



Merri-bek
City Council

Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held in Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic Centre,
90 Bell Street, Coburg
on Wednesday 12 November 2025

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

Present	Time In	Time Out
Cr Helen Davidson, Mayor	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Nat Abboud	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Sue Bolton	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Liz Irvin	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Dr Jay Iwasaki	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Chris Miles	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Adam Pulford	7.05 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Ella Svensson	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Katerine Theodosia	6.33 pm	8.49 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	6.33 pm	8.46 pm

OFFICERS

Acting Chief Executive Officer – Eamonn Fennessy
 Acting Director Business Transformation – Anita Curnow
 Acting Director City Infrastructure – Greg Rodwell
 Director Place and Environment – Pene Winslade
 Acting Director Community – Stefan Grun
 Specialist Governance Advisory – Anthony Smith
 Unit Manager Governance and Risk – Sophie Barison
 Team Leader Governance – Naomi Ellis

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

MINUTE CONFIRMATION

Resolution

Cr Theodosia moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 October 2025 be confirmed.

Carried

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

Cr Abboud acknowledged her attendance at the Waste Expo at the Melbourne Convention Centre to learn about Cleanaway's proposed waste-to-energy facility at Wollert and raised concerns about the disposal of fly ash. The expo also addressed strategies for promoting behavioural change for improving waste management and circular economy practices. While single-use promotional items were noted at the event, positive outcomes included hearing about the successful local initiatives STREAT and MAKE Studio repurposing food waste from the Victorian Market.

Cr Bolton acknowledged the community meeting to be held in Fawkner on Saturday at 10:00 am at the corner of Bonwick Street and Dukes Road to discuss pedestrian safety concerns at the Dukes Road crossing near the chemist. Additionally, Council has commenced public consultation on proposed changes and redevelopment of the Central Coburg precinct, details are available on the Council's website.

Cr Politis acknowledged Council's support of a series of recent festivals celebrating seniors, carers, and especially multiculturalism, including Diwali, the Chinese Moon Festival, and many of the Greek festivals.

Cr Politis acknowledged Council's support of the Merri-bek Community Shed, which has expanded from 9 to 240 members and continues to deliver creative upcycling and community projects. Recognition was also given to Reynard Street Neighbourhood House for securing grants to establish social enterprises in catering and horticulture, supporting disadvantaged members of the community. Additionally, Council facilitated space for the Our Daily Bread program at Schoolhouse Studios, enabling the distribution of over 200 meals weekly to vulnerable community members.

Cr Irvin acknowledged the Coburg Road Safety Community Forum initiated by residents with concerns about road safety along Moreland Road. The forum will take place on Saturday, 22 November, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Coburg Library. A petition to the State Government regarding safety improvements has also been initiated. Further details are available on Facebook or online.

Cr Iwasaki acknowledged the new Brunswick Picture House cinema will soon open on Sydney Road, with signage being installed and works nearing completion. A fundraiser for foundation memberships is currently underway to support the opening. Additionally acknowledged his and Cr Irvin's attendance at the Pollinator Picnic at Tate Reserve, hosted by Friends of Merri Creek East Coburg which featured activities such as building pollinator hotels. The event included a presentation by Clancy Lester the Bee Man, who runs free workshops promoting native pollinator habitats.

The Mayor, Cr Davidson acknowledged the Central Coburg Project and encouraged community feedback via the Conversations Merri-bek website. The proposal includes six new parks, residential development with social and affordable housing, and a \$60 million investment in the library and piazza precinct. Advocacy for improvements to the Upfield rail line was highlighted, including electrification, duplication, and extension to Wallan to address delays and cancellations.

The Mayor, Cr Davidson acknowledged the success of the Summer Art Show and congratulated local artist Maggie on receiving an award, encouraging residents to visit the Counihan Gallery.

PETITIONS

5.1 PETITION REQUESTING COUNCIL SUPPORTS A 24-HOUR CAT CONTAINMENT

A Petition was received containing 15 signatories requesting Council, for the safety of our precious, threatened biodiversity and the safety and wellbeing of our feline companions, supports a 24-hour cat containment.

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Svensson seconded –

That Council:

- 1. Receives the petition, requesting Council supports a 24-hour cat containment.**
- 2. Refers the petition requesting Council supports a 24-hour cat containment to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.**

Carried

5.2 PETITION REQUESTING COUNCIL ABANDON CAT CURFEWS OF ANY LENGTH

A Petition was received containing 404 signatories requesting Council to abandon cat curfews of any length, and instead adopt community desexing programs for stray and semi-owned cats. Such programs are proven to reduce intake and euthanasia rates at lower cost.

Resolution

Cr Yildiz moved, Cr Bolton seconded –

That Council:

- 1. Receives the petition, requesting Council abandons cat curfews of any length, and instead adopts community desexing programs for stray and semi-owned cats.**
- 2. Refers the petition requesting Council abandons cat curfews of any length, and instead adopts community desexing programs for stray and semi-owned cats to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.**

Carried

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 6.55 pm.

6.55 pm Cr Miles left the meeting.

6.56 pm Cr Miles returned to the meeting.

Report 7.1 Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029

Statement 1

Jenny Cotterell made the following statement:

My name is Jenny Cotterell. I hold qualifications in Animal Science and Conservation and Land Management, with over 30 years' experience, which includes 24 in local government animal management/ 10 in pounds and shelter. I implemented the Banyule Cat Desexing Program and published three research papers on its outcome.

On the surface, a cat curfew might seem like a simple fix, implement a law and everyone complies, problem fixed. These laws only apply to owned cats and can only be enforced if ownership is proven, difficult when many are unidentifiable. Unowned and semi-owned cats, which make up most complaints and impounds, remain unaffected and will continue to roam and breed.

Curfews also create false expectations. Residents will still see cats outside and expect Council to act, with the community having to conduct the trapping for council. Only 6% of impounded cats were reclaimed, the rest are unowned or semi-owned cats a curfew won't touch.

Each impound costs around \$500–\$600, totalling nearly \$500,000 last year, and a curfew will only push costs higher through more trapping and impoundments. Meanwhile, 334 cats euthanised last year were mostly likely healthy, treatable animals, through a capacity issue, a loss that erodes public trust.

A cat curfew also worsens social inequity. Families already struggling with rent and bills can't afford costly enclosures or fines. Renters and those in social housing without yards or fly screens will be forced to surrender pets or break the law. It turns cat ownership into a privilege for the wealthy, while low-income families may need to surrender pets or break the law. Even grants won't fix this, many lack funds to match, won't get approval, or have space for enclosures.

Merri-bek's desexing program is a strong foundation but needs more precise targeting and community engagement. Concentrating on the streets with the highest complaints delivers faster, lasting results through trust, not punishment. When residents trust officers, they share information and cooperate with Council. A curfew would erode that trust and significantly reduce participation in the desexing program.

At Banyule, I desexed 869 community owned and semi-owned cats, cutting complaints, impounds, and costs.

I urge councillors to reject the proposed curfew and strengthen desexing efforts, stop kittens being born, not families you represent being punished.

Statement 2

Beth Healy made the following statement:

I appreciate this opportunity to provide the perspective of a long term Merri-bek resident and home owner, who is also a cat rescuer.

I have been a resident of Merri-bek for 17 years. I have been doing grass-roots cat rescue in the northern suburbs since 2009 and prior to that in the UK for several years.

