



Merri-bek
City Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held in Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic
Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg
on Wednesday 10 September 2025

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The Mayor opened the meeting at 6.31 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 Helen Davidson, Mayor	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Nat Abboud	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Sue Bolton	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Liz Irvin	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Dr Jay Iwasaki	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Chris Miles	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Adam Pulford	7.14 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Ella Svensson	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Katherine Theodosios	6.31 pm	10.13 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	6.31 pm	10.04 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 – Pene Winslade
 Acting Manager Governance and Strategy – Phil Priest
 Unit Manager Governance – Sophie Barison
 Sarah Lionakis – Executive Officer Civic and CEO Office

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSCENCE

Nil

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Henderson declared a non-pecuniary material conflict of interest in *12.5 CEO Employment Matters - Proposed Board Membership*.

MINUTE CONFIRMATION

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 August 2025 be confirmed.

Carried

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Mayor Helen Davidson acknowledged a delegation she attended for The Northern Council Alliance. She and seven other mayors attended Parliament to advocate on key priorities for local communities. Matters discussed included the extension of the Upfield train line, the Northern Regional Hospital and upgrades to the Hume Freeway.

The delegation was successful. The Mayor also acknowledged the crises in Nepal and the impact for the Nepalese community in Merri-bek.

Cr Politis acknowledged the valuable contribution of the Men's Shed in Glenroy, noting that members have reported improved physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as a stronger sense of community connection through their involvement. Cr Politis highlighted the group's practical work, including furniture restoration and community workshops that teach skills such as how to restore furniture and perform basic home maintenance tasks like changing a washer.

Cr Abboud congratulated Brunswick Juventas on reaching the grand final. She encouraged the community to explore the newly released housing density maps on engage.vic.gov.au. Cr Abboud commended the Newlands Neighbourhood House picnic last weekend and encouraged residents to participate in the Transport Forum.

Cr Bolton highlighted the upcoming Road Safety Forum this Saturday, emphasising the importance of Council hosting the event in light of concerning accident rates in parts of Merri-bek. She also addressed the recent anti-migration rally held in the city over the weekend, reaffirming that Merri-bek stands firmly against racism and extremist ideologies, including Nazism.

Cr Liz Irvin acknowledged the recent meeting of the Brunswick Community History Group, which she attended to learn more about the rich history of Sydney Road. She also recognised Volaris Music Shop, a long-standing local business on Sydney Road, and congratulated them on celebrating their 50th anniversary this year.

PETITIONS

Nil.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

Public Question Time commenced at 6.44 pm.

Report 7.1 Adoption of the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035, Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 and Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026

Council received 1 statement and 1 question. They were presented to Council.

Statement

Sally Warmington made the following statement:

I am Sally Warmington and I am speaking on behalf of Merri-Bek Residents for Reconciliation Action.

We support local Traditional Owners and other First Nations residents and demonstrate community support for the First Nations' Advisory Committee. We provided feedback to the Review of the Community Vision and Council Plan.

We commend Council's commitment to Merri-bek's First Nations communities, and to the Ballert Mooroop site's development by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung as a culturally safe gathering place, with a statement to this effect now included in the Council Plan. We support the development of a Merri-bek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy, which should include measures of progress towards agreed goals, and the development of a Ballert Mooroop Business Case, in partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and the FNAC.

Earlier this year, we supported a FNAC proposal for \$500,000 to be allocated in the 2025/29 Budget, for a building and cultural activities on the Ballert Mooroop site. This was not adopted by Council, which we see as a missed opportunity to demonstrate Council's commitment to the project.

Question

Sally Warmington asked Council how will progress towards the Ballerri Mooroop site becoming a culturally safe gathering place happen without funds allocated in the 2025-29 budget; and if State funding is not secured, how will Council make good on its commitments to the project?

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

As part of the 2025–26 Budget process, Council allocated a surplus of \$503,971 to support this project. This was approved at the Special Council Meeting on 23 June 2025 when the budget was adopted. These funds will be used if external grants or State funding are not secured, ensuring the project can continue to move forward, so there's a funding allocation that can be drawn on if other sources don't eventuate.

Report 7.3 Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 – Endorsement for Exhibition

Council received 3 statements and 2 questions. They were presented to Council.

Statement 1

Rachel Weaver made the following statement:

I want to express my strong support for the initiative to introduce 24-hour cat containment. I am working on a large-scale research project funded by the Australian Research Council about biodiversity impacts on native bird species since the beginnings of European colonisation in Australia. For many years I was also a resident of Brunswick.

Colonial impacts on species have been, and continue to be, almost unfathomable. Domestic cats are not the only cause for avian biodiversity decline, but they are one of the greatest: pet cats kill millions of native birds every year, including endangered species. With the possibility of H5N1 Bird Flu arriving in Australia, there is an even more urgent need to take protective action. Containing cats is a relatively simple but effective step, and one that most responsible owners would be willing to undertake. This would also show Merri-bek Council's commitment to caring for species and offer a compelling example to other councils to undertake similar initiatives.

Thank you for considering my perspective, and I hope that you will succeed in implementing this important strategy for conserving our native bird species.

Statement 2

Jo Connellan made the following statement:

Thanks for listening to me Councillors. I put a statement in which you've I presume you all read. I guess that the main gist of what I wanted to say is, if you're going to do something about wildlife which I assume is the predominant reason why you're interested in managing cats, think about the most effective way that you can do that. The way that's measurable in four years' time, if you say that the main technique is a 24-hour curfew, you'll know that there will be less birds killed but how many you won't know and to what extent you won't know.

A way that you could measure it, is to actually have a very proactive program. And I mean that not just picking out where the colonies are, but to go across the city over two years moving from one colony, one area where the strays are, so by the end of two or three years or however long it takes but the quicker the better actually. Where you actually go and gather up the strays. This has been done before. It was done 50 years ago in Venice; they did exactly this. They went area to area. They gathered all the cats up, neutered them and rehomed them.

If you're going to put resources into this, that would be my suggestion of where you put the resources. At the end of 4 years and the end of this DAMP, you'll be able to see an estimation. I saw a figure of 6000 when I googled how many stray cats in Merri-bek. No idea where that figure came from but assuming it's 6000, you would be able to say at the end of that time, there's not just 3000 less cats but plus all the progeny they would've had over that four years, so you could with certainty say this is significant impact on what it's done for all wildlife, not just birds.

I'd like you to think about if you have a 24-hour curfew, practically, how do you implement it? If someone rings up and says Fluffy from number six is out on the road. What do you do? Do you send the officer down there. Fluffy may or may not be there when they get there. How do you prove it was Fluffy because even if you get out and Fluffy is still there, they will disappear if you get out of the car and go towards them.

How do you actually implement a curfew for cats? You potentially will end up with having neighbours dobbing in. But you'll have them also trapping them, in other cities this has happened. There are quite cruel trapping practices if neighbours have trapped their neighbourhood cats. Then you'll have to deal with not just the cat but the neighbourhood dispute. The only other way you could do it, if you have a whole team of bi-law officers which run the streets 24 hours a day to see what's going on.

So, thinking about how much resources you've got and how you could most effectively deploy this in a way that's measurable to you. I had some questions but I'm happy for them to be on notice as they were just data questions.

Statement 3

Jacinta Humphrey made the following statement:

I am Jacinta Humphrey. I am an Urban Ecologist based in the ICON Science Research Group at RMIT University and I'm an expert in native birds particularly those that live in cities. This evening, I just wanted to express my strong support for your Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan, in particular the inclusion of 24-hour cat containment which you are considering bringing in for next year. And the reason I'm in support of this is threefold. Firstly, there is very strong evidence that cats both feral cats and domestic pet cats have catastrophic effects or impact on our native wildlife particularly on birds.

There is also really strong evidence to suggest that cats that are safely contained within our properties actually live longer and are far safer because they are protected against being hit by cars or attacked by dogs or foxes. There are also issues with disease risk as well and they don't face this when they're safely contained at home.

Thirdly there's very strong evidence to suggest that the Australian public support and wants this to happen across the country and in particular in our cities. There was a study done by the Victorian Government called the Victorian Valuing Nature Survey and they found that 70% of the people that responded were in support of some form of cat containment and 61% wanted to see 24-hour containment. And I am certainly one of them.

I'm the owner of two indoor only cats. They cannot leave my property. They do have their own little secure cat enclosure or what some people might call a "catero" so they still get the opportunity to go outside experience sunshine and fresh air but it's impossible for them to leave so they're safe. It's also impossible for them to interact with any of our unique native wildlife and I really think that's the best of both worlds because that way we're protecting our native species and we're also looking after our feline companions.

6.57pm Cr Miles left the meeting.

6.59pm Cr Miles returned to the meeting.

Beth Healy's representative asked the following 2 questions:

Question 1

What it plans to do about the subsequent reduction in cat adoptions and the increase in euthanasia as a cat curfew will significantly discourage cat ownership due to the cost and logistical burden, especially for elderly and low income persons.

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

Before I address your first question, I would like to advise that there is no evidence that cat ownership reduces when a cat curfew is introduced. Careful introduction of a curfew with accessible information, support and advice for people who are concerned about the change has led to successful introduction of cat curfews elsewhere.

