



Minutes of the Council Meeting

Held in Bunjil (Council Chamber), Merri-bek Civic
Centre, 90 Bell Street, Coburg
on Wednesday 11 June 2025

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The Mayor opened the meeting at 6.30 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	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Helen Politis, Deputy Mayor	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Nat Abboud	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Sue Bolton	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Liz Irvin	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Dr Jay Iwasaki	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Chris Miles	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Adam Pulford	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Ella Svensson	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Katherine Theodosis	6.30 pm	8.59 pm
Cr Oscar Yildiz JP	6.30 pm	8.59 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
 Manager Governance and Strategy – Yvonne Callanan
 Acting Unit Manager Governance – Sophie Barison
 Executive Officer Civic and CEO office – Sarah Lionakis

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Nil.

DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Nil.

MINUTE CONFIRMATION

Resolution

Cr Yildiz moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14 May 2025 be confirmed.

Carried

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND OTHER MATTERS

The Mayor, Cr Davidson acknowledged the release of the draft Coburg North Master Plan in April that went out to community consultation. It was prepared, following the first phase of consultation in early 2025 and meetings with many stakeholders. The draft plan was released in April 2025 for the purpose of seeking further community input, and it was great that we received so much input in the second phase of consultation, that closed in May.

We received over 900 submissions and emails, a key focus of the community feedback was around the athletics track. The draft plan had supported possible changes to track and surrounding facilities in the far long-term some decades away, which would've seen the capacity for more use by other sports but changed some aspects of the track. We received really strong feedback about that, we are pleased to have heard that feedback. We've also heard strong feedback about the need to find a new basketball stadium and other sporting facilities too. Also the critical role that the much loved Olympic pool plays. In relation to the feedback we received, I want to assure everyone that we are listening and we are really grateful for the community input into this.

The consultation report will come back to Council next month. In that report, I expect there will be options available which amend the treatment of the athletics track and potentially other aspects as well. That is the exact purpose of what the community consultation process is. I want to thank everyone that's taking the time to contribute and participate in a respectful community engagement process which is at the heart of what we do.

Cr Yildiz acknowledged Sara Murdock the pharmacy owner at 108 Kent Road, Pascoe Vale, who was recently crowned the Pharmacist of the Year for Victoria.

Cr Abboud acknowledged Joe Montemurro, who has spent a long time at Brunswick Juventus, and extended congratulations on his recent appointment as the head coach of the Matildas.

Cr Abboud acknowledged a community meeting with the Safer Walking and Riding for Murray Road, to be held at the Newlands Senior Citizens Centre on Sunday 6 July at 2 pm.

Cr Politis acknowledged her attendance at the Children's Market that took place at the Schoolhouse Studios in late May, and recognised the spirit and creativity created by local children.

Cr Bolton acknowledged the Sydney Road Accessible Tram Stops Campaign and the planned, second anniversary rally of this campaign, being held on Saturday, 28 June at 11 am at the Coburg Mall outside the Coburg Library.

Cr Miles acknowledged the passing of Brian Gerard Conway the owner of West Street Meats in Hadfield and recognised his contribution to the community.

Cr Irvin acknowledged the recent Ewing Street Community Safety Meeting, held in partnership with Brunswick MP Tim Read, and expressed thanks to everyone who attended and participated in the online survey. It was noted that the feedback received will be shared with both the Council and the Department of Transport and Planning for their consideration.

PETITIONS

5.1 PETITION - PARKING CONDITIONS WHEATSHEAF ROAD GLENROY

A petition (D25/287682) has been received containing 35 signatories requesting Council to review the parking conditions on Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receives the petition, requesting Council to review the parking conditions on Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy.
2. Refers the petition requesting Council to review the parking conditions on Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. **Receives the petition, requesting Council to review the parking conditions on Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy.**
2. **Refers the petition requesting Council to review the parking conditions on Wheatsheaf Road, Glenroy to the Director City Infrastructure for consideration and response.**

Carried

5.2 PETITION - SAVE, UPGRADE AND ENHANCE THE COBURG ATHLETICS TRACK AND FIELD PRECINCT

A petition (D25/298624) has been received containing 1592 signatures requesting Council to save, upgrade and enhance the Coburg Athletics Track and Field Precinct

Resolution

Cr Yildiz moved, Cr Bolton seconded –

That Council:

1. **Receives the petition, requesting Council save, upgrade and enhance the Coburg Athletics Track and Field Precinct.**
2. **Refers the petition requesting Council save, upgrade and enhance the Coburg Athletics Track and Field Precinct to the Director Community for consideration and response.**

Carried

6.50 pm *Cr Miles left the meeting.*
6.50 pm *Cr Bolton left the meeting.*
6.50 pm *Cr Miles returned to the meeting.*

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 6.52 pm.

8.3 Notice of Motion – Community safety forum for road safety

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

Chris Slee made the following statement:

The recent death of a skateboard rider highlights the danger of a section of Moreland Road east of Melville Road. The road goes over the crest of a hill, which means that car drivers, pedestrians and other road users have limited visibility. There is a need for lower speed limit on this section of the road, as well as a pedestrian crossing near the IGA supermarket at the corner of Moreland Road and Queen Street. I request that Council urgently advocate for these changes with the Road Traffic Authority.

6.54 pm Cr Bolton returned to the meeting.

Caitlin Phillips asked what Council is intending to do to make our streets safer?

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

Council is aware of several resident concerns regarding traffic volumes and safety on Shaftsbury Street. We have identified the route as an important local connection in the draft Streets for People Plan.

The transport team are assessing the feedback received through the engagement period at the moment and a final version of the plan will be presented to Council in the coming months which will indicate some of the options available for improvements to streets like Shaftsbury Street and its priority in the plan. However, officers would be happy to meet with you about the specifics of the concerns you have raised in the meantime while the feedback is being assessed.

7.00 pm Cr Politis left the meeting.

7.01 pm Cr Politis returned to the meeting.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS - QUESTIONS

Council received six questions, they were presented to Council.

Sister City relationship with Xianyang, China

Regarding the cancellation of this Sister City relationship, Suzy Pinchen asked what future proofing steps will Council take to avoid a reoccurrence of this type of unfortunate decision, apparently made in the absence of local community consultation in contradiction of its own 2024 Community Engagement Policy, which requires, and I quote allowing for “adequate time for participants to provide informed responses to engagement requests?”

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

To clarify, Council followed its usual process when deciding to cease the Xianyang relationship, as part of a review which recommended winding up a number of inactive sister city relationships. We hadn't heard back from Xianyang and to the knowledge of staff there had been no activity in the relationship for several years.

