



Merri-bek
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday 8 November 2023

Commencing 7 pm

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

Language Link

This is the Agenda for the Council meeting.
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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 6 December 2023 commencing at 7 pm, in the Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg. The next Planning and Related Matters meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 November 2023 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 18 October 2023 be confirmed.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

5. PETITIONS

Nil.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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Pursuant to section 3(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 this report has been designated as confidential because it relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

12.2 CONTRACT 2021-203 MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL'S AQUATIC AND LEISURE SERVICES - PROPOSED VARIATION TO GUARANTEED CONTRACT SUM Y2 2023-2024

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this report has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

7. COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - 13 SEPTEMBER 2023 COUNCIL MEETING

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic
Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council confirms the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 September 2023, provided as Attachment 1, to this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

At its meeting of 18 October 2023, Council resolved to the defer the confirmation of the minutes of the 13 September Council meeting because the minutes as previously circulated did not contain the outcomes of its deliberations in relation to item 7.1 - Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and next steps for Coburg to Glenroy bike route.

The outcomes relating to Item 7.1 were removed from the proposed minutes to ensure that it could not be deemed under Council's Governance Rules, that this item had been actioned by officers following the receipt of the Notice of Rescission.

As the Notice of Rescission has now been determined by Council, this report recommends that Council confirm the proposed minutes for the 13 September Council meeting, provided as **Attachment 1** to this report.

Previous Council Decisions

Confirmation of Minutes – 18 October 2023

That Council defers the confirmation of minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 September 2023 to the next Council meeting.

1. Policy Context

Section 3.9.15 (3) of Council's Governance Rules provides for a Councillor to propose a Motion to rescind or alter a previous resolution of Council, provided the previous resolution has not been acted on.

Section 3.11 of Council's Governance Rules contains provisions which outline the requirements for the keeping and confirmation of Council meeting minutes.

2. Background

At its meeting of 18 October 2023, Council resolved to the defer the confirmation of the minutes of the 13 September Council meeting because the minutes as previously circulated, did not contain the outcomes of its deliberations in relation to item 7.1 - Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and next steps for Coburg to Glenroy bike route, which were omitted as a result of this item being subject to a Notice of Rescission.

As the Notice of Rescission relating to this matter was considered at the Council meeting of 18 October 2023, the proposed minutes for the 13 September Council meeting provided as **Attachment 1** to this report, have be amended to include the previously omitted meeting records and a notation that the resolution for item 7.1 - Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and next steps for Coburg to Glenroy bike route, was rescinded by Council at its meeting of 18 October 2023.

3. Issues

The outcomes relating to Item 7.1 were removed from the proposed minutes as a result of procedural legal advice received by Council officers which stated that the draft minutes would record what occurred at the meeting except in respect of that item that is the subject of a Notice of Rescission. It was advised that the item should be left blank, apart from a note that reads that the item was the subject of a Resolution but a Notice of Rescission has been delivered concerning that Resolution and reference that the Notice of Rescission will appear on the agenda for Council's next meeting.

This advice was provided based on consideration of the requirements contained in Council's Governance Rules relating to Notices of Rescission, which are detailed below:

- Section 3.9.15(5) of the Governance Rules, states that a resolution of Council will be deemed to have been acted on if its contents or substance has been formally communicated to a person whose interests are materially affected by it, including by publishing the proposed Minutes of a Council Meeting on Council's website.
- Section 3.9.15(6) of the Governance Rules of Rules states that the Chief Executive Officer or member of Council staff must defer implementing a resolution which has not been acted on; and is the subject of a notice of rescission which has been delivered to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Sub-Rule (2), unless deferring implementation of the resolution would have the effect of depriving the resolution of usefulness, giving rise to non-compliance with a legal obligation or placing the Council at legal, financial or other risk.

Therefore, in this situation it was necessary to ensure that no decision relating to item 7.1 - Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and next steps for Coburg to Glenroy bike route was published in the proposed minutes. This ensured that it could not be deemed that this item had been actioned by Council officers, following the receipt of the Notice of Rescission.

It is now recommended that Council confirm the proposed minutes for the 13 September Council meeting provided as **Attachment 1**.

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

There are no financial implications associated with the preparation or implementation of this report.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's decision, the confirmed minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 September 2023, will be published on Council's website.

Attachment/s

- 1 [Council Meeting Minutes - September 2023](#) D23/524419



Merri-bek City Council

PROPOSED Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held at the Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre,
90 Bell Street, Coburg
on Wednesday 13 September 2023

The Mayor opened the meeting at 7.03 pm and stated the Council meeting is being held on the traditional country of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and acknowledged them as Traditional Owners. The Mayor paid respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.

Present	Time In	Time Out
Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Adam Pulford	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	Leave of Absence	
Cr Helen Pavlidis	Leave of Absence	
Cr James Conlan	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Lambros Tapinos	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Mark Riley	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Monica Harte	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	7.03 pm	10.37 pm
Cr Sue Bolton	7.03 pm	10.37 pm

OFFICERS

Acting Chief Executive Officer – Anita Curnow
 Director Business Transformation – Sue Vujcevic
 Acting Director City Infrastructure – Greg Rodwell
 Director Community – Eamonn Fennessy
 Director Place and Environment – Joseph Tabacco
 Manager Governance and Strategy – Yvonne Callanan
 Unit Manager Governance – Troy Delia

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Cr Pavlidis was on an approved leave of absence from 14 August 2023 to 24 September 2023 inclusive.

Cr Carli Hannan sought a leave of absence from Council for the period 6 September to 28 September 2023 inclusive.

Motion

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council grant a leave of absence to Cr Carli Hannan for the period 6 September to 28 September 2023 inclusive.

Carried

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

MINUTE CONFIRMATION**Resolution**

Cr Harte moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 August 2023 be confirmed.

Carried

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS**Cr Bolton**

- Acknowledged a community rally to call for accessible tram stops on Sydney Road. The rally will commence at 1pm on Sunday 17 September 2023 from the Wilson Avenue, Brunswick open space, opposite Barkly Square.

Cr Riley

- Acknowledged the passing of Uncle Brian McKinnon on 20 July 2023.
- Acknowledged the passing of Fraser Brindley on 9 August 2023. Fraser was the first elected Greens Councillor to Merri-bek Council.
- Advised that as part of Merri-bek's commitment to supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart and saying yes to truth, treaty and a voice, 'Yes' corflute signs are available for free from Council's customer service centres and libraries.

PETITIONS

Mayor Cr Panopoulos acknowledged the submission of an additional 97 signatures to a petition received at the July Council meeting requesting Council remove unsafe bike infrastructure on Kent Road, Pascoe Vale.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Public Question Time commenced at 7.16 pm.

BERNARD CHONG YOONG WAI - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

This is a statement from the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee (STAC) on item 7.1: the Officer recommendation to rip out protected bike lanes on Kent Road, Pascoe Vale and replace them with an unsafe shimmy. It was adopted unanimously by seven attendees and one proxy at the STAC meeting on September 12, 2023. STAC is absolutely opposed to the removal of the protected bike lanes.

The Committee expresses our profound disappointment at Council officers failing to seek our advice prior to making this decision. Of all stakeholders, we were briefed yesterday - the last to be briefed. This smacks of tokenism at best. What is the point of a Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee if not to provide advice on safe walking and cycling infrastructure decision making?

The Officer recommendations are contrary to Council's policies on active transport and the Council Plan. The Planning Scheme clearly outlines a road user hierarchy that prioritises efficient and safe walking, cycling and the use of public transport over cars. Revisions to the Victorian Planning Provisions explicitly highlight the need to "Design development to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport, in that order, and minimise car dependency". Protected bike lanes are vital for the safety of people riding, and to keep footpaths safe for people walking.

The report identifies significant congestion and poor driver behaviour on Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Valerie Street, centred around the medical centre and sports field. And yet the recommendation is to remove the protected bike lanes that keep people on bicycles out of the most congested areas on the road. While Council plans to build an unprotected shimmy route on back streets, residents will always need to ride down this stretch of Kent Road to travel to and from the medical centre, the shops, the sports field and other destinations. People don't stop needing to go to the doctor just because the bike lane has been removed.

Council are proposing to paint sharrows on the road surface and that riders should use the road in the door zone of parked vehicles. This is very hazardous. If the Kent Road bike lanes are ripped out, the effect of this decision will be profound. It will severely damage Merri-bek's hitherto proud reputation on sustainability. It will undermine plans to build protected bike lanes across the whole state. Because if Merri-bek can't do it - who else can? And it will empower the people who are trying to stop safe active transport - those who want motor vehicles to continue dominating our road space, and who are opposed to sharing our limited space and resources.

It is not only cycling that will be undermined. The problem of congestion and conflict won't go away from Kent Road. It will be moved onto the footpath with pedestrians. This would create hazards for people attending football matches and for vulnerable patients visiting the medical clinic. Some families will return to driving, adding to the congestion.

We are facing a climate emergency. We cannot delay taking strong action on sustainable transport. We have a rising population, and a cost-of-living crisis. Safe cycling infrastructure is vital to meet these imperatives.

The current Parliamentary Inquiry on Vulnerable Road Users heard a large amount of evidence about the need for protected bike lanes. Road safety authorities were alarmed at the number of distracted drivers. 72% of drivers admit using a handheld mobile phone while driving. The majority of drivers admit to speeding.

Merri-bek urgently needs safe protected bike lanes to ensure that all people have the option to ride. Protected bike lanes are also vital to pedestrian safety. Without protected bike lanes, we will see more cycling and e-scootering on the footpaths. The effect on elderly residents will be devastating. Being forced to share footpaths with these devices is intimidating. Thousands are hospitalised each year due to falls, which can happen just by being startled.

Kent Road is an ideal location for protected bike lanes, to ensure that residents are safe on our footpaths. They have helped with traffic calming to protect residents, but clearly more has to be done. Reducing the street width to one lane of traffic is a vital traffic calming measure.

After seeing this report, the majority of members of the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee declare that they do NOT have Confidence that Council will help deliver active transport infrastructure in Merri-bek.

Councillors, please vote to retain this vital piece of infrastructure. Please urgently reaffirm Council's commitment to building a safe, separated bike network. STAC also requests that officers report back on how to restart its ten-year capital works plan on cycling infrastructure, which has clearly stalled.

Bernard Chong Yoong Wai read their statement.

PAULINE CARMICHAEL - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

Good evening, my name is Pauline Carmichael from Pascoe Vale. I hope that tonight's report on the Kent Road trial is considered in its own right. All the past consultation was constrained to discussing various options. The last resolution was to consult with residents, businesses and sporting clubs on Kent Road. This targeted consultation was welcomed because the specific concerns around this specific trial were falling on deaf ears. There has been three petitions since the commencement of the trial adding up to thousands and the local community has been left dumbfounded as to why their voice wasn't being heard. The last two petitions were deliberately not shared on-line to highlight the fact those people signing were genuinely impacted.

There is no doubt the greater Merri-bek community wants and needs our roads and streets to allow for safer cycling. This was heard at the submissions hearing on the Budget, the consultation around the 10 year capital works program and there is currently consultation on the new transport strategy and if you look at the pins placed by people highlighting unsafe roads and streets you will notice none on Kent Road. Some might say that Kent Road pre-trial was less safe than it is now for bike riders.

My points to that argument are:

At the very first engagement session on site I spoke to a prominent member of the Merri-bek bike user group and asked was this section of Kent Road unsafe before the trial. The answer was no and she frequently rode down Kent Road to get to Derby Street for lunch. If there was football on the weekend she would avoid Kent Road and when I asked what about now with the bike lane? She said she would still avoid Kent Road on the weekend if there was sport on.

The average speed was incorrectly published in one of the first officer reports. The speed was from the other end of Kent Road. The actual speed at the trial site was under 40 km/h when the actual limit was 50 km/h. This hasn't changed since the trial and the limit officially dropping to 40 km/h. The volume of traffic has not changed either so whoever came up with the idea it was a rat run was wrong.

There was no advocacy from anyone that the trial area of Kent Road was so unsafe it needed further traffic calming measures. In fact a neighbour requested one additional speed hump a year before the trial and was told NO the traffic survey and speed counts showed it was not required.

The argument of cars roaring down the middle of a wide road is perception not reality.

Bike riders who previously rode on the road and continue to ride on the road were safer pre-trial as there was plenty of space to ride in the car lane and a good distance from car doors. It's not as narrow as Kent Road east or other local roads in Brunswick or Coburg.

Children are still riding on the footpath which is the best place for them as merging out before the roundabout is very dangerous and the lane is too narrow for a parent to ride beside them.

A previous Council report said that 42% more female bike riders rode on Kent Road post-trial. If in fact they were female, because cameras blur images, it equated to 9 over 4 days! Pre-trial and post-trial (other than in total lockdown period) the number of male bike riders dropped by 13%. The total number of riders decreased from pre-trial to post trial by 8%. The number of riders per day post-trial is less than 60 per day and very few children and females. In comparison the number of pedestrians is 6 times more than that per day – approximately 375 per day and close to 50/50 females and males.

Since the trial it is a fact validated by expert road safety auditors that sightlines are terrible, and cars cannot see bikes when turning onto Kent Road from the various side roads and streets. Cars cannot see cars coming from the opposite direction and are forced to wait over the bike lane and often reverse back across the bike lane and pedestrian crossing. These examples have been witnessed by officers and Councillors. Again, not perceived safety risks they are real. I could go on all night, but I want to end on this point. Thousands of vulnerable people have been impacted. Most of them impacted after they get dropped off or exit their cars to go to the doctors. Bike riders are vulnerable road users as well and near misses have been reported from reversing cars from driveways and particularly at the Joffre Street intersection.

I believe it's a human rights consideration. 300m of separation is not keeping anyone safe.

Pauline Carmichael read their statement.

RORY DICKSON – QUESTION - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

How can we ensure the safety of cyclists and other road users without this dedicated lane? Considering the documented instances of dangerous and aggressive driving, such as aggressive refusals to give way to oncoming cars, heated arguments between drivers and cyclists, and reports of sideswiped mirrors and vehicle damage?

At the request of the Mayor, Acting Director City Infrastructure, Greg Rodwell responded:

Council is committed to a 10 Year Active Travel Capital Plan, which includes protected bike lane projects along with a range of other bike and pedestrian infrastructure projects. We also have non-infrastructure based initiatives, like our Ride & Stride program where we work with local schools to encourage safe, healthy travel options for kids. This is part of a multi-dimensional approach to creating safe and sustainable transport options for people of all ages and abilities.

The reports of aggressive driver behaviour and driver frustration on Kent Rd during the trial period have been noted. This has primarily been attributed to the single lane road width which will be reinstated to the original condition if the recommendation is adopted and will not require vehicles to swerve and give way to other oncoming vehicles on the street. Traffic calming devices will remain in the street to help achieve the 40kph speed limit.

Providing a low stress bike route between Glenroy and Coburg continues to be a strategy to facilitate safe, convenient and attractive cycling options for all confidence levels. The recommendation proposes an alternative alignment to the Glenroy to Coburg bike route that is expected to provide safe and comfortable bike riding options for everyone in the area.

MARION ATTWATER - STATEMENT – REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

There were 1,083 responses to the survey that was conducted in April. That consisted of 123 on-site intercept surveys, 82 physical mailout surveys, and 878 responses via the online survey.

The survey was not limited to only those in the immediate vicinity of Kent Road, it was open to all, which was something that we were critical of at the time because we believed that it would enable the Bicycle Users Group to unfairly dominate the survey responses. But it seems that in spite of the open nature of the survey, the overwhelming response via the various questions and open-text fields, is that the bike lanes are flawed and should be removed.

To quote from page 12 of the report which says “While there is some positive data from the Kent Road trial, the strength of the negative responses and challenges identified with trial treatments indicate that less confident bike riders may be better served on an alternative route.” and “When a transport project interrupts regular traffic patterns, it is common for travel behaviours to adjust over time to suit the new network arrangements. However, in this case, ongoing traffic volumes and behaviours that were expected to lessen over the two-year trial period, have instead prevailed.

This unexpected side-effect of the trial treatments also suggests that alternative options to the trial infrastructure should be pursued.” Unfortunately though, it seems that a Councillor or some Councillors, who are disappointed with the results of the survey and the trial generally, have instead suggested that there should be a last-minute contest to see which side can write the most emails and make the most phone calls to Councillors. And that Councillors should base their decision on the number of emails and phone calls that they receive in the days leading up to tonight’s meeting. This seems like a grossly unfair tactic.

I hope that the majority of Councillors will see past this unfair tactic, and instead base their decision on the 1083 responses to the survey that was open to all. Other local councils and VicRoads have removed separated bike lanes because the bike lanes created more problems and safety issues than they solved, which is exactly the situation with Kent Road in Pascoe Vale.

Marion Attwater read their statement.

JEMMA O'DONOHUE - QUESTION - REPORT 7.4 2023-2030 ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

What is Council doing to provide an accessible, welcoming community performance space similar to the Darebin Arts centre as part of this Draft Arts Merri-bek Strategy?

At the invitation of Mayor, Cr Pulford responded:

As part of the agenda item tonight we have created a couple of amendments to ask Council officers to look at how we can create something like the Darebin Arts and Performance centre here in Merri-bek. And also to look at what improvements could be made to Coburg Town Hall due to its proximity to Coburg High School and a formal Heads of Agreement.

SAMANTHA BOND - QUESTION - REPORT 7.4 2023-2030 ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

What is meant by an arts centre in this clause (ie is it just a gallery or workshop space) or whether this includes planning for a much needed Community Performing Arts Centre?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Community, Eamonn Fennesy responded:

The strategy that is before Council tonight talks to a Northern Arts Hub, that is in the area north of Bell Street possibly in Fawkner, Hadfield and Glenroy, we don't have a site listed for that. The intention for that is for an indoor performance space and also the space for creative production.

The size of that facility what it looks like and what the community needs all has to be planned in consultation with artists and the community.

NATALIE ABOUD - QUESTION - REPORT 7.4 2023-2030 ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

Will Council add an extra point to its motion regarding the draft strategy asking that it investigates the quickest way (such as renovating the Coburg Town Hall) to provide such a space for Merri-bek performers and their supporters?

Mayor, Cr Panopoulos responded:

The Mayor noted this question, as it relates to an item being considered by Council this evening.

MARILYN MOORE - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.2 COBURG BLUESTONE COTTAGE COMPLEX REDEVELOPMENT

I am the president of the Coburg Historical Society. Coburg Historical Society is a 51-year-old community organisation with growing membership and is a user of the Bluestone Cottage complex for over 40 years.

We are not here asking for a fourth building. We are questioning the officers recommendation for the area and the budget of a replacement building for our annexe. Resulting from Council's decision to sell the land to the eastern north of our state heritage listed bluestone cottage complex, including the land on which the annexe sits. We were told we could have a new building to replace our current annexe and took the opportunity to hopefully keep our collection safer in better facilities, become more operatively efficient and attract more volunteers who would work in a newer more fit for purpose building, extending open hours to cater for more visitors.

The officer recommendation is for the cheapest option concept one, which is only larger than our current annex because of the DDA toilet. This building will not accommodate our current collection, provide a kitchenette for our volunteers and give us sufficient space for expansion. An extension will be required immediately the building is finished.

The second option is only 140 m² internally and 155 m² outside it gives only 30 m² extra intern space which will be quick quickly used up with new records and new donations. If we have a kitchenette and toilet for the disabled it will be in that one, however we doubt we will be able to fit in any artefact displays or work areas.

Marilyn Moore read their statement.

MARILYN MOORE - QUESTION - REPORT 7.2 COBURG BLUESTONE COTTAGE COMPLEX REDEVELOPMENT

One of our Coburg Historical Society members is an architect. She advises that \$8,000 per square metre is about the current cost per square metre of a high end, bespoke architectural residential project.

Based on the figures for the three concepts mentioned in the Council report she notes there seems to be some considerable discrepancies in the costings. She states If you convert the annex internal sqm and cost of the annex you get the below comparison:

Option 1 - 121 sqm \$435,000 = \$3,595 / sqm

Option 2 - 140 sqm \$597,000 = \$4,264 / sqm (About \$600 more than option 1)

Option 3 (barely mentioned in the Council report) - 192 sqm \$1,497,000 = \$7,796 / sqm (a whopping \$3,532 more than Option 2 and \$4,201 more than option 1)

She makes the observation that the other rates for option 1 and 2 are also high for a commercial project

The question is why are these costs so high and why in particular does option 3 differ so significantly?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Community, Eamonn Fennessy responded:

Thank you for your question, like most Council projects, the costings were prepared by external Quantity Surveyors and respond to the concept plans. The budget also includes appropriate contingencies as like all construction activity across Victoria Council have seen significant cost escalations and material cost increases.

The difference in cost between option 1 and 2 as there are some differences between the concepts, notably the addition of a kitchenette in concept 2.

Option 3 has envisaged additional uses and degrees of occupation and use (and a need for additional levels of ventilation and amenity to support this) that require a higher specification under the building code, resulting in a higher cost per square metre.

Question Time Extension

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Public Question time be extended by 30 minutes at 7.45 pm.

Carried

ERINI PILIPASIDIS - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.9 NAMING OF LANEWAYS

I am from Brunswick, I am the daughter of Pagoni and Stavros Pilipasidis. Firstly I wish to thank you all and the officers recommendation to request the naming of this laneway in honour of my deceased mother Pagoni for her hard work, dedication and major contribution to the community. The name Pagoni is strongly linked to this laneway as it adjoins the 576 Sydney Road, Brunswick premises where Pagoni lived and spent most of her life for countless hours working around the clock in her field in fashion and textiles.

In 1961 Pagoni and Stavros migrated with their two children from Greece to Melbourne Australia on a ship called 'Patris' with no money, and with no English language. The family has been residing in Brunswick since that time in 1961. Brunswick was to become the centre of the Greek community in the 60s 70s and 80s. The community was thriving, and this was perfect for Pagoni as she was a qualified fashion designer and seamstress from Athens, she had plenty of work and was always in demand.

In the 1970s, Stavros and Pagoni purchased and began living with their two children at the 576 Sydney Road premises, which adjoins as I said before with the laneway on Sydney Road. The entrance door to their home is in this laneway which has become a significant part of the family's history and everyday life. It's through this laneway access that the family enters and leaves their home for over 53 years. Pagoni always maintained and kept this laneway clean, as she would say it's part of the family home. It was a perfect location for the family as Stavros's brother Nick was five doors down running his business Greenhill restaurant and function centre. His other brother George was five doors up running his grocery store and his other brother Jim was 100 metres away running his restaurant named Olympic. It was an exciting time for migrants to be in Brunswick, in those days. There were many Greeks, Italians and people from many other cultures everywhere the culture was changing.

In 1971 tragically Stavros had a sudden heart attack and suddenly died at the age of 44 years old, Pagoni was left a widow at the age of 42 years old to bring up her two young children. Despite the trauma of losing her husband suddenly at an early age and being left to raise her young children, Pagoni continued to work very hard in the field of the fashion and textiles industry.

Pagoni was one of the most well known and respected women in the Greek community since migrating to Brunswick in 1961. She worked very hard in her field and provided enormous support and help through her craft as an expert in the field of fashion and textiles to many people in her local Brunswick community as she had successfully graduated from Athens in fashion design studies.

As a fashion designer and seamstress she had a small school of students where she taught dressmaking and fashion designing and she eventually also passed on her passion to her daughter Erini.

Pagoni had extraordinary talents in her field and exceptional designing skills and she was very passionate and really loved her craft. Her contribution in the fashion and textile industry in the local Brunswick community was huge and significant.

She was very humble and had enormous generosity and kindness and with her very patient nature she was always helping people in need in her community.

Pagoni's passion and deep love for fashion and textiles led her to encourage and inspire her daughter to create a worldwide initiative to support the ideals of the United Nations, which was very well received by many Member States in the United Nations System.

Pagoni was instrumental in supporting to create our nation's first fashion TV series promoting and showcasing our local fashion designers and textile industry.

Pagoni died in 2017 and as a migrant woman left behind her a huge legacy and this legacy and hard work for her community should be remembered and honoured for a single mother raising 2 children to have achieved so much and contributed so much to her community.

Pagoni was an eclectic devoted collector of beautiful fabrics. Fabrics were her love and great passion. I am working towards creating a small gallery/exhibition to showcase and tell the story of Pagoni and Stavros's legacy at 576 Sydney Road, Brunswick premises adjoining this laneway were Pagoni lived.

Pagoni and Stavros were heroes as they migrated to Brunswick with no money, no English language with 2 young children and accomplished and contributed enormously to their community and for this reason their legacy should be honoured and they deserve to have this small laneway named after them.

There is further extensive detailed information that can be provided.

Erini Pilipasidis read their statement

MARION ATTWATER - QUESTION - REPORT 7.9 NAMING OF LANEWAYS

Report 7.9 on the naming of laneways seems to be proposing that Councillors give passive endorsement to the continuing use of the 2013 policy on naming places in Merri-bek-Moreland (in dot-point 1 of the officer recommendations). This 2013 policy is so out-of-date that it refers to a Directorate of Corporate Services that was abolished in 2018, and to naming guidelines of 2010 !! The Naming Guidelines or Rules have changed significantly since 2010, and the current version is the 2022 Naming Rules for Places in Victoria. The Naming Rules are a mandatory document

When a member of the public tries to read the 2013 Naming Places in Merri-bek Policy, do you think it is likely that they will end up informed on the 2010 Naming Rules and terminology rather than the 2022 Naming Rules for Places in Victoria?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Planning and Environment, Joseph Tabacco responded:

Each naming project undertaken is carried out in accordance with the 2022 Naming Rules for Places in Victoria. This information is clearly stipulated, and links provided in each element of our community engagement and consultation process (notification letters, public notice, corporate website, Conversations Merri-bek website etc.)

Council continues to adhere to the current policy and as explained continues to make it evident that we are operating in accordance with the 2022 Naming Rules for Places in Victoria.

I can also confirm that Council's existing policy is scheduled to be updated in early 2024. The officer's report on page 167 of the agenda foreshadows what some of the likely recommended changes to that policy will be.

JOHN ENGLART - QUESTION – NOTICE OF MOTION 8.3 COMMUNITY SUPPORT DURING EXTREME HEAT EVENTS

I speak on behalf of Climate Action Merri-bek to support this motion. I just have a question which I have been unable to get a straight answer to. Are any of Council's facilities used for cooling respite power resilient and can continue to provide air-conditioned cooling in the small possibility of power blackouts? Do any of them have solar and battery power to maintain function during severe or extreme heat events during their hours of opening? Have Council considered ensuring power resilience as part of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) operation of Emergency relief centres and to what result?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Community, Eamonn Fennessy responded:

To my knowledge Council doesn't have any backup generators at its facilities.

In relation to Emergency Relief Centres, as we don't have back up power, we would seek a generator via our emergency management arrangements or seek an alternative centre to open if this proved to be an issue in a particular area.

We are looking closely at the forth coming summer and our emergency management planning around that.

We are continuing to explore our needs for alternative power sources and also non fossil fuelled power sources, if that's possible.

BERIS HAMMOND - STATEMENT - NOTICE OF MOTION 8.5 REINSTATE POSTAL SERVICES TO GLENROY

As a resident of Glenroy I am very disappointed by the closure of Glenroy Post Office. The impact of decision has disadvantaged our Aged and Disabled Communities. Particularly those of us who do not drive.

- Access by train to Oak Park LPO - steep incline up Snell Grove, step up to enter premises.
- Access by Train to Broadmeadows LPO - I have been told by Aged gentlemen they will not go up as they feel very vulnerable being in wheelchairs at that shopping centre.
- Access by Bus to West Street LPO - step up to enter premises.

The potential hazard for those in wheelchairs, on walkers and those unstable on their feet to these LPO's is extremely high.

Our Aged Community are not all computer literate so they pay their rates, utility and other bills at the Post Office in person. I have been approached in the Supermarket and the Coffee Shop by very concerned older people telling me how it is going to severely impact them. They can withdraw money - will not / cannot use ATMs - they are totally bewildered by them or they just don't trust them. The potential here is for them to be taken financial advantage of by unscrupulous people.

Beris Hammond read their statement.

WENDY RUSHBY - STATEMENT - NOTICE OF MOTION 8.5 REINSTATE POSTAL SERVICES TO GLENROY

Regarding the post office closure, a lot of the elderly community are computer illiterate and a lot do not drive. How can they manage everything that is usually done at the post office by the staff for them.

Apart from the fact they do not own a computer, most of the community enjoy the social aspect of going to the local post office for who they know and love, and to have a chat with. For some this is the only interaction they have with people outside of their home.

For residents to now have to travel by public transport is so unreasonable, not only the cost but the time it will take them just to do a simple chore is totally unrealistic. I'm speaking from example as my husband needs a walker.

The post office we are being recommended to use is a fair distance away and very unacceptable.

We definitely need a post office in Glenroy, thank you Council for your ongoing support.

Wendy Rushby read their statement.

SONJA RUTHERFORD - STATEMENT - NOTICE OF MOTION 8.5 REINSTATE POSTAL SERVICES TO GLENROY

I am a member of the Save Glenroy Post Office campaign committee. As Merri-bek Councillors you are well aware of the problems associated with Australia Post's decision to close Glenroy Post Office. You have in the past few weeks voiced your opposition to the closure and have written letters to the government authorities, seeking a review of Australia Post's decision. We thank you and now we are seeking your ongoing support for residents in their ongoing campaign for the return of the postal service Glenroy shopping centre.

Just a quick summary of the campaign so far, we've had two well attended rallies, one at post office place the other in at Bourke Street at the Australian Post office headquarters, We have collected 3000 petitions, 101,400 of which were paper the others were online. We collected 153 signed letters to Prime Minister Albanese and we collected 230 signed letters to Australia Post and these were collected in a space of 2.5 hours one Saturday morning.

We delivered these 230 letters to Australia Post at their office in Bourke Street. We received replies to these two sets of letters, the first from Australia Post stating they understood it was not what residents wanted, but that they had made the right decision and that was that. At least they have agreed to meet residents at the Glenroy Hub at a date soon to be decided.

The reply from Prime Minister Albanese was totally unacceptable, the letters that were sent to him were requested him to intervene on the community's behalf but instead he simply sent the letters to Australian Post for them to reply on his behalf. The letter they sent was almost identical to the one that we received from Australia Post previously.

We also consider that Australia Post's refusal to grant a license for the Glenroy Newsagency to operate a postal service is also unacceptable and its reversal of this decision will be part of our ongoing campaign.

The campaign for the return of our postal service continues and we take heart from Sebastopol, who after two years of campaigning regained the return of the service last month.

We urge you to support the motion on this matter later in the evening, thank you.

Sonja Rutherford read their statement.

JULIE HOGAN - STATEMENT – REPORT 7.2 COBURG BLUESTONE COTTAGE COMPLEX REDEVELOPMENT

Coburg Historical Society welcomes the possibility of the new facility.

Full transparency seemed to be lacking in the costing of options in the public report to Council which only showed a breakdown of cost for concept one not for concept two and not for recently costed additional option.

A new report with full costing made public would be more transparent, yesterday we saw the costings and the new concept plans. We are struggling to understand how the costs for a relatively simple project can be so high.

The option presented to Council recently with two buildings is impractical and does not have an understanding of the management of visitors, volunteers and the collection. It could have benefited with direct discussion between our members and the architect.

We understand the concerns the Councillors have around the limited open public hours, volunteers do work many additional hours at the cottage but many more ours of administration tasks such as digitising, cataloguing and researching are often taken home as the cottage environment is unsuitable. Larger facilities would allow this to be done as volunteers could work on site more often. This would eventually flow on to additional opening hours. The concepts show a lot of money to spend and it would be disappointing at the very least to spend the amount shown in concept one and two, and not have a facility that would provide minimal options for anything other than storage.

The phrase "Build and they will come" I think is particularly relevant. A good useful attractive facility will attract more visitors and volunteers, and will be of a long lasting benefit to the promotion and understanding of history, especially our local stories.

Julie Hogan read their statement.

ANNELY AEUCKENS - QUESTION – REPORT 7.2 COBURG BLUESTONE COTTAGE COMPLEX REDEVELOPMENT

Does the Council understand that concept two, without temperature controls and proper ventilation, is inadequate even if the new structure is simply used for storage purposes (which it will not be)?

Not only as a member of the historical society but as a historian and a resident of almost a quarter of a century, I'm really concerned that the history of the area is looked after appropriately and that goes beyond printed records in libraries. It really is about preserving the voice of the community and so I just ask you to regard that beyond the cost of the dollar cost which we all have to take into account, but I think needs to be set aside as I think this is an area that has been relatively neglected by the Council.

Annely Aeuckens read their statement.

JANE HOLROYD - STATEMENT – REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

I'm a parent from Coburg High School's walking and riding sub-committee. Each day 250 teenagers ride to Coburg High School. All up we have 76% using sustainable transport. Just 23% of our students are driven, contrasting to Melbourne's secondary school average where 64% of students travel to school by car. A large factor in Coburg High's record is its location on Merri-bek's safest bike route. The Upfield Path, O'Hea Street and Pentridge Boulevard all offer bike journeys largely separated from vehicles. Not all of our students enjoy this sanctuary.

Our committee recently spoke at the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Road Safety of Vulnerable Road Users. We urged the Government and Merri-bek to fund and build more separated bike infrastructure on their roads. Before the hearing Principal Brent surveyed students. Here's a snippet of their experiences on Merri-bek's roads as relayed by Josh at the hearing. Miro, a year 7, Theo and Josh recounted cars driving dangerously close through roundabouts on multiple occasions. Sage, Year 11 student, reported they were hit by a car that wrecked their bike and also hit them onto the road, saying nobody got out of their car to check on them and drivers even beeped while they were crying and trying to get back on their bike.

People aged between 5 and 18 are nearly 17% of the Australian population, their voices are fairly absent in this evaluation in the Kent Road trial. Of 1083 survey responses only 5 people aged 15 years or under participated, that's less than half of one percent of the survey responses. Many young people walk and ride or want to, it's the way they can get around Merri-bek independently. They are highly vulnerable road users and they need your protection on Merri-bek's streets.

A student who rides to school in Merri-bek is six times more likely to be seriously injured than a kid who lives close enough to the school to walk. Half of people seriously injured riding a Merri-bek are hit on council control streets. These statistics come from Merri-bek's own submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry. The submission shows car-dooring, drivers illegally turning across cyclists are veering into them are common crash scenarios.

Our committee is bewildered that Council would redirect the Glenroy to Coburg bike route via back-street shimmies. Shimmies don't address the biggest risks to the people riding on your roads.

The Kent Road bike lanes should be improved, not removed. Stop compromising on safety, stop asking people who aren't engineers how to design infrastructure for our most vulnerable users, this isn't what consultation is for.

To finish positively your Open Streets program is helping many people reimagine streets so that they can serve more types of people especially our young people and we urge to persist in this vein.

Jane Holroyd read their statement.

Questions and Statements taken on notice

Questions and statements taken on notice may be summarised for the purpose of recording them in the minutes. Full and complete copies are made available to Council officers for responses or information. Responses to questions taken on notice are reported to the next practicable Council meeting.

RORY DICKSON - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

The Kent Road Separated Bike Lane is not just a painted path on the ground; it represents a commitment to a safer, healthier, and more sustainable future for our community. Instead of tearing it up, Councillors should wholeheartedly embrace it and extend its reach through to Derby Street, and onto O'Hea.

Yes, some people have expressed concerns about feeling unsafe in the bike lane, but the solution is not to dismantle it. The key to making it safer lies in enhancing its design and ensuring that it serves its purpose as a dedicated space for cyclists.

The primary reason some cyclists feel unsafe is the presence of cars infringing upon their space - and the lack of a connected, separated cycling network. The answer, then, is not to eliminate the lane but to enforce its separation from cars and make necessary improvements.

Imagine a world where our streets prioritise human lives and the environment over the convenience of cars. A world where children can bike to school or the oval without fear, where families can enjoy recreational rides without risking their safety, and where commuters can choose sustainable transportation options with confidence.

The Kent Road Separated Bike Lane is a vital step towards realising this vision. By extending and improving this bike lane, you are investing in your community's health and wellbeing.

You are reducing traffic congestion by giving people additional transportation options, you are lowering carbon emissions, and you are encouraging physical activity.

You are supporting local businesses by making the streets more inviting for pedestrians and cyclists, increasing foot traffic, and improving air quality.

Please do not be swayed by the voices calling for its removal; rather, you should listen to the growing chorus of advocates demanding safer and more accessible cycling infrastructure.

Please show commitment to the Kent Road Separated Bike Lane, making it a model for how Merri-bek can embrace sustainability, prioritise safety, and build a future that is both eco-conscious and people-centric.

Do not tear down progress, instead refine it so that it works for everyone. Tearing up the bike lanes does not work for everyone. It is time the car-centric folk sacrificed a car park, so that others can move about without having to use a car.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

ANNE RICHARDSON - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

My name is Anne Richardson. I am a Hadfield resident and I regularly use the Kent Road protected bike lanes to visit my partner who lives in Pascoe Vale. I am a regular commuter and recreational cyclist who has lived in the Merri-bek area for all but 3 of my 64 years.

During that time, the increase in the uptake of cycling and the development of infrastructure to support it has been wonderful to see. Although coverage of the current local cycling network is patchy in places (especially for east-west routes, and in the neglected north) it's now possible for me and my adult children to cycle more safely and more often than in the past. But we must continue to build on what we already have. I want my grandchildren to be able to cycle safely too.

There have never been more reasons to encourage people to consider other forms of transport—record levels of congestion and climate-related imperatives to name just two.

Removing the trial infrastructure in Kent Road is a vote for the car in a world where alternatives have already arrived and need to be catered for (such as bikes, e-bikes and scooters), and it flies in the face of what Merri-bek Council says it wants to do in both its Community Vision and its Transport Strategy.

Cycling is great for the environment, a boon for mental and physical health and a cheap way of getting around. People are more inclined to ride where safe infrastructure exists. We must retain the infrastructure we have, and continue to build on it.

Objections by residents to the design of the Kent Road Bike lanes were addressed in a long-running and expensive community consultation process. It would be a travesty to remove them now, not to mention a shocking waste of time and money.

A 2018 study of 'bikelash' (the term used by researchers to define the organised opposition to the installation of bicycle infrastructure), concluded that improvements in the road network for ALL users requires 'carefully planned and tailored engagement, robust design, judicious use of data to answer speculation, attention to wider street network benefits, and active leadership'.

I urge councillors to show some leadership and vote to retain the Kent Road bike lanes.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

ROD CALLENDAR - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

I am a Pascoe Vale resident and I regularly use the Kent Road protected bike lanes to visit the Kent Road shops and the PVH Medical centre. These bike lanes are an important, albeit small, extension to the off-road cycling network. They enable cyclists to ride from the corner of Cumberland Road and Kent Road to the Glenroy train station and shopping precinct, and to the Pascoe Vale train station and shops without going on a road.

Protected bike lanes make cycling much safer for cyclists of all ages and also encourage less experienced cyclists, in particular women and children, to ride. The dangers are real. These bike lanes have been in use as a trial for two years. On average, 22 cyclists are killed in Victoria every two years and MANY more end up with permanent disabilities. About 50% of those killed are on roads with a 60 km speed limit. The bike lanes also make it safer for pedestrians. The new design of the Kent Road lanes has marginally reduced the road width which has had the effect of slowing the traffic, and that, without exception, always makes it safer for all pedestrians, whether they are going to the sports ground or the medical centre on the other side of the road. They make it safer for all, and arguments to remove them are mistaken and misplaced.

There are many benefits to cycling:

- it's a cheaper option than the car,
- it's a way of socialising with friends and family,
- it's a great way to exercise,
- it allows teenagers, adults without licences and people with disabilities greater mobility, and
- It has obvious environmental benefits.

I think the protected bike lanes should not only be retained but should be extended down Kent Road to the Pascoe Vale Primary School which would encourage children to ride to school and the sports grounds. The current trial infrastructure has been achieved at great cost and after much community consultation. Adjustments to the design were made to address concerns, and the end result is an improvement.

Pulling it out is a dangerous and retrograde step. It would disadvantage the entire community (not to mention the Merri-bek of the future) to serve the interests of a those who are unwilling to learn to share the road.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

NICHOLAS ZULL - STATEMENT – REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

My name is Nicholas Zull, I live in Coburg North and I am representing the Merri-bek Bicycle User Group. We are a grassroots volunteer community organization operating in Merri-bek for the past thirty-three years, advocating to improve opportunities for residents who want to get around by bike and share the joy that using bicycles brings.

As you can imagine, BUG are profoundly disappointed with the officer recommendation to end the Kent Road trial and remove the protected bike lanes installed there. While we agree that it is high time this trial ended, the recommendation of Council officers is inconsistent with Council's climate targets, and mystifying in the context of both the resoundingly pro-bike-infrastructure feedback council received on the budget, and the issues reported by officers in this report itself.

The officer report identifies significant issues around poor driver behaviour on Kent Road, observed by Officers, Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre, and those attending football games. It then proposes to place riders in the most dangerous part of the road, the door zone, as they travel through the most congested section of Kent Rd with the busiest parking turn-over.

As I'm sure you know, driver behaviour has deteriorated since Covid, so much so that we are having a Parliamentary Inquiry into it and its impact on vulnerable road users. It's not an issue specific to Kent Road but observed all over Merri-bek and across Victoria. Many of the parents who made submissions and attended the Merri-bek hearing were from the Glenroy and Pascoe Vale area, and spoke of the difficulty in switching some trips to active transport while there was so little protection provided for those on bikes. Officer's expectation that traffic issues might 'settle' within two years needs to be re-assessed within this context. Of course, having safe, protected bike lanes to these local services would be one way of reducing the traffic volumes discussed in the officer's report. The Officer's report found that most riders felt safe in the current version of the bike lanes, with women split roughly 50/50 between it and the earlier version. With marginally more women preferring the style of lane with more extensive barriers, it seems extraordinary that officers would then suggest having no barrier at all!

Issues around maintenance and cleaning of the lanes are of course issues Council could address. We are yet to hear of pedestrian complaints about footpath maintenance resulting in the footpath being removed! As the traffic in this area confirms, this section of Kent Road is an important destination for residents, with the Kent Road shops, Pascoe Vale Scouts, the Medical Centre, and Sporting Clubs and Playgrounds. People won't stop needing to travel here just because the bike lanes have been removed. Those with kids, often on heavier, faster electric bikes will move onto the footpath, which they legally can do, as will disabled riders. Others will move into their cars. None of Council's aspirations to convert local trips to active travel will be realised here.

The proposed Pascoe Vale Shimmy (most of which already exists) may make a useful route for more confident riders to other destinations like the pool etc but it does not help anyone who needs to travel through this contested stretch of Kent Rd to get to the shops, the medical centre or the sports facilities. It is disappointing that Pascoe Vale Health have not expressed any concern for the residents who currently access their services by bike, or might want to do so in the future. The Australian Medical Association Road Safety Policy states that their position is that: 'Motor vehicles should be separated from cyclists through dedicated bicycle lanes for cyclists.' This is available on the AMA's website - [ama.com.au \(https://www.ama.com.au/position-statement/road-safety-2018#\)](https://www.ama.com.au/position-statement/road-safety-2018#) We also know from Monash University research, and Council's own social research more recently, that significant numbers of residents are interested in using a bicycle for some of their local trips.

Protected bike lanes like these on Kent Road that provide a safe route through a busy area to important local destinations are critical to Council ever realising its aspirations to reduce transport emissions and keep people safe. Merri-bek ripping up protected bike lanes in an area with the issues listed in this officer report makes a mockery of those aspirations, and savages the credibility of Merri-bek's claims to be a bike friendly city. We urge you to vote to permanently retain these bike lanes for those reasons.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

DENISE WHIMPEY - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

Please don't remove the Kent Road bike lanes. We need more cycling infrastructure, not less, to make cycling safer in Merri-bek. Council is supposed to be proactive in supporting active transport- this would be a regressive move that will discourage families and women in particular from cycling.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

ASANKA EPA - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

I'm a Merri-bek resident who uses cycling as a means of transport, and I'd like to do it more often, if I could do it safely. I want to let you know that there is support for protected bike lanes, and that it's not just opposition. Promoting safety for cyclists is essential, particularly for more vulnerable groups and inexperienced riders who might want to take up active transport but are deterred by the lack of safe means to get around Merri-bek.

Having cycled along Kent Rd myself, I can say that the lanes aren't perfect, but they are far, far better and safer than nothing. There's been some suggestion in the report that they're not great for bikes; that's solely because they're not as protected as they could be, I guarantee 0% of cyclists would prefer no protection.

The main issue seems to be that they impact traffic flow, but a bigger impediment is that we insist on having 2 lanes of parking taking up nearly half the road. This situation where you have two lanes of parking and one lane where you must give way to oncoming drivers is quite common in Merri-bek, we don't see calls to get rid of double-laned parking to improve flow elsewhere, so I'm not sure why it's only bike lanes, which take up substantially less space, that are being targeted. Other municipalities will often restrict parking to one side of the road to make room for other uses, but it seems we've tried to have it all on Kent Road, if we can tolerate this kind of traffic flow situation elsewhere, we can tolerate it here.

Ultimately, I believe cyclists should be able to get around without risking their lives, even if that slightly inconveniences other users. If not Kent Road, then when and where? You might think that the officer recommendation will be the end of this saga, but another proposal for a Glenroy-Coburg route will be before here soon enough, and the exact same objections will arise, time and time again. If you get rid of one parking lane, which I hope Council does in future projects, because that would resolve flow issues, you'll have opposition to that as well. Ultimately there will be pushback on giving road space to cyclists anywhere and the alternative routes suggested by officers will take years and years to come to fruition- if they ever do, as I fear this sets a precedent to strike down cycling infrastructure anywhere if trade-offs must be made.

I think Council must choose at some point whether it wants to support active transport and safety for all road users, even if that means dealing with some opposition, and I hope you'll keep that in mind not just tonight, and vote against tearing up protection, but also for future projects.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

DAN COLLESS - STATEMENT - REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

I live in Northcote but travel to many different parts of Melbourne for work as a freelancer. I try and ride to every area I am working at and recently Pascoe Vale for work. I ride daily and have done so for many years. I have been visiting Kent Road for work and have to say that the protected bike lanes are not safe by any means. There is a lot of confusion with cars not sure of when to yield or not and I feel actually safer riding on the road than in the bike lane as I am not sure what is going to happen when crossing the side streets as cars have to inch out as they can't see what's coming on Kent Road. I haven't seen this type of infrastructure on such a small stretch of local road, I think it could be useful for longer stretches such as Albert St but is not fit for purpose on smaller roads.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

JOHN ENGLART - STATEMENT – REPORT 7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

The report highlights this is due to poor driver behaviour and maintenance issues.

1. Ripping up the bike lane due to poor driver behaviour would seem to reward that poor behaviour.
2. The alternate preferred shimmy route proposed is indirect, involving more elevation change. It will inhibit cycling between Glenroy to Coburg.
3. Ripping up the separated bike lane will incur substantial reputational loss for Merri-bek's climate, and sustainable transport credentials. This will impact staff moral and make attracting good staff for employment in future much more difficult.
4. More families are using e-bikes locally in the northern suburbs, often used by women and children. These are longer and heavier bikes. Removing the bike lanes may well move these people to using the footpaths (with children they are legally able to ride on footpaths) posing a conflict and increased safety risk to people walking. So you are moving a slight inconvenience to car users to increasing a safety risk to people walking in an area with people visiting a medical clinic.
5. Re-prioritising car use, when we need to do exactly the opposite at this crucial point in time with the climate emergency. We are at a crucial time with climate change accelerating. We need to change transport behaviours, to reduce transport emissions and do so rapidly to meet Council's and state government climate targets. Protected bike lanes do this. Council has declared a climate emergency and needs to take difficult decisions to address this for the general public good.

The Mayor took this statement on notice.

JULIE WEBB - QUESTION – REPORT 7.6 SUMMER 2023-24 SPORTS GROUND TENANCY ALLOCATIONS

I have read the papers below and I would like to clarify that as Campbell Reserve is not on the list of allocated sports groups for summer, does that mean the space is available for community use during summer?

Please explain the basis for the answer.

The Mayor took this question on notice.

HAILEY SOMERVILLE - QUESTION - RAINBOW TICK ACCREDITATION PROCESS UPDATE FOR AQUATIC AND LEISURE FACILITIES

At the 8 February 2017 meeting, Council advised that "officers have been involved in a number of actions in creating welcoming and accessible environments at Council's Aquatic and Leisure facilities, which include initial discussions and review in relation to becoming accredited with the Rainbow Tick."

Could Council please provide an update on the Rainbow Tick accreditation process for its aquatic and leisure facilities, in addition to that for its libraries?

The Mayor took this question on notice.

HAILEY SOMERVILLE - QUESTION - PRIDE IN THE NORTH LGBTIQA+ WELLBEING AND INCLUSION SUMMIT

Is Council participating in the Pride in the North LGBTIQA+ Wellbeing and Inclusion Summit in November?

The Mayor took this question on notice.

LIAM BARWICK - QUESTION - ROAD SAFETY - FAWKNER

Currently the suburb of Fawkner has no fixed speed or red light cameras on any of its streets or roads.

Given Fawkner has Sydney Road as its main feed road into the suburb, why is Council not doing anything about the risk, and high accident rate of Fawkner. Will Council commit to ensuring Fawkner has a safe and proactive road and lights system?

The Mayor took this question on notice.

IRENE GEORGAKAKIS - QUESTION - ELECTRIC COOK TOPS/HEATING EMISSIONS

Can Council explain the Carnot cycle in the thermodynamics and why that indicates that using electric cook tops /heating emits more CO2 than gas tops/heating? And therefore why Council is promoting electric cook tops/heating if they are wanting to reduce CO2 emissions ?

Is increasing CO2 causing climate change and therefore if we reduce our CO2 here will it make any difference by the actions being undertaken/proposed effective?

The Mayor took this question on notice.

CHLOE HOLMES - QUESTION - COMING OUT DAY

Will Council hold an event on Coming Out Day on 11 October 2023 in support of the local LGBTIQA+ community?

The Mayor took this question on notice.

CHLOE HOLMES - QUESTION - AUTHORISATION UNDER SECTION 17 OF SUMMARY OFFENCES ACT

Are Council's Local Law Officers authorised under 56(1) of the Summary Offences Act to initiate action or file a charge-sheet charging an offence against section 17 of the Act?

The Mayor took this question on notice.

Public Question Time concluded at 8.17 pm.

Order of Business Altered

With the agreement of Council, the order of business was altered to consider the reports as follows:

- Council Report 7.1 Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and next steps for Coburg to Glenroy Bike Route
- Council Report 7.2 Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex Redevelopment
- Notice of Motion 8.5 Reinstate Postal Services to Glenroy
- Council Report 7.4 2023-2023 Arts and Culture Strategy
- Council Report 7.9 Naming of Laneways

COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 CONCLUSION OF KENT ROAD SEPARATED BIKE LANE TRIAL AND NEXT STEPS FOR COBURG TO GLENROY BIKE ROUTE

Executive Summary

The western section of Kent Road, between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road in Pascoe Vale, was part of a trial of separated bike lanes in 2021 and 2022. At the August 2022 Council meeting, Council resolved to make changes to the trial infrastructure to address concerns raised by residents and key stakeholders using the street, including patrons of Pascoe Vale Health and Cole Reserve sporting clubs, and extend the trial period to assess the impact of those changes. The resulting design changes were installed in December 2022 and feedback was sought from these parties via multi-channel surveys spanning February to May 2023.

Challenges identified through feedback and evaluation of the trial include conflicts between parking and through traffic, access to the medical centre, resident access, bin collection and bike rider dissatisfaction with some aspects of the lanes. The length of this trial would ordinarily be adequate for traffic volumes and behaviours to settle, however the issues identified early in the trial have instead prevailed. These issues, as well as present and future connectivity to physically separated bike infrastructure, have caused officers to recommend that the Kent Road trial be declared complete, that the separated bike lanes be removed and an alternative route for less confident bike riders be identified for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route.

At its August 2022 Council meeting, Council also resolved that officers would look at alternative alignments for the Glenroy to Coburg bike route. Officers have analysed route options accounting for the needs of less confident bike riders such as low traffic volumes, low speeds, acceptable grades, protection for busier road crossings and protection along sections of higher volume, higher speed road. This has led to officers recommending that Council endorses consultation with the community on an alternative route nicknamed the **Pascoe Vale Shimmy**, which would utilise a small part at the western end of the subject section of Kent Road, with a bidirectional bike lane on the southern kerb and then feed into Valerie Street, through backstreets to the south with appropriate treatments on these low volume roads to reinforce low traffic speeds, help for bike riders crossing busier roads and infrastructure to protect bike riders along O'Hea Street until the route ultimately joins the currently defined Glenroy to Coburg bike route at O'Hea and Derby Streets.

More confident riders may choose to continue to use the Kent Road route, including the section east of Cumberland Road that has been treated with Sharrows (shared lane bicycle symbols) by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), and directly south on the DTP's painted bike lane treatment in Derby Street, ultimately joining the currently defined Glenroy to Coburg bike route at O'Hea and Derby Streets. Officers are therefore, recommending that the subject section of Kent Road features similar Sharrows at the time of the removal of the current trial infrastructure. Officers also recommend measures to calm traffic at the Cornwall Road / Kent Road intersection in addition to proceeding with plans for a zebra crossing with flashing lights outside the Pascoe Vale Health medical centre at the eastern side of Joffre Street.

If approval is provided at this meeting, the existing infrastructure would be removed by end December 2023. As soon as approval is provided for the other Kent Road works, the detailed design will begin straight away and construction scheduled to be underway within 2023/24. Implementation details will be more specifically developed in the report back to Council.

There is \$300,000 allocated in the 2024/25 financial year for new infrastructure and wayfinding to be implemented along with the Kent Road Pedestrian Crossing at Pascoe Vale Health. The cost of removing the trial infrastructure and installing alternative infrastructure works is to be supported by bringing forward part of that \$300,000 into the current 2023/24 financial year.

Officer Recommendation

That Council, in light of survey results not favouring making permanent the Kent Road separated bike lanes:

1. Declares the trial of the Kent Road separated bike lanes complete.
2. Approves the removal of the Kent Road separated bike lane infrastructure along the north (eastbound) side of Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road, and along the south (westbound) side of Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Cornwall Road.
3. Approves consultation with the community on the following proposals:
 - a) To establish and provide wayfinding aids for a Glenroy to Coburg bike route for less confident bike riders by using a **Pascoe Vale Shimmy** route as shown at Attachment 1.
 - b) To implement a range of measures along the Pascoe Vale Shimmy route south of Kent Road to support its use by less confident bike riders.
 - c) To protect less confident bike riders on the short Kent Road section of the Pascoe Vale Shimmy route by installing a separated bidirectional bike lane involving the removal of parking along the south side of Kent Road between Valerie Street and Cornwall Road.
 - d) To modify the Cornwall Road and Kent Road intersection including redesign of the splitter island and kerb outstand on the south side of Cornwall Road so that the bike and pedestrian crossing points are clarified.
 - e) To recognise that more confident bike riders are likely to continue to use the Kent Road route from Cornwall Road to Derby Street, and then Derby Street from Kent Road to O'Hea Street as an alternative way to cycle between Glenroy and Coburg, and therefore provide bike "sharrow" markings on the section of Kent Road west of Cumberland Road in keeping with the Department of Transport and Planning treatment to the east of Cumberland Road.
 - f) To install a zebra crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre.

4. Receives a report before the end of 2023 documenting the community feedback on the proposed Pascoe Vale Shimmy route and treatments along Kent Road outlined in point 3 above, with recommendations on next steps.
5. Acknowledges and thanks the community for their time and effort over the extended two-year trial in both identifying issues and working on solutions, which has provided valuable insight into the application of on-road physically separated bike lanes in the local context.

Motion

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Conlan seconded –

That Council,

1. Declares the trial of the Kent Road separated bike lanes complete.
2. Approves making permanent the Kent Road separated bike lane infrastructure along the north (eastbound) side of Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road, and along the south (westbound) side of Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Cornwall Road.
3. Investigates and implements modifications to the Cornwall Road and Kent Road intersection so that the bike and pedestrian crossing points are clarified.
4. To install a zebra crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre, noting this involves the removal of 5 parking bays.
5. Acknowledges and thanks the community for their time and effort over the extended two-year trial in both identifying issues and working on solutions, which has provided valuable insight into the application of on-road physically separated bike lanes in the local context.

8.42 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting.

8.42 pm Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting.

Lost

Mayor Cr Panopoulos called for a division.

For	Against
Cr Pulford	Cr Bolton
Cr Panopoulos	Cr Davidson
Cr Conlan	Cr Yildiz
Cr Riley	Cr Tapinos
	Cr Harte
Total For (4)	Total Against (5)

Motion

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Yildiz seconded –

That Council, in light of survey results not favouring making permanent the Kent Road separated bike lanes:

1. Declares the trial of the Kent Road separated bike lanes complete.
2. Approves the removal of the Kent Road separated bike lane infrastructure along the north (eastbound) side of Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road, and along the south (westbound) side of Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Cornwall Road.
3. Approves consultation with the community on the following proposals:
 - a) To establish and provide wayfinding aids for a Glenroy to Coburg bike route for less confident bike riders by using a **Pascoe Vale Shimmy** route as shown at Attachment 1.

- b) To implement a range of measures along the Pascoe Vale Shimmy route south of Kent Road to support its use by less confident bike riders.
 - c) To protect less confident bike riders on the short Kent Road section of the Pascoe Vale Shimmy route by installing a separated bidirectional bike lane involving the removal of parking along the south side of Kent Road between Valerie Street and Cornwall Road.
 - d) To modify the Cornwall Road and Kent Road intersection including redesign of the splitter island and kerb outstand on the south side of Cornwall Road so that the bike and pedestrian crossing points are clarified.
 - e) To recognize that more confident bike riders are likely to continue to use the Kent Road route from Cornwall Road to Derby Street, and then Derby Street from Kent Road to O’Hea Street as an alternative way to cycle between Glenroy and Coburg, and therefore provide bike “sharrow” markings on the section of Kent Road west of Cumberland Road in keeping with the Department of Transport and Planning treatment to the east of Cumberland Road.
 - f) To install a zebra crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre.
4. Receives a report before the end of 2023 documenting the community feedback on the proposed Pascoe Vale Shimmy route and treatments along Kent Road outlined in point 3 above, with recommendations on next steps.
 5. Acknowledges and thanks the community for their time and effort over the extended two-year trial in both identifying issues and working on solutions, which has provided valuable insight into the application of on-road physically separated bike lanes in the local context.

Amendment

Cr Conlan moved, Cr Bolton seconded –

That point 6 be added to the motion as follows:

6. **Receives a report before the end of 2023 for options to install on-road protected bike lanes within the vicinity of Kent Road.**

Carried

Motion

Cr Yildiz moved –

That the Motion now be put.

Lost

Resolution

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Yildiz seconded –

That Council, in light of survey results not favouring making permanent the Kent Road separated bike lanes:

1. **Declares the trial of the Kent Road separated bike lanes complete.**
2. **Approves the removal of the Kent Road separated bike lane infrastructure along the north (eastbound) side of Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road, and along the south (westbound) side of Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Cornwall Road.**
3. **Approves consultation with the community on the following proposals:**
 - a) **To establish and provide wayfinding aids for a Glenroy to Coburg bike route for less confident bike riders by using a Pascoe Vale Shimmy route as shown at Attachment 1.**

- b) To implement a range of measures along the Pascoe Vale Shimmy route south of Kent Road to support its use by less confident bike riders.
 - c) To protect less confident bike riders on the short Kent Road section of the Pascoe Vale Shimmy route by installing a separated bidirectional bike lane involving the removal of parking along the south side of Kent Road between Valerie Street and Cornwall Road.
 - d) To modify the Cornwall Road and Kent Road intersection including redesign of the splitter island and kerb outstand on the south side of Cornwall Road so that the bike and pedestrian crossing points are clarified.
 - e) To recognize that more confident bike riders are likely to continue to use the Kent Road route from Cornwall Road to Derby Street, and then Derby Street from Kent Road to O'Hea Street as an alternative way to cycle between Glenroy and Coburg, and therefore provide bike "sharrow" markings on the section of Kent Road west of Cumberland Road in keeping with the Department of Transport and Planning treatment to the east of Cumberland Road.
 - f) To install a zebra crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre.
4. Receives a report before the end of 2023 documenting the community feedback on the proposed Pascoe Vale Shimmy route and treatments along Kent Road outlined in point 3 above, with recommendations on next steps.
 5. Acknowledges and thanks the community for their time and effort over the extended two-year trial in both identifying issues and working on solutions, which has provided valuable insight into the application of on-road physically separated bike lanes in the local context.
 6. Receives a report before the end of 2023 for options to install on-road protected bike lanes within the vicinity of Kent Road.

Carried

Mayor Cr Panopoulos called for a division.

For	Against
Cr Bolton	Cr Pulford
Cr Davidson	Cr Panopoulos
Cr Yildiz	Cr Conlan
Cr Tapinos	Cr Riley
Cr Harte	
Total For (5)	Total Against (4)

RESCINDED

This resolution was rescinded by Council at its meeting of 18 October 2023.

9.11 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting.

9.19 pm Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting.

7.2 COBURG BLUESTONE COTTAGE COMPLEX REDEVELOPMENT

Executive Summary

This project stems from the Council decision to sell the land to create the Coburg Health and Community Services Precinct in December 2021. Officers were directed to commence a subdivision process to excise the Bluestone Cottage complex and the land to its west

from the sale, retaining it in Council ownership, and begin the process of renewing the Coburg Historical Society's lease for the complex.

Subsequent Council resolutions requested that options be explored to refurbish the Bluestone Cottage, build a replacement annex and establish a new garden on the site, and ensure civic centre car parking of up to 18 spaces be established on the retained land.

A Bluestone Cottage Working Group was established in October 2022 consisting of Cr Mark Riley (Chair), senior officers and representatives of the leaseholders, Coburg Historical Society. The working group has met several times to consult on the abovementioned proposed scope of works.

This report sets forth two proposed concepts for the redevelopment of the Coburg Bluestone Cottage complex including heritage restoration of the Cottage and its detached kitchen; establishment of a new annex and establishment of a heritage garden. The establishment of up to 12 civic centre car parking spaces have also been planned for.

The officer recommendation is for Council to endorse Concept 1 as outlined in this report, which includes:

- a) Refurbishment of the existing internal and external heritage fabric of the Bluestone Cottage and its detached kitchen.
- b) Building a multi-purpose annex of 121sqm that is purpose-built to facilitate the storage and display of historical material, is fully dust and damp proof, and includes a DDA-compliant toilet.
- c) Establishing a new historic-themed garden on the site.
- d) Building 12 car parking spaces on the retained land.

The financial impact of the officer recommendation is \$3,230,000.

The existing annex will be removed as part of the site clearance of the Coburg Health Precinct in July – August 2024. This gives Council one year to design and build the replacement annex.

The benefit of this project is that the State listed heritage fabric of the Coburg Bluestone Cottage is restored and conserved as a Council asset.

The Coburg Historical Society will remain as leaseholders of the site, undertaking activities that have a community benefit including continuing to open the Coburg Bluestone Cottage Museum for 10 hours a month, and maintaining its historic collection.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses Concept 1 as the preferred plan for the redevelopment of the Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex project, including:
 - a) Refurbishment of the existing internal and external heritage fabric of the Bluestone Cottage and its detached kitchen.
 - b) Building a multi-purpose annex of 121sqm that is purpose-built to facilitate the storage and display of historical material, is fully dust and damp proof, and includes a DDA-compliant toilet.
 - c) Establishing a new historic-themed garden on the site.
 - d) Building 12 car parking spaces on the retained land.
2. Refers \$400,000 for the cost of design for the bluestone cottage redevelopment to the quarterly budget review process, if surplus funds are available.

3. Refers the packing, storage and moving the collection costs of \$50,000 to the 2024/25 budget development process for consideration.
4. Refers the \$2,830,000 construction costs to the 2024/25 capital works program budget development process for consideration, noting the following breakdown:
 - a) \$300,000 for car parking
 - b) \$1,140,000 for heritage works
 - c) \$1,590,000 for annex & garden works
5. Notes the \$200,000 cash contribution from Coburg Health Hub Pty, the developer of the adjacent health and community services precinct, for construction costs and the additional in-kind support of a Project Manager.
6. Continues to consult with the Coburg Historical Society as the project progresses through design and construction, noting it will be delivered concurrently with the Coburg Health and Community Services Precinct, as set out in the contractual documents for this project.

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Harte seconded -

That Council:

1. **Allocates a budget of \$4,200,000 for the project including the required consultancy fees and contingency and noting the \$250,000 required for carparking has been removed from this total.**
2. **Endorses a revised Concept 2 as the preferred plan for the redevelopment of the Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex project, including:**
 - a) **Refurbishment of the existing internal and external heritage fabric of the Bluestone Cottage and its detached kitchen.**
 - b) **Building a larger multi-purpose annex of at least at least 175sqm to 195sqm if this can be achieved within the allocated budget envelope, that is purpose-built to facilitate a multipurpose meeting and work space, the storage and display of historical material, is fully dust and damp proof, and includes a DDA-compliant toilet and kitchenette.**
 - c) **Establishing a new historic-themed garden on the site.**
 - d) **Building 10 car parking spaces on the retained land.**
3. **Refers \$400,000 for the cost of design for the bluestone cottage redevelopment to the quarterly budget review process, if surplus funds are available.**
4. **Refers the packing, storage and moving the collection costs of \$50,000 to the 2024/25 budget development process for consideration.**
5. **Refers \$3,550,000 construction costs to the 2024/2025 capital works program budget development process for consideration, noting the following breakdown:**
 - a) **\$1,140,000 for heritage works,**
 - b) **\$2,410,000 for annex, site and garden words**
6. **Notes the \$200,000 cash contribution from Coburg Health Hub Pty, the developer of the adjacent health and community services precinct, for construction costs and the additional in-kind support of a Project Manager.**
7. **Continues to consult with the Coburg Historical Society as the project progresses through design and construction, noting it will be delivered**

concurrently with the Coburg Health and Community Services Precinct, as set out in the contractual documents for this project.

8. **Receives a future report on the detailed design and options to reduce construction costs including but not limited to bulk tendering, modular construction and revisions to landscape to stay within the allocated project budget.**

Carried unanimously

8.5 REINSTATE POSTAL SERVICES TO GLENROY

Motion

That Council:

1. Writes to Australia Post Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Paul Graham and the Federal Minister for Communications, Michelle Rowland:
 - a) Informing Mr Graham and Ms Rowland of the deep disappointment and opposition of Council to the closure of Glenroy Post Office on Friday 25 August 2023, expressing significant concern that this decision appears to have occurred without consideration of Australia Post's responsibility as a provider of essential services and assessment of the Glenroy community and the needs of its vulnerable residents.
 - b) Requests both Minister Rowland and CEO Australia Post to meet jointly with Council, community representatives, Federal Member for Wills, Peter Khalil, and State Member for Broadmeadows Kathleen Matthews-Ward, to discuss a review of the situation and the reinstatement of postal services to Glenroy.
 - c) Requests Australia Post:
 - i. advise what provisions are being made for people from Glenroy with mobility challenges to access local Post Offices as the closest post offices Oak Park and Hadfield are not accessible; and
 - ii. provide data on locations and number of accessible Post Offices in the City of Merri-bek.
2. Provides support and assistance to the community campaign to reinstate postal services in Glenroy (up to the amount of \$5,000) to include provision of free meeting space and promotion activities through council's communication channels.

Resolution

Cr Harte moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Writes to Australia Post Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Paul Graham and the Federal Minister for Communications, Michelle Rowland:**
 - a) **Informing Mr Graham and Ms Rowland of the deep disappointment and opposition of Council to the closure of Glenroy Post Office on Friday 25 August 2023, expressing significant concern that this decision appears to have occurred without consideration of Australia Post's responsibility as a provider of essential services and assessment of the Glenroy community and the needs of its vulnerable residents.**
 - b) **Requests both Minister Rowland and CEO Australia Post to meet jointly with Council, community representatives, Federal Member for Wills, Peter Khalil, and State Member for Broadmeadows Kathleen Matthews-**

Ward, to discuss a review of the situation and the reinstatement of postal services to Glenroy.

c) **Requests Australia Post:**

- i. **advise what provisions are being made for people from Glenroy with mobility challenges to access local Post Offices as the closest post offices Oak Park and Hadfield are not accessible; and**
 - ii. **provide data on locations and number of accessible and the locations and number of inaccessible Post Offices in the City of Merri-bek.**
2. **Provides support and assistance to the community campaign to reinstate postal services in Glenroy (up to the amount of \$5,000) to include provision of free meeting space and promotion activities through council's communication channels.**

Carried unanimously

7.4 2023-2030 ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

Executive Summary

The Arts and Culture Strategy 2023-2030 was developed, following extensive community engagement, and is an aspirational, yet deliverable, reflection of the needs of the Merri-bek community. Community consultation on the draft strategy has now concluded with feedback incorporated into the final version provided at Attachment 1.

The new Strategy focuses on making Merri-bek a place where creativity and culture thrive, through three key priority areas of creation, connection and investment. Over the life of the Strategy, five key commitments will be delivered upon, focusing on: increased opportunities for First Nations artists; increased programming in the north of the municipality, a refreshed and flexible festival program; increased access to affordable spaces for artists; and increased public art commissions.

The 2023/24 action plan will be delivered within current budget resources, with some new recommendations referred to the 2024/25 Council budget process for future consideration.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the Arts and Culture Strategy 2023-2030, provided as Attachment 1.
2. Notes that the 2023/24 Action Plan is funded within existing operational budgets.
3. Refers funding recommendations contained in the final strategy for consideration as part of the 2024/25 budgeting process.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Pulford seconded -

That Council:

1. **Adopts the Arts and Culture Strategy 2023-2030, provided as Attachment 1.**
2. **Notes that the arts centre in the North (Fawkner or Glenroy) of the municipality referenced in the Strategy is informed by needs identified in Council's Community Infrastructure Plan 2022, and envisages an indoor performance space and creative production space, subject to future community engagement and planning.**

3. In addition acknowledges community requests a larger performing arts venue in Coburg and receives a future report on how such a facility might be achieved, including options for improvements to Coburg Town Hall or a shared facility with Coburg High School.
4. Notes that officers are working with Coburg High School to explore an agreement on shared use of community facilities including school access to the Coburg Town Hall.
5. Notes that the 2023/24 Action Plan is funded within existing operational budgets.
6. Refers funding recommendations contained in the final strategy for consideration as part of the 2024/25 budgeting process.

Carried unanimously

7.9 NAMING OF LANEWAYS

Executive Summary

In August 2022 Council resolved to receive a report on policy changes required to permit laneways to be named and a process be established for nomination of names from the community.

Naming of roads, features and localities is governed by Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) Naming Rules for places in Victoria - Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022 (the Naming Rules) which provides the process and requirements that names must meet.

Council also is directed by the Naming Merri-bek Places Policy (2013) and the Rights of Way Strategy (2011-2021).

The policy follows the Naming Rules within the local context and outlines how names are assessed, placing emphasis on our diverse culture and the contributions of local persons. The policy does not encourage the naming of laneways or walkways due to resource implications and risks associated with this practice, although it does not prohibit the naming of laneways.

The strategy sets the framework for managing and protecting the right of way (ROW) network and stipulates that ROW (laneways) are not named unless properties or development front them. In order to name a laneway in this scenario, as with all formal naming of roads or features, the name must comply with the Naming Rules.

Laneways are a public thoroughfare between or behind buildings, designed, constructed and intended to provide secondary access to and service at the rear of places of residence or business.

Naming laneways through a universal method exposes Council to risks and resource and financial consequences. Individual naming projects are time consuming (over 80 hours on average per renaming) and involve costs of advertising and consultation of approximately \$5,000 per renaming. Council has hundreds of unnamed laneways across the municipality.

There are also risks involved in renaming laneways. Once a formal address is created, a number of other issues must be considered including access for emergency services, waste collection, surface treatments, signage, lighting, etc.

Due to the risks and resource implications, and the fact it is relatively rare that a compelling reason is put forward for naming a laneway, (such as issues around wayfinding where an address is unclear due to a building's main point of access being on an unnamed laneway), it is recommended to attend to naming enquiries on a case-by-case basis, in situations where a clear community benefit can be demonstrated, rather than apply a blanket approach or invite ideas for naming unnamed laneways from the community.

This report considers three such cases, and makes the following recommendations:

- Kastoria Lane – continue discussions with the State Government naming authority to pursue the naming, subject to caveats about constructing the laneway
- Pagonis Lane – seek more evidence from the submitter to see if a case can be made to rename this walkway
- Sunshine Lane – not pursue naming due to the proposed name being inconsistent with the naming rules.

Officer Recommendation

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. Does not pursue the attempt to formally name 'Sunshine Lane' as it does not comply with Principle J of the naming rules – using commercial and business names.
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.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Davidson seconded -

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.**

Carried unanimously

7.3 HARD WASTE TRIAL OUTCOMES AND SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

The community was consulted on hard waste collections as part of the Kerbside Waste Reform consultation process from July 2020 to September 2021. This consultation found that 65 per cent of survey respondents indicated support for booked hard waste collections.

On 8 December 2021, Council resolved to trial a booked hard waste collection in 2022 and subsequently in May 2022, approved a contract variation to allow a 12-month period of booked collections in 2022/23 to be compared with the 2021/22 year of municipal-wide (or blanket) collections.

During the trial, properties paying the waste charge were permitted up to two collections of 1 cubic metre or one collection of 2 cubic metres per year. For comparison, the two scheduled collections in 2021/22 each permitted up to 1 cubic metre of hard waste.

The measures of success of the trial were tonnes of waste to landfill, tonnes of waste diverted to recycling or reuse streams, total cost of service (including collection costs and disposal costs) and community satisfaction. Through the trial it was also identified that reports of dumped rubbish were mistakenly made when booked waste was put out, and so the tonnes of dumped rubbish have also been included in the trial analysis.

The trial produced the following outcomes:

- Waste to landfill was reduced from 4,858 tonnes to 1,218 tonnes, or by 75 per cent.
- Diverted waste was reduced from 529.34 tonnes to 478.22 tonnes, representing a small increase in diversion rate from 6.3 per cent to 8.9 per cent.
- Waste to landfill from dumped rubbish increased from 984 tonnes to 1,172 tonnes.
- When taken together, waste to landfill from hard waste and dumped rubbish reduced from 5,842 tonnes to 2,390 tonnes, or by 60 per cent.
- The cost to collect hard waste and dispose of both hard waste and dumped rubbish was reduced from \$1,744,623.00 to \$1,270,986, a \$476,636 saving.

- Service users were surveyed and their satisfaction levels exceeded expectations at 88 per cent over 21,701 bookings, with 40 per cent satisfied and 48 per cent very satisfied.
- A more general community survey suggested 78 per cent of residents were aware of the booked service and 43 per cent have used the service. This compares to a participation rate of 30 per cent of properties paying the waste charge.

In light of the significant reduction in waste to landfill and associated lower cost of hard waste service, slightly improved diversion rates and high levels of satisfaction from service users, officers recommend moving permanently to a booked hard waste service. A report will be brought to the October 2023 meeting of Council recommending the award of a contract for the ongoing hard waste collection service model.

The reduced costs of the booked hard waste service will mean savings in the waste charge. Any credits from 2023/24 will be used to offset future year waste charges, and the budget will be set to accommodate the lower costs of the booked service compared to the municipal-wide service in future years.

Council officers recommend a booked service model that ensures clear and consistent messaging for the collection method especially for hard-to-reach audiences. Once the ongoing solution is determined, a community education campaign will be developed to grow awareness of why Council has moved to this service and how to use it. A booked collection service will allow a tailored behaviour change approach to better enable the community to reduce waste to landfill.

There remains a minority of residents (and people from outside Merri-bek) keen on the 'scavenger' benefits of the previous municipal-wide collection model. However, online and community-led initiatives for the promotion of reusable goods are considered more appropriate approaches to glean the benefits of reuse opportunities rather than doing so through a municipal-wide collection that produces considerably higher waste to landfill and imposes unnecessary costs on those paying the waste charge.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. In light of the success of the booked hard waste trial, adopts ongoing, a booked hard waste collection service for properties paying a kerbside waste charge of up to 2 cubic metres per financial year, either through one collection of up to 2 cubic metres or two collections of up to 1 cubic metre each.
2. Adopts a service model that includes a 'fee for service' hard waste collection option on a cost recovery basis for properties whose kerbside waste services are not provided by Council and for those with the service seeking additional collections after using their 2 cubic metre allowance in a financial year, with the fee included in Council's annual 'fees and charges' and a maximum for any property of 4 cubic metres per financial year.
3. Endorses the enhancement of community awareness and education programs about the hard waste service with a focus on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community members, older people and people with disability and people without ready access to digital communications, funded as part of the education programs within the waste charge.
4. Continues to actively promote ways to reduce waste as well as opportunities to rehome / repair goods to keep them circulating at their highest value (e.g. Rotary Inner Melbourne Emergency Relief Network (RIMERN), charitable organisations, garage sales and repair cafes).

Resolution

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council:

1. In light of the success of the booked hard waste trial, adopts ongoing, a booked hard waste collection service for properties paying a kerbside waste charge of up to 2 cubic metres per financial year, either through one collection of up to 2 cubic metres or two collections of up to 1 cubic metre each.
2. Adopts a service model that includes a 'fee for service' hard waste collection option on a cost recovery basis for properties whose kerbside waste services are not provided by Council and for those with the service seeking additional collections after using their 2 cubic metre allowance in a financial year, with the fee included in Council's annual 'fees and charges' and a maximum for any property of 4 cubic metres per financial year.
3. Endorses the enhancement of community awareness and education programs about the hard waste service with a focus on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community members, older people and people with disability and people without ready access to digital communications, funded as part of the education programs within the waste charge.
4. Continues to actively promote ways to reduce waste as well as opportunities to rehome / repair goods to keep them circulating at their highest value (e.g. Rotary Inner Melbourne Emergency Relief Network (RIMERN), charitable organisations, garage sales and repair cafes).

Carried unanimously

The order of business was altered and Report 7.4 2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy was considered fourth after Notice of Motion 8.5.

Time Extension**Resolution**

Cr Riley moved, Cr Harte seconded -

That the Council meeting be extended by 30 minutes at 9.55 pm.

Carried

7.5 DRAFT ALLOCATION AND USE OF SPORTING FACILITIES, GROUNDS AND PAVILIONS POLICY**Executive Summary**

Council's Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy 2016 provides a framework for the annual and seasonal allocation of sporting grounds and pavilions to clubs through a tenancy agreement.

Annual and seasonal (Winter) allocations open in January, close in February, and are reported to the March Council Meeting for consideration annually. At the 9 March 2022 Council meeting, Council endorsed the proposed allocations and requested that a review of the existing policy be undertaken in 2022.

In August 2022, the Victorian State Government released the 'Fair Access Policy Roadmap' which includes requirements all Councils must adhere to in order to be eligible to receive grant funding. At its 14 September 2022 Council also resolved to review its policies regarding trans and gender diverse inclusion, anti-discrimination, and diversity and inclusion. These recent decisions and other factors have been considered in a review of the Allocations and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy (the Policy).

At the 12 October 2022 Council Meeting, Council approved the release of a discussion paper on the allocation policy for stakeholder engagement. The discussion paper provided key points of consideration to ensure Council continues to meet obligations across various policy drivers and provides suggested policy conditions to be incorporated into a new policy.

Throughout November 2022 Council Officers engaged with sports club executives, members, State Sporting Associations, residents and Council committees and reference groups. Consultation highlighted the diversity in the community between club members and residents. Residents are sending a clear message that clubs need to value and work with the community and viewed many of the proposed policy conditions as non-negotiables for clubs to have the right to use facilities, whilst club members are not wanting Council to burden already overworked volunteers.

A further round of targeted engagement with Sporting Clubs occurred during June – early August 2023. Conversations Merri-bek remained open during this period for feedback.

In acknowledging the time, effort and resources required of volunteers and recognising that the Merri-bek sporting community is recovering from the many challenges faced throughout the pandemic, the Policy has been simplified and revised to focus on four policy objectives:

- Promoting healthy and safe local environments.
- Encouraging inclusivity of all people.
- Championing gender equity and development pathways.
- Demonstrating good governance.

Council officers will continue to work closely with clubs and associations with a core focus on providing training, support and resources for successful Policy implementation.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the outcomes of Phase 1 and 2 consultation that has informed the Draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy and thanks sports clubs, state sporting associations, residents and others involved for their participation.
2. Endorses the Draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy for public exhibition for 15 business days.
3. Receives a further report and final Policy in December 2023.

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Pulford seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the outcomes of Phase 1 and 2 consultation that has informed the Draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy and thanks sports clubs, state sporting associations, residents and others involved for their participation.**

2. **Endorses the Draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy for public exhibition for 15 business days.**
3. **Receives a further report and final Policy in December 2023.**

Carried unanimously

7.6 SUMMER 2023-24 SPORTS GROUND TENANCY ALLOCATIONS

Executive Summary

Council has a long-standing commitment in providing its community with sporting and recreational facilities and opportunities, encouraging them to stay active to improve their health and wellbeing outcomes.

Council's Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy 2016 (the Policy) provides a framework for the annual and seasonal allocation of sporting grounds and pavilions to clubs through a tenancy agreement.

In line with the Policy, facilities are allocated to clubs with sound governance structures, open membership for men, women and juniors, and a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility, including participation in club development programs.

13 summer seasonal tenancy applications were received from clubs and all requests can be accommodated. This report also provides an update on progress of each club's junior and female participation levels. Several clubs are still in the process of submitting their compliance documentation which is required prior to receiving their summer 2023-24 sports ground seasonal allocation.

An updated Draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy is separately recommended for public exhibition at the September 2023 Council meeting.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Allocates sports grounds and pavilions for the 2023-24 summer season to the clubs nominated in Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Notes that any club owing ground or pavilion fees from previous seasons, or with outstanding utility fees, will not be offered summer 2023-24 ground allocation until payment is made, or an agreed payment plan is in place.
3. Notes that clubs will be required to provide all compliance documentation prior to receiving their summer 2023-24 sports ground seasonal allocation, including compliance documents.
4. Authorises the Director Community to make any necessary changes to the allocation of facilities for the 2023-24 summer season and to inform Council of any changes.
5. Notes current proposed junior and female participation levels in Attachment 1 at sports clubs contained within this Summer 2023-24 Sports Ground Allocations report.

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Davidson seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Allocates sports grounds and pavilions for the 2023-24 summer season to the clubs nominated in Attachment 1 to this report.**
- 2. Notes that any club owing ground or pavilion fees from previous seasons, or with outstanding utility fees, will not be offered summer 2023-24 ground allocation until payment is made, or an agreed payment plan is in place.**
- 3. Notes that clubs will be required to provide all compliance documentation prior to receiving their summer 2023-24 sports ground seasonal allocation, including compliance documents.**
- 4. Authorises the Director Community to make any necessary changes to the allocation of facilities for the 2023-24 summer season and to inform Council of any changes.**
- 5. Notes current proposed junior and female participation levels in Attachment 1 at sports clubs contained within this Summer 2023-24 Sports Ground Allocations report.**

Carried unanimously

7.7 SHORT-STAY ACCOMMODATION - ESTIMATES AND OPTIONS

Executive Summary

Short-stay accommodation is commonplace across Australia, and internationally. In Victoria it is more prevalent in coastal communities and other areas that have a strong tourism economy. This is part of a worldwide technology-driven phenomenon that has taken place in the last 15 years which has led to concerns both about amenity and safety in communities as well as the impact on long-term rental markets. It is estimated that short-stay accommodation in Merri-bek represents about 0.2% of dwelling stock, with numbers in the hundreds. In coastal and other tourism-focused localities, numbers of dwellings used for short-stay accommodation are in the thousands.

This report outlines Victorian and Australian examples of regulation introduced for the short stay accommodation sector. Options for a regulatory response in Merri-bek are explored pointing to the limited scope of local government to impact the prevalence of short stay accommodation in their municipalities. Examples of Victorian Councils that have introduced a local law demonstrate that it has been implemented as a way of managing amenity issues. Differential rates and changes to the planning scheme are not considered to be an option that could be lawfully pursued.

Council's focus on advocating for the delivery of more affordable housing, the implementation of its Affordable Housing Action Plan, continuing to support Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd and proposing mandatory affordable housing requirements for the Brunswick Activity Centre are all considered to be more effective levers for improving the supply of affordable housing in Merri-bek.

Indications that the state government may soon introduce statewide legislation regarding short stay accommodation mean that a further update report is proposed by February 2024, at which time further advice can be provided about the ability to pursue a local law.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes this report as an overview of the complex set of issues around short stay accommodation; its prevalence; its impact on the long-term rental market and regulatory responses in other Victorian municipalities and some interstate areas.
2. Notes the advocacy that the Municipal Association of Victoria has undertaken in relation to regulation of short-stay accommodation and the advocacy and action that Council has undertaken in relation to affordable housing delivery.
3. Receives a further report by February 2024 which updates Council on planning and regulatory policy reform related to housing and based on this reform, outlines any options and legal barriers in relation to a local law for short stay accommodation.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes this report as an overview of the complex set of issues around short stay accommodation; its prevalence; its impact on the long-term rental market and regulatory responses in other Victorian municipalities and some interstate areas.**
2. **Notes the advocacy that the Municipal Association of Victoria has undertaken in relation to regulation of short-stay accommodation and the advocacy and action that Council has undertaken in relation to affordable housing delivery.**
3. **Supports in principle levying a fee and applying a cap on the total number of days per year a property can be used for short stay accommodation and receives a further report by February 2024 which updates Council on planning and regulatory policy reform related to housing and based on this reform, outlines any options and legal barriers in relation to a local law for short stay accommodation.**

Carried

7.8 PARKLET PROGRAM REVIEW

Executive Summary

Over the last few years, Council's Parklet Program has evolved from a small-scale initiative which trialled turning car parks into temporary public seating areas, into a far-reaching program with multiple types of parklets, focussed on supporting local hospitality businesses to expand their outdoor dining capacity.

Adopted in 2017, the initial Parklet Program offered businesses two options: a short-term option which allowed them to lease a parklet kit from Council for a six-month trial period, and a long-term option to supply their own parklet and pay an annual fee to lease the car parking space.

Parklet permit applications increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when density limits were imposed by the State Government. During this period, Council provided economic support to these businesses through fee reductions and waivers. The demand for both short and long-term parklets has declined significantly since density limits were lifted.

Short term parklets were initially implemented as a low-commitment way to test the idea. They allowed hospitality businesses to trial whether a parklet could work for them before deciding whether to invest in a long term parklet. Now that parklets are well understood and have had significant take-up, the need for the short-term parklets has dissipated. The kits that made up the short-term parklets are now at the end of their useful life and they have been dismantled. Any elements that could be salvaged, such as planter boxes, have been returned to Council's Operations Centre and will be reused on other Council projects. No new applications to lease short-term parklets have been received in the last 18 months. Officers therefore recommend that we now discontinue the short-term stream of the Parklet Program.

Despite some reduction in demand, the long-term stream of the Parklet Program is still valued by individual hospitality businesses, and we recommend that this program continues. It is a low cost to Council as the assets are owned and maintained by businesses.

In addition to the initial Parklet Program, Council's Outdoor Dining and Activation Program made use of State Government funding to provide Council-owned timber structures or planter boxes for temporary outdoor dining areas during the pandemic. These parklets were only ever intended for short term use, and most have now been removed as they deteriorated, became damaged, were no longer required, or were unsafe.

Four large timber temporary structures remain in the car parking spaces at the southern end of Lygon Street, which are still in use for outdoor dining. These are also now coming to the end of their useful life. We recommend that they remain in place until June 2024 to give business owners time to transfer over to the Parklet Program (long-term stream), if this is something they wish to do.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the proposed revisions to the Parklet Program set out in this report, namely discontinuing the short term parklets, and continuing the long term parklets whilst there is ongoing demand.
2. Endorses the extension of the Council-owned outdoor dining temporary structures in Lygon Street and waives parklet permit fees for the relevant businesses using this structure, to 30 June 2024.
3. Following this extension, endorses the removal of the Council-owned outdoor dining temporary structures in Lygon Street, and provides support to individual businesses who wish to transfer to the long term parklet program in this part of Lygon Street, to do so.

Resolution

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Yildiz seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses the proposed revisions to the Parklet Program set out in this report, namely discontinuing the short term parklets, and continuing the long term parklets whilst there is ongoing demand.**
2. **Endorses the extension of the Council-owned outdoor dining temporary structures in Lygon Street and waives parklet permit fees for the relevant businesses using this structure, to 30 June 2024.**
3. **Following this extension, endorses the removal of the Council-owned outdoor dining temporary structures in Lygon Street, and provides support to individual businesses who wish to transfer to the long term parklet program in this part of Lygon Street, to do so.**

Carried unanimously

The order of business was altered and Report 7.9 Naming of Laneways was considered fifth after Report 7.4.

7.10 REVISED STREET NUMBERING POLICY

Executive Summary

The purpose of this policy is to seek Council endorsement of a revised street numbering policy, shown at Attachment 1.

The current street numbering policy was endorsed by Council in June 2022. The next review is not due until April 2024. However, due to the need to reflect the revised Geographical Naming Victoria (GNV) Naming rules for places in Victoria – Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022 (the Rules), the policy has been reviewed and revised.

The proposed changes that are incorporated in the updated Street Numbering Policy include:

- Clearly specifying that street numbering will be undertaken in accordance with the Rules which specify that all street numbering should be in accordance with the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4819:2011 Rural and urban addressing (the Standard);
- Removal of procedural detail from the policy, which is detailed in the Rules and the Standard, with this detail part of Council's Street Numbering Procedure; and
- Added details of a one-off payment to be made to property owners when Council compulsorily renumbers a property.

Officer Recommendation

That Council adopts the revised Street Numbering Policy, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council adopts the revised Street Numbering Policy, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Carried unanimously

7.11 PROPOSED SALE OF LAND - 2 SPRY STREET, COBURG NORTH

Executive Summary

In 2018, Council purchased the land at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North to provide new open space, improve access and increase the vegetation buffer along the Merri Creek.

The site measured 4,364 square metres, zoned General Residential Zone 1 and is covered by a Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO), Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) and an Erosion Management Overlay (EMO). The site also had a dated, single storey dwelling.

Since its purchase, in accordance with Council's resolution of August 2018, the house has been subdivided from the rest of the site creating an 857m² lot which includes the dated house, an easement was created on the reserve providing carriageway easement rights for the owner of the dwelling to access and maintain the large retaining wall and part of the site was added to the road reserve to improve vehicular movement as showing in **Attachment 1**.

On the remaining 3,507 m², a DDA compliant elevated platform path has been constructed connecting Spry St to the creek. The path was opened to the public in December 2022.

Council's Building Maintenance Unit have recently been onsite and have identified upgrades worth over \$350,000 needed to the dwelling. Structural repairs may also be necessary: a structural engineer's report would be required to identify the costs of any structural repairs. The land on which the dwelling sits was not required to achieve the open space, access, environmental and biodiversity benefits of the site, which have now been realised.

The purpose of this report is therefore to seek endorsement from Council to commence the statutory process in accordance with Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* seeking formal feedback from the community on the proposed sale of the dwelling at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North. A further report will outline submissions received during the proposed consultation period, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee and presenting a recommendation regarding whether or not to proceed with the proposed sale of the site.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that the acquisition of land at 2 Spry Street Coburg has provided significant community benefit in the form of new open space, better access to the Merri Creek and improved vegetation of the creek corridor.
2. Confirms its previous resolution to declare the remaining 857m² of the site, being the subdivided house at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North, surplus to its requirements.
3. Notes that the dwelling needs costly repairs, has no identified Council use, and is unlikely to be of interest to social or affordable housing providers due to its relatively poor location, and the significant level of investment needed.
4. Notes that if Council were to consider retaining the site for a non-open space use, this would require identifying a separate budget in order to return funds to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund (Open Space Reserve) with which this site was purchased.
5. Resolves, in accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, to authorise that public notice be given of its intention to sell the site in *The Age* newspaper, on Council's official website as well as Council's Conversations Merri-bek website and a sign erected on the site inviting written submissions.
6. Appoints Councillor _____ as Chair, and Councillors _____, _____, and _____ to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the proposed sale of land.
7. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to sell the subdivided house of the land at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North.
8. Receives a further report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee (if any) and presenting a recommendation regarding whether or not to proceed with the proposed sale.

Resolution

Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Harte seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes that the acquisition of land at 2 Spry Street Coburg has provided significant community benefit in the form of new open space, better access to the Merri Creek and improved vegetation of the creek corridor.**

2. Confirms its previous resolution to declare the remaining 857m² of the site, being the subdivided house at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North, surplus to its requirements.
3. Notes that the dwelling needs costly repairs, has no identified Council use, and is unlikely to be of interest to social or affordable housing providers due to its relatively poor location, and the significant level of investment needed.
4. Notes that if Council were to consider retaining the site for a non-open space use, this would require identifying a separate budget in order to return funds to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund (Open Space Reserve) with which this site was purchased.
5. Resolves, in accordance with section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020, to authorise that public notice be given of its intention to sell the site in The Age newspaper, on Council's official website as well as Council's Conversations Merri-bek website and a sign erected on the site inviting written submissions.
6. Appoints the Ward Councillors and Cr Pulford as Chair to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the proposed sale of land.
7. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to sell the subdivided house of the land at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North.
8. Receives a further report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee (if any) and presenting a recommendation regarding whether or not to proceed with the proposed sale.

Carried unanimously

10.09 pm Cr Tapinos left the meeting.

7.12 PROPOSED ROW DISCONTINUANCE AND SALE ADJOINING 47 & 45 CLARENCE STREET BRUNSWICK EAST

Executive Summary

Council received a request from the incoming owners of 47 Clarence Street, Brunswick East to acquire a section of Right of Way (ROW) road adjoining and enclosed within the property, shown in blue in Attachment 1. This section of right of way has been enclosed within the property of 47 Clarence Street for more than 30 years, providing the property owner with long user rights.

Initial investigations and consultation uncovered another section of right of way is enclosed at the rear of 45 Clarence Street, Brunswick East also. Part of this section of ROW has been occupied for more than 30 years also, shown in orange in Attachment 1. Another small section has been occupied by a shed for only the last 1-2 years, shown in yellow in Attachment 1. The owner of 45 Clarence Street also expressed an interest in purchasing the sections currently occupied at the rear of their property.

The initial consultation with the other adjoining property owners found one neighbour is not supportive of discontinuing the section that has been recently occupied by the shed. This section slightly abuts approximately 50 cm their property fence. They stated that the section containing the new shed, reduces access to their asbestos containing fence. This party will be notified of the statutory consultation as an adjoining property owner, and will have the opportunity to make a submission and to further outline their concerns should the wish.

Internal consultation has been undertaken and the subject section of road is considered to be no longer reasonably required for municipal use and is surplus to Council's needs.

The purpose of this report is to commence the Statutory Process under the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government Act 2020* to discontinue the enclosed sections of road and sell the resultant land.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Commences the statutory procedures to discontinue and sell the resultant land adjoining 47 Clarence Street, Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street, Brunswick East, in accordance with Section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
2. Gives public notice of the proposed discontinuance in accordance with section 223 and 207A of the *Local Government Act 1989* and Section 114, clause 2 of the *Local Government Act 2020* in The Age newspaper and on Council's website and invite written submissions from Monday 25 September 2023 until Wednesday 25 October 2023. The notice will state that Council proposes to sell the land to the adjoining owners of 47 Clarence Street, Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street, Brunswick East in accordance with Council's Rights of Way Associated Policies 2011 and the Rights of Way Strategy 2011.
3. Appoints Councillor _____ as Chair, and Councillors _____, and _____ to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission.
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to discontinue and sell the resultant land adjoining 47 Clarence Street Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street Brunswick East.
5. Receives a further report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee and presenting a recommendation regarding whether to proceed with the proposal to discontinue the road, or part of the road adjoining 47 Clarence Street Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street Brunswick East.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council:

1. **Commences the statutory procedures to discontinue and sell the resultant land adjoining 47 Clarence Street, Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street, Brunswick East, in accordance with Section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1989 and Section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020.**
2. **Gives public notice of the proposed discontinuance in accordance with section 223 and 207A of the Local Government Act 1989 and Section 114, clause 2 of the Local Government Act 2020 in The Age newspaper and on Council's website and invite written submissions from Monday 25 September 2023 until Wednesday 25 October 2023. The notice will state that Council proposes to sell the land to the adjoining owners of 47 Clarence Street, Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street, Brunswick East in accordance with Council's Rights of Way Associated Policies 2011 and the Rights of Way Strategy 2011.**

3. **Appoints Cr Riley as Chair, and South Ward Councillors to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission.**
4. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to discontinue and sell the resultant land adjoining 47 Clarence Street Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street Brunswick East.**
5. **Receives a further report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee and presenting a recommendation regarding whether to proceed with the proposal to discontinue the road, or part of the road adjoining 47 Clarence Street Brunswick East and 45 Clarence Street Brunswick East.**

Carried

Cr Bolton called for a division.

For	Against
Cr Davidson	Cr Bolton
Cr Yildiz	
Cr Pulford	
Cr Panopoulos	
Cr Conlan	
Cr Riley	
Cr Harte	
Total For (7)	Total Against (1)

10.12 pm Cr Tapinos returned to the meeting.

7.13 2022/23 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS

Executive Summary

Council's Financial and Performance Statements (the Statements) for the 2022/23 financial year have been prepared and reviewed by the Victorian Auditor General Offices appointed auditor, RSD Audit and Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee.

This report seeks Council's 'in principle' approval of the Statements and the appointment of two Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer to sign the 2022/23 Statements in their final form.

Council is reporting an accounting surplus of \$40.936 million for the financial year 2022/23. This accounting surplus includes items such as non-cash contributions, capital grants, loan redemptions and committed capital or operational expenditure for future years.

After excluding non-cash items included in the accounting surplus, capital expenditure and committed funding requirements, Council had an unrestricted surplus of \$1.761 million.

It is recommended that Council commits the unrestricted surplus of \$1.761 million to:

- a) \$1.0 million to Significant Projects Reserve; and
- b) The remaining \$0.761 million to the capital works program, as a contingency allowance due to continuous cost escalations. The use of the contingency allowance would be subject to normal financial delegations.

Officer Recommendation

That Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, and having considered Council's Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 Statements at Attachments 1 and 2 to this report:

1. Approves 'in principle' the Financial and Performance Statements 2022/23;
2. Authorises the Mayor, Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson, and the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Anita Curnow, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 in their final form;
3. Notes the unrestricted surplus of \$1.761 million transfers:
 - a) \$1.0 million to the Significant Projects Reserve; and
 - b) \$0.761 to the capital works program as a contingency allowance.
4. Carries forward the \$723,565 of tied grant funding or contributions that were not spent as at 30 June 2023;
5. Carries forward the \$54,846 of operating projects into the 2023/24 Operating Projects Expenditure Program;
6. Carries forward the \$28.686 million of capital project funds into the 2023/24 Capital Works Program;
7. Carries forward the \$0.535 million of capital project funds into the 2024/25 Capital Works Program; and
8. Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 if recommended by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Davidson seconded -

That Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, and having considered Council's Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 Statements at Attachments 1 and 2 to this report:

1. **Approves 'in principle' the Financial and Performance Statements 2022/23;**
2. **Authorises the Mayor, Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson, and the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Anita Curnow, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 in their final form;**
3. **Notes the unrestricted surplus of \$1.761 million transfers:**
 - a) **\$1.0 million to the Significant Projects Reserve; and**
 - b) **\$0.761 to the capital works program as a contingency allowance.**
4. **Carries forward the \$723,565 of tied grant funding or contributions that were not spent as at 30 June 2023;**
5. **Carries forward the \$54,846 of operating projects into the 2023/24 Operating Projects Expenditure Program;**
6. **Carries forward the \$28.686 million of capital project funds into the 2023/24 Capital Works Program;**
7. **Carries forward the \$0.535 million of capital project funds into the 2024/25 Capital Works Program; and**

8. **Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 if recommended by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.**

Carried unanimously

7.14 **PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION: EXE-2023-471 ADDRESSED MAIL SERVICES**

Executive Summary

Council generates large volumes of addressed postal mail, some of which is processed using a digital mail solution and some of which is processed by Australia Post. The primary use of Australia Post relates to the issuing of the annual and quarterly rates notices which utilise Australia Post and are not able to go through the digital mail solution due to other contract arrangements.

As Australia Post does not contract for addressed mail services alone, procurement exemption EXE-2023-471 is proposed for a period of three (3) years from 1 October 2023 for the purpose of formalising expenditure paid to Australia Post for this service. Section 6.1.4.2(a) – Appendix 3 of Council's Procurement Policy allows for an exemption from tendering where there is sole supplier of the service. As the value of this exemption exceeds the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation, Council approval is required.

Australia Post does not comply with elements of the Merri-bek 2021-2025 Procurement Policy and objectives outlined in the Fossil Fuel Divestment Strategy 2015-2025.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the estimated expenditure of \$1,548,277 (excluding GST) with Australia Post under procurement exemption EXE-2023-471 without a contract for three (3) years from 1 October 2023, ending 30 September 2026 for addressed mail services.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to complete any required documentation.
3. Notes that the recommendation to engage Australia Post 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.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Riley seconded -

That Council:

1. **Authorises the estimated expenditure of \$1,548,277 (excluding GST) with Australia Post under procurement exemption EXE-2023-471 without a contract for three (3) years from 1 October 2023, ending 30 September 2026 for addressed mail services.**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to complete any required documentation.**

3. **Notes that the recommendation to engage Australia Post 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.**

Carried unanimously

7.15 MERRI CREEK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - FUTURE FUNDING AGREEMENT OPTIONS AND COUNCIL ALIGNMENT

Executive Summary

The Merri Creek is a highly valued environmental and community asset and Merri-bek City Council and the Merri Creek Management Committee have a long-standing relationship and mutual affinity for the Merri Creek dating back to the inception of the Merri Creek Management Committee in 1989.

Merri-bek City Council provides funding, along with other member partners, to support the operations of the Merri Creek Management Committee, in addition to engaging its services for targeted maintenance work along the Merri Creek. The Merri Creek Management Committee has a strong track record of delivering value to the community through both its advocacy, education programs and specialist maintenance works. The Merri Creek Management Committee also plays a key role in community education and public awareness for matters impacting the creek like contamination, litter, biodiversity and flora and fauna protection.

Council's current funding agreement with the Merri Creek Management Committee is due to end in June 2024. Officers propose to seek a new three-year funding agreement in line with Council's procurement requirements and processes at the appropriate time in early 2024. This will contribute to the continued viability of the Merri Creek Management Committee as part of Council's long-standing commitment to the proactive natural resource management of the Merri Creek.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses in principle the continuation of the current Merri Creek Management Committee Funding and Service Agreement model in establishing a new three-year funding agreement with Merri Creek Management Committee from 1 July 2024 through Council's normal procurement processes and requirements, on the basis of strong policy alignment, mutual benefits to both Council and the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) of the Funding Agreement, and the fact that the Agreement allows MCMC to leverage additional third party funding for conservation initiatives in the Merri Creek corridor.
2. Receives a further report before May 2024 on the proposed Funding and Service Agreement, and incorporating the anticipated budget into the 2024/2025 Budget Process.

Resolution

Cr Conlan moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses in principle the continuation of the current Merri Creek Management Committee Funding and Service Agreement model in establishing a new three-year funding agreement with Merri Creek Management Committee from 1 July 2024 through Council's normal procurement processes and requirements, on the basis of strong policy alignment, mutual benefits to both Council and the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) of the Funding Agreement, and the fact that the Agreement allows MCMC to leverage additional third party funding for conservation initiatives in the Merri Creek corridor.**
2. **Receives a further report before May 2024 on the proposed Funding and Service Agreement, and incorporating the anticipated budget into the 2024/2025 Budget Process.**

Carried unanimously

7.16 GOVERNANCE REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2023 - CYCLICAL 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 the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee Meeting held 18 July 2023, Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting held 3 August 2023 and the Arts Advisory Committee Meeting held 17 August 2023.
- The Arts Advisory Committee's recommendation to purchase the art work as listed in the officer recommendation.
- The Arts Advisory Committee's recommendation to accept the donation of the art work as listed in the officer recommendation.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Responses to Public Question Time items taken on notice at 20 June, 12 July and 9 August 2023 Council meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.
- A recommendation that Council appoints and authorises the Council officers referred to in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*).

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report:
 - a) Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee Meeting held on 18 July 2023
 - b) Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting held 3 August 2023

- c) Arts Advisory Committee meeting of 17 August 2023.
2. Accepts the recommendation of the Arts Advisory Committee meeting held 17 August 2023 and in accordance with the Art Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, approves the purchase of the following artwork for the Merri-bek Art Collection:
- Brook Andrew, *I'm anti violence and pro dignity (blue)*, 2021, Screen-print, \$800
 - Atong Atem, *Nyanluak*, 2022, Photograph, \$5,000
 - Jenna Lee, *Bill Can Pair*, 2022, Sculpture (paper), \$2,300
 - Jenna Lee, *Without Us*, 2022, Work on paper (framed), \$1,400
 - Luke King, *Portrait*, 2023, Work on paper, \$800
 - Kim Kruger, *Within ten miles of Melbourne 1*, 2022, Photograph, \$300
 - Kim Kruger, *Within ten miles of Melbourne 2*, 2022, Photograph, \$300
 - Kim Kruger, *Splitting logs for a "feed"*, 2022, Photograph, \$300
 - Uncle Brian McKinnon, *Bush Fire I "Redgum Sleeper"*, 2019, Mixed media (framed), \$6,500
 - Bundit Puangthong and Vipoo Srivilasa, *Flesh*, 2022, Sculpture (ceramic) \$5,000.
3. Accepts the recommendation of the Arts Advisory Committee meeting held 17 August 2023 and in accordance with the Art Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, accepts the donation of the following artwork for the Merri-bek Art Collection:
- Bundit Puangthong and Vipoo Srivilasa, *Food*, 2022, Sculpture (ceramic) Donation
 - Commoners Press, *10Press Portfolio*, 2022, Print folio, Donation.
4. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
5. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the June, July and August 2023 Council meetings, at Attachment 3 to this report.
6. In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020*:
- a) Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 of this report, as set out in the instrument.
 - b) Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instruments and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.
 - c) Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Yildiz seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report:**
 - a) **Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee Meeting held on 18 July 2023**
 - b) **Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting held 3 August 2023**
 - c) **Arts Advisory Committee meeting of 17 August 2023.**

2. **Accepts the recommendation of the Arts Advisory Committee meeting held 17 August 2023 and in accordance with the Art Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, approves the purchase of the following artwork for the Merri-bek Art Collection:**
 - **Brook Andrew, I'm anti violence and pro dignity (blue), 2021, Screen-print, \$800**
 - **Atong Atem, Nyanluak, 2022, Photograph, \$5,000**
 - **Jenna Lee, Bill Can Pair, 2022, Sculpture (paper), \$2,300**
 - **Jenna Lee, Without Us, 2022, Work on paper (framed), \$1,400**
 - **Luke King, Portrait, 2023, Work on paper, \$800**
 - **Kim Kruger, Within ten miles of Melbourne 1, 2022, Photograph, \$300**
 - **Kim Kruger, Within ten miles of Melbourne 2, 2022, Photograph, \$300**
 - **Kim Kruger, Splitting logs for a "feed", 2022, Photograph, \$300**
 - **Uncle Brian McKinnon, Bush Fire I "Redgum Sleeper", 2019, Mixed media (framed), \$6,500**
 - **Bundit Puangthong and Vipoo Srivilasa, Flesh, 2022, Sculpture (ceramic) \$5,000.**
3. **Accepts the recommendation of the Arts Advisory Committee meeting held 17 August 2023 and in accordance with the Art Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, accepts the donation of the following artwork for the Merri-bek Art Collection:**
 - **Bundit Puangthong and Vipoo Srivilasa, Food, 2022, Sculpture (ceramic) Donation**
 - **Commoners Press, 10Press Portfolio, 2022, Print folio, Donation.**
4. **Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.**
5. **Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the June, July and August 2023 Council meetings, at Attachment 3 to this report.**
6. **In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020:**
 - a) **Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 of this report, as set out in the instrument.**
 - b) **Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instruments and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.**
 - c) **Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.**

Carried unanimously

7.17 CONTRACT AWARD: PA-2023-476 MANAGED SERVICES PROGRAM PROVIDER FOR CONTINGENT LABOUR

Executive Summary

In September 2019 Council entered a contract for the Provision of Temporary Labour Hire – Neutral Vendor Managed Services in collaboration with the Northern Region group of Councils. This contract expires 30 November 2023, and a new contract is required for the provision of temporary labour services.

A request for quote was obtained from Comensura Pty Ltd (Comensura) who are a member of Procurement Australia panel for Managed Services Program (MSP) providers for Contingent Labour. Comensura's tender response was assessed by Procurement Australia and rated highest when compared to the other two (2) service providers who were included in the tender assessment.

Contingent labour/temporary hire services are engaged to ensure service delivery is not impacted where staffing gaps occur, such as during recruitment, leave backfill or in the event of needing to respond to unplanned events. In addition, temporary staff are at times required to provide specific skill sets or expertise that is short-term in nature and the skillset is not already available within Council.

Council's Procurement Policy allows opting into existing collaborative engagements with other government entities, local governments, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) or Procurement Australia (PA). The Procurement Australia Managed Services Program (MSP) provider for Contingent Labour selection was established through a tender process.

It is recommended that Council engages Comensura as the provider for the Provision of Managed Services Program for contingent labour services. Comensura's service offering provides a single solution for staff to source, engage, track, manage and pay temporary employees. In addition, this contract will enable Council to continue to source temporary labour-hire services, using a single online sourcing portal which reduces repetitive administration and tracks approval processes at competitive rates.

The recommended contract using Procurement Australia to engage the services of Comensura has 1 months remaining on the fixed term period which commenced 1 January 2021 with a further two (2) options of one (1) year each. The contract period including options ends 31 December 2025. The extension options are solely at Merri-bek City Council's discretion. There is a provision in the contract for the performance of the contractor to be reviewed annually.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage Comensura Pty Ltd ACN 120 725 902 (Contractor), under the Procurement Australia Contract PA-2023-476 (2312/0618) for the Provision of Managed Services Program Provider for Contingent Labour (Contract):
 - i. For an amount not exceeding \$11,450,000 million (excluding GST); and
 - ii. For a term commencing 1 December 2023 with an initial fixed term ending 31 December 2023 and a further two (2) options of one (1) year each until 31 December 2025.
2. Advises Procurement Australia and Comensura Pty Ltd of its decision on this matter.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to finalise documentation to formalise the arrangement.
4. Authorises the Chief executive to approve contract extensions options, subject to Contractor performance.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Pulford seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage Comensura Pty Ltd ACN 120 725 902 (Contractor), under the Procurement Australia Contract PA-2023-476 (2312/0618) for the Provision of Managed Services Program Provider for Contingent Labour (Contract):**
 - i. For an amount not exceeding \$11,450,000 million (excluding GST); and**
 - ii. For a term commencing 1 December 2023 with an initial fixed term ending 31 December 2023 and a further two (2) options of one (1) year each until 31 December 2025.**
- 2. Advises Procurement Australia and Comensura Pty Ltd of its decision on this matter.**
- 3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to finalise documentation to formalise the arrangement.**
- 4. Authorises the Chief executive to approve contract extensions options, subject to Contractor performance.**

Carried unanimously

10.19 pm Cr Conlan left the meeting.

7.18 CONTRACT VARIATION: CONTRACT 493T - MANAGED NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Executive Summary

At the Council meeting held on 10 August 2016, Council resolved to enter into a contract with Logicalis Australia Pty Ltd to manage network and infrastructure services for four years, with four one-year extension options under 493T - Managed Network and Infrastructure Services. The contract was resolved by Council for \$2,995,500.35 (excluding GST) for the life of the contract, including extensions. The contract term is from 22 March 2017 to 21 March 2025, inclusive of extension options.

The Managed Network and Infrastructure Services contract includes the provision of and ongoing support for the Wide Area Network (WAN) which provides internet connectivity, Local Area Network (LAN) which provides the physical network within Council sites and the Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN) which provides Wi-Fi connectivity at Council sites.

The contract extensions have been executed, expiring on 21 March 2025. The amount spent to date over the life of the contract has been \$2,755,417 (excluding GST). This report seeks to increase the authorised expenditure to \$4,056,398 excluding GST, an increase of \$1,060,898 excluding GST from the original resolution. The amount specified in the original resolution was not valid as there was no agreed pricing specified in the contract for years 5-8. The proposed increased expenditure addresses this gap and includes contingency for new sites and provision for migrating to a new vendor at the end of the contract should the incumbent vendor be unsuccessful retendering for these services. All expenditure aligning to this contract is within annual budget allocation.

Council's resolution authorised the Director Corporate Services *to do all things necessary to execute the contract and any other required documentation*. However, with this role having been disestablished this report is seeking Council to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute all documentation relating to contract 493T.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises an increased expenditure amount against contract 493T Managed Network and Infrastructure Services to \$4,056,398 excluding GST (an increase of \$1,060,898 excluding GST) which relates to the period 22 March 2017 to 21 March 2025 including all extensions.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute and complete any required contract documentation.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Davidson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Authorises an increased expenditure amount against contract 493T Managed Network and Infrastructure Services to \$4,056,398 excluding GST (an increase of \$1,060,898 excluding GST) which relates to the period 22 March 2017 to 21 March 2025 including all extensions.**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute and complete any required contract documentation.**

Carried unanimously

7.19 CONTRACT VARIATION: CONTRACT 711T - CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Executive Summary

At the Council meeting held on 10 October 2018, Council resolved to enter into contract 711T for the provision, implementation, migration and support of cloud computing infrastructure services with an initial three (3) year term and seven (7) one-year extension options. The contract was resolved by Council for \$2,618,970.37 (excluding GST) for the life of the contract, including extensions. The contract term is from 1 February 2019 until 31 January 2029, inclusive of extension options.

The second contract extension has been executed, expiring on 31 January 2024, with five one-year extension options remaining. The expenditure over the life of the contract has been \$1,763,926 (excluding GST). This report seeks to increase the expenditure required to \$5,331,547 (excluding GST), an increase of \$2,712,577 (excluding GST) from the original resolution. All expenditure aligning to this contract is within annual budget allocation.

The cloud infrastructure services contract includes the server infrastructure which is used to store data and host applications managed by Council. The contract also includes Data Protection (DP) and Disaster Recovery (DR) services to minimise the risk of unplanned outages. The increase in expenditure is due to the amount of data being stored and number of servers being used being higher than originally estimated and because there was no provision for additional usage in future years.

Council's resolution authorised the Director Corporate Services *to do all things necessary to execute the contract and any other required documentation*. However, with this role having been disestablished this report is seeking Council to authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute all documentation relating to contract 711T.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises an increased expenditure amount against contract 711T Cloud Infrastructure Services from \$2,618,970.37 excluding GST to \$5,331,547 excluding GST (an increase of \$2,712,577 excluding GST), and
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute contract extensions and complete any other required documentation.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Davidson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Authorises an increased expenditure amount against contract 711T Cloud Infrastructure Services from \$2,618,970.37 excluding GST to \$5,331,547 excluding GST (an increase of \$2,712,577 excluding GST), and**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute contract extensions and complete any other required documentation.**

Carried

Time Extension**Resolution**

Cr Riley moved, Cr Pulford seconded -

That the Council meeting be extended for a further 30 minutes until 11 pm.

Carried

NOTICES OF MOTION

10.21 pm *Cr Conlan returned to the meeting.*

8.1 REFRESHING MERRI-BEK'S COMMITMENT TO FOOD SYSTEM STRATEGY 2020-24

Motion

That Council confirms support for the Victorian Food Systems Consensus Statement, Towards A Healthy, Regenerative and Equitable Food System in Victoria, facilitated by VicHealth and in carriage with Sustain: The Australian Food Network and:

1. Affirms our commitment to the leverage points laid out in the Food Systems Consensus Statement, including support for:
 - a) The legislation for the Right to Food in Victoria.
 - b) Establishing a governmental food systems committee to undertake a food systems inquiry to subsequently develop a Victorian food systems plan.
 - c) The advancement of a comprehensive food systems monitoring framework.
 - d) A regenerative and agro-ecological food production.
 - e) The creation of a local food investment fund.

- f) That all public sector food procurement and retail is healthy and sustainable.
 - g) Actions to strengthen food literacy in schools in collaboration with educators.
 - h) Resourcing and empowerment of all local governments to lead food system strategies.
 - i) The revision of the Victorian planning provisions legislation to promote health.
 - j) Improving dignified access to healthy food through the food relief sector.
2. Supports the Food Systems and Food Security Working Group's advocacy efforts to lobby other jurisdictions, including the submission to the Food Systems Inquiry in NSW (2021-22).
 3. Undertakes to review its Food Systems Strategy in line with the VicHealth "building better food systems for healthier communities" module.

Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Pulford seconded -

That Council confirms support for the Victorian Food Systems Consensus Statement, Towards A Healthy, Regenerative and Equitable Food System in Victoria, facilitated by VicHealth and in carriage with Sustain: The Australian Food Network and:

1. **Affirms our commitment to the leverage points laid out in the Food Systems Consensus Statement, including support for:**
 - a) **The legislation for the Right to Food in Victoria.**
 - b) **Establishing a governmental food systems committee to undertake a food systems inquiry to subsequently develop a Victorian food systems plan.**
 - c) **The advancement of a comprehensive food systems monitoring framework.**
 - d) **A regenerative and agro-ecological food production.**
 - e) **The creation of a local food investment fund.**
 - f) **That all public sector food procurement and retail is healthy and sustainable.**
 - g) **Actions to strengthen food literacy in schools in collaboration with educators.**
 - h) **Resourcing and empowerment of all local governments to lead food system strategies.**
 - i) **The revision of the Victorian planning provisions legislation to promote health.**
 - j) **Improving dignified access to healthy food through the food relief sector.**
2. **Supports the Food Systems and Food Security Working Group's advocacy efforts to lobby other jurisdictions, including the submission to the Food Systems Inquiry in NSW (2021-22).**
3. **Undertakes to review its Food Systems Strategy in line with the VicHealth "building better food systems for healthier communities" module.**

Carried unanimously

8.2 SUPPORT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

Motion

That Council receives a report at the November Council meeting on options for Council to provide additional public liability insurance to neighbourhood houses for room hire to community groups.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Conlan seconded -

That Council receives a report at the November Council meeting on options for Council to provide additional public liability insurance to neighbourhood houses for room hire to community groups.

Carried unanimously

8.3 COMMUNITY SUPPORT DURING EXTREME HEAT EVENTS

Motion

That Council:

1. Receives a report on what community centres will be available for people to seek respite from extreme heat in Merri-bek in the 2023-2024 summer.
2. Seeks state government support for opening up community centres to the public in the event of extreme heat events in the 2023-2024 summer.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

That Council:

1. **Receives a report on what community centres will be available for people to seek respite from extreme heat in Merri-bek in the 2023-2024 summer.**
2. **Consults with Blacktown City Council in Western Sydney regarding their experience with heat refuges (Cooling Centres)**
3. **Advocates to the state government to update the State Heatwave Plan to more explicitly state the role of local government in a heatwave, including what resources will be made available to local councils to support the community, including measures such as providing Cooling Centres to members of the community who aren't able to stay cool in their homes.**

Carried unanimously

8.4 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY PASCOE VALE ROAD, GLENROY ACTIVITY CENTRE

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes previous resolution from this Council, May 2022, expressing concern for pedestrian safety and road rule non-compliance on Pascoe Vale Road in the Glenroy Activity Centre and advocating for installation of red-light cameras at pedestrian crossings.
2. Writes to Department of Transport and Planning, to advocate for further measures to improve the safety of pedestrians on Pascoe Vale Road, in the Glenroy Activity Centre, requesting:
 - a) Extension of times for 40 km/h from 7.00 am to 9.00 pm every day.
 - a) Extension of 40 km/h zone north beyond the pedestrian crossing near Anslem Avenue.
 - b) Investigation of other design opportunities to improve pedestrian safety, comfort and amenity.
3. Reviews the adequacy of street lighting on this strip, in particular the pedestrian crossing near Post Office Place, with potential advocacy to the Department of Transport and Planning for lighting improvements.

