



# Merri-bek City Council

## Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held at the Council Chamber, Merri-bek Civic Centre,  
90 Bell Street, Coburg  
on Tuesday 20 June 2023

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

Present	Time In	Time Out
Cr Angelica Panopoulos, Mayor	7.03 pm	9.48 pm
Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor	7.03 pm	9.48 pm
Cr Adam Pulford	7.03 pm	8.57 pm
Cr Annalivia Carli Hannan	8.01 pm	9.18 pm
Cr Helen Pavlidis	Apology	
Cr James Conlan	7.03 pm	9.48 pm
Cr Lambros Tapinos	7.11 pm	9.48 pm
Cr Mark Riley	7.03 pm	9.48 pm
Cr Monica Harte	7.03 pm	9.48 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	7.03 pm	9.48 pm
Cr Sue Bolton	7.03 pm	9.48 pm

### OFFICERS

Chief Executive Officer – Cathy Henderson  
Director Business Transformation – Sue Vujcevic  
Director City Infrastructure – Anita Curnow  
Director Community – Eamonn Fennessy  
Director Place and Environment – Joseph Tabacco  
Chief Financial Officer - Jemma Wightman  
Manager Governance and Strategy – Yvonne Callanan  
Unit Manager Governance – Troy Delia

## **APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Cr Pavlidis was an apology to the meeting.

## **DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Nil.

## **MINUTE CONFIRMATION**

### **Resolution**

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Yildiz seconded -**

**The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10 May 2023 be confirmed.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS**

*7.11 pm Cr Tapinos entered the meeting.*

### **Mayor, Cr Panopoulos**

- Attended the National General Assembly of Local Government conference in Canberra, meeting with key stakeholders from across the country in local government to learn about other councils and what they are doing in their areas that cause them concerns or difficulties. Advocacy motions were passed that will be taken to the Federal Government.
- Today is World Refugee Day, whilst in Canberra I represented our Council as part of the Mayoral taskforce for refugees. The taskforce met with MP's, Senators and the Minister regarding the Australian Government's current refugee and asylum seeker policies. Specifically we explained how they related to us at a local government level. We discussed the very human impact of the current refugee deterrent system. We explained why we need to abolish temporary visas and give people work and study rights and healthcare.

### **Cr Bolton**

- Attended and acknowledged the successful Ballerri Mooroop open day on Sunday 28 May. Council and the Wurundjeri people have been campaigning to win back the site and have the land returned.

There has been a campaign for a number of years to try and get a Cultural Centre and Aboriginal services, education and sports facilities on the site. It was a well-attended day with a lot of support from people in the First Nations Community, not only traditional owners but first nations people living off country and people who were involved in the original campaign to keep the school open. A lot of local residents and people from all over Merri-bek attended.

- Attended a successful rally on Saturday for accessible tram stops to be built on Sydney Road. In 2 years' time the Government will shut the Upfield train line in order to remove the level crossing in Brunswick, and that will remove any accessible public transport in this area.

### **Cr Davidson**

- Acknowledged and congratulated former Councillor and 2 time Mayor Cr John Kavanagh, who was awarded the Order of Australia medal for his commitment and work on Council for many years and his work with the community, in particular the various community centres we now have in Gowanbrae, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy.

He is now President of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, Council is still in contact with John Kavanagh through his work on the creek.

## **PETITIONS**

### **5.2 PETITION REQUESTING A RECYCLING BIN IN METHVEN PARK**

A petition (D23/257226) has been received containing 36 signatures requesting Council install a recycling bin in Methven Park.

#### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council install a recycling bin in Methven Park.
2. Refers the petition requesting Council install a recycling bin in Methven Park to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

#### **Resolution**

**Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Davidson seconded -**

That Council:

1. **Receives the petition, requesting Council install a recycling bin in Methven Park.**
2. **Refers the petition requesting Council install a recycling bin in Methven Park to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.**

**Carried**

### **5.1 PETITION REQUESTING THE PEDESTRIANISATION OF THE CARR STREET, COBURG BRIDGE**

A petition (D23/249142) has been received containing 17 signatures requesting the pedestrianisation of the Carr Street, Coburg bridge.

#### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting the pedestrianisation of the Carr Street, Coburg bridge.
2. Refers the petition requesting the pedestrianisation of the Carr Street, Coburg bridge to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

#### **Resolution**

**Cr Bolton moved, Cr Conlan seconded -**

That Council:

1. **Receives the petition, requesting the pedestrianisation of the Carr Street, Coburg bridge.**
2. **Refers the petition requesting the pedestrianisation of the Carr Street, Coburg bridge to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.**

**Carried unanimously**

### **5.3 PETITION REQUESTING COUNCIL INVESTIGATE PARKING AND BUSINESS PRACTICES IN THE VICINITY OF VICTORIA, HENKEL, ALEXANDER AND WENDEL STREETS, BRUNSWICK**

A petition (D23/268874) has been received containing 11 signatures requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander and Wendel Streets, Brunswick.

#### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander and Wendel Streets, Brunswick.
2. Refers the petition requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander and Wendel Streets, Brunswick to the Director City Infrastructure and the Director Place and Environment for consideration and response.

#### **Resolution**

**Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Riley seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Receives the petition, requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander and Wendel Streets, Brunswick.**
2. **Refers the petition requesting Council investigate parking and business practices in the vicinity of Victoria, Henkel, Alexander and Wendel Streets, Brunswick to the Director City Infrastructure and the Director Place and Environment for consideration and response.**

**Carried**

### **5.4 PETITION REQUESTING BETTER LIGHTING IN COLE RESERVE, PASCOE VALE**

A petition has been received containing approximately 100 signatures requesting Council provides better lighting on the west side of Cole Reserve, Pascoe Vale.

#### **Resolution**

**Cr Davidson moved, Cr Yildiz seconded –**

**That Council:**

1. **Receives the petition, requesting better lighting on the boundary of the west side of Cole Reserve, Pascoe Vale.**
2. **Refers the petition requesting better lighting on the boundary of the west side of Cole Reserve, Pascoe Vale to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

*Public Question Time commenced at 7.27 pm.*

*Mayor, Cr Angelica Panopoulos responded to the next 2 questions together.*

### **ALEXANDER WEINSTOCK – QUESTION – REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

I am deeply disappointed by the near total erasure of action on active transport in Merri-bek and believe this decision will cement harms to vulnerable people and the environment well into the future.

Given the overwhelming evidence that bike lanes have in improving the urban environment, the specific evidence and work gathered in Merri-bek that supports it, as well as direct community mobilisation by the community on this issue, what would it take for this Council to deliver on its promises?

### **RORY DICKSON – QUESTION –REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

Investing in private vehicles is costly and inefficient, making it a poor use of ratepayer funds. Cycling, on the other hand, provides numerous community benefits, including improved health, social connections, and financial well-being, which cars cannot offer. It is absurd for the council to disregard their constituents, considering that building safe cycling infrastructure is relatively inexpensive and provides significant advantages for the entire community, including drivers.

Why is the Merri-bek city council ignoring constituents' overwhelming demand for prioritising active transport over private cars despite record engagement at the previous Council Meeting?

### **Mayor, Cr Angelica Panopoulos, responded:**

Council has heard quite clearly the strong community feedback to invest more in dedicated bike lanes and other active transport infrastructure. An amendment will be moved as part of the adoption of the budget tonight to increase that investment in the coming years capital works program and also the Notice of Motion that is about doing the further work to increase the investment to make it easier to ride and walk in Merri-bek.

The recommended budget and capital works program before us does include significant investment in active transport generally, we have over the \$10 per capita requirement that has been satisfied.

The transport program is shown in Appendix B of the proposed budget document in tonight's agenda. I do agree that this was not visible enough in the draft budget documents and have asked that we find a better way of communicating this list of active transport projects that we will be designing and delivering.

In June 2022, Council adopted the 10 Year Capital works program for active travel, the program sets out a 10 year plan for infrastructure, including the separated bike lane projects as well as many shared paths and upgrades to existing paths. The funding for this is expected to be over the 10 years, the budget as it was presented before us only covered the 5 years. Some projects have had to be rephased but the on-road bike projects in that plan are proceeding as planned, apart from the construction of O'Hea Street which is a year later.

We are working on 25 active transport infrastructure projects overall, including De Carle Street bike lines, O'Hea Street (Sussex Street to Derby Street) in Pascoe Vale, Urquhart Street from Elm Grove to Armstead Avenue, bike routes emerging from the recently completed Fawcner transport study and finalisation of the Dawson Street protected bike lanes following the trial, also Northumberland Road and completing construction of those. As well as finalising and making a decision on Kent Road and those protected bike lanes. There are things happening but there is always more that needs to be done. The amendment and the Notice of Motion will hopefully address that tonight.

We also have constraints with the developer contributions program, this was set up in the last term of Council and has legally tied a lot of funding towards roads projects, which we have to satisfy.

### **JOHN ENGLART – QUESTION –REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

I outlined in my verbal presentation following Climate Action Merri-bek written submission that not having any dedicated bike lane projects in design means Council cannot take advantage of \$210 million funding by Victorian Government in the state Budget over next 4 years in the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program. And the advice of the Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28 stressing the importance of “initiatives that will result in more direct, separated cycle paths.” This appears to have been totally ignored by Council Officers in their response to the Climate Action Merri-bek submission.

Why isn't there dedicated cycling projects, consistent with the State Bicycle Strategy, at the very least in design in the budget to make use of state government grant funding in the next 4 years?

#### **At the request of the Mayor, Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow responded:**

I am pleased to advise that Merri-bek City Council did make a submission to the Victorian Government's \$200 million Safe Local Roads and Streets program on 19 May 2023. In its first EOI process, the State was seeking expressions of interest from Councils to take part in a phase of initial planning and project development, indicating that it would be partnering with up to ten local governments. Merri-bek has not yet heard the outcome of this EOI process.

An extract from our submission is as follows:

The broad scale, mass treatment projects that Council would like to deliver through this process are:

1. Raised threshold treatments
2. Improvement of pedestrian priority network
3. Safe access to school
4. Safe bike lanes

Council would also like to seek opportunities for improved road safety in the Lygon Street Brunswick East strip shopping centre, as this stretch of local road has significant numbers of fatality and serious injury crashes for vulnerable road users compared to any other local road in Merri-bek.

