**Council MEETING AGENDA**

Wednesday 14 May 2025

Commencing 6.30 pm

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

A close-up of a newspaper

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**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.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES** The minutes of the previous meeting are put before Council to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the record.
4. **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.
5. **PETITIONS** Council receives petitions from citizens on various issues. Council formally accepts petitions at Council meetings.
6. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** This is an opportunity (30 minutes), for citizens of Merri-bek to raise questions with Councillors.
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **FORESHADOWED ITEMS** This is an opportunity for Councillors to raise items proposed to be submitted as Notices of Motion at future meetings.
11. **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.
12. **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.
13. **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 11 June 2025 commencing at 6.30 pm, in the Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg. The next Planning and Related Matters meeting will be held on Wednesday28 May 2025 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 9 April 2025 and the Special Council Meeting held on 16 April 2025 be confirmed.

**4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS**

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**9. Notice of Rescission**

Nil

**10. Foreshadowed Items**

Nil

**11. URGENT BUSINESS**

**12. Confidential Business**

12.1 Central Coburg Program scenario modelling update

*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 Coburg Library and Piazza Location

*Pursuant to section 3(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 2020 this report has been designated as confidential because it relates to land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values.*

12.3 Brunswick Early Years Hub - Project Update

*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.*

**5. Petitions**

**5.1 Petition - Install a modal filter in Albert Street, Brunswick West**

A petition (D25/207302) has been received containing 65 signatories requesting Council install a modal filter in Albert Street, Brunswick West, between Pearson and Daly Streets, preventing vehicle thoroughfare, whilst maintaining access for pedestrians and cyclists and creating additional green space.

**Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council install a modal filter in Albert Street, Brunswick West, between Pearson and Daly Streets, preventing vehicle thoroughfare, whilst maintaining access for pedestrians and cyclists and creating additional green space.

2. Refers the petition requesting Council install a modal filter in Albert Street, Brunswick West, between Pearson and Daly Streets, preventing vehicle thoroughfare, whilst maintaining access for pedestrians and cyclists and creating additional green space.to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

**Attachment/s**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Petition - Install a Modal Filter for Albert Street, Brunswick West Proposal - Redacted | D25/207295 |  |

**5.2** **Petition - Opposing proposed dog park development at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner**

A petition (D25/219513) has been received containing 18 signatories requesting Council abandon the proposal for a fenced dog park at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner.

**Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Receives the petition requesting Council abandon the proposal for a fenced dog park at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner; and

2. Refers the petition to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

**Attachment/s**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Petition - Opposing the dog park at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner - Redacted | D25/219541 |  |

**5.3 Petition - Recognise community voices and protect shared access to Fleming Park**

A petition (D25/226730) has been received containing 183 signatories requesting Council:

 Recognise Fleming Park Dog Owners Association as a stakeholder and representative voice for shared park users.

 Facilitate the transparent publication of training and game schedules for organised sport use, following the example of Yarra Council (Victoria Park and Citizens Park).

 Improve perimeter fencing and safety for all park users, including pets.

 Provide a larger or additional fenced dog-friendly area that meets the needs of the local pet-owning population.

 Install lighting to improve safety for park users, especially in early mornings and evenings.

 Commit to genuine, inclusive consultation and better communication with all park users.

 Maintain access to shared green space for informal, recreational, and non-sport users-including dog owners, families, walkers, and renters.

## 

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives the petition relating to various matters concerning shared access to Fleming Park; and

2. Refers the petition to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

## Attachment/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Petition - Recognise community voices and protect shared access to Fleming Park - Redacted | D25/226730 |  |

**7. Council Reports**

**7.1 Safer Speeds for Local Streets in Merri-bek - Trials of 30 km/h**

**Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow**

**Transport**

**Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Approves officers submitting a grant application to the State Government to approve and cover all costs associated with a 30 km/h speed limit trial on local roads in select areas of Coburg, Brunswick and Brunswick East outlined in Figures 3 and 4 of this report.

2. Endorses Council officers to undertake community engagement for residents, schools, businesses and key stakeholders regarding the trial within the proposed trial areas

3. Receives a report on the evaluation of the 30 km/h speed limit trial areas following a 12-month evaluation of the trial.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

Merri-bek City Council is committed to making streets safer for everyone in our community, whether they choose to walk, ride, wheel, drive or catch public transport.

Crashes in Merri-bek have increased since 2020. In 2023, the number of crashes were the highest they’ve been since 2015. Similar trends exist for serious injury crashes and crashes involving pedestrians and bike riders. Without interventions to reduce the crash risk of our streets, crash rates are unlikely to change.

Council is proposing to trial 30 km/h speed limits across two Merri-bek sites – Brunswick/Brunswick East and Coburg – to assess the safer speed limit’s impact on road safety, active travel, and community safety perceptions. It is estimated that the reduced speed limit will eliminate 6.5 death or serious injury crashes within the trial areas for each year that the 30 km/h speed limit is in operation.

During community engagement for our 2024 Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy, our community told us that ‘Safety’ was the highest priority theme for them, particularly prioritising pedestrian safety. The Strategy adopts a Safe Systems approach, including managing speed on our road network and keeping our residents safe on their streets. The Moving Around Merri-bek Action Plan adopted with the Strategy includes pursuing 30 km/h trials in 2024-2025.

Speed limit reductions are one of the most cost-effective measures available to Councils to reduce the consequences of a mistake, the risk of a crash and the risk of fatal or serious injury if a crash does occur. At 30 km/h, a person walking or riding has a 90 per cent chance of surviving being hit by car – this drops to 60 per cent survival rate at 40 km/h, and only 10 per cent survival rate at 50 km/h.  Impacts are greater for children and the elderly.

In neighbouring Yarra City Council, 30 km/h trials resulted in a 51 per cent reduction in all crashes, and a 70 per cent reduction in serious crashes in areas with the 30 km/h speed limits. 68 per cent of residents living in the trial areas supported 30 km/h speeds after the trials were implemented.

Subject to Council’s decision, Officers will undertake community engagement on the proposal and seek approval from Department of Transport and Planning to implement the trials and will apply for funding to deliver the trials through Transport Accident Commission Safe Local Roads and Streets Program.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Lygon Street – Requests Arising from Community Forum -** 12 March 2025

*That Council:*

*…*

4. *Advocates to the State Government for a 30 km/h speed limit trial in the Lygon Street precinct to improve road safety and improve streetscape amenity.*

…

**1. Policy Context**

**Council Plan 2021-2025**

Theme 2: Moving and living safely in Merri-bek

Strategic Objective:

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.

Relevant Strategies:

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

2.7. Maintain road safety focus through review of crashes and reported accidents, advocacy and continued efforts to address black spots, reduce speed limits and implement traffic calming measures including road closures

**Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy (2024)**

The Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy was adopted by Council in March 2024. The Strategy seeks to ensure all actions impacting the councils transport network contribute to objectives aligned to the values of Safe, Accessible, Sustainable, Healthy, Liveable, and Inclusive.

A key pillar of our commitment to adopting a Safe Systems approach is safe speeds. Safer speeds not only improve road safety, they contribute to creating more accessible, sustainable, healthy, liveable and inclusive streets for everyone, especially our most vulnerable residents such as children and the elderly. The proposed 30km trials contribute to achieving the following specific objectives of the Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy (2024).

 Create streets where everyone feels safe.

 Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roads.

 In line with Victoria’s Towards Zero Strategy, adopt a Safe Systems approach to road safety

 Create a transport system in Merri-bek that allows everyone to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.

 Support our community to reduce their transport emissions as rapidly as possible

 Reduce air and noise pollution generated from vehicles.

 Create streets and public spaces that encourage physical activity and socialisation amongst local communities.

 Create high-quality and well-designed streets and places that are vibrant and well-loved by all.

 Work collaboratively with our community and stakeholders to improve our transport system.

 Work to make our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.

The 30 km/h trials are included in the endorsed Moving around Merri-bek 2024 - 2025 Action Plan under the Value ‘Safe’ –

By June 2025, Council will have:

 Taken and created opportunities to advocate for safety outcomes relating to introducing 30 km/h speed zones (inclusion in Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines and roll-out in pilot area of Merri-bek).

 Advocated to the State Government and TAC to fund a 30 km/h trial in an identified area of safety concern.

**The Merri-bek Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026**

Under the objective of *Equal access to all areas of community life* Council has the following actions:

 Council will improve the accessibility of Council buildings, infrastructure and open spaces and go beyond principles of Universal Design, whenever possible, so they can be accessed by everyone.

 We will improve the accessibility of Council’s information, programs and services to increase the participation and social inclusion of people with disability.

Universal Design asks us to look beyond traditionally accepted minimum standards and adopt new approaches that better serve the needs of everyone in the community.

Reduced speed limits of 30 km/h will assist in making our streets are safer, more accessible and inclusive.

**Living and Ageing Well in Merri-bek Framework**

The Living and Ageing Well in Framework establishes principles and practices which inform relevant, timely and responsive action across all areas of Council to support older people in our municipality.

Strategic Indicators:

1. Outdoor environments support the needs of all to enjoy regardless of physical capacities

2. Older people are able to get around the municipality as they need and feel safe

**Zero Carbon Merri-bek Strategy**

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.

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.

The Ride & Stride program has been a key deliverable under the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Strategy. Since 2021 the Ride & Stride program has been delivered in 16 local schools, with a key objective being to support safer streets near schools.

**Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030**

The Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030 commits to eliminating death from Victorian roads by 2050, with the first step of halving road deaths by 2030. The strategy outlines the following objectives:

 Ensure all Victorians are safe and feel safe on and around our roads.

 Halve road deaths and progressively reduce serious injuries by 2030.

 Embed a culture of road safety within the Victorian community.

 Deliver a suite of initiatives that are achievable and have an impact in the short term, but also prepare Victoria for the future.

In the Action Plan for 2021 to 2030, the following actions have been identified by the Victorian Government to improve safety and reduce speed across the network:

 We’ll update our Speed Zoning Policy and technical guidelines. The updated policy and guidelines will be informed by the feedback from local governments and communities.

 Through the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program we’re working with local governments, as road managers and key partners in driving road safety, to fund and support projects that improve local road safety.

 Responding to keen interest from local governments and their communities, we’ll consider proposals for speed limit reductions in areas with significant interface between pedestrians and bicyclists and vehicles.

**Infrastructure Victoria Draft 30-year Strategy 2025-2055**

Infrastructure Victoria is an independent advisory body with 3 functions:

1. preparing a 30-year infrastructure strategy for Victoria

2. advising the government on specific infrastructure matters

3. publishing research on infrastructure-related issues.

Infrastructure Victoria aims to take a long-term, evidence-based view of infrastructure planning.

Recommendation 14 of the strategy states:

*Make local streets safer for children and communities –*

*Reduce speed limits to 30 km/h on local streets, starting in places that children often visit including around schools, playgrounds, childcare centres and kindergartens.*

**2. Background**

Our commitment to Vision Zero and a Safe Systems approach to speed in Merri-bek

Both the National and Victorian Road Safety Strategies aims to halve the number of road deaths and reduce serious injuries by at least 30 per cent by 2030, on the way to Vision Zero by 2050.

The Safe System philosophy is based on four principles:

1. People make mistakes that can lead to road crashes

2. The human body has a limited physical ability to tolerate crash forces before harm occurs

3. A shared responsibility exists amongst those who plan, design, build, manage and use roads and vehicles and those who provide post-crash care to prevent crashes resulting in serious injury or death

4. All parts of the system must be strengthened to multiply their effects; so that if one part fails, road users are still protected.

Speed limit reductions are one of the most cost-effective measures available to Council’s to reduce the consequences of a mistake, the risk of a crash and the risk of fatal or serious injury if a crash does occur.

Implementing safer speeds are a key measure to reducing death and serious injury on our transport network.

**Evidence for 30 km/h Safety Impacts**

Research shows that 30 km/h is the maximum speed before a healthy adult is likely to be seriously injured or die in the event of an impact with a vehicle, as shown in Figure 1.

At 30 km/h, a person walking or riding has a 90 per cent chance of surviving being hit by car – this drops to 60 per cent at 40 km/h, and only 10 per cent at 50 km/h.

Within the context of Merri-bek’s current local road network, at 30 km/h 9 in 10 local residents will survive a crash; at 40 km/h, 6 in 10 local residents will survive.

A graph showing a speed limit

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*Figure 1 Graphic illustrating reduction in survival rate for pedestrians as vehicle speed increases*

**Disproportional Safety Impacts for Vulnerable Road Users**

When considering vulnerable road users outside of simple ‘pedestrian’ or ‘cyclist’ profiles, we know that road trauma disproportionately affects children, the elderly and those with impaired mobility in our community.

Land transport accidents are the leading cause of death in Australia for children aged 1 to 14.

People aged 60 and over have made up 50 per cent of pedestrian deaths and 34 per cent of hospitalisations over the past decade in Victoria.

**40 km/h Speed Limit Roll-Out in Merri-bek**

In 2023 and 2024, Council introduced 40 km/h speed limits to all council-managed local roads. Prior to this, there were a small number of local areas that had already had 40 km/h limits for over a decade.

When Council has previously implemented safer, lower speeds in Merri-bek, we’ve received a high level of community support and acceptance.

During the 2023/2024 40 km/h roll out, Council sent approximately 85,000 letters to residents informing them of the change in speeds from 50 km/h to 40 km/h. Council received 75 enquires from residents (0.0008 per cent of all notified). Of the 75 enquiries, only 18 per cent opposed the reduction in speed (13 enquiries). Conversely, 25 per cent requested for 30 km/h limits and higher order roads to be included in the speed reduction roll-out.

The two areas selected for the 30 km/h trials have had 40 km/h limits for over 10 years, pre-dating the recent wider 40 km/h roll-out. Selecting existing 40 km/h areas formed part of the key selection criteria in identifying proposed 30 km/h trial areas to ensure a reasonable and timely transition for our community.

**Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines and Merri-bek Advocacy for 30 km/h**

Through our Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy, and our previous Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy, Council has consistently advocated to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) for consideration of 30 km/h speed trials to be considered in targeted areas of Merri-bek.

Although streets included in the trial areas are all council-managed, 30 km/h speed limit, changes within these areas still require State Government approval. This is due to the current Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines not including 30 km/h speed limits. As a result, Councils may only implement 30 km/h in their municipality under trial conditions.

To ensure appropriate identification, implementation and evaluation of 30 km/h speed limit trials in Merri-bek, Council commissioned Monash University Accident Research Centre to undertake a Pre-Trial Study, which was submitted to Council and DTP in June 2022. The recommendations from this study have been incorporated into our proposed trials.

A request to amend the Speed Zoning Guidelines was part of Merri-bek’s submission to the Victorian Government Road Safety Partnership’s Parliamentary Inquiry into Vulnerable Road User Safety in 2023. The Partnership is made up of the Transport Accident Commission, Victoria Police, Department of Transport and Planning (Road Safety Victoria), Department of Justice and Community Safety and the Department of Health.

Council’s submission to the 2023 Parliamentary Inquiry advised:

 The most important factor in reducing injuries to vulnerable road users are travel speeds, and resultant impact speeds, especially at those locations where the mix of vulnerable road users is high

The Victorian Government’s recently released Road Safety Action Plan responds to this advocacy with the following actions:

 We’ll update our Speed Zoning Policy and technical guidelines. The updated policy and guidelines will be informed by the feedback from local governments and communities.

 Responding to keen interest from local governments and their communities, we’ll consider proposals for speed limit reductions in areas with significant interface between pedestrians and bicyclists and vehicles.

**Findings from City of Yarra 30 km/h Trials**

In 2018, Yarra City Council implemented a 30 km/h trial in two locations within Fitzroy and Collingwood.

Yarra City Council resolved to make the existing trial permanent in 2019. As 30 km/h is not included in the Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines, the speed limit has remained in place since 2019 as a trial. In November 2023, Yarra Councillors endorsed a plan to expand the existing 30 km/h speed zone to a larger area of Fitzroy and Collingwood, and extend the trial for another 2 years.

The trial areas in Yarra were selected based on the following factors:

 Areas with a high mix of pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles

 Areas with a high potential for conflict between vehicles and vulnerable road users

 Areas with a high number of crashes on 40 km/h local streets involving vulnerable road users

 Areas with a number of schools, education facilities, community uses, businesses, key public transport routes and high levels of street activation and socialisation

 Areas with strategic and locally important bicycle routes

Community Sentiment over the trial significantly increased:

 Immediately following the 2018 trial, 51 per cent of the community supported the 30 km/h speed limits, an increase from pre-trial (from 47 per cent).

 In 2023, surveys found this had increased to 68 per cent of participants living in the current trial area supporting 30 km/h speeds on streets they lived on

 Similarly, surveys found 59 per cent of participants living or working within the proposed trial expansion zone supported 30 km/h on streets they lived on

 These findings are consistent with a global body of evidence, which finds support for lower speeds increases post-implementation.

A review of the Victorian Government’s Road Crash Information System shows that in the five years since the trial began in 2018 (compared to the five years leading up to the trials):

 There was a 51 per cent reduction in all crashes, and a 70 per cent reduction in serious crashes in areas with the 30 km/h speed limits

 Comparatively, in the areas that have retained the 40 km/h speed limits, there was a 10 per cent reduction in all crashes, and an 11 per cent reduction in serious crashes

**Crash Statistics in Merri-bek**

In 2023, there were 444 recorded crashes in Merri-bek. This includes 2 fatalities, 120 serious injuries requiring hospitalisation, and 322 crashes included an ‘other’ type injury. That same year, 75 bike riders and 53 pedestrians were involved in a crash. On local streets managed by Merri-bek, there were 157 crashes in 2023.

Crash trends, as shown in *Figure 2*, have remained largely stagnant in the last decade. Some downward trends were evident before 2020. However, crashes have increased in most categories and are now back to levels seen a decade ago.

*A graph of crash and injury

AI-generated content may be incorrect.*

*Figure 2 Crashes in Merri-bek 2012-2023*

Without interventions to reduce the crash risk of our streets, crash rates are unlikely to change.

**Merri-bek 30 km/h Trials – Areas and Approach**

We are proposing to trial 30 km/h speed limits across two Merri-bek sites – Brunswick/Brunswick East and Coburg – to assess safer speed limit’s impact on road safety, active travel, and community safety perceptions.

Using State Government crash reduction factors, the proposed 30 km/h trial areas are estimated to eliminate 6.5 death or serious injury crashes within the trial areas for each year that the 30 km/h speed limit is in operation.

Findings from this trial will provide evidence on whether safer speed limits improve safety in Merri-bek for vulnerable road users, reduce crashes, injuries and fatalities, and create safer, more liveable local streets for local residents. The two trial sites will contribute to a growing body of evidence that can inform broader policy changes to speed zoning in Victoria and Australia.

Recent research has demonstrated that community support for 30 km/h is strongest in existing school zones, extended school zones, shopping strips, dining strips, inner city residential streets, and suburban residential streets.

The two trial areas have been strategically selected to serve as unique case studies, providing insights into the impact of lower speed limits in different urban contexts and with different community approaches. By considering areas that contain streets with different movement and place functions, the trial will provide a clearer understanding of how safer speed limits influence safety, accessibility, and the overall role of streets in our community.

These differing areas and approaches can help us evaluate how safer speed limits impact different precinct types and help inform a considered approach for any future roll-out implementing safer speeds in Merri-bek.

The 30 km/h speed limit trial applies only to selected local streets within the defined areas of Brunswick, Brunswick East, and Coburg. Speed limit changes on other roads, including arterial roads, are outside the scope of this proposal.

**Coburg - Schools Precinct**

Area:

The Coburg trial area is bounded by Gaffney Street (north), Bell Street (south), Sussex Street (east), and Sydney Road (west), as shown in *Figure 3*.

It represents a typical suburban environment with primarily local residential streets. This area centres around one of Merri-bek’s largest public primary schools, Coburg North Primary. It also borders two more of our largest public schools, Coburg Primary and Coburg High School, with many families who attend these schools residing in and/or commuting through the trial area on their journeys to school.

Approach:

There is a growing level of demand in our community, nationally and globally, to see safer speeds around schools, kindergartens and child-care centres. Two of Merri-bek’s largest public primary schools within and bordering this trial area are Coburg North Primary and Coburg Primary, who are both actively engaged in Council’s Ride & Stride program. Through our Ride & Stride surveys, we know that the key parent concern preventing children walking or riding to school is car traffic and speed near the school gate.

There are an increasing number of parent-led community campaigns in Merri-bek centred around improving children’s safe travel to school in Coburg, such as ‘Safer Streets, Coburg Kids’, ‘Safer Walking and Riding for Murray Road’, and a history of joint Council and Community advocacy to DTP for safer speeds on Bell St for Coburg High School and Coburg Primary School students.

Crash History:

Between 2019 and 2023, the Coburg trial area has recorded 36 crashes, including 6 serious injury crashes. Note that multiple crashes may be found at the one ‘dot’ on the map. These numbers only include reported crashes and not near misses.

