



City of
Whittlesea

MINUTES

OF SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON

MONDAY 5 JULY 2021

AT 6.31PM

**IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, 25 FERRES
BOULEVARD, SOUTH MORANG**

SENIOR OFFICERS

CRAIG LLOYD	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
KRISTI HIGH	EXECUTIVE MANAGER PUBLIC AFFAIRS
FRANK JOYCE	EXECUTIVE MANAGER GOVERNANCE
KATE MCCAUGHEY	DIRECTOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING
AMY MONTALTI	DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES
JUSTIN O'MEARA	DIRECTOR PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
DEBBIE WOOD	DIRECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

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Note:

In these Minutes, Resolutions adopted by Council are indicated in bold text.

1. OPENING**1.1 MEETING OPENING & INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson opened the meeting at 6.31pm.

“Welcome to this Council Meeting of 5 July 2021 which is being livestreamed.

I am Lydia Wilson, Chair of the Panel of Administrators and I would also like to introduce my Panel colleagues, Administrators Ms Peita Duncan and Mr Chris Eddy.

I would also like to introduce our Chief Executive Officer, Mr Craig Lloyd and ask that he in turn introduce the members of the Executive Leadership Team in attendance today.”

“Good evening everyone, we also have with us:

Executive Manager Public Affairs, Ms Kristi High;

Executive Manager Governance, Mr Frank Joyce;

Director Community Wellbeing, Ms Kate McCaughey;

Director Corporate Services, Ms Amy Montalti;

Director Planning & Development, Mr Justin O’Meara; and

Director Infrastructure & Environment, Ms Debbie Wood.

These members of the Executive Leadership Team will join us during the meeting.”

Following the Introductions, the Chief Executive Officer read the following prayer:

Almighty God, we ask for your blessing upon this council to make informed and good decisions to benefit the people of the City of Whittlesea.

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen

1.2 ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS STATEMENT

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson read the following statement:

“On behalf of the City of Whittlesea I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the Traditional Owners of this place.

I would also like to personally acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging.”

1.3 NAIDOC WEEK

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson acknowledged the NAIDOC Week.

“NAIDOC Week is from the 4th to the 11th of July, and a critical theme is Heal Country. NAIDOC 2021 invites the Nation to embrace First Nations cultural knowledge and understanding of country as part of Australia's national heritage, and equally respect the culture and values of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. As they do the cultures and values of all Australians. So it is important to note that it is NAIDOC Week.”

1.4 PRESENT**Members:**

Ms Lydia Wilson	Chair of Council
Ms Peita Duncan	Administrator
Mr Chris Eddy	Administrator

Officers:

Mr Craig Lloyd	Chief Executive Officer
Ms Kristi High	Executive Manager Public Affairs
Mr Frank Joyce	Executive Manager Governance
Ms Kate McCaughey	Director Community Wellbeing
Ms Amy Montalti	Director Corporate Services
Mr Justin O'Meara	Director Planning & Development
Ms Debbie Wood	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Ms Linda Martin-Chew	Team Leader Strategic Projects & Infrastructure
Ms Jessica Higgins	Statutory Planner
Ms Kate Weatherly	Project Manager – Investment Attraction

2. APOLOGIES

NIL

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NIL

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

MOVED: *Administrator Eddy*
SECONDED: *Administrator Duncan*

THAT the following Minutes of the preceding meeting as circulated, be confirmed:

Scheduled Meeting of Council held 1 June 2021

CARRIED

5. QUESTIONS, PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

5.1 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The answers provided verbally by the Chief Executive Officer at the meeting in response to questions asked by members of the public are preliminary answers provided on a without prejudice basis. A formal written response to each question is sent following the Council meeting which contains Council official position on the matter.

5.1.1 SEX BASED SERVICES AND FACILITIES

MOIRA DEEMING

Under Victorian law, is it legal for Local Government Councils to provide sex based/targeted services and facilities separately to gender identity based/targeted services and facilities? If not, why not? For example, can we legally put signs on a set of public toilets declaring that one is for biological males (including males with an intersex condition), one is for biological females (including biological females with an intersex condition) and one is for people with transgender identities (of any biological sex)? If not, why not?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CRAIG LLOYD

The City of Whittlesea's shared vision with our community is to be 'A place for all'.

As part of this vision, we have made a commitment to provide inclusive infrastructure and services for all residents and visitors.

Council aims to provide gender-neutral public toilets in its facilities wherever possible. Gender neutral facilities are available in our new Ganbu Gulinj Community Centre, our recently upgraded Mill Park Library and will be part of the redevelopment of Mill Park Basketball Stadium.

Council also adheres to laws that provide guidance on how to make Victoria a safer, fairer and more inclusive state.

This includes the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and the Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (amended in 2013).

These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity or intersex status. Under these laws, it is discriminatory to require a person who is transgender to use a toilet which does not align with their gender identity.

We are also very supportive of the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020, which highlights the need to redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence against persons of different genders, and to enhance social participation by persons of different genders.

5.1.2 LALOR DOG PARKS

THOMAS WATKINS AND LINH PHAM

There are more and more young couples and families moving to Lalor and bringing their dogs with them. However, there is only one dog park in Lalor that is on the far West side of the suburb. We would like to ask the council to create a dog park on the East side of the suburb, like those in Bundoora and Mill Park. Stockade Park is rarely used by residents. This space would be ideal for a dog park. So, my question to the council is:

Is it in the council's power to make this happen?

Do I need a petition? If yes, how many signatures are required for council to genuinely consider this?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CRAIG LLOYD

Thank you for your question. The City of Whittlesea's future dog off-leash areas are guided by Council's Dog Off-leash Area Policy & Management Plan, available on Council's website. The Plan considers locations based on site attributes and features including minimum size requirements and existing infrastructure.

VR Michael Reserve in Lalor has been identified as a suitable location for a dog off-leash area and will be considered as part of the 2022/23 Annual Budget process. We would accept a petition of at least 12 signatures however we welcome residents to have their say as part of the budget process each year and will provide more information about how to do so in early 2022.

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson then invited Mr Watkins to address Council with a further question.

5.1.3 RUBBISH AT PARTRIDGE STREET RESERVE, LALOR

THOMAS WATKINS

I was at the Partridge Street Reserve today, which is on Partridge Street in Lalor, just east of the station, Lalor train station. Now, we moved into the area about 18 months ago, during COVID, it was quite clean, very, very nice because it wasn't being used. It was being regularly maintained as well, the lawns were being mowed regularly. Now Mill Park Soccer Club has moved in there maybe six months ago now. It is honestly filthy. It is quite disgusting most of the time. I understand that Partridge Street reserve is a council park. It seems quite bizarre that they are allowed to just leave rubbish everywhere all the time, broken glass, it looks like there might even be kids or teenagers drinking there at night, but generally it is quite filthy. I am talking about on the field, around the field, around the club in general. I wrote an email to council today with a number of photos, specifically they seem to have had an event on the weekend. They had split the fields up, looked like four sections, there was a lot of people there. The streets had hundreds of cars all over the place. I have never seen anything like this. My partner Linh and I, she is over there, we were picking up rubbish. They had literally attached plastic bags to the fences for people to put rubbish in. Did not seem to have achieved anything. Absolutely filthy. Hundreds of pieces of rubbish, chip packets, Tim Tam packs, Gatorade bottle, water bottles. I understand council gets quite a number of questions about rubbish in the area. But what can be done about this? This is obviously council land. Mill Park Soccer Club, I do not know if they pay a fee or they get it for free, but surely Mill Park Soccer Club has some sort of remit to keep it clean?

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CRAIG LLOYD

Thank you for your question Mr Watkins, I have to take that on notice to get a little bit more information but I will have one of our directors contact you and have a look for ourselves and we will also liaise with the relevant club there to see what occurred over the weekend as well, but we will get back to you in the next couple of days. Thanks for raising it.

5.2 PETITIONS

NIL REPORTS

5.3 JOINT LETTERS**5.3.1 JOINT LETTER - PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION UNIT 7/24 BRAND DRIVE, THOMASTOWN**

A Joint Letter from 11 residents of Thomastown was received advising Council of the following:

“We wish to formally document our joint strong objection to the planning application for the following reasons:

- 1. The nature of the application undermines our existing businesses given the fact that our premises are in an industrial 1 zone area. It is unsafe and unreasonable to have anyone living here. Some of us have heavy equipment and/or trucks coming and going at all hours of the day given the nature of our work. If we were operating in a residential area, this would be unacceptable, so it is illogical to allow a residential dwelling to be constructed in an industrial area.*
- 2. In the past, there have been complaints of noise by people who were living in our factory complex. In fact, it is the applicant of this application that was the one complaining at the time when he was living at factory 15. We fear that should the approval be given for a caretaker permit, further noise complaints would be made, and this will further restrict our trade, which under industrial 1 zoning should not be a concern we have.*
- 3. Should this application be approved, the value of our property will suffer. Should the time come to sell up, it will be harder to sell when there is a residential dwelling in the complex. This may add to the time required to sell the premises and may reduce the sale price. This is commercially unjust and hence forms another point of objection.*
- 4. Approving the application would set a dangerous precedent where theoretically every factory could have residents. This would only serve to further deteriorate the industrial 1 zoning we have all bought and paid for and we therefore find this is a further unacceptable risk.*
- 5. If people live here, then we expect that they will also have visitors here. This further adds to risk of the complex by having people around that would not otherwise need to be here. This adds to the risk of pedestrian traffic (and associated public liability risk), loss of carparking or even potential crime.*

In summary, we strongly believe that approving this permit application will undermine our rights to use industrial 1 zones land as the planning scheme intended. Accordingly, we cannot stress enough that this planning application should be rejected. We all would wish to be notified of the decision.”

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Administrator Duncan
SECONDED: Administrator Eddy

THAT Council resolve to receive the Joint Letter from 11 residents objecting to the Planning Permit Application No. 2021-719852 for Unit 7/24 Brand Drive, Thomastown and consider the Joint Letter in conjunction with the Council Report on this planning permit application at the Council meeting on 2 August 2021.

CARRIED

6. OFFICERS' REPORTS

6.1 CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

ITEM 6.1.1 FOR DECISION: ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA

Attachments: 1 2021/22 Festival and Events Program [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: Director Community Wellbeing

Author: Team Leader Arts Culture & Events

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council resolve to:

- Endorse the place-based 2021/2022 Festival and Events program.
- Note the community consultation and engagement undertaken in developing the program.
- Prepare a draft W2040 Connected Communities Strategy addressing arts and culture priority actions (as described in Table 1) for Council's consideration by mid-2022. (This will include consideration of a dedicated arts space within the municipality.)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Council delivers a broad range of Arts and Cultural offerings including free public events that have a positive impact on increasing community cohesion, participant wellbeing and the local economy.

In December 2020, Council resolved to refocus and review the City of Whittlesea Festival and Events program with an aim to inform Council's future approach to delivery within a COVID-19 recovery environment.

This report provides a recommendation for a place-based 2021/2022 City of Whittlesea Festival and Events Program and identifies opportunities for continuous improvement and evaluation to strengthen Council's Arts and Culture portfolio.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Arts and Culture programming, and more specifically festivals and events, play an important role in building community cohesion, a sense of belonging and the local economy. This is particularly important following the extensive impacts of COVID-19 on the community in the past 18 months.

The recommendations of this report will continue to implement Council's COVID-19 recovery plan and further explore opportunities for more placed-based community reconnection and increased synergy across Council's arts-based projects and services.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Council will continue to deliver a vibrant program of Arts and Cultural activities in the City of Whittlesea to support community creativity, connection and the local economy.

- Council will continue to deliver smaller and more localised events over the next 12 months to ensure COVID-19 safety compliance and increase a localised sense of connection to place.
- Council will continue to support destination focussed events that attract people from outside the municipality e.g. Whittlesea Show and the Whittlesea Country Music Festival.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

The following social benefits have also been identified and need to be considered and promoted throughout the implementation of the Arts and Culture program:

- Increased community engagement and participation in the arts; increased sense of belonging, community cohesion and local pride.
- Improved accessibility; increase in provision of place-based activities.
- A safer and inclusive environment; improved perceptions of safety and celebration of local culture and diversity.
- Stimulating the local economy; support and promotion of local business through engagement or promotion at local events.

Delivering arts and culture programs in partnership across Council and community fosters and supports other W2040 objectives such as celebrating diversity and inter-cultural understanding, contributing to wellbeing and positive health outcomes, tackling racism and prejudice and fostering local leadership, skills development and economic participation opportunities.

REPORT**INTRODUCTION**

In December 2020 Council resolved to refocus its Festival and Events program and to undertake a Festival and Event Review (the Review) to be presented to Council in July 2021.

This report serves as the Review findings and identifies:

- The community consultation and engagement activities undertaken as a part of the Review.
- The strategic environment that underpins the provision of Arts and Cultural activities.
- Issues impacting the use and authorisation of fireworks at community events held on public land.
- The proposed Festival and Events Program 2021/2022.
- Ongoing opportunities for continuous improvement and evaluation to increase, support and improve the provision of arts and culture opportunities across the city.

BACKGROUND

Local communities continually identify and support festivals and events as an important Council function; as a result, Council delivers a broad range of Art and Cultural opportunities. Historically, these events have been underpinned by Council's Arts and Development Strategy and Festival and Events Policy.

City of Whittlesea Arts and Development Strategy 2016-2020

The City of Whittlesea Arts and Development Strategy 2016-2020 (the Strategy) was informed by four strategic directions (refer **Figure 1**) which identified the arts' vital role in achieving social, cultural and economic outcomes (refer *Policy Strategy and Legislation* section).

The Strategy focused on key areas including:

- Aboriginal Reconciliation and healing.
- Supporting cultural diversity and building resilient communities.
- Evaluation and community feedback.
- Providing opportunities for local young people to participate in arts programs.

The Strategy resulted in the delivery of creative involvement of local artists and audiences via the development of a local creative practitioners' network, (the Creative Arts Practitioner of Whittlesea, CAPOW network), a local Studio Art trail, and greater activation of the Council Great Hall.

Surveys from recent Arts and Cultural activities found:

- 74 per cent of respondents reported that the event made them feel more connected to their community.
- 81 per cent of respondents reported that the event made them feel proud of their local area.
- 85 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement 'Arts and Cultural activities make for a richer and more meaningful life'.



Figure 1: Whittlesea Arts and Development Strategy 2016-2020, Strategic Directions

City of Whittlesea Festival and Events Policy

The City of Whittlesea Festival and Events Policy was adopted in July 2014 with a vision that 'Festivals and Events in the City of Whittlesea celebrate and strengthen our diverse, vibrant communities and create opportunities for connections and belonging'. It recognises Council's role as Facilitator, Provider and a Regulator of events and has three strategic objectives. They are:

- Whole of Council Approach
- Community Engagement and Capacity Building
- Synergies and Partnerships.

City of Whittlesea Integrated Planning Framework

In March 2021 Council adopted an integrated planning framework to consolidate 100+ adopted community-facing policies, strategies and plans within six major Whittlesea 2040 aligned strategies plus the Community Plan (refer Figure 2). Adoption of this framework means that Council:

- will no longer look to develop and adopt separate, stand-alone policies/ strategies but will develop actions and priorities across a smaller number of integrated Whittlesea 2040 Strategies.
- maximise resources and focus on actions rather than multiple policies and siloed plans.



Figure 2: Integrated Planning Framework (adopted March 2021)

Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC)

PRACC is located next to the Civic Centre at 35 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang and is Council's only purpose-built arts and convention centre in the municipality. At its meeting of December 2017 Council resolved to manage PRACC as an in-house commercially driven venue, noting the: 'Overarching aims of the Centre are to achieve a cost neutral community facility'. This decision restricts the viability of use for many local artists and cultural and community groups. Several opportunities may exist for greater utilisation of PRACC to showcase Council run events and arts and cultural opportunities while balancing the financial imperatives.

In early June 2021, the Department of Health requested access to PRACC to host an ongoing vaccination service, delivered by Northern Health providing both AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines. This request was supported as PRACC is the most suitable venue in the City of Whittlesea to host this program. It has substantial floor space; is easily accessible and close to public transport; has commercial fridges and freezers and secure, lockable storage for the vaccines.

This decision will allow the local community to be vaccinated as quickly as possible however it will have a considerable impact on the many dance groups, schools, performers, regular PRACC users and staff. This impact is being monitored and alternative venues including the Council Great Hall, community centres and private bookable spaces are still being identified to best support local groups throughout 2021 and possibly into the 2022 event season.

Council's Festivals and Events Program Review

The Review was completed in response to:

- Impacts of COVID-19 on arts participation, production and public events.
- The conclusion of the Whittlesea Arts and Development Strategy 2016-2020.
- Council's December 2020 decision to refocus the City of Whittlesea Festival and Events program.

The Review aimed to examine the current context and key influences on the delivery of Council's Festival and Events program to:

- Inform Council's approach to the 2021/22 Festival and Events program moving forward.

- Revisit Council's position on the use of fireworks at events in the wake of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and Country Fire Authority's (CFA) amalgamation to form Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV).
- Identify opportunities for continuous improvement to ensure the City of Whittlesea can continue to respond to the changing local context and provide a gradual yet consistent post pandemic recovery program.

The Review was informed by extensive consultation, evaluation and engagement processes conducted prior to COVID-19 and across the last six months throughout the COVID-19 recovery phase. The consultation conducted provided critical insight into community views, opinions and preferences and more specifically:

- Into the type of arts and cultural activities the community would like to see incorporated into festivals and events.
- The broader impact these activities and programs had on their lives.
- The biggest barriers/issues experienced by local artists and creatives.
- The key focus areas that needed to be addressed to create safe and welcoming events post COVID-19.

Throughout the Review several key themes were identified including:

- The importance of community events in creating a sense of place and local pride (both in general and as a response to COVID-19 recovery).
- A high level of interest for greater engagement with First Peoples and cultural diversity through music, arts and crafts.
- The desire for more local festivals, events and broader arts and cultural participation opportunities for young people, families and local artists and creatives.

Key Review Outcomes

The Review identified three areas of activity including:

- **Programming:** A revised festivals and events program which adopts a local place-based approach complemented by larger events.
- **Operations:** The use of fireworks at community events.
- **Future policy:** Priority areas for arts policy and strategy development including the needs for a PRACC audience review, a strategically focused arts collection and infrastructure planning to foster inclusive and welcoming cities (including anti-racism initiatives); to be considered within Council's adopted new Integrated Planning Framework.

Programming: 2021/2022 Festival and Events Program

To best support the community's desire for more local festivals and events and to provide community support throughout the COVID-19 recovery phase and a more placed-based reconnection, the 2021/2022 Festival and Events program will focus on the delivery of smaller and more flexible events, including:

- One large annual community festival using PRACC and outdoor spaces as a major focus.
- Five small events with a geographical spread across the municipality.
- A Carols by Candlelight event in December.
- One night walking event (similar to Walking Thomastown).
- Continued online presence through the Whittlesea Arts website to support greater access to the festivals and events program such as livestreaming performances etc.

- Ongoing coordination and/or promotion of Council’s and key partner events such as the Whittlesea Country Music Festival, Whittlesea Show and libraries events program through the establishment of a Whittlesea Dates of Recognition Calendar which captures other key festivals and events including Sorry Day, NAIDOC Week, Refugee week, youth FREEZA events, etc.

Operations: The use of fireworks at community events

Fireworks can drive public attendance at events and play an important role in many cultures; especially in Chinese and South Asian communities and at popular cultural celebrations such as Diwali and Chinese New Year/Tet. However, they are an activity that increasingly divides community opinion. Anti-firework sentiment increased greatly following the 2020 bushfires, however the resulting cancellation of Council’s Australia Day fireworks in this year also heavily impacted attendance (with a decrease of 65 per cent recorded in comparison to previous years). There is also growing evidence that fireworks have an environmental footprint (releasing potentially harmful heavy metals, including lead and copper, into the air and over water bodies); and may increase hospitalizations for respiratory symptoms during firework periods (compared to non-firework periods).

Historically, Council has delivered two annual events with fireworks: the Australia Day celebrations in January and the Whittlesea Community Festival in March. The Community Festival changed its operating hours in 2018 to be a day only event (11am to 5pm) and Council’s decision in December 2020 to cease delivering a public event on Australia Day means that Council no longer has any designated events with fireworks.

Fireworks applications continue to be a part of large community run festivals and events with both the Whittlesea Country Music Festival and Vivid Diwali making annual applications for a firework display at their community events.

Council’s Fireworks Policy (2005) provides guidance on the manner in which Council will consider applications for permission to set off fireworks however it does not exclude fireworks provision across any events, instead adopting a case by case approach in line with a decision-making framework.

In addition to Council’s policy position, fireworks permits and processes have also been influenced by changes to the MFB/CFA regions. On 1 July 2020, the MFB and CFA career firefighters amalgamated to form FRV which now has the authority to approve fireworks on public land in metropolitan areas and during the fire danger period. These new arrangements have impacted Council’s role in authorising fireworks on public land as FRV permit conditions need to be taken into consideration. To enable this to take place, it is proposed that officers:

- Do not introduce any fireworks into the 2021/2022 Council run festivals and events program.
- Work with FRV on a case by case basis during 2021/2022 to authorise fireworks on public land.

Future Arts and Culture actions within the W2040 Connected Communities Strategy

The Review also identified a number of priority areas for any future Arts and Culture policy and strategy development to consider. These areas are summarised in Table 1.

<p>New integrated arts and cultural priority actions within the W2040 Connected Communities Strategy</p>	<p>Following the adoption of the Integrated Planning Framework, it is not anticipated that a separate new Arts and Culture Strategy will not be developed. Instead key actions will be developed and identified to support a broader range of festivals and events such as smaller place based events (such as street parties) and visitor destination experiences. These actions will sit within the seven larger strategies (as well as the Community Plan). These new W2040 Strategies align to the key directions of Council’s previous art strategy. Some actions will also be consolidated under the other strategies such as the Strong Local Economy Strategy.</p>
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PRACC audience development and strategic focus review	Council has recently commissioned an arts and audience development specialist, Silver Lining Strategy, to provide specialist insight into current retention barriers and identify opportunities for connection with new client and audience groups across PRACC and Council's Festivals and Events. The findings of the Audience Review will continue to inform Council's post COVID-19 recovery and ongoing operations; as well as key actions within the new W2040 Strategies.
Arts collection and infrastructure planning	In addition to the above, there are further opportunities to undertake a review regarding collection and infrastructure planning, including opportunities to promote, display and store the collection; feasibility around a dedicated visual arts facility; links to other strategic planning and reviews such as the Ziebell's farm; etc.
Arts and culture's role in fostering inclusive and welcoming cities	There is a significant opportunity to build on existing programs and projects across Council which applies arts and culture to foster inclusive and welcoming cities (including anti-racism initiatives). As outlined above, key associated actions will be developed and sit across the seven larger strategies identified in Figure 2 .
Support provided to arts and cultural industries	Council supports festivals and events in the municipality through annual grant rounds, expert advice and guidance; and the development of online resources to support the community to plan, deliver, manage and review their events. The development of Council's Visitor Economy Destination Plan will be key to identifying Council partnership opportunities with community events that drive the visitor economy such as the Whittlesea Show. It is anticipated a Visitor Economy Destination Plan will be developed as part of the W2040 Strong Local Economies Strategy. A further internal review of Council's grant program may provide opportunities for a revised program which further supports community/cultural industry run festivals and events.
Continuous improvement and evaluation	Consultation and evaluation are embedded into business as usual for Council's festivals, events and broader arts and culture programs. However, with increasing demand for local and affordable arts and culture opportunities and a growing community of practicing artists wanting to be involved in local festival and events, evaluation is critical in guiding future practice.

Table 1: Emerging arts and culture priority areas

PROPOSAL

The Review identified three areas of activity summarised in **Table 2** below:

Programming	A revised festivals and events program which adopts a local place-based approach complemented by larger events. Attachment 1 provides information on the proposed 2021/2022 Festivals and Events program. The 2021/2022 Festival and Events Program will be evaluated and modified as required. Council will be briefed if program evaluation identifies major shifts or changes in program delivery.
Operations	The use of fireworks at community events. Moving forward it is proposed that officers: Do not introduce any fireworks into the 2021/2022 Council run festivals and

	<p>events program.</p> <p>Work with FRV on a case by case basis during 2021/2022 to authorise fireworks on public land.</p>
<p>Future arts and culture policy and planning</p>	<p>The Review also identified a number of priority areas for arts policy and strategy development as summarised in Table 1: Emerging arts and culture priority areas.</p> <p>Priority areas for arts policy and strategy development include: PRACC audience review and strategic focus; arts collection and infrastructure planning; the role of arts and culture in fostering inclusive and welcoming cities (including anti-racism initiatives); development of new arts and cultural development priorities within Council’s adopted new Integrated Planning Framework.</p>

Table 2: Activity areas identified in the Festival and Events review

CONSULTATION

The Review adopted a multifaceted consultation methodology to capture a broader lens on what elements of arts, culture and events appeal most to the local community. A detailed summary of key findings is outlined in **Table 3** below:

Method	Key Findings
<p>Post event consultations (January – April 2021)</p>	<p>When asked to identify what they would like to see at “Your Community Festival”, the 10 most common responses were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music, street theatre, craft activities • Sports activities, cultural dancing, carnival • Food/food trucks, outdoor cinema and First Peoples. <p>Of the 437 respondents, 23 people selected fireworks.</p>
<p>Arts and Culture Survey (March 2021)</p>	<p>Resident interest and self-identified need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local festivals and events; • Cultural engagement with Aboriginal arts and culture and local diverse cultures; • Creative activities for children, young people and families; and • Places for artists and creatives to exhibit or share work. <p>Art forms of interest to the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live music, theatre/performance, dance; • Painting and Aboriginal craft; and • Photography.
<p>2021-2024 Council Plan development and Pandemic Recovery Plan (March 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing local festivals and events was identified as the second most important action Council should be doing to support community recovery besides supporting local business. • Effective COVID-safe guidelines and their application are critical to audience confidence in attending arts and cultural events (particularly physical distancing). • Community desire for more local festivals and events, improved access to live music and arts and craft activities

Method	Key Findings
	with a focus on activities from our Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities.
Post event evaluations (Consolidated results and conducted prior to COVID-19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 per cent of people felt more connected to the community after attending a Council event or activity. Over 80 per cent of attendees felt proud of their local area after attending a local Council event or activity.
Direct consultation – Over 300 local artists and creatives (Conducted prior to the establishment of CAPOW in 2017)	<p>The top four issues local artists were facing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of venues or spaces to exhibit/perform/share work; Ability (or lack thereof) to meet other artists and share; knowledge, stories, experience; Ability and support to set up an online social network; and Local professional development opportunities.

Table 3. Summary of consultation outcomes

In addition to the above, post event community evaluations, lessons learnt discussions and direct consultation with local community, artists and creatives, will continue to take place in the future to ensure Council programming remains reflective of local need.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

COVID-19 has had an immediate impact on the PRACC revenue with an estimated \$1,200,000 loss in revenue due to booking cancellations and repurposing the facility. The detailed net impact of COVID -19 on the PRACC business will be known at the end of the 2020/2021 financial year.

Table 4 provides a high-level summary of the indicative program costs associated with the delivery of the annual Festival and Events program; noting these figures exclude other smaller Council run events such as Youth events, Reconciliation events, etc.

Carols by Candlelight	\$50,000
Smaller local/place-based events	\$100,000
Walking Event/s	\$60,000
Large Community Festival	\$120,000
Digital online presence – content creation	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$ 350,000

Table 4. Indicative budget allocation for the Festival and Events season 2021/2022

The forecasted budget for the 2021/2022 Festival and Events program is allocated for in the Council adopted 2021/2022 budget and consistent with previous years expenditure.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Council's Arts and Culture program is aligned and supported by the following Council policies and strategies:

- Whittlesea 2040: Goal 1 - Connected Community through creating a sense of community and belonging (Direction 1.1) and a participating community (Direction 1.3). Goal 2 – Liveable Neighbourhoods through well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres (Direction 2.2).

- Council’s Arts Policy, Visual Art and Civic History Collection Policy, Festival and Events Policy and Event Approvals Policy which govern the operations of the Arts, Culture and Events team.
- Community Building Strategy: A Place Based Approach – Direction 2 – Build Community Connections.
- Cultural Heritage Strategy: Objective 3 – Promote and celebrate the diverse cultural heritage of our City and Objective 4 – Support heritage in our communities.
- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Thriving Children, Young people and Families strategies.
- City of Whittlesea Anti-Racism Strategy.

The program also aligns to the ‘Creativity Connects Us’ strategy; a federal five-year strategy for the Australian Council for the Arts and the Creative Victoria Act 2017, which explores the economic, cultural and social impact of Victoria’s creative industries.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing*

Arts and Culture participation opportunities contribute to a community’s overall wellbeing and Council’s commitment to building a socially cohesive community that embraces diversity and has a sense of belonging.

Strategic Risk *Health, Safety and Welfare - Failure of safety and risk management systems resulting in serious injury or harm to staff or member of public*

Council’s Arts and Culture programs have well developed safety and risk management systems and procedures and large events are planned with the assistance of local emergency services.

The ongoing threat of COVID-19 to the delivery of Council services, such as the arts, festivals and events; must be closely monitored to protect community health and safety.

Fireworks risks are managed by pyrotechnician registration with Worksafe and FRV and Council permit conditions. However, other associated risks with fireworks are less controlled and include:

- Impact on animals, stock and wildlife;
- Public amenity; and
- Increased fire risk during Summer.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Connected community
Key Direction	A socially cohesive community

Whittlesea 2040 strives to achieve a connected community; a socially cohesive community, healthy and safe community and a participating community.

Council’s Arts and Culture program plays a pivotal role in the delivery of creative and cultural programming within the municipality. The benefits of participation in the arts are well documented, with participation linked to an increase in community cohesion, individual participant wellbeing and extending to the broader local economy.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The delivery of a modified Council Festivals and Events program in 2021/2022, review of Council's current operational positions and the commissioning of a broader Arts and Culture Audience Review demonstrate how Council is responding to changes in local community needs to improve delivery outcomes and rebuild the community in a post COVID-19 environment.

This work, coupled with Council's ongoing commitment to delivering an arts and culture portfolio that grows the local creative sector and uses art as a tool to aid recovery and wellbeing ensures the municipality will continue to develop into a vibrant and inclusive place to live – A Place For All.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

- 1. Endorse the place-based 2021/2022 Festival and Events program, as described in Attachment 1 of this report.**
- 2. Note the community consultation and engagement undertaken in development of the 2021/2022 Festival and Events program.**
- 3. Prepare a draft W2040 Connected Communities Strategy including arts and culture priority areas (as described in Table 1) for Council's consideration by mid-2022.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Chairperson Wilson*
SECONDED: *Administrator Eddy*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

Proposed Festival and Events Season 2021/2022

Event	Description
Five small events geographically spread across the Municipality.	<p>These events will have a local community focus and be designed to be specific to place. Based on the successful elements of the 2020/21 events including the Summer Series of film nights and the Super Kids Festival.</p> <p>The focus on smaller events is designed to ensure compliance with the Public Events Framework to manage COVID-19 safety and social distancing requirements and garner public confidence in returning to community events post pandemic. In addition, provision of smaller satellite events across the municipality will also increase event accessibility and provide the opportunity for events to be responsive to their locations, bringing a heightened relevance and meaning to local communities</p>
A Carols by Candlelight event (10 December 2021)	<p>Carols by Candlelight is a hugely popular family event which showcases local musical talents and creates integral community development opportunities. The event will feature the community choir which forms two months ahead of the event and is made up of 60 members ranging in age from 7 – 80 years old.</p> <p>The delivery format for 2021 will be informed by the COVID-19 landscape closer to December however this event can be delivered as a hybrid event – in person and online – if required.</p>
One-night walking event (Similar to Walking Thomastown)	<p>The Walking Thomastown event featured light sculptures, performances and projections to showcase the cultural heritage elements of Thomastown and improve community perceptions of safety. The inaugural event held in April 2021 was successful and received strong interest for duplication in the future.</p>
One large central community festival using PRACC and outdoor spaces as a major focus	<p>To strengthen the use of PRACC in Council's programming, this event will focus on PRACC's indoor and outdoor spaces to showcase the potential of the venue and the civic centre precinct as an arts and culture hub for the municipality. The festival would utilise the lawns, PRACC, Sorry Space, amphitheatre and would connect Council to community and to PRACC. Previous experience has identified the space works well as a multi-zone festival site and would allow theatre programming (kids theatre in Woodstock especially), exhibition programming (in the Great Hall etc) as well as standard festival programming (stalls, activities, stages, food etc). This location is optimal as it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is relatively central geographically and has good public transport; • Has existing services such as water/ power is on site (as are some toilets) so costs are reduced; • Therefore allows Council to invest more on the 'fun stuff' such as programming and entertainment; • Allows for activities to be spread out and delivered in a COVID safe manner.
Continued Online presence	<p>A series of participation opportunities delivered digitally to support the newly launched Arts website, build on the successes of the 20/21</p>

Proposed Festival and Events Season 2021/2022

Event	Description
	season and enable broader community access activities in a safe environment. Potential activities include livestreaming performances, training and Q&A sessions.
Dates of Recognition Calendar	Enhance coordination and promotion of Council's (and key partners such as libraries) events program through the establishment of a Whittlesea Dates of Recognition Calendar which captures other key festivals and events including NAIDOC Week, youth FREEZA events, etc.

ITEM 6.1.2 FOR NOTING - FINAL PROGRESS REPORT COUNCIL'S DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2017-21

Attachments: 1 2017 – 2021 Whittlesea Disability Action Plan - Outcomes summary [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: Director Community Wellbeing

Author: Team Leader Access

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council note:

1. Note the outcomes from the Disability Action Plan 2017-21 (see Attachment 1)
2. Note the community feedback and emerging directions for Council in the next four years to increase participation opportunities and decrease discrimination for people with disabilities in our community.
3. Support the integration of future Disability Action Plan actions into the Community Plan 2021-25 and the Whittlesea 2040 (W2040) Strategies through alignment with the Council endorsed Integrated Planning Framework.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

This report provides:

- A summary of the progress and outcomes of the City of Whittlesea Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2017-21
- The findings of the recent community consultation undertaken as a part of the Community Plan 2021-25 consultation
- A recommendation and rationale on the integration of the DAP into the Community Plan 2021-25.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Integrating future Disability Plan actions into the Community Plan and W2040 Strategies will ensure a whole of organisation approach and ability to generate greater community outcomes. This will maximise health outcomes for residents with disabilities and carers while also meeting Council's requirements under the *Disability Act Victoria 2006*.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION**Benefits:**

- A whole of Council and community approach to disability inclusion leading to improved outcomes for meeting the human rights of inclusion for people with disabilities in our community.
- Stronger reporting structures with links to the Community Plan 2021-25 and W2040 Strategies.
- Developing a holistic and proactive approach that will champion inclusion of people with disabilities across a larger number of initiatives throughout the organisation, which will have broader reach for all in our community

- Integrating the DAP with the Community Plan and the Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan, gives Council the opportunity to achieve a strong health and wellbeing outcomes for the whole community.

Potential negative impact

- A possible negative impact is that the integration of Disability Plan actions may result in diminished visibility of those actions leading to stakeholders, including community members, feeling that Council has less of a commitment to disability inclusion.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Council will brief the Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN) on the new process that is being undertaken and improved outcomes expected by integrating DAP actions into the Community Plan 2021-25.

A report which extracts all disability actions across the Community Plan 2021-25 and W2040 Strategies will be prepared showing the full extent of Council's commitment across all W2040 goals.

For the life of the two previous DAPs, project managers have provided quarterly progress reports using Council reporting systems. This process will now be enhanced with monthly reporting for all actions in the Community Plan and quarterly reporting for all actions in the W2040 Strategies. An annual progress report, specifically on the DAP actions will be provided to Council and to the Whittlesea Disability Network.

REPORT**BACKGROUND**

The *Disability Act Victoria 2006* requires each local government to develop a DAP or address the following requirements under the Council Plan (referred to in this report as the Community Plan 2021-25):

- (a) Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities;
- (b) Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;
- (c) Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability;
- (d) Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminates against persons with a disability.

The City of Whittlesea has a large proportion of residents with disabilities. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018) identifies 35,249 (15.8%) of Whittlesea's 222,973 residents have a disability. It also states that 22,874 (10.1%) of Whittlesea residents are unpaid carers. These figures compare to the National percentages on 17.7% residents with a disability and 10.8% are unpaid carers.

The Australian Government's National Disability Strategy 2010-20 notes:

Australians with a disability have significantly worse life outcomes compared to others or compare to people with disability in similar countries. People with disability are more likely to experience:

- *Relatively poor health*
- *Lower level of participation in education, training and employment*
- *Social exclusion*
- *Lack of access to goods, services and facilities*
- *Ongoing discrimination*

Disability Action Plan 2017-21

In 2017, Council endorsed the DAP 2017-21 as a stand-alone cross-Council plan with actions under four key commitment areas:

- Inclusive communities;
- Good Health, housing and wellbeing for people with disabilities;
- Respect, equity and safety for all; and
- Contributory community living as a right for all regardless of ability.

The 2017-21 DAP consisted of 105 actions over four years, with 87 of these achieved on time and in their nominated year (including 3 on track to be delivered by June 2021). Fifteen actions were achieved outside of their scheduled timeline, with only 5 actions unachieved due to external factors

The significant outcomes achieved in the 2017 – 2021 DAP include:

- Development of the All-Abilities Playground at Mill Park (planned for over 15 years);
- Increasing access for residents with disabilities as a part of the Mill Park Leisure redevelopment;

- Delivery of the Marveloo portable change facility for events;
- Increase (from three to eight) in Changing Places facilities within the municipality, enhancing community participation for people with disability;
- Working with the Victorian Government on Accessible Parking Scheme reform;
- Undertaking the NDIS Gap Research Project that will support the service delivery market in the local area. This is a first for local government and will help strengthen service delivery in the local area to meet the needs of NDIS participants;
- Participation in the Australian Network on Disabilities Access and Inclusion Index Assessment which analyses Council's confidence and capacity to employ and support people with disabilities. Council's ranking increased from 29% to 51%, which puts Council in the top 20% of organisations that undertake the assessment.
- Provision of regular information to residents with disabilities and carers via direct newsletter and regular updates to the Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN). The WDN's membership has evolved over the past four years and further work is required to ensure the forum continues to meet residents' needs.
- Supporting isolated residents with disabilities and carers, during COVID lockdowns who are self-isolating and/or practicing physical distancing requirements.
- Additional outcome information is summarised in **Attachment 1**.

The five actions that were not achieved are outlined in the following Table

Action	Notes
Develop a Business Support Program that works with local business owners to encourage the inclusion of customers with disabilities (2018-19)	Council submitted two applications under the NDIS Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program in two funding rounds and was unsuccessful in each round. Information on how businesses could support customers with disabilities was provided and circulated in the "Business Resource Guide". Further work in this area will be investigated in future plans.
Establish Disability Work Experience/ Employment Pilot Program with Council Departments for people with disabilities (Including people with disabilities from Aboriginal, CALD backgrounds and women with disabilities) (2018-19)	This action was also included in the ILC applications mentioned above that were unsuccessful. It will be investigated in future plans.
Develop a Community Disability survey to get baseline data on community attitudes around inclusion in our community. (2017-18)	Community attitudes on inclusion questions were added to a number of Council surveys over the life of the Disability Plan. This approach established better ongoing engagement feedback than a stand-alone survey.
Establish the Access and Inclusion Coordinating group which oversees the work to increase the employment opportunities for people with disabilities at Council (2019-20);	Due to numerous senior management changes and the focus on Council's response to the pandemic for most of 2020, the Group was not established. This action will be revisited in future plans.

Develop Training program for staff that have community communication responsibility on the Accessible Communication Policy and inclusive Communication Protocol (including Communication toolkit)	This policy and protocol were put on hold due of changing priorities during the pandemic in 2020. This action will be revisited in future plans
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Table 1: Unachieved Actions

Whittlesea Integrated Planning Framework

In March 2021, Council adopted a new Integrated Planning Framework. Adoption of this Framework means Council will no longer prepare and adopt separate, stand-alone strategies but will develop actions and priorities across a smaller number of integrated Whittlesea 2040 Strategies. The Framework includes the Disability Action Plan actions that will be integrated into the Community Plan 2021-25 and Whittlesea 2040 Strategies (rather than a separate document).

PROPOSAL

By taking this approach it will mean that we will have two levels of actions on inclusion of people with disability.

- High level actions that will appear in the Community Plan.
- Next level actions that will appear in the Whittlesea 2040 Strategies.

It will also mean that instead of taking a disability specific focus in our actions, the organisation can respond across a number of disciplines with a human rights framework. The strength of this approach is that the increased scope will result in positive outcomes across a broader number of areas for residents with disabilities.

Measures to address potential community concerns regarding a change to Council’s policy framework will be addressed through further consultation with the Whittlesea Disability Network, and annual reporting which ensures Council’s progress on disability initiatives is maintained.

CONSULTATION

Community consultation

In March 2021, the community consultation on the planning for the next DAP was incorporated in the Community Plan 2021-25 community engagement. Questions relating to people with disabilities were included in the broader community survey.

- 36 people who completed the survey identified as having a disability,
- 49 people identified as carers, and
- 8 of these people identified as being a person with a disability *and* a carer.
- Local Service providers (Whittlesea Community Futures partners) were also consulted via the Community Plan 2021-25 survey. 19 local services responded to this survey.

Further specific disability cohort consultation was undertaken via a series of four workshop sessions:

What		Who	How
Workshop 1	External Engagement	Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN)	Hybrid workshop (face to face and online) 12 Participants
Workshop 2	Internal Engagement	Disability Staff Advisory Group	Online workshop 8 Participants
Workshop 3	Internal Engagement	Broader Staff	Online workshop 42 Participants
Workshop 4	External Engagement	Local Area Coordinators who are employed by Brotherhood of St Laurence. BSL is the organisation that oversees the implementation of the planning and plan development NDIS in the local area	Online workshop 16 Participants

Table 2. Summary workshop sessions

Key themes emerging from this consultation under each of the Whittlesea 2040 goals are summarised in Table 3 below; and have been incorporated into the Community Plan 2021-25 development.

Whittlesea 2040 Goals	Theme
1. Connected Community	Increase information-sharing on disability services, programs and events
	Increase community capacity building for people with disability
	Increase civic participation for people with disability
2. Liveable Neighbourhood	Improve Accessible Housing opportunities in local area
	Improve the built environment and infrastructure for people with disability
3. Strong Economy	Increase employment opportunities for people with disability
	Increase education opportunities including training for people with disability
	Support entrepreneurs with disability
4. Sustainable Environments	Improve accessible communication on sustainable opportunities

Whittlesea 2040 Goals	Theme
	Develop accessible sustainable programs

Table 3. Consultation Key Themes

CRITICAL DATES

The current DAP 2017-21 expired on 30 June 2021 and The Disability Act Victoria 2006 requires each Local Government to develop a DAP or address the requirements above in the Council Plan. There is no legislation around the DAP date but Council responsibility under the Council Plan is October 31.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Actions from the DAP that appear in the Community Plan 2021-25 will be funded via Council's recurrent department budgets or as Community Plan 2021-25 initiatives. When actions require additional resources, these will be considered as a part of Council's annual budget processes.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

The alignment to the National Disability Strategy (NDS) (updated version expected late 2021), Victorian Disability Act 2006, and the current State Disability Plan (2017-20) (new plan expected in late 2021) is outlined below.

W2040 area	Goal	Disability Act 2006 Requirements	NDS Proposed Outcome areas	State Disability Plan Pillar (2017/20)
Connected Communities		Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability	Health and wellbeing Rights, protection, justice and legislation Personal and community support	Health, housing and wellbeing
Liveable Neighbourhoods		Promoting inclusion and participation in the community	Inclusive and accessible communities	Inclusive communities Health, housing and wellbeing
Strong Local economy		Reducing barriers to obtaining employment	Economic security Learning and skills	Contributing lives

Table 4. Summary of alignment

Note: The DAP will also include actions around W2040 Goal area Sustainable Environment but there is less of a link around this goal area with the Disability Act, NDS and the State Disability Plan.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Governance - Ineffective governance of Council's operations and activities resulting in either a legislative or policy breach*

This integrated approach will ensure that Council meets its legislative requirements under the Disability Act Victoria 2006 while also meeting our requirements working towards eliminating discrimination in our community

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Connected community
Key Direction	A healthy and safe community

The new DAP has links to all Goal areas of the Whittlesea 2040. It has strong links to Goal areas 1) Connected communities, 2) Liveable neighbourhoods, 3) Strong Local Economy and 5) High Performing Organisation. It also links to 4) Sustainable Environment but not as strongly as the other four.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The City of Whittlesea has a long and proud history of supporting people with disabilities and their carers. It was one of the first Councils in Victoria to register a DAP with the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 2003.

This new structure of incorporating the DAP into the Community Plan is a strong next step in embedding the work on inclusion and disability from primarily one single team to the whole organisation and our community. It builds on the work that has been done in the four previous DAPs to achieve the best outcomes for all in our community.

The community and key stakeholders' input into actions in the Community Plan has identified priorities for Council in the next four years to increase participation opportunities and decrease discrimination for people with disabilities in our community.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Note the outcomes from the Disability Action Plan 2017-21 as described in Attachment 1.
2. Note community feedback and emerging directions for Council in the next four years to increase participation opportunities and decrease discrimination for people with disabilities in our community.

3. Support the integration of future Disability Action Plan actions into the Community Plan 2021-25 and the Whittlesea 2040 (W2040) Strategies through alignment with the Council endorsed Integrated Planning Framework.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Duncan*
SECONDED: *Chairperson Wilson*

THAT Council:

1. Note the outcomes from the Disability Action Plan 2017-21 as described in Attachment 1.
2. Note community feedback and emerging directions for Council in the next four years to increase participation opportunities and decrease discrimination for people with disabilities in our community.
3. Support the integration of future Disability Action Plan actions into the Community Plan 2021-25 and the Whittlesea 2040 (W2040) Strategies through alignment with the Council endorsed Integrated Planning Framework.
4. Seeks a further report by October 2021 in relation to those actions not achieved within the current Disability Action Plan, namely the Business Support Program; Disability Work Experience Employment Pilot; establishment of an Access and Inclusion Co-ordinating Group; and a training program for staff.

CARRIED

Attachment 1: 2017 – 2021 Whittlesea Disability Action Plan - Outcomes summary

Notable outcomes achieved in the 2017 – 2021 DAP include:

- Funding and building of the All-Abilities Playground at Mill Park (planned for over 15 years);
- Increasing access for residents with disabilities as a part of the Mill Park Leisure redevelopment;
- Delivery of the Marveloo portable change facility for events;
- Increase (from three to eight) in Changing Places facilities within the municipality, enhancing community participation for people with disability;
- Development of a Public Toilet Provision Guide that will inform the work on public toilets across the municipality (increasing amenities in our local community);
- Provision of mandatory induction disability awareness training sessions for all new staff with positions that require a level of disability awareness. This training has been developed into an online training program that has had over 800 staff attend in the life of the plan;
- Introduction of disability awareness training for Councillors;
- Working in partnership with the Victorian Government on the reform of the Accessible Parking Scheme to better meet the needs of local residents;
- Advocacy for increased accessible housing in the municipality (including Accessible Housing Forums and strengthening support for accessible, adoptive housing in the Whittlesea Planning scheme, a “The role of Local Government in the provision of Disability Housing” issues paper, and Accessible Housing Resource Kit)
- Undertake of the NDIS Gap research project that will support the service delivery market in the local area. This is a first for local government in the country and will help strengthen the market in our local area to meet the needs of NDIS participants locally;
- Australian Network on Disabilities Access and Inclusion index assessment which analyses Council's confidence and capacity to employ and support the employment people with disabilities. Council's ranking increased from 29% to 51%, which puts Council in the top 20% of organisations who undertake the assessment.
- Provision of regular information to residents with disabilities and carers via direct newsletter and regular updates to the Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN). The WDN's membership has evolved over the past four years and further work is required to ensure the forum continues to meet residents' needs.
- During COVID, supporting isolated residents with disabilities and carers who are self-isolating and/or practicing physical distancing requirements.
- Implement recommendations from the accessibility audits on Whittlesea Showgrounds and Whittlesea Swim centre.
- Continued to increase compliance with relevant Australian standards on bus stops and accessible parking spots around schools, childcare centres, reserves and other community facilities.
- Implementation of annual Disability Services Providers Expos for over 50 services.
- Purchase of two assisted hearing devices to support residents to be involved in Council meetings and community events.
- Continue to refurbish Current council facilities to meet the needs of all in our community. This includes Epping Memorial hall, Greenbrook, Riverside Cav, Spring st Hall, Civic centre, Epping depot, and number of a number of Kindergarten.
- The successfully advocate campaign to fund, build and establish the facility based respite service in Thomas St South Morang.

ITEM 6.1.3 FOR FEEDBACK - ABORIGINAL GATHERING PLACE

- Attachments:**
- 1 **Aboriginal Gathering Place Community Vision** [↓](#)
 - 2 **Aboriginal Gathering Place Investment Logic Map** [↓](#)
 - 3 **Aboriginal Gathering Place Feasibility Study 2018** [↓](#)
 - 4 **Aboriginal Gathering Place Draft Business Case 2021** [↓](#)
 - 5 **Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (WAGPAG) Proposed Terms of Reference** [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: Director Community Wellbeing

Author: Team Leader Aboriginal & Cultural Diversity

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council resolve to:

1. Support the establishment of a purpose-built Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Park.
2. Provide funding to commence the project in the 2021/22 financial year.
3. Note a number of key documents prepared by Council and the local Aboriginal community over the past few years which inform this report and the Gathering Place project
4. Transition the existing Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group (AGPGG) to a formal advisory committee of Council and called the 'City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (AGPAG)'.
5. Note Council will continue to explore external funding opportunities with other levels of government and other funding bodies.
6. Note a report will be brought to Council by March 2022 outlining a final Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case, operational governance arrangements, detailed costings, and a site assessment update.
7. Note that completion of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be commissioned and may impact on program delivery timeframes.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The vision (**Attachment 1**) for an Aboriginal Gathering Place (AGP) in the City of Whittlesea is for "a welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe space where all Aboriginal people have a sense of belonging and have access to activities, programs and services which strengthen culture and enhance wellbeing".

The idea for a gathering place in Whittlesea was initiated by local community members over 20 years ago. There has been considerable work undertaken to date with the Whittlesea Aboriginal community including the establishment of AGPGG in February 2019.

The AGPGG in collaboration with other key stakeholders has worked with Council to develop the concept and identify potential sites.

This report proposes Council support the establishment of a purpose-built AGP at Quarry Hills as articulated in Option 4 (**Attachment 4** as well as **Table 2** of this report).

The proposed AGP is set to be included as a major initiative within Council's Health Plan.

There is currently no allocation in Council's long-term financial plan (LTFP) for this project. Consideration by Council of the work completed to date, a review of the project vision, proposed phasing, project governance, facility options and budget will be required as part of the final business case development.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Establishing an AGP in Whittlesea has been the number one priority of the local Aboriginal community for over 20 years and remains the key priority of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG).

Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea have limited access to Aboriginal specific culturally appropriate services that respond to their immediate and long-term cultural needs. Recent population increases in the local Aboriginal community has resulted in an increase in the demand for services, as identified in the City of Whittlesea's Human Services Needs Analysis Snapshot conducted in March 2018. There are 14 Aboriginal Gathering Places across Victoria; however, none of these are located in the Northern Metropolitan region.

A Gathering Place is seen as integral to improving the significant health and wellbeing deficits faced by our Aboriginal Community.

In addition, Reconciliation efforts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people has a strong history in the City of Whittlesea, with the Whittlesea Reconciliation Working Group celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. This project is a significant initiative towards fostering greater understanding across our community on Aboriginal culture and history; and will offer wellbeing opportunities for all community members.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The Aboriginal Gathering Place (AGP) project has been co-designed with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to:

- Respond to the adverse health and wellbeing profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members;
- Increase a sense of belonging and connection to culture
- Increase self-determination
- Increase health and wellbeing outcomes
- Increased economic participation opportunities
- Foster partnerships between Council, local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members and Traditional Owners.

An evaluation of 13 Aboriginal Gathering Places across Victoria (commissioned by DHHS) found they create culturally safe environments and enable Aboriginal people to seek support and health care needs on their own terms. (*Gathering places in the eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne: places for inclusion, connection and empowerment*, Indigenous Health Equity Unit, University of Melbourne, 2016)

In addition, the AGP project has been designed to foster Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people living in Whittlesea through an increased awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture.

If adopted, it is proposed that the AGP:

- Becomes a major health and wellbeing initiative of Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (to be incorporated in the 2021- 25 Council Plan).
- Plays a role in the activation of the Quarry Hills Park.

The report also identifies the project's operational and financial impact for Council, and notes that further work will be required as part of the development of the final business case.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

A Major Initiative in the 2021-2022 Council Action Plan has been proposed to support this work including significant work around future governance and partnership development. This work will see a refinement of governance arrangements (between Council and the AGPGG), the level of service provision, the operating model and facility design to provide more detailed costings and clarity around roles and responsibilities. Key tasks moving forward will include:

- Develop a final Business Case (by March 2022) to inform development of the project and financial and operational requirements;
- Develop a Business Plan to build operational capacity over time;
- Confirm project governance, key stakeholders and relationships;
- Explore potential funding options including: Victorian and Australian Government grant opportunities, partnerships and philanthropy;
- On-going consultation with community (including the Gathering Place Governance Group, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and wider community).

To help manage the impacts of this complex project officers have established project governance including an elected community group (AGPGG), internal governance groups (AGP working and Control groups), an external intergovernmental working group and are members of the broader Quarry Hills project working group.

The design and delivery of the Gathering Place facility (outside of the master planning work) is not currently in the Major Projects Department Workplan for 2021/2022 and may require additional resources or may impact the delivery of existing Major Projects works.

If adopted the final Business Case will also develop an evaluation framework to assess the impact of the project.

REPORT**BACKGROUND*****Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - Health and Wellbeing***

Whittlesea has an estimated population of 1,633 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The population is increasing rapidly (growing by 46% between 2011 and 2016 compared with 33% for Melbourne as a whole). This trend is expected to continue.

Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea have limited access to Aboriginal specific culturally appropriate services that respond to their immediate and long-term cultural needs. The population increase has resulted in an increase in the demand for services, as was reported in the City of Whittlesea's Human Services Needs Analysis Snapshot conducted in March 2018. There are 14 Aboriginal Gathering Places across Victoria, however none of these are located in the Outer Northern Metropolitan region.

The Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Status 2015 (Health InfoNet 2016) presents indicators of Aboriginal health identified:

- Aboriginal people are 2.7 times more likely to feel high or very high levels of psychological distress;
- The death rate from intentional harm (suicide) is 2.2 times the rate reported for non-Indigenous people;
- The life expectancy is around 10 years less than the estimates for non-Indigenous people;
- Hospitalisation rates for circulatory disease are almost twice as high than for non-Indigenous people;
- Aboriginal people die from diabetes at six times the rate of non-Indigenous people; and
- In Victoria, Aboriginal adults make up 9% of the prison population despite only representing 0.8% of the population.

These challenges contribute to several negative social outcomes for residents when compared to the average for residents living in metropolitan Melbourne, including:

- Higher rates of family dysfunction and violence;
- Lack of social cohesion;
- Higher rates of physical and mental health problems; and,
- Higher incarceration rates.

The impacts of colonisation and past Australian government policies, particularly the forced removals and separation of families throughout the Stolen Generations, have resulted in trauma, grief and loss for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This trauma is experienced across generations and impacts negatively on future generations; and has been widely documented, notably in the Australian Government's 1997 *'Stolen Children' National Inquiry, Bringing them Home'* report. Policies and actions that are developed with Aboriginal people and are specific to the needs of Aboriginal people are required if health and wellbeing outcomes are to be improved.

Aboriginal Gathering Places and the broader community

Beyond the critical health and wellbeing benefits for the Aboriginal community, Aboriginal Gathering places provide significant benefits to the broader community. Gathering places are

fundamentally inclusive and welcoming spaces for all—by their very nature they attract and embrace anyone in need of support—including non-Indigenous people.

A 2016 Melbourne University study for the Department of Health and Human Services, Health and Wellbeing Outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gathering Place Model in Victoria, found that the effect on the wider non-Indigenous community and other mainstream community and government services is pronounced, with most gathering places working hard to establish strong partnerships and networks with external programs

The vision for Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place is of a place that serves the broader community and provides regular and ongoing opportunities for non-Aboriginal community members to learn and engage with local Aboriginal culture and history, including through school tours, cultural competency training for workplaces and cultural events and programming.

City of Whittlesea general population - Health and Wellbeing

The Eastern Melbourne Public Health Network (EMPHN) needs assessment identifies Whittlesea as having the highest rate of people aged over 18 years with high or very high psychological distress. Our municipality's psychological distress rating for this age group is above the Victorian average. The Gathering Place proposal has been developed as an initiative designed to foster connection and belonging to land, culture and community for both indigenous and non-indigenous community members. For example, it is anticipated that the facility will have the potential to host multiple school groups each week as well as a range of other health and wellbeing programs. To this end, if endorsed the Gathering Place will be a major health and wellbeing initiative of Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (to be incorporated in the 2021- 25 Council Plan).

2016 Melbourne University study

In 2016, Melbourne University's Indigenous Health Equity Unit were commissioned to prepare a study titled *Gathering places in the eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne: places for inclusion, connection and empowerment* for the Department of Health and Human Services. The study evaluated the health and wellbeing outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gathering place model in Victoria and found they have:

- Direct positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals and community;
- Provide a safe and inclusive space to connect;
- Support the sharing of knowledge; and,
- Empower people through social, cultural and healing activities.

Gathering Places – Definition and Role

A Gathering Place is a physically, socially and culturally safe place for Aboriginal people. They are led by Aboriginal people and broadly aim to support enhanced outcomes, increase connection to culture, and facilitate healing for Aboriginal people.

'Gathering Places are community owned and operated places that provide opportunities for people to connect and deliver services.' ([Aboriginal Victoria - Local Aboriginal Networks and Gathering Places](#))

Outlined below are examples of Gathering Places operating successfully in Victoria.

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Croydon

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) is a community controlled Aboriginal organisation based in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. MMIGP is an Aboriginal Neighbourhood House and is designed with developmental model which evolves over time according to identified need. The MMIGP aims to support the enhanced outcomes for the Aboriginal community of the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne by providing a range of programs and activities that:

- Lengthen life
- Strengthening children, young people and families
- Have cultural integrity and safety
- Support to implement innovative community-based approaches and solutions
- Collaborative planning and decision-making based on community-driven priorities
- Stronger partnerships between Aboriginal and mainstream services; and
- Stronger partnerships with government.

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Gathering Place, Hastings

Willum Warrain (‘home by the sea’) Aboriginal Association is the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Mornington Peninsula. It is a Gathering Place where Aboriginal people come together to realize community aspirations and forge shared identity.

Managed by an Aboriginal board, and supported by seven staff members, Willum Warrain is located in the coastal town of Hastings and provides information and referral services, charitable support, health and wellbeing programs, art and culture programs, and links between the Aboriginal community and the broader local community. The core strategic focus is cultural strengthening.

Gathering Place – Whittlesea

Council’s commitment to Reconciliation and improving the wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea dates back to 2001 with the establishment of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG). The WRG are strong advocates for the benefits and positive social and wellbeing outcomes provided by AGPs.

There has been considerable work with the Whittlesea Aboriginal community to date including the establishment of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group (AGPGG) in February 2019. Key activities completed to date include:

Year	Activity
2018	2018 Gathering Place Feasibility Study (Attachment 3).
2019	Officers establish the AGPGG as a project group.
2020	A draft Gathering Place Business Case presented to ELT and Council Briefings
	A Council Action Plan initiative delivered leadership and governance training to the AGPGG.
	Potential Gathering Place sites were identified and presented to the AGPGG: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1420 Plenty Rd, Mernda (known as Mayfield Farm), and • 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang, known as Quarry Hills site (preferred).
	A Gathering Place Community Vision and Investment Logic Map developed and endorsed by the AGPGG (Attachment 1 and 2).

Table 1: Recent activity

A Gathering Place within the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland

Following the identification of issues at the Preston Hall (Mernda) site, the AGPGG were presented with alternative location at 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang (known as Quarry Hills). The AGPGG have visited this site and strongly endorse it as the preferred site for the AGP (refer **Attachment 4** - and **Figure 1** below)

105 Hunters Lane South Morang is a large parcel of land (100.7 ha), which is planned to be part of Granite Hills Park (part of the larger Quarry Hills Regional Parkland). This parcel is comprised of two parcels - 105W Hunters Lane (the substantial component) and will become the parkland, and 105Y Hunters Lane (a small compound for Yarra Valley Water’s water tank).

The shaded area in **Figure 2** below (6 ha) is located on an elevated plateau and has been identified as a suitable site for a Gathering Place and may contain outdoor places that support activities within a Gathering Place. Within this area, the red circled area (1 ha) contains the former farm residence and associated structures. This area is likely to be the best location for a future facility (refer **Figure 3**).

This is a high-level assessment only and will need further detailed assessment and consultation to identify the actual area needed and improvements required.

The site enjoys an elevated aspect, is zoned Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ); and has both Bushfire and Cultural Heritage Overlays. The property is owned by Council and currently has an existing (vacant) residential dwelling and sheds (see Figure 2). Enhanced road and other infrastructure and services to support public uses would be required if the project were to progress.

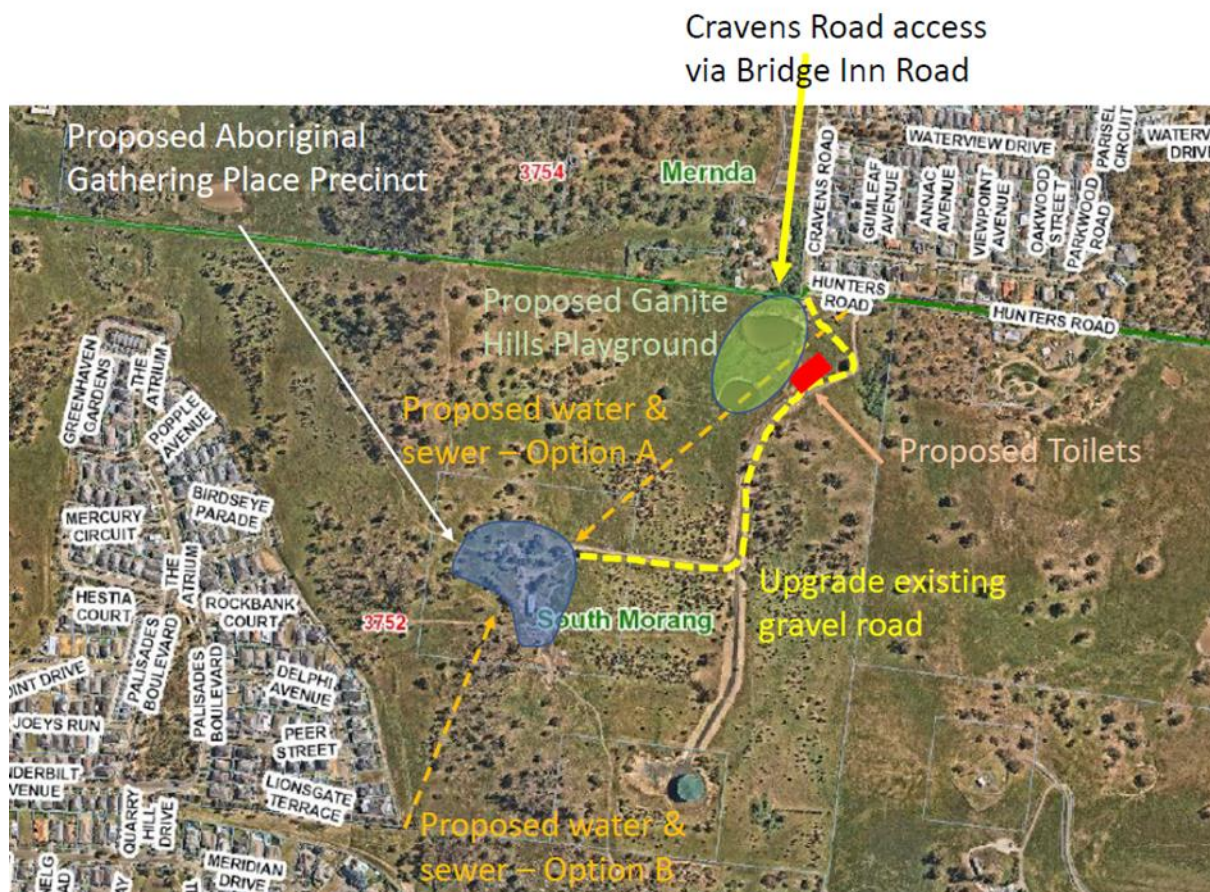


Figure 1: Site context



Figure 2: Gathering Place – shaded area (6 ha). Circled area = facility location



Figure 3: Gathering Place – existing facilities

The preferred site is adjacent (500m) the Granite Hills Playground development (currently under construction). A new facility at the Granite Hills Development has the potential to serve as a complimentary gateway to the AGP by providing an entrance and orientation. Based on the success of the All Abilities Play Space in Mill Park, the Granite Hills Playground has the potential to attract high numbers of people every week that could be connected physically and educationally to the AGP.

Moving forward there may opportunities to develop these facilities for mutual benefit including:

- Catering options and shelter for families at the playground
- A function room for hire for local families
- Interpretation providing cultural information about the AGP and local Aboriginal history and culture
- Providing long term sustainability to the AGP

This complimentary gateway project requires further investigation and feasibility.

PROPOSAL

This report proposes that Council:

- Support the establishment of a purpose-built Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills.
- Transitions the AGPGG to become a formal advisory committee of Council and provide advice on the development of this facility and programs;
- Continue to liaise and consult with Traditional Owners including commissioning a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation;
- Continues to work with other levels of government and partners to identify other sources of funding and on-going income opportunities.
- Becomes a major health and wellbeing initiative of Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (to be incorporated in the 2021- 25 Council Plan).

A number of options for facility development were identified (**Attachment 4 – Appendix A**) with this report recommending Option 4. A brief summary of facility options is provided in **Table 2** below:

Option Number	Description	Indicative Capital Cost	Benefits/ Constraints
Option 1	<p>Reuse of the existing dwelling on the site</p> <p>Includes works to bring the building to public use standards (DDA, signage, parking, essential safety services, etc).</p>	<p>\$450,000</p> <p>+</p> <p>services/ infrastructure costs (tbc)</p>	<p>Project would run small scale indoor programs and outdoor programs.</p> <p>May involve considerable investment in facility without much scope for community access and use.</p> <p>Option 1 has low fit-for-purpose outcomes and fails to meet the project objectives, except as an interim or pilot project.</p>
Option 2	<p>Provision of a modular built facility</p> <p>Demolish the existing dwelling and build a new modular facility with an approximate size of 545 sqm, including kitchen, amenities, large multi-purpose space and office.</p>	<p>\$2,000,000</p> <p>+</p> <p>services/ infrastructure costs (tbc)</p>	<p>Option 2 allows for indoor and outdoor programs.</p> <p>This model brings restrictions regarding shape and size for the site that may impact on functionality – this would need to be determined through site planning.</p> <p>The approximate cost for this option would be \$2 million for the building. External site works and services will be an additional cost (which could be as much as the building cost).</p> <p>Modular buildings typically have a life span of between 10-15 years.</p>

Option Number	Description	Indicative Capital Cost	Benefits/ Constraints
Option 3	<p>Provision of a purpose-built facility (base)</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total floor area of 545 sqm • Medium meeting/event space for 50 people • Meeting room for 15 people • Small communal dining space • Staff admin and storage areas • Basic kitchen • Car parking for 30 - 48 cars • Basic landscaping • 5-star building 	<p>\$3,000,000 + services/ infrastructure costs (tbc)</p>	<p>Options 3 and 4 meet the community vision for this project.</p> <p>Option three allows for moderate capacity for the meeting room, events space, staff administration areas and carparking as well as basic kitchen and landscaping provisions.</p> <p>This option currently doesn't include provision for an indoor meeting/events area that would support more than 50 people.</p> <p>External site works and services will be an additional cost (which could be as much as the building cost).</p> <p>This option can include a footprint that is designed with flexibility that allows it to be expanded as the project grows and evolves.</p>

Option Number	Description	Indicative Capital Cost	Benefits/ Constraints
Option 4	<p>Provision of a purpose-built facility (enhanced)</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total floor area of 1090 sqm • Large meeting/event space for 100 people • Meeting room for 30 people • medium communal dining space • Larger staff admin and storage areas • Enhanced kitchen • Car parking for 80 - 90 cars • Enhanced landscaping • 5-star building 	<p>\$6,000,000 + services/ infrastructure costs (tbc)</p>	<p>Options 3 and 4 meet the community vision for this project.</p> <p>Option four:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the preferred option of the AGPGG. • Allows for larger capacity for the meeting room, events space, staff administration areas and car parking as well as enhanced kitchen and landscaping provisions. • Includes provision for an indoor meeting/events area that has a capacity of 100 people – which may improve income potential/ sustainability for the facility (larger school groups etc). • Would be similar to other community centres and Council could build upon existing operating learnings and systems. <p>Further work is required to develop a concept, accurate costings and clarify the impact of the assumptions and constraints.</p> <p>External site works and services will be an additional cost (which could be as much as the building cost).</p>

Table 2: Facility options

Phase 1 Operational model – roles and responsibilities

Attachment 4 (Appendix B) articulates a Project Phases Plan with operational and governance models moving towards greater community control and autonomy during Phase 2.

Council role

At this stage, the AGPGG have requested that Council play a central role in the provision of staffing, utilities, facility/site capital and maintenance costs. The final business case will also identify opportunities for the initiative to become more self-sustaining and identify other external funding sources from Council.

City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group

Central to the successful delivery of this project will be the establishment of different governance arrangements which share leadership, responsibility and ‘power sharing’ between Council and local Aboriginal communities. This best practice as evidenced in the Uluru Statement of the Heart, the current Treaty Process in Victoria and the Closing the Gap

Targets which each articulate that self-determination is critical not just to the process but to the outcome itself.

This is a different model for Council and requires an appetite for trying new approaches

To this end it is proposed that Council transition the AGPGG to become a formal advisory committee to Council, called the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (AGPAG). The terms of reference are provided as **Attachment 5** and illustrated in **Figure 4**. It is proposed that a modest honorarium be paid to WAGPAG community members (excluding staff members who may also be WAGPAG members).

This report recognises the Aboriginal community will be central to direction and decision-making, and that there will be a need to build community capacity and relationships in parallel to the facility planning.

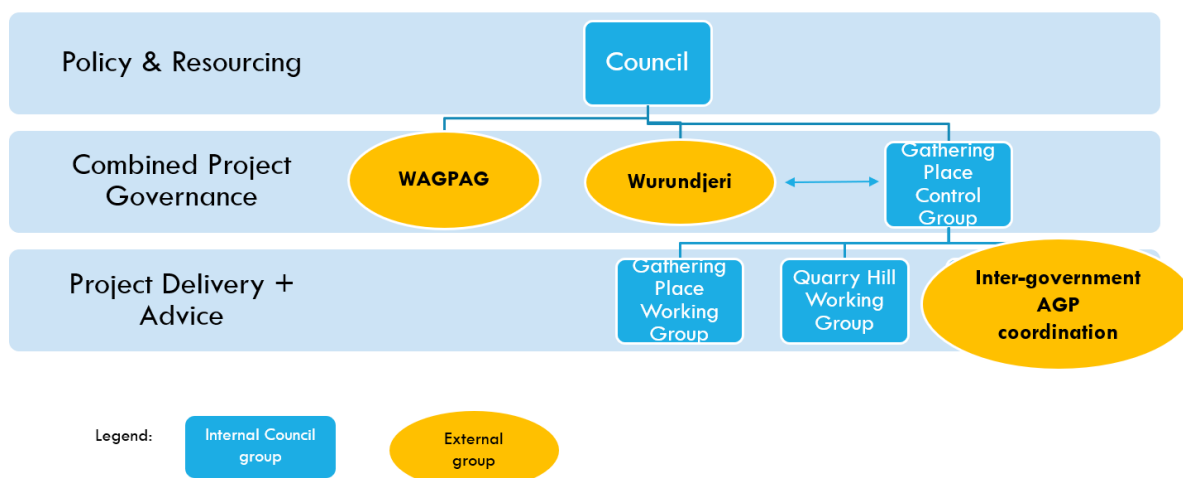


Figure 4: Proposed Phase 1 governance

Traditional Owners - Wurundjeri

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (Wurundjeri) is the organisation representing the traditional owners of the land upon which the Gathering Place is proposed to be established. To date, several meetings have been held with Wurundjeri about the Gathering Place project and Wurundjeri have expressed strong support for the project.

Noting the critical nature of the relationship with Wurundjeri, the proposed establishment of the WAGPA includes two seats for Wurundjeri Traditional Owners.

In addition, Council will undertake a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation which will be commissioned in 2021 and may impact on program delivery timeframes. A Cultural Values Study for the broader Quarry Hills Regional Park has also been commissioned and Wurundjeri will inform future design, interpretation and opportunities in the Park.

CONSULTATION

Engagement to date

Extensive consultations took place for the 2018 Feasibility Study with over 67 community members and the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG).

The AGPGG has convened since 2019 on twelve occasions to discuss and develop the findings of the Gathering Place Feasibility Study and to articulate the community vision, operating model and governance model. The AGPGG also visited other Gathering Places to learn about different approaches, and in May 2020 completed intensive Leadership and Governance Training (Council Plan 2020/2021 Major Initiative: AGP Leadership).

Complimenting this AGPGG was an ILM working group that discussed high-level problems, benefits, solutions and responses across three workshops totaling over 10 hours.

A separate Gathering Place Project Working Group consisting of staff across multiple directorates and representatives from Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Aboriginal Victoria and WRG has provided strategic, partnership and funding advice.

Three meetings have been held with Traditional Owners from Wurundjeri as outlined above.

Ongoing engagement

The proposal for an Aboriginal Gathering Place involves a staged development in partnership with Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group, Traditional Owners (Wurundjeri), other levels of government and local community.

It is proposed that Council also establish an inter-government coordination group with Aboriginal Victoria, DELWP and other departments to align with the Victorian Government's policy commitment to Gathering Places and self-determination including the Korin Korin Balit-Djak policy, Treaty process, Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Aboriginal Australians etc.

CRITICAL DATES

Short term

Short term key project dates include:

Date	Activity
19 May 2021	AGPGG Report workshop
6 July 2021	Scheduled Council Meeting
Feb 2022	Preliminary Phase - Completion of site investigations; site concept plan, service utility options; building scope and cost planning; and final Business Case.
March 2022	Scheduled Council Meeting
Feb 2022 – March 2023	Design Phase - RFT for design services (4 months), Delegated approval to award contract for design services (mid 2022), Concept Design, Design Development (sufficient to proceed to a Design & Construct contract for works in late 2022 – this could save 3-6 months, however there would need to be trade-offs with building functionality & architectural design), Detail Design, Detailed cost estimate, Permits & Approvals
Dec 2022	Preliminary site works completed allowing for limited outdoor programming to commence.
Feb 2023 – October 2024	Delivery Phase - RFT for works (4 months), Council award of contract for works (mid 2023), Construction, Commissioning, Fit-out
July 2023	Completion of the WAGPAG's initial term. At the end of this inaugural term, the WAGPAG will make recommendations to Council about future governance arrangements.
2024	Facility and landscaping completed.

Considering the complexity of the site and the many unknown issues at this point (e.g. natural / environmental / cultural values of the site, contamination, etc), these timelines have an 'optimism bias'. In addition:

- Outside of project visioning and initial works, facility design and development is not currently in the Major Projects Department workplan for 2021/22 and may impact on existing team resource requirements and/or delivery of other projects.
- The outcomes required in Phase 1 (to deliver a purpose-built facility) requires significant project fast tracking and prioritisation.
- Also note that completion of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be commissioned and may impact on program delivery timeframes. Cultural Heritage Management Plan development currently have 4+ months' delay with Traditional Owners.

Medium + Long Term – AGP Project Phases Plan

It is anticipated the AGP will have 3 key phases and work towards the establishing the centre as an independent community-run entity. Whilst subject to change and future Council decision making as the project evolves, it is anticipated the phases include:

Phase 1: Master Plan and Facility Establishment (July 2021 – October 2024)

Phase 2: Development and Partnership (2024 – 2028)

Phase 3: Independence and Sustainability (2028 - 2032)

Each phase has identified activities and outputs as summarised in **Attachment 4 - Appendix B**.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Please note the figures in this report are high level and subject to change as site investigations and conditions are undertaken and will be captured in the final Business case.

The financial (capital and operational) and resourcing (planning, development and management) associated with the initiative will be significant. At this stage the project has been developed with Council as the primary funder for both capital and operational arrangements. Some external capital funding has been procured.

Council will continue to explore external funding opportunities with other levels of government and funding bodies. This includes the establishment of an inter-governmental coordination group as recommended in the 2018 Feasibility report.

This project has identified potential project costs of up to \$14.9 million (capital and operating) over the next 25 years (Attachment 4 - refer draft Business Case). There is currently no long-term allocation in Council's long term financial plan (LTFP) for this project. It is proposed that this would be reviewed following preparation of the final Business case (due March 2022).

Council's Major Projects has provided high level indicative capital costs for four proposed options (**Attachment 4 – Appendix A** and **Table 3** below) including:

1. Re-use of the existing dwelling
2. Development of a modular built facility
3. Development of a purpose-built (base – up to 50 indoor) facility
4. Development of a purpose-built (enhanced - up to 100 indoor) facility.

Requirement	Option 1 – Re-use of Existing	Option 2 – Modular Facility	Option 3 – Purpose Built (base)	Option 4 – Purpose Built (enhanced)
Capital Cost (estimate)				
Upfront Capital Cost*	\$450,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000
Site Services & infrastructure Cost**	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*

Table 3: Indicative capital costs (subject to change)

*Estimated facility capital estimates require conceptual design in order more accurately assess costs.

**Upfront services cost (including connecting power, water and sewage) require further assessment but could be between one to two million dollars.

2021/2022 Proposed Project Budget

The 2021/2022 financial year includes a proposed \$250,000 in Council's Capital Works Budgets and \$300,000 grant from the DELWP's Suburban Parks Infrastructure Fund.

DEWLP Grant (\$300,000)

- \$100,000 Access and Car parking upgrade at Gathering Place Precinct (105W Hunters Rd)
- \$75,000 - Planning and Design - Includes high level master plan and concept design
- \$75,000 - Open space infrastructure - Park seating, natural landscaping & firepit
- \$50,000 - Signage - Interpretive/directional signage specific to the Gathering Place

Council's capital works program (\$250,000)

- \$150,000 - Public Amenity - New portable amenity with two standard toilets and one accessible toilet
- \$50,000 - Consultation & CMMP – Site concept planning, community consultation and cultural heritage management plan specific to the Gathering Place
- \$50K – recommission existing dwelling for residential programs.

Opportunities for external funding and partnership

It is anticipated that there will be opportunities to work with other levels of government towards shared outcomes on this project (such as the Victorian Government's Treaty and Truth and Reconciliation Commission processes; and the Australian Government's Closing the Gap targets and outcomes). This may also identify external funding opportunities, and Council will actively work to optimise these opportunities including capital co-contribution targets of 50 per cent.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

The project directly aligns to Goal 1 a Connected Community within *Whittlesea 2040* and is listed in the *Council Action Plan 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 (Update 2019)* within '1.2 A healthy and safe community'.

Other policy and strategy links include:

- Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2022 (City of Whittlesea)

- Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy (City of Whittlesea)
- Community Building Strategy 2017 (City of Whittlesea)
- Equal and Safe, Family Violence Strategy (City of Whittlesea)
- Koolin Balit Aboriginal Health Strategy 2012 –2022 (Victorian Government)
- Korin Korin Balit-Djak Plan (Victorian Government) Details how DHHS will work with Aboriginal communities, community organisations, other government departments and mainstream service providers – now and into the future – to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal people in Victoria.
- The Australian Government’s National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

If the Aboriginal Gathering Place is not developed there is some risk that it would significantly impact on Council’s capacity to effectively increase community wellbeing and service delivery for the Aboriginal community.

Strategic Risk *Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Ineffective stakeholder engagement resulting in compromised community outcomes and/or non-achievement of Council's strategic direction*

This project also includes some significant other risks including:

- Complexity of the site: The preferred site at Quarry Hills is remote and elevated which adds to design and delivery complexity and could add to costs.
- Cultural risks: The current cultural significance of the site is unknown and requires a Cultural Heritage Management Plan
- Community Governance Risks: The project requires a new approach to community governance and self-determination which is new for Council and requires time, commitment and significant community capacity.
- Fast track risks: To achieve the outcomes proposed in Phase 1 requires fast tracking and prioritising the project which increases risks and limits scope around on-going community consultation and un-foreseen project changes.
- Complexity of the project: Council has not been involved in delivering an AGP before and will need adequate time and resources to develop sustainable and effective programs which achieve the proposed outcomes. History shows that most AGP build their success over a period of time and require on ongoing commitment from a range of stakeholders.

Each of these risks can be responded to with treatments including securing appropriate permits, completing cultural heritage management plans and providing regular and comprehensive community governance training and support; as well as regular communication with Council and future funders around resourcing and support.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Connected community
Key Direction	A healthy and safe community

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

Establishing a Gathering Place in Whittlesea has been the main priority of the local Aboriginal community for over 20 years and remains a key objective of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group. A Gathering Place is seen as critical to improve the significant health and wellbeing deficits faced by our Aboriginal Community.

This report proposes Council support the establishment of a purpose-built Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills as articulated in option 4 (**Attachment 4**).

Critical to the success of the project is a commitment to shared governance model and responsibility for the facility with the Aboriginal Community. This is in-line with the long-term community vision for the project – with articulates a space operating on the principles of community control and self-determination.

Council will continue to explore external funding opportunities with other levels of government and other funding bodies and return to Council by March 2022 with a new report outlining a final Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case which includes future (Phase 2) project governance arrangements, detailed costings, and a site feasibility update.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

1. Support the establishment of a purpose-built Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Park described as Option 4 in Table 2 of this report.
2. Note the following funding arrangements for the Gathering Place project:
 - a) Proposed Council funding of \$250,000 in the draft 2021/22 budget;
 - b) External funding of \$300,000 from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's Suburban Parks Infrastructure Fund.
3. Note the following Gathering Place documents prepared with local community:
 - a) Aboriginal Gathering Place Community Vision (Attachment 1);
 - b) Aboriginal Gathering Place Investment Logic Map (Attachment 2);
 - c) Aboriginal Gathering Place Feasibility Study 2018 (Attachment 3);
 - d) Draft 2020 Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case (Attachment 4);
4. Establish the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (AGPAG) as per the Terms of Reference outlined in Attachment 5.

5. Note Council will pursue an external funding co-contribution target of 50 per cent to support the establishment of the Aboriginal Gathering Place described as Option 4 in Table 2 of this report.
6. Note a report will be brought to Council by March 2022 outlining a final Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case, future operational governance arrangements, detailed costings, and a site assessment update.
7. Note that completion of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be commissioned and may impact on program delivery timeframes.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Duncan*
SECONDED: *Chairperson Wilson*

THAT Council resolve to:

1. **Support the establishment of a purpose-built Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Park described as Option 4 in Table 2 of this report.**
2. **Note the following funding arrangements for the Gathering Place project:**
 - a) **Proposed Council funding of \$250,000 in the draft 2021/22 budget;**
 - b) **External funding of \$300,000 from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's Suburban Parks Infrastructure Fund.**
3. **Note the following Gathering Place documents prepared with local community:**
 - a) **Aboriginal Gathering Place Community Vision (Attachment 1);**
 - b) **Aboriginal Gathering Place Investment Logic Map (Attachment 2);**
 - c) **Aboriginal Gathering Place Feasibility Study 2018 (Attachment 3);**
 - d) **Draft 2020 Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case (Attachment 4);**
4. **Establish the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (AGPAG) as per the Terms of Reference outlined in Attachment 5.**
5. **Note Council will pursue an external funding co-contribution target of 50 per cent to support the establishment of the Aboriginal Gathering Place described as Option 4 in Table 2 of this report.**
6. **Note a report will be brought to Council by March 2022 outlining a final Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case, future operational governance arrangements, detailed costings, and a site assessment update.**
7. **Note that completion of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be commissioned and may impact on program delivery timeframes.**
8. **Include the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place as a key advocacy priority for 2021/22 in partnership with the Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group.**
9. **Amend the Terms of Reference for the Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group to include, under Ordinary Meetings, the provision to formally meet with Administrators on a biannual basis.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



COMMUNITY VISION ABORIGINAL GATHERING PLACE

Project Manager: Nick Butera

Project Sponsor: Russell Hopkins

Prepared by	
Name:	Nick Butera & Aboriginal Community Governance Group
Position:	Team Leader Aboriginal & Cultural Diversity,
Department:	CCD
Version Number:	1
Date:	1/06/2019

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea and the Gathering Place Working Group recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the Traditional Owners of this place. We acknowledge the vision of Elders and community members who have gone before us and their perseverance to see a Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea. This document is another step along the way.

April 2019



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1. Purpose

The first conversations about a Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea go back to the late 1990s. The starting point being the vision of Uncle Reg Blow, a few Elders and some young people. Since that time Uncle Reg has passed, along with some of our Elders, and the young people are no longer young. Today, Elders still want to see a Gathering Place established in the City of Whittlesea and a new generation of young people continue to advocate for a place where they can (re)connect to culture and feel that they belong.

Council’s commitment to reconciliation and improving the wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea dates back to 2001 with the establishment of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG). The WRG have been and continue to be strong advocates for the benefits and positive social and wellbeing outcomes that Aboriginal Gathering Places provide.

DIAGRAM 1: GATHERING PLACE TIMELINE



The purpose of this document is to outline community needs and priorities (infrastructure, programs, services, operations, governance) that need to significantly inform the establishment of a Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea.

The document is to be used as Part A of the *City of Whittlesea Gathering Place Business Case* (‘the Business Case’ hereafter). It sets out the community priorities as they have been articulated through:

- (i) The ongoing work of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group who have kept the Gathering Place on Council’s agenda since being established in 2001;
- (ii) Significant consultations that informed the *Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Feasibility Study*¹
- (iii) Community consultations/meetings ahead of the establishment of the Gathering Place Working Group;
- (iv) Facilitated workshops held with the Gathering Place Working Group that explored the key features of the City of Whittlesea Gathering Place – as recommended in the Feasibility Study.

¹ The Gathering Place feasibility Study was undertaken by Report Prepared By: Karen Milward Consulting Services

2. The Need for a Gathering Place

Whittlesea has a population of 1,633 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, constituting 0.83% of Whittlesea's population. This is a significantly larger proportion of the population than in the Northern Metropolitan (0.68%) and Metropolitan Melbourne (0.53%) areas. In addition the population is increasing rapidly, growing by 46% between 2011 and 2016, faster than the 33% for Melbourne as a whole. This trend is expected to continue.

Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea have limited access to Aboriginal specific culturally appropriate services that respond to their immediate and long term cultural needs. The population increase has resulted in an increase in the demand for services, as was reported in the City of Whittlesea's Human Services Needs Analysis Snapshot conducted in March 2018. While there are 14 Aboriginal Gathering Places across Victoria, none are located in the Northern Metropolitan region.

In addition, the *Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Status 2015 (Health InfoNet 2016)* presents indicators of Aboriginal health that show some disturbing trends:

- Aboriginal people are 2.7 times more likely to feel high or very high levels of psychological distress;
- The death rate from intentional harm (Suicide) is 2.2 times the rate reported for non-Indigenous people;
- The life expectancy is around 10 years less than the estimates for non-Indigenous people;
- Hospitalisation rates for circulatory disease are almost twice as high than for non-Indigenous people;
- Aboriginal people die from diabetes at six times the rate on non-Indigenous people.

These challenges contribute to a number of negative social outcomes for residents when compared to the average for residents living in metropolitan Melbourne, including;

- Higher rates of family dysfunction and violence
- Lack of social cohesion
- Higher rates of physical and mental health problems.

The impacts of colonisation and past Australian government policies, particularly the forced removals and separation of families have resulted in trauma, grief and loss for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This trauma is experienced across generations and impacts negatively on future generations. Policies and actions that are developed **with** Aboriginal people, and are specific to the needs of Aboriginal people, are required if health and wellbeing outcomes are to be improved.

This is supported by a 2016 Melbourne University study for the Department of Health and Human Services which evaluated the health and wellbeing outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gathering place model in Victoria. The study found that Gathering Places have direct impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals and community, provide a safe and inclusive space to connect, support the sharing of knowledge, and empower people through social, cultural and healing activities.



DIAGRAM 2: BENEFITS OF GATHERING PLACES



Business Case Part A



The influence of Gathering Places on health is evident. Gathering Places are crucial hubs for people to engage in activities that address their social, physical, cultural, and emotional, health and wellbeing needs. Social and emotional wellbeing is recognised as an important determinant of health for Aboriginal people and is interrelated with other social, cultural and political factors such as connection to country, spirituality, culture, community, family, and mental and physical health.

A 2016 Melbourne University study for the Department of Health and Human Services, *Health and Wellbeing Outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gathering Place Model in Victoria*, found that:

- Many programs and activities target the underlying social determinants of health that are crucial in closing the health gap for Aboriginal people in Victoria;
- Gathering Places are a conduit to other services in the region and link community members to specific health services;
- Gathering Places are pivotal to the cultural connection and continuance of positive pathways for Aboriginal children and young people;
- The effect on the wider non-Indigenous community and other mainstream community and government services is also pronounced, with most gathering places working hard to establish strong partnerships and networks with external programs;
- Gathering Places provide the space for cultural learning, and the transmission of knowledge and culture, which in turn builds pride and strength within communities and families;
- Having a safe space to engage with culture and other Aboriginal people is important for developing resilience and belonging. For young people, the importance of Gathering Places is in the non-judgmental and welcoming environment created through these spaces.

3. Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Feasibility Study

As a major step forward towards the establishment of a gathering place in the City of Whittlesea, in 2017, Council commissioned the development of a feasibility study for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place. The study was developed by Council, the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and the broader local Aboriginal community working together to identify a set of recommendations regarding potential sites, models of delivery and management, benefits including health impacts, community outcomes and budget.

There were 12 key consultations involving a total of 67 people including with WRG, Aboriginal Elders, Youth, Aboriginal Service providers, the Local Aboriginal Network (LAN) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. Key partners were consulted through the Gathering Place Feasibility Study Control Group made up of internal representation and external representation from Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, which contributed \$20,000 to the Feasibility Study.

The consultations undertaken confirmed the need for a Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea - a place that belongs to the Aboriginal community and which can be accessed by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members. The Gathering Place would be a place that enhances connection to community and culture and provides a culturally safe environment that supports Aboriginal activities and events.

From the consultations it was clear the Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place would need to offer a range of tailored programs and activities for Aboriginal Elders, men, women, youth, children, and families delivered in culturally appropriate settings. The consultations highlighted the need for a culturally inclusive space, based on local Aboriginal protocols and practices.

The geographic location of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place was given considerable attention in the Feasibility Study. It was noted that although the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents live in Epping and Thomastown (Census 2016), community members wanted the Gathering Place to have:

... plenty of space both indoors and outdoors to run specific cultural programs and events that allowed individuals and family groups to come together and connect culturally to the land and waterways

Consultations deemed that the most appropriate location for the Gathering Place was Mernda area. Importantly, community members provided guidance and a criteria for establishing a suitable site for the Gathering Place was developed. Both existing facilities/buildings as well as greenfield sites were considered, visited and assessed against the criteria (see Appendix 1). While a number of sites were examined the Consultants and Feasibility Study clearly recommended Preston Hall as the preferred option.

Business Case Part A

**Preston Hall**

Preston Hall is located at 1485 Plenty Road, Mernda. The property is relatively large (4 acres) with grounds of several hectares. Mature trees on the property and the drystone walls of the property are subject to heritage and vegetation protection overlays. The home itself is set back from Plenty Road, has 3 bedrooms, a sitting room, and an open space kitchen, meals and living area.

Since 2012, when the house was considered in to be in fair condition for its age, some repairs and improvements have been made to ensure it is habitable. The property is owned by Whittlesea Council and is currently rented out.

It is close to public transport – both train and bus. It is adjacent to public parks, close to the new Mernda Town Centre Development, Mernda Village, schools, and a community activity centre. There are plans for the development of community-based facilities on one side of the property.



The property lends itself to renovation and extension to meet community needs for a Gathering Place. It has extensive grounds/acreage to accommodate external design features seen as important by community members including the fire pit, kitchen garden, sitting spaces, community activities and car parking etc. It is home to 300 year old river red gum trees. The wetlands have potential for improvement and creation of specific spaces and features as designed by the community.

In considering the discussions from the Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Working Group, the second part of this Business Case considers in more detail the fit-for-purpose aspects of Preston Hall and other possible site locations.

4. Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Governance Group

The approach to The Business Case was based on the principles of self-determination and acknowledged that only policies and actions that are developed *with* Aboriginal people, and are specific to the needs of Aboriginal people, are effective in improving health and wellbeing outcomes. The Business Case has worked with the Aboriginal Community across 12 months to ensure the community's vision is accurately articulated and reflected.

Guiding the development of this Business Case is the Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Governance Group. The Group was established in February 2019. The process for establishing membership was community driven. An EOI document was developed and community members were invited to respond to the EOI. In total, 11 responses were received and each was assessed by a panel inclusive of Elders, community members and Aboriginal Council officers. The Governance Group members are:

- Blair Colwell
- Colin Moore
- Karen Bryant
- Anita North
- Shontia Saluja
- Aunty Margaret Donnelly
- Aunty Barbara Stewart
- Alister Thorpe
- Mitchell Allen

The Governance Group met on three occasions to further discuss and develop the findings of the Feasibility Study and the key features to be considered in the Business Case.

The Governance Group also spent a day visiting another Gathering Place in Hastings to get some learnings.

The diagram below provides a graphic summary of the Working Group discussions.

Business Case Part A





5. Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place

5.1 Vision

Our Gathering Place will be a welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe space where all Aboriginal people can connect and have a sense of belonging, as well as having access to activities, programs and services which strengthen our culture and enhance our wellbeing.

5.2 Operating Principles

The Gathering Place will be designed to offer a physical environment, built on co-design principles, using best practice approaches that:

- Reflect the vision of the local Aboriginal community;
- Are based on a model of community control;
- Is founded on and culturally aligned with local Aboriginal culture;
- Supports integration, inclusiveness and coordination;
- Is cost effective and incorporates flexible resource distribution.

DIAGRAM 3: OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Business Case Part A



The Gathering Place will be built on an understanding of best-practice approaches that support co-design principles. It will promote access and equity through a mix and promotion of programs that maximise the community's access to what is currently available. It will support the integration and coordination of programs and activities to ensure effective program delivery by the most appropriate provider(s) to best suit community needs.

5.3 Programs and Services

The Feasibility Study reported that Aboriginal people living in the Whittlesea region have very limited access to Aboriginal specific culturally appropriate and responsive services that respond to their immediate and long term cultural needs. There is still considerable work to be done to further define the activities, events, programs and services offered within the Gathering Place.

The Gathering Place should be a place where community members can drop in informally and a space where people can chat and share life and stories. However, the findings from the community consultations undertaken for the Feasibility Study strongly recommended programs and services that are structured and community led (see Appendix 2 for the full suite of suggested programs and services at the Feasibility Study stage).

Key priorities from the original list provided in the Feasibility Study and reinforced by the Governance Group were as follows:

A combination of regular, structured and planned activities AND drop in, unplanned activities including:

- Cultural strengthening programs (e.g. arts, language, dancing, crafts, painting)
- Healing programs and story-telling
- Aboriginal cultural events and celebration of days of cultural significance (Sorry Day, NAIDOC);
- Women's Programs / Mothers groups / play groups;
- Men's Programs / Men's Shed;
- Elders Programs including Elders Motivated and Deadly Community Group weekly catch-ups;
- Sports and recreational programs and activities for all age-groups;
- Youth Programs – homework clubs, afterschool programs, life skills and capacity building (arts and sports programs, education and employment pathways, cultural connections);
- Services provided through partnerships with – for example – VAHS, VACCA, Dardi Munwurro, local providers, etc.
- Aboriginal focused meetings: WRG meetings, LAN meetings, Gathering Place Governance Group meetings,
- Potential Space for Council Aboriginal Program Staff and programs – Aboriginal Youth Officer, Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Officer, Aboriginal Employment Officer, Aboriginal Partnership Officer, etc
- Drop in opportunities for children and young people with Cultural Care plans in Whittlesea who are required to connect with culture.

These baseline program and services still need to be established and consideration given to the wrap around service models and how the Gathering Place can be a referral point into and out of existing services.

Business Case Part A



The Governance noted that the provision of space for service providers needs to be managed and owned by the communities via the Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group. It is deemed to be important for clients to be able to meet services at the Gathering Place – especially when their home or office are inappropriate to meet. The ability for services to utilize the Gathering Place needs to be at the clients/community request and not the inclination of services. While services will have provision to work out of the Gathering Place, they cannot over time be allowed to become 'camped' in the spaces held within the Gathering Place. The possibility of partnerships through formal MOUs should be explored.

The Governance Group deemed there will need to be protocols developed that guide which services can use the Gathering Place, how often and for what purpose. Services would need to provide risk management plans that are aligned with the Gathering Place Risk Management Plan.

5.4 Social Enterprise and Economic Development

The Working Group notes the community discussions about the possibilities for the Gathering Place to generate income through commercial ventures / social enterprises (e.g. café, fee for service Cultural Safety training, markets, craft sales, etc.)

It is noted that such ventures should not be a first priority for the Gathering Place. In the first instance, the sustainability of the Gathering Place cannot be dependent on commercial income streams. It is the community health and wellbeing needs that are the first priority.

Future modelling of the economic/social benefits of commercial ventures has been completed by form part of the Business Case.

Business Case Part A



6. Site Options

During the Business Case development four options were considered for comparison:

- (i) Do Nothing
- (ii) Leasing Space
- (iii) Preston Hall, 1485 Plenty Rd Mernda
- (iv) Greenfield site

The options were scored in the following areas:

- Meeting project objectives;
- Financial outcomes;
- Sustainability; and
- Community benefit.

The preferred option for an Aboriginal Gathering Place is Option 4 as it best meets the project objectives and has the support of the Aboriginal community as the preferred site. (See Business Case Part B- Section 5 for further detail)

The original criteria developed as part of the Feasibility Study still holds being:

- Access to public transport;
- Close to water;
- Outdoor spaces for a range of cultural and community activities;
- Not near cemeteries and public facilities;
- Not near where Child Protection and justice related business is carried out (e.g. police, courts);
- Near to schools with facilities that could be shared (e.g. open space, sporting and recreation facilities);
- Not on/close to known massacre sites or sites that historically have had a negative impact on community;
- Not located near pubs / clubs (gaming machines and serving of alcohol).

Additional criteria included in this Business Case include:

- Current and predicted locations for Aboriginal population;
- The ability to have a mixture private spaces for cultural business and open public access spaces
- Cost for (re)development and fit-for-purpose aspects of the Gathering Place;
- Time from site approval to being partial and/or fully operational.

It should be noted, that Council officers have been clear since the delivery of the Feasibility Study that there are no known spaces south of Mernda that could provide significant outdoor spaces. In the established suburbs of Thomastown and Lalor, the Gathering Place would (likely) be a shop front with only the ability to provide indoor spaces.

Business Case Part A



7. Spaces and Places

The Working Group has considered the type of spaces and places required within the building and open space of the Gathering Place. Table 1 below highlights some of the aspirations and required infrastructure.

Internal	Area (m ²)	External	Area (m ²)
Hybrid Kitchen	40	Men's Space (fire pit + seating)	
Large multipurpose space (able to be divided)	100	Women's Space (fire pit + seating)	
Admin / reception area	2	General Space (fire pit + seating) – for Sorry Business/reflection space/yarning circle spaces	
Hot desk area for services / staff	12	Wetlands / Walking Trail / Landscaped Native Garden	
Meeting Room	30	Vegie Garden	
Consultation Room	24	BBQ and communal eating area (in and out)	
IT lounge or similar	10	Safe spaces for children	
Storage	28	Outdoor Gym	
Dining area	50	High ropes for young people	
Youth – Media & Music space	50		
Accessible for people with a disability		Stage / performance area	
Multiple non-unisex toilets		Ample parking	

8. Governance and Management

The Feasibility Study provided a number of options with regard to governance models. The governance models and arrangements of other Gathering Places in Victoria have also been considered.

Being Aboriginal controlled is critical to the success of the Gathering Place. However it is expected there will be a number of stages involved in achieving community controlled. This journey will take several years and will require a partnership between the community and the Council, which will in the first instance auspice the Gathering Place.

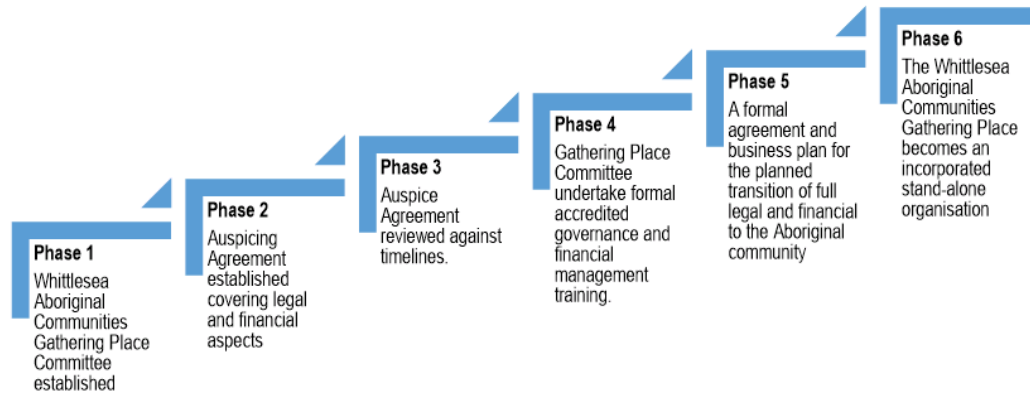
In auspicings the Gathering Place in the first instance, Council provides support, sponsorship and guidance. The relationship will be where the Gathering Place Committee will oversee operations, programs and service delivery, with support from Council which will provide (potentially) the following:

- Oversee the budget administration including delegated authority of expenditure – in particular any future capital works expenditure;
- Appropriate infrastructure support e.g. financial management systems, HR support and IT support). Identify the appropriate staged approach towards establishment and being inclusive of local Aboriginal community needs to determine priorities;
- Facilitate Governance Training Workshops, financial obligations and management and assist in the development of refining the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee policies and procedures and any training to operate and understand database software;
- Assist the development of tender briefs and the management of any external contractors to be appointed to prepare Capital Works Specifications for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place on site;
- Oversee the management of the building contractor and any sub-contractors appointed to undertake the building works identified by the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee for the Aboriginal Gathering Place;
- Prepare clear and appropriate financial and budget reports for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee.

Diagram 3 provides in simple for the stage of transition from 'auspicing' to a fully incorporated Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place.



DIAGRAM 3: TRANSITION OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT MODEL



9. Staff Resources

Typically Gathering Places in Victoria are staffed similar to Neighborhood Houses with a single Centre Coordinator. Depending on the model this role is responsible for schedule, coordinate and delivering programs and services (including contracted services) and visiting services, data collection, policy, fundraising/growth.

The examples of existing Gathering Places included facilities with from one staff to twelve staff. Funding for staff was often supported by Council, and various State and philanthropic grants.

It was also envisaged that there is potential for Aboriginal staff from Council, and other community-controlled services to co-locate a the facility.

Typically at least 75% Gathering place staff were Aboriginal.



Appendix 1: Comparative Analysis of Site Options (Feasibility Study)

The table below highlights how well each of the site options examined in the Feasibility Study were ranked by the community during consultations. Preston Hall clearly ranks highest and is therefore the preferred site.

Criteria (listed in priority order)	Mayfield Farm & Homestead	Preston Hall	60 Watts Street, Yan Yean	Nioka Bush Camp	Mernda Town Centre Development
1. Access to public transport	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
2. Close to water	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
3. Outdoor space suitable for a range of cultural and community activities including safe spaces for children, fire pit, tranquility garden, bush tucker plantings, vegetable gardens, cultural trails and walks.	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
4. Away from cemeteries and mental hospital and public facilities	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
5. Away from VACCA / DHHS Child Protection	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
6. Near schools to be near facilities that could be shared such as: open space, sporting and recreation facilities	Orange	Orange	White	White	Orange
7. Not on or close to known massacre sites or other sites that historically have had a negative impact on the local community	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	White
8. Not located near pubs (gaming machines and serving of alcohol)	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
9. Not located near clubs (gaming)	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange
10. Away from justice related business – police, courts	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	White
Rating Score out of 10	9/10	10/10	8/10	8/10	6/10



Appendix 2: Programs and Services (Feasibility Study)

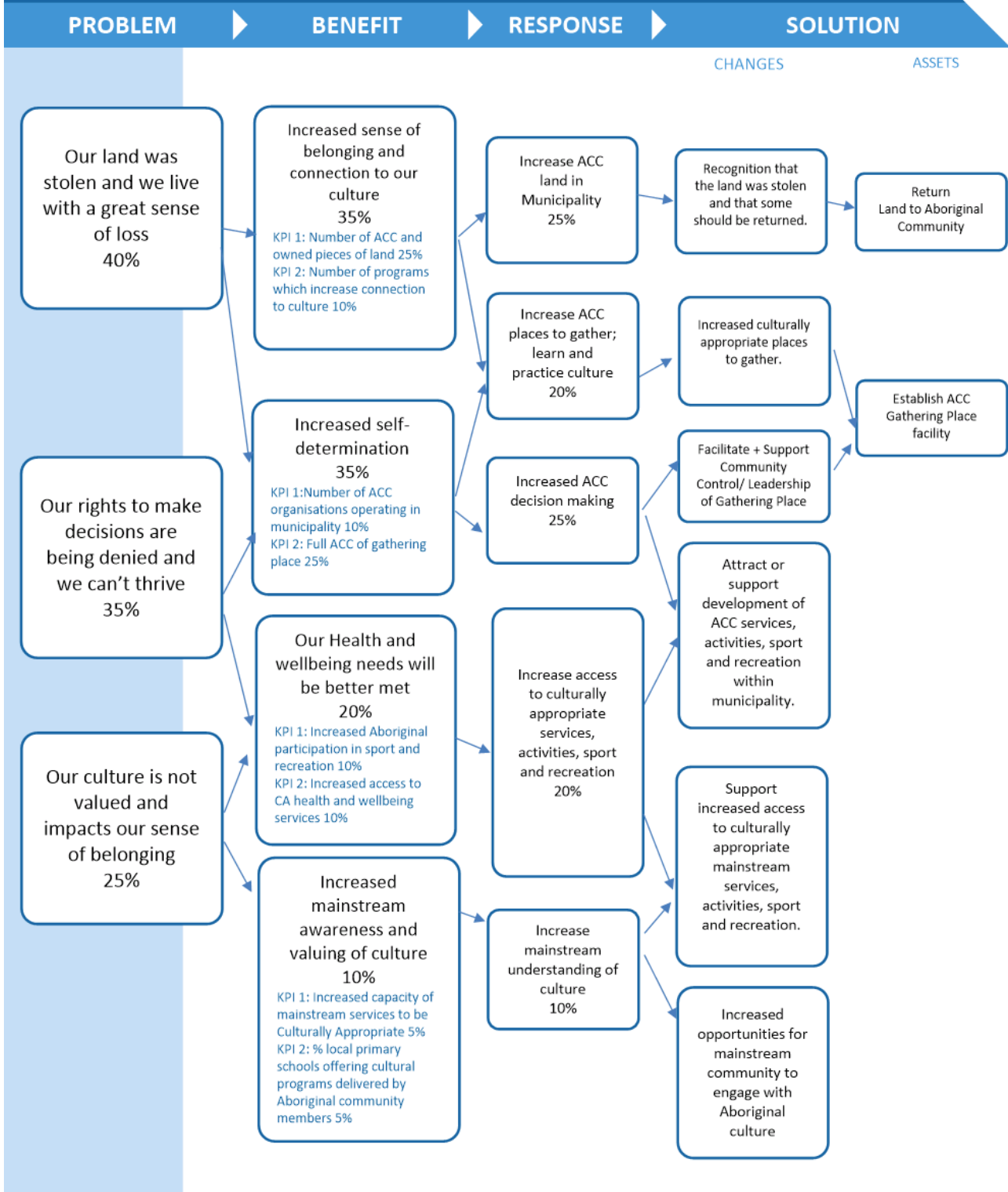
The following were identified during community consultations for the Feasibility Study as services that might be provided at the Gathering Place:

Cultural Strengthening Programs	Story telling programs
Healing programs	Play Groups
Art Program/Studio/Exhibitions	Music Programs & sound recording facilities
Men's Group /Men's Shed	Family violence support
Supported access programs for single parents	Community Development training
Leadership programs	Cultural awareness training for mainstream organisations
'Welcome Baby to Country' ceremonies	Computer training for Elders/ Youth
Fortnightly community lunches	Christmas lunch for community
Homework club	NAIDOC events
Program for Aboriginal workers to network	'Koori's in the Kitchen'
Language program	Elders Motivated and Deadly meetings
After school programs	Maternal & Child Health
Recreational activities	Gym/sports
Multi-media projects	Community Arts Projects
Cultural Dance Classes	Life Skills (home maintenance, cooking)
Women's programs / Mums group	Community radio
Short courses e.g. first aid	Events for children in out of home care
Mentoring programs	Arts programs e.g. basket weaving, quilt making, painting
Grandparent days	Youth program

CULTURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Improving health and wellbeing for Aboriginal community by providing culturally appropriate spaces and services. [Aboriginal Gathering Place](#)

INVESTMENT LOGIC MAP
Initiative



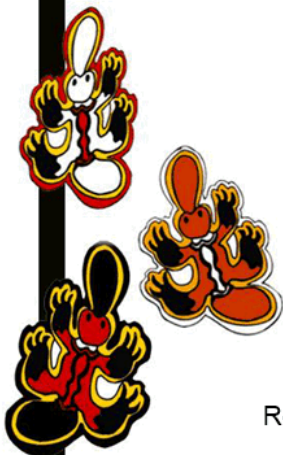
Investor: Russell Hopkins
Facilitator: Louise Rose and Steve Ward
Accredited Facilitator: No

Version no: 0.1
Initial Workshop: 05/06/2019
Last modified by: Nick Butera 05/06/2019
Template version: 6.0

Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Feasibility Study Project

Draft Report

26 April 2018



Report Prepared By: Karen Milward Consulting Services

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Abbreviations	
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCO's	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HSNA	Human Services Needs Analysis
IHEU	Indigenous Health Equity Unit (Melbourne University)
PCG	Project Control Group
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee
VACCHO	Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
VACSAL	Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited
VAHS	Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
WAGPC	Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee
WRG	Whittlesea Reconciliation Group

Glossary	Aboriginal	The term used in this document when referring to cultural heritage issues, Aboriginal organisations and other state government policies and programs.
	Koorie/ Koori	A term generally used to describe Indigenous inhabitants of south-east Australia.
In this Report the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are used in relation to specific policy and program names. The terms Koorie and Koori in general refer to Aboriginal people from the south-eastern part of Australia. The term Aboriginal is used more broadly. In this report this range of terms used embrace all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Australia.		

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Karen Milward Consulting Services for the Feasibility study project for the City of Whittlesea "recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the traditional owners of the land and waters this project takes place on".

Executive Summary

In 2017 Council engaged Karen Milward Consulting services to work with Council, the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and the broader local Aboriginal community to conduct the 'Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Feasibility Study' including recommendations regarding potential sites, models of delivery and management, benefits including health impacts, community outcomes and budget.

Consultation Findings

The Feasibility Study consultations have confirmed a high level of interest in establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place within the City of Whittlesea. A Gathering Place will provide a place that belongs to the Aboriginal community, which all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members could access to enhance their connection to community and culture and provide a culturally safe environment that supports Aboriginal activities and events.

All the research reports written about Victorian Aboriginal Gathering Places are referenced throughout this report. It is important to note that out of the 14 Aboriginal Gathering Places in Victoria, there is not one located in the Northern Metropolitan region. Most Aboriginal Gathering Places are located in the Southern and Eastern Metropolitan regions and a couple in regional Victoria.

A number of positive ideas and suggestions were made at each consultation and focus group session about what the Aboriginal Gathering Place might look like (including spaces and design) and the types of programs and activities it could provide. It is evident that the proposed Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place will need to offer a range of tailored programs and activities for Aboriginal Elders, men, women, children, young people and families delivered in culturally appropriate settings. These will need to be culturally inclusive and based on local Aboriginal protocols and practices.

Advice received during consultations with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community confirmed the following community vision for an Aboriginal Gathering Place:

"To provide the Whittlesea Aboriginal Community with a safe and welcoming place, where community members feel they belong and will not be judged".

Location

Community members provided guidance to the Consultants on what was required in terms of identifying a suitable location for the Aboriginal Gathering Place. This advice included existing facilities/buildings as well as Greenfield sites. Subsequent discussions with Council staff resulted in a number of site visits and assessments against community specifications including in order of preference:

1. **Preston Hall – 1485 Plenty Road, Mernda**
2. Mayfield Farm and Homestead – 1410 Plenty Road, Mernda
3. Nioka Bush Camp (Yan Yean Reservoir)
4. Private land holding – 60 Watts Street, Yan Yean
5. New Mernda Town Centre Development

Whilst a final decision on location has not been made the Consultants are suggesting Preston Hall as a preferred option with Council staff and the WRG continuing to be involved in conversations about the development of 60 Watts Street and the possibility of building a purpose built Gathering Place on that site.

Although the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents live in the Epping and Thomastown (2016 ABS Census) suburbs it was clearly identified that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members wanted an Aboriginal Gathering Place that had plenty of space both indoors and outdoors to run specific cultural programs and events that allowed individuals and family groups to come together and connect culturally to the land and waterways (if close by).

The sites visited clearly identified that the most appropriate places for an Aboriginal Gathering Place is in the Mernda area. This was a clear priority in the assessment criteria to measure suitability for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Proposed Operating Model

Based on the information gathered through the consultation process a Proposed Operating Model for an Aboriginal Gathering Place has been developed based on the principles below. The Aboriginal Gathering Place will:

- ▶ Support culturally inclusive access by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the City of Whittlesea;
- ▶ Provide a **culturally safe environment** to practice **culturally appropriate and inclusive practices** through the delivery of programs and activities that are responsive to client and community needs, support self-determination and sustainability and deliver positive outcomes;
- ▶ Focus on **best-practice approaches** that support **co-design principles** with the Aboriginal community;
- ▶ Include opportunities for current and future Aboriginal Gathering Place staff to participate in **accredited training courses and other professional development activities** to strengthen their skills, knowledge, expertise and competency;
- Recognise and build upon the **strength, resilience and capacities** in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Promote **Access and Equity** – the mix and promotion of programs will be structured to maximise the community's access to what is currently available;
- Support the **integration and coordination of programs and activities** to ensure effective program delivery by the most appropriate provider/ individual/ group;
- Build **evidence based practice** – The Gathering Place will be supported and encouraged to utilise and provide evidence that integrates required expertise, cultural knowledges and therapeutic practices; and
- **Cost effectiveness and flexible resource distribution** – The Gathering Place will operate within a context, which allows the flexible deployment of resources, enabling the most appropriate response to Aboriginal community participant need.

The Proposed Gathering Place Operating Model also provides guidance around governance, staffing configurations, programs and activities and partnership arrangements.

Next Steps

The Consultants are aware that there is still a lot of work to be undertaken before the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place is established and starts to provide programs and activities to Aboriginal community members in Whittlesea. It is also acknowledged that to progress the work associated with establishing the Gathering Place requires additional resources.

It is suggested that the existing Project Control Group (PCG) provides ongoing support to the process. To do so it will need to review its Terms of Reference. In this report it is suggested that the PCG transition to an oversighting committee - the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee (WAGPC). The primary focus of the WAGPC will be to progress activities associated with identifying an interim site/location to getting the Gathering Place's physical infrastructure built as well as identifying and securing funding for the operational and staffing infrastructure that will need to be in place when the Gathering Place eventually opens.

At a minimum, it is anticipated that it will take 3-5 years before the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place becomes fully operational. The WAGPC will need to have representation from key stakeholders who are able to support the next stage of development to achieve what is required to establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place.

The key tasks that will need to be completed to establish an Aboriginal Gathering Place include:

- 1) Continue the **Project Working Group** to lead the development of a Business Case to establish the Aboriginal Gathering Place.
- 2) **Preston Hall** – Confirm that Preston Hall is the preferred site for the Aboriginal Gathering Place to be located and then refurbishment of existing dwelling/s or building a new purpose built facility. Once this occurs it will be possible to identify the planning requirements that will need to be worked through to obtain approval from the Council to construct/ renovate the facility.

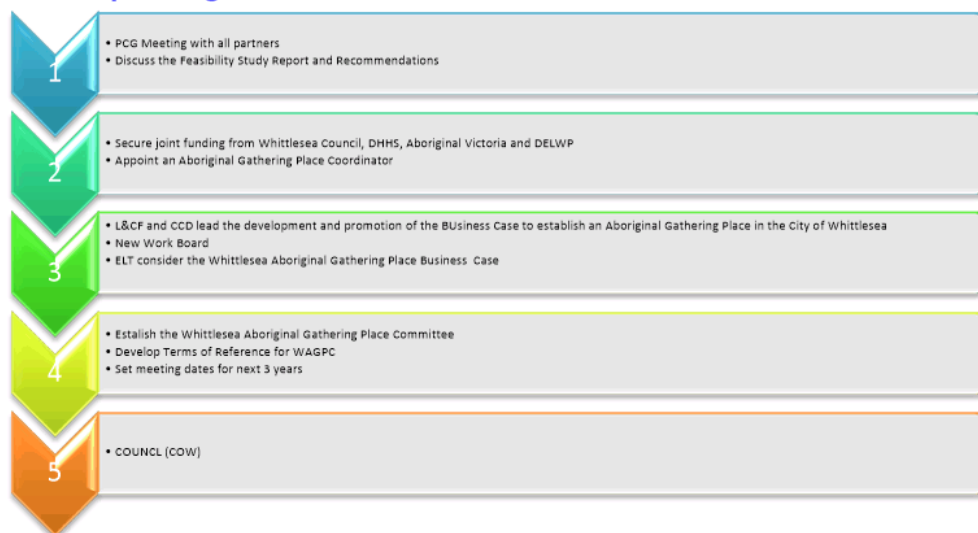
- 3) **Secure Funding** – The WRG and Whittlesea Council work together to identify potential funding sources to establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place and support its operations.
- 4) **Building Plans** – An architect will need to be appointed to draw up site plans for the Aboriginal Gathering Place, office space, program and activity rooms, recreational facilities, small and large activity rooms, counselling rooms, staff offices, commercial kitchen, children’s play area, men’s and women’s spaces, storage, fire pit and other infrastructure.
- 5) **Building the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place** – Funds will need to be obtained to either re-furbish an existing dwelling or purpose build the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place once the site plans have been endorsed and planning approval and construction permits are obtained from the Whittlesea Council or other body/agency.
- 6) **Operational Model** – The programs and activities provided to Aboriginal community members will depend on the operational model for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place. It is noted that further discussion needs to occur about the programs, services and activities the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place will provide to Aboriginal people as well as the support arrangements and outreach services that will be provided by Aboriginal and mainstream services in the region.
- 7) **Staffing Arrangements** – The final decision about the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place staffing configuration will occur once agreement has been reached about the Gathering Place’s initial operational model. **At a minimum it is suggested that funding be sought to employ an Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator position to implement the next steps for this project.**

Specifically, the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee does not wish to take a prescriptive approach in relation to the final program/activity outreach service model it implements at the Gathering Place. All Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee members will need to re-evaluate and agree on referral options closer to the opening date based on the most current evidence to emerge at that point in time.

- 8) **Staged Development Approach** – The Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee will oversee the implementation of a staged development approach to the establishment of the Service with the support of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee so there is an opportunity to focus on building capacity, bed down and de-bug operational systems and processes, demonstrate success and secure additional funding as the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place expands. Specifically, ensure the Gathering Place does not over-extend itself in the first 3-5 years.

Staff will also need time to focus on and build robust linkages, referral arrangements and organisation and outreach service delivery networks with existing Aboriginal and mainstream services in the local area and region.

Next Steps at a glance...



Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for Council's consideration:

Recommendation 1 – Agree to the establishment of an Aboriginal Gathering Place

- a) That WRG and Whittlesea Council agree to establish an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea.
- b) In the event that consensus and agreement is reached to establish a Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place, and Council approval is achieved, Council establish a community led Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee to work with Council to progress all elements to establish an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea.

Recommendation 2 – Establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee

A Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee is established with representatives from the WRG, Whittlesea Council, Aboriginal Victoria, DELWP Infrastructure area, EMAD, young Aboriginal people, Local Aboriginal Network, DHHS and other stakeholders identified. The WAGPC will then work together to implement the following next steps:

- a) Develop a Terms of Reference for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee which outlines its purpose, role, reporting requirements and modus operandi.
- b) Develop a Site Selection Criteria document which clearly states the minimum requirements that will need to be met and satisfied for the Preston Hall site on which the Aboriginal Gathering Place will be constructed.
- c) Preparing a Discussion Paper which outlines specific governance options that the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee will need to consider in determining which incorporation pathway will be the most suitable and strategically advantageous option to take up within 3-5 years.
- d) Preparing a fully costed Business Case which clearly identifies the various operational elements for the Aboriginal Gathering Place (including staffing structure, staff roles in terms of providing secretariat support to the WAGPC, undertaking research activities and organising professional development and training for staff who will be working at the Gathering Place).
- e) Seeking funding to support all activities and programs/ services to be undertaken by the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee (including the Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator position).

Recommendation 3 – Choosing a preferred site for the Aboriginal Gathering Place

That WRG and Whittlesea Council hold discussions to review the findings of this study to make a decision on the site location/s for the Aboriginal Gathering Place including interim and final sites.

In the event that consensus and agreement is reached, the next steps are to:

- a) Consult and gain endorsement of the preferred site/s (Preston Hall) from community members.
- b) Develop a paper and recommendations for consideration by the Whittlesea Council outlining the preferred site (Preston Hall), options for securing the site for the Aboriginal Gathering Place and the process to progress the establishment of the Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Recommendation 4 – Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator position

The PCG discuss joint funding options for an Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator position to undertake the following tasks to establish the Aboriginal Gathering Place:

- Coordinate the establishment of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee
- Support the work to be undertaken by the WAGPC (business case, facilitating meetings, preparing reports and other supported material, central liaison point for WRG, Council and WAGPC)
- Support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community and stakeholder engagement
- Coordinate the Aboriginal Gathering Place planning, build and establishment processes
- Provide advice to the WAGPC on cultural issues, gathering place development and implementation
- Coordinate the planning and delivery of Gathering Place programs once established
- Contribute to maintaining the infrastructure, grounds and facility of the Aboriginal Gathering Place
- Coordinate the preparation of policies and procedures (HR, OH&S, workplace, program and activity delivery, Code of Conduct, Delegation of Authority, funding, monitoring and reporting, etc)
- Be the central contact point for all stakeholders, community and partners involved in the Aboriginal Gathering Place
- Prepare and submit Aboriginal Gathering Place reports to the WAGPC
- Day to day running of the Aboriginal Gathering Place once established and operational
- Seek out and identify future opportunities to support the sustainability and ongoing operations of programs and activities at the Aboriginal Gathering Place (funding, employment, in-kind, donations, volunteering, goods and materials, etc).

Recommendation 5 – Design and build the Aboriginal Gathering Place

The WRG and Whittlesea Council work towards designing the building on the preferred site (Preston Hall) to either re-furbish the existing dwelling or to purpose build the Aboriginal Gathering at this site. This will include:

- a) The WAGPC and Whittlesea Council discuss the process to refurbish/ renovate the preferred property and site – Preston Hall.
- b) The WAGPC and Whittlesea Council confirm Aboriginal community interest (particularly the WRG) in a future purpose built centre on the Preston Hall site.
- c) Contract an architect to meet with the WAGPC and Whittlesea Council to identify key physical infrastructure and considerations that will need to be taken into account as part of the design aspects of the proposed Aboriginal Gathering Place that will either be re-furbished or whether a purpose built Aboriginal Gathering Place will occur.
- d) Prepare a fully costed Quantity Survey by the architect that identifies the costs that may be incurred to construct a purpose built/ refurbished Aboriginal Gathering Place.
- e) Source and secure funds to construct and fully fit out the Aboriginal Gathering Place and all staff, operational and administration spaces at the Gathering Place.

Project Background

In 2002 the Whittlesea Council made a commitment to the Australian Declaration towards Reconciliation and the Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples formally commencing Council's reconciliation journey.

Council acknowledges that colonisation, forced removals and separations, and other past Australian government policies have resulted in trauma, grief and loss for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, across generations.

Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy

In 2015 Council adopted an **Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy** further demonstrating its goal of building better relationships with the Aboriginal community. The Policy states:

"The City of Whittlesea values local Aboriginal communities and cultures; Council recognises they hold a special place as the First Peoples of Australia. Council is committed to inclusivity, equity and engagement with local Aboriginal people and communities."

The policy principles have been designed to underpin and guide Council action and include:

- **RESPECT:** We will be respectful of Aboriginal communities, acknowledging and embracing their history, culture, heritage and the talents of Aboriginal people bring to our community and our business.
- **SELF-DETERMINATION:** We understand and support the right of Aboriginal communities to determine their future and we will play our part.
- **EQUITY:** We strive to ensure Aboriginal communities participate and achieve to a level equal to all City of Whittlesea residents.
- **JUSTICE:** We acknowledge the wrongs of the past as a means to ensuring a better future for Aboriginal Communities:
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** We will partner with Aboriginal communities in ways that are meaningful and deliver mutually-beneficial outcomes.

Council established the **Whittlesea Reconciliation Group** in 2001. As a community-based committee, the WRG is a key reference group for Council on the continuing reconciliation process and to foster understanding of historical, cultural and contemporary issues.

The WRG's overall vision for reconciliation is *"a connected community respecting Aboriginal people as the first people of Australia, their history and culture through actions supporting reconciliation"*.

The group comprises 10 Aboriginal members, eight non-Aboriginal members, two nominated Councillors and three supporting Council officers. The group holds a unique position of authority as an interface role between community and Council.

Over more than a decade the WRG has made significant achievements in supporting reconciliation. The group has assisted Council to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing local Aboriginal communities, provided feedback and commented on council plans and strategic documents and delivered a range of key events and programs. Some of the WRG's key achievements include the development of Council's annual National Sorry Day event, Reconciliation Awards night and Koori BBQ, and these events engage over 400 people annually.

To ensure that the work of the WRG is adequately supported across all Council departments, an internal Reconciliation Governance Committee was established in 2017. This committee is chaired by the CEO and supported by a Reconciliation sub-committee that consists of interdepartmental officer representation from across Council.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Whittlesea Council adopted its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2012. The RAP has provided a structure to guide and build on Council's existing work including ongoing support for the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and annual events program. In 2017 Council entered the next stage of its reconciliation efforts with the release of the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2017-2020.

Council believes that building strong, sustainable and respectful relationships are foundational to a healthy participatory and productive local government. Through the current RAP, Council is working to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal people, communities and organisations in the region to support positive outcomes. One of the commitments of Council under the Stretch RAP relates to a Gathering Place for the Aboriginal people of Whittlesea (Action 1.11). This involves a commitment to undertaking a feasibility study regarding the establishing of an Aboriginal Gathering Place which makes recommendations on potential sites, models of delivery and management and benefits including health impacts, community outcomes and budget.

Council Policy Linkages

The RAP is linked to a range of existing Council Plans and Policies, most notably, *Shaping Our Future: Whittlesea 2030 Strategic Community Plan*. The Community Plan details the community's vision for the City of Whittlesea to the year 2030. It provides direction for the provision of key projects and services that will meet the needs of the Whittlesea community and deliver quality services and facilities that are culturally-appropriate. The RAP is also intentionally interdependent to *Building Respect: Whittlesea's Anti-racism Strategy 2015-2019* and Council's *Community Building Strategy; Better Together*. Together these three Strategies and associated Action Plans provide a range of co-ordinated activities aimed at preventing race-based discrimination, building community cohesion and connectivity whilst supporting local Aboriginal communities and further reconciliation.

Building Respect: Whittlesea's Anti-Racism Strategy

Building Respect is Council's commitment to preventing and responding to racism. The plan has three key directions grounded in evidence-based practice. These are;

- 1) Raising awareness and understanding
- 2) Places free from racism
- 3) Strengthening Council's organisational capacity.

The plan has 19 key actions that Council will deliver over the life of the strategy.

Community Building Strategy

The City of Whittlesea's Community Building strategy is guided by seven policy principles that are congruent with Council RAP and reconciliation efforts, these principles are;

- 1) equity, access and inclusion
- 2) A place-based approach
- 3) Community and civic participation
- 4) Collaboration and participation
- 5) Shared advocacy
- 6) Community Leadership
- 7) Community Outcomes

Council's RAP, Anti-Racism Strategy and Community Building Strategy should be viewed as a coherent, whole-of-Council commitment to effectively further the process of reconciliation for the benefit of the whole of community.

Broader Policy and Legislative Linkages

There are also a number of International, Commonwealth or Victorian policies, Acts and other signatory conventions that guided the development of the Strategy, most notably the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (RDA) and Australia's National Anti-Racism Strategy.

At the state level, key policies that inform Council's policies and actions and to which Council policies and actions respond and contribute to include:

- Korin Korin Balit-Djak – Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017-2027 (building on Kulin Balit Aboriginal Health Strategy); and
- Balit Murrup – Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing framework 2017-2027

Korin Korin Balit-Djak is the Victorian Government's flagship strategy aimed at realising its vision for 'Self-determining, healthy and safe Aboriginal people and communities' in Victoria. A key priority of the strategy is Aboriginal culture and community explicitly acknowledging that country, cultural identity and community is fundamental to Aboriginal communities to grow, thrive and determine their own futures (Priority 2). Specifically, strategic priority 2.2.2 reflects the Victorian government's commitment to "strengthen and increase the network of cultural meeting places across Victoria."

The Department of Health and Human Services will over the next three years:

- support the establishment and sustainability of Aboriginal Gathering Places in locations of most need in partnership with Aboriginal communities
- enable ongoing professional development programs including support for workers in Aboriginal organisations and Gathering Places
- establish a network to share good practice and leadership across cultural meeting places.

Balit Murrup consists of four key domains aimed at increasing the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health outcomes for Victorian Aboriginal communities. One of the key domains focuses on “supporting resilience, healing and trauma recovery” which includes support for strategies and initiatives that facilitate family and community connections and connecting with country.

At the local level the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy and Aboriginal Inclusion Charter provide a central foundation for the RAP and all reconciliation efforts. The Aboriginal Inclusion Charter is a rights-based document that stipulates 13 rights all Aboriginal people with the municipality can expect to have upheld. The City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Inclusion Charter is built on the principle that Aboriginal people should have the protection of a Charter as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, their collective rights to self-determination and cultural identity.

Establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place

In 2017 Council engaged Karen Milward Consulting services to work with Council, the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and the broader local Aboriginal community to conduct the “Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Feasibility Study” including recommendations regarding potential sites, models of delivery and management, benefits including health impacts, community outcomes and budget.

Informing pieces of work and reports include:

- City of Whittlesea: A Gathering Place Discussion Paper
- Indigenous Health Equity Unit (IHEU), University of Melbourne, evaluation of 13 Aboriginal Gathering Places across Victoria (commissioned by DHHS)
- City of Whittlesea Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2020
- Concurrent work focussed on a Human Services Needs Analysis also commissioned by Council

The expected outcomes of this Feasibility Study have been to:

- Develop a Community Vision for the Gathering Place which strengthens cultural identity, community connection and cultural reconnection
- Identify the health and human services needs of Aboriginal people and families, how they are currently met, strengths and gaps
- Identify the infrastructure requirements and potential sources of funding
- Identify potential partnerships to establish the Gathering Place and contribute to service and program delivery
- Identify options around potential locations and various delivery methods
- Develop an initial concept plan including management and governance arrangements
- Provide a risk assessment of establishing a Gathering Place including identification of potential barriers
- Recommend actions to progress the establishment of a permanent Gathering Place including a timeframe, milestones and performance measures
- Provide suggestions around stakeholder engagement and communications as the Council moves towards the establishment of the Gathering Place

The geographic scope of the Feasibility Study is the City of Whittlesea. However, it was noted that an integrated approach was expected involving the consideration of services and programs which operate across the LGA and the wider Northern region.

Guiding Principles

In conducting the feasibility study the Consultants ensured their processes and methods of consultation were aligned with the principles adopted by Whittlesea Council through its Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy including respect, self-determination, equity, justice and partnerships. Healing was a key theme informing the consultants' approach to the study.

City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Community

The City of Whittlesea is a local government area (LGA) located in the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne approximately 20 kilometres from the city centre. The city covers an area of 490 square kilometres and in 2017 the Council estimated the resident population to be 209,118. It is a rapidly growing area with the population forecasted to be 223,566 by 2018 and to grow to 382,896 by 2041 (71.9% increase).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up 0.8% of the population estimated to number 1,635. If it is assumed that 1.2% of the population is representative of the demographic profile of the broader City of Whittlesea residential population, the current estimated local Aboriginal population in 2016 is potentially closer to 2,023 people. Whittlesea is now the second largest Aboriginal population in metropolitan Melbourne. The data from multiple sources regarding the City of Whittlesea population suggests that local Aboriginal communities are younger in age profile and are growing in number.

The greatest growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is in the key service group areas: of 0-4 years old - which increased from 159 in 2011, to 233 in 2016 and 4-11 years old - which increased from 187 in 2011, to 280 in 2016. There was also a large increase in people aged 25-34 which increased from 173 in 2011, to 265 in 2016.

In 2016, 37.7% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community had completed Year 12 – an increase from 32.2% in 2011. 88.3% of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was employed, which was down from 91.2% in 2011.

The Aboriginal community in the LGA has increased by around 50% since 2011 with the region increasingly popular in terms of housing affordability and community connection.

Health, wellbeing and safety

Key health and human services indicators that impact on Aboriginal Victorians health, wellbeing and safety cited in Korin Korin Balit-Djak reflect the legacy of trans-generational trauma and systemic racism. There remains a significant gap between the health and wellbeing of Victoria's Aboriginal population and the non-Aboriginal population. Overall, Aboriginal people experience more disadvantage and challenges in relation to:

- Housing and homelessness
- Representation in the justice system
- Experience of family violence
- The proportion of children in out of home care
- Smoking
- Rates of risky drug and alcohol use
- New-born health and mortality rates
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Engagement in employment and economic development activities

While there are no specific data for Whittlesea, it is expected that the local Aboriginal community would experience the same level of health and wellbeing as other Aboriginal Victorians.

What is known from Council's recent Human Services Needs Analysis (2018) is that Aboriginal residents are not accessing the services they need. One of the key reasons cited during the consultations for this project was that there is a lack of culturally appropriate services in Whittlesea and it is becoming increasingly difficult and takes too much time to access services in Preston, Thornbury and Fitzroy to get the services they need.

The HSNA report also reported that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were not accessing services due to a lack of knowledge of the services available and how to access them. The established suburbs are experiencing a change in demographics so agencies need to be supported to respond to these changes, including ensuring services are culturally appropriate and able to respond to changing needs.

The report also confirmed that Community facilities remain important in the City of Whittlesea, particularly in the growth areas, as they provide space to deliver services and a location for residents to meet and socialise.

Project Governance

The City of Whittlesea Project Control Group managed the Feasibility Study Project with representation from Whittlesea Council, Whittlesea Reconciliation Group, Aboriginal community members, Local Aboriginal Network, Aboriginal Victoria, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning. Meetings were held to discuss the project plan, progress to date with the consultations and project outcomes.

It is important to recognise the valuable contributions of the Project Partners in the Feasibility Study Project for an Aboriginal Gathering Place in Whittlesea. Each partner has a critical and important role to play in the future to ensure that everyone works collaboratively together with the Whittlesea Aboriginal community to ensure that expectations are clear and commitments to future funding, planning, support and development are in place to meet the self-determination principles of the Whittlesea Aboriginal community.

What is a Gathering Place?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gathering places have been described as community hubs that promote the importance of culture in supporting positive health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.¹

Definitions of 'gathering' in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context include activities such as sharing food, performing ceremony, exchanging knowledge and creating supportive networks to ensure continuity of culture and traditional practices that create culturally safe places (Myers 1986; Pawu-Kurlpurlumu 2008).

Gathering places provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with an inclusive space to feel connected and empowered, and welcome non-Indigenous people too. Inclusive spaces are supported through cultural activities run at gathering places based around art and music, language and storytelling.

Each gathering place is diverse and provides a unique range of activities and services to suit the local context and communities they support. Each context includes distinct histories, communities, geographical location and organisational structures.

It should be noted that not all Aboriginal people believe that 'gathering place' is the right terminology to describe what they value in a structure where they are able to come together and alternative terminology used include 'healing place' and/or 'Gathering Place'.

The Indigenous Health Equity Unit, University of Melbourne, in an evaluation of thirteen gathering places across Victorian (2016) noted:

"Healing therapies that are more closely aligned with Aboriginal cultural beliefs are commonly offered at gathering places and provide an alternative to western-based health care. Alternative healing methods, cultural activities and protocols create a culturally safe environment that enables Aboriginal people to seek support and health care needs on their own terms."

¹ An evaluation of two gathering places in the eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne: places for inclusion, connection and empowerment, Indigenous Health Equity Unit, The University of Melbourne, 2016

Methodology

The feasibility was undertaken in stages involving:

- Developing a Community Vision
- Consultations with key Stakeholders
- Investigating possible sites
- Developing a proposed Gathering Place Operating Model
- Identifying implementation issues
- Providing recommendations on next steps

The Consultants also referenced a parallel study being undertaken by Whittlesea Council on the health and human services needs across the broader Whittlesea community.

Consultation with Key Stakeholders

The Karen Milward Consulting Services consultancy team conducted key stakeholder consultations with Aboriginal community members, staff in ACCHOs, and staff at City of Whittlesea and service providers within the region. The consultants held focus group sessions to hear the issues, needs and priorities for establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea.

Table 4: Stakeholders consulted

No.	Stakeholder Consulted
	Whittlesea Reconciliation Group
8	• Focus Group
	Aboriginal Community Members
36	• Elders Motivated and Deadly PAG group • Koori Kids • General community • Survey Responses
	Aboriginal Services and Networks
9	▶ Aboriginal services workshop ▶ ACCOs ▶ Local Aboriginal Network ▶ Survey Responses
	City of Whittlesea Staff
8	▶ Staff from x 4 Internal Council areas
	Mainstream Services and Government
6	▶ Phone consultations
67	Total number of Stakeholders Consulted

Site Investigation

Potential sites were suggested primarily through community consultations with some sites also put forward by Council staff.

The Consultants carried out a series of site investigations together with Council staff and undertook a comparative assessment of their relative merits against what community informed us were important considerations.

Stakeholder Consultations - Key Findings

This section of the Report provides a summary of the key issues and findings to emerge from the consultation sessions.

Consultations began with a focus group of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group to explore and develop a shared understanding of what a Gathering Place in Whittlesea would be. In particular, the focus group provided a forum in which a “vision” statement could be developed to help inform further stakeholder consultations. Discussions focussed on what the vision for an Aboriginal Gathering Place is and what should it be in 5 and 10 and 20 years’ time.

Community Vision

The vision for an Aboriginal Gathering Place developed by the WRG and further discussed and refined through discussions with Aboriginal community members is:

“To provide the Whittlesea Aboriginal Community with a safe and welcoming place, where community members feel they belong and will not be judged”.

Aboriginal community members consulted reported that the idea for an Aboriginal Gathering Place in Whittlesea had been discussed over the last 10 years and key Elders in the community over this time were the drivers of ensuring there was a culturally safe and welcoming place for the Aboriginal community (Uncle Reg Blow, Uncle Herb Paton, Aunty Frances and Aunty Bunta).

In large part, the vision has been adapted from what Aboriginal community members consulted advised Uncle Reg Blow would say if asked about his vision for an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea.

Is an Aboriginal Gathering Place needed?

The consultations provided solid evidence of a high level of interest in establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place within the Whittlesea LGA.

Community members strongly believed that the Gathering Place would instil pride in all people – it would be a place to share family stories, cultural traditions, values and customs to help build a strong, vibrant and healthy community.

“Gathering Places are welcoming, and they help bring the community together. They help Aboriginal people to connect and learn about culture, and are also important because Gathering/ Healing Places help promote health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They are also a place to share and pass on knowledge.” (Community member, survey response)

All service provider stakeholders (ACCO and mainstream) consulted supported the establishment of an Aboriginal Gathering Place in Whittlesea and would be willing to provide their services and programs on site in response to invitations from the Aboriginal community.

It was also clear from consultations with the Aboriginal community for this project that a Gathering Place is not an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation but it should be a community controlled organisation at some point in the future. This would occur when both the community, WRG, Council and other key stakeholders are comfortable with when the time is right about moving forward to be more self-determining therefore being self-sufficient and self-managed across everything that is culturally safe and meets the current and future needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the City of Whittlesea.

The consultation process also confirmed that the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and other essential Aboriginal community organisations who currently deliver essential culturally safe and responsive services to the Aboriginal community in the City of Whittlesea will be able to do this through an in-reach/outreach approach directly at the Aboriginal Gathering Place in consultation and agreement with the Whittlesea Aboriginal community.

There are now 14 Aboriginal Gathering Places/ Community Centres operating in Victoria with 11 of these operational in the Melbourne Metropolitan region (mainly eastern and southern metro Melbourne areas) with none in the northern metropolitan region. The University of Melbourne evaluation of community hubs report highlights the importance that Gathering Places/Centres have on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities.

An Aboriginal Gathering Place based in the City of Whittlesea will provide opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal culture and identity at a grass roots community level therefore providing social and economic benefits. A Gathering Place would be a culturally safe place for Aboriginal people to practice their cultural ways and pass on the knowledge to younger people.

Some Aboriginal community members advised that a Gathering Place provides the one-stop shop approach where families who come from other parts of the country know immediately where they can go to feel safe and be able to access the programs and services they need while feeling connected to their culture and community.

Elders consulted for this project advised that having a culturally safe space to practice their culture and just 'be' with other Aboriginal people was critical to supporting Aboriginal health and wellbeing. It is also important to have a place that is local rather than travelling great distances over long periods of time just to access an appointment or a program for two hours.

Consultations with City of Whittlesea staff confirmed Council support for the establishment of an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the region. Some of the reasons a Gathering Place were important to members of the Aboriginal community included:

"We will lose a whole generation of young people if we are not able to bring them along with us". (Elder)

"Whittlesea is a big place and the Aboriginal population is growing. It's important to have somewhere for the community to come together and get to know their neighbours" (Community Member)

Some other views expressed by Aboriginal community members in the on-line survey include the following:

"A gathering place is important because it brings the community together. It's a place where our Mob can go and feel safe, comfortable and free from discrimination. It helps with identity and connection to culture. Gathering places are inclusive and it helps to connect, support and empower people through social, cultural and healing activities. Gathering places help to connect people, and through the cultural activities knowledge is then passed on which allows the continuation of Aboriginal culture. It benefits all people; non-Aboriginal people are then able to learn more about Aboriginal culture, and vice versa. Gathering places are also Healing Places our Mob can come to these places, connect to culture, and access mental health services and wellbeing programs to address the impacts of intergenerational trauma due to colonisation."

"A gathering place is a space that can be used as a healing space, a place where Aboriginal people can sit, yarn and reflect on the past and people of the past. It can also provide a space for local Aboriginal people to meet for just a yarn or to do business. It would also show Aboriginal people respect and acknowledgment."

"It is important to establish locally available and accessible place for the local Aboriginal community to gather and hold events, deliver services and a place meet and establish local service hub to cater to local needs. The population is growing and it is difficult for current services to meet the needs and demands of those in the outer regions when located in the inner suburbs. It is also important to support local community control in establishing our own community priorities and needs. The benefits of gathering places are positively documented in recent Koolin Balit Reviews and go a long way to support local healing and community wellbeing. The establishment of a gathering place will also support establishment of pathways into local health, social and other community support services available in the catchment while supporting local employment opportunities for the local community."

“A Gathering Place is different to a service provider. It’s the infrastructure to provide the space to deliver cultural programs, language, songs, dance, business opportunity to showcase local Aboriginal artists and their works. When other residents within the Whittlesea area want to gain knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within this area the Gathering Place can provide this opportunity.

We are on Wurundjeri land and therefore need to respect the traditional owners and acknowledge their customs and lore as well. What is the difference between a Gathering Place and a Cultural Centre?

“We have many service providers; however we don’t have our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centres/Gathering places. This is an opportunity to fill this void.”

What Services, Activities and Programs could be delivered

Aboriginal community members consulted discussed the types of programs and activities they would like to see delivered at the Aboriginal Gathering Place including how they would be delivered and the type of space required to be effective. These suggestions need to be considered when developing a permanent facility and an interim site if needed.

The Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place will be:

- A place to gather
- A place that is culturally safe
- A place to connect to each other
- A place to call our own
- A place to share and practice culture
- A place to teach young people about culture
- A place to learn
- A place to gain work experience and earn money
- A place for Elders
- A place for healing
- A place to access services
- A hub where service organisations can deliver services and provide information
- A place to enhance cultural and community connection
- A place to strengthen culture and pride
- A place to have fun
- A living, breathing, Aboriginal place
- A place for others to come and learn about Aboriginal culture
- A place which is a combination of a “place to be” and a place to access services

Programs and Activities run by the Aboriginal Gathering Place

Programs and activities that could be provided at the Gathering Place are detailed in Table 5 below.

Table 5 - Key Programs and Activities that could be delivered at the Gathering Place

Needs	Aboriginal people living in the Whittlesea region have very limited access to Aboriginal specific culturally appropriate and responsive services that respond to their immediate and long term cultural needs and have to travel to Preston, Thornbury and Fitzroy.
Programs and Activities	<p>The Gathering Place should offer a range of program and activities focused on cultural strengthening and self-determination and are specifically tailored to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal men, women, children, young people and Elders. There was a common view that the Gathering Place should be alcohol and drug free.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Strengthening Programs • Story telling programs – Elders telling stories for younger people • Healing programs – e.g. massage, Reiki, yoga, pampering days, Elders group, possum skin cloaks • Play Group (VACCA) • Art Program/Studio/Exhibitions • Music Programs & sound recording facilities • Men’s Group /Men’s Shed – tool making workshops • Family violence support • Supported access programs for fathers/ single parents to enable them to see their children in a safe, neutral place • Weddings, Wakes, other functions • Community Development training • Leadership programs • Cultural awareness training for mainstream organisations • “Welcome Baby to Country” ceremonies • Large spaces for Bubup Wilam to hold activities and events for large groups • Computer training for Elders • Fortnightly community lunches • Christmas lunch for community • Homework club • NAIDOC events • Program for Aboriginal workers to network, learn and debrief • Activities/events for Koori groups from other areas e.g. Hume area • Koories in the Kitchen • Language program • Social enterprise opportunities - Café providing employment to local community members • Elders MAD specific space and place to run cultural activities • After school programs • Maternal & Child Health • Recreational activities • Traditional Games • Gym/sports • Healing training • Multi-media projects • Community Arts Projects • Ballroom/old-style dances • Cultural Dance Classes • Life Skills (home maintenance, cooking) • Women’s programs • Mums group • Pastoral programs • Entertainment • Stalls/markets/night market in summer • Community radio • Short courses e.g. first aid, “get ready for work” program • Activities/ events for children in out of home care as well as for foster parents • Meeting space hire • Social enterprise e.g. café, catering, selling of arts and crafts • Hip Hop program • Mentoring programs • Arts programs e.g. basket weaving, quilt making, painting • Grandparent days • Youth program • Music and Arts Festival/s

Council staff reported that demand on Council and access to programs is increasing all the time and is already exceeding what can be provided. Bubup Wilam was considered to be providing fantastic early years and family support services but more is needed. Bubup Wilam is also seeking larger spaces (hall type space) to support the growing demand to deliver activities and events to cater for large numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

There is a VACCA Playgroup in Thomastown and a “My Koori Playgroup” in Doreen.

Comments made by survey respondents also included:

- Programs that focus on the social determinants of health – not focusing on crisis but aim for prevention and education.
- Programs should be primarily based on cultural strengthening that adds to what is on offer - programs that already exist in the community should be delivered on an outreach service basis.
- Caring for country, men’s/ women’s business, bush trips, cultural renewal activities, culturally appropriate trauma and treatment programs, allied health, mental health prevention.

Elders yarning about the Gathering Place

Dedicated space for Elders is also limited. Elders don’t like to have to share their space with other groups, having to pack up and store their things after each session. A Gathering Place would build on what is already available and ensure the community is at the forefront of deciding what services could be located there to meet existing service gaps.

“We have been asking for a Gathering Place for a long time now. We would be able to do our own cultural things in a culturally safe space where we can do it all in one spot and not have to go to many different places in one day and not get stressed about getting there”.

“It would be great to hear running water, nice music and have a big boomerang out the front welcoming us all in”.

“It would be great for us Elders to welcome all the families and their children all coming together and we can teach them about our history and culture”.

Activities	Programs
Large Elders Room	Learn more about our history and culture
Fire Pit and Seating area for Elders to deliver cultural talks and have yarning up sessions with community members	Place for Aboriginal organisations to delivery culturally appropriate programs and services
Water Feature and have a big boomerang out the front	Library, language and reading programs.
Kitchen area to cook our own foods – Koories in the Kitchen, baking and producing our own cook books.	Learning more about Aboriginal language and usage
Run talent quests and blue light discos for the young people.	Dance programs – Ballroom dancing and encourage Aboriginal bands and groups to come in and teach our community members.
Break out spaces	Art, painting and craft programs
Ample parking and disabled access	Life skills programs.
Areas to have wakes for people who pass away in the community	Elders social enterprise to fund raise for EMAD activities and materials
Social activities at the Gathering Place and visits to other places	Art and photographic exhibitions

- **Photo 1 Consultation Elders Motivated and Deadly PAG, Thomastown**
- **Photo 2 Consultation with Community members at TRAC**



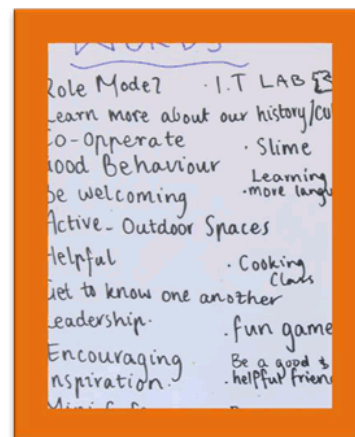
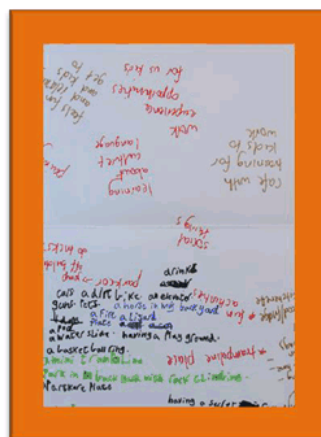
Young People’s Views about Programs and Services

The consultations held with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members who participated in the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal youth group discussed the different types of activities and programs they would like to see delivered at an Aboriginal Gathering Place. This included a code of conduct about being respectful to each other when participating in activities and programs at the Gathering Place.

“We want a place that is welcoming, feels fun and is relaxing”.

“We want to be able to do things that teach us about our history, our culture and language”.

Activities	Programs	Values – Expected Behaviours
Technology Labs	Learn more about our history and culture	Cooperative
Active – outdoor spaces, slide, rock climbing, dirt bike track, water slide, pool, playground	Be welcoming, feels fun and relaxing	Good behaviour
Slime activities	Role Models	Helpful
Cooking Classes (including a pizza oven, food, fridge and kitchenette)	Learning more about Aboriginal language and usage	Get to know one another
Pool table and Trampoline	Hip Hop / Dance	Leadership
Chill out spaces with comfy chairs and bean bags	Art, painting and craft program	Encouraging
Sport – football, volleyball, cricket and basketball and other physical activities	Social enterprise – mini café with training for kids who want to find work in the community	Be a good and helpful friend
Indoor mini café (like the one at TRAC)	Work experience opportunities	Mindful of others
Fun games and races		Inspiration
Social activities at the Gathering Place and visits to other places		Welcome other people
Having a panic room		
Art exhibitions		



Outreach Services and Programs

The consultation process identified that there are programs and services provided by mainstream and Aboriginal organisations and agencies that might be suitable for Aboriginal people participating in the Gathering Place programs, activities and services. It was suggested that the following programs, services could be provided as an outreach service/arrangement to the Aboriginal Gathering Place:

- ▶ VAHS– Mobile Clinics (GP and Dental), direct services including healthy lifestyles, adult health checks
- ▶ VACSAL - training programs including financial counselling and employment
- ▶ Whittlesea Council programs – employment, Maternal and Child Health, playgroups, etc.
- ▶ Plenty Valley Regional Library Service Mobile Library
- ▶ Community Corrections Workers and the Sherriff program
- ▶ Aboriginal Legal Services – legal advice
- ▶ Aboriginal Housing Victoria – housing and other supported accommodation
- ▶ Job Networks – training and employment
- ▶ Male and Female Counsellors and psychologists
- ▶ VACCA – Parenting and Family Support programs, programs/events for kids in out of home care
- ▶ (Access Services for Koories) ASK program
- ▶ Family History/Genealogy – Link-up, Connecting Home, Koorie Heritage Trust

It was identified that services would need to be provided with a secure environment/space to deliver their services in a confidential manner. Where services are delivered from mainstream organisations it was felt that it was important to make sure the services and programs provided should be safe and appropriate.

“We need to improve and educate mainstream health services in the area about what is culturally appropriate and what it means to be culturally safe when accessing their services – these will be programs we deliver at the Gathering Place”.

Concurrent consultancy project – Whittlesea Human Services Needs Analysis

At the time the Feasibility Study was being conducted the City of Whittlesea was also undertaking a Human Services Needs Analysis (HSNA) now completed. The Needs Analysis is a strategic planning and advocacy tool for the City of Whittlesea and its partners.

The aims of the HSNA were to:

- understand the human service needs of the municipality
- identify service gaps in particular geographical areas within the municipality
- identify the human service needs of the Mernda and Doreen communities
- explore opportunities for service delivery within the Mernda Town Centre.

Within this project, a number of key stakeholders including ACCOs and mainstream services as well as some community members were consulted. In order to streamline Council’s consultancy processes it was decided to ensure the HSNA project incorporated some of the issues we would otherwise have canvassed separately.

ACCOs reported that there is a significant gap in services in the region including health services, legal advice and financial advice (Judith Smale, HSNA 2018). In addition, they indicated that there is generally a lack of services access is not easy and often not affordable. Having a place for service providers to support their clients would make it easy for community members to get what they need.

What should not be provided at the Gathering Place?

The consultation process identified that the Gathering Place could not be all things to all community members but there was a strong sense across all groups that the Gathering Place should not be a medical centre/service or a place that provides direct primary and tertiary health services, particularly as the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service is planning to set up a satellite service in the region.

As one survey respondent noted some careful planning is required:

"I think given this is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiative you must be clear on what the intended purpose of the Gathering Place is so it doesn't get lost. We should be thinking about the service users first before service groups otherwise you might find the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people located in Whittlesea may chose not to use their services as it has a risk of losing its intended purpose and could become culturally unsafe."

Size and spaces

The views of community members about the ideal size of the Gathering Place and the internal and external spaces required are provided in Table 6 below. All Council staff that were consulted were aware that to run effective and successful programs and activities for many user groups there needs to be creative and innovative ways to store resources, furniture and supplies to allow for greater use and flexibility of large and small rooms and areas for activities and programs. Some Council staff advised that multiple access points would be needed to allow for secure after-hours access to parts of the facility.

It was clear that some spaces needed to be available to provide a 'quiet space' for Aboriginal people with disabilities (e.g. Asperger's and/or other conditions) but could also double as a room for Maternal and Child Health and other services that need to provide specialist equipment and one-to-one service delivery.

Large Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Multi-purpose spaces for forums, training, meetings, events and functions – 2 rooms ▶ Flexible space (internal) for community activities – spaces for men's and women's business, spaces for young people, children (eg. Playgroup) ▶ Performance Theatre – performing arts and flexible seating. ▶ Theatrette – visual cultural learning ▶ Board room and meeting room ▶ Specific/designated space for Elders including PAG Activities ▶ Music and Multi Media space ▶ Computer room/facilities ▶ Koori Education & Information Centre 	External Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Outdoor space suitable for a range of cultural and community activities including: ▶ Safe spaces for children ▶ Fire pit – made of bluestone (source from Council works) and bricks being dug up in development sites e.g. Bunnings, Coles, etc. ▶ Bush tucker plantings ▶ Sports and Recreation space ▶ Kitchen Garden ▶ Car Parking ▶ Cultural Trails and Walks
Small Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Small consulting rooms for clients and staff. ▶ Small consulting rooms for visiting services. ▶ Larger room for family counselling ▶ Library/story-telling, movie room ▶ Elders Room 	Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Industrial/Commercial Kitchen ▶ Toilets/Showers ▶ Lots of storage space ▶ Wi-Fi and Internet
Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator, Program Manager, Admin ▶ Maternal and Child Health 	Casual Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Art Exhibition Spaces ▶ Open space to sit and yarn
Rooms with Water/Sinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Art / Craft space/room ▶ Room for Children's activities e.g. Play Group, Out of Home Care kids events ▶ Young People's Activities ▶ Massage/wellbeing room 		

Design Features

"It is important that it is an Aboriginal space for Aboriginal people and not reliant on co-location or relationships with other services. Bushland is important but can be established through a re-vegetation program and buildings can be built or refurbished to accommodate program requirements but it should combine both indoor and outdoor spaces that are developed to brief." (Community member survey respondent).

Suggestions around the design of the building included:

Type of spaces required at the Gathering Place to provide for the delivery of program and activities	
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Natural landscape ▶ Internal and external spaces that flow into each other including break out rooms ▶ Aboriginal design – earth like colours, boomerang shaped signs and have Aboriginal art and design integrated throughout indoor and outdoor areas ▶ Central area - like a hub and spoke design ▶ Art and photography exhibition space/s ▶ Overall shape like Bunjil or a goanna (totem use needs to be politically correct) ▶ Design features that allow smoking ceremonies and wood burning without setting off alarms ▶ A Theatre room – visually learn about Aboriginal culture and stories ▶ Library space and area for Elders to do storytelling and yarning circles ▶ Suitable storage spaces for materials, furniture and equipment ▶ Multiple access points to allow for after-hours programs/activities so that some parts of the Gathering Place are not accessible at those times
Environmentally sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Big open windows ▶ Incorporate environmental and recycled and natural materials into the building where appropriate and possible – the sustainability and Aboriginal community ways could be very well linked. ▶ Solar power ▶ appropriate heating and cooling ▶ Materials should be reflective of the environment where the Gathering Place is located.
Outside features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Memorial wall – allow kids to put their hands and name on a brick ▶ Pavers in the garden with people’s names on them - as a way of fundraising ▶ Lots of trees to give the feeling of being in the bush ▶ Space for Welcome Baby to Country ceremonies ▶ Outside furniture to be built from wood from local community by community members ▶ Comfortable furnishings ▶ Water feature/s. ▶ Access for people with disabilities ▶ BBQ area and outdoor cooking area (cook own food, traditional food practices) ▶ Fire Pit and seating area ▶ Rubbish bins
Aboriginal Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An Aboriginal language name for the Gathering Place ▶ Aboriginal art work and artefacts – locally sourced where possible ▶ Flagpoles to display the Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Island flag ▶ All spaces to have Aboriginal names ▶ Cultural library and place to store digital stories.

Given these requirements it is estimated that a purpose built facility of approximately 1,000 to 2,000 sqm (2 acres) is needed and must have building space, car parking and outside/outdoors area.

In building/ renovating it is important for Council to engage Aboriginal suppliers wherever possible e.g. Zancott Recruitment, Intract, A&K Law, RAW recruitment. There are resources to help Council and the community to identify potential suppliers and support e.g. Reconciliation Victoria website, Kinaway Chamber of Commerce Victoria Ltd website, Indigenous Community Volunteers, etc.

Where should the Gathering Place be located?

Community members indicated that the following characteristics are important in deciding the location of the Gathering Place:

- Being accessible by public transport – train or bus
- Having sufficient car parking
- Being close to bushland
- Being close to water

“Water is a powerful element. It washes away our worries. Being in nature/ near water has significant health benefits.” (Community member survey respondent)

Access to transport was not identified as a ‘deal breaker’ in relation to where the Aboriginal Gathering Place should be located as many community members had access to vehicles and other modes of transport. Community members said they already help each other out with transport when needed. However, it is certainly preferable if the Gathering Place is located somewhere close to public transport given the size of the region. In addition, there was a general view that “down the track” the Gathering Place could look at getting its own community bus.

Aboriginal community members consulted advised that consideration was needed to ensure that the Gathering Place was:

- ▶ Not located on massacre sites or other sites that historically have had a negative impact on the local community
- ▶ Away from cemeteries and mental hospital facilities
- ▶ Not near the Northern Hospital
- ▶ Not on land classified as flood zones
- ▶ Not built under power lines
- ▶ Away from pubs and clubs
- ▶ Away from justice related business – police, courts and VACCA / DHS Child Protection
- ▶ Not next to a major commercial property e.g. Westfield Shopping Centre

How should the Gathering Place be managed?

A clear aspiration of community members is that the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place be community controlled, but definitely **not** run by any particular family group. Self-determination is critical. **“Self determination is an ‘on-going process of choice’ to ensure that Indigenous communities are able to meet their social, cultural and economic needs.”²**

Community members recognised that achieving self-management of the Gathering Place would not be possible from the start and that for a period of time ongoing support from Council was important. During the initial phase of implementation Aboriginal community members would need opportunities to learn new skills to prepare them for future roles in the governance of the Gathering Place.

Staffing was also considered in the focus groups. The consultation process identified that the Gathering Place will only be successful if from the beginning there is the right workforce in place.

Suggestions for staffing included:

- Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator – schedule and coordinate programs and services (including contracted services) and visiting services, data collection, policy, fund-raising/growth
- General/ Operations Manager – finance, IT, facilities management, HR
- Program Coordinators – deliver specific programs and activities
- Admin Officer/ Receptionist

² Social Justice and human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; Human Rights Commission, 2013

Business Case

Proposed Gathering Place Operational Model

On the basis of the consultations and what was learned throughout the project the Consultants are proposing the following operating model. This model needs to be further tested and agreed by key stakeholders including the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and Elders.

The Aboriginal Gathering Place Principles

The Aboriginal Gathering Place will:

- ▶ Support **culturally inclusive access** by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the City of Whittlesea;
- ▶ Provide a **culturally safe environment** to practice **culturally appropriate and inclusive practices** through the delivery of programs and activities that are **responsive** to client and community needs, support **self-determination** and **sustainability** and deliver positive outcomes and:
 - Are founded on and culturally aligned with Aboriginal culture and are inclusive
 - Facilitate active participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the community
 - Are delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- ▶ Focus on **best-practice approaches** that support **co-design principles** with the Aboriginal community.
- ▶ Include opportunities for current and future Aboriginal Gathering Place staff to participate in **accredited training courses and other professional development activities** to strengthen their skills, knowledge, expertise and competency;
- Recognise and build upon the **strength, resilience and capacities** in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Promote **Access and Equity** – the mix and promotion of programs will be structured to maximise the community's access to what is currently available;
- Support the **integration and coordination of programs and activities** to ensure effective program delivery by the most appropriate provider/ individual/ group;
- Build **evidence based practice** – The Gathering Place will be supported and encouraged to utilise and provide evidence that integrates required expertise, cultural knowledge and therapeutic practices; and
- **Cost effectiveness and flexible resource distribution** – The Gathering Place will operate within a context that allows the flexible deployment of resources, enabling the most appropriate response to Aboriginal community participant need.

The Aboriginal Gathering Place Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the Aboriginal Gathering Place is to provide a comprehensive range of community supported programs and activities that are responsive to the needs of and culturally relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (including: children, young people, Elders, men and women, and their families).

Proposed objectives are:

- Aboriginal community members are aware of the opportunities and support available to individual and families - families can participate in family activities or choose to participate in specific activities as individuals (men's, women's, children's, young people and Elders).
- The Aboriginal community in the Whittlesea area understand, support and contribute to the Gathering Place.
- To ensure the Aboriginal community is self-determining and achieves full Aboriginal Community Control of the Gathering Place.
- The Gathering Place is efficiently and effectively managed and operates sustainably.

Ongoing Community Engagement - Cultural Strengthening Approach

The Feasibility Study Project Control Group for this project understands that a key aspect of the Gathering Place will be its ability to respond to community driven needs and priorities as they arise. While the focus of the Aboriginal Gathering Place is to provide cultural strengthening based programs and activities a critical part of the delivery of these programs will also be how well Aboriginal community members are engaged and informed about how to access and fully participate a range of cultural strengthening initiatives.

Based on information gathered during the Feasibility Study Project community consultations, it is proposed that a Cultural Strengthening Model be considered which will allow the Aboriginal Gathering Place staff to work with Aboriginal services in the region to educate and inform community members about the needs and aspirations of the Aboriginal community.

The Aboriginal community meetings held to date have been well attended and should continue to be held quarterly to encourage greater dialogue and discussion to raise and explore issues relevant to the local Aboriginal people. These meetings will also identify what assistance or support Aboriginal community members might need (at any given point in time) to engage in activities or programs designed to promote cultural strengthening in a culturally safe and secure environment. For example – conducting an Art class once a week during which time participants can come together not only to work on paintings but also to talk about issues that are/have affected them.

The Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator and other staff could provide administrative support and assistance to each community meeting held (as required) as well as arrange access to facilities and/or equipment the community needs to conduct activities and programs. The approach used may involve assisting individuals in each group to research, prepare and submit funding applications to secure money for activities and/or programs that Aboriginal community members could be involved over time. The objective of this approach would be to empower individuals and groups to have control over accessing resources which they would use as part of achieving more self-determination.

Issues, needs and priorities raised by members at each Aboriginal community meeting held would provide a framework for the Aboriginal Gathering Place to work towards at a local level. Service responses, activities and programs provided by the Gathering Place could then be tailored to meet the specific needs of each Aboriginal community group in Whittlesea.

Consultations with local Aboriginal people, community groups and services over the next 12 months to identify what the agreed community engagement process will be for implementation is critical.

Programs and Activities

The proposed Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place should be set up so it is multi-faceted in nature and is in a strong position to offer a range of programs and activities that meet the diverse needs of Aboriginal men, women, Elders, children, young people and their family members at the same time.

It is also clear that the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place will need to ensure that Aboriginal cultural practices underpin all programs and activities to strengthen cultural identity and spirituality.

Education: Cultural Revival

The following culturally based programs and activities were identified during the consultation process:

- Koori Information Centre.
- Family history and reconnection with country, Family Unity, Mentoring Programs
- Historical Programs – Overcoming colonisation
- Practicing the Philosophic Principles – Living culturally in a contemporary world, Traditional Knowledge and Languages, Identity Issues
- Men's and Women's business activities and programs
- Caring for Country, Understanding your totem (life cycle, environment, preservation),
- Healing from Traditional Medicines
- Elders Programs, Kinship Systems, Narrative Therapy
- Traditional Dance and making traditional tools
- Traditional Food Preparation

Physical Health, Recreation and Wellbeing

These types of programs could include:

- Health Education and Fitness Programs
- Healthy Body Image
- Nutrition Programs
- Visiting Medical and Dental Services
- Smoking Cessation Programs
- Team Sports
- Music Appreciation, Reading, Movies
- Swimming

SEWB Programs

These types of programs could include:

- Case Management,
- Brokerage Services and Community Referrals,
- LINK Up Program in relation to the Stolen Generation etc,
- Family Empowerment Program
- Budgeting and Home skills programs
- Playgroup program for children 0-5 years
- Child Development and Parenting Program Centre
- Individual and Group Counselling
- Dealing with Family Violence through Family Empowerment
- Anger Management
- Dealing with Grief and Loss
- Healing support programs
- Relapse Prevention
- Journal Writing
- Art Therapy
- Risk Assessment identification and support

It is critical that quality assurance monitoring, performance measures and evaluation inform service/program design delivery.

Management and Governance Arrangements

Learnings from other Aboriginal Gathering Places are valuable and should be used to guide how the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place concept is progressed and then implemented.

In considering what governance and organisational arrangements might be appropriate for a Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place the consultants have looked at the experience of other Gathering Places as well as taking into account what community members put forward through the consultation process.

There are a number of stages involved in achieving the ideal arrangement which is a community controlled Aboriginal Gathering Place. Realistically this journey will take several years.

There should be a partnership between the community and the Council to take this project through the next stage of the establishment of the Aboriginal Gathering Place from concept to design, secure and confirm site and the refurbishment/ build of the facility. Clearly, Council will need to take a lead role on some of these issues including procurement of the site and management of the building process.

At the point of site procurement and build commencement a new interim community led committee will need to be established to work with Council on the governance and management arrangements for the Gathering Place. Existing Members may continue to sit on the Committee subject to going through the selection process. It is suggested an Expression of Interest process is established to determine appointments from community and other experts and stakeholders as determined are necessary to ensure the Committee is skilled and resourced effectively.

These could include:

- Aboriginal community members with experience on being on a board for at least 5 years (can be outside of Whittlesea)
- Senior officers from Victorian Government (infrastructure and health)
- Senior officers from Whittlesea City Council (planning, facilities)

Consideration should also be given to inviting specialist clinical staff and other experts from mainstream services who have formal partnerships with ACCOs and other Aboriginal services and who may provide outreach and other services to Aboriginal people accessing the Gathering Place to provide input and advice as required.

At all times, it is critical that Aboriginal community members make up the majority of members on the Committee to ensure the local Aboriginal cultural values, beliefs and practices are embedded in how the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place operates.

Initially this committee will work with and advise Council on issues in relation to operational issues. Council will act as the legal entity required to receive funds from the Australian and Victorian governments (and any other funding bodies) to establish a strong and clear process for the transition to an 'independent Aboriginal controlled and managed legal entity' in a manner that also achieves the support and confidence of its funding bodies. It would be expected this arrangement would be in place for around 3 years.

Governance, Management and Partnership considerations

The governance and management model also suggests four (4) levels of partnership as follows (similar to the Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place and EACH partnership model and the Indigenous Health Team and Yarra Valley Community Health, Eastern Health partnership model):

1) Establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee

Establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee with representation from WRG, Whittlesea Council, EMAD, Whittlesea Aboriginal Youth Group other Aboriginal community members, Aboriginal Victoria, DELWP Infrastructure and planning area, DHHS and other interested stakeholders.

2) Formal Partnership Agreement

Finalise a formal Partnership Agreement between the Whittlesea City Council and the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee (no other stakeholders or partners should be part of this formal agreement).

3) Partnership Funding Agreement

A formal 'time limited' partnership agreement for the legal and financial management of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place should be developed. Council would enter into this agreement with the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee and other funding bodies to meet the funding and legal requirements until such time as the Gathering Place is established as a separate and independent organisation in its own right.

4) Governance Training and Planning

The Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee will need to identify and agree to participate in formal accredited governance, management and financial management training to ensure the overall success of the establishment and operations of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place. This training would also need to focus on developing policy and procedures, financial planning and budgeting, strategic thinking and planning, running meetings, etc.

5) Partnership Transition Plan

A formal agreement and business plan for the planned transition of full legal and financial responsibility for the Centre from Whittlesea City Council to the Aboriginal community needs development. The final process of the Partnership Transition Plan will see the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee become an incorporated stand-alone organisation and enter into its own Funding and Service Agreements with funding bodies (similar to the process of other similar ACCOs).

Role of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee – Initial Implementation Stage

The primary role of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee in its initial implementation phase (prior to full community controlled governance) will include the following:

- To provide and oversee the strategic direction for the Gathering Place and ensure it remains focused on providing a non-judgemental and culturally safe environment and journey for Aboriginal community members in Whittlesea.
- To ensure the operations of the Gathering Place effectively and consistently provide a range of cultural strengthening programs and activities for all Aboriginal community members who access the Centre.
- To ensure there are opportunities for Aboriginal Elders and community members to have a say about the operations of the Gathering Place and participate in reciprocal learning activities through sharing their stories and ideas for programs and activities to be delivered.
- To manage, monitor and oversee the financial operations of the Gathering Place and ensure that it meets its funding and service agreement/s obligations – including any arrangements that are in place with an auspice organisation (Council) that has the responsibility of receiving and acquitting the funding received for the Gathering Place.
- To identify and pursue options for minimising duplication of services by utilising existing organisational and structural resources that are already in place in the region.
- To provide advice and direction about how Aboriginal and mainstream services will work with each other to ensure programs and activities remain focused on supporting the needs of Aboriginal community members as well as how continued support will be provided to Aboriginal people who access outreach services delivered on site.
- To ensure there are professional development opportunities for staff working at the Gathering Place to enhance their skills.
- To identify and pursue opportunities to promote the Gathering Place to the Aboriginal and wider community so people understand its purpose and aims in relation to having a place the community can call its own and being able to provide cultural strengthening programs in one place that is culturally welcoming and safe.
- To identify and put in place processes which allow volunteers to offer support and assistance to the Gathering Place staff and its operations, as needed.