If Merri-bek is successful in this, the initial planning and project development will occur with the support of the State. There is also funding in the budget for design of cycling projects as summarised on page 115 of the Agenda, Appendix B of the Budget Document.

## **NICHOLAS ZULL – STATEMENT –REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

Speaking on behalf of the almost 700 members of Merri-bek Bicycle User Group we would like to express our dismay and agitation regarding this Council's budget. The Council received an astonishing 87 submissions directly referencing cycling infrastructure and all but 4 were about Council's failure to budget, design, or build protected bike lanes over the next five years.

By their own admission, officers reported that “the participation rate in stage 2 of the engagement (online submissions) saw the highest levels in the past 5 years” and yet they are making no changes to the budget for cycling projects.

We believe Council should, at a bare minimum, commit to designing the Victoria Street, Brunswick protected bicycle lanes within the 2023/24 financial year. This route is already in the state Government Strategic Cycling Corridor and will play a critical role during the LXP construction. All of which make it more likely to attract funding from the state government for project delivery.

We also believe it would be appropriate for Council to adopt a Service Performance Indicator that measures successful mode shift to public and active transport modes, including travel by bicycle, potentially by using the Household Survey that is already conducted at regular intervals.

*Nicholas Zull read their statement.*

## **JOHN ENGLART – QUESTION –REPORT 7.3 BRUNSWICK CENTRAL PARKLANDS AND INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

As part of the Brunswick Central Parklands and Integrated Water Management Plan, what efforts are planned to increase mitigation of microplastics pollution from Clifton Park community synthetic pitch as part of this strategy?

Will Council investigate best practice standards as recommended by NSW Chief Scientist and Engineers Report published June 2023?

Do Council officers think proposed swales adjoining the synthetic field to intercept water prior to entering the drainage network is sufficient to mitigate microplastics pollution and meet best practice standards to prevent microplastics pollution of stormwater, local waterways and aquatic environments?

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

There is a project to replace the Synthetic Sportsfield surface at Clifton Park listed in the Brunswick Central Parklands and Integrated Water Management Plan as well as in Council's 2023/24 capital works budget.

The plan for delivery of this project will be informed by Council's Sportsfield Surface Study and Policy (*that I understand you have had some engagement with*) which is in the final stages of completion and is planned to be reported back through Council in the August meeting. The Study and Policy will take into account the recent report and recommendations from the NSW Chief Scientist's review into the design, use and impacts of synthetic turf in public open spaces you have referred to in your question statement.

Officers have also undertaken preliminary investigations into the removal and recycling of the existing synthetic surface.

Through the delivery of this project Council will assess and implement strategies to increase mitigation of microplastics pollution from Clifton Park community synthetic pitch.

## **MARION ATTWATER – QUESTION –REPORT 7.9 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

In the revised Community Engagement Policy, on page 824 of the agenda, it is written that in regards to selling, exchanging or leasing land that “We will give notice to the community of any proposal to sell or exchange land, letting the community know how they can provide feedback to the proposal.”

At the 10 May Council meeting, the wording of a resolution to give public notice about a proposal to sell land, the former Glenroy Library, was amended to state that the public notice would be placed on the Conversations Merri-bek website.

In spite of that amended resolution being carried unanimously, the public notice for the sale of the former Glenroy library was not placed on the Conversations Merri-bek website. It was only on the corporate website news page.

Shouldn't that section of the Community Engagement Policy be amended to align with the resolution of 10 May?

I would also like to ask about the Community Engagement Policy toolkit and guidance which is mentioned on page 810 of the officer's report.

What date was this toolkit developed by the Council, and what is the date of the most recent revision to the toolkit?

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

The internal toolkit and guidance was first developed in 2020 following the last iteration of the Community Engagement Policy. Sections of the toolkit are updated as required, and has most recently been reviewed in April 2023.

## **MARION ATTWATER – QUESTION –REPORT 7.14 GOVERNANCE REPORT - JUNE 2023 - CYCLICAL REPORT**

Has the Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee held any meetings in 2023, and if yes, on what dates please?

### **At the request of the Mayor, Director City Infrastructure, Anita Curnow responded:**

The Sustainable Transport Advisory Committee met on Tuesday 2 May 2023. The Record of that meeting will be included in the July Council Governance Report. That has been the only meeting this year.

## **NICHOLAS ZULL – STATEMENT – NOM 8.4 MAKING IT SAFER AND EASIER TO WALK AND RIDE IN MERRI-BEK**

Thank you councillors, on behalf of the almost 700 members of Merri-bek bicycle user group we can see it is clear that this budget is failing the people of Merri-bek with regards to infrastructure priorities. As expressed earlier, almost three quarters of the budget submissions were regarding the lack of budget allocation to separated bike lanes.

A network of separated bike lanes does not exist in Merri-bek despite the will of the residents, and compelling research consistently finding it is the silver bullet to improving modal share.

We strongly support Councillor Pulford's Notice of Motion, Making It Safer and Easier to Walk and Ride In Merri-bek, requesting Officer's prepare a report on accelerating the rollout on active transport infrastructure, and appreciate the councillor acting on the concerns of our community. We note officer's comments regarding indexation against inflation to be 'one growth factor laid on another' but are in a position to allay those fears.



Firstly, bicycle infrastructure is having to play a massive game of catch up comparative to the road network and footpaths so there is a real need to grow funding to meet council's own mode shift and climate emission targets.

And secondly, the population of Merri-bek is not increasing anywhere near the rate of inflation. Between 2016 and 2021 Merri-bek's population increased by 0.7% according to the ABS, and inflation increased by 9.51% according to the RBA. In real terms, that would be 8 cents per dollar taken away from active transport infrastructure, and that's before the ramping up of inflation we have endured since 2021.

We note that construction costs have risen by 30% over the past two years and these particularly impact protected bike lane infrastructure.

*Nicholas Zull read their statement.*

### **Questions and Statements taken on notice**

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

#### **KELLI SKAPETIS – QUESTION –REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

The published budget for this Council meeting states the Hosken Reserve redevelopment budget now stands at \$9 million. Why have Council officers been publishing budget commitments of only \$7 million up until this point in time? What was the approval process that has taken the budget from \$7 million, to \$9 million and when did this occur?

*The Mayor took this question on notice.*

#### **PAULINE CARMICHAEL – QUESTION –REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

I refer to report 7.1 in Council meeting agenda 8 June 2022 Significant community engagement took place on the 10 year active transport (walking and riding) 10 year capital program. On page 18 of the report it says that there were 292 survey responses and 932 pinned comments on the interactive map from 289 contributors and, in particular 215 submissions in relation to bicycle feedback and 82 submissions in relation to pedestrian feedback. In regards to the survey, which asked responders to rank project priorities in the 1-5 year and 6-10 programs, the responses were summarised into "themes".

There appears to be so much time and resources by Council officers, Councillors and the general public spent on trying to change priorities. I understand that priorities can change, for example the growth of Coburg High School and the uptake of active transport by its students and also the growth of the Pentridge area. I do not understand, however, the point of doing this important community engagement work for the survey results not to be reported transparently.

The survey was pretty simple – what are your priorities? There was an enormous number of pinned comments but most of them seemed to me to be pointed around several hot spots. I completed the survey and put a pin comment so I want to know the result. I want to see the submissions so that I can see if the community responses are aligned to the proposed 10 year program. For example if 80% of the survey respondents prioritised the Craigieburn Shared Path stages as the highest priority then that should tell Council how important that is to the community.

As it stands the community does not know how their feedback is being weighted in the officer recommendations and it seems too easy for the priorities to be changed based on how well you lobby.

So my question is – can the survey results and report of pinned comments by streets/roads and a copy of all the submissions please be made available to the community?

*The Mayor took this question on notice.*

**MATTHEW DEUTSCHER – QUESTION –REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

Is it true there is no funding allocated for the next 4 years for protected bike lane infrastructure?

As a daily cargo bike user I am appalled at how dangerous the school drop off run is. Is getting more car traffic off the roads and providing safe cycling routes a priority of Merribek City Council?

*The Mayor took this question on notice.*

**MARILYN MOORE – QUESTION – REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

I have read the Budget and officer reply to our budget submission (#117 Coburg Historical Society).

The budge reply states:

“...An approach for Council approval to undertake heritage assessment of the Coburg Shopping centre – along Sydney Road is currently being prepared.”

Firstly, there are buildings in the centre but outside Sydney Road we think should be assessed i.e. along Bell Street, 123-129 Bell Street, Coburg (Mary Street to Railway Reserve).

There are buildings in north (of Albion Street) Brunswick along Sydney Road which also should be assessed. One of our members has suggested that the middle eastern 1920's murals on the first floor of HO 159, 400-404 Sydney Road (Bates Building), the former Taj Mahal Ballroom, should also be assessed and hopefully protected. The murals are the subject of a booklet *Revealing Stories* by Janine Barrant and Dianna Wells printed last year in association with the Brunswick Design District. We have already suggested the assessment of remnant neon signs on top of shops.

So where in the Coburg Shopping centre will the feasibility study be carried out and will the assessment be extended to signs and building interiors ?

Will it extend to Bell Street and north Brunswick Sydney Road shops?

Does this officers reply assume a money limit (\$5,000?) the Council motion apparently carried with it?

We want the full heritage assessment, (if indicated by the feasibility study) to be carried out ASAP and not be delayed by a lack of funding. Strategic planning heritage assessments are notoriously slow moving and there is some urgency with this assessment.

*The Mayor took this question on notice.*

## **LINDA BENNETT – STATEMENT – REPORT 7.1 BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

I speak for 50 Residents of Merri-bek who want to see more Reconciliation outward facing action. And a submission to the draft budget was made about this 2 weeks ago. In our submission we requested 3 things:

1. That Council create an identified budget “line” that targets “positive local action on meaningful Reconciliation” as advised by Wurundjeri Elders and other locally living First Nations people.

Why - Because clear identification in the Budget ensures planned action and gives a clear message to our wider community.

2. That a budget commitment to bringing the 10+ years of Council support for Ballerit Mooroop to fruition would signal strong and practical support to the work of the First Nations Advisory Committee.

