



Merri-bek
City Council

PROPOSED
Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held in Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic Centre,
90 Bell Street, Coburg
on Wednesday 9 September 2026

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12.1 Sale of Properties Under Section 181 of the Local Government Act 1989

Pursuant to section 3(1)(f) of the Local Government Act 2020 this report has been designated as confidential because it relates to personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

12.2 Contract Award: RFT-2026-2 - Wallace Reserve Lighting Upgrade

Pursuant to section 3(1)(a)(h), and of the Local Government Act 2020, this report has been designated as confidential because it relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released, and confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a).

12.3 Contract Award: RFT-2026-20 Harold Stevens Athletics Track - Resurfacing and LED upgrade

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

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6.33 pm and stated the Council meeting is being held on the traditional country of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and acknowledged them as Traditional Owners. The Mayor paid respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.

Present	Time In	Time Out
Cr Nat Abboud, Mayor	6.33 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor	6.33 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Sue Bolton	6.35 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Liz Irvin	6.33 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Dr Jay Iwasaki	6.33 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Chris Miles	6.33 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Helen Politis	6.33 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Adam Pulford	Apology	
Cr Ella Svensson	6.33 pm	8.33 pm
Cr Katerine Theodosios	7.27 pm	8.30 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	6.33 pm	8.33 pm

OFFICERS

Chief Executive Officer – Kate McCaughey
 Director Business Transformation – Sue Vujcevic
 Director City Infrastructure – Greg Rodwell
 Director Place and Environment – Pene Winslade
 Director Community – Eamonn Fennessy
 Manager Governance and Strategy – Yvonne Callanan
 Unit Manager Governance and Risk – Sophie Barison
 Acting Team Leader Governance – Saskia Hunter

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Cr Pulford was an apology for the meeting.

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

MINUTE CONFIRMATION

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Miles seconded -

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 August 2026 be confirmed.

Carried

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Mayor Cr Abboud

- Acknowledged the natural disaster that occurred in Nepal, expressed sympathy and support for the individuals, families and communities affected, and recognised the significant loss, disruption and hardship experienced by those impacted during this difficult time.
- Acknowledged concerns regarding bird flu, including the potential impacts on wildlife and noted the importance of continued monitoring and public awareness.
- Acknowledge Cr Bolton's nomination for the Mary Rogers Award, in recognition of her contribution, commitment and ongoing service to the community.

Cr Politis

- Cr Politis noted that the previous week was Adult Learners Week and acknowledged the activities delivered by Glenroy Neighbourhood House, recognising their role in fostering community connection and providing certification courses that support pathways to employment.

Cr Bolton

- Acknowledged the disaster in Nepal and the Nepalese community in Merri-bek.

PETITIONS

Nil.

Meeting Adjournment

Resolution

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That the Meeting be adjourned for 5 minutes to address technical issues with the livestream.

Carried

The Council meeting was adjourned at 6.48 pm.

Meeting Resumption

Resolution

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That the meeting resume.

Carried

The Council meeting was resumed at 6.53 pm.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A summary of questions and the responses provided, and items for which community statements were made is provided below. Questions submitted in writing and not asked are taken On Notice.

Public Question Time commenced at 6.53 pm.

Report 7.2 Outdoor Pool Operating Hours

Council received 2 statements. They were presented to Council:

Statement 1

Samantha Green made the following statement:

I am speaking on behalf of the Fawkner Fins Swim Group and the nearly 500 people who signed the petition calling for an extension to the Fawkner Outdoor Pool swimming season.

My first point is that we are disappointed by Council's response to our request to trial an extended season at the Fawkner Outdoor Pool. Many of us who swam regular early morning laps last summer do not feel that the reported attendance figures of approximately nine swimmers per morning accurately reflect our experience at the pool.

Similarly, there appears to be an inconsistency in the report. On page 18, it states that "outdoor pool attendance falls significantly outside the peak summer period" and that attendance can decline by up to 70 per cent from January to March. However, the figures on page 22 appear to show attendance growing and then stabilising during that period, rather than declining.

We were pleased, although not surprised, to see that attendance at Fawkner Outdoor Pool more than doubled between the 2024/25 and 2025/26 seasons, while the subsidy per visit almost halved.

However, as we have discussed previously, promotion of the early morning opening hours was limited. The information was not published on the website until March, at the very end of the season, and there was no signage at the centre advertising the early morning sessions. As a result, the reported attendance figures may not reflect what could have been achieved with appropriate promotion, clear communication of opening hours, and greater community awareness.

The encouraging news is that attendance doubled and the subsidy per visit was almost halved despite the lack of promotion from either Council or the YMCA. That suggests there is significant potential to further increase participation with appropriate marketing and community engagement.

My second point is that the Fawkner Fins Social Swim Club was very pleased to recently meet with Council officers, and we are committed to working collaboratively with Council and Belgraveia to increase early morning swimming participation. We are keen to actively promote and rebuild the local swimming community over the coming months and hope to meet with pool and Belgraveia management soon to discuss ideas and opportunities.

We also agreed with Council officers that we would meet again in January to review attendance data and discuss the feasibility of extending early morning swimming next year.

We have three practical requests:

- A clear and transparent attendance recording system.
- Physical signage at the centre and updates to the website so that opening hours are accurately communicated.
- Active promotion and support of the Fawkner Fins by Belgraveia.

So, while we are disappointed by this decision, we remain optimistic and committed to working together. We are not going away. We will continue building our swimming community, continue encouraging more people to use the pool, and continue advocating for a longer outdoor swimming season so that our community can make the most of this valuable local asset.

Statement 2

Cate Hall made the following statement:

Council should be shouting from the roof tops about the success of the Coburg Olympic early morning lap swimming trial last season! Officer Report says cost \$7,000 we calculated well over 1,000 swims so that's 7 cents per swim!

Consider the impacts. (And we can back all of the following with our End of Season Survey Report (n=127))

Early mornings were life-changing for many. For the predominantly (70%) women, positive impacts included access to a regular exercise routine due to the time and location and consistent hours, with no UV issue, ability to walk and ride (65%) for the mainly local (68%) attendees, mental health, physical health and community building.

Where and how else could you get such a big bang for so little bucks!? And talk about ticking Council policy boxes!