Other roles for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee to consider and plan for the implementation stage will include:

- ▶ Developing policies, guidelines and procedures which clearly state how the Gathering Place will function under a Partnership Agreement Model.
- ▶ Identifying the programs, services and activities that will occur at the Centre
- ▶ Determining the staffing and other resources each service/agency will make available to deliver the programs, activities and/or service their staff will provide.
- ▶ Identifying which target group they will deliver to (men, women, children, young people, Elders and families), etc. and scheduling of programs.
- ▶ Preparing a 3, 6 and 12 month Program Calendar/timetable that includes specific dates, times and locations for the programs, activities and services.
- ▶ Preparing a Financial Plan and Budget for the Gathering Place which clearly identifies who will be responsible for meeting specific costs associated with delivering a program, activity or providing an outreach service.
- ▶ Coordinating meetings with potential funding bodies and confirming funding granted to the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee.
- ▶ Confirming arrangements for transition of governance arrangements to an Aboriginal community controlled organisation.

Role of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee – Stage 2

The role of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee – Stage 2 will be to develop the financial and operational plans and prepare a Risk Management Strategy for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place operations for the next three to five years.

Consideration will need to be given to ensure that appropriate/relevant staff are represented on the Committee to implement Stage 2 to establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place. The role of new/ additional Committee members would include but not be limited to the following:

- Providing advice to the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee on financial matters and issues arising.
- Identifying potential funding to establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee and operational funds to employ staff, materials and supplies, equipment and brokerage funding support;
- Providing advice to the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee on any additional funding that is available to support the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place development; and
- Providing advice on any changes to Australian and Victorian government legislation, strategies, frameworks and policies as it pertains to the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place.
- Provide advice and management of service agreements between Whittlesea Council and the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee.

Role of the Council – Stage 2

During this stage of shared governance the Council will:

- Oversee the budget administration including delegated authority of expenditure – in particular any future capital works expenditure.
- Provide appropriate infrastructure support e.g. financial management systems, HR support and IT support). Identify the appropriate staged approach towards establishment and being inclusive of local Aboriginal community needs to determine priorities.
- Facilitate Governance Training Workshops, financial obligations and management and assist in the development of refining the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee policies and procedures and any training to operate and understand database software.
- Assist the development of tender briefs and the management of any external contractors to be appointed to prepare Capital Works Specifications for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place on site.
- Oversee the management of the building contractor and any sub-contractors appointed to undertake the building works identified by the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee for the Aboriginal Gathering Place.
- Prepare clear and appropriate financial and budget reports for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee.

Operations

Staffing

It will be important that the Gathering Place is supported by the appropriate resources and staffing infrastructure. While staffing may grow over time, it is important that when it is “opened” to the community it has a full complement of skilled and qualified staff. The consultation process identified that the Gathering Place will only be successful if from the beginning there is the right workforce in place.

Ideally there should be:

- Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator – schedule and coordinate programs and services (including contracted services) and visiting services, data collection, policy, fund-raising/growth
- General/ Operations Manager – finance, IT, facilities management, HR
- Program Coordinators – deliver specific programs and activities
- Admin Officer/ Receptionist

Gathering Place Coordinator: This position will be responsible for overseeing and managing all day to day operations, activities and programs occurring at the Gathering Place including those delivered by permanent staff, visiting health care professionals, facilitators, program workers and other visitors.

The Coordinator will work closely with other staff of other Aboriginal and mainstream services in the City of Whittlesea to identify local linkages and support services and programs that individuals and families can access.

The Coordinator will have lead responsibility for overseeing the strategic, operational and financial plans of the Gathering Place as well as leading discussions with Australian and Victorian government staff to secure funds to cover costs associated with delivering the Gathering Place's programs and activities.

Administration Staff: The Gathering Place will employ office administration staff as required once it is confirmed what the appropriate staffing configuration is for the Gathering Place. Eventually core administration staff may include a Receptionist and at least one full-time Administration Worker.

HR and Finance/Accounting aspects of the Gathering Place (including Payroll tasks) could eventually be undertaken in-house (by full-time, part-time or contracted staff). However, in the early stages of operation these functions are likely to be provided by the Whittlesea Council as part of their existing operations.

Decisions will also need to be made about the employment of cleaners or cleaning contractors to service the administration and infrastructure of the Aboriginal Gathering Place as well as arrangements that will be put in place to maintain the outdoor areas of the Gathering Place – employ a person on staff (full-time or part-time) or contract these services out to a third party.

Program Coordinator/s

Each Program Coordinator (e.g. Elders, Men's, Women's and Youth) will be responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring and assessing the various programs and activities occurring at the Gathering Place. They will develop and manage a Cultural Program and Activity Schedule which clearly identifies when various programs and activities will occur in each space and be responsible for organising health care professionals, Aboriginal workers and facilitators, service and program providers and others to deliver each program and/or activity occurring on and off-site.

Program Coordinators will work closely and in partnership with existing staff and other visiting professionals to develop and manage targeted programs and activities to meet the needs of each target group from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community accessing and participating at the Gathering Place.

In addition to core staffing, it is critical that all programs and activities are delivered by appropriately skilled professionals who have undertaken cultural awareness training and operate from within a culturally inclusive framework.

A culturally safe Gathering Place

Safety

The Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee will need to ensure that the operations, policy and procedures of the Gathering Place promote and ensure a safe environment. A number of suggestions were offered as part of the community and service provider responses, which are included as follows:

- The Gathering Place should provide a safe, comfortable and warm environment as soon as Aboriginal and visitors walk through the door of the Gathering Place.
- A code of conduct to be adopted by the Gathering Place, users, staff and visitors.
- The Gathering Place to be located at a neutral site (now and in the future) and not attached to existing services and user-groups.
- Police checks to have a clear history of 'no violence' to be done on all staff and support workers of the Gathering Place.
- That staff policy and procedures be developed on how referral information is maintained and released to outside organisations and agencies.

Confidentiality

The consultation process unanimously identified one main issue of concern was the perceived lack of confidentiality from some Aboriginal and mainstream service providers when an individual accessed those organisations and/or services. Some anecdotal stories were provided to the Consultancy team describing the consequences of breaches that resulted in, either a family violence incidence or an incident being instigated or further escalated.

It was highlighted that the main perception of Aboriginal people consulted was the lack of confidentiality of Aboriginal people's 'business' as a contributing factor to the lack of participation of Aboriginal people in accessing Aboriginal specific programs and services. It needs to be ensured that the Gathering Place develops appropriate confidentiality mechanisms that are fully supported by the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee and staff employed by the Gathering Place.

The following recommendations are provided as a result of the consultation feedback:

- The Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee, Council and staff employed by the Gathering Place would be required to sign a confidentiality agreement as part of their member or employment contract.
- Staff policy and procedures be developed on how referral information is maintained and released to outside organisations and agencies.

Partnerships

In time, formalised partnership agreements will need to be established with all key services to facilitate the development of adequately defined and resourced referral pathways between the Aboriginal Gathering Place and service agencies. In addition strategic partnerships need to be developed to support the growth and sustainability of the Gathering Place.

Potential partners/relationships to be considered include:

- Whittlesea Council
- Local Aboriginal Network
- Growth Areas Alliance
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
- VACCHO, VACCA, VAEAI, Aboriginal Housing Victoria
- Department of Justice and Regulation and Victoria Police
- Referring agencies
- Services outreaching into the Gathering Place

Communication Strategy

It is critical that information about the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place and what it is doing is communicated to the local Aboriginal community, Council, ACCOs and service providers in the City of Whittlesea. As there may be a limited budget available to facilitate this process, there are opportunities that can be pursued to maximise awareness in a cost effective manner. One option available which can assist to reach a wide audience at minimal cost (over time) is the internet.

It is recommended that a specific website be established about the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place. The functionality of the website could include the following:

1. **Gathering Place Description** – An overview about the aims and goals of the Gathering Place.
2. **Gathering Place Location** – Information about where the Gathering Place will be located and how to contact the Gathering Place staff.
3. **Staff Profile** – Information about staff and their roles (including a photo of each staff member).
4. **Service Offerings** – A description about the outreach services that Aboriginal people can access and what the arrangements are for accessing each service offering.
5. **Programs** – A description of each of the programs being run by the Gathering Place including where and when each program is being run and how to access each program.
6. **Activities** – A description about the various activities being provided by the Gathering Place including where and when each activity is being held and how to access these.
7. **Program and Activity Calendar** – Confirming when and where programs and activities are being held – including meetings of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee and when Aboriginal community meetings will be held.
8. **Chat Room** – Establishing an on-line chat room which Aboriginal community members and others can access.
9. **Resource Library** – Setting up an online Resource Library which contains links to various documents, reports and other material which can be used by interested stakeholders during programs or activities delivered. Also, PDF copies of other documents such as information brochures about dealing with education and awareness raising about specific issues.
10. **Program and Activity Profiles** – Information about the outcomes achieved from each program or activity held by the Gathering Place. Information could also be published about the participation rates in the Gathering Place's programs and activities.
11. **Partnership Arrangements** – A description about the Partnership Agreements and Protocol Arrangements in place with Council, ACCOs and mainstream and Aboriginal services.
12. **Newsletter** – An online newsletter published each quarter to promote and raise awareness about the Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Site, Building and Facility Considerations

Site issues

The following points are raised for consideration and discussion by Whittlesea Council and the WRG in their decision-making process in relation to supporting the establishment of an Aboriginal Gathering Place:

- 1) The availability of suitable land or a property on which the proposed Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place and other infrastructure can be built.
- 2) The capacity of Council to secure funds to purchase this type of local community asset.
- 3) The likelihood that the proposed site will meet Local Government Planning Regulations in terms of its use - taking into account any potential objections that neighbours or others may raise in relation to its design, its operating hours and the various activities which may occur on the site at any given time.
- 4) The footprint area of the Gathering Place and the amount of space needed initially as well as in future years if it is identified that additional infrastructure needs to be added to meet any growth/increase in demand.
- 5) How cultural activities and gatherings will be conducted and how these will be incorporated into the overall infrastructure design and the physical (outdoor) landscape on the site.

Administration, Program and Service Delivery Spaces

The amount of space required for administration and specialist staff working at the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee will be informed and guided by a number of factors including:

- 1) How many core administration staff will be working on site at any given point in time - including a Coordinator, (Men's, Women and Young People) and other administration staff such as a Receptionist and program / project workers, etc.
- 2) The number of staff required on site to welcome and then supervise individuals and families who are on site at any given point in time – including after hours and on weekends for arrivals and departures.
- 3) The type of professional services that will be available during normal business hours and the specific spaces/areas on site that staff will need to deliver their treatment, service, program or activity.
- 4) The number of visiting specialists/professionals that will be on site at the same time who are delivering a specialist service or running a specific program and/or activity and spaces they need such as:
 - private spaces for one-on-one and group family counselling sessions; and
 - separate and shared spaces where group activities for Elders, women, men, young people and children can occur independently and at the same time.
- 5) A medical (treatment) space may need to be incorporated into the initial build in the event that a resident, guest or a staff member at the site becomes ill or sustains an injury.
- 6) Buildings that need to be constructed to store equipment and material related to maintaining the site – including storage facilities for equipment used to maintain the landscaping aspects of the facility.
- 7) A separate meeting room which has video hook-up facilities so staff can hold live online consultations with services located in other towns in the region when discussing arrangements for and with individuals and families before they arrive at or prior to their departure from the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place.
- 8) A staff amenities space where staff have some privacy when preparing or eating their meals.
- 9) A secure space to house the facility's IT equipment and infrastructure.

Another part of the design aspect of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee should be to provide internal and external areas and spaces where people can display creative works they produce as part of a program/activity delivered at the Gathering Place.

Activity and Other Spaces

The size, functionality, design, fittings in and location of activity spaces at the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee need to be considered:

1) Internal activity spaces:

- How many people will be using an internal space at the same time (maximum number of people).
- Will spaces be used by participants to create pieces of art and what sort of equipment and/or tools will participants need and have access to create their art pieces.
- Will there be specialist equipment (such as computers) in the space which participants will use in an activity or a program they are participating in. For example, using this space for vocational education programs and activities – by participants and by Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place staff.
- Will activity spaces be used for family group counselling or therapeutic healing sessions and how many family members will be in this space at the same time – both adults and children.
- How much space, if any, will be set aside at the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee for leisure activities, the type of equipment that will be available in this space and whether staff will be required to supervise this area when it is open for use by community members. For example: having a games room with a pool table, darts board or similar equipment.
- What space, if any, will be included in the design which can be used to teach residents life skills – such as a space which has multiple stoves to teach residents meal preparation and cooking skills.

2) Outdoor activity spaces:

- What activities or programs will the outdoor spaces will be used for – by individuals, families and groups?
- How many people will be present in the outdoor space at any given point in time? In particular, where the outdoor space may be used to conduct a ceremony which is also attended by a number of external visitors (such as an annual NAIDOC event).
- Access to toilet and other facilities (such as barbeques and covered eating areas) that people using the outdoor spaces can use if they are not staying in accommodation at the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place.
- Separate spaces and areas may need to be set aside on the site to conduct men's business, women's business, youth business, Elders business and shared group activities.
- Market garden areas could be created on site where participants can grow vegetables and flowers as part of their therapeutic healing journey. Vegetables and flowers grown can then be used by people staying at or staff working at the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place.
- A separate covered workshop area could be incorporated in the design of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place which has equipment that can be used by participants to create and build something as part of their healing journey. Specifically, what are the advantages of having Men's Shed and a Women's Shed as part of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place.

3) Spaces designed to support parents with children (both inside and out):

- How many babies and/or children under the age of 5 years will be onsite at any given point in time while their parent/s are participating in programs and/or activities.
- Will outdoor spaces and play areas need to be enclosed to ensure the safety of children and, if yes, how much space is required to accommodate this – taking into account the maximum the ages and the maximum number of children who will be onsite at the same time.

4) Will there need to be space set aside for the pets of individuals and families attending the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place?

Security

The physical location and infrastructure of the Gathering Place needs to have safe and easy access and is to provide an immediate response if the safety of Aboriginal people, staff and visitors is threatened.

From the consultations the following suggestions have been supported by the Consultants for consideration:

- Single entry and at least two exit points of the Gathering Place building.
- Security doors and windows.
- Windows should be double glazed and if rooms have windows that face public access areas they should be covered or have a protective film to allow only one way visibility.
- Reception and gathering place should be at the front of the Gathering Place and the Counselling, Maternal and Child Health and Children's programs, activities and out-reach services should be provided at the back of the Centre in a secured area.
- A room should be set up to provide a safe play area for children that is visible to the parents while they are receiving a service or participating in programs and activities at the Gathering Place.
- Have in place duress alarms or security system that would be responded to immediately.
- Physical location of service to be well lit including the car park area.

Scoping and identification of potential location and delivery options

This part of the study involved:

- Undertaking an audit of existing state government and council land and/or facilities in accessible locations in the City of Whittlesea.
- Investigating, mapping and assessing possible locations.
- Developing a range of initial site options.
- Developing concept options addressing scope, service types, integration, sites, ownership and procurement methods that meet the vision and concept and the "selection criteria" identified through the Aboriginal community consultations
- Making recommendations on options and conducting a workshop with Project Control Group members and Council staff to assess the viability and desirability of each option and decide on a preferred option that warrants further investigation/ development.
- Identifying risks and barriers by conducting a risk assessment with Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and Council staff.
- Developing a report on the outcomes of this process.

Possible locations for the Aboriginal Gathering Place

A number of locations were considered in response to the "requirements" identified by community members. These were in order of preference:

1. Preston Hall – 1485 Plenty Road, Mernda
2. Mayfield Farm and Homestead – 1410 Plenty Road, Mernda
3. Nioka Bush Camp (Yan Yean Reservoir)
4. Private land holding – 60 Watts Road, Yan Yean
5. New Mernda Town Centre Development

Preston Hall – Preferred location for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place

Preston Hall is located at 1485 Plenty Road, Mernda. The property is relatively large (4 acres) with grounds of several hectares. Mature trees on the property and the drystone walls of the property are subject to heritage and vegetation protection overlays.

The home itself is set back from Plenty Road, has 3 bedrooms, a sitting room, and an open space kitchen, meals and living area.

Since 2012, when the house was considered in "fair condition for its age" some repairs and improvements have been made to ensure it is habitable.

The property is owned by Whittlesea Council and is currently rented out.

It is close to public transport – both train and bus. It is adjacent to public parks, close to the new Mernda Town Centre Development, Mernda Village, schools, and a community activity centre. There are plans for the development of community-based facilities on one side of the property.

The property lends itself to renovation and extension to meet community needs for a Gathering Place. It has extensive grounds/acreage to accommodate external design features seen as important by community members including the fire pit, kitchen garden, sitting spaces, community activities and car parking etc. It is home to 300 year old river red gum trees. The wetlands have potential for improvement and creation of specific spaces and features as designed by the community.

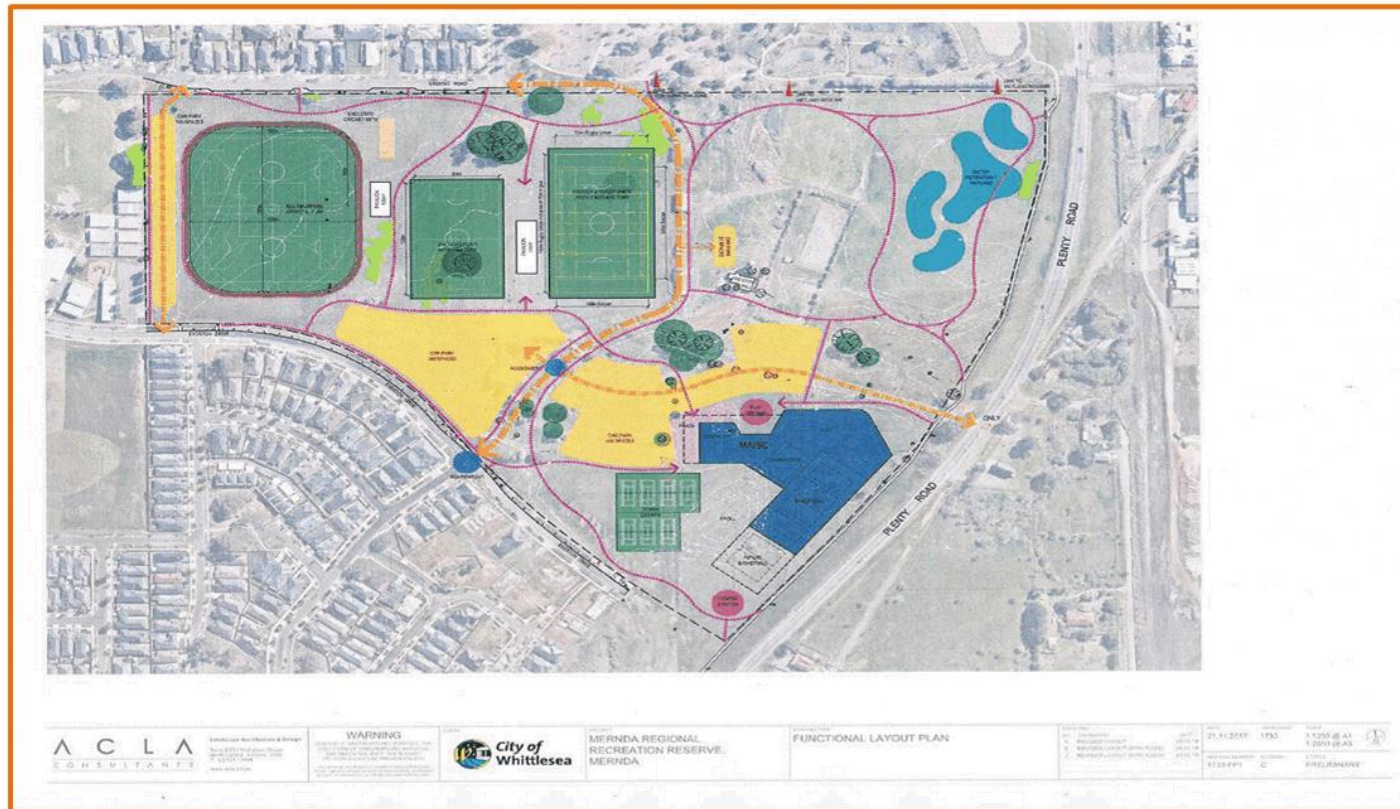


The property slopes down to a wetland area and is bordered by trees.





Draft Report – City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Feasibility Study Project – 26 April 2018



Proposed Mernda Regional Recreational Reserve - Site Development Plan

Draft Report – City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Feasibility Study Project – 26 April 2018

Mayfield Farm and Homestead

Mayfield Farm is a historical homestead and outer buildings consisting of a dairy and milking sheds, stables and a bluestone butter factory, which was built and occupied by Moses Thomas and his family, in the mid-1850s, from stone quarried on his land. The butter factory is unique and has an underground well in the basement of the building used for cooling purposes.

Mayfield farm is listed under the Whittlesea Council Heritage Overlay.

The property is currently owned by Fabcot, a subsidiary of Woolworths Pty. Ltd. Fabcot's proposed Mernda Town Centre Development Plan applies to land bound by Bridge Inn Road to the north, Plenty Road to the west, AV Jennings land to the south and vacant rural land, which will form the Plenty Gorge Parklands to the east. Mayfield Farm Homestead is located within the proposed development area.

This plan proposes to, "restore the historic buildings within the Mayfield Farm precinct to provide for multifunctional facilities that are adaptable to a range of commercial and community uses".

The property, while of reasonable size and providing potential for ample inside and outside space, it is in a state of significant disrepair. Some of the outer buildings would need to be demolished but others such as the stables are subject to the heritage overlay and may need to be "restored" in accordance with heritage guidelines. It is considered that the "stables" could be restored to provide specific activity rooms such as a Men's Shed, Arts /Crafts Room, Healing Space, etc.

There are mature trees surrounding the farm and a hawthorn hedge is also subject of heritage overlay. The property is reasonably close to Plenty Road and access is currently difficult but it is possible the driveway could be redesigned to make entry easier. There is plenty of room for a carpark although some levelling off the ground will be needed.

The Homestead itself was not accessible to the public and the consultants were unable to inspect the interior. It certainly seems large enough to incorporate a number of purpose refurbished rooms – offices, consulting rooms and some meeting space. There is plenty of land to incorporate some of the features community members indicated were important – fire pit, water feature, kitchen garden, outdoor community events. The property is close to new Mernda Town Centre and is easily accessible by public transport - both train and bus.





Nioka Bush Camp

Nioka Bush Camp is located on Wurundjeri land being part of the Traditional Owner Settlement Agreement but is jointly managed by Parks Victoria as part of their responsibility for Yan Yean Reservoir. This site is utilised by the Bupup Willam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre for outdoors cultural activities including Kinder Bush Tucker program. It also has cabins, a community room and fully equipped commercial kitchen for the purpose of camps for community groups.

It has a fire pit already in place as well as a number of benches and seats. It is surrounded by trees and slopes down to the Plenty River and is close to Plenty Gorge Park. As a potential property for a purpose built Gathering it is idyllic, it is private with no public access in a bush setting with plenty of wildlife. The Wurundjeri Land Council would need to approve any use or development of the site. It is near public transport but access is difficult and only by vehicle on a very steep road that is slippery when it rains. Though not absolutely necessary, a 4WD vehicle would be an advantage.





60 Watts Road, Yan Yean – private property

This property, which has been offered to Council at no cost by the owner, is currently being considered by Council for development of a new shared community space.

The landholding is 15 hectares in size and is currently undeveloped adjoining the Plenty River and bordered by Watts Road (Laurimar) separated by the Pipe Track, Hazel Glen Drive (Mernda) and Brennan's Forest which is part of the remainder of the owner's property (approximately 17 hectares) which is used for training horses.

There is reasonable bush, plenty of bordering trees, and an abundance of wildlife.

While public transport is currently relatively limited, as the surrounding areas are developed this will improve.

Council is currently going through a process to determine how all of the 15 hectares might be used – involving a combination of public facilities (e.g. sports, solar power centre) and community groups. The amount of space that might be available for a Gathering Place is impossible to determine at this time and there are competing interests. There is an expectation by Council that spaces will be shared by organisations.

Having said this it is expected that a few hectares is potentially available, subject to current planning processes, which would be suitable for a purpose built Gathering Place. However, this may take some time to come to fruition.

It is suggested that, subject to community endorsement, this option remains under consideration should there be a preference for a purpose built Gathering Place.

New Mernda Centre

Community members thought the New Mernda Centre should be considered as the space could be provided at no cost and is very accessible by public transport.

What has been proposed for the Gathering Place is a floor within a 6 storey building. However, the consultations identified that there would be no outdoor land area to do a lot of the activities considered important for cultural and community connection and strengthening. People also commented that it was important to have a place that is clearly Aboriginal and welcoming to community members. It was the overwhelming view, that the space on offer would not be culturally safe given community members would need to enter the building through a public space.

Other Potential Sites

Two other sites were suggested – Presbyterian Church, High Street, and the property on the corner of Epping and Daws Street – neither of which were considered suitable and/or were not available.

Interim Site Options

The Aboriginal community currently access the following spaces/locations for activities and programs in the City of Whittlesea:

- Youth Space at Westfield
- Thomastown TRAC
- Elders Motivated and Deadly - the Barry Road centre
- Plenty Valley Community Health – space available beside the service and Bunnings

Comparative Analysis of Site Options

The table below highlights how well each of the site options meets the criteria that were identified by community members in relation to an “ideal” site for the Aboriginal Gathering Place.

The preferred site based on the ratings of meeting the criteria listed in priority from 1 to 10 and scoring totals out of 10 is Preston Hall – 10/10 total scoring.

Criteria (listed in priority order)	Mayfield Farm & Homestead	Preston Hall	60 Watts Street, Yan Yean	Nioka Bush Camp	Mernda Town Centre Development
1. Access to public transport					
2. Close to water					
3. Outdoor space suitable for a range of cultural and community activities including safe spaces for children, fire pit, tranquillity garden, bush tucker plantings, vegetable gardens, cultural trails and walks.					
4. Away from cemeteries and mental hospital and public facilities					
5. Away from VACCA / DHHS Child Protection					
6. Near schools to be near facilities that could be shared such as: open space, sporting and recreation facilities					
7. Not on or close to known massacre sites or other sites that historically have had a negative impact on the local community					
8. Not located near pubs (gaming machines and serving of alcohol)					
9. Not located near clubs (gaming)					
10. Away from justice related business – police, courts					
Rating Score out of 10	9/10	10/10	8/10	8/10	6/10

On the basis of the initial assessment against community developed criteria the consultants consider Preston Hall to be the preferred option for establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding and delivery options

Outside of potential funding support available from Council other sources of potential funding to support the development and delivery of proposed programs and activities to be offered by the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place include:

Victorian State Government

- Aboriginal Victoria – Governance and other Educational Training Programs
- Aboriginal Victoria – Aboriginal Community Infrastructure Program
- Department of Education – Community Training and Education Programs
- Department of Environment, Water and Planning – Our Catchments, Our Communities – Leadership Development Grants (closes 17th April 2018)
- Department of Justice – Community Initiatives Program
- Department of Justice – Indigenous Youth Frontline Management Program
 - Department of Health and Human Services – Indigenous Family Violence Community Initiatives Fund, Koolin Balit funding, Gambling program, Juvenile Justice and any surplus funding available
 - Creative Victoria – Indigenous Professional Development Program – Supports a range of opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practitioners and arts workers in Victoria

Australian Government

- National Stronger Regions Fund – infrastructure projects which deliver economic benefit and address disadvantage
- Prime Minister and Cabinet – Indigenous Advancement Strategy (five funding streams and other one-off programs spread out across each financial year)
- Prime Minister and Cabinet – Close the Gap 2 – end of 2018 (to be determined)
- Community Easy Grants – over 50 types of grants available for non-profit organisations www.fundingcentre.com.au
- Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (IT Training & Technical Support)
- Australian Film Commission – Indigenous Unit – Funding for Short Feature Films, etc. www.screenaustralia.gov.au
- Foundation for Young Australians – Youth Led Futures Grants

Fund Raising

- Donations
- Approaching Corporates and wealthy individuals in the community to commit funds towards the operations and programs, services and activities to be delivered by the Gathering Place.
- Aboriginal Gathering Place fund raising activities.

Other Funding Sources

- ANZ Charitable Trust Grants
- BHP Corporate Community Program
- Reichstein Foundation
- Myer Foundation
- Ian Potter Foundation
- National Australia Bank
- Community Chest Organisation
- Victorian Universities
- Commonwealth Australia Bank
- Westpac Bank
- Law Institute Victoria
- A range of asset management strategies including land swaps and sale of property, and – Public/private partnerships

Monitoring and Evaluation

Confirming what outcomes have been achieved from the services, programs and activities conducted at the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place will be a critical component of the Gathering Place's operations. The Overcoming disadvantage Key Performance Indicators Report (Australian Government) indicated that 'evidence based planning' will be a key requirement of funding bodies in future years in determining which ACCOs and service providers will be funded.

It is important that the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place put in place mechanisms and processes from day one to capture Aboriginal community member activity data for the services, programs and activities accessed by Aboriginal people at the Gathering Place. The development of a Reporting Framework will also provide a template for the reviews that will be held in year 2 and year 3 – the confirmed funding period for the service. At the same time, data and other information gathered will provide a basis for preparing the Activity Reports submitted to the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee and to the various funding bodies (Australian and Victorian Government).

Data Capture and Monitoring

Aboriginal community member and activity data will be an important indicator of how successful the services, programs and activities are delivered at the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place.

It is recommended that the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee Chairperson and Aboriginal Gathering Place Coordinator:

- a) Meet with the Whittlesea City Council PCG and representatives of other funding bodies to:
 - Confirm what data and/or other service activity information is to be captured
 - Clarify and confirm when Activity Reports are to be submitted to the funding bodies and in what format
- b) Meet with the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee to:
 - Confirm what data and/or other service activity information is to be presented at meetings
 - Clarify and confirm when Activity Reports are to be submitted and in what format

It is further recommended that the Gathering Place Coordinator ensure that arrangements are made with each staff member and service provider who provides outreach services to the Gathering Place to keep accurate records about the number of people who access the services, programs and/or activities at the Gathering Place. Where possible, a simple user-friendly format and mechanism should be put in place which can be accessed.

Procedures implemented should ensure that relevant data is entered each week and that monthly reports are prepared and submitted to the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place. Data and other information gathered should reflect the Activity Reporting requirements of funding bodies to ensure that minimal time lags occur when submitting Annual Activity Reports.

Arrangements should be put in place to gather individual feedback from participants accessing the programs and activities run by the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place. Qualitative information should be gathered to confirm what outcomes were achieved as a result of the program or activity. This will assist with monitoring arrangements and provide a benchmark on which to make changes to the content, structure and delivery of funded and non-funded activities. Where possible, these requirements should be explained to participants at the beginning of each activity so it is clear why it is important to gather this information.

At the same time, it will be important to stress how gathering feedback will assist the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place and participants to create an environment which is based on 'evidence based planning'. If adopted, this approach will also facilitate the creation of community led decision making processes which strengthen service responses in providing access to culturally safe and secure services, programs and activities.

Activity Reports

It is recommended that an Activity Report template be prepared within 3 months of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place being staffed. Information contained in the Activity Reports should include the following:

Item	Information
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Type – List of outreach services provided/accessed • Aboriginal community members – Number, age, gender, other • Costs – How much outsourced service response costs
Programs	No. of programs held each period with specific about the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Room/area at the Centre – where the activity was held – Purpose – description about the program – Participants – number, age, gender, other – Program costs – direct and indirect – Outcomes achieved – including comments & evaluation by participants – Follow up – yes, no
Activities	No. of activities held each period with specific about the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Room/area at the Centre – where the activity was held – Purpose – description about the activity – Participants – number, age, gender, other – Activity costs – direct and indirect – Outcomes achieved – including comments & evaluation by participants – Follow up – yes, no
Funding Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of funding applications made each period • Description of funding application – who to, what for, how much, etc • Response – Approved/Declined, comments including follow up action

It is recommended that the Centre Coordinator prepare monthly, quarterly and annual Activity Reports which are submitted to the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee. Arrangements should be made with the relevant funding bodies to confirm what their requirements are for submitting Activity Reports. It is recommended that arrangements are made to publish and circulate Activity Reports to the various partners and other key stakeholders – as required. If possible, this information should also be published/posted on the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee website which contains information about the Gathering Place.

Evaluation

It is recommended that a full review and evaluation process of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee occur at the end of year 3 to confirm what outcomes have been achieved as the result of the Service being in operation. It is further recommended that a draft 'Review Terms of Reference' document is prepared by the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Committee in year 1 so it is clear what aspects of the Service will be reviewed and evaluated in year 3.

This approach will help to identify and establish what specific performance indicators will be measured and tested during the review process. It will also create a clear framework for the Gathering Place staff upon which to construct their data capturing and reporting arrangements.

Final Comments

The Feasibility Study has shown there is a sufficient level of interest, commitment and support establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place in Whittlesea.

The idea and passion for a place for the members of the Aboriginal community in Whittlesea to “call their own” is not new and has grown since conceived over 10 years ago by respected Elders in the region.

Whilst the project has identified a preferred option for a site that, with some renovations and refurbishments, would provide a space that could be used relatively soon, much still needs to be done on the part of Council and community to ensure the community’s aspirations can be realised.

As community members have told us through this process the Gathering Place is important and will be utilised and nurtured. The community members were consulted were unanimous in their views as to why it is important for Council to continue working towards finding the resources and making the effort to establish the Gathering Place.

“[A Gathering Place will be] a place for Aboriginal people to feel safe, but also open to the public and some opportunities for small business enterprises.”

“[It will be] a safe place to feel welcome and any Aboriginal person across Australia could walk in there have a cuppa or see some local art or meet people, or join a program.”

Appendices

Appendix One – Question Guides

Key Questions were used to guide the consultations and also incorporated into an on-line survey. Examples of stakeholder responses to specific questions appear throughout the project report. Direct comments made/written responses provided appear in the report as quotes. Responses provided are clustered together around common issues or topics and inform the proposed model and recommendations:

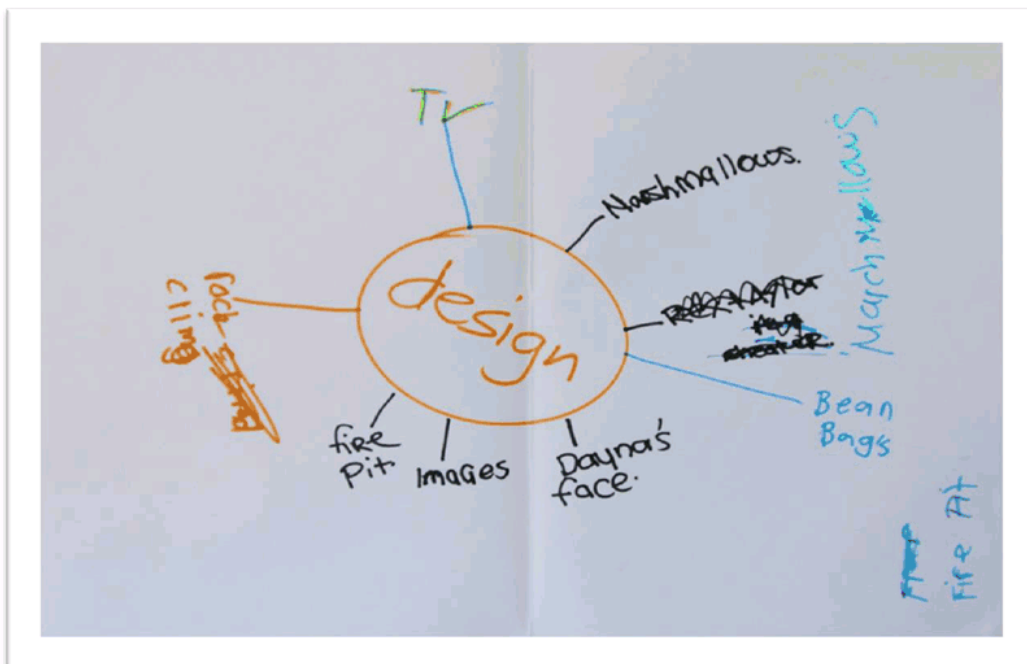
- The purpose of the Gathering Place
- What types of activities, events, programs and services could be delivered in the Gathering Place? Why are they important to the community? What are the barriers to accessing those services now?
- Who would use the Gathering Place?
- The space itself – what types of spaces need to be included – what should they look like, feel like and what functions will they fulfil? What symbols, fittings and design features, etc. need to be included to ensure that the Gathering Place is significant to the Whittlesea Aboriginal community?
- Where could it be located? Where shouldn't it be located?
- Should it be stand-alone or co-located? Are there interim options (prior to the Gathering Place being built)?
- What are the cultural issues and protocols that need to be considered in the location and design?
- What are the issues that need to be considered in terms of providing community members with easy access?
- What would this Centre mean to the community today, in five years' time, and for the next generation?
- Who should run the Gathering Place? How should it be governed? What staff will be needed to run the programs and services?
- What connections and partnerships with other organisations are important?
- How should it be funded?
- Are there fund raising opportunities? If so, what are some of these ideas?

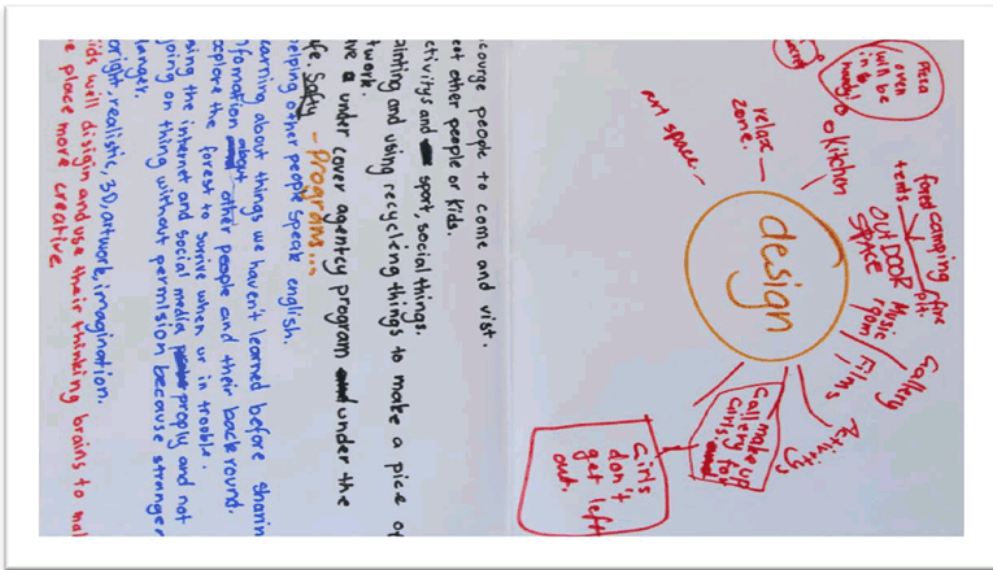
Qualifications to the Consultations

It should be noted that whilst the consultants made every effort to schedule consultations to accommodate stakeholder availability, some people were unable to participate in focus group sessions due to competing priorities.

There were some difficulties encountered in organising stakeholder consultations and many had to be held towards the end of 2017 possibly impacting the numbers of people attending.

Appendix 2 - Young people's views on design of the Gathering Place





Appendix 3 - Risks and Barriers

The following risks and barriers have been identified as part of the project requirements:

Potential Risks/Barriers	Actions	Responsibility
Community “needs” don’t fit well / clash with Council’s existing strategic planning priorities.	<p>The PCG liaises across Council divisions to ensure commitment to the Aboriginal Gathering Place is considered in all planning activities.</p> <p>The Gathering Place project is incorporated into Whittlesea Council’s Strategic Plan and continues to be supported in its Stretch Reconciliation Action Plans beyond 2020.</p>	PCG, Council, Executive Team
Council unable to engage suitable partners to guarantee long-term financial sustainability.	<p>As part of this project Karen Milward Consulting has identified government partners who may be able to contribute financially to either the interim and/or long-term site.</p> <p>Council seek further funding to support infrastructure as well as operational costs (including local businesses, service clubs etc).</p> <p>Community members using the Gathering Place have a role in fundraising events and activities (see consultation findings around suggestions made by community members).</p>	KMC Services, PCG
Council decision-making authorities and criteria compromise the community’s preferred design and/or site location.	<p>Ensure decision makers are adequately briefed about critical cultural design issues.</p> <p>Further consultation with community on which Gathering Place features are negotiable and which features are not.</p>	PCG, possibly KMC Services
Depending on location, residents may object to the establishment and operation of a Gathering Place in “their” neighbourhood.	<p>Community consultation/ and awareness raising should occur to promote the benefits and Council’s commitment – involving members of Whittlesea Reconciliation Group and Council.</p> <p>The Council and WRG consider opportunities for activities and programs that are inclusive of the broader community. Community consultations generally indicated that including and providing opportunities for the broader community to be involved in the Gathering Place.</p> <p>Opening of the Gathering Place a memorable event specifically inviting and welcoming residents of the local community. Media is engaged to promote and report on the event.</p> <p>Consideration is given to engaging residents and other members of the broader community to contribute as volunteers.</p> <p>An annual “reconciliation” event is held with support from Council.</p>	Council / WRG

<p>Service agencies are slow to/ unable to take up the opportunities to provide services out of the Gathering Place.</p>	<p>Council (led by the Multicultural & Aboriginal Strategic Unit) hold discussions with relevant local and relevant statewide services to take up invitations to be a co-located service (limited number) or an “outreach/ visiting” service provider.</p>	
<p>Service agencies staff not familiar with working in an ACCO.</p>	<p>All agencies providing services into the Gathering Place are required to participate in Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training and be involved collectively in ongoing professional development in relation to working with and meeting community needs.</p> <p>Partnership Guidelines are developed by Council to ensure agencies invited/ selected can provide culturally sensitive and appropriate services to meet community needs.</p> <p>MOUs/ Contracts with Agencies clearly outline service performance requirements and consequences for non-compliance.</p>	
<p>Governance & Operations</p>	<p>Council supports activities to build governance and management capacity over the transition period. Karen Milward Consulting could support this work if required.</p>	
<p>Community members do not use the Gathering Place at levels required to ensure viability</p>	<p>Whittlesea Council develop promotional and marketing activities to engage community.</p> <p>Community members are invited to contribute ideas about internal furnishings, artwork etc, as well as landscaping.</p> <p>Community members are involved in designing (and possibly making/building) a unique feature of the building that represents the story of the community.</p> <p>Processes are put in place to enable community input and feedback. At least annually, community members are formally consulted around service provision in the Gathering Place.</p> <p>Processes are put in place to enable community members to have input into the planning of annual community events and activities.</p>	<p>Council, WRG, Major Projects</p>



DRAFT BUSINESS CASE ABORIGINAL GATHERING PLACE

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Project Sponsor: Kate McCaughey

Prepared by	
Name:	Nick Butera
Position:	Team Leader Aboriginal & Cultural Diversity
Department:	Aboriginal & Cultural Diversity & Capital Delivery
Version Number:	4
Date:	June 2021

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea and the Gathering Place Working Group recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the Traditional Owners of this place.

We acknowledge the vision of Elders and community members who have gone before us and their perseverance to see a Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea. This document is another step along the way.



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Executive Summary

Note the figures and timelines described in the draft Business Case are preliminary, high level and subject to change

In summary, this Draft Business Case recommends:

1. Council note the Investment Logic Map, the Community Vision and operating principles.
2. Note work to date regarding options and model of service provision.
3. Note a report will be brought to Council by March 2022 outlining a final Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case, operational governance arrangements, detailed costings, and a site assessment update.
4. Council make a provision in 2021/22 Capital Works Program Design Budget for design of the gathering place (\$250,000), pending approval and further detail out of site planning and business case in February 2022.
5. Council staff continue to work with the community to develop their capacity to manage a community asset.

More detailed recommendations are included in section 11.

In preparing the business case, the following project objectives were identified:

1. Provide an Aboriginal Gathering Place Facility
2. Apply principles of self-determination which facilitate Aboriginal community management of the proposed Gathering Place

The need for an Aboriginal Gathering Place is driven by significant deficits in health and wellbeing for Aboriginal communities that contribute to higher rates of family dysfunction and violence, lack of social cohesion, and higher rates of physical and mental health problems. Whittlesea has a significant and growing Aboriginal population of 1,633 (second largest in Metro Melbourne) who have limited access to Aboriginal specific culturally appropriate services that respond to their immediate and long-term cultural needs.

The approach to draft the Business Case was based on the principles of self-determination and acknowledged that only policies and actions that are developed with Aboriginal people, and are specific to the needs of Aboriginal people, are effective in improving health and wellbeing outcomes. The Business Case has worked with the Aboriginal Community across 24 months to ensure the community's vision is accurately articulated and reflected.

Table 1: Options assessment summary



Draft Business Case – **Aboriginal Gathering Spaces**
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4



Requirement	Option 1 Do Nothing	Option 2 Lease Space	Option 3 Preston Hall Minor refurbishment and major extension	Option 4 Quarry Hills New development
Total Capital Cost	0	\$200,000	\$ 11,757,669	\$8,006,219
TOTAL SCORE:	5	9	16	17
CONCLUSION:	Options 1 and 2 fail to meet the project objectives and are not considered viable. Except as an interim or pilot project. Options 3 and 4 meet the project objectives and score highly. However further work is required to develop a concept, accurate costings and clarify the impact of the assumptions and constraints.			

A preliminary Economic & Financial Analysis Report produced by Urban Enterprise outlined significant economic and health and wellbeing benefits including:

- Generating up to 70 jobs (FTE) during construction, and up to 8 Aboriginal jobs (FTE) for the ongoing operation of the facility.
- Vast social benefits including improved health and wellbeing, reduced rates of incarceration, increased connection to culture, and increased education and employment outcomes. When health and wellbeing benefits were translated into monetary benefits, previous research demonstrated that Gathering Places consistently produce a cost benefit greater than 1 (with an average of 4.4)
- Analyses of other similar centres (in Australia and overseas) clearly demonstrate the viability of such facilities, and preliminary financial business modelling for the Aboriginal Gathering Place in Whittlesea suggest similar outcomes for Options Three and Four.

1. Description of service need

Problems

Investment Logic Mapping

The Investment Logic Mapping Process outlined the following problems:

1. Aboriginal Land has been stolen and the community lives with a great sense of loss
2. Aboriginal's rights to make decisions are being denied and they can't thrive
3. Aboriginal culture is not valued, and this impacts their sense of belonging

The Investment Logic Map is attached as **Appendix A**.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Status

Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea have limited access to Aboriginal specific culturally appropriate services that respond to their immediate and long-term cultural needs. The population





increase has resulted in an increase in the demand for services, as was reported in the City of Whittlesea's Human Services Needs Analysis Snapshot conducted in March 2018. While there are 14 Aboriginal Gathering Places across Victoria, none are located in the Northern Metropolitan region.

In addition, the *Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Status 2015 (Health InfoNet 2016)* presents indicators of Aboriginal health that show some disturbing trends:

- Aboriginal people are 2.7 times more likely to feel high or very high levels of psychological distress;
- The death rate from intentional harm (Suicide) is 2.2 times the rate reported for non-Indigenous people;
- The life expectancy is around 10 years less than the estimates for non-Indigenous people;
- Hospitalisation rates for circulatory disease are almost twice as high than for non-Indigenous people;
- Aboriginal people die from diabetes at six times the rate on non-Indigenous people.

These challenges contribute to a number of negative social outcomes for residents when compared to the average for residents living in metropolitan Melbourne, including;

- Higher rates of family dysfunction and violence
- Lack of social cohesion
- Higher rates of physical and mental health problems.

City of Whittlesea general population - Health and Wellbeing

- The Eastern Melbourne Public Health Network (EMPHN) needs assessment identifies Whittlesea as having the highest rate of people aged over 18 years with high or very high psychological distress. Our municipality's psychological distress rating for this age group is above the Victorian average. The Gathering Place proposal has been developed as an initiative designed to foster connection and belonging to land, culture and community for both indigenous and non-indigenous community members. For example, it is anticipated that the facility will have the potential to host multiple school groups each week as well as a range of other health and wellbeing programs. To this end, if endorsed the Gathering Place will be a major health and wellbeing initiative of Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan (to be incorporated in the 2021- 25 Council Plan).

Opportunities

Whittlesea has a population of 1,633 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, constituting 0.83% of Whittlesea's population. In addition, the population is increasing rapidly, growing by 46% between 2011 and 2016, faster than the 33% for Melbourne as a whole. This trend is expected to continue.

Improved health and wellbeing

In 2016, Melbourne University's Indigenous Health Equity Unit was commissioned to prepare a study titled *Gathering places in the eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne: places for inclusion*,





connection and empowerment for the Department of Health and Human Services. The study evaluated the health and wellbeing outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gathering place model in Victoria and found they have:

- Direct positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals and community;
- Provide a safe and inclusive space to connect;
- Support the sharing of knowledge; and,
- Empower people through social, cultural and healing activities.

Aboriginal Gathering Places and the broader community

- Beyond the critical health and wellbeing benefits for the Aboriginal community, Aboriginal Gathering places provide significant benefits to the broader community. Gathering places are fundamentally inclusive and welcoming spaces for all—by their very nature they attract and embrace anyone in need of support—including non-Indigenous people.
- A 2016 Melbourne University study for the Department of Health and Human Services, Health and Wellbeing Outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gathering Place Model in Victoria, found that the effect on the wider non-Indigenous community and other mainstream community and government services is pronounced, with most gathering places working hard to establish strong partnerships and networks with external programs
- The vision for Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place is of a place that serves the broader community and provides regular and ongoing opportunities for non-Aboriginal community members to learn and engage with local Aboriginal culture and history, including through school tours, cultural competency training for workplaces and cultural events and programming.

Background

The first conversations about a Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea go back to the late 1990s. The starting point being the vision of Uncle Reg Blow, a few Elders and some young people. Since that time Uncle Reg has passed, along with some of our Elders, and the young people are no longer young. Today, Elders still want to see a Gathering Place established in the City of Whittlesea and a new generation of young people continue to advocate for a place where they can (re)connect to culture and feel that they belong.

Council's commitment to reconciliation and improving the wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea dates back to 2001 with the establishment of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG). The WRG have been and continue to be strong advocates for the benefits and positive social and wellbeing outcomes that Aboriginal Gathering Places provide. In 2018 Council completed a Feasibility Study which recommended a Gathering Place be established at Preston Hall in the MRRR. In building on this Feasibility Study Council officers have undertaken a preliminary business case (this report) and an investment logic mapping exercise. Given the lack of an agreed concept design cost estimates within this report should be considered 'high level' and indicative in nature.





In June and August 2019, the first Gathering Place business case was presented to ELT and Council respectively.

- ELT endorsed ILM, Community Vision & Operating Principles
- ELT noted that Options 1 (Do Nothing) & 2 (Lease space) are not viable
- ELT Directed staff to Council to build capacity of Aboriginal Governance Group
- Proceed with planning for Preston Hall as the preferred site but also
 - investigate whether the existing building can be used by Gathering Place Governance Group from 2021 (the end of the current lease) as an interim facility
 - At the same time - investigate other Greenfield options that work for the Aboriginal Governance Group AND that could be developed earlier than the Preston Hall site.

In April-June 2020, a Council Action Plan initiative delivered intensive leadership and governance training to the AGPGG.

In July 2020, new potential Gathering Place sites were identified and presented to the AGPGG including

- 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang (known as Quarry Hills) and,
- 1420 Plenty Rd, Mernda (known as Mayfield Farm).

At the same time significant new issues were identified at the initial preferred site of Preston Hall (Mernda).

In November 2020 the AGPGG unanimously agreed that Quarry Hills site it their preferred option.

What is a 'Gathering Place'?

A Gathering Place is a physically, socially and culturally safe place for Aboriginal people. They are led by Aboriginal people and broadly aim to support enhanced outcomes, increase connection to culture, and facilitate healing for Aboriginal people.

'Gathering Places are community owned and operated places that provide opportunities for people to connect and deliver services.'

(Aboriginal Victoria - Local Aboriginal Networks and Gathering Places)

Outlined below are examples of Gathering Places operating successfully in Victoria.

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Croydon

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) is a community controlled Aboriginal organisation based in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. MMIGP is an Aboriginal Neighbourhood House and is designed with developmental model which evolves over time according to identified need. The MMIGP aims to support the enhanced outcomes for the Aboriginal community of the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne by providing a range of programs and activities that:

- Lengthen life
- Strengthening children, young people and families
- Have cultural integrity and safety
- Support to implement innovative community-based approaches and solutions
- Collaborative planning and decision-making based on community-driven priorities





- Stronger partnerships between Aboriginal and mainstream services; and
- Stronger partnerships with government.

Willum Warrain Aboriginal Gathering Place, Hastings

Willum Warrain ('home by the sea') Aboriginal Association is the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the Mornington Peninsula. It is a Gathering Place where Aboriginal people come together to realize community aspirations and forge shared identity.

Managed by an Aboriginal board, and supported by seven staff members, Willum Warrain is located in the coastal town of Hastings and provides information and referral services, charitable support, health and wellbeing programs, art and culture programs, and links between the Aboriginal community and the broader local community. The core strategic focus is cultural strengthening.

2. Project objectives and scope

Objectives

The object of the project is to increase the health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal community by establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea. The vision is for a facility that operates on the principles of culturally inclusive access, self-determination and sustainability based on best practice approaches that support co-design principles with the Aboriginal community. There are two objectives set out in this business case:

1. Provide an Aboriginal Gathering Place Facility
2. Facilitate a transition to the Aboriginal community control of a Gathering Place

Benefits

The anticipated benefits from an Aboriginal Gathering Place were outlined in the Investment Logic Mapping Process and included:

1. Increased sense of belonging and connection to culture
2. Increased self-determination
3. Increased health and wellbeing outcomes
4. Increased opportunities for Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and awareness and valuing of Aboriginal culture

Scope

The following items are in-scope:

- Establishment of an Aboriginal Gathering Place Facility
- Facilitation of a transition to Aboriginal community control of the Facility

The ILM process proposed a series of complementary service and asset solutions to the problems identified. However, many are outside the scope of the project.





The following items are out-of-scope:

- Council Recognition that the land was stolen and that some should be returned
- The return of some land to the Aboriginal community
- Increasing the number of culturally appropriate places to gather
- Attracting more Aboriginal Community Controlled services, and sports and recreation to the municipality
- Increasing access to culturally appropriate mainstream services

Policy and strategy

The project directly aligns to Goal 1 a Connected Community within *Whittlesea 2040* and is listed in the *Council Action Plan 2019-2020 (Update 2019)* within '1.2 A healthy and safe community'.

Other policy and strategy links include:

- Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2022 (City of Whittlesea)
- Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy (City of Whittlesea)
- Community Building Strategy 2017 (City of Whittlesea)
- Equal and Safe, Family Violence Strategy (City of Whittlesea)
- **Koolin Balit Aboriginal Health Strategy 2012 –2022 (Victorian Government)** Korin Korin Balit-Djak Plan (Victorian Government) Details how DHHS will work with Aboriginal communities, community organisations, other government departments and mainstream service providers – now and into the future – to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal people in Victoria.
- The Australian Government's National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

3. Governance

Phase 1 Operational model – roles and responsibilities

Appendix C articulates a Project Phases Plan with operational and governance models moving towards greater community control and autonomy during Phase 2.

Council role

At this stage, the AGPGG have requested that Council play a central role in the provision of staffing, utilities, facility/site capital and maintenance costs. The final business case will also identify opportunities for the initiative to become more self-sustaining and identify other external funding sources from Council.

City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group

Central to the successful delivery of this project will be the establishment of different governance arrangements which share leadership, responsibility and 'power sharing' between Council and local Aboriginal communities. This best practice as evidenced in the Uluru Statement of the Heart, the current





Treaty Process in Victoria and the Closing the Gap Targets which each articulate that self-determination is critical not just to the process but to the outcome itself.

This is a different model for Council and requires an appetite for trying new approaches

To this end it is proposed that Council transition the AGPGG to become a formal advisory committee to Council, called the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (AGPAG). The terms of reference are provided as **Appendix D** and illustrated in **Figure 1** below. It is proposed that a modest honorarium be paid to WAGPAG community members (excluding staff members who may also be WAGPAG members).

This draft Business Case recognises the Aboriginal community will be central to direction and decision-making, and that there will be a need to build community capacity and relationships in parallel to the facility planning.

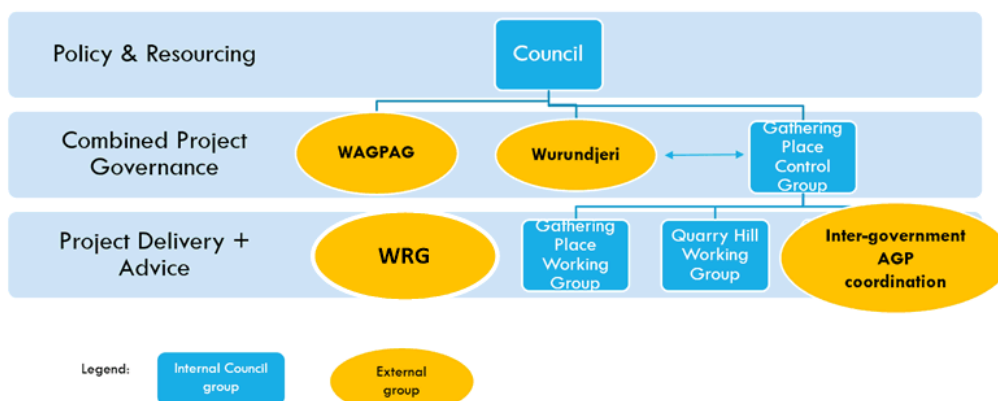


Figure 1: Proposed Phase 1 governance

Traditional Owners - Wurundjeri

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (Wurundjeri) is the organisation representing the traditional owners of the land upon which the Gathering Place is proposed to be established. To date, several meetings have been held with Wurundjeri about the Gathering Place project and Wurundjeri have expressed strong support for the project.

Noting the critical nature of the relationship with Wurundjeri, the proposed establishment of the WAGPA includes two seats for Wurundjeri Traditional Owners.

In addition, Council will undertake a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation which will be commissioned in 2021 and may impact on program delivery timeframes. A Cultural Values Study for the broader Quarry Hills Regional Park has also been commissioned and Wurundjeri will inform future design, interpretation and opportunities in the Park.

Performance and monitoring

The following Governance from the Project Management Framework (PMF) will be applied to this project.

Table 2: Project organisation and governance

PROJECT BOARD	Project Sponsor:	Director Community Wellbeing
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	Delivery Manager/s:	Manager Project Delivery Manager Aboriginal and Cultural Diversity
PROJECT CONTROL GROUP		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Community Wellbeing • Manager Project Delivery • Manager Aboriginal & Cultural Diversity • Project Management officer
SPONSOR COORDINATOR		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Supported by Team Leader Aboriginal and Cultural Diversity
PROJECT DELIVERY MANGER		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager Project Delivery (capital) • Manager Aboriginal & Cultural Diversity (operational)
DELIVERY RESPONSIBILITY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project manager (capital & operational)
PROJECT WORKING GROUP (internal)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project manager • Aboriginal & Cultural Diversity • Project Delivery • City Design • Project Management office • Community Infrastructure • Conservation Management • Community Development • Other community service teams
TRADITIONAL OWNERS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal on-going engagement through Council’s regular meetings with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. • Also engaged through cultural heritage studies etc.
ABORIGINAL GATHERING PLACE ADVISORY GROUP (membership through an EOI)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As described in Appendix D
Inter Government Coordination Group		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC - Representatives from key government agencies (DELWP, Reconciliation Victoria, Aboriginal Victoria,





	Department of Health Department of Health, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing etc.
City of Whittlesea Reconciliation Working Group (WRG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included as a standard item on the WRG agenda for information and updates.

DRAFT





4. Stakeholder identification and consultation

Key community documents

The AGPGG has convened since 2019 on twelve occasions to discuss and develop the findings of the Gathering Place Feasibility Study and to articulate the community vision, operating model and governance model. The AGPGG also visited other Gathering Places to learn about different approaches, and in May 2020 completed intensive Leadership and Governance Training (Council Plan 2020/2021 Major Initiative: AGP Leadership).

A number of key documents have been prepared in consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. These documents complement and inform this draft Business Plan, and include:

- **Community Vision and Investment Logic Map 2020:** In 2020 Council supported community members to prepare a Community Vision + Investment Logic Map.
- **Aboriginal Gathering Place Feasibility Study 2018:** In 2018 Council engaged a consult to work with community members to prepare a Feasibility Study.

Identification

Table 3: Stakeholder identification

Stakeholder Group/Name	Relationship to project	Consultation already undertaken	Synergies, benefits, concerns	Actions/responses	Timing of activities	Staff member responsible
Aboriginal Governance Group	Decision Making Group	9 sessions with 11 elected community representatives	Outlined critical community needs and priorities (infrastructure, programs, services) and preferred operations and governance options for a Gathering Place.	Moving forward this group would continue to drive and govern the project	Bi-monthly	Barry Firebrace
Investment Logic Mapping Working Group	Decision Making Group	3 Sessions	Outlined high level needs and benefits for ILM process	Completed	May, June 2020	Steve Ward
Whittlesea Reconciliation Group	Consultations	Ongoing	Strong Support, concern around Council Commitment	Continue to inform	Ongoing	Barry Firebrace & Nick Butera
Aboriginal Elders	Consultations	3 sessions	Strong Support, potential to host Elders at new	Continue to inform	Jan, March,	Barry Firebrace





Planned Activity Group			Gathering Place Site		April 2019	
Aboriginal Young People	Consultations	1 session	Strong Support, highlighted need for culturally safe youth spaces	Continue to inform	July 2018	Nick Butera
Aboriginal Community	Consultations	12 session with 67 Aboriginal community members	Highlighted as a critical need to increase connection and health and wellbeing	Continue to inform	Feb-July 2018	Barry Firebrace & Nick Butera

5. Options analysis

Table 4: Summary of options

Option Name	Scope	Assumptions
Option 1 – Do nothing	Business as usual, hire existing spaces at community centres such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barry Road CAC, Epping CAC, Galada CAC, Mernda Village CAC, Mill Park Lakes CAC, Whittlesea CAC No meeting room or hall hire fees taken 10% allocation from existing hire schedule Able to be implemented within six months
Option 2 – Lease space plus open space	Appropriately located lease for indoor service delivery. Utilise open space in a different location for specific activities, a community bus could use used to transport community to open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example a rental space that allows for 1000 sq m Able to be implemented within 12 months Access to parkland in Council ownership could be used for cultural programs in an outdoor setting. A modest building with a changeroom, kitchenette and small foyer space will be available or built Dedicated facility for the Aboriginal community
Option 3 – Preston Hall at MRRR	Mernda Regional Recreation Reserve. Same footprint as option 3, however access to existing Preston Hall heritage facility which will add at least \$550k in restoration and refurbishment fees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the heritage asset as a gathering space will be limited due to the planning and building controls that are triggered when a building changes use New facility will be linked to the existing Preston Hall via passageway Able to implement between 2024 and 2029
Option 4 – 105/105W Hunters Road, South Morang (Quarry Hills)	This option allowed for a new build dedicated Gathering Place with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal areas between 545 and 1090 sq m Carparking between 1650 and 3300 sq m Landcaping Utilities 	-The property currently has an existing residential dwelling and sheds (see appendix B) and is leased out as a residential property. The current lease expires in December 2020 with the tenant vacating the property at this -Able to implement between 2021 and 2029 -Would be similar to other community centres and could be delivered with greater certainty of cost and outcome.





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 star building • 15% contingency See image in Appendix B.	
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A Gathering Place within the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland

Following the identification of issues at the Preston Hall (Mernda) site, the AGPGG were presented with alternative location at 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang (known as Quarry Hills). The AGPGG have visited this site and strongly endorse it as the preferred site for the AGP (refer **Figure 2** below)

105 Hunters Lane South Morang is a large parcel of land (100.7 ha), which is planned to be part of Granite Hills Park (part of the larger Quarry Hills Regional Parkland). This parcel is comprised of two parcels - 105W Hunters Lane (the substantial component) and will become the parkland, and 105Y Hunters Lane (a small compound for Yarra Valley Water’s water tank).

The shaded area in **Figure 3** below (6 ha) is located on an elevated plateau and has been identified as a suitable site for a Gathering Place and may contain outdoor places that support activities within a Gathering Place. Within this area, the red circled area (1 ha) contains the former farm residence and associated structures. This area is likely to be the best location for a future facility (refer **Figure 4**).

This is a high-level assessment only and will need further detailed assessment and consultation to identify the actual area needed and improvements required.

The site enjoys an elevated aspect, is zoned Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ); and has both Bushfire and Cultural Heritage Overlays. The property is owned by Council and currently has an existing (vacant) residential dwelling and sheds (see Figure 3). Enhanced road and other infrastructure and services to support public uses would be required if the project were to progress.





Figure 2: Site context





Figure 3: Gathering Place – shaded area (6 ha). Circled area = facility location



Figure 4: Gathering Place – existing facilities

The preferred site is adjacent (500m) the Granite Hills Playground development (currently under construction). A new facility at the Granite Hills Development has the potential to serve as a complimentary gateway to the AGP by providing an entrance and orientation. Based on the success of the All Abilities Play Space in Mill Park, the Granite Hills Playground has the potential to attract high numbers of people every week that could be connected physically and educationally to the AGP.

Moving forward there may opportunities to develop these facilities for mutual benefit including:

- Catering options and shelter for families at the playground
- A function room for hire for local families
- Interpretation providing cultural information about the AGP and local Aboriginal history and culture





- Providing long term sustainability to the AGP

This complimentary gateway project requires further investigation and feasibility.

Quadruple bottom line assessment

Note the figures described in the draft Business Case are preliminary, high level and subject to change.

Table 5: Options assessment summary

Requirement	Option 1 – Do Nothing	Option 2 – Lease space plus open space	Option 3 – Preston Hall at MRRR	Option 4 – 105 Hunters Rd, Quarry Hills
Capital Costs (High Level Estimate)				
Upfront Capital Cost (\$)	0	\$200,000	\$11,757,669	\$6,000,000
Upfront services Cost (\$)				\$2,000,000* (estimate)
Operating Costs				
Utilities (1% OF CapEx)		\$7,000	\$117,577	\$60,000
Maintenance (1% OF CapEx)		\$2,000	\$117,577	\$60,00
WAGPA Honarium	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040
Staff (.6 FTE)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Staff (1 FTE)	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Rental	\$15,000	\$120,000		
TOTAL OpEx Over 25	\$2,875,000	\$5,725,000	\$8,378,835	\$8,376,000**
TOTAL LIFECYCLE COST (OpEx+CapEx)	\$2,875,000	\$6,425,000	\$20,136,504	\$14,876,264***
Scoring				
Fit to Objectives	0	2	5	5
Financial Score (assign score based on above figures)	4	3	2	2
Economic Benefit Score (assign score based on above figures)	0	2	5	5
Community Score	1	2	4	5
TOTAL SCORE:	5	9	17	16





CONCLUSION:	Options 1 and 2 fail to meet the project objectives and are not considered viable, except as an interim or pilot project. Options 3 and 4 meet the project objectives and score highly. However further work is required to develop a concept, accurate costings and clarify the impact of the assumptions and constraints.
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These financial implications are not currently reflected in the 4/15 New Works Program.

*Benefit Score:
 0 = worst case position (high cost and/or no objectives realised);
 1 = marginal benefit generated (high cost and some objectives realised);
 2 = modest benefit generated (moderate cost and some objectives realised);
 3 = reasonably good benefit generated (low cost and many objectives realised)
 4 = significant benefit generated (low cost and some high level of objectives realised); and
 5 = best case position (lowest cost and highest level of realisation of objectives).

*Upfront services cost (including connecting power, water and sewage) require further assessment but could be between one to two million dollars

**Total Lifecycle Cost does not include upfront services cost which require further assessment but could be in vicinity of two million+ dollars.

***Total Lifecycle Cost includes an estimated two million dollars for upfront services cost and is an indicative estimate only that requires further investigation

Appendix B provides information on the site assessment for 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang and possible options for use as a community facility including some high-level costs.

6. Critical assumptions and constraints

Assumptions

- The ILM created by this project will be owned and endorsed by Executive Leadership Team.
- Costs contained within Table 7 are high level only and based on assumptions. These costs need further exploration based on advice received from the Executive Leadership Team as well as the NWP Building Board.
- Being Aboriginal controlled is critical to the success of the Gathering Place. However, it is expected there will be a number of stages involved in achieving community controlled. This journey will take several years and will require a partnership between the community and the Council, which will in the first instance auspice the Gathering Place.
- Once established a long-term lease will be provided to the Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group/Association.
- Forecast revenue and expenditure for the options are being undertaken by Urban Enterprise Pty Ltd and will inform a more detailed business case on the final preferred option. This more detailed financial analysis for all options can take place in July and August 2019.

Constraints

- The timelines to commence building of the Gathering Place is dependent on development progress of the broader Mernda Regional Recreation Reserve. The business case for the broader Mernda Regional Recreation Reserve has not yet commenced, therefore timing of Option 4 could be delayed and may not be possible until between 2023 and 2029.





- The existing building on the Preston Hall site has Heritage overlays which will limit renovations options and use. Planning and building controls are triggered when a building changes use and this will constrain any use of Preston Hall.
- The existing Governance capacity of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group is limited and would require time and resources to increase capacity.

7. Social/economic/environmental impacts

The benefits from a Gathering Place are articulated in section 2 above as well as the Community Vision and the Investment Logic Map.

However, a preliminary Economic & Financial Analysis Report produced by Urban Enterprise also outlined significant economic and health and wellbeing benefits including:

- Generating up to 70 jobs (FTE) during construction, and up to 8 Aboriginal jobs (FTE) for the ongoing operation of the facility.
- Vast social benefits including improved health and wellbeing, reduced rates of incarceration, increased connection to culture, and increased education and employment outcomes. When health and wellbeing benefits were translated into monetary benefits, previous research demonstrated that Gathering Places consistently produce a cost benefit greater than 1 (with an average of 4.4)
- Analyses of other similar centres (in Australia and overseas) clearly demonstrate the viability of such facilities. Preliminary financial business modelling for the Aboriginal Gathering Place in Whittlesea suggests similarly positive outcomes are likely for Options 3/4.

The influence of Gathering Places on health is evident. Gathering Places are crucial hubs for people to engage in activities that address their social, physical, cultural, and emotional, health and wellbeing needs. Social and emotional wellbeing is recognised as an important determinant of health for Aboriginal people and is interrelated with other social, cultural and political factors such as connection to country, spirituality, culture, community, family, and mental and physical health.

A 2016 Melbourne University study for the Department of Health and Human Services, *Health and Wellbeing Outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Gathering Place Model in Victoria*, found that:

- Many programs and activities target the underlying social determinants of health that are crucial in closing the health gap for Aboriginal people in Victoria
- Gathering Places are a conduit to other services in the region and link community members to specific health services
- Gathering Places are pivotal to the cultural connection and continuance of positive pathways for Aboriginal children and young people
- The effect on the wider non-Indigenous community and other mainstream community and government services is also pronounced, with most gathering places working hard to establish strong partnerships and networks with external programs
- Gathering Places provide the space for cultural learning, and the transmission of knowledge and culture, which in turn builds pride and strength within communities and families





- Having a safe space to engage with culture and other Aboriginal people is important for developing resilience and belonging. For young people, the importance of Gathering Places is in the non-judgmental and welcoming environment created through these spaces.

8. Risk assessment

Table 6: Project Risk

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Budget over expend Cost estimate has been prepared without the use of a concept for the preferred site and as such it has assumptions embedded.	Medium	Scope space and area schedule to site specifications Ensure soil testing to determine anticipated amount of earth works/rock excavation required. Continued discussion on prioritisation of design components throughout life of the project. Market test construction cost through RFQ procurement process.
Project timeframe overrun	Medium	Negotiation of realistic timeframes with preferred contractor. Determine all timing risks when producing work plan timeframe. Ensure contract includes timing/completion clauses.
Community Resentment regarding timeline. Option 4 may not be realised until 2029.	Medium	Transparent information sharing with community to keep them informed. Establishing realistic expectations from outset. Consideration be given to an interim site – such as Option 2.
Poor Aboriginal Community Governance / Community politics	Medium	Provide training program and establish networks between them and other Gathering Place Governance Groups. Promote clear and transparent governance processes. Ensure transition to community control is over appropriate timeframe and responsive to community capacity.

9. Procurement strategy and previous lessons learned

Procurement

Council’s procurement procedure will be utilised to engage a consultant design team to undertake the full scope of design services from design development through detailed design and documentation. Upon approval of the final design, an open tender process will then be undertaken. Council will also prioritise Aboriginal-led design consultants and services and encourage other opportunities in line with the principles of co-design and Council’s Social Procurement Strategy.

Council currently has an existing design brief proposal from an Aboriginal Design Company.





Lessons learned

A similar project – the establishment of Bubup Wilam was delivered in 2011 by City of Whittlesea. The key lessons learned that need to be applied to this project are:

- Establishing trust with Community leaders requires time and flexibility
- Governance is something that can build and grow over time
- The establishment of a community-controlled organisations has significant impact on the Aboriginal sense of belonging and pride.

Operating Principles

More broadly – a study of 12 Aboriginal Gathering Place delivered from 2008-2018 across Victoria found the following principles were essential to the development of successful gathering places:

- Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge, protocols and practices—ensuring both the location and programs are culturally safe and strengthen cultural identity and connection is essential.
- Access to outdoor space – land, plants and water significantly increase the community's connection to country and culture.
- Holistic models of health and wellbeing—address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs.
- Self-determination—supports community control, community-identified priorities, community engagement and community knowledge translation
- Strong governance—ensuring integrity, transparency and accountability
- Advocacy—for the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and individuals
- A flexible approach—to manage and deliver programs and services in culturally appropriate ways
- Pathways to other organisations—providing cultural awareness, referral pathways, links with existing services and community networks
- Capacity building—of the local community and succession planning for gathering place staff to support sustainability
- Long Term security – the lack of long-term leases or land ownership significantly impacted the success of Gathering Places by limiting their opportunities to secure further funding.

10. Budget analysis

Note the figures described in the draft Business Case are preliminary, high level and subject to change.

Council's Capital Delivery has provided a high level indicative costs for four proposed options (**Appendix B** and **Table 7** below) including:

1. Re-use of the existing dwelling
2. Development of a modular built facility
3. Development of a purpose-built (base – up to 50 indoor) facility
4. Development of a purpose-built (enhanced - up to 100 indoor) facility





Requirement	Option 1 – Re-use of Existing	Option 2 – Modular Facility	Option 3 – Purpose Built (base)	Option 4 – Purpose Built (enhanced)
Capital Cost (estimate)				
Upfront Capital Cost	\$450,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000
Site Services & infrastructure Cost*	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*
Operating Cost				
Utilities (1% OF CapEx)	\$4,500	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$60,000
Maintenance (1% of CapEx)	\$4,500	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$60,000
WAGPAG Honorarium****	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040
Staff (1 FTE)	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Staff (0.6 FTE)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
TOTAL OpEx Over 25	\$4,101,000	\$4,876,000	\$5,376,000	\$6,876,000
TOTAL LIFECYCLE COST (OpEx+CapEx)	\$4,551,000**	\$6,876,000**	\$8,376,000**	\$12,876,000**
TOTAL LIFECYCLE COST (OpEx+CapEx) INCLUDING 2 MILLION FOR SITE SERVICES	\$6,551,000***	\$8,876,000***	\$10,376,000***	\$14,876,000***

Table 7: Indicative costs (subject to change)

*Upfront services cost (including connecting power, water and sewage) require further assessment but could be between one to two million dollars

**Total Lifecycle Cost does not include upfront services cost which require further assessment but could be in vicinity of two million+ dollars.

***Total Lifecycle Cost includes an estimated two million dollars for upfront site services cost and is an indicative estimate only that requires further investigation

****The proposed WAGPAG Terms of Reference includes an honorarium payment for committee members in acknowledgement of the considerable time commitment required and lived experience/ expertise.





Timeline and Project phases

Note the timelines described in the draft Business Case are preliminary, high level and subject to change.

The activities and outcomes associated with project phases are outlined in **Appendix C** of this report.

Short term

Short term key project dates include:

Date	Activity
19 May 2021	AGPGG Report workshop
6 July 2021	Scheduled Council Meeting
Feb 2022	Preliminary Phase - Completion of site investigations; site concept plan, service utility options; building scope and cost planning; and final Business Case.
March 2022	Scheduled Council Meeting
Feb 2022 – March 2023	Design Phase - RFT for design services (4 months), Delegated approval to award contract for design services (mid 2022), Concept Design, Design Development (sufficient to proceed to a Design & Construct contract for works in late 2022 – this could save 3-6 months, however there would need to be trade-offs with building functionality & architectural design), Detail Design, Detailed cost estimate, Permits & Approvals
Dec 2022	Preliminary site works completed allowing for limited outdoor programming to commence.
Feb 2023 – October 2024	Delivery Phase - RFT for works (4 months), Council award of contract for works (mid 2023), Construction, Commissioning, Fit-out
July 2023	Completion of the WAGPAG’s initial term. At the end of this inaugural term, the WAGPAG will make recommendations to Council about future governance arrangements.
2024	Facility and landscaping completed.

Table 8: Sort term phasing

Considering the complexity of the site and the many unknown issues at this point (e.g. natural / environmental / cultural values of the site, contamination, etc), these timelines have an ‘optimism bias’. In addition:

- Outside of project visioning and initial works, facility design and development is not currently in the Capital Delivery Department workplan for 2021/22 and may impact on existing team resource requirements and/or delivery of other projects.





- The outcomes required in Phase 1 (to deliver a purpose-built facility) requires significant project fast tracking and prioritisation.
- Also note that completion of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be commissioned and may impact on program delivery timeframes. Cultural Heritage Management Plan development currently have 4+ months' delay with Traditional Owners.

Medium + Long Term – AGP Project Phases Plan

It is anticipated the AGP will have 3 key phases and work towards the establishing the centre as an independent community-run entity. Whilst subject to change and future Council decision making as the project evolves, it is anticipated the phases include:

- Phase 1: Master Plan and Facility Establishment (July 2021 – October 2024)
 Phase 2: Development and Partnership (2024 – 2028)
 Phase 3: Independence and Sustainability (2028 - 2032)

11. Preferred option and recommendation

Options 1 and 2 fail to meet the project objectives and are not considered viable, except as an interim or pilot project. Options 3 and 4 meet the project objectives and score highly. The community has worked intensively with Council over the past 2 years and has been advocating for this initiative for over 20 years.

However further work is required to develop a final business case.

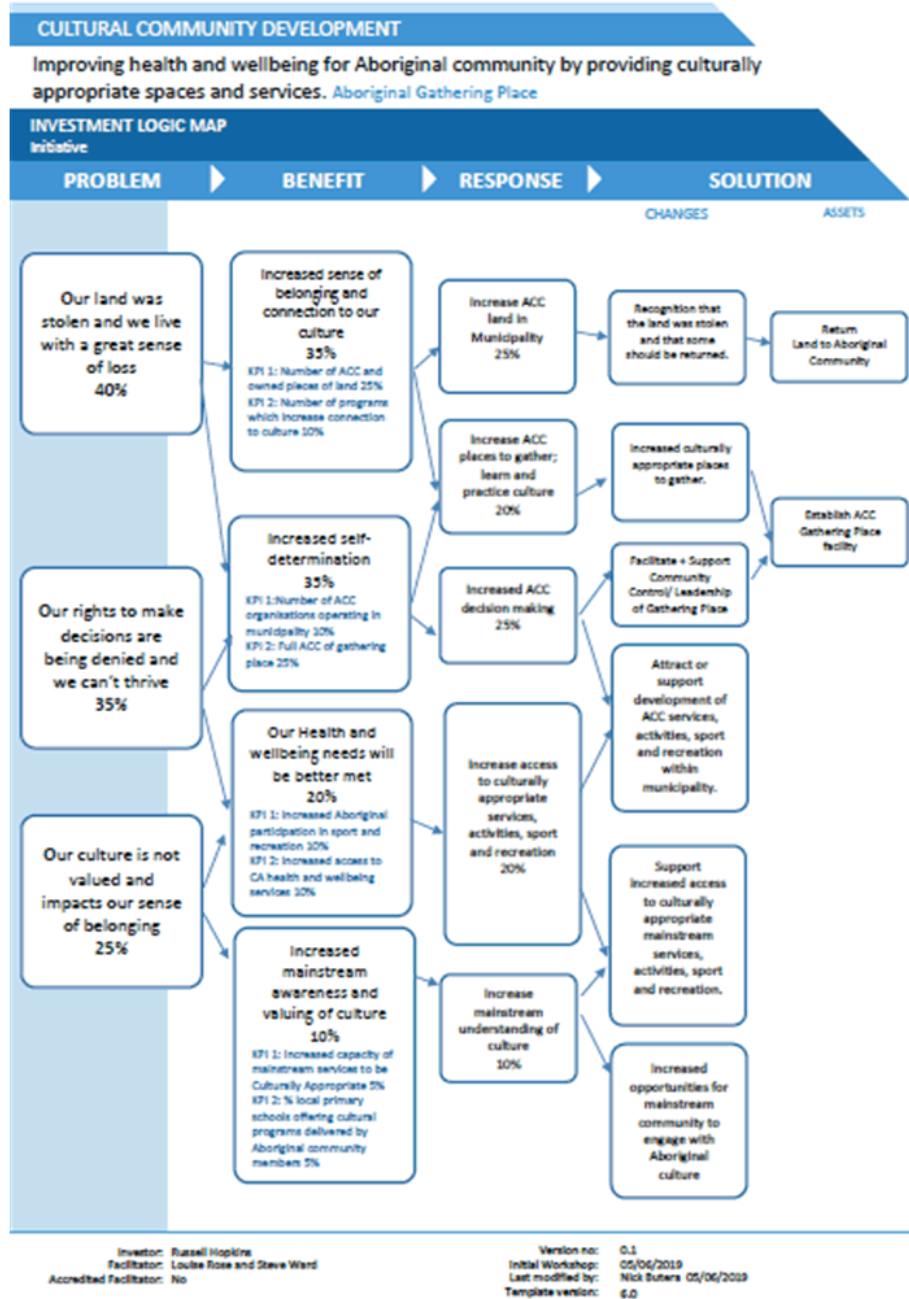
This Report recommends that:

1. Support the establishment of a purpose-built Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Park.
2. Provide funding to commence the project in the 2021/22 financial year.
3. Note a number of key documents prepared by Council and the local Aboriginal the community over the past few years which inform this report and the Gathering Place project
4. Transition the existing Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group (AGPGG) to a formal advisory committee of Council and called the 'City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (AGPAG)'.
5. Note Council will continue to explore external funding opportunities with other levels of government and other funding bodies.
6. Note a report will be brought to Council by March 2022 outlining a final Aboriginal Gathering Place Business Case, operational governance arrangements, detailed costings, and a site assessment update.
7. Note that completion of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will be commissioned and may impact on program delivery timeframes.





Appendix A: Gathering Place Investment Logic Map





12. Appendix B: Site Assessment of 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang Aboriginal Gathering Place

TO:	Nick Butera - Team Leader Aboriginal and Cultural Diversity	Date:	May 2021
FROM:	Major Projects (now Capital Delivery)		
SUBJECT:	Site Assessment of 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang Aboriginal Gathering Place –		
Cc:	Barry Firebrace Nick Mazarella		
Attachments	Gathering Place – Whole Site PDF Gathering Place – Site Arial Image PDF Gathering Place – House and Sheds		

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the site assessment for 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang and possible options for use as a community facility.

Note the figures described in the draft Business Case are preliminary, high level and subject to change

BACKGROUND

The Aboriginal and Cultural Diversity team have recently identified 105/105W Hunters Road South Morang as a possible location for Council’s proposed Aboriginal Gathering Place. The site is a large rural parcel of land located in the Quarry Hills, owned by Council and is zoned Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ). The property is also in a Bushfire Overlay Zone and has a current Cultural Heritage Overlay.

The property currently has an existing residential dwelling and sheds (see below) and is leased out as a residential property. The current lease expires in December 2020 with the tenant vacating the property at this time.





REPORT

Four key options were investigated for the use of this site as a community facility:

1. Reuse of the existing dwelling
2. Provision of a modular built facility
3. Provision of a purpose-built facility (base)
4. Provision of a purpose-built facility (enhanced)

Options Investigation

Option 1 - Reuse of the existing dwelling

A site inspection of the existing dwelling was undertaken with a building surveyor to consider the requirements of reusing the house as a community facility. This inspection was undertaken to identify major non-compliances and works that would be mandatory under the Building Regulations 2018 and National Construction Code (NCC)/Building Code of Australia (BCA 2019) for the change in use of the house from residential use to public use. The inspection and outcomes assumed that the internal building layout will remain as is. Any alterations to the internal use of the building would require further assessment with the NCC/BCA 2019.

In terms of compliance with the deemed-to-satisfy provisions of the Building Code of Australia 2019, the following major deficiencies were identified:

Building

The existing building is in a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) and Council's planning scheme will apply to its development and use. A planning permit and a building permit would be required for the proposed changes:

1. All the external cladding and roof material to be removed and replaced with materials that meet current Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) requirements of the BCA 2019. The BAL takes into consideration a number of factors, including the Fire Danger Index, the slope of the land, types of surrounding vegetation and its proximity to any building.
2. Widening of external entry/exit point doors to allow for accessible access to comply with the current DDA provisions of BCA 2019 & AS1428.1-2009.
3. All property entry/exit point doors must be fitted with D- Type lever handles which are operable from the side seeking egress at all times without a key.
4. All glass located in or directly next to entry/exit point doors to be replaced with safety glass.

Approximate cost of works is \$200K (excludes unforeseen works i.e. structural issues).

Accessibility





Building Regulation 236 requires the existing building to be upgraded (in terms of access for a person with a disability), from the main entrances and the accessible paths to where the proposed parking works are being carried out to comply with the current DDA provisions of BCA 2019 & AS1428.1-2009.

Any reuse of the dwelling would require:

1. Provision of two (2) minimum accessible car parks with provision of an accessible path from the parking to the building entrance.

Approximate cost of works is \$100K (excludes unforeseen works i.e. ground conditions, site topology).

Services

Any reuse of the dwelling would require:

1. Provision external fire hydrant system to comply with AS2419.1. The fire hydrant system must provide coverage to all areas of the building.
2. Provision of compliant fire hose reels in the vicinity of the building.

Approximate cost of works \$150K (excludes unforeseen works i.e. ground conditions, site topology).

As an additional item, the building surveyor also advised that before any works occur, the Essential Safety Measures (ESM's) are to be reviewed to ensure compliance with all relevant requirements. This includes review of:

- Appropriate paths of travel to open space/exits within the required distances
- Exit signage
- Door hardware (installing exit handles instead of locked doors and gates)
- Fire protection (equipment, coverage)
- Potential need for emergency lighting.

Please note that this report does not include assessment of areas that are outside the building surveyor's area of expertise (including but not limited to Health Regulations, Occupational Health & Safety Regulations, Workcover, Town Planning, Structural, etc).

In addition, further internal modifications may be required to meet user requirements. These works will be an additional cost.