A map of a city

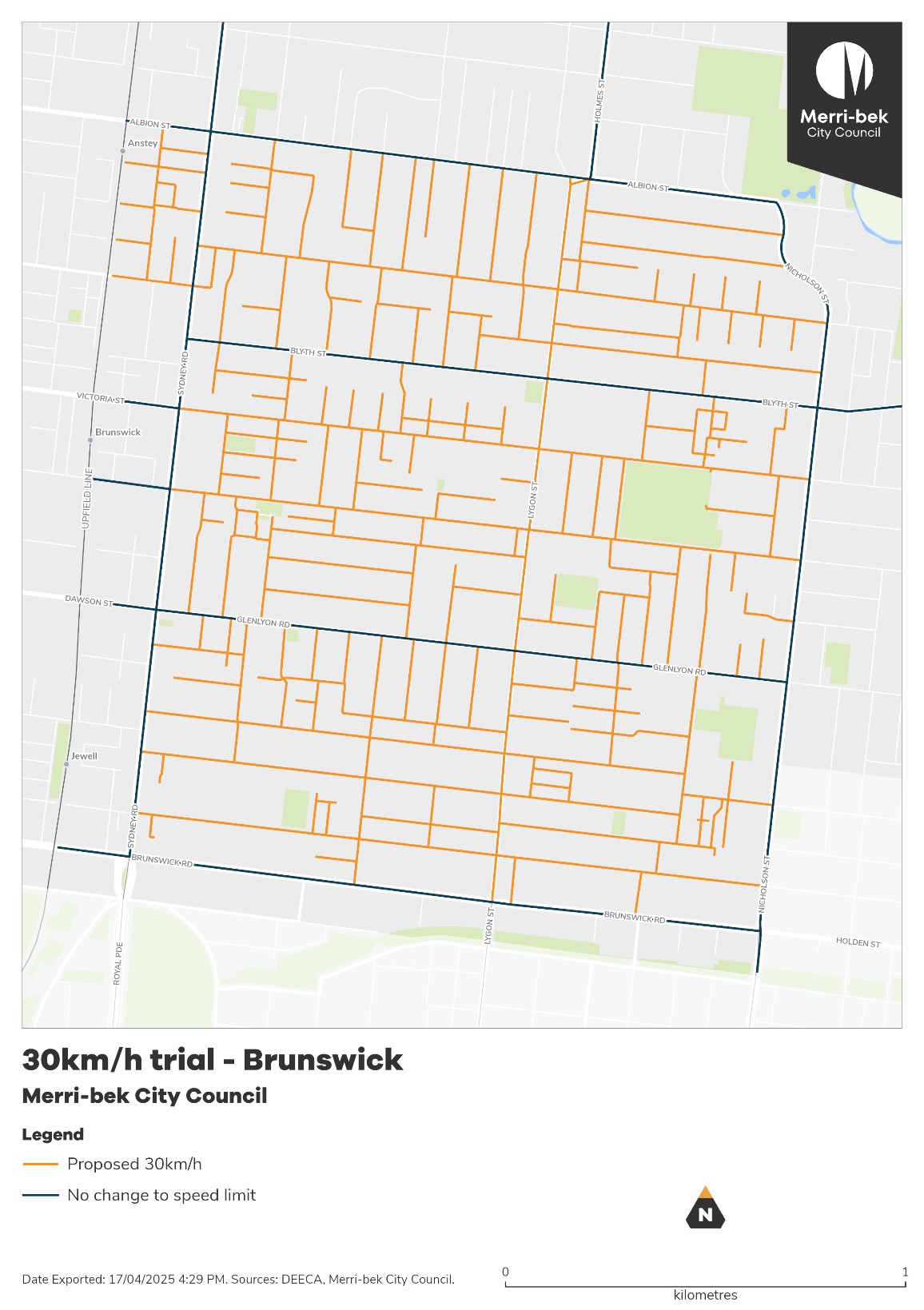
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*Figure 3 Coburg, proposed 30 km/h trial area*

**Brunswick and Brunswick East - Activity Precinct**

Area:

The Brunswick trial area is bounded by Albion Street (north), Brunswick Road (south), Sydney Road (east), and Nicholson Street (west). It is an activity precinct with a mix of residential, commercial, and community spaces, and is centred around the Lygon St activity area.



*Figure 4 Brunswick, proposed 30 km/h trial area*

Approach:

The selected area in Brunswick/Brunswick East is a densely populated area with a high mix of pedestrian, cyclist and driving activity, with a mix of residential, commercial, and community spaces. In local streets where cars, cyclists, and pedestrians share space, lower speeds improve reaction times and allow drivers to stop before impact.

Crash History:

Between 2019 and 2023, the Brunswick trial area has recorded 152 crashes involving, including 44 serious injury crashes.

**3. Issues**

**Community impact**

Any implementation of lower speed limits in Merri-bek is likely to draw a wide variety of community support and criticism. There are a number of common concerns that community members may have to any proposed changes to speed limits in their local areas.

***Impacts on travel time***

 There has been an extensive amount of research that shows that 30 km/h speed limits have negligible impacts on travel times.

 In urban areas, factors like traffic congestion, time spent at intersections, and parking delays have a greater influence on travel time than the speed limit itself.

 Global research has also shown that 30 km/h limits allowed the road system in a number of cities to accommodate cars more efficiently, resulting in faster overall travel times.

 Longer driving trips will largely take place on arterial roads, where speed limits are typically higher, so the impact of 30 km/h zones on overall travel time for longer journeys is likely to be minimal.

***Impacts on local business trade***

 Safer speed zones can generate more trade for local businesses, as people prefer to linger in street environments with calmer, quieter traffic. Many people enjoy taking the opportunity to walk or ride, or the calmer experience of parking and pulling out of car parks in safer speed zones.

 Yarra City Council has found no notable difference in the level of traffic or visitation to their trial areas as a result of the 30 km/h zones.

***Impacts on carbon emissions***

 In general, lower speeds like 30 km/h can lead to reduced emissions compared to 40 km/h, primarily due to reduced acceleration/deceleration, reduced braking and improved fuel efficiency, especially in urban areas.

 A review of 30 km/h speed limits in Europe (generally reduced from 50 to 30 km/h) found that emissions reduced by an average of 18 per cent.

The changed to speed limits and any associated impact to emergency response times or public transport operations will be considered as part of our key stakeholder engagement. These services will be consulted during the trial.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

An evaluation framework will be developed to assess the viability and effectiveness of the speed limit changes with key stakeholders (including TAC and DTP). This framework will be designed to review the effectiveness of 30 km/h speed limits in creating safer streets for vulnerable road users, and will inform any possible future roll-out of 30 km/h speed zones in Merri-bek and future review of the Victorian Speed Zoning Guidelines.

Factors that will be considered, but not limited to, within the evaluation framework for the trial areas before, during and after are:

 Evidence based Road Safety Principles

 Change in crash, injury and fatality risk

 Vehicle speeds

 Community sentiment

 Travel times

 Visitation to local businesses

 Active Travel mode share

 School active travel mode share

 Local resident, school and business case studies

**Human Rights Consideration**

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

Key sections in the Charter that are relevant to this report are freedom of movement (section 12) and taking part in public life (section 18).

The actions proposed in this report contribute positively to freedom of movement by creating safer streets for Merri-bek residents to walk, ride, wheel or drive around, and reducing fatality and injury rates in the instance of a collision.

It is considered that the right to freedom of movement has not been unreasonably limited by the recommendations in this report.

**4. Community consultation and engagement**

We will seek to engage the affected residents, schools, businesses and other key stakeholders within the proposed trial areas prior to, during, and following the 12-month trial.

This engagement will be conducted under the following objectives:

1. Directly inform affected residents, schools, businesses and key stakeholders within the trial areas on the changes to speed limits and associated timelines

2. Educate the wider community and visitors to the areas on the rationale of the speed limit changes and safety impacts

3. Gather feedback from residents, schools, businesses and key stakeholders within the trial areas before, during and after the 12-month trial to contribute to evaluating the speed limit’s long-term viability and effectiveness

All affected stakeholders will receive hard copy notification of the trial before commencing, along with a baseline survey to understand community perceptions of safety and speed on local streets (hosted through Conversations Merri-bek or hard copy by request). Post-trial surveys and notification of next steps will be distributed to all affected stakeholders at the conclusion of the trial.

Opportunities for in person engagement pre and post-trial to discuss the trial with affected community members will be considered and held at key locations, such as local schools or key activity areas.

We will engage with the communities directly affected within the trial area via a mix of hard copy, online (through Conversations Merri-bek) and in-person engagement opportunities. A detailed communication and engagement plan will be developed in line with our Community Engagement Policy.

**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.

Residents and businesses within the proposed trial areas will be able to provide their feedback on the trial at three different points; before the trial, during, and after 12 months of the trial being in place. Another opportunity will then be available whether to continue with the trial when the 12-month evaluation is presented to Council.

**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 trial will have on the council budget, as the resources to prepare and undertake the trial are proposed to be delivered via a Transport Accident Commission (TAC) grant.

Subject to Council and DTP approvals, Council will seek funding through the TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program to cover all costs associated with the trials.

This includes costs relating to:

 Infrastructure design and implementation

 Communications and engagement

 Monitoring and evaluation

 Staff Resourcing

**7. Implementation**

Should Council endorse the proposed trial locations, officers will seek required approvals from DTP and funding from TAC to implement the trials.

Councillors and community will be updated on progress and informed of implementation if approved and funded.

Engagement prior, during and after 12 months of the trial will be undertaken as outlined in Section 4 of this report.

Existing 40 km/h speed limit signs and road markings will be replaced by 30 km/h speed limit signs and road markings. Any additional signage or road marking to support adherence to the revised speeds will be considered during the trials as needed, subject to funding.

Any additional traffic calming infrastructure to support adherence to the revised speeds will be considered during the trials as needed, subject to funding.

Evaluation of the trial will be undertaken after 12 months of implementation and a report subsequently prepared for Council on the trial results.

**Attachment/s**

There are no attachments for this report.

**7.2 General (Amendment) Local Law 2025**

**Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow**

**Amenity and Compliance**

**Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Pursuant to section 73(3) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, publishes a notice that states

(a) the objectives of the proposed local law, and

(b) the intended effect of the proposed local law; and

(c) that a copy of the proposed local law is available for inspection –

(i) at the Council’s office; and

(ii) on the Council’s internet site; and

(d) the community engagement process that applies in respect of the making of the local law (as outlined in section 4 of this report). The community engagement period will be from 15 May 2025 to 4 June 2025.

2. Receives a further report following the community consultation to consider the making of the local law.

3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make minor changes to the proposed local law before community engagement commences, where changes are required for correctness, clarity, formatting or the like.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

The General Local Law 2018 was adopted at the 6 December 2017 Council meeting and came into effect on 1 February 2018. The Local Law aims to ensure a safe, healthy environment, protect public spaces, regulate premises, vehicles, and animals, manage nuisances, and maintain peace and good governance in the municipality.

Council has received numerous reports from community members about a current issue involving the feeding of wild birds which has the potential to lead to health concerns, property and infrastructure damage, a decline in community aesthetics and impact the enjoyment of people’s place of residence. The current Local Law does not include adequate provisions to address the issue, and therefore this report seeks to amend the existing local law to introduce new provisions that will enable enforcement action to be taken against those that breach the local law.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s endorsement of community consultation on the General (Amendment) Local Law in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

A summary of the proposed amendments is attached to this report, outlining the purpose, specific clauses and suggested wording (Attachment 1). The proposed amending Local Law (Attachment 2) outlines the changes as reviewed by Russell Kennedy Lawyers. Specifically, the following items have been included as proposed amendments for consideration of Council:

Part 5 – Animals

 Inclusion of feeding of birds on private property

 Inclusion of Power of Authorised Officers - feeding of birds on public land

 Inclusion of definition of private property

 Amendment to Schedule 1 Penalties fixed for infringements

On Council’s endorsement, a community engagement process will commence. The results of the community engagement process will be presented to Council for consideration to make the Local Law. The proposed amending local law will be certified from a qualified lawyer (Russell Kennedy Lawyers) in accordance with section 74(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Adoption of the General Local Law 2018** – 6 December 2017

*That Council:*

*1. Adopts the Moreland City Council General Local Law 2018 at Attachment 1 to this report subject to the following amendments:*

*a) Amend Clause 10.15:*

 *In the first sentence replacing ‘A person must minimise the risks’ with ‘a person must seek to eliminate the risks’;*

 *Replacing the words ‘stones or other refuse or pollutants’ in part (a) with ‘or stones;*

 *Replacing the words ‘or other waste’ in part (b) with ‘other waste, refuse or pollutants’;*

*b) Change the penalty in Schedule 1 of the General Local Law for 10.15 from 10 to 20 penalty units.*

*c) Add into the definition of mature tree:*

 *(c) has multiple trunks with a combined diameter that is 400 mm or wider measured 1.2 metres above ground level; or*

*d) After clauses 5.1 and 5.2 Keeping of animals, insert the words as a note: ‘clauses 5.1 and 5.2 don’t apply to a person who has a permit under the Wildlife Act to keep a native animal’.*

*2. Adopts the Prescribed Area – Possession and Consumption of Liquor in Public Places.*

*3. Determines that the Moreland City Council General Local Law 2018 shall come into effect on 1 February 2018, noting that the current General Local Law 2007 expires on 31 January 2018.*

*4. Revokes on 1 February 2018 the Environmental and Civic Assets Local Law 2014.*

*5. Delegates to the Director City Infrastructure the powers, duties and functions to amend any identified formatting or clerical errors prior to Gazetting the proposed General Local Law 2018.*

*6. Gives notice in the Government Gazette any by public notice specifying:*

*a) The title of the local law;*

*b) The purpose and general purport of the General Local Law 2018; and*

*c) That a copy of the General Local Law 2018 may be inspected at Council offices.*

*7. Sends a copy of the General Local Law 2018 to the Minister for Local Government.*

*8. Thanks submitters for their contribution and notifies them of the decision.*

**1. Policy Context**

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides the legislative framework for Councils to make local laws, including a local law which amends an existing local law. Section 71(1) of the Act states *A Council may make local laws for or with respect to any act, matter or thing in respect of which the Council has a function or power under this Act or any other Act.*

Council is responsible for making and administering its Local Law. Sections 73 and 74 of the *Local Government Act 2020* sets out the procedure for making a Local Law. This requires Council to make a new local law in accordance with its community engagement policy and to publish a notice stating the objectives and intended effect of the proposed local law.

In making a new local law, the Council must publish a notice stating –

a) the objectives of the proposed local law

b) the intended effect of the proposed local law

c) that a copy of the proposed local law is available for inspection at Council’s offices and on Council’s internet site, and

d) the community engagement process that applies in respect to the making of the local law.

Council Plan Alignment – Theme 2: Moving and living safely in Merri-bek; Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek; Theme 4: Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek and Theme 5: An empowered and collaborative Merri-bek.

This Local Law ensures the well-being and health of those living in our diverse community is protected, community members have access to attractive spaces and places and participation in decision making is encouraged and supported. An as-needed review of the local law is undertaken to ensure effectiveness and response to community needs.

**2. Background**

The General Local Law 2018 was made under the provisions of section 111(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* and section 42 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994.* The local law came into effect on 1 February 2018 and is valid until 31 January 2028.

Section 71(6) of *Local Government Act 2020 s*tates that a local law made under the *Local Government Act 1989* continues in force and may be amended or revoked by a local law made under the *Local Government Act 2020.*

The objectives of the General Local Law 2018 are to:

a) promote a physical and social environment that is accessible and free from hazards to health, in which the residents of and visitors to the municipality can enjoy a quality of life that meets the general expectations of the community;

b) protect the use of public places and control activities in, on or near them;

c) provide for safety in public places;

d) control, protect and conserve the environment and maintain the amenity of the municipality;

e) provide for, control and manage the use of premises and vehicles in particular circumstances;

f) regulate the number and manner of keeping of animals;

g) control, prevent and abate nuisances; and

h) provide for the peace, order and good governance of the municipality.

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides the legislative framework for Councils to make local laws. Section 71(1) of the Act states:

*A Council may make local laws for or with respect to any act, matter or thing in respect of which the Council has a function or power under this Act or any other Act.*

Council has received numerous reports from community members about the feeding of wild birds which has the potential to lead to health concerns, property and infrastructure damage, a decline in community aesthetics, and impact the enjoyment of people’s place of residence. The current Local Law does not include adequate provisions to address the issue, and therefore this report seeks to amend the existing local law to introduce new provisions which will enable enforcement action to be taken against those that breach the local law.

The purpose of this proposed amendment local law is to specifically address the issue with the feeding of birds. The impact of this issue is significant on community members and therefore requires prompt intervention which unfortunately cannot wait until the preparation of a new local law.

A local law must be relevant and responsive to the community’s needs. Council plans to commence a more comprehensive and holistic review the existing local law in August 2025, with adoption of a new local law expected to be in mid-2026.

**3. Issues**

Council has the ability to amend the existing Local Law and make new local laws in response to community needs. The issue with feeding of wild birds is one that can be addressed through an amendment local law. Council has obtained legal advice from Russell Kennedy Lawyers which states that the provisions in the existing Local Law are insufficient to deal with this current issue.

The following amendments are proposed to the General Local Law:

1) Immediately after clause 5.13 of the General Local Law insert:

**Feeding of birds on private property**

5.14 An occupier of private propertymust not:

(a) feed or continue to feed; or

(b) allow or cause to be fed any bird on that private propertyif:

(i) that bird is not ordinarily kept on the private property; and

(ii) the circumstances in which the bird is fed are likely to or do interfere with the material comfort of any other person or with a person’s use and enjoyment of land they own or occupy.

**Power of Authorised Officers - feeding of birds on public land**

5.15 An Authorised Officermay direct a person on any road, publicplaceor Council landnot to:

(a) feed or continue to feed; or

(b) allow or cause to be fed any bird on that road, publicplaceor Council land.

5.16 A person to whom a direction by an *Authorised Officer* under Clause 5.15 must comply with that direction.

2) In clause 1.10 of the General Local Law, immediately after the definition of “prescribe” insert:

*Private property* means land other than *Council land* and land occupied, managed or controlled by a public authority.

3) Set the infringement penalty units for new clauses 5.14 and 5.16 at 3.5 penalty units which is consistent with the other penalty units in Part 5 of the General Local Law. It should be noted that penalty units set under a local law made under the *Local Government Act 1989* are capped at $100 per penalty unit, penalty units set under a local law made under the *Local Government Act 2020* are at the value determined each year by the State Government through the Calculated Penalties Table and the penalty unit value process.

4) In the table in Schedule 1 to the Genera Local Law, immediately after the penalty fixed for “5.13 Conduct a commercial enterprise without a permit” insert:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 5.14 | Feeding of birds on private property | 3.5 |
| 5.16 | Failure to comply with a direction given by an *Authorised Officer* under clause 5.15. | 3.5 |

The amendments aim to provide clarity and stronger enforcement capability around the feeding of birds.

The amendment of the General Local Law involves the following key steps:

 May 2025 – report presented to Council to seek adoption to commence community consultation in accordance with Council’s Community Engagement Policy.

 15 May 2025 to 4 June 2025 – community consultation occurs

 July 2025 – a further report is presented to Council on community responses, and consideration to adopt the General (Amendment) Local Law 2025.

**Community impact**

The purpose of this proposed amendment local law is to specifically address an issue which has to date had significant impact on community members and therefore, requires prompt intervention.

The proposed amendment local law will directly impact community members as it restricts the feeding of birds on private property and on public land. Those found to be in breach of a local law are liable for penalties which may include the issuing of Notices to Comply, infringement or prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court.

Penalty units set under a local law made under the *Local Government Act 1989* are (including when amendments are made to that local law) capped at $100 per penalty unit.

Council does not have the option of setting the penalty unit value, Council does however, have the ability to set the number of penalty units for each offence. The new clauses set the infringement penalty units at 3.5 per offence, in line with the current infringement penalty unit for offences under Part 5 of the Local Law however, the community may provide feedback on the number of penalty units during engagement.

The proposed maximum penalty unit for the offences to be created under the proposed amending local law is the same as the maximum prosecution penalty for all existing offences in the Local Law.

**Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications**

The objectives of the local law include *promote a physical and social environment that is accessible and free from hazards to health, in which the residents of and visitors to the municipality can enjoy a quality of life that meets the general expectations of the community.*

**Legal and risk considerations**

The *Local Government Act 2020* sets out the procedure for making a local law. A legal review of the proposed amendments has been completed by Russell Kennedy Lawyers.

As Russell Kennedy has provided advice on this local law process, it is intended that the certification required by section 74 (1) be obtained from Russell Kennedy on Council’s consideration of making the Local Law.

**Human Rights Consideration**

A local law must not be inconsistent with any Act, including the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Genuine contribution and participation in the development of the local law helps ensure that community members who may be affected by the local law have the opportunity to participate in the process and design the local law which affects them.

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, specifically the Right to privacy and reputation which states that every person has a right to enjoy their private life free from interference; and the Right to take part in public life which states that every person has the right to participate in public life and democracy through helping make decisions on local issues. The assessment showed that no Human Rights have been breached.

**4. Community consultation and engagement**

Internal key stakeholders have been engaged on the proposed amendments and process for introducing them. The consultation and feedback received has informed the proposed Local Law amendments.

**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.

The proposed engagement process provides this opportunity.

**Proposed community engagement process**

Section 73 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires notice of the community engagement process that applies in respect of the making of a local law.

In accordance with Council’s Community Engagement Policy, Council will apply the IAP2 spectrum level to consult with the community which will be to listen to our community’s feedback on the potential decision to make a local law and take their feedback into consideration. This will involve seeking feedback via Council’s Conversations Merri-bek page and making the proposed local law available on Council's website and providing a copy of the proposed local law will be available at Council office and upon request. We will also focus on reaching our diverse community through various channels including the Community Connectors program and engaging with young people.

The engagement period will run for 15 business days, from 15 May 2025 to 4 June 2025.

**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**

No additional funding or resourcing is required to implement the recommendation made. Legal and advertising fees will be sourced from the Amenity and Compliance budget.

**7. Implementation**

On Council’s endorsement, a public notice will be published stating:

(a) the objectives of the proposed local law, and

(b) the intended effect of the proposed local law; and

(c) that a copy of the proposed local law is available for inspection –

(i) at the Council’s office; and

(ii) on the Council’s internet site; and

(d) the community engagement process that applies in respect of the making of the local law.

In accordance with Council’s Community Engagement Policy, the engagement period will run for 15 business days, from 15 May 2025 to 4 June 2025.

A further report will be presented to Council following the community consultation to consider the making of the local law.

The proposed amending local law will be certified from a qualified lawyer (Russell Kennedy Lawyers) in accordance with section 74(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**Attachment/s**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Proposed General (Amendment) Local Law 2025 Summary of Changes - Attachment 1 | D25/207810 |  |
| **2** | Proposed General (Amendment) Local Law 2025 for Consultation - Attachment 2 | D25/212915 |  |

**7.3 Accommodation needs of Food Relief Organisations**

**Director Community, Eamonn Fennessy**

**Community Wellbeing**

**Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Notes the findings of the feasibility assessment for accommodating food relief organisations, as outlined in Attachment 1.

2. Considers the needs of community organisations addressing food security in the review and allocation of Council-owned community venues.

3. Advises organisations seeking to provide food security services of any upcoming Expressions of Interest processes for use of Council-owned buildings.

4. Consider opportunities to utilise Council-owned community venues to support food security initiatives as part of future planning and service delivery.

5. Supports efforts to strengthen the capacity of community organisations addressing food security through advocacy and strategic partnerships.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

This report presents the outcomes of a feasibility assessment into the accommodation needs of food relief organisations within Merri-bek.

Merri-bek is home to 22 food relief organisations delivering essential services including food parcels, prepared meals, vouchers, culturally appropriate food, personal care items, and referral support. These organisations have varied operational needs, requiring spaces that support storage, distribution, client access, and service coordination.

Council continues to play a key role in supporting the food relief sector by:

 prioritising use of existing community assets

 co-locating services where feasible

 recognising food relief organisations in community venue hire policies

 providing access to local government grants and operational support.

Council reviewed available Council-owned buildings, considering location, existing uses, building condition, and operational requirements. The assessment identified that no current assets are fit-for-purpose without significant, unbudgeted investment. In addition to this, Council has no clear policy driver to provide or acquire purpose-built accommodation for food security organisations.