Subsequent to the Council decision, community members have come forward advising that there have been community discussions with Xianyang in recent years including with former Councillors, and there is potential for future activity.

Council can choose to reconsider the decision about the Xianyang sister city relationship and we expect this might occur at next month's Council meeting. Thank you again for your feedback and for raising this with us.

7.06 pm *Cr Bolton left the meeting.*

7.06 pm *Cr Politis left the meeting.*

7.07 pm *Cr Bolton returned to the meeting.*

7.07 pm *Cr Politis returned to the meeting.*

Glenroy getting a fair share of investment

Amy Szczygalski of Glenroy Community Action Group asked would Council please confirm whether Glenroy, relative to its population and compared to other suburbs within the LGA, receives a fair and proportional allocation of funding for footpath maintenance, street cleaning, and general upkeep of retail precincts and public areas?

Would Council please provide a breakdown of this expenditure by suburb, for all suburbs, for the past financial year, along with the proposed allocations for the upcoming financial year?

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

Council's services are generally divided up into proactive and reactive services. Proactive services include regular footpath inspections (every 25 months at least and 13 months in activity centres), street sweeping, clearing of pits and drains, mowing and upkeep of parks and sporting grounds and road and footpath renewal works. The level of effort on these tasks is to achieve standards that are common across the municipality. Sometimes more needs to be spent in one area, and other times in another.

Council also provides reactive services, and these respond to reports from the public about issues. This includes possible trip hazards on footpaths, potholes, areas where water is ponding, removal of dumped rubbish, removal of graffiti, etc. Our responses to these reports are evenly handled throughout the municipality, noting that some areas attract more reports than others.

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

Council is not able to easily breakdown the expenditure within the budget by suburb. Council offers a range of key services to the whole community, rather than suburb specific. To name a few, these services include customer service, libraries, maternal and child health, immunisation, arts and culture, aged care including meals on wheels.

The draft 2025-29 budget includes key infrastructure projects in Glenroy, some of which are multiyear delivery, and include:

- Park renewal projects at Page Reserve, ATC Cook Reserve and Volga Street/Middle Street
- Finalising the Glenroy activity centre upgrade works at Wheatsheaf Road
- Designing the Glenroy activity centre upgrade works at post office place
- Hooning prevention measures in reserve carparks
- Waterloo Road pedestrian crossing

We have also delivered a range of projects in Glenroy over a number of recent years - some examples include the Kingsford Smith Ulm dog park and park upgrade, and the Glenroy Community Hub.

Council has also delivered a range of place making activities in Glenroy including recently in April - Dinotastic- this was a very popular family event at Bridget Shortell Reserve in Glenroy. More place making events are also planned for Glenroy including:

- Wheel Sisters Art Installation in Linear Park (near the Glenroy Station) and launch event (end of June 25)- art promoting sustainable travel and celebrating women from different cultural backgrounds riding

- Polyglot Theatre's Paper Planet coming to Glenroy in October 25 school holidays- a free event for families

Council also provides a range of other economic development support to Glenroy including hosting networking and other events for traders, a business women's network, and a range of other supports for traders such as shopfront renewal grants.

Proposed dog on lead area within Tate Reserve

Cameron Miller asked how will Council balance the desires of a vocal user group against the rights of other people that use the area, and, in particular, those plants and animals that have no voice?

If dogs are allowed unrestricted access in this area by being off-lead in Tate Reserve, what actions will Council put in place to avoid further impacts to the creek including erosion, water quality and loss of understory plants?

The Merri Creek trail and Tate Reserve are valued open spaces by community both for their biodiversity values and roles as important health and recreation spaces. Council must take these factors into consideration when making decisions around such spaces. Part of the reason for the pilot and speaking to our community about these spaces is to help understand the different views of the community. As part of the pilot proposal, we are exploring the introduction of a fenced, dog-free habitat area in the lower, more ecologically sensitive part of the reserve. This would provide a dedicated space for vegetation recovery and wildlife movement with minimal disturbance. At the same time, a designated off-leash area would remain available in the upper area of the reserve, separated from the creek edge, providing recreational space for dog walkers.

The aim of this approach is to formally recognise and support both priorities — community use and habitat protection — through clear spatial separation, signage, and education, rather than continuing the current, often ambiguous, arrangements that are in place now.

The proposed implementation of the trial, which was shared with the community during consultation indicated that Tate Reserve was proposed to remain an On-lead area however Officers also proposed to include a Dog prohibited zone, which covers the habitat area adjacent to the Creek. During consultation we received strong support for changing Tate Reserve to be an off-lead area, in recognition for the way the space is currently used by the community despite its designation as an On-lead reserve. Officers are considering this proposal in addition to expanding the habitat area and subsequent Dog prohibited zone.

Council is also working closely with Melbourne Water in regard to methods for addressing some of the erosion issues along the creek corridor. While wash out and erosion does occur naturally in locations, further work is needed to look at impacts from community use of the creek corridors and how this can be better managed.

Verity Campbell, on behalf of an anonymous submitter asked how will you accommodate children's needs in Tate Reserve?

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

Council recognises the importance of balancing these uses, particularly where sensitive activities like bush kinder programs take place.

Part of our engagement with the community, is to better understand how different groups use and value these shared spaces.

Community feedback strongly supported changing the designation to allow off-lead dog access across the broader reserve, reflecting current informal use patterns. In response, officers are now considering this change while also exploring the expansion of the habitat zone and its designation as a dog-prohibited area.

The draft proposal aims to formally introduce a dog-prohibited area that could support the continued safe operation of bush kinder programs. This zone could provide a physically separated space for early childhood learning, free from interactions with off-lead dogs, and support the safety and wellbeing of children in these programs.

Question Time Extension

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That the Council meeting be extended by 30 minutes at 7.22 pm.

Carried

8.1 Notice of Motion – Abolishing sub minimum wages for disabled workers

Council received one statement. It was presented to Council:

Lewis Noonan made the following statement:

I am a resident in Coburg, I am also disabled. People with disability you cannot always tell because most disabilities and chronic illnesses are not invisible.

We are all finding it hard in this cost-of-living crisis and those with the least amount of money are suffering the most. Disabled and chronically ill people often have living and medical expenses that are higher than non-disabled people.

One of the recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission with the Transform Australian Disability Enterprises is to phase out segregated employment and sub-minimum wages by 2034. We know from the Royal Commission that the rates of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, tended to be higher in all segregated settings not just employment. Therefore group homes are often places of abuse as well.