There has been a lot of work done by cat and wildlife welfare groups on helping cats to adapt. There are resources available from Zoos Victoria, the RSPCA, Animal Welfare Victoria and several Councils. Merri-bek has information already available to support this, and if a 24 hour curfew is adopted, we will work to increase the availability and accessibility of this information for cat owners.

It is not intended for the cat curfew to be systematically enforced. In fact, enforcement would be a last resort with the approach to compliance being about education, support and warnings. Council's enforcement framework is sector-leading in its application of compassion and consideration of special circumstances and this would also apply to enforcing a cat curfew.

Your question comes with an underlying assumption that a cat curfew will drive animal surrenders and/or dissuade people from adopting a cat that needs a home, putting pressure on the pound and animal rescue groups. There is strong support for cat curfews from the Wat djerring Animal Facility, where Merri-bek's animals are taken, and from the Cat Protection Society and the RSPCA, among other welfare groups. Rather than undermining the work of these groups and vets, a cat curfew supports the work they do and allows them to focus on cats that do not have homes, to have them placed into homes.

When an Animal Management Officer is attending to stray cats, rather than taking them straight to the pound, they check for a microchip or identification. They are then returned to their owners (which would now include a reminder about the curfew and checking on support needed to contain the animal) rather than being taken to the pound. If they are not identifiable, we seek to find out from the person reporting or others in the neighbourhood which property the cat seems to 'belong' to, and speak to people at that property about whether they would like to have the cat as their own, being desexed, vaccinated, microchipped and with the first year of registration all at no cost.

This reduces, rather than increases, the burden on the facility and the rescue groups.

Question 2

How it will measure if the 24 hour cat curfew 'works', and what specific evidence do you have right now, that it does 'work'?

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

Using the example of Whittlesea, which introduced a 24 hour curfew in 2023, the number of cat nuisance calls has reduced by 40%. This is an important indicator. A reduction in these calls means Animal Management Officers can direct their time to work that brings about sustainable change instead of attending to stray cats.

Over time, we would expect the combination of the cat curfew and expanded desexing and homing program for unowned cats would drive down nuisance calls even further. Looking at long term data for Merri-bek, it is clear that the introduction of desexing programs and increase in cat registrations has driven down numbers of cats being impounded, and the curfew is an important next step in driving this down further.

Report 7.5 2026 State Election Advocacy Priorities

Council received 1 statement. It was presented to Council.

Andrea Bunting made the following statement:

I am also speaking on behalf of the Liveable Sydney Road - Coburg North & Fawkner campaign, who couldn't be here, and Climate Action Merri-bek, with our Convenor Maggie Cowling being a Coburg North resident.

We are requesting an item to be added under part (d) Road Safety as follows:

"Improve safety along Sydney Road in the 60 km/h section, between (and including) O'Hea Street and Boundary Road, to address the high rate of injury and fatality crashes, and in particular the high casualty rate of pedestrians crossing at the signalised intersections."

We believe that if Council is to advocate for road safety, then they also need to include our most unsafe roads. This needs to be based on data. The government publishes data for roads crashes where someone is taken to hospital or killed. I used the last two years of this data to compare the number of injuries and fatalities per year per kilometre of road. I broke Sydney Road into 3 sections based on the speed limit.

The most dangerous stretch of road in the whole of Merri-bek, by a considerable margin, is Sydney Road between O'Hea Street and Boundary Road. On average, someone is taken to hospital every two weeks on this short stretch of road, which is just over 2 kilometres long.

This road is not an activity centre. Yet for vulnerable road users, it is our second most hazardous road for serious injuries and fatalities, after Lygon Street.

Sydney Road between O'Hea Street and Boundary Road has two secondary schools, and is near a primary school. It is a route to the shops and recreation facilities, and a large retirement village is planned for this area. So many seniors also crossing this road, who are particularly vulnerable.

This hazardous stretch of road was the subject of a Council motion in 2023. There is currently a road safety campaign, which is active on social media and has an active petition to parliament. There is a lot of community interest in this road. Please add this to your advocacy priorities.

Notice of Motion 8.2 Procurement Policy and Subminimum Wages for Disabled People in Segregated Workplaces

Council received 1 statement and 1 question. They were presented to Council.

Question

Deborah Agnew – Riddell asked Council if it currently holds contract with any entities that pay subminimum wages to disabled people or may be engaged in practices considered modern slavery and if so, to provide the names of entities and specify the industries in which any contracts are held

At the request of the Mayor, Director Business Transformation, Sue Vujcevic responded:

Council does not engage with suppliers that are in breach of the Modern Slavery Act, and therefore we don't have any names of such entities.

Council may engage suppliers that pay subminimum wages to staff such as apprentices, trainees, junior employees and employees with a disability.

These subminimum wages in Victoria are lawful under the Fair Work Act 2009. Council doesn't specifically collect sub minimum wage information on entities that lawfully may pay such wages to their staff.

Statement

Sirani McNeil made the following statement:

I am Sirani McNeill. I am a hearing impaired and autistic woman and have had some forms of exploitation in the workplace.

I worked at a social enterprise as a hospitality trainee, I was put on an NDIS contract and payment at the same time. While I did get paid employment, most of the NDIS funding was taken away for things that were not needed, but only beneficial to the organisation. It felt like my labour was undervalued, and the arrangement blurred the line between support and exploitation. Instead of being recognised as a worker with rights and fair pay, I was treated as though the funding attached to me justified paying me less. This experience was disempowering and made me question whether organisations that brand themselves as “inclusive” are actually committed to equity and justice for people with disabilities. This organisation is meant to be disability friendly, however it was run only by non-disabled people and people without lived experience of subminimum wages.

I am a Victorian Board member for Our Fair Go, a Disabled People’s Representative Organisation (DPRO) which fights for fair pay and against modern slavery for disabled people. I have also been the Treasurer for Disability Justice in 2024- 2025. I have been a former board observer for Women with Disabilities Victoria, and currently on the People with Disability Australia Advisory Committees for Membership Engagement and Governance.

When I started out in cybersecurity without a degree at Yooralla (a disability non-for-profit organisation), I did not mind earning a bit less as a junior member of the team. But even then, the pay was not enough to cover basic living costs. It reinforced the same feeling—that my skills and contributions were not being valued at a fair rate, and that I was expected to accept less simply because of my circumstances.

Disabled people overwhelmingly oppose subminimum wage and modern slavery, as our voices have reflected in the Disability Royal Commission and in our own DPROs. DPROs are organisations whose membership and leadership are composed of at least 51% disabled people, and who government bodies are obligated to consult on these issues under Articles 4(3) and 33(3) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The public also rejects subminimum wages: polling by Down Syndrome Australia in March showed that 82% of Australians find subminimum wage unacceptable. Merri-bek Council may not have known what it was funding before—but we’d like to investigate this.

There is also a lot of employment for autistic men but not enough for women and needs to change in this mindset. There is also a lack of understanding about autistic people having different needs and different ways of finding employment.

Notice of Motion 8.1 Merri-bek Team For 2026 Youth Parliament Program

Council received 1 statement. It was presented to Council.

Gabriel Di Falco made the following statement:

I am a born and raised Merri-bek resident from Pascoe Vale South and I have been involved with the Youth Parliament Program for two years as a participant.

I can attest to how special this program is for young people across Victoria. And particularly as a former high school student in Merri-bek, I found it quite fascinating that I had to move away from the area to discover that such an opportunity existed. I think that this is something that we can’t afford to let pass us by especially in a community where there’s such diverse and passionate young people who want to get involved. I think it’s extremely important that we get involved with this program. The program basically simulates real state parliament and is accessible to people from ages 18 to 25 all across Victoria. This program puts everybody on an equal playing field, regardless of race, gender, background, experience in public speaking or knowledge of the political system. It is an incredible way to get Victorian students and young people involved in civics which I think is something that in Merri-bek we should be encouraging.

I think it is extremely crucial that we get support from council. It's very important that the six young people who may eventually be chosen to participate in this program have access to council employees who can liaise with Youth Parliament volunteer stuff so there are trusted council employees who can offer support.

It's also very important to realise how much more this program can get out of kids who do not have any other avenue to access the program. I know that there's a lot of schools who do put forward teams so I feel like if this program is supported we should target kids who are very keen to get involved but have no access to it through their school. Because that means that we're giving these kids a chance to shine in Parliament House and that is very special.

Question Time Extension

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That question time be extended by 30 minutes.

Carried

Public question time was extended for 30 minutes at 7.18 pm

Notice of Motion 8.3 Famine In Gaza

Council received 2 statements. They were presented to Council.

Statement 1

Sara Alasaad made the following statement:

My name is Sara Alasaad, and I am a proud Palestinian woman.

I come before you today not just as a Palestinian, but as a fellow human being for all of us to see one another with eyes of compassion.

Over the past 1 year, 11 months and 3 days we have witnessed an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, a crisis marked by widespread destruction and a man-made famine and a Genocide, driven by the denial of essential resources and the relentless bombardment by the IDF. And more recently in the past 24 hours, Israel has not only bombed Gaza, but also Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia and Qatar.

If you chose to ignore what is happening to the Palestinian people, what does that say about the human being you are?

If Israel gets away with destroying Gaza, then that will give a green light to all other dictatorial regimes to do similar things.

