shown as the blue hatched area on attachment 1 to this report, to General Residential 1 (GRZ1).
5. Notifies the person who made a submission in writing of its decision and the reasons for that decision
6. Explores options with Darul Ulum to preserve 7 mature native trees that exist on the site in keeping with the aims of the newly adopted Urban Forest Strategy

Progress Comment
The land swap process remains underway. Since the original 2017 decision, the State Government has introduced a Windfall Gains Tax that may render the swap cost prohibitive. Council's legal advisor is still in conversations with the State Revenue Office as to whether this will impact the transaction. Further steps remain dependent on the outcome of these conversations.

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/09/2023	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/12/2026	No

7.9 NAMING OF LANEWAYS

That Council:

1. Notes the potential risks and resource challenges associated with a universal approach to naming laneways, and that individual requests for naming laneways can be accommodated within the existing Naming Merri-bek Places Policy (2013), in cases where there is a clear reason to consider them as exceptions to standard practice.
2. Continues discussions with Geographic Names Victoria to assess the name 'Kastoria Lane' against Geographic Naming Victoria's naming rules for places in Victoria - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022.
3. Writes to the submitter of the request to name a walkway on Sydney Road 'Pagonis Place' requesting supporting evidence in relation to the naming rules, specifically Principle C – linking the name to the place and Principle I – using commemorative names.
4. Commence a formal process to name the laneway between Trafford Street and Ann Street, Brunswick.
5. Continues to assess individual naming requests as the naming authority, noting that the Registrar of Geographic Names holds the power to either approve or reject any proposal for naming.
6. Refers to the 2024/25 budget process consideration of allocating funds for the installation of informative text beneath new road names and interpretive signage at newly named parks to offer insights into the history and significance of place names and enhances understanding and appreciation of the locale's heritage and cultural importance.
7. If budget savings are declared in the 2023/24 budget, that consideration be given to allocating savings identified to ensure that projects nominated in this recommendation are delivered with interpretive signage elements.

Progress Comment
All actions have been implemented except for point 4 which will commence once Council's naming policy has been updated. Work is in train to update Council's naming policy.

Director Place and Environment	Council 8/05/2024	Target Date:	Further Report:
		30/12/2026	No

7.4 NAMING THE PARK AT 14 FRITH STREET, BRUNSWICK - VOTING POLL RESULTS

That Council:

1. Invite further consultation from the broader Merri-bek community on the resolved list of names for the Park at 14 Frith Street, with a view to a report coming back to Council in August 2024 with the final outcome of the consultation and poll and to confirm Council's preferred name.
2. Undertake a review of the Naming Merri-bek Places Policy, including consideration of:
   a) Considering naming parks and facilities only after they have been opened to the public, allowing users of the space to engage in the naming process.
   b) Reviewing consultation methods to explore additional strategies for increasing community participation.
   c) Considering incorporating a pre-poll workshop with submitters and stakeholders to discuss proposed names, taking into account historical and contextual factors for each site, as well as the overarching objectives of the policy, particularly in prioritising indigenous, women and migrant names.

Progress Comment
The Frith Street renaming was completed in 2024. A full internal review of the Naming Policy is currently underway.

Director Place and Environment	Council 12/02/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/03/2027	No

7.6 FAWKNER TRANSPORT STUDY IMPLEMENTATION

That Council:

1. Endorses infrastructure improvements to improve transport safety and accessibility in Fawkner including:
   a) A new pedestrian priority crossing on Jukes Road at the Fawkner Leisure Centre to assist in north-south movement.
   b) Completing a missing link of shared user path between McBryde Street and the Merri Creek.
   c) Shared Path Accessibility Improvements in Charles Mutton Reserve.
   d) Zebra Crossings at the intersections of Jukes Road and Williams Street.
   e) Raised threshold crossings along Jukes Road at the intersections of McDougall Street, Penn Court and Co-op Lane.
2. Endorses the following actions to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles on Bonwick Street:
   a) Installing new signage to direct visitors to the adjacent car parks near Bonwick Street.
   b) Formally requesting a compliance blitz by Victoria Police to reduce double parking, cars not giving way to pedestrians and other unsafe driver behaviour.
   c) Reconsider a “Walking Legs” pedestrian sign on the zebra crossing in the carpark on the eastern side of Bonwick St to signify that that it is a pedestrian crossing.
   d) In 12 months assess the impact of the above measures on the intersection of Jukes Rd and Bonwick St and bring a report to council identifying ways pedestrian safety could be further improved
3. Endorses the Fawkner Safe Travel Corridors as the preferred active transport routes within Fawkner and investigates extending the north south cycling corridor continuing through Parker Reserve to Shorts Road to enable this as a safe cycling corridor to Aldi supermarket, Upfield Bike Path, Merlynston Station, and Hosken Reserve.
4. Notes that there will be opportunity as part of the Streets for People Plan to identify priority corridors throughout Merri-bek for targeting improvements, which may include the east-west bicycle route in Fawkner at Roma Street and the Sydney Road – Murray Street intersection.

Progress Comment
All items have been delivered or are in delivery. An evaluation of the changes will be assessed in the second half of 2026 and a report will be presented to council in early 2027 to close item 2d.

Director Community	**Council 12/03/2025**	**Target Date:**	**Further Report:**
		9/06/2027	Yes

7.5 Vicki Cleary Day 2025 and Family Violence Initiatives

That Council:

1. Notes the information provided on current data, initiative and partnerships on prevention of family violence and gender based violence
2. Endorses the proposed program of support for the annual Vicki Cleary Day.
3. Requests that an evaluation, outcomes report, and future program proposal be presented to Council for consideration in the first half of 2027.
4. Refers support for Vicki Cleary Day in May 2025 to Quarter 3 budget deliberations.
5. Refers a funding request of $40,000 to the 2025/26 budget process for consideration.

Progress Comment
A successful Vicki Cleary Day was held in May 2026 with planning for 2027 to consider an Essendon District Football League round. An evaluation of the program will be presented to Council in 2027.

Director Community	Council 12/03/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		30/12/2026	Yes

7.2 Bachar Houli Foundation - Islamic College of Sport and Aspire Sports Centre

That Council:

1. Notes the Bachar Houli Foundations concept designs for the proposed Aspire Sports Centre as shown in Attachment 1.
2. Notes the Federal Government's commitment to provide grant funding of $15 million and the Bachar Houli Foundation's application to the Victorian Government's Building Fund for Non-Government Schools to develop the facility.
3. Notes the planning requirements that must be met for the project to proceed, and the significant community benefits it will deliver.
4. Resolves to enter into a peppercorn lease agreement with the Bachar Houli Foundation for a 30-year term with a 10-year extension option, exercisable by the Bachar Houli Foundation, subject to confirmation that funding has been secured for the project.
5. Receives a further report setting out:
   a) detailed terms of the proposed lease agreement
   b) potential relocation options for existing users at the former Coburg Bowls Club
   c) grant funding updates
   d) further design and planning considerations, draft community and stakeholder engagement plan
   e) details outlining how women and girls will be intentionally included in the programs and design of the facility and how this will be measured and reported by the Bachar Houli Foundation
6. Requests officers continue to explore the potential of Council's adjacent Russell Street car park sites, particularly for future community sport and recreation infrastructure needs, and maximise any synergies or colocation potential with the Bachar Houli Foundation as their proposal develops.

Progress Comment

Council officers are liaising with the Bachar Houli Foundation and other stakeholders in relation to project design, community use hours and management arrangements. Community engagement materials are available on Conversations Merri-bek about the project. Officers are continuing to develop a lease are working through the re-location options for ser groups (Merri shed and Coburg commons garden). A report to Council will be presented to the December 2026 meeting.