Most people who live in group homes and are working in Australian disability enterprises have an intellectual disability, being paid at least the minimum wage gives us particularly vulnerable group of people the freedom to make decisions about their lives that most of us take for granted, such as where they live and who they live with. Everyone deserves to have enough money to live a good life. With a median unit rental cost in Merri-bek of \$510 per week, at this rate a person making three dollars per hour could not make the rent even if they worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

How can we make our society fair if we accept the economic abuse and exploitation of disabled people?

Public Question Time concluded at 7.24 pm.

COUNCIL REPORTS

7.1 NORTH WEST BUILDING PHOENIX STREET AND BRUNSWICK BATHS GYM EXPANSION OPTIONS

Executive Summary

This report outlines future use options for the North-West (NW) building in Phoenix Street Brunswick and the Brunswick Baths Health Club, in response to growing community demand, operational pressures, and the current condition of the NW Building.

Following detailed review and consideration, it is recommended that Council proceed with enabling works to support a future extension of the Brunswick Baths Health Club onto the current outdoor activity zone/courts on the Brunswick Baths site. This would include demolition of the NW building, relocation of the outdoor activity zone (at a cost of approximately \$460,000 in the 2025/26 financial year) and commencement of the gym extension design and consultation. This recommendation would result in a reduction of the current 2025/26 capital works program by \$2.19 million.

This report is also noting that the construction of the new gym facility (\$5.0 million) is unbudgeted and recommended to be considered in future years capital works program development and budget considerations.

The report notes that while repurposing the NW building for gym expansion would offer some short-term capacity relief for existing users, it provides limited long-term value due to size limitations, structural compliance, building integrity and title constraints and the high cost to upgrade and maintain. Instead, redevelopment on the existing outdoor activity zone adjacent to the Brunswick Baths Health Club is identified as the preferred long-term solution to address capacity, safety, and future electrification requirements for the Brunswick Baths.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the assessment of possible options for the North-West building, including partial gym expansion, arts/community space fit-out, and demolition.
2. Notes that gym expansion into the North-West building offers poor long-term value, due to title separation, structural limitations, significant cost to enable second floor use and lack of alignment with Council's future electrification aspirations for Brunswick Baths.
3. Endorse the staged implementation of enabling works to support the future expansion of the Brunswick Baths Health Club, including:
 - a) Demolition of the North-West building.
 - b) Relocation of the Outdoor Activity Zone to the current site of the North-West building; and
 - c) Commencement of preliminary concept design and consultation for a new gym facility extension on the current Outdoor Activity Zone within the Brunswick Baths footprint, including provision of structurally suitable roof space to support infrastructure to allow for future electrification of Brunswick Baths.
4. Refers the below financial implications to the 2025/29 budget process:
 - a) Brings forward \$160,000 from the 2026/27 capital works program to 2025/26, so that in 2025/26 a total \$460,000 is allocated in the capital works program for the demolition of the north-west building, relocation of the outdoor activity zone, and design and consultation for a new gym facility;
 - b) Removes the remaining \$2.19 million in the 2026/27 capital works program.

5. Refers the costs of the new gym facility extension (including provision to support future electrification of Brunswick Baths), expected to be over \$5 million, to future capital works planning and the 2026/30 budget process.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council defers consideration of the North West Building Phoenix Street and Brunswick Baths Gym Expansion Options to the August 2025 Council Meeting to allow for more detailed investigation of the alternative and emerging options.

Carried

7.28 pm *Cr Miles left the meeting.*

7.2 **ACTIVITY CENTRES PROGRAM MERRI-BEK CLUSTER - PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT**

Executive summary

The State Government's Activity Centres Program (Program) is a priority action under the new state-wide planning strategy, *Plan for Victoria*. It aims to deliver more housing in well-connected areas across Melbourne. The State Government advises the Brunswick and Coburg Station Activity Centres, located along the Upfield Line, have been included in the Program due to their:

- Transport capacity
- Market viability
- Proximity to jobs and services
- Planned infrastructure upgrades, such as level crossing removals.

The State Government is describing the Brunswick and Coburg Activity Centres as the "Merri-bek Cluster". The land within the Merri-bek Cluster plays a vital role in supporting the municipality's residential, economic, and employment functions. Anchored by Sydney Road and the Upfield rail corridor, the area accommodates a diverse and vibrant mix of commercial, industrial, residential, and creative land uses. It is serviced by Merri-bek's integrated transport network, including pedestrian, cycling, public transport, and road connections as well as a range of civic and open spaces.

Phase 1 of community engagement for the Activity Centres Program (Program) commenced on 6 May and will close on 15 June 2025. This stage seeks preliminary feedback from councils and the community to inform the development of Activity Centre Plans for 25 centres, including the Brunswick and Coburg Station Activity Centres (collectively referred to as the Merri-bek Cluster). As a key stakeholder, it is important that Council plays an active advocacy role to help ensure the Program delivers positive outcomes for the Merri-bek community.

At this early stage, no draft Activity Centre Plans (Plans) or supporting technical documentation have been released. As such, the draft submission (Attachment 1), prepared for Council's endorsement, provides important high-level feedback based on available information, adopted Council strategies, local priorities, and known conditions.

The draft submission supports the State Government's objective to focus housing growth in well-served areas such as the Merri-bek Cluster. However, this growth must be carefully planned to ensure the delivery of affordable, sustainable, and diverse high-quality housing, supported by essential infrastructure, transport, and open space. The draft submission outlines seven key issues, and associated advocacy asks to ensure the fast-tracked Program does not negatively impact the liveability of Coburg and Brunswick.

The State Government has advised that detailed planning will continue throughout 2025, with a second phase of engagement to occur later in the year, when draft Plans and proposed planning controls are expected to be released. At that time, Council will consider a further report and a draft submission in response.

An amendment to the Merri-bek Planning Scheme to implement the outcomes of the Plans is anticipated in early 2026.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the State Government's Activity Centres Program (Program), which includes the Brunswick and Coburg Station Activity Centres (collectively referred to as the Merri-bek Cluster), and the draft submission provided at Attachment 1.
2. Endorses the draft *Activity Centres Program – Phase 1 Submission: Merri-bek Cluster*, June 2025 at Attachment 1 as Council's formal submission to the State Government for Phase 1 of the Program.
3. Receives a report on the draft Activity Centre Plan(s) and any associated planning controls to be released by the State Government during Phase 2 engagement, for the purpose of endorsing a formal Council submission.