Resolution

Cr Harte moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes previous resolution from this Council, May 2022, expressing concern for pedestrian safety and road rule non-compliance on Pascoe Vale Road in the Glenroy Activity Centre and advocating for installation of red-light cameras at pedestrian crossings.**
2. **Writes to Department of Transport and Planning, to advocate for further measures to improve the safety of pedestrians on Pascoe Vale Road, in the Glenroy Activity Centre, requesting:**
 - a) **Extension of times for 40 km/h from 7.00 am to 9.00 pm every day.**
 - a) **Extension of 40 km/h zone north beyond the pedestrian crossing near Anslem Avenue.**
 - b) **Investigation of other design opportunities to improve pedestrian safety, comfort and amenity.**
3. **Reviews the adequacy of street lighting on this strip, in particular the pedestrian crossing near Post Office Place, with potential advocacy to the Department of Transport and Planning for lighting improvements.**

Carried unanimously

10.37 pm Cr Conlan left the meeting.

The order of business was altered and Notice of Motion 8.5 Reinstate Postal Services to Glenroy was considered third after Report 7.2.

NOTICE OF RESCISSION

It is noted that the Acting Chief Executive Officer received a Notice of Rescission at 10.33pm from Cr Conlan seeking to rescind Council's decision relating to Report 7.1 Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and next steps for Coburg to Glenroy Bike Route.

The Notice of Rescission will appear on the agenda for the Council meeting scheduled Wednesday, 18 October 2023.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS

Nil.

URGENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Nil.

The meeting closed at 10.37 pm.

7.2 MOVING AROUND MERRI-BEK - DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the Draft Transport Strategy *Moving Around Merri-bek* (Attachment 1) and associated Action Plan (Attachment 2) for public exhibition for 5 weeks from Monday 13 November until Sunday 17 December 2023.
2. Notes the Draft Community Engagement Report detailing the methodology and findings of community engagement on the *Moving Around Merri-bek* Discussion Paper (Attachment 3).
3. Appoints Councillor _____ as Chair, and Councillors _____, _____, and _____ to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the Draft Transport Strategy *Moving Around Merri-bek* on Tuesday, 30 January 2024 at 6pm, at the Coburg Civic Centre.
4. Receives a further report at the March 2024 Council meeting with a final version of *Moving Around Merri-bek* Strategy and associated Action Plan that demonstrates feedback received in terms of quantity, source and themes of feedback from the consultation survey, any written submissions received and from the Hearing of Submissions and how this feedback has influenced the final version of *Moving Around Merri-bek*.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Moving Around Merri-bek was developed in response to the Council decision in April 2021 to undertake further work to fully revise the Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS) 2019. Developments in transport policy, travel patterns and behaviour, have also changed since the adoption of MITS 2019 and there is an opportunity to consider these issues and opportunities through the strategy review. These changes include shifts in work patterns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, innovations in electric vehicles, e-bikes, and shared transport services, as well as an increasing need to reduce transport emissions.

The Draft Transport Strategy, *Moving Around Merri-bek*, is laid out in three sections. The first section sets out the proposed vision and six values. These values guide the way Council manages and make changes to our transport system. They are: safe, accessible, sustainable, liveable, healthy, and inclusive. Each value includes a description of that value and translates it to transport objectives.

The second section is the Transport System. This is an adaptation from the framework outlined in the *Transport Integration Act 2010*. It has been adapted to better fit the local government context. The Transport System consists of distinct transport network layers that integrate to enable people to move around the city and to meet their daily transport needs. The objectives and actions related to this section will be informed and guided by the vision and values of the strategy.

The transport network layers include: pedestrian, cycling, public transport (trains, trams, and buses), driving (including parking and freight), and land-use. Each section details the planned approach for supporting the functions of that mode as well as the actions proposed to achieve the relevant objectives.

The third section is titled 'Streets for People'. It outlines a new approach for selecting, analysing, designing, and delivering streetscape improvements across the transport system. The intention is to approach transport capital works projects in a more holistic way that considers improvements to all modes of transport, urban design, and the natural environment. Council will develop and refine our Streets for People design approach using the existing street improvement projects that are confirmed in the 2024/25 Capital Works Program, such as Victoria Street, Harding and Munro Streets and Albert Street that were referred to the 2024/25 Budget process at the Council Meeting on 18 October 2023, for Making it Safer and Easier to Walk and Ride in Merri-bek.

An Action Plan accompanies *Moving Around Merri-bek* as a separate but linked document. The Action Plan outlines practical actions in the immediate term (2024/25) and foreshadows actions beyond that year (2025+) to apply the values and achieve objectives outlined in the strategy. The Action Plan follows the same heading structure as the strategy. It has been designed this way so the community can easily read and compare the two documents.

Previous Council Decisions

Making It Safer And Easier To Walk And Ride In Merri-Bek - Response to Notice of Motion – 18 October 2023

That Council:

1. *Endorses an accelerated program of active travel projects as detailed in Option 2 in this report (subject to the 2024/25 Council Budget process) including:*
 - a) *An increase in annual expenditure on upgrades to pedestrian accessibility, public lighting and roundabouts.*
 - b) *An increase in the funding to deliver outcomes from the Fawcner Transport Study from \$100,000 to \$300,000 (in 2025/26).*
 - c) *Earlier delivery of the Coonans Road (2025/26) and Reynolds Parade (2026/27) separated bicycle lane projects previously identified in Council's ten-year active travel program.*
 - d) *Commencing a program of "Streets for People" projects to improve walking, cycling and place outcomes, commencing with designs for Harding Street, Coburg and Albert Street, Brunswick in 2024/25.*
 - e) *Project management resources to deliver the above projects.*
2. *Advocates to the Victorian Government for a financial contribution towards these projects, particularly those on Strategic Cycling Corridors.*
3. *Refers the additional expenditure required to the 2024/25 Council Budget process, noting that it will need to be considered alongside other capital budget pressures.*
4. *Notes that project cost estimates are indicative and subject to change following design of and community engagement on individual projects.*
5. *Incorporates these actions into the relevant Transport Strategy Action Plans by March 2024.*
6. *Notes that a report on the opportunity to index the per capita spend on active travel will be presented to the November 2023 Council meeting.*

Notice of Motion - Making It Safer And Easier To Walk And Ride In Merri-Bek - 20 June 2023

That Council resolves to receive a report by October 2023 that details how Council could accelerate the roll out of active transport infrastructure to make it safer, easier and more comfortable to ride and walk around our city, including by:

1. *Bringing forward active transport projects that have been prioritised by community members and groups through recent consultations, including on our 10 Year Capital Works Programs for Walking and Cycling, in our Capital Works Program.*

2. *Increasing the \$10 per head minimum spend on active transport infrastructure each year in line with inflation.*

Active Travel (Walking and Riding) 10 Year Capital Program - 8 June 2022

That Council:

1. *Adopts the 10 Year Capital Works Program for Active Travel (Walking and Riding) at Attachment 1 to this report with the following changes:*
 - a) *Maintain separate bike and pedestrian budgets, and create a third budget category 'shared paths', for genuinely shared infrastructure such as the bridges over the creeks. This is to maintain maximum transparency.*
 - b) *Reinstate the O'Hea Street shared path to Derby St and the proposed separated lanes on De Carle Street to the first two years of the capital works program.*
2. *Notes the feedback on possible separated bicycle lanes on Glenlyon Road in Brunswick and Brunswick East, and Munro and Harding Streets in Coburg.*

Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy – Review – 14 April 2021

That Council:

...

2. *Endorses the commencement of further work to fully revise MITS 2019 and related documents including revised mode shift targets, implications for Council's aspirations to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2040, and potential additional MITS actions to meet mode shift and carbon emission objectives to continue to achieve this aspiration.*
3. *Receives a further report when the costs of this additional work has been fully scoped and costed, noting an early indication of this budget is in the order of \$60,000 to \$80,000.*

...

12. *Notes the significant work involved in undertaking the consultation process for the revised PMP and further refining the MITS and, in particular, that limited progression will occur on the other MITS actions during this time while the extensive COVID transport program is continued to be rolled out as well.*

Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy - Review Notice of Motion – 09 December 2020

That Council:

1. *Reaffirms the objective of mode shift to more sustainable transport options, noting that this requires strong investment in public transport, cycling, walking and other sustainable transport infrastructure, as well as incentives and encouragements to take up sustainable transport.*
2. *Recognises that using sustainable alternatives to driving is difficult for many in Moreland, partly due to lack of investment in the public transport system by the state government, particularly in the North of Moreland.*

...

5. *Receives a report in April 2021 which:*
 - a) *Recommends amendments to the Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy to reflect the above changes to parking restrictions and parking requirements and acknowledge that some households require a car.*

...

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council plan sets out Council's and community's vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.
 - 2.1. Build safe, accessible, and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand, especially the Coburg to Glenroy bike path.
 - 2.5. Facilitate substantially increased use of active transport in the community through targeted programs which include a focus on children, young people, families and older people.
 - 2.6. Collaborate with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on a case-by-case basis.

Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (2019)

Until the adoption of Council's new Transport Strategy in 2024, Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS) 2019 remains Council's transport strategy. MITS encourages greater take up of sustainable transport alternatives, a priority reinforced in engagement to date for the new Transport Strategy. The strategy includes actions which commit Council to:

- Reallocate road space and car parking according to the road user hierarchy (in descending order, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and motorists).
- Work together with state government to, among other things:
 - Continue to implement 40 km/h speed limits on local roads.
 - Install direct, safe and convenient crossings where lots of pedestrians and cyclists want to cross, even where VicRoads warrants aren't met.
 - Increase pedestrian and cyclist priority at signals and crossings.

Zero Carbon Merri-bek

Council's Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework outlines the community vision and strategic directions for the transition to zero carbon in Merri-bek by 2040. In 2019/20, transport was recorded to contribute 17 per cent of all carbon emissions in the Merri-bek local government area and 13 per cent were from private motor vehicles. The 2040 vision for Sustainable Transport includes:

- Most people choose to walk or cycle to get around locally because its healthy, free, safe and convenient.
- Merri-bek is known for its pedestrian and cycle-friendly streetscapes.

This overarching Framework informed 5-yearly action plans to drive the transition to zero emissions including:

- Investing in infrastructure to support active travel and public transport.
- Reallocate space used for private vehicle travel and parking to support sustainable transport use and other purposes.

In addition, Council resolved in December 2021 to adopt an interim target towards the Zero Carbon by 2040 goal of a reduction of emissions by 75 per cent by 2030.

Community Engagement Policy (2020)

Council has a Community Engagement Policy (2020) that aligns with the *Local Government Act 2020*. It sets directions for how Council will engage with the community on decisions that impact them, including future bicycle and pedestrian projects.

2. Background

The Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy was adopted in 2019 providing a vision, objectives and actions for Council to pursue over a ten-year period.

In December 2020 Council resolved not to implement two key actions relating to parking, and (after further consultation with relevant communities) remove parking restrictions that had been implemented in some Major Activity Centres and Neighbourhood Centres following adoption of MITS in 2019. This followed a finding in February 2020 of the Planning Panel reviewing the publicly exhibited Amendment C183 more that while the strategic intent of the intended parking restrictions was a legitimate approach, there had been insufficient parking survey and modelling undertaken to inform the Amendment.

Council adopted an approach to parking restrictions based on local need and usage. (It is noted that the Parking Management Policy is under review at present and has recently been consulted upon as resolved by Council in April 2021.)

In making the December 2020 resolution, Council also reaffirmed the objective of mode shift to more sustainable transport options, noting that this requires strong investment in public transport, cycling, walking and other sustainable transport infrastructure, as well as incentives and encouragements to take up sustainable transport.

In April 2021, Council resolved, among other things, that work should commence on fully revising MITS 2019 and related documents, recognising the contribution of transport to achieving net zero carbon emissions.

The scoping of a full revision of MITS 2019, in light of the above and when set against other significant changes in transport technology (electric vehicles, personal electric mobility devices, and share mobility), changed movement patterns following the pandemic, the heightening of the Climate Emergency (and Council's associated adoption in December 2021 of an interim target towards the Zero Carbon by 2040 goal of a reduction of emissions by 75 per cent by 2030), officers determined that a new Transport Strategy was required.

Prior to commencing the revision of the Transport Strategy, Merri-bek Council commissioned JWS Research to develop a social research report on transport in Merri-bek to understand transport uses, barriers and options for different cohorts and neighbourhoods throughout Merri-bek. This report informed the development of the *Moving Around Merri-bek* Discussion Paper.

The Discussion Paper presented six core themes and possible actions for inclusion in the Draft Transport Strategy which were informed by the social research report. This Discussion Paper sought community feedback on the themes as well as key issues and opportunities in Merri-bek's transport system. The Discussion Paper themes were, Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability and Collaboration and have since been updated in the Draft Transport Strategy based on feedback received during community engagement.

The Discussion Paper was released in July and community engagement was undertaken from 24 July until 2 September 2023. Feedback was sought through a broad and comprehensive communications and engagement campaign that involved community pop-ups, reference group presentations and engagement sessions with key stakeholders such as schools and traders associations to reach a broad audience. This resulted in 478 English language surveys completed and over 60 translated surveys received.

The outcomes of the community engagement period have informed the development of the Draft Transport Strategy, including changes to the strategy's values, objectives and actions. Since the conclusion of community engagement on the discussion paper, the Draft Transport Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and prepared for public exhibition and feedback.

3. Issues

Strategy Structure

An important factor in developing a new transport strategy was to provide a robust structure to the strategy. The current MITS 2019 policy targets and strategic objectives sought to use parking policy changes to facilitate change in the way Merri-bek's transport system functions to enhance sustainable transport modes, create better travel choices and address increasing congestion. This structure meant the success of MITS was highly dependent on the outcomes of specific actions within the strategy. With the abandonment of the two key parking actions in December 2020, the main driver of MITS was removed. In response, *Moving Around Merri-bek* has been developed with a new structure that is designed to be more robust and is more able to respond to changes in the transport system and policy environment while ensuring Merri-bek is pursuing a clear strategic direction to create better streets and improved transport system for the community.

Moving Around Merri-bek is structured into three parts: Vision and Values, the Transport System, and Streets for People.

First, our Vision and Values sets out the vision (using the Community Vision) and the six values that we will draw on to manage and make changes to our transport system. These values are: safe, accessible, sustainable, healthy, liveable, and inclusive.

The second part, the Transport System, outlines the multiple transport networks that make up our transport system. This includes the pedestrian, cycling, public transport, and driving networks, as well as consideration of land use and planning. We outline the directions we will take within each subsection and what success looks like for each.

The third section, Streets for People, is the synthesis of bringing our vision and values together with our transport system to undertake a holistic approach to designing and implementing changes to our transport system. This approach draws upon Movement and Place and Healthy Streets assessments to understand how streets work at the network level, how the street is experienced at the human scale, allows us to consider opportunities to improve our streets for everyone.

Streets for People

Connecting Movement and Place

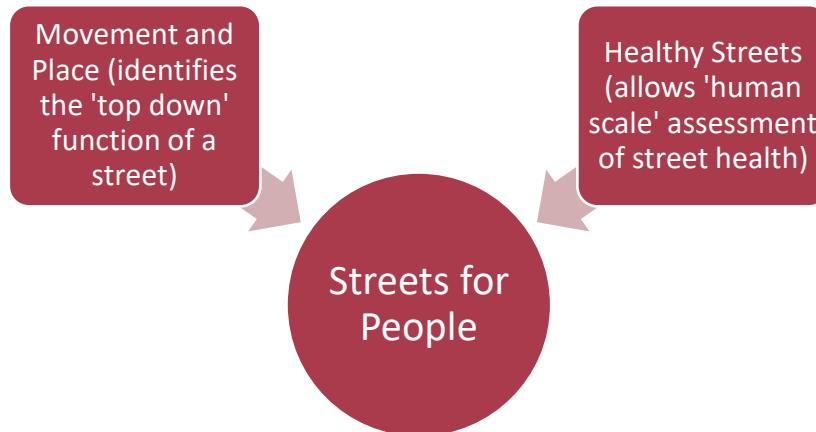
Movement and Place is a conceptual framework developed by the Victorian Government. This framework outlines that every street has both a movement function and a place function. The extent of each function depends on the unique characteristics of each street; a freeway has a high movement function but a low place function, whereas an activity centre street has a relatively lower movement function but higher place function. Movement and Place provides a common framework for talking about how our streets currently work, our aspirations for how we'd like our streets to function in the future, and what interventions may be appropriate for a given streets context.

Healthy Streets

Healthy Streets is an assessment tool developed in the UK and has spread internationally in recent years. It provides a framework for assessing streets at the human scale. This includes whether there are places to stop and rest, how welcoming the street feels, levels of noise, clean air, ease to walk and cycle, among others. This tool helps us to review how a street currently performs and identify opportunities to make improvements to the street.

Streets for People Framework

Combining Movement and Place, which considers how a street functions in relation to the rest of the transport system and sets the parameters for how we want that street to contribute to the performance of the transport system, and Healthy Streets which looks at the qualitative components of a street at the human scale, allow us to consider opportunities to improve a street for everyone. This is illustrated in the diagram below.



Within the strategy, we have outlined how we will do this, within a 'Streets for People' framework. This framework outlines a multi-stage process for identifying streets for interventions, considers how those streets perform at the network level via Movement and Place, and at the human scale with Healthy Streets, which then inform potential design options to be considered by the community, prior to a preferred design option being implemented. This process provides a clear rationale for selecting streets and the opportunities to improve them in a holistic way. It is hoped that this process ensures broad community buy-in for these projects, with more of the community seeing direct benefit for themselves. The Streets for People Framework will be developed over the course of 2024, as it is applied to existing projects, with a final Framework presented at the end of 2024.

Draft Action Plan Structure

The Draft Action Plan details the specific actions council will undertake to achieve the vision and values of the Transport Strategy. The plan is structured to align with the strategy clearly by listing actions that relate to each Value and associated objectives, as well as actions relevant to each component in the Transport System (e.g., Driving Network and Pedestrian Network).

The plan provides detailed actions to be delivered by June 2025 and lists actions for consideration in the 2025-29 Action Plan. Each specific action in the 2024-25 Action Plan identifies the branch responsible for delivery, what resources are required, and any milestone dates relevant to delivering the action. This allows the action plan to integrate with councils planning and reporting framework to ensure the actions are being delivered and reporting is coordinated with other council actions.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Transport emissions are the second largest source of emissions in Victoria and are set to become the largest source in the coming years.

Reducing transport emissions and the effects of climate change is a key focus of the transport strategy. We aim to reduce transport emissions by providing infrastructure that enables people to use zero emission transport modes such as walking and cycling, by supporting our community to switch to electric vehicles, by advocating to the State Government for improvements to public transport infrastructure and services, and by supporting increased densities in activity centres and around transport hubs.

We have outlined specific actions to calculate our communities existing transport emissions and develop scenario pathways to zero emissions.

Economic sustainability implications

The Draft Transport Strategy is important to ensuring the sustainability of Merri-bek's local economy and its contribution to the economy in Greater Melbourne and Victoria. The strategy specifically addresses issues and opportunities for improving access to local businesses and freight movement via a variety of transport modes.

Merri-bek's transport system provides crucial support to local businesses and this role is reflected in specific actions and objectives while also being embedded into the values of the strategy. For example, the strategy recognises changing trends in local delivery services and their adoption of new modes and technologies that support local business deliveries. For example, the Transport System section details how Council can support and enhance sustainability of local freight and delivery services and involve local businesses in how we manage and use valuable kerb-side space.

The Streets for People Framework also details Merri-bek's approach to enhancing the liveability and accessibility of activity centres and local destinations. This is reflected in the application of Movement and Place and the Healthy Streets approach to selecting projects and the strategic objectives that inform the design process. The Streets for People Framework will therefore improve accessibility and patronage of local businesses by enhancing the safety, comfort and amenity of local trips that support the local economy.

Legal and risk considerations

Transport is an issue of high interest to the community. The level of community engagement undertaken to date and planned for the exhibition phase of the Strategy is considered to have met Council's aspirations as outlined in the Community Engagement Policy, which is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 2020*. The comprehensive engagement process taken is detailed in Section 4.

Moving Around Merri-bek has been prepared to align with the transport system objectives and decision making principles of the *Transport Integration Act 2010*, expressed within the local Government context and specific to the municipality of Merri-bek.

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 *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* Council has a duty to promote gender equality in new or revised policies/ programs and services with a direct and significant impact on the community. The tool that we are asked to use are gender impact assessments and the Act requires us to demonstrate how our recommendations and actions will:

- meet the needs of people of different genders
- address gender inequality and
- promote gender equality.

Project managers for the actions included in the final action plan that require a gender impact assessment will be asked to address this requirement by applying a gender lens in their action planning and implementation and to report actions taken in the next Council progress report to the Commission, due in October 2025.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Background

We commissioned independent social research that undertook quantitative and qualitative research on community views and aspirations for transport between January and March 2023. The research found geographic disparities with access to transport. We heard that public transport is less accessible in the north and north-west of the municipality, particularly east-west bus services and low service frequency. East-west cycling connectivity was found to be lacking as well. The Social Research Report is available on the Conversations Merri-bek project page.

Following the Social Research Report, we undertook community engagement on a Discussion Paper as a precursor to the Draft Strategy. Engagement ran from 24 July to 2 September. It included a range of face-to-face activities, workshops, and online engagement activities. **We received feedback from over 1,000 people including 532 survey responses (58 surveys in other languages).**

Community engagement found that the key reasons why people do not choose walking and cycling, despite selecting it as options they'd like to use more frequently, more often involved the lack of safety and lack of convenience (the journey takes too long, and services are not near people).

The theme of safety featured strongly throughout the feedback and was the most prominent challenge in *Moving Around Merri-bek* and a major barrier to choosing more active or sustainable modes of transport.

Reflecting the overall feedback, most suburbs had the following key ideas / priorities in common:

- Safer, better, increased paths for cycling and walking
- Increased, improved, extended public transport services (with Brunswick West, Glenroy and Fawkner mentioning bus services)
- Advocating for accessible public transport stops/ services
- Traffic calming and slowing cars down/ reducing speed limits

Brunswick East and Brunswick respondents specifically mentioned improving Sydney Road, making it more attractive and safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Brunswick, Brunswick West, Glenroy, Coburg North, and Pascoe Vale respondents mentioned improved connections for bikes and public transport either East West and/ or North South.

Coburg respondents prioritised safety, increased lighting and more/ safer crossings.

Three advocacy ideas presented in the survey scored highly in terms of importance including advocating for:

- increased public transport services (87.5% Very Important / Important);
- increased accessible public transport and low-floor vehicles (83.2% Very Important/ Important); and
- improved safety and security on public transport (79.4% Very Important/ Important).

Please see the Discussion Paper Community Engagement Report (**Attachment 3**) for further details on the engagement findings.

In response to community feedback, we have changed one of the 'themes' (now called Values) from *Collaboration* to *Inclusive*.

We have also developed a new section, titled 'Streets for People', that lays out the basis for a more holistic way of planning and delivering infrastructure projects.

Forthcoming activities

Engagement and Communications activities for the Draft Strategy and Action Plan stage include:

The Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee was briefed on the draft strategy and action plan on Tuesday 24 October 2023.

If the recommendation is adopted, engagement will launch on Monday 13 November, following the November council meeting (pending any final adjustments).

Engagement is planned to close on Sunday 17 December, providing opportunity for community feedback across 5 weeks.

Engagement will include:

- An updated Conversations Merri-bek project page
- A short survey (available digitally on Conversations Merri-bek, digitally via Microsoft Forms in 7 languages other than English, and in hard copy format at all public-facing council facilities and upon request).
- A municipal wide letter informing the community of the project, explaining the Draft Strategy, and inviting them to provide feedback
- An overview/summary of the strategy translated into the 7 languages other than English
- An Easy English/low literacy overview/summary of the strategy
- Draft Strategy, Draft Action Plan, Easy English overview/summary and in-language summary/overviews all available in hard copy
- Running a workshop with the Merri-bek Connectors to facilitate feedback from our CALD communities
- An email to all community members who engaged with the Discussion Paper and who provided their contact details to remain informed about the development of the strategy to inform them of the Draft Strategy and to seek their feedback.
- An email to all Council committee members and reference group members to inform them of the Draft Strategy and to seek their feedback.
- An email to surrounding Councils, relevant State Government departments, and local MPs
- Inclusion in all relevant Merri-bek e-newsletters and physical newsletters informing of project and requesting feedback
- Posters displayed in all Council facilities, Neighbourhood Houses, local sporting clubs, local businesses informing of project and requesting feedback
- Postcards available in all Council facilities, Neighbourhood Houses, local sporting clubs, local businesses informing of project and requesting feedback
- Targeted social media advertising in English and 7 languages other than English
- Engage with local media via media release

A public hearing of submissions will conclude the engagement for the Draft Strategy and this is proposed to be held on Tuesday 30 January 2024.

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.

Officers pursued a rigorous engagement process to reach a broad range of community members to inform the development of the Draft Strategy. Officers recommend a public exhibition period for the Draft Strategy to allow all affected community members the opportunity to provide feedback on the strategy and action plan. Changes to the document will then be considered that directly address the ideas or concerns of all affected persons before the strategy and action plan is finalised.

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

There is no direct impact this draft strategy will have on the current council budget, as the resources to prepare and consult on the strategy are in existing budgets. Council officers will undertake a full financial and resource impact on the final strategy prior to being presented to Council for the final document.

We will provide an updated assessment of budget implications when the final documents are presented for endorsement. The strategy and action plan does recommend actions for future years that will require consideration through the annual budget processes including the 5-year Capital Works Program.

It is important to note that construction costs, particularly for Streets for People projects, carry significant uncertainty and are subject to change following the design stage of each project. Once construction estimates are better understood additional funding (Council or external grants) may be required, or projects may be staged across multiple years. Delivery of additional projects may require additional project management resources.

7. Implementation

Community feedback will be sought on *Moving Around Merri-bek* and the accompanying Action Plan between Monday 13 November and Sunday 17 December 2023. A public Hearing of Submissions will be held in early 2024, likely Tuesday 30 January.

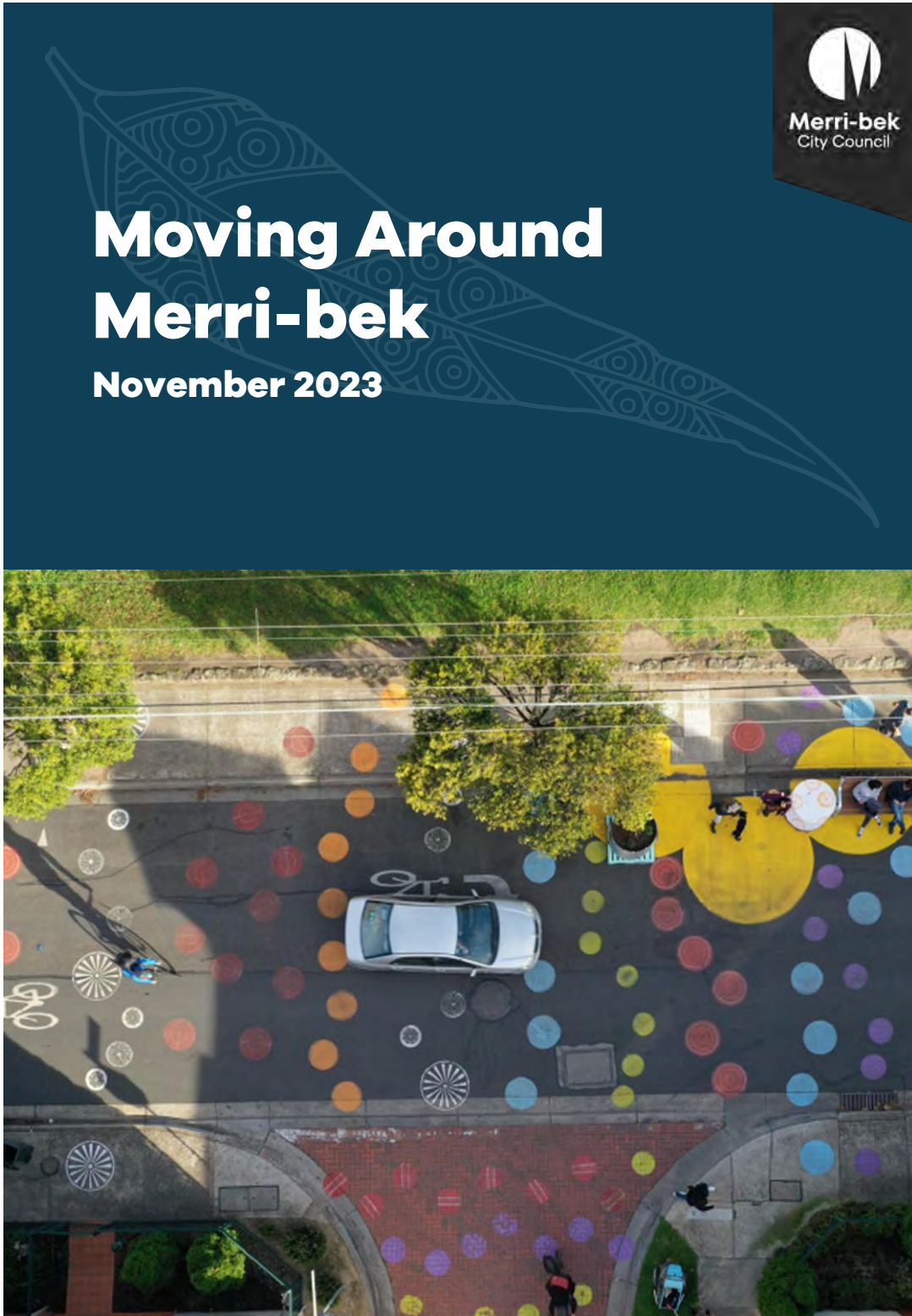
We will review feedback and revise the draft documents into a final version throughout January and following the Hearing of Submissions.

Officers will prepare a report for council detailing findings of the engagement on the draft strategy and present the final updated version of the strategy and Action Plan to the March 2024 council meeting.

We will seek endorsement of the final *Moving Around Merri-bek* and Action Plan at the March 2024 Council meeting. Development of a future action plan will take place during 2024 and will be presented to Councillors for endorsement late 2024.

Attachment/s

1	Draft Moving Around Merri-bek	D23/532851
2	Draft Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan	D23/532848
3	Moving around Merri-bek - Consultation Findings Report (Final 231023)	D23/532860



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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

The ways that people move through Merri-bek vary greatly, and no matter how people choose to travel, they should be able to do so easily and safely. But currently, not everyone has the same access or choices when it comes to transport in this municipality, and this is largely location based.

Subdivision of land since European settlement laid the foundational structure of Merri-bek's contemporary transport system. Tram and railway lines led property development when the southern parts of Merri-bek were developed, and the northern parts of the municipality were developed for housing when cars became more attainable and accessible for many Australians.

These development patterns in Merri-bek have resulted in a city with distinct characteristics—some areas where goods and services are more readily accessible via public transport, walking or other active transport, and others developed assuming near-universal car ownership, with very few travel options other than to drive.

In recent decades, the environmental, social, and economic costs of these development patterns have become apparent. Social isolation, road trauma, cost of living pressures, rising greenhouse gas emissions, and worsening public health have coalesced into a complex set of issues that we have to reckon with. Furthermore, the way we work and move around has changed since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ultimately, all these factors mean the way we approach transport planning needs to adapt and change. In response, we have developed a new transport strategy, **Moving Around Merri-bek**. This strategy seeks to address the challenges highlighted above, and steer us towards a future transport system that is **safe, accessible, sustainable, healthy, liveable, and inclusive**. These values will guide the way we manage and make changes to our transport networks.

Many different movement layers make up our transport system, including the pedestrian, cycling, public transport, and driving networks. These networks integrate with the way we plan for and make changes to our places.

We will continue improving the existing pedestrian network, including our footpaths, crossings, and providing more pedestrian amenities such as seating and lighting. We will

look to expand our popular ride-and-walk-to-school programs to encourage more children and families to travel actively to school.

We will continue improving and expanding our cycling network. Improving safety at intersections will be a focus, and we will plan for the growing usage of 2 and 3-wheeled transport, including e-bikes, e-scooters, and other forms of micro-mobility.

We will advocate to the Victorian Government for improvements to our public transport networks. This includes making public transport infrastructure fully accessible, reforming our legacy bus routes to meet contemporary needs, and increasing service frequencies across our trains, trams, and buses. We also advocate for duplicating and connecting the Upfield line to the Craigieburn line and making sure level crossing removal projects deliver the best outcomes for our community.

We will work to make our driving network safer. We will advocate for the ability to rollout 30 km/h safer speeds where appropriate. We will continue to make sure those who need to drive are able to reach their destinations. We will protect residential amenity where non-local traffic clogs up local streets. We will implement a parking decision-making process, so issues are worked through fairly and transparently. We will also continue to ensure accessible parking and loading zones are sufficient and well-placed to meet the needs of people and businesses.

We will ensure our land use system enables our population to increase while keeping people moving. Increases in density in activity centres and around transport hubs is key. Likewise, we will work to deliver high-quality streets and public spaces for people to enjoy.

In order to apply our values to our transport system to create great streets and places, we will develop a Streets for People framework, a tool for holistically analysing and improving our streets. This will allow us to work through identifying suitable streets, assessing them at the network level, and at the street level, and working with our local communities to ensure changes to our streets work for everyone.

This strategy aims to achieve all this and more, ultimately keeping our community at the heart, and creating a people-centric transport system for now and into the future.

Introduction

Purpose of this document

Moving Around Merri-bek is a long-term strategic document that guides the way Council manages and makes changes to Merri-bek’s transport system.

It also outlines our transport advocacy priorities to the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments. This document will be reviewed and updated when required to ensure it reflects Council and the communities’ priorities, and best-practice transport planning principles.

Developing Moving Around Merri-bek

The development of Moving Around Merri-bek began with a Social Research Report. This was commissioned by Council to understand the challenges faced by our community when moving around, and the opportunities they saw to improve transport. This report is available via Council’s Conversations Merri-bek website.

This research was crucial in understanding how Merri-bek has changed since the adoption of the previous Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy 2019 (MITS 2019), particularly the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

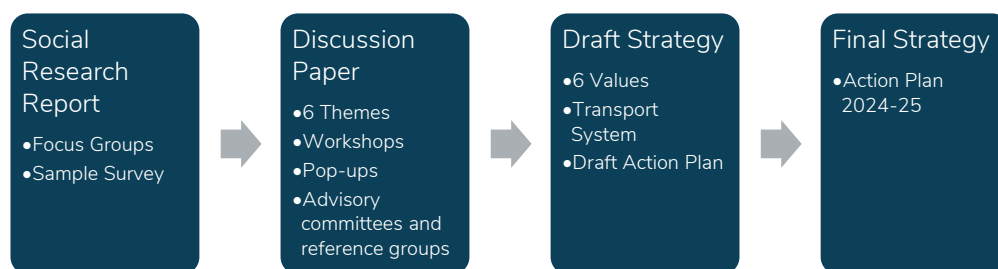
These results, along with the 2021 10-year Community Vision, the Council Plan 2021 to 2025, a heightened focus on the climate emergency, and new developments in transport technology, fed into the development of a Discussion Paper. This Paper was structured around six themes related to transport and outlined potential actions that we could undertake as part of a new Strategy.

A survey was developed and published on Council’s Conversations Merri-bek page to gather community feedback on the Paper and learn more about their experiences of and ideas for Merri-bek’s transport system. We also spoke with each of our Council advisory committees and reference groups, and spoke face-to-face to our community at a range of pop-ups and workshops. This engagement is summarised in a report, which is available alongside the Discussion Paper via Council’s website, as well as summarised within this draft strategy.

Moving Around Merri-bek was developed using the results of the community consultation described above. The document is structured in 3 parts. The first, around 6 values, which have been adapted from the Discussion Paper, based on what we learned from our community. These values are the fundamental tenets that guide the way we manage and make changes to our transport system. The second part of this Draft Strategy applies these values and our findings to the transport networks that make up our transport system, in line with the structure outlined in Victoria’s Transport Integration Act. In the final section, we introduce a new approach, Streets for People. This program outlines a holistic approach to street improvements that considers all modes of transport.

A Draft Action Plan accompanies this document. It outlines the actions that Council will undertake related to transport in 2024-25 and outlines actions planned for 2025-30.

Following a round of community engagement on this draft strategy, a final Moving Around Merri-bek and Action Plan will be presented to Council for adoption in early 2024.



Community at our heart – engagement summary

Community engagement has been a critical component to the development of this Draft Transport Strategy. Engagement as part of the Discussion Paper stage ran for 6 weeks, over which there were a range of ways for people to get involved, be informed and provide feedback. This stage of engagement was supported by a Discussion Paper which encouraged conversation and explored transport challenges, opportunities and ideas in Merri-bek across six core themes: Safety; Accessibility; Sustainability; Health; Liveability and Collaboration.

During this period, other transport events took place including the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Road Safety hearing at Coburg Civic Centre and the Mayor's Walk focusing on improving safety along the Merri Creek.

The engagement program was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign, that resulted in over 1,000 people providing feedback including:

- 532 survey responses (58 surveys in other languages).
- 300 people participating in 6 pop-up events.
- 41 representatives from Council's Advisory Committees, Reference Groups and Youth; Ambassadors attending workshops and meetings.
- 4 representatives from the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people attending a meeting; and
- 5 written submissions.

Based on demographic information, overall, the consultation successfully engaged a broad cross-section of the community including people of all age groups, from a range of backgrounds, as well as over 100 people with disability, limited mobility or who are a carer of someone with disability.

The feedback collected as part of this process was independently analysed by Chatterbox Projects.

The full engagement report is available here: <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/moving-around-merri-bek>

A second round of public consultation will take place for this Draft Transport Strategy and the accompanying Draft Action Plan.

Discussion Paper Feedback

The Discussion Paper restarted the conversation around transport with our community. It highlighted the transport challenges and opportunities based around the 6 themes.

The theme of safety featured strongly throughout the feedback and was the most prominent challenge in moving around Merri-bek and a major barrier to choosing more active or sustainable modes of transport. This was reflected in people selecting 'Safety - A safe transport system' as the highest priority theme for the new strategy (68.5%) in the survey, in which people were able to note their top 3 priority themes. Liveability was ranked the second highest priority overall (62.1%), closely followed by Accessibility (57.6%) and Sustainability (57%).

Reflecting the overall feedback, the majority of suburbs had the following key ideas/priorities in common:

- Safer, better, increased paths for cycling and walking
- Increased, improved, extended public transport services (with Brunswick West, Glenroy and Fawkner mentioning bus services)
- Advocating for accessible public transport stops/services
- Traffic calming and slowing cars down/ reducing speed limits

Policies guiding transport

We are building on local and state government policies, programs, and legislation to inform our transport strategy. The relevant policies and legislation are listed below.

Merri-bek City Council

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Merri-bek 2021-2031 Community Vision
- Merri-bek Advocacy Priorities 2022
- Accessible & Inclusive Communications Policy
- Living and Ageing Well Framework
- Merri-bek Planning Scheme
- Active women and Girls in Merri-bek Strategy
- Children, young people and families
- Climate Risk Strategy and Foundational Action Plan
- Community Engagement Policy
- COVID-19 recovery plan
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Gender Equality statement of Commitment
- Fawkner Transport Study
- Human Rights Policy
- Integrated Water Management Strategy + Action Plan
- Later years Strategy
- LGBTIQ+ Action Plan
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Merri-bek Community Infrastructure Plan
- Industrial Land Use Strategy
- Open Space Strategy (draft)
- Parking Management Policy
- Road Management Plan 2021-2025
- Shopping Strip Renewal Policy
- Social Cohesion Plan
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan 2016 – 2026
- Upfield Corridor Action Plan 2018-2029
- Public Lighting Policy
- Zero Carbon Merri-bek Framework + Action Plan
- 10-year Financial Plan (2021 – 2031)

Inter-Council Strategies

- Northern Region Transport Strategy
- North and West Melbourne City Deal Plan 2020-2040
- Northern Council Alliance EV Transition Plan

Victorian State Government

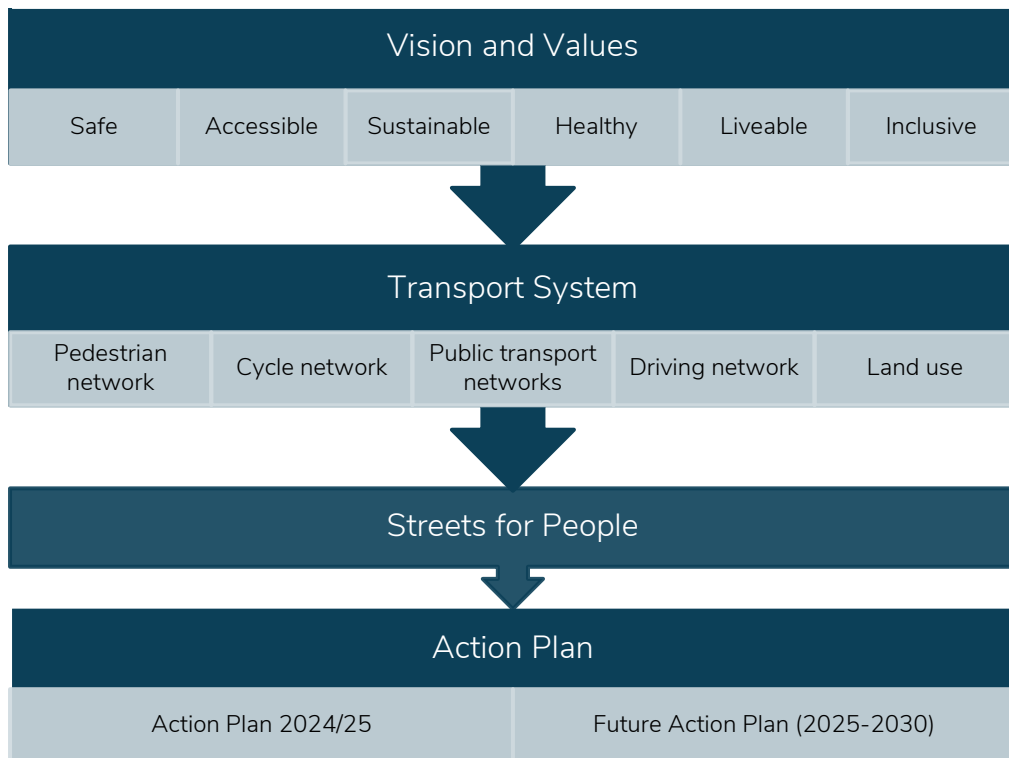
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050
- Road Management Act 2004
- Transport Integration Act 2010
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Climate Change Act 2017
- Local Government Act 2020
- Gender Equality Act 2020
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018 – 2028
- Victoria's Bus Plan
- Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030
- Victoria's Climate Change Strategy
- Victoria's Zero Emissions Vehicle Roadmap
- Victoria's Bus Network Reform – Melbourne's Northern Suburbs
- Victorian Movement and Place Framework
- Victoria's Tram Plan
- Victoria's Draft Transport Accessibility Strategy
- Victoria's Bus Network Reform – Northern Suburbs

How this document works

This strategy is set out in three parts. First are our Vision and Values. In this section, we outline and explain our six primary values that we will use to manage and shape how our transport system works.

The second part is the transport system. Here, we translate our Vision and Values onto the different networks that make up our transport system. This ensures that our values are used to guide the practical way our transport system is managed. It concludes with a new approach to delivering transport and streetscape improvements, Streets for People.

Finally, a separate, but linked, Action Plan outlines the specific work we will undertake and when we intend to complete the work. This strategy includes an Action Plan for 2024-25 and outlines actions committed for the years beyond 2025. A new Action Plan will be developed in 2024 that will cover the years 2025-2029 and outline actions to be considered beyond 2030.



History

The way one can travel through Merri-bek varies greatly depending on a number of factors, including location. In the north, it is difficult to travel without a car, with shops and houses typically far from the few public transport stations. In the south, trams and trains are easy to come across. The foundation for this difference is not new; it was laid as early as the first European settlements. However, our transport network bears the influence of those who lived here far earlier than that.

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung of the Kulin nation walked on the country we now call the City of Merri-bek for countless generations before the forceful cultural and physical dispossession of this land.

Though the walking routes of Merri-bek's original pedestrians were mostly destroyed by European colonisation, some paths are still able to be travelled. Pascoe Vale Road is one of the Woi-wurrung routes that is still visible on a contemporary road map, and just as many modern Australians walk along the Merri Creek trail every day looking to connect with nature, so did the Woi-wurrung. Chipped stone fragments found during the construction of the De Chene Bridge show what an important and well-used travel link this route was.

In 1837, two years after Melbourne's settlement on the banks of the Yarra, Robert Hoddle surveyed the surrounding land. The survey began with a line running north-south through John Batman's house and Flagstaff Hill. This would eventually become Sydney Road. From this line, he mapped land parcels, creating arbitrary property boundaries.

However, this mapping did not include any roads to access the properties. As such, the new landowners were forced to skim strips from the boundaries to create the first Merri-bek road network. Unsurprisingly, most purchasers gave up the smallest amount of land allowed. This resulted in narrow and sometimes steep roads, the effects of which are still seen in the narrowness of roads like Albion Street Brunswick and the steepness of O'Hea Street Pascoe Vale.

In 1851 gold was discovered near Clunes, and Pascoe Vale Road and Sydney Road became tollways as people rushed to find riches. The need for housing and other amenities along this route created demand for brick and bluestone, early industries for Brunswick and Coburg.

As Melbourne continued to grow, so did its transport network. The Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company (MTOBC) operated the largest network in the world, and in 1887 MTOBC expanded north along Sydney Road, as far as Moreland Road.

Property speculators began buying farms, planning trams and rail lines throughout, and then subdividing the land into residential housing lots. Sometimes these purchasers formed tramway companies – such as the Northern Tramway Company, which operated a horse-drawn tramway along Sydney Road from Moreland Road to Gaffney Street from 1889 to 1915. Other times, they left space in the subdivision plan, such as the curved intersections at Melville Road and Turner Street at Bell Street and Turner Derby Street at O'Hea Street Pascoe Vale, in the hope that a tramway might one day be built.

Most of these privately run transport companies were created to improve land values and did not earn much from ticket revenue. As the companies failed, first local governments, later the state government, stepped in to become operators of the tramways. Largely, these tram networks operated closer to the CBD, and in the south of Merri-bek, while the north remained farmland.

In 1950 the petrol rationing introduced during World War Two was removed. With cars now affordable for many Australians, those northern housing lots beyond the Melbourne train and tram network became more easily accessible. By 1966, suburban streets of detached houses with on-site parking occupied most all the former farmland in Merri-bek's north. Though they were still poorly accessible via public transport, it was simply assumed that one would use a car.

These development patterns in Merri-bek have resulted in a city with two distinct characteristics – a south formed before car ownership became common-place, and a north developed assuming near-universal car ownership, with very few travel options other than to drive.

A strategy that integrates transport to place and seeks to create more travel options for all individuals, and one that respects the traditional owners of this land, is essential to deliver a future city with transport equity.

Council's Responsibilities

All levels of government, and the private sector, contribute to managing and changing our transport system. The following table outlines where Merri-bek City Council is responsible for an element of the transport system, and where other entities may be involved.

Note: These examples are general in nature and exceptions are likely to exist under each section

	Local government	State Government	Private sector
Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri-bek manages most local streets and footpaths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Government manages the declared road network, speed limits, and most signalised intersections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private companies manage some of the transport vehicles in Melbourne, such as car share and e-bike/e-scooter share schemes
Street amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri-bek seating, trees, bike parking, and other amenities Merri-bek monitors the performance of Jemena and Citipower supplied street lights Merri-bek supplies and maintains public lighting in parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Government provides public lighting on railway platforms and shares costs with local government on arterial roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Lighting attached to power poles are maintained by Electricity Distribution Companies Jemena and Citipower. Al fresco dining and parklets are managed by private businesses under Merri-bek's permit policy
Off-road paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri-bek constructs and maintains most off-road paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Government constructs some new off-road paths it has identified as Strategic Cycling Corridors. Some of the land managed by the Victorian Government has off-road paths, including land near rivers (managed by State Government water corporations, such as Melbourne Water) and railways (managed by VicTrack) and freeways (managed by VicRoads) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some off-paths, such as the Ettaro Apartments walkway (part of the East Brunswick Shimmy) are privately owned and maintained but provide access to the public
Public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri-bek maintains a number of shelters it has installed at bus stops. Merri-bek is responsible for constructing and maintaining footpaths to bus stops, tram stops and railway stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State Government own and facilitate upgrades to each of the public transport networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street Advertising Companies JC Decaux and Media supply and maintain approximately 14 bus and tram shelters Private companies operate our public transport services, under contract with the State Government. Property developers who wish to move a bus stop pay the cost to reconstruct it meet universal access standards

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri-bek provides Community Transport Services 		
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merri-bek manages on-street parking on all streets Merri-bek manages some off-street car parks, including in activity centres and at recreation reserves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car parking at railway stations is often owned and managed by the State Government Parking rates for new developments are set by the State Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some off-street car parks are managed by private companies
Land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Merri-bek Planning Scheme is used by Council as the Planning Authority to help deliver State and local planning objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Government sets out the objectives for planning in Victoria for land use and development in the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Victorian Government entities (VicRoads, Melbourne Water, Melbourne Metropolitan Cemetery Trust, VicTrack) act as land manager for large parcels of crown land in the City of Merri-bek. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The private sector uses and develops land in line with the Merri-bek Planning Scheme. Contributions are also collected when land is subdivided to help pay for roads and sustainable transport projects.

Community Vision 2021-2031

This strategy is guided by the Community Vision and Theme 2: Moving and Living Safely in Merri-bek.

“Merri-bek is our home.

We respect and look after our land, air, waterways, and animals.

We care for our people and celebrate our diverse stories, cultures, and identities.

Merri-bek is enhanced by all of us supporting our local businesses, arts communities, and social organisations.

We work together proactively and transparently to continue to create a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative, and regenerative community.

Many faces, one Merri-bek.”

Theme 2: Moving and Living Safely in Merri-bek

In 2031, Merri-bek is safe. Our streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists, day and night. Everyone in Merri-bek is able to live in their homes without fear from others, both known and unknown.

In Merri-bek, we actively look out for each other and are well supported to do this by council.

Values

The content of Moving Around Merri-bek is built upon research, experience, established policy, and the diverse voices of our Merri-bek community. It pulls all these elements together to give a picture of not only how we get around Merri-bek, but the many different aspects of daily life which relate to transport, and how we can improve this into the future.

We have identified 6 core values that drive us and our community as we use and look at our transport system. These values are the overarching tenets that guide our work in transport at Merri-bek City Council. They ensure that all our work contributes to bettering our city and our transport system in the ways that are important to our community.

Our transport system needs to be:



Safe

Our streets should be safe for everyone

There are many ways to move around Merri-bek. Whether you're walking, cycling, driving, or using another kind of transport, safety is important, and will impact travel choices. This is particularly important for reducing gender, racial, and class inequality in our transport system.

Merri-bek continues to see high rates of casualty crashes (fatality or serious injury requiring hospitalisation) on our roads. The number of crashes is also high relative to neighbouring municipalities. Vulnerable road users are disproportionately affected by crashes on our road. Hotspots include Sydney Road, Bell Street, and other arterial roads with vulnerable road users more likely to be injured in a crash at a marked intersection.

There are many other ways that our streets can feel and be safe or unsafe for street users. The safety of pedestrians, cyclists and those using other micro mobility devices can be affected by factors such as uneven pavement, poor lighting at night, and motor vehicle noise and hostility. These safety impacts are particularly relevant when a person must walk or ride an extended period to reach a destination.

We're committed to improving how safe our streets feel and function for all road users. This includes the adoption of a safe system approach. This approach (Figure 1) is divided into 4 sections: Safe Roads, Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles, and Safe People.

Key objectives

1. Create streets where everyone feels safe
2. Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roads
3. In line with Victoria's Towards Zero Strategy, adopt a Safe System approach to road safety.



Figure 1 A Safe System Approach

Accessible

Our transport system should support everyone to access places they need and want to go

A transport system that allows everyone to access their everyday needs is critical to enable everyone to participate fully in society.

People with disability make up approximately 20 per cent of the Victorian and Merri-bek population and must be actively included in decisions about creating an accessible transport system. However, accessibility goes beyond supporting those with disability. Elderly people, people with prams or personal shopping trolleys, and people with long or short-term mobility issues need similar levels of infrastructure to support their daily travel needs. We must also consider those with invisible illness and disability, and with disability that does not affect mobility, but still impacts the way a person can go about their daily tasks.

Inclusive design features, and the application of Universal Design, are critical throughout the transport network in order to make it possible for any street user to comfortably and conveniently reach their destination. These features include, but are not limited to, tactile, visual, and audible design elements, as well as even street surfaces, and colour contrast.

Key objectives

1. Create a transport system that enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.
2. Actively identify and remove barriers to transport services and infrastructure that limit peoples access to everyday needs
3. Advocate to the Victorian Government to create a fully accessible public transport system, including accessible tram stops and tram vehicles.

Sustainable

We need to reduce our transport emissions, limit the impacts of climate risks, and enhance our natural environment

We are increasingly feeling and seeing the impacts of climate change on the environment, locally, across Australia and the globe. Transport plays a huge role in this, with transport generating a quarter of all greenhouse emissions in Merri-bek. Approximately 221,000 tonnes (equivalent) of carbon dioxide were generated by transport trips in Merri-bek in 2022, up 14 per cent from 2021.

We must work to minimise and the impacts of the climate emergency, both for the health of our planet and community members.

We must also consider the existing effects of climate change as we plan our future infrastructure. For example, work to reduce the Urban Heat Island Effect and increase the space available for nature.

We will look at the physical impacts of climate, such as heatwaves and stormwater flows, to our infrastructure and their useful life. We will seek ways to mitigate the contribution of transport infrastructure to the Urban Heat Island Effect by investigating the use of cool materials and by maximising opportunities for planting trees, especially along heat hotspots and active transport routes.

Council's adopted goal for Merri-bek is to achieve a 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 (against the baseline year of 2011 / 2012), net zero by 2035 and drawdown ('negative emissions') by 2040. It is important that we do all we can do support this goal as we develop transport projects.

Key objectives

1. To support our community to reduce their transport emissions as rapidly as possible
2. Actively reduce Council's contribution to transport emissions
3. To use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.
4. To adapt our transport infrastructure and services to meet the demands of a hotter and more unpredictable climate.

Healthy

Our streets should support the physical, mental, and social health of our community

Our transport system directly and indirectly impacts our health and wellbeing in several significant ways. It enables us to access friends, family, shops, services, schools and workplaces, providing the foundation for people to live happy and healthy lives.

We are in the midst of a health crisis, caused, in part, by our transport system. Firstly, from emissions. Across Australia, 900 to 2,000 people prematurely die from air pollution from vehicles each year. Another 900 and 4,500 cases of bronchitis, cardiovascular and respiratory disease occur each year from motor vehicle pollution¹.

Secondly, more than half of Australian adults do not get their daily exercise needs, nor do 70 per cent of children. Meanwhile, only an alarming 2 per cent of teenagers currently meet health guidelines for daily physical activity².

Finally, one-third of Australians report feeling lonely in the in a given week³, with increased incidences of loneliness prevalent in older age groups.

We will create more opportunities for people to travel actively, and to socialise, on our transport system. We will use our existing programs, including Open Streets, Play Streets, and Streets for People to encourage physical activity and make changes to our streets to support active transport trips.

The way we move, our ability to do so, and a transition away from a fossil fuelled transport system towards one with physical activity and social encounters built-in is crucial in reducing these significant health impacts.

Key objectives

1. Reduce air and noise pollution generated from vehicles
2. Use the transport system to improve the mental and physical health of everyone in Merri-bek
3. Create streets and public spaces that encourage physical activity and socialisation amongst local communities

¹ [Sustainable transport in healthcare](#)

² [About physical activity and exercise | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)

³ [Social isolation and loneliness - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)

Liveable

Access to shops, services, Community Transport Services, and well-designed public spaces are essential for our liveability

We want Merri-bek to be a great place to live, work, visit, and more for residents and all visitors.

The way that our transport network is designed and makes use of space is crucial for increasing liveability.

Making Merri-bek liveable means creating vibrant and welcoming spaces for people to come together and go about their day-to-day lives. It also means building a transport network that enables all residents to reach these destinations easily and safely.

Research has found that better linking land use and transport planning is critical to increasing liveability. Increasing density around essential services and shops, improving public transport services, and providing safe walking and wheeling paths and infrastructure are all noted as key levers to improving the liveability of an area.

Finally, the cost of transport inevitably impacts liveability, with higher costs reducing standard of living and increasing financial stress. Having key destinations easily accessible by active and public transport reduces the need for people to own a car, or multiple cars, or pay for public transport, to reach their daily needs.

Key objectives

1. Improve access to shops, services, and employment for our community
2. Create high-quality and well-designed streets and places that are vibrant and well-loved by all
3. Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community

Inclusive

We will work in collaboration with our community and stakeholders to foster an inclusive Merri-bek

An inclusive city is one where everyone has an equal opportunity to access shops, services, employment, social, and civic participation in our society. As part of this, we will use Gender Impact and Equality Assessments to ensure all our work improves peoples' rights and opportunities in line with our requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020 and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

At Merri-bek, we are committed to putting the community at the heart of everything we do.

Our Community Engagement Policy and Council Plan guide all our work, including transport projects, to make sure we consistently deliver genuine opportunities for our community to take part in our work. As part of that Policy, Council made a commitment to improve the way we engage with the community and local businesses on transport projects. This included the use of plain language in reports, access to evidence used to support decisions, and providing genuine opportunities for the community to provide input.

We will refine and expand our transport engagement plan ensuring our community engagement is best practice and meaningful.

We are committed to working in partnership with our Advisory Committees and Reference Groups, Connectors, service provider networks, interfaith networks, Neighbourhood Houses, and other community groups and organisations to ensure accessibility and inclusion are at the core of any transport response.

We also work collaboratively with our neighbouring councils, via groups such as M9, the Northern Council Alliance, Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action, and transport specific forums including the Metropolitan Transport Forum.

Further, our Level Crossing Removal Project Position Paper, 'Reshaping Brunswick', outlines a collaborative approach to improving transport infrastructure and amenity along the Upfield Line and Sydney Road Corridor with the State Government, local trader associations, stakeholder groups, and community members⁴.

Key objectives

1. Work collaboratively with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
2. Work to make our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities

⁴ [Reshaping Brunswick | Conversations Merri-bek](#)

The Merri-bek Transport System

The Merri-bek Transport System is the totality of physical space and infrastructure that allows us to take transport trips. This includes our footpaths, bike lanes, roads, railway lines, and parking. We also include land uses, as the way our city is built guides the ways in which we move around.

This follows the Transport System framework outlined in the Transport Integration Act, which changes to the local context where appropriate. For instance, as Merri-bek does not have a shipping port or an airport, we have excluded this from our framework.

Figure 2 shows the distinct transport network layers that comprise the Merri-bek Transport System.

Work collaboratively

We will continue to work with our neighbouring councils, state government agencies, and our broader community to improve transport for everyone. We work collaboratively with other government agencies already via the Metropolitan Transport Forum, M9 Council group, among others.

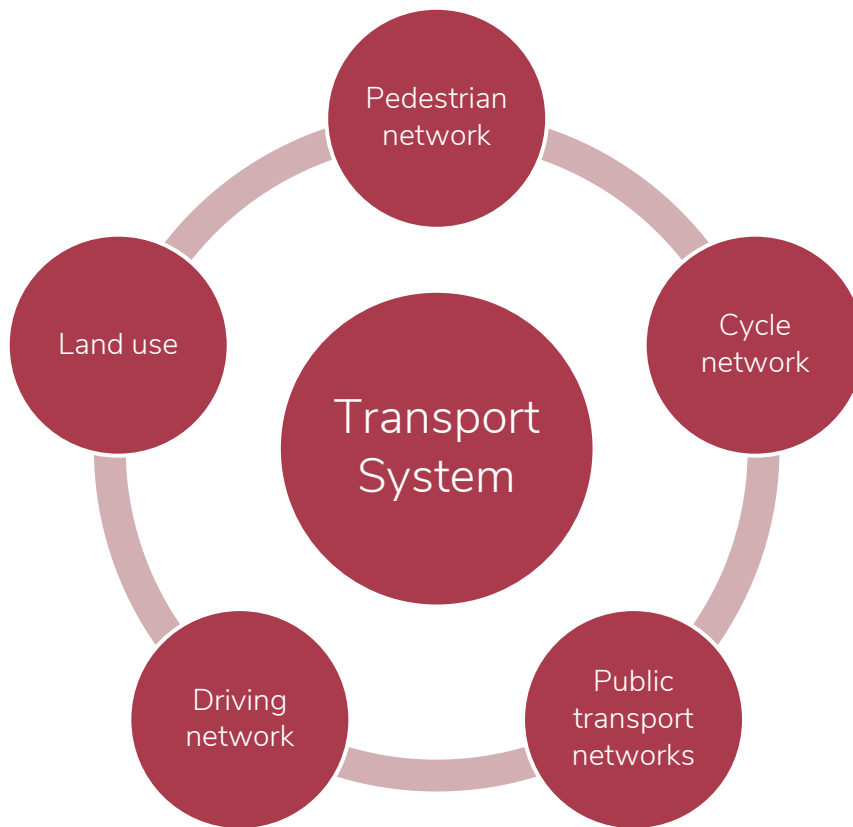


Figure 2 Merri-bek Transport System

Pedestrian Network

Every trip in Merri-bek starts or finishes on the pedestrian network. Our footpaths and street crossings should be designed to allow everyone to access the shops and services they need comfortably and safely, and to participate fully in society.

What we will do

Support active travel to school

Making it easier for children to walk, skate, scoot, or ride to school is one of the most important things we can do for our pedestrian network. It helps reduce local traffic and parking congestion, reduces our transport emissions, improve the mental and physical health of young people (and their parents) and helps build good habits from a young age.

Ride & Stride, and the accompanying Open Streets program, is an initiative that sees streets closed to vehicle traffic during school drop-off and pick-up times at local schools. The program is hugely successful, with 97 per cent of the families surveyed from participating schools reporting the street felt safer than normal. The program, and its consequent increased feeling of safety, program has contributed to a 19 per cent increase in active travel at those schools and has demonstrates the enormous impact that working with the school community can have on changing travel behaviour for the better.

We will look to expand our active transport and safer streets school programs to more schools across Merri-bek. We will also look to make further infrastructure improvements around schools to improve safety and access to schools.

Increase amenity in activity centres

There are many elements beyond the footpath that are important for supporting and enabling people to get around on the pedestrian network. Seating, lighting, wayfinding signage, and trees and other greenery can all help us when walking or wheeling on the pedestrian network.

We will look to enhance our pedestrian amenity in activity centres and along the Principal Pedestrian Network (part of the Victorian Government's transport hierarchy).

Review and improve our network

Uneven footpaths, missing links, steep ramps, and other barriers reduce the safety, accessibility, and comfort of people using the pedestrian network.

We will increase our review and maintenance of our footpaths, with a focus on the Principal Pedestrian Network. We will also look to declutter our footpaths in activity centres and along streets with narrow footpaths, removing redundant signage and other infrastructure that limits access and mobility along our pedestrian network.

Safe and convenient crossings

A lack of safe and convenient crossings decreases safety on our streets. It also reduces peoples' ability to undertake transport trips using the pedestrian network, particularly for children, the elderly, and people with disability.

We will look to decrease the wait time for pedestrians at signalised crossings, increase the green time for pedestrians, provide new crossings where needed, and advocate for missing crossing legs to be installed. Increasing the number of safe crossing points, and improving existing crossings (including at roundabouts), will improve safety and our communities' ability to move around Merri-bek.

What we will advocate for

Improve access to public transport

The Level Crossing Removal Projects and other railway upgrades present opportunities to improve pedestrian access to railway stations and to public transport stops. Pedestrian access should extend beyond the station itself.

We will advocate to the State Government to improve accessibility and create more direct access points into railway stations, tram and bus stops, and along public transport corridors.

Infrastructure and behaviour change programs for all schools

Active travel to school has decreased by almost 30 per cent in the last 15 years⁵. Significant investment is required to reverse this trend.

We will advocate to the State and Commonwealth Governments for dedicated funding to deliver infrastructure upgrades and behaviour change programs to all schools in Merri-bek.

What does success look like?

- More people using the pedestrian network for their everyday trips
- More young people travelling actively and independently to school
- A reduction in causality crashes involving pedestrians

How will we measure success?

Success for our pedestrian network will be based on analysis of existing transport datasets, such as VISTA and the ABS Census where increases in walking trips can be tracked. We will also look at new data sources, such as camera and sensor data, as well as insights from aggregated phone data. Success will also depend on our ability to implement new infrastructure, and upgrade existing infrastructure, to make walking safer and easier for everyone.

We will continue to use community feedback on all our projects to ensure that our work meets the needs of everyone in Merri-bek.

⁵ [Push for teens to find their feet as daily active travel rates take a step back | Cancer Council](#)

Cycle Network

Riding a bike is a fun, healthy, sustainable, and affordable way to move around Merri-bek. By improving and expanding upon our existing network, we can increase the range of transport choices for people and allow more people to try biking. This will help reduce our transport emissions, ease local vehicle traffic and parking congestion, and improve health outcomes.

What we will do

Expanding the network

In order to increase the number of trips by bike, and encourage new people to take up biking, we will expand Merri-bek's cycle network. This means leveraging off our existing network so new links are not isolated from the broader system.

New connections will be built to enable people of all ages and abilities to travel safely, based on the three types of cycle infrastructure outlined below.

Improving our existing network

Merri-bek is fortunate to have an existing, relatively high-quality, cycle network compared to most councils in Australia. The Merri Creek Trail, Moonee Ponds Creek Trail, Upfield Shared Path, Capital City Trail, O'Hea Street corridor, Dawson Street corridor, and M80 Trail are the backbone to our existing cycle network. We also have a network of shimmies providing connections through traffic-calmed local streets. While parts of this network are high quality and meet contemporary transport needs, other parts of the network need improvements to make them safer and more comfortable for users of all skills and abilities.

We will work to make these improvements, keeping best practice and suitability of certain infrastructure in mind, with a particular focus will be improving safety and comfort at intersections.

Rolling out more bike parking

Parking for wheeled transport of all kinds is important for enabling people to take local cycle trips. As with car parking, this will allow people to securely store their mode of transport while shopping, socialising, or working.

We will continue to roll-out bike parking where needed, including for new larger e-bikes and cargo bikes. We will also investigate local demand for bike hanger parking, so people in older style townhouses or apartments are able to securely store a bicycle.

Support other forms of wheeled transport

Our cycle network needs to support a growing diversity of 2 and 3-wheeled transportation. This includes electric bikes, cargo bikes, tricycles, e-scooters, and more. These micro-mobility vehicles have different dimensions, and riding conditions that should be reflected in the design of our cycle infrastructure. Shared mobility is also growing, with shared e-scooters and e-bikes in inner-Melbourne recording some of the highest use rates in the world.

We will undertake a feasibility study to determine whether shared mobility is suitable for Merri-bek, and what policies may be needed to reduce footpath parking and riding by users.

Behaviour change programs

Behaviour change programs are critical to helping people learn and apply new skills and knowledge. We have a range of existing programs that are designed to help people learn how to travel more sustainably.

This includes our popular Ride & Stride program, including Open Streets. This program helps parents, students, and school communities to travel actively to school.

We will continue to support bike education programs for adults and children, and partner with local organisations that are providing this service already.

We will also support communities to rediscover the potential of their local street via our Play Streets toolkit. This toolkit helps communities to plan and run a small event on a local street, opening it up for play and community-building activities. We will further look at opportunities to integrate Play Streets as part of our infrastructure planning and streetscape improvement projects.

What we will advocate for

Boosting funding for active transport

Our ability to improving and building upon the cycle network relies largely on an increase in funding.

We will advocate to the State Government to partner with Merri-bek to deliver upgrades to the cycle network above our budgeted cycle infrastructure program.

Safer intersections and crossing points

We will seek outcomes for improving cycling safety at intersections requires approval from the State Government, particularly where the cycle network intersects with the arterial road network. Items that improve cycling safety include increased protection, advance green bike lanterns, install new crossing points across arterial roads, and installing missing crossing legs to increase cycling access.

What does success look like?

- More cycling infrastructure is installed
- More people riding bikes and other forms of micro-mobility
- Those riding bikes reflect the diversity of our community
- Reduced collisions involving cyclists

How will we measure success?

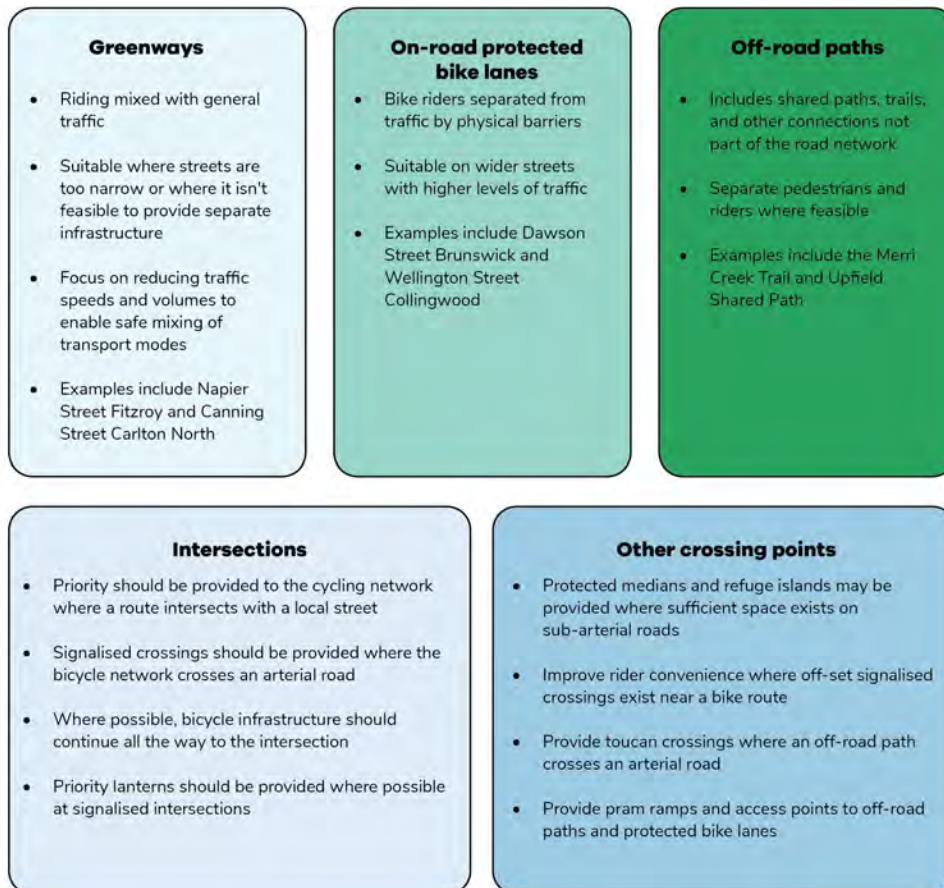
We will use existing transport data sources to help us monitor and evaluate cycling in Merri-bek. These include VISTA and the ABS Census. We will also look at new data sources, such as camera and sensor data, as well as insights from aggregated phone data.

We will investigate the transport data that is available to inform how we measure and evaluate our travel patterns. Finally, we will continue to use community feedback to inform and guide our infrastructure decisions.

The Merri-bek Cycling Network

Our Merri-bek Cycling Network will provide a level of cycling infrastructure that is safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities, and designed to encourage new people who currently feel unsafe riding in Merri-bek.

Primarily, this network will consist of the following 3 cycle infrastructure typologies, intersection, and crossing point guidelines.



The decision of which infrastructure is best suited for a given street depends on a range of factors, including:

- The role that street has for moving other modes of traffic
- The speed and volumes of motor vehicles
- The width of the street
- The type of land uses along the street
- The existence and number of driveway crossovers

The matrix in Figure 3 provides a guideline for determining which cycling typology may be appropriate based on vehicle volumes and travel speeds. Changes to vehicle speed and reducing vehicle volumes may also be considered to improve a street, depending on the context of that street.

While parts of our existing network include painted on-road bike lanes along relatively high speed and traffic volume corridors, new and upgraded infrastructure will be considered within the below matrix.

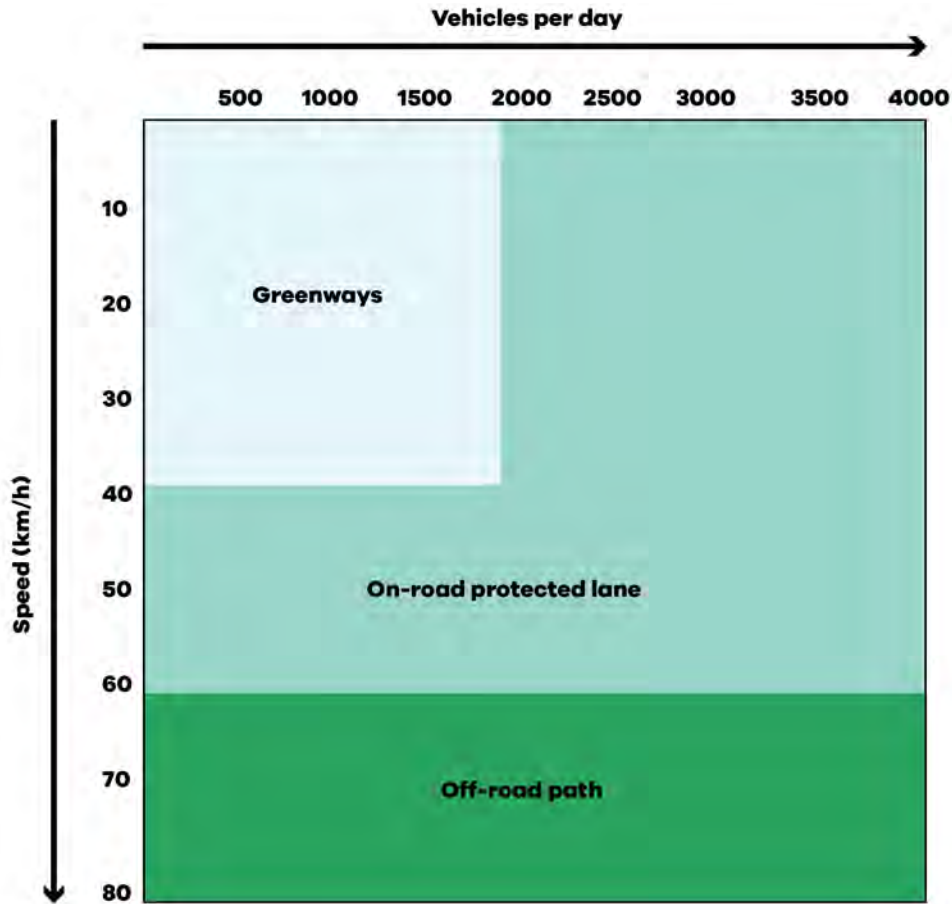


Figure 3 Cycling infrastructure matrix

Public Transport Networks

Our public transport networks enable people to access jobs and services across and beyond Merri-bek. Having an integrated public transport network is essential to reducing our carbon footprint.

Much of Merri-bek's public transport system has failed to keep pace with our city's growth, has failed to respond to changes in travel patterns resulting from that growth, and has failed to provide a usable service for all the people who live and visit of the city of Merri-bek. Our bus network is convoluted and slow, with irregular frequencies and limited service coverage. Much of our tram network is inaccessible, and trams are frequently stuck in traffic. The Upfield line remains single-track from Gowrie and has relatively low service frequencies compared to the rest of the railway network. Connecting the Upfield line to the Craigieburn line remains a high priority for our community to improve social and economic connections through the north of metro Melbourne and to the CBD.

Council is also a provider of transport services via our community transport service. It is a key local door to door transport service that support people who are unable to drive or use public transport. It comprises of a number of small buses that are also equipped with hoists and safety features that can assist people who use walking aids and wheelchairs. Council receives funding from the Commonwealth to provide this service.

The following outlines our core advocacy items to the Victorian Government to improve public transport for those who work, visit, or live in Merri-bek.

Overall

- Improve service reliability across the public transport network
- Improve the integration of public transport services, including time tabling to allow for multi-modal journeys
- Ensure bus services meet terminating trams to extend tram connections
- Prioritise improvements to public transport in the north of Merri-bek where there has been historical under-investment in public transport
- Ensure all stops, stations, and rolling stock are fully accessible
- Advocate for a PTV behaviour change strategy to promote respectful behaviour so everyone feels safe while using public transport

Trains

- Connect the Upfield Line to the Craigieburn Line via Somerton
- Duplicate track from Gowrie Railway Station to the end of the line
- Increase frequencies on the Upfield Line
- Transition Seymour Regional Rail Services to the Upfield corridor to free up capacity on the Craigieburn Line
- Ensure all railway stations are fully accessible

Deliver the Level Crossing Removal Project in Brunswick in-line with our **Reshaping Brunswick Advocacy document**

Trams

- Ensure all tram stops are fully accessible in line with our Reshaping Brunswick Advocacy document
- Upgrade the rolling stock so that all trams are low-floor and accessible
- Increase service frequencies

Buses

- Reform the bus network in Merri-bek in line with the principles in Victoria's Bus Plan
- Deliver on the current Bus Reform project for the North-West region
- Focus on improving east-west bus services
- Improve bus services in Fawkner
- Increase service frequencies and timetable duration
- Increase bus priority on arterial roads and at intersections

Community Transport

We will continue providing community transport services to meet the needs of our community.

Driving network

Accessing shops, services, and employment by car is important for many people who work, live, or play in Merri-bek. We need to make sure our driving network is safe for all road users and ensure that those who need to use a car, for personal use or freight delivery, are able to.

What we will do

Become a Safe System organisation

We will adopt a Safe System Approach to road safety, in line with the Victorian Government and many jurisdictions around the world. A Safe System Approach takes a holistic approach to road safety, looking equally at safer roads, safer speed limits, safer vehicles, and safer people driving. Some governments also consider after crash care as part of the approach. For Merri-bek, our ability to take action to improve road safety focuses on safer roads, safer speed limits on the local road network, safer people with learner driver programs and safety around school, and ensuring our council vehicle fleet is safe. We will advocate to the State Government for road safety improvements on the arterial road network, as well as advocating to the State and Commonwealth Governments for safer vehicles, driver education and licencing.

Roll out safer speed limits

Reducing speed limits decreases the likelihood and severity of a collision on our road network. In particular, the chance for survival for a pedestrian increases dramatically when speed limits are lowered. We are rolling out 40km/h on all local streets in Merri-bek and will develop a trial proposal for 30km/h in a suitable location. We will advocate to the State Government to include 30km/h in the Victorian Speed Design Guideline to make it easier for all local governments in Victoria, including Merri-bek, to provide 30km/h in suitable areas. We will also work to ensure that streets are designed to match the desired speed limit, using traffic management devices and design treatments to match the posted speed limit.

Support electric vehicles by providing charging infrastructure

Transitioning our cars to electric will be an important part of our efforts to reduce our transport emissions and improve local air

quality. As part of supporting people using electric vehicles, we will need to facilitate increased provision of publicly available charging infrastructure. Doing so will support both those who need to make a trip to a local destination and those who live in older style town houses or apartments where it is difficult or not possible to install charging infrastructure on their private property. As part of our support, we will enact the recommendations from the Northern Council Alliance community electric vehicle transition plan.

Develop a clear road hierarchy

Using the Movement and Place Framework, we will classify our road network so that the role of each street both for their movement function and their place function, and our future aspirations for them, are clear. This will help us make informed decisions about our road network and how it relates to our other transport networks.

Protect local amenity

Since the advent of GPS route planning, such as Google Maps, non-local traffic has increased on our local road network. This reduces the amenity of our local communities; increasing noise and air pollution and making our local streets less safe for children to travel actively and independently. We will look to reduce non-local traffic on local streets where it affects local amenity using traffic management interventions to guide drivers towards the arterial road network. We will advocate to GPS route planning companies, such as Google, to reduce unnecessary traffic on local streets.

Support car share

Car share has become an important tool to help people reduce their transport costs and to increase their access to shops and services. We will continue supporting car share to serve Merri-bek residents and businesses. We will also look for opportunities to reduce the administration burden to Council and to car

share operators in managing car share agreements.

Supporting freight and deliveries

Our local freight network and delivery services provide critical access for our local businesses to efficiently send and receive goods. It also allows businesses to connect to the Victorian Freight Network, connecting people, goods, and services across the state. For local businesses, this means having access to loading zones, and ensuring that heavy vehicles can safely navigate our local road network.

Delivery services have changed significantly in recent years. Much more of our local deliveries, especially food services, are now delivered by e-bike couriers. We will work to ensure all couriers, whether on an e-bike, in a van, or driving a heavy vehicle can safely and conveniently access local businesses and deliver their goods.

We will support businesses transition to smaller and more sustainable delivery vehicles and services, including electric courier / freight vehicles, e-cargo bikes, and other forms of zero emission vehicles.

Balance the use of kerbside space

Kerbside space, like the rest of our transport system, is the management of public space for a specific use. Historically, streets have served multiple purposes as sites of exchange, trade, social interaction, as well as the movement and storage of the means of transportation. The last 100 years saw kerbside space transformed solely for the use of private vehicle storage. However, as our city has grown, and as social values for how we live and move around have changed, competing demands for kerbside space have grown.

Parking is an important component of the transport system. It provides access to shops and services, allows businesses to send and receive goods, and allows friends and family to visit our homes. Ensuring adequate access to parking is important, especially when there are limited alternatives for some people.

As a consumer of space in the public realm, there is increased pressure on parking in high-demand areas. To improve other forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, space sometimes needs to be reallocated from its existing use, including space currently used for

car parking. In high demand areas, and areas with narrow footpaths, it may be preferable to provide bicycle parking on-street to maintain adequate footpath space for pedestrians. Increasing space for footpath trading, increasing tree canopy, and al fresco dining is also important for supporting our local businesses and creating vibrant activity centres.

Accessible parking is critical for people with disability to access shops and services. Loading zones allow businesses to serve their local communities. Both uses will be prioritised over general parking where additional spaces are required.

Managing the competing demands for finite kerbside space tension needs to be worked through carefully and considerately with our community. We will involve local residents and businesses when proposing changes to kerbside use.

Principles for parking decisions

We will parking spaces in Merri-bek using clear principles and processes. This includes gathering data, analysing it within the context of the street or area the parking issue is, and keeping the community informed and involved at the decision-making points.

Where parking restrictions need to be modified or adapted, the following principles will be considered:

- Understanding whether compliance with existing parking restrictions would address the issue

- Ability to reduce demand for parking, e.g. through mode split changes

- Type of land use within approximately 100m of the location – including whether properties have off-street parking and how much

- Availability of other suitable parking nearby

- Which users are advantaged by the proposed easing and their views

- Which users are disadvantaged by the proposed easing and their views

- The community benefits overall of proceeding / not proceeding

- The community disbenefits overall of proceeding / not proceeding

- Reduction in congestion

Should a parking issue be found to exist, we will work through a hierarchy of actions. First, identify options to reduce demand. This may be through encouraging walking and cycling for shorter trips or working with traders to find all day parking spots for employees. Second, we will review potential for increased parking enforcement to ensure parking users are following existing parking controls. If the first 2 options do not work, we will consider changes to parking controls to better match the areas parking needs. This could be changing time restrictions or identifying more loading zones. Finally, if the parking issue persists following all previous steps, we will consider further modifications to parking arrangements in the area. At each stage, we will evaluate our actions and communicate them to the community.

What we will advocate for

Update the Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines

The Victorian Speed Design Guideline is the document that tells us what speed limits are able to be set and the streets they can be set on. At present, 30km/h is not listed as an option, meaning that any speed limit applications including 30km/h can only be approved by the State Government as part of a waiver. Updating the Guideline to include 30km/h will allow all Victorian councils, including Merri-bek, to select 30km/h on streets where they are deemed appropriate.

What does success look like?

- Reduced road crash trauma on the road network
- Improved amenity for residents on local streets
- Reduced emissions from passenger vehicles
- People who need to use their car are supported

How will we measure success?

- Crash statistics
- Speed and volume profiles
- Transport emission statistics
- Community feedback

Electric vehicles and new transport technology

There have been technological innovations in transport in recent years, with electric vehicles, and other smaller forms of electric mobility. We will continue to monitor such innovations and support those which demonstrate clear benefit to the Merri-bek community and our strategic transport objectives.

Electric Vehicle (EV) ownership has increased dramatically in recent years, in Merri-bek and across Australia. While there were approximately 250 registered EVs in Merri-bek in 2021, it is forecast to increase to almost 11,000 EVs by 2030 (NCA 2022). EV charging infrastructure will need to increase in the coming years to support this growth.

EV charging will require a mixture of private charging at home, at work, at businesses, and charging in the public domain. Public charging will also be important for those in older housing stock that do not have access to off-street parking or are in older apartment complexes that are difficult to retrofit for EV charging infrastructure.

The recent NCA Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan estimated as many as 136 fast chargers will be required in Merri-bek activity centres by 2030 to meet charging demand.

What we will do

- Expand the public EV charging network using existing Council off-street car parks
- Support residents and businesses with information on EVs and EV charging infrastructure
- Transition Council's vehicle fleet to zero emissions
- Continue to monitor innovations in transport technology and support those which demonstrate clear benefit to Merri-bek

What we will advocate for

- A streamlined approach for connecting and upgraded the electricity network to support EV chargers
- A trial of using light poles and power poles to provide EV chargers on-street
- Increased funding to support Council's transition their vehicle fleet including heavy vehicles.

Land use

Our transport system allows us to access places; shops, services, schools, employment, and everything we need to participate fully in society. The Merri-bek Planning scheme guides the pattern of development and influences the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses to manage a growing population. This influences the ways we move and design places to make them safe and inclusive.

What we will do

Support people to live, work, buy, and play locally

We will improve local transport networks to enable people to meet their everyday needs close to home. Whether that means installing a missing footpath to make walking to school viable, or a new pedestrian crossing to access local shops. Small interventions such as these can make a big difference to the way we move around. We will work to identify infrastructure gaps near schools and activity centres, and work to make it easier for our community to live locally.

Support density around activity centres and transport hubs

Merri-bek has a statutory obligation to ensure at least 15 years of development is available to provide housing for a growing population. It's important that those new apartments, houses and workplaces are located close to existing shops, services, and transport hubs. This ensures that we can grow as a community while minimising impacts to our transport system and existing community. We will work to support people to get to and move around our activity centres, and have sufficient transport infrastructure that prioritises active and public transport trips.

Support the creation of great places

We will work with other key stakeholders (e.g. State Government, public transport operators) and the community to further strengthen our activity centres and key destinations that are socially and economically enriching and vibrant. As part of this, we will look at opportunities to make trips to these destinations as safe and enjoyable as possible.

Streets for People

Streets for people is a framework for making changes to our streets. It takes a holistic approach to understanding how our streets function in the wider transport system, how we make changes to streets to benefit all users, and ensure we align project outcomes with our values and strategic objectives.

This approach combines our values and the transport system to help us identify corridors where improvements to the transport system are required or desired, with a clear process for selecting streets and working with the community to determine the final designs.

How it works

Our Streets for People framework starts with analysis of the Merri-bek Transport System to understand how it currently functions, where issues exist, and where opportunities might be to make improvements.

We will select streets to apply the Streets for People Framework using a transparent and objective decision-making process.

Using Movement and Place, we will classify the street based on the role each street plays in the wider network, for both its movement function and its place function. We do this because the approach we will take and the design options available depend on the role the street plays. For example, a street in an activity centre will have different needs compared to a local residential street.

We will then undertake a Healthy Streets Assessment, which applies a people-centred approach to how a street functions. This assessment takes a holistic view of the different elements that make a street 'healthy' for the people who use it.

The Movement and Place classification and the Healthy Streets Assessment result will be used to develop design options to improve the street.

We will then work with the local community to refine our designs.

Following approval of the preferred design option or options, we will proceed to community consultation where appropriate, and then implementation. This may be done as one project, or delivered over a number of stages, depending on the budget and resourcing required for implementation.

The remainder of this section describes each of the Streets for People stages in more detail.

Merri-bek Transport System

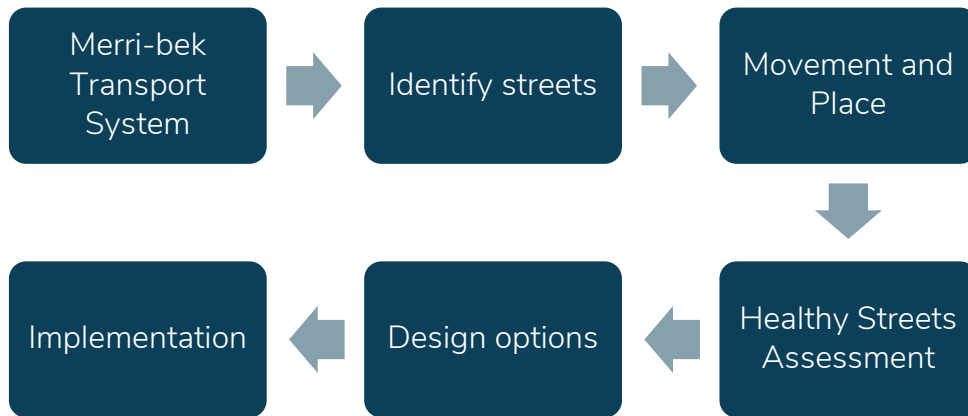
Using available transport and demographic data, we will identify corridors of movement in, out, and within Merri-bek. These corridors are the flows of people making everyday transport trips for a variety of purposes; trips to work, school, shops, deliveries, services, and social or recreational.

We will develop a framework for identifying and analysing corridors of movement that will inform a decision-making process for selecting streets for upgrades. This will include identifying streets by the way they currently function, how people use them, their allocation of space, and adjoining land uses.

Street selection process

We will develop a transparent process for selecting which streets will form part of the Streets for People framework. This will include, but is not limited to, the following factors:

- Level of community support
- Existing levels of walking/cycling
- Potential for increasing walking/cycling
- Heat vulnerability
- Connection to existing walking and cycling networks
- Connection to schools
- Connection to activity centres
- Crash risk
- Movement and Place classification



Movement and Place

Streets do a lot more than just allow people to move around. When planning our transport network, it’s important to recognise and respect the different characteristics of our streets as public spaces. The quality of our streets as places can often be negatively impacted if we simply seek to move people around as efficiently as possible.

Movement and Place is a conceptual framework for understanding and managing our streets in order to respect the important role they play in our city. It was developed by the Victorian Government.

Movement and Place outlines a way of thinking about, and classifying, our streets by both their functions and as a place within their own right. It looks at the entirety of a street, from property boundary to property boundary, including the footpath, the carriageway, and the interfacing land uses.

Using the Movement and Place Framework helps us to understand how our streets currently perform and how we might want to make changes to our streets. It helps us classify how a street functions overall, and how it functions for each of the transport network modes that make up our transport system. We can also use the Framework to identify streets where a given transport mode should have higher priority. For instance, improving efficiency on the Principal Freight Network or prioritising bike riders on the Principal Bicycle Network.

When conducting a Movement and Place assessment in Merri-bek, each section of street will be given a Movement and a Place classification between 1 and 5. This classification represents the relative level of significance a street has, from State significance to Local significance.

Score	Level of significance
1	State significance
2	Regional significance
3	Municipal significance
4	Neighbourhood significance
5	Local significance

The classifications communicate the State Government’s and Council’s aspirational function for each of the movement networks.

Streets can also be clustered together by their type. This allows us to consider the similarities different streets can have based on their Movement and Place rating. For example, Sydney Road may have a higher Movement and Place function relative to Melville Road, but both operate as activity streets.



More information about the Movement and Place Framework can be found [here](#).

How we will use the Movement and Place Framework

We will apply the Movement and Place function to the Merri-bek Transport System.

We will classify the Merri-bek Transport System with the Framework at an overall level, and then for each of the movement layers.

This will allow us to identify priority corridors for each mode and to make informed decisions where multiples modes are identified for a given street. Where multiple modes are identified as being important for a given corridor, priority will be given based on the transport hierarchy pyramid. This pyramid places pedestrians at the top, followed by cycling, public transport, and then driving.

Review existing conditions

We will review and make changes to our streets holistically, considering opportunities to improve the movement of the street for all modes and the place function of the street.

We will work with the local community around that street to understand how the street works for them and their aspirations for how the street should work in the future.

We will apply the Healthy Streets Design Framework to analyse and recommend changes to the street. This Framework allows us to review the performance of a street, based on the different elements shown below. This will involve an audit of the existing street, identifying challenges and opportunities under each of the elements. This differs from Movement and Place, which considers how a given street fits into the overall performance of the transport system.

More information about the Healthy Streets framework can be found [here](#).

Healthy Streets Assessment

Using the Healthy Streets assessment, we will identify opportunities to improve the street. In addition to the elements outlined in the Healthy Streets Framework, we will also consider:

- Pedestrian improvements
- Cycling improvements
- Driving access
- Public transport stops
- Trees and greening
- Streetscape enhancements
- Parking (including accessible parking, loading zones, EV charging, etc)

Design Options

We will then use the Movement and Place classification, the Healthy Streets Assessment, and community insights to develop design options that seek to improve the street in-line with our aspirations and in consideration of existing constraints.

Community consultation on these design options will then guide Council's decision on a preferred option to be developed into detailed designs for implementation.



Figure 4 Healthy Streets Design Framework

Implementation

Following Council and community support for the preferred design, we will then proceed to detailed design and implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation

Post-construction, we will monitor and evaluate the performance of the street relative to how it operated before the interventions.

We will use the Healthy Streets Framework, and other transport data. This evaluation will be provided back to the community.

Action Plan

An action plan will facilitate the implementation of Moving Around Merri-bek. The first action plan, included as part of this Strategy, details actions to be completed across the 2024/25 financial year. As part of the 2024 calendar year, we will further develop a five-year action plan covering 2025-2029, with the intention of renewing future action plans on a 4-year cycle. This will also include a review of the implementation of the previous action plan and recommended amendments to Moving Around Merri-bek to reflect contemporary transport challenges and opportunities.

The current Action Plan can be found here:

<https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/moving-around-merri-bek>

Glossary

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Active transport – A mode of transport that relies on physical movement, which may be assisted with an electric motor. Includes walking, cycling, e-bikes, scooters, e-scooters.

Behaviour change program – an intervention that encourages people to change their behaviour

DTP – The Victorian Department of Transport and Planning

EV – Electric Vehicle

M9 – A group of local governments in inner-Melbourne including the Cities of: Melbourne, Port Philip, Stonnington, Yarra, Darebin, Merri-bek, Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong, and Hobsons Bay.

Micro mobility – Small, personal vehicles, under 250kg, such as bicycles, e-scooters, e-bikes and cargo bikes.

Mode share – the proportion of trips done by a particular mode of transport.

Net Zero – A target to negating all greenhouse gas emissions produced by human activity.

Open Street – A term used to describe the act of closing a street to through traffic and opening it up for other modes of transport, especially walking and cycling.

PTV – Public Transport Victoria.

Public transport – Includes trains, trams, and buses.

Safe Systems – A theoretical framework for creating a safer road environment for people and vehicles. It recognises the need to design streets to safely accommodate human error.

VISTA – Victorian Integrated Survey of Travel and Activity.



Moving Around Merri-bek

Draft Action Plan

November 2023



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Introduction

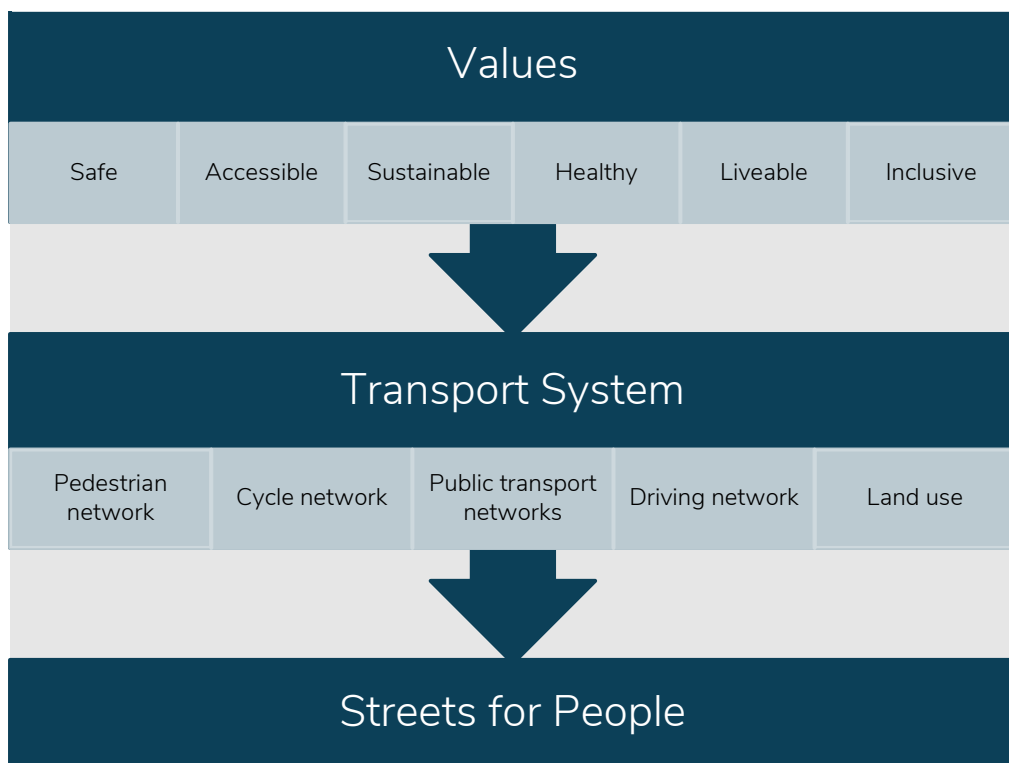
Purpose of this document

This Action Plan is an accompanying document to Moving Around Merri-bek, Council’s Transport Strategy.

This document provides an overview of the actions that we as a Council will undertake related to transport for the coming financial year (2024/25) and planned works for the years beyond.

How this document works

This document has the same structure as Moving Around Merri-bek. This allows the reader to compare between each of the sections in the strategy itself and this Action Plan, clearly showing what we are doing to meet our objectives. This includes work structured to address each of our Values and for each of our transport network layers. It concludes with a new approach to delivering transport and streetscape improvements, Streets for People.



Community Vision 2021-2031

This strategy is guided by the Community Vision and Theme 2: Moving and Living Safely in Merri-bek.

“Merri-bek is our home.

We respect and look after our land, air, waterways, and animals.

We care for our people and celebrate our diverse stories, cultures, and identities.

Merri-bek is enhanced by all of us supporting our local businesses, arts communities, and social organisations.

We work together proactively and transparently to continue to create a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative, and regenerative community.

Many faces, one Merri-bek.”

Theme 2: Moving and Living Safely in Merri-bek

In 2031, Merri-bek is safe. Our streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists, day and night. Everyone in Merri-bek is able to live in their homes without fear from others, both known and unknown.

In Merri-bek, we actively look out for each other and are well supported to do this by council.

Values

The content of Moving Around Merri-bek is built upon research, experience, established policy, and the diverse voices of our Merri-bek community. It pulls all these elements together to give a picture of not only how we get around Merri-bek, but the many different aspects of daily life which relate to transport, and how we can improve this into the future.

We have identified 6 core values that drive us and our community as we use and look at our transport system. These values are the overarching tenets that guide our work in transport at Merri-bek City Council. They ensure that all our work contributes to bettering our city and our transport system in the ways that are important to our community.

Our transport system needs to be:



Safe

2024/25

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Completed the road safety projects outlined in the capital works program	Transport	Road Safety and Amenity capital program funding	Design in 2023/24, deliver in 2024/25
Designed the following road safety projects and taken opportunities to seek grant funding for them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersection upgrade – Jukes Road / Williams Road intersection, Fawkner • Road section treatment – Kent Road, Sussex Street to Derby Street, Pascoe Vale – raised pavement and crossing • West Street / Glenroy Road, Hadfield - threshold treatments on each leg • Rennie Street / Barrow Street, Coburg – updated treatment 	Transport	Designs: Transport Project Design funding in capital program	Designs progressively completed, aiming for grant submission dates (TAC, Federal Blackspot) All designs complete by end 2024/25
Completed the rollout of area-wide 40 km/h zones throughout Merri-bek and associated community education program	Transport	As allocated in capital program	Last suburbs to be implemented by end 2024
Advocated strongly and leant in to planning for the Brunswick and Parkville Level Crossings Project to secure a viable, safe, bike route for bike riders displaced from the Upfield Shared Path during construction	City Development	Operational resources in the Level Crossing Removals team	As soon as possible, dependent on Project team engagement with Council
Used unallocated Road Safety and Amenity funding to deliver highest priority minor safety works, including street and path lighting, minor signage, line-marking and traffic device changes	Transport	Road Safety and Amenity – Unallocated funding in capital program	Ongoing, with improved communication
Improved access to and promotion of the resident crash and hazard reporting webpage for non-casualty crashes and near misses	Transport with support from Community Engagement	Existing resources (with support from Transport)	Relaunch by end 2024/25
Reported to Council the first annual road safety report (for the 2023 calendar year) identifying trends in crash numbers and types and priority sites for future treatments	Transport	Existing resources	By September 2024

5

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Taken and created opportunities to advocate for safety outcomes relating to introducing 30 km/h speed zones (inclusion in Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines and rollout in pilot area of Merri-bek)	Transport	Existing resources	By end of 2024/25
Begun researching speed-related crashes, speed zoning inconsistencies and speed behaviour on arterial and sub-arterial roads in Merri-bek and identified priority roads for advocacy for further appropriate speed limit reduction	Transport	Existing resources	Work to have commenced by end 2024/25 for focus in a future year

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Continuation of program of road safety projects that:

- Prepares an annual road safety report using official state casualty crash data, reported crash and near miss data and perceptions of safety information from the community to identify priority sites for treatment
- Draws from the annual road safety report to develop projects for grant submissions, undertakes design and consultation on these projects and puts forward submissions, using Transport Project Design funding in the Capital Works Program
- Delivers grant funded projects and funding from Council's budget for non-eligible projects that provide safety benefits as well as contributing to achievement of other outcomes and network goals
- Uses Road Safety and Amenity Program funding to deliver highest priority minor safety works, including street and path lighting, minor signage, line-marking and traffic device changes.

Continued advocacy and research to support Council's speed zoning objectives of reducing casualty crashes and supporting vulnerable road users, including:

- Ability to use 30 km/h in appropriate neighbourhoods in Merri-bek
- Achievement of speed zoning on arterial and sub-arterial roads in Merri-bek

Continued advocacy around safety of vulnerable road users during construction of Brunswick and Parkville Level Crossing Removals Project.

Accessible

2024/25

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Advocated strongly and leant in to planning for the Brunswick and Parkville Level Crossings Project to secure construction of at least three accessible tram stop pairs for Route 19 trams in Sydney Road before Upfield Line trains are disrupted for works.	City Development	Operational resources in the Level Crossing Removals team	As soon as possible, dependent on Project team engagement with Council
Work closely with the Brunswick and Parkville Level Crossing Removal Project to ensure detour routes, temporary boarding points and substitute transport vehicles during construction works are all accessible.	City Development	Operational resources in the Level Crossing Removals team	As soon as possible, dependent on Project team engagement with Council
In keeping with past practice, include removal and replacement of two bus shelters that do not meet accessibility requirements	Transport	Walking Facilities Program	By end 2024/25
Mapped existing accessible parking spaces and made this information available publicly.	Transport	Refer minor allocation for establishment to budget process	(if funded) Map launched by end 2024/25
Included public seating and associated infrastructure as eligible for funding under the existing Walking Facilities Program.	Transport	Walking Facilities Program	By date of draft 2025/26 budget release
Clarified and increased the requirement when Temporary Road Occupation and Works within Road Reserve permits are issued to require construction and traffic management companies to provide detour routes that meet accessible design standards	Transport	Existing operational resources	By end 2024/25
Clarified and strengthened the requirements of developers for Traffic Management Plans and Construction Management Plans so that these plans that depict accessible detour routes.	Transport	Existing operational resources	By end 2024/25
Established an internal interdisciplinary Footpath Improvement Working Group	Disability Planner	Existing operational resources and Walking Facilities Program	By end 2024/25

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By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Identified instances where bluestone laneways disrupt footpaths. Reconstruct laneway to provide a smooth surface for footpath users where possible.	Transport	Existing operational resources for analysis. Reconstruction projects to be considered as part of the budget process.	End of 2024/25

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Development of an advocacy campaign to get the Victorian Government to meet its legal responsibility under the 'Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002' to make every bus, tram, and rail stop accessible to a person with a disability, which was required by 2022.

Continue incremental approach to removing bus shelters that do not meet current accessible design standards and work with Victorian Government to build replacement bus stops with shelters that are accessible for all users. (Many of the existing 190 shelters installed with advertising companies are not accessible).

Establishment of a program of addressing deficiencies in provision of accessible parking through:

- Identifying existing accessible parking spaces that do not meet current accessible design standards and planning a prioritised forward program of measures to upgrade these, starting with Major Activity Centres.
- Identifying locations for additional accessible parking spaces where demand is high and planning a prioritised forward program of measures to install new spaces, starting with Major Activity Centres.

Put in place ongoing data maintenance arrangements for public-facing information about accessible parking spaces.

Refinement of Council's approach to road, footpath and bike path inspections to match the new settings in the Road Management Plan 2025 to 2029.

Revisiting the criteria in Council's annual allocation of capital funding for Footpath and Bike path Renewals to prioritise uneven walking and wheeling surfaces.

Mapping of walking distances without resting opportunities, starting with (and branching out from) the Principal Pedestrian Network and accounting for community requests, demographics and topography and identify priority walking routes for additional seating.

As part of a broader initiative to improve the impacts of construction activities in Merri-bek, engaged with the construction industry (whether working on public or private land) to promote Council's requirements to ensure that in Traffic Management Plans and Construction Management Plans pedestrian, cyclist, and public transport movements are prioritised, and meet DDA requirements.

Sustainable

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
<p>Create a workplace travel plan targeting Merri-bek City Council staff working at that provides incentives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to work using travel options other than driving a car with an internal combustion engine • Use options other than driving a car with an internal combustion engine to make work-related trips during work hours. <p>Advocate for a Fringe Benefit Tax exemption on sustainable commuting options</p>	Transport	Existing operating budget	End of 2024/25
Advocated to the Australian Government to introduce Corporate Automotive Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards	Transport	Existing operating budget	End of 2024
Advocated for the return of State Government car parking levy revenue to Merri-bek City Council to be reinvested in local sustainable transport projects.	Advocacy	Existing Advocacy officer and strategic transport planner time.	End of 2024
Worked with businesses who supply zero emissions vehicles to promote more sustainable travel options.	Sustainability and Climate	Existing operating budget. Additional funds required to deliver in FY25/26 and beyond.	End of 2024/25
Developed and implemented behaviour change programs to help people move around Merri-bek by more sustainable modes of transport.	Sustainability and Climate	Existing operating budget.	End of 2024/25

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Investment in cooler routes such as in the principal pedestrian network, near activity centres, and around primary schools, as part of our Streets for People Framework

Trial and scale up use of sustainable and climate resilient materials for footpaths and roads

Assess climate impacts to the useful life of roads

Publish a “pathway to zero transport emissions” plan for the City of Merri-bek.

- Calculate the greenhouse gas emissions from all travel undertaken into, within and out of the City of Merri-bek each year. Create a scenario plan with annual targets that shows how to reduce transport related emissions to zero by 2040.
- Report back to the community on transport emissions periodically when data becomes available.

Continue to support new zero emission transport technology. Observe changes and propose policy responses to emerging transport technologies.

Healthy

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Subject to a successful National Road Safety Action Grant application, led the commencement of a cross-Council initiative with other M9 Councils for expansion of Merri-bek's Open Streets Program	Sustainability and Climate	Grant funding	As per grant project timelines
Advocated to the Victorian Government for noise walls around more of M80 and Citylink and adoption of more stringent noise management standards for major roads.	Transport	Existing operational resources	By end 2024/25
Trained key transport projects staff in the Healthy Streets assessment methodology that will help changes to our streets improve both transport performance and community health and wellbeing	Transport	Existing operational resources	By end 2024
Introduced the Healthy Streets assessment methodology into transport improvement project design for selected projects to be designed in 2024/25	Transport	Capital project funding	By end 2024/25
Documented and established a systematic approach to maintenance of on-road Water Sensitive Urban Design gardens that filter contaminants from road runoff before they reach waterways	Open Space and Environment	Existing operational resources	By end 2024/25

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Further actions in the cross-Council expansion of Merri-bek's Open Streets Program, including consideration of the ongoing delivery model for Open Streets within Merri-bek.

Expansion of the Healthy Streets assessment methodology and professional development to all transport staff and those delivering road reconstruction and streetscape improvement programs.

Liveable

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Determined its position on allowing e-scooter hire schemes in Merri-bek, following the completion of the State Government trial in April 2024.	Transport	Existing operational resources	Potentially by August 2024, otherwise by April 2025.
As applicable, progressed implementation of e-scooter hire schemes in Merri-bek.	Transport	Existing operational resources	End 2024/25 – milestones as agreed
Worked with Brunswick and Parkville LXP to design a place with greater amenity, trees, places to walk, play and ride, that has public art, sports facilities and respects the heritage of railway corridor by telling story of people who worked on the railway line in creative ways	City Development	Existing operational resources (and possibly additional transport resources)	Aligned with project's milestone dates (not yet known)
Determined with shop owners in Lygon Street, Brunswick East, whether to make permanent outdoor dining sites or return them to car parking	Property, Place and Design	Subject to funding / business contributions	End 2024/25

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Continue to implement any Council decision regarding e-scooter share schemes.

Consider role of e-bike share schemes in transport choices within Merri-bek, responding to and/or proactively pursuing opportunities for e-bike schemes as applicable.

Further advocate and collaborate with Brunswick and Parkville LXP on liveable outcomes from the project.

Continue to work with local businesses to convert some on-road car parking spaces into outdoor dining or expanded footpath areas, introducing seating, greenery and bike parking facilities and place-activating public space otherwise occupied by vehicles.

Inclusive

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Further developed transport planning and project staff capability in Gender Equality Assessment, Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and understanding of the experiences and needs of LGBTIQ+ people and trans and gender diverse people using the transport system	Transport	Internal and external training opportunities and engagement through Human Rights Advisory Committee and LGBTIQ+ Reference Group	By end 2024/25
Continue efforts commenced as part of Merri Merri Wayi to improve Merri Creek corridor safety and perceptions of safety	Open Space and Environment	Existing operational funding	According to Merri Merri Wayi milestones.
Assembled maps identifying residential areas with poor transport network connectivity to important local destinations to help inform design and prioritisation of projects so that they better link socially isolated people with these destinations.	Transport	Existing operational resources	By end 2024/25
Undertaken design and engagement on at least one project that address transport inequality for future year capital funding consideration	Transport	Transport Project Design funding	By end 2024/25
Maintenance of vegetation along footpaths and bike paths in the public realm that contributes to feelings of uncertainty.	Open Space and Environment	Existing operational funding	Ongoing
Continued to respond to community requests for lighting, and where requests are consistent with Council's street and park lighting policies, continue to measure night time lighting levels to identify deficiencies.	Transport	Existing operational resources	Ongoing
Assembled maps that show lighting levels as they are measured across our transport network including those travelling through parks and reserves	Transport	Existing operational resources	By end 2024/25
Prioritised projects to install or upgrade public lighting to improve public safety across our transport system and progressively commissioned power companies to implement upgrades.	Transport	Walking Facilities Program	Ongoing

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Embedding of the processes for inclusion by design into transport program formulation and transport project design, building on actions in the 2024/25 action plan.

- Plan, design and evaluate transport projects that specifically address transport inequality
- Influence design of projects being delivered so that they provide inclusive outcomes

Collaborating with other Councils, advocate for the State to provide more inclusive public transport services and infrastructure and promote bystander action, aligning with Councils' efforts to improve public realm safety and perception of safety, so that all people (including LGBTIQ+ people and trans and gender diverse people) do not avoid or fear using public transport.

Implementing capital projects that address specific sites where infrastructure (or lack of infrastructure) contributes to lack of inclusion, and designing capital projects in road reserves that account for inclusion principles.

Consideration of including children in the transport system and increasing ways to grow children's confidence in being independent travellers.

Our Transport System

The Merri-bek Transport System is the totality of physical space and infrastructure that allows us to take transport trips. This includes our footpaths, bike lanes, roads, railway lines, and parking. We also include land uses, as the way our city is built guides the ways in which we move around.

This follows the Transport System framework outlined in the Transport Integration Act, which changes to the local context where appropriate. For instance, as Merri-bek does not have a shipping port or an airport, we have excluded this from our framework.

Figure 1 shows the distinct transport network layers that comprise the Merri-bek Transport System.

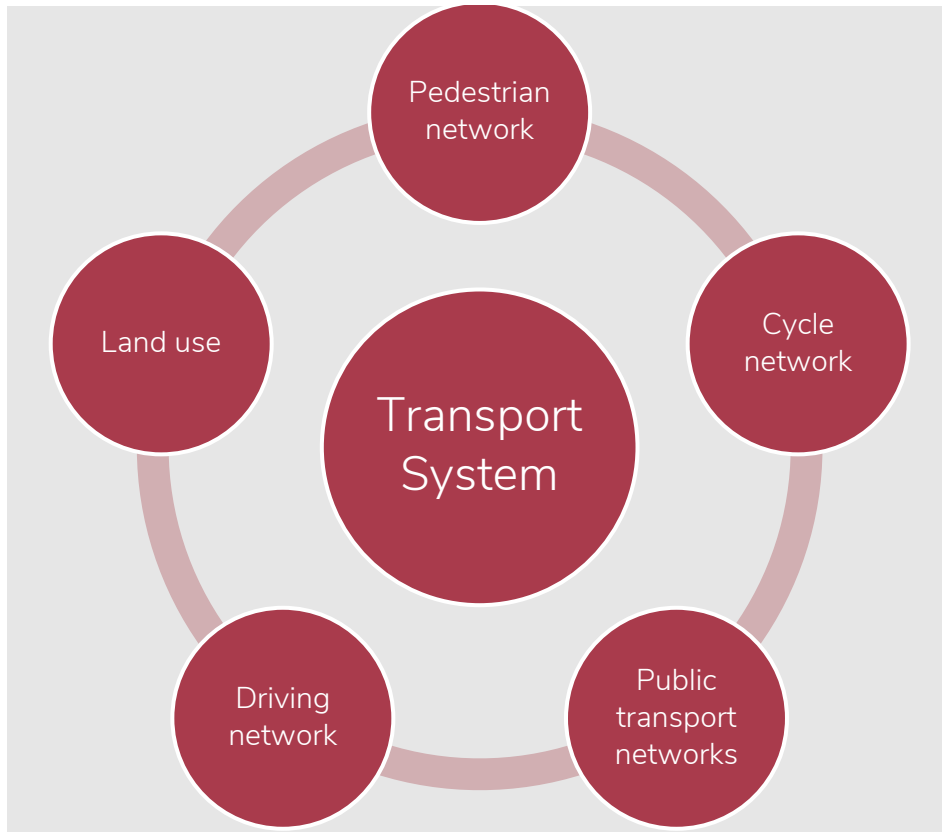


Figure 1 Merri-bek Transport System

Pedestrian Network

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Based on strategic criteria, identified a future pipeline of walking facilities projects for the short (1-2 year), medium (3-5 year) and long (6+ year) timeframes including zebra crossing, pedestrian operated signal, wombat (raised zebra) crossing, shared zone projects.	Transport	Existing operational funding	December 2024
Designed projects that have been identified for the short term in the Walking Facilities Program.	Transport	Transport Project Design capital funding	End 2024/25
Implemented projects across the walking network (comprising a mix of new assets and upgrades to existing assets) to improve pedestrian safety: Wombat (raised zebra) crossings on side streets along Albion Road, Brunswick West.	Transport	Walking Facilities Program funding	End 2024/25
Implemented Pedestrian Operated Signals across Harding Street near Patterson Street, Coburg to improve road safety for students walking, riding or scooting to and from St Bernards Primary School	Transport	Capital funded item	End 2024/25
Construction well underway on the replacement Kendall Street - Harding Street Riding and Walking Bridge over the Merri Creek.	Capital Works Planning and Delivery	Capital funded item (with Darebin City Council)	Contract awarded by late 2024 for construction complete by end 2025/26
Compiled a prioritised list of sites for improvements to the operation of pedestrian phases at signalised intersections and crossings, including waiting times, better controlling conflicting vehicle movements, adding missing pedestrian legs, and slip lane treatments; and advocated to the State for the changes to be implemented.	Transport	Existing operational funding	December 2024
Prepared a business case that demonstrates the benefits of installing Pedestrian Operated Signals even where there are currently no pedestrian crashes to be used as the basis for advocating for walking (active transport) funding for the State to invest in new pedestrian crossings of arterial roads	Transport	Existing, plus consultancy funding of 16approx. \$50,000 for expert advice	End 2024/25

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Signed off on a developer-constructed new footpath on the north side of Urquhart Street (Elm Grove to Sydney Road) Coburg (150m).	Transport	Privately funded with Council oversight	End 2024/25

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Join with other Councils to campaign for the state to fund Pedestrian Operated Signals for active transport reasons rather than only when there is an existing casualty crash history.

Complete the construction of the Kendall Street - Harding Street Riding and Walking Bridge over the Merri Creek.

Continue the program of Walking Facilities projects that:

- Refreshes the priority pipeline of walking facilities projects each year, accounting for external changes, new priorities, new funding opportunities
- Undertakes design and consultation on these projects, using Transport Project Design funding in the Capital Works Program
- Delivers projects

Continue advocacy on the list of changes to pedestrian phases at signalised intersections and crossings.

