



Merri-bek
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday 9 April 2025

Commencing 6.30 pm

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

Language Link

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

這是市政會會議的議程。您若在理解議程中有需要協助的地方，請打電話給“語言連接 (Language Link)”翻譯服務，號碼9280 1910。

Questo è l'ordine del giorno per la Riunione del consiglio Comunale. Se hai bisogno di aiuto sugli argomenti in discussione, sei pregato di telefonare al Language Link al numero 9280 1911.

Αυτή είναι η Ημερήσια Διάταξη για τη Συνεδρίαση του Συμβουλίου (Council Meeting). Για βοήθεια με οποιοδήποτε από τα θέματα της ημερήσιας διάταξης, παρακαλείστε να τηλεφωνήσετε στο Γλωσσικό Σύνδεσμο (Language Link), στο 9280 1912.

هذا هو جدول أعمال اجتماع المجلس البلدي. للمساعدة بأي بند من بنود جدول الأعمال الرجاء الاتصال بخط Language Link على الرقم 9280 1913.

Belediye Meclisi Toplantısının gündem maddeleri burada verilmiştir. Bu gündem maddeleri ile ilgili yardıma ihtiyacınız olursa, 9280 1914 numaralı telefondan Language Link tercüme hattını arayınız.

Đây là Nghị Trình cuộc họp của Ủy Ban Quy Hoạch Đô Thị. Nếu muốn biết thêm chi tiết về đề tài thảo luận, xin gọi điện thoại cho Language Link qua số 9280 1915.

यह काँसिल की बैठक का कार्यक्रम है। कार्यक्रम के किसी भी विषय के बारे में सहायता के लिए कृपया 9280 1918 पर फोन कीजिए।

这是市政府例会的议题安排，如果需要协助了解任何议题内容，请拨打9280 0750。

ਇਹ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਦਾ ਏਜੰਡਾ ਹੈ। ਏਜੰਡੇ ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਆਈਟਮ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ, ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 9280 0751 ਤੇ ਟੇਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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

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

Information about Council Meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NEXT MEETING DATE The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 May 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 Wednesday 23 April 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 12 March 2025 be confirmed.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

5. PETITIONS

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 5.1 | PETITION - INSTALL MORE STREET LIGHTS ON WHITE STREET, COBURG | 6 |
| 5.2 | PETITION - KEEPING BAIN AVENUE SAFE FOR PEDESTRIANS | 10 |
| 5.3 | PETITION - IMPROVE PARKING CONDITIONS FOR RESIDENTS ON WALTERS STREET, BRUNSWICK | 15 |

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

7. COUNCIL REPORTS

- | | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 7.1 | DRAFT INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025-2030 - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION | 18 |
| 7.2 | RAINBOW CROSSINGS - SITES FOR CONSULTATION | 32 |
| 7.3 | COBURG NORTH SPORTS HUB MASTERPLAN | 41 |
| 7.4 | MCDONALD RESERVE FEASIBILITY STUDY | 79 |
| 7.5 | DE CARLE STREET PROTECTED BIKE LANES (THE AVENUE TO MORELAND RD) - PROJECT DISCONTINUATION | 87 |
| 7.6 | GRANTHAM STREET/UNION STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE | 94 |
| 7.7 | SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES IN LOCAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRES | 100 |
| 7.8 | FRIENDS OF AILEU: ANNUAL REPORT 2024, STRATEGY PLAN 2025-2030 AND FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT (MERRI-BEK - HUME - AILEU) 2025-2030 | 114 |
| 7.9 | SISTER AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES REVIEW | 202 |
| 7.10 | GOVERNANCE RULES REVIEW - 2025 | 207 |

7.11	PUBLISHING CONTRACT INFORMATION ON COUNCIL'S WEBSITE	286
7.12	2024-25 THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT	289
7.13	GOVERNANCE REPORT - APRIL 2025 - CYCLICAL REPORT	320
7.14	CONTRACT VARIATION RFT-2024-13 - WILSON AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT	370
7.15	CONTRACT RFT-P-2024-3 FOR GENERAL AND SPECIALIST TREE SERVICES	374
7.16	ELECTRICAL CAPACITY UPGRADE - HADFIELD OPERATIONS CENTRE	379
8.	NOTICES OF MOTION	
	Nil	
9.	NOTICE OF RESCISSION	
	Nil	
10.	FORESHADOWED ITEMS	
11.	URGENT BUSINESS	

5. PETITIONS

5.1 PETITION - INSTALL MORE STREET LIGHTS ON WHITE STREET, COBURG

A petition (D25/131993) has been received containing 47 signatories requesting Council increase the number of street lights on White Street, Coburg for safety at night.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council increase the number of street lights on White Street, Coburg for safety at night.
2. Refers the petition requesting Council increase the number of street lights on White Street, Coburg for safety at night to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Petition - More lights on White Street, Coburg - Redacted D25/132035

Attention: Merri-bek Council

Harmony Ward Councillor: Helen Politis

RE: PETITION FOR MORE LIGHTS ON WHITE STREET, COBURG

Dear Cr Helen Politis,

I am writing on behalf of myself and fellow concerned residents of White Street in Coburg, to respectfully petition that Merri-bek Council increases the number of lights on our street for greater safety and security at night.

Even though White Street has nearly 40 residences and is used by many people as it has the Upfield Bike path at one end, and Anderson Reserve at the other end, there are currently only four lamp posts placed on one side only of the long and wide street.

It is extremely poorly lit at night, and many residents, guests, dog walkers, and commuters have expressed fear when walking on our very dark street.

You can see from the photos attached to the petition that there are only two lamp posts at either end of the long street; one ineffective lamppost outside number 13 White Street that is significantly obscured by the two large beech trees on the nature strip; and one final lamppost outside number 25A White Street.

There is simply not enough lighting to see clearly or feel safe at night.

Please find signatures below of concerned residents from White Street.

We look forward to hearing from you.

With thanks and kind regards,
Adèle Shelley



Petition to Install more lights on White Street, Coburg 3058

Petition summary and background	White Street has insufficient lighting (with only four lamp posts on one side of the street) and many residents and users feel unsafe at night.
Action petitioned for	We, the undersigned are concerned residents, who urge Merri-bek Council to increase the lights on White Street for safety at night.

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date

Attachments - photos of White Street:

View of White Street from Upfield Bike Path



View of White Street from Anderson Reserve



OUR ONLY FOUR LAMP POSTS FOR THE ENTIRE STREET:

1. Lamp post outside number 1 White Street



2. Lamp post outside number 13 White Street



3. Lamp post outside number 25A White Street



4. Lamp post outside 31 White St
(backing onto Anderson Reserve)



5.2 PETITION - KEEPING BAIN AVENUE SAFE FOR PEDESTRIANS

A petition (D25/148630) has been received with 205 signatories requesting Council keep Bain Avenue safe for pedestrians.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council keep Bain Avenue safe for pedestrians.
2. Refers the petition requesting Council keep Bain Avenue safe for pedestrians to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Petition - Keeping Bain Avenue safe for pedestrians - Redacted D25/148760

A petition from the residents of Merlynston and surrounding suburbs –

Keeping Bain Avenue safe for Pedestrians

Dear Merri Bek council,

Some of us live on Bain Avenue, sandwiched between Sydney Rd and the Merlynston train station. Many people walk and drive from Fawkner and Coburg north to this station with the new car park. To enter, you need to drive down Bain Ave. There is a lot of traffic.

Cars drive very fast down Bain Ave if they are late for a train and people are often running across the road to catch one. There is also increased traffic with the Food truck park on the corner of Plaisted and Sydney rds. Both ends of the street next to the station have blind corners.

Parking in the driveways on the corners is hazardous.

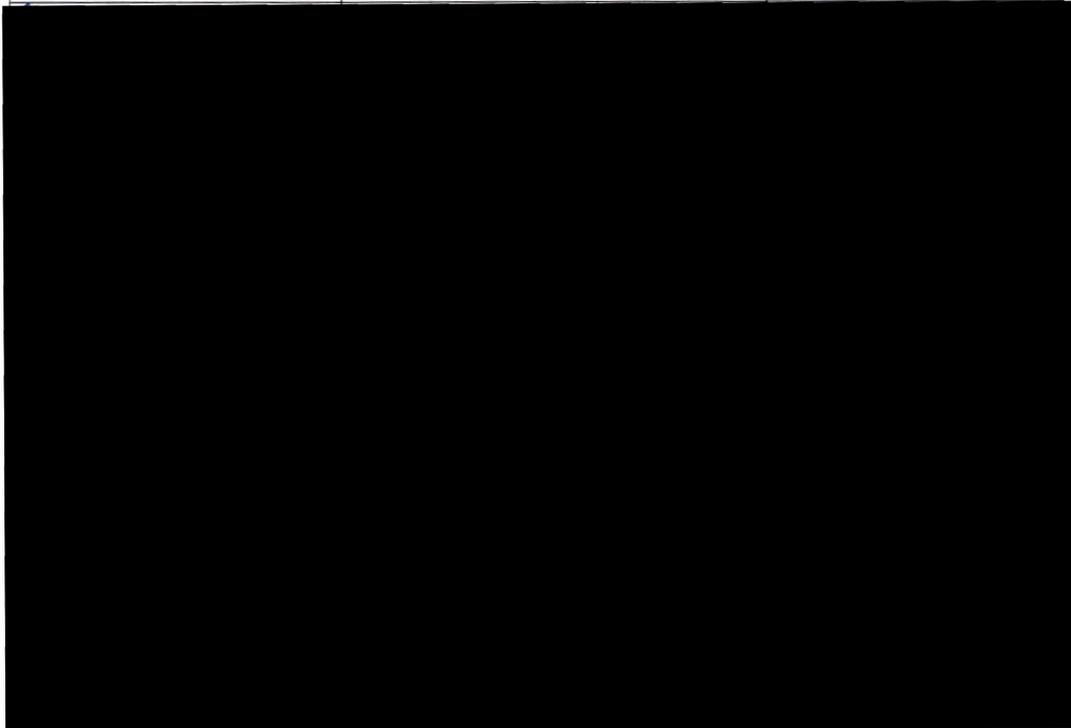
Pedestrians from the north often walk from the blind corner to the station diagonally down the road as it seems slightly faster. It is only a matter of time before someone is hurt.

Possible fixes to this problem

- sets of speed humps on Bain Ave to slow the traffic down. Before each of the blind corners and along the stretch next to the station
- Fish eye mirrors at each end to assist with the blind corners
- A zebra pedestrian crossing directly opposite the station entrance to encourage pedestrians to cross there.

Thankyou for signing

Name	Address	Signature
------	---------	-----------





change.org

Start a petition



Petition details

Comments



Make Bain Avenue safer for pedestrians

Started
Petition to

28 February 2025
Merri Bek Council

178

Signatures

200

Next goal

Support now

Sign this petition

Why this petition matters



Started by [Ruth Sandy](#)

[Media inquiries](#)

Dear Merri Bek council,

Some of us live on Bain Avenue, sandwiched between Sydney Rd and the Merlynston train station. Many people walk and drive from Fawkner and Coburg north to this station with the new car park. To enter, you need to drive down Bain Ave. There is a lot of traffic. Cars drive very fast down Bain Ave if they are late for a train and people are often running across the road to catch one. There is also increased traffic with the Food truck park on the corner of Plaisted and Sydney rds. Both ends of the street next to the station have blind corners.

Parking in the driveways on the corners is hazardous.

Pedestrians from the north often walk from the blind corner to the station diagonally down the road as it seems slightly faster. It is only a matter of time before someone is hurt.

Possible fixes to this problem

- sets of speed humps on Bain Ave to slow the traffic down. Before each of the blind corners and along the stretch next to the station
- Fish eye mirrors at each end to assist with the blind corners
- A zebra pedestrian crossing directly opposite the station entrance to encourage pedestrians to cross there.

Thankyou for signing



Share this petition in person or use the QR code for your own material.

[Download QR code](#)

[Report a policy violation](#)

Media inquiries

Are you a member of the media looking to cover this petition?

[Reach out for available actions.](#)

Decision makers

 Support now

[Sign this petition](#)

5.3 PETITION - IMPROVE PARKING CONDITIONS FOR RESIDENTS ON WALTERS STREET, BRUNSWICK

A petition (D25/167178) has been received containing 20 signatories requesting Council improves parking conditions for residents on Walters Street, Brunswick.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council improves parking conditions for residents on Walters Street, Brunswick.
2. Refers the petition requesting Council improves parking conditions for residents on Walters Street, Brunswick to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) Petition - Improve parking conditions on Walters Street, Brunswick - D25/167218
Redacted

Dear CEO,

We, the undersigned residents of Walters Street in Brunswick, Melbourne, hereby petition for the immediate consideration and action by Merri-Bek City Council regarding the ongoing lack of adequate residential street parking on our street. In recent months we have found an increased number of cars from surrounding areas taking up our car spots for extended periods of time resulting in limited or no parking for residents. We have one resident who is legally blind and walks with a walker and requires easy access to cars and on some instances, he has been required to walk increased distances to get to a parked car due to lack of space for his carer to park.

Key Concerns:

- **Insufficient parking availability:** The current number of parking spaces does not meet the demand from residents and their visitors.
- **Safety issues:** The overcrowded streets lead to poorly parked vehicles, obstructing traffic flow and creating hazards for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Negative impact on residents' quality of life:** The ongoing parking shortage has resulted in lengthy searches for parking spots, increased stress, and difficulties for those with mobility challenges or young children.

Request: We respectfully request that the local council take the following actions to address these parking issues:

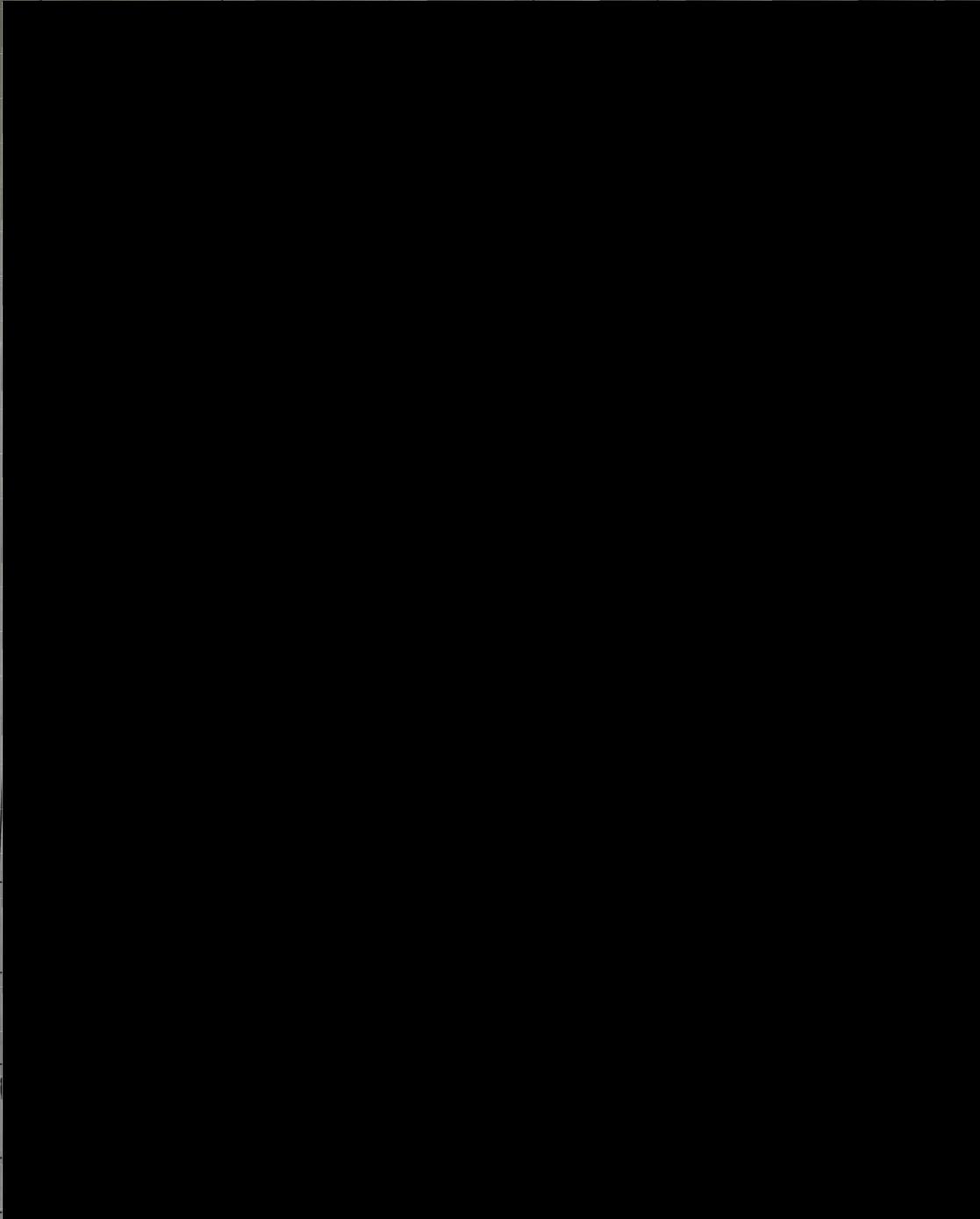
1. **Review and increase the availability of residential parking spaces** on Walters Street through measures such as the reallocation of parking zones or the introduction of additional parking spots where feasible. We propose permit parking for residents of Walters Street Brunswick and the introduction of 2-hour parking zones for any visiting cars.
2. **Improve parking regulations** to ensure better management of space usage and the reduction of unnecessary parking obstructions.
3. **Engage with local residents** to explore potential long-term solutions for residential parking, such as permits or dedicated parking zones for residents.

We, the undersigned, urge the council to prioritise this issue to ensure that the needs of Brunswick's residents are met, and our street remains a safe and convenient place to live.

Signatures:

[Space for names, addresses, and signatures of petitioners]

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
------	---------	-----------



7. COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 DRAFT INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025-2030 - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Director Place and Environment, Pene Winslade
Sustainability and Climate

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan 2025 -2030 (Attachment 1) for community engagement for four weeks from Monday 14 April until Sunday 11 May 2025, including two pop-up sessions in Coburg, and Glenroy.
2. Receives a further report at the August 2025 Council meeting with a final version of the Integrated Water Management Action Plan 2025 - 2030 for adoption.
3. Acknowledges the valuable contribution of the community and external stakeholders in the delivery of outcomes in the 2020-2025 Action Plan Integrated Water Management Strategy, including Melbourne Water, the Integrated Water Management Forum (led by the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action), Merri-creek Management Committee and the Waterwatch team and the “Friends of....” groups.

REPORT

Executive summary

The Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy (and first 5-year Action Plan) was adopted in August 2020 and is due for renewal. It sets out the vision for a water sensitive city by 2040 with five outcomes:

- collaborating in a water sensitive city;
- resilient and liveable landscapes;
- wise water use;
- healthy waterways; and
- community embracing water sensitive urban design.

Key achievements from the first Action Plan include delivery of six significant IWM projects across the municipality (detailed in the Background section) – mostly infrastructure but also including some volunteer and education elements.

Under the current IWM Strategy, five-year action plans are to be developed to support progress and achievement of the visions and outcomes. The next draft action plan (for 2025-2030) has been developed based on 1) the existing endorsed strategy, 2) the evaluation which has identified gaps and opportunities based on challenges and barriers over the past five years, and 3) feedback from stakeholder engagement to date.

Community engagement for the draft Plan will include a dedicated Conversations Merri-bek page. Two in-person pop-up stalls will be conducted, in Coburg and Glenroy. The draft plan will also be presented to relevant community and partner groups for feedback. Following community engagement, the draft plan will be revised and a final plan will be presented to Council at the August 2025 meeting for adoption.

Previous council decisions

Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 and 2020-2025 Action Plan - For Adoption - 12 August 2020

That Council:

1. *Notes the Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 - Towards a Water Sensitive City and 5 year forward Action Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 – Community and Stakeholder Consultation – Outcomes Report at Attachment 1 to this report.*
2. *Adopts the draft Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 - Towards a Water Sensitive City and 5 year forward Action Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 at Attachments 2 and 3 to this report.*
3. *Acknowledges the valuable contribution of the community and external stakeholders during the development of Moreland's Integrated Water Management Strategy, including the Friends of Waterways groups.*

DELWP Catchment Scale Integrated Water Management Plans – Endorsement of Targets - 8 September 2021

That Council:

1. *Acknowledges the leadership of the Department of Land Water Environment and Planning (DELWP) and the significant work of the Integrated Water Management (IWM) Forum members in developing the Catchment Scale Integrated Water Management (CSWIM) Plans.*
2. *Gives in-principle endorsement of the Yarra and Maribyrnong (River) Catchment Plans, indicators and targets as a basis for inclusion in Moreland's strategies, plans and processes to contribute to the delivery of the IWM outcomes (Attachment 1 and Attachment 2).*
3. *Continue to support to the ongoing process of monitoring, evaluation and review of progress towards the 2030 targets (included in the Attachments).*
4. *Continue to actively participate in the IWM Forums and working groups, collaboratively working with others to achieve IWM outcomes.*
5. *Work through the IWM Forums to develop implementation plans for the catchment targets and proactively seek funding support to deliver on the targets identified as relevant to the Yarra and Maribyrnong (River) Catchments.*
6. *Through Moreland IWM Forum members at the IWM Forum meetings request commitment from DELWP to remain involved in the implementation phase and resolve issues, support briefings, advocacy and broader communication.*

1. Policy context

Climate change is reducing the availability of potable water supplies, putting pressure on stormwater systems, open spaces, landscapes and biodiversity. Droughts are becoming longer in duration and there are more frequent intense storm bursts and flash flooding and more extremes of temperature. It is becoming increasingly difficult to keep our city cool, green, healthy and resilient.

Merri-bek's IWM strategy proposes to invest in new ways to diversify supply, reduce demand and build resilience. In becoming a 21st century water sensitive city it also seeks to harness benefits from our local catchments including green infrastructure, new sources of water, and a healthy downstream environment.

The Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy (and first 5-year Action Plan) was adopted in August 2020 and sets out the vision for a water sensitive city by 2040. The endorsed IWM Strategy 2040 can be found on [Conversations Merri-bek](#).

The implementation of the IWM Strategy is a Major Initiative and Priority under Theme 1 – An environmentally proactive Merri-bek in the 2021-2025 Council Plan. (Council Actions 161, 198, 200)

The IWM Strategy and draft Action Plan 2025 - 30 is strategically aligned to:

- Open Space Strategy, April 2024
- Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2027
- Nature Plan 2020
- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2020
- Public Place Service Improvement Plan 2024
- Climate Risk Strategy, November 2022
- Draft Circular Economy Strategy (under development)
- Merri-bek's Statement of Commitment
- Urban Heat Island Effect Action Plan 2017-2026
- Merri-bek Local Planning Policy - Environmentally sustainable development Clause 15.01-2L-05

The IWM Strategy and draft Action Plan 2025-30 align with key state-level water policies and frameworks, including:

- Water for Victoria (2016)
- Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria (2017)
- Yarra and Maribyrnong Strategic Direction Statements (September 2018)
- IWM Forum Catchment Integrated Water Management Plan (2022) and Action Plans (2024):
 - Maribyrnong Catchment IWM Action Plan 2024: [View Plan](#)
 - Yarra Catchment IWM Action Plan 2024: [View Plan](#)
 - Water is Life: Traditional Owner Access to Water Roadmap 2022
 - Planning Scheme requirements, including:
- Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines (BPEM, 1999 as amended)
 - Victorian Planning Provisions (VC154 amendments – Stormwater Management, 2018)
 - State Environmental Protection Policy - Waters (SEPP)
 - Healthy Waterways Strategy (HWS) 2018
EPA Publication 1739.1, 2021 Urban stormwater management guidance (publication 1739)

Under the Environment Protection Act 2017, the General Environmental Duty (GED) mandates that risks of harm to human health and the environment must be minimized. Councils and other land or infrastructure managers (OMLI) have explicit obligations to prevent pollution, protect waterway health, and ensure environmental sustainability. These responsibilities align with the Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy's vision for a water-sensitive Merri-bek, reinforcing sustainable water practices and resilient urban landscapes.

Furthermore, in accordance with Council obligations, local governments must review and update their plans at intervals of no more than five years.

2. Background

The IWM Strategy 2040 brings together all elements of the water cycle to achieve the greatest social, economic and environmental benefits for the community. Taking an integrated approach ensures that the water cycle is more resilient to the impacts of climate change and a growing population, while continuing to make Merri-bek a great place to live, work and play.

The IWM Strategy was developed in response to a range of existing and emerging issues impacting our city:

Climate change and the climate emergency – reduced availability of potable water supplies, adds pressures on the stormwater system, our open spaces, landscapes and biodiversity. Droughts are becoming longer in duration and there are more frequent intense storm bursts and flash flooding and more extremes of temperature. The resilience of our city is challenged by these changes and it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep our city cool, green and healthy in these changing times. We must invest in new ways to diversify supply, reduce demand and build resilience.

Population growth – The City of Merri-bek covers 50.9 square kilometres and is one of Melbourne's most populous municipalities and had an estimated resident population of 185,767 people in 2019. By 2036, Merri-bek's population is forecast to be 235,200¹.

Increasing population will lead to a higher demand for limited water supplies, pollution pressures caused by urban consolidation, putting pressure on Merri-bek and Victoria's precious water resources that support our local community and environment.

Regulatory and policy – water scarcity and regulated water management requirements especially in drought periods will impact our urban habitat and biodiversity, our open spaces and landscapes.

Economic – increasing water and sewage charges by water authorities, increased threat from floods and land subject to inundation, increased pressure on our drainage system and capacity to cope with more frequent and more severe rain events all place additional financial pressure on the community and Council.

Knowledge and technology – developments in water recycling, stormwater reuse, stormwater treatment are constantly informing new ways of planning, designing and delivering council assets and services. Anticipating these needs and keeping informed of any changes and innovation will enable Merri-bek to better plan for change and place us in the best position to manage this precious resource.

The IWM Strategy 2040 was developed to align with Yarra and Maribyrnong strategic direction statements (September 2018). The proposed draft actions for 2025 – 2030 have been developed to align with the state government led Integrated Water Management Plans - Actions for delivery (2024), developed by the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA) IWM Forums, of which Merri-bek is an active member.

3. Issues

Under the current IWM Strategy, five-year action plans are to be developed to support progress and achievement of the visions and outcomes. The first five-year action plan ran from 2020-2025 and it is now time to develop the next five-year action plan. The existing strategy is still relevant and is not changing.

Draft IWM Action Plan 2025 – 2030

The draft IWM Strategy Action Plan 2025-2030 has been developed to outline key initiatives, programs and projects for the second five years of the IWM Strategy 2040.

¹ [Population and housing forecast data](#)

The draft action plan for the next 5-year period 2025-2030 has been developed based on:

- The existing endorsed strategy
- Recent evaluation which has identified gaps and opportunities based on challenges and barriers over the past five years.
- Feedback received from stakeholder engagement to date.

The Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy (and first 5-year Action Plan) was adopted in August 2020 and sets out the vision for a water sensitive city by 2040 with five key outcomes:

- collaborating in a water sensitive city;
- resilient and liveable landscapes;
- wise water use;
- healthy waterways; and
- community embracing water sensitive urban design.

Evaluation

The current (nearing completion) 5-year action plan includes a total of 58 actions. 36 of these actions are either fully complete or ongoing.

Key highlights from the action plan include delivery of:

- Construction of Moomba Park Wetland, Fawkner – involving water treatment (49 kg per year of nitrogen reduced), habitat (including the endangered growling grass frog), community amenity, and interpretive signage.
- Brunswick Parkland Integrated Water Management Plan – water treatment (removing 108 kg per year of nitrogen, and a 22 Megalitres of annual potable water saving through rainwater re-use).
- Dunstan Reserve stormwater harvesting, Brunswick West – water treatment (removing 130 kg per year of nitrogen, and saving 10 Megalitres per year of potable water).
- CB Smith permeable kerb and channel trial and partnership project, Fawkner – four passively irrigated trees, increased urban cooling and reducing pollutants.
- Chain of Ponds collaboration called “Reimagining Moonee Ponds Creek”, Stage 1 – which delivered 400 meters of rehabilitated waterway and amenity.
- Funding Merri Creek Management Committee, Waterwatch and Litter Working Group – 1,000 volunteers, 6,775 environmental education participants, and 333 events/ classes.
- Gavin Park wetland, Pascoe Vale – water treatment (removing 114 kg of nitrogen per year)

The new draft action plan has been informed by evaluation of action progress to date and targeted engagement over 2024 and 2025. Key findings from evaluation include:

- An identified gap and opportunity to increase support for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung as the Traditional Owners and custodians of Country (including waterways) aligning with Merri-bek’s Statement of Commitment.
- There is an opportunity to consolidate actions and treat some actions as internal operational actions through governance and asset management.
- Incomplete actions have been evaluated to understand what challenges or barriers delayed or prevented implementation, to inform how the outcome might still be achieved through the next action plan or through other aligned council action plan or council program.

- Some actions are now addressed through concurrent action planning process for aligned strategies such as Nature Plan and Open Space action planning.
- It is difficult to track progress of some completed actions because of a lack baseline data. Future actions have been drafted to better monitor progress against agreed measures and indicators.

The evaluation also found there is a need:

- To 'tell the story of water' better to improve communities' connection to the natural environment and develop understanding of the issues and what we can each do to help.
- To develop an approach to share information including across the organization, with partners, Traditional Owners, neighbouring councils, Melbourne Water and the public.
- For technical guidance and upskilling to support the uptake of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) in the private and public realm. Internally this also means in capital works including but not limited to sports and park upgrades, road and transport projects.
- To continue to build an understanding of flood and climate modelling and how to interpret and apply it more comprehensively in decision making.
- To improve our interaction with our diverse community, including education resources about protecting our waterways and sustainable water use.

The full list of draft actions to be included for community engagement is included in Attachment 1.

Community impact

The draft IWM Action Plan 2025 - 2030 proposes a broad range of actions which will impact the community in different ways. Community impact will be considered at the early planning stages of each action over the five-year timeframe.

Acting to improve water management outcomes helps to mitigate the negative impact the community and environment experiences on our waterways, on the supply of our drinking water, on the comfort and amenity of public and private realm and community assets, resources and services.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Transitioning to a water sensitive city is a crucial part of becoming a resilient, climate adapted city that is able to respond to the Climate Emergency. The sustainable management of water resources remains crucial for resilience to climate change².

Some examples of specific actions that support this include understanding flood hazard, stormwater harvesting for irrigation to reduce potable water use, reducing stormwater pollution, and increasing provision of water for biodiversity, greening and cooling.

Economic sustainability implications

The IWM Strategy and Action Plan support long-term economic sustainability by promoting efficient water resource management. Reducing water usage, improving stormwater infrastructure, and encouraging water-sensitive urban design, can help lower operational costs, minimise damage to public assets, and enhance resilience against climate-related water challenges. This approach stabilises economic environments by reducing future financial liabilities

² [Integrated Water Management \(IWM\) Strategy 2040 – Towards a water sensitive city](#)

Human rights consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and Gender Equality Act 2020.

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

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

A Gender and Equity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan 2025-2030

Cultural rights

Under the Charter, First Nations peoples have the right to enjoy their identity and culture, to maintain and use their language, and maintain their kinship ties to members of their community.

The Charter also recognises the special relationship First Nations peoples have with the land, water and resources in Victoria. This relationship could be spiritual, material or economic and may be connected to traditional laws and customs. This right also protects your access to cultural institutions, ancestral lands, natural resources and traditional knowledge³.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Planned Engagement and Communications activities for the Integrated Water Management Action Plan 2020 - 25 are as follows.

Engagement is planned to launch on Monday 14th April, following the April council meeting (pending any final adjustments).

Engagement is planned to close on Sunday 11th May, providing opportunity for community feedback across 4 weeks.

Engagement activities will include:

- An updated Conversations Merri-bek project page with a survey seeking feedback on the draft action plan.
- Two pop up events will be held, one in Glenroy and one in Coburg
- Social media posts will promote opportunities for engagement and awareness of the IWM Strategy and draft Action Plan
- Direct and ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners through the Integrated Water Management Officer and Water Unit from Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.
- Direct engagement with targeted interest groups including Merri Creek Management Committee, Chain of Ponds Collaboration, Friends of Merri Creek and Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek
- Direct engagement with partner organisations and authorities including Melbourne Water, DEECA, Yarra Valey Water and EPA
- Direct engagement with neighbouring councils

³ [Section 19 - Right to protection of cultural rights | Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#)

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.

through community engagement feedback, changes to the Action Plan will be considered that directly address the ideas or concerns of all affected persons before the Action Plan is finalised

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The estimated capital funding requirements over the five-year timeframe are included in the forward 5-year Capital Works Program (noting those that require external funding support).

Based on the draft list of actions, an assessment of likely budget implications has been prepared and provided as part of this report and can be found in Attachment 2. Council officers will undertake a full financial and resource impact on the final plan prior to being presented to Council in August 2025.

Merri-bek have successfully received over \$5 Million in grant funding in the past decade primarily from Melbourne Water's Liveable Communities, Liveable Waterways Programme and DEECA. For both capital and strategic work, we will continue to apply for Melbourne Water grants and other as they become available for the bigger projects.

Refer to Attachment 2 – Draft IWM Action Plan estimated costs

7. Implementation

Community feedback will be sought on the draft Integrated Water Management Action plan from late April to early May 2025.

We will review feedback and revise the draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan in May and June.

Officers will prepare a report for council detailing findings of the engagement on the draft Action Plan and present the final Action Plan to Council for adoption at the August Council Meeting.

Attachment/s

1 ↓	Draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan for Public consultation	D25/129032
2 ↓	Draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan estimated costs	D25/141930

Attachment 1 Draft Integrated Water Management (IWM) Action Plan 2025 – 2030

Abbreviations used in the table below:

CASBE – Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment

DEECA – Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action

DTP – Department of Transport and Planning

MCMC – Merri Creek Management Committee

LGA – Local Government Area

WWCHAC – Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

NA – Not applicable (the reason may vary)

Neighbouring councils includes Hume, Mitchell Shire, Whittlesea, Darebin, Moonee Valley, City of Melbourne, and City of Yarra

WSUD – Water Sensitive Urban Design

Outcome 1 - Collaborating in a Water Sensitive City

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
1 Working with others improves IWM outcomes	Number of opportunities and projects implemented with partners to achieve Merri-bek's Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 outcomes including through participation in the Yarra and Maribyrnong Integrated Water Management Forums.	1.1	Partner with and support Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people to care for and be the voice of the creeks.	WWCHAC, DEECA, Melbourne Water, neighbouring councils	1-5	Amended
		1.1.2	Work with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people to agree on how best to include Wurundjeri perspectives in the existing IWM Strategy through an update or agreed similar and implement.	WWCHAC	1-2	New
		1.1.3	Work with our partners to better present and share IWM information to tell the water story, share resources, and coordinate advocacy actions using a variety of platforms and technologies.	Neighbouring councils, WWCHAC, DTP, DEECA, Merri Creek Management Committee, Chain of Ponds, Melbourne Water	1-2	New
		1.1.4	Continue collaboration with academic institutions to advance WSUD research and emerging technologies For example, permeable pavement, passive irrigation, green roofs, Internet of Things (IoT) research, to enhance stormwater management, system efficiency, and adaptive solutions.	Academic Institutions, Melbourne Water	1-5	Existing
		1.1.5	Develop confidence among internal and external stakeholders in the future performance, and value of projects through development of 'scorecards'. These scorecards will explain IWM targets for the sub-catchments of Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks with baseline and performance data to track progress. Targets include: nitrogen retention, percentage of catchments treated by WSUD, passive irrigation, permeability, volume of harvested and re-used alternative water supply.	DEECA, Melbourne Water, neighbouring councils	1-2	New
		1.1.6	Advocate for Melbourne Water to work in partnership with Council to investigate opportunities, identify barriers and develop a costed and prioritised master plan to naturalise and revitalise sections of Merlynston Creek	Melbourne Water	1-3	New
		1.1.7	Continue to work with IWM Forum to advocate for improved funding for integrated water projects, stronger collaboration between councils and water authorities, and stronger integration of IWM principles into Victorian Planning Provisions to embed stormwater management in urban development	IWM Forum, DEECA	1-5	Amended

Outcome 2 - Resilient and Liveable Landscapes

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
2.1 Increase urban tree resilience supported by water	Percentage of urban forest or street trees with a non-potable source of water such as stormwater harvesting or passive irrigation.	2.1.1	Further develop, update and implement technical guidance relevant to the Merri-bek context to increase uptake, quality and performance of passively irrigated trees and landscapes in capital works programs.	Melbourne Water, neighbouring councils	3	Amended
2.2 Increase permeability	Increased permeability by de-paving hard surfaces and introduce surfaces which allow water to recharge surrounding soils across public areas.	2.2.1	Investigate trends and issues in private and public realm relating to permeability, including soil health and the applications of permeable pavement. In collaboration with our partners, use the findings to develop resources 1) to enhance understanding of impacts of permeability on urban resilience and healthy waterways and 2) outline catchment scale opportunities for improved permeability and implementation.	Melbourne Water, LGAs, DEECA, CASBE	2-3	Amended
	Ensure more than 20% site permeability is adhered to in private development (as required under ResCode).	2.2.2	Urban Planning, ESD, and Planning Compliance teams will continue to enforce existing requirements through their work. Through CASBE continue to advocate for improved Environmentally Sustainable Development in the planning scheme.	CASBE, LGAs, DTP	1-5	Amended
2.3 Reduce extent of flooding	Number of opportunities identified to reduce the impacts of flooding through the increase of effective flood storage volume created as part of multi-functional assets (e.g. green infrastructure, stormwater harvesting schemes, talking tanks, leaky tanks, combined retardation and treatment schemes).	2.3.1	Further develop and share communication resources for the public and for Merri-bek staff about flood risk, inundation and climate change impacts to inform decision making including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flood and hazard data and modelling; increased flood risk as a result of climate change; approaches to mitigate flooding, including use of public open space inundation to slow down water to protect private property and infrastructure. 	Melbourne Water	2-4	New
		2.3.2	Align work with the Emergency Management Victoria Critical Infrastructure Resilience Strategy and identify critical infrastructure to inform prioritisation of drainage improvement projects and implement through the required Emergency Management activities.	Melbourne Water, Emergency Management Victoria	1-5	New
		2.3.3	Develop priority drainage asset upgrades program informed by proposed significant development and commence implementation to proactively address stormwater capacity, flooding risks, and WSUD integration.		1-5	New
		2.3.4	Assess opportunities to integrate stormwater detention, harvesting, and smart tank technology at priority flood mitigation sites, including road networks and open spaces. Evaluate costs, maintenance needs, and feasibility, and align with the capital works program to enhance water management and climate resilience.		2-4	New
2.4 Reduce urban heat load	Utilise stormwater harvesting and water sensitive urban design to support increased vegetation and cooling in areas of high heat vulnerability.	NA	<i>This measure is integrated into a range of actions in this action plan.</i>		NA	NA

Outcome 3 - Wise Water Use

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
3.1 Reduce Council's mains water use.	Implement building retrofits and irrigation efficiency upgrades to achieve a 5% reduction in councils mains water use.	3.1.1	Develop sustainable sportsfield guidance to support implementation of the Sportsfield Surface Policy and apply it to relevant capital projects.	Melbourne Water, EPA, DEECA	1-4	Amended
		3.1.2	Continue to integrate water efficiency measures including water tanks through the implementation of the Sustainable Buildings Policy to all new builds and retrofits.		1-5	Amended
3.2 Increase council alternative water use where there will be overall positive impact on the environment	By 2025 implement an additional two new stormwater harvesting schemes and upgrade two existing stormwater harvesting schemes that together substitute potable mains water supply by an additional 18 million litres per year.	3.2.1	Deliver two stormwater harvesting projects in the next 5 years. Depending on the outcomes of the feasibility study, opportunities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oak Park stormwater harvesting scheme in the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment, and CB Smith stormwater harvesting scheme) in the Merri Creek catchment. AG Gillon (Reaburn Reserve) – Brunswick Central Parklands stormwater harvesting scheme in the Moonee Ponds Creek catchment 	Melbourne Water	1-5	Existing (new projects)
		3.2.2	Review the stormwater harvesting priority program for irrigation of sportsfields and passive open space to align with the sportsfield renewal program, irrigation renewal program, and Open Space Action Plan.	NA	1-2	Amended
3.3 Reduce community water use (per capita).	Number of collaborative projects with partners, the community and businesses to increase the number of water tanks, water smart gardening and WSUD on private property and reduce per capita water use to 155 litres per person per day.	3.3.1	Review opportunities with schools and youth groups to identify demand to support a case for increased IWM education and implement (including Waterwatch, litter management, and nature play). And progressively add updated educational signage at our Wetlands/SWH to support the education initiatives. Review council-led educational programs and existing information platforms to ensure they include supporting community to reduce potable water use.	Waterwatch, MCMC, Schools	1-5	Amended
		3.3.2	Build on existing partner programs to improve communities' capacity to maintain and upgrade existing private rainwater tanks.	Friends of Merri Creek, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek	4	Amended

Outcome 4 - Healthy Waterways

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
4.1 Reduce stormwater pollutant loads and flow volumes discharged to receiving waters.	Reduce our impact on downstream waterways by further reduction of 112 kg/year total nitrogen in five years from existing urban stormwater via implementation of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) tools.	4.1.1	Seek external funds to support the delivery of at least two large scale WSUD projects with increased habitat in the next 5 years. The projects being investigated to deliver include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moonee Boulevard wetland • Kingsford Smith Ulm Reserve wetland • Fran Street Reserve wetland • K W Joyce Reserve large scale bioretention system • Gilpin Park wetland and irrigation under the Brunswick Parklands IWM Plan 	Melbourne Water, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Chain of Ponds Collaboration	1-5	Existing (new projects)
		4.1.2	Continue to integrate WSUD into small projects such as road renewal, streetscape projects and private development as appropriate. Continue to integrate WSUD and Integrated water management approach to large scale projects including Coburg Library and Piazza.			Amended (new projects)
	Reduce amount of litter, rubbish and plastic entering our waterways.	4.1.3	Undertake further investigations into identified Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT) opportunities from previous studies to determine appropriate design and sizing responses, and preliminary feasibility of various GPT solutions. Implement the GPT Assessment and Prioritisation Framework to guide future investment and strategic placement.	Melbourne Water	4	New
		4.1.4	Continue to seek funding and support community group activities and education for litter reduction across the Moonee Ponds and Merri Creeks sub-catchments. Prioritise action at litter hotspots and litter sources.	Melbourne Water, Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Friends of Merri Creek, MCMC, Chain of Ponds Collaboration	1-5	New
		4.1.5	Develop a communications plan and support materials for new and existing businesses, providing information on how to manage litter and waste in shopping strips and prevent it from entering our waterways. Distribute and make the material accessible in accordance with the communications plan.	Melbourne Water, Neighbouring Councils, Business networks	1-5	New
4.2 Increase provision of water for biodiversity.	Area of passive public open space supported by an alternative water source to capture and utilise stormwater to enhance biodiversity by retaining water in the landscape and mimicking natural flow regimes.	NA	<i>This measure is integrated into a range of actions in this action plan.</i>		NA	NA
	Area of revegetation and rehabilitation works on floodplain or improving the condition of degraded waterway.	4.2.1	Complete a feasibility study for the Jukes Road, Fawkner, stormwater diversion into Bababi Djinanang.		3	New

Outcome 5 - Community Embracing Water Sensitive Urban Design

(existing) Indicator	(existing) Measure	Number	Action	Suggested external partners	Delivery Year/s Delivery Year/s	Existing, amended, or new action
5.1 Continue uptake of water sensitive urban design in new development	Percentage of planning approvals with inclusion of water and stormwater management meeting clause 22.08 of the Moreland Local Planning Scheme and VC154 of the Victorian Planning Provisions.	5.1.1	Explore opportunities to increase enforcement resources to improve compliance with stormwater quality requirements in the Victorian Planning Provisions (Planning Scheme).	DEECA, DTP	1-3	New
		5.1.2	Update and promote council guidance for developers to reflect emerging best practices in rainwater capture, WSUD asset design, construction, and maintenance. Ensure guidelines support effective stormwater management in private developments and align with current industry standards and regulatory frameworks.		3-4	New
5.2 Reduced flow rate and volume of water from new developments, improving on pre-development conditions	The volume of new detention systems and water tanks, the area of WSUD treatments.	NA	<i>This is actioned through the planning process.</i>		NA	<i>Actioned outside this action plan</i>
5.3 Working together with community groups for a transition to water sensitive cities	Number of projects and Council contribution on collaborative projects with community groups (e.g. planting, raingarden webinars, Waterwatch collaboration).	5.3.1	Continue to run community planting days, promote and fund programs such as Waterwatch Activities and Nature Stewards Program and actively partner with neighborhood houses to trial programs	Melbourne Water, Universities	4-5	New

Attachment 2 - Draft IWM Action Plan estimated costs											
Description	2025-2026		2026-2027		2027-2028		2028-2029		2029-2030		Total
	Pre-Committed Fund \$ for IWM Projects	Subject to External Funding	Pre-Committed Fund \$ for IWM Projects	Subject to Business Case and/or External Funding	Pre-Committed Fund \$ for IWM Projects	Subject to Business Case and/or External Funding	Pre-Committed Fund \$ for IWM Projects	Subject to Business Case and/or External Funding	Pre-Committed Fund \$ for IWM Projects	Subject to Business Case and/or External Funding	
Capex - IWM related projects (design and implementation)	\$ 168,000		\$ 172,500				\$ 181,500				\$ 522,000
Capex - IWM renewal	\$ 110,000		\$ 115,000		\$ 120,000		\$ 125,000		\$ 130,000		\$ 600,000
Capex - Committed stormwater Harvesting and Wetland projects (10 year capital budget)	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,588,500	\$ 1,588,500	\$ 2,350,000	\$ 2,350,000			\$ 11,877,000
Opex - Operational budget	\$ 75,000		\$ 78,000	\$ 82,000	\$ 81,120	\$ 68,880	\$ 84,365	\$ 35,635	\$ 87,739		\$ 592,739
Opex - Operational budget subject to external funding		\$ 55,000		\$ 170,000		\$ 170,000		\$ 120,000			\$ 515,000

Heavy reliance on external funding from state and federal government sources. _____
 Additional funding required to meet all targets. _____
 Maintenance costs are not included in this table as they will be considered during the business case process. Future infrastructure projects will incorporate ongoing maintenance considerations as part of the asset lifecycle planning. _____
 Drainage upgrades and flood mitigation projects are not included in this table. _____
 Actions included in other Council action plans with allocated funding have not been considered in this table _____

7.2 RAINBOW CROSSINGS - SITES FOR CONSULTATION

Director City Infrastructure, Caden McCarthy

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the eight identified locations listed below for community engagement to help select two sites and designs for the installation of pride flags on Council roads or footpaths:
 - CB Smith Reserve (outside Fawkner Leisure Centre)
 - Victoria Street, Coburg (outside Coburg Library)
 - Glenroy Community Hub (in forecourt)
 - Waterloo Road and Snell Grove intersection, Oak Park
 - Brunswick Town Hall
 - West Street, Brunswick (adjacent to Bulleke-bek Park)
 - Howarth Street, Brunswick (adjacent to Yubup Park)
 - Piera Street, Brunswick East
2. Acknowledges that of the two sites to be selected, one is to be in the municipal area north of Bell Street and one in the municipal area south of Bell Street.
3. Refers the installation of two rainbow crossings (progressive pride flags) on Council roads or footpaths at a total cost of \$45,000 to the 2025/2026 Council budget process for consideration.

REPORT

Executive Summary

At the February 2025 Council meeting, Council resolved to investigate locations for painting a progressive pride flag on two roads or footpaths in Merri-bek – one in the north and one in the south of Merri-bek. A further report was requested to provide estimated costs, and recommend a community engagement approach for site and design selection.

Rainbow and progressive pride flags have been incorporated into infrastructure throughout many cities and serve as a symbol of LGBTIQ+ pride in the community.

To help identify suitable locations, selection criteria were developed consisting of three main themes: transport, placemaking, and maintenance. In total eight suitable locations have been identified, three in the municipal area north of Bell Street, and five in the municipal area south of Bell Street.

It is proposed that community engagement will take place in July and August 2025 to help select the final two sites and designs, with a Council decision on the final two sites later in the year.

The installation at a cost of \$45,000 will be referred to the 2025/26 Council budget process for consideration.

Previous Council Decisions

Notice of Motion - One Community, Proudly Diverse: Rainbow Crossings for Merri-bek – 12 February 2025

That Council seeks a report by April 2025 that:

- 1. Identifies suitable locations on Council roads or footpaths with high levels of pedestrian activity within Merri-bek to paint a progressive pride flag as a symbol of inclusivity and welcome for LGBTIQ+ people with the aim of installing this design on two roads or footpaths - one in the north of the municipality and one in the south.*
- 2. Provides an estimated cost for these installations to consider in upcoming budgets.*
- 3. Recommends an approach to community engagement to select the sites and final designs.*

1. Policy Context

Merri-Bek LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2023-2026

The Merri-Bek LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2023-2026 outlines the work we do within the LGBTIQ+ space and is central to all outcomes, outputs and activities contained in the plan. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

- 1.3 Deliver projects that increase signs of support towards LGBTIQ+ communities in Council buildings and infrastructure across Merri-bek'

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan 2021-2025 sets out Council's and community's vision for the future. Key objectives and strategies related to this report include:

- 3.5 Enhance social cohesion by strengthening relationships and developing opportunities for cultural and social connection and addressing the physical, cultural, financial system barriers to access, inclusion and participation by all people, in particular culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This should also include measures to address racism and LGBTIQ+ discrimination

Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy (2024)

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

- Create streets and public spaces that encourage physical activity and socialisation amongst local communities.
- Work to make our streets and public spaces are safe for all people and inclusive of all genders, backgrounds, and abilities.

2. Background

At the February 2025 Council meeting, Council resolved to investigate suitable locations for painting a progressive pride flag on two roads or footpaths in Merri-bek, provide estimated costs, and recommend a community engagement approach for site and design selection.

Rainbow and progressive pride flags have been incorporated into infrastructure throughout many cities both internationally and within Australia. Painted flags have successfully created focal points for communities, where people go to visit.

Installing two painted progressive pride flags should be complimented by the surrounding environment supporting pedestrian activity or public spaces where there is regular activity. The locations selected should help serve the purpose of the flags as symbols of LGBTIQ+ pride in the community, affirm Council's commitment to inclusivity and respect, and be a vibrant addition to the public realm.

3. Issues

Location Selection

To help identify suitable locations, selection criteria were developed consisting of three main themes: transport, placemaking, and maintenance.

Transport

Council officers recommend avoiding locations requiring approval from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). DTP can take up to 12 months to approve non-standard treatments such as pride flags and approval is not guaranteed. There is also a significant cost associated with DTP review, approval and oversight of the works to ensure compliance. In addition, Council officers recommend the pride flag should not interfere with statutory line-marking and signage, to avoid confusion for road users. As such, Council officers have identified locations that:

- Are on a Council road or footpath.
- Are not at a formal pedestrian crossing - zebra or pedestrian operated. This is because formal pedestrian crossings are a major traffic control device and require DTP approval even if on a Council road.
- Does not negatively impact statutory line-marking and signage.
- Will be inclusive for all road users, including people walking, riding or driving.

For locations where there are safety concerns, a road safety audit will need to be completed. Existing lighting levels will also need to be assessed, and lighting upgrades may be required.

It should be noted the painted flags will not change pedestrian priority or create a shared zone. The markings will purely be installed for decorative and symbolic purposes.

Placemaking

To ensure the installation becomes a focal point of the community and helps create placemaking:

- Locations will need to be highly visible and easily accessible, with existing high levels of pedestrian activity.
- Locations will need to allow for people to safely view the flag.
- Locations should consider surrounding properties and work together to create a positive outcome.

Maintenance

To minimise ongoing maintenance, Council officers have considered:

- Locations that do not have excessive vehicle volumes or turning movements that will prematurely wear the installation.
- Upcoming private or public construction works in the immediate vicinity that will damage the installation.

Suitable Locations in the North of the Municipality

Based on the criteria, three suitable locations have been identified in the north of the municipality:

1. CB Smith Reserve (at Fawkner Leisure Centre)

CB Smith Reserve provides a multitude of services to the community including a library, health services, senior citizens centre, community and neighbourhood houses, alongside a playground, newly redeveloped leisure centre and sporting facilities.

Providing a flag on the existing informal raised crossing will be highly visible and reach a wide range of community members.



Figure 1: Concept plan for a Progressive Pride Flag at CB Smith Reserve, Fawkner

2. Glenroy Community Hub Forecourt

Glenroy Community Hub currently holds a monthly social group called 'My Rainbow' for local young LGBTQIA+ people. Locating a flag here could support the use of the space, be highly visible for local residents and support attendees of the 'My Rainbow' Group.

There are numerous locations a flag can be located within the forecourt area. The final location would need to be determined through community engagement. Two possible locations have been shown in figure 3.



Figure 3: Concept plan for Progressive Pride Flags within Glenroy Community Hub forecourt

3. Waterloo Road at Snell Grove, Oak Park

Locating the flag on the raised intersection between the Oak Park train station and Snell Grove shopping strip will be highly visible to visitors of the shopping strip and help activate the local neighbourhood shopping strip. This location experiences high levels of pedestrian activity and public transport users accessing Oak Park Station.



Figure 4: Concept plan for a Progressive Pride Flag in Waterloo Road at Snell Grove, Oak Park

Suitable Locations in the South of the Municipality

Five suitable locations have been identified in the south of the municipality:

4. Victoria Street Mall, Coburg outside Coburg Library

Victoria Street Mall is a vibrant part of the municipality with high levels of pedestrian activity. A flag located within the existing shared zone outside Coburg Library will be highly visible and will complement the existing placemaking treatments in Victoria Street and surrounding Louisa Street.



Figure 1: Concept plan for a Progressive Pride Flag in Victoria Street, Coburg

5. Brunswick Town Hall

Brunswick Town Hall is easily accessible and has high level of pedestrian activity. Locating a flag here would be a prominent entry statement to the town hall and be a vibrant addition to the streetscape.

The flag would need to be marked on the asphalt surface, potentially under the portico. This is because markings may not adhere sufficiently to the bluestone footpath.



Figure 5: Concept plan for a Progressive Pride Flag outside Brunswick Town Hall

6. West Street, Brunswick next to Bulleke-bek Park

Bulleke-bek park attracts high levels of visitors each day and is passed by users of the Upfield Shared Path and those crossing the rail corridor from Orient Grove. A flag in this location will complement the existing street activations in nearby Duckett Street and Florence Street.



Figure 6: Concept plan for a Progressive Pride Flag in West Street, Brunswick

7. Howarth Street, Brunswick next to Yubup Park

Yubup Park attracts high levels of visitors each day and has new facilities for the community to dwell and spend time near the activity centre. A flag in this location will also attract visitors to the newly created park and vice versa.



Figure 7: Concept plan for a Progressive Pride Flag in Howarth Street, Brunswick

8. Piera Street, Brunswick East

Piera Street has existing parklets with on road bike hoops and murals on adjacent buildings. Being immediately off Lygon Street there is significant pedestrian activity passing and a flag in this location would fit the fabric of the street.

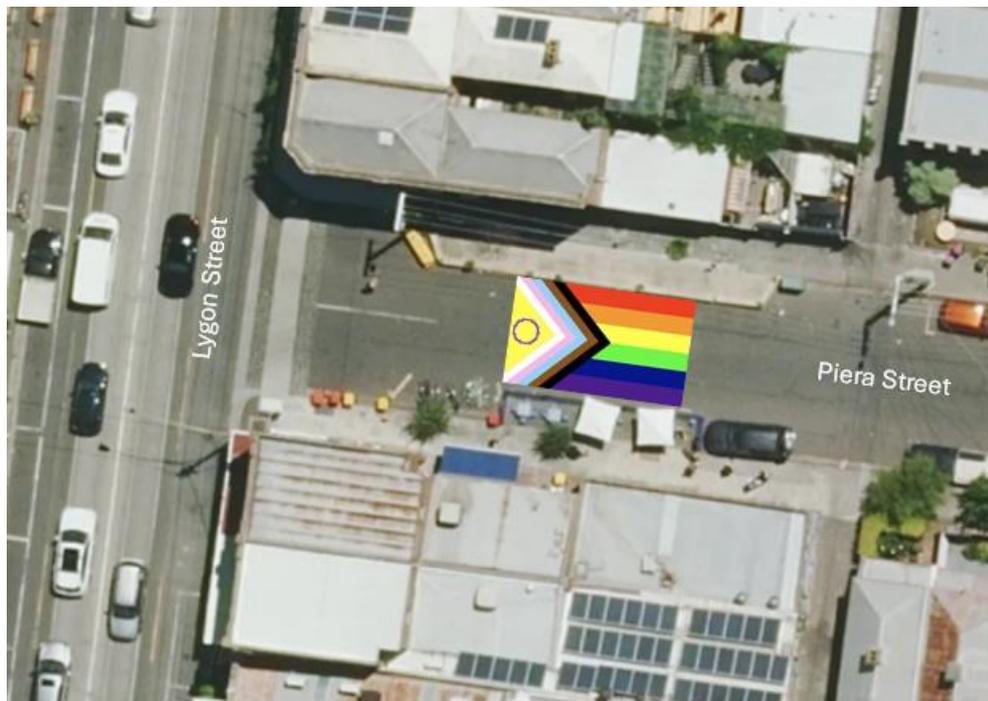


Figure 8: Concept plan for a Progressive Pride Flag in Piera Street, Brunswick East

Material Selection

Consideration has been given to the materials used to mark the flags, including the associated upfront and ongoing maintenance costs. Materials considered were:

	Upfront cost	Maintenance cost	Service life
Paint	Medium - due to extra labour involved	High	6 months to 2 years
Thermoplastic	Medium	Low	2 to 5 years
Omnigrip (recommended)	High	Low	5 to 10 years

Paint is the cheapest option however there is additional labour and time costs associated with the preparation and curing of the product meaning it is not substantially cheaper than superior alternative materials. Paint also tends to fade fast and can't be pressure washed. Paint would require regular repainting and ultimately create a maintenance issue.

Thermoplastic is more expensive than paint but is easy to install and would create less disruption during installation. However given the size of the flag markings, there are concerns thermoplastic would not be able to meet skid resistance requirements and could create a new safety issue. As such Thermoplastic is not recommended.

It is recommended Omnigrip is used for all locations. Omnigrip is available in all the colours of the progressive pride flag, has the longest service life, can be pressure washed, and meets skid resistance requirements.

Omnigrip was used by City of Greater Geelong for their Yarra Street progressive pride flag crossing and by City of Port Phillip for their Jackson Street rainbow road.

Community impact

The installation of the pride flags will have a positive community impact and demonstrate Council's support for the LGBTIQA+ community.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. The proposal supports Section 8 of the Human Rights Charter which relate to recognition and equality before the law.

4. Community consultation and engagement

The Transport Team will undertake community engagement across July and August 2025.

This period of engagement will seek community feedback on the eight identified locations to help determine the final two sites and designs - one in the municipal area north of Bell Street and one in the municipal area south of Bell Street.

Engagement will include:

- A Conversations Merri-bek project page.
- A survey - available digitally on Conversations Merri-bek and in hard copy format on request.
- Promotion via Merri-bek social media channels.
- Inclusion in all relevant Merri-bek e-newsletters and physical newsletters informing of the project and requesting feedback.

- Mailout to owners and occupiers within a 100-metre radius of the 8 identified locations.

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

Cost estimates for each of the eight identified locations were sought from three suppliers. Depending on the flag size and traffic management required, the cost per flag ranges from \$10,000 up to \$20,000. With an estimated cost of \$5,000 for community engagement, it is estimated to cost up to \$45,000 for the installation of the two progressive pride flags.

Subject to Council's decision, funds required (\$45,000) to action this resolution are to be referred to the 2025/2026 budget process for consideration.

The project can be delivered within Council's existing resources.

7. Implementation

Community engagement to select the final two sites and designs will be completed across July and August 2025. Subsequently, a report will be considered by Council to determine the two sites.

Lighting inspections will also be completed to ensure there is sufficient lighting at each location.

Following advice from contractors, it is recommended the pride flags be installed in spring or summer as the warmer weather will aid in the preparation, curing and bonding of the markings to the surface.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.3 COBURG NORTH SPORTS HUB MASTERPLAN

Director Community, Eamonn Fennessy

Community Wellbeing

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the findings of the Coburg North Sports Hub Community Engagement Report and thanks the community for their contributions.
2. Endorses the release of the Draft Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan (Attachment 1) for public consultation from April 10 - May 11, 2025.
3. Receives a further report in July 2025 including a summary of community feedback, a revised Masterplan and associated cost plan for consideration.
4. Thanks the Australian Government for its funding contribution towards the development of the Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Coburg North Sports Precinct is an important community asset that accommodates a variety of sporting activities and recreational uses. Council has been working towards the development of a comprehensive masterplan to guide the precinct's future to ensure it meets the evolving needs of the community.

The Coburg North Master Plan provides a long-term vision and short-to-medium-term development plans for a significant community open space in Coburg North.

The scope of the Master Plan area includes the Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool facility, Jackson Reserve, Harold Stevens Athletics Track, Coburg Basketball Stadium and the proximal open space and creek corridors of Merri Creek and Edgars Creek.

It is a site with enormous potential to support community physical activity, sport, leisure and social opportunities, however there are equally significant complexities and constraints for its development. To address the myriad of existing issues, the proposed approach is to maintain and enhance the existing community activities on the site, while strategically advocating to other levels of government for funding to support large-scale changes and significant facility renewal that will transform the site for the community to enjoy for the next 50 years.

Development of the Masterplan has been enabled by a \$2 million Australian Government grant. This funding has also helped realised some short-term facility accessibility and enhancement projects to commence across the site with an overall value of \$1.78 million.

The community has engaged with the project and demonstrated strong interest in its outcomes. The draft Master Plan is reflective of the aspirations of the community, whilst also balancing consideration for the site conditions, complexities, competing interests and Council's financial capacity to implement the short-term actions.

Previous Council Decisions

N/A

1. Policy Context

The development of the Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan aligns with key strategic directions set out in the following Council and government policies:

Merri-bek Council Plan 2021–2025

The Masterplan supports strategic objectives related to “Connected Communities” and “Liveable Neighbourhoods”, by enhancing access to high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable community infrastructure that meets the needs of current and future residents.

Merri-bek Open Space Strategy

The Open Space Strategy was endorsed in December 2023. The plan contributes to the long-term vision of increasing open space provision and improving the functionality and diversity of recreational spaces across the municipality.

Merri-bek Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2020

The Masterplan responds to the strategy’s focus on equitable access, growing demand for community sport infrastructure, and opportunities to support participation across all ages, genders, and backgrounds.

Fair Access Policy Roadmap (Victorian Government) 2024

The project supports gender equity in community sport by planning for inclusive, welcoming facilities in line with the state’s policy direction.

2. Background

In 2023 Council received a \$2 million funding commitment from the Australian Government to develop a Masterplan for the area and facilities outlined below (Figure 1). This funding also included four capital works projects to lift the condition and usability of existing facilities in the precinct.

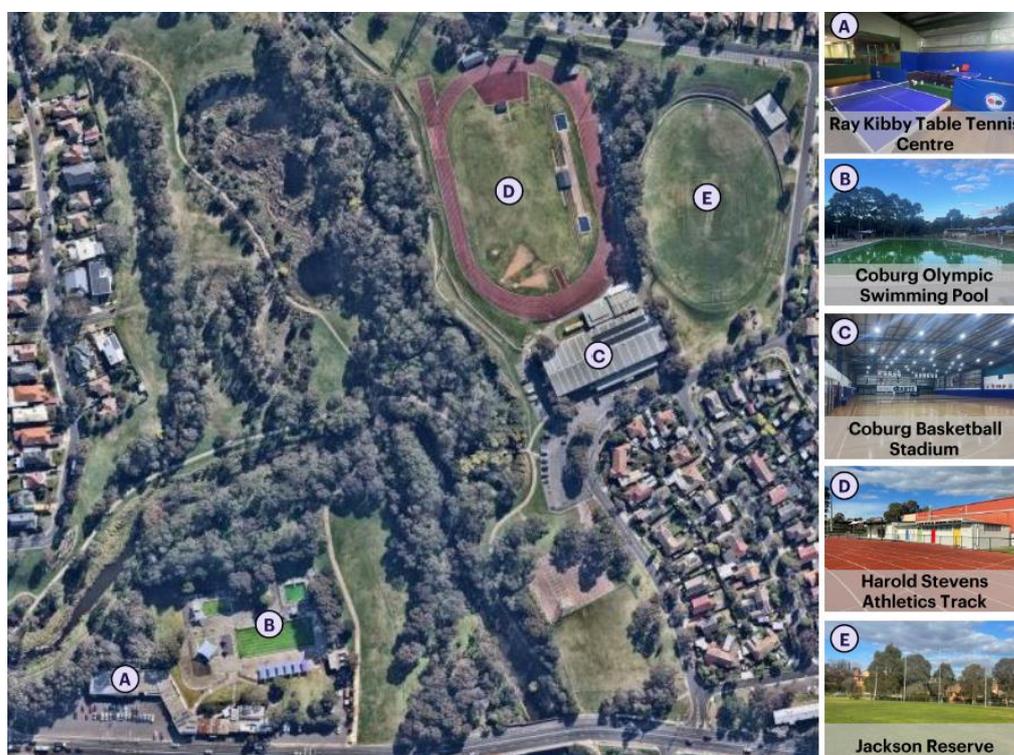


Figure 1: Masterplan location and area scope

The Coburg North Sports Hub is an area that includes 5 key sporting facilities – the Harold Stevens Athletics Track, Jackson Reserve, Coburg Basketball Stadium, Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool, Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre and the surrounding trails and open spaces along Merri and Edgars Creeks.

In addition to the development of the Masterplan, Council is delivering 4 capital works projects consisting of:

- A high-performance gym at the Harold Stevens Athletics Track
- Entry improvements to the Coburg Basketball Stadium
- Entry improvements and floor refurbishments to the Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre
- A refresh of the Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool changerooms

All existing facilities within the precinct were developed more than 30 years ago and have received minimal upgrades since that time. The purpose of this Masterplan is to provide a strategic framework to guide the future planning, development, and investment in the precinct, ensuring it can sustainably support the current and future needs of the community.

A comprehensive background analysis was undertaken to understand the Merri-bek community and planning context, including demographic data, growth trends, and strategic alignment with Council policies. This included reviewing ABS data, population forecasts, and over 30 relevant Council strategies and documents.

To assess the current condition and future potential of the Coburg North Sports Hub, a range of research and analysis methods were undertaken, including:

- Extensive site visits and guided facility walkthroughs
- Review of participation trends via AusPlay data and Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2020)
- Mapping and provision analysis of Council's most common sports
- Review of existing facility upgrades and proposed works
- Benchmarking against other multi-sport precincts across Melbourne
- Catchment area mapping was completed to assess local access to the site
- Comprehensive technical audits, including planning, access, condition, and energy assessment

It was found that this area is an ageing precinct with a range of facilities showing signs of wear and requiring significant upgrades. Approximately 27% of assessed facilities are in fair to poor condition. Comprehensive upgrades will need to navigate heritage, environmental, and planning constraints, with likely requirements for Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) and planning permits.

Access and compliance issues are prevalent across the site, with audits identifying over 20 areas for improvement at both the swimming pool and basketball stadium, alongside design issues such as short court run-offs, non-compliant cricket pitch dimensions, and safety risks like large height drops at Jackson Reserve. There is also a shortfall in indoor multi-purpose spaces, courts, and facilities for recreational walking highlighting the need for targeted investment to meet community demand and support high-priority activities. Benchmarking against best-practice sports precincts shows the Hub falls short in key areas such as defined entrances, modernised play spaces, efficient layout, car parking, shading, and seating.

Despite these challenges, the area remains a valuable and accessible asset, serving nearly 19,000 residents within walking distance and over 350,000 within a 15-minute drive.

This draft Masterplan addresses key findings throughout the research and consultation period and has been prepared for formal review by Council.

3. Issues and Considerations

As well as the natural site constraints, there are several other key factors that constrain the subject area. These are:

- Topography
- An overhead power line easement and associated structures
- Scale of the streets accessing the site
- Fences and barriers restricting pedestrian and passive access and the disconnect between activities due to level change of ground and access to pathways and parking.

In addition, Merri Creek is one of the most significant gathering spaces for the Kulin Nation in southeast Australia. The area is extensively used for community sport and active recreation, and home to several sport and recreation user groups.

- Peak activity creates vehicular congestion in residential streets.
- Dated infrastructure and facilities with many areas of non-compliance to current building standards and guidelines.
- Growing area with more residential developments and growth forecast.

Planning and site constraints including:

- Creek corridors
- Vegetation, erosion and flooding overlays
- Cultural heritage
- Topography and level changes
- Overhead powerlines and easement

Community impact

In the short-term, the proposal is for all the current user group and community activities to continue with Council's support.

In the longer-term, some of the activities will need to be relocated to alternative sites so they can achieve minimum compliance with fit-for-purpose facilities that will enable these activities to be available for the growing community. However, where this is considered necessary, transition support and processes are proposed to minimise any disruptions to existing activities. It can also be noted that relocating some of the current activities will not only enhance the community participation experience of these activities but also alleviate some of the existing community concerns around noise and street parking congestion.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

The Draft Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan supports Council's declared climate emergency and commitment to environmental sustainability. The plan includes guiding principles and future design considerations that prioritise biodiversity, water-sensitive urban design, sustainable materials, and climate resilience. The site's unique location at the confluence of Merri and Edgars Creeks presents an opportunity to integrate nature-based solutions and ecological restoration as part of the precinct's long-term transformation.

Future implementation stages will be subject to further environmental assessments and will aim to minimise environmental impact and embed sustainability in both built form and landscape design.

Economic sustainability implications

The Masterplan provides a long-term framework to guide staged and financially responsible investment over the next 30–50 years. It supports economic sustainability by identifying short-, medium-, and long-term infrastructure priorities that can be aligned with capital works planning, external funding opportunities, and partnerships.

By maximising the use of sport and community facilities, the plan also aims to support local economic activity, create employment opportunities during construction phases, and contribute to broader social and economic benefits in the surrounding area through an increase in attendance to the area, and the potential for large event or/and sporting events

Legal and risk considerations

There are no immediate legal risks associated with the endorsement of the Draft Masterplan for public consultation. Future implementation stages will require further detailed planning, design, and compliance with relevant planning, building, and environmental legislation.

Risk management strategies will be developed as individual projects progress, including appropriate governance, funding accountability, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms. The draft plan helps mitigate long-term risk by providing a coordinated and strategic approach to the precinct's growth and development.

Human Rights Consideration

This report and the Draft Masterplan have been considered in accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Victoria), and the Merri-bek Human Rights Policy. The Masterplan aims to enhance access to community infrastructure and open space for all people, regardless of age, gender, ability, or background. The approach to community consultation and the principles embedded in the plan reflect a commitment to equity, inclusion, and cultural respect.

4. Community consultation and engagement

An extensive stakeholder engagement process was undertaken as part of this project. This commenced with developing, refining and finalising a robust engagement plan, guided by Council's Community Engagement Policy. Targeted engagement with a range of stakeholders, including Council Staff has informed the development of the Masterplan. Key stakeholders engaged include:

Extensive stakeholder engagement (22 stakeholder interviews) including:

- State Stadiums Victoria (SSV)
- Friends of Coburg Olympic Pool
- Murray Road Advocacy Group
- Friends of Edgers Creek
- Friends of Merri Creek
- Merri Creek Management Committee
- Scope
- Athletics Victoria
- Basketball Victoria
- Cricket Victoria
- Table Tennis Victoria
- YMCA (Active Merri-bek)
- AFL (Community Venue Development)
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC)
- Sport and Recreation Vic. (SRV)
- Melbourne Water
- Merri-bek Bicycle Users Group
- Coburg High School

- Darebin City Council
- Merri Health

Three sporting group/stakeholder workshop sessions, including:

- Coburg Basketball Association
- Coburg Table Tennis Club
- East Coburg Cricket Club
- Coburg Football Club (Jnr VFL)
- Coburg Harriers Athletics Club
- Coburg Little Athletics Centre
- Extensive engagement was also undertaken with Council officers from a wide range of operational functions.

Conversations Merri-bek:

- Broad community consultation (441 online surveys, 361 interactive map comments, three community pop-ups and eight email submissions).

Upcoming/Proposed:

Conversations Merri-bek:

- Broad community consultation to gather feedback on the Draft Masterplan. Feedback will be encouraged through an interactive web page with structured questions, this will be advertised through Councils website, and digital media.

Six key themes were identified from this process, which are outlined below:

1. Be bold and identify aspirational projects that will create meaningful outcomes.
2. Improve safety and increased activation of pathways, connections, sporting facilities and open space.
3. Enhance the environmental conditions, habitats and connection to the community.
4. Prioritise sustainable renewal and development for all major projects.
5. Develop the physical and cultural connectivity of the sporting zones, user groups and Hub visitors.
6. Engage and empower the community to shape the outcomes of the project.

Please see **Attachment 2** for the full engagement 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. Implementation and Financial and Resources Implications

The Draft Masterplan is proposed to be released for community consultation via the Conversations Merri-bek platform. The engagement approach will include a combination of interactive elements and structured survey questions to encourage community participation and feedback. Following the consultation period, community input will be reviewed and used to inform the refinement of the Draft Master Plan. A final version, along with a summary of community feedback, will then be presented to Council for consideration and endorsement.

There are no financial or resourcing implications associated with placing the Draft Masterplan on public exhibition.

Should Council endorse the final Masterplan, it will be committing to the staged implementation of a range of identified actions over the next 10 years.

A preliminary assessment of costs associated with these actions is outlined below:

- Actions underway and fully funded by grants already obtained: \$1.7 million.
- Actions that are already included within Council's budget: \$1.8 million in 2028/29.
- Actions that are not yet funded and have potential to be budgeted for within Council's operational budgets over the next 5-10 years: \$5-10 million.
- Actions that are not yet funded and can only proceed with substantial external funding.

Please note:

- This information has been prepared to complete this report, and more detailed cost planning is scheduled to be completed and be presented back along with an accompanying report in June/July 2025.
- Any costs that they are indicative and provided in 2025 \$AUD estimates that will naturally change over time.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | Coburg North Sports Precinct Master Plan - April 2025 v2(2) | D25/154818 |
| 2 | Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan - Engagement Report_V2 | D25/159497 |



Coburg North Sports Hub Master Plan

Melbournes leading nature, sport , recreation and wellbeing destination.

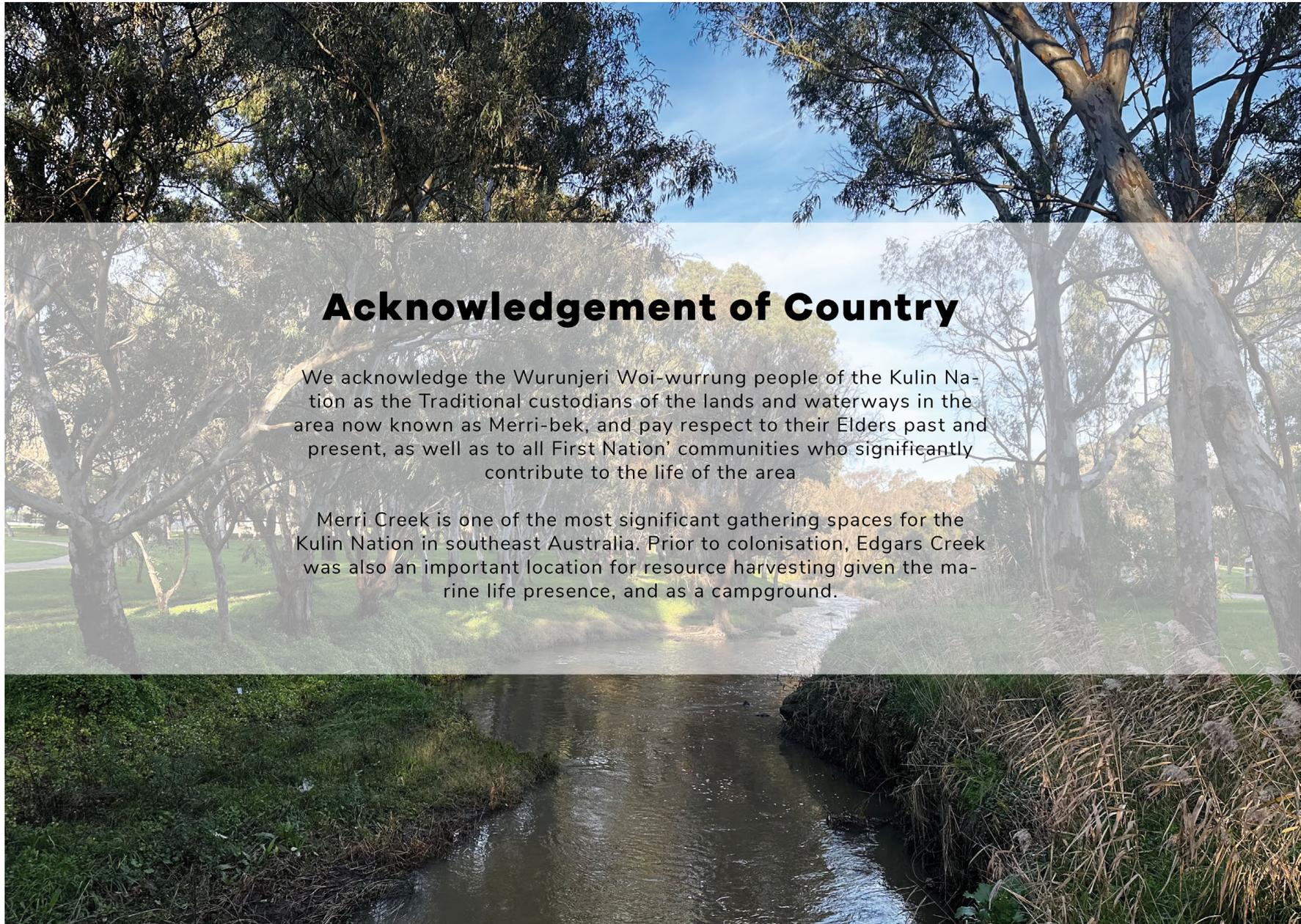
PREPARED BY:



URBAN / MASTER PLANNING / DESIGN



theocd.com.au



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wurunjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek, and pay respect to their Elders past and present, as well as to all First Nation' communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area

Merri Creek is one of the most significant gathering spaces for the Kulin Nation in southeast Australia. Prior to colonisation, Edgars Creek was also an important location for resource harvesting given the marine life presence, and as a campground.

Coburg North Sports Hub Master Plan

Project Overview

Merri-bek City Council is developing a Master Plan for an area labelled the "Coburg North Sports Hub" and has appointed independent consultants Solucio and The Office for Collective Design (The OCD) to lead this process.

This area has not previously been defined as a collective precinct. It includes five key sporting facilities as well as the surrounding trails, open spaces, Merri Creek and Edgars Creek.

Project Aim

The aim of the project is to strategically guide future planning and development on the site, ensuring it can sustainably meet the needs of the community.

Of significant importance for this project is the requirement for both

- A long-term vision, as well as;
- Aligned and realistic short-term development plans.

Work Completed to Date

A thorough research, engagement, consultation and analysis process has been undertaken, including the following activities to inform the draft Master Plan.

- Background research.
- Site and urban design analysis.
- Extensive stakeholder engagement (22 stakeholder interviews and three sporting group/stakeholder workshop sessions).
- Broad community consultation (441 online surveys, 361 interactive map comments, three community pop-ups and eight email submissions).
- Workshops with Council Officers and a cross-department working group.
- Technical site analysis reports conducted for the site's facilities.

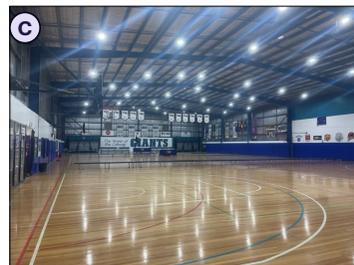
Key Sporting Facilities



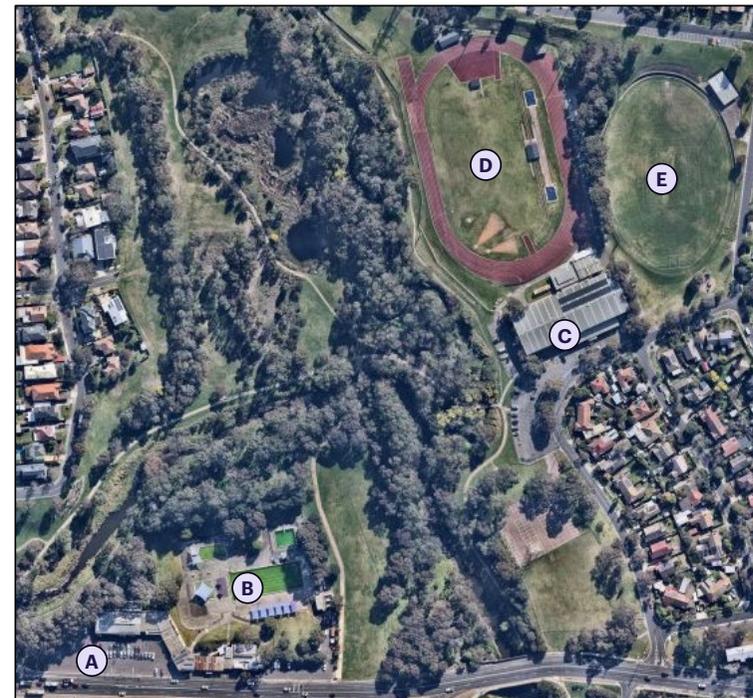
Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre



Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool



Coburg Basketball Stadium

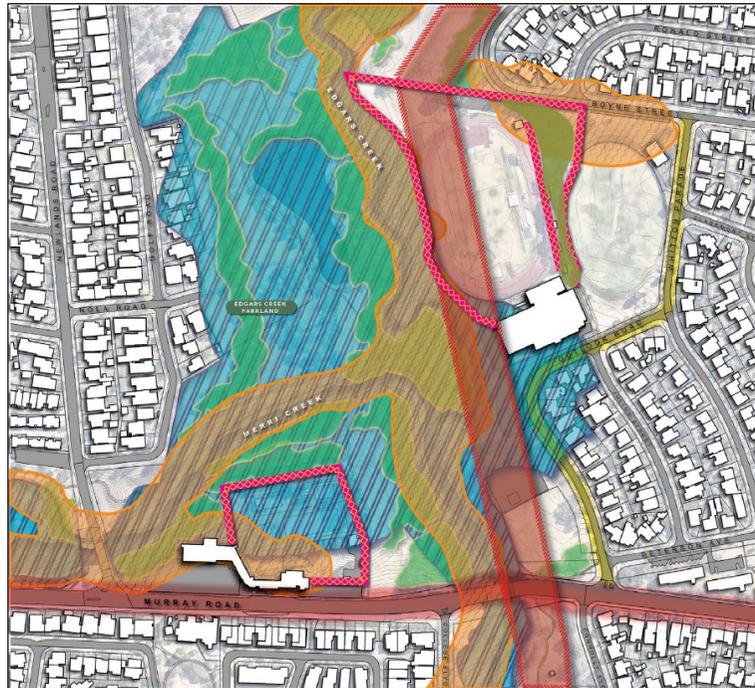


Harold Stevens Athletics Track



Jackson Reserve

Site Analysis, Community and Stakeholder Feedback, and Zone Priorities



Site Analysis and Constraints

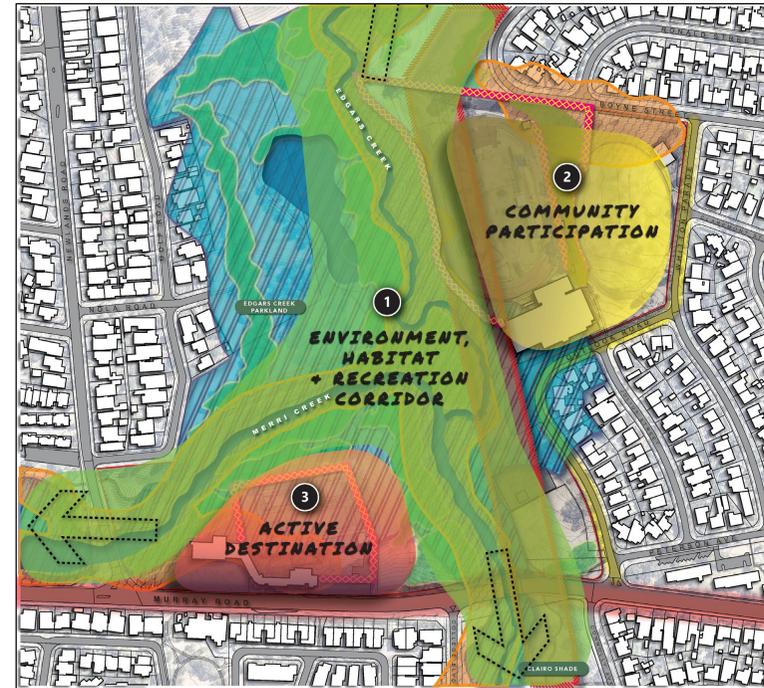
The Master Plan area is complex with several major considerations, including:

- Significant gathering space for the Kulin Nation.
- Dated infrastructure and facilities with non-compliance.
- High demand and use for sport/recreation and a growing population catchment.
- Residential setting, interfaces and impacts.
- Environmental, topographical, planning, zoning and cultural development restrictions.

Community and Stakeholder Priorities

A separate engagement and consultation report is available, however the following key themes have been synthesised to inform the draft Master Plan:

- Be bold and aspirational.
- Improve safety and increase activation.
- Enhance the environmental outcomes.
- Prioritise sustainable renewal.
- Develop the physical and cultural connectivity.
- Engage and empower the community to shape the outcomes of the project.



Master Plan Zones

The Sports Hub is comprised of three naturally delineated zones, which each require a tailored approach to address the specific priorities. The long-term intention for each zone is outlined as:

Zone 1: Environment, Habitat and Recreation Corridor

- Create a tranquil escape from the surrounding urban landscape that inspires community health and wellbeing.
- Continue to restore and rejuvenate the natural setting, balancing ecological preservation with recreational opportunities.

Zone 2: Community Participation

- Maintain the existing basketball stadium until a superior fit-for-purpose stadium can be developed.
- Reduce the peak load and vehicular congestion around this zone.
- Create a flexible and innovative space for diverse sport, recreation and events.

Zone 3: Active Destination

- Rejuvenate the Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool.
- Create a community oasis with an innovative sustainable design that reflects the natural setting.

2050 Vision – Melbourne’s leading nature, sport, recreation and wellbeing destination.

Establishing a long-term concept to support short-term planning and development

The circumstances, context, analysis and conditions of this site have determined that all existing sporting assets will likely need to be replaced, redeveloped, expanded or re-purposed within the next 25-years.

This provides an opportunity to re-imagine the entire area and consider how it can best cater to the community needs in the long-term future.

This challenge has inspired the following Vision, Guiding Principles and 2050 Vision Concept Plan.

Master Plan Vision

Set at the confluence of Merri Creek and Edgars Creek, the Coburg North Sports Hub will instill and cultivate community pride for the growing local population.

The Sports Hub will be a respectful and accessible destination which showcases natural biodiversity, culturally sensitive environmental practices, and best-practice sport facilities and activation.

Guiding Principles for the Master Plan

- Aspirational and Meaningful.
- Respectful, Accessible and Activated.
- Maximise Community Benefits from Sport-Designated Spaces.
- A Distinct Identity.
- Environmentally Focused.

These statements have been used as a framework to consider and align a short-term development plan for each zone that will commence the process of achieving the long-term vision.

The Master Plan will be reviewed every ten years, and this will include preparing new short-term development plans.



Community Aspirations and Opportunities

Zone 1: Environment, Habitat and Recreation Corridor



Zone 2: Community Participation



Zone 3: Active Destination



10-year Zone Development Plans 2025-2035



Zone 1: Environment, Habitat and Recreation Corridor

Key Actions:

- Increase vegetation buffers and tree canopy along the creek corridors.
- Improve stormwater retention along the creeks, using native plants and vegetation.
- Improve, expand and connect the trail network across the Sports Hub – and incorporate a five-kilometer trail loop.
- Acknowledge and honour traditional owners and incorporate Woi Wurrung language on site entries and interfaces.
- Install directional signage provided in an easy-to-interpret format and in multiple languages.
- Provide signage for designated dog entry areas into Merri Creek and Edgars Creek.