Why - Because it would be true to the 4 year Council Plan which identifies this as one of the priority actions.

3. That other Reconciliation actions be included in the Draft 4 year Budget under the guidance of the First Nations Advisory Committee to ensure publicly visible and widespread action across Council.

Why - Because it would be true to the Council’s 2021 Statement of Commitment to local Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, a commitment to take positive local action and lead change.

We thank Councillors for their strong support for Ballerit Mooroop voiced over the last weeks and for its inclusion in the redrafted budget. However we would hope that Councillors appreciate that their 2021 Commitment to Action goes beyond the one project that is Balleert Mooroop. After all, the statement commits the Council to becoming a leader in Reconciliation.

*The Mayor took this statement on notice.*

*Public Question Time concluded at 7.54 pm.*

*8.01 pm Cr Carli Hannan entered the meeting.*

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

### **7.1 MERRI-BEK CITY COUNCIL 4-YEAR BUDGET 2023-2027 AND COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2023-2024 - FOR ADOPTION**

#### **Executive Summary**

Council must prepare and adopt a rolling 4-year Budget that contains financial statements and other matters. This must be finally approved by Council no later than 30 June each year.

The purpose of this report is to present for adoption the:

- 4-Year Budget 2023-2027 (Attachment 1); and
- Council Action Plan 2023-24 (Attachment 2).

The 4-Year Budget 2023-2027 continues to deliver services to Merri-bek’s 174,000 plus residents within the 3.50 per cent rate cap set by the State Government. The 4-year budget funds Councillor and community initiatives and delivers critical major projects while maintaining Council’s financial sustainability.

Key features of the budget include:

- An operating projects program of \$5.9 million. Key projects in the program include:
  - Urban Forest Strategy - Tree Planting Regime (\$0.5 million) as well as additional funding for preparation to places to plant trees in tricky-to-plant areas (\$0.3 million);
  - Continuing the solar and/or thermal grants for low-income earners (\$0.4 million);
  - Zero Carbon Merri-bek (ZCM) Emergency Action Plan (\$0.3 million);
  - Integration of climate risk & resilience (\$0.3 million);
  - Expanding the outdoor help for seniors program (\$0.3 million);
  - Continuing the Coburg Night Market (\$0.2 million) including supporting local makers and food stallholders with reduced fees;
  - Expanding the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and elderly community engagement program (\$0.1 million);
  - Funding to facilitate a new homelessness assertive outreach program (\$0.1 million);
  - Ballerit Mooroop – funding of \$0.1 million has been included for the next 2-years for a role to provide support in strategic planning, project management, advocacy and seeking funding opportunities (these funds will also provide additional support and leadership on Councils key Statements of commitment priorities);
  - Continuing to expand the dad's group partnership (\$40,000); and
  - Co-funding Merri Wayi which is a community-led collaboration to enable our nature and urban worlds to thrive along the Merri-Creek (\$25,000).
- A capital works program of \$123.1 million. Key projects in the program include:
  - Continuing construction of the \$36.9 million Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment;
  - Commencing the upgrade works for several early-years facilities over the next five years totaling \$32.1 million. Including completing Oak Park Kindergarten and Derby Street Children's Centre, Pascoe Vale in 2023-24;
  - Continuing construction of the \$29.0 Saxon Street Community Hub;
  - Improvements to parks, open space and streetscapes (\$24.1 million);
  - Roads and carparks renewal and maintenance (\$17.5 million);
  - Delivery of Hosken Reserve Masterplan \$9.0 million; and
  - Footpaths, bicycle paths and transport infrastructure (\$5.7 million).
- As part of Council's participatory budgeting process earlier this year, funding six community budget ideas totaling \$278,000:
  - Double Council's shade structures program for playgrounds and parks \$80,000;
  - Take the First Step Merri-bek (domestic violence prevention) \$33,000;
  - Installation of nesting boxes \$10,000;
  - Accessible tennis facilities and reserves \$100,000;
  - Drinking fountains in shopping strips \$50,000; and
  - More bins around parklands \$5,000.

- The 4-Year Budget 2023-2027 continues Council’s strong commitment to delivering on its major projects pipeline with a further \$13.3 million set aside for the Significant Projects Reserve to fund future projects. Saxon Street Community Hub and Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment projects are the two key projects being funded from the reserve which have commenced in the current year.
- The budget is informed by the Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2023-2024 (provided as Attachment 2). The Council Action Plan is developed annually to support implementation of the Merri-bek Council Plan 2021-2025 and identifies the major priorities and actions to deliver against the Strategic Objectives (as contained in the Council Plan).
- The budget has been prepared in accordance with the Revenue and Rating Plan 2021-25 which was adopted at the Special Council meeting held 24 June 2021.

Since public exhibition of the Proposed 4-Year Budget 2023-2027 which occurred from 19 April to 21 May 2023, amendments have been made to develop the Proposed budget based on new information (e.g., changes to fees as set by the State Government) and community feedback received on the proposed budget as part of the community engagement process. Details of the changes are summarised in section 3 of this report.

121 submissions were received on the proposed budget in the second round of community engagement; these submissions are in addition to the 26 eligible community budget ideas received in the first stage of engagement. A copy of public submissions received, and Council officer commentary is provided as Attachment 3.

Key changes made to the proposed budget since public exhibition are detailed in this report.

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Having considered all submissions received and in accordance with Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, adopts the Annual Budget 2023-2027 (Attachment 1 to this report).
2. Formally declares the Rates Levies and Annual Service Charges for the 2023-24 rating year as follows:
  - a) Declaration of Rates and Charges:

In accordance with section 158 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the following rates and charges are declared for the rating year commencing 1 July 2023 and ending 30 June 2024.

- b) Amount intended to be raised:

An amount of \$182,616,906 (or such other amount as is lawfully raised as a consequence of this resolution) be declared as the amount which Council intends to raise by general rates and the annual service charge, which is calculated as follows:

Category	Amount
Residential properties	\$145,068,755
Commercial properties	\$8,865,784
Industrial properties	\$6,355,075
Municipal charge	\$0
Service charges	\$22,312,303
Charge in lieu of rates on cultural and recreational lands	\$14,990
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$182,616,906</b>

Rates Information:

i. General rates:

A general rate to be declared for the 2023-24 financial year. The rateable amount per property will be determined by multiplying the Capital Improved Value of each rateable property by the rate in the dollar indicated in the following table:

Category	Rate
Residential properties	0.0022656 (0.22656 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value)
Commercial properties	0.0022656 (0.22656 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value)
Industrial properties	0.0022656 (0.22656 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value)

ii. No amount is fixed as the minimum amount payable by way of general rate in respect of each rateable property within the municipal district.

c) Municipal charge:

No municipal charge is declared in respect of the 2023-24 financial year.

d) Annual service charge:

i. An annual service charge, for the collection and disposal of refuse, be declared in respect of the 2023-24 financial year.

ii. The annual service charge be in the sum of, and be based on the criteria, set out below:

Category	Rate
Household Rubbish - Shared	\$88.58
Household Rubbish - 80 litre	\$136.27
Household Rubbish - 120 litre	\$306.62
Household Rubbish - 160 litre	\$374.75
Household Rubbish - 200 litre	\$408.82
Household Rubbish - 240 litre	\$476.96
Household Rubbish - 160 litre (concession)	\$187.38
Household Rubbish - 200 litre (concession)	\$204.41
Household Rubbish - 240 litre (concession)	\$238.48
Mixed Recycling - Shared	\$35.14
Mixed Recycling - 120 litre	\$40.54
Mixed Recycling - 240 litre	\$54.05
Mixed Recycling - 360 litre	\$121.62
Food & Garden Organics - Shared	\$59.38
Food & Garden Organics - 120 litre	\$91.36
Food & Garden Organics - 240 litre existing services	\$91.36
Food & Garden Organics - 240 litre new services	\$205.55

Glass Recycling - Shared	\$9.58
Glass Recycling - 120 litre	\$14.73
Glass Recycling - 240 litre	\$33.15

e) Cultural and recreational land:

In accordance with section 4(4) of the *Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963*, the following amounts be declared as a charge in lieu of the general rate (which would otherwise be payable):

Glenroy Road, Glenroy	Northern Golf Club	12,852
Outlook Road, Coburg	Vic Amateur Basketball Association	2,138
<b>Total:</b>		<b>14,990</b>

f) Incentives:

No incentives are declared for the payment of general rates (and annual service charge described earlier in this resolution) before dates fixed or specified for their payment under section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

g) Interest on rates and charges:

- i. Interest is to be charged in accordance with section 172 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, on any amounts of rates and charges which have not yet been paid by the instalment dates fixed by the Minister in accordance with section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*;
- ii. That the interest to be charged is at the rate fixed under section 2 of the *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983*, that applied on the first day of July immediately before the due date for payment; and
- iii. Interest on rates and charges is to be calculated from the date on which the instalment was due.

h) Interest on unpaid monies:

- i. Interest is to be charged on any amounts of money (other than rates and charges) which a person owes to the Council, and which has not been paid by the due date;
- ii. The interest rate shall be determined by Council from time to time and shall not exceed the rate fixed from time to time by the Order-in-Council; and
- iii. That such interest is to be applied in accordance with the provisions of section 120 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

3. Notes that the fees and charges in the Annual Budget 2023-2027 have been updated from the Proposed Annual Budget 2023-2027 with the following changes:

- a) Statutory Fees and Charges have been increased by 3.99 per cent due to the fees and fines being set as part of the Victorian State Budget and gazette 23 May 2023;
- b) Indicator has been added to the fees and charges schedule showing which fees are statutory;
- c) The bin change over fee is now shown by waste service and whether it is the first or subsequent changeover; and
- d) The standard kerbside waste service charge has decreased by \$13.96 from the proposed budget that went out for community feedback to \$296.41 due to several factors.