I would like to tell you the story of Hind. She was a five year old a child trying to escape the bombing in Gaza with her family. Their car came under attack and only her and her cousin survived the initial strike. They were left trapped and terrified. A Palestinian Red Crescent Operator was on the phone with Hind's cousin who was begging for help but instead of rescue, more gun fire came. In just six seconds she was shot 64 times by an Israeli tank and later Hind was also killed. That tank was so close could see that they were just two children alone and surrounded by the bodies of their family. There was a total of 335 bullets shot into that car. If this is not a war crime, what is?

I write today to bring forward a recommendation that reflects a deep concern in compassion for the ongoing loss of life in human dignity shared by many residents in our community.

In that spirit, I put forward the following recommendations:

Firstly, as a citizen of Merri-bek council, I urge you to acknowledge our distress as local residents for what is happening in Gaza by raising the Palestinian flag to show your statement against injustice, a man-made famine, a genocide, and your solidarity against human suffering

Secondly, I recommend that our representative council members add their voices to call for Australia to Sanction Israel, until a permanent Ceasefire is enacted and until the Siege on Gaza is lifted, allowing Food and Aid to flow into Gaza

And lastly, I recommend the council to mark the UN-recognised International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people on 29 November with an event or support for a Palestinian event. I have seen Merri-bek proudly support first Nation struggles and supporting refugees and human rights causes. Let us continue that legacy now by raising the Palestinian flag because history will remember where we stood. Let it remember that we stood on the side of humanity and let Gaza know we care.

Statement 2

Veronica Sherman – made the following statement:

I was born in Sweden and at age 10, I immigrated to Israel with my family. At age 20, after my army service, I moved to Australia and I have lived here for 30 years.

Every month since October 7th, 2023, I have been hosting Gaza Discussion Groups. I have wanted to create a safe and calm place where we can come together in person to listen, learn and grieve.

Last month, four out of the five people who came along, either had a parent or a grandparent who was in the Holocaust.

Each one of them spoke about what it's like to grow up in the shadow of a genocide. And why being a descendant of a Holocaust survivor is the reason they are now speaking up for the people being murdered in Gaza.

All of them agreed that we can't remain silent during a genocide. NEVER AGAIN is for everyone.

One comment has stayed with me for the whole month.

"My grandmother told me that when she heard that people in other countries knew about what was happening to them, even though it didn't change their situation, it gave her hope and a feeling of not being alone."

Collective solidarity is powerful. The biggest lie we can tell ourselves is that we are powerless.

The reason I'm here tonight is to ask you to raise the Palestinian flag. Not because I think that Merri-bek Council can stop a genocide in Gaza. But because I want to live in a community that shows solidarity with the oppressed. I want to live in a community that doesn't remain silent during a genocide.

A flag is just a flag. For most people it doesn't hold much meaning. But at this point in history, it's one of the few ways we can show our support. Not just to the families trapped in an ongoing nightmare in Gaza and their relatives here in Merri Bek who wake up every morning having to check if their loved ones are still alive. But also, for the wider Muslim community whose identity is intertwined in the Palestinian plight for freedom.

I would love to not raise the Palestinian flag. I would much prefer another solution to show solidarity. But I honestly can't think of anything that is more meaningful and effective. And it's so ridiculously easy. And budget friendly.

We have a moral obligation to not remain silent. Raising the flag is raising our collective voice.

7.25 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting

7.29 pm Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting

NON-AGENDA ITEMS – QUESTIONS

Nil.

Public Question Time concluded at 7.28 pm.

COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 ADOPTION OF THE MERRI-BEK COMMUNITY VISION 2025-2035, MERRI-BEK COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029 AND MERRI-BEK COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2025-2026

Executive Summary

The development of the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035 (Attachment 1), Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment 1) and Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026 (Attachment 2) have been informed by a number of key inputs, including working with Councillors to determine their priorities for the next four years and a deliberative community engagement process via a Community Panel, including a Community Youth Panel.

The draft Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035 and draft Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 were presented to Council at its meeting on the 23 June 2025 and subsequently went out to Public Exhibition for 28 days.

One submission was received for the draft Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035, which included feedback as summarised in (Attachment 3), no Council officer changes are recommended for the vision as a result of the submission received.

26 submissions were received for the draft Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment 3), with a number of submissions providing positive feedback. A few submissions have resulted in Council Officers recommending changes to the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029, as summarised below:

- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities 1.3 to now read: *Inspire and activate community connection and care for nature, ecological sustainability and climate resilience (including thermal comfort and UV protection) for public and private land in Merri-bek.*
- Following the Acknowledgement to Country, insert the explainer in the Council Plan: *In this document, the term First Peoples is used to refer specifically to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We have chosen this terminology to acknowledge their unique identities, histories, and enduring connection to Country. While terms such as Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Koorie or First Nations are sometimes used, First Peoples is used here to reflect respect for the diversity and sovereignty of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.*
- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities 1.5 to now read: *Work closely with Traditional Owners and local First Nations People to care for Country.*
- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities 1.6 to now read: *Enable and engage the community to take meaningful action for resilience, a safe climate and circular economy, with a focus on the vulnerable communities including First Peoples, including delivery of programs that improve thermal comfort, reduce energy bills, reduce carbon emissions, and reduce waste to landfill.*
- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities 2.12 to now read: *Work to preserve First Peoples culture by supporting Elders, empowering younger generations, promoting truth telling, recognising culture's foundational role in wellbeing.*
- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities 2.13 to now read: *Prioritise First Peoples self-determined solutions that promote culture, connection, and community strengthening, which contribute to wellbeing.*

- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities 2.15 to now read: *Partnering with government and housing providers to develop accessible, inclusive housing, including First Peoples on Council land including in Central Coburg and other locations, as well as advocating for more public and community housing.*
- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities include 2.16 to read: *Advocate for more social and affordable housing stock. Including crisis, traditional and permanent housing options through planning policy, partnerships and direct engagement with developers and by supporting local responses to homelessness.*
- To strengthen the Initiative and priorities include 2.17 to read: *Support the advancement of Ballerrt Mooroop as Merri-bek's First Peoples gathering place.*

Many issues raised in relation to the draft Merri-bek Council Plan 2025–2029 are already being addressed or implemented through current strategies, action plans, or policies, therefore Council officers did not recommend further changes as a result of such submissions received.

Further minor changes are also proposed for the final Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029, including grammatical changes to improve readability, and cosmetic design changes following a final review after the public exhibition period.

Additionally, officers have developed the Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026 (Attachment 2). It includes the specific actions to be undertaken during the first financial year in the implementation of the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029. All actions documented in the Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026 are resourced for delivery, including through the 2025-26 annual budget i.e. through the adopted 2025-2029 Budget.

At the Council Meeting held Wednesday, 13 August 2025 Council endorsed the withdrawal of the following actions from the Council Action Plan 2024-25:

- Action 209: Commence construction of Brunswick Early Years Centre
- Action 215: Commence construction on the West Street streetscape renewal project.
- Action 216: Progress construction of the Wheatsheaf Road Glenroy streetscape improvement project.

The above actions are now included in the Council Action Plan 2025-2026.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035 (provided as Attachment 1) in accordance with legislative requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
2. Adopts the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025–2029 (provided as Attachment 1) in accordance with legislative requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, noting that it incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029.
3. Adopts Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026 (provided as Attachment 2) as the first year of actions to deliver against the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029.
4. Authorises the Director Business Transformation to finalise the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035, Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 and Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026, including any minor administrative changes, professional design of the documents and online versions, for distribution and implementation.

5. Advises submitters that Council has considered their submissions relating to the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 and that the submitters be advised of the outcome of the consideration, as it relates to their specific submission through this council report (provided as Attachment 3), and they be thanked for their contributions.
6. Thanks, the members of the Community Panel and Community Youth Panel for their contribution and advise them in writing of the outcome of Council's decision.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Adopts the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035 (provided as Attachment 1) in accordance with legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.**
2. **Adopts the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025–2029 (provided as Attachment 1) in accordance with legislative requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008, noting that it incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029.**
3. **Adopts Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026 (provided as Attachment 2) as the first year of actions to deliver against the Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029, with an additional action to be added under Theme 2: Healthy and Inclusive Communities, at initiative 2.9. to read: “Explore, including through partnership arrangements, ways to improve health, access and inclusiveness in public & private spaces for people in precarious housing such as access to toilets and bathrooms, seating under shelter, showers, lockers and a place to heat food as well as improved access to services.”**
4. **Authorises the Director Business Transformation to finalise the Merri-bek Community Vision 2025-2035, Merri-bek Council Plan 2025-2029 and Merri-bek Council Action Plan 2025-2026, including any minor administrative changes, professional design of the documents and online versions, for distribution and implementation.**
5. **Advises submitters that Council has considered their submissions relating to the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 and that the submitters be advised of the outcome of the consideration, as it relates to their specific submission through this council report (provided as Attachment 3), and they be thanked for their contributions.**
6. **Thanks, the members of the Community Panel and Community Youth Panel for their contribution and advise them in writing of the outcome of Council's decision.**

Carried unanimously

7.2 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PLAN 2021-2025 - YEAR 4 REVIEW

Executive Summary

The Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 (the Plan) aims to improve health, wellbeing and educational outcomes for children, young people and families with a vision of ‘a community where children, young people and families are healthy, resilient, empowered, safe and belong’. The Plan's associated Implementation Plan 2022-2025 details the actions and activities that will be undertaken in each of the Plan's three outcome areas of Inclusive City and Community, Improved Health and Wellbeing, and Lifelong Learning and Participation.