However, given the high and growing demand for accommodation across community sectors and the importance of these organisations, Council will continue to work within its existing asset base and advocate to state and federal governments for ongoing investment and support to meet local food security needs.

Future planning of projects and buildings will ensure the specific needs of food relief providers are considered when purchasing, refurbishing, or leasing Council-owned buildings.

However, long-term infrastructure solutions such as building new facilities, retrofitting existing ones, or acquiring land are not financially sustainable within Council’s current resources.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Food System Strategy 2024-2027** – 14 August 2024

*That Council:*

*1. Notes the feedback received on the Draft Food Systems Strategy 2024-2027 during the public exhibition, and thanks the community for the contributions.*

*2. Adopts the Food System Strategy 2024-2027 (Attachment 1) with an additional point under “1. Food equity and security”. The additional point is to note that Council will conduct a feasibility study to determine the accommodation needs of food relief organisations in Merri-bek.*

**Food System Strategy 2024-2027** – 12 June 2024

*That Council:*

*1. Endorses the draft Food System Strategy 2024-2027 for public exhibition from the 17 June 2024 to the 8 July 2024.*

*2. Notes the food and material relief organisations and volunteer groups in Merri-bek and thanks them for their significant contribution to life in Merri-bek.*

*3. Notes the level of support that is offered to emergency food and material aid services and volunteer groups by Merri-bek City Council.*

*4. Notes how food security and food relief is addressed in the Food System Strategy 2024–2027.*

*5. Requests a feasibility study is undertaken to determine the accommodation needs of food relief organisations in Merri-bek including the advantages and disadvantages of various options such as use of existing Council buildings, long term lease or property acquisition.*

**1. Policy Context**

Food equity and security is a strategic priority in the *Food System Strategy 2024-2027*, which involves:

 Strengthening the Food and Material relief sector and advocating to other levels of government for investment in food security.

 Securing external funding for continuation of the Community Food Hub project.

 Continuing to evaluate the outputs of the Community Food Hub project as a long-term holistic solution to food insecurity.

**2. Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased the demand for food and material relief across Merri-bek, leading to the establishment and expansion of many community-led food relief organisations. In 2022, Council reviewed this sector and identified that these groups already operating in a fragmented and under-resourced environment face persistent challenges including limited funding, volunteer workforce instability, and a lack of access to appropriate premises and infrastructure.

During the development of the Food System Strategy 2024–2027, these issues were echoed by local organisations, who reported difficulty in meeting rising demand due to chronic under-resourcing, a lack of integration with other services, and over-reliance on volunteers, including in critical service delivery roles.

To build a clearer picture of long-term needs, Council commissioned the Community Food Hub project the coordinator to undertake a targeted needs assessment in 2024. This work was supplemented in early 2025 with in-depth interviews with food relief organisations actively seeking secure accommodation. Approximately 22 food relief organisations operate within Merri-bek, with most based in partner venues or community settings, and a smaller number hiring Council-owned spaces.

Council does not have a clear role or policy driver for supporting the accommodation needs of food security organisations. The specific needs of individual organisations can be complex and expensive. Providing tailored and purpose built or purchased solutions is therefore not recommended given the many other demands on Council capital works budgets to support core Council activities.

However, in assessing the needs of organisations officers believe Council can help these organisations by prioritising the use of existing and available Council assets to support food relief efforts where practical, including through co-location opportunities and enabling access to community venues.

To sustain and scale support for food relief into the future, ongoing collaboration with state and federal governments will be essential particularly with agencies and organisations that already receive external funding. Council remains committed to playing a key role in enabling local service delivery, advocating for systemic investment, and fostering integrated, co-located solutions within its existing asset network.

**3. Issues**

**Community impact**

Access to suitable premises at low or no cost continues to be an issue for smaller community organisations, many of they who are run by volunteers and have limited resources.

The needs of the organisations are varied and depend on their operations. They range from the provision of perishable and non-perishable food items, case management and confidential counselling and referral to services, culturally appropriate fresh produce for sale via food voucher programs or direct purchasing.

In many instances, accommodation for these organisations would need to be purpose built or retro fitted for the specific requirements of the services based on their functions.

In addition to secure accommodation, one of the key needs for many small volunteer run food relief organisations is operational funding to co-ordinate the service and support the volunteers.

The recommendations will contribute to further strengthening the network of food relief organisations.

**Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications**

The physical requirements of these groups include access to cold storage, storage of provisions, access to a commercial kitchen, private rooms to conduct confidential conversations. Due to the community accessing these services, ideally, they need to be located within 1.5 km of public transport.

**Economic sustainability implications**

Federal funding for food and material relief in Merri-bek is provided to CIS - Merri-bek and Salvation Army for goods and services but not for infrastructure.

**Legal and risk considerations**

There are no legal considerations arising from this report.

**Human Rights Consideration**

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the right to accessing food with dignity is a key consideration. In identifying the future locations for these services various access needs will be considered.

The suitability of the venues has been assessed based on accessibility.

**4. Community consultation and engagement**

 As part of the Community Food Hub project the coordinator conducted an extensive food security needs analysis, interviewing 15 local community / not-for-profit food relief or food security organisations late 2023/ early 2024.

 Council conducted in depth interviews with organisations currently seeking accommodation in 2025 to understand their specific needs.

 Key themes emerged from these discussions around infrastructure gaps and reliance on volunteers and lack of ongoing operational funding.

 Staff will continue to liaise with the relevant Council units to explore accommodation options as Council buildings come up for lease and as part of the review of use of Council venues.

**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**

N/A

**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 would be significant capital cost to provide for the specific needs of community food security organisation. The acquisition of land and/or purchase and development of purpose-built facilities would be in the millions of dollars and is therefore not recommended.

Any subsidies or free use offered to services using existing Council venues will impact overall revenue facility revenue to Council and would be in the low thousands of dollars for one organisation.

**7. Implementation**

Include food security organisations as a key priority activity in the review of community venue hire guidelines.

Continue to monitor the needs of food relief organisations through the Food and Material Relief Network.

Advise all organisations of opportunities to lease buildings through Expression of Interest processes, grants or partnership opportunities via relevant communication channels.

**Attachment/s**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Accommodation Needs of Food Relief Organisations Analysis Summary April 2025 | D25/203153 |  |

**7.4 Use of Herbicides at Shore Reserve - Response to Petition**

**Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow**

**Open Space and Environment**

**Officer Recommendation**

That Council receives this report regarding a petition containing 58 signatures presented at the 11 December 2024 Council meeting.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

Council received a petition with 58 signatures from lead petitioner (Irene Georgakakis) at the 11 December 2024 Council meeting “requesting Council stop using herbicides or any other chemicals and poisons at Shore's Reserve and all other open spaces”.

Upon receiving the petition, Council resolved that a report be received by Council on the matters raised in the petition.

The matters raised in the petition are summarised as:

 Concern that the herbicides Council is using are not safe for people (including children), dogs and the environment

 Requesting that Council use alternatives to these herbicides for weed management

 There is an underlying problem with the playing surface at Shore Reserve and managing its use and maintaining the surface may be all that is needed (rather than application of herbicides).

The report addresses the above matters, advising:

 The herbicide used by Council (glyphosate) is considered safe by Australian authorities when used according to the instructions for application.

 Council has previously undertaken trials of alternatives to using this herbicide and no suitable alternative has been found to cover all the different scenarios for its use. However, Council has several alternative weed management approaches where it is practical and beneficial to adopt these, and new approaches continue to be adopted such as goats.

 The Shore Reserve oval is used for Australian Rules Football and cricket. For the level of use it receives, it is a substandard sized-ground and ultimately not suited to the usage it receives. Strategies Council is adopting to address this include finding alternative venues for some of the West Coburg Football Club senior games to be played. A ground renewal and sportsfield lighting upgrade are currently included in the draft 5-year Capital Works Program for planning in 2027/28 and implementation in 2028/29.

 Council adopts weed management practices that minimise the opportunity for weeds to take hold on sportsground surfaces and applies herbicides sparingly and in accordance with manufacturer’s guidelines and regulator requirements.

 Notwithstanding this, Council will minimise its use of herbicides to manage weeds at Shore Reserve in informal recreation areas, while maintaining safe use of herbicides to manage weeds on the playing surface. This approach will result in more weeds being visible throughout the reserve between weeding events. The community will be invited to participate in weeding events at the Reserve alongside Council officers.

A response to the lead petitioner has been prepared and dispatched and is at Attachment 1.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Petition requesting Council stop using herbicides or any other chemicals and poisons at Shore's Reserve and all other open spaces** - 11 December 2024

*A petition (D24/462611) was received containing 58 signatures requesting Council stop using herbicides or any other chemicals and poisons at Shore's Reserve and all other open space.*

*That Council:*

*1. Receives the petition, requesting Council stop using herbicides or any other chemicals and poisons at Shore's Reserve and all other open space.*

*2. Refers the petition requesting Council stop using herbicides or any other chemicals and poisons at Shore's Reserve and all other open space to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.*

*3. Receives a report to a Council meeting on the matter.*

**Weed Management Research and Moreland No-Glyphosate Trial** - 8 December 2021

*That Council:*

*1. Notes the findings from the Deakin University research which indicates based on the results of the field trials and taking into consideration cost, safety information and off -target impacts, glyphosate is considered to be the most effective weed management strategy of the different approaches used in the trial. A peer reviewed report on this research is provided at Attachment 1.*

*2. Notes the commencement in July 2021 of Council’s own weed management trial including community feedback from trial areas to date and notes the budget recommendations that will be put forward for 2022/2023.*

*3. After the conclusion of the trial, any recommendations about the future use of glyphosate, takes into account evidence about the impacts of glyphosate on human health that include reports from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as well as the industry-funded Australian Pesticide and Veterinary Medicines Authority and evidence of insurance companies not insuring companies or organizations which manufacture, distribute or use glyphosate. An assessment of the impact of glyphosate on humans should include the adequacy of labeling on the safe use of glyphosate.*

**Weed Management: Glyphosate Phase Out Plan** - 9 June 2021

*That Council:*

*1. Notes that to date, despite considerable investigation of options, none of the alternatives to using glyphosate for weed management has shown to be as effective or viable economically or environmentally.*

*2. Notes that current guidance from the Australian regulatory authorities and WorkSafe Victoria, is that products containing glyphosate can continue to be used safely, as long as adhering to directions in the Safety Data Sheet and labels and does not represent a health risk to the public.*

*3. Notes that glyphosate has already ceased to be used in high risk exposure sites across Moreland.*

*4. In the light of the high cost and unproven effectiveness of currently available alternative treatments, undertakes a trial of a large ‘no glyphosate’ zone with a comparison control zone over a two-year period and evaluates the trial using metrics including worker hours, equipment hours, material costs and community feedback.*

*5. By agreeing to the trial, sets aside previous Council decisions to cease the use of glyphosate by August 2021, made at the:*

*• 14 August 2019 Council Meeting - “Weed Management Review – Further Report to Review of Pest and Weed Management Policy (from 6 December 2017)”; and*

*• 12 August 2020 Council Meeting - “Weed Management – Glyphosate Phase Out Update”*

*6. Continues a phased approach to both reducing and then potentially ceasing the use of glyphosate at all other low risk and environmentally sensitive sites in the future, with an update report on the findings of current Deakin University research and the application of any promising alternatives to Moreland that may impact on the 2022/23 Budget be received by Council in December 2021*

**Weed Management: Glyphosate Phase Out Plan** - 12 May 2021

*That the item be deferred for one month until the Council meeting on 9 June 2021.*

**Weed Management – Glyphosate Phase Out Update** - 12 August 2020

*That Council*

*1. Notes the work currently undertaken to phase glyphosate products out of Council operation by August 2021.*

*2. Receives a report at the March 2021 Council meeting highlighting the timing and cost implications of the full ‘Phase Out Plan’.*

*3. Notes that residents can register their property on the ‘No Spray Register’ which stops the use of glyphosate on land abutting their property. Property owners who sign up to the register, acknowledge that they are committing to maintaining the weeds on the public areas that abut the property, including footpaths, laneways, verges and gutters.*

**Weed Management Review – Further Report to DCI70/17 (Review of Pest and Weed Management Policy** **decision 6 December 2017)** - 14 August 2019

*That Council:*

*1. Notes the potential negative health impacts of glyphosate on residents, workers and bystanders, and notes the well-established negative impacts on bees and insect populations which are critical to agriculture and native ecosystems as well as the development of weed resistance to glyphosate.*

*2. Adopts a phased approach to ceasing the use of glyphosate products by August 2021.*

*3. Receives a report in August 2020, providing an update on the progress of moving to banning glyphosate by 2021.*

*4. Continues to advocate for viable alternate products to replace glyphosate.*

*5. Notes that Council officers are progressing an initiative to provide a sign to all residents currently on the ‘No Spray Register’ and those who sign up to the register, noting that the resident is committed to maintaining the weeds on the public areas that abut the property, including footpaths, laneways, verges and gutters.*

**Review of Pest and Weed Management Policy** - 6 December 2017

*That:*

*1. Council acknowledges the actions undertaken to date implementing the Pest and Weed Management Policy.*

*2. A report comes back to Council after an assessment of the results of the trials of safer, organic, bio-degradable alternatives, outlining options for the phasing out of glyphosate.*

**1. Policy Context**

The Pest and Weed Management Policy was adopted by Council in September 2016.

The policy underscores the benefits of an integrated pest and weed management strategy in public open space, ensure proper selection and use of herbicides and pesticides and investigate the use of viable alternatives that lead to more sustainable environmental outcomes. Before being adopted, the policy went through a full community consultation process. Feedback received through this consultation period helped form the final policy.

The Merri-bek Nature Plan provides strategic direction to enhance biodiversity and celebrate nature in our municipality. Council has partnered with a number of key organisations, new and emerging community groups and other key stakeholders, such as Melbourne Water, in undertaking activities such as weed control, revegetation and ecological burning to rehabilitate parklands along the creek corridors. Effective weed management is complex and can be especially challenging in the urban environment. In conservation areas, Council engages skilled bushland contractors to undertake weed control. They use a range of best practice land management techniques, including brush cutting, hand weeding, herbicide spraying, flame-weeding and ecological burning.

**2. Background**

The full wording of the petition presented to Council at its 11 December 2024 meeting is as follows:

The poison you are using may be classified as a “safe” herbicide, however has it been tested for longer than 5 to 10 years as is required by Science and the medical establishment?

By its make up and purpose it is a poison to poison “weeds” to thus eliminate them from the grasses of the reserve. We deem this a poison and it does not have any reason to be sprayed on this and on any oval, reserve, park, open areas in the municipality of Merri-bek.

We are concerned about our safety, our children’s safety, our dogs’ safety and the environment’s safety.

Also, the sports oval at Shore’s Reserve needs care as it has been way overused. Upon inspection it does not have enough “weeds” to justify any sort of spraying. What it needs is a good amount of top soil to cover the many pot holes and the whole lot to be punched to make holes to aerate the soil as it is so compacted by the grass roots.

More care and maintenance is what this oval needs, not poisons.

Council has actively assessed alternatives to use of glyphosate in recent years.

These activities are documented in the extensive history of Council resolutions on this matter outlined at the start of this report. In summary, there have previously been requests for the phasing out of use of glyphosate by Council that have been tested by officers through trials. Council has reduced glyphosate usage for certain activities, does not apply glyphosate in playgrounds and has implemented No Spray zones. Along with several other Councils, Merri-bek also commissioned research by Deakin University into alternatives to use of glyphosate and the safety of glyphosate.

The outcome of these activities has been that there is no suitable alternative to use of glyphosate for most of Council’s weed management functions and that when it is used according to manufacturer’s specifications, it is safe to humans, animals and the environment. Several Councils that had discontinued using glyphosate have now returned to using it, finding no other method suitable for weed management.

**3. Issues**

Issues highlighted by the petitioners:

***Concern that the herbicides Council is using are not safe for people (including children), dogs and the environment***

All herbicides used by Council, including Specticle Herbicide and Weedmaster Duo, are Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) approved and safe when applied according to their labels. Specticle, a water‑based indaziflam formulation has been registered since 2016. Weedmaster Duo, a post emergent herbicide that targets annual, perennial and aquatic weeds, has been registered since 2012.

The APVMA’s rigorous, science‑based review, assesses both the likelihood and impact of exposure on people, animals, plants, and the environment. Proper label use mitigates any identified risks, ensuring safe, effective weed management across Council operations. Council chemicals are stored in a locked chemical storage shed with lockable cabinets, accessible only to certified staff. Access and usage are recorded for auditing and safety purposes.

***Requesting that Council use alternatives to these herbicides for weed management***

During the period - July 2021 to June 2023 - Council undertook trials of alternatives to using herbicides with no suitable alternative being found to cover all the different scenarios for its use. However, Council has several alternative weed management approaches where it is practical and beneficial to adopt these, and new approaches continue to be adopted such as:

 **Goats**: Control weeds in hard-to-reach or steep terrain.

 **Solarisation**: Use of black plastic to trap heat and kill weeds, seeds, and pathogens in warmer weather.

 **Dense Planting/Ground Covers**: Reduce weed growth by covering soil with low-growing plants.

 **Manual Weeding**: Labour-intensive but effective for small areas.

 **Mulching**: Suppresses weeds and pests while retaining moisture.

 **Ecological Burning:** has been safely used as a management tool in Merri-bek’s grasslands both for managing weeds and increasing plant diversity for many years.

Officers will reduce their use of herbicides at Shore Reserve, by applying dense planting, mulching and manual weeding to parts of Shore Reserve that are informal recreation areas. This will mean that there are more weeds visible throughout the Reserve between manual weeding events. It is acknowledged that some members of the community may be concerned about weed growth. The community will be invited to participate in scheduled weeding events alongside Council officers. Notice will be provided of upcoming events at the Reserve, ahead of time. The oval will continue to be treated with herbicides.

***There is an underlying problem with the playing surface at Shore Reserve and managing its use and maintaining the surface may be all that is needed (rather than application of herbicides).***

Shore Reserve supports both Australian Rules Football (AFL) and cricket, but given the volume and intensity of use, its smaller dimensions place pressure on its ability to sustain the required level of activity. To help manage this, Council is working to spread some of West Coburg Football Club’s games to alternative venues.

A sports field redevelopment and sports field lighting upgrade are currently included in the draft 5-year Capital Works Program for planning in 2027/28 and implementation in 2028/29, as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2027/28  (design)** | **2028/29 (implementation)** | **Total** |
| Shore Reserve: Sports Field Redevelopment | $100,000 | $2,400,000 | $2,500,000 |
| Shore Reserve: Sports Field Lighting Upgrade | $50,000 | $350,000 | $400,000 |
| Total | $150,000 | $2,750,000 | $2,900,000 |

**Community impact**

Council receives on average 150-200 customer service requests per year relating to weed management. Of these requests, less than 5 per cent relate to concerns of chemical use. A vast majority call for Council to manage weed control within the municipality. It is important to strike a balance between community expectation and implications of alternate products on service delivery.

With the proposal to minimise herbicide use at Shore Reserve, it is possible that some members of the community will be unhappy with the presentation of the Reserve. The community will be invited to participate in scheduled weeding events alongside Council officers. Notice will be provided of upcoming events at the Reserve, ahead of time.

**Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications**

Merri-bek City Council is taking a leading role within the region by declaring a climate emergency and continues to seek new initiatives to preserve and enhance the environment for community wellbeing. The projected increase in global temperatures will favour proliferation of weeds with their physiological tolerances to climate stressors, so control and management of weeds especially environmentally significant ones, will prove challenging without the use of herbicides.

**Economic sustainability implications**

Any phasing out of use of herbicide will result in additional expenditure to manage weeds in the municipality and to maintain an acceptable level of service, in the absence of alternate cost-effective solutions.

**Legal and risk considerations**

Merri-bek City Council addresses legal and risk considerations in herbicide use through comprehensive policies that prioritise public health, environmental sustainability, and community engagement. These measures aim to ensure that weed management practices on sporting grounds are safe, effective, and compliant with legal standards. The Council's Pest and Weed Management Policy outlines its approach to weed control, emphasising the use of non-residual chemical herbicides and alternative methods to minimise environmental impact.

**Human Rights Consideration**

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. Merri-bek City Council's Human Rights Policy, grounded in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, emphasises the protection of residents' health and well-being. This includes ensuring that public spaces, such as sporting grounds, are safe and accessible for all community members. The Council acknowledges its responsibility to uphold human rights in all its operations, including environmental management practices.

**Gender Equality Impact Assessment**

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act, the recommendations in this report were assessed for the extent of “direct and significant impact on the public”. The recommendations were not deemed to have direct and significant impact, and so a Gender Impact Assessment was not undertaken.

**4. Community consultation and engagement**

There was no community consultation or engagement undertaken as part of providing this report to Council.

The local community around Shore Reserve will be advised of forthcoming weeding events and invited to take part.

**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 were no financial or resource implications in providing this report to Council.

**7. Implementation**

Officers will implement the reduced use of herbicides in informal recreation parts of Shore Reserve within the next 3 months.

Officers will continue to monitor the use of herbicides across the municipality in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and ensure a more robust communication process with residents in surrounding areas of this usage.

Officers will continue to benchmark usage of herbicides and alternate weed control across other municipalities.

The Current Weed Management policy will be reviewed in early 2026 and will include chemical control along with cultural, biological, and mechanical methods for holistic and sustainable weed management.

**Attachment/s**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Response to Petition on Herbicide Use at Shore Reserve Dec 2024 | D25/217644 |  |

**7.5 C236mbek - Development Contributions Plan 2.0 - Gateway 1 - Authorisation & Exhibition**

**Director Place and Environment, Pene Winslade**

**City Strategy and Economy**

**Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Endorses the report *Merri-bek Development Contributions Plan (April 2025)* as shown in Attachment 1 as part of Amendment C236mbek.

2. Seeks authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare Merri-bek Planning Scheme Amendment C236mbek in accordance with section 8A of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

3. Subject to the Minister’s authorisation, prepares Amendment C236mbek, generally in accordance with the documentation provided at Attachments 1 and 2.

4. Exhibits Amendment C236mbek in accordance with section 19 of the *Planning and* Environment *Act 1987* and as outlined in the Consultation section of this report.

5. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make changes to the Amendment prior to exhibition based on any conditions imposed in the authorisation granted by the Minister for Planning and to make administrative changes to correct errors and grammatical changes.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

In 2015 Council adopted the *Moreland Development Contributions Plan 2015* (DCP 1.0*)* as a formal, lawful, and equitable way to collect contributions from new development toward the necessary infrastructure for a growing population.

DCP 1.0 established an obligation on Council to collect levies in line with specified rates in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme, deliver the infrastructure projects listed in the DCP’s incorporated document, and spend the collected levies on these projects.