4. Notes that the Annual Budget 2023-2027 includes borrowings of \$8.0 million for the Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment.
5. Notes that Appendix B in the Annual Budget 2023-2027 now details the Transport Program.
6. Notes that Appendix C in the Annual Budget 2023-2027 now details the Park Program.
7. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make the final documents available for public inspection.
8. Advises submitters that Council has considered their submissions relating to the Proposed Annual Budget 2023-2027 and that the submitters be advised of the outcome of the consideration as it relates to their specific submission through this council report, and they be thanked for their contributions.
9. Adopts Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2023-2024 (provided as Attachment 2) as the third year of actions to deliver against the Merri-bek Council Plan 2021-2025.
10. Authorises the Director Business Transformation to finalise the Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2023-2024 and Annual Budget 2023 - 2027, including any amendments as a result of the adoption of the Budget 2023-2027 and or/minor administrative changes.

## **Resolution**

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Pulford seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Having considered all submissions received and in accordance with Section 94 of the Local Government Act 2020, adopts the Annual Budget 2023-2027 (Attachment 1 to this report) subject to the following change:**
  - a) **Allocate \$60,000 in the strategic priorities operating projects to fund Youth Holistic Outreach Program (YHOP) for one year.**
  - b) **Offset point a) by reducing the surplus by 60,000.**
  - c) **Allocate \$135,000 in the Capital Works Program in 2023/24 for the design and engagement of the Victoria Street Bike Lanes (Sydney Road to Pearson Street, Brunswick).**
  - d) **Offset point c) by reducing the Capital Works Program in 2023/24 for roads resurfacing by \$135,000.**
  - e) **Refers the shortfall in the roads resurfacing program of \$135,000 to the 2023/24 quarterly review process, to be increased in the quarterly review process if surplus funds allow.**
  - f) **Refers \$40,000 to fund a heritage and technical report on the Gillon Oval grandstand to the 2023/24 quarterly review process, if surplus funds are available.**
  - g) **Refers \$400,000 to fund the lights program at Raeburn Reserve to the 2023/24 quarterly review process, if surplus funds are available.**
  - h) **Refers \$400,000 to the 2023/24 quarterly review process for the delivery of the Victoria Street Bike Lanes, if surplus funds are available.**
  - i) **Allocate \$70,000 in the Capital Works Program in 2023/24 for the picnic shelter at ATC Cook Reserve.**
  - j) **Offset point i) by reducing the surplus by \$70,000.**
2. **Formally declares the Rates Levies and Annual Service Charges for the 2023-**



24 rating year as follows:

a) **Declaration of Rates and Charges:**

In accordance with section 158 of the Local Government Act 1989, the following rates and charges are declared for the rating year commencing 1 July 2023 and ending 30 June 2024.

b) **Amount intended to be raised:**

An amount of \$182,616,906 (or such other amount as is lawfully raised as a consequence of this resolution) be declared as the amount which Council intends to raise by general rates and the annual service charge, which is calculated as follows:

Category	Amount
Residential properties	\$145,068,755
Commercial properties	\$8,865,784
Industrial properties	\$6,355,075
Municipal charge	\$0
Service charges	\$22,312,303
Charge in lieu of rates on cultural and recreational lands	\$14,990
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$182,616,906</b>

**Rates Information:**

i. **General rates:**

A general rate to be declared for the 2023-24 financial year. The rateable amount per property will be determined by multiplying the Capital Improved Value of each rateable property by the rate in the dollar indicated in the following table:

Category	Rate
Residential properties	0.0022656 (0.22656 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value)
Commercial properties	0.0022656 (0.22656 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value)
Industrial properties	0.0022656 (0.22656 cents in the dollar of Capital Improved Value)

ii. No amount is fixed as the minimum amount payable by way of general rate in respect of each rateable property within the municipal district.

c) **Municipal charge:**

No municipal charge is declared in respect of the 2023-24 financial year.

d) **Annual service charge:**

i. An annual service charge, for the collection and disposal of refuse, be declared in respect of the 2023-24 financial year.

ii. The annual service charge be in the sum of, and be based on the criteria, set out below:

Category	Rate
Household Rubbish - Shared	\$88.58
Household Rubbish - 80 litre	\$136.27
Household Rubbish - 120 litre	\$306.62
Household Rubbish - 160 litre	\$374.75
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Mixed Recycling - Shared	\$35.14
Mixed Recycling - 120 litre	\$40.54
Mixed Recycling - 240 litre	\$54.05
Mixed Recycling - 360 litre	\$121.62
Food & Garden Organics - Shared	\$59.38
Food & Garden Organics - 120 litre	\$91.36
Food & Garden Organics - 240 litre existing services	\$91.36
Food & Garden Organics - 240 litre new services	\$205.55
Glass Recycling - Shared	\$9.58
Glass Recycling - 120 litre	\$14.73
Glass Recycling - 240 litre	\$33.15

e) **Cultural and recreational land:**

In accordance with section 4(4) of the Cultural and Recreational Lands Act 1963, the following amounts be declared as a charge in lieu of the general rate (which would otherwise be payable):

Glenroy Road, Glenroy	Northern Golf Club	12,852
Outlook Road, Coburg	Vic Amateur Basketball Association	2,138
<b>Total:</b>		<b>14,990</b>

f) **Incentives:**

No incentives are declared for the payment of general rates (and annual service charge described earlier in this resolution) before dates fixed or specified for their payment under section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

g) **Interest on rates and charges:**

- i. Interest is to be charged in accordance with section 172 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, on any amounts of rates and charges which have not yet been paid by the instalment dates fixed by the Minister in accordance with section 167 of the *Local Government Act 1989*;
- ii. That the interest to be charged is at the rate fixed under section 2 of the *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983*, that applied on the first day of July immediately before the due date for payment; and
- iii. Interest on rates and charges is to be calculated from the date on

which the instalment was due.

- h) Interest on unpaid monies:
  - i. Interest is to be charged on any amounts of money (other than rates and charges) which a person owes to the Council, and which has not been paid by the due date;
  - ii. The interest rate shall be determined by Council from time to time and shall not exceed the rate fixed from time to time by the Order-in-Council; and
  - iii. That such interest is to be applied in accordance with the provisions of section 120 of the Local Government Act 2020.
- 3. Notes that the fees and charges in the Annual Budget 2023-2027 have been updated from the Proposed Annual Budget 2023-2027 with the following changes:
  - a) Statutory Fees and Charges have been increased by 3.99 per cent due to the fees and fines being set as part of the Victorian State Budget and gazette 23 May 2023;
  - b) Indicator has been added to the fees and charges schedule showing which fees are statutory;
  - c) The bin change over fee is now shown by waste service and whether it is the first or subsequent changeover; and
  - d) The standard kerbside waste service charge has decreased by \$13.96 from the proposed budget that went out for community feedback to \$296.41 due to several factors.
- 4. Notes that the Annual Budget 2023-2027 includes borrowings of \$8.0 million for the Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment.
- 5. Notes that Appendix B in the Annual Budget 2023-2027 now details the Transport Program.
- 6. Notes that Appendix C in the Annual Budget 2023-2027 now details the Park Program.
- 7. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make the final documents available for public inspection.
- 8. Advises submitters that Council has considered their submissions relating to the Proposed Annual Budget 2023-2027 and that the submitters be advised of the outcome of the consideration as it relates to their specific submission through this council report, and they be thanked for their contributions.
- 9. Adopts Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2023-2024 (provided as Attachment 2) as the third year of actions to deliver against the Merri-bek Council Plan 2021-2025.
- 10. Authorises the Director Business Transformation to finalise the Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2023-2024 and Annual Budget 2023 - 2027, including any amendments as a result of the adoption of the Budget 2023-2027 and or/minor administrative changes.

Carried unanimously

## Order of Business Altered

With the agreement of Council, the order of business was altered to consider Notices of Motions 8.1 and 8.4 before report 7.2.

## 8.1 RESPONSE TO ATTACKS ON THE LGBTIQA+ AND OTHER COMMUNITIES

### Motion

That Council:

1. Repudiates attempts by the far right to shut down LGBTIQA+ and other community events.
2. Continues holding inclusive activities and events that celebrate our diversity of gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, colour, disability, cultural and language backgrounds, including events such as drag story times. Council will demonstrate to the LGBTIQA+ community that they will always have a place in our communities and at our libraries.
3. Stands firmly behind the principle of equality as protected by human rights frameworks.
4. Receives a report at the August 2023 meeting that outlines the requirements, priorities, phasing and costs for Council library services to gain Rainbow Tick accreditation in line with the recently endorsed Merri-bek LGBTIQA+ Action Plan
5. Calls on the State Government to:
  - a) Enact the recommendations of the Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee's Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections to extend the state's anti-vilification protections beyond race and religion to cover areas such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and HIV/AIDS status.
  - b) Conduct a State-wide audit of public library safety to identify emerging threats, risks and best-practice in ensuring safety for staff and library visitors. The audit would include a review of event management, built environment, safety procedures and staff training.
  - c) Create a taskforce focused on library safety. The taskforce would recommend actions to make libraries safe for everyone. The taskforce would have representatives from organisations, including library workers and their representative/s, Australian Services Union, Victorian Pride Lobby, Victorian Multicultural Commission, Victoria Police, WorkSafe, local government and regional library corporations.
  - d) Increase and index libraries' operational funding and begin to reverse the steady real decline of state government funding for libraries.