Resolution

Cr Politis moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the State Government's Activity Centres Program (Program), which includes the Brunswick and Coburg Station Activity Centres (collectively referred to as the Merri-bek Cluster), and the draft submission provided at Attachment 1.**
2. **Endorses the draft Activity Centres Program – Phase 1 Submission: Merri-bek Cluster, June 2025 at Attachment 1 as Council's formal submission to the State Government for Phase 1 of the Program.**
3. **Receives a report on the draft Activity Centre Plan(s) and any associated planning controls to be released by the State Government during Phase 2 engagement, for the purpose of endorsing a formal Council submission.**

7.29 pm *Cr Miles returned to the meeting during the debate.*

Carried

7.3 PARKING AVAILABILITY ON PARK STREET SERVICE ROAD, BRUNSWICK

Executive Summary

In response to resident concerns about parking availability and a request for resident permit parking zones, Council officers have conducted a comprehensive review of the parking conditions along Park Street Service Road between McVean Street and the Upfield Railway Line in Brunswick. This assessment was guided by the Parking Management Policy (PMP), which outlines criteria for implementing resident permit parking zones, including high occupancy rates and the presence of 1P timed restrictions.

In July 2024, an initial proposal to introduce 1P timed parking restrictions was put forward to replace some of the existing 2P restrictions on Park Street, accompanied by a questionnaire which was distributed to 189 affected properties. The survey required a minimum 25 per cent response rate with at least 60 per cent support to proceed with the proposed changes. However, only 18 per cent responded, with 79 per cent opposing the changes, primarily due to concerns about guest parking limitations. Consequently, the proposal did not advance.

Following continued resident feedback, Council resolved on 11 September 2024 to monitor parking conditions further. Subsequent occupancy surveys conducted in May 2025 revealed that most sections recorded occupancy rates below the 80 per cent threshold necessary for implementing 1P restrictions, with the exception of one area (south side of the Service Road between 815 Park Street crossover and Dollman Street), which approached or exceeded this threshold during certain periods. Additionally, number plate analysis indicated that approximately two-thirds of parked vehicles belonged to residents with valid permits, suggesting that local residents primarily drive parking demand.

Based on these findings, Council officers determined that existing parking arrangements sufficiently meet current demand, and no changes to parking restrictions are warranted at this time. Council officers remain committed to ongoing monitoring to ensure parking policies continue to align with community needs and usage patterns.

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes that the parking restrictions on the Park Street Service Road between McVean Street and the Upfield Railway Line are generally operating well and no changes to parking restrictions are warranted at this time.

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Notes that the parking restrictions on the Park Street Service Road between McVean Street and the Upfield Railway Line are generally operating well and no changes to parking restrictions are warranted at this time.**
- 2. Notes that parking stress may occur during events at Royal Park, and writes to all sports clubs that use parking on or near Royal Park to ask to explain there is parking stress on residents and to encourage the benefits of cycling and the use of public transport, car sharing car pooling for everyone, noting the locations and directions if necessary to transit and cycling routes.**

Carried

7.36 pm Cr Svensson left the meeting.

7.4 CIRCULAR ECONOMY STRATEGY AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN 2025 - 2030 - DRAFTS FOR ENDORSEMENT TO CONSULT

Executive Summary

This report progresses three related actions in the Council Action Plan 2024-25 (being CAP #1 for the next Zero Carbon Merri-bek action plan, #199 development of Circular Economy Strategy and action plan, and #206 for the next Climate Risk action plan).

The report presents Council's first draft *Circular Economy Strategy: Towards a zero waste Merri-bek* (Attachment 1). The draft strategy provides direction for Council's role in accelerating the transition towards a circular economy. It reflects the need to move beyond 'managing waste' towards 'avoiding waste and pollution', by rethinking how we can all use precious resources much more efficiently.

The report also presents the draft *Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025 – 2030: Towards a zero carbon, zero waste and climate resilient Merri-bek* (Attachment 2). This action plan incorporates all the implementation responses across the three strategies of ZCM 2040 Framework, draft Circular Economy Strategy and our Climate Risk Strategy (2022).

Spread across five strategic directions, the action plan proposes 29 goals and 34 programmatic actions (with sub-initiatives) for achievement/delivery by 2030.

Beyond advocacy for critical policy and legislative changes at the state and federal level, the very highest priority/impact actions across the three strategy areas are:

- Climate Risk / Resilience – actions focused on supporting vulnerable/at-risk residents (Actions 1.4, 1.7, 1.9), increasing local canopy cover/cooling in recognized hot spots (Action 1.8), and delivering climate-ready infrastructure (Action 5.4).
- Zero Carbon Merri-bek (ZCM) – actions focused on broadscale residential uptake of energy efficiency, electrification and solar (Actions 2.2, 2.3, 2.6) and transport mode-shift (Actions 3.2, 3.3).
- Circular Economy – optimising our kerbside waste services (Action 4.3) to minimise waste to landfill, using our substantial buying power to deliver low-carbon/circular buildings and infrastructure (Actions 5.3, 5.4), and influence our many suppliers.

Where relevant, the action plan notes where actions or activities may be subject to funding allocation through a business case or external grant.

The action plan also notes the relevant Directorate, Branch or Unit delegated as lead delivery partner, in recognition that as the impacts and risks from climate change, waste and pollution accelerate, Council's proactive response must take a 'whole of Council' approach, progressively embedding capability and responsibility within teams across the organisation.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the draft Circular Economy Strategy (Attachment 1) and the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025 – 2030 (Attachment 2) for public exhibition and four weeks of community engagement commencing 23 June 2025.
2. Receives a further report at the September 2025 Council meeting presenting a final version of the Circular Economy Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025 – 2030, incorporating community feedback, for adoption.
3. Acknowledges the valuable contribution that the Merri-bek community, external partners and stakeholders have made to community outcomes over the past five years of the Zero Carbon Merri-bek – Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020 – 2025 (Attachment 3), and the development of the draft strategy and action plan.

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the draft Circular Economy Strategy (Attachment 1) and the draft Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025 – 2030 (Attachment 2) for public exhibition and four weeks of community engagement commencing 23 June 2025.**
- 2. Receives a further report at the September 2025 Council meeting presenting a final version of the Circular Economy Strategy and Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025 – 2030, incorporating community feedback, for adoption.**
- 3. Acknowledges the valuable contribution that the Merri-bek community, external partners and stakeholders have made to community outcomes over the past five years of the Zero Carbon Merri-bek – Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020 – 2025 (Attachment 3), and the development of the draft strategy and action plan.**

Carried

7.5 COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM ANNUAL ROUND RECOMMENDATIONS 2025

Executive Summary

The Community Grant Program offers a range of community grants for not-for-profit community organisations to apply for funding towards initiatives that benefit the Merri-bek community.

This round of applications opened for a period of over 9 weeks from 1 January for groups to apply for funding to support the delivery of projects between 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 and support of new organisational between 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2028.