Option 2 - Provision of a modular built facility

This option allowed for a new build size of 545 sqm and all car parking and ancillary external works to be provided at 105/105W Hunters Road. However, this model brings restrictions regarding shape and size for the site that may impact on functionality – this would need to be determined through site planning.

The approximate cost for this option would be \$2 million for the building. External site works and services will be an additional cost (which could be as much as the building cost).

Option 3 – Provision of a purpose-built facility to meet project requirements





Two options were investigated for the provision of a purpose-built facility to meet project requirements as per the area schedule supplied to Major Projects from the Aboriginal and Cultural Diversity Team.

Option 3 – Purpose Built Base model

This option allowed for a new build size of 545 sqm and all car parking and ancillary external works to be provided at 105/105W Hunters Road.

The approximate cost for this option would be \$3 million for the building. External site works and services will be an additional cost (which could be as much as the building cost).

This option can include a footprint that is designed with flexibility that will allow it can be expanded as the project grows and evolves.

Option 4 – Purpose Built Enhanced model

This option allowed for a new build size of 1090 sqm and all car parking and ancillary external works to be provided at 105/105W Hunters Road.

The approximate cost for this option would be \$6 million for the building. This is based on the current build-cost rate of \$4,000-\$4,500 per square metres.

Please note that this is a high-level opinion of cost and will require further assessment based on concept plans. A more detailed cost estimate can be prepared once the design process commences and the project scope is better defined.

External site works and services will be an additional cost (which could be as much as the building cost). Again, these costs can be further defined once the external site works are better defined.

Requirement	Option 1 – Re-use of Existing	Option 2 – Modular Facility	Option 3 – Purpose Built (base)	Option 4 – Purpose Built (enhanced)
Capital Cost (estimate)				
Upfront Capital Cost	\$450,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000
Upfront Services Cost*	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*	TBC*
Operating Cost				
Utilities (1% OF CapEx)	\$4,500	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$60,000
Maintenance (1% of CapEx)	\$4,500	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$60,000
WAGPA Honorarium****	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040
Staff (1 FTE)	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Staff (.6 FTE)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
TOTAL OpEx Over 25	\$4,101,000	\$4,876,000	\$5,376,000	\$6,876,000





TOTAL LIFECYCLE COST (OpEx+CapEx)	\$4,551,000**	\$6,876,000**	\$8,376,000**	\$12,876,000**
TOTAL LIFECYCLE COST (OpEx+CapEx) INCLUDING 2 MILLION FOR UPFRONT SERVICES	\$6,551,000***	\$8,876,000***	\$10,376,000***	\$14,876,000***

*Upfront services cost (including connecting power, water and sewage) require further assessment but could be between one to two million dollars

**Total Lifecycle Cost does not include upfront services cost which require further assessment but could be between one to two million dollars or more.

***Total Lifecycle Cost includes an estimated two million dollars for upfront services cost and is an indicative estimate only that requires further investigation

****The proposed WAGPA Terms of Reference includes an honorarium payment for committee members in acknowledgement of the considerable time commitment required.

Proposed High Level Timeline

A preliminary timeline for a project of this scale and complexity is shown below.

2021/22

- Site Masterplan to be prepared to identify possible location of facility and preferred option (est \$25K) – 6 months
- Site investigations (eg survey, Geotech, est \$25K) – 6 months
- Complete Business Case – by June 2021
- Prepare Functional Brief & Consultant Brief for Design Services - 3 months
- Capital Delivery can provide floor plan layouts for various options, which is best done once the siting plan is confirmed.
- We can also provide some high-level cost estimates with the assistance of a QS.

2022/23

- Tender and award contract for Design Services - 3 months
- Design (Concept, Development, Detail) - 9 months (approx. \$250K)
- Permits and approvals – 2 months

2023/24 & 2024/25

- Prepare RFT for works – 2 months
- Tender and award contract for works - 4 months





- Construction – 12 to 18 months

2024/25

- Practical Completion of works in mid 2024
- Loose Fitout, Commissioning & Certificate of Occupancy issued by Building Surveyor (2 months)
- Handover & opening – by Dec 2024
- 12 months Defects Liability Period

This time is indicative only and can be refined once the Business Case is finalised.

CONCLUSION

Option 1 (Reuse of the existing dwelling) is not considered viable as the cost of works is estimated to be at least \$450K, which is greater than the current value of the asset. There is also high risk involved in the scope of works.

Option 2 (Purpose-built facility) would be similar to other community centres and could be delivered with greater certainty of cost and outcome.

Tim Smith
Team Leader Project Planning and Facilitation





13. Appendix C: Aboriginal Gathering Place Project Phases Plan

It is anticipated the AGP will have 3 key phases and work towards the establishing the centre as an independent community-run entity. Whilst subject to change and future Council decision making as the project evolves, it is anticipated the phases include:

- Phase 1: Master Plan and Facility Establishment (July 2021 – October 2024)
- Phase 2: Development and Partnership (2024 – 2028)
- Phase 3: Independence and Sustainability (2028 - 2032)

PHASE 1: MASTERPLAN + ESTABLISHMENT		
<i>July 2021- October 2024</i>		
GOVERNANCE:	Council will establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Committee (WAGPA) Council will lead coordination and project management with advice and input from Advisory Community.	
RESOURCES:	In Principle: Council will support the resourcing for phase 1 but always be looking for supporting funding. 2021- 2022 - \$250,000 CAPITAL WORKS + \$300,000 DEWLP 2022 – 2023 - TBC (3 – 6 MILLION CURRENTLY REQUIRED IN HIGH LEVEL TOTAL CAPITAL COST ESTIMATES) 2023 - 2024 - TBC (3 – 6 MILLION CURRENTLY REQUIRED IN HIGH LEVEL TOTAL CAPITAL COST ESTIMATES)	
SCOPE:	Activities	Outputs
	AUTHORISE: Agreed Council Scope + Authorisation	Council report July 2021 Council report Feb 2022
	MASTERPLAN: Completed Business Case, Design + Vision	Completed Master Plan Dec 2021 Completed CHMP Costed Concept Design
	CONSTRUCT: Construct Purpose Built Facility	Purpose built facility + amenities for 100 pax Completed services + utilities + car parking
	GOVERNANCE: Build Community Capacity to Operate the Facility	Establish Formal Community Governance





	PARTNERSHIP: Secure Additional Partners and External Funding and Income Streams	Partnership and Funding Agreements
PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT + PARTNERSHIP		
<i>November 2024 – October 2028</i>		
GOVERNANCE	<p>During Phase 2, Council will support the WAGPA to identify ongoing governance arrangements for the AGP including options to form a Community Asset Committee as listed under section 65(2) of the Local Government Act (2020).</p> <p>During this phase it's likely Council will continue to support programming and facility management, but the project will transition to greater autonomy and independence from Council.</p>	
RESOURCES	Resources will need to be confirmed but will likely include Council contributions towards facility utilities, maintenance and staffing	
SCOPE:	Activities	Outputs
	Governance transition: establish new agreements between council and AGPGG Re: Higher levels of governance autonomy.	Establish formal and more autonomous community governance
	Governance capacity building: Build community and organisational capacity	Training and support
	Programming: Deliver programs and services for them site	Programs + participation evaluation
	Partnership: Continue securing additional partners and external funding and income streams	Partnership and funding agreements
PHASE 3: INDEPENDENCE + SUSTAINABILITY		
<i>November 2028 – October 2032 (Councillor Term)</i>		
GOVERNANCE	Council will continue to support programming and facility management but seek for the Community Control to become independent and sustainable. Together Council and the AGPGG will also explore broader independence and treaty opportunities.	





Resources	TBC	
SCOPE:	Activities	Outputs
	Independence: Independent community-controlled organisation operates the asset.	TBC
	Sustainable governance + operating model established	TBC

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14. Appendix D: ABORIGINAL GATHERING PLACE ADVISORY GROUP

The approach to Gathering Place Project has been based on the principles of self-determination and acknowledged that only policies and actions that are developed *with* Aboriginal people, and are specific to the needs of Aboriginal people, are effective in improving health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Business Case, Community Vision and Investment Logic Map has been worked on with the Aboriginal Community across 18 months to ensure the community's vision is accurately articulated and reflected.

Guiding the development of this Business Case was the Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Gathering Place Governance Group. The Group was established in February 2019.

The process for establishing membership was community driven. An EOI document was developed and community members were invited to respond to the EOI. In total, 11 responses were received, and each was assessed by a panel inclusive of Elders, community members and Aboriginal Council officers.

The Governance Group also spent a day visiting another Gathering Place in Hastings to get some learnings. The Governance Group continues to meet monthly and receives council officers support to take establish and record meeting actions.

The existing members of the Governance Group members are:

- Blair Colwell
- Karen Bryant
- Anita North
- Shontia Saluja
- Aunty Margaret Donnelly
- Aunty Barbara Stewart
- Alister Thorpe

The recommendation of the current Council report is to transition this group to a newly established City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (AGPAG) as per the Terms of Reference outlined below. An EOI will be developed to recruit new members including 2 seats for Wurundjeri Traditional Owners.





Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (WAGPAG) Terms of Reference

Acknowledgement

The Whittlesea Reconciliation Group recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum people as the traditional custodians of this place.

Background

A Gathering Place is a physically, socially and culturally safe place for Aboriginal people. They are led by Aboriginal people and broadly aim to support enhanced outcomes, increase connection to culture, and facilitate healing for Aboriginal people. Many successful Gathering Places also facilitate local Reconciliation efforts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Council and members of Whittlesea’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community are looking to work together to develop an Aboriginal Gathering Place (AGP) within the municipality. Development of the Gathering Place will be informed by best-practice principles of self-determination, sustainability and co-design.

Establishment of a Gathering Place in Whittlesea has been a priority for the local Aboriginal community for over 20 years; and remains the key objective of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group. The 6 July 2021 Council meeting resolved to support development of a Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place and formalise its relationship with the local Aboriginal community on this project. This decision builds on the work of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group (AGPGG) was established in 2019 and represents the project’s evolution as an endorsed priority for Council.

Phases

It is anticipated that governance of the AGP will have 3 key phases and work towards the establishing the centre as an independent community-run entity. Whilst subject to change and future Council decision making as the project evolves, it is anticipated the phases may include:

Phase	Governance	Activities
Phase 1	<p>Establish formal governance:</p> <p>Council to establish the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group (WAGPAG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and construct facility (the asset). • Establish governance arrangements and operational model once asset built. • Build community capacity to operate the facility. • Secure additional partners and external funding and income streams.





Phase	Governance	Activities
	(Council coordination and project management with advice and input from Advisory Community)	
Phase 2	<p>Transition to greater independence:</p> <p>WAGPAG to identify ongoing governance arrangements for the AGP including options to form a Community Asset Committee as listed under section 65(2) of the Local Government Act (2020).</p> <p>(A community asset committee is a committee with powers of the council, with terms and conditions specified by the CEO, for the purpose of managing a community asset).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Asset Committee manages the asset on behalf of Council. • Delivers programs and services from the site (in partnership with Council and others). • Continues to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ build community /organisational capacity, and transition to an independent arrangement. ○ secure additional partners and external funding and build income streams.
Phase 3	Transition to independent entity - TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent community controlled organisation operates the asset.

Term

The WAGPAG shall be established for two years or until July 2023. At the end of this inaugural term, the WAGPAG will recommend to Council that it either:

- Continues for another two years;
- Transitions (as per Phase 2) to an alternate governance arrangement (such as a Community Asset Committee); or
- Transitions to some other governance structure.

Vision





Our Gathering Place will be a welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe space where all Aboriginal people can connect and have a sense of belonging, as well as having access to activities, programs and services which strengthen our culture and enhance our wellbeing.

Purpose

That Council and community work together during Phase 1 of the Gathering Place to develop the Gathering Place vision using principles of co-design, self-determination and sustainability.

Aims

Members of the WAGPAG will work in good faith to:

- Foster a productive, inclusive and trusted relationship between Council and the Aboriginal community.
- Oversee the strategic development of the Gathering Place.
- Build the capacity of Council and community members to deliver a successful Gathering Place in the longer term.
- Empower the Aboriginal community

Objectives

- Provide advice to Council on the development of the Gathering Place final business case, master planning and design for the new facility feasibility at Quarry Hills
- Provide advice to Council and inform the development of programs to be delivered from the site in response to local needs and opportunities.
- Provide advice to Council and explore options to identify future (post phase 1) governance arrangements.
- Support engagement with Traditional Owners regarding the project.
- Provide expertise and advice, and actively lead engagement with the wider community and stakeholders regarding the project.
- Undertake training and capacity building exercises to foster community capacity in future project phases.

Membership

WAGPAG Membership comprises:

- Up to 12 community members (voting). Existing members of the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Governance Group will be invited to be members of the WAGPAG.
- 1 x member of Whittlesea Reconciliation Working Group (voting)
- 1 x member of Council's Executive Leadership team or their representative (non voting/ ex-officio)
- Council officers (non voting/ ex-officio, including minutes and agendas)





- 2 x Traditional Owners' Representation will also be sought (voting).
- Other Non Aboriginal members (non voting) may attend as required on a skills basis as required or when invited to participate

WAGPAG membership is for the inaugural two year period.

WAGPAG will aim to build a membership that reflects the diversity of the local Aboriginal community and seek to include representation from young people, elders, and local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

To ensure a diversity of membership, support such as transportation and child-care for members such as elders and young parents will be made available.

Membership Recruitment

If initially additional numbers are required to achieve 12 community representatives (or in the case of resignation or vacancy), then the WAGPAG will recruit new members through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. Eligible individuals include people who:

- are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- live, work or study in the City of Whittlesea
- are committed to the WAGPAG's purpose, vision and aims
- are committed to attending a minimum of four ordinary meetings per year.

The EOI process for new members includes:

- Applications will be assessed by the WAGPAG;
- Administrated by Council officers; and
- Advertised through existing members' networks, radio (3KND), local schools, Council's website, local newspapers and other networks as appropriate.

Chair

The WAGPAG will be chaired by a community member. The Chair:

- To be nominated (self-nominations are accepted) and voted by members of the WAGPAG at its first meeting, and appointed for a one year term.
- To chair each meeting (including opening and closing meetings)
- Follows the agreed agenda, keeps discussions followed, ensures discussions are inclusive and respectful.

Public Statements

Where it is deemed a public statement is required, the Chair and Council will work together prior to release. Members can't make statements on behalf of Council.

Voting





In general, it is anticipated decision making will be by consensus. The Chair may exercise a casting vote if required. There is no proxy voting.

Ordinary Meetings

- An annual schedule of six ordinary meetings will be held.
- Additional meetings will be held as needed.

Quorum

Meeting quorum includes:

- 3 x Aboriginal community members (required for each meeting, to enable decisions to be made)
- 1 x member of Council's Executive Leadership team or their representative
- 1 x Council officers.

If there is no quorum the chair can choose to continue the meeting informally but decisions must be ratified at a future meeting.

Attendances and Absenteeism

- All members are required to attend a minimum of four meetings per year.
- Members who miss two consecutive meetings without apology will be contacted by the chair to confirm if they are able to continue on the WAGPAG.

Budget

Resourcing for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place will be established through Council's annual budget process.

Honorarium

The commitment made to the WAGPAG is considerable with community members making a significant time commitment to ongoing work throughout the year. In acknowledgement of the commitment involved in WAGPAG membership, members will be paid an annual Honorarium fee in recognition of their participation, expertise and lived experience. There will be one Honorarium rate for all WAGPAG members. The Honorarium fee will be paid in two instalments via Statement By Supplier Invoicing.

WAGPAG members who are also employees of the City of Whittlesea will not be eligible for an honorarium fee.

Relationship with Whittlesea Reconciliation Group





Regular 'for information' updates regarding the Aboriginal Gathering Place project will continue to be provided to the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG). These may be from WAGPAG members (if also members of the WRG), or Council staff.

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Phase	Governance	Activities
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Phase 2	<p>Transition to greater independence:</p> <p>WAGPAG to identify ongoing governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Asset Committee manages the asset on behalf of Council. Delivers programs and services from the site (in partnership with Council and others). Continues to:

Phase	Governance	Activities
	<p>arrangements for the AGP including options to form a Community Asset Committee as listed under section 65(2) of the Local Government Act (2020).</p> <p>(A community asset committee is a committee with powers of the council, with terms and conditions specified by the CEO, for the purpose of managing a community asset).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ build community /organisational capacity, and transition to an independent arrangement. ○ secure additional partners and external funding and build income streams.
Phase 3	Transition to independent entity - TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independent community controlled organisation operates the asset.

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The WAGPAG shall be established for two years or until July 2023. At the end of this inaugural term, the WAGPAG will recommend to Council that it either:

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Objectives

- Provide advice to Council on the development of the Gathering Place final business case, master planning and design for the new facility feasibility at Quarry Hills

- Provide advice to Council and inform the development of programs to be delivered from the site in response to local needs and opportunities.
- Provide advice to Council and explore options to identify future (post phase 1) governance arrangements.
- Support engagement with Traditional Owners regarding the project.
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- Undertake training and capacity building exercises to foster community capacity in future project phases.

Membership

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- 1 x member of Council's Executive Leadership team or their representative (non voting/ ex-officio)
- Council officers (non voting/ ex-officio, including minutes and agendas)
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The EOI process for new members includes:

- Applications will be assessed by the WAGPAG;
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The WAGPAG will be chaired by a community member. The Chair:

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Voting

In general, it is anticipated decision making will be by consensus. The Chair may exercise a casting vote if required. There is no proxy voting.

Ordinary Meetings

- An annual schedule of six ordinary meetings will be held.
- Additional meetings will be held as needed.

Quorum

Meeting quorum includes:

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- 1 x Council officers.

If there is no quorum the chair can choose to continue the meeting informally but decisions must be ratified at a future meeting.

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- Members who miss two consecutive meetings without apology will be contacted by the chair to confirm if they are able to continue on the WAGPAG.

Budget

Resourcing for the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place will be established through Council's annual budget process.

Honorarium

The commitment made to the WAGPAG is considerable with community members making a significant time commitment to ongoing work throughout the year. In acknowledgement of the commitment involved in WAGPAG membership, members will be paid an annual Honorarium fee in recognition of their participation, expertise and lived experience. There will be one Honorarium rate for all WAGPAG members. The Honorarium fee will be paid in two instalments via Statement By Supplier Invoicing.

WAGPAG members who are also employees of the City of Whittlesea will not be eligible for an honorarium fee.

Relationship with Whittlesea Reconciliation Group

Regular 'for information' updates regarding the Aboriginal Gathering Place project will continue to be provided to the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG). These may be from WAGPAG members (if also members of the WRG), or Council staff.

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ITEM 6.1.4 FOR DECISION - CITY OF WHITTLESEA COMMUNITY AWARDS COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

Attachments: 1 Terms of Reference [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: Executive Manager Governance

Author: Team Leader Governance Administration

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

1. The Community Awards Committee membership for 2021 be ratified by Council.
2. Committee members be notified in writing that their nominations have been ratified by Council.
3. The list of Committee members be published on Council's website.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Seven former members of the Australia Day Awards Committee submitted an expression of interest to be members of the Community Awards Committee in its inaugural year.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

There was a positive response from members of the former Australia Day Awards Committee to participate in the Community Awards Committee. The nominations reflect Council's diverse community and met the required numbers to form the committee. As such, Council did not proceed with advertising community member positions to the wider community.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee (attachment 1) require up to six community representative members. In future years, former awards recipients will also be invited to participate. The members bring a range of experience and skills to the Committee and as it is the inaugural awards with no former recipients invited, having seven community members is appropriate. It is therefore recommended that all nominees are accepted onto the Committee for 2021/22.

On 4 May 2021, Council appointed Administrator Peita Duncan as the Administrator representative on the Committee.

The Terms of Reference also identify one member of the Executive Leadership Team to be a non-voting member of the Committee.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Once ratified successful submitters will be informed of the acceptance of their expression of interest and the first meeting of the committee will be conducted in the week commencing 19 July 2021, with awards ceremony planned for October 2021. At the first meeting in line with the Terms of Reference, there will be one appointment for a term of four years, three appointments for a term of three years, two appointments for a term of two years and one appointment for a term of one year.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

This is a positive move to enable the inaugural City of Whittlesea Community Awards. Members will be invited to attend the meeting and the nominations for awards and the awards ceremony will be widely publicised.

REPORT**BACKGROUND**

On 4 May 2021, Council adopted the City of Whittlesea Community Awards terms of reference and award categories and criteria and appointed Administrator Peita Duncan as the Administrator representative with voting rights on the Committee.

Current members of the former Australia Day Awards Committee (ADAC) were invited to submit an Expression of Interest to join the inaugural Community Awards Committee.

PROPOSAL

Seven former members of the ADAC submitted an Expression of Interest to join the Community Awards Committee. It is proposed that all Expressions of Interest be accepted, and submitters be invited to join the inaugural Awards Committee.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED AWARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The proposed committee members represent the diversity of the local Whittlesea Community in relation to age, ability, gender, cultural background and location within the municipality. They have all been recognised for their contribution to the community as either former Australia Day award recipients (senior citizen, young citizen, access and inclusion citizen), or community representatives. Through the expression of interest the committee members all showed passion for the local community and they have a range of expertise through work and volunteering to bring to the committee.

The proposed committee members are listed below:

Lillian McClelland - joint recipient of the Senior Citizen of the Year Award in 2016.

Mahendra Sukhdeo – appointed as a community member to the ADAC in 2017.

Jenny Nicholls – appointed as a community member to the ADAC in 2019.

Matthew Bui – appointed as a community member to the ADAC in 2019.

Raymond Rosales - recipient of the Senior Citizen of the Year Award in 2020.

Vivian Ly - recipient of the Young Citizen of the Year Award in 2020 (when a Year 12 student).

Dalal Sleiman – recipient of the Access and Inclusion Citizen of the Year in 2020.

CONSULTATION

All existing members of the former Australia Day Awards Committee were contacted to inform them of the Community Awards initiative and to invite them to participate on the newly established Community Awards Committee.

In conjunction with the members of the Community Awards Committee and Council's Public Affairs team, a communication and engagement plan will be developed for the promotion of the Awards and to seek nominations. This is expected to include a multipronged approach to

encourage award nominations including use of Council's website, social media sites, newsletter and notifications to community groups and organisations.

CRITICAL DATES

Once ratified successful submitters will be informed of the acceptance of their expression of interest and this first meeting of the committee conducted in the week commencing 19 July 2021.

Monday 19 July 2021	First meeting of the Committee. At this meeting term appointments will be confirmed in accordance with the terms of reference.
Tuesday 27 July 2021	Open Award Nomination Period
Monday 27 September 2021	Close Award Nomination Period
TBA October 2021	Confidential meeting of Committee held to determine Award recipients
TBA October 2021	Hold Award Ceremony in conjunction with a Community Event and/or Citizenship Ceremony

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs for the awards ceremony will be funded through Council's event budgets.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

City of Whittlesea linkages include Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All, Council Plan 2017-2021, the Community Building Strategy and the A Voice for All: Community Engagement Policy 2021.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Ineffective stakeholder engagement resulting in compromised community outcomes and/or non-achievement of Council's strategic direction*

The purpose of the Community awards is to recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals for work to support the local community.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal Connected community
Key Direction A participating community

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The inaugural Community Awards will be a great opportunity to celebrate and recognise significant positive contributions by community members.

The inclusion of the diverse range of former members of the ADAC on the inaugural Community Day Awards committee will assist in the successful transition and conduct of these awards.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

1. Appoint the following people listed below, as Community Representatives to the City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee for the conduct of the inaugural Community Awards for the 2021 period:
 - Jenny Nicholls;
 - Lillian McClelland;
 - Mahendra Sukhdeo;
 - Matthew Bui;
 - Raymond Rosales;
 - Vivian Ly; and
 - Dalal Sleiman.
2. Notify the Committee members in writing that their nominations have been ratified by Council and thank them for their expression of interest.
3. Publish the list of Committee members on Council's website.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Duncan*

SECONDED: *Administrator Eddy*

THAT Council resolve to:

1. **Appoint the following people listed below, as Community Representatives to the City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee for the conduct of the inaugural Community Awards for the 2021 period:**
 - **Jenny Nicholls;**
 - **Lillian McClelland;**
 - **Mahendra Sukhdeo;**
 - **Matthew Bui;**
 - **Raymond Rosales;**

- Vivian Ly; and
 - Dalal Sleiman.
2. Notify the Committee members in writing that their nominations have been ratified by Council and thank them for their expression of interest.
 3. Publish the list of Committee members including Administrator Duncan on Council's website.

CARRIED



City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee

Terms of Reference

1. TITLE

The name of the Committee shall be *City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee* (the Committee).

2. PURPOSE

To undertake the processes and activities relating to the seeking and assessing nominations and making Awards at the annual Community Awards Event on behalf of the City of Whittlesea. Determining Award categories and criteria for each Award, shall be the responsibility of the Council. Council may seek the advice of the Committee. The Committee may make recommendations to Council on any variation to the Award categories of criteria or any proposal for new or additional Award categories.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The Committee shall comprise of Council and Community representatives. All Committee appointments are to be made by the Council. Specifically, membership shall comprise the following:

- a) One Administrator representative;
- b) a member of the City of Whittlesea Executive Leadership Team (non-voting);
- c) a minimum of three and maximum of six Community representatives; and
- d) Award recipients for the most recent year for a term of one year.

3.1

Community representatives shall be appointed for a fixed term. At the first Committee meeting after their appointment the specific term of a community member shall be determined by lot. There shall be one appointment for a term of four years, three appointments for a term of three years and two appointments for a term of two years.

3.2

Other persons (non-Committee) may be invited to attend the meetings at the request of the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee to provide advice and assistance where necessary. They have no voting rights and may be requested to leave the meeting at any time by the Chairperson.

Adopted by Council 4 May 2021 v 1.04

3.3

A quorum of members must be present before a meeting can proceed. A quorum is more than half of the current number of members of the Committee. Where a quorum is not achieved the members present may, at the discretion of the Chairperson, continue the meeting, but any decisions made at the meeting must be ratified at the next Committee meeting.

3.4

Decisions will be made by consensus. Where the Committee is unable to reach consensus, a vote shall be conducted and a simple majority will be sufficient. In the event of a tie in votes the Chairperson has a second and casting vote.

3.5

Committee members will cease to be a member if they:

- resign from the Committee;
- fail to attend two consecutive meetings without providing apologies to the Chairperson;
- reach the end of the term of their appointment; and/or
- breach confidentiality.

4. VACANT POSITIONS

Any vacant positions will be filled by the Council.

5. CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson shall be elected from the Community representatives for a period of 12 months. The Chairperson shall be supported by a member/s of Council's Governance team in their responsibilities which include:

- Scheduling meetings and notifying Committee members;
- Inviting specialists to attend meetings when required by the Committee;
- Guiding the meeting according to the agenda and time available;
- Ensuring all discussion items end with a decision, action or definite outcome; and
- Review and approve the draft minutes before distribution.

6. MINUTE TAKER/SECRETARY – GOVERNANCE OFFICER

The role of the minute taker/Governance Officer is to:

- Prepare agendas and issue notices for meetings, and ensure all necessary documents requiring discussion or comment are attached to the agenda;
- Distribute the Agenda at least one week prior to the meeting;
- Take notes of proceedings and preparing minutes of meeting; and
- Prepare and distribute the minutes to all Committee members.

The minutes shall include any declarations of conflicts of interests and shall be checked by the Chairperson and accepted by Committee members as a true and accurate record at the commencement of the next meeting.

7. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Committee members must act with integrity including avoiding conflicts of interest when carrying out their duties.

Where a Committee member has a personal relationship (eg. family member or friend) with someone who has been nominated for an award, the Committee member will declare this conflict of interest and abstain from voting in that award category.

8. TIMING AND DURATION OF MEETINGS

A schedule of two meetings shall be set by the Chairperson each year, focussed on making an Award annually. Meetings shall last no more than 90 minutes.

9. AMENDMENTS

The terms of reference shall be reviewed annually by the Committee and any suggested changes brought to the attention of the Council through one of the Council representatives.

ITEM 6.1.5 FOR DECISION - COVID-19 PANDEMIC RECOVERY FUND**Attachments:** 1 [COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions](#) ↓**Responsible Officer:** Chief Executive Officer**Author:** Emergency Management & Pandemic Recovery

Council has undertaken an extensive community consultative process to develop actions for the \$2M Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund. This consultation explored community perspectives to guide the roll out of the Fund via a community participatory budget working group, as well as community consultation via a survey, pandemic impact analysis, and ongoing liaison with key external stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council resolve to:

1. Acknowledge the community participatory budget working group for their work in codesigning with Council the Recovery Fund Actions.
2. Adopt the COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions (Attachment 1).
3. Note that COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions will be reported on quarterly via the Community Plan reporting processes.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted communities across the world and continues to keep local health authorities on alert for outbreaks which in turn hinder long-term community recovery. Council has committed \$2 million in the 2021/22 budget year to a Community Recovery Fund in response to the scale of the impacts of the Pandemic and the understanding that the road to recovery would be long and complex.

An extensive community engagement process was established to consult with the community to codesign actions for the Recovery Fund. The subsequent Pandemic Recovery actions bring together the results from that process as well as community and business engagement, evidence and research gathered throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period, as well as specialist knowledge and insights from key stakeholders.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The COVID-19 Pandemic will continue to have a profound health, social and economic impact globally and locally. Whittlesea's response has been designed to respond to evidence and draw on the findings from Council's Pandemic Impact Assessments, community engagements and is aligned with other Council plans, strategies and budgets to optimise Council's capacity to support the community to recover from the pandemic.

The Pandemic Recovery Fund actions aim to support recovery across the four disaster recovery environments of social, economic, environment and built infrastructure.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The Pandemic Recovery fund actions have been shaped and guided by various consultative processes ensuring that they are truly codesigned with the community and key stakeholders.

The actions have a strong alignment with Whittlesea 2040 goals as well as the *Disaster Recovery Environments*¹. The predominate themes of economic development and local jobs, and support for vulnerable communities and local service providers will compliment programs already established in the relief phase such as the business mentoring program and the Emergency Relief Funds grant program.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Many of the recommended actions will be integrated into the new Community Plan.

- Progress of the Pandemic Recovery fund actions will be reported to Council quarterly via the Community Plan reporting process.
- There will be ongoing monitoring of government, community and industry responses and updating of findings of Council's Pandemic Impact Assessments

¹ *Emergency Management Victoria (2019) Resilient Recovery Strategy*

REPORT**INTRODUCTION**

This report outlines Council's COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund actions and the community and key stakeholder codesign approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated key social and economic determinants of health, such as financial vulnerability, unemployment/underemployment, inequality and social isolation and has had an impact upon mental and physical wellbeing. Pandemic recovery actions align with the Whittlesea 2040 goals and have a strengthened focus on the social and economic environment.

A Municipal Pandemic Readiness and Recovery Plan was adopted by Council on 2 February 2021 to guide actions through to the end of the financial year. That Plan was consistent with the identified role of local government as the coordinator of local relief and recovery activities. It outlines key directions and actions under each of the four Whittlesea 2040 goal areas, designed to assist the community back to a state of normal functioning.

BACKGROUND

Since the announcement of COVID-19 as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 11 March 2020, and the subsequent declaration of a state of emergency by the Victorian Government, the economic, health and social impacts of the disease have been significant.

Following any major emergency, Council works with the community and key stakeholder groups to coordinate response, relief and recovery planning which incorporates outcomes from community and key stakeholder engagement and local impact assessments.

The Municipal COVID-19 Pandemic Readiness and Recovery Plan was adopted by Council on 2 February 2021 for implementation through to 30 June 2021. This Plan has addressed the immediate response, relief and recovery needs of the community and progress will be reported to Council as part of the 2020/21 corporate reporting.

In response to the scale of the impacts and the understanding that the road to recovery would be long and complex, Council has committed \$2 million to a Community Recovery Fund for the 2021/22 financial year.

Recovery actions are designed to assist the community to get back to a state of normal functioning – or 'building back better' which is the objective of all disaster recovery actions. Recovery can provide an opportunity to improve these aspects beyond previous conditions, by enhancing social, natural, built and economic environments contributing to a more resilient community. Recovery actions can support and build capacity, remove barriers, and use local knowledge and strengths.

An extensive community engagement process in line with Council Policy was established to consult with the community to codesign actions for the Recovery Fund. The subsequent Pandemic Recovery actions bring together the results from that process as well as community and business perspectives, evidence and research gathered throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period, as well as specialist knowledge and insights from key stakeholders.

The actions have strong alignment with the *Disaster Recovery Environments*². Table 1 below aligns these themes with Whittlesea 2040 goals.

² *Emergency Management Victoria (2019) Resilient Recovery Strategy*

Table 1: Alignment between Whittlesea 2040 and Disaster Recovery Environments

Whittlesea 2040 goals	Disaster Recovery Environments
<i>Connected community</i>	<i>Social</i>
<i>Liveable neighbourhoods</i>	<i>Built infrastructure</i>
<i>Strong local economy</i>	<i>Economic</i>
<i>Sustainable environment</i>	<i>Natural</i>

Additionally, the *National Principles for Disaster Recovery (Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience)* have been applied in the consultative process, impact assessment, development of actions, and in the ongoing coordination of recovery. These principles are as follows:

- Understand the context - successful recovery is based on an understanding of the community context, with each community having its own history, values and dynamics.
- Recognize complexity - successful recovery responds to the complex and dynamic nature of both emergencies and the community.
- Use community-led approaches - successful recovery is community-centred, responsive and flexible, engaging with community and supporting them to move forward.
- Coordinate all activities - successful recovery requires a planned, coordinated and adaptive approach, between community and partner agencies, based on continuing assessment of impacts and needs.
- Communicate effectively - successful recovery is built on effective communication between the affected community and other partners.
- Acknowledge and build capacity - successful recovery recognises, supports and builds on individual, community and organisational capacity and resilience (particularly for vulnerable groups).

These principles will continue to be applied as recovery actions are developed and implemented with the community.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund actions be endorsed (refer to Attachment 1). These actions are structured around Whittlesea 2040 goals, the Disaster Recovery Environments and disaster recovery principles. The below table outlines focus areas for the pandemic recovery fund however Attachment 1 details the actions as well as budget allocation.

Whittlesea 2040 Goal	Pandemic Recovery focus areas
Connected community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of recovery efforts across the municipality including COVID-19 safe messaging and mass vaccinations • Grants program to support community service organisations as well as emergency relief • Strengthen multichannel communications with community and

	<p>local businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more local services for community to increase community connections and respond to local needs
Liveable neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more community gardens and support local events • Advocate for better public transport • Provide more public amenities
Strong local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support programs and incentives to buy local • Enhanced learning and job ready opportunities for young people • Increased training and support for unemployed and underemployed residents
Sustainable environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Upgrades Program to support uptake of renewable energy • Continue solar panel and battery scheme for council buildings to reduce running costs to community groups

CONSULTATION

As part of the Community Plan consultation process a group of residents were randomly selected to participate in budgeting workshops. This group was representative of the diversity of the municipality. 32 residents participated over three sessions of three hours each. At each workshop participants were briefed on the impact of the Pandemic across the four Whittlesea 2040 goals to inform the discussion. The Group were led through a series of facilitated activities and smaller group work over the three sessions through which they developed a final list of 17 recommendations, or action Items, that they then voted on as individuals to prioritise.

These suggested actions were then cross referenced with impact assessment data, key stakeholder engagement results, community survey results, and Council key strategic directions to ensure a consistent and targeted approach to recovery. 16 of the suggested actions were supported via this process. One action relating to large gatherings in public spaces was not supported.

The subsequent Pandemic Recovery actions bring together community and business perspectives, evidence and research gathered throughout the COVID-19 period, as well as specialist knowledge and insights from key stakeholders.

Council will continue to consult and coordinate recovery actions with key stakeholders during the recovery phase via the following avenues:

- Pandemic Recovery Subcommittee established under the City of Whittlesea Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and comprising agencies from the Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership.
- Whittlesea Emergency Relief Network
- Various Traders associations and business support networks
- Community groups and other community feedback avenues including place-based community committees.
- Internal pandemic recovery working group.

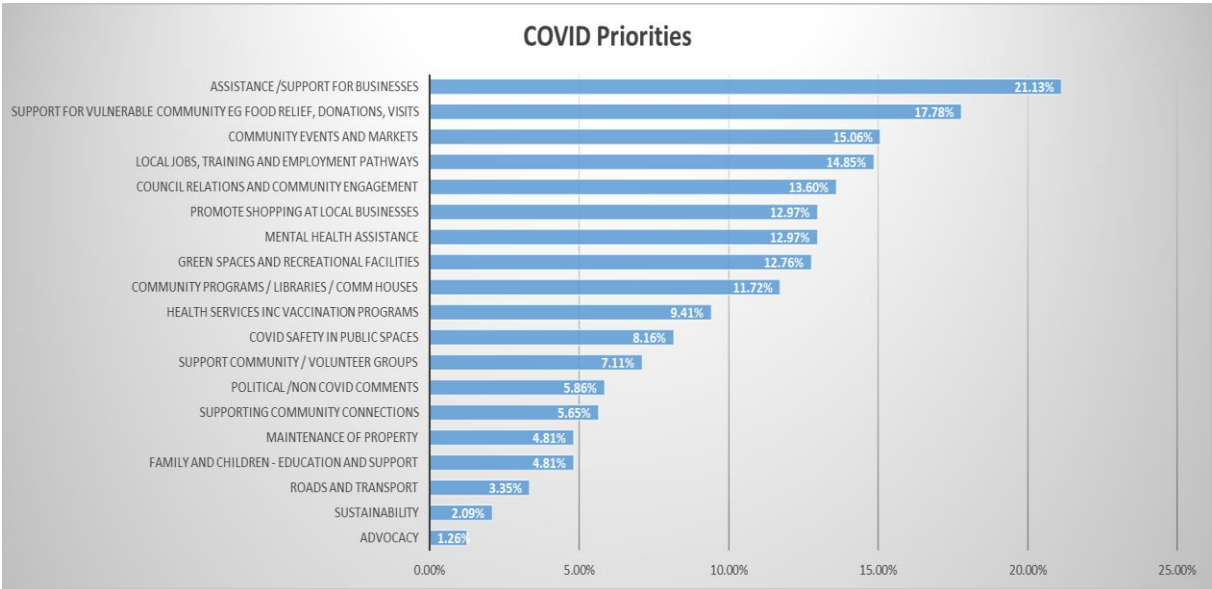
CRITICAL DATES

It is envisaged that recovery fund actions will be implemented in this financial year, however given the unpredictable nature of this Pandemic, a flexible approach will be required. This will allow Council to move in and out of phases as conditions and restrictions change and might require the suspension or reorientation of actions as required.

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

As part of the Community Plan consultation survey a section was included to gauge community views on pandemic recovery priorities. The survey was available online or via hard copy postcard. 478 responses were received and table 2 below summarises the responses. These results are consistent with the priorities identified by the participatory budget working group and rate support for local businesses and vulnerable communities as the top two priorities.

Table 2: Community survey results for Covid-19 Pandemic recovery priorities



Additionally, eighteen local service providers responded to the survey in the free text area. Themes arising from their comments are as follows:

- Increase community connections and mental health support
- Support vulnerable communities via existing community and emergency relief service system
- Support local businesses and local employment (including young people and the unemployed)
- Build on the existing community strengths of our diverse community

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

During the development of pandemic recovery actions consultation occurred with key external partners and across the organisation. Impact assessments were derived from multiple sources including the Covid-19 Community Impact Survey and the Business Impact Survey. Key impacts are detailed in table 3 below.

Table 3: Pandemic impacts summary

	Latest economic trends and impacts
JobKeeper and JobSeeker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In April 2021, 6.9% of people in the City of Whittlesea aged 15 years and over were JobSeeker and Youth Allowance recipients (compared to 5.7% for Greater Melbourne). Only Hume and Mitchell have a higher share of people who are recipients of this scheme. ¹ Early economic indicators are that the end of the JobKeeper scheme has not had the significant negative economic impacts that many expected. ¹
Labour Market Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the fortnight ending 22 May 2021, payroll jobs in the local Whittlesea-Wallan SA3 region rose by 0.2%, compared to a national increase of 0.3%. This follows a decrease of -0.3% in payroll jobs in the previous fortnight. ²
Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The unemployment rate for the City of Whittlesea continues to rise, reaching 8.5% in March 2021, up from 7.8% from December 2020. Unemployment has steadily increased throughout the pandemic, from 5.2% in March 2020. ³ At the local level, unemployment has increased, the most in Wollert and Epping, where it is now 9.9% and 12.6%, respectively. ⁴
	Impacts on the community ⁵
Social connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88% of people said the pandemic has had a negative impact on their social life. 56% of parents are very concerned about their children's social wellbeing Three in five people feel less connected to their community
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two in three people said the pandemic has negatively impacted their mental health. Almost one in two people attended routine medical appointments less often.
Jobs and financial security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many people have faced challenges during the pandemic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14% working fewer hours 10% have experienced reduced income 33% more stressed about finances 10% accessed superannuation
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 80% of businesses have lost revenue and customers. For 72% of businesses it was impossible to operate remotely. One in three businesses have laid off casual workers and 16% stood down permanent staff. ⁶

Sources

¹ Profile.id - <https://profile.id.com.au/whittlesea/job-seeker>

- 2 ABS 2021 - <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>
- 3 ABS 2021 - <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia/latest-release>
- 4 Labour Market Information Portal - <https://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/Downloads/SmallAreaLabourMarketsSALM>
- 5 City of Whittlesea – COVID-19 Community Impact Survey
- 6 City of Whittlesea – COVID-19 Business Impact Survey

The Pandemic Fund Recovery Actions address issues raised in the various surveys and build a recovery platform to, in time, have a direct impact on some of the key community and economic indicators.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Council has allocated \$2M to the COVID -19 Pandemic Recovery Fund for the 2021/22 financial year.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Under the Emergency Management Act, following any major emergency incident, Council is required to coordinate local recovery efforts which incorporates outcomes from community and key stakeholder engagement and ongoing impact assessments. Council will undertake this responsibility via the Pandemic Recovery fund actions and continuing to work with community and key stakeholders through the various forums to ensure a coordinated recovery approach.

Under the Act, the pandemic is a class 2 incident and local government is not eligible for resource re-imburement for emergency relief and recovery expenditure from the Victorian Government. There are however ongoing discussions between Councils, the Department of Health, Emergency Management Victoria, and other Government Departments on funding and grants for specific pandemic recovery initiatives.

Whittlesea 2040 – A place for all Having Pandemic Recovery actions embedded within the new Community Plan will align with Whittlesea 2040 goals and other major Council strategies. In addition, Whittlesea 2040 goals align with the four disaster recovery environments identified in **Table 1** of this report.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Emergency Management - Failure to manage and respond to an emergency event which may be detrimental to community health and wellbeing*

Allocating \$2M to a Pandemic Recovery fund will support the community to recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Strategic Risk *Governance - Ineffective governance of Council's operations and activities resulting in either a legislative or policy breach*

Developing Municipal Pandemic Recovery actions that are aligned with Whittlesea 2040 as well as wider emergency management frameworks avoids the risks associated with poorly coordinated services and maximises community outcomes.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Connected community
Key Direction	A healthy and safe community

The Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions will specifically address Council's commitments to create a healthy and safe community and support the achievement of Whittlesea 2040 goals by coordinating Council's recovery actions into other key Council plans, resources and service delivery.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

Council has undertaken an extensive community consultative process to develop actions for the \$2M Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund for 2021/22. The consultation gathered community perspectives to guide the roll out of the Fund via a community participatory budget working group, community consultation, impact analysis, and ongoing liaison with key external stakeholders. The Pandemic recovery actions have strong alignment with the *Disaster Recovery Environments*³ and with Whittlesea 2040 goals.

RECOMMENDATION**THAT Council resolve to:**

1. Acknowledge the community participatory budget working group for their work in codesigning with Council the recovery fund actions.
2. Adopt the COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions (Attachment 1).
3. Note that COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions will be reported on quarterly via the Community Plan reporting processes.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Chairperson Wilson*
SECONDED: *Administrator Eddy*

THAT Council resolve to:

1. **Write to all members of the Community Participatory Budget Working Group to express Council's appreciation for their time and commitment in co-designing with Council and making recommendations for the \$2m community Recovery Fund.**

³ *Emergency Management Victoria (2019) Resilient Recovery Strategy*

2. **Adopt the COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions (Attachment 1).**
3. **Note that COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions will be reported on quarterly via the Community Plan reporting processes.**

CARRIED

Attachment 1

Pandemic Recovery Fund Actions

W2040 goal	Focus area	Disaster Recovery Domain	Budget	Action
Connected community	A healthy and safe community	Social	\$400k	Provide COVID -19 emergency recovery grants to local community service organisations to support vulnerable communities and to provide emergency relief.
		Social	\$150k	Continue to work with partners to lead recovery from COVID19 pandemic including vaccinations and COVID-19 safe health messaging
	A participating community	Social	\$160k	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain strong multichannel communication with community to promote access to services. 2. Develop a new Council website to be accessible, multilingual and mobile friendly to improve access to our services. 3. Create a mix of digital, online and print communications to reach our diverse communities.
		Social	\$150k	Provide more local services for community to access closer to home
		Social	Within budget	Continue to improve local community engagement in line with Council's Community Engagement Policy to inform Council programs and decision-making.
		Social	Within Budget	Continue to support place-based events in parks and reserves including a bush kinder pilot, nature play programs and community tree planting days.
Liveable neighbourhoods	Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres	Built infrastructure	\$70k	Support the community to establish and sustain community gardens.
		Built infrastructure	\$200k	Develop and commence implementing a plan for public toilets making them accessible, useable and safe.
	Smart,	Built	\$30k	Advocate for better public transport, including be

	connected transport network	infrastructure		rail, tram and bus infrastructure and services
Strong local economy	Increased local employment	Economic	\$400k	As part of COVID-19 recovery, deliver a 'support local' campaign and incentive program to support the community and local businesses.
		Economic	\$150k	Increase capacity building and training in the community to enhance employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents.
	Education opportunities for all	Economic	\$110k	Work with community partners to deliver a series of educational workshops and resources to support young people in preparation for future job opportunities.
	Successful, innovative local businesses	Economic	\$50k	Strengthen and provide opportunities for local businesses to join and participate in networks to support new and existing businesses, whilst strengthening business-to-business connections.
		Economic	Within Budget	Implement the Business Advisory Panel and other targeted forums with key business sectors to strengthen engagement and partnerships with Council.
High performing organisation		Economic	Within budget	Continue to implement Council's Financial Hardship Policy to support financially vulnerable residents.
Sustainable environment	Leaders in clean, sustainable living	Natural	\$70k	Introduce a program to support the uptake of renewable energy options using Environmental Upgrade Agreements.
		Natural	\$60k	Extend solar panel scheme for council buildings used by community groups to help minimise operational costs.

ITEM 6.1.6 FOR DECISION - CONSTRUCTION OF THE MERNDA SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES FACILITY CONTRACT 2021-17 - TENDER EVALUATION REPORT**Attachments: 1 Detailed Evaluation - Confidential**

This attachment has been designated as confidential by the Director Infrastructure & Environment, under delegation from the Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with Rule 53 of the Governance Rules 2021 and sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that— (i) relates to trade secrets; or (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage. In particular the report/attachment contains information about tenderer's prices.

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Author: Senior Contracts Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

It is recommended that contract number 2021-17 for the Construction of the Mernda Social Support Services Facility:

- is awarded to JR & BL Kendall Pty Ltd
- for the lump sum price of \$2,152,811 (excl. GST)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The tender evaluation panel advises that:

- Three tenders were received
- The recommended tender was the highest ranked and is considered best value because it has demonstrated that it has the highest ability to deliver this project in accordance with Council's specified requirements.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The recommended tenderer demonstrated the highest capability and capacity to deliver this project, and with minimal impact on Council and the community.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of this contract award will enable the project to commence in a timely manner within the required timeframe of the Economic Stimulus Grant from the State Government.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Regular communication with the community will continue to minimise the impact of the works.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this contract is to engage a Contractor for the construction of the Mernda Social Support Services Facility.

The Mernda Strategy Plan (2008) identified a need to establish a purpose-built facility in the Mernda / Doreen urban growth area to provide social support programs for older residents and day respite for carers.

The delivery of this project will provide a Social Support facility which will include three activity rooms, an office, consulting room, quiet room, outdoor space, kitchen, storage and amenities.

Tenders for the contract closed on 27 April 2021. The tendered prices and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachment.

EVALUATION

No member of the Tender Evaluation Panel declared any conflict of interest in relation to this tender evaluation.

A Tender Probity and Evaluation Plan was designed specifically for this tender process and it was authorised prior to this tender being advertised. All tenders received were evaluated in accordance with that plan. The evaluation involved scoring of conforming and competitive tenders according to these pre-determined criteria and weightings:

Criteria	Weighting
Price	50%
Capability	23%
Capacity	20%
Impact	7%

The weightings reflect the relative importance of each element to this particular contract. They were determined as being most appropriate after considering numerous factors including (but not restricted to) the time, quality, risk and contract management requirements which were likely to have the most impact on the achievement of best value.

Only tenders that were conforming and competitive were fully scored. Tender submissions that were evaluated as non-conforming or not sufficiently competitive were set aside from further evaluation. In cases where this occurred the reasons for that outcome are detailed in the confidential attachment.

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

TENDERER	CONFORMING	COMPETITIVE	SCORE	RANK
Tenderer A JR & BL Kendall Pty Ltd	Yes	Yes	90.0	1
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	88.2	2
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	77.7	3

Refer to the confidential attachment for further details of the evaluation of all tenders.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the budget for the Construction of the Mernda Social Support Services Facility.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk Not linked to the risks within the Strategic Risk Register.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal **Connected community**
Key Direction **A socially cohesive community**

The facility is required to meet the increased ageing community.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The tender from JR & BL Kendall Pty Ltd was determined to be best value and it is considered that this company can perform the contract to the required standards.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

1. **Accept the tender submitted by JR & BL Kendall Pty Ltd for the sum of \$2,152,811 (excluding GST) for the following contract:**
Number: 2021-17
Title: Construction of the Mernda Social Support Services Facility
subject to the following conditions:
 - a) **Tenderer to provide proof of currency of insurance cover as required in the tender documents.**
 - b) **Price variations to be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the tender documents.**
 - c) **Tenderer to provide contract security as required in the tender documents.**
2. **Approve the funding arrangements detailed in the confidential attachment.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Eddy*
SECONDED: *Administrator Duncan*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

ITEM 6.1.7 FOR FEEDBACK - PROPOSED PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT: INLAND RAIL PROJECT - TOTTENHAM TO ALBURY

Attachments:	1	Attachment 1: Project Area and Site Context ↓
	2	Attachment 2: ARTC Rail Project Draft Explanatory Report ↓
	3	Attachment 3: ARTC Rail Project Draft Incorporated Document ↓
Responsible Officer:		Director Planning & Development
Author:		Team Leader Strategic Projects & Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council resolve to write to the Minister for Planning expressing support for the planning framework proposed by the planning scheme amendment to facilitate the nationally significant Inland Rail Project - Tottenham to Albury.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Australian Rail Track Corporation is proposing a planning scheme amendment to facilitate the nationally significant Inland Rail Project – Tottenham to Albury. The planning scheme amendment has been sent to Council for comment at the request of the Minister for Planning as part of the project approvals process.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The planning framework being proposed by the planning scheme amendment (the Amendment) will assist with facilitating the Inland Rail Project by avoiding the need for planning permits for ongoing works. The Amendment will apply the Specific Controls Overlay (SCO) to each project area, with an associated Incorporated Document providing conditions that must be met to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. An integral part of the approvals process with State Government is that each affected Council provide a letter of support to the Minister for Planning, including any views or feedback on the project and the proposed planning scheme amendment.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION.

The recommendation provides support for an infrastructure project which will benefit both City of Whittlesea and the State of Victoria, noting that it aligns with national and metropolitan freight strategies. The Project also provides infrastructure improvements that will support the proposed Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

The project area within the City of Whittlesea is confined to a narrow section of rail reserve with road access available from Beveridge Road, Beveridge. The Amendment will apply the SCO to the project area, with an associated Incorporated Document providing conditions that must be met to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.

The conditions include measures to ensure environmental and amenity effects are reduced and managed during construction of the project. These measures will be informed by an Environment Report prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.

The Incorporated Document also provides a condition for expiry to cover the expected project period, and to allow the planning controls to lapse when they are no longer required.

REPORT**INTRODUCTION**

Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) is proposing a planning scheme amendment to facilitate the nationally significant Inland Rail Project (the Project), which will connect Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland and complete Australia's national freight network.

The planning framework proposed by ARTC via the Amendment has a single purpose, to expedite the construction of the Project by removing the need for planning permits as works progress. The proposed Specific Controls Overlay (SCO) will be applied to the project areas and will be supported by an Incorporated Document to set conditions for the reduction and management of environmental and amenity impacts.

The Project is being delivered in Victoria in two phases. Stage 1 includes twelve rail enhancement sites between Beveridge and Albury. Stage 2 affects Metropolitan Melbourne and is temporarily on hold.

A number of Federal and State planning and environmental approvals are required prior to the Project proceeding. Before works can commence, ARTC will make a request to the Victorian Minister for Planning to amend the planning schemes for the Whittlesea, Mitchell, Benalla, Strathbogie, Wangaratta and Wodonga local government areas.

As part of this approvals process, ARTC has provided draft Amendment documents to Council and requested Council's feedback about the Project and the Amendment. ARTC have also requested that a letter for support for the Project and Amendment be sent to the Minister for Planning.

This report seeks to provide the information required for Council to determine whether such a letter of support is warranted.

PROPOSAL

Stage 1 of the Project provides for the upgrade of the North East Rail Line (Beveridge to Albury) to provide greater freight carrying capacity, designing in the ability to accommodate double stacked freight trains up to 1,800 metres long. The Project utilises the existing rail corridor, with the elements of the upgrade including:

- Structural compliances for the track.
- Height and width clearances.
- Relocation of overhead and underground utilities, signal gantries and track slew works.

In terms of the project area and construction impacts, this municipality is affected in a relatively minor way. One gantry and signal upgrade will be required on the eastern edge of the rail track in Beveridge, in the north of the municipality (*refer Attachment 1*). The project area is described in greater detail in the next section of the report.

In order to facilitate the Project, ARTC has requested that the Minister for Planning prepare a planning scheme amendment to apply the SCO to the project areas within each affected municipality. The Amendment also proposes the requirement for an Incorporated Document to provide conditions that must be met to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning and which will ensure the Project can progress without the need for additional planning permits.

Ministerial approval is contingent upon ARTC undertaking a voluntary exhibition of the draft planning scheme amendment documentation and receiving a letter of support for the Project and the Amendment from each affected Council.

Council officers have reviewed the draft planning scheme amendment documentation and a summary has been provided later in the report.

THE PROJECT AREA

The project area to which the SCO will be applied within the City of Whittlesea is confined to a narrow section of rail reserve, east of the railway line, with road access to Beveridge Road, Beveridge (*refer Attachment 1*). The railway line forms the boundary between City of Whittlesea and Shire of Mitchell.

The area surrounding the project area is rural at present. Nevertheless, a change to this context will be delivered in the future via implementation of the following significant urban and infrastructure projects near the project area:

Within City of Whittlesea:

- Subject to a future Planning Scheme Amendment and planning permit approvals, the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal (BIFT) is proposed to be constructed on land directly adjacent to the rail reserve to the east and south-east. This land is currently zoned and used for farming. The BIFT has been identified as a freight and logistics hub in the *Victorian Freight Plan 2018* (State Government of Victoria), and the *North Growth Corridor Plan* (Victorian Planning Authority).
- The alignment of the Outer Metropolitan Ring/ E6 Transport Corridor – Rail Connections is identified on land east of the rail reserve through the Public Acquisition Overlay Schedule 7 (PAO7). The acquiring authority is the Director of Public Transport.

Within Shire of Mitchell:

- Lockerbie North Future Urban Structure will be implemented directly south of Minton Street, which forms the western extension of Beveridge Road within Mitchell Shire.
- The potential Beveridge Train Station would be located just south of the project area.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Current planning controls for the project area include the Public Use Zone Schedule 4 (PUZ4). The PUZ4 provides for the use of the land for transport.

The project area is partly affected by Public Acquisition Overlay Schedule 7 (PAO7) and Public Acquisition Overlay Schedule 9 (PAO9). PAO7 relates to the Outer Metropolitan Ring/ E6 Transport Corridor – Rail Connections as mentioned above. PAO9 relates to the Amaroo and Lockerbie Main Sewer Project. The acquiring authority is Yarra Valley Water.

The planning controls affecting the project area do not trigger planning permit approvals for the use of the land for a railway or a road. However, other permit triggers (such as native vegetation removal or cultural heritage) may apply. With respect to the latter, the Minister for Planning has determined that an Environmental Effects Statement (EES) is not required under the *Environmental Effects Act 1978 (Vic)* subject to conditions requiring the preparation of an Environment Report and Environmental Management Framework.

Aboriginal cultural heritage will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)*, with four Cultural Heritage Management Plans under development for the Project.

In summary, the application of the Specific Controls Overlay with the associated Incorporated Document seeks to address all planning and environmental approvals at both State and federal levels to allow development to occur without planning permits if they comply with the conditions of the Incorporated Document.

CONSULTATION

ARTC requested that Council provide property addresses for land parcels within 250 metres of the project area in order to provide written notification of the planning scheme amendment to those addresses. ARTC was provided with this information on 29 March 2021.

The Amendment documentation was provided to Council officers by ARTC on 14 April 2021 and was referred to the relevant internal departments for comment. There were no concerns raised other than to request confirmation that specialist reports had not identified any significant native vegetation within the project area. ARTC has provided this confirmation and also advised that the project area had recently undergone significant disturbance due to track upgrades.

It is also relevant to note that within the proposed Incorporated Document, the conditions relating to the preparation of the Environmental Management Framework require consultation with each affected Council, which would include City of Whittlesea.

THE DRAFT PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT

The Amendment facilitates the delivery of the Beveridge to Albury portion of the Inland Rail - Project, which will improve the efficiency and capacity of the Victorian freight network. The Project is also expected to improve the safety of road users by reducing the number of trucks on the Victorian road network. The planning authority for the proposed Amendment is the Minister for Planning.

The Amendment affects six Victorian planning schemes and seeks to apply the SCO to the affected land in each municipality. The SCO prevails over any contrary or inconsistent provision in the planning scheme and allows the use and development of the project areas for the purposes of the Project.

The Explanatory Report provides a detailed strategic assessment of the planning framework proposed by ARTC and is provided at Attachment 2. The conditions under which the use and the development of the Project is to be undertaken are listed in the associated Incorporated Document, which is provided at Attachment 3.

ARTC have exhibited the draft planning scheme amendment on a voluntary basis prior to seeking approval of the Amendment by the Minister for Planning pursuant to Section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Key to receiving approval from the Minister for Planning is that each affected Council provides a letter supporting the Project and the Amendment.

An important consideration for Council in providing this support is to understand the level of rigour applied to the conditions for the use and development that have been included in the proposed Incorporated Document. These conditions are to be undertaken to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning and comprise the following:

Environment Report

Preparation of a report in accordance with the conditions of *the Inland Rail - Beveridge to Albury Environment Effects Statement Referral No 2020-07*, dated 23 August 2020.

Environmental Management Framework

The Environmental Management Framework (EMF) must be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning, be informed by the findings of the Environment Report and prepared in consultation with City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Benalla Rural City Council, Rural City of Wangaratta and Wodonga Council. The EMF will include:

- A set of Environmental Performance Requirements to define the environmental outcomes that must be achieved during the design and construction of the Project.

- The process and timing for the preparation of a Construction Environment Management Plan and any sub-plan that is required by the Environmental Performance Requirements.
- Performance monitoring and reporting processes, including auditing to ensure environmental and amenity effects are reduced and managed during construction of the Project.
- A statement of all environmental commitments for the Project.

Native Vegetation

Native vegetation removal deemed necessary for the Project, and required offsets, will be undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (DELWP, December 2017) to the satisfaction of the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

Flood Management

Not applicable to City of Whittlesea.

Heritage Management

Not applicable to City of Whittlesea as there are no heritage overlays affecting the project area.

Creating and altering access to roads

Not applicable to City of Whittlesea as the project area is not accessed via an arterial road or freeway.

Urban Design Framework

Not applicable to City of Whittlesea due to the rural context of the project area.

Preparatory Buildings and Works

These conditions relate to preparatory buildings and works that do not require a planning permit and include investigation, testing and survey work. Any native vegetation removed in preparatory buildings and works are subject to *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP, December 2017) and relevant information about the native vegetation to be removed must be provided to the to the satisfaction of the Secretary to DELWP.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Council as a result of the Project or the Amendment. The planning authority for the Amendment will be the Minister for Planning.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Policy 3.4.2 of Plan Melbourne seeks to increase the volume of freight carried on rail. This is a stated intention of the Project, although it should be noted that the proposed location of the BIFT will mean the distribution of freight to road versus rail is uncertain for this municipality.

North Growth Corridor Plan

The Growth Corridor Plans are high level integrated land use and transport plans that provide a strategy for the development of Melbourne's growth corridors over the coming decades.

In the context of the project area, the *North Growth Corridor Plan* identifies future industrial land on the City of Whittlesea side of the railway line and future residential land on the Shire of Mitchell side of the railway line.

Integrated Transport Strategy 2014

The *Integrated Transport Strategy* states that “rail freight plays a limited role within Whittlesea, being primarily focussed on through movement on the interstate line and in the longer term through the proposed intermodal hub at Beveridge”.

The Project facilitates the improvement of freight carrying capacity through the interstate rail network. However, as noted above, the effect in relation to the distribution of freight to road versus rail is uncertain once the BIFT is established.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Not linked to the risks within the Strategic Risk Register.*

There are no strategic risk implications for Council as a result of the Project or the Amendment. The Project is being undertaken by ARTC and the planning authority for the Amendment will be the Minister for Planning.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Liveable neighbourhoods
Key Direction	Smart, connected transport network

Noting that the Project achieves state and national freight objectives rather than being targeted to neighbourhoods, it broadly aligns with objectives from *Whittlesea 2040* to extend networks and to provide better transport links.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

ARTC has requested that the Minister for Planning undertake a Planning Scheme Amendment to apply the SCO to project areas that form part of the Inland Rail Project – Tottenham to Albury within six local government areas, including City of Whittlesea. Via the Amendment, an Incorporated Document will provide conditions that must be met to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning, to ensure the Project can progress without the need for additional planning permits.

Ministerial approval for the Amendment is contingent upon ARTC undertaking a voluntary exhibition of the draft planning scheme amendment documentation and receiving a letter of support for the Project and the Amendment from each affected Council.

Council officers have reviewed the Amendment documentation and found it to be satisfactory, noting that the Project affects a relatively small area within City of Whittlesea. ARTC has proposed a planning framework that has incorporated the necessary

considerations of environmental and amenity impacts. The Amendment will expedite a nationally significant infrastructure project and, on balance, should be wholeheartedly supported. As such, it is recommended that Council write to the Minister for Planning expressing support for the Inland Rail Project - Tottenham to Albury, and the proposed Amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to write to the Minister for Planning expressing support for the planning framework proposed by the planning scheme amendment to facilitate the nationally significant Inland Rail Project - Tottenham to Albury.

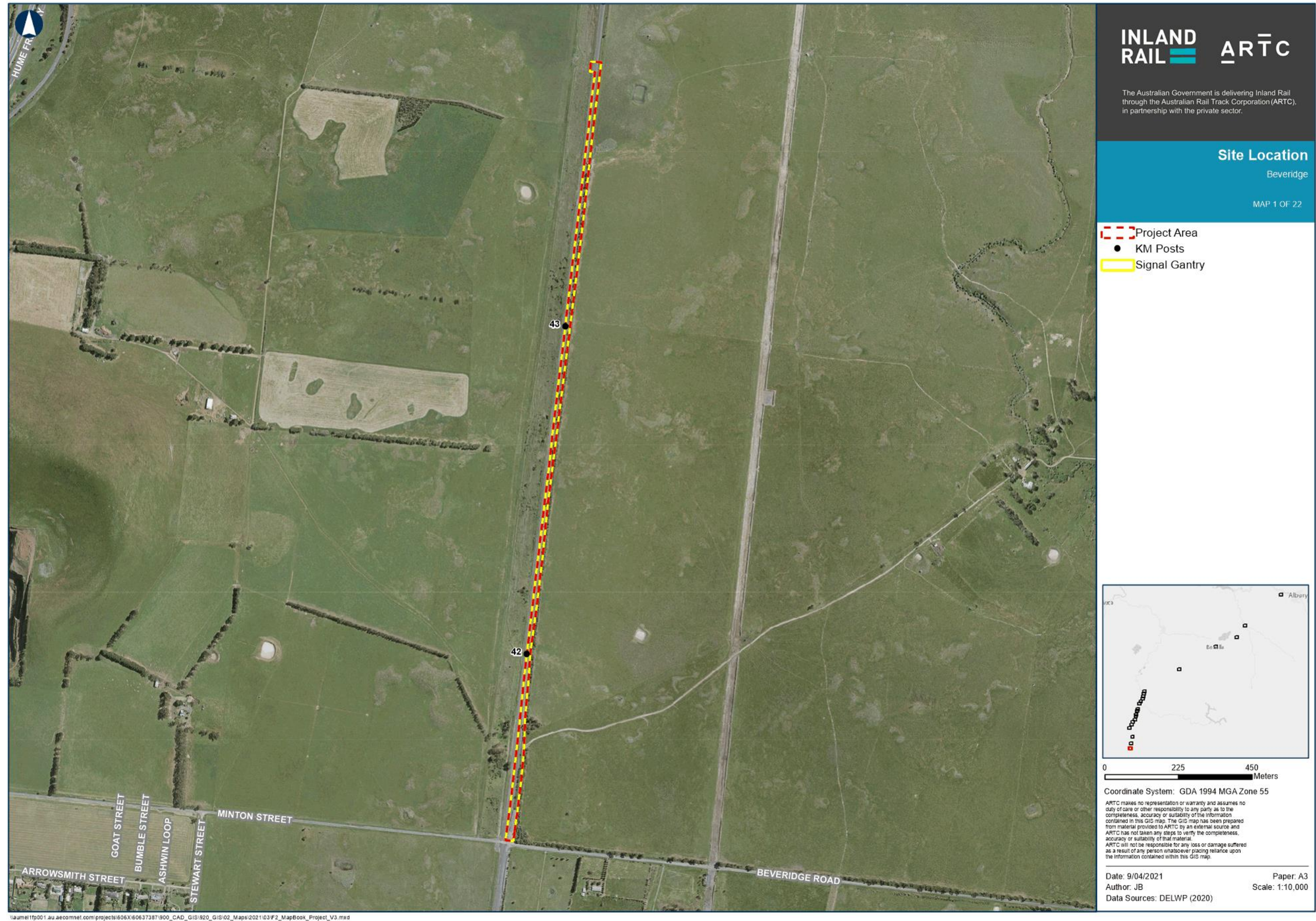
COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Chairperson Wilson*
SECONDED: *Administrator Eddy*

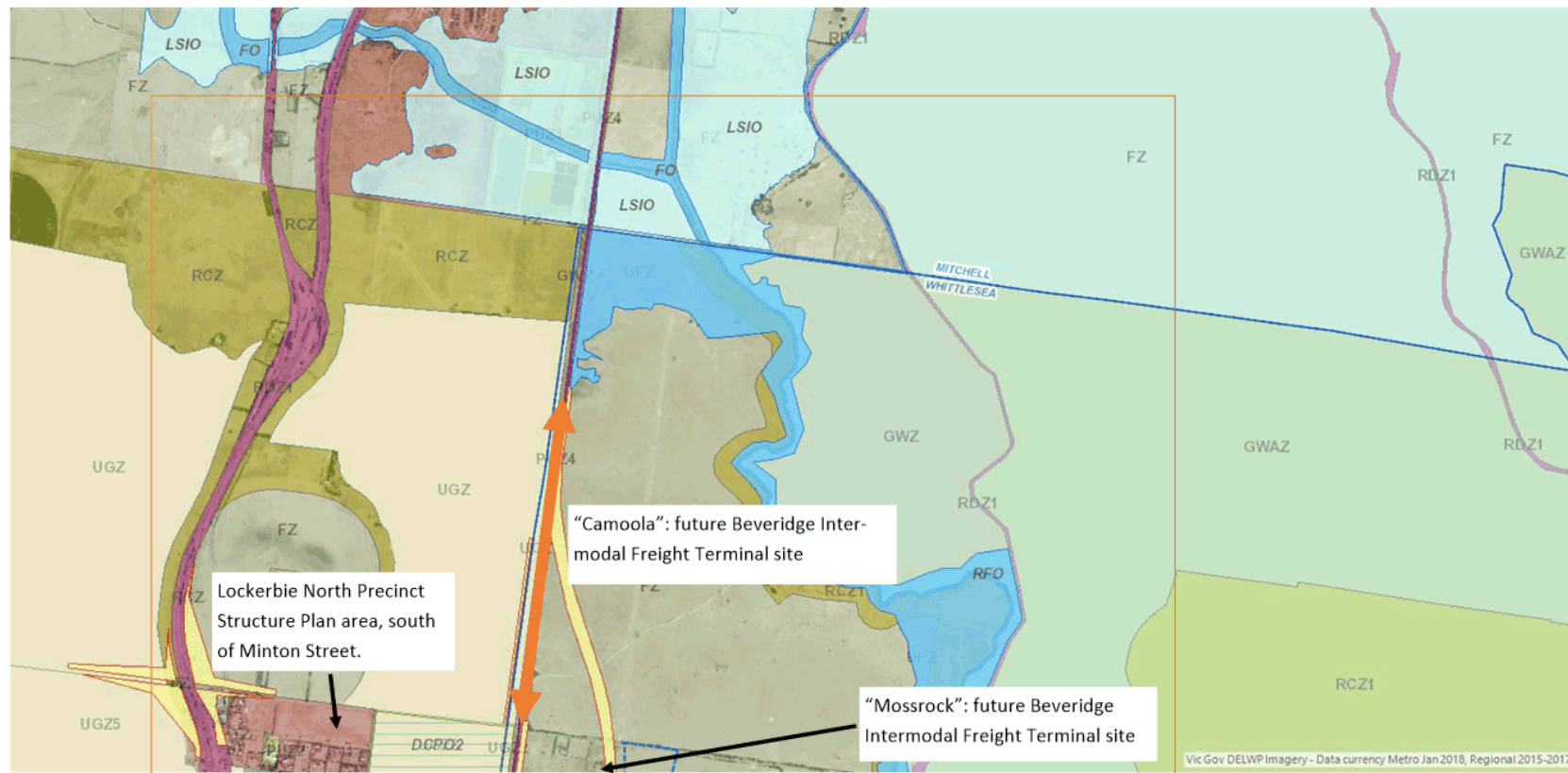
THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

Attachment 1



Attachment 1: Site Context



↔ Extent of Project Area

Planning and Environment Act 1987

INLAND RAIL – BEVERIDGE TO ALBURY AMENDMENT GC157 EXPLANATORY REPORT

Who is the planning authority?

This Amendment has been prepared by the Minister for Planning, who is the planning authority for the Amendment.

The Amendment has been made at the request of the Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (**ARTC**) as the proponent responsible for the Inland Rail-Beveridge to Albury Project (**the Project**) which forms the Victorian portion of the broader Inland Rail Program.

Land affected by the Amendment

The Amendment applies to the land (**Project Land**) required for the Project shown as Specific Controls Overlay (**SCO**) on the Planning Scheme Maps forming part of the Whittlesea, Mitchell, Strathbogie, Benalla, Wangaratta and Wodonga Planning Schemes (**the Planning Schemes**).

The Project Land includes a series of isolated work areas extending from Beveridge to Albury along the North East Rail Line, which runs largely parallel to the Hume Highway from the Murray River at Albury to the outskirts of Melbourne. The Project Land does not include the entire North East Rail Line and the total Project Land is less than 10% of the North East Rail Line.

The Project Land affected by the Amendment is shown in Attachment A.

Generally, the Project comprises:

City of Whittlesea

- Gantry and signalling upgrades

Mitchell Shire Council

- Adjustment of alignment of existing rail track (track slews), Wallan
- Bridge replacement over the rail line at Broadford-Wandong Road, Wandong
- Bridge replacement over the rail line at Hamilton Street, Broadford
- Track lowering and/or bridge replacement at Short Street, Broadford
- Bridge replacement over the rail line at Marchbanks Road, Broadford
- Track lowering under the road at Hume Highway, Tallarook
- Track slews, Seymour-Goulburn River
- Track slews, Seymour
- Track slews, Seymour-Mangalore
- Bridge replacement over the rail line at Seymour-Avenel Road, Seymour
- Track lowering under the road at Hume Highway, Seymour
- Gantry and signalling upgrades

Strathbogie Shire Council

- Bridge replacement or vehicle underpass at Anderson Street, Euroa
- New platform, track realignment and upgraded pedestrian access at Euroa Station
- Gantry and signalling upgrades

Benalla Rural City Council

- Bridge replacement over the rail line at Benalla Station or new platform, track realignment and upgraded pedestrian access at Benalla Station
- Gantry and signalling upgrades

Rural City of Wangaratta

- Bridge replacement over the rail line at Beaconsfield Parade, Glenrowan
- Bridge upgrade over the rail line at Green Street, Wangaratta
- Track lowering, new platform and upgraded pedestrian access at Wangaratta Station
- Gantry and signalling upgrades

Wodonga Council

- Track lowering under the road at Murray Valley Highway, Barnawartha North
- Gantry and signalling upgrades

What the Amendment does

The Amendment introduces '*Inland Rail-Beveridge to Albury April 2021*' (**Incorporated Document**) into the Planning Schemes to facilitate the use and development of the Project Land for the purpose of the Project.

Specifically, the Amendment changes the Planning Schemes to:

- Amend the Schedules to Clause 45.12 (Specific Controls Overlay) in the Whittlesea, Mitchell and Strathbogie Planning Schemes to insert the Incorporated Document.
- Insert Clause 45.12 (Specific Controls Overlay), Schedule to Clause 45.12 (SCO) and the Incorporated Document into the Benalla, Wangaratta and Wodonga Planning Schemes.
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 72.03 *What Does this Scheme Consist of?* to insert:
 - Whittlesea Planning Scheme Maps: SCO
 - Mitchell Planning Scheme Maps: SCO
 - Strathbogie Planning Scheme Maps: SCO
 - Benalla Planning Scheme Maps: SCO
 - Wangaratta Planning Scheme Maps: SCO
 - Wodonga Planning Scheme Maps: SCO
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 72.04 *Documents Incorporated in this Planning Scheme* to the Planning Schemes to insert the Incorporated Document.

The Amendment may seek to apply a Public Acquisition Overlay (**PAO**) to acquire designated land necessary for the timely delivery of the Project. The method of acquisition is yet to be confirmed and is dependent on the Project accessing the powers under the *Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009* (Vic) for the delivery of Project works.

Strategic assessment of the Amendment

Why is the Amendment required?

The Amendment is required to facilitate the timely and coordinated delivery of the Project.

The Project comprises of upgrade works along the existing North East Rail Line corridor from Beveridge to Albury. The Project will utilise the existing corridor and modify or replace existing infrastructure at discrete locations where there is not adequate clearance for double-stacked freight trains. The main components of the Project include 12 discrete project areas (also referred to as 'enhancement sites') from Beveridge to Albury where road and rail interfaces do not provide the required horizontal and vertical clearance for double-stacked freight trains.

In addition to the enhancement sites, the Project includes works to signal gantries, adjustment and alignment of existing rail track (track slews) and overhead powerline works to ensure that appropriate horizontal and vertical clearances are achieved for double-stacked freight trains along the alignment from Beveridge to Albury.

The Project is the Victorian component of the Inland Rail Program and is of national, state and regional significance. Australia's unique geographic and demographic characteristics places a greater emphasis on the need for an efficient internal freight network. Freight transport services between major population centres, particularly in capital cities, deliver millions of tonnes of freight each year. The Project will assist to enhance this supply chain and complete the backbone of the national freight network between Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It will transform the way freight is moved around the country, connect regional Australia to markets more efficiently, drive substantial cost savings for producers and consumers, and deliver significant economic benefits.

Better infrastructure and an effective national freight operation are key to delivering efficient supply chains, improving Australia's global competitiveness and lifting the nation's wealth and prosperity. The objectives of the Project align with the Victorian State Governments Freight Plan "*Delivering the Goods*". Better freight connections will support Victorian businesses and primary producers and assist to create jobs across all parts of the economy. To build on Victoria's advantage as the freight and logistics capital of Australia, freight networks need to be upgraded and safeguarded into the future.

How does the Amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The Amendment implements the objectives of planning in Victoria as set out in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Victoria (Vic)) (**P&E Act**) as follows:

a) *To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land.*

The Amendment facilitates a Project that will improve the efficiency and capacity of the Victorian freight network. Accordingly, the Project will help achieve an integrated and sustainable transport system that facilitates economic prosperity and coordinates the reliable movements of goods. The Amendment is also expected to improve the safety of road users by reducing the number of trucks on the Victorian road network.

b) *To provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity.*

The Project Land is predominantly located within an existing rail infrastructure corridor and the Project is not likely to have any significant adverse impacts on any natural or man-made resources. Parts of the Project Land have been significantly modified and disturbed both physically and ecologically, and the surrounding areas are also highly developed. Environmental management will be integrated within the detailed design, construction and operation of the Project and measures will be included to ensure Project impacts are monitored, avoided, controlled and mitigated as required.

The Project was referred to the Minister for Planning in April 2020 to determine if an Environmental Effects Statement (**EES**) was required under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) (EES referral number 2020-07). The Minister for Planning determined that an EES was not required for the Project subject to conditions requiring the preparation of an Environment Report and Environmental Management Framework (**EMF**). The EMF will be developed in consultation with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (**DELWP**) and to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. The EMF will be informed by the findings and conclusions of the Environment Report and will include a statement of environmental commitments for the Project to provide an overarching framework to manage environmental and amenity impacts during construction.

c) *To ensure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians, and visitors to Victoria.*

The Amendment facilitates the Project, which will improve the reliability, capacity and efficiency of Victoria's freight network. The Project will provide for improved infrastructure and strengthened links to Melbourne and regional areas. Most permanent works will be contained within existing rail and road corridors. All works will be designed to respond to the local environment and the local social and built form context, to enhance the living and working environment for nearby communities by improving the movement of goods. The Project will reduce Victoria's reliance on road transport and remove a significant number of trucks from the road network. This is expected to result in fewer fatal and serious injury crashes between trucks and cars.

d) To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value.

The Project Land includes the following heritage places listed on the National Heritage List (**NHL**), Victorian Heritage Register (**VHR**), Victorian Heritage Inventory (**VHI**) or local Heritage Overlays (**HO**):

- Glenrowan Heritage Precinct (NHL:105729, VHR:H2000, VHI:H8125-0015, HO170 – Wangaratta Planning Scheme)
- Kelly Gang Siege Precinct and Environs (HO171 – Wangaratta Planning Scheme)
- Seymour Railway Station (VHR:H1591, HO150 – Mitchell Planning Scheme)
- Wangaratta Railway Station Complex (VHR:H1597, HO139 – Mitchell Planning Scheme)
- The Railway Station and Associated Items-Precinct (HO11 – Wangaratta Planning Scheme)
- Docker Street West-Precinct (HO9 – Wangaratta Planning Scheme)
- Docker Street East-Precinct (HO8 – Wangaratta Planning Scheme)
- Wallan Station Complex (VHI:H7923-0045, HO221 – Mitchell Planning Scheme)
- Benalla Railway Station (HO60 – Benalla Planning Scheme)
- Benalla Central Urban Conservation Area (HO26 – Benalla Planning Scheme)
- Rail Bridge over Broken River, Ackerly Avenue, Benalla (HO1- Benalla Planning Scheme)
- Signal Boxes A and B (HO63 – Benalla Planning Scheme)
- Seymour Railway Station (HO308 – Mitchell Planning Scheme)
- House and garden, 770 Wandong Road (HO294 – Mitchell Planning Scheme)
- Former Beveridge Station Complex (VHI:H14320-Whittlesea Planning Scheme)

Works within the registered extent of the above places listed on the VHI or VHR will require consultation with Heritage Victoria and permits or consents (or exemptions from permits or consents) under the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic). The Incorporated Document also includes conditions to manage the impact of the Project on heritage places included under a Heritage Overlay. This includes a requirement for a report or plans detailing the extent of development to be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning where, but for the Incorporated Document, a planning permit would be required for buildings, works, demolition, alteration or removal of a heritage place within a Heritage Overlay.

Aboriginal cultural heritage will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic). At the time of writing, four Cultural Heritage Management Plans (**CHMP**) are under development for the Project.

e) To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and coordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community.

The Incorporated Document will provide a single approval that will ensure orderly and coordinated provision of rail freight transport infrastructure and associated facilities for the benefit of the community. The Project will result in improvements to rail and road infrastructure and will ensure that existing utilities are adequately protected, relocated and upgraded where necessary.

f) To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The Project is expected to significantly improve the freight network in Victoria and strengthen links to Melbourne and regional areas. The Amendment will facilitate the Project, which will benefit present and future Victorians by delivering significant economic benefits and driving cost savings for producers and consumers. The Project will also address the forecasted demand that expects to see freight volumes in Victoria triple. The delivery of the Project will be carefully managed to minimise disruption for rail users, local communities and businesses.

How does the Amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The Project that will be facilitated by the Amendment has been informed by a range of specialist studies. It has considered potential environmental, social and economic effects of construction and operation as follows.

Environmental effects

Environment Report

The Project was referred to the Minister for Planning in April 2020 to determine if an EES was required under the *Environment Effects Act 1978 (Vic)* (referral number 2020-07).

The Minister for Planning determined that an EES was not required for the Project subject to conditions, including a condition requiring the preparation of an Environment Report to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. The Environment Report for the Project will examine and document:

- The predicted impacts (direct and indirect) on biodiversity values, particularly associated with
 - listed species (under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)* (**FFG Act**) and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth) (**EPBC Act**).
 - disruption to habitat connectivity for listed fauna (under the FFG Act and EPBC Act) including Brush-tailed Phascogale, Squirrel Glider, Barking Owl, Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater.
 - listed communities (under the FFG Act and EPBC Act), including the FFG Act-listed Victorian Temperate Woodland Bird Community and EPBC Act-listed Grey Box Grassy Woodlands.
 - native vegetation, including impacts to large trees and large hollow-bearing trees.
- Potential cumulative impacts of nearby and coinciding infrastructure projects (such as the Shepparton Line Upgrade and the North East Rail Line Upgrade) on native vegetation and biodiversity values particularly in relation to values mentioned above.
- Assessment of project design alternatives and construction techniques to avoid and minimise adverse environmental effects, including exploration of alternate proposed measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate potential impacts on native vegetation and biodiversity values examined in the report, such as no-go zones.
- Mapping that clarifies the potential locations of proposed project infrastructure, works and construction, as well as predicted environmental impacts and key environmental assets and values to be avoided (e.g. environmental control points and no-go zones); and

- Targeted surveys and ecological investigations undertaken by suitably qualified persons in accordance with relevant survey guidelines in consultation with DELWP, to inform the prediction of potential environmental impacts of the project on native vegetation and biodiversity values.

Environmental Management Framework

The second condition of the Minister's no-EES decision on the referral (referral number 2020-07) requires the preparation of an Environmental Management Framework (**EMF**). The EMF must be informed by the findings and conclusions of the Environment Report and be developed in consultation with DELWP and to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. It will provide a statement of all environmental commitments for the Project and provide an overarching framework to manage environmental and amenity impacts during construction.

Native vegetation

The Project Land generally occurs within a highly modified environment, dominated by road and rail infrastructure, in addition to land cleared for agricultural purposes or rural town centres. Interspersed amongst this are areas of remnant native vegetation that occur on both public and private land. As the Project is currently within the reference design phase the total amount of native vegetation removal required to facilitate the project is still being established. However, as the design progresses and the final construction footprint is refined, the predicted impacts (direct and indirect) on biodiversity values, particularly associated with native vegetation removal, will be detailed in the Environment Report for the Project, which will be placed on public exhibition for comment.

In addition, the Incorporated Document requires details of the proposed removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation necessary for the construction of the Project to be prepared in accordance with Application Requirements 1, 5, 9, 10 and 11 in Tables 4 and 5 of the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction and lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP 2017) (**the Guidelines**), to the satisfaction of the Secretary to DELWP. The Incorporated Document also requires native vegetation offsets to be provided in accordance with the Guidelines, except as otherwise agreed by the Secretary to DELWP.

Environmental Overlays

The Project Land intersects several Environmental Overlays including Environmental Significance Overlays (ESO) and Vegetation Protection Overlays (VPO).

The Incorporated Document requires an EMF be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning and in consultation with the Whittlesea, Mitchell, Strathbogie, Benalla, Wangaratta and Wodonga Councils. This will include consultation on the objectives of the Environmental Overlays and the outcomes will be incorporated into the Project's EMF.

Heritage

The Project Land includes several heritage places listed on the NHL, VHR, VHI or local HO.

Works within the registered extent of places listed on the VHI or VHR will require consultation with Heritage Victoria and permits or consents (or exemptions from permits or consents) under the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) This includes any item subject to an Interim Protection Order under the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic).

The Incorporated Document includes conditions to manage the impact of the Project on specified heritage places listed on local Heritage Overlay. This includes a requirement for a report or plans detailing the extent of development to be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning where, but for the Incorporated Document, a planning permit would be required for buildings, works, demolition, alteration or removal of a heritage place within a Heritage Overlay.

The preparation and approval of a CHMP is required for the Project in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic). At the time of writing, four CHMPs are under development for the Project.

Flooding

The Incorporated Document requires that where, but for the Incorporated Document, a planning permit would be required any buildings and works on a part of the Project Land affected by the Floodway Overlay, Land Subject to Inundation Overlay or Urban Floodway Zone must be undertaken to the satisfaction of the relevant floodplain management authority.

Potentially contaminated land

The EMF will include measures to manage contaminated land within the Project Land to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.

Air quality

- Operation

Emissions from the operation of double-stacked freight trains are not expected to increase significantly over the existing emissions primarily due to the use of the same number of locomotives per service and only a slight increase in train frequency. Calculations of PM2.5, PM10 and NOx emissions indicate that emissions as a result of the Project would have a very minor contribution.

- Construction

Air quality impacts from the Project associated with the construction phase will primarily be in relation to the emission of dust. The Incorporated Document requires the preparation and approval of an EMF, which alongside the Construction Environmental Management Plan (**CEMP**) will include measures to manage air quality impacts during construction to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.

Noise

- Operation

Preliminary assessments indicate there will be limited noise impacts associated with the operation of the Project. The Wangaratta Station Precinct is the only area that may experience a noticeable increase in noise levels at sensitive receptors with predicted rail noise levels likely be above the assessment criteria without mitigation. However, an initial review of noise mitigation options identified that at-property treatments may be feasible. The final mitigation strategy will be confirmed during detail design. To ensure that Project noise impacts are appropriately mitigated, noise monitoring will be undertaken once the Project is operational.