To fulfil the vision of the Plan, there has been continued collaboration with community, partner organisations and the State Government to implement Year 4 actions. Progress has continued in all outcome areas to increase inclusion and accessibility of services and programs, which positively impacts health and wellbeing. Engagement in early learning and civic participation has also increased, with children and young people readily sharing their opinions on matters that impact them, when afforded the opportunity. The Plan's annual review highlights activities completed and concludes the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025, see Attachment 1.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 annual review and implementation of Year 4 actions which concludes the Plan.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Politis seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2021-2025 annual review and implementation of Year 4 actions which concludes the Plan.**

Carried

7.3 DRAFT DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2029 - ENDORSEMENT FOR EXHIBITION

Executive Summary

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) requires councils in Victoria to develop a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years. The DAMP must outline council services, council programs and policies established to address the administration of the Act, and councils' management of cat and dog issues in their community.

This plan is the overarching strategic document relating to domestic animals and is to be prepared at 4-year intervals. The current DAMP 2021-2025 is due to expire at the end of November 2025, therefore a new DAMP must be developed, adopted by Council and submitted to the Secretary of Victoria's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) by 1 December 2025.

The draft DAMP 2025-2029 has been prepared following community and stakeholder engagement which ran from 25 June to 23 July 2025. With support for a 24-hour cat curfew in the engagement, officers are recommending the phased introduction of a cat curfew. This will line Merri-bek up with most M9 (inner) and Northern Councils who have either a 24-hour or night-time curfew. In addition, the DAMP envisages a step-up in Council's cat desexing program, with the goal of seeing unowned cats becoming owned and registered.

The draft DAMP is presented to Council for endorsement to be placed on public exhibition for the period 15 September to 12 October 2025. At the conclusion of the public exhibition period feedback will be considered and amendments made to the draft if required. The final Plan will then be presented to the November 2025 Council meeting for adoption.

Officer Recommendation

1. That Council endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for public exhibition for the period 15 September to 12 October 2025, noting that it includes:

- a) An increase in Council's cat desexing program, focused on areas with the highest levels of nuisance cat complaints
- b) Introduction of a 24-hour cat curfew from 1 July 2026 with an 8-month grace period

Motion

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Miles seconded -

That Council

1. Endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for public exhibition for the period 15 September to 12 October 2025 with the following changes:
 - a) Amend the listed Activities Under the heading 4.3 Reducing overpopulation rates and euthanasia levels - Our Plan Objective 4A to read
 - Partner with City of Darebin and City of Whittlesea to seek partnership/funding opportunities to increase the size of the desexing program.
 - implements a four-year rolling program throughout all of Merri-bek to collect, neuter, vaccinate, microchip and re-home un-owned and semi-owned cats. The initial focus would be on areas with high volumes of cat nuisance complaints, and it would use the Banyule model of engaging residents who feed cats to take ownership, including providing free registration for the first year, when someone takes on ownership responsibility for a semi-owned cat.
 - data on nuisance complaints, impoundments and euthanasia to be collected before the program begins and at the end of 4 years. This data will be reported publicly. Investigate additional ways of monitoring the size of the population of un-owned and semi-owned cats.
 - Develop and provide material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners.
 - Undertake design of a possible grant program for low-income residents to help them transition their cats to indoors and put it forward for consideration in the 2026/27 Budget – to be completed in Year 1, and the measure of achievement to be that information is provided to Councillors before end December 2025.
 - Promote “Safe cat, Safe wildlife” education material.
 - Provide educational material to owners promoting the benefits of cat containment to cats, the community and wildlife.
 - Provide an education and support program to assist residents transition their cats to indoor cats.
 - Resource citizen scientists to survey and get data on locations of threatened and endangered species in Merri-bek to inform areas to have a high priority focus on semi-owned and un-owned cats, as well as cat owners who have cats which do predate.
 - b) Include an additional sentence in the introduction to section 4 of the draft DAMP which reads: “Merri-bek council’s approach is to have an evidence-based approach to protecting wildlife as well as a humane approach to addressing the overpopulation of semi-owned and un-owned cats.

2. Notes that the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan focuses the need to significantly reduce the population of un-owned and semi-owned cats through a systematic program of collecting, de-sexing and re-homing, therefore a cat curfew is not being recommended.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, before exhibiting the draft, to have text and actions in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 amended to reflect the position outlined above.
4. Advocates to the State government for legislative changes that would enable future community-based trials of additional humane approaches to un-owned cat management such as trials of Trap, Neuter, Release (TNR) programs. Investigate whether it is possible to lodge a late submission on this basis to the public consultation on Victoria's new Domestic Animals Regulations being run by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

Lost

Motion

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council

1. Endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for public exhibition for the period 15 September to 12 October 2025 with changes noted at point 2, noting that it includes:
 - a) An increase in Council's cat desexing program, focused on areas with the highest levels of nuisance cat complaints
 - b) Introduction of a 24-hour cat curfew from 1 July 2026 with an 8-month grace period
 - c) Referral to the 2026/27 Budget process a grant program to assist low-income residents to transition their cats to being indoor cats
2. The above is subject to the following change being made to the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 before exhibition:
 - a) Adding a further action under *Objective 4A: To decrease the number of stray, abandoned and unwanted cats* that states: "Undertake design of a possible grant program for low-income residents to help them transition their cats to indoors and put it forward for consideration in the 2026/27 Budget" – to be completed in Year 1, and the measure of achievement to be that information is provided to Councillors before end December 2025.
 - b) Authorising the Chief Executive Officer to have text and actions in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 amended to reflect this action and narrative in the text including explanations that many low-income residents are renters, and that funds may be needed to help cat proof a property, establish a secure outdoor area and/or provide indoor enrichment.

Lost

Cr Pulford called for a division.

For

Cr Pulford
Cr Svensson
Cr Iwasaki
Cr Irvin

Total For (4)

Against

Cr Davidson
Cr Abboud
Cr Bolton
Cr Yildiz
Cr Theodosios
Cr Miles
Cr Politis

Total Against (7)

Amendment

Cr Politis moved, Cr Abboud seconded –

1. That Council endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for public exhibition for the period 15 September to 12 October 2025 with changes noted at point 2, noting that it includes:
 - a. An increase in Council’s cat desexing program, focused on areas with the highest levels of nuisance cat complaints
 - b. Introduction of a night time curfew (7pm to 7am) from 1 July 2026 with an 8-month grace period
2. The above is subject to the following changes being made to the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 before exhibition:
 - a) Replacing references to introducing a 24-hour cat curfew with a night time cat curfew
 - b) Authorising the Chief Executive Officer to have text and actions in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 amended to reflect this position
 - c) Adding a further action under *Objective 4A: To decrease the number of stray, abandoned and unwanted cats* that states: “Undertake design of a possible grant program for low-income residents to help them transition their cats to containment and put it forward for consideration in the 2026/27 Budget” – to be completed in Year 1, and the measure of achievement to be that information is provided to Councillors before end December 2025.

Carried

Resolution

Cr Politis moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

1. That Council endorses the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 for public exhibition for the period 15 September to 12 October 2025, noting that it includes:
 - a) An increase in Council’s cat desexing program, focused on areas with the highest levels of nuisance cat complaints
 - b) Introduction of a night time curfew (7pm to 7am) from 1 July 2026 with an 8-month grace period
2. The above is subject to the following changes being made to the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 before exhibition:
 - a) Replacing references to introducing a 24-hour cat curfew with a night time cat curfew
 - b) Authorising the Chief Executive Officer to have text and actions in the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 amended to reflect this position
 - c) Adding a further action under *Objective 4A: To decrease the number of stray, abandoned and unwanted cats* that states: “Undertake design of a possible grant program for low-income residents to help them transition their cats to containment and put it forward for consideration in the 2026/27 Budget” – to be completed in Year 1, and the measure of achievement to be that information is provided to Councillors before end December 2025.

7.4 INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025 - 2030 - FOR ADOPTION

Executive summary

The Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy 2040 brings together all elements of the water cycle to achieve the greatest social, economic and environmental benefits for the community. It provides the vision for a water sensitive Merri-bek, supported by five-year action plans. Taking an integrated approach ensures that the water cycle is more resilient to the impacts of climate change and a growing population, while continuing to make Merri-bek a great place to live, work and play.

This report presents Council's final draft Integrated Water Management Action Plan for 2025–2030. This plan builds on completion of the 2020–2025 Action Plan and sets out the next phase of initiatives to improve water outcomes, enhance resilience, and support community health and climate adaptation. It was released for public consultation between Monday 14 April and Sunday 11 May 2025.

Overall, the community feedback affirmed the strategic direction of the Action Plan. This reaffirms Council's plans to progress projects and partnerships to further advance stormwater harvesting, waterway health, flood management, and the transition to water sensitive urban design and long-term resilience and liveability goals – which in turn contribute to urban cooling, permeability, biodiversity and urban greening. The engagement also provided valuable refinements to better reflect the needs of the community, partners, and Traditional Owners.