Longer-term/or if funding becomes available:

- Embed first nations public art and highlight significant first nations stories.
- Improve and widen the bridges.
- Develop environmentally sustainable amenities and active transport/end of trip facilities.
- Install low-intensity, directional lighting along the trail in designated zones.



Zone 2: Community Participation

Key Actions:

- Complete the new Sports Hub indoor gym[^].
- Complete Basketball Stadium entry refurbishment[^].
- Implement appropriate netting to enable senior cricket matches to return to Jackson Reserve Oval.
- Improve Basketball Stadium changerooms.
- Incorporate access gates within the athletics track fence.
- Explore the feasibility of options to upgrade and extend the life of the athletics' track.
- Complete a feasibility study and concept design for a new, relocated basketball stadium to allow for expansion of courts.

Longer-term/or if funding becomes available:

- Enhance the creek corridor and vegetation buffer.
- Remove the basketball stadium, once new fit-for-purpose stadium is fully operational.
- Realign the whole space on one level with improved drainage, irrigation and natural grass.
- Realign and increase the provision of car parking, incorporating additional trees and landscaping.
- Develop new multi-use sporting fields, training and supporting amenities for Athletics, Cricket and Australian Rules, and review the management model for this space to maximise community use.
- Replace, relocate and expand the play space.
- Develop a perimeter synthetic running trail/pathway that connects with the existing Sports Hub trail network.



Zone 3: Active Destination

Key Actions:

- Complete the pool changeroom upgrades[^].
- Complete the Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre entry refurbishment and DDA-access upgrade[^].
- Complete the Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre kitchen upgrades and explore options to expand the number of compliant table tennis areas⁺.
- Review and update Council's Aquatic and Leisure Strategy.

Longer-term/or if funding becomes available:

- Redevelop the Aquatic facilities (*subject to outcomes of updated strategy).
 - Explore new year-round facilities such as a café, gym and indoor wellness, retail, athlete recovery and meeting spaces.
 - Explore innovative and environmentally sustainable design options such as a green rooftop above indoor facilities.
 - Incorporate and expand the Table Tennis Centre, within a delineated/dedicated space.
 - Realign, increase and improve the safety of car parking and access, while enhancing landscaping along Murray Road.
- Work with relevant parties to improve pedestrian access, connectivity, safety and main road crossings.

[^]Actions that have external funding allocated to them.

⁺Action that has future council budget allocated to it.



PREPARED FOR:

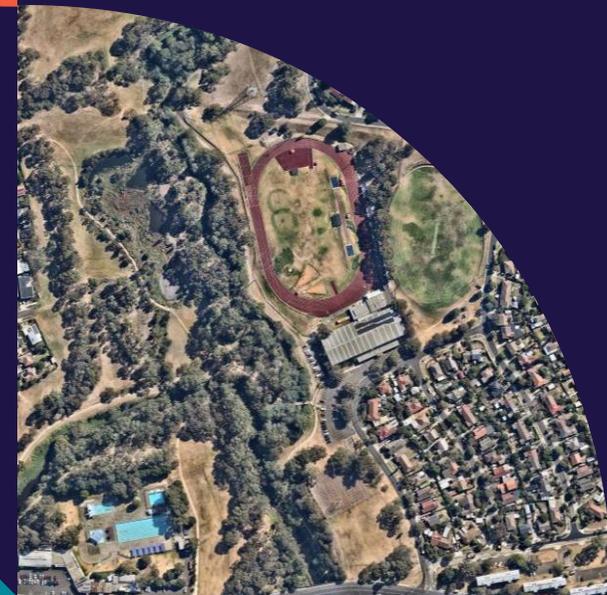




Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan

Merri-bek City Council

Stakeholder Engagement Report – February 2025



Executive Summary

Project Overview

Merri-bek City Council is developing a Masterplan for an area labelled the Coburg North Sports Hub, an area that includes five key sporting facilities as well as the surrounding trails, open spaces, Merri Creek and Edgars Creek. This Masterplan aims to strategically guide planning and developments on the site, ensuring it can sustainably meet the needs of the community.

How and Who We Engaged

A number of engagement activities were undertaken as part of the consultation process including:

- Council Officer project workshops.
- Sporting Reference Group project workshops.
- Detailed interviews with Council officers from many business units.
- 22 interviews with external stakeholders and user groups.
- 441 online community surveys.
- 361 interactive map comments.
- Eight emails from Merri-bek residents.
- Three community pop-ups – at the Farmers Market (Coburg North Primary School), Fawkner Fiesta and the Coburg Olympic Pool.

Community Survey Highlights

The key takeaways from the community survey and mapping feedback are:

- Average visitations to the Sports Hub by respondents is 2-3 times per week for approximately 100 minutes each visit.
- Most common reasons for visits are walking, using the pool and basketball.
- Around half travel to the Hub by car and under half arrive by active means.
- 53% of respondents find the facilities/provisions either poor or very poor.
- A clear majority are satisfied with the creeks and vegetation, open space and paths but more disagreed than agreed that the Hub is well connected.

Themes Derived From Stakeholders and Community Consultation

	Be bold and identify aspirational projects that will create meaningful outcomes.
	Improve safety and increased activation of pathways, connections, sporting facilities and open space.
	Enhance the environmental conditions, habitats and connection to the community.
	Prioritise sustainable renewal and development for all major projects.
	Develop the physical and cultural connectivity of the sporting zones, user groups and precinct visitors.
	Engage and empower the community to shape the outcomes of the project.

Guiding Principles for the Masterplan

- Aspirational and Meaningful.
- Respectful, Accessible and Activated.
- Maximise Community Benefits from Sport-Designated Spaces.
- A Distinct Identity.
- Environmentally Focused.

Background

Project Overview

Merri-bek City Council is developing a Masterplan for an area labelled the Coburg North Sports Hub and appointed independent consultants Solucio and The Office for Collective Design (The OCD) to lead the process.

The area includes five key sporting facilities (Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool, Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre, Coburg Basketball Stadium, Harold Stevens Athletics Track and Jackson Reserve) as well as the surrounding trails, open spaces, Merri Creek and Edgars Creek.

The Masterplan aims to strategically guide planning and developments on the site, ensuring it can sustainably meet the needs of the community.

Developing the Masterplan has involved a robust process of background research, substantial site analysis and urban design, extensive stakeholder consultation, broad community consultation, workshops with Council and a designated Sporting Reference Group, and technical reports developed for the site's facilities.

Important Context and Constraints

Merri Creek is one of the most significant gathering spaces for the Kulin Nation in southeast Australia.

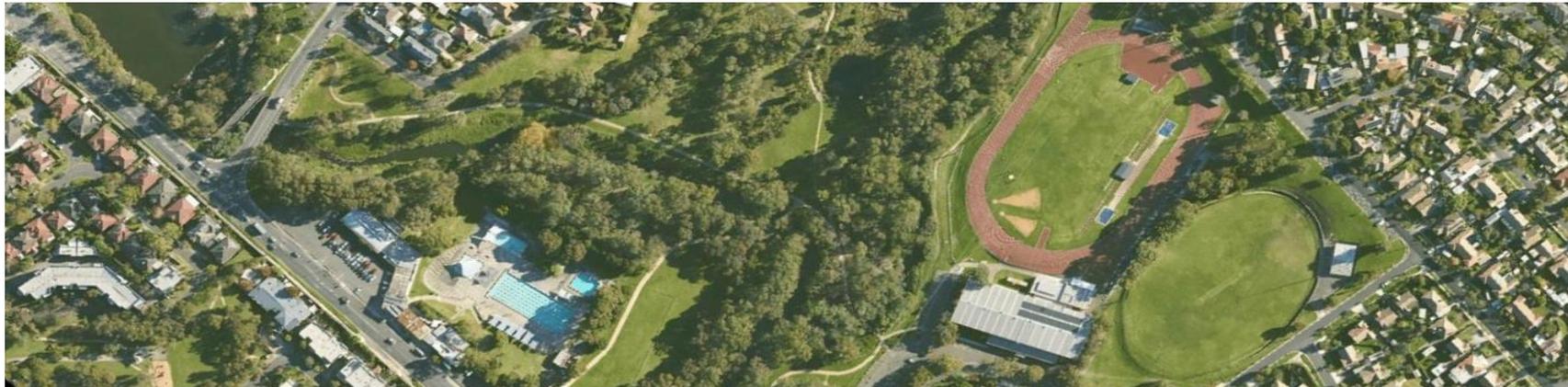
The site is a highly utilised area for community sport and active recreation, and home to several sport and recreation user groups.

It is within a growing area with more residential developments and growth forecast. Peak activity creates vehicular congestion in residential streets.

The majority of infrastructure and facilities is outdated with many areas of non-compliance to current building standards and guidelines.

There are planning and site constraints including:

- Creek corridors.
- Vegetation, erosion and flooding overlays.
- Cultural heritage.
- Topography and level changes.
- Overhead powerlines and easement.



How We Engaged

Process Overview

An extensive stakeholder engagement and community consultation process commenced with developing, refining and finalising a robust engagement plan, in collaboration with the PWG. The plan is aligned with the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum and includes stakeholder segments and targeted engagement activities, including:

- Council Officer project workshops with >20 attendees from a cross-section of business units.
- Sporting Reference Group project workshops with official representatives from the current user groups.
- Seven interviews with Council officers from a broad cross-section of business units including:
 - Community Engagement.
 - Community Wellbeing, including Aquatic and Leisure.
 - Cultural Development.
 - Sustainability and Climate.
 - Property, Place and Design/Building Projects/Maintenance.
 - Sport and Recreation.
 - Open Space and Planning.
- 22 interviews with external stakeholders and user groups.
- 441 online community surveys.
- 361 interactive map comments.
- Eight emails from Merri-bek residents.
- Three community pop-ups – at the Farmers Market (Coburg North Primary School), Fawker Fiesta and the Coburg Olympic Pool.

Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan

We are developing a Masterplan for an area called the Coburg North Sports Hub to ensure the growing community can access a variety of sport and recreation.

Home • Coburg North Sports Hub Masterplan

To stay informed
Click the "Follow" button in the banner at the top of the page.

Timeline

- July 2024 - October 2024: Background research and scoping
- July 2024 - September 2024: End-of-phase Consultation
- September - November 2024: Technical Council Engagement Activities
- 30 October - 4 November 2024: Local Update
- 20 October - 21 November 2024: Community Survey
- 2 November 2024: Public Information session at Coburg Farmers Market
- 17 November 2024: Come and see our the "Public Place" for an information pop-up about the masterplan
- December 2024 - January 2025: Masterplan Design Process
- 8 January 2025: Coburg Olympic Pool - Coburg North Summer Pop-up
- March 2025 - April 2025: Draft Masterplan engagement - Further opportunities for community feedback
- July 2025: Council Establishment of Final Masterplan

About the project
To progress our vision as sustainable, inclusive space that honours the cultural significance of Merri and Edgars Creeks while providing modern infrastructure for sports and recreation, independent consultants Solucio and The Office for Collective Design (The OCD) are leading this process.

History of the area
The Coburg North area and Merri and Edgars Creeks hold deep cultural and historical significance for the Aboriginal Nation. It has important gathering sites, and sites for resource harvesting. It is home to important First Peoples sites, including ancestral trees and sacred landscapes.

The Sports Hub area now
The Coburg North Sports Hub area is now home to 5 key sport and recreation facilities, trails and open spaces that are well used by the community. The facilities were constructed in the 2000s and have been renewed upgrades.

The local sports facilities

- Harold Blewett Athletics track**
The historic Coburg Harrier Athletics Club, and Coburg City Athletics Centre has been operating since 1956. The club has used the site for many years and the club is currently in the process of upgrading the site and adding new facilities.
- Jackson Reserve**
Jackson Reserve in Coburg is a well-used recreation facility that has a long history of community activities. It has over 200 players in the club and is currently in the process of upgrading the site and adding new facilities.
- Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool**
The Coburg Olympic Pool is a beloved community facility that has been operating since 1962. The pool caters from children to adults, with a dedicated swimming lane for competitive swimmers. It has over 40,000 visitors annually.
- Coburg Basketball Stadium**
The Coburg Basketball Stadium is currently operating in 1988. It is the only basketball stadium in the area and is currently in the process of upgrading the site and adding new facilities.
- Ray Kilroy Table Tennis Centre**
The Ray Kilroy Table Tennis Club is a well-used recreation facility that has a long history of community activities. It has over 200 players in the club and is currently in the process of upgrading the site and adding new facilities.

Join the Conversation

Interactive map **Online survey**

Community Survey
The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete depending on how detailed your responses are. We have engaged well-respected and experienced management consultants, Solucio, to conduct this survey and to give you the confidence that your responses will be confidential. The results of the survey will remain anonymous. All on-page will collated responses be used for any purpose other than reports on this project and planning and project reports to the Council for the project.

Contact us

Accessibility
We are committed to ensuring that our project is accessible and inclusive for all members of the community. If you need additional support to participate or require alternative to different format, please contact our Accessibility and Inclusion Communications Advisor for more information. Your communication needs we can help you.

- Name: Claire Davidson
- Phone: 0340 1111
- Email: gdavidson@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Merri-bek City Council

- Name: Christina Grayland
- Phone: 0340 1111
- Email: cggrayland@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Solucio Consultants

- Name: Sam Manning
- Email: smanning@solucio.com.au



Which Stakeholders We Engaged

Merri-bek City Council Business Units	
Department	Area of Management
Community Wellbeing	Unit Manager, Recreation Services & Community. Unit Manager, Aquatic and Leisure. Unit Manager, Community Development and Social Policy.
Community Engagement	Unit Manager, Community Engagement.
Cultural Development	Unit Manager, Arts and Culture.
Sustainability and Climate	Unit Manager, Sustainable Built Environment. Integrated Water Management Lead. Manager, Sustainability and Climate.
Open Space & Design	Unit Manager, Open Space Design and Development.
Sport and Recreation	Sport and Recreation Development Officer.
Open Space Maintenance	Unit Manager, Urban Forest.
Property, Place and Design	Property Officer Open Space Acquisition.
Building Projects	Head of Building Projects (Capital Works Planning and Delivery).
Maintenance	Building Maintenance.
Social Policy	Social Policy and Projects Officer. Ballarrt Mooroop First Peoples Projects Coordinator.

Which Stakeholders We Engaged

Existing User Groups / Sporting Reference Group (SRG)	
Club / Association	Description / Detail
Coburg Basketball Association	President, Coburg Basketball Association. Tenant in Coburg Stadium, sub tenant through SSV.
Coburg Table Tennis Club	Tenant in Ray Kibby Table Tennis Centre on lease.
East Coburg Cricket Club	Seasonal allocation of Jackson Reserve – Summer.
Coburg Football Club (Jnr VFL)	General Manager, Coburg Football Club (VFL). Seasonal allocation of Jackson Reserve – Winter.
Coburg Harriers Athletics Club	Athletics track and clubhouse - on a lease.
Coburg Little Athletics Centre	Athletics track and clubhouse - on a lease.

Which Stakeholders We Engaged

External Stakeholders	
Group / Organisation	
State Stadiums Victoria (SSV)	Table Tennis Victoria
Friends of Coburg Olympic Pool	YMCA (Active Merri-bek)
Murray Road Advocacy Group	AFL (Community Venue Development)
Friends of Edgers Creek	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC)
Friends of Merri Creek	Sport and Recreation Vic. (SRV)
MCMC	Melbourne Water
Scope	Merri-bek Bicycle Users Group
Athletics Victoria	Coburg High School
Basketball Victoria	Darebin City Council
Cricket Victoria	Merri Health

Engagement Themes and Key Findings

Themes	Description
	<p>Be bold and identify aspirational projects that will create meaningful outcomes.</p> <p>There is a strong sentiment that this Masterplan is an opportunity too good to be missed and that it should set out an ambitious vision with tangible improvements, practical timeframes and genuine outcomes. The Coburg North Sports Hub is commonly thought of as a site with significant potential, yet currently presenting well below this perception.</p>
	<p>Improve safety and increased activation of pathways, connections, sporting facilities and open space.</p> <p>With well-established trails following Merri Creek and Edgars Creek, the Coburg North Sports Hub is a key node in the creek and trail network with a great opportunity to showcase these trails to a diverse cross-section of the community. More complete and resolved linkages with consideration of improved lighting through the site will also draw attention of the improving sporting assets, which will also benefit from greater connection.</p>
	<p>Enhance the environmental conditions, habitats and connection to the community.</p> <p>Benefitting from an extensive bushland corridor interface throughout the site, the Masterplan can enhance and leverage the natural environment to draw people into the Hub. The Plan can achieve this with clear direction including increasing the tree canopy and improving energy usage, efficiency and water management.</p>
	<p>Prioritise sustainable renewal and development for all major projects.</p> <p>All infrastructure projects proposed through the Masterplan will need to undergo a thorough assessment for Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) and climate resilience. The supporting evidence and rationale developed to recommend infrastructure projects will need to analyse the options of refurbish versus redevelop.</p>
	<p>Develop the physical and cultural connectivity of the sporting zones, user groups and precinct visitors.</p> <p>The infrastructure and user groups of the Hub are understood to have historically functioned in relative isolation. Equally there is a clear priority amongst current stakeholders to 'bring down the fences' and develop greater linkages between facilities, user groups and general community visitors to the precinct. There is also an opportunity for greater connection to Country which will be explored with the Merri-bek City Council (MbCC) First Nations Advisory Committee and Wurundjeri Woio-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.</p>
	<p>Engage and empower the community to shape the outcomes of the project.</p> <p>Given the current and potential future use of the Coburg North Sports Hub, the significant local community should have transparent information and well advertised opportunities to help shape the project as it progresses from the analysis to design phases – and once the final draft is complete.</p>

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles are the core foundational elements of the Masterplan. These act as the structural elements that establish key priorities for the Masterplan to achieve, as all recommendations made will align with a guiding principle.

	Principle	Description	Key Priorities
	Aspirational and Meaningful	<i>An ambitious, transformational vision with a mix of fully-committed short-term improvements and longer-term aspirational projects that will be subject to external funding.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring the environmental opportunities into the core of the planning process. • Provide options to address the significant pressure on the current basketball courts. • Consider bold opportunities if the potential benefits outweigh the potential negatives.
	Respectful, Accessible and Activated	<i>Significantly improved pedestrian, active transport and facility connectivity – as well as improved user group collaboration.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance signage, wayfinding and storytelling throughout the entire precinct, acknowledging the traditional owners of the land and waterways. • Greater site functionality and ability of user groups and the community to navigate the site and access each of its offerings.
	Maximise Community Benefits from Sport-Designated Spaces	<i>Fit-for-purpose sporting facilities that celebrate the user groups and will cater to the current and future community needs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that future sporting assets (i.e., fields, tracks, pools, courts, changerooms, etc.) will be compliant, fit-for-purpose and allow for future growth. • Increase community sport activation and participation for user groups and sports.
	A Distinct Identity	<i>An attractive, safe, inclusive and unique precinct that encourages the community to engage and enjoy its offerings.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of sporting and non-sporting events held at the precinct. • Foster an environment whereby all user groups, members of the community, and wildlife can enjoy the precinct freely.
	Environmentally Focused	<i>Best-practice environmental preservation, enhancement, conservation and integration.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate best-practice ESD for all infrastructure projects. • Preserve the precinct’s wildlife and natural habitats by increasing the coverage of vegetation across the Hub.



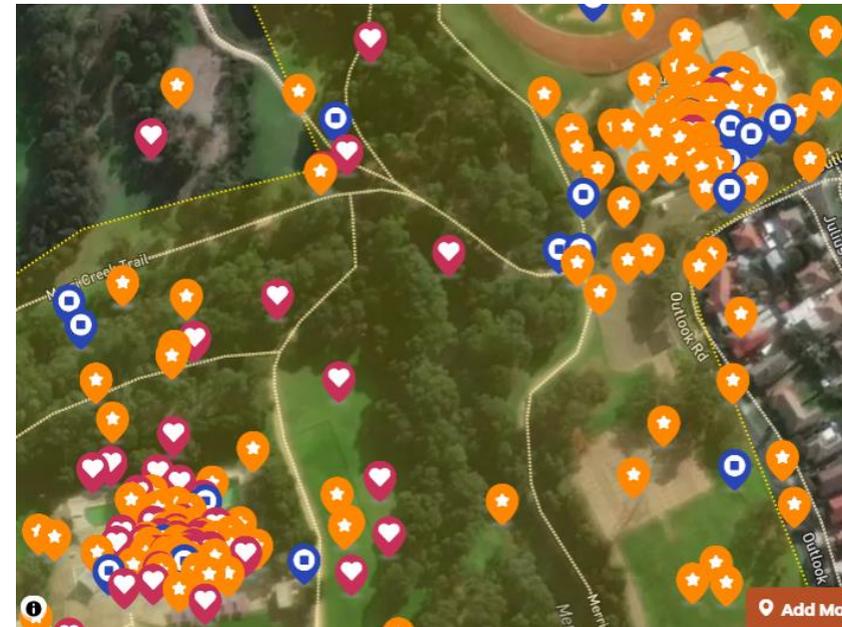
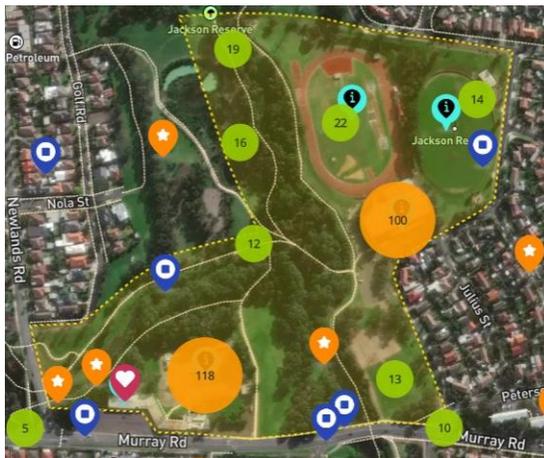
Community Survey

Survey Overview

A community survey was published on the Merri-bek City Council's Conversations Merri-bek webpage and the survey was open for almost four weeks (30th October – 24th November 2024) and then temporarily again in January 2025, after the community pop-up at the Coburg Olympic Pool. The survey was publicised through Council's social media, the community pop-ups and signage placed around the Coburg North Sports Hub area.

The survey attracted 441 individual responses and the results are summarised in the pages following.

The survey page also provided an interactive mapping and comments function for which there were 361 contributions from 194 individuals – Council reported that the volume of responses were quite high for this type of online engagement. As can be noticed from the images, a large proportion of the feedback centred around the Coburg Olympic Pool and the Coburg Basketball Stadium.



-  Needs improving
-  I love this
-  Barrier to access

Community Survey

Most Valued

Both the community survey and interactive mapping tool provided opportunities for open comments. When those completing the survey were asked about what they most valued about the Sports Hub, following are the most common responses:

- Beautiful native trees (and the overall green canopy), shrubs, creeks, wetlands and wildlife. Large amount of open space and parkland.
- The Merri Creek and Edgars Creek corridors, in particular.
- Lovely setting for walking/running/cycling paths.
- Having so many sport/recreation facilities in the one place.
- The basketball stadium, enjoyment of watching children play basketball and the welcoming basketball community.
- The Olympic pool and its outdoor/natural setting.
- A place that brings the community together – a true community hub.
- An athletics track that can be used all-year round.
- Enjoyment in seeing young children being active, socialising and making friends.
- Ease of access.
- Affordable activities within the Hub.
- The large size of the area – wouldn't like to see any sections carved out for other non-recreational uses.
- That the area is not 'over-developed'.
- The connection to nature.
- Unpaved walking trails/tracks.
- Proximity to people's homes.

"It's really the fact that the natural setting of the Merri Creek has these wonderful facilities nearby, so it doesn't feel suburban – is quite special".

"I feel so lucky that I live and have raised my family in an area which I can walk to two creeks, a swimming pool, a running track, a sports oval, a basketball centre and a table tennis centre! As a family we have used and loved them all."

"We LOVE the Coburg Olympic Pool and see it as an asset. It's position amongst the gum tree is so special and a way to almost feel like you're swimming at a waterhole".

"The community and experiences my kids get from this space is huge!"

"The Merri and Edgars Creek trails are just sublime and loved by many just the way they are".

"Love that all these different facilities and sports are nestled amongst the trees. The facilities are not too imposing on the natural landscape. I feel like I'm in a community when I go for a walk along Edgars Creek past the footy oval and basketball stadium with people all around".

"The opportunities it creates for my children. The memories they are making. The lessons they are learning being part of teams".

"The combo of sports facilities and activity locations mixed into the rural/parkland setting. It makes me forget I'm in a city and that is why I love the precinct".

Community Survey

Community Trends

The survey asked about what trends are being noticed in the areas of community interest, engagement and participation for which the more frequent responses are:

- Growing demand for basketball participation and facilities in the area.
- Due to the increasing cost-of-living, there has been increased interest in informal (non-club based) recreation.
- The greater amount of people/families walking, running and riding through the area and the preference for safer active travel infrastructure.
- Facilities catering to more than just one section or interest/user-group within the community i.e. facilities looking to provide multiple offerings.
- Increase in younger families in the area, especially families with infants.
- More people using the facilities and open space every day, including for walking dogs.
- Greater numbers using the outdoor gyms in the area.
- More women are looking for a safe space to exercise.
- An increased number of people wanting to use the facilities but a good percentage are being turned off by the poor standard of facilities and are looking elsewhere.
- New community initiatives such as the Coburg Parkrun.
- Greater value placed on seeking shade.
- Car parking spaces are a premium during busy periods and hot days.
- More high-rises and medium density residential complexes being built in the area.
- Increase in social sport (less formalised) for both adults and children.

"Basketball is increasing in popularity exponentially. Merri Creek paths see heavier use since lock down – everyone has discovered what a gem this area is and how great it is for wellbeing."

"There are more people running and cycling as well as walking dogs than 12 years ago when we first moved here. The Harold Stevens track is meant to be open for the public use but the gates are always locked."

"There is so much community interest in the area for active lifestyles and community sport, and this is the closest sports precinct for so much of the huge and growing population of the Inner North, but participation is being undermined by how crowded and old these facilities are."

"There is a huge growth in basketball and this is creating a lot of stress on the current facility. The basketball stadium is very busy and impossible to park at during many times of the week".

"More women running because the athletics club provides coaching that is targeted at the times, levels and coaching styles they need".

"So many more people clearly enjoy walking, picnicking, enjoying the quiet places, the wild places. So good to find an area which caters for sports and for quiet down-time".

"Growing community size in the Pentridge area means more people are interested in using these facilities. People are trying to connect with the community again post-COVID, so we are seeing a rise in running groups and swimming groups."

Community Survey

Areas For Improvement

When asked about what could be improved within in the Sports Hub precinct, the more common responses include:

- Connectivity through and to the area could be greatly improved, especially between facilities.
- The inadequacy in the number of basketball courts and poor standard of facilities at the Coburg Basketball Stadium.
- Under-investment in facilities by levels of government – all facilities generally old and tired (some unfit for purpose or approaching end-of-life) – could do with significant improvements and better accessibility, especially for people with a disability (e.g. no ramps at the pool).
- A lack of car parking and bike storage areas.
- Olympic pool could be heated and be open longer – both during each day and more months of the year.
- Signage around the area is very poor – some people not aware of the existence of some facilities due to inadequate signage.
- Poor drainage at Jackson Reserve.
- Perceived lack of safety in some areas of the Hub, especially in the evenings/at night.
- Athletics track surface could be improved and the track become more accessible – no locked gates or high fences. Also, there are a number of comments about how the track is hidden from view behind the basketball stadium.
- Front entrance to pool and active transport provisions are unsafe with the adjacent busy road and regular accidents.
- More water fountains and rubbish bins alongside the trails/paths.
- Lack of public amenities around the Hub.

"I never actually thought of (the area) as an integrated 'hub' until I saw this survey! The facilities operate independently and are not integrated in any meaningful way. It would be really great if they were though!"

"The sports facilities are fenced and often locked and there is no welcoming entry. It feels territorial and it feels private. The pathways and car parks are not well maintained. There are no signs that are clear and welcoming".

"Has not had any love given to the precinct overall and so looks old and tired. Question of safety at night, especially for women".

"The athletics track is surrounded by a new fence and the gate is usually locked when my son and I try to access the track. We now go to Edwards Lake track instead. When we can access the track, it feels unsafe with few people around and it feels like we shouldn't be there".

"Connectivity is not great and the area is not as welcoming as it could be".

"The signage is very poor, there aren't direct paths connecting the precinct, and the facilities clearly look like they haven't been updated in decades".

"The walking tracks especially on the Merri Creek side have areas that feel isolated and unsafe. I prefer to run along the southern end of Merri Creek".

"The Coburg pool is a beautiful space but too cold, particularly at the start of summer, for young kids and toddlers. The change rooms are not nice, to the point my children (aged 7 and 3) refuse to go into them. There's nothing 'attractive' about the basketball stadium".

The athletics track is in poor condition and needs resurfacing as soon as possible. Its condition is the worst I've seen of all athletics tracks in Victoria".

Community Survey

General Comments

At the conclusion of the survey, people were asked to provide any other comments for consideration. Following are the most repeated themes from those comments, along with some direct quotes in the next column:

- General content that this area is being given attention with the development of a masterplan – many consider this planning long overdue.
- Along similar lines, many survey respondents commented that facilities are generally much better in neighbouring LGAs and that the facilities are being left behind.
- Thought could be given to a better name for the area.
- Traffic in the surrounding roads and streets is a major issue.
- Consideration that any development is of a low impact and doesn't reduce the current amount of open space or trees/vegetation.
- More car parking necessary and could be located below or on top of facilities.
- Planning should consider greater use by all members of the community, not just sporting/active people – especially for when the facilities experience down-time e.g. potential for more community uses.
- Consideration of new facilities or activities to be included, such as tennis courts, a skate park or BMX/pump track.
- More commercial operations could be included within the site e.g. café, gym.
- Dedicated off-leash areas for dogs should be allocated or sign-posted.
- Consider the incorporation of local history into signage.
- Gratitude for the consultation process and the opportunity to pass on opinions.

"This precinct has such potential to deliver huge socio-economic benefits for the rapidly growing Inner North. But it has been underfunded for so long, the facilities pale in comparison to those elsewhere around Melbourne".

"I think this is a great opportunity to be bold and do something special".

"Please look at road safety and don't forget to support our pedestrians and cyclists who wish to safely access these areas".

"It's a bit of a wasted resource at the moment".

"We have an amazing space, in a great location. These facilities could be the starting place of many future stars and that is how it should be visioned".

"It would be great to have a centre that we can be proud of".

"It's a really exciting initiative and good luck to all involved in improving these facilities and how they connect. It's hard to overstate the importance of organised community sport for connectedness and general wellbeing of residents".

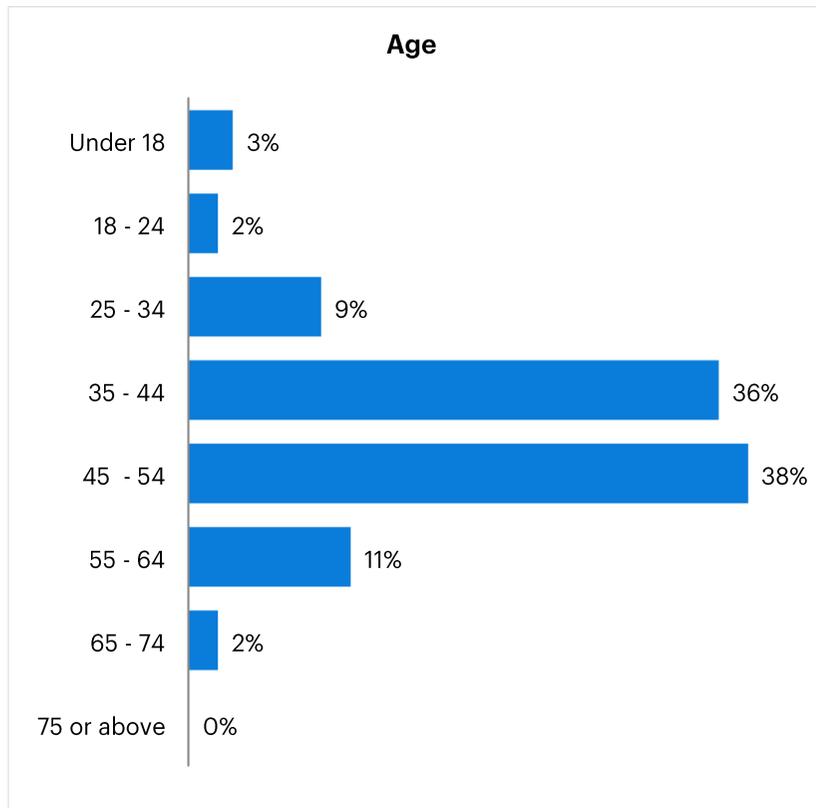
"With Pentridge growing, our facilities need to be developed to grow along with it".

"From my nine-year old: "It would be great if you could fix some of these problems because we deserve a better (basketball) stadium to be able to play and watch games".

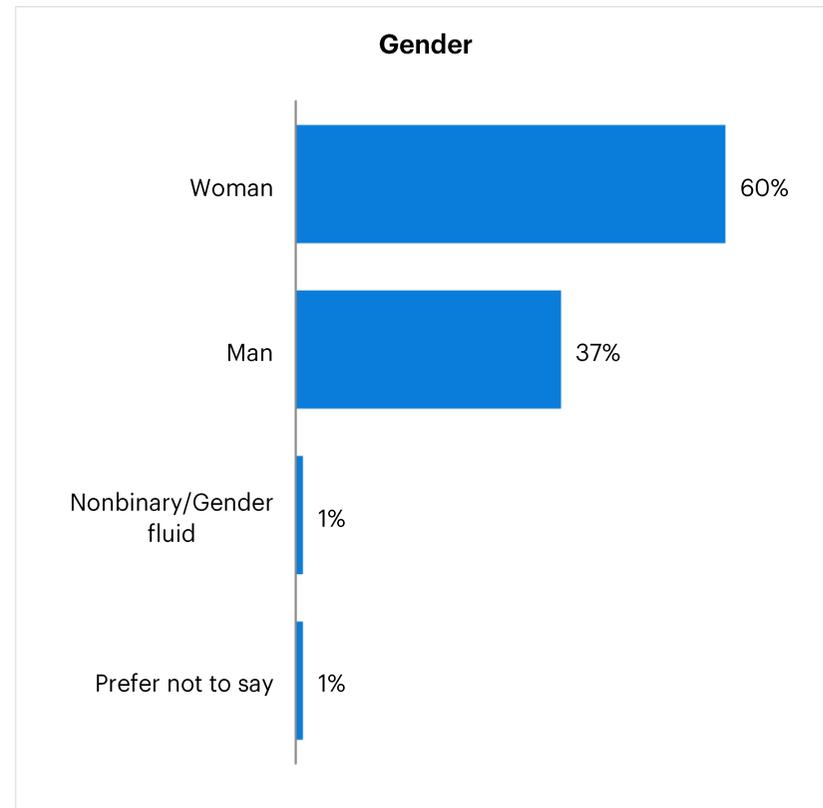
"As a local resident, I love the vibrancy created by all the activity surrounding the sports hub – it makes for a lovely soundscape too".

Demographics

60% of the survey respondents are female, and almost three-quarters of respondents (74%) are between 35 and 54 years old.



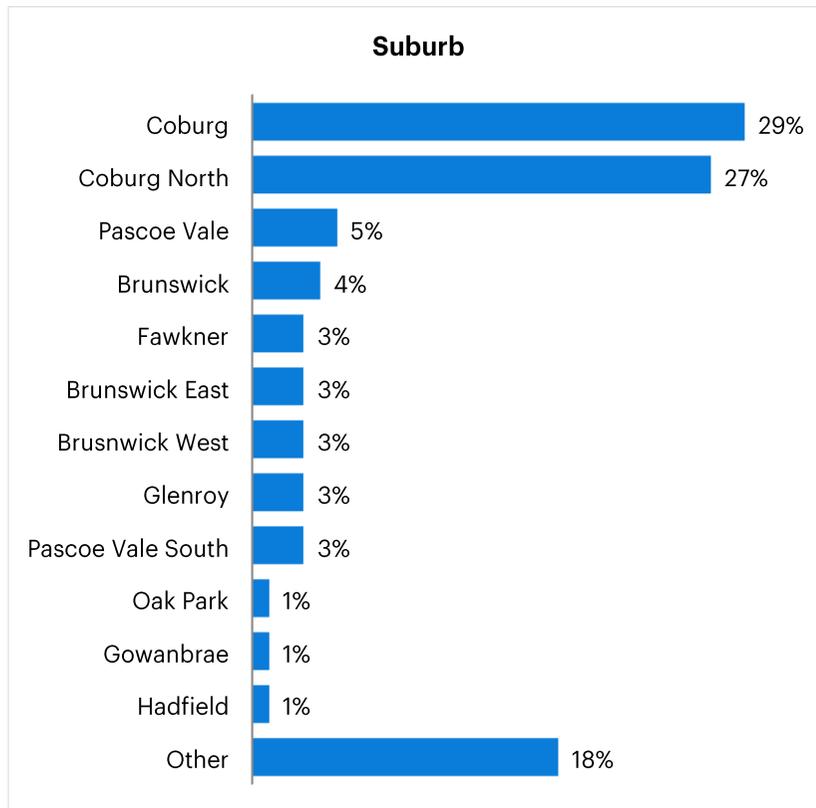
Q1) What is your age?
N = 441



Q2) What best describes your gender?
N = 441

Proximity

56% of the respondents live in Coburg or Coburg North and 78% spend 15 minutes or less travelling to the Sports Hub.



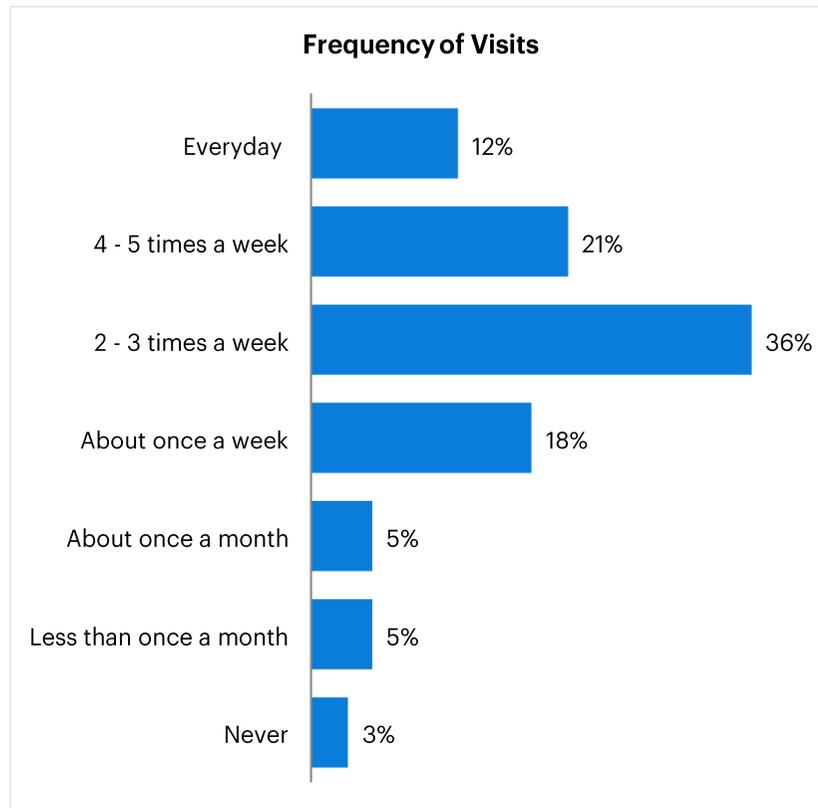
Q3) What suburb do you live in?
N = 441



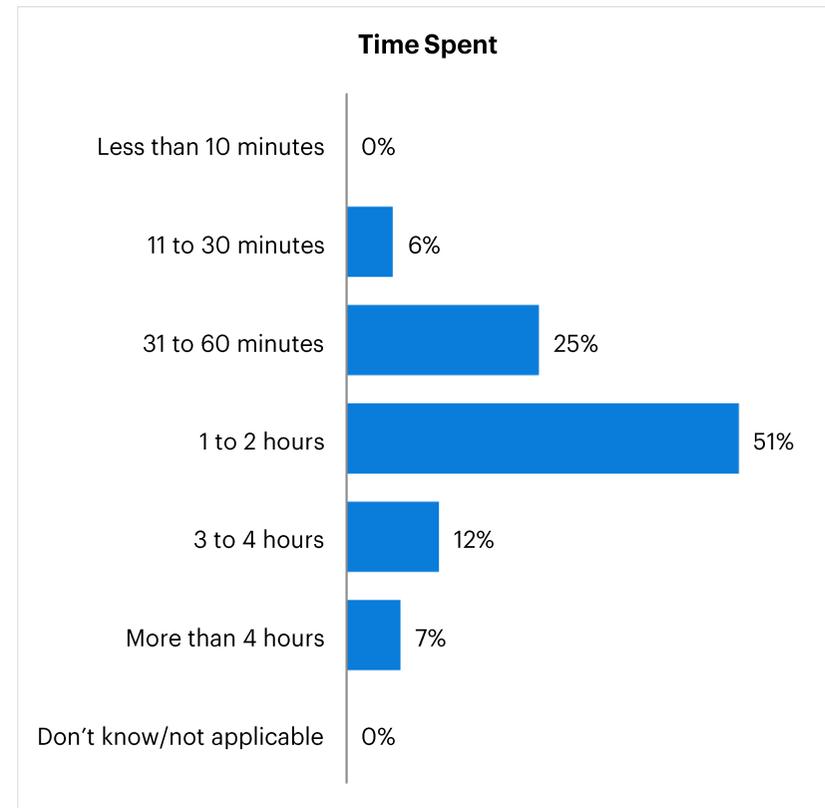
Q8) How long does it take to get there (to the Coburg North Sports Hub)?
N = 441

Visitation – Frequency & Time Within Hub

Most of the survey respondents are frequent visitors to the Sports Hub (with 69% visiting at least twice each week) and the average time spent in the Hub by respondents is just over 100 minutes per visit.



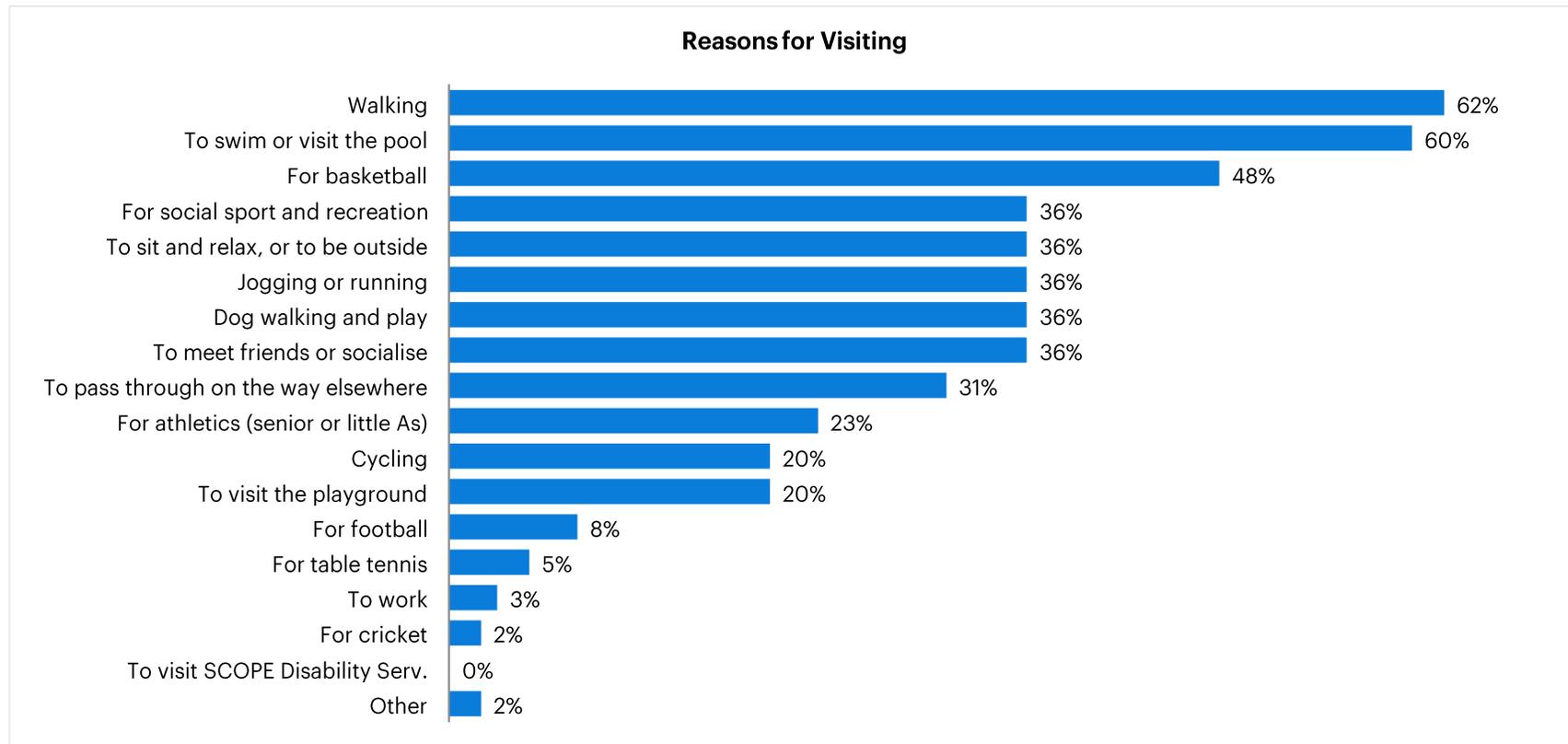
Q4) How often do you visit the Sports Hub area?
N = 441



Q6) On average, how much time do you spend there each visit?
N = 441

Visitation – Reasons

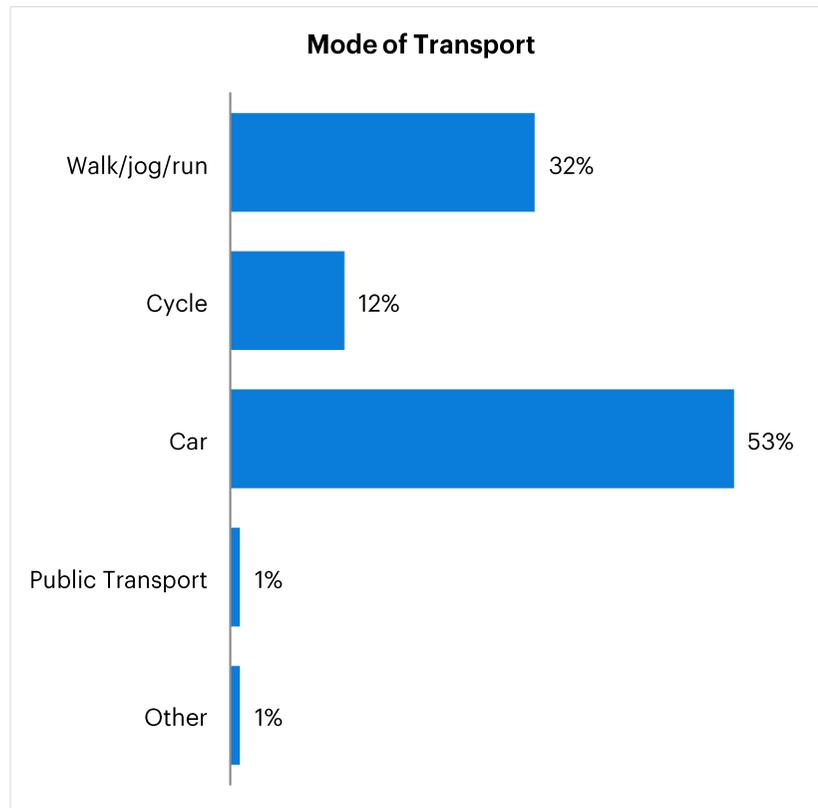
The principal reasons for the survey respondents visiting the Sports Hub are: For walking (62%); Using the pool (60%); for basketball (48%);



Q5) Why do you visit the Sports Hub?
N = 441

Travel & Perception of Facilities

Around half (53%) of the survey respondents travel to the Hub by motor vehicles and just under half (44%) arrive at the Hub by active means. Over half of the respondents (53%) find the facilities either poor or very poor.



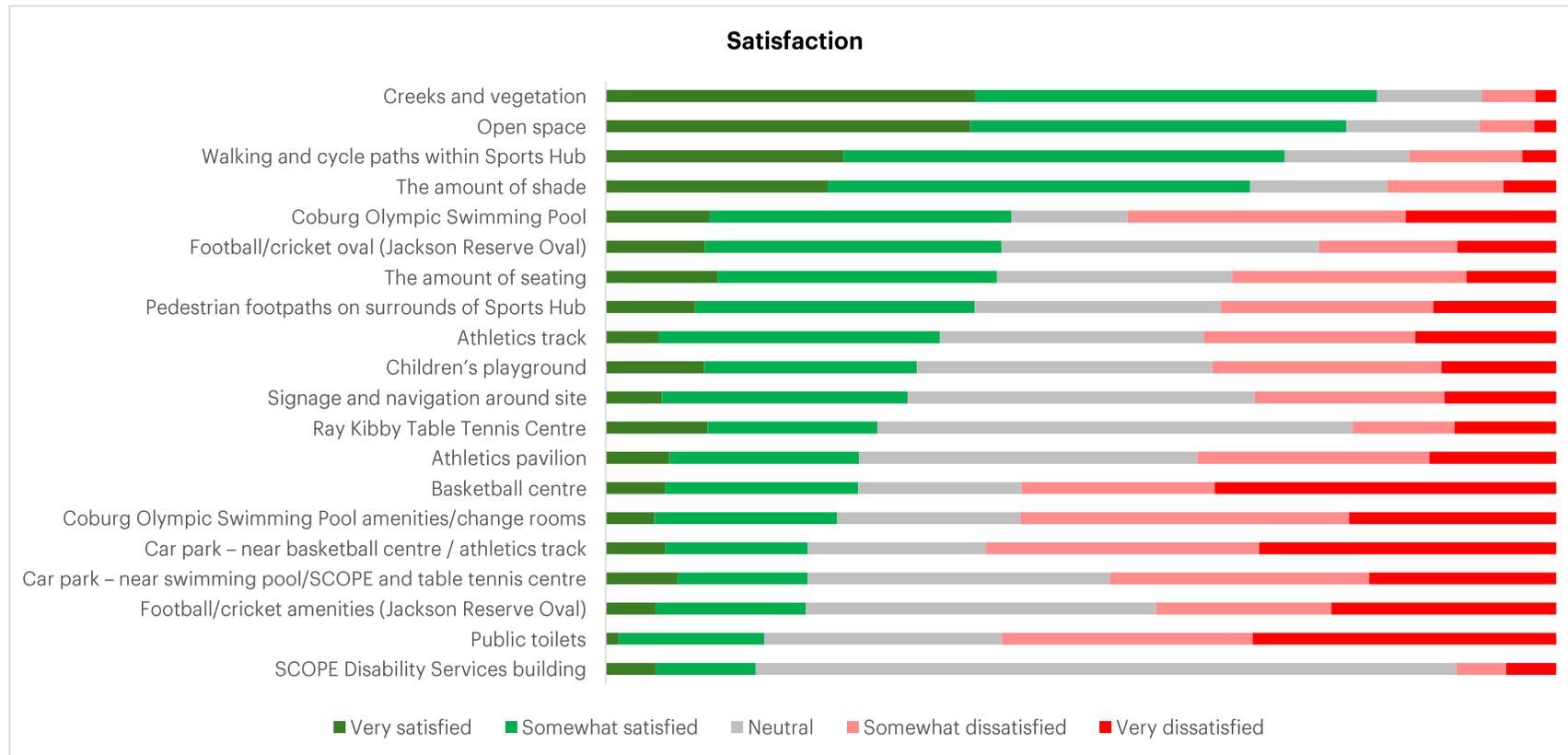
Q7) How do you get to and from the area?
N = 441



Q8) How would you rate the overall quality of facilities?
N = 441

Satisfaction with Facilities

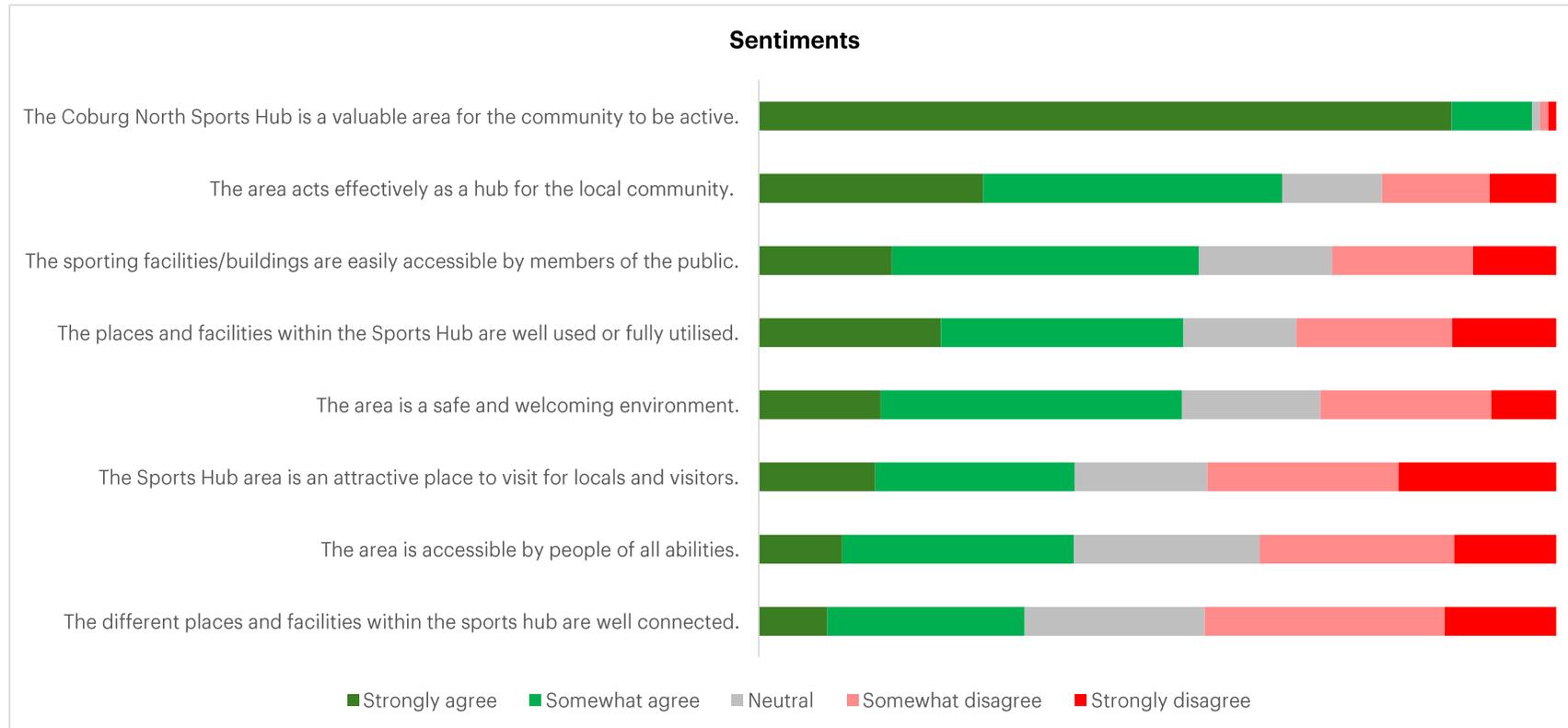
The majority of survey respondents are satisfied with the: creeks and vegetation (81%); open space (78%); walking and cycle paths (71%). There is a high level of dissatisfaction with the: car parks (60% & 47%); public toilets (58%); swimming pool amenities/change rooms (56%); basketball centre (56%);



Q10) How satisfied are you with the following facilities?
N = 441

Sentiments About The Sports Hub

97% of the survey respondents agree that the Sports Hub is a valuable area for the community to be active. A small majority of people think that the area provides a safe and welcoming environment (53%). Opinion is divided on whether the Sports Hub is an attractive place to visit (40% agree and 44% disagree). More respondents disagreed (44%) than agreed (33%) that the Sports Hub is well connected.



Q13) How much do you agree with the following statements?
N = 441



Insightful, intuitive intelligence



35/328 Reserve Road
Cheltenham, VIC 3192



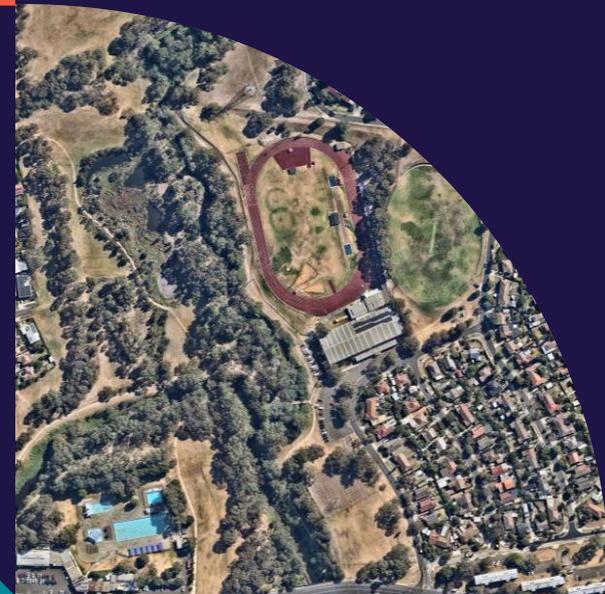
info@solucio.com.au



(03) 9240 5171



www.solucio.com.au



7.4 MCDONALD RESERVE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Director Community Eamonn Fennessy

Community Wellbeing

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the current design for sporting, active recreation and transport, access options at McDonald Reserve
2. Notes that funding for detailed design for stage 1 is underway and budgeted in the current financial year
3. Notes \$3.5 million for construction of stage 1 has previously been referred to the 2025-2029 budget process for consideration
4. Refers \$150,000 to the 2025-2029 budget process for consideration to progress the concurrent detailed design of Stage 2; and
5. Notes indicative costs to deliver Stage 2 of the project are upwards of \$10 million for further consideration in future budgets and external funding opportunities.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In 2021, Brunswick Hockey Club approached Council seeking support for a second synthetic hockey pitch in Merri-bek. Following a feasibility study and site analysis, McDonald Reserve, Coburg was identified as the preferred location. A concept design was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including local sporting clubs and Coburg High School, and was released for wider community consultation in late 2024.

The design went out for public exhibition on conversations Merri-bek in early 2025 and community and stakeholder feedback has informed the current revised proposal (**Attachment 1**)

Further work is now underway, including detailed design for Stage 1 and traffic and transport investigations, for access and parking options. A broader joint use agreement is being considered with Coburg High School including the school oval uplift and independent assessments of PFAS and environmental impacts.

Previous Council Decisions

Hockey Feasibility Study Update – McDonald Reserve – 12 February 2025

That Council:

1. *Endorses the current design for sporting, active recreation and transport options at McDonald Reserve (Attachment 1) for public exhibition during February and March 2025.*
2. *Notes the community engagement which has taken place to date regarding designing sporting facilities at McDonald Reserve (Attachment 2) and thanks the community for their feedback.*
3. *Refers the \$3.5 million required to deliver Stage 1 of the project to the 2025/26 Council budget process for consideration.*
4. *Notes indicative costs to deliver Stage 2 of the project are upwards of \$10 million for further consideration in future budgets.*

5. *Assess all proposed surfaces, including tennis courts, through the Sports Surfaces Policy.*
6. *Take steps to increase tree canopy cover and use permeable surfaces as part of parking design to reduce urban heat island effect from carparks.*
7. *Requests a further report to Council in April 2025, incorporating the final design, potential staging options and any additional budget implications that arise following public exhibition.*

Hockey Feasibility Study – 14 September 2022

That Council:

1. *Notes the Brunswick Hockey Club Second Hockey Field Feasibility Study, at Attachment 1, and supports in-principle the provision of a second field for the Brunswick Hockey Club.*
2. *Notes that Hockey is a growing sport particularly amongst gender and culturally diverse communities, in particular South Asian communities and international students, which form a large component of our growing community.*
3. *Notes that Parker Reserve North Coburg and McDonald Reserve Coburg are recommended by the feasibility study as possible sites for a second hockey field, and supports in principle McDonald Reserve Coburg as the preferred site subject to further detailed site investigation, including of industrial land through the current open space review, community engagement with other clubs using the reserve, Coburg High School, nearby residents and people who use the reserve for dog walking and passive recreation and funding availability.*
4. *Notes the Hockey Feasibility Study's estimated capital costs and that more detailed cost planning will be required based on site conditions, potential staging of works and further efficiencies in delivery in consultation with users of the reserve.*
5. *Notes that Hockey is played on synthetic grass fields with recyclable options and that Merri-bek council is in the process of reviewing the environmental sustainability of different sports playing surfaces.*
6. *Council resolves to receive a future report on the consultation and benefits or otherwise of a phased approach that could allow the construction of the hockey field and the installation of temporary facilities in the first phase, followed by a permanent pavilion in subsequent phases.*
7. *Notes that the North Coburg Rebels Baseball Club has year-round allocation at Parker Reserve.*

Developing a policy regarding sports playing surfaces in City of Merri-bek – 10 August 2022

That Council:

1. *Requests a report and development of a policy on managing our sports field surfaces in particular, and open spaces surfaces more generally, that gives consideration to our stance on the Climate Emergency, Integrated Water Management, Urban Heat Island Effect and our goal of zero waste by 2030, including:*
 - a) *Consideration of the triple bottom line principles of environmental, social and financial sustainability including new and emerging natural turf and soil management, soil organic carbon sequestration or carbon sink potential options and best practice turf management.*
 - b) *Consideration of the impact of other synthetic surfaces being used by other land users within the municipality (e.g., schools) on community wellbeing.*
 - c) *Tabling a report to Council by 30 June 2023, given the breadth and complexity of the imminent Open Space Strategy Review.*

- d) *Noting the process will follow Council's consultation and engagement processes with the community, including tools like Conversations Merri-bek, and submissions and throughout review process.*

Feasibility study for a second hockey pitch in Merri-bek – 9 June 2021

That Council:

1. *Undertakes a feasibility study to identify a suitable location for a second synthetic/hybrid hockey pitch including all surface options within Merri-bek which would include a triple bottom line - environmental, social and economic - assessment of the pros and cons for the different playing field surfaces options.*
2. *Receives a report to determine whether Merri-bek has a suitable location for the establishment of a second synthetic/hybrid hockey pitch in Merri-bek.*
3. *Refers the funds required (\$40,000) to action this resolution to the 2021/2022 budget for consideration.*

1. Policy Context

This report aligns with key policy documents:

- Community Vision 2021-2031 (Theme 3: A Healthy and Caring Merri-bek and Theme 4: Spaces and Places in Merri-bek).
- Council Plan 2021-2025 (Strategy 3.3: Ensure Merri-bek residents are more active more often at all stages of life by providing a diverse range of accessible and affordable recreation opportunities that reflect our diverse community and develop and maintain partnerships to enhance participation options).
- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2020:
 - Increase participation by Merri-bek residents in sport and active recreation and foster strong relationships with local recreation clubs, associations, peak bodies and government agencies
 - Ensure an adequate supply and distribution of good quality sporting infrastructure used in the most effective and efficient manner possible.
- Sportsground Surfaces Policy 2023 - this Policy outlines Council's approach to the management of our sports grounds and considers the triple bottom line principles of environmental, social and financial sustainability.

2. Background

Brunswick Hockey Club, established in 1923, is one of Merri-bek's oldest sporting clubs and now one of Melbourne's largest hockey clubs, with over 450 members. The club fosters inclusive participation with an affordable fee structure that supports juniors, women, and players from diverse community backgrounds.

Since 2008, the club has played at the Brunswick Secondary College synthetic hockey pitch, developed by Council in partnership with the Department of Education and Training Victoria. Despite refurbishment in 2018 and club-funded upgrades to changerooms and amenities, the current facility is at full capacity for training, matches, and community programs.

In response to sustained growth, the Brunswick Hockey Club formally approached Council in 2021 to seek support for a second synthetic hockey pitch. Following a feasibility study, Council endorsed McDonald Reserve, Coburg as the preferred location due to its subsurface conditions, existing community sport infrastructure, and central location.

Council collaborated with current users of McDonald Reserve, including East Coburg Tennis Club, Brunswick Juventus Football Club, Brunswick Cricket Club, and Coburg High School, to develop a concept plan for a shared-use sporting precinct. The proposed design, endorsed by these stakeholders, includes:

- A synthetic hockey pitch
- Additional tennis courts and dedicated pickleball courts
- Open space and seating to support soccer and informal recreation
- Sports lighting for both hockey and the school oval
- A shared pavilion and storage
- Upgraded walking trails
- Expanded parking and child drop-off strategies

Community consultation on the draft design was undertaken in November–December 2024 via Conversations Merri-bek, pop-up sessions, and stakeholder engagement, including at the Coburg Farmers Market. Feedback has informed a revised design, which is recommended for public exhibition in February–March 2025 ahead of final Council consideration in April 2025.

The revised design went out for public exhibition through Conversations Merri-bek and site signage remained for updates.

In response to feedback, the design now includes an access and parking zone that will feature permeable surfaces, and aligns with broader Council transport projects currently underway to improve local traffic, pedestrian, and cycling connections around McDonald Reserve.

Environmental Commitments – PFAS and Sustainability

As part of Council’s commitment to environmentally sustainable design, independent environmental assessments, including PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) testing, are being undertaken during the detailed design phase. The findings will inform the scope and specifications of the construction tender. A PFAS-free hockey pitch is Council’s preferred option, and the project will prioritise environmentally responsible materials and construction methods to support ecological and public health outcomes.

3. Issues

In November 2023, Council endorsed the Sportsground Surface Policy. Our community’s growing demand for access to quality public open spaces, driven by population growth, urban densification, and increased diversity of sport participants, necessitates crucial decisions about the types of playing surfaces and management practices that can accommodate this need to be made by Merri-bek City Council. In the deliberation of a second synthetic Hockey field in Merri-bek, this policy provided the framework for the decision regarding the development of this Facility Design Plan.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Competition field hockey is only played on synthetic grass fields, in line with Hockey Australia Hockey turf and field standards. The following mitigations will be considered within the final design.

Microplastic Mitigation

- Use non-microplastic alternatives for infill – Instead of traditional rubber crumb, organic options infill like cork, coconut husk, or wood fibres, which break down naturally and do not contribute to plastic pollution will be incorporated.
- Install containment systems – Fitting edge barriers, drainage filters, and sediment traps will prevent microplastics from leaving the pitch and entering waterways.
- Regular maintenance practices – Implementing best-practice maintenance strategies, such as proper brushing and infill top-ups, will ensure minimal displacement of synthetic fibres and infill material.

Sustainable Infill Alternatives

- Cork and coconut blend – A natural, biodegradable alternative that provides shock absorption and retains moisture, reducing heat levels on the field.

- Olive pit granules – A sustainable by-product of olive oil production, offering durability and reduced heat absorption.
- Silica sand – While not organic, this infill is an inert, non-toxic alternative that minimises the risk of microplastic pollution.

Cooling and Water Conservation

- Use organic infill, which holds moisture and stays cooler than rubber-based options.
- Incorporate surrounding tree planting and shading structures to reduce surface temperatures.
- Explore irrigation systems that utilise recycled or harvested rainwater for pitch cooling.
- Compliance with Merri-bek’s Sustainable Buildings Policy, Urban Forest Strategy 2017-2027, and the Integrated Water Management Strategy.

End-of-Life Considerations

To further enhance sustainability, Council will plan for the responsible disposal or recycling of synthetic turf at the end of its lifespan. This includes partnering with manufacturers who offer take-back programs.

Human Rights and Gender Considerations

Whilst a formal Human Rights assessment was not undertaken, the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (2006) were considered in the preparation of this project, specifically in relation to:

- Right to Participate in Public Life (Section 18): The introduction of further sporting and active recreation facilities will enable greater participation in sport and general active and healthy living pursuits.
- Right to Equality (Section 8): Further decisions regarding the built form and environment will be made without discrimination, ensuring the design and use of the facilities and area considers all community members equally, regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status, or disability. Gender equity is a critical aspect of planning community sports infrastructure in Victoria. A synthetic hockey pitch and associated facilities will provide a platform for increased participation by women and girls in organised sports, aligning with Merri-bek’s commitment to improving gender equity in sport and active recreation. The design for the future multipurpose pavilion will incorporate features such as gender-neutral change rooms, safe lighting, and seating areas to encourage diverse participation.

Community impact

The proposal to progress to detailed design for Stage 2 of the McDonald Reserve redevelopment presents a significant opportunity to shape high-quality, inclusive community infrastructure. Stage 2 will include the delivery of an active recreation zone, improved access and transport connections, expanded parking, a new shared-use pavilion, and upgraded tennis infrastructure, including courts and amenities.

This next phase will build on the momentum of Stage 1 and ensure that the broader community continues to be engaged in the design of spaces that reflect local needs. Through detailed design, Council will work closely with community members, local sporting clubs, and Coburg High School to co-design safe, accessible and flexible active recreation and community infrastructure that supports a wide range of users, from casual reserve visitors to formal sporting participants.

Importantly, Stage 2 also responds directly to community feedback received during consultation in 2024, which highlighted the need for improved traffic flow, pedestrian access, family-friendly amenities, and informal recreation opportunities. The inclusion of permeable surfaces, transport access upgrades, and community-driven design will enhance the reserve's functionality while promoting sustainability, equity, and wellbeing.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

- Assess all proposed surfaces, including tennis courts, through the Sports Surfaces Policy.
- Take steps to increase tree canopy cover and use permeable surfaces as part of parking design to reduce urban heat island effect from carparks.

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

Extensive consultation has been undertaken to inform the proposed redevelopment of McDonald Reserve, with a strong focus on ensuring that community voices shape the future use and design of this important open space throughout 2024 (February 12 Council Report and attachments).

In March 2025 the design was release for public exhibition on Conversations Merri-bek <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/mcdonald-reserve>, site signage, and direct stakeholder engagement with sports clubs and Coburg High School.

Community highlighted strong support for improved sporting facilities while also raising concerns around access, parking, traffic impacts, environmental sustainability, and preserving open space for informal recreation. This feedback has been considered in the revised design (attachment 1), which now includes a defined access and parking zone with permeable surfaces, and reflects Council's commitment to integrated transport and environmental planning, greater opportunities for active recreation input into design opportunities. Council officers also engaged with Coburg High School to explore opportunities for a broader joint-use agreement, ensuring students and the wider school community, and local sports clubs can benefit from the upgraded facilities within the school.

As the project progresses into Stage 2, further consultation will be undertaken during the detailed design process. This will provide an opportunity for the community and local sports clubs to co-design active recreation areas, pavilion amenities, and transport-related infrastructure, ensuring the final design reflects local needs and requirements of those who use McDonald Reserve now and into the future.

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. Implementation, Financial and Resources Implications

Progress Full Project Design and Prepare for Construction

- Considers progressing the concurrent detailed design of Stage 2 (pavilion, open space and amenities), to be done with the detailed design for stage 1 underway in the current year and existing budget.
- This approach will ensure a coordinated outcome and enable a more efficient construction phase. The detailed design will include investigations into car parking, traffic flow, access, landscaping, and environmental impacts, including further independent PFAS testing of synthetic.

Financial Implication:

- Refers \$150,000 to the 2025-2029 budget process for consideration to progress the concurrent detailed design of Stage 2 (pavilion, open space and amenities).
- Notes \$3.5 million for construction of stage 1 has already been referred to the 2025-2029 budget process for consideration
- Construction of stage 2 subject to external funding opportunities and final design costing.

Attachment/s

- 1 [↓](#) McDonald Reserve Facility Design Plan_Revised April 2025 D25/161780



LEGEND:

- 1. SYNTHETIC HOCKEY (97.4m x 59m)
- 2. CLAY TENNIS COURTS WITH 3.6m HIGH FENCE AND SPORTS LIGHTING (61.21m x 34.85m)
- 3. SYNTHETIC TENNIS COURTS WITH 3.6m HIGH FENCE AND SPORTS LIGHTING (61.21m x 34.85m)
- 4. TENNIS AND HOCKEY PAVILION (420m²)
- 5. PICKLE BALL COURTS/HOCKEY WARM-UP TRAINING AREA WITH 3.6m HIGH FENCE (39.4m x 17.81m)
- 6. HOCKEY SHELTER AND STORAGE (75m x 5m)
- 7. NATURAL TURF FIELD (5,910m²)
- 8. NATURAL PLAY SPACE (1,755m²)
- 9. FUTURE ACCESS AND FACILITY PARKING ZONE INCLUDING PERMEABLE TREATMENTS
- 10. SPORTS LIGHTING TOWER
- 11. BIKE PATH
- 12. EXISTING OVERHEAD POWER LINES
- 13. EXISTING NATURAL TURF OVAL
- 14. EXISTING NETBALL/BASKETBALL COURTS

McDonald Reserve
 Pentridge Boulevard, Coburg.
CONCEPT MASTER PLAN | MARCH 2025



DRAWING NO: MC_2208_007_001 REV: C DATE: 27/03/25 DRAWN BY: HQD SCALE: 1:500 © 2025

7.5 DE CARLE STREET PROTECTED BIKE LANES (THE AVENUE TO MORELAND RD) - PROJECT DISCONTINUATION

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Transport

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves the discontinuation of the protected bicycle lanes project on De Carle Street between The Avenue and Moreland Road.
2. Approves further engagement with Merri-bek Primary School on measures to address school access and safety on surrounding streets.
3. Notes that community engagement is underway for the Draft Streets for People Plan which identifies the Barrow Street corridor for streetscape improvements as a priority project.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The section of De Carle Street between Rennie Street and The Avenue, Coburg was identified for road reconstruction originally scheduled for delivery in the 2021/2022 financial year. In line with Council's policy to consider active transport initiatives along with road reconstruction projects, the opportunity to reallocate some road space to allow for separated bike lanes was investigated, both for the road reconstruction section as well as De Carle Street from The Avenue to Moreland Road.

Concept designs were developed and exhibited to local residents for consultation between January 2020 and September 2023. An alternative concept design was developed in 2023 which did not include separated bike lanes, which was presented to the community for feedback in 2023. At the November 2023 Council meeting, it was resolved to proceed with the original design that included separated bike lanes.

The northern section has been delivered as part of the road reconstruction project, and was completed early in 2025.

During the detailed design phase, a Road Safety Audit was undertaken on the designs. In the section from The Avenue to Moreland Road in particular, the Road Safety Audit highlighted a number of safety risks and made some recommendations to address these issues. These recommendations go beyond the scope of the Council's decision and would require significant additional funding to resolve.

In light of this and considering the De Carle Street does not play a strategic role in north-south bike movements through the area, it is recommended that the project be discontinued.

Remaining allocated budget is recommended to be used for safety improvements around Merri-bek Primary School to support its participation in the Ride and Stride program, to be developed in consultation with the school.

Previous Council Decisions

De Carle Street Bicycle Lanes – 8 November 2023

That Council:

1. *Approves the installation of protected bicycle lanes on De Carle Street between Rennie Street and Moreland Road in line with previous designs developed for consultation in November 2021.*

2. Approves the removal of eight parking bays on the eastern side of De Carle Street between The Grove and Rennie Street to facilitate two-way vehicle movement.
3. Approves the removal of three parking bays between Moreland Road and The Avenue to enable two-way vehicle passing gaps every 80 to 100 metres.
4. Approves the installation of traffic calming treatments at roundabouts on De Carle Street between Moreland Road and Rennie Street to reduce vehicle speeds and address road safety risks.

De Carle Street Separated Bicycle Lanes – 9 June 2021

That Council:

1. Notes the consultation outcomes on the proposed implementation of separated cycling lanes on De Carle Street, Coburg between Rennie Street and Moreland Road, as requested by Council in July 2020 (DCF27/20).
2. Approves the implementation of separated cycling lanes on De Carle Street

Removal of Car Parking Spaces to Support Cycling Infrastructure – 8 July 2020

That Council:

...

3. Consults with the local community on the detailed design for the De Carle Street, Coburg road narrowing and bike path construction which would require the removal of some parking and receives a report on the findings on the consultation with recommendations on the next steps prior to any construction.

1. Policy Context

Council Plan 2021-2025

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

Strategic Objective 2: To contribute to the health, safety, and security of everyone living in our diverse community and to increase safe, accessible, physically active and enjoyable ways to get around Merri-bek, especially via walking, cycling and public transport:

- 2.1 Build safe, accessible and high-quality bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create links between areas of high pedestrian and cycling demand
- 2.2 Scope and implement suburb based active transport (bike and pedestrian) improvements (prioritising Fawkner, Gowanbrae, Hadfield, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy)
- 2.5 Facilitate substantially increased use of active transport in the community through targeted programs which include a focus on children, young people, families and older people
- 2.6 Collaborate with the community to improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure on a case-by-case basis

Moving Around Merri-bek Strategy (2024)

The Moving Around Merri bek Strategy was adopted at the March 2024 Council Meeting. The Strategy seeks to ensure all actions impacting the council's transport network contribute to objectives aligned to the values of Safe, Accessible, Sustainable, Healthy, Liveable, and Inclusive.

- Create streets where everyone feels safe.
- Reduce the frequency and severity of crashes on our roads.

- Create a transport system in Merri bek that allows everyone to meet their daily needs and to fully participate in our community.
- Reduce air and noise pollution generated from vehicles.
- Create streets and public spaces that encourage physical activity and socialisation amongst local communities.
- Improve access to shops, services and employment for our local community.
- 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.

2. Background

De Carle Street was first identified in Council's 10-year capital works program for walking and cycling in June 2019. It was proposed to be a 'shimmy route' with wayfinding signage, that would give people riding bikes an alternative route to riding on Sydney Road.

The section of the street between Rennie Street and The Avenue was then identified on Council's annual road reconstruction program for 2021/2022. This presented an opportunity to reallocate some road space to improve safety for people riding bikes.

Between January 2020 and September 2023, five rounds of consultation were undertaken with the residents and property owners near the project area, where different concept designs for bike lanes were presented. The initial concept design included separated bike lanes on each side of the streets, with most parking retained, and the driving lane reduced down to single lane width but with two-way vehicle movement maintained.

An alternative option was presented for consultation in September 2023, which included wide, buffered, painted bike lanes with no physical separation, and traffic calming devices to reduce vehicle speeds and volumes.

At the 8 November 2023 Council meeting, Council resolved to progress with the earlier concept designs that included separated bike lanes. The section of the project associated with the road reconstruction program (Rennie Street to The Avenue) then progressed through to construction.

After updating the concept design for the section between Moreland Road and The Avenue, in line with Council's resolution, officers commissioned an independent Road Safety Audit (RSA) on the design. This audit identified a number of safety concerns with the proposal, and some recommendations to overcome these issues were provided. However, the identified solutions would have a more significant impact than what was originally included in the scope of the Council resolution.

3. Issues

Issues with design

The Road Safety Audit (RSA), undertaken by a consultant in February 2024, made 12 findings relating to the safety of the proposed design. Of those 12 findings, 4 were considered 'High' risk rating, where the issues should be corrected or significantly reduced, even if the treatment cost is high. A further 6 were considered 'Medium' risk rating. The primary concerns related to:

- Issues with the driving lane width and 2-way vehicle movements, particularly in areas where there is a high demand for short-term on-street parking around the primary school.
- Issues with the width of parking lanes adjacent bollards in the buffer between the parking lane and the bike lanes.

- Potential confusion for people driving when entering the project area at one of the roundabouts.
- Bike lane widths and lack of continuity, particularly on approach to roundabouts.

Additionally, the installation of the right-turn ban for northbound traffic at De Carle Street and Moreland Road in 2021 by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), which includes some rubber kerbing in the middle of the road, reduces the viability of De Carle Street as a strategic bike route. Council could install 'bicycles excepted' signs to allow riders to make this movement, but the design of the treatment makes northbound movement for people riding bikes more difficult.

Potential design solutions

The two main resolutions recommended by the auditors were to remove all the parking on at least one side of De Carle Street, or to make De Carle Street one-way between The Avenue and Moreland Road. Officers agree that either of these recommendations could resolve the issues, however these changes would go beyond what was specified in the Council resolution.

Removing on-street parking from 1 side of the street

This solution would allow for 2-way vehicle traffic to be more comfortably maintained, and reduce the risks associated with vehicles entering the project area. It would also potentially allow for the proposed bike lanes to be wider, getting them closer to the minimum standard widths recommended in Austroads Guide to Road Design (Part 6A).

However, there are a number of potential issues that could arise from pursuing this option:

- By widening the vehicle lanes, there is a possibility that there would be an increase in vehicle speeds along the corridor. This is a heightened risk given the presence of the school.
- This level of parking impact in the residential area was not identified in the previous community consultations and may have impacted peoples' responses. However, there are only two dwellings in the project area that do not have access to off-street parking.
- This level of impact on parking or other transport modes would more commonly be reserved for more significant bike corridors than what De Carle Street would be.
- While it may address concerns with the driving environment, it is likely that the bike lanes would still be sub-standard given the road widths.
- This would still not resolve the issues with the bike lane continuity and delineation, particularly on approach to roundabouts.

Officers do not recommend this design option.

Making De Carle Street a One-way street

The other primary suggestion from the auditors was to make this section of De Carle Street a one-way street. This change to the design would allow for wider bike lanes, better buffers between parked cars and bike and vehicle lanes, and less chance for driver confusion in the project area. It would also mean that more on-street parking could be retained.

Similarly, officers have identified a number of potential issues that this could have on the local area. These are:

- Potential for faster vehicle speeds on De Carle Street, as people driving do not need to be expectant of on-coming traffic.

- It is likely that making this section of De Carle Street one-way would result in an increase of vehicle traffic on Barrow Street, which is a preferred bicycle route. Council has invested in measures to reduce through-traffic on Barrow Street, and this change could counteract some of those measures.
- This concept was not included in any of the previous rounds of community engagement, and it may have impacted peoples' responses.
- It is very likely that this option would still require the removal of more than three parking spaces between The Avenue and Moreland Road, which was specified in the Council resolution.
- This would still not resolve these issues with the bike lanes' continuity and delineation, particularly on approach to roundabouts.

Officers do not recommend this design option.

Not progressing with separated bike lanes on De Carle Street (Moreland Road to The Avenue)

For the above reasons, officers do not believe that either of those two options are viable solutions in the De Carle Street context. It is recommended that the Council does not move forward with re-designing and installing separated bike lanes on De Carle Street between Moreland Road and The Avenue.

Alternative active transport investments

Some of the allocated budget could also be used for active transport improvements around Merri-bek Primary School (participant in Council's Ride and Stride program) to address pre-existing safety concerns related to school drop-off, walking and riding to school, and their Open Streets program. Officers will work directly with the school to develop appropriate solutions to address some of these concerns.

Additionally, it is recommended that more resources are focussed on making active transport improvements to the adjacent north-south street, Barrow Street. Barrow Street has long been identified as a primary bicycle route (Brunswick East Shimmy) in Merri-bek and has also been identified as a Streets for People corridor in the draft Streets for People Plan. By investing in active transport improvements on Barrow Street, the objective sought by the original Council resolution would be achieved in a more strategic manner, providing a safe and comfortable route for people to ride and walk in Coburg.

Barrow Street, which already has a permanent road closure at Moreland Road, a trial road closure further north at Harding Street, and a number of traffic calming measures, presents a much more strategic active transport link than De Carle Street. It also provides good connectivity to Merri-bek Primary School via Blair Street.

Impact on the Rennie Street to The Avenue section

The part of the project that was associated with the road reconstruction program, Rennie Street to The Avenue, has already been delivered, and it is expected that the officer recommendation will have limited impact on this section. The design of the section that was installed was slightly different, allowing for slightly wider bike lane widths, better concrete separators between parked cars and the bike lanes, and more sections for drivers to yield and pass each other. This section is currently operating suitably for all road users and is recommended to remain unchanged.

Community impact

Sections of the community are expecting Council to deliver this piece of infrastructure, including members of the Merri-bek Primary School community. While non-delivery of these protected bike lanes may have an impact in the short term, it is important that the infrastructure delivered is up to standard and will meet the community expectations and Council's strategic direction. Officers will work with the school community to ensure other safety improvements are delivered to assist families to safely travel to the school using active transport. Further improvements on Barrow Street will enhance local walking and cycling connectivity to local destinations.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

This recommendation is not likely to have a negative impact on Council's efforts to mitigate the climate emergency in Merri-bek. While protected bike lanes can make riding a bike for transport a viable option for more people and therefore encourage more sustainable transport for local trips, it is important that they are suitable for the street environment and are well connected as part of a broader network. The issues raised in the RSA, as well as concerns over the strategic alignment of the project, mean that progressing with this project may not have any positive impact on an increase of sustainable transport use in Merri-bek.

Legal and risk considerations

The recommendation not to proceed with installing separated bike lanes on De Carle Street addresses the risks associated with safety concerns of the solution resolved in 2023 by Council for delivery.

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 it is not considered that this recommendation will adversely impact on the human rights of any person. The primary human right that this project has the potential to impact upon is the Right to Freedom of Movement.

The recommendations will not restrict any persons' ability to freely move around Merri-bek, or within Victoria. The introduction of separated bike lanes has the potential to create a more inviting and safer environment for people to freely move, but by not going ahead with the project in the De Carle Street context, this will not adversely affect the ability for people to move freely in the area.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Previous consultation

There have been five phases of community consultation on this project.

An initial period of consultation occurred in January 2020, with letters sent to owners and occupiers of all properties on De Carle Street between Rennie Street and Moreland Road including Merri-bek Primary School (95 letters in total). The letter asked for feedback on a concept plan of the Rennie Street and The Avenue intersection, as well as an indicative cross-section for The Avenue to Moreland Road section. Following Council's resolution in July 2020 to consult further with the community on the proposed changes to De Carle Street, letters were sent to the same properties in February 2021 seeking feedback on a concept plan including separated bike lanes for The Avenue – Moreland Road section.

A follow up letter was sent in March 2021 including further explanation of the proposed changes following feedback from a resident that more information was required to fully understand the proposed change.

Further consultation (online and via post) was undertaken in September 2023 on a revised design. This design included 'advisory bike lanes', which are wider painted bike lanes with no physical separation, and traffic calming along the project area, rather than separated bike lanes.

The endorsed concept design was last exhibited for community consultation in February 2021.

Further consultation

Subject to Council's decision, officers will consult directly with Merri-bek Primary School to work on some interventions that can address some of the school community's outstanding safety concerns around the school. The school principal has been notified of the recommendations in this report.

Additionally, all residents on De Carle Street will be notified via mail of the Council decision, in order to close-the-loop on this long running project.

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.

Merri-bek Primary School and local resident immediately affected by the project have been included in all previous consultation phases of this project.

Communications

Officers will draft a letter to all residents within the project area to notify them of the outcome of this Council decision. This letter will provide some context of the project and reasons for the outcome. The project page on Conversations Merri-bek website will also be updated in line with the Council 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 allocated funding for this project will be declared as savings and redeployed across the 2024/25 active transport capital works program. A portion of the project's budget can be reallocated to address some of the safety concerns around Merri-bek Primary School.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's decision, officers will discontinue work on the project and notify all affected persons of the outcome of the project by mail.

Officers will engage Merri-bek Primary School directly to address some of the outstanding safety concerns around the school.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.6 GRANTHAM STREET/UNION STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE

Director Place and Environment, Pene Winslade

City Strategy and Economy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that there is an existing Neighbourhood Centres Strategy, and a Design and Development Overlay in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme, that currently set the vision for the Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Activity Centre, and that a future planned review of these will include community engagement.
2. Notes that the draft Streets for People Plan that is currently the subject of a community engagement process includes Union Street as a corridor project.
3. Notes that both the Open Space Strategy and Merri-bek Planning Scheme identify the need for a new public open space within or near the Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Activity Centre.
4. Notes the actions that Council officers have taken to engage with the landowners of the Union Square Shopping Centre as a way of seeking to improve the amenity and appearance of the shopping centre.
5. Writes to the relevant State Minister, re-iterating Council's support for accessible tram stops and advocating for a reduced speed limit on Grantham Street, Brunswick West.

REPORT

Executive summary

The Union Square Shopping Centre is a privately owned shopping centre and car park located within one of Merri-bek's twelve Neighbourhood Activity Centres. While Council has no ability to influence the offering of shops or services, Council officers have engaged with landowners about the appearance and amenity of the centre.

The Merri-bek Planning Scheme sets out a vision for the future of this Neighbourhood Activity Centre. Current community engagement on the draft Streets for People Plan, and upcoming reviews of the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy and planning scheme controls provide the community with the opportunity to have a say about the future of the activity centre.