If initial noise mitigation measurements are unsuccessful, further mitigation measures will be considered to ensure compliance with applicable industry standards. This will likely include a process of further railway noise modelling, analysis of engineering and environmental constraints, and consultation with directly affected landowners and sensitive receptors.

- Construction

Construction activities may result in potential noise impacts near the Project Land. However, noise impacts during construction will be short-term, in discrete locations and will be managed to acceptable levels. The EMF will include an overarching framework for site or work specific measures to reduce and manage environmental and amenity effects of noise during construction and the Project will be delivered in accordance with the relevant EPA Victoria policies and guidelines. The Project must have regard to the Environmental Guidelines for Major Construction

Sites (EPA Victoria, February 1996) to minimise noise-related impacts during construction and the relevant provisions for the *Environment Protection Act 1970* (Vic).

Social effects

The Project will facilitate a range of positive social effects, including increased employment opportunities arising from the construction of the Project and improved freight connections for Victorian businesses and primary producers.

The Project will connect regional Victoria to markets more effectively and in turn, drive substantial cost savings for producers and consumers. Upgrades to road and pedestrian foot bridges will provide for improved urban design outcomes, lighting, visibility, and accessibility that complies with the Australian Government's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth (Cth)).

It is anticipated that Project's construction works will impact the people who live, work and operate businesses near the Project Land. However, these impacts will mostly be temporary in duration. Impacts would include restrictions on access to the Project Land including areas of open space, disruption to local access routes, amenity impacts such as traffic, noise and dust and potential disruption to utilities. The EMF for the Project will provide a framework to ensure that these localised construction activities are appropriately managed. Ongoing consultation with the community, stakeholders and businesses will be undertaken to understand how the Project can enhance opportunities and manage potential social impacts.

Temporary occupation and permanent acquisition

To enable the construction of new road and rail infrastructure at some locations, and to facilitate access to construction sites, a limited number of properties will be required for temporary occupation or permanent acquisition. Conversations with landowners who are likely to be affected have already taken place, and consultation with these landowners will continue as the project design progresses.

Economic effects

The Project is expected to have a positive economic effect by enhancing supply chains and completing the 'backbone' of the freight network between Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria. Positive economic effects are expected to include (but are not limited to):

- An improved investment landscape with the Project expected to be a catalyst for complementary private sector investments, such as fleet upgrades, new terminals and integrated freight precincts.
- An increase in access to national markets and decreased logistics costs for local Victorian businesses.
- More effective connections for regional Victoria to national markets which will drive substantial cost savings for producers and consumers.
- Increased employment opportunities arising from the construction of the Project including a predicted 2,800 Victorian jobs during construction.

It is anticipated that the construction of the Project may impact local businesses operating within close proximity to the Project. These impacts will mostly be temporary in duration and the EMF for the Project will provide a framework to ensure localised construction activities are appropriately managed.

Does the Amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

A large portion of the Project Land is located within a bushfire prone area. In addition, the Bushfire Management Overlay (**BMO**) applies to land in Broadford, Tallarook and Seymour. Works in these areas are limited to rail and road infrastructure, utilities, and associated infrastructure and works,

which in accordance with the BMO does not require a planning permit. As such, the Amendment is unlikely to pose risk of bushfire to the community, infrastructure or the environment.

ARTC has consulted with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in the preparation of this Amendment and will continue to consult with the CFA as the Project design progresses.

Does the Amendment comply with the requirements of any Minister's Direction applicable to the Amendment?

Section 12(2)(a) of the P&E Act requires that in preparing a Planning Scheme Amendment, a planning authority must have regard to the Minister's Directions. The following Minister's Directions are relevant to this amendment.

Ministerial Direction – The Form and Content of Planning Schemes

The Amendment is consistent with the *Ministerial Direction – The Form and Content of Planning Schemes* under Section 7(5) of the P&E Act.

Direction No. 1 Potentially Contaminated Land

The Amendment is consistent with *Direction No. 1 Potentially Contaminated Land*. The Amendment does not propose a sensitive use, agriculture or public open space and design and construction of the Project will be in accordance with an EMF. The EMF will contain measures to manage contamination in accordance with industry standards, and to ensure the environmental condition of the land is suitable for the future intended use.

Direction No. 9 Metropolitan Planning Strategy

The Amendment is consistent with *Direction No. 9 Metropolitan Planning Strategy* and *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*. The Project will deliver on the relevant principles, outcomes and directions by:

- Delivering jobs and investment opportunities.
- Facilitating transport improvements to make jobs and community services more accessible.
- Improving freight operations which will increase social and economic participation.
- Improving the operation of the existing freight network with more efficient freight transport.
- Ensuring the environmental and construction impacts are managed and minimised through implementation of the EMF.

In particular, the Amendment delivers on Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 Outcome 3: Melbourne has an integrated transport system that connects people to jobs and services and goods to market by specifically delivering on:

- Policy 3.4: Improve freight efficiency and increase capacity of gateways while protecting urban amenity
- Policy 3.4.2 Increase the volume of freight carried on rail
- Policy 3.4.3 Avoid negative impacts of freight movements on urban amenity

Direction No. 11 Strategic Assessment of Amendments

The Amendment has been prepared having regard to *Direction No. 11 Strategic Assessment of Amendments*.

Direction No. 19 Preparation and Content of Amendments that may Significantly Impact the Environment, Amenity and Human Health

The Amendment has been prepared having regard to *Direction No. 19 – Ministerial Direction on the Preparation and Content of Amendments that may significantly impact the environment, amenity and human health* and *Ministerial requirement for information for authorisation or preparation of amendments that may significantly impact the environment, amenity and human health*.

This Direction requires planning authorities to seek the views of the EPA Victoria in the preparation of Planning Scheme Amendment reviews and amendments that could result in significant impacts on the environment, amenity and human health due to pollution and waste.

It is not considered that the Amendment will result in the use or development of land that may result in significant impacts on the environment, amenity and human health due to pollution or waste. The EPA Victoria has been consulted on the Amendment and the consideration of potential impacts to the environment, amenity and human health will be addressed by the EMF. ARTC will continue to engage with the EPA Victoria as detailed design of the Project progresses, and throughout the construction of the Project.

How does the Amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The Amendment supports or implements the following clauses of the Planning Policy Framework (PPF).

- **Clause 11 (Settlement):** The Project facilitates investment in Victoria's freight network and will ensure the needs of future communities are met by enhancing supply chains.
 - The Project is consistent with **Clause 11.01-1S (Settlement)** as it will strengthen transport links on national networks for the movement of commodities.
 - In accordance with **Clause 11.03-6S (Regional and local places)**, the Project proponent has undertaken extensive consultation with key stakeholders to ensure the distinctive characteristics and needs of regional and local places have been considered in the development of the Project.
- **Clause 12 (Environment and Landscape Values):** The Project seeks to protect any areas of environmental value through seeking to avoid, mitigate and/or manage any potential impacts from construction and operation. The Project will adopt context sensitive construction methods where possible to mitigate inappropriate impacts to natural areas and reserves. The Project will leverage the existing rail infrastructure corridors to the maximum extent possible to avoid and minimise native vegetation removal.
 - Consistent with **Clause 12.01-2S (Native vegetation management)** the unavoidable removal of native vegetation would be offset in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP, 2017). It is anticipated the Project will be able to satisfy all offset requirements.
 - Pursuant to **Clause 12.03-1S (River corridors, waterways, lakes and wetlands)**, the Project seeks to protect and enhance river corridors, waterways and lakes. The Project has been developed to maintain environmental assets and protect any environmental values of these assets where possible.
- **Clause 13 (Environmental Risks and Amenity):** Construction and operation of the Project will be undertaken in accordance with an EMF to ensure that best practice environmental and risk management approaches are adopted.
 - The Project supports planning for bushfire resilience by utilising areas that are generally cleared of hazardous vegetation consistent with **Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire Planning)**.
 - As part of the Project, supporting technical specialist studies have been undertaken. Of relevance to this Clause, disciplines included surface water, groundwater,

contamination, air quality and noise. In doing so, the objectives and strategies contained under the following clauses are supported and/or implemented as part of the Project where applicable.

- **Clause 13.03 (Floodplains)**
- **Clause 13.04 (Soil Degradation)**
- **Clause 13.05 (Noise)**
- **Clause 13.06 (Air Quality)**
- **Clause 13.07 (Amenity and Safety)**

The specialist technical studies (listed above) identified mitigation measures to avoid, mitigate and/or manage any potential impacts. These measures will be included in the Project's EMF to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.

- **Clause 14 (Natural Resource Management):** In accordance with **Clause 14 (Natural Resource Management)** the Project supports environmental quality and sustainable development in Victoria.
 - The Project supports the objective of **Clause 14.01-1S (Protection of agricultural land)** by using the existing rail corridor and road reserves to the maximum extent practicable and limiting the permanent occupation of farming land.
- **Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage):**
 - Pursuant to **Clause 15.01-1S (Urban design)**, the Project will promote good urban design. An Urban Design Framework has been developed to support the development and use of the Project.
 - In accordance with **Clause 15.01-6S (Design for rural areas)**, the development and use of the Project seeks to respect valued areas of rural character of the towns the Project Land affects.
 - The Project supports the objective of **Clause 15.02-1S (Energy and resource efficiency)** by supporting low energy forms of transport by reducing the size and number of trucks on Victorian highways, which therefore, will result in lower carbon emissions. It is estimated that the national Inland Rail Program will reduce carbon emissions by 750,000 tonnes.
 - The Project will protect places and sites with significant heritage and cultural value in accordance with **Clause 15.03-1S (Heritage conservation)**. The Project Land intersects with one place on the NHL, three places on the VHR, three places on the VHI and several places listed on local heritage overlays. The heritage places in the Project Land are most commonly associated with Station Precincts and the Glenrowan Heritage Precinct recognising the site of the 'Kelly Gang' siege. In accordance with **Clause 15.03-1S (Heritage Conservation)** mitigation measures will be developed as part of the Project to ensure the protection and appropriate treatment of heritage sites. Compliance with any heritage permit conditions will be incorporated into the EMF to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.
 - Pursuant with **Clause 15.03-2S (Aboriginal cultural heritage)**, Aboriginal cultural heritage will be managed accordance with the requirements of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)*. At the time of writing, four CHMPs are under development for the Project and are being prepared in consultation with Aboriginal Victoria, the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation. The Project's CHMPs will provide management conditions for any Aboriginal heritage within the Project Land.
- **Clause 17 (Economic Development):** The Project will enhance Victoria's economic prosperity by significantly improving the efficiency of Victoria's rail freight capacity. The efficiency of supply chains is directly reflected in the price consumers pay for goods and an efficient internal freight

network will help ensure the competitiveness of exports. The Project will maximise returns to the economy and provide a source of taxable revenue to support the provision of public services.

- On a local scale, the Project will lead to enhanced economic outcomes by providing local employment opportunities during construction in accordance with **Clause 17.01-1S (Diversified Economy)**.
- In accordance with **Clause 17.01-2 (Innovation and Research)** the Project will expand the development of logistics infrastructure in Victoria.
- **Clause 18 (Transport):** The Project will help deliver an integrated and sustainable transport system that facilitates economic prosperity and coordinates the reliable movements of goods.
 - Pursuant to **Clause 18.01-1S (Land use and transport planning)**, the Project will contribute to developing an integrated transport network to connect goods to market.
 - In accordance with **Clause 18.01-2S (Transport Systems)** the Project is addressing the forecasted demand that expects to see freight volumes in Victoria triple.
 - The Project is expected to significantly improve the freight network in Victoria and strengthen links to Melbourne and regional areas in accordance with **Clause 18.05-1S (Freight Links)**. The Project will improve freight efficiency and increase capacity whilst protecting urban amenity at and adjacent to the Project Land located along the existing railway corridor. The Project will also minimise negative impacts of freight movements on urban amenity by reducing the size and number of trucks on Victorian highways, which as a consequence, will reduce road congestion, lower carbon emissions, reduce road noise and likely reduce deaths and injuries from road accidents.
- **Clause 19 (Infrastructure):** The Project will facilitate the efficient use of existing infrastructure by upgrading and increasing the efficacy and capacity of the North East Rail line.
 - The facilitation of the Project by this Amendment supports the objective of **Clause 19.03-2S (Infrastructure design and provision)** by providing timely, efficient and cost-effective development infrastructure that meet the needs of the community.

How does the Amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the Municipal Strategic Statement?

The Local Planning Policy Frameworks (**LPPF**) of each municipality, including the Municipal Strategic Statements (**MSS**), contains a broadly consistent planning framework relevant to the Project that is directed to improving transport infrastructure and services while also protecting heritage, environmental and landscape values.

Specifically, the Project supports and implements the following objectives and strategies from the LPPF:

Whittlesea Planning Scheme

- Clause 11.03 (Planning for Places)
- Clause 13.01 (Climate Change Impacts)
- Clause 15.01 (Built Environment)
- Clause 15.01 (Sustainable Development)
- Clause 15.03 (Heritage)
- Clause 17.01 (Employment)
- Clause 17.02 (Commercial)
- Clause 17.03 (Industry)
- Clause 18.01 (Integrated Transport)
- Clause 18.02 (Movement Networks)
- Clause 18.05 (Freight)
- Clause 19.03 (Development Infrastructure)

Mitchell Planning Scheme

- Clause 21.01 (Municipal Profile)
- Clause 21.02 (Settlement)
- Clause 21.03 (Environmental and Landscape Values)
- Clause 21.04 (Environmental Risks)
- Clause 21.06 (Built Environment and Heritage)
- Clause 21.08 (Economic Development)
- Clause 21.09 (Transport)
- Clause 21.10 (Infrastructure)
- Clause 21.11 (Local Areas)
- Clause 22.02 (Heritage Policy)

Strathbogie Planning Scheme

- Clause 21.01 (Municipal Profile)
- Clause 21.02 (Sustainable Settlement)
- Clause 21.03 (Local Area Plans)
- Clause 21.04 (Sustainable Environment)
- Clause 21.05 (Sustainable Communities)
- Clause 21.06 (Sustainable Economic Growth)
- Clause 21.07 (Sustainable Infrastructure)
- Clause 22.03 (Hume Freeway, Goulbourn Valley Highway Environs)

Benalla Planning Scheme

- Clause 21.01 (Benalla Rural City)
- Clause 21.02 (Settlement, Housing and Character)
- Clause 21.03 (Environmental, Landscape and Heritage Values)
- Clause 21.04 (Environmental Risks)
- Clause 21.06 (Economic Development)
- Clause 21.07 (Transport and Infrastructure)
- Clause 21.08 (Local Areas)

Wangaratta Planning Scheme

- Clause 21.01 (Introduction)
- Clause 21.02 (Settlement)
- Clause 21.03 (Environmental and Landscape Values)
- Clause 21.04 (Environmental Risks)
- Clause 21.06 (Built Environment and Heritage)
- Clause 21.08 (Economic Development)
- Clause 21.09 (Transport)
- Clause 21.10 (Infrastructure)
- Clause 21.11 (Local Areas)
- Clause 22.01 (Rural Land Use and Agriculture)
- Clause 22.03 (Glenrowan Township)
- Clause 22.06 (Heritage Places and Precincts)
- Clause 22.07 (Hume Freeway Environs)

Wodonga Planning Scheme

- Clause 21.01 (Municipal Profile)
- Clause 21.02 (Vision and Strategic Framework)
- Clause 21.03 (Settlement)

- Clause 21.04 (Environmental and Landscape Values)
- Clause 21.05 (Environmental Risk)
- Clause 21.07 (Built Environment and Heritage)
- Clause 21.09 (Economic Development)
- Clause 21.10 (Transport)
- Clause 21.11 (Infrastructure)
- Clause 21.13 (Local Areas)
- Clause 22.02 (Urban Design along Main Roads)
- Clause 22.05 (Cultural Heritage Policy)

The Amendment provides support and implements these clauses, as follows:

- The Project will facilitate investment in Victoria's freight network and will ensure the needs of future communities are met by enhancing supply chains. It will help deliver an integrated and sustainable transport system that facilitates economic prosperity and coordinates the reliable movements of goods.
- Construction and operation of the Project will be undertaken in accordance with an EMF, which will ensure that best practice environmental and risk management approaches are adopted.
- Places and sites of significant heritage and cultural value will be protected and respectfully managed as far as practicable.
- The Project has been designed to ensure the protection of significant environmental and landscape values through the avoidance, mitigation and/or management of any potential impacts from construction and operation. The Project will adopt context sensitive construction methods where possible to mitigate impacts to natural areas and reserves. The Project will leverage the existing rail infrastructure corridors to the maximum extent possible to avoid and minimise native vegetation removal.
- The Project will enhance Victoria's economic prosperity by significantly improving freight capacity. This will connect regional Victoria to markets more efficiently and drive substantial cost savings for producers and consumers.
- The Project will create an efficient rail network which will reduce the nation's reliance on road transport, and as a consequence, reduce road congestion, lower carbon emissions, reduce road noise, likely reduce deaths and injuries from road accident and improve amenity in urban and regional centres.
- The Project will not preclude the levels of service, safety and visual amenity of the Hume Freeway which runs largely parallel to the Project Land.
- The Project has ensured that adequate fire protection measures have been considered particularly where parts of the Project Land are affected by the BMO at Broadford, Tallarook and Seymour. The Amendment is not expected to increase the risk to life, property, community infrastructure or the natural environment from bushfire.
- The Project will add significant value to existing and future primary production industries. It will renew aging infrastructure which will provide an improved connection to regional markets.
- The Project will respect the valued areas of rural character of the towns the Project Land affects and promote good urban design along and abutting the existing railway corridor.

Does the Amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The Amendment makes proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions, specifically **Clause 45.12** and **Clause 72.04** of the Planning Schemes to facilitate the Project.

The Amendment applies an Incorporated Document to the SCO under Clause 45.12 of the Planning Schemes. The purpose of Clause 45.12 is to apply specific controls designed to achieve a particular land use and development outcome in extraordinary circumstances. The use of this provision for the Project is appropriate because the Project is of genuine State significance and the Incorporated Document will allow the Project Land to be used and developed in a coordinated, consistent and timely manner under a single planning control. It will remove the need for the Project to seek multiple and separate planning permits.

The site-specific controls in the Amendment are set out in the Incorporated Document and allow the use and development of the Project Land for the purposes of the Project subject to the conditions set out in the Incorporated Document.

How does the Amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

ARTC has consulted the following agencies, authorities and stakeholders in the process of development of the Project and preparation of this Amendment:

- Aboriginal Victoria
- Benalla Rural City Council
- Country Fire Authority
- City of Whittlesea
- DELWP
- Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (**DAWE**)
- Department of Transport / VicRoads
- EPA Victoria
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Heritage Victoria
- Mitchell Shire Council
- North East Catchment Management Authority
- Office of the Victorian Government Architect
- Strathbogie Shire Council
- Taungurung Land and Waters Council Aboriginal Corporation
- VicTrack
- V/Line
- Rural City of Wangaratta Council
- Wodonga Council
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- Emergency services

Does the Amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The Amendment facilitates a Project that is consistent with the vision statement in the *Transport Integration Act 2010* (Vic) (**TI Act**) and addresses the key transport system objectives and decision-making principles in the TI Act, in the following ways:

Division 2 – Transport system objectives

- **Section 8 (Social and economic inclusion):** The Project will support social and economic inclusion by improving the capacity of the freight network, thereby expanding opportunities for access to social and economic opportunities, particularly for primary producers.
- **Section 9 (Economic prosperity):** The Project will support economic prosperity by creating jobs and facilitating better freight connections in Victoria. The Project will modernise and improve existing transport infrastructure which will achieve greater operational efficiencies for Victoria's rail and road networks, creating jobs in all parts of the economy.

- **Section 10 (Environmental sustainability):** Improved freight services along the North East Rail line from Beveridge to Albury will support the development of the rail network as a sustainable transport option for the movement of goods throughout Victoria. An efficient rail network and competitive rail services will reduce the nation's reliance on road transport, and as a consequence, reduce road congestion and lower carbon emissions. It is estimated that the national Inland Rail Program will reduce carbon emissions by 750,000 tonnes. The Project will be designed and constructed to achieve an 'excellent' Infrastructure Sustainability (IS) Rating from the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA).
- **Section 11 (Integration of transport and land use):** The Project will generally be delivered within the existing rail corridor and maximises integrations with the existing railway network while minimising impacts to proximate land uses.
- **Section 12 (Efficiency, coordination and reliability):** The Amendment will ensure the Project is delivered in a timely manner to support the current and future requirements of the transport system and the demands of the Victorian freight network.
- **Section 13 (Safety and health and wellbeing):** Currently 74 percent of all inter-capital freight between Brisbane and Melbourne is carried by road. The Project will reduce the size and number of trucks on Victorian highways and deliver significant safety, environmental and community benefits. It is estimated that the national Inland Rail Program could remove 200,000 truck movements from the road between Melbourne and Brisbane each year.

Division 3 – Decision-making principles

- **Section 15 (Principle of integration decision making):** The Project has been the subject of a coordinated and public process that has incorporated the views of relevant agencies, statutory authorities, and local governments.
- **Section 16 (Principle of triple bottom line assessment):** The economic, environmental and social costs and benefits of the Project have been considered. The investigations and assessments undertaken for the Project satisfy the principles of triple bottom-line assessment.
- **Section 17 (Principle of equity):** The Project will improve the overall operation of the transport system in Victoria and will cater for the needs of existing and future businesses and communities. The rail services are available to all persons and businesses including those in rural areas.
- **Section 18 (Principle of transport system user perspective):** The rail corridor in the Project Land is shared with V/Line's passenger operations, the Sydney-Melbourne XPT. The delivery of the Project will be managed and programmed so as to not inhibit the user experience of this transport system.
- **Section 19 (Precautionary principle):** The precautionary principle was adopted during the development of the Project through specialist investigations and due-diligence evaluations to avoid serious or irreversible damage to the environment.
- **Section 20 (Principle of stakeholder engagement and community participation):** The Project is supported by a communications strategy which includes consultation with local communities, transport system users and other key stakeholders.
- **Section 21 (Principle of transparency):** The Project is supported by a communications strategy which includes consultation with local communities, transport system users and relevant agencies during the preparation of the Amendment. Consultation will continue throughout the lifetime of the Project to provide transparency and appropriate information sharing with stakeholders and communities.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The implementation of the new planning provisions will have minimal impact on the resource and administrative costs of the relevant responsible authorities.

ATTACHMENT A
PROJECT LAND AFFECTED BY THE AMENDMENT

DRAFT

Inland Rail - Beveridge to Albury

Incorporated Document
April 2021

Incorporated document pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is an Incorporated Document in the Whittlesea, Mitchell, Strathbogrie, Benalla, Wangaratta and Wodonga Planning Schemes (**the Planning Schemes**) and is made pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

This Incorporated Document facilitates the delivery of the Inland Rail - Beveridge to Albury Project (**the Project**)

The control in Clause 4 prevails over any contrary or inconsistent provision in the Planning Schemes.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of Clause 4 is to allow the use and development of land described in Clause 3.0 for the purposes of the Project.

3.0 LAND

The control in Clause 4 applies to the land shown as [SCO number] on the planning scheme maps forming part of the Planning Schemes (**the Project Land**).

4.0 CONTROL

4.1 EXEMPTION FROM PLANNING SCHEME REQUIREMENTS

Despite any provision to the contrary or any inconsistent provision in the Planning Schemes, no planning permit is required for, and no provision in the Planning Schemes operates to prohibit, restrict or regulate the use or development of the Project Land for the purposes of, or related to, constructing, maintaining or operating the Project.

The use and development of the Project Land for the purposes of, or related to, the Project includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a) Road and railway works, including but not limited to, works to facilitate the provision of new rail and road infrastructure, relocation of pedestrian infrastructure and installation of new pedestrian infrastructure, relocation of utilities and installation of new utility infrastructure, earthworks, piling, replacement of track infrastructure, access tracks, landscaping, vegetation removal and bicycle and pedestrian shared use paths.
- b) Use and development of land for a railway or railway station, including railway tracks and associated communications, signaling, service roads and other rail related infrastructure.
- c) Use and development of land for a road, including associated communications, signaling, and other road related infrastructure.
- d) Buildings and works to facilitate the development of new publicly accessible spaces and public realm improvements including, but not limited to, streetscape and landscape works and associated infrastructure.
- e) Creation and alteration of access to roads.
- f) Alteration and upgrades to existing intersections and development of new intersections.
- g) Relocation of telecommunications infrastructure.
- h) Associated rail infrastructure, including power upgrades and overhead infrastructure,

cabling and signaling.

- i) Bus stops, car parking, bicycle facilities, landscaping and loading and unloading facilities.
- j) Ancillary activities, preparatory and enabling works, including but not limited to:
 - i) Developing and using lay down areas and depots for construction purposes.
 - ii) Temporary stockpiling of excavation material for construction purposes.
 - iii) Constructing and using temporary site workshops and storage, staff car parking, administration and amenities buildings.
 - iv) Removing, destroying and lopping of trees and removing vegetation, including native vegetation and dead native vegetation.
 - v) Demolishing and removing buildings, structures, infrastructure and works.
 - vi) Relocating, modifying, protecting and upgrading services and utilities.
 - vii) Constructing fences, temporary site barriers and site security.
 - viii) Constructing or carrying out works to create or alter roads, car parking areas, bunds, mounds, landscaping, excavate land, salvage artefacts and alter drainage.
 - ix) Constructing and using temporary access roads, diversion roads and vehicle parking areas, loading and unloading areas, access paths and pedestrian walkways.
 - x) Earthworks including cutting, stockpiling and removal of spoil, and formation of drainage works.
 - xi) Displaying signs in relation to the Project.
 - xii) Subdividing and consolidating land.
 - xiii) Carrying out works to alter watercourses.

4.2 CONDITIONS

The use and development permitted by this document must be undertaken in accordance with the following conditions:

Environment Report

- 4.2.2 Prior to the commencement of works, including preparatory works described in Clause 4.3 (a)x, an Environment Report must be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning that satisfies the conditions (a)(i)-(v) of the Inland Rail - Beveridge to Albury Environment Effects Statement Referral No 2020-07, dated 23 August 2020. The Environment Report must be prepared in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Cwth).

Environmental Management Framework

- 4.2.3 Prior to the commencement of works, excluding preparatory works listed in Clause 4.3, an Environmental Management Framework (EMF) must be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. The EMF must be informed by the findings of the Environment Report and prepared in consultation with City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Benalla Rural City Council, Rural City of Wangaratta and Wodonga Council.
- 4.2.4 The EMF must include:

- a. A set of Environmental Performance Requirements to define the environmental outcomes that must be achieved during the design and construction of the Project.
- b. The process and timing for the preparation of a Construction Environment Management Plan and any sub-plan that is required by the Environmental Performance Requirements.
- c. Performance monitoring and reporting processes, including auditing to ensure environmental and amenity effects are reduced and managed during construction of the project.
- d. A statement of all environmental commitments for the Project

Native Vegetation

- 4.2.5 Prior to the removal of native vegetation, excluding native vegetation removed under Clause 4.3, details of the proposed removal of native vegetation necessary for the construction of the Project must be prepared in accordance with Application Requirements 1, 5, 9, 10 and 11 in Tables 4 and 5 of the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP, December 2017) to the satisfaction of the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). For the avoidance of doubt, the information provided to the Secretary to DELWP must include information about any native vegetation that has been, or is to be, removed under Clause 4.3.
- 4.2.6 Prior to the removal of native vegetation, excluding native vegetation removed under Clause 4.3, native vegetation offsets must be provided in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP, December 2017), except as otherwise agreed by the Secretary to DELWP.
- 4.2.7 In exceptional circumstances, the Secretary to DELWP may vary the timing requirement in Clause 4.2.5.
- 4.2.8 The secured offset(s) for the Project may be reconciled at the completion of the Project in accordance with the *Assessor's handbook – Applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation* (DELWP, October 2018).
- 4.2.9 For the purpose of this document, the term 'remove native vegetation' includes to destroy and/or lop native vegetation.

Flood Management

- 4.2.10 Where, but for this Incorporated Document, a planning permit would be required for buildings and works within the Floodway Overlay, Land Subject to Inundation Overlay or Urban Floodway Zone, the buildings and works must be undertaken to the satisfaction of the relevant floodplain management authority.

Heritage Management

- 4.2.11 Where, but for this Incorporated Document, a planning permit would be required for buildings, works, demolition, alteration or removal of a heritage place within a Heritage Overlay, a heritage assessment must be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning, except as otherwise agreed by the Minister for Planning (excluding preparatory buildings and works under Clause 4.3).
- 4.2.12 Where, but for this Incorporated Document, a planning permit would be required

to remove, destroy or lop a tree within a Heritage Overlay where tree controls apply, a report or plan showing the trees to be removed, and measures taken to reduce tree removal must be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning, except as otherwise agreed by the Minister for Planning (excluding preparatory buildings and works under Clause 4.3).

Creating and altering access to roads

- 4.2.13 Where, but for this Incorporated Document, an application to create or alter access to a road in a Road Zone, Category 1 would be referred to the Roads Corporation, the creation or alteration of access must be undertaken in consultation with the Roads Corporation.
- 4.2.14 Before a plan of subdivision is certified under the *Subdivision Act 1988*, the consent of the Roads Corporation must be obtained to subdivide land adjacent to a road declared as a freeway or arterial road under the *Road Management Act 2004* or land owned by the Roads Corporation for the purpose of a road.

Construction works within the Seymour Hospital emergency service flight path

- 4.2.15 Where, but for this Incorporated Document, a planning permit would be required for buildings and works within Schedule 9 of the Design and Development Overlay under the Mitchell Planning Scheme, the buildings and works must be undertaken to the satisfaction of the Secretary to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Urban Design Framework

- 4.2.16 Prior to the commencement of works, excluding preparatory works listed in Clause 4.3, an Urban Design Framework (UDF) must be prepared to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. The UDF must outline the urban design vision, principles and site-specific objectives for the Project at the following enhancement site locations:
- a. Wandong (Broadford-Wandong Road)
 - b. Broadford (Hamilton Street and Short Street)
 - c. Euroa (Euroa Station precinct)
 - d. Benalla (Benalla Station precinct)
 - e. Glenrowan (Beaconsfield Parade)
 - f. Wangratta (Wangaratta Station precinct)

Other conditions

- 4.2.17 Unless otherwise stated, the plans and other documents listed in Clause 4.2 must be to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning or other relevant approving authority prior to the commencement of works.
- 4.2.18 Plans and other documents may be prepared and approved for separate components or stages of the Project but each plan or other document must be approved before commencement of works for that component or stage, excluding preparatory buildings and works listed in Clause 4.3.
- 4.2.19 The plans and documentation required under Clause 4.2 may be amended from time to time to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning or relevant approving

authority, except as otherwise agreed by the Minister or the relevant approving authority.

- 4.2.20 The use and development of the Project Land must be undertaken generally in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

4.3 PREPARATORY BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The following buildings and works may be undertaken, and the Project Land may be used in the following manner before the plans and other documents listed in Clause 4.2 are approved:

- a) Preparatory buildings and works for the Project including, but not limited to:
- i) Buildings and works, including vegetation removal, where but for this Incorporated Document, a planning permit would not be required under the provisions of the planning schemes.
 - ii) Development of track slews.
 - iii) Investigating, testing and preparatory works to determine the suitability of land, and property condition surveys.
 - iv) Creation and use of construction access points and working platforms.
 - v) Site establishment works including temporary site fencing and hoarding, site offices, and hardstand and laydown areas.
 - vi) Construction, protection, modification, removal or relocation of utility services, rail signaling, overhead and associated infrastructure.
 - vii) Establishment of environment and traffic controls, including designation of 'no-go' zones.
 - viii) Establishment of temporary car parking.
 - ix) Demolition to the minimum extent necessary, to enable preparatory works.
 - x) The removal of native vegetation to the minimum extent necessary to enable preparatory buildings and works.
 - xi) The removal of vegetation within an Environmental Significance Overlay and Vegetation Protection Overlay to the minimum extent necessary to enable preparatory buildings and works.
- b) Prior to the removal of native vegetation under Clause 4.3 associated with preparatory buildings and works, information about the native vegetation to be removed must be provided to the to the satisfaction of the Secretary to DELWP. The information must be in accordance with Application Requirements 1, 5, 9, 10 and 11 in Tables 4 and 5 of the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP, December 2017).
- c) The biodiversity impacts from the removal of native vegetation under Clause 4.3 must be included in the total biodiversity impacts when determining offset(s) in accordance with Clause 4.2.5.

5.0 EXPIRY

The controls in this document expire if any of the following circumstances apply:

- The development allowed by the control, including preparatory buildings and works,

is not started by 31 December 2023.

- The development allowed by the control is not completed by 31 December 2030.

The Minister for Planning may extend these periods if a request is made in writing before the expiry date or within three months afterwards.

DRAFT

6.2 LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

ITEM 6.2.1 FOR DECISION - LOCAL AREA TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND STREET IMPROVEMENT PLAN, MILL PARK AND EPPING

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Author: Traffic Transport Engineering Officer

Attachments:

- 1 Study Area and Concept Plan [↓](#)
- 2 Crash and Traffic Volumes Location Plan [↓](#)
- 3 Traffic Treatments Examples [↓](#)
- 4 Community Consultation Results [↓](#)

This report presents the investigation, findings and the extensive community consultation for the Local Area Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvement Plan (LATMSIP) recently conducted for the area bounded by McDonalds Road, Childs Road, Morang Drive and the future outer Metropolitan Ring Road/E6 corridor in Mill Park and Epping, known as LATM 26 & 32 (see Attachment 1).

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

1. Finalise the Draft Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvement Plan for the LATM 26 & 32 area;
2. Subject to Council decision, inform the community within the study area of the endorsed Plan and Council decision.

KEY FACTS AND / OR ISSUES

- Council has had a regular program to deliver Local Area Traffic Management since 1996.
- This project is identified in the *2020/21 Council Action Plan*, under the theme Streets for people - Study and Implementation of LATM areas 26 and 32 in Mill Park.
- The project methodology expands the historical approach to Local Area Traffic Management Plans, which had the sole focus of traffic safety and improved mobility and access to active travel infrastructure.
- The project will be delivered through a combination of existing and revised New Works
- Program funding allocations within the study area, including:
 - Local Road Safety;
 - Street Lighting Upgrades;
 - Pedestrian and Cycling Pathway Upgrades / Repairs;

Community consultation has been undertaken with a low overall response rate; however a good level of support was received for the proposed improvements from the directly affected residents in the area.

INTRODUCTION

The report outlines the status of the study and investigation process into the development of the Local Area Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvements Plan (LATMSIP) for the LATM 26 & 32 in Mill Park and Epping.

BACKGROUND

The development of the plan was included as an action item in the *2020/21 Council Action Plan*. The LATM 26 & 32 area is bound by McDonalds Road, Childs Road, Morang Drive and the future outer Metropolitan Ring Road/E6 corridor in Mill Park and Epping (*Attachment 1*).

Abutting Land Use

The area has a number of significant abutting land uses, including Mill Park Leisure Centre, Mill Park All Abilities Playspace, Mill Park Heights Primary School, Westfield Plenty Valley Shopping Centre and South Morang Train Station that generate significant pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular traffic and parking.

Road Function

The road network within the LATM area consists of two main collector roads (Prince of Wales Avenue and Pindari Avenue) with several curvilinear local access roads including cul-de-sacs and courts.

Road Safety and Traffic Conditions

The Department of Transport's (formally VicRoads) casualty crash database (*Crashstats*) indicates that from 2016 to 2021 there were five (5) casualty crashes recorded within the study area (*Attachment 2*).

Traffic surveys have been undertaken on collector roads and local streets within the study area and indicate that whilst traffic speeds and volumes are within acceptable tolerances in most streets, they are unacceptable in Prince of Wales Avenue, Romano Avenue and The Fred Hollows Way, Mill Park (*Attachment 2*).

In this case acceptable tolerances are considered to be where the 85th percentile traffic speeds, i.e. the speed at which 85 per cent of the traffic is travelling at or below the speed limit; whereas unacceptable is where the 85th percentile traffic speeds are in excess of the designated speed limit.

Public Transport

The 569 (Epping Plaza Shopping Centre – South Morang Train Station) bus service operates in both directions along The Fred Hollows Way, Manning Clark Road, Romano Avenue, Pindari Avenue and the Prince of Wales Avenue.

Connectivity

The study area consists of some existing unsealed granitic sand paths within the Mill Park Recreation Reserve.

The Mill Park Recreation Reserve has no wayfinding along the paths.

PROPOSAL

The aim of the study is to deliver a wide range of unprogrammed and programmed traffic management improvements that will improve road safety, pedestrian and cyclist connectivity and will provide opportunities for streetscape enhancements.

Some examples of the proposed devices are presented in *Attachment 3*.

The following planned project improvements have been considered within the study area:

- Local Road Safety Works;
- Street Lighting Upgrades; and
- Pedestrian and Cycling Pathway Upgrades / Repairs.

The preparation of a Draft Local Area Traffic Management and Street Improvement Plan included a technical assessment aimed at addressing ongoing concerns about traffic conditions and road safety. A detailed analysis of the reported casualty crashes, resident concerns, and recorded volume and speed data were key inputs into the development of the Plan.

The plan recommends the installation of:

- A suite of traffic calming devices in Prince of Wales Avenue, Romano Avenue and the Fred Hollows Way,
- Pedestrian and cycling connectivity improvements and installation of raised (wombat) crossings along Prince of Wales Avenue, Manning Clark Road and The Fred Hollows Way, and
- An upgrade of the existing unsealed paths within the Mill Park Recreation Reserve
- Installation of wayfinding signage to Council facilities.

CONSULTATION

A consultation package (comprising of a cover letter, concept plan, examples of treatments, survey form, frequently asked questions fact page and a reply paid envelope) was distributed to 3,119 property owners and occupiers within the study area, inviting the community to provide feedback on the draft Local Area Traffic Management and Street Improvement Plan by completing and returning a questionnaire, visiting the Council 'Have Your Say' web page and / or by attending one of two a public drop in sessions held at the All Abilities Playspace in Mill Park on Wednesday 7 April 2021 and Thursday 8 April 2021.

A consultation package was also sent to the bus operator (Dyson Bus Company) and Victoria Police inviting feedback on the draft Local Area Traffic Management and Street Improvement Plan.

A summary of outcome of the results and feedback of the survey are provided in *Attachment 4*.

The overall response rate received from the LATMSIP 26 & 32 areas was 5%, with a response rate from owners and occupiers of the directly affected properties in close proximity to a proposed traffic calming device of 9%.

To improve response rates, Council officers telephoned and visited owners and occupiers who had not responded to solicit a response. A copy of the questionnaire and a note to call Council officers was left if residents were not at home. This additional approach resulted in an increase of the response rate from the directly affected property owners and occupiers to 52%. Community feedback on the Draft LATMSIP resulted in an average of 68% of respondents indicating their support for the range of traffic management devices proposed.

During the community engagement session and the home visits, a number of community members indicated that they felt no need to respond to the survey if they did not object to the proposal; many community members indicated that they are not overly concerned with this proposal and support Council's decisions, therefore they have not participated in the survey. This provides some clarity with the initial low response rate to the community consultation.

The outcomes of the Council decision along with the final endorsed plan will be communicated through a mail out to the property owners and occupiers in the study area and those who provided feedback at the community information sessions. The broader community will be informed through an information flyer/poster being posted at the Mill Park Leisure Centre.

CRITICAL DATES

The LATMSIP study for the LATM 26 & 32 areas is a 2020/21 *Council Action item* with the following key dates:

- Completed study and DRAFT plan by the end of 2020/21 financial year
- Design and delivery commencing in 2021/22 financial year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project will be delivered through a combination of existing and revised New Works Program funding allocations within the study area, as follows:

- Local Road Safety Works;
- Street Lighting Upgrades;
- Pedestrian and Cycling Pathway Upgrades / Repairs; and

Detailed design of the Local Area Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvement Plan will occur in 2021/22, with delivery to commence in the same financial year.

The estimated cost for delivery of this project is \$1,250,000 over a three-year delivery program. In the 2021/22 New Works Program, \$500,000 are allocated for this project.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

City of Whittlesea Road Safety Strategy (2017):

Address safety of all road and path users. Address driver behaviour and attitude towards vulnerable road users: pedestrian, cyclists and motorcyclists.

City of Whittlesea Bicycle Plan 2016 – 2020:

Key Direction 3: Build and maintain a high quality network.

City of Whittlesea Street Tree Management Plan (2016):

Action 14: Coordinate the Street Tree Renewal Program with the Road Rehabilitation Program.

City of Whittlesea Integrated Transport Strategy (2014):

Action RF 2.2: Manage local roads to improve amenity and safety for users.

City of Whittlesea Municipal Road Safety Strategy (2004):

Action Plan 3: Ensure that a safer road environment is developed and maintained.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Ineffective stakeholder engagement resulting in compromised community outcomes and/or non-achievement of Council's strategic direction*

The LATMSIP project is a Council Action item with aim to improve the road safety conditions and overall wellbeing of the community. Community and Stakeholder engagements are crucial element for the success of the project. Extensive community and stakeholders consultation was undertaken to mitigate this risk.

Strategic Risk *Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing*

The purpose of the Local Area Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvement Program is to review and improve road safety, local traffic movement and pedestrian connectivity and to improve the streetscape opportunities within a specific LATM area. To ensure consistency in the development of LATM schemes, in 1996 Council adopted a LATM Priority Program for the selection of LATM study areas. All data is updated and tabulated to determine annual LATM rankings for future budget allocation in the Council New Works program.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Liveable neighbourhoods
Key Direction	Smart, connected transport network

The LATMSIP will result in a reduction in vehicle speeds, clearer definition of intersection priorities, improvements to existing devices and improved traffic conditions at a number of pedestrian crossing locations, a reduction in the number of motor vehicle crashes in the area and an opportunity for streetscape improvements to be implemented.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

A comprehensive and rigorous study involving a technical assessment and community consultation process has been conducted for the LATM 26 & 32 areas to develop a draft Local Area Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvement Plan (LATMSIP).

The community that will be directly affected by this proposal indicated a good level of support for the draft LATMSIP.

Some flexibility is available with respect to the detailed design and positioning of the devices, however it is possible that, despite the information already provided, some residents may not want a device in close proximity or in front of their property, and will require further discussions.

The draft plan is expected to result in a significant reduction in traffic speeds, enhance road safety, and generally improve the residential amenity and liveability of the neighbour areas in the LATM 26 & 32.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve:

1. To Finalise the Draft Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvement Plan for the LATM 26 & 32 area,
2. Subject to Council decision, directly inform the local community and provide information to the broader community, of the endorsed Plan and Council decision.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Eddy*
SECONDED: *Chairperson Wilson*

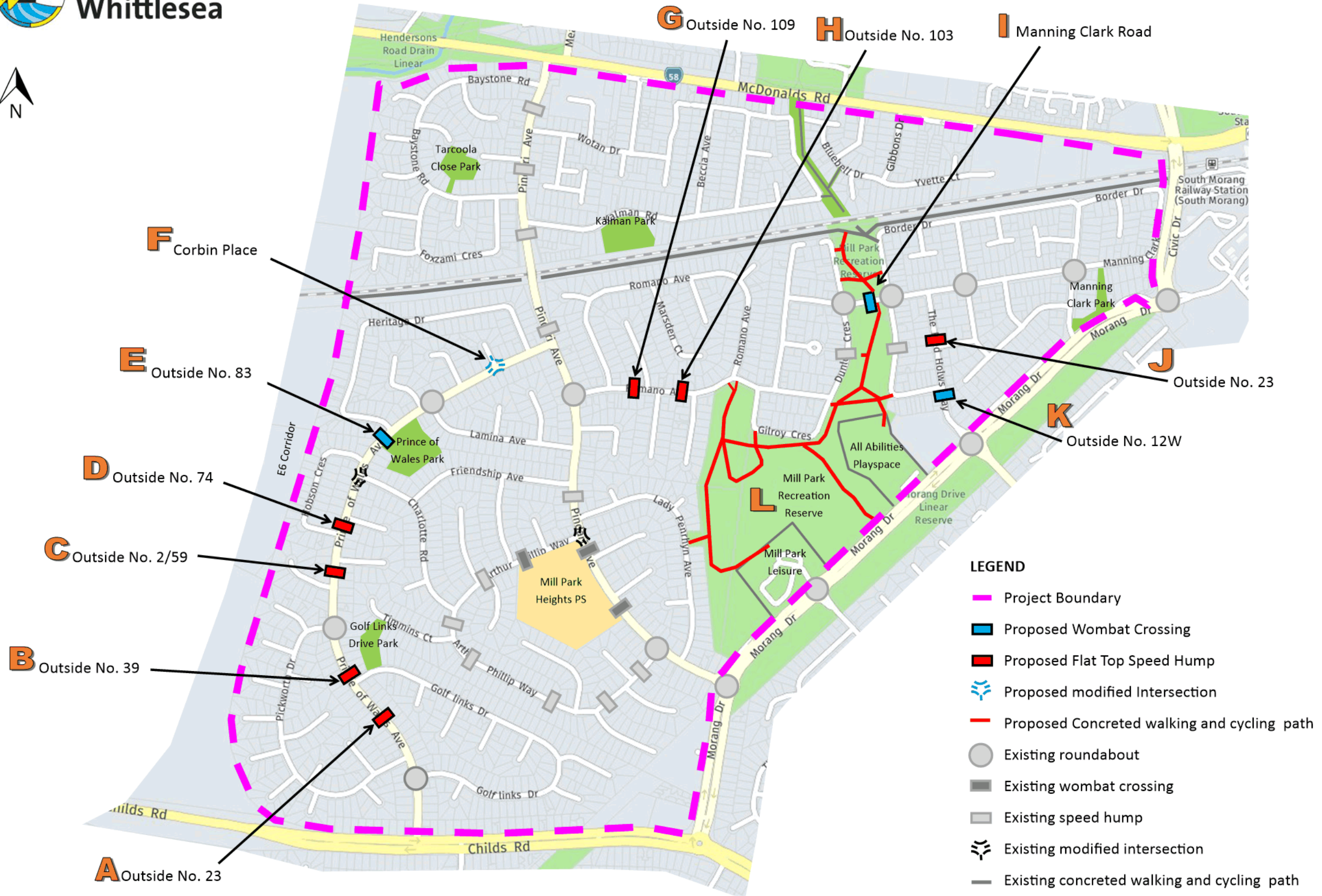
THAT Council resolve:

- 1. To Finalise the Draft Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvement Plan for the LATM 26 & 32 area,**
- 2. Directly inform the local community and provide information to the broader community of the endorsed Plan and Council decision including, but not limited to, through direct mail out to all property owners/occupiers in the study area and those who provided feedback at community information sessions and information where possible at the Mill Park Leisure Centre, All Abilities Playspace and Mill Park Heights Primary School.**

CARRIED

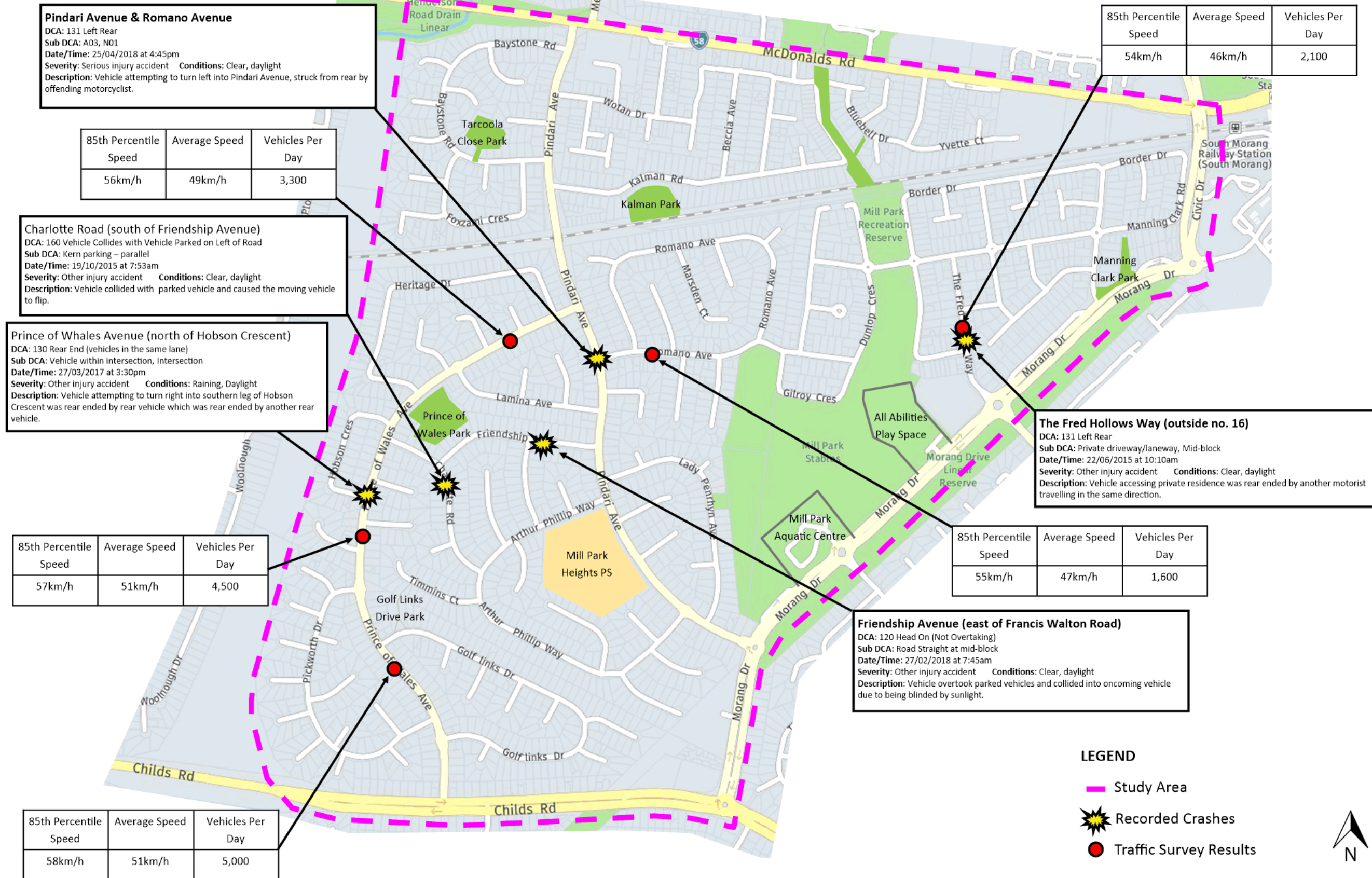


Concept Plan





Local Area Traffic Management (LATM) Traffic Surveys



Local traffic management and street Improvements - Concept plan detail



1. Flat top speed humps:



Indicative image only

This treatment proposed for:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Prince of Wales Avenue: | Romano Avenue: | Fred Hollows Way: |
| A) Outside No. 23 | G) Outside No. 109 | J) Outside No. 23 |
| B) Outside No. 39 | H) Outside No. 103 | |
| C) Outside No. 2/59 | | |
| D) Outside No. 74 | | |

2. Wombat crossing:



Indicative image only

This treatment proposed for:

- E) Outside No. 83 Prince of Wales Ave
- I) Outside No. Manning Clark Rd (Mill Park Recreation Reserve)
- K) Outside No. 12W Fred Hollows Way

Council Offices
 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang VIC 3752
Mail to: Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC VIC 3083
Phone: 9217 2170
National Relay Service: 133 677 (ask for 9217 2170)
Email: info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Free telephone interpreter service
 **131 450**

ABN 72 431 091 058

whittlesea.vic.gov.au

3. Modified Intersection



Indicative image only

This treatment proposed for:

F) Corbin Court

4. 'Give way' line marking

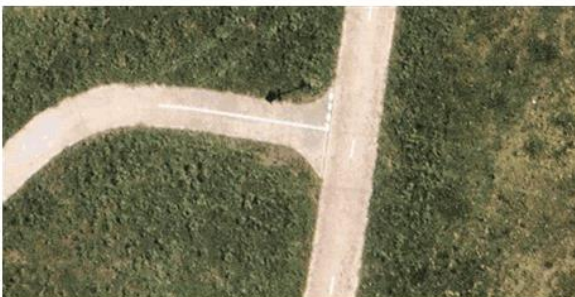


Indicative image only

This treatment proposed for:

J) Intersection of Fred Hollows Way and Odonoghue Street

5. Proposed 2.5 metre wide walking and cycling path



Indicative image only

L) Walking and cycling path proposed for construction within Mill Park Recreation Reserve

The survey received a total of **164** (5.3%) responses (115 mail, 45 online, 4 phone) from 3,119 surveyed owners and occupiers.

12 (52%) out of **23** impacted residents responded to the survey after door knocking.

Question 1			
Do you think the proposed traffic management measures will improve road safety in your area?			
Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Total Responses to Question 1
97 (61%)	26 (16%)	36 (23%)	159 (5%)

Question 2			
Do you think the proposed traffic management measures and street improvement works will improve your connections to local parks, public transport and other activity centres in your local area?			
Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Total Responses to Question 2
76 (49%)	35 (23%)	43 (28%)	154 (5%)

Question 3		
Overall, do you support the proposed traffic management and street improvements?		
Yes	No	Total Responses to Question 3
76 (68%)	35 (32%)	111 (4%)

Question 5					
How do you usually get around your local neighbourhood?					
Private car	Bicycle	Walking	Public transport	Other	Total Responses to Question 5
92	21	72	16	4	205
45%	10%	35%	8%	2%	7%
Other:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private car towing trailer • All of the above • Mobility Scooter 					

Question 6					
How would you prefer to get around your local neighbourhood?					
Private car	Bicycle	Walking	Public transport	Other	Total Responses to Question 6
85	30	79	18	4	216
39%	14%	37%	8%	2%	7%
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above • Mobility Scooter 					

ITEM 6.2.2 FOR DECISION - REDEVELOPMENT OF THE MILL PARK BASKETBALL STADIUM CONTRACT 2021-15 - TENDER EVALUATION REPORT**Attachments: 1 Detailed Evaluation - Confidential**

This attachment has been designated as confidential by the Director Infrastructure & Environment, under delegation from the Chief Executive Officer, in accordance with Rule 53 of the Governance Rules 2021 and sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that— (i) relates to trade secrets; or (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage. In particular the report/attachment contains information regarding tenderer's prices.

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Author: Senior Contracts Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

It is recommended that contract number 2021-15 for Redevelopment of the Mill Park Basketball Stadium:

- is awarded to Simbuilt Pty Ltd
- for the lump sum price of \$2,121,695 (excl. GST)

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The tender evaluation panel advises that:

- Six tenders were received

The recommended tender was the highest ranked and is considered best value because it has demonstrated that it has the highest ability to deliver this project in accordance with Council's specified requirements.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

A redevelopment of the facilities at the Mill Park Basketball Stadium is essential to ensure that it meets the current standards required to encourage the growth and diversity in participation in sport. Functional improvements will also enable efficient and effective daily operations. A key role of Council is to provide opportunities for the community to participate in both structured and unstructured physical activity; and the provision of suitable facilities is a crucial requirement.

The recommended tenderer demonstrated the highest capability and capacity to deliver this project, and with minimal impact on Council and the community.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of this contract award will enable the project to commence in a timely manner within the required timeframe of the Economic Stimulus Grant from the State Government.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Regular communication with the community will continue to minimise the impact of the works.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this contract is to engage a contractor for the redevelopment of the Mill Park Basketball Stadium.

The Mill Park Basketball Stadium was constructed in 1991 by Council in partnership with Stadium Sport Victoria ('SSV') and the Department of Education. The facility is located on the grounds of Mill Park Secondary College, with a lease arrangement in place until 2041.

The Mill Park Basketball Stadium is the largest indoor stadium in the municipality and home to the Whittlesea City Basketball Association ('WCBA'). As the municipality's largest provider of basketball training, competition and facilitator of elite pathways, the WCBA services a current membership of 4500, which is expected to grow to over 7000 members by the end of the decade.

The non-compliant amenities at the facility are restrictive in allowing growth and diversity within the game. The redevelopment of Mill Park Basketball Stadium will provide a building that meets improved functional requirements, is accessible, inclusive and a sustainable facility. The scope includes the internal reconfiguration of the foyer, reception, canteen and office spaces, as well as refurbishment of existing public amenities, conversion of non-accessible player change amenities and an extension to create new player change rooms and amenities.

Tenders for the contract closed on 27 April 2021. The tendered prices and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachment.

EVALUATION

No member of the Tender Evaluation Panel declared any conflict of interest in relation to this tender evaluation.

A Tender Probit and Evaluation Plan was designed specifically for this tender process and it was authorised prior to this tender being advertised. All tenders received were evaluated in accordance with that plan. The evaluation involved scoring of conforming and competitive tenders according to these pre-determined criteria and weightings:

Criteria	Weighting
Price	50%
Capability	23%
Capacity	20%
Impact	7%

The weightings reflect the relative importance of each element to this particular contract. They were determined as being most appropriate after considering numerous factors including (but not restricted to) the time, quality, risk and contract management requirements which were likely to have the most impact on the achievement of best value.

Only tenders that were conforming and competitive were fully scored. Tender submissions that were evaluated as non-conforming or not sufficiently competitive were set aside from further evaluation. In cases where this occurred the reasons for that outcome are detailed in the confidential attachment.

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

TENDERER	CONFORMING	COMPETITIVE	SCORE	RANK
Tenderer A Simbuilt Pty Ltd	Yes	Yes	95.3	1
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	89.9	2
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	88.4	3
Tenderer D	Yes	Yes	85.9	4
Tenderer E	Yes	Yes	85.5	5
Tenderer F	Yes	Yes	77.7	6

Refer to the confidential attachment for further details of the evaluation of all tenders.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the budget for the Mill Park Basketball Stadium.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk Not linked to the risks within the Strategic Risk Register.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal Connected community

Key Direction A healthy and safe community

The improved stadium is required to meet the population growth.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The tender from Simbuilt Pty Ltd was determined to be best value and it is considered that this company can perform the contract to the required standards.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

1. **Accept the tender submitted by Simbuilt Pty Ltd for the sum of \$2,121,695 (excluding GST) for the following contract:**

Number: 2021-15

Title: Redevelopment of the Mill Park Basketball Stadium

subject to the following conditions:

- a) Tenderer to provide proof of currency of insurance cover as required in the tender documents.**
 - b) Price variations to be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the tender documents.**
 - c) Tenderer to provide contract security as required in the tender documents.**
- 2. Approve the funding arrangements detailed in the confidential attachment.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Administrator Duncan
SECONDED: Administrator Eddy

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

ITEM 6.2.3 FOR NOTING - 165 - 185 GORDONS ROAD, SOUTH MORANG DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- Attachments:**
- 1 **Development Plan - Location Plan** [↓](#)
 - 2 **Development Plan - Concept Plan** [↓](#)
 - 3 **Development Plan - Report** [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Development

Author: Senior Strategic Planner

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

1. Approve the *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* (June 2021), in accordance with Schedule 6 to Clause 43.04 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme; and
2. Notify the proponent, landowners and submitters of the above.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

- The consideration of a development plan for the area covered by the Development Plan Overlay (Schedule 6) has a long history.
 - The proposed *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Development Plan Overlay (Schedule 6).
- The proposed Development Plan provides an acceptable layout and provides appropriate access and egress, roads, open space and vegetation protection that considers the fragmented nature of this development.
- The proposed Development Plan was placed on non-statutory exhibition between 12 January to 10 February 2021.
- A total of eight submissions were received; four submissions were non objecting submissions, two submissions from adjoining landowners outside of the development plan area and two submissions from landowners within the development plan area requesting changes to the *Development Plan* proposal.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The proposed *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Development Plan Overlay (Schedule 6).

Non-statutory exhibition of the proposed *Development Plan* included notification of adjoining landowners/occupiers and landowners/occupiers of landholdings within the development plan area of the proposal and provided them with an opportunity to comment.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the proposed *Development Plan* will allow for the consideration of subsequent planning permit applications for the development of the land for residential purposes in accordance with the subject Development Plan.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Notification of Council's decision on the proposed *Development Plan* will be provided to the proponent, all landowners within the development plan area all submitters.

REPORT**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this report is to consider whether the *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* dated June 2021 (*Development Plan*), prepared by consultants Glossop Co on behalf of the owners of the land at 181 Gordons Road, South Morang (the proponent) is to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. The objective of the proposed *Development Plan* is to guide the future use and development of the land at 165, 171, 175, 181 and 185 Gordons Road, South Morang.

The proposed *Development Plan* has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 6 (DPO6) to the Development Plan Overlay. A Development Plan must be to the satisfaction of the responsible authority (Council) before a planning permit such as for subdivision and/or development on the site can be granted.

This report will discuss the background and the merits of the proposed *Development Plan* in the context of the applicable statutory framework and the submissions received from the non-statutory exhibition process.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The land in which the proposed *Development Plan* affects comprises of five parcels of land located at 165, 171, 175, 181 and 185 Gordons Road, South Morang. Each lot is separately owned and developed with single residential dwellings and associated outbuildings.

Attachment 1 identifies the *Development Plan* area.

Land within the *Development Plan* has an overall area of 4.47 hectares and is located on the southern side of Gordons Road between Vincent Recreation Reserve to the east and Evendrive Estate to the west.

The subject sites are affected by the General Residential Schedule 1 Zone and Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1. The subject sites are also covered by the South Morang Local Structure Plan.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROPOSAL

A development plan was prepared and lodged with Council for the subject sites in August 2017. An assessment of that submission determined that a considerable amount of work was needed for the then development plan to address the requirements of Clause 43.04 and Schedule 6 to the Development Plan Overlay and the South Morang Local Structure Plan. Consequently at that time it was not suitable for endorsement. The proponent took the matter to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) and VCAT upheld Council's decision.

Following this outcome, discussions between the proponent and Council continued. Revised versions of the proposed a development plan were prepared and lodged with Council in 2019 and 2020 which sought to address a series of concerns raised by VCAT and previous Council comments.

The key revisions of the development plan sought to address issues related (but not limited) to:

- Internal road network
- Access to the site

- Developable area
- Open space provision.

Consequently, a revised plan being the *Development Plan* was prepared and lodged with Council for the subject sites in December 2020. A consideration of the *Development Plan* by officer's lead to a view that the *Development Plan* provided a reasonable response to the abovementioned issues.

Following this, in January 2021, the proposed *Development Plan* was placed on non-statutory exhibition between 12 January to 10 February 2021 to landowners within the *Development Plan* area and adjoining and abutting landowners and occupiers.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PLAN

The *Development Plan*, which includes an overarching Development Plan Concept Plan and accompanying text document, has been prepared in accordance with the Development Plan Overlay Schedule 6 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

Attachment 2 shows the urban layout forming part of the proposed *Development Plan*.

In essence, the proposed development parcels are structured around a road and open space network which seeks to facilitate connections to the existing road network (Auburn Road and Gordons Road) and vehicle access and circulation within the relevant land parcels, provides open space and retains significant River Red Gums.

Specifically, the *Development Plan* proposes:

- A series of local parks which also serve to retain significant River Red Gums and provides a link to Vincent Recreation Reserve.
- An appropriate transition and interface between the development parcels, proposed open space and the adjoining Vincent Recreation Reserve.
- Internal road network which in the ultimate will connect residential development through from Auburn Road to Gordons Road.
- Resolution to access issues likely as a result of the staged development of the land through the provision of temporary site access options.
- Standard to medium density residential housing outcomes.
- Pedestrian and bicycle links throughout.

The ultimate build out of the *Development Plan* will result in approximately 100 new dwellings.

NON-STATUTORY EXHIBITION AND SUBMISSIONS

The proposed *Development Plan* was placed on non-statutory exhibition over a four-week period between 12 January to 11 February 2021.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement to advertise the proposed *Development Plan*, in accordance with Council practice a copy of the proposed *Development Plan* was sent to all land owners and occupiers of land adjoining the subject sites, landowners and occupiers of sites within the development plan area and relevant external authorities.

At the conclusion of the non-statutory exhibition period a total of eight submissions were received as follows:

- Four submissions were non objecting submissions from referral authorities
- Two submissions from adjoining landowners outside of the development plan area and;
- Two submissions from landowners within the development plan area.

The two submissions provided by adjoining landowners raised concerns beyond the scope of the proposed *Development Plan* and the two submissions provided by landowners within the development plan area sought changes to the exhibited version of the proposed *Development Plan*.

The following table details the submissions received and the officer response.

Submission Summary	Officer Response & Recommendations
Adjoining landowner – Tiandra Drive, South Morang	
<p>Raised concerns in respect to living next door to a future building site and the need for extra protective measures above standard requirements in order to minimise the impact of soil particles, building material particles, noise and increased traffic on their health, wellbeing and the environment.</p>	<p>No changes to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> recommended.</p> <p>In response to the review of the submission, Council officers communicated with the submitter the requirements and mitigation measures implemented as part of any future planning permit and building permit process, which ensures all amenity impacts to adjoining or nearby properties are reduced and managed to a level which appropriately protects human health and the environment.</p>
Adjoining landowner – Auburn Road, South Morang	
<p>Raised concerns in respect to on street car parking impacts arising from the connection of Auburn Road into the proposed future street network.</p> <p>The submission requested for access to the development plan area to only be facilitated off Gordons Road and for the proposal to only support low density/rural style future development outcomes.</p>	<p>No changes to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> recommended.</p> <p>It is noted that the adjoining Evendrive Development Plan (affecting the properties along Auburn Road) established a road network that would further support a future through connection to the adjoining properties affected by the proposed 165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang <i>Development Plan</i>.</p> <p>Further to this, the Traffic Impact Assessment prepared as part of the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> considers the existing traffic conditions on connecting roads, traffic generation and access and supports the proposed internal road layout and access points.</p> <p>The proposed <i>Development Plan</i> provides for an appropriate level of connectivity through and between the Development Plan areas. This is facilitated through two access/egress points which provide permeability and connectivity. It is not a desirable outcome for a Development Plan area to achieve only one access/egress point.</p> <p>In respect to development density, it is noted that the area in which the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> falls is not a rural living precinct and zoning of the land parcels and</p>

	<p>the adjoining parcels is reflective of a more standard density residential outcome. To this end, it is considered that the development proposed is in keeping with the surrounding development densities.</p>
<p>Submission Summary</p>	<p>Officer Response & Recommendations</p>
<p>Landowner – 175 Gordons Road, South Morang</p>	
<p>Raised concerns with respect to consultation between landowners, biodiversity matters and conservation area allocation and road layout within their land which is part of the proposed <i>Development Plan</i>.</p> <p>The submission requested for further developable area to be included within the area allocated for conservation purposes within their land.</p> <p>The submission further requested for public road construction to be removed from their land and included solely within 181 Gordons Road, South Morang.</p>	<p>Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the proponent to consult with affected landowners within the <i>Development Plan</i>, all affected landowners are consulted as part of the non-statutory exhibition process.</p> <p>Upon review of the submission, Council officers negotiated changes to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noting the relatively low habitat/conservation value of the portion of land within the south-western corner of the site. Council officers conclude that an increase in developable area of 175 Gordons Road within the south-western portion of the site can be achieved. • Part of the site previously designated as ‘conservation reserve’ is now proposed to be designated as ‘open space’ and is to be subject to a series of tree protection and open space embellishment requirements. <p>No changes to the internal road layout are recommended in response to the submission, as it is considered that the proposed road layout provides appropriate site access to balance the future potential fragmented nature of development and ensures each landowner can develop independently.</p>
<p>Landowner – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang</p>	
<p>Raised concerns with respect to open space allocation, stormwater outfall, temporary access and traffic management.</p> <p>The submission provided an alternative concept proposal.</p> <p>The submission requested for a reduction of open space allocation within their site and as a result an increase in developable area.</p>	<p>After reviewing the submission, Council officers negotiated the following changes to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council officers determine than an increase in developable area within the southern section of the site can occur, subject to achieving the retention of an area of open space in accordance with Council’s Open Space Strategy and the South Morang Local Structure Plan,

	achieving open space embellishment requirements and continued retention of River Red Gums (trees 255, 257, 258).
Submission Summary	Officer Response & Recommendations
Fire Rescue Victoria (formally Country Fire Authority)	
Provided support for the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .	No changes recommended to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .
Environmental Protection Agency	
Raised no concerns with the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .	No changes recommended to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .
Melbourne Water	
Raised no concerns with the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .	No changes recommended to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .
Aus-Net Services	
Raised no concerns with the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .	No changes recommended to the proposed <i>Development Plan</i> .

POST EXHIBITION FINAL REVIEW OF PLAN

In response to submissions to the proposed *Development Plan*, Council officers communicated to the proponent and both landowners at 175 and 185 Gordons Road, South Morang the changes required to the proposed *Development Plan*.

Council officers requested the proponent engage with both landowners at 175 and 185 Gordons Road, South Morang to discuss the concerns of both submissions and make changes to the proposed *Development Plan* in line with the officer response & recommendations as outlined in the above submission table.

As a result an amended version of the proposed *Development Plan* Report and Concept Plan (text and plans) was provided to Council officers for comment and is attached to this Report (*Attachment 2 and 3*).

CRITICAL DATES

Original Development Plan Submission	January 2017
Victorian Tribunal and Administrative Tribunal Hearing	September 2017
Victorian Tribunal and Administrative Tribunal decision on Development Plan	April 2018
Resubmission of Development Plan	November 2018
Further resubmissions of Development Plan proposals in response to Council	December 2019, February 2020, April 2020,

Requests for Further Information	July 2020
Latest resubmission of Development Plan proposal	December 2020
Non-statutory exhibition period	12 January – 10 February 2021

DISCUSSION

One of the key issue affecting amended version of the proposed *Development Plan* as set out in Attachments 2 and 3 is site access considerations and how each separate landholding could be appropriately delivered in a staged development independently of each other given that the parcels comprising the proposed *Development Plan* are owned by different entities. As part of the consideration of the proposed *Development Plan*, it was important to ensure that road access to Gordons Road was practical and safe and that there did not end up being any isolated parcels which could not be developed. At the same time, it was also important to ensure that the development parcels were practical and the overall outcome was an appropriate outcome having regard to all of the other relevant planning considerations. (e.g. avoiding “back of fence” style outcomes for instance).

The various issues were considered at length as part of the VCAT Hearing.

Appropriate site access is required to balance the future potential fragmented nature of development and ensure each landowner can develop independently. Council required that the proposed *Development Plan* produced an outcome which achieved appropriate site access, a logical road network and pedestrian and vehicle connectivity throughout.

The Traffic Impact Assessment prepared as part of the proposed *Development Plan* considered that the existing private driveways currently providing access to individual lots, cannot appropriately service future development as proposed by the proposed *Development Plan*, and as a result a highly permeable road network is required across the entire development plan area. In addressing this point, the *Development Plan* provides a road network that connects Gordons Road to Auburn Road and achieves the following requirements:

- Facilitates a 7.3m public road carriageway in accordance with Council’s standards.
- Provides public road access to all five landholdings within the proposed Development Plan in both the interim and ultimate.
- Limits additional access points to Gordons Road to protect its functionality and safety.
- Designs roads to allow for the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians, cyclists and service vehicles (such as garbage trucks) both in the interim and ultimate.

In order to achieve the above, two interim road requirements for the properties at 171, 175 and 181 Gordons Road, South Morang are proposed and practical solutions have had to be provided to have regard to how development may transpire.

171 and 175 Gordons Road, South Morang interim and ultimate road requirements

To ensure either landowner can develop independent of the adjoining landowner an interim road construction is proposed for the Gordons Road connection within 171 and 175 Gordons Road.

The proposed *Development Plan* shows this road connection centred along both property boundaries, however, the exact location of the connection will be dependent on the sequencing of development. If both lots are to be developed at the same time the connection can be evenly located across both lots. If one lot is developed before the other a greater proportion of the road will need to be provided as follows:

- The first landholding to develop must construct a 6.0m carriageway and 4.5m nature strip along the boundary of the adjoining landholding, constructed as a public road to be transferred to Council.
- The second landholding to develop must construct a 1.3m carriageway extension and 4.5m nature strip within their property boundary to complete the road connection to Gordons Road.

181 Gordons Road, South Morang interim and ultimate road requirements

Should the landowners at 175 or 185 Gordons Road not wish to develop, the proposed public road network could result in the future development of land at 181 Gordons Road, South Morang being landlocked and not accessible by a public road.

Therefore, to ensure that 181 Gordons Road, South Morang can develop independent of an adjoining landholding interim site access is proposed as follows:

- Constructed along the eastern boundary of 181 Gordons Road, South Morang and must connect public access from Gordons Road to the internal public road network via a laneway to Council's standards.
- Be facilitated through a series of agreements which provides Council and the public access over the temporary accessway, addresses public liabilities and secures the re-alignment of services and closure of the temporary access as part of the ultimate road configuration.

The landowner at 181 Gordons Road, South Morang will need to bear all relevant costs associated with the preparation of and execution of the above agreements to give effect to the above requirements before the grant of any planning permit for 181 Gordons Road prior to development of 175 and 185 Gordons Road.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed Development Plan in its amended form as per attachments 2 and 3 provides for a practical and positive way forward given the difficulties of the fragmentation of the land within the Development Plan Overlay area. Council officers have strived to ensure a reasonably balanced outcome for all landowners but have also been cognoscente of the constraints on each of the relevant land parcels. As far as practicable, officers think that the overall outcome is a fair and reasonable outcome with each parcel having appropriate levels of developable land, road infrastructure, open space and tree conservation and at the same time provides an acceptable outcome for the way that the overall area will be developed.

In addition to all of the above considerations, Council officers also had regard to the requirements of Clause 56 to ensure that any subdivision meets the requirements of this clause.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

It is considered that the *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* in its amended form, as set out in Attachment 2 and 3, is generally consistent with the objectives and general provisions of the State Planning Policy Framework.

Clause 11 – Settlement

The *Development Plan* is consistent with this clause by contributing to a number of facets of planning; including housing diversity, transport links and good urban design.

Clause 15 – Built Environment and Heritage

The *Development Plan* is generally consistent with this clause. The design of the development layout satisfactorily responds to the site features and constraints. The residential development includes elements which will assist in making it attractive, liveable, walkable and cyclable.

Clause 16 – Housing

The *Development Plan* is generally consistent with this clause. The development increases the supply of housing in an existing urban area across five single dwelling sites. The *Development Plan* ensures that the site is connected to the broader area.

Clause 18 – Transport

The *Development Plan* is consistent with this clause. The *Development Plan* includes appropriate walking and cycling infrastructure connections to the existing road and public open space network.

Clause 19 – Infrastructure

The *Development Plan* is generally consistent with this clause. The development makes provision for appropriate infrastructure to service the development.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Not linked to the risks within the Strategic Risk Register.*

The *Development Plan* and supporting documentation consider the proposal to be appropriate for residential development and will not result in any risks to the community or the broader environment.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Liveable neighbourhoods
Key Direction	Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres

The *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* will ensure that the residential development of the development plan area will be well designed, contribute to housing diversity within the Municipality and responds to the constraints affecting all landholdings. Future residential development will help build connection to place and community through a number of key elements including; permeable street network, cycle and pedestrian links to the Vincent Recreation Reserve and contribution to community infrastructure and open space.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

Extended discussions and negotiation with the proponent by Council officers and through consultation with affected landowners within the relevant area has resulted in an amended version of the proposed *Development Plan* that provides for an acceptable outcome to support future development of the five separate landholdings.

The amended version of the proposed *Development Plan* (as per attachments 2 and 3) responds to site access constraints and ensures that future residential development of these landholdings is in keeping with the surrounding residential area.

To this end, it is recommended that the *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* as contained in Attachments 2 and 3 of this report is approved by Council in accordance with Schedule 6 of the Development Plan Overlay (Clause 43.04) of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

- 1. Approve the *165 – 185 Gordons Road, South Morang Development Plan* (June 2021), in accordance with Schedule 6 to Clause 43.04 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme; and**
- 2. Notify the proponent, landowners and submitters of the above.**

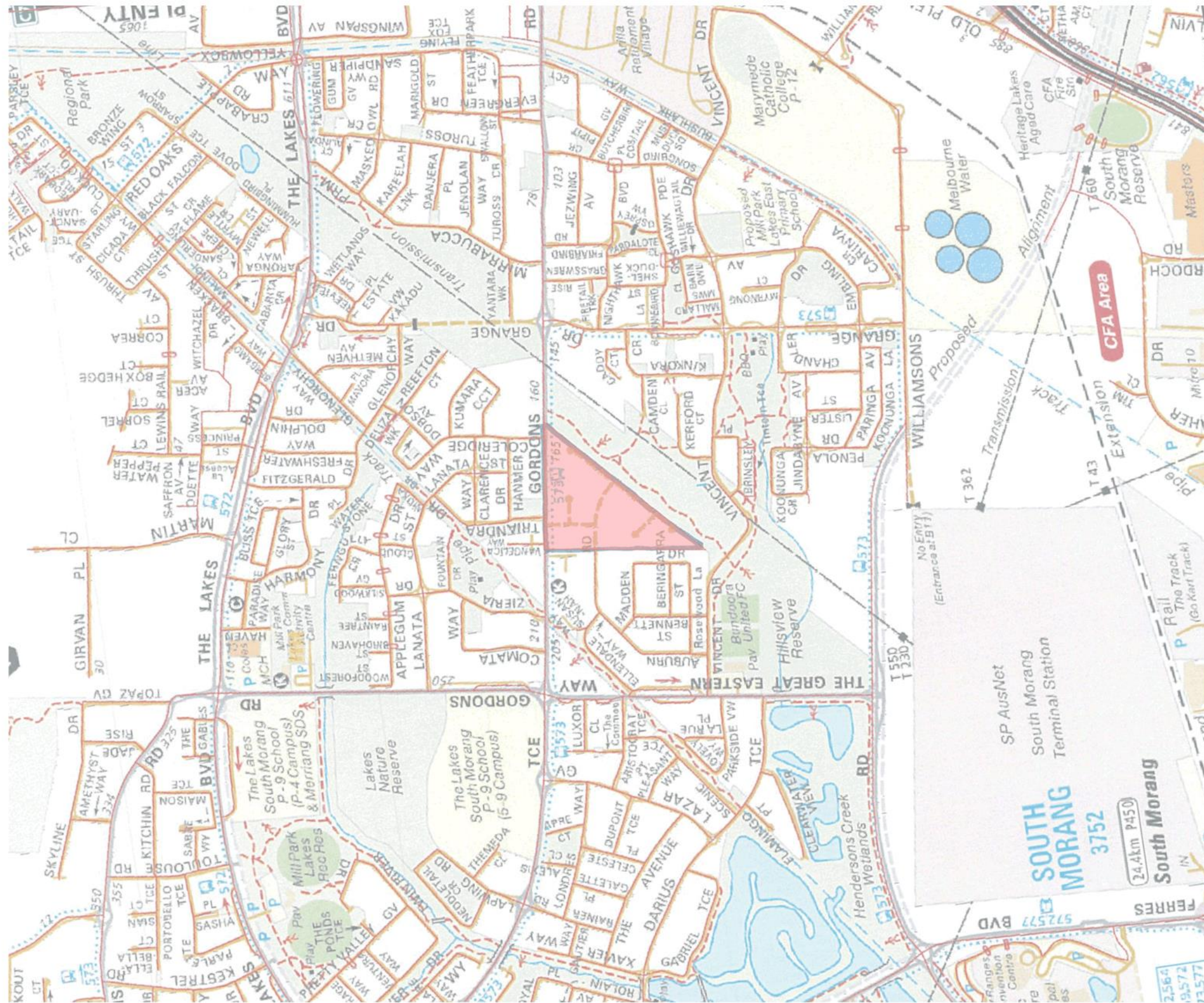
COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Eddy*
SECONDED: *Chairperson Wilson*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

BROADER SITE CONTEXT



LEGEND:

- MAJOR TOWN
- MAJOR ROAD, ROAD
- ROAD NAME
- RAILWAY, TRAMWAY
- PROPERTY/PARCEL, SELECTED
- ADDRESS, LOT, CROWN ALLOTMENT
- RIVER, STREAM, COASTLINE
- WATERBODY
- LOCALITY
- LOCALITY NAME
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT NAME
- URBAN GROWTH BONDARY (UGB)
- AREA OUTSIDE THE UGB
- INVESTIGATION AREA
- LAND ADDED TO UGB SINCE 2005
- BOUNDARY OF SEARCHED SUBURB
- DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA



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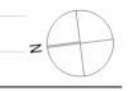
Revision
 REV 01: 15.12.2020
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT - RP1 RESPONSE

Client
 VIEWBANK HOMES

Project
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN
 GORDONS ROAD
 SOUTH MORANG

Drawing Title
 BROADER SITE CONTEXT PLAN
 Scale
 1:4000 @ A1
 Date
 15.12.2020

FOR ENDORSEMENT
 Drawn
 C.B
 Drawing No.
 TPA03
 Job No.
 20-05
 Revision
 REV C1



DEVELOPMENT PLAN



LEGEND:

- DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS
- ROAD RESERVES NATURE STRIP
- OPEN SPACE
- PRIORITYISATION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC AS SHOWN WITH ARROW
- INDICATIVE SHARED PATH
- ACTIVE FRONTAGE
- EXISTING BUILDING ENVELOPES
- ROAD CROSS-SECTIONS
- RIVER RED GUMS TO BE RETAINED
- CITY OF WHITLSEA R10 T12 CANOPY EDGE + 1.0M AS SPECIFIED BY COUNCIL GUIDELINES (TO BE RETAINED)
- CITY OF WHITLSEA T12 RADIUS DETERMINED BY HALF TREE HEIGHT OR CANOPY SPREAD, WHICHEVER IS GREATEST (TO BE RETAINED)

NOTE: EMBELLISHMENT OF OPEN SPACE MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL'S OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND ANY OTHER APPLICABLE STRATEGY. TO BE DETERMINED AS PART OF A SUBSEQUENT PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EACH DEVELOPMENT SITE



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Revision
 REV C1 07.06.2021
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT_R12 RESPONSE

Client
 VIEWBANK HOMES

Project
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN
 GORDONS ROAD
 SOUTH MORANG

Drawing Title
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT
 Scale
 1:1000 @ A1
 Date
 02.06.2021

FOR ENDORSEMENT
 Drawn
 C.B
 TPA08
 Job No.
 20-05
 Revision
 REV C1





Development Plan

Nos. 165, 171, 175, 181 and 185 Gordons Road
South Morang

Date of report: June 2021

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Glossop Quality System			
Author	MM	Checked By	JG
Date Issue	June 2021	Revision Number	3

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1. Introduction

This document constitutes the Development Plan for Nos.165, 171, 175, 181 and 185 Gordons Road, South Morang ('the Development Plan Area'). Preparation of this Development Plan is a statutory requirement prior to the consideration of any planning permit application for residential subdivision and/or development by the City of Whittlesea ('the Responsible Authority') pursuant to Clause 43.04-2 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme ('the Planning Scheme').

This Development Plan consists of both text and plan components, comprising:

- A description of the site context and features;
- An outline of the statutory controls and influences;
- A response to applicable requirements of Development Plan Overlay Schedule 6 (DPO6); and
- The relevant technical materials that informed the preparation of this document.

Once approved, all subsequent subdivision and development applications for land within the Development Plan area must be generally in accordance with this Development Plan. This Development Plan may be amended to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

p.1



2. Site Context

Surrounding Area

The Development Plan Area is located within a generally established part of South Morang. It is one of the few remaining undeveloped landholdings. Recently completed developments, including single dwellings of between 1-2 storeys, low scale apartment developments and some limited non-residential developments are found in proximity to the site.

Key features of the surrounding area include:

- The Little Learners Early Education centre, approximately 60m to the west;
- The Lakes South Morang P-9 school, approximately 500m to the west;
- Quarry Hills Park, approximately 1.9km to the west;
- The Mill Park Lakes Recreation Reserve, approximately 870m to the north-west;
- Mill Park Lakes Community Activity Centre, approximately 670m to the north;
- Hawkstowe Park, approximately 1.8km to the east;
- Plenty Gorge Park, approximately 3.3km to the east;
- Plenty Road, approximately 1.5km to the east;
- Vincent Reserve to the immediate south-east;
- Marymede Catholic College, approximately 820m to the south-east;
- South Morang Central Shopping Centre and Westfield Shopping Centre, approximately 2km to the south; and
- South Morang train station, approximately 1.5km and bus interchange, approximately 800m to the south-west.

Development Plan Area

The Development Plan ("DP") Area is located on the south side of Gordons Road between Vincent Recreation Reserve to the east and Evendrive Estate to the west. The site comprises Nos. 165, 171, 175, 181 and 185 Gordons Road.

The land is formally described as:

- Lot 1 LP 144508;
- Lot 2 LP 144508;
- Lot 3 LP 144508;
- Lot 4 LP 144508; and

p.2



- Lot 5 LP 144508.

Key features of the Development Plan Area include:

- The area contains 5 individual allotments in varying ownerships.
- The area is triangularly shaped. It is bound by Gordons Road to the north, Vincent Recreation Reserve to the southeast and residential allotments to the west.
- Vehicle access to all lots is currently provided via Gordons Road.
- Levels and features of the Development Plan area are shown on the Plan of Feature Survey, which is provided at **Appendix A**. Most notably:
 - The area has a 256m long street frontage to Gordons Road, 430m southeast boundary and 338m west boundary, which provide a total area of approximately 4.47 hectares.
 - The area is relatively flat with minor undulations.
 - The area has a 2.5m wide drainage and sewerage easement adjacent to the southeast boundary.
- Remnant native vegetation is present in small areas and scattered throughout the area. More particularly:
 - There are 85 River Red Gums within the site of which 13 are mature and 72 are planted or naturally established semi-mature specimens.
 - There are 35 Victorian native trees within the site of which 3 have 'moderate' retention value, the remainder are weed species or exhibit 'poor' or 'very poor' structure.
 - 6 tree groups of similar species were assessed and found to be generally insignificant.
 - All trees within the Development Plan area have been surveyed to inform the preparation of this document. A copy of the relevant Arboricultural Assessment is provided in **Appendix B**.
- The site has limited ecological significance. More particularly:
 - A Biodiversity Assessment, targeted survey for Matted Flax-lily *dianella amoena* and Repeat targeted surveys for Matted Flax-lily and Tussock Skink is provided in **Appendix C**.
 - A targeted survey for Matted Flax-lily, Tussock Skink and Golden Sun Moth has been conducted and it is unlikely that any other rare or threatened flora species occur on site.

p.3



- There is a moderate likelihood that Golden Sun Moth, Grey-headed Flying Fox and Tussock Skink are present. No other listed fauna species are present or likely to occur.
- Follow-up targeted surveys for Matted Flax-lily and Tussock Skink have been conducted to inform the occurrence and likely distribution of both species at 165-185 Gordons Road, South Morang. No Matted Flax-lily or Tussock Skink were recorded within the study area during the initial or follow-up surveys.
- Remnant native vegetation in the study area is representative of the Plains Grassy Woodland EVC. Variation in vegetation quality is represented by three habitat zones, (HZ1 to HZ3). The habitat zones differ primarily in the presence of large old trees, species diversity and percentage cover.
- All habitat zones are of low quality due to high understorey cover of exotic species, notably including Chilean Needle-grass '*Nassella neesiana*'. Infestation of Blackberry '*Rubus fruticosus*' is present in Habitat Zone 2.