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/08/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		30/03/2027	No

7.1 STREETS FOR PEOPLE PLAN

That Council:

1. Notes the findings of the community engagement on the draft Streets for People Plan, and thanks the community for their feedback.
2. Adopts the Streets for People Plan (Attachment 1), including the Streets for People network, the high priority projects list, and the Streets for People process for design, community engagement, and delivery.
3. Advocates to the State Government to:
   a) Make improvements to Elm Grove and Urquhart Street in the Coburg Civic and Pentridge area or negotiate changes in the responsible authority for roads in this area, with a goal of moving the state road designation from Elm and Urquhart Streets to Pentridge Boulevard.
   b) Make improvements for people walking and riding along the length of Boundary Road, Pascoe Street, and Rhodes Parade, in Pascoe Vale.
   c) Design and deliver the Craigieburn Line shared path project in collaboration with Council.
4. Notes the findings of the investigation into turning roads into parks.
5. Conducts a review into the operation of Northumberland Road, between Rhodes Parade and Arndt Street, 12 months following reconstruction of the road. The review shall consider feedback from Pascoe Vale Girls College, Pascoe Street businesses, local residents, and users of Northumberland Road.
6. Adds the following text to the 'Proposed Network - Corridor and Targeted network' section of the Streets for People Plan (as a new paragraph 2 on Page 17 of the plan – page 41 of the Council Agenda): “Targeted projects focus on smaller improvements that can be made to the street. This includes elements such as street trees, wayfinding, street benches, and other amenities. Targeted projects typically will not consider significant changes to the way the street operates, such as road closures or protected bike lanes.”
7. Changes the title in Table 3 of the Streets for People Plan from “Aspirations Community Engagement” to “Engagement on the community’s aspirations and lived experiences” (page 20 of the Streets for People Plan, and page 44 of the Council Agenda).
8. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make minor changes to the policy document for publication, as required.

Progress Comment

Northumberland Road works have recently concluded. A review into the operations will be undertaken in the coming months. All other items have been delivered.

Director Place and Environment	Council 12/11/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		30/12/2026	No

7.4 PROPOSED SALE OF COUNCIL LAND - 10 MURRELL STREET, GLENROY

That Council:

1. Notes the five submissions received in relation to the proposed sale of Council land at 10 Murrell Street, Glenroy, and the advice set out in this report.
2. Endorses the proposed sale of the land by a public process.
3. Writes to all submitters thanking them for their submissions and informing them of Council's decision.
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to effect the sale.
5. Directs the net proceeds of the sale to the Significant Projects Reserve.

Progress Comment

A sale process is in train.

Director Place and Environment	Council 11/03/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/12/2026	Yes

7.2 568 SYDNEY ROAD - PARK CLOSE TO HOME – PRELIMINARY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

That Council:

1. Notes the community engagement report on options for the new park at 568 Sydney Road, Brunswick.
2. Endorses the schematic design for 568 Sydney Road, Brunswick (Image 3 in this report), with any future changes to parking on Staley St to come back to council for a decision.
3. Endorses the approach to report back to the community, including the schematic design being publicly available on Conversations Merri-bek.
4. Receives a future report on the results of a second round of community engagement, with a recommended concept design for endorsement.

5. Explore further traffic calming measures for Staley Street.

Progress Comment

Outcomes from community engagement are being assessed and concept designs are being reviewed ahead of the detailed design and construction process.

Director Place and Environment	Council 11/03/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		8/12/2027	Yes

7.10 VISIBLE SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS IN HERITAGE OVERLAY

That Council:

1. Notes that Amendment C233mbek seeks to reduce planning permit requirements for some visible solar energy systems on contributory and non-contributory heritage buildings.
2. Receives a further report by late 2027 on further options to amend the Merri-bek Planning Scheme, including the potential removal of permit requirements for visible solar energy systems within the Heritage Overlay, informed by planning panel precedents, independent heritage advice and the outcomes of Amendment C233mbek.
3. Notes that consultation with Council's Liveability Advisory Committee and Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience Advisory Committee, and the Brunswick History Group and the Coburg Historical Society will be undertaken as part of the preparation of the further report.

Progress Comment

Officers are progressing the resolution, with a further report to Council by late 2027, informed by State Government direction, planning panel precedents, heritage advice and stakeholder consultation.

Director Place and Environment	Council 8/04/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		30/06/2027	Yes

7.2 SHARED E-BIKE SCHEME FOR MERRI-BEK

That Council:

1. Approves a pause on progressing a shared e-bike scheme.
2. Receives a future report when a Merri-bek shared e-bike scheme becomes feasible.

Progress Comment

No further update at this stage.

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/05/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/03/2027	No

7.5 EVALUATION TRIAL ROAD CLOSURE - BARROW STREET, COBURG

That Council:

1. Continues the Barrow Street road closure trial for a further 12 months to allow further development and community engagement on the Harding Street (Streets for People) concept design to address the impacts of the road closure trial on surrounding streets.
2. Implements safety modifications to the Coburg Street/Sheffield Street (Coburg) intersection. In addition, ensures that traffic counting is undertaken at the narrower southern end of Coburg Street in addition to other parts of Coburg St, and assess if any traffic calming measures are needed at the southern end.

Progress Comment

Further designs have been prepared for the Coburg/Sheffield Street intersection. These modifications have been included in draft designs for the Harding/Munro Streetscape improvement designs and will be subject to further community consultation.

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/05/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/12/2026	No

7.1 PROPOSED AMENDMENT C239MBEK – BRUNSWICK AND COBURG ACTIVITY CENTRES HERITAGE PROJECT: DECISION GATEWAY 1

That Council:

1. Adopts the Brunswick and Coburg Activity Centre Heritage Study: Stage 2 Final Report (GML Heritage, 2025) at Attachment 1 as the general basis for Amendment C239mbek to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme (Amendment).
2. Notes the Brunswick and Coburg Activity Centres Heritage Study Peer Review (Lovell Chen, 2025) at Attachment 2 and the Brunswick and Coburg Activity Centre Heritage Project: Summary of findings and officer recommendations report at Attachment 3.
3. As the planning authority, applies to the Minister for Planning (Minister) under section 8A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) (Act), for authorisation to prepare the Amendment.
4. If authorisation is received:
   a) Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make changes to the draft Amendment documentation at Attachment 5 as required prior to exhibition of the Amendment to correct any administrative errors and to meet any conditions the Minister imposes through authorisation.
   b) Endorses, for the purpose of exhibition, the draft Amendment documentation at Attachment 5, subject to any changes required under (4)(a) above.
   c) Exhibits the Amendment in accordance with sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Act.

Progress Comment

The Department of Transport and Planning, under delegation from the Minister for Planning, has authorised Amendment C239mbek subject to conditions. Officers have responded to the conditions and are preparing the Amendment for formal public exhibition.

Director Business Transformation	Council 13/05/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		9/12/2026	Yes

7.9 DRAFT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

That Council:

1. Adopts the Finance Management Policy (provided as Attachment 1 to this report)
2. Subject to point (1) approval, revokes the following policies which are now incorporated into the Finance Management Policy:
   a) Investment Policy
   b) Loan and Borrowing Policy
   c) Financial Reserves and Capital Management Policy
3. Notes that a report on the Fossil Fuel Divestment Strategy that accounts for the Finance Management Policy will be brought to Council before the end of 2026.

Progress Comment

The updated Finance Management Policy is now available on Council's website, and the policies listed in item 2 have been revoked. A report on the Fossil Fuel Divestment Strategy will be brought to Council at the December 2026 Council meeting.

Director Place and Environment	Council 10/06/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		1/06/2027	Yes

7.2 CENTRAL COBURG UPDATED FRAMEWORK PLAN AND SITE A1 EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST PROCESS

That Council:

1. Endorses the updated Central Coburg framework (Attachment 1) and development standards (Attachment 2).
2. Notes how the feedback provided during the engagement has been reflected in the updated Central Coburg framework (Attachment 1) and informed the development standards (Attachment 2).

3. Publishes the updated Central Coburg framework (Attachment 1) and development standards (Attachment 2) Council's Conversations Merri-bek page.
4. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make any minor refinements to the updated Central Coburg framework and development standards.
5. Receives a report at a future council meeting on accessibility measures and considerations for the Central Coburg plan, and that an accessibility consideration be made at different stages of the project to ensure that no changes get made which make the precinct inaccessible, and authorises the Director Place and Environment to reflect this into the Framework Plan and Design Principles. The accessible assessment needs to consider a wide range of disabilities including but not limited to mobility disabilities, vision impairment, hearing impairment and other disabilities.
6. Commences an open Expression of Interest ('EOI') process to invite organisations with a local connection to put forward ideas for potential community uses they might develop and deliver on the southern portion of the Council-owned site at 28 Victoria Street, Coburg, with dimensions approximately 26.9m x 45.4m ('Site A1').
7. Following the EOI, receives a report confirming next steps for this site, including optimal uses, and a recommended shortlist (subject to suitable EOI(s) being received), that may progress to a potential Request for Information (RFI) process to submit proposals to purchase the site from Council and use it to deliver community services and outcomes.
8. In accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, authorises public notice be posted on Council's website and feedback sought on Council's intention to sell the site to a successful respondent pending Council decisions on the EOI and RFI processes.