I have trapped, desexed, rehabilitated and/or rehomed thousands of cats in Melbourne I rarely trap an owned pet cat. I don't want to have to keep going out late at night in the cold for hours, to trap cats – I would prefer to stay home and watch Netflix.

The number of stray cats is increasing exponentially and Council are achieving little to address this. It will only get worse.

Council rely heavily on volunteer rescues to remove cats from the street, and to assist residents in desexing their cats.

With desexing costs doubling recent years, it is not possible for us to sustain this. It is very difficult to cover rehoming costs through adoption fees, and rehoming adult cats is usually done at a loss.

Already, rescue-assisted community desexing has dropped significantly, with the expected impact on stray cat breeding. Rescues are all full and cannot keep up with the growing number of stray cats. The real problem is stray cat overpopulation.

I urge the councillors to please put your attention and resources toward the problem of stray cats.

7.05 pm *Cr Pulford entered the meeting.*

Statement 3

Imogen Ebsworth made the following statement:

The Invasive Species Council strongly supports Merri-bek City Council's transition to 24/7 cat containment as part of its Domestic Animal Management Plan review. This measure is the most effective way to ensure the safety of both pet cats, who live longer and safer lives when contained, and native wildlife.

Merri-bek City Council is home to more than 200 species of native birds, 24 native reptile and amphibian species, and 23 native mammals. Roaming cats are a significant threat to protecting, maintaining and enhancing this level of urban biodiversity within the Council's borders. Conservatively, 7 of the 11 focal species for the Merri-bek Council are at risk from cats through direct predation and cat-borne diseases, particularly toxoplasmosis.

A night-time curfew is not sufficient, as pet cats are natural predators that hunt both day and night, preying on native animals. We urge the Council to adopt a staged, holistic implementation, focusing first on education and community support before enforcement.

The Council's key recommendations are to transition to 24/7 cat containment to protect local biodiversity and pet safety, and to expand desexing and registration programs to manage the unowned cat population.

This policy is vital for achieving the Council's Nature Plan goals and reflects strong community support for responsible cat ownership.

Statement 4

Kathleen Chapman made the following statement:

My name is Kathleen Chapman. I am from Moggies of Merri-bek and I have been rescuing cats for 20 years. I work with stray cats as well as cats rescued from pounds and shelters, and I'm also an advocate for humane and evidence-based approaches to cat management.

I would like to start with a quote from the Australian Pet Welfare Foundation's position statement on cat containment, which goes to the heart of this issue:

Mandated cat containment actively prevents the resolution of the problem of wandering cats because it presents a huge barrier to cat semi-owners taking full ownership of the stray cats they are feeding.

In 2024-25, Merri-Bek impounded 954 cats, and only 57 were reclaimed by owners - a return rate of just 6%. The vast majority of cats that are being impounded are unowned or semi-owned. Semi-owned meaning someone feeds them, but doesn't consider themselves to be their owner.

The key to effectively reducing the cat population is to get semi-owners to take full-ownership of the cats they are feeding, and this can be done through a targeted desexing program, as Banyule Council very successfully implemented. This involves targeting the areas where most complaints are coming from, and where most cats are being impounded, speaking to people who are feeding these cats and offering free desexing, free microchipping and free registration. ANY curfew represents a huge barrier to getting people to take ownership of the cats they are feeding.

The community cat program in Banyule resulted in a 66% reductions in cat impoundments, an 82% reduction in euthanasia, a 36% reduction in complaints. The program cost \$77,440, but saved council \$440,660.

In contrast while more than 100 councils have introduced cat curfews, there is no evidence whatsoever to support their effectiveness. Why would Council choose to introduce a cat curfew, which there is no evidence to support it, instead of a targeted cat desexing program the effectiveness of which has been clearly documented in several peer reviewed journal article articles. Furthermore, a cat curfew is simply unenforceable unless you are relying on neighbourhood vigilantes to trap impound other people's cats. This has happened in Darebin where there is an Instagram page to encourage people to report cats out after dark so that they can trap them.

Please do what is right and reject any form of cat curfew and instead vote to implement an evidence based targeted cat desexing program.

8.1 Notice of Motion – Retain the former Coburg North TAFE site for skills, innovation and job creation

A statement from Maggie Cowling was received and incorporated into the following statement read by Theadora Lamaro.

Statement

Theadora Lamaro made the following statement:

We submit this statement as key stakeholders in the redevelopment of the former Batman TAFE site in Coburg North. Many of us live and work on this block, and some of our homes are completely surrounded by the site in question.

We oppose the motion to retain zoning of this area as industrial land, as we believe it does not accurately reflect the existing character or usage of the neighbourhood. This block, and the surrounding area, is a vibrant mix of hospitality venues, residential properties, creative industries, industrial businesses, and retail spaces. The area has a long history of being used for mixed purposes, including agriculture, manufacturing and design, and residents have called this block home for over a century.

We are deeply concerned that the Victorian State Government has earmarked this site for ongoing industrial use without sufficient consultation with the local community. As residents and workers directly impacted by this decision, we ask that our voices be heard, and our homes be considered in shaping the future of this precinct.

We, the local residents and business owners, 'TAFE site Stakeholders group' have been engaged with Merri-bek Council since 2020, including a meeting held on 24th July of that year with Council Officers Maria-Luisa Nardella (Economic Development), Kim Giaquinta (Strategic Planning), Mark Hughes (Urban Planning) and Cr Lambros Tapinos. We have also been in discussion and had a meeting with Anthony Cianflone 6th June 2023.

We support the use of this site for mixed uses, covering the following points:

- Meaningful Consultation with First Nations traditional owners of the natural wetlands site, including engaging with the Wurundjeri Tribal Land Council (Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation) to ensure appropriate protocols are adhered to and Treaty guidelines followed, regarding any development moving forward.
- Protect the amenity of existing residents, including air quality, noise levels, and light conditions for those whose homes share boundaries with the site;
- Preserve, protect and enhance the existing canopy trees and natural environment on the site;
- Create urban permeability, ensuring safe, accessible routes for walking and cycling, and providing public green spaces that help cool our suburb, foster community connection, and support mental health;

- Encourage access to and engagement with local enterprises located on the site.

We, the 'TAFE site Stakeholders group' support innovative, creative, and sustainable development, including green retrofits of existing buildings wherever possible.

We also emphasise our request for ongoing meaningful community involvement throughout the planning and development process to ensure outcomes that reflect the values and needs of the local neighbourhood.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS – QUESTIONS

Council received 5 questions. They were presented to Council.

7.17 pm *Cr Yildiz left the meeting.*

7.18 pm *Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting.*

Submission to Activity Centres Program, phase 2 Engagement

Question 1

Helen Deans asked Council:

Why were heritage sites, areas and streets not formally accounted for in the response the Strategic Planners prepared for the Council meeting, by ensuring that important heritage areas were excluded from core / inner / and outer catchment areas?

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

Council's submission to the State government Phase 2 Activity Centre reform consultation process carefully considered heritage sites, areas and streets.

The endorsed Council submission discussed building heights and catchment boundaries, seeking to lower proposed heights in heritage streetscapes and move all heritage precincts to the outer catchment area, consistent with the State's methodology.

Council also heard two public questions on heritage at the 8 October meeting and considered these representations from the community in its decision and in the Phase 2 submission.