Consistent with existing advocacy positions, this report recommends writing to the relevant State Minister advocating for accessible tram stops and a reduced speed limit on Grantham Street.

Previous Council decisions

Union Square Shopping Centre/Grantham Street – 12 June 2024

That Council:

1. *Calls for a report outlining the options, cost and timing of a community engagement program that develops a community vision for the Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Centre in Brunswick West. The report should consider how the following elements could be included in the community engagement:*
 - a) *Economic output, job creation, offering of shops and other services in the neighbourhood centre.*
 - b) *Streetscape renewal, beautification, including public seats, streetlights, greening, and public realm works.*

- c) *New public space as identified in the Open Space Strategy and the Merri-bek Planning Scheme at the Union Square Shopping Centre.*
 - d) *Advocacy related to traffic, trams, cycling and pedestrian movements, including lower speed limits, accessible tram stops, and possible relocated traffic lights to the intersection of Grantham and Union Street.*
 - e) *The report should also provide advice on the timing and implications of the review of the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy, Design and Development Overlay, as well as consider development of a Place Framework for the Neighbourhood Centre and advice on how a community vision could inform these strategies.*
2. *Writes to the landowners of the Union Square Shopping Centre about the cleanliness and amenity at the shopping centre, offering to assist them with developing a plan to make the centre more safe and visually appealing, and alerting them to the future report about the community engagement program.*

1. Policy Context

Community Vision 2021-2031

The Community Vision Statement acknowledges that Merri-bek “...is enhanced by all of us supporting our local businesses, arts communities and social organisations.”

Theme 4 relating to spaces and places aspires to a Merri-bek where living and working is easy and enjoyable, where public and commercial spaces bring people together and where Council and the community support the development of vibrant hubs of arts, businesses and recreation.

Council Plan 2021-2025 - Theme 4: Vibrant Spaces and Places

- *Strategy 2.3: Advocate to improve public transport capacity and equitable access across Moreland, including advocating for bus services to be scheduled to operate at night and on weekends*
- *Strategy 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*
- *Strategy 4.10: Increase local jobs and economic activity through supporting local, micro and social business and partnership efforts.*

Shopping Strip Renewal Policy 2015-2025

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Council will deliver local economic development and urban design improvements for the renewal of neighbourhood Activity Centres, i.e. shopping strips, across the City. The objectives of this Policy are:

- To enhance the local economy and increase local employment
- To improve the physical condition of local shopping strips
- To build partnerships and participation in the community
- To leverage Council infrastructure and investment
- The policy expires in October 2025.

Neighbourhood Centres Strategy 2017

The Neighbourhood Centres Strategy is a background document in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme and formed the basis for the built form controls for each neighbourhood centre.

Economic Development Action Plan 2024-2027

The Economic Development Action Plan 2024–2027 sets out how Council’s Economic Development Unit will support local business and the local economy. Its primary goal

is to ensure ample access to goods, services and employment opportunities, thereby supporting the health and wellbeing of the Merri-bek community.

Actions within the EDAP are set out under seven themes, and Theme 5: Activity Centres and Commercial & Industrial Precincts includes actions of particular relevance to this report, including with relation to the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy and actions and initiatives to support the ongoing renewal of small and neighbourhood shopping strips.

2. Background

The Union Square Shopping Centre, a privately owned shopping centre and car park is located at the core of the Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Activity Centre. Neighbourhood Activity Centres are part of the hierarchy of activity centres in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme, with their function defined as:

- Providing a mix of uses to serve the daily and weekly shopping and service needs of the local community.
- Generally including (or have the potential to include) shops, a supermarket, small service businesses, coffee shops, medical/health clinics, public transport and limited community services.
- Accommodating an increase in density and scale of built form appropriate to their role in the Activity Centre Hierarchy but at a lesser intensity and scale to the larger centres of Coburg, Brunswick and Glenroy.

There are 12 Neighbourhood Activity Centres defined in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme.

As part of adopting the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy in 2015, Council also endorsed a program of streetscape upgrades, focussing on and prioritising 11 of the 12 Neighbourhood Activity Centres and approved budget for implementation of the program in 5 centres. Subsequent Council decisions have approved streetscape upgrades in a further two centres.

The Design and Development Overlay applies to each Neighbourhood Activity Centre and sets out the design objectives and built form outcomes sought for each centre. For the Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Centre, the Overlay also identifies new pedestrian links and an open space as part of a future redevelopment of the Union Square Shopping Centre.

3. Issues

Economic activity

Consumer spending data, 'SpendMapp', available to Council at suburb level shows consumer spending in West Brunswick compared to East Brunswick (despite an almost identical population to East Brunswick - 15,620 compared to 15,327 residents, respectively) was 56.5 per cent lower overall in 2024, including 26.3 per cent lower for spending in Grocery Stores and Supermarkets and 55.8 per cent lower for Specialised Food Retailing.

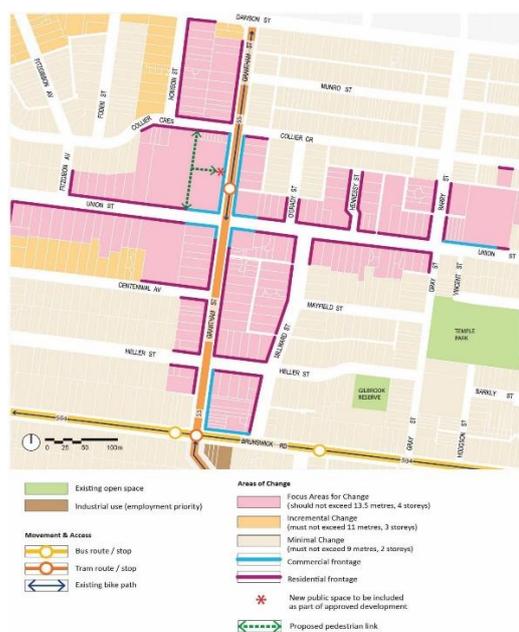
Similarly, the same data shows that the dollar amount of 'Resident escape spend' (i.e. spending by residents outside of their home suburb) in 2024 was 14 per cent higher for West Brunswick compared to East Brunswick overall, and 42.3 per cent higher for spending in Grocery Stores and Supermarkets. This is despite both suburbs having only one full line supermarket. Moreover, escape expenditure on Grocery Stores and Supermarkets going outside of Merri-bek from Brunswick West totalled \$20 million in 2024. This indicates that West Brunswick residents are underserved for retail services, particularly grocery stores and supermarkets, and that opportunities to create and support local jobs in Brunswick West and Merri-bek are being lost.

Council's role limitations and regulatory powers

The Union Square Shopping Centre and its car park are in private ownership. In addition to responding to complaints that come through to Council's regulatory teams like Amenity and Compliance, and Environmental Health, Council officers have continued to attempt to engage with the landowners so that the economic benefits of improving the amenity and appearance of the centre can be discussed with them. Most recently, this has included writing to the landowners to action the June 2024 Council resolution. The offer to meet with Council officers and discuss the amenity and cleanliness of the centre is yet to be taken up.

The offering of shops and services in the Shopping Centre is not within Council's power to influence, beyond ensuring that the necessary permits are in place for any businesses that require them. The Shopping Centre, and other shops opposite the Shopping Centre, and nearby in a section of Union Street (east of Grantham Street), are commercially zoned and this zone encourages a vibrant mix of retail, office and entertainment uses.

The Neighbourhood Centres Strategy which forms the basis for the Design and Development Overlay represents the current vision for Merri-bek's Neighbourhood Activity Centres. This Strategy is translated into the Design and Development Overlay in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme. Consultation with the community on the Neighbourhood Centres Strategy and Design and Development Overlay occurred in 2016. The Framework Plan for the Grantham Street/Union Street Centre is as follows:



The 2022 Planning Scheme Review identified a need to review the Design and Development Overlay controls for the Neighbourhood Activity Centres. As part of this review, community engagement will occur. It is expected that this review will commence in the next 18 months.

The Economic Development Action Plan identifies actions to support businesses in smaller shopping strips. In addition to reviewing the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy, a program of support initiatives for businesses in Neighbourhood and Local Activity Centres will be developed and delivered in the second half of 2025 and 2026. However, the central location of Union Square within the Union/Grantham Neighbourhood Activity Centre and its status as a privately owned shopping centre severely limits Council's ability to utilise the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy and Program to achieve significant change in terms of the overall precinct's amenity and economic vitality.

The public realm

Grantham Street is a State Government (Department of Transport and Planning) controlled road. Any changes to the function of this road would be undertaken by the State Government. Despite this, it is possible that beautification works on the footpaths could occur. Previous Council resolutions about the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy and program have determined which Neighbourhood Activity Centres have received funding for streetscape upgrades.

This Policy is currently being reviewed ahead of its expiry in October this year. It is therefore recommended that any decisions about a streetscape upgrade project for Grantham Street not be made until this review is undertaken and Council determines the way forward for the Policy and streetscape upgrade program.

Council has recently resolved to undertake public consultation on its draft Streets for People plan. A map of the future network of Streets for People corridors in Merri-bek is detailed in the plan. These corridors will be prioritised for streetscape improvements as part of the capital works program. One of the corridor projects identified in this draft is the Union Street corridor.

Advocating for changes to the Grantham Street/Union Street intersection is not recommended at this stage, ahead of progressing the Union Street corridor project as outlined in the draft Streets for People plan.

Accessible public transport is already an advocacy priority for Council, including accessible tram stops. It is timely to reiterate Council's support for accessible tram stops on Grantham Street and in all tram corridors. Advocating for a reduced speed limit on Grantham St is also consistent with advocacy positions that Council has taken.

Public open space

The Design and Development Overlay in the planning scheme identifies a new public open space to be provided as part of the future redevelopment of the shopping centre.

The recently adopted Open Space Strategy underwent extensive community engagement. This Strategy, similarly, identifies the need for a new open space near the Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Activity Centre is recommended to fill an open space gap as well as reduce pressure on existing open spaces from population increase.

It is therefore considered that the matter of public open space provision for this Neighbourhood Activity Centre has already been considered in existing strategic work that has gone through community engagement processes.

Community impact

Well-functioning Neighbourhood Activity Centres, such as Grantham Street/Union Street Neighbourhood Activity Centre, provide local residents with a place to shop for their daily needs, as well as opportunities for local employment. Such benefits can improve quality of life in small but significant ways, positively impacting community wellbeing.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Healthy and well-functioning Neighbourhood Activity Centres provide local residents with access to a wide range of daily and weekly retail convenience needs and services close to where they live; reduce the need to travel long distances, including by less sustainable modes of travel, and in turn reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Economic sustainability implications

Merri-bek's 12 Neighbourhood Activity Centres play an important role in our economy and our community. They provide essential goods and services, create and support jobs and help attract visitors to Merri-bek. The EDAP includes a focus on supporting retail precincts in various ways in recognition of their important role and with the aim of growing spending in local retailers, supporting job creation, and positively impacting local economic sustainability.

Legal and risk considerations

Individual Council programs, projects and actions that pose a potential risk will require a risk assessment prior to implementation. Any action Council takes where there is an alleged breach of legislation or a local law, must be carried out in accordance with the legislation or local law.

Human Rights Consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities. The recommendations of this report do not conflict with any of the requirements of the Charter. Any current and future projects that are referred to in this report will undergo their own assessments as required.

4. Community consultation and engagement

This report notes the community engagement that has been undertaken on previous projects as well as current and future community engagement.

Affected persons rights and interests

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

Communications

Current and future community engagement on Council projects and plans will include a communication plan.

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 implement the recommendation of this report can be met within existing team resources and budgets.

7. Implementation

The letter to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety will be prepared following Council's resolution.

A copy of this report, which outlines some important economic data will be forwarded to the landowners as part of following up Council officers request for a meeting.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.7 SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES IN LOCAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY CENTRES

Director Place and Environment, Pene Winslade

City Strategy and Economy

Officer recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the diverse range of business support initiatives that have been implemented and continue to be implemented to assist small businesses in local and neighbourhood activity centres, including numerous actions delivered through the Shopping Strip Renewal Program and outlined in the Economic Development Action Plan.
2. Notes that during year 1 of the Economic Development Action Plan (financial year 2024-25) Council has developed and promoted a small and neighbourhood shopping strip parklet grant to support businesses to add on-street dining spaces.
3. Notes the analysis provided considering the benefits and risks associated with offering small business grants to support small businesses, especially in local and neighbourhood activity centres.

REPORT

Executive summary

Local and neighbourhood activity centres play an important part in Merri-bek's economy, providing a mix of uses to serve the daily and weekly shopping and service needs of local communities.

At its meeting on 14 August 2024, Council considered a report about engagement with small businesses in neighbourhood activity centres focused on the North-West Ward. As part of this, Council resolved to receive a report that considers offering business grants in 2025 to support local traders, especially in local and neighbourhood activity centres.

Council runs a range of programs and activities to support small businesses and address issues currently facing businesses in Merri-bek's shopping strips, including local and neighbourhood centres. Council's adopted Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) 2024 – 2027 also includes a number of actions that will support Merri-bek's local and neighbourhood activity centres. This includes an action to investigate, define and implement a program of support initiatives for smaller local and neighbourhood shopping strips.

While business grants could be deployed, unless the total grant pool is significant, a business grant program is unlikely to benefit a large number of businesses and provide an amount that can make a meaningful difference.

This report notes the actions in the EDAP already underway to support small businesses in local and neighbourhood activity centres and that work to set further business support priorities will be undertaken as part of an upcoming piece of work to develop a plan for improvements to civic spaces within Merri-bek's activity centres.

Previous Council decisions

Engaging with small businesses in Neighbourhood Activity Centres (North-West Ward) – 14 August 2024

That Council:

1. *Notes that several Neighbourhood and Local Activity Centres in the North-West Ward have benefited from projects carried out under the Shopping Strip Renewal Program and that West Street, Hadfield is about to benefit from a dedicated project involving both business support and streetscape upgrade works.*
2. *Notes that the recently adopted Economic Development Action Plan 2024–2027 contains several priorities and actions for Council’s retail precincts, including:*
 - a) *An action to deliver financial assistance to encourage the provision of parklets (outdoor dining areas) in smaller and neighbourhood activity centres; and*
 - b) *Developing and implementing a program of support initiatives for smaller local and neighbourhood shopping strips;*

and that these initiatives will be promoted to businesses in neighbourhood and local centres when they are launched.
3. *Notes the upcoming review of Council’s Special Charge Scheme Policy and associated Handbook will assist businesses with guidance on how to establish and operate a trader association, including relating to organisational structure and access to relevant information including support services and that the Handbook will be promoted to businesses in neighbourhood and local centres following its review.*
4. *Receives a report that considers offering business grants in 2025 to support our local traders, especially in local and neighbourhood activity centres.*

Engaging with small businesses in Neighbourhood Activity Centres – 13 March 2024

That Council:

1. *Receives a report outlining current business development support practices in neighbourhood activity centres situated in the North-West Ward including the consideration of providing further resources and assistance to facilitate the establishment and functioning of trader associations, including guidance on organisational structure, networking opportunities, and access to relevant information and support services.*
2. *Notes that the formation of trader associations will facilitate direct communication channels between small businesses and Council, enabling the exchange of ideas, feedback, and support mechanisms.*
3. *Continues to collaborate with formal and informal trader associations to identify and address common challenges faced by small businesses in neighbourhood activity centres, such as marketing, promotion, parking, and infrastructure improvements. This includes regular meetings and forums to facilitate ongoing dialogue between small businesses, trader associations, and relevant stakeholders, providing a platform for sharing best practices, discussing issues of concern, and exploring collaborative solutions.*

1. Policy context

Community Vision 2021-2031

The Community Vision Statement acknowledges Merri-bek “...is enhanced by all of us supporting our local businesses, arts communities and social organisations.” Theme 4 relating to spaces and places aspires to a Merri-bek where living and working is easy and enjoyable, where public and commercial spaces bring people together, and where Council and the community support the development of vibrant hubs of arts, businesses and recreation.

Council Plan 2021-2025

A Strategic Objective (within Theme 4: Vibrant Spaces and Places) is to create welcoming, unique spaces and places that attract and connect everyone, improving access to community facilities and affordable housing and encouraging vibrant artistic, social and economic activity.

Further strategies in the Council Plan include:

- 4.10 - Increase local jobs and economic activity through supporting local, micro and social business and partnership efforts.
- 4.11 - Make Merri-bek a creative and cultural destination within Melbourne, significantly contributing to local vibrancy, cohesion and inclusion.

Merri-bek Planning Scheme

Merri-bek has a network of activity centres across the municipality that have been organised into a hierarchy as identified on the Activity Centre Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 02.04 and listed as either Major Activity Centres, Neighbourhood Centres or Local Centres.

Council seeks to support the activity centre network by:

- Reinforcing the development of activity centres across Merri-bek based on their role and function within the activity centre network.
- Facilitating change to the scale of the built form within activity centres in accordance with their size and role in the activity centre hierarchy.

Economic Development Action Plan 2024-2027

Council at its meeting on 10 July 2024 adopted the Economic Development Action Plan 2024–2027 (EDAP). The EDAP sets out how Council will support local business and the local economy over the next three years.

The priority, and actions, most relevant to this report is Priority 5.1 detailed below.

Priority	Action	Timing		
		Y1	Y2	Y3
5.1 Encourage the ongoing renewal of smaller local and neighbourhood shopping strips in Merri-bek.	Deliver a financial assistance program to encourage the provision of parklets (outdoor dining areas) in appropriate locations in Merri-bek's smaller and neighbourhood activity centres.	X		
	Deliver business support initiatives in alignment with the Shopping Strip Renewal Program 2015 – 2025, including a shop front improvement project at West Street, Hadfield.	X		
	Evaluate outcomes of the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy and Program 2015-2025, with the goal to inform development of future neighbourhood shopping strip support initiative(s).	X		
	Investigate, define and implement a program of support initiatives for smaller local and neighbourhood shopping strips. (STF)		X	X

2. Background

Merri-bek's Local and Neighbourhood Activity Centres

Merri-bek's local and neighbourhood activity centres sit within a three-level activity centre hierarchy. The hierarchy ensures that the majority of households are within walking distance (i.e. approximately 400 metres) of an activity centre and have access to a neighbourhood and major activity centre to meet their weekly convenience needs.

This report is focused on supporting businesses within Merri-bek's 42 local activity centres and 12 neighbourhood activity centres.

- There are approximately 300 businesses across 42 local activity centres. These centres are typically quite small, with approximately two or three up to 20 shops. They generally can include small supermarket/grocery store and services such as bakeries, newsagents, chemists and cafes.

- There are approximately 300 businesses across 12 neighbourhood activity centres. They typically contain around 20 to 40 businesses and include or have the potential to include retailers, a supermarket, small service businesses, coffee shops, medical/health clinics, public transport and limited community services.

Merri-bek's three major activity centres contain approximately 1,900 businesses. The Activity Centre Framework Plan from the Merri-bek Planning Scheme is included at **Attachment 1**.

Supporting businesses and facilitating economic development

Council advocates for and supports businesses across the three levels of the activity centre hierarchy through retail and trader assistance, skills development workshops, networking events, industry and investment facilitation, visitor economy initiatives, business and parklet permit concierge services, business information and referrals.

Council has implemented a number of actions and initiatives in recent years to support traders, including retail and hospitality-based businesses. These are detailed in **Attachment 2**.

Council is currently planning and actioning further initiatives to support traders, including retail and hospitality-based businesses, consistent with the EDAP, including:

- Production of a new 'Love Merri-bek Trails' guide map, focused on 'hidden gems' in northern Merri-bek, including in neighbourhood and local activity centres.
- Production and distribution of quick guides – 'What is a Trader Association?' and 'Establishing a Trader Association' – to provide traders with helpful information.
- A 'Welcome to Merri-bek' new business pack to provide helpful information about Council's range of business-relevant services to businesses, new or existing.
- Setting up an 'Economic Data and Market Research' page on Council's website to provide easy access to relevant economic and market data to help businesses develop and better inform their business plans and marketing strategies.
- Engaging with businesses at the Melville/Albion, West Brunswick Shopping Strip on the potential for actioning a program of shop front upgrades under the Shopping Strip Renewal Program, similar to other recent SSRP initiatives.
- Investigating the potential for further wall murals at neighbourhood activity centres, subject to availability of sites and costs involved.
- Operating a peer-to-peer mentoring program, available to Merri-bek businesses.
- Planning a trader networking event for Lygon Street traders and additional networking events for major activity centre precincts, including Glenroy traders.
- Evaluating the outcomes of the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy (SSRP) 2015 – 2025 and Program to identify successes and areas for improvement, and to inform discussion of how to best support activity centre traders in coming years.
- Following evaluation of the SSRP 2015 – 2025 and in line with EDAP Priority 5.1; investigating, defining and implementing a program of support initiatives for local and neighbourhood shopping strips. Importantly, this work will inform consideration and prioritisation of business support initiatives under a forthcoming plan for improvements to civic spaces within activity centres (as foreshadowed in draft Streets for People Plan).

Broader small business support and programs available to local traders

These activities are in addition to ongoing business support initiatives that are available to all businesses and that the Economic Development team resource, including:

- The Business Approvals Merri-bek (BAM) service – to help businesses understand what permits they need from Council and how to apply for them
- The Parklet Concierge service – to help traders understand what permits they need for a parklet (outdoor dining space) and how to apply for them
- The Business Merri-bek Business Hotline and business@merri-bek.vic.gov.au e-mail enquiry and referral service
- An annual calendar of business skills workshops and networking events, including 13 business skills workshops covering topics relevant to small business and informed by the 2024 Merri-bek Business Survey (250 respondents).
- Production and distribution of a monthly 'Business Merri-bek' e-newsletter, subscribed to by over 6,000 local businesses, to regularly share updates on business skills workshops, networking events and other relevant information.

3. Issues

Current challenges facing traders

After the pandemic and its restrictions, business conditions rebounded as consumers, having saved during lockdowns, returned to shopping and dining. While 2022 saw strong performance, challenges remained, including shadow lockdowns from new COVID strains and significant debt, particularly to landlords and the ATO. Additionally, the recovery for many businesses was brief, as the cost of living crisis took hold, driven by rising inflation (peaking in late 2022) and interest rate hikes (with the RBA cash rate peaking at 4.35 per cent from November 2023 until February 2025).

Many businesses have been impacted by the cost of living crisis, facing simultaneously rising costs of doing business and slowing foot traffic and consumer spending. This impact has been felt most by businesses reliant on discretionary spending (e.g. dining out) while those offering better value or 'affordable treats' have tended to fare a little better.

By March 2025 (at the time this report is written), there is some optimism, with the RBA having started to cut interest rates and early signs of improved consumer confidence. Real wages are rising as inflation falls, but long-term effects of the crisis continue to strain household budgets.

Recent business grants:

Vacant shop grant program 2022/23

In response to economic challenges and the rising number of vacant shops in 2022, Council introduced the Vacant Shop Grant Program. The program offered grants of \$5,000 or \$10,000 to new tenants, with a total grant pool of \$100,000 (plus \$25,000 to cover required officer administration time). Operating during 2022/23, the program awarded 11 grants. It was a well-received initiative that helped reduce the number of vacant shops. However, it also required significant investment while benefiting only a limited number of businesses. Despite a thorough review of each applicant's business plan, three businesses have since closed, suggesting grants do not always support long-term business success.

Parklet small and neighbourhood shopping strip parklet grant program 2024/25

The 2024/25 Budget included a grant to support businesses in local and neighbourhood activity centres to install parklets, enhancing outdoor café and dining spaces for both businesses and the community. The program was introduced in the first quarter of the financial year and communicated through door-to-door visits to eligible businesses. Despite proactive promotion and initial interest, participation remains low entering the last quarter of the financial year; only 25 per cent of the \$10,000 fee waivers has been used and no applications to have been received for grants of up to \$3,000 from the \$25,000 earmarked for parklet materials and construction.

Key considerations in relation to offering business grants

In considering whether or not to offer business grants to small and medium sized businesses in Merri-bek's local and neighbourhood activity centres; it is useful to consider the associated benefits and issues/risks.

Potential benefits:

- **Short term financial support:** Grants provide businesses with modest short-term financial support during challenging economic conditions.
- **Demonstrated commitment:** Grants demonstrate Council's commitment to and concern for small businesses.

Potential issues and risks:

- **Opportunity cost:** Grant programs are resource-intensive for both businesses and Council. Administering and assessing grants displaces officer time from other initiatives, forcing delays or even cancelling other planned initiatives.
- **Dependency risk:** Grants may unintentionally encourage businesses to rely on financial aid rather than developing long-term strategies to help ensure viability.
- **Public funds risk:** There is a risk that grants may only have a short term impact and could be awarded to businesses that continue to struggle or close despite receiving support, potentially resulting in a waste of public funds. This occurred with the Vacant Shop Grant, where three out of eleven businesses closed within 12 – 14 months of receiving funding.
- **Insignificant beneficial impact due to likely funding pool limitations:** Unless the total grant pool is sufficiently large, both small and large grant programs may struggle to meaningfully support a significant number of businesses, potentially limiting their effectiveness. For example:
 - **Smaller grants (e.g. \$2,000 each):** While more affordable, small grants may not have a significant impact and also suffer low uptake as businesses may find them less worthwhile. With a \$100,000 grant pool, 50 businesses could potentially benefit. However, at \$2,000 per business, it is unlikely to be of significant benefit to any individual business.
 - **Larger grants (\$10,000–\$20,000 each):** Larger grants are more likely to address business challenges, but they come at a higher cost, potentially benefiting fewer businesses. For a \$100,000 pool, only 5 - 10 businesses may benefit, reaching a small portion of the 600 businesses across Merri-bek's 42 local and 12 neighbourhood activity centres. Even with a \$200,000 funding pool; only ca. 10 – 20 businesses would benefit.
- **Role of Councils:** Small businesses typically have access to grants from time to time through state and federal government programs.

Grants options

Officers have investigated and assessed the following options:

- Option 1 – Shop front upgrade program
 - Potential Offer: Each business would receive design consultant services and up to \$4,000 to spend on shop front improvements such as new awning signage, window decals and signage, minor façade upgrades, etc.
 - Potential Grant Pool: Approximately \$125,000 would see 20 businesses participate. Administration costs would be additional (see below).
- Option 2 – Business distress grant
 - Potential Offer: Direct cash grant (e.g. \$5,000) to businesses that can demonstrate an acute level of financial distress within their business.
 - Potential Grant Pool: A grant pool of \$100,000 could see 20 businesses participate. Administration costs would be additional (see below).
- Option 3 – ‘Take the next step’ (investment encouragement) grant
 - Potential Offer: Direct cash grant (e.g. \$10,000) to businesses that can demonstrate how it would help unlock a business idea or opportunity. Applications would be judged and awarded against specific criteria.
 - Potential Grant Pool: A grant pool of \$200,000 could see 20 businesses participate. Administration costs would be additional (see below).

Analysis shows that many of the issues and risks identified above would apply to these options. For example:

- Options 1 & 3 – Would not address the core challenge facing businesses right now; that is – that business costs have risen while demand and sales are down.
- Options 1 & 3 – Based on recent experience including the Parklet grant, take up could be low.
- Option 2 & 3 – While grants offer short term financial relief; unless the grant fund pool is sufficiently large, it risks being limited in the number of businesses it supports and may have little impact on alleviating significant economic hardship.
- Options 1, 2 & 3 – Would be labour intensive to administer and displace other activities set out in the Economic Development Action Plan unless additional officer resources were also funded. Depending on the type and scale of grant, it is estimated that \$35,000 - \$50,000 would be required to fund a part time officer to manage the above described grants. Option 2 & 3 would also require administrative support from Council’s finance team. Finally, grants with more recipients and/or performance based criteria and acquittal requirements (e.g. Option 3) are more time consuming to appropriately administer.

Requiring grant recipients to make a modest co-contribution can help reduce the overall cost of the grant program. However, this requirement can reduce uptake.

In summary, while a business grant program would offer short term financial support for businesses, there are significant financial, administrative and associated risks involved.

Community impact

Well-functioning activity centres provide local residents with a place to gather and socialise, as well as opportunities for local employment. Such benefits can improve quality of life in small but significant ways, positively impacting community wellbeing.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Healthy and well-functioning local and neighbourhood activity centres provide local residents with access to a wide range of daily and weekly retail convenience needs and services where they live, reduce the need to travel long distances including by less sustainable modes of travel, and in turn reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Economic sustainability implications

Local businesses and activity centres play an important role in our economy and our community. They provide essential goods and services, create employment and can attract visitors to Merri-bek. The EDAP includes a focus on supporting businesses in activity centres in various ways with the aim of growing local spending, supporting job creation, and positively impacting local economic sustainability.

Legal and risk considerations

Individual Economic Development programs, projects and actions that pose a potential risk will require a risk assessment prior to implementation.

Human Rights consideration

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, and no concerns have arisen.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Economic Development Action Plan consultation

The EDAP was informed by significant engagement with businesses, through an online business survey, in-person business feedback forum, discussions with businesses, trader associations, First Nations representatives, and various internal and external stakeholders across Council and its partner organisations.

Local and neighbourhood activity centre business engagement

The Economic Development Unit regularly engages with as many of Merri-bek's approximately 16,500 businesses as it can. Council officers also regularly engage with the only existing trader association in a small or neighbourhood activity centre in Merri-bek (i.e. West Street Trader Association). This regular business engagement helps to ensure that initiatives are developed and delivered in a business friendly, responsive and useful manner.

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.

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 cost for a one year grant program in line with the options outlined ranges, including administration costs, ranges as follows:

- Option 1 (Shop front upgrade program) - \$160,000
- Option 2 (Business distress grant) - \$150,000
- Option 3 (Take the next step investment encouragement grant) - \$250,000.

Any option endorsed by Council will need to be referred to the 2025/2026 budget process for consideration.

7. Implementation

The EDAP sets out the timeframe for implementation of individual actions. The evaluation of the Shopping Strip Renewal Policy & Program will be completed during the remainder of 2024/25.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Activity Centre Framework Plan | D25/154233 |
| 2 | Recent and ongoing actions to support traders and activity centres | D25/151912 |

Attachment 1 – Activity Centre Framework Plan – Merri-bek Planning Scheme



Legend

- Brunswick Activity Centre
- Coburg Activity Centre
- Glenroy Activity Centre
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Local Centre
- Highway
- Arterial Road
- Moreland Local Government Area
- 1** Activity Centre Number

Attachment 2: Recent and Ongoing Activities to support Activity Centres and Traders

Council's Economic Development Unit has implemented numerous actions and initiatives in recent years to support traders, including retail and hospitality-based businesses. Examples include:

- Numerous projects under the Shopping Strip Renewal Program – including but not limited to:
 - Commissioning a number of murals to add to the appearance/vibrancy of shopping strips, including Bonwick Street, Fawkner (2018; see picture); Gaffney Street/Pascoe Vale Station, Pascoe Vale (2017, see picture); and at Campbell Turner Library (2022).



- Providing a program of digital business support to local traders at Gaffney Street/ Pascoe Vale Station, Pascoe Vale (2021; see picture)



- Providing shop front improvement upgrades to small businesses at Melville/Moreland Road, West Brunswick (2022)
- Re-designing and installing replacement West Street-branded flags/ banners at the West Street, Hadfield shopping strip (2024; see pictures)

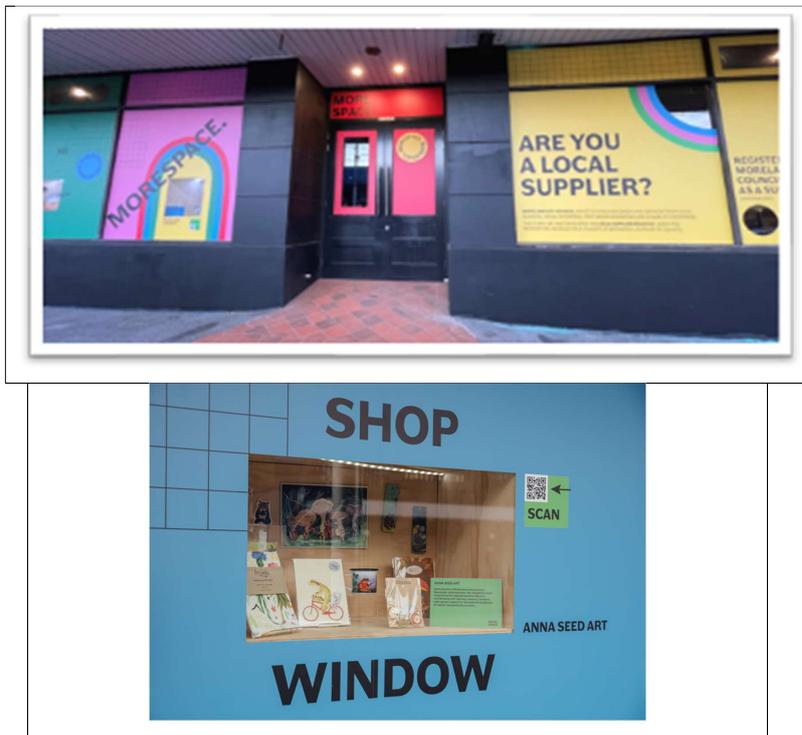


- Providing 10 businesses with shop front improvement upgrades at the West Street, Hadfield shopping strip (2025; see before and after pictures)



Image: Red Rock charcoal Chicken before and after the Shopfront Improvement

- Installing and maintaining Merri-bek 'Morespace' shoppable windows at numerous locations, including two installations at Pascoe Street, Pascoe Vale (as well as at other sites in Coburg and Brunswick major activity centres) (2021 – 2025; see picture)



- A Parklet Grant (i.e. for outdoor trading and dining areas) fee waiver and financial support scheme, to support and encourage traders in local and neighbourhood activity centres to install parklets for the benefit of traders and the wider community (2024-25; see picture of an existing parklet)



Image: Parklet at Waxflower, 153 Weston Street, Brunswick

- Procuring, promoting and providing 50 external specialist Small Business Mentoring Service sessions to eligible businesses (a business usually accesses 3 – 4 sessions over a short term period).
- Various activities under the 'Love Merri-bek, Buy Local' program – including:

- Establishing and operating the 'Love Merri-bek, Buy Local' micro website, including interactive business directory, regular blog stories and posts (2021 – ongoing)
- Producing four (to date) 'Love Merri-bek Trail' guide maps (i.e. for Breweries and Distilleries; Art Galleries; Leisure activities; and Live Music and Records) to attract and disperse visitors across Merri-bek (2023 – Ongoing; see picture)
- Associated campaigns and videos (e.g. Most recently a 'Buy Local, Support Local' promotional campaign video (2024)



- Monitoring and administering the Central Coburg (2022-2027) and Sydney Road Brunswick (2023 – 2028) and Central Coburg Shopping Precinct Special Charge Schemes
- Running trader discussion and networking events, most recently at Glenroy Activity Centre (2025)
- Facilitating and attending safety and security forums with Victoria Police for local traders including at Brunswick, Coburg, Glenroy (2024 – 2025)
- Facilitating Victoria Police Crime Prevention Officer visits to local businesses, including in Coburg and Bonwick Street Fawkner (2024 – 2025; ongoing)
- Facilitating trader enquiries related to amenity and cleanliness matters (ongoing)

7.8 FRIENDS OF AILEU: ANNUAL REPORT 2024, STRATEGY PLAN 2025-2030 AND FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT (MERRI-BEK - HUME - AILEU) 2025-2030

Director Community, Eamonn Fennessy

Community Wellbeing

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2024 (Attachment 1).
2. Endorses the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2025-2030 (Attachment 2), as the guide for Annual Action Plans to be prepared and implemented by the East Timor Project Team and the Friends of Aileu Community Committee.
3. Endorses the renewed Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek – Hume – Aileu) 2025-2030 (Attachment 3), as the basis for continuing the friendship relationship with the Municipality of Aileu.
4. Authorises the Mayor Cr Davidson and Cr Adam Pulford, Co-Chair of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, to sign Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek – Hume – Aileu) 2025-2030 (Attachment 3), and a Tetun language copy of that Agreement, with the date of signing to be arranged with the Project Officer.
5. Notes the plans to celebrate 25 years of friendship with Aileu, including involvement of Port Phillip Friends of Suai and Yarra-Darebin Friends of Baucau, on 6 May 2025 in Coburg Town Hall.
6. Authorises the Mayor Cr Davidson and Co-Chair of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee Cr Adam Pulford to sign invitations for official guests to attend the 6 May event.

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report presents:

1. Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2024 (**Attachment 1**), documenting the activities undertaken for, and supported by, the East Timor Partnership Project (Merri-bek and Hume) for the calendar year 2024, for Council to note
2. Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2025-2030 (**Attachment 2**), for Council to endorse, as the guide for Annual Action Plans to be prepared and implemented by the East Timor Project Team and the Friends of Aileu Community Committee
3. Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek – Hume – Aileu) 2025-2030 (**Attachment 3**), for Council to:
 - a) Endorse, as the basis for continuing the friendship relationship with Aileu
 - b) Authorise the Mayor Cr Davidson and Cr Pulford, Co-Chair of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee signing the Friendship Agreement at a date to be arranged
4. An outline of plans to celebrate 25 years of friendship with Aileu, together with the Port Phillip Friends of Suai and the Yarra-Darebin Friends of Baucau, at Coburg Town Hall on Tuesday 6 May, along with a proposal for inviting official guests.

A similar report, with relevant recommendations, is being prepared for Hume City Council's meeting on 28 April 2025.

Mr João Bosco dos Santos, President of Aileu Municipality, has advised his agreement to the draft Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek – Hume – Aileu) 2025-2030.

As can be seen from Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2024:

- The friendship relationship with Aileu retains strong organisational and community support, and contributes to stronger communities, both in Merri-bek and Hume and in Aileu.
- The Project Team, the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and partner organisations continue to work together producing positive community development outcomes in Aileu.

Timor-Leste has come a long way since the establishment of the friendship relationship between the then Moreland City Council, Hume City Council and the then District of Aileu, with the signing of the original MOU on 4 May 2000, with Xanana Gusmão representing East Timor and Aileu,

The May 2000 MOU was signed soon after the widespread destruction, violence and loss of life imposed on Timor-Leste and Aileu before and after the August 1999 UN supervised Popular Consultation and the subsequent withdrawal of the Indonesian Administration and military.

Since the events of 1999, and the subsequent Restoration of Independence of Timor-Leste on 20 May 2002, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and its people have made significant progress, especially in terms of:

- Truth and reconciliation
- Developing a strong democracy and effective public sector at the national level
- Developing a vibrant local democracy at the village and sub-village level, under-pinned by the restoration of traditional authority and practices
- The free involvement of community organisations and citizens in public life.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste is gradually devolving powers and responsibilities for service delivery functions to the former Districts, now Municipalities, however, local elections and the establishment of responsible local government at the municipal level are still some way off.

Timor-Leste and Aileu face numerous challenges including in improving community health and nutrition, providing education for all through the life span, protection and enhancement of the environment and local agriculture in the face of climate change, and developing and income generation and employment opportunities for all, especially the youth of the nation.

The Aileu Municipal Authority appreciates the value of the friendship relationship, and supports its continuation, as do our non-government partner organisations and the people of Aileu.

The recommendations of this report facilitate the continuation of the friendship with Aileu and the celebration of its achievements in the broader context of solidarity and friendship between Australian and Timor-Leste.

Previous Council Decisions

Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2023 – 10 July 2024

That Council notes the Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2023 (Attachment 1).

Friends of Aileu Annual Report (calendar years 2021 and 2022 combined) – 10 May 2023

That Council notes the Friends of Aileu Annual Report, for calendar years 2021 and 2022 combined (Attachment 1).

Governance Report - August 2020 - Cyclical Report – 12 August 2020

That Council:

1. *Notes the reports from Committees to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report and in accordance with the recommendation of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, endorses the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2020.*

...

Governance Report - June 2020 - Cyclical Report – 10 June 2020

That Council:

...

6. *Notes the achievements outlined in the:*

...

c) *Friends of Aileu Summary Annual Report 2019, at Attachment 8 to this report.*

7. *Endorses the draft Friendship Agreement 2020 between the Municipality of Aileu, Timor-Leste, Hume City Council and Moreland City Council, at Attachment 9 to this report, as the basis for continuing the friendship relationship with the Municipality of Aileu, to be signed on a date to be confirmed.*

...

1. Policy Context

The primary purpose of Local Government under the *Local Government Act 2020*, and the prior *Local Government Act 1989*, is to ensure 'peace, order and good government'.

It was in this context, that the friendship relationship between the then Moreland City Council, Hume City Council and the then District of Aileu, was established in 2000, following the widespread violence and destruction experienced throughout and at the end of the 24 years of occupation of East Timor by the Indonesian military.

The work of the East Timor Partnership Project (the Friends of Aileu) has been guided over the last 5 years by the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2020, which is:

- One of the related strategies under Theme 3: A healthy and caring Merri-bek, of the Merri-bek City Council Plan 2021-2025
- Consistent with Council's commitment to developing policy and programs founded on health and well-being, social justice, human rights and social inclusion.

2. Background

The friendship relationship with Aileu was established on 4 May 2000, by the signing of an MOU with Xanana Gusmão representing East Timor and Aileu. The friendship relationship has been renewed at approximately 5-year intervals.

On 4 May 2000, Xanana Gusmão also:

- Signed the guiding *Statement of Principles for Victorian Local Governments Working in East Timor*, together with the Victorian Minister for Local Government, the President of the VLGA and the President of the MAV
- Delivered the 13th Blackburn Oration at Coburg Town Hall on *The Importance of Community Alliances in the Re-Building of East Timor*.

The friendship relationships between the Yarra and Darebin City Councils and Baucau, and between the Port Phillip City Council and Suai, were also established by MOU around 4 May 2000.

Following these first 3 formal local government-sponsored community friendship relationships (with Aileu, Baucau and Suai), numerous other Victorian local governments and communities established friendship relationships with other Districts, Sub-districts and villages in Timor-Leste.

This year thus marks 25 years since the establishment of formal local government and community friendship relationships with Timor-Leste.

This year also marks 50 years since:

- The arrival of the first refugees from East Timor in Darwin in August 1975, and their subsequent relocation to Melbourne and other cities
- East Timor's Declaration of Independence on 28 November 1975, following Portuguese Colonial Administration leaving Dili and in the face of imminent full-scale invasion by the Indonesian military
- The establishment of the Australia East Timor Association (AETA) in December 1975, to express solidarity with the people of East Timor by bringing attention to their plight following the Indonesian invasion, and to their resistance to the military occupation.

3. Issues

Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2024

Key activities and outcomes mentioned in Friends of Aileu Annual Report for 2024 include:

- The continued valuable work of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, and the Committee's Project reference Group, in guiding the friendship relationship, including its support for the work of the East Timor Project Team and especially its contributions to developing the Annual Report 2024, the Strategy Plan 2025-2030 (with a community workshop on 23 November 2024) and the Friendship Agreement 2025-2030
- The ongoing partnerships including with Bayside Social Justice Group, Grassroots Gatherings Inc, Timorese Association in Victoria (TAV), Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre (METAC), Australia East Timor Association (AETA), East Timor Students Association (ETSA) Vic, Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), Wild Timor Coffee Co. and Kew Rotary Fair Trade and Gift Shop/Kor Timor
- The formation of a new working group, chaired by Committee member Glenyys Romanes, to develop the next phase of the successful Oral Health Education Project (*Kose Nehan / Brush Your Teeth*)
- Activities and events in Merri-bek and Hume including:
 - The annual *Grassroots Gathering* youth, culture and music event for Aileu at CERES in February, attracting some 300 people and raising \$9,500 for youth, art and environmental activities in Aileu
 - The annual Trivia Quiz at Brunswick Town Hall in June, attracting some 100 people and raising \$12,100 for the Aileu University Scholarship Program
 - The continuation of the annual Hume City Council education donation of \$5,200
 - A community event *Voices of Liberation / Stories and Music of Resistance* at *Black Spark Arts and Cultural Centre*, Northcote, in May

- The hosting by the Project Team and the Friends of Aileu Community Committee of:
 - Thomas Denning, final year Bachelor of Community Development student at Victoria University, for a 200-hour industry placement
 - An Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network (AusTimor FN) members' forum at the Brunswick Town Hall meeting room in March
 - A social event for PALM scheme agricultural workers from Timor-Leste at Brunswick Town Hall in April, in collaboration with Carla Chung, PALM scheme project worker with Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)
 - A wake for Professor Helen Hill, formerly of Victoria University and founder of Australia East Timor Association (AETA), at Coburg Town Hall in May, in collaboration with Helen's family and the Timorese community
 - The *In The Spirit of Togetherness* cultural event for the Timorese Association in Victoria (TAV) at Coburg Town Hall in November, to introduce the new TAV committee following the re-establishment of the organisation
 - Monthly on-line working group meetings to help coordinate the events and activities of friendship groups and Timorese community groups for the 50th anniversary of the Timorese community in Australia and the 25th anniversary of the commencement of friendship relationships between Victorian Councils and communities and Timor-Leste Municipalities and communities
- Coordinating the hosting by Hume City Council of the *Timor Cup 2023/24* soccer tournament, organised by Greenvale United Soccer Club and the Timorese community, with the competition running from 27 December 2023 to 11 January 2024, and with an awards night at Town Hall Broadmeadows on 13 January
- Participation in the monthly welcome dinners organised by the Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre (METAC) for the Timorese community and friends, and in other events organised by the Australia East Timor Association (AETA), the East Timor Women's Association (ETWA) and the Friends of Suai.
- Activities supported in Aileu including:
 - The continued valuable work of the Aileu Friendship Commission, assisted by the Aileu Municipal Youth Centre, managing the Aileu University Scholarship Program and overseeing organisations and programs or projects supported by the funds from Friends of Aileu
 - The Aileu University Scholarship Program, providing \$10,700 in fee support for 17 young Aileu students undertaking tertiary studies in Timor-Leste, with 1 graduating with a Masters' degree (2 years), 4 with Bachelor degrees (4 years) and 3 with Diplomas (3 years)
 - Scholarships at the Baucau Teachers' College, providing \$4,100 in fee support for 7 young Aileu students, with 1 graduating Bachelor of Education (4 years) and 3 graduating Bachelor of Teaching (3 Years)
 - The participation of 27 young people from Aileu in Permatil's 5-day 2024 PermaYouth training camp, and support by the Aileu Anan Association (AILA) and the Aileu University Students Association (KEUMA) practical water and land conservation work implemented in their home villages following the camp

- The continued partnership with the Aileu Resource and Training Centre, in particular, support for its management and staff salaries, and the ARTC's:
 - Staff development program (with staff member Ana Maria graduating with a Bachelor of Accounting), Children's and IT education and training program and the Kadalak Dame agricultural garden project.
 - Manu Casa Resource and Training Centre (MCRTC) in the rural Lequidoe Administrative Post, including the MCRTC's reforestation, land and water source protection and enhancement, agriculture, women's development and children's education projects.
- A 3-day working visit to Aileu by the East Timor Project Administration and Support Officer in August, while in Timor-Leste on private holiday, including participation in a meeting of the Aileu Friendship Commission and meetings with partners including:
 - The newly appointed Municipal President Mr João Bosco dos Santos
 - The 3 newly appointed Municipal Secretaries:
 - Mr José Viçente Vilanova (Administration and Finance),
 - Mrs Victória Mesquita do Rêgo (Integrated Planning, Investment and Development) and
 - Mr Rogêrio da Conceição (Social Affairs and Community Organisations)
 - The Secretary of the Aileu Friendship Commission
 - The Management and staff of the Aileu Resource and Training Centre and the Aileu Municipal Youth Centre
- Continued support for the *Kose Nehan* oral health education project, with Aileu dental therapist Ana Tilman delivering refresher training in the 6 pilot schools and distributing 1,300 replacement toothbrushes and 1,000 toothpaste tubes for 1,300 students, teachers and administrative staff
- Key issues for Friends of Aileu 2025 include:
 - Finalisation of the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2025-2030 and the Friendship Agreement 2025-2030
 - Continuing to recruit new members and supporters, including a stronger focus on engaging with and involving younger people from our communities
 - Organising events and activities for the 25th anniversary for the friendship relationship and the 50th anniversary of the Timorese community in Australia
 - Fundraising for scholarships, to support the ARTC programs, to support other community health, youth, agricultural, water source protection and environmental activities, and to contribute to the operational costs of the Aileu Friendship Commission and Aileu Municipal Youth Centre
 - Securing agreement on the next phase of the *Kose Nehan* oral health education project with Timor-Leste Government, Aileu Municipality and other partners, and identifying funding sources for its implementation
 - Working for the success of the Friendship Conference in Dili (10 & 11 July) and a possible Council / Friends of Aileu delegation to the conference and a visit to Aileu (7-9 July)

- Working for the success of the Aileu participation in the PermaYouth Convergence 20-25 October, including possible participation by Friends of Aileu and a small group of young people from our communities.

Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2025-2030

This report also presents the updated Strategy Plan 2025-2030, for Council to endorse as the guide for Annual Action Plans to be prepared and implemented by the East Timor Project Team and the Friends of Aileu Community Committee.

The Strategy Plan was prepared by the Project Team following consideration of the outcomes from a community planning workshop on 23 November 2024 and discussion at meetings of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee.

Friends of Aileu Friendship Agreement 2025-2030

This report also presents the updated Friendship Agreement 2025-2030, for Council to endorse as the basis for continuing the friendship relationship for the coming 5 years.

The Friendship Agreement was prepared following consideration of the outcomes from a community planning workshop on 23 November 2024, discussion at meetings of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and consideration of a draft by the Aileu Municipal President.

The Friendship Agreement is a statement of intent and commitment, but is it intended to have no legal effect and may be amended or terminated as agreed between the parties.

Celebrating 25 years of friendship with Aileu

In view of the significant outcomes from the friendship relationship with Aileu, including most recently, outlined in the Annual Report 2024 (Section 3.1 above), and historic and ongoing connections (including as outlined in Sections 1 and 2 above), the Friends of Aileu Community Committee supports a proposal that:

- A Council and community event celebrating 25 years of friendship with Timor-Leste be held on 6 May 2025 at Coburg Town Hall
- The event be a joint celebration of the friendships with the Yarra-Darebin Friends of Baucau and the Port Phillip Friends of Suai
- Formal invitations to the event be sent to relevant individuals and organisation representatives, including the Mayors and CEOs of Hume, Yarra, Darebin and Port Phillip, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, local Members of the Victoria Parliament and the Presidents and CEOs of VLGA and the MAV
- The event involves the Australia East Timor Association (AETA), the Timorese Association in Victoria (TAV), the Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre (METAC) and the East Timorese Students Association Victoria (ETSA Vic), all of which work in collaboration with the Friends of Aileu and other friendship groups, improving connections within our local communities and with communities in Timor-Leste
- The event be in the early evening (6:30pm start), with theatre style layout for a short address, reflection and Q&A opportunity, and with opportunities for guests to mingle over drinks and snacks.

Dr Kirsty Sword Gusmão AO, Coburg resident, activist, founder of the Alola Foundation, Goodwill Ambassador for Education to Timor-Leste and former First Lady of Timor-Leste, has agreed to deliver the keynote address on 6 May.

The Project Team and the Friends of Aileu Community Committee are working with other Council staff, Yarra, Darebin and Port Phillip City Councils, the Friends of Baucau, the Friends of Suai and AETA to finalise details of the event.

Community impact

The friendship relationship continues to have positive impacts on residents' ability to participate in public life, and develop strong communities in Merri-bek, Hume and Aileu

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

A significant emphasis in many areas of friendship and cooperation with Aileu is addressing the impacts of climate change and the sustainability of local agriculture on which the community of Aileu largely depends.

Economic sustainability implications

A significant emphasis in many areas of friendship and cooperation with Aileu is addressing constraints on economic participation and sustainable livelihoods.

Legal and risk considerations

The Friendship Agreement is a statement of intent and commitment, but is it intended, and stated in its terms, to have no legal effect, and may be amended or terminated as agreed between the parties.

Risks of the friendship relationship include the possibility that some members of the Merri-bek community or people in politics or the media may raise issues about whether:

- Involvement in the friendship relationship and support for community development in Aileu should be a Council priority.
- The expenditure of publicly raised and donated funds transferred to Aileu to support community development activities lacks transparency and accountability.

These risks are suitably mitigated by:

- Implementation of a Communications Plan that provides proactive information, including that included in the Annual Reports and timely reports from Aileu partner organisations, using the Committee to Council Reports (included in the Governance Report to Council), Friends of Aileu's periodic newsletter and through the Merri-bek and Hume Council websites and social media, that illustrates the value of the friendship relationship to the Merri-bek and Hume communities and to the people of Aileu.
- The operation and oversight provided by the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and the Aileu Friendship Commission, and the application of Hume and Merri-bek City Councils' financial procedures and delegations.

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 it is considered that the friendship relationship and the recommendations of this report impact positively on the human rights of the people of Merri-bek, Hume and Aileu.

The continuation of the friendship relationship with Aileu, as recommended by this report, will provide ongoing opportunities for Merri-bek community members to actively involve themselves in public life and strengthen our local community, while:

- Learning more about the different and common challenges facing our local communities, Australia as a nation and our region, with particular reference to Timor-Leste and Aileu.
- Supporting the people of Aileu as they strive to develop their local democracy and a more inclusive and sustainable future and thus contributing to a justice and stability in our region.

4. Community consultation and engagement

Consultation on the matters dealt with in this report

Consultation on the matters dealt with in this report include:

- Discussion at meetings of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee on 15 August 2024, 12 December 2024 and 11 February 2025
- Inclusion of advice of events and dates in the Friends of Aileu Newsletter, October 2024
- Discussion at a community workshop held on 23 November 2024
- Discussion at a community workshop held on 23 November 2024
- Deliberations at meetings of the Community Committee's Project Reference Group on 18 September 2024 and 20 February 2025.

Affected persons rights and interests

No person's rights are adversely affected by the friendship relationship or the recommendations of this report.

Communications

A communications plan will be developed in collaboration with the Communications Teams of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, covering:

- The public release of the Annual Report 2024 and the Strategy Plan 2025-2030 and the Friendship Agreement 2025-2030
- The conduct of the 25th anniversary of friendship event scheduled for 6 May 2025
- The proposal for participation in the Friendship Conference in Dili, Timor-Leste, (10 and 11 July), and for a delegation to the conference including a visit to Aileu (7 - 9 July), which will be the subject of separate reports.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There are no new financial or resources implications from this report.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's approval of the recommendations of this report, and Hume City Council's approval of similar recommendations, the East Timor Project Officer will liaise with relevant officers to facilitate implementation of the matters arising from this report, including:

- The development of the Communications Plan.
- The signing of the Friendship Agreement by the Mayors of Merri-bek and Hume.
- The signing of the Friendship Agreement by:
 - Mr João Bosco dos Santos, President of Aileu Municipality and President of the Aileu Friendship Commission
 - Mr Jose Valente da Costa, Secretary of the Aileu Friendship Commission
 - Mr Tomas Cabral, Timor-Leste Minister for State Administration

with these latter signings to be arranged at a date to be agreed, possibly in conjunction with the Friendship Conference to be held in Dili, Timor-Leste, on 10 and 11 July 2025.

- The issue of formal invitations to the 2 May celebration of 25 years of friendship with Aileu, Baucau and Suai.

Attachment/s

1 ↓	Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2024	D25/123462
2 ↓	Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2025-2030	D25/123466
3 ↓	Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek - Hume - Aileu) 2025-2030 English	D25/123468

Friends of Aileu

Linking Merri-bek and Hume communities with Aileu, Timor-Leste.



Friends of Aileu Annual Report 2024

Activities and Achievements in 2024 and an Outlook for 2025

Prepared by Christopher Adams and Aoife Carli Hannan, East Timor Project Team,
with the Friends of Aileu Community Committee



Bemvindu ba Relatoriu Anual tinan 2024 Belun Aileu nian
/
Welcome to Friends of Aileu Annual Report for 2024

Acknowledgements:

Friends of Aileu Community Committee, Merri-bek City Council and Hume City Council acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, including the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan in Hume, as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways in the areas now known as Merri-bek and Hume.

We pay respect to their Elders, past and present, as well as to other First Nations people and communities and their Care for Country and the significant contributions they make to the life of our communities.

The Friends of Aileu Community Committee also acknowledges the support of the Merri-bek and Hume City Councils and their communities for the friendship relationship which has flourished since its establishment in May 2000, and the support and involvement of the Municipality and people of Aileu.

We acknowledge with respect the traditional leaders and elders of Aileu, all who supported the armed, diplomatic and clandestine fronts during the resistance period, and all who participated in the UN Referendum of August 1999 and the subsequent restoration of Timor-Leste's independence in May 2002.

We also acknowledge the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and its agents, including the Aileu Municipal Authority, and their efforts and achievements, together with the people of Aileu, to develop their local democracy and work towards a more prosperous and sustainable future.

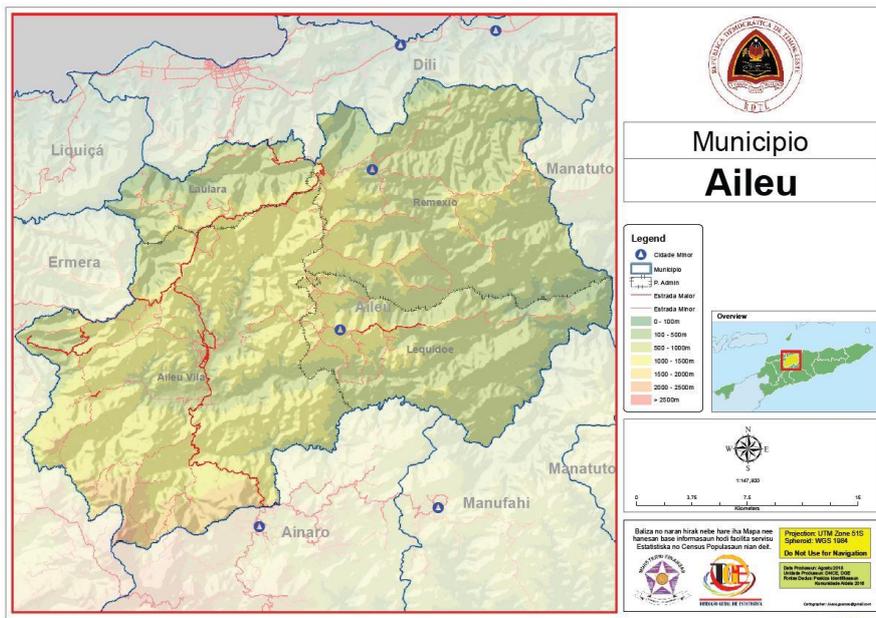
Contents

SECTION	TITLE	Page
Cover photos	Aileu Friendship Commission members and partner organisation representatives, Uma Dame (Peace House), Aileu, December 2024	
	Community Committee members, community members and staff at the Strategic Planning workshop, Merri-bek, November 2024	
Acknowledgements		1
Contents		2
Maps	Timor-Leste, one of Australia's nearest neighbours	4
	Aileu Municipality	
Photos	Dom Baumeta statues, Malere, Aileu Vila	5
	The traditional symbol of Aileu, Ai-Kleuk, Bandeirahun, Suku Liurai, Aileu Vila	
	Aileu: a view over rural houses, beside terraced vegetable gardens and coffee groves under shade trees in the valley, towards partially vegetated hills and distant mountains	
1	An introduction and some highlights from 2024	7
1.1	This report, the project and its governance	7
1.2	Some highlights in Merri-bek and Hume	8
1.3	Some highlights in Aileu and Timor-Leste	9
2	A summary of 2024 activities and outcomes	13
2.1	Working together as a community to sustain and develop our friendship with Aileu: Activities in Australia and in Merri-bek and Hume	13
2.1.1	The friendship relationship, its governance and implementation	13
2.1.2	Communications	17
2.1.3	Community Partnerships	19
2.1.4	Other Australian groups active in Aileu	23
2.1.5	Friends of Aileu's major events	24
2.1.6	Council and community events	25

2.1.7	Networking with other friendship and solidarity groups	26
2.1.8	Networking with the Timorese community	29
2.2	Working together in friendship for a more prosperous and sustainable future for Aileu: Activities in Timor-Leste and Aileu	33
2.2.1	Municipality of Aileu – Aileu Rai Husar (Navel of the Land)	33
2.2.2	Aileu Municipal Authority – coming together to build Aileu for the future	34
2.2.3	Aileu Friendship Commission – working with Friends of Aileu	35
2.2.4	Aileu Municipal Youth Centre – promoting youth as active healthy citizens	36
2.2.5	Aileu University Scholarship Program – developing the next generation of leaders	36
2.2.6	Teacher Education Scholarships – improving the quality of education	39
2.2.7	Aileu Resource and Training Centre – locally directed and strengths-based community development in action	41
2.2.8	PermaYouth Camp 2024 – planting water, growing communities	44
2.2.9	Oral Health Education Project – <i>Kose Nehan (Brush Your Teeth)</i>	46
2.2.10	Project Administration Support Officer visit to Aileu – maintaining our relationships	46
3	Financial Summary 2024	49
4	Outlook for 2025	51
Attachments		
1	Friends of Aileu Community Committee membership (August 2024)	55
2	Friends of Aileu Governance and Relationships (January 2024)	57
3	East Timor Partnership Project: Management Arrangements (August 2024)	59
4	Friends of Aileu flyer (December 2024)	61
5	Aileu's Culture and Traditions How Aileu got its name: The story of Dom Baumeta	63
6	Financial summary, calendar year 2024	67



Timor-Leste: one of Australia’s nearest neighbours

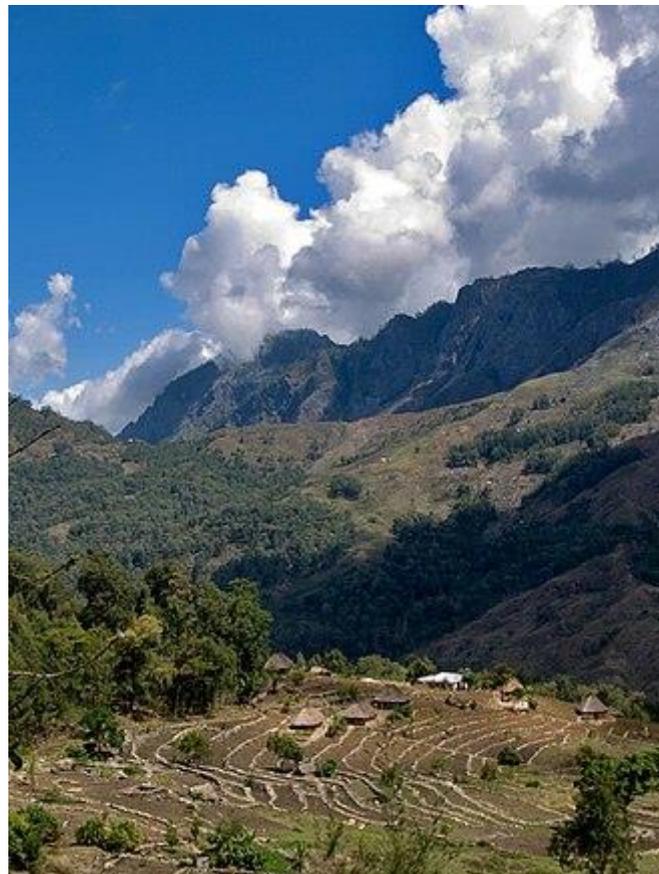


Aileu Municipality, a largely mountainous, partly forested area of 790 km² with significant areas of agricultural use, is home to some 54,300 people (some 9,380 households), most of whom live in 139 Aldeias (small hamlets) that are administered as 33* Sucos (villages), grouped into 4 Administrative Posts (Aileu Vila, Laulara, Lequidoe & Remexio)

* 2 new Sucos were created in early 2025, increasing the total number of Sucos to 35.



Dom Baumeta Statue, Malere / The traditional symbol of Aileu, Ai-Kleuk, Suku Liurai



Aileu: a view over rural houses beside terraced vegetable gardens, with coffee groves under shade trees in the valley, towards partially vegetated hills and distant mountains

1 An introduction and some highlights from 2024

1.1 This report, the project and its governance

This **Friends of Aileu Annual Report** covers the calendar year 2024, highlighting the main activities of the **Friends of Aileu Community Committee** and the **East Timor Project**, and the community development activities undertaken by our partner organisations in Aileu, Timor-Leste

The Annual Report has been prepared with and for the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, a joint Working Group of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, whose Terms of Reference were last updated in January 2023.

The report is presented to **Merri-bek and Hume City Councils** and will be made available to Friends of Aileu's partner organisations in Australia, Aileu and Timor-Leste, to our donors and supporters, and to the broader communities of Merri-bek, Hume and Aileu.



Strategic planning workshop, November 2024: Friends of Aileu Community Committee members, community members, Council staff and facilitator Michael Henry

Standing: Glenyys Romanes, Richard Brown, Jose Pires, Dominique Wiehahn, Michael Henry, John Rutherford, Aoife Carli Hannan and Petr Svoboda

Kneeling: Heather Bridges, Antoninho Dos Santos, Anne Jungwirth, Karla Collrick, Celia Chung and Mark Riley

Front: Chris Adams (Other workshop participants: Veronica Pradel and Paul O'Sullivan)

The Friends of Aileu Community Committee held a strategic planning workshop in November to assist the Project Team prepare an updated **Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan, 2025 - 2030** and a draft updated **Friendship Agreement 2025 - 2030**, which will be presented to the 2 Councils for their consideration in early 2025, together with this Annual Report.

The **Project Reference Group**, a sub-committee of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, whose members are Anne Jungwirth, Glenyys Romanes, Glenda Lasslett, Richard Brown, Carlo Carli and Joe Caputo, has continued to provide the Project Team with valuable additional guidance between Committee meetings.

The **East Timor Project Team** comprises the Project Officer (Christopher Adams) and the Project Administration Support Officer (Aoife Carli Hannan), who are each employed by Merri-bek City Council at 0.5 EFT.

Merri-bek City Council manages the **East Timor Project Cost Centre** (the budget for employee salaries and materials and services), with Hume City Council reimbursing Merri-bek for 50% of actual expenses on a quarterly basis.

Merri-bek City Council also manages two separate **Balance Sheet accounts** (Friends of Aileu Donations & Fundraising and Friends of Aileu Fundraising Sales), that receive 100% of net donations and fundraising. 100% of these publicly raised funds are used by Friends of Aileu's to support for community development activities in Aileu.

1.2 Some 2024 highlights in Merri-bek and Hume

The Year got off to a great start with the return to CERES in February of the **Grassroots Gathering fundraiser for Aileu**, organised by Grassroots Gatherings Inc, attracting some 300 people and raising \$9,500 for youth art and environmental work in Aileu.



**Grassroots Gathering for Aileu in the CERES pavilion, February 2024:
Standing are guest speakers: Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Bill Nicholson
and visual artists Aretha Brown and Bec Soares**

The year's activities continued with the annual **Trivia Quiz** at Brunswick Town Hall in June, attracting some 100 people and raising \$12,100 for fundraiser for the Aileu Scholarship Program.



Trivia Quiz fundraiser / In The Spirit of Togetherness

The year was capped off in November, when Friends of Aileu, together with the **Australia East Timor Association (AETA)**, hosted the ***In the Spirit of Togetherness fundraiser*** for the **Timorese Association in Victoria (TAV)** and the **Melbourne East Timor Activity Centre (METAC)**, at which the new members of the recently re-established TAV committee were introduced to the community.

Each of these events was successful, not only in fundraising, but also, and at least as important, in strengthening the relationships between the Friends of Aileu, partner organisations and members of our communities.

1.3 Some 2024 highlights in Aileu and Timor-Leste

Following Timor-Leste's 2023 parliamentary elections, which resulted in a change of government, a new executive and management team for the **Aileu Municipal Authority** was sworn in in January 2024.

The **Aileu Friendship Commission** was convened by the President of Aileu Municipality several times during the year and provided the nominations for the Aileu University Scholarship Program and oversight of the organisations and projects supported by Friends of Aileu.

During 2024, Friends of Aileu provided financial support for community development activities in Aileu, including:

- An allowance for operational costs of the **Aileu Friendship Commission**, using uncommitted funds carried over from 2023
- A contribution to the operational costs of the **Aileu Municipal Youth Centre**, which assisted the Aileu Friendship Commission to manage the Aileu University Scholarship Program with uncommitted funds carried over from 2023

- The **Aileu University Scholarship Program**, which used funds raised at the annual Trivia Quiz fundraiser in 2023 and the Hume City Council education donation, to cover the tuition fees of 16 young people from Aileu studying at universities in Dili. This included partial tuition fee support for the Secretary of the Aileu Friendship Commission to undertake Year 2 of a 2-year Master of Management, Education, at Cristal Institute in Dili, plus funding for a Bachelor of Medicine graduate to undertake a specialist English language course at GEM Institute, Dili



Aileu Scholarship Program graduates

- **Teacher Education Scholarships**, covering the tuition fees of 7 young people from Aileu studying at the **Baucau Teachers College**, which used funds from the Hume City Council 2023/24 education donation



Baucau Teachers College graduates

- Support for agreed community development activities, including further development of the Kadalak Dame garden project, and operational costs of the **Aileu Resource and Training Centre** with uncommitted funds carried over from 2023



ARTC's Kadalak Dame garden / Participants at 2024 PermaYouth Camp

- Support for the participation of 60 young people from 12 Aileu villages in the **2024 PermaYouth Camp** in Fatuqueru, Ermera Municipality, organised by **Permatil (Permacultura Timor-Leste)** and the **PermaYouth Association of Timor-Lorosae**, with the funds, coordination and follow-up with participants on their actions plans being managed by the **Aileu Anan Association (AILA)** assisted by the **Aileu University Students Association (KEUMA)**, with funds raised at the **2024 Grassroots Gathering for Aileu**.

Our friendship with Aileu and the contribution to community development activities of Aileu partner organisations has been able directed by the work of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and the Committee's Project Reference Group.

The support of many volunteers and staff who assisted with events, and of the many businesses and individuals who made donations or attended fundraising events and other activities, is most appreciated, along with the participation especially over the recent years of **Grassroots Gatherings Inc** which has helped us reach a younger audience with the messages of friendship.

Finally, the support of the **Merri-bek and Hume City Councils** has been fundamental to the success of the friendship relationship and the ability to work with Aileu partner organisations on community development activities such as those highlighted above.

2 A summary of 2024 activities and outcomes

2.1 Working together as a community to sustain and develop our friendship with Aileu: Activities in Australia and in Merri-bek and Hume

2.1.1 The friendship relationship, its governance and implementation

2.1.1.1 Friendship Agreement and Municipal Cooperation Agreements

The friendship relationship with Aileu is guided by:

- The **Friendship Agreement (Moreland - Hume - Aileu) 2020**, which has been renewed periodically since the signing of the initial **Memorandum of Understanding** on friendship with Aileu, and the **Statement of Principles for Victorian Local Governments Working in East Timor**, both the latter having been signed in May 2000
- The **Municipal Cooperation Agreements (Moreland and Hume) 2016**, with respect to Aileu.

2.1.1.2 Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan and Community Committee

Actions undertaken to realise the intent of the friendship relationship are guided by the **Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan (2020)** and the deliberations of the **Friends of Aileu Community Committee**.

The **Friends of Aileu Community Committee**, formerly an Advisory Committee of Merri-bek City Council under the *Local Government Act 2020*, with Hume City Council representation, was re-established in 2023 as a joint working group of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils with updated Terms of Reference and a refreshed membership.

Community Committee membership as of August 2024 is shown at **Attachment 1** (page 55).

Councillor representatives for 2024 were:

- Cr Naim Kurt, Mayor Hume City Council (Committee Chair for 2024)
- Cr Joseph Haweil, Hume City Council
- Cr Adam Pulford, Mayor, Merri-bek City Council.

Council representatives, appointed December 2024 for 2025, are:

- Cr Adam Pulford, Merri-bek City Council (Committee Co-Chair for 2025)
- Cr Chris Miles, Merri-bek City Council
- Cr Jarrod Bell, Mayor, Hume City Council (Committee Co-Chair for 2025)
- Cr Naim Kurt, Hume City Council

The Community Committee met 5 times during 2024, in February, April, June, August and December (the October meeting having been cancelled as it fell within the caretaker period for the 2024 Council elections).

Several meetings were hybrid, allowing people unable to be there in person to participate on-line, including friends from Timor-Leste and Aileu.

Guests attending meetings during 2024 were:

- Thomas Denning, Victoria University Community Development student on industry work placement with Merri-bek City Council and Friends of Aileu
- Mara Baviera, Climate Resilience Integration Lead (Merri-bek)
- Petr Svoboda, Social Policy and Projects Officer (Merri-bek)
- Michael Henry, strategy planning workshop facilitator
- Tiernan Nile Ali, RMIT International Relations student
- And on-line from Aileu,
 - Abílio de Araujo (President, Aileu Anan Association,
 - José Valente (Secretary, Aileu Friendship Commission),
 - Joaquinho dos Reis Mendonça (Administration, Finance and Programs, Aileu Resource and Training Centre).

On 23 November, Friends of Aileu Community Committee conducted a half-day workshop to help develop a renewed Strategy Plan and a draft Friendship Agreement for the period 2025 to 2030, to be presented for Council consideration in early 2025.



Strategy Planning workshop

Participants in the workshop were:

- Community Committee members:
 - Anne Jungwirth
 - Dominique Wiehahn
 - Glenyys Romanes
 - John Rutherford
 - Paul O'Sullivan
 - Richard Brown
 - Antoninho Francisco (Chico) dos Santos

- Community members
 - Mark Riley (former Merri-bek councillor)
 - Jose Pires (Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre) who gave a short talk about his own and his family's journey from East Timor as refugees in 1975 to the present
- The Project Team's Christopher Adams and Aoife Carli-Hannan
- Merri-bek staff Veronica Pradel and Petr Svoboda and Hume staff Karla Collrick and Celia Chang
- Michael Henry (workshop facilitator and a member of Port Phillip Friends of Suai).

Other committee members had opportunities to contribute input direct to the Project Team and at the meeting of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee in December 2024 and in early 2025.

Friends of Aileu's Governance and Relationships arrangements as of January 2024 are illustrated at **Attachment 2** (page 57).

You may [Contact the Project Officer](#) for more information about the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, Friends of Aileu activities in Merri-bek and Hume and the activities of partner organisations that we support in Aileu.

2.1.1.3 East Timor Partnership Project

The friendship relationship is supported by the **East Timor Partnership Project** of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils established by agreement between the then Moreland City Council and Hume City Council in April 2000 and has been periodically renewed since then.

The Partnership Project is resourced by a budget allocated to **Merri-bek City Council's East Timor Project Cost Centre**, with Hume City Council reimbursing Merri-bek for 50% of actual expenditure on a quarterly basis. The total Cost Centre expenditure (salaries and materials and services) for calendar year 2024 (2nd half of 2023/24 and 1st half of 2024/25) was \$123,878, shared 50/50 by the 2 Councils.

2.1.1.4 East Timor Project Partnership Project Liaison Group

The East Timor Project Partnership Project Liaison Group (comprised of Merri-bek Director Community, Hume Director City Services and Living and the relevant Managers, Unit Managers / Coordinators of both Councils and the Project Officer) meets at least annually, meet this year on 4 July 2024:

- Reviewing the operation of the East Timor Project and the Friends of Aileu Community Committee
- Agreeing to support a recommendation to the CEO for the Project Administration Support Officer to work for up to 5 days in Aileu, following a period of annual leave taken in Timor-Leste and for which all international travel costs were to be met privately

- Noting a range of upcoming Friends of Aileu events and related community activities planned for later in 2024 and into 2025 including
 - A planned event in May 2025 for the 25th anniversary of Friends of Aileu
 - A possible Council / Friends of Aileu delegation to Dili and Aileu for the planned Friendship Conference in 2025
 - Timorese community events throughout 2025 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the arrival in Australia of the first refugees from East Timor in August 1975
- Agreeing that the Project Officer would prepare a letter renewing the current **Management Arrangements** for the East Timor Partnership Project for agreement between the Directors of the 2 Councils - see the August 2024 re-statement of the Management Arrangements and letter of agreement at **Attachment 3** (page 59)

2.1.1.5 East Timor Project Team

The East Timor Partnership Project is coordinated by the **Project Team** comprised of the Project Officer East Timor (Chris Adams) and the Project Administration Support Officer (Aoife Cari Hannan) both now working 0.5 EFT. Cass Alexiou of the Community Venues team worked part-time on the project during a period of leave taken by Aoife.

The Project Team hosted Thomas Denning, a final year student for Bachelor of Community Development at Victoria University, for a 200-hour industry placement from 23 April to 3 October.

Thomas brought enthusiasm, energy to the Project Team, contributing new perspectives, experiences and skills, while:

- Assisting in planning and executing the Trivia Quiz fundraiser, including soliciting donations for prizes and auction items from local businesses for this large fundraising event
- Completing a review of the Friends of Aileu volunteer recruitment and retention processes and drafted a new volunteer engagement program aligned with *Gideon Rosenblatt's Engagement Pyramid*
- Engaged in numerous community activities including information stalls at Council events and East-Timorese community cultural events
- Also working with the Community Development and Social Policy Unit, Thomas:
 - Applied Permaculture principles to a *Theory of Change Framework*, developed a visual communication tool, and provided contextual information on the intersection of community development practice, policy development and permaculture

- Reviewed the current *Growing in Public Spaces* guidelines and provided advice on taking a community development approach in the review and development of the revised guidelines.

2.1.1.6 Registration as a fundraiser

Following advice from **Consumer Affairs Victoria CAV**, Merri-bek City Council resolved in November 2023 to seek **Merri-bek City Council - Friends of Aileu** being registered as a **fundraiser** under the **Fundraising Act 1998 (Fundraising Regulations 2019)**. This registration (No. FR0017263) was granted by CAV in April (effective from 20 March 2024).

Registration achieves compliance in respect of fundraising activity and will enhance the attractiveness of Friends of Aileu to members of the public, partner organisations and existing and potential supporters and donors.

During 2024 an application was also made to the **Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission (VGCCC)** for **Merri-bek City Council – Friends of Aileu** to be declared a **community or charitable organisation** under the **Gambling Regulation Act 2003 (Gambling Regulations 2015)**.

The VGCCC declined to make this declaration advising that Friends of Aileu (a project of Council) did not meet all governance requirements of a legal entity.

VGCCC officers also advised that local government councils (i.e. Merri-bek City Council) could not be declared a community or charitable organisation, and nor could local government councils be exempted from the requirement to be declared, as are some other mainly educational organisations.

The VGCCC decision means Friends of Aileu is not permitted to undertake any gaming activity (e.g.: small raffles, which have typically raised only about \$1,000 each year). This does, however, serve as a reminder of the need to look for other avenues to raise funds, recognising the current cost-of-living pressures and the multitude of causes people are invited to support.

2.1.2 Communications

2.1.2.1 Key Messages

Friends of Aileu's key messages and calls to action were refined throughout the year, with updates made to the layout and messages on the Friends of Aileu Page on Merri-bek City Council's website. An updated version of the Friends of Aileu flyer (DL size) published in December 2024 - see copy at **Attachment 4** (page 61).

2.1.2.2 Website and Social Media

A start was made on changes to the layout and content of the [Friends of Aileu page on the Merri-bek City Council website](#) to better emphasise key messages, calls to action and information on current news and events. This work will continue in 2025.

[Friends of Aileu Facebook page](#) was used to provide information on upcoming activities and events and news from Aileu.

The Community Committee identified more sophisticated and varied use of Social Media as an important improvement to achieve better, considering both broad community audiences and more targeted audiences, considering their media and style preferences. The Project Team will continue discussions with the 2 Councils' Communications Teams on this issue during 2025.

In October Tiernan Nile Ali, International Relations graduate of Monash University, expressed interest in the Friends of Aileu Community Committee. He subsequently met with the Project Team, attended the Fawkner Festa and a Community Committee meeting, with a view to contributing to the friendship relationship and the work of the Committee.



Header Pages: Facebook Page / Digital newsletter

2.1.2.3 Friends of Aileu digital newsletter

The Friends of Aileu digital newsletter was published four times during 2024, in January, May and October, providing more detailed news of events and activities in Merri-bek and Hume, and in Aileu.

These newsletters can be accessed on the Merri-bek website at [Friends of Aileu](#) under Friends of Aileu News, and have been shared on the [Friends of Aileu Facebook page](#).

Subscriber numbers have grown from an initial 70 to 300, including 30 signed up at Friends of Aileu and Council events in 2024.

Response to the newsletter has been good, with numerous compliments from readers and engagement statistics (for the first 7 editions to May 2024) showing that:

- 45% to 60% of recipients opening the newsletter
- 6.6% to 12% of recipients opening an internal link.

Efforts will continue to grow the distribution list and recipients' engagement with the newsletter.

Campaign Monitor, the platform for the newsletter, was also used for event information and invitations throughout the year.

You may [Subscribe to the Friends of Aileu newsletter here](#)

2.1.3 Community Partnerships

A major strength of Friends of Aileu has been the partnerships formed with a range of community organisations who have supported the friendship relationship in a variety of ways.

Friends of Aileu has engaged more strongly with the Timorese community, including helping promote the newly re-established Timorese Association in Victoria (TAV), and working with TAV and others on planning for the celebration in 2025 of 50 years of the Timorese community in Victoria.

With increasing cost and accountability pressures many community organisations have been less able to invest in social and social justice concerns beyond actions closely related to their areas of core business.

These changes, and the reality of competing demands for attention, with community-to-community relationships and community development partnerships with Timor-Leste commanding less media and public attention than the earlier resistance and self-determination struggles and the associated and now largely resolved crises, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain or achieve the same buy-in of interest and financial and in-kind support that was once more readily available.

2.1.3.1 Merri Health

Merri Health and previously the Moreland Community Health Service, have been highly valued partners of Friends of Aileu over many years, providing expertise, equipment and donations to support the work of the Aileu Municipal Health Service and the Uma Ita Nian Clinic and its St Francis Assisi Disability Workshop.

Merri Health provided donations to Friends of Aileu of \$20,000 in 2019/20, and \$25,000 each in 2020/21 and 2022/23. These funds were used to support project partners in Aileu implement a range of projects addressing social determinants of health, through improvements in revegetation, water conservation and supply, agriculture, food security and nutrition, as well as support for the operation of the Aileu Municipal Health Service including efforts to provide relief to communities affected by restrictions imposed during the covid-19 pandemic.

We hope to renew the partnership with Merri Health in the near future, now that its merger with Banyule Community Health has been completed, noting that in March 2025 the merged organisations adopted the new name **Holstep Health**.

2.1.3.2 Dental Health Services Victoria, North Richmond Community Health and others – *Kose Nehan* Project

Dr Martin Hall, who initiated the **Oral Health Education Project (*Kose Nehan*)** left **Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV)** early in 2024 to take up the position of Chief Oral Health Advisor with the government of Seychelles. While Martin is no

longer available to lead the **Kose Nehan (Brush Your Teeth)** Project he has continued to provide valuable advice.

The project has advanced to the stage where the 2016-2018 pilot program covering approximately 1,000 students in 6 Aileu schools has been formally evaluated, with both the Aileu Municipal Authority and Timor-Leste Ministry of Health wishing to see it expanded to other schools and other municipalities.



Dental therapist Ana Tilman with Aileu school students

The Borrow Foundation UK has shown interest in further funding the project, but agreement has not been reached on the scope and details of such an expanded project. Borrow Foundation prefer to support a project with an emphasis on ongoing data collection and research, while the Ministry of Health want to see an emphasis on on-the-ground service delivery.

A new **Kose Nehan working group**, convened by Committee member Glenyys Romanes, has been meeting monthly since August. Other members of the working group are retired dentists John Rogers and Jamie Robertson, Natalie Savin, a former Director of North Richmond Community Health and the Project Officer, with Terry Bracks of Balibo House Trust and the Balibo Dental Project also attending some meetings.

The working group is close to developing a proposal for the continuance of the **Kose Nehan** Project and will report to the Friends of Aileu Community Committee early in 2025.

2.1.3.3 CERES and Future Collective

CERES has also been a significant partner of Friends of Aileu since around 2015, including through community engagement visits organised through its former **CERES Global** project annually from 2015 to 2019.

CERES suspended overseas travel during the COVID emergency period, and the CERES Global project is no longer operating.



A previous CERES Global engagement group, working with Aileu farmers on the initial development of the ARTC's Kadalak Dame Garden

Friends of Aileu and CERES continue to explore options for future partnerships.

Ben Walta, the former coordinator of CERES Global, has recently established **Future Collective**, a new not-for-profit organisation that aims to connect Australian communities with communities in India and the Asia-Pacific including Timor-Leste.

The Project Officer has had initial discussions with Future Collective about the possibility of working together to organise a study tour for some university students and other interested people to Timor-Leste for the 1st International PermaYouth Convergence to be held in October 2025 in Fatuqueru, Ermera municipality.

2.1.3.4 Grassroots Gatherings Inc

Grassroots Gatherings has partnered with Friends of Aileu since 2017, focusing on supporting youth-led sustainability and arts initiatives in Aileu.



Guests at a previous Grassroots Gathering event at CERES

The collaboration has predominately involved the facilitation of fundraisers and awareness-raising events to support projects in Timor-Leste, while inspiring a new generation to engage with and support Friends of Aileu. It has also strengthened understanding of the enduring connection between the communities of Merri-bek, Hume, and Aileu.

Grassroots Gatherings collaborated with Friends of Aileu on 2 key events in 2024 - see **Sections 2.1.5.1 and 2.1.6.2** below.



Coffee harvest in Aileu / Serving Wild Timor Coffee / Kor Timor handcrafts

2.1.3.5 Wild Timor Coffee Company, the Rotary Club of Kew Fair Trade and Gift Shop and Kor Timor

Friends of Aileu purchases **Wild Timor Coffee**, sourced from small holdings near Belumhato, Aileu Vila, for fundraising at 50% of the retail price.

Wild Timor Coffee operates as a Social Enterprise (defined as a business that trades to intentionally tackle social problems, improve communities, provide people access to employment and training, or help the environment) and feeds back café donations and a proportion of profits to its help its supplier community improve their coffee

quality and livelihoods, and for other community development projects in Aileu and elsewhere in Timor-Leste.

Friends of Aileu purchases traditional woven tais cloth handcraft, sourced by the **Rotary Club of Kew Fair Trade and Gift Shop** from the not-for-profit women's social enterprise **Kor Timor (Colours of Timor)**, based in Taibesi, Dili, Timor-Leste, for fundraising at 50% of retail price.

Sales of these products provide a small regular income to the Friends of Aileu, with 100% of the profit used to support community development activities in Aileu.

2.1.3.6 Brunswick Zebras Soccer Club

During 2024 Brunswick Zebras Soccer Club donated multiple team sets of superseded jerseys, in a range of both adult and junior sizes, to the Aileu Municipal Youth Centre, who distributed to them to the Rai Klaran football club, and several small local football clubs.



Zebra's uniforms being worn by players of Aileu's Rai Klaran FC

2.1.4 Other Australian groups active in Aileu

Friends of Aileu maintains relationships of varying closeness with several of the other Australian groups active in Aileu. We acknowledge their work and the extra dimensions of friendship they bring to Aileu.

2.1.4.1 Kangaroo Valley Remexio Partnership

Kangaroo Valley Remexio Partnership (KRRP), based in Shoalhaven Shire, NSW, has an ongoing and independent partnership with Remexio Administrative Post of Aileu, currently focussing largely on support for university education.

KVRP has established two houses in Santa Cruz and Manleuana, Dili Municipality, which are managed in collaboration with Padre David Alves, a former Parish Priest of Remexio now based in Maliana, Bobonaro municipality. These houses are made available to selected disadvantaged university students from Aileu and elsewhere in Timor-Leste. KVRP supports the resident students with a living allowance and well as tuition fees.

2.1.4.2 St Joseph's College, Echuca, & St Augustine's College, Kyabram

St Joseph's College, Echuca, and St Augustine's College, Kyabram, continue their independent friendship relationships with schools in Aileu Vila and Lequidoe

Administrative Posts, and with the Aileu Municipal Youth Centre and the *Projetu Montanha* Youth Training Centre.

2.1.4.3 Bayside Social Justice Group

The Sandringham Mission Bayside Social Justice Group, coordinated by Heather McGrath, also has an ongoing and independent partnership with the Church, Schools and community in Asu Mau, Remexio Administrative Post.

Heather McGrath is a regular visitor to Remexio and regular participant in Friends of Aileu Community Committee meetings.

2.1.5 Friends of Aileu's major events

2.1.5.1 Grassroots Gathering fundraiser for Aileu

The 6th annual Grassroots Gathering for Aileu, returned to CERES on 25 February, after the wonderful [Grassroots Gatherings](#) team took a rest in 2023.