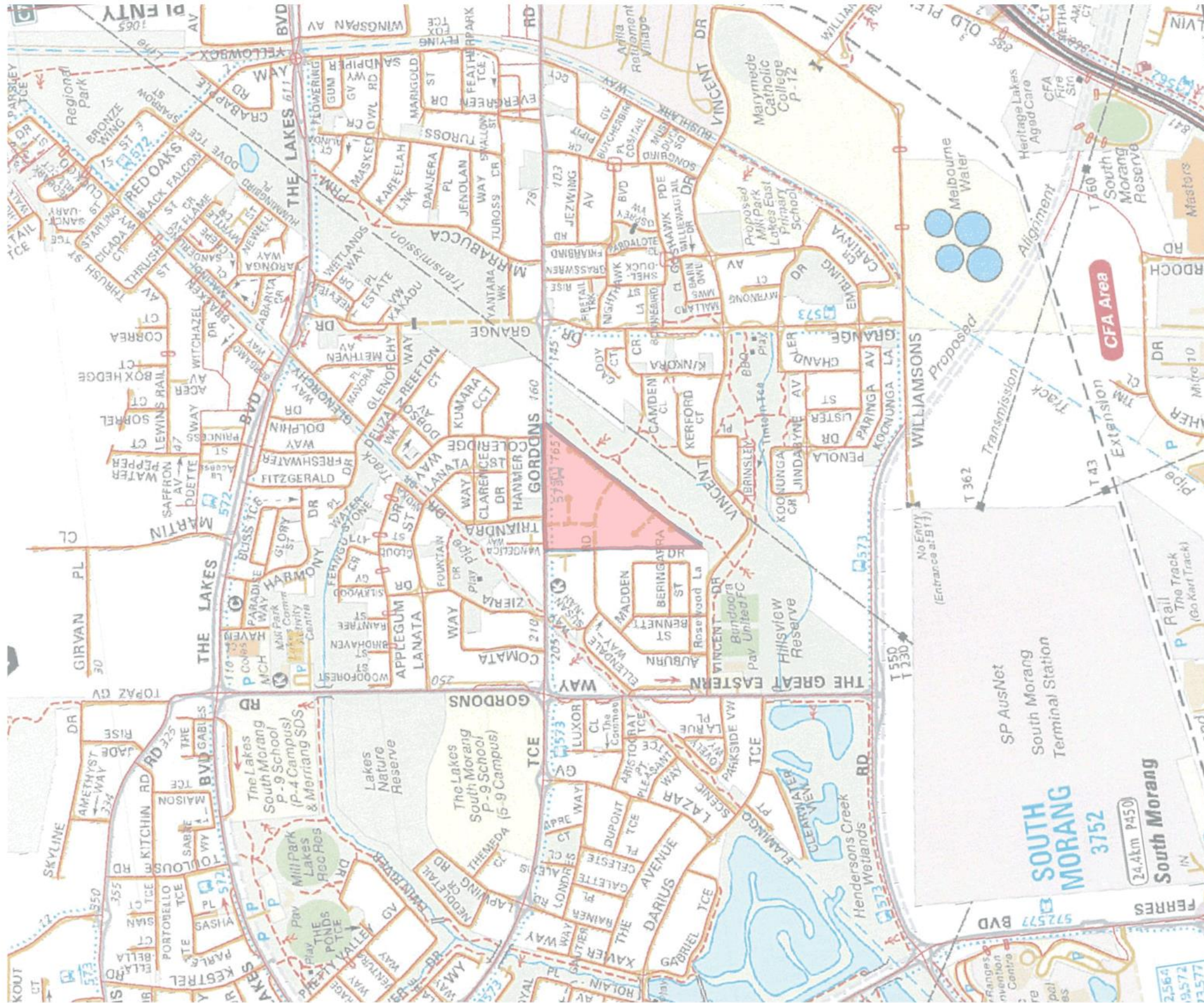
Figure 1. Broader Site Context Plan

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BROADER SITE CONTEXT



LEGEND:

- MAJOR TOWN
- MAJOR ROAD, ROAD
- ROAD NAME
- RAILWAY, TRAMWAY
- PROPERTY/PARCEL, SELECTED
- ADDRESS, LOT, CROWN ALLOTMENT
- RIVER, STREAM, COASTLINE
- WATERBODY
- LOCALITY
- LOCALITY NAME
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT NAME
- URBAN GROWTH BONDARY (UGB)
- AREA OUTSIDE THE UGB
- INVESTIGATION AREA
- LAND ADDED TO UGB SINCE 2005
- BOUNDARY OF SEARCHED SUBURB
- DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA



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Revised:
 REV 01 15.12.2020
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT, RP1 RESPONSE

Client:
 VIEWBANK HOMES

Project:
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN
 GORDONS ROAD
 SOUTH MORANG

Drawing Title:
 BROADER SITE CONTEXT PLAN
 Scale:
 1:4000 @ A1
 Date:
 15.12.2020

FOR ENDORSEMENT
 Drawn:
 C.B
 Drawing No:
 TPA03

Job No:
 20-05
 Revision:
 REV C1

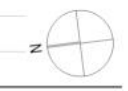


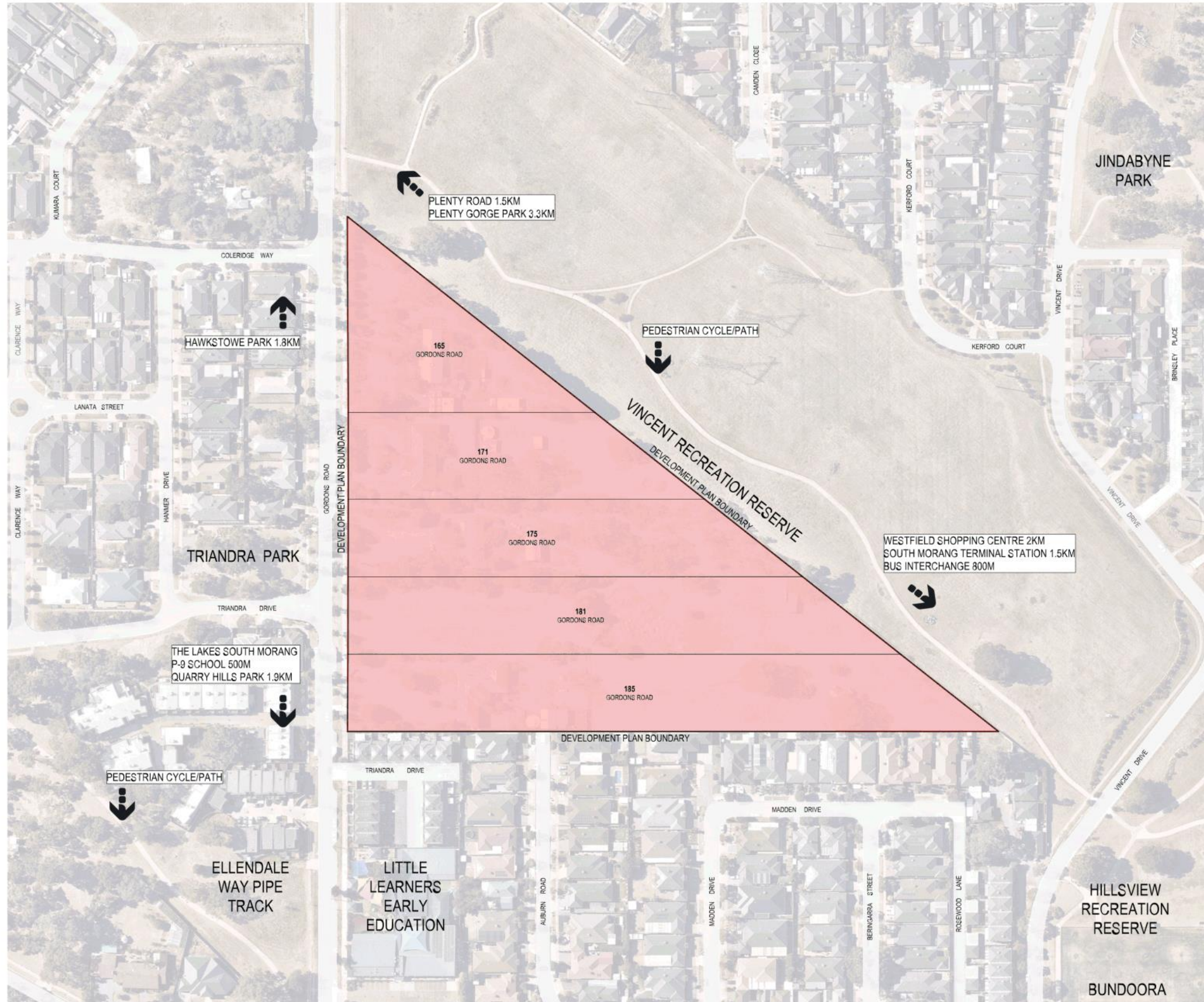


Figure 2. Site Context Plan

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SITE CONTEXT PLAN

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 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT RFI RESPONSE

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Drawing Title
 SITE CONTEXT PLAN
 Scale
 1:1000 @ A1
 Date
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 C.B
 Drawing No.
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 20-05
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 REV C1





3. Planning Controls and Context

General Residential Zone – Schedule 1

The Development Plan Area is zoned General Residential Zone (GRZ1).

Pursuant to Clause 32.08, the Purpose of this zone is:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area.
- To encourage a diversity of housing types and housing growth particularly in locations offering good access to services and transport.
- To allow educational, recreational, religious, community and a limited range of other non-residential uses to serve local community needs in appropriate locations.

Schedule 1 to the General Residential Zone does not contain any local variations.

Figure 3. Zoning Map – General Residential Zone, Schedule 1



p.6



Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 6

The Development Plan Area is affected by Development Plan Overlay (DPO6).

Pursuant to Clause 43.04, the Purpose of this overlay is:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To identify areas which require the form and conditions of future use and development to be shown on a development plan before a permit can be granted to use or develop the land.*
- *To exempt an application from notice and review if a development plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.*

Clause 43.04-2 includes the following permit requirement:

A permit must not be granted to use or subdivide land, construct a building or construct or carry out works until a development plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

This does not apply if a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit may be granted before a development plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. A permit granted must:

- *Be generally in accordance with the development plan.*
- *Include any conditions or requirements specified in a schedule to this overlay.*

Pursuant to Clause 3.0, if two or more dwellings on a lot are subdivided, any conditions or restrictions on the dwellings continue to apply.

Pursuant to Clause 4.0, the requirements for a Development Plan are as follows:

The development plan must include sufficient area to demonstrate the development of the area to be subdivided is so far as practicable integrated with the immediately surrounding area, and must show:

- *General consistency with the South Morang Local Structure Plan.*
- *The local road, pedestrian and bicycle network, including links to adjoining land and networks and provision for access to proposed public transport routes.*
- *Concept design of the proposed subdivision including proposed landscape treatment.*
- *Location and layout of the non-residential uses, including activity centres and open space.*
- *Relevant topographical and landscape details, including identification of significant environmental and cultural features and measures to preserve and enhance those features.*

p.7



- Opportunities for a diverse range of allotment sizes and dwelling types.

Figure 4. Overlay Map – Development Plan Overlay, Schedule 6



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Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1

The Development Plan Area is affected by Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1).

Pursuant to Clause 42.02, the Purpose of this overlay is to:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To protect areas of significant vegetation.*
- *To ensure that development minimises loss of vegetation.*
- *To preserve existing trees and other vegetation.*
- *To recognise vegetation protection areas as locations of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance.*
- *To maintain and enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous fauna.*
- *To encourage the regeneration of native vegetation.*

Clause 42.02-2 includes the following permit application trigger.

A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation specified in a schedule to this overlay.

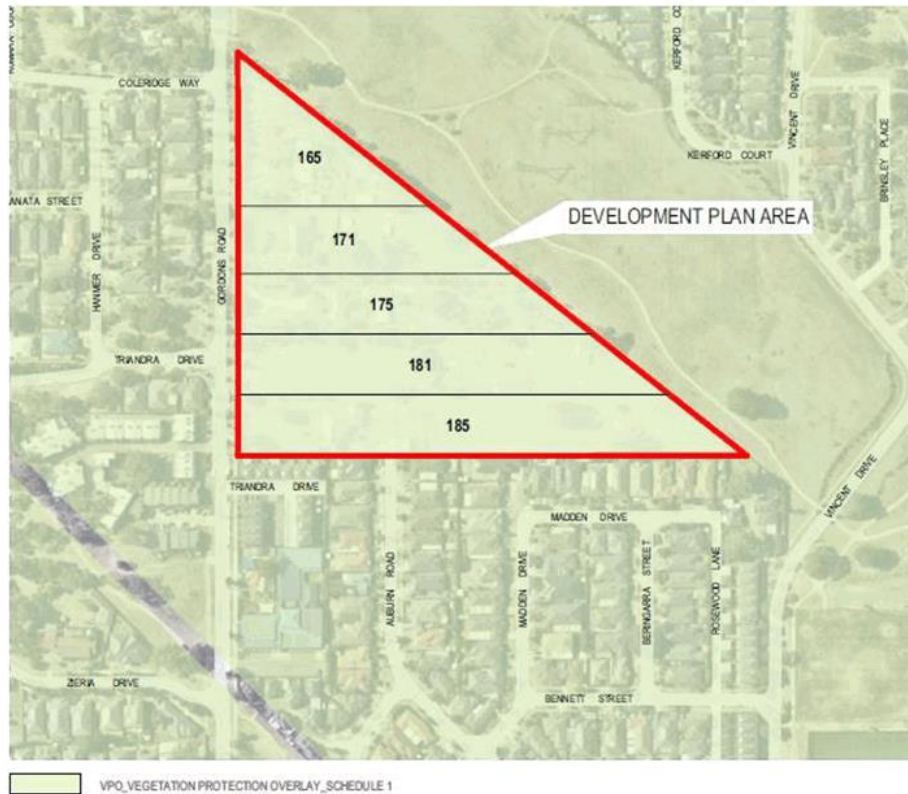
This does not apply:

- *If the table to Clause 42.02-3 specifically states that a permit is not required.*
- *To the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation in accordance with a native vegetation precinct plan specified in the schedule to Clause 52.16.*

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Figure 5. Overlay Map – Vegetation Protection Overlay, Schedule 1



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Planning Policy Framework

Within the Planning Policy Framework (PPF), the following policies are considered most relevant to the proposal:

- Clause 11: 'Settlement';
- Clause 12: 'Environmental and Landscape Values';
- Clause 15: 'Built Environment and Heritage';
- Clause 16: 'Housing';
- Clause 18: 'Transport'; and
- Clause 19: 'Infrastructure'.

State and Regional planning policies support development that integrates relevant environmental, social and economic factors in the interests of net community benefit and sustainable development. Development should take advantage of existing settlement patterns and respond to neighbourhood character and landscape considerations.

Local Planning Policy Framework

Within the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF), the following policies are considered most relevant to the proposal:

- Clause 21.02: 'Municipal Profile';
- Clause 21.03: 'Council Vision and Strategic Framework';
- Clause 21.04: 'Settlement';
- Clause 21.05: 'Environment and Landscape Values';
- Clause 21.08: 'Built Environment and Heritage';
- Clause 21.09: 'Housing';
- Clause 21.11: 'Transport'; and
- Clause 22.10: 'River Red Gum Protection Policy'.

The local planning policies support developments that retain environmental assets and provide a housing mix that meets the needs of the local community. The policies recognise that open spaces are valuable assets for conservation and recreation, amongst other purposes. Clause 22.10 applies to the protection of Red River Gums in urban and rural areas and encourages Red River Gums to be retained to be located in road reserves and public open spaces.

p.11



South Morang Local Structure Plan

The South Morang Local Structure Plan ('the SMLSP') was approved by the Minister for Planning in February 1997 and applies to land within the South Morang growth area. The SMLSP is an incorporated document within the Whittlesea Planning Scheme and is intended to provide a mechanism to support the planning and management of the area.

The SMLSP has the following vision:

- *Promote the development of a cohesive urban community, reflecting the sense of containment provided by the surrounding hills, and fostering a sense of place with a unique character and identity.*

To this end, the SMLSP envisages that the Development Plan Area will be developed for residential purposes.

Relevant goals of the SMLSP are to:

- *Balance social, economic, environmental and community interests.*
- *Facilitate the creation of an interesting and diverse urban environment.*
- *Conserve, enhance and manage areas and features of environmental and heritage significance.*
- *Accommodate future development at a rate related to demand and the ability to service the area.*
- *Facilitate the creation of a sense of community identity and provide opportunities for the physical and social fulfilment of future residents.*
- *Provide a flexible structure that can readily adapt to changes in people's lifestyles and aspirations.*
- *Ensure that development is energy efficient in terms of subdivision/housing design and transportation.*
- *Provide a framework for the coordinated and timely provision of infrastructure.*
- *Provide a structure which allows equitable accessibility of all residents to public facilities, services and open space.*

The SMLSP encourages development to provide public open space that reinforces the natural features of the area and retains mature River Red Gums, creates a safe and convenient road network including appropriate pedestrian and cycle paths, and a diversity of lot sizes.

Major factors influencing this are the demand for a wider choice of housing types, including compact housing on smaller lots, the demand for the provision of more affordable housing, changes in population levels and demographic structures including trends towards smaller households, and the need to restrain infrastructure costs in developing urban areas.

p.12



Detailed planning of development areas is to be considered through the preparation of a Development Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Development Plan Overlay.

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4. Development Plan Requirements

Clause 4.0 of DPO6 sets out a series of requirements for a Development Plan.

General consistency with SMLSP

The Development Plan Area is designated for residential purposes only under the SMLSP and the development plan has been prepared having regard to the goals of the SMLSP.

The Development Plan supports these goals by:

- Providing residential development for all of the land as designated by the SMLSP. Non-residential uses are not encouraged within the Development Plan area due to its distance from designated activity centres.
- Ensuring that development density is commensurate with what is now anticipated and occurring within the SMLSP area. It is noted that the SMLSP was prepared in 1997, well before the current Plan Melbourne¹ policy settings and the population growth expectations set out in Victoria in Future (VIF2019)². At the time of preparation, it was expected that the average gross residential density would be approximately 15 dwellings per hectare. However, this benchmark has evolved over the last three decades³. The SMLSP itself stressed that this density was based on the then current estimation and anticipated to evolve over the 20-year development time horizon of the area.
- Requiring the retention of mature remnant River Red Gums within the public realm;
- Conserving areas of biological significance by including them in public open spaces;
- Providing links to Vincent Recreation Reserve;
- Providing a permeable movement network that would seamlessly connect to the existing road networks in the immediate area; and
- Providing opportunities to deliver a variety of lot sizes and types to meet the evolving demands of the community.

¹ A Policy guideline at Clause 11.01-1S.

² A Policy guideline at Clause 11.02-1S

³ For instance, Policy 2.2.5 of Plan Melbourne says that in the future, the planning and development of growth areas should seek to increase residential densities to more than 20 dwellings per hectare.

p.14



Development Staging/ Servicing

The development plan provides for the timely and coordinated provision of infrastructure.

The main objectives of staging development, in accordance with the SMLSP (as relevant) are to facilitate the development of land which:

- Is located to enable the logical and cost effective provision of utility services i.e. water, sewer, drainage, etc.
- Has the potential to engender a unique character and identity, to help develop a strong sense of community.
- Reduces the prospect of isolation.
- Is in a variety of ownerships to avoid establishment of supply monopolies which could effect housing choice and affordability.

The staging of the development will ensure (as relevant):

- All utility and engineering services are provided at the developer's cost.
- Main roads required to provide access to the development are constructed or upgraded to a standard required by Council at the developer's cost.

Figure 6. Development Plan

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DEVELOPMENT PLAN



NOTE: THE EXACT LOCATION OF THIS CONNECTION ROAD WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE TIMING OF DEVELOPMENT OF ASSOCIATED LAND FOR EXAMPLE IF BOTH DEVELOP AT THE SAME TIME THEN IT COULD BE EVENLY LOCATED AS INDICATED HOWEVER IF ONE LAND OWNER DEVELOPS BEFORE THE OTHER A GREATER PORTION OF THE ROAD WILL NEED TO BE PROVIDED ON THE LAND OF THE FIRST DEVELOPER TO THE SATISFACTION OF RA

DETAIL

LEGEND:

- DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS
- ROAD RESERVES NATURE STRIP
- OPEN SPACE
- PRIORITISATION OF THROUGH TRAFFIC AS SHOWN WITH ARROW
- INDICATIVE SHARED PATH
- ACTIVE FRONTAGE
- EXISTING BUILDING ENVELOPES
- ROAD CROSS-SECTIONS
- RIVER RED GUMS TO BE RETAINED
- CITY OF WHITLSEA RRS TPZ CANOPY EDGE + 1.0M AS SPECIFIED BY COUNCIL GUIDELINES (TO BE RETAINED)
- CITY OF WHITLSEA TPZ RADIUS DETERMINED BY HALF TREE HEIGHT OR CANOPY SPREAD, WHICHEVER IS GREATEST (TO BE RETAINED)

NOTE: EMBELLISHMENT OF OPEN SPACE MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL'S OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND ANY OTHER APPLICABLE STRATEGY. TO BE DETERMINED AS PART OF A SUBSEQUENT PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EACH DEVELOPMENT SITE



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 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT - RI RESPONSE

Client
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Project
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN
 GORDONS ROAD
 SOUTH MORANG

Drawing Title
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FOR ENDORSEMENT
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 20-05
 Revision
 REV C1





Developable Area

The development plan area will be developed for residential purposes. The development plan area is highly constrained which has limited the developable site area. The developable areas are outlined at **Figure 6**.

A preliminary land budget for the site is provided below. A public open space contribution must be made in accordance with the Schedule to Clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme.

A detailed breakdown of approximate net developable area is provided in the table below.

	185 GORDON S ROAD	181 GORDONS ROAD	175 GORDONS ROAD	171 GORDONS ROAD	165 GORDONS ROAD
TOTAL AREA (SQM)	12434.63	10408.67	8397.75	6981.78	6464.89
SITE COVERAGE (%)	60	60	60	60	60
<i>OPEN SPACE</i>					
PUBLIC ROAD (SQM)	2039.63	1932.48	1485.47	1199.11	93.85
ENCUMBERED LAND (SQM)	362.46	606.13	N/A	75	75
ENCUMBERED LAND (%)	2.91	5.82	N/A	1.07	1.16
UNENCUMBERED LAND (SQM)	2500	N/A	2070.56	2079.39	2941.03
UNENCUMBERED LAND (%)	20.11	N/A	24.66	29.78	45.49
TOTAL OPEN SPACE (SQM)	2862.46	606.13	2070.56	2154.39	3016.03
TOTAL NDA (SQM)	7532.54	7675.42	4841.72	3368.83	3039.13

The encumbered land calculation comprises land set aside for the following reasons:

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- Land where significant native vegetation such as mature River Red Gums, or patches of native grasses that provides habitats for native fauna. The protection of these areas is required by various Local and State Planning Policies;
- Public infrastructure such as roads. All road reservations have been calculated based on the Whittlesea City Council's *Guidelines for Urban Development, December 2015*; and
- Single tree reserves (181 & 171 Gordons Road).

The unencumbered land calculation comprises land set aside for the following reasons

- Open space areas which also accommodate tree retention as unencumbered open space

Diverse Range of Allotment Sizes and Dwelling Types

The SMLSP, the purpose of the zone and relevant planning policies encourage the provision of a range of dwelling types and sizes to cater for a range of households. The Development Plan aims to achieve an urban neighbourhood that provides a range of dwelling types and a density that respects the surrounding area and land constraints. The Development Plan seeks to:

- Encourage greater housing choice and diversity;
- Provide a range of lot sizes and housing types to cater for differing housing demands;
- Provide an appropriate transition to the established residential development to the west and north by limiting the future built form to not more than 2 storeys across the entire Development Plan Area;
- Provide attractive streetscapes and a high-quality urban design and distinct urban character; and
- Encourage innovative design responses that would capitalise on unique lot dimensions, abuttals and outlooks.

Detailed development design and layout will be determined as part of the planning permit application stage. The Development Plan does not consider the retention of existing dwellings, where practical further retention of these dwellings can be determined as part of subsequent planning applications.

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Built Form Outcomes

The following built form outcomes apply:

- Subdivision of land must minimise the creation of triangle lots and consider solar access to future dwellings. Developments should maximise solar access to dwellings and respond appropriately to Clause 22.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.
- All future developments must meet the relevant objectives of Clauses 54, 55 or 56 where relevant as part of the detailed design of subsequent planning permit applications.
- All future developments must incorporate an active edge where it abuts a street (including a paper road) or an open space. Solid walls and fencing are discouraged along these interfaces.
- All future developments must provide a landscape buffer between development blocks, Vincent Recreation Reserve and the Transmission Line Easement.
- Front loaded dwellings must include rear fencing which incorporates some form of transparency with any built form being a minimum of two storeys in height to create passive surveillance opportunities of the open space (please refer to precedent images below). The fencing should address any overlooking provisions, the details will be determined as part of any subsequent planning permit applications.

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- Where possible, all development should address Vincent Reserve and comply with the relevant design guidelines shown on cross section K.
- Minimise vehicle crossovers to maximise landscaping opportunities in the front setback and to maintain on street parking provision.
- Achieve secluded private open space that demonstrates useability and achieves positive amenity for future occupants.
- Provide upper level and secluded private open space on a balcony or deck where enhanced outlook opportunities exist, such as adjacent to public open space and where the balcony is designed or located to minimise the need for overlooking screening.

All future development must accord with the relevant APA AusNet Guidelines for buildings adjacent to the Transmission Line Easement.

Development Staging

Due to the fragmented nature of land ownership, the sequencing of development will depend on the individual landowner. The development plan has been prepared to allow each lot to be delivered independent of other lots. This may result in the provision of interim infrastructure as outlined below. The relevant infrastructure requirements for each lot is outlined in the Precinct Infrastructure Plan overleaf Easements must be negotiated and consented to by all affected land owners under the relevant provisions of the *Subdivision Act 1988*.

Assessments have been undertaken to confirm the interim and ultimate infrastructure requirements. Each lot will be required to provide for its infrastructure (including roads, drainage and other services). The staging of the development has been designed to enable the logical and cost-effective provision of utility services in accordance with the SMLSP.

171-175 Gordons Road

The development of 171-175 Gordons Road will require interim site access.

Site Access

Interim site access is to be constructed as follows:

- 6.0m carriageway width and 4.5m nature strip (It is noted that service locations/offset may have some impact on the width of the nature strip, this is to be determined as part of detailed design).
- Constructed as a public road to be transferred to Council.

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The exact location of the connection will be dependent of the sequencing of development. If both lots are to be developed at the same time the connection can be evenly located across both lots. If one lot is developed before the other a greater proportion of the road will need to be provided on this land to the satisfaction of Council (please refer to Figure 8). The details will be determined as part of a subsequent planning permit application.

181 Gordons Road

The development of 181 Gordons Road will require two items of interim infrastructure:

- Interim Site Access; and
- Interim Stormwater Outfall.

Interim Site Access

An interim site access is to be constructed as follows:

- Be located along the eastern boundary of 181 Gordons Road.
- 10m minimum carriageway width.
- 200mm concrete carriageway depth.
- Provision of street light poles within the cross section.
- Services to be located within the (temporary) carriageway and then re-routed as part of the ultimate road configuration. A subsequent agreement can provide for this and outline liability for work.
- Ensure safe pedestrian access is considered as part of the cross section.

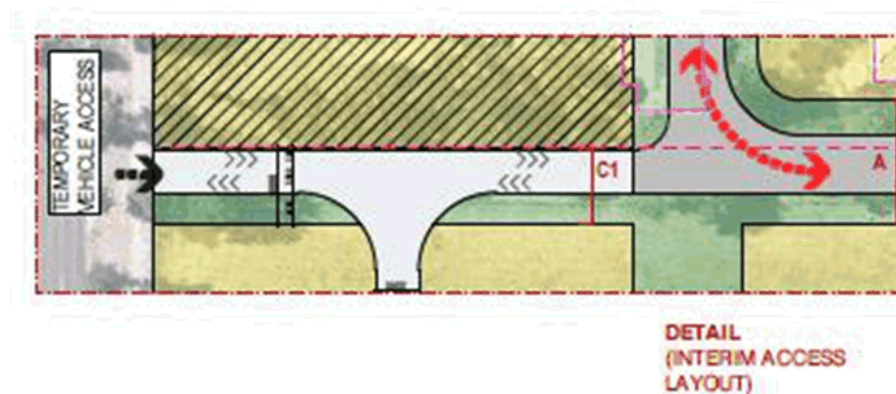


Figure 8 Extract from Development Plan (TPA10)

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The landowner must enter into the following Agreements:

- Release and Indemnity Agreement from the Body Corporate to Council to address potential liabilities involved in public access over the interim road.
- License and/or grant of temporary easement (right of access) for the public at large to access the lots over the temporary accessway.
- An agreement to provide for the re-alignment of services and closure of temporary access as part of the ultimate road configuration.

The landowner is to bear all relevant costs associated with the preparation and execution of the above Agreements.

Stormwater Outfall

An overall drainage outfall plan has been prepared for the entire Development Plan Area. In the interim, the landowner must negotiate a temporary drainage outfall over 185 Gordons Road. The temporary outfall must be aligned to avoid the need to demolish the existing dwelling at 185 Gordons Road.

The appropriate approvals and/or consent for the creation of temporary drainage outfall must be obtained prior to any subsequent planning permit application to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

185 Gordons Road

Stormwater Outfall

Should the southern section of 185 Gordons Road be developed, the stormwater outfall design should ensure the asset can cater for minor and major flows and protect the existing dwelling at 185 Gordons Road. The details of these assets will be determined at the detailed design stage of any subsequent planning permit application. Should 185 Gordons Road not be developed until a later stage these assets will be located on private property and an easement will be established to allow maintenance. The stormwater outfall from 185 should connect to the existing outfall connection to the west.

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Precinct Infrastructure Plan

The required infrastructure for each lot is set out in the table below. Works on individual lots will be triggered by the development of that lot. Each landowner/developer will be responsible for the provision of infrastructure on its own land.

Affected Properties	Construction/ Development Type	Project Description	Timing
185 Gordons Road	Road	Public roads (Cross sections G and F1)	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Lanes	Private roads (Cross sections B and D)	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Shared path	Shared path to be provided through the area of open space, and associated embellishments.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Open Space Contribution	Provision of an open space of approximately 2862.46sqm and meeting the applicable requirements of Clause 53.01.	Delivered prior to SOC of the abutting stage of subdivision, unless otherwise agreed by the Responsible Authority. Any embellishment of Vincent Recreation Reserve will occur prior to SOC of the last stage if any subdivision of land.
	Drainage	DSS pipe (approx. 70m of 525mm Ø pipe) and connection to Auburn Road to the west, as specified by the Drainage Outfall Plan. ¹	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
181 Gordons Road	Road (interim)	Public Road cross section G.	Prior to SOC of the stage of subdivision in which the Development Type falls.
	Road (Ultimate)	Public roads (Cross sections F2 and H)	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land

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	Lane (Interim)	Interim Site access ⁴ , private road (Cross section C1)	Prior to SOC of the stage of subdivision in which the Development Type falls.
	Lanes (ultimate)	Private Road (Cross sections H and C2)	Prior to SOC of the stage of subdivision in which the Development Type falls.
	Paper Road	4m wide paper road adjacent to Vincent Reserve (Cross section J).	Prior to SOC of the stage of subdivision in which the Development Type falls.
	Drainage (interim)	Interim DSS Pipe (approx. 70m of 525mm pipe) over 185 Gordons Road as specified by the Drainage Outfall Plan ⁵ .	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land.
	Drainage (Ultimate)	DSS pipe (approx. 40m of 525mm Ø pipe).	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
175 Gordons Road	Road	Public Road cross sections A ⁶ and G ⁷ . Cross Section A to be provided in accordance with Council's interim site access requirements as noted on Page 20.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Shared path	Shared path to be provided through the area of open space, and associated embellishments.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Drainage	DSS pipe (approx. 45 m of 450mm Ø pipe) and connection to Auburn Road to the west, as specified by the Drainage Outfall Plan.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land

⁴ To be removed and replaced with dwellings in accordance with the requirements of this Development Plan).

⁵ Removal of any interim DSS Pipes are to be undertaken after delivery of the ultimate DSS pipe by and at the cost of the landowner in which it falls.

⁶ Where road A is to be located across two lots, only 50% of the reservation needs to be delivered as part of the development of this lot, and designed to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. In the interim, the developer should ensure that a trafficable lane with a minimum width of 5.5m is provided to allow safe and efficient two-way traffic.

⁷ This only relates to 1.5m extension of edge strip that is located within 175 Gordons Road.

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	Open Space Contribution	Provision of an open space of approximately 2070.56sqm and meeting the applicable requirements of Clause 53.01.	Delivered prior to SOC of the abutting stage of subdivision, unless otherwise agreed by the Responsible Authority. Any embellishment of Vincent Recreation Reserve will occur prior to SOC of the last stage if any subdivision of land.
171 Gordons Road	Road	Public Road Cross sections A ⁸ . Cross Section A to be provided in accordance with Council's interim site access requirements as noted on Page 20.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Paper Road	4m wide paper road adjacent to Vincent Reserve (Cross section J).	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Shared path	Shared path to be provided through the area of open space, and associated embellishments.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Drainage	DSS pipe (approx. 45m of 450mm Ø pipe) and connection to Auburn Road to the west, as specified by the Drainage Outfall Plan.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Open Space Contribution	Provision of an open space of approximately 2154.39sqm and meeting the applicable requirements of Clause 53.01.	Delivered prior to SOC of the abutting stage of subdivision, unless otherwise agreed by the Responsible Authority. Any embellishment of Vincent Recreation Reserve will occur prior to SOC of the last stage if any subdivision of land.
165 Gordons Road	Paper Road	4m wide paper road adjacent to Vincent Reserve (Cross section J).	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land

⁸ Where road A is to be located across two lots, only 50% of the reservation needs to be delivered as part of the development of this lot, and designed to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. In the interim, the developer should ensure that a trafficable lane with a minimum width of 5.5m is provided to allow safe and efficient two-way traffic.

p.26



	Pedestrian path	Shared path to be provided through the area of open space, and associated embellishments.	Prior to the SOC of last stage of any subdivision of the land
	Open Space Contribution	Provision of an open space of approximately 3016.03sqm and meeting the applicable requirements of Clause 53.01.	Delivered prior to SOC of the abutting stage of subdivision, unless otherwise agreed by the Responsible Authority. Any embellishment of Vincent Recreation Reserve will occur prior to SOC of the last stage if any subdivision of land.

Any embellishment of Vincent Recreation Reserve will occur prior to the last stage of any subdivision of land.

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Access & Movement Network

A detailed Traffic Impact Assessment has been prepared by Traffix Group. A copy of this report is provided at **Appendix E**. The Traffic Impact Assessment identifies the road hierarchy. All public streets are to be local access road. All cross sections are identified on the Development Plan.

The Development Plan seeks to provide a highly permeable road network across the Development Plan Area. In particular, it seeks to:

- Provide an efficient, legible, and safe local road network that provides good internal movement that connects seamlessly to the established road network.
- Encourage pedestrian connectivity throughout the Development Plan Area and with abutting land. All public roads will comprise shared paths. Where appropriate, shared paths must be provided within public open spaces to achieve a high level of pedestrian permeability within the Development Plan Area.
- Traffic prioritisation devices/markings to be provided (as indicated on the Development Plan) to direct traffic along the public roads within the Development Plan Area. Prioritisation of the loop road will guide traffic away from the northern laneway at 181 and 185 Gordons Road.

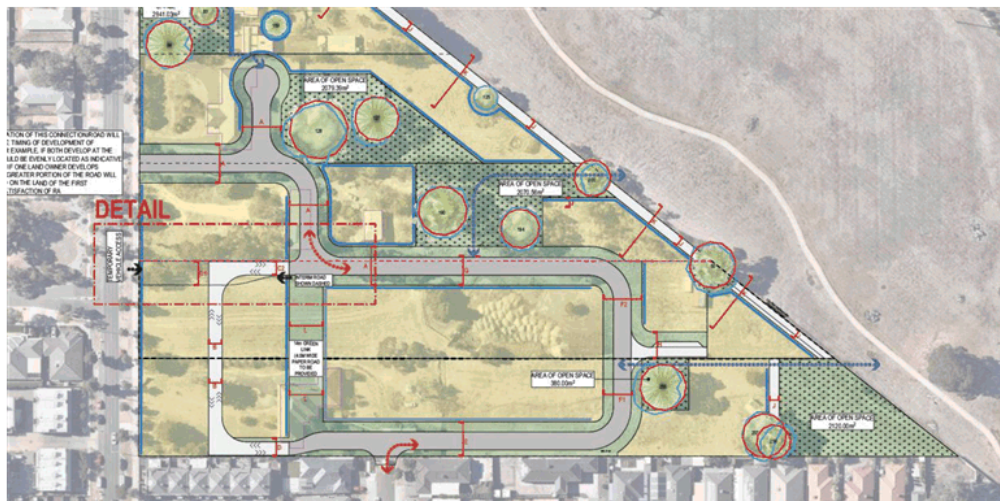


Figure 9 Extract from Development Plan (TPA10)

- Provide limited access to Gordons Road to protect its function and safety.
- Provide landscaping along local roads to create landscape corridors and contribute to an attractive urban environment and ensure the road network is planned to provide for the safety of all road users.

p.28



- Design roads to allow for safe and convenient movement of services vehicles in both the interim and ultimate design.

No traffic control treatment, with the exception of the priority movements identified on the development plan are required as street lengths are less than 240m, thereby meeting the speed control objectives of Clause 56 of the Planning Scheme.

The location of carriageway pavement, parking, cross overs, footpaths, and Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) features will be determined as part of any subsequent planning permit applications.

All interim and ultimate access road constructions are detailed on pages 19-20 and within the Precinct Infrastructure Plan. 185 Gordons Road provides for the future connection to Auburn Road via the cross sections which runs along the boundary of 185 Gordons Road.

Potential Temporary Dead-End Turning Provisions have been described in the Traffic Impact Assessment. Any temporary turn around areas will be accordance with City of Whittlesea Guidelines for Urban Development and will allow for a 12.5m service vehicle to turn around. Temporary turn around requirements will be considered in full as part of the detailed design of any subsequent planning permit applications.

Figure 10 Cross Sections

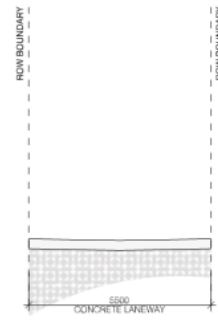
p.29

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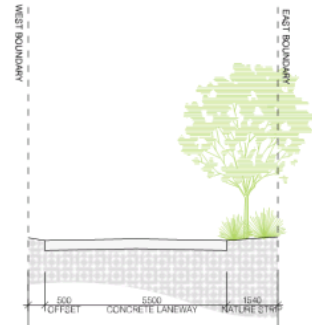
GLOSSOP

CROSS SECTIONS

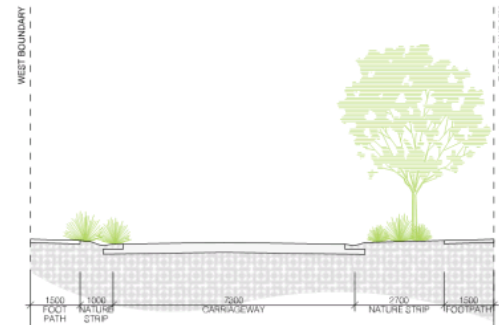
185 GORDONS ROAD:



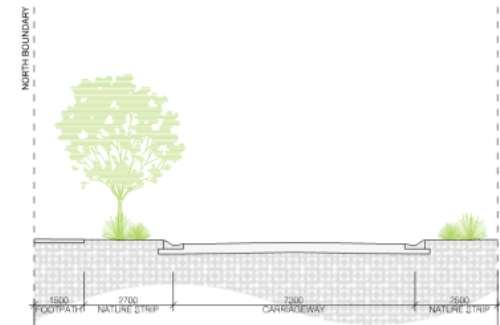
CROSS SECTION B
PRIVATE LANEWAY



CROSS SECTION D
PRIVATE LANEWAY



CROSS SECTION E
PUBLIC ROAD



CROSS SECTION F1
PUBLIC ROAD

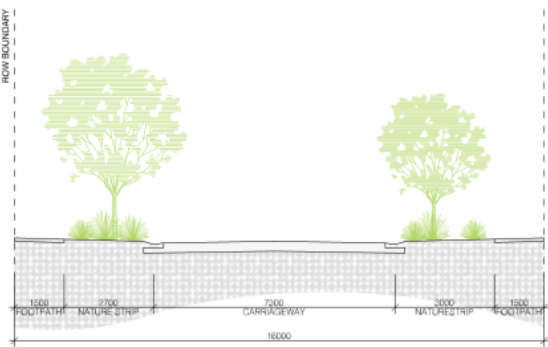
ADJACENT TO RESERVE
(EDGE OF TPZ OF TREE 225)
NOTE: ROAD LANE OPEN SPACE
FOOTPATH AND NATURE STRIP CAN BE
ACCOMMODATED IN THE OPEN SPACE
NETWORK IN PLANS CROSS SECTION A



CROSS SECTION L
GREEN LINK

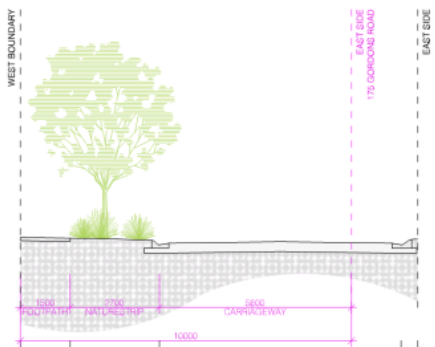
NOTE: EXACT DETAILS OF GREEN LINK
TO BE DETERMINED AT THE
APPROPRIATE FUTURE TIME TO
ACCOMMODATE SERVING PROVISION, A
FOOTPATH AND 0-100 OVERLAND
FLOWS AND TO BE IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE CITY OF WHITTLSEA OPEN
SPACE STRATEGY.
NOTE: A 4M PAPER ROAD WILL BE
PROVIDED ONCE DETAILS ARE
CONFIRMED

175 GORDONS ROAD:



CROSS SECTION A
PUBLIC ROAD

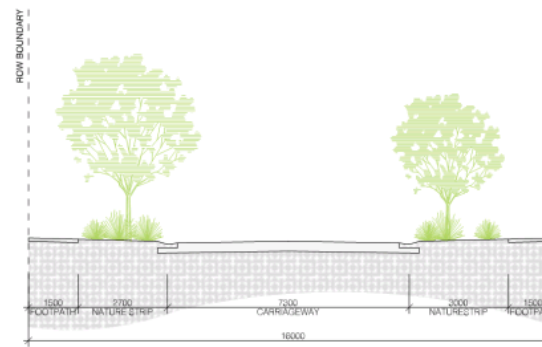
NOTE: THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE CROSS
SECTION WILL BE DEPENDENT ON THE TIMING OF
ROAD WORKS. THE CROSS SECTION FOR
EXAMPLE IN BOTH DIRECTIONS IS TO BE LOCATED AT THE
SAME TIME THEN IT COULD BE EVENLY LOCATED.
THE OTHER THEN A GREAT PORTION OF THE ROAD
WILL NEED TO BE PROVIDED ON THE LAND OF THE
ADJACENT PROPERTY. THE INCLUSION OF NATURE STRIP
AND FOOTPATH PATH IN ACCORDANCE WITH
COUNCIL STANDARDS. PROVIDING ACCESS TO
BICYCLABLE LANE IN THE SOUTHERN CORNER



CROSS SECTION G
(ULTIMATE ACCESS)
PUBLIC ROAD

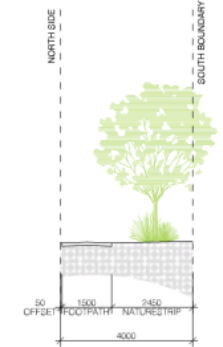
NOTE: ROAD LANE OPEN SPACE
FOOTPATH AND NATURE STRIP CAN BE
ACCOMMODATED IN THE OPEN SPACE
NETWORK IN PLANS CROSS SECTION A

171 GORDONS ROAD:



CROSS SECTION A
PUBLIC ROAD

TYPICAL SECTION 165 / 171 / 175 / 185 GORDONS ROAD



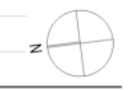
CROSS SECTION J
PAPER ROAD



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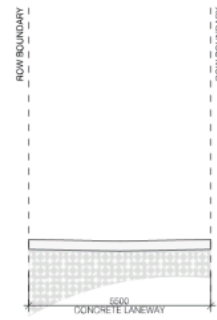
Revision	Client
REV 01: 02.06.2021 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENCROACHMENT RFI RESPONSE	VIEWBANK HOMES

Project	Drawing Title	FOR ENDORSEMENT
DEVELOPMENT PLAN GORDONS ROAD SOUTH MORANG	DEVELOPMENT PLAN_CROSS-SECTIONS Scale 1:100 @ A1 Date 02.06.2021	Job No. 20-05 Revision TPA09 REV C1

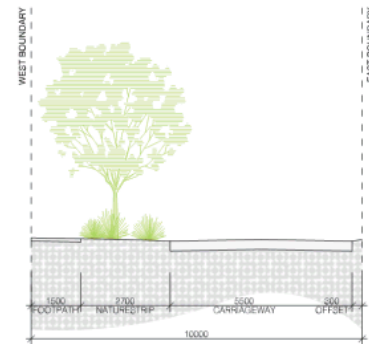


CROSS SECTIONS

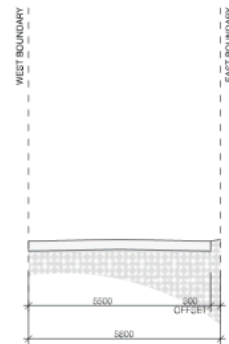
181 GORDONS ROAD:



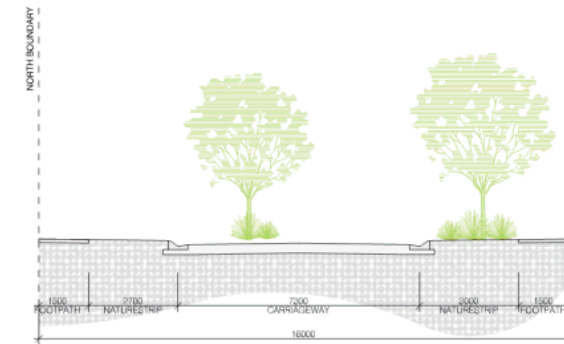
CROSS SECTION B
PRIVATE LANEWAY



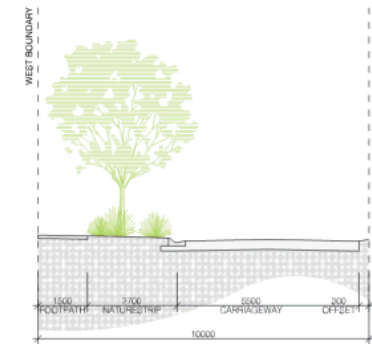
CROSS SECTION C1
(INTERIM ACCESS - PUBLIC TEMPORARY ROAD)



CROSS SECTION C2
(ULTIMATE ACCESS - PRIVATE LANEWAY)

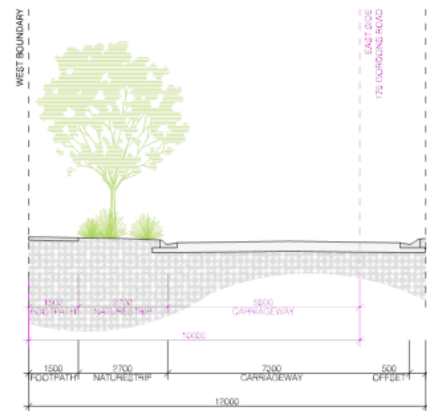


CROSS SECTION F2
PUBLIC ROAD

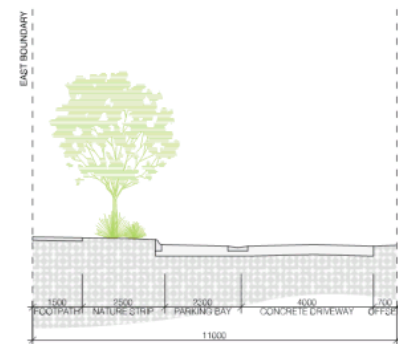


INTERIM CROSS SECTIONS A & G
(IF CONSTRUCTED PRIOR TO NO. 175 DEVELOPING)

NOTE: ROAD ABUTE OPEN SPACE FOOTPATH AND NATURE STRIP CAN BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE OPEN SPACE NETWORK IN A SIMILAR FASHION TO CROSS SECTION A



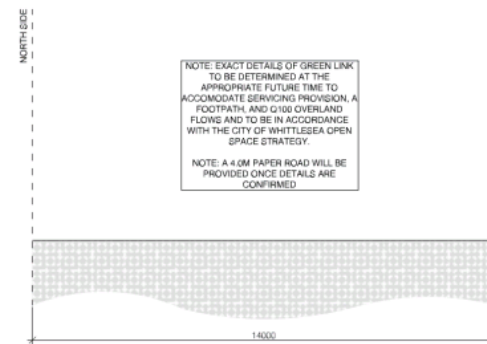
CROSS SECTION G
(ULTIMATE ACCESS) PUBLIC ROAD



CROSS SECTION H
PRIVATE ROAD

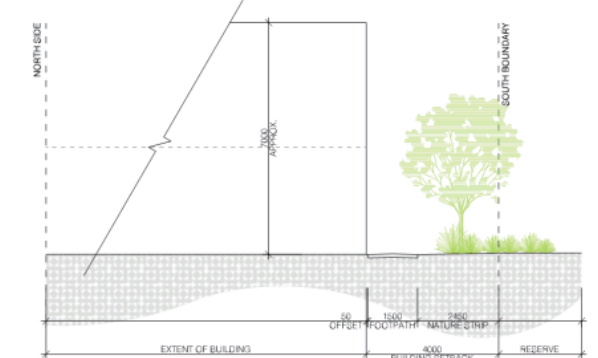


CROSS SECTION J
PAPER ROAD

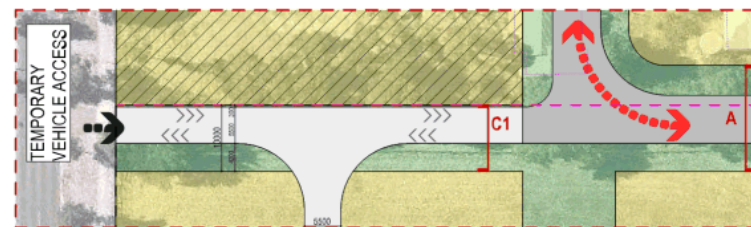


CROSS SECTION L
GREEN LINK

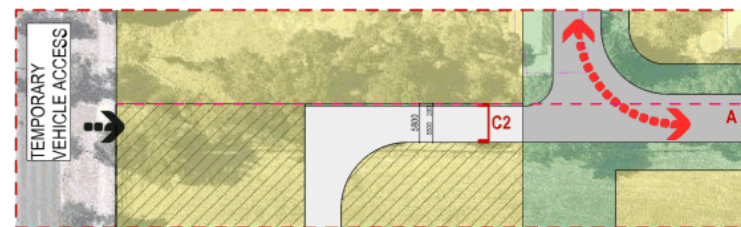
TYPICAL SECTION 165 / 171 / 175 / 181 GORDONS ROAD



CROSS SECTION K
EXTENT OF BUILDING



DETAIL
(INTERIM ACCESS LAYOUT)



DETAIL
(ULTIMATE LAYOUT)



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Revision
REV C1 02.06.2021
DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT RFI RESPONSE

Client
VIEWBANK HOMES

Project
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
GORDONS ROAD
SOUTH MORANG

Drawing Title
DEVELOPMENT PLAN - CROSS-SECTIONS
Scale
1:500, 1:100 @ A1
Date
02.06.2021

FOR ENDORSEMENT
Drawn
C.B
Job No.
20-05
Revision
TPA10
REV C1





Drainage Strategy

A Drainage Outfall Plan has been prepared for the Development Plan area. A copy of the plan is provided at **Appendix D**.

The subject site is located within an active Melbourne Water DSS, namely the Upper Henderson Creek DSS (UHCDS). The drainage strategy is prepared in accordance with the UHCDS. There are permanent Melbourne Water DSS downstream assets, including regional stormwater water quality and retarding assets which have been constructed and are in operation.

The stormwater infrastructure will convey local stormwater runoff from the Development Plan Areas to a legal point of discharge and meet the infrastructure requirements shown in the UHCDS.

The Drainage Outfall Plan outlines drainage requirements, which are as follows:

- Ultimate drainage requirements under the Upper Henderson Creek Drainage; and
- Interim drainage requirements to allow development to progress in stages.

These have been summarised in this section of the Development Plan.

The developer of the subject land is required to construct DSS pipelines, the proposed DSS pipe alignment is detailed in Figure 3-1 of the Drainage Outfall Plan which is reproduced below. The indicative sizes applicable to these scheme assets is detailed in Table 3-2 of the Drainage Outfall Plan which is reproduced below. The proposed provision of drainage must be in accordance with Melbourne Water and City of Whittlesea drainage requirements.

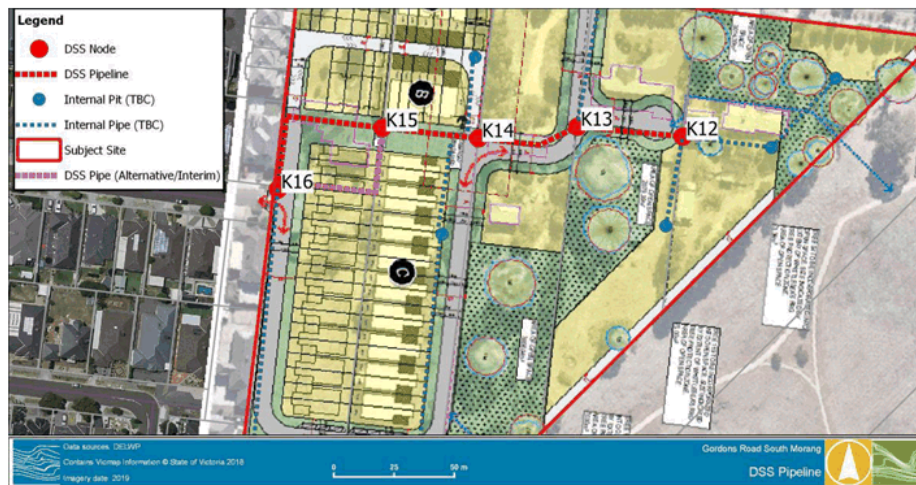


Figure 11 Proposed DSS Pipeline Alignment

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Table 3-2 Upper Henderson Creek DSS – Indicative Pipeline

DSS Node Reference	Approx. Length	Ownership	Design Flow (m ³ /s)	Indicative Pipe Size (slope)	Pipe Capacity (m ³ /s)
K12-K13	45 m	Council	0.25 m ³ /s (Q _{20%} AEP)	450 mm Ø (1 in 100)	0.29 m ³ /s
K13-K14	45 m	Council	0.27 m ³ /s (Q _{20%} AEP)	450 mm Ø (1 in 100)	0.29 m ³ /s
K14-K15	40 m	Council	0.37 m ³ /s (Q _{20%} AEP)	525 mm Ø (1 in 100)	0.43 m ³ /s
K15-K16	70 m	Council	0.65 m ³ /s (Q _{20%} AEP)	525 mm Ø (1 in 58) ^B	0.65 m ³ /s
K16-LPD	TBC	Council	0.65 m ³ /s (Q _{20%} AEP) ^A	525 mm Ø (1 in 58) ^B	0.65 m ³ /s ^C

Note A: Q_{20%} AEP at K16 does not exceed pipe capacity of existing downstream pipeline at LPD, namely 0.65 m³/s (pipe 20-19 in Figure 3-2).

Note B: Pipe slope and size match downstream connecting pipe (i.e. 525 mm Ø @ 1 in 58.7)

Figure 12 Indicative Pipeline sizes

Overland flow paths must be designed in accordance with the safety criteria outlined in the Standards and Specifications section within the Planning and Building section of Melbourne Water’s website. A 10m wide drainage reserve within a 14 m wide green link is also proposed, to ensure safe conveyance of overland flows. Details are provided at paragraph 3.2.1 of the attached Drainage Outfall Plan. The proposed layout must adequately accommodate the overland flows during 1% AEP flood events (major drainage) and all road reserves/public areas designed to convey the gap flow must comply with Melbourne Water’s floodway safety criteria.

The flows from the site do not exceed design capacity of the existing DSS pipe within Evendrive Estate and therefore there is no need for onsite water retardation.

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Notional drainage requirements are listed in Table below.

Lot	DSS Node Reference	Ownership	Indicative Pipe Size (slope)	Indicative Easement ^D
171 Gordons Road	K12-K13	Council	450 mm Ø (1 in 100)	4 m
175 Gordons Road	K13-K14	Council	450 mm Ø (1 in 100)	4 m
181 Gordons Road	K14-K15	Council	750 mm Ø (1 in 100)	4 m
185 Gordons Road	K15-K16	Council	900 mm Ø (1 in 100)	5 m
185 Gordons Road	K16-LPD	Council	525 mm Ø (1 in 58)	4 m

Upper Henderson Creek DSS – Indicative Pipeline

Easement widths are shown indicatively and are based on Melbourne Water's requirements. Easement widths will need to be confirmed based on Whittlesea City Council's easement requirements for pipes vested in Council. Easements are not required if the pipe is located within a public road reserve or pedestrian accessway.

Development Staging and Drainage

The staging of the development will be dictated by the provision of a free-draining outfall, as outlined in Table 3-2. If the DSS pipes downstream of a lot have not been constructed, development temporary works will/may be required as part of the drainage agreement with Melbourne Water and the Developer must negotiate any temporary or ultimate drainage works with downstream landowner(s) to obtain a drainage outfall solution through their property/ies.

Approval must be granted and forwarded to the Responsible Authority and Melbourne Water before construction of the drainage works commences. The Developer must fund the costs of these works unless an alternative arrangement is entered into with the downstream landowner(s).

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Interim Arrangement

The developer(s) are not required to build any water quality or retardation assets onsite, including during the interim stages:

- DSS assets downstream of the subject site, including regional stormwater water quality and retarding assets (e.g. Henderson Creek Wetlands north of Findon Road), have already been constructed and are in operation.
- Each lot will ultimately be connected to K16, the legal point of discharge for the overall Development area, either via the construction of the DSS pipeline or an alternative free-draining outfall.

Sediment control measures may be required during the interim stage, to protect downstream drainage assets from anticipated sediment discharge during construction. The provision of sediment control measures during construction would not present a difficulty on the site with regards to available undeveloped space although, it may be necessary to set aside a developable lot for this asset during the interim stage.

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Servicing

The provision of infrastructure to service the proposed development is subject to detailed design at the subdivision stage. The following servicing authorities are responsible for the relevant infrastructure assets.

Utility	Authority
Sewerage	Yarra Valley Water
Water	Yarra Valley Water
Drainage	Melbourne Water
Electricity	AusNet
Gas	APA Group
Telecommunications	NBN Co

Sewerage

The responsible authority for sewerage is Yarra Valley Water. Yarra Valley Water asset maps shows sewer assets run along Madden Drive and Auburn Road. It is anticipated that connection will occur at the point along 185 Gordons Road at the boundary of 40 Auburn road and 19 Madden Drive. Any upgrades required will be the responsibility of the developer.

Water

The responsible authority for water is Yarra Valley Water. Yarra Valley Water asset maps shows that multiple reticulated water mains run along Gordons Road and Madden Drive. There are no anticipated issues with regard to supply and Yarra Valley Water will determine which main the subdivision is to connect into, upon formal application.

Drainage

A Drainage Outfall plan has been prepared for the development plan area which details the interim and ultimate infrastructure requirements. The Drainage Outfall Plan is included at Appendix D. Permanent Melbourne Water DSS downstream assets, including regional stormwater water quality and retarding assets (Henderson Creek Wetlands north of Findon Road) have been constructed and are in operation.

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Electricity

Ausnet Services are the responsible authority for electricity supply in the area. Low voltage underground cables run along Gordons Road to the north, Auburn Road, Madden Drive and Beringaria Street to the west. It is likely that the subdivision will be able to obtain electrical supply for residential and street lighting purposes from the existing services. Any upgrades required will be the responsibility of the developer.

Gas

The responsible authority for gas supply is APA Group. According to the asset information, there is a high-pressure gas line located along Gordons Road to the north and Auburn Road to the west. Any upgrades required will be the responsibility of the developer.

Telecommunications

The responsible authority for telecommunications is NBN Co. According the assessment information, inservice/constructed copper/RF/Fibre cables are located along Gordons Road and provide service to 171, 175 and 185 Gordons Road. Any upgrades required will be the responsibility of the developer.

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Open Space and Landscape

An overall landscape masterplan is provided at **Appendix F**. The development plan presents an opportunity to enhance the landscape values of the surrounding area through the provision of landscaping and open space. The overall landscape theme complements the design response and the provision of open space in the form of local and small local open spaces which will preserve the environmental qualities of the site and provide for recreation opportunities.

Future street tree planting within the Development Plan Area will be done in accordance with the City of Whittlesea's Guidelines for Urban Development (*A Guide to Growth Area Street Tree Planting 2010*). Street Trees along Gordons Road must be retained and protected wherever possible. If a street tree cannot be feasibly retained, payment of the tree removal fee will be the responsibility of the developer.

Detailed landscape treatments will be considered as part of any subsequent planning permit application(s).

Any Planning Permit issued for the development of land within the Development Plan Area must include a permit condition to require the provision of a landscape plan before the commencement of any buildings and works as appropriate.

Embellishment of open space must be in accordance with Council's Open Space Strategy and any other applicable strategy and is to be determined as part of a subsequent planning application for each development site.

The embellishment of Vincent Recreation Reserve will occur as part of any future subdivision. A 4m paper road will be provided along lots which front Vincent Recreation Reserve.

The Embellishment of the Green link⁹ will include:

- Screen planting along the side fencing;
- Shared path separated from any servicing provision;
- Overland flow path in the form of a grass swale in accordance with any stormwater management requirements.

⁹ Greenlink to be provided across 181 and 185 Gordons Road.



The South Morang Local Structure Plan requires that for land where an open space contribution has not previously been made, open space shall be provided at a rate of 8% of the land being subdivided with a maximum of 3% encumbered land. In accordance with the SMLSP, an overall arrangement has been made for the provision of private open space. The provision of encumbered and unencumbered open space is provided in the Precinct Infrastructure Plan.

The following approximate areas and types of open space are provided as part of the development plan.

Lot	Area	Type of Open Space	Facilities/Features ¹⁰
165 Gordons Road	Encumbered – 75sqm (1.16%) Unencumbered – 2941.03sqm (45.49%) Total Open Space – 3016.03sqm (46.65%)	Small Open Space	To be provided in accordance with Council's Open Space Strategy and include a shared path connection to Vincent Recreation Reserve.
171 Gordons Road	Encumbered – 75sqm (1.07%) Unencumbered – 2079.39 sqm (29.78%) Total Open Space – 2154.39sqm (30.86%)	Small local open space	To be provided in accordance with Council's Open Space Strategy and include and include a shared path connection to Vincent Recreation Reserve.
175 Gordons Road	Encumbered - N/A	Small local open space	To be provided in accordance with Council's Open Space Strategy and include and include a shared path

¹⁰ The table provides a guide for the range of features/facilities that are appropriate to the type of open space as outlined in the City of Whittlesea's Open Space Strategy



	Unencumbered – 2070.56sqm (24.66%) Total Open Space – 2070.56sqm (24.66%)		connection to Vincent Recreation Reserve.
181 Gordons Road	Encumbered - 606.13sqm (5.82%) Unencumbered – N/A Total Open Space – 606.13sqm (5.82%)	Tree Reservation	N/A
185 Gordons Road	Encumbered – 362.46sqm (2.91%) Unencumbered - 2500sqm (20.11%) Total Open Space – 2862.46sqm (23.02%)	Local park	To be provided in accordance with Council's Open Space Strategy and include a shared path connection and minor playground.

A network of open spaces are identified on the Development Plan. These spaces are designed to:

- Include any protected flora and fauna habitats.
- Make provisions for shared paths as indicated. Shared paths will be provided in accordance with City of Whittlesea's Guidelines for Urban Development. Shared paths must link open space areas, Vincent Recreation Reserve and footpaths appropriately throughout the development plan area in accordance with DPO6.
- Accommodate the Whittlesea City Council's preferred tree protection zones for all mature remnant River Red Gums noted on the Tree Retention Plan.

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The developer must determine the appropriate layout for the shared path network considering the following:

- A shared path must be constructed through all open space areas.
- The shared path cannot encroach into the Tree Protection Zones (applied in accordance with Council's standards) of any tree marked for retention within the open space network.
- The shared path network must connect to pedestrian paths provided within the road network and any other applicable open space in a safe and logical manner.
- The shared path network within the Development Plan Area must provide a minimum of three points of connection to the existing shared path within Vincent Recreation Reserve.
- Garden bed embellishment works within the Vincent Recreation Reserve must be similar to those provided south of Gordons Road within the Reserve.

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Flora and Fauna

The Development Plan Area contains remnant native vegetation, scattered (indigenous) trees and planted indigenous and non-indigenous vegetation. Seven Scattered Trees are present within the Development Plan area. Tree 127 (as identified in the Arborist report at **Appendix B**) is likely to be of heritage significance due to a significant vertical scar on its bole. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be required as part of the subsequent planning permit application at 171 Gordons Road. Remnant native vegetation in the study area is representative of the Plains Grassy Woodland EVC (EVC 55_61; DELWP 2016b). No EPBC-listed flora species were recorded in the study area. Three habitat zones were defined based on their current condition influenced by land use history. All habitat zones are of low quality due to the high understorey cover of exotic species. A biodiversity assessment is included at **Appendix C**. There is a total of 22 remnant mature River Red Gums within the Development Plan Area. These trees are identified on the Tree Retention Plan. Retention of these is encouraged by Clause 22.10 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme and the SMLSP. Retained trees must be located within either public open space or a road reserve. The Tree Protection Zones of retained trees must not be encroached upon by future development or embellishment works in open space unless agreed in writing by the responsible authority. The Tree Protection Zone of Tree 50 must be wholly located within public open space.

A targeted assessment for Golden Sun Moth, Grey-headed flying Fox, Tussock Skink, and Matted Flax Lily has been completed. Follow-up targeted surveys for Matted Flax-lily and Tussock Skink have also been conducted. A copy is provided at **Appendix C**. The assessment recommends:

- The majority of River Red Gums proposed for retention are sited in public open space reserves and/or road reserves;
- Where a tree is to be located in a lot, the lot is large enough to accommodate a suitable development envelope that does not disturb the tree or its root system;
- Areas of significant River Red Gum regeneration are protected;
- Tree removal to be generally limited to only those trees independently assessed as presenting a danger to people and property;
- Appropriately protect trees identified for retention during the construction phase, and thereafter to ensure that their health is regularly monitored by an appropriate environmental consultant where located on public land;
- Any tree nominated on a development and/or subdivision plan for protection is located within an appropriate tree protection zone. The protection zone must be large enough to ensure that the trunk and canopy remain intact and that the root system is not severely damaged or destroyed during the construction phase;

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- Any planning permit for subdivision which contains a protected tree on a lot includes a requirement that the protected tree, protection envelope, development envelope and any related conditions to be nominated on the relevant title;
- Protect all remnant native vegetation and scattered trees throughout the study area, including Victorian Volcanic Plains Endangered EVC 55_61 *Plains Grassy Woodland*;
- Design potential land development to avoid or where possible minimise impacts to native vegetation;
- Ensure appropriate consideration of construction measures to ensure retained vegetation in surrounding areas is appropriately delineated and protected during construction works. Suitable measures include signage and temporary fencing/webbing to prevent encroachment of machinery into retained areas of native vegetation;
- Ensure appropriate weed management at the study area for CaLP Act weeds and Weeds of National Significance, including during any proposed construction works; and
- Engage a zoologist or fauna handler to supervise the disturbance and removal of grass and surface rocks and attempt to capture any displaced fauna for relocation within the local area when the development occurs.

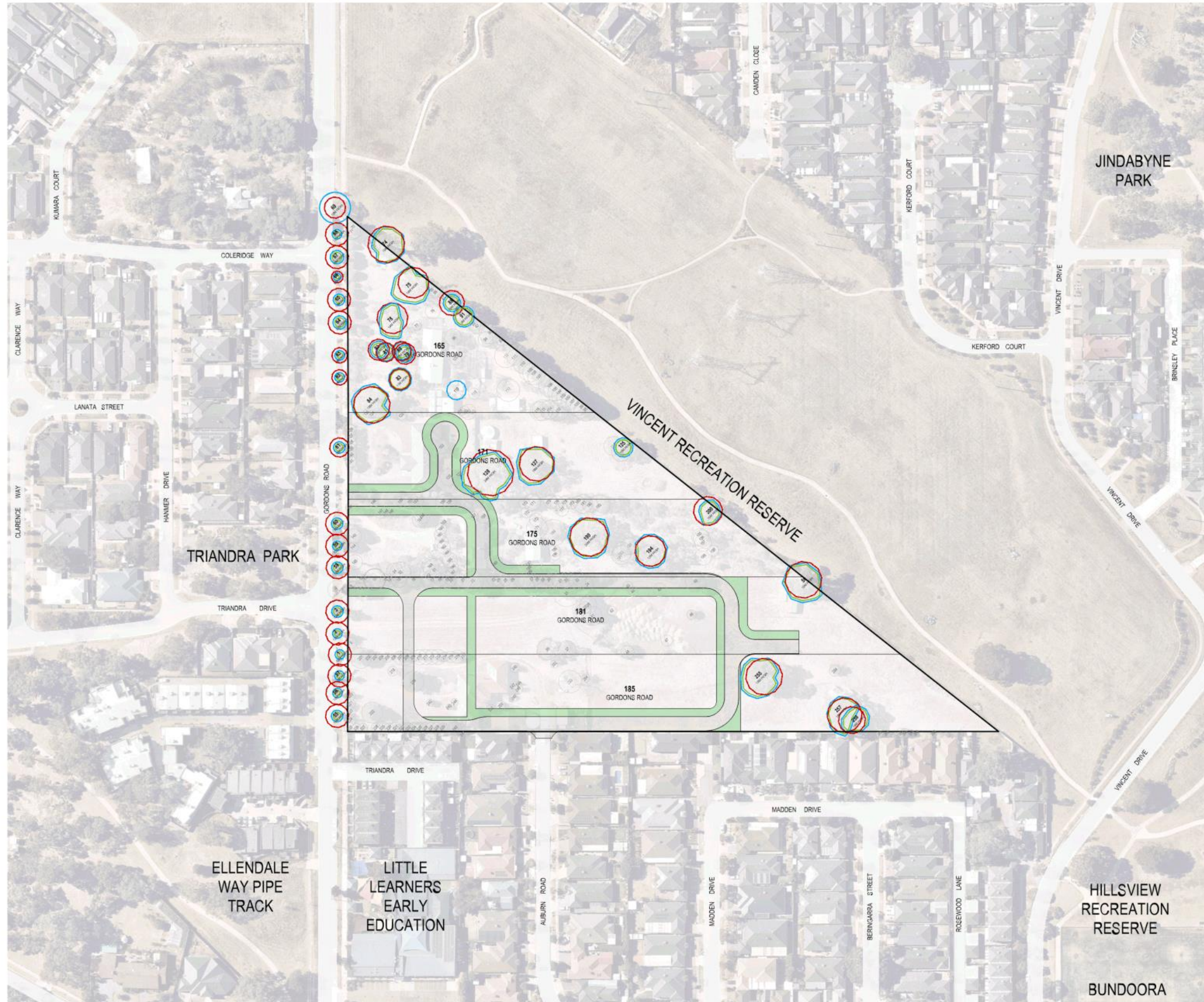
Where applicable, these requirements are to be included on any permit issued.

Figure 13. Tree Retention Plan

p.41






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TREE RETENTION PLAN

LEGEND

-  DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA
-  OUTLINE OF TREE CANOPY CROWN (TO BE RETAINED)
-  CITY OF WHITTLESEA RRG TPZ CANOPY EDGE + 1.0M AS SPECIFIED BY COUNCIL GUIDELINES (TO BE RETAINED)
-  CITY OF WHITTLESEA TPZ RADIUS DETERMINED BY HALF TREE HEIGHT OR CANOPY SPREAD, WHICHEVER IS GREATEST (TO BE RETAINED)
-  CITY OF WHITTLESEA TPZ RADIUS DETERMINED BY HALF TREE HEIGHT OR CANOPY SPREAD, WHICHEVER IS GREATEST (TREES TO BE REMOVED)

TREE RETENTION TABLE

NO	SPECIES	COMMON NAME	
1	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
2	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
3	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
53	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
55	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
56	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
57	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
58	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
59	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
60	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
61	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
62	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
63	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
64	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
65	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
66	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
67	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
68	CORYMBIA MACULATA	SPOTTED GUM	RETAIN
69	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
74	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
75	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
76	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
77	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
78	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
79	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
80	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
81	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
82	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
83	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
84	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
88	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
91	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
119	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
126	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
127	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
128	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
130	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
134	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
200	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
255	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
257	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN
258	EUCALYPTUS CAMALDU	RIVER RED GUM	RETAIN



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Revision
 REV 01: 15.12.2020
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT - RFI RESPONSE

Client
 VIEWBANK HOMES

Project
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN
 GORDONS ROAD
 SOUTH MORANG

Drawing Title
 TREE RETENTION PLAN
 Scale
 1:1000 @ A1
 Date
 15.12.2020

FOR ENDORSEMENT
 Drawn
 C.B
 Drawing No.
 TPA07

Job No.
 20-05
 Revision
 REV C1



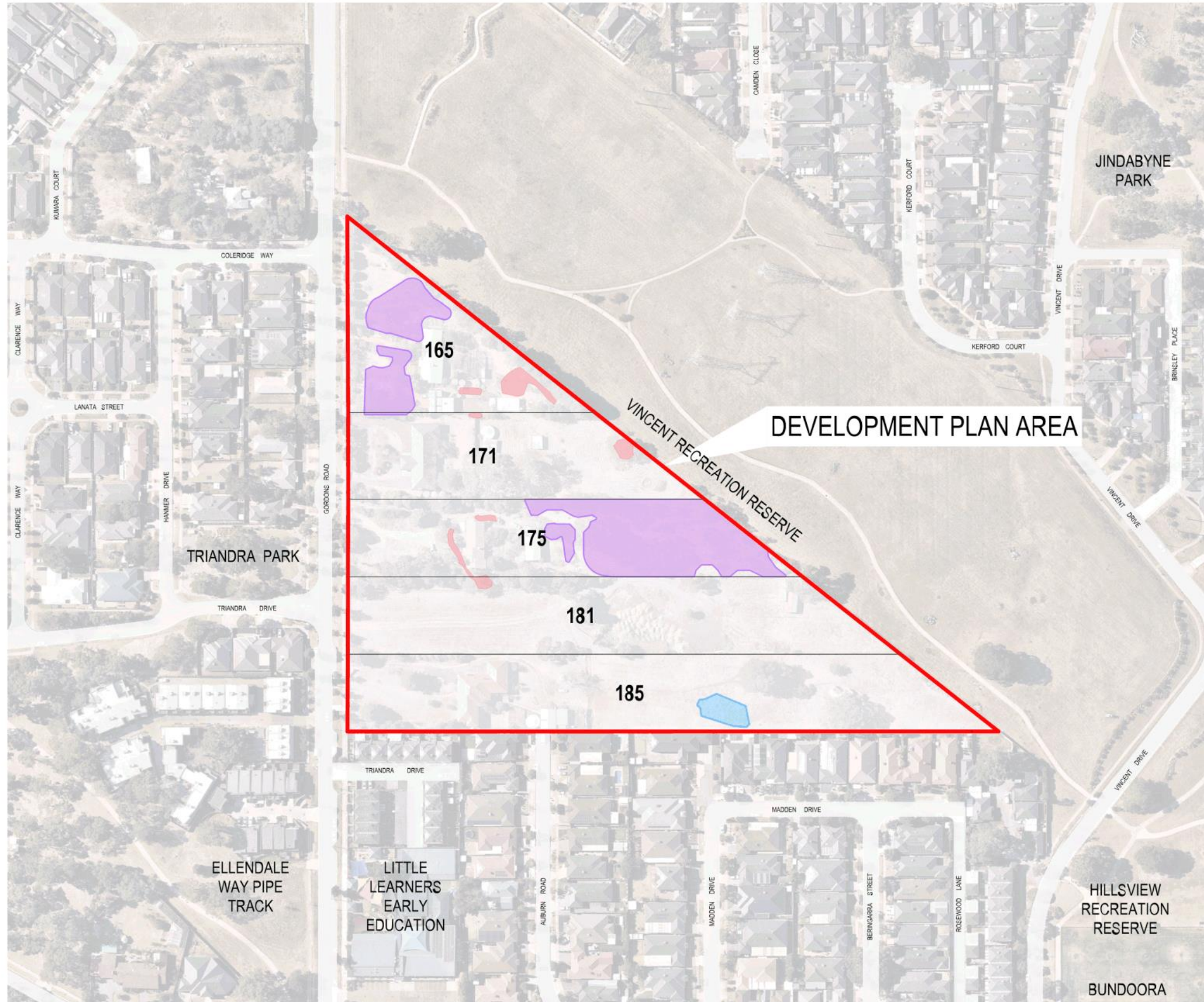


Figure 14. Existing Native Vegetation Plan

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EXISTING NATIVE VEGETATION

LEGEND:

-  DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA
-  HABZONE 1_PGW(0.029ha)
-  HABZONE 2_PGW(0.511ha)
-  HABZONE 3_PGW(0.049ha)



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Revision
 REV 01 15.12.2020
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ENDORSEMENT - RFI RESPONSE

Client
 VIEWBANK HOMES

Project
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN
 GORDONS ROAD
 SOUTH MORANG

Drawing Title
 EXISTING NATIVE VEGETATION
 Scale
 1:1000 @ A1
 Date
 15.12.2020

FOR ENDORSEMENT
 Drawn
 C.B
 Drawing No.
 TPA06
 Job No.
 20-05
 Revision
 REV C1





Development Contribution

The Development Plan Area falls within the western precinct of the SMLSP.

The development contributions applicable under the *South Morang Local Structure Plan Infrastructure Funding Policy (December 1995)* includes an infrastructure contribution rate of \$42,561.79¹¹, which includes the following contributions¹²:

- Community & Indoor Recreation Facilities: \$6477.35:
- Roads: \$35,520.68; and
- Unencumbered Open Space: \$563.76.

In addition to the contributions collected under the SMLSP, individual landowners/ developers will be responsible for the following items as identified by the Development Plan, which are traditionally provided as part of subdivision works:

- Construction of all new internal roads within the Development Plan area.
- Provision of public open spaces, including pedestrian pathways. Open spaces for tree protection purposes do not represent any open space contribution, and no “credit” can be obtained for their provision against development contributions.
- Physical services including underground drainage, water, supply, sewerage and electricity.

Planning Permit Conditions

The following conditions must be included on any permit issued for residential subdivision:

- a. Waste Management Plan.
- b. Car Parking Demand Assessment and associated Car Parking Plan. This must include an assessment against the developments ability to achieve the required car spaces per dwelling and in total (including visitor car parking where applicable).
- c. Servicing Strategy.
- d. Landscape Plan (individual land holdings) – to be provided by all residential subdivisions in the Development Plan area which demonstrates accordance with the Landscape Masterplan.
 - i. The Landscape Plan to show landscaping treatments for open space areas provided in each individual land holding.
 - ii. Detail open space embellishment works including the provision of the shared path.

¹¹ 2020/2021 financial year contribution rates. Indexation applies.

¹² Per hectare

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e. any relevant recommendation(s) of the targeted survey (as detailed on pages 38-39)

f. a site-specific Biodiversity Assessment and associated Native Vegetation Removal Report as part of any subsequent planning permit for all lots within the development plan area.

Any permit issued for the subdivision of 185 Gordons Road must also include the following condition:

- Provide for a playground to service the local community in the open space reserve provided at 185 Gordons Road.

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ITEM 6.2.4 FOR DECISION - PLANNING APPLICATION 719837 - USE OF THE LAND FOR INDUSTRY (ASPHALT BATCHING PLANT) AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS, INCLUDING BUILDINGS AND WORKS WITHIN THE LAND SUBJECT TO INUNDATION OVERLAY AT 29 GRAYSTONE COURT EPPING

Attachments:

- 1 Architectural Plans [↓](#)
- 2 Locality Map [↓](#)
- 3 Bund Screen Plan [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Development

Author: Statutory Planner

APPLICANT: Alex Fraser Asphalt Pty Ltd

COUNCIL POLICY: 15.02-1L Environmentally Sustainable Development
17.01-1L Diversified Economy
19.03-3L Water Sensitive Urban Design

ZONING: Industrial 1 Zone

OVERLAY: Design & Development Overlay – Schedule 2 (part)
Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 33
Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (part)

REFERRAL: Melbourne Water – Section 55,
Environment Protection Authority (EPA) – Section 52

OBJECTIONS: Five objections

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council resolve to approve Planning Application No. 719837 and issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit, subject to conditions, for the use of the land for industry (asphalt batching plant) and associated buildings and works, including buildings and works within the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The application seeks approval for the use of the land for an asphalt batching plant and associated buildings and works within the site. The site is currently being used as a materials recycling facility as approved by Planning Permit No. 711082 (issued 30 September 2009, as amended).

The site has a total area of 35.85 hectares and both uses are to run on site concurrently, with the uses being interrelated.

Notification of the application was undertaken and a total of seven objections were received, two objections have subsequently been withdrawn following successful mediation between all parties.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The proposal has demonstrated a satisfactory level of compliance with the applicable industrial zoning and overlays, as well as relevant Council policy.

Council officers have engaged with all objectors, two of which agreed to meet with Council officers and the applicant and visited existing similar facilities operated by the applicant. Following this, both objectors were satisfied that all issues raised in their objections were adequately addressed or could be managed via a Planning Permit and subsequently withdrew their objections.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The approval of this application will allow for the re-use of materials currently recycled on site in asphalt which supports a more sustainable use; reduces the impacts of transport to and from the site and further supports the ongoing development of the City of Whittlesea's growth areas and major road projects.

Any objectors unhappy with the decision retain rights to seek a review of the decision at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Appropriate conditions will be included to manage any offsite amenity impacts. A Site Environmental Management Plan will also manage how any environmental or amenity impacts of the use will meet EPA, Melbourne Water and Council requirements.

Ongoing dust management measures are to be increased on site, including through requiring the paving of the entry/exit and circulation areas associated with the proposed uses within the site.

REPORT**SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

The subject site is located to the south of Cooper Street and access to the site is via the southern end of Graystone Court (see Attachment 1). The parcel is irregular in shape, with an approximate width of 558.45 metres and depth of 548.79 metres and a total area of 35.86 hectares.

The site is bound by Central Creek to the west and partially along the southern boundary, and the Hume Freeway to the east. The land to the north and west (beyond the waterway) forms part of an industrial subdivision known as Biodiversity Park. Land directly north-east of the site is within the 415 Cooper Street, Epping Development Plan (approved January 2018). The subdivision of the surrounding area created lots suitable for industrial use and development, most of which has been or is in the process of being constructed.

The wider area is characterised by the Cooper Street Employment Area to the north/east of the Hume Freeway and the Melbourne Wholesale Market. Land to the north is also developing for industrial uses and development at 410 Cooper Street Epping, while land to the north west is currently utilised as a materials recycling facility. To the west is the transition across the Merri Creek into Hume City Council and the suburb of Campbellfield, which is a state significant industrial precinct. The closest residential land is the Carlingford Estate (Lalor), approximately 210 metres from the south-eastern corner of the subject site boundary and 900 metres from the proposed buildings and works/use.

The subject site is currently being used as a materials recycling facility and was previously used for extractive industry (quarry), until approximately 2019. The materials recycling component is primarily carried out in the southern parts of the site, with a water storage reservoir in the north-east corner and landscape buffers, fencing and bunds to all boundaries. The works area is proposed in the north-western corner of the site.

RESTRICTIONS AND EASEMENTS

The subject land is formally known as Lot 100 on Plan of Subdivision 712702W. Covenants as to part AD931057E, AD931058C and AD933850Y apply to the land, restricting certain industrial waste or contaminants being brought to the land.

Section 173 Agreement AH652106N applies to the land and relates to the provision of open space for the creation of the open space adjacent to the Merri Creek and Council's requirements on the transfer of the land. It is noted that this Agreement has been satisfied.

Section 173 Agreement AL469580T applies to the land and relates to the maintenance requirements of the water assets and management of stormwater flows within the land and the provision of Council access.

None of the restrictions on Title preclude Council from determining the application or are contravened by the proposal.

An 18 metre wide easement in favour of Council is located along the northern site boundary for the purposes of drainage.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for the use and development of an asphalt batching plant within the subject site (see Attachment 2). The asphalt is to be produced utilising materials which are recycled on site in conjunction with the existing use of the land. The proposal results in buildings and

works within the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay which is associated with the former alignment of Central Creek.

The asphalt plant is to include buildings and works for raw material bins, bitumen storage tanks, batching facilities and associated plant and equipment. In addition, an office/amenities building, workshop, drivers crib room, truck and car parking areas, as well as the access lanes within the works area are all proposed to be constructed. The maximum height of the plant is 21.5 metres above natural ground level.

The proposed buildings are to be setback from the northern title boundary a distance of 33 metres (minimum) to 59.02 metres (maximum). Raw material bins are proposed on the western side boundary for a length of 86 metres and the existing bund wall is to be cut back to construct the bins. From the north, an approximately 9 metre high bund screens views into the works area from Cooper Street, while an approximately 15 metre high bund will screen views from the Hume Freeway to the east (see Attachment 3).

The application is proposed to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Normal hours of operation are nominated as 5.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and 5.00am to 5.00pm Saturday, Sunday and public holidays, excluding Christmas Day, Good Friday and ANZAC Day. By requesting provision for the use to operate 24 hours a day allowance is made for occasional night shifts due to the nature of major road projects and the roadworks for these occurring during evenings.

Vehicle access to the asphalt plant is proposed to be fully sealed to minimise dust emissions as a result of the traffic to the site.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Public notice of the application was required as the proposed facility exceeds a fire protection quantity under the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012 and will require a notification under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017.