As advised last month, we understand that the Heritage Overlay will continue to protect any significant heritage places from inappropriate development in the same way that it does today. While Council does not control the State government decision making on this process, our understanding is that existing heritage protections will remain.

Question 2

Helen Deans asked Council:

When did the councillors and the Merri-bek Strategic Planners receive the State Government's Activity Centre Program Phase 2 proposal?

Were the Councillors aware that the (two) information sessions prepared for residents of Merri-bek had not been completed prior to the council vote on the council response to the State Government's Activity Centre Program Phase 2?

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

Council received the core and catchment maps on 10 September 2025, the same day they were released publicly via Engage Victoria. The State Government letterboxed affected properties, mailed non-occupier owners, and promoted engagement through media, online channels, and drop-in sessions. Council further promoted these activities through its website and social media, encouraging residents to participate in the State government's process.

Staff and Councillors were aware of the State government's consultation timeframe and process. That is why Council considered the maps at its 8 October 2025 meeting — the only Council meeting the material could be considered at prior to the 24 October submission deadline. Council was aware that the State Government consultation was still running at that time but Council was a stakeholder just like to the community providing its feedback as a stakeholder to the State Government as the responsible authority.

Council can advocate and make submissions aligned with its policies such as the planning scheme and Streets for People but it does not control this process.

Question Time Extension

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That the Council meeting be extended by 30 minutes at 7.28 pm.

Carried

Traffic Impact Assessment

Question 1

Maureen McCunnie asked can Council confirm whether a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) has been conducted for the proposed activity centre intensification affecting Jesse, Hall, Florence, Station Streets? If not, why not?

If so, when was it conducted, what were the findings, and why has it not been made publicly available?

Question 2

Maureen McCunnie asked Council, if not, why not?

If so, when was it conducted, what were the findings, and why has it not been made publicly available?

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

I'll start by just reiterating that Council is a stakeholder in this process, just like community members – we aren't leading it and we've had the same time as the community to consider the materials.

We have advocated that the State take an integrated planning approach to designing the two Merri-bek Activity Centres – including heritage, open space, transport, and economic development considerations. However this reform is being led by the State Government, not by Council, and it is focused on built form and housing capacity. As the Planning Authority, this is something the Minister can choose to do.

7.33 pm Cr Miles left the meeting.

7.34 pm Cr Miles returned to the meeting.

Activity Centre Plans

Michele McKay asked Council, in Council's Phase 2 submission to the state government I noted that on 9 pages the Council mentions the importance of transparency and inclusive engagement for Activity Centre Plans. Council states: The program must commit to meaningful inclusive engagement.

Before and since its submission to state government how many council led consultations have there been?

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

The Activity Centre reform process is being led by the State Government, on very tight timeframes. It is not a Council project.

In Council's own Planning Scheme Amendment processes we run extensive community engagements. However, Council is a stakeholder in this State Activity Centre reform process, just like community members, and we received information at the same time as community members.

We encouraged the State government to engage deeply with the community in its process – and we connected community members like you with the state government to make sure your feedback was being heard.

However, in a four week State consultation period, there is simply not time for Council officers to first digest what the State is proposing, then prepare / promote / conduct a consultation program that competed with the State's consultation, then assess the community's feedback to Council against the Planning Scheme, and then prepare a report to Council. It would also potentially create confusion in the community about who they should be providing feedback to – and reduce the impact of the community's feedback to the state.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS - QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

Council received a further 2 questions that were taken on notice relating to:

- Palestinian Flag
- O'Hea Street bike lane extension

Public Question Time concluded at 7.37 pm.

COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2029

Executive Summary

Merri-bek City Council has been developing its new Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2025 to 2029 and this report presents the proposed final plan for adoption.

The draft DAMP 2025-2029 was endorsed for public exhibition at the 10 September 2025 Council meeting. The public exhibition period ran from 18 September to 16 October 2025. As well as gauging overall thoughts on the draft DAMP, Council sought feedback on a proposed night time cat curfew and what kinds of support cat owners may require to help confine their cats to their properties.

The community holds a range of views on the merits and practicality of introducing any form of cat confinement. Council acknowledges and appreciates the contributions of the community and stakeholders on this matter. Officers have considered and weighed up the community feedback as well as revisiting the research on the impacts on cat wellbeing and wildlife of roaming cats and are recommending that 24 cat confinement be adopted. Research papers considered in forming this recommendation include the Victorian Cat Management Strategy, NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Cat Management (2024), Keeping Cats Safe at Home' project, Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife Campaign, Merri-bek Nature Plan and benchmarking against other Councils.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 (**Attachment 1**) is now being presented to Council for adoption.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Adopts the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment 1).

2. Provides a copy of the Plan to the Secretary of Victoria's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) by 1 December 2025.
3. Makes an Order under Section 25 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to introduce 24-hour cat confinement, effective from 1 April 2027.
4. Publishes a copy of this resolution in the Government Gazette and in a newspaper circulating the municipal district of the Council to reiterate the resolution of 10 November 2021 to introduce mandatory cat desexing. This includes a requirement for all newly registered cats to be desexed, unless exempt under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Resolution

Cr Svensson moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. **Adopts the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 (Attachment 1) with the following amendments:**

a) Include the following activities under section 4.3 Objective 4A:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Partner with researchers to investigate the effects of cat containment on native wildlife	Year 1	Entered a partnership
Review the impact of cat containment at 12 and 24 months post curfew implementation	Year 3 and Year 4	Report as part of annual DAMP review

b) Remove reference under section 4.3 Objective 4A, activity – 'Introduce a 24-hour cat confinement with a commencement date of 1 April 2027. Introduce the curfew with a grace period until 1 July 2027'.

2. **Introduce a municipal-wide cat curfew from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am, commencing 1 April 2027.**
3. **Makes an Order under Section 25 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 to implement a cat curfew from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am, commencing 1 April 2027.**
4. **Introduce a council-wide 24-hour cat confinement for all new cats registered after 1 April 2027 (applying only to new registrations received after this date).**
5. **Makes an Order under Section 25 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 to implement 24-hour cat confinement for all new cats registered after 1 April 2027.**
6. **As part of its efforts in managing cat overpopulation rates and euthanasia rates, Council continues to require that all cats be desexed, with this requirement applying to all new cat registrations effective from 12 November 2025, except for cats exempt under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and a copy of this resolution being published in the Government Gazette and in a newspaper circulating the municipal district of the Council.**
7. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make minor amendments to the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-2029 amended (if required) to reflect Council's resolution.**

8. Provides a copy of the Plan to the Secretary of Victoria's Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) by 4 December 2025.

Cr Iwasaki called for a division.

For	Against	Abstain	
Cr Pulford	Cr Bolton	Cr Miles	
Cr Svensson	Cr Davidson		
Cr Iwasaki	Cr Yildiz		
Cr Abboud	Cr Politis		
Cr Irvin			
Cr Theodosios			
Total For (6)	Total Against (4)	Total Abstain (1)	Carried

7.2 MELBOURNE WATER STORMWATER (FLOOD) MAP - COUNCIL SUBMISSION

Executive summary

Melbourne Water (MW) manages rivers, creeks, and main stormwater drains across metropolitan Melbourne and is responsible for regional floodplain management. In this role, MW periodically reviews and updates both urban stormwater and riverine flood maps.