The collection period for levies under DCP 1.0 has expired, and a new DCP, the *Merri-bek Development Contributions Plan, April 2025* (DCP 2.0) has been prepared to support new and upgraded infrastructure to meet the needs of the community over the next 15 years.

Amendment C236mbek proposes to introduce DCP 2.0 into the Merri-bek Planning Scheme by applying Schedule 2 to the Development Contributions Overlay to all land within the municipality. Schedule 2 to the Development Contributions Plan Overlay imposes a development infrastructure levy and/or a community infrastructure levy on new residential, commercial, and industrial development.

The DCP 2.0 is based on Council’s Capital Works Program (CWP) and includes infrastructure projects such as roads, drainage, footpath, streetscape works as well as community infrastructure projects (early years centres, libraries and aquatic facilities). The infrastructure is required to cope with the growing population of the municipality and the consequential increased demand on infrastructure.

The DCP 2.0 will provide certainty for Council, developers and the broader community on the application and extent of levies for new residential, commercial and industrial developments. The DCP 2.0 will also reduce uncertainty and resource demands associated with case-by-case voluntary negotiations and agreements between Council and developers.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Amendment C221more – Development Contribution Plan Project Substitutions – Decision Gateway 2 – Adoption** – 7 December 2022

*That Council:*

*1. Using its powers as a planning authority under s 29 of the Planning and Environment 1987, adopt Moreland (Merri-bek) Planning Scheme Amendment C221more as shown in Attachments 1, 2 and 3 to this report.*

 *Submit the adopted Amendment to the Minister for Planning.*

**Amendment C215 – Development Contributions Plan (DCP) – Extension of Project Delivery Dates – Decision Gateway 3–** 10 November 2021

*That Council:*

*1. Adopts Amendment C215more to the Moreland Planning Scheme Pursuant to Section 29(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.*

*2. Submits Amendment C215more to the Moreland Planning Scheme to the Minister for Planning for approval, pursuant to section 31 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.*

**Moreland Planning Scheme C133 – Development Contributions Plan -** 11 February 2015

*Council resolve to:*

*1. Note the recommendations of the Amendment C133 Panel Report dated 27 November 2014 (Attachment 1).*

*2. Adopt Amendment C133 pursuant to section 29(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, with changes recommended in the Amendment C133 Panel Report (Attachment 1) as follows:*

*a) Correct all errors in the exhibited DCP identified in Appendices C and E.*

*b) Revise the apportionment of all road or drainage projects in the Development Contributions Plan that span two (or more) charge areas in proportion to the length of street frontage relating to the project in each charge area.*

*c) Delete project RD0163 from the Development Contributions Plan.*

*d) Insert an end date of 30 June 2023 in the Development Contributions Plan.*

*e) Delete Clauses 5.0, 6.0, 7.0 and 8.0 from the Development Contributions Plan Overlay schedule.*

*f) Insert the following revised dot point under Clause 4.0 of the Development Contributions Plan Overlay schedule:*

*“Land known as 'Coburg Hill' (the former Kodak site), located at 173‑199 Elizabeth Street, Coburg North (described as Lot B on PS608167Y), which is defined by Schedule 10 to Clause 43.04‑Development Plan Overlay to the Moreland Planning Scheme.”*

*g) Amend the charging rates in the Development Contributions Plan Overlay schedule as required to reflect the changes to the DCP recommended in this report.*

*3. Delegate to the Director Planning and Economic Development the authority to finalise changes to the Amendment in accordance with Council’s resolution and also to undertake any changes as required to correct errors, grammatical changes, map changes and any consequential changes required to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) to align it with the final Amendment.*

*4. Submit Amendment C133 with changes to the Minister for Planning for approval, pursuant to section 31(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.*

*5. Notify all submitters of Council’s resolution and to write to all submitters advising of the Minister’s decision on Amendment C133 once confirmed.*

**1. Policy Context**

**Council Plan 2021-2025**

The *Council Plan 2021-2025* (Council Plan) aims to create a municipality that is healthy and caring, contains vibrant spaces and places, and is empowered and collaborative.

The preparation of a new Development Contributions Plan (DCP) is a major initiative and priority of the Council Plan (Item 46). The *Council Action Plan 2024-2025* (Action Plan) also includes *Action 134 – Continue preparation of a new Development Contributions Plan.*

The development of a new DCP also aligns with the following strategic objectives of the Council Plan:

 Strategy 4.1 *- Improve and provide equitable access to council-owned community infrastructure by investing in needs driven, place-based, integrated services and facilities including developing precinct plans.*

 Strategy 5.6 *-* Significantly *progress efforts to secure more developer funding towards Council’s response to population growth.*

 Strategy 5.8 *-* Ensuring *our assets provide the best fit for community needs over the long term*

**Budget and Capital Works Program**

Council’s Adopted 4-Year Budget (2024-2028) sets out what Council will deliver in terms of services, infrastructure and projects over four years and how these activities will be funded. The Budget also contains Council’s 4-year Capital Works Program (CWP) which sets out a detailed breakdown of project spending over the four-year budget period.

The 4-year Budget and CWP have informed the project list for the new DCP, with projects commencing in the 2026/27 financial years onwards considered for inclusion.

***Planning and Environment Act 1987* and Ministerial Direction**

The DCP is enabled by the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act), which sets out the legislative requirements to guide operation of a DCP. Having a DCP means Council can collect levies from those land developments which enable local population growth and economic development. This collection obliges Council to deliver all the infrastructure projects listed in the DCP before its expiry.

The *Ministerial Direction on the Preparation and Content of Development Contributions Plans* (Ministerial Direction) provides direction to Councils on the preparation and content of a DCP, including where a DCP can be applied, exempt development, and what can be funded from collected levies. It also sets out specific reporting requirements Councils must follow when they have a DCP.

**Development Contributions Guidelines**

The Victorian State Government has published *Development Contributions Guidelines, March 2007* (DCP Guidelines) for the preparation of a full cost apportionment DCP.

The DCP Guidelines provide a clear and detailed guidance on key concepts and required tasks in preparing a full cost apportionment DCP. These guidelines are recognised by Planning Panels Victoria as the appropriate guide to the development of DCPs. The new DCP has been prepared in accordance with these guidelines.

**Merri-bek Planning Scheme**

Municipal Planning Strategy

Merri-bek’s Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) at Clause 02.03-8 (Infrastructure – Community Infrastructure) includes the following strategic direction focused on providing infrastructure to support a growing and changing population:

*In planning and delivering community infrastructure, Council supports:*

 *Providing accessible community infrastructure (e.g. health, education, social, leisure and cultural facilities) in different locations suited to the local community’s needs.*

Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) includes State planning policies that apply in all planning schemes across the State. This includes existing State policies relating to development and infrastructure contributions.

Clause 19.03-1S (Development and infrastructure contributions plans) clause includes an objective *to facilitate the timely provision of planned infrastructure to communities through the preparation and implementation of development contributions plans and infrastructure plans.* Strategies to support this objective include:

 *Prepare development contributions plans and infrastructure contributions plans, under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, to manage contributions towards infrastructure.*

 *Collect development contributions on the basis of approved development and infrastructure contributions plans.*

**2. Background**

In 2015, Amendment C133 to the Moreland Planning Scheme was approved by the Minister for Planning. This amendment introduced the *Moreland Development Contributions Plan 2015* (DCP 1.0) into the planning scheme and applied Schedule 1 to the Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO1) to all land in the municipality.

**DCP 1.0 Overview**

The DCP 1.0 included:

- 842 projects that had a total cost of $114,921,542 (in 2012 at the time of its creation)

- 10-year timeframe based on a 10-year CWP delivered between 2013/14 to 2022/23.

- Anticipated cost recovery of approximately of 11% (i.e. income for Council), where collection of levies would cease after the DCP expiry, being 30 June 2023.

Schedule 1 to the Development Contributions Plan Overlay

The Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO) is a planning tool that enables councils to implement a DCP. In Merri-bek, a schedule to the DCPO sets out areas where development contributions are required to fund infrastructure, services, and works prior to development.

While DCPO1 itself does not trigger a planning permit, it applies to permit applications for land subdivision or for buildings and works within the DCPO area. This ensures that developments comply with the requirements of the DCP, including the obligation to contribute to infrastructure funding.

These provisions will also apply to any future DCPO Schedules adopted by Council.

**Amendments to DCP 1.0**

The DCP 1.0 played a key role in supporting the delivery of essential infrastructure across the municipality. However, delivering the full list of projects within the original 10-year timeframe proved challenging due to the number of projects in the DCP and an 18-month amendment process that effectively reduced the delivery window.

In response, Council undertook Amendment C215more to extend the DCP’s infrastructure completion date for an additional 3 years to 30 June 2026. There was no change to the collection date for the levies/contributions.

Council initiated a further review of DCP 1.0 in 2022. This review focused on the DCP project list, with the goal of establishing a revised list of infrastructure projects for delivery by 2026 that reflected changes to Council’s CWP and updated Council policy and strategic priorities. The updated project list formed the revised DCP incorporated document, the ‘2015 DCP Addendum’, and was introduced in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme through Amendment C221more.

These delivery challenges highlight the importance of a more focused project list and a longer implementation timeframe to support timely and effective outcomes.

**3. Issues**

**Need for a new DCP**

Council ceased collecting DCP levy income from DCP 1.0 on 1 July 2023. Since its adoption in 2015, Merri-bek’s population has grown significantly—from 167,870 in 2015 to 191,747 in 2025. Continued housing development is expected to drive further growth, with the population projected to increase by approximately 40,000 people (or 21%) by 2040.

To support this growth, a new DCP is required. It will enable Council to continue to collect contributions from new development, ensuring the cost of infrastructure provision is shared between current and future communities.

The *Merri-bek Development Contributions Plan, April* 2025 (DCP 2.0) spans a 15-year period to 2040. It was prepared by technical experts and has been designed and developed to overcome issues experienced in the delivery of DCP 1.0, including:

 Refining the project list to contain projects that have a level of certainty based on their documented need in a Council strategic document.

 Aligning the costs of the projects with costings set out in the 2024-2028 Council Budget and CWP.

 Ensuring the road and drainage program detailed in the project list is based on Councils Condition Based Program.

 Adopting a 15-year timeframe, which offers opportunities to review projects and find replacement projects where council commitments change.

 The project list having a list of projects distributed across the municipality which would help with finding replacement projects if identified in a review process.

A copy of DCP 2.0 has been provided at **Attachment 1**.

**Implementation of DCP 2.0**

A DCP must be incorporated into a planning scheme before any infrastructure levies can be collected from new development. Amendment C236mbek proposes to amend the Merri-bek Planning Scheme to introduce DCP 2.0 by:

 Inserting a new Schedule at Clause 45.06 Development Contributions Plan Overlay that references DCP 2.0 and sets out a summary of the costs and contributions prescribed in the DCP (DCPO2).

 Apply the DCPO2 to all areas identified in the DCP 2.0 where levies will be collected from new development.

 Amend Schedule to Clause 72.04 Documents Incorporated in this Planning Scheme to list DCP 2.0 as an incorporated document.

A copy of the amendment documentation is provided at **Attachment 2.**

**Levy calculation methodology**

A DCP sets a levy charged to new residential, commercial and industrial development to part fund an adopted list of infrastructure projects required to meet demand created by population growth. This enables the cost of these infrastructure projects to be shared equitably between current and future communities.

The methodology used to calculate the development contribution levy is the cost apportionment method which is set out in the DCP Guidelines and is detailed in Section 5.0 of DCP 2.0 at **Attachment 1.**

Broadly speaking the calculation is based on the ‘nexus principle’ where new development is charged for the delivery of infrastructure it will ultimately benefit from. Costs are apportioned according to projected share of infrastructure usage by new development. An allowance for ‘external demand’ is also included - this accounts for development outside the DCP area or beyond its timeframe that will still benefit from the infrastructure.

**Criteria for inclusion of projects in DCP 2.0**

The selection of projects for DCP 2.0 was based on specific criteria outlined in the Ministerial Direction and DCP Guidelines, which define strict rules for eligible projects. Projects included must:

 Be used by a broad cross-section of the community.

 Serve a neighbourhood-sized catchment or larger area.

 Be a capital works item or set out in a Council adopted strategy.

 Be an upgrade of existing infrastructure, or a new item of infrastructure (general maintenance projects cannot be included).

 Not be an open space project, as these will be funded through the Public Open Space Contribution (POSC).

 Have a value above $10,000. Projects with a value of less than $10,000 are largely related to maintenance.

 Commence from July 2026 and can be delivered within the 15-year DCP period. This is to ensure all eligible projects have not commenced prior to the amendment process.

The list of projects included in DCP 2.0 is based on Council’s 2024-2028 Capital Works Program (CWP), Council’s 10-year Asset Plan (2022-2023 to 2031-2032) and a road program identified from Council’s Road condition audit undertaken in September 2024. This demonstrates Council’s commitments to delivering the projects within the nominated 15-year timeframe.

Overall, DCP 2.0 includes a total of 25 infrastructure projects with a combined value of $158,341,503, with 15 per cent of the cost attributable to new development over a 15-year period. The projects can be summarised as:

 12 road programs capturing 109 individual road/drainage projects.

 3 drainage upgrades.

 1 streetscape upgrades.

 2 education-based community infrastructure projects.

 7 Community infrastructure projects.

Details of the projects are contained in Table 6 of **Attachment 1.**

**Levy payable for new development**

DCP 2.0 is proposed to cover all land within the municipality and applies to all new residential, commercial, and industrial development commencing in the 2026/2027 financial year (subject to exhibition outcomes and ministerial approval and gazettal of the amendment).

For the purposes of DCP 2.0, each suburb represents one charge area (total of 12 charge areas). This structure allows levies to reflect the specific infrastructure demand and cost apportionment within each suburb. All development within a particular charge area will be required to pay the same contribution amount per demand unit.

Tables detailing the contributions payable for residential, commercial, and industrial development are set out in the new Schedule 2 to the Development Contribution Plan Overlay (DCPO2) which is contained in **Attachment 2.**

As can be seen from these tables, the charge per new dwelling ranges from $304 in Brunswick to $2,667 in Coburg. The charge per 100m2 of commercial floor area ranges from $2.30 in Brunswick to $28.24 in Hadfield. For 100m2 of industrial floor area, the charge ranges from $2.40 in Brunswick to $29.29 in Hadfield.

Some development is exempt from paying infrastructure levies. Section 6.5 of DCP 2.0 sets out this development which includes:

 A non-government school as defined in the Ministerial Direction.

 Housing developed by or for the Department of Health and Human Services as defined in the Ministerial Direction.

 A small second dwelling as defined in the Ministerial Direction.

 Alterations and additions to an existing dwelling.

 Outbuildings normal to an existing dwelling and fences.

 Reinstatement of a dwelling which has been unintentionally damaged or destroyed.

**15-year Timeframe**

DCP 2.0 is proposed to have a 15-year timeframe to receive contributions and deliver projects. A 15-year timeframe will strike an acceptable balance between managing the risk associated with delivering the DCP projects and leveraging forecasted growth and opportunities for periodic review, based on the following:

 Development forecasts confirm new development is expected to occur well beyond 15 years across the municipality

 The DCP 2.0 projects are costed and committed to in the 4-year Budget and 10-year Financial Plan

 The DCP 2 projects are planned to be delivered in the first 6 years of the 15-year period of the DCP, providing a large buffer to manage any delays and still deliver before the 2041 expiry.

**Collection and administration of funds**

The DCPO2 contained in **Attachment 2** sets out when the infrastructure levy is payable. This aligns with sections 46N and 46O of the Act and requires payment of the:

 Development infrastructure levy either prior to the issuing of a Statement of Compliance (but after Certification of the relevant plan) or prior to commencement of the development.

 Community infrastructure levy prior to the issuing of a Building Permit.

Council currently has an administrative policy in place which sets out the administrative processes to be followed when implementing DCP 1.0. Council officers are currently in the process of reviewing this policy to ensure it aligns with DCP 2.0 and best practice.

**State Contribution Reforms**

Last year, the State Government announced plans to develop a statewide approach to developer contributions. Since November 2024, an industry working group has been exploring models to better align infrastructure provision with housing growth.

As at the time of preparing this report, the working group has not released a report with findings/recommendations for a new DCP system, and there is currently no confirmed timeline for the introduction of a new statewide system.

Officers have been advised by State Government counterparts to progress a planning scheme amendment for a new DCP. Officers have been undertaking the technical work to support a planning scheme amendment for the last 18 months. Delaying this process to await future reforms would leave Council unable to collect infrastructure levies for an extended period, significantly impacting the delivery of vital community infrastructure.

To ensure flexibility, DCP 2.0 includes a mechanism for periodic review, enabling the project list to be updated in response to policy changes, development trends, or future reform outcomes.

**Legal and risk considerations**

DCP 2.0 is a legal instrument that obliges Council to deliver the infrastructure projects that are included on the DCP project list before the expiry date of the DCP.

If Council resolves to not proceed with any of the infrastructure projects listed in the DCP, the funds collected for these projects can be reallocated to new projects with the Minister for Planning’s approval or refund the levies collected to affected landowners.

To address this risk, DCP 2.0 includes a four yearly review process to ensure that the DCP remains consistent with expected future development and infrastructure projects needs and costs.

**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 there are no adverse impacts. The human rights considered as part of the preparation of this report relate specifically to freedom, dignity, and equity.

The most relevant section of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights to the preparation of this report is property rights. This report does not deprive any party of any legal or proprietary interest in land, or the ability to use and develop that land in accordance with the planning regulatory framework. The amendment, if authorised, with go through a statutory process that includes public exhibition and consideration of submissions.

**4. Community consultation and engagement**

Public consultation will be conducted as part of the formal statutory exhibition process for the amendment. Subject to the timing of the Minister’s authorisation of the amendment, it is anticipated that exhibition will occur in August/September 2025 for a period of four weeks after the notice of the amendment is published in the Government Gazette.

In accordance with section 19 of the Act, notice of the amendment via direct mail (or email) will be given to:

 Relevant Victorian Government departments.

 Prescribed Ministers.

 All abutting councils.

To comply with other notice requirements in section 19 of the Act, and to reach the wider community, the following will also be done:

 Notice of the preparation of the amendment in the Government Gazette and the Age newspaper.

 Copies of amendment documentation will be available on Council’s website and hard copies will be made available to residents upon request.

 Communication through Council’s social media platforms.

 Notice in any relevant Council publication available at the time of exhibition.

 To those industry professionals and development consultants who work on behalf of regular permit applicants.

Under section 19(1A) of the Act, it is considered impractical to individually notify owners and occupiers throughout the municipality of changes proposed under section 3 of this report.

**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**

Administrative costs associated with the processing of the amendment will be met within the base budget of the Strategic Planning Unit.

Once implemented into the Merri-bek Planning Scheme, DCP 2.0 will generate a significant income stream for Council and assist in delivering Council’s CWP, particularly those infrastructure items forming part of DCP 2.0.

Based on a full development scenario, Council would collect approximately $24.4 million over the life of the DCP towards the delivery of identified infrastructure items. However, if development occurs at a slower rate than predicted in DCP 2.0, Council will collect fewer contributions and will have to cover the funding gap through its general rates budget to deliver the specified infrastructure projects.

One of the key principles in compiling the project list for DCP 2.0 was to avoid over-commitment and this was done by selecting projects from Council’s CWP and current road audit program. Community infrastructure projects have been included where there is a high degree of certainty that the project will be delivered.

This level of commitment also allows Council to manage any risks associated with a potential shortfall in development contributions due to a lower than anticipated rate of development, as Council will not over-commit to the delivery of infrastructure projects on an annual basis.

**Resources**

Council currently has an administrative policy in place which sets out the administrative processes to be followed when implementing DCP 1.0. Council officers are currently in the process of reviewing this policy to ensure it aligns with DCP 2.0 and best practice.

The administration of the DCP will have resourcing implications on several Council Branches and Units, who will oversee the levying of the DCP, receipt of payments and oversight of project delivery. It is expected that resourcing and governance oversight of the DCP will be met through existing resourcing within relevant Branches and Units in a similar way to how the DCP 1.0 has been administered. If it is considered that additional resources are required, this will be outlined in a future report to Council, when adoption of the amendment is being considered.

**7. Implementation**

The following timelines for the amendment are broken down into the key ‘decision gateways’ for Council. The timeline is approximate and subject to Ministerial approval timelines and Planning Panels Victoria reporting and assumes an August/September 2025 exhibition period.

**Decision Gateway 1: Authorisation and exhibition** (current report)

**Decision Gateway 2: Submission Review and Panel Request** (November/December 2025)

**Decision Gateway 3: Panel report review and approval request** (May 2026)

**Attachment/s**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Merri-bek Development Contributions Plan 2, April 2025 | D25/206836 |  |
| **2** | Proposed Planning Scheme Changes | D25/204549 |  |

7.6 Year 4 Council Action Plan 2024-25 - Third Quarter Performance Report

**Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic**

**Governance and Strategy**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Year 4 Council Action Plan 2024-25 – Third Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1) and the achievements to date in delivering against the Council Plan 2021-25.

2. Endorse the following actions to be placed on hold from Council Action Plan 2024-25 as outlined in section three of this report.

a) Place on hold Action 215: *Commence construction on the West Street streetscape renewal project*

b) Place on hold Action 216: *Progress construction of the Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement project.*

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

The Third Quarter Performance Report (provided as **Attachment 1**) provides an overview of Council’s performance through the delivery of the Council Plan 2021-25, specifically the Year 4 Council Action Plan 2024-25.

The status of the 64 actions is as follows:

 11% (7 action) closed (achieved)

 85% (54 actions) in progress (on track)

 1% (1 action) is off-track (behind target)

 3% (2 actions) withdrawn (on hold or remove).

The Year 4 Council Action Plan in the third quarter shows that 96 per cent are either achieved or on track for completion in the delivering the final year action plan for the overarching 2021-25 Council Plan, with some notable achievements as highlighted in the report.

Endorsement is sought to place the following actions on hold, due to external partnerships delays that are impacting the delivery of these actions.

 Action 215: *Commence construction on the West Street streetscape renewal project.*

 Action 216: *Progress construction of the Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement project.*

This report also highlights the overall progress of delivering initiatives as outlined in the Council Plan 2021-25.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Year 4 Council Action Plan 2023-24 – Second Quarter Performance Report –** 12 February 2025

That Council:

*1. Notes the Year 4 Council Action Plan 2024-25 – Second Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1) and the achievements to date in delivering against the Council Plan 2021-25*

*2. Notes the remaining action from the Council Action Plan 2023-24 has been delivered.*

**Year 4 Council Action Plan 2023-24 – First Quarter Performance Report –** 11 December 2024

That Council:

*1. Noted the Year 4 Council Action Plan 2024-25 – First Quarter Performance Report (provided as Attachment 1) and the achievements to date in delivering against the Council Plan 2021-25*

*2. Noted one action from the Council Action Plan 2023-24 has been delivered and there is one remaining action ‘not achieved’.*

## 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 4 Council Action Plan 2024-25 supports the implementation of the Council Plan 2021-25 for the fourth and final financial year of the 4-year period and included specific actions to be undertaken that were resourced through the 2024-25 annual budget (included in the 2024-28 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 third quarter performance report is to provide a status update on delivery against Council Action Plan 2024-25 as at 31 March 2025. These are outlined in the table below in section three of this report.