Feedback has informed refinements and the final action plan presented for Council endorsement includes:

- Revisions to actions 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 to address community concerns about permeability, enforcement, and maintenance responsibilities
- Moving the flood education action (Action 2.3.1) to better reflect its primary role in community awareness rather than risk mitigation
- Expanding Action 4.1.2 to reinforce third-party commitments by embedding Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) and IWM principles across all Council and externally delivered projects—including Victoria's Big Build works and level crossing removals—to ensure alignment with the IWM Strategy and delivery of measurable water-sensitive outcomes
- Clarifying language and intent of cultural engagement actions (Actions 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) to ensure meaningful and ongoing partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Incorporating feedback into future planning cycles, including actions on IWM for activity centres and a drought response framework for open space
- Rewording some actions to allow for greater flexibility of scope for actions occurring later in the five-year action plan – without altering desired outcome
- Adding a response to the council's EPA obligations as an appendix to the Action plan.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the draft Integrated Water Management (IWM) Action Plan 2025 – 2030 at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Refers to the annual budget process, the budgets identified in **Error! Reference source not found.** of this report.
3. Acknowledges the valuable contribution of the community and external stakeholders during the development of Merri-bek's IWM Action Plan 2025–2030, including the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Merri Creek Management Committee, Chain of Ponds Collaboration, Waterwatch and the Friends of Waterways groups, Melbourne Water, the IWM Forum (led by the Victorian Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action).
4. Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make minor amendments to the IWM Action Plan 2025–2030 prior to publication.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Adopts the draft Integrated Water Management (IWM) Action Plan 2025 – 2030 at Attachment 1 to this report.**
2. **Refers to the annual budget process, the budgets identified in Table 1 of this report.**
3. **Acknowledges the valuable contribution of the community and external stakeholders during the development of Merri-bek's IWM Action Plan 2025–2030, including the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Merri Creek Management Committee, Chain of Ponds Collaboration, Waterwatch and the Friends of Waterways groups, Melbourne Water, the IWM Forum (led by the Victorian Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action).**
4. **Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make minor amendments to the IWM Action Plan 2025–2030 prior to publication.**

Carried

8.23 pm *Cr Theodosius left the meeting.*

8.24 pm *Cr Miles left the meeting.*

7.5 2026 STATE ELECTION ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

Executive Summary

Merri-bek last adopted State Advocacy Priorities in April 2022 (alongside Federal Advocacy Priorities, with both elections occurring in the same year).

These advocacy priorities were the focus for Council's advocacy platform during the 2022 Federal and State elections.

In February 2024, Council adopted new Federal Advocacy Priorities, with a focus on infrastructure, to advocate for in the lead up to the May 2025 Federal Election.

The next Victorian State Election will be held on 28 November 2026 it is timely for Council to adopt new State advocacy priorities. These will provide a focus for Council to promote its advocacy priorities to key stakeholders and an opportunity to secure support and investment in projects and initiatives for the benefit of the Merri-bek community.

The 2026 State Election advocacy priorities proposed for adoption in this report were developed and selected following discussions and workshops with Council's Senior Managers, Executive and Mayor and via briefing with Councillors. Council's Community Vision, Council Plan, Long-term Financial Plan, Capital Works Plan and 2025/26 Budget were also considered in relation to advocacy priorities.

The adoption of specific advocacy priorities for the next State election will not curtail opportunities for further advocacy associated with existing advocacy priorities or emergent issues nor will this impact operational advocacy which periodically occurs through day-to-day activities at an officer level.

Officer Recommendation

That Council adopts the following Advocacy Priorities for the 2026 State Election:

- a) Upfield Rail Corridor
- b) Improving bus networks
- c) Accessible transport
- d) Road safety
- e) Active transport
- f) Coburg Library and piazza project
- g) Brunswick Baths Gym expansion and preparation for electrification
- h) Ballerdt Mooroop
- i) All Abilities Playground
- j) Sport infrastructure
- k) Growing basketball in Merri-bek
- l) Coburg Social and Affordable Housing
- m) Building better homes through environmentally sustainable design
- n) Creating cooler greener spaces and community connections to nature
- o) More businesses and more jobs in Merri-bek
- p) Social justice initiatives

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Adopts the following Advocacy Priorities for the 2026 State Election:**
 - a) Upfield Rail Corridor**
 - b) Improving bus networks**
 - c) Accessible transport**
 - d) Road safety**
 - e) Active transport**
 - f) Coburg Library and piazza project**
 - g) Brunswick Baths Gym expansion and preparation for electrification**
 - h) Ballerdt Mooroop**
 - i) All Abilities Playground**
 - j) Sport infrastructure**
 - k) Growing basketball in Merri-bek**
 - l) Coburg Social and Affordable Housing**
 - m) Building better homes through environmentally sustainable design**

- n) **Creating cooler greener spaces and community connections to nature**
 - o) **More businesses and more jobs in Merri-bek**
 - p) **Social justice initiatives**
2. **When advocating on road safety, include consideration of projects which address:**
 - **Roads with high rates of serious injuries and fatalities per kilometre per year (with a higher weighting for road fatalities)**
 - **Roads with high rates of vulnerable road users being seriously injured or killed per km per year (with a higher weighting for road fatalities)**
 - **Safe routes to schools and shops**
 - **Equity - higher weighting for areas that have received less road safety attention in the past**
 3. **Include in the road safety projects for advocacy, in addition to the projects outlined in the officer report, a project for "Speed on Green" traffic lights and red turning arrows on the most dangerous Sydney Road intersections north of Bell St in Coburg North.**
- 8.25 pm *Cr Miles returned to the meeting.*
- 8.26 pm *Cr Yildiz left the meeting during the debate.*
- 8.28 pm *Cr Theodosia returned to the meeting.*

Carried

7.6 NAMING PART OF THE LANEWAY BETWEEN 217-219 ELIZABETH STREET COBURG NORTH

Executive Summary

The Kastorian Association of Victoria ('Kastorian Association') is a cultural organisation based in North Coburg. The Kastorian Association was established in 1968 by Kastorian immigrants from Greece who settled in the area. Their premises is located at 219 Elizabeth Street, North Coburg with entranceway from the unnamed right of way ('laneway') at the rear of the property. A locality map is shown in Attachment 1.

The Kastorian Association has requested to have the laneway named Kastoria Lane to ensure clear wayfinding to their premises.

At its meeting on 12 April 2023 a Notice of Motion was endorsed by Council to name the laneway Kastoria Lane, to acknowledge the contribution of the club to the community. The name 'Kastoria' aligns with Council's commitment to recognising and celebrating the contributions of culturally significant communities, such as the Kastorian Association, to the City of Merri-bek's heritage.

At meetings on 12 July 2023 and 13 September 2023, Council resolved to continue discussions with Geographic Names Victoria ('GNV') for an exemption to be made to Principle J (using commercial and business names, in GNV's *Naming Rules for Places in Victoria, Statutory Requirements for naming roads, features and localities – 2022* – the 'Naming Rules'), for the name 'Kastoria'.

In July 2024 GNV provided Council with an exemption from Principle J of the Naming Rules. The proposed name 'Kastoria Lane' has a strong link to the place. GNV advised that Council must be clear who the laneway is being naming after and requested written approval from the Kastorian Association to use the name. The Kastorian Association provided Council with their written approval in January 2025.

Consultation has been undertaken consistent with the requirements of the Local Government Act. Notice of Council's proposal to name part of the laneway between 217-219 Elizabeth Street Coburg North 'Kastoria Lane' was published on Council's Conversations Merri-bek website from 2 June 2025 until 4 July 2025.

Respondents were invited to provide a submission of support or objection to this name. Five (5) submissions were received, four (4) in support and one (1) seeking further details about the process. No objections were received.

Having considered community feedback, officers recommend that Council endorses the name Kastoria Lane for that part of the laneway between 217-219 Elizabeth Street Coburg North.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the feedback received from the community on the proposed name, 'Kastoria Lane', for the part of the laneway at the rear of 217-219 Elizabeth Street Coburg North.
2. Submits the name 'Kastoria Lane' to Geographic Names Victoria for registration and gazettal.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate to do all other things necessary to formalise the name 'Kastoria Lane', once registered by Geographic Names Victoria.

Resolution

Cr Politis moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the feedback received from the community on the proposed name, 'Kastoria Lane', for the part of the laneway at the rear of 217-219 Elizabeth Street Coburg North.**
2. **Submits the name 'Kastoria Lane' to Geographic Names Victoria for registration and gazettal.**
3. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate to do all other things necessary to formalise the name 'Kastoria Lane', once registered by Geographic Names Victoria.**

Carried unanimously

7.7 C233MBEK - FIX UP AMENDMENT - GATEWAY 1 - AUTHORISATION AND EXHIBITION

Executive Summary

The Merri-bek Planning Scheme (Scheme) sets out the policies and provisions that guide how land is used and developed across the municipality. To maintain its effectiveness in providing direction and supporting decision-making, Council periodically undertakes "fix-up" amendments to correct errors, update references, resolve mapping anomalies, implement recommendations and improve accuracy.