Thank you to officers for engaging with our questions over the last couple of days. We strongly support the Officer recommendation to add a week day early morning and to increase the hours to 6am to 9am. As shown in our Survey Report 71% of Ice burgers wanted more mornings.

However the most commonly requested morning mentioned to us at the pool was Saturday and adding Saturday was our key recommendation for mornings. This would enable access for a different cohort who can't make the weekday mornings. We are asking for Saturday morning to be included further to the three weekday mornings. We do not support the officer recommendation to fund extra mornings by removing the pool hour 2-3pm during school term.

Last season Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool (COSP) had much, much greater early morning and general outdoor attendance than the other seasonal outdoor pools. Our data based on daily tallies for us by staff showed an average of at least 35 early morning swimmers (this is at odd with Council's quoted average of 30) 9 early morning at Fawkner.

Penalising the well-attended pool by cutting hours is unfair and inequitable - and we will still only be at three mornings compared to five at Fawkner in spite of the demonstrable demand in Coburg.

Officers say COSP gets less morning hours due to Coburg having two pools but CLC does not offer outdoor, 50m lap swimming so is not relevant to the early morning lap swimming provision issue.

We understand this funding work around has come about due to the contract with Belgravia not having enough early morning provision for COSP - it stuck with the initial only four hours per week compared to fifteen hours at Fawkner - but that doesn't make it an acceptable outcome for COSP users - current and potential. E.g. 2pm is a great time for a quick before school finishes.

Notice of Motion – 8.2 Urgent Safety Upgrade of Boundary Road and Sussex Street Intersection, Pascoe Vale

Council received 1 statement, it was presented to Council:

Statement

Natasa Jovic made the following statement:

In 2025, I brought a Change.org petition to Council asking that Council do what it could to make this intersection safer. I would like to thank Councillor Chris Miles for recognising the importance of this issue and for bringing it before Council again today.

I have been a Hadfield local for over 20 years. It wasn't until my girls started at Mercy College in Coburg and we began using this intersection every day that I truly realised just how dangerous it is. What alarmed me most were the repeated near misses I witnessed on every light change for traffic travelling east to west.

For those unfamiliar with the intersection, I have printed an aerial photograph of the intersection, and I am happy to provide it if permitted?

Victorian Department of Transport and Planning crash data shows that between 2012 and 2024, there were 16 recorded injury crashes at this intersection.

Of those, 7 were classified as serious injury crashes, with a further 9 classified as other injury crashes.

The intersection was also identified as the 7th most dangerous intersection in North-West Melbourne in the RACV 2025 My Melbourne Road Survey.

But these are only the crashes that have been officially recorded. They don't capture the countless near misses that occur every day. I myself, have had my own near miss at this intersection with my girls in the car.

The problem also doesn't stop at the intersection.

When congestion builds up, drivers look for alternative routes to avoid the backlog, pushing additional traffic into surrounding residential streets — many of which are small and narrow and were never designed to carry this volume of through-traffic.

I myself use the backstreets to avoid this intersection.

Finally, The Boundary Road and Sussex Street intersection is not simply a local intersection. This intersection is an important link for the surrounding road network and it is crucial that traffic can move through it safely and efficiently.

I am asking Council to work with the relevant road authorities to investigate the intersection and identify practical measures to make it safer — not only for those using Boundary Road and Sussex Street, but for the entire surrounding community.

We know that this intersection is dangerous and I implore Council to do what it can to work with the relevant authorities to investigate practical solutions to make this intersection safer.

Notice of Motion – 8.3 Improving Bus Services

Council received 1 statement, it was presented to Council:

Statement

Andrea Bunting secretary of Climate Action Merri-bek (CAM) made the following statement:

CAM has campaigned for better buses in Merri-bek for 18 months, including collaborating with Melbourne bus campaigner Peter Parker. We have campaigned for a series of bus routes with local residents. In May, two of our campaigns received state government funding. Our latest petition to upgrade bus route 534 was tabled in parliament today, receiving a record 1300 signatures. We have written numerous articles and advocacy documents with ideas on improving buses in Merri-bek and we have workshopped ideas with state MPs. This weekend we will campaign for better buses in Fawkner.

We hope that as Council develops its bus advocacy priorities that it consults with CAM.

I suggest some modifications to the motion 8.3. Part 3 refers to three documents including one by the consulting firm Movement and Place from April 2026. It is on Public Transport Service Analysis, focusing on buses. This document was not available on the internet until Monday. Thank you to the Mayor for chasing it up. I suggest adding that the report was commissioned by the Metropolitan Transport Forum.

This report contained a map on page 52, labelled as key bus advocacy priorities for the City of Merri-bek. It showed six specific bus routes servicing Merri-bek and made recommendations on service levels and span. These ideas were developed by the consulting firm after consulting with Council Officers.

Item 2 in the motion says: "Incorporates the findings of the reports to its advocacy priorities."

This suggests that Council will include those 6 bus routes in its advocacy priorities. I suggest this is premature. There has been no community consultation on this, and the recommendations do not all line up with recent discussions we have had with state MPs. Bus advocacy is of long-term importance, going well beyond the current election period so we need to do this comprehensively.

Council is developing a Transport Advocacy Strategy informed by community engagement. I suggest that item 2 in the motion be modified to say that the findings of the three listed reports inform the development of the Bus section in the Council's Transport Advocacy Strategy

Notice of Motion – 8.1 Moratorium on Data Centre developments

Council received 1 question, it was presented to Council:

Question 1

Sarah Webber asked Council:

Will Council resist the unnecessary and environmentally harmful, massive expansion of data centres in Victoria?

Mayor, Cr Abboud responded:

We will be talking about this later on in the agenda so I think the answer will become apparent then, thank you for your advocacy.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS - QUESTIONS

Safer streets for Brunswick North Primary

Arne Brants asked Council:

Question 1

When can the school community expect a substantive progress update on council's road safety commitments?

Question 2

Given the success of School Street implementations in other Victorian and Australian councils, and the inability to make any progress on alternatives here in Merri-Bek, what would it take for council to reconsider implementing or trialling School Streets?