Progress Comment

Actions 1, 2, 3, and 4 have been completed.

Work is underway on items 5 and 6 (with actions 7 and 8 to come after the completion of 6).

Director Place and Environment	**Council 10/06/2026**	**Target Date:**	**Further Report:**
		31/08/2027	No

7.1 KERBSIDE WASTE REFORM - FORTNIGHTLY RUBBISH

That Council:

1. Notes that the proposed introduction of a fortnightly rubbish collection service is the last stage of Council's major kerbside waste reform program adopted by Council in 2021, following previous implementation of booked hard waste and the four-bin kerbside service.

2. Notes that a fortnightly rubbish service would save ratepayers at least $16 million over the next decade when compared to a weekly rubbish service.
3. Thanks the 3,000 households and businesses in parts of Hadfield and Brunswick/Brunswick West that took part in the trial of fortnightly rubbish.
4. Notes the evaluation findings from the fortnightly rubbish Trial during July–December 2025, which reduced waste sent to landfill by 19 per cent and almost doubled the amount of food waste recovered via food and garden organics (FOGO) bins.
5. Thanks the community for almost 2,000 contributions received during eight weeks of community engagement about fortnightly rubbish (detailed at Attachment 1).
6. Having considered the trial findings, community feedback, Council's adopted policy settings, financial implications, environmental outcomes, equity impacts and implementation requirements, resolves to endorse the transition to a municipality-wide fortnightly rubbish service as standard from July 2027 or as soon as practicable after this date (no later than October 2027), including the policy adjustments, concessions, implementation supports and operational measures outlined in this report. Contacts residents about bin size preferences in early 2027.
7. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to update and release Council's Kerbside Waste Service and Charge Policy to reflect Council's decision and the service adjustments outlined in this report as follows, together with any necessary administrative amendments:
    a) Increase the standard rubbish bin to 140 litres (instead of 120 litres);
    b) Increase the maximum volume for rubbish to 480 litres per fortnight (instead of 360 litres in the Trial), with an associated increase in the waste charge multiplier;
    c) Provide ad hoc rubbish collections for a fee on an as-needed basis (instead of an annual fee option for ongoing weekly rubbish collections);
    d) Rename the Financial Hardship concession to a Pensioner Concession, applicable to rubbish and FOGO bins, and streamline eligibility to align with the Municipal Rates Concession;
    e) Provide weekly rubbish collection service, with adjusted charge, for large apartment buildings (e.g. 20+ households) where Council deems that fortnightly rubbish is not viable; and
    f) Provide operational discretion for delegated Officers to make manageable service adjustments for case-by-case exceptional circumstances, including on compassionate grounds.
8. Further to point 7 above, introduces additional measures to make fortnightly waste collection easier for households, including:
    a) Expanding the large family concession to be a "larger household" concession, with any households with six or more residents eligible for a free upsize.
    b) Introducing a concession for households that foster multiple animals on an ongoing basis (three or more animals).
9. Requests Council officers to contact Merri-be real estate agents to encourage them to distribute information to renters about the kerbside service in Merri-bek, including:

i) Circumstances when renters are able to order free larger bins without needing their landlord's permission (if they are eligible for a concession).
ii) Circumstances where renters will need the property owner's permission to change a bin size or service level.

10. By September 2026, receives a briefing on further measures that could make fortnightly waste collection easier for households, including:
    a) The provision of free paper bags for kitchen caddies.
    b) Further incentives to reduce nappies in landfill, including exploring expanding existing reuseable nappy subsidies, and a subsidised nappy recycling program.
11. Develop and implement an evidence-based program to encourage greater use of FOGO. This would include:
    a) Analysis of current FOGO use (bin lift rates, household types not using FOGO and the reasons why not).
    b) Extensive promotion of the use of the FOGO bin – including information about the need to reduce landfill (landfill capacity), and the environmental and cost benefits of removing FOGO from the landfill bin.

Progress Comment

Items 1,2,3,4,5. Noted and completed.

Item 6. Planning for this item is in progress.

Items 7, 8, 9, 11. In progress.

Item 10 will occur in the coming months.

Director Place and Environment	**Council 10/06/2026**	**Target Date:**	**Further Report:**
		31/12/2026	No

7.3 PLACES FOR PEOPLE PLAN 2026

That Council:

1. Notes the findings of the community engagement on the draft Places for People Plan.
2. Adopts Places for People (Attachment 1) for implementation.

3. Changes page 27 of the Places for People (Attachment 1) to identify the Pascoe Vale Road opportunity as a high priority project and provides a report back to council by December 2026 with recommendations for public realm improvements to the pedestrian areas of Pascoe Vale Road.
4. Revokes the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy 2015–2025 and notes that it is superseded by and incorporated into Places for People Plan.
5. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make minor changes to the policy document for publication, as required.

Progress Comment

Report on the outcome of the investigation on Pascoe Vale Road to be tabled in coming months.

Director Place and Environment	**Council 8/07/2026**	**Target Date:** 30/07/2027	**Further Report:** No

7.1 HOPE STREET STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

That Council:

1. Notes the Community Engagement Report (Attachment 1) detailing the methodology and findings of the second round of community engagement on the Hope Street Streetscape Improvements project.
2. Endorses a revised Hope Street Streetscape Improvements concept design, which has been updated to reflect a range of community and stakeholder feedback, to progress to detailed design and staged delivery.
3. Notes that the project will be delivered in stages, with Council-led works to be progressed based on budget allocation, detailed design, procurement, State approvals, and any external funding opportunities.
4. Endorses officers continuing to advocate to the Department of Transport and Planning for State Government-led aspects of the design, including improved pedestrian crossing and signal outcomes at the Melville Road and Sydney Road intersections, and improved east-west walking and cycling connections along Hope Street.
5. Notes that officers will investigate a future application to the Department of Transport and Planning to introduce a 30km/h speed limit on Hope Street, following the delivery of traffic calming infrastructure, and review of post-construction speed and traffic data.
6. Undertakes ongoing movement analysis of all modes of transport along Hope Street and surrounds before, during and after delivery, to monitor the impacts of the delivered changes, as well as changes during and after the delivery of the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project.

7. Notes that Council is no longer proposing to discontinue the #509 Hope St bus.
8. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make minor changes to the proposed design subject to detailed design, Road Safety Audit, Department of Transport and Planning requirements, service authority requirements, urban design refinements, and coordination with the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project, where those changes do not substantially alter the intent or function of the endorsed design.

Progress Comment

Detailed design is being progressed with construction expected to commence in late 2027.

Director Place and Environment	**Council 12/08/2026**	**Target Date:** 31/03/2027	**Further Report:** No

7.3 C236MBEK - GATEWAY 2 - DCP 2.0 CONSIDERATION OF SUBMISSIONS AND REQUEST FOR A PLANNING PANEL

That Council:

1. Notes and considers all submissions made on or before the last date of exhibition of Amendment C236mbek to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme (Amendment), in accordance with section 22(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) (Act).
2. Notes and considers late submissions made after the last date of exhibition of the Amendment in accordance with section 22(2) of the Act.
3. In relation to all submissions which were considered by Council, refers those submissions to an independent Planning Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning (Minister) under Part 8 of the Act in accordance with section 23 of the Act.
4. Endorses the response to submissions and the recommendations as set out in the C236mbek Engagement Report at Attachment 1 to form the basis of Council's submission to the independent Planning Panel.
5. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make administrative changes to the Amendment and to give directions on issues which arise in the course of the Panel hearing in response to expert evidence and submissions consistent with Council's endorsed position in Attachment 1.

Progress Comment
Amendment C236mbek has been referred to Planning Panels Victoria, with a single-member Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning. The Panel report is expected in November 2026. The next and final decision gateway is for Council to consider the Panel's report and recommendations and determine whether to adopt the Amendment.