MW has recently commenced the process of updating its stormwater flood maps, as applied to its drainage areas, to better identify locations at risk of flooding. The first stage of its new Greater Melbourne Flood Information Program (the Program) covers the municipalities of Yarra, Darebin, Glen Eira and Merri-bek.

To confirm the accuracy of their mapping, MW is currently seeking feedback from the community about past flooding events and any changes to the built environment, such as new fences, landscaping, or structures, that may influence stormwater flows. As part of this process, MW released draft urban stormwater (flood) maps for Merri-bek on 13 October 2025, inviting public feedback until 5 December 2025.

Council has already undertaken community consultation and adopted its own stormwater map for areas where it manages local drainage. MW's current consultation on the Program relates only to main drainage areas in Merri-bek, which fall under MW's management.

This initial stage of community engagement precedes a future State Government-led process to introduce the final MW maps into the Merri-bek Planning Scheme, as well as the schemes of other participating councils.

Council officers welcome the opportunity to contribute to MW's approach to floodplain management and has prepared a submission to proactively represent Merri-bek's interests. The draft submission:

- Supports MW's community consultation and a future State-led planning scheme amendment process.
- Advocates for greater collaboration, transparency, and local consideration in MW's floodplain management approach.
- Asks that MW:
 - Confirm its process for affected landowners to seek a review of MW's mapping.
 - Outline its long-term drainage upgrade and investment priorities in Merri-bek.

- Undertake strategic floodplain management for Merri-bek's activity centres, where MW mapping impacts redevelopment potential.

This report seeks Council's endorsement of the draft submission at **Attachment 1** and authorisation for the Director, Place and Environment, to finalise and submit it to MW and relevant stakeholders.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft submission at Attachment 1, as Council's response to Melbourne Water, for its stormwater (flood) mapping program.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, to finalise the submission, including any minor administrative or grammatical updates and changes arising from new information received through Melbourne Water's ongoing engagement process, and submit it to Melbourne Water.
3. Provide a copy of the final submission to the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Water, and other councils participating in Melbourne Water's mapping program.

8.09 pm *Cr Bolton left the meeting.*

8.09 pm *Cr Svensson left the meeting.*

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses the draft submission at Attachment 1, as Council's response to Melbourne Water, for its stormwater (flood) mapping program.**
2. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer, to finalise the submission, including any minor administrative or grammatical updates and changes arising from new information received through Melbourne Water's ongoing engagement process, and submit it to Melbourne Water.**
3. **Provide a copy of the final submission to the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Water, and other councils participating in Melbourne Water's mapping program.**

8.09 pm *Cr Iwasaki left the meeting during the debate.*

8.10 pm *Cr Yildiz left the meeting during the debate.*

8.10 pm *Cr Iwasaki returned to the meeting during the debate.*

8.11 pm *Cr Bolton returned to the meeting during the debate.*

Carried

7.3 AMENDMENT C235MBEK - REVISED PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTION RATE FOR THE PLANNING SCHEME - GATEWAY 2

Executive summary

Merri-bek is growing, with its population forecast to increase by approximately 49,000 residents (a 28.5 per cent growth rate) between 2021 and 2036. Recent Victorian Government planning reforms are expected to facilitate further development and further increase population growth across the municipality. This growth will place greater demand on Council's existing public open space network.

Council's *Merri-bek Open Space Strategy* (MOSS) identifies the need for more high-quality, safe, and inclusive public open spaces to meet the needs of the growing community. A key implementation action of MOSS is to update the public open space contribution rate to ensure new development helps fund the creation and upgrades of open spaces across Merri-bek.

Amendment C235mbek (the Amendment), authorised by the Minister for Planning under delegation on 1 August 2025, proposes to introduce an updated city-wide public open space contribution rate of 8.68 per cent.

The updated rate is supported by detailed technical analysis demonstrating its strategic and economic justification. Incorporating the new rate into the Merri-bek Planning Scheme will ensure developers apply the updated rate at subdivision (for developments of more than two dwellings), providing essential funding to expand and improve Merri-bek's open space network.

The Amendment was publicly exhibited from 4 September to 13 October 2025, with seven submissions received. Two of these submissions raised concerns, and five supported the proposal or expressed no concerns.

Key themes in submissions were about housing impacts, changing the levy rate, analysis for the levy rate, planning permits, enabling open space, enabling community benefits, consistency with other councils, strategic alignment, specific sites, and transitional provisions. The themes for each submission are shown in Attachment 1.

This report recommends that Council consider all submissions received on Amendment C235mbek, refer them to an Independent Planning Panel appointed by the Minister for Planning, and endorse the proposed responses in Attachment 2 to form the basis of Council's submission.

A successful outcome for Amendment C235mbek will enable Council's ability to meet community expectations for the City's evolving open space network and its infrastructure.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the significant impact of the open space reserve in facilitating the delivery of critical open spaces to meet the needs of a rapidly growing Merri-bek population.
2. Considers all submissions made on or before the last date of exhibition of Amendment C235mbek to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme (Amendment), relating to a revised public open space contribution rate, in accordance with section 22(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) (Act).
3. Considers any late submissions received after the last date of exhibition but on or before the Council meeting date (12 November 2025), in accordance with section 22(2) of the Act.
4. In relation to all submissions which were considered by Council,
 - a) Using its powers as a Planning Authority under section 23 of Act, refers those submissions to an independent Planning Panel appointed by the Minister under Part 8 of the Act.
 - b) Requests that the Minister for Planning appoint an independent Planning Panel under Part 8 of the Act to consider all submissions received in relation to Amendment C235mbek.
5. Endorses the responses to submissions in Attachment 2 to this report to form the basis of Council's submission to the independent Planning Panel.

6. Authorises the Director, Place and Environment to:
 - a) Present submissions to the Planning Panel, adopting a position of advocacy for the Amendment, generally in accordance with this report and Attachment 2.
 - b) Make minor changes to Amendment C235mbek and to give direction on issues that arise during the future panel hearing in response to expert evidence, submissions, and the planning panel.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the significant impact of the open space reserve in facilitating the delivery of critical open spaces to meet the needs of a rapidly growing Merri-bek population.**
2. **Considers all submissions made on or before the last date of exhibition of Amendment C235mbek to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme (Amendment), relating to a revised public open space contribution rate, in accordance with section 22(1) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic) (Act).**
3. **Considers any late submissions received after the last date of exhibition but on or before the Council meeting date (12 November 2025), in accordance with section 22(2) of the Act.**
4. **In relation to all submissions which were considered by Council,**
 - a) **Using its powers as a Planning Authority under section 23 of Act, refers those submissions to an independent Planning Panel appointed by the Minister under Part 8 of the Act.**
 - b) **Requests that the Minister for Planning appoint an independent Planning Panel under Part 8 of the Act to consider all submissions received in relation to Amendment C235mbek.**
5. **Endorses the responses to submissions in Attachment 2 to this report to form the basis of Council's submission to the independent Planning Panel.**
6. **Authorises the Director, Place and Environment to:**
 - a) **Present submissions to the Planning Panel, adopting a position of advocacy for the Amendment, generally in accordance with this report and Attachment 2.**
 - b) **Make minor changes to Amendment C235mbek and to give direction on issues that arise during the future panel hearing in response to expert evidence, submissions, and the planning panel.**

8.12 pm *Cr Svensson returned to the meeting during the debate.*

8.17 pm *Cr Yildiz returned to the meeting during the debate.*

Carried

7.4 PROPOSED SALE OF COUNCIL LAND - 10 MURRELL STREET, GLENROY

Executive summary

The sale of the former kindergarten site at 10 Murrell Street, Glenroy, was endorsed as a funding source to contribute to the cost of constructing the new Glenroy Community Hub in 2018.