Approximately 300 guests participated throughout the afternoon, enjoying:

- A moving Welcome to Country by Uncle Bill Nicholson
- Guest speakers: Gumbaynggirr artist and community activist Aretha Brown and artist Bec Soares
- Music from performers including NoLess, Amutha & Dave Machine, Nû, Bandides, Ruth Rogers-Wright, Chico and Xavi, Timor OanS and Paulo Almeida & Friends, featuring The Black Sistaz.
- Appetising food, good company and more.

A total of \$9,500 was raised for permaculture and youth sustainability activities in Aileu



Grassroots Gathering 2024 at CERES

2.1.5.2 Trivia Quiz fundraiser for Aileu University Scholarship Program

The annual Trivia Quiz fundraiser for the Aileu University Scholarship Program, returned to Brunswick Town Hall, on 14 June after being deferred 2023, while Friends of Aileu's registration as a fundraiser with Consumer Affairs Victoria was finalised.

The event, attended by approximately 100 guests, was a great success, with MC Oliver Clark entertaining guests and keeping up the energy flowing while managing the tight program.

A total of \$12,129 was raised on the night, enough to cover the shortfall for the 2024 Scholarship Program, with over \$10,900 retained to cover the bulk of the budget for the 2025 Scholarship Program.



Guests at the Trivia Quiz fundraiser, Brunswick Town Hall

2.1.6 Council and community events

2.1.6.1 Council festivals

The Friends of Aileu Project Team (Chris and Aoife) and Community Committee members and other supporters engaged with the local community at a range of Council events in 2024, including:

- **Sydney Road Street Party** on 3 March, volunteers Richard Brown and Peter Svoboda
- **Glenroy Festival** on 5 May, volunteers Thomas Denning, Liz Roder and Richard Brown, with:
 - Chico dos Santos and son Xavi, sharing Timorese music, song and stories with children
 - Merri-bek's Peter Svoboda and Rachel Birch, sharing information on the Ballert Mooroop Project



Chico and Xavi at Glenroy Festival and Coburg Night Market

- **Fawkner Festa** on 17 November, volunteers Richard Brown, Tiernan Nile Ali and former Merri-bek councillor Mark Riley

- **Coburg Night Market** on 13 and 14 December, with Chico dos Santos and son Xavi, sharing Timorese music, song and stories with children on December 14.

2.1.6.2 Voices of Liberation Stories and Music of Resistance

A new engagement activity was tried this year, Grassroots Gatherings partnering with [Black Spark Arts and Cultural Centre](#), St Georges Road, Northcote, for the *Voices of Liberation / Stories and Music of Resistance* (see [Grassroots Gatherings Facebook Page](#)) event on 11 May, attended by approximately 25 people.

Guest speakers and performers were:

- Izu Pereira and Dulce Soares from Timor-Leste, speaking on *Decolonisation, Resistance and Contemporary Activism in Timor-Leste*
- Carla Chung, community organiser, speaking her life and experiences in Timor-Leste and Australia
- Chico dos Santos and Xavi, sharing music and stories, and experiences in Timor-Leste and Australia.



Voices of Liberation Stories and Music of Resistance at Black Spark

2.1.7 Networking with other friendship and solidarity groups

2.1.7.1 Victorian Local Government Timor-Leste Network

Alongside the Whole of Victorian Government Program for Timor-Leste, most recently renewed by MOU with Timor-Leste in 2017, representatives of the 13 Victorian Councils with Friendship and/or Municipal Cooperation Agreements with Timor-Leste municipalities and relevant friendship groups, met several times a year as the Victorian Local Government Timor-Leste Network.

Merri-bek and Hume have in the past participated in the activities of the Timor-Leste Program, including by providing workshops and study tour placements for visiting Timor-Leste public servants.

The Victorian Local Government Timor-Leste Network last met in November 2023. Since early 2024 the Whole-of-Government Timor-Leste Program has been inactive, due it is understood to budget constraints and resultant organisational changes.

The Project Officer maintains connections with relevant State Government officers and will advise of any prospects of the Whole-of-Government Program or the Local Government Network being re-activated.

It is proposed that the relevant State Government Ministers and officers, and representative of peak local government organisations be invited to Friends of Aileu's 25th anniversary event in May 2025 and the Friendship Conference in Dili July 2025.



Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network meeting, Brunswick meeting room

2.1.7.2 Supporting activities of other Timor-Leste friendship and solidarity groups

The Project Officer, Project Administration Support Officer, Community Committee members and other supporters have maintained links with other Timor-Leste networks including through the following events and activities.

2.1.7.2.1 [Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network \(AusTimor FN\)](#)

Relevant activities were:

- Hosting an **AusTimor FN members' forum** at Brunswick Town Hall meeting room on 16 March
- Leading coordination of friendship group and **Timorese community organisations** for their events in 2025 by convening monthly on-line meetings from June to November, with a range of events being planned for the 25th anniversary of friendship relationships (May 2000), the 50th anniversary of arrival of refugees from East Timor in Australia (August 1975) and the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence (November 1975)
- Contributing to AusTimor FN planning for the **Friendship Conference** proposed to be held with the Timor-Leste Ministry of State Administration on 10 and 11 July 2025 in Dili,
- Participating in activities of other friendship groups including **Port Phillip Friends of Suai commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the 1999**

Suai Church Massacre, held at the St Kilda South Port Uniting Church on 6 September, with guest speakers Dr Lia Kent, ANU Research Fellow and author, and Balthasar Kehi, Academic and Timorese community leader.

2.1.7.2.2 [Australia East Timor Association \(AETA\)](#),

Activity included participation in:

- **The funeral for AETA founder Professor Helen Hill**, who passed away on 7 May, held on 17 May at the Church of All Nations, Carlton [Obituary: Dr. Helen Mary Hill, OT-L - AETA - Australian East Timor Association](#)

Note also that AETA founding member John Sinnott passed away on 8 January [Vale John Sinnott - AETA - Australian East Timor Association](#)



Helen Hill's funeral / AETA Independence Day dinner

- **The annual AETA Dinner**, commemorating the 2002 Timor-Leste Restoration of Independence, held on 17 May at William Angliss College, with:
 - MC Jose Pires
 - Guest speakers Associate Professor Lisa Palmer and Academic and community leader Balthasar Kehi
 - Jean McLean, giving eulogies for Professor Helen Hill and John Sinnott
 - Izu Pereira and Dulce Soares sharing music and song from Timor-Leste
- **AETA's annual *Honouring The Struggle* event** to commemorate the 1975 Timor-Leste Declaration of Independence, held on 5 December at the St Kilda South Port Uniting Church, with MC John Faine and guest speaker Pat Walsh, speaking on *Are History and Hope Still Rhyming?* [Timor-Leste-25-years-on-from-the-1999-referendum-Are-Hope-and-History-still-Rhyming](#), and the subsequent end of year get together in South Melbourne

2.1.7.2.3 [East Timor Women's Association \(ETWA\)](#)

Activity included participation in the **ETWA exhibition and seminar** on [Tais, Culture & Resilience: Woven Stories From Timor-Leste exhibition](#) of tais from the LO'UD Cooperative from Lautem municipality, Timor-Leste, at Trinity College, Melbourne

University, being the Public opening on 17 September and a Symposium on 21 September.

2.1.8 Networking with the Timorese community

The Project Officer, Project Administration Support Officer, Community Committee members and other supporters organised or participated in the following events and activities of the Timorese community and their organisations.

2.1.8.1 [Melbourne East Timorese Activity Centre \(METAC\)](#)

Participating in several of **METAC's monthly community welcome dinners**, held at the Factory, Belgium Ave, Richmond, on:

- **Friday 3 May**, sponsored by AETA, welcoming newly arrived scholarship students from Timor-Leste
- **Friday 5 July**
- **Friday 4 October**, sponsored by East Timor Women's Association (ETWA)
- **Friday 1 November**, sponsored by Friends of Baucau



METAC dinner with Timor-Leste students / Helen Hill wake at Coburg Town Hall

2.1.8.2 [Pacific Australia Labour Mobility \(PALM\) scheme](#)

Organising 2 events with Carla Chung, Project Worker with [ACRATH \(Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans\)](#), for PALM scheme workers from across Victoria and Timorese community and friends:

- **A social music and dance evening** at Brunswick Town Hall on 6 April
- **A memorial event** for the late Professor Helen Hill at Coburg Town Hall on 18 May

2.1.8.3 [Timorese Association in Victoria Inc \(TAV\)](#)

Hosting the *In The Spirit of Togetherness* social event and fundraiser for the Timorese community and friends, at Coburg Town Hall on 16 November, where the new TAV committee was introduced, and participants enjoyed contemporary and traditional Timorese music, and traditional dance performances by a group of female PALM scheme workers from Pakenham and Warragal.



Timorese Association of Victoria Committee / PALM scheme workers' traditional dance

2.1.8.4 [Greenvale United Soccer Club, Timor Cup 2023/24](#)

The Timor Cup competition commenced on 27 December 2023, with pool games from 27 to 30 December, a New Year's Eve Party on 31 January, further pool games from 2 to 7 January 2024, finals from 10 to 12 January and the Awards Night on 13 January.

The Project Officer:

- Lead the coordination between the **Greenvale United Soccer Club** and the **Timor Cup** organising committee and Hume City Council, who provided support, including:
 - A community event grant, playing fields and facilities, and other in-kind support
 - Use of Town Hall Broadmeadows for the Awards Night
- Attended several pool games between, the finals and the Awards Night at Town Hall Broadmeadows.



Opening ceremony Timor Cup finals / Hume Mayor Cr Naim Kurt presenting Timor Cup

2.1.8.5 [Melbourne Timorese Club \(MTC\)](#) and [Endeavour Hills United Soccer Club](#)

The Project Officer attended the **Melbourne Timorese Club / Endeavour Hills United dinner for the Timor-Leste Restorations of Independence**, on 15 June at Palmyra Hall, Dandenong.

The relatively large Timorese community in the outer south-eastern suburbs is very active, with a strong partnership between the Melbourne Timorese Club and the Endeavour United Soccer Club.



Timorese community choir and traditional dance performances

2.2 Working together in friendship for a more prosperous and sustainable future for Aileu: Activities in Timor-Leste and Aileu

2.2.1 Municipality of Aileu – *Aileu Rai Husar (Navel of the Land)*

The Municipality of Aileu covers an area of 790 km², situated in the highlands to the south of Dili. Land use is predominantly for agriculture, mostly within the river valleys and close to rural dwellings, with surrounding largely forested hills and mountains.

Aileu has a population of 54,300 (2022 Population and Housing Census), growing at 1.5% pa and with a median age of 21.4 years.

2,970 people (5.4%) live in urban Aileu town and 51,430 (94.6%) live in 139 small rural hamlets (Aldeias).



Seloi Craik lake and rice fields / Aileu market

Aileu Municipality (formerly Aileu District) is made up of 4 Administrative Posts or Postus (the former Sub-districts) of Aileu Vila, Laulara, Lequidoe and Remexio. The 4 Administrative Posts (Postus) contain 139 Aldeias (hamlets or sub-villages), which are organised into 33 geographically defined Sucus (villages) for administrative and representative purposes.

In December, Aileu reclaimed a key part of its heritage, re-dedicating the renovated Indonesian-era statue of historical-legendary leader Dom Baumeta at the roundabout opposite the Aileu Hospital and Health Centre and the Dom Baumeta Gardens, which were also renovated over the period 2024-2025.

See the ceremony here, where PM Xanana Gusmão exhorted the people of Aileu not to forget their history: [Serimonia Kore Korente Hosi Estatua Dom Aileu Baumeta PM Xanana Husu Keta Haluha Istorja](#)

The legend of Dom Baumeta refers to the legend tree at Suku Liurai where the root of a banyan fig tree grew to maturity without a branch or leaf. The tree developed into a twisted shape that looked like a chair; its unique appearance made it famous as the chair of Dom Baumeta, which eventually gave rise to the name 'Aileu', from Ai (= tree in Tetun) + leu (= twisted in Mambai).

See the statue of the bent tree chair at Ai-Kleuk, Bandeira-Hun, Suku Liurai - see page 5 above and **Attachment 5** (page 63): Aileu's Culture and Traditions-How Aileu got its name: The story of Dom Baumeta.

You can get some other glimpses of other aspects of Aileu from these YouTube videos: [Aileu from the air](#), [Travel to Aileu - Hello Beautiful Timor | Halo Bonita Timor](#), [Aileu Timor-Leste](#), [Perfil Suku Liurai](#) and [Prosesu Suku Uma Lulik Hohulu Aileu](#).

A major highlight for the people and Aileu and Timor-Leste as a whole was the visit by Pope Francis from 9 to 11 September. Hundreds of thousands travelled from all parts of the country gathered for the open-air mass at Tasi Tolu, Dili. On 10 September

2.2.2 Aileu Municipal Authority – coming together to build Aileu for the future

Following Timor-Leste's 2023 Parliament election, new appointments were made in early 2024 to the newly designated [Aileu Municipal Authority](#) (formerly the Aileu Municipal Administration, headed by the outgoing Municipal Administrator, Mr Abel da Conceição):

- Mr João Bosco dos Santos, [President of the Aileu Municipal Authority](#)
- 3 Municipal Secretaries:
 - Mr José Vicente Vilanova, Administration and Finance
 - Mrs Victória Mesquita do Rêgo, Planning, Investment and Integrated Development
 - Mr Rogério da Conceição, Social Affairs and Community Organisations
- Other newly appointed or re-assigned Directors and Managers.



Left photo: Minister Tomas Cabral with Municipal President Joao Bosco dos Santos
Right photo: Inauguration of the 3 new Municipal Secretaries

You can see more about the Aileu Municipal Authority, including its Vision and Mission statements and services on the [Aileu Municipal Portal](#) (currently a work in progress).

While it is understood that capital and operational budgets have been severely constrained over the last couple of years, the Aileu Municipal Authority and local

service departments or agencies, working in areas including health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, have been very active.

Significant progress has also been made in improving local services and facilities, and managing construction of new and extended public buildings, and reconstruction projects on old public buildings, public open spaces and roads and bridges.

Severe wet season damage to roads and bridges, and disruptions to projects under construction, continue to impact on budgets and people's ability to go about the daily business, including getting produce to markets.

Increased use of polyhouses (greenhouses) has enabled irrigation during the dry season and storm protection during the wet season, improving the volumes, quality and diversity of agricultural produce available for consumption and sale at markets and shops locally and in Dili.



Aileu Municipal Consultative Council members and municipal officers, December 2024, with Municipal President Mr João Bosco dos Santos (blue suit centre)

Community input to budgets, planning and execution of government-funded activities and projects is gradually being improved through the work on the advisory **Municipal Consultative Council** and better coordination across departments.

2.2.3 Aileu Friendship Commission – working with Friends of Aileu

The Aileu Friendship Commission (AFC) is convened by Municipal President, Mr João Bosco dos Santos, or one of the 3 Municipal Secretaries.

The AFC includes representatives of the NGOs and community organisations supported by Friends of Aileu and other Aileu community representatives, and provides advice and oversight on:

- Management of the Aileu University Scholarship Program, largely undertaken by Mr José Valente, AFC Secretary and General Manager of the Aileu Municipal Youth Centre, including calling for EOIs for vacancies on the scholarship program, selection of beneficiaries, signing of study

agreements, payment of monies for tuition fees and monitoring and reporting on students' progress

- Proposals for funding or other support from Friends of Aileu for community development activities, which are endorsed by the Aileu Municipal President and forwarded to the Project Officer by the AFC Secretary for consideration including discussion with the Friends of Aileu Community Committee
- Reporting by the implementing organisation of expenditure against budget and on the activities and outcomes of organisations, programs and projects supported by Friends of Aileu.

Friends of Aileu provided \$1,530 for the operating costs of the Aileu Friendship Commission, which met regularly throughout the year.



Aileu Friendship Commission Secretary and Youth Centre Manager with:
Left photo: Scholarship students signing agreements with Municipal Secretary
Right photo: Director and Program Manager Aileu Resource and Training Centre

2.2.4 Aileu Municipal Youth Centre – promoting youth as active healthy citizens

During 2023, Friends of Aileu provided \$1,530 for operational costs of the [Aileu Municipal Youth Centre](#), in view of their excellent program for youth and the assistance they provide to the Aileu Friendship Commission.

2.2.5 Aileu University Scholarship Program – developing the next generation of leaders

In 2024, the **Councillor Andy Ingham Aileu University Scholarship Program** paid the tuition fees of 17 young people (12 male and 5 female) studying at several universities in Dili, at a total cost of \$10,674 (\$8,681 raised through the annual Trivia Quiz, plus the \$1,193 unspent funds from the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Hume City Council education donations).

Throughout the year, José Valente, Aileu Friendship Commission Secretary, arranged to meet with most of scholarship students in Dili and Aileu, including a meeting with many of the students' parents.

By the end of 2024, 16 of the 17 scholarship recipients had progressed as below and in the following Table:

- José Valente da Costa, continuing from 2023, had completed semesters III & IV of his 2-year Master of Management (Education) course, and proposes to continue study in 2025 to complete a double Masters
- 4 students continuing from 2023 graduated from Bachelor courses (8 semesters over a minimum of 4 years)
- 3 students continuing from 2023 graduated from Diploma courses (6 semesters over a minimum of 3 years)
- 2 students continuing from 2023 completed semester VII and practical experience for Bachelor courses
- 2 students continuing from 2023 completed semesters IV & V
- 4 new students commencing in 2024 completed semesters I & II

The 17th student is Olga Falção, a new scholarship recipient in 2024. She had recently graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine from UNTL and completed a Level 1 Intermediate English course at ETDA (both self-funded). Olga is currently undertaking a Master of Public Health (on-line) through Sati Mutiara University, Medan, Indonesia (75% scholarship), while volunteering with the [NGO HIAM Health](#), the [Aileu Municipal Health Centre](#) and the [Rotaract Club of Aileu](#).

Olga's 2024 scholarship was for a specialist course in English for Medicine and Health at GEM Institute, to be completed in preparation for seeking a scholarship for a Masters in Paediatrics in Australia. Unfortunately, the English for Medicine and Health course did not proceed due to insufficient registrations. If this is the case again in 2025, Olga intends to enrol in the English for Work and Life course at GEM Institute.



Scholarship students with Municipal Secretary and Friendship Commission Secretary

Aileu University Scholarship Program		
Scholarship recipients for the 2024 academic year		
Name	Qualification and/or Course (Semesters studied) 2024	Institution
José Valente da Costa	Master Management, Education (m III & m IV) - graduated (prior self-funded Bachelor of Psychology at ISC)	Cristal Institute (ISC) Proposes to complete double Masters Public Administration in 2025 self-funded
Elias do Carma Mendonça	Bachelor Engineering (VIII) - graduated	National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL)
Domingos dos Santos	Bachelor Petroleum (VIII) - graduated	Dili Institute of Technology (DIT)
Joel Timóteo dos Santos Sarmiento	Bachelor ICT (VIII) - graduated	Institute of Business (IOB)
Meliana de Jesus Carvalho	Bachelor of Information Science (VII & VIII) - graduated	Institute of Business (IOB)
Gabrial Araujo	Diploma Engineering (V & VI) - graduated	Oriental University of Timor-Lorosae (UNITAL)
Marçiana Soi Martins	Diploma ICT (V & VI) - graduated	Institute of Business (IOB)
Pascoal Noronha	Diploma Multimedia (V & VI) - graduated	Institute of Business (IOB)
Eduardo S. Caldeira	Bachelor Engineering (VII & practical)	National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL)
Agostinho de Jesus Alves	Bachelor Engineering (VII & practical)	Dili Institute of Technology (DIT)
Feliçiana Tersa Martins	IT (IV & V)	Cristal Institute (ISC) Student with a disability
Saturnino Mendonça	IT (IV & V)	Cristal Institute (ISC)
Hermenegildo Barbara Ximenes	Engineering (I & II)	Cristal Institute (ISC)
Arcanзу Maria	Engineering (I & II)	Cristal Institute (ISC)
Dionísio de Jesus	ICT (I & II)	Cristal Institute (ISC)
Flaviana Elisa	ICT (I & II)	Cristal Institute (ISC)
Olga Margarida Barros Falção	English for Medicine and Health – deferred, as this course did not proceed in 2024	GEM Institute Proposes to undertake an appropriate English language course as soon as available

Over the 4 years from 2021, when the scholarship program was reintroduced following a temporary suspension for a review that led to some management changes, until 2024, Friends of Aileu has provided \$41,000 to assist 30 young people (17 male, 13 female) undertake post-secondary studies.

Of these 30 students:

- 1 has graduated with a Master degree (an additional 4 semesters over 2 years)
- 12 have graduated with a Bachelor degree (8 semesters over 4 years minimum)
- 6 have graduated with a Diploma (6 semesters over 4 years minimum).

2.2.6 Teacher Education Scholarships – improving the quality of education

In 2024, Friends of Aileu covered the tuition fees of 7 Aileu students at the [Baucau Teachers College](#) (Instituto Católico para a Formação de Professores, or ICFP), at a total cost of \$4,124, funded from the Hume City Council 2023/24 education donation.

Of the 7 scholarship recipients, 5 were 2023 recipients continuing their studies during 2024, while 2 were new recipients, accepted following recommendations (based on financial need and assessed student commitment) by Margie Beck, former Administrator of ICFP now working for the college part-time from Australia.



Baucau Teachers College graduates

During 2024, the 7 scholarship recipients (4 male and 3 female) had progressed as noted below and in the following Table:

- 1 student continuing from 2023 will graduate with a Bachelor of Education (a 4-year Licentiate degree) in March 2025, and has found initial work a volunteer teacher in Dili
- 2 students continuing from 2023 will graduate with a Bachelor of Teaching (a 3-year degree) and will continue to the 4th year in 2025
- 1 new student commencing in 2024 will graduate with a Bachelor of Teaching (a 3-year degree) and will continue to the 4th year in 2025
- 1 student continuing from 2023 completed Year 2
- 2 new students commencing in 2024 completed Year 1.

Baucau Teachers' College (ICFP) Scholarships Scholarship recipients for the 2024 academic year		
Name	Qualification and/or Year Level	Progress, with initial employment or placement locations, or results where available
Zacarias Pereira da Conceição	Bachelor of Education (Licentiate) Year 4	Maria Auxiliadora Primary School in Comoro, Dili Will graduate in March 2025
Angela Mendonça	Bachelor of Teaching Year 3	Will continue to Year 4 in 2025
Aniçeto Fátima Martins	Bachelor of Teaching Year 3	Will continue to Year 4 in 2025
Agaptio Bere Xavier	Bachelor of Teaching Year 3	Will continue to Year 4 in 2025
Luisa Isobél de Jesus	Year 2	Will continue to Year 3 in 2025
Zelita Doutál Sarmento	Year 1	4HD & 3DI Will continue to Year 2 in 2025
Federisio P. Xavier	Year 1	2HD & 5DI Will continue to Year 2 in 2025

Over the 8 years from the commencement of support for scholarships at Baucau Teachers College in 2017 until 2024, Friends of Aileu has provided \$33,600 to assist 15 young people (7 male, 8 female) to undertake teacher education at the Baucau Teachers College, with:

- 8 having graduated with a Bachelor of Education (4 years study)
- 4 having graduated with a Bachelor of Teaching (3 years study).

All 8 Bachelor of Education graduates have found teaching employment, with several initially engaged as volunteer teachers, others with contract teaching positions at Katilosa Foundation in Baucau (for people with a disability), and both Government schools and Catholic schools in Aileu, Dili and Ermera.



Previous year Aileu graduate Lucia, at Katilosa School for children with a disability

2.2.7 Aileu Resource and Training Centre – locally directed, strengths-based community development in action

During 2024, the **ARTC** continued to manage a range of programs including a Library and an educational pre-history exhibit, children’s reading and Staff member Ana Maria education, IT training, the Kadalak Dame garden project in Aileu Vila, the Manu Casa reforestation, water source protection project in Lequidoe, solar power in remote villages in Lequidoe and the ARTC staff development program.



From right: ARTC Program Manager Joaquinho, Director Natalia and staff

They work with program and project participants to design and implement programs and projects to develop confidence and skills, take on new challenges and, where possible, gain income for their families aiming to improve their lives and the sustainability of their communities.



ARTC’s Computer Training and Children’s reading and education classes

You can see further snippets of the work of ARTC on these Facebook pages: [Director Natália Ximenes](#) and [Program Manager Joaquinho dos Reis](#).

The ARTC’s computer training course has been recognised by INDMO, the national accreditation agency for technical and further education. ARTC also continue to develop their library, the only one serving Aileu, with staff undertaking further training in library management in May.



ARTC Director Natalia at INDMO / Staff at library management training in Aileu

ARTC's Kadalak Dame garden project, inspired by former advisor Sister Rosalva and developed in an ongoing collaboration between ARTC, local farmers and lay workers from the Aileu Vila and Lequidoe parishes, with work beginning during a series of Friends of Aileu / CERES Global community engagement visits over the period 2016-2019.



Working the Kadalak Dame experimental, demonstration, and production garden

The garden is expanding and improving each year, and in August took first prize in local agriculture at the Ministry of Agriculture fair held in Dili to celebrate 25th anniversary of the August 1999 Popular Consultation.



Collecting Kadalak Dame produce / Receiving Ministry of agriculture prize

ARTC continues the development of the Manu Casa Resource and Training Centre. in Lequidoe. Programs operating in partnership with the local community include children's education, women's literacy, enterprise and economic participation, solar lighting for remote households, vegetable and fruit tree cultivation, and re-forestation erosion control and water source protection and enhancement.



Reforestation and water source enhancement Manu Casa Lequidoe

In mid-2024, the Aileu Municipal Authority gave ARTC short notice to vacate the government building they have occupied for almost 20 years, and which has had major repairs made, including with funds from Friends of Aileu. This historic building, formerly an Administration office during the Portuguese and Indonesian periods, is known locally as the *Biblioteka*, as it was initially used as a library following independence, is being converted for use as a local government office and customer service point.

This re-purposing of the *Biblioteka* is part of the redevelopment of the site and adjacent public open space known locally as *Sabraka Laran (the orange tree area)* to a more formal public park and site for civic functions.

The termination of the ARTC occupancy of the *Biblioteka* is one example of many across Aileu, Dili and elsewhere, where the Government has terminated both legal and informal (squatting) occupancies of buildings and land during the year.



Former ARTC office in the Biblioteka / Temporary office in disused government building

An old government building elsewhere in Aileu town has been provided for ARTC to relocate to on a temporary basis. Significant repairs were required to make the new premises safe, secure and weather-proof.

In 2024, Friends of Aileu contributed a total of \$9,956 to support the activities of the ARTC, with the funds used for management and operational costs and an upgrade of the rustic building at the Kadalak Dame garden site and for repairs to the new temporary premises provided for use by ARTC by the Aileu Municipal Authority.

As part of the ARTC's ongoing staff development program, supported with funds from Friends of Aileu:

- Program Manager Joaquin dos Reis and IT trainer Quintão Alves, undertook a Certificate III in Training and Assessment at the Cicanada Foundation Youth

- Vocational Training Centre (Fundasaun Cicanada Sentru Treinamento Vocationál Juventu - STVJ) in Dili
- Staff member Ana Maria graduated in Accounting at UNDIL university.



Ana Maria with parents



Joaninho and Quintão with fellow Cert III trainees

2.2.8 PermaYouth Camp 2024 – planting water, growing communities

The 2024 National PermaYouth Camp, *Kuda Be Hamoris Komunitade (Planting water, growing communities)*, was held from 20 to 25 October at Fatuqueru, Ermera, conducted by the [PermaYouth Association of Timor-Lorosae](#) in collaboration with [Permatil](#), and was attended by 700 participants from across 14 municipalities, including representatives of traditional and local authorities and volunteer facilitators.



Reforestation, food forest and nursery at the PermaYouth site, Remexio, Aileu

Friends of Aileu provided \$3,900 from the 2024 Grassroots Gathering fundraiser for [Aileu to the Aileu Anan Association \(AILA\)](#), for it and the [Aileu Municipality University Students Association \(KEUMA\)](#) to support the participation by 27 young people (23 male and 4 female) from rural communities in the Aileu Vila and Laulara Administrative Posts, in the 2024 PermaYouth Camp

Permatil provided funding for a similar number of participants from Remexio and Lequidoe Administrative Posts, along with other participants from municipalities.

The groups of Aileu Vila and Laulara participants, between 1 and 5 young people from each of 12 aldeias (hamlets or sub-villages), and the others from Remexio and



PermaYouth Camp Fatuqueru, Ermera, October

Lequidoe, each prepared an Action Plan, which is their commitment to implement particular water and land conservation works in their home villages in collaboration with traditional local authorities, as has been done by participants of previous PermaYouth Camps.



Practical water source protection and enhancement, Suku Liurai village

AILA and KEUMA used some of the Friends of Aileu funding to conduct on-site monitoring and evaluation of the water and land conservation works implemented during November and December in 18 sub-villages in the Aileu Vila and Lequidoe Administrative Posts

Permatil and the PermaYouth Association have set up quantitative monitoring at a few selected water and land conservation works, and while results are only beginning to come in, they and qualitative observations and reports from villagers, indicate rapid and significant improvements in the flow, quality and reliability across seasons of water availability.

The Fatuqueru Camp site, which is larger, more accessible than the Remexio site used for the 2023 Camp, and now has more facilities, is planned to be the main site for the [October 2025 International PermaYouth Convergence](#).

See more about [Permatil's water conservation program](#) from this YouTube video.

2.2.9 Kose Nehan Oral Health Education Project

During 2024, Sally Vong, previously of North Richmond Community Health, assisted with obtaining a donation of toothbrushes from Piksters, purchasing toothpaste in Dili and liaising with Dental Nurse Ana Tilman.

Ana has been contracted each year for a week or so, while taking time off from her work with the [Timor-Leste Dental Program](#), to distribute the supplies and provide refresher training for students and teachers at the 6 pilot schools currently participating in the *Kose Nehan* Project.

In October, Ana Tilman delivered refresher training at the 6 schools and distributed 1,300 replacement toothbrushes and 1,000 tubes of toothpaste to 1,300 students, teachers and administrative staff. Sufficient donated toothbrushes are available for two further 6-monthly distributions around April and October in 2025.



Ana Tilman instructing students in oral care at Namoleso and Cotbaru schools

2.2.10 Project Administration Support Officer visit to Aileu

During August, the Aoife Carli Hannan, Project Administration Support Officer, spent 3 days working in Aileu at the end of a private holiday in Timor-Leste.



Aoife Carli Hannan at Aileu Municipal Youth Centre and Resource and Training Centre

Over these 3 days, Aoife met with:

- Mr João Bosco dos Santos, the new Municipal President
- The 3 Municipal Secretaries:
 - Mr José Viçente Vilanova (Administration and Finance),
 - Mrs Victória Mesquita do Rêgo (Integrated Planning, Investment and Development) and

- Mr Rogério da Conceição (Social Affairs and Community Organisations)
- Other managers and staff of the Aileu Municipal Authority
- Mr José Valente da Costa, Director Aileu Technical and Vocational High School, General Manager Municipal Youth Centre and Secretary of the Aileu Friendship Commission, including for a meeting of the Friendship Commission
- Others including:
 - Natália da Conceição Ximenes, Director Aileu Resource and Training Centre, with Joaquin dos Reis and other ARTC staff, including a visit to the Kadalak Dame garden
 - Henrique Rodrigues, SEFOPE
 - Ego Lemos, PERMATIL
 - Bella Galhos, Advisor to President of Timor-Leste.



Aoife at Kadalak Dame garden and Municipal Youth Centre



Aoife with members of the Aileu Friendship Commission and partner organisations at the Youth Centre's Uma Dame (Peace House)

3 Financial Summary 2024

The activities outlined in **Section 2.1** (page 13) and **Section 2.2** (page 33) have been made possible by the strong partnership between Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, the contributions of members of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, other supporters of Friends of Aileu, community members, donors, and local organisations and businesses that have supported fundraising efforts.

See **Attachment 6** (page 67) **Financial summary for calendar year 2024**, comprising:

- 6.1 Income and expenditure totals, Friends of Aileu donation and fundraising accounts, 1 January to 31 December 2024
- 6.2 Income by activity, calendar year 2024 - Donations & Fundraising including sales
- 6.3 Expenditure by project, calendar year 2024
- 6.4 Commitments for 2025, Total funds carried over to 2025 and Uncommitted funds available for 2025 (shortfall).

4 Outlook for 2025

The Friends of Aileu Community Committee and the Project Team look forward to deepening and broadening relationships with the Merri-bek and Hume communities, including working towards better engagement with younger members of our communities.

A focus for the future will be to target efforts at community partnerships and activities that align with interests and concerns of Merri-bek and Hume and broader Australian communities, including those of the First Peoples', of Timor-Leste and of other neighbouring countries of our region.

We also look forward to strengthening the friendship with the people of Aileu through our engagement with the Aileu Municipal Authority and the Aileu Friendship Commission, and through our partnerships with Timor-Leste and Aileu government authorities, and non-government and community organisations.

Following Timor-Leste's 2023 Parliament election, in early 2024 Mr João Bosco dos Santos, was appointed President of the Aileu Municipal Authority, along with 3 new Municipal Secretaries (Mr José Viçente Vilanova, Mrs Victória Mesquita do Rêgo and Mr Rogério da Conceição) and other new Directors and Managers.



Left photo: Minister Thomas Cabral with Mr João Bosco dos Santos, and Right photo: Foreground from right Municipal Secretaries José Viçente Vilanova, Victória Mesquita do Rêgo and Rogério da Conceição

It will be important to build on the short visit by the Project Administration Support Officer in August, to develop strong a working relationship with the new Aileu Municipal Authority, the Friendship Commission and our other Timor-Leste and Aileu partner organisations.

The updated *Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan 2025-2030* will be finalised early 2025 to reflect current priorities and opportunities. A draft updated *Friendship Agreement 2025-2030* will also be prepared (the current Friendship Agreement having been signed in 2020).

Following further consideration of the draft Friendship Agreement 2025-2030 by the Friends of Aileu Community Committee, and discussions with the Aileu Municipal Authority and Friendship Commission, it is proposed to recommend the updated Friendship Agreement and Strategy Plan and for consideration and endorsement by Merri-bek and Hume City Councils at Council meetings in early 2025.

In May 2025, we will mark the 25th anniversary of the signing of the *Statement of Principles for Victorian Local Governments Working With East Timor*, and of the signing of the initial Memorandum of Understanding establishing the friendship relationship with Aileu, The MOU was signed on the occasion of Xanana Gusmão delivering the 13th Blackburn Oration on *The Importance of Community alliances in the Re-building of East Timor*, on 4 May 2000.

Around that date, similar MOUs were signed, establishing the friendship relationships between the Port Phillip City Council and the municipality of Suai Cova Lima, and between the Darebin City Council, the City of Yarra and the municipality of Baucau.



The original friendship and the Blackburn Oration MOU May 2000

It is proposed to celebrate these anniversaries and relationships with a joint event at Coburg Town Hall on Friday 2 May 2025, for which Kirsty Sword Gusmão, Timor-Leste’s UN Goodwill ambassador for Education and former First Lady, has agreed to be guest speaker.

The East Timor Project Team will continue working with the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and convenors and members of the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network (AusTimor FN) on preparations for the Friendship Conference, planned to be held in Dili on 10 and 11 July 2025 (the most recent similar conferences having been held in 2016 in Dili, and in 2014 in Melbourne).



**2016 Dili Conference:
Richard Brown with Minister Tomas Cabral / Friends of Aileu delegation in Aileu**

The Friends of Aileu Community Committee supports having a delegation participate in the Friendship Conference in July, with a prior visit to Aileu (potentially 7-8 July).

The Friendship Conference would also be a good opportunity for a Merri-bek and Hume City Council delegation, during which the updated Friendship Agreement 2025-2030 could be signed by the Timor-Leste partners.

During 2025 major focus areas for the East Timor Project Team and the Friends of Aileu Community Committee will be working with:

- Interested individuals and organisations, locally and in Aileu and Timor-Leste, to develop a plan the next phase of the *Kose Nehan* oral health education project and to seek funding for its implementation



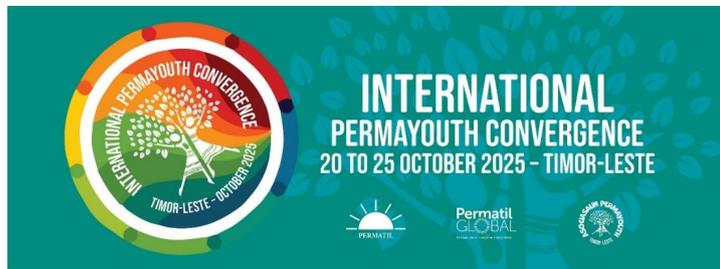
The first refugees to arrive in Darwin, Aug 1975: Pires family / Manny Napoleon

- Melbourne's Timorese community:
 - As they prepare for a series of activities to recognise and celebrate the 50th anniversaries of:
 - The arrival in Australia of the first refugees from East Timor in August 1975
 - Timor-Leste's declaration of Independence in November 1975
 - Seek to play a role lobbying for the rights of and providing support for, Timor-Leste migrant workers on the Australian Government's PALM scheme
- [Permatil Global](#), Permatil Timor-Leste, and the newly founded PermaYouth Association Timor-Lorosae on preparations for the first [International PermaYouth Convergence](#), *Planting Water, Growing Community*, be held from 20 to 25 October 2025, at the PermaYouth Camp site in Fatuqueru, Railaco Administrative Post, Ermera municipality.



PermaYouth: *Planting Water, Growing Community*

- Our local community and our partners in Aileu, including the Aileu Anan Association (AILA) and the Aileu University Students Association (KEUMA), to draw together a small joint delegation to this PermaYouth Convergence sponsored by to take part in this exciting sharing of permaculture learnings, arts, culture and music spread across six days, and showcasing Timor-Leste’s world-leading achievements in promoting and implementing water source protection and enhancement, permaculture and PermaYouth mobilisation.



Permatil Global sponsor of the first International PermaYouth Convergence Fatuqueru, Ermera, Timor-Leste, Oct 2025

The Project Officer will also continue his role as a member of the Permatil Global Public Fund Committee, overseeing the funds raised by or donated to Permatil Global.

All in all, 2025 promises to be an exciting and rewarding year for the Merri-bek - Hume - Aileu friendship relationship, other friendship relationships between Australia and Timor-Leste, and the Timorese community in Melbourne and Victoria, as well as for the people of Aileu and Timor-Leste.



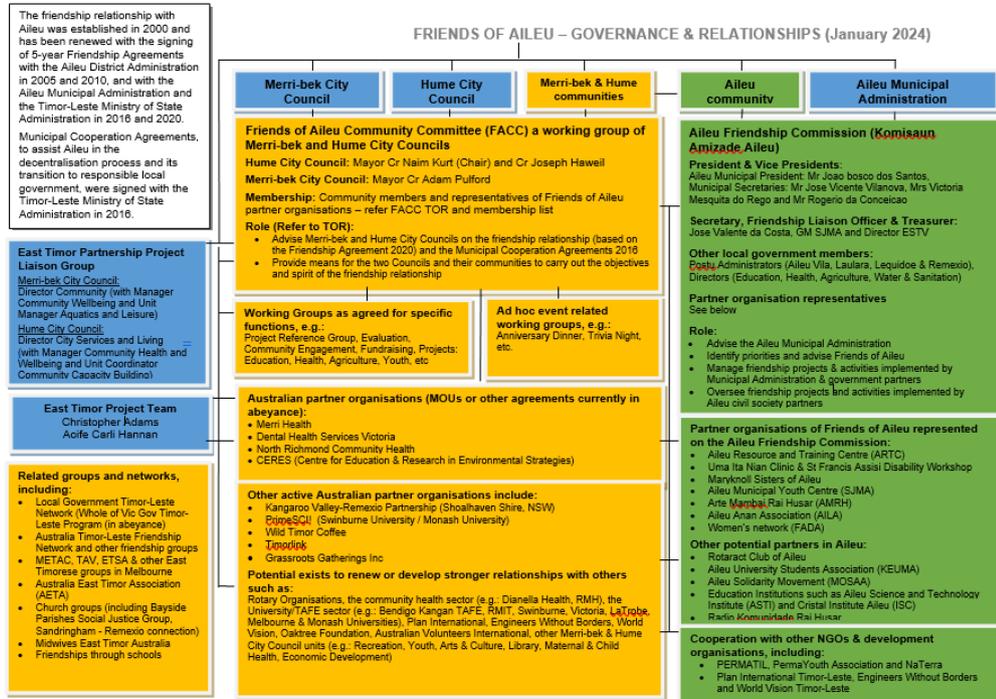
Timorese community and friends celebrating culture and friendship

Attachment 1**Friends of Aileu Community Committee members (August 2024)**

Qualification: Live, work, study or volunteer in Merri-bek or Hume			
Name	City (Organisation &/or Suburb)	Comments	
Cr Naim Kurt	Hume	Hume City Council representative and Committee Chair	Appointed Dec 2023 for 2024 calendar year
Cr Joseph Haweil	Hume	Hume City Council representative	
Cr Adam Pulford	Merri-bek	Merri-bek City Council representative	
Dr Martin Hall	Dental Health Services Victoria (North Fitzroy)	Resigned March 2024 relocated to Seychelles	Partner Organisation representatives, continuing from 2023
Joe Caputo	Merri Health (Brunswick)	Merri Health Board	
John Rutherford	Hume (Broadmeadows)	Community member	Hume Community members continuing from 2023, 5 vacancies
Smiley Sandhu	Hume (Craigieburn)	Resigned August 2024	
Heather Bridges	Merri-bek (Coburg North)		Merri-bek Community members continuing from 2023, 3 vacancies
Paul O'Sullivan	Merri-bek (Brunswick)		
Dominique Wiehahn	Merri-bek (Brunswick West)	Project Lead, RMIT Asia Impact Team	
Anne Jungwirth	Merri-bek (Brunswick West Merri Health Chair)		Special interest members continuing from 2023, no vacancies
Carlo Carli	Merri-bek (Brunswick)	Persons with strong knowledge of and special connections to Aileu and Timor-Leste	
Glenyys Romanes	Merri-bek (Brunswick)		
Richard Brown	Merri-bek (Brunswick West)		
Heather McGrath	Bayside		Persons with strong knowledge of and special connections to Aileu and Timor-Leste
Chico dos Santos	Maribyrnong		
Mark Higginbotham	Maribyrnong		

Attachment 2

Friends of Aileu - Governance and Relationships (January 2024)



Attachment 3 (2 pages)

East Timor Partnership Project: Management Arrangements (August 2024)

a) Letter outlining arrangements (3 pages)

Merr-i-bek Civic Centre
 90 Jial Street
 Cotaba Village, 3058
 T: 0810 949 1111

Postal Address
 Locked Bag 10
 Burnside, Victoria 3096
 merr-i-bek.vic.gov.au

Doc. No: D24245632
Engineer: Christopher Jones
Email: ian@merri-bek.vic.gov.au
Tel: 0424 1234
Mobile: 0475 954 066

Kristen Cherry
 Acting Director City Services and Living
 Hume City Council
 PO Box 119
 DALLAS 3047

Dear Kristen

**EAST TIMOR PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (FRIENDS OF AILEU):
 RENEWAL OF MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

As discussed at the Project Liaison meeting on 4 July 2024, this letter confirms the ongoing management arrangements between Merr-i-bek City Council and Hume City Council for the East Timor Partnership Project.

The current management arrangements are:

- As outlined in Arden Joseph's letter dated 12 May 2021 (D21/1194597), and agreed to in Hector Gaston's letter dated 19 May 2021
- As subsequently amended, to account for the change in status of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee from an Advisory Committee under the Local Government Act to a joint Working Group of our 2 Councils and a renewed membership, with approval from Acting CEO Merr-i-bek on 11 January 2023 (D2023/004695) and from Hume Director City Services and Living on 24 February 2023 (Doc: N172023/00302).

The proposed management arrangements for the coming period are outlined below and are essentially identical to those currently in operation.

- East Timor Project Cost Centre and Friends of Aileu Fundraising**
 Merr-i-bek City Council will manage:
 - The East Timor Project Cost Centre budget and expenditure for salaries and overheads for the Project Officer and Project Administration Support Officer, who are employed by Merr-i-bek on 0.5 FTE each, and for the project operating budget (materials and services)
 - Separately funded provision of Merr-i-bek meeting and function room hire
 - Two Donation Accounts for funds raised by or donated to the Friends of Aileu and their expenditure to support project activities in Timor-Leste.
 Hume City Council will separately manage its own East Timor Project Cost Centre budget to cover limited local operating costs associated with meeting and function room hire at Hume City Council premises and any Council donation to Friends of Aileu for education purposes.



2. Cost-sharing
 Expenditure against Merr-i-bek City Council's East Timor Project Cost Centre budget will be shared equally between the 2 Councils.
 Merr-i-bek officers will:

- Consult each year with Hume counterparts on the proposed budget for Merr-i-bek's East Timor Project Cost Centre for the coming periods
- Invoice Hume City Council at the conclusion of each quarter for 50% of the actual quarterly expenditure recorded in Merr-i-bek's East Timor Project Cost Centre.

3. Friends of Aileu Community Committee
 The Friends of Aileu Community Committee, a joint Working Group of Merr-i-bek and Hume City Councils, with councillor representative(s) appointed by each Council, shall meet bi-monthly operating in accordance with the Terms of Reference adopted January 2023 (Attachment 1).
 These Terms of Reference include the following provisions:

- Appointments of Community members, Special Interest members, Partner Organisation representatives and Co-opted members will be made following responses to a call for Expressions of Interest or to invitations to nominate for vacant positions, taking account of each Councils governance and authorisation arrangements
- The TOR will be reviewed by 30 June in the year following the end of each Council term and be refreshed as required or as otherwise directed by Council or agreed by the Committee.

I propose that we review the TOR and membership the next meeting of the Liaison Group, proposed for tentatively in April-May 2025.

4. The East Timor Project Officer and Project Administration Support Officer
 The Project Officer and Project Administration Support Officer will work with the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and partner organisations:

- Reporting to the relevant Unit Manager (Merr-i-bek) and Coordinator (Hume)
- Supporting the Friends of Aileu Community Committee in accordance with its Terms of Reference (TOR)
- Implementing the Annual Project Action Plan, based on the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan (most recently renewed 2020 and to be renewed once again in 2025) taking account of:
 - The Friendship Agreement between the 2 Councils, the Timor-Leste Ministry of State Administration and the Aileu Municipal Authority – the Friendship Agreement having been most recently renewed in May 2020, with a new Agreement to be submitted to the 2 Councils for renewal under the signatures of their Mayors again in 2025

Merr-i-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911	Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914	普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912	Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915	National Relay Service		
العربية	Arabic	9280 1913	नेपाल	Nepali	9280 0751	33 36 77 or relay@nrrc.com.au		

b) Letter of agreement

- ii. The Municipal Cooperation Agreements between each Council and the Ministry of State Administration, Government of Timor-Leste – the Municipal Cooperation Agreement having been established in 2016 consistent with the Victorian Government MOU with Timor-Leste which was most recently renewed in 2017
 - iii. Other agreements with and inputs from the Aileu Municipal Authority and other Timor-Leste and Australian partner organisations
 - iv. Relevant Council Plans, Policies and Strategies.
5. Project Work Plan and Office Accommodation
- The Project Officer and Project Administration Support Officer (each currently employed 0.5 FTE) will work primarily from Merri-bek's Coburg office and be accommodated at Hume's Broadmeadows office on a part-time basis (for 1 day per week or as otherwise agreed), with relevant IT and other office support being provided by each Council.
6. Project Annual Report
- In the first half of each calendar year, the Project Officer will prepare the Friends of Aileu Annual Report, outlining project activities for the previous calendar year and summarising project outcomes with reference to the Friends of Aileu Strategy Plan, the Friendship Agreement and the Municipal Cooperation Agreements, for consideration by Council (Merri-bek) or Executive Leadership Team (Hume).
7. Project Liaison
- The responsible Directors of each Council will meet at least once per year, or otherwise as agreed, to provide high level direction concerning the Project Work Plan, coordination between the 2 Councils, agreements with partner organisations and any other relevant issues.

Your agreement to these management arrangements would be most appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Eamonn Fennessy
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY
MERRI-BEK CITY COUNCIL
09 August 2024

Our Ref: HCC0529-06
Daphne-Jane Andrew
Telephone: 0419 740 267

13 August 2024

Eamonn Fennessy
Director Community
Merri-bek City Council
Locked Bag 10
Brunswick Vic 3056

Dear Eamonn

**RE: EAST TIMOR PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (FRIENDS OF AILEU):
RENEWAL OF MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

I am writing to confirm our acceptance of the management arrangements between Merri-bek City Council and Hume City Council regarding the East Timor Partnership Project, as outlined in your letter dated 9 August 2024.

We are pleased to formally acknowledge our agreement to the proposed arrangements.

We look forward to continuing to work with Merri-bek City Council and to a successful collaboration.

Yours sincerely



KRISTEN CHERRY
ACTING DIRECTOR CITY SERVICES & LIVING



Attachment 1 – Terms of Reference Friends of Aileu Committee (Jan 2023)

CC

- Bernadette Hetherington, Manager Community Wellbeing, Merri-bek Council
- Kim Critchley, Unit manager Aquatics Leisure and Community Venues, Merri-bek Council
- Julie Andrews – Coordinator Community Capacity Building – Hume City Council

Attachment 4

Friends of Aileu flyer 2024

Friends of Aileu

Linking Merri-bek and Hume communities with Aileu, Timor-Leste.



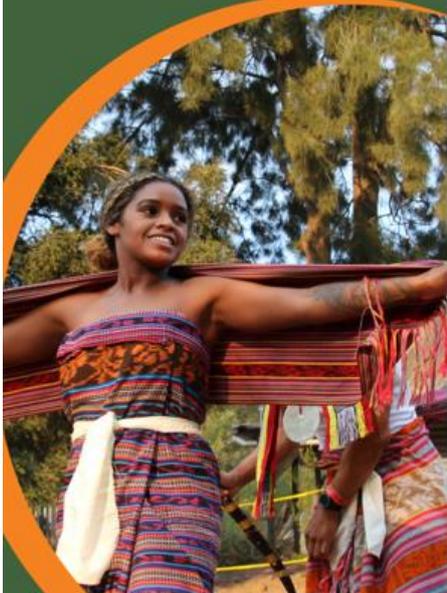
Merri-bek
City Council



HUME

A community-to-community partnership linking Hume and Merri-bek in Melbourne with Aileu, Timor-Leste.

**Based on genuine friendship.
Driven by local community.**



About Aileu

Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor) is one of Australia's closest neighbours. It is also one of its youngest, having only gained independence in 2002. Aileu is a mountainous rural area of Timor-Leste which is home to 50,000 people.



Friends of Aileu

- Our relationship is based on respect, solidarity and sustainability.
- Our friendship involves sharing culture, knowledge, skills and resources.
- Our engagement focuses on education, health and environment.

"I am proud to be part of partnership based on community action, friendship and commitment to making a difference to the lives of people in Aileu."

— Anne Jungwirth, Committee Member



How to Get Involved

- Attend Friends of Aileu community events
- Buy Friends of Aileu Fair Trade Coffee
- Visit our website or contact us via the details below

☎ 0475 954 068

✉ friendsofaileu@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

🌐 [merri-bek.vic.gov.au/friends-of-aileu](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofaileu)

📄 <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofaileu> Find out More



Attachment 5 (4 pages)**AILEU'S CULTURE AND TRADITIONS****The story of Dom Baumeta: How Aileu got its name***As recounted by Mr. Júlio Tilman, Aileu Vila, 2018***Jardim Dom Baumeta, Malere, Aileu Vila*****About the place where a twisted root appeared, to be called Aileu, in Bandeirahun, Suku Liurai, Aileu Vila.***

Bau-Meta was the youngest son of five children. They didn't have anything, so he went out to make a living. One day he went for a walk to the Ri-Telu River, in the Manu-Catí kingdom. After he had walked for a long time, he was tired. He saw a palm wine tree nearby, so he lay down to sleep under the palm wine tree. He was thirsty, and wanted to drink the palm wine, but there wasn't any palm wine. The palm wine would only be ready in the tree in another month's time.

Even though he stayed there for a long time, Bau-Meta never got any palm wine. He thought that some people must be coming and stealing the palm wine. He wanted to find out who was stealing it.

One night, he slept near the palm wine tree. In the morning, when the land was still dark, he was surprised to see a young woman coming down from the tree. She was holding a piece of bamboo that she had used to pour out the palm wine every afternoon.

Bau-Meta grabbed her, trying to take the palm wine that she had got down, but the young woman resisted, and said: 'Young woman said: 'Let me go now.'

Bau-Meta replied: 'I'm not going to let you go. Tell me the truth, why are you coming to steal my palm wine all the time?'

The young woman said 'I'm not stealing it. This is my tree. Because you are stronger than me, I can't run away. Come with me to see my father, so that he can pay you for your palm wine, since you believe that this tree is yours.'

Bau-Meta replied: 'Fine, let's go.'

The two of them walked to the young woman's house. While they were walking, the woman stayed silent. When they got up to Nau-Demesa, the woman said:

The young woman said: 'This is where I live. Wait here for a while, but don't be scared.'

Bau-Meta replied: 'Scared of what?'

Before Bau-Meta had finished speaking, two big pythons appeared. Bau-Meta wasn't surprised, because of what the woman had said to him. Bau-Meta continued to walk along the path, and saw a house made of rock. He went to meet the young woman's parents, to tell them: 'I have come to receive payment for my palm wine'.

Bau-Meta and the young woman walked into the house. The young woman was walking in front. At the same time, one of the large pythons entered, and coiled around Bau-Meta very tightly, to taste his face and body with the tip of its tongue. Bau-Meta didn't show any fear, and he continued to ask for payment for his palm wine. He said to the python: 'I have come to receive payment for my palm wine'.

It was bad luck, the first python let him go, then the other one came and coiled around Bau-Meta even tighter.

Bau-Meta wasn't scared and said again: 'I have come to receive payment for my palm wine'. The young woman that had disappeared, appeared again, and then the python let Bau-Meta go. She called Bau-Meta to go and wash. The young woman wanted Bau-Meta to wear some clothes, but he was just wearing a loincloth.

The two pythons turned themselves over, and they were the father and mother of the young woman. They asked the young man (Bau-Meta): 'Do you want to live here?'

Bau-Meta answered: 'I want to. If you let your daughter marry me.' They agreed to let them marry.

Bau-Meta lived in Nau-Damesa for two years, and in the end, he returned to Aileu / Nunu-Ber-Mau-Hun. Before he returned, the uncles said that the palm wine tree was theirs, because the seed of the palm wine tree had been brought down from Tata Bau Mountain, the young woman was a descendant of Tata Loco clan (sacred house).

There was a celebration in Dili, and they went to it. When they returned to Aileu, the young woman showed the way. On the road on the way back, Bau-Meta didn't see anything he recognised, because he was still in the python's land.

It was only after they got to Ri-Tel that Bau-Meta knew where he was, and then they walked to Cou-Lau-Udo, where the young woman's parents lived. When Bau-Meta arrived, they were still holding a funeral, because they thought that Bau-Meta had died, because he hadn't returned for a long time.

They didn't pull down the tent (temporary shelter) that they had built, because in a few days, the Governor would be returning to Dili from overseas.

Bau-Meta didn't stay in Cou-Lau-Udu for a long time. Bau-Meta went down to Dili because the Governor of Dili was going to give Bau-Meta a Book so that he would become a king. When he was going to return to Aileu, all of the people gathered to receive the Book, with a large party. In these days, Bau-Meta's wife also gave birth to a son.

Even though she had just given birth, Bau-Meta's wife wanted to participate as well in the party. And she went. When she returned home, she saw that her son only had one eye. Her husband Bau-Meta also returned, and he was very drunk.

He asked why she went to the party: 'Why did my son become like this?' His wife responded, 'I don't know, but it doesn't matter'. When Bau-Meta left, a big wind suddenly swirled around. Bau-Meta returned and couldn't find his wife or his son anymore. He didn't know where they had disappeared to.

Bau-Meta just looked at this and said: 'I am a king now. The time has come now. It seems that the Governor has said that this Book is to take the place of my wife'.

They continued the celebrations.

After two years, Bau-Meta went to Dili, with the intention of looking for another wife, and at the same time assist the new governor that had arrived in Dili. He took the Book with him. At night, Bau-Meta slept in the house of the Motael king. The queen took the Book that was hidden under a pillow, and then Bau-Meta heard the queen saying that she didn't trust her husband anymore.

It was daytime, and Bau-Meta returned to Aileu. When he got to the Comoro River, he remembered that he had forgotten the Book at the Motael king's house. He returned, riding his horse quickly, to go and ask the Motael queen, whose house he had slept at the night before. He didn't believe that anyone else had stolen his book. When he arrived in Motael, the Motael king's wife responded that she hadn't found a book. Bau-Meta said: 'Whatever you need, I will give it to you, as long as you give me the book back'.

The queen continued to say that she didn't have the book: 'I can't give you anything'. Bau-Meta returned to Aileu empty handed. He was very sad and regretted what had happened.

So, in this way, Aileu continued to be dependent on the Motael Kingdom, the way it had been before Bau-Meta became a king. After some days, Bau-Meta arrived at the place which in the present day is called Bandeira-Hun. Bau-Meta went up to the top of the banyan tree, and didn't come down, and was lost. Some of his men looked for him at the top of the banyan tree but couldn't find him.

They only found the rock that Bau-Meta had turned himself into. The rock was called Bau-Meta, and to this day, it continues to be kept at the sacred house where Dom Bau-Meta lived, in order to worship it as a significant sacred site in Aileu.

The new name Aileu originates from a tree root that is in a strange formation, twisting itself like a snake, 10 metres from the banyan tree that Bau-Meta went up in Bandeira-Hun, Aileu.

Aileu had three kings. The main king, Dom Açú-Koli was followed by Dom João Mendonça, who lived in Bandeira-Hun, three kilometers from Aileu Vila.

The toponymy of the root that gave Aileu its name (Ai-Pau = a type of tree + Leu-enroscado = crazy roots).

Before it was called Aileu and the Aileu Administrative post, Manu-Cáti was the Administrative Post headquarters for the villages that are now part of Aileu and Lequidoe, next to Remexio, which belonged to the Motael-Dili kingdom.

The Manu-Cáti Administrative Post was removed from the Dili Council list in 1913, because it supported Dom Boa Ventura with troops in the Manufahi (Maun-Fahe) war in 1912 opposing the Portuguese regime.

This is the story of Dom Bau-Meta and how Aileu got its name.

Attachment 6 (3 pages)**Financial Summary, calendar year 2024****6.1 Income and Expenditure, Friends of Aileu donation and fundraising accounts, 1 January to 31 December 2024 (\$AU)**

Account	Balance 01/01/24	Income Jan-Dec	Expenditure Jan-Dec	Movement Jan-Dec	Balance 31/12/24
1.3159 Donations and Fundraising	19,177.78	27,181.17	29,059.85	-1,878.68	17,299.10
1.3160 Fundraising Sales	467.50	3,168.00	1,686.50	1,481.50	1,949.00
Totals	19,645.28	30,349.17	30,746.35	-397.18	19,248.10
Balance at 31/12/24					\$19,248.10

6.2 Income by activity, calendar year 2024 - Donations & Fundraising including sales

Income 2024		
Activity	Amount AUD	Notes
Grassroots Gathering CERES	\$6,903	Balance of youth & environment funds available for 2025 = \$AU 5,156 = \$(6,903 + 2,153 - 3,900 Transfer 2024)
Grassroots Gathering sales	\$2,153	
Hume City Council 23/24 Education Donation	\$5,200	Zero carry over to 2025
Trivia Quiz Night	\$12,129	Balance of scholarship funds available for 2025 = \$AU 10,916 (\$7,465 Accumulated Trivia + \$920 HCC Ed 22/23 + \$1,076 HCC Ed 23/24 – \$10,674 Transfer 2024 + \$12,129 Trivia 2024)
Coffee and Tais sales	\$3,168	
Total Income	\$AU 29,553	
Income as per Accounts	\$AU 30,349.17	
Variance	-\$AU 796.17	

6.3 Expenditure by project, calendar year 2024

All funds transferred to Aileu, apart from Rotary Donations In Kind for Kose Nehan project and purchase of fundraising coffee and tais

Expenditure 2024		
Project/Activity	Amount AUD	Amount USD
Baucau Teachers College scholarships Note: Not paid until 03/01/25	\$AU 4,124 ($\$AU 1,073$ balance of the $\$AU 5,200$ 2024 HCC education donation used for Aileu University Scholarship Program)	approx. $\$US 2,600$
Aileu University Scholarship Program	\$AU 10,674 (2023 Trivia funds $\$8,681$ + balances of HCC ed donations 23/24 $\$1,073$ + 22/23 $\$920 = \$1,993$)	$\$US 7,005$
Aileu Friendship Commission operating costs	\$AU 1,530	$\$US 1,005$
Youth Centre operating costs	\$AU 1,530	$\$US 1,005$
ARTC operating costs	\$AU 9,956 ($\$(7,259 + 2,697)$)	$\$US 6,580$ ($\$(4,765 + 1,815)$)
AILA for Aileu participants in PermaYouth Camp 2024 and village water conservation	\$AU 3,900	$\$US 2,565$ AILA retaining unspent funds of $\$1,050$ from $\$2,565$, with $\$740$ to be used for additional data collection and balance of $\$310$ for 2025 activities on this project
Kose Nehan Project (T-L)	$\$1,117$	$\$US 726$
Sub-Total Transferred to Aileu	\$AU 32,831	\$US 21,486
Rotary DIK shipping cost for Kose Nehan Project (Australia)	$\$456$	$\$US 296$ approx.

Expenditure 2024		
Project/Activity	Amount AUD	Amount USD
Coffee and Tais fundraising purchases (Australia)	\$1,231	\$US 800 approx.
Sub-Total Spent in Australia	\$AU 1,687	\$US 1,096 approx.
Total Expenditure 01/01/24 to 30/12/24	\$AU 34,518	\$US 22,582 approx.
Baucau Teachers College scholarships Note: Not paid until 03/01/25	\$AU 4,124	\$US 2,600 approx.
Expenditure 01/01/24 to 31/12/24 adjusted to actual	\$AU 30,394	
Expenditure as per Accounts	\$AU 30,746.35	
Variance	-\$AU 352.35	

6.4 Commitments for 2025, Total funds carried over to 2025 and Uncommitted funds available for 2025 (shortfall)

Commitments for 2025	
2024 Baucau Teachers College Scholarships (paid 03 Jan 2025)	\$4,124.37
2025 Aileu Scholarship Program (balance left from 2024 Trivia)	\$10,916.00
2025 Youth & Environment (balance left from 2024 Grassroots Gathering)	\$5,156.15
Sub-total committed funds required for 2025	\$20,196.52
Total Funds carried over to 2025	\$19,248.10
Uncommitted funds available 2025 (shortfall)	- \$948.42



Linking Merri-bek and
Hume communities
with Aileu, Timor-Leste.

FRIENDS OF AILEU STRATEGY PLAN 2025-2030

1 Purpose

The *Friends of Aileu Community Committee* and the *East Timor Project Team* will use this *Strategy Plan* to guide their actions towards realising the intent of the friendship relationship between the people and municipalities of Merri-bek, Hume and Aileu, as outlined in the *Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek - Hume - Aileu) 2025-2030*.

2 Vision

Our vision is of:

- A prosperous, sustainable, and equitable future for the people of Aileu, supported by inclusive governance that respects local initiatives and traditional values and operates within a thriving national democracy.
- A more connected, informed, and empathetic outlook amongst the people of Merri-bek and Hume, inspiring action to strengthen community bonds and foster local democracy within our increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

3 What we will do

To help realise this *Vision*, we will foster collaboration between the municipalities and people of Merri-bek, Hume, and Aileu.

We commit to engaging in the spirit of friendship, based on principles of mutual respect, ongoing learning, sustainability and locally led decision-making, sharing our respective stories, cultures, insights, skills and resources.

4 Goals

Our goals are:

Goal 1 Communities and friendship

Provide opportunities for the people of Merri-bek, Hume and Aileu to shape and participate in the friendship relationship.





Linking Merri-bek and
Hume communities
with Aileu, Timor-Leste.

Goal 2 - People and Organisations

Support the people of Aileu in pursuing their own goals and those of their community organisations and local government, with an emphasis on participation by youth, women, and vulnerable people including those living with a disability.

Goal 3 – Programs, Projects and Activities

Support community development programs, projects and activities in Aileu, identified through discussion and interaction between interested people and organisations from our respective communities.

Goal 4 – Partnerships, Collaboration and Networks

Develop and maintain collaborations, partnerships and participation in networks, that support the friendship relationship.

Goal 5 – Capabilities and Resources

Maintain and develop the capabilities and resources of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and encourage supporters and other community members to contribute to the friendship relationship.

5 Objectives

The Objectives we will focus on to achieve these Goals, and to work towards our Vision, are outlined below. Actions to be undertaken consistent with these Objectives will be detailed in the Annual Action Plan.

Goal 1 – Communities and Friendship

Provide opportunities for the people of Merri-bek, Hume and Aileu to shape and participate in the friendship relationship.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Increase the involvement of younger members of our communities
- 1.2 Develop and facilitate community development programs, projects and activities in partnership with the people of Aileu to support their aspirations, taking account of mutual interests of our respective communities and partner organisations



Friends of Aileu

Linking Merri-bek and
Hume communities
with Aileu, Timor-Leste.

- 1.3 Develop, promote and implement activities that attract the involvement and support of community members, Council staff and local community organisations and businesses
- 1.4 Collaborate with members of Melbourne's East Timorese community and students and workers from Timor-Leste and their organisations on activities of mutual interest
- 1.5 Learn from each other as we engage in programs, projects and activities
- 1.6 Share our cultures, stories, interests, concerns and perspectives, including through visits between Aileu and Merri-bek and Hume
- 1.7 Develop and share our understanding of the cultures, stories, interests, concerns and perspectives Australia's First Peoples, our immigrant communities and the people of our neighbouring countries.

Goal 2 - People and Organisations

Support the people of Aileu in pursuing their own goals and those of their community organisations and local government, with an emphasis on participation by youth, women and vulnerable people, including those living with a disability.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Provide organisational and professional development support for the Aileu Municipal Authority as it develops its service delivery functions and moves towards elected local government
- 2.2 Provide organisational and professional development support for the Aileu Friendship Commission to assist it to provide oversight of programs, projects and activities implemented in Aileu
- 2.3 Provide organisational and professional development support for selected Aileu non-government and community organisations to assist them to operate more effectively and sustainably.

Goal 3 – Programs, Projects and Activities

Support community development programs, projects and activities in Aileu, identified through discussion and interaction between interested people and organisations from our respective communities.





Linking Merri-bek and
Hume communities
with Aileu, Timor-Leste.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Consult with the Aileu Municipal Authority, the Aileu Friendship Commission, our partner organisations in Aileu and other Timor-Leste government and non-government organisations to identify appropriate community priorities that we have the capacity to influence or support
- 3.2 Work with our Aileu partner organisations, selected Aileu government and non-government organisations to help them conceive, design, deliver and evaluate community development programs, projects, and activities that build on their existing capacities and resources to address identified and agreed priorities
- 3.3 Continue our focus on the following areas with an emphasis on participation of youth, women and disadvantaged people including people with a disability:
 - a) Education and training, including through scholarships for university studies, technical and further education, teacher education and pre-school education
 - b) Community health, including improved nutrition and oral health education
 - c) Environmental protection and improvement and sustainable agriculture, including reforestation, soil and water conservation, water source protection and enhancement, permaculture and conservation agriculture.

Goal 4 – Partnerships, Collaboration and Networks

Develop and maintain collaborations, partnerships and participation in networks, that support the friendship relationship.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Work with the Merri-bek and Hume City Councils to maintain and implement the East Timor Partnership Project, including operating appropriate governance and reporting mechanisms for the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and the Project Team
- 4.2 Develop partnerships with Australian organisations that can contribute to the friendship relationship
- 4.3 Collaborate with other local governments, community groups, community and educational organisations and schools that have friendship relationships with Aileu, its Administrative Posts, Sucos and communities





Linking Merri-bek and Hume communities with Aileu, Timor-Leste.

- 4.4 Play an active role in the Australia Timor-Leste Friendship Network, and collaborate with other friendship groups, solidarity groups, and community and educational, health and environmental organisations in areas of mutual interest
- 4.4 Promote the value and achievements of Timor-Leste friendship relationships with relevant areas of the State and Federal Governments such as DFAT, Local Government Victoria and Multicultural Affairs, and peak organisations such as ALGA, LGPro, VLGA and MAV, and support any initiatives that they may undertake that are consistent with this Strategy Plan and our Friendship Agreement.

Goal 5 – Capabilities and Resources

Maintain and develop the capabilities and resources of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and encourage supporters and other community members to contribute to the friendship relationship.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Maintain ongoing recruitment of individuals and organisations that support or participate in the activities of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee
- 5.2 Enhance community and Merri-bek and Hume staff participation in the Friends of Aileu Community Committee meetings and its activities
- 5.3 Develop Friends of Aileu's communications capacity and effectiveness of the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and the Project Team, including through appropriate use of social media and other new and emerging communications tools
- 5.4 Develop and diversify our fundraising capacity and attractiveness to donors
- 5.5 Conduct events and activities that support the friendship relationship with Aileu and the achievement of goals and objectives of this Strategy
- 5.6 Participate in other community activities that promote the friendship relationship
- 5.7 Assist community members and staff of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils to develop their understanding of Timor-Leste and Aileu and their capacity and motivation to contribute to the friendship relationship
- 5.8 Provide information and reports on these Goals and Objectives, and on events, activities, learnings and achievements, targeted to recipients' needs and preferences.



Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek - Hume - Aileu) 2025-2030

An in-good-faith, non-binding agreement between the Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, Victoria, Australia, the Municipal Authority of Aileu, and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

On 4 May 2000, in recognition of the aspirations of the people of East Timor and Aileu to take control of their future, the then Moreland City Council (now Merri-bek City Council) and Hume City Council committed to a friendship relationship with the then District of Aileu (now Municipality of Aileu).

That commitment was made by signing a *Memorandum of Understanding* with Xanana Gusmão, then President of the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), representing East Timor and Aileu, on the occasion of Mr. Xanana delivering the 13th *Blackburn Oration* on '*The Importance of Community Alliances in the Re-building of East Timor.*'

Also on that day, Xanana Gusmão, the Victorian Minister for Local Government, the President of the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) and the President of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) signed the overarching *Statement of Principles For Victorian Local Governments Working in East Timor* as a guide for such friendship relationships.

The *Friends of Aileu Community Committee*, which was established in April 2000, continues to operate as a means for the Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, their staff and members of their communities and partner organisations to collaborate to realise the mutual benefits of the friendship relationship.

The friendship relationship has been periodically renewed, most recently in 2020, with the signing of the *Friendship Agreement (2020)* between the then Moreland City Council, Hume City Council, the Timor-Leste Government Ministry of State Administration and the then Aileu Municipal Administration.

In recognition of the continuing value of this relationship to our communities, we the signatories to this *Friendship Agreement (Merri-bek – Hume – Aileu) 2025-2030*, reaffirm our organisation's commitment:

- To continue the *friendship relationship* in accordance with the principles and values of mutual respect, ongoing learning, sustainability and locally led decision making, on which our relationship is based
- To support the development of local government in Aileu, including as outlined in the *Municipal Cooperation Agreements (2016)* between the Timor-Leste Government Ministry of State Administration, and Hume City Council and the then Moreland City Council.

We agree that we will continue to work together in friendship to:

- Help develop and maintain strong communities in Aileu and in Merri-bek and Hume
- Share our stories, cultures, perspectives, skills and resources, and improve mutual understanding
- Respond to the aspirations of the people of Aileu as they build their local democracy and governance, and work towards a healthier and more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future
- Engage with the people of Aileu in ways that respect their strengths and complement their efforts to achieve the goals that they have developed for themselves

- Ensure that any activities that we undertake or support:
 - Respect the policies, programs and priorities of the **Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste** and of the **Aileu Municipal Authority**, and address complementary priorities identified in consultation with the **Aileu Municipal Authority**, the **Aileu Friendship Commission** and our Aileu and Timor-Leste partner organisations and their communities
 - Note the special place of traditional and religious relationships and authority in community life in Timor-Leste
 - Recognise the capacity of our organisations, partners, supporters and communities to resource and sustain them
- Engage with women and vulnerable people including people living with a disability as they strive to participate more fully in community, economic and political life, and with young people as they strive to take on their responsibilities for the future.

We acknowledge the independence, wisdom, knowledge and skills of the people of Aileu and their government, non-government and community organisations.

We also acknowledge the complementary roles and contributions of Merri-bek and Hume City Councils, the Friends of Aileu Community Committee and community members, Australian partner organisations and other community groups and organisations, engaging with Aileu in the spirit of friendship.

This **Friendship Agreement 2025-2030** is intended to be a guide for our organisations, and for the communities we represent for the coming five years. This agreement will not have any legal effect and may be terminated or varied as agreed between the signatories.

.....
Councillor Helen Davidson	Mr João Bosco dos Santos	Councillor Jarrod Bell
Mayor Merri-bek City Council	President Municipal Authority of Aileu	Mayor Hume City Council and Co-Chair of Friends of Aileu Community Committee
Date:	Date:	Date
.....
Mr Tomás do Rosário Cabral	Mr José Valente	Councillor Adam Pulford
Minister of State Administration Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste	Secretary Aileu Friendship Commission	Merri-bek City Council, Co-Chair of Friends of Aileu Community Committee
Date:	Date:	Date:



Merri-bek
City Council

Friends of Aileu

Linking Merri-bek and Hume communities with Aileu, Timor-Leste.



7.9 SISTER AND FRIENDSHIP CITIES REVIEW

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1) Notes the review of the existing (inactive) Sister and Friendship Cities arrangements.
- 2) Based on outcome of the review, ceases the Sister City relationship and Friendship City relationships as outlined below, due to extended periods of inactivity:
 - a) Sister City - Xianyang, China
 - b) Friendship Cities
 - i) Corum Municipality, Turkey
 - ii) Spartiaton Municipality, Greece
 - iii) City of Canterbury-Bankstown, NSW
 - iv) Solarino, Sicily, Italy
 - v) Messina, Sicily, Italy
- 3) Writes to the Mayor of the Sister City and each of the Friendship Cities advising that Council has ceased the relationships.
- 4) Notes that the Special Relationship arrangement with Mansfield Shire Council is now ceased.

REPORT

Executive Summary

In 2021, Council resolved to write to current (inactive) Sister and Friendship Cities seeking to determine if the objectives of the relationships are being met and continue to be of benefit. This included contacting the seven identified Sister/Friendship cities as per Council's resolution.

A full evaluation of the inactive Sister and Friendship Cities exercise is provided below, noting that only two municipalities responded to Council's enquiries, with the remaining five municipalities not responding, despite further efforts to follow up in September 2024.

Due to the limited response received to Council's enquiries, this report recommends that the existing Sister and Friendship Cities relationships are ceased.

Previous Council Decisions

Sister and Friendship Cities Review – 14 July 2021

That Council:

1. *Formally writes to current (inactive) Sister and Friendship Cities seeking to determine if the objectives of the relationships are being met and continue to be of benefit, as follows:*
 - a) *Sister City – Xianyang, China*
 - b) *Friendship Cities (including special relationship Cities)*
 - i) *Corum Municipality, Turkey*

- ii) *Spartiaton Municipality, Greece*
 - iii) *City of Canterbury-Bankstown, Australia*
 - iv) *Mansfield, Australia*
 - v) *Solarino, Sicily, Italy*
 - vi) *Messina, Sicily, Italy.*
2. *Receives a further report on the outcomes of discussions with those Sister and Friendship Cities identified in this report and present recommendations for the purpose of:*
- a) *continuing relationships, including recommendations for timelines for review of relationships; or*
 - b) *ceasing existing relationships.*

Progressive cities – developing new working cities relationships - Response to Notice of Motion 36/19 – 9 September 2020

That Council:

1. *Officers contact the cities of Bristol and San Francisco to explore developing a progressive working policy and Council officer based collaborative relationship to further inform work on climate emergency.*
2. *Officers undertake further desktop research to identify an appropriate local government which has a sound record of working collaboratively with indigenous and multicultural populations and organisations.*
3. *Notes Council officers will provide updates to Council on the progress of establishing new collaborative relationships and outcomes, with cities as named above and in relation to other opportunities as they arise.*
4. *Receives a report identifying cities to cease existing relationships with.*

1. Policy Context

Council has in place Sister/Friendship City Guidelines that sets out the criteria for officers to assess requests for sister/friendship city agreements to be established and make a recommendation to Council based on the outcome of that assessment. Further, the guidelines outline that should either a friendship or sister city agreement be put in place and there be no activity for a two year period, Council can end the agreement after informing the relevant city.

Federal legislative provisions under Australia's *Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020* require all existing or prospective foreign arrangements with councils, including Sister City arrangements, to be notified to the Minister of Foreign Affairs via the Foreign Arrangements Scheme. Merri-bek Council has complied with this requirement, most recently in August 2024.

2. Background

Sister Cities and Friendship Cities are cooperative agreements between cities (usually) in different countries, aimed at fostering international friendships, cultural exchange and economic collaboration. These partnerships can be formalised through agreements.

Historically, Council did have arrangements with one sister city, five friendship cities, and one special friendship arrangement, which were all established many years ago, and for which have become inactive, with little formal contact over the past decade.

Importantly, Councils current Sister/Friendship City Guidelines as adopted by Council, state that “Should either a friendship or sister city agreement be put in place and there be no activity for a two year period, Council can end the agreement after informing the relevant city”.

Other Requirements

Federal legislative provisions under Australia’s Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 require foreign arrangements with Councils to be notified via the Foreign Arrangements Scheme. Merri-bek has complied with this requirement and informed DFAT that existing arrangements are under review and that it will advise any future changes to Council’s Sister City / Friendship Cities via the relevant DFAT portal as required.

3. Issues

The table overleaf lists the relationships, including their establishment dates and purposes, as identified for review in accordance with Council's 2021 resolution. As part of this review, each municipality was contacted, with follow-up attempts made, to gather feedback on whether the relationships were meeting their objectives and providing mutual benefits. The outcomes of these Council enquiries are also detailed in the table.

Name of city/country	Established	Details and Status
Xianyang / China	28/01/1997 Sister City	The relationship began in 1992 and formalised in 1997 to promote cultural and educational exchanges. Discussions expanded to include economic development and trade. Delegates and artists from both cities exchanged visits, with two Councillors visiting Xianyang in 2006. The last delegation from Xianyang was in 2016, with no further activity since then. Status: Inactive for 2 years or more, with no response to Council outreach.
Messina, Sicily / Italy	23/03/2004 Friendship City	In 2004, Council established a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Messina, Sicily, to celebrate shared social and migratory connections. This friendship relationship was formed with the Provincia Di Messina, Sicily, Italy. Provincia Di Messina ceased to exist in 2015 and replaced by the Metropolitan City of Messina. Status: Inactive for 2 years or more, with no response to Council outreach.
Former Canterbury / Australia	1/09/2006 Friendship City	In September 2006, Council established a friendship city partnership with the City of Canterbury to foster mutual understanding and benefit diverse communities. Following Canterbury’s amalgamation with Bankstown in 2016 to form the City of Canterbury-Bankstown, the partnership continued nominally. The last recorded interaction occurred in 2018, when the then Mayor sent a letter regarding the Alliance for Gambling Reform. No response was received, and no formal contact has been documented since.

Name of city/country	Established	Details and Status
		Status: Inactive for 2 years or more, with no response to Council outreach.
Spartiaton Municipality / Greece	30/11/2009 Friendship City	At the time of establishment, many Moreland residents were from the Laconia Region. In November 1987, the then Brunswick City Council signed a sister city relationship with Sparta which was reaffirmed through a renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding in November 2009. Spartiaton Municipality ceased to exist in 2011, when 7 municipalities were amalgamated. Now known as Municipality of Sparta. Status: Inactive for 2 years or more, with no response to Council outreach.
Mansfield / Australia	27/02/2003 Special Relationship Agreement	In 2003, Council and Mansfield Council formalised a special relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on economic development, staff exchange, emergency management, tourism, student education exchanges and general municipal support. While the agreement adopted in 2003, had no specified end date and could be terminated by either party, exchanges have primarily focused on emergency management support. Status: Confirmed that relationship can cease.
Solarino, Sicily / Italy	26/01/2007 Friendship City	In January 2007, the relationship between Council and the Municipality of Solarino was reaffirmed through a renewed Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement was originally adopted by the former Brunswick City Council. The last known engagement with Solarino was in 2010 when an invitation was received to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the Municipality of Solarino. Status: Inactive for 2 years or more. Status: Received a response acknowledging relationship and potential future collaborations, however the response did not address whether the objectives were being met or if the relationship remained beneficial.
Corum Municipality / Turkey	24/02/2011 Friendship City	In 2011, following a delegation from Corum, Turkey to Merri-bek, a Memorandum of Understanding was entered between Corum City Council and Council. As a symbol of the signing of the MOU a time capsule was buried at the Coburg Lake Reserve. Members of the Turkish community were invited to place items of significance in the time capsule which will be opened in 2050. Status: Inactive for 2 years or more, with no response to Council outreach.

Sister and friendship city relationships are less relevant in today's interconnected world. Digital communication particularly enables cultural and economic exchanges without formal partnerships. These agreements often require significant resources but may yield limited benefits, making them less of a priority for cities facing local challenges and budget constraints.

Whilst these historical arrangements may have been beneficial in the past, such formal arrangements are not needed for Council to engage with other cities, governments and networks, which now occurs on an as needs basis and is not limited to a handful of historical arrangements. We operate in a more agile environment to seek and share knowledge, information and have dialogue with other cities, governments and networks outside of Merri-bek.

Given the inactivity of these arrangements and the absence of responses to Council enquiries, it is recommended that the Council discontinue these relationships. This recommendation of course doesn't prevent exchange of ideas, information etc with other cities.

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 found to be in compliance.

4. Community consultation and engagement

The nature of this report does not require community consultation.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

There are financial implications associated with the preparation of this report.

7. Implementation

If the recommendation to cease the Sister City and Friendship Relationships is adopted, Council will write to the Mayor of the Sister City and each of the Friendship Cities advising of Council's decision.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.10 GOVERNANCE RULES REVIEW - 2025

Director Business Transformation Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

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

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report recommends that Council endorses the Governance Rules as amended (provided as **Attachment 1**) for community consultation. The amendments proposed, whilst are minor in nature, do offer improvements to existing processes relating to Urgent Business, Notices of Motion and the keeping of minutes in relation to petitions tabled at a Council meeting.

With the pending introduction of Model Governance Rules later this year, it is proposed that the amendments to the Governance Rules are limited to only minor matters such as those mentioned above.

The proposed amendments the Governance Rules outlined in this report are subject to community engagement requirements as required by the *Local Government Act 2020*, therefore this report recommends that a 15 day community consultation process be commenced on 14 April 2025.

Previous Council Decisions

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

- 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

Since the commencement of the current Council term, requests have been received from Councillors seeking amendments to the Governance Rules, including amending processes for urgent business; including an additional step for the notices of motion process; and how petitions tabled at a Council meeting are recorded in the minutes.

Local Government Victoria (LGV) is in the process of developing Model Governance Rules, following the IBAC recommendations resulting from Operation Sandon. These Model Governance Rules are expected to apply to all councils and they will be finalised and released in late 2025. LGV has informally told council representatives that a comprehensive review of a council's Governance Rules would not be advisable at this time, before the release of the statewide Model Governance Rules, but that minor amendments could be appropriate.

Due to the pending introduction of Model Governance Rules, it is proposed that the amendments to the Governance Rules are limited to only minor matters such as those mentioned in this report.

3. Issues

When amending its Governance Rules, Council must ensure that a process of community engagement is followed in accordance with section 60(4) of the Act. A 15 day community consultation process where the amended Governance Rules is put on public exhibition for comment, is proposed.

Proposed changes to the Governance Rules

The changes proposed to the Governance Rules as provided in Attachment 1, are detailed below, with removed text struck through and added text displayed in italics:

Amendment to section 3.5.6 (1) & (2) – Urgent Business (Page 23) 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; and*
- ~~(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.*

This amendment re-instates the Urgent Business provisions that were contained in the previous version of Councils Governance Rules, and enables the Chief Executive Officer to determine if a matter should be presented to Council as a matter of Urgent Business.

Amendment to section 3.9.14 – Notices of Motion (Page 37) to read as:

3.9.14 Notices of Motion

- (1) A Councillor can submit to the Chief Executive Officer a Notice of Motion for inclusion in the Agenda for a Meeting.
- (2) *A Councillor must announce their intention to submit a Notice of Motion, including its general intent, at a Councillor Briefing Session before lodging it as per point (3) below.*
- (3) *Provided point 2 is met, a Notice of Motion must be in writing, signed by the Councillor (including by electronic means), and be lodged with the Chief Executive Officer no later than 12 noon 10 business days before the Meeting at which it is intended to be considered to ensure its inclusion in the Agenda.*

This amendment proposes the addition of point 2 to enhance collaboration among Councillors by ensuring that all Councillors are informed in advance. This allows for constructive discussion and feedback prior to the formal submission of a Notice of Motion.

Amendment to section 3.11.1 (n) – Keeping of Minutes (Page 43):

- (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;*

This amendment ensures that the minutes comprehensively record the details of the requests contained in a petition tabled during the meeting, rather than a summary.

Legal and risk considerations

The amended Governance Rules as proposed, meet the requirements of *the Local Government Act 2020*.

Human Rights Consideration

There has been careful consideration in upholding human rights as required by the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Victoria) through the amendment of the Governance Rules. In particular, the right to freedom of expression (section 15) providing that people are free to say what they think and want to say.

It is considered that the Governance Rules adopted in December 2021 had already captured this requirement appropriately, with the current existence of 'community statements' at Council meetings, which is not proposed for change as part of the current amendment.

4. Community consultation and engagement

This report seeks approval for the amended Governance Rules to proceed to community consultation.

Consultation with Councillors has been conducted in preparation for the amended Governance Rules. The community consultation approach involves making the amended Governance Rules available on the website for a period of 15 days, starting from 14 April 2025, with feedback invited from the community until 5pm on 28 April 2025.

The proposed commencement date of community consultation, 14 April 2025, does not align with the requirements outlined in Council's Community Engagement Policy, which states:

"We will avoid, where possible, carrying out community engagement around key dates of the calendar year such as Christmas and the New Year, public holidays, and school holidays, unless it is considered appropriate for enabling the participation of specific groups."

However, as these amendments are minor and do not impact the community significantly, proceeding with the proposed dates is deemed appropriate.

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 amended Governance Rules do not directly impact the Community, but Councillors rights and interests may be considered to be impacted by the proposed amendments. Councillors will have the opportunity to express those views during consideration of the revised Governance Rules.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The resources required to consult and prepare the amended Governance Rules are met within existing resource allocations.

7. Implementation

Subject to Council's decision, community consultation will commence from 14 April 2025 and inviting feedback from the community to be received by 5pm, 28 April 2025. The final Governance Rules as amended will be presented to the May 2025 Council meeting for consideration for approval.

Attachment/s

1 [↓](#) Governance Rules - Proposed Amendments - April 2025 D25/158587



Governance Rules

Draft April 2025

Table of Contents

COMMITMENT	4
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Purpose.....	5
1.2 Principles.....	5
CHAPTER 2 - CONTEXT	7
2.1 Affected Persons Rights and Interests	7
2.2 Merri-bek’s Governance Setting.....	8
2.3 Context	8
2.4 Definitions.....	9
CHAPTER 3 – MEETING PROCEDURE	13
3.1 Purpose of Council Meetings	13
3.2 Meeting Roles	14
3.3 Notice of Meetings and availability of Agenda.....	17
3.4 Quorum.....	19
3.5 Business of Meetings	21
3.6 Community Questions and Submissions	24
3.7 Voting.....	30
3.8 Addressing the Meeting	31
3.9 Motions and Debate	32
3.10 Points of Order	41
3.11 Minutes	42
3.12 Suspension of Standing Orders	45
3.13 Circumstances in which Council will close a Meeting to members of the public	45
CHAPTER 4 – ELECTION OF THE MAYOR	47
4.1 Overview	47
4.2 Election of Mayor.....	47
4.3 Role and Election of Deputy Mayor.....	48
4.4 Nominating	48
4.5 Method of Voting	48
4.6 Determining the Election of Mayor / Deputy Mayor.....	49
4.7 Ceremonial Mayoral Speech.....	50

CHAPTER 5 COUNCIL COMMITTEES & JOINT COUNCIL MEETINGS	51
5.1 Delegated Committees	51
5.2 Advisory Committees	52
5.3 Hearing Committees	52
5.4 Community Asset Committees	53
5.5 Joint Council Meetings	53
CHAPTER 6 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	55
6.1 Obligations with regard to conflict of interest:.....	55
6.2 Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees	55
6.3 Procedure at a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting	55
6.4 Procedure at Advisory Committee Meetings and other Meetings organised, hosted or supported by Merri-bek	56
6.5 Council staff.....	56
6.6 Procedure for disclosures of conflicts of interest by Council staff	56
6.7 Contractors and Consultants	57
CHAPTER 7 - DELEGATIONS.....	58
CHAPTER 8 – COMMON SEAL.....	59
8.1 Custodian of Common Seal.....	59
8.2 Arrangements for the Signing and Sealing of a Document.....	59
8.3 Affixing the Common Seal.....	59
8.4 Sealing Register	60
CHAPTER 9 - COUNCIL RECORDS.....	61
9.1 Records of Meetings held under the auspices of Council.....	61
9.2 Councillor attendance records	61
CHAPTER 10 – ELECTION PERIODS	62
Election Periods Generally	62
Election Period Policy	63

COMMITMENT

Good governance, integrity and accountability are central to the *Local Government Act 2020* ("the Act"), to underpin local government democracy, accountability, conduct and enable our community to hold the Council to account. Council is committed to embedding the principles of good governance throughout its decision making, corporate governance and democratic governance by establishing and adhering to the Governance Rules established.