Cycle Network

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
In partnership with other metropolitan Councils and the Metropolitan Transport Forum, advocated to the State Government to develop a plan and timeline and funding program for delivering the Strategic Cycling Corridor network. Since the adoption of Victoria's Strategic Cycling Corridors over 5 years ago, there has yet to be a funding and delivery program for this future cycling network.	Transport	Existing operational resources	By end 2024/25
Identified areas of high demand for additional bike parking in partnership with our community and implemented facilities.	Transport	Bicycle Facilities funding in capital program	By end 2024/25
New forms of bikes, such as e-bikes and cargo bikes, are difficult to store in older housing such as terraces and apartment buildings. Bike hangars provide secure bike parking for residents on-street. We will test the market demand for this type of parking to determine whether we roll-out this type of bike parking.	Transport	Bicycle Facilities funding in capital program	By end 2024/25
Construct an extension to the Upfield shared use path suitable for learner bike riders. Bike riders using Upfield Shared Path travelling between O'Hea St and Gaffney St currently ride on-road for 100m on Batman Avenue, Coburg North.	Transport	Project individually funded in capital program	Design to be completed by end 2024/25 (delivery is funded for 2025/26)
Completed the installation of permanent physical separation devices on Dawson Street (Upfield Shared Path to Barry Street) Brunswick to create a 550m protected bike route to RMIT Brunswick and Brunswick Secondary College.	Transport	Project individually funded in capital program	Works begin 2023/24 and complete in early 2024/25
Be well progressed with delivery of the O'Hea Street Bike Path Extension - Sussex to Derby Street-Pascoe Vale	Transport	Project individually funded in capital program	Construction well underway by end 2024/25, to be completed early in 2025/26
Undertake design and options assessment for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coonans Road and Reynolds Parade separated bicycle lanes • Albert Street corridor • Harding and Munro Streets corridor 	Transport	New funding from October 2023 Council meeting	Delivery in 2025/26

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Facilitated DTP construction of a 750m shared use path from the north end of Sages Road, Fawknor to Western Ring Road (M80) Trail	Transport	Victorian Government funding and delivery	Construction to commence early 2024, delivery by end 2024/25
Sought DTP approval to trial the installation of bike call buttons to operate the off-set pedestrian crossing to improve cycling safety and convenience. ('bikes in side road may operate signals')	Transport	Seek grant funding for trial	Designs of one site completed by end of 2024/25

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Work with the M9 Council group to identify cross-border infrastructure opportunities to improve walking and cycling access.

Develop plans in partnership with neighbouring municipalities for new paths, bridges and crossings and advocate to the Victorian Government to construct walking and bike riding routes of state significance across municipal boundaries. (with Hume, Darebin, Yarra, Melbourne and Moonee Valley)

Implement an annual process to continue the program of Bicycle Facilities projects that:

- Refreshes the priority pipeline of bicycle facilities projects each year, accounting for external changes, new priorities, new funding opportunities
- Undertakes design and consultation on these projects, using Transport Project Design funding in the Capital Works Program
- Delivers projects

Provide bike parking at key public locations catering for all bike shapes and sizes (including family bikes, e-bikes, cargo bikes and bikes with trailers).

Council to use town planning permit process to ensure private land developers provide bike parking and end-of-trip facilities for bike riders in new buildings. We will also participate in the recent DTP car parking and bike parking in new developments review.

We will assess our off-road path network and identify sections where sufficient space exists to separate pedestrians and bike riders. We will continue advocating to LXP to separate pedestrians and bike riders along the Upfield corridor as part of the Brunswick level crossing removal project.

Develop solutions for the following projects:

Pascoe Vale South Primary North-South on-road bicycle route (O'Hea Street to Moonee Ponds Creek Trail): Install on-road devices to create a 2km on-road bicycle lane. Route runs starts at the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail at Reynolds Parade and links to existing bicycle infrastructure on O'Hea Street, Coburg North

Widen the Merri Creek Trail at Clara Street, Brunswick East (Moreland Road underpass). Reconstruct a 100m length of the Merri Creek Trail north of Clara Street as a 3m wide path to improve sight lines and reduce the likelihood of a bike rider – bike rider or bike rider – walker crash

Undertake a design and feasibility study to reconstruct Merri Creek Trail and access paths in Bowden Reserve, Coburg (south of Bell Street Underpass)

- Undertake a design and feasibility study to redesign and reconstruct the 30m boardwalk to rear of 13-19 Merribell Avenue Coburg that forms part of the Merri Creek Trail to bring the path gradient into compliance with accessible design standards.
- Undertake a design and feasibility study to construct a 150m long x 3m wide concrete shared use path linking the intersection of Nicholson Street and Bell Street to the Merri Creek Trail, creating a safe alternative to travelling under Bell Street during a flood event.

Public Transport Networks

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
<p>Renewed our advocacy on improvements to public transport to the relevant Minister, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget plan for universal tram stops and low floor trams • Delivery of outcomes in Reshaping Brunswick Advocacy document • Track duplication of Upfield line from Gowrie Railway Station • Connecting Upfield line to the Craigieburn line • Delivery of bus reform in line with Victoria's Bus Plan and the current Bus Reform project for the North-Western suburbs. 	Advocacy	Existing operations funding	End of 2024/25
Worked with our community and disability advocates to campaign for accessible tram stops on all tram routes within Merri-bek.	Advocacy	Existing operations funding	End of 2024/25
Advocated to LXRP for accessible alternative transport services during railway disruptions as part of construction works along the Upfield line.	City Development	Existing operations funding	Dependent on LXRP timelines.

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Create an updated Public Transport Advocacy document that includes Council advocacy priorities for completion during the 2025-2029 timeframe. This will include:

- Track duplication between Gowrie and Upfield Railway Stations and connection of the Upfield line to the Craigieburn line
- Accessible tram stops and low-floor trams on all tram routes within Merri-bek and across Metro Melbourne
- Reform of Merri-bek's bus routes in line with the objectives in Victoria's Bus Plan and the Bus Reform project
- Improved service reliability for tram and bus services through greater on-road priority to public transport services
- Increased service frequency and span of hours for all public transport services
- An accessible Jacana Railway Station with safer pathways to the platforms
- Revitalisation of railway stations and surrounding precincts within Merri-bek.

Review our bus shelter upgrade program in light of potential improvements to the bus network, either from DTPs current Bus Network Reform project and / or changes based on renewed DTP and bus operator contracting.

Undertake a research project, in partnership with neighbouring councils, on the social, economic, and environmental benefits of

Support efforts that move interstate freight from road-based transport to rail-based transport. Ensure rail improvements improve safety outcomes for walkers near the rail corridor.

Driving network

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Prepared a new Road Management Plan for the period 2025 to 2029, including engagement on intervention levels and response times for hazards that arise on footpaths and road crossings.	Capital Works Planning and Delivery	Existing operational resources	To be completed by June 2025
Maintained our existing local roads and monitor the condition of local roads each year, make repairs and reconstruct as needed, in line with the Road Management Plan	Capital Works Planning and Delivery	Existing operational resources	Ongoing
Continued to support car share and encourage operators to diversify their vehicle fleet, including utes and deploy electric vehicles	Transport	Existing operational resources	Ongoing
Improved our parking data sources, analyses, and reporting.	Transport	Existing operational resources	End of 2024/25
Created an enforceable electric vehicle charging station parking control to discourage drivers of Internal Combustion Engine vehicles from parking in EV recharge zones and drivers of EVs parking for longer than a vehicle recharge cycle.	Transport	Existing operational resources	End of 2024/25
Advocated to the Victorian Government to include 30 km/h in the Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines.	Transport	Existing operational resources	End of 2024/25
Advocated for inclusion of sustainable commuting options as part of the existing Fringe Benefit Tax scheme	Transport	Existing operational resources	End of 2024/25

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Advocacy campaign to support low and zero emission vehicles as part of the Fringe Benefits Tax scheme

Participate in the on-street EV charging pilot project as part of a Victorian Government grant funding program with Intellihub.

Continue rolling-out EV fast chargers in activity centres and within Council-owned facilities, in line with the recommendations in the NCA Community EV Transition Plan.

Support private operators to install and operate Electric Vehicle recharge points within the City of Merri-bek.

Encourage Electricity Network Providers (Jemena and City Power) to develop a standard pole mounted EV recharge point to enable EV charging from on-street parking space.

Develop a kerbside management plan to assist managing the growing diversity of kerbside use, including parking, on-street dining, footpath extensions, bike lane installation, and different car parking uses.

Land Use

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Submitted a response to proposed car parking, bike parking, and end of trip facility reform in the Victorian Planning Scheme, led by the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning.	Strategic Planning	Existing operating budget	Within DTP project timelines
Undertaken a Liveability Index for Merri-bek to identify gaps using geospatial analyses and areas for improving local access to shops and services	Transport	Seek funding through the Council budget process	End of 2024/25
Investigated opportunities to include sustainable transport projects into a new Development Contribution Plan.	Transport	Existing operating budget	In line with DCP project timeline

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Development of action plans to improve liveability based on the results of the Liveability Index.

Streets for People

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Complete a Movement and Place Assessment for all streets in Merri-bek	Transport	Existing	End of 2024/25
Develop and implement a Streets for People Framework that outlines a clear and transparent approach to selecting streets for upgrades, the approach to identifying challenges and opportunities for each street, concept designing, and integrating community knowledge.	Transport	Existing design budget for streetscape improvement projects	End of 2024/25
Piloted the Streets for People Framework to already-planned projects (Harding, Victoria, Albert Streets) in the design of those projects and to develop and refine the Framework iteratively.	Transport	Using existing resources as part of funded design projects in the budget	End of 2024/25
Developed a Streets for People Plan covering forward years (short term, medium term and longer term, up to 10 years) to deliver streetscape upgrades. This will include delivering missing gaps in the pedestrian and cycling networks, connecting schools, activity centres, and other key destinations in with a wider Merri-bek walking and cycling network.	Transport	Funding will be sought via the Council budget process	End of 2024

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

The Capital Works Program for 2025/26 will be based on the delivery of projects designed in previous years, and the available funding envelope.

In the preparation of the Capital Works Program from 2026/27 onwards, it is proposed that the funding for all Transport Program capital items be reconsidered, so that there is an appropriate mix of:

- Investment in strategic upgrade of the road network to deliver identified Streets for People projects
- Investment in minor works to address emerging safety and amenity issues in the short term
- Investment in treatments to address casualty crash patterns (including pursuit of grant funding)
- Investment in the off-road network of shared paths (including pursuit of grant funding) as an integral part of the overall transport system

This is the integration of the Shopping Strip Renewal Program (which is currently focused on (neighbourhood activity centres) into the Streets for People program when it comes to end of its current funding cycle in 2026/27.

In addition, the opportunity for integrating upgrades of infrastructure (such as with concurrent road reconstructions, road resurfacing, footpath renewal, tree planting programs) and with behavioural programs (such as Open Streets and Ride & Stride, speed limit changes, road safety issues needing to be addressed) should be taken, and this should factor in the street selection and prioritisation of the Streets for People plan.

Implementation of the Streets for People plan can then be matched to the available funding, and consideration given to whether additional funding can and should be allocated to accelerate the delivery.

Evaluation and reporting

By June 2025, Council will have	Led by which branch	Using what resources	Milestone dates
Developed an evaluation and reporting plan for the Strategy and future Action Plan, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigated appropriate data sources and costs Investigated new data sources, such as video capture and aggregated phone data 	Transport	Existing operating budget	End of 2024
Updated transport GIS layers for internal and external use	GIS	Existing operating budget	End of 2024
Provided an annual report to Council on our progress implementing actions from the Action Plan	Transport	Existing operating budget	End of 2024

For consideration in 2025 – 2029 Action Plan:

Incorporate an updated transport evaluating and reporting plan that uses existing and new data sources to track organisational performance against our strategic objectives and evaluates how our completed projects performed against our strategic objectives.



Merri-bek
City Council

Moving Around Merri-bek

Discussion Paper-Consultation Findings Report





Chatterbox Projects

ChatterBox Projects was engaged by Merri-bek City Council to support the development and delivery of an engagement plan to seek community feedback to inform the development of the draft Strategy, Moving Around Merri-bek. Council staff and the ChatterBox Team worked in partnership to design the engagement program and to deliver engagement activities.

ChatterBox Projects was also engaged to undertake independent data analysis which has informed the findings of this report.

ChatterBox Projects is a highly skilled and experienced community engagement consultancy with extensive knowledge in delivering end-to-end community engagement services.

Our work focuses on community consultations, including place-based and online engagement, facilitation, planning and visioning, master plan development, urban activations, survey design, data gathering, analysis and reporting and the development of innovative engagement methods and tools. We also provide training in planning and implementing community engagement strategies.

Over the past 9 years, ChatterBox Projects has undertaken over 250 small, medium and large-scale community engagement projects for 26 local government organisations, 6 state government agencies as well as projects for the not for profit, education and retail precinct sectors.

Acknowledgement of traditional custodianship

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.

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Version control

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Section
0.1	03/08/2023	Vaughn Allan	New report to present the engagement methodology and results	Entire document
0.2	20/09/2023	Robyn Cochrane	Draft V#1 – high level overview of findings with some gaps	Entire document
0.3	21/10/2023	Robyn Cochrane/ Sam Walsh	Final draft	Entire document
Final	23/10/2023	Robyn Cochrane, Sam Walsh and Angela Walter (ChatterBox Projects)	Final	Entire document



1. Executive Summary

Council is developing a new Strategy. This new Strategy will guide future transport projects in Merri-bek and aim to provide community members with greater transport choice in how they move around the municipality.

This new Strategy will replace the previous transport strategy, which was adopted in 2019

Community engagement is a critical component to this project, with the new Strategy being informed by 3 stages of engagement. This report includes the community and stakeholder feedback from Stage 2.

The Stage 2 engagement program, which ran for 6 weeks from 24 July to 2 September, included a range of ways for people to get involved, be informed and provide feedback. This stage of engagement was supported by a Discussion Paper which encouraged conversation and explored transport challenges, opportunities and ideas in Merri-bek across 6 core themes: Safety; Accessibility; Sustainability; Health; Liveability and Collaboration.

The engagement program was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign, that resulted in over 1,000 people providing feedback, as outlined in the table below.






Engagement activities	Led by	Participation
Survey (online and hard copy) Available on the Conversations Merri-bek project page, at engagement activities and in Council facilities	ChatterBox Projects	532 (incl 58 surveys in other languages)
Interactive map to identify safety issues (online) Available on the Conversations Merri-bek project page	Council	82
Post your ideas (online) Available on the Conversations Merri-bek project page	Council	36 ideas
Place-based pop-up engagements 6 pop-up engagements with the ChatterBox Projects trailer (see table 2 for more details)	ChatterBox Projects	300 (approx.)
Workshops with key stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CALD Connectors (1.5 hrs online) Traders (1.5 hrs online) Community Groups (2hrs in-person) 	ChatterBox Projects	20
Workshops with Council groups/committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age-Friendly Reference Group Children's Reference Group Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee Gender Equity Reference Group Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee 	Council	26
Workshop with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung	Council	4
Workshop with Youth Ambassadors		15
Written submissions		5
TOTAL		1,020

Please note: Some individuals may have participated in more than 1 engagement activity.






Based on demographic information, overall, the consultation successfully engaged a broad cross-section of the community including people of all age groups, from a range of backgrounds, as well as over 100 people who either have disability, limited mobility or who are a carer of someone with disability.

1.1 Key findings

In relation to moving around Merri-bek now, survey participants told us that the top 5 modes of transport that people use are:

 WALK	298 respondents
 BIKE	222 respondents
 CAR	194 respondents
 TRAM	155 respondents
 TRAIN	98 respondents

When asked what modes of transport people would like to use more often the top 5 responses all involved active/public transport options.

 BIKE	296 respondents
 WALK	228 respondents
 TRAM	215 respondents
 TRAIN	194 respondents
 BUS	142 respondents

The key reasons why people do not choose these modes of transport more often involved the lack of safety and lack of convenience (the journey takes too long, and services are not near people).

The theme of safety featured strongly throughout the feedback and was the most prominent challenge in moving around Merri-bek and a major barrier to choosing more active or sustainable modes of transport.

This was reflected in people selecting 'Safety - A safe transport system' as the highest priority theme for the new Strategy (68.5%). Liveability was ranked the second highest priority overall (62.1%), closely followed by Accessibility (57.6%) and Sustainability (57%).

Additional themes for the new Strategy that were suggested during the engagement included:

- Affordability/Equity – ensuring transportation options are affordable and equitable for all.
- Connectivity – ensuring efficient and seamless movement of people and goods.

The following provides a summary of the key challenges and issues as well as opportunities and ideas raised throughout the engagement in relation to the top 4 priority themes.

Safety

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangerous and speeding vehicles, creating safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists • Lack of bike paths/safe, separated, connected bike paths • Lack of crossings/safe/supervised crossings • Poor, uneven, unsafe, narrow footpaths • Unsafe/dark spaces and anti-social behaviour • Dangerous and speeding cyclists, scooters, e-bikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase bike paths, protected, separated, connected bike paths • Prioritise pedestrians at signalised crossings to provide more time • Increase crossings/safer crossings/supervised crossings • Improve footpaths • Reduce speed limits • Increase lighting • Improve safety around Merri-Creek and schools

Liveability

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor design of parking/lack of parking in some shopping strips • Lack of space for deliveries/loading, unloading • Poor roads/potholes • Poor bus services especially for older people trying to access services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase green spaces, trees, mini-parks, gardens • Revitalise shopping strips and increase amenities – toilets, seating, drinking fountains, signage • Lower speed limits • Transport planning by suburb • Support transport needs of businesses – deliveries/freight • Walkable/rideable streetscapes • Reconsider car parking • Advocate for cheaper public transport

Accessibility

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accessible public transport stops • Lack of amenities like seating, shade, public toilets (at public transport stops, long roads, key locations) • Poor, unsafe, uneven footpaths • Obstructions on footpaths • Narrow paths to accommodate all users/ types of bikes/mobility aids • Lack of information about accessibility/ way-finding signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase accessible parking spaces in key locations • Advocate for accessible public transport stops • More bike parking for different types/sizes of bikes (for all users/abilities) • Improve footpaths • Prioritise pedestrians at crossings to give more time to cross • Increase amenities on roads/paths/stops - seating, toilets, shade, signage

Sustainability

Issues and challenges	Opportunities and ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars creating pollution/emissions • Some public transport services are unreliable, irregular and not connected • Not enough funding for bike paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for the increase of electric bikes and EVs – charging stations, subsidies etc • More bike parking in better locations/ increased/connected bike paths • Funding/education/incentives to encourage active transport options • Increase trees, green spaces to combat heat island and encourage active transport • Continue to support/expand carshare

Suburb insights

The following information provides a high-level overview of the different priorities and ideas that emerged for some of the different suburbs within Merri-bek (featured suburbs had more than 10 survey responses).

Suburb	Brunswick	Brunswick East	Brunswick West	Coburg	Coburg Nth	Fawkner	Glenroy	Pascoe Vale
Mode they want to use more (Most people)	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle	Cycle Train Tram	Train Tram Bus	Train Tram Bus	Walk Cycle Train Tram

Reflecting the overall feedback, most suburbs had the following key ideas/priorities in common:

- Safer, better, increased paths for cycling and walking
- Increased, improved, extended public transport services (with Brunswick West, Glenroy and Fawkner mentioning bus services)
- Advocating for accessible public transport stops/services
- Traffic calming and slowing cars down/reducing speed limits

Brunswick East and Brunswick participants specifically mentioned improving Sydney Road, making it more attractive and safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Brunswick, Brunswick West, Glenroy, Coburg North, and Pascoe Vale participants mentioned improved connections for bikes and public transport either East West and/or North South.

Coburg participants prioritised safety, increased lighting and more/safer crossings.

Objectives and advocacy

Survey participants expressed strong support for the transport objectives that were presented in the Discussion Paper as well as confirming the importance of Council’s advocacy work to improve transport outcomes in Merri-bek.

Three advocacy ideas presented in the survey scored highly in terms of importance including advocating for:

- increased public transport services (87.5% Very Important/Important);
- increased accessible public transport and low-floor vehicles (83.2% Very Important/Important); and
- improved safety and security on public transport (79.4% Very Important/Important).

Other advocacy ideas put forward by survey participants included: safe and protected pedestrian and bike movements on major roads; and decreasing speed limits, car traffic/parking to improve safety and make streets more liveable and easier to move around.

Some participants across the engagement activities suggested more consultation activities, particularly to inform the Collaboration and Accessibility themes, development of the Strategy and its implementation. The importance of developing a Strategy that is clear, easy to understand and includes measures to ensure tracking, reporting and accountability was also suggested.



10

2. Project/Engagement Overview

2.1 Project background

Council is developing a new Strategy. This new Strategy will guide future transport projects in Merri-bek and aim to provide community members with greater transport choice in how they move around the municipality.

This new Strategy will replace the previous transport strategy, which was adopted in 2019. Many actions from the 2019 Strategy have now been completed or are currently underway. In addition, in April 2021, Merri-bek Councillors resolved to revise the 2019 Strategy following its decision to abandon 2 actions related to parking provisions.

Developing a new Strategy will also enable Council to take into consideration changes that have occurred since 2019, upcoming projects and developing trends including things like COVID-19 and more people working from home more often; projects such as the Suburban Rail Loop and Level Crossing Removals as well as the increasing use of electric vehicles, e-bikes and car share services.

Council has also updated key policies that will need to be incorporated into the new Strategy including a new Community Vision and new more ambitious Zero Carbon Merri-bek targets for 2030.

Community feedback on the previous transport strategy and other transport-related projects, Council's Promise document and Community Vision will guide the direction of the new Strategy, which aims to take a more people-centred approach, addressing the needs of all transport users moving around Merri-bek.

Other key inputs that will be taken into consideration to inform the development of the new Strategy include:

- State and Federal policy and legislation;
- Council adopted strategies;
- inter-Council policies and transport projects;
- results of recent community consultation; and
- social research.

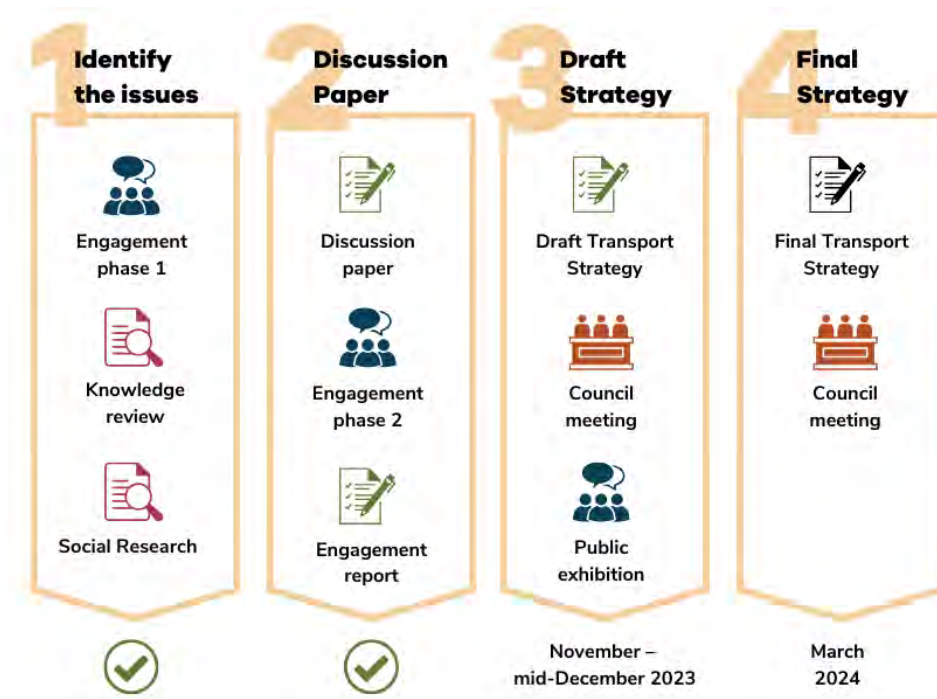
2.2 Project stages

The project plan to develop a new Strategy includes 3 rounds of consultation to gather community and stakeholder feedback (see Figure 1).

- **Stage 1:** (now complete) involved undertaking the social research from January to March 2023 to gain information about how people move around Merri-bek and barriers and challenges impacting their transport choices.
- **Stage 2:** (now complete) involved undertaking community consultation from 24 July to 2 September 2023 to discuss transport needs, challenges, opportunities and ideas (with the support of a discussion paper) and gather feedback to inform the development of a draft Strategy.
- **Stage 3:** (Public Exhibition scheduled for November 2023 to mid-December 2023) will involve consultation on the draft Strategy to inform finalisation of the document.

This report focusses on the findings from community and stakeholder feedback from Stage 2 consultation.

Figure 2.1: Project Stages



Social Research

In preparation for the development of Moving Around Merri-bek, Council commissioned independent research to better understand the community’s existing travel patterns, the challenges they face with the transport system, and the opportunities to improve it.

The research consisted of 2 elements. First, 6 focus groups were conducted among a cross-section of Merri-bek residents. The focus groups occurred in late January and early February 2023. Second, a randomised sample survey of 600 residents was undertaken in the first half of March 2023. Survey quotas for different ages, genders, and backgrounds were sought to ensure the results were representative of Merri-bek’s population.

This research, which will be used to inform the new Strategy, was presented in a report available on Council’s website: [Understanding transportation perception and behaviours in the City of Merri-bek \(May 2023\)](#).

The social research was also used to inform the development of a Discussion Paper that was used to generate discussion and support Stage 2 community consultation activities.

2.3 What we did – engagement program

In partnership with Council, ChatterBox Projects designed a comprehensive communications and engagement program which aimed to gather feedback from a broad range of community members and stakeholders including those who live, work, study, visit or own/operate a business in Merri-bek.

Stage 2 community consultation was undertaken over 6 weeks, from 24 July to 2 September 2023.

Engagement objectives

The engagement objectives for Stage 2 consultation were:

- Inform people about the project, the different approach that Council is taking to develop the new Strategy and how to participate and provide feedback.
- Update people about new transport related information including results of social research, technical information, policy updates, and new trends (opportunities and drivers) to help inform conversation and discussions.
- Provide the community with information and a range of opportunities to participate to ensure Council hears from many different people across the community.
- Listen to community and stakeholders through the engagement activities as they share their lived experiences and challenges in relation to how they travel, where and when they travel and why they choose certain modes of transport.
- Consult and gather feedback on the transport challenges, opportunities and ideas for Merri-bek, using the discussion paper as a guide to inform the development of a draft Strategy.

Discussion Paper

The [Moving Around Merri-bek Discussion Paper](#) was developed to support the Stage 2 engagement activities by generating discussion and guiding topics of conversation as people were asked to provide feedback on their transport challenges, aspirations, opportunities and ideas for improvement.

The Discussion Paper, which was informed by research, policy, and previous community feedback, explores transport challenges, opportunities and ideas for Merri-bek across 6 core theses:

- Safety
- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Health
- Liveability
- Collaboration

Engagement program and participation

The engagement program provided a range of opportunities for the community and stakeholders to get information and provide feedback. Some activities were delivered by Council staff and others were delivered in partnership with ChatterBox Projects.

Council's promotional campaign and efforts to inform and involve the community achieved significant reach. Around **1,020 engaged participants provided feedback** via online and in-person activities including.

Engagement activities included:

- Survey (online and hard copy)
- Online Interactive map and post your ideas (via Conversations Merri-bek project page)
- Place-based pop-ups
- Workshops with key community groups, Advisory Committees, Reference Groups
- Written submissions

Pop-ups

The place-based pop-ups were designed to intercept community members and to encourage people to learn about the project, ask questions and provide feedback and ideas. Feedback at the pop-ups could be provided via hard copy surveys, a chatboard, 2 dotmocracy boards and a voting pod.

The chatboard (where people can write their responses on a board with chalk) asked ‘What is your one small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek’.

The dotmocracy activities (where people can place an allocation of dots on a board to indicate their priorities) included 2 separate activities.

The first dotmocracy activity asked:

- Thinking about transport in Merri-bek, what is the most important to you – Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, Collaboration (participants could choose their top three).

The second dotmocracy activity asked:

- Which modes of transport would you like to use more often? – Walking, Car, Motorbike, Cycle, Scoot/Skate, Tram/Train/Bus.
- What is the main reason why you can’t use this mode of transport right now? (participants could select all relevant options)

• Not near me	• Does not feel safe	• Physically not possible for me
• Not affordable for me	• Not reliable or regular	• Don’t have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
• Takes too long	• No accessible	

The voting pod (where people can indicate their preference by placing 1 ball into a tube) asked how easy it was for people to move around Merri-bek. This engagement activity provided an interactive way to start conversations and to get people to think about how they move around Merri-bek.

Community sentiment at the pop-ups

At the pop-ups, general sentiment was recorded after each interaction to get a sense of how community members were feeling about the project. Of the interactions recorded (122) 84% were either positive or very positive about the project, 6% were neutral, and 10% were negative or very negative.






				
51%	33%	6%	6%	4%

Table 2.1 provides more details about the 6 place-based pop-ups that were held around the municipality.

Table 2.1: Overview of place-based pop-up engagement activities and participation

Pop-up	Details	Participation
1 - Morgan Court, Glenroy	Saturday 19 Aug, 10am - 2pm	25
2 - Bonwick Street, Fawkner	Saturday 19 Aug, 1:30pm - 3:30pm	20
3 - Fleming Park, Brunswick East	Sunday 20 Aug, 12pm - 2pm	100
4 - Brunswick Town Hall, Sydney Road, Brunswick	Thursday 24 Aug, 12pm - 2pm	70
5 - Snell Grove, Pascoe Vale	Thursday 24 Aug, 3:30pm - 5:30pm	25
6 - Victoria Mall, Coburg	Friday 25 Aug, 10am - 12pm	60
TOTAL		300



2.4 Communications and engagement reach

Council implemented a broad promotional program to raise awareness of the project and engagement opportunities and encourage people with different perspectives and backgrounds to participate. As shown in Table 2.2, Council’s promotional campaign and efforts to inform the community achieved significant reach.

Table 2.2: Overview of communication activities with participation outcomes (Council to provide details)

Promotional methods (inform and raise awareness)	People reached
Conversations Merri-bek project page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unique visitors - 2,241 ▪ Total page visits - 3,391 ▪ Followers of the page - 77
Material downloads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Downloads of the Discussion Paper - 351 ▪ Downloads of the Social Research Report – 106 ▪ Easy English version of the Discussion Paper - 9
Information webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendees – 6
Social media coverage and interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Click throughs from translated social media ads – 1,171 ▪ Click throughs from English social media ad – 493
E-newsletter/newsletter articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Article in the e-Business e-news - 6,000 subscribers ▪ Article in the Merri-bek News delivered to 70,000 households ▪ Article in the all-staff e-newsletter emailed to 1,000 staff
Email campaign/direct emails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Email sent to Conversation Merri-bek’s 3,795 subscribers ▪ 5 emails sent to 39 community groups
Displays of A3 posters and A5 posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coburg Civil Centre (Town Hall) ▪ Sporting clubs/venues (in Fawkner, Oak Park and Coburg) ▪ Merri-bek Libraries x 5 ▪ Neighbourhood houses, community halls and youth spaces (in Coburg, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick, Brunswick East, Oak Park, Fawkner, and Glenroy) x 14 ▪ Cafes surrounding the Civic Centre x 4
Delivery of A3 posters and A5 postcards (online and hard copy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sydney Road Brunswick Association (SRBA) ▪ Coburg Traders Association

Promotional methods (inform and raise awareness)	People reached
Distributed of translated materials - online and hard copy surveys, and in-language posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Connectors ▪ Merri-bek Libraries x 5 ▪ Pronia (Greek Community Organisation) ▪ Alevi Community Federation (Turkish Community Organisation) ▪ Arabic Welfare ▪ Patronato INCA (Italian Community Organisation) ▪ Neighbourhood Network Neighbourhood Houses x 7 ▪ Merri Health ▪ Service Provider Network

2.5 Who we heard from

<p>Snapshot</p> <p>We heard from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly local Merri-bek residents (94.3%) • All age groups with strong representation from those aged between 25-59 years • A good spread of both women (52%) and men (40.7%) • A diverse range of people including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 166 people who were born outside of Australia from 42 different countries ○ 81 people who speak a language other than English at home ○ 64 people who identified as LGBTQIA+ ○ 74 people with disability or who are a carer of someone with disability ○ 31 people who experience limited mobility ○ 5 people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander • A range of local groups including the Brunswick Residents Network, CALD Connectors, Climate Action Merri-bek, Coburg High Walking and Cycling, Coburg Trader Association, Merri-bek BUG, Sydney Road Brunswick Association, Upfield Transport Alliance, and Walk on Merri-bek

Detailed demographic information

Around 1,020 individuals provided feedback. The survey was the most comprehensive data gathering activity, capturing demographic information as well as in-depth feedback on key topics of interest. This section describes the demographic profile of the participants. Not all engagement activities captured participant demographic information or the same information, so this profile is mostly based on the survey (online, hard copy, and translated versions) unless stated otherwise.

Residential suburb: Figure 2.2 shows most of the survey participants (479 or 94.3%) live within Merri-Bek, many in Brunswick (134). Other suburbs well represented included Coburg (82), Brunswick East (64), Coburg North (41), and Brunswick West (39).

Gender: Figure 2.3 shows a good spread between female participants (279) and male participants (217) and 9 participants identified as Non-binary/genderqueer/genderfluid.

Age: Figure 2.4 shows all age groups were represented and many survey participants (192 or 36.7%) were aged 25 to 39 years. The 40 to 49 years age group was well represented (137) and 99 participants were aged 50 to 59 years. Younger voices were also represented and captured via the survey and place-based pop-up engagement. The place-based pop-up activities (voting pod) also engaged 17 children and young people under 18 years.

Diversity: Figure 2.5 shows all diversity and other categories were represented. Some participants identified as a Person who speaks a language other than English at home (81), LGBTQIA+ (64), Person with disability (37), Carer of someone with disability (37), Person who experiences limited mobility (31), and/or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (5). Regarding birthplace, 166 participants reported they were born outside of Australia of which many reported New Zealand (17), United Kingdom (14), United States (9), England (7), Germany (6), and France (5).

The consultation also attracted participants representing community segments as well as local groups that provided a written submission including Brunswick Residents Network, CALD Connectors, Climate Action Merri-bek, Coburg High Walking and Cycling, Coburg Trader Association, Merri-bek BUG, Sydney Road Brunswick Association, Upfield Transport Alliance, and Walk on Merri-bek.

Figure 2.2: Participant residential suburb (Survey)

Residential locations were not recorded for the 29 participants who selected 'Outside of Merri-bek'.

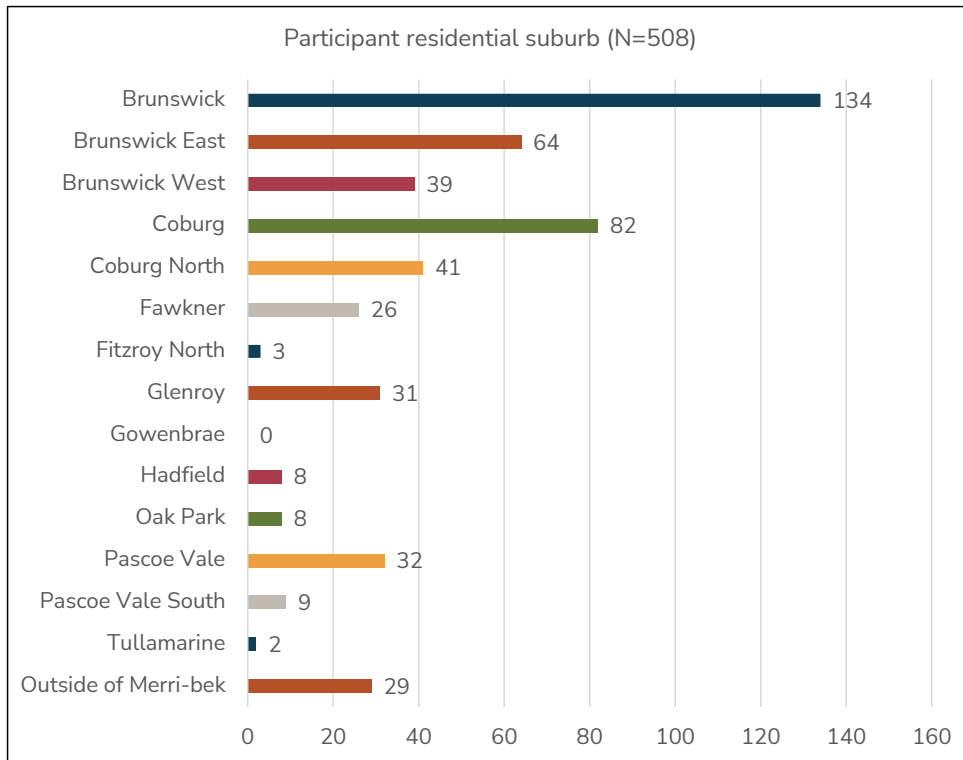


Figure 2.3: Gender of participants (Survey)

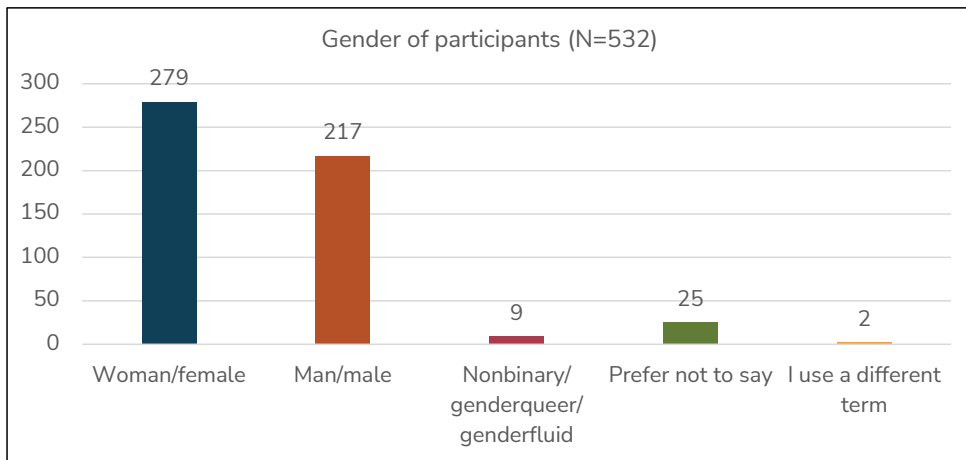


Figure 2.4: Age of participants (Survey)

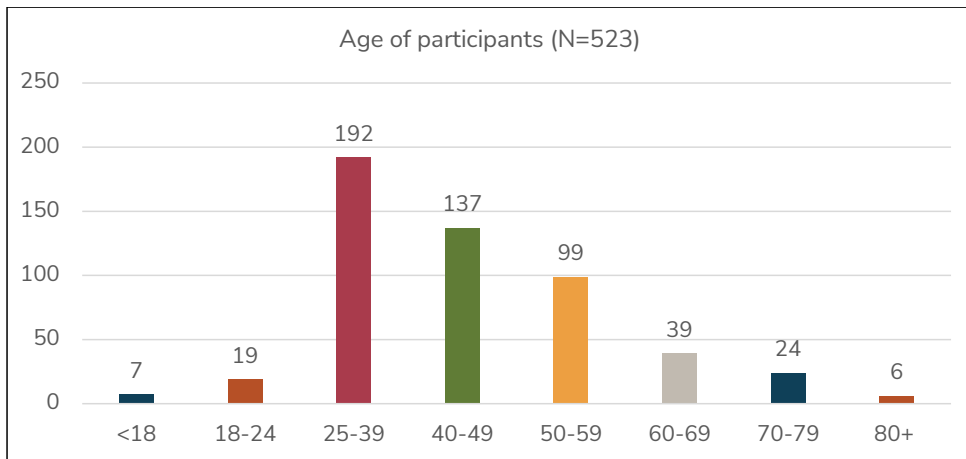


Figure 2.5: Age of participants (Pop-ups)

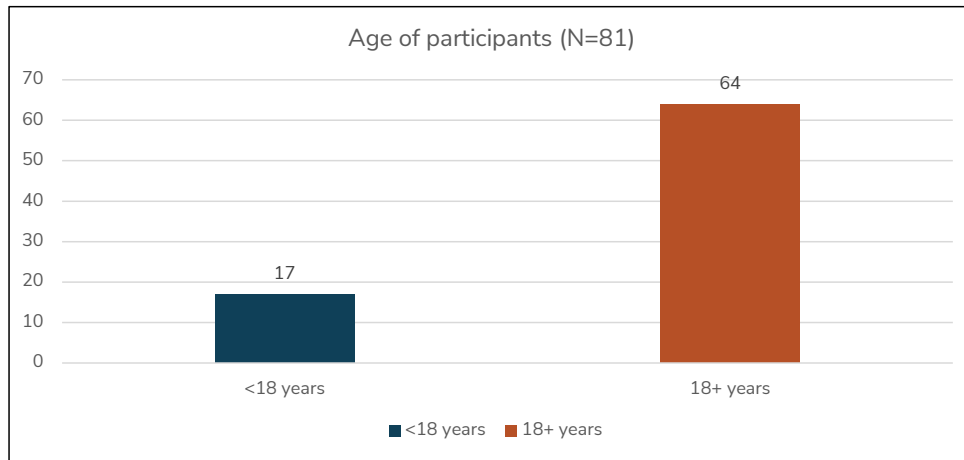
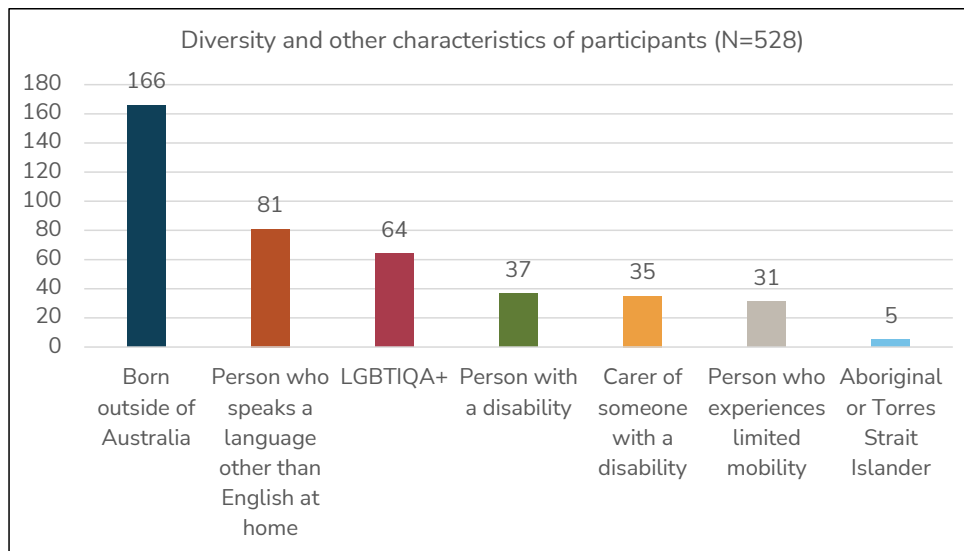


Figure 2.6: Diversity and other characteristics of participants (Survey)



Of the 166 participants who indicated they were born outside of Australia, 114 reported the following locations (where a location was reported by multiple participants this is indicated in brackets):

Argentina	Hong Kong (3)	Norway
Belgium	India	Papua New Guinea (2)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iraq	Philippines (2)
Brazil	Ireland (2)	Poland
Brunei	Italy	Qatar

Canada (4)	Japan (2)	Russia (2)
Chile (2)	Lebanon	Scotland (2)
China (4)	Malaysia (2)	Singapore (2)
Colombia (2)	Malta	Sri Lanka
England (7)	Mauritius	Taiwan (2)
Europe	Mexico	Thailand
France (5)	Middle East	United Kingdom (14)
Germany (6)	New York City	United States (9)
Greece (2)	New Zealand (17)	Venezuela

Overall, the consultation successfully engaged a broad cross-section of the Merri-Bek community.

There were some segments of the community that had no or low levels of engagement including:

- no feedback from people living in Gowanbrae, Fitzroy North, and Tullamarine; and
- lower levels of feedback from people aged under 24 years and over 70 years

In addition, other than 2 submissions from Traders Associations (representing over 800 businesses), the response rate from individual business owners in Merri-bek is unable to be determined.

Ideas to target these groups for future consultation:

To target specific suburbs:

- Letter box drops
- Targeted social media advertising
- Place-based pop-ups in more locations

To target specific age groups:

- Targeted social media advertising
- Customised consultation such as school’s workshops or on-site pop-ups at youth facilities, skate parks, drop-ins at libraries, seniors’ centres, leisure centres etc
- Advertising on public transport

To target business owners

- Trader drop-ins at shopping strips to drop off information and answer questions
- Continued communications via Economic Development channels

3. Engagement findings – moving around Merri-bek now

3.1 Overview

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the community feedback with a focus on moving around Merri-bek now. Findings and insights are presented regarding how easy it is to move around Merri-bek; modes of transport currently used and reasons why; and modes of transport that participants would like to use more often and main barriers.

When asked at pop-up events **how easy it is to move around Merri-bek**, most participants of all ages (64 or 79.0%) reported Very Easy or Easy with 16 (or 19.8%) reporting Very Easy. 10 (or 12.3%) reported it is Difficult or Very difficult for them to move around Merri-bek.

Participants were asked via the survey **how often they currently used specific modes of transport** to move in, out or around Merri-bek. Participants use all transport modes (Walk, Cycle, Car, Tram, Train, Bus, Uber/taxi, Scoot/skate, Motorbike) to varying degrees to move in, out or around Merri-bek. Most participants (298 or 57.0%) reported they walk All of the time or Most of the time, and 107 (or 20.5% of 523) reported All of the time. Many participants reported that they cycle All of the time or Most of the time (222 or 43.9% of 506) and/or use a car All of the time or Most of the time (194 or 36.7% of 529). Most participants reported they Rarely or never use a motorbike (484 or 96.2% of 503) or scoot/skate (458 or 91.4% of 501).

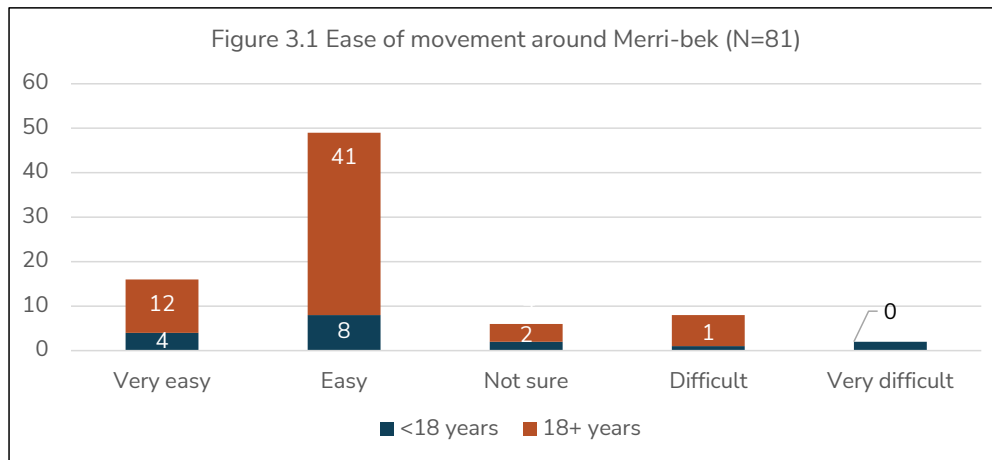
Participants were asked via the survey and pop-up events **which modes of transport they would like to use more often**. Participants selected all transport modes (Walk, Cycle, Car, Tram, Train, Bus, Uber/taxi, Scoot/skate, Motorbike) to varying degrees. Participants most frequently reported they would like to Cycle more often (296 or 54.3%), Walk more often (228 or 41.8%), and/or use a Tram more often (215 or 39.4%). A lower level of interest was reported for Motorbike (4 or 0.7%), Uber/taxi (15 or 2.8%), and Scoot/skate (29 or 5.3%).

3.2 Ease of movement around Merri-Bek

Place-based pop-up engagement participants (voting pod) were asked how easy it is for them to move around Merri-bek and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 3.1, participants aged under 18 years and 18 years and over selected response options to varying degrees. Most participants of all ages (64 or 79.0%) reported Very Easy or Easy with 16 (or 19.8%) reporting Very Easy. 10 (or 12.3%) reported it is Difficult or Very difficult for them to move around Merri-bek.

Figure 3.1: Ratings for ease of movement around Merri-bek (Pop-up)

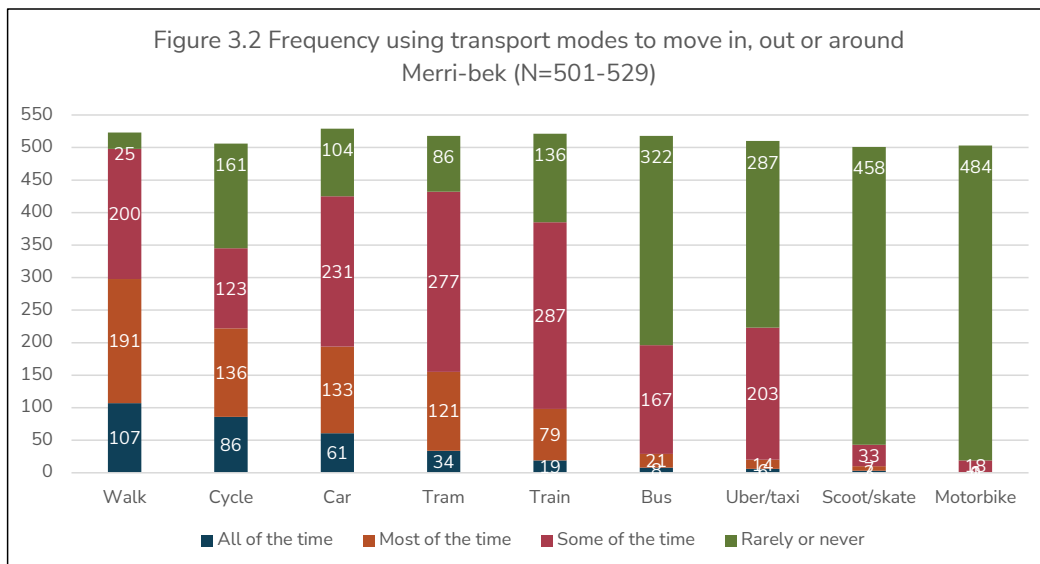


3.3 Modes of transport currently used and reasons why

Survey participants were asked how often they currently used specific modes of transport to move in, out or around Merri-bek and presented with 9 transport modes and 4 response options.

Figure 3.2 shows participants use all transport modes to varying degrees to move in, out or around Merri-bek. Most participants (298 or 57.0%) reported they walk All of the time or Most of the time, and 107 (or 20.5% of 523) reported All of the time. Many participants reported that they cycle All of the time or Most of the time (222 or 43.9% of 506) and/or use a car All of the time or Most of the time (194 or 36.7% of 529). Most participants reported they Rarely or never use a motorbike (484 or 96.2% of 503) or scoot/skate (458 or 91.4% of 501).

Figure 3.2: Modes of transport currently used to move in, out, or around Merri-bek (Survey)



Survey participants were asked in relation to the transport mode that they use most often, why is this the best way to travel around Merri-bek and 443 participants provided a personalised response which referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped using the transport modes as themes, as presented in Table 3.1. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 3.1: Themes in reasons why participants choose a specific transport mode/s (Survey)

Main transport mode referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
1. Walk	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking is an easy, quick, and convenient way to access shops and public transport from my house. Enjoy walking for exercise, while exercising the dog, and for mental and physical health reasons. Most things and places are within walking distance or close to home, so walking is fast and efficient. Walking as I can no longer drive. 	<p><i>"Most things I require are close to my house, so walking is fast and efficient".</i></p> <p><i>"I love walking for mental and physical health and most of what I need is within walking distance".</i></p> <p><i>"On foot because I can't drive at my age".</i></p>
2. Cycle	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It keeps a car off the road, has the lowest carbon intensity, is better for the environment, is a sustainable option and as it does not use fossil fuels there is a low environmental impact which is good for the planet. Cycling is convenient, efficient to get around within Merri-bek, and an effective way of travelling for most of my day-to-day purposes. Like that it keeps me active, healthy (mentally and physically), and is good exercise outdoors. Cycling is free, affordable, or the cheapest transport mode. Cycling avoids contributing to traffic congestion and it is good not having to locate a car park. E-bikes are good. Don't have a driver's license. 	<p><i>"Cycling is convenient, efficient and it's faster to get around within Merri-bek. I like that it keeps me healthy, keeps a car off the road and it's faster to park and go in and out of places".</i></p> <p><i>"Affordability, convenience, good exercise".</i></p> <p><i>"It is the most environmentally and cost-effective means of transportation".</i></p>
3. Car	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy, quick, safe, reliable, most cost-effective, and not overcrowded. Most convenient because of my physical condition, chronic illness, mobility issues, due to being time poor, being employed with shift work, or having access to disabled car parking. Most flexible for carrying large loads such as groceries, because of young children, or the need to travel to multiple destinations for work and family obligations. 	<p><i>"Gives flexibility and ability to carry large loads e.g. groceries. Also, it's much easier since I have 2 kids under 3".</i></p> <p><i>"Car is fast, convenient and reliable".</i></p> <p><i>"Due to a lot of travel with my job, time restrictions and weight of items I need to carry".</i></p>
4. Tram	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trams are safe, easy to travel, fast to reach my destination, and parking is easy. Tram stop is located near my home. Tram route is conveniently close to home and work. Trams are frequent, reliable, and the best option. 	<p><i>"It is the most direct route into the city and back home from the city".</i></p> <p><i>"Trams are conveniently located, affordable and quick".</i></p> <p><i>"Because it easy and fast to reach in my destination and easy for parking".</i></p>

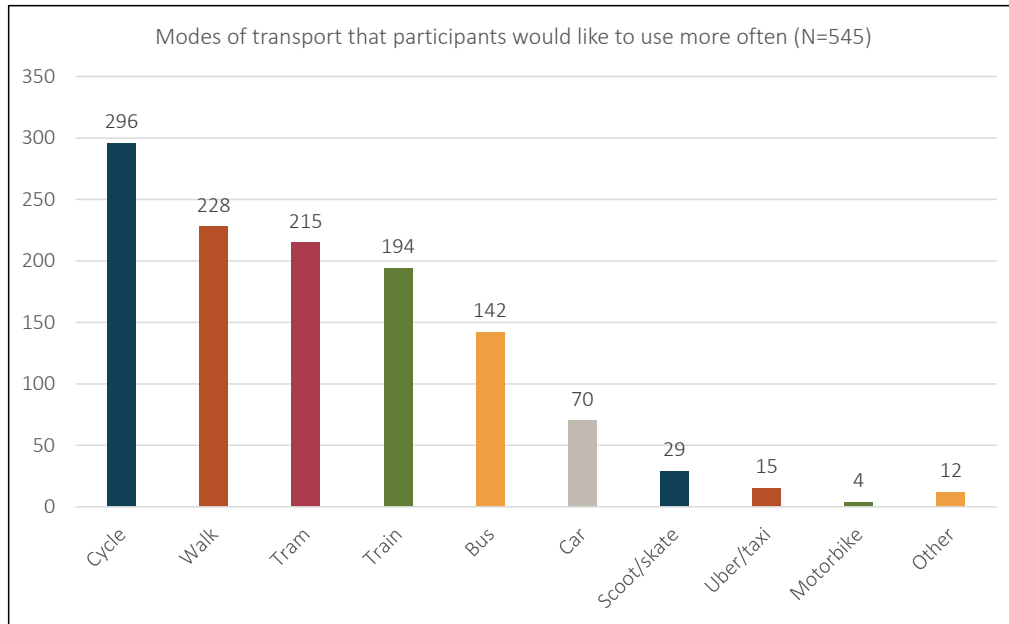
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trams are quick and the most direct route to and from the city. 	
5. Train	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trains get me to work, the city or my destination quickly. Train is a convenient option, more reliable and faster than buses. A station is located near my home and the places I want to go are connected to the train or tram system. Because I do not, or prefer not, to drive. 	<p><i>"I prefer not to drive, it is better for health, sustainability and more social".</i></p> <p><i>"The most convenient option for me".</i></p> <p><i>"Train transport gets me quickly to work".</i></p>
6. Bus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service that is closest to home. The most direct services to destinations. 	<p><i>"Buses are closest to home in Fawkner".</i></p> <p><i>"Bus is more direct to where I need or want to go".</i></p>
7. Uber/taxi	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A flexible service that meets my personal transport needs. 	<p><i>"Only service to accommodate my needs".</i></p> <p><i>"I always take the train or an uber into and out of the city if I need to go there".</i></p> <p><i>"Uber for after hours or where public transport does not go".</i></p>
8. Scoot/skate	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets me to around for day-to-day shopping and commuting to work. Use the Upfield and OHea Street bike paths daily and it's a safe route and faster than public transport. Living in West Brunswick and it is faster than a car or the tram. 	<p><i>"I can get to shops for day-to-day shopping, also going to the pool as well as commuting into the city or our suburban office for work".</i></p> <p><i>"E-scooter on the Upfield and OHea Street bike paths daily to and from work. It's a safe route that allows me to avoid riding on the road, It's faster than public transport".</i></p> <p><i>"I use an electric scooter because I live in West Brunswick, and it is faster compared to a car or the tram".</i></p>

3.4 Modes of transport that could be used more often and main barriers

Survey participants and place-based pop-up participants (dotmocracy) were asked which modes of transport they would like to use more often in Merri-bek and presented with 9 response options as well as an "Other" option for personalised feedback.

As shown in Figure 3.3, participants selected all response options to varying degrees. Participants most frequently reported they would like to Cycle more often (296 or 54.3%), Walk more often (228 or 41.8%), and/or use a Tram more often (215 or 39.4%). A lower level of interest was reported for Motorbike (4 or 0.7%), Uber/taxi (15 or 2.8%), and Scoot/skate (29 or 5.3%).

Figure 3.3: Modes of transport that participants would like to use more often (Survey, Pop-ups)

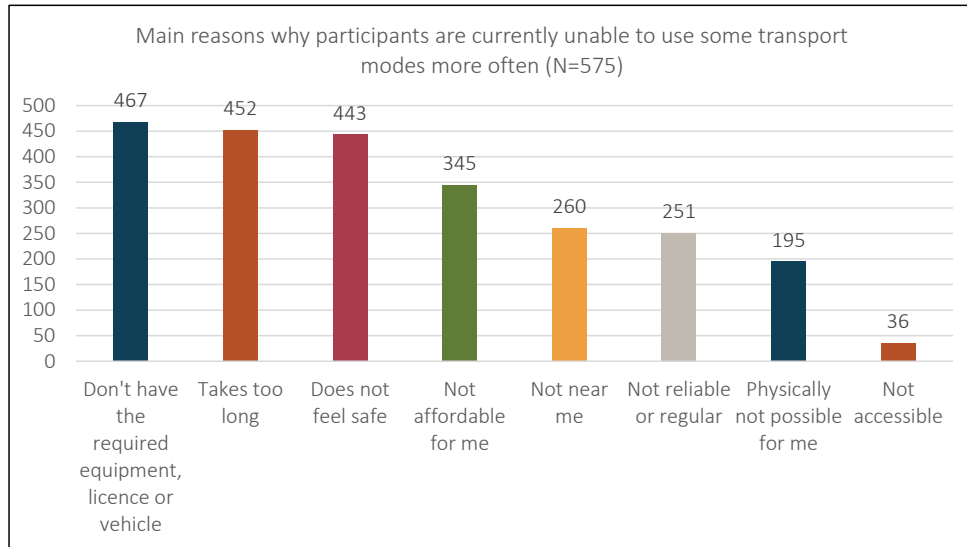


The 12 survey participants who selected 'Other' provided the following responses: Carpooling to work; Don't feel the need to use transport more often; Electric bike/E-bike (3); Happy with options chosen; Have close access to train, tram and bus and GoGets when I need to hire a car; Motorised scooter; None (3); Rickshaw; Walking or public transport at night.

Survey participants and place-based pop-up participants (dotmocracy) were also asked for the main reasons why they are currently unable to use this mode or these modes of transport (Bus, Motorbike, Scoot/skate, Train, Uber/taxi, Cycle, Car, Walk, Tram) and presented with 8 response options.

As shown in Figure 3.4, the most frequently reported overall main barriers or reasons why participants are currently unable to use some modes of transport are Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle (467 or 81.2%), Takes too long (452 or 78.6%), and Does not feel safe (443 or 77.0%). Figures 3.5 to 3.7 show the main barriers or reasons reported for each mode of transport.

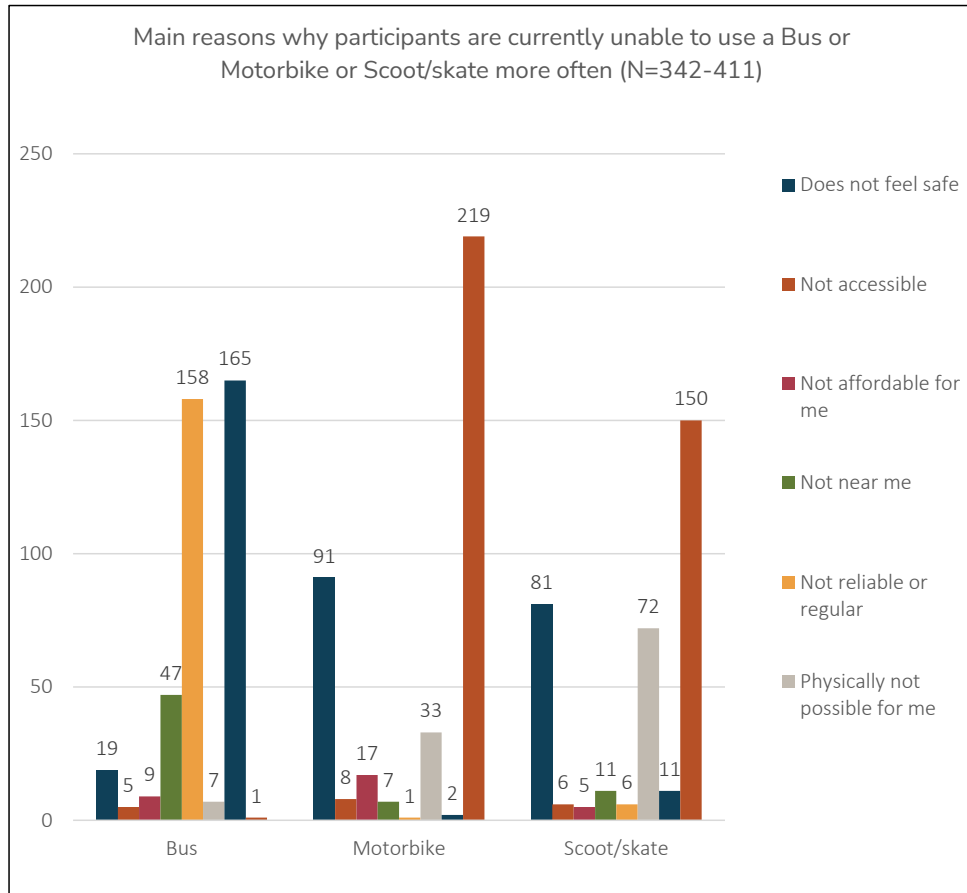
Figure 3.4: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use some transport modes more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



As shown in Figure 3.5, the most frequently reported main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Bus more often are Takes too long (165) and Not reliable or regular(158). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to use a Motorbike more often are Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle (219) and Does not feel safe (91). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to Scoot/skate more often are Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle (150) and Does not feel safe (81).

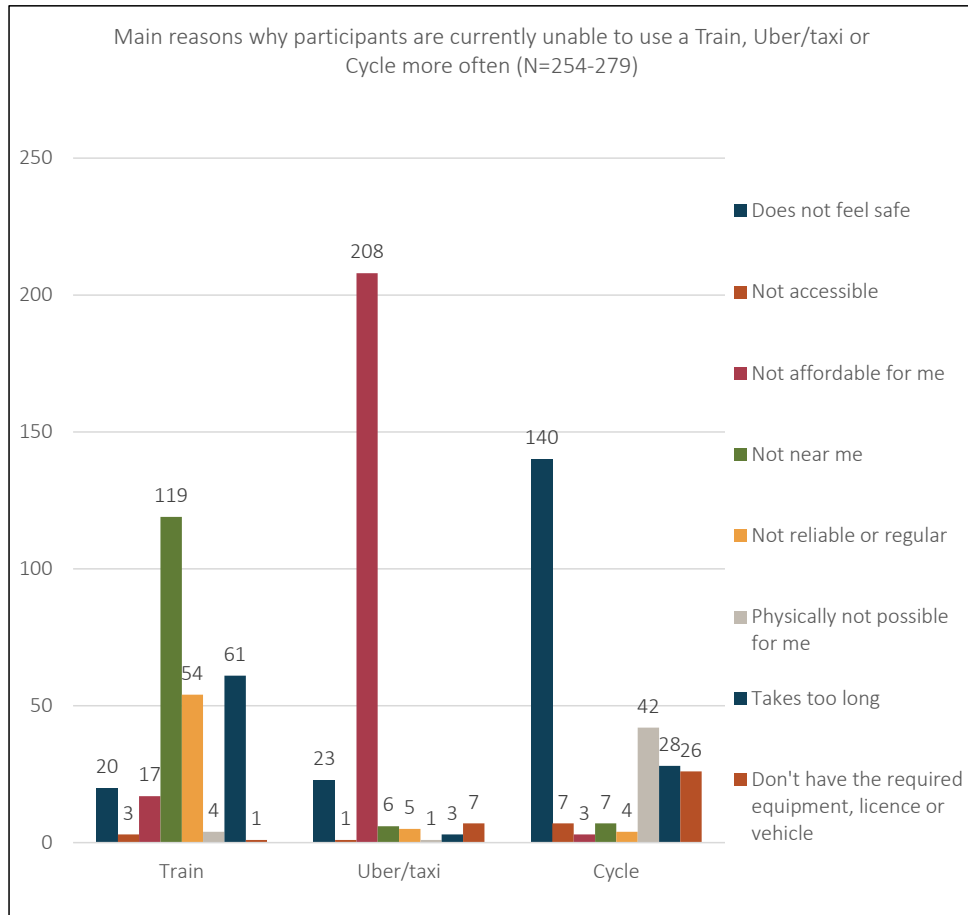


Figure 3.5: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Bus or Motorbike or Scoot/skate more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



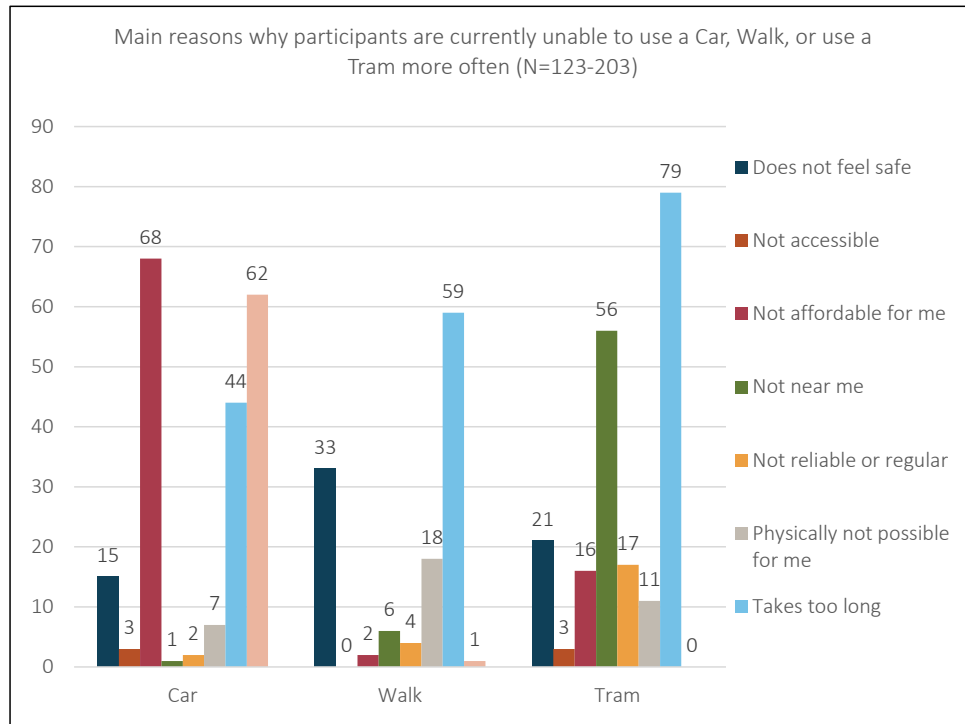
As shown in Figure 3.6, the most frequently reported main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Train more often are Not near me (119) and Takes too long (61). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to use an Uber/taxi more often are Not affordable for me (208) and Does not feel safe (23). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to Cycle more often are Does not feel safe (140) and Physically not possible for me (42).

Figure 3.6: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Train, Uber/taxi or Cycle more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



As shown in Figure 3.7, the most frequently reported main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Car more often are Not affordable for me (68) and Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle. The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to Walk are Takes too long (59) and Does not feel safe (33). The most frequently reported main reasons for currently being unable to use a Tram more often are Takes too long (79) and Not near me (56).

Figure 3.7: Main reasons why participants are currently unable to use a Car, Walk, or use a Tram more often (Survey, Pop-ups)



Survey participants were asked if there is another reason why they are unable to use a specific mode of transport and to indicate which mode and why. 202 participants provided a personalised response of which 8 generally indicated nothing further to add. The responses from the remaining 194 participants referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped into themes. Four themes emerged during the analyses and are presented in Table 3.2. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 3.2: Themes in other reasons why participants are unable to use some modes of transport (Survey)

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
1. Safety is a significant issue and concerns vary by transport mode	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling: Preferred transport mode, however, safety concerns relating to road conditions, lack of protected space and inadequate infrastructure. A desire for safer and more cycling-related infrastructure to encourage cycling. • Walking: Desirable transport mode, however, some walking paths are in potentially dangerous condition. Walking is generally considered safe during the day, but there are safety concerns at night due to no or poor lighting. A desire for safer pedestrian-related infrastructure to encourage walking. • Trains: Safety-related concerns associated with waiting times due to poor connections, overcrowding, and the risk of COVID-19 transmission. • Cars: While generally considered a safer option, cars are also associated with chaos on roads and footpaths. Safety concerns associated with the behaviours of some car drivers. • Buses: Safety concerns associated with infrequent and unreliable services. Infrequency leads to longer waiting times and personal safety concerns. • Trams: Sometimes seen as unsafe, particularly when crossing busy roads. • Overall transport environment: General safety concerns relating to anti-social behaviours, gender-based violence and lack of speed-restricting devices. 	<p><i>"Access to safe walking paths is incredibly important to me, including good lighting in the evening. I've been followed home after getting off a tram after work on a winter afternoon as it was getting dark, which was very scary".</i></p> <p><i>"Sometimes it doesn't feel safe to cycle to certain places so I might need to choose another form of transport if there isn't a good, safe way to get there".</i></p> <p><i>"I would like to use the car more but the 60km limit on Moreland Road is very dangerous for cars turning in and needs to become 50km".</i></p> <p><i>"Security, because of people disturbing people on public transport".</i></p>
2. Inconvenience, inefficiency, and affordability are concerns in relation to public transport services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses: Concerns about infrequent and unreliable schedules, and suboptimal connections to other modes of transportation • Trains: Generally preferred for city visits or family trips, but their infrequency and limited usefulness for local travel are issues. • Trams: Regarded as unaffordable for short trips, concerns about overcrowding and uncomfortable seating at stops. • Overall public transport services: Generally viewed as irregular, slow, or not providing direct routes or connections to destinations. The cost of public transport is seen as a barrier to use. 	<p><i>"The train service is too infrequent and unaffordable".</i></p> <p><i>"Better public transport in the evenings and weekends, especially buses, would be helpful. I cannot drive for medical reasons".</i></p> <p><i>"Would love east-west tram connection between route 58 and Route 19/Upfield train line along Moreland Road".</i></p>
3. Accessibility is an issue, due to physical limitations or lack of infrastructure across transport modes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cars: Viewed as accessible and convenient, especially in areas where amenities are easy to access. Yet there is a preference to reduce car usage due to the negative impact on the roads and difficulty parking is also a concern. 	<p><i>"Reluctant to use the bus routes that run East-West because they can be very unreliable".</i></p> <p><i>"I would love accessible trams for my friends with disabilities who cannot access the current trams".</i></p>

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling: Desire for safer roads, better cycling infrastructure to improve connectivity between modes of transport, and more bike parking stations. • Buses: Regarded as generally inaccessible due to infrequent and unreliable schedules, and lack of bike racks. 	
4. Environmental concerns which often motivate a preference for more sustainable transport modes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling and walking: Active transport modes are desirable and environmentally friendly, yet use may be limited due to safety concerns and limited supporting infrastructure. • Cars: Generally viewed as environmentally unfriendly, contributing to pollution and congestion. • Buses: Concerns about exhaust emissions and a call for more electric buses. • Overall transport environment: General sentiment is current transportation infrastructure prioritizes motor vehicles over other modes, leading to unsafe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Leading to environmental concerns and a desire for more sustainable and safe transportation options. 	<p><i>"Car - I avoid as much as possible for environmental reasons and being stuck in traffic".</i></p> <p><i>"I would avoid using all single person transport that uses fossil fuels".</i></p>

Workshop participants reported:

- **Cycling:** Many youth participants would like to cycle more. They have friends and family living to the north and north-west of Merri-bek and there is a lack of viable transport connections, for instance between Coburg and Broadmeadows. Train stations and bus stops often felt unsafe for young people, with poor lighting and a lack of covered waiting areas reducing the attractiveness of catching public transport. Some relied on ride share services (Youth Ambassadors).
- **Cars:** Some youth participants noted the importance of driving as a social activity, particularly in areas such as Fawkner with limited options for young people at night and on weekends. Reasons for preferring to drive include feeling unsafe when it's dark (commonly held belief by female participants), that it is quicker and more convenient, that the buses are poor and run infrequently, and switching between various forms of public transport is often necessary which makes it difficult.
- **Uber/taxi:** Some older participants must catch a taxi as public transport would take too long and they don't drive. On-demand bus services, like those operating in Melton, may work well in under-serviced areas of Merri-bek.
- **Multi-modal travellers, not single mode users:** Many residents use different modes of transport (public transport, walking, cycling and driving) at different times and for different purposes.

4. Engagement findings – looking to the future

4.1 Overview

This Section presents the findings from the analysis of the community feedback with a focus on the 6 Draft Themes (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and proposed Objectives, looking to the future. Findings and insights are presented regarding the level of support for the Draft Themes and the most important Objectives and advocacy initiatives for Council. Other ideas and general feedback provided to inform the Strategy is also presented.

When asked to indicate the **3 most important Themes of a future transport system** for Merri-bek, participants selected the Themes to varying degrees. Safety was most frequently selected as Priority 1 (189 or 34.2%) and ranked the highest priority overall (378 or 68.5%). Safety was followed by Liveability which was ranked as the second highest priority overall (343 or 62.1%) and the third highest priority overall was Accessibility (318 or 57.6%). Survey participants were asked to share their own suggestions and ideas if they thought an important priority was missing. Some participants indicated they had nothing further to add or the priorities are good. Suggestions included reconsidering or expanding the scope the 6 current themes and considering the addition of Affordability and Connectivity as other important priorities.

Survey participants were asked **to what extent they support the proposed Objectives for each Draft Theme** and presented with 5 response options. Most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of all objectives as shown below:

- Safety objectives: 91.1% to 93.8%
- Accessibility objectives: 93.0% to 95.5%
- Sustainability objectives: 89.6% to 90.9%
- Health objectives: 88.8% to 93.0%
- Liveability objectives: 87.3% to 94.1%
- Collaboration objectives: 89.0% to 93.4%.

4.2 Preferred themes for a new transport system for Merri-bek

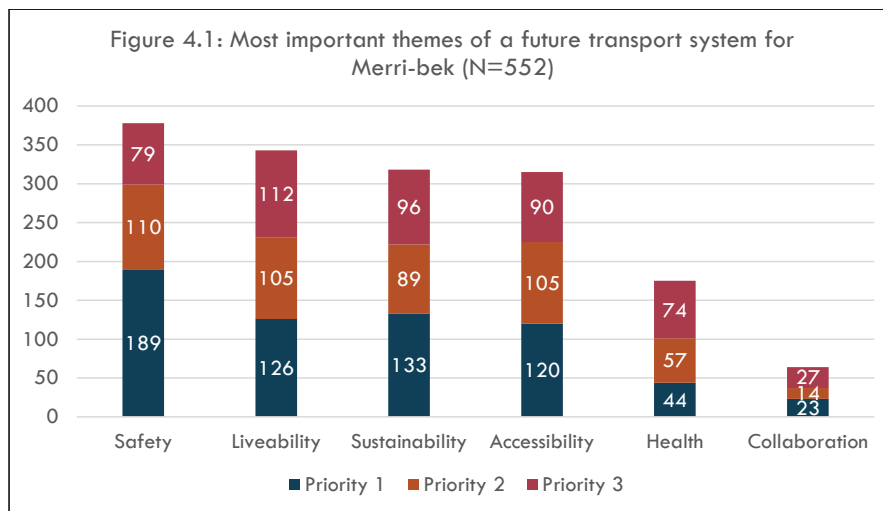
Survey participants and place-based pop-up (Dotmocracy) participants were asked to indicate the 3 most important elements of a future transport system for Merri-bek and presented with the following listing of 6 themes and theme descriptions.

- Accessibility: An accessible transport system – all people can use different modes of transport no matter their age, background, or abilities.
- Collaboration: A transport system shaped by community and Council working together – Council and community are working together to meet transport needs and advocating to State Government for transport improvements.
- Health: A transport system to contributes to our health – there are more easy options to walk or ride for fitness, fun and everyday trips as well as places for us to come together as a community.
- Liveability: A transport system that makes our lives better – there are enjoyable connections and transport options close to where people live, making it easy to access shops, services, and jobs.

- Safety: A safe transport system – people are safe travelling in all kinds of ways on local roads, streets, and paths.
- Sustainability: A sustainable transport system – there are more easy options to travel sustainably, whether by foot, bike, e-scooter, public transport, or zero-emission vehicles, helping to reduce transport emissions.

As shown in Figure 4.1, all statements were selected to varying degrees. Safety was most frequently selected as Priority 1 (189 or 34.2%) and ranked the highest priority overall (378 or 68.5%). Safety was followed by Liveability which was ranked as the second highest priority overall (343 or 62.1%) and the third highest priority overall was Accessibility (318 or 57.6%).

Figure 4.1: Most important themes of a future transport system for Merri-bek (Survey, Pop-ups)



Survey

participants were asked to share their thoughts if an important priority is missing (from the themes shown above in Figure 4.1). 436 participants provided a personalised response of which 188 generally indicated nothing further to add or the priorities are good. The responses from the remaining 248 participants referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped into themes. Eight themes emerged during the analyses and are presented in Table 4.1. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 4.1: Suggested for revisions and additional themes as transport system priorities (Survey)

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<p>1. Reconsider or expand the scope of Safety as an important priority to consider</p> <p>Safety is a key consideration and directly impacts the well-being and confidence of road users and the success of the transportation system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing safety can encourage active and sustainable modes of transport, reduce accidents and injuries, and enhance the overall quality of transportation for all users. • Prioritizing safety is important for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, and children. Merri-bek needs safe 	<p>"Good quality paths for cycling and walking that are maintained and big enough for pedestrians and cyclists on the same path. Well-lit paths to allow for visibility at nighttime".</p> <p>"Bike priority and walking priority. Cars should not have</p>

34

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<p>pedestrian crossings, pathways, bike lanes, and road infrastructure to protect all road users.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety extends beyond physical protection to include the feeling of security when using different transport modes. When people feel unsafe, they are less likely to choose a mode of transport, leading to increased car usage and congestion. 	<p><i>right or way or priority in any urban planning setting".</i></p> <p><i>"By safety I mean lessening the risk I'll be hit by a car when walking or getting off a tram".</i></p>
<p>2. Reconsider or expand the scope of Accessibility as an important priority to consider</p>	
<p>Accessibility is a key consideration and fundamental aspect of transport planning and policymaking to create a system that is inclusive, efficient and provides equal opportunities for everyone to move around independently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizing accessibility ensures transportation options are available and usable for all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities, socioeconomic status, or location. This promotes equal opportunities for travel and societal participation. Prioritizing accessibility fosters inclusivity and social equity by enabling everyone including those with limited mobility, prams or wheelchairs, to access essential services like healthcare, education, employment, and recreational activities. Accessibility enhances safety by reducing the risk of accidents and injuries through accessible infrastructure and promotes the use of sustainable transportation and more environmentally friendly modes of transport. 	<p><i>"Accessibility - impossible to use trams when you have a pram as there are no accessible tram stops".</i></p> <p><i>"Accessibility is a human right and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency first".</i></p> <p><i>"Equality. There are many people in our community who cannot drive. Walking, cycling and access to public transport should not be treated as a lefty life-style choice. Our young and older residents need lots of safe choices for moving around independently".</i></p>
<p>3. Reconsider or expand the scope of Sustainability as an important priority to consider</p>	
<p>Sustainability is a key consideration due to its potential to reduce emissions, improve livability, enhance long-term planning, and contribute to global efforts to combat climate change and achieve environmental goals. Transportation is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, and sustainable practices can help reduce these impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizing sustainable transportation systems supports the creation of vibrant and inclusive communities by providing accessible, safe, and efficient transportation options. It also considers the long-term impacts of transportation decisions to ensure systems can adapt and remain efficient in the face of future challenges and embraces new technologies. By prioritizing sustainability, transportation systems can become more environmentally friendly, socially equitable, and resilient, ultimately benefiting both individuals, the community, and planet. 	<p><i>"All these themes need to be resilient/agile enough to withstand extreme weather events. The whole transport system doesn't catastrophically fail under heatwaves or flooding".</i></p> <p><i>"Can we have more electric charging infrastructure as well please and ensure that the charging infrastructure we have is working".</i></p> <p><i>"Reduce vehicle use and associated pollution and risk".</i></p>
<p>4. Affordability is another important priority to consider</p>	
<p>Affordability is a key consideration to promote social equity and its impacts are wide-ranging. By ensuring that transportation options are affordable for all, transportation systems can become more inclusive, sustainable, and beneficial for individuals and community members, regardless of their socioeconomic status, as well as local businesses and industries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability influences the choice between private vehicles and public transportation. If public transportation is more affordable, it becomes a more attractive option, leading to reduced traffic congestion, air pollution, and carbon emissions. 	<p><i>"Affordability - \$5 is a lot to pay for a short tram ride, for example. Extended off-peak fares and short-trip tickets would be great for people on low incomes".</i></p> <p><i>"Affordability is also an important consideration! the lack of regular and reliable wheelchair accessible public transport near me means I often must rely on taxi services. I'm</i></p>

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordability is closely linked to accessibility. Affordable transportation options and fares ensure that vulnerable populations can access essential services and activities, promoting social inclusion and reducing transportation-related barriers. Affordability supports economic growth and development by facilitating the movement of goods and services, supporting local businesses and industries, and enabling efficient commuting to work. 	<p><i>lucky enough to be able to afford to do this, but many wheelchair users aren't in that position of financial privilege".</i></p> <p><i>"Affordability. Public transport should not be a financial burden".</i></p>
<p>5. Reconsider or expand the scope of Livability as an important priority</p>	
<p>Livability is a key consideration, with a focus on creating a transport system that enhances the overall quality of life for individuals and communities. It encompasses factors such as accessibility, convenience, comfort, and safety, all of which contribute to creating a pleasant and enjoyable transportation experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritising livability aims to provide efficient and reliable options for people to move around, reducing reliance on private cars and promoting sustainable modes of transportation. It emphasizes the creation of safe and inclusive spaces for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users. Furthermore, it recognizes the importance of creating vibrant and attractive streetscapes that enhance the overall aesthetics and character of a community. By prioritizing livability, communities can enhance their overall quality of life, promote healthier and more sustainable modes of transportation, and create vibrant and enjoyable public spaces. 	<p><i>"A transport system that improves our livability should be sustainable and improves our health".</i></p> <p><i>"As a category, or in the descriptions, we are missing independence. For example, children/youth accessing transport independently; elderly accessing transport to maintain independence; people with issues accessing certain modes of transport for reasons of health and disability to gain or maintain independence".</i></p> <p><i>"I guess this is associated with livability, but timeliness and convenience would also be important".</i></p>
<p>6. Connectivity is another important priority to consider</p>	
<p>Connectivity is a key consideration due to its role in ensuring efficient and seamless movement of people and goods within a transportation system. Transportation planners and policymakers can create a comprehensive and integrated network that meets the diverse needs of individuals and promotes sustainable and livable communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritizing connectivity enhances accessibility by providing well-connected transportation options, allowing individuals to reach various destinations easily. It also improves the efficiency of transportation systems by reducing unnecessary transfers or long waiting times. Prioritizing connectivity enhances the overall reliability and effectiveness of transportation systems by making it easier to coordinate schedules, optimize routes, and improve service frequency and punctuality. It indirectly fosters social cohesion and community interaction by enabling people to easily connect with one another. 	<p><i>"Connected Network - high coverage of Merri-bek by cycle networks and public transport networks (also frequent)".</i></p> <p><i>"Connected. Dedicated cycling lanes that are connected, Tram, Train and Bus timetables connected and coordinated to make the use of more than one mode of public transport easier without the need to wait longer than 3 minutes".</i></p> <p><i>"Connectivity includes notions of safety, reliability, speed of service and access to services within the broader transport system".</i></p>
<p>7. Reconsider or expand the scope of Collaboration as an important priority to consider</p>	
<p>Collaboration that involves raising awareness and education about transportation requirements can lead to safer, more efficient, and</p>	<p><i>"Education about road rules for all transport and mutual respect".</i></p>

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<p>more inclusive transportation systems that benefit individuals, communities, and the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising transport awareness increases understanding about the needs and challenges of different modes of transportation, fostering empathy and understanding among road users. It improves safety by promoting safer behaviors and practices among drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. • Prioritising transport awareness enhances efficiency by encouraging informed choices about modes of transportation, leading to more efficient use of resources and infrastructure. Promote and support active transport, alternative transport modes, and community collaboration in transport planning. This will contribute to environmental sustainability by raising awareness about the environmental impact of different modes of transportation, encouraging greener choices. • Prioritising transport awareness promotes social inclusion by ensuring that transportation systems are accessible and accommodating for all individuals, regardless of their abilities or circumstances. 	<p><i>"We need to cut down on car use, so promoting other forms of transport is really important".</i></p> <p><i>"Glad to see collaboration in there - this is important for building ownership by the Merri-Bek community, leading to increased use".</i></p>
<p>8. Reconsider or expand the scope of Health as an important priority to consider</p>	
<p>Health could also address disease mitigation. Transportation systems can contribute to controlling the spread of diseases, protecting public health, and creating a more resilient and sustainable community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising actions such as improving air quality in public transport vehicles and implementing cleaning protocols is essential for the overall safety and well-being of the community. Learning from countries like Japan, where air cleaning systems are implemented in public transport, can help ensure the safety and inclusion of all individuals. • Prioritising disease mitigation addresses the spread of airborne diseases on public transport, which directly impacts the health and safety of individuals. This is important in enclosed spaces like public transport vehicles where the potential for disease transmission is high. In the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, disease mitigation is very relevant. Failure to consider disease mitigation can lead to discrimination and exclusion of vulnerable individuals who are at a higher risk of contracting diseases or experiencing long-term health effects. 	<p><i>"Health. Control of disease spread".</i></p> <p><i>"Totally ignoring a current major issue under the banner of health and safety - the lack of mitigation against transmission of airborne diseases on public transport".</i></p> <p><i>"Keeping services frequent, well ventilated, clean, and providing private vehicles are necessary to the health of vulnerable members of the community, and to avoid making healthy people chronically ill".</i></p>

4.3 Transport system theme - Safety

<p>Theme – Safety: A safe transport system – people are safe travelling in all kinds of ways on local roads, streets, and paths.</p> <p>Proposed Safety objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve road safety outcomes and create safe streets for all people to walk, ride and drive in Merri-bek. • Prioritise, where possible, creating streets suitable for walking and cycling for people of various skills and abilities. • Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.

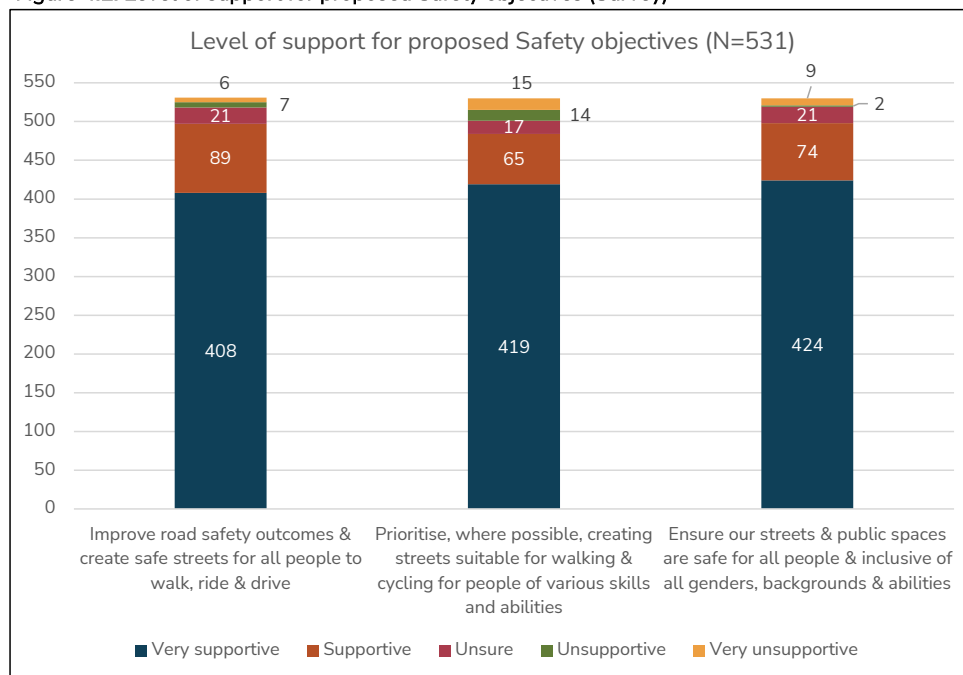
4.3.1 Support for proposed Safety objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Safety objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.2, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Safety objectives:

- 497 or 93.6% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Improve road safety outcomes and create safe streets for all people to walk, ride and drive in Merri-bek.
- 484 or 91.1% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Prioritise, where possible, creating streets suitable for walking and cycling for people of various skills and abilities.
- 498 or 93.8% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.

Figure 4.2: Level of support for proposed Safety objectives (Survey)



4.3.2 Challenges, opportunities, and ideas for Safety

Online mapping participants were asked about their experiences of safety when moving around Merri-bek, and 82 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of safety-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
<p>Dangerous or speeding vehicles: Road accidents: Merri-bek is one of the worst municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne for pedestrian road trauma. Dangerous on Lynch Road, Murray Road, Bell Street intersection. Design of streets that permit cars to go fast makes local streets unsafe, including large vehicles that are driven over speed humps. Drivers cutting through local roads makes it unsafe. Car speed both at legal and illegal speeds, make me feel unsafe on Sydney Road from Gaffney to Boundary which is mostly 60km. Lots of car accidents and near misses with pedestrians, reduce to 40km. The area is becoming more built up residentially with schools, childcare, aged care and more food outlets and speed limit needs to reflect community here and be enforced. Cars are often parked dangerously close to roundabouts on Major Road obstructing view and making it hard for vehicles to pass. Cars from Park Street turning on Sydney Road and The Avenue are not watchful of cyclists crossing to continue along Park Street and near-misses are common here and it does not feel safe. Cars speed through zebra crossings. Drivers frequently go through pedestrian lights outside a school, despite the visibility of crossing guards. Drivers often speed through roundabouts especially when going straight.</p>
<p>Cyclists, bike lanes, and bike paths: Some bike riders ride dangerously and there is no way to identify them (no number plates). Some students don't feel safe riding to school. Safety issues with car doors opening, large cars and trucks, and speeding drivers that do not consider cyclists on the roads. Cycling along Sydney Road feels unsafe due to potholes and drivers who don't give much room. It is difficult to see traffic from either direction when turning into Pearson Street due to parked cars. Also, the traffic flow has been growing steadily, making for long waits to be able to turn. Bike riding under the train line feels safe. The increasing number of survey holes with metal caps added into bike lane has created additional hazards. Turning left from Nicholson into Sumner is hard for cyclists, turning out of Sumner is dangerous as oncoming vehicles ignore you and cycling along Sydney Road feels unsafe. Lack of safe and connected bike paths. There are narrow shared bike and pedestrian path where cyclists and particularly ebikes and scooters do not slow down. Traveling East to West on a bike is dangerous as the road narrows and the bike lane disappears.</p>
<p>Walking and pedestrian crossings: Some areas of Merri-bek have long roads and no crossings or traffic lights and people will cross anywhere which is dangerous (i.e., Murray, Road, West Street). Speeding cars making it unsafe for walkers. Crossings can be quite challenging with children - busy roads, wide crossings, and parked cars. Lack of lighting of the Sydney Road and Hume Highway were identified as having unsafe pedestrian crossings and intersections. Crossing the road on foot feels unsafe because traffic is too fast on Moreland Road. Need pedestrian lights near the IGA supermarket as it is a busy intersection with Cornwall Street. Some pedestrian crossings are good. Footpath northside of Albion between Sydney Road and Upfield line needs regrading to be flat. Feel unsafe walking with my children down some narrow laneways.</p>
<p>Footpaths: Having narrow footpaths nearby fast motor vehicles is an issue, particularly on arterial roads. The poor quality of some footpaths is a major concern, particularly for older persons who may be vulnerable to falls, those with prams, or those with mobility challenges. Older persons may be deterred by e-scooters and bicycles being used on footpaths. Need to ensure footpaths are even and clear of obstructions, including vehicles, e-bikes and scooters, and only used by pedestrians by building protecting bike lanes. Uneven and unsafe footpaths impact people with prams, people with mobility issues and older people (i.e., Fawkner, Sydney Road in Brunswick).</p>
<p>Street lighting: Street lighting could be improved particularly for activity centres, where there are many pedestrian crashes at nighttime. Feeling unsafe at night and in deserted streets can be</p>

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
addressed in part by good design, investment in infrastructure and by creating more of a walking culture.
Locations that feel unsafe (dark, anti-social behaviours, isolated or unkempt): Along Merri Creek trail/path especially at night/early hours and flooding, Spider Place in Brunswick, Victoria Mall Coburg, area next to Dimmy's in Coburg, shared bike path at Bell Street, Coburg railway station, Pentridge in Coburg, Sydney Road in Coburg.
Car parking: Need ample parking to find a space and park safely (difficult to find parking in Brunswick East). Need to remove on-street parking or allow it on one side only (and not close to roundabouts, traffic islands and the shopping precinct on Major Road).
Bus: Bus stop vandalism makes people feel unsafe when catching the bus and vandalised, or smashed bus stops need to be reported.
Other: Safety issues for specific cohorts – children, older people. Being able to walk on paths safely is a big issue for the elderly.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: There is a strong call for enhanced safety measures for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users. Improvement ideas include focusing on the safety of bike lanes with more protected cycling infrastructure, and the need for safer pedestrian crossings through measures such as pedestrian refuges, lower speed limits for cars, traffic calming structures and well as high quality footpaths. Other ideas include improving safety around school areas, with suggestions for car-free zones. Overall, there is a desire for a transportation system that prioritizes safety for all users, regardless of their mode of transportation, and that ensures streets are always safe for travel, including areas being well lit at night.
Improve cyclist safety, bike lanes and paths: The community in Merri-bek has advocated for safer ways to move around by bicycle and shown support for Council to design and build more protected bike lanes. Construct safe and connected high-quality bike links and connections. Introduce a targeted safety campaign across Merri-bek to minimise dooring incidents and encourage cycling. Plan to roll out separated bike paths through Brunswick. One-way streets should have bike contra-lanes. Better separation of car and cyclist lanes to improve safety. Car park spaces along Royal Parade increase risk, work with State Government and/or Melbourne City Council to fix this serious issue. Separate bike lanes or paths from vehicles or use physical barriers like curbs, bollards, or planters can help prevent vehicle encroachment. Ensure bike paths are well-lit, especially during low-light conditions or nighttime, to enhance visibility for cyclists and improve overall safety. Create separated paths for bikes and e-scooters. Cyclists/ pedestrians need right-of-way to cross north-south safely and for traffic efficiency along the linear trail.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
<p>Improve pedestrian safety and crossings: Pedestrian safety should be a priority safety concern. Support for pedestrian priority at signalised intersections. More safe crossings and supervised crossings near schools. Guard rail and raised footpath along Murray Road to improve safety. Have extra pedestrian crossing for elderly residents. Lynch Road needs speed breakers to make it safer for pedestrians. Hilton Street needs safer crossing or lights. Install a pedestrian crossing along Albion from Sydney Road to Barrow Street which is very busy and near Woolworths. The pedestrian lights across Sydney Road do not allow enough time to cross both north and southbound lanes, particularly for older people.</p>
<p>Improve footpaths: Develop a Strategy that guarantees footpaths will be built and maintained to a certain standard (width and quality), with enforcement to ensure developers repair adjoining roads and footpaths to an adequate standard. Improve footpaths on Sydney Road to make them safer.</p>
<p>Reduce vehicle speed limits: Prioritise reducing speeds to 30kph for local residential streets, all roads through shopping centres and densely populated areas. Reduce speed limit to 40km/h along Blyth Street which is a major east/west thoroughfare for cars, bikes and buses and riding a bike along here is scary. Reduce speed limits to have a safer area for residents as well as active transport users. There needs to be a speed limit for cyclists and electric bikes and scooters in Coburg Lake Reserve.</p>
<p>Install more lighting: Need more themed lighting in Spider Place in Brunswick making it safer and more customer friendly and in parks generally. Add lighting to Sydney Road to make it safer. Add some type of sensor light to the Merri Creek trail.</p>
<p>Consider safety interventions: Lighting, emergency phone, in quiet places. Bright LED lights makes walking home feel much safer. More enforcement to make sure dogs stay on leads, especially along the Merri Creek.</p>
<p>Improve traffic management and surveillance: Better traffic management measures during morning and afternoon school rush hours. Need cameras along Merri Creek to improve safety. Better line marking for parking spaces especially around schools to increase safety. Low-cost action is to reduce speed on local roads.</p>

4.4 Transport system theme – Accessibility

<p>Theme – Accessibility: An accessible transport system – all people can use different modes of transport no matter their age, background, or abilities.</p>
<p>Proposed Accessibility objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community. • Advocate strongly to State Government for accessible transport services and stops.

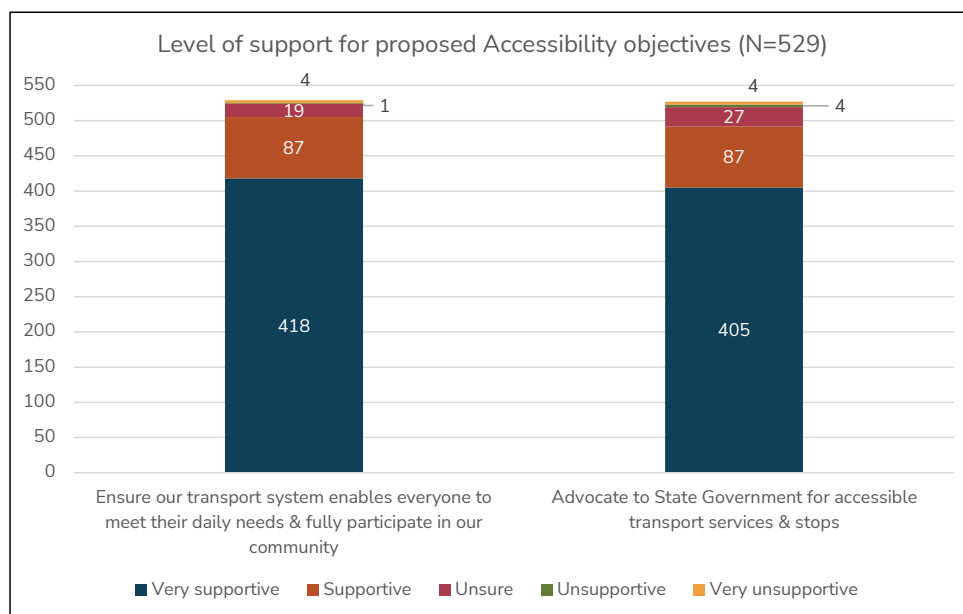
4.4.1 Support for proposed Accessibility objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Accessibility objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.3, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Accessibility objectives:

- 505 or 95.5% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community
- 492 or 93.0% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Advocate strongly to State Government for accessible transport services and stops.

Figure 4.3: Level of support for proposed Accessibility objectives (Survey)



4.4.2 Challenges, opportunities, and ideas for Accessibility

Online visioner participants were asked about their experiences of Accessibility when moving around Merri-bek, and 8 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of accessibility-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online visioner, Workshops, Written submissions)
<p>Public transport: Accessible public transport is urgent whether the Upfield sky rail goes ahead or not. Easy access to public transport is important for many people who cannot or will not drive cars, including young people, due to age, disability or low incomes. Many residents do not have a licence or access to a car and some not to drive or walk to save money. Shade and seating at transport stops are important for accessibility, particularly on rainy or hot days. Mothers with prams/people with disability trying to access public transport (getting on and off) and accessing public transport stops (in the rain etc). Bus routes do not operate frequently enough and are unintuitive routes. Refuges for pedestrians to get to the bus and more seating at bus stops. Create hubs to connect buses and trams.</p>
<p>Footpaths/driveways: Uneven footpaths and footpaths that dip sharply to roads are not accessible for people with limited mobility (i.e., Brunswick, Lawsons Street, some streets in Glenroy). Cars being parked over the footpath makes it harder for people with prams or people with disability. More units mean more cars parking on the side of the road and across driveways, making it hard to walk on footpaths. Make all footpaths accessible by getting rid of obstacles, adding more ramps, grinding down bluestone footpaths and driveways, and managing obstructions (bins, hard rubbish, construction signs, road signs). Flush dropped kerbs or raised intersections on all corners.</p>
<p>Cycling network and infrastructure: Lack of safe and connected bike paths. Disjointed planning with shared paths. Need a bike network for less confident riders and to get more people riding. Create a public and active transport network that facilitates a complete first and last-mile journey. Rebrand bike lanes as mobility lanes. Make them wide enough for more than just bikes. Need wheeling infrastructure to accommodate tricycles and adapted bicycles as three-wheeled bikes (trikes, hand cycles, cargo bikes) have different requirements.</p>
<p>Trams: No accessible tram stops. All stops need adequate seating and cover (i.e., Route 96 tram stops on Nicholson Street)</p>
<p>Inadequate connections: Connections between destinations are not good (i.e., in Coburg, between Coburg and Pentridge).</p>
<p>Amenities and information for pedestrians: Install public toilets and seating on pedestrian routes. Create accessibility maps and install wayfinding signs for informal walking paths.</p>
<p>Street blockages: Wide vehicles obstructing streets are an accessibility hazard. Promote or create process for removing temporary blockages on streets.</p>
Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
<p>Key insights: The feedback about transportation accessibility is diverse. Improvement ideas focus on cyclist movements and bike infrastructure, creation of car-free zones, better and unobstructed footpaths, and have pedestrian-friendly areas with amenities and seating. There is a desire for increased green spaces and tree planting, especially along walking and cycling paths. The need</p>

<p>Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)</p>
<p>for safer and more accessible footpaths and pedestrian crossings is also highlighted. Public transport improvements include more frequent services, better connectivity, and better signage. Other ideas include improving accessibility for key workers and low-income earners and improving accessibility infrastructure, such as wheelchair-friendly pathways, providing a supportive environment for persons of all-abilities, and accessible public transport.</p>
<p>Improve cycling: Ensure temporary footpath and road occupancy permits consider safe and accessible access for everyone including those who cannot dismount and walk their bicycle, nor push them. Provide more accessible parking bays at key locations with accessible ramps and additional bike parking that provides space for bicycles of a range of sizes and shapes so that adapted bicycles, recumbent tricycles, tricycles and other bikes with wider and longer wheelbases can be manoeuvred by all abilities and parked.</p>
<p>Improve footpaths/driveways: Support for auditing of footpaths to ensure accessibility. Support for investigating and enforcing vehicles blocking footpaths. Need a footpath on Murray Road on the Pentridge side for secondary school students. Council officers to investigate problems spots for those in a wheelchair and address areas where pedestrians are forced onto a narrow, uneven footpath with no ramps up/down kerbs.</p>
<p>Provide amenities and information for pedestrians: Add seating along long streets where crossings or traffic lights are far apart to assist older people and people with disability. More, clearer signs for people with vision impairment within popular bus stops in local suburbs. Need an updated pedestrian network based on consultation, actual use and desired use.</p>
<p>Improve accessibility for people of all abilities: Improve accessibility for those with disability aids include mobility devices such as wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Install ramps or lifts for people with disability. Accessible and safe access to medical centres from the road regardless of mode of transport. Prioritize pedestrian crossings at busy intersections to allow more time to cross.</p>
<p>Improve connections: Improve connectivity between Sydney Road and the railway line so it can be one connected precinct improving access for everyone.</p>
<p>Improve tram stops: Council to support the Sydney Road Accessible Tram Stops campaign around the municipality</p>

4.5 Transport system theme – Sustainability

<p>Theme – Sustainability: A sustainable transport system – there are more easy options to travel sustainably, whether by foot, bike, e-scooter, public transport, or zero-emission vehicles, helping to reduce transport emissions.</p>
<p>Proposed Sustainability objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community to reduce transport emissions as rapidly as possible by providing increased transport choice. • Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.

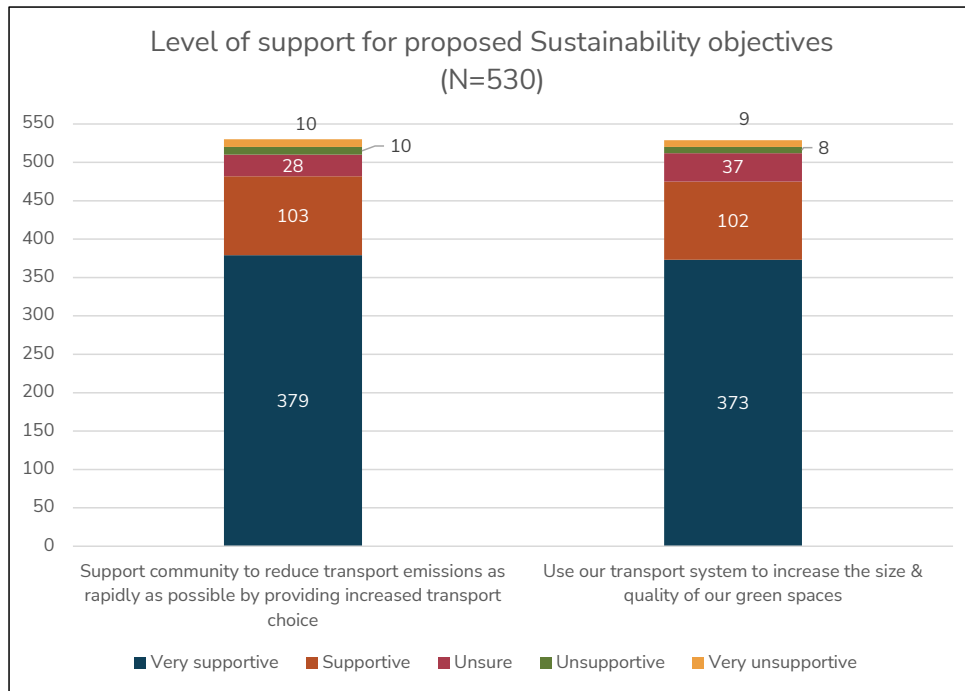
4.5.1 Support for proposed Sustainability objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 2 proposed Sustainability objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.4, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 2 proposed Sustainability objectives:

- 482 or 90.9% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Support community to reduce transport emissions as rapidly as possible by providing increased transport choice.
- 475 or 89.6% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.

Figure 4.4: Level of support for proposed Sustainability objectives (Survey)



4.5.2 Challenges, opportunities, and ideas for Sustainability

Online visioner were asked about actions to take to reduce transport emissions, and 17 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of sustainability-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online visioner, Workshops, Written submissions)
Cars: Cars driving around/circling looking for a park increases pollution (Bonwick Street).
Public transport: Some public transport is not good and can be irregular (i.e., Hadfield, Fawkner train, buses arrive late and are irregular in Fawkner).

<p>Cycling: With bike paths, cycling funding is insufficient.</p>
<p>Bus: Bus network is not a good, coordinated service.</p>

<p>Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)</p>
<p>Key insights: Ideas about sustainability in transport focussed on the need for improved infrastructure and facilities to support active transport, such as cycling and walking, as well as electric vehicles. Improvement ideas included more designated bike paths, increased safety of bike lanes on roads, and provision of separated cycle lanes. There is also a desire for the creation of a comprehensive bike network that connects existing paths for safe and fast travel throughout Merri-bek. Greening ideas included creating green, leafy, and shaded walking and cycling corridors, particularly along the Merri Creek, to make these modes of transport more attractive. Other ideas included better connectivity between public transport options and emphasising the importance of reducing reliance on cars, promoting active transport, and creating a safe and sustainable transportation network to improve the overall liveability and health of the community.</p>
<p>Plan for cycling and e-bikes: Make bike riding safer. Create a connected cycle network plan using a mixture of off-road paths, protected bike lanes and bicycle boulevards on quiet local streets, to provide local and direct connections within a larger network. Plan for the growth in e-bike users and connect to the safe bicycle network. On wider roads, move or build bike lanes to the inside of car parking. Install secure and convenient bike racks near bike paths and popular destinations to encourage cycling and provide safe places for locking bikes. Better connections between bike paths. Priorities bikes and other active transport over cars including EVs. Build a functioning transport system for bikes by ensuring there is bike parking at destinations. Provide electric bike subsidies. Encourage increased cargo bike usage for freight.</p>
<p>Cars and e-vehicles (EVs): Create an electric vehicle charging plan to meet our current and future needs, without impacting spaces used to move around. How about charger infrastructure at car share parking spots. Consider rolling out EV chargers. Half of Merri-Bek (largely south) does not have access to garages and can't guarantee a house-front park. Educate that EVs are not a magic wand to fix the climate crisis or transport emissions. HUGE mode shift is required. Carshare is already fantastic in Merri-bek - let's continue to expand these services to more areas. Reduce speed limits as an interim measure to make safer and better use of existing transport infrastructure.</p>
<p>Public and green spaces: Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of green spaces. Purchase land and leave the roads for transport. Work with shopping centres to instal solar panels over carparks (i.e., Barkly Square): reduces heat, shades cars, facilitates car charging. Address the urban heat island effect to make walking more amenable (including increase tree canopy). Use some space in very wide streets to plant more mid-street rows of trees to reduce the Urban Heat Island effect. To reduce emissions, general transport projects such as re-sheeting should aim to reduce the overall hard standing by using permeable grids for parking, porous surfaces and installing rain gardens to narrow streets and make them safer.</p>

Opportunities and ideas (Online visioner, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
<p>Encourage and prioritise active transport and public transport: Most people are multi-modal using a range of options depending on the circumstances. Prioritise a transition to active transport and public transport and provide more funding to encourage active transport. Affordability is an attraction of sustainable transport. Educate people that private car use at current level is not safe or sustainable and explain why.</p>
<p>Improve connections: Improve the integration between different modes of transportation (i.e., connecting buses with trains) to create a seamless journey for commuters. Add more green space on Sydney Road so people connect and stay longer.</p>
<p>Make sustainability the overarching theme: We are facing a climate emergency. Climate impacts have accelerated, and other environmental problems are increasing. It is urgent that we make our transport system sustainable. Incentivise active modes of transport through subsidy.</p>
<p>Walking: Increase education about sustainable transport options, encourage mode shift with safe built environments and collect data on mode shift. More incentivised active transport through schemes such as Ride and Stride programs.</p>
<p>Car usage and parking: Make driving less convenient. Aiming to reduce car usage while increasing road capacity with level crossing removals. Restrict parking permits where off-street parking is available to create more room for others.</p>



4.6 Transport system theme – Health

Theme – Health: A transport system to contributes to our health – there are more easy options to walk or ride for fitness, fun and everyday trips as well as places for us to come together as a community.

Proposed Health objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Work to reduce noise and air pollution where possible and mitigate the harms caused by them.
- Support transport choice that contributes to improving the mental and physical health of people in Merri-bek.
- Create streets and public spaces that encourage socialisation amongst local communities.
- Increase opportunities, through transport options, for people to meet their daily exercise needs.

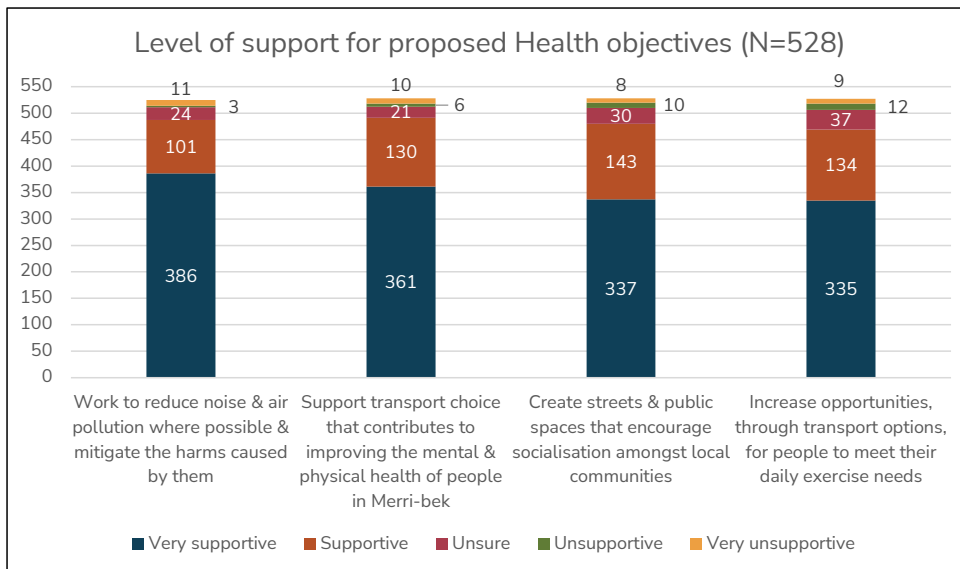
4.6.1 Support for proposed Health objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 4 proposed Health objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.5, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 4 proposed Health objectives:

- 487 or 92.2% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Work to reduce noise and air pollution where possible and mitigate the harms caused by them.
- 491 or 93.0% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Support transport choice that contributes to improving the mental and physical health of people in Merri-bek.
- 480 or 90.9% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Create streets and public spaces that encourage socialisation amongst local communities.
- 469 or 88.8% reported Very supportive or Supportive for Increase opportunities, through transport options, for people to meet their daily exercise needs.

Figure 4.5: Level of support for proposed Health objectives (Survey)



4.6.2 Challenges, opportunities and ideas for Health

Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of health-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Workshops, Written submissions)
Noise: Improve the surface of some roads like Newlands Road for less noise.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: Improvement ideas relating to health proposed included some overlap with sustainability and accessibility. Ideas to address air pollution included calls to reduce private car use and promote alternative modes of transportation to improve air quality. The importance of promoting active transportation to improve physical activity levels and overall health is mentioned. Accessibility is a concern for people with health issues and disabilities, with suggestions for more benches and seating around the municipality, especially at public transport interchanges. Other ideas included focusing on creating people-centered, non-vehicle-centered places to improve mental health and well-being, which will support the mitigation of climate change and heat effects, noise and improve community safety.
Climate change and heat effects: There are health impacts from climate change, vehicles causing global warming and road surfaces producing urban heat effects. Although relevant to "liveability", these impacts reinforce the urgency of ceasing use of internal combustion engines and redesigning roads. Reducing the urban heat island effect should be an important health consideration as major contributors are bitumen roads and car parks. Provide more shade (tree canopy) around bus shelters to create healthier environments for those waiting (especially the elderly, who may be more susceptible to the heat).
Create safer streets for people to be active: Consider creating wider footpaths, increasing tree canopy, increasing compliance and surveillance, creating a desire for increased amenity and safety, safe and open driveways to combat EVs that are silent. Implement a Play Street program where residents can apply to open a street for people (Dandenong has this). Provide safe spaces for teenagers and children to use and to move around by foot and independently. More road closures.
Information and education: Provide and improve education for parents on the health benefits of active transport for their children (and themselves). Educate our community about bikes, bike and bike repair workshops, bike education, and learn to ride a bike classes. Provide Council-mapped routes to schools. Promote active transport as a form of preventative health care that improves mental and physical health. Needs to promote how much money is saved by driving less.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Provide opportunities for people of all ages to be healthy and active: Do not limit organised sport to 'closed-off' stadiums, host and encourage sports and movement in our streets. Engage with sports people/professionals who could become good examples and champions of active transport (i.e., Dohertys Gym). Focus on seniors, as for many, walking is the main form of exercise. Provide more seating.
Increase safety around schools: Provide safe crossings, especially around schools. Improve streets around schools and install modal filters in front of schools. Every school to have at least one car-free frontage (or a one-way street with expanded people-space).



4.7 Transport system theme – Liveability

Theme – Liveability: A transport system that makes our lives better – there are enjoyable connections and transport options close to where people live, making it easy to access shops, services, and jobs.

Proposed Liveability objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Create high-quality and well-designed spaces that are vibrant and well-loved by all.
- Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community.
- Help reduce cost of transport for residents by having an increased range of travel options.

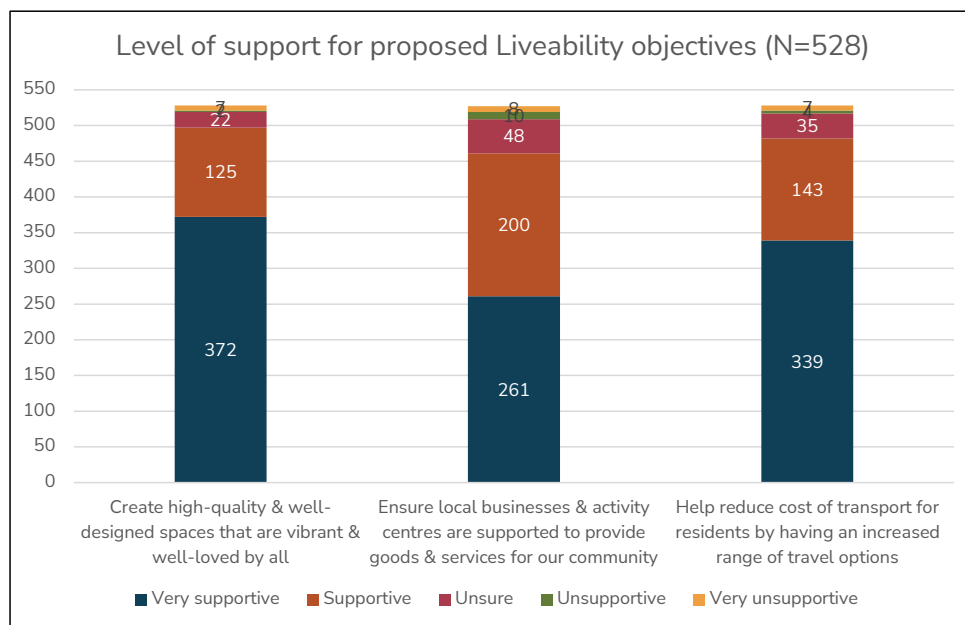
4.7.1 Support for proposed Liveability objectives

Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Liveability objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.6, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Liveability objectives:

- 497 or 94.1% reported Very supportive for Create high-quality and well-designed spaces that are vibrant and well-loved by all.
- 461 or 87.3% reported Very supportive for Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community.
- 482 or 91.3% reported Very supportive for Help reduce cost of transport for residents by having an increased range of travel options.