At the request of the Mayor, Director Place and Environment, Pene Winslade responded:

Council acknowledges that the commitments previously made for Brunswick North Primary School have not progressed within the timeframe originally anticipated

We remain committed to improving safety around Brunswick North Primary. We are currently developing our new School Transport Precincts Program, are already working with our first school (Merri-bek Primary School), and Brunswick North Primary has been identified as the second school to receive a project improving the school street frontage.

We plan to start engagement with principal and school community of Brunswick North Primary in the next year or so.

Disabled access study funding for Sydney Road

Romeo asked Council, regarding the \$200,000 allocated in the current Council budget over two years for (study) relating to disabled access for wheelchair and three wheels e/scooters onto public transport such as trams running along Sydney Road. Is Council aware that trams can be retrofitted with ramps?

O'hea's Road, Coburg - road pits

Romeo asked is Council aware the newly built road pits on O'hea's Road, Coburg are filled with water?

Mayor, Cr Abboud responded the questions would be taken on notice.

Public Question Time concluded at 7.18 pm.

7.18 pm Cr Miles left the meeting.

COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 2025-26 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS

Executive Summary

Council's Financial and Performance Statements (the Statements) for the 2025-26 financial year have been prepared and reviewed by the Victorian Auditor General Offices appointed auditor, RSD Audit and Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

This report seeks Council's 'in principle' approval of the Statements and the appointment of two Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer to sign the 2025-26 Statements in their final form.

Like all Victorian Councils, Merri-bek operates in a financially constrained environment shaped by rate capping, rising service delivery and construction costs, cost shifting from other levels of government, increasing community expectations, climate and infrastructure pressures, and the need to renew and maintain a substantial asset base. This report details the 30 June 2026 Financial and Performance Statements.

The 30 June 2026 Financial and Performance Statements identify and inform financial sustainability measures including:

- A reduction in unrestricted cash of \$5.1 million (33%) which is the lowest in the past 5-year period. A key contributor to the lower cash position is a significant increase in rates arrears. Rates arrears increased by 3.3 million or 11.8% (excluding emergency services volunteer funds levies), which is the largest increase since the pandemic.
- An accounting surplus of \$26.9 million for the period ending 30 June 2026. However, it is important to note that this includes items such as non-cash contributions, capital grants, loan redemptions and committed capital or operational expenditure for future years. The adjusted underlying surplus is \$21.6 million which removes capital grants and contributions non-monetary from the accounting surplus.
- An unrestricted deficit of \$2.9 million. The unrestricted deficit excludes non-cash items included in the accounting surplus, loan repayments, capital expenditure and committed funding requirements. This reflects the compounding financial pressures, meaning that Council has spent more than it earned in that year.
- The seven Victorian Auditor General Office (VAGO) indicators are all low risk both for the year and for the 5-year historic actuals. While this is a positive result for Council, it is important to note we are seeing a year-on-year decline in the overall results.

- The overall capital works delivery was \$63.7 million in comparison to an adopted budget of \$93.9 million (despite VAGO's 2 asset indicators remaining low risk).

Key measures to strengthen Council's financial sustainability and increasing financial pressures include:

- Improved performance around delivery of the adopted capital works program is an organisational priority for 2026-27 to deliver the \$89.1 million program for 30 June 2027.
- Improved performance to return Council to a position where there is a favourable unrestricted surplus whereby Council's spending is proportionate to its income is also an organisational priority for 2026-27. In the short term, these efforts have identified the need to amend the calculation of the unrestricted cash and unrestricted position measures. These two measures form part of the key indicators used to assess Council's financial position and to compare current performance against both historical and projected results. The amendment is detailed in the *Reserves Movement* section of the report under issues. These changes do not change the audited financial statements but have been identified since Councillors and Audit and Risk Committee were briefed. In accordance with the *Financial Management Policy*, a Council resolution is required to approve any unbudgeted expenditure from a reserve. Accordingly, this report seeks approval for an additional drawdown of \$390,600 from the Public Resort & Recreation Land Fund. If approved, this drawdown will be recognised in 2026-27 and reflects additional expenditure incurred across nine capital projects that were fully funded from Public Resort & Recreation Land Fund in the adopted budget.
- An independent review of its long-term financial sustainability. The review will help identify opportunities to strengthen Council's long term financial position and ability to invest in services, infrastructure and assets that support our community. The outcomes are intended to inform future budget planning, including the 2027-31 Budget, and support Council's long-term asset management planning.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive the Audit and Risk Committee's recommendations regarding the Financial and Performance Statements for 2025-26 Statements as described in section 3 of this report.
2. Approves 'in principle' the Financial and Performance Statements 2025-26 at **Attachments 1 and 2** to this report.
3. Authorises the Mayor, Cr Nat Abboud, Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson, and the Chief Executive Officer, Kate McCaughey, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2025-26 in their final form.
4. Carries forward the \$1,303,592 of tied operating funding that were not spent as of 30 June 2026.
5. Carries forward the \$41,147,401 capital project funds into the 2026/27 Capital Works Program.
6. Disestablishes the Local Government Funding Vehicle (LGFV) Reserve.
7. Draws down \$1,227,518 from the waste charge reserve to reflect the full costs associated with delivering the kerbside waste collection for 2025-26.
8. Draws down \$390,600 from the Public Resort & Recreation Land Fund to reflect additional costs associated with open space funded capital projects in 2025-26.
9. Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2025-26 if recommended

by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Resolution

Cr Politis moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Receive the Audit and Risk Committee's recommendations regarding the Financial and Performance Statements for 2025-26 Statements as described in section 3 of this report.**
- 2. Approves 'in principle' the Financial and Performance Statements 2025-26 at Attachments 1 and 2 to this report.**
- 3. Authorises the Mayor, Cr Nat Abboud, Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson, and the Chief Executive Officer, Kate McCaughey, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2025-26 in their final form.**
- 4. Carries forward the \$1,303,592 of tied operating funding that were not spent as of 30 June 2026.**
- 5. Carries forward the \$41,147,401 capital project funds into the 2026/27 Capital Works Program.**
- 6. Disestablishes the Local Government Funding Vehicle (LGFV) Reserve.**
- 7. Draws down \$1,227,518 from the waste charge reserve to reflect the full costs associated with delivering the kerbside waste collection for 2025-26.**
- 8. Draws down \$390,600 from the Public Resort & Recreation Land Fund to reflect additional costs associated with open space funded capital projects in 2025-26.**
- 9. Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2025-26 if recommended by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.**

7.19 pm Cr Miles returned to the meeting during the debate.