Director Place and Environment	**Council 9/09/2026**	**Target Date:** 31/12/2026	**Further Report:** Yes

7.4 AMENDMENT C235MBEK - REVISED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTION RATE FOR THE PLANNING SCHEME - CONSIDERING THE INTERIM PANEL REPORT

That Council:

1. Notes the:
   a) Planning Scheme Amendment C235mbek (amendment) Interim Panel Report for a revised Public Open Space Contribution rate dated 2 April 2026 at Attachment 1.
   b) updated HillPDA report, the peer review report by Westlink and the projects list document by Veris at Attachments 2, 3 and 4 respectively, prepared in response to the C235mbek Interim Panel Report.
   c) updated amendment Explanatory Report at Attachment 5, which references the HillPDA, Westlink and Veris documents at Attachments 2, 3 and 4 respectively, to support the amendment's supplementary exhibition.
2. Endorses supplementary exhibition of Amendment C235mbek, including the documents at Attachments 2, 3, 4 and 5, to address the matters identified in the Interim Panel Report.
3. Notes that a further report will be provided to Council following completion of the Amendment C235mbek's supplementary exhibition process addressing:
   a) The outcomes of the exhibition.
   b) Any submissions received.
   c) The proposed position to advance the amendment.
4. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to do all procedural and administrative steps necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Progress Comment
Amendment C235mbek is on supplementary exhibition until 30 October 2026.

Director Place and Environment	**Council 9/09/2026**	**Target Date:** 31/12/2026	**Further Report:** No

7.5 NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DECLARE A SPECIAL CHARGE SCHEME (2027-2032) - CENTRAL COBURG SHOPPING PRECINCT

That Council:

1. Notes the letter from Central Coburg Business Association Inc (CCBA) at Attachment 1 requesting the renewal of the Central Coburg Shopping Precinct Special Charge Scheme (Scheme) for the Central Coburg Shopping Precinct (Precinct).
2. Notes the affected properties in the Precinct (being those rateable properties listed in Attachment 2 to this Report).
3. Resolves to commence the statutory process under the Local Government Act 1989 (Act) to declare a renewed Scheme for the Precinct:
   a) for the period of 1 July 2027 to 30 June 2032;
   b) for the purpose of defraying expenses for promotional, advertising, marketing, business development and other activities associated with the encouragement of commerce, retail and professional activity and employment in the Precinct; and which may include the appointment of a part-time Association Manager;
   c) estimated to raise an amount of $224,138.96 in the first year, increasing by approximately 1 per cent in each remaining year.
4. Undertakes public consultation in respect of the proposed declaration as required by sections 161, 161A,161B and 223 of the Act, including by:
   a) publishing a public notice by 19 September 2026 pursuant to sections 163(1A) and 163B (3) of the Act in the form proposed at Attachment 3 on Council's website and in 'The Age' newspaper;
   b) sending letters to the owners and occupiers of the properties within three (3) business days of the publication of the public notice, providing copies of the public notice, in accordance with section 163(1C) of the Act, and an estimate of the special charge payable;
   c) keeping a copy of the Proposed Declaration of a Special Charge in the form proposed at Attachment 4 available for public inspection at the Coburg Civic Centre and the Coburg Library from 19 September 2026 for at least 28 days; and
   d) receiving written submissions under s 163A and 223 of the Act, and written objections under section 163B of the Act, for a period of 28 days after the publication of the public notice.

5. Sets the date for the meeting at which Council will consider whether to declare the Scheme for 14 April 2027.
6. Advises CCBA of the matters specified in paragraphs 1 to 5 of this resolution.
7. Appoints Councillors Politis and Abboud to a Hearing of Submissions Committee, established by Council under section 223(1)(b)(i), of the Local Government Act 1989, to hear any persons who in their written submissions under section 223 have requested they be heard in support of their submissions. Should the Chair not be available, the Committee may elect an Acting Chair from amongst the appointed members.
8. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the Hearing of Submissions Committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to declare a Special Charge Scheme for the Central Coburg Shopping Precinct.
9. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, or her delegate to carry out any and all other administrative procedures necessary to enable Council to carry out its functions under sections 163(1A), (1B) and (1C), 163A, 163B and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Progress Comment

Amendment C235mbek is on supplementary exhibition until 30 October 2026.

Notices of Motion

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/03/2024	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/03/2027	Yes

8.6 Dangers for cyclists and pedestrians at Hudson Street and Victoria Street, Coburg intersection

That Council:

1. Receives a report on safety hazards and potential solutions for cyclists and pedestrians at the Hudson Street and Victoria Street, Coburg intersection.
2. Requests officers to take account of potential flow-on effects of additional traffic to Hudson Street and consider the need for potential safety improvements to Hudson Street as part of the Harding/Munro Streets for People project.

Progress Comment

The designs have been presented as part of the Harding/Munro Streetscape Design. A council report will be tabled in 2027.

Director City Infrastructure	Council 12/06/2024	Target Date:	Further Report:
		30/03/2027	Yes

8.1 Standards for enclosed dog parks

That Council:

1. Conducts a review of the standards for enclosed off-lead dog parks with consideration given to:
   - eliminating gaps in fences, underneath fences and underneath gates that allow tiny dogs to escape
   - provision of water in both the large dog and small dog sections of the dog park
   - provision of shade in dog parks, especially in the area where people gather to watch their dogs
   - latches on gates to be accessible on both sides of the gate for people in wheelchairs
2. Receives a report on the outcome of the review.

Progress Comment
The review of standards for enclosed off-lead dog parks has not yet progressed to the formal assessment stage and remains linked to the broader development of the Open Space Guidelines. While the review has not been completed, the principles outlined in the Notice of Motion have been considered in recent dog park improvement projects, including the Gilpin Park Dog Park upgrade. Further consideration of the standards is proposed as part of the next phase of Open Space Guidelines development. A report on the outcome of the review will be presented to Council in March 2027.

Director Community	**Council 10/07/2024**	**Target Date:** 16/04/2027	**Further Report:** Yes

8.2 RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED LOCAL ARTIST - DESTINY DEACON 1956 TO 2024

That Council:

1. Pays tribute to the life and work of internationally renowned Merri-bek artist Destiny Deacon.
2. Receives a report with recommendations on the best way to recognise the contribution of Destiny Deacon to art, the First Nations community and the local community. Some suggestions for recognition to be considered include an artist's residency or art prize in Destiny Deacon's name as well as other recommendations.

Progress Comment
The First People's Arts Officer has consulted with the family trust and a proposal developed. A report will be presented at a 2027 Council meeting.

Director Place and Environment	Council 11/09/2024	Target Date:	Further Report:
		30/12/2026	Yes

8.3 UPFIELD TRAIN LINE

That Council:

1. Receives a report as soon as practicable that identifies the methodology and cost for a survey of people who live north of Batman station who are also current users of the Upfield Line or who have abandoned using the Upfield line. Such a survey would seek to discover:
   - why people have abandoned using the Upfield Line
   - changes people have made to their public transport usage because of the unreliability of the train service for people who live north of Batman station
   - whether people would resume using the Upfield train if it was duplicated to improve frequency and reduce cancellations
   - whether people would be attracted to using the Upfield train service if there were one or two extra train stations between Gowrie and Upfield stations.
2. Proposes to our partner Councils in the Northern Alliance of Councils (Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Mitchell Shire, Nillumbik and Whittlesea) that we commission this survey to support advocacy efforts for the Upfield Line duplication and extension.

Progress Comment

Resolution being reviewed with proposal to align any advocacy and engagement with state government investigatory work that has recently been announced.

Director Community	Council 12/02/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/03/2027	Yes

8.2 REVIVING PASCOE VALE POOL

That Council:

1. Acknowledges the importance of accessible, high quality local pools for all residents in Merri-bek.
2. Recognises that during this Climate Crisis, we have an obligation to take proactive action and ensure that there are spaces for residents to stay cool in increasingly hot summers.
3. Requests Officers provide a report that considers the level of investment required for the refurbishment of Pascoe Vale Pool, with a view to:
   a) Extending opening hours
   b) Improving facilities
   c) Avoiding unexpected maintenance
   d) Increasing sustainability
   e) Advocating to both state and federal levels of government for funding.
4. Revisits the Aquatic and Leisure Strategy for an update.

Progress Comment

Point 3 of the resolution has been addressed by a report of Council on outdoor pool opening hours in September 2026. A further report addressing infrastructure will be provided following completion of Council's10-year asset management plan completed in 2027.