As part of its four-yearly review under the *Planning and Environment Act 1984*, Council adopted the *Planning Scheme Review 2022*, which recommended improvements to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme. The *Heritage Action Plan Implementation Plan 2022–2025* also identifies actions to address specific heritage issues. This has identified a need for a range of minor or administrative changes, including:

- **Zoning/Overlays anomalies and updates:** Remove outdated overlays from 384 properties; rezone some parkland to the Public Park and Recreation Zone.
- **Heritage updates:** Update planning permit exemptions, revise statements of significance, improve Heritage Overlay schedules, correct mapping, remove incorrect overlays, and update design/demolition guidance.
- **General corrections:** Fix grammatical and spelling errors, formatting issues, and mapping errors; update strategy, policy, and reference documents.

Amendment C233mbek is needed to resolve these anomalies and improve the clarity, accuracy, and effectiveness of the planning scheme, while supporting Council's preparation for the next Planning Scheme Review in 2026.

Council officers recommend that Council resolves to request the Minister for Planning authorise Amendment C233mbek. Public exhibition of the amendment would follow the Minister's authorisation.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. As the planning authority, apply to the Minister for Planning (Minister) under section 8A of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) (Act), for authorisation to prepare Amendment C233mbek to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme (Amendment).
2. Prepares the Amendment if authority is received under section 8A of the Act, or if 10 business days have passed since the Minister received the application without notifying Council of a decision:
 - a) As the planning authority, prepares the Amendment in accordance with section 8A(2) or section 8A(7) of the Act as relevant.
 - b) Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make minor changes to the draft Amendment documentation at Attachments 1-6 as required prior to exhibition of the Amendment, to correct any administrative errors, and to meet any conditions the Minister imposes through authorisation.
 - c) Endorses, for the purpose of exhibition, the draft Amendment documentation at Attachments 1-6, subject to any changes required under (2)(b) above.
 - d) Exhibits the Amendment in accordance with sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Act.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **As the planning authority, apply to the Minister for Planning (Minister) under section 8A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) (Act), for authorisation to prepare Amendment C233mbek to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme (Amendment).**
2. **Prepares the Amendment if authority is received under section 8A of the Act, or if 10 business days have passed since the Minister received the application without notifying Council of a decision:**

- a) **As the planning authority, prepares the Amendment in accordance with section 8A(2) or section 8A(7) of the Act as relevant.**
- b) **Authorises the Director Place and Environment to make minor changes to the draft Amendment documentation at Attachments 1-6 as required prior to exhibition of the Amendment, to correct any administrative errors, and to meet any conditions the Minister imposes through authorisation.**
- c) **Endorses, for the purpose of exhibition, the draft Amendment documentation at Attachments 1-6, subject to any changes required under (2)(b) above.**
- d) **Exhibits the Amendment in accordance with sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Act.**

Carried

7.8 SUMMER SPORTING ALLOCATIONS 2025/26

Executive Summary

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

In line with the Policy, facilities are allocated to clubs with sound governance structures, open membership for men, women and juniors, and a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility, including participation in club development programs. Thirteen (13) summer seasonal tenancy applications were received from clubs and all requests can be accommodated. This report also provides an update on progress of each club's junior and female participation levels. Several clubs are still in the process of submitting their compliance documentation which is required prior to receiving their summer 2025/2026 sports ground seasonal allocation.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Allocates sports grounds and pavilions for the 2025/2026 summer season to the clubs shown in Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Authorises the Director Community to make any necessary changes to the allocation of facilities for the 2025/2026 summer season if required and to inform Council of any changes.
3. Notes any club owing ground and pavilion fees from previous seasons, or owing any other debt to Council, will be informed that no ground allocation will be granted until payment is made, or a payment plan has been agreed to.
4. Notes current junior and female participation levels at sports clubs contained within this 2025/2026 Summer Sports Ground Tenancy Allocations Report.

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Allocates sports grounds and pavilions for the 2025/2026 summer season to the clubs shown in Attachment 1 to this report.**

2. **Authorises the Director Community to make any necessary changes to the allocation of facilities for the 2025/2026 summer season if required and to inform Council of any changes.**
3. **Notes any club owing ground and pavilion fees from previous seasons, or owing any other debt to Council, will be informed that no ground allocation will be granted until payment is made, or a payment plan has been agreed to.**
4. **Notes current junior and female participation levels at sports clubs contained within this 2025/2026 Summer Sports Ground Tenancy Allocations Report.**

Carried

7.9 2024-25 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE STATEMENTS

Executive Summary

Council's Financial and Performance Statements (the Statements) for the 2024-25 financial year have been prepared and reviewed by the Victorian Auditor General Offices appointed auditor, RSD Audit and Council's Audit and Risk Committee.

This report seeks Council's 'in principle' approval of the Statements and the appointment of two Councillors and the Chief Executive Officer to sign the 2024-25 Statements in their final form.

Council is reporting an accounting surplus of \$30.4 million for the financial year 2024-25. This accounting surplus includes items such as non-cash contributions, capital grants, loan redemptions and committed capital or operational expenditure for future years.

After excluding non-cash items included in the accounting surplus, capital expenditure and committed funding requirements, Council had an unrestricted surplus of \$43,664.

Officer Recommendation

That Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee, and having considered Council's Financial and Performance Statements for 2024-25 Statements at Attachments 1 and 2 to this report:

1. Approves 'in principle' the Financial and Performance Statements 2024-25.
2. Authorises the Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Politis, and the Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Henderson, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2024-25 in their final form.
3. Carries forward the \$473,339 of tied operating funding that were not spent as of 30 June 2025.
4. Carries forward the \$32,410,329 of capital project funds into the 2025/26 Capital Works Program.
5. Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2024-25 if recommended by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council, in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit and Risk Committee, and having considered Council's Financial and Performance Statements for 2024-25 Statements at Attachments 1 and 2 to this report:

1. **Approves 'in principle' the Financial and Performance Statements 2024-25.**

2. **Authorises the Mayor, Cr Helen Davidson, Deputy Mayor, Cr Helen Politis, and the Chief Executive Officer, Cathy Henderson, to certify the Financial and Performance Statements for 2024-25 in their final form.**
3. **Carries forward the \$473,339 of tied operating funding that were not spent as of 30 June 2025.**
4. **Carries forward the \$32,410,329 of capital project funds into the 2025/26 Capital Works Program.**
5. **Authorises the Principal Accounting Officer to implement any minor administrative changes to the Financial and Performance Statements for 2024-25 if recommended by the Auditor-General upon final review, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.**

8.39 pm Cr Pulford left the meeting during the debate.

Carried

7.10 GOVERNANCE REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2025 - 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 Friends of Aileu Community Committee held 7 August 2025, with a recommendation that Council notes the summary.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- A response to Public Question Time item taken on notice at the 13 August 2025 Council meeting, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the Friends of Aileu Community Committee held 7 August 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes a response to a question taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 13 August 2025 Council meeting, provided as Attachment 3.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the summary of minutes from the Friends of Aileu Community Committee held 7 August 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.**
2. **Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.**
3. **Notes a response to a question taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 13 August 2025 Council meeting, provided as Attachment 3.**

Carried

7.11 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-2025-34 - ROAD RECONSTRUCTION - DEVON ROAD, PASCOE VALE (VIEW STREET TO OAK STREET)

Executive Summary

The Road Reconstruction of Devon Road, Pascoe Vale (View Street to Oak Street), has been included in the 2025–2026 Capital Works Program under the Roads and Carparks Program. The project is part-funded through the Development Contributions Plan (DCP).

The scope of works includes the installation of underground major drainage system and associated pits, full depth pavement upgrade, reconstruction of the existing kerb and channel, vehicle crossings, footpaths, and garden bed installation.

Following the tender evaluation process, Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd has been identified as the preferred tenderer based on the strength of their submission. Subject to contract award on 10 September 2025, the contractor has confirmed readiness to commence offsite preparatory works from 22 September 2025.

Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd has successfully delivered projects of similar scale and complexity for Merri-bek and other councils, with strong performance outcomes. Onsite construction is scheduled to begin in the first week of October 2025 and is expected to be completed over a six-month including industry shutdown period by March 2026 (weather permitting). The works will be delivered in up to two distinct sections to minimise disruption to residents and local traffic.

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

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd and ACN 619 423 068 (Contractor) to award the Contractor contract RFT-2025-34 Road Reconstruction Devon Road, Pascoe Vale (View Street to Oak Street) (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - i. For the total Contract value of \$1,139,504.51 (excluding GST), comprising of fixed lump sum of \$893,883.63 (excluding GST) and provisional amount of \$245,620.88 (excluding GST).
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer,
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and
 - b) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

Resolution

Cr Theodosis moved, Cr Miles seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) Make a formal offer to Kaizen Civil Pty Ltd and ACN 619 423 068 (Contractor) to award the Contractor contract RFT-2025-34 Road Reconstruction Devon Road, Pascoe Vale (View Street to Oak Street) (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:**
 - i. For the total Contract value of \$1,139,504.51 (excluding GST), comprising of fixed lump sum of \$893,883.63 (excluding GST) and provisional amount of \$245,620.88 (excluding GST).**
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:**
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and**
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer,**
- 2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:**
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and**
 - b) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.**

Carried

7.12 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-2025-18 - MOOMBA PARK - NEW MODULAR PAVILION (DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT)

Executive Summary

The "Moomba Park Pavilion Reconstruction project" was initiated to address the outdated and insufficient facilities at Moomba Park. With a notable increase in female participation in the traditionally male-dominated sport of soccer, there was a clear demand for more inclusive and accessible amenities. Recognising this, the Council identified an opportunity to develop a joint-use facility catering to both community groups and sports clubs.