### Resolution

**Cr Bolton moved, Cr Conlan seconded -**

That Council:

1. **Repudiates attempts by the far right to shut down LGBTIQA+ and other community events.**
2. **Continues holding inclusive activities and events that celebrate our diversity of gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, colour, disability, cultural and language backgrounds, including events such as drag story times. Council will demonstrate to the LGBTIQA+ community that they will always have a place in our communities and at our libraries.**
3. **Stands firmly behind the principle of equality as protected by human rights frameworks.**

4. **Receives a report at the August 2023 meeting that outlines the requirements, priorities, phasing and costs for Council library services to gain Rainbow Tick accreditation in line with the recently endorsed Merri-bek LGBTIQ+ Action Plan**
5. **Calls on the State Government to:**
  - a) **Enact the recommendations of the Legislative Assembly Legal and Social Issues Committee's Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections to extend the state's anti-vilification protections beyond race and religion to cover areas such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and HIV/AIDS status.**
  - b) **Conduct a State-wide audit of public library safety to identify emerging threats, risks and best-practice in ensuring safety for staff and library visitors. The audit would include a review of event management, built environment, safety procedures and staff training.**
  - c) **Create a taskforce focused on library safety. The taskforce would recommend actions to make libraries safe for everyone. The taskforce would have representatives from organisations, including library workers and their representative/s, Australian Services Union, Victorian Pride Lobby, Victorian Multicultural Commission, Victoria Police, WorkSafe, local government and regional library corporations.**
  - d) **Increase and index libraries' operational funding and begin to reverse the steady real decline of state government funding for libraries.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **8.4 MAKING IT SAFER AND EASIER TO WALK AND RIDE IN MERRI-BEK**

### **Motion**

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

1. **Bringing forward active transport projects that have been prioritised by community members and groups through recent consultations, including on our 10 Year Capital Works Programs for Walking and Cycling, in our Capital Works Program.**
2. **Increasing the \$10 per head minimum spend on active transport infrastructure each year in line with inflation.**

### **Resolution**

**Cr Pulford moved, Cr Riley seconded -**

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

1. **Bringing forward active transport projects that have been prioritised by community members and groups through recent consultations, including on our 10 Year Capital Works Programs for Walking and Cycling, in our Capital Works Program.**
2. **Increasing the \$10 per head minimum spend on active transport infrastructure each year in line with inflation.**

## 7.2 WHEATSHEAF ROAD STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

### Executive Summary

Wheatsheaf Road has been the focus of a number of improvements over the last few years. It is an important link connecting Glenroy Station, recently upgraded as part of the Level Crossing Removal works, and the award-winning Glenroy Community Hub.

Recent improvements to Wheatsheaf Road have included:

- the Shopfront Improvement Program worked with Wheatsheaf Road businesses to refresh their presentation, branding and displays.
- A number of murals were painted in Wheatsheaf Road as part of the Love Outdoors and RenuWall activation program.

Council is also continuing advocacy to the State Government around pedestrian safety at Plumpton Avenue.

The Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvements Project aims to build on these improvements by lifting the overall presentation of the street, and making it safer, greener and more attractive.

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement for the final concept design, and associated changes to operational responsibility for parts of Wheatsheaf Road in accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004*.

Feedback was sought from the community on a draft concept design in June/July 2021. This feedback from the community along with expert arborist assessment and technical reports on existing conditions has informed the final design.

Key features of the final design include:

- A new pedestrian operated signal crossing over Wheatsheaf Road
- Two new raised threshold pedestrian crossings, one over Argyle Street and one across the slip-lane at Glenroy Road corner
- New street trees in passive irrigation (Water Sensitive Urban Design) tree pits
- New street furniture, including seating and bicycle hoops
- Refurbished pedestrian laneway connection to the Waterloo Road and Blucher Street off-street carparking
- Wider on-street parking spaces
- Upgraded accessible parking spaces on Wheatsheaf Road (increasing from two to three dedicated accessible spaces).

### Tree replacement

The existing trees on Wheatsheaf Road create multiple issues for the strip. They have a narrow canopy that provides little shade. There are difficulties with access, sightlines, and safety due to the form of the trees and their relationship to the shops. An arborist's assessment of the trees highlighted that they are reaching the end of their useful life expectancy in the shopping strip context.

The design therefore proposes the removal of 38 existing street trees, to be replaced by 16 new trees that will eventually provide a far broader canopy and shading. There was strong support from the traders for tree replacement. New trees are proposed to be

positioned in between on-street car spaces, allowing for larger tree canopies and more open views throughout the shopping strip.

### **Transfer of responsibility**

Wheatsheaf Road, between Plumpton Avenue and Glenroy Road is part of the State Government managed arterial road network. The changes to the road design proposed would result in a transfer of responsibility from the Department of Transport and Planning to Council for maintaining new and altered road infrastructure. This report outlines associated operational responsibilities in accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004*.

### **Changes to car parking**

A reduction of on-street carparking is required to deliver the following key improvements:

- a pedestrian operated signalised pedestrian crossing
- raised threshold pedestrian crossings at Argyle Street intersection
- planting of street trees in a location where they can achieve large canopies.

The design proposes the removal of a total of ten on-street car parking spaces: eight from Wheatsheaf Road (three on the north side, five on the south side) and two on-street car parking spaces from Argyle Street, near the intersection with Wheatsheaf Road.

### **Approvals**

Under the *Road Management Act 2004*, Council is responsible for parking, except for clearways on arterial roads. Accordingly, Council's approval is required to remove or modify parking associated with these works. The project cannot progress until Council has approved the proposed removal of parking.

The delivery of the project is also subject to Department of Transport and Planning approvals and authorisation for works within the road reserve.

### **Delivery**

Funds for the delivery of the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvement works are identified in Council's current Capital Works program, with the budget for construction allocated over two years (FY2022-23 and FY2023-24). Following authority approvals the project will be tendered to the market, with construction planned to commence in late 2023.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Endorses the Final Concept Design for the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvements.
2. Endorses, in accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004*, the removal of eight car parking spaces from Wheatsheaf Road (three on the north side, five on the south side), and two car parking spaces from Argyle Street near the intersection with Wheatsheaf Road, as part of the design.
3. Notes that, in accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004*, Council will assume the role of the Responsible Road Authority upon the completion of the project for the footpath and landscaping and drainage infrastructure from the back of kerb, as well as the indented parking and street trees within the road reserve.

### **Resolution**

**Cr Davidson moved, Cr Yildiz seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Endorses the Final Concept Design for the Wheatsheaf Road Streetscape Improvements.**
2. **Endorses, in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004, the removal of eight car parking spaces from Wheatsheaf Road (three on the north side, five on the south side), and two car parking spaces from Argyle Street near the intersection with Wheatsheaf Road, as part of the design.**
3. **Notes that, in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004, Council will assume the role of the Responsible Road Authority upon the completion of the project for the footpath and landscaping and drainage infrastructure from the back of kerb, as well as the indented parking and street trees within the road reserve.**

8.49 pm *Cr Carli Hannan returned to the meeting during the debate.*

**Carried unanimously**

8.53 pm *Cr Bolton left the meeting*

## **7.3 BRUNSWICK CENTRAL PARKLANDS AND INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **Executive Summary**

This report presents the final Brunswick Central Parklands and Integrated Water Management (IWM) Plan for endorsement. This 19-hectare Brunswick Central Parklands includes Gillon Oval, Reaburn Reserve, Brunswick Park, Clifton Park and Gilpin Park.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. **Endorses the Brunswick Central Parklands and Integrated Water Management Plan shown in Attachment 1.**
2. **Acknowledges the Community Engagement Summary Report (Attachment 2) and thanks the community and sporting clubs for their feedback, patience and support for the Plan.**
3. **Notes that the Brunswick Central Parklands and Integrated Water Management Plan identifies a total of \$1.5 million in proposed new capital works spending in the Parklands over the next 5 years. These projects will be subject to future Council budget processes, and their priority will be assessed along with all other projects in annual updates of the Capital Works Program.**

### **Resolution**

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Tapinos seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Endorses the Brunswick Central Parklands and Integrated Water Management Plan shown in Attachment 1.**
2. **Acknowledges the Community Engagement Summary Report (Attachment 2) and thanks the community and sporting clubs for their feedback, patience and support for the Plan.**
3. **Notes that the Brunswick Central Parklands and Integrated Water Management Plan identifies a total of \$1.5 million in proposed new capital works spending in the Parklands over the next 5 years. These projects will be subject to future Council budget processes, and their priority will be assessed along with all**



**other projects in annual updates of the Capital Works Program.**

8.55 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting during the debate.  
8.55 pm Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting during the debate.  
8.56 pm Cr Bolton returned to the meeting before the vote.

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.4 CENTRAL COBURG STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Executive Summary**

The *Coburg Activity Centre Reference Document 2018* is a document contained in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme and is implemented by the Activity Centre Zone for Coburg. This planning scheme control provides detailed guidance for land use and built form outcomes as well as how the development of land should contribute positively to movement around the Activity Centre, the appearance of the public realm, environmentally sustainable design and improved landscaping.

At its October 2022 meeting, Council endorsed the 2022 Planning Scheme Review report. This report includes an action that a review of the Coburg Structure Plan and Coburg Activity Centre Zone be undertaken, commencing in 2027.

The revitalisation of Central Coburg is a longstanding ambition of Council. The Council Action Plan includes actions around engagement to understand the priorities of the community towards this goal. A wide-ranging community engagement program is currently being developed and is planned to commence later this year.

The review of Council's Integrated Transport Strategy will also influence future updates to the planning scheme related to active transport.

It is recommended that Council notes the existing planning scheme controls that provide strategic direction to land use and built form outcomes in the Coburg Activity Centre as well as previous resolutions to progress both a review of these controls and the Central Coburg Revitalisation.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Notes the community engagement program proposed to take place in the 2023-24 financial year in relation to the revitalisation of Central Coburg.
2. Notes the existing planning scheme controls that give strategic direction to the development of the Coburg Activity Centre and Council's previous decision to undertake a review of the Coburg Structure Plan and Activity Centre Zone, commencing in 2027.

### **Resolution**

**Cr Carli Hannan moved, Cr Riley seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Notes the community engagement program proposed to take place in the 2023-24 financial year in relation to the revitalisation of Central Coburg.**
2. **Notes the existing planning scheme controls that give strategic direction to the development of the Coburg Activity Centre and Council's previous decision to undertake a review of the Coburg Structure Plan and Activity Centre Zone, commencing in 2027.**

8.57 pm Cr Pulford left the meeting and did not return.

**Carried unanimously**

9.00 pm Cr Carli Hannan left the meeting.  
9.01 pm Cr Conlan left the meeting.  
9.01 pm Cr Carli Hannan returned to the meeting.

## **7.5 STRATEGIC PROPERTY FRAMEWORK**

### **Executive Summary**

Council is the owner of an extensive property portfolio which it manages to provide and facilitate the provision of services and amenities to the community, both current and future.

Council's property portfolio plays an important role in providing for the community and in helping to ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation. The kinds of transactions that Council typically makes decisions on include:

- Leasing a Council owned building, for example to a sporting or community organisation that is delivering benefits to the community.
- Purchasing land so that it may be used to deliver community benefit such as a new park in an area with relatively poor access to open space, or to accommodate a new community facility, or because it is strategically beneficial in some identified way.
- Working in partnership to redevelop, sell or swap land to be able to achieve greater community benefit, such as using vacant land or overflow car parking for affordable housing or new community facilities.