Applications for this round, support one-off project implementation, the development and delivery of facility improvements, and new organisations that benefit and engages the Merri-bek community through community led initiatives.

This report provides recommendations for funding in relation to three categories:

- Community Strengthening Grant (up to \$7,000 per application),
- Organisational Establishment Grant (up to \$10,000 per year for 3 years),
- Facility Improvement Grant
 - Smaller projects (up to \$10,000 per application),
 - Larger projects (up to \$40,000 per application, with a minimum 25 per cent contribution from the applicant towards the project).

For the 2025 annual program:

- Nineteen (19) applications, to the value of \$121,408.50 were received under the Community Strengthening Grant category. Fourteen (14) projects to the value of \$89,366 are recommended for funding.
- Five (5) applications to the value of \$50,000 per year were received under the Organisational Support Grant category. Four (4) applications to the value of \$40,000 per year totally in \$120,000 over 3 years are recommended for funding.

- Sixteen (16) applications requesting \$385,506 were received for the Facility Improvement Grant funding program. Fifteen (15) projects to the value of \$353,724.00 are recommended for funding.

Following Council endorsement, all successful applicants will be advised of the outcome of their applications and the necessary funding requirements will be put in place.

Unsuccessful, withdrawn and incomplete applicants will be given feedback or relevant advice on how these can be strengthened for future rounds or redirected to other funding sources.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Allocates Community Strengthening Grants to the value of \$89,365 for projects delivered in 2025/26:
 - a) Australia Nepal Public Linc Inc \$3,911
 - b) Celebrating & Conserving Cultures \$7,000
 - c) Culture, Arts & Language Academy \$7,000
 - d) Estrela do Mar Inc \$5,100
 - e) KindSugi Upcycling (auspiced by Social Health Australia) \$7,000
 - f) Merri Community Shed \$7,000
 - g) Merri Creek Management Committee \$7,000
 - h) Multi Art and Culture Association Inc \$7,000
 - i) Nepalese Association of Victoria \$7,000
 - j) Northern and Inner North Multiple Birth Association Inc \$7,000
 - k) Pink Ember Studio Co-operative Ltd \$6,500
 - l) Rain Moth Community Nursery (auspiced by NECCHi) \$6,677
 - m) U3A Merri-bek Inc \$6,077
 - n) Women`s Housing LTD \$5,100
2. Allocates Organisational Establishment Grants to the value of \$40,000 per year for 3 years; 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28:
 - a) Merri Community Shed \$10,000
 - b) Oddany Inc \$10,000
 - c) Styling Station Melbourne Ltd \$10,000
 - d) Vixen - Peer-Led Health and Support Network (Auspiced by Scarlet Alliance) \$10,000
3. Allocates a total of Facility Improvement Grants to the value of \$353,740 for projects delivered in 2025/26; the two types recommended under this category are:
 Smaller Facility Improvement Grants (up to \$10,000 per project)
 - a) Coburg Primary School \$10,000
 - b) Cretan Brotherhood of Melbourne and Victoria \$10,000
 - c) Moomba Park Tennis Club Inc \$9,790
 - d) Newlands and East Coburg Community Hubs Inc (NECCHi) \$9,972
 - e) Norm Warehouse \$10,000
 - f) Transgender Victoria \$10,000

Larger Improvement Grants (up to \$40,000 per project).

- a) 5th Brunswick Scout Group (auspiced by Scouts Victoria) \$24,078
 - b) Bioquisitive LTD \$30,816
 - c) Ceres Earth Limited (t/a CERES Inc) \$40,000
 - d) Parish of St Vasilios Brunswick - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia \$40,000
 - e) Hadfield Tennis Club \$32,620
 - f) Kevin Heinze Grow \$22,013
 - g) Northern Schools Early Years Cluster Inc. (Glenroy Central Kindergarten) \$25,125
 - h) Pascoe Vale Sports Club Inc \$39,300
 - i) Sussex Neighbourhood House \$40,000
4. Notes Facility Improvement Grants second round for smaller projects up to \$10,000 per project. Recommendations to value of \$46,122 were endorsed by Director Community for projects delivered in 2024/25:
- a) Newlands and East Coburg Community Houses Inc. (NECCHi) \$9,122
 - b) Pascoe Vale Sports Club Inc \$10,000
 - c) Schoolhouse Studios \$7,000
 - d) St Matthews Anglican Church Glenroy Hadfield with St Linus Merlynston \$10,000
 - e) Sussex Neighbourhood House \$10,000
5. Notes the updated Community Grants Guidelines for 2025-2026.

Resolution

Cr Miles moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Allocates Community Strengthening Grants to the value of \$89,365 for projects delivered in 2025/26:**
- a) Australia Nepal Public Linc Inc \$3,911**
 - b) Celebrating & Conserving Cultures \$7,000**
 - c) Culture, Arts & Language Academy \$7,000**
 - d) Estrela do Mar Inc \$5,100**
 - e) KindSugi Upcycling (auspiced by Social Health Australia) \$7,000**
 - f) Merri Community Shed \$7,000**
 - g) Merri Creek Management Committee \$7,000**
 - h) Multi Art and Culture Association Inc \$7,000**
 - i) Nepalese Association of Victoria \$7,000**
 - j) Northern and Inner North Multiple Birth Association Inc \$7,000**
 - k) Pink Ember Studio Co-operative Ltd \$6,500**
 - l) Rain Moth Community Nursery (auspiced by NECCHi) \$6,677**
 - m) U3A Merri-bek Inc \$6,077**

- n) **Women`s Housing LTD \$5,100**
- 2. **Allocates Organisational Establishment Grants to the value of \$40,000 per year for 3 years; 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28:**
 - a) **Merri Community Shed \$10,000**
 - b) **Oddany Inc \$10,000**
 - c) **Styling Station Melbourne Ltd \$10,000**
 - d) **Vixen - Peer-Led Health and Support Network (Auspiced by Scarlet Alliance) \$10,000**
- 3. **Allocates a total of Facility Improvement Grants to the value of \$353,740 for projects delivered in 2025/26; the two types recommended under this category are:**

Smaller Facility Improvement Grants (up to \$10,000 per project)

 - a) **Coburg Primary School \$10,000**
 - b) **Cretan Brotherhood of Melbourne and Victoria \$10,000**
 - c) **Moomba Park Tennis Club Inc \$9,790**
 - d) **Newlands and East Coburg Community Hubs Inc (NECChi) \$9,972**
 - e) **Norm Warehouse \$10,000**
 - f) **Transgender Victoria \$10,000**

Larger Improvement Grants (up to \$40,000 per project).

