



Merri-bek
City Council

PROPOSED
Minutes of the Special Council Meeting

Held in Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic Centre,
90 Bell Street, Coburg
on Monday 20 July 2026

1.	WELCOME	3
2.	APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE	3
3.	DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS	3
4.	COUNCIL REPORTS	
4.1	NOTICE OF NATIVE TITLE DETERMINATION APPLICATION	4

The Mayor opened the meeting at 6.01 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	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Sue Bolton	6.02 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Liz Irvin	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Dr Jay Iwasaki	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Chris Miles	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Helen Politis	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Adam Pulford	Absent	
Cr Ella Svensson	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Katerine Theodosis	6.01 pm	6.06 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	Absent	

OFFICERS

Chief Executive Officer – Kate McCaughey
 Director Business Transformation – Sue Vujcevic
 Director Place and Environment – Pene Winslade
 Director Community – Eamonn Fennessy
 Manager Governance and Strategy – Yvonne Callanan

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

COUNCIL REPORTS

4.1 NOTICE OF NATIVE TITLE DETERMINATION APPLICATION

Executive Summary

The Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People have lodged a Native Title Determination Application in the Federal Court seeking recognition of native title over approximately 10,424 square kilometres across metropolitan Melbourne and surrounding municipalities, including the City of Merri-bek.

The application applies to Crown land only and excludes freehold land, private property and public works. As a result, Council-owned freehold land is not affected. Council's interest relates to Crown land where it is appointed as Committee of Management or has statutory land management responsibilities.

Under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*, Council has been invited to become a respondent party to the proceeding. If Council elects to do so, a Notice of Intention to Become a Party must be filed with the Federal Court by 21 July 2026.

Becoming a respondent does not mean Council opposes or supports the Native Title claim. Rather, it enables Council to protect its legal interests, remain informed throughout the proceedings and participate where matters affect Crown land under Council's management.

Officers have obtained legal advice which recommends Council become a respondent party to preserve its legal interests while participating proportionately in what is expected to be a lengthy court process. It is important to note that State and territory governments are the lead respondents in Federal Court Native Title claims because they legally own and manage unallocated Crown land, public infrastructure, and natural resources.

It is therefore recommended that Council become a respondent party and consider participating in a joint legal representation arrangement with other affected councils which, among other benefits, has the potential advantage of mitigating legal costs.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Becomes a respondent to the application for determination of native title in Victoria known as "Perry James Wandin & Ors on behalf of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung People and State of Victoria & Ors" (Federal Court Proceeding VID1466/2025).
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage legal representation to:
 - a) take steps on behalf of Council to become a respondent;
 - b) provide legal advice to Council regarding the application, and
 - c) to otherwise act on behalf of Council throughout the application process.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Becomes a respondent to the application for determination of native title in Victoria known as "Perry James Wandin & Ors on behalf of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung People and State of Victoria & Ors" (Federal Court Proceeding VID1466/2025).**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage legal representation to:**
 - a) **take steps on behalf of Council to become a respondent;**

- b) provide legal advice to Council regarding the application, and**
- c) to otherwise act on behalf of Council throughout the application process.**

Carried unanimously

The Council meeting closed at 6.06 pm.

Confirmed

Cr Nat Abboud
MAYOR