Figure 4.6: Level of support for proposed Liveability objectives (Survey)



4.7.2 Challenges, opportunities and ideas for Liveability

Online mapping participants were asked how transport impacts the liveability of Merri-bek, and 11 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of liveability-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
<p>Local economy and shopping strips: Bonwick street shopping strip parking is worse than before. It could have been designed better. West Street also lacks parking and people drive around/ circle around looking for a park. Deliveries, loading and unloading is an issue for businesses on Sydney Road. This issue has recently caused a major business to relocate. Pavement dining is compromised by cars that zoom by. The basics need to be addressed - safe footpaths, well thought out bike paths with clear wayfinding, maintained parks and playgrounds and graffiti removal to get people out and supporting local businesses and keeping active in a safe and clean community.</p>
<p>Cars: Glenroy is too car centric. Modern suspension systems mean older-style low speedhumps are useless, with cars going over them at 60pkh with no reduction of speed. If you do slow down traffic, the actual time taken in car journeys barely rises but it contributes to a safer and more vibrant community. Lower speeds would help people feel safe and reduce noise.</p>
<p>Walking and pedestrian safety: Keen to walk more and use public transport more but the crossings and stops feel unsafe (I.e., near Barkly Street/Brunswick Road). Residents have spoken out about not feeling safe walking around Merri-bek due to insufficient lighting, graffiti and anti-social behaviours.</p>
<p>Public and green space: Feel more comfortable walking and cycling around areas with lots of tree cover such as around Glencairn tennis club. Developers need to be required to include more green spaces available to the public and not permitted to build up against the pavement. With a warming climate we will need more green space for the area to be liveable.</p>
<p>Car parking and roads: Roads need resurfacing, potholes need fixing, and planning permits need to give appropriate reductions to off-street parking provision so there is proper planning suburb by suburb.</p>
<p>Trams: Accessible tram stops are needed on Sydney Road.</p>
<p>Footpaths: Rubbish bins left on the footpaths create a barrier for people who can't move them out of the way.</p>
<p>Bus: Need to improve bus transport for older people to access social outings, hospital, services.</p>

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
<p>Key insights: Ideas relating to liveability focus on improving streetscapes, public and green spaces, and supporting the local economy and shopping strips. Other ideas focussed on reconsidering and sharing available space, the affordability of transport modes, and creating a more vibrant and community-centric and pedestrian friendly environment.</p>
<p>Improve streetscapes, public and green spaces: Pay more attention to public spaces closed to vehicle traffic such as the mall in Victoria Street Coburg. Encourage active transport by making our streets green, shady, and pleasant to walk through. Expand programs of planting shady street trees. Re-allocate bitumen road space to garden space. Facilitate management and design of street gardens by neighbours. Make residential streets a place to live, not transit, by facilitating neighbourhood cohesion and connections. Remove large unnecessary areas of bitumen can also create mini parks. Council to plant more trees and encourage residents to plant trees in their yards and stop removing existing trees. Consider greening and public realm evaluation in planning approvals. Revitalise Coburg Lake and increase active transport options around Coburg Lake. Landscaping to include and consider shade and trees. Start blocking off through routes in Merri-bek to reclaim our neighbourhoods from the car.</p>
<p>Consider the local economy and shopping strips: Revitalise shopping strips to support small businesses. Provide safe protected access to and within shopping strips for cyclists. Undertake periodic surveys to understand customer travel and shopping behaviour in key activity centres. Support the transport needs of businesses including delivery of goods and freight access. Ensure access to goods and services. Create walkable, rideable and vibrant streetscapes. Facilities at shopping areas need to include public toilets, seating, and drinking fountains. Consider linking social and affordable housing areas with activity centres through good public spaces and paths. Big box stores are poorly accessible except by car. Delivery trucks are dangerous. Designated loading areas for freight should be made to combat this.</p>
<p>Affordability: Need to consider transport affordability as worsening transport affordability often has the greatest impact on those in the community who already have their transport mode choices limited for other reasons. The people who are most vulnerable to transport accessibility pressures are also those shown to benefit the most from active travel improvements and especially protected bike lanes. Women, the elderly and disabled.</p>
<p>Reconsidering car parking: Share the available space more fairly. The cost of providing car parking is borne by the whole community. Free car parking encourages people to drive short distances to the shops thereby worsening the situation for people walking and cycling. Suggest distinguishing between car parking and car storage.</p>
<p>Incorporate the Movement and Place Framework: The hierarchy for the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users in the Movement and Place Framework needs to be incorporated within the Strategy.</p>
<p>Uber/taxi: Create designated loading areas for uber and other ride share options.</p>

4.8 Transport system theme – Collaboration

Theme – Collaboration: A transport system shaped by community and Council working together – Council and community are working together to meet transport needs and advocating to State Government for transport improvements.

Proposed Collaboration objectives (as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper)

- Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
- Work with neighbouring councils and other levels of government to provide coordinated solutions to transport challenges.
- Actively co-create solutions to transport issues with local communities and stakeholders.

4.8.1 Support for proposed Collaboration objectives

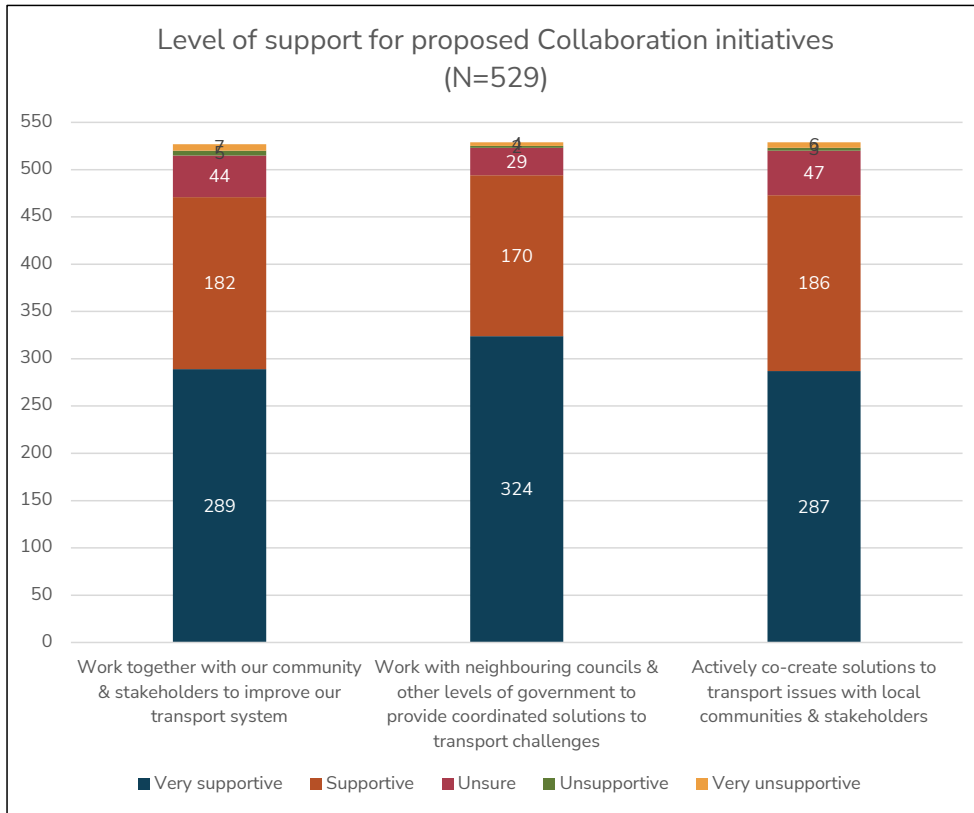
Survey participants were asked to what extent they support the 3 proposed Collaboration objectives and presented with 5 response options.

As shown in Figure 4.7, most participants were Very supportive or Supportive of the 3 proposed Collaboration objectives:

- 471 or 89.0% reported Very supportive for Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
- 494 or 93.4% reported Very supportive for Work with neighbouring councils and other levels of government to provide coordinated solutions to transport challenges.
- 473 or 89.4% reported Very supportive for Actively co-create solutions to transport issues with local communities and stakeholders.



Figure 4.7: Level of support for proposed Collaboration objectives (Survey)



4.8.2 Challenges, opportunities and ideas for Collaboration

Online mapping participants were asked about their experiences of safety when moving around Merri-bek, and 82 participants provided a personalised comment. Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. Survey and place-based pop-up engagement participants were asked for their small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek and around 450 participants provided a personalised response. These participants, as well as those providing written submissions, referred to a variety of collaboration-related topics. These responses have been grouped and paraphrased and are presented below.

Challenges and issues (Online mapping, Workshops, Written submissions)
Information and consultation: Lack of information about paths and location of paths. The loudest voices often get the most influence. Some residents feel that Council doesn't listen to them despite having lots of ideas.
Resourcing: Merri-bek Council officers are under-resourced and need to find ways and projects to get communities involved.

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
Key insights: Ideas to support collaboration include more consultation with community groups, local cyclists, pedestrians, and diverse cross-section of the community including persons of all-abilities, to ensure effective decision-making, to understand lived experiences about different transport modes. Other improvement ideas include raising awareness about transportation option, applying best practice consultation approaches and more communication and signage, particularly for public transport routes and bike paths. There is also a desire for Council to create a Strategy that is clear and measurable to guide and monitor transport in Merri-bek.
Raise awareness and apply best practice consultation approaches: Raise public awareness about the benefits of sustainable transportation options through campaigns and educational programs. Educating the right sense of road or shared paths is very important. Commit to funding best practice consultation and participatory research that is transparent with timely provision of information; shares traffic and transport data; involves Council officers doing on-site visits, liaising with community groups, and reaching out to interested residents to hear about local lived experiences of moving around Merri-bek. Engage with, and consider the views of, non-residents who are customers and visitors. Consider funding 'Local Highway Initiative' community-led programs. Provide good, easy, simple communications to educate on the benefits of active transport and why cyclists do what they do. Consider collaborative advocacy and inform the community how they can help Council advocate. More wayfinding signage. Write some stories from people who live in closed streets outlining the benefits.
Create a Strategy that is clear and measurable: Keep the Strategy simple and ensure it has longevity. Ensure the Strategy has a clear vision for staff and Councillors to follow. Accountability and measures are important as is progress reporting to the community. Set percentage targets for the trips via each mode (i.e., walking, riding, public transport to school), and set goals of

Opportunities and ideas (Online mapping, Pop-ups, Survey, Workshops, Written submissions)
percentage reduction of transport emissions. Track modal shift to low carbon options to stay accountable to the environment. Consider equity and acknowledge people aren't one type of road user they use multiple modes. Consider creating a vision for the whole of Sydney Road.
Engage young people: Would like to see more collaboration with young people in Merri-bek, especially those aged 12 to 21 years. From 12 years it can be expected that most people should be able to move around independently (and for many families this happens much earlier) and the only barriers to them doing so would be those in the transport system.
Partner with community groups: Involve the Merri Creek Management Committee and use research provided by community groups (such as BRN/MBUG).

4.9 Noteworthy insights about transport at the Suburb level

This section presents a brief overview of noteworthy insights and differences observed about transport at the suburb level across the municipality, presented in alphabetical order. Insights are not presented for suburbs with fewer than 10 identifiable responses, namely Fitzroy North, Gowenbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, and Pascoe Vale South.

Suburb Insights
<p>Brunswick: Many participants walk most of the time and use a train or tram some of the time or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus or uber/taxi, sometimes use a car, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a train or tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Accessibility, Safety and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included improving east/west connections for bike routes and trams, wider and safer paths for cyclists and pedestrians, considering accessibility and safety for older persons, increasing the frequency and accessibility of public transport services, traffic calming on streets to stop the rat runners, fixing Sydney Road to prioritise pedestrians, bike riders and trams, making streets more attractive with greenery, improving the condition of footpaths, installing wayfinding signage and having walking maps (digital) with safe walking routes</p> <p>.</p>
<p>Brunswick East: Many participants use a train or tram some of the time or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle and walk. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus or uber/taxi, sometimes or most the time use a car, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety,</p>

Suburb Insights
<p>Sustainability, and Accessibility are priority themes. Participant ideas included improving movement along Sydney Road (i.e., accessible tram stops, reduce on-street parking or trams and bikes only), improving cyclist safety by separated bike lanes on Lygon Street to meet Cardigan Street lanes.</p>
<p>Brunswick West: Many participants walk and use a tram some or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they use a car and cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus, train or uber/taxi, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety, Liveability and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included making it safer to cycle, improving current shared cycling/walking paths, having safe east-west cycling routes and protected bike lanes integrated with parks and reserves, and having more frequent and reliable bus services.</p>
<p>Coburg: Many participants walk most of the time, use a car sometimes or most of the time, and use a train or tram some of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus or uber/taxi, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to cycle more, and some would like to walk or use a train or tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety, Sustainability, and Accessibility are priority themes. Participant ideas included providing more transport options, improving safety with more lighting on bike paths, parks, opens spaces and in car parks. Having more school crossing supervisors (Reynolds/Reynard) and reverting Derby Street speed limit to 50km/hour, other than the area outside the school (which is 40km/h).</p>
<p>Coburg North: Many participants walk, use a car, train or tram some of the time or most of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes scoot/skate and rarely use an uber/taxi or motorbike. Many participants would like to cycle, train, tram or walk more. While all transport system themes are important, Safety and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included better east-west cycle ways, more safe bike lanes, increasing and extending public transport services and making them more accessible and having green, shaded walking and cycling corridors</p>
<p>Fawkner: Many participants use a car some of the time or most of the time. Many participants use an uber/taxi, train or walk some of the time others use a bus, tram, or cycle rarely or sometimes. Many participants rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to use a train, tram or bus more. While all transport system themes are important, Accessibility and Liveability are priority themes. Participant ideas included having more public transport options</p>

Suburb Insights
including more frequent buses and trains and extending the tram line to Fawkner, having safer streets for cyclists, and slowing car traffic.
<p>Glenroy: Many participants walk or use a car some of the time or most of the time. Many participants rarely or sometimes cycle or use a tram or uber/taxi, and many sometimes use a train. Most rarely use a bus, motorbike, or scoot/skate. Most participants would like to use a train, tram, or bus more. While all transport system themes are important, Accessibility and Sustainability are priority themes. Participant ideas included having more frequent buses, a tram that goes from Glenroy toward Preston, more accessible trams and tram stops on Sydney Road, improving cyclist and pedestrian safety, and having a north-south and east-west grid pattern with wider streets and designated cycling paths.</p>
<p>Pascoe Vale: Many participants walk or use a car some or most of the time and use a train some of the time. Mixed responses were reported by participants regarding the frequency that they cycle. Many participants rarely or sometimes use a bus, tram, or uber/taxi, and rarely use a motorbike or scoot/skate. Many participants would like to walk, cycle, use a train or tram more. While all transport system themes are important, Liveability, Accessibility, and Safety are priority themes. Participant ideas included having safer, protected bike paths on Kent Road, reducing car speed limits, remove Pascoe vale railway crossings, extending the 58 tram to increase north-south options, increasing, or improving cycling infrastructure and east-west connections</p>



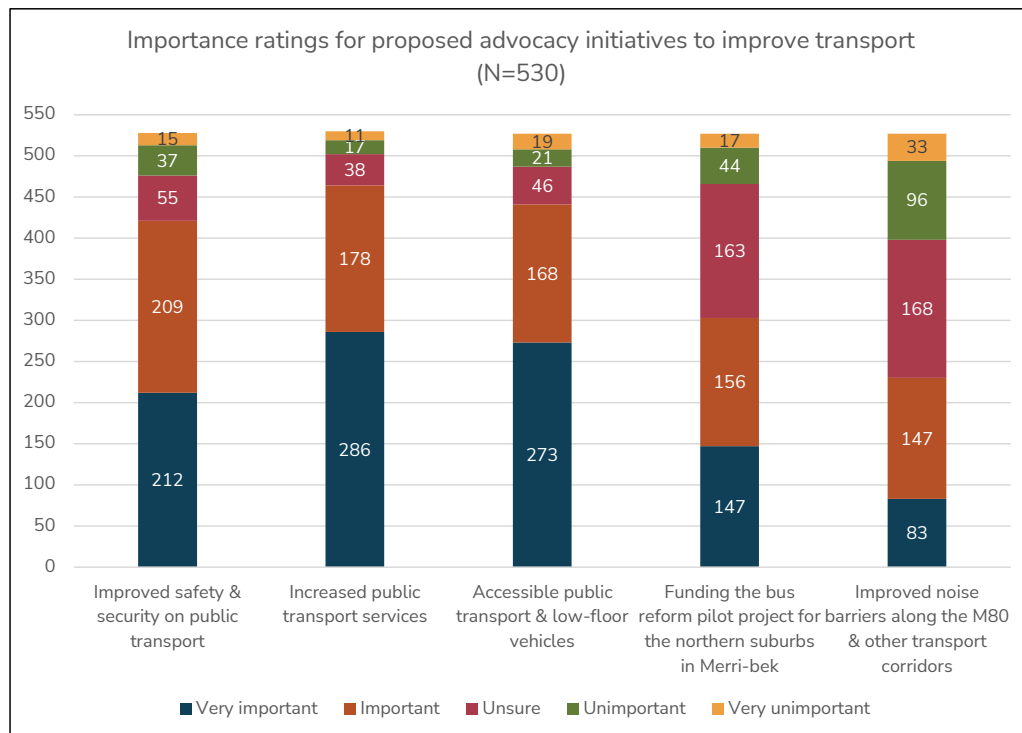
4.10 Advocating for transport improvements

Survey participants were asked how important Council advocacy is for transport improvements and presented with a listing of 5 advocacy ideas and 5 responses options.

As shown in Figure 4.8, all statements were regarded as important to varying degrees. Most participants rated 4 of the 5 initiatives as Very important or Important:

- 421 or 79.4% rated Improved safety and security on public transport as Very important or Important.
- 464 or 87.5% rated Increased public transport services as Very important or Important.
- 441 or 83.2% rated Accessible public transport and low-floor vehicles as Very important or Important.
- 303 or 57.2% rated Funding the bus reform pilot project for the northern suburbs in Merri-bek as Very important or Important.
- 230 or 43.4% rated Improved noise barriers along the M80 and other transport corridors as Very important or Important.

Figure 4.8 Importance ratings for proposed advocacy initiatives to improve transport (Survey)



Survey participants were asked to share their thoughts about other important advocacy ideas for Council to improve movements around Merri-bek (in addition to the ideas shown above in Figure 4.8). 256 participants provided a personalised response of which 29 generally indicated nothing

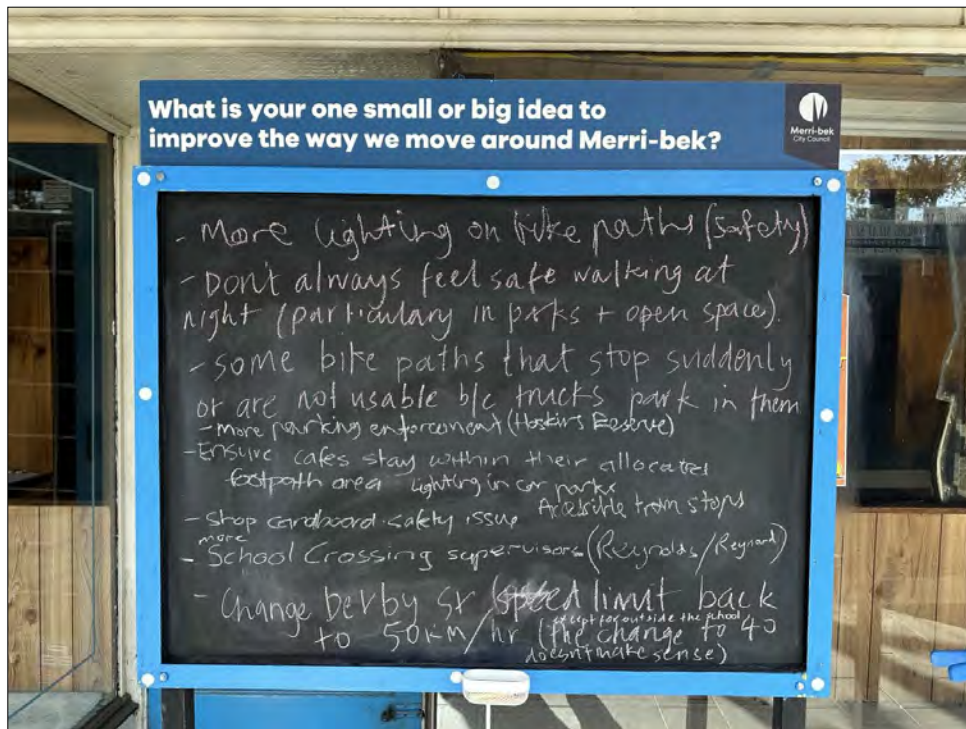
further to add. The responses from the remaining 227 participants referred to 1 or more topics. The responses were reviewed and grouped into themes. Five themes emerged during the analyses and are presented in Table 4.2. Each theme is accompanied by a descriptive summary, and a selection of verbatim quotes which reflect the general sentiment in the feedback.

Table 4.2: Themes in other important advocacy ideas for Council to improve movements around Merri-bek (Survey)

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<p>1. Safe and protected bike and pedestrian movements on major roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge: Cyclist and pedestrian safety and the need for improved cycling and walking infrastructure. Desire for more wider footpaths, protected bike lanes on major roads involving the removal of on-street parking to expand bike lanes, separation of bike lanes from moving vehicles, improved road surfaces in bike lanes, and physically separated bike lanes on major roads. Advocacy ideas and requests: More signage, policing, and cameras at pedestrian crossings, and reduced vehicle size and speed on council roads. Improving cycling infrastructure on existing cycle highways, reducing the number of heavy and large vehicles on the roads. Advocating for better roads in collaboration with state government agencies and having roads that are safe for all transport modes. Improving pedestrian crossings, accessible tram stops to ensure accessibility for all, including the elderly and people with mobility issues. Integrate cycling infrastructure with public transport and neighboring municipalities. 	<p><i>"Advocate for safe bike lanes on Sydney Rd and other major arterials through the LGA - especially during the LXRA work on the Upfield Line".</i></p> <p><i>"Advocate with Vic Roads for protected bike lanes".</i></p> <p><i>"Pedestrian crossings. There are not enough safe pedestrian crossings in the Brunswick East Village of Lygon Street. Too often people are crossing the road into four lanes of speeding traffic".</i></p>
<p>2. Reducing car traffic to improve livability and road safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge: Reducing car traffic to improve movements in Merri-bek. Reducing car traffic and improving movements around Merri-bek, with a focus on promoting active transport and improving road conditions to enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Improving road safety, including reducing speed limits, implementing traffic calming measures, and increasing enforcement of road rules to protect vulnerable road users like cyclists and pedestrians is also a key point. Advocacy ideas and requests: Advocating for reduced car speed limits and improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Creating car-free zones near schools, implementing parking maximums, and encouraging the use of electric buses. Transforming sections of Sydney 	<p><i>"Traffic calming in Nicholson Street between Moreland and Bell Street, especially near the IGA supermarket".</i></p> <p><i>"Increase electric vehicle infrastructure".</i></p> <p><i>"Advocating for better roads in Coburg with VicRoads. I have just moved from the eastern suburbs and the difference is shocking".</i></p>

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<p>Road to be more pedestrian and cyclist friendly. Advocating for improved road surfaces, reduced car traffic, active and sustainable transport in new developments and infrastructure projects.</p>	
<p>3. Removing on-street car parking on busy streets to improve active transport movements</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge: Removing of on-street parking to prioritize the safety and efficiency of different modes of transportation, promote active transportation, and improve the overall mobility and accessibility of Merri-bek. However, mixed views were reported. Advocacy ideas and requests: Enhance safety by reducing visibility issues for drivers and pedestrians, thus decreasing the risk of accidents. Improve traffic flow by reducing congestion and travel times, particularly in busy areas. Create dedicated cycling infrastructure, encouraging more people to cycle and reducing reliance on cars. Enhance pedestrian access by creating wider footpaths and safer pedestrian crossings, promoting active transportation. 	<p><i>"Have permanent bike lanes on Sydney Road and restrict parking. Research has shown that there is a lot of off-street parking in the vicinity of Sydney Road".</i></p> <p><i>"Council purchasing land to create many low impact, low cost, conveniently located public parking lots to enable on-street parking to be eliminated on Sydney Road, Lygon Street and Nicholson Street".</i></p> <p><i>"Think you're transport system is forgetting the number one people mover – cars - the only practical solution for some of us. You end up removing lanes, making green areas to block off streets, that change free flowing traffic to being bottlenecked".</i></p>
<p>4. Adjusting car parking to increase greenery and green infrastructure</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge: Increasing greenery, trees, and green space to create a more pleasant and comfortable environment to move around Merri-bek. Advocacy ideas and requests: Trees are important for creating a pleasant and comfortable environment for pedestrians, which can encourage more people to walk and improve movement. Seeking more green spaces which contribute to a more attractive and enjoyable environment, including spaces with seating areas for individuals with mobility issues to rest and relax. Advocating to improve green spaces and create better bike lanes to promote healthier modes of transportation and enhance movement within the area. 	<p><i>"Eliminate on-street parking on Sydney Rd, Lygon St and Nicholson St to open those thoroughfares up for increased pedestrian, tram and bicycle use, and allow relevant businesses to increase their curbside footprint on those streets to create vibrant, green and community-centric transit arteries".</i></p> <p><i>"Improved pedestrian/cycling/green space infrastructure along Murray Road".</i></p> <p><i>"I love the walking and cycling tracks under the raised rail tracks. More spaces like this with welcoming greenery and away from traffic for walking and cycling".</i></p>
<p>5. Improving public transport services and infrastructure</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge: Improving public transport options and infrastructure, including hygiene, bus frequency and reliability, and bus stops. Advocacy ideas and requests: Advocating for more accessible tram stops, better-designed bus stops, and improved pedestrian infrastructure around public transport. Installing more benches and seating 	<p><i>"Any better public transport infrastructure is appreciated".</i></p> <p><i>"Improved east-west public transport".</i></p> <p><i>"Installing air filtration systems and CO2 monitoring in all modes of public transport".</i></p>

Main topics referenced in feedback	Selected verbatim comments
<p>especially at public transport interchanges, so it is easier for people with health issues and disabilities to get around and rest. Advocating for better transport options in collaboration with state government agencies.</p>	



Workshop participants were asked to consider the 6 transport systems (Safety, Accessibility, Sustainability, Health, Liveability, and Collaboration) and then share their thoughts about challenges, issues, opportunities, and ideas. These participants referred to a variety of advocacy-related topics. These responses have been grouped where relevant and are presented below.

- Public transport: As a priority Council needs to address the north/south divide in Merri-bek in relation to public transport by partnering with the City of Hume and advocating to the State Government
- Buses: Better buses in specific areas (i.e., Fawkner) with Sunday and evening bus services. Reconsider the Blue Orbital bus route. Improve interchanges, ease of transfer. Ensure adequate and efficient bus replacement services particularly in the northern suburbs of Merri-bek when the Upfield Line is closed for the removal of level crossings. Review bus services and routes across the northern suburbs, increase the frequency of bus services in the northern suburbs including links to Campbellfield Shopping Plaza, and build bus shelters at Campbellfield Shopping Plaza
- Train: Duplication of Upfield line allowing more frequent services, ensure the entire Upfield Line has parity with other Metro Rail Lines where passengers are enjoying a 10-minute service. Address the immediate duplication of the rail track between Gowrie and Upfield, particularly during the closure of the Upfield Line for the removal of level crossings in Brunswick. Build a railway station at Campbellfield to provide easy access to the Shopping Plaza and link to the airport. Extend the Upfield Line to the northern growth areas between Upfield and Wallan.
- Tram: Accessible tram stops on all routes. Tram light extensions. Install accessible tram stops along North Coburg, East Coburg and West Coburg tram routes before the Upfield Line is closed for level crossing removal.
- Cars: Advocate for safer speeds on arterial roads. This can be linked to safer access to public transport (much of which runs along arterial roads). This is particularly for younger and older residents who may be more reliant on public transport
- Pedestrians: Advocate for more signalised pedestrian crossings on arterial roads with a list of priorities.



5. Engagement findings – spotlight on gender

This section examines the consultation findings with a focus on gender and presents key insights to consider in the development of the Strategy and supporting actions.

5.1 Assessing gender impacts

Merri-bek City Council aims to ensure all new or updated policies, programs, and services address requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (the “Act”) and the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. In assessing the impacts of the policy, service, or program, it is important to acknowledge impacts may vary significantly across different people within a single group. Section 6(8) of the Act indicates “gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes.” By recognising the concept of intersectional gender inequality, the Act aims to address discrimination, disadvantage, and inequity.

To determine whether notable differences were apparent for gender, six data screening and interpretation steps were taken:

- Omit “Prefer not to say” responses and missing responses to the Gender and Age questions from the dataset.
- Convert responses into a format suitable for statistical analysis (IBM SPSS program)
- Re-run results charts to segment the responses for all closed-ended questions by the three gender sub-groups.
- Convert results from numbers to rounded percentages (no decimal points) to create proportions for comparative purposes.
- Compare the percentages and observe differences between the three gender sub-groups.
- Note differences of 10% or more in the responses from Woman/Female (278 participants) and Man/Male (217 participants). Due to the substantially lower number of responses for Other genders (11 participants - non-binary, gender- queer, gender-fluid, or use different term), report high level observations only.

5.2 Key insights

Participant characteristics by gender: Some gender differences greater than 10% are noted regarding participant age and diversity characteristics. Proportionally more Woman/Female participants are aged 40 to 49 years, 50 to 59 years, 60 to 69 years and 70 to 79 years. In contrast, more Man/Male participants are aged 18 to 24 years and 80 years and over. Proportionally more Woman/Female participants identify as a person with a disability (including limited mobility), Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, LGBTIQ+, and having a birthplace outside of Australia. Regarding Other genders, 45% (5 of 11) are aged 25 to 39 years, 27% (3 of 11) identify as a person with a disability (including limited mobility), and 82% (or 9 of 11) identify as LGBTIQ+.

Notable findings differences by gender:


- Cycle: Woman/Female participants are more likely to cycle “Rarely or never” (37%, Man/Male=20%). Man/Male participants are more likely to want to Cycle more often (65%, Woman/Female =53%).
- Reasons currently unable to Scoot/skate more: “Physically not possible for me” is more likely to be reported than Woman/Female participants (18%, 7% Man/Male).
- Proposed objectives: Woman/Female participants are more likely to be supportive for:
 - Accessibility – 1. Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community (85%, 69% Man/Male).
 - Collaboration – 1. Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system (59%, 48% Man/Male).
 - Liveability – 2. Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community (54%, 43% Man/Male).
 - Safety – 3. Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities (85%, 73% Man/Male).
- Importance of transport improvements advocacy: Woman/Female participants are more likely to report the following advocacy ideas are very important:
 - Improved safety and security on public transport (44%, 32% Man/Male).
 - Accessible public transport and low-floor vehicles (59%, 44% Man/Male).

Observations for Other genders:

- More likely to Walk “All of the time”, Cycle, Walk and use a Tram “Most of the time”, use a Bus, Car, Uber/taxi “Some of the time” and use a Train “Rarely or never” than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Less likely to want to use a Car more often or use a Train more often than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Reasons currently unable to use transport modes more: More likely to report Bus is not reliable or regular, Car takes too long, Cycle and Motorbike do not feel safe, Train is not near me or takes too long, and Walk does not feel safe than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Preferred themes: Liveability is less important; Sustainability is more important than reported by Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Proposed objectives: Overall more supportive of all proposed objectives than Man/Male and Woman/Female participants.
- Importance of transport improvements advocacy: More likely to report Increased public transport services are very important.

6. Appendices

6.1 Survey

 October 23, 2023

Moving around Merri-bek Survey

How you move around Merri-bek

01. How often do you currently use the following modes of transport to move into, out of and around Merri-bek? Required

Bus
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Car
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Motorbike
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Cycle
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Scoot/skate
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time

Moving around Merri-bek Survey Page 1 of 14



October 23, 2023

<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Train
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Tram
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Uber/taxi
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never
Walk
<input type="radio"/> All of the time
<input type="radio"/> Most of the time
<input type="radio"/> Some of the time
<input type="radio"/> Rarely or Never

02. Regarding the transport mode that you use most often, why is this the best way for you to travel? Required

03. Which modes of transport would you like to use more often in Merri-bek? Required

Select all that apply



October 23, 2023

Select all that apply
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus
<input type="checkbox"/> Car
<input type="checkbox"/> Motorbike
<input type="checkbox"/> Cycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Scoot/skate
<input type="checkbox"/> Train
<input type="checkbox"/> Tram
<input type="checkbox"/> Uber/taxi
<input type="checkbox"/> Walk
<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="text"/>

04. For the modes of transport you are unable to use, what is the main reason why?

Bus
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Car
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle



October 23, 2023

Motorbike
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Cycle
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Scoot/skate
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Train
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular



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<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Tram
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Uber/taxi
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle
Walk
<input type="radio"/> Not near me
<input type="radio"/> Not affordable for me
<input type="radio"/> Takes too long
<input type="radio"/> Does not feel safe
<input type="radio"/> Not reliable or regular
<input type="radio"/> Physically not possible for me
<input type="radio"/> Don't have the required equipment, licence or vehicle

05. If there is another reason why you are unable to use a specific mode of transport, please indicate which mode and why.



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Our future transport vision

What kind of transport system do you want for Merri-bek in the future?

We know these 6 draft themes are important features of a transport system.

1. **Safety:** a transport system where people are safe travelling on local streets and paths, and people feel safe while in public spaces.
2. **Accessibility:** an accessible transport system where all people can use different modes of transport no matter their age, background, or abilities.
3. **Sustainability:** a sustainable transport system that has more easy options to travel sustainably, whether by foot, bike, e-scooter, public transport, or zero-emission vehicles, helping to reduce transport emissions.
4. **Health:** a transport system that contributes to our health by providing more easy options to walk or ride for fitness, fun and everyday trips. As well as places for us to come together as a community.
5. **Liveability:** a transport system that makes our lives better. There are enjoyable connections and transport options close to where people live, making it easy to access shops, services, and jobs.
6. **Collaboration:** a transport system shaped by community and Council working together. Council and community work together to meet transport needs and advocating to State Government for transport improvements.

06. Please select your top three priorities for creating an improved transport system for the future. Required

Select 3 answers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessibility
<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaboration
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Liveability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustainability



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07. Please share your thoughts if you think an important theme or priority is missing. Required

To what extent do you support the proposed objectives as outlined in the Moving around Merri-bek Discussion paper?

08. Safety objectives Required

Improve road safety outcomes and create safe streets for all people to walk, ride and drive in Merri-bek.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Prioritise, where possible, creating streets suitable for walking and cycling for people of various skills and abilities.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Ensure our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive

09. Accessibility objectives Required



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Ensure our transport system enables everyone in Merri-bek to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Advocate to State Government for accessible transport services and stops.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive

10. Sustainability objectives Required

Support community to reduce transport emissions as rapidly as possible by providing increased transport choice.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Use our transport system to increase the size and quality of our green spaces.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive

11. Health objectives Required

Work to reduce noise and air pollution where possible, and mitigate the harms caused by them
--



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<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Support transport choice that contributes to improving the mental and physical health of people in Merri-bek.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Create streets and public spaces that encourage socialisation amongst local communities.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Increase opportunities, through transport options, for people to meet their daily exercise needs.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive

12. Liveability objectives ^{Required}

Create high-quality and well-designed spaces that are vibrant and well-loved by all.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive



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<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Ensure local businesses and activity centres are supported to provide goods and services for our community.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Help reduce cost of transport for residents by having an increased range of travel options.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive

13. Collaboration objectives Required

Work together with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Work with neighbouring councils and other levels of government to provide coordinated solutions to transport challenges.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive



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<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive
Actively co-create solutions to transport issues with local communities and stakeholders.
<input type="radio"/> Very Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Supportive
<input type="radio"/> Unsure
<input type="radio"/> Unsupportive
<input type="radio"/> Very Unsupportive

Advocating for transport improvements

Council is not responsible for all transport modes in Merri-bek. Other levels of government, in particular the State Government, are responsible for transport modes such as public transport and major roads.

How important are the following ideas for Council to advocate for?

14. Improved safety and security on public transport Required

In these questions, the slider is set to the centre to start. You will need to click on it to make sure your response is recorded, even if you are submitting an answer of 'unsure'

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

15. Increased public transport services Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

16. Accessible public transport stops and low-floor vehicles Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

17. Funding the bus reform pilot project for the northern suburbs in Merri-bek Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.



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18. Improved noise barriers along the M80 and other transport corridors Required

On a scale between 0 and 100, and in increments of 25, provide your rating below.

--

19. Please share your thoughts if an important advocacy idea for Council is missing and will improve movements around Merri-bek.

--

20. What is your one small or big idea to improve the way we move around Merri-bek? Required

--

About you

Merri-bek is a very diverse community. By telling us a little bit about you, you are helping us understand who we are hearing from as we aim to hear from a diverse range of people. Your information will not be used for any other purposes. For details on how Merri-bek City Council collects and protects your personal information, refer to our [Privacy Policy](#).

21. How do you describe your gender?

Select one answer only
<input type="radio"/> Man/male
<input type="radio"/> Woman/female
<input type="radio"/> Nonbinary/genderqueer/genderfluid
<input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say



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I use a different term (please tell us)

22. What suburb do you live in?

Select one answer only
<input type="radio"/> Brunswick
<input type="radio"/> Brunswick East
<input type="radio"/> Brunswick West
<input type="radio"/> Coburg
<input type="radio"/> Coburg North
<input type="radio"/> Fawkner
<input type="radio"/> Fitzroy North
<input type="radio"/> Glenroy
<input type="radio"/> Gowenbrae
<input type="radio"/> Hadfield
<input type="radio"/> Oak Park
<input type="radio"/> Pascoe Vale
<input type="radio"/> Pascoe Vale South
<input type="radio"/> Tullamarine
<input type="radio"/> I live outside of Merri-bek

23. What is your age range?

Select one answer only
<input type="radio"/> Under 18
<input type="radio"/> 18-24
<input type="radio"/> 25-39
<input type="radio"/> 40-49
<input type="radio"/> 50-59
<input type="radio"/> 60-69
<input type="radio"/> 70-79



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80+

24. I identify as

Select all that apply

Select all that apply
<input type="checkbox"/> A person with a disability
<input type="checkbox"/> A person who experiences limited mobility
<input type="checkbox"/> A carer of someone with a disability
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> LGBTIQ+
<input type="checkbox"/> Someone who speaks a language other than English at home
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

25. Were you born in Australia?

Select one answer only
<input type="radio"/> Yes
<input type="radio"/> No (please let us know where you were born)
<input type="text"/>

26. If you would like to receive email updates about this project please enter your email

7.3 MAKING IT EASIER TO WALK AND RIDE IN MERRI-BEK - OPTIONS FOR INDEXATION OF PER CAPITA SPENDING ON ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow
Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council refers to the 2024/25 Budget process the adoption of a simple increase in the per capita spend of rates funding on active transport infrastructure to \$12 per head, to operate as a minimum spend, from 2024/25.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report responds to the Resolution of Council on 20 June 2023 for a report on indexing the \$10 per capita spend on active transport infrastructure to inflation.

The report canvases various options for establishing an index and the pros and cons of these. For any scenario, there are a wide range of assumptions that need to be made in setting and testing an index. Options considered are:

- inflation as an index (which needs to be forecast and which can be highly variable),
- an index of 1 per cent per annum, which applies to other parts of recurrent capital spending (which produces a moderate increase in minimum spend)
- an index of the rate increase (which is nominated in time to be accounted for in a coming budget year)

These options all feature a 'multiplier effect' with both population growth and an index on the per capita spend. Population growth is forecast at a little over 1 per cent p.a. at present.

A further option is to remove the 'per capita' component of the indexing and adopt the rate increase instead, applying this to the \$10 per capita figure applying in 2023/24. The basic assumption for a rate increase is 2 per cent pa.

Another variable for these options is the impact of a changing 'base year' for indexing – a base year of 2019/20 produces much higher indexation over the next 5 years than a base year of 2023/24.

The actual spend in the 5-year Capital Works Program is already higher than many of the resulting indices and if the Option 2 from the accelerated program of active transport spending is adopted in the 2024/25 budget then it would exceed all scenarios over the next 5 years.

The report recommends the simple approach of a one-off increase to \$12 per capita of spending on active transport infrastructure, as a middle ground of the scenarios contemplated, to guard against unintended consequences of externally imposed variables impacting future inflation and unknown rates increases.

Previous Council Decisions

Making it safer and easier to walk and ride in Merri-bek - response to Notice of Motion – 18 October 2023

That Council:

1. *Endorses an accelerated program of active travel projects as detailed in Option 2 in this report (subject to the 2024/25 Council Budget process) including:*
 - a) *An increase in annual expenditure on upgrades to pedestrian accessibility, public lighting and roundabouts.*
 - b) *An increase in the funding to deliver outcomes from the Fawkner Transport Study from \$100,000 to \$300,000 (in 2025/26).*
 - c) *Earlier delivery of the Coonans Road (2025/26) and Reynolds Parade (2026/27) separated bicycle lane projects previously identified in Council's ten-year active travel program.*
 - d) *Commencing a program of "Streets for People" projects to improve walking, cycling and place outcomes, commencing with designs for Harding Street, Coburg and Albert Street, Brunswick in 2024/25.*
 - e) *Project management resources to deliver the above projects.*
2. *Advocates to the Victorian Government for a financial contribution towards these projects, particularly those on Strategic Cycling Corridors.*
3. *Refers the additional expenditure required to the 2024/25 Council Budget process, noting that it will need to be considered alongside other capital budget pressures.*
4. *Notes that project cost estimates are indicative and subject to change following design of and community engagement on individual projects.*
5. *Incorporates these actions into the relevant Transport Strategy Action Plans by March 2024.*
6. *Notes that a report on the opportunity to index the per capita spend on active travel will be presented to the November 2023 Council meeting.*

Making it safer and easier to walk and ride in Merri-bek – 20 June 2023

That Council resolves to receive a report by October 2023 that details how Council could accelerate the roll out of active transport infrastructure to make it safer, easier and more comfortable to ride and walk around our city, including by:

1. *Bringing forward active transport projects that have been prioritised by community members and groups through recent consultations, including on our 10 Year Capital Works Programs for Walking and Cycling, in our Capital Works Program.*
2. *Increasing the \$10 per head minimum spend on active transport infrastructure each year in line with inflation.*

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council plan sets out Council's and community's vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.
 - o 2.1. Build safe, accessible, and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand, especially the Coburg to Glenroy bike path.

- 2.5. Facilitate substantially increased use of active transport in the community through targeted programs which include a focus on children, young people, families and older people.
- 2.6. Collaborate with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on a case-by-case basis.

Zero Carbon Merri-bek

Council's Zero Carbon Merri-bek 2040 Framework outlines the community vision and strategic directions for the transition to zero carbon in Merri-bek by 2040. In 2019/20, transport was recorded to contribute 17 per cent of all carbon emissions in the Merri-bek local government area and 13 per cent were from private motor vehicles. The 2040 vision for Sustainable Transport includes:

- Most people choose to walk or cycle to get around locally because its healthy, free, safe and convenient.
- Merri-bek is known for its pedestrian and cycle-friendly streetscapes.

This overarching Framework informed 5-yearly action plans to drive the transition to zero emissions including:

- Investing in infrastructure to support active travel and public transport.
- Reallocate space used for private vehicle travel and parking to support sustainable transport use and other purposes.

In addition, Council resolved in December 2021 to adopt an interim target towards the Zero Carbon by 2040 goal of a reduction of emissions by 75 per cent by 2030.

2. Background

In June 2023, Council adopted its 2023-27 Budget which included a Transport Program of works. At the same meeting, Council resolved to receive a report on accelerating investment in walking and riding infrastructure and indexing the minimum per capita spending on active transport, which has remained at \$10 per capita since its introduction in the 2019/20 budget.

At the October 2023 Council meeting, the opportunity to accelerate walking and cycling infrastructure projects was presented and Option 2 was endorsed for consideration in the 2024/25 budget process. This program of accelerated projects would require an additional \$906,000 per year on average between 2024/25 to 2028/29, and would increase average annual per capita spending on active travel during this period from \$11.34 to \$15.70.

The second aspect of the June 2023 resolution was to report on indexation of the per capita spending on active transport. This was not covered in the October 2023 report and is the subject of this report.

With a new Transport Strategy and associated Action Plan under preparation, there is a good opportunity to consider the approach to future funding for active transport infrastructure.

3. Issues

There are several possible approaches to indexation, and officers recommend that Council considers these closely in determining whether indexation should apply to the \$10 per capita spending on active transport infrastructure.

The current population forecast for the current and next 5 financial years is shown in the table below. This represents growth at approximately 1.1 per cent each year.

Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Population forecast	176,422	178,362	180,324	182,308	184,313	186,340

It is noted, and is proposed to continue to be the case, that the \$10 per capita has the following parameters applying to it:

- The best available forecast of resident population for a given year is used to determine \$10 per head
- The figure applying is that known when the budget for the subsequent year is set, and applied to the 5 year Capital Works Program, with annual updates to population projections where available as the Capital Works Program is refreshed each year.
- The \$10 per capita is for spending on improvements to existing assets to help walking and riding, rather than spending on maintenance or renewal of assets such as footpaths and bike paths.
- Where grant funding is obtained for walking and riding infrastructure, this is in addition to the \$10 per capita figure. Sometimes, this will mean deducting expenditure from the calculation if a grant has been able to substitute rates funding for a certain project.
- Where road safety and amenity projects are introduced that are not specific to walking and riding infrastructure, there may be some attribution of spending to walking and riding, but not the full 100 per cent. Typically, 50 per cent of this funding would be allocated to the \$10 per capita calculation where people walking and riding are beneficiaries of the project, unless there is good reason to vary up or down from this figure.

It is further noted that in the annual budget presentation, there is explicit reference to the level of spending per capita for the forthcoming budget year and the outlook demonstrated in the Capital Works Program.

Some of this funding, especially that used for project design and that for projects in the later years of the 5-year Capital Works Program, is shown in a general funding line (for example, Pedestrian Facilities – Unallocated or Bike Facilities – Unallocated, or Transport Project Design, Evaluation and Monitoring). This funding is included in calculations of the per capita spend in accordance with the parameters outlined in the above list.

The specific June 2023 Council resolution being addressed in this report is:

To receive a report by October 2023 that details how Council could accelerate the roll out of active transport infrastructure to make it safer, easier and more comfortable to ride and walk around our city, including by Increasing the \$10 per head minimum spend on active transport infrastructure each year in line with inflation.

Inflation as a means of indexation

Officers have presented analysis of indexing to inflation in this report. However, there are some complexities and cautions with respect to using inflation as an index.

Inflation has two main characteristics relevant to the proposal to use it for indexing future budget spending.

- As has been seen in recent years, **inflation varies considerably** and sometimes unpredictably. While recent high inflation may make this appear to be a way of increasing the per capita spend, inflation can also track quite low and could dampen increases in spending (or even reduce spending under a deflating economy). It would make a very significant difference to the per capita figure if it were indexed according to inflation experienced for the 5 years from 2016/17 compared to the 5 years from 2019/20.
- **Inflation is, by definition, a lagging indicator.** That is, inflation figures are released after the end of each quarter, and are backwards looking. Applying inflation to a future-facing budget year is therefore not possible. There are forecasts of inflation released by the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) for an outlook of approximately 18-24 months, and these outlooks are understood to be based on the objectives of the RBA in managing inflation to within a target 2 to 3 per cent range¹. For example, the recent history of **actuals** and *current RBA estimates* of inflation are:

Jun 2021	Dec 2021	Jun 2022	Dec 2022	Jun 2023	Dec 2023	Jun 2024	Dec 2024	Jun 2025	Dec 2025
3.8	3.5	6.1	7.8	6.0	4.1	3.6	3.3	3.1	2.8

Source: <https://www.rba.gov.au/publications/smp/> for various time periods Accessed 26/10/2023

It is possible to use RBA forecast inflation to determine the next year's per capita index. However should the actual inflation considerably exceed this amount, this raises questions about the suitability of using this method and whether adjustments are to be made to the per capita spend amount 'on the fly'.

Data showing the application of inflation to determine the best way to index per capita spend is provided in the options tables below. However, this approach is not recommended by officers.

Alternatives to using inflation as an index

There are two other options for indexing the per capita spend to account for the increasing costs in delivery of infrastructure projects; applying the rate increase adopted by Council (generally assumed to be the rate cap) and applying a 1 per cent increase.

It is noted that other parts of the Capital Program with annual allocations of funding do not apply inflation or even the rate increase figure to them.

Applying a 1 per cent increase

Recurrent funding in the Capital Works Program is either annually fixed (without any indexing) or a figure of 1 per cent per annum is applied. While under most circumstances this results in a reduction in real terms in spending, it promotes fiscally responsible budgets and prioritisation of spending of recurrent funds on the most important things. Where contracts are in place with third party providers that have in-built indexing to CPI, these are considered on a case by case basis during the budgeting process to reach agreement on the figures needed to meet our contractual obligations.

¹ <https://www.rba.gov.au/education/resources/explainers/australias-inflation-target.html>
Accessed 26/10/2023

In recent times, the specific project funding identified in the Capital Works Program for future years has been reviewed when the annual rolling forward of the program occurs, to reflect recent experience with costs of projects and aligned with current market rates. This means that, where there is no change in the budget envelope, there are fewer projects able to be funded and this applies universally across our Capital Works Program.

The tables below show the scenario of applying a 1 per cent increase to the per capita spend on active transport infrastructure. There is no uncertainty attached with applying a 1 per cent increase to the per capita figure every year.

Applying the rate increase

The most 'intuitive' index to apply to the per capita figure, given the figure applies directly to rates funding, is to apply the rate increase adopted by Council for that year in the budget. In recent times at Merri-bek, this has always been the rate cap declared by the Essential Services Commission in late December, six months out from the adoption of the next financial year's budget.

The timing of the declaration of the rate cap suits the timing of compilation of the budget (noting that the income side of Council's budget is very significantly impacted by the rate increase that is applied).

The table below shows the level of variation in the rate cap compared to the level of variation in inflation in recent years.

Council may consider the option of applying the rate increase to the per capita spend in active transport infrastructure.

Spending growth with population as well as growth in per capita figure

Officers have presented analysis of each of the indexation options alongside the growth in population to show the resultant spending levels that would be derived from applying both the population growth resulting from using a 'per capita' approach as well as an index to the 'per capita' figure itself. This would result in a double multiplier being applied to the active transport infrastructure spend each year.

Council may consider shifting from a 'per capita' basis for the calculation of spending on active transport infrastructure to instead elect to vary the minimum total spending of rates funding on active transport infrastructure to the rate increase, without having the second multiplier of the population growth applied.

Notes on the actual spend per capita compared to the 'spending floor' or 'safety net' approach

In recent years, as shown in the tables provided, there has been a budgeted spend greater than the \$10 per capita spend, in some years, this has amounted to several dollars per capita. It is recommended that any indexed figure continues to represent a minimum spend and therefore act as a 'safety net' or 'floor' of spending, and that Council may choose to spend higher amounts of rates funding on active transport investments. This is also the case for the project spend in the current 5-year Capital Works Program.

Assumption of the 'base year' for indexing spending

From the date the \$10 per capita spend level was set

It is assumed that the base year for indexing spending for active transport infrastructure is to be the year the \$10 per capita spending was introduced. This was 2019/20 and therefore, applying an index to this from that date would result in the 'floor' of spending creeping up over that time (noting that this has generally been achieved each year given higher than \$10 per capita being spent).

From the 2023/24 figure

Given this decision is being put forward for consideration in the 2024/25 budget year, there is a plausible argument for it being considered from this year forward, using 2023/24 figure of \$10 per capita as the base.

One-off adjustment of per capita spend

Council may consider an alternative by which a one-off decision is made to increase the per capita spend to a different figure, higher than \$10. A figure of \$12 per capita is shown in the table against the other options. It is noted that previously, before the \$10 per capita was adopted, the previous level was \$5 per capita. So there is precedent for a one-off increase in per capita spend.

This option is recommended by officers, as a simpler and effective minimum spend.

Community impact

The greatest impact on the community from adopting the recommendation of this report is on the investments that may not be included in the Capital Works Program due to the need to adhere to the policy position adopted.

Over time, the multiplier effect of the recommendation is such that active transport infrastructure will consume proportionally more and more of rates funding, meaning this impact on spending for other asset categories (or indeed on other Council services) will be more greatly felt, unless a further decision of Council is made in future that modifies or adjusts the indexation approach.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

At the highest level, the more funding that is spent on active transport infrastructure, the greater the rate of improvement to this infrastructure and the greater the encouragement for people to use active transport.

However, it is noted that equivalent funds could be spent on behavioural transport programs to encourage take up of active transport modes or on other programs encouraging reduction in carbon emissions such as degasification and solar thermal programs.

Economic sustainability implications

The officer recommended approach is one that accounts for the need for Council's budget to be economically sustainable. There are always opportunities for grant funding that are pursued by officers for transport projects, and these are considered to be a useful approach to supplementing spending of rates funding on transport projects.

Legal and risk considerations

There is no connection to any legal requirement for spending on improvements for active transport infrastructure. This is purely a policy position of the Council that is entirely within its control.

Human Rights Consideration

Spending on active transport infrastructure can engage the right to recognition and equality before the law (section 6 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006) and the right to freedom of movement (section 12).

Walking and riding projects generally positively impact the right to freedom of movement for people using these modes, and can positively impact people's right to recognition and equality before the law where project outcomes positively address inequality on the basis of age, gender, disability, etc.

There are no adverse human rights impacts identified from the recommendations of this report.

4. Community consultation and engagement

This report was informed by engagement the 2023-27 Council Budget, including consideration of the many community submissions on the 2023-27 Council Budget seeking increased funding on active transport infrastructure, especially protected bike lanes.

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.

As a general report about funding levels, and with no specific projects in mind, there is no specific person whose rights may be affected by the recommendations of this report. These considerations apply when individual projects are being designed, developed and implemented.

Communications

There are no specific communications proposed with respect to this report, however officers are available to address queries that may arise, and the annual consultation undertaken as part of the 2024/25 Budget will provide a further opportunity for the community to have their say on the matter of indexing the per capita spend level on active transport infrastructure.

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 table and chart that follow show the resulting spend from the range of scenarios contemplated in the Issues section. It is clear that there are many different options available for indexing of spending. It is also clear that the currently budgeted spend over the next 5 years is higher than most of the index-calculated scenarios, and the Option 2 scenario outlined in the October 2023 Council report and resolved to be put to the 2024/25 Budget process shows considerably higher levels of investment than any of the index scenarios.

The light grey line shows the index that was requested in the original June 2023 Notice of Motion (having clarified that this would be from the 2019/20 base year). While this is consistent with the Option 2 spending for the foreseeable future, it will continue to increase steadily (depending on what inflation actually does) and would, under constant inflation of 3.1 per cent, add \$1 million per year in 10 years to the safety net, while applying rates funding without a population-related increase would increase by as little as \$400,000 in that time. A progressively increasing spend would mean trade-offs with other parts of the capital program would be inevitable over time.

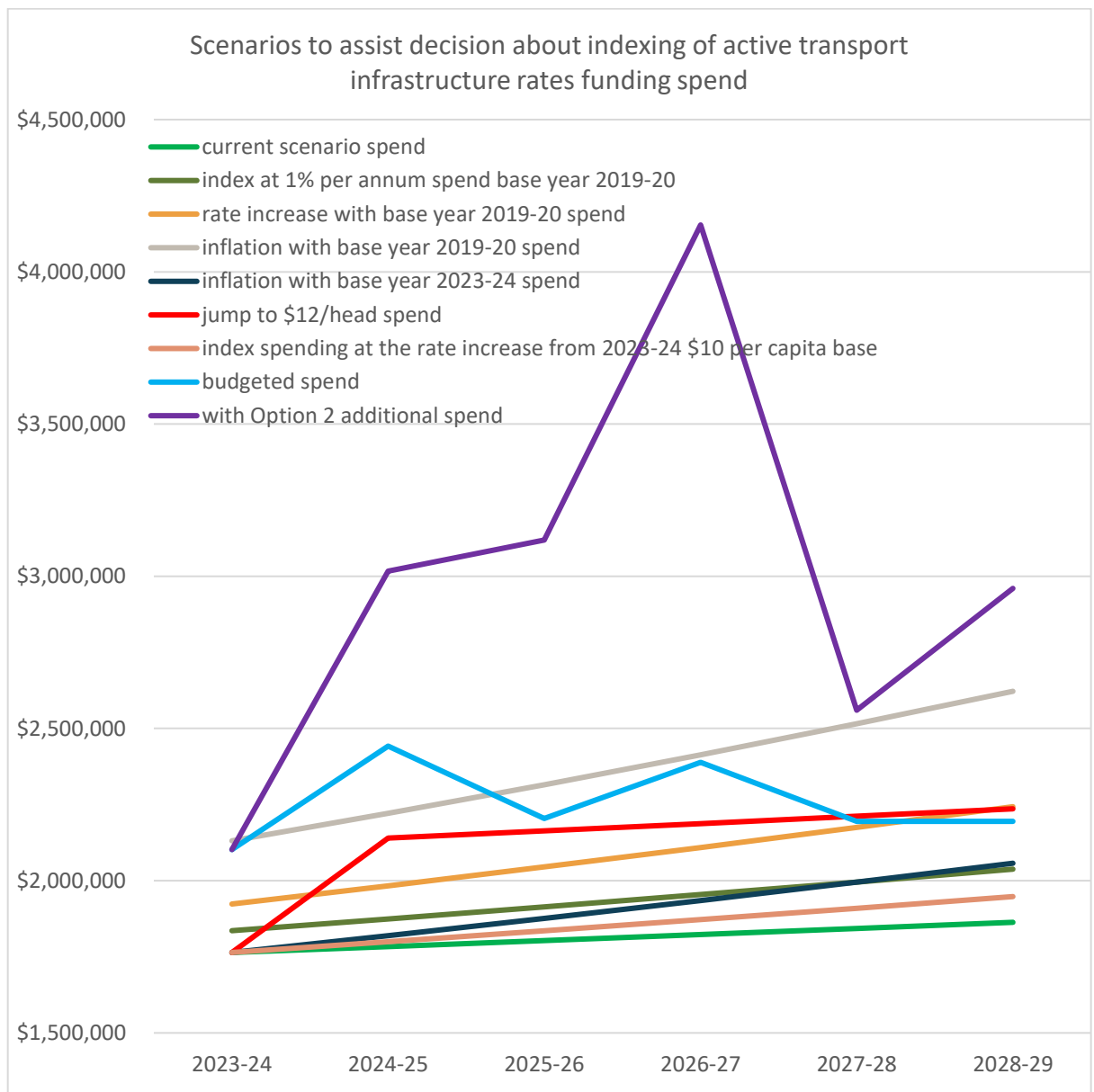
Officers recommend a simple increase of the per capita rate to \$12 per head from 2024/25 (red line). Officers' next suggestion would be applying the rate increase to the per capita rate each year with a 2019/20 base year (yellow line).

Opportunities for larger investments in active transport infrastructure should be taken when capacity in the budget is able to be found, such as the fixed term injection that Option 2 would afford. These sorts of changes should not be built into the base as they compromise Council's ability to manage emerging budget pressures and changes external environments.

Minimum annual spend on active transport infrastructure from rates funding under different scenarios

Note: colours align with the colours of lines on the subsequent chart

Year	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Population estimate	176,422	178,362	180,324	182,308	184,313	186,340
current scenario spend (\$10/head)	\$ 1,764,220	\$ 1,783,620	\$ 1,803,240	\$ 1,823,080	\$ 1,843,130	\$ 1,863,401
index at 1% per annum spend base year 2019-20	\$ 1,835,854	\$ 1,874,603	\$ 1,914,176	\$ 1,954,589	\$ 1,995,846	\$ 2,037,974
rate increase with base year 2019-20 spend	\$ 1,923,507	\$ 1,983,552	\$ 2,045,478	\$ 2,109,343	\$ 2,175,192	\$ 2,243,097
inflation with base year 2019-20 spend	\$ 2,131,152	\$ 2,221,380	\$ 2,315,435	\$ 2,413,479	\$ 2,515,663	\$ 2,622,173
inflation with base year 2023-24 spend	\$ 1,764,220	\$ 1,819,292	\$ 1,876,091	\$ 1,934,667	\$ 1,995,063	\$ 2,057,345
jump to \$12/head spend in 2024-25	\$ 1,764,220	\$ 2,140,344	\$ 2,163,888	\$ 2,187,696	\$ 2,211,756	\$ 2,236,081
index spending at the rate increase from 2023-24 \$10 per capita base	\$ 1,764,220	\$ 1,799,504	\$ 1,835,494	\$ 1,872,204	\$ 1,909,648	\$ 1,947,841
budgeted spend, current 5 year CWP	\$ 2,102,269	\$ 2,442,146	\$ 2,204,138	\$ 2,388,997	\$ 2,194,860	\$ 2,194,860
with Option 2 additional spend	\$ 2,102,269	\$ 3,017,146	\$ 3,119,138	\$ 4,153,997	\$ 2,559,860	\$ 2,959,860



7. Implementation

The implementation of the decision of Council on the matter of the figure to be set for per capita spend in coming budgets is to be made when the draft 2024/25 budget is consulted upon and when the final 2024/25 budget is adopted. The budget is presented as a four-year budget and will therefore span the years 2024/25 to 2027/28 and the 5-year Capital Works Program presents an additional year of proposed spending, aligned with the 10-year Long Term Financial Plan.

During the compilation of the 2024/25 Budget, officers will be consulting with Councillors on the priorities to be included in the draft Budget as it is formally brought to Council for decision. Officers will be tracking the per capita spend on active transport components of the budget as it is presented, including the Option 2 projects resolved to be presented at the October 2023 Council meeting, to assist Council in making budget decisions in 2024.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.4 RAINBOW TICK ACCREDITATION - REQUIREMENTS, PRIORITIES, PHASING, AND COSTS FOR COUNCIL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy

Community Wellbeing

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the requirements, phasing and required resources necessary to achieve Rainbow Tick accreditation.
2. Approves in principle the preparation and application for Rainbow Tick accreditation for the following services, subject to the 2024/25 budget process: Aged and Community Support, Library Services, Youth Services, Maternal and Child Health, and Preschool Field Officer program.
3. Refers costs of \$248,332 to support the required preparation for Rainbow Tick accreditation to the 2024/2025 budget process for consideration.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Rainbow Tick accreditation is widely recognised as one of the most impactful ways to measure and demonstrate LGBTIQ+ inclusion in organisational practices and service delivery. This report outlines that Rainbow Tick accreditation is an ambitious process that has the potential to have the most impact when implemented as part of an overall plan for change within the Council which works in partnership with the community and other organisations.

Based on benchmarking with other councils and internal assessment the following Merri-bek Councils services should be considered to prepare for and receive Rainbow Tick accreditation: Aged and Community Support, Library Services, Youth Services, Maternal and Child Health and Preschool Field Support Team.

To successfully achieve Rainbow Tick accreditation additional operating and staff resourcing totalling \$248,332 is recommended to be referred to the 2024/25 budget process for Council's consideration. This includes:

1. Specialist staff resources to effectively drive Rainbow Tick readiness at a cost of \$91,666 per year for 2 years totalling \$183,332.
2. Three-year accreditation costs and fees of approximately \$45,000.
3. External expertise to assist the Rainbow Tick Steering group will cost \$20,000 in the 2024/25 financial year only.

Benchmarking shows that the Council should allow at least 18 months to conduct gap analysis, consult with communities, introduce measures that address gaps and allow at least 6 months to fully implement new strategies before the accreditation is invited to undertake the assessment.

Once the Council receives the accreditation, a mid-cycle review process is conducted every 18 months and every 3 years a full re-accreditation is required. Accreditation beyond the initial 2 years will require consideration of further budget and officer resourcing in line with the 2026/27 Budget process.

Previous Council Decisions

Merri-bek LGBTIQA+ Action Plan – 10 May 2023

That Council:

1. *Endorses the Merri-bek LGBTIQA+ Action Plan 2023-2026, and requests that the following additional actions be included:*

...

- b) A report be presented to Council in 2023 that outlines the requirements, priorities, phasing, and costs for Council services and programs to move towards Rainbow Tick accreditation in line with activity 2.5 of the LGBTIQA+ Action Plan, to inform 2024/2025 Council budget consideration.*

...

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025 Strategic Objective 3 supports Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services, facilitating local partnerships and programs, mitigating the effects of climate change and supporting the community to adapt and build climate resilience. Strategy 3.5 commits the Council to: Enhance social cohesion by strengthening relationships and developing opportunities for cultural and social connection and addressing the physical, cultural, and financial system barriers to access, inclusion and participation by all people, in particular culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This should also include measures to address racism and LGBTIQA+ discrimination.

Council's first Human Rights Policy was adopted in 2016 and in 2022 was updated to reflect the changing social, political, economic, environmental and health context. This policy commits Council to ensure that Merri-bek is a safe and welcoming city for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual-plus, Transgender (and gender diverse), Queer or Questioning, Asexual and Aromantic and Intersex people (LGBTIQA+) and will strive to ensure that its services are accessible to and appropriate to the needs of our LGBTIQA+ residents and visitors and staff. We acknowledge that the full diversity of sexes, genders and sexualities goes beyond the LGBTIQA+ acronym and that while some issues may overlap, many will be unique for individual communities.

The Merri-bek LGBTIQA+ action plan 2023 – 2026 formalises operations across the organisation to ensure that our work is genuine in supporting LGBTIQA+ communities. The action plan is guided by and supports the implementation of the Human Rights Policy to achieve improved outcomes across our city. Priority area 2 says Merri-bek City Council will work towards creating safe, accessible and inclusive services, that are informed by evidence and the voices of LGBTIQA+ communities. Action number 2.5 commits to: Investigate, accreditation standards across appropriate Council services.

2. Background

Rainbow Tick accreditation is an inclusion framework developed by Rainbow Health Australia at La Trobe University for LGBTQ-inclusive service delivery for health and human services organisations. Previously known as Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV), Rainbow Health Victoria has played an important role in improving the lives of LGBTIQA+ Victorians since 2003.

Rainbow Tick accreditation is provided through an independent assessment, provided by Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) and the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS).

The Rainbow Tick is for health and human services organisations seeking to provide a safe and inclusive workplace and services for the LGBTQIA+ community. The six standards it incorporates are designed to be used by the whole organisation but can also be applied to specific services or sites within an organisation.

Rainbow Health Victoria created Rainbow Tick as a quality framework to help organisations show that they are safe, inclusive and affirming services and employers for the LGBTQIA+ community. The Rainbow Tick is built upon a set of voluntary LGBTQIA+ -practice guidelines outlined in the Victorian Government's Well Proud: A Guide to GLBTI-inclusive Practice for Health and human services.

Rainbow Health Victoria's first LGBTQIA+ inclusive practice guide was published in 2013 to accompany the development of the Rainbow Tick. An updated version was subsequently released in 2016.

In 2020 in the lead-up to the Local Government elections, the Victorian Pride Lobby developed a Rainbow Local Government campaign designed to support and promote the efforts of local governments to foster a culture that is inclusive, responsive and accessible to LGBTQIA+ Victorians. This campaign asked Council election candidates to pledge support to Rainbow Tick accreditation, set up LGBTQIA+ advisory committees, and LGBTQIA+ action plans and fly the rainbow flag.

3. Issues

Rainbow Tick accreditation is an ambitious process and only 5 local governments have achieved partial accreditation to date. Benchmarking with other Councils such as Moonee Valley, Darebin and Monash City Councils and Rainbow Tick accredited organisations such as Merri Health identified the following considerations:

Prioritise customer-facing services to limit scope and cost

The Rainbow Tick has originally been developed for LGBTQIA+ inclusive service delivery for health and human services organisations. To date, no Local Government organisation has received Rainbow Tick for the whole organisation. Only 5 Local governments across Victoria received Rainbow Tick accreditation for dedicated services such as the City of Port Phillip or Moonee Valley City Council for their Aged and Disability Services or Whittlesea City Council for Youth Services.

Limiting the scope for accreditation is necessary because of practical considerations related to the workload and the cost and process of accreditation which are affected by the number of staff, the number of sites, and the specific areas of the organisation. Darebin City Council has chosen only 4 areas to pursue accreditation due to cost and workload considerations which include Youth Services, Family & Children's Services, Toy Library and the Early Years Education Support, Supported & Connected Living Department at the cost of the accreditation estimated to be \$20,000.

Based on considered internal assessment and scoping of costs the following Merri-bek Council services are recommended to prepare for and ideally receive Rainbow Tick accreditation: Aged and Community Support, Library Services, Youth Services, Maternal and Child Health, and Preschool Field Officer program.

Costs for independent accreditation for accreditation for the above five service areas is estimated to be approximately \$45,000 every three years.

Allow at least 18 months to the pre-accreditation phase

Benchmarking shows that the Council should allow at least 18 months to conduct a gap analysis, consult with communities, introduce measures that address gaps and allow at least 6 months to fully implement new strategies before the accreditation is invited to undertake the assessment.

It is essential to allow enough time for the preparation and setting up of an internal steering group. Ethical practice requires a commitment to ongoing active listening to the lived experience of LGBTQIA+ communities and a willingness to reflect on individual and organisational blind spots. Input must be sought from a broad range of people, representative across the letters in the LGBTQIA+ acronym, and including a diversity of experiences of different ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds, as well as other intersecting experiences.

Resourcing and expertise requirements

The process of preparing for accreditation is complex and requires resources and will require additional specialist staff resourcing.

To meet the Rainbow Tick standards Council needs to develop policies that clearly outline the role of any consultation groups and their place within organisational governance structures and what will happen with the information provided by service users. Council also needs to remunerate and acknowledge LGBTQIA+ community representatives and organisations appropriately for their participation.

Therefore, it is essential to set up a working group approach involving staff from selected sites, managers, and other stakeholders who have lived experience. This group will co-design an organisational community participation strategy.

Based on consultation with other organisations it is recommended an additional suitably qualified staff resource be supported.

An additional budget of \$20,000 is also recommended for external specialist services to support the design of internal and external consultation and to advise on accreditation preparation.

Commit to long-term re-accreditation

To be successful whole Council change is required to ensure cultural safety for LGBTQIA+ people. This includes a commitment to:

- A thorough and honest appraisal of current systems and capabilities to establish a baseline for improvement.
- An investment in staff capability to drive the process.
- A commitment to engaging LGBTIQ service users, staff and community.

Once the Council receives the accreditation a mid-cycle review process is conducted every 18 months and every 3 years full re-accreditation needs to be undertaken.

This process will require continuous improvement which will require ongoing effort and resourcing. Merri Health has implemented ongoing training in preparation for the re-accreditation which includes compulsory training of new staff and quarterly training for all staff. Merri Health also suggested the need to allocate full-time staff for intensive re-accreditation phases at least 3 months before the re-accreditation.

Rainbow Tick and Merri-bek LGBTIQ+ action plan

There are 11 shared actions between Rainbow Tick accreditation and the Council's LGBTIQ+ action plan. These shared actions focus mostly on workforce training, communications, and advocacy for LGBTIQ+ staff. The council's LGBTIQ+ action plan includes 41 actions aimed at enhancing the well-being and inclusivity of Merri-bek's LGBTIQ+ population. The effectiveness and longevity of Rainbow Tick accreditation are contingent upon the Council's responsiveness to emerging issues identified in the action plan. A coordinated approach that synchronises pre-accreditation resourcing and action plan implementation is recommended.

Community Impact

Rainbow Tick is now widely recognised as one of the most impactful ways to measure and demonstrate LGBTIQ+ inclusion in organisational practices and service delivery.

Rainbow Tick accreditation has the most impact when implemented as part of an overall plan for change in a system or sector. This could involve supporting and encouraging key organisations in a service system to achieve accreditation, while also developing referral systems to create local or state-wide networks to ensure accessible services for LGBTIQ+ people.

The biggest potential impact will be on the LGBTIQ+ community across the spectrum of ages. However, overlapping systems of inequality and discrimination can influence both the experiences and specific needs of LGBTIQ+ people. This includes experiences of inequality and discrimination based on culture, Aboriginality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, ability, geography, age, migration status, religion and other factors. These intersecting social experiences are important in understanding how individuals and communities may describe or feel about being LGBTIQ+, and where people may turn for advice and support.

Legal and risk considerations

There is a potential reputational risk for the Council arising from not committing to Rainbow Tick accreditation, in particularly the risk within the LGBTIQ+ community and wider community that Council is not willing to support becoming more LGBTIQ+ inclusive.

Human Rights Consideration

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

LGBTIQ+ rights are protected under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and cross-over with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. The Equal Opportunity Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation and requires the Council to have a positive duty to eliminate and prevent these.

The Rainbow Tick accreditation assumes that the Council demonstrates an understanding of LGBTIQ+ specific human rights in health and community services including the right to bodily integrity and autonomy, and the right to legal and social recognition of identity and relationships.

Gender Impact Assessment

The endorsed LGBTIQ+ Action Plan demonstrates affirmative action towards gender equality, particularly for transgender and gender diverse communities. The action plan's intersectional approach considers the impacts of gender on lived experiences and the need to consider this in programs, services and policies to ensure they are inclusive to people of all genders. Importantly the action plan demonstrates positive action, consistent with the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*

4. Community consultation and engagement

The Rainbow Tick accreditation proposal was discussed at the Merri-bek LGBTIQ+ Reference group meeting in September 2023 which led to the endorsement of the LGBTIQ+ action plan that states that "Council is a leader in providing inclusive and informed services across all life stages, demonstrated by working towards community endorsed standards."

The broader LGBTIQ+ action plan had wide community engagement and involved in-person consultation at Midsumma Carnival 2023 and online engagement activities via the Conversations Merri-bek platform between 16 February 16 – 2 March 2023. The draft action plan has been developed in collaboration with members of the LGBTIQ+ reference group. This final engagement process allowed for additional comments to be made and any feedback to be incorporated.

This engagement did not gauge specific support for a Rainbow Tick process but did highlight a desire for Council to be more inclusive in its services and programs and to prioritise community-led initiatives.

Affected person's rights and interests

The Rainbow Tick framework is designed to support organisations to improve the quality of care and services they provide to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) service users, staff and volunteers. Therefore, this decision will be communicated to those service users, staff and volunteers via multiple channels and opportunities.

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

To successfully achieve Rainbow Tick accreditation additional operating and staff resourcing total of \$248,332 is recommended to be referred to the 2024/25 budget process for Council's consideration. This includes:

1. Specialist staff resources to effectively drive Rainbow Tick readiness at a cost of \$91,666 per year for 2 years totalling \$183,332.
2. Three-year accreditation costs and fees of approximately \$45,000.
3. External expertise to assist the Rainbow Tick Steering group will cost \$20,000 in the 2024/25 financial year only.

Accreditation beyond the initial 2 years will require consideration of further budget and officer resourcing in line with the 2026/27 Budget process.

7. Implementation

If supported and endorsed the following steps will be taken towards the Rainbow Tick accreditation:

- By February 2024 set up the Rainbow Tick steering group to start self-assessment
- By June 2024 appoint a suitable expert who will assist the steering group in applying the 6 Rainbow Tick standards and co-design the engagement strategy
- By August 2024 appoint LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Officer to lead and complete the Rainbow Tick gap analysis.
- Book the formal Rainbow Tick accreditation for May/June 2025
- By June 2025 receive Rainbow Tick Accreditation valid till June 2028

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.5 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PLAN 2021-2025 - IMPLEMENTATION OF YEAR 2 ACTIONS

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy

Early Years and Youth

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the Children, Young People and Families Plan annual review and implementation of Year 2 actions.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 (the Plan) aims to improve health, wellbeing and educational outcomes for children, young people and families with a vision of 'a community where children, young people and families are healthy, resilient, empowered, safe and belong'. The Plan's associated Implementation Plan 2022-2025 details the actions and activities that will be undertaken in each of the Plan's three outcome areas of Inclusive City and Community, Improved Health and Wellbeing, and Lifelong Learning and Participation.

To fulfil the vision of the Plan, Council has continued to collaborate with community, partner organisations and the State Government to achieve the implementation of year 2 actions.

The annual review of the Plan has highlighted the range of activities that have been completed and the challenges that present to implement the Early Years Infrastructure Program and respond to the emerging needs of children, young people and families in a post-pandemic environment. The annual review has identified the Plan's achievements in Year 2 which are outlined in detail at **Attachment 1**.

Previous Council Decisions

Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 – Implementation of Year 1 Actions – 14 September 2022

That Council notes the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 implementation of Year 1 Actions.

Children, Young People and Families Implementation Plan 2022-2025 – 13 April 2022

That Council adopts the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2022-2025.

Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 – 9 June 2021

That Council adopts the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025.

1. Policy Context

The Plan aligns with the following key policy documents and legislative requirements:

- Community Vision 2021-2031 (in particular, Theme 3: A Healthy and Caring Merri-bek, Theme 4: Spaces and Places in Merri-bek and Theme 5: An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek)
- Council Plan 2021-2025 (Major initiative and priority 21: Implement the Children, Young People and Families Plan)
- Council Action Plan 2022-2023 (Action 126: Implement actions of the Children, Young People and Families Plan).
- Child Safe Standards.

The Plan aligns with key international policy on the human rights of children and young people:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Background

On 9 June 2021, Council endorsed the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025. The Plan provides an integrated strategy to improve the health, wellbeing and educational outcomes of children and young people aged 0-24 years and their families. The Plan was developed through extensive consultation with key stakeholders including children, young people, families, community members, local organisations and education providers. Consultation methods were diverse and targeted to ensure barriers to participation were reduced.

The Plan has three key outcome areas:

- Outcome 1: Inclusive City and Community
- Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing
- Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation

In each outcome area, there are several strategic objectives that contribute to achieving the broader outcome.

On 13 April 2022, Council endorsed the associated Children, Young People and Families Implementation Plan 2022-2025 (the 'Implementation Plan'). The Implementation Plan details the range of actions and activities developed through previous consultations that Council will undertake in collaboration and partnership to meet the objectives of the Plan.

An annual review of the Plan and associated Implementation Plan is undertaken on an annual basis to monitor progress and report on achievements. The key achievements in Year 2 included the continued implementation of the Early Years Infrastructure Plan and Building Blocks Partnership which resulted in a refurbishment and expansion project at Turner Street Kindergarten and Park Street Early Learning Co-op, and a new modular kindergarten at Doris Blackburn Preschool. Further achievement highlights included processes to amplify the voices of children and young people in decision making through the establishment of the Children's Reference Group and continued success of the Youth Ambassadors. Infants and families were also supported through a range of partnership programs such as the implementation of INFANT (helping families with healthy eating and active play from the start of their baby's life), sleep and settling sessions and Dads Group events. Council has also continued to support and collaborate with Merri-bek Toy Library to increase access to low-cost, sustainable play equipment across its two branches in Pascoe Vale and West Brunswick. The Year 2 review report outlines the detail related to all actions and activities completed in the reporting period.

3. Issues

Community impact

The Plan continues to positively impact children and young people through their consultation and participation in decision making on matters that impact them through the Children's Reference Group and Youth Ambassadors program.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Climate change has been raised by children and young people as a significant concern. Efforts have been made to empower young people to take action through climate emergency initiatives.

Environmentally sustainable design (ESD) in early years infrastructure has been discussed with the Victorian Schools Building Authority and Department of Education.

ESD upgrades were recently installed at a new kindergarten modular at Doris Blackburn Preschool and will be a significant focus in the detailed design process for the Brunswick Early Years Hub, which is currently being developed.

Legal and risk considerations

There is continued adherence to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and legislation on working with children checks for all staff who have regular contact with children and young people. As an additional measure, all staff in Early Years and Youth are required to have a valid working with children check, regardless of their level of direct contact with children and young people. Where there is online engagement with young people, staff adhere to the Online Engagement Policy and Procedure Manual.

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 the Plan is being implemented in accordance with the Charter, in particular the right to protection of families and children (section 17). The Plan also aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in particular, the right to express views and the views of the child to be taken seriously (Article 12).

4. Community consultation and engagement

Community engagement and consultation is a key consideration in the Plan's actions and activities. Key opportunities for consultation and engagement during the Year 2 reporting period were:

- Children's Reference Group
The Children's Reference Group was established in partnership with primary schools and 12 children aged 10-12 years were appointed. The members were consulted on the Arts and Culture Strategy, Open Space Strategy, child safe resources and civic participation activities.
- Youth Ambassadors
A new recruitment process resulted in over 50 applications and 14 members were appointed. Consultations have included Arts and Culture Strategy, Open Space Strategy and child safe resources.
- Early Years Infrastructure
Children, families and community members were consulted during the Doris Blackburn Preschool modular expansion project and the Brunswick Early Years Hub initial concept design.

Affected persons rights and interests

The Plan has been assessed as having a positive impact on children, young people and families' rights and interests. Early years infrastructure projects may impact local members interests although mitigation strategies are considered and on balance, these projects provide a positive impact, enabling early years education and care.

Communications

The Plan's Year 2 review and highlights of key achievements will be communicated via social media and website updates.

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

Financial and resource implications to implement Year 2 actions were resourced through operational budgets, external grants and through the annual budget process.

7. Implementation

The communication of the Plan's Year 2 review and key achievements will be implemented. An annual report on the Plan's Year 3 review and key achievements will be presented in Council in October 2024.

Attachment/s

- [1](#) Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 Year 2 Review D23/505104



Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-25

Year 2 Review



Executive summary

The Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 Year 2 Review of actions has been completed. This report details the actions achieved during Year 2 of the Plan's implementation, from July 2022 to June 2023.

The key findings were:

- 15 Year 2 actions were completed, 65 total actions have now been completed, noting some actions are for multiple years.
- Many of the actions in the Plan have already been achieved – for further information please see the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 Year 1 Review.
- Engagement and consultation processes have been further strengthened to involve children, young people and families in decision making on matters that impact them.

The emerging key issues identified were:

- Families continue to experience complex issues and vulnerability with increased referrals to support services.
- Children are displaying increased developmental vulnerability especially in areas of speech and language, emotional and behavioural concerns.
- Increasing number of families, including young people, are impacted by mental health concerns.
- Service delivery needs to be flexible to meet the needs of children, young people and families, including continued options for face-to-face and online engagement.

The Children, Young People and Families Plan will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis with the next report due in October 2024.

Photo Credit: Fawkner Festa 2021 Jacinta Keefe Photography

Merri-bek Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 Year 2 Review

Context

The Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 (the Plan) is a strategy for improving children, young people and families' health, wellbeing and educational outcomes through a whole of Council approach.

The Plan focuses on three outcome areas:

1. Inclusive City and Community
2. Improved Health and Wellbeing
3. Lifelong Learning and Participation

The Plan's vision is that all children, young people and families live in a community where they are healthy, resilient, empowered, safe and belong.

Key achievements

The key achievements in each outcome area were:

1. Inclusive City and Community:

- Access to early years services has been further improved by enhancing the kindergarten central enrolment process to ensure a streamlined transition from 3-year-old to 4-year-old kindergarten as well as referrals through the Kindergarten Outreach program and Supported Playgroups.
- Early literacy has been supported through the delivery of story time in community languages: Urdu, Nepali, Arabic, Italian and Greek and story time in Reconciliation Week.
- The needs of the growing population have been addressed through implementation of the Building Blocks Partnership and completing refurbishment and kindergarten expansion projects at three early years centres.

- Intergenerational programs were delivered at numerous early years services.
- Youth services have been operating from six different locations across the municipality in partnership with the libraries, Fawkner Community Sports Hall, Glenroy Community Hub and Glenroy Public Hall. New partnerships have been established with the Coburg Basketball Association and Glenroy Neighbourhood House.

2. Improved Health and Wellbeing

- Responded to the emerging needs of children with a focus on COVID-19 recovery through a partnership with the University of Melbourne, Rotary and Coburg Primary School to deliver vision and hearing screening sessions for 110 primary aged children.
- Raised the profile of Youth Services as the first point of contact for young people with digital footprint enhancements resulting in almost 1000 phone calls and website visits.
- Young people experiencing vulnerability have been assisted by further funding provided to Youth Holistic Outreach Program with participants reporting positive outcomes.
- Provided opportunities for families to participate in preventative health and wellbeing programs such as Sleep and Settling community sessions, INFANT program, and Dads Group.
- Contributed to children and families' active travel through expansion of the Ride and Stride program by engaging over 1800 children from 6 primary schools.
- Provided opportunities for children, young people and families to engage in arts and culture through targeted child and youth-friendly programs at the Counihan Gallery and at public events.

3. Lifelong Learning and Participation

- Empowered young people to deliver youth-led projects on matters that are important to them through the continued success of the Youth Ambassador Program.
- Provided opportunities for children to be involved in decision making through the establishment of the Children's Reference Group where children were consulted in age-appropriate ways on Council's strategies, resources, and civic participation.
- Collaborated with education providers to strengthen partnerships and support quality settings for children and young people through workshops, school engagement and professional development sessions.
- Supported parents in their role as educators through the delivery of evidence-based parenting programs and parent information sessions.
- Supported young people to remain engaged in learning through funding Operation Newstart with all participants reporting positive outcomes.
- Increased opportunities for young people to gain training and employment with 65 young people engaged in training programs and 12 young people engaged as contractors across Council.

Key terms:

Objective	High level goal of what Council aims to achieve.
Action	What Council will do.
Activities	How the action will be achieved.

Further information

Contact Council's Early Years and Youth Branch on 92401111 or visit www.merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Outcome 1: Inclusive City and Community



Merri-bek will be an inclusive and accessible city and community where children, young people and families engage in activities, programs and services. There will be respect, acknowledgement and celebration of diverse cultures and identities, recognising the benefits diversity brings to the community. Places and spaces will be accessible and meet the needs of children, young people and families.

Outcome 1: Inclusive City and Community			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
1.1 Develop inclusive and accessible activities, programs and services.	1.1.1 Ensure programs are welcoming and accessible.	Build capacity of early years services to provide inclusive services for diverse children and families.	226 children with additional needs received support to access and participate in kindergarten programs.
		Explore improvements to childcare and kindergarten central registration system to ensure a streamlined registration process.	Improvements to the registration system have been made by implementing new features to the software program and providing the seamless transition from 3-year-old to 4-year-old kindergarten.
		Expand kindergarten central enrolment to include three-year-old kindergarten.	Achieved in Year 1.
	1.1.2 Collaborate with service providers through a collective impact approach to meet the needs of children, young people and families.	Identify and utilise suitable spaces for young people in Merri-bek with a focus on the northern suburbs.	Worked in partnership with 20 organisations with 8 partnership agreements in place to administer the shared indicators survey. New partnerships have been established with Coburg Basketball Association and Glenroy Neighbourhood House. The shared indicators led by Merri Health provide a consistent measure to assess the impact of programming.
		Deliver Supported Playgroups with a focus on the northern suburbs.	10 Supported Playgroups were delivered with 100% satisfaction rate in a range of locations, including Glenroy Community Hub, Lorne Street Kindergarten and the NMC Playgroup Association Fawkner.

Outcome 1: Inclusive City and Community			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
		Engage children and young people to inform program planning, development and delivery of core activities at Glenroy Community Hub, Fawkner Library and other settings as appropriate.	Young people have been consulted both online and through the Youth Ambassadors to inform the service delivery for all school holiday workshops, weekly programming and events. Young people have also input to the activation of Glenroy Community Hub, Fawkner Community Sports Hall and Brunswick Library.
	1.1.3 Ensure that services, programs and policies comply with the Council's requirements under the Gender Equity Act 2020.	Support staff to build capability to integrate Gender Impact Assessments in their planning for review or development of services, programs and policies with a direct and significant impact on the public.	Updated information and resources to integrate Gender Impact Assessments into the review or development of services, programs or policies provided.
1.2 Increase opportunities for social cohesion.	1.2.1 Increase opportunities for intergenerational activities and programs.	Explore, plan, design and deliver local intergenerational projects, place activations and activities.	2 Intergenerational programs were held at 17 early years services. 5 different sites throughout Merri-bek hosted pop-up sessions facilitated by Victoria University.
	1.2.2 Support Aboriginal Community members to participate and feel included in services and programs.	Promote and provide 'Acknowledgement of Country' signs for all early years services and Council buildings.	The plaques need to be replaced due to Council's name change. Consultation will occur with early years services to determine the preferred style of plaque.
		Deliver a pilot 'Welcome Baby to Country' event.	N/A – Year 3 Action.
		Embed indigenous perspectives in early years programs.	29 early years professionals attended 'Nature Play - Early Childhood Professional Development Gathering' session about embedding indigenous perspectives in the early years with positive feedback received.
	1.2.3 Ensure children, young people and families have access to a flexible and accessible community grants program.	Engage children, young people and families in the Community Grants Review.	Achieved in Year 1.

Outcome 1: Inclusive City and Community			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
		Promote and support uptake of the Merri-bek Youth Initiatives Grant and other funding opportunities.	New grant category established and widely promoted through the Merri-bek Youth Commitment Network including presentations on available grant opportunities.
1.3 Progress the child-friendly cities and communities initiatives.	1.3.1 Improve the effectiveness of initiatives that support children to participate in civic life.	Promote and support organisations to adopt the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter.	Council office co-chairs the Advisory Group for the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network and promotes child friendly initiatives.
		Explore the use of Child Impact Assessments in Council decision making.	N/A – Year 3-4 Action.
1.4 Develop and activate child, young people and family friendly spaces.	1.4.1 Create opportunities for families to connect and strengthen communities.	Identify and secure suitable and affordable facilities for the delivery of community playgroups.	Community Playgroups Resource List has been updated with available venues. A new playgroup for children with additional needs, My Time, operates from NMC Playgroup Association Fawkner.
		Deliver an affordable, inclusive and safe school holiday program to primary school aged children and families.	School holiday programs are delivered from Brunswick East Primary School and Brunswick South West Primary School with up to 125 families participating.
		Deliver literacy programs that meet the needs of a culturally diverse community.	Early literacy story time sessions delivered in community languages: Italian, French, Spanish, Turkish and Greek and run on a weekly basis. Other community language story time sessions in Urdu, Nepali and Arabic conducted once per year. Story time sessions delivered in Reconciliation Week.
	1.4.2 Involve children, young people and families in place making projects.	Engage children, young people and families in pre-project Place Making consultation.	Place activation projects have involved engaging with community as part of consultation and testing of ideas, bringing people into spaces. Children, young people and families are key target groups for the activation events and

Outcome 1: Inclusive City and Community			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
			activities across the 3 Activity Centres of Brunswick, Coburg and Glenroy.
	1.4.3 Oxygen Youth Space will diversify community use.	Explore alternative use options including specialised private hire.	Achieved in Year 1.
	1.4.4 Ensure places and spaces are child, young people and family friendly.	Advocate for the creation of and access to new and existing youth spaces in Fawkner and Brunswick and other similar redevelopment projects.	Youth services are now operating programs across 6 sites including Oxygen Youth Space, Brunswick Library, Glenroy Community Hub, Fawkner Community Sports Hall and Glenroy Public Hall. Young people have also provided input into the Open Space Strategy and have been advocating for youth spaces in Fawkner area.
		Include children and families in the design stage of early years infrastructure projects.	Families have provided feedback via Conversations Merri-bek on Doris Blackburn Preschool project and plans for Brunswick Early Years Hub.
		Activate the youth space and maker space at Glenroy Community Hub.	Weekly presence at the Glenroy Community Hub and Recording Space and Jam Room. Attendees at Takeover Nights have continued to increase with up to 30 young people attending each session. School holiday workshops have been delivered in both the youth space and the makers space in partnership with the libraries and school engagement sessions and tours of the Glenroy Community Hub have continued leading to 30 new independent users of the recording space.
1.5 Provide infrastructure which meets the needs of the growing population.	1.5.1 Invest in integrated facilities.	Explore opportunities for co-located hub models for integrated early years services, including childcare, kindergarten, maternal and child health and playgroup programs and youth spaces and programs.	A concept design for a new Brunswick Early Years Hub has been developed subject to final approval. The hub would include childcare, kindergarten, maternal and child health and a playgroup space.

Outcome 1: Inclusive City and Community			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
	1.5.2 Invest in early years infrastructure to support the implementation of the three-year-old kindergarten from 2022.	Explore co-investment opportunities with DET to support three-year-old kindergarten and implementation of the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Service Plan (KISP).	Continued implementation of the Building Blocks Partnership. Projects completed during the reporting period include a new modular kindergarten at Doris Blackburn Preschool, refurbishment at Pascoe Vale Community Centre Children's Room and expansion at Park Street Early Learning Co-Op.
	1.5.3 Provide quality early years facilities including maternal and child health, parent groups, playgroups, childcare and kindergarten.	Develop and implement the Early Years Infrastructure Plan.	The Early Years Infrastructure Plan is completed. The focus of the Plan is Maternal and Child Health Centres, Playgroup venues, and childcare and kindergarten infrastructure owned by the Council.

Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing

Merri-bek will have increased participation in health and wellbeing programs with a focus on early intervention and prevention. Children, young people and families will have increased knowledge of support services and how to access them. Partner organisations will be supported to strengthen referral pathways and collaborate to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families. Merri-bek remains committed to the safety of children and young people.



Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
2.1 Increase knowledge of support services and referral pathways.	2.1.1 Improve service awareness and collaboration between local agencies.	Convene service provider networks and facilitate information sharing.	Several service provider networks are convened to share information and strengthen partnerships, including Fawkner Service Provider Network, Glenroy Service Provider Network and Merri-bek Youth Commitment.
		Provide families with information about early years services.	Information about early years services is provided through promotion of events and services, website updates, social media, parent information sessions, information sharing through playgroups, festivals, community events and a recent revision of the 'Early Years Services for Families' booklet.
	2.1.2 Establish Merri-bek Youth Services as the first point of contact for young people and community.	Develop and implement the 'First Point of Contact' campaign across the community to raise and promote the profile of Youth Services and simplify access to information and services.	The 'First Point of Contact' campaign focused on increasing the digital footprint of Youth Services. 'Fawkner Youth Space' was established on Google Maps; the profile was viewed 8620 times. Combined Google business listing views generated 992 phone calls and website visits. 1800 MY YOUTH phone number continues to operate successfully. 27% of service enquiries are received via the hotline and 53% of the community enquiries are received via email.

Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
		Deliver the Data and Information Project through the collection, updating, maintaining and sharing of information on services, programs and opportunities available to young people.	The scoping phase of the Data and Information Management project has been completed. Information continues to be collated and disseminated via the Merri-bek Youth Commitment and School Engagement sessions. Year 2 efforts have culminated in establishing 2 new focuses for the Data and Information Project moving forward: 1. Promotion of Askizzy and 2. Producing a library of Civic Participation opportunities for young people in Merri-bek. The outcomes of these projects will be reported on in Year 3.
	2.1.3 Provide assertive outreach and case management support to young people experiencing vulnerability.	Invest in the ongoing provision and expansion of the Youth Holistic Outreach Program (YHOP) in Merri-bek, a flexible outreach model offering support to vulnerable young people.	Further funding was provided to YHOP. 67 young people were supported during the 12-month period. The young people engaged in the program reported improvements in self-confidence, access to longer term support, mental health, social engagement and reengagement in education or training pathways.
	2.1.4 Increase knowledge of renting in Merri-bek and capacity of renters.	Promote the new Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021 with young people and families to increase knowledge of rights and responsibilities.	Renters and Housing Union (RAHU) were provided a grant to deliver a total of 4 renter information nights.
2.2 Increase engagement and participation in preventative health and wellbeing programs.	2.2.1 Raise awareness and support wellbeing, positive social movements and campaigns which impact children, young people and families.	Produce an annual calendar of events and coordinate resources to promote and implement key events for children, young people and families.	A calendar of important events for children and families is produced and delivered to all early years services. An annual community event is held to celebrate Children's Week and Playgroup Week.
	2.2.2 Increase immunisation rates above the Victorian state average.	Develop communications plan to deliver a Council awareness raising campaign on the importance of immunisations.	Communications plan has commenced and will be further developed in Year 3.
		Deliver outreach immunisation sessions.	Achieved in Year 1 – ongoing action.

Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
	2.2.3 Develop pilot parenting groups for families with diverse needs.	Explore options to develop parenting groups for families with multiple children.	N/A – Year 3 Action.
	2.2.4 Establish and deliver an Early Years Outreach Bus model.	Explore funding opportunities to transform a bus to deliver outreach early years services.	Initial scoping of this initiative has commenced.
	2.2.5 Provide support for families in pre-natal stage of pregnancy.	Explore funding opportunities to provide pre-natal parenting and coaching programs for families.	N/A – Year 3-4 Action.
	2.2.6 Support fathers in their parenting role.	Assist to recruit new dads to Dads Groups	Achieved in Year 1 – ongoing action.
		Promote, collaborate and continue Dads Group partnership.	Dads Group partnership continues with positive feedback received.
		Plan and deliver the 'Dads with a Pram' community event.	Community event has been planned and will be delivered in September 2023.
	2.2.7 Increase knowledge and participation of children and families in early years services.	Deliver a targeted outreach approach to increase access and participation in early years services such as maternal child health, childcare, kindergarten and playgroups.	150 children enrolled in kindergarten through the support of Kindergarten Outreach Officers working with families from diverse language backgrounds.
	2.2.8 Increase breastfeeding rates.	Expand the Infant Feeding Support program to Southern Merri-bek.	Opportunities to expand the Infant Feeding Support program to Southern Merri-bek continue to be explored.
	2.2.9 Implement the INFANT nutrition program.	Deliver the INFANT program within MCH new parent groups.	INFANT program has been implemented with 9 facilitators trained.
	2.2.10 Implement the Sleep and Settling Program.	Deliver 'Sleep and Settling' community sessions with families.	Community sessions are delivered monthly in person and online and provide flexibility in service delivery to meet community needs. Sessions provided included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 145 newborn sessions • 51 6-8-month sessions • 21 12-18-month sessions.
	2.2.11 Ensure data and research is accessible to partner organisations.	Refresh the Early Years and Youth Data Profile	N/A – Year 3 Action.

Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
	2.2.12 Ensure data required for service planning is accurate and reflects local understanding.	Review data discrepancies between the reported number of births and fertility rate at local (council), state and federal government levels, and their implications for population forecasts and service planning.	Achieved in Year 1.
2.3 Advocate for increased services to support mental health and resilience.	2.3.1 Young people are connected with organisations that provide support.	Provide information and referral to young people.	Information and referral to support young people is provided through Merri-bek Youth Services, YHOP and school and services provider networks.
	2.3.2 Identify and advocate for service gaps.	Respond to the emerging needs of children, young people and families with a focus on COVID-19 recovery.	The emerging needs of children and young people continue to be addressed through the partnership between the Council, the University of Melbourne, Rotary and Coburg Primary School to deliver vision and hearing screening to 110 primary aged children.
	2.3.3 Continued growth in partnerships with community organisations.	Strengthen partnerships and promotion of specialised services, programs and activities and support co-location of services.	Partnerships have continued to be strengthened through secondary consultations and referral with services such as: The Orange Door, Child Protection, Victoria Police, Merri Health, Relatewell, Dads Group, Berry Street, and the Northern Community Legal Service. Relatewell have been co-located at MCH centres through online consultations across 4 different locations: Victoria Street, Coburg, Pascoe Vale and Bellevue Park.
2.4 Provide opportunities for participation in physical and creative activities.	2.4.1 Children, young people and families will have access to accessible aquatic and leisure facilities and services.	Engage children, young people and families in the development of the new 'Leisure and Aquatics Strategy'.	Extensive consultation was undertaken in the formulation of the 3 years Active Merri-bek Aquatic and Leisure Strategy.

Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
	2.4.2 Improve access to inclusive sports and physical activity across Merri-bek and its facilities.	Engage children, young people and families in the review of the 'Sports Grounds Allocation Policy'.	The allocation policy is in its final stages of consultation and planning for adoption by December 2024.
		Engage children, young people and families in Sports and Recreation pre-project infrastructure design and consultation.	Council will continue to work with Football Victoria through their Go Girls hub in gaining feedback about the physical activity opportunities and infrastructure across Merri-bek.
	2.4.3 Engage children and young people in active travel and adopt sustainable transport modes.	Develop and roll-out the Ride and Stride active transport program to primary school students.	The Ride and Stride program has been expanded and now includes the following schools (number of students participating): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fawkner Primary (180) • Glenroy West Primary (327) • Oak Park Primary (400) • Brunswick South West PS (436) • St Margaret Mary's Primary (163) • Coburg Primary (320)
		Encourage primary and high schools to host event days such as Ride2School Day, Walk Safely to School Day and 'Walktober' to encourage students to regularly use physically active travel options to get to school.	Ride2School Day was successfully promoted as part of the Ride and Stride program.
	2.4.4 Increase opportunities for children, young people and families to participate in arts and culture.	Engage children, young people and families in the development of a new 'Arts and Culture Strategy'.	Children, young people and families were engaged through online campaigns, posters and information in our youth centres, and through consultation with the Children's Reference Group.

Outcome 2: Improved Health and Wellbeing			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
		Deliver family-friendly exhibitions and public programs to increase the participation of families and children in arts and culture.	290 children visited the Counihan Gallery including visits from 4 secondary schools. Public program highlights included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family-friendly exhibitions • Resonate 2022 – over 2450 attendees at family-friendly music programs • A range of child, youth and family-friendly activities were held at Fawkner Festa, Glenroy Festival and Sydney Road Street Party.
2.5 Collaborate with partner organisations to increase safety in the community and home.	2.5.1 Advocate for the Kidsafe program to be funded for Merri-bek families.	Explore costing of the Kidsafe program and trial the program for 12 months free of charge to families.	N/A – Year 3 Action.
	2.5.2 Collaborate with primary schools and kindergartens to increase road safety.	Deliver the road crossing safety program to primary schools.	N/A – Year 3 Action.
		Pilot the road crossing safety program with kindergartens on school sites.	N/A – Year 3 Action.
	2.5.3 Collaborate with early years services to increase gender equity.	Provide training in challenging and dispelling gender norms in the early years.	N/A – Year 3 Action.
		Promote and support programs which increase gender equity in the early years.	Department of Education’s Respectful Relationships training program was promoted with early years services.
2.5.4 Collaborate with family violence services to promote children’s safety and wellbeing.	Continue to convene the Merri-bek Family Violence Network and share information about support programs for children, young people and families.	6 meetings held with up to 20 attendees. Key topics included post-pandemic support, housing and financial counselling, family violence, drug and alcohol services and changes to the Orange Door.	

Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation

Merri-bek will have high quality learning opportunities from birth to adulthood. This will include children learning through play in the early years and progressing to formal schooling and beyond. Children, young people and families will be supported when transitioning between education settings, such as starting primary school and moving to secondary school. There will be opportunities for young people to engage in further training and pathways to employment. Children and young people will be involved in decisions that impact them. They will be consulted in age-appropriate ways and their opinions will be valued.



Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
3.1 Involve children, young people and families in decision making on matters that impact them.	3.1.1 Children and young people are engaged when decisions are made that affect them across Council and community.	Facilitate the Youth Ambassadors (YA) program and support young people to participate in civic life and Council decision making.	The Youth Ambassadors program has been a continued success with the inaugural group of Youth Ambassadors finishing and a new recruitment process that resulted in 50+ applications and 14 new members in 2023. They have participated in 7 meetings and completed training with Centre for Multicultural Youth and 'Run For It' and consulted on Child Safe resources, Arts and Culture Strategy, Open Space Strategy, and the Norm Anderson Trust Sub Fund where the Youth Ambassadors allocated funding to Schoolhouse Studios and Operation Newstart.
		Develop an organisational framework that provides children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development and review of Council strategies, plans and projects.	Internal training developed to upskill staff on how to engage and consult with children and young people.
		Create opportunities for children to be involved in decision making.	Children's Reference Group established in partnership with primary schools with 12 members. The children were consulted on Arts and Culture Strategy, Open Space Strategy, civic participation and Child Safe resources.
		Explore the delivery of a Merri-bek Children's Summit.	N/A – Year 3 Action.

Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
	3.1.2 Develop opportunities for children and young people to learn more about Council and civic participation.	Include information about Council in school engagement presentations.	48 engagements sessions have been delivered to 11 primary and secondary schools including information about Council services.
		Include child-friendly information about Council on website which aligns with primary school curriculum on civics and citizenship.	N/A – Year 3 Action.
	3.1.3 Empower children and young people to co-design and deliver projects that matter to them.	Explore and support opportunities for child and youth-led projects.	Youth Ambassadors planned and delivered a Youth Mental Health Forum in partnership with BATYR. A total of 40 young people attended the forum representing 3 secondary schools. They learnt about support services available through Satellite Foundation, Headspace and Orygen.
		Deliver the Merri-bek Freeza program.	The Freeza program was successfully delivered with several key events including the Oxygen Stage at Sydney Road Street Party, Clothes Swap and “My Sis” event for NAIDOC and the Pride event involving Nevo and their queer book launch. Amped Up Productions are currently planning their 12-month program through consultation with local schools with the aim to develop school-based music events.
	3.1.4 Empower Merri-bek’s young people to take action on climate change.	Support and resource the Merri-bek Student Climate Network.	Focus has shifted to supporting youth-led events and youth-led networks.
		Facilitate and support the implementation of an annual youth focused Climate Initiative.	Focus has shifted to support youth-led events. Supported community grant application for a UN Youth Summit in August 2023. A listening session held

Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
			for a "Climate Justice in Colour" pilot project.
		Partner in the delivery of the North West Communities School Summit.	Achieved in Year 1.
3.2 Increase participation in learning and education from birth to adulthood.	3.2.1 Support the role of parents as educators and provide them with the tools, resources and information to raise their children.	Promote and deliver community Parent Information Sessions.	A parent information session about Talking to Children About Climate Change and a series of School Readiness sessions were delivered with over 250 attendees.
		Increase the delivery of evidence-based parenting group programs such as Circle of Security and Solihull.	Circle of Security has commenced and is implemented in partnership with Relatewell at their Coburg office; 4 sessions were held running at capacity of 10 attendees per session.
	3.2.2 Support children's transition to primary and secondary school.	Promote and facilitate the Merri-bek Transition Network with early years services and primary schools.	Partnership with Merri Health to facilitate the Transition Network with 4 meetings held in the reporting period.
		Develop and pilot activities to support the transition from primary school to secondary school.	Achieved in Year 1.
	3.2.3 Support children and young people with homework programs.	Partner with organisations to deliver and expand community-based homework support programs.	Fawkner Neighbourhood House and Sussex Street Neighbourhood House run established homework programs which no longer require Council support. Merri-bek Youth and Merri-bek libraries are running a pilot study group at Glenroy Hub.
	3.2.4 Support young people to remain engaged in learning.	Support the delivery of the Operation Newstart program.	Contributed funding to Operation Newstart to support program implementation. The intensive personal development / outdoor education and reengagement program was delivered over 10 weeks with a total of 16 participants reporting positive outcomes, including reengagement with school and community.

Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
3.3 Collaborate with education providers to support quality settings.	3.3.1 Build stronger partnerships with primary and secondary schools across Merri-bek.	Deliver an annual Merri-bek Principals' Forum with primary and secondary schools.	The annual Principals' Forum was delivered with 15 primary and secondary schools represented. Presentations included school refusal from Travancore School, Navigator program and Council updates on AEDC data breakdown, Playgroups in Merri-bek, Youth update, Child Safety updates, linking with Indigenous communities and the Merri-bek name change.
		Deliver in-school presentations and activities to build relationships with students and teachers to raise awareness of Council services.	40 school engagement sessions have been delivered to all secondary schools; 8 school engagement sessions have been delivered to Fawkner Primary, Coburg North Primary and Glenroy West Primary.
	3.3.2 Build high quality early years education and care services.	Plan and deliver early years professional development and training.	6 professional development sessions were held with over 150 attendees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Play • Supporting Children and Families of Refugee Background • The Alannah and Madeline Foundation of Teacher Wellbeing • Wild About Waste • Difficult Conversations • Nature Play, Early Childhood PD Gathering. The annual Merri-bek Early Years Conference "Play Move Improve" was attended by 200 early years professionals.

Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation			
Objective	Action	Activity	Year 2 Reporting
		Facilitate opportunities for information sharing and peer support through convening early years networks.	Preschool Teachers Network meetings are facilitated in collaboration with the Department of Education. Children's Services Coordinators Network meetings continue to be well attended.
	3.3.3 Enable teachers to meet, share and collaborate on sustainability initiatives.	Deliver a professional development and networking event with teachers and early years educators focused on sustainability.	Professional development and networking day was held at CERES on the topic of First Nations Perspectives with 40 educators in attendance.
3.4 Increase opportunities for training and employment pathways.	3.4.1 Young people will be offered employment pathway programs in partnership with industry-based training providers.	Partner with organisations to deliver training and employment programs that explore career planning and lead to employment outcomes.	A series of accredited and non-accredited training programs has been delivered; courses included White Card, Coffee Barista, RSA, and First Aid Level 2. Collectively, 65 young people successfully completed the courses.
	3.4.2 Young people will have opportunities to gain work experience across Council.	Review Council's current experience, volunteer and apprenticeship / traineeship approach and identify opportunities for improvement. Develop a proposal to implement the opportunities identified as part of the review and implement agreed changes.	A new 'Management of Volunteers Procedure' was developed and endorsed.
		Collaborate with local secondary schools and tertiary institutions to provide placement opportunities.	Placement opportunities have been provided for 54 students in Maternal Child Health, Youth Services and Supported Playgroups.
	3.4.3 Support the New Graduates Program in Maternal and Child Health.	Provide mentoring and regular meetings to debrief and support new Maternal and Child Health graduates.	Debriefing for all Maternal and Child Health nurses and 6 new graduates was regularly provided. All new graduates participate in a formalised program.
	3.4.4 Young people will be connected to local entry level employment opportunities.	Explore the development and implementation of a "Jobs Fair" with partners.	A Jobs Fair was delivered in partnership with Melbourne Airport with 800 attendees.

Outcome 3: Lifelong Learning and Participation			
Objective	Action	Activities	Year 2 Reporting
	3.4.5 Provide suitably skilled young people one-off paid work opportunities where possible and appropriate.	Engage young people as contractors across Council and community.	12 young people were provided paid opportunities across Council with young artists producing designs for our merchandise; MCs at various events i.e. the Queer Film Screening; young facilitators leading workshops on photography, podcasting and sewing during school holidays, mental health facilitators as part of AFL/Movember Ahead of Game initiative; and young performers at various Council events. 3 Peer Support Workers were also engaged to support the Freeza program, Youth Ambassador program and Marketing and social media.
	3.4.6 Youth Businesses will be targeted to register on Council's Local Supplier Database and promoted across Council to improve their procurement opportunities.	Engage youth businesses and educate Council staff in the 'Social and Local Procurement Project' or successor project.	Internal promotion and training provided to encourage staff to use local suppliers including youth businesses where appropriate.
	3.4.7 Collaborate with stakeholders across the region to improve employment outcomes for young people.	Participate and support the Inner Northern Youth Employment Taskforce and Jobs for Youth campaign.	Continued involvement in the quarterly Youth Employment Network Meetings and direct support for the delivery of the Real Industry Job Interviews program.
	3.4.8 Deliver the Jobs Victoria Advocates program.	Support young people to assist them finding training and employment opportunities.	Achieved in Year 1.

7.6 SPORTSGROUNDS SURFACE STUDY

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Open Space and Environment

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the revised Sportsgrounds Surface Policy (the Policy) at Attachment 1, based on feedback from the recent community engagement.
2. Notes the Community Feedback Report at Attachment 2 that has shaped the revised Policy.
3. Endorses the development of decision-making guidelines for Sportsground Surface investment decisions to be published online and referenced in the Policy.
4. Endorses the use of 'consult' level of engagement for ahead of procurement for future Sportsground Surface projects, following Council's Community Engagement Policy.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The draft Sportsgrounds Surface Policy outlines Council's approach to the management of our sportsgrounds and gives consideration to the triple bottom line principles of environmental, social and financial sustainability. In August 2023 Council endorsed release of the Draft Policy for consultation, expanding its application to other synthetic playing surfaces such as lawn bowls, tennis and hockey.

The Policy was open for public exhibition during August and September 2023. The community was invited to provide feedback on all aspects of the Policy. A report is attached summarising community feedback and how this has been considered in formulating the revised Policy recommended in this report. Council received minimal feedback with some statements and constructive feedback provided

The feedback provided has been included in the revised Policy. These changes include:

- addition of text making the decision-making process transparent for tailored upgrades and management practices;
- amending the decision-making framework in the policy to re-order the decision making cycle commencing the cycle with stakeholder and community engagement;
- (as resolved by Council in August 2023) the extension of the coverage of the policy to other sports surfaces including lawn bowls, tennis, hockey and other synthetic surfaces.

In addition to these policy amendments, it is recommended that decision-making guidelines be developed and made public for Sportsground Surface investment decisions to be published online on Conversations Merri-bek or Council's website.

This report recommends the Sportsground Surface Policy with minor amendments be endorsed by Council.

Previous Council Decisions

Sportsground Surface Study – 9 August 2023

Resolution that Council:

1. *Endorses the Draft Sportsgrounds Surface Policy (Attachment 1) for public exhibition from 11 August 2023 until 11 September 2023, with the following amendments:*
 - a) *Incorporate the allocated weekly hours and actual demand use of the synthetic field at John Fawkner College next to CB Smith Reserve jointly managed by the school and Council, before releasing the report for public exhibition.*
 - b) *Apply the proposed policy to other sports surfaces including lawn bowls, tennis, hockey and other synthetic surfaces.*
2. *Notes the background research report “Merri-bek Sportsgrounds Surface Study” (Attachment 2) which has provided key evidence to inform the Sportsgrounds Surface Policy.*
3. *Conducts a trial of best-practice, natural turf management practices at a local sports ground in Merri-bek as part of an upcoming upgrade, which considers similar, successful trials of this approach, such as Middle Head Oval in NSW. The results of this trial, including preliminary results, to be presented back to Council before the August 2024 Council meeting.*

Notice of Motion - Developing a policy regarding Sports Playing Surfaces in City of Moreland – 10 August 2022

Resolution that Council:

1. *Requests a report and development of a policy on managing our sports field surfaces in particular, and open spaces surfaces more generally, that gives consideration to our stance on the Climate Emergency, Integrated Water Management, Urban Heat Island Effect and our goal of zero waste by 2030, including:*
 - a) *Consideration of the triple bottom line principles of environmental, social and financial sustainability including new and emerging natural turf and soil management, soil organic carbon sequestration or carbon sink potential options and best practice turf management.*
 - b) *Consideration of the impact of other synthetic surfaces being used by other land users within the municipality (e.g., schools) on community wellbeing.*
 - c) *Tabling a report to Council by 30 June 2023, given the breadth and complexity of the imminent Open Space Strategy Review.*
 - d) *Noting the process will follow Council’s consultation and engagement processes with the community, including tools like Conversations Moreland, and submissions and throughout review process.*

1. Policy Context

The Sportsgrounds Surfaces Policy relates to, and is influenced by, several Council policies, strategies and action plans.

The driver for zero carbon in the **Zero Carbon Merri-bek** Climate Emergency Action Plan is a factor in considering how synthetic surface waste products are managed. It also informs the opportunity cost of having emissions-reducing natural turf on surfaces in lieu of emissions-generating synthetic surfaces (during manufacture in particular).

The quality of water that makes its way to creeks, the consumption of water in irrigation of sportsground surfaces and the permeability of surfaces to slow stormwater runoff are relevant to the **Merri-bek Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040** and associated Action Plan and the **Climate Risk Strategy** and Foundational Action Plan.

The Climate Risk Strategy also identifies increasing consideration of Sustainable Infrastructure for civil works (including sportsground surfaces) and use of climate-resilient materials.

The heat-retaining (synthetic) or cooling (natural turf) characteristics of sportsground surfaces is relevant to the **Merri-bek Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan**.

The contamination of runoff with plastic particles and the ultimate disposal method for end-of-life synthetic pitches is relevant to Council's **Waste and Litter Strategy** (and its forthcoming replacement, the Circular Economy Strategy) and in particular the Zero Waste to Landfill goal set when that Strategy was adopted.

Council's **Active Recreation and Sport Strategy** highlights the benefits of increasing the participation in sport by girls, women, and gender diverse teams, requiring sportsground allocation to adjust to the additional teams including making greater use of existing surfaces across the week. The considerable benefits of recreation extend to physical and mental wellbeing, connection and community building.

The current **Open Space Strategy** includes (and it is expected the forthcoming new Strategy for 2024 will also include) a recognition of the vital role of sportsgrounds in our open spaces, their use for passive and active recreation and the opportunity for an enhanced approach to the sharing of these spaces between different users.

The **Long-Term Financial Plan** for Council recognises at the high-level future funding capacity predictions and, coupled with the **10-Year Asset Plan**, foreshadows the degree of capital investment anticipated.

2. Background

Our community's growing demand for access to quality public open spaces, driven by population growth, urban densification, and increased diversity of sport participants, necessitates crucial decisions about the types of playing surfaces and management practices that can accommodate this need to be made by Merri-bek City Council.

Given the projected deficit of sports fields over the next two decades in inner Melbourne, the divided community sentiment regarding synthetic turf, and the complexities arising from Merri-bek's unique climatic, geotechnical, and environmental conditions, it is critical that Merri-bek City Council has a clear process for making decisions about sportsground surfaces.

In preparation for the development of a draft of the Sportsgrounds Surface policy, a study was commissioned to establish a research framework that examines the social, economic, and environmental effects of sportsground surface options in the context of Merri-bek. By analysing the most up-to-date evidence relating to Merri-bek's climate, community, and financial circumstances, this study provides the Council with valuable insight into the consequences, advantages, and limitations of using natural turf, synthetic turf, and alternative technological solutions and management techniques. Ultimately this research will help inform future decision-making related to sportsground surfaces in Merri-bek.

Merri-bek City Council is committed to fostering a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative and regenerative community. Our Sportsgrounds Surface Policy is a testament to this commitment, embodying our vision and outlining our strategic objectives for sports ground surface management and decision-making within our municipality. The Policy outlines Council's approach to the management of our sportsgrounds and gives consideration to the triple bottom line principles of environmental, social and financial sustainability.

This Policy applies to sportsgrounds, as defined in the Merri-bek Open Space Strategy 2012-2022, as areas reserved for sporting pursuits such as baseball, soccer, cricket or football. In August 2023 Council endorsed the Draft Sportsgrounds Surface Policy to also cover other sports surfaces including lawn bowls, tennis, hockey and other synthetic surfaces.

3. Issues

Community Engagement process and feedback

The Draft Policy was made available on Conversations Merri-bek for the period 11 August to 11 September 2023 for submissions.

The exhibition period was promoted to those who had participated in the Draft Policy's development, including community groups and organisations, and was also promoted broadly across Council's social media and e-news channels.

This resulted in the Conversations Merri-bek submission page receiving 305 visitors who reviewed the page 419 times and included 136 downloads of the Policy. From these, 8 submissions were made to Council from 7 submitters.

Additional minor amendments raised through the community engagement

People who engaged provided either statements or constructive feedback. The constructive feedback from the community has resulted in the following recommended minor amendments to the attached Policy (**Attachment 1**):

- The removal of the word "Harmoniously" from the aim in recognition that it would unlikely be possible to harmoniously integrate opposing needs of our community.
- The addition of text "and make the process transparent" to the strategy for Stakeholder and Community Engagement to ensure transparency with the community on the decision-making process for tailored upgrades and management practices.
- Amending the decision-making framework in the policy to re-order the decision making cycle to commence with stakeholder and community engagement. The new cycle order is:
 1. Stakeholder and community engagement
 2. Aligning with the Policy
 3. Data gathering for informed decision-making
 4. Understanding intensity of use
 5. Identifying the options
 6. Managing risks
 7. Evaluating the options

In addition to the minor amendments referred to above the Policy has also been amended to extend the coverage of the policy to other sports surfaces including lawn bowls, tennis, hockey and other synthetic surfaces.