 - a) **5th Brunswick Scout Group (auspiced by Scouts Victoria) \$24,078**
 - b) **Bioquisitive LTD \$30,816**
 - c) **Ceres Earth Limited (t/a CERES Inc) \$40,000**
 - d) **Parish of St Vasilios Brunswick - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia \$40,000**
 - e) **Hadfield Tennis Club \$32,620**
 - f) **Kevin Heinze Grow \$22,013**
 - g) **Northern Schools Early Years Cluster Inc. (Glenroy Central Kindergarten) \$25,125**
 - h) **Pascoe Vale Sports Club Inc \$39,300**
 - i) **Sussex Neighbourhood House \$40,000**
- 4. **Notes Facility Improvement Grants second round for smaller projects up to \$10,000 per project. Recommendations to value of \$46,122 were endorsed by Director Community for projects delivered in 2024/25:**
 - a) **Newlands and East Coburg Community Houses Inc. (NECChi) \$9,122**
 - b) **Pascoe Vale Sports Club Inc \$10,000**
 - c) **Schoolhouse Studios \$7,000**
 - d) **St Matthews Anglican Church Glenroy Hadfield with St Linus Merlynston \$10,000**
 - e) **Sussex Neighbourhood House \$10,000**
- 5. **Notes the updated Community Grants Guidelines for 2025-2026.**

7.39 pm *Cr Svensson returned to the meeting.*

Carried

7.6 CARBON OFFSETS POLICY UPDATE

Executive Summary

In 2008, Council set its ambition to be carbon neutral as an organisation by 2012. This was achieved and Council certified as carbon neutral in 2012 by the Federal Government's Climate Active Program (previously NCOS), the third Local Government Area (LGA) in Australia to do so and the second in Victoria.

Under the Climate Active Standard, in order to be certified as carbon neutral organisations must measure their greenhouse gas emissions, reduce these where possible, offset their remaining emissions and prepare a publicly available report on their emissions trajectory.

Merri-bek City Council first adopted its Carbon Offsets Policy (Policy) in 2015, and this Policy was last updated and endorsed by Council 12 August 2020 (Attachment 2). The Policy is supported by Merri-bek Zero Carbon – 2040 Framework, Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-21 – 2024-25 and the current draft Climate Emergency Action Plan 2025-26 – 2030-31.

Council has adopted an ambitious corporate carbon target, of 80-100 per cent reduction by 2030, against a 2011-12 baseline. This excludes offsets.

The Policy outlines Council's approach to, and criteria for, the purchase of carbon offsets.

The process of purchasing is therefore guided by the Policy using:

- 1) mandatory criteria (offsets from Standards approved by Climate Active (e.g., Gold Standard, Australian Carbon Credit Units, Verified Carbon Standard); and
- 2) desirable criteria (co-benefits including location, reliability, affordability).

Indicative of the strong interest in local and affordable offsets, the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) is currently leading a project to explore whether a consortium of councils could develop a local carbon offsets project. Merri-bek will continue to monitor progress, however any outcome from this work will likely be several years away.

During FY 2025-26 council officers will explore alternatives to Climate Active certification, developing reporting tools and templates, and building consensus among interested Victorian councils.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorses the updated Carbon Offsets Purchase Policy (Attachment 1), with minor updates.
2. Notes that officers will continue to investigate reporting and offsetting solutions, working with neighbouring councils and the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) to develop possible alternatives, and monitoring market developments for improved options over time.
3. Receives a further report in the financial year 2026-27 at a briefing or similar.

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council defers consideration of Carbon Offsets Policy Update, to the July 2025 Council meeting, to allow further discussion on the potential issues.

Carried

7.7 PROCUREMENT POLICY

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement of a revised Procurement Policy (Policy), shown at Attachment 1. The current policy was approved by Council in June 2021 and has been amended by Council a number of times since.

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council must review its Procurement Policy at least once during each year term of Council. The current policy is due for review by 30 June 2025. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide a procurement framework for Council to achieve value for money in the procurement of goods and services, including for carrying out works;
- Assist in advancing the Council's sustainability and social objectives;
- Ensure continuous improvement in the provision of services for the community; and
- Ensure that Council resources are used efficiently and effectively for the benefit of the community.

The proposed revised policy includes the below key changes:

- A succinct and more user-friendly policy that removes repetition, which works better for our potential suppliers as well as internal officers;
- A new exemption to support spending with local businesses;
- Increases to the procurement threshold, including a \$350,000 (including GST) public tendering threshold to align with the cost escalation impacts on procuring goods and services;
- Setting a minimum weighting of pricing as 50 per cent;
- Revisions to ensure compliance requirements are clearer and not open to misinterpretation from both council officers and potential suppliers.

Officer Recommendation

That Council adopts the revised Procurement policy, at Attachment 1 of this report.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Irvin seconded -

That Council:

1. **Adopts the revised Procurement policy, at Attachment 1 of this report, with an amendment to section 4.12 Public Tender Requirements to add:**
 - ***For major construction contracts greater than \$3 million, Council is committed to providing employment opportunities to youth employment (aged 15 to 24). For construction tenders with an estimated value of greater than \$3 million, suppliers are required to specify the number of youth employment opportunities both in full-time equivalent and in dollar spend this contract will create. Local employment opportunities will be looked at favourable, however is not mandatory.***
2. **Receives a briefing by the end of July on options for Council to not procure goods or services from suppliers with subminimum wages for workers with disabilities and associated procurement policy implications.**

Carried

7.8 CONTRACT AWARD: RFT-2025-2 HOLBROOK RESERVE PAVILION AND GENDER INCLUSIVE CHANGE ROOMS

Executive Summary

Holbrook Sports Pavilion is in the Holbrook Reserve Park, Brunswick West. This facility is home to cricket and soccer but longer meets the needs of the sporting codes and Council's policy to support gender diversity in sport. This new Pavilion will bring the facility up to current standards by delivering all gender change rooms, a social room and umpire rooms and an externally accessible public toilet. Also in scope are storerooms and all civil, services and landscape works.

Design of the pavilion commenced in September 2024 and was completed in consultation with key stakeholders and feedback from the community. The construction of this new pavilion is expected to commence in July 2025 and expected to be completed by June 2026.

The proposed pavilion will be compliant with the current standards. The designs have been finalised and approved by key stakeholders.