Director Community	Council 12/02/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		10/02/2027	Yes

8.3 IMPROVING SAFETY, CLEANLINESS AND WELLBEING OF COMMUNITY AT VICTORIA MALL

That Council receives a report by mid-March that considers:

1. Security

   In the interests of public safety, Council extends the current level of Security Services in Victoria Mall with these security services to be trained in and have a focus on de-escalation, for a period of a further 6 months and undertakes a review of the impact of these services within the next 3 months.

2. Cleanliness

   Maintains and seeks to increase the cleaning services in the Mall, so that rubbish, tree debris and pigeon droppings are properly managed. In the interests of wellbeing the community should have access to a healthy, hygienic and pleasant public space, that enhances community wellbeing and contributes to a thriving local economy.

3. Community Forum

   That Council coordinates a Community Needs and Safety Forum, which is advertised for the public to attend as well as all stakeholders, including Council, traders, service providers, sports clubs, community leaders to have an input into community safety in central Coburg. This forum should consider ways of turning the area in front of the Coburg Library into a community space.

4. Exploring ways to better engage with people displaying dangerous and antisocial behaviour

   To keep the community safe, address safety concerns, and reassure shoppers, traders, and the community, Council explores methods for better engaging with people displaying dangerous and antisocial behaviour.

5. Reinstating public seating with back rests and access to shelter in Coburg Mall

   In the interests of elderly people, people with mobility issues and others, Council to consider reinstating public seating with back rests in Coburg Mall. Consideration should be given to providing an equivalent amount of public seating to that which was demolished, and some of the new seating to be in front of the library with a table.

Progress Comment

Items 1 and 2 have been actioned.

Item 4 has been actioned and appropriate measures are in place.

Item 3, the community forum, will be arranged for 2027which will include consideration of item 5.

Director Community	Council 14/05/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		26/02/2027	Yes

8.3 HONOURING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JOE SAM LUPPINO

That Council:

1. Formally recognises and honors the outstanding contribution of Joe Sam Luppino by naming the grandstand at Coburg City Oval the “Joe Sam Luppino Stand”.
2. Should this not be deemed suitable, identifies and considers an alternative location or facility within Merri-bek to appropriately commemorate Joe’s legacy and service to the community.

Progress Comment

The naming process for the City Oval grandstand in commemoration of Joe Luppino has progressed. Community submissions have been received and are currently being reviewed and assessed by officers as part of the ongoing process. A further report with recommendations will be provided to Council in 2027.

Director Place and Environment	Council 10/09/2025	Target Date:	Further Report:
		31/12/2026	No

8.9 URGENT ACTION REQUIRED ON ROAD SAFETY: RECENT FATAL INCIDENTS ON MORELAND ROAD

That Council:

1. Recognises two recent deaths on the state-controlled Moreland Road, of a cyclist on 25 August and a skateboarder in mid-May, both caused by motorists.

2. Acknowledges the urgent need for a safer road environment for vulnerable users along Moreland Road.
3. Writes to the Minister for Transport and relevant Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) officials to request:
   a) An immediate safety audit of Moreland Road.
   b) Implementation of priority interventions at Murdock Street, Gordon Street, and other high-risk locations.
   c) That the State government fund and deliver safety enhancements including pedestrian crossings, speed reductions, infrastructure upgrades, safe cycling infrastructure and road user awareness campaigns.

Progress Comment

Road Safety Plan scheduled for consultation in early 2027. The resolution including the Ministerial letter, will be addressed as part of this plan.

Director Community	**Council 11/02/2026**	**Target Date:**	**Further Report:**
		30/12/2026	Yes

8.2 COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY DURING EXTREME HEAT

That Council:

1. Notes that Merri-bek council recognised that we are in a state of climate emergency in 2018 which obligates council to help develop a climate resilient community through assisting the community to adapt to climate extremes such as extreme heat.
2. Notes that climate change is causing an increase in the number of extreme heat events, which means that there is a need for more community venues that provide cool centres which are open to all community members
3 Notes that Merri-bek's libraries and aquatic centres, outdoor pools and Maternal and Child Health Centres are relied on as public venues to provide cool spaces during extreme heat.
4. Recognises that lack of access to cool spaces is a human rights and equity issue with higher death rates on extreme heat days. This makes extreme heat a life and death issue for many people, especially people from a range of vulnerable communities such as seniors, people with disabilities, First Nations people, young parents with young children and migrant communities.
5. Receives a report which investigates:

a) potential additional community centres such as Neighbourhood Houses which could be cool centres to offer hot day activities in a cool environment. Such centres may need to be funded to install passive cooling such as a misting system and would be open to all community members.
b) how to make Merri-bek libraries and other Council venues more suitable to be cool spaces to promote to the community, using a holistic approach so that the spaces aren't just a bare air-conditioned room but have activities, programs and engagement.
c) availability of a health worker in a cool centre to monitor people's temperature
d) expanding the use of Merri-bek's community bus to transport elderly, isolated and vulnerable people to cool spaces
e) options for a cool space in Merri-bek such as CB Smith Reserve Fawkner where there are a number of Council facilities in close proximity to each other such as the Fawkner Leisure Centre, the Fawkner Library, the Fawkner Community Hall, Fawkner Community and CB Smith Sport Pavillion as well as a park.
f) extension of low-income subsidy scheme for energy efficiency and solar panels
g) that councils air conditioning infrastructure is maintained and fit for purpose across all of its workplaces and facilities.

6. Advocates to state government for a low income subsidy scheme for people to install external blinds and secure window screens to mitigate against extreme heat.
7. Undertakes some targeted community consultation about what the community needs in order to deal with extreme heat. Such consultation could target seniors groups, domestic violence services, people with disabilities, migrant communities, homeless people, young parents with small children and other community organisations as well as open community consultation.
8. Considers a budget allocation in the 2026-27 Council budget for community initiatives to assist community centres such as neighbourhood houses to provide cool spaces for the community during extreme heat as well as targeted upgrades to make Council facilities able to be used as cool spaces.
9. Approaches the State Government about the potential for joint council and state government funding for such initiatives.

Progress Comment

A report will be presented to Council on this matter in December 2026.

Director Place and Environment	Council 11/03/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		24/11/2026	Yes

8.2 LANEWAY BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

That Council receives a report on a project to scope a laneway beautification program, which could:

1. Identify laneways and roundabouts to beautify.
2. Explore laneways and roundabouts that can be better activated.
3. Identify ways to encourage laneway and roundabout greening projects in appropriate neighbourhoods.

Progress Comment

A report will be presented to Council in 2027.

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/05/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		9/12/2026	Yes

8.1 FOOTBRIDGE ACROSS MERRI-CREEK IN SOUTHERN FAWKNER

That Council receives a report this year on what it would cost to determine service need and, pending that, undertakes a feasibility study, for a footbridge across the Merri Creek between Fawkner and Reservoir, near Lorne Street, Fawkner with a view to consideration in the 2027-28 budget process. The scope would consider:

1. Exploring options for external funding; and
2. Delivering an appropriate stakeholder consultation program which might include: City of Darebin; Merri Creek Management Committee; State Government; Victoria Walks; Bicycle Victoria; Walk on Merri-bek; Merri-bek Bicycle Users Group; Darebin Bicycle Users Group; Streets Alive Darebin.

Progress Comment

A report is scheduled for the February 2027 council meeting.

Director Community	Council 13/05/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		12/06/2027	Yes

8.4 PLACE-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR FAWKNER

That Council:

1. Notes the success of the Place-based Community Outreach – Fawkner Pilot program which has an emphasis on helping communities, especially disadvantaged and multicultural communities, to become sustainable and climate resilient.
2. Receives a report by August 2026 on options for an expanded Place-Based Community Development Program for Fawkner, including possible objectives, scope and cost implications, with consideration to be given to including a sustainable communities aspect.

Progress Comment

A report will be presented to Council in the first half of 2027.

Director Place and Environment	Council 13/05/2026	Target Date:	Further Report:
		9/12/2026	Yes

8.5 CLIMATE ADVOCACY

That Council:

1. Notes:
   a) That people all around Australia, including Merri-bek, are experiencing increasing impacts of climate change, including heatwaves and extreme storms, placing pressure on local infrastructure, services and community wellbeing.
   b) The financial and social impacts of these climate events on households, businesses, and community organisations, already experiencing a cost-of-living crisis

c) The rising costs to Council budgets as a result of climate change, including costs associated with disaster response, infrastructure repair and resilience upgrades;

d) The existing constraints on local government budgets and shortfalls in existing government grants, meaning councils are ill-equipped to support residents and businesses without significantly compromising budget and resources.