On 12 December 2018, Council declared 10 Murrell Street surplus to its needs and resolved to commence a statutory process regarding Council's intention to sell the site following completion of the Hub, which occurred in 2022.

At its meeting in September 2024, Council requested a further report be prepared detailing specific alternative uses be explored including food relief, crisis housing, social housing, a Glenroy Men's Shed.

The relevant report was presented to Council at its meeting on 9 July 2025, where Council resolved to consult the community on its intention to sell the land, in accordance with its requirements under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Notice was published on Council's website of the proposal to sell the land, with physical copies of the notice also distributed to nearby stakeholders. The notice provided parties with the opportunity to lodge a written submission and to speak to their submission should they wish to do so.

Submissions were heard by Council on 16 October 2025. Five written submissions were tabled, and one submitter spoke to the hearing.

Having received and considered submissions from those wishing to do so, Council is now in a position to make a decision regarding the proposed sale of 10 Murrell St, Glenroy.

Submissions varied, with several submitters proposing alternative uses for the site, one expressing support for the sale provided a tree is protected, one strongly opposed, and one organisation expressing a desire to lease the site or, failing that, to purchase the land.

Officers are recommending that Council endorse the sale to deliver on its original decision on funding the Glenroy Community Hub. If the funds are not returned to the Significant Projects Reserve, this will reduce Council's capacity to deliver planned future significant community infrastructure projects. Alternative uses of the site have been considered, including the uses proposed by community submitters, some of which would not be possible under current zoning. In this instance officers advise that retaining the site would negatively impact Council's significant project investments as well as requiring potentially significant additional expenditure to make the site fit for purpose.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the five submissions received in relation to the proposed sale of Council land at 10 Murrell Street, Glenroy, and the advice set out in this report.
2. Endorses the proposed sale of the land by a public process.
3. Writes to all submitters thanking them for their submissions and informing them of Council's decision.
4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to effect the sale.
5. Directs the net proceeds of the sale to the Significant Projects Reserve.

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Politis seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the five submissions received in relation to the proposed sale of Council land at 10 Murrell Street, Glenroy, and the advice set out in this report.**
2. **Endorses the proposed sale of the land by a public process.**

3. **Writes to all submitters thanking them for their submissions and informing them of Council's decision.**
4. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to do all things necessary to effect the sale.**
5. **Directs the net proceeds of the sale to the Significant Projects Reserve.**

Cr Davidson called for a division.

For

Cr Davidson
Cr Yildiz
Cr Pulford
Cr Miles
Cr Svensson
Cr Iwasaki
Cr Politis
Cr Abboud
Cr Irvin
Cr Theodosis

Total For (10)

Against

Cr Bolton

Total Against (1)

Carried

7.5 INVESTIGATION INTO AN URBAN AGROFORESTRY TRIAL - RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a high-level investigation into the potential for a site for an agroforestry trial in the city to cultivate a forest for timber harvesting, which Council resolved to undertake in July 2025. The investigation was framed as a circular economy and research initiative, assessing its potential to generate local evidence, build new skills, and create value from urban timber.

The findings confirm that while an agroforestry trial is technically feasible, it presents a combination of significant practical, financial, and strategic challenges that make it a high-risk undertaking in an urban parkland context.

Based on the options analysis, this report recommends focusing investment on strengthening Council's core programs, namely the Street and Park Tree Program and creek corridor tree and native vegetation planting—while trialing lower-risk innovations like micro-forests and developing a circular economy for urban wood within existing operations.

Issues and challenges identified through the investigation include:

- **Site and planning constraints:** Suitable large-scale sites, such as those investigated at Lorne Street, Fawkner, and Gowanbrae for their propensity of underdeveloped grass area and potential to accommodate planting, are located within sensitive creek corridors. These areas are subject to Environmental Significance Overlays (ESO) in the Merri-bek Planning Scheme, which require revegetation approaches that preference using locally indigenous species, protection and enhancement of riparian ecology, habitat connectivity, bank stability, water quality and maintaining habitat connectivity for native fauna. This creates a policy conflict with a trial designed to test productive timber harvesting and would restrict the species choices available for such a trial.
- **High operational risk and complexity:** The trial would introduce high-risk forestry operations into local streets and public parks. A formal risk assessment identified a

'High' Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) risk associated with felling, processing, and transporting timber in areas with high public access.

- The risks of maintaining a long-term commitment: The 15 to 30-year cycle required to establish and then harvest timber is a long-term, multi-decade commitment. There are risks of project failure due to shifts in community sentiment, support and funding.
- Specialised maintenance: The trial would require a specialised, costly, and frequent clearwood pruning regime, which is operationally distinct and far more resource-intensive than Council's standard amenity pruning regime.

As part of the investigation a comparative carbon analysis was completed. This analysis confirmed that agroforestry offers very competitive carbon sequestration potential, estimated at 280–420 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent per hectare (tCO₂e/ha) over 30 years. This compares favourably to micro-forests (200–300 tCO₂e/ha) and creek corridor tree and native vegetation planting (80–140 tCO₂e/ha). However, this benefit is highly dependent on the final end-use of the timber.

The investigation into the Master Tree Grower program found that while partners are willing, the program's specialised curriculum is not aligned with Council's core training needs and is therefore not a high priority at this time.

The investigation concluded that while the program could potentially be supported for general arborist professional development under existing Council learning and development policies (particularly in relation to timber value assessment, which supports the separate circular economy initiative), the development and hosting of a specific MTG program in Merri-bek is not a high priority for Council at this time.

Based on the options analysis, this report recommends focusing investment on strengthening Council's core programs - the Street and Park Tree Program and creek corridor tree and native vegetation planting - while trialing lower-risk innovations like micro-forests and developing a circular economy for urban wood within existing operations.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the investigation into an urban agroforestry trial and its findings.
2. Continues to focus tree and native vegetation planting efforts on strengthening Council's Street and Park Tree Program and along creek corridors, to enhance canopy cover and biodiversity.
3. Explores small-scale Micro-Forest projects in suitable locations and monitor outcomes.
4. Continues to develop an Urban Wood Circular Economy initiative within existing operations to realise a higher benefit for trees with quality timber that require removal.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Notes the investigation into an urban agroforestry trial and its findings.**
- 2. Continues to focus tree and native vegetation planting efforts on strengthening Council's Street and Park Tree Program and along creek corridors, to enhance canopy cover and biodiversity.**
- 3. Explores small-scale Micro-Forest projects in suitable locations and monitor outcomes.**

4. **Continues to develop an Urban Wood Circular Economy initiative within existing operations to realise a higher benefit for trees with quality timber that require removal.**

Carried

7.6 DRAFT PUBLIC ART POLICY

Executive Summary

Through the development of the 2023-2030 Arts and Culture Strategy, community shared their desire for increased support of the arts in Merri-bek, including an increase in public art. This was reiterated through the recent Council Plan process.