## 3. Issues

**Council Action Plan Performance 2024-25**

Of the 64 actions in the Council Action Plan 2045-25, 96% per cent are either achieved or on track for completion in the delivering the final year action plan for the overarching 2021-25 Council Plan.

Some key highlights across the five strategic themes include:

**Theme 1:** Important progress was made in sustainability initiatives, including the Sustainable Communities Outreach pilot, which engaged 296 community members and recruited 60 participants for health workshops.

A $739,850 grant was secured to electrify the Oak Park Sports and Aquatic Centre. The Annual Tree Planting Program successfully added 3,506 trees, increasing urban greenery. Additionally, five schools participated in the Ride & Stride program, promoting active transport, and the E-bike Library pilot was extended. The Sydney Road Festival featured over 135 vendors using alternatives to single-use plastics, showcasing our commitment to environmental sustainability.

**Theme 2:** Advocacy for the duplication, extension, and electrification of the Upfield Rail Line remains a priority, with Merri-bek engaging Federal MPs and candidates to secure $4 million for a scoping report. Recent meetings with key candidates and the Federal Minister for Infrastructure have strengthened support, resulting in a $2 million election commitment from the Federal Coalition. This followed an announcement from the Australian Government in February for $7.05 million for delivery of a business case to develop and prioritise options for upgrades to Melbourne’s northern metropolitan railway lines, including the Upfield and Craigieburn train lines.

The road resurfacing program for 2024/25 is nearly complete, with road renewals progressing well. Planning for 'Streets for People' projects is underway, and the first draft of the Action Plan is ready, with community engagement scheduled for later this year.

**Theme 3:** Highlights from key programs have included successfully supporting 58 new residents who received one-on-one assistance navigating the Aged Care system, bringing the total to 333 for the year. Additionally, six outreach sessions on Council services that support older residents were held, including participation at the Sydney Road Street Party.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan has seen staff receive a Communication Access accreditation to better assist customers with complex needs. A free multi-arts program for individuals with disabilities was launched, and accessible entry points have been installed in key locations as part of ongoing access improvements. The continued implementation of the LGBTIQA+ Action Plan, 50 attended an intergenerational event, 100 joined the Queer audio tour, and 300 participated in the Inclusive Gym and Swim night, showcasing vibrant community engagement.

**Theme 4:** Highlights have included the Council-endorsed vision for a new Coburg Library and Piazza in February 2025, outlining objectives and a funding strategy. The recently opened Balam Balam Place, a $30 million redevelopment, provides a dynamic cultural hub with essential community services, fostering creativity and connectivity in Brunswick.

The development programs into the Shopping Strip Renewal Program continued at West Street Shopping Precinct in Hadfield, supporting traders. Three business skills workshops were conducted, bringing the total for the year to 10, facilitated a visit to Coburg by the Victorian Government's Small Business Bus.

The activation program across Brunswick, Glenroy, and Coburg has included the opening of Michelle Guglielmo Park and several exciting community activations to welcome residents back to the space. Other highlights include the launch of Summer StoryFest, a series of lunch and read events and the beginning of a Projection series that will continue throughout the year. A "Come and Try" event was also held at the Wilson Ave Climbing Wall, and a Harmony Day Story Time event activated Victoria Mall.

**Theme 5:** Council actively engaged with local State and Federal Members of Parliament, focusing on key advocacy for the Upfield Rail Line duplication, the Central Coburg Library redevelopment, and block funding for aged care. A submission to the Victorian Building Electrification Regulatory Impact Statement urged the phase-out of gas in residential and commercial properties.

Council also called for a transparent assessment of public housing options in response to the Parliamentary Inquiry. Collaborative efforts with advocacy partners have advanced transport priorities and greenhouse actions. Additionally, 83% of staff completed the 'Service with HEART' training, enhancing customer service delivery.

Detailed commentary for the third quarter performance of the Council Action Plan 2024-25 are shown in **Attachment 1**.

**Completed actions (Achieved)**

Council has completed seven actions, which account for 11% of the Council Action Plan 2024-25. Since the previous quarter’s report, the following five actions have been completed.

| **Action #** | **Action Description and Update:** | **Directorate** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 3 | **Urban forest strategy – implementation of annual tree planting program including identifying ways to support the community to preserve and plant new trees on private and public land**  The 2024 Annual Tree Planting Program successfully planted 3,506 trees. This initiative focused on enhancing our urban environment, with approximately 85% of the trees planted along streets to improve air quality, provide shade, and beautify our roadways. The remaining 15% were planted in parks, contributing to these recreational areas' overall greenery and ecological health. | City Infrastructure |
| 180 | **Complete the Pilot Library Social Worker to support community wellbeing**  The Pilot Library Social Worker program was undertaken, and service was provided to library users with challenging and complex needs. The pilot program is now concluded, and an evaluation has been completed.  Following the Library Social Worker trial, Coburg Library Staff are being supported through targeted sessions with a clinician from, Council’s Employee Assistance Program provider, to build skills in reflective practice.  Vulnerable, unhoused Merri-bek community members continue to be supported by temporary additional support from MOSS – Merri-Outreach Services and the ongoing assertive outreach provided by Vincentcare. | Community |
| 210 | **Finalise construction of the Saxon Street Brunswick facility and open space**  Balam Balam Place (Saxon Street Brunswick sight) was opened to the public on Monday, 3 March 2025. The significant $30 million redevelopment has created a state-of- the-art cultural, creative, and accessible hub with welcoming and affordable spaces for creatives, artists, and the Brunswick community. This significant investment in our city's cultural future ensures that Merri-bek continues to thrive as an inclusive and creative place to live, work, and connect.  Alongside artistic and innovative opportunities, the hub will also feature vital community services such as Maternal and Child Health (MCH), further enriching the community's access to essential resources. | City Infrastructure |
| 219 | **Complete construction for 260 Sydney Road Brunswick (Park Close To Home)**  All works at the new park are now complete, with the stormwater connection works completed in March, the Michelle Guglielmo Park is open for all to enjoy, and event bookings are live. | Place and Environment |
| 222 | **Develop a funding and delivery strategy for a new library in central Coburg that includes a functional brief for future library services, potential co-located uses, adjacent open space and public realm, and captures these within an initial Concept Plan**  Council endorsed a vision and brief for a new Coburg Library and Piazza in February 2025. The endorsed brief includes a vision, objectives, a funding and delivery strategy, functional briefs, and proposed location (pending testing). | Community |

**On track (In Progress)**

54 or 85 per cent of actions are on track for completion in the delivering the final year action plan for the overarching 2021-25 Council Plan.

Detailed updates for the third quarter performance are shown in **Attachment 1**.

**Off track (Behind Target)**

One action or one per cent of actions currently considered ‘Off Track’ in Council Action Plan 2024-25. Action update are listed in table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action #** | **Action Description and Update:** | **Directorate** |
| 209 | Commence construction of Brunswick Early Years Centre  The project has been delayed as Council is awaiting confirmation from the Department of Education (Victorian School Building Authority) regarding funding and the timeline for construction of the Hub. | Community |

**Withdrawn (On hold or remove)**

Two or three per cent of actions proposed to be either placed on hold or withdrawn from the 2024-25 Council Action Plan. Details are shown in the table below.

| **Action #** | **Action Description and Update:** | **Directorate** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 215 | **Commence construction on the West Street streetscape renewal project**  The project is still in detailed design and has a delayed design schedule due to flood modelling requirements and Melbourne Water approvals. Tender is now anticipated in May 2025, with construction expected to commence in the second half of 2025.  Council endorsement is sought to place this action on hold due to external partnership delays.  If the hold extends beyond the current financial year, this important, funded initiative may be considered for inclusion in the next Council Action Plan for adoption in the upcoming financial year. | Place and Environment |
| 216 | **Progress construction of the Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement project**  Works are still on hold pending final approvals from the Department of Transport and Planning. Conversations are ongoing to discuss the proposed alignment of the drainage infrastructure and underground services.  Council endorsement is sought to place this action on hold due to external partnership delays.  If the hold extends beyond the current financial year, this important, funded initiative may be considered for inclusion in the next Council Action Plan for adoption in the upcoming financial year. | 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 2024-25 were resourced through the 2023-24 annual budget (included in the 2024-28 Budget).

**7. Implementation**

The Year 4 Council Action Plan 2024-25 third quarter performance results will be made available on Council’s website.

## Attachment/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Council Action Plan Report Q3 2024-25 | D25/198049 |  |

7.7 Adoption of Council's Governance Rules - 2025

**Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic**

**Governance and Strategy**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the revised Governance Rules, provided as Attachment 1.

2. Writes to the submitters, thanking them for their contribution and providing a copy of the outcome of Council’s decision.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

Council at its meeting of 9 April 2025, endorsed the amended Governance Rules for community consultation and invited feedback from the community on the proposed amendments for a period of 15 days from 14 April 2025 until 28 April 2025.

At the close of the submission period, 7 submissions were received from 7 submitters. A summary including the submissions received (in full), together with the Council Officer responses is provided in Attachment 2.

Of the 7 submissions received, 2 were in support of the amendments and 3 objected to the amendments for reasons which included: We don't elect the CEO, they should not get the only say in what is urgent business; Too secretive; and in relation to Urgent Business, the intention of this rule change is to remove the power to make a decision on from elected Councillors, and give it to the CEO. 2 further submissions received related to not being able to identify the proposed amendments.

In response to the feedback received regarding the amendment of Governance Rule 3.5.6 Urgent Business, it should be noted that the intention of this rule is to enable the Chief Executive Officer to advise Council of potential matters of urgent business and to determine if any matters raised as potential urgent business items, can be addressed through the existing operational service request process, without requiring a Council resolution.

Any items referred to a Council meeting as urgent business, will still be required to be admitted as Urgent Business by a resolution of Council, before the item can be considered.

In response to the feedback that the proposed amendments are too secretive, it should be noted that the amendments as proposed, do not impact on Councils commitment to act in an open and transparent manner.

Following the review and consideration of the feedback received, this recommends adoption of amendments to the Governance Rules, as shown in Attachment 1.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Governance Rules Review – 2025** – 9 April 2025

*That Council:*

*1. Endorses the amended Governance Rules, provided as Attachment 1 to this report, for community consultation for a period of 15 days from 14 April 2025 and inviting feedback from the community to be received by 5pm, 28 April 2025, with the following change, without the inclusion of the proposed change related to section 3.9.14 – Notices of Motion (Page 37).*

*2. Receives a report at the May 2025 Council meeting to consider the amended Governance Rules.*

**Adoption of Council’s Governance Rules 2024** – 10 April 2024

*That Council:*

*1. Adopts the Governance Rules provided in Attachment 1 to this report.*

*2. Writes to all submitters who contributed feedback in the August 2023 and February 2024 community consultation processes, thanking them for their contribution and providing a copy of the outcome of Council’s decision.*

**Adoption of Council’s Governance Rules 2023** – 14 February 2024

*That Council:*

*1. Endorses the additional amendments to the Governance Rules provided in Attachment 1 to this report, with the following amendments:*

*a) Amend 3.5.6 Urgent Business to read:*

*(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 the submitter provides a clear justification for how:*

*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.*

*(2) The Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, may also bring to the attention of Councillors, an item of Urgent Business, that is urgent in nature, and that cannot be addressed through an operational service request process.*

*b) Amend 3.6.1 (9) Questions of Council and Community Statements to read:*

*Prior to the hearing of Questions of Council and Community Statements, the Mayor will inform Councillors and the public of the total number of questions received for the Council meeting (including how many have been taken on notice).*

*c) Amend 3.6.2 (2) (e) Questions of Council to read:*

*A copy of all questions and community statements including those to be taken On Notice received before 5pm on the day of the Council Meeting, will be distributed to Councillors as soon as reasonably practicable.*

*d) 3.6.2 (8) Questions of Council to read:*

*The Chairperson may elect to answer the question themselves or a Councillor may nominate themselves to answer each question. Prior to responding, the Chairperson may seek contextual information from the person submitting the question.*

*e) Amend 3.4 Quorum to read:*

*(2) If, after 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time of any Meeting, 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 reschedule the Meeting for a period not exceeding seven days from the original date of the meeting.*

*(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 reschedule the Meeting to a date not exceeding seven days from the original date of the meeting.*

*f) Amend section 3.9.15 (4) Notices of Rescission to read:*

*A notice of rescission must be in writing, signed (including by electronic means) and dated by at least two Councillors 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 and must contain written rationale for the proposed rescission.*

*2. Invites community feedback on the additional amendments, for a period of 15 business days commencing 16 February 2024 until 5pm, 8 March 2024.*

*3. Receives a report at the 10 April 2024 Council meeting to consider the amended Governance Rules.*

**Adoption of Council’s Governance Rules 2023** – 8 November 2023

*That Council defers the consideration of item 7.17 Adoption of Council’s Governance Rules 2023, to the February 2024 Council meeting to allow for further review of the provisions relating to minutes, rescission notices, conflicts of interest and quorum.*

**Adoption of Council’s Governance Rules 2023** – 18 October 2023

*That Council defers consideration of this item to the next Council meeting.*

**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

*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 April 2025, Council endorsed revised Governance Rules for community consultation. Due to the pending introduction of Model Governance Rules by Local Government Victoria, it was proposed that any amendments to the Governance Rules be limited to only minor matters such as those proposed below.

These amendments are shown below, with any removed text struck through, and any added text displayed in italics, to highlight the changes made. The amendments only relate to the provisions for Urgent Business and the keeping of minutes in relation to petitions:

**Amendment to section 3.5.6 (1) & (2) – Urgent Business to read as:**

(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 ~~the submitter provides a clear justification of how~~:

(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.*

*~~(2) The Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, may also bring to the attention of Councillors, an item of Urgent Business, that is urgent in nature and that cannot be addressed through an operational service request process.~~*

*(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.*

**Amendment to section 3.11.1 (n) – Keeping of Minutes to read as:**

(n) details of any petitions made to Council, *including a full description of the request contained in the petition, if the petition has not already been published in a Council agenda;*

## 3. Issues

At the close of the submission period, 7 submissions were received from 7 submitters. A summary including the submissions received (in full), together with the Council Officer responses is provided in **Attachment 2**.

Of the 7 submissions received, 2 were in support of the amendments and 3 objected to the amendments and 2 further submissions received related to not being able to identify the proposed amendments.

Key comments outlined in the submissions received include:

 We don't elect the CEO, they should not get the only say in what is urgent business.

 In its current form I see nothing to be concerned as really this currently an internal matter and seems will work well.

 It seems fair me.

 I don’t agree would be too secretive.

 I object to the change to rule 3.5.6 Urgent Business. The intention of this rule change is to remove the power to make a decision on from elected Councillors, and give it to the CEO.

In response to the feedback received regarding the amendment of Governance Rule 3.5.6 Urgent Business, it should be noted that the intention of this rule is to enable the Chief Executive Officer to advise Council of potential matters of urgent business and to determine if any matters raised as potential urgent business items, can be addressed through the existing operational service request process, without requiring a Council resolution.

Any items referred to a Council meeting as urgent business, will still be required to be admitted as Urgent Business by a resolution of Council, before the item can be considered.

In response to the feedback that the proposed amendments are too secretive, it should be noted that the amendments as proposed, do not impact on Councils commitment to act in an open and transparent manner.

After consideration of the feedback received by Council officers, this report does not propose any further amendments to the revised Governance Rules. Accordingly, the Governance Rules are presented for Council consideration as provided in **Attachment 1**.

### Legal and risk considerations

The revised Governance Rules as presented in **Attachment 1** meet the requirements of *the Local Government Act 2020.*

### Human Rights Consideration

There has been consideration in upholding human rights as required by the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Victoria) through this review 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.

## 4. Community consultation and engagement

In preparation of the revised Governance Rules, consultation with Councillors was undertaken in March 2025.

The revised Governance Rules were made available on the Conversations Merri-bek website from 14 April 2025, inviting written submissions from the community to be received by 28 April 2025.

**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 have not been 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 revised Governance Rules were 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 - Proposed - May 2025 | D25/220414 |  |
| **2** | Governance Rules Review - 2025 Submissions and Responses Table | D25/220183 |  |

7.8 Financial Management Report for the period ended 31 March 2025

**Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic**

**Finance and Procurement**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 31 March 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

This report presents the Financial Management Report for the financial year to date period ending 31 March 2025. A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation at the end of February 2025. The results of this review are included in this report as the Full Year Revised Forecast.

The 31 March 2025 Income Statement shows that Council has recorded a surplus of $86.3 million, $14.0 million higher than the year-to-date budget of $72.2 million, as a result of higher overall revenue and lower overall expenditure. These differences are considered largely timing in nature. As set out in the Issues section of this report, operating surplus funds do not convert to immediately available cash to Council; they are used to fund important community infrastructure projects like the Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment or Balam Balam Place, Brunswick.

Council has spent $68.1 million on capital expenditure, which is tracking below the year-to-date (YTD) budget of $72.7 million, with $24.6 million budget remaining.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**2024/25 Third Quarter Financial Review** – 9 April 2025

*That Council:*

*1. Notes the 2024-25 Third Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 28 February 2025, including operating performance and capital performance at Attachment 1.*

*2. Notes the status of the capital works program for 2024-25.*

*3. Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of $2.9 million and the decrease to operating expenditure of $0.5 million arising from the 2024-25 Third Quarter Financial Review.*

*4. Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of $102.2 million, arising from the 2024-25 Third Quarter Financial Review.*

*5. Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:*

*a) Fully or partially grant funded projects to be carried forward if the funding is secured and received this financial year:*

 *McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Pavilion Gender Inclusive Facilities - $1,456,539*

 *Shared Zones – Victoria St and Albert Street - $800,000*

 *Dunstan Reserve Childcare - $720,000*

 *Brunswick Early Years Hub - $400,000*

 *Community Battery - $400,000*

 *Bain Avenue from Plaisted to Boundary, Road Reconstruction - $367,590*

 *Gowanbrae Dog Park - $200,000*

 *Wombat Crossings – Barrow St & Blair St, Coburg - $172,960*

 *Wombat Crossing – Dawson St at Melville Road, Brunswick West - $145,390.*

*b) Rates funded projects:*

 *Shore Reserve – Football & Cricket - $704,105*

 *Sim Cr & Victoria St – Engeny Hot Spot No 8 - $491,829*

 *Brunswick City Baths Repainting & Renewal - $300,000*

 *Narre Narre Stadium Floor Renewal - $300,000*

 *Northwest Brunswick Pre-school - $263,323*

 *Urquhart Street from Alva to Keith, Road Reconstruction - $250,000*

 *Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex Redevelopment - $250,000*

 *Road Closures - $205,000*

 *Victoria St Bike Lanes – Sydney Rd to Pearson St - $203,527*

 *South Street – Engeny Hot Spot No 12 - $200,000*

 *Merri Trail – Flood Mitigation – Bridge to Darebin - $185,971*

 *Kendall/Harding Footbridge over Merri Creek - $177,000*

 *Balfe Parks Sports Field Lights - $163,929*

 *WSUD Implementation – Various - $134,000*

 *Large Scale WSUD (Sportsfield Stormwater Reuse) - $130,000*

 *Kerbside Waste Reform (waste charge funded) - $102,735*

 *O’Hea St Bike Path Extension – Sussex to Derby St - $100,000*

 *LXRP Equipment - $87,002*

 *Hadfield Depot Masterplan Development & Drainage - $75,000*

 *Craigieburn Shared Path – Stage 4 - $40,000.*

*c) Reserve funded projects:*

 *York Street Park Close to Home - $300,000*

 *Park Renewal – Gervase Reserve - $263,104*

 *Saxon St Community Hub – Northwest Building - $150,000*

 *Minor Park – Tate Reserve (Removal) - $20,000.*

*6. Brings forward the following capital project funding to the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Brunswick Activity Centre Upgrade Works – Wilson Ave - $372,179*

 *Alva Gr from Urquhart to Bell, Road Reconstruction - $338,661*

 *Urban Forest Strategy – Tricky to Plant Areas - $262,024*

 *Gym Equipment Replacement Program – Various - $251,896*

 *James Martin Reserve (former Pigeon Club) - $250,000*

 *Park Renewal – Cox Reserve (reserve funded) - $59,315*

 *Coburg Library Redevelopment (reserve funded) - $50,227*

 *West Street Intersection and Streetscape - $43,000.*

*7. Approves funding for new projects in the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Property Purchase (reserve funded) - $1,766,000*

 *40 km/h Rollout – Traffic Calming (76% externally funded) - $409,064*

 *CB Smith – Electrical Works - $300,000*

 *Carelink Go+ Device Purchases - $160,000 (previously budgeted as operating)*

 *Bob Hawke Capital Improvements/Replacements - $95,640*

 *Park Close to Home – 568-574 Sydney Road (reserve funded) - $50,000.*

*8. Approves additional funding for the following existing projects:*

 *McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Pavilion Gender Inclusive Facilities (externally funded) - $1,456,539*

 *Replace Council Fleet (banked carry forward) - $786,559*

 *Shared Zones – Victoria St and Albert St - $270,000*

 *Raeburn Reserve – Cricket Training Nets (externally funded) - $225,000*

 *Accommodation Changes to Meet Service Demand - $225,000*

 *Merri Trail – Flood Mitigation – Bridge to Darebin - $185,971*

 *Road Closures - $165,000*

 *Installation of Pedestrian Operated Signals - $110,000*

 *Feasibility Study/Investigation/Design – Forward Planning - $100,000*

 *Kent Road – Separated Bike Lane Trial - $100,000*

 *Coburg Library Redevelopment (banked carry forward) - $100,000*

 *Craigieburn Shared Path - Stage 4 - $65,000*

 *Coburg Streetscape Masterplan – Louisa St - $60,400*

 *Wombat Crossing – Albion to Melville - $50,000*

 *Brunswick Activity Centre Upgrade Works – Wilson Ave - $50,000*

 *Park Close to Home – 260 Sydney Road (reserve funded) - $46,000*

 *Woodlands Bridge (50% externally funded) - $30,102*

 *Turner Street Kindergarten Expansion - $30,000*

 *Gym Equipment Replacement Program – FLC - $26,770*

 *Carlise Street – Nicholson – Glenora, Coburg - $23,745*

 *Cole Reserve Upgrade Masterplan – Lighting - $18,804*

 *Gillon Cricket Practice Nets - $13,850*

 *Brearley Reserve – Public Toilets – $9,513*

 *Harding Street Corridor - $9,195*

 *Transport Trial Sites – bike lanes & shared zones - $7,980*

 *Cole Reserve Upgrade Masterplan – Groundworks (banked carry forward) - $6,429*

 *Municipal Art Collection – Various - $1,737*

 *Park Renewal – HW Foletta Park - $840.*

*9. Notes savings realised from the following existing projects in the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment (reserve funded) - $600,000*