Council purchases far more land than it sells. Within the last ten years, Council has significantly invested in property by purchasing 28 sites, totalling \$89,523,742, as well as selling five, generating \$8,020,000. Council has a proactive approach to creating new parks within open space gap areas, and purchasing land for strategic projects.

As Merri-bek continues to undergo rapid growth, the Strategic Property Framework provides a tool for guiding the way Council plans and manages its property portfolio on behalf of its community, to deliver maximum benefits.

Property functions are often complex and time-consuming endeavours, with multiple external dependencies. It can be challenging to consider these in a coherent way within the larger framework of the Council Plan, Community Vision, operational management, and ongoing service delivery.

The Strategic Property Framework aims to respond to this challenge, by providing the structure and clear processes to support rigorous and efficient decision-making on major property transactions. This is reflected in the 2022-23 Merri-bek City Council Action Plan which commits to complete an integrated property framework for this purpose.

The Strategic Property Framework presents the context, vision and guiding principles, and decision-making processes for each property function, including a comprehensive assessment process which will include evaluation against prescribed formulae under a decision-making matrix.

It also lays out an accompanying action plan and particulars for monitoring and reporting.

If adopted, the principles within the framework will then guide updates to other property policies and processes, each of which will be subject to their own process for consultation, endorsement and/or adoption.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Adopts the Strategic Property Framework at Attachment 1.
2. Notes that further strategic work will be undertaken in relation to understanding and mapping Merri-bek's property needs as set out in the framework's action plan, including updates to various policies and strategies, each of which will be subject to

its own community consultation process as defined within the Community Engagement Policy.

3. Notes that officers will use the tools within the framework to analyse and report the projected benefits of individual property matters.
4. Authorises the Director Place and Environment authority to correct minor errors, or make changes to improve readability of the Strategic Property Framework.

## **Resolution**

**Cr Tapinos moved, Cr Riley seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Adopts the Strategic Property Framework at Attachment 1.**
2. **Notes that further strategic work will be undertaken in relation to understanding and mapping Merri-bek's property needs as set out in the framework's action plan, including updates to various policies and strategies, each of which will be subject to its own community consultation process as defined within the Community Engagement Policy.**
3. **Notes that officers will use the tools within the framework to analyse and report the projected benefits of individual property matters.**
4. **Authorises the Director Place and Environment authority to correct minor errors, or make changes to improve readability of the Strategic Property Framework.**

9.03 pm *Cr Conlan returned to the meeting during the debate.*

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.6 WEST STREET SHOPPING STRIP STREETScape RENEWAL PROJECT**

### **Executive Summary**

West Street is a thriving shopping strip in Hadfield with an established trader group, however it experiences some longstanding issues around lack of pedestrian-friendliness and is also looking a little run down. Council has previously considered upgrades to make the strip more walkable and welcoming to locals. An earlier proposal put forward in 2014 to calm local traffic movements by making changes to the intersection of West Street and Glenroy Road did not proceed, as it would have resulted in the loss of several parking spaces, and this approach was not supported by the community.

In order to explore broader approaches to improving the centre that could calm local traffic, and make West Street safer, more attractive and more people friendly, it was included as a project in Council's Shopping Strip Renewal Program, with a larger scope area.

Community engagement was recently carried out with both traders and the broader community to understand their priorities for improvements. Assessments were also carried out to understand local conditions, and what improvements would have the most impact.

This report provides an update on the outcomes of the West Street Shopping Strip Renewal Project Round 1 community and stakeholder engagement, the findings of a Traffic and Parking Study, and proposes next steps in developing a concept plan for the improvement works.

The engagement process included a letter-drop to addresses within the walkable catchment, face to face conversations with traders, an online survey and onsite pop-up events.

The issue of parking was of the highest concern for both traders and the broader community. The second highest concern was around the need for traffic calming. Other issues respondents suggested included pedestrian safety upgrades, aesthetic updates, and improvements to cleanliness of the shopping strip.

The Traffic and Parking Study, undertaken in March 2023, found that parking within West Street's service road is at capacity, and that most people currently visit the strip by car. Fewer people visit the shops by other modes like walking and cycling. There is a public bus stop, but a very small proportion of people currently travel to the area by bus.

There are many interventions that can be explored as part of the development of the concept plan for West Street, that respond to this community feedback. It is proposed that Council explore options to improve pedestrian safety, encourage active transport, support local business, and make the strip greener, more accessible, and more comfortable.

This will include exploration of elements such as improved pedestrian crossings, road markings, signage, cycling and walking programs, bus stop improvements, trader support, accessibility improvements, speed limits, public artworks, street furniture, and trees.

## **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Notes the outcomes of the Round 1 Community Engagement activities and the findings of the Traffic and Parking Study.
2. Endorses the proposed next steps to develop a concept plan for renewal works, with Round 2 engagement outcomes provided in a future report to Council expected December 2023.

## **Resolution**

**Cr Harte moved, Cr Bolton seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Notes the outcomes of the Round 1 Community Engagement activities and the findings of the Traffic and Parking Study.**
2. **Endorses the proposed next steps to develop a concept plan for renewal works, with Round 2 engagement outcomes provided in a future report to Council expected December 2023.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.7 CLIMATE RISK FOUNDATIONAL ACTION PLAN - FOR ADOPTION**

### **Executive Summary**

The Climate Risk Strategy was adopted by Council in November 2022. Council officers have developed a draft Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan (Foundational Action Plan). The Foundational Action Plan supports Council's climate change roles and responsibilities under Victorian legislation and broader responsibilities, including:

- The *Climate Change Act 2017* requires that decision-makers have regard to climate change.
- The *Local Government Act 2020* requires local governments to plan for climate change risks.

- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, which sets out some of the accountabilities and opportunities in relation to local climate change adaptation, as land use planning plays a key role in managing responses to climate risks and natural hazards including bushfires, flooding, heatwaves, sea-level rise, and storm surges.
- Broad requirements that Councils appropriately discharge their duty of care. The threat of climate change is now clearly established through legislation, national and state policy and international agreements. Therefore, Councils have a clear duty of care in the context of climate change adaptation.
- The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan which is integrated into the Council Plan.

This Foundational Action Plan will establish:

- Systems to monitor, report on and evaluate changing vulnerability, exposure and climate hazards;
- Baselines of existing Council and community climate vulnerability and exposure; and
- Processes to make cost-effective decisions about how best to manage climate risk and drive adaptation action.

Additionally, the Foundational Action Plan aims to develop a better understanding of Community climate resilience needs, including the most vulnerable. These foundational actions are important in planning for the Climate Risk Action Plan for 2026 – 2030, which is expected to have more actions focused on the community.

The draft Foundational Action Plan was developed through internal consultation and community engagement between April 6 and May 15, 2023.

Overall, there was support for the action plan and in delivering tangible benefits to the community, consistent with past engagement results. Some areas where the community would like to see more action are:

- Planting and protecting trees
- Focus on health and coping with heatwaves
- Ensuring drainage is clear of debris and cleansing to prevent flooding
- Working with private sphere such as with land developers and landlords
- Planning controls to avoid new sources of excess heat such as in industrial areas.

The response to the community feedback includes changes reflected in the draft Foundational Action Plan and communication of feedback to Council areas that deliver relevant services.

## **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. Notes the outcomes of the community and stakeholder engagement on the draft Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan, as summarised in the outcomes report (Attachment 1), and thanks community members and stakeholders for their feedback on the draft Foundational Action Plan.
2. Adopts the revised Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan (Attachment 2).

## **Resolution**

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Carli Hannan seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Notes the outcomes of the community and stakeholder engagement on the draft Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan, as summarised in the outcomes**

**report (Attachment 1), and thanks community members and stakeholders for their feedback on the draft Foundational Action Plan.**

**2. Adopts the revised Climate Risk Foundational Action Plan (Attachment 2).**

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.8 ENDORSEMENT OF APPROACH FOR PUBLIC ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING**

### **Executive Summary**

Merri-bek City Council is recognised as a leader in encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs), as well as the creation and promotion of zero emissions transportation pathways. Council currently manages a fleet of 27 electric vehicles (EVs), the largest such fleet of any Victorian council.

To encourage take-up of EVs by our community, Merri-bek currently manages 22 chargers (16 for use by the public, 6 reserved for Council vehicles), which together can charge a total of 27 vehicles simultaneously. Four of the public chargers are 50kW chargers, while the remaining 12 vary from 7 to 25kW. Council's charging portfolio supplies over 1,700 charging sessions per month and consumed over 320MWh electricity in the past 12 months.

All electricity provided at Council's EV chargers is backed by renewable certificates from the Crowlands Wind Farm, and electricity is currently provided free of cost to the user. Council has installed two public EV chargers in 2022 at Glenroy Community Hub, and two more at Fleming Park in 2023 (awaiting final commissioning). Council is currently planning to install additional EV charging at nine parking bays for Council vehicles, with funding support from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DECCA).

The EV charging landscape is changing rapidly, so in 2022/23 Council undertook a study to guide our future investment in, and engagement with, charging infrastructure. The study provided clarity on the roles of Council and the private sector in the expansion of EV charging infrastructure across Merri-bek and beyond. Topics that Council considered with regards to public EV charging included:

- The role of the private sector in developing and operating public chargers, and how Council can best support this
- Whether Council should consider a permitting scheme for kerb-charging
- Planning the future deployment of public chargers in Merri-bek
- Supporting car-share companies wishing to trial EVs, to encourage residents to reduce reliance on privately owned vehicles and reduce emissions.

While Merri-bek has been successful in building an EV charging portfolio, there is increasing need to expand the charging infrastructure in response to the growing number of EVs, community feedback, changes within the market including new business models, and to meet Council's community carbon reduction targets.

In addition to the recommendations outlined in this report, there is also a need to monitor the industry and continue to adapt and re-assess Council's role as it evolves.

Merri-bek played a key role in helping prepare the recent Northern Council Alliance (NCA) report 'Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan: Part A' (Attachment 1). Modelling as part of the report predicted that Merri-bek Local Government Area will require between 70 and 150 additional fast chargers between now and 2030 (10-20 installed per year, at an approximate annual cost of \$1-2m). This will be necessary to meet Council's zero emission targets. Achieving this number of EV charger installations is cost prohibitive without a significant resource boost or new approaches including attraction of private

sector investment to own and operate EV charges.