The creation of Merri-bek's first Public Art Policy will enable increased investment in public art across the municipality, creating increased opportunities for artists, engaging residents and visitors and enhancing public space. The Policy will also ensure best practice in the commissioning and maintenance of Council's public art collection.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Public Art Policy at Attachment 1 for public exhibition in November 2025.
2. Refers funding recommendations for the draft policy for consideration as part of the 2026/2027 budgeting process.
3. Notes the current statutory limitations and practical feasibility of consideration of the inclusion of public art in the planning process.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Theodosis seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses the draft Public Art Policy at Attachment 1 for public exhibition in November 2025.**
2. **Refers funding recommendations for the draft policy for consideration as part of the 2026/2027 budgeting process.**
3. **Notes the current statutory limitations and practical feasibility of consideration of the inclusion of public art in the planning process.**

Carried

7.7 OPEN COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS REPORT

Executive Summary

The Open Council Resolutions Report provided as **Attachment 1**, has been prepared to update Councillors and the community on the progress of Council resolutions that remain open and are yet to be finalised.

There are currently 33 open Council resolutions, with 1 of these relating to a Petition, 15 relating to Council officer reports and 17 relating to Notices of Motion.

The Open Council Resolutions Report is presented to Council on an ongoing basis, promoting transparency of how Council resolutions are being implemented.

Officer Recommendation

That Council receives and notes the Open Council Resolutions Report provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

Resolution

Cr Irvin moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council receives and notes the Open Council Resolutions Report provided as Attachment 1 to this report.

Carried

7.8 2025-26 FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT

The First Quarter Financial Report gives an overview of Council's performance through delivery of the budget. It compares the actual revenue and expenditure with the budgeted revenue and expenditure year to date (YTD) and assesses the financial performance in the first quarter to determine a forecast outcome for 30 June 2026.

A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation in October 2025 to form the 2025-26 First Quarter Financial Review (Q1 Forecast). This process provided Council the opportunity to review its YTD performance and reallocate available financial resources to maximise the delivery on its strategic objectives. The results of this review are included in this report as the Q1 Forecast.

For the three months ended 30 September 2025, Council has achieved an operating surplus result of \$161.4 million which is \$1.6 million (1%) more than the YTD budget of \$159.9 million. It is important to note that the operating surplus does not convert to immediately available cash to Council. Surplus funds are used to fund important community infrastructure projects like the recently completed Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment and Balam Balam Place.

As described above, significant amounts of surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

Council's forecast adjusted underlying surplus of \$17.0 million is \$5.0 million less than the adopted budget of \$22.0 million. This result is important as it measures Council's ability to generate a surplus in the ordinary course of business – excluding non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions, and other contributions to fund capital expenditure from net results.

Although the Q1 underlying result remains a surplus, the lower surplus compared to the adopted budget indicates a decline in the operating position. It should also be noted that of the \$5.0 million, \$2.7 million relates to the Elevate Program and Coburg basketball feasibility study, which will be funded by a reduced transfer to the Significant Projects Reserve in 2025-26.

After budgeted transfers to reserves, a deficit (negative) unrestricted result of \$0.7 million has been forecasted. This is primarily due to an additional \$1.0 million of rates funded capital projects.

Council has spent \$9.1 million on capital expenditure as at the end of September which is \$0.3 million (3%) less than the YTD budget of \$9.4 million, with \$84.8 (90.3%) of the adopted full year budget remaining.

After a detailed review of the capital works program, there is a forecast increase of \$9.0 million from the adopted budget of \$93.9 to \$102.9 million. This is primarily due to 35 projects requiring additional funding of \$9.3 million and \$8.4 million of additional carry forwards from 2024-25, offset by \$5.8 million of carry forwards into 2026-27 and \$3.3 million of savings.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the 2025-26 First Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 30 September 2025, including operating performance and capital performance at Attachment 1.
2. Notes the status of the capital works program for 2025-26.
3. Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of \$9.2 million and the increase to operating expenditure of \$6.0 million arising from the 2025-26 First Quarter Financial Review.
4. Approves a decrease of \$2.7 million to the transfer to the Significant Projects Reserve (to \$1.8 million) in 2025-26 to fund additional expenditure relating to the Elevate Transformation Program and the bring forward of the Coburg basketball feasibility study. This reduction will be offset by a corresponding increase to the reserve in the 2026-2030 budget.
5. Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of \$102.9 million, arising from the 2025-26 First Quarter Financial Review.
6. Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2026-27 Capital Works Program:
 - a) Fully or partially grant funded projects to be carried forward if the funding is secured and received this financial year:
 - AG Gillon Stormwater Harvesting - \$1,000,000
 - Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex Redevelopment - \$611,324.
 - b) Rates funded projects:
 - Bin Purchases (waste charge funded) - \$2,258,519
 - West Street Neighbourhood Streetscape - \$1,000,000
 - DeChene Reserve - Gender Inclusive Facilities - \$700,421
 - Coburg Outdoor Pool - 8 X 15 Toddlers Pool - \$175,000
 - Fawkner Library Upgrade Works - \$70,000.
7. Brings forward the following capital project funding to the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:
 - Brunswick Early Years Hub (grant funded) - \$261,663
 - Coburg Olympic Pool - Repainting - \$135,000
 - Balfe Park Sportsfield Redevelopment - \$50,000.
8. Approves funding for the following new projects in the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:
 - Fawkner Netball Club Roof (grant funded) - \$4,560,000
 - Jukes Rd & William St, Fawkner - Priority Crossing (grant funded) - \$437,000
 - Blackspot Project - Intersection of Widford St & View St, Glenroy (grant funded) - \$263,900
 - Raised Crossing - Everett St & Moreland Rd (SLRSP) (grant funded) - \$184,000
 - Electric Vehicle Chargers (externally funded) - \$170,000 (previously budgeted as operating)
 - Emergency Road Works - Ivy St, Brunswick - \$104,010
 - Blackspot Project - Intersection of Albert St & Wilkinson St, Brunswick (grant funded) - \$57,330
 - Brunswick Bowls Club - \$16,646
 - Albion St/Lillian St Rectification - \$15,000
 - Glenroy Community Hub - Electrical Works - \$10,815