In addition to these policy amendments, it is recommended that decision-making guidelines be developed and made public for Sportsgrounds Surface investment decisions to be published on Conversations Merri-bek.

Further detail on how Council has considered community feedback and responded to the submissions is available in **Attachment 2** of this report.

This report therefore recommends the amended Sportsgrounds Surface Policy (**Attachment 1**) be adopted by Council.

Community impact

Decisions relating to sports turf surfaces, and particularly the use of synthetic turf, generally attracts a high level of community and sporting association interest. Often, there is agreement on the need to increase capacity to support community sport and active recreation – however, there are different perspectives on the best surface type to meet this growing demand. It is often not a clear-cut decision over which turf types is best suited to the use, the local context, and environmental, economic and social considerations. Desktop research into local perspectives has shown many community groups are concerned with the environmental and social impacts of synthetic turf.

The principles contained within the Policy and the recommended associated guidelines for decision-making will ensure Council's Sportsground Surface investment decision-making is transparent, inclusive, accessible and timely, giving members of the community the opportunity to participate in Council decision-making.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Merri-bek City Council is committed to fostering a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative and regenerative community. Our Sportsgrounds Surface Policy is a testament to this commitment, embodying our vision and outlining our strategic objectives for sports ground surface management and decision-making within our municipality. The Policy outlines Council's approach to the management of our sportsgrounds and gives consideration to the triple bottom line principles of environmental, social and financial sustainability.

The Policy is supported by the Sportsground Surface Study. The Study concluded that although research and evidence is limited in some areas, there are clear social, environmental and economic implications associated with the decision to upgrade a natural turf field to a synthetic playing surface. The unsuitability of hybrid turf as a viable widespread, whole field option except for in very high use/wear areas at present for Council means that a decision needs to be made that weighs the climate and environmental disbenefits of synthetic turf with the significant social value of participation in sport and recreation.

Economic sustainability implications

In ensuring a systematic data gathering approach, using the Policy, decisions that Council ultimately make are based on sound economic viability principles. This will be predicated on the factors for final consideration such as maintenance costs, resilience, and adaptability to future demand changes. The upfront investment cost can be extensively justified, and all alternatives have been explored.

Legal and risk considerations

One of the principles in the Policy is that Council should take a precautionary approach to decision making particularly where potential environmental impacts are unknown. Prioritising risk avoidance and harm prevention in all decisions is a major consideration. When making decisions around sportsground surface type and management practices, the draft Policy intent is that the best decision is made for today and for years to come.

Human Rights and Gender Impact Considerations

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Gender and Human Rights implications will be assessed in the implementation of the Policy where decisions on individual sportsgrounds will be undertaken.

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

Decisions to renew and / or change a sportsground surface will be made as part of Council's capital works and annual budget processes. The Policy when adopted will be used to guide these future decisions and the financial resources required for different options will be accounted for in those decisions.

7. Implementation

Upon Council approval, the Policy will be provided on Council's website and notified to those who participated in the engagement. It will then be applied to forthcoming capital projects.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Merri-bek Sportsground Surface Full Policy and Framework Final | D23/516820 |
| 2 | Sportsfield Surface Policy - Community Responses | D23/516818 |



Draft Sportsground Surface Policy

1. Introduction

At Merri-Bek City Council ('Council'), we are committed to fostering a vibrant, safe, healthy, resilient, innovative, and regenerative community. Our Sportsground Surfaces Policy is a testament to this commitment, embodying our vision and outlining our strategic objectives for sportsground surface management and decision-making within our municipality.

Developed in consultation with our stakeholders and guided by evidence-based research, this Policy is a clear reflection of our commitment to the sustainable use and enjoyment of our public open spaces.

This Policy outlines Council's approach to the management of our sports grounds, and gives consideration to the triple bottom line principles of environmental, social and financial sustainability. This Policy applies to sports grounds, as defined in the Merri-bek Open Space Strategy 2012-2022, as areas reserved for sporting pursuits such as baseball, soccer, cricket or football. This policy also covers other sports surfaces including lawn bowls, tennis, hockey and other synthetic surfaces.

The primary purpose of our sports grounds is to facilitate organised sport for our community. With limited amounts of open space, we want to maximise the use of sports grounds by our community for diverse uses outside of organised sport hours. Our aim is to manage sports grounds in a way that maximises use and provides the highest quality grounds to support community demand within budget allocations.

2. Context

Our community's growing demand for access to quality public open spaces, driven by population growth, urban densification, and increased diversity of sport participants, necessitates crucial decisions about the types of playing surfaces and management practices that can accommodate this need to be made by Merri-bek City Council.

Given the projected deficit of sports fields over the next two decades in inner Melbourne, the divided community sentiment regarding synthetic turf, and the complexities arising from Merri-bek's unique climatic, geotechnical, and environmental conditions, it is critical that Merri-bek City Council has a clear process for making decisions about sportsground surfaces.

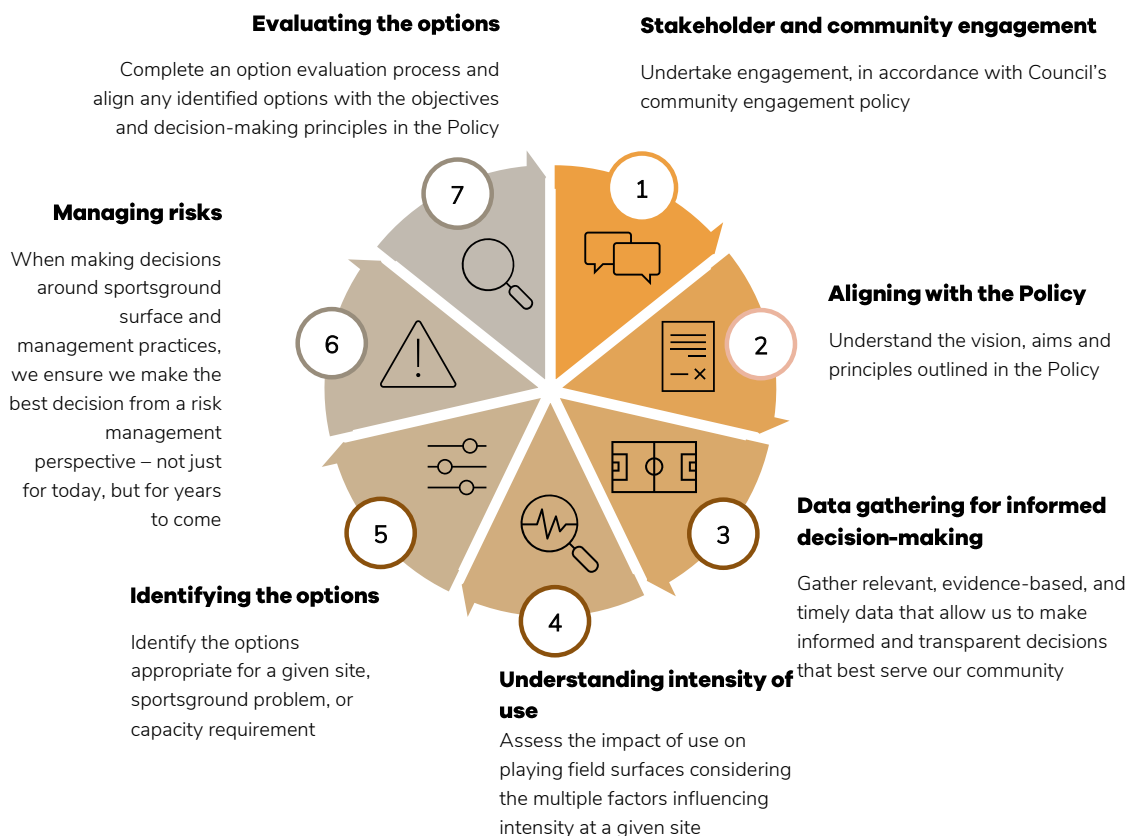
3. Policy

VISION	<p>Merri-bek’s sportsground surfaces enable vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable spaces that foster a happy and healthy community through access to sport and recreation for all.</p>						
AIM	<p style="text-align: center;">OUR AIM THROUGH THIS POLICY IS TO</p> <p>Integrate the diverse needs of our growing community with considered surface decisions that nurture the social, economic, and environmental fabric of our city.</p>						
OBJECTIVES	<p style="text-align: center;">WE ARE GUIDED BY OUR PRINCIPLES, INCLUDING</p> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>SOCIAL</p>  <p>Our surfaces and management practices are suitable to meet growing sporting and community demand.</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>ENVIRONMENTAL</p>  <p>We fully understand and are open about the environmental impact of our decisions.</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>ECONOMIC</p>  <p>Our decisions consider financial equity both across the municipality and between different user groups.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">  <p>Our decisions transparently consider and value diverse formal and informal community users</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;">  <p>We avoid, minimise, and mitigate all environmental impacts of sportsground decisions to the extent possible using the most current technology.</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;">  <p>Our decisions are economically sustainable, considering longevity, risk management, and adaptation to changing community needs.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>SOCIAL</p>  <p>Our surfaces and management practices are suitable to meet growing sporting and community demand.</p>	<p>ENVIRONMENTAL</p>  <p>We fully understand and are open about the environmental impact of our decisions.</p>	<p>ECONOMIC</p>  <p>Our decisions consider financial equity both across the municipality and between different user groups.</p>	 <p>Our decisions transparently consider and value diverse formal and informal community users</p>	 <p>We avoid, minimise, and mitigate all environmental impacts of sportsground decisions to the extent possible using the most current technology.</p>	 <p>Our decisions are economically sustainable, considering longevity, risk management, and adaptation to changing community needs.</p>
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 <p>Our decisions transparently consider and value diverse formal and informal community users</p>	 <p>We avoid, minimise, and mitigate all environmental impacts of sportsground decisions to the extent possible using the most current technology.</p>	 <p>Our decisions are economically sustainable, considering longevity, risk management, and adaptation to changing community needs.</p>					
STRATEGIES	<p style="text-align: center;">WE CREATE CLEAR STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY, INCLUDING</p> <p><i>Field diversification: Offer a mix of field types to cater to diverse user needs and local conditions.</i></p> <p><i>Accessibility and inclusivity: Promotion of inclusivity and accessibility across all sports field facilities.</i></p> <p><i>Stakeholder and Community engagement: Involve the community in decision-making for tailored upgrades and management practices guided by Council’s Community Engagement Policy.</i></p> <p><i>Sustainable field management: Invest in physical and social infrastructure resilient to environmental changes and risks.</i></p> <p><i>Continual learning: Incorporate emerging research for ongoing policy improvements. Trial new surfaces.</i></p>						
PRINCIPLES	<p style="text-align: center;">OUR POLICY IS GROUNDED IN CORE DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES, INCLUDING</p> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>EVIDENCE-BASED</p> <p>We understand that effective management of sports ground surfaces relies on clear, evidence-based principles.</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>PRECAUTIONARY</p> <p>We err on the side of caution with unknown impacts, prioritising risk avoidance and harm prevention in all decisions.</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> <p>STRATEGIC & SPECIFIC</p> <p>We balance site-specific needs with a systems view of the sports field network for overall sustainability and efficiency.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>EVIDENCE-BASED</p> <p>We understand that effective management of sports ground surfaces relies on clear, evidence-based principles.</p>	<p>PRECAUTIONARY</p> <p>We err on the side of caution with unknown impacts, prioritising risk avoidance and harm prevention in all decisions.</p>	<p>STRATEGIC & SPECIFIC</p> <p>We balance site-specific needs with a systems view of the sports field network for overall sustainability and efficiency.</p>			
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4. Decision-making framework

Merri-bek City Council has a supporting decision-making framework for internal use to ensure this Policy is enacted with robust, transparent, and evidence-based decision-making. It aligns Council's decision-making on sportsground surfaces and management practices with the unique social, economic, and environmental considerations impacting our community, coupled with a steadfast commitment to safeguarding access to sport and recreation and the enjoyment of our public open spaces for all members of the community.

Our framework for making decisions about our sportsground surfaces follows the following process and makes use of a multi-factor decision making tool informed by our objectives and decision-making principles outlined above.



Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
1	<p>I am concerned that synthetic turf has considerable environmental issues (outlined concisely in the documents provided) and the social implications on restricting access to informal use of open spaces and sports areas. Passive recreation is important and while some smaller parks have both organised sport and informal use, there needs to be consideration to NOT having synthetic turf where multi-use currently occurs . The heat emitted, problems with release of micro plastic into grounds and waterways as the surface degrades and lack of hygiene with people spitting on surface and dogs defecating - who will monitor cleanliness? I feel that smaller parks with some organised sport activities are not suitable candidates for synthetic turf.</p>	<p>This is a statement and does not have a direct impact on the Policy; therefore, no change is required. The submitter will be contacted to see if they wish to further discuss their comment.</p>
1	<p>Hi Again - a further submission on the policy. I have a few more reflections: the intensification of use of fields for formal sport - and exclusive clubs - is not the only way spaces can be used more effectively for increased health and wellbeing. My son is Autistic and he is not going to benefit from that kind of use. Combining with community sport and recreation is a more inclusive approach to sports fields and synthetic turf is a bad option for this.</p> <p>Also - on reflection I appreciate the effort to apply a TBL approach but I think, as I said, it risks equating short medium and long term benefits and risks against each other with a lot of critical issues bundled under the sustainability aspect.</p> <p>The policy would be far better with a transparent process clearly stated about who and how intensity and type of use are chosen for each ground; and how the various issues will be compared against each other and across fields/the council/global issues</p>	<p>Based upon this feedback and in consultation with the team, we have amended the policy to include decision making transparency in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy. We are confident that with this change and development of decision-making guidelines, consideration of the intensity and different types of use of the Sportsground will form part of the decision-making process for individual projects.</p>

Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
2	<p>Greetings</p> <p>I am writing in response to the draft policy statement on Sportsground Surfaces and I am extremely concerned.</p> <p>I have read it and the supporting study and believe the policy and 'decision making framework' will not lead to harmoniously integrating the diverse needs of the community as is the stated aim. There seem to be a LOT of issues that I think will be lost in the process of applying this policy to field decisions.</p> <p>1. This policy risks further carving off public open space for private/semi-private use. In a municipality like ours, which has one of the lowest proportions of open space per capita in Melbourne, I think council needs to review how these sporting organisations operate and how many we actually need - we currently have four NPL status clubs, much higher than neighbouring councils.</p> <p>2. It includes a 'decision-making framework to guide our decision making ... to maximise the use of these spaces'. It states that the primary purpose of our sports grounds is to facilitate organised sport for our community but elsewhere that the decision-making framework will safeguard enjoyment of our public open spaces for all members of the community – I have serious doubts that this policy will resolve tension over shared use of public land and will fuel community tensions. Furthermore, I believe it will lead to increased surface choices that include synthetic turf which many including myself strongly oppose.</p> <p>3. I have serious concern that the policy doesn't adequately address how health and environmental issues will be assessed, over what timeframe the impacts are considered and at what scale (field, council, global). These are all very significant issues – at a local/field level as well as at an overall council and global level. If this policy is applied to an individual field, how will these issues be adequately considered and taken account of? A huge number of established and emerging issues are bundled under some very broad catch-alls, making decision making that takes account of these significant issues invisible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • infill and turf runoff and leeching of chemicals in short term extreme rainfall events, noting that these are increasing under climate change 	<p>Based upon this feedback and in consultation with the team, we have amended the policy to include decision making transparency in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy. We are confident that with this change and development of decision-making guidelines, consideration of the intensity and different types of use of the Sportsground will form part of the decision-making process for individual projects.</p> <p>Council's Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds, and Pavilions Policy outlines the commitments and expectations placed upon Council and Sporting Organisations to provide fair and equitable use of its sportsgrounds.</p> <p>The feedback provided is also being considered in the development of the Open Space Strategy. The Open Space Strategy will consider the need for open space through analysis of the current and forecast future demand for open space. The strategy will align with the primary purpose of our sports grounds to facilitate organised sport for our community and will seek to maximise the use of these spaces by the community outside of the periods of use by organised sport (as is the intention of this policy).</p>

Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • usability in hot weather, heat stress, glare, contribution to existing city-wide urban heat island effects and the increase in extreme heat days as well as average temperatures with climate change • loss of biodiversity and green spaces • infection transmission risks, pathogens ingestion of microplastics by players • carbon emissions in manufacturing, synthetic turf disposal at end of life <p>4. The same can be said for the financial aspects as it doesn't adequately resolve tensions over the life of the turf – how will upfront and long term costs such as replacement be balanced with maintenance, and the fact the cost of synthetic turf in itself makes the case for increased use by formal sport (and therefore not being available for the community) to make it 'economically efficient'.</p> <p>5. Overall issues that the policy raises for me are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It doesn't provide clarity on how intensity of use for each field will be determined and by whom • It seems increased use of fields by clubs is assumed, with associated increase pressure on the turf and reduced access by community • It doesn't clarify how various uses will be balanced for a field and across council as a whole • It doesn't clarify how individual field decisions will sit within a council wide context – is there an overall policy for number of fields with certain surfaces is acceptable or not? How will council ensure a series of individual decisions by field don't lead to overall adverse outcomes for community and the environment?? • How does this policy relate to the revised public open space strategy which is not final yet? surely, they should inform each other and be considered together? • How will decisions be made for new fields vs existing fields? The supporting document distinguishes brown field sites from existing sites for surface decisions eg replacing natural turf with synthetic turf has different environment implications that establishing a new field in a new place • It isn't clear who they consulted with in the policy development and what consultation beyond this 4week window there might be 	

Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
3	<p>Hi, Artificial turf can reach very high surface temperatures leading to unplayable fields and health risks, but also contributing to the urban heat island effect. To counteract these high temperatures, irrigation of the fields is needed, which leads to high water demands.</p> <p>With climate change and weather temperature increasing synthetic turf may be a high investment for a short term as it may cause some urban heat island effect and sport field may not be able to be used in hot temperature</p>	<p>This is a statement and does not have a direct impact on the Policy; therefore, no change is required. The submitter will be contacted to see if they wish to further discuss their comment.</p>
4	<p>While I hear the arguments for and against synthetic turf from an environmental perspective and find the idea of adding more plastic to our environment quite alarming, as someone who has played baseball in summer on a synthetic diamond I can tell you that it was also unbearably hot.</p> <p>If we expect longer and more intense heatwaves it seem counter intuitive to create hotter surfaces to play sport on.</p>	<p>This is a statement and does not have a direct impact on the Policy; therefore, no change is required. The submitter will be contacted to see if they wish to further discuss their comment.</p>
5	<p>I participate in organised sport but also in unorganized sport. Therefore, I see the requirement of use for all. I am concerned by the emergence of, primarily soccer clubs, that are attempting to take over use of sports fields solely for their own club. This is a gradual process but involves fencing community sports fields, then requesting them to be dog free, then requesting sole use of the fields for their club. Clubs that have attempted this successfully or unsuccessfully include Pascoe Vale Football Club at Hoskens reserve, Moreland Football club at Campbell reserve, etc. council owned land should be for the use of all not just the few especially when those few do not live nearby or within the council area. Priority should be for the majority and for those in the municipality. Therefore, sports grounds should always remain available to the community outside or organised sport hours. And clubs should be required to maintain good relations with the community they reside within or face the possibility of losing their access to the grounds should they negatively affect the local community.</p>	<p>This is a statement and does not have a direct impact on the Policy; therefore, no change is required. The submitter will be contacted to see if they wish to further discuss their comment.</p>

Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
6	<p>1, Weighting of factors in the Decision making Framework tool needs to be transparent</p> <p>2, Guidelines needed in how to apply the precautionary principle as part of this policy</p> <p>3, Decisions taken on synthetic turf for Sportsgrounds need to be Fiscally responsible.</p> <p>4 Keep the community, relevant sports organisations, and general public informed on progress and results of all sports surface trials conducted.</p> <p>5 Apply this decision making framework to a wider scope in Merri-bek, including to inform decision making for kindergartens and school playgrounds.</p> <p>6 Consider updating Nature Strip Guidelines for a general prohibition against use of synthetic turf, with exceptions for applicants to justify through using the decision making framework tool.</p> <p>7 Liaise and promote this policy with other Councils and the State Government to enhance good governance on use of synthetic turf in public places.</p> <p>8 Consideration should be given for restriction on use of both natural turf sports fields and synthetic turf sports fields during wet weather conditions. The former to reduce damage to the surface and maintain playability, the latter to reduce exacerbating microplastics pollution to stormwater and local waterways.</p> <p>9. Any use of synthetic turf, or hybrid turf, should have an End of Life Management Plan developed and in place, which outlines costs, disposal or recycling method, and the risks and greenhouse gas emissions associated with end of life. The advice of the NSW CSE that Cutting up EOL sporting fields for use in other settings be avoided should be adopted.</p>	<p>Based upon this feedback and in consultation with the team, we have amended the policy to include decision making transparency in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy. We are confident that with this change and development of decision-making guidelines, consideration of the intensity and different types of use of the Sportsground will form part of the decision-making process for individual projects.</p> <p>There will be no standardised weighting attributed to each factor of the decision-making framework given the context variability of each project (e.g. field location and surrounding infrastructure, climatic conditions and field make up overall). The importance attributed to each factor will be specific to each individual decision needing to be made.</p> <p>This policy will be shared with State Government agencies, other Councils, schools and kindergartens as part of Council's advocacy activities.</p> <p>The submitter has been contacted to further discuss their comments.</p>
7	<p>It took me ages to realise that the "Sportsground Surface Policy" was even a policy document. I first read the policy and didn't realise what it was. It reads like a piece of fiction about utilising a methodology Council has developed to make objective and harmonious decisions on improving sporting grounds and surfaces. It would involve super efficient experts evaluating options and presenting it to nice community minded people using objective data and reviewing options and finally as a</p>	<p>Based upon this feedback and in consultation with the team, we have amended the decision-making framework in the policy to re-order the decision making cycle commencing the cycle with stakeholder and community engagement. We are confident that with this change and development of decision-making</p>

Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
	<p>final act - a Step 7 - which would involve the community and stakeholders. Even more concerning the policy totally dismisses the role of sporting clubs. I suppose Council believes the provision of team sport arises organically from the sports grounds like mushrooms. What Council is providing is a Policy Cycle in which technocrats and council officers do all the heavy lifting and everyone else is marginalised. It is not exactly a model which inspires confidence.</p> <p>Concepts like co-design, which we used at Sumner Park, have disappeared as the bureaucrats take over. The policy is a series of wishful thoughts It provides some distorted version of the Policy Cycle, so familiar in public administration course, with no evaluation and minimal input from those involved in the provision of sport and recreation.</p> <p>It is a normative step by step approach largely lead by technoracts and bureaucrats which does not reflect the real world and the real world issues surrounding sporting reserves. Council has a problem, especially pronounced in the south of Merri-bek, there are not enough sporting fields for the community needs and through poor Council planning at least two grounds Fleming and Wylie have largely been marginalised and under-utilised by sporting clubs. Rather than deal with this you develop a policy that ignores existing conflicts and seeks to harmoniously resolve these conflicts though a rational process of data, evaluation and consultation. Who are you kidding?</p> <p>I am happy to write a critique or speak to officers but the policy is really a nothing statement that kicks the can down the road. Your stated aim is at best a motherhood statement or at worse misconstrues the situation. Your policy states: "Our aim through this policy is to harmoniously integrate the diverse needs of our growing community with considered surface decisions that nurture the social, economic, and environmental fabric of our city." Really it is going to harmoniously resolve the diverse needs or is just going to respond to the loudest voices?</p> <p>We know that ratepayers expect a full menu of recreation activities for everyone in the family, from kids to grandparents. They have historically supported the spending of rates to finance traditional facilities (playgrounds, bike paths, pools, bushland and soccer, hockey, cricket, AFL, lacrosse</p>	<p>guidelines, community input and transparency will be improved for individual project decisions.</p> <p>The submitter has been contacted to further discuss their comments.</p>

Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
	<p>fields) and even nontraditional ones like skate park. It is Council's role to provide these facilities within a budget.</p> <p>The problem is we have a number of residents all of whom feel an overwhelming need to speak loudly in public forums. So called NIMBYs (an acronym for Not In My Back Yard), who loudly define the boundaries of his or her backyard manage to take issue with the expanding use of existing sporting fields. The hostility to synthetic is in my opinion an extension of the NIMBY phenomenon. Also bizarrely the opposition is to soccer synthetic not to tennis, bowling, cycling, hockey and all the other sport that use synthetic surfaces.</p> <p>If we followed this new model we would outlined in then ever have got the improvements to Sumner Park to both facilities and the grounds. Our club was a key protagonist that made it happen and now that it was successful we can all rave about it. But if we left it up to this Policy Cycle process it would have been dead in the water, or at best we would still be discussing the project.</p> <p>I think you need to define the real problem on how do we meet the expectation of providing recreational activities which ratepayers expect and deal with the ongoing opposition. The idea of "harmoniously integrating the diverse needs of our growing community" is frankly an illusion.</p> <p>This policy does not give any agency to sporting clubs which are critical players in the provision of sport. For that reason I oppose it and suggest it be reframed with a role for sporting clubs. Sporting clubs are social and cultural institution and should not be relagated to Step 7 as mere stakeholders.</p> <p>Maybe it hasn't occurred to Council but for most team sports it is the clubs that provide it Council provides the facility and the ground. Yet clubs are missing from the policy process. Maybe they are the stakeholders you mention in stage 7th of your Policy Cycle. So you create a framework in which Council identifies all the issues and options by themselves because we know how good and clever they have been in the past. Finally at the end of the process we will let the stakeholder to have a say. Why can't we</p>	

Submitter #	What we heard	What we are doing
	<p>incorporate the principles of co-design with sporting clubs? It works!!!</p> <p>The policy seems to me loaded with bureaucratic feel good statements with no attempt to identify the key stakeholder clubs and their associated families other than by the generic term "the community." Where do Clubs like the Zebras fit into this model? Well they actually don't and that is why I do not support this policy in its current form.</p>	

7.7 TOWARDS A PLACE-BASED, COMMUNITY CO-MANAGEMENT OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES - PROJECT REPORT

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Open Space and Environment

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the successful outcomes achieved in partnership with the community and the findings of the report.
2. Updates all park pages under the 'Find a Park' section of Council's website with current photos, park features and for those with a sportsground, links to sporting club pages with training and game time information.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In response to a Council Resolution and decision through the 2022-23 budget process a trial project was commenced in September 2023 on initiatives on place-based community co-management of parks and open spaces. The trial initiatives aimed to improve community visibility of activities undertaken within a park and the level of involvement of the community with Council in open space management. The trial was conducted at ATC Cook Reserve in Glenroy and Allard Park/Jones Park in Brunswick East through to the end of July 2023.

The trial was received positively by the communities utilising the two parks. Outcomes achieved with the community included establishing a native garden and native lawn, the opening up of a car park, a litter pick up day and supporting the delivery of a Global City Nature Challenge entry event and a community festival at the adjoining Ballerrt Mooroop.

The project found that whilst there was a willingness of the community to participate in the maintenance and activation of the parks and open spaces they needed to be continuously supported by the project officer to coordinate activities and maintain engagement. The community also expressed a clear desire for information relating to the park and training and game times for organised sport on the sportsgrounds. Officers recommend updating all park pages under the 'Find a Park' section of Council's website with current photos, park features and for those with a sportsground, links to sporting club pages with training and game time information.

Previous Council Decisions

Shared Use of Reserves - 12 May 2021

That Council:

1. *Notes the importance of Moreland's open space reserves for informal recreation, dog-walking and organised sport.*
2. *Notes that there are certain times when all these user groups compete for usage of the reserves such as after work on weekdays and on weekends.*
3. *Receives a report which considers:*
 - a) *Whether the allocation of hours for shared use reserves is equitable between the different parts of the community which use the reserve for informal and formal recreation is equitable, particularly for the after-work weekday/weekend time slot;*
 - b) *A better means of communicating the allocated times to the community such as with signage at the reserves and council communication channels;*

- c) *A better means of communication to the community about any change to the allocated hours such as during school holidays, or when clubs are playing away games; and*
- d) *Whether there needs to be improved signage at reserves which are off-lead dog parks as well as for organised sport regarding whether dogs can be off-lead during sports matches and training.*

Notice of Motion - Towards Place-Based Community Co-Management of Parks and Open Spaces - 8 July 2020

That Council:

1. *Receives a report in time for it to be considered as part of the next Council Plan and/or budget process proposing a design and a pilot of a place-based community co-management of a park or parks which would include:*
 - a) *Expanding and clarifying the key concepts of place-based community co-management of parks for their specific application in Moreland (that is, move from concept to operations);*
 - b) *Identifying appropriate sites;*
 - c) *Identifying a trial methodology, including an evaluation framework. The proposed pilot should include such matters as:*
 - i. *Who could potentially be involved in managing or steering the park's planning and how people can get involved in the planning and when this is likely to occur and how people can expect to be invited to participate at key points in time;*
 - ii. *Consideration of a variety of management approaches utilising committees or steering groups that could be used to advise and/or collaborate with Council to plan ahead and manage the park(s) and any criteria for broadening the rollout across the city (noting which parks are not likely to be significant enough to garner enough interest in a community management approach);*
 - iii. *Describing what each trial park's maintenance and care schedule involves and the frequency entailed;*
 - iv. *A summary description of the plans for upgrades to the park and the time frames expected for these (short/medium/long term) with links to more detailed plans;*
 - v. *The cost of establishing online diaries/web pages for parks and such management/steering groups along with the potential benefits for Council and the community.*

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021 - 2025

2. Background

This report responds to two resolutions of Council (NOM30/20 and NOM 8.4 on 12 May 2021), which relate to community visibility of activities undertaken within a park and the level of involvement of the community with Council in open space management.

The proposal was to trial a place-based, community co-management model for open space at ATC Cook Reserve in Glenroy and Allard Park/Jones Park in Brunswick East for a period of 12 months.

The premise for the proposal was that the expansion of co-management of parks could play a role in advancing the engagement process between different community groups and Council leading to improved management of parks and reserves. The involvement of the different community user groups in the management of local parks would contribute to an improved visible condition of the grounds, garden beds and play spaces, more equitable use of spaces, increased activation, improved safety, shared knowledge and understanding between user groups and improved maintenance of parks through the combination of community care activities and Council coordinated maintenance.

The trial proposed exploring increased engagement with the community through a place-based co-management methodology that included an interactive portal through the Conversations Merri-bek website, in park signage and QR codes and a working committee/steering group made up of representatives from different community user groups, Council officers and Councillors. The intent was to make the system easily accessible and interactive so that members of the community, sporting clubs and Council can interact, share, and seek information about the management of the parks using both face to face and online forums.

Project Methodology

The project officer commenced in September 2022 and ran the project to the end of July 2023 using the following methodology.

1. Established baseline data to determine optimum park usage:
 - a. Identified key internal and external stakeholders
 - b. Conducted a basic SWOT analysis for each of the parks:
 - i. Conducted a survey using a Post-Occupancy Evaluation Methodology Framework looking at current park usage. Who is doing what, where and when. Establishing the park is being used as intended and is 'fit for purpose.'
 - ii. Conducted surveys and interviews with internal and external stakeholders.
2. Developed a methodology and schedule of evaluation to monitor progress.
3. Short listed a group or groups of people to form an informal advisory or reference committee for each of the parks.
4. Identified opportunities for events and activities in the park that will attract a range of demographics.
5. Attempted to identify and develop volunteer opportunities in the maintenance and upkeep of the park that will promote an ecological and environment awareness.
6. Considered options for digital engagement including a Conversations Merri-bek page with points for community participation.
7. Maintained a schedule of ongoing engagement with the local community in each park.

Project Results and Observations Summary

As a generalisation the community surrounding Jones Park in East Brunswick were more actively involved in the park than the community around ATC Cook Reserve.

The project officer identified and met with key internal Council stakeholders: Open Spaces Maintenance, Open Space Development (Design and Nature Conservation), Recreation Services, Youth Services and Community Wellbeing to identify strengths and weakness around usage, management, and communication.

Council conducted a survey over representative days, evenings and weekends through January 2023 – March 2023 using a post-occupancy survey methodology (who is doing what, where, when and why) to identify park issues.

Allard and Jones Parks

Allard/Jones Parks were unique in the park holdings given that they have two distinct spaces clearly dedicated for different user groups.

- Allard Park is specifically a sports field used by the North Brunswick Football Club and the Brunswick Ultimate Disc Society. It has a dedicated Bocce Club and Clubhouse on site. It is a dog on leash site.
- Jones Park on the other hand is a passive recreation space with a hill, large swaths of open lawns, wetlands and a grove of trees popular for picnics and small gatherings.

On average the informal survey noted that the parks attract over 300 people a day (excluding specific sporting events).

ATC Cook Reserve

ATC Cook Reserve is primarily a sports field used by the Glenroy Football Club and the Pascoe Vale United Cricket Club with the popular Glenroy Bowls and Tennis Club on the perimeters of the field. There is a lateral section of the park adjoining Daley Street with a playground for young children, a barbecue area and a section of exercise equipment.

The Reserve is popular during the day with the Nepalese Community, particularly a group of seniors who gather there daily and it has become a known gathering place for this community. Aside from the Bowls Club and the Tennis Club, the Park appears to be underutilised averaging around 70 people a day. There is demonstrated scope for expanding regular usage of the park as people noted that during the COVID lockdowns, the park was very popular with the local community attracting 'hundreds' of people at a time.

Survey results

Top line survey results are shown in the table below:

	Allard/Jones	ATC Cook
Condition of the Park	85% rated as excellent	45% rated as excellent
Cleanliness	87% rated as excellent	30% rated as excellent
Feeling of safety	92% rated as excellent	32% rated as excellent

The survey showed that Jones Park is cared for, considered well serviced and very popular with the locals who enjoyed the respite from a fairly dense urban environment.

ATC Cook Reserve was perceived as suffering from deterioration was generally underutilised by the local community. There was evidence of hooning and anti-social behaviour and large amounts of litter and dumped rubbish across the park during that period.

Through the process of surveying, the project officer asked individuals and those with leadership positions in sporting groups, clubs or ethno-cultural groups and organisations in each of the parks if they would be willing to be part of a reference or advisory group for each of the parks. The project officer identified:

- 15 key individuals for Allard/Jones Park,
- 6 sporting groups (including a number of Nepalese cricket teams who use the space informally), two cultural groups (Nepalese and Pacific Islander) and 6 individuals for ATC Cook Reserve.

Engagement Projects undertaken as a part of the pilot project

Allard / Jones Park

Engagement undertaken as part of the project at Allard / Jones Park is listed below:

- In collaboration with Open Space maintenance staff the project officer expanded a community engagement initiative to establish a native garden with a local resident to include a native lawn along the strip of the park bordering on Galada Way.
- Council is working with the residents of the apartment building at the corner of Galada Way and Allard Park on a mural for the park facing side of the building which is in progress.
- The project officer worked with residents around ongoing concerns with the ad hoc pump track developed by teenagers during the COVID lockdown which has impacted on a grove of trees planted at the base of the hill.
- In collaboration with the Recreation team worked on opening the Bocce Club which was underutilised for general community usage.
- In collaboration with the Conservations Programs Officer, developed and delivered the Merri-bek entry for the Global City Nature Challenge on Sunday 30 April at Jones Park. The event attracted over 30 participants and was well received.

ATC Cook Reserve

Engagement undertaken as part of the project at ATC Cook Reserve is listed below:

- Council worked with the Glenroy Bowls Club on promoting a series of music events to further activate the area.
- Council organised to have the row of rocks that locked off the car park to mitigate hooning activity opened up.
- The project officer worked with the Nepalese Community that uses the park as a gathering space on activities to support their presence there. Supported budget proposals to have a permanent shelter erected, and in recognising the large number of seniors using the space, for age-appropriate exercise equipment to be installed.
- Organised with the Volunteer Group Clean-Up Glenroy for a litter-pick up on a Sunday 16 July 2023 at the Reserve. The event attracted 15 volunteers from both the local and wider Glenroy Community.
- Worked with the Social Policy and Projects Officer in the development and delivery of a community festival at the adjoining Ballerrt Mooroop site that adjoins ATC Reserve. The event ran on 28 May 2023 as part of National Reconciliation Week and attracted around 200 people from the local community
- In May and June 2023, in collaboration with the Early Childhood Development Unit, introduced a schedule of child's play events developed and run by Victoria University.

Findings

The overall findings from the trial included:

- This pilot project found that the community appreciated and valued the parks and open spaces in their neighbourhoods.

- There was, when actively supported by Council, a capacity and a willingness of the community to participate in the maintenance of parks and open spaces in a variety of practical and creative ways. People wanted to have responsibility and ownership, but they needed to be continuously supported by the project officer and given agency by Council.
- There was an indication that people were willing to work through co-sharing issues i.e sports use vs dog owners, if there were clear and transparent regulations in place and the regulations were enforced.

People wanted clear information about maintenance procedures and schedules, particularly about the methods for weed control and mowing schedules. It was explained that Council can only release the most general information about schedules as weather and environmental conditions constantly disrupt schedules.

People also asked for accurate and timely information on the use and availability of sports grounds. The information available on Council websites is not always accurate (due to last minute changes of training and game times and locations made by sporting clubs and associations). There is an opportunity to develop links on park website pages to the relevant sporting club game and training time pages as an improved information source.

Further Actions

Officers recommend updating all park pages under the 'Find a Park' section of Council's website with information including:

- Current photographs of the park and the amenities.
- A short statement on the history of the park and the rationale for the name (with photographs where available).
- A statement about the area of the park pre colonisation recognising the Indigenous history of a given area
- A listing of the amenities available in the park.
- A listing of flora and fauna to be found in the park.
- A schedule of activities in the park.

Links to the websites of sporting groups, organisations, or associations with scheduled activity in the park.

3. Issues

Community impact

The pilot program established that there is an appetite and capacity in the community for more active participation in the management and maintenance of parks and open spaces. By involving stakeholders in the decision-making processes, a model of co-management empowers local communities fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. The place-based model ensures that the specific needs and conditions of a given park or open space are addressed. The increased participation enhances the effectiveness of conservation efforts, ensures better understanding of and compliance with regulations and reduces conflict with park authorities as well with and between communities.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Co-management models promote active engagement of local communities, including indigenous groups who possess traditional knowledge and deep connections to the land. The involvement of community members who are aware and engaged in issues of the environment and sustainability leads to improved conservation outcomes as they collectively contribute their knowledge and expertise, monitor biodiversity and enforce sustainable resource use.

Economic sustainability implications

A co-management model for park management can mobilise a community-based volunteer workforce to assist with the maintenance of the park thus alleviating resource pressure on maintenance crew, effectively and timely managing issues such as hand weed control and litter pick up.

Human Rights Consideration

The co-management model for park management can help ensure the active participation of all stakeholders, including marginalised or vulnerable groups, in the decision-making processes. The place-based model inherently respects and protects the interests of local communities and ensures a balance of conservation efforts with the sustainable use of natural resources. The process ensures that the benefits of parks and open spaces are distributed equitably among different social and economic groups. The process can also provide capacity-building initiatives to empower local communities, enabling them to actively participate in the co-management process.

4. Community consultation and engagement

The pilot program was an effective engagement process that highlighted the need for support of a dedicated community engagement resource to maintain continual community participation for parks and open spaces. Sporting groups, cultural associations, individuals from a range of communities as well as groups with an interest in environmental and sustainability issues were consulted during the process of the project.

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 recommended action of updating all park pages under the 'Find a Park' section of Council's website can be undertaken utilising existing Open Space budgeted resources.

7. Implementation

The recommended action of updating all park pages under the 'Find a Park' section of Council's website will be completed incrementally over the next 12 months.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.8 BRUNSWICK EARLY YEARS HUB - PROJECT UPDATE

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy

Early Years and Youth

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the key project milestones which have been achieved to progress the development of the Brunswick Early Years Hub.
2. Notes the progress of an Environmental Audit to identify and mitigate site contamination risks which is due for completion in March 2024.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Brunswick Early Years Hub will be a custom designed contemporary facility that will consolidate, integrate, and expand early years' service capability and provide premium learning and care environments for Merri-bek families. The Hub project involves the relocation of: Tinning Street Childcare Centre, 77 Tinning Street, Brunswick; owned by Council and operated by Moreland Community Child Care Centre Inc, (MCCCC); and Council's Maternal Child Health Centre, 482 Victoria Street, Brunswick West. The Hub will include up-to 138 Long Day Care, Kindergarten and Nursery places, providing 68 newly created places and will include space for playgroups.

This Report provides an update on key actions which have been completed to date and a scope of works to occur to progress the project in readiness for construction, estimated to commence in late 2024. Feedback received from community and stakeholder consultation and engagement will be incorporated into the detailed design of the new facility which is scheduled to occur in early 2024. The Report includes an update on the environmental audit process which is currently occurring in relation to the development site situated on Council owned land at 346, Albert Street, Brunswick. The full environmental audit process is due for completion in March 2023.

Previous Council Decisions

Proposed Brunswick Early Years Hub – 12 April 2023

That Council:

1. *Notes the key steps undertaken in assessing the feasibility to develop a new purpose-built Early Years Hub on Council owned land situated at 346 Albert Street, Brunswick.*
2. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate to:*
 - a) *Enter a Memorandum of Understanding with Moreland Community Child Care Centres, outlining roles, responsibilities, and shared commitments in relation to the project.*
 - b) *Make application to the Victorian School Building Authority, Department of Education for funding towards the cost of the project, to be lodged by 30 June 2023.*
3. *Endorses the concept plan at Attachment 1 and release for community and stakeholder consultation.*
4. *Receives a further Report in July 2023 highlighting community feedback and proposed project timelines.*

Early Years Infrastructure Plan – 8 June 2022

That Council:

1. *Adopts the Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2022–2030.*

Merri-bek Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 – 9 June 2021

That Council:

1. *Adopts the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025.*

Kindergarten Infrastructure Services Plan – 14 July 2021

That Council:

1. *Endorses the agreed Kindergarten Infrastructure and Service Plan (KISP)*
2. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education and Training to enter a Building Blocks Partnership.*

1. Policy Context

In 2018 the Victorian State Government commenced implementation of a 10-year Early Childhood Reform Plan with a strong focus on subsidised kindergarten, significant capital infrastructure investment and more equitable, innovative and inclusive early childhood services, supports and facilities. Since then, the Government has announced further expansion and substantial investment in kindergarten programs including the introduction of funded 3-year-old programs (15 hours per week) from 2022 to 2029; and in 2022 that the Best Start, Best Life initiative would be expanded, with three major new elements to be implemented over the next decade, at a cost of \$9 billion:

- Making kindergarten free across the state.
- A new year of universal Pre-Prep for 4-year-olds comprising 30 hours per week, a doubling of the current 15 hours provided (to be rolled out over the next decade); and
- Establishing 50 government owned and operated childcare centres in areas of high need, one of which will be co-located with Moomba Park Primary School in Fawkner and a further centre to be established in Glenroy.

To align and maximise the opportunity to expand and improve services Council has developed and adopted:

- Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan 2020 (KISP).
- Merri-bek Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025.
- Merri-bek Community Infrastructure Plan 2022.
- Merri-bek Early Years Infrastructure Plan 2022-2030; and
- Building Blocks Partnership (BBP) funding agreement and Memorandum of Understanding 2022, which commits the State Government to co-contributions of \$10.7 million funding towards 11 new and expanded kindergartens across the municipality over the coming years.

Together, the State Government and Council policy settings outlined above lay the strategic foundations to enable co-investment in a program of kindergarten and early years infrastructure projects, including the Brunswick Early Years Hub.

2. Background

In 2019 Council was approached by the Board of Management of the Moreland Community Child Care Centres Inc (MCCCC) regarding the need to undertake an assessment of two of the services ageing facilities at Mitchell and Tinning Streets, Brunswick, due to concerns about the escalating cost of maintenance and to discuss options for their renewal or replacement in the longer term. Preliminary investigations were undertaken and since that time Council and MCCCC have been in dialogue about long term options for the renewal or replacement of the facilities.

In 2020, Council undertook a comprehensive analysis of the projected future demand for kindergarten programs across the municipality - the Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) projected a shortfall of 313 kindergarten places across Brunswick and Brunswick East by 2029, highlighting the need for an expansion of existing early years infrastructure, or the creation of new infrastructure in the coming years. The limited availability and high cost of suitable land in Brunswick has posed a significant challenge for Council and early years services in identifying options to expand existing service capacity.

In July 2022 Council, through the Chief Executive Officer, was advised by the Victorian School Building Authority offering enhanced funding support via the Building Blocks Partnerships, providing the possibility of a significant funding contribution towards the development of a new Early Years Hub in Brunswick.

In 2022, Council undertook a site analysis to identify and assess the suitability of any existing Council owned property that could meet the requirements of the proposed Hub. This process identified a preferred site located on Council owned land at 346, Albert Street, Brunswick.

3. Issues

Existing facilities not fit for purpose

In addition to the projected short fall in kindergarten places in the coming years and the growing and unmet demand for childcare places in Brunswick, a key driver for the project is that two of the three proposed existing facilities to be relocated into the Hub are not fit for purpose. Due to their size and lack of land to expand, along with their age and deteriorating condition the ongoing maintenance, or renewal has been assessed as not being cost effective.

This is confirmed in a comprehensive Building Assessment of the Tinning and Mitchell Street Centres, undertaken in February 2023 which identified the following key points:

- cost to bring the buildings to meet full compliance with regulatory requirements would exceed the cost of building replacement.
- estimated maintenance cost of \$30,000 per year, per building for the next ten years to maintain basic functionality; and
- Without significant maintenance these buildings will become unusable in 5 years.

Concept Plan

Council engaged an architect and quantity surveyor to develop a concept plan and cost estimate which determined that the proposed site is suitable to accommodate a facility required to deliver the outcomes sought, including the right mix of services to meet community needs. The concept plan provides for up-to 138 long day care, kindergarten, and nursery places.

In summary, the design incorporates:

- A two-level building; including space for long day care, kindergarten programs and Maternal Child Health Service.
- A separate play and multi-purpose space for playgroups and community use.

- Storage and outdoor play space.
- On site car parking for staff.
- Drop off/pick up zone; and
- Environmentally sustainable features including rainwater harvesting which may also service adjoining Gilpin Park.

Key Project Milestones

The following actions have occurred to progress the project:

- An analysis of data in relation to current utilisation of the existing services along with future demographic projections, in particular the projected unmet demand for kindergarten places in the coming decade, along with mapping of existing service users and travel impacts.
- A Memorandum of Understanding has been entered into between Council and Moreland Community Child Care Centres (MCCCC) setting out a shared vision and the roles and responsibilities of both parties in jointly progressing the project.
- Town planning advice confirming that the proposed project is consistent with existing zoning requirements.
- An arborist report identified that existing vegetation on site includes twelve mature trees, none of which achieved a 'high' arboriculture rating status. The concept plan requires the removal of five trees, while seven will be retained and supported by a complementary landscape plan including several new trees.
- Geotechnical Site Investigations identified 1.5 meters of fill over the natural soil with the site been classified as 'Class P' in accordance with Australian Standard. This would likely require bored piers foundations then the traditional concrete slab approach.
- A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) and Soil Waste Classification (SWC) identified traces of the lowest rated contaminates 'Category D' in some selected bore holes.
- A 'peer review' of all existing environmental data and reports was undertaken by an accredited auditor who recommend the site be subject to a full environmental audit given the proximity of a former landfill at Gilpin Park which adjoins the proposed site and potential for methane gas vapour to rise to the surface.

Environmental Audit

Following routine soil testing which occurred as an initial stage of the project it was decided to undertake a full environmental audit of the site, given its classification as a sensitive use site. An auditor approved Sampling and Analysis Quality Plan (SAQP) was developed which involves additional testing for:

- Soil Contamination.
- Land Fill Gas; and
- Ground Water Contamination.

Bores and wells are installed on-site with samples collected on or about every 6 weeks with a minimum of three separate rounds of testing with data utilised to inform the final Auditors Report. The first round of sampling re-confirmed 'Category D' contamination with no further testing required; no methane gas vapour was detected in the land fill gas bores; and no elevated contaminants of concern were detected in the groundwater well (fuels, volatiles, PFAS etc).

The second round of groundwater monitoring occurred on 2 October 2023 which was generally consistent with the first round of sampling with minor elevated levels of copper, nickel, zinc, chloride, sulphate and fluoride observed. It is suggested that this is likely regional elevated levels, rather than contamination originating from the site.

Landfill gas was also monitored on 2 October 2023, with similar results to the first round. Note, this was undertaken during the requested 'worst case scenario setting', so it is very positive there was no methane gas vapour detected. There was a marginal increase in CO₂, which may need to be reviewed by the Auditor and their landfill gas risk assessor. The third round of testing is due on or about 13 November with a fully completed report forecast for completion by March 2023.

Community impact

The new Hub will be a custom designed modern facility that will consolidate, integrate, and expand early years' service capability and provide premium learning and care environments for Merri-bek families and will assist in meeting the projected increased demand for kindergarten places in the coming years. The proposed Hub will enable the service to achieve optimal efficiency in terms of staffing and other operational considerations.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

It is proposed that the new Hub will incorporate the most suitable and practical environmentally sustainable design measures in line with Councils exiting policy.

A significant feature currently proposed is the potential to capture rainwater from the Hub to be utilised at Gilpin Park.

Economic sustainability implications

The proposed Hub provides both short and long-term economic benefits, both through the boost to employment during the planning and construction phases of the project; and expanded infrastructure creates increased ongoing employment opportunities as additional staffing numbers are required in line with the increased number of kindergarten places. Improved learning opportunities and educational outcomes for children also provides long term benefits in terms of young people's capability to transition from education to employment and contribute to the City's economic wellbeing.

Legal and risk considerations

The principal risk for Council relates to the potential for methane gas emissions, which to date has not been detected after two rounds of sampling. The full environmental audit process is due for completion on or about March 2023.

Council will continue to progress the project through the design tender process and commence preliminary design work, prior to the conclusion of the environmental audit.

If the final environmental audit report recommends that the proposed site is not suitable due to significant contamination, it is estimated that between \$50,000-\$100,000 of architectural works may have commenced which would not be recoverable.

After further consultation with the environmental contractors and known risks, it is considered reasonable for Council to proceed with the project as scheduled.

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 aligns with Council's Human Rights Policy. The provision of early years infrastructure aligns with the aspirations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which forms part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly in relation to children's rights to education and health care and supports children to reach their full potential in life.

Gender Impact Assessment

Applying a gender lens in the planning and development phase for new facilities will ensure the needs of people of different genders are met and supports the aspiration to promote gender equality, as required under the Gender Equality Act.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Affected persons rights and interests

The interests of children and families are the primary focus of this proposal. As outlined, the Hub when completed will deliver multiple benefits for children, young people and families.

Communications, community and stakeholder engagement

The project proposal was developed in collaboration with MCCCC with information and input provided by other key stakeholders including the Victorian School Building Authority. Community and stakeholder consultation has included:

- Briefing provided to MCCCC Board, staff and families. This occurred following an initial briefing to Council in March 2023. Briefings included a presentation outlining the key drivers for the project, the options explored and the identification of the preferred site at 346 Albert St, Brunswick. These meetings highlighted a number of aspirations regarding the design, environmental considerations, orientation of the building and its relationship to Gilpin Park. The outcomes of these discussions will be incorporated into the detailed design process which is tentatively scheduled to occur in early 2024 and will include “workshopping” with delegates from MCCCC.
- The project has been profiled on the Conversations Merri-bek web page from 18 September to 13 October with promotional posters displayed at Victoria Street - Maternal Child Health and Tinning Street Childcare. In summary, sixteen formal responses were received by way of Conversations Merri-bek which on balance were constructive and supportive. Key response themes include integration with Gilpin Park; sufficient bike parking and trails; sustainable design features; and ensuring the centre is a safe and welcoming place.

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

Enhanced Grant Funding Opportunity

Council has been advised by the Department of Education (Victorian School Building Authority) that a grant of approximately \$4,500,000, (subject to Ministerial approval) will be provided to support the development of the Brunswick Early Years Hub.

Project Cost Estimate and Opportunities

The concept plan has been reviewed by a Quantity Surveyor estimating a total project cost of \$11,520,000 (Excl. GST) at **Attachment 1**.

The current cost plan includes \$662,747.00 for site remediation works.

Financing Strategy

The proposed finance strategy is contingent upon co-investment by the Victorian School Building Authority, Department of Education to the value of \$4,500,000.

The direct Council financial impacts require new spending of \$7,820,000.00 as outlined in the table below and are included in the adopted 5 year capital budget program.

	FY24	FY25	FY26	Total
Rates	\$1,240,000.00	\$3,900,000.00	\$2,680,000.00	\$7,820,000.00
Grants	\$1,850,000.00	\$1,480,000.00	\$1,170,000.00	\$4,500,000.00
Totals	\$3,090,000.00	\$5,380,000.00	\$3,050,000.00	(\$11,520,000.00) \$12,320,000.00*

*The project is currently estimated to cost \$11,520, 000.00. If grant funding of \$4.5m is confirmed and the project cost estimate remains at \$11,520,000.00 Council will be in a position to reduce the rates contribution to the project from the \$2,680,000.00 currently allocated in the 2026 financial year, to \$1,880,000.00.

7. Implementation

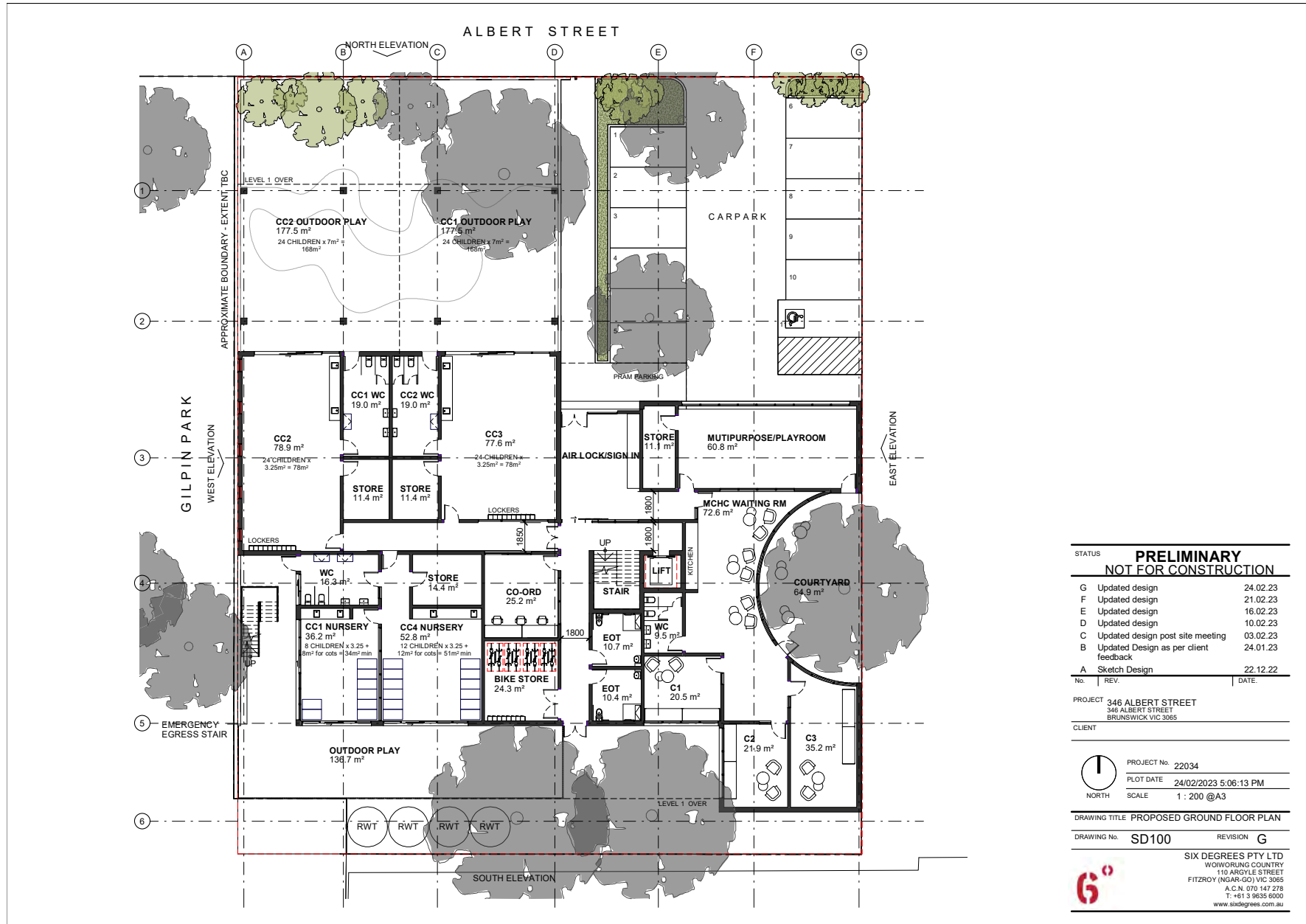
- Release Architect Tender: November 2023
- Close Architect Tender: Mid-December 2023
- Tender Evaluation and appointment of Architect; Mid-January 2024
- Detailed Design Completion: February to May 2024

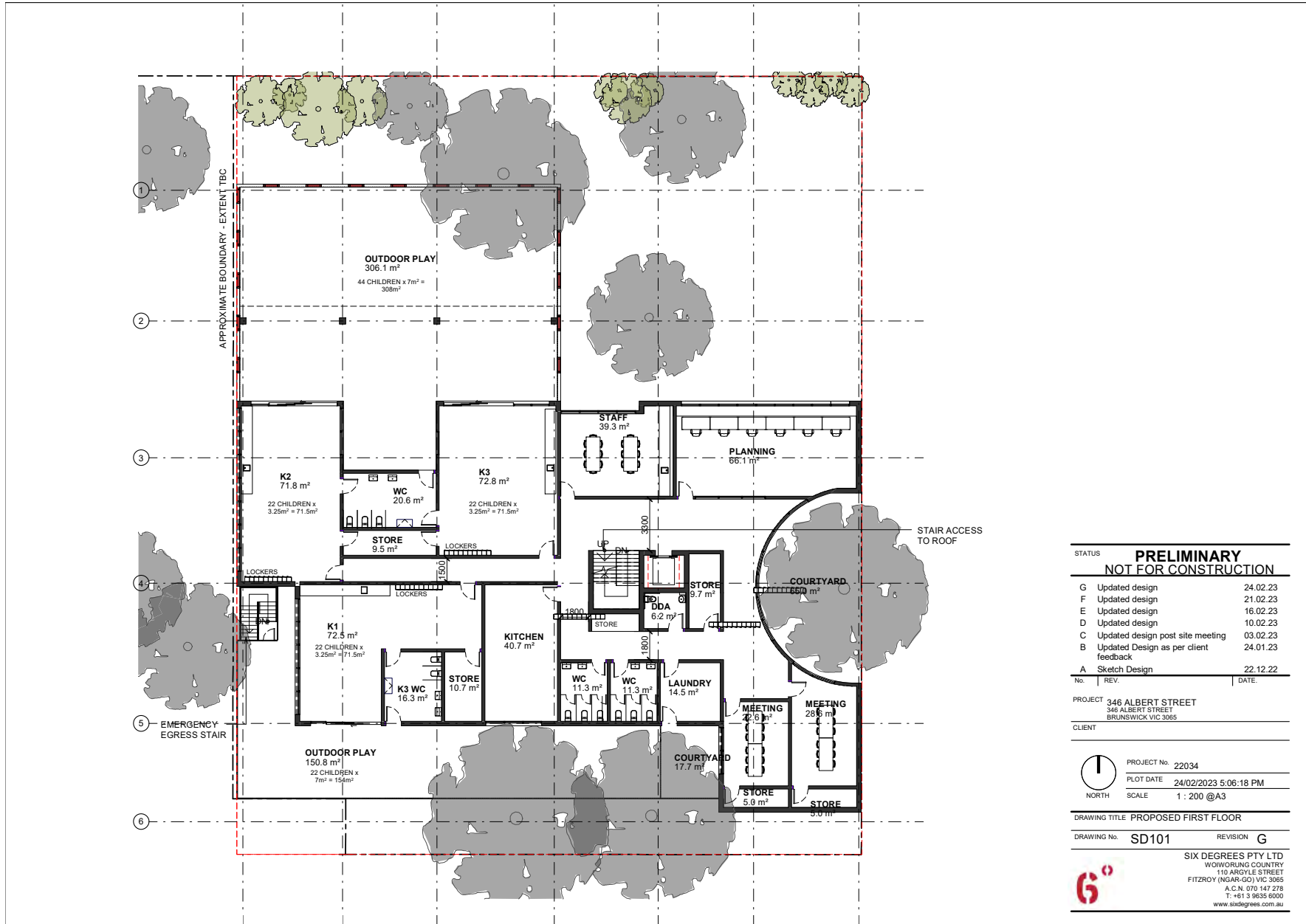
Attachment/s

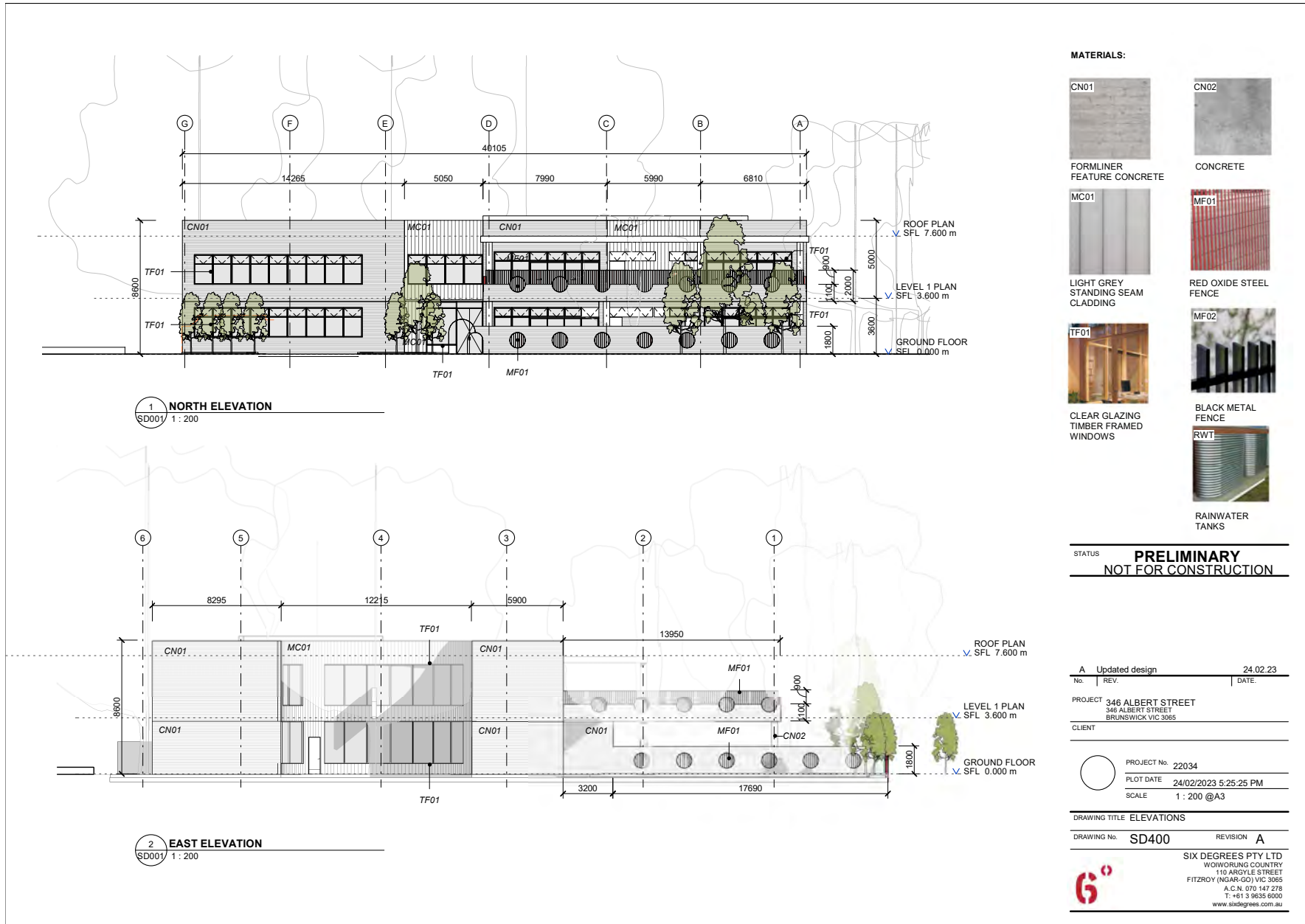
- 1 [↓](#) Proposed Brunswick Early Years Hub - Concept Design - February 2023 D23/98691

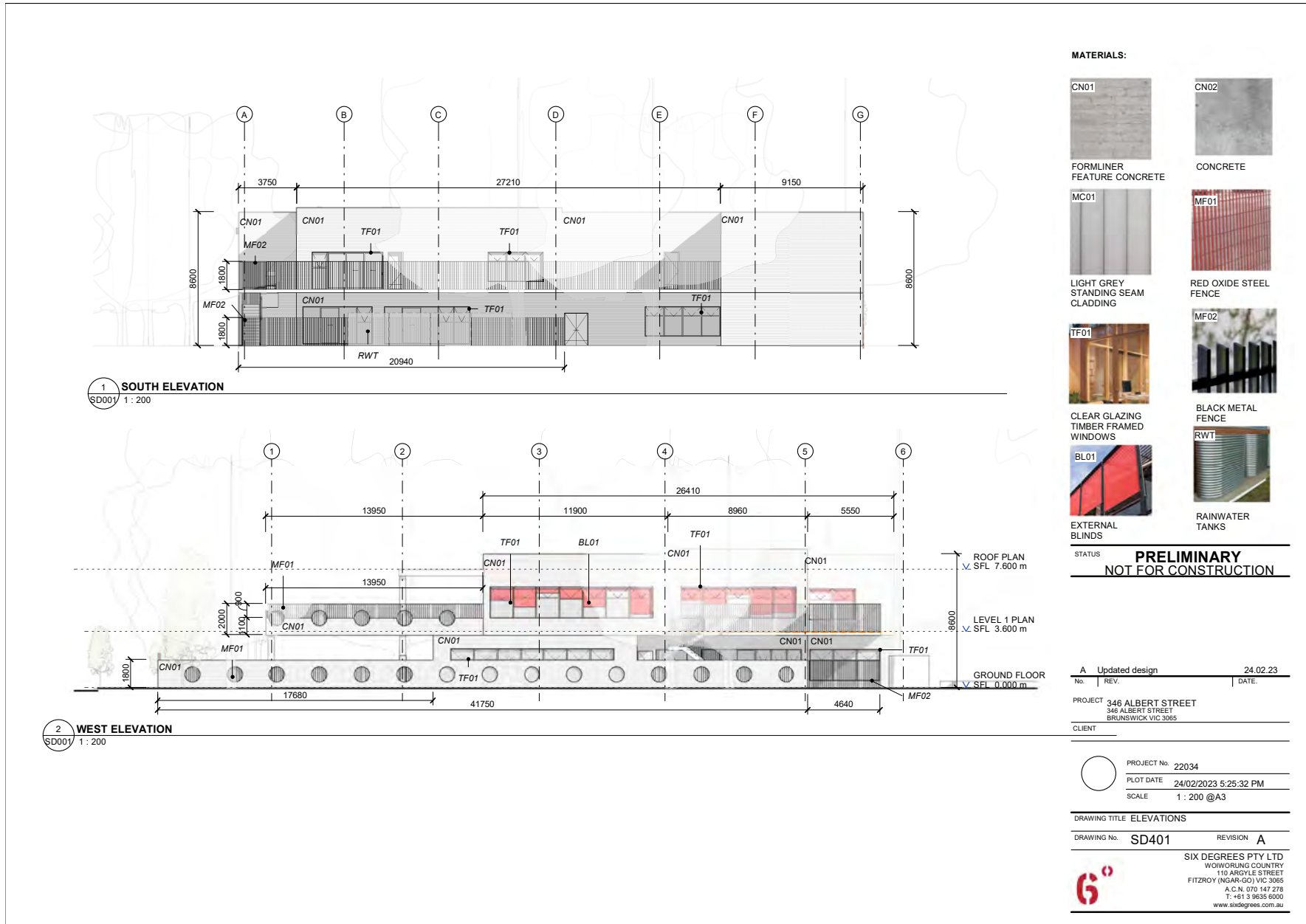


STATUS PRELIMINARY NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION		PROJECT 346 ALBERT STREET 346 ALBERT STREET BRUNSWICK VIC 3065	DRAWING TITLE SITE PLAN DRAWING No. SD000	REVISION A
CLIENT		PROJECT No. 22034	SIX DEGREES PTY LTD WOIWORUNG COUNTRY 110 ARSTYLE STREET FITZROY (NGAR-GO) VIC 3065 A.C.N. 070 147 278 T: +61 3 9635 6000 www.sixdegrees.com.au	
A Updated design	24.02.2 3	PLOT DATE 24/02/2023 5:06:06 PM		
No. REV.	DATE	NORTH SCALE 1 : 1000 @A3		











STATUS **PRELIMINARY**
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

No.	REV.	DATE.

PROJECT **346 ALBERT STREET**
346 ALBERT STREET
BRUNSWICK VIC 3065

CLIENT

PROJECT No.	22034
PLOT DATE	24/02/2023 5:06:38 PM
SCALE	@A3

DRAWING TITLE **3D RENDER**

DRAWING No.	REVISION
SD500	


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EXTERIOR


CONCRETE

- WALLS
- COLUMNS
- FLOOR SLAB




METAL

- ROOF SHEET ON STEEL BATENS
- RAINWATER TANKS




TIMBER

- BATTENS TO SOFFIT
- DECK TO OUTDOOR AREA



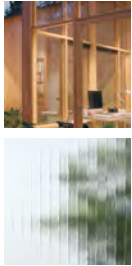
STEEL

- FENCE & SLIDING GATE
- SCREEN INFILL



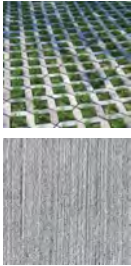
GLAZING

- CLEAR GLASS
- FLUTED GLASS
- TIMBER FRAME




PAVING & PATHWAY

- PERMEABLE PAVERS (SUREPAVE)
- BRUSHED CONCRETE



SERVICES PLANT


- GRIDMESH ON STEEL FRAME



INTERIOR


FLOOR

- MARMOLEUM
- TILES TO AMENITIES
- RUBBER TO STAIRS




WALLS

- PLYWOOD
- ACOUSTIC PANELS
- TILES TO AMENITIES




JOINERY

- PLYWOOD
- FORMPLY/LAMINATE FINISH
- STAINLESS STEEL BENCH



CEILING

- ACOUSTIC SPRAY
- PLASTERBOARD TO AMENITIES



SERVICES

- SOLAR PANELS ON ROOF
- SPLIT UNIT AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEM
- AUTOMATED SLIDING GATE TO CARPARK
- SWING GATE TO PEDESTRIAN ENTRY WITH SWIPE ACCESS
- UNDERGROUND RAINWATER TANK IN ADJACENT PARK

STATUS **PRELIMINARY**
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

A	Updated design	10.02.23
No.	REV.	DATE

PROJECT 346 ALBERT STREET
346 ALBERT STREET
BRUNSWICK VIC 3065

CLIENT _____

PROJECT No. 22034

PLOT DATE 24/02/2023 5:26:14 PM

SCALE @A3

DRAWING TITLE MATERIALS

DRAWING No. SD600 REVISION A

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110 ARGYLE STREET
FITZROY (NGAR-GO) VIC 3065
A.C.N. 070 147 278
T: +61 3 9355 6000
www.sixdegrees.com.au

7.9 SUBURB BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT - BRIDGES AVENUE COBURG NORTH / PASCOE VALE

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Finance and Procurement

Officer Recommendation

That Council approves the suburb boundary realignment to the western boundary of 2/18 Bridges Avenue, in order to ensure that the development is located wholly within the suburb of Coburg North, along with the rest of Bridges Avenue, as outlined in this report.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The need for a minor realignment of a suburb boundary has emerged as a consequence of the subdivision of land on the parcel currently known as 2/18 Bridges Avenue, which lies partly within the suburb of Pascoe Vale and partially within Coburg North. The current and proposed suburb boundary realignment is indicated in the maps in Background and Issues sections of this report.

As the land parcels are located within two suburbs, Council is unable to issue street numbering for the proposed subdivision. Without the provision of street numbers from Council, the development is unable complete the subdivision process for the release of new titles to purchasers.

This recommendation is independent of any current or future planning processes or decisions regarding this development.

It seeks to resolve the suburb boundaries, which cannot bisect the development and bring the entirety of Bridges Avenue into the same suburb. The proposed boundary realignment is considered to be most effectively resolved by including the entire lots within the suburb of Coburg North.

Previous Council Decisions

A planning permit SP/2023/161 was issued under delegated authority of Council for the subdivision of the land at 2/18 Bridges Avenue Pascoe Vale in August 2023.

1. Policy Context

The Naming rules for places in Victoria 2022, Statutory requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022 uphold the guidelines in the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998*. The naming rules are based on national standards and policies.

Council as a naming authority, in line with *The Naming rules for Places in Victoria 2022 section 1.5.2*. has the following responsibility in this matter;

“Naming authorities are responsible for submitting naming proposals that comply with these naming rules to the Registrar.”

To adhere to the relevant guidelines below, the suburb should be amended prior to new addresses been resolved.

Below is the relevant legislation.

NOTE: Gazetted Localities are the officially recognised boundaries of suburbs (in cities and larger towns) and localities (outside cities and larger towns).

AS NZS 4819-2011 Rural and Urban Addressing.

Section 3.3.2 Selections of locality boundaries

d) A locality boundary, where possible, should not bisect properties in common ownership or land parcels. Some exceptions may apply to large areas, e.g. forest, lakes or national parks.

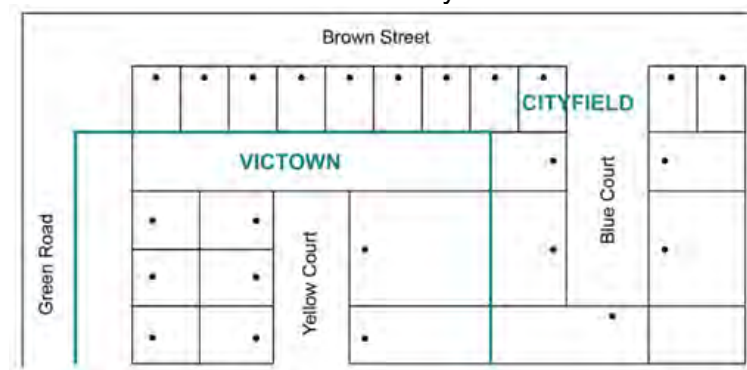
Section 3.4.2 Review of localities

Boundaries of localities in areas that are subject to development should be reviewed and amended where appropriate.

Official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria

Section 5.2.1

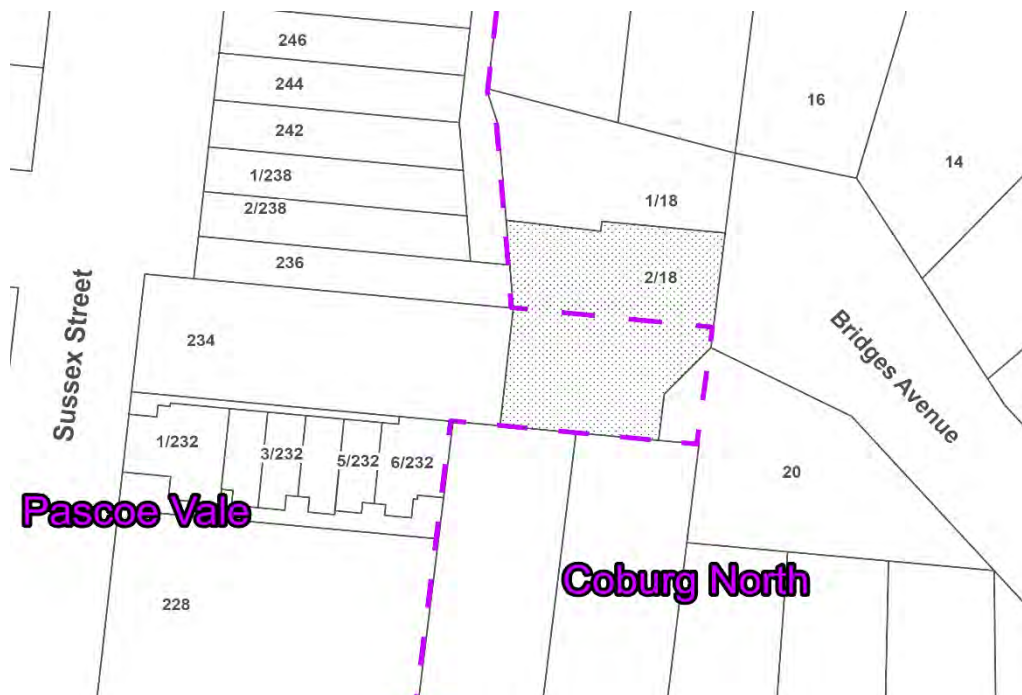
3. In dead-end roads and cul-de-sacs, the locality boundary should wrap around the properties at the end of the road so that all properties accessed from the same road are addressed to the same locality



2. Background

Historically the suburb boundary between Pascoe Vale and Coburg North ran behind properties along Sussex Street Pascoe Vale. Previous development has led to parts of the back parcels becoming properties that front Bridges Avenue instead. The boundary was not moved at that stage and has created the bisection we see below.

Current boundary:



A subdivision permit has been issued for an two dwelling development on the shaded land parcel (Lot 3 RP3160) known as 2/18 Bridges Avenue Pascoe Vale. All other properties in Bridges Avenue are addressed to the suburb Coburg North.

As per the Official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria ‘*the locality boundary should wrap around the properties at the end of the road so that all properties accessed from the same road are addressed to the same locality*’.

As such, all properties in the Bridges Avenue cul-de-sac should be addressed to, and form a part of Coburg North. The finalisation of the subdivision process involves the release of new street numbering by Council, and as such can be resolved to adhere to the Naming Rules.

As part of the regular subdivision application lodged on 10 August 2023, a request that Council provide new property addresses pursuant to its powers and responsibilities under the *Geographic Place Names Act 1998* was requested on 30 August 2023.

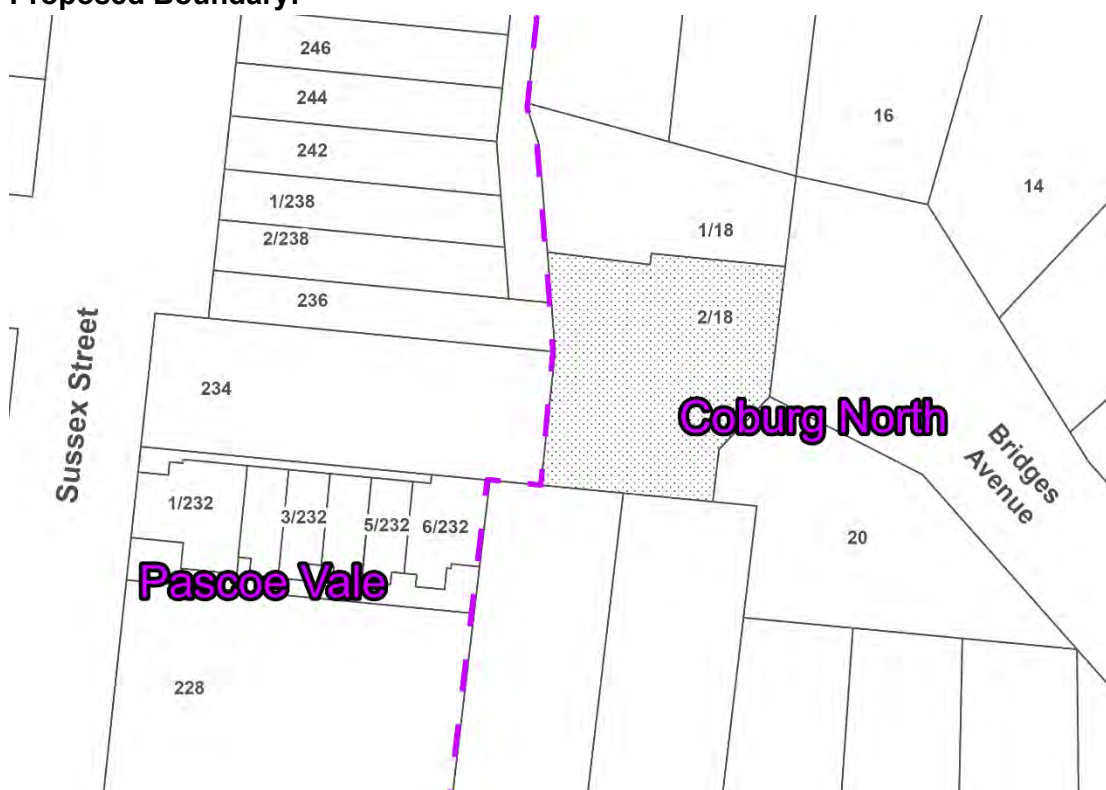
The Addressing Standards and official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria both require that parcels not be bisected by a suburb boundary. The Australian Standard, AS NZS 4819-2011 Rural and Urban Addressing requires that the suburb boundary should be adjusted prior to new addresses being released.

For council to issue street numbering, the minor boundary realignment must be resolved.

As per Section 5.2.1 of the Official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria the appropriate resolution is to realign the suburb and cul-de-sac fully into Coburg North.

Once resolved, addressing can be issued and the suburb boundary realignment is submitted to Geographic Names Victoria Registrar for finalisation and gazettal whereby the Land Victoria maps are amended.

Proposed Boundary:



The proposed suburb boundary realignment as shown in the map above:

- Conforms to the statutory requirements in Section 5.2 of the Official Naming rules for Places in Victoria.

- As the names of the locality themselves are not changing, all naming rules are being adhered to.
- The name is not an estate or linked to a subdivision name and the size is appropriate.
- The locality boundaries sit wholly within Merri-bek municipality therefore Council does not need to consult with neighbouring municipalities.
- As the amendment is a small realignment, no impact has been made to United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names resolutions, Sustainable Development Goals, or Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework goals.

As Council is the naming authority for locality (suburb) boundaries, Council officers have assessed that this proposal meets all relevant statutory requirements. Once Council resolves to realign the boundary it is submitted the Geographic Names Victoria Registrar for finalisation whereby the Land Victoria maps are amended.

3. Issues

Currently Council is unable to issue the street numbering as the development is bisected by the boundary between Pascoe Vale and Coburg North. This delays the subdivision process which if unresolved will delay the lodgement to Land Victoria for the release of Certificates of Title and in turn the settlements for new residents.

In order to issue the new numbering for the development, Council is required to realign the suburb boundary to meet the guidelines in the Official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria and AS NZS 4819-2011 Rural and Urban Addressing.

By realigning the boundary as per officer recommendations, council will bring the Bridges Avenue cul-de-sac fully into Coburg North as per Section 5.2.1 of the Official Naming Rules for Places in Victoria.

Community impact

No other members of the community are affected by the suburb boundary adjustment.

Legal and risk considerations

There is a risk of cost escalation and other impacts to both the developer and new residents should the suburb addressing delay the subdivision process and settlements of the new properties.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with Human Rights Consideration.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Council's Community Engagement Policy 2020 states that for matters related to Council's internal organisational operations Council will not engage the community. Therefore, as this proposed boundary realignment has a negligible impact on the community, nor can the realignment be influenced significantly by the community; only the identified affected persons have been contacted directly. A public notice was displayed on conversations Merri-bek for 30 days in line with the Naming Rules consultation guidelines.

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 three properties that have been identified as affected persons.

The owner of the development site itself at 2/18 Bridges Avenue Pascoe Vale, and the adjoining owners at 1/18 Bridges Avenue Coburg North and 20 Bridges Avenue Coburg North.

A public notice was also issued on the Merri-bek website.

The consultation period was open for 30 days and no objections were received. Support was received from the owners abutting the development.

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

There are no financial implications of this report. The issuing of street numbers reflecting the suburb boundary change can be completed with the current resources in the Finance and Procurement Branch.

7. Implementation

Should Council support the recommendation of this report, Council officers will issue the new street numbering. This will enable the development to connect utility services, as well as progress the subdivision and enable the lodgement to Land Victoria for the release of Certificates of Title and in turn the settlements for new residents.

Council officers will submit the resolution to Geographic Names Victoria Registrar for finalisation whereby the Land Victoria maps are amended.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.10 PUBLIC LITTER BINS - CHANGE OVER UPDATE

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Open Space and Environment

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Updates Technical Notes Part B – B140 Bins as part of Merri-bek Technical Notes Review to include signage for each stream that encourages correct public bin usage and colour coding in line with the Australian Standard.
2. Continues to provide public litter bins for general rubbish and mixed recyclables (in some locations) and introduces standardised signage on public bins across the municipality and limits the supply of 4 bins to residents and businesses.
3. Refers the following to the 2024/25 budget process:
 - Any additional resources required to create a standard look and feel to the public litter bins.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Merri-bek City Council is committed to diverting waste from landfill and reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste management. The recent roll out of glass recycling and food and garden organics bins to all households will increase the amount and quality of materials recovered for recycling through the kerbside system.

Work is currently ongoing to identify priority waste materials across our local economy to inform the development of the new Circular Economy Strategy, which will replace the now expired Waste and Litter Strategy.

Since this time the internal and external context of waste management has changed significantly. Reforms to the kerbside waste collection service, the upcoming introduction of a Container Deposit Scheme, and the state-wide ban on 7 key single use plastic items will all impact on the performance of public litter bins.

Further work is needed to determine the costs and benefits of increasing public litter bin infrastructure.

This report addresses Items 3 and 4 in the Council Resolution Action Memo, 13 October 2021 as stated in the Previous Council Decision, that addressed the feasibility of including additional bins in public places to replicate the 4-bin program for residents and businesses.

The introduction of standardised signage to improve our current diversion and contamination levels is recommended as an initial phase. The introduction of additional bins for the food and garden organics and glass recycling streams can be assessed following the assessment of the effectiveness of the Kerbside Waste Reform and Container Deposit Scheme.

A 12-month trial of public place recycling bins in collaboration with the Brunswick 5Th Scouts Group has been set up in Methven Park to audit contamination levels and test various signage strategies to educate the public and minimise contamination levels.

In addition to the new initiatives Council will continue to monitor contamination in public litter bins and test and monitor effectiveness of strategies. Council will seek to collaborate, share information and learn from other councils addressing similar challenges.

Previous Council Decisions

Public Litter Bins - Cost of Standardisation - Response to Notice of Motion - 13 October 2021.

That Council:

...

3. *In light of these costs and risks, rather than seeking funding to implement a new system of public bins in the 2022/2023 budget cycle, requests officers to provide a report by June 2022 on a changeover policy towards a common “look and feel” of the bins at end of life informed by good practice urban design principles and that suits the different contexts of the bins.*
4. *Seeks consideration of the business case for adding recycling, glass and food organic / garden organics bins at public litter bin sites, including the ongoing delivery model and costs to deliver, to feed into the Waste Strategy review.*

...

Notice of Motion - From struggle to peace: Addressing the war on waste in our homes, streets and parks - 14 April 2021

That Council:

...

- 3 *Seeks Council officers to provide a report in October 2021 on the cost of streamlining the look and feel of public litter bins, including the colour and messaging consistent with residential bins, to enable consideration in the 2022/2023 budget cycle*

...

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Theme 1: An environmentally proactive Merri-bek

Strategic Objective: To strive for maximum protection of people’s health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment.

Strategy: Strive for zero waste to landfill with best practice municipal waste minimisation through reform of kerbside services, community education and innovation.

Theme 4: Vibrant Places and Spaces in Merri-bek

Strategic Objective: To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Moreland that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.

Strategy: Promote the amenity and liveability of the public realm with services, facilities, community participation, strong local laws and compliance activities.

Council Action Plan 2023/2024 - Major Initiatives and Priorities

32. In consultation with the community, develop and implement a new Public Realm Amenity Service Plan to keep our spaces and places clean, safe and inviting. (New - incorporating Public Toilet Strategy, Graffiti Strategy, Waste and Litter Strategy).

2. Background

Since the Council resolution in October 2021 much has changed in relation to managing waste and litter at a local, state and federal level, and this in turn has impacted Council’s strategic direction.

In July 2022, a new authority called Recycling Victoria, was established to manage the waste and resource recovery sector. This authority is currently developing a service standard for kerbside waste collections, which will include a list of prescribed items for each of the four waste streams.

Possibly the most significant change in relation to litter is the planned introduction of a container deposit scheme (CDS) in Victoria in November this year. This scheme will reduce the amount of beverage containers in the litter stream. The 2016 *Public Place Recycling and Litter Bin Audit* did not count CDS eligible containers however, based on the categories used it's possible to estimate that around 10 per cent to 20 per cent of waste bins and 40 per cent to 60 per cent of recycling bins could be diverted for recycling through the CDS.

Another significant change in the waste and litter landscape is a policy shift by state and federal government, to consider how we use and manage materials and resources through a circular economy lens. This broadscale policy change provides the opportunity to refocus efforts on waste reduction through better product design, product stewardship, reuse, repair and repurposing as preferred options over recycling, recovery and residuals management.

This shift in the traditional approach to waste management by local and state government, led to a revision in the development of the refreshed Waste and Litter Strategy. The new strategy, called the Circular Economy Strategy – Towards a Zero Waste Merri-bek, will have a focus on the three fundamental principles of a Circular Economy, which are to:

1. Design out waste and pollution.
2. Keep products and materials in use at their highest value.
3. Regenerate natural systems.

This refocus means that strategy actions will seek higher order outcomes to reduce waste, with a focus on priority materials, and will include initiatives to work with businesses to rethink material use across the local economy.

Public Place Litter Bins

The public litter bin system manages approximately 673 tonnes of waste to landfill per year which is equivalent to just 1 per cent of total waste managed by Council.

There are 626 public place litter bins plus 37 smart compaction bins installed across the municipality. These are serviced by the Street Cleansing unit using two waste trucks dedicated to emptying public litter bins. The litter bin trucks work from established schedules to service bins and dispose directly at the Cleanaway landfill in Ravenhall, at the end of the day's operations.

The 37 smart bins are installed in areas identified as problem areas for bin overflows as well as out of the way areas where there are few bins. The objective of installing smart bins is to maximise bin capacity using automated crushing hardware to compact the contents within the bin by up to 85 per cent as well as reducing the frequency of service.

The introduction of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) will increase diversion from landfill from public litter bins. Eligible containers accepted through the CDS are commonly consumed away from home and disposed of through the public litter bin system. The introduction of deposit points for CDS eligible containers will reduce the amount of beverage containers in public litter bins and will reduce the need for additional mixed recycling and/or glass bins.

It is therefore recommended to determine the percentage of recyclables in the public litter bin system (general rubbish and mixed recycling) after CDS has been established before making a determination on installing additional public place recycling bins and adding glass bins.

Public place recycling bins that will require standardised signage

There are currently 61 recycling bins across the municipality, 4 located north of Bell Street, the remaining 57 are located to the south with the majority along Sydney Road. Contents are transported to Visy Recycling in Banyule.

An audit conducted on public place litter and recycling bins in 2016 found contamination to be 21 per cent of the recycling stream. Most of this contamination was food waste. At the time the contamination rate was 5 per cent higher than in household recycling. Since this time household recycling contamination has increased significantly and now sits at 31 per cent of the recycling stream, it is assumed that public place recycling bin contamination rate has also increased in line with household recycling.

A 12-month trial of public place recycling bins has been set up in Methvyn Park to audit contamination and test various signage strategies to educate the public and minimise contamination levels. This trial is being undertaken in collaboration with the Brunswick 5th Scouts Group as an initiative to engage and seek ideas from young members in our community on recycling challenges and provide an educational opportunity at the same time.

Locations of garbage bins

The table below shows the distribution of the 626 public place garbage bins throughout Merri-bek.

No	Location
75	Near Public Transport stops
240	Within or next to Parks and Reserves
7	Along Bike Paths
12	Within or next to Car Parks
292	Along Main Street and Roads

The listed locations will all require standardised signage to assist with appropriate disposal of waste.

3. Issues

Community impact

Development of consistent signage for use across existing and new public place bins will assist people to use bins correctly. This would reduce contamination and improve the quality of the recovered material streams. The standard design of waste units and placement in the public realm that will improve the aesthetic of the area.

The roll out of CDS deposit points will change behaviour around disposal of beverage containers which will impact the volume of material collected through the public litter bin system. Further analysis on the composition of public litter and recycling bins following the introduction of CDS will be required to determine the need for additional bins.

Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability Implications

Waste going to landfill remains a significant environmental issue, however waste to landfill through the public litter bin system represents just 1 per cent of total waste managed by Council. Whilst important, it should be recognised that far greater impact on Green House Gas emissions generated by waste to landfill can be made through improvements to residential and commercial waste collection services. It is therefore proposed that the focus for public litter bins should be on increasing diversion and improving the quality of the material recovered through the existing public litter bin system prior to investing in additional infrastructure.

Economic Sustainability Implications

Further strategies will be investigated to assess options for treatment of public place litter and recycling bins in Merri-bek in the future. This includes the trial at Methven Park and potential further audit of public litter and recycling bins, following the implementation of CDS, to determine whether the percentage and quality of recyclables in the public litter bin system justifies the cost of additional bins.

The October 2021 Council report outlined the cost to paint all silver bins red, in line with the Australian Standard for waste and recycling colour coding, was estimated to cost \$217,000 (at \$1,000 per bin). It is recommended to replace public bins in a staged approach within Council's existing allocated budget, continue to implement strategies to extend the life and minimise graffiti of existing bins and improve messaging on bins.

Human Rights Consideration

All external treatment of bins and any graphics used on the bins will take into consideration the Human Rights Charter and the Merri-bek Human Rights Policy implications in regard to access.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Affected Persons Rights and Interests

Council will consult with any person potentially impacted by the installation of additional public place bins.

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 costs associated with the end-of-life replacement, the trial at Methven Park and current strategies to extend the life and minimise graffiti of existing bins and improve messaging on bins will be undertaken within the existing budget.

7. Implementation

The recommendations of this report will be implemented as part of Council's business as usual processes with the update of the Technical Notes undertaken as part of the annual review process of Technical Notes and a staged implementation of signage on public bins.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.11 COMMUNITY SUPPORT DURING EXTREME HEAT EVENTS

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy

Aged and Community Support

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Supports the community during extreme heat events through:
 - a) Making community venues available in Merri-bek for the 2023-2024 summer for people to seek respite during extreme heat events, including extended operating hours, as outlined in the report;
 - b) Other actions as set out in the report, including monitoring of vulnerable clients of Council services and targeted communications to the wider community and vulnerable groups.
2. Continues to liaise with other Councils, Emergency Services agencies and the State Government to ensure the adequacy of planning and resourcing of community support during extreme heat events.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Climate science research forecast a likely increase in the duration and severity of extreme heat and heatwave events in the future and the confirmation of an El Nino weather event in Victoria which increases the likelihood of high temperatures during the 2023 – 2024 summer season. Extreme heat events can cause a substantial impact on the community and the quality of life of individuals and in some cases can cause severe health impacts and even death. The failure of energy, transport and other critical infrastructure can greatly compound the health impact of an extreme heat event. This Report outlines the range of measures taken by Council to support the community during periods of high or extreme heat, including the availability of cool venues such as libraries and swimming pools.

Extreme Heat is identified as a high risk within Merri-bek in the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA), given its likelihood and potential consequences. This risk rating informs the Extreme Heat Plan which is a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan which outlines Council's roles and responsibilities during emergencies including periods of extreme heat as outlined in this Report.

Previous Council Decisions

Community Support During Extreme Heat Events – 13 September 2023

That Council:

1. *Receives a report on what community centres will be available for people to seek respite from extreme heat in Merri-bek in the 2023-2024 summer.*
2. *Consults with Blacktown City Council in Western Sydney regarding their experience with heat refuges (Cooling Centres)*
3. *Advocates to the state government to update the State Heatwave Plan to state the role of local government more explicitly in a heatwave, including what resources will be made available to local councils to support the community, including measures such as providing Cooling Centres to members of the community who aren't able to stay cool in their homes.*

1. Policy Context

Council has an Extreme Heat Plan which is a sub-plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan. An associated Action Plan outlines Council's operational response to extreme heat and is updated annually. Extreme Heat is identified as a high risk in the municipality via the Community Emergency Risk Assessment (CERA), given its likelihood and potential consequences.

Council has a number of other plans that contribute to reducing the impact of extreme heat on the community, including the Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan 2016-2026; the Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2027; and Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan 2023-2025.

2. Background

In Victoria, a heatwave is defined as a period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot weather that could impact on human health, community infrastructure and services. The Bureau of Meteorology issues a heatwave warning for local weather districts for two types of heatwaves:

- Severe Heatwaves are likely to be more challenging for vulnerable people such as older people, particularly those with medical conditions.
- Extreme Heatwaves which will put people at risk if they do not take precautions to stay cool – even if they are healthy. Extreme Heatwave warnings are a rare occurrence.

Warnings are sent to Health and Emergency Management agencies and issued through the Bureau of Meteorology website and Weather App which Council officers are registered to.

The Department of Health, through the Chief Health Officer, also issues Heat Health Warnings notifying the community, local governments, hospitals, health and community services of the risk and likely impact on people's health during a heatwave, or on occasion when it is considered that forecast temperature poses a health risk, for example a single day of extremely high temperatures.

The heat health warning triggers elements of Council's Heat Plan including community information, education and monitoring of vulnerable communities including Aged and Community Support clients. The Extreme Heat Plan focusses on building individual and community resilience to extreme heat through the provision of information and support for pre-planning.

3. Issues

Community impact

Extreme heat events can cause a substantial impact on the community and the quality of life of individuals and in some cases can cause severe health impacts and even death. Climate science research forecast an increase in the duration and severity of extreme heat and heatwave events. Extreme heat can affect anybody, including the young and healthy; however, there are certain population groups that are more at risk than others. These include people aged 65 years and over, people who have a medical condition and people taking medicines that affect the way the body reacts to heat. The failure of energy, transport and other critical infrastructure can greatly compound the health impact of an extreme heat event.

Building Community Resilience

Emergency Management Victoria's Extreme Heat Sub-Plan emphasises the importance of: "individuals taking responsibility for their own health and the health of those in their care, and actively planning and preparing for extreme heat events."

The Department of Health has lead responsibility for preparing messages and general information about management in an extreme heat event. Fact sheets are provided on the Department’s website and the Better Health Channel website. A media toolkit has been prepared for use by local government. This toolkit comprises a range of electronic documents that can be used to ensure media releases are localised.

While in most instances the safest option for people during high heat days is to stay home, The Dept of Health’s community information brochure “How to Cope and Stay Safe in Extreme Heat” includes the following reference: “Spend as much time as possible in cool or airconditioned buildings (shopping centres, libraries, cinemas or community centres).”

The Department (and Council) also provides information to the community about how to keep your home cool during hot weather. The notion of creating a “cool room” is being promoted as a measure for staying safe and comfortable at home. However, for some households without air conditioning, it is simply not possible to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature during periods of extended heat, particularly when the overnight minimum remains high during a declared heatwave (3 consecutive days or more).

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing has several programs aimed at preparing and reducing the impact of heat events on Victorians in public housing. These programs include:

- Weekly contact services for tenants aged 75 years and over and a further phone call when there is an expectation of hot weather. The phone call includes tips about keeping their homes cool;
- Cooler places located in community facilities within public housing that allow residents to attend for respite; and
- Electricity generators for high-rise public housing apartment buildings.

Cool venues during high heat days

Council operates several community facilities that can offer patrons cool venues during high heat days including libraries; swimming pools; community venues and Glenroy Hub etc. These venues are well dispersed across the municipality.

The table below lists Merri-bek Community Venues which are accessible to the community during periods of high heat.

<p>Leisure Centres: Seasonal Outdoor Pools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coburg Olympic - Pascoe Vale - Fawkner Leisure (Under redevelopment) 	<p>The <i>Hot Weather Strategy</i> for Council’s summer seasonal pools (Pascoe Vale and Coburg Olympic) see them extend their hours of operation if the weather is 32 degrees and above as follows: School Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekdays - 1pm to 7pm • Weekends – 10am to 7pm <p>School Holidays:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekdays – 10am to 7pm • Weekends – 10am to 7pm
<p>Year Round Leisure Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brunswick Baths (Indoor and outdoor pool) - Coburg Leisure Centre (indoor pool only) - Oak Park Sports and Aquatic Centre (outdoor pool only) 	<p>Brunswick Baths and Oak Park Sports and Aquatic Centre outdoor pools are open regardless of the weather conditions during the summer. For extreme weather conditions and demand, hours may be extended pending staff availability.</p>

Brunswick Library	Mon-Thurs: 9am-8pm Friday: 9am-6pm Saturday: 9am-4pm Sunday: 1pm-5pm
Campbell Turnbull Library	Monday: 1pm-5pm Tuesday: 10am-8pm Wednesday-Friday: 10am to 5pm Saturday: 10am to 1pm
Coburg Library	Monday-Friday: 9am to 8pm Saturday: 9am to 4pm Sunday: 1pm to 5pm
Fawkner Library	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: 10am-5pm Tuesday: 10am to 8pm Saturdays from 10am to 1pm
Glenroy Library	Monday-Wednesday: 9am to 8pm Thursday: 9am to 10pm Friday: 9am to 6pm Saturday: 9am to 4pm Sunday: 1pm to 5pm
Maternal Child Health Centres (16 locations)	Monday-Friday: 8.30am-4.30pm Monthly at two Centres on Saturdays 8.30am-12.30pm

In addition to extended hours in the case of swimming pools a number of other measures are implemented on high heat days to support the community, with a particular focus on vulnerable residents. These include:

- Monitoring of local impacts by Council Officers in line with their Emergency Management roles and communication with external emergency services and support agencies and internally across Council.
- Communications and engagement: passing on Dept of Health advice to community members on how to stay safe during periods of high heat and information about local impacts including any changes to Council services or events.
- Monitoring of vulnerable people who receive Council services such as Aged and Community Support and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clients.
- MCH clients can stay longer than usual at centres if they wish to, following a routine appointment on days of high heat.
- Seasonal outdoor pools offer extended opening hours on high heat days (32 degrees and above).
- Merri-bek libraries make drinking water available to the public in libraries on high heat days and this is always available at Glenroy Community Hub.
- Engagement with community leaders and connectors to discuss heat health and planning and develop specific strategies and communications to reach isolated or at-risk communities.
- Council partner agencies also monitor vulnerable clients, including Vincent Care who have measures in place on high heat days to support homeless people.

Trial establishment of Cooling Centres - Blacktown City Council, Sydney

Council officers consulted with Blacktown City Council, who with financial support from the NSW State Government undertook a project over two years to explore the feasibility and establish several Cooling Centres to be activated during periods of high heat, triggered by the issue of a severe or extreme heatwave warning (Usually 3 – 7 days in advance). The program was trailed in the 2021/22 summer which was characterised by cooler and wetter conditions, with no extreme heatwave events. The trial was conducted on days where the maximum temperature ranged between 32°C and 35°C.

The trial did not involve the use of transport to help people attend the cool centres and advertising was done through Council's social media channels and community service networks. Staffing and other resourcing was through a collaborative arrangement between the Council, emergency and community service agencies and was also supported through community volunteers.

The evaluation included the following findings:

- Those impacted by the heat are only able to seek respite during the day, but are leaving a cool centre to return to hot homes.
- The service is not reaching those socially isolated e.g., elderly and disabled people who are not being checked on.
- Residents are not comfortable visiting or staying in cool centres. Some may prefer staying at home despite the heat; and
- Some people did not access the centres as these did not cater to the needs of pets/animals.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Council officers have recently led a process of assessing the vulnerability of several Council buildings to climate change. The project assessed eight sample buildings in Merri-bek for resilience to climate change, considering their existing functions. Some of these buildings may be used by community during extreme heat events including Brunswick Town Hall, Brunswick, and Coburg Library. Based on the assessment, a number of vulnerabilities have been found which will require further consideration and potential investment to improve their performance during extreme weather events.

Local Government's role within the State Emergency Management Plan

The State Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) Extreme Heat Sub Plan outlines responsibilities of local government in the preparedness and planning for extreme heat. Section 5.2.8 states:

“Municipal councils and multi-agency MEMPCs both play a critical role in preparing their community for extreme heat events. Within any respective MEMPC extreme heat-related sub-plans, there will likely be context-specific information for communities to utilise local services, such as community centres, libraries, shopping centres and areas with significant tree canopy ahead of extreme heat events. Municipal councils may develop their own preparedness activities to ensure community members and in particular those most at risk during extreme heat events are protected.”

Advocacy in relation to resources and availability is made through the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committees as a request for further information and support. The Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government Victoria have also been involved in the ongoing discussions with extreme heat emergencies and their impacts on the community and current resources available to local councils.

Council officers are also involved in the Climate Emergency Action Basecamp group which brings together municipal councils across the country to discuss impacts of climate change, programs for extreme heat and share ideas and information.

Economic sustainability implications

Extreme heat can restrict the productivity of workers, particularly those working outdoors or in heat-exposed jobs. As extreme heat events become even hotter and occur more often, decreased labour productivity will become even more costly and will likely force changes in the workplace, such as a transition to working night shifts (*Climate Council Report (2014): <http://www.climatecouncil.org.au/heatwaves-report>*).

Outages of infrastructure and utilities as a result of extreme heat events can constrain economic productivity and growth of the economy, as business may suspend, or products become unavailable for consumption. Individuals may also find themselves in economic hardship if they are dependent on costly methods of cooling, such as air conditioning.

Legal and risk considerations

Local Government has a clear duty of care in the context of climate change adaptation. The actions outlined in this report along other related strategies allow Council to understand, communicate, and proactively address climate risk. This will limit exposure to legal and financial liability which could otherwise result from a failure to appropriately plan, adapt and build resilience to now foreseeable and unavoidable climate impacts.

Human rights consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, particularly Sections 12 and 18 which relate to freedom of movement and taking part in public life respectively.

Building the climate resilience of Merri-bek's community is closely tied to the effective delivery of Council's human rights, gender equity and social cohesion work. Examples of this include actions related to reviewing existing solar and thermal grants to maximise climate resilience and social equity outcomes, and in ensuring continuing access to Council services by at risk clients in Early Years and Aged and Community Care Services during heatwaves.

4. Community consultation and engagement

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.

Measures to support the community during heatwaves involve initiative-specific engagement with external stakeholders such as community service providers, emergency service agencies and at-risk cohorts.

Communications

As outlined in this report Council plays a key role in informing the community of ways to keep safe during heatwaves including up to date information about local impacts and changes to Council services. Timely and targeted information is provided to clients of Aged and Community Support and Maternal and Child Health Services in the lead up to summer, prior to and during periods of high and extreme heat. The broader community is also provided with information about how to stay safe and updates on other impacts of extreme heat such as disruptions to public transport, electricity or other essential services. Targeted "real time" information is provided via social media about capacity at Council swimming pools on high heat days or other changes to Council services or events.

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 resolutions can be implemented within current resources.

7. Implementation

Council's Emergency Management staff will activate the Extreme Heat Action Plan in collaboration with relevant Council Business Units as required to ensure the community are informed and supported to stay healthy in the heat.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.12 COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND SUPPORT MERRI-BEK

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy

Community Wellbeing

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Refers \$50,000 to support the Community and Information Support Merri-bek (CIS Merri-bek) operational funding to the Quarter 1 2023/24 budget review and then a further \$50,000 to the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budget process for Council's consideration.
2. Notes the leadership role CIS Merri-bek play in food relief coordination across the community and support them to continue providing food relief information via Council channels and coordinate the food relief network as part of any operational funding awarded by Council.
3. Supports Community Information and Support Victoria's (CIS Vic's) advocacy to the Victorian Government for operational funding.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report is in response to a request to Council from CIS Merri-bek regarding its current and future funding needs. Community Information and Support Merri-bek (CIS Merri-bek) is located at 512 Sydney Road Coburg. The organisation provides emergency relief that supports residents who are in financial crisis and experiencing financial disadvantage with limited or no other means of support. CIS Merri-bek have delivered this service locally for more than 45 years. For a client accessing emergency relief, this could mean help with food, food vouchers, and help with household bills (utilities, travel, and medical costs) as well as information, advocacy and referrals. The organisation does not receive any operational funding for their coordination from government or philanthropic agencies and has no secure accommodation.

They were a critical part of the response during Covid-19 and will be an important part of supporting the community through other disasters, such as the upcoming heatwave.

CIS Merri-bek are seeking support from Council for operational funding to continue the service. They have previously had Councils organisational support grant, and then Covid-related funding via the State Government but they are no longer eligible for this funding and/or it is no longer available.

There is a broader campaign to gain State funding in the longer term, not just for CIS Merri-bek but across other Community Information and Support Services across the state.

In addition, the future accommodation of CIS Merri-bek is not secure, as their lease agreement with the Uniting Church of Australia, is on a month-to-month basis and the Uniting Church has entered into an arrangement with Assemble Futures to redevelop the current site at 512 Sydney Road.

It is understood that a preliminary proposal for the redevelopment of part of the site has been presented to the State Government as part of its Development Facilitation. Ultimately the proposal, should it progress, will be considered and determined by the Minister for Planning rather than Council. This process should allow for formal comments to be sought from Council and the surrounding community as part of the State Governments Development Facilitation Process.

Council Officers are investigating any possible suitable Council owned premises that may might provide suitable interim accommodation.

Previous Council Decisions

Notice of Motion - Coburg Community Information Centre – 14 June 2017

Council resolves to:

1. *Recognise the important social support that the Coburg Community Information Centre provides to the Moreland community through its provision of emergency relief and the No Interest Loans Scheme.*
2. *Refer an amount of \$13,000 into the 2017-2018 budget process to assist the Coburg Community Information Centre to cover administration and overhead costs.*
3. *Receive a report on options to ensure the longevity of the service.*

1. Policy Context

Council Action Plan 2021-25 Key Objectives

(3.1.) Plan, deliver and advocate for services and good outcomes that meet the changing needs of Moreland's diverse and growing population.

(3.11.) Support service coordination, information provision and community advocacy for people experiencing insecure housing.

Community Grants Policy – July 2022

Council Grants offers the Organisational Establishment category, but CIS Merri-bek are not eligible to apply as they are well established.

Human Rights Policy 2022

Council commits to reducing barriers for people in poverty, low-income families, or people experiencing economic hardship, homelessness, or intergenerational social-economic disadvantage by addressing poverty and disadvantage (p.14).

2. Background

CIS Merri-bek deliver an important emergency relief service to the Merri-bek community. The work that CIS Merri-bek undertook during the COVID pandemic was hard and complex, however proved that they are making a difference to all sections of the community.

CIS Merri-bek have a holistic philosophy of getting people back on their feet and dealing with underlying issues, to help people with referrals to relevant services. Under the leadership of their coordinator, they train up a dedicated team of students on placement and volunteers that staff the organisation. It is due to this coordinator role, that the organisation can bring an overall return of community value of more than \$500,000 in in kind support such as casework for clients with complex needs, community donations, food relief and the energy assistance program.

CIS Merri-bek have approach Council seeking financial support to continue their operations and programs with greater certainty.

3. Issues

Community Impact

CIS Merri-bek is one of the only secular organisations that provides emergency food relief and related services and promotes inclusion and diversity. The other major providers have religious affiliations, which for many in the community can create a barrier for them to seek help.

In financial year 2022/23, CIS Merri-bek received \$150,000 of emergency relief funding from the Commonwealth. The total financial and in-kind contribution by CIS Merri-bek, is over \$500,000. During this period, the total number of calls and community visits was 3412. Over 80 per cent of CIS Merri-bek clients receive a Centrelink benefit (Disability/Newstart and Aged pension).

CIS Merri-bek service are a unique, holistic model of community support responding to broader structural inequities that mean that peoples circumstances mean they cannot survive on Government payments. Issues impacting on clients who seek support from CIS Merri-bek includes housing and rental crisis support/advocacy, unemployment pressures, lack of secure work, casual labour force issues, rising utility costs, disability and illness, health events and unforeseen circumstances, where individuals and family have no financial buffer, and increasing food prices.

CIS Merri-bek provides a wraparound support service, assisting with emergency and food relief, utility bill relief and referral/advocacy, rental arrears and advocacy, pharmaceutical bills, public transport costs and referral to debt/financial support services. This is delivered through locally provided, non-judgemental impartial and one on one case work, referral and advocacy for clients.

During the pandemic and the creation of the Food & Material Relief Network, CIS Merri-bek demonstrated their role as an 'anchor' service and played the role of coordinating smaller agencies who were responding during the crisis without formal systems in place. They facilitated agencies providing support across the LGA, to regularly contribute to the Network. CIS Merri-bek led the group through discussions of fair provision of scarce resources, client assessment systems and wicked problem solving in consultation with the services. Inadequate resourcing means there is currently no network and a recognised gap in servicing the municipality.

Funding Considerations

Councils Community Grants policy does not have provision to support ongoing funding for organisations like CIS Merri-bek. Council Grants provides *Organisational Establishment Grants*, but CIS Merri-bek are not eligible to apply as they have operated for many years.

Council does fund a small number of organisations with operational support such as the Toy Library. It also provides operational and program support to Neighbourhood Houses.

Council's past funding allocations to CIS Merri-bek are outlined in the below table. Up until June 2020, funding was principally used by CIS Merri-bek to pay for rent. After this period, CIS Merri-bek received Council and State funding via Council for one-off projects.

The average recurrent operational funding amount paid to Community Information and Support member agencies by local government in Victoria is \$134,700. CIS Merri-bek is the only Branch office that receives no local government funding of this type or accommodation support from Council.

Of the 30+ CIS Vic member agencies that are funded by the Federal Government to deliver the essential service of emergency relief, CIS Merri-bek is the only agency that does not receive assistance from the Council in the form of venue and or operational / staffing costs.

Council Support for Community Information and Support Merri-bek

2013/14	Operational support	\$26,670.49
2014/15	Operational support	\$4000
2015/16	Operational support	\$3200
2016/17	Operational support	\$2560
2017/18	Operational support	\$13,000
2018/19 – 2019/20	Organisational Support Grant	\$20,000 over 2 years
2020/21	Moreland Food & Material Relief Support Project*	\$50,000
2021/22	State COVID-19 Multicultural Communities Taskforce* (through Department of Families, Fairness and Housing)	\$20,000
2022/23	Covid Local Partnership Funding* (through Department of Families, Fairness and Housing)	\$15,500
		*one-off funding

Human Rights Consideration

CIS Merri-bek supports community members that are not only struggling with financial issues, but are experiencing complex issues such as social isolation, family violence, intergenerational poverty, housing stress and homelessness. There is no other agency in Merri-bek that deals with clients who are falling through the gaps in service provision and can offer information, advocacy and support.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

The upcoming summer period is likely to include heatwave conditions, that will impact community members facing additional vulnerabilities and those with high exposure to heat due to inadequate housing. CIS Merri-bek is a key response agency in reaching isolated and vulnerable residents during a heatwave emergency, through the provision of home visiting service with emergency vouchers and food relief packs.

Human Rights Consideration

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

While not contained in the Victorian Charter, the right to food is recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as part of the right to an adequate standard of living and is enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. All human beings, regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status have the right to adequate food and the right to be free from hunger.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Several consultations have been conducted between Council and CIS Merri-bek.

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

It is recommended to refer \$50,000 to the Q1 2023/24 budget process for Council's consideration and then a further \$50,000 to the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budget process.

7. Implementation

Council officers will continue to communicate with CIS Merri-bek and explore any suitable potential accommodation options. Officers will also advise DFFH (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) of CIS Merri-bek's concerns and needs.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.13 BANNING FOSSIL FUEL ADVERTISING ON COUNCIL LAND

Director Place and Environment Joseph Tabacco

Property, Place and Design

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Not permit advertising on Council land which specifically promotes fossil fuel companies, or companies which are directly involved in the extraction, production and/or processing of coal, oil and gas.
2. Notes the definitions of 'fossil fuel', 'fossil fuel company' and 'Council Land' as provided in the Council report which articulate the scope of this resolution.
3. Includes in the draft Lease and Licence Policy, the draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy, and its accompanying User Guide to reference the prohibition of advertising of companies that produce or supply fossil fuels on Council land.
4. Notes that agreements with tenants relating to this initiative would be phased in as lease, licence, land-related contracts and allocation agreements are renewed or negotiated.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In 2018, Merri-bek declared a climate emergency and in 2019 Council passed the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Strategy to take a leading role in decarbonising our city, transitioning to net-zero emissions. The burning of fossil fuels is the major cause of the climate emergency. Climate action consistent with the science requires new coal, oil and gas to remain in the ground and our energy system to urgently transition to 100% clean renewable energy.

Council has been approached by Comms Declare, a volunteer run, nonpartisan group of communications professionals committed to a transition to a climate friendly future. Comms Declare has commenced a campaign to ban fossil fuel advertising in Australia and is seeking support from local Councils to ban fossil fuel advertising in their local communities.

A ban on advertising of fossil fuel companies on Council land could be a positive addition to the suite of existing Council initiatives designed to support tenants of Council-owned buildings and facilities to be less reliant on fossil fuels in the context of the climate emergency.

A survey was undertaken of all active tenants of Council owned and managed land, seeking input to understand what a ban on fossil fuel advertising would mean for them and what each organisation's position was in relation to climate action. Of the 22 responses, all respondents indicated they had no current fossil fuel advertising, with 2% stating the introduction of such a ban may have an organisational impact: primarily relating to grants and funding.

Should a decision be made to introduce a ban on fossil fuel company advertising on Council land, updates would be made to Council's draft Lease and License Policy, the draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy, and its accompanying User Guide incorporating this prohibition. Additionally, changes to formal agreements could be phased in as lease and licence agreements are renewed or negotiated.

Previous Council Decisions

Notice of Motion – Banning Fossil Fuel Advertising on Council owned property – 13 July 2022

That Council:

1. *Calls for a report on how Council can prohibit advertising on Council-owned property for companies involved in the production or supply of fossil fuels, and the impacts and implications of this proposal; and*
2. *Receives the report at a future Council meeting.*

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan 2021-2025 includes the Merri-bek Community Vision. Relevant themes to this report include:

- Theme 1: An environmentally proactive Merri-bek strives for maximum protection of people's health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment.

Climate Risk Strategy (2022)

The Climate Risk Strategy describes how Council will proactively plan for and respond to the inevitable impacts of climate change and defines an integrated approach to:

- Managing climate-related risks to Council, our assets and the services we provide.
- Adapting Council's infrastructure, open spaces, natural environment and community services to climate change, while also supporting the Merri-bek community's adaptation journey.
- Building resilience within Council and across the municipality

Merri-bek Zero Carbon 2040 Framework

This Framework outlines our strategic directions for the transition to zero carbon in Merri-bek, aiming for the municipality to achieve 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 (against baseline year), net zero by 2035 and drawdown ('negative emissions') by 2040.

2. Background

There is clear evidence that the burning of fossil fuels exacerbates the climate crisis. To align with scientific findings, climate initiatives necessitate keeping fresh reserves of coal, oil, and gas untapped, while rapidly shifting energy infrastructure toward 100% renewable and clean sources.