2. Writes to the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Minister for Local government, and Treasurer, and the Victorian Local Government Minister and Treasurer, advocating for more action and resources to help communities, households, and local governments tackle the intense challenges of climate change and a just transition in the community.

3. Receives a report scoping a project to develop options to ensure adequate funding to manage the increasing costs of extreme weather events and other climate impacts on our communities, including appropriate means of liaising with and advocating to other tiers of government around funding options.

Progress Comment

Items 2 and 3 are in progress.

Director Place and Environment	**Council 10/06/2026**	**Target Date:** 31/03/2027	**Further Report:** No

8.1 GLENROY PASCOE VALE ROAD ACTIVITY CENTRE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND REVITALISATION

That Council:

1. Recognises the importance of revitalising and beautifying Pascoe Vale Road (a State Road) within the Glenroy Activity Centre to improve visual appeal, public amenity, strengthen community pride, increase perceptions of safety and support local economic growth.

2. Recognises ongoing community and trader concerns regarding safety, amenity, and cleanliness throughout the precinct, and acknowledges the necessity for collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches to revitalisation between Council, State Government, traders, property owners, and key stakeholders.

3. Requests officers undertake an audit of the Glenroy Pascoe Vale Road Activity Centre to identify priority maintenance, beautification, safety and activation works, including opportunities for Tricky Spot tree plantings, damaged bollards and pedestrian railings, graffiti removal and pressure cleaning requirements, and report back to Council by November 2026 outlining the findings, proposed priority actions and recommendations for further improvements.
4. Requests officers incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in all future design and delivery works within the activity centre, with a view to improving community safety and fostering a welcoming, pedestrian-friendly environment.
5. Continues to engage with traders and landlords and property owners to address concerns related to shopfront cleanliness and presentation, and support activation of shopfronts to create a more vibrant and inviting streetscape.
6. The Mayor writes to Coles (and the relevant state MP), seeking their collaboration in improving the amenity and safety of their carpark, including enhanced landscaping, lighting, maintenance, and a more attractive community environment.
7. The Mayor writes to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety and the local State Member advocating for streetscape and infrastructure improvements along Pascoe Vale Road as a key activity centre.

Progress Comment

A report will be tabled in the coming months to close the remaining items in this resolution.

Director Place and Environment	**Council 12/08/2026**	**Target Date:** 31/03/2027	**Further Report:** No

8.1 DATA CENTRES

That Council:

1. Notes the rapidly increasing electricity and water demand associated with the surge in data centre builds in Victoria.
2. Notes the surge in energy demand from data centre builds may potentially impact Victoria's decarbonisation objectives and increase pressure on energy infrastructure.
3. Notes the potential impact of data centres on local communities, including noise pollution (waterways and noise), strain on electricity provision, potential fire hazards, and impact on water supplies and waterways pollution.

4. Notes the M9 Councils' (including Melbourne, Merri-bek, Darebin, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Port Phillip, Stonnington, and Yarra) advocacy in train in relation to data centres, which includes:
   a) Preparing an M9 Councils' submission to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry examining the opportunities, impacts and regulatory settings associated with the growth of data centre infrastructure across Australia.
   b) Writing to the relevant Minister calling for greater Council involvement in planning decisions relating to data centres.
5. Complementing the M9 work, writes to the Victorian Premier, the Victorian Minister for Artificial Intelligence and the Digital Economy, the Prime Minister, the Federal Minister for Industry and Innovation, and the Federal Minister for Environment, asking for urgent consideration of climate, environmental, construction and amenity impacts, and request they ensure policy and regulation of data centres that:
   a) Is informed by community interest, evidence and input from relevant scientific experts, as well as cities, eco-systems and communities impacted by the establishment of data centres;
   b) Are enforceable and ensures strong safeguards are legislated for people, the community, cultural heritage and the environment; and
   c) There is transparency for the community about the different types of data centres, their impacts on the community, and how the federal and state governments are mitigating these impacts.
6. Supports any motions at the Municipal Association of Victoria State conference which call for a moratorium on approvals for new data centres and expansions of existing data centres.

Progress Comment

Items 4 and 5 are in progress.

Director Place and Environment	Council 9/09/2026	Target Date: 31/03/2027	Further Report: No

8.1 MORATORIUM ON DATA CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

That Council:

1. Calls on the Victorian Government to:
   a) Implement an immediate moratorium on approvals of new data centres, expansions of existing data centres and construction of new data centres until a Victorian Parliamentary Joint Select Committee Inquiry into Data Centres has been completed and a Victorian Data Centre Planning and Sustainability Framework is developed and enacted with enforceable regulations.
   b) The Inquiry should include comprehensive public hearings and invite evidence from scientific experts, community organisations, Traditional Owners, local residents, local governments, industry representatives and relevant government agencies to consider the cumulative, environmental, social and economic impacts (including the impact on electricity and water bills) of data centres and recommend an appropriate regulatory framework and other initiatives identified through the inquiry process.
   c) Develop a Statewide Data Centre Community Benefit Framework requiring major data centre developments to deliver measurable benefits to host communities.
   d) Establish a dedicated Victorian planning policy for data centres that includes:
      - Preferred locations based on infrastructure capacity, renewable energy availability and land use compatibility;
      - Assessment of cumulative impacts on energy, water, transport and community infrastructure;
      - Minimum sustainability and resource-efficiency standards; and
      - Public reporting on energy consumption, water use, emissions and renewable energy sourcing.
   e) Require proponents of major data centre developments to enter into Community Benefit Agreements that may include investment in:
      - Local infrastructure and public realm improvements;
      - Renewable energy, climate resilience and circular economy initiatives;
      - Local employment, apprenticeships and workforce development programs, and
      - Environmental and neighbourhood enhancement projects.
   f) Establish transparent consultation requirements to ensure councils and local communities are meaningfully engaged in the assessment of major data centre proposals.

g) Ensure local government representation in the development of the Victorian framework and any future state-led assessment or approval processes.

2. Communicates the call for a moratorium on approvals of new data centres, expansions of existing data centres and construction of new data centres to the federal government.

Progress Comment

Items 1, 2: In progress.

7.4 GOVERNANCE REPORT - NOVEMBER 2026

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the Friends of Aileu Advisory Committee held 13 October 2026, at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Governance report is prepared as a monthly standing report to Council which provides a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

This Governance report includes:

- A summary of the minutes of Advisory Committees and Groups.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil.

1. Policy Context

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and the Governance Rules set out the requirements for keeping and reporting records of meetings held under the auspices of Council.

2. Background

The Governance Report is prepared as a monthly report to Council to provide a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

In accordance with best practice principles and good governance practice, and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act, this report incorporates matters including reporting of Advisory Committees, records of meetings held under the auspices of Council, items relating to the delegation of Council powers and duties, and policy and strategy reporting.

3. Issues

Advisory Committee minutes

A summary of the minutes of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee meeting held 13 October 2026 is provided at **Attachment 1** for Council's information.

Records of Meetings held under the auspices of Council

Records of matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Merri-bek that involve Councillors and Council officers are kept in accordance with the Governance Rules.

Meeting Records must include meeting attendees, including organisations represented by external presenters; the title of matters discussed; and any conflicts of interest disclosed and whether the declarant of a conflict of interests recused themselves from the meeting. Some examples include Councillor Briefings, meetings with residents/developers/ clients/organisations/Government departments/statutory authorities and consultations.

Records of Meetings received since the previous Council Meeting are presented at **Attachment 2** as follows:

- Central Coburg Oversight Committee - 30 September 2026
- Councillor Briefing – 12 October 2026
- Councillor Briefing – 19 October 2026
- Planning Briefing – 26 October 2026.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

There are no climate emergency implications associated with this report.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, and this report does not contravene or limit any of the 20 fundamental human rights as set out in the Charter.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Advisory committees provide a valuable communication and consultation link between the organisation, Councillors, Council and the community.

Affected persons rights and interests

This report and its recommended decision do not affect any person's rights.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in the matters listed.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. Implementation

Governance activity, including reports of Committees to Council, Records of Meetings and Community Question Time items, will continue to be reported to Council monthly.