- Coburg Lake Bridge Rectification Works - \$10,620.
9. Approves additional funding for the following existing projects in the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:
- Mitchell Parade Retaining Walls (grant funded) - \$1,068,852
 - Drainage, Moama Crescent and Jhonson Street - Hot Spot No 21 - \$381,650
 - Victoria St - Streets for People (grant funded) - \$374,000
 - York Street Park Close to Home (reserve funded) - \$265,374
 - Rehabilitation, Moonee Pde from Jewel to Union - \$245,000
 - Wombat Crossings - Barrow St & Blair St, Coburg - \$200,000
 - Brunswick City Baths Repainting & Renewal - \$174,345
 - Road Reconstruction, Katawa Grove from Cooraminta to Dead End - \$168,000
 - 40 km/h Rollout - Traffic Calming - \$100,000
 - South Street - Engeny Hot Spot No 12 - \$99,404
 - Richards Reserve Natural Turf Renewal - \$85,485
 - South Street from Jensen to West, Road Reconstruction - \$82,866
 - Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment - \$55,195
 - South Street from Dickinson to Everitt, Road Reconstruction - \$51,421
 - Park Renewal - Soudan St (reserve funded) - \$48,599
 - Building Maintenance - Capital Purchases - \$28,138
 - Fallon St From Union to Collier Both Carriageways - \$16,889
 - Park Renewal - Beccles / Oulton Reserve (reserve funded) - \$12,974
 - Tyson Street from Jukes Rd to Denys Street, Road Reconstruction - \$12,028
 - Mobile Phone Purchases - \$15,408
 - Shade Sail Installation - Anne Sgro Child Care (grant funded) - \$6,302.
10. Notes savings realised from the following existing projects in the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:
- Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Lonsdale St to Clifton Grove - \$548,786
 - Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Montefiore St to Lonsdale St - \$425,878
 - Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Sussex St to Bishop St - \$356,397
 - Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Bishop St to Montefiore St - \$350,514
 - Road Reconstruction, Dalgety Street from Hope to Whitby - \$325,000
 - Road Reconstruction, Devon Street from View to Oak - \$300,000
 - Park Renewal, Cox Reserve, including playground upgrade (reserve funded) - \$227,239
 - School Active Travel and Safety Infrastructure - \$200,000
 - Road Reconstruction, Garden Street from Belfast to Glenlyon (both Carriageways) - \$165,237
 - Road Safety and Amenity Improvements Program - \$143,000
 - Wombat Crossing - Albion to Melville - \$115,000
 - Coburg North Sports Hub Upgrades - \$95,755
 - Patterson Street from Tinning to Albion, Road Reconstruction - \$26,760
 - Parker Reserve - Baseball - Change Room & Refurbishment - \$25,000
 - Snell Gve-Public Toilet-Snell Gve, Oak Park - \$15,859
 - Fawkner Community Hall - CB Smith Reserve - \$7,000.

Resolution

Cr Irvin moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the 2025-26 First Quarter Financial Report for the period ending 30 September 2025, including operating performance and capital performance at Attachment 1.**
2. **Notes the status of the capital works program for 2025-26.**
3. **Notes the increase to the full-year forecast for operating income of \$9.2 million and the increase to operating expenditure of \$6.0 million arising from the 2025-26 First Quarter Financial Review.**
4. **Approves a decrease of \$2.7 million to the transfer to the Significant Projects Reserve (to \$1.8 million) in 2025-26 to fund additional expenditure relating to the Elevate Transformation Program and the bring forward of the Coburg basketball feasibility study. This reduction will be offset by a corresponding increase to the reserve in the 2026-2030 budget.**
5. **Endorses the full-year capital expenditure forecast of \$102.9 million, arising from the 2025-26 First Quarter Financial Review.**
6. **Carries forward the following capital project funding to the 2026-27 Capital Works Program:**
 - a) **Fully or partially grant funded projects to be carried forward if the funding is secured and received this financial year:**
 - **AG Gillon Stormwater Harvesting - \$1,000,000**
 - **Coburg Bluestone Cottage Complex Redevelopment - \$611,324.**
 - b) **Rates funded projects:**
 - **Bin Purchases (waste charge funded) - \$2,258,519**
 - **West Street Neighbourhood Streetscape - \$1,000,000**
 - **DeChene Reserve - Gender Inclusive Facilities - \$700,421**
 - **Coburg Outdoor Pool - 8 X 15 Toddlers Pool - \$175,000**
 - **Fawkner Library Upgrade Works - \$70,000.**
7. **Brings forward the following capital project funding to the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:**
 - **Brunswick Early Years Hub (grant funded) - \$261,663**
 - **Coburg Olympic Pool - Repainting - \$135,000**
 - **Balfe Park Sportsfield Redevelopment - \$50,000.**
8. **Approves funding for the following new projects in the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:**
 - **Fawkner Netball Club Roof (grant funded) - \$4,560,000**
 - **Jukes Rd & William St, Fawkner - Priority Crossing (grant funded) - \$437,000**
 - **Blackspot Project - Intersection of Widford St & View St, Glenroy (grant funded) - \$263,900**
 - **Raised Crossing - Everett St & Moreland Rd (SLRSP) (grant funded) - \$184,000**
 - **Electric Vehicle Chargers (externally funded) - \$170,000 (previously budgeted as operating)**
 - **Emergency Road Works - Ivy St, Brunswick - \$104,010**
 - **Blackspot Project - Intersection of Albert St & Wilkinson St, Brunswick (grant funded) - \$57,330**
 - **Brunswick Bowls Club - \$16,646**
 - **Albion St/Lillian St Rectification - \$15,000**
 - **Glenroy Community Hub - Electrical Works - \$10,815**
 - **Coburg Lake Bridge Rectification Works - \$10,620.**

9. Approves additional funding for the following existing projects in the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:

- Mitchell Parade Retaining Walls (grant funded) - \$1,068,852
- Drainage, Moama Crescent and Jhonson Street - Hot Spot No 21 - \$381,650
- Victoria St - Streets for People (grant funded) - \$374,000
- York Street Park Close to Home (reserve funded) - \$265,374
- Rehabilitation, Moonee Pde from Jewel to Union - \$245,000
- Wombat Crossings - Barrow St & Blair St, Coburg - \$200,000
- Brunswick City Baths Repainting & Renewal - \$174,345
- Road Reconstruction, Katawa Grove from Cooraminta to Dead End - \$168,000
- 40 km/h Rollout - Traffic Calming - \$100,000
- South Street - Engeny Hot Spot No 12 - \$99,404
- Richards Reserve Natural Turf Renewal - \$85,485
- South Street from Jensen to West, Road Reconstruction - \$82,866
- Fawkner Leisure Centre Redevelopment - \$55,195
- South Street from Dickinson to Everitt, Road Reconstruction - \$51,421
- Park Renewal - Soudan St (reserve funded) - \$48,599
- Building Maintenance - Capital Purchases - \$28,138
- Fallon St From Union to Collier Both Carriageways - \$16,889
- Park Renewal - Beccles / Oulton Reserve (reserve funded) - \$12,974
- Tyson Street from Jukes Rd to Denys Street, Road Reconstruction - \$12,028
- Mobile Phone Purchases - \$15,408
- Shade Sail Installation - Anne Sgro Child Care (grant funded) - \$6,302.

10. Notes savings realised from the following existing projects in the 2025-26 Capital Works Program:

- Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Lonsdale St to Clifton Grove - \$548,786
- Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Montefiore St to Lonsdale St - \$425,878
- Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Sussex St to Bishop St - \$356,397
- Road Reconstruction, O’Hea Street from Bishop St to Montefiore St - \$350,514
- Road Reconstruction, Dalgety Street from Hope to Whitby - \$325,000
- Road Reconstruction, Devon Street from View to Oak - \$300,000
- Park Renewal, Cox Reserve, including playground upgrade (reserve funded) - \$227,239
- School Active Travel and Safety Infrastructure - \$200,000
- Road Reconstruction, Garden Street from Belfast to Glenlyon (both Carriageways) - \$165,237
- Road Safety and Amenity Improvements Program - \$143,000
- Wombat Crossing - Albion to Melville - \$115,000
- Coburg North Sports Hub Upgrades - \$95,755
- Patterson Street from Tinning to Albion, Road Reconstruction - \$26,760
- Parker Reserve - Baseball - Change Room & Refurbishment - \$25,000
- Snell Gve-Public Toilet-Snell Gve, Oak Park - \$15,859
- Fawkner Community Hall - CB Smith Reserve - \$7,000.