To secure a contractor to deliver the project, an advertisement was placed in *The Age* newspaper on Saturday, 25 January 2025 inviting tenders from suitably experienced contractors via the e-tender portal.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:
 - a) Make a formal offer to **Notion Partners** – ABN 30 328 629 266 (Contractor) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2025-2 Holbrook Sports Pavilion (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of the resolution:
 - i. For the total contract value of \$1,695,229.00 (excluding GST), comprising of \$1,395,229 fixed lumpsum (excluding GST) and a provisional amount of \$300,000 (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 Abboud moved, Cr Svensson seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) Make a formal offer to Notion Partners – ABN 30 328 629 266 (Contractor) to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2025-2 Holbrook Sports Pavilion (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of the resolution:**
 - i. For the total contract value of \$1,695,229.00 (excluding GST), comprising of \$1,395,229 fixed lumpsum (excluding GST) and a provisional amount of \$300,000 (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

7.9 CONTRACT AWARD RFT-2024-45 - CLEANING SERVICES - COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT

Executive Summary

This purpose of this report is to recommend the awarding of contract No RFT-2024-45 Cleaning Services Collaborative Procurement for the provision of cleaning services. Council, in collaboration with four northern region Councils, undertook a tendering process to seek submissions from suitably qualified and capable contractors to provide cleaning services to the four municipalities.

Council requires the provision of cleaning services across 110 sites comprising administration offices, community/recreation facilities, libraries, maternal and child health centres and public toilets and barbecues. The anticipated expenditure on this contract is forecast to be a maximum spend of \$7,900,000 (excl. GST).

A key requirement of the tender submissions was to demonstrate how they would deliver on Council's social, environmental, and economic priorities, including strong environmental management practices and social and economic initiatives across the northern region community. The preferred tenderer has committed to employing a percentage of its workforce from within the northern region, including five per cent of employees from disadvantaged backgrounds. The preferred tenderer is also committed to the use of Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) certified cleaning products and the use of sustainable consumable products.

The potential term for the contract is five-years, with an initial period of 3 years and the option to extend for a further period of 2x1 years. The anticipated contract commencement date is 1 July 2025, which aligns across the other Councils and ensures a common end date of 30 June 2028 for the initial contract term.

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 **GDM Group Pty Ltd ATF Gagovski Family Trust (Cleaning Melbourne) (Contractor) ABN 54 160 063 325** to award to the Contractor contract **RFT-2024-45** for the **Provision of Cleaning Services (Contract)** on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:
 - i. For a supply contract for an initial contract term of 3-years ending 30 June 2028 with the option for Council to extend the contract for a further 2x1 year period.
 - ii. On a lump sum pricing basis for routine services and on a schedule of rates basis for additional reactive services. The total estimated spend for the 5 years is \$7,900,000 (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;
 - b) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract; and
 - c) Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to:**
 - a) **Make a formal offer to GDM Group Pty Ltd ATF Gagovski Family Trust (Cleaning Melbourne) (Contractor) ABN 54 160 063 325 to award to the Contractor contract RFT-2024-45 for the Provision of Cleaning Services (Contract) on the following terms and otherwise subject to and in accordance with paragraph 1(b) of this Resolution:**
 - i. **For a supply contract for an initial contract term of 3-years ending 30 June 2028 with the option for Council to extend the contract for a further 2x1 year period.**
 - ii. **On a lump sum pricing basis for routine services and on a schedule of rates basis for additional reactive services. The total estimated spend for the 5 years is \$7,900,000 (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;**
 - b) **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to exercise the option to extend contracts in accordance with the provisions within the Contract; and**
 - c) **Advises all tenderers of Council's decision in relation to the Contract.**

Carried

7.10 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 APRIL 2025

Executive Summary

This report presents the Financial Management Report for the financial year to date period ending 30 April 2025. A detailed financial review was undertaken across the organisation at the end of February 2025. The results of this review are included in this report as the Full Year Revised Forecast.

The 30 April 2025 Income Statement shows that Council has recorded a surplus of \$58.7 million, \$2.3 million higher than the year-to-date budget of \$56.4 million, as a result of higher overall revenue and lower overall expenditure. These differences are considered largely timing in nature. As set out in the Issues section of this report, operating surplus funds do not convert to immediately available cash to Council; they are used to fund important community infrastructure project like the Coburg Library and Piazza Redevelopment or recently completed projects like Fawkner Leisure Centre redevelopment and Balam Balam Place, Brunswick.

Council has spent \$73.7 million on capital expenditure, which is tracking below the year-to-date (YTD) budget of \$78.9 million, with \$19 million budget remaining.

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 30 April 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council notes the Financial Management Report for the period ended 30 April 2025, at Attachment 1 to this report.

Carried

7.11 GOVERNANCE REPORT - JUNE 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.
- A response to a Public Question Time item taken on notice at the April 2025 Council meeting, with a recommendation that Council notes the response.
- A recommendation to revoke the Plaques Policy.
- A recommendation relating to the 2025-26 funding and proposed 5-year funding agreement with CERES Earth Pty Ltd.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees, provided as Attachment 1 to this report, as follows:
 - a) Arts Advisory Committee held 7 May 2025.
 - b) Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee held 8 May 2025.
2. Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.
3. Notes the response to a question taken on notice during Public Question Time at the April Council meeting, provided as Attachment 3.
4. Revokes the Plaques Policy 2021–2031 and notes it will be replaced with operational guidelines authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.
5. Notes that Council's five-year funding agreement with CERES Earth Ltd (CERES) will expire in June 2025.
6. Endorses a grant to CERES Earth Ltd \$261,182 (excl. GST) in 2025-26, equivalent to the current year annual funding, noting that this amount is budgeted in Council's draft 2025-2026 Budget.
7. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to finalise a funding agreement for the 2025-26 grant with CERES Earth Ltd.
8. Notes that a new five-year agreement with CERES Earth Ltd is under negotiation, to start in 2026-27, and a report will be brought back to Council for consideration.