 *Dawson St Bike Lanes - $459,250*

 *De Carle Street from Donald to Davies, Road Reconstruction - $260,000*

 *Mitchell Pde Retaining Wall - $230,000*

 *Bendigo Street from Alpine to Cumberland, Road Reconstruction - $210,000*

 *Oak Park Kindergarten - $200,000*

 *De Carle St Bike Lanes – The Avenue to Moreland Rd - $189,679*

 *Merri Creek Trail Access and Safety Upgrades - $185,971*

 *Carnarvon Street from Blyth to Dorothy, Road Reconstruction - $150,000*

 *Furniture & Fittings Replacement Program - $150,000*

 *Park Renewal – Fisher Reserve (reserve funded) - $147,573*

 *Carnarvon Street from Dorothy to Stewart, Road Reconstruction - $115,000*

 *Yungera St from Wyuna to Mutton, Road Reconstruction - $106,339*

 *Road Safety and Amenity Improvements Program - $100,000*

 *Peterson Avenue from Mehegan to Jackson, Road Reconstruction - $90,000*

 *Tyson Street from Jukes Rd to Denys Street, Road Reconstruction - $90,000*

 *Derby St Kindergarten Children’s Centre - $70,000*

 *Park Close to Home Frith Street (reserve funded) - $60,000*

 *Raeburn Reserve – Lights - $52,055*

 *Chris Court from Devereaux to Dead End, Road Reconstruction - $41,984*

 *Lonsdale Street from O’Hea to Murray, Road Reconstruction - $40,000*

 *Coburg (Former) Bowls – Upgrades - $35,835*

 *Rayner Reserve – Pavilion Upgrade & Gender Inclusive Facilities - $35,000*

 *Pedestrian Access & Priority Treatments - $33,000*

 *Park Renewal – CB Smith Reserve - $25,000*

 *Coburg Activity Centre Upgrade Works – Victoria St - $25,000*

 *Commercial Tenancy Maintenance Obligations - $17,376*

 *Immunisation Room – Minor Capital - $10,740*

 *Temple Park – Public Toiler Renewal – 24 Gray Street - $4,750*

 *Rayner Reserve – New Public Toilet - $2,000*

 *Oxygen Youth Centre – Accessible Door Installation - $1,878*

 *Kaumple Street, Pascoe Vale, Drainage Works - $1,604*

 *Shore Reserve – Public Toilets – Reynard Street - $634.*

**2024/25 Second Quarter Financial Review** – 12 February 2025

*That Council:*

*1. Notes the 2024-25 Second Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 31 December 2024, including operating performance and capital performance at Attachment 1.*

*2. Notes the status of the capital works program for 2024-25.*

*3. Notes the decrease to the full-year forecast for operating income of $5.3 million and the decrease to operating expenditure of $2.7 million arising from the 2024-25 Second Quarter Financial Review.*

*4. Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of $107.1 million, arising from the 2024-25 Second Quarter Financial Review.*

*5. Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:*

*a) Grant funded projects to be carried forward if the funding is secured and received this financial year:*

 *Oak Park Sports and Aquatic – Electrification (83% grant funded) - $900,000*

 *Cole Reserve Upgrade Masterplan – Groundworks - $816,132*

*b) Rates funded projects:*

 *Shore Reserve – Football & Cricket - $1,207,629*

 *McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Pavilion Gender Inclusive Facilities - $1,000,000*

 *Replace Council Fleet - $928,755*

 *Dunstan Reserve Childcare (8% grant funded) - $700,000*

 *Holbrook Reserve Female Friendly Change Rooms - $700,000*

 *Glenroy Activity Centre Upgrade – Wheatsheaf Rd - $600,000*

 *Sylvester St Oak Park Land Slide - $600,000*

 *Narre Narre Stadium Floor Renewal - $400,000*

 *Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex Redevelopment - $400,000*

 *McBryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) – Social Room Amenities & Kitchen - $350,000*

 *O’Hea St Bike Path Extension – Sussex to Derby St - $313,850*

 *Hadfield Depot Masterplan Development & Drainage - $300,000*

 *Shared Zones – Victoria St and Albert St - $200,000*

 *Merri Trail – Flood Mitigation – Bridge to Darebin - $200,000*

 *Coburg Library Redevelopment - $100,000*

 *Hosken Reserve Stage 3 Football Pitches - $80,000*

*c) Reserve funded projects:*

 *York Street Park Close to Home - $600,000*

 *Park Renewal – McCleery Reserve - $23,800.*

*6. Brings forward the following capital project funding to the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Sim Cr & Victoria St – Engeny Hot Spot No 8 - $381,000*

 *Gowanbrae Dr & Birk Ct – Engeny Hot Spot No 6 - $99,000*

 *Kerbside Waste Reform – $48,300.*

*7. Approves funding for new projects in the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Woodlands Bridge (50% externally funded) - $38,939.*

*8. Approves additional funding for the following existing projects:*

 *Waste Truck Additional – Walter St Depot (waste charge funded) - $1,587,441*

 *Greenbank Crescent Retaining Walls - $831,118*

 *Coburg North Sports Hub Upgrades - $372,559*

 *Brunswick Activity Centre Upgrade Works - Stewart St - $294,667*

 *Accommodation Changes to Meet Service Demand - $261,436*

 *Gowanbrae Dr & Birk Ct – Engeny Hot Spot No 6 - $201,000*

 *Feasibility Study/Investigation/Design - Forward Planning - $200,000*

 *Street Landscape Improvements (69% reserve funded) - $162,183*

 *Richards Reserve Natural Turf Renewal - $148,000*

 *Sim Cr & Victoria St – Engeny Hot Spot No 8 - $140,829*

 *Shore Reserve – Football & Cricket - $123,400*

 *CB Smith Reserve Passive Irrigation Trial (fully grant funded) - $122,073*

 *Dawson St Bike Lanes - $114,500*

 *Toilets Lake Reserve – Adjoining Tool Shed - $70,298*

 *Bonwick St Toilets, Fawkner - $62,875*

 *Carlisle Street – Nicholson – Glenora, Coburg - $60,752*

 *Park Close to Home – 260 Sydney Road (fully reserve funded) - $55,000*

 *Resurfacing Program – Various - $50,000*

 *Derby St Kindergarten Children’s Centre - $50,000*

 *Park Renewal – HW Foletta Park (fully reserve funded) - $37,000*

 *Sportsfield & Ovals Minor Capital Program - $30,582*

 *Sumner Park – 3 Alister Street, North Fitzroy - $22,525*

 *Gillon Oval Cricket Practice Nets - $18,010*

 *Wallace Reserve – North - $11,622*

 *Merri Creek Trail – Seating Installation - $10,000*

 *De Carle Street – The Grove to Rennie – Coburg - $556.*

*9. Notes savings realised from the following existing projects in the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Replace Council Fleet - $1,587,441*

 *Oak Park Kindergarten - $200,000*

 *Transport Trial Sites – bike lanes & shared zones - $114,500*

 *Allard Park Sportsfield Redevelopment - $70,138*

 *Paisley Court from Bluebell Kerb Line to Dead End - $33,795*

 *Mitchell Pde Retaining Wall - $27,319*

 *Kerb and Channel Repairs – Various Locations - $25,000*

 *Bridge Programmed Maintenance – Various Locations - $25,000*

 *Lorn St – Kiddle – Wilson, Fawkner - $18,350*

 *Holbrook Reserve – Netting - $4,055*

 *Chiller Unit – Civic Centre - $2,296.*

*10. Notes, as at the end of the second quarter, as per Section 97 (3) of the Local Government Act 2020, the Chief Executive Officer is of the opinion that a revised budget is not required, however impacts to the full year forecast will continue to be closely monitored.*

**2024-25 First Quarter Financial Report** – 11 December 2024

*That Council:*

*1. Notes the 2024-25 First Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 30 September 2024, including operating performance and capital performance at Attachment 1.*

*2. Notes the status of the capital works program for 2024-25.*

*3. Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of $12.7 million and the increase to operating expenditure of $4.9 million arising from the 2024-25 First Quarter Financial Review.*

*4. Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of $114.1 million, arising from the 2024-25 First Quarter Financial Review.*

*5. Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:*

*a) Grant funded projects to be carried forward if the funding is secured and received this financial year:*

 *Brunswick Early Years Hub - $2,100,000*

*b) Rates funded projects:*

 *Dunstan Reserve Childcare - $2,000,000*

 *Kendall/Harding Footbridge over Merri Creek - $800,000*

*6. Brings forward the following capital project funding to the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *South Street from Jensen to West, Road Reconstruction - $952,380*

 *Yungera Street from Wyuna to Mutton, Road Reconstruction - $744,244*

 *Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment - $642,000*

 *Kerbside Waste Reform - $103,510*

 *Charles Mutton Reserve - $50,000.*

*7. Approves funding for new projects in the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Property Purchase (fully reserve funded) $3,245,000*

 *Coburg North Sport Hub Upgrades (transferred from operating) - $1,780,152*

 *Sylvester Street Oak Park Land Slide - $750,000*

 *Pedestrian Improvements (fully grant funded) - $598,140*

 *Blackspot Project East Street and North Street, Hadfield (fully grant funded) - $88,464*

 *Edgars Creek Corridor Connection Project (fully grant funded) - $77,302*

 *Shade Sail Installation – Anne Sgro Children’s Centre (86% grant funded) - $48,295*

 *Immunisation Room – Minor Capital - $18,000*

 *Oxygen Youth Centre – Accessible Door Installation - $12,000.*

*8. Approves additional funding for existing projects in the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Hosken Reserve Stage 4 Open Space and Civil Work (fully reserve funded) - $1,678,799*

 *Park Close to Home Frith Street (50% grant funded, 50% reserve funded) - $650,136*

 *Dunstan Reserve Stormwater Harvesting (fully grant funded) - $375,000*

 *Snell Grove – Public Toilet, Oak Park – $155,000*

 *Raeburn Reserve – Lights - $142,150*

 *Shore Reserve – Public Reserve – Reynard Street – $142,000*

 *Fawkner Community Hall – CB Smith Reserve - $120,000*

 *Lake Reserve Toilets – Adjoining Tool Shed - $40,000*

 *Temple Park Public Toilet Renewal – 24 Gray Street - $30,000*

 *Coburg Olympic Pool – Pool Plant and Building Works - $20,000*

 *Commercial Tenancy Maintenance Obligations - $20,000*

 *Hadfield Depot Internal Break Out Area Works - $20,000*

 *Oak Park Kindergarten - $20,000*

 *Parker Reserve – Pavilion South - $10,172*

 *Municipal Art Collection: Various - $8,200.*

*9. Notes savings realised from existing projects in the 2024-25 Capital Works Program:*

 *Hosken Reserve Stage 3 Football Pitches - $512,836*

 *Gym Equipment Replacement Program Fawkner Leisure Centre - $374,900*

 *McPherson Street from Dead End to Reynard - $320,628*

 *Carnarvon Street from Blyth to Dorothy, Road Reconstruction - $172,028*

 *Pascoe Vale Community Centre – Children’s Area Refurbishment - $164,266*

 *Kent Road from Bawden to Derby, Road Reconstruction - $158,183*

 *Park Renewal – Evans Reserve - $154,000*

 *Bain Avenue from Plaisted to Boundary, Road Reconstruction - $151,458*

 *Paisley Court from Bluebell Kerb Line to Dead End, Road Reconstruction - $126,978*

 *Beccles Street from Anderson Kerb Line to Lowson Kerb Line - $122,212*

 *Carnarvon Street from Dorothy to Stewart, Road Reconstruction - $110,000*

 *Londsdale Street from Ohea to Murray, Road Reconstruction - $102,559*

 *Chris Court from Devereaux to Dead End, Road Reconstruction - $59,660*

 *Allard Park Sportsfield Redevelopment - $47,362*

 *Carbon Management Strategy: Various - $20,000*

 *De Carle Street: The Grove to Rennie – Coburg - $7,509*

 *De Carle Street: The Avenue to The Grove – Coburg - $5,492.*

**2023-24 Financial Statements and Performance Statements** – 11 September 2024

*That Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, and having considered Council’s Financial and Performance Statements for 2023/24 Statements at Attachments 1 and 2 to this report:*

*1. Approves ‘in principle’ the Financial and Performance Statements 2023/24.*

*2. Authorises the Mayor, Cr Adam Pulford, Deputy Mayor, Cr Lambros Tapinos, and the Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Henderson, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2023/24 in their final form.*

*3. Notes the unrestricted surplus of $1.141 million transfers to the Significant Projects Reserve.*

*4. Carries forward the $536,978 of tied grant funding or contributions that were not spent as of 30 June 2024.*

*5. Carries forward the $41.377 million of capital project funds into the 2024/25 Capital Works Program.*

 *Noting that this does not include a carry forward for the Brunswick Velodrome community pump track due to the funding source being grant funding which was not successful.*

*6. Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2023/24 if recommended by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.*

## 1. Policy Context

The 2024-2028 Budget was adopted by Council on 26 June 2024. The Budget sets out the resources required to deliver the Council Plan, Services and Capital Works Program for the 2024/25 financial year.

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

## 2. Background

The Financial Management Report at Attachment 1 provides Council’s financial statements for the year to date (YTD) period ended 31 March 2025. The actual results are compared to the budget in the Executive Summary and compared to the revised forecast in all other parts of the report, which include carry forwards from 2024-25 and the outcomes of the First, Second and Third Quarter Financial Reviews.

## Relevant Council Plan action, strategy, policy, or resolution

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

## 3. Issues/Discussion

Council ended March 2025 with a surplus operating result of $86.3 million which is $0.2 million (0%) more than the year to date (YTD) revised forecast of $86.1 million. These differences are considered largely timing in nature.

It is important to note that the $86.3 million operating surplus does not convert to immediately available cash to Council. Surplus funds are used to fund important community infrastructure projects like the Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment or Balam Balam Place, Brunswick.

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

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 2025. 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 Capital** ended $0.9 million (28%) favourable primarily due to the timing of receipt of grant funding for Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment ($0.3 million), Oak Park Kindergarten ($0.2 million) and Derby St Kindergarten ($0.1 million) (timing).

### Expenditure

 **Contracts, Materials and Services** ended $1.5 million (3%) favourable primarily due to later than anticipated payment to the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) for the provision of Council electoral services (timing).

**Net Loss on Disposal of Assets** ended $1.8 million (145%) unfavourable due to recognition of asset book value write-offs occurring as a result of capitalisation of recently completed asset renewal projects across roads, footpaths and drainage (permanent).

### Key Definitions

Surplus – is reported based on the Australian Accounting Standards and includes all operating income and expenditure recognised in the financial period, including gifted subdivisional assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the surplus is not a cash surplus. It does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

Adjusted underlying surplus – is the surplus for the year adjusted for non-recurrent capital grants and contributions. It is an accepted measure of financial sustainability as it is not impacted by non-recurring or once-off items of revenue and expenses that can often mask the operating results.

Unrestricted result – this is the net funding result after considering the funding requirements to meet loan principal repayments and transfers to and from reserves.

### Capital Projects – Capital Expenditure

Council has spent $68.1 million on capital expenditure year to date which is tracking $5.9 million (8%) below the YTD forecast of $74.0 million, with $34.1 million (33%) of the revised budget remaining.

### Cash

Council’s cash assets were $101.9 million as at 31 March 2025. This is a $4.5 million decrease on 30 June 2024 cash levels.

Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors, mainly due to the timing of when the rates instalments fall due. It is expected that cash levels will increase during May due to the fourth rates instalment due on 31 May.

### Solvency Assessment

Council officers have reviewed Council’s liquidity (Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities) at 31 March 2025 as 4.3. The Victorian Auditor General’s Office (VAGO) recommends that this ratio be 1.5 or higher. This is a positive result and shows that Council is solvent.

### Human Rights Consideration

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

## 4. Community consultation and engagement

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

**Affected persons rights and interests**

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

## 5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

## 6. Financial and Resources Implications

The overall corporate objective is to deliver the 2024-25 budget with the best possible outcome for Council and the community and in line with the approved revised forecast targets.

## 7. Implementation

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

## Attachment/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Council Monthly Financial Management Report - March 2025 | D25/196085 |  |

7.9 Governance Report - May 2025 - Cyclical Report

**Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic**

**Governance and Strategy**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the First Nations Advisory Committee to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report.

2. Endorses the recommendation of the First Nations Advisory Committee meeting held 31 March 2025, to consider the development of a Merri-bek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy.

3. Notes the recommendation of the First Nations Advisory Committee meeting held 31 March 2025, to allocate $500,000 in the 2025/26 Council budget for the Ballerrt Mooroop gathering place, to match the $500,000 being sought from the State Government.

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 12 February and 9 April 2025 Council meetings, provided at Attachment 3.

**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 First Nations Advisory Committee held 31 March 2025 and the associated recommendations from the committee.

 Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.

 Responses to Public Question Time items taken on notice at 12 February and 9 April 2025 Council meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.

**Previous Council Decisions**

Nil.

**1.** **Policy Context**

Reports from Advisory Committees to Council are 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.

## 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.

## 3. Issues

**Advisory Committee minutes**

A summary of the minutes of the First Nations Advisory Committee held 31 March 2025 is provided at **Attachment 1** for Council’s information. The Committee recommends Council develops a Merri-bek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy; and allocates matching funding of $500,000 in the 2025/26 Budget for Ballerrt Mooroop gathering place.

**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 previous Council Meeting are presented at **Attachment 2** as follows:

 Councillor Briefing – 7 April 2025

 Councillor Briefing – 14 April 2025

 Councillor Workshop - 16 April 2025

 Central Coburg Oversight Committee - 28 April 2025.

### Responses to Questions taken On Notice at Council meetings

At Council Meetings, questions 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 subject matter of questions taken on notice are recorded in the meeting minutes.

The responses to questions taken On Notice at **Attachment 3** to this report relate to questions from 12 February and 9 April 2025 Council meetings regarding:

 Donations in Council owned carparks

 Tree pits in narrow footpaths

 Sussex Street and Boundary Road intersection

 Rainbow Crossings - Sites for Consultation

 Painting on side of building on Sydney Road, Coburg

 Electrical Capacity at Hadfield Operations Centre

 Heavy vehicle electrification as against hydrogen fuel cells.

**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.

## 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 implications associated with this report.

## 7. Implementation

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

## Attachment/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Reports from Advisory Committees to Council - May 2025 | D25/220531 |  |
| **2** | Records of Meetings - May 2025 | D25/218748 |  |
| **3** | Responses to questions taken On Notice - May 2025 | D25/220497 |  |

7.10 Procurement Australia Contract 2703/0110 Bulk Fuels and Fuel Cards

**Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow**

**City Services**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves opting into a Collaborative Procurement Arrangement with Procurement Australia Panel Contract No. 2703/0110 for Bulk Fuels and Fuel Cards (Contract) and accept the Schedule of Rates Tender for:

a) A contract term commencing 1 April 2025 for a period of two (2) years, with two (2) times one (1) year option to extend.

b) Category 1.1 – Bulk Fuel from:

i. Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd

ii. Pacific Fuel Solutions Pty Ltd

c) Category 1.2 – Bulk Metered Delivery from:

i. Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd

ii. Pacific Fuel Solutions Pty Ltd

d) Category 2.2 – Fuel Cards from:

i. Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd

e) An amount that is not exceeding $5.8 million over the life of the contract.

2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:

a) Do all the things necessary to formalise the arrangement under Contract 2703/0110 including executing any required documentation for the Contract.

b) Exercise contract extension options subject to contractor performance and vary the Contract (as required) in accordance with the terms of the Contract and Council’s procurement policies.

3. Notes that Council has committed through the Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency Action Plan to continue its transition towards zero emission vehicles. There are no minimum purchases of fuel required under this contract and so as the fleet transitions, there will be no penalty for consumption under this Contract reducing.

**REPORT**

## Executive Summary

This report is seeking to opt into a Collaborative Procurement Arrangement with Procurement Australia Panel (Contact No. 2703/0110) for Bulk Fuels and Fuel Cards

The current contract for Bulk Fuels and Fuel Cards expired on 31 March 2025.

Council’s Procurement Policy allows opting into existing collaborative engagements with other government entities, local governments, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) or Procurement Australia. Procurement Australia’s Bulk Fuels and Fuel Cards contract was established through a tender process.

It is recommended that Council approve the opting into the Procurement Australia panel for the provision of bulk fuels and fuel card services. In utilising the panel, it ensures Council obtains the best value from members of the panel by requesting quotes from members that best meet requirements including accounting for variation in prices over time to secure the most favourable price.

This tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Contract Award Procurement Australia Contract 2403/0109 - Bulk Fuels** 13 April 2022.

*That Council:*

*1. Accepts the Schedule of Rates Tender for the provision of Category 1 – Bulk Fuel from:*

*a) Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd*

*b) Pacific Petroleum Pty Ltd*

*c) Petrogas Pty Ltd*

*2. Accepts the Schedule of Rates for the Category 2 – Bulk Metered Delivery from:*

*a) Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd*

*b) Petrogas Pty Ltd*

*3. Awards a preferred supplier Contract for the provision of Bulk Fuel for a period of two (2) years, with a one (1) year option to extend.*

*4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the contracts for the provision of bulk fuels.*

*5. Authorises the Director City Infrastructure to advise Procurement Australia of Council’s decision in this matter.*

## 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 108 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 (including GST) as well as the policy commitments contained in the Procurement Policy.

Council’s Procurement Policy includes commitments to sustainable procurement. In this instance, it is necessary to engage such suppliers to continue providing essential services to the community without disruption, and there is no effective alternative options to pursue at this time.

## 2. Background

Council is reliant on fuel to ensure ongoing delivery of several essential Council services.

Through Council’s current bulk fuel delivery contract, Council consumes, about:

 390,000L of diesel annually

 35,000L of AdBlue\* annually

 20,000L unleaded fuel annually

\* AdBlue is a solution used to treat diesel exhaust streams to reduce harmful nitrogen oxide emissions.

Council’s previous Contract has been in place for 2 years and when preparing to exercise the 1-year extension, we were advised that Procurement Australia had tendered a new bulk fuels and fuel card contract. Council, having previously participated in bulk fuel purchasing through Procurement Australia, assessed the benefits of the collaborative procurement effort and identified that this new contract offers Council greater security in supply and better value for money.