The principles of good governance incorporate the principles outlined in the Act, including the overarching governance principles as well as the public transparency, community engagement, strategic planning, service performance and financial management principles.

Council decision making will be founded on good governance and conducted with transparency. The process by which decisions will be made is transparent and clearly articulated in these Governance Rules for the scrutiny of our community and accountability of Councillors and Council officers. Council recognises that accountability, integrity and transparency are of fundamental importance to our community and are critical for enhancing good governance.

Council seeks to apply good governance in order to:

- Engage our community in decision making;
- Achieve the best outcomes for the Merri-bek community, including future generations;
- Ensure the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information;
- Ensure the ongoing financial viability of Council;
- Increase our performance;
- Drive out inefficiencies; and
- Reassure residents that we are spending public monies wisely.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

These Governance Rules determine the way in which Council will:

- a) Make decisions:
 - in the best interest of the Merri-bek community;
 - fairly and on the merits of the question;
 - in a way that ensures any person whose rights will be directly affected by a decision will be entitled to communicate their views and have their interests considered;
- b) Elect its Mayor and Deputy Mayor;
- c) Conduct Meetings of Council and Delegated Committees;
- d) Give notice of Meetings and record and make available Meeting records (Minutes and livestreamed Meetings);
- e) Be informed in its decision making through community engagement, Advisory Committees, Councillor areas of responsibility and Council officer reports;
- f) Require the disclosure and management of conflicts of interest.

The Governance Rules also include:

- Rules for the conduct of Council and Councillors during Election Periods, through the Election Period Policy;
- An overview of alignment of the Governance Rules within Council's democratic and corporate governance; and
- Provisions for use of the Common Seal.

1.2 Principles

Council must, in the performance of its role, give effect to the overarching governance principles outlined in the Act. These principles are:

- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- e) Innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued;
- f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;

- g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
- h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, Council must take into account the following supporting principles —

- a) the community engagement principles;
- b) the public transparency principles;
- c) the strategic planning principles;
- d) the financial management principles;
- e) the service performance principles.

CHAPTER 2 - CONTEXT

2.1 Affected Persons Rights and Interests¹

In any matter in which a decision must be made by Council (including persons acting with the delegated authority of Council), Council must consider the matter and make a decision:

- a) fairly, by giving consideration and making a decision which is balanced, ethical and impartial; and
- b) on the merits, free from favouritism or self-interest and without regard to irrelevant considerations.

Council must, when making any decision to which the principles of natural justice apply, adhere to the principles of natural justice (including, without limitation, ensuring that any person whose rights will be directly affected by a decision of Council is entitled to communicate their views and have their interests considered).

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

This includes but is not limited to the rights outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and Council's Human Rights Policy.

The opportunity provided for a person whose rights have been affected to contribute their views will be documented in any relevant report put before the Council or Delegated Committee.

A Council officer making a decision under delegation that affects the rights of a person will record in writing the opportunity provided to the person to have their views considered.

¹ Section 60(2) Local Government Act 2020

2.2 Merri-bek’s Governance Setting



2.3 Context

The Governance Rules are to be read in the context of and in conjunction with:

- Community Engagement Policy
- Public Transparency Policy;
- Good Governance Framework;
- Conflicts of interest Guidance as issued by Local Government Victoria; Councillor Code of Conduct;
- Employee Code of Conduct;
- Other relevant policies.

Each numbered section or sub-section is a Rule or Sub-Rule.

2.4 Definitions

(1) In these Governance Rules:

Act means the Local Government Act 2020;

Absolute Majority means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council. In the case of a Delegated Committee an Absolute Majority is the number of members which is greater than half the number members appointed to the Delegated Committee.

Advisory committee means a committee established by the Council, that provides advice to:

- (a) the Council; or
- (b) a Delegated Committee; or
- (c) a member of Council staff who has been delegated a power, duty or function of the Council;

that is not a Delegated Committee.

Agenda means a document containing the date, time and place of a Meeting and a list of business to be transacted at the Meeting.

Agreement of Council means indicative agreement of all Councillors present, without a vote being conducted. In the event there is any uncertainty about majority of Councillors agreeing, the matter may be put to a vote.

Authorised Officer has the same meaning as in the Act.

Chairperson means the Chairperson of a Meeting and includes an acting, temporary and substitute Chairperson.

Council Chamber means any room where the Council holds a Council Meeting.

Chief Executive Officer means the person occupying the office of Chief Executive Officer of Council, and includes a person acting in that office.

Common Seal means the common seal of Council.

Council means Merri-bek City Council.

Councillor means a Councillor of Council.

Council Meeting means a Meeting of the Council convened in accordance with these Governance Rules and includes scheduled and unscheduled meetings (unscheduled meetings known as Special meetings as per definition below) and meetings designated for Planning and Related Matters, whether held face to face (in person) attendance in a set location or via electronic means (virtual) or in a hybrid format that includes both in person and electronic attendance.

Council staff means a person who is appointed (other than an independent contractor under a contract for services or a volunteer) to enable the functions of the Council to be carried out.

Delegate means a member of Council staff to whom powers, functions and duties have been delegated by an instrument of delegation from the Chief Executive Officer.

Delegated Committee means a Committee established by Council to which powers, duties or functions have been delegated in accordance with section 11 of the Act.

Deputy Mayor means the Deputy Mayor of Council and any person appointed by Council to act as Deputy Mayor.

Director means a senior member of Council staff holding the position of Director or another position (however designated) which reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

Disorder means any disorderly conduct of a member of the Gallery or a Councillor and includes:

- interjecting when another person is speaking, except, in the case of a Councillor, to raise a Point of Order;
- making comments that are defamatory, malicious, abusive or offensive;
- refusing to leave the Meeting when requested, ordered or directed to do so by the Chairperson in accordance with these Governance Rules; and
- engaging in any other conduct which prevents the orderly conduct of the Meeting.

Foreshadowed Item means a matter raised in the relevant section of the Council Meeting that a Councillor intends to submit a Notice of Motion for the next Council Meeting.

Majority of the Votes means a majority of Councillors present at the time of a vote voting in favour of a matter.

Mayor means the Mayor of Council and any person appointed by Council to be acting as Mayor, including a Deputy Mayor, if the Mayor is not available.

Meeting means Council Meeting as described above

Meeting Designated for Planning and Related Matters means a Council Meeting that is held only for the consideration of planning and related matters.

Minister means the Minister administering the Act.

Minutes means the official record of the proceedings and decisions of a Meeting.

Motion means a proposal framed in a way that will result in the opinion of Council being expressed, and a Council decision being made, if the proposal is adopted.

Notice of Motion means a notice setting out the text of a Motion which a Councillor proposes to move at a Council Meeting.

On Notice means held or deferred to enable preparation of a response.

Point of Order means a procedural point (about how the Meeting is being conducted), not involving the substance of a matter before a Meeting.

Procedural Motion means a Motion that relates to a procedural matter only and which is not designed to produce any substantive decision but used merely as a formal procedural measure.

Rule or Sub-Rule means a Rule or Sub-Rule included in these Governance Rules.

Second vote means a vote cast by the Chairperson when there has been an equality of votes cast for and against a matter (also known as a casting vote). A Councillor who does not vote will be taken to have voted against the question;

Special Meeting means an unscheduled Meeting of the Council to consider a matter that cannot be effectively dealt with in the schedule of Council Meetings and/or is convened for a particular purpose such as the Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

these Rules means these Governance Rules.

(2) Definitions provided by the Act

The following definitions provided by the Act are applied to these Governance Rules:

Confidential Information means the Confidential Information established under section 3(1) of the Act, and means

- (a) Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released;
- (b) security information, being information that if released is likely to endanger the security of Council property or the safety of any person;
- (c) land use planning information, being information that if prematurely released is likely to encourage speculation in land values;
- (d) law enforcement information, being information which if released would be reasonably likely to prejudice the investigation into an alleged breach of the law or the fair trial or hearing of any person;
- (e) legal privileged information, being information to which legal professional privilege or client legal privilege applies;
- (f) personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs;
- (g) private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:
 - i) relates to trade secrets; or
 - ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage;
- (h) confidential Meeting information, being the records of Meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a);
- (i) internal arbitration information, being information specified in section 145;
- (j) Councillor Conduct Panel confidential information, being information specified in section 169;
- (k) information prescribed by the regulations to be confidential information for the purposes of this definition;
- (l) information that was confidential information for the purposes of section 77 of the *Local Government Act 1989*;

Electoral Material means an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice that contains Electoral Matter but does not include an advertisement in a newspaper that is only announcing the holding of a Meeting.

Electoral Matter means matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any Electoral Material produced by or on behalf of the election manager for the purposes of conducting an election.

Nomination Day means the last day on which nominations to be a candidate at a Council election may be received in accordance with the Act and the regulations.

CHAPTER 3 – MEETING PROCEDURE

The way in which Council and Delegated Committee Meetings are conducted makes a significant contribution to good governance. The Chairperson plays a crucial role in facilitating an orderly, respectful, transparent and constructive Meeting by ensuring all Councillors and members of Delegated Committees have the opportunity to be heard, matters are adequately discussed, Meeting procedures are followed appropriately, and statutory requirements are adhered to.

The Chairperson is an independent leader of Meetings and generally does not participate in debate or move or second Motions.

The Act provides for the Mayor to appoint a Councillor as the Chair of a Delegated Committee and any such appointment prevails over any appointment made by the Council. While there are no limitations on exercising that power, the Mayor must always act in a way that is consistent with the adopted Councillor Code of Conduct and transparency commitments of the Council.

Each member of the Meeting has an obligation to participate in good decision-making through their preparation and contribution to the Meeting.

Specific duties and discretions of the Chairperson are outlined throughout these Governance Rules.

3.1 Purpose of Council Meetings

- (1) Council holds Council Meetings and, when required, Special Meetings to conduct the business of Council.
- (2) Council is committed to transparency in decision making and, in accordance with the Act, Council and Delegated Committee Meetings are open to the public and the community are able to attend. Meetings will only be closed to members of the public if:
 - (a) the Meeting is to consider confidential information; or
 - (b) a Meeting is required to be closed for security reasons; or
 - (c) it is necessary to enable the Meeting to proceed in an orderly manner.
- (3) If a Meeting is closed to the public for the reasons outlined in Sub-Rule 2(b) or 2(c), the Meeting will continue to be livestreamed. In the event a livestream is not available, the Meeting will be adjourned.
- (4) For the avoidance of doubt, if a Meeting is open to the public and the livestream is not available, a Meeting that has not commenced will proceed as scheduled and a Meeting that has commenced will continue.

3.2 Meeting Roles

3.2.1 Chairperson and Members

- (1) The Chairperson, Councillors and members of Delegated Committees will ensure good decision-making by endeavouring to ensure:
 - (a) Decision making is transparent to members and observers;
 - (b) Meeting members have sufficient information to make good decisions;
 - (c) Every member is supported to contribute to decisions;
 - (d) Any person whose rights are affected has their interests considered;
 - (e) Debate and discussion is focussed on the issues at hand;
 - (f) Meetings are conducted in an orderly manner.

3.2.2 Mayor to take the Chair

- (1) The Mayor must take the Chair at all Council Meetings at which the Mayor is present.
- (2) If the Mayor is not in attendance at a Council Meeting, the Deputy Mayor (if one has been elected) must take the Chair.
- (3) If the Mayor and any Deputy Mayor are not in attendance at a Council Meeting, Council must appoint one of the Councillors as a temporary Chairperson.

3.2.3 Delegated Committee Chairperson

- (1) At the Meeting at which Council appoints the members of a Delegated Committee it must also appoint a Chairperson. If Council is appointing a single member as a result of a vacancy, or additional members, there is no change to the appointed Chairperson unless resolved by Council.
- (2) For the avoidance of doubt, Sub-Rule (1) does not intend to limit the powers of the Mayor provided in the Act.

3.2.4 The Chairperson's Duties and Discretions

In addition to the specific duties and discretions provided in these Governance Rules, the Chairperson:

- (1) must not accept any Motion, question or statement which is:
 - (a) vague or ambiguous;
 - (b) defamatory, malicious, abusive or objectionable in language or substance;
or
 - (c) outside the powers of Council;
- (2) must allow the Chief Executive Officer the opportunity to correct factual errors or incorrect assertions that arise during the Meeting.
- (3) must call a person to order if their behaviour is disruptive and interferes with the conduct of the business of Council.
- (4) may direct that a vote be recounted to be certain of the result.

- (5) must decide on all points of order in accordance with Rule 3.10 and
- (6) May adjourn a Disorderly Meeting.
- (7) Subject to Rule 3.1 (2), the Chairperson may determine to close a Meeting to the public to maintain security and order, if the circumstances prevent seeking a Council resolution in accordance with Rule 3.13.
- (8) Where the Governance Rules do not provide a procedure for the meeting, the Chairperson may determine the procedure to be followed in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and relevant Governance officer.

3.2.5 Chief Executive Officer

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, may participate in the Meeting to provide support to the Chairperson and advice to the Meeting.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer:
 - (a) Must immediately advise if a proposed resolution or action is, to their knowledge, contrary to legislation or Council Policy;
 - (b) May advise if there are administrative or operational implications arising from a proposed resolution;
 - (c) May assist to clarify the intent of any unclear Motion to facilitate implementation of a resolution;
 - (d) On request, assist with procedural issues that may arise.

3.2.6 Councillors and members of Delegated Committees

Councillors and members of Delegated Committees contribute to good governance and decision making by:

- (1) Seeking views of community members and reading Agenda papers prior to the Meeting.
- (2) Demonstrating due respect and consideration to community views and the professional / expert advice provided in the Agenda papers.
- (3) Attending Meetings and participating in debate and discussion.
- (4) Demonstrating respect for the role of the Chairperson and the rights of other Councillors or members of Delegated Committees to contribute to the decision-making.
- (5) Being courteous and orderly.

3.2.7 Community

- (1) Council Meetings are decision making forums for the Council that are open to the community to attend and/or view proceedings.
- (2) Community members may only participate in Council Meetings in accordance with Rule 3.6.
- (3) Community members are encouraged to participate in Council's engagement processes.

- (4) Community members may seek to inform individual Councillors of their views by contacting them directly in advance of Meetings.

3.2.8 Apologies and absences

- (1) Councillors and members of Delegated Committees who are unable to attend a Meeting may submit an apology:
 - (a) In writing to the Chairperson, who will advise the Meeting: or
 - (b) By seeking another Councillor or member of the Delegated Committee to submit it at the Meeting on their behalf.
- (2) An apology submitted to a Meeting will be recorded in the Minutes.
- (3) A Councillor intending to take a leave of absence must submit it in writing to the Mayor.
- (4) The Mayor will seek to have any leave of absence request received included in the Agenda of the next Council Meeting.
- (5) A leave of absence not included in a Council Meeting Agenda may still be considered by Council if a written request has been received by the Mayor prior to the Meeting.
- (6) Council will not unreasonably withhold its approval of a leave of absence request.
- (7) A Councillor who has not submitted an apology or had a leave of absence approved who is not in attendance at a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting will be recorded as absent.²
- (8) For the benefit of clarity, should unplanned leave of absence occur (between two Council meetings), Council will receive the request at the next possible Council meeting for approval, providing Sub-Rule (5) is met.

3.2.9 Attendance at meetings by electronic means

- (1) Councillors and members of Delegated Committees who wish to attend a meeting via electronic means must submit a written request to the Mayor (or Chairperson), no later than 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- (2) The Mayor (or Chairperson), must grant any reasonable request from a Councillor or member to attend a meeting by electronic means.
- (3) At the commencement of each meeting, the Mayor (or Chairperson), will advise the meeting of any Councillors or members that have been granted approval to attend the meeting by electronic means.
- (4) It will remain the responsibility of the Councillor or member attending electronically to ensure that they have the required access and environment suitable for electronic communications. This includes ensuring that they are in a private and secure place when attending a Confidential meeting.

² **Section 35 (1) (e) of the Act** provides a Councillor ceases to hold office if they are absent from Council Meetings for a period of 4 consecutive months without leave obtained from the Council.

- (5) A Councillor or member that has not sought approval to attend a meeting by electronic means in accordance with 3.2.9(1), and cannot attend the meeting in person, will be recorded as absent.

3.3 Notice of Meetings and availability of Agenda

3.3.1 Date, time and place of Council Meetings

- (1) At or before the last Meeting each year, Council must fix the date, time and place of all Council Meetings and any Delegated Committee Meetings for the following calendar year.
- (2) Council may resolve a Delegated Committee will set its own schedule of Meetings.
- (3) When setting the dates of Council Meetings, Council may set Meetings Designated for Planning and Related Matters.
- (4) Council by resolution, or the Chief Executive Officer, may change the date, time and place of, or cancel, any Council Meeting which has been fixed, or schedule an additional Council Meeting and must provide notice of the change to the public.

3.3.2 Special Meetings

- (1) Council may by resolution call a Special Meeting. Any resolution of Council to call a Special Meeting must specify the date and time of the Special Meeting and the business to be transacted. The date and time of the Special Meeting must not be prior to 6pm on the day following the Council Meeting at which the resolution was made.
- (2) The Mayor, or at least three Councillors may by written notice to the Chief Executive Officer call a Special Meeting. A written notice to call a Special Meeting must:
 - (a) Specify the preferred date and time and the business to be transacted;
 - (b) be delivered to the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate in sufficient time to enable notice to be given in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.3.4.
- (3) The Chief Executive Officer, following consultation with the Mayor, may call a Special Meeting.
- (4) In the event a Special Meeting is to be called pursuant to Sub-Rule (2) and (3), the Chief Executive Officer must determine the time and date for the Special Meeting giving consideration to:
 - (a) the urgency of the business to be transacted;
 - (b) the availability of Councillors; and
 - (c) a reasonable notice period for persons whose rights or interests may be impacted by the business to be transacted
- (5) The Chief Executive Officer must arrange for notice of the Meeting on Council's website, and other mediums that will maximise the opportunity for the community to be notified in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.3.4.
- (6) The Chief Executive Officer must call a Special Meeting to elect a Mayor following a Council election declaration, in accordance with the Act.

- (7) The Special Council Meeting for the election of a Mayor following an election may also consider the role of Deputy Mayor and any other matters as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
- (8) Only the business specified in the Council resolution, or written notice, may be considered at a Special Meeting, unless by unanimous resolution determines to admit another matter.

3.3.3 Call of the Council

- (1) If a quorum cannot be achieved or maintained repeatedly (3 or more times) due to the absence of Councillors, the Chief Executive Officer may require all Councillors to attend a Call of the Council Meeting.
- (2) Notice of the Meeting must be given in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.3.4(2).
- (3) The Agenda for a Call of the Council Meeting must only contain matters that have been unable to be transacted because a quorum has not been achieved or maintained.
- (4) If a Councillor does not attend within 30 minutes after the time fixed for a call of the Council Meeting, or remain at the Meeting for the business to be conducted, the Chief Executive Officer must, following the Meeting, seek a reason in writing from the Councillor(s) not in attendance.
- (5) If, after considering the reason provided by the Councillor for the absence in accordance with Sub-Rule (4), the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Mayor, or Deputy Mayor if the reason has been provided by the Mayor, does not consider the Councillor has provided a reasonable excuse for not attending, the Chief Executive Officer must recommend to the Council to make an application for an internal arbitration process in accordance with section 143 of the Act³.

3.3.4 Notice of Meetings

- (1) A schedule of Council Meetings must be prepared and published on Council's website and in ways that ensures it is available to a broad section of the community at least once each year and with such greater frequency as the Chief Executive Officer determines. The schedule of Council Meetings must also be available from Council's Customer Service Centres.
- (2) A notice of a Meeting, that is not a Special Meeting, incorporating or accompanied by an Agenda of the business to be dealt with, must be sent electronically to every Councillor for all Council Meetings, at least six days before the Meeting. A period of less than six days may be justified if exceptional circumstances exist. If exceptional circumstances exist as to why a notice of the meeting cannot be given

³ **Section 143 of the Act provides:** Application for an internal arbitration process

(1) An arbiter may hear an application that alleges misconduct by a Councillor.

(2) An application for an internal arbitration process to make a finding of misconduct against a Councillor may be made by—

(a) the Council following a resolution of the Council; or

(b) a Councillor or a group of Councillors.

in accordance with this rule, the exceptional circumstances must be set out/explained in the agenda.

- (3) An Agenda for a Council Meeting held in accordance with the schedule of Council Meetings prepared in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) will be made available on Council's website at least 6 days prior to the Meeting, or at the same time that the agenda is made available to Councillors, whichever comes sooner.
- (4) An Agenda for a Special Meeting must be made available electronically to every Councillor at least 48 hours before the Meeting. A period of less than 48 hours may be justified if exceptional circumstances exist.
- (5) An Agenda for a Special Meeting will be made available on Council's website no less than 24 hours before the Council Meeting.
- (6) The extraordinary circumstances that mean Council is unable to give the notice described in this Rule must be recorded in the Minutes of the relevant Special Meeting.
- (7) Notice of a Special Meeting must be published on Council's website and in ways that will be available to a broad section of the community as soon as practicable after the time and date of the Meeting has been determined.
- (8) If a Special Meeting is called to consider a matter that directly affects the rights of any person(s), every endeavour must be made to notify that person(s).

3.4 Quorum

- (1) Meetings must commence within 30 minutes of the scheduled starting time. A Councillor or member attending a meeting by electronic means of communication with the approval of the Mayor (or Chairperson), is deemed present for the purposes of a quorum.
- (2) If, after 30 minutes from the scheduled starting time of any Meeting, 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.
- (4) The Chairperson may defer an item of business in respect of which there is, or is likely to be, a disclosure of a conflict of interest by one or more Councillors that will cause a quorum to be lost and direct the Chief Executive Officer to include that item of business on an Agenda for a future Council Meeting.
- (5) If a quorum cannot be achieved or maintained due to the declaration of conflicts of interests by the majority of Councillors, Council will:

- (a) Determine the matter will be considered in separate parts, if a quorum can be maintained for each separate part; or
 - (b) Determine to make decisions on separate parts of the matter at a Meeting where quorum can be maintained, before making a decision on the whole matter.
- (6) If a quorum cannot be achieved or maintained due to the declaration of conflicts of interests by the majority of Councillors, and the matter cannot be separated into component parts or prior decisions made, Council will delegate the decision to be made:
- (a) By the Chief Executive Officer; or
 - (b) By a Delegated Committee, established for the purpose of determining the matter, comprised of all the Councillors who have not disclosed a conflict of interest and any other person(s) the Council considers suitable.
- (7) A decision made under delegation due to Council not being able to achieve or maintain a quorum will be reported to the next Council Meeting.

3.4.1 Notice of adjourned Council Meeting

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer must provide written notice, including by electronic means, to each Councillor of any Council Meeting adjourned to another date or time.
- (2) Where it is not practicable because time does not permit notice in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) to occur, then, provided every reasonable attempt is made to contact each Councillor either verbally, or by some other means, it will be sufficient.
- (3) Notice of an adjournment to another date or time must be published on Council's website as soon as practical.

Quorum Calculation

Section 61(4) of the Act provides that a quorum at a Meeting must be at least a majority of the Councillors or members of the Delegated Committee.

Number of Councillors/Committee Members	Number required for Quorum
11	6
10	6
9	5
8	5
7	4

3.5 Business of Meetings

The business to be transacted at a Council Meeting is contained in the Agenda provided to Councillors and available to the public on Council's website. The Chief Executive Officer oversees preparation of the Agenda and determines the content and order of business to facilitate open, efficient and effective processes of government. The role of the Mayor includes providing advice to the Chief Executive Officer when the Chief Executive Officer is setting the Agenda for Council Meetings. Council can admit an item of urgent business if it has arisen after distribution of the Agenda and cannot be reasonably deferred to the next Meeting.

3.5.1 Business at Meetings

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer may include any matter on the Agenda for a Council Meeting which he or she thinks should be considered at the Meeting to which the Agenda relates.
- (2) No business can be dealt with at a Council Meeting unless it is:
 - (a) Contained on the Agenda; or
 - (b) Admitted as Urgent Business in accordance with Sub-Rule 3.5.6

3.5.2 Order of business for Council Meetings

The order of business must be determined by the Chief Executive Officer to facilitate and maintain open, efficient and effective processes of government. Generally, the order of business of any scheduled Council Meeting will be as follows:

- (a) Welcome;
- (b) Apologies/Leaves of Absence;
- (c) Disclosures of conflicts of interest; (Rule 5.3)
- (d) Confirmation of Minutes of previous Meetings; (Rule 3.11.3)
- (e) Acknowledgements and Other Matters (Rule 3.5.5)
- (f) Petitions; (Rule 3.6.5)
- (g) Public question time; (Rule 3.6.2)
- (h) Council reports;
- (i) Notices of Motion; (Rule 3.9.14)
- (j) Notices of rescission; (Rule 3.9.15)
- (k) Foreshadowed Items;
- (l) Urgent business; (Rule 3.5.6);
- (m) Confidential business.

3.5.3 Order of business for Meetings Designated for Planning and Related Matters

The order of business of any Meeting Designated for Planning and Related Matters will be as follows:

- (a) Welcome;
- (b) Apologies;
- (c) Disclosures of conflicts of interest; (Rule 5.3)
- (d) Confirmation of Minutes of previous Meetings; (Sub-Rule 3.11.3)
- (e) Council reports;
- (f) Urgent business (Rule 3.5.6);
- (g) Confidential business.

3.5.4 Change to order of business

- (1) Once an Agenda has been sent to Councillors, the order of business for that Meeting may be altered with the Agreement of Council.
- (2) If the Agreement of Council is not achieved, the order of business may be altered by a resolution of Council.
- (3) The Chief Executive Officer, following consultation with the Mayor, may withdraw a report included in the Agenda, if special circumstance exist that mean Council consideration of the report would not be appropriate.

3.5.5 Acknowledgements and Other Matters

- (1) At each Council Meeting of Council provision of 10 minutes has been made in the Agenda for the Mayor and Councillors to:
 - a) Acknowledge and recognise achievements of local individuals and organisations; and
 - b) Raise matters considered important to Council.
- (2) For the purposes of raising matters as outline in Sub-Rules (1) (a) and (b), the nature of these matters should not be the subject of an item already listed in the Council agenda, does not require a decision of Council or cannot address matters where internal mechanisms already exist (i.e. raising matters to address customer requests).
- (3) The Chairperson will manage the time commitment across Councillors indicating their intent to speak.
- (4) Where an item is requiring a decision of Council, these matters must be raised in accordance with the provisions as outlined in Urgent Business (3.5.6), Notices of Motion (3.9.14) or Foreshadowed Items (3.9.17).

3.5.6 Urgent Business

- (1) If the Agenda for a Meeting makes provision for urgent business, business cannot be admitted as Urgent Business other than by resolution of Council and only then if ~~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; or
 - (c) The item involves a matter of urgency as determined by the Chief Executive Officer; and
 - ~~(d) It cannot be addressed through an operational service request process; and~~
- ~~(2) 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.
- (3) 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.
- (4) A Councillor proposing a matter be admitted as urgent business must lodge it in writing to the Chief Executive Officer no later than 3 pm on the day of the Meeting.
- (5) The Chief Executive Officer will advise the Mayor of any matter he or she determines appropriate for Council to consider admitting as urgent business.
- (6) The consideration of Urgent Business is a two-step process as follows:
 - (a) At the point in the agenda when Urgent Business is listed, the Chairperson will seek any items of Urgent Business.
 - (i) The Councillor proposing an item of Urgent Business is to briefly describe the nature of the matter (at this point the Council is not moving a motion) and seek that the item to be accepted as urgent business.
 - (ii) The Chairperson will seek a mover and seconder to accept the item as Urgent Business.
 - (b) A motion may then be moved and seconded in accordance with Rule 3.9 – Motions and debate.

3.5.7 Time Limits for Meetings

- (1) A Meeting must not continue after three hours from the time it commences unless a majority of Councillors present vote in favour of its extension in accordance with this Rule.
- (2) Extensions of a Meeting will be in block periods of 30 minutes.

- (3) After the initial 30 minute extension the Meeting must not continue unless a majority of Councillors present vote in favour of a further extension.
- (4) A Meeting may only be continued for a maximum of two 30 minute extensions.
- (5) In the absence of such extensions as provided for in Sub-Rules (1), (2) and (3), or in the event there is further business to be transacted at the completion of two extensions, the Meeting must stand adjourned to 6 pm on the following day. In that event, the provisions of Sub-Rule 3.4.1.
- (6) Notwithstanding Sub-Rule (5), the Chairperson may seek the Agreement of Council not to adjourn the Meeting to the following day, if the Chairperson reasonably believes the remaining business will take less than 10 minutes to transact.

3.5.8 Chairperson may temporarily adjourn a Meeting exceeding two hours

- (1) The Chairperson may adjourn a Meeting for a 10 minute break, at an appropriate point in proceedings after two hours has elapsed.
- (2) Notwithstanding Sub-Rule (1), the Chairperson may seek the Agreement of Council not to adjourn the Meeting if the Chairperson reasonably believes the remaining business of the Meeting will take less than 30 minutes to transact.

3.6 Community Questions and Submissions

3.6.1 Questions of Council and Community Statements

- (1) Members of the public may only address a Council Meeting in accordance with the provisions of these Governance Rules.
- (2) Unless Council resolves differently, there must be a time provided for questions of Council and Community Statements at every scheduled Council Meeting not designated for Planning and Related Matters to enable members of the public to submit questions to Council.
- (3) Sub-Rule (2) does not apply during any period when a Meeting is closed to members of the public in accordance with section 66(2) of the Act.
- (4) There will be no Questions of Council and Community Statements during a local government election period.
- (5) The time provided for questions of Council and community statements will not exceed 30 minutes in duration, unless by resolution of Council, in which case, the time may be extended for one period of up to 30 minutes.
- (6) Priority will be given to questions and statements that relate to matters listed in the Agenda. If time allows, questions about items other than those listed on the Agenda will be considered.

- (7) A maximum of two questions or statements, in any combination, is allowed per person. If a person has submitted two questions or statements, the second or statement question may, at the discretion of the Chairperson:
 - (a) be deferred until all other persons who have submitted questions have asked their first question; and/or
 - (b) not be asked or permitted if the time allotted for public question time has expired.
- (8) A person submitting two questions or statements, in any combination, may identify the priority order of the questions or statements.
- (9) Prior to the hearing of Questions of Council and Community Statements, the Mayor will inform Councillors and the public of the total number of questions received for the Council meeting (including how many have been taken on notice).

3.6.2 Questions of Council

- (1) Persons wishing to ask a question will be encouraged to submit their question on the Questions of Council form available on Council's website by 12 noon on the day of the Council Meeting.
- (2) Questions can be submitted by:
 - (a) The online form at www.Merri-bek.vic.gov.au
 - (b) Email to: governance@Merri-bek.vic.gov.au; or
 - (c) Mail to: Locked Bag 10, Merri-bek Vic. 3058; or
 - (d) In person at the Coburg Civic Centre Customer Service Centre at 90 Bell Street Coburg, up until the beginning of an in-person council meeting.
 - (e) A copy of all questions 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.
- (3) Assistance will be available for any community member seeking or requiring support to write their question(s).
- (4) A maximum of three questions will be heard on any one subject. Council will then proceed to the next subject, returning to the previous subject if time allows.
- (5) Questions that are submitted in writing but not asked, will be taken On Notice.
- (6) Persons submitting questions must be present in the public gallery either personally or by representative unless the question has been submitted in accordance with a procedure developed at Rule 3.6.4.
- (7) When invited by the Chairperson, the person submitting the question:
 - (a) Must state their name and suburb;
 - (b) May ask their question, with a preamble or background for up to 3 minutes.
- (8) The Chairperson may elect to answer the question themselves or a Councillor may nominate themselves to answer each question. Prior to responding, the Chairperson may seek contextual information from the person submitting the question.

- (9) The Chairperson may at their discretion, refer the question to the Chief Executive Officer, who may refer it to a member of Council staff.
- (10) No discussion of a question or answer will be allowed, other than for the purposes of clarification by a Councillor.
- (11) A question or community statement may be disallowed by the Chairperson if the Chairperson determines it:
 - (a) relates to a matter outside the duties, functions or powers of Council;
 - (b) is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance;
 - (c) may lead to a breach of Council's obligation to comply with its statutory obligations;
 - (d) deals with subject matter already answered; or
 - (e) deals with a matter that should be, or has been, considered as a confidential matter.
- (12) No questions directed at an individual Councillor or member of Council staff will be allowed.
- (13) The Chairperson may decide to take any question On Notice. Questions On Notice will be actioned by the relevant Director and a written response forwarded to the person and made available to Councillors. The status of On Notice items will be reported to the next practicable Council Meeting.
- (14) A question will only be dealt with as an On Notice question if the entire question has been provided in writing and contact details for a response are provided. An incomplete question or a question where not contact details are provided will not be prioritised to be included before the time allowed for public question time and community statements has elapsed.

3.6.3 Community statements

- (1) A member of the community may make a statement, for up to 3 minutes, in relation to any matter listed on the Agenda for the Council Meeting that the statement is to be made.
- (2) Community Statements must not be directed at individual Councillors or members of Council staff.
- (3) Community Statements will not receive a response.
- (4) The Chairperson may cease a community statement he or she deems defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance.
- (5) A member of the public wishing to make a community statement may indicate their intention in advance of the Meeting or by completing a form on arrival at the Meeting.

3.6.4 Questions and community statements from members of the public not in attendance and at Meetings conducted electronically

- (1) Council may, by resolution, determine that the Chief Executive Officer must develop a procedure that enables the submission of questions and statements by community members who are not in attendance but are viewing the livestream to be admitted to the Meeting.
- (2) A procedure developed at Sub-Rule (1) must include the person asking the question being visible to the Meeting when asking a question.
- (3) Where a person is experiencing technical difficulties that prevents them from asking their submitted question, as lodged in accordance with Rules 3.6.2 or 3.6.3 (ie. unable to connect to an online meeting) or where connectivity issues arise that prevent the person from being able to be seen or heard when invited to address Council, the Chairperson may elect to read out their question.
- (4) A procedure developed in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) must give consideration to:
 - (a) Accessibility;
 - (b) Community members in attendance at the Meeting; and
 - (c) Relevance of the question to an item on the Agenda for the Meeting.
- (5) If a Council Meeting is being conducted electronically or online, in accordance with any Guidelines issued for the Minister for Local Government, provision will be made for questions and community statement to be made via video call, if the question or intent to make a submission is lodged in accordance with Rules 3.6.2 or 3.6.3 as is applicable.

3.6.5 Petitions and joint letters

- (1) Every petition submitted to Council must:
 - (a) be in legible and in permanent writing;
 - (b) state clearly on each page the matter and the action sought of Council;
 - (c) not be derogatory, defamatory or objectionable in language or nature;
 - (d) not relate to matters outside the powers of Council; and
 - (e) include the names, addresses and original signatures of at least 10 people;
 - (f) clearly indicate the name and contact details of the lead petitioner.
- (2) If the lead petitioner is present at the Meeting at the time a petition is presented, the Chairperson may invite the lead petitioner to address the Meeting for up to two minutes.
- (3) Where a petition has been signed by less than 10 people or does not otherwise conform to the requirements contained in rule 3.6.5 (1), it will be treated as a joint

letter and forwarded directly to the appropriate member of Council staff for action as an operational item.

- (4) Any Councillor presenting a petition is responsible for ensuring that:
 - (a) he or she is familiar with the contents and purpose of the petition; and
 - (b) the petition is not derogatory, defamatory or objectionable in language or nature.
- (5) The only Motions that may be considered by Council on any petition are:
 - (a) that the petition be received; and
 - (b) that the petition be referred to the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director for consideration and response; or
 - (c) that the petition be referred to the Chief Executive Officer or relevant Director for a report to a future Council Meeting.
- (6) If a petition relates to an item listed on the Agenda for the Meeting at which it is submitted, the petition may be dealt with in conjunction with the item.
- (7) If a petition relates to:
 - (a) a 'planning matter' which is the subject of a public exhibition or notification process under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*; or
 - (b) a matter which Council has determined will be the subject of a Hearing Committee and is the subject of a public submissions process in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy,the petition will be treated as a joint submission in relation to the 'planning matter' or the 'statutory matter' (as the case may be).
- (8) An online or electronic petition may be submitted to a Council Meeting.
- (9) The number of signatories to an online or electronic petition will be taken to be the number of signatories at the time the petition is provided to Council for submission to a Council Meeting.
- (10) An online or electronic petition will not be presented to a Council Meeting if it contains signatures that are false or misleading.

3.6.6 Submissions to Meetings designated for Planning and related matters

At a Meeting Designated for Planning and Related Matters:

- (1) the Chairperson may invite a Council Officer to provide an overview of a planning matter to be considered; and
- (2) an objector to, or proponent of, a Planning Permit Application or Planning Scheme Amendment included in the Agenda, may be invited by the Chairperson to address the Meeting for no more than three minutes.

3.6.7 Public addressing the Meeting

- (1) Any member of the public addressing Council must extend due courtesy and respect to Council and the processes under which it operates and must take direction from the Chairperson whenever called on to do so.
- (2) Council may suspend standing orders in accordance with Rule 3.12, to hear from a community member or representative of an organisation, on matters of significance to the Council, only if prior arrangements have been made by written request to the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer.

3.6.8 Display of placards and posters

- (1) Subject to Sub-Rules (2) and (3), a person can display any placards or posters in the Council Chamber or in any building where a Meeting is being, or is about to be, held, including outside the entrance to the building.
- (2) A placard or poster must not:
 - (a) display any offensive, indecent, insulting or objectionable item or words; or
 - (b) obstruct the entrance to the Council Chamber or a building where a Meeting is being, or is about to be, held;
 - (c) obstruct the view or physically impede any person; or
 - (d) be attached to a pole, stick or other object.
- (3) The Chairperson may order and cause the removal of any placard or poster that is deemed by the Chairperson to be objectionable, disrespectful or otherwise inappropriate.

3.6.9 Prohibited items

- (1) Unless worn for either medical, health, cultural or religious purposes, a person must not wear a facemask or head covering that disguises their identity.
- (2) A person may not bring in the Council Chamber or any building where a Meeting is being, or is about to be, held, including outside the entrance to the building any item that may affect the safety or security of the Meeting.
- (3) Items considered to affect the safety or security of a Meeting include:
 - (a) A bag or object larger than a small backpack;
 - (b) Devices that amplify sound;
 - (c) Any other object identified by a Councillor, Council officer or security officer.
- (4) The Chairperson may cause the removal of any object or material that is deemed by the Chairperson to be objectionable or disrespectful.

3.6.10 Chairperson May Remove ⁴

- (1) Members of the public present at a Council Meeting must not interject during the Council Meeting.
- (2) If a person, other than a Councillor, interjects or gesticulating offensively during the Council Meeting, the Mayor may direct:
 - (a) the person to stop interjecting or gesticulating offensively; and
 - (b) if the person continues to interject or gesticulate offensively, the removal of the person.
- (3) In causing a person's removal under Sub-Rule (2)(b), or the removal of an object or material under Sub-Rules 3.6.8 and 3.6.9, the Chairperson may ask the Chief Executive Officer, an Authorised Officer or a member of security or Victoria Police to remove the person, object or material.

3.6.11 Chairperson may adjourn Disorderly Meeting

- (1) The Chairperson may call a break in a Meeting for either a short time, or to resume another day if:
 - (a) the behaviour at the Council table or in the gallery is significantly disrupting the Meeting; or
 - (b) as provided in Rule 3.5.8 when a Meeting has been in progress for longer than 2 hours.
- (2) The break referred to in Sub-Rule (1) is an adjournment.
- (3) If the Chairperson calls a Meeting to resume on another day, the provisions of 3.4.1 apply.

3.7 Voting**3.7.1 How a matter is determined**

- (1) To determine a Motion at a Meeting, the Chairperson must first call for those in favour of the Motion and then those opposed to the Motion and must then declare the result to the Meeting.
- (2) In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson must, unless the Act provides otherwise, exercise a Second vote (casting vote).

3.7.2 Voting must be seen

- (1) Voting may be by any method resolved by Council that enables those in attendance and those watching a livestream broadcast to clearly see which way a Council has voted at the time a vote is taken.

⁴ It is intended that this power to remove a member of the public, be exercisable by the Chairperson, without the need for any Council resolution. The Chairperson may choose to order the removal of a person whose actions immediately threaten the stability of the Meeting or wrongly threatens his or her authority in chairing the Meeting.

- (2) In the absence of a Council resolving an alternative method, voting on any matter is by show of hands.

3.7.3 When a division is permitted

- (1) A division may be requested by any Councillor on any vote.
- (2) The request must be made to the Chairperson either immediately prior to, or immediately after, the vote has been taken, and may not be made after the Meeting has moved to the next item of business.
- (3) When a division is called for the Chairperson must:
 - (a) first ask each Councillor wishing to vote in favour of the Motion to clearly indicate their vote and the Chairperson must then state the names of those Councillors to be recorded in the Minutes;
 - (b) then ask each Councillor wishing to vote against the Motion to clearly indicate their vote and the Chairperson must then state the names of those Councillors to be recorded in the Minutes;
 - (c) next, ask each Councillor abstaining from voting to clearly indicate their vote and the Chairperson must then state the names of those Councillors to be recorded in the Minutes; and
 - (d) finally, declare the result of the division.
- (4) Where a division is requested after the original vote has been taken, the Motion is decided on the division and the fact that there may be a difference between the result obtained when the original vote was taken and the result obtained on the division must be disregarded.

3.7.4 No discussion once a vote has been declared

- (1) Once a vote on a Motion has been declared carried or lost by the Chairperson, no further discussion relating to the Motion is allowed, unless the discussion:
 - (a) involves a Councillor requesting that his or her opposition to a resolution be recorded in the Minutes or calling for a division; or
 - (b) is a Councillor foreshadowing a notice of rescission where a resolution has just been made, or a positive Motion where a resolution has just been rescinded.
- (2) If a Motion is defeated, a new Motion on the same matter may be considered by Council only to avoid that matter being left in limbo.

3.8 Addressing the Meeting

3.8.1 Councillor allowed to speak uninterrupted

A Councillor who has the floor must not be interrupted unless called to order, or given notice by the Chairperson his speaking time has elapsed or is about to elapse, when he or she must sit down and remain silent until the Councillor raising the Point of Order has been heard and the Point of Order dealt with.

3.8.2 Addressing the Meeting

- (1) If the Chairperson so determines, any person addressing the Chairperson must refer to the Chairperson as:
 - (a) Mayor; or
 - (b) Chairperson,
- (2) all Councillors, other than the Mayor, must be addressed as Cr.....(surname); and
- (3) all Council staff, must be addressed by their official title.
- (4) Except for the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer, any person who addresses the Meeting must direct all remarks through the Chairperson.

3.9 Motions and Debate

A resolution must be able to be acted upon, a Motion must clearly state what is intended and what its effect will be if it becomes the decision. This provides clarity for the implementation of Council decisions.

3.9.1 Moving a Motion

The procedure for moving any Motion is:

- (1) The mover must outline the Motion without speaking in support of it;
- (2) The Motion must be seconded by a Councillor other than the mover;
- (3) If a Motion is not seconded, the Motion lapses for want of a seconder;
- (4) If there is a seconder, then the Chairperson must call on the mover to speak to the Motion;
- (5) After the mover has spoken to the Motion, the seconder may also speak to the Motion;
- (6) After the seconder has spoken to the Motion (or after the mover has spoken to the Motion if the seconder reserves their right to speak to the Motion), the Chairperson must call on any Councillor who wishes to speak against the Motion, then on any Councillor who wishes to speak for the Motion, after waiting until all Councillors wishing to speak to the Motion have spoken; and
- (7) If no Councillor wishes to speak against the Motion, then the Chairperson may put the Motion or call on any other Member to speak.
- (8) If the mover or seconder of a motion indicates that he or she wishes to withdraw from moving or seconding the motion, the Chairperson may seek another mover or seconder (as the case requires), but if no Councillor indicates his or her willingness to be the substitute mover or seconder, the motion lapses.

3.9.2 Chairperson's duty

Any Motion which:

- (1) is defamatory; or
- (2) is objectionable in language or nature; or
- (3) is vague or unclear in its intention; or
- (4) is outside the powers of Council; or
- (5) is not relevant to an item of business on the Agenda and has not been admitted as urgent business; or
- (6) purports to be an amendment but is not

must not be accepted by the Chairperson.

3.9.3 Right of reply

- (1) The mover of a Motion, which has not been amended, may, once debate has been exhausted, exercise a right of reply to matters raised during debate.
- (2) No new matters may be raised in the right of reply.
- (3) If no Councillor has spoken against a Motion, there will be no right of reply.
- (4) After the right of reply has been exercised, the Motion must immediately be put to the vote without any further discussion or debate.

3.9.4 Moving an amendment

- (1) A Motion, which has been moved and seconded, may be amended by leaving out, inserting or adding words, which must be relevant to the subject of the Motion.⁵
- (2) An amendment may be proposed or seconded by any Councillor, except the mover and seconder of the original Motion.
- (3) If a Councillor proposes an amendment and the original mover and seconder of the Motion both indicate their agreement with the amendment, the amended Motion becomes the substantive Motion without debate or vote.
- (4) If a Councillor proposes an amendment to which either the mover or seconder does not agree, the following will apply:
 - (a) the amendment must be moved and seconded;
 - (b) a Councillor may speak on any amendment once, whether or not he or she has spoken to the Motion, but debate must be confined to the terms of the amendment;
 - (c) any number of amendments may be proposed to a Motion, but only one amendment may be accepted by the Chairperson at any one time. No second or subsequent amendment, whether to the Motion or an amendment

⁵ If a proposed amendment is Ruled to be the negative of, or substantially contrary to, the Motion, it should be treated as an alternative Motion to be considered only in the event that the Motion before the Chair is lost – see Foreshadowing Motions.

of it, may be taken into consideration until the previous amendment has been dealt with and voted on;

- (d) if the amendment is carried, the Motion as amended then becomes the Motion before the Meeting (known as the 'substantive Motion'); and
- (e) the mover of an amendment does have a right of reply.

3.9.5 Foreshadowing Motions

- (1) At any time during debate a Councillor may foreshadow a Motion so as to inform Council of his or her intention to move a Motion at a later stage in the Meeting, but this does not extend any special right to the foreshadowed Motion.
- (2) A Motion foreshadowed may be prefaced with a statement that, in the event of a particular Motion before the Meeting being resolved in a certain way, a Councillor intends to move an alternative or additional Motion.
- (3) A Motion foreshadowed has no procedural standing and is merely a means to assist the flow of the Meeting.
- (4) The Minutes of the Meeting will not include foreshadowed Motions unless the foreshadowed Motion is subsequently formally moved as a Motion.

3.9.6 Withdrawal of Motions

Before any Motion is put to the vote, it may be withdrawn with the Agreement of Council.

3.9.7 Separation of Motions

- (1) Where a Motion contains more than one part, a Councillor may request the Chairperson to put the Motion to the vote in separate parts.
- (2) The Chairperson may decide to put any Motion to the vote in separate parts.

3.9.8 Motions moved in a block

The Chairperson may allow like Motions to be moved, or request Councillors to move like items, in a block (en bloc), if once passed the Motions will only:

- (a) note actions already taken; or
- (b) will not commit Council to further action, approve any spending (including any contractual variations) or changes to policy.

3.9.9 Motions in writing

- (1) All Motions, except Procedural Motions, must be submitted in writing.
- (2) The Chairperson may adjourn a Meeting while a Motion is being written or may request Council to defer the matter until the Motion has been written, allowing the Meeting to proceed uninterrupted.

3.9.10 Debate must be relevant to the Motion

- (1) Debate must always be relevant to the Motion before the Meeting, and, if not, the Chairperson must request the speaker to confine debate to the Motion.

- (2) If, after being requested by the Chairperson to confine debate to the Motion before the Meeting, the speaker continues to debate irrelevant matters, the Chairperson may direct the speaker to be seated and not speak further in respect of the Motion before the Chairperson. The speaker must immediately comply with any such direction.

3.9.11 Adequate and sufficient debate

- (1) Adequate debate is required where a matter is contentious in nature. In such a case, every Councillor should be given an opportunity to participate in the debate.
- (2) A Motion has been sufficiently debated if opposing views (where they exist) have been sufficiently put, not so much the number of those who have spoken but whether all minority opposing views have been put.
- (3) Once the views put are representative of the views of all Councillors or Members of the Delegated Committee, the debate would be regarded as sufficient.

3.9.12 Speaking times

- (1) Unless a Motion for an extension of speaking time has been carried, the maximum speaking times are:
 - (a) the mover of a Motion or amendment - 3 minutes;
 - (b) the mover of a Motion when exercising his or her right of reply – 2 minutes; and
 - (c) any other speaker – 3 minutes.
- (2) A Motion for an extension of speaking time must be proposed before the initial speaking time, for that speaker, expires.
- (3) A Motion for an extension of speaking time must not be accepted by the Chairperson if another Councillor has commenced speaking.
- (4) Only one extension of speaking time is permitted for each speaker.
- (5) Any extension of speaking time must not be more than two minutes.

3.9.13 Procedural Motions

- (1) Unless otherwise prohibited, and subject to Sub-Rule (3), a Procedural Motion may be moved at any time and must be dealt with immediately by the Chairperson.
- (2) Procedural Motions require a seconder.
- (3) The Chairperson may reject a Procedural Motion if he or she believes the Motion on which it is proposed has not been adequately or sufficiently debated.
- (4) Regardless of any other provision in these Governance Rules, a Procedural Motion must be dealt with in accordance with the table at Sub-Rule (8).
- (5) A Procedural Motion may not be moved or seconded by the Chairperson.
- (6) Unless otherwise provided, a Procedural Motion must not be amended.
- (7) Procedural Motions table:

Governance Rules

Chapter 3: Meeting Procedure

Motion	Form	Mover/Seconder	When prohibited	Effect if Carried	Effect if Lost	Debate Permitted
Deferral of a matter (to a future Meeting)	'That the debate on this matter be deferred until (insert Meeting/date) to allow (purpose of deferral) ...'	Any Councillor who has not moved or seconded the original Motion or otherwise spoken to the original Motion	(a) During the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor; (b) During the election of a Chairperson; or (c) When another Councillor is speaking	Consideration/debate on the Motion and/or amendment is postponed to the stated date and the item is re-listed for consideration at the resolved future Meeting, where a fresh Motion may be put and debated	Debate continues unaffected	Yes
Closure (of debate)	'That the Motion now be put'	Any Councillor who has not moved or seconded the original Motion or spoken for/against the original Motion	During nominations for a Chairperson	Motion or amendment is put to the vote immediately without further debate, subject to any Councillor exercising his or her right to ask any question concerning or arising out of the Motion	Debate continues unaffected	No
Laying a Motion on the table (pausing debate)	'That the Motion be laid on the table'	A Councillor who has not spoken for/against the Motion	During the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor	Motion not further discussed or voted on until Council resolves to take the question from the table at the same Meeting	Debate continues unaffected	No
Take a Motion from the table (resume debate on a matter)	'That the Motion in relation to xx be taken from the table'	Any Councillor	When no Motion is on the table	Debate of the item resumes	Debate of the item remains paused	No
Alter the order of business	'That the item listed at xx on the Agenda be considered before/after the item listed as xy'	Any Councillor	(a) At a Meeting to elect the Mayor; or (b) During any debate	Alters the order of business for the Meeting	Items are considered in the order as listed in the Agenda	No
Suspension of Standing Orders	'That Standing Orders be suspended to ...' (reason must be provided)	Any Councillor		The Rules of the Meeting are temporarily suspended for the specific reason given in the Motion No debate or decision on any matter, other than a decision to resume Standing Orders, is permitted	The Meeting continues unaffected	No

Governance Rules

Chapter 3: Meeting Procedure

Motion	Form	Mover/Seconded	When prohibited	Effect if Carried	Effect if Lost	Debate Permitted
Resumption of Standing Orders	'That Standing Orders be resumed'	Any Councillor	When Standing Orders have not been suspended	The temporary suspension of the Rules of the Meeting is removed	The Meeting cannot continue	No
Adjourn the Meeting	'That the Meeting be adjourned for xx minutes/until xx date [and insert reason]	Any Councillor	When Standing Orders have not been suspended	The Meeting is ceased to reconvene at the specified time/date.	The Meeting continues (if the Governance Rules allow)	Yes
Consideration of confidential matter(s) (Close the Meeting to members of the public)	That, in accordance with section 66(2)(a) of the Local Government Act 2020 the Meeting be closed to members of the public for the consideration of item xx which is confidential as it relates to [insert reason]	Any Councillor	During the election of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor	The Meeting is closed to members of the public	The Meeting Continues to be open to the public	Yes
Reopen the Meeting	'That the Meeting be reopened to members of the public'	Any Councillor		The Meeting is reopened to the public	The Meeting remains closed to the public	No

3.9.14 Notices of Motion

(1) A Councillor can submit to the Chief Executive Officer a Notice of Motion for inclusion in the Agenda for a Meeting.

~~(2)~~ A Councillor must announce their intention to submit a Notice of Motion, including its general intent, at a Councillor Briefing Session before lodging it as per point (3) below.

~~(2)~~(3) Provided point 2 is met, A-a Notice of Motion must be in writing, signed by the Councillor (including by electronic means), and be lodged with the Chief Executive Officer no later than 12 noon 10 business days before the Meeting at which it is intended to be considered to ensure its inclusion in the Agenda.

~~(3)~~(4) The Chief Executive Officer must inform Councillors about the legal and cost implications of any proposed Notice of Motion. The Chief Executive Officer may suggest revised wording to the draft Notice of Motion to facilitate compliance with the requirements for Notices of Motion under these Governance Rules.

- ~~(4)~~(5) A Notice of Motion must relate to the objectives, role and functions of Council as outlined in the Act.
- ~~(5)~~(6) A Notice of Motion must call for a Council report if the Notice of Motion proposes any action that:
- (a) impacts the levels of Council service;
 - (b) commits Council to expenditure greater than \$5,000 that is not included in the adopted Council Budget;
 - (c) proposes to establish, amend or extend Council policy;
 - (d) proposes to impact the rights of any person who has not had the opportunity to contribute their views;
 - (e) commits Council to any contractual arrangement; or
 - (f) concerns any litigation in respect of which Council is a party.
- ~~(6)~~(7) The Chief Executive Officer must reject any Notice of Motion which:
- (a) is too vague;
 - (b) is defamatory;
 - (c) may be prejudicial to any person or Council;
 - (d) is objectionable in language or nature; or
 - (e) is outside the powers of Council.
- ~~(7)~~(8) The Chief Executive Officer may reject a proposed Notice of Motion that relates to a matter that can be addressed through the operational service request process.
- ~~(8)~~(9) If rejecting a Notice of Motion, the Chief Executive Officer must inform the Councillor who lodged it of that rejection and the reasons for the rejection no later than nine business days before the Meeting at which it is intended to be considered. The Councillor may submit a revised Motion within 24 hours.
- ~~(9)~~(10) The Chief Executive Officer may designate a Notice of Motion to be confidential in accordance with relevant grounds as contained in the Act, in which case, the Notice of Motion will be considered in the part of the relevant Council Meeting that is closed to members of the public.
- ~~(10)~~(11) The full text of any Notice of Motion accepted by the Chief Executive Officer must be included in the Agenda and outline the policy, financial and resourcing implications if the Notice of Motion is passed.
- ~~(11)~~(12) The Chief Executive Officer may arrange for comments of members of Council staff to be provided to Councillors prior to the Notice of Motion being published in the Agenda for the relevant Council Meeting.
- ~~(12)~~(13) The Chief Executive Officer must cause all Notices of Motion to be sequentially numbered, dated and entered in a register.
- ~~(13)~~(14) Unless Council resolves otherwise, each Notice of Motion must be considered in the order in which they were received.
- ~~(14)~~(15) The Motion moved must not be substantially different to the Motion published in the Agenda, however may be amended by resolution of the Council.

~~(15)~~(16) If a Councillor who has lodged a Notice of Motion is absent from the Meeting or fails to move the Motion when called upon by the Chairperson to do so, any other Councillor may move the Motion.

~~(16)~~(17) If a Notice of Motion is not moved at the Council Meeting at which it is listed, it lapses.

3.9.15 Notices of Rescission

- (1) A notice of rescission is a form of Notice of Motion. Accordingly, all provisions in these Rules regulating Notices of Motion equally apply to notices of rescission.
- (2) Motions to rescind or alter a previous resolution of Council can be made by:
 - (a) notice of rescission delivered by a Councillor in accordance with Sub-Rule (3); or
 - (b) recommendation contained in an officer's report included in the Agenda.
- (3) A Councillor may propose a Motion to rescind or alter a previous resolution of Council provided:
 - (a) the previous resolution has not been acted on; and
 - (b) a notice is delivered to the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate setting out:
 - (c) the relevant previous resolution to be rescinded or altered; and
 - (d) the Meeting and date when the relevant previous resolution was carried.
- (4) A notice of rescission must be in writing, signed (including by electronic means) 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.
- (5) The Chief Executive Officer, or a member of Council staff with responsibility for the subject matter of a resolution, may implement a resolution of Council at any time after the close of the Meeting at which it was made. A resolution of Council will be deemed to have been acted on if:
 - (a) its contents or substance has been formally communicated to a person whose interests are materially affected by it, including by publishing the proposed Minutes of a Council Meeting on Council's website; or
 - (b) a statutory process has been commenced so as to vest enforceable rights or obligations on Council or any other person.
- (6) Notwithstanding Sub-Rule (5)(a) where a Notice of Rescission has been received prior to the publication of the proposed minutes (and a notation has been recorded as per Rule 3.11.1 (p)), the resolution will not be deemed to have been acted upon.
- (7) Notwithstanding Sub-Rule (4), the Chief Executive Officer or member of Council staff must defer implementing a resolution which:
 - (a) has not been acted on; and

- (b) is the subject of a notice of rescission which has been delivered to the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with Sub-Rule (2), unless deferring implementation of the resolution would have the effect of depriving the resolution of usefulness, giving rise to non-compliance with a legal obligation or placing the Council at legal, financial or other risk.
- (8) If a Motion for rescission is lost, a similar Motion may not be put before Council for at least one month from the date it was last lost, unless Council resolves that the notice of rescission be re-listed at a future Meeting.
- (9) If a Motion for rescission is not moved at the Meeting for which it is listed, it lapses.
- (10) A notice of rescission listed on an Agenda may be moved by any Councillor present but if not being moved by the Councillor who submitted it, must be moved in the form it was listed and must not be amended.

3.9.16 Change of Council Policy

- (1) Council reviews its policies to ensure they are current and continue to reflect community expectations and the position held by Council.
- (2) It is good practice for Council to review significant policies at least once in each Council term (every 4 years) and such reviews may lead to change in policy position.
- (3) Subject to Sub-Rule (4), if Council wishes to change a Council policy, a formal notice of rescission is not required.
- (4) If a policy has been in force in its original or amended form for less than 12 months, any intention to change the policy which may result in a substantial change to the policy's application or operation for members of the public should be communicated to those affected, and their comment sought, prior to the policy being changed.

3.9.17 Foreshadowed Items

- (1) At the time designated in the Council Meeting Agenda, a Councillor may foreshadow a Notice of Motion to be submitted for consideration at the next Council Meeting by indicating, when called on to do so by the Chair, the subject matter of the foreshadowed Notice of Motion.
- (2) The subject matter, as indicated by the Councillor, of a Foreshadowed Item will be recorded in the Minutes.
- (3) No discussion or debate is allowed on a Foreshadowed Item.
- (4) A Foreshadowed Item will have no further formal status at that Council Meeting.
- (5) Foreshadowed Items are intended to be used to indicate to Council and the community matters of importance that will be raised at the next Council Meeting.
- (6) If a Councillor does not submit a Notice of Motion in accordance with Rule 3.9.14 for the next Council Meeting, no further action on a Foreshadowed Item will occur.

3.10 Points of Order**3.10.1 Raising a Point of Order**

- (1) A Councillor raising a Point of Order must state:
 - (a) the Point of Order; and
 - (b) any chapter, Rule, paragraph or provision relevant to the Point of Order.
- (2) The Chairperson must decide all points of order by stating the provision, Rule, practice or precedent which he or she considers applicable to the Point of Order raised, without entering into any discussion or comment.
- (3) The Chairperson may adjourn the Meeting to consider a Point of Order; otherwise he or she must Rule on it as soon as it is raised.
- (4) All other matters before Council are suspended until the Point of Order is decided.

3.10.2 Dissent in Chairperson's ruling

- (1) A Motion of dissent in the Chairperson's ruling must, if seconded, be given priority to all other items of business and a substitute Chairperson must be elected to preside while the Motion is being considered.
- (2) The substitute Chairperson must put questions relative to the ruling to the Chairperson first, and then to the mover of the Motion.
- (3) The substitute Chairperson must conduct a debate on the Chairperson's ruling, and the matter must be decided by a majority vote.
- (4) The Chairperson must then resume the Chair for the remainder of the Meeting.

3.10.3 Valid points of order

- (1) A Point of Order may be raised in relation to:
 - (a) a Motion which under Rule 3.9.2 should not be accepted by the Chairperson;
 - (b) a question of procedure;
 - (c) a Councillor who is, or appears to be, out of order;
 - (d) debate that is irrelevant to the matter under consideration;
 - (e) a matter that is outside the powers of Council; or
 - (f) any act of Disorder.

3.10.4 Contradiction or opinion

- (2) Rising to express a mere difference of opinion or to contradict a speaker is not a Point of Order.

3.10.5 Disorderly Conduct

- (1) The conduct of Councillors at Council Meetings is governed by the Act, these Rules and the Councillor Code of Conduct.
- (2) Where a Councillor engages in improper or Disorderly conduct, or acts in a way that otherwise disrupts the Meeting, and prevents the conduct of Council business:
 - (a) Council may, by resolution, suspend that Councillor from a portion of the Meeting or from the balance of the Meeting where the Chairperson has warned the Councillor to cease that behaviour; or
 - (b) The Mayor, at a Council Meeting, having previously warned the Councillor to cease that behaviour, may direct a Councillor to leave the Meeting for a period of time or the balance of the Meeting.⁶
- (3) Where Council suspends a Councillor under Sub-Rule (2)(a), or the Mayor directs a Councillor to leave the Meeting under Sub-Rule (2)(b) the Councillor will take no active part in the portion of the Meeting from which he or she has been suspended.
- (4) If a Councillor has been suspended from a Meeting or directed to leave in accordance with Sub-Rule (3) the Chairperson may ask the Chief Executive Officer, an Authorised Officer a member of Victoria Police to remove the Councillor.

3.11 Minutes

The Minutes of a Meeting must contain details of the proceedings and resolutions made, be clearly expressed, be self-explanatory and incorporate relevant reports or a summary of the relevant reports considered in the decision-making process.

3.11.1 Keeping of Minutes

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer or Delegate is responsible for the keeping of Minutes on behalf of Council. Those Minutes must record:
 - (a) the date, place, time and nature of the Council Meeting;
 - (b) the names of Councillors and whether they are present, an apology, on leave of absence, etc.;
 - (c) the titles of the members of Council staff present who are not part of the gallery;
 - (d) the disclosure of a conflict of interest made by a Councillor in accordance with the Act;
 - (e) the arrivals and departures of Councillors, during the course of the Meeting (including any temporary departures or arrivals);
 - (f) every Motion and amendment moved (including Procedural Motions),
 - (g) the outcome of every Motion moved;

⁶ The Act (section 19(1)(b)) provides the power to the Mayor to direct a Councillor, subject to any procedures or limitations specified in the Governance Rules, to leave a Council Meeting if the behaviour of the Councillor is preventing the Council from conducting its business.

- (h) where a division is called, the names of every Councillor and the way their vote was cast (and if they abstained);
- (i) when requested by a Councillor, a record of their support of, opposition to, or abstention from voting on any Motion;
- (j) for the purposes of Sub-Rules (h) and (i) an abstention will be recorded along with a note that the vote was counted against the question in accordance with section 61(5)(e) of the Act.
- (k) details of any failure to achieve or maintain a quorum;
- (l) a summary of any question asked and the response provided as part of public question time
- (m) the items about which community statements have been made and the number of community statements;
- (n) details of any petitions made to Council, including a full description of the request contained in the petition, if the petition has not already been published in a Council agenda;
- (o) the time and reason for any adjournment of the Meeting or suspension of standing orders;
- (p) where a rescission motion has been received, a notation will be recorded in the proposed minutes advising that the resolution is subject to a Notice of Rescission to be considered by Council;
- (q) any other matter, which the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate thinks should be recorded to clarify the intention of the Meeting or assist in the reading of the Minutes and at the request of any Councillor; and
- (r) the time the Council Meeting was opened and closed, including any part of the Council Meeting that was closed to members of the public.

3.11.2 Electronic Minutes

Once confirmed, the Minutes may be stored electronically in perpetuity as the record of Council business.

3.11.3 Confirmation of Minutes

- (1) The Minutes as recorded by the Chief Executive Officer, or Delegate, will be made available as the proposed Minutes soon as possible, but at a minimum to:
 - (a) Councillors, within 7 business days;
 - (b) members of the public, by publishing them on Council's website, within 9 business days of the Council Meeting they relate to.
- (2) At every Council Meeting the Minutes of the preceding Council Meeting(s) must be dealt with as follows:
 - (a) a Motion will be moved to confirm the Minutes in the following terms: 'That the Minutes of theMeeting held on20.....be confirmed.';

- (b) if a Councillor indicates opposition to the Minutes, the Councillor must specify the particular item or items in the Minutes and, after asking any questions to clarify the matter, can only move a Motion to rectify the alleged error(s) in the Minutes by adding the following words to the Motion in Sub-Rule (2) (a) '...subject to the following alteration(s).....'.
- (3) no debate or discussion is permitted on the confirmation of Minutes except as to their accuracy as a record of the proceedings of the Council Meeting to which they relate;
- (4) once the Minutes are confirmed in their original or amended form, the Minutes must, if practicable, be signed by the Chairperson of the Meeting at which they have been confirmed; and
- (5) the Minutes must be entered in the minute book and each item in the minute book must be entered consecutively.

3.11.4 Webcasting and Recording of Proceedings

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer (or Delegate) may, for the purposes of minute taking, cause all or part of the proceedings of a Meeting to be recorded on suitable audio or video recording equipment.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer will cause a livestream of the proceedings of a Meeting to be conducted and the recording of that livestream to be made available to the public.
- (3) A Meeting that has been closed to members of the public for consideration of confidential matters will not be livestreamed.
- (4) A Meeting that has been closed to members of the public for security reasons or because it is necessary to do so to enable the Meeting to proceed in an orderly manner, must continue to be livestreamed.
- (5) A Meeting that has been closed to members of the public for security reasons or because it is necessary to do so to enable the Meeting to proceed in an orderly manner must be adjourned if the livestream is not possible.
- (6) A person in the gallery must not operate film, photographic, tape-recording or other equipment to reproduce sound and/or images at any Meeting without first obtaining the consent of the Chairperson.
- (7) The consent of the Chairperson given under Sub-Rule (3) may be revoked at any time during the course of a Meeting by the Chairperson stating that consent has been revoked and ordering that the recording cease, at which time the recording must cease.

3.12 Suspension of Standing Orders

Standing Orders are the *Rules* made to govern the procedure at *Council Meetings* as contained in these Governance Rules. The Standing Orders cover a range of matters including the order of business, *Rules of debate*, *Procedural Motions* and election procedures. Standing Orders can be suspended to facilitate the business of a *Meeting* but should not be used purely to dispense with the processes and protocol of the government of *Council*.

- (1) To temporarily remove the constraints of formal Meeting procedure and allow full discussion or clarification of an issue, Council may, by resolution, suspend standing orders in accordance with the Procedural Motion table at Rule 3.9.13.
- (2) Suspension of standing orders should not be used purely to dispense with the processes and protocol of the government of Council.
- (3) No Motion can be accepted by the Chairperson or lawfully be dealt with during any suspension of standing orders, except a Motion to resume standing orders.
- (4) No Motion to suspend standing orders can be accepted by the Chairperson during a second extension of time for a Meeting.

3.13 Circumstances in which Council will close a Meeting to members of the public

- (1) The Act provides the basis for matters to be considered as confidential. Council will only close a Meeting to the public for consideration of confidential matters in accordance with the Act and its Public Transparency Policy.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer may determine to advertise that a Meeting will be closed to members of the public if:
 - (a) There is reason to believe the safety or security of Councillors, Council staff or members of the public will be at risk if the Meeting is open to the public; or
 - (b) All matters to be considered at the Meeting are confidential in nature.
- (3) Council may resolve to close a Meeting to members of the public if:
 - (a) There is reason to believe the safety or security of Councillors, Council staff or members of the public is at risk; or
 - (b) A Meeting, has become, or is at risk of becoming so Disorderly that the business of Council cannot be conducted; or
 - (c) The matter to be considered relates to confidential matters.
- (4) Having closed the Meeting in accordance with Sub-Rule (2), Council may resolve that it's decision or any report considered, or any part of its decision or any report considered, may be released to the public, to provide clarity that a Councillor or Council staff member who discusses those elements resolved to be released is not releasing confidential information.

3.13.1 Designated Confidential Information

- (1) If, after the repeal of section 77(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the Chief Executive Officer is of the opinion that information relating to a Meeting is confidential information within the meaning of the Act, he or she may designate the information as confidential and advise Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly.

- (2) Information which has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer as confidential information within the meaning of the Act, and in respect of which advice has been given to Councillors and/or members of Council staff in writing accordingly, will be presumed to be confidential information.

CHAPTER 4 – ELECTION OF THE MAYOR

4.1. Overview

The role and functions of the Mayor are provided in the Act. The holder of this significant office is the Chairperson at Council Meetings, the leader of the Councillors, acts as the principal spokesperson for Council and carries out civic and ceremonial duties. The Mayor also leads engagement with the community on the development of the Council Plan.

The Chief Executive Officer must determine the most appropriate time and date for the election of the Mayor, except that the election of the Mayor must be held in accordance with any provisions contained in the Act⁷.

- (1) A Mayor is to be elected no later than one month after the date of a general election.
- (2) At the Meeting to elect the Mayor, Council must first resolve if the term of the Mayor is to be 1 or 2 years.
- (3) If the Mayor is elected for a 1 year term, the next election of the Mayor must be held on a day to be determined by the Council that is as close to the end of the 1 year term as is reasonably practicable.
- (4) If the Mayor is to be elected for a 2 year term, the next election of the Mayor must be held on a day to be determined by the Council that is as close to the end of the 2 year term as is reasonably practicable.
- (5) A Mayor is to be elected within one month after any vacancy in the office of Mayor occurs.
- (6) The election of a Mayor after the period specified in this section does not invalidate the election.
- (7) A Councillor elected to fill a vacancy in the office of Mayor caused other than by the expiration of a one year or a 2 year term serves the remaining period of the previous Mayor's term.

4.2. Election of Mayor⁸

- (1) At a Council Meeting that is open to the public, the Councillors must elect a Councillor to be the Mayor of the Council.
- (2) Subject to section 167, any Councillor is eligible for election or re-election to the office of Mayor.
- (3) The election of the Mayor must—
 - (a) be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer; and
 - (b) subject to this section, be conducted in accordance with the Governance Rules.

⁷ In accordance and as outlined in Section 26 of the Act

⁸ In accordance and as outlined in Section 25 of the Act

- (4) Subject to subsections (5) and (6), the Mayor must be elected by an absolute majority of the Councillors.
- (5) If an absolute majority of the Councillors cannot be obtained at the Meeting, the Council may resolve to conduct a new election at a later specified time and date.
- (6) If only one Councillor is a candidate for Mayor, the Meeting must declare that Councillor to be duly elected as Mayor.
- (7) In this section, **absolute majority** means the number of Councillors which is greater than half the total number of the Councillors of a Council (i.e. 6).

4.3. Role and Election of Deputy Mayor

In accordance with section 21 of the Act, the role of the Deputy Mayor must perform the role of the Mayor and may exercise any of the powers of the Mayor if the Mayor is unable to attend a Council meeting or part thereof; incapable to perform his or her duties or the office of the Mayor is vacant.

- (1) At the Council Meeting at which the Mayor is to be elected, the Council may resolve to establish the position of Deputy Mayor and elect a Councillor to the position of Deputy Mayor.
- (2) The term of a Deputy Mayor is identical to the term of the Mayor as resolved by Council.
- (3) If the Council has not resolved to establish the position of Deputy Mayor, any provisions in these Governance Rules relating to the Deputy Mayor have no effect.

4.4. Nominating

- (1) Each nomination requires a mover and seconder.
- (2) A nominated Councillor must advise the Chair whether they accept or decline the nomination as a candidate for the role of Mayor/Deputy Mayor.

4.5. Method of Voting

The election of the Mayor must be carried out by a show of hands.

4.6. Determining the Election of Mayor / Deputy Mayor

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer will preside during the election of the Mayor.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer must invite nominations for the office of Mayor and confirm acceptance of the nomination with the nominee.
- (3) Where in an election for the Mayor:
 - (a) only one candidate has been nominated, that candidate must be declared elected;
 - (b) two candidates have been nominated, a vote must be taken and the candidate who receives an Absolute Majority of votes must be declared elected;
 - (c) two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives an Absolute Majority of votes, a Second vote will be conducted.
 - (d) where, after a Second vote, where two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives an Absolute Majority of votes the Chief Executive Officer will seek the Meeting to resolve to conduct a new election at a Meeting to be held at 6 pm the following day;
 - (e) more than two candidates have been nominated and no candidate receives an Absolute Majority:
 - (i) the candidate with the fewest number of votes cast must be eliminated;
 - (ii) the names of the remaining candidates must be put to the vote again; and
 - (iii) the procedure in (i) and (ii) above must be continued until there remain only two candidates, at which point the candidate to be declared elected is to be determined by the procedures outlined in (b) to (d).
 - (f) in the event of more than two candidates having an equality of votes and one of them having to be declared a defeated candidate (where there are three or more candidates with equal votes); the Chief Executive Officer will conduct a vote for one candidate to be defeated;
 - (g) In the event the vote for a candidate to be defeated results in an equality of votes the defeated candidate will be determined by lot.
 - (h) if a lot is conducted, the Chief Executive Officer will conduct the lot and the following provisions will apply:
 - (i) each candidate will draw one lot;
 - (ii) the order of drawing lots will be determined by the alphabetical order of the surnames of the Councillors who received an equal number of votes except that if two or more Councillor surnames are identical, the order will be determined by the alphabetical order of the Councillors' first names;
 - (iii) as many identical pieces of paper as there are Councillors who received an equal number of votes must be placed in a receptacle;
 - (iv) the word 'Defeated' shall be written on one of the pieces of paper, and the Councillor who draws the paper with the word 'Defeated' written on it must be declared the defeated candidate (in which event a further vote must be taken on the remaining candidates).

- (4) If Council resolves to have the office of Deputy Mayor, the provisions of Sub-Rules (2) and (3) apply to the election of the Deputy Mayor with all necessary modifications and adaptations.

4.7. Ceremonial Mayoral Speech

- (1) Upon being elected, the Mayor may make a ceremonial speech.
- (2) The purpose of the ceremonial Mayoral speech is to outline priorities for the year ahead based on the adopted Council Plan.

CHAPTER 5 COUNCIL COMMITTEES & JOINT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Various types of Committees can play a key role in connecting community views and experts with the decision-making processes of Council. Committees provide advice to Council and to Council officers exercising delegation to make decisions or implement policy.

Committees, usually comprise community members and Councillors, and may include representatives of community organisations. These committees are essential forums to provide input to the development of Council policy and decision making in their areas of focus.

The appointment of Councillors to specific areas of responsibility also provides a framework for relationships between Councillors and the administration of Council to underpin informed decision making.

Council also has Councillor representatives on external committees and organisations to ensure Council's voice is heard in key priority areas. These committees and organisations also inform Council, via its representatives, in regard to sector and/or expert views.

Council will seek the views of community members whose rights or obligations may be affected before making a decision. Community engagement on each issue will be undertaken in accordance with the Community Engagement principles of the Act and Council's Community Engagement Policy.

In certain circumstances Council will establish a formal opportunity for members of the community to address a committee established to hear from the community in regard to a specific issue.

5.1 Delegated Committees

Council may establish Delegated Committees as part of its governance framework. Delegated Committees can comprise Councillors, members of Council staff and others and must be chaired by a Councillor. As Council may delegate specific powers, duties and functions to Delegated Committees, their Meeting procedures need to be formal.

- (1) If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, these Rules will apply to the Delegated Committee Meetings with any necessary modifications.
- (2) For the purpose of Sub-Rule (1):
 - (a) a Council Meeting is to be read as a reference to a Delegated Committee Meeting;
 - (b) a Councillor is to be read as a reference to a Member of the Delegated Committee; and

- (c) a reference to the Mayor is to be read as a reference to the Chairperson of the Delegated Committee.
- (3) If Council establishes a Delegated Committee, Council may resolve that a provision of these Governance Rules do not apply to that Committee.

5.2 Advisory Committees

- (1) Advisory Committees established by Council will be consulted for input on related policy, strategy or major operational proposals.
- (2) Each Advisory Committee will be established in accordance with a framework and terms of reference determined by the Chief Executive Officer that at a minimum will prescribe:
 - (a) Membership terms that provide for renewal of membership and continuity of contribution, with provision for initial appointments to support rotation of memberships.
 - (b) Inclusive and transparent recruitment processes for community member membership and participation.
 - (c) Requirements for disclosures of conflicts of interest.
 - (d) A description of the roles of members including attendance and participation requirements, role of the committee, Councillor chair, reporting requirements, confidentiality.
- (3) Subject to the Local Government Act 2020, the Council may appoint any number or combination of its members and staff officers to be an Advisory Committee to consider and make a recommendation to the Council upon any matter, but no recommendation of any Advisory Committee shall have any force or effect until approved by the Council.

5.3 Hearing Committees

- (1) Council will establish Hearing Committees to provide an opportunity to hear from community members in formal setting on key issues.
- (2) A Hearing Committee will be comprised only of Councillors.
- (3) A quorum for a Hearing Committee will be half of the Councillors appointed to the Hearing Committee.
- (4) Where issue is affects a large proportion of the Merri-bek community all Councillors will be appointed to the Hearing Committee.
- (5) Priority will be given to addresses from those members of the community who have registered an interest in addressing a Hearing Committee.
- (6) Community members will be provided with reasonable notice of the date and time that they will be invited to address a Hearing Committee.
- (7) Council may resolve that a Hearing Committee Meeting will be held electronically and make provisions for community members address the committee by a video conferencing tool.
- (8) Council may resolve a Hearing Committee Meeting will be livestreamed.

- (9) A summary of proceedings of all Hearing Committee Meetings held will be reported to Council.

5.4 Community Asset Committees⁹

The Act provides for Council to establish a community asset committee for the management of a community asset such as a hall. Council may appoint members of the community to the committee and delegate to it powers, duties, or functions. The powers delegated to a community asset committee must be limited in the amount and purpose of any financial delegation.

- (1) The Governance Rules will apply to any Community Asset Committee established by Council.
- (2) Council may resolve, in establishing a Community Asset Committee, that the Meeting procedure chapter of these Governance Rules does not apply.
- (3) A Community Asset Committee must report the Minutes of all Committee Meetings to the next practicable Council Meeting.
- (4) A Community Asset Committee must act in accordance with its adopted Charter, Instrument of Delegation and any Terms of Reference adopted by Council.
- (5) A Community Asset Committee must adhere to any policy, guideline or protocol introduced by Council, which relates to the operational or governance requirements of the Committee.
- (6) A Community Asset Committee must provide Council with an Annual Report each year, in a format determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

5.5 Joint Council Meetings

Regional collaboration provides benefits to the Merri-bek community through collective procurement, increased advocacy and alignment for major projects. While on some matters that are worked on in partnership it's possible for the participating Councils to make their own decisions and determinations, in some circumstances, it may be beneficial to hold Joint Council Meetings as are provided for in the Act.

- (1) Council may resolve to participate in a Joint Council Meeting.
- (2) If Council has resolved to participate in a Joint Council Meeting, the Chief Executive Officer (or Delegate) will agree on governance Rules with the participating Councils.

⁹ Section 47 of the Act provides:

1) The Chief Executive Officer may by instrument of delegation delegate any power, duty or function of the Council that has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer by the Council to—

- (a) a member of Council staff; or
- (b) the members of a Community Asset Committee.

This means Council may not delegate directly to a Community Asset Committee.

- (3) Where the participating Councils agree Merri-bek will chair a Joint Council Meeting, the Mayor will be nominated to Chair the Joint Council Meeting.
- (4) A joint meeting must comply with any requirements prescribed by the regulations.

CHAPTER 6 – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Act defines general and material conflicts of interest and provides exemptions for remoteness and interests in common with a substantial proportion of ratepayers along with other specific circumstances.

The Act also provides Council must include in its Governance Rules procedures for disclosures of Conflicts of interest, including at Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council that are not Council Meetings. Meetings conducted under the auspices of Council include those Meetings arranged or hosted by Council.

These Rules provide the procedures for disclosures of conflicts of interest.

Further guidance is available from the Managing Conflicts of Interest guideline.

6.1 Obligations with regard to conflict of interest:

- (1) Councillors, members of Delegated Committees and Council staff and contractors are required to:
 - (a) Avoid - all situations which may give rise to conflicts of interest;
 - (b) Identify - any conflicts of interest; and
 - (c) Disclose – or declare all conflicts of interest.

6.2 Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees

- (1) May not participate in discussion or decision-making on a matter in which they have a conflict of interest.
- (2) When disclosing a conflict of interest, Councillors must clearly state their connection to the matter.
- (3) All disclosures of conflicts of interest will be recorded in the Minutes of a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting.
- (4) Council will maintain a Conflict of Interest Register which will be made available on Council's website.

6.3 Procedure at a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting

- (1) At the time designated in the Agenda, a Councillor with a conflict of interest in an item on that Agenda must indicate they have a conflict of interest by clearly stating:
 - (a) The item for which they have a conflict of interest; and
 - (b) Whether their conflict of interest is general or material; and
 - (c) The circumstances that give rise to the conflict of interest.
- (2) Immediately prior to the consideration of the item in which they have a conflict of interest, a Councillor or Member of a Delegated Committee must indicate to the Meeting the existence of the conflict of interest and leave the Meeting.
- (3) A Councillor who is not present at the designated time in the Agenda for disclosures of conflicts of interest, must disclose their conflict of interest in the manner that required for the declarations of conflicts of interest at Sub-Rule (1) prior to leaving the Meeting.

- (4) A Councillor or Member of a Delegated Committee who discloses a conflict of interest and leaves a Council Meeting must not communicate with any participants in the Meeting while the decision is being made.

6.4 Procedure at Advisory Committee Meetings and other Meetings organised, hosted or supported by Merri-bek

- (1) A Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee who has a conflict of interest must not participate in discussion of matters that will come before Council for a decision, or if a decision will be made by a member of staff acting under delegation.
- (2) At the time indicated on the Agenda, a Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee with a conflict of interest will indicate the existence of the conflict of interest and the matter in which the conflict of interest arises.
- (3) If there is no Agenda, a Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee with a conflict of interest will indicate the existence of the conflict of interest as soon the matter arises.
- (4) At the time for discussion of that item, the Councillor or member of an Advisory Committee will leave the discussion and not communicate with any members of the Meeting for the duration of the discussion.
- (5) The existence of a conflict of interest will be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- (6) If there are no Minutes kept of the Meeting, the conflict of interest will be recorded in a Meeting record and provided to the Governance team for recording in the register of Conflicts of Interest.
- (7) The Meeting Minutes or record will also record the duration of the discussion and whether the Councillor left the Meeting.
- (8) Meeting records and reports of conflicts of interest will be presented to Council for noting and inclusion on the public record.

6.5 Council staff

- (1) Must act in accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct.
- (2) Must not exercise a delegation or make a decision on any matter where they have a conflict of interest.
- (3) May be permitted to provide advice to a decision maker if a conflict of interest exists, subject to the procedure and disclosure provisions at Rule 5.6 and the Employee Code of Conduct.

6.6 Procedure for disclosures of conflicts of interest by Council staff

- (1) Council staff must disclose the existence of all conflicts of interest in writing and in the form determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
- (2) All conflicts of interest disclosed by Council staff will be provided to the Governance team for recording in the register of Conflicts of Interest.
- (3) A Council staff member who has disclosed a conflict of interest may provide advice to Council or another staff member acting under delegation if:

- (a) The number and qualifications of other people providing advice regarding the same matter is equal or greater; or
- (b) The staff member who has disclosed the conflict of interest is the only staff member with expertise in the area; and
- (c) The staff member's Director determines that the conflict of interest has not influenced the advice provided; and
- (d) The existence of the conflict of interest is documented in all advice provided by that staff member, including any Council Report(s), and in the case of verbal advice, is documented by the decision maker.

6.7 Contractors and Consultants

- (1) All Contractors and consultants engaged by Council to provide advice to the decision making process will be required to disclose conflicts of interest.
- (2) A Contractor or consultant who discloses a conflict of interest will not be engaged to provide advice on that matter unless;
 - (a) The conflict is so remote or insignificant it could not be considered to influence the advice being provided; or
 - (b) There are no other contractors or consultants reasonably available and qualified to provide the technical advice required; and
 - (c) The conflict of interest is documented, including any Council Report(s), in all advice provided by that contractor or consultant.

CHAPTER 7 - DELEGATIONS

Council can make decisions (act) in two ways – by resolution at a Council Meeting or by delegation (others acting on its behalf). The Local Government Act 2020 provides for Council to delegate to the Chief Executive Officer.

Delegation of Council powers to the Chief Executive Officer and other members of Council staff is a long-established practice to enable day to day operational decisions to be made efficiently. Delegation of Council powers is primarily enabled and regulated by the Local Government Act 2020, however powers, duties and functions may be delegated from a range of Acts, Regulations and local laws.

Additionally, the Act and other legislation confers some powers duties and functions directly to the Chief Executive Officer. These may also be delegated by the Chief Executive Officer to various positions in the organisation's structure.

Delegations are to a position in the organisational structure rather than to a person.

- (1) A Delegate must exercise the duties and perform the duties and functions set out in the Instrument of delegation and in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council.
- (2) A Delegate making a decision that will affect any person's rights, will identify whose rights may be affected and provide an opportunity for that person (or persons) to convey their views regarding the effect on their rights, and consider those views.
- (3) Delegates must keep appropriate records of decisions and actions taken under delegation.
- (4) The Chief Executive Officer may designate certain decisions made under delegation as matters to be reported to Council.
- (5) Council's public register of delegations will be available on its website and for inspection, on request, at Council's offices.

CHAPTER 8 – COMMON SEAL

The purpose of this Section is to provide for the security and proper use of the Common Seal. The Common Seal is the corporate signature of Council and exists in the form of a stamp. It evidences Council's corporate will and authenticates decisions taken and acts performed by Council.

As many of the powers, duties and functions of a Council are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and other members of Council staff, the Common Seal of Council is only used on legal documents such as local laws, contracts, agreements, transfers of land and other documents where required by legislation or where outside the Chief Executive Officer's delegation.

8.1 Custodian of Common Seal

- (1) A person must not use the Common Seal without authority from Council.
- (2) The Chief Executive Officer must always ensure the security of the Common Seal.

8.2 Arrangements for the Signing and Sealing of a Document

- (1) A written request and a copy of the Council resolution approving the use of the Council seal must be submitted to the Manager Governance and Strategy for signing and sealing.
- (2) If Sub-Rule (1) is not met, the documents must not be signed and sealed.
- (3) A contract or agreement must only be submitted for signing and sealing, once the document has been fully executed by the other party/parties (unless the other party to the contract or agreement is either the State Government of Victoria, the Federal Government or another Local Government entity).