Resolution

Cr Pulford moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. **Notes the summary of minutes from Advisory Committees, provided as Attachment 1 to this report, as follows:**
 - a) **Arts Advisory Committee held 7 May 2025.**
 - b) **Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee held 8 May 2025.**
2. **Notes the Records of Meetings, at Attachment 2 to this report.**
3. **Notes the response to a question taken on notice during Public Question Time at the April Council meeting, provided as Attachment 3.**
4. **Revokes the Plaques Policy 2021–2031 and notes it will be replaced with operational guidelines authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.**
5. **Notes that Council's five-year funding agreement with CERES Earth Ltd (CERES) will expire in June 2025.**
6. **Endorses a grant to CERES Earth Ltd \$261,182 (excl. GST) in 2025-26, equivalent to the current year annual funding, noting that this amount is budgeted in Council's draft 2025-2026 Budget.**
7. **Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to finalise a funding agreement for the 2025-26 grant with CERES Earth Ltd.**
8. **Notes that a new five-year agreement with CERES Earth Ltd is under negotiation, to start in 2026-27, and a report will be brought back to Council for consideration.**

Carried

NOTICES OF MOTION

8.1 ABOLISHING SUB MINIMUM WAGES FOR DISABLED WORKERS

Motion

That Council:

1. Signs the open letter that calls for subminimum wages for disabled workers to be abolished and for these workers to be paid a 100% of the minimum wage instead (as provided <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Dj4N8NtD9RKJj7eyPqKkIPggKI2aONCrwBOEzjrElg/edit?pli=1&tab=t.0>)
2. Write to the Federal Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Mark Butler and the Victorian Minister for Disability Lizzie Blandthorn to advocate for the Australian and Victorian Governments to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner to increase minimum wages for employees with disabilities to 100% of the minimum wage by 2034.
3. Write to the federal Industrial relations Minister Amanda Rishworth, requesting that the Federal Government urgently implement the recommendations tabled by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and abolish the practice of allowing Australian Disability Enterprises and other Companies to pay disabled workers a sub minimum wage.
4. Requests the CEO to:
 - a) To provide advice to Council relating to possible amendments to the grants policy and guidelines to ensure that grants aren't awarded to organisations that are engaged in restrictive practices or pay a subminimum wage.
 - b) Conduct an Audit of Council web pages and the list of support services for older people and or people with disability to ensure that there are no references to Australian Disability Enterprises.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. **Signs the open letter that calls for subminimum wages for disabled workers to be abolished and for these workers to be paid a 100% of the minimum wage instead (as provided <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Dj4N8NtD9RKJj7eyPqKkIPggKI2aONCrwBOEzjrElg/edit?pli=1&tab=t.0>)**
2. **Write to the Federal Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme Mark Butler and the Victorian Minister for Disability Lizzie Blandthorn to advocate for the Australian and Victorian Governments to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner to increase minimum wages for employees with disabilities to 100% of the minimum wage by 2034.**
3. **Write to the federal Industrial relations Minister Amanda Rishworth, requesting that the Federal Government urgently implement the recommendations tabled by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and abolish the practice of allowing Australian Disability Enterprises and other Companies to pay disabled workers a sub minimum wage.**

4. Requests the CEO to:

- a) To provide advice to Council relating to possible amendments to the grants policy and guidelines to ensure that grants aren't awarded to organisations that are engaged in restrictive practices or pay a subminimum wage.
- b) Conduct an Audit of Council web pages and the list of support services for older people and or people with disability to ensure that there are no references to Australian Disability Enterprises.

Carried unanimously

8.2 EMERGENCY SERVICES AND VOLUNTEER FUND

Motion

That Council:

1. Calls on the State Government to only use the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund for the core activities of the essential services that it is meant to fund such as sufficient safe equipment maintaining minimum staffing levels.
2. Opposes the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund preferring that these emergency services be funded through the State Government's consolidated revenue fund.

Resolution

Cr Bolton moved, Cr Iwasaki seconded -

That Council:

1. Through the Mayor, writes to the State government regarding the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) and expressing the following points:
 - a) City of Merri-bek opposes the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) and calls for emergency services to be funded through the State Government's consolidated revenue fund instead
 - b) The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) should not be used for non-core activities
 - c) The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) should not be used to make or disguise cuts to emergency services
 - d) Calls for the State government to commit to a moratorium on collecting the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) in order to allow a public inquiry to examine the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) and its implications.
2. Include a message with the rates notices, clearly indicating that the ESVF is a State government levy that it is forcing Councils to collect for them and that Council totally opposes the ESVF and is campaigning to end it.
3. Receives a briefing in the first half of 2026 regarding financial implications to Merri-bek in relation to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund.

8.14 pm Cr Pulford left the meeting.

8.16 pm Cr Pulford returned to the meeting.

Cr Bolton called for a division.

For

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

Total For (8)

Against

Cr Miles
Cr Politis
Cr Theodosis

Total Against (3)

Carried

8.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM FOR ROAD SAFETY

Motion

That Council:

1. Requests Officers to host a community forum at Coburg Town Hall to discuss Road Safety matters in Merri-bek, including; Recent trends in road safety incidents throughout Merri-bek. Council efforts to address road safety, including current road safety projects and advocacy.
2. Requests Officers to invite relevant stakeholders such as the Department of Transport and Planning, Victoria Police, the Transport Accident Commission and RACV to attend the forum.

Resolution

Cr Irvin moved, Cr Bolton seconded -

That Council:

1. **Requests Officers to host a community forum at Coburg Town Hall to discuss Road Safety matters in Merri-bek, including; Recent trends in road safety incidents throughout Merri-bek. Council efforts to address road safety, including current road safety projects and advocacy.**
2. **Requests Officers to invite relevant stakeholders such as community advocacy groups the Department of Transport and Planning, Victoria Police, the Transport Accident Commission and RACV to attend the forum.**

Carried unanimously

NOTICE OF RESCISSION

Nil

FORESHADOWED ITEMS

Nil

URGENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Nil

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Resolution

Cr Abboud moved, Cr Iwasaki 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 Merri-bek Affordable Housing Pipeline because it relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.
- 12.2 Confidential Financial Matter because it relates to legal privileged information, being information to which legal professional privilege or client legal privilege applies.

Carried

The Council meeting closed to the public at 8.32 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 8.59 pm.

Publication of Confidential Resolution

Council resolved to make the following decision public:

12.2 CONFIDENTIAL FINANCIAL MATTER

Resolution

Cr Iwasaki moved, Cr Abboud seconded -

That Council

1. Establishes a refund scheme for those parking infringements specified as Items 1 to 11 in Column 1 of Schedule 6 of the Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019, as follows:
 - a) Refunds available for eligible parking infringements from 1 July 2013 – 11 June 2025, equivalent to 0.3 of a penalty unit for each infringement;
 - b) An interest component to be added for infringements from 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2023;
 - c) Applications for refunds to be accepted over a 12 month period.
2. Authorises the CEO to take all steps necessary to establish the refund scheme as above.
3. In accordance with Section 87(4) of the *Road Safety Act 1986*, resolves to fix at 0.5 penalty units the penalty for those parking infringements specified as Items 1 to 11 in Column 1 of Schedule 6 of the Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019 effective 12 June 2025, until otherwise resolved.

4. **Publicly releases information about the refund scheme on 17 June 2025 and includes this resolution in the published minutes of this meeting.**

Carried unanimously

The Council meeting closed at 8.59 pm.

Confirmed

Cr Helen Davidson
MAYOR