Following Tasmania's Waratah Wynyard Council, Yarra City Council resolved at its 18 July 2023 Council meeting to not permit advertising on Council property which specifically promotes fossil fuels, or by companies which extract, produce and/or refine fossil fuels.

Restrictions are already in place in France, the ACT, and at multiple county areas in the UK and the Netherlands. Other countries in the European Union, Germany, Sweden and Canada are debating the issue currently.

In 2018, Merri-bek City Council officially recognised the climate emergency and embraced the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Strategy, committing to spearhead the decarbonization of our city and the journey toward achieving net-zero emissions.

Council has been approached by Comms Declare, a climate advocacy group within the areas of advertising, marketing public relations and media in Australia seeking support to ban fossil fuel advertising in local communities (#FossilAdBan).

At its meeting on 13 June 2022 a Notice of Motion was received requesting a report on how Council can prohibit advertising on Council owned property for companies involved in fossil fuel production or supply.

The introduction of this initiative could be a positive addition to the substantial program of activities undertaken by Council to support tenants to become more environmentally conscious, including:

- installing solar panels on leased Council buildings.
- Community Climate Change and Energy Action Fund to support electrification
- Plastic Wise Sports Club pledge for clubs to transition from single use plastics
- installation of drinking fountains sports venues to reduce use of plastic
- gas equipment assessment to plan and budget for the electrification
- workshops on food waste reduction and reusable items, including cloth nappies
- trial of reusable crockery at our Town Halls to cut single-use waste
- reusable catering packs at Oxygen Youth Centre reducing single-use waste
- new four-bin waste system; glass and FOGO bins

3. Issues

In order to test the impact of a fossil fuel company advertising ban, all current formal tenants of Council land were asked to provide feedback on what a ban of this nature would mean for their organisation were it to be implemented. All tenants under a formal occupation agreement for Council's owned and managed land received direct correspondence, a frequently asked questions list and a contact person to approach for further information.

Organisations were asked the following questions:

- *Do you currently have advertising on Council Land of companies involved in the production or supply of fossil fuels?*
- *Would the introduction of an advertising ban on companies involved in the production or supply of fossil fuels have an impact on your organisation?*
- *If you answered "yes" the ban would impact your organisation, please explain how.*
- *Do you support the banning advertising and promotion for companies involved in the production or supply of fossil fuels?*
- *Do you have any other comments?*

The survey yielded 22 responses, and in summary all survey respondents indicated no current fossil fuel company advertising, with two respondents stating the introduction of such a ban would have an organisational impact primarily due to the limitation of sponsorship and grant avenues which would create an additional burden on other sponsors, or the organisation itself. One respondent also cautioned the exclusion of companies who are currently transitioning to non-fossil fuels.

87 per cent of survey respondents supported the ban of advertising and promotion for companies involved in the production or supply of fossil fuels, with 9 per cent against and 1 per cent neutral.

On 10 October 2023, legal counsel provided the following summarised advice:

Where Council land is not subject to a lease, licence or other form of occupancy agreement, Council possesses complete authority over the land to manage and implement this initiative.

Where Council has entered into a lease, licence or other form of occupancy agreement, in respect of Council land, the ability to enforce a ban on advertising endorsing fossil fuel companies on that land will rely on the specific terms of the occupancy agreement in question.

For example, under a Council retail lease a tenant is required to obtain Council approval before installing signs within the premises that might be visible from the exterior. In situations where Council has issued a lease featuring a provision such as this, Council retains the authority to decline approval for an advertising sign promoting a fossil fuel company.

Under agreements such as a licence or seasonal allocation, Council possesses more extensive rights to regulate the kind of advertising that can be installed by the licensee or occupant, dependent on the specific terms of the agreement.

It is important to note that even where Council has the right under a lease, licence or occupancy agreement to prohibit this particular form of advertising, there is potential for non-compliance and a scarcity of Council resources for monitoring or enforcement.

When considering this initiative, it is important to clearly define 'fossil fuel', 'fossil fuel company' and 'Council Land' to ensure scope is articulated. For the purposes of this initiative:

- 'Fossil fuel company' would be defined as fuels including, but not limited to thermal coal, gasses such as gas and LPG, petrol and diesel which have been sourced from mining companies.
- 'Fossil fuel company' would be defined as a company or other organisation that engages in the exploration, production, utilisation, transportation, sale or manufacturing of fossil fuels or fossil fuel by-products.
- 'Council Land' would be defined as land which is owned or vested in Council or Crown land for which Council is the committee of management and where users need to enter into a formal agreement with Council for use.

Advertising activities on Council Land within the definition described above, could include:

- i. Direct advertising approaches
- ii. Short term hire agreements at community venues
- iii. Long term agreements such as leasing, licensing and seasonal allocations
- iv. Contracts which permit advertising, e.g., bus shelters
- v. Other uses that require a permit or formal user agreement

The definition would not include footpaths, roads or nature strips not subject to a use agreement (such as an A frame board), construction or filming permits, nor land and assets not owned by Council which advertising occurs thereon.

Council has a range of agreements which can influence the type of advertising that can occur, these include tenant agreements, seasonal sport allocations, contracts and community venue hire.

Two key policy documents are to be updated this financial year which could reference the prohibition of advertising of companies that produce or supply fossil fuels on Council land.

Draft Lease and Licence Policy

This policy is currently in draft and is out for community consultation. It could be amended by including an additional paragraph under 4.2 Structure, which provides that all leases of Council Land must include a prohibition on signs which advertise fossil fuel companies.

In addition to this, lease, licence and occupancy agreement templates could be amended by including a new signage clause prohibiting the tenant from installing any sign which promotes fossil fuel companies.

Council currently has 146 active leases, including 25 sporting club leases (who are most likely to be impacted by this change).

Draft Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy, and its accompanying User Guide

Section 5.7 of the Current User Guide outlines the process for sporting groups to apply for sponsor / club name / temporary activity signage including applying for relevant permits. The Guide states that *“as part of the sporting ground tenancy application, all existing sponsorship signage must be identified by the club including the size of their signs. Any new signs will need to be assessed by the conditions set out in this section. The signs must not advertise tobacco or alcohol products, gaming activities or adult entertainment venues, or contain any offensive words, pictures or messages to the satisfaction of Merri-bek City Council.”* This section could be updated to include fossil fuel companies in the list of products or companies that must not be advertised.

Council can impose fossil fuel advertising bans through some of its existing contracts, working with tenants such as those at aquatic and leisure centres. More forward planning will need to be undertaken prior to negotiation for renewal of upcoming contracts such as permits for community events and activities.

Other advertising contracts

One potential contract that could be targeted for the prohibition of fossil fuel advertising is with a company that specialises in promoting street furniture, large-scale billboards, advertisements on public transportation, and self-service bicycle rental systems. Council has an existing agreement with this company for bus shelter advertising, this will conclude in 2027. Council has the ability to structure the upcoming contract, to explicitly prohibit the advertising of fossil fuels.

Community/Social impact

The banning of fossil fuel advertising on Council Land can be part of a suite of measures designed to encourage a shift in attitudes needed to transition to safer and cleaner energy sources.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

This action would support Council’s endorsed Climate Risk Strategy, and Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan, and demonstrate environmental leadership in rejecting the ongoing promotion of fossil fuels.

Economic sustainability implications

Individual sports clubs may be impacted by the lessening of potential sponsors or advertisers. However, Council is actively supporting its tenants in becoming less reliant on fossil fuels in ways which also make them more financially sustainable, such as by installing solar panels on leased Council buildings to reduce tenants’ power costs.

Legal and risk considerations

Legal and risk implications will be assessed when updating agreements for the use of land, including leases, licences and sporting club agreements for the banning of fossil fuel advertising subject to the proposed policies.

Leases are legally binding agreements and changes can only be made subject to the agreement to both parties. Therefore, any changes would be phased-in as agreements and leases are renewed or renegotiated.

Human Rights Consideration

In developing this report to Council, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

It is considered that the subject matter does not conflict with any human rights issues but supports the principles in the Charter such as section 18 Property rights including contractual rights and leases.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Internal consultation has taken place with the following units:

- Arts and Culture
- Aquatic and Leisure Services
- Council Facilities
- Property
- Recreation Services
- Sustainability and Climate

A survey of all active tenants on Council owned and managed land was undertaken from 14 September 2023 to 30 September 2023 which included a frequently asked questions list and a key contact person for additional information.

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.

Communications

Key messages on the proposal to ban advertising of fossil fuel companies, and why this is being explored, would be developed and shared through social media.

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 recommendations in this report can be accommodated within existing budgets and workplans.

7. Implementation

- If this initiative is pursued, the recommended changes would be reflected in the draft Lease and Licence Policy (2023) and an updated version of Council's Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy, and its accompanying User Guide.

- Implementation would be rolled out incrementally, as new leases are agreed or existing leases renewed or renegotiated. Leases are legally binding agreements and can only be changed according to their terms, or by mutual agreement of the parties.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.14 ABORIGINAL PLACE NAMES ON POSTAL CHANNELS

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy

Community Engagement

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the immediate implementation of traditional Aboriginal place name Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country as part of the Merri-bek City Council address;
2. Adopts a progressive implementation approach for the use of traditional Aboriginal place names in postal addresses for mail outgoing from Council, as becomes possible following staff training and systems upgrades.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In 2021 Council endorsed a Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, that recognises the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in Merri-bek. Implementing the traditional place names as part of the mailing address is a simple and proactive approach Council can adopt that aligns with our Statement of Commitment.

Use of traditional place names can help build cultural awareness, respect and understanding of First Nations history, language, and connection to country. Australia Post's address guidelines include instructions on use of traditional place names in their postal service along with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Map of Indigenous Australia as a resource to locate the traditional place of different regions.

There are actions Merri-bek City Council can take to encourage and implement the use of traditional place names in Council's day-to-day work, such as through address protocols. Actions that require changes to Council's systems will require further consideration and enquiry to determine capability and impacts.

Previous Council Decisions

Using indigenous place names on Australia Post items - 20 June 2023

That Council:

1. *Produces a report that outlines the benefits and costs to Merri-bek City in meeting its Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Merri-bek, by implementing a practice of using indigenous place names on Australia Post and other delivery/postal items in Council's day to day work.*

...

Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland – 12 May 2021

That Council:

1. *Endorses the Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Moreland as approved by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Board of Management on 4 March 2021.*

...

1. Policy Context

Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Merri-bek

Council recognises that:

- The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people are the Traditional Owners of these lands and waterways in Merri-bek.

Council supports:

- The right for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to enjoy their identity and culture, maintain and use their language, maintain their kinship ties and maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters as defined in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The Moreland Human Rights Policy 2016 – 2026 makes a clear statement of commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities states that:

“Merri-bek City Council’s vision for reconciliation is where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as the traditional custodians of the land, whose dispossession is addressed through respectful partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Council is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous Australians, particularly the Wurundjeri people as traditional owners of the land we now call Merri-bek.”

2. Background

The campaign to include traditional place names in postal addresses was led by Gomeri woman, Rachael McPhail. Australia Post responded to the campaign by launching a newly designed Parcel Post and Express Post satchels with an official space for Indigenous place names.

A number of postal services have now joined the campaign and mail packaging has been designed to include an Acknowledgement of Country and a dedicated traditional place names field in the address.

Council’s use of traditional place names can be informed by Australia Post’s address guidelines, which includes instructions on use of traditional place names in their postal service and provides the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) – Map of Indigenous Australia as the recommended resource to locate the traditional place of different regions within Australia.

Recommendations to implement use of traditional place names in postal addresses

Merri-bek City Council address

Merri-bek City Council’s current written address format is expressed as follows:

Merri-bek City Council
90 Bell Street
Coburg 3058

To implement the use of traditional place names in Australian postal addresses in Council material it is recommended that address now be identified as:

Merri-bek City Council
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country
90 Bell Street
Coburg 3058

Outgoing mail from Merri-bek City Council

It is recommended to implement a progressive roll-out for the use of traditional Aboriginal place names in postal addresses for mail outgoing from Council.

Internal communications and resources to educate staff will be implemented to increase awareness of this practice and encourage the use of traditional place names in addresses across the organisation.

Bulk outgoing mail from Council includes rates notices, resident parking permit renewals, animal registration renewals and the like.

The inclusion of traditional place names in the addresses of bulk outgoing mail will require further consideration to determine the capabilities of Council's systems. Incorporating traditional place names on bulk outgoing mail can be rolled out progressively as systems allow or as systems upgrades occur.

3. Issues

Community impact

Merri-bek City Council implementing the use of traditional places names in our delivery and postal services, public website and satellite services will have a broad positive impact for the Merri-bek community, by promoting reconciliation and social cohesion.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

There are no direct climate emergency or environmental sustainability implications associated with this report.

Economic sustainability implications

There are no economic sustainability implications associated with this report. Legal and risk considerations

There are no legal and risk considerations applicable.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirement of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. The report supports Charter Section 19 (2) Aboriginal Cultural Rights and Responsibilities which say that Aboriginal People hold distinct cultural rights and must not be denied the right to:

- Enjoy their identity and culture
- Maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Affected persons rights and interests

This action does not require community engagement and does not impact service delivery of the experience of customers and residents.

Consultation with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (Elders/Traditional Owners)

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (Elders/Traditional Owners) have been consulted on the report and advised on the correct use of the traditional place name in Merri-bek as - Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) – Map of Indigenous Australia is to be used as the recommended resource to locate the traditional place of different regions within Australia.

Communications

A communications plan will be developed that informs residents and customers of the introduction of traditional place names.

A communications plan and staff training will be developed that informs staff of the introduction of traditional place names in Merri-bek City Council's address and in the addresses of outgoing mail.

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 implementation of this program/project can be achieved within existing council resources.

7. Implementation

Implementing the traditional place name in Merri-bek City Council's address can occur immediately for online applications and in the short term for printed applications.

Implementing traditional place names in outgoing mail will be rolled out progressively as staff training and/or systems allow, noting that some systems upgrades may be required before this goal can be achieved.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.15 PROPOSED SALE - 2 SPRY STREET, COBURG NORTH

Director Place and Environment Joseph Tabacco

Property, Place and Design

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that the portion of land that Council acquired at Spry Street to create an open space buffer and path along the Merri Creek has now been subdivided and will remain in Council ownership
2. Notes the one submission received in relation to the proposed sale of the remainder of the land at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North.
3. Having fulfilled its obligations under Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Community Engagement Policy, supports the proposal to sell the site at 2 Spry St, Coburg North by a public process.
4. Writes to the submitter advising them of the Council's decision.
5. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to do all things necessary to effect the sale of 2 Spry Street, Coburg North by a public process.
6. Returns the net proceeds of this sale to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund in accordance with the resolution of Council at its 6 August 2018 meeting.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In 2018, Council purchased the property at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North, a plan of which is shown in Attachment 1. The purchase was funded from the Public Reserve and Recreation Land Fund. The site was identified as a strategic open space acquisition, because it met *Goal 3 of the Open Space Strategy - to improve access and increase the vegetation buffer along the Merri Creek* and provided an opportunity to introduce an access pathway from Spry Street to the creek/shared trail.

The site measured 4,364 square metres and is zoned General Residential Zone and contained a double storey dwelling.

At its meeting on 6 August 2018, (an extract of the Council meeting minutes is attached to this report as Attachment 2), Council resolved in the event that it acquired the land to create a separate disposable lot and give public notice of its intent to sell the land and invite written submissions. The proceeds of any sale would be contributed to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund.

The subdivision process has been completed, a new lot has been created for the dwelling and part thereof land known as Lot 1 measuring 857sqm in Attachment 1.

At its meeting on 13 September 2023 Council confirmed its previous resolution:

- To declare the remaining 857m² of the site surplus to its requirements and resolved in accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* to give public notice of its intention to sell the site in The Age newspaper, on Council's Conversations Merri-bek website, on Council's main website and by placing a notice on the site inviting written submissions.
- Notes that the dwelling needs costly repairs, has no identified Council use, and is unlikely to be of interest to social or affordable housing providers due to its relatively poor location, and the significant level of investment needed.

Public notice was given in *The Age* newspaper, on Council's Conversations Merri-bek website, on Council's main website and by placing a notice on the site inviting written submissions. Submissions closed at 5 pm on 16 October 2023.

One submission was received, in Attachment 3. The submitter did not request to be heard, so a Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting was not required.

Council, having satisfied its statutory requirements under Section 114 the *Local Government Act 2020* and its Community Engagement Policy, is now in a position to make a decision on the proposed sale of the site at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North. This report recommends that Council proceeds with the sale of this site via a public process and return the funds to be used for future acquisition or improvement of open space.

Previous Council Decisions

Proposed Sale of Land - 2 Spry Street, Coburg North – 13 September 2023

That Council:

1. *Notes that the acquisition of land at 2 Spry Street Coburg has provided significant community benefit in the form of new open space, better access to the Merri Creek and improved vegetation of the creek corridor.*
2. *Confirms its previous resolution to declare the remaining 857m² of the site, being the subdivided house at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North, surplus to its requirements.*
3. *Notes that the dwelling needs costly repairs, has no identified Council use, and is unlikely to be of interest to social or affordable housing providers due to its relatively poor location, and the significant level of investment needed.*
4. *Notes that if Council were to consider retaining the site for a non-open space use, this would require identifying a separate budget in order to return funds to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund (Open Space Reserve) with which this site was purchased.*
5. *Resolves, in accordance with section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020, to authorise that public notice be given of its intention to sell the site in The Age newspaper, on Council's official website as well as Council's Conversations Merri-bek website and a sign erected on the site inviting written submissions.*
6. *Appoints the Ward Councillors and Cr Pulford as Chair to a Committee to hear any submitters requesting to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the proposed sale of land.*
7. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to sell the subdivided house of the land at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North.*
8. *Receives a further report outlining any submissions received, including a summary of proceedings of the Hearing of Submissions Committee (if any) and presenting a recommendation regarding whether or not to proceed with the proposed sale.*

Proposed Acquisition of Land - 2 Spry Street, Coburg North - Confidential – 13 August 2018 (Attachment 2)

Proposed Acquisition of Land - 2 Spry Street, Coburg North - Confidential – 6 August 2018 (Attachment 2)

1. Policy Context

Council Plan

The Council Plan 2021-2025 sets out strategic objectives through delivery of major initiatives and priorities and ways to achieve these objectives. The Council Plan also outlines how the Council will protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipality. The Council Plan includes the Merri-bek Community Vision and part of the key themes to achieve the community vision is to manage assets that meet changing needs over the long term.

2. Background

In 2018, Council purchased a property at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North as a strategic open space acquisition, to improve access and increase the vegetation buffer along the Merri Creek, an aspiration contained within the Moreland Open Space Strategy.

At its meeting on 13 September 2023 Council confirmed its previous resolution to declare the remaining 857m² of the site, in **Attachment 1**, being the subdivided house at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North, surplus to its requirements and resolved in accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* to give public notice of its intention to sell the site in *The Age* newspaper, on Council's Conversations Merri-bek website, on Council's main website and by placing a notice on the site inviting written submissions.

Public notice was given in *The Age* newspaper, on Council's Conversations Merri-bek website, on Council's main website and by placing a notice on the site inviting written submissions. In addition, 195 letters were mailed to landowners and occupiers in the vicinity of the subject site advising of the proposal and inviting written submissions. Submissions closed at 5 pm on 16 October 2023.

One submission was received, in **Attachment 3**. The submitter did not request to be heard, a Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting was not required, and officers are able to present the matter to Council.

Council, having satisfied its statutory requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020* and its Community Engagement Policy, is now in a position to make a decision regarding the proposed sale of the site.

3. Issues

Summary of Views Expressed in Submissions	Number of submissions	Officer comments
The submitter wrote on behalf of <i>Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective (WUC)</i> to propose that this property be used for a recycling drop off point/eco info centre.	1	The site is zoned General Residential Zone. Any change of use (ie recycling drop off point) would require a Planning Permit. Alternative uses would require upgrades to the site to fulfill Council's Essential Safety Measures requirements costed at over \$350,000 prior to any occupation. Council has no identified budget to undertake these works. The proceeds of the proposed sale are to be returned to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund as resolved by Council at its 6 August 2018 meeting. These funds were used to purchase the property, and can only be used to acquire or improve open space.

Council's Building Maintenance Unit undertook a preliminary assessment of the dwelling identifying upgrades worth an estimated \$375,000, as shown below.

External works, i.e. painting, replacing gutters, fencing, floor boards, tiling, window wood rot and probable underpinning.	\$153,500
Internal works i.e. painting, plumbing, heating and cooling, replacement of staircase to make compliant, replacement of windows and light fittings.	\$106,000
Essential Services	\$25,000
Outhouse i.e., check and fix all rotted walls, electrical and plumbing.	\$25,000
Consultancy	\$16,000
15% contingency	\$48,825
Total	\$374,325

No structural assessment or report has been undertaken. This would require a qualified building surveyor to provide a detailed report on compliance upgrades and any structural issues.

Urban Planning

The property at 2 Spry Street, Coburg North is located in the residential hinterland adjacent the Merri Creek.

The land is currently included in a General Residential Zone and would not require rezoning prior to any sale. This zoning permits development of up to three storeys. The land to the north is included in a Public Park and Recreation Zone and forms part of the Merri Creek Trail. Land to the east and partly south has been purchased by Council for open space purposes and will be rezoned as part of a future amendment.

No change is required to the Environmental Significance Overlay and Erosion Management Overlay that apply to the site.

Social and affordable housing

The location scores 7/20 on the University of Melbourne Housing Access Rating Tool (HART). It is adjacent to open space and 600 metres from a tram and 1.1km from the nearest train. It does not score for proximity to other essential services.

The dwelling is an unrenovated four-bedroom house built pre-1945 requiring costly renovation to bring up to standard. It is unlikely to be considered for use as a group home or rooming house.

As a development site, the constraints of the General Residential Zone, its sensitive location adjacent to open space and its distance from key services makes this a less attractive site for the development of new social or affordable housing.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Section 8 of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities - Right to recognition and equality before the law which means that all Victorians have the right to be recognised as a person, to enjoy their rights without discrimination, to be treated equally under the law and protected from discrimination.

4. Community consultation and engagement

The following Council units were consulted with in relation to the site and seeking expertise in relation to other future uses for the site:

- Principal Advisor Social and Affordable Housing
- Social Policy and Early Years

- Transport
- Asset Management
- Strategic Planning
- Open Space Maintenance and Street Cleansing
- Open Space Design and Development.
- Youth and Leisure Services

Council's Principal Advisor Social and Affordable Housing Officer has assessed the site and advised it is not identified as a suitable site for affordable housing.

No alternate uses were identified, and no objections were received from these units in relation to the proposal to commence statutory procedures associated with the notice of intention to sell the site.

Public notice was also given in *The Age* newspaper, on Council's corporate website and on Council's Conversation Merri-bek platform on 18 September 2023 inviting written submissions. In addition, 195 letters were mailed to landowners and occupiers in the vicinity of the subject site advising of the proposal and inviting written submissions.

Council consulted with the community in accordance with Section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Engagement Policy (IAP2 Spectrum and Statutory Projects).

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

At its meeting on 6 August 2018, Council resolved that if the property a 2 Spry Street, Coburg North was to be sold, the proceeds of any sale would be returned to the Public Resort and Recreation Land Fund which is used for the purchase or upgrade of open space sites. The fund was used to purchase the land and can only be used for open space acquisition or improvements.

At a further meeting on 13 September 2023 Council confirmed its resolution from a meeting held on 6 August 2018.

7. Implementation

If the officer recommendation is endorsed, officers will commence the process to sell the land and improvements at 2 Spry St, Coburg North by a public process.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|---|--|------------|
| 1 | 2 Spry Street Coburg North - Plan | D23/385470 |
| 2 | Proposed acquisition of land - 2 Spry Street, Coburg North - extract of confidential Council meeting minutes - August 2018 | D23/421725 |
| | <i>Pursuant to section 3(1)(h) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a).</i> | |
| | <i>Confidential minutes Council..</i> | |
| 3 | Summary of Submissions Proposed Sale of 2 Spry St Coburg North | D23/508190 |

Attachment 1

2 Spry Street, Coburg North - Plan



Figure 1: Aerial of 2 Spry Street, Coburg North

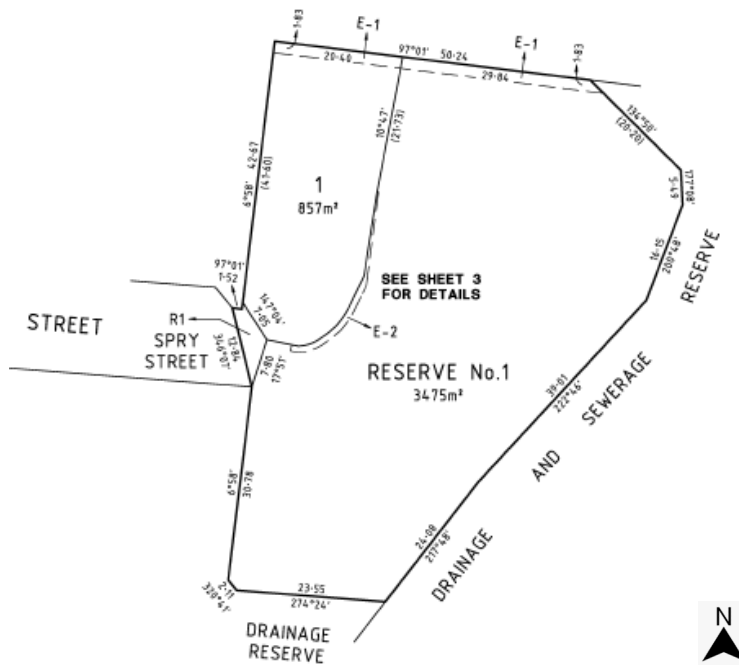


Figure 2: Plan of subdivision 2 Spry Street, Coburg North

Submission for the Proposed Sale of 2 Spry Street, Coburg North

No of Submissions	Comments
1	<p>Hi Merri-bek Property Team,</p> <p>On behalf of Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective (WUC) and the Merri-bek community doing out utmost to recycle "hard to recycle" items, we would like to submit to council that this property be used for a recycling drop off point/eco info centre.</p> <p>Currently WUC at 869 Sydney Rd Brunswick is drop off point for: Medical blister packs (program by Pharmacycle) Dental products (Terracycle) Skin Care Products (Terracycle) and Soft Plastics (Reground)</p> <p>The demand for these services is massive in our community and our space in Brunswick very limited in terms of size. If we had a suitably sized space, we could increase the number of participants immeasurably</p> <p>The house would not need expensive/extensive remodelling to be fit for this purpose.</p> <p>Parking would not be an issue as we could limit the days/hours allocated for drop offs from community. Pick-ups by companies could also be contained a few days per month.</p> <p>Merri-bek community needs a "one stop shop" service like this desperately.</p> <p>Community members are so keen to do the right thing and WUC, with an adequately sized space, is perfectly placed (having existing partnerships with relevant organisations) to deliver this program.</p> <p>I'm happy to be contacted for more information.</p>

7.16 SUPPORT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council approves the extension of Council's Community Liability Policy to provide cover for uninsured unincorporated hirers and individuals when hiring rooms from Neighbourhood Houses, providing protection in the event of public liability incidents.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report is in response to Notice of Motion 8.2 Support for Neighbourhood Houses received at the Council meeting held 13 September 2023. At this meeting Council resolved to receive a report on options for Council to provide additional public liability insurance to neighbourhood houses for room hire to community groups.

There are seven independent neighbourhood houses within Merri-bek. They offer educational, social, recreational and support programs for people of all backgrounds, ages and cultures. Neighbourhood Houses also offer venue hire to unincorporated groups or individuals for the purpose of meetings, training, art and craft and birthday parties.

Unincorporated groups or individuals usually do not hold Public Liability Insurance and consequently, local community groups have become hesitant or unwilling to utilise Neighbourhood House facilities for their needs or are hiring a room or hall for an event without the adequate insurance cover.

Council's Insurance broker has been successful in negotiating an extension of Council's Community Liability Policy which will ensure unincorporated groups or individuals will be covered for public liability incidents when hiring rooms from Neighbourhood Houses, however there are specific conditions and an additional premium allocated to the Council. These conditions include approval processes through the Council for uninsured hirers, compliance with Council's hiring terms, single-day events with restrictions, exclusion of alcohol, and other safety and legal requirements. The Council will provide guidance to Neighbourhood Houses on how these conditions will be applied. The impact to budget is an additional \$3,500 per year.

Previous Council Decisions

Support for Neighbourhood Houses – 13 September 2023

That Council receives a report at the November Council meeting on options for Council to provide additional public liability insurance to neighbourhood houses for room hire to community groups.

1. Policy Context

Council's current suite of insurance policies have limitations in situations where a Neighbourhood House rents a hall or room to an uninsured, unincorporated group or individual. While the hired hall or room is covered by the Council's Public Liability Policy, the specific activities conducted by the uninsured third party are not covered. For example, if an uninsured hirer hosts a birthday party and a guest is injured by tripping and falling on uneven floor, it would be covered. However, activities like serving a birthday cake that results in food poisoning would not be covered by Council's existing Public Liability Policy.

2. Background

Council's seven Neighbourhood Houses play a crucial role as safe and welcoming hubs where people can forge connections, acquire new skills, and exchange ideas and experiences. They serve as vital drivers of social and economic inclusion. In addition to offering courses and organising neighbourhood house events, Neighbourhood Houses actively promote the use of their facilities by community groups and individuals to bring the community together, often at minimal or no cost.

As expected, unincorporated groups or individuals typically do not hold Public Liability insurance. Council has become aware that when Neighbourhood Houses hire rooms to unincorporated groups or individuals, they remain uninsured. Consequently, local community groups are now hesitant or unwilling to utilise Neighbourhood House facilities for their needs, which is impacting room hire revenue for Neighbourhood Houses.

Officers met with Neighbourhood Houses on numerous occasions regarding previous advice received by Council's insurer; at the time, Officers advised that the current conditions according to the insurer would impede the hiring of Neighbourhood Houses by unincorporated groups. The conditions at the time included that a Council staff member would need to review each hire arrangement received from a Neighbourhood House and the Neighbourhood House would also be required to follow Council Hall hire policy as well as other relevant policies and hire conditions.

On further review with the insurer, officers believe a clearer set of guidelines can now be developed for the Neighbourhood Houses to ensure this cover is able to be included for the hire of Neighbourhood House venues uninsured third party(s).

3. Issues

Council's Insurance broker has been able to negotiate an extension of Council's Community Liability Policy for the Hire of Neighbourhood Houses by unincorporated groups or individuals.

The cover is subject to the following conditions and an additional premium (allocated to Council):

- Any Uninsured Hirer to go through the usual process for approval/ decline via Council – not the Neighbourhood House.
- Any Uninsured Hirer to comply with Council's (not any Neighbourhood Houses) Hiring Terms, Conditions, Risk Management and COVID Plans.
- Must be single day events with a maximum duration of 6 hours and meeting/event must end by 10PM.
- Capacity restriction to 100.
- Exclusion of Alcohol.

Events where:

- Goods or services are NOT for sale.
- There are NO sports or games with a high risk of injury or damage is taking place.
- Children must be always supervised by guardians.
- Events must comply with Local Laws and/or necessary permits.
- Excludes events that are organised and managed by Council.

Council will provide guidance to Neighbourhood Houses on how the above conditions will be applied.

Legal and risk considerations

In order to obtain insurance, Council is bound by and must comply with conditions as outlined under any insurance policy, and therefore Council has no choice but to adhere to specified conditions in order to be covered by the related insurance policy.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Whilst previous decisions regarding limiting the use of Neighbourhood House venues due to limited Public liability insurance, may have prevented groups meeting at these venues, this report and the impending decision expands on the opportunities for community individuals and groups to convene. For example, Section 18 the right to participate in public affairs and Section 16: the right to peaceful assembly.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Communications

Officers met with the Neighbourhood House Networker and Managers to understand the requirements of community hirers. Officers followed up with Neighbourhood Houses in mid to late 2022 advising of the initial interpretation of the Insurers conditions. Formal advice was provided to Neighbourhood Houses in December 2022.

The Community Managed Halls (Jessie Morris and Hadfield Halls) purchase their own public liability insurance as part of their Lease arrangements with Council, but this does not provide coverage for uninsured hirers. Officers provided advice regarding Council's insurance requirements to the Community committees in July 2022 and previously in May 2017 during Lease renewals. Subject to Council's decision on this matter, Officers will update the Neighbourhood Houses on the changed level of cover, as outlined in the implementation section of this report.

Affected persons rights and interests

Prior to 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 their views regarding the effect on their rights, and for those expressed views to then be considered.

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

Insurers will charge an additional premium of \$3,500 per year to Council. Funds required to action this resolution can be met from the budget of the Governance and Strategy Branch.

7. Implementation

If endorsed, Officers will convey the outcome in writing to the seven Neighbourhood Houses in Merri-bek and the two Community Managed Halls, along with simple and clear guidance and amend Hiring policies and guidelines where appropriate.

Community organisations affected by the implementation will be consulted on the new guidelines for hire arrangements.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.17 ADOPTION OF COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE RULES 2023

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Council Meeting at its meeting on 18 October 2023 resolved that the matter be deferred to the meeting to be held on 8 November 2023.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the revised Governance Rules, provided as Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Writes to the submitters, thanking them for their contribution and providing a copy of the outcome of Council's decision (including a copy of responses as provided in Attachment 2).

REPORT

Executive Summary

At its meeting of 9 August 2023, Council resolved to endorse revised Governance Rules for community consultation for period of 21 Business days, via Conversations Merri-bek. At the close of the submission period, 7 submissions were received from 2 submitters.

Upon review of the submissions received, this report does not propose additional amendments to the revised Governance Rules as exhibited. Submissions received consisted of: matters that can be categorised as questions or statements; matters that are resolved through existing processes and legislation (i.e. not needing to be repeated in the Governance Rules); matters already included in the exhibited Governance Rules; and matters which Council officers have determined may conflict with established Governance Rules and/or have the potential to disrupt the flow/running of Council meetings inadvertently.

A summary of the submissions received, together with the Council Officer responses is provided in **Attachment 2**.

Although no additional amendments are recommended in response to community submissions received, Council officers recommend addressing an inconsistency that emerged during the 9 August 2023 Council meeting. This inconsistency relates to question time at unscheduled Council meetings. Whilst Council rejected an amendment to Rule 3.3.2 of the revised Governance Rules which sought to include public question time at every unscheduled meeting, a corresponding section 3.6.1 (2) was not updated, inadvertently keeping question time at all Council meetings (except for ceremonial, confidential, or Planning and Related Matters meetings).

To align with the Council's initial decision against including question time at unscheduled meetings, this report recommends an amendment to Rule 3.6.1 (2) Questions of Council and Community Statements to apply to scheduled Council meetings only.

The revised Governance Rules as presented in **Attachment 1** to this report for Council's consideration for adoption reflects the change to Rule 3.6.1 (2) and also retains the amendments as exhibited, which include:

- Correcting anomalies and improving readability throughout the document.
- Amending the definition of a Special Meeting to describe it as an unscheduled meeting of the Council for specific purposes.
- Adding a new rule allowing the Chairperson to determine meeting procedures when not specified in the Governance Rules.
- Amending the process for calling a Special Meeting by the Mayor or Councillors.

- Providing a definition for addressing quorum issues in Council meetings.
- Adjusting the notice requirements and agenda distribution for meetings, including considering exceptional circumstances arrangements.
- Modifying the order of business for Council Meetings, to be determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Ensuring time for questions from the public at scheduled Council Meetings.
- Providing information to Councillors about the number of questions received.
- Distributing written questions to Councillors before the Council Meeting.
- Handling unasked questions by taking them "On Notice."
- Allowing the Chairperson to answer questions or delegate them to appropriate parties.
- Enabling the Chairperson to refer questions to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Allowing community members to make statements related to Agenda items at Council Meetings.
- Restricting Community Statements from directing questions to individual Councillors or Council staff.
- Defining how petitions with fewer than 10 signatures should be handled.
- Introducing a rule prohibiting the wearing of face masks or head coverings that disguise identity, except for specific reasons.
- Specifying the process for the Chairperson's casting vote in the event of a tie.
- Clarifying the process for moving and seconding motions.
- Adding a provision for the Chairperson to seek another mover or seconder if mover or seconder wishes to withdraw.
- Deleting a procedural motion rule.
- Updating the policy regarding the review of Council policies.
- Expanding the scope of matters to be recorded in meeting minutes.
- Clarifying the suspension of Standing Orders in Council Meetings.
- Modifying the rules for determining the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor.
- Establishing a quorum for Hearing Committees.
- Altering procedures related to conflicts of interest at advisory committee meetings and other Council-supported meetings.
- Updating the record-keeping requirements for various Council meetings and briefings.
- Revising rules related to the use of Council resources during election periods.
- Deleting a paragraph about an approval memorandum in the Election Period Policy.
- Deleting Appendix 1.

Previous Council Decisions

Governance Rules Review – 9 August 2023

That Council:

1. *Endorses the amended Governance Rules provided as Attachment 1 to this report, for community consultation for a period of 21 business days from 14 August 2023 and inviting feedback from the community to be received by 5pm, 11 September 2023, with the following amendments:*
 - a) *Rule 3.3.2 Special Meetings*
 - *Amend Rule 3.3.2 (2) (a) to read as: Specify the preferred date and time and the business to be transacted.*
 - *Amend Rule 3.3.2 (2) to remove point (c).*
 - b) *Rule 3.2.4 The Chairperson’s Duties and Discretions*

Amend Rule 3.2.4 The Chairperson’s Duties and Discretions, Point (8) to read as:

Where the Governance Rules do not provide a procedure for the meeting, the Chairperson may determine the procedure to be followed in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and relevant Governance officer.”
 - c) *Rule 3.6.1 (2) Questions of Council and Community Statements*

Amend to read as: Unless Council resolves differently, there must be a time provided for questions of Council and Community Statements at every Council Meeting with the exception of ceremonial type meetings, meetings convened to consider confidential matters or meetings designated for Planning and Related Matters to enable members of the public to submit questions to Council.
 - d) *Receives a report at the October 2023 Council meeting to consider the amended Governance Rules.*

Governance Rules Review Process - 8 February 2023

That Council:

1. *Notes the recent reviews of the Governance Rules and options for additional reviews.*
2. *Determines that option 2 is its preferred course of action:*

To review only the specific sections of the Governance Rules nominated by Councillors and officers, as requiring further clarity or benchmarking for best practice.

Notice of Motion – Review of Governance Rules – 7 December 2022

That Council:

1. *Receives a report at the February 2023 Council meeting, outlining the processes and resourcing required to undertake a full review of Council’s Governance Rules.*
2. *The scope of the review of the Governance Rules is to include:*
 - a) *undertaking a review against best practice in meeting procedure and a comparative benchmark with other metropolitan councils; and*
 - b) *outlining options for improving the Governance Rules which includes (but is not limited to):*
 - i) *enhancing community questions and submissions*
 - ii) *refining motions and debate*
 - iii) *clarifying conflicts of interest*

- iv) *refining records of meetings held under auspices of Council being more inclusive; and*
- v) *removing ambiguity in the interpretation and practical application of the Governance Rules.*

Adoption of Council's Governance Rules - 10 August 2022

That Council:

1. *Adopts the revised Governance Rules, which provide for attendance and participation in Council meetings and delegated committees by electronic means of communication, provided as Attachment 1.*
2. *Thanks all submitters who provided feedback, and writes to submitters who may have provided feedback outside of the proposed amendments, explaining the purpose and rationale for the limitation of proposed amendment changes, and providing a copy of the outcome of Council's decision (including a copy of responses as provided in Attachment 2).*

Adoption of Council's Governance Rules - 8 December 2021

That Council:

1. *Adopts the revised Governance Rules, provided as Attachment 1.*
2. *Writes to the individual submitter, thanking them for their contribution and providing a copy of the outcome of Council's decision (including a copy of responses as provided in Attachment 2).*

Implementation of *Local Government Act 2020* - Governance Rules, Public Transparency Policy and Council Expenses Policy - for Adoption - 12 August 2020

That Council:

1. *Adopts the Governance Rules at Attachment 1 to this report with the following amendment:*
 - *Modify sub-rule 3.3.4 (3) to read: An Agenda for an Ordinary Meeting held in accordance with the schedule of Council meetings prepared in accordance with sub-rule (1) will be made available on Council's website at least 6 days prior to the meeting.*
2. *Determines the commencement date for the Governance Rules to be 1 September 2020.*

...

1. Policy Context

Section 60 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides that a Council must develop, adopt and keep in force Governance Rules. In doing so, a Council may amend its Governance Rules subject to ensuring that a process of community engagement is followed in amending its Governance Rules.

2. Background

At its meeting held 9 August 2023, Council endorsed revised Governance Rules for community consultation that included the following amendments, which were proposed by officers and Councillors following an internal review process:

Correction of anomalies and improved readability (various pages):

Minor amendments have been made to update Council's name change, correct any anomalies or errors and improve readability and flow of the document.

Page 11: Amend the definition of Special Meeting, to read as:

To mean an unscheduled Meeting of the Council to consider a matter that cannot be effectively dealt with in the schedule of Council Meetings and/or is convened for a particular purpose such as the Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Page 8: Add new Rule 3.2.4(8) The Chairperson's Duties and Discretions:

Where the Governance Rules do not provide a procedure for the meeting, the Chairperson may determine the procedure to be followed in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Governance Officer.

Page 17: Amend Rule 3.3.2 (2) Special Meetings (unscheduled), to read as:

The Mayor, or at least three Councillors may by written notice to the Chief Executive Officer call a Special Meeting. A written notice to call a Special Meeting must:

- (a) Specify the preferred date and time and the business to be transacted;
- (b) be delivered to the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate in sufficient time to enable notice to be given in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.3.4.

Page 18: Amend Rule 3.3.3 (1) Call of the Council, to read as:

If a quorum cannot be achieved or maintained repeatedly (3 or more times) due to the absence of Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer may require all Councillors to attend a Call of the Council Meeting.

Page 18: Amend Rule 3.3.4 (2) Notice of Meetings, to read as:

A notice of a Meeting, that is not a Special Meeting, incorporating or accompanied by an Agenda of the business to be dealt with, must be sent electronically to every Councillor for all Council Meetings, at least six days before the Meeting. A period of less than six days may be justified if exceptional circumstances exist. If exceptional circumstances exist as to why a notice of the meeting cannot be given in accordance with this rule, the exceptional circumstances must be set out/explained in the agenda.

Page 19: Amend Rule 3.3.4 (4) Notice of Meetings, to read as:

An Agenda for a Special Meeting must be made available electronically to every Councillor at least 48 hours before the Meeting. A period of less than 48 hours may be justified if exceptional circumstances exist.

Page 19: Amend Rule 3.3.4 (5) Notice of Meetings, to read as:

An Agenda for a Special Meeting will be made available on Council's website no less than 24 hours before the Council Meeting.

Page 21: Amend Rule 3.5.2 Order of Business for Council Meetings, to read as:

The order of business must be determined by the Chief Executive Officer to facilitate and maintain open, efficient and effective processes of government. Generally, the order of business of any scheduled Council Meeting will be as follows:

Page 24: Add new Rule 3.6.1 (9) Questions of Council and Community Statements:

Prior to the hearing of questions of Council and Community Statements, councillors are to be informed by the Mayor of the total number of questions received for the Council meeting.

Page 25: Add new Rule 3.6.2 (2)(e) Questions of Council:

A copy of all questions received before 12noon on the day of the Council Meeting, will be distributed to Councillors as soon as reasonably practicable.

Page 25: Amend order of Rule 3.6.2 (4) and (5) Questions of Council:

Rotate order of appearance.

Page 25: Amend Rule 3.6.2 (5) Questions of Council, to read as:

Questions that are submitted in writing but not asked, will be taken On Notice.

Page 25: Amend Rule 3.6.2 (8) – Questions of Council and Community Statements, to read as:

The Chairperson may elect to answer the question themselves or nominate one appropriate Councillor to answer each question. Prior to responding, the Chairperson may seek contextual information from the person submitting the question.

Page 25: Amend Rule 3.6.2 (9) – Questions of Council and Community Statements to read as:

The Chairperson, may at their discretion refer the question to the Chief Executive Officer, who may refer it to a member of Council staff.

Page 26: Amend Rule 3.6.3 (1) – Community Statements, to read as:

A member of the community may make a statement, for up to 3 minutes, in relation to any matter listed on the Agenda for the Council Meeting that the statement is to be made.

Page 26: Amend Rule 3.6.3 (2) – Community Statements, to read as:

Community Statements must not be directed at individual Councillors or members of Council staff.

Page 27: Amend Rule 3.6.5 (3) – Petitions and Joint Letters, to read as:

Where a petition has been signed by less than 10 people, or does not otherwise conform to the requirements contained in rule 3.6.5(1), it will be treated as a joint letter and forwarded directly to the appropriate member of Council staff for action as an operational item.

Page 29: Add new Rule 3.6.9 (1) Prohibited items:

Unless worn for either medical, health, cultural or religious purposes, a person must not wear a facemask or head covering that disguises their identity.

Page 30: Amend Rule 3.7.1 (2) How a matter is determined to read as:

In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson must, unless the Act provides otherwise, exercise a Second vote (casting vote).

Page 31: Amend Rule 3.9.1 (6) Moving a Motion to read as:

After the seconder has spoken to the Motion (or after the mover has spoken to the Motion if the seconder reserves their right to speak to the Motion), the Chairperson must call on any Councillor who wishes to speak against the Motion, then on any Councillor who wishes to speak for the Motion, after waiting until all Councillors wishing to speak to the Motion have spoken; and

Page 32: Add new Rule 3.9.1 (8) Moving a Motion:

If the mover or seconder of a motion indicates that he or she wishes to withdraw from moving or seconding the motion, the Chairperson may seek another mover or seconder (as the case requires), but if no Councillor indicates his or her willingness to be the substitute mover or seconder, the motion lapses.

Page 35: Rule 3.9.13 (6) Procedural Motions:

Delete the following procedural motion: (6) *Unless otherwise provided, debate on a Procedural Motion is not permitted and the mover does not have a right of reply.* The rationale for this amendment is that the accompanying table clearly indicates where debate is allowed, making this inclusion redundant.

Page 39: Amend Rule 3.9.16 (1) Change of Council Policy, to read as:

Council reviews its policies to ensure they are current and continue to reflect community expectations and the position held by Council.

Page 42: Amend Rule 3.11.1 (p) Keeping of Minutes, to read as:

any other matter, which the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate thinks should be recorded to clarify the intention of the Meeting or assist in the reading of the Minutes and at the request of any Councillor; and

Page 44: Amend Rule 3.12 Suspension of Standing Orders, to read as:

Standing Orders are the Rules made to govern the procedure at Council Meetings as contained in these Governance Rules. The Standing Orders cover a range of matters including the order of business, Rules of debate, Procedural Motions and election procedures. Standing Orders can be suspended to facilitate the business of a Meeting but should not be used purely to dispense with the processes and protocol of the government of Council.

Chapter 4, Election of the Mayor

Page 48: Amend Rule 4.6 (3)(h) Determining the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor, to read as:

If a lot is conducted, the Chief Executive Officer will conduct the lot and the following provisions will apply:

Chapter 5, Council Committees & Joint Council Meetings

Page 51: Add Rule 5.3 (3) Hearing Committees:

A quorum for a Hearing Committee will be half of the Councillors appointed to the Hearing Committee.

Chapter 6, Conflict of Interest

Page 55: Amend Rule 6.4 (8) Procedure at Advisory Committee Meetings and other Meetings organised, hosted or supported by Merri-bek, to read as:

Meeting records and reports of conflicts of interest will be presented to Council for noting and inclusion on the public record.

Chapter 9, Council Records

Page 60: Amend Rule 9.1 (1) Records of Meetings held under the auspices of Council, to read as:

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.

Chapter 10, Election Period Policy

Page 64: Amend Rule 6.5 Council resources must not be used, to read as:

Council resources must not be used by any Councillor or candidate in any way that supports an election campaign or in a way that is intended or likely to influence voting in any election.

Chapter 10, Election Period Policy

Amend Rule 6.7.1 Electoral Matter, as follows:

Page 65: Delete paragraph: Appendix 1 contains the approval memorandum required for a publication during the election period.

Appendix 1:

To be deleted.

Attachment 1 to this report is the revised Governance Rules that reflect the proposed amendments resulting from the consultation with Councillors and the wider community.

3. Issues

Submissions Received

At the close of the public exhibition period, 7 submissions were received from 2 submitters. Council officers considered all submissions received and for the purposes of transparency, these have been included in **Attachment 2** which provides a breakdown of feedback received by each submitter together with Council Officer responses.

Council officers have thoroughly reviewed the received submissions and have not recommend additional changes to the final version of the Governance Rules. Below, is a summary of the issues raised in the submissions and an explanation as to why Council officers do not propose further amendments to the exhibited version (further detail can be found in **Attachment 2** to this report):

1. Submitter 1

- Wearing of facemasks in the Gallery (question by nature).

2. Submitter 2

- Keeping of Council meeting minutes (addressed by existing processes and legislation).
- Change of Council policy (statement by nature).
- Moving a motion (covered in the revised Governance Rules as exhibited).
- Questions of Council and Community Statements (two submissions: the first submission conflicts with other guidelines established by the Governance Rules, the second submission is a statement by nature).
- Chairperson's duties and discretions (Council officers do not support this submission as it would cause disruption to Council meetings).

Additional change recommended by Council Officers

In addition to retaining amendments as exhibited, an additional amendment is recommended to rectify an inconsistency that emerged during the Council meeting on 9 August 2023.

At this meeting, Council rejected the following amendment:

“b) Rule 3.3.2 Special Meetings (unscheduled)

Incorporate the following point (9) There shall be public question time at every unscheduled meeting with the exception of ceremonial type meetings, meetings convened to consider confidential matters, or meetings designated for Planning and Related Matters.”

However, as part of a separate amendment, Council resolved as follows:

Rule 3.6.1 (2) Questions of Council and Community Statements

Amend to read as: Unless Council resolves differently, there must be a time provided for questions of Council and Community Statements at every Council Meeting with the exception of ceremonial type meetings, meetings convened to consider confidential matters or meetings designated for Planning and Related Matters to enable members of the public to submit questions to Council.

This has created a conflict between Rules 3.3.2 and 3.6.1 (2) within the revised Governance Rules. To align with the Council's initial decision against including question time at unscheduled meetings, it is recommended an amendment to Rule 3.6.1 (2) Questions of Council and Community Statements to apply to scheduled Council meetings only as follows:

Page 24: Amend Rule 3.6.1 (2) Questions of Council and Community Statements, to read as:

Unless Council resolves differently, there must be a time provided for questions of Council and Community Statements at every scheduled Council Meeting not designated for Planning and Related Matters to enable members of the public to submit questions to Council.

Accordingly, the Governance Rules presented for Council adoption (as exhibited and including the abovementioned correction) are provided in **Attachment 1**.

Legal and risk considerations

The amended Governance Rules as proposed, meet the requirements of *the Local Government Act 2020* and the *Regulatory Legislation Amendment (Reform) Act 2022*.

Human Rights Consideration

There has been careful consideration in upholding human rights as required by the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Victoria) through the amendment of the Governance Rules. In particular, the right to freedom of expression (section 15) providing that people are free to say what they think and want to say.

It is considered that the Governance Rules adopted had already captured this requirement appropriately, with the current existence of public questions, community statements and the ability to lodge petitions and joint letters at Council meetings.

4. Community consultation and engagement

In preparation of the revised Governance Rules, consultation with Councillors to review only the specific sections of the Governance Rules nominated by Councillors and officers, as requiring further clarity and/or benchmarking for best practice was undertaken at briefings held on 3 May 2023 and 19 July 2022.

The revised Governance Rules were made available on the Conversations Moreland website from 14 August 2023, inviting written submissions from the community to be received by 11 September 2023.

Affected persons rights and interests

Prior to 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 their views regarding the effect on their rights, and for those expressed views to then be considered. The provisions as outlined in the Governance Rules relating to affected persons are not proposed to be amended as part of this review. As outlined in the abovementioned consultation and engagement process, persons were invited to contribute to the review of the Governance Rules in line with Council's Community Engagement and Public Participation Policy.

Communications

The adopted Governance Rules will be published on Council's website, subject to Council's decision.

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

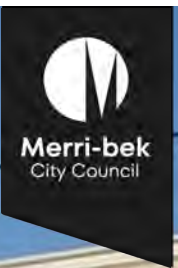
The resources required to consult and prepare the amended Governance Rules are met within existing resource allocations.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's decision, the adopted Governance Rules will be published on Council's website.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Governance Rules - September 2023 | D23/476154 |
| 2 | Governance Rules Review 2023 - Submissions and Responses Table | D23/469227 |



Governance Rules

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COMMITMENT

Good governance, integrity and accountability are central to the *Local Government Act 2020* ("the Act"), to underpin local government democracy, accountability, conduct and enable our community to hold the Council to account. Council is committed to embedding the principles of good governance throughout its decision making, corporate governance and democratic governance by establishing and adhering to the Governance Rules established.

The principles of good governance incorporate the principles outlined in the Act, including the overarching governance principles as well as the public transparency, community engagement, strategic planning, service performance and financial management principles.

Council decision making will be founded on good governance and conducted with transparency. The process by which decisions will be made is transparent and clearly articulated in these Governance Rules for the scrutiny of our community and accountability of Councillors and Council officers. Council recognises that accountability, integrity and transparency are of fundamental importance to our community and are critical for enhancing good governance.

Council seeks to apply good governance in order to:

- Engage our community in decision making;
- Achieve the best outcomes for the Merri-bek community, including future generations;
- Ensure the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information;
- Ensure the ongoing financial viability of Council;
- Increase our performance;
- Drive out inefficiencies; and
- Reassure residents that we are spending public monies wisely.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

These Governance Rules determine the way in which Council will:

- a) Make decisions:
 - in the best interest of the Merri-bek community;
 - fairly and on the merits of the question;
 - in a way that ensures any person whose rights will be directly affected by a decision will be entitled to communicate their views and have their interests considered;
- b) Elect its Mayor and Deputy Mayor;
- c) Conduct Meetings of Council and Delegated Committees;
- d) Give notice of Meetings and record and make available Meeting records (Minutes and livestreamed Meetings);
- e) Be informed in its decision making through community engagement, Advisory Committees, Councillor areas of responsibility and Council officer reports;
- f) Require the disclosure and management of conflicts of interest.

The Governance Rules also include:

- Rules for the conduct of Council and Councillors during Election Periods, through the Election Period Policy;
- An overview of alignment of the Governance Rules within Council's democratic and corporate governance; and
- Provisions for use of the Common Seal.

1.2 Principles

Council must, in the performance of its role, give effect to the overarching governance principles outlined in the Act. These principles are:

- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- e) Innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued;
- f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;

- g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
- h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, Council must take into account the following supporting principles —

- a) the community engagement principles;
- b) the public transparency principles;
- c) the strategic planning principles;
- d) the financial management principles;
- e) the service performance principles.

CHAPTER 2 - CONTEXT

2.1 Affected Persons Rights and Interests¹

In any matter in which a decision must be made by Council (including persons acting with the delegated authority of Council), Council must consider the matter and make a decision:

- a) fairly, by giving consideration and making a decision which is balanced, ethical and impartial; and
- b) on the merits, free from favouritism or self-interest and without regard to irrelevant considerations.

Council must, when making any decision to which the principles of natural justice apply, adhere to the principles of natural justice (including, without limitation, ensuring that any person whose rights will be directly affected by a decision of Council is entitled to communicate their views and have their interests considered).

Before making a decision that affects a person's rights, Council (including persons acting with the delegated authority of Council) will 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.

This includes but is not limited to the rights outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and Council's Human Rights Policy.

The opportunity provided for a person whose rights have been affected to contribute their views will be documented in any relevant report put before the Council or Delegated Committee.

A Council officer making a decision under delegation that affects the rights of a person will record in writing the opportunity provided to the person to have their views considered.

¹ Section 60(2) Local Government Act 2020

2.2 Merri-bek’s Governance Setting



2.3 Context

The Governance Rules are to be read in the context of and in conjunction with:

- Community Engagement Policy
- Public Transparency Policy;
- Good Governance Framework;
- Conflicts of interest Guidance as issued by Local Government Victoria; Councillor Code of Conduct;
- Employee Code of Conduct;
- Other relevant policies.

Each numbered section or sub-section is a Rule or Sub-Rule.

2.4 Definitions

(1) In these Governance Rules:

Act means the Local Government Act 2020;

Absolute Majority means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council. In the case of a Delegated Committee an Absolute Majority is the number of members which is greater than half the number members appointed to the Delegated Committee.

Advisory committee means a committee established by the Council, that provides advice to:

- (a) the Council; or
- (b) a Delegated Committee; or
- (c) a member of Council staff who has been delegated a power, duty or function of the Council;

that is not a Delegated Committee.

Agenda means a document containing the date, time and place of a Meeting and a list of business to be transacted at the Meeting.

Agreement of Council means indicative agreement of all Councillors present, without a vote being conducted. In the event there is any uncertainty about majority of Councillors agreeing, the matter may be put to a vote.

Authorised Officer has the same meaning as in the Act.

Chairperson means the Chairperson of a Meeting and includes an acting, temporary and substitute Chairperson.

Council Chamber means any room where the Council holds a Council Meeting.

Chief Executive Officer means the person occupying the office of Chief Executive Officer of Council, and includes a person acting in that office.

Common Seal means the common seal of Council.

Council means Merri-bek City Council.

Councillor means a Councillor of Council.

Council Meeting means a Meeting of the Council convened in accordance with these Governance Rules and includes scheduled and unscheduled meetings (unscheduled meetings known as Special meetings as per definition below) and meetings designated for Planning and Related Matters, **whether held face to face (in person) attendance in a set location or via electronic means (virtual) or in a hybrid format that includes both in person and electronic attendance.**

Council staff means a person who is appointed (other than an independent contractor under a contract for services or a volunteer) to enable the functions of the Council to be carried out.

Delegate means a member of Council staff to whom powers, functions and duties have been delegated by an instrument of delegation from the Chief Executive Officer.

Delegated Committee means a Committee established by Council to which powers, duties or functions have been delegated in accordance with section 11 of the Act.

Deputy Mayor means the Deputy Mayor of Council and any person appointed by Council to act as Deputy Mayor.

Director means a senior member of Council staff holding the position of Director or another position (however designated) which reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

Disorder means any disorderly conduct of a member of the Gallery or a Councillor and includes:

- interjecting when another person is speaking, except, in the case of a Councillor, to raise a Point of Order;
- making comments that are defamatory, malicious, abusive or offensive;
- refusing to leave the Meeting when requested, ordered or directed to do so by the Chairperson in accordance with these Governance Rules; and
- engaging in any other conduct which prevents the orderly conduct of the Meeting.

Foreshadowed Item means a matter raised in the relevant section of the Council Meeting that a Councillor intends to submit a Notice of Motion for the next Council Meeting.

Majority of the Votes means a majority of Councillors present at the time of a vote voting in favour of a matter.

Mayor means the Mayor of Council and any person appointed by Council to be acting as Mayor, including a Deputy Mayor, if the Mayor is not available.

Meeting means Council Meeting as described above

Meeting Designated for Planning and Related Matters means a Council Meeting that is held only for the consideration of planning and related matters.

Minister means the Minister administering the Act.

Minutes means the official record of the proceedings and decisions of a Meeting.

Motion means a proposal framed in a way that will result in the opinion of Council being expressed, and a Council decision being made, if the proposal is adopted.

Notice of Motion means a notice setting out the text of a Motion which a Councillor proposes to move at a Council Meeting.

On Notice means held or deferred to enable preparation of a response.

Point of Order means a procedural point (about how the Meeting is being conducted), not involving the substance of a matter before a Meeting.

Procedural Motion means a Motion that relates to a procedural matter only and which is not designed to produce any substantive decision but used merely as a formal procedural measure.

Rule or Sub-Rule means a Rule or Sub-Rule included in these Governance Rules.

Second vote means a vote cast by the Chairperson when there has been an equality of votes cast for and against a matter (also known as a casting vote). A Councillor who does not vote will be taken to have voted against the question;

Special Meeting means an unscheduled Meeting of the Council to consider a matter that cannot be effectively dealt with in the schedule of Council Meetings and/or is convened for a particular purpose such as the Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

these Rules means these Governance Rules.

(2) Definitions provided by the Act

The following definitions provided by the Act are applied to these Governance Rules:

Confidential Information means the Confidential Information established under section 3(1) of the Act, and means

- (a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released;
- (b) security information, being information that if released is likely to endanger the security of Council property or the safety of any person;
- (c) land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values;
- (d) law enforcement information, being information which if released would be reasonably likely to prejudice the investigation into an alleged breach of the law or the fair trial or hearing of any person;
- (e) legal privileged information, being information to which legal professional privilege or client legal privilege applies;
- (f) personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;
- (g) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:
 - i) relates to trade secrets; or
 - ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage;
- (h) confidential Meeting information, being the records of Meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a);
- (i) internal arbitration information, being information specified in section 145;
- (j) Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information, being information specified in section 169;
- (k) information prescribed by the regulations to be confidential information for the purposes of this definition;
- (l) information that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the *Local Government Act 1989*;

Electoral Material means an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice that contains Electoral Matter but does not include an advertisement in a newspaper that is only announcing the holding of a Meeting.

Electoral Matter means matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any Electoral Material produced by or on behalf of the election manager for the purposes of conducting an election.

Nomination Day means the last day on which nominations to be a candidate at a Council election may be received in accordance with the Act and the regulations.

CHAPTER 3 – MEETING PROCEDURE

The way in which Council and Delegated Committee Meetings are conducted makes a significant contribution to good governance. The Chairperson plays a crucial role in facilitating an orderly, respectful, transparent and constructive Meeting by ensuring all Councillors and members of Delegated Committees have the opportunity to be heard, matters are adequately discussed, Meeting procedures are followed appropriately, and statutory requirements are adhered to.

The Chairperson is an independent leader of Meetings and generally does not participate in debate or move or second Motions.

The Act provides for the Mayor to appoint a Councillor as the Chair of a Delegated Committee and any such appointment prevails over any appointment made by the Council. While there are no limitations on exercising that power, the Mayor must always act in a way that is consistent with the adopted Councillor Code of Conduct and transparency commitments of the Council.

Each member of the Meeting has an obligation to participate in good decision-making through their preparation and contribution to the Meeting.

Specific duties and discretions of the Chairperson are outlined throughout these Governance Rules.

3.1 Purpose of Council Meetings

- (1) Council holds Council Meetings and, when required, Special Meetings to conduct the business of Council.
- (2) Council is committed to transparency in decision making and, in accordance with the Act, Council and Delegated Committee Meetings are open to the public and the community are able to attend. Meetings will only be closed to members of the public if:
 - (a) the Meeting is to consider confidential information; or
 - (b) a Meeting is required to be closed for security reasons; or
 - (c) it is necessary to enable the Meeting to proceed in an orderly manner.
- (3) If a Meeting is closed to the public for the reasons outlined in Sub-Rule 2(b) or 2(c), the Meeting will continue to be livestreamed. In the event a livestream is not available, the Meeting will be adjourned.
- (4) For the avoidance of doubt, if a Meeting is open to the public and the livestream is not available, a Meeting that has not commenced will proceed as scheduled and a Meeting that has commenced will continue.

3.2 Meeting Roles

3.2.1 Chairperson and Members

- (1) The Chairperson, Councillors and members of Delegated Committees will ensure good decision-making by endeavouring to ensure:
 - (a) Decision making is transparent to members and observers;
 - (b) Meeting members have sufficient information to make good decisions;
 - (c) Every member is supported to contribute to decisions;
 - (d) Any person whose rights are affected has their interests considered;
 - (e) Debate and discussion is focussed on the issues at hand;
 - (f) Meetings are conducted in an orderly manner.

3.2.2 Mayor to take the Chair

- (1) The Mayor must take the Chair at all Council Meetings at which the Mayor is present.
- (2) If the Mayor is not in attendance at a Council Meeting, the Deputy Mayor (if one has been elected) must take the Chair.
- (3) If the Mayor and any Deputy Mayor are not in attendance at a Council Meeting, Council must appoint one of the Councillors as a temporary Chairperson.

3.2.3 Delegated Committee Chairperson

- (1) At the Meeting at which Council appoints the members of a Delegated Committee it must also appoint a Chairperson. If Council is appointing a single member as a result of a vacancy, or additional members, there is no change to the appointed Chairperson unless resolved by Council.
- (2) For the avoidance of doubt, Sub-Rule (1) does not intend to limit the powers of the Mayor provided in the Act.

3.2.4 The Chairperson's Duties and Discretions

In addition to the specific duties and discretions provided in these Governance Rules, the Chairperson:

- (1) must not accept any Motion, question or statement which is:
 - (a) vague or ambiguous;
 - (b) defamatory, malicious, abusive or objectionable in language or substance;
or
 - (c) outside the powers of Council;
- (2) must allow the Chief Executive Officer the opportunity to correct factual errors or incorrect assertions that arise during the Meeting.
- (3) must call a person to order if their behaviour is disruptive and interferes with the conduct of the business of Council.
- (4) may direct that a vote be recounted to be certain of the result.

- (5) must decide on all points of order in accordance with Rule 3.10 and
- (6) May adjourn a Disorderly Meeting.
- (7) Subject to Rule 3.1 (2), the Chairperson may determine to close a Meeting to the public to maintain security and order, if the circumstances prevent seeking a Council resolution in accordance with Rule 3.13.
- (8) Where the Governance Rules do not provide a procedure for the meeting, the Chairperson may determine the procedure to be followed in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and relevant Governance officer.

3.2.5 Chief Executive Officer

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, may participate in the Meeting to provide support to the Chairperson and advice to the Meeting.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer:
 - (a) Must immediately advise if a proposed resolution or action is, to their knowledge, contrary to legislation or Council Policy;
 - (b) May advise if there are administrative or operational implications arising from a proposed resolution;
 - (c) May assist to clarify the intent of any unclear Motion to facilitate implementation of a resolution;
 - (d) On request, assist with procedural issues that may arise.

3.2.6 Councillors and members of Delegated Committees

Councillors and members of Delegated Committees contribute to good governance and decision making by:

- (1) Seeking views of community members and reading Agenda papers prior to the Meeting.
- (2) Demonstrating due respect and consideration to community views and the professional / expert advice provided in the Agenda papers.
- (3) Attending Meetings and participating in debate and discussion.
- (4) Demonstrating respect for the role of the Chairperson and the rights of other Councillors or members of Delegated Committees to contribute to the decision-making.
- (5) Being courteous and orderly.

3.2.7 Community

- (1) Council Meetings are decision making forums for the Council that are open to the community to attend and/or view proceedings.
- (2) Community members may only participate in Council Meetings in accordance with Rule 3.6.
- (3) Community members are encouraged to participate in Council's engagement processes.

- (4) Community members may seek to inform individual Councillors of their views by contacting them directly in advance of Meetings.

3.2.8 Apologies and absences

- (1) Councillors and members of Delegated Committees who are unable to attend a Meeting may submit an apology:
 - (a) In writing to the Chairperson, who will advise the Meeting; or
 - (b) By seeking another Councillor or member of the Delegated Committee to submit it at the Meeting on their behalf.
- (2) An apology submitted to a Meeting will be recorded in the Minutes.
- (3) A Councillor intending to take a leave of absence must submit it in writing to the Mayor.
- (4) The Mayor will seek to have any leave of absence request received included in the Agenda of the next Council Meeting.
- (5) A leave of absence not included in a Council Meeting Agenda may still be considered by Council if a written request has been received by the Mayor prior to the Meeting.
- (6) Council will not unreasonably withhold its approval of a leave of absence request.
- (7) A Councillor who has not submitted an apology or had a leave of absence approved who is not in attendance at a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting will be recorded as absent.²
- (8) For the benefit of clarity, should unplanned leave of absence occur (between two Council meetings), Council will receive the request at the next possible Council meeting for approval, providing Sub-Rule (5) is met.

3.2.9 Attendance at meetings by electronic means

- (1) Councillors and members of Delegated Committees who wish to attend a meeting via electronic means must submit a written request to the Mayor (or Chairperson), no later than 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- (2) The Mayor (or Chairperson), must grant any reasonable request from a Councillor or member to attend a meeting by electronic means.
- (3) At the commencement of each meeting, the Mayor (or Chairperson), will advise the meeting of any Councillors or members that have been granted approval to attend the meeting by electronic means.
- (4) It will remain the responsibility of the Councillor or member attending electronically to ensure that they have the required access and environment suitable for electronic communications. This includes ensuring that they are in a private and secure place when attending a Confidential meeting.

² *Section 35 (1) (e) of the Act* provides a Councillor ceases to hold office if they are absent from Council Meetings for a period of 4 consecutive months without leave obtained from the Council.

- (5) A Councillor or member that has not sought approval to attend a meeting by electronic means in accordance with 3.2.9(1), and cannot attend the meeting in person, will be recorded as absent.

3.3 Notice of Meetings and availability of Agenda

3.3.1 Date, time and place of Council Meetings

- (1) At or before the last Meeting each year, Council must fix the date, time and place of all Council Meetings and any Delegated Committee Meetings for the following calendar year.
- (2) Council may resolve a Delegated Committee will set its own schedule of Meetings.
- (3) When setting the dates of Council Meetings, Council may set Meetings Designated for Planning and Related Matters.
- (4) Council by resolution, or the Chief Executive Officer, may change the date, time and place of, or cancel, any Council Meeting which has been fixed, or schedule an additional Council Meeting and must provide notice of the change to the public.

3.3.2 Special Meetings

- (1) Council may by resolution call a Special Meeting. Any resolution of Council to call a Special Meeting must specify the date and time of the Special Meeting and the business to be transacted. The date and time of the Special Meeting must not be prior to 6pm on the day following the Council Meeting at which the resolution was made.
- (2) The Mayor, or at least three Councillors may by written notice to the Chief Executive Officer call a Special Meeting. A written notice to call a Special Meeting must:
 - (a) Specify the preferred date and time and the business to be transacted;
 - (b) be delivered to the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate in sufficient time to enable notice to be given in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.3.4.
- (3) The Chief Executive Officer, following consultation with the Mayor, may call a Special Meeting.
- (4) In the event a Special Meeting is to be called pursuant to Sub-Rule (2) and (3), the Chief Executive Officer must determine the time and date for the Special Meeting giving consideration to:
 - (a) the urgency of the business to be transacted;
 - (b) the availability of Councillors; and
 - (c) a reasonable notice period for persons whose rights or interests may be impacted by the business to be transacted
- (5) The Chief Executive Officer must arrange for notice of the Meeting on Council's website, and other mediums that will maximise the opportunity for the community to be notified in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.3.4.
- (6) The Chief Executive Officer must call a Special Meeting to elect a Mayor following a Council election declaration, in accordance with the Act.

- (7) The Special Council Meeting for the election of a Mayor following an election may also consider the role of Deputy Mayor and any other matters as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
- (8) Only the business specified in the Council resolution, or written notice, may be considered at a Special Meeting, unless by unanimous resolution determines to admit another matter.

3.3.3 Call of the Council

- (1) If a quorum cannot be achieved or maintained repeatedly (3 or more times) due to the absence of Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer may require all Councillors to attend a Call of the Council Meeting.
- (2) Notice of the Meeting must be given in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.3.4(2).
- (3) The Agenda for a Call of the Council Meeting must only contain matters that have been unable to be transacted because a quorum has not been achieved or maintained.
- (4) If a Councillor does not attend within 30 minutes after the time fixed for a call of the Council Meeting, or remain at the Meeting for the business to be conducted, the Chief Executive Officer must, following the Meeting, seek a reason in writing from the Councillor(s) not in attendance.
- (5) If, after considering the reason provided by the Councillor for the absence in accordance with Sub-Rule (4), the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor if the reason has been provided by the Mayor, does not consider the Councillor has provided a reasonable excuse for not attending, the Chief Executive Officer must recommend to the Council to make an application for an internal arbitration process in accordance with section 143 of the Act³.

3.3.4 Notice of Meetings

- (1) A schedule of Council Meetings must be prepared and published on Council's website and in ways that ensures it is available to a broad section of the community at least once each year and with such greater frequency as the Chief Executive Officer determines. The schedule of Council Meetings must also be available from Council's Customer Service Centres.
- (2) A notice of a Meeting, that is not a Special Meeting, incorporating or accompanied by an Agenda of the business to be dealt with, must be sent electronically to every Councillor for all Council Meetings, at least six days before the Meeting. A period of less than six days may be justified if exceptional circumstances exist. If exceptional circumstances exist as to why a notice of the meeting cannot be given

³ **Section 143 of the Act provides:** Application for an internal arbitration process

(1) An arbiter may hear an application that alleges misconduct by a Councillor.

(2) An application for an internal arbitration process to make a finding of misconduct against a Councillor may be made by—

(a) the Council following a resolution of the Council; or

(b) a Councillor or a group of Councillors.

in accordance with this rule, the exceptional circumstances must be set out/explained in the agenda.

- (3) An Agenda for a Council Meeting held in accordance with the schedule of Council Meetings prepared in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) will be made available on Council's website at least 6 days prior to the Meeting, or at the same time that the agenda is made available to Councillors, whichever comes sooner.
- (4) An Agenda for a Special Meeting must be made available electronically to every Councillor at least 48 hours before the Meeting. A period of less than 48 hours may be justified if exceptional circumstances exist.
- (5) An Agenda for a Special Meeting will be made available on Council's website no less than 24 hours before the Council Meeting.
- (6) The extraordinary circumstances that mean Council is unable to give the notice described in this Rule must be recorded in the Minutes of the relevant Special Meeting.
- (7) Notice of a Special Meeting must be published on Council's website and in ways that will be available to a broad section of the community as soon as practicable after the time and date of the Meeting has been determined.
- (8) If a Special Meeting is called to consider a matter that directly affects the rights of any person(s), every endeavour must be made to notify that person(s).

3.4 Quorum

- (1) Meetings must commence within 30 minutes of the scheduled starting time. A Councillor or member attending a meeting by electronic means of communication with the approval of the Mayor (or Chairperson), is deemed present for the purposes of a quorum.
- (2) If, after 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time of any Meeting or adjournment, a quorum cannot be obtained, the Chairperson, or if the Chairperson is not present, those Councillors present or, if there are no Councillors present, the Chief Executive Officer or, in the absence of the Chief Executive Officer, a Delegate, may adjourn the Meeting for a period not exceeding seven days from the date of the adjournment.
- (3) If, during any Meeting or any adjournment of the Meeting, a quorum cannot be maintained, the Chairperson, or if the Chairperson is not present, those Councillors present or, if there are no Councillors present, the Chief Executive Officer or, in the absence of the Chief Executive Officer, a Delegate, may adjourn the Meeting for a period not exceeding seven days from the date of the adjournment.
- (4) The Chairperson may defer an item of business in respect of which there is, or is likely to be, a disclosure of a conflict of interest by one or more Councillors that will cause a quorum to be lost and direct the Chief Executive Officer to include that item of business on an Agenda for a future Council Meeting.
- (5) If a quorum cannot be achieved or maintained due to the declaration of conflicts of interests by the majority of Councillors, Council will:

- (a) Determine the matter will be considered in separate parts, if a quorum can be maintained for each separate part; or
 - (b) Determine to make decisions on separate parts of the matter at a Meeting where quorum can be maintained, before making a decision on the whole matter.
- (6) If a quorum cannot be achieved or maintained due to the declaration of conflicts of interests by the majority of Councillors, and the matter cannot be separated into component parts or prior decisions made, Council will delegate the decision to be made:
- (a) By the Chief Executive Officer; or
 - (b) By a Delegated Committee, established for the purpose of determining the matter, comprised of all the Councillors who have not disclosed a conflict of interest and any other person(s) the Council considers suitable.
- (7) A decision made under delegation due to Council not being able to achieve or maintain a quorum will be reported to the next Council Meeting.

3.4.1 Notice of adjourned Council Meeting

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer must provide written notice, including by electronic means, to each Councillor of any Council Meeting adjourned to another date or time.
- (2) Where it is not practicable because time does not permit notice in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) to occur, then, provided every reasonable attempt is made to contact each Councillor either verbally, or by some other means, it will be sufficient.
- (3) Notice of an adjournment to another date or time must be published on Council's website as soon as practical.

Quorum Calculation

Section 61(4) of the Act provides that a quorum at a Meeting must be at least a majority of the Councillors or members of the Delegated Committee.

Number of Councillors/Committee Members	Number required for Quorum
11	6
10	6
9	5
8	5
7	4

3.5 Business of Meetings

The business to be transacted at a Council Meeting is contained in the Agenda provided to Councillors and available to the public on Council's website. The Chief Executive Officer oversees preparation of the Agenda and determines the content and order of business to facilitate open, efficient and effective processes of government. The role of the Mayor includes providing advice to the Chief Executive Officer when the Chief Executive Officer is setting the

Agenda for Council Meetings. Council can admit an item of urgent business if it has arisen after distribution of the Agenda and cannot be reasonably deferred to the next Meeting.

3.5.1 Business at Meetings

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer may include any matter on the Agenda for a Council Meeting which he or she thinks should be considered at the Meeting to which the Agenda relates.
- (2) No business can be dealt with at a Council Meeting unless it is:
 - (a) Contained on the Agenda; or
 - (b) Admitted as Urgent Business in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.5.6

3.5.2 Order of business for Council Meetings

The order of business must be determined by the Chief Executive Officer to facilitate and maintain open, efficient and effective processes of government. Generally, the order of business of any scheduled Council Meeting will be as follows:

- (a) Welcome;
- (b) Apologies/Leaves of Absence;
- (c) Disclosures of conflicts of interest; (Rule 5.3)
- (d) Confirmation of Minutes of previous Meetings; (Rule 3.11.3)
- (e) Acknowledgements and Other Matters (Rule 3.5.5)
- (f) Petitions; (Rule 3.6.5)
- (g) Public question time; (Rule 3.6.2)
- (h) Council reports;
- (i) Notices of Motion; (Rule 3.9.14)
- (j) Notices of rescission; (Rule 3.9.15)
- (k) Foreshadowed Items;
- (l) Urgent business; (Rule 3.5.6);
- (m) Confidential business.

3.5.3 Order of business for Meetings Designated for Planning and Related Matters

The order of business of any Meeting Designated for Planning and Related Matters will be as follows:

- (a) Welcome;
- (b) Apologies;
- (c) Disclosures of conflicts of interest; (Rule 5.3)
- (d) Confirmation of Minutes of previous Meetings; (Sub-Rule 3.11.3)
- (e) Council reports;
- (f) Urgent business (Rule 3.5.6);
- (g) Confidential business.

3.5.4 Change to order of business

- (1) Once an Agenda has been sent to Councillors, the order of business for that Meeting may be altered with the Agreement of Council.
- (2) If the Agreement of Council is not achieved, the order of business may be altered by a resolution of Council.
- (3) The Chief Executive Officer, following consultation with the Mayor, may withdraw a report included in the Agenda, if special circumstance exist that mean Council consideration of the report would not be appropriate.

3.5.5 Acknowledgements and Other Matters

- (1) At each Council Meeting of Council provision of 10 minutes has been made in the Agenda for the Mayor and Councillors to:
 - a) Acknowledge and recognise achievements of local individuals and organisations; and
 - b) Raise matters considered important to Council.
- (2) For the purposes of raising matters as outline in Sub-Rules (1) (a) and (b), the nature of these matters should not be the subject of an item already listed in the Council agenda, does not require a decision of Council or cannot address matters where internal mechanisms already exist (i.e. raising matters to address customer requests).
- (3) The Chairperson will manage the time commitment across Councillors indicating their intent to speak.
- (4) Where an item is requiring a decision of Council, these matters must be raised in accordance with the provisions as outlined in Urgent Business (3.5.6), Notices of Motion (3.9.14) or Foreshadowed Items (3.9.17).

3.5.6 Urgent Business

- (1) If the Agenda for a Meeting makes provision for urgent business, business cannot be admitted as Urgent Business other than by resolution of Council and only then if:
 - (a) It relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the Agenda; and
 - (b) Deferring the item until the next Meeting will mean a decision on the item will not have any effect on the matter; or
 - (c) The item involves a matter of urgency as determined by the Chief Executive Officer; and
 - (d) It cannot be addressed through an operational service request process; and
- (2) In addition to the requirements in Sub-Rule (1), where Urgent Business is to be admitted to a Meeting Designated for Planning and Related Matters, the urgent business must relate to a planning matter.

- (3) A Councillor proposing a matter be admitted as urgent business must lodge it in writing to the Chief Executive Officer no later than 3 pm on the day of the Meeting.
- (4) The Chief Executive Officer will advise the Mayor of any matter he or she determines appropriate for Council to consider admitting as urgent business.
- (5) The consideration of Urgent Business is a two-step process as follows:
 - (a) At the point in the agenda when Urgent Business is listed, the Chairperson will seek any items of Urgent Business.
 - (i) The Councillor proposing an item of Urgent Business is to briefly describe the nature of the matter (at this point the Council is not moving a motion) and seek that the item to be accepted as urgent business.
 - (ii) The Chairperson will seek a mover and seconder to accept the item as Urgent Business.
 - (b) A motion may then be moved and seconded in accordance with Rule 3.9 – Motions and debate.

3.5.7 Time Limits for Meetings

- (1) A Meeting must not continue after three hours from the time it commences unless a majority of Councillors present vote in favour of its extension in accordance with this Rule.
- (2) Extensions of a Meeting will be in block periods of 30 minutes.
- (3) After the initial 30 minute extension the Meeting must not continue unless a majority of Councillors present vote in favour of a further extension.
- (4) A Meeting may only be continued for a maximum of two 30 minute extensions.
- (5) In the absence of such extensions as provided for in Sub-Rules (1), (2) and (3), or in the event there is further business to be transacted at the completion of two extensions, the Meeting must stand adjourned to 6 pm on the following day. In that event, the provisions of Sub-Rule 3.4.1.
- (6) Notwithstanding Sub-Rule (5), the Chairperson may seek the Agreement of Council not to adjourn the Meeting to the following day, if the Chairperson reasonably believes the remaining business will take less than 10 minutes to transact.

3.5.8 Chairperson may temporarily adjourn a Meeting exceeding two hours

- (1) The Chairperson may adjourn a Meeting for a 10 minute break, at an appropriate point in proceedings after two hours has elapsed.
- (2) Notwithstanding Sub-Rule (1), the Chairperson may seek the Agreement of Council not to adjourn the Meeting if the Chairperson reasonably believes the remaining business of the Meeting will take less than 30 minutes to transact.

3.6 Community Questions and Submissions

3.6.1 Questions of Council and Community Statements

- (1) Members of the public may only address a Council Meeting in accordance with the provisions of these Governance Rules.
- (2) Unless Council resolves differently, there must be a time provided for questions of Council and Community Statements at every scheduled Council Meeting not designated for Planning and Related Matters to enable members of the public to submit questions to Council.
- (3) Sub-Rule (2) does not apply during any period when a Meeting is closed to members of the public in accordance with section 66(2) of the Act.
- (4) There will be no Questions of Council and Community Statements during a local government election period.
- (5) The time provided for questions of Council and community statements will not exceed 30 minutes in duration, unless by resolution of Council, in which case, the time may be extended for one period of up to 30 minutes.
- (6) Priority will be given to questions and statements that relate to matters listed in the Agenda. If time allows, questions about items other than those listed on the Agenda will be considered.
- (7) A maximum of two questions or statements, in any combination, is allowed per person. If a person has submitted two questions or statements, the second or statement question may, at the discretion of the Chairperson:
 - (a) be deferred until all other persons who have submitted questions have asked their first question; and/or
 - (b) not be asked or permitted if the time allotted for public question time has expired.
- (8) A person submitting two questions or statements, in any combination, may identify the priority order of the questions or statements.
- (9) Prior to the hearing of Questions of Council and Community Statements, the Mayor will inform Councillors of the total number of questions received for the Council meeting.

3.6.2 Questions of Council

- (1) Persons wishing to ask a question will be encouraged to submit their question on the Questions of Council form available on Council's website by 12 noon on the day of the Council Meeting.
- (2) Questions can be submitted by:
 - (a) The online form at www.Merri-bek.vic.gov.au
 - (b) Email to: governance@Merri-bek.vic.gov.au; or
 - (c) Mail to: Locked Bag 10, Merri-bek Vic. 3058; or
 - (d) In person at the Coburg Civic Centre Customer Service Centre at 90 Bell Street Coburg, up until the beginning of an in-person council meeting.

- (e) A copy of all questions received before 12 noon on the day of the Council Meeting, will be distributed to Councillors as soon as reasonably practicable.
- (3) Assistance will be available for any community member seeking or requiring support to write their question(s).
- (4) A maximum of three questions will be heard on any one subject. Council will then proceed to the next subject, returning to the previous subject if time allows.
- (5) Questions that are submitted in writing but not asked, will be taken On Notice.
- (6) Persons submitting questions must be present in the public gallery either personally or by representative unless the question has been submitted in accordance with a procedure developed at Rule 3.6.4.
- (7) When invited by the Chairperson, the person submitting the question:
 - (a) Must state their name and suburb;
 - (b) May ask their question, with a preamble or background **for up to 3 minutes**.
- (8) The Chairperson may elect to answer the question themselves or nominate one appropriate Councillor to answer each question. Prior to responding, the Chairperson may seek contextual information from the person submitting the question.
- (9) The Chairperson may at their discretion, refer the question to the Chief Executive Officer, who may refer it to a member of Council staff.
- (10) No discussion of a question or answer will be allowed, other than for the purposes of clarification by a Councillor.
- (11) A question or community statement may be disallowed by the Chairperson if the Chairperson determines it:
 - (a) relates to a matter outside the duties, functions or powers of Council;
 - (b) is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
 - (c) may lead to a breach of Council's obligation to comply with its statutory obligations;
 - (d) deals with subject matter already answered; or
 - (e) deals with a matter that should be, or has been, considered as a confidential matter.
- (12) No questions directed at an individual Councillor or member of Council staff will be allowed.
- (13) The Chairperson may decide to take any question On Notice. Questions On Notice will be actioned by the relevant Director and a written response forwarded to the person and made available to Councillors. The status of On Notice items will be reported to the next practicable Council Meeting.
- (14) A question will only be dealt with as an On Notice question if the entire question has been provided in writing and contact details for a response are provided. An incomplete question or a question where not contact details are provided will not

be prioritised to be included before the time allowed for public question time and community statements has elapsed.

3.6.3 Community statements

- (1) A member of the community may make a statement, for up to 3 minutes, in relation to any matter listed on the Agenda for the Council Meeting that the statement is to be made.
- (2) Community Statements must not be directed at individual Councillors or members of Council staff.
- (3) Community Statements will not receive a response.
- (4) The Chairperson may cease a community statement he or she deems defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance.
- (5) A member of the public wishing to make a community statement may indicate their intention in advance of the Meeting or by completing a form on arrival at the Meeting.

3.6.4 Questions and community statements from members of the public not in attendance and at Meetings conducted electronically

- (1) Council may, by resolution, determine that the Chief Executive Officer must develop a procedure that enables the submission of questions and statements by community members who are not in attendance but are viewing the livestream to be admitted to the Meeting.
- (2) A procedure developed at Sub-Rule (1) must include the person asking the question being visible to the Meeting when asking a question.
- (3) Where a person is experiencing technical difficulties that prevents them from asking their submitted question, as lodged in accordance with Rules 3.6.2 or 3.6.3 (ie. unable to connect to an online meeting) or where connectivity issues arise that prevent the person from being able to be seen or heard when invited to address Council, the Chairperson may elect to read out their question.
- (4) A procedure developed in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) must give consideration to:
 - (a) Accessibility;
 - (b) Community members in attendance at the Meeting; and
 - (c) Relevance of the question to an item on the Agenda for the Meeting.
- (5) If a Council Meeting is being conducted electronically or online, in accordance with any Guidelines issued for the Minister for Local Government, provision will be made for questions and community statement to be made via video call, if the question or intent to make a submission is lodged in accordance with Rules 3.6.2 or 3.6.3 as is applicable.

3.6.5 Petitions and joint letters

- (1) Every petition submitted to Council must:
 - (a) be in legible and in permanent writing;
 - (b) state clearly on each page the matter and the action sought of Council;
 - (c) not be derogatory, defamatory or objectionable in language or nature;
 - (d) not relate to matters outside the powers of Council; and
 - (e) include the names, addresses and original signatures of at least 10 people;
 - (f) clearly indicate the name and contact details of the lead petitioner.
- (2) If the lead petitioner is present at the Meeting at the time a petition is presented, the Chairperson may invite the lead petitioner to address the Meeting for up to two minutes.
- (3) Where a petition has been signed by less than 10 people or does not otherwise conform to the requirements contained in rule 3.6.5 (1), it will be treated as a joint letter and forwarded directly to the appropriate member of Council staff for action as an operational item.
- (4) Any Councillor presenting a petition is responsible for ensuring that:
 - (a) he or she is familiar with the contents and purpose of the petition; and
 - (b) the petition is not derogatory, defamatory or objectionable in language or nature.
- (5) The only Motions that may be considered by Council on any petition are:
 - (a) that the petition be received; and
 - (b) that the petition be referred to the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director for consideration and response; or
 - (c) that the petition be referred to the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director for a report to a future Council Meeting.
- (6) If a petition relates to an item listed on the Agenda for the Meeting at which it is submitted, the petition may be dealt with in conjunction with the item.
- (7) If a petition relates to:
 - (a) a 'planning matter' which is the subject of a public exhibition or notification process under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*); or
 - (b) a matter which Council has determined will be the subject of a Hearing Committee and is the subject of a public submissions process in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy,the petition will be treated as a joint submission in relation to the 'planning matter' or the 'statutory matter' (as the case may be).

- (8) An online or electronic petition may be submitted to a Council Meeting.
- (9) The number of signatories to an online or electronic petition will be taken to be the number of signatories at the time the petition is provided to Council for submission to a Council Meeting.
- (10) An online or electronic petition will not be presented to a Council Meeting if it contains signatures that are false or misleading.

3.6.6 Submissions to Meetings designated for Planning and related matters

At a Meeting Designated for Planning and Related Matters:

- (1) the Chairperson may invite a Council Officer to provide an overview of a planning matter to be considered; and
- (2) an objector to, or proponent of, a Planning Permit Application or Planning Scheme Amendment included in the Agenda, may be invited by the Chairperson to address the Meeting for no more than three minutes.

3.6.7 Public addressing the Meeting

- (1) Any member of the public addressing Council must extend due courtesy and respect to Council and the processes under which it operates and must take direction from the Chairperson whenever called on to do so.
- (1)** Council may suspend standing orders in accordance with Rule 3.12, to hear from a community member or representative of an organisation, on matters of significance to the Council, only if prior arrangements have been made by written request to the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

3.6.8 Display of placards and posters

- (1) Subject to Sub-Rules (2) and (3), a person can display any placards or posters in the Council Chamber or in any building where a Meeting is being, or is about to be, held, including outside the entrance to the building.
- (2) A placard or poster must not:
 - (a) display any offensive, indecent, insulting or objectionable item or words; or
 - (b) obstruct the entrance to the Council Chamber or a building where a Meeting is being, or is about to be, held;
 - (c) obstruct the view or physically impede any person; or
 - (d) be attached to a pole, stick or other object.
- (3) The Chairperson may order and cause the removal of any placard or poster that is deemed by the Chairperson to be objectionable, disrespectful or otherwise inappropriate.

3.6.9 Prohibited items

- (1) Unless worn for either medical, health, cultural or religious purposes, a person must not wear a facemask or head covering that disguises their identity.
- (2) A person may not bring in the Council Chamber or any building where a Meeting is being, or is about to be, held, including outside the entrance to the building any item that may affect the safety or security of the Meeting.
- (3) Items considered to affect the safety or security of a Meeting include:
 - (a) A bag or object larger than a small backpack;
 - (b) Devices that amplify sound;
 - (c) Any other object identified by a Councillor, Council officer or security officer.
- (4) The Chairperson may cause the removal of any object or material that is deemed by the Chairperson to be objectionable or disrespectful.

3.6.10 Chairperson May Remove ⁴

- (1) Members of the public present at a Council Meeting must not interject during the Council Meeting.
- (2) If a person, other than a Councillor, interjects or gesticulating offensively during the Council Meeting, the Mayor may direct:
 - (a) the person to stop interjecting or gesticulating offensively; and
 - (b) if the person continues to interject or gesticulate offensively, the removal of the person.
- (3) In causing a person's removal under Sub-Rule (2)(b), or the removal of an object or material under Sub-Rules 3.6.8 and 3.6.9, the Chairperson may ask the Chief Executive Officer, an Authorised Officer or a member of security or Victoria Police to remove the person, object or material.

3.6.11 Chairperson may adjourn Disorderly Meeting

- (1) The Chairperson may call a break in a Meeting for either a short time, or to resume another day if:
 - (a) the behaviour at the Council table or in the gallery is significantly disrupting the Meeting; or
 - (b) as provided in Rule 3.5.8 when a Meeting has been in progress for longer than 2 hours.
- (2) The break referred to in Sub-Rule (1) is an adjournment.
- (3) If the Chairperson calls a Meeting to resume on another day, the provisions of 3.4.1 apply.

⁴ It is intended that this power to remove a member of the public, be exercisable by the Chairperson, without the need for any Council resolution. The Chairperson may choose to order the removal of a person whose actions immediately threaten the stability of the Meeting or wrongly threatens his or her authority in chairing the Meeting.

3.7 Voting

3.7.1 How a matter is determined

- (1) To determine a Motion at a Meeting, the Chairperson must first call for those in favour of the Motion and then those opposed to the Motion and must then declare the result to the Meeting.
- (2) In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson must, unless the Act provides otherwise, exercise a Second vote (casting vote).

3.7.2 Voting must be seen

- (1) Voting may be by any method resolved by Council that enables those in attendance and those watching a livestream broadcast to clearly see which way a Council has voted at the time a vote is taken.
- (2) In the absence of a Council resolving an alternative method, voting on any matter is by show of hands.

3.7.3 When a division is permitted

- (1) A division may be requested by any Councillor on any vote.
- (2) The request must be made to the Chairperson either immediately prior to, or immediately after, the vote has been taken, and may not be made after the Meeting has moved to the next item of business.
- (3) When a division is called for the Chairperson must:
 - (a) first ask each Councillor wishing to vote in favour of the Motion to clearly indicate their vote and the Chairperson must then state the names of those Councillors to be recorded in the Minutes;
 - (b) then ask each Councillor wishing to vote against the Motion to clearly indicate their vote and the Chairperson must then state the names of those Councillors to be recorded in the Minutes;
 - (c) next, ask each Councillor abstaining from voting to clearly indicate their vote and the Chairperson must then state the names of those Councillors to be recorded in the Minutes; and
 - (d) finally, declare the result of the division.
- (4) Where a division is requested after the original vote has been taken, the Motion is decided on the division and the fact that there may be a difference between the result obtained when the original vote was taken and the result obtained on the division must be disregarded.

3.7.4 No discussion once a vote has been declared

- (1) Once a vote on a Motion has been declared carried or lost by the Chairperson, no further discussion relating to the Motion is allowed, unless the discussion:
 - (a) involves a Councillor requesting that his or her opposition to a resolution be recorded in the Minutes or calling for a division; or

- (b) is a Councillor foreshadowing a notice of rescission where a resolution has just been made, or a positive Motion where a resolution has just been rescinded.
- (2) If a Motion is defeated, a new Motion on the same matter may be considered by Council only to avoid that matter being left in limbo.

3.8 Addressing the Meeting

3.8.1 Councillor allowed to speak uninterrupted

A Councillor who has the floor must not be interrupted unless called to order, or given notice by the Chairperson his speaking time has elapsed or is about to elapse, when he or she must sit down and remain silent until the Councillor raising the Point of Order has been heard and the Point of Order dealt with.

3.8.2 Addressing the Meeting

- (1) If the Chairperson so determines, any person addressing the Chairperson must refer to the Chairperson as:
 - (a) Mayor; or
 - (b) Chairperson,
- (2) all Councillors, other than the Mayor, must be addressed as Cr.....(surname); and
- (3) all Council staff, must be addressed by their official title.
- (4) Except for the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer, any person who addresses the Meeting must direct all remarks through the Chairperson.

3.9 Motions and Debate

A resolution must be able to be acted upon, a Motion must clearly state what is intended and what its effect will be if it becomes the decision. This provides clarity for the implementation of Council decisions.

3.9.1 Moving a Motion

The procedure for moving any Motion is:

- (1) The mover must outline the Motion without speaking in support of it;
- (2) The Motion must be seconded by a Councillor other than the mover;
- (3) If a Motion is not seconded, the Motion lapses for want of a seconder;
- (4) If there is a seconder, then the Chairperson must call on the mover to speak to the Motion;
- (5) After the mover has spoken to the Motion, the seconder may also speak to the Motion;
- (6) After the seconder has spoken to the Motion (or after the mover has spoken to the Motion if the seconder reserves their right to speak to the Motion), the Chairperson must call on any Councillor who wishes to speak against the Motion, then on any

Councillor who wishes to speak for the Motion, after waiting until all Councillors wishing to speak to the Motion have spoken; and

- (7) If no Councillor wishes to speak against the Motion, then the Chairperson may put the Motion or call on any other Member to speak.
- (8) If the mover or seconder of a motion indicates that he or she wishes to withdraw from moving or seconding the motion, the Chairperson may seek another mover or seconder (as the case requires), but if no Councillor indicates his or her willingness to be the substitute mover or seconder, the motion lapses.

3.9.2 Chairperson's duty

Any Motion which:

- (1) is defamatory; or
 - (2) is objectionable in language or nature; or
 - (3) is vague or unclear in its intention; or
 - (4) is outside the powers of Council; or
 - (5) is not relevant to an item of business on the Agenda and has not been admitted as urgent business; or
 - (6) purports to be an amendment but is not
- must not be accepted by the Chairperson.

3.9.3 Right of reply

- (1) The mover of a Motion, which has not been amended, may, once debate has been exhausted, exercise a right of reply to matters raised during debate.
- (2) No new matters may be raised in the right of reply.
- (3) If no Councillor has spoken against a Motion, there will be no right of reply.
- (4) After the right of reply has been exercised, the Motion must immediately be put to the vote without any further discussion or debate.

3.9.4 Moving an amendment

- (1) A Motion, which has been moved and seconded, may be amended by leaving out, inserting or adding words, which must be relevant to the subject of the Motion.⁵
- (2) An amendment may be proposed or seconded by any Councillor, except the mover and seconder of the original Motion.
- (3) If a Councillor proposes an amendment and the original mover and seconder of the Motion both indicate their agreement with the amendment, the amended Motion becomes the substantive Motion without debate or vote.

⁵ If a proposed amendment is Ruled to be the negative of, or substantially contrary to, the Motion, it should be treated as an alternative Motion to be considered only in the event that the Motion before the Chair is lost – see Foreshadowing Motions.

- (4) If a Councillor proposes an amendment to which either the mover or seconder does not agree, the following will apply:
 - (a) the amendment must be moved and seconded;
 - (b) a Councillor may speak on any amendment once, whether or not he or she has spoken to the Motion, but debate must be confined to the terms of the amendment;
 - (c) any number of amendments may be proposed to a Motion, but only one amendment may be accepted by the Chairperson at any one time. No second or subsequent amendment, whether to the Motion or an amendment of it, may be taken into consideration until the previous amendment has been dealt with and voted on;
 - (d) if the amendment is carried, the Motion as amended then becomes the Motion before the Meeting (known as the 'substantive Motion'); and
 - (e) the mover of an amendment does have a right of reply.

3.9.5 Foreshadowing Motions

- (1) At any time during debate a Councillor may foreshadow a Motion so as to inform Council of his or her intention to move a Motion at a later stage in the Meeting, but this does not extend any special right to the foreshadowed Motion.
- (2) A Motion foreshadowed may be prefaced with a statement that, in the event of a particular Motion before the Meeting being resolved in a certain way, a Councillor intends to move an alternative or additional Motion.
- (3) A Motion foreshadowed has no procedural standing and is merely a means to assist the flow of the Meeting.
- (4) The Minutes of the Meeting will not include foreshadowed Motions unless the foreshadowed Motion is subsequently formally moved as a Motion.

3.9.6 Withdrawal of Motions

Before any Motion is put to the vote, it may be withdrawn with the Agreement of Council.

3.9.7 Separation of Motions

- (1) Where a Motion contains more than one part, a Councillor may request the Chairperson to put the Motion to the vote in separate parts.
- (2) The Chairperson may decide to put any Motion to the vote in separate parts.

3.9.8 Motions moved in a block

The Chairperson may allow like Motions to be moved, or request Councillors to move like items, in a block (en bloc), if once passed the Motions will only:

- (a) note actions already taken; or
- (b) will not commit Council to further action, approve any spending (including any contractual variations) or changes to policy.

3.9.9 Motions in writing

- (1) All Motions, except Procedural Motions, must be submitted in writing.
- (2) The Chairperson may adjourn a Meeting while a Motion is being written or may request Council to defer the matter until the Motion has been written, allowing the Meeting to proceed uninterrupted.

3.9.10 Debate must be relevant to the Motion

- (1) Debate must always be relevant to the Motion before the Meeting, and, if not, the Chairperson must request the speaker to confine debate to the Motion.
- (2) If, after being requested by the Chairperson to confine debate to the Motion before the Meeting, the speaker continues to debate irrelevant matters, the Chairperson may direct the speaker to be seated and not speak further in respect of the Motion before the Chairperson. The speaker must immediately comply with any such direction.

3.9.11 Adequate and sufficient debate

- (1) Adequate debate is required where a matter is contentious in nature. In such a case, every Councillor should be given an opportunity to participate in the debate.
- (2) A Motion has been sufficiently debated if opposing views (where they exist) have been sufficiently put, not so much the number of those who have spoken but whether all minority opposing views have been put.
- (3) Once the views put are representative of the views of all Councillors or Members of the Delegated Committee, the debate would be regarded as sufficient.

3.9.12 Speaking times

- (1) Unless a Motion for an extension of speaking time has been carried, the maximum speaking times are:
 - (a) the mover of a Motion or amendment - 3 minutes;
 - (b) the mover of a Motion when exercising his or her right of reply – 2 minutes; and
 - (c) any other speaker – 3 minutes.
- (2) A Motion for an extension of speaking time must be proposed before the initial speaking time, for that speaker, expires.
- (3) A Motion for an extension of speaking time must not be accepted by the Chairperson if another Councillor has commenced speaking.
- (4) Only one extension of speaking time is permitted for each speaker.
- (5) Any extension of speaking time must not be more than two minutes.

3.9.13 Procedural Motions

- (1) Unless otherwise prohibited, and subject to Sub-Rule (3), a Procedural Motion may be moved at any time and must be dealt with immediately by the Chairperson.
- (2) Procedural Motions require a seconder.

- (3) The Chairperson may reject a Procedural Motion if he or she believes the Motion on which it is proposed has not been adequately or sufficiently debated.
- (4) Regardless of any other provision in these Governance Rules, a Procedural Motion must be dealt with in accordance with the table at Sub-Rule (8).
- (5) A Procedural Motion may not be moved or seconded by the Chairperson.
- (6) Unless otherwise provided, a Procedural Motion must not be amended.
- (7) Procedural Motions table:

Motion	Form	Mover/Seconder	When prohibited	Effect if Carried	Effect if Lost	Debate Permitted
Deferral of a matter (to a future Meeting)	'That the debate on this matter be deferred until (insert Meeting/date) to allow (purpose of deferral)' ...'	Any Councillor who has not moved or seconded the original Motion or otherwise spoken to the original Motion	(a) During the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor; (b) During the election of a Chairperson; or (c) When another Councillor is speaking	Consideration/debate on the Motion and/or amendment is postponed to the stated date and the item is re-listed for consideration at the resolved future Meeting, where a fresh Motion may be put and debated	Debate continues unaffected	Yes
Closure (of debate)	'That the Motion now be put'	Any Councillor who has not moved or seconded the original Motion or spoken for/against the original Motion	During nominations for a Chairperson	Motion or amendment is put to the vote immediately without further debate, subject to any Councillor exercising his or her right to ask any question concerning or arising out of the Motion	Debate continues unaffected	No
Laying a Motion on the table (pausing debate)	'That the Motion be laid on the table'	A Councillor who has not spoken for/against the Motion	During the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor	Motion not further discussed or voted on until Council resolves to take the question from the table at the same Meeting	Debate continues unaffected	No
Take a Motion from the table (resume debate on a matter)	'That the Motion in relation to xx be taken from the table'	Any Councillor	When no Motion is on the table	Debate of the item resumes	Debate of the item remains paused	No
Alter the order of business	'That the item listed at xx on the Agenda be considered before/after the item listed as xy'	Any Councillor	(a) At a Meeting to elect the Mayor; or (b) During any debate	Alters the order of business for the Meeting	Items are considered in the order as listed in the Agenda	No

Governance Rules

Chapter 3: Meeting Procedure

Motion	Form	Mover/Seconder	When prohibited	Effect if Carried	Effect if Lost	Debate Permitted
Suspension of Standing Orders	'That Standing Orders be suspended to ...' (reason must be provided)	Any Councillor		The Rules of the Meeting are temporarily suspended for the specific reason given in the Motion. No debate or decision on any matter, other than a decision to resume Standing Orders, is permitted.	The Meeting continues unaffected.	No
Resumption of Standing Orders	'That Standing Orders be resumed'	Any Councillor	When Standing Orders have not been suspended	The temporary suspension of the Rules of the Meeting is removed.	The Meeting cannot continue.	No
Adjourn the Meeting	'That the Meeting be adjourned for xx minutes/until xx date [and insert reason]	Any Councillor	When Standing Orders have not been suspended	The Meeting is ceased to reconvene at the specified time/date.	The Meeting continues (if the Governance Rules allow)	Yes
Consideration of confidential matter(s) (Close the Meeting to members of the public)	That, in accordance with section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 the Meeting be closed to members of the public for the consideration of item xx which is confidential as it relates to [insert reason]	Any Councillor	During the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor	The Meeting is closed to members of the public.	The Meeting continues to be open to the public.	Yes
Reopen the Meeting	'That the Meeting be reopened to members of the public'	Any Councillor		The Meeting is reopened to the public.	The Meeting remains closed to the public.	No

3.9.14 Notices of Motion

- (1) A Councillor can submit to the Chief Executive Officer a Notice of Motion for inclusion in the Agenda for a Meeting.
- (2) A Notice of Motion must be in writing, signed by the Councillor (including by electronic means), and be lodged with the Chief Executive Officer no later than 12

- noon 10 business days before the Meeting at which it is intended to be considered to ensure its inclusion in the Agenda.
- (3) The Chief Executive Officer must inform Councillors about the legal and cost implications of any proposed Notice of Motion. The Chief Executive Officer may suggest revised wording to the draft Notice of Motion to facilitate compliance with the requirements for Notices of Motion under these Governance Rules.
 - (4) A Notice of Motion must relate to the objectives, role and functions of Council as outlined in the Act.
 - (5) A Notice of Motion must call for a Council report if the Notice of Motion proposes any action that:
 - (a) impacts the levels of Council service;
 - (b) commits Council to expenditure greater than \$5,000 that is not included in the adopted Council Budget;
 - (c) proposes to establish, amend or extend Council policy;
 - (d) proposes to impact the rights of any person who has not had the opportunity to contribute their views;
 - (e) commits Council to any contractual arrangement; or
 - (f) concerns any litigation in respect of which Council is a party.
 - (6) The Chief Executive Officer must reject any Notice of Motion which:
 - (a) is too vague;
 - (b) is defamatory;
 - (c) may be prejudicial to any person or Council;
 - (d) is objectionable in language or nature; or
 - (e) is outside the powers of Council.
 - (7) The Chief Executive Officer may reject a proposed Notice of Motion that relates to a matter that can be addressed through the operational service request process.
 - (8) If rejecting a Notice of Motion, the Chief Executive Officer must inform the Councillor who lodged it of that rejection and the reasons for the rejection no later than nine business days before the Meeting at which it is intended to be considered. The Councillor may submit a revised Motion within 24 hours.
 - (1) The Chief Executive Officer may designate a Notice of Motion to be confidential in accordance with relevant grounds as contained in the Act, in which case, the Notice of Motion will be considered in the part of the relevant Council Meeting that is closed to members of the public.
 - (2) The full text of any Notice of Motion accepted by the Chief Executive Officer must be included in the Agenda and outline the policy, financial and resourcing implications if the Notice of Motion is passed.
 - (3) The Chief Executive Officer may arrange for comments of members of Council staff to be provided to Councillors prior to the Notice of Motion being published in the Agenda for the relevant Council Meeting.

- (4) The Chief Executive Officer must cause all Notices of Motion to be sequentially numbered, dated and entered in a register.
- (5) Unless Council resolves otherwise, each Notice of Motion must be considered in the order in which they were received.
- (6) The Motion moved must not be substantially different to the Motion published in the Agenda, however may be amended by resolution of the Council.
- (7) If a Councillor who has lodged a Notice of Motion is absent from the Meeting or fails to move the Motion when called upon by the Chairperson to do so, any other Councillor may move the Motion.
- (8) If a Notice of Motion is not moved at the Council Meeting at which it is listed, it lapses.

3.9.15 Notices of Rescission

- (1) A notice of rescission is a form of Notice of Motion. Accordingly, all provisions in these Rules regulating Notices of Motion equally apply to notices of rescission.
- (2) Motions to rescind or alter a previous resolution of Council can be made by:
 - (a) notice of rescission delivered by a Councillor in accordance with Sub-Rule (3); or
 - (b) recommendation contained in an officer's report included in the Agenda.
- (3) A Councillor may propose a Motion to rescind or alter a previous resolution of Council provided:
 - (a) the previous resolution has not been acted on; and
 - (b) a notice is delivered to the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate setting out:
 - (c) the relevant previous resolution to be rescinded or altered; and
 - (d) the Meeting and date when the relevant previous resolution was carried.
- (4) A notice of rescission must be in writing, signed (including by electronic means) by a Councillor and be delivered to the Chief Executive Officer or a Delegate by 12 noon at least 10 business days prior to the next **Council Meeting**.
- (5) The Chief Executive Officer, or a member of Council staff with responsibility for the subject matter of a resolution, may implement a resolution of Council at any time after the close of the Meeting at which it was made. A resolution of Council will be deemed to have been acted on if:
 - (a) its contents or substance has been formally communicated to a person whose interests are materially affected by it, including by publishing the proposed Minutes of a Council Meeting on Council's website; or
 - (b) a statutory process has been commenced so as to vest enforceable rights or obligations on Council or any other person.
- (6) Notwithstanding Sub-Rule (4), the Chief Executive Officer or member of Council staff must defer implementing a resolution which:
 - (a) has not been acted on; and
 - (b) is the subject of a notice of rescission which has been delivered to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Sub-Rule (2), unless deferring

implementation of the resolution would have the effect of depriving the resolution of usefulness, giving rise to non-compliance with a legal obligation or placing the Council at legal, financial or other risk.

- (7) If a Motion for rescission is lost, a similar Motion may not be put before Council for at least one month from the date it was last lost, unless Council resolves that the notice of rescission be re-listed at a future Meeting.
- (8) If a Motion for rescission is not moved at the Meeting for which it is listed, it lapses.
- (9) A notice of rescission listed on an Agenda may be moved by any Councillor present but if not being moved by the Councillor who submitted it, must be moved in the form it was listed and must not be amended.

3.9.16 Change of Council Policy

- (1) Council reviews its policies to ensure they are current and continue to reflect community expectations and the position held by Council.
- (2) It is good practice for Council to review significant policies at least once in each Council term (every 4 years) and such reviews may lead to change in policy position.
- (3) Subject to Sub-Rule (4), if Council wishes to change a Council policy, a formal notice of rescission is not required.
- (4) If a policy has been in force in its original or amended form for less than 12 months, any intention to change the policy which may result in a substantial change to the policy's application or operation for members of the public should be communicated to those affected, and their comment sought, prior to the policy being changed.

3.9.17 Foreshadowed Items

- (1) At the time designated in the Council Meeting Agenda, a Councillor may foreshadow a Notice of Motion to be submitted for consideration at the next Council Meeting by indicating, when called on to do so by the Chair, the subject matter of the foreshadowed Notice of Motion.
- (2) The subject matter, as indicated by the Councillor, of a Foreshadowed Item will be recorded in the Minutes.
- (3) No discussion or debate is allowed on a Foreshadowed Item.
- (4) A Foreshadowed Item will have no further formal status at that Council Meeting.
- (5) Foreshadowed Items are intended to be used to indicate to Council and the community matters of importance that will be raised at the next Council Meeting.
- (6) If a Councillor does not submit a Notice of Motion in accordance with Rule 3.9.14 for the next Council Meeting, no further action on a Foreshadowed Item will occur.

3.10 Points of Order**3.10.1 Raising a Point of Order**

- (1) A Councillor raising a Point of Order must state:
 - (a) the Point of Order; and
 - (b) any chapter, Rule, paragraph or provision relevant to the Point of Order.
- (2) The Chairperson must decide all points of order by stating the provision, Rule, practice or precedent which he or she considers applicable to the Point of Order raised, without entering into any discussion or comment.
- (3) The Chairperson may adjourn the Meeting to consider a Point of Order; otherwise he or she must Rule on it as soon as it is raised.
- (4) All other matters before Council are suspended until the Point of Order is decided.

3.10.2 Dissent in Chairperson's ruling

- (1) A Motion of dissent in the Chairperson's ruling must, if seconded, be given priority to all other items of business and a substitute Chairperson must be elected to preside while the Motion is being considered.
- (2) The substitute Chairperson must put questions relative to the ruling to the Chairperson first, and then to the mover of the Motion.
- (3) The substitute Chairperson must conduct a debate on the Chairperson's ruling, and the matter must be decided by a majority vote.
- (4) The Chairperson must then resume the Chair for the remainder of the Meeting.

3.10.3 Valid points of order

- (1) A Point of Order may be raised in relation to:
 - (a) a Motion which under Rule 3.9.2 should not be accepted by the Chairperson;
 - (b) a question of procedure;
 - (c) a Councillor who is, or appears to be, out of order;
 - (d) debate that is irrelevant to the matter under consideration;
 - (e) a matter that is outside the powers of Council; or
 - (f) any act of Disorder.

3.10.4 Contradiction or opinion

- (2) Rising to express a mere difference of opinion or to contradict a speaker is not a Point of Order.

3.10.5 Disorderly Conduct

- (1) The conduct of Councillors at Council Meetings is governed by the Act, these Rules and the Councillor Code of Conduct.
- (2) Where a Councillor engages in improper or Disorderly conduct, or acts in a way that otherwise disrupts the Meeting, and prevents the conduct of Council business:
 - (a) Council may, by resolution, suspend that Councillor from a portion of the Meeting or from the balance of the Meeting where the Chairperson has warned the Councillor to cease that behaviour; or
 - (b) The Mayor, at a Council Meeting, having previously warned the Councillor to cease that behaviour, may direct a Councillor to leave the Meeting for a period of time or the balance of the Meeting.⁶
- (3) Where Council suspends a Councillor under Sub-Rule (2)(a), or the Mayor directs a Councillor to leave the Meeting under Sub-Rule (2)(b) the Councillor will take no active part in the portion of the Meeting from which he or she has been suspended.
- (4) If a Councillor has been suspended from a Meeting or directed to leave in accordance with Sub-Rule (3) the Chairperson may ask the Chief Executive Officer, an Authorised Officer or a member of Victoria Police to remove the Councillor.

⁶ The Act (section 19(1)(b)) provides the power to the Mayor to direct a Councillor, subject to any procedures or limitations specified in the Governance Rules, to leave a Council Meeting if the behaviour of the Councillor is preventing the Council from conducting its business.

3.11 Minutes

The Minutes of a Meeting must contain details of the proceedings and resolutions made, be clearly expressed, be self-explanatory and incorporate relevant reports or a summary of the relevant reports considered in the decision-making process.

3.11.1 Keeping of Minutes

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer or Delegate is responsible for the keeping of Minutes on behalf of Council. Those Minutes must record:
 - (a) the date, place, time and nature of the Council Meeting;
 - (b) the names of Councillors and whether they are present, an apology, on leave of absence, etc.;
 - (c) the titles of the members of Council staff present who are not part of the gallery;
 - (d) the disclosure of a conflict of interest made by a Councillor in accordance with the Act;
 - (e) the arrivals and departures of Councillors, during the course of the Meeting (including any temporary departures or arrivals);
 - (f) every Motion and amendment moved (including Procedural Motions),
 - (g) the outcome of every Motion moved;
 - (h) where a division is called, the names of every Councillor and the way their vote was cast (and if they abstained);
 - (i) when requested by a Councillor, a record of their support of, opposition to, or abstention from voting on any Motion;
 - (j) for the purposes of Sub-Rules (h) and (i) an abstention will be recorded along with a note that the vote was counted against the question in accordance with section 61(5)(e) of the Act.
 - (k) details of any failure to achieve or maintain a quorum;
 - (l) a summary of any question asked and the response provided as part of public question time
 - (m) the items about which community statements have been made and the number of community statements;
 - (n) details of any petitions made to Council;
 - (o) the time and reason for any adjournment of the Meeting or suspension of standing orders;
 - (p) any other matter, which the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate thinks should be recorded to clarify the intention of the Meeting or assist in the reading of the Minutes and at the request of any Councillor; and
- (q) the time the Council Meeting was opened and closed, including any part of the Council Meeting that was closed to members of the public.

3.11.2 Electronic Minutes

Once confirmed, the Minutes may be stored electronically in perpetuity as the record of Council business.

3.11.3 Confirmation of Minutes

- (1) The Minutes as recorded by the Chief Executive Officer, or Delegate, will be made available as the proposed Minutes soon as possible, but at a minimum to:
 - (a) Councillors, within 7 business days;
 - (b) members of the public, by publishing them on Council's website, within 9 business days of the Council Meeting they relate to.
- (2) At every Council Meeting the Minutes of the preceding Council Meeting(s) must be dealt with as follows:
 - (a) a Motion will be moved to confirm the Minutes in the following terms: 'That the Minutes of theMeeting held on20.....be confirmed.';
 - (b) if a Councillor indicates opposition to the Minutes, the Councillor must specify the particular item or items in the Minutes and, after asking any questions to clarify the matter, can only move a Motion to rectify the alleged error(s) in the Minutes by adding the following words to the Motion in Sub-Rule (2) (a) '...subject to the following alteration(s).....'.
- (3) no debate or discussion is permitted on the confirmation of Minutes except as to their accuracy as a record of the proceedings of the Council Meeting to which they relate;
- (4) once the Minutes are confirmed in their original or amended form, the Minutes must, if practicable, be signed by the Chairperson of the Meeting at which they have been confirmed; and
- (5) the Minutes must be entered in the minute book and each item in the minute book must be entered consecutively.

3.11.4 Webcasting and Recording of Proceedings

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer (or Delegate) may, for the purposes of minute taking, cause all or part of the proceedings of a Meeting to be recorded on suitable audio or video recording equipment.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer will cause a livestream of the proceedings of a Meeting to be conducted and the recording of that livestream to be made available to the public.
- (3) A Meeting that has been closed to members of the public for consideration of confidential matters will not be livestreamed.
- (4) A Meeting that has been closed to members of the public for security reasons or because it is necessary to do so to enable the Meeting to proceed in an orderly manner, must continue to be livestreamed.
- (5) A Meeting that has been closed to members of the public for security reasons or because it is necessary to do so to enable the Meeting to proceed in an orderly manner must be adjourned if the livestream is not possible.