Carried unanimously

7.2 OUTDOOR POOL OPERATING HOURS

Executive Summary

This report responds to Notices of Motion and community petitions regarding the operating hours at 3 of Council's 6 aquatic leisure centres, including:

- Two Council Notice of Motions requesting changes to outdoor pool operating hours and seasons. These resolutions request an extension of the operating hours at Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool and an extension of the operating season at Fawkner Outdoor Pool.
- Petitions to extend the outdoor pool season and hours at Fawkner Outdoor Pool and community feedback in relation to expanding morning swimming at Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool.

These requests reflect community expectations for access to outdoor pools, particularly for early morning lap swimming.

This report considers options to extend outdoor pool operations. It outlines the financial, operational and network-wide impacts of year-round or expanded seasonal operations.

The operating hours for Fawkner, Pascoe Vale and Coburg Olympic Outdoor pools can be extended or reduced based on forecast and daily temperatures. This flexibility allows Council to respond quickly to community demand, safety risks and changing weather. Decisions also consider workplace and public safety, facility preparation and the ongoing financial viability of the outdoor pools.

The base operating hours for these three pools reflect different usage patterns during school terms and school holidays. Temperature triggers are also used to extend or reduce hours, as outlined in **Attachment 1**.

As agreed by Council in September 2023, outdoor pools will continue to open from mid-November when hot weather is predicted in the long-range forecast.

The new management contract RFT 2025-47 includes the following extended hours for the next four years. These changes have been budgeted and allowed for at \$116,000 in total over four years:

- **Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool** – season extended from Labour Day to the end of March.
- **Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool** – morning swimming extended from 1 December to 31 March, with two sessions each week from 6am to 8am.
- **Fawkner Leisure Outdoor Pool** – morning swimming and programming extended from 1 December to 31 March, with weekday sessions from 6am to 9am and Aqua programs on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7.30am.

Extension of the operating season at Fawkner Leisure Centre Outdoor 50m Pool

Feasibility undertaken for this report has identified that the extended season at Fawkner Leisure Outdoor Pool would significantly increase the subsidy per visit, which is currently \$10.38. Three scenarios were considered and the additional costs for each of these is estimated as:

- 1 September to 30 November (Three months): \$72,600 per year.
- 1 October to 31 April (Three months): \$72,600 per year.
- Year-round opening (Eight months): \$193,000 per year.

Outdoor pool attendance falls significantly outside the peak summer period. Attendance can decline by up to 70 per cent from January to March. Combined with limited morning swim attendance at Fawkner, extending the season beyond 31 March is not considered viable.

Extension of the operating season at Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool

At Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool, the early morning swimming trial had stronger use, with an average of 30 swimmers per session. Community feedback also shows ongoing interest in more early morning access at this location. Officers recommend replacing the current Tuesday and Thursday morning sessions with Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 6am to 9am. The additional cost would be funded by reducing afternoon swimming by 1 hour on weekdays during the school term.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes as part of the Council's new contract RFT 2025-47 for the Management of Council's Aquatic and Leisure Centres the revised seasonal operating hours have been funded through the endorsed contract return fee to Council for the Pascoe Vale, Coburg Olympic and Fawkner Outdoor Pools in accordance with the contract, as follows:

- a) Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool - Extension of season operations from Labour Day weekend to end of March of approximately 20 days at a budgeted cost of \$7,000 per annum.
 - b) Fawkner Outdoor Pool - Extension of hours of outdoor pool to cater for morning swimming and programming: Weekdays, 6am - 9am at a budgeted cost of \$15,000 per annum.
 - c) Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool - Extension of hours to cater for morning swimming 2 x mornings a week 6am – 8am at a budgeted cost of \$7,000 per annum.
2. Resolves to alter the Coburg Olympic Pool hours by allocating an additional 5 hours per week operating 3 x mornings a week from 6am – 9am (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) at an additional cost of \$8,100 per season.
 3. Resolves to fund the additional 5 hours per week at Coburg Olympic Pool by reducing the afternoon opening hours by 1 hour per weekday during the school term.
 4. Notes temperature triggers are also used to extend or reduce Outdoor Pools opening hours, as outlined in Attachment 1 of this report, and that this includes Outdoor Pools opening in November when consecutive days of hot weather is predicted in the long-range forecast.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes as part of the Council's new contract RFT 2025-47 for the Management of Council's Aquatic and Leisure Centres the revised seasonal operating hours have been funded through the endorsed contract return fee to Council for the Pascoe Vale, Coburg Olympic and Fawkner Outdoor Pools in accordance with the contract, as follows:**
 - a) **Pascoe Vale Outdoor Pool - Extension of season operations from Labour Day weekend to end of March of approximately 20 days at a budgeted cost of \$7,000 per annum.**
 - b) **Fawkner Outdoor Pool - Extension of hours of outdoor pool to cater for morning swimming and programming: Weekdays, 6am - 9am at a budgeted cost of \$15,000 per annum.**
 - c) **Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool - Extension of hours to cater for morning swimming 2 x mornings a week 6am – 8am at a budgeted cost of \$7,000 per annum.**
2. **Resolves to alter the Coburg Olympic Pool hours by allocating:**
 - a) **An additional 5 hours per week operating 3 x mornings a week from 6am – 9am (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) at an additional cost of \$8,100 per season; and**
 - b) **An additional 2 hours per week operating 1 morning a week from 9am – 11am (Saturday) at an additional cost of \$3,240**
3. **Resolves to fund point 2 by:**
 - a) **Reducing the afternoon opening hours by 1 hour per weekday during the school term to fund point 2(a);**

- b) In consultation with Belgravia Leisure, reduce staffed hours by 30 minutes per week over 12-months at the 24/7 gym facilities only (Oak Park Sports and Aquatic Centre, Fawkner Leisure Centre and Brunswick Baths) releasing \$3,240 to fund point 2(b), which would provide Saturday morning opening at Coburg Olympic Swimming Pool from 9am–11am over 18 weeks.
- 4. Notes Council will consider opening hours at Coburg Olympic Pool following a review of year 1 of Contract RFT-2025-47 Management of Council's Aquatic and Leisure Services (1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027).
- 5. Notes temperature triggers are also used to extend or reduce Outdoor Pools opening hours, as outlined in Attachment 1 of this report, and that this includes Outdoor Pools opening in November when consecutive days of hot weather is predicted in the long-range forecast.