Public notice of the application resulted in a total of seven objections being received. The grounds of objection can be summarised as follows:

1. Dust emissions
2. Health risks associated with chemicals used in production of asphalt and odour and fume emissions
3. Heavy vehicle (truck) traffic increases
4. Loss of property values
5. Noise emissions and compliance with set levels
6. Environmental impacts
7. Views from the street

As previously noted, Council officers engaged with all objectors and as a result, two objectors agreed to meet with Council officers and representatives for the applicant to further discuss their concerns. Objectors then met with the applicant on site of one of the applicants existing asphalt batching plants in Laverton to tour and view the operation. Subsequently, both objections were withdrawn.

One withdrawal stipulates a condition for any Permit to issue to require as follows:

The permit holder must ensure:

- *If the dust extraction or augers fail, the plant must be shut down until such time as the dust extraction or augers are repaired and fully operational; and*
- *If the dust extraction or augers fail, a vacuum system must be employed to extract the dust and ensure it is not emitted to air.*

Council officers and the applicant have no objections to the inclusion of the above condition on any permit to issue. The purpose of the condition seeks to ensure that any potential for dust emission from the proposed use is mitigated. During mediation it was demonstrated that the plant would automatically shut down should the augers fail and a dust extraction (vacuum) system would be employed, therefore this condition reinforces that process.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME

Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP)

The following sections of the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) are relevant to the application:

Clause 13.05-1S of the VPP is a State policy for noise abatement which sets out an objective '*to assist the control of noise effects on sensitive land uses.*'

Relevant strategies seek to:

- *Ensure that development is not prejudiced, and community amenity is not reduced by noise emissions, using a range of building design, urban design and land use separation techniques as appropriate to the land use functions and character of the area.*

Planning decisions are required to consider the State Environment Protection Policy (SEPP) *Control of noise from Commerce, Industry and Trade No. N-1.*

Clause 13.06-1S of the VPP is a State policy for air quality management which sets out an objective '*to assist the protection and improvement in air quality.*'

Relevant strategies seek to:

- *Ensure, wherever possible, that there is suitable separation between land uses that reduce amenity and sensitive land use.*

Planning decisions are required to consider *State Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality Management)* and *Recommended separation distances for industrial residual air emissions (Environment Protection Authority, 2013).*

Clause 14.02-1S and 14.02-2S of the VPP are State policies for catchment planning and management and water quality, which set out an objective '*to assist the protection and restoration of catchments, water bodies, groundwater, and the marine environment*' and '*to protect water quality.*'

Relevant strategies include:

- *Retaining drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30 metres wide along each side of a waterway to maintain natural drainage functions, stream habitat, wildlife corridors and landscape values.*
- *Requiring development at or near waterways provide for the protection and enhancement of the environmental qualities of waterways and their instream uses.*
- *Protect reservoirs, water mains and local storage facilities from potential contamination.*
- *Ensure that land use activities potentially discharging contaminated runoff or wastes to waterways are site and managed to minimise such discharges and to protect the quality of surface water and groundwater resources, rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries and marine environments.*

Planning decisions are required to consider (as relevant) *State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria)* and *Urban Stormwater – Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines (Victorian Stormwater Committee 1999).*

Clause 15.02-1L of the VPP sets out an objective '*to achieve best practice in environmentally sustainable development from the design stage through to construction and operation*'.

The policy includes general strategies, energy performance strategies, integrated water management strategies, indoor environment quality strategies, transport strategies, waste management strategies and urban ecology strategies.

Clause 17.01-1L of the VPP relates to diversified economy and includes relevant strategies as follows:

- *Support the allocation of employment growth in Thomastown, Epping, Bundoora, and South Morang.*
- *Encourage a more equal distribution of employment opportunities and types throughout the municipality with particular emphasis on Epping and South Morang.*
- *Facilitate a greater diversity in economic investment in the municipality by supporting the following:*
 - *Employment generating industries within the Cooper Street Employment Area (including the Melbourne Wholesale Markets, Cooper Street South-West and Cooper Street West) with an emphasis on the food industry, freight, logistics, office, research and development, high technology, manufacturing and industrial uses.*

Clause 17.03-2S of the VPP sets out an objective '*to facilitate the sustainable operation of industry*'.

Relevant strategies seek to:

- *Ensure that industrial activities requiring substantial threshold distances are located in the core of industrial areas.*
- *Minimise inter-industry conflict and encourage like industries to locate within the same area.*
- *Provide adequate separation and buffer areas between sensitive uses and offensive or dangerous industries...to ensure that residents are not affected by adverse environmental effects, nuisance or exposure to hazards.*

Clause 18.01-2 of the VPP sets out an objective '*to coordinate development of all transport modes to provide a comprehensive transport system*'.

Relevant strategies seek to:

- *Planning or regulating new uses or development of land near an existing or proposed transport route to avoid detriment to, and where possible enhance the service, safety and amenity desirable for that transport route in the short and long term.*

Clause 19.03-3L of the VPP requires applications for new buildings and works within the Urban Growth Boundary to comply with Objectives and Strategies as nominated within the Clause.

Relevant objectives include:

- *To reduce pressure on the potable water supply, mitigate flooding and improve downstream river health.*

Strategies to achieve this require improving the quality of stormwater and reducing the flow of water discharged to waterways and using measures to prevent litter being carried off-site in stormwater flows.

Industrial 1 Zone

The subject site is located within the Industrial 1 Zone, the purpose of which is:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for manufacturing industry, the storage and distribution of goods and associated uses in a manner which does not affect the safety and amenity of local communities.*

The use of the land for an asphalt batching plant (a form of industry and manufacture) requires a planning permit as it cannot meet the Section 1 (permit not required) conditions due to exceeding a fire protection quantity under the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012 and as it requires a notification under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017.

It is noted that the site is more than 900 metres from a residential property, which exceeds the 500 metre recommended separation distance per the *Industrial Residual Air Emissions Guidelines* (EPA, 2013). It is therefore considered that the safety and amenity of any residential property in the surrounding area will not be adversely affected by the proposed use.

The proposed use is consistent with the purpose of the Zone and the applicable Victorian Planning Provisions. The use contributes to the provision of jobs and facilitates urban development in Council's growth areas. The development allows for the expansion of an existing industrial use in a designated industrial area and demonstrates a high standard of environmentally sustainable practices and design.

Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 2

The overlay relates to the Hume Freeway – Metropolitan Ring Road to North of Craigieburn.

The proposed buildings and works are located outside of the part of the land which is affected by this overlay and therefore an assessment under the overlay is not triggered.

Development Plan Overlay – Schedule 33

The subject site is located within the Cooper Street South-West Employment Area, which requires any planning application for use of the land, and/or the construction of buildings and works to ensure that the orderly and integrated use and development of the land as intended for the precinct and identified in the concept plan is not prejudiced.

The use of the land on the concept plan is nominated as 'existing Materials Recycling site'. No changes to this are proposed and the proposed use seeks to compliment the use identified by the plan. It is therefore considered that the proposal is generally in accordance with the concept plan and does not prejudice its outcomes.

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay

Part of the subject site is located within the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay, the purpose of which is:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To identify land in a flood storage or flood fringe area affected by the 1 in 100 year flood or any other area determined by the floodplain management authority.*
- *To ensure that development maintains the free passage and temporary storage of floodwaters, minimises flood damage, is compatible with the flood hazard and local drainage conditions and will not cause any significant rise in flood level or flow velocity.*
- *To reflect any declaration under Division 4 of Part 10 of the Water Act, 1989 where a declaration has been made.*
- *To protect water quality in accordance with the provisions of relevant State Environment Protection Policies, particularly in accordance with Clauses 33 and 35 of the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters of Victoria).*

- *To ensure that development maintains or improves river and wetland health, waterway protection and flood plain health.*

The overlay applies to land within the site which previously included Central Creek. The creek has been re-routed as part of the wider subdivision of the area. As part of the assessment, this application was referred to Melbourne Water who did not object, subject to the inclusion of conditions on any permit to issue.

It is noted that the storage bins of materials used in the process is currently nominated directly on the western site boundary, which abuts the creek. Melbourne Water have conditionally required management to avoid pollutant/sediment laden runoff entering the waterway from the bins to be detailed for approval. It is therefore considered that the proposed use can be appropriately managed to mitigate any potential impacts on the health of the waterway.

Car Parking

Clause 52.06 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme prescribes the rate and design standards for car parking spaces required on site. The onsite provision of 13 car parking spaces exceeds the requirements of Scheme and is satisfactory.

Design requirements of access lanes and vehicle crossings nominated at Clause 52.06 have also been assessed and are satisfactory.

COMMENTS ON GROUNDS OF OBJECTION

Dust emissions

The applicant has demonstrated that dust mitigation on site has been thoroughly considered as a result of the existing use of the land for materials recycling. Dust monitors at the boundaries specifically record dust emissions to ensure that compliance with EPA requirements are continually met.

Additional dust control measures are proposed through sealing of vehicle accessways that contain the highest traffic movements.

Components of the asphalt mix are stored under cover to reduce any potential emissions and the plant is entirely closed, resulting in only steam emissions. To further counteract any potential emissions, the applicant has agreed to the implementation of conditions on the permit at the request of a neighbouring property owner to ensure that should the machines fail, the operation will cease immediately and any fine particles are vacuumed to ensure they are not emitted into the air.

It is noted that any Site and Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) will further require that in the event that the dust generated by the site operation cannot be controlled than the offending site activities are to cease until dust minimisation is re-established.

Health risks associated with chemicals used in production of asphalt & odour and fume emissions

The applicant has advised that asphalt manufacturing does not produce any chemicals and the plant used only emits clean steam. Approximately 200 litres of turpentine is to be stored on site for the purpose of testing the asphalt and the EPA prescribes methods for the disposal of any turpentine which is to be wasted as a result of the use.

It is noted that the EPA granted an 'exemption from works approval' for the proposed use, subject to odour emission monitoring results demonstrating compliance with *State Environment Protection Policy (Air Quality Management)*.

The proposal includes mechanisms to control odour, through a 'closed' system design which results in any bitumen particles transferred to be via a water bath. In addition, fume extraction at the loading point of the asphalt into trucks mitigates potential emissions at this point.

Noting these factors, it is considered that the proposal implements best practice measures to mitigate any potential impacts and ensure compliance with State policy requirements.

Heavy vehicle (truck) traffic increases

The subject site is contained within a significant industrial precinct and a purpose built industrial and business park. Consideration has been given to the ultimate development of the area, ensuring that the road network and intersections with Cooper Street would be sufficient to cater for the expected traffic volumes when the area is completely developed.

The applicant has submitted that a maximum of 19 trucks and 16 passenger vehicles would be attending the site as a result of the use per day, with the proposed use resulting in an additional 38 truck movements (inbound/outbound) per day. Traffic modelling prepared on behalf of the applicant suggests that this is a relatively low amount in traffic engineering terms, which can be easily accommodated by the surrounding road network. This has been reviewed by Council Engineers who considered this assessment satisfactory.

Loss of property values

No evidence was submitted to establish this claim. In accordance with Clause 65.01 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, property values are not a decision guideline that can be given consideration in determining a planning application. Further, VCAT have consistently upheld this view that the perceived loss of property value as a result of a planning application is not a matter which can be considered.

Noise emissions and compliance with set levels

Some of the objectors expressed concerns with ensuring that plant operations will comply with set noise levels that are required under any Permit to issue. Compliance with SEPP levels are enforceable by the EPA and are reinforced by conditions on industrial use permits, which are in turn enforceable under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* by Council enforcement officers. It is considered that these measures are enough to ensure compliance can be achieved.

Environmental impacts

As detailed previously, the proposed use will operate within an entirely 'closed' system, this results in ensuring that any emissions from the manufacturing of the asphalt is converted into steam, which is the only material which is released.

In addition, the materials used in the manufacturing when stored on site will be completely contained within the bins nominated along the western boundary and are transferred via entirely enclosed conveyor systems to the plant. These measures ensure that any potential for emissions are minimised.

These factors can be reinforced via a SEMP which will be enforceable under the conditions of any Permit to issue and which details the overall risk of each environmental component of the site. A SEMP determines this by detailing any potential issues (without preventative measures) and the likelihood of them occurring (without preventative measures), which ultimately determines the level of risk. The level of risk subsequently determines the type and amount of environmental protection measures to prevent the risks from occurring or reduce them to an acceptable level.

Views from the street

As noted above and demonstrated in Attachment 3, existing bunds within the site ensure that views to the plant from Hume Freeway and Cooper Street will be obscured.

As Graystone Court forms part of an industrial precinct, it is not considered that it is necessary to screen views of industrial plant equipment within the site from the street or the surrounding industrial buildings.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The application has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. The proposal demonstrates a satisfactory level of compliance, subject to the inclusion of permit conditions detailed in the recommendation section of this report (including those recommended by referral authorities).

The concerns of objectors have been taken into consideration in assessing the proposal and it is considered the proposed use is consistent with an industrial area and will not have a detrimental impact on the ongoing use of the area for industrial purposes. Any impacts, including noise, dust and odour emissions can be effectively managed via the permit and accordingly approval of the application is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to approve Planning Application No. 719837 and issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Permit for Use of the Land for Industry (Asphalt Batching Plant) and Buildings and Works, including Buildings and Works in the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay in accordance with the endorsed plans and subject to the following conditions:

Amended Plans

- 1. Before the development and use permitted starts, amended plans to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved, the plans will be endorsed and will then form part of this permit. The plans must be generally in accordance with the plans dated December 2020, Revision C and prepared by Davis, Naismith & McGovern, but modified to show:**
 - a. The existing vehicle crossover and any (made or unmade) internal path.**
 - b. The type of material to be stored in each bin to be notated, in accordance with Condition 26.**
 - c. A schedule of external materials, finishes and colours.**
 - d. A Site Environmental Management Plan in accordance with Conditions 2 and 27.**
 - e. A Waste Management Plan in accordance with Condition 3.**
 - f. A Stormwater Management Plan in accordance with Condition 4.**
 - g. The following sustainability initiatives to be notated on the plans:**
 - The development must meet the NCC 2019 requirements for lighting, insulation and glazing.**
 - Rainwater tanks connected to toilets for flushing must be provided for the office.**
 - Office area must achieve at minimum 30% of each office floor area**

is achieving 2% daylight factor. Skylights are encouraged. Warehouse/workshop roof must incorporate skylights/transparent roof sheeting for at least 10% of roof area.

- Install light-coloured roofing to reduce the Urban Heat Island impact. Light-coloured roofing must have a minimum initial solar reflective index of 82. (Colourbond 'Surfmist' colour or similar.)
- Secure staff bike parking must be provided. Shared visitors bike parking to be provided in the car park area. Provide end of trip facilities including a shower and a minimum 2 lockers conveniently located in the change rooms next to the shower.
- Provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure must be provided in the carpark.
- At least 80% of all construction and demolition waste must be recycled.
- It is recommended that at least 20% supplementary cement materials like slag and/or flyash should be incorporated in all the concrete mixes used on site.
- It is recommended that a solar PV system is installed for each warehouse/workshop.

Site Environmental Management Plan

2. Before works commence, a Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP), must be submitted to and approved by the responsible authority and Melbourne Water. When approved, the plan will be endorsed and form part of this planning permit.

The SEMP must clearly nominate the dust mitigation requirements in accordance with Condition 21.

The approved SEMP must be implemented to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Waste Management Plan

3. Before the use and / or development starts, a Waste Management Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. When approved, the plan will be endorsed and form part of this planning permit. The approved waste management plan must be implemented to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

The Plan must be in accordance with Council's Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy, and provide the following details of a regular private waste (including recyclables) collection service for the subject land including:

- The type/s and number of waste bins.
- Screening of bins.
- Type / size of trucks.
- Frequency of waste collection.
- The provision and use of a bin-tug. The bin-tug must be maintained in an operational state at all times.
- Hours of collection (to comply with EPA Regulations).

to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. The endorsed Waste Management Plan must not be amended without prior written consent of the Responsible Authority.

Stormwater Management Plan

4. Prior to the commencement of works, a stormwater management plan as required by Clause 53.18 (Stormwater Management in Urban Development) based on amended plans must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority. The site should meet the *Urban Stormwater - Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines (Victorian Stormwater Committee, 1999)* objectives, with plans modified to show:
 - a. Deemed to Comply report, STORM rating and calculations, or MUSIC calculations or equivalent.
 - b. Details of water sensitive urban design devices including type and constructed dimensions, and the location, use and dimensions of the area(s) draining to each device. Water sensitive urban design devices may include raingardens, rainwater tanks, permeable gross pollutant (litter) traps and landscape elements.

Site Management Plan

5. Prior to the commencement of works, including demolition and excavation, a Site Management Plan must be submitted to and endorsed by the Responsible Authority. No works are permitted to occur until the Plan has been endorsed by the Responsible Authority. Once endorsed, the Site Management Plan will form part of the permit and must be implemented to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. The plan must:
 - a. Be in accordance with the Responsible Authority's Site Management Plan template.
 - b. Address occupational health and safety, traffic management, environmental controls and cultural heritage and/or dry stone wall protection measures to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
 - c. Be submitted to the Responsible Authority a minimum of 21 days before a required pre-commencement meeting (attended by authorised representatives of the construction contractor and project superintendent as appointed by the developer) on the site of the works.
 - d. Identify any site offices, workspaces, personnel rest and amenity areas, hardstands, material laydown areas, and stockpiles.
 - e. Include the proposed route for construction vehicle, equipment and machinery access to the site including a program for the upgrade and maintenance works required along this route while works are in progress.
 - f. Address the location of parking areas for construction and sub-contractors' vehicles, equipment and machinery on and surrounding the site, to ensure that they cause minimum disruption to surrounding properties.
 - g. Include measures to reduce the impact of noise, dust and other

emissions created during the construction process.

- h. Demonstrate all environmental and cultural heritage and/or dry stone wall protection measures identified on a drawing(s) drawn to scale.
- i. Provide measures to ensure that no mud, dirt, sand, soil, clay or stones are washed into or allowed to enter the storm water drainage system.
- j. Include means by which foreign material will be restricted from being deposited on public roads by vehicles, equipment and machinery associated with the building and works on the land to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.
- k. Address any recommendations of any approved Cultural Heritage, Dry Stone Wall and Conservation Management Plans applying to the land.
- l. Identify the location and method of any Tree Protection Zones inclusive of trees within nature strips adjacent to the site boundaries in accordance with Appendix 2 of Council's 'Street Tree Management Plan'.
- m. Ensure that all contractors working on the site must be inducted into an environmental management program for construction works.

All works must be carried out generally in accordance with the measures set out in the Site Management Plan approved by the Responsible Authority. Any changes to the Site Management Plan must be submitted to and approved by the Responsible Authority prior to implementation unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Responsible Authority.

For further information, including submission, please contact Council's Infrastructure Protection Unit on 9217 2170 or info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au.

Drainage Management

- 6. Before starting any buildings or works, engineering plans showing a properly prepared design (with computations) for the internal drainage and method of disposal of stormwater from all roofed and sealed areas, including the use of an on-site detention system (if required), must be submitted to Council for approval. These internal drainage works must be completed to Council's satisfaction prior to using or occupying any building on the site.
- 7. Prior to using or occupying any building on the site, the permit holder is required to construct at no cost to Council, drainage works between the subject site and the Council nominated point of discharge. Such drainage works must be designed by a qualified engineer and submitted to and approved by Council. Computations will also be required to demonstrate that the drainage system will not be overloaded by the new development. Construction of the drainage system must be carried out in accordance with Council specifications and under Council supervision

Layout Not Altered

- 8. The development allowed by this permit and shown on the plans and/or schedules endorsed to accompany this permit shall not be amended for any reason without the consent of the Responsible Authority.
- 9. Once the development has started it must be continued and completed to the

satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Construction Works

10. Any litter generated by building activities on the site shall be collected and stored in an appropriate enclosure which complies with Council's Code of Practice for building/development sites. The enclosures shall be regularly emptied and maintained such that no litter overflows onto adjoining land. Prior to occupation and/or use of the building, all litter shall be completely removed from the site.
11. During the construction phase, vehicles leaving the site must not deposit mud or other materials on roadways. Any mud or other materials deposited on roadways as a result of construction works on the site must be cleaned to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority within two hours of it being deposited.
12. The permit holder shall be responsible to meet all costs associated with reinstatement and/or alterations to Council or other Public Authority assets deemed necessary by such Authorities as a result of the development. The permit holder shall be responsible for obtaining prior specific written approval for any works involving the alteration of Council or other Public Authority assets.
13. At all times during the construction phase of the development, the permit holder shall take measures to ensure that pedestrians are able to use with safety any footpath along the boundaries of the site.

Materials on Roadway

14. During the construction phase, any mud or other materials deposited on roadways as a result of construction works on the site must be cleaned to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority within two hours of it being deposited.

Vehicle Washing

15. A concrete paved washing bay must be constructed so that all waste water drains to an oil and silt interceptor trap then discharges to an approved outlet to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Stormwater Management

16. Before the use of the development allowed by this permit starts, stormwater management works shown on the endorsed plan must be completed and then maintained to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Car Park Construction

17. Before the use commences and / or occupation of the development hereby permitted, the area(s) set aside for the parking of vehicles and access lanes as shown on the endorsed plans must be:
 - a. Constructed.
 - b. Properly formed to such levels that they can be used in accordance with

the plans.

- c. Surfaced with an all-weather sealcoat or treated to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority to prevent dust and gravel being emitted from the site.
- d. Drained and maintained.
- e. Line marked to indicate each car space and all access lanes.
- f. Clearly marked to show the direction of traffic along access lanes and driveways.

to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Car spaces, access lanes and driveways must be kept available for these purposes at all times, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

18. In areas set aside for car parking, measures must be taken to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority to prevent damage to fences or landscaped areas.

Sustainability Compliance Inspection & Report

19. Prior to the occupation of any building approved under this permit, a compliance inspection and report prepared by a suitably qualified person or company, must be submitted to the Responsible Authority.

The compliance report must be to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority and must confirm that all sustainability measures notated on the plans as required under Condition 1.f. and Condition 4 have been implemented in accordance with the approved documentation.

Completion of Development

20. Upon completion of all buildings and works authorised by this permit the permit holder must notify the Responsible Authority of the satisfactory completion of the development and compliance with all relevant conditions.

Dust Mitigation Requirements

21. The permit holder must ensure:
 - If the dust extraction or augers fail, the plant must be shut down until such time as the dust extraction or augers are repaired and fully operational; and
 - If the dust extraction or augers fail, a vacuum system must be employed to extract the dust and ensure it is not emitted to air.

Car Parking

22. A minimum of 13 car spaces must be provided on the land for the use and development permitted, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Loading / Unloading

23. The loading and unloading of goods from vehicles must only be carried out on the land and must not disrupt the circulation and parking of vehicles on the land, to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Noise Levels

24. Noise levels emitted from the site must not exceed the permissible levels determined under *State Environment Protection Policy No. N-1 (Control of*

Noise from Commerce, Industry & Trade).

Hours of Operation

25. The use hereby permitted may operate 24 hours a day excluding Christmas Day, Good Friday and ANZAC Day.

General Amenity

26. The development and / or use permitted must be managed so that the amenity of the area is not detrimentally affected, through the:
- a. Transport of materials, good or commodities to or from the land;
 - b. Appearance of any building, works or materials;
 - c. Emissions of noise, artificial light, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, vapour, steam, soot, ash, dust, waste water, waste products, grit or oil.

EPA Victoria Conditions

27. The permit holder must ensure that nuisance dust and/or nuisance airborne particles must not be discharged or emitted beyond the boundaries of the premises.
28. There must be no emissions of noise and/or vibrations from the premises which are detrimental to either of the following:
- a. The environment in the area around the premises; and/or
 - b. The wellbeing of persons and/or their property in the area around the premises.

Melbourne Water Conditions

29. Prior to the endorsement of plans, additional information must be submitted to Melbourne Water outlining what type of materials will be stored in the proposed 'bins' adjacent to the Melbourne Water waterway along the western boundary and how these will be managed to avoid pollutant/sediment laden runoff entering the waterway.
30. Prior to the commencement of works, a Site Environmental Management Plan must be submitted to Melbourne Water for review and approval.
31. Prior to the commencement of works, a drainage plan must be submitted to Melbourne Water for review and approval.
32. Prior to the commencement of works, a separate application direct to Melbourne Water must be made for the approval of any new or modified stormwater connection to Melbourne Water's drains or watercourses.

Permit Expiry

33. This permit will expire if:
- a. The approved development does not start within 2 years of the date of this permit; or
 - b. The approved development is not completed within 4 years of the date of this permit and / or
 - c. The approved use is not commenced within two years of the completion of the development.

The responsible authority may extend the periods referred to above if a request is made in writing. This request must be made before or within 6 months after the permit expiry date where the development has not yet started and within 12 months after the permit expiry date where the development allowed by the permit has lawfully started before the permit expires.

NOTES:**Building Over Easements**

Any building or works to occur within an easement must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. In addition, the following will apply:

- a. Access to any drainage pit in the easement is to be maintained.
- b. Council reserves the right to excavate, lay, repair or replace pipes within the easement.
- c. Council is not liable for any damage from such works and that reinstatement shall be the owner's responsibility and at the owner's expense.
- d. Prior to a building approval being issued, any drain(s) existing in the easement are required to be shown on the plans, with a detailed sketch indicating any pier and beam footings required to span these public assets.
- e. Building approval must be obtained prior to the commencement of the works.

Melbourne Water Advice

Please note, Melbourne Water may not grant access to our land for construction purposes, therefore it is advised that the applicant consider how any construction activities can be conducted via existing access to the site. To access more information regarding other services or online applications that Melbourne Water offers please visit our website. For general development enquiries contact our Customer Service Centre on 131 722.

Environment Protection Act 2017 Note

The amended *Environment Protection Act 2017* will impose new duties on individuals and/or businesses undertaking the activity permitted by this permit. If your business engages in activities that may give rise to a risk to human health or the environment from pollution or waste, you may understand those risks and take action to minimise them as far as reasonably practicable.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Chairperson Wilson*
SECONDED: *Administrator Eddy*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED



SITE LOCATION PLAN
(NOT TO SCALE)

PROPOSED ASPHALT PLANT 455 COOPER STREET, EPPING FOR: ALEX FRASER PTY LTD

LEGEND

- AREA OF WORKS
- INDUSTRIAL 1 ZONE
- URBAN FLOODWAY ZONE
- PUBLIC CONSERVATION & RESOURCE ZONE
- SPECIAL USE ZONE 4
- ROAD ZONE - CATEGORY 1
- PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT ZONE 1
- GENERAL RESIDENTIAL ZONE
- PUBLIC PARK & RECREATION ZONE
- GRASSLAND NATURE CONSERVATION RESERVE

DRAWING INDEX:-

- TP01. SITE LOCALITY PLAN
- TP02. EXISTING CONDITIONS SITE PLAN
- TP03. SITE PLAN
- TP04. SITE ELEVATIONS
- TP05. SITE OFFICE PLAN & ELEVATIONS
- TP06. WORKSHOP PLANS & ELEVATIONS
- TP07. DRIVERS CRIB ROOM PLAN & ELEVATIONS
- TP08. BULK BINS FLOOR PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS
- TP09. BULK BINS ROOF PLAN

**PRELIMINARY ONLY
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

No	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY

C	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	16.12.20	JMcG
B	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	11.12.20	JMcG
A	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	11.12.20	JMcG

REVISIONS

ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON THE JOB BEFORE COMMENCING ANY WORK OR SHOP DRAWINGS

DAVIS, NAISMITH & MCGOVERN
Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers

Tel 613 9870 2022
Fax 613 9870 2827
Email dnm@dncconsulting.com
Web www.dncconsulting.com
43 Wartens Road, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia 3134
A.B.N. 12 150 286595

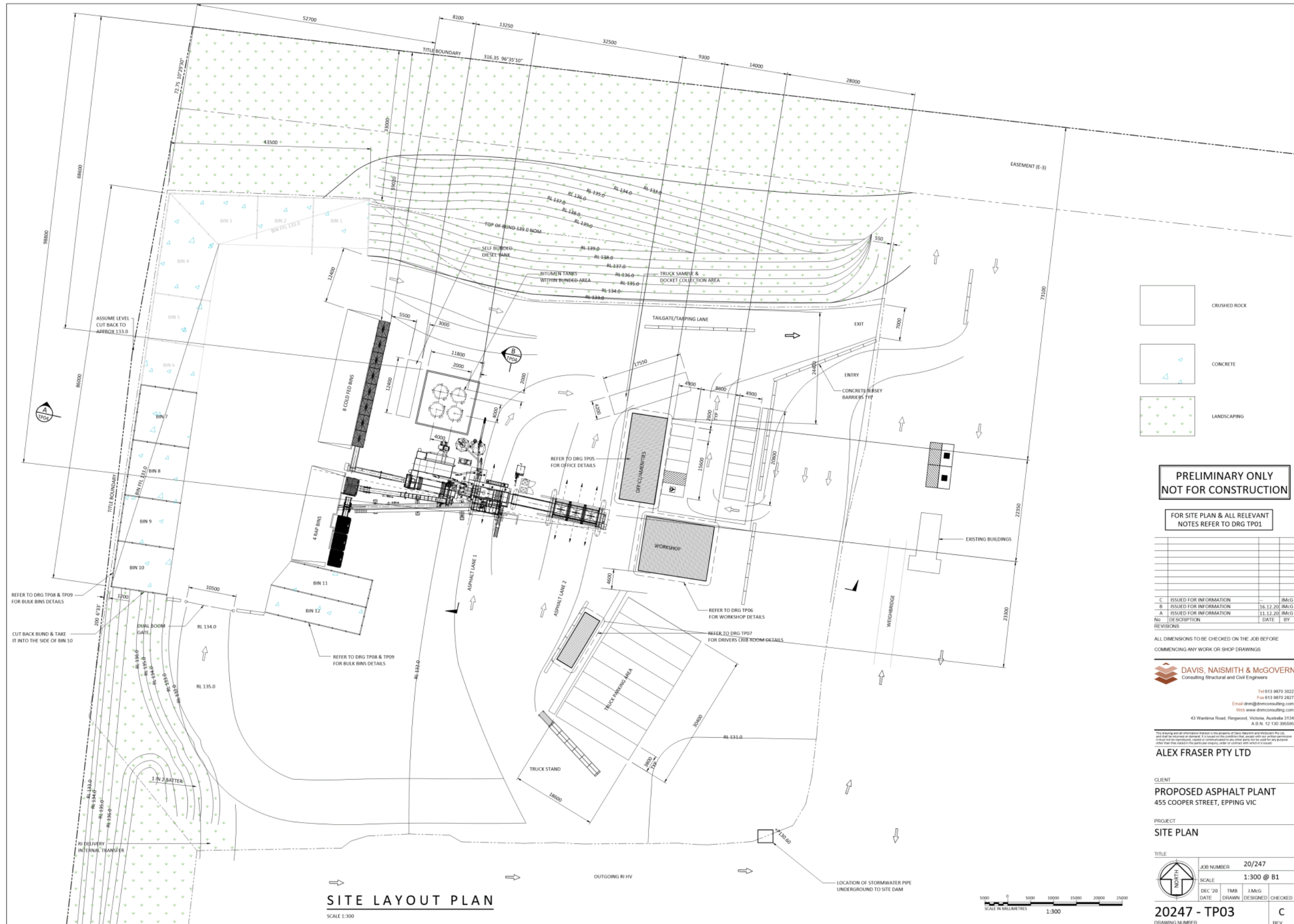
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ALEX FRASER PTY LTD

CLIENT
**PROPOSED ASPHALT PLANT
455 COOPER STREET, EPPING VIC**

PROJECT
SITE LOCALITY PLAN

TITLE		JOB NUMBER	
20247 - TP01		20/247	
SCALE		SHEET 1:2000 @ B1	
DEC '20	A.L.	JMcG	CHECKED
DATE	DRAWN	DESIGNED	CHECKED
20247 - TP01			C
DRAWING NUMBER			REV



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NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

FOR SITE PLAN & ALL RELEVANT
NOTES REFER TO DRG TP01

No	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY
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B	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	16.12.20	JMCG
A	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	11.12.20	JMCG

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DAVIS, NAISMITH & MCGOVERN
Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers
Tel 613 9870 2022
Fax 613 9870 2827
Email dnm@dnmconsulting.com
Web www.dnmconsulting.com
43 Wartana Road, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia 3134
A.B.N. 12 130 386096

ALEX FRASER PTY LTD

CLIENT
PROPOSED ASPHALT PLANT
455 COOPER STREET, EPPING VIC

PROJECT
SITE PLAN

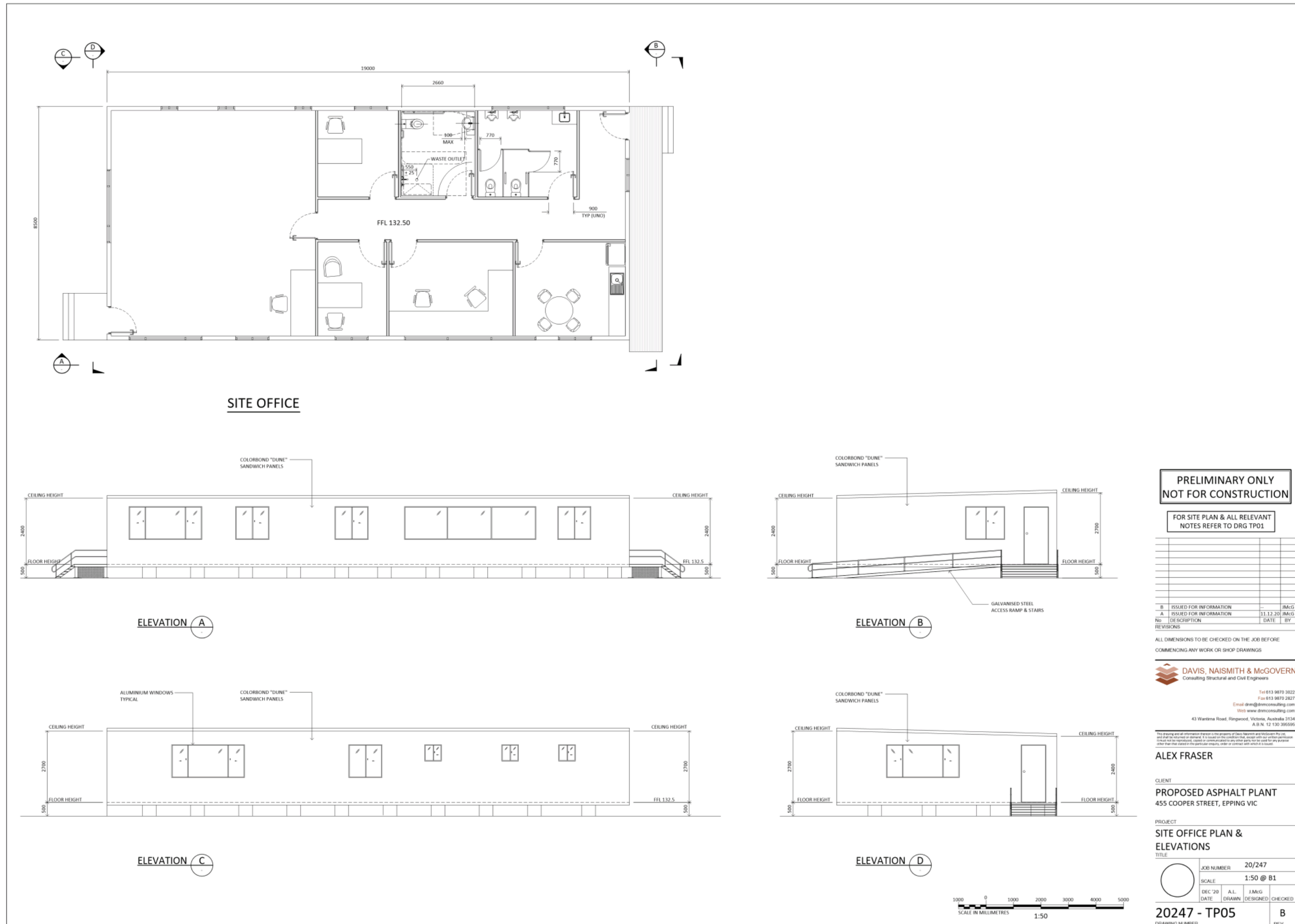
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JOB NUMBER 20/247

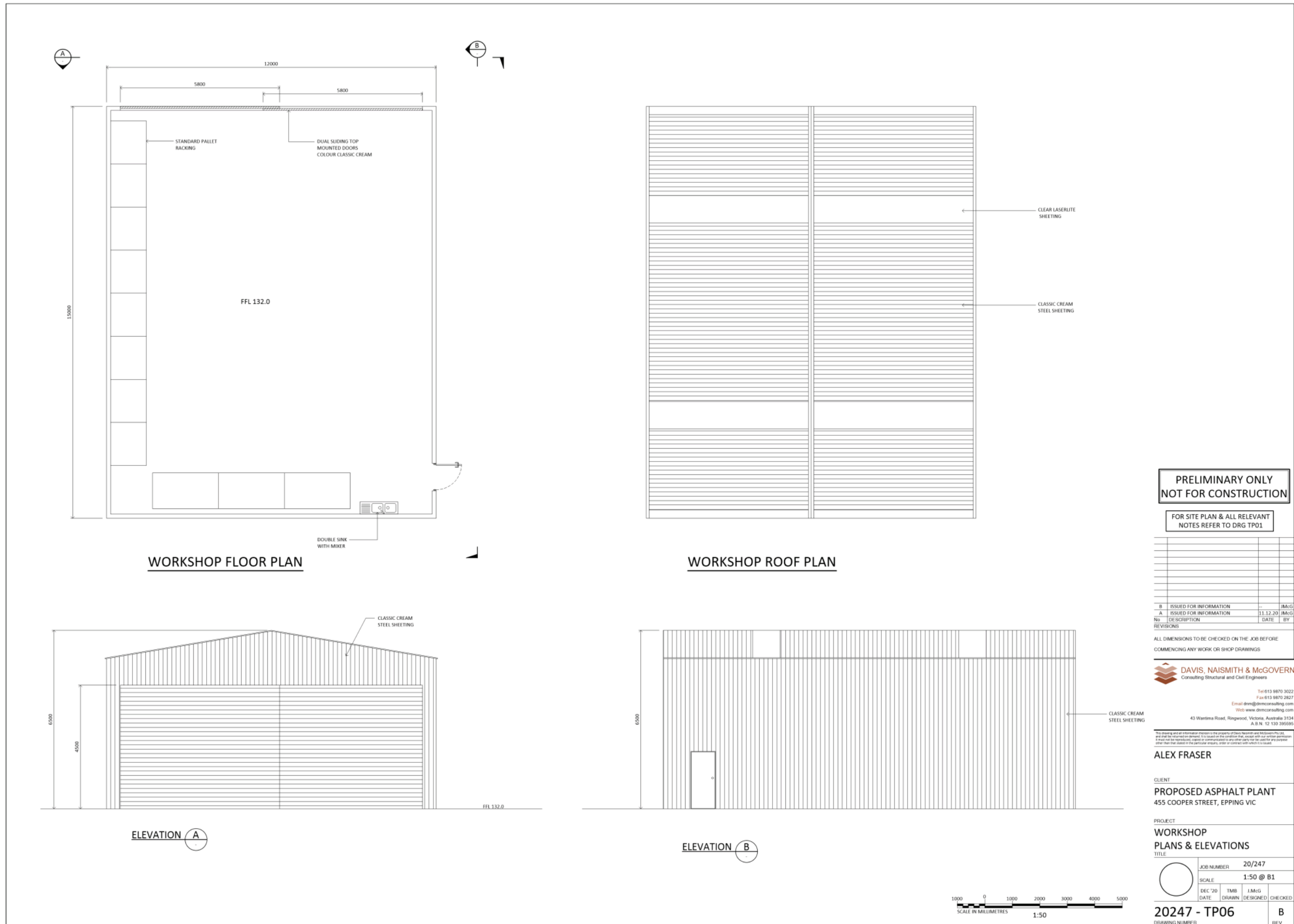
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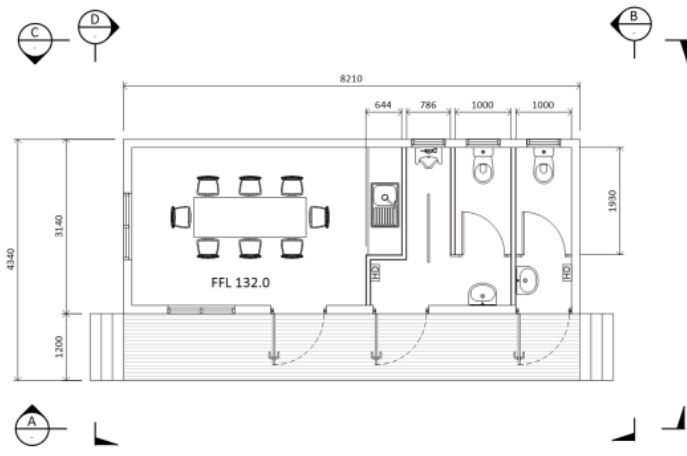
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DRAWN TMB
DESIGNED J.MCG
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DRAWING NUMBER

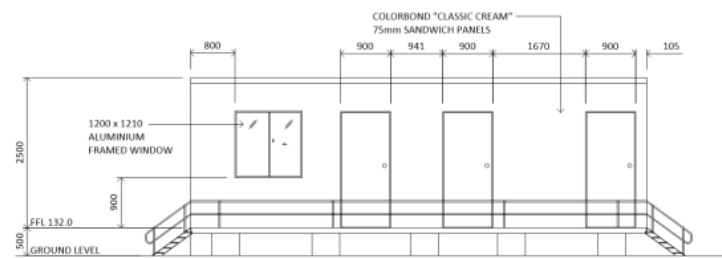
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REV



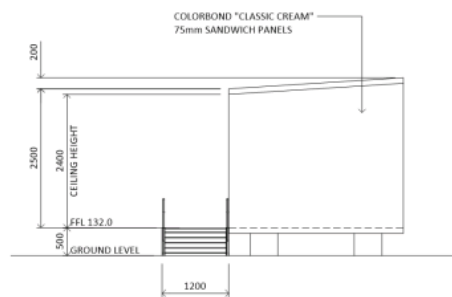




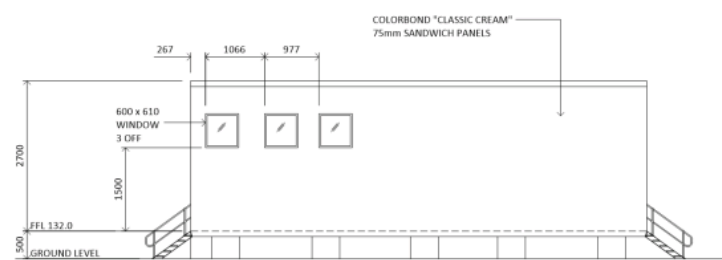
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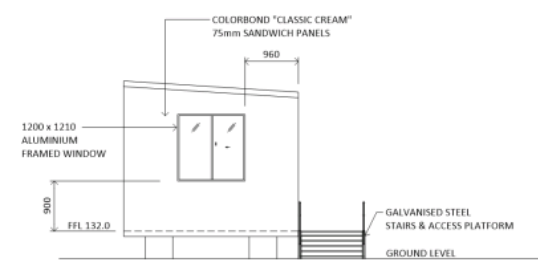
ELEVATION A



ELEVATION B



ELEVATION C



ELEVATION D

PRELIMINARY ONLY
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

FOR SITE PLAN & ALL RELEVANT
NOTES REFER TO DRG TP01

No	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY

No	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY
B	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	-	JMcG
A	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	-	JMcG

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DAVIS, NAISMITH & McGOVERN
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Tel 613 9870 2022
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A.B.N. 12 130 386585

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ALEX FRASER

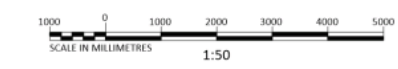
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455 COOPER STREET, EPPING VIC

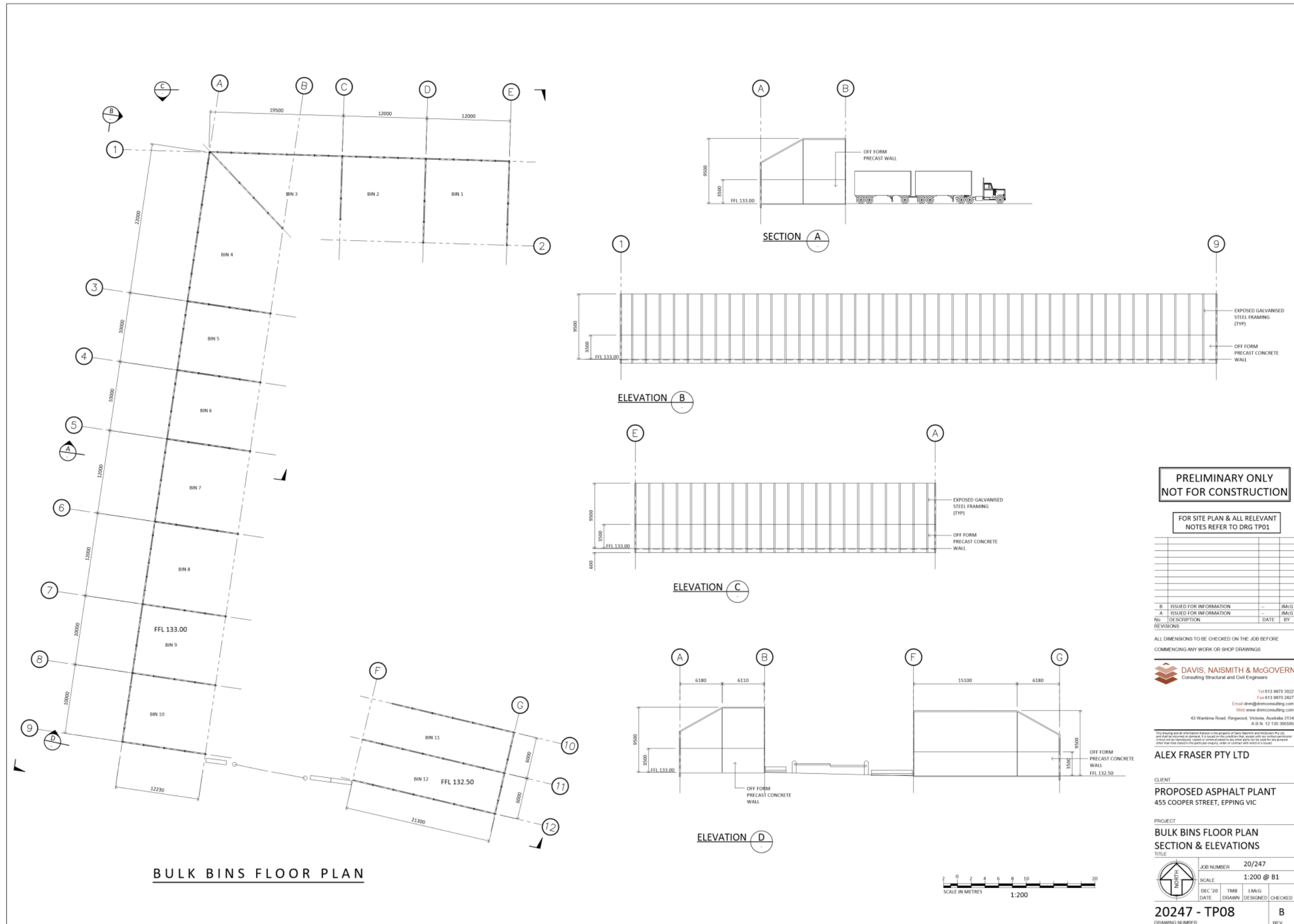
PROJECT
DRIVERS CRIB ROOM PLAN & ELEVATIONS

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20247 - TP07
DRAWING NUMBER

B
REV

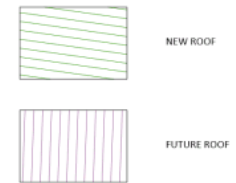






BULK BINS ROOF PLAN

LEGEND:



**PRELIMINARY ONLY
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

FOR SITE PLAN & ALL RELEVANT
NOTES REFER TO DRG TP01

No	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY

No	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY
B	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	--	JMcG
A	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	--	JMcG

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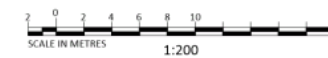
CLIENT
PROPOSED ASPHALT PLANT
455 COOPER STREET, EPPING VIC

PROJECT
BULK BINS ROOF PLAN

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SCALE	DEC '20
DATE	TMB
DRAWN	J.McG
DESIGNED	CHECKED

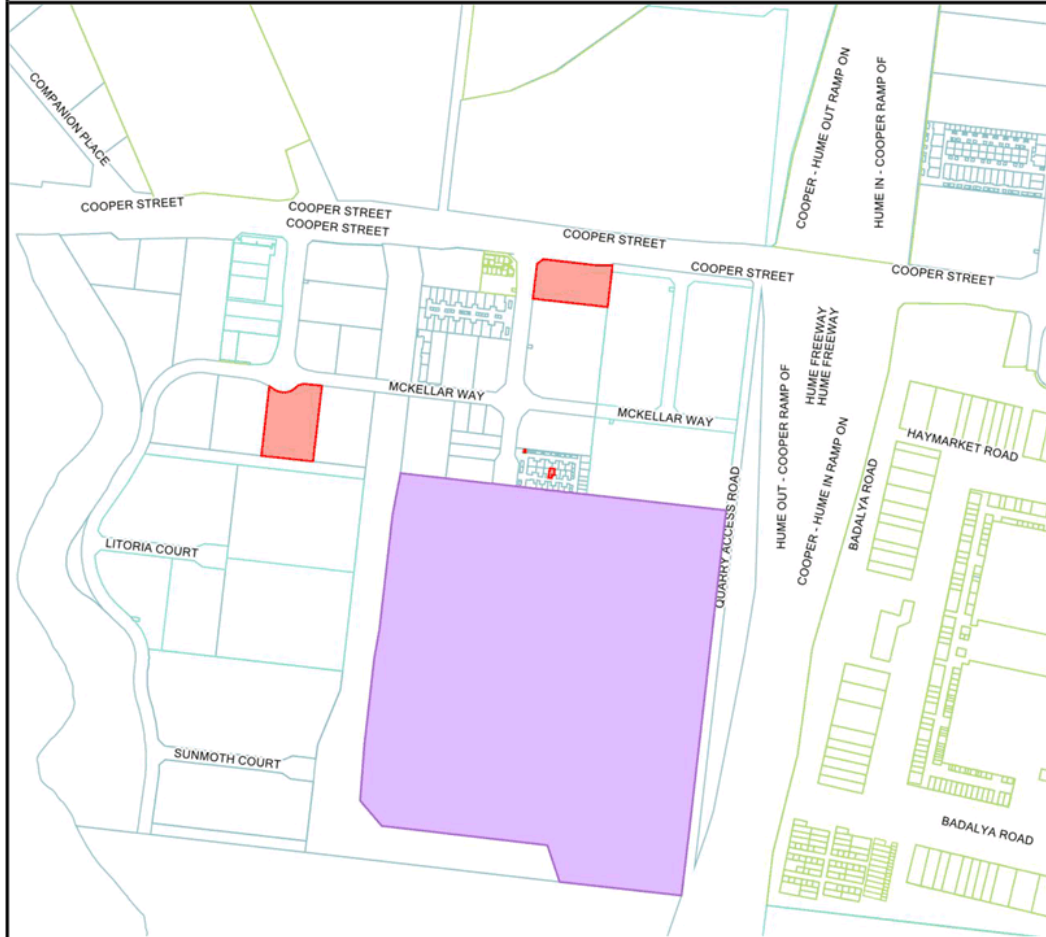
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DRAWING NUMBER


B
REV





PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 719837



-  Subject Land
-  Objector (Including 1 outside locality map area)

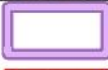



City of
Whittlesea

BUILDING & PLANNING REPORT

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 719837



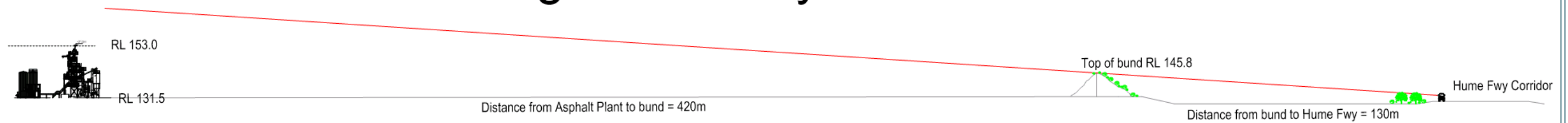
-  Subject Land
-  Objector (Including 1 outside locality map area)



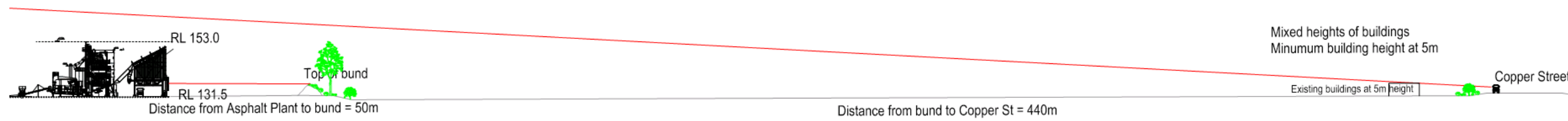
City of Whittlesea

BUILDING & PLANNING REPORT

Visual Screening Hume Fwy



Visual Screening Copper Street



	DATE	REVISION	DESCRIPTION	AF Epping	HANSON		
	29th Sept '20	1.0	Draft for Council Pre-Application meeting		A.B.N. 86 000 186 845		
					ADDRESS	Altona, Vic	
					DRAWING	AF Epping_Site Visual	
					DRAWN	Alan Brogan	
			DATE	27/11/2020			
				AF Epping Site Visual			

6.3 STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY

ITEM 6.3.1 FOR DECISION - ADOPTION OF CITY OF WHITTLESEA INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN AND 2021-2022 ACTIONS

Attachments:	1	City of Whittlesea IAP 2021-26 ↓
Responsible Officer:	Director Planning & Development	
Author:	Project Manager - Investment Attraction	

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council resolve to:

1. Adopt the Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026,
2. Support the implementation of Year 1 priority actions for 2021/2022 as identified in the Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026.
3. Write to participating stakeholders and invite them to a roundtable breakfast event scheduled for mid-July to thank them for their contribution to the project and demonstrate Council's commitment to supporting investment activity.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026 (the Plan, Attachment 1) responds to Council's commitment to support businesses to start, grow and prosper, giving the community access to a range of local jobs in a strong local economy.

The Plan sets out a suite of actions mapped along five stages of an Investor Journey. These actions will inform Council service provision activities and guide how Council communicates and engages with strategic partners to attract public and private investment to the City to create new local employment opportunities.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The importance of economic development, and investment attraction activities is recognised in Goal 3 – Strong Local Economy in *Whittlesea 2040: a place for all*.

The Plan and its actions are designed to build on the strengths and opportunities for the city, informed by an analysis of key economic drivers and impacts from COVID-19, a competitor review, and stakeholder engagement with business, State Government, Industry and advocacy groups, and health, tertiary and training institutions.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

By capitalising on the City's strengths and responding to key opportunities, the Plan and its resulting actions will help to ensure that Council's investment attraction efforts are targeted and effective in attracting public and private investment.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

The action plan will guide service delivery activities. Progress against key actions will be reported to Council and the community annually. A final report will be prepared at the end of the Plan in 2026 to report overall progress to Council and the community.

REPORT**INTRODUCTION**

The Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026 (the Plan) will guide the City of Whittlesea's efforts to retain and grow existing investment, and attract new investment in the city, supporting an increase in employment opportunities for local residents.

BACKGROUND

Council's Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021 sets out Council's commitment to support businesses to start, grow and prosper, giving the community access to a range of local jobs in a strong local economy.

The City of Whittlesea is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. The city welcomes more than 8,000 new residents every year and over the past 5 years an average of 1,800 jobs p.a. This rapid population growth is expected to continue and by 2040 our population is estimated to grow from 236,539 (June 2020) to 382,896.

Census data from 2016 shows that around 32 per cent of residents work within the municipality and 19 per cent work in inner Melbourne. Some 80 per cent of residents drive to work with many experiencing long commute times of more than two hours. Traffic congestion and long commutes significantly impact on the wellbeing of our community.

With nation leading population growth and development combined with an existing lag in road and public transport infrastructure, the City of Whittlesea has a major focus on attracting more local jobs in a diverse range of industries, supporting the diverse nature of our resident and business community.

A range of investment attraction initiatives have been completed by Council in line with the Economic Development Strategy since 2017, however economic impacts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 have highlighted the need to increase these efforts. Accordingly, the preparation of an Investment Attraction Plan is one of the actions set out in the Municipal Pandemic Recovery and Response Action Plan, endorsed by Council in February 2021.

PROPOSAL

The Investment Attraction Plan outlines the greatest ever commitment by Council on how Council together with key stakeholders and partners can create an attractive business and investment environment that will influence public and private investment decision making and in turn create additional employment opportunities for local residents.

Current status

Guided by the Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021, Council has progressed a number of investment attraction initiatives, complementing business support service activities. These include:

- Business-focussed communications, including the development of an Investment Attraction Prospectus, regular eNewsletter for business subscribers, and social media promotions,
- Development and implementation of Council's Priority Development Application Process and completion of the State Government's Better Approvals Process review, and

- Council's Advocacy program, as well as support for regional investment attraction and advocacy activities facilitated through partnerships with NORTHLink, the Northern Councils Alliance and National Growth Areas Alliance.

Economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of the role of local business in supporting local economic participation, placing greater emphasis on Council's Economic Development functions. By identifying the city's key strengths and opportunities for economic growth sectors, the Investment Attraction Plan will focus Council efforts to attract public and private investment, targeting new medium and large businesses and supporting all business to thrive and grow for the benefit of the local community.

Developing the Plan

Urbis was appointed in late 2020 to work with Council to prepare the Investment Attraction Plan.

The Plan has been prepared considering the following:

- Existing Council and State Government and regional investment policy and objectives;
- Macro-economic growth trajectory for Australia following COVID-19 and implications for Whittlesea
- COVID-19 impacted population projections and impact upon growth assumptions for in Whittlesea
- COVID-19 impacted employment growth and business growth projections by sector
- Key investment infrastructure, institutions, economic anchors and drivers
- Skills review of residents matched against existing jobs
- Investment attraction activities, materials and resourcing at other Councils
- Feedback from targeted stakeholders examining:
 - Perceptions of Whittlesea from their investment or business experience
 - Reasons for locating in Whittlesea and future plans
 - Suggested opportunities for improvements to Council services for business retention and growth.

Goals and Targets

The Plan seeks to position the City of Whittlesea as:

- Supportive, providing businesses with support networks that empower them to rise above post COVID-19 pandemic challenges, innovate and grow
- Proactive, going the extra mile to make things happen, so businesses can pursue their growth plans with confidence and optimism and
- Forward thinking, supporting job growth now and into the future.

In doing this, the Plan sets out a number of actions focussed around five different stages of the investment journey.

- Outcome 1: More businesses are aware of the City of Whittlesea's strengths and seek information or advice from the City of Whittlesea when they are defining their business growth needs.
- Outcome 2: More businesses shortlist the City of Whittlesea as one of their location options.
- Outcome 3: The City of Whittlesea offers prospective businesses competitive packages.

- Outcome 4: More businesses are highly satisfied with their experience of relocating to the City of Whittlesea.
- Outcome 5: More existing businesses are highly satisfied with their experience in the City of Whittlesea.

Actions under each outcome are focussed on how Council coordinates messaging and activities, communicates with key stakeholders and our business community, and champions successes. These actions have been thematically grouped and prioritised in the Implementation Plan.

The Plan sets out measures of success such as customer satisfaction ratings from business impact surveys and number of enquiries from potential investors and/or businesses.

Measurable targets and further economic indicators such as number of new businesses and local jobs created, number of targeted communications to business and business engagement efforts and events will be developed as part of the Strong Local Economy Strategy being developed in 2021-2022.

CONSULTATION

Community input on the role of Council in supporting a Strong Local Economy and business support activities has been sought and confirmed through recent community engagement for the Council Action Plan 2021 and recent Business Impact Surveys.

Stakeholder interviews were undertaken with representatives of the following sectors:

- State Government
- Industry and advocacy groups
- Businesses in the Food and beverage, Health, Education, Retail, Manufacturing, Logistics, freight and warehousing, and renewable energy and waste recycling sectors;
- Landowners and developers

Input has also been included from local members of Parliament.

Themes arising from the targeted interviews and resulting opportunities are set out in detail in the Plan.

CRITICAL DATES

The Municipal Pandemic Readiness & Recovery Plan identified the development of an Investment Attraction Plan in the list of actions to be implemented by Council up to June 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The approved 2021-2022 Council Budget provides Council's greatest ever level of funding to economic development and investment attraction activities. This includes a dedicated Investment Attraction budget of \$235,000, further supported by taking a 'whole of council' approach to implementation including increased resourcing for economic development, communications and advocacy, grants and planning functions.

This budget allocation will support Year 1, 2021-2022 actions focused on the development and implementation of strategic frameworks for the following essential investment attraction approaches:

- Communications

- Partner Engagement & Advocacy
- Business Engagement & Support
- Council grants and incentives package
- Priority Development Approvals Process and
- Evaluation and monitoring.

The approved 2021/2022 Council Budget contains the greatest ever level of funding towards investment attraction activities enabling delivery of Year 1 priority actions. The balance of actions for future years will be referred to Council for consideration as part of subsequent budget approval processes.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

The Investment Attraction Plan is informed by

- Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All. Goal 3, Strong Local Economy
- Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021
- Municipal Pandemic Recovery & Response Plan
- Community Building Strategy – Building better together

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Strong local economy
Key Direction	Increased local employment

The Investment Attraction Plan seeks to deliver on the outcomes of *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all* by strengthening the investment environment within the city in order to increase the number and diversity of local jobs. The proposed actions will direct how Council will work with government, business and industry partners to promote the city’s strengths, and to guide new Council-led initiatives and internal processes relevant to business activity.

At its meeting on 1 March 2021, Council resolved to adopt a new integrated planning framework. The aim is to consolidate all of Council’s community-facing policies, strategies and plans within five major strategies aligned to the key theses of *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all*. It is proposed that this Plan will fall under the proposed new Strong Local Economy Strategy to be developed in the second half of this year. To be consistent with the new integrated planning framework the document title has been amended to Investment Attraction Plan (previously Investment Attraction Strategy).

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026 will guide Council's approach and actions to attract and retain investment in the City, giving the community access to a range of local jobs in a strong local economy in line with the directions set in *Whittlesea 2040: a place for all*.

The Plan and its actions aim to position Council as supportive, proactive and forward thinking in creating a positive investment environment, and recognises the importance of working with key partners and building on Council's strengths to achieve this goal.

The approved 2021/2022 Council Budget contains the greatest ever level of funding towards investment attraction activities, and will enable delivery of Year 1 priority actions. The balance of actions for future years will be subject of annual prioritisation and budget approval processes.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

- 1. Adopt the Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026;**
- 2. Support the implementation of Year 1 priority actions for 2021/2022 as identified in the Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026;**
- 3. Write to participating stakeholders and invite them to a roundtable breakfast event scheduled for mid-July to thank them for their contribution to the project and demonstrate Council's commitment to supporting investment activity.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Eddy*
SECONDED: *Chairperson Wilson*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED



**CITY OF
WHITTLESEA
INVESTMENT
ATTRACTION PLAN
2021-26**

Prepared for City of Whittlesea
June 2021

COVID-19 AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON DATA INFORMATION

Prepared for City of Whittlesea

The data and information that informs and supports our opinions, estimates, surveys, forecasts, projections, conclusion, judgments, assumptions and recommendations contained in this report (Report Content) are predominantly generated over long periods, and is reflective of the circumstances applying in the past. Significant economic, health and other local and world events can, however, take a period of time for the market to absorb and to be reflected in such data and information. In many instances a change in market thinking and actual market conditions as at the date of this report may not be reflected in the data and information used to support the Report Content.

The recent international outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), which the World Health Organisation declared a global health emergency in January 2020 and pandemic on 11 March 2020, is causing a material impact on the Australian and world economies and increased uncertainty in both local and global market conditions.

The effects (both directly and indirectly) of the COVID-19 Outbreak on the Australian real estate market and business operations is currently unknown and it is difficult to predict the quantum of the impact it will have more broadly on the Australian economy and how long that impact will last. As at March 2020, the COVID-19 Outbreak is materially impacting global travel, trade and near-term economic growth expectations. Some business sectors, such as the retail, hotel and tourism sectors, are already reporting material impacts on trading performance now and potentially into the future. For example, Shopping Centre operators are reporting material reductions in foot traffic numbers, particularly in centres that ordinarily experience a high proportion of international visitors.

The Report Content and the data and information that informs and supports it is current as at the date of this report and (unless otherwise specifically stated in the Report) necessarily assumes that, as at the date of this report, the COVID-19 Outbreak has not materially impacted the Australian economy, the asset(s) and any associated business operations to which the report relates and the Report Content. However, it is not possible to ascertain with certainty at this time how the market and the Australian economy more broadly will respond to this unprecedented event. It is possible that the market conditions applying to the asset(s) and any associated business operations to which the report relates and the business sector to which they belong could be (or has been) materially impacted by the COVID-19 Outbreak within a short space of time and that it will have a lasting impact. Clearly, the COVID-19 Outbreak is an important risk factor you must carefully consider when relying on the report and the Report Content.

Any Report Content addressing the impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on the asset(s) and any associated business operations to which the report relates or the Australian economy more broadly is (unless otherwise specifically stated in the Report) unsupported by specific and reliable data and information and must not be relied on.

To the maximum extent permitted by law, Urbis (its officers, employees and agents) expressly disclaim all liability and responsibility, whether direct or indirect, to any person (including the Instructing Party) in respect of any loss suffered or incurred as a result of the COVID-19 Outbreak materially impacting the Report Content, but only to the extent that such impact is not reflected in the data and information used to support the Report Content.

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This report is dated **June 2021** and incorporates information and events up to that date only and excludes any information arising, or event occurring, after that date which may affect the validity of Urbis Pty Ltd's (Urbis) opinion in this report. Urbis prepared this report on the instructions, and for the benefit only, of **City of Whittlesea** (Instructing Party) for the purpose of a **City of Whittlesea Investment Attraction Plan 2021-26** (Purpose) and not for any other purpose or use. Urbis expressly disclaims any liability to the Instructing Party who relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose other than the Purpose and to any party other than the Instructing Party who relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose whatsoever (including the Purpose).

In preparing this report, Urbis was required to make judgements which may be affected by unforeseen future events including wars, civil unrest, economic disruption, financial market disruption, business cycles, industrial disputes, labour difficulties, political action and changes of government or law, the likelihood and effects of which are not capable of precise assessment.

All surveys, forecasts, projections and recommendations contained in or made in relation to or associated with this report are made in good faith and on the basis of information supplied to Urbis at the date of this report. Achievement of the projections and budgets set out in this report will depend, among other things, on the actions of others over which Urbis has no control.

Urbis has made all reasonable inquiries that it believes is necessary in preparing this report, but it cannot be certain that all information material to the preparation of this report has been provided to it as there may be information that is not publicly available at the time of its inquiry.

In preparing this report, Urbis may rely on or refer to documents in a language other than English which Urbis will procure the translation of into English. Urbis is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness of such translations and to the extent that the inaccurate or incomplete translation of any document results in any statement or opinion made in this report being inaccurate or incomplete, Urbis expressly disclaims any liability for that inaccuracy or incompleteness.

This report has been prepared with due care and diligence by Urbis and the statements and opinions given by Urbis in this report are given in good faith and in the belief on reasonable grounds that such statements and opinions are correct and not misleading bearing in mind the necessary limitations noted in the previous paragraphs. Further, no responsibility is accepted by Urbis or any of its officers or employees for any errors, including errors in data which is either supplied by the Instructing Party, supplied by a third party to Urbis, or which Urbis is required to estimate, or omissions howsoever arising in the preparation of this report, provided that this will not absolve Urbis from liability arising from an opinion expressed recklessly or in bad faith.

Urbis acknowledges the important contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make in creating a strong and vibrant Australian society.

We acknowledge, in each of our offices, the Traditional Owners on whose land we stand.

Prepared for City of Whittlesea

Urbis staff responsible for this report were:

Director	Mark Dawson
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Consultant	Mariko Kimura
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Project code	P0030441
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Report number	Final
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01 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This section provides an overview of the City of Whittlesea Investment Attraction Plan 2021-26 project, namely:

- Project context and requirements
- Key project outcomes
- Approach to achieving key project outcomes
- Project timeline

PROJECT CONTEXT AND REQUIREMENTS

PROJECT CONTEXT

- City of Whittlesea is an up-and-coming destination offering attractive reasons for businesses to invest. Home to a growing population, City of Whittlesea benefits from proximity to major transport links, and diverse land uses, including significant employment areas and activity centres.
- However, in recent years, and even pre-COVID, while population growth charged ahead, providing the number and diversity of jobs to support those new residents has been challenging.
- Throw into the mix a COVID-induced economic downturn, and the challenge for municipalities such as Whittlesea has been elevated. Competition to attract investment will only intensify.
- Now more than ever, City of Whittlesea needs to be able to sell a compelling proposition: **Why Whittlesea?**

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Faced with these challenges, City of Whittlesea engaged Urbis to assist with preparation of City of Whittlesea's Investment Attraction Plan 2021-26. The plan is aimed at growing investment and employment within the City over the next five years.
- As part of this engagement, Urbis consulted with:
 - Key external stakeholders including State Government agencies, relevant industry bodies and businesses, major developers and education & training institutions.
 - Internal stakeholders across various levels and functions at Council
- Urbis also reviewed and considered the following:
 - City of Whittlesea's strengths and sector opportunities
 - Investors' needs
 - Potential partnerships and engagements
 - Impacts of COVID-19
 - City of Whittlesea's role in investment attraction
- In the rest of this section, we detail this projects' outcomes, approach and timeframe.



Photo credit: Graeme Bartlett

KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

The following key project outcomes were identified at inception.



An **Investment Attraction Plan** that sets out a practical and achievable blueprint to grow jobs and investment in the City over the next five years.



The **evidence base** to validate opportunities, strengths, and any change/development required within the city to attract jobs and investment, including:

- Identifying sectors where the City of Whittlesea would provide a competitive advantage aligned to market demand;
- Providing direction on how investment decisions can be influenced to achieve key outcomes for the municipality;
- Suggesting potential solutions that City of Whittlesea can deliver to improve investment attraction

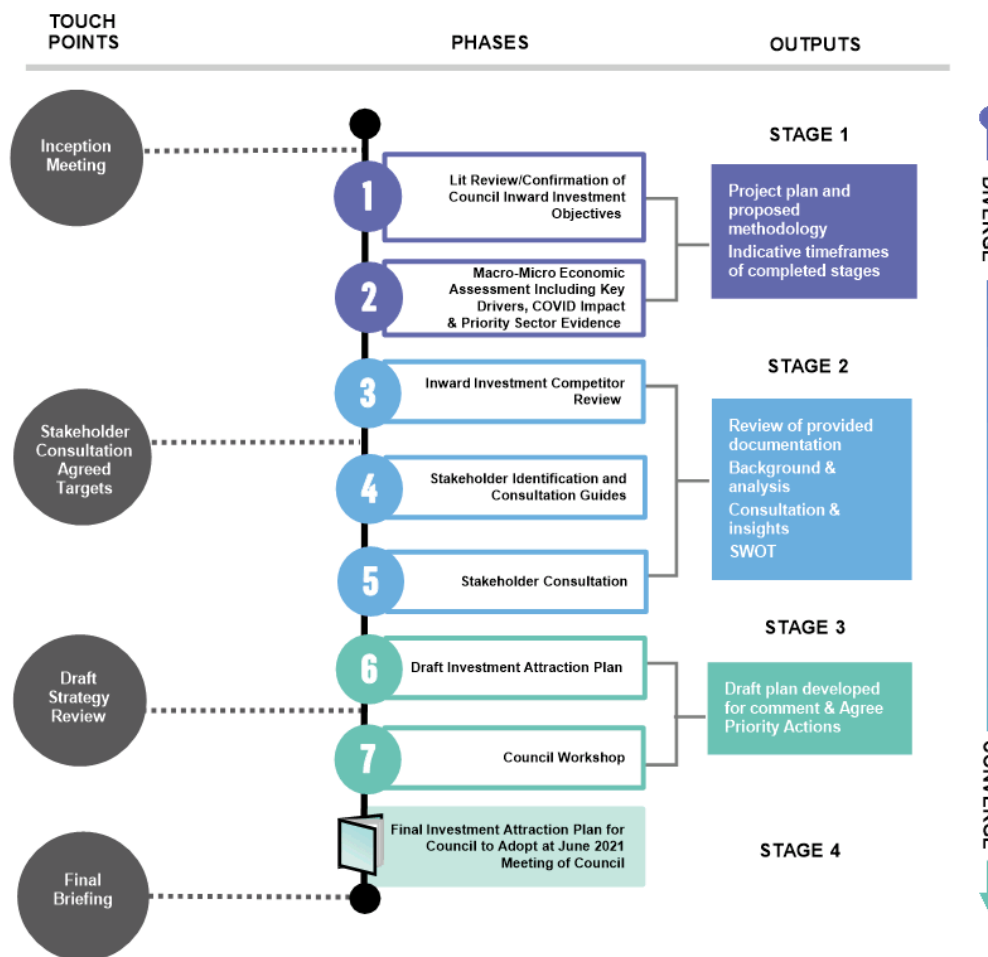


Addressing of City of Whittlesea's **key questions and challenges**, particularly:

- How can City of Whittlesea build a compelling narrative around a Council that businesses want to partner with, and a place where businesses want to be?
- Where are key opportunities for City of Whittlesea to reduce any barriers to attracting investments?

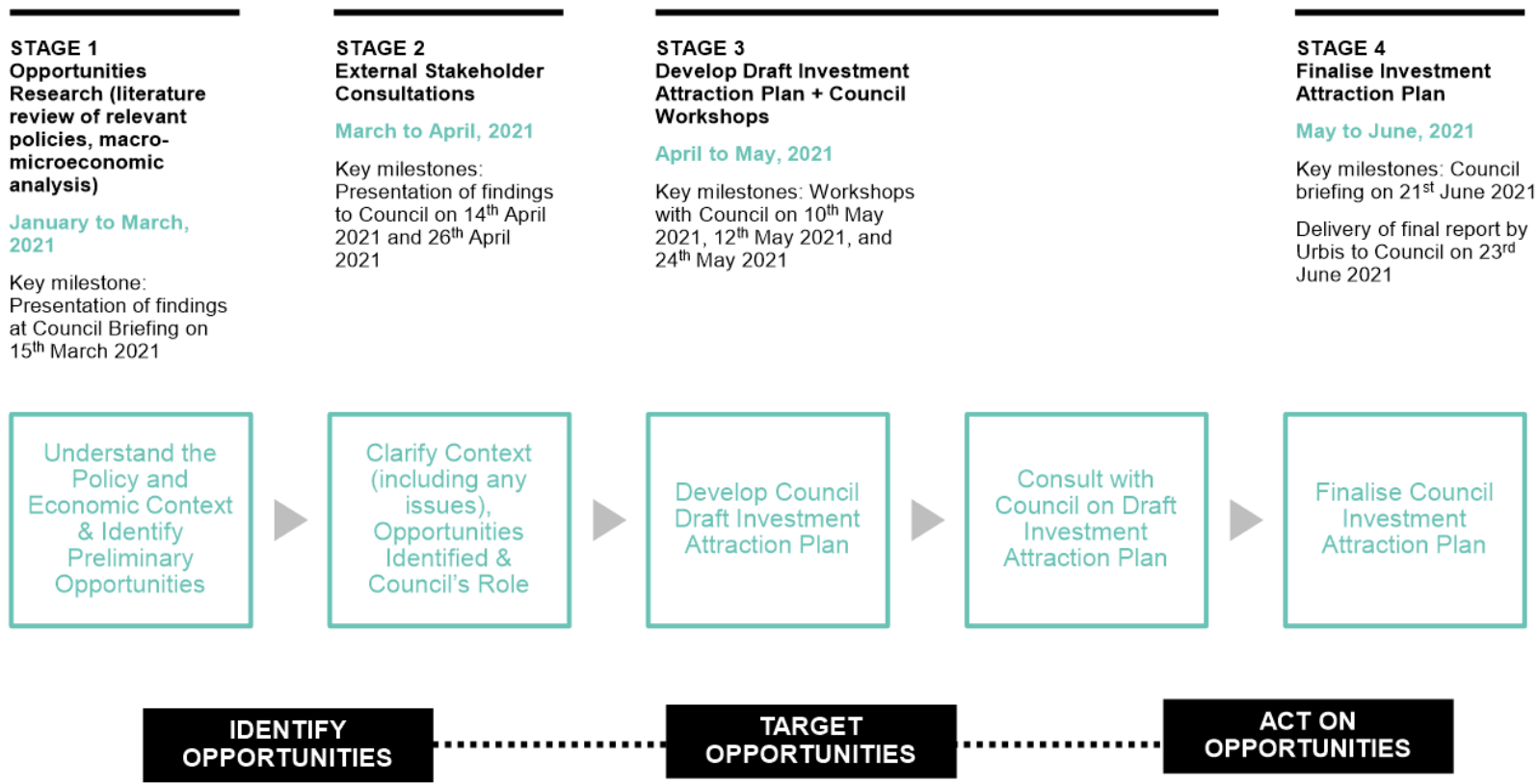
APPROACH TO ACHIEVING KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

- To achieve key project outcomes, Urbis adopted a rigorous multi-staged approach.
- This multi-staged approach combines:
 - A comprehensive literature review of key relevant policies, coupled with in-depth macro-microeconomic analysis (Stage 1)
 - Stakeholder consultations with key external stakeholders relevant to investment attraction (Stage 2) and
 - Workshops with Council (Stage 3).
- Such a multi-staged approach was designed to ensure that City of Whittlesea's Investment Attraction Plan 2021-26 is **evidence-based and actionable**, acting upon relevant policy directions, market evidence and holistic feedback from key external and internal stakeholders.



PROJECT TIMELINE

- The project kicked off in January 2021 with an inception meeting, following which key project outcomes and the approach were agreed upon.
- Subsequently, the project ran from January to June 2021, according to the following stages and timeframes.



02 POLICY CONTEXT

This section summarises key policies relevant to City of Whittlesea's Investment Attraction Plan, covering:

- **Overview of policies reviewed**
- **Implications of key policies on the Investment Attraction Plan**

More detailed analysis of relevant policies can be found in Appendix B.

OVERVIEW OF POLICIES REVIEWED

- To ensure that the investment attraction plan aligns with current policy directions, relevant endorsed policies were reviewed and considered.
- The following policies were deemed by City of Whittlesea as policies relevant to the investment attraction plan, and were provided to Urbis for review.
- Through a thematic analysis, Urbis identified that these policies broadly point to three key themes, which support a strong local economy:
 - Create diversity of jobs
 - Rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Enhance economic participation of residents
- In alignment with current policy, the investment attraction plan addresses these themes.
- The rest of this section highlights key policies which guide the investment attraction plan.
- These policies form the investment attraction plan’s policy context by providing strategic direction or identifying potential barriers and enablers to investment attraction for clarification through stakeholder consultations.

WHITTLESEA 2040: A PLACE FOR ALL

Goal 3: A Strong Local Economy

Increased local employment; education opportunities for all; successful, innovative local businesses



THEME 1 Create diversity of jobs

- Food & Beverage Growth Plan: Melbourne’s North
- North & West Melbourne City Plan Deal 2020-40
- North Link – Unlocking High-Value Jobs in Melbourne’s North
- North Link – Investment Attraction Strategy
- The Future Workforce – Melbourne’s North
- City of Whittlesea – Economic Development Strategy
- City of Whittlesea – Thomastown Industrial Area Plan 2018-38



THEME 2 Rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic

- COVID-19 Impacted Background Research for Whittlesea 2040
- City of Whittlesea Pandemic Readiness & Recovery Plan



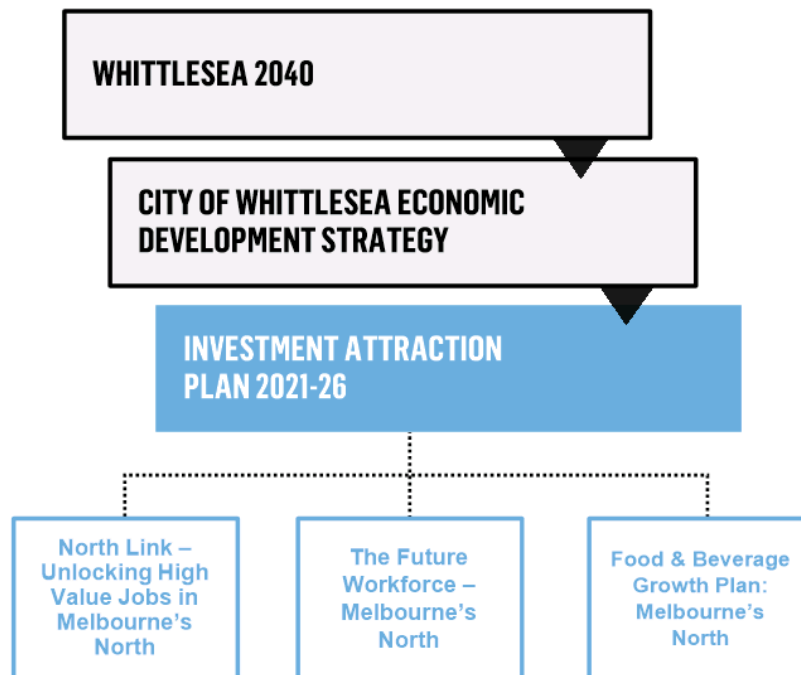
THEME 3 Enhance economic participation of residents

- Gender Equity in Employment
- Upcoming/ongoing projects:
 - Work locally: enhancing opportunities for local employment
 - Employment feasibility: aimed at helping young residents access meaningful and sustainable employment

IMPLICATIONS OF KEY POLICIES ON INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN

- The investment attraction plan is broadly aligned with relevant endorsed policies:
- The plan addresses key themes that resonate across relevant endorsed policies: create diversity of jobs, rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, enhance economic participation of residents.
- The plan is guided by Council's long-term vision (Whittlesea 2040) and Economic Development Strategy.
- The plan addresses enablers and barriers to investment attraction which were identified in key policies.
- Key policies that form the investment attraction's policy context and their implications are summarised in the chart and table below. (Details can be found in Appendix B.)
- The next section discusses the investment attraction plan's macro-microeconomics context to identify sector opportunities that are locally relevant to City of Whittlesea.

KEY POLICIES



Prepared for City of Whittlesea

THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN

Key Policy/ Document	Key Implication for the Investment Attraction Plan	How it is Addressed by the Investment Attraction Plan
Whittlesea 2040	Represents Council's long-term vision for every aspect of Council's work and partnerships	Goals and key directions guide the investment attraction plan Goal 3 Strong Local Economy is investment attraction plan's key driving force
City of Whittlesea Economic Development Strategy	Overarching strategy that directs Council's economic development function and plans	The investment attraction plan has been developed to support the Economic Development Strategy
North Link – Unlocking High Value Jobs in Melbourne's North	Identifies key enablers and barriers to supply of developable industrial land in Melbourne's North that's needed to accommodate new and growing businesses	The investment attraction plan addresses the barriers and enablers e.g. importance of infrastructure advocacy and employment precincts
The Future Workforce – Melbourne's North	Identifies key enablers and barriers to a skilled local workforce that can support new and growing businesses	The investment attraction plan addresses the barriers and enablers e.g. importance of education institutions as stakeholders/enablers, the need to foster stronger connections between education institutions and industry
Food & Beverage Growth Plan: Melbourne's North	Recognises City of Whittlesea's strengths in the F&B sector Identifies key enablers and barriers to investment attraction in F&B sector	The investment attraction plan addresses the barriers and enablers e.g. helping businesses foster networks, recognising the F&B sector as a priority sector

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03 SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

This section features relevant highlights from Urbis' analysis of Whittlesea's macro-microeconomics context, aimed at identifying local sector opportunities. Highlights of the analysis include:

- Overview of macro-microeconomics analysis
- National economic outlook
- City of Whittlesea's economic outlook & drivers
- City of Whittlesea's strengths
- City of Whittlesea's sector opportunities (and their alignment with state priority sectors)
- City of Whittlesea's growth opportunities
- Implications of macro-microeconomics context on Investment Attraction Plan

OVERVIEW OF MACRO-MICROECONOMICS ANALYSIS

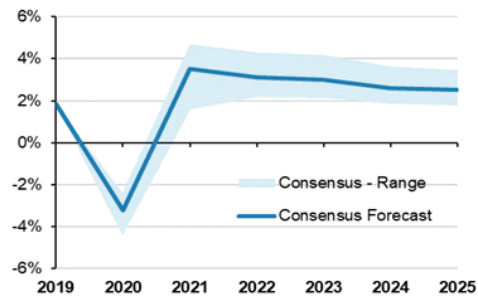
- The purpose of this macro-microeconomics analysis is to complement earlier policy review with market-based evidence, and identify growth and sector opportunities.
- These opportunities and any barriers to realising them, are clarified with key external and internal stakeholders in subsequent stages.
- The investment attraction plan considers stakeholder feedback in targeting and acting on these opportunities.
- Urbis' macro-microeconomics analysis covers:
 - The macroeconomic outlook for Australia and City of Whittlesea (with COVID-19 impacts) and
 - More locally, City of Whittlesea's strengths, sector opportunities and opportunities for growth
 - Alignment of sector opportunities with state priority sectors
 - Implications of the macro-microeconomics context on the investment attraction plan
- This section is therefore structured as indicated in the adjacent chart.



NATIONAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- Urbis' analysis of the national economic outlook indicates that now is an opportune time for City of Whittlesea to attract investments and emerge from the pandemic in a stronger position.
- As Australia's GDP rebounds to pre-pandemic levels in 2021, opportunistic investors and businesses will leverage record-low interest rates to expand and position for increased economic activity. City of Whittlesea can tap into those investors and businesses.
- Australia's unemployment rate may take a longer while to recover to pre-pandemic levels, which has flow on effects in City of Whittlesea. Attracting investments is critical to creating jobs and tackling unemployment.
- Whilst Australia's population growth is forecast to remain lacklustre for the next couple of years, City of Whittlesea can take advantage of population shifts towards outer suburbs. Solid population growth is attractive to investors and businesses, and a competitive advantage for City of Whittlesea.

Australia Real GDP

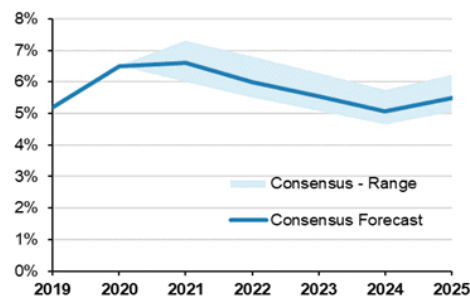


Source: Consensus Economics; Urbis ; ABS



Urbis anticipates a return to pre-COVID levels by December 2021, stabilising at around 3% per annum. Driven by low interest rates, strong private consumption, business investment and increased confidence.