A Councillor workshop was held on 6 February 2023, to explore the following three approaches that respond to the challenges of a changing industry:

- Putting a price on electricity at EV charges: by providing free charging, Council is currently discouraging investment by the private sector in public charging in the municipality, however, is attracting new economic development activity to our shops, libraries and aquatic centres.
- Leasing bays to charging operators: it is not possible to install and operate sufficient chargers to meet anticipated demand without private sector investment.
- Setting up a permit scheme for on-street charging: residents without access to off-street parking need access to charging solutions which are convenient, safe and legal if they are to transition to EVs.

A range of approaches and changes were presented and discussed at the workshop and feedback was gathered. This feedback has informed the recommendations made by this report.

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Introduces a price on electricity provided at fast/direct current (DC) public electric vehicle (EV) chargers of 25 c/kWh during financial year 2023/24 as per the Rates and Charges included in the draft Merri-bek Council Budget 2023-2027. Revenue will be re-invested in maintenance of existing chargers, replacement of chargers where necessary, and installation of new chargers.
2. Explores opportunities in financial year 2023/24 to lease public parking bays to charging operators, willing to install, operate and maintain EV chargers.
3. Continues to encourage Council's electricity distributors (Jemena and Citipower) to trial pole-mounted chargers in the municipality to give options for those without off-street parking.
4. In financial year 2023/24 explore the requirements of a permit scheme for on-street charging of EVs. This would aim to identify what would be required (e.g., switchboard upgrade, civil works, rectification deposit, risk and officer time) for Council teams and Council's insurer to approve a resident charging their EV on the road reserve using electricity from their home. Officers will provide an update at a Councillor Briefing in November 2023 with potential to refer to the budget process for 2024/25.
5. Installs an EV charger dedicated to a car-share bay by financial year 2024/25.

## Resolution

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Tapinos seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Introduces a price on electricity provided at fast/direct current (DC) public electric vehicle (EV) chargers of 25 c/kWh during financial year 2023/24 as per the Rates and Charges included in the draft Merri-bek Council Budget 2023-2027. Revenue will be re-invested in maintenance of existing chargers, replacement of chargers where necessary, and installation of new chargers.**
2. **Explores opportunities in financial year 2023/24 to lease public parking bays to charging operators, willing to install, operate and maintain EV chargers.**
3. **Continues to encourage Council's electricity distributors (Jemena and Citipower) to trial pole-mounted chargers in the municipality to give options**

for those without off-street parking.

4. In financial year 2023/24 explore the requirements of a permit scheme for on-street charging of EVs. This would aim to identify what would be required (e.g., switchboard upgrade, civil works, rectification deposit, risk and officer time) for Council teams and Council's insurer to approve a resident charging their EV on the road reserve using electricity from their home. Officers will provide an update at a Councillor Briefing in November 2023 with potential to refer to the budget process for 2024/25.
5. Installs an EV charger dedicated to a car-share bay by financial year 2024/25.
6. Conduct a review in June 2027 to determine if the market has changed following Council's decision to charge for electric vehicle chargers.
7. Seek input on siting of EV charging stations and positioning of charging equipment at EV charging stations from one or more organisations such as the Disabled Motorists Association which can advise on accessibility for drivers with mobility issues.

Carried unanimously

## 7.9 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

### Executive Summary

Council's Community Engagement Policy (the Policy) supports the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Policy sets standards for how Council engages with the Merri-bek community, to involve them in decision-making and in shaping projects and services that are important to them.

In December 2022 Council endorsed *an amended Community Engagement Policy for a 15-day public exhibition period in February 2023*. The proposed amendments were the outcome of a comprehensive annual review. The key recommendation was to improve the community's access to participate in the public exhibition period by extending it from 10 to 15 business days.

The Policy was open for public exhibition during February 2023. The community was invited to provide feedback on the minor amendments as well as other aspects of the Policy. A report is attached summarising community feedback and how this has been considered in formulating the revised Policy recommended in this report.

Council received minimal feedback which is understandable due to the minor nature of the amendments. People who engaged were either neutral or positive. Constructive feedback was provided, which has been included in the revised Policy, these changes include: the addition of policy principles developed in earlier community consultation; adjustments to text align with wording from the *Local Government Act 2020*; and referencing *Local Government Regulations (Planning and Reporting)*.

This report recommends the Community Engagement Policy with minor amendments be endorsed by Council.

### Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the revised Community Engagement Policy (the Policy) at Attachment 1, based on feedback from the recent community engagement.
2. Notes the Community Feedback Report at Attachment 2 that has shaped the revised Policy.



## Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Panopoulos seconded -

That Council:

1. Adopts the revised Community Engagement Policy (the Policy) at Attachment 1, based on feedback from the recent community engagement, with the following changes:
  - a) Under heading "Who we engage" (p11), add "informal users of parks" to the list.
  - b) Under heading: Engagement methods we use, add "signs in parks to reach informal users of parks".
2. Notes the Community Feedback Report at Attachment 2 that has shaped the revised Policy.
3. Replace all references to 'LGBTIQ+' with 'LGBTIQA+' in the revised Policy

9.18 pm *Cr Carli Hannan left the meeting and did not return.*

Carried unanimously

## 7.10 ESTABLISHMENT OF A HERITAGE AND LOCAL HISTORY REFERENCE GROUP

### Executive Summary

Terms of Reference for the Heritage and Local History Reference Group have been drafted for Council approval following Council resolution requesting this on December 7, 2022.

### Officer Recommendation

That Council endorse the draft Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Heritage and Local History Reference Group (Attachment 1).

## Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Tapinos seconded -

That Council endorse the draft Terms of Reference for the establishment of a Heritage and Local History Reference Group (Attachment 1).

Carried unanimously

## 7.11 LIVING AND AGEING WELL IN MERRI-BEK – REPORT ON YEAR 3 ACTIONS

### Executive Summary

The Living and Ageing Well in Merri-bek: An Age Friendly Framework (the Framework) establishes principles and practices which inform relevant, timely and responsive action across all areas of Council to support older people in our municipality. It brings together the key objectives of existing Council policies, plans, strategies and external partnerships, that contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of older people living in Merri-bek. The Living and Ageing Well Program (LAW) refers to the preparation and implementation of the Framework and is led by the Aged and Community Support branch.

The implementation of the Framework is a Council Action Plan item. The Living and Ageing Well in Merri-bek Year 3 Annual Review shows the actions and achievements from January 2022 to December 2022, against each of the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Environments.

This Year 3 Annual Review reports on the Framework Actions progressed throughout 2022. It does not include Actions that were not progressed in 2022 and which are scheduled for future years.

A range of initiatives were delivered in line with the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Environments to encourage active ageing within the municipality. Council officers continued to provide support for older people as pandemic restrictions lifted but many older people remained isolated. LAW focussed on collecting important data on housing issues for older people exacerbated during the pandemic and supporting older people with opportunities for social connection. LAW continued to advocate for older people to be included in all areas of council planning and service delivery and supporting departments to deliver age-friendly practices and adapting services for older people due to the pandemic. LAW officers piloted collaborative approaches to support older people to access physical exercise activities for well-being.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council notes the Living and Ageing Well in Merri-bek: Year 3 Annual Review.

### **Resolution**

**Cr Harte moved, Cr Davidson seconded -**

**That Council notes the Living and Ageing Well in Merri-bek: Year 3 Annual Review.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.12 COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT - AMENDMENT**

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides for councils to review a Councillor Code of Conduct at any time. The resolution to adopt an amended Code of Conduct must be passed by at least a two-thirds majority of elected Councillors.

It is proposed to amend the existing Councillor Code of Conduct to incorporate updated child safety and wellbeing requirements. Other minor administrative amendments have also been proposed. Following consultation with Councillors, the proposed changes are:

- Amendment of section 5.5, now titled "Child Safety and Wellbeing" to include a new commitment statement and outline the expected standards of behaviour and unaccepted behaviours;
- Amendments reflecting Council's name change; and
- Amendment of updated titles of Council policies as detailed in section 8 – Associated Documents.

The amended Code of Conduct as proposed, is provided as Attachment 1.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council adopts the Councillor Code of Conduct as amended, provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

## **Resolution**

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Conlan seconded -**

**That Council adopts the Councillor Code of Conduct as amended, provided as Attachment 1 to this report.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.13 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 APRIL 2023**

### **Executive Summary**

This report presents the Financial Management Report for the financial year to date period ending 30 April 2023.

The April Income Statement shows the Council surplus is \$2.5 million better than the year-to-date revised forecast as a result of lower overall revenue and lower overall expenditure. These differences are considered largely timing in nature.

Council has spent \$54.7 million on capital expenditure, which is tracking below the year-to-date (YTD) forecast of \$61.6 million, with \$24.3 million budget remaining.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 30 April 2023, at Attachment 1 to this report.

## **Resolution**

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Davidson seconded -**

**That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 30 April 2023, at Attachment 1 to this report.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.14 GOVERNANCE REPORT - JUNE 2023 - CYCLICAL REPORT**

### **Executive Summary**

The Governance report is prepared as a monthly standing report to Council which provides a single reporting platform for a range of statutory compliance, transparency, and governance related matters.

This Governance report includes:

- A summary of the minutes of the Merri-bek First Nations Advisory Committee held 9 May 2023.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Responses to a Public Question Time item taken on notice at 9 November 2022, 8 March 2023, 12 April 2023 and 10 May 2023 Council meeting, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.
- A request to vary Contract RFT-2021-188 – Provision of Audit Services.
- A recommendation that Council appoints and authorises the Council officers referred to in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*).

## Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the Merri-bek First Nations Advisory Committee Advisory Committee to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report and notes the Committee's recommendations:
  - a) that the new Expressions of Interest (EOI) process for new committee members should be initiated by the end of June 2023.
  - b) that Council allocates appropriate budget for the Ballerdt Mooroop project in the 23/24 budget to ensure the project continuity.
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 9 November 2022, 8 March 2023, 12 April 2023 and 10 May 2023 Council meeting, at Attachment 3 to this report.
4. Approves the Financial Variation to contract RFT-2021-188 – Provision of Audit Services for the 2023-24 year by \$13,000 from \$134,566 to \$147,566 (excl GST), and authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Variation of Contract documentation.
5. In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020*:
  - a) Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 of this report, as set out in the instrument.
  - b) Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instruments and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.
  - c) Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.