The Council successfully secured a Federal Government grant of \$1,456,539 for the Fawkner Sports and Community Hub Project: which encompasses upgrading the sports pavilion to better support community activities, alongside the installation of new public toilet facilities.

This project aligns with strategic objectives outlined in the Council Plan, emphasising community engagement, sustainability, and the enhancement of recreational infrastructure. Designs for the new modular pavilion have been finalised and approved by key stakeholders. The pavilion upgrade will ensure compliance with Football Victoria's current standards and guidelines.

In addition to the new pavilion, the existing social room at the south end of the sportsground will be demolished. This and construction of a new public toilet at this location will begin under a separate contract once the new pavilion is nearly complete.

Tender invitations were issued on 31 May 2025 to qualified contractors for the Moomba Park – New Pavilion (Modular) project, with submissions closing on 4 July 2025. A total of 11 tenders were received.

Following a comprehensive evaluation process—considering cost, capacity, capability, and risk—Modular Spaces Pty Ltd (as trustee for Modular Buildings Unit Trust) has been identified as the preferred service provider.

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

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to Modular Spaces Pty Ltd as trustee for Modular Buildings Unit Trust ABN 202 108 735 54 (**Contractor**) to award contract RFT-202518 for the Moomba Park – New Modular Pavilion (**Contract**) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - i. for the lump sum of \$1,769,492.62 (excluding GST) plus provisional sum(s) of \$250,000 (excluding GST), totalling \$2,019,492.62 (excluding GST)
 - b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;
2. Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:
 - a) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and
 - b) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) **Make a formal offer to Modular Spaces Pty Ltd as trustee for Modular Buildings Unit Trust ABN 202 108 735 54 (Contractor) to award contract RFT-202518 for the Moomba Park – New Modular Pavilion (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:**
 - i. **for the lump sum of \$1,769,492.62 (excluding GST) plus provisional sum(s) of \$250,000 (excluding GST), totalling \$2,019,492.62 (excluding GST)**

- b) **Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and the Contractor provided that:**
 - i. **the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and**
 - ii. **other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer;**
- 2. **Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by the Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution:**
 - a) **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to execute the Contract and any required documentation for the Contract; and**
 - b) **Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.**

Carried

7.13 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-P-2025-6 - PROVISION OF DRY GOODS

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to recommend the award of a panel contract for the supply of dry goods to Council. This includes packaging, dry goods and chemicals.

The aim of the tender process is to establish a panel of dry goods suppliers to support the operations of Merri-bek's Meals Production Kitchen. This kitchen functions as a Class 1 Food Production Business and is responsible for preparing and delivering meals to eligible recipients under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), the Home and Community Care Program (HACC), and individuals with Home Care Packages who have supply agreements in place. In addition to servicing Merri-bek residents, the meals service fulfills contractual obligations with Banyule, Yarra, and Darebin Councils. Meals are delivered directly to homes in Merri-bek and Darebin, providing not only nutritional support but also opportunities for social connection and welfare checks.

To facilitate procurement of these services and in the light of the expiry of the previous contract through which Council used to procure these services, Merri-bek City Council is establishing a new panel of contractors with competitively sourced schedules of rates to provide the following Panel of Dry Goods Services.

Council sought tenders from suitably qualified contractors for each of these categories and assessed the tenders in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and with the Procurement Evaluation and Probity Plan. Contracts are recommended to be awarded as outlined in the Officer Recommendation above. The tender complies with section 109(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Accept the Schedule of Rates submitted by Tenderers and make a formal offer to each of the individual panel contractors listed in Table 1 below according to the service categories, for the **Contract RFT-P-2025-6 Provision of Dry Goods (Contract)** on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:

- ii. For a period of two (2) years commencing 1 October 2025, with an option for a further two (2), two (2) year extension at the discretion of Council.
- iii. For a maximum contract expenditure of \$2,327,000 (excluding GST) across all suppliers for the term of the contract including extension options.

Preferred Tenderers Fully Legal Name	ABN
Dry Goods	
AR Food Service Pty Ltd	39 614 538 484
P Manettas & Co Technical Pty Ltd T/as Bidfood Truganina	95 003 044 997
PFD Food Services Pty Ltd	29 006 972 381
Packaging	
P Manettas & Co Technical Pty Ltd T/as Bidfood Truganina	95 003 044 997
Rollerskate Investments Pty Ltd	27 103 796 596
PFD Food Services Pty Ltd	29 006 972 381
Chemicals	
P Manettas & Co Technical Pty Ltd T/as Bidfood Truganina	95 003 044 997
PFD Food Services	29 006 972 381
Cleaner Future Pty Ltd	28 607 341 515

- b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and each Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer.
- c) Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by each Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - i. Do all things necessary to execute the Contract;
 - ii. Exercise the option to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract;
 - iii. Accept new panel contractor(s) during the contract term subject to the same public tender/evaluation process as adopted for the original panel contractors, to ensure we can maintain a range of suitable suppliers to meet Council's needs, providing the total contract amount to remain as paragraph 1 (a).
 - iv. Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:

- a) Accept the Schedule of Rates submitted by Tenderers and make a formal offer to each of the individual panel contractors listed in Table 1 below according to the service categories, for the Contract RFT-P-2025-6 Provision of Dry Goods (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - ii. For a period of two (2) years commencing 1 October 2025, with an option for a further two (2), two (2) year extension at the discretion of Council.
 - iii. For a maximum contract expenditure of \$2,327,000 (excluding GST) across all suppliers for the term of the contract including extension options.

Preferred Tenderers Fully Legal Name	ABN
Dry Goods	
AR Food Service Pty Ltd	39 614 538 484
P Manettas & Co Technical Pty Ltd T/as Bidfood Truganina	95 003 044 997
PFD Food Services Pty Ltd	29 006 972 381
Packaging	
P Manettas & Co Technical Pty Ltd T/as Bidfood Truganina	95 003 044 997
Rollerskate Investments Pty Ltd	27 103 796 596
PFD Food Services Pty Ltd	29 006 972 381
Chemicals	
P Manettas & Co Technical Pty Ltd T/as Bidfood Truganina	95 003 044 997
PFD Food Services	29 006 972 381
Cleaner Future Pty Ltd	28 607 341 515

- b) Negotiate and finalise the terms of the Contract between Council and each Contractor provided that:
 - i. the terms specified in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution shall not be altered without a further Resolution of Council; and
 - ii. other than terms referred to in paragraph 1(a) of this Resolution, the terms of the Contract are acceptable to the Chief Executive Officer.
- c) Conditional on acceptance of the Contract by each Contractor in accordance with the terms of this Resolution authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:

- i. Do all things necessary to execute the Contract;
- ii. Exercise the option to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract;
- iii. Accept new panel contractor(s) during the contract term subject to the same public tender/evaluation process as adopted for the original panel contractors, to ensure we can maintain a range of suitable suppliers to meet Council's needs, providing the total contract amount to remain as paragraph 1 (a).
- iv. Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

Carried

NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 MERRI-BEK TEAM FOR 2026 YOUTH PARLIAMENT PROGRAM

Motion

That Council:

1. Sponsors a team in the 2026 Victoria Youth Parliament.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Sponsors a team in the 2026 Victoria Youth Parliament to a maximum value of \$5000.**

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

8.49 pm Cr Pulford returned to the meeting during the debate.

Carried

8.2 PROCUREMENT POLICY AND SUBMINIMUM WAGES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN SEGREGATED WORKPLACES

Motion

That Council investigate the implications of not procuring from organisations such as prison industries and businesses which use the Supported Wage System such as Australian Disability Enterprises for future contracts and provide a report back to Council by December 2025.

Motion

Cr Bolton moved,

That Council investigate the implications of not procuring from organisations such as prison industries and businesses which use the Supported Wage System such as Australian Disability Enterprises for future contracts and provide a report back to Council by December 2025.

Lapsed for want of a seconder

8.3 FAMINE IN GAZA

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes the distress that has been caused within large sections of the Merri-bek community from witnessing the human-made famine in Gaza as a result of the denial of food, and the destruction of Gaza as a result of relentless bombing.
2. Adds its voice to renewed calls for Australia to impose sanctions on Israel, until a permanent ceasefire is enacted and the siege of Gaza is fully lifted to allow Palestinians in Gaza to have unlimited access to food, water, fuel, electricity, medical supplies and construction materials to repair damaged homes and civilian infrastructure.
3. Raises the Palestinian flag.
4. Marks the UN-recognised International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people on 29 November with an event. (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people>).

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the distress that has been caused within large sections of the Merri-bek community from witnessing the human-made famine in Gaza as a result of the denial of food, and the destruction of Gaza as a result of relentless bombing.**
Carried
2. **Adds its voice to renewed calls for Australia to impose sanctions on Israel, until a permanent ceasefire is enacted and the siege of Gaza is fully lifted to allow Palestinians in Gaza to have unlimited access to food, water, fuel, electricity, medical supplies and construction materials to repair damaged homes and civilian infrastructure.**

Cr Svensson called for a division.