7.27pm Cr Theodosia entered the meeting during the debate.

7.31 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting.

7.34 pm Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting during the debate.

Carried unanimously

7.3 CERES FUNDING AGREEMENT 2026-2031

Executive Summary

CERES Earth Ltd (CERES) is a long-standing Council-supported environmental education and social enterprise organisation operating from Council-owned land in Brunswick East and Coburg, occupied under a fifty-year lease. Council acknowledges CERES' significant contributions in delivering environmental and sustainability education, advancing climate action, urban agriculture, circular economy innovation and fostering community engagement and connection.

Council's previous five-year Funding Agreement (Agreement) with CERES expired on 30 June 2025. In response to a financial sustainability funding request, a one-year continuation of funding for 2025-26 was provided while CERES undertook financial turnaround work and officers developed a new Agreement.

The proposed Agreement provides five years of operational and capital funding from 2026-27 to 2030-31. Funding is within Council's adopted budget and forward estimates and no additional funding is sought through this report.

The proposed Agreement continues Council's support for CERES while strengthening accountability for public funding. It includes clearer annual reporting, practical key performance indicators, capital works planning and acquittal, early notification of material risks, and proportionate funding consequences where material issues are not addressed.

The Agreement gives Council better understanding of CERES' financial sustainability and community benefit as appropriate for a major partner and funder.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Notes:
 - a) The diverse environmental and social community benefits delivered by CERES Earth Ltd, and its contribution towards achieving the Merri-bek Community Vision and Council Plan 2025 – 2029 strategic objectives.
 - b) CERES Earth Ltd's financial sustainability work undertaken over the past

twelve months whilst a new five-year Funding Agreement was developed.

2. Endorses the Funding Agreement 2026-7 – 2030-31 between Council and CERES Earth Ltd at Attachment 1.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate any final changes to the funding agreement with CERES Earth Ltd. and execute in accordance with Council's decision.

Resolution

Cr Irvin moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes:**
 - a) **The diverse environmental and social community benefits delivered by CERES Earth Ltd, and its contribution towards achieving the Merri-bek Community Vision and Council Plan 2025 – 2029 strategic objectives.**
 - b) **CERES Earth Ltd's financial sustainability work undertaken over the past twelve months whilst a new five-year Funding Agreement was developed.**
2. **Endorses the Funding Agreement 2026-7 – 2030-31 between Council and CERES Earth Ltd at Attachment 1.**
3. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate any final changes to the funding agreement with CERES Earth Ltd. and execute in accordance with Council's decision.**

Carried unanimously

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

Executive Summary

Merri-bek is experiencing ongoing growth, with further development and population growth expected across the municipality. This will increase demand on Merri-bek's open space network.

Amendment C235mbek (amendment) proposes, supported by detailed technical work, to replace Merri-bek's existing suburb-based public open space contribution rates of 2.5%–6.8% with a city-wide rate of 8.68%. If approved by the State Government, the amendment will enable Council to collect higher contributions from development to fund new and improved open space across the municipality. The proposed rate is estimated to increase the existing annual contribution revenue by approximately \$6 million, from \$9 million to \$15 million per year, subject to future subdivision activity.

Amendment C235mbek was publicly exhibited from 4 September to 13 October 2025. Council received seven submissions. Two raised concerns, and five supported the proposal or raised no concerns. These submissions were referred to an independent Planning Panel.

A Panel Hearing was held on 23 February 2026. The C235mbek Interim Panel Report was issued on 2 April 2026 and is included as **Attachment 1**. The report has been shared with submitters and is available on Council's [website](#) and the State's [C235mbek webpage](#).

The Interim Report recommended further technical work to better support the proposed 8.68% contribution rate, followed by supplementary exhibition before the Panel finalises its

recommendations. In response, additional expert work was commissioned and is now complete. This work is included at **Attachments 2, 3, and 4** and confirms the merits of the proposed 8.68% rate.

It is recommended that Council note the work undertaken in response to the Interim Panel Report and the updated amendment documents in **Attachment 5** and endorse their supplementary exhibition. Following the exhibition, Council will receive a further report on the submissions received and the recommended next step, including whether the C235mbek Panel should be reconvened.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

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

Resolution

Cr Irvin moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the:**
 - a) **Planning Scheme Amendment C235mbek (amendment) Interim Panel Report for a revised Public Open Space Contribution rate dated 2 April 2026 at Attachment 1.**
 - b) **updated HillPDA report, the peer review report by Westlink and the projects list document by Veris at Attachments 2, 3 and 4 respectively, prepared in response to the C235mbek Interim Panel Report.**
 - c) **updated amendment Explanatory Report at Attachment 5, which references the HillPDA, Westlink and Veris documents at Attachments 2, 3 and 4 respectively, to support the amendment's supplementary exhibition.**

2. **Endorses supplementary exhibition of Amendment C235mbek, including the documents at Attachments 2, 3, 4 and 5, to address the matters identified in the Interim Panel Report.**
3. **Notes that a further report will be provided to Council following completion of the Amendment C235mbek's supplementary exhibition process addressing:**
 - a) **The outcomes of the exhibition.**
 - b) **Any submissions received.**
 - c) **The proposed position to advance the amendment.**
4. **Authorises the Director Place and Environment to do all procedural and administrative steps necessary to give effect to this resolution.**

Carried unanimously

ALTER THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

With the agreement of Council, the order of business was altered to bring forward item Notice of Motion 8.2 Urgent Safety Upgrade of Boundary Road and Sussex Street Intersection, Pascoe Vale, before returning to the order of business as printed in the agenda.