- (6) A person in the gallery must not operate film, photographic, tape-recording or other equipment to reproduce sound and/or images at any Meeting without first obtaining the consent of the Chairperson.
- (7) The consent of the Chairperson given under Sub-Rule (3) may be revoked at any time during the course of a Meeting by the Chairperson stating that consent has been revoked and ordering that the recording cease, at which time the recording must cease.

3.12 Suspension of Standing Orders

Standing Orders are the Rules made to govern the procedure at Council Meetings as contained in these Governance Rules. The Standing Orders cover a range of matters including the order of business, Rules of debate, Procedural Motions and election procedures. Standing Orders can be suspended to facilitate the business of a Meeting but should not be used purely to dispense with the processes and protocol of the government of Council.

- (1) To temporarily remove the constraints of formal Meeting procedure and allow full discussion or clarification of an issue, Council may, by resolution, suspend standing orders in accordance with the Procedural Motion table at Rule 3.9.13.
- (2) Suspension of standing orders should not be used purely to dispense with the processes and protocol of the government of Council.
- (3) No Motion can be accepted by the Chairperson or lawfully be dealt with during any suspension of standing orders, except a Motion to resume standing orders.
- (4) No Motion to suspend standing orders can be accepted by the Chairperson during a second extension of time for a Meeting.

3.13 Circumstances in which Council will close a Meeting to members of the public

- (1) The Act provides the basis for matters to be considered as confidential. Council will only close a Meeting to the public for consideration of confidential matters in accordance with the Act and its Public Transparency Policy.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer may determine to advertise that a Meeting will be closed to members of the public if:
 - (a) There is reason to believe the safety or security of Councillors, Council staff or members of the public will be at risk if the Meeting is open to the public; or
 - (b) All matters to be considered at the Meeting are confidential in nature.
- (3) Council may resolve to close a Meeting to members of the public if:
 - (a) There is reason to believe the safety or security of Councillors, Council staff or members of the public is at risk; or
 - (b) A Meeting, has become, or is at risk of becoming so Disorderly that the business of Council cannot be conducted; or
 - (c) The matter to be considered relates to confidential matters.
- (4) Having closed the Meeting in accordance with Sub-Rule (2), Council may resolve that it's decision or any report considered, or any part of its decision or any report considered, may be

released to the public, to provide clarity that a Councillor or Council staff member who discusses those elements resolved to be released is not releasing confidential information.

3.13.1 Designated Confidential Information

- (1) If, after the repeal of section 77(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1989, the Chief Executive Officer is of the opinion that information relating to a Meeting is confidential information within the meaning of the Act, he or she may designate the information as confidential and advise Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly.
- (2) Information which has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer as confidential information within the meaning of the Act, and in respect of which advice has been given to Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly, will be presumed to be confidential information.

CHAPTER 4 – ELECTION OF THE MAYOR

4.1. Overview

The role and functions of the Mayor are provided in the Act. The holder of this significant office is the Chairperson at Council Meetings, the leader of the Councillors, acts as the principal spokesperson for Council and carries out civic and ceremonial duties. The Mayor also leads engagement with the community on the development of the Council Plan.

The Chief Executive Officer must determine the most appropriate time and date for the election of the Mayor, except that the election of the Mayor must be held in accordance with any provisions contained in the Act⁷.

- (1) A Mayor is to be elected no later than one month after the date of a general election.
- (2) At the Meeting to elect the Mayor, Council must first resolve if the term of the Mayor is to be 1 or 2 years.
- (3) If the Mayor is elected for a 1 year term, the next election of the Mayor must be held on a day to be determined by the Council that is as close to the end of the 1 year term as is reasonably practicable.
- (4) If the Mayor is to be elected for a 2 year term, the next election of the Mayor must be held on a day to be determined by the Council that is as close to the end of the 2 year term as is reasonably practicable.
- (5) A Mayor is to be elected within one month after any vacancy in the office of Mayor occurs.
- (6) The election of a Mayor after the period specified in this section does not invalidate the election.
- (7) A Councillor elected to fill a vacancy in the office of Mayor caused other than by the expiration of a one year or a 2 year term serves the remaining period of the previous Mayor's term.

4.2. Election of Mayor⁸

- (1) At a Council Meeting that is open to the public, the Councillors must elect a Councillor to be the Mayor of the Council.
- (2) Subject to section 167, any Councillor is eligible for election or re-election to the office of Mayor.
- (3) The election of the Mayor must—
 - (a) be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer; and
 - (b) subject to this section, be conducted in accordance with the Governance Rules.

⁷ In accordance and as outlined in Section 26 of the Act

⁸ In accordance and as outlined in Section 25 of the Act

- (4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6), the Mayor must be elected by an absolute majority of the Councillors.
- (5) If an absolute majority of the Councillors cannot be obtained at the Meeting, the Council may resolve to conduct a new election at a later specified time and date.
- (6) If only one Councillor is a candidate for Mayor, the Meeting must declare that Councillor to be duly elected as Mayor.
- (7) In this section, **absolute majority** means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council (i.e. 6).

4.3. Role and Election of Deputy Mayor

In accordance with section 21 of the Act, the role of the Deputy Mayor must perform the role of the Mayor and may exercise any of the powers of the Mayor if the Mayor is unable to attend a Council meeting or part thereof; incapable to perform his or her duties or the office of the Mayor is vacant.

- (1) At the Council Meeting at which the Mayor is to be elected, the Council may resolve to establish the position of Deputy Mayor and elect a Councillor to the position of Deputy Mayor.
- (2) The term of a Deputy Mayor is identical to the term of the Mayor as resolved by Council.
- (3) If the Council has not resolved to establish the position of Deputy Mayor, any provisions in these Governance Rules relating to the Deputy Mayor have no effect.

4.4. Nominating

- (1) Each nomination requires a mover and seconder.
- (2) A nominated Councillor must advise the Chair whether they accept or decline the nomination as a candidate for the role of Mayor/Deputy Mayor.

4.5. Method of Voting

The election of the Mayor must be carried out by a show of hands.

4.6. Determining the Election of Mayor / Deputy Mayor

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer will preside during the election of the Mayor.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer must invite nominations for the office of Mayor and confirm acceptance of the nomination with the nominee.
- (3) Where in an election for the Mayor:
 - (a) only one candidate has been nominated, that candidate must be declared elected;
 - (b) two candidates have been nominated, a vote must be taken and the candidate who receives an Absolute Majority of votes must be declared elected;
 - (c) two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives an Absolute Majority of votes, a Second vote will be conducted.
 - (d) where, after a Second vote, where two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives an Absolute Majority of votes the Chief Executive Officer will seek the Meeting to resolve to conduct a new election at a Meeting to be held at 6 pm the following day;
 - (e) more than two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives an Absolute Majority:
 - (i) the candidate with the fewest number of votes cast must be eliminated;
 - (ii) the names of the remaining candidates must be put to the vote again; and
 - (iii) the procedure in (i) and (ii) above must be continued until there remain only two candidates, at which point the candidate to be declared elected is to be determined by the procedures outlined in (b) to (d).
 - (f) in the event of more than two candidates having an equality of votes and one of them having to be declared a defeated candidate (where there are three or more candidates with equal votes); the Chief Executive Officer will conduct a vote for one candidate to be defeated;
 - (g) In the event the vote for a candidate to be defeated results in an equality of votes the defeated candidate will be determined by lot.
 - (h) if a lot is conducted, the Chief Executive Officer will conduct the lot and the following provisions will apply:
 - (i) each candidate will draw one lot;
 - (ii) the order of drawing lots will be determined by the alphabetical order of the surnames of the Councillors who received an equal number of votes except that if two or more Councillor surnames are identical, the order will be determined by the alphabetical order of the Councillors' first names;
 - (iii) as many identical pieces of paper as there are Councillors who received an equal number of votes must be placed in a receptacle;
 - (iv) the word 'Defeated' shall be written on one of the pieces of paper, and the Councillor who draws the paper with the word 'Defeated' written on it must be declared the defeated candidate (in which event a further vote must be taken on the remaining candidates).

- (4) If Council resolves to have the office of Deputy Mayor, the provisions of Sub-Rules (2) and (3) apply to the election of the Deputy Mayor with all necessary modifications and adaptations.

4.7. Ceremonial Mayoral Speech

- (1) Upon being elected, the Mayor may make a ceremonial speech.
- (2) The purpose of the ceremonial Mayoral speech is to outline priorities for the year ahead based on the adopted Council Plan.

CHAPTER 5 COUNCIL COMMITTEES & JOINT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Various types of Committees can play a key role in connecting community views and experts with the decision-making processes of Council. Committees provide advice to Council and to Council officers exercising delegation to make decisions or implement policy.

Committees, usually comprise community members and Councillors, and may include representatives of community organisations. These committees are essential forums to provide input to the development of Council policy and decision making in their areas of focus.

The appointment of Councillors to specific areas of responsibility also provides a framework for relationships between Councillors and the administration of Council to underpin informed decision making.

Council also has Councillor representatives on external committees and organisations to ensure Council's voice is heard in key priority areas. These committees and organisations also inform Council, via its representatives, in regard to sector and/or expert views.

Council will seek the views of community members whose rights or obligations may be affected before making a decision. Community engagement on each issue will be undertaken in accordance with the Community Engagement principles of the Act and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

In certain circumstances Council will establish a formal opportunity for members of the community to address a committee established to hear from the community in regard to a specific issue.

5.1 Delegated Committees

Council may establish Delegated Committees as part of its governance framework. Delegated Committees can comprise Councillors, members of Council staff and others and must be chaired by a Councillor. As Council may delegate specific powers, duties and functions to Delegated Committees, their Meeting procedures need to be formal.

- (1) If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, these Rules will apply to the Delegated Committee Meetings with any necessary modifications.
- (2) For the purpose of Sub-Rule (1):
 - (a) a Council Meeting is to be read as a reference to a Delegated Committee Meeting;
 - (b) a Councillor is to be read as a reference to a Member of the Delegated Committee; and

- (c) a reference to the Mayor is to be read as a reference to the Chairperson of the Delegated Committee.
- (3) If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, Council may resolve that a provision of these Governance Rules do not apply to that Committee.

5.2 Advisory Committees

- (1) Advisory Committees established by Council will be consulted for input on related policy, strategy or major operational proposals.
- (2) Each Advisory Committee will be established in accordance with a framework and terms of reference determined by the Chief Executive Officer that at a minimum will prescribe:
 - (a) Membership terms that provide for renewal of membership and continuity of contribution, with provision for initial appointments to support rotation of memberships.
 - (b) Inclusive and transparent recruitment processes for community member membership and participation.
 - (c) Requirements for disclosures of conflicts of interest.
 - (d) A description of the roles of members including attendance and participation requirements, role of the committee, Councillor chair, reporting requirements, confidentiality.
- (3) Subject to the Local Government Act 2020, the Council may appoint any number or combination of its members and staff officers to be an Advisory Committee to consider and make a recommendation to the Council upon any matter, but no recommendation of any Advisory Committee shall have any force or effect until approved by the Council.

5.3 Hearing Committees

- (1) Council will establish Hearing Committees to provide an opportunity to hear from community members in formal setting on key issues.
- (2) A Hearing Committee will be comprised only of Councillors.
- (3) A quorum for a Hearing Committee will be half of the Councillors appointed to the Hearing Committee.
- (4) Where issue is affects a large proportion of the Merri-bek community all Councillors will be appointed to the Hearing Committee.
- (5) Priority will be given to addresses from those members of the community who have registered an interest in addressing a Hearing Committee.
- (6) Community members will be provided with reasonable notice of the date and time that they will be invited to address a Hearing Committee.
- (7) Council may resolve that a Hearing Committee Meeting will be held electronically and make provisions for community members address the committee by a video conferencing tool.
- (8) Council may resolve a Hearing Committee Meeting will be livestreamed.

- (9) A summary of proceedings of all Hearing Committee Meetings held will be reported to Council.

5.4 Community Asset Committees⁹

The Act provides for Council to establish a community asset committee for the management of a community asset such as a hall. Council may appoint members of the community to the committee and delegate to it powers, duties, or functions. The powers delegated to a community asset committee must be limited in the amount and purpose of any financial delegation.

- (1) The Governance Rules will apply to any Community Asset Committee established by Council.
- (2) Council may resolve, in establishing a Community Asset Committee, that the Meeting procedure chapter of these Governance Rules does not apply.
- (3) A Community Asset Committee must report the Minutes of all Committee Meetings to the next practicable Council Meeting.
- (4) A Community Asset Committee must act in accordance with its adopted Charter, Instrument of Delegation and any Terms of Reference adopted by Council.
- (5) A Community Asset Committee must adhere to any policy, guideline or protocol introduced by Council, which relates to the operational or governance requirements of the Committee.
- (6) A Community Asset Committee must provide Council with an Annual Report each year, in a format determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

5.5 Joint Council Meetings

Regional collaboration provides benefits to the Merri-bek community through collective procurement, increased advocacy and alignment for major projects. While on some matters that are worked on in partnership it's possible for the participating Councils to make their own decisions and determinations, in some circumstances, it may be beneficial to hold Joint Council Meetings as are provided for in the Act.

- (1) Council may resolve to participate in a Joint Council Meeting.
- (2) If Council has resolved to participate in a Joint Council Meeting, the Chief Executive Officer (or Delegate) will agree on governance Rules with the participating Councils.

⁹ *Section 47 of the Act provides:*

1) The Chief Executive Officer may by instrument of delegation delegate any power, duty or function of the Council that has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer by the Council to—

- (a) a member of Council staff; or
- (b) the members of a Community Asset Committee.

This means Council may not delegate directly to a Community Asset Committee.

- (3) Where the participating Councils agree Merri-bek will chair a Joint Council Meeting, the Mayor will be nominated to Chair the Joint Council Meeting.
- (4) A joint meeting must comply with any requirements prescribed by the regulations.

CHAPTER 6 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Act defines general and material conflicts of interest and provides exemptions for remoteness and interests in common with a substantial proportion of ratepayers along with other specific circumstances.

The Act also provides Council must include in its Governance Rules procedures for disclosures of Conflicts of interest, including at Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council that are not Council Meetings. Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council include those Meetings arranged or hosted by Council.

These Rules provide the procedures for disclosures of conflicts of interest.

Further guidance is available from the Managing Conflicts of Interest guideline.

6.1 Obligations with regard to conflict of interest:

- (1) Councillors, members of Delegated Committees and Council staff and contractors are required to:
 - (a) Avoid - all situations which may give rise to conflicts of interest;
 - (b) Identify - any conflicts of interest; and
 - (c) Disclose – or declare all conflicts of interest.

6.2 Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees

- (1) May not participate in discussion or decision-making on a matter in which they have a conflict of interest.
- (2) When disclosing a conflict of interest, Councillors must clearly state their connection to the matter.
- (3) All disclosures of conflicts of interest will be recorded in the Minutes of a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting.
- (4) Council will maintain a Conflict of Interest Register which will be made available on Council's website.

6.3 Procedure at a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting

- (1) At the time designated in the Agenda, a Councillor with a conflict of interest in an item on that Agenda must indicate they have a conflict of interest by clearly stating:
 - (a) The item for which they have a conflict of interest; and
 - (b) Whether their conflict of interest is general or material; and
 - (c) The circumstances that give rise to the conflict of interest.
- (2) Immediately prior to the consideration of the item in which they have a conflict of interest, a Councillor or Member of a Delegated Committee must indicate to the Meeting the existence of the conflict of interest and leave the Meeting.
- (3) A Councillor who is not present at the designated time in the Agenda for disclosures of conflicts of interest, must disclose their conflict of interest in the manner that required for the declarations of conflicts of interest at Sub-Rule (1) prior to leaving the Meeting.

- (4) A Councillor or Member of a Delegated Committee who discloses a conflict of interest and leaves a Council Meeting must not communicate with any participants in the Meeting while the decision is being made.

6.4 Procedure at Advisory Committee Meetings and other Meetings organised, hosted or supported by Merri-bek

- (1) A Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee who has a conflict of interest must not participate in discussion of matters that will come before Council for a decision, or if a decision will be made by a member of staff acting under delegation.
- (2) At the time indicated on the Agenda, a Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee with a conflict of interest will indicate the existence of the conflict of interest and the matter in which the conflict of interest arises.
- (3) If there is no Agenda, a Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee with a conflict of interest will indicate the existence of the conflict of interest as soon the matter arises.
- (4) At the time for discussion of that item, the Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee will leave the discussion and not communicate with any members of the Meeting for the duration of the discussion.
- (5) The existence of a conflict of interest will be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- (6) If there are no Minutes kept of the Meeting, the conflict of interest will be recorded in a Meeting record and provided to the Governance team for recording in the register of Conflicts of Interest.
- (7) The Meeting Minutes or record will also record the duration of the discussion and whether the Councillor left the Meeting.
- (8) Meeting records and reports of conflicts of interest will be presented to Council for noting and inclusion on the public record.

6.5 Council staff

- (1) Must act in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct.
- (2) Must not exercise a delegation or make a decision on any matter where they have a conflict of interest.
- (3) May be permitted to provide advice to a decision maker if a conflict of interest exists, subject to the procedure and disclosure provisions at Rule 5.6 and the Employee Code of Conduct.

6.6 Procedure for disclosures of conflicts of interest by Council staff

- (1) Council staff must disclose the existence of all conflicts of interest in writing and in the form determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
- (2) All conflicts of interest disclosed by Council staff will be provided to the Governance team for recording in the register of Conflicts of Interest.
- (3) A Council staff member who has disclosed a conflict of interest may provide advice to Council or another staff member acting under delegation if:

- (a) The number and qualifications of other people providing advice regarding the same matter is equal or greater; or
- (b) The staff member who has disclosed the conflict of interest is the only staff member with expertise in the area; and
- (c) The staff member's Director determines that the conflict of interest has not influenced the advice provided; and
- (d) The existence of the conflict of interest is documented in all advice provided by that staff member, including any Council Report(s), and in the case of verbal advice, is documented by the decision maker.

6.7 Contractors and Consultants

- (1) All Contractors and consultants engaged by Council to provide advice to the decision making process will be required to disclose conflicts of interest.
- (2) A Contractor or consultant who discloses a conflict of interest will not be engaged to provide advice on that matter unless;
 - (a) The conflict is so remote or insignificant it could not be considered to influence the advice being provided; or
 - (b) There are no other contractors or consultants reasonably available and qualified to provide the technical advice required; and
 - (c) The conflict of interest is documented, including any Council Report(s), in all advice provided by that contractor or consultant.

CHAPTER 7 - DELEGATIONS

Council can make decisions (act) in two ways – by resolution at a Council Meeting or by delegation (others acting on its behalf). The Local Government Act 2020 provides for Council to delegate to the Chief Executive Officer.

Delegation of Council powers to the Chief Executive Officer and other members of Council staff is a long-established practice to enable day to day operational decisions to be made efficiently. Delegation of Council powers is primarily enabled and regulated by the Local Government Act 2020, however powers, duties and functions may be delegated from a range of Acts, Regulations and local laws.

Additionally, the Act and other legislation confers some powers duties and functions directly to the Chief Executive Officer. These may also be delegated by the Chief Executive Officer to various positions in the organisation's structure.

Delegations are to a position in the organisational structure rather than to a person.

- (1) A Delegate must exercise the duties and perform the duties and functions set out in the Instrument of delegation and in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council.
- (2) A Delegate making a decision that will affect any person's rights, will identify whose rights may be affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey their views regarding the effect on their rights, and consider those views.
- (3) Delegates must keep appropriate records of decisions and actions taken under delegation.
- (4) The Chief Executive Officer may designate certain decisions made under delegation as matters to be reported to Council.
- (5) Council's public register of delegations will be available on its website and for inspection, on request, at Council's offices.

CHAPTER 8 – COMMON SEAL

The purpose of this Section is to provide for the security and proper use of the Common Seal. The Common Seal is the corporate signature of Council and exists in the form of a stamp. It evidences Council's corporate will and authenticates decisions taken and acts performed by Council.

As many of the powers, duties and functions of a Council are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and other members of Council staff, the Common Seal of Council is only used on legal documents such as local laws, contracts, agreements, transfers of land and other documents where required by legislation or where outside the Chief Executive Officer's delegation.

8.1 Custodian of Common Seal

- (1) A person must not use the Common Seal without authority from Council.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer must always ensure the security of the Common Seal.

8.2 Arrangements for the Signing and Sealing of a Document

- (1) A written request and a copy of the Council resolution approving the use of the Council seal must be submitted to the Manager Governance and Strategy for signing and sealing.
- (2) If Sub-Rule (1) is not met, the documents must not be signed and sealed.
- (3) A contract or agreement must only be submitted for signing and sealing, once the document has been fully executed by the other party/parties (unless the other party to the contract or agreement is either the State Government of Victoria, the Federal Government or another Local Government entity).

8.3 Affixing the Common Seal

- (1) The affixing of the Common Seal to any document must be attested to by the signatures of both:
 - (a) a Councillor; and
 - (b) the Chief Executive Officer,acting on behalf of Council.

- (2) The seal of a Council must not be affixed to any document without the Council's approval granted either generally or specifically by resolution that the seal be so affixed.

The following is an example of the required approval:

That Council affix the Common Seal to the [description of document].

Or

The [document], shall come into force immediately upon the common seal of the Council is affixed to the [document].

- (3) The affixing of the Seal to a document must be witnessed by signatures of a Councillor and the Chief Executive, except in the instance where the Seal is to be appended to the contract of employment for the Chief Executive. In this instance, a second Councillor will sign alongside the Mayor.

8.4 Sealing Register

The Manager Governance and Strategy will ensure that a register of all uses of the Common Seal is kept by Council. The register will contain a description of the document, the date the Seal was affixed and the date Council resolved to affix the Seal.

CHAPTER 9 - COUNCIL RECORDS

9.1 Records of Meetings held under the auspices of Council

- (1) 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.
- (2) Records kept in accordance with Sub-Rule one will include:
 - a) The attendees at the Meeting, including organisations represented by external presenters;
 - b) The title of matters discussed
 - c) Any conflicts of interest disclosed and whether the person with the conflict of interest left the Meeting.
- (3) Where Minutes are kept of a Meeting and made available to the community, an additional record is not required to be kept.

9.2 Councillor attendance records

- (1) Council will maintain a register of Councillor attendance at Council Meetings, Delegated Committee Meetings and Meetings arranged to brief Councillors.
- (2) The register of Attendance kept in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) will be published on Council's website quarterly

CHAPTER 10 – ELECTION PERIODS

The Election Period Policy governs the conduct of Council, Councillors and members of Council staff during an election period to ensure appropriate decision-making in the lead up to a Council election.

The Election Period prohibits the use of Council resources for any election campaign and puts in place a procedure to ensure Council does not print, publish or distribute any material that may influence the outcome of the election.

Additionally, the Election Period Policy addresses Councillors and staff standing as candidates in Council, State or Federal elections.

Election Periods Generally

- (1) Council will have in place an election period policy that:
 - (a) Governs decision making during a local government election period, including what may be considered at a Council Meeting;
 - (b) Prohibits the use of Council resources for any election campaign purposes, including Federal, State or Council elections;
 - (c) Sets out the conditions for any community engagement required to be undertaken during an election period, including consultations, Civic events, and activities of Advisory Committees established by Council;
 - (d) Sets out the requirements for any Council publications during a local government election period – including the website, social media, newsletters and advertising – to ensure Council does not publish materials that relate to issues that are the subject of election campaigns;
 - (e) Defines roles and responsibilities in relation to who is the spokesperson for Council during an election period;
 - (f) Sets out the requirements for a Councillor or member of Council staff who is a candidate in an election including a Federal, State or Council election.
- (2) At least once in each Council term and, not later than 12 months prior to the commencement of an election period, Council will review its election period policy.
- (3) The Election Period Policy forms part of these Governance Rules.
- (4) The operation of Council Advisory Committees shall be suspended upon the commencement of the election period ahead of a general Council election.
- (5) Any outstanding Delegate's Reports may still be reported to a Council Meeting during this period.
- (6) Council Committees shall resume Meeting following the election and the appointment by the incoming Council of Councillors to each committee.

Election Period Policy**1. Introduction**

The Act requires Council to include an Election Period Policy (Policy) in its Governance Rules.

2. Context

Under Section 69 of the Act, an election period policy must prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election that:

- (a) relates to the appointment or remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer but not to the appointment or remuneration of an Acting Chief Executive Officer; or
- (b) commits the Council to expenditure exceeding one per cent of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; or
- (c) the Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or
- (d) the Council considers should not be made during an election period.

An Election Period Policy must also prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election or by-election that would enable the use of Council resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence voting at the election.

Section 123 of the Act (Misuse of Position) prescribes serious penalties for any Councillor who inappropriately makes use of their position or information obtained in their role, to gain an advantage, or disadvantage another.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The requirements of this policy will be monitored throughout each election period to ensure compliance.

4. Associated documents

Local Government Act 2020

Councillor Code of Conduct

Environmental Protection Act 1970 (EPA Act)

Approval Memo – Appendix 1

5. Policy Objectives

To support and ensure the conduct of good governance for Council and the organisation during election periods through the transparency and accountability of Councillors, Council officers, and candidates during an election period.

The policy complies with the Act, which requires Councils to have an election period policy that sets out requirements relating to conduct, decision making, transparency and equity, and use of Council resources during an election period.

6. Policy Details

6.1 Election Period

During the 'Election Period' for a Municipal General Election the Council will be deemed to be in 'Caretaker Mode'. The election 'caretaker' period extends for 32 days - from the time nominations close on Nomination Day, until 6pm on election day.

During an election period, Councillors:

- a) Will continue to fulfil their duties (unless they are granted a leave of absence);
- b) Will continue to engage, and communicate with, the community in their Councillor role;
- c) Must comply with the Act and Councillor Code of Conduct, and
- d) Must not use their position to influence Council officers, or access Council resources or information, in support of any election campaign or candidacy.

Section 69 of the Act prohibits any Council decision during the election period for a general election that:

- a) Relates to the appointment or remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer, but not to the appointment or remuneration of an acting Chief Executive Officer;
- b) Commits the Council to expenditure exceeding 1% of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; or
- c) The Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or
- d) The Council considers should not be made during an election period.

If the Council considers that there are extraordinary circumstances where the municipality or the local community would be significantly disadvantaged by the Council not making a particular decision, the Chief Executive Officer may make an application to the Minister for a compliance exemption in accordance with section 177 of the Act.

During an election period, it shall be the ultimate responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer, having consulted with the Mayor, to determine if a matter is to be presented to Council for decision.

6.2 Guidance on Decisions

Council will avoid making decisions that would affect voting at an election or decisions that may unreasonably bind an incoming Council and could be deferred until after the election.

Examples of inappropriate decisions include:

- a) Allocating community grants or other direct funding to community organisations;
- b) Major planning scheme amendments;
- c) Changes to strategic objectives and strategies identified in the Council Plan;
- d) Adopting policy;
- e) Setting advocacy positions.

The only items to be considered at a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting held during the election period, will be the Annual Report, and administrative items to complete the Council's term of office, for example, routine governance items (including records of Meeting held under the auspices of Council reporting). Public Question Time and Community Statements will be suspended during the election period.

At a Council Meeting designated to consider Planning and Related Matters, only permit applications that may otherwise be subject of an application to VCAT on the grounds Council has failed to determine within the prescribed time will be considered.

6.3 Officers with Delegated Authority

During the election period, Council officers must defer making a decision under a delegation from Council or sub-delegation from the Chief Executive Officer, that could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place.

6.4 Caretaker Statement

During the election period, the Chief Executive Officer will ensure that a Caretaker Statement is included in every report submitted to the Council or to a Delegated Committee of Council for a decision.

The Caretaker Statement will specify one or more of the following:

- a) The recommended decision is not, a decision prohibited by the Act and is a decision that falls within the guidance of the Election Period Policy.
- b) The recommended decision is outside the guidance of the Election Period Policy, but the following negative consequences of a failure to make a decision on this matter outweigh the consequences of binding an incoming Council. [Insert description of negative consequences of failure to make decision].
- c) The recommended decision is a decision prohibited in the Act during an election period, but compliance exemption was sought from the Minister in accordance with section 177 of the Act and was granted by on [insert date].

During the election period, the Council will not make a decision on any matter or report that does not include one of these Caretaker Statements.

Councillors will refrain from moving Motions or raising matters at a Meeting that could potentially influence voting at the election.

There will be no Notices of Motion accepted during the Caretaker Period.

6.5 Council resources must not be used

Council resources must not be used by any Councillor or candidate in any way that supports an election campaign or in a way that is intended or likely to influence voting in any election.

6.6 Candidacy

A Councillor must not use Council resources for candidacy, or any purpose that may be perceived as being used for candidacy (individual or political party). This also applies to a Councillor standing in local, state, or federal government elections, and for any other elected positions, for example, positions on boards. Such use would constitute misuse of position by the Councillor.

6.6.1 State and Federal Government Elections

Councillors will ensure there is a demonstrable distinction between their obligations to Council and their personal interests as a candidate, or member of a political party, in an election period prior to a state or federal election. In accordance with the Councillor code of conduct, a Councillor who becomes an endorsed candidate of a registered political party or publicly expresses an intention to run as a candidate in a state or federal election, is a 'Prospective Candidate' and will provide written advice to the Chief Executive Officer, as soon as practicable, who will then advise all Councillors.

Councillors will not use Council resources or participate in electioneering at Council events, Meetings or functions, in support of any candidate in a state or federal election.

Where clauses of this policy apply to a Councillor or candidate, it is intended that they be applied in the case of a state, federal or Council election.

6.7 Council Publications

6.7.1 Electoral Matter

Council will not print, publish or distribute (or cause to be printed, published or distributed) any Electoral Material (anything containing Electoral Matter) during an election period.

The following definitions are noted:

Section 3(1) '**publish**' means publish by any means including by publication on the Internet;

Section 3(4) '**Electoral Matter**' means matter, which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any Electoral Material produced by or on behalf of the Returning Officer for the purposes of conducting an election.

Section 3(5) without limiting the generality of the definition of 'Electoral Matter', matter is to be taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on -

- (a) the election; or
- (b) a candidate in the election, or
- (c) an issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election.

Council will not issue, publish or distribute any publication during an election period, other than media and social media responses/statements on a service or issue, or those that are required under an Act or regulation, or the Annual Report media release.

'Publications' include hard copy and electronic advertisements, promotional media releases, fliers, posters, newsletters/updates, booklets, surveys, invitations and group mailouts/emails.

Any publications to be issued during the election period are to be forwarded to the relevant Director for approval, and then sent to the Governance unit for vetting for Electoral Matter. Once vetted, the publication will then be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

Council publications available in Council facilities will be reviewed before the election period to identify and temporarily remove anything that might reasonably influence the election.

The Chief Executive Officer, or Delegate, will be the primary spokesperson for Council communications during an election period.

Media and social media responses and statements will only be issued during an election period in the name of the Chief Executive Officer. These will be subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Council officers will not make any public statement that could be construed as influencing the election.

6.7.2 Annual Report

It is a requirement of the Act that Council's Annual Report is presented by the Mayor at an open Meeting of Council held, in the year of a general election, on a day not later than the day before election day. Every endeavour will be made for the report to be prepared and presented prior to the commencement of the election period.

6.8 Council Resources

The Council will also ensure other Council resources are not used inappropriately in ways that may influence voting in an election. This includes financial, human and material resources. Any staff member who considers that a particular use of Council resources may influence voting in the election must advise their Director or the Chief Executive Officer and obtain approval before authorising, using or allocating the resource.

In applying these principles, the Council understands that the following will be the normal practice during the election period:

- a) Council resources, including offices, support staff, hospitality services, equipment and stationery will be used exclusively for normal Council business during the Caretaker Period, and will not be used for the personal advantage of any Councillor or candidate in connection with any election. This does not apply to the provision of space for the Returning Officer.
- b) No new publications or pamphlets, including Inside Merri-bek will be published by Council during the election period.
- c) Speeches for Councillors will only be prepared by Council staff in relation to events that are part of the normal services or operations of the Council, for example for a Citizenship Ceremony, and such speeches will not be circulated or available for publication.
- d) No Council logos, letterheads, business cards, photos or other Merri-bek City Council branding will be used for, or linked in any way, to a candidate's election campaign.

- e) It is recommended that Council staff who are either following Councillors/candidates Facebook pages or who are 'friends' with them unfriend and/or unfollow the Councillor/candidate during this period.
- f) There will be no ward or Councillor Meetings held.
- g) The Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors or any other Council staff member will not be asked to undertake any tasks connected directly or indirectly with electioneering.
- h) Reimbursements of Councillors' out-of-pocket expenses during the Election Period will only apply to costs that have been incurred in the performance of normal Council duties, and not for expenses that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a candidate's election campaign.
- i) Where Councillors have Council funded equipment, including laptops, tablets, printers and mobile phones, these are not to be used for election purposes or in a manner that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a candidate's election campaign.

6.8.1 Council Facilities and Meeting Rooms

Council Facilities/Halls for Hire Council facilities will be able to be hired by Federal and State political members and officers, and local candidates (including Councillors) at the normal corporate hire rate determined for the facility, in the lead up to an election, but not during an election period for any local state or federal election.

To avoid a perception that Council facilities are being used to promote any candidacy, no promotional material related to the event/hired use, apart from directional signage, is able to be displayed in the common public areas of the facility being hired. This will be advised at time of booking.

Candidates wishing to conduct electioneering activities in public space, for example, a stall at a shopping strip or park, must act in accordance with Council's local laws and procedures.

No other promotional material, including signage, posters, flyers or banners, for any political candidacy is permitted on Council land or in its facilities at any time.

It is an offense under Council's local laws to display this material on Council land, and penalties apply.

6.8.2 Use of the Title 'Councillor'

Councillors may use the title Councillor in their election material, as they continue to hold office during the caretaker period.

While a Councillor can refer to themselves as Councillor in all communication issued by the Councillor (verbal or written), it must be made clear that it is the communication of a candidate and not a position of Council.

6.8.3 Photographs and Images

Photographs and images paid for by Council or taken by Council officers are not to be used in Electoral Material for any candidate. This includes images of Councillors, Council events, and Council owned or maintained infrastructure.

Photographs taken by Councillors, their family or friends, or professional photos they have directly commissioned and paid for, may be used in Electoral Material.

6.8.4 Election Signage on Council Land

In order to ensure Council resources including buildings and land will not be used to support any electioneering activity, Council prohibits any type of candidate election signage being erected or displayed on Council land, including:

- a) Council owned/managed parks, reserves, buildings (exteriors) and nature strips
- b) Road dividing strips (median strips, traffic islands, roundabouts)
- c) Trees, shrubs or plants
- d) Street signs, traffic control signs, parking signs

If election signage is displayed on Council Land:

- a) Council may request the immediate removal of the signage by the owner or candidate or may remove the signage without notification to the owner or candidate.
- b) An infringement notice and fine may be issued to the candidate, in accordance with the General Local Law.
- c) Any costs incurred by Council to remove signage, and/or any costs caused by the signage, for example, damage to trees, may be charged to the candidate.
- d) If election signage is displayed on Crown, Federal or State land in the City of Merri-bek, Council contact the relevant land manager to request the sign be removed.
- e) Victoria Police will be contacted in the event of any one attempting to obstruct Council officers removing signage.
- f) Council will report all instances of the display on Council land of candidate election signage for a local government election, to the Victorian Electoral Commission.

In accordance with the EPA Act, advertising material/documents may not be affixed to any fixed structure for example, light poles, traffic lights etc without the consent of the owner, occupier or manager of the structure.

6.9 Community Engagement and Council Events

Community engagement is an integral part of Council's policy development process and operations, however, there are concerns that consultation undertaken close to a general election may become an issue in itself and influence voting.

Council events in the lead up to an election can also raise concerns over the potential use of sitting Councillors using them for electioneering purposes.

If consultation must be undertaken or an event held during this time, the Council must explain to the community the special circumstances making it necessary and how the risks influencing the election will be mitigated or prevented.

Therefore, during an election period no public consultation under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 will be conducted during this period.

- a) Only consultation for the purpose of planning permit applications and operational issues such as canvassing residents' views on small-scale traffic treatments, installation of single trees and the like will be allowed as they are operational in nature and are unlikely to impact the conduct of the election.
- b) Civic Events will cease during this time.
- c) No election material or active campaigning is to be conducted at Council sponsored festivals.

6.10 Equitable Access to Council Information

The Council recognises that all election candidates have a right to information from the Council administration. However, sitting Councillors will continue to receive information that is necessary to fulfil their elected roles. Neither Councillors nor candidates will receive information or advice from Council staff that might be perceived to support election campaigns, and transparency will be observed and practised in the provision of all information and advice during the Election Period.

Information and briefing material prepared by staff for Councillors during the Election Period will relate only to factual matters or to existing Council policies and services. All such requests are to be issued through the offices of the responsible Council Director who will maintain a register of requests made and advice provided. Such information will not relate to new policy development, new projects or matters that are the subject of public or election debate or that might be perceived to be connected with a candidate's election campaign.

A copy of the document/advice will then be passed to the Manager Governance and Strategy as issued during the Election Period. The document/advice will be emailed or provided in a hardcopy format to all sitting Councillors and candidates to access. Candidates will be advised of this process in writing.

An Information Request Register will be maintained by the Governance and Strategy Branch during the Election Period. This Register will be a public document that records all requests for information by Councillors and candidates, and the responses given to those requests. Only information that can be reasonably accessed will be released.

All requests for information are to be directed to the Manager Governance and Strategy.

6.11 Publicity

It is recognised that Council publicity is intended to promote normal services or operations of the Council. Council publicity will not be used in any way that might be construed as intended to influence the outcome of the Council election.

- a) During the Election Period, no Council employee may make any public statement that could be construed as influencing the election. This does not include statements of clarification that are approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- b) During the Election Period, publicity campaigns, other than for the purpose of conducting the election, will be avoided. Where a publicity campaign is deemed necessary for a Council service or operation, it must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer. In any event, Council publicity during the Election Period will be restricted to promoting the normal services or operations of the Council.
- c) Any requests for media advice or assistance from Councillors during the Election Period will be channelled through the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager Community Engagement. In any event, no media advice and/or assistance or media releases will be provided in relation to election campaign matters, or in regard to publicity that involves specific Councillors.
- d) Councillors will not use their position as an elected representative or their access to Council staff and other Council resources to gain media attention in support of matters that could be construed as relating to an election campaign.

Information published on Council's website with regard to sitting Councillors will be limited to statements of facts about their roles and responsibilities as a Councillor. For example, contact details, roles and responsibilities as assigned by Council resolution.

6.11.1 Council Websites and Social Media

The only new material published on Council's websites or social medial sites during an election period will be:

- a) The Agenda and Minutes for any Council or Delegated Committee Meetings;
- b) The Annual Report
- c) Key service disruption information

Service information already published on the website will be reviewed to ensure it does not include anything that might be seen as likely to influence the election.

6.12 Assistance to Candidates

A copy of this Policy must be given to each Councillor as soon as practicable after it is adopted, be available for inspection, on request, by the public at the Council office and be published on Council's website. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that all Councillors, Managers and staff are informed of the requirements of this policy.

The Council affirms that all candidates for the Council election will be treated equally.

Any assistance and advice to be provided to Candidates as part of the conduct of the Council Election will be provided equally to all candidates. The types of assistance that are available will be documented and communicated to all candidates in advance.

All election related enquiries from candidates, whether sitting Councillors or not, will be directed to the Returning Officer or, where the matter is outside the responsibilities of the Returning Officer, to the Chief Executive Officer or the Director Business Transformation.

Governance Rules Review 2023 – Submissions and Responses

Submitter	Submission	Response to Submission
1	<p>Re Rule 3.6.9(1) prohibited items “Unless worn for worn for either medical, health, cultural or religious purposes, a person must not wear a facemask or head covering that disguises their identity.” is Medical defined. Specifically, can I attend a meeting with a face mask as protection from COVID, etc? If the medical face mask is OK, surely it would be reasonable to have me identify myself on entry, eg photo ID.</p>	<p>Council Officer Comments: No further amendment of the Governance Rules is proposed as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A medical face mask such as a surgical mask to prevent the spread of an infectious disease is permitted to be worn. 2. Council can rely on section 224 of the Local Government Act 1989, which provides for an Authorised officer to demand the name and address of a person who has committed or they believe is about to commit an offence against any Act, regulation or local law.
2	<p>Re amend rule 3.11.1(p) Keeping of Minutes, p42, to read as “Any other matter, which the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate thinks should be recorded to clarify the intention of the Meeting or assist in the reading of the Minutes and at the request of any Councillor; and “ First comment: clearly it is not the Chief Executive Officer recording the minutes at Council meetings, so why bother to give the impression that they do? Stonnington Council Governance Rule 66.1 is worded better than Merri-bek’s rule 3.11.1(1) to say “The Chief Executive Officer (or other person authorised by the Chief Executive Officer to attend the meeting and to take the minutes of such meeting) must keep minutes of each Council meeting, and those minutes must record:” Second comment – does the Council officer recording the minutes have an Instrument of Sub-delegation from the CEO to perform the role? Probably not. Therefore the word “authorise” is more accurate than “delegate”. Third comment – the minutes should indicate which Council Officer recorded the minutes.</p>	<p>Council Officer Comments: No further amendment of the Governance Rules is proposed.</p> <p>Primarily, the Chief Executive Officer serves as the primary administrator for the Council, holding such responsibilities that encompass the management of Council operations, and ensuring the implementation of Council decisions.</p> <p>Regarding the Governance Rules, the term "delegate" describes the individual tasked with recording meeting minutes, as outlined in position descriptions established by the Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the submitter’s proposed phrasing includes the phrase "other person authorised by the Chief Executive Officer." However, it's crucial to emphasise that specific legislation, such as the Local Government Act 1989 and the Local Government Act</p>

Governance Rules Review 2023 – Submissions and Responses

		<p>2020, does not obligate the Chief Executive Officer to "authorise" or necessitate a formal instrument of delegation for administrative tasks such as minute-taking.</p>
	<p>Re amend rule 3.9.16(1) Change of Council Policy, page 39, to read as "Council reviews its policies to ensure they are current and continue to reflect community expectations and the position held by Council" First comment: agree with the change of wording (deletion of "a particular") Second comment: it's a pity though, that policies are not being reviewed in a timely manner, for example the Councillor Expenses Policy, the Naming Places in Merri-bek 2013 Policy, the Public Transparency Policy</p>	<p>Council Officer Comments: No further amendment of the Governance Rules is proposed. It is noted that the submission agrees with the proposed amendment. The submitters comments are noted regarding the timeliness of policy reviews.</p>
	<p>Re add new rule 3.9.1(8) Moving a motion, page 32 "If the mover or seconder of a motion indicates that he or she wishes to withdraw from moving or seconding the motion, the Chairperson may seek another mover or seconder (as the case requires), but if no Councillor indicates his or her willingness to be the substitute mover or seconder, the motion lapses." My comment: I disagree with this proposal. I have seen this happen in past council meetings, where a motion has been amended to the extent that the original mover no longer wanted to move the (amended) substantive motion. What that meant, in my view, was that the amendments changed the substantive motion so significantly, as to not have been valid amendments. Those amendments should have been an alternative motion. I would instead like to see the preamble to rule 3.9 Motions and Debate added as 3.9.1(8), which is "A resolution must be able to be acted upon, a Motion must clearly state what is intended and what its effect will be if it becomes the decision. This provides clarity for the implementation of Council decisions". In my view this should be an actual rule or sub-rule.</p>	<p>Council Officer Comments: No further amendment of the Governance Rules is proposed. The new Rule's purpose is to allow a mover or seconder to withdraw their support. This means that if a Councillor disagrees with an amendment, they have the option to withdraw their support.</p>

Governance Rules Review 2023 – Submissions and Responses

	<p>Re add new rule 3.6.1(9) Questions of Council and Community Statements, page 25, “Prior to questions of Council and Community Statements, councillors are to be informed by the Mayor of the total number of questions received for the council meeting “</p> <p>First comment: this should be rule 3.6.1(4) not (9)</p> <p>Second comment: There should be an additional rule “The Chairperson is not to take questions on notice prior to a council meeting”</p>	<p>Council Officer Comments: No further amendment of the Governance Rules is proposed as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council Officers find the order of point 9 acceptable since its sequence does not impact its relevance. 2. Council officers do not support the implementation of a proposed new rule aimed at discouraging the identification of questions to be taken on notice. <p>Council is committed to addressing all questions within the guidelines established by the Governance Rules, encompassing the types of questions permitted, the quantity of questions submitted, and the allotted time for public questions during Council meetings. In this context, identifying questions for later response is considered advantageous, especially in the context of managing community expectations.</p>
	<p>Re add new rule 3.6.2(2) Questions of Council, page 25, “A copy of all questions received before 12noon on the day of the Council Meeting, will be distributed to Councillors as soon as reasonably practicable.”</p> <p>My comment: agree, except that “reasonably practicable” could be interpreted to mean the next day</p>	<p>Council Officer Comments: No further amendment of the Governance Rules is proposed. Council officers do not believe that there is a risk of such an interpretation being applied in this manner.</p>
	<p>Re add new rule 3.2.4(8) The Chairperson’s duties and discretions, page 15, “Where the Governance Rules do not provide a procedure for the meeting, the Chairperson may determine the procedure to be followed in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and relevant Governance officer.”</p> <p>My comment: I disagree with this wording. Instead the wording should be taken from the Stonnington Council Governance Rule 77. Procedure not Provided in this Chapter “In all cases not specifically provided for by this Chapter, reference must be</p>	<p>Council Officer Comments: No further amendment of the Governance Rules is proposed as the new provision enables the Chairperson to make a discretionary determination in consultation with the CEO and the relevant Governance Officer, in the event that a new or unexpected issue arises in a meeting, that is not subject to the Governances Rules and has the potential to unnecessarily disrupt or delay Council’s meeting and decision-making</p>

Governance Rules Review 2023 – Submissions and Responses

	<p>made to the Standing Orders and Rules of Practice of the Upper House of the Victorian Parliament (so far as the same are capable of being applied to Council proceedings).”</p>	<p>process. This type of clause is commonly used in meetings procedure/Governance Rules.</p> <p>The proposal to use of the Standing Orders and Rules of Practice of the Upper House of the Victorian Parliament (Standing Orders) as a reference guide is not recommended as it would likely require an adjournment of the meeting to identify if there is a relevant provision contained in the Standing Orders. The Standing Orders contain a significant amount of information that is not applicable to Local Government and will at times, not provide an adequate answer/solution to the matter in question.</p>
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7.18 YEAR 3 COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-24 - FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Council Action Plan 2023-24 – First Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).
2. Notes the progress of the 'Off Track' or incomplete actions from Council Action Plan 2021-2022 and 2022-23 (as provided in the table below). These actions have continued to be tracked and will be reported (as resolved by Council, 10 August 2022 and 9 August 2023).
3. Endorse placing action 82 '*Continue to review Neighbourhood Character provisions in the planning scheme*' on hold in the Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24.
4. Endorse the inclusion of new action in Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24 '*Commence implementation of homelessness strategy*' under Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek in the 2023-24. This action was a direct result of a NOM from the 10 May 2023 Council Meeting.
5. Endorse the withdrawal of action 155 '*Implement a meeting room booking system that enhances current system and encourages ease of new bookings*' from Year 2 Council Action Plan 2022-23 for continued reporting.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This First Quarter Performance Report (Attachment 1) provides an overview of Council's performance through the delivery of the Council Plan 2021-25, specifically the Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24.

The final status of the 91 actions is as follows:

- 2 per cent (2 actions) closed (achieved)
- 92 per cent (83 actions) in progress (on track)
- 2 per cent (2 actions) behind target (off track)
- 1 per cent (1 actions) withdrawn (removed), proposed to be withdrawn, or on hold

Given that Council is in the first quarter of this financial year, some actions have yet to start and are planned for delivery in the second half of the year, and over 90% of actions are on track at the end of the first quarter.

Endorsement is sought to place 82 '*Continue to review Neighbourhood Character provisions in the planning scheme*' on hold in the Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24 for continued reporting as it is dependent on the outcomes from the State Government Planning reforms.

An endorsement is also sought to amend the Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24 to include the following action: '*Commence implementation of homelessness strategy*' under Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek. This action directly resulted from a NOM from the 10 May 2023 Council Meeting.

Further, it is proposed to withdraw action 155 'Implement a meeting room booking system that enhances current system and encourages ease of new bookings' from Year 2 Council Action Plan 2022-23. After evaluating options, there was found to be no viable, cost-effective solution for this project.

This report also includes updates on those actions that were not achieved or 'Off-Track' in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 action plans and as resolved by Council on 10 August 2022 and 9 August 2023 to continue reporting on these actions separately, yet concurrently until their completion are outlined in the table below in section two of this report.

Previous Council Decisions

Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24 - First Quarter Performance Report - 9 August 2023

That Council:

1. *Noted the Council Action Plan 2022-23 – Fourth Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1).*
2. *Endorsed that 'Off Track' actions from the Council Action Plan 2022-23 will continue to be reported to Council through the quarterly reporting cycle of the Council Action Plan 2023-24.*
3. *Endorsed that 'Off Track' action 26 'Design, approval and construction of new shared paths along the Craigieburn Rail Corridor' be deemed superseded and be included as a new action in the Council Action Plan 2023-24 entitled 'Re-design and obtain approvals for shared paths in Stages 2 and 3 of the Craigieburn Rail Corridor and advocate for construction funding'; and amend the Council Action Plan 2023-24 accordingly.*
4. *Endorsed that Action 84 (as referred to the 2023-24 Council Action Plan) be amended to include affordable housing, and amend the Council Action Plan 2023-24 as follows:*
 - a) *'Continue to carry out research, technical studies, strategic planning, partnership building, engagement planning and **affordable housing**, to guide the future of central Coburg'; and*
5. *Endorsed, Council amend Action 84 (in Point 4 above), for continued reporting on Action 79 (as per the 2021-22 Council Action Plan: Explore opportunities to include affordable housing as part of the urban revitalisation programs in central Coburg) be incorporated into Action 84, as an integrated approach to revitalisation planning for Central Coburg.*
6. *Endorsed setting a completion date of December 2023 for the following actions from the 2021-22 plan to facilitate the subsequent phase of these projects:*
 - a) *Action 90 'Completion of Concept Design for West Street Shopping Strip Streetscape Renewal Program'; and*
 - b) *Action 91 'Completion of Detailed Design for Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement.*

1. Policy Context

In accordance with sections 88 and 90 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council adopted its Community Vision 2021-31 and Council Plan 2021-25 in October 2021.

The Year 3 Council Action Plan, 2023-24 supports the implementation of the Council Plan 2021-25 for the third financial year of the 4-year period and included specific actions to be undertaken that were resourced through the 2023-24 annual budget (included in the 2023-27 budget).

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

2. Background

The purpose of the first quarter performance report is to provide a status update on delivery against the Council Action Plan 2023-24 as at 30 September 2023.

This report also includes updates on those actions that were not achieved or 'Off-Track' in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 action plans and as resolved by Council on 10 August 2022 and 9 August 2023 to continue reporting on these actions separately, yet concurrently until their completion are outlined in the table below in section two of this report.

3. Issues

Council Action Plan Performance 2023-24

Council has 91 actions in Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24.

Detailed results for the first quarter performance 2023-24 are shown in Attachment 1.

Completed actions (Achieved)

Two actions have completed their objective in Council Action Plan 2023-24 with action updates presented in table below.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update	Directorate
185	Liase with and advocate to the State Government to maximise good design and delivery outcomes for the Brunswick level crossing removals Following the adoption of Council's advocacy position paper, 'Reshaping Brunswick' in April 2023, letters were sent to all relevant MPs and Departments outlining Council's position on the design and delivery outcomes of the Brunswick Level Crossing Removals. Presentations to all relevant officers within the Level Crossing Removal Project team, partners and consultants were also completed in April and May 2023.	Place and Environment
188	Commence construction of the Saxon Street Brunswick facility and open space Construction commenced with early works starting in 2023. Expected to complete construction by October 2024.	City Infrastructure

On track (In Progress)

83 actions or 92 per cent of actions are 'in progress' in Council Action Plan 2023-24. Detailed updates for the first quarter performance are shown in Attachment 1.

Off track (At risk, support may be needed)

Two or 2 per cent of actions are currently consider 'off track' in Council Action Plan 2023-24. Details are shown in the table below.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update	Directorate
161	Construction of Dunstan Reserve (Brunswick West) stormwater harvesting system, subject to external funding Awaiting the appointment of a project manager to deliver on this project. Detailed design documents are complete, and the project is ready for tender. Expected commencement	Place and Environment

	dates will likely be in the third quarter of this financial year, with completion to be in the 2024-25 financial year.	
167	Deliver active travel capital works program The program is delayed while recruiting vacant roles to deliver the program. Engagement on De Carle Street bicycle infrastructure has commenced. Planning underway for Harding Street bridge, O'Hea Street separated bicycle lanes and shared zones in Brunswick East.	City Infrastructure

Action not started

Three or 3 per cent of action are not yet started given only being in the first three months of the financial year. Reporting this way allows Council to be as transparent as possible with the Council and the Community on the status of the plan.

These actions are all reliant on preceding actions/projects to be completed before these actions can commence, further information provided in table below.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update	Directorate
144	Commence Detailed Design for West Street streetscape renewal Concept design is underway. Detailed design will begin in the third quarter of this financial year.	Place and Environment
145	Commence construction of Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement Detailed design is almost complete. It is expected that construction will begin in in the third quarter of this financial year, January to March 2024.	Place and Environment
146	Commence construction of the Stewart Street Brunswick streetscape improvement Detailed design is almost complete. It is expected construction will begin in January to March 2024.	Place and Environment

Withdrawn or hold

One action is categorised as proposed to be put on hold in the 2023-24 Council Action Plan. Details are shown in the table below.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update	Directorate
82	Continue to review Neighbourhood Character provisions in the planning scheme It is proposed to place this action on hold in the Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24. Dependant on the outcomes from the State Government Planning reforms relating to housing supply, it may be reactivated if necessary or amended accordingly.	Place and Environment

Inclusion in Council Plan 2023-24

Endorse the inclusion of new action in Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24 'Commence implementation of homelessness strategy' under Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek in the 2023-24. This action was a direct result of a NOM the went to the 10 May 2023 Council Meeting.

This action will be within base resource with the draft strategy was presented Council at the 18 October 2023 meeting.

Council Action Plan 2021-22 and 2022-23 remaining actions progress report

Not - Achieved (Off-Track)

Five were off track at the end of the Council Action Plan 2022-23. These actions were not identified in Council Action Plan 2023-24 and did not achieve their objective at the time of end-of-year reporting.

It was resolved to continue to report and track these 'Off Track' actions until completion concurrently through the quarterly updates for the Council Action Plan 2023-24 at the 10 August Council Meeting 2023. This is a mechanism Council has previously endorsed and confirms commitment to transparent reporting practices.

Additionally, at this meeting it was resolved that off-track action 26 'Design, approval and construction of new shared paths along the Craigieburn Rail Corridor' would be superseded and replaced with a new Action in the Year 3 Council Action Plan.

This action was included in the Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24 as new action 196; '*Re-design and obtain approvals for shared paths in Stages 2 and 3 of the Craigieburn Rail Corridor and advocate for construction funding*'.

This left four (4) actions remaining to be reported on with an additional two (2) actions carried over from the 2021-22 planned which were also endorsed for extension to be completed before moving to the next phase of these projects, leaving six (6) actions left for reporting.

However, it is now proposed to withdraw a further action from the 2022-23 plan, action 155: '*Implement a meeting room booking system that enhances current system and encourages ease of new bookings*'; reasons are detailed below.

All other actions will continue to be delivered under existing resources to have them complete by December 2023.

Action #	Action Description and Q1 Update:	Directorate
2022-23 Council Action Plan		
22	Investigate and implement measures to encourage reduced speed and improve pedestrian safety measures (special attention to accessibility) taking a precinct approach The Roads Minister in August 2023 has approved 40km/h on all local streets in Merri-bek. Planning is underway for communications and signage implementation.	City Infrastructure
125	Undertake Detailed design of Stormwater Harvesting at AG Gillon and Gilpin Park (Brunswick Central Parklands) This action is progressing and is due to be finished in the third quarter of this year pending the following two barriers: 1) cleaning of the Hope Street drain which is underway and 2) resolving scope and design details for irrigation requirements which is underway.	Place and Environment
139	Implement targeted dog on-leash signage that promotes off-leash areas The implementation of the targeted dog on-leash signage that promotes off-leash areas forms part of the wider Open Space strategy development; this piece of work will align with the timeline of the adoption of this strategy.	City Infrastructure

155	<p>Implement a meeting room booking system that enhances current system and encourages ease of new bookings</p> <p>Proposed to withdraw this action from the 2022-23 Council Action Plan for continued reporting.</p> <p>After evaluating options, there was found to be no viable, cost-effective solution for this project and utilising current systems was found to be the most fiscally appropriate option. Council endorsement is now sought to withdraw this action for continued reporting.</p>	Community
2021-22 Council Action Plan		
90	<p>Completion of Concept Design for West Street Shopping Strip Streetscape Renewal Program</p> <p>Functional layout plans 90% complete. Concept design is underway. Stage 2 community engagement to commence in October 2023.</p>	Place and Environment
91	<p>Completion of Detailed Design for Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement</p> <p>The detailed design is almost complete, pending the finalisation of flood modelling and drainage design (these have been unexpectedly complex and have caused delays). Currently awaiting approvals from the Department of Transport and Planning. Expect the design to be complete by mid-October 2023.</p>	Place and Environment

Community impact

Community impact is addressed throughout the Council Plan 2021-25 but primarily under strategic objective 5: To build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications are addressed throughout the Council Plan 2021-25 but primarily under strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3:

1. To strive for maximum protection of people, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment
2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport.
3. To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services and facilitating local partnerships and programs.

Economic sustainability implications

Economic sustainability implications are addressed throughout the Council Plan 2021-25 but primarily under strategic objective 4: To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.

Legal and risk considerations

The Merri-bek Community Vision 2021-31 and Merri-bek Council Plan 2021-25 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 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 was not required for this report as it reflects the performance against the Council Plan 2021 – 25.

Advice was sought from officers across Council to provide the performance updates.

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 2023-24 were resourced through the 2023-24 annual budget (included in the 2023-27 Budget). Actions deemed 'Off Track' will be delivered under existing budget and staff resources.

7. Implementation

The Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24 first quarter performance results will be made available on Council's website.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Council Action Plan 2023-24 Q1 report D23/508297



**Merri-bek
City
Council**

**Council Action Plan
2023-2024**

1st Quarter Performance 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 report supports Council's continuing commitment to sustainable, equitable and transparent management of funds on behalf of Merri-bek ratepayers, key stakeholders, and the broader community.

In accordance with sections 88 and 90 of the Local Government Act 2020, Council adopted a new Community Vision 2021-2031 and Council Plan 2021-2025 on 20th October 2021. These were developed as major outputs of a four-stage engagement program which included a deliberative panel process.

The Council Action Plan 2023-24 was adopted which supports implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025 for the third financial year of the 4-year period. It includes the specific actions to be taken during the third financial year in the implementation of the Council Plan 2021-2025.

This First Quarter Performance Report gives an update on delivery of the Council Action Plan 2023-24.

In summary, the status of the 91 actions in the plan is as follows:

Number	Percentage	Status	Definition	Traffic Light
2	2%	Achieved	Completed, achieved	
83	92%	In progress	On track	
2	2%	Off track	At risk, support may be needed	
3	3%	Action not started	Action not commenced	
1	1%	Withdrawn or proposed withdrawn	On hold or removed	

The rest of this report below provides a detailed progress update for each action below including:

- A description of the action
- The percentage complete against what was planned for this financial year
- The status in the form of a traffic light (see table above); an
- Relevant officer commentary.

Theme 1: An environmentally proactive Merri-bek

1: To strive for maximum protection of people’s health, plants and animals through leading an urgent response to the climate emergency and a regeneration of our natural environment

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
1	Continue to implement Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency Action Plan	Place and Environment	●	<p>Key achievements for the first quarter of the year have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received a highly commended award in the Energy Efficiency category for its Solar and Thermal Subsidy program and finalist for the Electrify Everything Community of Practice at the Cities Power Partnership awards. • Wrapped up the Electrify Merri-bek communications campaign, which led to a 124% increase of people going to our Go Electric website page and 123 downloads of the Merri-bek Go Electric Plan. • Contributed to the Greenhouse Alliances submission to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Residential Electrification. Initial conversations were held regarding the possibility of a pole-mounted electric vehicle charger trial. Solar installation is underway at Walter St Depot, expanding existing solar capacity. • Further trialing of The Adaptation Game with staff and development of tool kits for residents has commenced. - - The Solar and Thermal program (main update in CAP 123) eligibility criteria are being reviewed to ensure equitable and targeted implementation.
2	Continue to deliver Integrated Behaviour Change Program including the Ride and Stride program with participating primary schools	Place and Environment	●	<p>Key achievements for the first quarter have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 School visits were conducted to update on the program and collect information on infrastructure needs (Fawkner, Glenroy West, Oak Park, Brunswick Southwest, Coburg). Engaged with Transport to respond to identified infrastructure needs. • 2 Open Streets events run (Oak Park and Fawkner). Planning is underway for the third in the following quarter (Glenroy West). • Submitted grant application on behalf of six councils for additional funding for Open Streets from the Office of Road Safety. • Attended two M9 travel behaviour change officer meetings. • Worked with Lug + Carrie to market remaining spaces for cargo bike trials. • Facilitated marketing of the Mums on Bikes program through Community Connectors.

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
3	Urban forest strategy - continue the implementation of annual tree planting program including identifying ways to support the community to preserve and plant new trees on private and public land	City Infrastructure	●	The 2023 tree planting program was completed in the third week of September. 2881 trees were planted. The program was completed approximately 5 weeks early despite starting one month late. The focus will now be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watering and maintaining the trees planted in 2023 in addition to those planted in 2022 and 2021. • Planning a trial program to plant trees in tricky-to-plant locations in areas of high urban heat island.
7	Continue to develop the Open Space Strategy - The Strategy will assist with identifying priorities for new and expanded open space and for decision-making about the use of open space.	City Infrastructure	●	Phase 1 Consultation completed. Draft Strategy in development. On track for presentation to Council in December 2023.
11	Continue to implement Yarra and Maribyrnong Catchment Scale Integrated Water Management plans and achieve 2030 targets	Place and Environment	●	Council Officers continued actively participating in working group meetings for the two catchments (Yarra and Maribyrnong) and contributing to the Integrated Water Management (IWM) Forum priority action plans. The IWM Forum Steering Group (for both catchments) occurred in September. The forum was seeking in-principal agreement for the catchment scale priority action plan. The integration of each of the priority actions relevant to Merri-bek will be proposed for inclusion into the ten-year council capital works program through the upcoming budget process (pending approval).
14	Continue implementing Zero Waste (and plastic wise) Community and Council (Festivals, events, facilities) initiatives	Place and Environment	●	Reusable Crockery trial at Town Halls and Merlynston Progress Hall continues. Most use occurs at Council's two Town Halls, with support provided to continue streamlining this effective initiative. Plastic Wise support was provided to Council's Festivals Unit in preparation for the summer festival months.
120	Continue to implement the reformed Kerbside waste service	City Infrastructure	●	All Merri-bek households paying a waste charge have been delivered the correct infrastructure to participate in the new 4-bin service (upgraded recycling bin, new FOGO bin, new glass bin). The new collection frequencies (fortnightly recycling, monthly glass, weekly forgo) commenced on the 1st July 2023. Residents are now able to adjust the size of bins to suit their individual circumstances (i.e.,

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
				<p>downsizing from a 240L recycling bin to a 120L recycling bin because the household generates low amounts of recycled material), and waste charges will be altered accordingly.</p> <p>The new look waste charge displayed on rates notices shows the cost of each individual waste and recycling stream. This initiative was implemented in Q1 of this financial year, allowing greater transparency for costs relative to the Kerbside collection service.</p>
122	Continue to implement the Nature Plan	City Infrastructure	●	<p>Planned expenditure for budget completed. Phasing is to be updated as part of the first quarter budget review.</p> <p>Key projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Strip and Community Projects • Bird Count data • Gardens for Wildlife • Gardening booklet • Wildflower meadows • Differential mowing - research component • Nature Stewards • Community plants • Nature Map
123	Continue to improve safety and thermal comfort of low-income residents at home through solar and energy efficiency subsidies	Place and Environment	●	<p>The solar and thermal subsidy program continued to progress its rollout this quarter, including: 19/100 Thermal - participants confirmed eligible and making their way through the pipeline.</p> <p>24/50 Solar - participants registered and confirmed eligible. In addition, 94 households expressed their interest in the program (eligibility not confirmed, so many may be Bulk Buy)</p> <p>Council's solar supplier - 'Solar Savers' (administered by Maroondah City Council), undertook a procurement process for a new solar installer, with the new contractor to be ready in coming months.</p>
161	Construction of Dunstan Reserve (Brunswick West)	Place and Environment	●	<p>Awaiting the appointment of a project manager to deliver on this project. Detailed design documents are complete, and the project is ready for tender. Expected commencement</p>

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
	stormwater harvesting system, subject to external funding			dates will likely be in the third quarter of this financial year, with completion to be in the 2024-25 financial year.
162	Develop place-based action plans for delivery of IWM outcomes for the remaining 9 sub-catchments	Place and Environment	●	This project is in the early stages of brief development. Recruitment for the team is underway, and the timing of this project has been identified as a risk for the delivery of this project. We will continue to monitor as the year progresses.
163	Develop a Governance structure and operations to oversee the Community Food Hub in the north	Community	●	The Food Leadership Action Group (FLAG) terms of reference are finalised; Consultants Open Food Network (OFN) will continue to support the organisation functions of the FLAG. FLAG has commenced recruitment for a Community Food Hub Project Coordinator.
164	Investigate opportunities for Neighborhood and Community Batteries, including grant applications	Place and Environment	●	Progress on Neighborhood and Community Battery opportunities for this reporting period included Council receiving a \$200,000 grant as part of the State Government's Victorian Neighborhood Battery Initiative. The project, led by Merri-bek, in conjunction with the City of Yarra, seeks to understand the potential value of using Council assets for future Neighborhood Battery sites, with 20 sites across both Councils being assessed.

Theme 2: Moving and living safely in Merri-bek

2: To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
18	Review and update the Integrated Transport Strategy in consultation with the community	City Infrastructure	●	Engagement on the Discussion Paper occurred in August with plans to submit a draft Transport Strategy to the November Council meeting for council consideration to release for public comment.
19	Undertake community engagement and seek adoption of a revised parking management policy with a precinct-by-precinct approach	City Infrastructure	●	Planning is underway for engagement to occur in October, with a Council report planned for December 2023.
27	Continue to advocate to improve public and sustainable transport capacity and equitable access across Merri-bek	CEO	●	<p>Advocacy to improve public transport and public transport accessibility in Merri-bek continued in the first quarter of 2023/24. A letter outlining Merri-bek Council's past advocacy, current position, and ideas for improving cycling infrastructure and tram stop accessibility on Sydney Road was sent to the Level Crossing Removal Authority CEO at his request following a meeting with Merri-bek CEO, where these topics were raised. The letter was copied to key contacts at the Department of Transport and Planning.</p> <p>Following the State Government's release of Melbourne's Tram Plan, a letter was sent to the Minister for Public Transport, The Honourable Ben Carroll, calling for accessible tram stops in Merri-bek. The letter welcomed progress on tram stop upgrades in Melbourne's north and west but expressed disappointment that key tram corridors in Merri-bek were overlooked and reiterated the lack of accessibility on Sydney Road's route 19, which will become even more critical as work on the Brunswick level crossing removals takes place.</p> <p>Support was also provided for a community-accessible tram stop rally that launched Transport Equity Week in Australia, helping to publicise the event.</p>

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
165	Deliver roads and car park capital works renewal program	City Infrastructure	●	Council has a strong track record in timely and within budget of roads and car park renewal projects. With the increase in number and value of projects, resources to manage roads and car park projects has been recalibrated. Most of the roads (including drainage) projects are either in tender evaluation phase or in construction phase.
166	Deliver road resurfacing capital works program	City Infrastructure	●	Currently, the Delivery Road Resurfacing Capital Works Program is running as per plan.
167	Deliver active travel capital works program	City Infrastructure	●	The program is delayed while recruiting vacant roles to deliver the program. Engagement on De Carle Street bicycle infrastructure has commenced. Planning underway for Harding Street bridge, O'Hea Street separated bicycle lanes and shared zones in Brunswick East.
196	Re-design and obtain approvals for shared paths in Stages 2 and 3 of the Craigieburn Rail Corridor and advocate for construction funding	City Infrastructure	●	Initial designs have not been approved by VicTrack and Melbourne Water due to flood and construction impacts. Seeking funding at first quarter financial review to undertake new designs that meet requirements.

Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek

3: To support Merri-bek to become a more inclusive, connected, healthy and caring community through providing equitable access to community facilities and services, facilitating local partnerships and programs, mitigating the effects of climate change and supporting the community to adapt and build climate resilience

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
34	Continue to plan and deliver Early Years Infrastructure Projects as listed in the 5-year Capital Works Program	Community	●	An official opening of the 33-place kindergarten room at Doris Blackburn Kindergarten occurred on Sunday 17 September with attendance by MPs. Stage 1 works have commenced at Pascoe Value Community Centre which will create a 33-place kindergarten. Improvements and minor expansion of Turner Street Kindergarten completed. Planning underway for Oak Park Kindergarten, Derby Street Children's Centre and Brunswick Early Years Hub. Council is working closely with the Victorian School Building Authority for a new Early Years Hub to be developed at Moomba Park Primary School in Fawkner.
38	Continue to progress the Fawkner Leisure Centre upgrade	City Infrastructure	●	Construction commenced in in 2023 and project is scheduled to complete in November 2024 before the summer season commences.
40	Continue to implement the Hosken Reserve masterplan	City Infrastructure	●	Tennis and Soccer pavilion works are in the final stages. The contract for the sportsfield upgrade has been awarded, and tender documents are being finalised for community, open space, and car park areas. The project is expected to be completed by March 2024.
48	Continue to implement the Social Cohesion Plan	Community	●	Twenty diverse participants from across Merri-bek participated in the 'Democracy Lab' to strengthen civic participation and community-led action in Merri-bek. Council has partnered with Victoria University to deliver a research project on understanding reporting barriers and supporting needs of people experiencing racism. Other activities include finalising the details of the Victorian Interfaith Network Festival to take place in November.
49	Continue to conduct navigation pilot - Aged Well planning to support older people to access services	Community	●	During this quarter, Council has continued to provide services through our Aged Well program. Plans are in place for a 'Positive Ageing Expo' as part of Seniors Week, as well as providing one-on-one support to individual residents to assist them with accessing the Aged Care Programs available. Council has also commenced recruitment to ensure the program is fully operational and can respond to the needs of Merri-bek residents.

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
50	Continue to implement and improve new outdoor help and services for older people	Community	●	During this quarter, Council has continued to provide and promote the 'outdoor help and services for older people'. We have commenced the Tender process to enable the appointment of a Panel of service providers to allow a smoother transition to services for Merri-bek residents. The development of the administrative processes is underway to enable the promotions and growth of this program over the remainder of the financial year.
52	Continue to implement the First People's Employment Plan	Business Transformation	●	First People's Employment Officer has been appointed and commenced in the role. Orientation and induction program completed, along with building relationships inside Council with key stakeholders and within relevant local community connections. Completed review of intentions from First Peoples Employment Plan and preparation of key steps and actions. Set up of the First Peoples Working Group commenced.
53	Continue to work with community and partners to raise awareness of First Nations communities, reconciliation and Treaty	Community	●	Council convened Ballerit Mooroop Stakeholder Group meetings which included Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Elders, members of the Ballerit Mooroop Working Group and local services. In consultation with the First Nations Advisory Committee Council advertised the newly funded role of Ballerit Mooroop First Peoples Projects Coordinator who will advocate and support the delivery of the Ballerit Mooroop Community Hub and contribute significantly to the commitments outlined in the Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Merri-bek.
55	Continue education around tobacco related harm and enforcement of tobacco regulation	Place and Environment	●	Tobacco education visits are conducted throughout the year. Tobacco education on smoke-free outdoor dining regulations was provided at the Merri-bek City Council liquor licensing forum. Environmental Health also represented Merri-bek City Council at the inaugural Western Public Health Unit Tobacco and Vaping Action Group meeting.
126	Continue to implement actions of the Children, Young People and Families Plan	Community	●	Children, Young People and Families Plan implementation underway. Key outcomes include: 4 seminars delivered to local sporting clubs on mental health initiative Ahead of the Game; 18 young people undertook Pool Life Guard training and five have gained employment at Council aquatic facilities; On 12 August the Youth Ambassadors hosted the Minister for Youth, Natalie Suleyman and Member for Pascoe Vale, Anthony Cianflone at Oxygen Youth Space, to celebrate International Youth Day 2023; Youth Connectors pilot program commenced with 6 young people; Maternal and Child Health in partnerships with Drummond Street Family Services have developed the Offspring

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
				Young Mothers Group, a much-needed young parents group and provides parenting support for younger mothers 25 years and under.
127	Continue to assess climate risk for priority Council infrastructure	Place and Environment	●	Through ongoing works such as the completed Climate Resilience Assessments for Buildings, we continue to combine climate science and audits on our buildings and infrastructure to inform decision making, and investment for adaptation to the impacts of climate change.
128	Continue to deliver Libraries After Dark program to reduce gambling harm	Community	●	LAD at Glenroy Library is growing in attendance, with ongoing programming proving popular.
131	Continue to implement the Gender Equity Action Plan	Business Transformation	●	Gender equality actions continue to be delivered and updated. Key highlights included educational visits by Dr Niki Vincent, Gender Equality Commissioner, and an updated report to the Executive team on the Gender Equality plan progress, including reviews and updates of policies and training undertaken by staff. Additionally, Gender Equity Action Plan meetings continue to support progress on actions in the plan.
168	Implement the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Act 2006	Community	●	Disability Access and Inclusion Plan implementation underway. Recently completed actions include: delivering a work experience program for young adults with a mild intellectual disability; delivering the Art Connection program for people with disabilities at Coburg and Glenroy libraries; implementing an independent review of Council's inclusive employment practices; launched a public awareness campaign about 'invisible' disabilities; commenced sensory-friendly operating hours at Brunswick Library; advocated for accessible tram stops on Sydney Road; developed and distributed adhesive braille labels for household bins.
169	Continue to advance identified priorities under Council's Gender Equality Commitment	Community	●	Planning underway for 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence campaign, supporting community education of new affirmative consent laws. Gender Equality Commissioner conducted training for senior leaders on gender impact assessments. Preparing Council's first progress report under the Gender Equality Act, due in February, including a review of completed gender impact assessments and actions taken between July 2021 - June 2023.
170	Partner with healthy eating advisory services to adapt a healthy eating framework	Community	●	Council have partnered with Merri Health to deliver the Monash Healthy Sports Clubs initiative, which focuses on 9 key areas of health and wellbeing. One of the 9 areas is Healthy Food and Beverages. Supporting sporting clubs to engage in a more long-term

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
	for community and sporting clubs to implement			approach to change, in particular healthy eating, is a more sustainable approach to supporting healthier lifestyles.
171	Implement the Human Rights Plan	Community	●	A monitoring and evaluation framework is being developed in partnership with RMIT University. The Human Rights Implementation group has met; the first topic was the LGBTIQ+ action plan and the group will continue to provide input into Council policy. A forum is planned for November to build staff capacity around human rights, diversity, and inclusion. A staff lunchtime human rights series has also been launched.
172	Implement Year 3 Sport and Active Recreation Strategy	Community	●	Currently reviewing priorities following COVID impacts and return to sports. Developing the action plan review in consultation with other relevant departments. Conducting stakeholder workshops to unpack the status and evaluate the future priorities in the actions.
173	Implement Climate Risk Action Plan	Place and Environment	●	The implementation of the Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan is on track. Some of the key highlights this quarter include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the assessment of climate resilience of Early Years and Youth and Aged and Community Services and planning of implementation of recommendations • Support to Emergency Management on planning of communications for extreme heat in the upcoming summer • Conducting The Adaptation Game (TAG) among Council officers as a learning opportunity on how climate change impacts the most at-risk in our community • Progress on the monitoring and evaluation framework of the Climate Risk Strategy, including the establishment of 11 key indicators • Finalisation of scope and start of the literature review of the climate vulnerability analysis based on local climate risks and hazards • Embedding of climate risk in key plans and strategies in development (open space, transport, asset management plan) • Completion of Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) reporting as part of the annual report and the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP-ICLEI Track) reporting.
174	Address key factors affecting mental health and community resilience through collaborations at service provider networks	Community	●	A meeting was convened in September with Glenroy and Fawkner Service Provider network with strong attendance (over 30 people from 15 different community organisations) and ran a 30-minute introduction session on Heatwave Preparedness and how this affects mental health. Leaders of these organisations invite them to the Heatwave Preparation Workshop planned for the November 23rd meeting.

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
	and partnerships with community sector agencies and organisation			
175	Advocate for support to realise the Ballerri Mooroop Community Hub	Community	●	Council's Yes to Voice, Truth and Treaty campaign was developed in consultation with the First Nations Advisory Committee. Council hosted three Voice to Parliament information sessions for staff and three public forums that reflected a diverse range of views. Council continues to move towards being Treaty-ready, including the employment of Ballerri Mooroop First Peoples Projects Coordinator to assist Council in preparing for the future Traditional Owner Treaty negotiation processes.
176	Advocate for gambling harm prevention including focus on community sports setting and young people	Community	●	Council provided input to the submission by the Victorian Local Governance Association regarding the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Regulation of Gambling and Liquor and Reducing the Harm caused by Gambling in early July. Further, Council attended an information session in August organised by the Municipal Association of Victoria for Local Government Planners to better understand the changes in relation to the new Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC). There has been ongoing liaison with the Alliance for Gambling Reform about a new funding agreement.
178	Establish homelessness assertive outreach program and service coordination with local homelessness and community service providers	Community	●	Council has been actively pursuing a functional zero approach to enhance coordination with key homelessness services and affiliated entities. Over the past few months Council has initiated a request for quotations, and we are pleased to inform you that we have received tenders in response. In the near future, we anticipate selecting an organisation to carry out assertive outreach in the metropolitan belt area, with the primary aim of reducing the number of individuals experiencing rough sleeping.
179	Implement Digital Inclusion Plan across Merri-bek	Community	●	Digital Inclusion Action Plan implementation plan underway. Partnership program established with U3A delivering weekly digital literacy training and support for seniors at Glenroy Community Hub.
180	Pilot Library Social Worker to support community wellbeing	Community	●	Library Social Worker role commended in February 2023 and the program is underway with an extension is being planned for due to the social workers availability.
181	Implement the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan with key stakeholders and continue	Community	●	Council's LGBTIQ+ action plan outcomes included meetings with peak stakeholders Many Coloured Sky, Transgender Victoria and Val's Café, and representation at the queer refugee and asylum seeker and Melbourne's North is Coming Out networks. An MCH Rainbow Families play date saw 30 families connect at a social event. The LGBTIQ+

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
	to convene the LGBTIQ+ Reference Group			reference group continues to provide constructive advice on projects including Transport Strategy and Public Amenities Plan.

Theme 4: Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek

4: To create welcoming, unique spaces and places across Merri-bek that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
75	Public toilet project pipeline - Council to adopt principles for design and location of public toilets and then identify and priorities locations for new and upgraded public toilets	City Infrastructure	●	This work will be delivered in conjunction with the delivery of the Public Amenity Service Plan. A project working group has been formed, and a project plan has been drafted.
76	Continue to support Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd partnership	Place and Environment	●	Supporting Merri-bek Affordable Housing Ltd- established effective work relationship with the new Executive Officer and supported the development of its strategic plan.
80	Continue to advocate for zero carbon in the planning scheme through the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments (CASBE)	Place and Environment	●	Council Officers meet with the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments group on a regular basis and continue to meet with and advocate for the Department of Transport and Planning as a collective.
82	Continue to review Neighborhood Character provisions in the planning scheme	Place and Environment	●	It is proposed to place this action on hold in the Year 3 Council Action Plan 2023-24. Dependant on the outcomes from the State Government Planning reforms relating to housing supply, it may be reactivated if necessary or amended accordingly.
84	Continue to carry out research, technical studies, strategic planning, partnership building, engagement planning and affordable housing, to guide the future of central Coburg	Place and Environment	●	This action is programmed for completion in late 2023. As of October 2023, this is on track. A Councilor briefing occurred on 16 August 2023, and engagement activities are scheduled to commence in October.
94	Continue to integrate and implement business	Place and Environment	●	In Quarter One, the Economic Development team worked closely with the Urban Design team to review the results of community and trader engagement and used the

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
	development programs into the Shopping Strip Renewal Program (SSRP)			information collected to inform consideration of opportunities for the public realm and other improvements to the West Street shopping precinct. Both teams have also worked together to prepare for a further round of consultation in late October.
96	Continue to scale up and implement adaptive training and support programs for micro and small businesses	Place and Environment	●	<p>Over the past three months, Council Officers arranged and held a two-and-a-half-hour workshop for Traders Association committee members on best practice governance practices for incorporated associations. During the quarter, Council Officers also planned for a business bus visit to Merri-bek in the next few months (West Street Hadfield, 21 November) and a Business Victoria workshop on Generating Cash Flow (15 November, in person at Coburg Council offices).</p> <p>In addition, scoping has commenced for a further series of training programs in 2024 in relation to the following topics (final topics to be confirmed) - AI for Business; Social Media Reels for Business; TikTok for Business; and Canva for Business. Finally, three Merri-bek Businesswomen Network Coffee Conversations were held, providing opportunities for local businesswomen to come together and learn and network from one another; with further sessions planned and ready to take place in October and December.</p>
97	Continue to develop and support the Love Merri-bek Buy Local campaign	Place and Environment	●	This quarter has seen a third Love Merri-bek Trail Map - 'At Your Leisure', featuring over 30 leisure activity-related businesses, was completed, and shared online, as well as in-print via the featured venues and other key outlets, including Merri-bek libraries & galleries, selected hotels, the SRBA Hub in Sydney Road, Brunswick, and other locations. Council Officers have also commenced the task of reviewing all businesses on the Love Merri-bek site and verifying their details to ensure that the site is up to date.
98	Collaborate with local traders, residents, agencies, and creatives, develop, and implement an activation program for Brunswick	Place and Environment	●	Officers are working with key stakeholders and partners to develop a program for Brunswick for the year ahead. We are planning to continue the successful projection project at 260 Sydney Road and developing partnerships with a number of community groups.
99	Collaborate with local traders, residents, agencies, and creatives, develop, and	Place and Environment	●	Officers have started engaging with key stakeholders and partners to develop the program for Glenroy.

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
	implement an activation program for Glenroy			
100	Collaborate with local traders, residents, agencies, and creatives, develop, and implement an activation program for Coburg	Place and Environment	●	Officers are engaging with local stakeholders and partners to develop a program for Coburg for the year ahead, with a focus on supporting the upcoming community engagement program, The Coburg Conversation.
108	Continue to implement key visitor attraction activities	Place and Environment	●	A third Love Merri-bek Trail Map - 'At Your Leisure', featuring over 30 leisure activity-related businesses, was completed, and shared online, as well as in-print via the featured venues and other key outlets, including Merri-bek libraries & galleries, selected hotels, the SRBA Hub in Sydney Road, Brunswick, and other locations. Council Officers also contributed to drafting and submitting a grant application to the State Government's Visitor Servicing Fund program together with three other inner metropolitan Councils.
133	Continue RenuWall graffiti intervention program	Community	●	Renuwall site scoping commenced for current financial year. Internal stakeholder engagement undertaken; an initial three sites have been identified for murals.
134	Continue to commence preparation of a new Development Contributions Plan	Place and Environment	●	Work is underway to calculate a new development contribution and is expected to be completed by June 2024.
136	Continue to review service levels for responding to public realm amenity customer requests	City Infrastructure	●	A project working group has been formed and a project plan drafted with the different services Council provides collated.
144	Commence Detailed Design for West Street streetscape renewal	Place and Environment	●	Concept design is underway. Detailed design will begin in the third quarter of this financial year.
145	Commence construction of Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement	Place and Environment	●	Detailed design is almost complete. It is expected that construction will begin in in the third quarter of this financial year, January to March 2024.

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
146	Commence construction of the Stewart Street Brunswick streetscape improvement	Place and Environment	●	Detailed design is almost complete. It is expected construction will begin in January to March 2024.
147	Continue to commence preparation of a Planning Scheme amendment for an Activity Centre Zone for the Brunswick Activity Centre	Place and Environment	●	The third phase of consultation is due to be completed by the end of September 2023 for the Vibrant Brunswick project. Planning Scheme changes must be reviewed and tested before the Council considers a Planning Scheme Amendment package.
148	Continue to formalise stormwater drainage modelling within the Planning Scheme	Place and Environment	●	Engagement of stormwater maps with affected landowners is due to be completed by the end of October 2023.
149	Continue the proactive planning enforcement program by auditing approximately 80+ development projects for compliance with planning permits	Place and Environment	●	The proactive planning enforcement program has continued this quarter, with 11 new audits commenced to monitor compliance with planning permit requirements. While the number commenced reflects the program being behind target in this first quarter, the proactive program and cases have continued to be actively managed by the team throughout the quarter. The team is confident that that overall target will be achieved over the course of the year.
150	Continue the Cladding Rectification Project seeking resolution of moderate and low risk buildings with suspected combustible cladding	Place and Environment	●	<p>A Minister's Guideline (MG-15) and Cladding Risk Mitigation Framework (CRMF) have been developed under section 188 (1)(c) of the Building Act 1993. MG-15 provides Council, Municipal Building Surveyor, and owners with a clear policy around understanding risk, how it is assessed and a procedure for how risk can be addressed.</p> <p>The documents consider cladding remediation solutions that address cladding risk without full removal of combustible cladding. The CRMF is consistent with the Victorian Government's established approach to risk and is based on technical tools developed by CSV, which determine risk by fire spread rather than by assessing a comprehensive list of building elements. In many cases, this will significantly reduce the costs borne by affected owners to address cladding risk while improving building safety.</p>




Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
				The council's Municipal Building Surveyor has resolved a further three cases this quarter. Council was also advised of two cases returned from the Victorian Building Authority that are not closed. Building Services will be meeting with CSV in the next few weeks to discuss the role of this program within Merri-bek Council.
152	Continue to implement the affordable housing action plan	Place and Environment	●	Eight Affordable housing planning outcomes supported, including pre-application advice, drafting permit and Section 173 condition, recommendations, and strategy for VCAT hearings. Confirmation was received from Homes Victoria that 103 new social housing homes have been completed, and 469 further new homes are underway. Affordable Housing Reference Group met in September, toured the Nightingale Village, and provided input into the draft Homelessness Strategy. Submission to National Housing and Homelessness Plan drafted for Council endorsement. Response and analysis were undertaken in response to the release of the State Government Housing Statement, including coordinating the M9 Council's affordable housing work group.
153	Continue to complete development plans for the construction of a new storage annex, refurbishment of the Coburg Historical Society Bluestone Cottage and creation of a heritage garden in consultation with Historical Society	Community	●	Council resolution from September 2023 has established the scope of works and budget for this project. Planning is underway to determine process, governance, and stakeholder engagement for the detailed design phase of the project.
182	Through the Brunswick Design District partnership, work creatively to elevate Brunswick's profile as a design district and create an environment that attracts and supports the ongoing growth of design enterprises within the district	Place and Environment	●	During the first months of the new financial year, officers visited several businesses to film a series of videos for the Brunswick Design District (BDD) to promote awareness of the great range of creative and design-related businesses in Brunswick and Merri-bek, including (vi) Sans Beast; (vii) Brunswick Ballroom; (viii) Sheet Society; (ix) Volker Haug; and (x) Co-Paradiso and Dead-on Sound. The videos will be shared and promoted in the coming months. Officers have also worked with RMIT and Creative Victoria to commission data about the creative and design-related economy in Brunswick and other Merri-bek suburbs; and to review and commence updating the BDD website. Finally, the BDD was promoted as part of the Merri-bek for Business website to increase awareness of the design and creative sector in Merri-bek to attract further investment and talent.

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
183	Implement two key activities to support business and job growth within Merri-bek's key (e.g. top 5) and/or emerging industry sectors	Place and Environment	●	<p>In August 2023, Council Economic Development officers held a successful event attended by over 90 businesses and 20 Council staff and Councillors. The event aimed to inspire confidence in the local economy for businesses and investors to encourage investment and job creation to benefit the local community. Participants provided strong positive feedback after the event, and a number of follow-up meetings have been organised.</p> <p>Following on from a successful inaugural bio-med-tech networking event in May 2023, Council Officers have commenced work on a mini-action plan to help support and facilitate the bio-med-tech ecosystem in Merri-Bek and Brunswick in particular. The mini-action plan has examined the strengths and opportunities for the small but fast-growing sector, which promises to provide diverse, high-quality employment opportunities for residents. The mini-action plan will help identify key activities to take place through the remainder of the financial year.</p>
184	Develop a new Economic Development Action Plan to guide Council's economic development-related work over future years	Place and Environment	●	Council officers have commissioned, received, and reviewed a draft Merri-bek Economic Health Check, which will serve as an economic baseline and assessment to inform analysis of the economy's strengths and weaknesses and help underpin the identification of necessary actions for the future Action Plan. Officers have also commenced a draft project plan for executing the remainder of the project.
185	Liaise with and advocate to the State Government to maximise good design and delivery outcomes for the Brunswick level crossing removals	Place and Environment	✓	Following the adoption of Council's advocacy position paper, 'Reshaping Brunswick' in April 2023, letters were sent to all relevant MPs and Departments outlining Council's position on the design and delivery outcomes of the Brunswick Level Crossing Removals. Presentations to all relevant officers within the Level Crossing Removal Project team, partners and consultants were also completed in April and May 2023.
186	Commence concept design for Louisa Street Coburg Streetscape improvement	Place and Environment	●	Stage 1 pop up footpaths, designed in collaboration with local artists, was delivered in August 2023. Stage 2 design is in progress and on track for delivery by March 2024.
187	Commence construction for 260 Sydney Road Brunswick (Park Close To Home)	Place and Environment	●	Following two phases of community engagement, the detailed design of this new urban park is being progressed with a view to going out to tender for construction in early 2024.

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
188	Commence construction of the Saxon Street Brunswick facility and open space	City Infrastructure	✔	Construction commenced with early works starting in 2023. Expected to complete construction by October 2024.
189	Deliver library events in line with Community Programs Framework to support wellbeing and learning outcomes	Community	●	Library events are being delivered to support community wellbeing and learning outcomes.
190	Deliver Annual Arts and Culture Festivals program	Community	●	Planning has commenced for the 2023-24 festival program with programs for Fawkner Festa and Coburg Night Market nearly complete. A new music programmer has been appointed to Brunswick Music Festival and Coburg Night Market, and a new festival logistics company have also been appointed.
191	Deliver Arts investment grant	Community	●	Flourish Arts Grants advertised and a record 145 applications have been received. Significant work done to increase accessibility of the grant application process for applicants.
192	Finalise and implement new integrated Arts & Culture strategy	Community	●	New Arts & Culture Strategy endorsed by Council in September 2023, and implementation now underway.
193	Local History Maintenance & Conservation: deliver Heritage and Local History Action Plan implementation plan items	Community	●	Planning underway for major projects including Upfield rail line history project and local history cataloguing project. Consultation with First Peoples underway for an Aboriginal history project to identify sites of significance in Merri-bek.

Theme 5: An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek

5: Build community trust through encouraging participation, evidence-based decision making, stewardship of resources and being accessible and responsive

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
109	Continue to deliver the Community Engagement Policy Implementation Plan 2020-2024	Community		Actions in the Implementation Plan continue to be planned and delivered in accordance with our engagement practices.
113	Community at the HEART <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop efficiencies and understand pain points by conducting customer journey and service process mapping, learning from and listening to customer feedback and complaints • Improve customer communication channels • Implement the continuous improvement program including initiatives under Community at the Heart 	Community		Customer sentiment data from surveys conducted by CSBA and JWS has been used to develop a strategy for the Customer Experience Transformation Program. CX team has been meeting with areas across Council to improve communications with customers through Closing the Loop and to facilitate discussions on how to utilise HEART scores to identify where efficiencies can be targeted. Helphub (CS knowledge base) has been soft launched with the customer service team and work has been conducted across the organisation to ensure usefulness and longevity.
115	Continue to deliver advocacy campaigns that support council priorities	CEO		Participation in advocacy groups to further key priorities continued in the first quarter of the new financial year, including NCA, M9, NAGA, CASBE. Submissions were made to Victorian State Government inquiries on the 2022 Victorian Flood Event, the Rental and Housing Affordability Crisis, Expanding Victoria's anti-vilification laws, and the Federal Government on the National Multicultural

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
				Framework. Merri-bek also hosted and participated in the hearing of submissions to the inquiry into the impact of road safety behaviour of vulnerable road users. A motion on accessibility and electric vehicle infrastructure was submitted for the MAV State Council meeting. A revision of federal advocacy priorities commenced with workshops and briefings involving Senior management and Executive members and Councilors.
156	Continue to support the CALD Merri-bek connectors community engagement program to improve access to information and services	Community	●	The Connectors Program has successfully been delivered, providing CALD community support to key Council projects and initiatives including the Kerbside Waste Reforms and Open Space Strategy.
157	Continue to build capability and develop staff to improve customer experience	Community	●	Training and capacity-building underway to support several units that need assistance to understand customer feedback data and the HEART score. Customer experience excellence training is being developed by the Capability Officer to be rolled out to the organisation.
158	Continue to undertake a feasibility analysis to determine land and construction costs, funding sources and prioritisation of expenditure to inform developer contributions	Place and Environment	●	Work is underway to calculate a new development contribution and is expected to be completed by June 2024.
159	Continue to deliver the Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy Implementation plan (2021-2024)	Community	●	Implementation of the Accessible and Inclusive Communications Policy continues. Some recent achievements include Accessible Communications Toolkit developed for staff; Community Languages Aides reviewed; staff participation in NAATTI training. The Language Link that features on all Council materials is currently being reviewed. The Connector program has been reviewed and a new group of Connectors have been inducted.
194	Continue the phased implementation of the Merri-bek name change	Community	●	The first year of the renaming process has been completed and the budget is up to date. The next stage of the renaming project involves changing the signage of all MCH sites and collaborating with Open Space to install new signage in parks. The

Action No.	Action Name	Directorate	Status	Comments
				visible vehicles have been completed, and the next step is to proceed with the fleet changeover.
195	Annual review of 10-year Financial plan alongside 4-budget review	Business Transformation	●	The 2023-24 4-year budget process has begun, with consultation underway with the management team. As part of the annual budget process an annual review of the 10-year financial plan is undertaken.

7.19 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Finance Management

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 30 September 2023, at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Approves the allocation of additional budget to three projects in the Capital Works Program (and to be incorporated into the Quarter 1 budget forecast) as follows:
 - a) \$1,500,000 from the Significant Projects Reserve to the Saxon Street Community Hub project, taking the total project budget from \$28,998,029.00 to \$30,498,029.00.
 - b) \$150,000 of savings from the Fleming Park Masterplan Implementation project and \$50,000 of savings from the Park Street Kinder Roof replacement to the Wallace Reserve Pavilion Projects, taking the total combined project budget to \$1,195,591.06
 - c) A further \$80,000 of savings from the Fleming Park Masterplan Implementation project to the Commercial Tenancy Obligations Project, taking the total project budget to \$330,000.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report presents the Financial Management Report for the financial year to date period ending 30 September 2023.

The September Income Statement shows the Council surplus is \$7.0 million better than the year-to-date revised forecast as a result of higher overall revenue and lower overall expenditure. These differences are considered largely timing in nature.

Council has spent \$11.3 million on capital expenditure, which is tracking below the year-to-date (YTD) forecast of \$20.7 million, with \$116.1 million budget remaining.

This report also seeks Council approval for the allocation of additional budget to three projects in the Capital Works Program (Saxon Street Community Hub, Wallace Reserve Pavilions Project and Commercial Tenancy Project) for reasons including latent conditions causing delays and the need for re-design of some aspects of some of the projects; design challenges, resulting in an overall increase in cost and delivery timeframes; and additional works to maintain a compliant goods lift as outlined in the issues section of this report.

Previous Council Decisions

2022-23 Financial Statements and Performance Statements – 13 September 2023

That Council:

1. Approves 'in principle' the Financial and Performance Statements 2022/23;
2. Authorises the Mayor, Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson, and the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Anita Curnow, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 in their final form;
3. Notes the unrestricted surplus of \$1.761 million transfers:
 - a) \$1.0 million to the Significant Projects Reserve; and

- b) \$0.761 to the capital works program as a contingency allowance.
- 4. Carries forward the \$723,565 of tied grant funding or contributions that were not spent as at 30 June 2023;
- 5. Carries forward the \$54,846 of operating projects into the 2023/24 Operating Projects Expenditure Program;
- 6. Carries forward the \$28.686 million of capital project funds into the 2023/24 Capital Works Program;
- 7. Carries forward the \$0.535 million of capital project funds into the 2024/25 Capital Works Program; and
- 8. Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2022/23 if recommended by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Saxon Street Redevelopment Project - 19 April 2023

That Council:

- 1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Amend the formal offer (\$24,967,260.00) previously made to McCorkell Constructions Pty Ltd (Contractor) for the contract ST-2022-314 for 33 Saxon Street Redevelopment Project (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - i. for a fixed price design and construction contract for the lump sum of \$25,147,116.00 being the revised value (excluding GST) and inclusive of any sum payable for Early Works as defined in the Letter of Intent dated 17 February 2023 and updated 6 April 2023; and
 - ii. approve any contract cost variation as delegated to the Chief Executive Officer in the Instrument of Delegation
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
- 2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - c) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract;
 - d) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option to extend the Contract in accordance with the provisions within the Contract.

Contract Variation: RFT-2021-217 – Wallace Reserve North And South Refurbishments - 8 February 2023

That Council:

- 1. Approves the contract value variation of Contract RFT- 2021- 217 – Wallace Reserve North and South Refurbishments (originally executed under the Chief Executive Officer's delegation) from \$691,000.00 to \$877,591.06 (an increase of \$186,591.06 or 27 per cent) as follows:
 - a) Contract sum for building works of \$816,753.39 (up from \$610,000)
 - b) Further 5 per cent contingency of \$40,837.67 (original 10 per cent contingency of \$61,000 now included in item a)

- c) *Provisional sum of \$20,000 (unchanged)*
- 2. *Notes that additional project budget of \$190,144.60 is to be supported by reallocating savings in public toilet and road reconstruction projects and these budget adjustments will be presented to Council as part of the Q2 financial reports.*
- 3. *Notes that, related to the cost increases the project has also suffered delays in delivery schedule and, subject to the contract variation approval is now scheduled for completion by the end of April 2023.*
- 4. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the contract variation and related documentation.*

Saxon Street Redevelopment Project - 19 December 2022

That Council:

- 1. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:*
 - a) *Make a formal offer to McCorkell Constructions Pty Ltd (Contractor) to award the contract ST-2022-314 for 33 Saxon Street Redevelopment Project (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:*
 - i. *for a fixed price design and construction contract for the lump sum of \$24,967,260.00 (excluding GST)*
 - ii. *Approve a contingency sum for 10 per cent, being \$ 2,496,726.00 as provision for cost escalation, options proposed as part of Tender, and other unforeseen cost risk.*
 - iii. *Note additional sum of \$875,687 has been allowed for the costs associated with project management, building surveyor, Quantity Surveyor, legal matters etc.*
 - b) *Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:*
 - i. *the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and*
 - ii. *other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;*
- 2. *Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:*
 - a) *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract, subject to*
 - i. *the resolution of any town planning conditions that remain Council's responsibility as the applicant, and*
 - ii. *that the 28-day statutory period for appeals to VCAT has elapsed without appeal regarding the decision to grant a permit for the development*
 - b) *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract; and*
 - c) *Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.*

3. *Approves an increase in budget for 33 Saxon Street Redevelopment Project from \$23,295,356 to \$28,998,029 in the 4-year capital works program. The budget to support this increase is to be approved with the following adjustments by fund source: \$25,106,211 from the significant projects reserve (up from \$22,795,356); \$2,891,818 from the DCP Reserve (not included in previous budget); \$1,000,000 in Commonwealth Government pledge of grant funding (up from estimate previously of \$500,000). These sums are to be included and phased in the 2023-2027 4-year budget development.*

1. Policy Context

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

The Financial Management Report at **Attachment 1** provides Council's financial statements for the year to date (YTD) period ending 30 September 2023. The actual results are compared to the revised forecast.

3. Issues

Council ended September 2023 with a surplus operating result of \$151.9 million which is \$7.0 million (5%) better than the YTD revised forecast of \$144.9 million. These differences are considered largely timely in nature.

Significant variance explanations are provided below to clarify where the current YTD variances are expected to be a timing or permanent difference by 30 June 2024. A timing variance is a current difference between actual result and budget which is expected to be resolved before the end of the financial year. A permanent variance is a current difference between actual result and budget which will continue to the end of the financial year.

The main items contributing to the overall variance are:

Revenue

- **Grants Operating** ended \$1.9 million (47%) favourable due to Commonwealth Home Support Program funding being received for June through to December (timing).
- **User Fees** ended \$1.2 million (104%) favourable due to the following:
 - Calendar year food registrations being recognised earlier than anticipated (\$0.6 million) (timing);
 - Higher than anticipated tree related permits year to date (\$0.1 million) (permanent); and
 - Various minor favourable variances across the organisation (timing).
- **Other Revenue** ended \$0.5 million (25%) favourable primarily due to insurance recoveries of \$0.3 million and higher than anticipated interest on term deposits of \$0.2 million (permanent);
- **Grants Capital** ended \$0.5 million (100%) favourable due to the receipt of grant funding relating to capital projects which were carried forward from 2022/23 (timing).

These favourable variances are partially offset by a \$0.5 million (21%) unfavourable variance in Contributions - Monetary due to the unpredictable timing of Public Open Space Contribution (timing).

Expenditure

Contacts, Materials and Services ended \$2.1 million (12%) favourable primarily due to the following:

- \$1.8 million (65%) underspend in General Works & Services in the following areas:
 - \$0.9 million underspend in Operating projects throughout the organisation (timing); and
 - \$0.9 million underspend in Other Unclassified Contracts (timing).
- \$0.5 million (21%) underspend in Insurance costs due to the timing of premium payments (timing);
- Financial expenses ended \$0.3 million (22%) favourable due to the timing of Neighbourhood House and solar low-income grants (timing).

These favourable variances are partially offset by a \$0.4 million (95%) unfavourable variance in Communications due to \$0.3 million of data expenses relating to 2022/23 being paid in September.

Key Definitions

Comprehensive operating surplus – the comprehensive operating surplus reflects the anticipated annual performance of the organisation's day to day operations based on recurrent income and expenditures.

Underlying operating result – the underlying operating result is an important measure of financial sustainability as it excludes income which is to be used for capital from being allocated to cover operating expenses.

Environmental Upgrade Agreements

No new Environmental Upgrade Agreements were approved in the quarter from 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023. There are currently six agreements in operation, with a total value of \$484,854 Environmental Upgrade Agreement payments that have not yet fallen due.

Capital Projects – Capital Expenditure

The Capital Expenditure program year to date has an actual spend of \$11.3 million which is tracking below the YTD forecast of \$20.7 million (46%), with \$116.1 million (91%) revised budget remaining.

Cash

At the end of September, Council had cash and short-term investments of \$112.9 million. This is \$4.4 million lower than the cash position at the beginning of the financial year. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors including the timing of payments and receipts.

Solvency Assessment

Council's liquidity ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities) is 5.55 as at 30 September 2023. The Victorian Auditor-General's Office recommends that this ratio be 1.5 or higher.

Allocation of additional Funds to Capital Works Projects

Saxon Street Redevelopment

33 Saxon Street Redevelopment project is identified as a major project in Council's 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 capital works program. The scope of works is for a community facility that includes a creative production space, gallery exhibition, commercial café/hospitality and open space for events and recreation.

In December 2022 Contract ST-2022-314 was awarded for a sum of \$24,967,260.00. In April 2023, following contract negotiations with respect to environmental approvals for the project, Council approved a higher contract sum of \$25,147,116.00, with the contingency set at the level of the Instrument of Delegation. The total project budget including costs outside of this Contract is \$28,998,029.00.

The redevelopment of 33 Saxon Street has experienced several latent conditions that were not allowed for in the project budget including contaminated soil through soft landscaped areas, requiring removal of the top 500 mm of soil; asbestos; lead paint; underground fuel tanks; extensive works for Wheeler House; and additional compliance needs for the north-building.

These latent conditions as described above, necessitate the need to request allocation from the strategic projects reserve of \$1.5 million. This will reduce the balance in the Significant Projects Reserve from \$2,410,000 to \$910,000.

Wallace Reserve Project

Wallace Reserve is located at 123 Justin Avenue, Glenroy. The facility is a large sporting reserve with four formal sports fields and two sports pavilions catering for soccer during the winter season, and cricket throughout the summer season.

The refurbishment to create female friendly change rooms for both north and south sports pavilions will benefit existing female teams from Glenroy Lions Soccer Club, Moreland Eagles Soccer Club, Glenroy Cricket Club and Pascoe Vale United Cricket Club and will provide an opportunity for clubs to continue to grow their female programs.

In 2021 Contract RFT-2021-217 was awarded for an amount of \$691,000. The project has experienced latent conditions and unforeseen circumstances. This led to additional costs, and Council approved contract variations of \$186,591.06, resulting in new contract value of \$877,591.06.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Council has now engaged a new contractor to complete the remainder of the project and an additional budget of \$200,000 is required to complete the project, which can be offset from savings in the current year capital works program (ie. Fleming Park Masterplan Implementation project / Park Street Kinder Roof replacement).

Commercial Tenancy Project

As part of commercial tenancy agreement for the 451-459 Sydney Road, Coburg, Merri-bek City Council is required to provide and maintain a compliant goods lift. The current lift was deemed not suitable and compliant, hence a suitable contractor for these works has been procured. The original approved budget, set in 2022/23, for this project is \$250,000, which was carried forward into the 2023/24 year. An additional budget of \$80,000 to complete these works, based on quotations received (which can be offset from savings in the current year capital works program ie. Fleming Park Masterplan Implementation project).

Community Impact

There are no community impacts identified in this report.

Climate Emergency and Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications identified in this report.

Economic Sustainability Implications

There are no economic sustainability implications identified in this report.

Legal and Risk Considerations

There are no legal and risk considerations identified in 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

This report has been prepared based on information provided by managers and reviewed by directors.

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 2023/24 budget with the best possible outcome for Council and the community and in line with the adopted budget targets.

These budget adjustments proposed in relation to Saxon Street Community Hub, Wallace Reserve and Commercial Tenancy Project can be made as part of the Q1 capital adjustment process.

7. Implementation

The financial position of Council will continue to be monitored and managed. Subject to Council endorsement, budget adjustments will support the continuation of the projects outlined in this report.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Council Financial Report - September 2023 D23/504357



Council Financial Management Report

Three Months Ended September 2023

Executive Summary

For the three months ended 30 September 2023, Council had an operating surplus of \$151.9 million which is \$7.0 million (5%) higher than the year to date (YTD) revised forecast of \$144.9 million. This comprises total revenue of \$201.4 million which is \$3.7 million (2%) higher than the YTD revised forecast of \$197.7 million and total expenditure of \$49.6 million which is \$3.3 million (6%) favourable compared to the YTD revised forecast budget of \$52.9 million.

The Full Year Revised Forecast reflects the adopted 2023-24 budget plus carry forwards from the 2022-23 financial year.

The main reasons for the favourable variance to YTD budget are:

Revenue

Grants Operating ended \$1.9 million (47%) favourable due to Commonwealth Home Support Program funding being received for June through to December, payments were expected to be received in arrears from the beginning of this financial year.

User fees ended \$1.2 million (104%) favourable due to the following:

- Calendar year food registrations being recognised earlier than anticipated (\$0.6 million);
- Higher than anticipated tree related permits year to date (\$0.1 million); and
- Various minor favourable variances across the organisation.

Other Revenue ended \$0.5 million (25%) favourable primarily due to insurance recoveries of \$0.3 million and higher than anticipated interest on term deposits of \$0.2 million.

Grants Capital ended \$0.5 million (100%) favourable primarily due to the receipt of grant funding relating to capital projects which were carried forward from 2022/23 and were therefore not included in the 2023/24 budget.

These favourable variances were partially offset by a \$0.5 million (21%) unfavourable variance in Contributions - Monetary due to the unpredictable timing of Public Open Space Contributions.

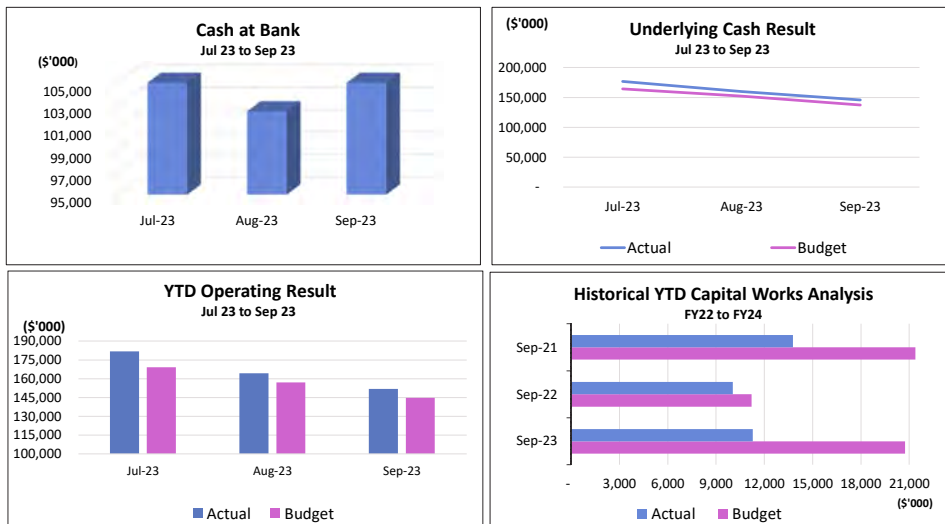
Expenditure

Contracts, Materials & Services ended \$2.1 million (12%) favourable primarily due to the following:

- General Works & Services ended \$1.8 million (65%) favourable primarily due to the following:
 - \$0.9 million underspend in Operating projects throughout the organisation;
 - \$0.9 million underspend in Other Unclassified Contracts;
- Insurance Costs ended \$0.5 million (21%) favourable primarily due to timing of premium payments.
- Communications ended \$0.4 million (96%) unfavourable due to \$0.3 million of FY23 data expense invoices being paid in September.
- Financial Expenses ended \$0.3 million (22%) favourable due to the timing of Neighbourhood House and Solar low income grants.

Council has spent \$11.3 million on capital expenditure to 30 September 2023 which is \$9.4 million (46%) lower than the YTD revised forecast, with \$116.1 million (91%) of the full year revised budget remaining. The capital revised forecast reflects the adopted 2023-24 budget and \$28.7 million of carry forwards from 2022-23

Cash assets are \$112.9 million at 30 September 2023. This is a decrease of \$4.4 million on 30 June 2023 cash levels. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors including the timing of payments and receipts.



Merri-bek City Council
Consolidated Income Statement
 Three Months Ended September 2023

YTD Variance (\$)		YTD Variance (%)	
● when >\$100k	● when <\$100k & >-\$100k	● when > 10%	● when < 10% & >-10%
● when <-\$100k	● when <-\$100k	● when < 10%	● when < -10%

Full Year Original Budget (\$'000)	Revenue & Expenditure	NOTES	YTD Actual (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Variance (%)	Full Year Revised Forecast (\$'000)
Revenue							
184,495	Rates and Charges		183,578	183,420	158	0%	184,495
17,462	Statutory Fees and Fines		4,570	4,640	(70)	(2%)	17,462
7,006	User Fees	1	2,339	1,149	1,190	104%	7,006
10,455	Contributions - Monetary		2,078	2,626	(548)	(21%)	10,455
19,827	Grants Operating	2	5,754	3,904	1,850	47%	19,827
10,994	Grants Capital	3	451	0	451	100%	10,994
7,434	Other Revenue	4	2,485	1,991	494	25%	7,434
87	Asset Sales		150	0	150	0%	87
257,760	Total income		201,404	197,730	3,674	2%	257,760
Expenditure							
108,807	Employee Benefits		24,048	25,096	1,048	4%	108,807
68,416	Contracts, Materials & Services	5	16,199	18,306	2,107	12%	69,195
33,104	Depreciation		8,276	8,276	0	0%	33,104
236	Amortisation Expense		59	59	0	0%	236
2,960	Bad & Doubtful Debts		729	740	11	2%	2,960
(1,655)	Net loss on disposal of assets		0	0	0	0%	(1,655)
917	Finance Costs		171	229	58	25%	917
745	Other Expenses		72	164	92	56%	745
213,532	Total expenses		49,554	52,870	3,316	6%	214,309
44,228	Surplus		151,850	144,860	6,991	5%	43,451

Revenue

- 1) **User Fees** ended \$1.2 million (104%) favourable due to:
 - The recognition of calendar year food registrations earlier than anticipated (\$0.6 million);
 - Higher than anticipated tree related permits year to date (\$0.1 million); and
 - Various minor favourable variances across the organisation.
- 2) **Grants Operating** ended \$1.9 million (47%) favourable primarily due to Commonwealth Home Support Program funding being received for June through to December. Payments were expected to be received in arrears from the beginning of this financial year.
- 3) **Grants Capital** ended \$0.5 million (100%) favourable primarily due to the receipt of grant funding relating to capital projects which were carried forward from 2022/23 and not included in the 2023/24 budget.
- 4) **Other Revenue** ended \$0.5million (25%) favourable primarily due to insurance recoveries of \$0.3 million and higher than anticipated interest on term deposits of \$0.2 million.

Expenditure

- 5) **Contracts Materials and Services** ended \$2.1 million (12%) favourable primarily due to:
 - General Works & Services ended \$1.8 million (65%) favourable primarily due to the following:
 - \$0.9 million underspend in Operating projects throughout the organisation;
 - \$0.9 million underspend in Other Unclassified Contracts;
 - Insurance Costs ended \$0.5 million (21%) favourable primarily due to timing of premium payments.
 - Communications ended \$0.4 million (96%) unfavourable due to \$0.3 million of FY23 data expense invoices being paid in September.
 - Financial Expenses ended \$0.3 million (22%) favourable due to the timing of Neighbourhood House and Solar low income grants.