For
Cr Bolton
Cr Yildiz
Cr Pulford
Cr Svensson
Cr Iwasaki
Cr Irvin
Cr Theodosis
Total For (7)

Against
Cr Davidson
Cr Abboud

Total Against (2)

Abstain
Cr Miles
Cr Politis

Total Abstain (2)

Carried

3. **Raises the Palestinian flag.**

Carried

4. **Marks the UN-recognised International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people on 29 November with an event.**
(<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people>).

Carried

8.4 SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC HOUSING STATEMENT

Motion

That Council receives a report on the implications of signing the United Housing Sector Statement with the report to address the alignment with Merri-bek's existing policies in relation to the three demands of the statement:

- a) Commission and release detailed evaluations of the structural conditions of all the towers. If and when a strong case is made for demolition, build replacement public housing nearby or elsewhere on the estate first, and relocate the tenants when complete.
- b) End all 'surplus' public land sales and use that land to build more public housing.
- c) Introduce inclusionary zoning on private land for a mandatory component of public housing.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council receives a report on the implications of signing the United Housing Sector Statement with the report to address the alignment with Merri-bek's existing policies in relation to the three demands of the statement:

- a) **Commission and release detailed evaluations of the structural conditions of all the towers. If and when a strong case is made for demolition, build replacement public housing nearby or elsewhere on the estate first, and relocate the tenants when complete.**
- b) **End all 'surplus' public land sales and use that land to build more public housing.**
- c) **Introduce inclusionary zoning on private land for a mandatory component of public housing.**

Carried

8.5 SWEATING OUR ASSETS - POOLS

Motion

That Council, as part of the forthcoming review of the Aquatic and Leisure Strategy, investigates ways that we can get more out of our aquatic assets such as extended opening times, early morning swim programs and other events over the warmer months.

Item Withdrawn

Cr Abboud withdrew Notice of Motion 8.5 Sweating our Assets.

8.6 ADDRESSING TYRE DUMPING

Motion

That Council:

1. Writes to the Minister for Environment requesting the State:
 - a) bolsters Environment Protection Authority (EPA) resourcing and powers to deal with the prevalence of illegal tyre dumping; and
 - b) invests in Recycling Victoria programs that improve access to appropriate waste disposal and recycling facilities and develop end-markets for the use of recycled tyre materials
2. Works with Tyre Stewardship Australia to develop and deliver public education programs and initiatives that support the Recycling Victoria programs.
3. Monitors illegal tyre dumping on Council owned land at known dumping sites for six months.
4. Explores opportunities to collaborate with our neighbouring councils to develop a regional response to tackle a common problem.
5. Receives a report back to Council within nine months on progress, including potential pilot programs or partnerships to reduce illegal tyre dumping in Merri-bek.

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Davidson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Writes to the Minister for Environment requesting the State:**
 - a) **bolsters Environment Protection Authority (EPA) resourcing and powers to deal with the prevalence of illegal tyre dumping; and**
 - b) **invests in Recycling Victoria programs that improve access to appropriate waste disposal and recycling facilities and develop end-markets for the use of recycled tyre materials**
2. **Works with Tyre Stewardship Australia to develop and deliver public education programs and initiatives that support the Recycling Victoria programs.**
3. **Monitors illegal tyre dumping on Council owned land at known dumping sites for six months.**
4. **Explores opportunities to collaborate with our neighbouring councils to develop a regional response to tackle a common problem.**
5. **Receives a report back to Council within nine months on progress, including potential pilot programs or partnerships to reduce illegal tyre dumping in Merri-bek.**

Carried

Time Extension

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Miles seconded -

That the Council meeting be extended by 30 minutes at 9.32 pm.

Carried

8.7 PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes with concern the State Government's proposed changes to protest laws in Victoria, and the City of Melbourne's proposals to restrict protesting in the CBD, which risk undermining the long-standing democratic right to protest.
2. Affirms that protest and peaceful assembly are fundamental democratic rights, essential to community organising, grassroots movements, and the ability of people to raise their voices on issues affecting them.
3. Recognises that communities in Merri-bek, including workers, students, First Nations peoples, young people, the LGBTIQA+ community, and multicultural groups, have historically relied upon peaceful protest to secure important social, environmental, and political reforms.
4. Expresses concern that restrictions on protest risk silencing vulnerable communities, narrowing civic participation, and criminalising people seeking to advocate for change.
5. Writes to the Premier, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Police and the City of Melbourne reaffirming the importance of protest as a democratic right, requesting a public commitment to protect it, and noting that the right to raise issues in peaceful protest at the state's capital belongs to us all.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes with concern the State Government's proposed changes to protest laws in Victoria, and the City of Melbourne's proposals to restrict protesting in the CBD, which risk undermining the long-standing democratic right to protest.**

Carried
2. **Affirms that protest and peaceful assembly are fundamental democratic rights, essential to community organising, grassroots movements, and the ability of people to raise their voices on issues affecting them.**

Carried
3. **Recognises that communities in Merri-bek, including workers, students, First Nations peoples, young people, the LGBTIQA+ community, and multicultural groups, have historically relied upon peaceful protest to secure important social, environmental, and political reforms.**

Carried

4. **Expresses concern that restrictions on protest risk silencing vulnerable communities, narrowing civic participation, and criminalising people seeking to advocate for change.**

Cr Svensson called for a division.

For

Cr Bolton
Cr Davidson
Cr Svensson
Cr Pulford
Cr Iwasaki
Cr Abboud
Cr Irvin
Cr Theodosios

Total For (8)

Against

Cr Politis

Total Against (1)

Abstain

Cr Miles
Cr Yildiz

Total Abstain (2)

Carried

5. **Writes to the Premier, the Attorney-General, the Minister for Police and the City of Melbourne reaffirming the importance of protest as a democratic right, requesting a public commitment to protect it, and noting that the right to raise issues in peaceful protest at the state's capital belongs to us all.**

Carried

9.49 pm *Cr Yildiz left the meeting.*

8.8 COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT ALGA CONFERENCES

Motion

That Council:

1. Notes in accordance with the Councillor Support, Expenses and Resources Policy an annual budget allocation for attendance at seminars, conferences and training and community events, including for attendance at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly, which is an important forum for local government advocacy.
2. Notes the costs associated with Councillors attending ALGA multiple times in a single Council term can be significant, and that Council must balance professional development opportunities with responsible use of public funds.
3. Requests a report that reviews Council's Councillor Support, Expenses and Resources Policy regarding Councillor attendance at the ALGA National General Assembly.
4. Explores options for limiting paid councillor attendance such that each Councillor may only attend one National General Assembly at Council expense per Council term.
5. Considers necessary exceptions, such as where a Councillor is elected to a national local government body or holds a representative role that requires ongoing attendance.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council defers consideration of Councillors Attendance at ALGA Conferences to the next Council meeting.

9.50 pm *Cr Pulford left the meeting during the debate.*

9.51 pm Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting during the debate.
9.51 pm Cr Pulford returned to the meeting during the debate.

Carried

Time Extension

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That the Council meeting be extended by 30 minutes at 10.01 pm.

Carried

10.03 pm Cr Yildiz left the meeting.

8.9 URGENT ACTION REQUIRED ON ROAD SAFETY: RECENT FATAL INCIDENTS ON MORELAND ROAD

Motion

That Council:

1. Recognises two recent deaths on the state-controlled Moreland Road, of a cyclist on 25 August and a skateboarder in mid-May, both caused by motorists.
2. Acknowledges the urgent need for a safer road environment for vulnerable users along Moreland Road.
3. Writes to the Minister for Transport and relevant Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) officials to request:
 - a) An immediate safety audit of Moreland Road.
 - b) Implementation of priority interventions at Murdock Street, Gordon Street, and other high-risk locations.
 - c) That the State government fund and deliver safety enhancements including pedestrian crossings, speed reductions, infrastructure upgrades, safe cycling infrastructure and road user awareness campaigns.

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council:

1. **Recognises two recent deaths on the state-controlled Moreland Road, of a cyclist on 25 August and a skateboarder in mid-May, both caused by motorists.**
2. **Acknowledges the urgent need for a safer road environment for vulnerable users along Moreland Road.**
3. **Writes to the Minister for Transport and relevant Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) officials to request:**
 - a) **An immediate safety audit of Moreland Road.**
 - b) **Implementation of priority interventions at Murdock Street, Gordon Street, and other high-risk locations.**

- c) That the State government fund and deliver safety enhancements including pedestrian crossings, speed reductions, infrastructure upgrades, safe cycling infrastructure and road user awareness campaigns.

Carried

NOTICE OF RESCISSION

Nil.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS

Nil.

URGENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Nil.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Irvin seconded –

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

- 12.1 Contract Award: RFT-2024-66 - Enterprise Software because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.
- 12.2 Proposed Acquisition of Open Space because it relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.
- 12.3 Sale of Properties Under Section 181 of the Local Government Act 1989 because it relates to personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.
- 12.4 Contract 2021-203 Management Of Council's Aquatic and Contract 2021-203 Management of Council's Aquatic and Leisure Services - Variation to Guaranteed Contract Sum Y4, 2025-2026 because it relates to private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.
- 12.5 CEO Employment Matters - Proposed Board Membership because it relates to personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

Carried

The Council meeting closed to the public at 10.05 pm.

OPENING THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

The Council meeting be open to the public.

Carried

The Council meeting opened to the public at 10.13 pm.

The Council meeting closed at 10.13 pm.

Confirmed

Cr Helen Davidson
MAYOR