8.2 URGENT SAFETY UPGRADE OF BOUNDARY ROAD AND SUSSEX STREET INTERSECTION, PASCOE VALE

Motion

That Council:

1. **Writes to The Hon. Paul Hamer MP, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, requesting that the intersection of Boundary Road and Sussex Street, Pascoe Vale, be upgraded as a matter of urgency.**
2. **Notes and acknowledges the advocacy work of Natase Jovic in seeking to make the Boundary Road and Sussex Street intersection safer for all.**

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Davidson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Writes to The Hon. Paul Hamer MP, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, requesting that the intersection of Boundary Road and Sussex Street, Pascoe Vale, be upgraded as a matter of urgency.**
2. **Notes and acknowledges the advocacy work of Natase Jovic in seeking to make the Boundary Road and Sussex Street intersection safer for all.**

Carried unanimously

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

Executive Summary

On 12 June 2026 Council received a written request from Central Coburg Business Association (CCBA) (**Attachment 1**) to begin the statutory process to renew the special charge scheme for the Central Coburg Shopping Precinct (**Precinct**) currently in place and which has been in place since the late 1990s.

The current Central Coburg Shopping Precinct Special Charge Scheme (**Scheme**) commenced on 1 October 2017 and will conclude on 30 June 2027.

The purpose of the renewed Scheme would be to continue to defray the promotional, advertising, marketing and business development expenses associated with the encouragement of commerce, retail, professional activity and the creation of employment in the Precinct.

This report highlights the achievements of the current Scheme, sets out the statutory process for the renewal of the Scheme and the proposed financial contributions to the Scheme, and identifies any associated risks.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to commence the statutory process and give public notice of its intention to declare the Scheme.

The statutory process involves inviting submissions from property owners and occupiers, in favour of or objecting to the proposed renewal of the Scheme. Any submitters may be heard by a Hearing of Submissions Committee. This report also requests that Council establish a Hearing of Submissions Committee.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

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

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

Resolution

Cr Politis moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

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

- c) keeping a copy of the Proposed Declaration of a Special Charge in the form proposed at Attachment 4 available for public inspection at the Coburg Civic Centre and the Coburg Library from 19 September 2026 for at least 28 days; and
 - d) receiving written submissions under s 163A and 223 of the Act, and written objections under section 163B of the Act, for a period of 28 days after the publication of the public notice.
5. Sets the date for the meeting at which Council will consider whether to declare the Scheme for 14 April 2027.
 6. Advises CCBA of the matters specified in paragraphs 1 to 5 of this resolution.
 7. Appoints Councillors Politis and Abboud to a Hearing of Submissions Committee, established by Council under section 223(1)(b)(i), of the Local Government Act 1989, to hear any persons who in their written submissions under section 223 have requested they be heard in support of their submissions. Should the Chair not be available, the Committee may elect an Acting Chair from amongst the appointed members.
 8. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to set the time, date and place of the meeting of the Hearing of Submissions Committee to hear submissions in relation to Council's intention to declare a Special Charge Scheme for the Central Coburg Shopping Precinct.
 9. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, or her delegate to carry out any and all other administrative procedures necessary to enable Council to carry out its functions under sections 163(1A), (1B) and (1C), 163A, 163B and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Carried unanimously

7.6 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION - SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION

Executive Summary

This report responds to the 14 August 2024 Notice of Motion on Short Stay Accommodation and provides an update on the actions arising from that resolution and the Victorian Government's short stay accommodation reforms.

Since the Notice of Motion in 2024, the Victorian Government has progressed several initiatives relating to short stay accommodation, which is accommodation booked for a continuous period of less than 28 days. These reforms include:

- The introduction of the *Short Stay Levy Act 2024*, which imposes a statewide 7.5 per cent levy on bookings for short stay accommodation.
- Changes to the *Owners Corporations Act 2006* to strengthen the management of disruptive behaviour associated with short stay accommodation.
- Ongoing investigation of planning system reforms that may provide councils with powers to regulate short stay accommodation.

Current data indicates that short stay accommodation represents a relatively small proportion of Merri-bek's housing stock, accounting for 0.77 per cent of private dwellings, with 7.7 listings per 1,000 dwellings compared with 33 across comparable inner-city councils (Yarra, Port Phillip and Stonnington).

In this context and having considered the viability of available local regulatory mechanisms, the Victorian Government's planning reform process provides the most appropriate opportunity to consider the regulation of short stay accommodation.

Accordingly, it is recommended that Council continue to engage with the Department Transport and Planning (DTP), monitor local impacts and advocate for a practical and effective regulatory framework.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes that the Victorian Government is investigating potential planning reforms to provide councils with powers to regulate short stay accommodation.
2. Notes the feedback provided by Council Officers to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on proposed planning reforms for short stay accommodation.
3. Supports continued engagement with DTP, ongoing monitoring of the impacts of short stay accommodation in Merri-bek, and advocacy for a practical and effective regulatory framework.
4. Notes that the actions arising from the Notice of Motion - Short Stay Accommodation, resolved by Council on 14 August 2024, have been completed.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes that the Victorian Government is investigating potential planning reforms to provide councils with powers to regulate short stay accommodation.**
2. **Notes the feedback provided by Council Officers to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on proposed planning reforms for short stay accommodation.**
3. **Supports continued engagement with DTP, ongoing monitoring of the impacts of short stay accommodation in Merri-bek, and advocacy for a practical and effective regulatory framework.**
4. **Notes that the actions arising from the Notice of Motion - Short Stay Accommodation, resolved by Council on 14 August 2024, have been completed.**

Carried

7.7 SUMMER SPORT ALLOCATIONS 2026/2027

Executive Summary

Council is committed to providing the community with sporting and recreational facilities and opportunities to encourage physical activity and improve community health and wellbeing outcomes. Council's Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy 2025 (the Policy) provides a framework for the annual and seasonal allocation of sporting grounds and pavilions to clubs through a tenancy agreement.

In line with the Policy, facilities are allocated to clubs with sound governance structures, open membership for men, women and juniors, and a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility, including participation in club development programs. Eleven (11) summer seasonal tenancy applications were received from clubs and all requests can be accommodated. This report also provides an update on progress of each club's junior and female participation levels. Several clubs are still in the process of submitting their compliance documentation which is required prior to receiving their summer 2026/2027 sports ground seasonal allocation.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Allocates sports grounds and pavilions for the 2026/2027 summer season to the clubs shown in Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Authorises the Director Community to make any necessary changes to the allocation of facilities for the 2026/2027 summer season if required and to inform Council of any changes.
3. Notes any club owing ground and pavilion fees from previous seasons, or owing any other debt to Council, will be informed that no ground allocation will be granted until payment is made, or a payment plan has been agreed to.
4. Notes current junior and female participation levels at sports clubs contained within this 2026/2027 Summer Sports Ground Tenancy Allocations Report.