Carried

7.9 GOVERNANCE REPORT - NOVEMBER 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 Advisory Committees.
- Records of Meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the records.
- Responses to Public Question Time items taken on notice at the 13 August and 10 September Council meetings, with a recommendation that Council notes the responses.
- A recommendation that Council appoints and authorises the Council officers referred to in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*).
- A recommendation that Council appoints applicants to the First Peoples Advisory Committee, Disability Reference Group and the Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- A request to amend the 2025 Road Management Plan to include information that was omitted from the 2025 Road Management Plan as presented to Council at its meeting held 8 October 2025.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from the Friends of Aileu Community Committee held 14 October 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 13 August and 10 September Council meetings, provided as Attachment 3.
4. In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020*:
 - a) Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 to this report, as set out in the instrument.
 - b) Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument, remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it, and revokes the previous Instrument executed on 18 December 2024.
 - c) Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.
5. Appoints the community members listed in Confidential Attachment 5 of this report to the First Peoples Advisory Committee, Disability Reference Group and Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee.
6. Notes that all applicants to the First Peoples Advisory Committee, Disability Reference Group and the Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee will be contacted to thank them for their application and advised of the outcome.

7. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to amend the 2025 Road Management Plan (as adopted 8 October 2025), to include a corrected table as shown in Attachment 6 of this report.

Resolution

Cr Irvin moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the summary of minutes from the Friends of Aileu Community Committee held 14 October 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.**
2. **Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.**
3. **Notes responses to questions taken on notice during Public Question Time at the 13 August and 10 September Council meetings, provided as Attachment 3.**
4. **In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 147(4) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and section 313 of the Local Government Act 2020:**
 - a) **Appoints and authorises Council staff referred to in the Instrument at Attachment 4 to this report, as set out in the instrument.**
 - b) **Determines the instrument comes into force immediately, the common seal of Council is affixed to the instrument, remains in force until Council determines to vary or revoke it, and revokes the previous Instrument executed on 18 December 2024.**
 - c) **Authorises the affixing of Council's common seal.**
5. **Appoints the community members listed in Confidential Attachment 5 of this report to the First Peoples Advisory Committee, Disability Reference Group and Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee.**
6. **Notes that all applicants to the First Peoples Advisory Committee, Disability Reference Group and the Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion Advisory Committee will be contacted to thank them for their application and advised of the outcome.**
7. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to amend the 2025 Road Management Plan (as adopted 8 October 2025), to include a corrected table as shown in Attachment 6 of this report.**

Carried

7.10 CONTRACT RFT-2025-42 ROAD RECONSTRUCTION, TINNING STREET, BRUNSWICK FROM GARNET STREET TO WALTERS STREET

Executive Summary

The road reconstruction of Tinning Street in Brunswick, from Garnet Street to Walters Street, has been included in the 2025–2026 Capital Works Program under the Roads and Carparks Program. The project forms part of Council's current Development Contributions Plan (DCP).

The scope of works includes the installation of underground drainage pipes and associated pits, reconstruction of the existing bluestone kerb and channel, bluestone and concrete vehicle crossings, asphalt footpaths, and garden bed installation.

Following the tender evaluation process, Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd has been identified as the preferred tenderer based on the strength of their submission. Subject to contract award on 12 November 2025, the contractor has confirmed readiness to commence offsite preparatory works from 12 January 2026. (immediately after end of year break).

Presta Construction Group 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 second week of January 2026 and is expected to be completed over a four-month period by early May 2026 (weather permitting). The works will be delivered in up to three 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 **Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd and ACN 096 137 745 (Contractor)** to award the Contractor contract **RFT-2025-42 Road Reconstruction Tinning Street, Brunswick (Garnet Street to Walters 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 \$1,347,456.00 (excluding GST), comprising of fixed lump sum of \$1,162,424.00 (excluding GST) and provisional amount of \$185,032.00 (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.
3. Refers the budget savings of \$202,044 to the quarterly review process.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Yildiz seconded -

That Council:

1. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) **Make a formal offer to Presta Construction Group Pty Ltd and ACN 096 137 745 (Contractor) to award the Contractor contract RFT-2025-42 Road Reconstruction Tinning Street, Brunswick (Garnet Street to Walters 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 \$1,347,456.00 (excluding GST), comprising of fixed lump sum of \$1,162,424.00 (excluding GST) and provisional amount of \$185,032.00 (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.
- 3. Refers the budget savings of \$202,044 to the quarterly review process.

Carried

NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 RETAIN THE FORMER COBURG NORTH TAFE SITE FOR SKILLS, INNOVATION AND JOB CREATION

Motion

That Council:

- 1. Notes the officer submission to the Victorian government in relation to the former Coburg North TAFE site advocating to maintain industrial zoning for the site.
- 2. Writes to the Federal Minister for Industry and Innovation advising of Council's submission, and seeking the Federal Government's active support of any industries seeking help to establish innovative industries and job hubs at this site.

Motion

Cr Politis moved, Cr Theodosius seconded –

That Council:

- 1. Notes the officer submission to the Victorian government in relation to the former Coburg North TAFE site advocating to maintain industrial zoning for the site.
- 2. Writes to the Federal Minister for Industry and Innovation advising of Council's submission, and seeking the Federal Government's active support of any industries seeking help to establish innovative industries and job hubs at this site.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council defers consideration of 8.1 Retain The Former Coburg North Tafe Site For Skills, Innovation And Job Creation to the December meeting to enable a meeting to occur between the TAFE Site Stakeholders Group and interested Councillors and a Council officer.

Carried

8.2 RAMADAN NIGHTS @ BONWICK STREET, FAWKNER 2026

Motion

That Council:

1. Receives a future report investigating the establishment of a 'Ramadan Nights' event, that outlines operational, financial and logistical requirements for delivery including:
 - a) Considerations for holding this event on an annual basis from 2027 as a multicultural community celebration.
 - b) Assesses the suitability of hosting the event in Bonwick Street, Fawkner during the month of Ramadan.
 - c) Outlines engagement considerations and opportunities to include Muslim Women's Council Victoria, local business owners, restaurants, and community groups to collaboratively plan and deliver the event in a way that celebrates cultural diversity and strengthens social cohesion.
 - d) Identify external funding opportunities, including relevant State and Federal Government multicultural and community event grants, to support event delivery.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council:

1. **Receives a future report investigating the establishment of a 'Ramadan Nights' event, that outlines operational, financial and logistical requirements for delivery including:**
 - a) Considerations for holding this event on an annual basis from 2027 as a multicultural community celebration.**
 - b) Assesses the suitability of hosting the event in Bonwick Street, Fawkner during the month of Ramadan.**
 - c) Outlines engagement considerations and opportunities to include Muslim Women's Council Victoria, local business owners, restaurants, and community groups to collaboratively plan and deliver the event in a way that celebrates cultural diversity and strengthens social cohesion.**
 - d) Identify external funding opportunities, including relevant State and Federal Government multicultural and community event grants, to support event delivery.**

Carried unanimously

NOTICE OF RESCISSION

Nil.

FORESHADOWED ITEMS

Nil.

URGENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Nil.

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Politis seconded –

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

- **Contract Award: Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) RS8017-2023 Recruitment Services 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.**

Carried

The Council meeting closed to the public at 8.45 pm.

OPENING THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded –

The Council meeting be open to the public.

Carried

The Council meeting opened to the public at 8.49 pm.

The Council meeting closed at 8.49 pm.

Confirmed

Cr Helen Davidson
MAYOR