As outlined in **Confidential Attachment 1** 2703-0110 Bulk Fuels & Fuel Cards (Member Report), Procurement Australia has outlined the procurement process and evaluation.

## 3. Issues

### Contract Services

Given volume of fuel used by Council and current fuel markets, it is appropriate for Council to enter this preferred supplier contract with all shortlisted suppliers for the provision of Bulk Fuel for a period of period of two (2) years with two (2) x one (1) year options to extend.

The Contract included multiple categories that Merri-bek City Council wishes to opt in to, these are:

 Category 1.1 – Bulk Fuels

 Category 1.2 – Metered Bulk Fuels

 Category 2.2 – Single Branded Fuel Cards

**Category 1.1 – Bulk Fuels**

This includes the bulk supply of:

 Regular unleaded petrol (ULP)

 Premium diesel

 AdBlue

### Category 1.2 – Metered Bulk Fuels

This includes the bulk supply of:

 Regular unleaded petrol (ULP)

 Premium diesel

 AdBlue

### Category 2.2 – Single Branded Fuel Cards

### Community impact

If there is uninterrupted fuel supply to support the Council's fleet, there will be no negative community impact, ensuring essential services continue without disruption

### 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, Procurement Australia, or MAV that may be available.

This is a Collaborative Procurement Arrangement with Procurement Australia.

### Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Whilst Council investigates alternate fuel sources, such as Hydrogen, there are no effective alternatives immediately available to our diesel heavy fleet at this time.

Council’s light fleet and plant is progressively being replaced with electric vehicles and plant. This will continue to cause a reduction in unleaded petrol consumption over time.

There is nothing in the Procurement Australia Contract requiring a minimum purchase of fuels so the drive to zero emissions vehicles will not be impacted by the award of this Contract.

### Economic sustainability implications

Entering the contract will result in cost savings on fuel supply due to the collaborative nature of the procurement process via Procurement Australia as well as volume-based nature of the agreement, contributing to economic sustainability. It is noted that the expenditure under the contract is heavily influenced by global and domestic trends in the price of oil which can be volatile. As such, the expenditure under the contract can be significantly impacted in any given year by these factors, however this has been factored in in the maximum expenditure using historical fuel use and pricing.

### Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities there are no direct impacts on human rights.

## 4. Consultation / Recommendation from Management

This arrangement will support Council Operations and continued service delivery. There is no direct impact on the community. Community consultation was not required.

## 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 Procurement Australia contract will provide the lowest transactional costs and therefore benefits Council, in comparison to if Council were to procure the purchase of bulk fuels and fuel cards individually.

This contract does not have a minimum usage, and Council can opt-in and out of the contract at any time without penalties. The opt out and no minimum usage provisions are important as Council and works towards electrification of fleet.

Council spends $1,200,000 per year on fuel to keep Council’s fleet operating to deliver our essential services.

This is fully funded through the Fleet Services Unit budget.

## 7. Implementation

Following Council approval, Council officers will opt-in to the new panel arrangement using the Procurement Australia online portal.

## Attachment/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | 2703-0110 Bulk Fuels & Fuel Cards (Member Report)  *Pursuant to section 3(1)(g)(i) 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 relates to trade secrets.* | D25/190158 |  |
| **2** | Category 1 - Bulk Fuels Rates  *Pursuant to section 3(1)(g)(i) 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 relates to trade secrets.* | D25/214465 |  |
| **3** | Category 2 - Fuel Cards Rates  *Pursuant to section 3(1)(g)(i) 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 relates to trade secrets.* | D25/190161 |  |

7.11 Contract Extension: EXE-2023-546 Pathway and ePathway Software Maintenance and Support

**Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic**

**Information Technology**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves a procurement exemption under section 6.1.4.2 (a) of the procurement policy for EXE-2023-546 Info Software Maintenance and Support for:

a) Additional maximum spend of up to $960,021 (excluding GST) under this extension;

b) For a term of three (3) one-year extension options commencing 1 July 2025 at the discretion of Council.

2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to approve the contract exemption and related documentation as identified in point one above.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

## Council has in place an existing contract EXEC-2023-546 which expires on 30 June 2025 for the Software maintenance and support for Infor Global Solutions, the provider of the Pathway and ePathway platforms (these platforms support core functions, including property management, regulatory management (i.e. planning and building), and revenue management).

On 12 March 2025, Council resolved to commence the procurement tender process for an Enterprise Resourcing Planning (ERP) System. The EDRMS will form part of this ERP procurement process which is currently underway.

This report is recommending that Council endorses a procurement exemption under section 6.1.4.2 (a) of the Procurement Policy which states:

*The following circumstances are exempt from the general publicly advertised tender, quotation and expression of interest requirements.*

*Extension of contracts while Council is at market – this allows Council to extend an existing contract where the procurement process to replace the contract has commenced… This exemption may be used when the establishment of an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is considered not to be in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of the critical public services to the municipality.*

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval for a maximum allowable spend of $960,021 (excluding GST) for Contract EXE-2023-546 for Software Application Maintenance and Support for Infor Global Solutions (ANZ) Pty Ltd, for a maximum contract term of three one-year extension options commencing 1 July 2025.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Elevate Customer And Digital Transformation Program** – 12 March 2025

*That Council:*

*1. Notes that Council’s current core business systems are reaching end of their useful lives and need to be modernised to improve customer experience and advance integration between systems and cyber security.*

*…*

*6. Commences the procurement tender process for the Enterprise Resource Planning system and*

*a) Notes that the contract award will be subject to a Council resolution.*

*b) Notes that the tender process may result in amendments to the forward financial projections outlined in Confidential Attachment 1.*

## 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 comply with its Procurement Policy before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works.

The Procurement Policy allows Council to extend existing contracts while Council is at market if establishing an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is not considered to be in the in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of the critical public services to the municipality.

## 2. Background

The current contract for software and maintenance support for Pathway and ePathway expires on 30 June 2025 and has no extension options.

On 12 March 2025, Council resolved as a part of the elevate customer and digital transformation program, to commence the procurement tender process for an Enterprise Resourcing Planning (ERP) System. The EDRMS will form part of this ERP procurement process which is currently underway.

This contract extension is allowed under section 6.1.4.2 (a) of the Procurement Policy which states:

*The following circumstances are exempt from the general publicly advertised tender, quotation and expression of interest requirements.*

*Extension of contracts while Council is at market – this allows Council to extend an existing contract where the procurement process to replace the contract has commenced… This exemption may be used when the establishment of an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is considered not to be in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of the critical public services to the municipality.*

The exemption being sought is for three (3) one-year extension options commencing 1 July 2025 at the discretion of Council for a maximum additional spend of $960,021 (excluding GST). By granting approval for up to 3-years of exemptions allowed for an orderly transition to the new Enterprise Resourcing Planning System.

## 3. Issues

### Procurement exemption for extension

Council has recently resolved on 12 March 2025, as a part of the elevate customer and digital transformation program, to commence the procurement tender process for an Enterprise Resourcing Planning System.

If a procurement exemption for extensions linked to the current timeframes of the elevate program were not to be endorsed, Council would need to run a public tender process for a short-term interim solution. This would require significant additional resources if a transition to a short-term interim supplier were required, that is not currently budgeted for. This is not in the best interest of the public and would result in significant additional budget requirements.

### Community impact

The ePathway product is our eService portal, used by the community for online transactions with Councils. It is imperative that there is no disruption to these services while we consider other platforms.

### Collaboration

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 because of lack of alignment with contract requirements.

### 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 is not required as the Pathway and ePathway platforms are already being utilised.

## 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 Information Technology - Applications Unit is responsible for the software budget and contract management.

The current spend within the existing contract (EXE-2023-546) is $290,133 (excluding GST).

The maximum spend within the extension is $960,021 (excluding GST) for 3-years and is within the existing IT budget. No additional resourcing is required to implement this extension. If Council were to go to market for a short-term interim solution, while the elevate customer and digital transformation program is being undertaken, additional resourcing would be required.

## 7. Implementation

Subject to Council’s decision, the next step would be entering into a contract extension to ensure continuity of Council’s Pathway/ePathway system whilst Council procures and implements an Enterprise Resourcing Planning (ERP) System.

## Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.12 Contract extension: Exe-2023-401 Content Manager Software Application Maintenance and Support

**Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic**

**Information Technology**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves a procurement exemption under section 6.1.4.2 (a) of the procurement policy for EXE-2023-401 Software Application Maintenance and Support for Content Manager for:

a) additional maximum spend of up to $793,868 (excluding GST) under this extension;

b) a term of three (3) one-year extension options commencing 1 July 2025 at the discretion of Council.

2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to approve the contract extensions and related documentation as identified in paragraph 1.

**REPORT**

**Executive Summary**

Council has in place an existing contract EXE-2023-401 which expires on 30 June 2025 for the Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) that manages Council’s corporate records and provides evidence of business activities.

On 12 March 2025, Council resolved to commence the procurement tender process for an Enterprise Resourcing Planning (ERP) System. The EDRMS will form part of this ERP procurement process which is currently underway.

This report is recommending that Council endorses a procurement exemption under section 6.1.4.2 (a) of the Procurement Policy which states:

*The following circumstances are exempt from the general publicly advertised tender, quotation and expression of interest requirements.*

*Extension of contracts while Council is at market – this allows Council to extend an existing contract where the procurement process to replace the contract has commenced… This exemption may be used when the establishment of an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is considered not to be in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of the critical public services to the municipality.*

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval of a maximum allowable spend of $793,868 (excluding GST) for Contract EXE-2023-401 for Software Application Maintenance and Support for Content Manager with the current supplier (Kapish Services Pty Ltd) for a maximum contract term of three one-year extension options commencing 1 July 2025 at the discretion of Council.

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Elevate Customer and Digital Transformation Program** – 12 March 2025

*That Council:*

*1. Notes that Council’s current core business systems are reaching end of their useful lives and need to be modernised to improve customer experience and advance integration between systems and cyber security.*

*…*

*6. Commences the procurement tender process for the Enterprise Resource Planning system and*

*a) Notes that the contract award will be subject to a Council resolution;*

*b) Notes that the tender process may result in amendments to the forward financial projections outlined in Confidential Attachment 1.*

**Software Application Maintenance and Support for Content Manager– Kapish – EXE-2023-401** – 20 June 2023

*That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:*

*1. Engage Kapish Services Pty Ltd under contract EXE-2023-401 for the provision of software application support and maintenance, and consultancy services for Council’s electronic document management system Content Manager:*

*i. For an amount not exceeding $547,000 excluding GST.*

*ii. For a term commencing 1 July 2023 for a period of two (2) years, with no options for extension.*

*2. Do all things necessary to engage the services of Kapish Services Pty Ltd and execute any other required documentation.*

## 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 comply with its Procurement Policy before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works.

The Procurement Policy allows Council to extend existing contracts while Council is at market if establishing an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is not considered to be in the in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of the critical public services to the municipality.

## 2. Background

The current contract for Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) that manages Council’s corporate records and provides evidence of business activities expires on 30 June 2025 and has no extension options.

On 12 March 2025, Council resolved as a part of the elevate customer and digital transformation program, to commence the procurement tender process for an Enterprise Resourcing Planning (ERP) System. The EDRMS will form part of this ERP procurement process which is currently underway.

This contract extension is allowed under section 6.1.4.2 (a) of the Procurement Policy which states:

*The following circumstances are exempt from the general publicly advertised tender, quotation and expression of interest requirements.*

*Extension of contracts while Council is at market – this allows Council to extend an existing contract where the procurement process to replace the contract has commenced… This exemption may be used when the establishment of an interim short-term arrangement with an alternative supplier is considered not to be in the public interest, as it may be cost prohibitive and/or present a risk in the delivery of the critical public services to the municipality.*

The exemption being sought is for 3 three (3) one-year extension options commencing 1 July 2025 at the discretion of Council for a maximum spend of $793,868 (excluding GST). By granting approval for up to 3-years of exemptions allowed for an orderly transition to the new Enterprise Resourcing Planning System.

## 3. Issues

### Procurement exemption for extension

Council has recently resolved on 12 March 2025, as a part of the elevate customer and digital transformation program, to commence the procurement tender process for an Enterprise Resourcing Planning System.

If a procurement exemption for extensions linked to the current timeframes of the elevate program were not to be endorsed, Council would need to run a public tender process for a short-term interim solution. This would require significant additional resources if a transition to a short-term interim supplier were required, that is not currently budgeted for. This is not in the best interest of the public and would result in significant additional budget requirements.

### Collaboration

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 because of lack of alignment with contract requirements.

### 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 is not required as the document management system is already being utilised.

## 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 Information Technology - Applications Unit is responsible for the software budget and contract management.

The current spend within the existing contract (EXE-2023-401) is $473,502 (excluding GST). The maximum spend within the extension is $793,868 (excluding GST) for 3-years and is within the existing IT budget. No additional resourcing is required to implement this extension. If Council were to go to market for a short-term interim solution, while the elevate customer and digital transformation program is being undertaken, additional resourcing would be required.

## 7. Implementation

Subject to Council’s decision, the next step would be entering into a contract extension to ensure continuity of Council’s corporate record system whilst Council procures and implements an Enterprise Resourcing Planning (ERP) System.

## Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.13 Contract Award: RFT-2025-13 Permanent Shared Zone Installation – Albert Street and Victoria Street, Brunswick East

**Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow**

**Transport**

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:

a) Make a formal offer to **Etheredge Mintern Pty Ltd ACN 006 521 151** (**Contractor**) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2025-13 for the Permanent Shared Zone Installation alongside Fleming Park in Albert Street and Victoria Street, Brunswick East including new road pavement, alterations to kerb alignment, footpath, ramps, drainage and new landscaping area (**Contract**) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:

i. For the total Contract value of $732,293.57 excluding GST, comprising of fixed lumpsum of $648,580.22 (excl. GST) and provisional amount of $83,713.35 (excl. 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

The Permanent Shared Zone installation at Albert Street and Victoria Street, Brunswick East has been identified in the 2024-2025 Capital Works Program. Some $375,906 of grant funding from the State Government is allocated to the two shared zones through the Living Local Suburban Grants Program and must be used by October 2025.

The road works are required to install a new red asphalt road pavement, concrete and asphalt footpaths, long and wide pram ramps, kerb extensions, speed humps and cushions, new seating, tree pits, garden beds, drainage and public artwork on the road pavement. These works will deliver permanent infrastructure to replace temporary rubber traffic calming, signage and line marking as well as planter boxes that were used for the trial of the treatment.

During the tender evaluation process, Etheredge Mintern Pty Ltd was identified as the preferred tenderer based on their submission. The contractor has confirmed its ability to undertake the onsite works with a starting date being 26 May 2025.

Etheredge Mintern Pty Ltd has previously undertaken projects of similar complexity for other councils with very good results. The construction program is for an 11-week duration with completion by late August, which is in accordance with our aim to complete this project by October 2025.

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

**Previous Council Decisions**

**Decision to Permanently Close John Street, Brunswick East** - 7 December 2022

*That Council, following consideration of the report from the Department of Transport (VicRoads) and the written and verbal submissions that the public submitted under Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989:*

*1. Resolves under Section 207, Schedule 11, Clause 9 of the Local Government Act 1989 to block the passage of vehicles, other than bicycles and pedestrians, by placing permanent barriers in John Street, Brunswick East at the intersection of Albert Street and John Street to a point 8 metres further south;*

*2. Notifies all those who previously received a circular in relation to the proposal, including those who made written submissions, emergencies services and the Department of Transport of Council’s decision*

*…*

**Safe Movement of Pedestrians and Cyclists – Outcomes of 12-Month Trials** – 10 August 2022

*That Council:*

*…*

*3. Makes permanent the shared zones on Victoria Street and Albert Street, Brunswick East by:*

*a) Seeking state government (Department of Transport) approval to permanently lower the speed limit in the shared zones to 20 km/h*

*b) Undertaking functional and detailed design of a permanent shared zone in 2022/23 largely in line with the current trial but with a view to permanent features and reduced maintenance costs.*

*…*

*7. Resolves to continue to monitor the infrastructure after implementation including receiving feedback from the community in accordance with the ‘post implementation’ phase of the community engagement process for future bike projects as adopted in March 2022.*

*8. Notes the $400,000 in the 2022/23 capital works budget ‘Allowance for next step works for trial bike lanes and shared zones-Various’ will be used to implement the next stages on these shared zones and bike lane trials and any additional funding needed will be referred to the budget process including quarterly budget updates.*

**Safe Movement of Pedestrians and Cyclists - COVID-19 Response** - 8 July 2020

*That Council:*

*…*

*4. Approves the following projects as described in this report to be delivered as soon as possible, subject to external/grant funding being secured.*

*i. An expanded zebra crossing program (up to $500,000);*

*ii. An expanded pedestrian threshold program (up to $500,000);*

*iii. Pop up separated bicycle lanes on Dawson Street, Brunswick between the Upfield shared path and Barry Street ($105,000);*

*iv. Pop up shared zones on Albert Street and Victoria Street in Brunswick East at the Fleming Park shared path ($150,000);*

*v. Pop up separated bicycle lanes on Kent Road, Pascoe Vale, between Cornwall Road and Cumberland Road ($60,000);*

*vi. Pop up separated bicycle lanes on Northumberland Road, Pascoe Vale between Rhodes Parade and the KW Joyce Reserve shared path ($66,000);*

## 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 to a suitably qualified contractor to undertake the Permanent Shared Zone Installation in Albert Street and Victoria Street, Brunswick East alongside Fleming Park (includes the south end of Hutchinson Street and John Street, as well as the north end of Elesbury Avenue) as per the detailed drawings and specifications.

The tender was advertised via Council Procurement portal and in *The Age* newspaper on 15 March 2025, inviting tenders via the e-tender portal from suitably experienced contractors to undertake the works.

Tender closed at 3pm on Tuesday 8 April 2025, with tenders received from following 7 contractors. Six tenderers were deemed conforming.

1. Evergreen Civil Pty Ltd - ACN: 128 554 307

2. Multipro Civil Pty Ltd - ACN: 112 295 879

3. Novacon Group Pty Ltd - ACN: 621 403 076

4. Etheredge Mintern Pty Ltd - ACN: 006 521 151

5. New Horizon Construction Pty Ltd - ACN: 618 941 389

6. Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd - ACN: 619 423 068

7. Vine Civil Pty Ltd - ACN: 633 838 883

**Tender Evaluation**

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 tender evaluation criteria included cost, capacity, capability, social, environmental, and economic sustainability considerations.

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows:

| **Title** | **Generalist or Nominated Speciality** | **Full Voting / Advisory Member** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Senior Transport Officer | Project Manager (Chair) | Full Voting |
| Senior Construction Engineer | Engineering Services | Full Voting |
| Senior Transport Officer | Generalist | Full Voting |
| Procurement Partner | Procurement | Advisory |

In assessing the tenders, consideration was given to the following pre-defined criteria:

| **Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| --- | --- |
| Cost | 40% |
| Traffic Management & Works Program and Methodology | 10% |
| Capability, Experience and Capacity | 20% |
| Quality Management System | 10% |
| Customer Service | 3% |
| Social Sustainability | 4% |
| Economic Sustainability | 4% |
| Environmental Sustainability | 4% |
| Environmental Sustainability Construction Options | 5% |
| **Total Scores** | **100%** |

## 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 because it is a local stand-alone road re-construction and drainage project for which there is a healthy local market of contractors.

**Social Implications**

Etheredge Mintern has a Social Procurement Policy in place. The company states that it provides opportunities to underprivileged members of society and supports businesses with similar cultures.

**Local Implications**

Etheredge Mintern Pty Ltd is based in Kilsyth (Shire of Yarra Ranges) and has indicated that it will use suppliers located within Merri-bek and surrounding municipalities where possible.

**Environmental Implications**

Etheredge Mintern Pty Ltd has externally iso-certified Environmental Management Systems in place. The company has processes in place to recycle and/or reuse all waste and use recycled products where possible. They track energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through a structured monitoring and reporting system, focusing on 3 key areas: stationary energy, operational energy, and embodied emissions. The company's approach includes regular audits, data collection, and a commitment to reducing its carbon footprint over time.

### 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

Installing the trial Shared Zones was part of a Council decision at its July 2020 meeting to allocate an additional $1.68 million in the 2020/2021 budget for walking and riding improvements in response to the COVID-19 State of Emergency in Victoria. This investment aimed to encourage as many people as possible to walk or ride a bike given the social distancing requirements at the time.

Given the need to act quickly, the trial shared zones were installed using temporary infrastructure to allow Council to monitor their performance and make real-time adjustments based on community feedback over the course of the trial, before making a final decision.

Mail outs to residents in March 2021 (on the lead up to the trial) and during the trial invited feedback on the shared zones. An engagement specialist also undertook intercept surveys with the community between December 2021 and March 2022 to gauge their views on the trial projects.

For the Shared Zones, 158 people made submissions. An additional 60 people gave feedback via the intercept surveys.

An independent community run survey with 67 participants was also submitted for consideration by Brunswick Residents Network and the then Moreland Bicycle User Group.

### Key issues and findings for the Shared Zone trials were:

 130 people completed a survey relating to the Albert Street shared zone and a total of 88 people completed a survey for the Victoria Street shared zone.

 Comments were very similar for both of the shared zones.

 More respondents felt the trial shared zones increased safety (rather than reduced safety).

 Pedestrians said they were more likely to use the space.

 Bike riders were neutral and drivers were slightly less likely to use the space as a result of the trial.

 Traffic surveys indicated that there was an increase in pedestrian numbers within the shared zones (compared to background levels in December 2020). Bike ridership volumes have steadied or increased in the shared zone indicating that bike riders are not discouraged by pedestrians having priority.

 Vehicle volumes are lower compared to background levels and there is no indication that vehicles are avoiding the treatment by using other local streets in the area.

 Vehicle speeds are 10 km/h slower in the shared zones than immediately outside. The shared zones appear to have had negligible impact on parking in the area, but it is noted that parking pressure in the area has been increasing over the duration of this trial compared to December 2020 levels.

The engagement activities deemed the trials a success, and in August 2022, Council unanimously endorsed both shared zone projects to be made permanent.

The final designs for the permanent shared zones have been modified based on feedback and data gathered during the trial period. In Victoria Street, the shared zone has been shortened on the west side to commence closer to Elesbury Avenue, with an additional speed hump installed immediately west of Elesbury Avenue to slow vehicles entering the shared zone. To address sight distance for all users and enable vehicles to safely pass in the intersection of Victoria Street and Elesbury Avenue, vehicles will no longer be able to park within the intersection. All ramps for pedestrians will have suitably gentle slopes for DDA compliance, whilst leaving the regular footpath flat alongside the park. Pavement materials and line marking have been selected for longevity and reduced maintenance requirements.