Resolution

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Miles seconded -

That Council:

1. **Allocates sports grounds and pavilions for the 2026/2027 summer season to the clubs shown in Attachment 1 to this report.**
2. **Authorises the Director Community to make any necessary changes to the allocation of facilities for the 2026/2027 summer season if required and to inform Council of any changes.**
3. **Notes any club owing ground and pavilion fees from previous seasons, or owing any other debt to Council, will be informed that no ground allocation will be granted until payment is made, or a payment plan has been agreed to.**
4. **Notes current junior and female participation levels at sports clubs contained within this 2026/2027 Summer Sports Ground Tenancy Allocations Report.**

Carried unanimously

7.8 GOVERNANCE REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2026 - CYCLICAL REPORT

Executive Summary

The Governance report is prepared as a monthly standing report to Council, this report includes:

- A summary of the minutes of Advisory Committees and Groups.

- The Arts Advisory Committee's recommendation in accordance with the Art Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, Council approves the purchase of the following artwork for the Merri-bek Art Collection:
 - ENOKi, *I Am Flesh & Blood*, 2026 polyester thread on calico
 - Bundit Puangthong, *The House of Herbs* and *No Single*, 2023 oil on board.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Response to a Public Question Time item taken on notice at the 12 August 2026 Council meeting, with a recommendation that Council notes the response.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the Advisory Committee at Attachment 1 to this report:
 - a) First Peoples Advisory Committee held 23 July 2026
 - b) Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee held 29 July 2026
 - c) Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience Advisory Committee held 4 August 2026
 - d) Friends of Aileu Community Committee meeting held 11 August 2026
 - e) Arts Advisory Committee meeting held on 18 August 2026.
2. Endorses the recommendation of the Arts Advisory Committee meeting held 18 August 2026 and in accordance with the Art Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, approves the purchase of the following artwork for the Merri-bek Art Collection:
 - a) ENOKi, *I Am Flesh & Blood*, 2026 polyester thread on calico
 - b) Bundit Puangthong, *The House of Herbs* and *No Single*, 2023 oil on board.
3. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
4. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 12 August 2026 Council meeting, provided as Attachment 3 to this report.

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the summary of minutes from the Advisory Committee at Attachment 1 to this report:**
 - a) **First Peoples Advisory Committee held 23 July 2026**
 - b) **Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee held 29 July 2026**
 - c) **Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience Advisory Committee held 4 August 2026**
 - d) **Friends of Aileu Community Committee meeting held 11 August 2026**
 - e) **Arts Advisory Committee meeting held on 18 August 2026.**
2. **Endorses the recommendation of the Arts Advisory Committee meeting held 18 August 2026 and in accordance with the Art Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, approves the purchase of the following artwork for the Merri-bek Art Collection:**

- a) **ENOKi, I Am Flesh & Blood, 2026 polyester thread on calico**
 - b) **Bundit Puangthong, The House of Herbs and No Single, 2023 oil on board.**
 3. **Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.**
 4. **Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 12 August 2026 Council meeting, provided as Attachment 3 to this report.**
- Carried unanimously**

7.9 PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION: EXE-2026-29: ADDRESSED MAIL - AUSTRALIA POST

Executive Summary

Council generates large volumes of addressed postal mail, some of which is processed using a digital mail solution and some of which is processed by Australia Post. The primary use of Australia Post relates to the issuing the annual and quarterly rates notices to the 90,000 properties within Merri-bek, which cannot be sent using the digital mail solution due to other contract arrangements.

Section 4.8.1 of Council's Procurement Policy allows for an exemption from tendering where there is sole supplier of the service. As Australia Post does not contract for addressed mail services alone, procurement exemption EXE-2026-29 is proposed for a period of three (3) years from 1 October 2026.

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval for a maximum allowable spend of \$1,226,569 for EXE-2026-29 for Addressed Mail Services.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises a maximum expenditure of \$1,226,569 (excluding GST) with Australia Post under Procurement Exemption EXE-2026-29 for Addressed Mail Services, for a term of three (3) years from 1 October 2026, ending 30 September 2029 for addressed mail services.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to complete any required documentation.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Miles seconded -

That Council:

1. **Authorises a maximum expenditure of \$1,226,569 (excluding GST) with Australia Post under Procurement Exemption EXE-2026-29 for Addressed Mail Services, for a term of three (3) years from 1 October 2026, ending 30 September 2029 for addressed mail services.**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to complete any required documentation.**

Carried unanimously

7.10 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-2025-53 - CONSTRUCTION OF DE CHENE RESERVE PAVILION: GENDER INCLUSIVE CHANGEROOMS

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council approval to award Contract RFT-2025-53 - De Chene Reserve Pavilion: Gender Inclusive Changerooms to the preferred contractor Harris HMC Interiors (VIC) Pty Ltd.

The De Chene Pavilion Changeroom project aligns with Council Plan 2025–2029 to focus on Healthy and Inclusive Communities and its commitment to accessible, safe and welcoming community facilities. The provision of gender-inclusive and female-friendly changerooms supports Council's long-standing commitment to gender equity and increasing participation by women and girls in sport, consistent with the Active Women and Girls Strategy, Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy. The project will provide inclusive, accessible and fit-for-purpose infrastructure that supports increased participation and diverse community use.

Eight (8) conforming tenders were received and assessed in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy against weighted evaluation criteria including cost, capability, capacity, methodology, program and sustainability considerations.

Following the tender evaluation process, Harris HMC Interiors (VIC) Pty Ltd, who have a strong track record of delivering comparable sports pavilions and public building projects with local government clients, has been identified as the preferred contractor.

The contract award results in a budget shortfall of approximately \$101,367 to the project budget which will be referred to in the quarterly forecast process.