## Resolution

**Cr Conlan moved, Cr Yildiz seconded -**

That Council:

1. **Notes the summary of minutes from the Merri-bek First Nations Advisory Committee Advisory Committee to Council, at Attachment 1 to this report and notes the Committee's recommendations:**
  - a) **that the new Expressions of Interest (EOI) process for new committee members should be initiated by the end of June 2023.**
  - b) **that Council allocates appropriate budget for the Ballerdt Mooroop project in the 23/24 budget to ensure the project continuity.**
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 9 November 2022, 8 March 2023, 12 April 2023 and 10 May 2023 Council meeting, at Attachment 3 to this report.**
4. **Approves the Financial Variation to contract RFT-2021-188 – Provision of Audit Services for the 2023-24 year by \$13,000 from \$134,566 to \$147,566 (excl GST), and authorises the Chief Executive Officer to execute the Variation of Contract documentation.**

5. **In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020:**
- a) **Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 of this report, as set out in the instrument.**
  - b) **Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instruments and remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it.**
  - c) **Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.**

**Carried unanimously**

## **7.15 EXTENSION OF CONTRACT 763T – VALUATION SERVICES**

### **Executive Summary**

At the Council meeting held on 12 June 2019, Council resolved to award preferred supplier contracts for a period of two years, with two two-year extensions options for 763T – Valuation services. The contract was approved with spending thresholds of \$375,000 (excluding GST) per annum, which equates to \$2,250,000 (excluding GST) for the life of the contract, including extensions.

The Valuation Contract manages Council's property valuation services, including open space valuations, asset valuations and other related services. These services do not include the valuation of properties for the annual rating purposes, these are provided by the Valuer-General Victoria as of 1 July 2018.

The contract is due for expiry on 30 June 2023, if an extension is not executed. The amount spend to date over the life of the contract has been \$1,101,167 (excluding GST).

The current supplier under this contract has performed well and is being recommended to be extended. The forecasted expenditure for the two-year extension is \$500,000 or \$250,000 per annum (excluding GST), which is within the original delegation. All expenditure aligning to this contract is within annual budget allocation.

### **Officer Recommendation**

That Council:

1. **Executes the final two-year extension ending 30 June 2025 of 763T – Valuation Services with Opteon (Victoria) Pty Ltd Trading as Opteon Property Group (ABN 73 140 547 600), remaining with the original contract spend approved of \$2,250,000 (excluding GST).**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the extension under the Contract and complete any required documentation.**

### **Resolution**

**Cr Bolton moved, Cr Riley seconded -**

**That Council:**

1. **Executes the final two-year extension ending 30 June 2025 of 763T – Valuation Services with Opteon (Victoria) Pty Ltd Trading as Opteon Property Group (ABN 73 140 547 600), remaining with the original contract spend approved of \$2,250,000 (excluding GST).**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the extension under the Contract and complete any required documentation.**

**Carried unanimously**

## 7.16 SOFTWARE APPLICATION MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT FOR CONTENT MANAGER – KAPISH – EXE-2023-401

### Executive Summary

Council has in place an electronic document management system that manages Council's corporate records and provides evidence of business activities.

In 2020, Contract 868ST, was awarded to Kapish Services Pty Ltd for the support and maintenance, and consultancy services for Council's electronic document management platform Content Manager. This contract was executed under the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation and is due to end on 30 June 2023.

It is proposed to enter into a new 2-year agreement with Kapish Services Pty Ltd for the purposes of continuing use of the document management platform. However, as the cumulative expenditure of the existing contract coupled with a proposed new 2-year agreement will exceed the Chief Executive Officer's financial delegation, Council approval is required.

Further, Kapish Services Pty Ltd is the only vendor currently able to support our current electronic document management system. In accordance with section 6.1.4.2(a) of the Procurement Policy an exemption from tendering applies where there is only one supplier of the software.

The costs relating to a new 2-year agreement are included within the 2023/24 and 2024/25 operating budgets.

### Officer Recommendation

That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:

1. Engage Kapish Services Pty Ltd under contract EXE-2023-401 for the provision of software application support and maintenance, and consultancy services for Council's electronic document management system Content Manager:
  - i. For an amount not exceeding \$547,000 excluding GST
  - ii. For a term commencing 1 July 2023 for a period of two (2) years, with no options for extension.
2. Do all things necessary to engage the services of Kapish Services Pty Ltd and execute any other required documentation.

### Resolution

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Bolton seconded -**

**That Council authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**

1. **Engage Kapish Services Pty Ltd under contract EXE-2023-401 for the provision of software application support and maintenance, and consultancy services for Council's electronic document management system Content Manager:**
  - i. **For an amount not exceeding \$547,000 excluding GST**
  - ii. **For a term commencing 1 July 2023 for a period of two (2) years, with no options for extension.**
2. **Do all things necessary to engage the services of Kapish Services Pty Ltd and execute any other required documentation.**

9.32 pm Cr Davidson left the meeting during the debate.

9.32 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting during the debate.

**Carried unanimously**

## 7.17 CONTRACT MAV-2023-443 - BILL PAYMENT SERVICES

### Executive Summary

Merri-bek City Council joined other councils in tendering for a provider of a bill payment services. These services allow residents and debtors to pay bills in a flexible manner using a range of payment methods such as over-the-counter, internet and over the phone. In the previous financial year 60,000 transactions were processed via the bill payment services. The bill payment services is an important service to the community as they are able to go into a physical location and make cash payments without a limit.

As these services are required by all councils, it was more efficient and effective for councils and the industry to jointly tender. This also provides the lowest transactional costs and therefore benefits council, in comparison to if Council were to procure the bill payment services individually.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) conducts the tender on behalf of councils. The tender was advertised on Tenderlink on 16 January 2023, closing on 3 March 2023 at 3:00pm. It was assessed by a panel of 6 representatives from the MAV. The proposed contract term is five (5) years from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2028 with an option to extend the Standing Offer for two (2) additional periods of two (2) years.

The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, however the successful supplier does not comply with elements of the Merri-bek 2021-2025 Procurement Policy and objectives outlined in the Fossil Fuel Divestment Strategy 2015-2025.

### Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage Australia Post (**Contractor**) under the Municipal Association Victoria contract MAV-2023-443 for Bill Payment Services (**Contract**):
  - i. For an amount not exceeding \$1,100,000 (excluding GST); and
  - ii. For a term commencing 1 June 2023 for an initial period of five (5) years, with an option for a further two (2) by two (2) year extensions, until end term of 31 May 2032.
2. Advises the Municipal Association of Victoria of its decision on this matter.
3. Notes that the recommendation to engage Australia Post does not comply with the council's commitment to "excluding from future contracts, tenders or business dealings any companies involved in the Adani mine and associated rail infrastructure projects; and will be excluding from future contracts, tenders or business dealings from any companies involved in developing new coal mines." as set out in Council's approved Procurement Policy 2021-2025.

### Resolution

**Cr Riley moved, Cr Harte seconded -**

That Council:

1. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to engage Australia Post (Contractor) under the Municipal Association Victoria contract MAV-2023-443 for Bill Payment Services (Contract):**
  - i. **For an amount not exceeding \$1,100,000 (excluding GST); and**

- ii. For a term commencing 1 June 2023 for an initial period of five (5) years, with an option for a further two (2) by two (2) year extensions, until end term of 31 May 2032.
2. Advises the Municipal Association of Victoria of its decision on this matter.
3. Notes that the recommendation to engage Australia Post does not comply with the council's commitment to "excluding from future contracts, tenders or business dealings any companies involved in the Adani mine and associated rail infrastructure projects; and will be excluding from future contracts, tenders or business dealings from any companies involved in developing new coal mines." as set out in Council's approved Procurement Policy 2021-2025.

Carried unanimously

## NOTICES OF MOTION

### 8.2 USING INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES ON AUSTRALIA POST ITEMS

#### Motion

That Council:

1. Produces a report that outlines the benefits and costs to Merri-bek City in meeting its Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Merri-bek, by implementing a practice of using indigenous place names on Australia Post and other delivery/postal items in Council's day to day work.
2. Receives the report with recommendations for a way forward be presented to Council for consideration by October 2023.

#### Resolution

Cr Riley moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. Produces a report that outlines the benefits and costs to Merri-bek City in meeting its Statement of Commitment to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities of the City of Merri-bek, by implementing a practice of using indigenous place names on Australia Post and other delivery/postal items in Council's day to day work.
2. Receives the report with recommendations for a way forward be presented to Council for consideration by October 2023.

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

9.36 pm Cr Davidson returned to the meeting during the debate.

Carried unanimously



## 8.3 COBURG CITY OVAL

### Motion

That Council:

1. Between the months of March and October each year, gives Coburg FC management of the gates of Coburg City Oval.
  - a) If the Club regains those management rights, the Coburg City Oval gates will be open from 10 am to 4 pm each day except for football match days.
  - b) Whilst the gates are open, dogs can enter but must be on lead at all times and must not be on the oval itself. Dogs are not allowed entry on football match days or during Coburg FC's use as per their Council agreement.
  - c) Coburg FC reserves the right to deny entry to the facility on football match days.
2. Provides greater signage around the facility and community awareness stating that the above is the case. The club does not want to stop people from accessing the oval to play football or gain personal fitness and health sessions, but nothing good happens in the venue at night especially with its poor lighting and the fact that there's no passing traffic.

### Resolution

**Cr Yildiz moved, Cr Davidson seconded -**

**That Council provides greater signage around the facility and community awareness stating that the above is the case. The club does not want to stop people from accessing the oval to play football or gain personal fitness and health sessions, but nothing good happens in the venue at night especially with its poor lighting and the fact that there's no passing traffic.**

**Carried unanimously**

### NOTICE OF RESCISSION

Nil.

### FORESHADOWED ITEMS

Nil.

### URGENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Nil.

The meeting closed at 9.48 pm.