Merri-bek City Council
Underlying Result Analysis
Three Months Ended September 2023

Adopted Budget (\$'000)	YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Variance (%)	Full Year Revised Forecast (\$'000)
44,230 Surplus for the Year	151,850	144,860	6,991	5%	43,451
44,230 Surplus/Deficit	151,850	144,860	6,991	5%	43,451
<i>Non Operating Income and Expenditure</i>					
(1,742) Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant	(150)	0	(150)	100%	(1,742)
(55) Contributions Capital (cash & non monetary)	(12)	(26)	14	-53%	(55)
(10,994) Grants - Capital	(451)	0	(451)	100%	(10,994)
(10,000) PRRLF Reserve	(1,955)	(2,500)	545	-22%	(10,000)
(400) DCP Reserve	(111)	(100)	(11)	11%	(400)
(23,191) Total Capital Income	(2,679)	(2,626)	(53)	2%	(23,191)
21,039 Underlying Result	149,172	142,234	6,938	5%	20,260
<i>Less</i>					
2,036 Loan Principal Repayments	333	333	0	0%	2,036
7,533 Additional Rates Funded CAPEX	1,883	1,883	0	0%	7,533
0 Operating Grants brought forward from FY25	0	0	0	0%	0
15,761 Transfers to Reserves - Operating	1,362	2,500	(1,138)	0%	15,761
(4,291) Transfers from Reserves - Operating	0	0	0	0%	(4,291)
0 Carry Forwards processed into FY25	0	0	0	0%	0
21,039 Total Transfers & Other	3,579	4,716	(1,138)	24%	21,039
0 Unrestricted surplus / (deficit)	145,593	137,517	8,076	6%	(779)

Merri-bek City Council
Balance Sheet
As at 30 September 2023

	NOTES	September 2023 (\$'000)	September Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Variance to Forecast (\$'000)	Prior Year June 2023 (\$'000)	Movement Since 30 June 2023 (\$'000)
ASSETS						
Current assets						
Cash Assets		64,864	69,324	(4,460)	68,282	(3,418)
Receivables		195,328	198,109	(2,781)	38,568	156,763
Other Financial Assets		48,000	48,000	0	49,000	(1,000)
Inventories		290	261	29	248	42
Non Current Assets Classified As Held For Sale		2,625	0	2,625	2,625	0
Other Assets		2,891	2,335	556	3,057	(165)
Total current assets		313,998	318,029	(4,031)	161,779	152,221
Non current assets						
Unlisted Shares		2	2	0	2	0
Property, Plant & Equipment		2,814,925	2,813,916	1,009	2,803,641	11,285
Right of use assets		947	947	0	947	0
Investments		28,690	28,690	-	28,690	0
Total non-current assets		2,844,564	2,843,555	1,009	2,833,278	11,285
Total Assets		3,158,562	3,161,584	(3,022)	2,995,057	163,506
LIABILITIES						
Current liabilities						
Payables						
Payables		32,126	38,768	6,642	19,098	13,028
Revenue Received in Advance		1,134	1,134	0.5	1,823	(689)
Provisions		20,827	21,501	674	21,146	(319)
Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings		1,338	1,338	(0.37)	1,338	0
Trust Funds & Deposits		1,198	4,710	3,512	1,229	(31)
Total current liabilities		56,624	67,451	10,827	44,635	11,990
Non current liabilities						
Provisions		2,390	2,259	(131)	2,390	0
Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings		22,168	21,485	(683)	22,501	(333)
Total non-current liabilities		24,558	23,744	(814)	24,891	(333)
Total Liabilities		81,182	91,195	10,013	69,526	11,656
Net Assets		3,077,380	3,070,389	6,991	2,925,530	151,850
EQUITY						
Reserves						
Asset Revaluation Reserves		2,089,066	1,981,604	107,462	2,089,066	0
General Reserves		70,062	86,386	(16,324)	86,487	(16,425)
Total Reserves		2,159,128	2,067,990	91,138	2,175,553	(16,425)
Surplus						
Accumulated Surplus		918,252	1,002,399	(84,147)	749,977	168,275
Total Accumulated Surplus		918,252	1,002,399	(84,147)	749,977	168,275
Total Equity		3,077,380	3,070,389	6,991	2,925,530	151,850

Merri-bek City Council
Cash Flow Statement
Three Months Ended September 2023

	NOTES	YTD September 2023 (\$'000)	YTD September Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Variance to Forecast (\$'000)
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES				
Receipts				
Rates and charges		39,666	42,482	(2,816)
Statutory fees and fines		3,948	4,378	(430)
User fees		1,773	2,014	(241)
Grants - operating		5,724	6,885	(1,161)
Grants - capital		328	151	177
Contributions - monetary		2,078	2,218	(140)
Interest received		1,295	1,295	0
Trust funds and deposits taken		147	147	0
Other receipts		1,771	1,121	650
Net GST refund/payment		1,369	2,382	(1,013)
Total receipts		58,099	63,073	(4,974)
Payments				
Employee costs		(24,762)	(24,141)	(621)
Materials and services		(17,455)	(17,590)	135
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(104)	0	(104)
Other payments		(72)	(73)	1
Total payments		(42,392)	(41,804)	32
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities		15,707	21,269	(4,942)
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES				
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(19,696)	(20,707)	1,012
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		75	-	75
Payments for investments		-	-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(19,621)	(20,707)	1,087
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES				
Finance costs		(171)	(187)	16
Proceeds from borrowings		-	-	-
Repayment of borrowings		(333)	(333)	(0)
Interest paid - lease liability		-	-	-
Repayment of lease liabilities		-	-	-
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities		(504)	(520)	16
Net increase / (decrease) in cash & cash equivalents		(4,418)	42	(3,839)
CASH POSITION				
Non-restricted Cash at 1 July 2023		24,282	24,282	0
Other Financial Assets at 1 July 2023		93,000	93,000	0
Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		117,282	117,282	0
Non-restricted Cash at 30 September 2023		64,864	69,324	(4,460)
Other Financial Assets at 30 September 2023		48,000	48,000	0
Cash & cash equivalents at 30 September 2023		112,864	117,324	(4,460)
Net increase / (decrease) year to date		(4,418)	42	(4,460)

Merri-bek City Council
Top Ten Capital Projects by Annual Budget Value
Three Months Ended September 2023

YTD Variance (\$)		YTD Variance (%)	
● when > 50	● when < -50	● when > 0.15	● when < -0.15
● when > 25	● when < -25	● when > 0.1	● when < -0.1

Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Capital Project	NOTES	YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Percentage Variance (\$'000)	Commitments (\$'000)
127,375	Grand Total (All Projects)		11,286	20,733	9,447	46%	89,413
28,428	52690127 - Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment		2,650	4,927	2,277	46%	28,068
18,782	52690254 - Saxon St Community Hub : Brunswick		469	1,725	1,256	73%	26,381
3,980	52690359 - Hosken Reserve Stage 3 Football Pitches		81	400	319	80%	4,026
3,153	52690319 - Derby St Kindergarten Children's Centre		73	99	26	26%	2,383
3,078	52690360 - Hosken Reserve Stage 4 Open Space & Civil Work		26	0	(26)	0%	11
3,000	52690375 - Brunswick Early Years Hub		0	750	750	100%	0
2,747	52690238 - Oak Park Kindergarten		8	127	119	94%	68
2,390	5537134 - Replace Council Fleet : Walter St depot		0	0	0	0%	768
2,343	5567929 - Resurfacing Program - Various		295	220	(75)	-34%	910
2,141	52190023 - Park Close to Home Frith Street		544	900	356	40%	1,620

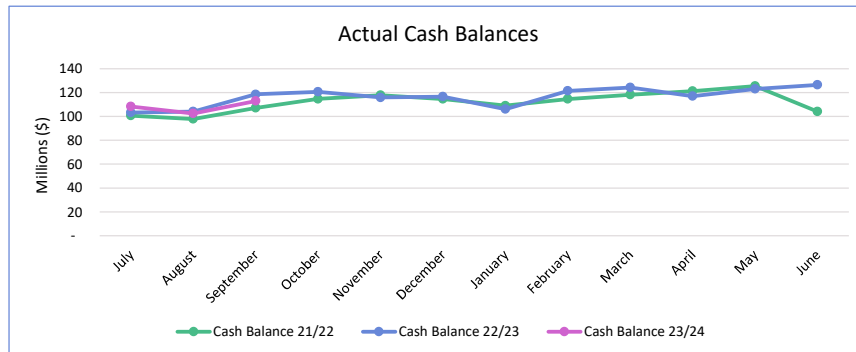
Merri-bek City Council
Top Ten Capital Projects by YTD Overspend
(Excluding property purchases and fully funded capital projects)
Three Months Ended September 2023

Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Capital Project	NOTES	YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Percentage Variance (\$'000)	Commitments (\$'000)
127,375	Grand Total (All Projects)		11,286	20,733	9,447	46%	89,413
0	64590350 - CERES - Fire Claim Settlement		271	0	(271)	-100%	0
690	52690352 - Turner Street Kindergarten Expansion		330	170	(160)	-94%	271
1,061	4327145 - Library Books Replacement Program : Library Books		358	230	(128)	-56%	1,619
116	52490259 - Upgrade Roundabouts to improve access		97	0	(97)	-100%	76
2,343	5567929 - Resurfacing Program - Various		295	220	(75)	-34%	910
0	55290445 - Boiler Replacement Brunswick - Town Hall		66	0	(66)	-100%	0
8	52190347 - Playground Strategy - Wylie Reserve		63	8	(55)	-682%	0
227	65190204 - Coburg Streetscape Masterplan - Louisa St		73	26	(47)	-181%	8
0	55390130 - Waste Truck Refurbishment - Walter St Depot		45	0	(45)	-100%	114
106	52190281 - Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve		98	55	(43)	-79%	70

Merri-bek City Council
Top Ten Capital Projects by YTD Underspend
Three Months Ended September 2023

Revised Forecast (\$'000)	Capital Project	NOTES	YTD Actuals (\$'000)	YTD Revised Forecast (\$'000)	YTD Variance (\$'000)	YTD Percentage Variance (\$'000)	Commitments (\$'000)
127,375	Grand Total (All Projects)		11,286	20,733	9,447	46%	89,413
28,428	52690127 - Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment		2,650	4,927	2,277	46%	28,068
18,782	52690254 - Saxon St Community Hub : Brunswick		469	1,725	1,256	73%	26,381
849	52690222 - Hosken Reserve Stage 1 Football Pavilion		3	759	756	100%	334
3,000	52690375 - Brunswick Early Years Hub		0	750	750	100%	0
2,141	52190023 - Park Close to Home Frith Street		544	900	356	40%	1,620
1,000	52190315 - Moonee Ponds Creek Naturalisation Project		650	1,000	350	35%	0
400	52190413 - 508-512 Bell Street (Park Close to Home)		0	328	328	100%	0
1,147	52390308 - Lorne St-From Hime to Wembley		134	459	325	71%	792
1,871	52690221 - Hosken Reserve Stage 2 Tennis Club Pavilion & Cour		976	1,300	324	25%	441
3,980	52690359 - Hosken Reserve Stage 3 Football Pitches		81	400	319	80%	4,026

Merri-bek City Council - Cash & Investments Three Months Ended September 2023



Bank	Type of account	Interest Rate	S & P short term rating	Amount (\$'000)
Westpac	Transaction	4.45%	A-1+	\$ 10,977
Westpac	Investment	4.55%	A-1+	\$ 23,812
				\$ 34,790

	Maturity date	Interest Rate	S & P short term rating	Amount (\$'000)	Ratio
CBA - 4	07-Nov-23	5.25%	A-1+	\$ 6,000	12.82%
CBA - 4	24-Oct-23	5.22%	A-1+	\$ 4,000	
Bendigo Bank - 5	18-Dec-23	4.48%	A-2	\$ 4,000	20.51%
Bendigo Bank - 4	08-Nov-23	5.05%	A-2	\$ 12,000	
IMB - 4	04-Dec-23	5.10%	A-2	\$ 5,000	12.82%
IMB - 4	03-Nov-23	5.15%	A-2	\$ 5,000	
ME Bank - 4	27-Dec-23	4.70%	A-2	\$ 4,000	17.95%
ME Bank - 4	03-Oct-23	4.60%	A-2	\$ 10,000	
NAB - 4	19-Oct-23	5.10%	A-1+	\$ 7,000	8.97%
Suncorp - 4	07-Dec-23	4.62%	A-1	\$ 11,000	14.10%
Westpac - 6	05-Feb-24	4.96%	A-1+	\$ 6,000	7.69%
Westpac - 4	13-Oct-23	4.87%	A-1+	\$ 4,000	5.13%
				Total	100%
				Green	73%

Minor Cash Accounts (e.g., NAB holding account & Petty Cash) **\$ 74**

Cash at Bank & Investment Total **\$ 112,864**

*Credit rating; [D15/200676](#) - S & P Ratings tab

Procurement Delegations Report
Contracts Executed in September

Contract Description	Contract Number	Start date	Delegation Exercised	TOTAL Contract Value (Ex GST)
Roundabout upgrade at intersection of Belair Ave and Chapman Ave - Glenroy	RFT-2023-391	6/09/2023	CEO	\$ 378,826.00
Tangyes St, Pascoe Vale drainage improvement works	FRT-2023-433	11/09/2023	CEO	\$ 558,387.00

7.20 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE CHARTER REVIEW

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council endorses the updated Audit and Risk Committee charter as provided in Attachment 2 to this report (as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee).

REPORT

Executive Summary

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* Council is required to establish an Audit and Risk Committee.

In doing so, Council must have in place an Audit and Risk Committee Charter that specifies the functions and responsibilities of the Committee. The current Audit and Risk Committee Charter stipulates that it be reviewed biennially.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the Charter at its meeting held 5 September 2023. The Charter largely preserves many of the existing provisions, with Council officers recommending minor grammatical / administrative amendments, consolidating related provisions under dedicated sections for improved readability, and updating Council's name and Council officer titles.

In addition to these improvements, the Audit and Risk Committee also endorsed changes and recommendations relating to the correction and duplication of reference to skills under section 12, removal of the signatory page, amending the evaluating performance of the committee to occur every two years via an evaluation survey, strengthening the recruitment of independent members and clarifying the process.

Further it is recommended to remove the requirement for the Strategic Internal Audit plan to be presented at Councillor briefing by the Chairperson. The removal of this requirement is recommended due to the necessity of presenting an Annual Committee Performance Report formally to Council.

Previous Council Decisions

Audit and Risk Committee Charter Review and Appointment of Independent Member – 14 July 2021

That Council:

...

3. *Endorses the updated Audit and Risk Committee charter as provided in Attachment 1 to this report (as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee).*

Establishment of the Audit and Risk Management Committee in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 - 13 May 2020

That Council:

1. *Accepts the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and adopts the revised Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter at Attachment 1 to this report.*

...

Audit and Risk Management Committee – 10 May 2017

That Council:

1. Council approves the Draft Audit and Risk Committee Charter at Attachment 1.

...

1. Policy Context

Division 8, Part 2 of the *Local Government Act 2020* outlines the requirements for Council establishing an Audit and Risk Committee and the preparation and approval of an Audit and Risk Committee Charter.

Council's current Audit and Risk Committee Charter is compliant with Council's obligations as required by the Act.

2. Background

The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory committee of Council established to assist the Council discharge its responsibilities as prescribed by the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) including supporting Council with embedding the governance principles, public transparency principles and financial management principles.

The Committee is not deemed a delegated committee of Council, thus has no executive powers, management functions, or delegated financial responsibility. As such, the Committee's responsibilities and authority are outlined in the Audit and Risk Committee Charter (the Charter).

3. Issues

The Audit and Risk Committee Charter (as adopted September 2021) continues to be compliant with Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the Charter at its meeting held 5 September 2023. The Charter retains much of the existing provisions, with proposed amendments including minor grammatical / administrative amendments, consolidating related provisions under dedicated sections for improved readability, and updating Council's name and Council officer titles.

The Committee also endorsed the following changes:

- Clarification that evaluating performance of the committee will occur every two years via an evaluation survey;
- Explaining that recruitment of independent members occurs via a job recruitment website and outlining who makes up the selection panel; and
- Removal of the requirement for the Strategic Internal Audit plan to be presented at Councillor briefing by the Chairperson. The current Charter does not require Council approval of the Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan. Instead, the Committee's responsibilities include preparing an Annual Committee Performance Report, which incorporates an annual evaluation of Committee performance based on the Audit and Risk Committee Charter as stipulated in Section 54(4a) of the Act. This report is to be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for annual presentation to Council in accordance with Section 54(4b) of the Act and should also be made available on the Council's website. Given these requirements, whilst the Chairperson will continue to present this report informally through a Councillor Briefing or other mechanisms, it is considered unnecessary to explicitly state this requirement, given the report must be presented formally to Council.

The reviewed Audit and Risk Committee Charter (including track changes) is attached as **Attachment 1** as well as a clean copy of the updated Charter – **Attachment 2**.

4. Community consultation and engagement

As the Charter relates to the existing Audit and Risk Committee no community consultation and engagement is required.

The preparation for this report and attachments has been informed through consultation with the Audit and Risk Committee, Unit Manager Integrity, Risk and Resilience and Manager Governance and Strategy.

The Audit and Risk Committee received and reviewed the Charter at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 5 September 2023.

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.

Communications

The revised Audit and Risk Committee Charter will be published on Council's website subject to Council's decision and after the Audit and Risk Committee formally receives Council's adopted Audit and Risk Committee Charter at its 28 November 2023 meeting.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There are no financial or resource implications in adopting the proposed Charter.

7. Implementation

Should non-substantive amendments be received from Council, the Audit and Risk Committee will formally receive Council's adopted Audit and Risk Committee Charter at its 28 November 2023 meeting.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Audit and Risk Committee Charter - with tracked changes | D23/520906 |
| 2 | Audit and Risk Committee Charter | D23/520427 |



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The Merri-bek City Council has established an Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) in compliance with section 53(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).

1 Purpose

Council is committed to good governance, public transparency and accountability to the Merri-bek community. The Audit and Risk Committee is established to strengthen Council's governance, risk management, financial management and to drive continuous improvement.

The Committee is an advisory committee of the Council established to assist the Council discharge its responsibilities under the [Local Government Act 2020 \(the Act\)](#) to:

- monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with:
 - the overarching governance principles;
 - the Act and the regulations and any Ministerial directions; and
 - other relevant laws and regulations;
- monitor internal controls; monitor Council financial and performance reporting;
- monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls;
- oversee internal [and external](#) audit function;
- oversee external audit functions; and
- monitor related party transactions.

~~Pursuant to section 53(2) of the Act, the Committee is an advisory committee and does not have delegated powers, including executive powers, management functions, or delegated financial responsibility.~~

~~The Committee operates to advise the Council on how to best fulfil its responsibilities and facilitate decision making by providing a forum for improving communication between Council members and senior management, finance, risk and compliance managers, internal and external auditors.~~

The Committee will engage with management in a constructive and professional manner in discharging its responsibilities and formulating its advice to the Council.

~~The Committee operates to advise the Council on how to best fulfil its responsibilities and facilitate decision making by providing a forum for improving communication between the Council members and senior management, finance, risk and compliance managers, internal auditors and external auditors.~~

2 Authority

~~Pursuant to section 53(2) of the Act, the Committee is an advisory committee and does not have delegated powers, including executive powers, management functions, or delegated financial responsibility.~~

The Council authorises the Committee, within its responsibilities, to:

- obtain any information it requires from any official or external party (subject to any legal obligation to protect information);
- discuss any matters with the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) [\(or their](#)

- ~~representative~~, or other external parties (subject to confidentiality considerations);
- request the attendance of any official, including Councillors and Council Officers, at Committee meetings;
- obtain legal or other professional advice at the entity's expense, as considered necessary to meet its responsibilities;
- seek resolution on any disagreements between management and the external auditors on financial reporting; and
- ~~seek resolution of any disagreement between management and the internal auditors on internal audit recommendations.~~

All recommendations of the Committee shall be referred to the Council for approval, other than the:

- Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan;
- Memorandums of Audit Planning (MAP) that do not require the approval of the Council;
and
- Management responses to audit recommendations arising from Internal Audit Reports.

The Committee has the authority to review the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement and provide advice to Council. The Committee can recommend to Council its approval 'in principle', the signing of the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement.

3 Membership

- 3.1** The Committee comprises of seven members (three Councillors and four independent and external members), appointed by Council. In accordance with the Act the Members must:
- include Councillors of the Council (section 53(3a)).
 - consist of a majority of members who are not Councillors of the Council and who collectively have:
 - expertise in financial management and risk (Section 53(3b i));
 - experience in public sector management; (section 53(3b ii));
 - ~~skills and experience in accordance with the Independent Member Skills Matrix (independent members only).~~
 - not be a member of Council staff (Section 53(3c)).
- 3.2** The Council will appoint the Chair of the Committee in accordance with section 53 of the Act:
- must not be a Councillor (section 53(4)); and
 - must not be a member of Council staff (section 53(3c)).
- 3.3** In the absence of the Chair, the Committee will elect a temporary Chair from the remaining independent members present at the meeting.
- ~~**3.4** The Mayor of Council or Chief Executive Officer of Council and other Council Officers may attend committee meetings, and when they elect to do so, will require copies of committee papers.~~

~~3.53.4~~ The Council or Council Officers, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Manager of Information ~~Technology Officer~~, Manager Governance and Strategy or other management representatives may attend meetings as advisers or observers but will not be members of the committee. For example, Directors will be invited to all meetings and Managers will be invited to attend if an audit report central to their area of responsibility is presented.

~~3.63.5~~ The Committee reserves the right to meet at any time without non-members or with invited non-members only.

~~3.73.6~~ A representative(s) of the VAGO will be invited to attend meetings of the committee, to present reports and observe, as an observer. Such a~~The~~ representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (Section 125) and conflict of interest (Part 6, Division 2) as outlined within this Charter and the Act.

~~3.83.7~~ A representative(s) of the appointed internal audit contractor will be invited to attend meetings of the committee, to present internal audit reports as an observer. Such a~~The~~ representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (Section 125) and conflict of interest (Part 6, Division 2) as outlined within the Act.

~~Membership of the committee will be reviewed periodically (but at least every three years) by the Council with the aim of ensuring an appropriate balance between continuity of membership, the contribution of fresh perspectives and a suitable mix of qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience.~~

~~3.8~~ Councillor members will be appointed for a one-year term of ~~office.~~

~~3.9~~ The initial appointment of ~~external independent~~ Committee members shall be for a three-year period. An independent member may serve no more than two full terms in any one position before the position must be publicly advertised. This does not preclude existing members from being re-appointed through a competitive process.

~~3.10~~ The Committee will adopt and maintain a program of induction, training, and awareness- raising for its members, with the objective of enabling the Committee to keep abreast of contemporary developments and leading practices in relation to its functions.

~~Pursuant to section 53(6) of the Act, the Council will pay a fee to independent committee members. This fee is based on a per meeting fee will be based on a per annum fee, determined by the CEO, which will be indexed in alignment with the rate cap % each 1 July. P~~

~~Payment will be made each quarter following receipt of a Tax Invoice after each meeting following receipt of a Tax Invoice.:~~

~~To provide the Council with the information required to review fees, each Council term. No less than once every Council term, the fee paid to Independent Members will be benchmarked with five other peer Councils against no less than five other peer Councils to provide the Council with the information required to fully review fees.~~

4 Functions and Responsibilities

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act, the functions and responsibilities of the Committee include:

4.1 Monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with the overarching governance principles and the ~~Local Government Act 2020~~, and the regulations and any ministerial directions. (Section 54(2a)).

~~4.1.1 Monitor Council processes for compliance of Council policies and procedures. (Section 54(2))~~

~~4.1.24.1.1~~ Assess the Council's procurement framework with a focus on the probity and transparency of policies and procedures/processes.

~~4.1.34.1.2~~ Assess the Council's policy framework and procedures to ensure the embedding of the governance principles.

~~4.1.44.1.3~~ Monitor the implementation of a three-year financial management improvement plan as a minimum. The progress against this plan will be reported to the Committee at each meeting. This plan is intended to provide assurance of longer term planning to strengthen financial management policies and procedures aligned to implementation of financial management principles.

~~4.1.54.1.4~~ On an annual frequency review the CEO Employment Matters Policy and Terms of Reference for the CEO Employment Matters Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with the Act.

~~4.1.64.1.5~~ Monitor work by the council to mitigate and plan for climate change risk.

4.2 Monitor internal controls.

4.2.1 Review the effectiveness of the Council's internal control system with management and the internal and external auditors.

4.2.2 Assess whether management has controls in place for unusual types of transactions and/or any potential transactions that might carry more than an acceptable degree of risk.

4.2.3 Should the need arise, meet periodically with key management, internal and external auditors, and compliance staff, to understand and discuss any changes in the Council's control environment.

4.3 Monitor the Council's commercial interests, especially where these have been established under section 193 of the Local Government Act 1989 or sections 110-111 of the Local Government Act 2020. Monitor compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

4.3.1 Monitor Council's processes regarding compliance with legislation and regulations.

4.3.2 Stay informed about how management is monitoring the effectiveness of its compliance and ethics program and making recommendations for change as necessary.

4.3.3 Review whether the Council has procedures for it to receive, retain and treat complaints, including confidential and anonymous employee complaints under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* and section 1317AA of the *Corporations Act 2001 (Commonwealth)*, dealing with an accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters or other matters likely to affect the Council or its compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

4.3.4 Obtain assurance that adverse trends are identified and review management's actions ~~plans~~ to ~~deal with~~ manage these.

4.3.5 Review management disclosures in financial reports of the effect of significant compliance issues.

4.3.6 Comply with legislative and regulatory requirements imposed on audit committee

members, including not misusing their position (Section 123 of the Act) to gain an advantage for themselves or another or to cause detriment to the Council and disclosing conflicts of interest (Section 125 of the Act).

4.4 Monitor Council financial and performance reporting (Section 54(2b))

- 4.4.1 Receive assurance that Council has appropriate systems and procedures in place for collecting and analysing information and data for the purposes of measuring the performance of individual programs and activities (as identified in the Council Plan).
- 4.4.2 Review the process for the management and governance of the use of data, information and knowledge.
- 4.4.3 Review any changes to Council's accounting policies and procedures and the methods of applying them, with the input of management, external and internal auditors, ensuring that they are in accordance with the stated financial reporting framework.
- 4.4.4 Assess significant estimates and judgements in financial reports by enquiring into the financial reports of the Council.
- 4.4.5 Assess whether a comprehensive process has been established for the purposes of legislative disclosure reporting requirements.
- 4.4.6 Assess information from internal and external auditors that affects the quality of financial reports. For example, actual and potential material audit adjustments, financial report disclosures, non-compliance with legislation and regulations, internal control issues.
- 4.4.7 Seek the external auditor for an independent opinion on the management's:
 - technical compliance with accounting standards
 - proper application of the accounting principlesclarity in financial disclosure practices as used or proposed in the financial report of the Council.
- 4.4.8 Assess internal control systems covering the public release of information.
- 4.4.9 Recommend to the Council whether the financial report including the performance statement should be approved based on the Committee's assessment of them.
- 4.4.10 Review the financial reporting provided to Council and monitor the financial performance and sustainability of Council.

4.5 Monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls (Section 54(2c))

- 4.5.1 Monitor the implementation of a three-year risk management improvement plan as a minimum. The progress against this plan will be reported to the Committee at each meeting.
- 4.5.2 Review and recommend enhancements to Council's policy for the oversight and management of business risks.
- 4.5.3 Review management's overall risk profile, risk management framework and implementation strategy and advise Council of concerns regarding the appropriate

resourcing of the required actions.

4.5.4 Receive regular risk reports, which:

- provide an overview of management of each strategic risk by strategic risk owners; and
- identify key risks, the status and the effectiveness of the risk management systems, to ensure that identified risks are monitored and new risks are identified, mitigated and reported.

4.5.5 Assess Council processes for management's identification and control of material risks, including business, financial and legal compliance risks in accordance with Council's identified tolerance for risk particularly in the following areas:

- potential non-compliance with legislation, regulations and standards and Council's policies
- important accounting judgements or estimates that prove to be wrong
- litigation and claims
- fraud and theft – significant business risks, recognising that responsibility for general or specific risk areas, for example, environmental risk, occupational health and safety, and how they are managed by the Council.

4.5.6 Assess adequacy of Council process to manage insurable risks.

4.5.7 Review whether the Council has a current and active Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan which are tested periodically.

4.5.8 Ascertain whether fraud risks have been:

- identified, analysed, evaluated, have an appropriate treatment plan which has been implemented, communicated, monitored and there is regular reporting and ongoing management of fraud risks

4.5.9 Receive summary reports from management on all suspected and actual frauds, thefts and material breaches of legislation, ensuring reporting to the Council and/or relevant authorities.

4.5.10 Monitor the Council's fraud prevention and detection framework, including any action taken with respect to actual and suspected instances of fraud.

4.5.11 Monitor management's efforts to create and maintain a strong internal control environment, including the design and implementation of anti-fraud strategies and programs, attendance conduct of fraud awareness seminars and/or completion of training courses to increase staff awareness of activities that amount to fraud.

4.6 **Oversee internal audit function (Section 54(2d))**

~~4.6.1—Discuss with Council the appropriate method for the provision of the internal audit function, which in the case where this is outsourced, would include the sign-off of the evaluation criteria, the appointment, the monitoring and assessment of effectiveness and termination of the contractor. The tender specification will require the internal auditors engaged to be appropriately qualified and continue professional development.~~

~~4.6.2—Monitor the implementation of a three-year internal audit improvement plan as a minimum. The progress against this plan will be reported to the Committee at each meeting.~~

~~4.6.34.6.1~~ Review the allocation of internal audit resources through the Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan, against Council's Audit Universe, 3-year Audit Plan, Assurance Map and Council's strategic risks.

~~4.6.44.6.2~~ Assess if there has been any obstruction to the work ~~reported through to the audit committee completed by the internal auditor.~~

~~4.6.54.6.3~~ Review and approve the memorandum of planning (MAP) for each internal audit to ensure that the audit objectives and scope are fit for purpose.

~~4.6.64.6.4~~ Provide the opportunity for audit committee members to meet with the internal auditors without management being present.

~~4.6.74.6.5~~ Review the reporting on completed internal audits, seeking clarification through critical analysis to assure the Committee that management is responding adequately to the findings and ~~that~~ key risks are mitigated.

~~4.6.84.6.6~~ Monitor the progress of the strategic annual internal audit plan and work ~~plan~~ ~~rogram~~ and consider the implications of internal audit findings for the control and operating environment.

~~4.6.94.6.7~~ Monitor the implementation of internal audit's findings and recommendations.

~~4.6.104.6.8~~ Require Internal Audit contractor ~~or the Audit and Quality Assurance Administrator~~ to conduct periodic ~~testing reviews of to confirm~~ whether audit actions reported as completed by management have been effectively implemented.

4.7 **Oversee external audit function (Section 54(2d))**

~~4.7.1~~—At the appropriate meeting, ask the external auditor to outline the external audit plan including proposed audit strategies and how they ~~might~~ relate to identified risk areas; discuss audit results; consider the implications of the external audit findings for the control environment.

~~4.7.24.7.1~~ Ask the external auditor if there have been any significant resolved or unresolved disagreements with management.

~~4.7.34.7.2~~ Monitor and critique management's response to the external auditor's findings and recommendations.

~~4.7.44.7.3~~ Sight all representation letters signed by management and consider the completeness and appropriateness of the information provided.

~~4.7.54.7.4~~ Provide the opportunity for committee members to meet with the external auditor as the need arises without management being present.

~~4.7.64.7.5~~ Maintain an awareness of local government performance audits undertaken by the VAGO ~~(through the VAGO Status report)~~ and ensure recommendations are brought to the attention of the Council for action/implementation where appropriate.

4.8 **Related-party transactions**

Review the processes for the identification, nature, extent and reasonableness of related-party transactions.

5 **Engagement with the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO)**

The committee will engage with the VAGO ~~(or their representative)~~, as the entity's external auditor, in relation to the VAGO's financial statement and performance audit coverage. In particular, the

committee will:

- Invite a representative from the VAGO to attend Committee meetings and encourage a positive working relationship;
- Provide feedback to the VAGO on draft strategies, reports and opportunities for improvements; and
- Provide advice to management on action to be taken on significant issues raised in relevant VAGO reports or better practice guides.

~~The Committee is an advisory committee and does not have any delegated powers, including executive powers, management functions, or delegated financial responsibility. All recommendations of the Committee shall be referred to the Council for approval, other than the:~~

- ~~• Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan;~~
- ~~• Memorandums of Audit Planning (MAP) that do not require the approval of the Council; and~~
- ~~• Management responses to audit recommendations arising from Internal Audit Reports.~~

~~The Committee has the authority to review the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement and provide advice to the Council. The Committee can recommend to Council its approval 'in principle', the signing of the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement.~~

6 Evaluating Performance

The Committee will undertake an annual assessment of its performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with section 54(4a) of the Act. This assessment will be reported in accordance with the reporting requirements outlined in section 8 of the Charter.

~~Every two years, Management will assist the Committee to complete and Audit and Risk Committee Performance evaluation through a survey, initiate a self-assessment of the performance of the Committee at least every two years. The survey review will invite input from the Council, each Committee member, senior management, internal audit, the VAGO (or representative), and any other relevant stakeholders. The results of the performance evaluation self-assessment will be reported through the Annual Committee Performance Report. The Chair, in conjunction with management, will undertake formal reviews of performance and independence of independent audit committee members before reappointing them for additional terms.~~

7 Reporting

The Committee will prepare an Annual Committee Performance Report that includes an annual assessment of Committee performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with Section 54(4a) of the Act. This report will be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for presentation to Council annually in accordance with Section 54(4b) of the Act. This report will be published on the Council's website.

~~The Chair of the Committee, or a representative on behalf of the Committee, will present the~~

~~Annual Committee Performance Report to a Councillor Briefing prior to the report being presented to Council.~~

The Committee will prepare a biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee and includes the Committee findings and recommendations in accordance with section 54(5a) of the Act, along with the agreed actions. This report will be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for reporting to Council biannually.

In alignment ~~with the Meeting Procedure Local Law (to be replaced by the Governance Rules 2023 by 30 September 2020)~~, Public Transparency principles and Governance principles in the Act, summary minutes from each Committee meeting are to be presented to Council through the Governance ~~Report - Cyclical report, report after each Committee meeting~~ summarising progress, matters discussed and any issues the Committee wishes to share with all Councillors. ~~This requirement is common to all Advisory Committees.~~

~~The Chair of the Committee, or a representative on behalf of the Committee, will present the Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan to a Councillor Briefing prior to commencement of the financial year.~~

Internal audit reports and external audit reports shall not be made public.

Pursuant to section 54(6b) of the Act, the Chief Executive Officer is required to table reports upon request by the ~~C~~chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

8 Administrative Arrangements

8.1 Meetings

The committee will meet at least four times per year. One or more special meetings may be held to review the Council's annual financial statements and performance statement, or to meet other responsibilities of the committee.

All committee members are expected to attend each meeting, in person or via tele-or-video conference. Failure to attend a meeting will result in non-payment of members fees for the associated meeting.

The Chair is required to call a meeting if asked to do so by the Council and decide if a meeting is required if requested by another member, internal audit or the VAGO.

8.2 Planning

~~8.1.1~~ The Committee will develop a forward meeting schedule that includes the dates and location ~~for each meeting for the forthcoming year.~~

~~8.1.2~~ In accordance with section 54(3) of the Act the Committee will develop an annual work program that includes the timing of reporting for all of the responsibilities outlined in this charter.

8.3 Quorum

A quorum will consist of ~~a majority of committee members, with a minimum of two 2~~ independent ~~members~~ and ~~one 1~~ Councillor. The quorum must be in attendance at all times during the meeting.

8.4 Secretariat

In accordance with section 54(6a) of the Act, the CEO will appoint a Council Officer to provide – secretariat support to the Committee. The secretariat will:

- ensure the agenda for each meeting is approved by the Chief Executive Officer ~~of Council~~ and Committee Chair;
- the agenda and supporting papers are circulated, at least ~~ten days one week before prior to the~~ meeting; ~~and~~
- ~~ensure the minutes of the meetings are prepared and maintained. Minutes to include relevant elements of the Committee's discussion.~~
- ~~_____~~ Minutes must be reviewed by the Director Business Transformation and Committee _____ Chair and ~~circulated within three wo~~ weeks of the meeting to each member and committee _____ observers, as appropriate. ~~Minutes to include relevant elements of the Committee's _____ discussion.~~
-

9 Conflicts of Interest

Committee recommendations must be transparent and accountable, to protect the public interest, maintain the integrity of the Committee and Council and enable the public to be confident that the Committee is performing its duties properly. If a conflict of interest exists, it must be declared and managed. Committee members are required to provide written declarations, through the Chair, to the Council declaring any material personal interests they may have in relation to their responsibilities.

Division 2 of Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 2020* applies to Independent Members, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. An independent member has a *conflict of interest* if they have:

- (a) a general conflict of interest within the meaning of section 127 of the Act
- (b) a material conflict of interest within the meaning of section 128 of the Act.

Members of the Committee will provide declarations in accordance with statutory requirements.

~~External Independent~~ members should consider past employment, consultancy arrangements and related party issues in making these declarations and the Council, in consultation with the Chair, should be satisfied that there are sufficient processes in place to manage any real or perceived conflict.

At the beginning of each committee meeting, members are required to declare any material personal interests that may apply to specific matters on the meeting agenda. Where required by the Chair, the member will be excused from the meeting or from the committee's consideration of the relevant agenda item(s). The Chair is also responsible for deciding if he/she should excuse themselves from the meeting or from the committee's consideration of the relevant agenda item(s).

Details of material personal interests declared by the Chair and other members, and actions taken, will be appropriately recorded in the minutes.

10 Misuse of Position

Section 123 of the *Local Government Act 2019-2020* applies to Independent Members, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. The Independent Member must not intentionally misuse their position –

- (a) to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or for any other person; or

- (b) to cause, or attempt to cause, detriment to the Council or another person.

11 Confidential Information

Section 125 of the Local Government Act 2019-2020 applies to Independent Members, as if the member were a member of a delegated Committee. The requirements include:

- (1) Unless subsection (2) or (3) applies, a person who is, or has been, an Independent Member must not intentionally or recklessly disclose information that the person knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply if the information that is disclosed is information that the Council has determined should be publicly available.
- (3) A person who is, or has been, an Independent Member may disclose information that the person knows, or should reasonably know, is confidential information in the following circumstances—
 - (a) for the purposes of any legal proceedings arising out of this Act;
 - (b) to a court or tribunal in the course of legal proceedings;
 - (c) pursuant to an order of a court or tribunal;
 - (d) in the course of an internal arbitration and for the purposes of the internal arbitration process;
 - (e) in the course of a Councillor Conduct Panel hearing and for the purposes of the hearing;
 - (f) to a Municipal Monitor to the extent reasonably required by the Municipal Monitor;
 - (g) to the Chief Municipal Inspector to the extent reasonably required by the Chief Municipal Inspector;
 - (h) to a Commission of Inquiry to the extent reasonably required by the Commission of Inquiry.
 - (i) to the extent reasonably required by a law enforcement agency.

12 Recruitment

A position description for independent members is established and maintained for each of the four independent member positions. The position description includes a [committee skills matrix skills assessment](#) that identifies the blend of skills and experience required for the role.

[Independent members will be recruited via a job recruitment website and appointed by Council on the recommendation of a selection panel comprised of the Audit and Risk Committee Chair, Director Business Transformation, Manager Governance and Strategy and Audit and Risk Committee.](#)

[Where an independent member resigns mid-term, a new independent member will be recruited and appointed for a three-year term.](#)

13 Induction

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their committee responsibilities.

14 Review of the Committee Charter

The Committee charter will be reviewed every 2 years.

Any substantive changes to the charter will be recommended by the Committee and must be formally approved by the Council.

~~John Watson, Chairperson~~

~~Marilyn Kearney, Independent Member~~

~~Jeff Rigby, Independent Member~~

~~Lisa Tripodi, Independent Member~~

~~Mayor Cr Angelica Panopolous-
Councillor Member~~

~~Cr Mark Riley, Councillor Member~~

~~Cr Adam Pulford
Councillor Member~~



Audit and Risk Committee Charter



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The Merri-bek City Council has established an Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) in compliance with section 53(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act).

1 Purpose

Council is committed to good governance, public transparency and accountability to the Merri-bek community. The Audit and Risk Committee is established to strengthen Council's governance, risk management, financial management and to drive continuous improvement.

The Committee is an advisory committee of the Council established to assist the Council discharge its responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) to:

- monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with:
 - the overarching governance principles;
 - the Act and the regulations and any Ministerial directions; and
 - other relevant laws and regulations;
- monitor internal controls; monitor Council financial and performance reporting;
- monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls;
- oversee internal and external audit function;
- oversee external audit functions; and
- monitor related party transactions.

The Committee operates to advise the Council on how to best fulfil its responsibilities and facilitate decision making by providing a forum for improving communication between Council members and senior management, finance, risk and compliance managers, internal and external auditors.

The Committee will engage with management in a constructive and professional manner in discharging its responsibilities and formulating its advice to the Council.

2 Authority

Pursuant to section 53(2) of the Act, the Committee is an advisory committee and does not have delegated powers, including executive powers, management functions, or delegated financial responsibility.

The Council authorises the Committee, within its responsibilities, to:

- obtain any information it requires from any official or external party (subject to any legal obligation to protect information);
- discuss any matters with the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) (or their representative), or other external parties (subject to confidentiality considerations);
- request the attendance of any official, including Councillors and Council Officers, at Committee meetings;
- obtain legal or other professional advice at the entity's expense, as considered necessary to meet its responsibilities;
- seek resolution on any disagreements between management and the external auditors on

financial reporting; and

- seek resolution of any disagreement between management and the internal auditors on internal audit recommendations.

All recommendations of the Committee shall be referred to the Council for approval, other than the:

- Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan;
- Memorandums of Audit Planning (MAP) that do not require the approval of the Council; and
- Management responses to audit recommendations arising from Internal Audit Reports.

The Committee has the authority to review the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement and provide advice to Council. The Committee can recommend to Council its approval 'in principle', the signing of the Annual Financial Statements and Performance Statement.

3 Membership

- 3.1** The Committee comprises of seven members (three Councillors and four independent and external members), appointed by Council. In accordance with the Act the Members must:
- include Councillors of the Council (section 53(3a)).
 - consist of a majority of members who are not Councillors of the Council and who collectively have:
 - expertise in financial management and risk (Section 53(3b i));
 - experience in public sector management; (section 53(3b ii));
 - not be a member of Council staff (Section 53(3c)).
- 3.2** The Council will appoint the Chair of the Committee in accordance with section 53 of the Act:
- must not be a Councillor (section 53(4)); and
 - must not be a member of Council staff (section 53(3c)).
- 3.3** In the absence of the Chair, the Committee will elect a temporary Chair from the remaining independent members present at the meeting.
- 3.4** The Council or Council Officers, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Manager of Information Technology, Manager Governance and Strategy or other management representatives may attend meetings as advisers or observers but will not be members of the committee. For example, Directors will be invited to all meetings and Managers will be invited to attend if an audit report central to their area of responsibility is presented.
- 3.5** The Committee reserves the right to meet at any time without non-members or with invited non-members only.
- 3.6** A representative(s) of the VAGO will be invited to attend meetings of the committee, to present reports and observe. The representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (Section 125) and conflict of interest (Part 6, Division 2) as outlined within this Charter and the Act.

- 3.7 A representative(s) of the appointed internal audit contractor will be invited to attend meetings of the committee, to present internal audit reports. The representative will be required to act in accordance with the governance principles in addition to the obligations of confidentiality (Section 125) and conflict of interest (Part 6, Division 2) as outlined within the Act.
- 3.8 Councillor members will be appointed for a one-year term of office.
- 3.9 The initial appointment of independent Committee members shall be for a three-year period. An independent member may serve no more than two full terms in any one position before the position must be publicly advertised. This does not preclude existing members from being re-appointed through a competitive process.
- 3.10 The Committee will adopt and maintain a program of induction, training, and awareness- raising for its members, with the objective of enabling the Committee to keep abreast of contemporary developments and leading practices in relation to its functions.

Pursuant to section 53(6) of the Act, the Council will pay a fee to independent committee members. This fee is based on a per meeting fee, determined by the CEO, which will be indexed in alignment with the rate cap % each 1 July. Payment will be made after each meeting following receipt of a Tax Invoice.

To provide the Council with the information required to review fees, each Council term the fee paid to Independent Members will be benchmarked with five other peer Councils.

4 Functions and Responsibilities

In accordance with section 54(2) of the Act, the functions and responsibilities of the Committee ~~include~~

- 4.1 **Monitor the compliance of Council policies and procedures with the overarching governance principles and the Act, regulations, and any ministerial directions (Section 54(2a)).**
- 4.1.1 Assess the Council's procurement framework with a focus on the probity and transparency of ~~proc~~ and procedures/processes.
- 4.1.2 Assess the Council's policy framework and procedures to ensure the embedding of the governance principles.
- 4.1.3 Monitor the implementation of a three-year financial management improvement plan as a minimum. The progress against this plan will be reported to the Committee at each meeting. This plan is intended to provide assurance of longer-term planning to strengthen financial management policies and procedures aligned to implementation of financial management principles.
- 4.1.4 On an annual frequency review the CEO Employment Matters Policy and Terms of Reference for the CEO Employment Matters Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with the Act.
- 4.1.5 Monitor work by the council to mitigate and plan for climate change risk.
- 4.2 **Monitor internal controls.**
- 4.2.1 Review the effectiveness of the Council's internal control system with management and the internal and external auditors.

- 4.2.2 Assess whether management has controls in place for unusual types of transactions and/or any potential transactions that might carry more than an acceptable degree of risk.
- 4.2.3 Should the need arise, meet periodically with key management, internal and external auditors, and compliance staff, to understand and discuss any changes in the Council's control environment.
- 4.3 Monitor the Council's commercial interests, especially where these have been established under section 193 of the Local Government Act 1989 or sections 110-111 of the Local Government Act 2020. Monitor compliance with relevant laws and regulations.**
 - 4.3.1 Monitor Council's processes regarding compliance with legislation and regulations.
 - 4.3.2 Stay informed about how management is monitoring the effectiveness of its compliance and ethics program and making recommendations for change as necessary.
 - 4.3.3 Review whether the Council has procedures for it to receive, retain and treat complaints, including confidential and anonymous employee complaints under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* and section 1317AA of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Commonwealth), dealing with an accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters or other matters likely to affect the Council or its compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.
 - 4.3.4 Obtain assurance that adverse trends are identified and review management's actions to manage these.
 - 4.3.5 Review management disclosures in financial reports of the effect of significant compliance issues.
 - 4.3.6 Comply with legislative and regulatory requirements imposed on audit committee members, including not misusing their position (Section 123 of the Act) to gain an advantage for themselves or another or to cause detriment to the Council and disclosing conflicts of interest (Section 125 of the Act).
- 4.4 Monitor Council financial and performance reporting (Section 54(2b))**
 - 4.4.1 Receive assurance that Council has appropriate systems and procedures in place for collecting and analysing information and data for the purposes of measuring the performance of individual programs and activities (as identified in the Council Plan).
 - 4.4.2 Review the process for the management and governance of the use of data, information and knowledge.
 - 4.4.3 Review any changes to Council's accounting policies and procedures and the methods of applying them, with the input of management, external and internal auditors, ensuring that they are in accordance with the stated financial reporting framework.
 - 4.4.4 Assess significant estimates and judgements in financial reports by enquiring into the financial reports of the Council.
 - 4.4.5 Assess whether a comprehensive process has been established for the purposes of legislative disclosure reporting requirements.
 - 4.4.6 Assess information from internal and external auditors that affects the quality of financial reports. For example, actual and potential material audit adjustments, financial report disclosures, non-compliance with legislation and regulations, internal control issues.

- 4.4.7 Seek the external auditor for an independent opinion on the management's:
- technical compliance with accounting standards
 - proper application of the accounting principles
- clarity in financial disclosure practices as used or proposed in the financial report of the Council.
- 4.4.8 Assess internal control systems covering the public release of information.
- 4.4.9 Recommend to the Council whether the financial report including the performance statement should be approved based on the Committee's assessment of them.
- 4.4.10 Review the financial reporting provided to Council and monitor the financial performance and sustainability of Council.
- 4.5 Monitor and provide advice on risk management and fraud prevention systems and controls (Section 54(2c))**
- 4.5.1 Monitor the implementation of a three-year risk management improvement plan as a minimum. The progress against this plan will be reported to the Committee at each meeting.
- 4.5.2 Review and recommend enhancements to Council's policy for the oversight and management of business risks.
- 4.5.3 Review management's overall risk profile, risk management framework and implementation strategy and advise Council of concerns regarding the appropriate resourcing of the required actions.
- 4.5.4 Receive regular risk reports, which:
- provide an overview of management of each strategic risk by strategic risk owners; and
 - identify key risks, the status and the effectiveness of the risk management systems, to ensure that identified risks are monitored and new risks are identified, mitigated and reported.
- 4.5.5 Assess Council processes for management's identification and control of material risks, including business, financial and legal compliance risks in accordance with Council's identified tolerance for risk particularly in the following areas:
- potential non-compliance with legislation, regulations and standards and Council's policies
 - important accounting judgements or estimates that prove to be wrong
 - litigation and claims
 - fraud and theft – significant business risks, recognising that responsibility for general or specific risk areas, for example, environmental risk, occupational health and safety, and how they are managed by the Council.
- 4.5.6 Assess adequacy of Council process to manage insurable risks.
- 4.5.7 Review whether the Council has a current and active Business Continuity Plan and Disaster Recovery Plan which are tested periodically.
- 4.5.8 Ascertain whether fraud risks have been:

- identified, analysed, evaluated, have an appropriate treatment plan which has been implemented, communicated, monitored and there is regular reporting and ongoing management of fraud risks
- 4.5.9 Receive summary reports from management on all suspected and actual frauds, thefts and material breaches of legislation, ensuring reporting to the Council and/or relevant authorities.
- 4.5.10 Monitor the Council's fraud prevention and detection framework, including any action taken with respect to actual and suspected instances of fraud.
- 4.5.11 Monitor management's efforts to create and maintain a strong internal control environment, including the design and implementation of anti-fraud strategies and programs, attendance of fraud awareness seminars and/or completion of training courses to increase staff awareness fraud.

4.6 Oversee internal audit function (Section 54(2d))

- 4.6.1 Review the allocation of internal audit resources through the Strategic Annual Internal Audit Plan, against Council's Audit Universe, 3-year Audit Plan, Assurance Map and Council's strategic risks.
- 4.6.2 Assess if there has been any obstruction to the work completed by the internal auditor.
- 4.6.3 Review and approve the memorandum of planning (MAP) for each internal audit to ensure that the audit objectives and scope are fit for purpose.
- 4.6.4 Provide the opportunity for audit committee members to meet with the internal auditors without management being present.
- 4.6.5 Review the reporting on completed internal audits, seeking clarification through critical analysis to assure the Committee that management is responding adequately to the findings and that key risks are mitigated.
- 4.6.6 Monitor the progress of the strategic annual internal audit plan and work plan and consider the implications of internal audit findings for the control and operating environment.
- 4.6.7 Monitor the implementation of internal audit's findings and recommendations.
- 4.6.8 Require Internal Audit contractor to conduct periodic reviews to confirm whether audit actions reported as completed by management have been effectively implemented.

4.7 Oversee external audit function (Section 54(2d))

- 4.7.1 At the appropriate meeting, ask the external auditor to outline the external audit plan including proposed audit strategies and how they relate to identified risk areas; discuss audit results; consider the implications of the external audit findings for the control environment. Ask the external auditor if there have been any significant resolved or unresolved disagreements with management.
- 4.7.2 Monitor and critique management's response to the external auditor's findings and recommendations.
- 4.7.3 Sight all representation letters signed by management and consider the completeness and appropriateness of the information provided.
- 4.7.4 Provide the opportunity for committee members to meet with the external auditor as the need arises without management being present.

4.7.5 Maintain an awareness of local government performance audits undertaken by the VAGO (through the VAGO Status report) and ensure recommendations are brought to the attention of the Council for action/implementation where appropriate.

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Review the processes for the identification, nature, extent and reasonableness of related-party transactions.

5 Engagement with the Victorian Auditor-General's Office

The committee will engage with the VAGO (or their representative), as the entity's external auditor, in relation to the VAGO's financial statement and performance audit coverage. In particular, the committee will:

- Invite a representative from the VAGO to attend Committee meetings and encourage a positive working relationship;
- Provide feedback to the VAGO on draft strategies, reports and opportunities for improvements; and
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6 Evaluating Performance

The Committee will undertake an annual assessment of its performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with section 54(4a) of the Act. This assessment will be reported in accordance with the reporting requirements outlined in section 8 of the Charter.

Every two years, Management will assist the Committee to complete an Audit and Risk Committee Performance evaluation through a survey. The survey will invite input from each Committee member, senior management, internal audit, the VAGO (or representative), and any other stakeholders. The results of the performance evaluation will be reported through the Annual Committee Performance Report. The Chair, in conjunction with management, will undertake formal reviews of performance and independence of independent audit committee members before reappointing them for additional terms.

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The Committee will prepare an Annual Committee Performance Report that includes an annual assessment of Committee performance against the Audit and Risk Committee Charter in accordance with Section 54(4a) of the Act. This report will be provided to the Chief Executive Officer for presentation to Council annually in accordance with Section 54(4b) of the Act. This report will be published on Council's website.

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8.1.1 The Committee will develop a forward meeting schedule that includes the dates and location for each meeting for the forthcoming year.

8.1.2 In accordance with section 54(3) of the Act the Committee will develop an annual work program that includes the timing of reporting for all of the responsibilities outlined in this charter.

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A quorum will consist of two independent members and one Councillor. The quorum must be in attendance at all times during the meeting.

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In accordance with section 54(6a) of the Act, the CEO will appoint a Council Officer to provide secretariat support to the Committee. The secretariat will:

- ensure the agenda for each meeting is approved by the Chief Executive Officer and Committee Chair;
- the agenda and supporting papers are circulated at least ten days prior to the meeting;
- Minutes must be reviewed by the Director Business Transformation and Committee Chair and circulated within three weeks of the meeting to each member and committee observers, as appropriate. Minutes to include relevant elements of the Committee's discussion.

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- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply if the information that is disclosed is information that the Council has determined should be publicly available.
- (3) A person who is, or has been, an Independent Member may disclose information that the person knows or should reasonably know, is confidential information in the following circumstances—
 - (a) for the purposes of any legal proceedings arising out of this Act;
 - (b) to a court or tribunal in the course of legal proceedings;
 - (c) pursuant to an order of a court or tribunal;
 - (d) in the course of an internal arbitration and for the purposes of the internal arbitration process;
 - (e) in the course of a Councillor Conduct Panel hearing and for the purposes of the hearing;
 - (f) to a Municipal Monitor to the extent reasonably required by the Municipal Monitor;

- (g) to the Chief Municipal Inspector to the extent reasonably required by the Chief Municipal Inspector;
- (h) to a Commission of Inquiry to the extent reasonably required by the Commission of Inquiry.
- (i) to the extent reasonably required by a law enforcement agency.

12 Recruitment

A position description for independent members is established and maintained for each of the four independent member positions. The position description includes a committee skills matrix that identifies the blend of skills and experience required for the role.

Independent members will be recruited via a job recruitment website and appointed by Council on the recommendation of a selection panel comprised of the Audit and Risk Committee Chair, Director Business Transformation, Manager Governance and Strategy and Audit and Risk Committee.

Where an independent member resigns mid-term, a new independent member will be recruited and appointed for a three-year term.

13 Induction

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their committee responsibilities.

14 Review of the Committee Charter

The Committee charter will be reviewed every 2 years.

Any substantive changes to the charter will be recommended by the Committee and must be formally approved by the Council.

7.21 GOVERNANCE REPORT - NOVEMBER 2023 - CYCLICAL REPORT

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report:
 - a) Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023.
 - b) Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes the response to a question taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 12 July meeting Council meeting, at Attachment 3 to this report.
4. Notes the Merri-bek City Council Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Report 2022-23, at Attachment 4 to this report.
5. Approves Merri-bek City Council – Friends of Aileu being registered as a fundraiser with Consumer Affairs Victoria in accordance with the Fundraising Act 1998, with respect to the East Timor Partnership Project.
6. Notes the requirements and arrangements for the registration of Merri-bek City Council – Friends of Aileu as a fundraiser:
 - a) The Project Officer, East Timor will be nominated as the appeal manager.
 - b) The CEO, Director Community, Manager Community Health and Wellbeing and Unit Manager Aquatics and Leisure and Community Venues are deemed as associates and will be requested to complete a Criminal Record and Insolvency Declaration.
 - c) All members of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, including Merri-bek and Hume City Council Councillor representatives, community members and partner organisation representatives are deemed as associates and will be requested to complete a Criminal Record and Insolvency Declaration.
 - d) The Project Officer East Timor will complete the on-line registration, including obtaining and lodging:
 - i. The Beneficiary consent forms required to be completed by or on behalf of all beneficiaries of the fundraising.
 - ii. The Criminal record and insolvency declaration required to be completed by the appeal manager and all associates.
 - e) The Project Officer East Timor will be required to lodge to Consumer Affairs:
 - i. An annual financial return.
 - ii. A Fundraiser Change of Details form, annually or as required, for instance when the appeal manager or any associate changes.
 - iii. A fundraiser renewal every 3 years.
7. Sets the dates and times for Council meetings in 2024 as provided in Attachment 5 to this report, and designates those meetings indicated for consideration of Planning and Related Matters in accordance with the Governance Rules.

8. Sets the date and time for the election of the Mayor for 2024/25 as Wednesday, 20 November 2024, at 7 pm.
9. Appends the schedule of 2024 Council meetings to the minutes, publishes it on the Council website and makes it available at Customer Service Centres.
10. Approves the revocation of the Community Facilities and Directional Signage Policy and the Landscape Guidelines and Technical Notes for Various Developments Policy.
11. In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020*:
 - a) Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 6 of this report, as set out in the instrument.
 - b) Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instruments and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.
 - c) Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.

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 the following items:

- A summary of the minutes of the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meetings held 12 September and 24 October 2023.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Response to a Public Question Time item taken on notice at 12 July 2023 Council meeting, with a recommendation that Council notes the response.
- Merri-bek City Council Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Report 2022-23.
- Registration of Merri-bek City Council Friends of Aileu as a fundraiser.
- Adoption of the Council Meeting Dates for 2024.
- Revocation of the Community Facilities and Directional Signage Policy and the Landscape Guidelines and Technical Notes for Various Developments Policy.
- A recommendation that Council appoints and authorises the Council officers referred to in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*).

Previous Council Decisions

Governance Cyclical Report – Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*) – 13 September 2023

That Council:

...

6. *In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020*:*
 - a) *Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 of this report, as set out in the instrument.*

- b) *Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instruments and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.*
- c) *Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.*

Governance Cyclical Report - Minutes Friends of Aileu Community Committee meeting 7 July 2020 – 12 August 2020

That Council:

1. *Notes the reports from Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report and in accordance with the recommendation of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, endorses the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2020.*

...

Governance Cyclical Report - Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2019 and Draft Friendship Agreement 2020 – 10 June 2020

That Council:

...

6. *Notes the achievements outlined in the:*

...

- c) *Friends of Aileu Summary Annual Report 2019, at Attachment 8 to this report.*
7. *Endorses the draft Friendship Agreement 2020 between the Municipality of Aileu, Timor-Leste, Hume City Council and Moreland City Council, at Attachment 9 to this report, as the basis for continuing the friendship relationship with the Municipality of Aileu, to be signed on a date to be confirmed.*

...

1. Policy Context

Reports from Advisory Committees to Council provided in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

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.

Council's Governance Rules contains provisions which enable the Chairperson to take a question On Notice, with a considered written response being provided to the questioner, in circumstances including where the question requires information that is either not available or accessible at the time of that meeting, or where the time allowed for Public Question Time has elapsed.

The Audit and Risk Committee's Charter requires that a biannual report of recommendations and findings must be presented to Council.

Fundraising in the name of the Friends of Aileu, and the disbursement of these funds, is conducted in support of the Friendship Agreement 2020 between Moreland and Hume City Councils and the municipality of Aileu, Timor-Leste, and is consistent with the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2020.

Council's Governance Rules contain provisions which require Council to fix the date, time and place of all Council meetings for the following calendar year, including meetings designated for Planning and Related Matters.

Council's Governance Rules also contain an Election Period Policy which outlines the requirements and limitations for the making of Council decisions in the 32 days prior to a Council election.

Section 26(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that a Mayor is to be elected no later than one month after the date of a general election.

Council-approved policies are reviewed every 10 years or earlier if there is a need for an early review or an earlier review is required by the policy.

Two policies approved by Council historically are now considered not to be required as Strategic Policies.

Authorisation of planning officers under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 is done in accordance with said Act.

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 auspice of Council, items relating to the delegation of Council powers and duties, and policy and strategy reporting.

Council periodically reviews policies to ensure they continue to meet Council needs. The Community facilities and directional signage policy and the Landscape Guidelines and Technical Notes for Various Developments Policy have been reviewed and they are no longer required to be Strategic Policies, as they are operational in nature and provide technical guidance to officers making recommendations and decisions.

3. Issues

Advisory Committee minutes

A summary of the minutes of the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meetings held 12 September and 24 October 2023 is provided at **Attachment 1** for Council's information.

The minutes of both meetings do not contain any recommendations from the Committee to Council.

Records of Meetings held under the auspice 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 interests 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 October Council Meeting are presented at **Attachment 2** as follows:

- Councillor Briefing – 16 October 2023
- Councillor and Planning Briefing – 23 October 2023.

On Notice response – 12 July 2023 Council meeting

At Council Meetings, questions and/or statements are taken On Notice during Public Question Time, where persons submitting questions are not in attendance or where the maximum allowable time for public questions has elapsed.

Questions taken On Notice are provided with a written response following the meeting for which they are submitted and reported to Council at the next practicable meeting. The questions are recorded in the meeting minutes. Statements taken On Notice are provided to Councillors for information, with an abbreviated/summarised version recorded in the meeting's minutes.

The on notice response at **Attachment 3** to this report relates to a question from 12 July Council meeting regarding the Draft Budget 2023-27 consultation.

Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Report

The Audit and Risk Committee is required to report the recommendations it has made to Council biannually.

At the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee on 5 September 2023, the Recommendations and Findings Report was endorsed by the Committee for presentation to Council. The report lists the recommendations to Council and findings for all reports presented to the Audit and Risk Committee throughout 2022-23 and has been prepared for reporting to Council at **Attachment 4**.

Registration of Merri-bek City Council Friends of Aileu as a fundraiser

Under the Fundraising Act 1998, any person or organisation who undertakes any fundraising in Victoria should register as a fundraiser with Consumer Affairs Victoria unless exempted under provisions of the Act.

Under the Act, municipal councils are not exempt organisations, at least some of the activities undertaken to raise funds in the name of the Friends of Aileu are not exempt activities, and funds raised in the name of the Friends of Aileu often exceed the limit of \$20,000 per annum provided for in the fundraiser registration guidelines published on the Consumer Affairs Victoria website, a change from the \$10,000 that was provided for in the Fundraising Act 1998.

The East Timor Partnership Project is a joint activity of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, that includes fundraising and disbursement of funds in support of the Friendship Agreement 2020 between the two Councils and the Municipality of Aileu that is consistent with the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2020.

Funds raised in the name of the Friends of Aileu are:

- a) Raised with input from the Friends of Aileu Community Committee (a joint Working Group of the two Councils) and with direct participation by members of the Community Committee and other supporters of the Friends of Aileu.
- b) Deposited in Merri-bek City Council's bank account.
- c) Disbursed to beneficiaries following Merri-bek City Council financial policy, systems and processes and relevant officer delegations, with input from the Friends of Aileu Community Committee.

Adoption of Council Meeting Dates 2024

The proposed Council Meeting Schedule (Schedule) for the period January to December 2024 provided as **Attachment 5** to this report, has been drafted to enable Council to effectively carry out its decision-making functions for the year.

The Schedule includes the times and dates for Council meetings and Council meetings designated for consideration of Planning and Related Matters.

Council meetings are generally held on a Wednesday evening in the Council Chamber at the Merri-bek Civic Centre.

Council currently conducts two scheduled Council meetings per month (with the exception of January), with a Council meeting occurring in the second week of the month and a Planning and Related Matters meeting occurring in the fourth week of the month. The proposed Council meeting dates for the 2024 year, mirrors the previous schedule for the most part.

However, due to the conduct of the general Council elections on 26 October 2024, only Council meetings to be held in the month of November 2024, will be for the swearing in of the newly elected Councillors and the election of the Mayor.

As the election of the Mayor must be held no later than one month after the date of a general election, it is proposed that this meeting be held on Wednesday 20 November 2024.

All Council meetings being conducted between 24 September 2024 and 26 October 2024, must be conducted in accordance with the requirements and limitations specified the Election Period Policy contained in Council's Governance Rules.

Strategic Policies to be revoked

There are two historic Policies that were approved by Council, but which have been identified as no longer being required in this form.

In one case, the Policy plays a technical advice role aligned with the Technical Notes (Technotes) that are published on Council's website. In the other case, the legal standing of the document is superseded due to changes in external context and other ways of achieving the same outcome.

It is therefore recommended that these two policies be revoked, noting that the equivalent information and guidance in these areas will still be provided publicly through Council's Technotes.

The two policies are:

- Community Facility and Directional Signage
- Landscape Guidelines and Technical Notes for Various Developments

It is proposed to revoke both policies (which can be found on the Merri-bek website), for the reasons outlined below.

Community Facility and Directional Signage – proposed revocation

This policy was first prepared in 2009 and has not been updated since. Although the policy lists 2026 as the year for update, it is usual practice to review policies at least every 10 years and so a review is overdue.

This policy was created to address businesses and schools wanting directional signs years ago when VicRoads direction was not very clear. This hasn't been an issue for more than five years.

Should a request for signage come in, having the same information in a Technical Note is an appropriate way of addressing incoming requests for signage, to ensure this is only provided when there is a genuine need.

Council's approach is governed by both the Australian Standard AS1742.5 and the Traffic Engineering Manual Volume 2, and these provide good guidance.

The document will be updated to ensure contemporary references to the above documents and posted on Council's website along with other Technotes on Street and Park Furniture.

Landscape Guidelines and Technical Notes for Various Developments – proposed revocation

The Landscape Guidelines and Technical Notes for Various Developments were first adopted by Council in 1998, and have not been updated since. A review was scheduled for 2003 and has not occurred.

The scope of the policy was cited as:

“This document applies to all developments which require a landscape plan to be submitted as part of a planning application. These include applications for multi-unit developments, commercial and industrial sites where landscaping is required as part of the planning approval. The guidelines will also be used more generally to encourage a strong and distinct Moreland landscape across private and public land-holdings.”

Today, these objectives are achieved through other means, and as a result, the policy is not required to be a stand-alone policy.

For example, in 2020, Council explored the use of landscape bonds to protect trees jeopardised by developments, and resolved:

That Council:

1. Notes the work undertaken to investigate the use of landscape bonds for the protection of trees on private land and the conclusion this is not a suitable tool in these circumstances.
2. Notes that the investigation of the use of bonds for the protection of trees on Council land is feasible and that work is continuing on investigating the process to require a bond equal to a percentage of the amenity value of a tree required to be retained and protected as part of the asset protection permit process.
3. Endorses the continuation of work towards the preparation of a Planning Scheme Amendment for the protection of trees on private land and receives a further report outlining the assessment of significant trees when finalised and the next steps.

The third item has been completed, and legal advice has been received that the Council's enforcement powers around tree removal on public land are adequate and therefore, securing a bond is not required.

There are Landscape Technical Notes on Council's website and the Urban Forest website contains significant advice about tree species that are appropriate and encouraged in the Merri-bek context.

As a result, there is no need for a separate policy document and so it is recommended that the Landscape Guidelines and Technical Notes for Various Developments be revoked.

Appointment and Authorisation to enforce the Planning and Environment Act 1987

The appointment of Authorised Officers facilitates the administration and enforcement of any Act, regulations or local laws which relate to the functions and powers of the Council. Authorisations are made to specific Council officers in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.

In accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987, Authorised Officers can only be appointed by the Council as the Act prohibits delegation of the power to appoint Authorised Officers.

Council staff can only take action to enforce provisions of legislation where they have been properly and lawfully authorised. The authorisation proposed appoints the staff member as an Authorised Officer which will enable that Officer to take action and commence proceedings against people who have breached permit conditions or otherwise not complied with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* or regulations.

The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation at **Attachment 6** is a routine, administrative update to ensure all Planning staff have a correct and up-to-date authorisation. Updates are reviewed internally each quarter to ensure relevant staff are authorised. The last update was presented to Council at the September 2023 meeting. The next update will be presented to a future Council as required.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

4. Community consultation and engagement

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

Public Question Time provides an opportunity for the community to engage with and direct their questions and statements directly to the Council.

5. Officer Declaration for a Conflict of Interests

Council officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflicts of interest in the matters contained therewith.

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There are no financial and/or resource implications as a result of this report.

Fundraisers are required to maintain accurate financial records and lodge an annual return.

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.

Subject to Council's decision the next steps include:

- The Project Officer will complete the process to register Merri-bek City Council – Friends of Aileu as a fundraiser under the Fundraising Act 1998 during November 2023.
- The schedule of Council meeting dates being published in Council's minutes, on Council's website and being made available at Council's Customer Service Centres.
- Reporting to Audit Committee on 28 November that these two policies have been revoked and are no longer overdue for review.
- Preparing the advice from the Community Facility and Directional Signage Policy into a Technote and adding it to Part B – Street and Park Furniture.
- Executing the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation to enforce the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and updating the Register of Authorisations for publishing on Council's website.

Attachment/s

1 ↓	Reports from Advisory Committees to Council - November 2023	D23/527898
2 ↓	Records of Meetings - November 2023	D23/521623
3 ↓	Response to question taken On Notice - November 2023	D23/522887
4 ↓	Audit and Risk Report (Recommendations and Findings) 2022-23	D23/517158
5 ↓	Council Meeting Dates 2024	D23/517973
6 ↓	Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation - Planning and Environment Act - November 2023	D23/531121

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A report of the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023 are provided for Council's information.

Councillors appointed to the Committee: Cr Adam Pulford.

Key Items Discussed

- Transport Strategy Update
 - STAC members were provided an update on the development of the Transport Strategy and outcomes from engagement on the Discussion Paper.
 - Key discussion on the cycling network section focussed on different types of bike infrastructure treatments.
- Parking Management Policy
 - Planned engagement activity on the parking management policy update was discussed.
- Kent Road Bike Lane Trial
 - The group discussed the recommendation being presented to the September Council Meeting regarding the Kent Road Bike Lane Trial.
 - Committee members raised several concerns about the recommendation being presented to council.

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was disclosed at the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

There were no official recommendations from the committee to Council. However, committee members raised a confidential document for discussion following the meeting that was presented to the September Council Meeting as a statement on behalf of STAC members.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A report of the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023 are provided for Council's information.

Councillors appointed to the Committee: Cr Adam Pulford.

Key Items Discussed

The sole agenda item for this meeting was the Draft Transport Strategy.

- STAC Members were provided a copy of the Draft Transport Strategy to be discussed at the meeting.
- A presentation was provided on key sections of the draft strategy including the Values, Transport System, and the Streets for People framework.
- An update on the planned engagement process for November and December was presented to STAC members.
- 45 minutes was allocated to open discussion and feedback on the strategy and draft action plan.

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: Councillor Briefing

Date: 16 October 2023

Meeting time: 6.00pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff 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 were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor Cr Adam Pulford Cr Monica Harte Cr Lambros Tapinos Cr Helen Pavlidis
Apologies	Cr James Conlan Cr Mark Riley Cr Oscar Yildiz Cr Sue Bolton Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan
Council Staff (name and position)	Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Joseph Tabacco, Director Place and Environment Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy Nuray Jarkan, Unit Manager You Services Barry Hahn, Manager Early Years and Youth Lee Dowler, Unit Manager Transport Caden McCarthy, Manager Transport
External participants	Youth Ambassadors

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Youth Ambassadors (introduction & update)	-	-
2 Proposed Brunswick Early Years Hub	-	-
3 Electoral Boundary Review - Update	-	-
4 Parking Management Policy Update – Consultation	-	-
5 Making it safer to walk and ride in Merri-bek - Response to NOM	-	-
6 Council Meeting Agenda Briefing	-	-

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](#).

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
7	Close	-	-

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 & Planning Briefing

Date: 23 October 2023

Meeting time: 6:00pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 8 August 2022.

Rule 9.1 provides that a record of the matters discussed at meetings organised or hosted by Council that involve Councillors and Council staff 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 were disclosed and the person with the conflict of interest left the meeting.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor Cr Adam Pulford Cr Helen Pavlidis Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor Cr James Conlan Cr Monica Harte Cr Lambros Tapinos
Apologies	Cr Sue Bolton Cr Mark Riley Cr Oscar Yildiz Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan
Council Staff (name and position)	Cathy Henderson – Chief Executive Officer Anita Curnow – Director City Infrastructure Joseph Tabacco – Director Place and Environment Eamonn Fennessy – Director Community Sue Vujcevic – Director Business Transformation Phillip Priest – Group Manager City Development Mark Hughes – Unit Manager Urban Planning Esha Rahman – Planning Coordinator Caden McCarthy – Manager Transport Vaughn Allan – Strategic Transport Lead Lee Dowler – Unit Manager Transport Miles Saunders, Unit Manager Waste Services Catherine Dear, Manager City Services
External participants	N/A

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 MPS/2021/520/A - 347 Reynard Street, Pascoe Vale South	-	-
2 Rescission motion process	-	-
3 Draft Transport Strategy	-	-

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](#).

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
4 Fortnightly Garbage Trial	-	-

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](#).



XRef. D23/328106
Doc. No D23/396506
Enq: J.Nicholas
Tel: [REDACTED]

Dino Albano
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr Albano

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM 12 JULY 2023 COUNCIL MEETING

My apologies for the delay in response. I write to you in response to your question submitted to the 12 July Council meeting, as follows:

- What percentage of the newsletters were delivered to households and businesses during the consultation period of the draft budget 2023-24, and what percentage were not?

Thank you for your interest in community engagement and public participation.

After checking with the business that distributes Merri-bek Community News on behalf of Council, I can confirm that distribution of the Autumn 2023 edition commenced on 16 May 2023 and was completed on 7 June 2023. The distribution business cannot provide a breakdown of percentage of completion at a particular date, so unfortunately, I cannot provide an answer as to what percentage of the publication was delivered to households and businesses during the consultation period of the Draft Budget 2023-27.

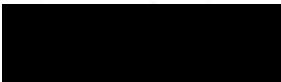
We acknowledge that in this instance, the timing of the delivery of Merri-bek Community News meant that some residents may have received this information after consultation on the Draft Budget 2023-27 had closed.

The consultation on Council's Draft Budget 2023-2027 was done in two stages, with community budget ideas sought from November 2022 to March 2023, and public exhibition of the draft budget from 19 April to 21 May 2023.

Council promotes consultation opportunities to our community across a variety of channels and mediums, including our corporate website, our engagement platform Conversations Merri-bek, via our social media channels and e-newsletters, via a variety of printed collateral, at drop-in face-to-face sessions and in our Customer Service Centres.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Jessamy Nicholas, Manager Community Engagement on [REDACTED] or jnicholas@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Jessamy Nicholas
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY
25 / 10 / 2023

Merri-bek City Council Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations (to Council) and Findings - 2022/23 Audit and Risk Committee Meetings

Recommendations	
Annual Financial Statement and Performance Statement	<p>6 September 2022</p> <p>RECOMMENDED that Council record its approval 'in principle' to the Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement (the statements) for the year ended 30 June 2022; and that subject to the review of the final version of the Annual Financial Report and the Performance Statement, Council authorise the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Executive Officer to send the statements to the Auditor-General; - Chief Executive Officer, the Mayor and Councillors to certify the final version of the statements; - Chief Financial Officer to implement any non-material changes to the statement as recommended by the Auditor-General and provide a summary of any such changes to the Audit and Risk Committee at its next meeting. Any material changes will be discussed with the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee prior to being presented to Council.
Committee Management and Work Plan Report	<p>6 September 2022</p> <p>ENDORSES the 2020/21 annual Committee Performance Report, incorporating an assessment of the performance of the Committee against its Charter, for presentation to Council.</p> <p>ENDORSES the bi-annual Audit and Risk (recommendations and findings) report for presentation to Council.</p> <p>14 March 2023</p> <p>ENDORSES the bi-annual Audit and Risk report for presentation to Council.</p> <p>06 June 2023</p> <p>ENDORSES the 2022/23 annual Committee Performance Report, incorporating an assessment of the performance of the Committee against its Charter, for presentation to Council.</p>
Risk Management Report	<p>14 March 2023</p> <p>ENDORSES the Strategic Risks by Directorate risk report, a redacted version will be presented to Council at the 16 April Council meeting.</p>
Findings	
Annual Financial Statement and Performance Statement	<p>6 September 2022</p> <p>Council is monitoring and managing its financial position and key controls.</p>
Audit Actions Progress Report	<p>6 September 2022, 20 December 2022, 14 March 2023 and 6 June 2023</p> <p>Management continues to progress on the completion of actions arising from internal and external audits.</p>
Business Actions Progress Report	<p>6 September 2022, 20 December 2022, 14 March 2023 and 6 June 2023</p> <p>Management is progressing responses to business actions.</p>
Climate Change Risk and Resilience Report	<p>6 September 2022</p> <p>Council endorsed the draft Climate Risk Strategy for community and stakeholder engagement at the 13 April 2022 Council meeting (Item 7.3, Minutes of Council Meeting, 13 April 2022). Community and stakeholder engagement commenced on 30 May and formally closed on Friday 1 July 2022. The engagement outcomes will inform the Strategy finalisation, with oversight through the Climate Resilience Integration Board (CRIB). A final version of the Strategy will be presented for Council adoption in November 2022, with the Action Plan presented for adoption in June 2023.</p> <p>The Climate Resilience Integration Lead role has been vacant since 12 May 2022. The role was reviewed and reclassified to a higher pay scale, reporting directly to the Manager Sustainability and Climate. This improves the potential to efficiently deliver an organisation-wide change program that demonstrates leadership in climate risk management, reporting and decision-making processes. The Committee will be updated once CRIB has reviewed the impact of staff changes on its deliverables. The 2022/23 budget includes dedicated funding for resourcing and consultancy support to conduct risk / vulnerability assessments of infrastructure as foundational action.</p> <p>20 December 2022</p> <p>Council endorsed the Climate Risk Strategy at the 9 November 2022 Council meeting (item 7.1, Minutes of Council Meeting, 9 November 2022). The strategy benefitted from stakeholder feedback that highlighted the most important climate impacts to the community.</p> <p>Note the Climate Resilience Integration Lead role commenced on 24 October 2022.</p> <p>The 2022/23 budget includes dedicated funding for resourcing and consultancy support to conduct risk / vulnerability.</p> <p>14 March 2023</p> <p>After Council endorsement of the Climate Risk Strategy at the 9 November 2022 Council meeting the two-year foundational action plan is being developed for Council consideration in June 2023.</p> <p>A follow up review of the audit by Crowe on climate change adaptation was carried out in January 2023 to assess progress against the recommendations. An update and response will be provided to the Audit and Risk Committee as a separate report</p> <p>A strategic risk workshop will be held with Council Officers on 22 February 2023, to ensure alignment and adequate controls and tasks are identified to manage climate risks and their consequences.</p> <p>6 June 2023</p>

	<p>Council has drafted the Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan (CRFAP) covering financial years 2023/24 to 2024/25. This draft has benefitted from extensive internal consultations and a whole-of-Council approach. The plan is currently undergoing community consultation which will conclude on May 15, 2023.</p> <p>A Strategic Climate Risk workshop was conducted on 22 February 2023 with representatives from across the organisation. This has resulted in an updating of risk controls, addition of actions into the CRFAP, as well as helping to build a maturing risk culture in the organisation.</p> <p>In addition to developing the CRFAP, in financial year 2022/23 two key projects are underway, which will assess the resilience of Council infrastructure and the services they support under a changing climate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a service review of early years and youth, aged and community services, and emergency management for resilience to climate change, building vulnerability assessment. b) building vulnerability assessment.
Committee Work Plan Report	<p>6 September 2022</p> <p>Management has a plan in place to review overdue policies managed by the Business Transformation Directorate. Councillor expenses have been recorded in accordance with policy.</p> <p>The Interstate and Overseas Travel register is current and contains a record of travel by Councillors and Officers. The Chief Financial Officer has reviewed credit card transactions for the CEO corporate credit card from July 2021 to June 2022.</p> <p>Council has a framework for the recruitment and management of the CEO. Management has a plan in place to review the CEO Employment Matters policy to align to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020. Council holds a commercial interest with one organisation.</p>
Committee Management Report	<p>6 September 2022</p> <p>After a competitive recruitment process Marilyn Kearney has been appointed as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p>The assessment of the Committee’s performance against the Committee Charter was positive noting two anomalies.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Report (recommendation and findings) is endorsed and recommended for reporting to Council.</p>
Committee Management and Work Plan Report	<p>20 December 2022</p> <p>Management has a plan in place to review overdue policies managed by the City Infrastructure Directorate. Declarations of gifts, benefits and hospitality have been recorded in accordance with policy.</p> <p>The Child Safe Standard mini audit concluded that the processes around the management of commercially sensitive and confidential Child Safe files are adequate.</p> <p>The meeting dates for the 2023 Audit and Risk committee meetings have been confirmed.</p> <p>An Audit and Risk Committee report which should have been reported twice in the 2021- 22 Financial Year (September 2021 and March 2022), titled ‘Recommendations and Findings’ was only presented in September 2021. In 2022 – 2023, it has been presented in September 2022 and will be presented in March 2023.</p> <p>14 March 2023</p> <p>Management has a plan in place to review overdue policies managed by the Community Directorate and Business Transformation Directorate.</p> <p>Councillor expenses have been recorded in accordance with policy.</p> <p>The Interstate and Overseas Travel register is current and contains a record of travel by Councillors and Officers. The acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed credit card transactions for the CEO corporate credit card from 1 July 2022 to 30 January 2023.</p> <p>Internal Auditor Crowe are meeting all their contract deliverables.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Report (recommendation and findings) is endorsed and recommended for reporting to Council.</p> <p>6 June 2023</p> <p>Management has a plan in place to review overdue policies managed by the Place and Environment Directorate. The Register of Delegations is current.</p> <p>Report of gifts, benefits and hospitality have been recorded in accordance with policy.</p> <p>The assessment of the Committee’s performance against the Committee Charter was positive.</p> <p>The current Audit and Risk Committee work plan is on track. Management and the Audit and Risk Committee have fulfilled all obligations scheduled since the March 2023 meeting.</p>
Council Plan 2021-2025 First Year Implementation	<p>20 December 2022</p> <p>That Council has appropriate systems and procedures in place measuring the performance of individual programs and activities as identified in the Council Plan 2021 – 25 through the implementation of the annual action plans and supported by a cloud-based technology system (Pulse).</p>
Financial Management Report	<p>6 September 2022, 20 December 2022 14 March 2023 and 6 June 2023</p> <p>Council is monitoring and managing its financial position and key controls.</p>
Management and Governance of the use of Data, Information and Knowledge	<p>20 December 2022</p> <p>There are adequate protocols and standards applied to the management and governance of the use of data, information, and knowledge.</p>
Memorandums of Audit Planning and Audits Completed	<p>6 September 2022</p> <p>The Management of Contaminated Land has ten findings. Appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management.</p> <p>The Cash Handling Audit has eight findings and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management.</p> <p>The Conflict-of-Interest Management Audit has four findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management.</p> <p>Sufficient progress has been made against the Internal Audit Plan.</p> <p>20 December 2022</p>

	<p>The Cyber Security – Essential 8 audit report has ten findings. Appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. The Child Safe Standards audit report has eight findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. The Safety Process audit report has eight findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. Sufficient progress has been made against the Internal Audit Plan.</p> <p>14 March 2023 The Immunisation Management audit has six findings and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. The Follow Up review identified 2 recommendations (from a total of 38) that require reinstatement in the Audit Action tracking system. Sufficient progress has been made against the Internal Audit Plan. The Strategic Internal Audit Plan outlines the eight audits scheduled to be completed in 2023/24.</p> <p>6 June 2023 The Crowe Payroll Management audit has a total of eleven findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. The Procurement (above threshold)/tendering) audit has a total of three findings and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. The Public Health and Wellbeing Act Compliance audit has a total of 7 findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. The BDO Australia Payroll review has 9 findings, and appropriate management comments (including actions) have been provided by management. All eight audits scheduled in the 2022-23 Internal Audit Plan have been completed.</p>
<p>Payroll Post Project Implementation Review</p>	<p>6 September 2022 The Post Implementation Report will inform the future success of similar projects by applying learnings for deliveries.</p> <p>14 March 2023 Progress has been made to action and complete the recommendations arising from the Payroll (MyPay) Post Implementation Review undertaken and provided by Touch Projects.</p>
<p>Procurement Framework Report</p>	<p>14 March 2023 Council has implemented a range of key processes and controls to manage key risks associated with probity, processes, and procedures within the existing Procurement Framework.</p>
<p>Recent Reports and Publications</p>	<p>6 September 2022, December 2022, 14 March 2023 and 6 June 2023 Management has reviewed recent reports and publications related to issues of management controls, integrity and continuous improvement that impact the local government sector and initiated actions to mitigate Council’s risk in response.</p>
<p>Risk Management Report</p>	<p>6 September 2022 All actions on the Risk Management Improvement Plan 2020 -22 have been completed. The reporting of results of an internal IT phishing campaign to the committee have been deferred until the December 2022. Council continues to manage complaints and public interest disclosures. Adequate remedial action has been taken to address the breakdown in control reported to the committee. Fraud risks continue to be identified, analysed, and monitored. Council’s Business Continuity Plan has been updated. There are open Public Liability claims that may exceed Council’s excess.</p> <p>20 December 2022 The Annual Risk Report demonstrates that Council’s operational and strategic risks continue to be effectively identified and managed across the organisation. The IT Roadmap 2022-25 has been prepared and Council data was not compromised when a targeted phishing attack occurred in November. Council continues to manage complaints and there are no public interest disclosures. Adequate remedial action has been taken to address the breakdown in controls reported to the committee. A business continuity exercise was completed on 30 November 2022. There are open Public Liability claims that may exceed Council’s excess.</p> <p>14 March 2023 Six actions from the Risk Management Improvement Plan 2023 - 2026 have been completed. The annual Disaster Recovery Test identified two issues, which have been corrected. Council continues to manage complaints and there are no public interest disclosures. Adequate remedial action has been taken to address the breakdown in controls reported to the committee. Council’s nine Strategic Risks have been reviewed. A Business Continuity post-exercise report outlines 12 recommendations towards Cyber Security and Business Continuity improvement. There are open Public Liability claims that may exceed Council’s excess. A Risk Maturity self-assessment indicates that between November 2020 and December 2022, risk management maturity has improved.</p>

	<p>6 June 2023 Seven actions from the Risk Management Improvement Plan 2023 - 26 have been completed. Phishing Simulation test results improved when compared to Q1. Council continues to manage complaints and public interest disclosures. Adequate remedial action has been taken to address the breakdown in controls reported to the committee. There are open Public Liability claims that may exceed Council's excess. Council's Business Continuity Plan is in place and remains current and active. Audit actions which originate from CCTV audits are progressing. Strategic Risks have featured across audits throughout 2022-23.</p>
<p>VAGO Report</p>	<p>6 September 2022 and 20 December 2022 Council has been selected to participate in a VAGO audit concerning illegally disposed asbestos-contaminated (hazardous) waste.</p> <p>14 March 2023 Management has reviewed recent reports and publications related to issues of management controls, integrity and continuous improvement that impact the local government sector and initiated actions to mitigate Council's risk in response.</p> <p>6 June 2023 The Interim Management Letter outlines a summary of audit findings from the interim phase of the audit. Council has responded to a VAGO survey concerning a performance audit in relation to illegal disposal of asbestos-contaminated materials.</p>

Council Meeting Dates - 2024

Date	Time	Meeting type
Wednesday, 31 January 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 14 February 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 28 February 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 13 March 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 27 March 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 10 April 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 24 April 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 8 May 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 22 May 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 12 June 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 26 June 2024	6.45 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 10 July 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 24 July 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 14 August 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 28 August 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Wednesday, 11 September 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Monday, 23 September 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Tuesday, 24 September 2024		Pre-election Caretaker Period Commences
Wednesday, 9 October 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 23 October 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters
Saturday, 26 October 2024		General Election Day
Monday, 18 November 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting - Swearing In
Wednesday, 20 November 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting - Mayoral Election
Wednesday, 11 December 2024	7 pm	Council Meeting
Wednesday, 18 December 2024	6.30 pm	Council Meeting - Planning and Related Matters



Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation
(Planning and Environment Act 1987 only)

Planning Officers – November 2023

S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987)

Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation

In this instrument 'officer' means

- Alex Osborne
- Anna Fraser
- Ariadne Hasiotis
- Caleb Cootes
- Dee Erdogan
- Denise Ho
- Denise Turner
- Ekta Shah
- Emre Akin
- Esha Rahman
- Evan Strouss
- Gina Settle
- Graeme Linsell
- Houston Watt
- Jack Poulson
- Jeff Robinson
- Jessica Henwood-White
- Jessica Thomas
- Jessica Weymouth
- Karmen Wheeler
- Kate MacLaren
- Kate Murphy
- Keaton Paterson
- Kosta Vassilacopoulos
- Lachlan McGowan
- Lawson Peters
- Lorenzo Alizzi
- Louie Chen
- Lucas Wearne
- Luke Rogers
- Mark Hughes
- Niall O'Brien
- Ola Odah
- Phi Tran
- Phillip Priest
- Rachel Clarke
- Robert Wallis
- Rosie Ivers
- Ryan Hay
- Sofie Lemaire
- Vicki Lu
- Vita Galante
- Wyatt Griffiths

S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987)

7.22 CONTRACT AWARD - RFT-2023-452 - ROAD RECONSTRUCTION WORKS - WARATAH STREET, PASCOE VALE

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow
Capital Works Planning and Delivery

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd (Contractor) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2023-452 for the Road Reconstruction Works – Waratah Street, Pascoe Vale between Derby to Sussex Street (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution for the lump sum of \$607,775.00 excluding GST plus provisional sum of \$126,930.00 (excluding GST), totaling \$734,705.00 (excluding GST).
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and
 - b) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Road reconstruction works along Waratah Street, Pascoe Vale between Derby Street to Sussex Street are identified in the 2023-2024 Capital Works Program. The works are required to address the poor condition of the kerb and channel, vehicle crossings and road pavement and provide underground drainage along this section of Waratah Street. The works are programmed to be completed in 2023-2024. Provision for bicycle facilities is not required as this section of Waratah Street does not play a strategic cycling role in the network.

Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd achieved the highest score through the evaluation process. Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd has previously undertaken road reconstruction works for Council and successfully delivered the works to a very good standard.

The project will be utilising recycled crushed concrete as bedding material in the road sub-base and as backfill to the new drainage pipes in the street. The use of recycled crushed concrete will reduce the need for raw materials by approximately 550 cubic metres.

This contract will also promote the use of increased recycled content in road construction activities by using an asphalt product in the wearing course (top layer) of the road pavement containing recycled glass, reclaimed asphalt product and HDPE plastic.

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

Previous Council Decisions

There has been no prior Council decision in relation to this specific contract or project.

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 conduct 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 \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

2. Background

The purpose of the report is to award a tender for the Road Reconstruction Works at Waratah Street, Pascoe Vale between Derby Street to Sussex Street as per the detailed plans and specification.

An advertisement was placed in The Age newspaper on Saturday, 15 July 2023 inviting tenders via the e-tender portal from suitably experienced contractors to undertake the road reconstruction works.

Tenders closed on Tuesday, 8 August 2023 and 12 tenders received from the following contractors:

1. ADP Constructions Pty Ltd
2. CDN Constructors Pty Ltd
3. GP Bluestone Pty Ltd
4. Holman VIC Constructions Pty Ltd
5. Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd
6. MJ Construction Group Pty Ltd
7. New Horizon Construction Pty Ltd
8. Panhold Constructions Pty Ltd
9. Parkinson Group (VIC) Pty Ltd
10. Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd
11. Quantum Civil Pty Ltd
12. Melbourne Civil Works Pty Ltd

Tender Evaluation

All twelve (12) tenders received were conforming.

Tenders were evaluated in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and in accordance with the approved Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan for this project.

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows:

Title	Speciality	Full Voting / Advisory Member
Senior Construction Engineer	Construction	Full Voting
Transport Engineer	Transport	Full Voting
Project Engineer	Construction	Full Voting
Senior Procurement Partner	Procurement	Advisory Member
Unit Manager Sustainable Built Environment	Sustainability	Advisory Member

In assessing the tenders, consideration was given to the following predefined evaluation criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
Pricing Response	
Tender Price	40%
Qualitative Criteria Response	
Traffic Management and Works Program	10%
Capability, Experience and Past Performance and Capacity	15%
Quality Management System	10%
Customer Service	7%
Social Sustainability	5%
Environmental Sustainability	4%
Economic Sustainability	4%
Environmental Sustainability Construction Options	5%
Total Qualitative Criteria Response	60%
Weighted Result	100%

The tender evaluation process identified Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd as the preferred tenderer based on the results of the evaluation matrix, included as **Confidential Attachment 1**.

Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd has previously undertaken road reconstruction works for Council and successfully delivered the works to a very good standard.

3. Issues

Collaboration

Note that section 109(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement must include information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

Under this contract there are no opportunities to collaborate with other Councils or public bodies as:

- This is a locally based stand-alone road reconstruction project for which there is a healthy local market of contractors.
- The nature of the works is not dependent on works being undertaken by other Councils or public bodies.

Informal discussions between neighbouring Councils on collaborative procurement have identified these types of programmed works less attractive for collaboration than some other types of procurement given the health of the local contractor industry for works of this size and nature.

Social Implications

Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd has a social policy in place which has indicated that they provide support to the local communities.

Environmental Implications

Presta Construction Group have processes in place to recycle all waste and use recycled products where possible. They ensure that all excavated spoil, concrete and asphalt is taken to recycling facilities during the project.

Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd will be using recycled products as well on-site where possible including crushed concrete in road base and concrete pavement base.

Local Implications

Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd have a policy which indicated that they engaged with local communities and support job creation and workforce development.

Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd is located in neighbouring Darebin City Council within Northern Councils Alliance area.

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. Consultation / Recommendation from Management

Consultation with owners/residents along Waratah Street, Pascoe Vale between Derby Street to Sussex Street was undertaken via a letter drop in May 2023. Several residents responded advising they are in agreement and support the proposed works.

Owners and residents will also be informed prior to the works commencing on site via a letter drop from Council and the Contractor.

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

An amount of \$905,000.00 has been allocated in Council's Capital Works Program for Road Reconstruction Works at Waratah Street, Pascoe Vale between Derby to Sussex Street.

The table below shows the anticipated expenditure for the contract.

Item	Amount (excluding GST)
Tendered lump sum amount	\$607,775.00
Provisional sum	\$126,930.00
TOTAL	\$734,705.00

Should any variations be contemplated within the CEO's delegation, additional funding would be sourced from the allocated budget for this project in Council's Capital Works Program for Road Reconstruction Works at Waratah Street, Pascoe Vale between Derby to Sussex Street.

7. Implementation and Timeline

It is proposed that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the contract and any other documentation.

Works are planned to commence in May 2024 and be completed in June 2024.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|---|---|------------|
| 1 | Tender Recommendation RFT-2023-452 - Road Reconstruction Works - Waratah Street, Pascoe Vale - Confidential | D23/488933 |
|---|---|------------|

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

7.23 CONTRACT AWARD - EXE-2023-501 ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Capital Works Planning and Delivery

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage Brightly Software Australia Pty Ltd ACN 126 629 954 (**Contractor**) under contract EXE-2023-501 for the provision of software application support and maintenance for Council's Asset Management System 'Brightly' (**Contract**):
 - a) For an expenditure not exceeding \$1,003,442.00 excluding GST
 - b) For a term commencing 1 February 2024 for an initial period of three (3) years, with a further two (2) extension options of two (2) years each at the discretion of Council subject to performance.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive too all things necessary to execute the Contract and any other required documentation.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive to exercise the options to extend and vary the Contract in accordance with the provisions within the Contract.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Council has in place as Asset Management System that manages Council's asset register, operational and maintenance records, and asset accounting records.

In 2018, Council decided to upgrade existing on-premises Asset Management System (AMS) to Cloud Based Asset Management System Brightly (previously known as Assetic). At that time, Council entered year to year contract with 5 per cent increment.

The Contractor is the only vendor currently able to support our existing Asset Management System requirements. We seek to engage the Contractor in accordance with section 6.1.4.2(a) of the Procurement Policy exemption - Information technology resellers and software developers. This provision allows Council to renew software licenses and maintenance and support, or upgrade existing systems, where there is only one supplier of the software, who holds the intellectual property rights to the software.

It is proposed to enter into a three (3)-year fixed term contract with a further two (2) extension options of two (2) years each.

The cumulative expenditure of the proposed contract will exceed the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation. Consequently, Council approval is required.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil.

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 conduct 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 \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy. However, the Policy allows exemptions from tendering to renew software licences and maintenance and support or upgrade existing systems, where there is only one supplier of the software, who holds the intellectual property rights to the software.

2. Background

In 2011 Council awarded the contract to Assetic (now Brightly) for an Asset Management System. Since then Council has been using Assetic's desktop based system to build asset repository and asset valuation data. In 2015, an extension was signed by Director City Infrastructure for continuation of the contract. In 2018, Council moved to Assetic's Cloud based asset management system in order to align with Information Technology Strategy 2016-2019; given the following benefits:

- Increased productivity and ability to expand use of the Asset Management System to more teams and functions.
- Reduced overhead and resource cost.
- Potential integration with Customer Relationship Management system would reduce double handling and increase data transparency between the two systems.
- Higher mobility, having both Android and iOS applications.
- Future ability to implement a new chart of accounts within Assetic for a finance system link.
- Better health and safety outcomes for staff with introduction of apps.
- Improved audit trails.

Finally, a new contract was signed between Council and Assetic in December 2017 for Migration and Implementation of Assetic Cloud System.

During the project data related to assets, their valuations and their maintenance were cleansed and migrated to the cloud.

All financial asset classes previously residing in the Finance Register have been migrated to Assetic. Council generates all monthly and yearly financial reports such as Depreciation, Capitalisation, Disposal and Revaluation from Assetic System.

Road maintenance activities including inspections, scheduling and actions continue to be recorded in Assetic. Under Assetic's cloud based system, this has been expanded to Fleet, Open Space, Buildings and part of Street Cleansing.

3. Issues

Collaboration

Note that section 109(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement must include information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available. This contract has no opportunity for collaboration due to specific nature of our software requirement.

Exemption from tendering

Brightly Software Pty Ltd is the only vendor currently able to support our current Asset Management System, as it provides unique functionality and features that integrate with our current operating environment. An exemption from tendering is in accordance with section 6.1.4.2(a) of the Procurement Policy applying to *information technology resellers and software developers*, which allows Council to renew software licences and maintenance and support, or upgrade existing systems, where there is only one supplier of the software holding the intellectual property rights to the software.

Brightly Software Pty Ltd has provided a quote for the service which includes an annual subscription fee with an additional hosted environment (testing environment) and Assetic Predictor v5.0.

Future market engagement

Council is not currently able to consider changing its asset management system due to integration and linkages with other existing systems. However, Council officers will continue to research the current market offerings and determine the best course of action when extensions are being contemplated.

Community impact

No impact to the community.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

The Asset Management System provides the history of maintenance works. This will enable Council officers to determine the effect climate change has on each type of asset and propose appropriate action.

The need for close monitoring of assets to account for climate change and to assess climate resilience mean that having a functional asset management system is a requirement.

Economic sustainability implications

Nil.

Legal and risk considerations

There are no known legal risks associated with this contract.

A procurement risk assessment has been conducted. This assessment has determined the risk of extending the AMS Contract with Brightly is significantly less than the risk of engaging a new contractor to implement their AM system.

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 and engagement

This is an internal service with no impact to the community.

Affected persons rights and interests

No individuals were identified whose rights and interests are affected by this matter.

Communications

Not applicable.

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

Brightly is used across the organisation. Any replacement system will need substantial changes to work processes and subsequent training which could become a costly exercise.

The estimated expenditure for 7-year period is not expected to exceed \$1,003,442.00 excluding GST. Expenditure on the Assetic/Brightly contracts has been and continues to be charged to Information Technology Branch software budget.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's decision, Council will enter a contract with Brightly Software Pty Ltd to continue Asset Management System with Additional Hosted Environment and Assetic Predictor v5.0.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.24 CONTRACT EXE-2023-513 TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Information Technology

Officer Recommendation

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.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Council has been using telephony and data services provided by Telstra Corporation Limited since 3 October 2014 under the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Telecommunications Contract TC4322-2013 which expired on 20 August 2020.

Council is currently utilising the previous Telstra MAV carriage pricing agreement which expired on 20 August 2020. However, this contract had an automatic month-to-month renewal option that was being utilised.

This report seeks Council approval to enter an agreement with Telstra Corporation Limited (Telstra) for the provision of telephony and data services through the Victorian Telecommunication Services (VTS) panel contract, in accordance with the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) State Purchase Contract VTS Head Agreement that complies with the Section 108 of the Local Government Act 2020. Tender #DPC-ICT-03- 2020/21 / ID: 450392 via the Victorian Telecommunications Services. This agreement is effective from 17 December 2021 until 17 December 2027.

This panel contract allows for the provision of Telecommunications: Core Services including: Data Services; Fixed Voice Services; and Mobile Services.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil.

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 conduct 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 \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy. However, the Procurement Policy section 6.1.4.2(a) allows exemptions from tendering when relying on contracts and arrangements established by the State Government.

The Procurement Policy 2021-25 was re-endorsed at the May 2023 Council meeting and includes the following commitment statement: "Council is committed to addressing the climate emergency and will be 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." The Issues section of this report addresses this matter further.

2. Background

Council has been using telephony and data services provided by Telstra Corporation Limited since 3 October 2014 under the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Telecommunications Contract TC4322-2013 which expired on 20 August 2020.

Under this contract, multiple agreements have been executed. The initial agreement was from 3 October 2014 to 3 October 2017. A subsequent agreement was entered from 14 October 2017 to 14 June 2018. The most recent agreement was entered on 20 August 2018 for a further 24 months ending 20 August 2020. Since this time the agreement has continued on month-to-month basis in accordance with a clause in the contract.

Previous Contracts

Contract TC4322 – 2013 – Provision of telephone and data services was awarded to Telstra Corporation Limited for a period of 6 years, with a further 2 x 1 year extensions:

- Business Services Agreement (MAV) with Telstra on 3 October 2014 for 36 months ending 3 October 2017 was executed by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Business Services Agreement (MAV) with Telstra was entered into again on 20 August 2018 for a further 24 months ending 20 August 2020 by the Chief Executive Officer.

3. Issues

Procurement Compliance

Council officers recommend engaging Telstra even though they do not fully comply with elements of the Merri-bek 2021-2025 Procurement Policy and objectives outlined in the Fossil Fuel Divestment Strategy 2015-2025.

Service providers

In the wake of the initial COVID-19 lockdown imposed on Melbourne on March 31, 2020, the city experienced a series of lockdowns which extended until October 21, 2021. These lockdowns significantly impacted Council's ability to pursue the renewal of our telecommunications contract. During this period of uncertainty, the Council faced substantial pressure to ensure that our staff had reliable and increased access to data services for remote working, primarily relying on our existing telephone and data services. Council Officers made the strategic decision not to explore alternative telecommunication service providers or to implement significant changes in the management of our telecommunications services at the time.

This decision is in accordance with section 6.1.4.2(a) of the Procurement Policy which allows exemptions from tendering when relying on contracts and arrangements established by the State Government.

Council has more than 1,398 devices which use SIM cards. To change telecommunication service providers, the SIM cards in all of these devices would need to be physically replaced. Having to return these devices to have their SIM cards replaced would adversely affect Council's ability to deliver services to the community, inconvenience Councillors and staff and require a significant amount of internal resources to enable to the changeover. Security, reliability and not interrupting service provision are key reasons for engaging Telstra; additionally the new contract is expected to yield some savings due to cheaper plans as set out in the financial section of this report.

Telstra was considered to have the best network coverage across the municipality, which is increasingly important for the efficient delivery of services to the community. Telstra has not had any data breach incident that is known to Council.

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 conducted.

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. Community consultation and engagement

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

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

Analysis was conducted based on six months of usage from January to June 2023.

Based on the fleet size of 1,398 devices and an average monthly data consumption of 3.516 terabytes:

- The monthly average expenditure under the current agreement is \$34,103.50 excluding GST.
- The proposed monthly expenditure under the new agreement is \$24,303.00 excluding GST, which equates to \$291,636.00 per annum excluding GST.
- The estimated savings per month is \$9,800.50 excluding GST, which equates to \$117,606.00 per annum excluding GST. This savings is due to cheaper plans and reduced excess data charges under the new agreement.

The total estimated expenditure over the three-year term allowing for 20 per cent contingency is \$1,049,889.60 excluding GST. The contingency is for additional devices, additional data services and ongoing digitisation of manual processes.

Period	Amount excluding GST
Year 1	\$291,636.00
Year 2	\$291,636.00
Year 3	\$291,636.00
Net	\$874,908.00
20% Contingency	\$174,981.60
Total	\$1,049,889.60

7. Implementation

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

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.25 CONTRACT AWARD - RFT-2023-445 - PROVISION OF ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Director City Infrastructure Anita Curnow

Capital Works Planning and Delivery

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to High Profile Engineering Pty Ltd ACN 060 117 106, QA Electrical Pty Ltd ACN 124 222 760, La Candide Pty Ltd trading as Alert Electrical ACN 084 279 783, JNJ Electrics Pty Ltd ACV 085 334 434, AB & MB Electrical Contractors Pty Ltd ACN 084 670 100 (**Contractors**) to award to each Contractor panel Contract RFT-2023-455 for the Provision of Electrical Services (**Contract**) for a maximum spend of \$2,040,000 ex GST across all Contractors over the life of the contract on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractors provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and
 - b) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option(s) to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract; and
 - c) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The report seeks Council endorsement to award Contract RFT-2023-445, Provision of Electrical Services. This contract will provide electrical maintenance services via a panel arrangement for an initial contract term of 2 years with two additional extension options each of 2 years at the discretion of Council. The total contract term including options is 6 years.

Tenders were called for a panel of appropriately experienced and licensed qualified vendors to provide maintenance services to electrical infrastructure across Council-owned buildings and property. This tender provides a standing offer arrangement for a prequalified panel of contractors. Five companies are proposed to be awarded Contract RFT-2023-445, namely:

- AB & MB Electrical Pty Ltd
- Alert Electrical Group (Registered Name: La Candide Pty Ltd)
- High Profile Engineering Pty Ltd
- JNJ Electrics Pty Ltd
- QA Electrical Pty Ltd

There is no specific nominated budget under this contract; it will be dependent upon workload generated by projects, and reactive and planned maintenance works. However, the overall combined contract expenditure is limited to \$2,040,000 ex GST over the life of the contract (up to 6 years).

Expenditure under this contract will be determined by available annual budget allocations and works required during the contract term.

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

Previous Council Decisions

There has been no prior Council decision in relation to this specific contract.

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 conduct 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 \$300,000 (incl GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

2. Background

The current electrical services panel Contract 591T that commenced on 1 September 2017 (2) year term with an option of two further two (2) year extensions – totalling six (6) years has expired and new panel needs to be established, that is the subject of this report. The objective of establishing the electrical services panel is to ensure electrical infrastructure, equipment and fittings are properly maintained and monitored, and comply with statutory legislation and Australian Standards, and meet safety requirements.

The tender process was undertaken as a public tender which was advertised in The Age newspaper on 8 July 2023.

The Contract shall be effective for an initial 2-year period with an option of further two 2-year extensions. It provides electrical maintenance services to the entire municipality between the hours of 7am – 5pm and attend emergency call out works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Contract is not exclusive to the appointed Panel Contractors and not all work needs to be undertaken using the rates stipulated in the Contract. While suppliers have submitted their schedule of rates for this tender, officers can seek quotes for capital works to maintain competitiveness within the panel. Market testing of the panel may also be conducted via the seeking of quotes from outside the panel periodically throughout the life of the contract to ensure best value is being obtained.

3. Issues

Tender Evaluation

All tenders were evaluated in accordance with the approved Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan for this contract.

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows.

Title and/or company	Project Mgr/ Generalist or Nominated Speciality	Full Voting / Advisory Member
Building Maintenance Coordinator	Project Mgr (Chair)	Full
Unit Manager Building Maintenance	Generalist	Full
Essential Safety Measures Coordinator	Generalist	Full

Senior Procurement Partner	Procurement	Advisory
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In assessing the tenders, consideration was given to the following predefined evaluation criteria included in the Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan.

Criteria	Weighting	Comments
Price	40%	
Experience	25%	Technical expertise, qualified personnel, and past performance in successfully taking on similar maintenance contracts and completing works within timeframes and on budget.
Quality	15%	The contractor must have a quality assurance management system in place. Level of quality of customer service provided whilst undertaking similar engagements. Assess Contractor's service delivery methodology, i.e. computerised recording systems, invoicing, reporting standards
Resources	10%	The proposed team should have the ability to complete any works according to the schedule. The number of resources available for this contract must be adequate
Social	3%	How social sustainability is considered as part of this project/deliverable e.g. creating jobs for disadvantaged groups, social equity, partnerships with the community, human rights, gender, disability etc Diversity achievements/processes of the organisation submitting the tender Corporate Social Responsibility achievement of the organisation submitting the tender Social Procurement of the organisation submitting the tender
Economic	3%	How economic sustainability is considered as part of this project/deliverable e.g. support of local businesses, opportunities to generate employment among disadvantaged residents/communities, social enterprises, Indigenous businesses, buy local
Environmental	4%	How environmental sustainability is considered as part of the project/deliverable e.g. achievement of Zero Carbon Merri-bek, Integrated Water Management Strategy, Sustainable Council Buildings Policy, Waste and Litter Strategy and Plastic Wise Policy. How environmental sustainability is considered/initiatives by the organisation submitting the tender that would directly benefit Merri-bek City Council. How environmental sustainability is considered within the organisation submitting the tender own operations e.g. initiatives like energy saving, recycling etc.

The submission of all the 14 tenderers were evaluated and the details are shown in the attached the Tender Recommendation Report (**Confidential Attachment 1**).

Collaboration

Note that section 109(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires that any report to the Council that recommends entering into a procurement agreement must include information in relation to any opportunities for collaboration with other Councils or public bodies which may be available.

Under this contract, there are no opportunities to collaborate with other Councils because they have existing contracts that do not align with our contract current requirements.

Social / Environmental / Local Implications

The preferred contractors have internal policies supporting social sustainability, environmental management, and the use of local suppliers and businesses. Local employment opportunities are encouraged and implemented within their organisation values. The contractors are located within the municipality, or within proximity in adjacent municipalities.

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. Consultation / Recommendation from Management

Fourteen submissions were received via Council's e-tendering portal on the closing date at 4:00pm on 24 July 2023 and evaluated in accordance with the Procurement Policy.

It was determined by the evaluation panel that five contractors are needed on the panel for electrical services to allow sufficient resource to adequately cater over the maximum 6 years of the contract.

The evaluation panel applied the pre-defined criteria to the tender submissions and determined that the following five Contractors provided suitable experience, rates and other quality and sustainability attributes to achieve the highest scores in the evaluation and therefore be recommended for the contract.

Price contributed 40 per cent to the overall evaluation and was calculated by applying the rates submitted by each contractor multiplied by the number of expected work requests and their average hour duration.

The table below identifies the five contractors recommended for the Panel Contract RFT-2023-445 and which other companies tendered but were not evaluated as favourably as those recommended.

Contractor	Range of scores (out of a maximum possible 100)
Recommended for the panel (in alphabetical order)	
AB & MB Electrical Pty Ltd	77 to 89
Alert Electrical Group (Registered Name: La Candide Pty Ltd)	
High Profile Engineering Pty Ltd	
JNJ Electrics Pty Ltd	
QA Electrical Pty Ltd	

Contractor	Range of scores (out of a maximum possible 100)
Not recommended for the panel (in alphabetical order)	
Adapt Essential Services Pty Ltd	43 to 72
A Grade Maintenance Services Pty Ltd	
AVA Services Group Pty Ltd	
CBC Facilities Management Pty Ltd	
Commlec Services Pty Ltd	
Eco Electrical Services Pty Ltd	
High Access Cabling Pty Ltd (ATF HAC Trust)	
Hede Electrics Pty Ltd	
Ultralec Electrical Services (Registered Name: Sonec Services Pty Ltd)	

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

Expenditure under this contract will be determined by available annual budget allocations and works required during the contract term.

Spending on core electrical services for the last few years has averaged \$220,000 ex GST per annum. The current year budget is \$90,000 ex GST.

The schedule of rates provided are expected to be maximum chargeable by suppliers subject to CPI increase (where applicable). In calculating the maximum spend over the greatest possible Contract life of 6 years, it has been estimated that spending will stay at this level, with allowance for CPI growth.

It is important to note that the contractors from this panel will sometimes be used to provide electrical services related to capital projects using project budgets and/or emergency works using emergency budgets and this influences the level of spending which may be above the core budget available for electrical services maintenance.

The maximum spend includes an allowance for capital project works and emergency spending of up to \$600,000 ex GST over the life of the contract. This is to be tracked separately to the 'business as usual' electrical maintenance activities.

Spending on RFT-2023-445 in any given year will be limited by budget capacity.

7. Implementation and Timeline

It is proposed that the CEO be authorised to do all things necessary to execute Panel Contract RFT-2023-445 with each of the five recommended Contractors and any other required documentation.

The contracts will commence on 15 November 2023.

Attachment/s

- 1 RFT-2023-445 Tender Recommendation Report

D23/488954

Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the Local Government Act 2020 this attachment has been designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

8. NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AROUND BONWICK STREET, FAWKNER

Cr Sue Bolton

Motion

That Council receives a report on improving pedestrian safety around the Bonwick Street shopping centre in Fawkner. Some safety aspects to be considered include:

1. Putting pedestrian-operated traffic lights on the pedestrian crossing on Jukes Road.
2. Erecting a pedestrian sign of the walking legs at the pedestrian crossing in the carpark on the eastern side of the shops.
3. Examine ways of improving the traffic flow to ensure that eastbound traffic turning right into Bonwick Street from Jukes Road doesn't bank up across the pedestrian crossing.

1. Background

Cr Bolton's background:

As the population of Fawkner has grown, the Bonwick Street shopping centre has become extremely busy with traffic being very congested. This is a situation which creates dangers for pedestrians. There have been a number of reports of near misses at the pedestrian crossing on Jukes Road and the pedestrian crossing in the carpark on the eastern side of the shops.

It was also raised by Fawkner resident at a community meeting in Fawkner on 15 October 2023 that Council consider reconfiguring the traffic around the Bonwick Street shops to make the shopping centre safer for pedestrians.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

As part of the delivering on the Council Plan, officers are currently developing project options following consultation on the Fawkner Transport Study that was conducted in September and October 2022. As part of the actions from this project includes the development of a prioritised list of transport related capital works for the Fawkner area. The projects presented in this motion can be considered as part of delivering this action.

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan sets out Council's and community's vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this notice of motion fall in Theme 2: Living and moving safely in Merri-bek, and include:

2. To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport:
 - 2.2. Scope and implement suburb based active transport (bike and pedestrian) improvements (prioritising Fawkner, Gowanbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy)

Integrated Transport Strategy

Pedestrian safety is also a fundamental component of Council's existing Integrated Transport Strategy. Ensuring the safety and accessibility of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users is at the heart of all the aims and objectives of this Strategy.

The Strategy aims to achieve liveability through more active transport trips (and fewer cars) which also delivers sustainability outcomes, clean air outcomes and greater participation in economic and community life. Active transport trips are greatly encouraged by a focus on transport safety and personal security and when barriers are reduced to improve access for all.

These themes are expected to remain central to the new Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy. This strategy is being developed and a final version will be presented back to Council in March 2024.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

There are no financial implications to preparing an assessment to examine the options presented in this motion.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

A report can be prepared to consider other pedestrian improvement projects in Fawkner that were considered within the Fawkner Transport Study and can be prepared within existing resource requirements.

8.2 WAR IN GAZA

Cr Sue Bolton

Motion

That Council:

1. Mourns the tragic and horrific loss of civilian lives in the current conflict and condemns all attacks that target civilians.
2. Recognises that the constant bombing and the total siege of Gaza is traumatising for many Merri-bek residents who have relatives in the region or have come from war-torn countries. We express our solidarity with these communities.
3. Notes that the current conflict did not begin on 7 October 2023 – it began with the Occupation of Palestine, and the forced displacement of millions of Palestinians from their homelands as a result.
4. Condemns the words of senior Israeli politicians and military officials that seek to dehumanise Palestinians in Gaza to justify their war crimes. For example,
 - On 8 October 2023, Nissim Vaturi, member of the Knesset for the far right and governing coalition party, Likud, called for “erasing the Gaza Strip from the face of the earth. Those who are unable will be replaced.”
 - On 9 October 2023, Israeli Defence Minister, Yoav Gallant, stated: “We are imposing a complete siege on [Gaza]. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel – everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we act accordingly”.
5. Notes that many global organisations and institutions, including Amnesty International, United Nations Special Rapporteurs, and the UN’s Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Occupied Palestinian Territory, have documented systematic evidence of war crimes committed by Israel and its army against Palestinians, including:
 - a) sustained bombing of residential neighbourhoods
 - b) the bombing of schools, health facilities, mosques and churches where civilians are sheltering
 - c) the use of white phosphorous (a chemical weapon which burns the skin)
 - d) the denial of food, water, fuel, electricity, internet, and medical supplies to the people of Gaza.
6. Notes that 800 scholars of international law, conflict studies, Holocaust and Genocide Studies declared in a public statement on 15 October:

“We are compelled to sound the alarm about the possibility of the crime of genocide being perpetrated by Israeli forces against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”
7. Writes to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister calling on the Australian government to:
 - a) Strongly condemn the war crimes being carried out by Israel against the Palestinians in Gaza.
 - b) Call for an immediate ceasefire and end to Israel’s indiscriminate bombing.
 - c) Call for the immediate lifting of the siege on Gaza to allow Palestinians in Gaza to have unlimited access to food, water, fuel, electricity, medical supplies and construction materials to repair damaged homes and civilian infrastructure.
 - d) Advocate for all Palestinian and Israeli hostages to be released.

- e) Advocate for a political resolution to the decades-long conflict which includes an end to Israel's illegal Occupation of Palestine in order for there to be a just and sustainable peace.
 - f) End all military, economic, political and diplomatic ties with the state of Israel until it complies with its obligations under international law.
8. Notes that boycotts, divestment and sanctions are legitimate, non-violent tactics used by individuals and organisations to pressure foreign governments over human rights abuses and war crimes, including Israel's brutal and illegal colonisation of Palestine.
 9. Receives a report to explore options for council to cancel contracts with companies that support Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine or profit from it, especially companies which supply equipment to the Israeli Defence Force.
 10. Amends the Community Flag Schedule outlined in Council's Civic Flags Policy by raising the Palestinian flag at Council's Coburg Civic Centre and Brunswick Town Hall until a cease fire is declared in Gaza.

1. Background

Cr Bolton's Background:

The constituent councils that make up the City of Merri-bek, have previously expressed views on issues of war and peace. Previous issues where the constituent councils stated a position in support of peace included the referendums on conscription during World War One, the anti-nuclear weapons campaign in the 1980s, and opposition to the 1990 Gulf War (invasion of Iraq).

Many people in Merri-bek come from war-torn countries, some have relatives in Gaza and in the region and some of them come from other countries which have experienced genocide. A sizeable part of the community are horrified as they watch the wholesale attack on civilians which is occurring in Gaza. More than 90 organisations including human rights organisations, trade unions, aid organisations, faith groups, and organisations representing Jewish and Palestinian people have signed a joint statement initiated by Amnesty International Australia.

The statement calls on the Australian government to act on the escalating humanitarian crisis in Gaza and call for an immediate ceasefire and for an end to the targeting of civilians in Gaza. Amnesty International stated that it is "greatly concerned about violations of international humanitarian law (the laws of war) by Israeli forces in Gaza." Amnesty International has "collected evidence of horrific human rights abuses; from the use of white phosphorus, which burns the skin, to airstrikes pounding residential buildings, killing children, to the cutting off of water, food, fuel, and electricity to millions of people. Amnesty International's statement added that "We cannot allow any country to commit war crimes with impunity."

In spite of this, the Australian Parliament shamefully chose not to condemn the ongoing war crimes committed by Israel. On the international stage, Australia abstained from casting a vote in the UN General Assembly which called for an immediate humanitarian truce in Gaza.

Whole families in Gaza have been wiped out, whole neighbourhoods have been flattened with more than 42% of dwellings being destroyed or damaged according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). As of 30 October 2023, , more than 8,000 Palestinian civilians, including more than 3000 children, have been killed by Israel's carpet bombing of Gaza. This includes many paramedics and other healthcare workers. In addition more than 50 UN relief workers and more than 30 journalists have been killed.

2. Policy Context

Officer's comments:

The Merri-bek Human Rights Policy 2016–2026 states that Council will advocate to other spheres of government, business, partner organisations and the community to promote human rights and address issues of discrimination and marginalisation at the local, regional, national and international level.

Council's Community Flag Schedule is a living document that can be added to by Council resolution.

3. Financial Implications

Officer's comments:

The cost of implementing this motion can be met within existing budget allocations.

4. Resources Implications

Officer's comments:

This motion can be actioned within existing resource allocations.

9. NOTICE OF RESCISSION

9.1 Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and Next Steps for Coburg to Glenroy Bike Route

Cr Helen Pavlidis

Rescission Motion

That Council rescind the resolution related to Item 9.1 *Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and Next Steps for Coburg to Glenroy Bike Route* adopted at the Council meeting held on 18 October 2023.

That Council:

1. Declares the trial of the Kent Road separated bike lanes complete.
2. Approves making permanent the Kent Road separated bike lane infrastructure along the north (eastbound) side of Kent Road between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road, and along the south (westbound) side of Kent Road between Cumberland Road and Cornwall Road.
3. Investigates and implements modifications to the Cornwall Road and Kent Road intersection so that the bike and pedestrian crossing points are clarified.
4. To install a zebra crossing outside the Pascoe Vale Health Medical Centre, noting this involves the removal of 5 parking bays.
5. Acknowledges and thanks the community for their time and effort over the extended two-year trial in both identifying issues and working on solutions, which has provided valuable insight into the application of on-road physically separated bike lanes in the local context.

Executive Summary

At the Council meeting held on 18 October 2023, Item 9.1 *Conclusion of Kent Road Separated Bike Lane Trial and Next Steps for Coburg to Glenroy Bike Route* was adopted.

Cr Pavlidis has given notice to rescind the motion.

Reference Material containing the officers report and attachments from the 13 September 2023 Council meeting, which relate to this matter have been separately circulated, with the Agenda.

9.2 De Carle Street Bicycle Lanes

Cr Helen Pavlidis

Rescission Motion

That Council rescind the resolution related to 7.2 *De Carle Street Bicycle Lanes* adopted at the Council meeting held on 18 October 2023.

That Council:

1. Approves the installation of protected bicycle lanes on De Carle Street between Rennie Street and Moreland Road in line with previous designs developed for consultation in November 2021.
2. Approves the removal of eight parking bays on the eastern side of De Carle Street between The Grove and Rennie Street to facilitate two-way vehicle movement.
3. Approves the removal of three parking bays between Moreland Road and The Avenue to enable two-way vehicle passing gaps every 80 to 100 metres.
4. Approves the installation of traffic calming treatments at roundabouts on De Carle Street between Moreland Road and Rennie Street to reduce vehicle speeds and address road safety risks.

Executive Summary

At the Council meeting held on 18 October 2023, 7.2 *De Carle Street Bicycle Lanes* was adopted.

Cr Pavlidis has given notice to rescind the motion.

Reference Material containing the officers report and attachments from the 18 October 2023 Council meeting, which relate to this matter have been separately circulated, with the Agenda.