8.3 Affixing the Common Seal

- (1) The affixing of the Common Seal to any document must be attested to by the signatures of both:
 - (a) a Councillor; and
 - (b) the Chief Executive Officer,acting on behalf of Council.
- (2) The seal of a Council must not be affixed to any document without the Council's approval granted either generally or specifically by resolution that the seal be so affixed.

The following is an example of the required approval:

That Council affix the Common Seal to the [description of document].

Or

The [document], shall come into force immediately upon the common seal of the Council is affixed to the [document].

- (3) The affixing of the Seal to a document must be witnessed by signatures of a Councillor and the Chief Executive, except in the instance where the Seal is to be appended to the contract of employment for the Chief Executive. In this instance, a second Councillor will sign alongside the Mayor.

8.4 Sealing Register

The Manager Governance and Strategy will ensure that a register of all uses of the Common Seal is kept by Council. The register will contain a description of the document, the date the Seal was affixed and the date Council resolved to affix the Seal.

CHAPTER 9 - COUNCIL RECORDS

9.1 Records of Meetings held under the auspices of Council

- (1) A record of the matters discussed at all Hearing of submission Meetings, Advisory Committee Meetings and Councillor Briefings organised or hosted by Council will be kept.
- (2) Records kept in accordance with Sub-Rule one will include:
 - a) The attendees at the Meeting, including organisations represented by external presenters;
 - b) The title of matters discussed
 - c) Any conflicts of interest disclosed and whether the person with the conflict of interest left the Meeting.
- (3) Where Minutes are kept of a Meeting and made available to the community, an additional record is not required to be kept.

9.2 Councillor attendance records

- (1) Council will maintain a register of Councillor attendance at Council Meetings, Delegated Committee Meetings and Meetings arranged to brief Councillors.
- (2) The register of Attendance kept in accordance with Sub-Rule (1) will be published on Council's website quarterly

CHAPTER 10 – ELECTION PERIODS

The Election Period Policy governs the conduct of Council, Councillors and members of Council staff during an election period to ensure appropriate decision-making in the lead up to a Council election.

The Election Period prohibits the use of Council resources for any election campaign and puts in place a procedure to ensure Council does not print, publish or distribute any material that may influence the outcome of the election.

Additionally, the Election Period Policy addresses Councillors and staff standing as candidates in Council, State or Federal elections.

Election Periods Generally

- (1) Council will have in place an election period policy that:
 - (a) Governs decision making during a local government election period, including what may be considered at a Council Meeting;
 - (b) Prohibits the use of Council resources for any election campaign purposes, including Federal, State or Council elections;
 - (c) Sets out the conditions for any community engagement required to be undertaken during an election period, including consultations, Civic events, and activities of Advisory Committees established by Council;
 - (d) Sets out the requirements for any Council publications during a local government election period – including the website, social media, newsletters and advertising – to ensure Council does not publish materials that relate to issues that are the subject of election campaigns;
 - (e) Defines roles and responsibilities in relation to who is the spokesperson for Council during an election period;
 - (f) Sets out the requirements for a Councillor or member of Council staff who is a candidate in an election including a Federal, State or Council election.
- (2) At least once in each Council term and, not later than 12 months prior to the commencement of an election period, Council will review its election period policy.
- (3) The Election Period Policy forms part of these Governance Rules.
- (4) The operation of Council Advisory Committees shall be suspended upon the commencement of the election period ahead of a general Council election.
- (5) Any outstanding Delegate's Reports may still be reported to a Council Meeting during this period.
- (6) Council Committees shall resume Meeting following the election and the appointment by the incoming Council of Councillors to each committee.

Election Period Policy**1. Introduction**

The Act requires Council to include an Election Period Policy (Policy) in its Governance Rules.

2. Context

Under Section 69 of the Act, an election period policy must prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election that:

- (a) relates to the appointment or remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer but not to the appointment or remuneration of an Acting Chief Executive Officer; or
- (b) commits the Council to expenditure exceeding one per cent of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; or
- (c) the Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or
- (d) the Council considers should not be made during an election period.

An Election Period Policy must also prohibit any Council decision during the election period for a general election or by-election that would enable the use of Council resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence voting at the election.

Section 123 of the Act (Misuse of Position) prescribes serious penalties for any Councillor who inappropriately makes use of their position or information obtained in their role, to gain an advantage, or disadvantage another.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The requirements of this policy will be monitored throughout each election period to ensure compliance.

4. Associated documents

Local Government Act 2020

Councillor Code of Conduct

Environmental Protection Act 1970 (EPA Act)

Approval Memo – Appendix 1

5. Policy Objectives

To support and ensure the conduct of good governance for Council and the organisation during election periods through the transparency and accountability of Councillors, Council officers, and candidates during an election period.

The policy complies with the Act, which requires Councils to have an election period policy that sets out requirements relating to conduct, decision making, transparency and equity, and use of Council resources during an election period.

6. Policy Details**6.1 Election Period**

During the 'Election Period' for a Municipal General Election the Council will be deemed to be in 'Caretaker Mode'. The election 'caretaker' period extends for 32 days - from the time nominations close on Nomination Day, until 6pm on election day.

During an election period, Councillors:

- a) Will continue to fulfil their duties (unless they are granted a leave of absence);
- b) Will continue to engage, and communicate with, the community in their Councillor role;
- c) Must comply with the Act and Councillor Code of Conduct, and
- d) Must not use their position to influence Council officers, or access Council resources or information, in support of any election campaign or candidacy.

Section 69 of the Act prohibits any Council decision during the election period for a general election that:

- a) Relates to the appointment or remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer, but not to the appointment or remuneration of an acting Chief Executive Officer;
- b) Commits the Council to expenditure exceeding 1% of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year; or
- c) The Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or
- d) The Council considers should not be made during an election period.

If the Council considers that there are extraordinary circumstances where the municipality or the local community would be significantly disadvantaged by the Council not making a particular decision, the Chief Executive Officer may make an application to the Minister for a compliance exemption in accordance with section 177 of the Act.

During an election period, it shall be the ultimate responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer, having consulted with the Mayor, to determine if a matter is to be presented to Council for decision.

6.2 Guidance on Decisions

Council will avoid making decisions that would affect voting at an election or decisions that may unreasonably bind an incoming Council and could be deferred until after the election.

Examples of inappropriate decisions include:

- a) Allocating community grants or other direct funding to community organisations;
- b) Major planning scheme amendments;
- c) Changes to strategic objectives and strategies identified in the Council Plan;
- d) Adopting policy;
- e) Setting advocacy positions.

The only items to be considered at a Council or Delegated Committee Meeting held during the election period, will be the Annual Report, and administrative items to complete the Council's term of office, for example, routine governance items (including records of Meeting held under the auspices of Council reporting). Public Question Time and Community Statements will be suspended during the election period.

At a Council Meeting designated to consider Planning and Related Matters, only permit applications that may otherwise be subject of an application to VCAT on the grounds Council has failed to determine within the prescribed time will be considered.

6.3 Officers with Delegated Authority

During the election period, Council officers must defer making a decision under a delegation from Council or sub-delegation from the Chief Executive Officer, that could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place.

6.4 Caretaker Statement

During the election period, the Chief Executive Officer will ensure that a Caretaker Statement is included in every report submitted to the Council or to a Delegated Committee of Council for a decision.

The Caretaker Statement will specify one or more of the following:

- a) The recommended decision is not, a decision prohibited by the Act and is a decision that falls within the guidance of the Election Period Policy.
- b) The recommended decision is outside the guidance of the Election Period Policy, but the following negative consequences of a failure to make a decision on this matter outweigh the consequences of binding an incoming Council. [Insert description of negative consequences of failure to make decision].
- c) The recommended decision is a decision prohibited in the Act during an election period, but compliance exemption was sought from the Minister in accordance with section 177 of the Act and was granted by on [insert date].

During the election period, the Council will not make a decision on any matter or report that does not include one of these Caretaker Statements.

Councillors will refrain from moving Motions or raising matters at a Meeting that could potentially influence voting at the election.

There will be no Notices of Motion accepted during the Caretaker Period.

6.5 Council resources must not be used

Council resources must not be used by any Councillor or candidate in any way that supports an election campaign or in a way that is intended or likely to influence voting in any election.

6.6 Candidacy

A Councillor must not use Council resources for candidacy, or any purpose that may be perceived as being used for candidacy (individual or political party). This also applies to a Councillor standing in local, state, or federal government elections, and for any other elected positions, for example, positions on boards. Such use would constitute misuse of position by the Councillor.

6.6.1 State and Federal Government Elections

Councillors will ensure there is a demonstrable distinction between their obligations to Council and their personal interests as a candidate, or member of a political party, in an election period prior to a state or federal election. In accordance with the Councillor code of conduct, a Councillor who becomes an endorsed candidate of a registered political party or publicly expresses an intention to run as a candidate in a state or federal election, is a 'Prospective Candidate' and will provide written advice to the Chief Executive Officer, as soon as practicable, who will then advise all Councillors.

Councillors will not use Council resources or participate in electioneering at Council events, Meetings or functions, in support of any candidate in a state or federal election.

Where clauses of this policy apply to a Councillor or candidate, it is intended that they be applied in the case of a state, federal or Council election.

6.7 Council Publications

6.7.1 Electoral Matter

Council will not print, publish or distribute (or cause to be printed, published or distributed) any Electoral Material (anything containing Electoral Matter) during an election period.

The following definitions are noted:

Section 3(1) '**publish**' means publish by any means including by publication on the Internet;

Section 3(4) '**Electoral Matter**' means matter, which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any Electoral Material produced by or on behalf of the Returning Officer for the purposes of conducting an election.

Section 3(5) without limiting the generality of the definition of 'Electoral Matter', matter is to be taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on -

- (a) the election; or
- (b) a candidate in the election, or
- (c) an issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election.

Council will not issue, publish or distribute any publication during an election period, other than media and social media responses/statements on a service or issue, or those that are required under an Act or regulation, or the Annual Report media release.

'Publications' include hard copy and electronic advertisements, promotional media releases, fliers, posters, newsletters/updates, booklets, surveys, invitations and group mailouts/emails.

Any publications to be issued during the election period are to be forwarded to the relevant Director for approval, and then sent to the Governance unit for vetting for Electoral Matter. Once vetted, the publication will then be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for approval.

Council publications available in Council facilities will be reviewed before the election period to identify and temporarily remove anything that might reasonably influence the election.

The Chief Executive Officer, or Delegate, will be the primary spokesperson for Council communications during an election period.

Media and social media responses and statements will only be issued during an election period in the name of the Chief Executive Officer. These will be subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Council officers will not make any public statement that could be construed as influencing the election.

6.7.2 Annual Report

It is a requirement of the Act that Council's Annual Report is presented by the Mayor at an open Meeting of Council held, in the year of a general election, on a day not later than the day before election day. Every endeavour will be made for the report to be prepared and presented prior to the commencement of the election period.

6.8 Council Resources

The Council will also ensure other Council resources are not used inappropriately in ways that may influence voting in an election. This includes financial, human and material resources. Any staff member who considers that a particular use of Council resources may influence voting in the election must advise their Director or the Chief Executive Officer and obtain approval before authorising, using or allocating the resource.

In applying these principles, the Council understands that the following will be the normal practice during the election period:

- a) Council resources, including offices, support staff, hospitality services, equipment and stationery will be used exclusively for normal Council business during the Caretaker Period, and will not be used for the personal advantage of any Councillor or candidate in connection with any election. This does not apply to the provision of space for the Returning Officer.
- b) No new publications or pamphlets, including Inside Merri-bek will be published by Council during the election period.
- c) Speeches for Councillors will only be prepared by Council staff in relation to events that are part of the normal services or operations of the Council, for example for a Citizenship Ceremony, and such speeches will not be circulated or available for publication.
- d) No Council logos, letterheads, business cards, photos or other Merri-bek City Council branding will be used for, or linked in any way, to a candidate's election campaign.

- e) It is recommended that Council staff who are either following Councillors/candidates Facebook pages or who are 'friends' with them unfriend and/or unfollow the Councillor/candidate during this period.
- f) There will be no ward or Councillor Meetings held.
- g) The Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors or any other Council staff member will not be asked to undertake any tasks connected directly or indirectly with electioneering.
- h) Reimbursements of Councillors' out-of-pocket expenses during the Election Period will only apply to costs that have been incurred in the performance of normal Council duties, and not for expenses that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a candidate's election campaign.
- i) Where Councillors have Council funded equipment, including laptops, tablets, printers and mobile phones, these are not to be used for election purposes or in a manner that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a candidate's election campaign.

6.8.1 Council Facilities and Meeting Rooms

Council Facilities/Halls for Hire Council facilities will be able to be hired by Federal and State political members and officers, and local candidates (including Councillors) at the normal corporate hire rate determined for the facility, in the lead up to an election, but not during an election period for any local state or federal election.

To avoid a perception that Council facilities are being used to promote any candidacy, no promotional material related to the event/hired use, apart from directional signage, is able to be displayed in the common public areas of the facility being hired. This will be advised at time of booking.

Candidates wishing to conduct electioneering activities in public space, for example, a stall at a shopping strip or park, must act in accordance with Council's local laws and procedures.

No other promotional material, including signage, posters, flyers or banners, for any political candidacy is permitted on Council land or in its facilities at any time.

It is an offense under Council's local laws to display this material on Council land, and penalties apply.

6.8.2 Use of the Title 'Councillor'

Councillors may use the title Councillor in their election material, as they continue to hold office during the caretaker period.

While a Councillor can refer to themselves as Councillor in all communication issued by the Councillor (verbal or written), it must be made clear that it is the communication of a candidate and not a position of Council.

6.8.3 Photographs and Images

Photographs and images paid for by Council or taken by Council officers are not to be used in Electoral Material for any candidate. This includes images of Councillors, Council events, and Council owned or maintained infrastructure.

Photographs taken by Councillors, their family or friends, or professional photos they have directly commissioned and paid for, may be used in Electoral Material.

6.8.4 Election Signage on Council Land

In order to ensure Council resources including buildings and land will not be used to support any electioneering activity, Council prohibits any type of candidate election signage being erected or displayed on Council land, including:

- a) Council owned/managed parks, reserves, buildings (exteriors) and nature strips
- b) Road dividing strips (median strips, traffic islands, roundabouts)
- c) Trees, shrubs or plants
- d) Street signs, traffic control signs, parking signs

If election signage is displayed on Council Land:

- a) Council may request the immediate removal of the signage by the owner or candidate or may remove the signage without notification to the owner or candidate.
- b) An infringement notice and fine may be issued to the candidate, in accordance with the General Local Law.
- c) Any costs incurred by Council to remove signage, and/or any costs caused by the signage, for example, damage to trees, may be charged to the candidate.
- d) If election signage is displayed on Crown, Federal or State land in the City of Merri-bek, Council contact the relevant land manager to request the sign be removed.
- e) Victoria Police will be contacted in the event of any one attempting to obstruct Council officers removing signage.
- f) Council will report all instances of the display on Council land of candidate election signage for a local government election, to the Victorian Electoral Commission.

In accordance with the EPA Act, advertising material/documents may not be affixed to any fixed structure for example, light poles, traffic lights etc without the consent of the owner, occupier or manager of the structure.

6.9 Community Engagement and Council Events

Community engagement is an integral part of Council's policy development process and operations, however, there are concerns that consultation undertaken close to a general election may become an issue in itself and influence voting.

Council events in the lead up to an election can also raise concerns over the potential use of sitting Councillors using them for electioneering purposes.

If consultation must be undertaken or an event held during this time, the Council must explain to the community the special circumstances making it necessary and how the risks influencing the election will be mitigated or prevented.

Therefore, during an election period no public consultation under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 will be conducted during this period.

- a) Only consultation for the purpose of planning permit applications and operational issues such as canvassing residents' views on small-scale traffic treatments, installation of single trees and the like will be allowed as they are operational in nature and are unlikely to impact the conduct of the election.
- b) Civic Events will cease during this time.
- c) No election material or active campaigning is to be conducted at Council sponsored festivals.

6.10 Equitable Access to Council Information

The Council recognises that all election candidates have a right to information from the Council administration. However, sitting Councillors will continue to receive information that is necessary to fulfil their elected roles. Neither Councillors nor candidates will receive information or advice from Council staff that might be perceived to support election campaigns, and transparency will be observed and practised in the provision of all information and advice during the Election Period.

Information and briefing material prepared by staff for Councillors during the Election Period will relate only to factual matters or to existing Council policies and services. All such requests are to be issued through the offices of the responsible Council Director who will maintain a register of requests made and advice provided. Such information will not relate to new policy development, new projects or matters that are the subject of public or election debate or that might be perceived to be connected with a candidate's election campaign.

A copy of the document/advice will then be passed to the Manager Governance and Strategy as issued during the Election Period. The document/advice will be emailed or provided in a hardcopy format to all sitting Councillors and candidates to access. Candidates will be advised of this process in writing.

An Information Request Register will be maintained by the Governance and Strategy Branch during the Election Period. This Register will be a public document that records all requests for information by Councillors and candidates, and the responses given to those requests. Only information that can be reasonably accessed will be released.

All requests for information are to be directed to the Manager Governance and Strategy.

6.11 Publicity

It is recognised that Council publicity is intended to promote normal services or operations of the Council. Council publicity will not be used in any way that might be construed as intended to influence the outcome of the Council election.

- a) During the Election Period, no Council employee may make any public statement that could be construed as influencing the election. This does not include statements of clarification that are approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- b) During the Election Period, publicity campaigns, other than for the purpose of conducting the election, will be avoided. Where a publicity campaign is deemed necessary for a Council service or operation, it must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer. In any event, Council publicity during the Election Period will be restricted to promoting the normal services or operations of the Council.
- c) Any requests for media advice or assistance from Councillors during the Election Period will be channelled through the Chief Executive Officer or the Manager Community Engagement. In any event, no media advice and/or assistance or media releases will be provided in relation to election campaign matters, or in regard to publicity that involves specific Councillors.
- d) Councillors will not use their position as an elected representative or their access to Council staff and other Council resources to gain media attention in support of matters that could be construed as relating to an election campaign.

Information published on Council's website with regard to sitting Councillors will be limited to statements of facts about their roles and responsibilities as a Councillor. For example, contact details, roles and responsibilities as assigned by Council resolution.

6.11.1 Council Websites and Social Media

The only new material published on Council's websites or social medial sites during an election period will be:

- a) The Agenda and Minutes for any Council or Delegated Committee Meetings;
- b) The Annual Report
- c) Key service disruption information

Service information already published on the website will be reviewed to ensure it does not include anything that might be seen as likely to influence the election.

6.12 Assistance to Candidates

A copy of this Policy must be given to each Councillor as soon as practicable after it is adopted, be available for inspection, on request, by the public at the Council office and be published on Council's website. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that all Councillors, Managers and staff are informed of the requirements of this policy.

The Council affirms that all candidates for the Council election will be treated equally.

Any assistance and advice to be provided to Candidates as part of the conduct of the Council Election will be provided equally to all candidates. The types of assistance that are available will be documented and communicated to all candidates in advance.

All election related enquiries from candidates, whether sitting Councillors or not, will be directed to the Returning Officer or, where the matter is outside the responsibilities of the Returning Officer, to the Chief Executive Officer or the Director Business Transformation.

7.11 PUBLISHING CONTRACT INFORMATION ON COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Finance and Procurement

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes that the list of contracts awarded over the public tender threshold will continue to be published online

REPORT

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared in response to the notice of motion resolved at the September 2024 Council meeting.

This report explores the options to publish a listing on Councils website of all contacts awarded, excluding the roads and footpath programs (from 9 December 2020 onwards). This report is seeking Council endorsement to publish all contracts above the public tender threshold (currently \$300,000 excluding GST) on Councils website once a contract has been signed. It is important to note this information will include:

- Contract number
- Title
- Description
- Category
- Successful supplier/s.

Previous Council Decisions

Publicly available information on website – 11 September 2024

That Council

1. *Notes that footpath and road audit reports will be placed on Council's website.*
2. *Receives a report at the March 2025 Council meeting with proposed options/actions to include the following on Council's website: Contract information on all projects, excluding the roads and footpath program (from 9 December 2020 onwards) and consolidate projects in one space so it is easier to navigate and access.*

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 must comply with its Procurement Policy before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works.

This report is also in align with section 3(1)(g(ii)) of the *Local Government Act 2020* a report may be designated as confidential because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

2. Background

This report has been prepared in response to the notice of motion resolved at the September 2024 Council meeting.

This report explores the options to publish a listing on Council's website of all contracts awarded, excluding the roads and footpath programs (from 9 December 2020 onwards). This report is seeking Council endorsement to publish all contracts above the public tender threshold (currently \$300,000 excluding GST) on Council's website once a contract has been signed. This information is currently available via Council's website as follows:

- Contract number
- Title
- Description
- Service category
- Successful supplier/s.

3. Issues

At any point in time, Council has over 400 active contracts in place. The administrative burden of listing every single contract since 9 December 2020 onwards, would require a permanent, additional resource to coordinate and maintain this public register. Balancing the needs for community transparency as well as budgetary pressures, Council officers advise that Council should continue listing summary information for all contracts over the public tender threshold (currently \$300,000) via Council's public website. This register would be able to be maintained within existing resources and have no additional cost to Council.

It is important to distinguish between when a contract is awarded and when a contract is signed. While a contract may be endorsed by Council or under delegation to award a contract, the contract is not legally binding until both parties have signed the contract. In some instances, this is shortly after Council (or officer endorsement) and in other instances significant time delays may take in place, while both parties negotiate the terms of the contract. Council officers advise that only when a contract has been executed, will this information be made publicly available online.

Community impact

Not applicable.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Not applicable.

Economic sustainability implications

Not applicable.

Legal and risk considerations

Legal considerations have been made in this report. In alignment with section (1)(g(ii)) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, it is not recommended to disclose the final contract amount.

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 engagement has not been required to inform the preparation 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

The officer recommendation to publish contracts awarded above the public tender threshold does not have a financial or resourcing implication.

If Council were to publish all contracts (excluding the roads and footpath program) regardless of the dollar amount, this would require an additional full-time resource at a cost outlined below:

2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2027-28
122,000	130,000	139,000	142,000

7. Implementation

All contracts awarded above the public tender threshold are currently published via Council's website, on the eTenderbox page. This page is not currently very easy to find via Council's webpage and this link will be made easier to find.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.12 2024-25 THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Finance Management

Officer Recommendation

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
 - LXR P 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.

REPORT

Executive Summary

The Third Quarter Financial Report gives an overview of Council’s performance through delivery of the budget. It compares the actual revenue and expenditure with the budgeted revenue and expenditure year to date (YTD) and assesses the financial performance in the third quarter to determine a forecast outcome for 30 June 2025.

A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation in March 2025 to form the 2024-25 Third Quarter Financial Review (Q3 Forecast). This process provided Council the opportunity to review its YTD performance and reallocate available financial resources to maximise the delivery on its strategic objectives. The results of this review are included in this report as the Q3 Forecast.

For the eight months ended 28 February 2025, Council has achieved an operating surplus result of \$96.7 million which is \$9.7 million (11%) more than the YTD budget of \$87.0 million. It is important to note that the operating surplus does not convert to immediately available cash to Council. Surplus funds are used to fund important community infrastructure projects like the Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment or Balam Balam Place in Brunswick.

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

Council's forecast adjusted underlying surplus of \$24.0 million is \$4.0 million more than the Q2 forecast of \$20.0 million. This result is important as it measures Council's ability to generate a surplus in the ordinary course of business – excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions, and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from net results.

The increase in the adjusted underlying surplus in the Q3 forecast suggests an improvement in the operating position.

After budgeted transfers to reserves, a positive unrestricted result of \$1.2 million has been forecast from the surplus. This is primarily due to an increase in revenue of \$2.9 million, partially offset by \$1.5 million of rates funded capital projects brought forward to 2024-25.

Council has spent \$62.7 million on capital expenditure as at the end of February which is \$3.1 million (5%) less than the YTD budget of \$65.6 million, with \$30.0 (32%) of the adopted full year budget remaining.

After a detailed review of the capital works program, there is a forecast decrease of \$4.9 million from the Q2 forecast of \$107.1 million to \$102.2 million. This is due to \$9.8 million of additional carry forwards into 2025-26 and \$3.7 million of savings, offset by 34 projects requiring additional funding of \$7.0 million and \$1.6 million brought forward from 2025-26 and 2026-27.

Previous Council Decisions

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.*

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 Lawson 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.*

2024-25 Second Quarter Financial Report – 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
 - Lorne St – Kiddle – Wilson, Fawkner - \$18,350
 - Holbrook Reserve – Netting - \$4,055
 - Chiller Unit – Civic Centre - \$2,296.

...

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

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

The purpose of this report is to compare the actual and budgeted results to date and provide an explanation of any material variations. This report also includes the Q3 Forecast which assesses the financial trends that have occurred in the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year to determine a forecast outcome for 30 June 2025.

2. Issues

Operating Performance Summary

	Year to Date			Full Year		Variance Fav / (Unfav) (\$'000)
	Actual	Adopted Budget	Variance Fav / (Unfav)	Q2 Forecast	Q3 Forecast	
	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	
Income / revenue	249,563	242,133	7,430	282,937	285,867	2,930
Expenditure	152,880	155,095	2,215	238,090	238,639	549
Surplus / (deficit)	96,683	87,038	9,645	44,847	47,228	2,381
Adjusted underlying surplus	86,895	82,095	4,800	20,031	24,045	4,014
Unrestricted result	74,807	66,825	7,982	(1,547)	1,155	2,702

Year to Date Result (against adopted budget)

For the eight months ended 28 February 2025, Council had an operating surplus of \$96.7 million which is \$9.7 million (11%) more than the year to date (YTD) budget of \$87.0 million.

Revenue of \$249.6 million is \$7.5 million (3%) more than the YTD budget of \$242.1 million and total expenditure of \$152.9 million is \$2.2 million (1%) favourable compared to the YTD budget of \$155.1 million.

The main drivers for the YTD favourable variance compared to the adopted budget are:

Revenue

- Grants Capital ended \$3.3 million (100%) favourable due to the timing of grant funding recognition in comparison to budget, particularly for Oak Park Kindergarten (\$0.6 million), Saxon St Community Hub (\$0.5 million) and Derby St Kindergarten (\$0.5 million), which were received earlier than anticipated (timing).
- Contributions Monetary ended \$1.6 million (27%) favourable primarily due to variability in timing of receipts of Open Space Contributions (timing).
- Rates and Charges ended \$0.6 million (1%) favourable due to higher than anticipated recognition of supplementary rating valuations.

Expenditure

- Contracts, Materials and Services ended \$3.1 million (9%) favourable mainly due to permanent savings of \$0.4 million on insurance premiums, and favourable timing variances of \$2.5 million for consultants and contractors, and \$0.5 million for general works and services relating to both service and project delivery.

Forecast Year End Result (forecast movement)

The 2024-25 Second Quarter Financial Review (Q2) was completed and endorsed by Council at the February 2025 Council meeting. The Q2 forecast projected a surplus of \$44.8 million.

Following another detailed review across the organisation in March 2025, Council has completed a revised forecast with full year projections now showing a surplus of \$47.2 million, a favourable movement of \$2.4 million.

Revenue

The forecast for revenue is an increase of \$2.9 million, comprising of:

- Other Revenue is forecast to increase by \$5.0 million primarily due to \$4.8 million from the State Government for the level crossing removal projects completed along the Upfield and Craigieburn train lines.
- Contributions - Monetary is forecast to decrease by \$1.1 million due to lower than anticipated subdivider contributions at the end of February 2025.
- Capital Grants are forecast to decrease by \$0.8 million primarily due to capital projects carried forward into 2025-26 which are grant funded (\$2.9 million), offset by additional grant funded projects of \$1.7 million.

Expenditure

The forecast for expenditure is an increase of \$0.5 million, comprising of:

- Employee Benefits are forecast to increase by \$0.5 million primarily due to an increase in the annual leave provision of \$0.4 million.

Council's forecast adjusted underlying surplus of \$24.0 million is \$4.0 million more than the Q2 forecast. This result is important as it measures Council's ability to generate a surplus in the ordinary course of business - excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions, and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from net results.

A surplus or increasing surplus suggests an improvement in the operating position. Currently, the Q3 forecast is forecasting an increase in the adjusted underlying surplus which suggests an improvement in the operating position.

After budgeted transfers to reserves, a positive unrestricted result of \$1.2 million has been forecast from the surplus. This is primarily due to an increase in revenue of \$2.9 million, partially offset by \$1.5 million of rates funded capital projects brought forward to 2024-25.

Capital Performance Summary

	Year to Date			Full Year		
	Actual	Adopted Budget	Variance Fav / (Unfav)	Q2 Forecast	Q3 Forecast	Variance Fav / (Unfav)
	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)
Property	31,939	28,364	(3,575)	40,767	40,061	706
Plant and equipment	5,376	4,797	(579)	6,765	7,451	(686)
Infrastructure	25,399	32,696	7,297	59,615	54,718	4,897
Total capital works	62,714	65,587	3,144	107,146	102,229	4,917

Year to Date Result (against adopted budget)

For the eight months ended 28 February 2025, Council's capital expenditure of \$62.7 million was \$3.3 million (5%) below the YTD budget, with \$30.0 million (32%) of the full year budget remaining.

Forecast Year End Result (forecast movement)

The capital works program is forecast to decrease by \$4.9 million from the Q2 forecast of \$107.1 million to \$102.2 million mainly as a result of:

- \$9.8 million of carry forwards into 2025-26 identified in the Q3 forecast;
- 34 projects requiring additional funding of \$7.0 million;
- \$3.7 million of savings; and
- \$1.6 million brought forward from 2025-26 and 2026-27.

There remains \$39.5 million (39%) of the capital revised forecast to be spent.

Further details of the forecast movement are included under **Attachment 2**.

Financial Position Summary

	Year to Date			Full Year		
	Actual	Adopted Budget	Variance Fav / (Unfav)	Q2 Forecast	Q3 Forecast	Variance Fav / (Unfav)
	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)
Cash and investments	99,939	100,544	(605)	108,088	115,152	7,064
Net current assets	168,094	161,136	6,958	89,165	96,187	7,022
Net assets and total equity	3,025,069	3,036,990	(11,921)	3,221,221	3,223,602	2,381

Year to Date Result

The financial position at 28 February 2025 shows a cash and investment balance of \$99.9 million which is \$0.6 million less than the YTD budget. This variance is primarily due to timing differences in receipt of rates and payments to suppliers.

Forecast Year End Result (forecast movement)

The forecast financial position for 30 June 2025 is a cash and investment position of \$115.2 million (an increase of \$7.1 million) and net current assets of \$96.2 million (an increase of \$7.0 million). These increases are primarily due to a decrease in the capital works program of \$4.9 million.

Cash and cash equivalents compared to current liabilities are forecast to be 187.4 per cent at 30 June 2025. This indicator measures whether a Council can generate sufficient cash to pay its commitments on time. Overall cash levels (both restricted and unrestricted) have remained consistent over the past few years, however, the split between unrestricted (less than 90 days) and restricted (greater than 90 days) has shifted to gain the best investment opportunities.

Council Resolutions included in the Q3 forecast

Council Report	Council Meeting	Source	\$
7.19 Contract Variation: RFT-2022-287 Provision of an Integrated Parking Management Solution	March 2025	Rates	Funded within existing budgets
7.5 Vicki Cleary Day 2025 and Family Violence Initiatives	March 2025	Rates	10,000
Rates funded resolutions			10,000
7.14 Contract Variation: RFT-2023-529 - 260 Sydney Road Park Close to Home Construction	February 2025	Reserves	46,000
Reserves funded resolutions			46,000
Total additional funding required			56,000

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.

Solvency Assessment

Council officers have reviewed Council's liquidity (Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities) and the revised forecast is 2.6. The Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) recommends that this ratio be 1.5 or higher. This is a positive result and shows that Council is solvent.

Human Rights Consideration

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

4. Community Consultation and Engagement

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

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

Affected persons rights and interests

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

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The overall corporate objective is to deliver the 2024-25 budget with the best possible outcome for Council and the community and in line with the approved revised forecast targets.

7. Implementation

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

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

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Council Quarterly Financial Management Report - February 2025 | D25/154190 |
| 2 | Capital Works Program - 2024-25 Third Quarter Financial Review | D25/133235 |



Council Quarterly Financial Management Report

8 Months Ended February 2025

Contents

Executive Summary	Page
Operating Performance	1
Capital Works Program	1
Cash & Investments	1
Procurement	1
Operating Performance	
Income Statement	2
YTD Operating Result	3
Capital Works	3
Debtors	3
Rates Collection	4
Investments	4
Financial Sustainability	
Financial Sustainability Ratios	5
Treasury Corporation of Victoria (TCV)	5
Standard Statements	
Comprehensive Income Statement	6
Statement of Financial Position	7
Statement of Cashflows	8
Statement of Capital Works	9
Procurement Reporting	10

Executive Summary

Operating Performance

For the eight months ended 28 February 2025, Council recorded an operating surplus of \$96.7 million which is \$9.7 million (11%) more than the year to date (YTD) budget of \$87.0 million. This comprises total revenue of \$249.6 million which is \$7.5 million (3%) more than the YTD budget of \$242.1 million and total expenditure of \$152.9 million which is \$2.2 million (1%) favourable compared to the YTD budget of \$155.1 million.

Income Statement	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Total Revenue	249,563	242,133	7,430	3%	275,568	285,867	10,299
Total Expenses	152,880	155,095	2,215	1%	235,890	238,639	(2,750)
Surplus/(Deficit)	96,683	87,038	9,645	11%	39,679	47,228	7,549

YTD favourable variance in revenue is driven by \$3.3 million relating to the timing recognition of capital grants, \$1.6 million relating to the timing of receipt of Open Space Contributions, and the higher than anticipated recognition of \$0.6 million relating to supplementary rating valuations. YTD favourable variance in expenses is primarily due to the temporary timing difference of \$3.0 million of Materials & Services expenditure to temporary timing differences across all directorates.

Capital Works Program

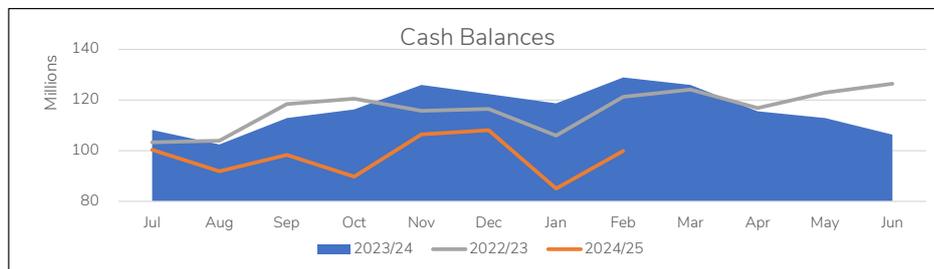
Council has spent \$62.5 million on capital expenditure to 28 February 2025 which is \$3.3 million (5%) less than the YTD budget, with \$30.0 million (32%) of the full year budget remaining. The variance is driven by underspends to budget for roads projects (\$4.6 million) and footpaths & cycleways (\$2.0 million), offset by overspends to budget for land purchases (\$3.2 million) and drainage projects (\$0.3 million).

Financial Results Summary	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Budget \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
New asset expenditure	18,762	16,250	(2,512)	(15%)	20,204	26,364	(6,160)
Asset renewal expenditure	33,534	37,427	3,893	10%	53,512	55,712	(2,200)
Asset upgrade expenditure	10,418	12,180	1,763	14%	18,984	20,153	(1,169)
Total capital works expenditure	62,714	65,857	3,144	5%	92,701	102,229	(9,528)

Cash & Investments

Cash assets are \$99.9 million at 28 February 2025. This is a decrease of \$6.4 million on 30 June 2024 cash levels, mainly as a result of both a property purchase, reimbursement of the fire services property levy back to state government as well as an on-track spend against the capital works program. Cash fluctuates frequently over the year due to a number of factors, mainly due to the timing of when the rates instalments fall due.

Of the \$99.9 million cash assets, \$49.8 million is convertible to cash in less than 60 days and \$55.1 million (90%) is held in green investments. The portfolio is in compliance with Council policy which requires at least \$20.0 million to be convertible to cash and green investments to make up greater than 70% of all investments.



Procurement

The compliance report shows the number of invoices paid on time at a rate of 75%. There were 5 contracts approved under delegation during February 2025.

Operating Performance

Income Statement

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

Income Statement	Notes	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	YTD Variance %	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Revenue								
Rates and charges		194,191	194,671	■ (480)	■ (0%)	194,037	194,491	■ 454
Statutory fees and fines		12,431	12,045	■ 386	■ 3%	18,436	18,258	■ (178)
User Fees		5,799	5,958	■ (159)	■ (3%)	8,594	9,656	▲ 1,061
Contributions - Monetary	1	7,680	8,758	▼ (1,077)	▼ (12%)	9,056	11,017	▲ 1,961
Grants - Operating		16,530	17,270	▼ (740)	■ (4%)	22,879	21,944	▼ (935)
Grants - Capital		3,321	2,832	■ 489	▲ 17%	11,928	12,917	▲ 988
Other Revenue	2	9,210	6,106	▲ 3,105	▲ 51%	10,547	17,121	▲ 6,574
Asset Sales		-	22	■ (22)	▼ (100%)	90	62	■ (27)
Total Revenue		249,563	247,875	▲ 1,689	▲ 1%	275,568	285,867	▲ 10,299
Expenses								
Employee Benefits		73,882	74,061	■ 180	■ 0%	111,824	114,628	▼ (2,804)
Contracts, Materials & Services	3	48,368	50,199	▲ 1,831	■ 4%	78,247	77,293	▲ 955
Depreciation		25,822	26,363	▲ 542	■ 2%	40,890	40,146	▲ 744
Amortisation		157	157	■ 0	■ 0%	236	236	■ 0
Bad and doubtful debts		2,481	2,370	■ (111)	■ (5%)	3,064	3,501	■ (436)
Net loss on disposal of assets		1,213	1,300	■ 88	■ 7%	(0)	1,213	▼ (1,213)
Finance Costs		560	573	■ 13	■ 2%	869	887	■ (17)
Other Expenses		398	443	■ 45	■ 10%	758	735	■ 23
Total Expenses		152,880	155,468	▲ 2,587	▲ 2%	235,890	238,639	▼ (2,750)
Net Result		96,683	92,407	▲ 4,276	▲ 5%	39,679	47,228	▲ 7,549

Notes

Revenue

1. **Contributions - Monetary** ended \$1.1 million (12%) unfavourable primarily due to the variable timing of receipt of Open Space Contributions.

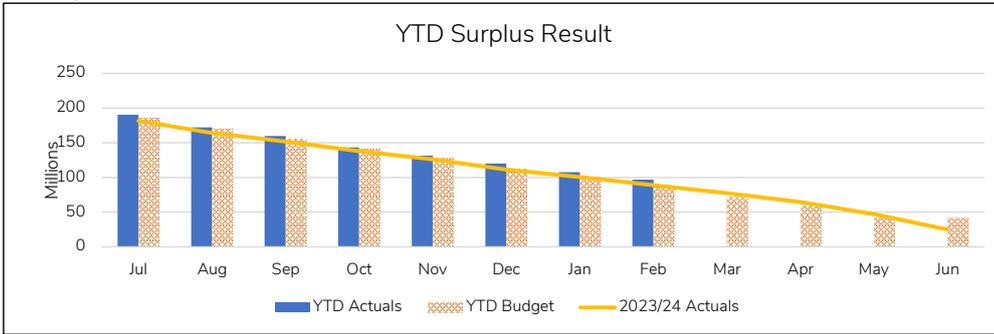
2. **Other Revenue** ended \$3.1 million (51%) favourable largely due to the earlier than anticipated recognition of an accounting adjustment associated with the sale of land for the Coburg Health Hub.

Expenses

3. **Contracts, Materials & Services** ended \$1.8 million (4%) favourable due to temporary timing differences across service and project delivery in all directorates.

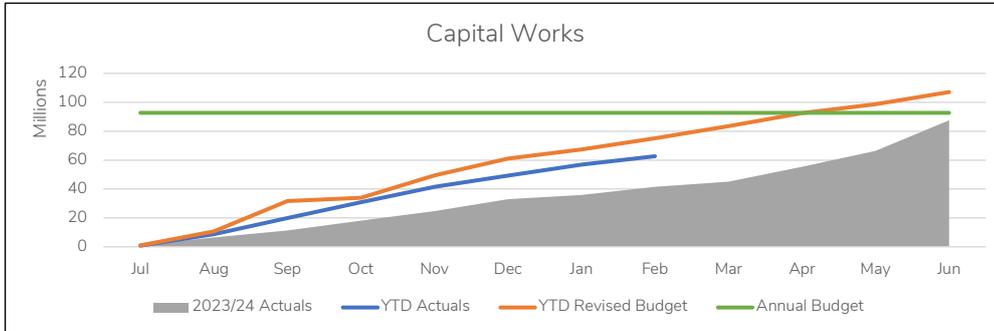
YTD Operating Result

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



Capital Works

Council has spent \$62.7 million on capital expenditure to 28 February 2025 which is \$12.3 million (16%) lower than the YTD revised forecast, with \$30 million (32%) of the full year budget remaining. The capital revised forecast of \$102.2 million reflects \$67.6 million of expenditure from the adopted 2024-25 budget, \$41.4 million of carry forwards from 2023-24, additional funding for existing projects \$3.4 million, additional funding for new projects \$6.6 million, and funding for projects brought forward from 2025-26 and 2026-27 \$2.5 million less carry forwards to 2025-26 \$4.9 million and project savings of \$2.8 million.

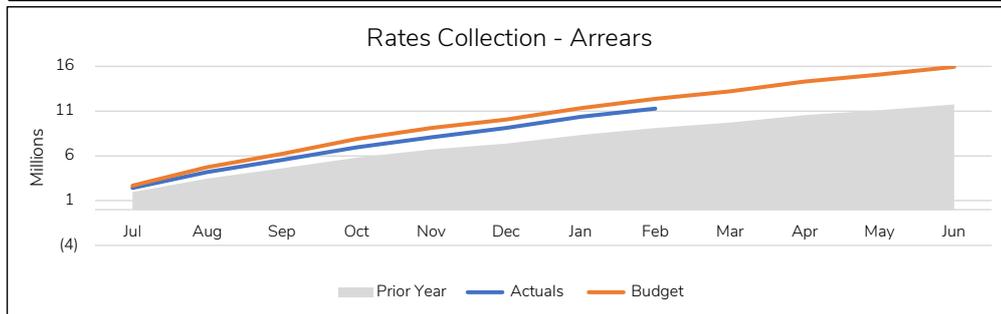
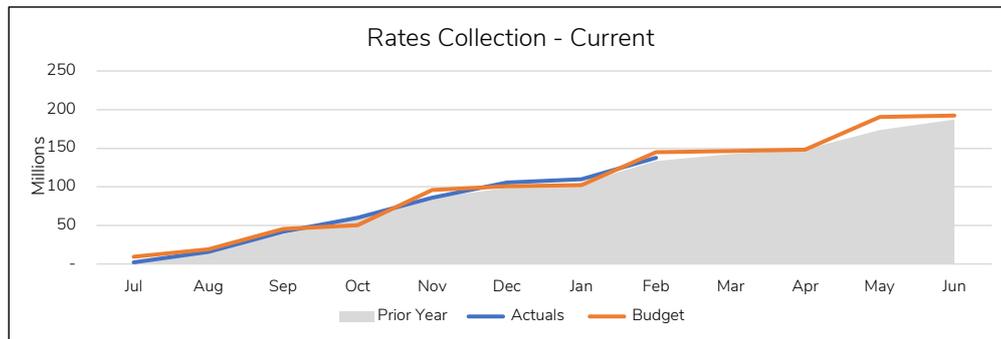


Debtors



Rates Collection

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



Investments

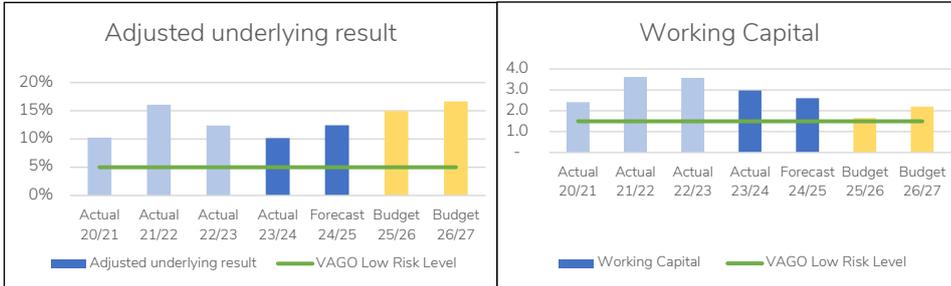
Of the \$99.9 million cash assets, \$49.8 million is convertible to cash in less than 60 days and \$55.1 million (90%) is held in green investments. The portfolio is in compliance with Council policy which requires at least \$20.0 million to be convertible to cash and green investments to make up greater than 70% of all investments.

Bank	Maturity Date	Green %	Interest Rate %	S & P short term rating	Amount \$'000	Ratio %
Minor Cash*	N/A		N/A	N/A	82	
Westpac	N/A		4.70%	A-1+	28,064	
Westpac	N/A		4.80%	A-1+	10,674	
ME Bank - 4	2/04/2025	100%	4.95%	A-2	10,118	16.6%
CBA - 4	2/04/2025		4.85%	A-1+	6,000	9.8%
Bendigo Bank - 4	20/05/2025	100%	4.90%	A-2	4,000	22.9%
Bendigo Bank - 4	24/03/2025	100%	4.90%	A-2	10,000	
Suncorp - 3	3/03/2025	100%	4.92%	A-1	11,000	18.0%
IMB - 3	4/04/2025	100%	4.90%	A-2	10,000	16.4%
Westpac - 6	11/04/2025	100%	4.95%	A-1+	4,000	16.4%
Westpac - 6	3/06/2025	100%	4.96%	A-1+	6,000	
Total		90%			99,939	100.0%
Green					55,118	90.2%

* Minor cash includes NAB holding account and Petty Cash

Financial Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Ratios

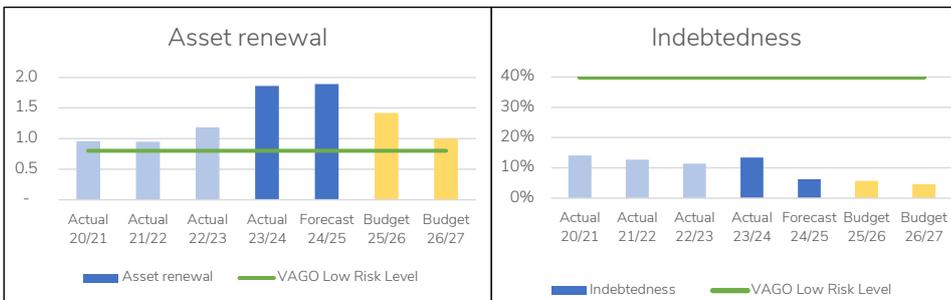


Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / adjusted underlying revenue

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

Current assets / current liabilities

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



Renewal & upgrade spend/ depreciation

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

Non-current liabilities / own-source revenue

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

Treasury Corporation of Victoria (TCV)

TCV loan requirements		Target	Forecast
Interest Cover	EBITDA/Interest Expense	> 2	95
Interest Bearing Loans	Interest Bearing Liabilities/Own Source Revenue	< 60%	11%

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

Standard Statements

Comprehensive Income Statement

Comprehensive Income Statement	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Revenue						
Rates and charges	194,191	194,671	(480)	194,037	194,491	454
Statutory fees and fines	12,431	12,045	386	18,436	18,258	(178)
User Fees	5,799	5,958	(159)	8,594	9,656	1,061
Contributions - Monetary	7,680	8,758	(1,077)	9,056	11,017	1,961
Contributions - Non-monetary	401	213	188	-	401	401
Grants - Operating	16,530	17,270	(740)	22,879	21,944	(935)
Grants - Capital	3,321	2,832	489	11,928	12,917	988
Other Revenue	9,210	6,106	3,105	10,547	17,121	6,574
Asset Sales	-	22	(22)	90	62	(27)
Total Revenue	249,563	247,875	1,689	275,568	285,867	10,299
Expenses						
Employee Benefits	73,882	74,061	180	111,824	114,628	(2,804)
Contracts, Materials & Services	48,368	50,199	1,831	78,247	77,293	955
Depreciation	25,822	26,363	542	40,890	40,146	744
Amortisation	157	157	0	236	236	0
Bad and doubtful debts	2,481	2,370	(111)	3,064	3,501	(436)
Net loss on disposal of assets	1,213	1,300	88	(0)	1,213	(1,213)
Finance Costs	560	573	13	869	887	(17)
Other Expenses	398	443	45	758	735	23
Total Expenses	152,880	155,468	2,587	235,890	238,639	(2,750)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	96,683	92,407	4,276	39,679	47,228	7,549

Underlying Result	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Surplus for the Year	96,683	92,407	4,276	39,679	47,228	7,549
Other Comprehensive Income						
Net asset revaluation	-	-	-	290	290	-
Total Comprehensive Result	96,683	92,407	4,276	39,969	47,518	7,549
Non Operating Income and Expenditure						
Net loss on disposal of assets	1,213	1,278	(65)	(90)	1,150	1,240
Contributions Capital (cash & non-monetary)	(254)	(272)	19	(56)	(885)	(829)
Grants - Capital	(3,321)	(2,832)	(489)	(11,928)	(12,917)	(988)
PRRLF Reserve	(7,109)	(8,199)	1,089	(9,000)	(10,135)	(1,135)
DCP Reserve	(317)	(287)	(30)	-	(397)	(397)
Net asset revaluation	-	-	-	(290)	(290)	-
Total Capital Income	(9,788)	(10,311)	523	(21,073)	(23,184)	(2,109)
Underlying Result	86,895	82,095	4,800	18,606	24,046	5,440
Less						
Loan Principal Repayments	1,272	1,272	-	2,071	1,997	74
Additional Rates Funded CAPEX	(5,583)	(5,583)	-	3,373	(8,375)	11,748
Transfers to Reserves - Operating	440	3,622	3,182	15,350	16,035	(685)
Transfers from Reserves - Operating	-	-	-	(2,189)	(2,726)	537
Carry Forwards processed into FY26	15,958	15,958	-	-	15,958	(15,958)
Total Transfers & Other	12,087	15,269	3,182	18,605	22,890	(4,286)
Unrestricted Surplus/(Deficit)	74,807	66,825	7,982	1	1,155	1,154

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position	YTD Actuals \$'000	30/06/24 Actuals \$'000	Movement Inc/(Dec) \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents	49,820	22,387	27,433	45,874	45,152	(722)
Trade and other receivables	106,772	44,236	62,536	39,222	39,241	19
Other financial assets	50,118	84,000	(33,882)	70,000	70,000	-
Inventories	687	659	28	252	252	-
Prepayments	1,327	2,429	(1,103)	-	-	-
Non-current assets classified as held for sale	2,119	11,019	(8,901)	-	-	-
Other assets	4,360	2,208	2,152	2,976	2,976	-
Total current assets	215,204	166,940	48,264	158,324	157,621	(703)
Non-current assets						
Unlisted Shares	2	2	-	2	2	-
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	2,849,982	2,811,429	38,554	3,104,130	3,113,590	9,460
Right-of-use assets	771	600	171	475	475	-
Investments	36,407	36,024	383	29,267	29,267	-
Total non-current assets	2,887,162	2,848,054	38,936	3,133,874	3,143,334	9,460
Total assets	3,102,366	3,014,994	87,200	3,292,198	3,300,955	8,757
Current liabilities						
Payables						
Payables	20,811	18,751	2,060	15,082	15,082	-
Revenue Received in Advance	2,642	6,898	(4,256)	1,851	1,851	-
Provisions	20,631	22,194	(1,564)	28,014	28,450	436
Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings	1,997	1,997	-	14,274	14,212	(62)
Trust Funds & Deposits	1,017	6,092	(5,076)	1,839	1,839	-
Lease liabilities	12	109	(97)	-	-	-
Total current liabilities	47,109	56,042	(8,933)	61,059	61,434	374
Non-current liabilities						
Provisions	2,494	2,603	(109)	2,310	2,310	-
Interest-bearing liabilities	26,548	27,127	(579)	12,776	13,609	833
Lease liabilities	251	20	232	-	-	-
Trust Funds & Deposits	694	694	-	-	-	-
Total non-current liabilities	29,988	30,444	(456)	15,086	15,919	833
Total liabilities	77,097	86,486	(9,389)	76,145	77,353	1,207
Net assets	3,025,269	2,928,509	96,760	3,216,053	3,223,602	7,549
Equity						
Asset revaluation reserves	2,066,283	2,066,206	77	2,266,398	2,266,398	-
Other reserves	79,335	76,570	2,765	45,617	63,684	18,067
Accumulated surplus	879,651	785,733	93,918	904,037	893,519	(10,518)
Total equity	3,025,269	2,928,509	96,760	3,216,053	3,223,602	7,549

Statement of Cashflows

Statement of Cash Flows	YTD	Annual	Annual	Annual
	Actuals	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	Inflows	Inflows	Inflows	Inflows
	(Outflows)	(Outflows)	(Outflows)	(Outflows)
Cash flows from operating activities				
Rates and charges	126,600	192,295	192,727	432
Statutory fees and fines	7,969	15,710	15,535	(175)
User fees	8,290	21,064	22,126	1,061
Grants - operating	16,480	22,585	21,650	(935)
Grants - capital	1,693	10,752	11,740	988
Contributions - monetary	7,715	9,056	11,017	1,961
Interest received	3,859	4,014	4,651	638
Trust funds and deposits taken	7,838	15,225	15,225	-
Other receipts	5,488	5,718	11,655	5,937
Net GST refund/(payment)	1,127	7,274	7,274	-
Payments to Employees	(76,379)	(108,154)	(110,958)	(2,804)
Payments to Suppliers	(54,131)	(87,649)	(86,694)	955
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(19,049)	(15,225)	(15,225)	-
Other payments	(438)	(3,822)	(3,799)	23
Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities	37,064	88,842	96,921	8,080
Cash flows from investing activities				
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(65,010)	(92,701)	(102,229)	(9,528)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	338	90	63	(27)
Payments/(Proceeds) for investments	22,882	5,900	5,900	-
Net cash used in investing activities	(41,790)	(86,711)	(96,266)	(9,556)
Cash flows from financing activities				
Finance costs	(560)	(869)	(886)	(17)
Repayment of borrowings	(1,273)	(2,071)	(1,997)	74
Repayment of lease liabilities	135	-	-	-
Net cash used in financing activities	(1,722)	(2,940)	(2,884)	56
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	(6,449)	(809)	(2,229)	(1,420)
Cash at beginning of period	22,387	46,683	22,387	(24,296)
Cash at end of period	15,939	45,874	20,159	(25,716)
Cash Position				
Non-restricted Cash at 1 July 2024	22,387	46,683	22,387	(24,296)
Other Financial Assets at 1 July 2024	84,000	75,900	84,000	8,100
Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	106,387	122,583	106,387	(16,196)
Non-restricted Cash at end of financial period	49,820	45,874	45,152	(722)
Other Financial Assets at end of financial period	50,118	70,000	70,000	-
Cash & cash equivalents at end of financial period	99,939	115,874	115,152	(722)

Statement of Capital Works

Statement of Capital Works	YTD Actuals \$'000	YTD Forecast \$'000	YTD Variance \$'000	Annual Budget \$'000	Annual Forecast \$'000	Annual Variance \$'000
Property						
Land	3,259	3,245	(14)	-	3,245	(3,245)
Buildings	26,031	29,060	3,029	28,133	30,096	(1,963)
Building Improvements	2,649	3,695	1,047	6,985	6,720	265
Total property	31,939	36,000	4,061	35,119	40,061	(4,942)
Plant and equipment						
Plant, machinery and equipment	3,747	4,367	620	3,962	5,175	(1,213)
Fixtures, Fittings and Furniture	129	320	192	339	189	150
Computers and telecommunications	719	563	(155)	745	950	(206)
Artworks	42	45	3	44	54	(10)
Library books	740	803	63	1,082	1,082	-
Total plant and equipment	5,376	6,098	722	6,172	7,451	(1,279)
Infrastructure						
Roads	9,899	12,284	2,385	18,877	20,576	(1,699)
Bridges	65	145	80	1,411	372	1,040
Footpaths and cycleways	1,029	2,263	1,234	4,600	3,628	973
Drainage	1,168	1,556	388	1,439	3,681	(2,243)
Waste management	60	264	204	212	545	(333)
Parks, open space and streetscapes	12,569	15,698	3,129	23,610	24,656	(1,046)
Other infrastructure	609	662	53	1,261	1,261	0
Total infrastructure	25,399	32,872	7,473	51,410	54,718	(3,307)
Total capital works expenditure	62,714	74,971	12,257	92,701	102,229	(9,528)
Represented by:						
New asset expenditure	18,762	21,739	2,978	20,204	26,364	(6,160)
Asset renewal expenditure	33,534	40,221	6,687	53,512	55,712	(2,200)
Asset expansion expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asset upgrade expenditure	10,418	13,010	2,593	18,984	20,153	(1,169)
Total capital works expenditure	62,714	74,971	12,257	92,701	102,229	(9,528)

Procurement reporting

Compliance Report – Invoices paid within payment terms

This report indicates the volume of invoices that are paid within agreed payment terms for the month of February 2025.

Payment terms	# of invoices	Actual %	Target %
0 Days	19	0%	100%
7 days	58	36%	100%
14 days	179	65%	100%
21 days	8	0%	100%
30 Days	1,543	79%	100%
Unknown	2	0%	100%
Total of invoices paid on time	1,809	75%	100%

Exemptions approved in the month of February

Directorate	Branch	For	Amount excl GST	Rationale
Place and Environment	Sustainability & Climate	Cash and Inkind Contribution to the Arc Research Hub "Internet of things for water"	\$ 53,000.00	Endorsed under sole or select sourcing supplier
City Infrastructure	Asset Management	Consultancy Works - Newlands Bridge	\$ 16,500.00	Endorsed under specialised services
Business Transformation	Financial Accounting	Software for Annual Report	\$ 275,000.00	Endorsed under specialised services and sole supplier
City Infrastructure	Capital Works Planning and Delivery	Workplan to address AASB13	\$ 21,600.00	Endorsed under specialised services and sole supplier
Business Transformation	Governance & Strategy	Gift Cards for Community and Youth Panel	\$ 20,400.00	Endorsed under specialised services (being able to limit certain retailers)
Place and Environment	Place Activation	Activation of Glenroy Activity Centre	\$ 29,700.00	Endorsed under intellectual property rights by supplier
Place and Environment	Economic Development	Conference and Event Management Services	\$ 16,500.00	Endorsed under sole supplier
Place and Environment	Director Place and Environment	Advisory Services - Coburg Central	\$ 110,000.00	Endorsed under specialised skills and time critical project
City Infrastructure	Capital Works Planning and Delivery	Subconsultants for Bluestone Cottage	\$ 73,425.00	Endorsed under specialised services

Contracts approved under delegation

This includes a listing of all of the contracts entered under delegation for the month of February.

Contract Description	Contract	Start date	Delegation	Total Contract (excluding GST)
Shore Reserve Pavilion Upgrade (Modular)	RFT-2024-54	14/02/2025	Council	\$1,939,824.00
Provision of Footpath Conditions Data Collection Service	RFQ-2024-75	17/02/2025	Manager	\$121,400.00
Elevate Change Strategy	RFQ-2024-99	17/02/2025	Director	\$226,925.00
Road Reconstruction - De Carle Street, Brunswick	RFT-2024-62	27/02/2025	Director	\$436,420.00
Learning Management System	RFQ-2024-116	1/03/2025	Director	\$147,744.00

Procurement reporting

Exception reporting

Exception	#	\$ excl GST
GST transactions for non-GST vendors	0	\$ -
2 payments against invoice	0	-
Invoices dated after payment date	2	\$ 9,987.18

Notes:

1. One of the invoices were entered incorrectly. For example, an invoice dated 23 January 2025 was accidentally recorded as 23 February 2025 by the purchasing agent. The AP team processed the PI without noticing the date error. Furthermore, the other invoice was paid early because the purchasing agent provided the correct documentation.

First nations spend

Council's procurement aims to spend 1% of its total procurement activities through partnerships with First Nations Businesses.

No. of supplier used YTD	YTD spend incl GST	No. of suppliers used Prior Year	Prior year spend incl GST
18	674,231.49	32	952,422.53

Local spend

Council's procurement policy encourages purchasing from local suppliers

No. of supplier used YTD	YTD spend incl GST	No. of suppliers used Prior Year	Prior year spend incl GST
240	10,206,030.63	205	26,867,307

Capital Works Program - 2024-25 Q3 Financial Review

Capital Works Program	\$'000
Adopted budget	92,701
Plus	
Additional carry forwards from 2023-24	16,337
Plus	
Q1 forecast changes	5,031
Plus	
Q2 variations	(6,922)
Plus	
Q3 variations	(4,917)
Q3 forecast	102,229

Q3 Variations	\$'000
New projects requiring funding	2,781
Existing projects requiring additional funding	4,174
Projects requiring a bring forward from 2025-26 and 2026-27	1,627
Project savings	(3,741)
Projects requiring a carry forward into 2025-26	(9,759)
Q3 variations	(4,917)

New projects requiring funding

Project	Q2 Forecast \$	Additional Funding \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
Property Purchase	-	1,766,000	1,766,000		1,766,000	
40 km/h Rollout - Traffic Calming	-	409,064	409,064	309,064		100,000
CB Smith - Electrical Works	-	300,000	300,000			300,000
Carelink Go+ Device Purchases ¹	-	160,000	160,000			160,000
Bob Hawke Capital Improvements/Replacements	-	95,640	95,640			95,640
Park Close to Home - 568-574 Sydney Road	-	50,000	50,000		50,000	
Total	-	2,780,704	2,780,704	309,064	1,816,000	655,640

(1) Budget transferred from operating, expenditure was originally budgeted as operating.

Existing projects requiring additional funding

Project	Q2 Forecast \$	Additional Funding \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
Mobryde St Reserve (Moomba Park) - Pavillion Gender ¹	83,461	1,456,539	1,540,000	1,456,539		
Replace Council Fleet ⁶	516,203	786,559	1,302,762			786,559
Shared Zones - Victoria St and Albert St ²	623,000	270,000	893,000			270,000
Raeburn Reserve - Cricket Training Nets	100,000	225,000	325,000	225,000		
Accommodation Changes to Meet Service Demand	546,202	225,000	771,202			225,000
Merri Trail - Flood Mitigation - Bridge to Darebin ³	28,893	185,971	214,864			185,971
Road Closures ⁴	105,420	165,000	270,420			165,000
Installation of Pedestrian Operated Signals (Bienn Feasibility Study/Investigation/Design - Forward P Kent Road - Separated Bike Lane Trial	74,600	110,000	184,600			110,000
	1,100,000	100,000	1,200,000			100,000
	320,000	100,000	420,000			100,000
Coburg Library Redevelopment (2024-29) ⁶	250,000	100,000	350,000			100,000
Craigieburn Shared Path - Stage 4 ⁵	36,591	65,000	101,591			65,000
Coburg Streetscape Masterplan - Louisa St	103,000	60,400	163,400			60,400
Wombat Crossing - Albion to Melville	306,138	50,000	356,138			50,000
Brunswick Activity Centre Upgrade Works - Wilson	751,986	50,000	801,986			50,000
Park Close to Home - 260 Sydney Road	777,361	46,000	823,361		46,000	
Woodlands Bridge	38,939	30,102	69,041	15,051		15,051
Gym Equipment Replacement Program - FLC	125,100	26,770	151,870			26,770
Carlisle Street - Nicholson - Glenora, Coburg	100,244	23,745	123,988			23,745
Cole Reserve Upgrade Masterplan - Lighting	325,000	18,804	343,804			18,804
Gillon Cricket Practice Nets	222,580	13,850	236,430			13,850
Brearley Reserve-Public Toilets-1-25 Heliopolis St	18,400	9,513	27,913			9,513
Harding Street Corridor	80,000	9,195	89,195			9,195
Transport Trial Sites - bike lanes & shared zones	5,500	7,980	13,480			7,980
Cole Reserve Upgrade Masterplan - Groundworks ⁶	108,868	6,429	115,297	6,429		

(1) Project also has a carry forward into 2025-26 of \$1,456,539, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$83,461.

(2) Project also has a carry forward into 2025-26 of \$800,000, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$93,000.

(3) Project also has a carry forward into 2025-26 of \$185,971, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$28,893.

(4) Project also has a carry forward into 2025-26 of \$205,000, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$65,420.

(5) Project also has a carry forward into 2025-26 of \$40,000, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$61,591.

(6) Additional funding from previously approved carry forwards.

Existing projects requiring additional funding cont.

Project	Q2 Forecast \$	Additional Funding \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
Municipal Art Collection : Various	32,725	1,737	34,462			1,737
Park Renewal - HW Foletta Park	235,582	840	236,422			840
Projects completed with additional works in 2024-25						
Turner Street Kindergarten Expansion	-	30,000	30,000			30,000
Total	7,015,791	4,174,433	11,190,223	1,703,019	46,000	2,425,414

Projects requiring a bring forward

Project	Q2 Forecast \$	Bring Forward \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
Bring forwards from 2025-26						
Brunswick Activity Centre Upgrade Works - Wilson ¹	751,986	372,179	1,124,165			372,179
Alva Gr from Urquhart to Bell, Road Reconstruction	-	338,661	338,661			338,661
Urban Forest Strategy - Tricky to Plant Areas	400,000	262,024	662,024			262,024
James Martin Reserve (former Pigeon Club)	94,500	250,000	344,500			250,000
Park Renewal - Cox Reserve	43,997	59,315	103,312		59,315	
Coburg Library Redevelopment ²	250,000	50,227	300,227		50,227	
West Street Intersection and Streetscape	60,959	43,000	103,959			43,000
Bring forwards from 2026-27						
Gym Equipment Replacement Program - Various	163,729	251,896	415,625			251,896
Total	1,765,170	1,627,302	3,392,473	-	109,542	1,517,761

(1) Project also requires \$50,000 additional funding, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$1,174,165.

(2) Project also requires \$100,000 additional funding (funded from previously approved carry forward), bringing the Q3 forecast to \$400,227.

Projects with savings

Project	Q2 Forecast \$	Savings \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment	8,495,663	(600,000)	7,895,663		(600,000)	
Dawson St Bike Lanes	480,500	(459,250)	21,250			(459,250)
De Carle Street from Donald to Davies Road Reconstr	778,328	(260,000)	518,328			(260,000)
Mitchell Pde Retaining Wall	695,195	(230,000)	465,195	(331,304)		101,304
Bendigo Street from Alpine to Cumberland, Road Rec	766,960	(210,000)	556,960			(210,000)
Oak Park Kindergarten	1,555,798	(200,000)	1,355,798			(200,000)
De Carle St Bike Lanes : The Avenue to Moreland Rd	189,679	(189,679)	0			(189,679)
Merri Creek Trail Access and Safety upgrades : Var	185,971	(185,971)	-			(185,971)
Carnarvon Street from Blyth to Dorothy, Road Recon	441,156	(150,000)	291,156			(150,000)
Furniture & Fittings Replacement Program	269,745	(150,000)	119,745			(150,000)
Park Renewal - Fisher Reserve	195,997	(147,573)	48,424		(147,573)	
Carnarvon Street from Dorothy to Stewart, Road Rec	292,636	(115,000)	177,636	177,636		(292,636)
Yungera St from Wyuna to Mutton, Road Reconstructi	744,244	(106,339)	637,906			(106,339)
Road Safety and Amenity Improvements Program	557,782	(100,000)	457,782			(100,000)
Peterson Avenue from Mehegan to Jackson, Road Reco	495,040	(90,000)	405,040			(90,000)
Tyson Street from Jukes Rd to Denys Street, Road R	591,500	(90,000)	501,500			(90,000)
Derby St Kindergarten Children's Centre	1,580,348	(70,000)	1,510,348			(70,000)
Park Close to Home Frith Street	1,541,443	(60,000)	1,481,443		(60,000)	
Raeburn Reserve - Lights	292,150	(52,055)	240,095			(52,055)
Chris Court from Devereaux to Dead End, Road Recon	253,900	(41,984)	211,916			(41,984)
Lonsdale Street from Ohea to Murray, Road Reconstr	497,441	(40,000)	457,441			(40,000)
Coburg (Former) Bowls - Upgrades	100,000	(35,835)	64,165			(35,835)
Rayner Reserve - Pavilion Upgrade & Gender Inclusi	366,649	(35,000)	331,649			(35,000)
Pedestrian Access & Priority Treatments	45,679	(33,000)	12,679			(33,000)
Park Renewal - CB Smith Reserve	463,285	(25,000)	438,285			(25,000)
Coburg Activity Centre Upgrade Works - Victoria St	25,000	(25,000)	-			(25,000)
Commercial Tenancy Maintenance Obligations	310,226	(17,376)	292,850			(17,376)
Immunisation Room - Minor Capital	18,000	(10,740)	7,260			(10,740)
Temple Park-Public Toilet Renewal-24 Gray Street	160,139	(4,750)	155,388			(4,750)
Rayner Reserve - New Public Toilet	150,000	(2,000)	148,000			(2,000)
Oxygen Youth Centre - Accessible Door Installation	12,000	(1,878)	10,122			(1,878)
Kaumple Street, Pascoe Vale, Drainage Works	507,589	(1,604)	505,986			(1,604)
Shore Reserve - Public Toilets - Reynard Street	182,588	(634)	181,953			(634)
Total	23,242,629	(3,740,667)	19,501,962	(153,668)	(807,573)	(2,779,426)

Projects with a change of funding source

Project	Q2 Forecast \$	\$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
Montifore Street from Murray to Ohea, Road Reconstr	695,195	-	695,195	222,364	-	(222,364)
Total	695,195	-	695,195	222,364	-	(222,364)

Carry Forwards into 2025-26	\$
Q1 forecast	4,900,000
Q2 forecast	10,420,166
Q3 forecast - changes to previously approved carry forwards	(1,035,184)
Q3 forecast - new carry forward requests	9,759,004
Total carry forwards	24,043,986

New capital carry forwards into 2025-26

Project and Delay Reason	Expected Completion Date	Q2 Forecast \$	Carry Forward \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
<u>Mcbride St Reserve(Moomba Park) - Pavilion Gender Inclusive Facilities</u> ¹ An additional \$1.46 million was committed to this project through the Federal Government's Thriving Suburbs Program. This means the project can now proceed with a more ambitious scope. Extra time is needed to finalise the new design.	Jul-2026	83,461	(1,456,539)	(1,373,079)	(1,456,539)		
<u>Shared Zones - Victoria St and Albert St</u> ² Tender advertisement was delayed due to design challenges but has now occurred. Some works will be completed this financial year, but some elements will carry into the new year.	Dec-2025	623,000	(800,000)	(177,000)	(13,000)		(787,000)
<u>Dunstan Reserve Childcare</u> Project is delayed due to site conditions and design. Tender review underway, contract to be awarded before end of financial year.	Jun-2026	943,473	(720,000)	223,473	(720,000)		
<u>Shore Reserve - Football & Cricket</u> Construction of the modular building will occur ahead of September 2025. The existing building demolition, new buildings and associated works are expected to be delivered in September/October 2025 with expected project completion in December 2025.	Dec-2025	931,029	(704,105)	226,924			(704,105)
<u>Sim Cr & Victoria St - Engeny Hot Spot No 8</u> The start date for construction of this project is dependent on timing of Department of Transport and Planning authorisation for the necessary traffic management.	Aug-2025	521,829	(491,829)	30,000			(491,829)
<u>Brunswick Early Years Hub</u> This is a multi-year project. Expenditure is now expected to occur next financial year	Jun-2026	900,000	(400,000)	500,000	(400,000)		
<u>Community Battery</u> Council has requested a variation to the funding agreement to reflect the delays in the project. If approved, the project will be extended to October 2025, hence 50% of costs expected to be incurred next financial year.	Oct-2025	824,662	(400,000)	424,662			(400,000)
<u>Bain Avenue from Plaisted to Boundary, Road Reconstruction</u> The start of this project has been delayed due to adverse weather conditions and the need for underground services alteration works.	Aug-2025	637,590	(367,590)	270,000	200,000		(567,590)
<u>York Street Park Close to Home</u> Contract award is scheduled for June and construction is likely to commence early in the new financial year.	Nov-2025	400,000	(300,000)	100,000		(300,000)	
<u>Brunswick City Baths Repainting & Renewal</u> An unforeseen delay with architect documentation has resulted in a delay to tender works. The industry is also experiencing a shortage of available good referenced contractors.	Sep-2025	600,000	(300,000)	300,000			(300,000)
<u>Narre Narre Stadium Floor Renewal</u> Delays due to technical challenges relating to moisture levels. Construction is expected to start in 2024-25 but will not be completed by 30 June.	Sep-2025	500,000	(300,000)	200,000			(300,000)
<u>Northwest Brunswick Pre-school</u> Due to extended consultation, construction will now start in June 2025 and progress into the new financial year.	Sep-2025	350,000	(263,323)	86,677			(263,323)
<u>Park Renewal - Gervase Reserve</u> Park upgrade is still in the redesign phase based on internal feedback.	Oct-2025	378,997	(263,104)	115,893		(263,104)	

(1) Project also requires additional funding of \$1,456,539, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$83,461.

(2) Project also requires additional funding of \$270,000, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$93,000.

New capital carry forwards into 2025-26 cont.

Project and Delay Reason	Expected Completion Date	Q2 Forecast \$	Carry Forward \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
<u>Urquhart Street from Alva to Keith, Road Reconstruction</u> Commencement of the project has been delayed due to the inclusion of the shared path.	Sep-2025	364,620	(250,000)	114,620			(250,000)
<u>Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex Redevelopment</u> Carry forward required due to timing of the settlement of the Coburg Health Hub site. Awarding of the tender will not occur before settlement has been finalised.	Dec-2026	450,000	(250,000)	200,000			(250,000)
<u>Road Closures ³</u> Delay due to extended consultation for the Sumner Street road closure.	Dec-2025	105,420	(205,000)	(99,580)			(205,000)
<u>Victoria St Bike Lanes - Sydney Rd to Pearson St</u> Construction was originally planned to be staged but now all construction west of Upfield Line has been streamlined into one tender.	Nov-2025	286,527	(203,527)	83,000			(203,527)
<u>Gowanbrae Dog Park</u> Consultation period has meant plans were not finalised until January. Completion may be further delayed due to weather and contractor availability.	Jul-2025	528,495	(200,000)	328,495	(200,000)		
<u>South Street - Engeny Hot Spot No 12</u> Construction is on track to be completed by the end of June 2025. Defects inspection will occur in July 2025 before paying the final claim.	Jul-2025	700,000	(200,000)	500,000			(200,000)
<u>Merri Trail - Flood Mitigation - Bridge to Darebin ⁴</u> The changing context for this design work has led to a decision to wrap up the work of the original consultant and seek a new consultant to be appointed towards the end of the financial year.	Jun-2026	28,893	(185,971)	(157,078)			(185,971)
<u>Kendall/Harding Footbridge over Merri Creek</u> Project has been delayed by changes in design standards. Design phase expected to continue into 2025-26	Dec-2025	395,967	(177,000)	218,967			(177,000)
<u>Wombat Crossings - Barrow St & Blair St, Coburg</u> This project is fully funded by the Department of Transport and Planning with delivery required by February 2026. The initial aim was to deliver the project this financial year however due to design complexities, the design will now be completed and tendered this financial year with construction occurring in early 2025-26.	Feb-2026	213,960	(172,960)	41,000	(172,960)		
<u>Balfe Parks Sports Field Lights</u> Project has experienced delays due to procurement, and community consultation required for the redesign.	Aug-2025	350,000	(163,929)	186,071			(163,929)
<u>Saxon St Community Hub - Northwest Building</u> Until a Council decision is made on the future direction, this project has been delayed.	TBA	200,000	(150,000)	50,000		(150,000)	
<u>Wombat Crossing - Dawson St at Melville Road, Brunswick West</u> This project is impacted by multiple services and associated approval requirements for the design, from the Department of Transport and Planning, CitiPower and Yarra Trams. We are expecting to complete the design this financial year and deliver the works in the first half of 2025-26.	Nov-2025	186,180	(145,390)	40,790	(145,390)		
<u>WSUD Implementation - Various</u> Due to technical challenges, a carry forward is required for ongoing detailed development of the concept design.	Sep-2025	223,500	(134,000)	89,500			(134,000)
<u>Large Scale WSUD (Sportsfield Stormwater Reuse)</u> Delays due to technical challenges, a carry forward is required to enable completion of design and harvesting system upgrade works	Sep-2025	436,000	(130,000)	306,000			(130,000)
<u>Kerbside Waste Reform</u> Carry forward required based on new expected spend on bins for 2024-25.	Jul-2026	617,300	(102,735)	514,565		(102,735)	

(3) Project also requires additional funding of \$165,000, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$65,420.

(4) Project also requires additional funding of \$185,971, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$28,893.

New capital carry forwards into 2025-26 cont.

Project and Delay Reason	Expected Completion Date	Q2 Forecast \$	Carry Forward \$	Q3 Forecast \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
O'Hea St Bike Path Extension - Sussex to Derby St Construction is now likely to start in 2025-26 due to delays in getting approvals from the Department of Transport and Planning.	Apr-2026	200,000	(100,000)	100,000			(100,000)
LXRP Equipment Purchase has been delayed pending the outcome of investigations into purchasing an electric vehicle.	Dec-2025	87,002	(87,002)	-			(87,002)
Hadfield Depot Masterplan Development & Drainage Delays due to extended staff engagement.	Jun-2026	228,278	(75,000)	153,278			(75,000)
Craigieburn Shared Path - Stage 4⁵ Delays in the finalisation of this design due to ongoing challenges with flood modelling and associated approvals.	Jul-2025	36,591	(40,000)	(3,409)			(40,000)
Minor Park - Tate Reserve (Removal) Project has been delayed as it is dependent on the completion of the Esslemont Reserve project.	Nov-2025	30,996	(20,000)	10,996		(20,000)	
Total		13,363,768	(9,759,004)	3,604,764	(2,907,889)	(835,839)	(6,015,276)

(5) Project also requires additional funding of \$65,000, bringing the Q3 forecast to \$61,591.

Changes to carry forwards into 2025-26 previously approved

Project	Previously Approved \$	Adjustment \$	New Carry Forward \$	Grants \$	Reserves \$	Council \$
Adjustments due to spend now expected to occur in 2024-25						
Coburg Library Redevelopment (2024-29)	100,000	(100,000)	-			(100,000)
Replace Council Fleet ¹	928,755	(928,755)	-			(928,755)
Cole Reserve Upgrade Masterplan - Groundworks	816,132	(6,429)	809,703	(6,429)		
Total	1,844,887	(1,035,184)	809,703	(6,429)	-	(1,028,755)

(1) \$786,559 to be spent in 2024-25, the remaining (\$142,196) declared as savings.

7.13 GOVERNANCE REPORT - APRIL 2025 - CYCLICAL REPORT

Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic

Governance and Strategy

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee to Council held 13 March 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 12 March 2025 Council meeting, provided as Attachment 3.
4. Notes the summary of minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee held 4 March 2025 to Council at Attachment 4 to this report.
5. Notes the Merri-bek City Council Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Biannual report – March 2025 at Attachment 5 to this report.
6. Adopts the revised Councillor Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy at Attachment 6 to this report.
7. Adopts the Councillors Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy, as detailed in Attachment 7 of this report, and requests the Mayor to write to any Councillor who is considering or has nominated for the upcoming Federal Election (officially announced with the issuance of the writ on 31 March 2025) encouraging adherence to this policy.
8. Endorses the motion relating to food security and community resilience through place-based local responses, provided at Attachment 8 for submission to the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government.

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 Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee held 13 March 2025.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Responses to Public Question Time items taken on notice at the 12 March 2025 Council meeting, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.
- The summary of minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee held 4 March 2025.
- The Merri-bek City Council Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Biannual Report – March 2025.
- A revised Councillor Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy for adoption.
- A proposed new policy for consideration and adoption relating to Councillors candidacy at State or Federal Elections.
- An additional proposed topic for the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly in June 2025.

Previous Council Decisions

Governance Report – March 2025 - Cyclical Report – 12 March 2025

That Council:

...

5. *Endorses the motions regarding Retaining Aged Care Services within Local Government, Enhancing Federal Support Social Cohesion Initiatives with On-Site Support Workers in Housing Complexes; and Supporting People Seeking Asylum within our Communities, provided at Attachment 5 for submission to the 2025 National General Assembly of Local Government.*

Governance Report - October 2024 - Cyclical Report – 9 October 2024

That Council:

...

5. *Notes the Merri-bek City Council Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Report 2023/24 at Attachment 5 to this report.*

Revised Councillor Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy – 7 December 2022

That Council adopts the revised Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy as provided in Attachment 1 to this report.

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.

The Audit and Risk Committee's Charter requires that a biannual report of recommendations and findings must be presented to Council.

Section 138 of the Act requires Council to have in place a Councillor Gift Policy. The Policy must make provision for the maintenance of a gift register and any matters in the regulations, including a minimum value of gifts that must be disclosed. Councils must also ensure their Policy complies with the public transparency principles.

Council's Governance Rules prohibits the use of Council resources for any election campaign purposes, including Federal, State or Council elections and sets out general requirements for a Councillor or member of Council staff who is a candidate in an election including a Federal, State or Council election, including ensuring demonstrable distinction between their obligations to Council and their personal interests as a candidate.

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 Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee held 13 March 2025 is provided at **Attachment 1** for Council's information. There are no recommendations from the Committee to Council.

Records of Meetings held under the auspice of Council

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

Meeting Records must include meeting attendees, including organisations represented by external presenters; the title of matters discussed; and any conflicts of interests disclosed and whether the declarant of a conflict of interests recused themselves from the meeting.

Some examples include Councillor Briefings, meetings with residents/developers/clients/organisations/Government departments/statutory authorities and consultations.

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

- Councillor Induction Briefing – 9 December 2024
- Audit and Risk Committee – 4 March 2025
- Central Coburg Oversight Committee – 5 March 2025
- Councillor Briefing – 11 March 2025
- Councillor Briefing – 17 March 2025
- Councillor Workshop - 22 and 23 March 2025
- Planning Briefing – 24 March 2025
- Central Coburg Oversight Committee – 26 March 2025
- Councillor Briefing – 31 March 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 questions are recorded in the meeting minutes.

The responses to questions taken On Notice at **Attachment 3** to this report relate to questions from 12 March 2025 Council meetings regarding:

- March Governance Report – Public Transparency Policy
- Memorandum of Understanding
- U3A

Audit and Risk Committee minutes

A summary of the minutes from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held 4 March 2025 is provided at **Attachment 4**.

Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Report

The Audit and Risk Committee is required to report its Recommendations and Findings report to Council twice a year. The Audit and Risk Committee recommendations and findings report is shown at **Attachment 5**.

Revised Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Council officers have undertaken a review of the existing Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy which was last amended and adopted by Council in December 2022.

The review was undertaken to amend the references to Councillor Code of Conduct, since the introduction of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and to provide further clarity in some parts of the policy.

The review of Council's existing policy confirms that the policy continues to meet current legislative requirements, however the following changes are either necessary or recommended:

- a) The template has been adapted to fit Council's current template structure with the numbering of some items being amended where required.
- b) Amending any reference to the Councillor Code of Conduct to now read Model Councillor Code of Conduct.
- c) Section 2.2 - Organisational Context (Page 1) – adapted to reflect requirements of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.
- d) Section 4.2(2) Council Policy Position (Page 3) amended the following clause with the aim of focussing specifically on the act of soliciting gifts or benefits, rather than the broader concept of accepting them:
 - (2) Councillors will not seek or accept (directly or indirectly) from any person or body, any immediate or future gift, reward, inducement or benefit for themselves or any other person or body, relating to their status with the Council, or their performance of any duty or work relating to the Council.

Amended to now read:

"Councillors will not ask for gifts, rewards or benefits for themselves or others in exchange for services or favourable decisions."

- (3) Section 4.2.1 - Token Offers (Page 4) amend as follows to provide better clarity and guidance:
 - Amended to read as: A token offer is valued at \$50 or less.
 - Added: Councillors may generally accept token offers, as long as the offer does not create a conflict of interest or lead to reputational damage or is otherwise in breach of this policy.
- (4) Section 4.2.6 - Disposal of Gifts (Page 6) amended to include the wording "or by obtaining a commercial quote for the same (or similar) item" to align with a similar amendment to the staff gift policy.
- (5) Section 7 – Definitions (Page 8) updated definition of Regulations to reflect the current Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.
- (6) Section 9 – References (Page 10) updated the references as follows:
 - Added a link to the Local Government Victoria, Conflict of Interest Guide 2020.
 - Deleted the outdated link to the VLGA Improved Governance Guide for Councils.

The proposed changes as outlined above (with exception of numbering to accommodate the new template structure) are shown in the revised policy provided as **Attachment 6** to this report.

Proposed Councillor Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy

The Model Councillor Code of Conduct (effective 26 October 2024) has replaced previous statutory requirements for Councils to develop their own Codes of Conduct and previous standards of conduct. Councils must now follow the statewide Model Code, though they can still create separate local rules on specific matters if needed.

Previously, Council's Councillor Code of Conduct included locally tailored procedures for Councillors seeking to nominate for State or Federal office. These procedures addressed key issues such as leave of absence, conflicts of interest, and the use of Council resources, aligning with MAV guidelines released in 2021. These guidelines encouraged Councils to incorporate nomination related rules into their Councillor Code of Conduct. However, the new Model Councillor Code of Conduct has rendered Council's previous Councillor Code of Conduct and its specific procedures regarding Councillors nominating for State or Federal elections obsolete.

Despite these changes, Councillors remain bound by fundamental principles of integrity, transparency, avoiding conflicts of interest, upholding Council's reputation and refraining from using their position for personal gain (as per the Local Government Act 2020 and the Model Councillor Code of Conduct). Additionally, Council's existing Election Period Policy within the Governance Rules prohibits the use of Council resources for election campaigns and requires Councillors to clearly distinguish between their Council obligations and personal interests as candidates.

A proposed policy (provided as **Attachment 7**) has been developed that reinstates the previous policy/procedure contained within the former Councillor Code of Conduct, to assist with the continuation of clear processes for managing Councillors' nominations as candidates for State or Federal elections.

2025 National General Assembly of Local Government

The Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) National General Assembly (NGA) is an annual forum for Mayors and Councillors to engage nationally on local government matters. The 2025 NGA, themed '*National Priorities Need Local Solutions,*' will take place at the National Convention Centre in Canberra from 24 to 27 June.

At the March 2025 Council meeting, motions for submission to the NGA were endorsed for submission by the 31 March 2025 deadline. This report presents an additional motion, as provided in **Attachment 8**, relating to food security and community resilience through place-based local responses for Council endorsement. ALGA has confirmed that it is acceptable for Council to advise them of outcomes from this April meeting in relation to its endorsement of the additional motion.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

There is no direct climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications resulting from the presentation of this report to Council.

Economic sustainability implications

There is no direct economic sustainability implications resulting from the presentation of this report to Council.

Legal and risk considerations

Adopting a Councillor Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy involves legal and risk considerations. The policy complies with the *Local Government Act 2020* with regard to ensuring Councillors avoid misuse of position, declare conflicts of interest, and refrain from using Council resources for campaign purposes. This policy supports governance standards and prevents such breaches. Further, the policy enhances transparency and public trust by demonstrating good governance and providing guidance for Councillors managing dual roles.

Human Rights Consideration

The nature of the proposed Councillor Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy is in alignment with expectations of elected officials in the exercise of their duties. The adoption of such a policy does not impact a person's human rights.

Other 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.

As the revised Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy and the Councillor Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy applies only to Councillors the community was not consulted in the development of the proposed policy.

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.

Subject to Council's decision the next steps include:

- a) Providing a copy of the following policies to each Councillor and publishing on Council's website:
 - Councillor Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy as adopted; and
 - Councillor Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy as adopted
- b) Confirming Council's endorsement of the additional motion for inclusion to the National General Assembly, with ALGA.

Attachment/s

1	Reports from Advisory Committees to Council - April 2025	D25/166752
2	Records of Meetings - April 2025	D25/154982
3	Responses to questions taken On Notice - April 2025	D25/167425
4	Summary of Audit and Risk Committee held 4 March 2025	D25/160043
5	Audit and Risk Committee Recommendations and Findings Report	D25/132212
6	Revised - Councillor Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy 2025	D25/159426
7	Councillors Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy	D25/141064
8	ALGA Motion - NGA 2025 Food security and community resilience	D25/166332

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - 13
MARCH 2025**

A report of the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting held on 13 March 2025 are provided for Council's information.