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

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Awards the **Contract RFT-2025-53** for the **construction of De Chene Reserve Pavilion: Gender Inclusive Changerooms** to **Harris HMC Interiors (VIC) Pty Ltd** for a fixed lump sum amount of \$2,149,059.00 (excluding GST) plus a provisional sum of \$410,000.00 (excluding GST), totaling \$2,559,059.00 (excluding GST), and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Resolution:
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that the terms specified in paragraph 1 of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council;
 - b) Ensure that, other than terms referred to in paragraph 1 of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer; and
 - c) Advise all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract (conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this resolution).
3. Refers Contract RFT-2025-53 budget shortfall of \$101,367 to the first quarterly budget review.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Awards the Contract RFT-2025-53 for the construction of De Chene Reserve Pavilion: Gender Inclusive Changerooms to Harris HMC Interiors (VIC) Pty Ltd for a fixed lump sum amount of \$2,149,059.00 (excluding GST) plus a provisional sum of \$410,000.00 (excluding GST), totaling \$2,559,059.00 (excluding GST), and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Resolution:**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) **Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that the terms specified in paragraph 1 of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council;**
 - b) **Ensure that, other than terms referred to in paragraph 1 of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer; and**
 - c) **Advise all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract (conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this resolution).**
3. **Refers Contract RFT-2025-53 budget shortfall of \$101,367 to the first quarterly budget review.**

8.13 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting during the debate.

Carried unanimously

7.11 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-2026-3 - MCDONALD RESERVE - HOCKEY PITCH AND SPORTS LIGHTING WORKS

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council approval to award contract RFT-2026-3 McDonald Reserve – Hockey Pitch and Sports Lighting works to the preferred contractor Polytan Asia Pacific Pty Ltd.

The McDonald Reserve Hockey Pitch and Sports Lighting Works forms part of Council's commitment to improving community sporting infrastructure and addressing increased demand for hockey facilities within Merri-bek. The project will deliver a new competition-ready synthetic hockey pitch at McDonald Reserve, together with sports lighting, irrigation, spectator shelter, equipment storage and associated civil works. The upgrade is intended to increase hockey capacity, improve the quality and functionality of the reserve and provide a fit-for-purpose sporting facility for ongoing community use.

Eleven conforming tenders were received and assessed in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy against weighted evaluation criteria including cost, capability, capacity, methodology, program and sustainability considerations.

Following the tender evaluation process, Polytan Asia Pacific Pty Ltd has been identified as the preferred contractor, who has a strong track record of completing comparable sports field upgrade projects for local government clients.

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

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Awards the contract RFT-2026-3 for **McDonald Reserve – Hockey Pitch and Sports Lighting works** (the **Contract**), to Polytan Asia Pacific Pty Ltd (the **Contractor**) for a maximum fixed lump sum amount of \$3,243,036.70 (excluding GST) plus a provisional sum(s) of \$450,000.00 (excluding GST), totaling \$3,693,036.70 (excluding GST) and otherwise subject to and in accordance with point 2 of this resolution:
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that the terms specified in paragraph 1 of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council;
 - b) Ensure that, other than terms referred to in paragraph 1 of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer; and
 - c) Advise all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract (conditional on acceptance of the contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this resolution).
3. Thanks, the Victorian State Government for its support and contribution to this project for the amount of \$468,038.

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Awards the contract RFT-2026-3 for McDonald Reserve – Hockey Pitch and Sports Lighting works** (the **Contract**), to Polytan Asia Pacific Pty Ltd (the **Contractor**) for a maximum fixed lump sum amount of **\$3,243,036.70** (excluding GST) plus a provisional sum(s) of **\$450,000.00** (excluding GST), totaling **\$3,693,036.70** (excluding GST) and otherwise subject to and in accordance with point 2 of this resolution:
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) **Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that the terms specified in paragraph 1 of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council;**
 - b) **Ensure that, other than terms referred to in paragraph 1 of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer; and**
 - c) **Advise all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract (conditional on acceptance of the contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this resolution).**
3. **Thanks, the Victorian State Government for its support and contribution to this project for the amount of \$468,038.**

Carried unanimously

NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 MORATORIUM ON DATA CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

Motion

That Council:

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

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. Calls on the Victorian Government to:

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

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

8.18 pm Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting during the debate.

Carried unanimously

Item Notice of Motion 8.2 - Urgent Safety Upgrade of Boundary Road and Sussex Street Intersection, Pascoe Vale – was brought forward to be considered earlier in the order of business.

8.3 IMPROVING BUS SERVICES

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes the importance of improved bus services for local residents and visitors to our municipality.
2. Incorporates the findings of the reports to its advocacy priorities.
3. Shares the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (Improving Bus Services June 2026), Infrastructure Victoria (Fast, Frequent, Fair August 2025), and Movement and Place (Metropolitan Melbourne Public Transport Analysis April 2026) with local candidates and Members of Parliament.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the importance of improved bus services for local residents and visitors to our municipality.**
2. **Notes that the findings of the three listed reports will inform the development of bus priorities in Council's Transport Advocacy Strategy.**
3. **Shares the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (Improving Bus Services June 2026), Infrastructure Victoria (Fast, Frequent, Fair August 2025), and Movement and Place (Metropolitan Melbourne Public Transport Analysis April 2026) with local candidates and Members of Parliament.**

Carried unanimously

NOTICE OF RESCISSION

Nil.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS

Nil.

URGENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Nil.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Resolution

Cr Davidson moved, Cr Politis seconded -

In accordance with section 66(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, this Council meeting be closed to the public to consider this/these report(s):

- 12.1 Sale of Properties Under Section 181 of the Local Government Act 1989 because it relates to personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.
- 12.2 Contract Award: RFT-2026-2 - Wallace Reserve Lighting Upgrade because it relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released; AND confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a).
- 12.3 Contract Award: RFT-2026-20 Harold Stevens Athletics Track - Resurfacing and LED upgrade because it relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

Carried

The Council meeting closed to the public at 8.30 pm.

8.30 pm *Cr Theodosis left the meeting and did not return.*

OPENING THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Irvin seconded –

The Council meeting be open to the public.

Carried

The Council meeting opened to the public at 8.33 pm.

The Council meeting closed at 8.33 pm.

Confirmed

Cr Nat Abboud
MAYOR