Attachment/s

1⇩	Report from Advisory Committee to Council - November 2026	D26/486342
2⇩	Records of Meetings - November 2026	D26/480195

FRIENDS OF AILEU COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - 13 OCTOBER 2026

A report of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee meeting held on 13 October 2026 is provided for Council's information.

Meeting attendees

Committee members (community):

- Carlo Carli, Joe Caputo, Richard Brown, Glenyys Romanes

Apologies:

- Cr Adam Pulford (Merri-bek Council representative)
- Cr Jarrod Bell and Cr Naim Kurt (Hume Council representatives)
- Anne Jungwirth (Committee member: community)
- Jose Valente (Secretary Aileu Friendship Commission)

Guests online from Aileu, Timor-Leste:

- Sara Virginia Musara (Australian Volunteer), Abilio de Araujo (Aileu Anan Association), Joaninho dos Reis (Aileu Resource and Training Centre)

Council Officers:

- Christopher Adams, Antoninho dos Santos

Key Items Discussed

- Financial Report August - September: Balances, Income (fundraising & donations), Expenditure on partner organisations project activities in Aileu.
- Progress and issues report by Sara Virginia Musara (Australian Volunteer, Decentralisation Advisor to Aileu Municipal Authority), including on:
    - Options and issues for Friends of Aileu scholarship and Municipal staff development scholarships.
    - Transparency and accountability improvements, including IT and communications support for Village Chiefs.
    - Discussions with various parties on climate risks and improving support for farmers.
    - The annual Aileu Expo 26-28 November and a proposed Government Expo 28 November that all municipalities are being asked to contribute.
- Commentary from Abilio de Araujo (former scholarship student, President of Aileu Anan Association, Manager DFAT funded *Partisipa* program for local government support), adding some context to above issues from his years of experience with the friendship relationship.
- Progress report from Joaninho dos Reis (Program Manager, Aileu Resource and Training Centre) including:
    - Learnings from his August study tour in Merri-bek and Hume and implementation of several new initiatives, such as "working bees" at the Kadalak Farm project to foster voluntary contributions to community activities, the continuation of permaculture training and English language courses focussing on permaculture and tourism vocabulary.

- Continued development of Kadalak Farm as a tourism venture, and recent visits including that from Netherlands Ambassador to Timor-Leste and the World Food Program Country Director.
- ARTC's provision of produce to the School Feeding Program in the neighbouring Likisa municipality and new contract anticipated for supply to the School Feeding Program in Aileu.
- ARTC's preparations for the annual Aileu Expo 26-28 November.

- A progress report on Oral Health Project by Glenyys Romanes (Committee member and Chair of Oral Health Working Group), including:
  - Progress towards finalising a Memorandum of Intent with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health and development of Friends of Aileu's Oral Health Project Plan 2026-2029.
  - The receipt of a $5,000 grant received from the International College of Dentists for a project on oral health Information, Education and Communication materials to be delivered in partnership with the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health, the Timor-Leste Dental Association and the Aileu Municipal Health Service.
  - Joaninho dos Reis' welcome role in handing over the donated ultra-sonic scaler to the Aileu Municipal dental clinic, and the related briefing of the new Municipal President on the friendship relationship.
- Other Friends of Aileu activities including:
  - Ongoing collaboration with Friends of Baucau and the Timorese Association in Victoria on proposed establishment of a joint *Friends of Timor-Leste MyFund* with the Inner North Community Foundation.

    Trivia Quiz fundraiser for the Aileu scholarship Program, 7-10pm Tuesday 27 October, Coburg Town Hall Bookings https://events.humanitix.com/friends-of-aileu-trivia-quiz-2026.
  - A possible Council / Friends of Aileu delegation to Timor-Leste in May 2027, to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Restoration of Independence (20 May 2002), with the Project Officer to discuss with the Aileu Friendship Commission Secretary a request for the Aileu Municipal President to prepare an invitation for such a delegation.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was disclosed at the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

There were no recommendations from the committee to Council.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Central Coburg Oversight Committee
Date: 30 September 2026
Meeting time: 4:00pm

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at all **Hearing of Submission Meetings**, **Advisory Committee Meetings** and **Councillor Briefings** organised or hosted by Council will be kept.

The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest disclosed and whether the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Nat Abboud, Mayor Cr Jay Iwasaki Cr Liz Irvin Cr Helen Politis
Apologies	Cr Chris Miles
Council Staff (name and position)	Kate McCaughey, CEO Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Peter Sagar, Central Coburg Program Director Lisa Dempster, Manager Cultural Development
External participants	Nil

Items discussed		**Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature**	**Left meeting**
1	Library and Piazza concept design	Nil	

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Peter Sagar, Central Coburg Program Director

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's website.

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing
Date: 12 October 2026
Meeting time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at all **Hearing of Submission Meetings**, **Advisory Committee Meetings** and **Councillor Briefings** organised or hosted by Council will be kept.

The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest disclosed and whether the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees		
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor	Cr Liz Irvin
	Cr Ella Svensson	Cr Chris Miles
	Cr Jay Iwasaki	
	Cr Adam Pulford	
Apologies	Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	Cr Sue Bolton
	Cr Helen Politis	Cr Katerine Theodosis
	Cr Nat Abboud, Mayor	
Council Staff (name and position)	Kate McCaughey, Chief Executive Officer Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation Greg Rodwell, Director City Infrastructure Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Pene Winslade, Director Place & Environment Seamus Lowe, Unit Manager Property	
External participants	Nil	

Items discussed		**Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature**	**Left meeting**
1	Organisational update	-	-
2	Review of Council Meeting Agenda, 14 October 2026	-	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: *Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation*

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's website.

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing
Date: 19 October 2026
Meeting time: 6.00pm – 6.30pm

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at all **Hearing of Submission Meetings**, **Advisory Committee Meetings** and **Councillor Briefings** organised or hosted by Council will be kept.

The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest disclosed and whether the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees		
Councillors	Cr Nat Abboud, Mayor	Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor
	Cr Jay Iwasaki	Cr Liz Irvin
	Cr Helen Politis	Cr Chris Miles
	Cr Ella Svensson	
Apologies	Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	Cr Sue Bolton
	Cr Katerine Theodosis	Cr Adam Pulford
Council Staff (name and position)	Kate McCaughey, Chief Executive Officer Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation Greg Rodwell, Director City Infrastructure Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy	
External participants	Nil	

Items discussed		**Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature**	**Left meeting**
1	Organisational update	-	-
2	Mandatory Councillor Training – Conflicts of Interest	-	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: *Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation*

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's website.

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Planning Briefing
Date: 26/10/2026
Meeting time: 7.00pm

This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at all **Hearing of Submission Meetings**, **Advisory Committee Meetings** and **Councillor Briefings** organised or hosted by Council will be kept.

The record will include the attendees at the meeting, including the organisations represented by external presenters, the title of matters discussed and any conflicts of interest disclosed and whether the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees		
Councillors	Cr Nat Abboud, Mayor	Cr Liz Irvin
	Cr Sue Bolton	Cr Chris Miles
	Cr Jay Iwasaki	Cr Adam Pulford
	Cr Helen Politis	Cr Oscar Yildiz JP
	Cr Ella Svensson	
Apologies	Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor	Cr Katerine Theodosis
Council Staff	Kate McCaughey, CEO Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment Phil Priest, Group Manager City Development Mark Hughes, Unit Manager Urban Planning Ryan Hay, Planning Coordinator	
External participants	None	

	Items discussed *(list topics discuss, excluding welcome & next meeting)*	**Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature**	**Left meeting**
1	MPS/2026/540 – 21-23 Piera Street, Brunswick East	-	-
2	MIN/2026/9 – 429 Albert Street, Brunswick	-	-
3	MPS/2025/558 - 102 McBryde Street, Fawkner	-	-

Name and title of Council officer completing record: Phil Priest, Group Manager City Development

This form is kept in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles and Merri-bek City Council's Privacy Policy and practices as stated on Merri-bek's website.