Councillors appointed to the Committee: Cr Dr Iwasaki.

Key Items Discussed

- Draft Circular Economy Strategy update
- Draft Climate Emergency Action Plan update
- Draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan 2026-31
- Sustainable Communities community outreach pilot in Merri-bek's North
- Synthetic turf and PFAS research

Disclosures of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was disclosed at the meeting.

Committee Recommendation

There were no recommendations from the committee to Council.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 9 December 2024

Meeting time: 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees													
Councillors	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor</td> <td>Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cr Nat Abboud</td> <td>Cr Sue Bolton</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cr Liz Irvin</td> <td>Cr Jay Iwasaki</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cr Chris Miles</td> <td>Cr Adam Pulford</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cr Ella Svensson</td> <td>Cr Katerine Theodosis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cr Oscar Yildiz JP</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor	Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor	Cr Nat Abboud	Cr Sue Bolton	Cr Liz Irvin	Cr Jay Iwasaki	Cr Chris Miles	Cr Adam Pulford	Cr Ella Svensson	Cr Katerine Theodosis	Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	
Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor	Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor												
Cr Nat Abboud	Cr Sue Bolton												
Cr Liz Irvin	Cr Jay Iwasaki												
Cr Chris Miles	Cr Adam Pulford												
Cr Ella Svensson	Cr Katerine Theodosis												
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP													
Apologies													
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation • Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy 												
External participants	Nil												

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Council meeting agenda	-	-

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

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Audit and Risk Committee Meeting

Date: 4 March 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Where minutes are kept of a Meeting and made available to the community, an additional record is not required to be kept.

This Record will be reported to the next practicable Council meeting and made publicly available as part of the agenda.

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor Cr Ella Svensson
Apologies	
Council Staff (name and position)	Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment Jemma Wightman, Chief Financial Officer Bernie McCullen, Program Director Transformation Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy Robert Raiskums, Manager IT Sophie Barison, Unit Manager Integrity Risk and Resilience
External participants	1 Representative from Crowe 2 Representatives from RSD Audit

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

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Declaration of interests and/or conflicts of interest		
2	CEO update		
3	Confirmation of minutes		
4	Confirmation of items asterixed for discussion		
5	Elevate Transformation Program report		
6	Finance Management report		
7	Committee Management and Workplan report		
8	Memorandum of Audit Planning and Audits Completed		
9	External Audit report		
10	Risk Management report		

Name and title of Council officer completing record:

Sophie Barison – Unit Manager Integrity Risk and Resilience

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Central Coburg Oversight Committee

Date: Wednesday 5 March 2025

Meeting time: 4.00 – 5.00 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor Cr Nat Abboud Cr Jay Iwasaki
Apologies	Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor
Council Staff (name and position)	CEO – Cathy Henderson Director Place and Environment – Pene Winslade Director Community – Eamonn Fennessy Program Director Central Coburg – Peter Sagar Acting Program Manager Central Coburg – Sunny Haynes
External participants	Nil

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Declaration of any conflicts of interest	-	-
2	Terms of Reference – brief recap	-	-
3	Central Coburg program history	-	-
4	Reflections and feedback on the scenario briefing	-	-
5	First cut of economic data	-	-

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

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 11 March 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor Cr Liz Irvin Cr Chris Miles Cr Ella Svensson
	Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor Cr Jay Iwasaki Cr Adam Pulford Cr Katerine Theodosis
Apologies	Cr Nat Abboud Cr Oscar Yildiz JP
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation
External participants	Nil

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Council meeting agenda	1 Cathy Henderson – disclosed a conflict in relation to Governance report (relating to CEO Employment and Remuneration Matters Policy and Terms of Reference) and the confidential report (relating to CEO Employment Matters)	Yes

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

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 17 March 2025

Meeting time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Ella Svensson Cr Nat Abboud Cr Liz Irvin Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor Cr Oscar Yildiz JP Cr Jay Iwasaki
Apologies	Cr Sue Bolton Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor Cr Chris Miles Cr Adam Pulford Cr Katerine Theodosis
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation • Michaela Skett, Unit Manager Sustainable Communities • Victoria Hart, Manager Sustainability and Climate • Robyn Mitchell, Unit Manager Sustainable Built Environment • Naomi Clarke, Acting Integrated Water Management Lead • Christina Grayland, Acting Manager Community Wellbeing • Phil Jansen, Unit Manager Urban Forest • Bernadette Hetherington, Acting Manager Open Space and Environment
External participants	Nil

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	Budget discussions & CERES	-	
2	Draft Circular Economy Strategy and Draft Climate Emergency Action Plan	-	

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

Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
3	Draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan – Engagement	-	
4	Coburg North Masterplan	-	
5	Urban Forest Program Briefing	1 Cathy Henderson 2. General 3. Nature of the conflict: A friend lives in a street included in the presentation.	Yes
6	Governance Rules Review	-	

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

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor workshop

Date: 22 & 23 March 2025

Meeting time: 22nd 9am – 5pm, 23rd 9am – 1pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor Cr Nat Abboud Cr Liz Irvin Cr Sue Bolton
	Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor Cr Oscar Yildiz JP Cr Jay Iwasaki Cr Chris Miles
	Cr Ella Svensson Cr Katerine Theodosis
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Anita Curnow, Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation • Jemma Wightman, Chief Financial Officer • Riley Morton, Acting Management Accounting Coordinator • Indivar Dhakal, Manager Capital Works Planning and Delivery • Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy
External participants	Nil.

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
Saturday 22 March 2025		
1 Budget Planning 2025-26		
Sunday 23 March 2025		
1 Capital Works Program	1 Cr Liz Irvin 2. General 3. Nature of the conflict: In relation to Harding Street Bridge project / employer working on the bridge project	Yes

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

	Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
2	Council Plan Workshop		

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

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Planning Briefing

Date: 24 March 2025

Meeting time: 6:00pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees			
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor	Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor	
	Cr Sue Bolton	Cr Liz Irvin	
	Cr Jay Iwasaki	Cr Chris Miles	
	Cr Adam Pulford	Cr Ella Svensson	
Apologies	Cr Nat Abboud	Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	
	Cr Katerine Theodosis		
Council Staff (name and position)	Cathy Henderson – Chief Executive Officer Pene Winslade – Director Place and Environment Phillip Priest – Group Manager City Development Mark Hughes – Unit Manager Urban Planning Esha Rahman – Planning Coordinator Vita Galante – Planning Coordinator		
External participants	Nil		
Items discussed		Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1	MPS/2022/934/A – 1-5 Weston Street, Brunswick	-	-
2	MPS/2024/465 – 27 Ballarat Street, Brunswick	-	-
3	PPE/2025/14 – U1-3/427 Albert Street, Brunswick	-	-
4	MPS/2021/695/A – 16 Jessie Street, Coburg	-	-

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

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Central Coburg Oversight Committee

Date: 26 March 2025

Meeting time: 4.00 pm-5.00 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor Cr Jay Iwasaki Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor
Apologies	Cr Nat Abboud
Council Staff (name and position)	CEO – Cathy Henderson Director Place and Environment – Pene Winslade Director Community – Eamonn Fennessy Program Director Central Coburg – Peter Sagar
External participants (include organisation represented)	2 Representatives from MGS Architects

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Declaration of any conflicts of interest	-	-
2 Design Team and examples from other locations	-	-
3 Upcoming Councillor workshops	-	-

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

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

Record of Meeting

Meeting: Councillor Briefing

Date: 31 March 2025

Meeting time: 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm



This Record is kept in accordance with the Governance Rules adopted by Council most recently on 10 April 2024.

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

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

Attendees	
Councillors	Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor Cr Nat Abboud Cr Liz Irvin Cr Ella Svensson Cr Chris Miles Cr Oscar Yildiz JP Cr Jay Iwasaki Cr Katerine Theodosis Cr Adam Pulford
Apologies	Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor Cr Sue Bolton
Council Staff (name and position)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cathy Henderson, Chief Executive Officer • Caden McCarthy, Acting, Acting Director City Infrastructure • Eamonn Fennessy, Director Community • Pene Winslade, Director Place and Environment • Sue Vujcevic, Director Business Transformation • Lee Tozzi, Food Systems Officer • Christina Grayland, Acting Manager Community Wellbeing • Jemma Wightman, Chief Financial Officer • Riley Morton, Acting Management Accounting Coordinator • Chris Cheal, Unit Manager Economic Development • Narelle Jennings, Manager City Strategy and Economy • Vaughn Allan, Acting Manager Transport • Yvonne Callanan, Manager Governance and Strategy
External participants (include organisation represented)	2 Representatives from Open Food Network

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
1 Addressing food security in the North - findings from the food hub in the North		

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

Items discussed	Conflict disclosed by, general or material and the nature	Left meeting
project		
2 2025-2029 Budget - Fees & Charges Schedule briefing		
3 Supporting small businesses in local and neighbourhood activity centres		
4 Rainbow Crossings		
5 Sister and Friendship Cities Review		

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

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

Merri-bek Civic Centre
90 Bell Street
Coburg Victoria 3058
T: (03) 9240 1111

Postal Address
Locked Bag 10
Brunswick Victoria 3056

merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Doc. No D25/167268
Enq: Troy Delia
Tel: 9240 1111



Marion Attwater
[REDACTED]

Dear Marion

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM MARCH 2025 COUNCIL MEETING

I write to you in response to your questions submitted to the March Council meeting, as follows:

Question 1

Public transparency, misinformation and item 7.17 Governance Report

And finally on pages 331, 337 and 338, in the Governance Report, is a recommendation that Councillors should adopt an amended Public Transparency Policy that has only been reviewed by Council officers and has not gone out to community consultation in line with the community engagement policy. This policy has not been reviewed even once in the 4.5 years since it was adopted as part of the new Local Government Act. It contains errors, omissions and false information.

My question is does recommendation 9 of the Governance Report that Council "Adopts the amended Public Transparency Policy provided as Attachment 6" represent a breach of human rights, by excluding the municipal community from deciding whether a key community accountability policy should be accurate or inaccurate?

Answer question 1

No, there has not been a breach of human rights in relation to the revised Public Transparency Policy.

It is unusual circumstances this year because later in 2025, the State Government will release a Model Public Transparency Policy which will either take the place of Council's existing policy, or may require a full review of our policy to ensure we meet the new requirements.

Nonetheless, in order to keep the existing policy up to date, officers have undertaken a review with minor administrative changes proposed such as Council's name and officer position titles have been updated, typographical errors corrected and outdated references removed.

In accordance with Council Community Engagement Policy, no community engagement process was required.

Question 2

When the Council approved joining the M9 group at the 12 May 2021 Council meeting, it was for the purpose of shared advocacy. Part of the Council resolution was that Council "Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute a Memorandum of Understanding formalising Council's membership of M9". There was no mention of whether the Memorandum of Understanding would be a confidential document or a public document, so presumably it is a public document. Yet the MOU has never been placed on the Council website. No MOU has ever been placed on the Council website actually, even though the Public Transparency Policy explicitly states that details of any Memorandum of

Understanding entered into by Council that are not subject to confidentiality clauses will be available on the Council website.

Why isn't the M9 MOU, and other MOU's such as some of the CASBE MOU's, available on the Council website still after 4 and a half years?

Does the administration require a \$33 million software program in order to implement such a simple process?

Answer question 2

The Public Transparency Policy does include that Council will make details of any Memorandum of Understanding entered into by Council, that are not subject to confidentiality clauses, available on the public website.

Council will undertake a review of existing MOU's to ensure that where confidentiality is not a concern, that these MOU's are published accordingly.

I trust this answers your questions, however, if you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact Troy Delia, Unit Manager Governance on 9240 1111 or by email at: tdelia@merri-bek.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Sue Vujcevic
DIRECTOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION
02/04/2025

Merri-bek Civic Centre
90 Bell Street
Coburg Victoria 3058
T: (03) 9240 1111

Postal Address
Locked Bag 10
Brunswick Victoria 3056

merri-bek.vic.gov.au



XRef. D25/121913
Doc.No. D25/133719
Enq: K.Critchley

Pierre Quaglino
[REDACTED]

Dear Pierre,

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME ON NOTICE RESPONSE FROM MARCH 2025 COUNCIL MEETING

Thank you for your question submitted to the 12 March Council meeting, as follows:

Question 1:

Why can't the Coburg Citizens Centre, which remains unattended most of the time, be made available more often to the U3A members (who are all ratepayers), and why does the U3A management has to pay for the privilege?

The Coburg Senior Citizens Centre is a highly utilised venue, frequently booked by various senior groups. Under Council's policy and the Historical Arrangements framework, all senior groups are entitled to up to seven (7) hours of free access per week to ensure fair and equitable use.

Currently, U3A has three (3) bookings per week at the centre, which collectively fall within their allocated seven (7) hours of free usage:

- Monday: 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
- Wednesday: 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
- Thursday: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Non-profit senior groups requiring additional hours beyond the allocated seven (7) free hours are eligible for a discounted hire rate.

While the Coburg Senior Citizens Centre is not always in use, its availability is managed in accordance with Council policy to ensure fair access for all community groups and new and emerging groups. A member of the Community Venues team can contact you to discuss any additional booking requests and explore options that are in line with Council's policy.

I trust this answers your question, however if you require any further information, please contact Kim

Critchley, Unit Manager Aquatic and Leisure Services via email on kcritchley@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Eamonn Fennessy
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY
31 / 03 / 2025



Committee:	Audit and Risk Committee <small>(Established in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>)</small>
-------------------	--

Meeting Date:	Tuesday 4 March 2025
----------------------	----------------------

Representatives:	Councillor members – Mayor Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor Cr Helen Politis and Cr Ella Stevensson Independent members - John Watson (Chair), Marilyn Kearney, Lisa Tripodi and Jeff Rigby
-------------------------	---

The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by Independent Chair, John Watson. The following business was conducted:

1. No conflicts of interest were declared.
2. The CEO advised the Committee that no issues relating to any impending legal action or known legislation breached or instances of fraud were noted.
3. The internal and external auditor reported that there had been no obstructions to the work of internal audit.
4. The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 17 December 2024 were **CONFIRMED**.

ELEVATE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

1. **DISCUSSED AND NOTED** the status of the Elevate Transformation Program.

Finding

1. The Elevate Transformation Program is currently in the initiation phase of planning.

FINANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

1. **DISCUSSED and NOTED** the progress against the 3-year Financial Management Improvement Plan;
2. **DISCUSSED and NOTED** the monitoring and update on Council’s controls for unusual transactions above acceptable risk;
3. **DISCUSSED and NOTED** the management disclosures in financial reports of the effect of significant compliance issues;
4. **DISCUSSED and NOTED** Council’s handling of accounting, internal accounting controls or auditing matters or other matters likely to affect the Council or its compliance with relevant legislation and regulations;
5. **DISCUSSED and NOTED** the Finance Management Report for the period ending 31 December 2024 at Attachment 1 to this report; and
6. **DISCUSSED and NOTED** the Second Quarter Financial Review – included in Attachment 1 to this report.

Finding:

1. Council is monitoring and managing its financial position and key controls.

COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT AND WORK PLAN REPORT

1. **NOTED** the schedule to review the Community Directorate polices overdue for review.
2. **NOTED** the report on Councillor Expenses.

3. **NOTED** the report on Interstate and Overseas Travel.
4. **NOTED** the report on the CEO credit card transactions.
5. **NOTED** the contract review report on Internal Auditor Crowe.
6. **DISCUSSED, NOTED AND ENDORSED** the bi-annual Audit and Risk report for presentation to Council.

Findings

1. Management has a plan in place to review and update policies.
2. Councillor expenses have been recorded in accordance with policy.
3. The Interstate and Overseas Travel register is current and contains a record of travel by Councillors and Officers.
4. The Chief Financial Officer has reviewed the credit card transaction for the CEO corporate credit card from 1 July 2024 to 15 January 2025.
5. Internal Auditor Crowe are meeting their contract deliverables.
6. The Audit and Risk Report bi-annual report is endorsed and recommended for reporting to Council.

MEMORANDUM OF AUDIT PLANNING AND AUDITS COMPLETED

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

1. **DISCUSSED, ACCEPTED and ENDORSED** the findings, recommendations, and management comments for the following audits and review:
 - Special Rate Charge – Funding Agreements
 - Aged Care Service.
2. **RECEIVED and ENDORSED** the rolling three Year Strategic Internal Audit Plan July 2025 – June 2028 including the 2025/26 Strategic Internal Audit Plan.
3. **NOTED** the progress against the 2024/25 Strategic Internal Audit Plan.

Findings

1. The Special Rate Charge – Funding Agreements audit identified six findings and management comments have been provided against six recommendations.
2. The Aged Care Service audit identified six findings and management comments have been provided against six recommendations.
3. The rolling three Year Strategic Internal Audit Plan July 2025 – June 2028 outlines the eight audits proposed to be completed in 2025/26.
4. Sufficient progress has been made against the Internal Audit Plan.

EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

1. **DISCUSSED and NOTED** the Audit Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2025.
 2. **NOTED** the VAGO Status Report.
 3. **NOTED** Council's participation in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's Fraud and Corruption Control Inquiry.
 4. **NOTED** the actions from the Electrical Safety Victoria's Electrical Line Clearance Systems audit are complete.
-

Findings

1. The Audit Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 has been received.
2. Management has reviewed the January 2025 VAGO Status Report.
3. Council will participate in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee's Fraud and Corruption Control Inquiry alongside all other Victorian councils.
4. The actions from Electrical Safety Victoria's Electrical Line Clearance Systems audit have been completed.

RISK MANAGEMENT

That the Audit and Risk Committee:

1. **NOTED** the actions completed in the 2023-26 Risk Management Improvement Plan.
2. **NOTED** the recent activities detailed in the Information Technology update.
3. **NOTED** Council's management of complaints and public interest disclosures.
4. **NOTED** the actions taken in response to the breakdown in a key control.
5. **NOTED** the significant open Public Liability claims.
6. **NOTED** the continued improvements in Council's risk maturity.
7. **NOTED** the Strategic Risk report.
8. **NOTED** the recent activities of the CCTV Committee.
9. **NOTED** progress against the findings and recommendations from the October 2024 business continuity exercise.
10. **NOTED** the information items included in this report
11. **DISCUSSED** the updated documents comprising the Fraud and Corruption Control Framework.

Findings

1. Two further actions from the Risk Management Improvement Plan 2023 - 26 have been completed.
2. The Information Technology update outlines Council's current Microsoft Secure Score, and the results of a recent phishing simulation campaign.
3. Council continues to manage complaints and public interest disclosures.
4. There has been one breakdown in a key control since the December committee meeting.
5. There are Public Liability claims that may exceed Council's excess.
6. A risk maturity self-assessment was conducted in December 2024.
7. A Strategic Risk review identified one change to a strategic risk rating and confirmed the effectiveness of existing risk mitigation activities.
8. A report from the CCTV Committee outlines requests, complaints and changes to the CCTV environment.
9. Council has reviewed and responded to the findings and recommendations from the October 2024 business continuity post-exercise report.
10. Council has responded to the information items in this report.
11. The documents comprising the Fraud and Corruption Control Framework have been updated.

Forthcoming Meetings:

3 June 2025	2 September 2025	18 November 2025
-------------	------------------	------------------

Audit and Risk Committee

Biannual Report



In accordance with Part 2, Division 8, clause 54 (5) of the Local Government Act 2020, the Audit and Risk Committee presents its biannual audit and risk report that describes the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee). This is the first biannual report for the 2024/25 financial year and covers the period 1 July to 30 December 2024. This report includes the committee meetings that took place on 3 September 2024 and 17 December 2024. The Committee's activities for the reporting period are summarised below.

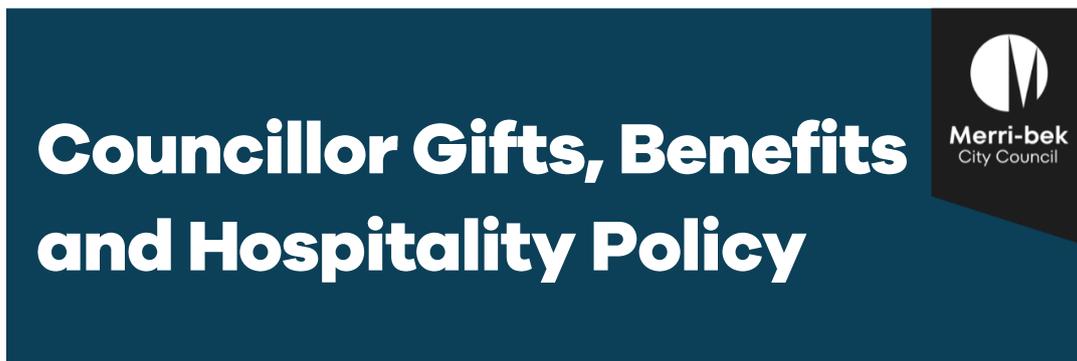
Focus Area	Outcome
Compliance and Legislative Requirements	
Policy List	<p>An update on the status of Council policies per Directorate was presented at the following committee meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Transformation Directorate - 3 September 2024 • City Infrastructure Directorate -17 December 2024. <p>The Committee noted the reports.</p>
Councillor Expenses	<p>The Committee received a report on Councillor expenses on 3 September 2024 which listed Councillor Expenses between January and June 2024. The reports included a table of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation • Childcare and Family Care • Conferences, Seminars and Professional Development • Copying and Stationery • Events • IT, Mobile and Data • Refreshments • Subscriptions • Travel and Mileage. <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>
Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality	<p>The Committee received a report on 17 December 2024 which outlined the gifts offered and received between July and October 2024. The report included a table of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of offer/receipt • Recipient of gift/offer • Approximate value of offer/gift • Description of the offer/gift • Who was the offer/gift received from? • Reason • At what setting was the gift/offer received? • What, if any, is the relationship with the service provider? • Who approved? • Declined or retained by recipient? <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>

Interstate and Overseas Travel	<p>The Committee received a report on 3 September 2024 which listed the Interstate and Overseas travel completed by Councillors and Staff. The report included a table of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and Position • Purpose of Travel • Dates of Travel • Cost (Accommodation, Transport, Meals, Other). <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>												
CEO Credit Card Transactions	<p>The Committee received a report on 3 September 2024 which listed the CEO's credit card transactions. The report included a table of the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting Date • Transaction Date • Description • Amount. <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>												
<p>Disaster Recovery Testing and Implementation</p> <p>Audit Actions and Business Actions Report</p>	<p>The Committee received a report on 17 December 2024 which confirmed the Disaster Recovery Test was completed on 2 September 2024. The Committee noted the report.</p> <p>The Committee received reports on 3 September and 17 December 2024, The reports detailed the business actions and audit actions to be completed and implemented by Council. The Committee noted the progress toward completion of outstanding actions.</p>												
Audit Actions Progress Overview 2024-25	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Audit Actions Progress to date 2024-25</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Audit Actions at 1 July 2024</th> <th>Actions added 1 July 2024-30 December 2024</th> <th>Actions closed Between 1 July 2024 and 30 December 2024</th> <th>Actions remaining open at end of December 2024</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>22</td> <td>47</td> <td>46</td> <td>23</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Audit Actions Progress to date 2024-25				Audit Actions at 1 July 2024	Actions added 1 July 2024-30 December 2024	Actions closed Between 1 July 2024 and 30 December 2024	Actions remaining open at end of December 2024	22	47	46	23
Audit Actions Progress to date 2024-25													
Audit Actions at 1 July 2024	Actions added 1 July 2024-30 December 2024	Actions closed Between 1 July 2024 and 30 December 2024	Actions remaining open at end of December 2024										
22	47	46	23										
Council Financial and Performance Reporting													
Council Plan	<p>The Committee received a report on 17 December 2024 which outlined the fourth-year implementation of the Council Plan 2021-25. The Committee noted the strategic indicators update achieved against the Council Plan 2021-25, the outcomes achieved against the Council Action Plan 2023-24, and progress towards completion of delayed actions and the status of these actions.</p>												
Financial Report	<p>The Committee received reports on 3 September 2024 and 17 December 2024. The Committee noted the reports.</p>												
Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement 2023/24	<p>The Annual Financial Report and Performance Statement 2023/24 was presented to the Committee for feedback at the 3 September 2024 meeting. The Committee recommended that Council record its approval 'in principle' to the draft Annual Financial Report and draft Performance Statement (the statements) for the year ended 30 June 2024; and that subject to the review of the draft version of the Annual Financial Report and the Performance Statement, Council authorise the:</p>												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive Officer to send the statements to the Auditor-General; • Chief Executive Officer, the Mayor and Councillors to certify the final version of the statements; • Chief Financial Officer to implement any non-material changes to the statement as recommended by the Auditor-General and provide a summary of any such changes to the Audit and Risk Committee at its next meeting. Any material changes will be discussed with the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee prior to being presented to Council. <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted the VAGO Closing Report and Final Management Letter for the financial year ending 30 June 2024 • Noted the report by the Chief Financial Officer, the Governance and Management Checklist, the Annual Financial Report 2023/2024, and the Performance Statement 2023/2024 and noting the verbal assurance by the External Auditors that they are not aware of any matters that would prevent the Committee providing its advice as follows to the Council.
Risk Management, Business Continuity and Fraud Prevention	
Risk Management Improvement Plan 2023-2026	<p>The Committee received reports on 3 September and 17 December 2024 which outlined the progress of the actions in the plan.</p> <p>The Committee noted the reports.</p>
Annual Fraud Risk Report	<p>The Committee received a report on the 3 September 2024 which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of fraud risks identified and the action to establish and implement treatment plans • The Fraud and Theft Incident Register • Actions arising from Fraud Reviews • An overview of fraud prevention and detection activities undertaken • Increase staff awareness of activities that amount to Fraud, report on completion rate of Fraud awareness training. <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>
Annual Risk Report	<p>The Committee received a report at the 17 December 2024 meeting. The report included an:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Enterprise Risk Management Framework and Implementation Strategy • Overview of Management of Strategic Risks • Council's Operational Risk Profile • Overview of Processes for risk identification. <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>
Business Continuity	<p>The Committee received a report on 17 December 2024 on the findings of a Business Continuity Exercise. The report confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Business Continuity Exercise was undertaken in October 2024 and that a post-exercise report has been received and management is working through the findings and recommendations. <p>The Committee noted the report.</p>
Internal Audit	
Audit Reports	Project Management

	<p>The Committee received the audit report on 3 September 2024. The recommendations were noted by the committee.</p> <p>Follow Up Review The Committee received the audit report on 3 September 2024. The recommendations were noted by the Committee.</p> <p>Rates Management The Committee received the audit report on 17 December 2024. The recommendations were noted by the committee:</p> <p>Building maintenance - Essential Safety Measures The Committee received the audit report on 17 December 2024. The recommendations were noted by the Committee.</p> <p>Management of Contract Variations – Hosken Reserve The Committee received the audit report on 17 December 2024. The recommendations were noted by the Committee.</p>	
Memorandum of Audit Planning (MAP)	<p>Special Rates Charge – Funding Agreements The Committee received and endorsed the MAP on 3 September 2024.</p> <p>Aged Care Service The Committee received and endorsed the MAP on 3 September 2024.</p> <p>Depot Operations The Committee received and endorsed the MAP on 17 December 2024.</p> <p>Privacy & Third-Party Management The Committee received and endorsed the MAP on 17 December 2024.</p> <p>Human Resources – Recruitment and Selection The Committee received and endorsed the MAP on 17 December 2024.</p>	
Recent Reports and Publications	<p>The Committee received the Curious Eyes publication on 3 September 2024 and 17 December 2024 and noted the reports and management comments.</p>	
External Audit		
Final Management Letter	<p>The committee received the Final Management Letter at the 3 September 2024 meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee noted the VAGO Closing Report and Final Management Letter for the financial year ending 30 June 2024. 	
Audit and Risk Committee Attendance		
Committee Member	3 September 2024	17 December 2024
John Watson (Chair)	√	√
Jeff Rigby	√	√
Lisa Tripodi	√	√
Marilyn Kearney	√	√
Mayor Adam Pulford	√	○
Cr Monica Hart	√	○
Cr Lambros Tapinos	X	○
Mayor Helen Davidson	○	√
Deputy Mayor Helen Politis	○	√
Cr Ella Svensson	○	√
Key		

√ In attendance X Apology O No requirement to attend meeting as was not an appointed member		
Committee Member Terms		
Committee Member	Appointment / Extension	Term End
John Watson (Chair)	15 May 2023	15 May 2026
Jeff Rigby	1 July 2021	30 June 2027
Lisa Tripodi	1 January 2023	31 December 2025
Marilyn Kearney	1 July 2022	30 June 2025
Mayor Adam Pulford	December 2022	November 2024
Cr Monica Harte	December 2022	November 2024
Cr Lambros Tapinos	December 2022	November 2024
Mayor Helen Davidson	December 2024	December 2025
Deputy Mayor Helen Politis	December 2024	December 2025
Cr Ella Svensson	December 2024	December 2025



Date Adopted by Council:	TBC
Commencement Date:	TBC
Review Date (4 years from authorised date):	April 2029
Responsible Directorate	Business Transformation

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

1. Introduction

The community expects, and the law requires, that Councillors act with integrity, accountability, impartiality, fairness, equity and consistency, and in the public interest.

Councillors are required to act impartially and with integrity and must avoid conflicts of interest in the performance of their duties as a Councillor. This policy supports Councillor compliance with the conflict of interest provisions of the Local Government Act 2020 and ensures the principles of good governance and accountability are followed by Councillors when they are offered gifts, benefits, bequests or hospitality in the course of their duties.

2. Context**2.1 Alignment**

Council is committed to ethical and transparent decision-making that is open to scrutiny and free of improper influence.

Section 138 of the Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to have in place a Councillor Gift Policy that explains the procedures for the maintenance of the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register. Council's Public Transparency Policy provides that the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register will be made available on Council's website.

2.2 Organisational Context

Councillors are required to act in accordance with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and the Standards of conduct embedded within it, including complying with policies, protocols and legislation.

3. Objectives

This policy provides Council's position on responding to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality; and provides the procedures for the maintenance of a Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register.

Compliance with this Policy will support Councillors to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain high levels of integrity and public trust.

4. Policy Details**4.1 Statutory Requirements**

The Local Government Act 2020 has a number of obligations and requirements in relation to the receipt of gifts by Councillors:

Section 3 Definitions

gift means –

any disposition of property otherwise than by will made by a person to another person without consideration in money or money's worth or with inadequate consideration, including—

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

- (a) the provision of a service (other than volunteer labour); and
- (b) the payment of an amount in respect of a guarantee; and
- (c) the making of a payment or contribution at a fundraising function;

gift disclosure threshold means –

- (a) in the case of a Council, other than the Melbourne City Council, \$500 or a higher amount or value prescribed by the regulations;

Section 128

A relevant person (Councillor) has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

An affected person includes a person from whom the relevant person (Councillor) has received a disclosable gift.

disclosable gift means –

one or more gifts with a total value of, or more than, \$500 or if an amount is prescribed for the purposes of this subsection, the prescribed amount, received from a person in the 5 years preceding the decision on the matter –

- (a) if the relevant person held the office of Councillor, was a member of Council staff or was a member of a delegated committee at the time the gift was received; or
- (b) if the gift was, or gifts were, or will be, required to be disclosed as an election campaign donation –

but does not include the value of any reasonable hospitality received by the relevant person at an event or function that the relevant person attended in an official capacity as a Councillor, member of Council staff or member of a delegated committee.

Section 137 Anonymous gift not to be accepted

A Councillor must not accept, directly or indirectly, a gift for the benefit of the Councillor the amount or value of which is equal to or exceeds the gift disclosure threshold unless –

- (a) the name and address of the person making the gift are known to the Councillor; or
- (b) at the time when the gift is made –
 - (i) the Councillor is given the name and address of the person making the gift; and
 - (ii) the Councillor reasonably believes that the name and address so given are the true name and address of the person making the gift.

If the name and address of the person making the gift are not known to the Councillor for whose benefit the gift is intended, the Councillor is not in breach of subsection (1) if the Councillor disposes of the gift to the Council within 30 days of the gift being received.

Section 134 / Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020

Gifts equal to or exceeding the disclosable gift threshold must be recorded on a Councillor's biannual personal interests return.

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Section 306 / Local Government (Electoral) Regulations 2020

Gifts must be disclosed on an Election Campaign Donation return in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and Regulations.

Section 138

All offers of gifts (including any offers of benefits or hospitality) will be recorded on the gift register.

4.2 Council Policy Position:

Councillors have a duty to place the public interest above their private interests when carrying out their official functions. Councillors will be ethical, fair and honest in the conduct of official duties and not seek, solicit or use their position, to gain gifts, benefits or hospitality.

1. Councillors will not accept gifts, benefits or hospitality that could raise a reasonable perception of, or actual, bias or preferential treatment.
2. Councillors will not ask for gifts, rewards or benefits for themselves or others in exchange for services or favourable decisions.
3. Councillors will decline offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality, or where an exception applies under this policy, seek endorsement to accept the offer;
4. If any gift or benefit (token or non-token) is offered by an external person or body, to a Councillor, disclosure must be made in writing on the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form within 5 days (regardless of whether the gift is accepted or declined);
5. If a gift is accepted because refusal would offend or there was no opportunity to decline the gift, it will be declared, assessed, and disposed of in accordance with clauses 4.2.2 and 4.2.3.
6. Councillors will not accept any offers of money (including cash, gift cards, cheques etc).
7. Councillors will not accept gifts, benefits or hospitality made by a person or organisation with a primary purpose to lobby Councillors. If any gift or benefit (token or non-token) is offered by a lobbyist, to a Councillor, disclosure must be made in writing on the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form within 5 days.

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

4.2.1 Token offers

A token offer is an offer of a gift, benefit or hospitality that is of inconsequential or trivial value to both the person making the offer and the individual. It may include promotional items such as pens and note pads, or home made/grown items or produce and modest hospitality that would be considered a basic courtesy, such as light refreshments during a meeting. A token offer is valued at \$50 or less.

Councillors may generally accept token offers, as long as the offer does not create a conflict of interest or lead to reputational damage or is otherwise in breach of this policy.

All offers (even if not accepted) must be declared via the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form for inclusion on Council's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register.

4.2.2 Non-token offers

Councillors can only accept non-token offers if they have a legitimate business benefit. All accepted non-token offers must be approved in writing by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), recorded in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register and be consistent with the following requirements:

- it does not raise an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest or have the potential to bring the individual or Council into disrepute; and
- there is a legitimate business reason for acceptance. It is offered in the course of the individual's official duties, relates to the individual's responsibilities, and has a benefit to Council or the municipality.

Councillors may be offered a gift or hospitality where there is no opportunity to seek written approval from the CEO prior to accepting. For example, they may be offered a wrapped gift that they later identify as being a non-token gift. In these circumstances, the Councillor must disclose receipt of the gift within five business days and forward the gift to the Manager Governance and Strategy for disposal in accordance with clauses 4.2.4, 4.2.5 and 4.2.6.

Where the gift would likely bring the Councillor or Council into disrepute, the Councillor should return the gift immediately and complete the Gift, Benefit and Hospitality Declaration Form.

4.2.3 Ceremonial Gifts

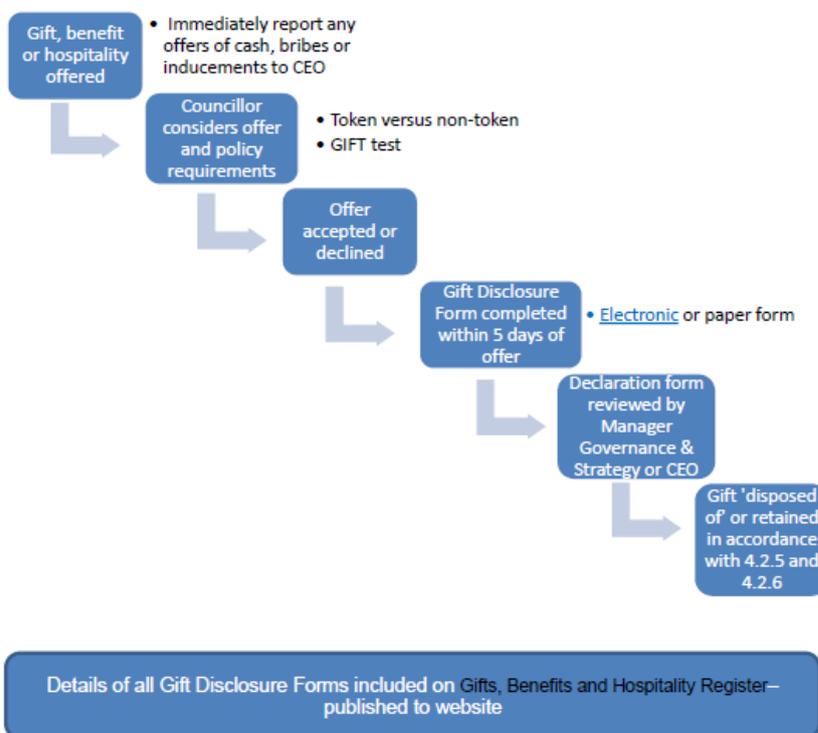
Ceremonial gifts are official gifts provided as part of the culture and practices of communities and government, within Australia or internationally. Ceremonial gifts are the property of the organisation, irrespective of value, and should be accepted by individuals on behalf of Council.

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

4.2.4 Process

Value of Gift	Declare	What to do with Gift
Up to \$50	Token gift – Submit Gift Declaration Form	Retain subject to endorsement by Manager Governance and Strategy
\$50-\$500	Non-token gift –Submit Gift Declaration Form	Decline offer if possible Return to donor CEO may endorse acceptance by Council of gift with legitimate business benefit
Over \$500	Non-token gift – Submit Gift Declaration Form	Decline offer or return to donor

4.2.5 Procedure



4.2.6 Disposal of Gifts

If a gift does not have a public value the recipient may, at the discretion of the CEO, buy the gift from Council. The purchase price must be the manufacturer's wholesale value of the gift in the place of origin at the time of purchase as determined by the CEO. If there is difficulty in assessing the value, a valuation must be obtained by Council from an appropriately experienced person or body or by obtaining a commercial quote for the same (or similar) item.

Where gifts are accepted because refusal may give offence or there was no opportunity to decline, they should be forwarded to the CEO who may dispose of these gifts by any of the following methods:

- (a) Disposal by resolution of Council;
- (b) Retention by the Council;
- (c) Transfer to other public agencies or authorities;
- (d) Transfer as a gift to a local recognised charitable, aid or non-profit organisation;
- (e) Archival action by Museums Victoria or the State Library Victoria;
- (f) Reduction to scrap; or
- (g) Destruction.

The CEO may delegate decision making powers in relation to (b) to (g) above to the Director Business Transformation.

4.2.7 Exemptions

All gifts/hospitality received in the ordinary course of attending conferences, seminars, events and information sessions (including gifts for presentations) where Council has paid a fee for attendance are exempted from the scope of this policy. Such gifts/hospitality can be accepted as they are contained in the attendance fee and are offered equally to all attendees and as such do not need to be declared.

Other exemptions include gifts / prizes / hospitality received as part of a sponsorship arrangement or 'official gifts and or donations' received by an individual on behalf of Council which will become a Council asset and should be listed on Council's asset register.

4.2.8 Bribes or inducements

If a Councillor believes they have been offered a bribe or inducement, the offer must immediately be reported to the CEO, Manager Governance and Strategy or Director Business transformation (who should report any criminal or corrupt conduct to Victoria Police or the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission).

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

4.3 Breaches

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct. Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Manager Governance and Strategy and anomalies highlighted and brought to the attention of the CEO and/or the Mayor.

4.4 Reporting

Completed Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form are to be forwarded to the Manager Governance and Strategy for recording in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register.

The Register of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality will be maintained by the Governance unit and will be forwarded to the CEO, Director Business Transformation and Manager Governance and Strategy on a quarterly basis for review.

The Register of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality will be made available for public inspection on Council's website and updated quarterly.

5. Roles And Responsibilities

Party/parties	Roles and responsibilities	Timeline
Chief Executive Officer, Director Business Transformation and Manager Governance and Strategy	Ensure legislative requirements are met, research, coordinate consultation, review and updating of this policy.	Ongoing
Unit Manager Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the Register of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality. Ensure this Policy is available on Council's website and to all Councillors 	Ongoing
Team Leader Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a copy of the Register of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality to the Manager Governance and Strategy, Director Business Transformation and CEO quarterly. Place the quarterly update of the Register of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality on Council's website. 	Quarterly
Executive Assistant to Mayor and Councillors	Support Councillors to complete online Gift Form and / or provide hard copy of forms	As required

6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Manager Governance and Strategy will ensure this policy is reviewed as required and as a result of changes to applicable legislation.

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Benefit	Preferential treatment, privileged access, favours or other advantage offered to an individual. May include invitations to sporting, cultural or social events, access to discounts and loyalty programs and promises of a new job. Benefits are considered a gift .
Bribe	Money, reward or service offered to procure an action, decision, or preferential treatment - a corrupt inducement to reward.
Gift	Goods and services given of a commercial value including property, tickets, souvenirs, promotional items, vouchers, flowers, chocolates, fruit baskets and discounted or free services. Gifts also include hospitality and benefits.
Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register	A comprehensive record of all offers gifts, benefits and hospitality, who the offer was made by and to, the value of the offer and whether it was accepted. The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register is published on Council's website.
Hospitality	Hospitality is the provision of food, beverages, travel or services (accommodation, entertainment, etc.) Hospitality is a form of Gift .
Lobbyist	A person, company or organisation who is paid or engaged by a third-party client to influence government outcomes. Lobbyists seek to influence public sector employees or politicians to support an outcome favourable to their third-party client.
Reasonable Hospitality	Hospitality received at an event or function that the Councillor attended in an official capacity, such as light refreshments during a meeting. Usually Reasonable Hospitality would not include a sit down catered meal or an invitation to a function.
Monetary gifts	Cash, cheques, money orders, gift vouchers, traveller's cheques, direct deposits loans.
Official gifts	Gifts officially given to Council as part of Council business operations e.g.: sister city arrangements, individuals and organisations bestowing a corporate gift which is in the public interest e.g.: plaques or art works.
Sponsorship	Where items or services are exchanged and identified as part of a formal written sponsorship agreement between Council and a third party.
The Regulations	The Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Term	Definition
Token Offer	<p>A token offer is a gift, benefit or hospitality that is of inconsequential or trivial value to both the person making the offer and the recipient (such as basic courtesy). A token offer cannot be valued at more than \$50 and should not create a sense of obligation in the receiver that will influence, or appear to influence, the exercise of their official duties. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flowers; • Food – chocolates and cakes; • Single bottle of reasonably priced wine; and • Trinkets (ties, scarves, coasters, tie pins).
Non Token Offer	<p>A non-token offer is a gift, benefit or hospitality that is, or may be perceived to be by the recipient, the person making the offer or by the wider community, of more than inconsequential value. All offers valued at more than \$50 are non-token offers.</p>
Value	Face value or estimated retail value.

8. Associated Documents

When deciding whether to accept an offer, Councillors should first consider if the offer could be perceived as influencing them in performing their duties or lead to reputational damage. The more valuable the offer, the more likely that a conflict of interest or reputational risk exists.

The GIFT Test (Victorian Public Sector Commission)

G	Giver	<p>Who is providing the gift, benefit or hospitality and what is their relationship to me?</p> <p>Does my role require me to select and/or manage suppliers, award grants, regulate industries or determine government policies? Could the person or organisation benefit from a decision I make?</p>
I	Influence	<p>Are they seeking to gain an advantage or influence my decisions or actions?</p> <p>Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered to me publicly or privately? Is it a courtesy or a token of appreciation or a valuable non-token offer? Does its timing coincide with a decision I am about to make?</p>
F	Favour	<p>Are they seeking a favour in return for the gift, benefit or hospitality? Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered honestly? Has the person or organisation made several offers over the last 12 months?</p> <p>Would accepting it create an obligation to return a favour?</p>
T	Trust	<p>Would accepting the gift, benefit or hospitality diminish public trust?</p> <p>How would the public view acceptance of this gift, benefit or hospitality? What would my colleagues, family, friends or associates think?</p>

Councillor Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy

- Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Control Plan
- Procurement Policy 2021-2025

9. References

- Local Government Act 2020
- Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Resource Suite, Victorian Public Sector Commission
- https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/173635/Conflict-of-interest-guide-FINAL-October-2020.pdf
- Investigation into the Regulation of Lobbying, Access and Influence in NSW - <https://www.icac.nsw.gov.au/investigations/past-investigations/2021/operation-eclipse>



Councillors Candidature at State or Federal Elections Policy

Date Adopted by Council:	<insert date> 2025
Commencement Date:	<insert date> 2025
Review Date (4 years from authorised date):	<insert date> 2029
Responsible Department:	Business Transformation
Responsible Branch:	Governance and Strategy
Document ID:	D25/141064

1. Introduction

This policy provides guidance to Councillors who propose to nominate or have nominated as candidates in State or Federal elections. It applies to all Councillors who declare their intention to run for such elections, ensuring they understand their responsibilities and obligations during this period.

2. Context

The Model Councillor Code of Conduct (effective 26 October 2024) has replaced previous statutory requirements for Councils to develop their own Codes of Conduct and previous standards of conduct. Councils must now follow the statewide Model Code, though they can still create separate local rules on specific matters if needed.

Previously, Council's Councillor Code of Conduct included locally tailored procedures for Councillors seeking to nominate for State or Federal office. These procedures addressed key issues such as leave of absence, conflicts of interest, and the use of Council resources, aligning with MAV guidelines released in 2021. These guidelines encouraged Councils to incorporate nomination related rules into their Councillor Code of Conduct. However, the new Model Councillor Code of Conduct has rendered Council's previous Councillor Code of Conduct and its specific procedures regarding Councillors nominating for State or Federal elections obsolete.

Despite these changes, Councillors remain bound by fundamental principles of integrity, transparency, avoiding conflicts of interest, upholding Council's reputation and refraining from using their position for personal gain (as per the Local Government Act 2020 and the Model Councillor Code of Conduct). Additionally, Council's existing Election Period Policy within the Governance Rules prohibits the use of Council resources for election campaigns and requires Councillors to clearly distinguish between their Council obligations and personal interests as candidates.

This policy has been developed to reinstate the previous policy/procedure contained within the former Councillor Code of Conduct, to assist with the continuation of clear processes for managing Councillors' nominations as candidates for State or Federal elections.

3. Objectives

The objective of this policy is to provide clear guidance and establish expectations for Councillors who choose to run as candidates in State or Federal elections, whether as Prospective or Nominated Candidates. It aims to:

- Ensure the integrity of Council operations and processes is maintained.
- Promote a clear separation between Councillor duties and campaigning activities.
- Safeguard Council resources and prevent conflicts of interest.
- Uphold compliance with governance standards, including adherence to the Election Period Policy, Governance Rules, and Standards of Conduct.

By reinforcing ethical behaviour, responsible governance and transparency, the policy seeks to protect public trust and confidence in Council operations. Additionally, it

outlines procedures for Councillors to declare their candidacy and apply for leave of absence, ensuring their external political pursuits do not compromise their obligations to Council or diminish accountability during election campaigns.

4. Policy details

A Councillor that has publicly announced their intention to run as a candidate in a State or Federal Election, will be deemed a Prospective Candidate (a Councillor will also be considered a Prospective Candidate if they have been endorsed by a political party and/or are starting to campaign, such as distributing flyers and door knocking etc).

When a Councillor has formally nominated, they are a Nominated Candidate. A Councillor can only become a Nominated Candidate in the weeks prior to the election date.

Regardless of whether a Councillor is a Prospective Candidate or a Nominated Candidate, a Councillor will act in accordance with the Election Period Policy (incorporated in the Governance Rules) including:

- Ensure there is appropriate separation between their role as a Councillor and their activities whilst campaigning, and that there is a demonstrable distinction between obligations to Council and their personal interests as a candidate (or member of a political party). For example, a Councillor cannot tell residents or imply, that they will address Council issues in return for their vote.
- Not improperly use Council resources (phones, emails, business cards, Council photos, staff support, logos) that are provided for Councillor roles. Photographs and images paid for by Council or taken by Council officers are Council resources and cannot be used in electoral material for any candidate. A Councillor must not use Council equipment and facilities in relation to their candidacy, or use Council resources in a manner that could be perceived as supporting or being connected with a candidate's election campaign.
- Make sure their communications (verbal or written) make it clear that this is the communication of a candidate and not a position of the Council (however a Councillor may refer to themselves as a Councillor in their communications because that is factually true). For example, a Councillor cannot promise Council support to something (whether it is to an issue or a promise of funding) unless that is the resolved position of Council.
- Not use their position of Councillor to influence Council officers, or access Council resources or information, in support of any election campaign or candidacy. This also includes expecting the organisation to give preference to issues raised by the Councillor whilst they are campaigning. The Councillor should continue to direct their requests through to the relevant Director rather than engaging officers directly.
- Not use Council activities, including committee meetings and Council-related external activities in relation to their candidacy.
- Act in accordance with the Standards of Conduct, such as acting honestly and respectfully.

Becoming a prospective candidate

A Councillor that becomes a Prospective Candidate in a State or Federal election, will provide written advice to the Chief Executive Officer, as soon as practicable after they have decided to run. The Chief Executive Officer will then advise all Councillors. The Prospective Candidates must then declare their intended candidacy at a Council meeting as soon as practicable after notifying the Chief Executive Officer.

Becoming a nominated candidate

A Councillor that becomes a Nominated Candidate must, apply for leave of absence from the Council and this leave of absence should commence no later than the date of their nomination as a candidate with the electoral commission and conclude no earlier than the close of voting for the election. During this period, a Councillor who is on a leave of absence should not attend meetings of the Council or otherwise act as a Councillor.

Council should approve any application for Leave of Absence. If the timing of the close of nominations does not align with Councils meeting schedule, a leave of absence may be approved retrospectively at the next available Council meeting.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Timelines
Councillors	Required to act in accordance with this Policy.	As required
Chief Executive Officer	Provides guidance for circumstances that are not provided for under this Policy.	As required
Manager Governance and Strategy	Administers and reviews requirements of the Policy.	Ongoing
Unit Manager Governance	Administers requirements of the Policy.	Ongoing

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The requirements of this Policy will be monitored in the lead up to and throughout each State and Federal election period to ensure compliance.

The Policy will be reviewed every 4 years and/or when updates are required.

7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Council	Merri-bek City Council
Councillor	Is an elected member of the Council as defined by the Local Government Act 2020.
Chief Executive Officer/CEO	Is the Chief Executive Officer appointed by Council as defined by the Local Government Act 2020.
Prospective Candidate	A Councillor who has not yet nominated to be a candidate for a State or Federal election, but who is planning to nominate as a candidate, including publicly announcing their intention to run as a candidate or has been endorsed by a political party and/or are starting to campaign (i.e.. distributing flyers, door knocking etc).
Nominated Candidate	A Councillor who has officially nominated to run in a State or Federal election.
Election	A Victorian State election or a Federal election or a by-election for either parliament.
Election period	The period commencing on the day a Councillor nominates as a candidate for election and concluding at the close of voting on election day.

8. Associated Documents

Local Government Act 2020

Governance Rules, incorporating the Election Period Policy

Model Councillor Code of Conduct

Councillor Support, Expenses and Resources Policy

9. Review

The next review of this Policy is scheduled for April 2029.

Proposed Motion- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)- National General Assembly (NGA) June 2025

Topic: Addressing food security and community resilience through place based local responses

Motion:

The National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to:

Commit \$500 million to establish a national program that supports local governments to plan, implement, and scale up community-based food systems, urban agriculture, and repair/social enterprise initiative.

National Objective

****Why is this a national issue and why should this be debated at NGA? (Maximum 200 words)***

Food insecurity, chronic disease, and social isolation are growing national challenges, exacerbated by climate pressures and the rising cost of living. The need for healthy, affordable food and resilient, connected communities is universal across Australia – affecting cities, suburbs, regional towns, and remote communities alike.

This motion proposes a national response through local government-led initiatives, enabling councils to develop integrated community food systems, social enterprises, and repair cafés that provide real, measurable benefits. These projects improve public health, enhance social inclusion, reduce food and material waste, and support climate resilience – all critical national priorities.

Local governments are best placed to implement these place-based solutions, but they require meaningful federal support to scale. By investing in local-level action, the Federal Government would directly contribute to national goals including improved public health, increased food security, stronger community cohesion, climate adaptation, and reduced waste.

Debating this motion at the NGA is essential to building cross-jurisdictional momentum for a coordinated, nationwide approach to community food systems. It supports the ALGA's vision for empowered, sustainable councils, and puts forward a clear, actionable pathway for federally-supported local action in line with the NGA's theme: Climate Change and Renewable Energy.

Summary of Key Arguments

****Background information and supporting key arguments (Maximum 500 words)***

Local food systems and community hubs offer scalable, place-based solutions to national challenges such as food insecurity, poor health, social isolation, and climate resilience.

Councils across Australia already support community gardens, food swaps, repair cafés and social enterprises – but the scope and impact of these initiatives are limited by resources. A \$500 million federal investment would empower councils to deliver these programs at scale, resulting in significant national benefits.

Australia's public health system faces increasing strain from preventable chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity. "Food as medicine" programs – where fresh, healthy food is prescribed as part of treatment – have been trialled with great success in local settings, improving health outcomes and reducing long-term costs. Councils, through local health partnerships, are well-placed to implement such models.

Food systems resilience is another national priority. Local food production shortens supply chains and reduces vulnerability to disruptions. Urban agriculture, community gardens and farmers markets increase food access, reduce waste, and build skills. Social enterprises and cooperative food models also stimulate local economies and employment – especially for marginalised groups.

Repair cafés and community hubs reduce material waste and landfill while building intergenerational skills and community bonds. These hubs become spaces for climate action, circular economy initiatives, and social connection – all aligned with the Australian Government's emissions, waste and wellbeing strategies.

This motion proposes that a national program to address:

- Urban agriculture and food growing in public space
- Community-led markets, food swaps and co-ops
- Food-based health pilots ("food as prescription")
- Community hubs for sustainability, repair and food sharing

Federal support should also fund the development of benchmarking frameworks and shared best-practice tools so councils can report on outcomes such as: kilos of food grown or distributed; health improvements; waste diverted from landfill; participation rates and volunteer hours; social enterprise employment outcomes; and reductions in food insecurity.

This motion aligns with existing strategies like the National Obesity Strategy, National Food Waste Strategy, and the National Preventive Health Strategy – all of which highlight the importance of community-led initiatives in achieving national goals. It also supports ALGA's own policy positions on community wellbeing, sustainability, and local economic development.

This motion puts forward a practical, well-evidenced, and nationally-relevant proposal. It calls for investment where it matters most – in communities – and empowers local government to take the lead in delivering integrated solutions. Councils are ready to act and with a federal partnership, we can build healthier, fairer, and more sustainable communities across Australia.

7.14 CONTRACT VARIATION RFT-2024-13 - WILSON AVENUE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT

Director Place and Environment, Pene Winslade

Property, Place and Design

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Approves an increase to the contract sum for Contract RFT-2024-13 – Wilson Avenue Streetscape Improvements from \$1,803,599 up to \$2,074,139 (excluding GST) for unforeseen and anticipated variations arising during construction works, noting that:
 - a) Variations to the Contract totaling \$72,684.81 (excluding GST) have previously been approved under delegation;
 - b) This increase of up to \$197,855 would bring the variation allowance to a cumulative total of 15.0 per cent of the contract value;
2. Refers the budget shortfall of up to \$197,855 to the 2025/26 budget process;
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to approve the contract variation and related documentation as identified in point 1.

REPORT

Executive summary

Council entered into Contract RFT-2024-13 – Wilson Avenue Streetscape Improvements with Kaizen in October 2024 to undertake the works associated with Streetscape Improvement works.

Works commenced in February 2025 and since then a number of site conditions have resulted in unforeseen variations. To date, variations to the Contract totalling \$72,684.81 (excluding GST) which have been approved by the Chief Executive Officer under delegation.

The project is less than two months into a ten-month schedule with approximately 15 per cent of works complete. Given the anticipated likelihood of further unforeseen variations to continue to arise over the life of the project, it is requested Council approve an increase of the contract sum of \$197,855 to allow management of the remainder of the works and timely delivery of the project.

This amount includes some known variations which officers have reviewed but are yet to have finalised pricing or approval.

Previous Council decisions

Contract RFT-2024-13 – Wilson Avenue Streetscape Improvements – 14 August 2024

That Council:

1. *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:*
 - a) *Make a formal offer to Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd (Contractor) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2024-13 for the Wilson Avenue Streetscape Improvement (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:*
 - i. *for the lump sum of \$1,609,184 (excluding GST) plus provisional sums of \$194,415 (excluding GST), totaling \$1,803,599 (excluding GST)*
 - b) *Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:*

- i. *the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and*
 - ii. *other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;*
2. *Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:*
- a) *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and*
 - b) *Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.*

1. Policy context

Financial management

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. Contract variations exceeding Council's delegation to the CEO require Council approval.

Council Plan 2021-2025

The Wilson Avenue Streetscape Improvement works aligns with Council Plan 2021-2025 Strategic Objectives:

- An environmentally proactive Merri-bek
- Moving and living safely in Merri-bek
- A healthy and caring Moreland
- Vibrant spaces and places in Merri-bek.

Brunswick Structure Plan 2018

Wilson Avenue is nominated as a Pedestrian Priority Street in the Brunswick Structure Plan (BSP) linking Sydney Road to Jewell Station and the Upfield corridor. The BSP identifies Wilson Avenue as a future major new public space and priority project for streetscape improvements to create a safe and more attractive pedestrian environment.

2. Background

In 2014 a portion of Wilson Avenue was closed to traffic to create a new public space fronting Sydney Road.

In 2020-21 Council undertook the community engagement and design of streetscape improvements for the remainder of Wilson Avenue, from Black Street to Jewell Station. Construction of the streetscape improvements was postponed for two years, to allow the three adjacent private development sites to be completed to ensure efficient construction delivery and avoid the risk of damage to new streetscape works.

The streetscape improvements will address safety and accessibility issues, connecting people from Jewell Station and the Upfield shared path, through to the Sydney Road. The scope will include new tree planting with passive irrigation; designated seating and outdoor dining areas; widened footpaths and flexible spaces for events and activities; raised threshold crossings and intersections; feature lighting; and garden bed planting and raingardens.

A request for tender was released in May 2024 and the tender was awarded to Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd for the lump sum of \$1,803,599 (excluding GST) by Council in August 2024.

3. Issues

Works commenced in February 2025 and are approximately 15 per cent complete.

Since construction commenced a number of site issues and latent conditions which could not have been reasonably identified at the time of awarding the contract have been uncovered, resulting in variations totalling \$72,684.81 (excluding GST), These variations have been approved under delegation.

The primary issues leading to variations have included: unmarked services, underground service clashes with new drainage works, poor condition of existing pits and pipes preventing retention, and works exceeding provisional sum amounts.

Response to these issues has been time sensitive and it is anticipated that upcoming unforeseen variations will also require timely response to avoid delay costs.

The project is less than two months into a ten-month schedule with approximately 15 per cent of works complete. Given the anticipated likelihood of some unforeseen variations to continue to arise over the life of the project, it is requested Council approve a variation of the contract sum up an additional \$197,855 to allow the management of the remainder of the works and the timely delivery of the project.

This amount includes some known variations which officers have reviewed but are yet to have finalised pricing or approval.

Community impact

Construction works have an impact on residents and businesses on and near Wilson Avenue.

The contractor and Council officers are working to minimise construction disruption to the community through good communication, careful phasing of the project, and overall program management.

The timely management of variations will help to reduce any delay to the construction program and therefore impact on the community.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

The Wilson Avenue Streetscape Improvement project will deliver a more sustainable urban environment with the project including:

- extensive new tree canopy and understorey planting for urban cooling and increased biodiversity
- water sensitive urban design features for stormwater infiltration and treatment

Timely delivery of the works without delay will minimise resource use associated with construction.

Economic sustainability implications

Delays in works may result in delay costs.

Legal and risk considerations

There are no known legal implications associated with the proposed variation.

Human Rights Consideration

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

4. Community consultation and engagement

The Wilson Avenue Streetscape Improvement project has involved extensive community and stakeholder engagement during its planning and design phases. This report is seeking financial variation to a Council approved contract and does not require further community consultation and/or engagement on the project.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The proposed contract variation as recommended and including the previously approved variations takes the total value of the contract to \$2,074,139 (GST exclusive).

Items	Value (excluding GST)
Original contract sum RFT-2024-13	\$ 1,803,599
Total variation of up to 15 per cent made up of:	\$ 270,540
<i>Approved variations to date (approved by CEO)</i>	\$ 72,685
<i>Variation requested (includes anticipated variations)</i>	\$ 197,855
Proposed total contract sum RFT-2024-13	\$ 2,074,139

Project budget

The total budget approved for the project is \$2,231,628 (excluding GST) which includes project costs outside this contract. With the additional costs outlined above, total forecast expenditure on the project will be up to \$2,429,483 (excluding GST).

It is recommended that Council notes that the increased contract value requires an increase in project budget allocation of \$197,855 and refers this increase to the 2025/26 budget process.

7. Implementation

Upon Council's approval of the contract variation, works on the project will continue towards the currently scheduled practical completion date.

Attachment/s

There are no attachments for this report.

7.15 CONTRACT RFT-P-2024-3 FOR GENERAL AND SPECIALIST TREE SERVICES

Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow

Open Space and Environment

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Accept the Schedule of Rates submitted by Tenderers and make a formal offer to each of the individual panel contractors listed in Table 1 below according to the various service categories, for the **Contract RFT-P-2024-3 for General and Specialist Tree Services (Contract)** on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - i. For a period of three (3) years, with an option for a further one (1), two (2) year extension.
 - ii. For an allowable maximum contract spend of \$16.5 million (excluding GST) for the term of the contract including extension options.

Table 1

Preferred Tenderer Name	ACN	ABN
Category A – Amenity Tree Services		
ETS Infrastructure Management Pty Ltd	070 013 884	38 070 013 884
Lucas Tree Services	611 315 452	50 611 315 452
Proleaf	641 740 436	78 641 740 436
Stevens Specialist Trees	099 910 853	82 099 910 853
Tree Amigos	158 713 823	47 158 713 823
TreeServe	169 334 712	87 169 334 712
Category B – Electric Line Clearance		
ETS Infrastructure Management Pty Ltd	070 013 884	38 070 013 884
Lucas Tree Services	611 315 452	50 611 315 452
Proleaf	641 740 436	78 641 740 436
Stevens Specialist Trees	099 910 853	82 099 910 853
TreeServe	169 334 712	87 169 334 712
Category C – Consultancy Services		
ENSPEC Pty Ltd	062 909 255	92 062 909 255
ETS Infrastructure Management Pty Ltd	070 013 884	38 070 013 884
Homewood Consulting	113 595 430	39 531 880 706
Lucas Tree Services	611 315 452	50 611 315 452
Xylem Tree Care Pty Ltd	640 958 532	13 640 958 532
Category D – Tree Root Services		
Lucas Tree Services	611 315 452	50 611 315 452

Category E – Tree Planting and Establishment		
Lucas Tree Services	611 315 452	50 611 315 452
Mt Beenak Earth Pty Ltd.	680 016 004	54 680 016 004
Sevron	165 444 011	165 444 011

- b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and each 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 each 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; RFT-P-2024-3 for General and Specialist Tree Services;
 - b) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract;
 - c) Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to allow contractors to work across different categories if required, ensuring we can maintain a range of suitable suppliers to meet Council's needs, providing the total contract amount to remain as paragraph 1 (a); and
 - d) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

REPORT

Executive Summary

Council has an in-house urban forest team of qualified arborists to deliver a range of services relating to proactive and reactive tree inspection, provide specialist arboricultural advice and general tree services. Council purchases products to facilitate this work and contractors and consultants are required at times to supplement Council resources to ensure they are delivered successfully.

To facilitate procurement of these services and in the light of the expiry of the previous contract through which Council used to procure these services, Merri-bek City Council is establishing a new panel of contractors with competitively sourced schedules of rates to provide the following services:

- Category A: Amenity tree inspection, pruning, removal and stump grinding;
- Category B: Electric line clearance;
- Category C: Consultancy;
- Category D: Tree root management, including non-destructive root investigation and root barrier installation; and
- Category E: Tree planting and establishment including plant health remediation.

Council sought tenders from suitably qualified contractors for each of these categories and assessed the tenders in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and with the Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan. Contracts are recommended to be awarded as outlined in the Officer Recommendation above. The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Previous Council Decisions

Nil.

1. Policy Context

This report is in keeping with Council's commitment to accountability and sound financial management. It also addresses the requirement under section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires Council to comply with its Procurement Policy (Policy) before entering into a contract for the purchase of goods or services or the carrying out of works. The Policy 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 contracts for the provision of General and Specialist Tree Services for an initial term of three years with one, two-year extension option. The services requested are identified as distinct categories within the tender documentation and are described below:

- a) Amenity tree inspection, pruning, removal and stump grinding;
- b) Electric line clearance;
- c) Consultancy;
- d) Tree root management, including non-destructive root investigation and root barrier installation; and
- e) Tree planning and establishment including plant health remediation.

The contract will enable Council to continue to engage qualified and experienced contractors to provide general and specialist tree services such as tree pruning, removal, stump grinding, juvenile tree establishment, root management and arboricultural consultancy. These services are required to deliver projects delivered by multiple internal stakeholders and meet day-to-day service delivery needs. The previous contract, RFT-P-2020-132, through which these services were procured, expired in February 2024.

A public tender was advertised and released on 9 November 2024 with 20 respondents submitting a tender response. Tender responses closed on 9 December 2024.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria

Item Evaluation Criteria	Weighting %
Pricing Response	
Price	40%
Qualitative Criteria Response	
Past Experience and Current Contracts	10%
Skilled Personnel and Qualifications	10%
Capacity of the tenderer to provide the services	12%
Operation of The Services and Service Delivery Methodology	10%
Management and Administration of The Contract	8%
Social Sustainability	4%
Economic Sustainability	4%
Environmental Sustainability	2%
Total Qualitative Criteria Response	60%
Total scores	100%

The membership of the tender evaluation panel was as follows:

Position	Full Voting / Advisory Member Contribution
Unit Manager Urban Forest	Full
Team Leader Forest Futures	Full
Team Leader Forest Maintenance	Full
Line Clearance Surveillance Officer	Non-Voting/Advisory
Manager Open Space and Environment	Non-Voting/Advisory
Senior Procurement Partner	Procurement process Advisory

3. Issues

A number of respondents qualitative score did not meet the Minimum Score criteria set in the Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan, therefore their tender submission did not proceed to the shortlisting phase of the evaluation.

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.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

All tender submissions by vendors were scored and assessments weighted against Economic, Environmental and Social Sustainability requirements. Council officers engaging with suppliers and service providers will ensure these are adhered to as part of ongoing contractor performance monitoring.

Human Rights Consideration

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

4. Community consultation and engagement

Consultation with other Units in their respective Branches, and more broadly with staff delivering operational services for Council was not required because of the specialist nature of the services being procured.

Engagement with external parties including community groups was not required.

5. Officer Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

6. Financial and Resources Implications

The approved Urban Forest Unit budget for the services for year 1 (2024-25) is

\$2,074,790, and the budget components are detailed in Table 5 below. Services may also be procured from other internal business units with expenditure being derived from Annual Base Budgets, Operating & Capital Budgets ('Opex'/'Capex') as required.

Table 3: Budget components proposed to be used to pay for the services rendered

Budget Component (where applicable)	Cost Centre	Estimate Budget Value (\$)
Tree Maintenance (base)	5590050-6285	\$628,000
Tree Establishment (base)	5590592-6285	\$550,000

Electric Line Clearance (base)	5595010-6285	\$846,790
Urban Forest Strategy – Tree Planting Regime (opex)	5595060-6285	\$50,000
Total		\$2,074,790

The 2025-26 draft budget has allowed for increased rates and spend within this contract will remain within existing budget.

Specific Fees in Council for services procured externally will also need to be modified once the Contract is endorsed to ensure the rates are aligned.

7. Implementation

It is proposed that the Chief Executive Officer be authorised to do all things necessary to execute the contracts and any other required documentation, including execution of the future optional contract extension.

The contracts will commence as soon as possible following Council endorsement.

Attachment/s

- 1 RFT-P-2024-3 - Tender Recommendation Report - Signed D25/114592

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.

7.16 ELECTRICAL CAPACITY UPGRADE - HADFIELD OPERATIONS CENTRE

Director Place and Environment, Pene Winslade

Sustainability and Climate

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the need for an increase in electrical capacity at the Hadfield Operations Centre (also known as 5 Walter Street, Hadfield) by 3,000kVA (or 3 MW), to support electrification of the site and installation of infrastructure necessary for the transition of Council fleet to zero emissions vehicles.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to upgrade electrical capacity at Hadfield Operations Centre, including:
 - a) Accepting the negotiated offer from Jemena to install a new 3 MegaWatt kiosk transformer at Hadfield Operations Centre, for \$403,690.59 (excluding GST); and
 - b) Executing a contract for the delivery of required civil and electrical works on Council property to operationalise the transformer.
3. Notes that the following sums have been referred to the draft budget process for 2025/26:
 - a) \$403,690 (for the Jemena offer)
 - b) \$376,000 (for the remaining works).

REPORT

Executive Summary

Merri-bek City Council has a target to reduce our corporate carbon emissions by 80-100 per cent by 2030. To meet this target, Council needs to electrify the Hadfield Operations Centre facilities and fleet, transitioning from gas, diesel and unleaded to renewable electricity where possible.

The Hadfield Depot is facing electrical capacity constraints and needs to expand its electrical capacity expansion in order to continue to transition to renewable energy. This requires the installation of transformer kiosks.

A project is underway to develop a masterplan for the Hadfield Operations Centre, and draft layouts have been prepared. The masterplan aims to modernise and optimise the operations centre. In particular, it responds to the need to improve stormwater drainage and waste stockpiles, flagged by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The masterplan stakeholder consultation report lists electrical capacity expansion as a high priority, and the two transformer kiosks are present in the draft layouts.

A technical study was prepared in 2022 to understand what electrical capacity would be needed at the Hadfield Operations Centre if Council's fleet and facilities were electrified by 2030 (study attached).

To enable the planned increase in electric vehicles (EVs) and/or zero emissions vehicle as well as electrification of the Operations Centre, the technical study outlines the need for an overall electrical expansion of 3,000kVA. This will be achieved by installing two transformers (one 2,000kVA and a second 1,000kVA), totalling 3,000kVA. Two transformers are necessary to reduce the costs of trenching and cabling from the sub-boards to the transformer.

The Distribution Network Service Provider (DNSP) for the area is Jemena. As the DNSP they are responsible for the physical infrastructure of the electricity network and have a monopoly on associated works, for example to increase electrical capacity.

The offer from Jemena for the full 3,000kVA required is \$403,690.59 ex GST to install two kiosk transformers at Hadfield Operations Centre. Their offer does exclude certain on-site works, which would need to be completed by Council before Jemena can carry out their works. These excluded works are slab construction, trenching, conduit installation, establishing easements.

Based on Jemena's offer plus estimated costs of additional required works, a total investment of \$779,690 (ex GST) is required to upgrade the electrical capacity at Hadfield Operations Centre.

Jemena's offer has a number of requirements: it must be accepted within 60 working days (a deadline which can be extended if agreed to in writing), payment must be made up-front, and certain on-site works are excluded. Jemena's offer states that they are planning to start works 12-20 weeks from the contract being agreed and customer obligations being met.

Previous Council Decisions

Zero Carbon Moreland - 2030 Targets Review - 8 December 2021

That Council:

1. *Notes the summary of updated climate science and the advice regarding the extent of emissions reductions required by 2030 to keep the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5C (above pre-industrial levels), alive.*
2. *Notes that the Zero Carbon Moreland (ZCM) 2040 Framework (ZCM Framework) and associated 5-year ZCM Climate Emergency Action Plan (endorsed in November 2019) are providing a solid foundation for Council to continue demonstrating local government leadership in responding to the climate crisis through:*
 - a) *progressively eliminating emissions from Council's own operations*
 - b) *inspiring and enabling community and businesses to reduce emissions, with a focus on ensuring equity and co-benefits such as community health and resilience*
 - c) *facilitating collective advocacy calling for urgent and effective action by state and federal government.*
3. *Endorses interim and aspirational ZCM targets for the Moreland community:*
 - a) *75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030*
 - b) *Net zero by 2035*
 - c) *Drawdown ('negative emissions') by 2040*
4. *Call on our community, businesses, state and federal governments to join Council in collective action towards these community targets and the safe and fair future that success would help to achieve.*
5. *Endorses the additional highly ambitious ZCM 'target range' for Council (corporate/operational) emissions:*
 - *80 – 100 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 (precluding offsets, against 2011/12 baseline). Note: Council has taken significant actions to reduce its operational emissions by 70 per cent from the 2011/12 baseline and that Council has been certified as 'carbon neutral' (or 'net zero') since 2012 under the national Climate Active scheme, whereby Council annually purchases carbon offsets for all its remaining emissions.*

6. *Note the following conditions related to achievement of corporate emissions target:*
 - a) *Achievement of 80 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 is contingent on additional funding allocation and re-scoped capital works forward plan (to bring forward a transition of Council’s light fleet to zero emissions and converting approximately 27 Council buildings to ‘all electric’). High-level cost estimate to deliver these actions may be up to \$16M over the 9 years to 2030.*
 - b) *Progress beyond 80 per cent, towards 100 per cent reduction (the upper end of the target range) is also contingent on commercialisation and availability before 2030 of suitable new or emerging technologies (that is, zero emissions waste trucks and construction materials).*
7. *Pending adoption of corporate ZCM target range, develop business cases for referral to the 2022/23 budget process and consideration within Council’s long term financial plan (i.e., to enable accelerated transition to zero emissions light feet and accelerated transition off gas in Council buildings)*
8. *Endorse revisions to the ZCM Framework and Climate Emergency Action Plan as necessary to reflect the newly endorsed targets.*
9. *Acknowledges and thanks all community members, including those involved in the Moreland Climate Coalition, that are acting and advocating for the many local and regional and national systems changes required to ensure a safe, fair and resilient Moreland into the future.*

1. Policy Context

Strategic alignment

Merri-bek Zero Carbon - 2040 Framework (revised February 2022 and October 2022), sets a corporate carbon target 80-100 per cent reduction by 2030 (precluding offsets) against a 2011/12 baseline.

Zero Carbon Merri-bek Climate Emergency Action Plan Council 2025 (p. 17) states – “Council’s heavy vehicles (e.g. waste trucks) transitioning to zero emissions – pending commercial availability of suitable vehicles and refuelling infrastructure”. Ref 3.5 (p. 19) states “Continue testing feasibility and pathways for the transition from diesel to zero emissions for Council’s light commercial and heavy vehicle fleet.”

Fleet Selection Policy (endorsed September 2024) states (p.4) “it is estimated that fleet will need to reduce unleaded fuel consumption to zero and diesel consumption by between 26 per cent and 37 per cent by 2030, depending on emissions achieved by other key areas.” (p.5) “This Policy will ensure: Fleet is progressively transitioned to zero emission models ...” (p.6) “The general policy is as follows: a) all operational light vehicles must be a ZEV” (p.8) “The general policy is as follows: a) all operational heavy vehicles must be a ZEV.”

Merri-bek Procurement Policy, Appendix 3 – Council Specific Exemptions includes:

- Sole suppliers such as Services Authorities and their appointed contractors (e.g., water, gas, telecommunications and electricity).

2. Background

Merri-bek City Council has an ambitious carbon target to reduce our corporate carbon emissions by 80-100 per cent by 2030. To meet this target, we need to electrify the Hadfield Operations Centre facilities and fleet, transitioning from gas, diesel and unleaded to renewable electricity where possible.

This need for chargers was acknowledged by Council as part of the Zero Carbon Moreland Targets review, including the costs involved for light fleet (Council Report 7.4 Zero Carbon Moreland - 2030 targets review 8 December 2021). This was then enacted through the CEO Endorsed Fleet Selection Policy.

Yarra City Council and Banyule Council are currently upgrading electricity capacity at their depots (both have purchased multiple electric trucks).

Electrical demand is calculated by the electricity distributor based on the installed equipment, such as electric vehicle (EV) chargers. Solar photovoltaic (PV) and batteries reduce electricity invoices, but do not alter the calculations for the required electrical capacity. Although additional solar PV or batteries on-site would be beneficial in reducing on-going energy costs, they would not alter the need for, or cost of the electrical capacity upgrade.

A project is underway to develop a masterplan for the Hadfield Operations Centre, and draft layouts have been prepared. The masterplan aims to modernise and optimise the operations centre. In particular, it responds to the need to improve stormwater drainage and waste stockpiles, flagged by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The masterplan stakeholder consultation report lists electrical capacity expansion as a high priority, and the two transformer kiosks are present in the draft layouts.

Converting fleet to zero emissions

Council has committed to convert its fleet to zero emission vehicles, where available vehicle models meet our operational needs. This is laid out in Council's Fleet Selection Policy (endorsed September 2024).

Currently Council's fleet is responsible for 2,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases, or almost one third of our 2023/24 carbon emissions (28 per cent due to diesel consumption, 1 per cent due to unleaded). The vast majority of Council's fleet emissions are due to vehicles based at the Hadfield Operations Centre.

Electrification is the favoured approach to converting fleet to zero emissions vehicles.

Council has made excellent progress in electrifying our light fleet, and Merri-bek currently runs one of the largest electric vehicle (EV) light fleets in the country (30 EVs and 7 e-bikes). Council's light EV fleet is significantly larger than those of comparable councils (Yarra, Hume, Banyule, Darebin, City of Port Phillip).

Our heavy electric fleet, however, is smaller than those of City of Port Phillip, Stonnington, Yarra, Banyule or Whitehorse. Council's light fleet is currently responsible for 1.3 per cent of our corporate carbon footprint, while heavy fleet accounts for 32 per cent.

Council has taken initial steps to reduce emissions from heavy fleet. An electric ride-on mower has been purchased, and Fleet has placed orders for two electric trucks and an electric streetsweeper.

Council continues to explore the feasibility of hydrogen waste vehicles. Should hydrogen be generated on-site, this would require high site electrical capacity.

3. Issues

Current electrical capacity limitations

A technical study was prepared in 2022 to understand what electrical capacity would be needed at the Hadfield Operations Centre if Council's fleet and facilities were electrified by 2030 (study attached).

To support an expanding fleet of EVs, Hadfield Operations Centre must provide charging facilities. Six chargers have been installed, capable of charging nine vehicles. Two of these chargers were installed to support heavy vehicles currently on order. Heavy vehicles in high use will require dedicated chargers for after-hours charging.

Supplying chargers in turn requires investing in an electrical capacity upgrade.

The 2022 technical study found that electrical capacity at the Hadfield Operations Centre is insufficient to install EV chargers beyond the six chargers currently installed nor electrification of the building itself.

Electrical capacity upgrade scope and timing

To enable the planned increase in electric vehicles (EVs) as well as electrification of the Operations Centre, the technical study outlines the need for an overall electrical expansion of 3,000kVA. This will be achieved by installing two transformers (one 2,000kVA and a second 1,000kVA), totalling 3,000kVA. A total of 3,000kVA would permit full electrification of Council's current fleet.

Two transformers are necessary to reduce the costs of trenching and cabling from the sub-boards to the transformer. Other reasons are that there is a space limit on the amount of cabling which can be routed to one transformer; and 3,000kVA transformers are not available off-the-shelf, which substantially increases the price.

The proposed location for the 2,000kVA transformer is next to the current tree nursery area to the north of the site, while the location for the 1,000kVA transformer would be to the south of the site. The locations of the transformers have been included in the current Hadfield Operations Centre master planning process. The Hadfield Operations Centre Upgrade Masterplan is nearing completion and currently notes the 'electrical capacity expansion' as a high priority

As required before any works can be undertaken, Council has submitted an enquiry to Jemena (the Distributed Network Service Provider (DNSP) of the electricity asset at this location) to confirm there is enough electricity capacity in the grid, local to the site. Jemena has confirmed capacity is available and approved the works by providing an offer.

3. Financial implications

Quotation process

The Distribution Network Service Provider (DNSP) for the area is Jemena. As the DNSP they are responsible for the physical infrastructure of the electricity network. The upgrade works can only be undertaken by the DNSP, other than on-site excluded works, including slab construction, trenching, conduit installation, which must be completed by Council.

The offer from Jemena for the full 3,000kVA is \$403,690.59 ex GST to install two kiosk transformers at Hadfield Operations Centre. The offer does exclude certain on-site works, which would need to be completed by Council before Jemena can carry out their works. These excluded works are slab construction, trenching, conduit installation, establishing easements.

All prices received are listed in the table below (prices shown are ex GST).

Works	2025 Jemena offer	Minimum additional works*	Total (Jemena offer plus minimum additional works)
Installation of a 2,000kVA and a 1,000kVA transformer	\$ 403,690	\$ 376,000	\$ 779,690

*The cost of minimum required additional works (slab, trenching, high-voltage conduit, arranging easements, metering and main switchboard) was estimated at approximately \$300k by the 2022 technical study. An increase of 30 per cent has been included to allow for cost inflation since 2022.

Jemena's offer has a number of requirements: it must be accepted within 60 working days (a deadline which can be extended if agreed to in writing), payment must be made up-front and certain on-site works are excluded.

Jemena's offer states that they are planning to start works 12-20 weeks from the contract being agreed and customer obligations being met.

Customer obligations include:

1. Payment to Jemena upfront.
2. Providing substation easements
3. Completing required civil works on Council property (slab construction, trenching, conduit installation)

These customer obligations have not yet been met. Once Council agrees to Jemena's offer and provides payment, a timeframe will be agreed with Jemena under which Council will provide the easements and complete required civil works. These works will be completed in close collaboration with the Hadfield Operations Centre masterplan process.

Based on Jemena's offer plus estimated costs of additional required works, a total investment of \$779,690 (ex GST) is required to upgrade the electrical capacity at Hadfield Operations Centre.

There is considered to be a high risk of prices increasing further, if delayed.

Risks

3,000kVA is required to enable full site electrification, including both building facilities and fleet. This is based on the current fleet of 129 vehicles based on-site.

Electrical capacity is provided by Jemena on a 'first in best dressed' basis. Electrical capacity is currently available from the grid and Jemena is willing to supply this to the Hadfield Operations Centre. If we decline the offer now, capacity within the grid is not guaranteed to continue.

A future application to Jemena may require significant local grid upgrades (significantly more expensive) or may be rejected by Jemena. For example, if new housing developments are built in Hadfield, this could lock up available electrical capacity, leaving no options for expansion.

Climate emergency and environmental sustainability implications

Increasing electrical capacity at Hadfield Operations Centre is essential for Council to expand its fleet of electric vehicles, particularly heavy electric vehicles as well as upgrade and operations of the depot building and facilities itself. Council's fleet is responsible for 29 per cent of FY23/24 carbon emissions. A shift to zero emission vehicles is needed for Council to meet its corporate carbon target of 80-100 per cent reduction against 2011/12 baseline, precluding offsets.

Human Rights consideration

The implications of this report have been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. The Moreland Human Rights Policy provides an overarching framework for delivering accessible, equitable and inclusive programs, services and decision-making processes.

4. Community consultation and engagement

No community engagement has been undertaken as part of the development of this report.

Communications

Any communications regarding works at the site and any impact to nearby or neighbouring resident will occur prior to works commencing.

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 amounts below have been referred to the 2025/26 draft budget process:

- a) \$ 403,690 (for Jemena offer)
- b) \$ 376,000 (for remaining works).

7. Implementation

Upon Council's approval of the officer recommendation, next steps include:

- Accept offer from Jemena
- Fully incorporate the works in the Hadfield Operations Centre Upgrade Masterplan
- Complete additional on-site works

The project is expected to be completed by late 2025.

Attachment/s

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| 1↓ | Technical Report - Walter St Hadfield Depot electrical electricity capacity upgrade 2023 | D23/87292 |
|----|--|-----------|



**Walter Street Depot Site Strategy Report 1:
Electrical Vehicle Charging, Batteries and Solar PV**

Moreland City Council

J00429_P001_001
February 2023

Enhar Pty Ltd
Suite G-03 60 Leicester Street, Carlton, VIC 3053
T: +61 3 9429 9463 F: +61 3 8676 4924 E: info@enhar.com.au www.enhar.com.au

Document Revision Status & Approval Log

Date	Version	Status for Purpose	Authors	Reviewer/s	Authoriser
23/6/2022	1.0	Draft Report	Roger Mansfield Trevor Ackland Richard Keech	Richard Keech	Trevor Ackland
14/2/2023	2.1	Final Report	Roger Mansfield	Trevor Ackland	Roger Mansfield
24/2/2023	3.0	Final Report	Roger Mansfield	Trevor Ackland	Roger Mansfield
24/2/2023	3.1	Final Report	Roger Mansfield	Trevor Ackland	Roger Mansfield

Disclaimer

Enhar acts in a professional manner and exercises all reasonable skill and care in the provision of its professional services. The intended purpose of this document is for use by the addressed recipient for the purpose of a technical and financial feasibility assessment of a commercial solar PV system at the site as described in the client brief and Enhar's proposal. The content of this document is not to be used for other purposes.

Enhar does not accept liability for any use of this report other than for its intended purpose, or by any parties other than the addressed recipient. Australian Standard 4122 provides guidance on the responsibilities of the client and the consultant.

The report is commissioned by and prepared for the exclusive use of the Client. Reproduction of this report by other entities is not permitted other than by prior written agreement with Enhar



Enhar Pty Ltd
Walter Street Depot
Electric Vehicle Study

Contents

1 Executive Summary 3

1.1 EV fleet projections 3

1.2 Stage 1: Existing infrastructure 3

1.3 Stage 2 and 3: Electrical upgrades and costs 3

1.4 EV chargers 3

1.5 Solar/Battery options 3

1.6 EV Next Steps 3

2 Introduction 4

2.1 Engagement and goals 4

2.2 Project context 4

3 Electric Vehicle Modelling and Demand 5

3.1 Summary of Vehicle Fleet 5

3.2 Timing of Vehicle EV Replacement 5

3.3 Parking Areas for Vehicle Types 6

3.4 Small Plant and Equipment 6

4 EV Supply Equipment (EVSE) and Charging requirements 7

4.1 Plug type and compatibility 7

4.2 Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP) 7

4.3 EV Energy Load Management systems 7

4.4 EVSE Layout options 8

4.5 EVSE Recommended Layout (Optimised) 8

4.6 Recommended EV Layout and Quantities 8

4.7 Peak Load and Transformer Requirements 9

4.8 Key Recommendations: EV Supply Equipment (EVSE) and Charging requirements 9

5 Electrical Infrastructure 10

5.1 Existing Grid Capacity and Electrical supply 10

5.2 Main Depot 10

5.3 Veterans' Association electrical connection 11

5.4 Existing Chargers 11

5.5 Key Recommendations: Existing Infrastructure 11

6 Electrical Upgrade Requirements 12

6.1 Electrical upgrade Requirements: 12

6.2 Grid Upgrades Distributor/Jemena 13

6.3 Transformer upgrades 14

6.4 Internal Electrical infrastructure upgrades 14

6.5 Trenching and Civil works 15

6.6 Construction Sequence 15

6.7 Infrastructure and EV Capital Cost 15

6.8 Key Recommendation: Electrical upgrades 16

7 Future Electrical Load Profile 17

7.1 Vehicles Classes and Details 17

7.2 Average Site Consumption 2026 17

7.3 Average Site Consumption 2031 17

7.4 Projections 17

8 Solar PV and Hybrid 18

8.1 Existing Solar PV 18

8.2 Solar General Recommendations General 18

8.3 Maximised Roof Top system 19

8.4 Rooftop and Conventional Carport 20

8.5 Rooftop and Conventional Carport and bespoke truck-port structure 21

8.6 Rooftop and rooftop installation on Harrys Ice-cream 22

9 Conclusions and Summary 23

9.1 EV fleet projections 23

9.2 EV chargers 23

9.3 Existing infrastructure 23

9.4 Electrical upgrades and costs 23

9.5 Alternatives 24

9.6 EV Next Steps 24

9.7 Solar PV and battery hybrid opportunities 24

10 Appendix A: Vehicle Fleet 25

11 Appendix B: Proposed EVSE and Infrastructure Layout 25

12 Appendix C: Solar Drawings 25

13 Appendix D: Jemena Offer 25

14 Appendix E Methodology and Assumptions 25



Enhar Pty Ltd
Walter Street Depot
Electric Vehicle Study

1 Executive Summary

This report provides a detailed feasibility assessment and preliminary design, strategy and cost estimate for Electrical Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE), small plant charging and additional solar/battery at the Merri-bek City Council Depot 1 Walter St, Hadfield.