A project update letter was sent to properties in the vicinity of the Albert Street Shared Zone in June 2024 with a project timeline update and details for removal of some of the ageing trial infrastructure. This included some parking changes to protect pedestrian areas and sight distance around key crossing points.

A project update was mailed to all surrounding properties in August 2024 including concept plans and specific details for the permanent shared zone installations. The concept plans were also published on a dedicated Conversations Merri-bek webpage, including 3D visualisations of the Albert Street Shared Zone around the John Street Road Closure. A3 posters detailing the project concept plans, with updates and links to the conversations page were also displayed on six dedicated Shared Zone awareness signs in Albert Street and Victoria Street.

Victoria Street and Elesbury Avenue residents made a number of email submissions to Council officers regarding the plans and requested a follow up site meeting that was held onsite on 26 September 2024. Based on this meeting and submissions from directly impacted residents, adjustments were made to proposed tree plantings in Elesbury Avenue, as well as to the number and location of bollards proposed. The changes allow more manoeuvring room in the road carriageway than is currently available or was available before the trial with parked vehicles, as well as for a greater length for passing in Victoria Street and better visibility for all users, whilst still extending the footpath ramps into the road.

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

A total budget of $1,093,000.00 has been allocated in the Council Capital Works Program over two consecutive financial years of 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 for the Permanent Installation of the Shared Zones in Albert Street and Victoria Street, Brunswick East. This amount includes $375,906 of grant funding from the State Government through the Living Local Suburban Grants Program to permanently install both shared zones

The table below shows the anticipated expenditure for Contract RFT-2025-13:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount (excluding GST)** |
| Tendered lump sum amount | $648,580.22 |
| Provisional sum | $83,713.35 |
| **TOTAL** | **$732,293.57** |

Budget commitments are shown in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Adopted budget ($)** | **2024/2025** | **2025/2026** | **Total** |
| **Shared Zones budget** | **$93,000** | **$1,000,000** | **$1,093,000** |
| Non-contract project costs | | | |
| *Specialist road markings and line marking* |  | *$134,300* |  |
| *Street lighting* | *$8,129* |  |  |
| *New seating* |  | *$9,300* |  |
| *Design costs in 2024/25* | *$67,913* |  |  |
| *Upkeep of trial infrastructure* | *$10,854* |  |  |
| Total costs outside Contract RFT‑2025‑13 | $86,897 | $143,600 |  |
| Contract costs |  | $732,294 |  |
| **Total remaining budget** | **$6,103** | **$124,106** | **$130,210** |

## 7. Implementation and Timeline

It is proposed that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the contract/s and any other required documentation.

The contracts will commence as soon as possible following Council endorsement.

Construction works are planned to commence in June 2025 and be completed in the first half of the 2025/2026 financial year.

## Attachment/s

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | Tender Recommendation Report for above $700k- RFT-2025-13 Permanent Installation of Shared Zones  *Pursuant to section 3(1)(g(i)) 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 relates to trade secrets.* | D25/217176 |  |

**8. Notices of Motion**

**8.1 Sister City with Bharatpur Metropolitan City of Nepal**

**Cr Chris Miles**

## Motion

That Council:

1. Writes to Ms Renu Dahal, Mayor Bharatpur Metropolitan City Bagmati Province Nepal extending an invitation to meet with the Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson and Councillors in June to explore a potential sister city relationship between the two councils, including opportunities to foster cultural exchange, mutual understanding, and opportunities for collaboration.

2. Receives a report at the July meeting, which investigates the possible establishment of a Sister City Relationship with Bharatpur Metropolitan City in Nepal, which includes the identification of a potential governance structure for the relationship and potential areas of collaboration between Bharatpur Metropolitan City and Merri-bek City Council.

## 1. Background

Cr Miles’s background:

Australia and Nepal have enjoyed strong bilateral relations since 15 February 1960. The milestone 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties was celebrated in 2020, reflecting a longstanding and evolving partnership. Australia established its Embassy in Kathmandu in 1984, followed by Nepal opening its Embassy in Canberra in 2007, signifying deepening engagement.

The Nepalese community in Australia has grown significantly in recent years, particularly in Victoria, which hosts the second-largest Nepalese population in Australia. Between 2011 and 2021, the community more than doubled, driven by strong demand for Australian education and evolving skilled migration pathways. This trend is expected to continue.

Beyond diplomatic relations, people-to-people connections have strengthened through tourism, trade, education, professional exchanges, and government cooperation. Australia has played a pivotal role in Nepal’s development in areas such as healthcare, education, hydropower, agriculture, forestry, and governance. In 2021, 2.2% of the City of Merri-bek's population spoke Nepali at home compared to 0.4% in Greater Melbourne. While the City of Merri-bek has a higher proportion of people who spoke Nepali at home, Glenroy is the highest at 7.8%, followed by other suburbs including Fawkner (3.3%) and Oak Park (3.1%).

## 2. Policy Context

Officer’s comments:

Councils adopted Sister City/Friendship City Guidelines (the Guidelines) outline that Sister and Friendship city relationships strengthen ties between communities for the benefit of cultural exchange and economic development. Council is committed to supporting sister and friendship relationships to the extent that they promote relevant cultural and historic ties and foster economic links, provided there is evidence the local community is prepared to actively support and participate in the relationship.

The Guidelines also set the criteria that is to be used for the assessment of requests for sister/friendship city agreements to be established. This criteria includes:

 A demonstrated link or relationship between the cities (including Merri-bek);

 A demonstrated historic, cultural or social benefit of a sister city relationship; and

 How will the relationship help develop networks of communication between Merri-bek and the proposed city?

The proposed Council report will address each element of the above criteria, as well as the identification of a potential governance structure for the relationship and potential areas of collaboration between Bharatpur Metropolitan City and Council.

Australia’s *Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020* requires that all prospective foreign arrangements with councils, including Sister City arrangements, be notified to the Minister of Foreign Affairs via the Foreign Arrangements Scheme. A formal notification will be made to the Minister should this motion be adopted.

## 3. Financial Implications

Officer’s comments:

There are no financial implications associated with the preparation of a Council report which explores the potential for Council to enter into a sister city relationship with Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Bagmati Province Nepal.

## 4. Resources Implications

Officer’s comments:

The motion can be implemented using existing Council resources.

**8.2 Pedestrian Safety at Bonwick Street and Jukes Road Intersection**

**Cr Nat Abboud**

## Motion

That Council investigates urgent solutions to ensure pedestrian safety from car accidents where cars can mount the curb on the southwest corner of Bonwick Street and Jukes Road intersection in Fawkner such as bollards or planter boxes.

## 1. Background

Cr Abboud’s Background

Once again there has been a dangerous incident on Bonwick street. A man became unconscious in his car and drove into the Chemist Discount Centre Fawkner which is located on the corner of Jukes Road. The man was revived and has survived a heart attack but the pharmacy has suffered structural damage for the second time from a car accident in less than a year.

Although Bonwick Street has had significant investment recently, there is still more to do to urgently resolve safety on this corner to protect pedestrians and the building from accidents of this type.

## 2. Policy Context

Officer’s comments:

The parking bay directly in front of the pharmacy on Bonwick Street, near Jukes Road, is a disability parking bay, which includes a ramp to allows universal access from the parking bay to the footpath.

Providing this ramp is also a legal requirement to meet standards under the Disability Discrimination Act.

It appears in the incident that recently occurred at this site, the ramp made it somewhat easier for the errant vehicle to mount the footpath.

When Bonwick Street underwent a streetscape upgrade in 2020, seven disability parking bays were installed.

The Australian Standard for disability parking has since been updated. The subject parking bay no longer meets the standard.

The new standard requires a shared zone next to the disability parking bay, to enable manoeuvrability of a wheelchair user. It also requires the installation of a bollard to ensure that space is not encroached by a vehicle.

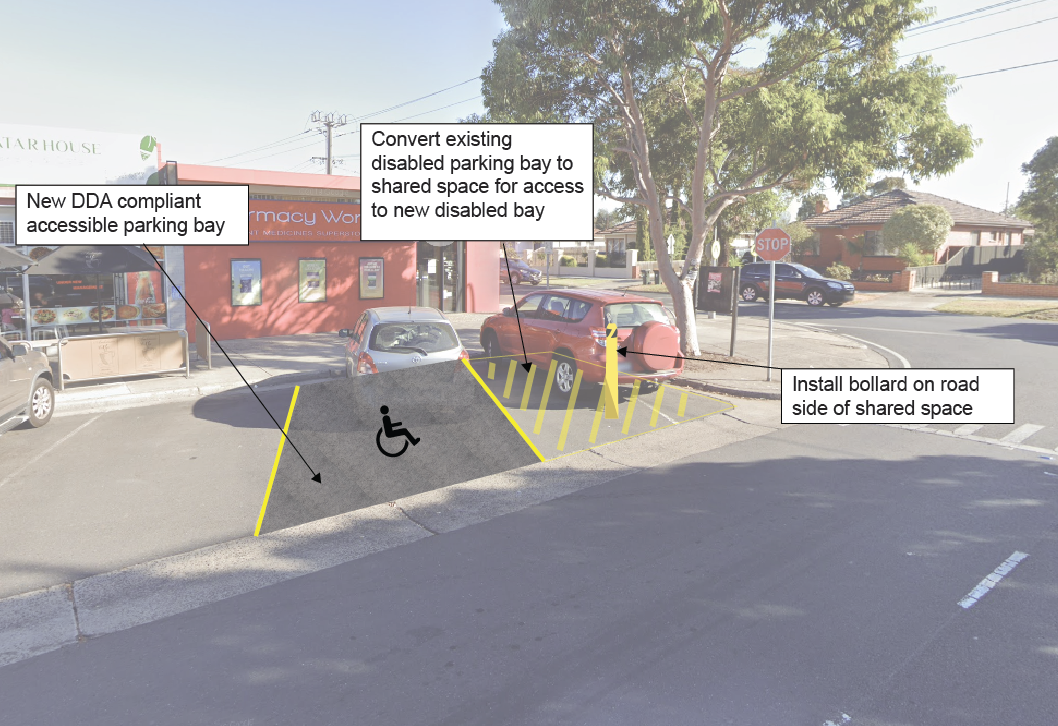
Council officers will update this parking bay so that it meets the new standard.

This will mean that the parking bay will shift south so that it is in front of where the rubbish bins and tree are located. This location has a kerb along its length. These elements will create a barrier for an errant vehicle mounting the kerb.

Where the ramp currently is, a bollard will be located in the road way so that users of disability parking are protected. This will also prevent errant vehicles from mounting the kerb.

To ensure no loss of regular parking, the disability parking bay at the end of the row of parking is proposed to be converted to a regular parking bay, reducing the total number of disability parking bays to six. A letter will go out to businesses shortly with the proposed parking change.

The concept designs below illustrate the proposed changes to improve safety and create a parking bay for people with disability that is compliant with the new Australian Standards.



Council officers will review the five remaining disability parking bays in Bonwick Street and consider whether upgrades are required to align them with the updated standard.

## 3. Financial Implications

Officer’s comments:

Updating the disability parking is being completed within existing Council budget, drawing on infrastructure funding set aside to address urgent transport safety and compliance issues.

## 4. Resources Implications

Officer’s comments:

Updating the disability parking bay is being completed within existing Council resources.

**8.3 Honouring the Life and Legacy of Joe Sam Luppino**

**Cr Oscar Yildiz**

## Motion

That Council:

1. Formally recognises and honors the outstanding contribution of Joe Sam Luppino by naming the grandstand at Coburg City Oval the “Joe Sam Luppino Stand”.

2. Should this not be deemed suitable, identifies and considers an alternative location or facility within Merri-bek to appropriately commemorate Joe’s legacy and service to the community.

## 1. Background

Cr Yildiz’s Background

Joe Sam Luppino made an extraordinary and lasting contribution to the Moreland (now Merri-Bek) community through his 23 years of dedicated service to Council. Whether you had the privilege of working alongside Joe for a short time or many years, his influence and legacy are deeply felt by all.

Joe was a highly respected and admired figure, not only within Merri-Bek but across the broader sport and recreation sector. He commenced his career with Moreland Council in 2001 as the Access for All Abilities Officer, where he coordinated the Recreational Access Program and championed inclusive sporting and recreation opportunities for people with disabilities. In 2007, Joe was appointed Recreation Services Coordinator, and later promoted to Unit Manager Recreation Services, where he led a team responsible for planning, managing, and delivering Council’s sport and recreation programs, including the community grants program.

Joe’s deep passion for sport, combined with his unwavering commitment to fairness, drove significant positive change. He played a pivotal role in advancing gender equity and increasing junior and female participation in sport — achievements that have since been adopted as best practice by councils and sporting bodies across the country.

His leadership also led to the development and upgrade of numerous community and recreational facilities, with a focus on multi-purpose spaces and equitable access for all.

I had the honour of working alongside Joe for 16 years at Moreland/Merri-Bek Council. His professionalism, leadership, and compassion made him not only a respected manager, but also a deeply valued colleague and friend. Joe was known for his generosity of spirit, humility, and ability to bring people together.

Joe Sam Luppino was born on 30 September 1971 to proud parents Carmelo and Rosa Luppino. He passed away on 4 January 2024, following a courageous battle with cancer. He is survived by his beloved wife Betty, 10-year-old daughter Bianca, mother Rosa, and brother Steve.

**Service and Advocacy for People with Disabilities**

Joe dedicated his professional life to empowering people with disabilities, combining his academic background with hands-on experience in community support. He volunteered with the Victorian Weekend Wanders, offering recreational travel experiences to individuals with complex needs, and co-founded Breakaway Adventures, a not-for-profit organisation focused on inclusive recreational opportunities for young adults with disabilities.

At Council, Joe led the Access for All Abilities program with distinction, championing equal opportunity in sport and recreation long before it became a widespread standard.

**Leadership and Legacy at Council**

Joe’s love of sport led him to Council’s Recreation Services Unit, where he thrived as a leader and mentor. A passionate sportsman himself, he played football, tennis, cricket (indoor and outdoor), squash, and golf. He was a proud supporter and lifetime member of the Richmond Football Club, and was actively involved in supporting local football and soccer clubs across multiple communities.

He was instrumental in forming the Victoria University Student Union football team, where he leveraged his leadership and recruiting skills to build a competitive and inclusive team.

Joe’s proud and enduring legacy at Merri-bek Council is reflected in projects that led to improved community sport and recreation facilities, and ultimately greater and more equal access for all. Through his leadership, the groundbreaking and sector leading Active Women’s Policy was introduced, ensuring women and girls had equal opportunities to participate in sport—an initiative that led to the upgrade of nearly all sports pavilions across the municipality to be female-friendly.

Joe was a driving force behind several major infrastructure projects, including the CB Smith Soccer Pavilion and Ground, the Coburg City Oval Redevelopment, and the Inner Metro North Netball Project, which delivered 24 new netball courts across Merri-bek.

He was also instrumental in advocating to state and federal governments for critical grant funding to support the ongoing enhancement of local sporting facilities.

In 2020 and the Covid pandemic, Joe planned, recruited and led a large Working for Victoria workforce of 11 teams and 73 staff – people who would otherwise have been out of work - refurbishing and upgrading 110 of Council’s Community Facilities including Sports Pavilions and Facilities, Public toilets, Aquatic Centres, Neighbourhood Houses, Kindergartens, Maternal Childcare Centres, Community Halls, Libraries, Youth Facilities, and Civic Centres. This was an extraordinary feat that made a huge difference for individuals in some of the darkest days of the pandemic. It has also had lasting benefit to the community.

These achievements over 23 years benefited the health and wellbeing of thousands of people in the Merri-bek community. Joe built lasting and constructive relationships within the community and stakeholders, particularly with the 80 community sporting clubs in Merri-bek.

**Personal Values and Community Impact**

Joe’s legacy extends far beyond the programs he managed or the policies he influenced. He will be remembered for his humility, integrity, and selflessness. He consistently put others first, ensuring those around him felt valued, respected, and supported. His kindness, optimism, and compassion left a lasting impact on everyone he encountered — colleagues, friends, and community members alike.

Joe’s story is one of courage, resilience, and service — a legacy that deserves to be honoured in a lasting and meaningful way.

## 2. Policy Context

Officer’s comments:

This motion aligns with Council’s ongoing commitment to community inclusion, equality in sport and recreation, and the recognition of long serving staff members who have made an exceptional impact. Naming a Council of a Council facility as proposed by the motion is possible and has precedent.

## 3. Financial Implications

Officer’s comments:

This motion can be accommodated within current operational budgets.

## 4. Resources Implications

Officer’s comments:

This motion can be enacted with current resource allocations.

**8.4 Coburg City Oval**

**Cr Oscar Yildiz**

## Motion

That Council:

1. Ensures the two public access gates at City Oval are opened from 6am and closed by 10pm daily and that:

a) Dogs must remain on-lead at all times during open hours and are prohibited from accessing the oval.

b) No public access is permitted on match days or during club use, as outlined in the Council’s agreement with Coburg FC.

c) Coburg FC reserves the right to deny access on match days in line with operational and safety needs.

2. Installs improved signage around the venue to inform the public of access times, dog policies, and usage rules.

3. Notes that while the club supports community access for health and fitness, the venue’s poor lighting and limited passive surveillance make it unsuitable for unsupervised evening use and that clear communication are necessary for public safety.

## 1. Background

**Cr Yildiz’s Background**

Established in 1891, the Coburg Football Club (Coburg FC) is based at the recently redeveloped Coburg City Oval—a project co-funded by Moreland City Council, the State Government, the AFL, and Cricket Australia.

The club fields junior teams at Jackson Reserve, Coburg North, a junior-sized oval. Coburg FC’s senior men’s team is one of six “standalone” or independent historic clubs competing in the AFL’s tier-two competition, the Victorian Football League (VFL). This high-profile competition sees AFL-aligned teams such as Collingwood, Essendon, Carlton, Richmond, and others visiting Coburg City Oval as part of the fixture.

All men’s VFL matches are broadcast live nationally via afl.com.au and the AFL app. In addition, one to two matches each year are televised live on Channel 7.

The club’s two women’s teams compete in the Victorian Amateur Football Association (VAFA), the largest women’s football competition in Victoria.

Despite operating with only one full-time staff member, General Manager Nick Byrne, Coburg FC runs a professional program supported by a network of volunteers, university interns, workplace students, and work experience participants. On any given day, 3–4 people of various ages and abilities are actively working at the venue, developing skills in sports administration, media, strength and conditioning, and facilities management.

Coburg City Oval is the municipality’s premier sporting facility and the only one that brings mainstream, free-to-air broadcast exposure to the suburb and to Council. It is a community asset of significance and pride.

Security Concerns and Gate Access

Prior to 2018, Coburg FC managed the gates to Coburg City Oval, opening and locking them daily in line with training and game schedules. This access control was necessary as entry to VFL matches requires ticketing or membership.

In 2018, Council altered this arrangement, mandating that gates remain open at all times except on match days. Since then, the club has experienced a marked increase in:

 Vandalism, theft, and graffiti

 Drug use within the facility

 Safety issues, especially affecting women, children, and staff

The grandstand, a key feature of the redevelopment, has unfortunately become a gathering place for illicit activity. In the past year alone, Coburg FC has submitted over 100 support requests to Council related to vandalism and safety issues. Staff and volunteers—including the Council’s cleaner and workplace students—report feeling unsafe, particularly at night.

Security incidents reported since January 2025 include:

 Drug use onsite

 Theft of vehicle number plates

 Trespassing and removal of unauthorised individuals

 Physical altercations involving community members

 Repeated instances of graffiti, discarded drug paraphernalia, and vandalism requiring costly clean-up

The club’s General Manager often remains onsite late into the evening to ensure the safety of players and volunteers.

**Dog Control and Facility Misuse**

An increasing concern for Coburg FC is the misuse of the oval by dog owners, including:

 Dogs off-lead interfering with training sessions

 Owners not cleaning up after their pets

 Disregard for Council’s on-lead policy at the venue

This behaviour compromises the safety and cleanliness of the playing surface. Club volunteers are routinely forced to address these issues, which has led to tension with some members of the public.

Prior to each match, the club is required to inspect and clean the playing field of dog waste and debris, a responsibility it believes should not fall solely on volunteers.

## 2. Policy Context

Officer’s comments:

Policy direction for City Oval is provided by Council’s Open Space Strategy and Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

## 3. Financial Implications

Officer’s comments:

The cost of implementing this Notice of Motion, including signage, can be undertaken within existing operational budgets.

## 4. Resources Implications

Officer’s comments:

The proposed arrangements and signage can be undertaken within existing resource allocations.

**8.5 Marketing materials and gifts for school students, visitors and dignitaries**

**Cr Oscar Yildiz**

## Motion

That Council reinstates the provision of providing corporate/official gifts ensuring appropriate options for such gifts and marketing materials are available, including items suitable for school students, visitors, community groups, and dignitaries, as well as materials that can be provided to Councillors for official visits.

## 1. Background

Cr Yildiz’s background:

Council regularly hosts visits from local community groups, schools and international delegations keen to learn about our services and initiatives. As Councillors, we also represent Merri-bek in other states and internationally, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and dignitaries.

Currently, Council does not have any official marketing materials, souvenirs, or branded gifts to present to visitors. This is a missed opportunity to positively promote our City and leave a lasting, professional impression.

Recently, while hosting a visit from a local primary school alongside the Mayor, we had very few materials available limited to a small number of waste management brochures. A simple item such as a bookmark, keyring, pin, or other branded gift would have been well received and would have showcased Council’s pride in its services and identity.

In my 17 years of service, I have consistently found it difficult to source appropriate Council-branded gifts when meeting with visitors or dignitaries. Unlike many other Councils, which offer tailored and thoughtful gifts bearing their logo, Merri-bek lacks such resources.

On numerous occasions, including when meeting Ambassadors in Canberra, I have personally purchased gifts to ensure that Merri-bek is remembered positively.

This matter is not merely about gifts, it is about professional representation, civic pride, and enhancing our reputation both locally and internationally. Small tokens of appreciation can leave a lasting impact and help put Merri-bek firmly on the map for all the right reasons.

## 2. Policy Context

Officer’s comments:

There are no policy implications associated with this proposal. Prior to the pandemic, Council maintained arrangements for the provision of corporate and official gifts; however, these practices were discontinued due to the suspension of official and dignitary visits during that period. As official visits have now resumed, such as school visits to educate students about Council operations, it is appropriate to source and maintain a supply of corporate gifts.

## 3. Financial Implications

Officer’s comments:

The provision of corporate gifts can be sourced within existing budget allocations.

## 4. Resources Implications

Officer’s comments:

There are no resource implications associated with this proposal.