7.5 CONTRACT AWARD: STATE PURCHASE CONTRACT - VTS VICTORIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Information Technology

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises to continue as a contract member of the State Purchase Contract for the Telecommunications Services for Telephony and Data Services with **Telstra Limited** ACN 086 174 781 (the Contractor) on the following terms:
    i. For a 3-year contract period, commencing 22 November 2026
    ii. For a maximum spend of $963,480.60 (excluding GST).
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary relevant to the State Purchase contract (SPC) and any required documentation.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council approval to continue to engage with Telstra Limited under the State Purchase Contract for Telecommunications Services for Telephony and Data Services. The new contract term commences 22 November 2026 and is for a three-year period, ending 21 November 2029.

Council has engaged Telstra Limited (Telstra) for telephony and data services since 3 October 2014, initially through the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Telecommunications Contract TC4322-2013. Following the expiry of this contract on 20 August 2020, services continued under the automatic month-to-month renewal provision until Council entered into a new agreement under the State Purchase Contract. The current agreement is due to expire on 21 November 2026.

The proposed new agreement will be established through the VTS State Purchase Contract under Head Agreement DPC-ICT-03-2020/21 (Tender ID: 450392), in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and section 109(1) of the Local Government Act 2020. The VTS panel covers core telecommunications services, including data and internet, fixed voice, and mobile services.

The VTS panel commenced on 17 December 2021 and was initially set to expire on 17 December 2027. The Department of Government Services (DGS) has advised that existing customers may enter into new agreements that extend beyond the panel's expiry date.

This recommendation is in accordance with section 4.8.1 which allows for an exemption from the standard procurement thresholds when *a contract made with, or a purchase from a contract made by, another government entity, government-owned entity or other approved third party.*

The procurement complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020.*

Previous Council Decisions

Contract EXE-2023-513 Telecommunications Services – 8 November 2023

That Council:

1. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage Telstra Limited ACN 086 174 781 (Contractor) under the State Purchase Contract (SPC) for the provision of Telecommunications Services for telephony and data services EXE-2023-513 (Contract) for:*

    a) *An amount not exceeding $1,049,889.60 excluding GST, and*

    b) *A term of three years, commencing from the date executed by CEO and expiring three years from the execution date.*

2. *Authorises the Chief Executive officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract, exercise future extension options, and vary the contract in accordance with the terms of the Contract.*

3. *Notes that the recommendation to engage Telstra does not comply with Council's commitment to "excluding from future contracts, tenders or business dealings any companies involved in the Adani mine and associated rail infrastructure projects; and will be excluding from future contracts, tenders or business dealings from any companies involved in developing new coal mines" as set out in Council's approved Procurement Policy 2021-2025.*

1. Policy Context

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. It also addresses the requirement under section 109(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 which requires Council to adhere to its Procurement Policy when entering into contracts for the purchasing of goods or services, or the carrying out of works. Council adopted the Procurement Policy on 11 June 2025 which sets the threshold for conducting a public tender for goods, services and works where once-off or ongoing cumulative spend over the life of the contract is expected to exceed $350,000 (incl GST).

2. Background

Council has engaged Telstra Limited (Telstra) for telephony and data services since 3 October 2014, initially through the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Telecommunications Contract TC4322-2013. Following the expiry of this contract on 20 August 2020, services continued under the automatic month-to-month renewal provision until Council entered into a new agreement under the State Purchase Contract. The current agreement is due to expire on 21 November 2026.

Previous Contracts

The MAV Telecommunications Contract TC4322-2013 was awarded to Telstra for an initial six-year term, with two optional one-year extensions. Council's agreements and service arrangements were:

- 3 October 2014 to 3 October 2017: A 36-month Business Services Agreement under the MAV contract, executed by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 14 October 2017 to 14 June 2018: A subsequent agreement under the MAV contract.
- 20 August 2018 to 20 August 2020: A further 24-month Business Services Agreement under the MAV contract, executed by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 21 August 2020 to 6 December 2023: Continued services on a month-to-month basis under the contract's automatic renewal provision.
- 6 December 2023 to 6 December 2026: A three-year agreement under the VTS panel.

3. Issues

Service providers

Telstra has provided reliable telephony and data services that have performed as expected throughout Council's previous and current contracts. Based on this performance, Council recommend continuing with Telstra rather than exploring alternative telecommunications providers or making significant changes to the existing service arrangements.

Council has more than 1,040 devices that use SIM cards. Changing telecommunications providers would require the physical replacement of SIM cards in all these devices. Coordinating their return and replacement would disrupt Council operations, inconvenience Councillors and staff, and require significant internal resources. This could also affect the delivery of services to the community.

Security, reliability, and service continuity are key reasons for the proposed continued engagement of Telstra. Council officers consider Telstra to offer the best network coverage across the municipality, supporting staff to deliver community services efficiently. The proposed agreement is also expected to provide savings through lower-cost plans, as outlined in the financial section of this report.

Council is not aware of any Telstra data breach affecting its services or information.

This recommendation is in accordance with section 4.8.1 which allows for an exemption from the standard procurement thresholds when *a contract made with, or a purchase from a contract made by, another government entity, government-owned entity or other approved third party.*

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Changing service providers would generate additional environmental waste through the need for additional SIM cards.

Legal and risk considerations

There are no known legal risks associated with this contract. A procurement risk assessment has been completed.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and no issues were identified.

4. Consultation / Recommendation from Management

All relevant areas were consulted in the creation of this report, including the Finance and Procurement team.

5. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Council Officers, external consultants, and all other parties involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest in this matter.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The total cost for the three-year contract period was estimated based on the current actual fleet size and the pricing proposed by Telstra.

The estimated monthly expenditure under the new agreement is $232,164.00 (excluding GST) per annum. This is based on current pricing plus accounting for the pricing adjustments.

The total estimated maximum expenditure over the three-year contract period is $963,480.60 excluding GST, which includes allowance to accommodate potential variations in fleet size, service requirements, data usage, and associated costs over the contract period.

7. Implementation and Timeline

Subject to Council's decision, Telstra Limited will continue to provide telephony and data services for three (3) years from date of signed agreement.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 NOT A DATE TO CELEBRATE CAMPAIGN SUPPORT

Cr Jay Iwasaki

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes YouGov polling from 2026 showing:
    a) 61% of First Nations people and 54% of Australian voters prefer an Australian Long Weekend held on the second-last Monday in January rather than a fixed January 26 holiday, and that;
    b) 32% of First Nations people have personally experienced racism, hostility or negative treatment on January 26.
2. Notes the Not A Date To Celebrate campaign, led by Merri-bek-based Aboriginal social enterprise Clothing The Gaps, which is supported by more than 200 businesses and organisations and a petition of more than 109,000 people, and aims to encourage consideration of alternative ways to celebrate Australia's national identity, including allowing 26 January to be formally recognised as a Day of Mourning while identifying a more inclusive occasion for national celebration.
3. Notes the Australian Long Weekend proposal, a national public holiday held on the second-last Monday in January and never on January 26.
4. Supports the Not A Date To Celebrate campaign and Australian Long Weekend proposal and agrees to be listed as a campaign supporter, including:
    a) Writing to the Prime Minister, the Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians and local federal MPs advising of Council's position and asking them to consider the Australian Long Weekend proposal:
    b) Submits a motion to the Municipal Association of Victoria's State Council inviting other councils to support the Australian Long Weekend, and;
    c) Shares Council's position through its usual communication channels ahead of January 2027.

1. Background

Cr Iwasaki's background:

Merri-bek Council recognises that January 26 is a day of Mourning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and not celebration, as declared by the Aboriginal community on January 26, 1938, the 150th anniversary of British invasion. One Community, Proudly Diverse recognises not just the modern multi-cultural community, but that this land was taken by force and without treaty.

Clothing the Gaps is an aboriginal-led and majority owned social enterprise, B-Corp, and community brand on Sydney Road in Merri-bek. Their Not A Date to Celebrate campaign is widely supported and proposes moving the Australia Day public holiday to the second last Monday in January each year.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

At its September 2017 meeting, Merri-bek City Council acknowledged that January 26 marked the beginning of the British Invasion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and oppression of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is therefore not an appropriate date for an inclusive national celebration. Council does not recognise January 26 as a day of celebration and believe that national identity should be celebrated on a day that is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Council also resolved at this meeting to support the #changethedate campaign.

Merri-bek City Council's 2021 Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Merri-bek recognises that: 'January 26 commemorates the British Invasion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and oppression of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is therefore an inappropriate day for an inclusive national celebration'.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

There are no financial implications arising from this resolution.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

The resolution can be accommodated within existing resources.