The aim is to ensure there is adequate electrical infrastructure and EV charging capacity to meet the charging requirements of the future EV light and heavy vehicle fleet and electrical small plant; to ensure vehicles are charged when required.

1.1 EV fleet projections

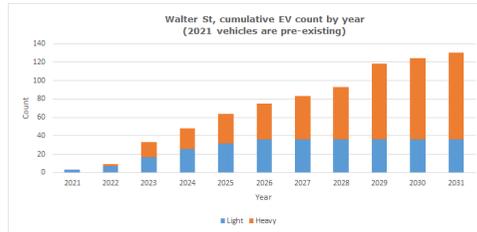


Figure 1-1: Projected growth in EV fleet

1.2 Stage 1: Existing infrastructure

There is limited opportunity for further EV's within the current electrical infrastructure. Stage 1 of the plan is already underway, installing a small number of chargers to maximise use of existing electrical supply infrastructure.

Summary of the existing infrastructure:

- Limited capacity at Distribution Boards:** Existing distribution boards have limited additional capacity for additional EV chargers due to already being at capacity
- Limited Site Electrical Capacity** Based on transformer capacity a maximum 290Amps/200kVA, allowing a maximum additional charger capacity of 100kW.
- Full Site Electrical upgrade Required for additional EV chargers (stage 2 and 3):**
 - Existing Electrical infrastructure would only provide enough EV capacity until only the end of 2022/23 financial year.
 - A Full electrical supply upgrade is required, including new transformer/s, upgraded incoming supply and upgraded main switchboard/s
 - The minimum expansion of electricity capacity is 2MVA for stage 2

1.3 Stage 2 and 3: Electrical upgrades and costs

Electrical upgrades are required for any additional EV charging infrastructure and EV chargers beyond 2023.

In summary

- Site Electrical upgrades are required to allow maximum demand of 2.6MVA for stage 2 and 3:** as calculated by AS3000 and Jemena requirements to meet the future demand of EV charging.
- 2 Stages of construction recommended for electrical upgrades:**
 - Stage 1 Northern (2023):** 2MVA transformer, new MSB, 9 panel board, 46 2x22kW Chargers and 1x 150kW DC charger
 - Stage 2 Southern (2027/8):** 1000kVA transformer, new MSB, 4 panel boards, 16 Schneider EV link pedestal units (2 ports 22kW/port)
- Jemena application submitted, response received February 2023:** Jemena approved upgrade and quoted **\$306,000** for transformer and supply upgrade for both stage 1 (2000MVA) and stage 2 (1MVA). This offer expires on the 28/06/2023 with work scheduled within 12 weeks of approval (or agreed site ready date). Further consultation with Jemena required to request price for stage 1 only; and if extension of time is viable to allow council to complete design and preparation works.

Table 1-1: Stage 2 and 3 construction, scope and anticipated costs.

Construction Stage	Scope	Anticipated Costs
Stage 2: Northern Construction 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 2MVA transformer from the North HV line, approved and costed Install new pad mounted 2.0MVA Main Switchboard Connect existing MSB for Depot and existing MSB for Veterans building to the New MSB subject to Jemena requirements. Install 9 Panel boards throughout and associated cabling/trenching Install 46 x Scheider EV Link chargers (each can charge 2 bays simultaneously at 22kW each bay) Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports 	\$ 2,901,446
Phase 3: Southern Construction 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 1000kVA transformer, MSB and connection from the southern HV line, approved and costed by Jemena (noting offer expires 28/06/23 and risk that in five years electrical capacity is not available) New electrical connection and meter at rear Install 4 Panel boards throughout the south half of the site as shown in the drawing Install 16 x Scheider EV Link pedestal Units (2 port 22kW/port, total 32 ports) Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports 	\$ 1,502,157
Grand TOTAL		\$ 4,403,603

Stage 2 could potentially be conducted in additional smaller steps to minimise disruption to the depot and reduce upfront costs.

For example Stage 2A could include the required Jemena infrastructure upgrade, new main switchboard and 2 to 3 distribution boards for areas where electrical vehicles are next required. Stages 2B and 2C could be based on electrical vehicle purchases over the next 5 years.

1.4 EV chargers

An optimised EV layout which includes:

- Port access and reach to each and every vehicle charging
- 22kW ports located dependent on the expected EV charging of each vehicle classification
- 2 x 150kW chargers (with 2 ports each) for fast/emergency charging.

Table 1-2: Vehicles classification and no. of parking bays per 22kW port.

Vehicle Classification No.	Vehicle Classification name	No. Parking bays per 22kW Port (Reach available to all parking bays)
1	Light Vehicle	2
2	Medium truck (Heavy)	1
3	SEA Garbage Truck (Heavy)	1
4	Small Bus/Large Van (Heavy)	2

1.5 Solar/Battery options

Solar/battery options are detailed in this report. They can reduce energy costs by 11-28% but do not change the need for full supply upgrades as neither solar or battery or both can be relied on to supply continuous power during poor weather.

1.6 EV Next Steps

The next steps will require:

- Existing underground service locations:** a contractor should be employed to identify and map existing underground services and provide a detailed site layout
- Stage 2: Detailed Design and Tender Documentation 2023:** appoint a consultant to develop the current concept design into a detailed design including single line diagram, conduit sections, detailed solar layout, schematics for LMS ethernet connection and solar and Comprehensive package of tender documents and designs.
 - as a minimum it is recommended that stage 2 transformer upgrade, MSB installation and panel board installation is conducted as a single construction. The EV charger infrastructure could be installed over a number of years, as per EV demand (e.g., there are 5No. 2X22kW charging units per panel board, and construction could be sequenced per panel board)
- Stage 2: Jemena Approval:** request pricing and approve Jemena works for the 2MVA transformer ONLY, request a time extension to allow budget approval, detail design and tendering to be conducted
- Stage 2: Request for Tender 2023:** take a request for tender to market (select or public) and appoint a consultant to assist with tender evaluation and award.
- Stage 2: Construction 2023:** Commence Jemena Preparation works (Civil works and easement creation), asap; and continue to full construction that minimizes site disruption.



2 Introduction

2.1 Engagement and goals

This report is provided to meet Moreland City Council ('Council') requirements per RFQ Q21-0151 "Walter Street Depot - site strategy for electric vehicle charging, batteries, solar and degasification" (PO P0023547, 2021-12-01) to address the following site goals:

1. In the short-term, provide charging for one or two electric tipper trucks;
2. Provide charging for those EVs which will be purchased over the next five years, which are based at the depot. This is likely to include tipper trucks, cars, small buses, utility vehicles and vans; and ensure there is adequate charging capacity to meet demand
3. Move the depot off gas;
4. Make efficient use of rainwater.

This report addresses only Goals 1 and 2. Goals 3 and 4 are addressed in a second, companion report.

2.2 Project context

Walter Street Depot in Hadfield has a large light and heavy vehicle fleet with 129 vehicles stationed at the depot, consisting of 33 light vehicles and 96 heavy vehicles. Council plan to replace all vehicles with suitable EV vehicles when the vehicles are due for replacement; provided suitable, fit for purpose vehicles are available at the time.

This report addresses the following:

- **Electric Vehicle Modelling and Demand:**
 - Detailed review of existing vehicles stationed at the depot including vehicle types, planned replacement time, mileage and expected charging times
- **Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) and Charging requirements**
 - Recommendations on EVSE equipment types based on expected charging requirements
 - Recommendations on EVSE layout
 - Electrical peak demand calculation
- **Existing Electrical Infrastructure Assessment**
 - Review and assessment of existing electrical infrastructure by an A-Grade electrician and certified electrical engineer
 - Recommendations on suitability of existing electrical infrastructure for additional EV charging
- **Electrical Upgrade Requirements:**
 - Recommendations on required grid upgrades, including application to the DNSP Jemena
 - Concept design of electrical infrastructure including locations of all key equipment (new electrical boards, EV charger locations), concept electrical design (cable design as per AS3000, electrical board sizing) and trenching locations
 - Capital cost budget estimates (+/- 20%)
- **Review of future electrical load profile, demand and costs**
 - Modelling of future electrical load profile, peak demand and future electrical costs.
- **Assessment of solar PV and Solar PV/Battery hybrid options**
 - Sizing of Rooftop and carport systems
 - Hourly solar yield estimates for a typical meteorological year and comparison with expected future electrical profile
 - Costing and financial assessment.

Throughout the project all aspects of this project were discussed and approved by Council staff.



3 Electric Vehicle Modelling and Demand

3.1 Summary of Vehicle Fleet

A large light- and heavy-vehicle fleet is stationed at Walter Street Depot, with a total 129 heavy vehicles consisting of 33 light vehicles and 96 heavy vehicles. Moreland Council plan to replace all vehicles with suitable electric vehicles when the vehicles are due for replacement, provided suitable, fit-for-purpose vehicles are available.

A full list of the vehicle fleet is provided in Appendix A.

We have split the vehicles into four classifications, for the purposes of future EV vehicle modelling, required EV charging and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Table 3-1: Total Vehicle Types and Classifications

Vehicle Classification No.	Vehicle Classification name	Vehicles	Total Number
1	Light Vehicle	Utes Passenger Vehicles	33
2	Medium truck (Heavy)	Tipper Trucks Street Sweepers Drain Cleaners Graffiti Trucks Drain Cleaner	51
3	SEA Garbage Truck (Heavy)	Rear Loader and Side Loaders	29
4	Small Bus/Large Van (Heavy)	Buses Large Vans Tractors	16
Total			129 *

* Excludes: Tower lift (Elevated Work Platform, Cherry picker and wheel loader. Excludes EVs that are currently in the fleet.

Based on annual average distance travelled and typical efficiency of each vehicle type, we have estimated the expected charge frequency in days/week.

Based on discussions with Moreland Site operates, a typical charging profile is provided below.

Table 3-2: Vehicle Types and classifications

Vehicle Classification No.	Vehicle Classification name	Expected Charge frequency (days/week)	Avg. Annual kM	EV Typical Efficiency Wh/km	Typical Charge profile
1	Light Vehicle/Ute	1	10,891	220Wh/Km	Predominant Day time
2	Medium truck (Heavy)	3	9043	900Wh/km	Predominant afternoon (3pm onwards)
3	SEA Garbage Truck (Heavy)	5	21,272	2200Wh/km	12:30pm onwards
4	Small Bus/Large Van (Heavy)	3	4,840	400Wh/km	Predominant Overnight (4:30pm onwards)

3.2 Timing of Vehicle EV Replacement

Based on information provided by Moreland on expected EV vehicle replacements for the vehicle fleet, provided below is the expected vehicle purchased replacements over the next 10 years.

Light vehicles and utes will all be replaced by 2026. By the end of 2023, ideally 14 Electric Heavy vehicles will be purchased.

Table 3-3: Vehicle Classifications and Cumulative EV count by Year.

Year	Vehicle Classification – Purchasing of Vehicles								Total new
	1		2		3		4		
	Number	Type	Number	Analog	Number	Analog	Number	Analog	
2026	33	Light Ute	18	Medium Truck	13	Garbage	8	Small bus	72
2031	0	Light Ute	33	Medium Truck	16	Garbage	8	Small bus	57
Total new	33		51		29		16		129

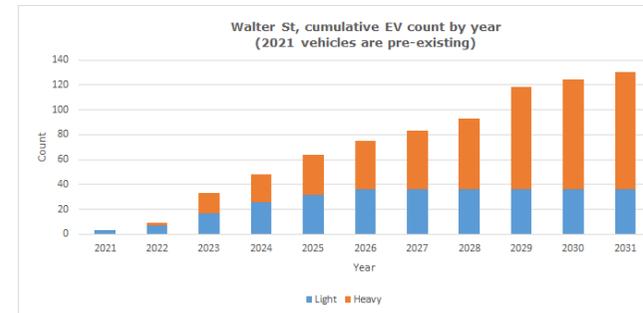


Figure 3-1: Drawing of the site with each parking zone clearly Labelled

Table 3-4: Timing of EV roll out

Program year			Vehicle class	
			1 Light (sedan,ute)	2, 3, 4 (Heavy)
		Pre-existing EVs	3	0
1	2022	New EVs	4	2
2	2023		10	14
3	2024		9	6
4	2025		6	10
5	2026		4	7
6	2027		0	8
7	2028		0	10
8	2029		0	25
9	2030		0	6
10	2031		0	6
		Total	36	94



3.3 Parking Areas for Vehicle Types

Based on advice by the site operators at the depot the following areas are identified:

- A TIPPER TRUCKS
- B STREET SWEEPERS
- C TRACTORS AND UTES
- D REAR LOADERS AND SIDE-LOADERS
- E BUSES
- F TRACTORS, UTES AND CARS
- G TIPPERS THAT TOW
- H GARGAGE TRUCKS/SIDE-LOADERS
- I GRAFFITI TRUCK AND TRUCKS
- J CARS
- TBD DRAIN CLEANER
- TBD TOWER LIFT (ELEVATED WORK PLATFORM - CHERRY PICKER)
- TBD WHEEL LOADER

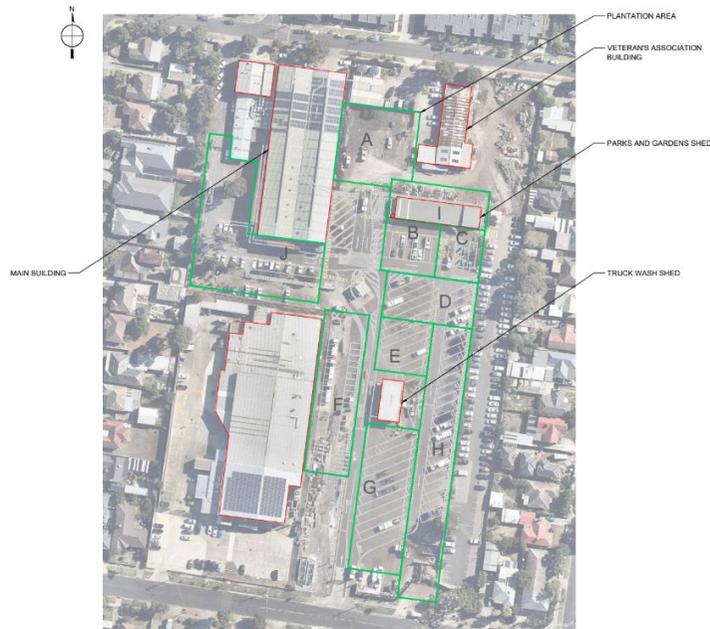


Figure 3-2: Drawing of the site with each parking zone Labelled

3.4 Small Plant and Equipment

IN addition to EV vehicles there will be small plant and equipment that will be electrified in the short to medium term. Details are summarised in the table below.

Table 3-5: Small Plant and Equipment

Small plant	No.	Charging/ Maximum draw (Amps)	Battery Size (kWh)	Total Peak Load (kW)	Total (kWh per day)	Expected charging location
Ride on Mowers	10	15Amp standard GPO	8kWh	30kW (worst case)	90kWh	On back of truck at carpark
Chainsaws, blowers, brush cutters push mowers and similar	104	10 Amp standard GPO	Variable (<2kWh)	100kW (Worst case)	Variable	Shed

3.4.1 Recommendations

- **All small plant and equipment are charged via standard General Power Outlets (GPO's)**, not requiring additional EVSE charging equipment
- **Additional electrical load is minor:** compared to EVSE charging requirements
- **Additional minimum 15 x double GPO's will be required for small plant and equipment, co-located at 15 x future Electric Vehicle Chargers.**



4 EV Supply Equipment (EVSE) and Charging requirements

4.1 Plug type and compatibility

Council need to choose EVs and EVSE to maximise compatibility with existing charging infrastructure. In this regard, the most important factor in EVs and EVSE infrastructure is plug type. The landscape of plug type and compatibility relates to both AC charging and DC (aka 'fast') charging.

The current deployed mix of plug types in Australia (AC: Type 1, Type 2; DC: CCS, Chademo) increases the risk that:

- vehicle operators will have increase difficulty a suitable charging point; and
- suppliers of EVSE infrastructure will need to spend more to support a range of vehicle types.

So, good choices by Council in regards to EVs and EVSE will help to minimise the hassle and cost associated with lack of standardisation of plug/socket arrangements.

AC charging: For AC charging, the EV industry in Australia and most of the world has settled on Type 2 plug and socket (aka 'Mennekes' plug) as the standard for AC charging on new vehicles. Type 2 plugs support three-phase delivery and are most common in Europe and least common in Japan.

DC charging: For DC charging, they Type 2 CCS plug/socket arrangement has emerged as the predominant type. In Australia, most new EVs have Type 2 CCS support. Notable exceptions include the following Japanese makes which use the legacy Chademo DC charger socket:

- Nissan Leaf,
- Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV.

Recommendations. In regard to choices relating to plug/socket compatibility, we make the following recommendations:

- Buy only fleet vehicles that support Type 2 CCS charging arrangements. This means:
 - Do not buy fleet vehicles that have the Japanese CHAdeMO charge socket;
 - Do not buy fleet vehicles without DC fast charge support.
- EVSE rollout should focus on both Type 2 (AC) and Type 2 CCS (DC).
 - Supporting charging using Type 1 (AC) and CHAdeMO (DC) is, on balance, not worth it because these legacy plug types are a rapidly shrinking part of the market.
- *Ultra-fast DC chargers.* Council's needs, so far as we understand them today, can be met without needing to install emerging ultra-fast DC chargers. It is likely that vehicles purchased in the future will support much higher charging rates and will be able to use ultra-fast chargers belonging to off-site third-parties where necessary.

4.1.1 EVSE Chargers

EV charger units that are currently available have been used for costing and modelling. EV chargers are representative of sizes and configurations that are expected to be available in the coming years, the technology evolves the product selection could be expected to widen and benefit overall design and capital cost. Any manufacturers listed are suggestions only and to be confirmed during the detailed design process:

- 22kWAC 32A three-phase dual-port – 22kW/Port (OCPP & RFID)
- 150kWDC three-phase dual-port (OCPP & RFID)

DC (150kW) fast chargers are most suited to highway applications where a quick charge is required. Fast chargers require high-capacity, very large electrical infrastructure if multiples are installed.

The majority of vehicles are on site for significant periods at the end of the day and available for charging for extended periods (refer to Table 3-2 for typical charging profiles). We therefore recommend the installation of multiple 22kWAC chargers throughout the site; to accommodate the charging profiles and expected charge frequency of each vehicle type; as per Table 3-2.

A minimal number of high-capacity DC chargers for emergency quick chargers as required.

Table 4-1: Chargin Times

Vehicle Classification	Typical Battery size	Typical Usable Battery (kWh)	22kW Charge times (hrs)	150kW Charge time (hrs)
1	Light Vehicle/Ute	100kWh	5 hr	0.75hr
2				
3	Medium truck (Heavy)	150kWh	7 hrs	1hr
4	SEA Garbage Truck (Heavy)	200kWh	9 hrs	1.33hr
5	Small Bus/Large Van (Heavy)	100kWh	5 hrs	0.75hr

Table 4-2: Summary of EV Charger Recommended

EV charger rating	150kW(DC)	22kW(AC)/port
Model	 Tritium PKM150	 Schneider EVlink (Pedestal - or wall-mounted)
Specs	Type 2 CCS (both ports) Dual-port Tethered charger cable OCPP RFID	Type 2 Single or Dual-port (per 22kW/port) Removable (socket-based) charge cable OCPP RFID
Electrical	3-phase 220A. Max 150kW when one port is used. Max 75kW per port when two ports are used concurrently.	3-phase 32A/port (Max 22kW per port, 44kW per unit)

Note the lead time on chargers can be 6 months for the DC units in particular.

4.2 Open Charge Point Protocol (OCPP)

Any EVSE including control equipment should be OCPP or "Smart", this ensures that Council are not tied to any manufacturer for future upgrades and additions and allows mixing of equipment from different vendors on the site if required. Non OCPP have significant limitations for fleet usage and future flexibility are not suitable for fleets generally.

Council has advised that RFID tags will not be used as "it is one more thing for the crews to deal with and the data won't be terribly useful."

4.3 EV Energy Load Management systems

The addition of EV charging infrastructure can result in an increase in the electricity demand of site. EVSE may have a load management system (LMS) that monitors and controls charging loads at the consumer mains switchboard or distribution board level with CTs. This can reduce expensive upgrades of transformers or the site's electrical infrastructure. However, these systems can be complex and costly too. Should the electrical demand of the site be increased while the charger is in operation, the LMS can be programmed to limit the electricity drawn as not to compromise the sites electricity supply and cause disruption. LMS has ongoing maintenance and monitoring associated with third parties.

The requirement for LMS has been identified for Walter St due to the large number of chargers. This will prevent the simultaneous use of all chargers causing the site to exceed its maximum electrical capacity.



4.4 EVSE Layout options

Two EVSE carparking options were reviewed:

- maximised layout (1 x charger per bay/vehicle),
- optimised layout that considers expected charging times based on km travelled.

In both cases every parking bay will have reach to a charging point, however in the optimised layout the charger may not be available as another vehicle will be using it.

EV charger layout	Description and Discussion	Approx. Site Peak Demand (MVA)	Risks and issues
<p>1 x Charger per bay/vehicle.</p> <p>Capacity and reach to every vehicle/bay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides capacity and reach to every vehicles/bay • Provides 1 x 22kW AC charger per vehicle/bay, allowing all vehicles to be charged simultaneously • Provides 2 x DC 150kW DC chargers • No risk that a vehicle will ever not have access to an EV charger • Based on charging regimes and requirements of the vehicle fleet, charging all vehicles simultaneously will never be required 	4.2MVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will require large scale electrical supply upgrades, potentially beyond the capability of the local network • Prohibitively expensive due to large scale electrical upgrades, and number of chargers • Future high potential peak demand chargers
<p>Optimised charger layout</p> <p>Reach to charging port for each vehicle, reduce charging capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides reach to every vehicles/carpark bay • Provides a EV charger layout that considers charging regimes and requirements of each vehicle type (i.e. 1 x EV charger supplies multiple buys, with cable port reach to every vehicles/bay) • Provides 2 x DC 150kW DC chargers • Provides access to a charging port for all parking bays and vehicles, adopting 10m off the shelf charger cables • Reducing Electrical Peak Demand requirements and associated costs for electrical infrastructure upgrades • Not all vehicles will have immediate access to charging; and some management between vehicle types required • High use, critical vehicles (e.g. garbage trucks) will always have electrical capacity and reach available to a charger. (i.e. 1 x Charger per vehicle) 	2.6MVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some management of vehicle charging times will be required between vehicle types. • Minor risk that vehicles will not have access to charging when required (i.e. charger will be utilised by vehicles in adjoining carparking bay) • Will require moderate electrical upgrades

Table 4-3: Charger Layout options

4.5 EVSE Recommended Layout (Optimised)

Based on expected charge frequency of each vehicle (as per Table 3-2.) we have optimised the EV charging layout for the 22kW per port chargers, based on the Optimised layout.

All vehicle/parking bay will be within reach of a charging port.

Table 4-4: Recommended optimised number of charging ports per vehicles classification.

Vehicle Classification No.	Vehicle Classification name	Vehicles	No. Parking bays per 22kW Port (reach available to all parking bays)
1	Light Vehicle	Utes Passenger Vehicles	2
2	Medium truck (Heavy)	Tipper Trucks Street Sweepers Drain Cleaners Graffiti Trucks Drain Cleaner	1
3	SEA Garbage Truck (Heavy)	Rear Loader and Side Loaders	1
4	Small Bus/Large Van (Heavy)	Buses Large Vans Tractors	2

4.6 Recommended EV Layout and Quantities

Referring to the above the following total number of recommendation chargers is below.

Table 4-5: EV chargers - diversity not applied

Charger Type	No. Ports	No. Units	Total kW/Amps
2x22kW AC three-phase ports	124	62	2728kW/3965Amp
150kW DC chargers	4	2	300/436
Total;	128	64	3028/4401

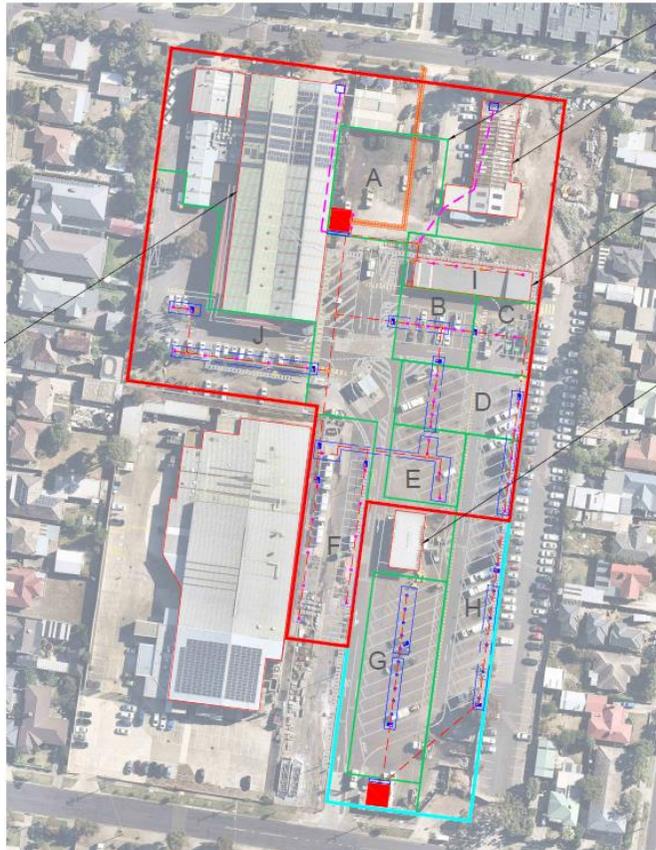


Figure 4-1: Drawing of Charger locations (orange, pink, yellow and blue dots), refer to Appendix B for more detail.

4.7 Peak Load and Transformer Requirements

The site is within the Jemena network. For the installation of EV, Jemena require an AS3000 maximum-demand calculation to determine the size of the transformers and electrical infrastructure required.

From table C2, load group C, of AS3000 the requirement for EV Chargers is provided:

(ii) Charging equipment associated with electric vehicles	Full connected load of highest rated appliance, plus 75% of full load of remainder	Full connected load of highest rated appliance, plus 75% of full load of remainder
---	--	--

Table 4-6: Required Peak Demand for future EV

Charger Type	No. Ports	No. Units	Total kW/Amps	Total peak AS3000 KW
2x22kW AC three-phase ports	124	62	2728/3965	2100
150kW DC chargers	4	2	300/436	263
130kW Small plant			130/189	106
Existing load from buildings and existing chargers	4	2	131/191	131
TOTAL PEAK LOAD FOR ALL EV INFRASTRUCTURE, including existing load				2.6MVA

The following sections will:

- Review existing electrical infrastructure to meet EV demand
- Review and recommend required electrical infrastructure upgrades to meet future site demand.

4.8 Key Recommendations: EV Supply Equipment (EVSE) and Charging requirements

- **22kW AC Units recommended as preferred charging unit throughout the site** (22kW per port, 32Amp/port 3-phase 32A/port, 44kW per unit, Schneider EVlink (Pedestal - or wall-mounted), due to:
 - Majority of vehicles are parked for long periods a the end of the working day to allow long periods for charging
 - Reduce overall peak demand and required electrical infrastructure upgrades, compared with DC high capacity chargers
- **2 x 150kW Units recommended (2 ports per unit):** for short term quick charges when required
- **Optimised EVSE layout recommended** (over maximised): a selective EV layout that:
 - Locates EVSE dependant on expected charging requirements of the 4 vehicle types
 - Significantly reduces overall peak electrical demand comparatively to the maximised layout (1 charger per bay)
 - Allows all parking bays to have reach to a vehicle port, requiring 10m leads
 - May require some management of vehicle charging times and a risk that vehicles may not have access to charging when required
- **Peak electrical load of 2.6MVA:** as per AS3000 maximum demand calculation and Jemena requirements



5 Electrical Infrastructure

5.1 Existing Grid Capacity and Electrical supply



North	Roof Identification	Electrical meter	Main Switchboard	Distribution Board
	R#			

Figure 5-1: Labelled electrical infrastructure location (not to scale, all location and tilt angles are approximate).

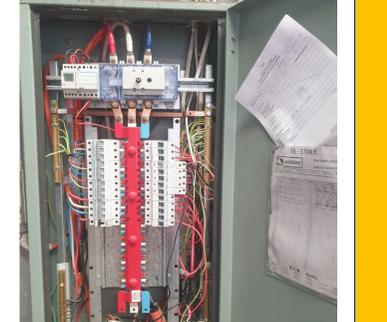
NMI	Transformer	Total Site Capacity	Existing Peak demand	Available KW for EV
Main Depot	200kVA dedicated	290A Amp/200KW	140kW including De-gasification peak load	60kW (Existing infrastructure)
Veterans	500kVA Shared (55kVA allocated from Jemena)	80A Amp/55kVA	7kW	NA Full switchboard and supply upgrade required

5.2 Main Depot

Table 5-1: Electrical Infrastructure – Main depot

Board:	MSB – Main Depot
<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front of the site <p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fed from Street via 1 x 240mm² CU 800Amp Main Switch 2 x MCCB Spaces <p>Recommendation and EV infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential for New EV connection via spare MCCB, requiring trenching and a new external panel board in parking area Limited total site capacity for additional Chargers 	
<p>Board:</p> <p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located on internal wall on western side near the front entrance of Admin Building <p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 x EV changer Spare space Supply XLPE 50mm² Fed from MSB – 100amp MCCB Main isolator in board 250amp Plug in generator back-up <p>Recommendations for EV infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recommend for EV connection due to limited capacity 	
<p>Board:</p>	



<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South-western corner of site <p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply XLPE 70mm² • Fed from MSB – 160amp MCCB • Main isolator in board 250amp • 2x32Amp 3 phase EV chargers <p>Recommendations for EV infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommend for EV connection due to limited capacity 	
<p>Board:</p>	<p>DB Store</p>
<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside poisons store area in Parks and Garden Shed <p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spare space • Supply 70mm² • Fed from MSB – 160amp MCCB • Main isolator in board 250amp <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metering conducted on the existing board for a period of 3 weeks to assess current peak demand and available capacity • Suitable for 2 X 22kW to be installed in spare MCCB 	
<p>Board:</p>	<p>DB Wash Bay</p>
<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSB located at truck wash bay (west exterior) <p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply 16mm² • Fed from DB Store – 63amp MCB • Main isolator in board 63amp • Not recommend for EV connection due to limited capacity and location <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not suitable due to limited capacity 	

5.3 Veterans’ Association electrical connection

Table 5-2: Electrical Infrastructure – Main depot

<p>Board:</p>	<p>MSB</p>
<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans’ Association building <p>Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Fuse-based switchboard • 80A supply <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended for EV connection • Full board upgrade required. 	

5.4 Existing Chargers

The site has existing chargers as shown with orange dots in the drawings.

5.5 Key Recommendations: Existing Infrastructure

- **Limited capacity at Distribution Boards:** Existing distribution boards have limited additional capacity for additional EV chargers
 - **DB Store:** 2 x 22kW chargers can be installed at DB Store, as part of Phase 1 of works
 - **DB1:** not suitable due to limited available capacity (1 x EV charger installed)
 - **DB3/Mech:** not suitable due to limited available capacity (2x32Amp EV chargers connected)
 - **DB Wash Bay:** not suitable due to volt drop.
- **Limited Site Electrical Capacity.** Based on transformer capacity a maximum 290Amps/200kVA, allowing a maximum additional charger capacity of 100kW. To install the additional chargers, would require:
 - Removing of existing Voltage optimisation Unit, to allow full capacity
 - Installation of a new distribution board, connected to the MSB, with cabling to the rear parking area and an external Distribution/Panel board, allowing a maximum of 100kW of chargers
- **Full Site Electrical upgrade required:**
 - Existing Electrical infrastructure would only provide enough EV capacity until only the end of 2022/23 financial year.
 - A Full electrical supply upgrade is required, including new transformer/S, upgraded incoming supply and upgraded main switchboard/s

Existing electrical infrastructure will only provide enough charging capacity until the end of 2023



6 Electrical Upgrade Requirements

6.1 Electrical upgrade Requirements:

Additional transformers and grid supply upgrades are required to meet the maximum peak load of 2.6MVA as calculated as per AS300 (C2 load group C, 0.75 of the peak load) and Jemena requirements.

The largest standard size transformer available is 2.0MVA, however the cable distances would be too great with a single transformer and be cost-prohibitive. A staged approach is recommended with transformers at the north and south ends of the property.

To match the installation plan and proposed EV purchase, Enhar recommends a 2MVA transformer ('Tx1') at the north end and a 1000kVA transformer ('Tx2') at the south end (refer to calculations in following section). Enhar has submitted a connection application to Jemena for this arrangement and expects a quote from Jemena to arrive in August 2022.

A load management system or LMS will be employed to keep the load from overloading the transformers. This is normal practice for large EV charger installations. The LMS measures the power through the transformer and if required will reduce the charging power in each charger in use until a set power threshold is met.

Phase 2 Electrical upgrade requirements are required by the end of 2022/2023 financial year, to provide the EV infrastructure required to meet EV demand.

It is recommended the installation is completed in three phases as below.

- **Phase 1: 2x22kW EV chargers for tipper trucks - 2022**
 - New 2 x (2 x 22kW/32A) connected to DB Store at the Parks and Gardens shed in available MCCB slots
 - One charger to the west of the Parks and Gardens shed
 - One charger internal to the Parks and Gardens shed
 - New bollards and cabling
 - No other electrical upgrades required.
- **Phase 2: Electrical Upgrade Northern - 2023**
 - New 2MVA transformer ('T1' on Figure 6-1) from the North HV line, subject to Jemena approval and costing with associated easement
 - Install new pad-mounted 2.0MVA Main Switchboard (MSB)
 - Connect existing MSB for Depot and existing MSB for Veterans building to the new MSB subject to Jemena requirements
 - Install 9 Panel boards throughout the north half of the site as shown in the drawing
 - Install 46(No.) x Schneider EV Link pedestal Units (2 port 22kW/port, total 92 ports)
 - Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports (150kW on 1 port when only one car is connected)
- **Phase 3: Electrical upgrade Southern - 2026**
 - New 1000kVA transformer from the North HV line, subject to Jemena approval
 - Install new pad-mounted 1000kVA Main Switchboard
 - New electrical connection to the street at the south side of the site
 - Install 4 Panel boards throughout the south half of the site as shown in Figure 6-1
 - Install 16 x Schneider EV Link pedestal Units (2 port 22kW/port)
 - Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports (150kW on 1 port when only one car is connected)

Refer to appendix A and Figure 6-1 for locations and layout of all electrical infrastructure:

- Phase 1 shows chargers as orange dots.
- Phase 2 is the area in red outline.
- Phase 3 is the area in light blue outline.
- Groups of 5 chargers are associated with an outdoor panelboard using a blue dashed circle.
- Conduit paths are shown as red dashes.
- Transformers for phases 2 and 3 are shown as red blocks.
- Each transformer has an adjacent main switchboard.
- Transformer 1 has a Jemena easement for the HV cable.
- Vehicle types are grouped and labelled A through J. The number of EV charger ports per carpark space depends on the type of vehicle, as described in previous sections.

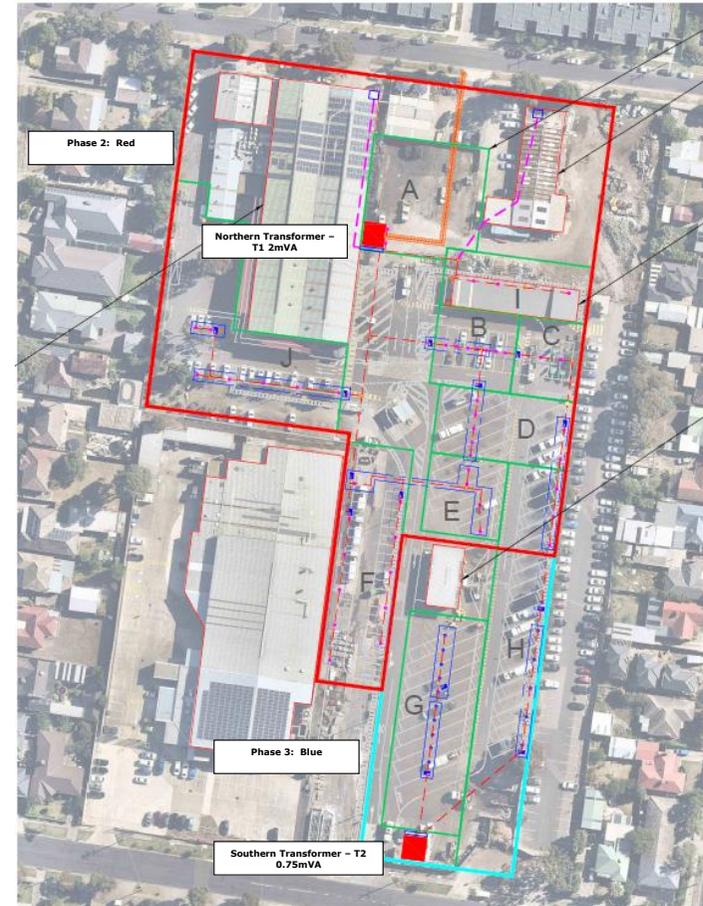


Figure 6-1: Drawing of Construction Phases and transformer locations. (refer to the Appendix B for detailed information)



6.1.1 Peak-demand calculations

The peak demand calculations are as per Jemena requirements and AS3000, with a 0.75 diversity factor, A LMS (load management system) will be used to avoid overloading the transformers. Our modelling shows that this is unlikely to occur. An LMS system can assist in reducing future site peak demand charge, and help ensure maximum demand is not exceeded. The maximum demand calculation is therefore as follows

Table 6-1: Transformer sizing as per AS300 and Jemena requirements

Phase 2: Transformer 1 - north						
QTY	Equipment	Load group	Calculation (A)	red	white	blue
92	22kW 3 phase / port	C(ii)	2214	2214	2214	2214
1	150kW 3 phase / port	C(ii)	218	218	218	218
1	100kW Existing demand charge + 50% increase		191	191	191	191
1	130kW small plant			189	189	189
			Total A	2811	2811	2911
			Total MVA required	1.9MVA		
			Required transformer size	2MVA		
Phase 3: Transformer 2 - south						
QTY	Equipment	Load group	Calculation (A)	Red	white	blue
1	150kW 3 phase / port	C(ii)	218	218	218	218
32	22kW 3 phase / port	C(ii)	775	775	775	775
			Total A	993	993	993
			Total MVA required	0.7MVA		
			Required transformer size	1.0MVA		

A LMS (load management system) will be used to avoid overloading the transformers. Our modelling shows that this is unlikely to occur. An LMS system will reduce the peak demand charge.

6.2 Grid Upgrades Distributor/Jemena

6.2.1 General

Existing Jemena Infrastructure: In assessing the risks of the electrical upgrades, publicly available information was assessed and provides the following information:

- The HV feeder running past the front and rear of the site is not declared as constrained
- The zone substation had adequate head-room capacity for additional capacity
- Zone substation (ZSS) is 'Pascoe Vale' (PV), 1.5km to south west of site
- No declared limitations on ZSS or feeder
- No declared significant upgrades pending/required.
- Front and back of site are both on the same feeder (PV24)
- Max demand on ZSS is 33MVA
- Nameplate capacity of ZSS is 75MVA.

Jemena Application: A Jemena application for a northern 2MVA transformer and southern 0.75MVA transformer was submitted. The Jemena response boosted the 0.75MVA transformer to 1MVA due to using standard Jemena sizes. The response is attached as appendix D. The response provided:

- Viability of proposed electrical upgrades
- Jemena cost estimate to install the required equipment upgrade, to include:
 - Installation of HV cabling and upgrade
 - Installation of required transformer
 - Implementation of an easement for the HV line and transformer (which remains Jemena property).
 - Listing of exclusions which need to be addressed by Council.

Jemena Response

Jemena provided a response was received on the 14/02/2023 and is provided in Appendix D.

IN summary:

- Offer to install a 2MVA transformer at the Northern end of the site, and a 1MVA transformer at the southern end of the site; excluding various items as outlined in the offer, including civil works and easement creation within the site
- Jemena costs to upgrade supply to include the 2MVA transformer and 1MVA transformer us **\$306,0987.62**, noting exclusions.
- The Jemena offer expires on the 28/06/2023, with the work to commence within 12 weeks of acceptance.

Based on this information, it was therefore anticipated that the electrical upgrades would be viable without conductor upgrades and Jemena have confirmed this with a price roughly as expected.

Recommendations

Additional EVSE infrastructure to allow for any further EV charging will require a grid upgrade. We recommend that:

- Approval of the 2MVA transformer upgrade is provided to Jemena at the earliest viable time, to allow council to conduct the preparation works such as Civil (concrete pad), trenching and conduits and other works
- Request a price for the 2MVA transformer ONLY; and re-apply for the 1MVA in five years time, or when EV uptake requires

Key Risks: Some key Risks with the Jemena Upgrade include:

- If Stage 2 upgrade with the 1000kVA upgrade is delayed there is a risk that customers may add load between the offer date and implementation date and Jemena may no longer be able to provide the capacity required at this site – site not viable for proposed upgrades.
- Note Jemena require all existing supplies to be consolidated into the 2MVA and 1MVA supplies. This would meet code and we have allowed for this in the cost estimate and drawings.

Jemena approved and quoted required supply upgrade works



6.3 Transformer upgrades

The transformer upgrades will require:

- New HV incomer from the street to the proposed transformer location
- A 7.2m x 7.2M Fenced enclosure
- A new Easement for the transformer and underground cable.
- A new Main switchboard (MSB) for each transformer.

Jemena will provide a cost estimated for these works. All new works up to the new MSBs will be owned by Jemena.

The substation easement in red is the fence boundary around the Jemena transformer. The red line with orange hatching is the underground cable easement.



Figure 6-2: Location of Phase 2 transformer and MSB

New southern transformer:

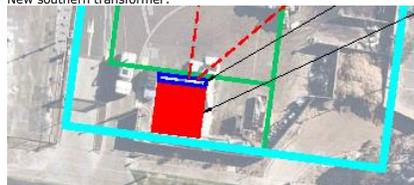


Figure 6-3: Location of Phase 3 transformer and MSB

6.4 Internal Electrical infrastructure upgrades

6.4.1 General

Internal electrical infrastructure upgrades will be required:

- New MSBs: located adjacent to the transformers
- Panels boards: scattered throughout the site as per the drawing. Ground mounted .
- Bollards: for protection of the panelboards and car chargers.
- Existing building main switchboards will most likely have to be fed from the new main Switchboard 1.

The layout of all internal infrastructure and locations is provided in Appendix B

6.4.2 New MSBS

The new MSBs are located as close to the transformers as possible to reduce the length of the consumers mains and overall volt drop of the installation.

The new MSBs will fit on the blue concrete plinth shown in the drawings with room to spare for any future upgrades. Protection/bollards.

6.4.3 Panel boards

The panelboards would be 400A, 30-pole off-the-shelf NC430183U from NHP. They are 1000mm High x 640mm wide x 240mm deep. Bollards will be required and are included in the cost estimate.

Each panel board is connected to 5NO. 2x22kW charging ports, so there are 10x40A 3 phase breakers in each panelboard and ten cables from each panelboard to its charger.



Stainless steel enclosure option available

Figure 6-4: Typical Panel board located throughout the site.



Enhar Pty Ltd
Walter Street Depot
Electric Vehicle Study

6.5 Trenching and Civil works

Approximately 2.0km of trenching and 5km of cabling is required.

For the LMS system and OCPP an ethernet connection must be made to each charger. This will require special Gel filled underground rated ethernet cable. Alternatively a wireless mesh system can be set up, but the vehicles are likely to disrupt the wireless comms.



6.6 Construction Sequence

- **Stage 1 1:** immediately simple matter of adding chargers to the Parks and Gardens shed within the existing space MCCB spaces
- **Stage 2:** 2022/2023 based on expected EV purchase, phase 1 will need to commence and be operational in mid 2023.
- **Stage 2 3:** 2026/27 based on current EV projections.

The construction will unfortunately be a disturbance to the site during construction. The successful contractor will have demonstrate they can sequence construction to ensure as much as possible that normal site operation is maintained.

The site has entrances from both ends and only half the site will undergo construction at any time.

A considerable amount of trenching is required to get power to each charger and it is this trenching that can disturb normal operations. The concept design in appendix B shows 5 charger stands of 2x22kW ports each fed from their own panelboard. The trenching from the main switchboard to each panelboard could be undertaken independently to the trenching from the 5 x EV Chargers to their associated panelboard. This may allow more flexibility with parking during the install but would also add a cost due to the extra mobilization to work fronts.

Certainly, the transformer and main switchboard at each end can be installed separately from other work. The solar can be installed separately from other work. The site is split into two halves so that only one half is under construction at a time.

6.7 Infrastructure and EV Capital Cost

6.7.1 Phase 2:

Table 6-2: Cost Estimate Phase 2:

QTY	Item	details	total
Phase 2			
1	2MVA transformer	Proportioned off Jemena quote	\$ 204,000
1	Jemena exclusions	Slab, survey, trenching, HV conduit, arranging easements, metering etc	\$ 121,000
1	Main switchboard 2MVA	16 breakers - 9x400A panel board breakers, 2x400A breakers building, 10 x 40A breakers chargers, cable ways, consumers mains	\$ 70,000
9	400A panelboard	Off-the- shelf - 10 x 40A 3 phase breakers 10kA	\$ 21,600
10	switchboard foundations	MSB and Panel	\$ 15,000
2633	16mm2 3ph cable	From Panel boards to Chargers. 38m is longest run. 16mm2 is biggest size that will fit into the terminals of the EV chargers.	\$ 98,338
228	95mm2 3ph cable	From MSB to 150kW charger	\$ 39,707
1552	300mm2 3ph cable	From MSB to Panel boards. 100m is longest run. There are 12 panelboards therefore less than 1200m of cable @ \$240/m	\$ 761,313
104	Small plant 10A charging system in shed	100kW peak load from 104 Chainsaws, blowers, brush cutters, push mowers	\$ 20,000
10	Small plant 15A charging system at outdoor parks	30kW peak load from ride on mowers	\$ 10,000
1	LMS	LMS demand management systems	\$ 30,000
1	LMS ethernet cabling		\$ 8,000
46	22kW 3 phase / port	2 ports per charger. 120% markup	\$ 394,680
47	charger foundations		\$ 25,850
93		Extension cable 10m type 2. 120% markup	\$ 49,662
1	150kW 3 phase / port	Price from Tritium with 120% markup	\$ 125,000
47		Extended warranty on 47 chargers	\$ 94,000
4414	trenching	Trenching and reestablishment	\$ 353,911
4414	warning tape		\$ 2,839
122	sweep bends		\$ 15,423
20	bollards for switchboards		\$ 3,500
94	bollards for chargers		\$ 16,450
4414	conduit		\$ 172,238
7	pits		\$ 24,500
1	contingency		\$ 200,000
1	writing on car park spaces 150kW		\$ 205
Sub TOTAL			\$2,877,216
New submains options to Depot MSB and Veterans			
50	150mm2 3ph cable	main building submain assuming Jemena require it - 200kW service	\$ 1,400
60	16mm2 3 ph cable	veterans submain assuming Jemena require it	\$ 960
110	cable tray		\$ 1,870
Sub TOTAL			\$ 4,230
TOTAL			\$ 2,881,446



6.7.2 Phase 3;

Table 6-3: Cost Estimate Phase 3:

QTY	Item	Details	Total
1	1000kVA transformer	Proportioned off Jemena quote	\$ 102,000
1	Jemena exclusions	Slab, survey, trenching, HV conduit, arranging easements, metering etc	\$ 28,000
1	Main switchboard 1000kVA	4x400A breakers, cable ways, consumers mains	\$ 70,000
4	400A panelboard	Off-the- shelf - 10 x 40A 3 phase breakers 10kA	\$ 9,600
5	switchboard foundations	MSB and Panels	\$ 7,500
598	16mm2 3ph cable	From Panel boards to Chargers. 38m is longest run. 16mm2 is biggest size that will fit into the terminals of the EV chargers.	\$ 22,345
12	185mm2 3ph cable	From MSB to DC 150kW fast charger. 106m is north run.	\$ 2,084
430	300mm2 3ph cable	From MSB to Panel boards 100m is longest run. There are 12 panel boards therefore less than 1200m of cable @ \$240/m	\$ 210,867
1	LMS	LMS demand management systems	\$ 30,000
1	LMS ethernet cabling		\$ 8,000
16	22kW 3 phase / port	2 ports per charger. 120% markup	\$ 137,280
17	charger foundations		\$ 9,350
33		Extension cable 10m type 2. 120% markup	\$ 17,622
1	150kW 3 phase / port	Price from Tritium with 120% markup	\$ 125,000
17		Extended warranty on 17 chargers	\$ 34,000
1040	trenching		\$ 83,397
1040	warning tape		\$ 669
62	sweep bends		\$ 7838
10	bollards for switchboards		\$ 1,750
34	bollards for chargers		\$ 5,950
1040	conduit		\$ 13,522
0	pits		\$ -
1	contingency		\$ 200,000
1	writing on car park spaces 150kW		\$ 205
1		inflation due to phase 2 installation in 5 years time	\$ 311,363
	TOTAL		\$ 1,438,342

6.7.3 Total EV and Electrical upgrade costs

Table 6-4: EV and electrical upgrade capital budget

Stage 2: Northern. Construction 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 2MVA transformer from the North HV line, approved by Jemena Install new pad mounted 2.0MVA Main Switchboard Connect existing MSB for Depot and existing MSB for Veterans building to the New MSB subject to Jemena requirements. Install 9 Panel boards throughout the north half of the site as shown in the drawing Install 46(No.) x Scheider EV Link pedestal Units (2 port 22kW/port, total 86 ports) Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports (150kW on 1 port when only one car is connected) 	\$ 2,881,446
Stage 3: Southern. Construction 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 1000kVA transformer from the North HV line, subject to Jemena Approval Install new pad mounted 1000kVA Main Switchboard New electrical connection Install 4 Panel boards throughout the south half of the site as shown in the drawing Install 15 x Scheider EV Link pedestal Units (2 port 22kW/port) Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports (150kW on 1 port when only one car is connected) 	\$ 1,438,342
Grand TOTAL		\$ 4,319,788

6.8 Key Recommendation: Electrical upgrades

- **Site Electrical upgrades required to allow maximum demand of 2.6MVA:** as calculated by AS3000 and Jemena requirements.
- **2 Phases recommended for electrical upgrades:** 2MVA transformer Tx1 at the north end and a 1000kVA transformer Tx2 at the south end. A single electrical upgrade not recommended due to internal cable lengths and associated costs.
 - **Stage 2 (2023):** 2MVA transformer, new MSB, 9 panel boards, 46 2x22kW Chargers and 1x 150kW DC charger
 - **Stage 2 (2026/7):** 1MVA transformer, new MSB, 4 panel boards, 15 Schneider EV link pedestal units (2 ports 22kW/port)
- **Jemena application submitted, response received 14/02/2023:** Jemena provided a response to the application and confirmed viability of the supply upgrade. Jemena quote a cost of \$306,087 for the installation of 2MVA and 1MVA transformers, excluding various civil and other works which council will need to organise.
- **Total costs \$4.4M. Phase 1,2 \$2.9M Phase 3: \$1.5M**

Stage 2 Supply upgrade works and new MSB required ASAP



7 Future Electrical Load Profile

7.1 Vehicles Classes and Details

Table 7-1: Charging profiles and assumptions used in modelling

Vehicle Classification Set No.	Vehicle Classification name	Expected Charge frequency (days/week)	Avg. Annual km	EV Typical Efficiency Wh/km	Typical Charge profile
1	Light Vehicle/Ute	1	10,891	220Wh/Km	Predominant Day time
2	Medium truck (Heavy)	3	9043	900Wh/km	Predominant afternoon (3pm onwards)
3	SEA Garbage Truck (Heavy)	5	21,272	2200Wh/km	12:30pm onwards
4	Small Bus/Large Van (Heavy)	3	4,840	400Wh/km	Predominant Overnight (4:30pm onwards)

7.2 Average Site Consumption 2026

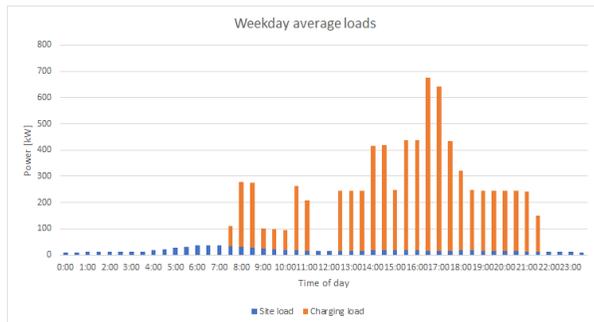


Figure 7-1: Expected average site Consumption 2026 (excluding de-gasification)

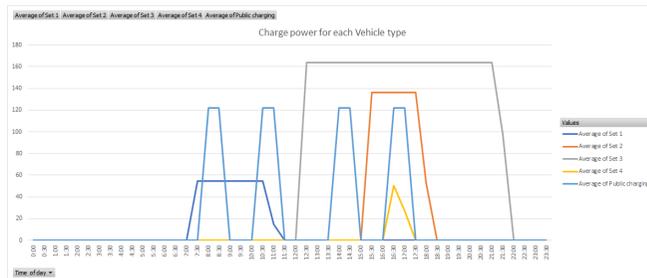


Figure 7-2: Indicative charging load per vehicle class

7.3 Average Site Consumption 2031

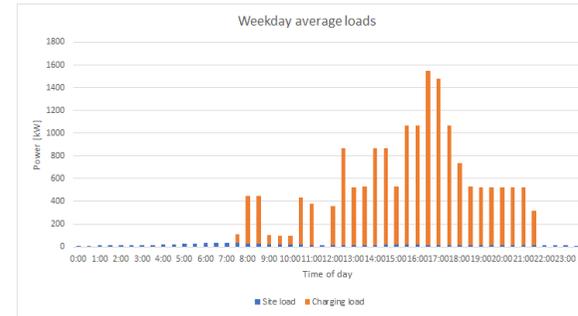


Figure 7-3: Expected Average site Consumption 2031 (excluding de-gasification)

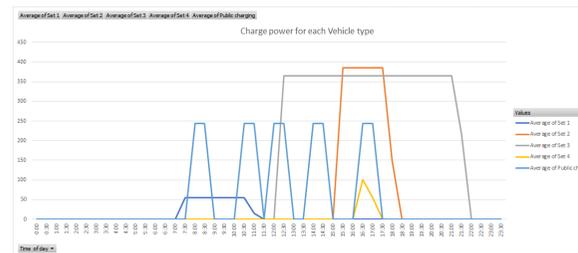


Figure 7-4: Indicative charging loads per vehicle class

7.4 Projections

Figure 7-5: Projected annual consumption, peak load and electrical costs.

	Current	2026	2031
Annual grid consumption	139,338	1,093,217	2,208,758
Peak Demand (kVa) (best case)	71	836	1879
\$/kWh	0.167	0.20	0.301
\$/kVa/month	3.98	4.77	5.97
Annual electricity costs	\$32,812	\$360,850	\$1,023,247



8 Solar PV and Hybrid

8.1 Existing Solar PV

Table 8-1: Existing solar PV system

System Configuration	System capacity (kWp/KVA)	NA / 60kVA
	Panels	250W
	Inverters and location	Front of the site
	AC connection	MSV
	Installed Date	~2013
	System performance/ Comment	Operating.
	New system configuration with existing	The existing grid protection device could be reused for the new system Enhar recommends Fronius inverters to match existing.



8.2 Solar General Recommendations General

Table 8-2: General recommendations based on assessment and electricity details.

General solar suitability	<p>Roof Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is open East and West facing roof area suitable for an additional 166kW system, flush mounted Skylight mesh/walkway is required Installation follow Phase 1 transformer upgrade, as will not be viable on the existing MSB and supply. <p>Roof area and West facing carport structure over carparks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roof Area as above West Facing carport structure in region F, to ensure higher afternoon solar generation consistent with EV loads Conventional carport solar structure typical below  <p>Roof area and West facing carport structure over carparks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roof area as above West Facing carport structure in region F - typical West facing truck port in region D and H
Load profile assessment	<p>All modelling has been conducted based on projected 2026 loads, as per previous section. Predominant loads are in mid to late afternoon when Garbage trucks and heavy vehicles commence charging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Export and battery utilisation will vary as EV uptake increases/varies and timing of EV charging Export is predominantly on weekends Additional solar utilization could be achieved by timing of EV charging commensurate with solar generation. Additional solar utilization could be achieved charging vehicles over the weekend (all analysis assumes limited to no charging over the weekend) Battery sized to achieve >65% annual utilization at projected 2031 EV load profile.

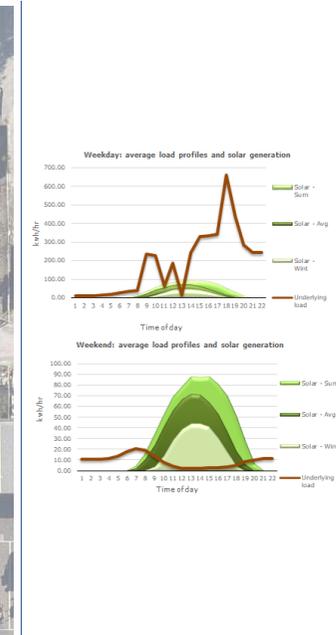


Enhar Pty Ltd
Walter Street Depot
Electric Vehicle Study

8.3 Maximised Roof Top system

Table 7-1: General Solar Recommendations

Description	Maximum Rooftop System	Maximum rooftop system with battery
Electrical Connection	New MSB - northern	New MSB - northern
Recommended installation date	2023/24, after transformer upgrade	2023/24, after transformer upgrade
System Size (kWp DC)	166	166
Annual Yield (Yr 1)	195,963	195,963
Battery Usable kWh/kW	NA	100kWh/50kW
Battery utilisation	NA	74%
% load met by solar (2026 loads)	11%	14%
% export	38%	24%
Capital cost ex. GST	\$261,450	\$371,450
Total LGC subsidy (if applicable to 2031)	\$24,426	\$ 24,426.00
Total Billing savings / year	\$27,277	\$29,764
Annual maintenance	\$2,490	\$3,990
PAYBACK	9.4	12.6
NPV	\$93,313	\$16,031
IRR	10.11%	6.95%
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Export and battery utilisation will vary as EV uptake increases. Export is predominantly on weekends Battery sized at 75% utilization at 2031 Walkway mesh required over all skylights 	



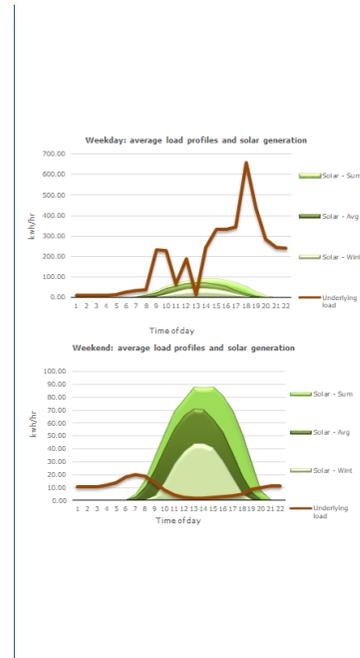
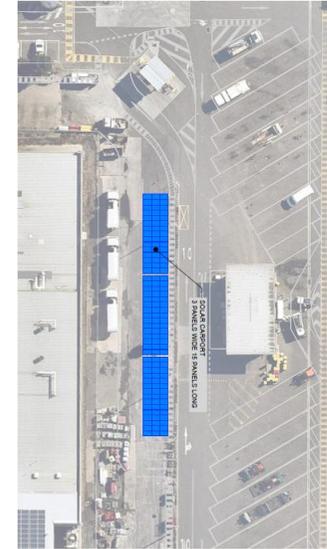


Enhar Pty Ltd
Walter Street Depot
Electric Vehicle Study

8.4 Rooftop and Conventional Carport

Table 7-2: General Solar Recommendations

Description	Maximum Rooftop System and 60kW Carport	With Battery
Electrical Connection	New MSB – northern	
Recommended installation date	2023/24, after transformer upgrade	
System Size (kWp DC)	226	226
Annual Yield (Yr 1)	266,794	266,794
Battery Usable kWh/kW	NA	250kWh/200kW
Battery utilisation	NA	65%
% load met by solar (2026 loads)	14%	20%
% export	41%	19%
Capital cost ex. GST	\$452,650	\$702,650
Total LGC subsidy (if applicable to 2031)	\$33,291	\$ 33,291.00
Total Billing savings / year	\$36,339	\$40,685
Annual maintenance	\$3,390	\$6,015
PAYBACK	12.5	17.1
NPV	\$18,510	-\$168,331
IRR	6.94%	3.80%
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walkway mesh required over all skylights Typical carport system adopted 	



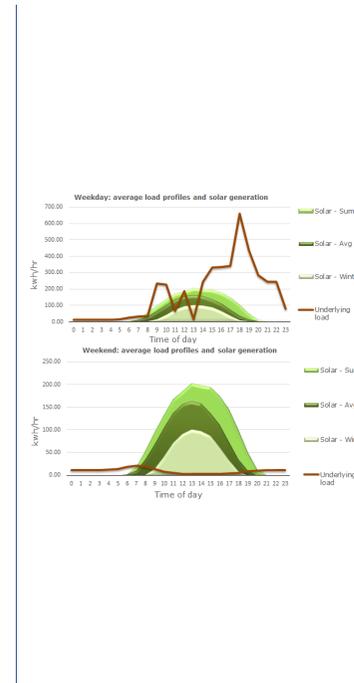
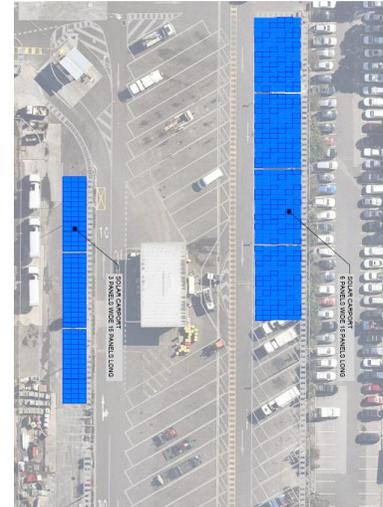
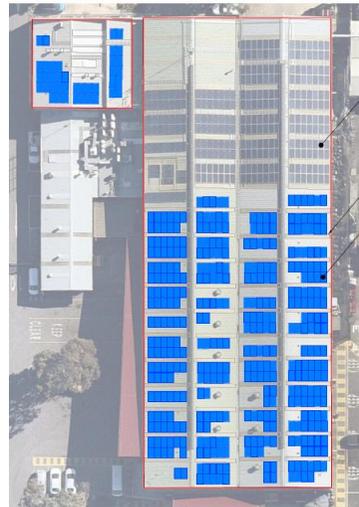


Enhar Pty Ltd
Walter Street Depot
Electric Vehicle Study

8.5 Rooftop and Conventional Carport and bespoke truck-port structure

Table 7-3: PV Recommendations

Description	Maximum Rooftop System, 60kW Carport and 140kW Truck Park Bay	
	No Battery	With Battery
Battery	No Battery	With Battery
Electrical Connection	New MSB – northern	
Recommended installation date	2023/24, after transformer upgrade for roof and carport 2026 for truck parking bay	
System Size (kWp DC)	366	366
Annual Yield (Yr 1)	432,064	432,064
Battery Usable kWh/kW	NA	250kWh/200kW
Battery utilisation	NA	80%
% load met by solar (2026 loads)	21%	28%
% export	40%	25%
Capital cost ex. GST	\$907,500	\$1,157,500
Total LGC subsidy (if applicable to 2031)	\$53,960	\$53,960
Total Billing savings / year	\$54,646	\$61,901
Annual maintenance	\$5,490	\$9,240
PAYBACK	16	17.7
NPV	-\$167,630	-\$313,047
IRR	4.40%	3.41%
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Truck parking bay requires bespoke design Some significant cable runs back to the MSB connection No significant reduction in peak demand due to timing of peak load. 	



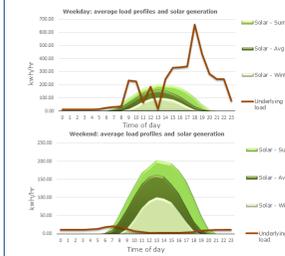


Enhar Pty Ltd
Walter Street Depot
Electric Vehicle Study

8.6 Rooftop and rooftop installation on Harrys Ice-cream

Table 7-4: PV Recommendations

Description	Maximum Rooftop System (166kW) Harrys Ice-cream (
Battery	No Battery	With Battery
Electrical Connection	New MSB – northern	
Recommended installation date	2023/24: Rooftop after transformer upgrade for roof and carport 2026 Harrys Ice-Cream	
System Size (kWp DC)	370	370
Annual Yield (Yr 1)	436,786	436,786
Battery Usable kWh/kW	NA	250
Battery utilisation	NA	81%
% load met by solar (2026 loads)	21%	28%
% export	40%	25%
Capital cost ex. GST	\$555,000	\$805,000
Total LGC subsidy (if applicable to 2031)	\$54,535	\$54,535
Total Billing savings / year	\$55,120	\$62,420
Annual maintenance	\$5,550	\$9,300
PAYBACK	9.7	12.6
NPV	\$178,657	\$34,050
IRR	9.78%	6.94%
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key risk is Jemena approval to cross property boundaries from Harrys Ice-Cream 	





9 Conclusions and Summary

9.1 EV fleet projections

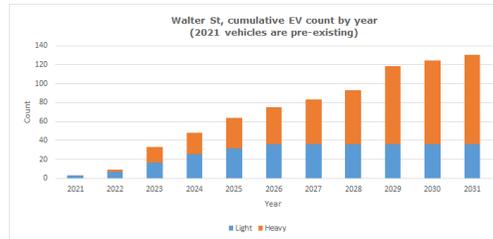


Figure 9-1: Assumed growth in EV fleet

9.2 EV chargers

An optimised EV layout which includes:

- Port access to each and every carparking bay
- 22kW ports located dependent on the expected EV charging of each vehicle classification
- 2 x 150kW chargers (with 2 ports each) for fast/emergency charging.

Table 9-1: Vehicles classification and no. of parking bays per 22kW port.

Vehicle Classification No.	Vehicle Classification name	No. Parking bays per 22kW Port (Reach available to all parking bays)
1	Light Vehicle	2
2	Medium truck (Heavy)	1
3	SEA Garbage Truck (Heavy)	1
4	Small Bus/Large Van (Heavy)	2

Table 9-2: EV chargers and peak demand -75% diversity not applied

Charger Type	No. Ports	No. Units	Total kW/Amps
2x22kW AC 3 phase ports	124	62	2728kW/3965Amp
150kW DC chargers	4	2	300/436
Total;	128	64	3028/4401

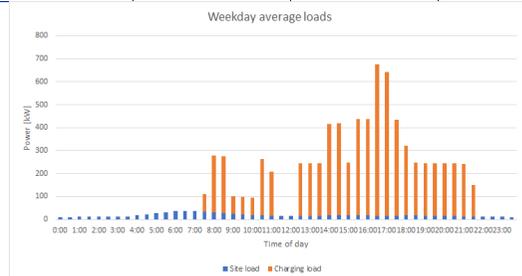


Figure 9-2: Expected average weekday load at 2026, including existing site load.

9.3 Existing infrastructure

Summary of the existing infrastructure:

- **Limited capacity at Distribution Boards:** Existing distribution boards have limited additional capacity for additional EV chargers due to already being at capacity
- **Limited Site Electrical Capacity** Based on transformer capacity a maximum 290Amps/200kVA, allowing a maximum additional charger capacity of 100kW. To install the additional chargers, would require:
 - Installation of a new distribution board, connected to the MSB, with cabling to the rear parking area and an external Distribution/Panel board, allowing a maximum of 100kW of chargers
- **Full Site Electrical upgrade recommended:**
 - Existing Electrical infrastructure would only provide enough EV capacity until only the end of 2022/23 financial year.
 - A Full electrical supply upgrade is required, including new transformer/s, upgraded incoming supply and upgraded main switchboard/s

9.4 Electrical upgrades and costs

- **Site Electrical upgrades required to allow maximum demand of 2.6MVA:** as calculated by AS3000 and Jemena requirements
- **2 Phases recommended for electrical upgrades:** 2MVA transformer Tx1 at the north end and a 1000kVA transformer Tx2 at the south end. A single electrical upgrade not recommended due to internal cable lengths and associated costs.
 - **Phase 1 (2023):** 2MVA transformer, new MSB, 9 panel board, 46 2x22kW Chargers and 1x 150kW DC charger
 - **Phase 1 (2026/7):** 1MVA transformer, new MSB, 4 panel boards, 15 Schneider EV link pedestal units (2 ports 22kW/port)
- **Jemena application submitted, response expected August 2022:** Jemena will provide a response with costing, requirements and viability for the upgrades. Key risks are
 - Jemena may not be able to provide the capacity required at this site – site not viable for proposed upgrades
 - Jemena may require expensive re-conductor upgrades back to the main substation (not included in cost estimates) – site will be prohibitively expensive to upgrade
 - Jemena may not accept the proposed easement arrangement and alteration of transformer location – will effect sizing and internal cabling and associated costs
- **Total costs \$4.3M. Phase 1 \$2.9M Phase 2: \$1.4M**

Table 9-3: Phase 2 and 3 construction, scope and anticipated costs.

Phase 2: Northern. Construction 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New 2MVA transformer from the North HV line, subject to Jemena Approval and costing with associated easement • Install new pad mounted 2.0MVA Main Switchboard • Connect existing MSB for Depot and existing MSB for Veterans building to the New MSB subject to Jemena requirements. • Install 9 Panel boards throughout the north half of the site as shown in the drawings • Install 46(No.) x Scheider EV Link pedestal Units (2 port 22kW/port, total 92 ports) • Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports (150kW on 1 port when only one car is connected) 	\$ 2,901,446
Phase 3: Southern. Construction 2031	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New 1000kVA transformer from the North HV line, subject to Jemena Approval • Install new pad mounted 1000kVA Main Switchboard • New electrical connection • Install 4 Panel boards throughout the south half of the site as shown in the drawing • Install 16 x Scheider EV Link pedestal Units (2 port 22kW/port) • Install 1 X 150kW DC charger Tritium PKM150 2x75kW ports (150kW on 1 port when only one car is connected) 	\$ 1,438,342
Grand TOTAL		\$ 4,319,788



9.5 Alternatives

The hydrogen economy is still in very early stages, and if hydrogen vehicles were available, and if we were to generate hydrogen on-site, we would need at least as much electricity as with EVs (if not more).

9.6 EV Next Steps

The next steps will require:

- **Jemena quotation** : Wait on Jemena response for the viability and cost of site electrical transformer upgrade with 2.0MVA transformer only, expected installation August 2023
 - Immediately approve Jemena to proceed with Stage 1 transformer upgrade; if upgrade is viable and costing is appropriate
- **Existing underground service locations**: a contractor should be employed to identify and map existing underground services and provide a detailed site layout

- **Phase 1: Detailed Design and Tender Documentation 2022**: appoint a consultant to develop the current concept design into a detailed design including single line diagram, conduit sections, detailed solar layout, schematics for LMS ethernet connection and solar and Comprehensive package of tender documents and designs.
 - it is recommended that Stage 1 is conducted as single construction to minimise construction costs and reinstatement
 - as a minimum it is recommended that the transformer upgrades, MSB installation and panel board installation is conducted as a single construction. The EV charger infrastructure could be installed over a number of years, as per EV demand (e.g., there are 5No. 2X22kW charging units per panel board, and construction could be sequenced per panel board)
- **Phase 1: Request for Tender 2022**: take a request for tender to market (select or public) and appoint a consultant to assist with tender evaluation and award.
- **Phase 1: Construction 2023**

9.7 Solar PV and battery hybrid opportunities

Four solar PV and battery hybrid systems were analysed and are summarized below. The systems were analysed on projected 2026 loads, assuming limited new EV load no the weekends. Exports calculated and battery analysis is highly dependent on EV charging regimes. Additional EV usage on the weekends will assist in decreasing solar exports.

Table 9-4: Solar PV options

Description	Depot Roof – maximised		Depot roof and conventional carport		Depot roof, conventional carport and truck port		Maximum Rooftop System (166kW) Harrys Ice-cream (
	Without Battery	With Battery	Without Battery	With Battery	Without Battery	With Battery	Without Battery	With Battery
Recommended installation date	2023/24, after transformer upgrade		2023/24, after transformer upgrade		2023/24: rooftop and conventional carport 2026 truck port		2023/24, Rooftop 2026 Harrys Icecream	
System Size (kWp DC)	166	166	226	226	366	366	370	370
Annual Yield (Yr 1)	195,963	195,963	266,794	266,794	432,064	432,064	436,786	436,786
Battery Usable kWh/kW	NA	100kWh/50kW	NA	250kWh/200kW	NA	250kWh/200kW	NA	250
Battery utilisation	NA	74%	NA	65%	NA	80%	NA	81%
% load met by solar (2026 loads)	11%	14%	14%	20%	21%	28%	21%	28%
% export	38%	24%	41%	19%	40%	25%	40%	25%
Capital cost ex. GST	\$261,450	\$371,450	\$452,650	\$702,650	\$907,500	\$1,157,500	\$555,000	\$805,000
PAYBACK	9.4	12.6	12.5	17.1	16	17.7	9.7	12.6
IRR	10.11%	6.95%	6.94%	3.80%	4.40%	3.41%	9.78%	6.94%
Key Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional roof system requiring safety mesh over existing skylights • Highly recommended 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional roof system requiring safety mesh over existing skylights • Conventional, Off the shelf solar carport • Highly recommended 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional roof system requiring safety mesh over existing skylights • Conventional, Off the shelf solar carport • Bespoke, high cost solar PV carport increases paybacks significantly 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventional roof system requiring safety mesh over existing skylights • Harrys Ice cream Requires installation over property boundaries to the new MSB. Highly unlikely Jemena will allow this, however worth assessment. 	



10 Appendix A: Vehicle Fleet

11 Appendix B: Proposed EVSE and Infrastructure Layout

12 Appendix C: Solar Drawings

13 Appendix D: Jemena Offer

14 Appendix E Methodology and Assumptions

Solar PV Panel specification

The PV arrays presented in the concept drawings are based on readily available conventional solar panels. For feasibility assessment sizing and modelling, a 400kWp 120 half-cell solar module with physical dimensions of approximately 1.754m x 1.096m were adopted. This is a common solar PV module configuration and approximate footprint on the market at the time of this report's preparation.

Solar PV layout and sizing

All layouts have adopted panel specification above. General solar PV roof design follows design are as below:

- **Panel design for flat or low slope <5° roof areas:**
 - **Option 1, 10° minimum tilt:** Panels installed on tilt frames to a minimum tilt angle of 10° is preferred to optimise 'self-cleaning', as per the Clean Energy council recommendations and maximise performance ratio. Panel design must also adopt appropriate spacing between rows to avoid shade between 10am and 2pm at the winter solstice.
 - **Option 2, flat on roof:** Panels installed flat with the roof to maximise total capacity on the available roof areas, only if:
 - roof area is not subject to excess roof litter, vegetation or dirt,
 - there is limited roof space and high electrical consumption loads,
 - the structural capacity of the building may not tolerate tilted panels, or;
 - there are visibility/heritage constraints and
 - the panels are easily and safely accessible for cleaning purposes.
- **Tilted panels:**
 - Rows of tilted panels must be spaced at a sufficient distance to avoid inter-row shading between panels rows between 10am and 2pm at any time of year.
- **Panel maintenance access:** must be provided to ensure that the Solar PV system can be easily and safely maintained and cleaned, inclusive of:
 - Ensuring that every panel can easily reached by removing only one other panel
 - Providing min. 600mm maintenance access rows between groups of panels a maximum of 4 deep.
- **General roof maintenance and access:** Ensure adequate and safe access to roof for general roof maintenance of plant and guttering, inclusive of
 - A minimum 600mm clearance between the edges of the solar arrays to the edges of any roof sheets/gutters
 - A minimum of 600mm clearance between the edge of the panel and at least 2 sides of fixed plant such as fixed fans etc.
 - A minimum of 1200mm clearance to larger HVAC plant and items that need routine maintenance
 - A minimum of 600mm clearance between any skylight and the edge of the nearest panel.
- **Safe roof Hardware access and accessibility:**
 - Ensure suitable access and usability of all existing safe roof hardware. Any future safe roof hardware installations (if specified) and offsets from the edge of roof. Where a practical 2m offset from the roof edge/unprotected edge is preferred.

The location, sizing and orientation of recommended PV systems considers:

- Available roof area and building/roof/structural electrical constraints.
- Measured shading profiles and quantitative shading measurements (if required), ensuring that panels are not subject to excessive shade.
- Purlin orientation, spacing and roof type to ensure ease and adequacy of solar framing roof connection.
- Electrical load profile at the site/ to optimise system orientation and sizing.
- Ease of grid connection.
- Ease of construction and maintenance during system life.
- AC electrical connection points and appropriately sized distribution boards for the recommended system size.

Solar Yield Model

Simulations of each system option were conducted using a Helioscope™ – a robust modelling software tool to get results on the system yields, shade and other losses, or an alternative recognised solar software. The simulations from our analysis have been included for reference and are based on an industry accepted bankable solar power simulation engine.



Typical Meteorological Year (TMY) hourly yield calculation results from each site were used in our load profile modelling. Simulation summaries are included in this report and consider the following parameters:

- the solar resource information specific to the site and proposed PV orientation,
- technical data from current market standard solar PV mono or poly crystalline solar PV panels – Trina Solar 335Wp modules were used in these simulations
- technical data from solar inverters – the SMA Tripower, Fronius or Solaredge inverters were simulated (common well regarded 3-phase commercial inverter).
- system loss due to panel temperature based on the power temperature co-efficient of the panel, local BoM temperature data and roof type at the site,
- Estimated percentage system losses such as AC/DC wiring losses, panel soiling and panel mismatch factor, etc.

Annual degradation

Natural reduction in performance/yield of the PV system is included due to minor deterioration of PV cell efficiency. The decrease in efficiency is linear between 0% at commencement and 18% at the completion of 25-year warranty.

All solar panel have a performance warranty at least 80% of the initial level at 25 years. Inverter locations and AC connections

Inverter locations

When selecting a location to install inverters, several considerations were considered.

- **Weather protection:** Most inverters are rated to be installed indoors or outdoors (IP56 or IP65 rated for example), however, if locating outdoors, they require protection from direct sunlight and rain. For instance, locating inverters on a south facing wall with a small canopy installed to provide protection from directly overhead is generally suitable. If North Facing a suitable shade structure is required.
- **Maintenance:** It is important to consider how the system will be maintained when selecting a location for the inverters. Installing the inverters at a single location will make maintenance and troubleshooting more straightforward. If inverters are installed across 2 or more locations, then consideration of their location relative to the PV modules they are connected to should be taken so that it is obvious to any maintenance personnel how to isolate different parts of the PV system.
- **Minimise Cable Runs:** Locating the inverters such that the cable runs are minimized will control costs and simplify installation. The longer the AC cable run, the higher the AC voltage the inverters will operate at, due to the resistance that needs to be overcome to "push" power to loads.
- **Access:** According to Australian Standards AS5033, inverters shall be located in a "restricted access" area if the PV array voltage is greater than 600VDC. It is a major technical advantage for larger scale PV arrays to operate above 600V.

In all cases where a recommended string inverter location is provided, most inverter locations are recommended on internal masonry/concrete walls if available. Other considerations include:

- **Accident/vandalism protection:** as the proposed inverter locations are publicly accessible in a car park, adequate vandalism protection and car exclusion will be necessary via cages, bollards or similar. This is included in budget price estimates.
- **Inverter type:** where practical string inverters have been included in budget costs. However, if there is differential shading or multiple PV orientations, a micro inverter systems or panel DC optimiser solution is recommended, and additional costs assumed in the capital costs provided in this document.

The exact inverter location may be subject to the inverter make and models chosen and the final design of the PV system.

Inverter sizing and type

Solar PV panels are rated in kWp DC (kilowatt peak DC), and inverters are rated in kW nominal AC (kilowatt nominal AC).

Maximum AC inverter rating: Some inverters can provide power above their nominal capacity for a period, for example 10% over-rating. Hence final inverter selection should consider the maximum power capable of being produced by the inverter, rather than nominal capacity, when designing AC connection points and circuit breakers.

DC capacity of the PV array can be oversized compared with the inverter's kW AC capacity, with minimal loss in performance. This is due to real-world losses during operation such as temperature, incident solar angle, cable losses etc. PV module's ratings are at Standard Test Condition which very rarely (if ever) occurs in the field, and therefore will not achieve peak capacity.

Therefore, for string inverters connected to a 100kWpDC solar system, the AC inverter capacity could be designed with 85kWac to 88kWac inverters. Final design AC inverter capacity is subject to final electrical string design and available inverter sizes.

Inverter Type: Fronius, SMA or SolarEdge string inverters have been included in budget costs and performance simulations, as these systems are commonly the most used and cost-effective inverter systems.

https://www.solaredge.com/, provide some added benefits including panel level performance and monitoring, ease of DC string design on multi-orientated arrays and 'rapid shutdown' of the system. The SolarEdge design is marginally more expensive and as an overall system cost is expected to be 3-4% more expensive.

AC connection

All relevant Main Distribution Boards (MSBs) and Distribution Boards (DB) were inspected during site inspections to identify electrical constraints, suitable locations for AC connection of the solar system and a maximum potential PV system size for each DB.

Grid Connection

- **Solar Systems above 30kW AC (Inverter capacity, including any existing PV systems):** For Solar PV systems above 30kW AC (Inverter capacity), Jemena and Australian standards require additional secondary protection controls and devices over and above internal grid protections in the inverter systems. Where multiple electrical AC connection points are required, Jemena require a master grid protection device/board, and slave boards to ensure that all systems are shut down if there is a grid outage. This requires communications between inverter/grid protection boards, which is conducted ideally via ethernet cable or similar; wireless comms is also a viable but less reliable option. The grid protection controls are also required on existing solar PV inverter systems currently on site.

Financial savings, parameters and assumptions

Avoided Tariffs

When the solar system is generating it will avoid consumption of electricity from the grid. The value of this avoided electrical consumption is dependent on the tariff structure and rates at the site. The following tariffs are applicable:

- **Avoided PEAK tariff:** this is the rate of €/kWh saved by consumption of solar generated electricity on site during peak hours. Peak times are 2pm to 8pm Monday to Friday.
- **Avoided SHOULDER tariff:** this is the rate of €/kWh saved by consumption of solar generated electricity on site during Shoulder hours. Shoulder times are 7am to 2pm, and 8pm to 10pm Monday to Friday.
- **Avoided OFF-PEAK tariff:** rate of €/kWh saved by consumption of solar generated electricity on site during off-peak hours. Off Peak times are all times outside the peak and shoulder times.

14.1.1 Feed-in Tariffs

The Feed in Tariff for Large market customers is negotiated with the energy retailer. Most commercial electricity retailers will provide a Feed in tariff rate equivalent to the 'Energy Charge' electricity tariff, which is what we have used in our modelling.

Estimated increases in tariff rates adopted are provided in **Error! Reference source not found.**, and are based on known publicly available modelling data.

Company tax depreciation

Company tax offsets for the solar asset have **NOT** been included in the financial model.

If applicable tax offsets and depreciation benefits for the renewable energy asset installation assuming a company tax rate of 28% and adopting the diminishing value as per ATO tax rulings with a 20-year project life

Renewable Certificate System

All solar PV systems are eligible for renewable energy certificates. There are currently two renewable energy certificate schemes: the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme and the Large-scale renewable energy scheme.

The Large-scale Renewable Energy Target is designed to deliver the majority of the Australia's 2020 large renewable energy target, while the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme supports the installation of small-scale renewables, such as household solar rooftop panels and solar hot water systems.

Small-scale Technology Certificates (STCs) <100kWp:

The STC system provides an upfront capital subsidy for small renewable energy systems under 100kW and for eligible solar hot water systems. For Solar PV Systems, the subsidy equates to approximately 25-30% upfront discount at the point of sale. The number of upfront STCs available is based on an estimated annual MWh energy production of the PV system over a 11-year period, for different climatic zones. One STC equates to 1MWh of renewable energy generation.



STC value has been upwards of \$36 for a four-year period. Enhar's analysis estimates the STC price at **\$32** per certificate for installation in 2020 for the financial analysis of the solar PV systems. Current legislation dictates that STC eligibility is for system sizes up to 100kWp connected to a single NMI meter.

The Department of Education capital cost estimates are post STC price.

For Walter Street the existing system would have been already claimed as STCs. As the existing system is less than 99kW a small amount of solar could be added to bring the system up to 99kW and claim a small amount of STCs. It is however simpler and cheaper electrically to claim LGCs for all new solar.

Large Generator Certificates LGC >100kWp:

LGCs are an annual subsidy provided under Australia's Renewable Energy Target (RET) and is based on the metered annual generation of the solar system. One LGC is equivalent to 1MWh of electrical generation.

To access LGCs, the installed solar PV system will be required to become a Clean Energy Regulator accredited power station, with additional metering and annual paperwork. LGCs are a market-based system and vary in price depending on the market, demand for certificates at the time of sale, and government legislation at the time. LGCs for the renewable energy generated electricity will be available until 2030 under current legislation, and the renewable plant must be registered with the Clean Energy Regulator prior to 2020 (or prior to the renewable target being met).

The following table presents the adopted LGC rates adopted in the financial analysis, adopting:

- Known hedged market rates for the first 4 years from Green Energy Traders for a 4 year contract to sell LGCs to the trader, Green Energy traders is a well-regarded Renewable Energy Certificate trader in the industry.
- Review a range of modelled forecasts for LGC prices and some of our partners involved in the Melbourne renewable energy buying group. From the Projected market rates of the LGC's from the year 2022 to 2030 we have chosen a conservative scenario condition as below
- Recent federal government policy has introduced some extra risks in the LGC pricing forecast, however, our current understanding is that this does not affect the current LGC system which is legislated to 2030.

Costs

Capital costs (CAPEX)

Capital cost estimates are based on known recent awarded tender processes of similar scale projects, and incorporated the below:

- Complexity/ease of installation, with consideration of available access/crane hire, AC/DC cabling runs, safety issues.
- DC electrical design considerations such as cable runs and complexities.
- Grid connection costs specific to the site and system size.
- Industry norms

Operating costs (OPEX)

- The following operating costs have been included:
- Estimated annual maintenance cost of AUD\$15/kWp installed.
- Inverter replacement 10 years after the installation date at a cost of 7% of the initial capital cost of the installation

Payback, NPV and IRR

The payback time, return on investment, net present value and internal rate of return calculations involve the following assumptions

- All PV generated electricity will produce electricity bill savings and income at the rates and amounts detailed in this report,
- Feed-In Tariff (FIT) adopted for exported power are provided in the tables
- Company tax depreciation offsets not adopted. If applicable tax offsets and depreciation benefits for the renewable energy asset installation assuming a company tax rate of 28% and adopting the diminishing value as per ATO tax rulings with a 20-year project life. Including tax depreciation will improve the financial case.
- Government subsidies either:
 - sub-100kWp: Upfront STC (small technology certificates) rebate available at the time of report preparation (11 year deeming period \$32 per MWh)
 - >100kWp: Annual LGC payments until 2030 at a variable rate
- Estimated annual maintenance cost of as stated above.

- Financial payback assumes a 25-year system lifetime (manufacturer performance warranty on PV yield is 25 years for all the proposed PV panels),
- Natural reduction in performance/yield of the PV system due to minor deterioration of PV cell efficiency. The decrease in efficiency is linear between 0% at commencement and 20% at the completion of 25-year warranty (product warranty is for performance at least 80% of the initial level)
- Inverter replacement 10 years after the installation date at a cost of 7% of the initial capital cost of the installation
- Does not include unexpected failure of equipment

Net Present Value (NPV): is determined by calculating the costs (negative cash flows) and benefits (positive cash flows) for each period of an investment. After the cash flow for each period is calculated, the present value (PV) of each one is achieved by discounting its future value at a periodic rate of return. NPV is a useful tool to determine whether a project or investment will result in a net profit or a loss. A positive NPV results in profit, while a negative NPV results in a loss. The NPV measures the excess or shortfall of cash flows, in present value terms, above the set discount rate.

Internal Rate of Return (IRR): The internal rate of return (IRR) is a rate of return used in capital budgeting to measure and compare the profitability of investments. The IRR is also called the effective interest rate. The higher a project's IRR, the more desirable it is to undertake the project. An investment is considered acceptable if its internal rate of return is greater than an established minimum acceptable rate of return