Australia Unemployment Rate

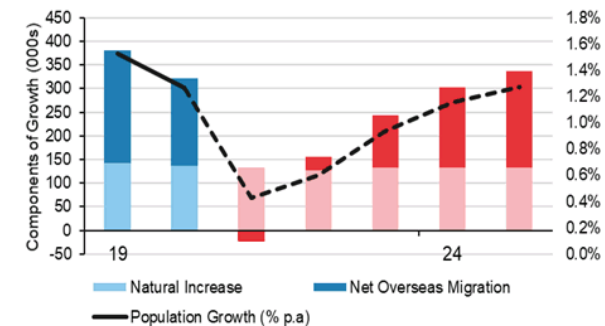


Source: Consensus Economics; Urbis ; ABS



Urbis anticipates that unemployment will slowly trend back to pre-pandemic levels by late 2024/early 2025.

Australia Population Growth

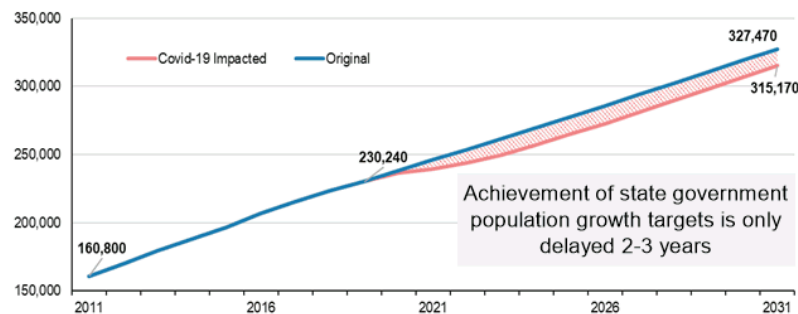


Urbis anticipates that population growth will be lacklustre for some time, achieving pre-pandemic levels close to 2025. Key factors are low natural growth and overseas migration.

CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- Strong population growth has been the key driver of employment and economic development in City of Whittlesea.
- Australia's travel restrictions in response to the pandemic, will slow population growth.
- However, Urbis anticipates that relative to Greater Melbourne, City of Whittlesea's will continue to experience strong population growth, in line with other growth areas.
- City of Whittlesea is outperforming other growth areas in driving strong employment growth.
- Even so, City of Whittlesea's employment growth has not kept pace with population growth. This highlights the importance of investment attraction to create more jobs for City of Whittlesea's fast-growing population.

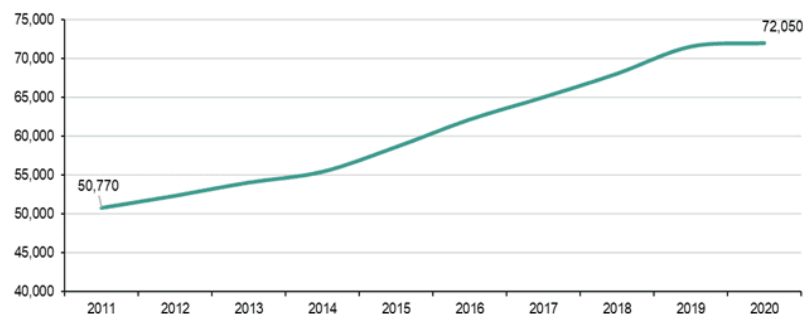
City of Whittlesea's Forecast Population Growth (2011-31)



Period	City of Whittlesea	Growth Area LGAs Average	Greater Melbourne
2011-19	4.4% p.a	4.5% p.a	2.9% p.a
2020-30	2.6% p.a	2.7% p.a	1.9% p.a

Source: ABS, VIF2019, Victorian State Budget 2020/21; Urbis

City of Whittlesea's Employment Growth (2011-20)



Period	City of Whittlesea	City of Hume	City of Wyndham	City of Casey	City of Cardinia
2011-19	4.0% p.a	3.1% p.a	2.7% p.a	2.3% p.a	3.1% p.a.

Source: Economy.id

CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S DRIVERS

- City of Whittlesea benefits from a range of political, economic, social and technological drivers, which unlock investment opportunities.
- For City of Whittlesea to capture those opportunities, partnership is key – across key influencers behind the drivers: State and Federal Government, Council, industry (including growth sector businesses or institutions), and education institutions.
- Recognising their roles in driving investment opportunities, these groups were consulted as part of developing the investment attraction plan.



Key influencers:
State & Federal Government

POLITICAL

- **State government priority sectors relevant to City of Whittlesea** including food & fibre, international education, medical technologies & pharmaceuticals, retail, transport distribution and logistics and postal
- **New transport infrastructure** including Melbourne Metro 2, Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6, Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal, potentially high speed rail to Sydney
- **Emerging employment hubs** including Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal, Melbourne Markets expansion, Thomastown Industrial Area Plan, Epping Activity Centre, Future Lockyerbie Activity Centre, Cooper Street West precinct, areas
- **Major town centre & activity centre development (current and proposed):** Mernda, Epping North, Wollert, Donnybrook/Woodstock



Key influencers:
Council, industry, education institutions

ECONOMIC

- **Post COVID-19 economic recovery.** As Australia rebounds to pre-pandemic levels in 2021, post COVID-19 recovery will drive positive business sentiments and structural shifts that City of Whittlesea needs to align with for growth opportunities. This entails supporting impacted businesses and workers in their transition towards new opportunities, attracting investments and supporting existing businesses in their expansion.
- **Growth and development of key economic institutions** including Northern Hospital Health Precinct, emerging health care hubs, new TAFE facilities to meet changing needs of workers and businesses, educational institutions



Key influencers:
Council, industry, education institutions

SOCIAL

- **Surge in localisation and population shifts towards outer suburbs** driven by accelerated changes to city structure and movement patterns as a result of COVID-19. This drives increased demand for greenfield housing, increased working from home and increased demand for localised facilities and services.
- **Structural changes to labour force post COVID-19** such as more flexible work patterns, employment growth in growth sectors like health care and construction, greater demand to upskill workers to match key growth sectors, increasing female participation in workforce facilitated by Federal Government budget.



Key influencers:
Council, industry, education institutions

TECHNOLOGICAL

- **Continued technological changes** will drive the need to upgrade key infrastructure to accommodate work from home (WFH) and business demands, acceleration of technological uptake particularly around WFH and Internet of Things (IOT), transformational impact on key sectors such as manufacturing, logistic, retail and health

CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S SECTOR STRENGTHS

- City of Whittlesea also offers sector strengths.
- These sector strengths are recognised by Urbis' sector evaluation framework (discussed subsequently) in identifying sectors to target for the investment attraction plan.
- Sector strength is measured by City of Whittlesea's location quotient, which is a ratio that indicates the concentration of a particular sector in City of Whittlesea, relative to Victoria.
- When City of Whittlesea's location quotient for any given sector is greater than 1 (shaded darker green in adjacent table), it means that City of Whittlesea has relative strengths in that sector, when compared with the rest of Victoria.
- City of Whittlesea's sector strengths (indicated by a location quotient greater than 1) are:
 - Retail (Pacific Epping)
 - Manufacturing
 - Construction
 - Wholesale Trade (Melbourne Market)
 - Health (Northern Hospital)
 - Education (tertiary institutions, technical colleges)
- In addition, City of Whittlesea outperforms other growth areas (with a higher location quotient) in the following sectors:
 - Retail
 - Manufacturing
 - Wholesale Trade
 - Health
 - Utilities
- City of Whittlesea's diverse sector strengths are supported by key employment centres, each with their own sector strengths (shaded darker green in adjacent table).

Location Quotient for City of Whittlesea, Growth Areas, Employment Precincts
2016-20

	City of Whittlesea	Growth Areas Average	Cooper Street Employment	Epping Central	RMIT / Uni Hill	Thomastown Industrial	Plenty Valley
Retail	1.51	1.31	1.41	1.72	1.23	1.00	3.07
Manufacturing	1.44	1.12	2.35	0.27	0.74	3.72	0.19
Construction	1.34	1.31	1.48	0.28	0.56	1.80	0.59
Wholesale Trade	1.19	0.97	5.83	0.30	0.49	2.52	0.21
Health	1.18	0.78	0.45	3.23	1.16	0.15	1.07
Education	1.15	1.19	0.15	1.02	2.22	0.09	0.27
Other Services	1.00	1.03	0.67	0.91	0.74	1.58	1.13
Utilities	1.00	0.71	0.52	0.29	0.21	1.91	2.91
Transport & Warehousing	1.00	1.91	1.33	0.45	2.59	0.96	0.14
Admin & Support	0.85	0.87	0.69	0.73	0.62	0.77	0.37
Accom. & Food	0.78	1.05	0.34	1.25	0.46	0.46	1.40
Arts & Rec.	0.70	0.84	0.66	0.38	0.37	0.23	0.25
Real Estate	0.64	0.89	0.52	0.83	0.65	0.35	0.84
Public Admin & Safety	0.60	0.87	0.18	0.92	1.04	0.33	3.96
Mining	0.50	0.58	0.41	0.00	0.00	0.91	0.00
Farming	0.48	0.95	2.20	0.00	0.12	1.06	0.18
Professional Services	0.33	0.38	0.10	0.14	0.73	0.25	0.20
Finance & Insurance	0.31	0.27	0.00	0.30	0.90	0.19	0.51
IT	0.30	0.34	0.08	0.30	0.16	0.27	0.65

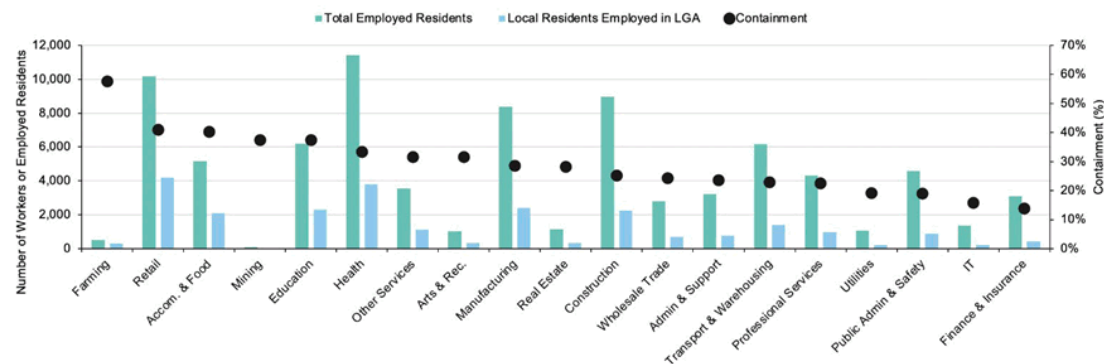
Source: Economy.id, ABS

Low  High

CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S SECTOR STRENGTHS (CONT'D)

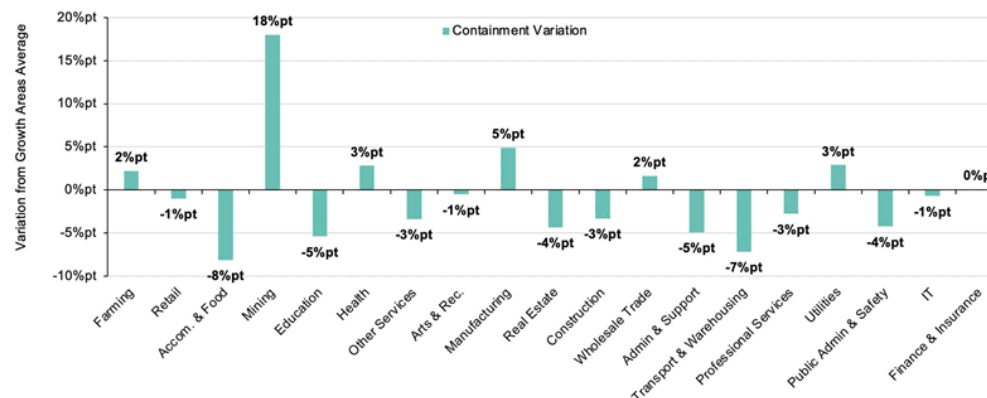
- These sector strengths are translating into jobs for City of Whittlesea's local residents. As at Census 2016:
 - Retail sector employs circa. 4,200 local residents
 - Manufacturing sector employs circa. 2,400 local residents
 - Construction sector employs circa. 2,250 local residents
 - Wholesale trade sector employs circa. 700 local residents
 - Healthcare sector employs circa. 3,800 local residents
 - Education sector employs circa. 2,300 local residents
 - Utilities sector employs circa. 200 local residents
- This highlights the importance of building on Whittlesea's sector strengths in the investment attraction plan, ultimately to create jobs for Whittlesea's fast-growing resident population.
- Each sector's ability to create jobs for local residents is measured by the containment metric. This is a ratio that indicates the percentage of working residents who are employed locally in that sector. The ability to create jobs for local residents is considered by Urbis' sector evaluation framework (discussed subsequently) in identifying sectors to target for the investment attraction plan.
- Of particular importance are those larger-emplying sectors that demonstrate greater ability to create jobs for local residents (through a higher containment percentage than growth area average), namely: Health, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, and Utilities

City of Whittlesea Employment Containment by Industry, 2016



Source: ABS

City of Whittlesea Employment Containment by Industry vs. Growth Area Average, 2016

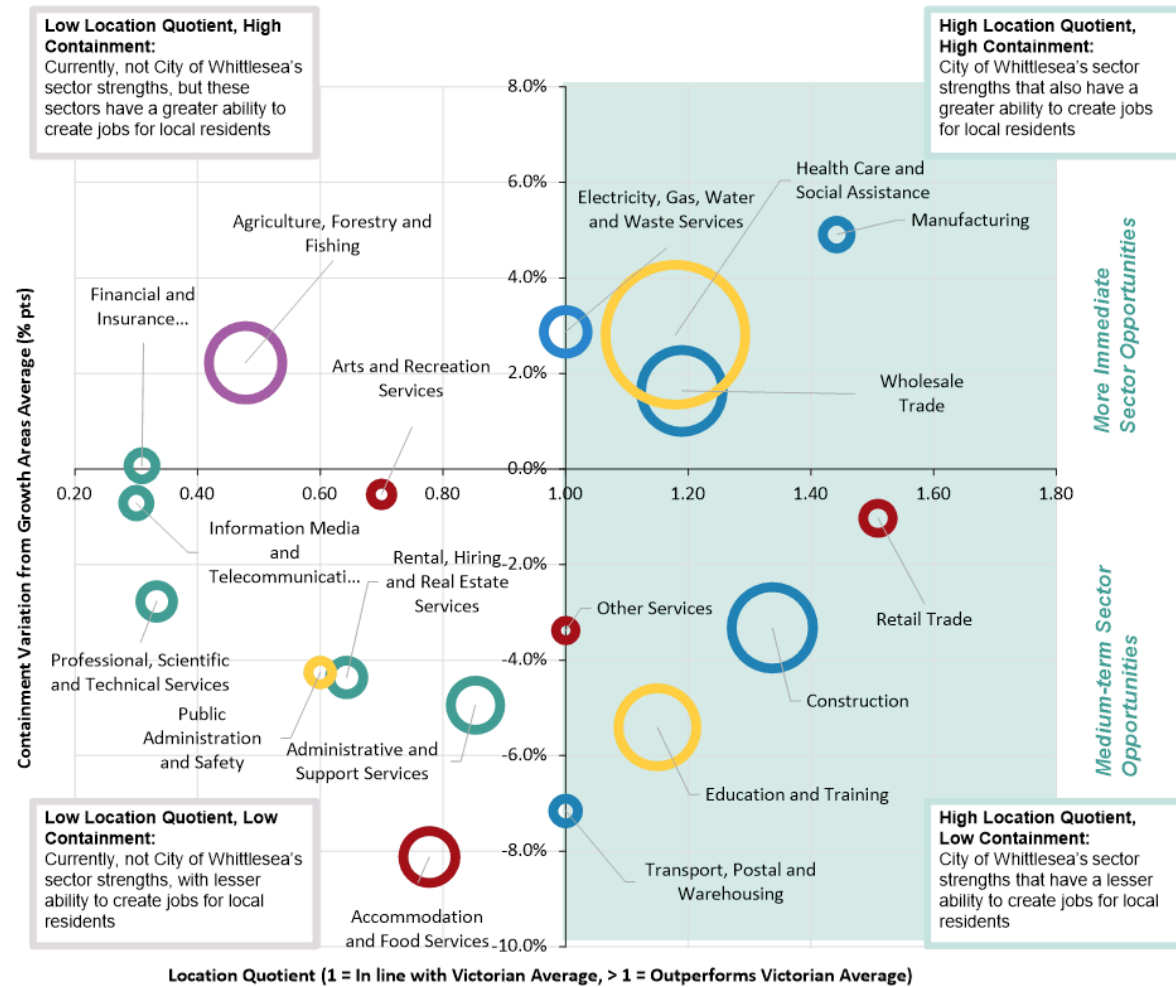


Source: ABS

CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

- Urbis has identified local sector opportunities (green box) using Urbis' sector evaluation framework (in the overleaf) that considers:
 - City of Whittlesea's sector strengths (as measured by a location quotient greater than 1, relative to Victoria)
 - Each sector's ability to create jobs for local residents (as measured by higher containment %, relative to Growth Area average)
- Given the investment attraction plan's 5-year timeframe, coupled with an urgent need to create jobs for local residents post COVID, Urbis suggests focusing on:
 - Whittlesea's sector strengths and
 - Sectors that are on the cusp of becoming Whittlesea's sector strengths.
- With Whittlesea's current or prospective strengths in these sectors, it will be relatively easier for Whittlesea to attract more investments and businesses from those sectors, ultimately creating jobs for local residents in the short-to- medium term.
- Among these sector opportunities (green box), there are:
 - More immediate opportunities for sectors that have a greater ability to create jobs for local residents (top right quadrant). These sectors can offer quick wins in delivering jobs to residents.
 - Medium-term opportunities for sectors that have a lesser ability to create jobs for local residents (bottom right quadrant) . Growing these sectors will need to be complemented with relevant training programs which ensure that local residents can better match the jobs created. This may warrant a dedicated resident upskilling project, outside of this investment attraction plan.

CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



Source: ABS, Economy.id, Department of Jobs & Small Business, Victorian State Budget 2020/21; Urbis

ALIGNING CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES WITH STATE PRIORITY SECTORS

- In summary, City of Whittlesea's sector opportunities (identified using Urbis' sector evaluation framework on previous page) are:
 - Healthcare & Social Assistance
 - Wholesale Trade (including Melbourne Market – Fresh Food Wholesale Trade)
 - Manufacturing (including Food Manufacturing)
 - Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services (including waste recycling services)
 - Construction
 - Education & Training
 - Transport Postal & Warehousing
 - Retail Trade
- These sector opportunities are aligned with state priority sectors (listed adjacent), which are highlighted in blue.
- In addition, City of Whittlesea offers the following significant opportunities:
 - Epping's planned health precinct and Food Hub (around Melbourne Market) have the potential to significantly facilitate advancement of state priority sectors – Food & Fibre and Medical Technologies & Pharmaceuticals
 - City of Whittlesea is also home to waste recycling businesses which apply digital technologies in their innovative waste to resource technologies



Construction Technologies



Food & Fibre



Medical Technologies & Pharmaceuticals



Retail, Transport Distribution and Logistics and Postal



International Education



Digital Technologies



Creative Industries



Defence Technologies



Professional Services



Space Technologies



Visitor Economy



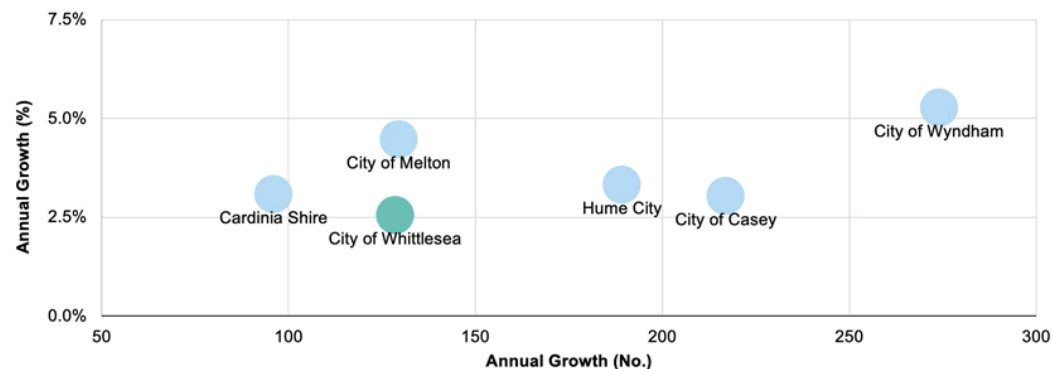
Victoria's Racing Industry

CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

In addition to sector opportunities, the investment attraction plan is also geared towards capturing more opportunities for growth in City of Whittlesea.

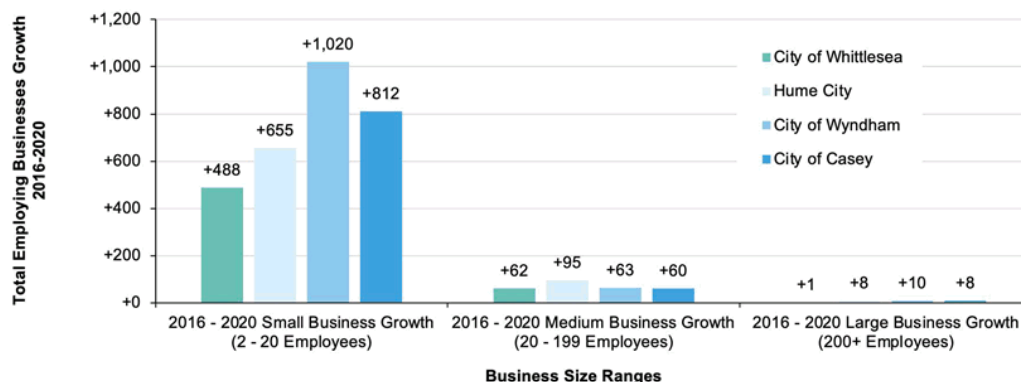
- There are opportunities for City of Whittlesea to:
 - Attract more employing businesses to City of Whittlesea
 - Attract more large businesses (employing more than 200 people) to City of Whittlesea
 - Support the growth of existing small and medium sized businesses in City of Whittlesea
- These opportunities for growth were identified by Urbis' macro-microeconomics analysis which revealed:
 - Hume, Casey and Wyndham are outperforming Whittlesea in attracting a greater number of employing businesses each year.
 - Compared with other growth areas, City of Whittlesea is experiencing the lowest percentage growth in employing businesses per annum.
 - The vast majority of new businesses relocating to or setting up in Whittlesea are small and medium sized businesses (with less than 200 employees).
 - However, in recent years (2016-20), Whittlesea only attracted one large business (employing more than 200 employees).
 - By contrast, Wyndham, Casey and Hume attracted a greater number of large businesses (in the order of 8 to 10 over 2016-2020).
- These trends underscore the importance of this investment attraction plan to attract more employing businesses to Whittlesea, including large businesses, which can generate jobs for Whittlesea's local residents.

City of Whittlesea vs Other Growth Areas, Net Growth in Employing Businesses, 2016-20



Source: ABS

City of Whittlesea Business Growth by Scale of Business (No. of employees), 2016 - 2020



Source: ABS

IMPLICATIONS OF MACRO-MICROECONOMICS CONTEXT ON INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN

- In summary, key insights from Urbis' analysis of Whittlesea's macro-microeconomics context and their implications on the investment attraction plan are detailed below.

Key macro-microeconomics insights	Implications on investment attraction plan
<p>Australia's GDP is set to rebound to pre-pandemic levels in 2021, driven by low interest rates.</p>	<p>Highlights importance of investment attraction plan to attract opportunistic businesses leveraging low interest rates to expand.</p>
<p>Australia's unemployment rate and population growth may take a longer while (likely until 2025) to recover to pre-pandemic levels.</p>	<p>Highlights importance of investment attraction plan to attract businesses and create jobs for Whittlesea's fast-growing resident population (relative to Greater Melbourne and Australia).</p>
<p>Key influencers behind political, social, economic and technological drivers of Whittlesea's investment opportunities are State & Federal government, Council, industry and education institutions.</p>	<p>These groups were consulted as part of developing the investment attraction plan.</p> <p>The importance of partnership across these groups is recognised by the investment attraction plan.</p>
<p>Sector opportunities lie in Whittlesea's strength sectors and promising sectors on the cusp of becoming Whittlesea's strength sectors. Some have a greater ability to create jobs for local residents (and are more immediate opportunities).</p> <p>These sector opportunities are: Healthcare & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services, Retail, Construction, Transport Postal & Warehousing, Education & Training, Other Services.</p>	<p>Major businesses and stakeholders in identified opportunity sectors were consulted as part of developing the investment attraction plan.</p> <p>Their suggestions and concerns are addressed in the investment attraction plan.</p>
<p>There are further opportunities for Whittlesea to attract more employing businesses, particularly large businesses that can generate more jobs.</p>	<p>Large businesses from opportunity sectors were consulted as part of developing the investment attraction plan. Their suggestions and concerns are addressed in the investment attraction plan.</p>
<p>Hume, Casey and Wyndham outperform Whittlesea in attracting a greater number of businesses per year, including large businesses.</p>	<p>Hume, Casey and Wyndham's investment attraction approach and initiatives are studied to identify learnings for Whittlesea.</p>

04 PEER REVIEW

This section provides an overview of key learnings from investment attraction initiatives by City of Hume, Casey and Wyndham.

Earlier macro-microeconomics analysis identified that these Councils are leading growth areas in the number and scale of businesses they are attracting.

OVERVIEW OF PEER REVIEW

- The purpose of this peer review is to identify relevant learnings on investment attraction from City of Casey, Wyndham and Hume.
- As analysed earlier, in recent years, these Councils have been leading growth areas in the number and scale of businesses they are attracting.
- This is a clear indicator that their investment attraction initiatives are driving results.
- Reviewing their initiatives offers insights into investment attraction actions that are effective in getting businesses onboard.
- Understanding Whittlesea's competitive landscape is also critical to ensuring that Whittlesea is well-positioned.
- The investment attraction plan draws on these learnings with the aim of attracting more businesses (including large businesses) to Whittlesea.
- Ultimately, attracting more businesses to Whittlesea creates more jobs for local residents.



KEY LEARNINGS FOR CITY OF WHITTLESEA

- In summary, key learnings relevant to Whittlesea are featured below.
- The investment attraction plan draws on these learnings, as well as feedback from key internal and external stakeholders.
- As leading growth areas in the number and scale of businesses they have been attracting, Hume, Casey and Wyndham offer learnings on investment attraction actions that are driving results.
- However, these learnings need to be considered within the context of Whittlesea's internal and external stakeholders.
- To this end, Urbis conducted consultations with Whittlesea's key stakeholders. Their feedback and insights are detailed in the next section.

<p>MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS: Communicate Whittlesea's strengths as a Council and as a place for business & investments</p>	<p>RESOURCING: Deliver an enabling organisational structure that is poised for growth</p>	<p>INVESTMENT ATTRACTION: Proactively attract investment interest and follow through on opportunities</p>	<p>BUSINESS SUPPORT & GROWTH: Facilitate growth of local businesses and priority sectors</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop clear and consistent messaging on Whittlesea's strengths as a Council and as a place for business and investments ▪ Messaging can comprise a clear action-oriented theme (e.g. "Backing Business in Casey") supported by key messages. ▪ Deliver the message compellingly through tailored website content for investors, visual collaterals (such as an investment attraction prospectus) and videos ▪ Convey business confidence and opportunity at Whittlesea by featuring successful local businesses, major incoming businesses, upcoming major developments and development-ready land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrate interdependent functions (such as investment attraction, infrastructure and planning) to facilitate stronger collaboration between these functions. ▪ Enhance resourcing for economic development to drive greater scale of impact. ▪ Ensure relevant and sufficient resourcing in planning to enhance service levels for planning, engineering and landscaping assessments, and to facilitate pre-planning support for incoming businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assign or establish a dedicated team to proactively attract investment interest, led by a well-connected senior personnel who can drive opportunities for Whittlesea with industry, various levels of government and educational institutions. ▪ Assign investment facilitation case managers to enquiring businesses, working closely with them throughout their expansion and/or relocation. ▪ Alternatively, assign a dedicated planner to strategically facilitate investment attraction and business through the planning process from pre-application through to post permit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate growth of priority sectors through business grant programs for eligible businesses in priority sectors. ▪ Facilitate growth of local businesses through business support and engagement with Economic Development team, partnerships with business advisory institutions (such as Kangan Institute, Melbourne Innovation Centre) and small business grants programs. ▪ Foster a local business community (which local businesses can tap into for enabling connections and support) through networking events (such as annual awards, training & networking events).

05 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

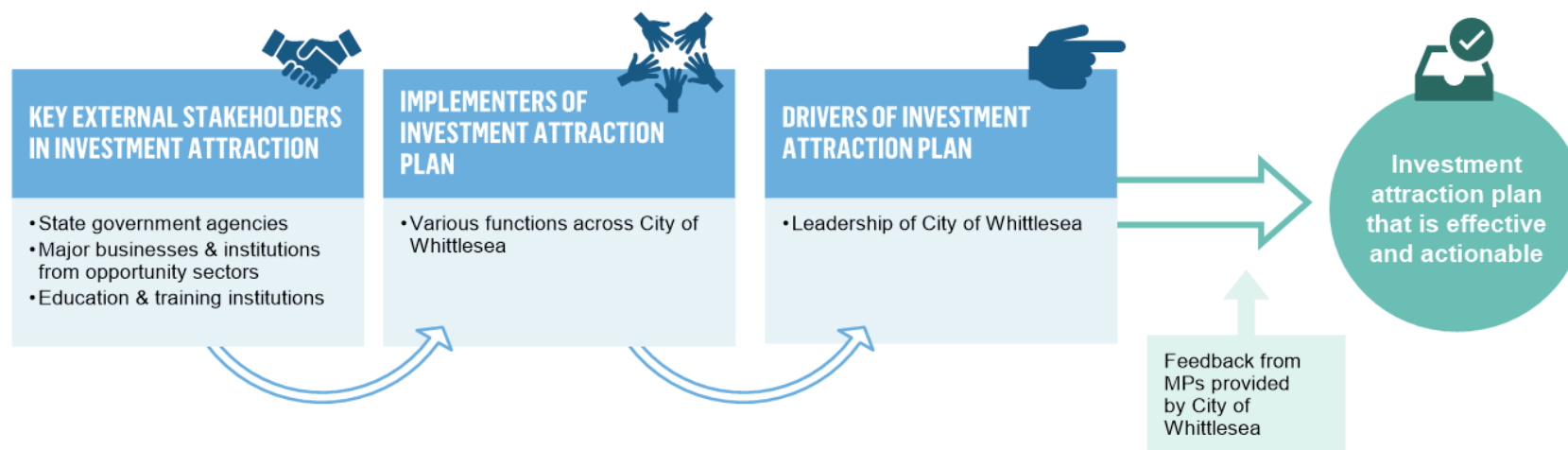
This section features feedback from Whittlesea's key external and internal stakeholders whom Urbis consulted as part of developing the investment attraction plan.

- Key external stakeholders consulted comprise major businesses and institutions in Whittlesea's opportunity sectors (identified through the macro-microeconomics analysis), state government agencies, and educational institutions
- Key internal stakeholders consulted span across various levels and functions in Council who will work together to drive and implement the investment attraction plan
- In addition to Urbis' consultations, the Council team provided Whittlesea's representing MPs with an update on the investment attraction plan. Feedback from the MPs was incorporated into the final investment attraction plan.

OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

- When developing the investment attraction plan, Urbis consulted Whittlesea's key external and internal stakeholder groups (summarised in chart below).
- Urbis and Whittlesea recognise that a range of external stakeholders play important roles in driving or influencing growth and investment opportunities for Whittlesea. These key external stakeholders comprise state government agencies, major businesses and institutions in opportunity sectors (identified through earlier macro-microeconomics analysis) and educational institutions - Urbis consulted all of these stakeholder groups. In addition, the Council team updated Whittlesea's representing Federal government MPs whose feedback were incorporated into the final investment attraction plan.
- Equally important is considering the perspectives and priorities of Whittlesea's internal stakeholders who are key to driving and implementing the investment attraction plan. They were also consulted by Urbis, and their views on proposed actions and their relative prioritisation were incorporated into the investment attraction plan.
- Feedback from relevant external and internal stakeholders was a critical component in developing the investment attraction plan. The result is an investment attraction plan that addresses the concerns and needs of Whittlesea's key stakeholders, and is therefore effective and actionable.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS CONSULTED BY URBIS



5.1

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

This section features:

- Key external stakeholders who were consulted by Urbis
- Their feedback on what they need to realise investment and growth opportunities for Whittlesea
- Their suggestions on Council actions that can facilitate investment attraction and address any barriers

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

- Key external stakeholders consulted by Urbis are indicated adjacent. They were identified jointly by City of Whittlesea and Urbis. They have also been invited to a Council-organised post-engagement economic forum (roundtable) to continue to strengthen relationships.
- Broadly, these stakeholders are major players in Whittlesea from each of the following stakeholder groups:
 - State government agencies: Referral agencies who can connect Whittlesea with investors and expanding businesses
 - Industry & advocacy groups: Peak bodies that shape strategic directions for growth across government, industry and educational institutions
 - Major businesses and institutions in opportunity sectors which were identified in earlier macro-microeconomics analysis (Pg 24):
 - Healthcare & Social Assistance
 - Manufacturing
 - Wholesale Trade
 - Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services
 - Retail
 - Construction
 - Transport Postal & Warehousing (including Logistics & Freight)
 - Education & Training
- Among identified landowners & developers, QIC was able to represent construction and retail sectors, as a major institutional owner and developer of shopping centres across the country (including Pacific Epping). MAB and Frasers Property are major industrial and mixed use property developers who offered insights into how Whittlesea can well-position for manufacturing and logistic & freight sectors.
- Education stakeholders provided their perspectives as major players in an opportunity sector, as well as key economic institutions that drive training and upskilling of residents to match local jobs.

Prepared for City of Whittlesea

STATE GOVERNMENT



FOOD & BEVERAGE



EDUCATION



INDUSTRY & ADVOCACY GROUPS



HEALTH



RENEWABLE ENERGY / RECYCLING



MANUFACTURING



LANDOWNERS & DEVELOPERS



LOGISTICS & FREIGHT



KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS: WHAT THEY NEED

During stakeholder consultations, Whittlesea's key external stakeholders expressed that they needed the following to grow and expand in Whittlesea.

A CLEAR VISION FOR THE FUTURE:

- Clearly articulated growth strategy by Council
- Communication from Council on future supply of developable industrial land (how much and where)
- Published infrastructure plans featuring upcoming infrastructure

ADVOCACY FOR MAJOR PROJECTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Advocating by Council of key initiatives, proposals, businesses within the municipality to State and other Government agencies
- Advocacy by Council for major infrastructure that is needed to keep abreast with population growth and to enhance ease of access and movement
- Addressing potential for power supply to become a key concern/barrier

RESOURCING SUPPORT FROM COUNCIL:

- Council's active support for local resident training and capacity building
- Assistance in elevating the profile of key industry sectors which are not highly appealing to young people
- Enhancing Whittlesea's attractiveness to talents by ensuring diversity of housing types, range of quality amenity and employment opportunities
- Rate relief and business incentives that are comparable to other growth areas (particularly Hume)

ENHANCED PLANNING ASSESSMENT & APPROVAL SERVICE LEVELS:

- Faster turnaround of planning approvals
- More certainty around planning timelines
- Pre-application support and engagement

MORE ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION WITH COUNCIL:

- Proactive stakeholder engagement which facilitates communication at the right levels (for instance, quarterly briefings between CEOs and directors, regular contact between officers and working level staff)
- A partnership approach to stakeholder engagement
- Better appreciation of industry needs and plans, particularly among larger players
- More communication about Council's activities, strengths of Whittlesea, and local businesses
- Facilitation of connections between like-minded businesses and organisations

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS: SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR COUNCIL

- In addition to expressing their needs in order to expand and grow in Whittlesea, key stakeholders consulted suggested actions listed adjacent **around communication and proactive engagement (including advocacy)**.
- Urbis has categorised these suggested actions according to the stakeholder needs that they address, namely:
 - More stakeholder engagement & communication
 - A clear vision for the future
 - Advocacy for major projects and infrastructure

MORE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION:

Proactively engage with key stakeholders

- Organise more strategic discussions between senior personnel: Quarterly briefings between CEOs, Directors
- Ensure regular meetings between Council Officers and working level staff among key stakeholders
- Council and key stakeholders need to be aligned and informed about each others' plans
- Involve/invite stakeholders to participate in Council structure plan process
- Facilitate appropriate connections and linkages between business, institutions, government, agencies. If a meeting has an Executive attending, then Council needs to have senior representation
- Celebrate wins more often (email communication) and increase marketing efforts (for instance around the food cluster and the recycling precinct). This information helps to fuel the next wave of investors and promotes a sense of community among local businesses and key stakeholders.
- Communicate relevant initiatives and activities of other agencies and Government departments (for instance, soon-to-be-launched Manufacturing Industry Development Fund, Real Industry interview event)
- Organise a series of business forums with quality speakers and attendees. Invite key stakeholders to present their plans.

A CLEAR VISION FOR THE FUTURE: Communicate Whittlesea's growth plans

- Communicate and map out the short-, medium- and long-term plans for Whittlesea employment land and infrastructure.
- Share more information about Council's activities, priorities and intentions.
- Promote local community benefits of upcoming major developments and proposals.

ADVOCACY FOR MAJOR PROJECTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Advocate to State and other government agencies, update stakeholders on progress

- Give industrial land equal importance to residential growth, identify more industrial land that's appropriately zoned and supported by services, infrastructure
- Finalise Epping's Structure plan which should be underpinned by an appropriately costed infrastructure plan
- Be more proactive in advocacy to State Government for projects such as the Food Hub, renewable energy plan at the Markets
- Upgrade road infrastructure/alleviate congestion, escalate public transport plan
- Get involved with securing reliable power supply throughout the municipality
- Advocate for renewable energy

KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS: SUGGESTED ACTIONS (CONT'D)

- Key stakeholders consulted also suggested actions listed adjacent **around support from Council to facilitate their business operations and plans.**
- Urbis has categorised these suggested actions according to the stakeholder needs that they address, namely:
 - Enhanced planning service levels
 - Resource support from Council (such as skills, grants and business incentives)

ENHANCED PLANNING SERVICE LEVELS: Provide businesses with more certainty and support

- Introduce Planning Concierge or Case Managers for significant business proposals
- Use facilitated planning controls that don't require public notice in certain areas like activity centres and industrial areas. Limiting permit triggers is a good selling point.
- Council to review objections to identify those of substance that the applicant needs to respond to.
- Support the activity centre hierarchy
- Give confidence to investors that if an adequate planning application is submitted, then Council can commit to a given timeline (a six-week process for instance)
- Provide more certainty that developers and institutions can implement their proposals in a timely and cost effective manner
- Council decision makers and influencers to meet with proponents to understand and identify potential issues, pre-application
- Identify/introduce key community interest groups which the stakeholder should engage with, pre-application

RESOURCE SUPPORT: Connect businesses with skills & grants, competitive business incentives

- Provide support to companies applying for State or Federal government grants
- Engage in Structured Workplace Learning programs and internships
- Showcase the different occupations and roles to school students for instance promoting the technology side of waste management and advanced manufacturing
- Offer incentives to attract skills to the municipality for instance rate discounts to new residents who work in the municipality
- Early placement of services in growth areas – childcare, medical, GP, core public and primary health, to enhance attractiveness of municipality to skilled workforce
- Highlight Whittlesea's level of amenity and ease of access (i.e., re-position as being in Melbourne's middle ring with good radial access rather than a growth area) to attract skilled workforce
- Consider reintroducing Rate Holidays (Melbourne Market tenants)
- Consider business incentive schemes or grants that are competitive – comparable with other growth areas (particularly Hume)

5.2

KEY INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

This section features:

- Key internal stakeholders' suggestions on the vision and priority actions that form the investment attraction plan

KEY INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS: FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Through a series of workshops, Urbis consulted Whittlesea’s key internal stakeholders. Summarised below are their suggestions and feedback on **future opportunities for improvement**, that can better position Whittlesea in facilitating investments and business growth.

Key Future Opportunities for Improvement	Assessments by Whittlesea’s Key Internal Stakeholders
<p>City of Whittlesea’s efforts to-date around business support have been OK; however, there is opportunity for improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council rated City of Whittlesea 3.6/5.0 (72%) for partnering with businesses, 3.7/5.0 (74%) for support network and services provided to businesses. ▪ However, Council would like to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - +7%pts in supporting businesses - +5%pts in partnering with businesses and their success <p>Some variation of views within Council, with some seeing greater opportunity for improvement in business support. Regardless, Council was aligned in wanting to see improved business support and partnerships with businesses; suggested that there is an opportunity for a business support desk by expanding current business concierge</p>
<p>City of Whittlesea has gains to make in proactiveness to make things happen for businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council rated City of Whittlesea 3.3/5.0 (66%) for being proactive and making things happen (for businesses), which is relatively low compared with their ratings on partnership with businesses (72%) and business support (74%) <p>Council was aligned in recognising that this is a key area of improvement; suggestions that there is a need to encourage more awareness and training around customer service and the role that everyone plays along the investment journey</p>
<p>Strong desire to see City of Whittlesea as a forward-thinking Council that creates jobs now and for the future This presents an opportunity to drive sense of purpose across the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council gave the lowest rating for City of Whittlesea being forward-thinking, creating jobs now and for the future; rating in this area was 2.8/5.0 (56%) ▪ Strong desire to see City of Whittlesea progressing as a forward-thinking Council that creates jobs now and for the future; would like to see +11%pts in rating ▪ This shared desire presents the opportunity to drive a unified sense of purpose across the organisation <p>Council was aligned in recognising that this is a key area of improvement.</p>

KEY INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS: IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIP

Whittlesea’s key internal stakeholders unanimously agreed on **the importance of partnerships (internal and external)** in driving investment and growth opportunities for Whittlesea.

Key Future Opportunities for Improvement

Assessments by Whittlesea’s Key Internal Stakeholders

Importance of partnerships (external and internal)

Aligned understanding across Council on the following:

- Recognition that “we can’t do this alone”, hence the importance of partnerships externally and internally in attracting investments and ultimately, driving jobs growth
- External partnerships with businesses, education & training institutions, and state government agencies (particularly DJPR) are important
- Internal partnership across Council is also important, recognising the need to:
 - Foster external relationships at the executive level
 - Drive organisation-wide awareness of investment attraction as a priority
 - Support human resource needs for investment attraction
 - Establish clear directions and frameworks around: stakeholder engagement (who and which level in City of Whittlesea to engage with which stakeholders) and prioritisation criteria for budget allocation and planning permits

KEY INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS: SUGGESTED PRIORITY ACTIONS

Their suggested priority actions for the investment attraction plan are summarised below.

Key Themes	Suggested Priority Actions
<p>Promoting City of Whittlesea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent messaging on the strengths of Whittlesea as a location and as a Council across communication channels ▪ Digital content tailored to businesses and investors ▪ Hosting and attending industry events
<p>Engaging with businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dedicated “Senior Investment Advisor” and economic development officers to provide larger businesses with advice and strengthen relationships with industry, commercial agents and referring state government agencies ▪ Quarterly Business & Economic forums (or roundtables) to facilitate regular, two-way communication between Council and businesses ▪ Business awards to celebrate achievements of local businesses and foster a sense of pride from being part of the local business community ▪ Advisory panel comprising senior business leaders to provide feedback and suggestions for growth plans and structure plans
<p>Enhancing competitiveness of City of Whittlesea in attracting prospective businesses (i.e. getting them over the line)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current efforts have been more weighted towards information provision and supporting existing businesses; however, there could be a gap in efforts and support to “close the deal” and get prospective businesses over the line (i.e. deciding to relocate to City of Whittlesea) ▪ Review/revise grants and planning processes and communicate these processes effectively. ▪ Streamlined planning approval process for eligible incoming businesses – clear and transparent criteria, a triaging panel that meets regularly to determine priority planning applications for fast-tracked approval ▪ Planning concierge to manage planning related matters for incoming businesses

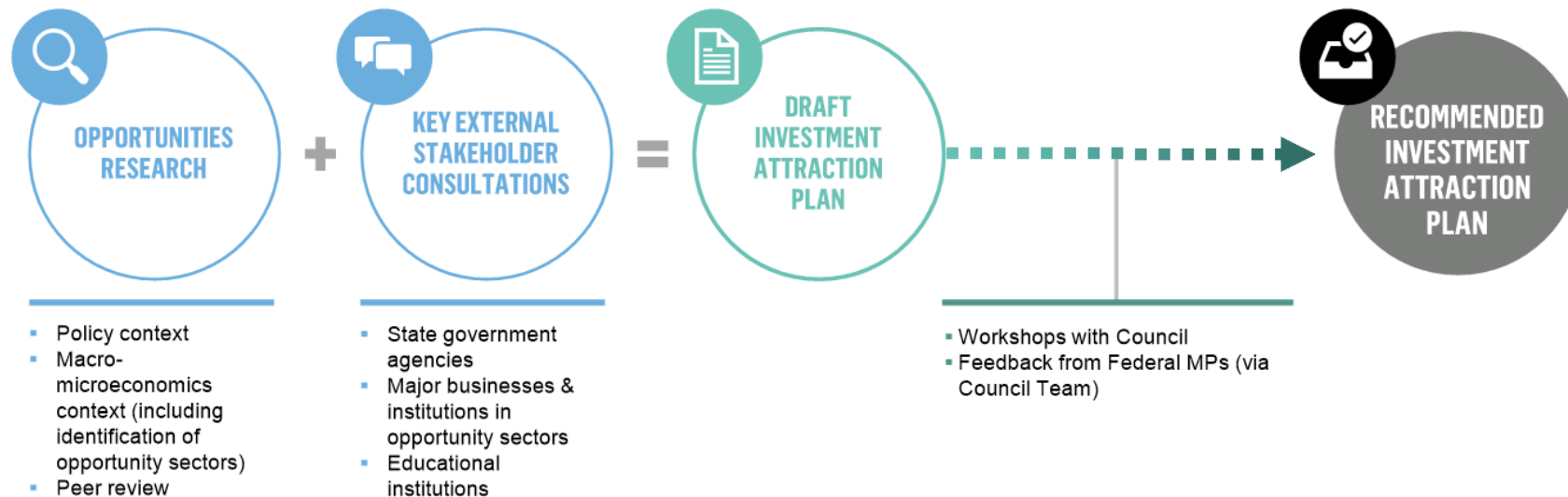
06 ANALYSIS & REVIEW OF DRAFT INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN

This section describes the approach to:

- Analysing and reviewing the draft investment attraction plan, in consultation with Whittlesea's key internal stakeholders
- Prioritising actions

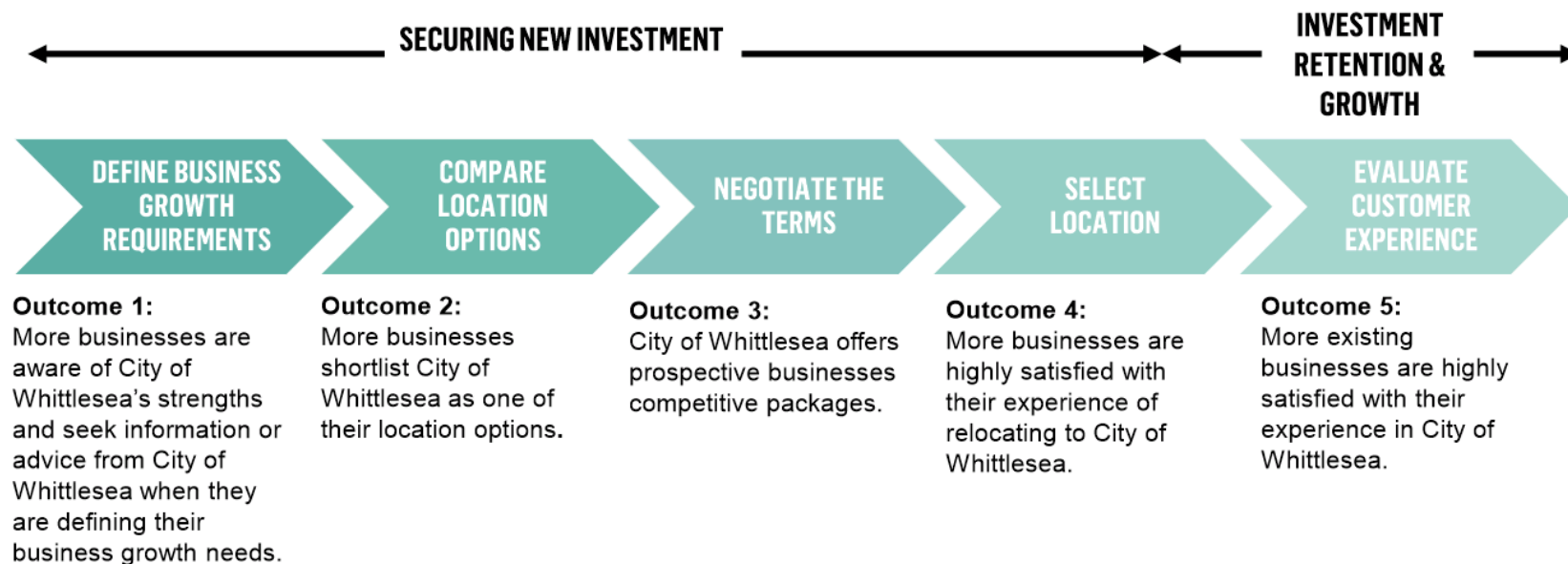
APPROACH TO ANALYSING AND REVIEWING DRAFT INVESTMENT PLAN

- Urbis' approach to analysing and reviewing the draft investment attraction plan, within the entire process, is described in the flowchart below.
- A range of potential actions were identified based on:
 - Comprehensive opportunities research covering the policy context, macro-microeconomics context (to identify opportunity sectors), and a review of investment attraction actions implemented by growth areas leading in the number and scale of businesses they are attracting (Casey, Hume, Wyndham)
 - Key external stakeholders' suggested actions
 - Consideration of the investment journey
 - Workshop among Urbis' specialist experts across Property Economics, Stakeholder Engagement and Planning
- These potential actions, along with their accompanying outcomes and vision, were translated into a draft investment attraction plan.
- Thereafter, the draft investment attraction plan was refined in consultation with Council who provided feedback on alignment of actions with Council directions and relative prioritisation between actions.
- Finally, the draft investment attraction plan was also presented to representing Federal MPs (via the Council team) for their feedback and insights, which were incorporated into the final recommended investment attraction plan.
- In the rest of this section, we describe the investment journey which guided key outcomes in the recommended plan and the prioritisation framework which drove prioritisation between actions.



THE INVESTMENT JOURNEY & KEY OUTCOMES

The investment attraction plan’s key outcomes were developed along the investment journey (described below). This was aimed at ensuring that Council proactively addresses every stage of the investment journey. Broadly, the investment journey encompasses progressive steps that investors and businesses take from considering expansion, to deciding on where and which Council they would like to grow with. It is critical that Council works alongside prospective investors and expanding businesses every step of the way to facilitate their investment in Whittlesea.

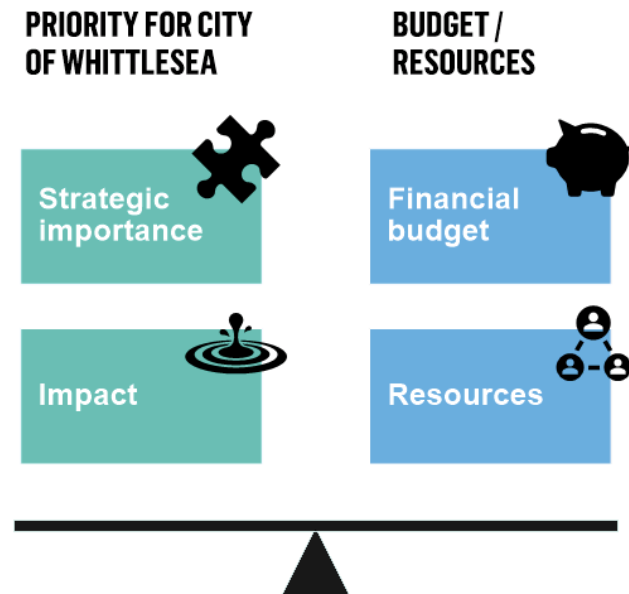


THE PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK: PRIORITISING BETWEEN ACTIONS

- This prioritisation framework was adopted to facilitate feedback from key internal stakeholders on prioritisation between actions.
- The framework was developed with the goal of prioritising proposed actions by considering the balance between priority and budget/resourcing requirements.
 - First, key stakeholders rate suggested actions for their priority to City of Whittlesea (considering strategic importance and impact).
 - Next, key stakeholders rate suggested actions for their budget/resourcing requirements.
 - An implementation score is calculated for each action:

$$\text{IMPLEMENTATION SCORE} = \frac{\text{Priority rating}}{\text{Budget rating}}$$

- Higher implementation scores indicate either:
 - Quick wins (higher priority, lower budget requirements) or
 - High impact actions (higher priority that outweighs budget/resourcing requirements)
- Actions with higher implementation scores were therefore prioritised for more immediate implementation.
- Some actions were incorporated in the final investment attraction plan as a result of post-workshop feedback from Council and MPs, hence they may not have ratings; however are incorporated as being high, immediate priorities given their strategic importance.
- In addition to the above, Urbis offers a view on the implementation timeframe for each action.
- The prioritisation process is detailed in the *Appendix A*.

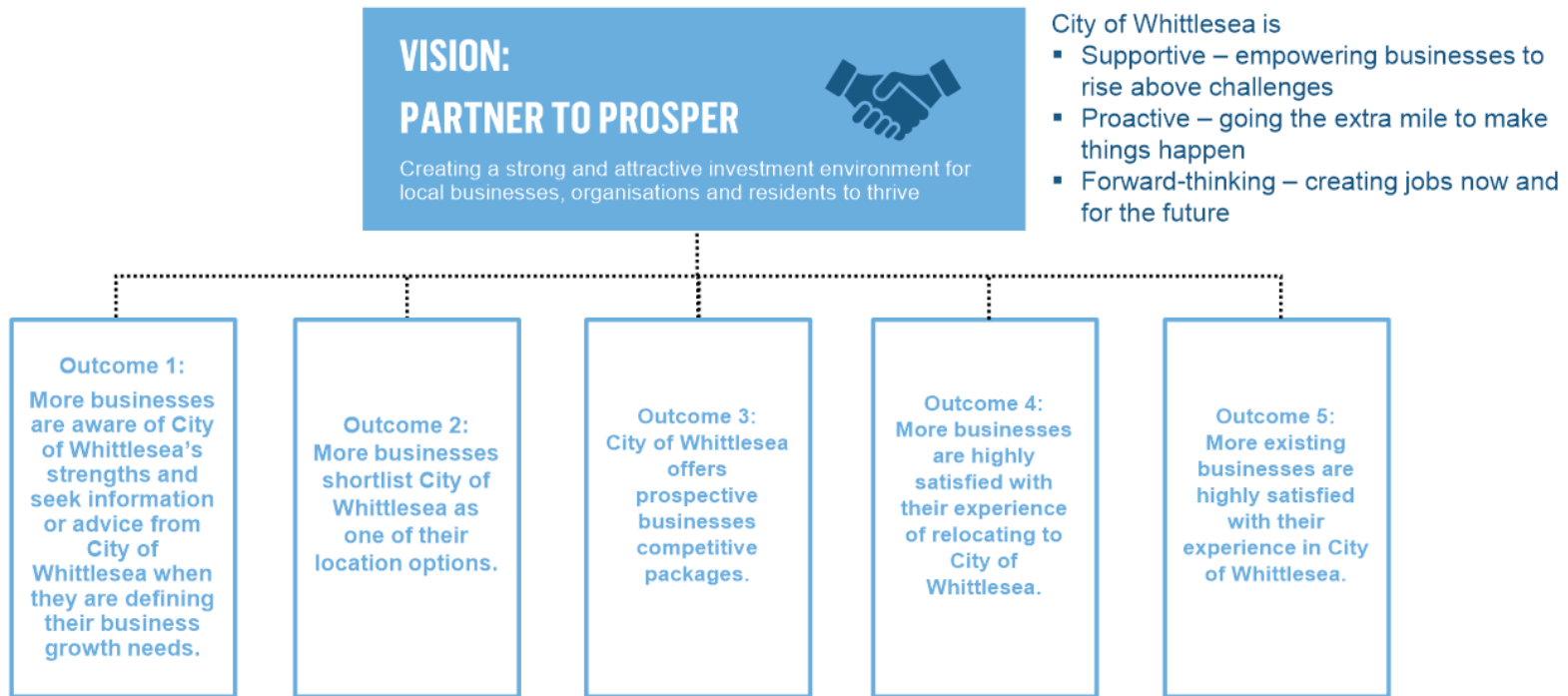


07 RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN

This section details the recommended investment attraction plan which comprises:

- The vision & outcomes
- Actions and how success will be measured
- Implementation framework

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: VISION & OUTCOMES



RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: ACTIONS AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Key Outcomes & Measures of Success	Recommended Actions
<p>Outcome 1:</p> <p>More businesses are aware of City of Whittlesea’s strengths and seek information or advice from City of Whittlesea when they are defining their business growth needs.</p> <p>How Success will be Measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of first-time enquiries from prospective investors and/or businesses ▪ Number of first-time enquiries from priority sectors 	<p>Develop consistent messaging on the strengths of Whittlesea as a Council and as an investment destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council that is supportive, pro-active and forward-thinking (vision guiding investment attraction plan) ▪ Opportunity sectors ▪ Emerging employment hubs and town centre/activity developments ▪ Proximity and access to CBD ▪ Upcoming developable land supply with access to services and infrastructure <p>Develop prominent and tailored digital website content for businesses and prospective investors. Content should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on running and operating a business for small to medium sized businesses ▪ Information relevant to larger investors and businesses such as upcoming developable land supply with access to services & infrastructure, major proposals and developments, economic and demographic profile of Whittlesea to facilitate business case preparation. <p>Ensure that dedicated Investment Attraction officers and Senior Investment Advisor are accessible to businesses & investors, and proactively seeking out investment and growth opportunities for Whittlesea</p> <p>Council attendance at, and hosting of, business events, networking functions, business awards, trade shows, conferences and training programs to strengthen networks with industry</p> <p>Regular business e-newsletter open for subscription, providing regular updates on progress and achievements in Whittlesea</p> <p>Develop a social media strategy (more frequent light touch, timely communication e.g. LinkedIn) for corporate posts, accompanied by social media principles that encourage Council to post updates on Council progress and achievements</p>

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: ACTIONS AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Key Outcomes & Measures of Success	Recommended Actions
<p>Outcome 2:</p> <p>More businesses shortlist City of Whittlesea as one of their location options.</p>	<p>Build on and strengthen relationships with commercial agents who can introduce prospective businesses seeking a new location</p>
<p>How Success will be Measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of prospective investors and/or businesses that shortlist Whittlesea as a location option 	<p>Foster strong partnerships with referring government agencies Invest VIC and Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be facilitated by a clear stakeholder engagement framework that sets out which levels and who to engage with various stakeholders, as well as when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number of businesses or organisations from priority sectors that shortlist Whittlesea as a location 	<p>Strengthen partnerships with regional advocacy and peak bodies such as Northern Council Alliance, Metropolitan Partnerships, as well as National Growth Areas Alliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key to successful partnership is defining and articulating Whittlesea’s roles and responsibilities via-a-vis other partners
	<p>Explore innovative ways to develop close working relationships with key State government departments relevant to economic development such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hosting state government representatives and offering them the opportunity to work out of Council’s office for a period of time
	<p>Strengthen communications with Federal MPs representing Whittlesea to facilitate their communication to Federal government on Whittlesea’s needs (including infrastructure and major projects)</p>
	<p>Communicate through business events, tailored website content and the media (business media, local community media, developer or investor-oriented media such as Urban Developer and Domain News):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengths of Whittlesea ▪ Support offered by Whittlesea to businesses ▪ Future availability of land and Whittlesea’s growth plans ▪ Major developments and proposals

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: ACTIONS AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Key Outcomes & Measures of Success	Recommended Actions
<p>Outcome 3: City of Whittlesea offers prospective businesses competitive packages.</p> <p>How Success will be Measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation by local businesses on Whittlesea’s level of business incentives/grants (measured by annual business sentiment survey) 	<p>Allocate budget to investment attraction that can be leveraged (subject to approval) to provide competitive and targeted business grants for new businesses considering relocating to Whittlesea or in priority sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitated by streamlined business grant approval process
	<p>Develop a Council incentive package targeted to priority investment attraction outcomes</p>
	<p>Review Priority Development Approval Process for eligible businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More effective and broader communication on this process ▪ Eligibility criteria should be clear and transparent ▪ Facilitated by a triaging panel that regularly meets to identify priority planning applications to fast-track
	<p>Broaden role of investment attraction officers and economic development officers to support businesses through the planning process.</p> <p>Alternatively, assign a dedicated planner to strategically facilitate investment attraction and business through the planning process from pre-application through to post permit.</p>
	<p>Communicate planning approval processes and timelines that Council can commit to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This offers businesses with procedural and timeline certainty, thereby winning their confidence. ▪ Communication and engagement should ideally begin pre-application.

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES & MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Key Outcomes & Measures of Success	Recommended Actions
<p>Outcome 4:</p> <p>More businesses are highly satisfied with their experience of relocating to City of Whittlesea.</p> <p>How Success will be Measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Satisfaction levels of newly relocated businesses/ organisations (as measured by post occupancy check-ins and/or surveys) 	<p>Conduct a post occupancy check-in with newly relocated businesses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome newly located businesses ▪ Connect them with Council services for their employees, local business support (including recruitment channels) and local business networks <p>Connect key incoming businesses with a dedicated relationship manager who engages with them throughout the relocation process to ensure it is smooth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This key relationship manager can be their main contact who regularly engages with them, moving forward. ▪ The relationship manager also plays an important ongoing role in connecting incoming businesses with opportunities in Whittlesea – business support, networking groups and events, recruitment channels. <p>Organise meet & greet by Council when businesses first relocate to Whittlesea</p>

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: ACTIONS AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Key Outcomes & Measures of Success	Recommended Actions
<p>Outcome 5:</p> <p>More existing businesses are highly satisfied with their experience in City of Whittlesea.</p> <p>How Success will be Measured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Satisfaction levels of local businesses (as measured by annual business sentiment surveys) 	<p>Establish an advisory panel comprising senior business leaders to provide suggestions and industry perspectives on development & implementation of growth strategies, and/or structure plans.</p>
	<p>Conduct quarterly Business & Economic forums (or roundtables) by sector or industry groupings to communicate Council's plans & progress (including on advocacy), future land availability, and to listen to businesses' needs.</p>
	<p>For key businesses, organise for Council to meet and greet with business' leadership team at least once a year, demonstrating commitment and stability of leadership.</p>
	<p>For key businesses, ensure that they have a relationship manager at City of Whittlesea they can contact whenever they are facing any challenges or issues. Regular catchups to be organised (frequency can be in discussion between relationship manager and businesses).</p>
	<p>Ensure regular communications (e.g. through emails or e-newsletters) about progress on plans & advocacy, recent initiatives or priorities, and City of Whittlesea's achievements.</p>
	<p>Conduct regular business sentiment or satisfaction survey to ensure existing businesses are satisfied and to identify areas for improvement. The business sentiment or satisfaction survey can seek business' feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Satisfaction of their employees with Council services ▪ Businesses' satisfaction with local business support and connections with the local business community
	<p>Expand current business concierge into a business desk who can assist existing businesses in a range of services such as grant document preparation, and access to talents through internships, workplace learning programs, and connecting into tertiary institutions.</p>
	<p>Advocate on behalf of businesses for important projects like Food Hub, renewable energy program for markets, improved infrastructure with State and government agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular updates can be provided at quarterly Business & Economic Forums. <p>Collaborate with stakeholders across business, education, employment and community services and all levels of Government to design and implement local solutions that link local employers to a suitably skilled workforce</p>

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Action No.	Actions and components	Year 1 2021/22	Year 2 2022/23	Year 3 2023/24	Year 4 2024/25	Year 5 2025/26
1	Investment Attraction Communications Framework – develop and ongoing implementation					
1.1	Determine and regularly update consistent messaging on the strengths of Whittlesea as a Council and as an investment destination (based on investment attraction report findings) for use in communications					
1.2	Prepare and implement digital media content strategy & plan for businesses and prospective investors, constituting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailored and prominent digital website content for businesses and investors, with targeted content for small to medium sized businesses, as well as larger investors and businesses ▪ Review business e-newsletter, enabling regular updates on progress and achievements in Whittlesea, recent initiatives ▪ Develop social media strategy (more frequent light touch, timely communication e.g. LinkedIn) for corporate posts, accompanied by social media principles that encourage Council to post updates on Council progress and achievements ▪ Determine and track digital media metrics used to measure effectiveness (clickthrough rates, shares, leads generated) 					
1.3	Prepare and implement media & PR strategy & plan that identifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key messages (based on Action 1.1) ▪ Media coverage targets ▪ Media to target including business media, local community media, developer or investor-oriented media such as Urban Developer and Domain News ▪ PR events to drive media coverage 					

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Action No.	Actions and components	Year 1 2021/22	Year 2 2022/23	Year 3 2023/24	Year 4 2024/25	Year 5 2025/26
2	Investment Attraction Partner Engagement & Advocacy Framework					
2.1	Develop stakeholder engagement framework which maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which level and/or function in Council to engage with each key stakeholder group: commercial agents, state government agencies, Federal Government, regional advocacy and peak bodies, education & training institutions, employment and community services ▪ Engagement objectives for each stakeholder group ▪ Engagement frequency for each stakeholder group ▪ Advocacy priorities & plan 					
2.2	Prepare stakeholder engagement plan for each stakeholder group which includes speaking opportunities, trade shows, conferences, major industry events, and other innovative ways to strengthen working relationships					

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Action No.	Actions and components	Year 1 2021/22	Year 2 2022/23	Year 3 2023/24	Year 4 2024/25	Year 5 2025/26
3	Business Engagement & Support Framework – develop and ongoing implementation					
3.1	Develop business engagement framework which maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which level and/or function in Council to engage with which business group based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sectors - Size of businesses (e.g. large businesses, small-to-medium sized businesses) - Stages along the investment journey (e.g. newly relocated businesses, existing businesses) 					
3.2	Plan and implement business engagement activities which detail business engagement and initiatives to support framework including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attending and hosting of business events, networking functions, business awards, trade shows, conferences and training programs to strengthen networks with industry ▪ Advisory panel comprising senior business leaders to provide suggestions and industry perspectives on development & implementation of growth strategies, and/or structure plans ▪ Quarterly Business & Economic forums (or roundtables) ▪ Meet-and-greet by Council (newly relocated businesses and on an annual basis for existing key businesses) 					
3.3	Expand business concierge to a business support desk that can assist existing businesses in a range of services such as grant document preparation, and access to talents through internships, workplace learning programs, and connecting into tertiary institutions					

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Action No.	Actions and components	Year 1 2021/22	Year 2 2022/23	Year 3 2023/24	Year 4 2024/25	Year 5 2025/26
4	Council grants and incentives package					
4.1	Review existing business grants program including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target businesses (whether by scale or sector) ▪ Supporting workforce/employment planning (and how program translates into local jobs) ▪ Budget allocated ▪ Business grant approval process (eligibility, steps in approval process, timeframe, decision-making mechanisms) 					
4.2	Investigate business incentives program including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target businesses (whether by scale or sector) ▪ Supporting workforce/employment planning (and how program translates into local jobs) ▪ Budget allocated ▪ Types of incentives (a menu of incentives) ▪ Business incentives approval process (eligibility, steps in approval process, timeframe, decision-making mechanisms) 					
4.3	Launch updated annual business grants and incentives program					

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Action No.	Actions and components	Year 1 2021/22	Year 2 2022/23	Year 3 2023/24	Year 4 2024/25	Year 5 2025/26
5	Enhance planning support and planning assessment service levels					
5.1	Review and implement updated Priority Development Approval Process for eligible businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More effective and broader communication on this process ▪ Eligibility criteria should be clear and transparent ▪ Facilitated by a triaging panel that regularly meets to identify priority planning applications to fast-track 					
5.2	Review case management support role of Economic Development officers, Investment Attraction officers or dedicated planner(s) within Investment Attraction to strategically facilitate investment attraction and business through the planning process from pre-application through to post permit.					
5.3	Develop communication strategy and plan to ensure that enhanced planning support and service levels are communicated across Council and to businesses and investors					

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Action No.	Actions and components	Year 1 2021/22	Year 2 2022/23	Year 3 2023/24	Year 4 2024/25	Year 5 2025/26
6	Evaluation and Monitoring Frameworks					
6.1	<p>Develop evaluation and monitoring frameworks & mechanisms including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post-occupancy survey measures ▪ Business sentiment survey measures ▪ Investment Attraction Plan outcome measures ▪ Efficacy of communications, advocacy and engagement approaches ▪ Planning assessment service level measures (such as timeframes) <p>The above should consider alignment with other Council survey initiatives. They should also feed into economic indicators relevant to this plan – for instance measures for economic development strategy such as jobs created.</p>					
6.2	<p>Develop plan for collection of monitoring data including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How surveys are disseminated (and how often) ▪ How data that relates to measures can be most effectively and efficiently collected and analysed ▪ Whether there are any softwares and applications to drive efficiency of data collection and analysis 					
6.3	<p>Develop plan for reporting of data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How often ▪ To who ▪ How data reported is to be acted upon 					

APPENDIX A: PRIORITISATION OF ACTIONS

This section details the prioritisation of actions, considering:

- Implementation score
- Council feedback
- Urbis' view on feasibility of implementing in the short term, as well as strategic importance

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 1

More businesses are aware of City of Whittlesea’s strengths and seek information or advice from City of Whittlesea when defining their business growth needs

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
<p>Develop consistent messaging on the strengths of Whittlesea as a Council and as an investment destination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council that is supportive, pro-active and forward-thinking (vision guiding investment attraction plan) ▪ Opportunity sectors ▪ Emerging employment hubs and town centre/activity developments ▪ Proximity and access to CBD ▪ Upcoming developable land supply with access to services and infrastructure 	High	Low	High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority in Council workshops, hence identified as being a high priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis’ inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22 – drives all other communication efforts and feasible to implement in the short-term.</i></p>
<p>Develop prominent and tailored digital website content for businesses and prospective investors. Content should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on running and operating a business for small to medium sized businesses ▪ Information relevant to larger investors and businesses such as upcoming developable land supply with access to services & infrastructure, major proposals and developments, economic and demographic profile of Whittlesea to facilitate business case preparation. 	82%	62%	Score of 1.3 (above 100%) High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops, also with a high (above 100% implementation score), hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis’ inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22 – supports investment attraction efforts and feasible to implement in the short-term.</i></p>
<p>Ensure that dedicated Investment Attraction officers and Senior Investment Advisor are accessible to businesses & investors, and proactively seeking out investment and growth opportunities for Whittlesea</p>	78%	82%	0.9. High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Implementation score is also fairly high (90%). Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis’ inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22 (subject to candidates) – the investment attraction team serves as the front line in investment attraction efforts.</i></p>

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PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 1 (CONT'D)

More businesses are aware of City of Whittlesea’s strengths and seek information or advice from City of Whittlesea when defining their business growth needs

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
Council attendance at, and hosting of, business events, networking functions, business awards, trade shows, conferences and training programs to strengthen networks with industry	66%	64%	1.0. High – an immediate priority.	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Implementation score is also high (around 100%). Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis’ inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22 – the investment attraction team serves as the front line in investment attraction efforts. Hence it is strategically important that they are well-connected with industry.</i></p>
Regular business e-newsletter open for subscription, providing regular updates on progress and achievements in Whittlesea	58%	40%	1.5. High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Implementation score is also high (above 100%) – a quick win. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis’ inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22 – there is already an existing business e-newsletter, hence a quick win, which requires only a review of content.</i></p>
Develop a social media strategy (more frequent light touch, timely communication e.g. LinkedIn) for corporate posts, accompanied by social media principles that encourage Council to post updates on Council progress and achievements	High	Low	High – an immediate priority.	<p>This was suggested as part of post workshop feedback on draft investment attraction plan. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis’ inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22 – feasible to implement in the short term and can achieve a multiplier effect by leveraging professional networks of Council.</i></p>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 2

More businesses shortlist City of Whittlesea as one of their location options

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
Build on and strengthen relationships with commercial agents who can introduce prospective businesses seeking a new location	86%	48%	2.2. High – an immediate priority	Wasn't specifically discussed; however, given its high implementation score (>100%), a quick win. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Whittlesea has existing relationships with commercial agents hence it is relatively easy to build on them in the short term.</i>
Foster strong partnerships with referring government agencies Invest VIC and Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be facilitated by a clear stakeholder engagement framework that sets out which levels and who to engage with various stakeholders, as well as when 	90%	56%	1.6. High – an immediate priority	This was a suggested priority in Council workshops. Also has a high implementation score. Hence identified as a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Linkages and partnerships with referral state government agencies are critical to raising the profile of Whittlesea. Hence this action is of high strategic importance.</i>
Strengthen partnerships with regional advocacy and peak bodies such as Northern Council Alliance, Metropolitan Partnerships, as well as National Growth Areas Alliance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key to successful partnership is defining and articulating Whittlesea's roles and responsibilities via-a-vis other partners 	High	Low	High – an immediate priority	This was suggested as part of post workshop feedback on draft investment attraction plan. Hence identified as a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Linkages and partnerships with advocacy and peak bodies are strategically important to drive greater scale of advocacy efforts, which ultimately enhance the Region's attractiveness as an investment destination, including Whittlesea.</i>
Explore innovative ways to develop close working relationships with key State government departments relevant to economic development such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosting state government representatives and offering them the opportunity to work out of Council's office for a period of time 	High	Low	High – an immediate priority	This was suggested as part of post workshop feedback on draft investment attraction plan. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Linkages and partnerships with referral state government agencies are critical to raising the profile of Whittlesea. Hence this action is of high strategic importance.</i>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 2 (CONT'D)

More businesses shortlist City of Whittlesea as one of their location options

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
Strengthen communications with Federal MPs representing Whittlesea to facilitate their communication to Federal government on Whittlesea's needs (including infrastructure and major projects)	High	Low	High – an immediate priority	<p>This was incorporated in response to post workshop feedback on how Federal government can be engaged. Hence identified as a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Linkages and partnerships with Federal government are critical to advocating Whittlesea's needs particularly around infrastructure and major projects that enhance attractiveness of Whittlesea. Hence this action is of high strategic importance.</i></p>
<p>Communicate through business events, tailored website content and the media (business media, local community media, developer or investor-oriented media such as Urban Developer and Domain News):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengths of Whittlesea ▪ Support offered by Whittlesea to businesses ▪ Future availability of land and Whittlesea's growth plans ▪ Major developments and proposals 	78%	52%	1.5. High – an immediate priority	<p>Wasn't specifically discussed; however, given its high implementation score (>100%), a quick win. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Strategically important to raise the profile of Whittlesea. Also leverages on existing communication functions, hence feasible to implement in the short term.</i></p>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 3

City of Whittlesea offers prospective businesses competitive packages.

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
<p>Allocate budget to investment attraction that can be leveraged (subject to approval) to provide competitive and targeted business grants for new businesses considering relocating to Whittlesea or in priority sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated by streamlined business grant approval process <p>Develop a Council incentive package targeted to priority investment attraction outcomes</p>	70%	82%	0.85. High – however, could be implemented over medium to long term	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Implementation score is also fairly high. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Whilst important, Urbis suggests that this can be implemented in the medium to long term. Key external stakeholders consulted identified that business incentives were good-to-haves but less of a decision-making factor than other actions. That said, other Council's business incentive programs should be monitored and Whittlesea needs to ensure it is competitive.</i></p>
<p>Review Priority Development Approval Process for eligible businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More effective and broader communication on this process Eligibility criteria should be clear and transparent Facilitated by a triaging panel that regularly meets to identify priority planning applications to fast-track 	84%	66%	1.3. High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Implementation score is also high (around 100%). Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This was highlighted as being important for external key stakeholders. Also, other growth areas are enhancing their planning assessment levels. Therefore, this action is strategically important to ensure that Whittlesea remains competitive.</i></p>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 3 (CONT'D)

City of Whittlesea offers prospective businesses competitive packages.

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
<p>Broaden role of investment attraction officers and economic development officers to support businesses through the planning process.</p> <p>Alternatively, assign a dedicated planner to strategically facilitate investment attraction and business through the planning process from pre-application through to post permit.</p>	High	Moderate	High – an immediate priority	<p>This was suggested as part of post workshop feedback on draft investment attraction plan. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This was highlighted as being important for external key stakeholders. Also, other growth areas are enhancing their planning assessment levels. Therefore, this action is strategically important to ensure that Whittlesea remains competitive.</i></p>
<p>Communicate planning approval processes and timelines that Council can commit to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This offers businesses with procedural and timeline certainty, thereby winning their confidence. ▪ Communication and engagement should ideally begin pre-application. 	82%	64%	1.3. High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Implementation score is also high (around 100%). Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This was highlighted as being important for external key stakeholders. Also, other growth areas are enhancing their planning assessment levels. Therefore, this action is strategically important to ensure that Whittlesea remains competitive.</i></p>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 4

More businesses are highly satisfied with their experience of relocating to City of Whittlesea

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
<p>Conduct a post occupancy check-in with newly relocated businesses to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome newly located businesses ▪ Connect them with Council services for their employees, local business support (including recruitment channels) and local business networks 	82%	48%	1.7. High – an immediate priority.	<p>Wasn't specifically discussed; however, given its high implementation score (>100%), a quick win. Hence identified as a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This is strategically important to measure effectiveness of actions. Also, it is relatively easy to implement in the short-term particularly through digital channels.</i></p>
<p>Connect key incoming businesses with a dedicated relationship manager who engages with them throughout the relocation process to ensure it is smooth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This key relationship manager can be their main contact who regularly engages with them, moving forward. ▪ The relationship manager also plays an important ongoing role in connecting incoming businesses with opportunities in Whittlesea – business support, networking groups and events, recruitment channels. 	88%	62%	1.7. High – however, could be implemented over medium to long term	<p>Wasn't specifically discussed; however, given its high implementation score (>100%), a quick win. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Whilst important, Urbis suggests that this can be implemented over the medium to long term. Accessible investment attraction and economic development teams can offer good levels of service in the meantime.</i></p>
<p>Organise meet & greet by Council when businesses first relocate to Whittlesea</p>	82%	58%	1.7. High – an immediate priority.	<p>Wasn't specifically discussed; however, given its high implementation score (>100%), a quick win. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Key external stakeholders mentioned that consistent, stable leadership is important in providing them with confidence. This is therefore strategically important.</i></p>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 5

More existing businesses are highly satisfied with their experience in City of Whittlesea

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
Establish an advisory panel comprising senior business leaders to provide suggestions and industry perspectives on development & implementation of growth strategies, and/or structure plans.	82%	50%	1.6. High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Post workshop feedback advised that this is of high strategic importance. Implementation score is also high (above 100%). Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This was identified as being important to key external stakeholders. Council have also expressed that this is of high strategic importance.</i></p>
Conduct quarterly Business & Economic forums (or roundtables) by sector or industry groupings to communicate Council's plans & progress (including on advocacy), future land availability, and to listen to businesses' needs.	70%	50%	1.7. High – an immediate priority	<p>This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Implementation score is also high (above 100%). Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Regular communication was identified by key external stakeholders as being important to them. This is therefore of high strategic importance.</i></p>
For key businesses, organise for Council to meet and greet with business' leadership team at least once a year, demonstrating commitment and stability.	64%	60%	1.1. High – an immediate priority	<p>Wasn't specifically discussed at Council workshops; however, given its high implementation score (>100%), a quick win. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority.</p> <p><i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. Key external stakeholders mentioned that consistent, stable support is important in offering them confidence. This is therefore strategically important.</i></p>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 5 (CONT'D)

More existing businesses are highly satisfied with their experience in City of Whittlesea

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
For key businesses, ensure that they have a relationship manager at City of Whittlesea they can contact whenever they are facing any challenges or issues. Regular catchups to be organised (frequency can be in discussion between relationship manager and businesses).	84%	High	High – however, could be implemented over medium to long term	Wasn't specifically discussed at Council workshops; however, given its high priority score, coupled with key external stakeholder feedback on anticipating regular engagement between Council officers and working level staff in local businesses, identified as a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Whilst important, Urbis suggests that this can be implemented over the medium to long term. Accessible investment attraction and economic development teams can offer good levels of service in the meantime.</i>
Ensure regular communications (e.g. through emails or e-newsletters) about progress on plans & advocacy, recent initiatives or priorities, and City of Whittlesea's achievements.	68%	Low	High – an immediate priority	This was discussed at Council workshops. Also possible to leverage on current communication channels hence relatively low budget requirements. A quick win – therefore identified as a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. A quick win, since it leverages on existing communications resources and channels.</i>
Conduct regular business sentiment or satisfaction survey to ensure existing businesses are satisfied and to identify areas for improvement. The business sentiment or satisfaction survey can seek business' feedback on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Satisfaction of their employees with Council services ▪ Businesses' satisfaction with local business support and connections with the local business community 	62%	40%	1.6. High – an immediate priority	Wasn't specifically discussed; however, this is important for measurement of actions' effectiveness. Implementation score is also high (above 100%). Hence identified as a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This is of strategic importance because it enables measurement of actions' effectiveness.</i>

PRIORITISATION BETWEEN ACTIONS: OUTCOME 5 (CONT'D)

More existing businesses are highly satisfied with their experience in City of Whittlesea

Recommended Actions	Priority Rating	Budget Rating	Implementation Score	Council /Urbis Feedback
Expand current business concierge into a business desk who can assist existing businesses in a range of services such as grant document preparation, and access to talents through internships, workplace learning programs, and connecting into tertiary institutions.	70%	High	High – an immediate priority	This was a suggested priority at Council workshops. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This action offers wider support to local businesses (large, medium and small), hence of strategic importance in facilitating business growth.</i>
Advocate on behalf of businesses for important projects like Food Hub, renewable energy program for markets, improved infrastructure with State and government agencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates can be provided at quarterly Business & Economic Forums. 	88%	Moderate	High – an immediate priority	This action addresses key external stakeholders' feedback on anticipating Council to proactively advocate for major infrastructure and projects. It was also discussed at Council workshops. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This is of strategic importance, given it was identified as being important to key external stakeholders. However, equally important is prioritising between infrastructure and projects to advocate for. Urbis suggests to weight efforts towards large scale infrastructure projects and projects that are in relatively more advanced planning stages (hence closer to realisation).</i>
Collaborate with stakeholders across business, education, employment and community services and all levels of Government to design and implement local solutions that link local employers to a suitably skilled workforce	High	Low	High – an immediate priority	This was suggested as part of post workshop feedback on draft investment attraction plan. Hence identified as being a high, immediate priority. <i>Urbis' inputs on implementation timeframe: Suggest to implement within FY2021/22. This is of strategic importance, given it ultimately links jobs created with local residents.</i>

APPENDIX B: POLICY CONTEXT

This section summarises key policies relevant to City of Whittlesea's Investment Attraction Plan, covering:

- **Key Policy 1** - Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All
- **Key Policy 2** - City of Whittlesea's Economic Development Strategy
- **Key Policy 3** - NORTH Link: Unlocking high value jobs in Melbourne's North
- **Key Policy 4** - The Future Workforce: Melbourne's North
- **Key Policy 5** - Food & Beverage Growth Plan: Melbourne's North

KEY POLICY 1 - WHITTLESEA 2040: A PLACE FOR ALL

- Whittlesea 2040 represents the long-term vision for City of Whittlesea, which guides every aspect of Council’s work and partnerships.
- The investment attraction plan is therefore guided by Whittlesea 2040’s goals and key directions.
- A key driving force of the investment attraction plan is Whittlesea 2040’s Goal 3: Strong local economy, achieved through increased local employment, education opportunities for all and successful, innovative local businesses.

OVERVIEW OF WHITTLESEA 2040

- Whittlesea 2040 represents the long-term vision for City of Whittlesea, that directs every aspect of Council’s work and partnerships.
- It was created in consultation with the community and supported by background research and Council workshops.
- To achieve this vision, Whittlesea 2040 sets out four goals, each with key directions (summarised in the table adjacent).
- These goals and directions guide the investment attraction plan.
- The key driving force is Goal 3: Strong local economy, realised through increased local employment, education opportunities for all and successful, innovative local businesses.
- Other relevant trends identified by Whittlesea 2040 and considered by the investment attraction plan are:
 - Recognition that residents and the local economy need to transition towards new economy sectors
 - Growing concerns around climate change and therefore a desire for sustainable living
 - The need for a variety of local jobs, supported by quality education facilities that offer residents with requisite training
 - Desire for quality infrastructure, namely road and public transport connections, to meet the needs of a fast-growing population
 - Acknowledgement that investment in local business and innovation is critical

SUMMARY OF WHITTLESEA 2040 GOALS & KEY DIRECTIONS

To address trends identified and resident needs, Whittlesea 2040 established the following goals and priority indicators:

Goals	Key Directions
Goal 1: Connected Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A socially cohesive community ▪ A healthy and safe community ▪ A participating community
Goal 2: Liveable Neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Smart, connected transport network ▪ Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres ▪ Housing for diverse needs
Goal 3: Strong Local Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased local employment ▪ Education opportunities for all ▪ Successful, innovative local businesses
Goal 4: Sustainable Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity ▪ Climate ready ▪ Leaders in clean, sustainable living

Sources: Whittlesea 2040 – A Place for All (City of Whittlesea); Whittlesea 2040 – Background Paper (SGS Economics & Planning); Whittlesea 2040 – Community Engagement Summary Report (City of Whittlesea)

KEY POLICY 2 - CITY OF WHITTLESEA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

- City of Whittlesea’s Economic Development Strategy drives Council’s economic development function and plans.
- Investment attraction is an economic development activity that facilitates economic growth and employment generation.
- The investment attraction plan has therefore been developed to support the Economic Development Strategy’s directions and goals.

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY

- City of Whittlesea’s Economic Development Strategy is the overarching strategy that drives Council’s economic development function and plans, including the investment attraction plan.
- City of Whittlesea developed this strategy in 2017, to realise the vision of an additional 10,000 jobs by 2021.
- The strategy was informed by consultation with the local business community, tertiary institutions, neighbouring councils, developers, traders associations, retail centres, regional partners, state and federal agencies and key Council staff, along with priorities outlined in the Community and Council Plans.
- Its directions and goals (summarised in the table adjacent) guide the investment attraction plan.
- Other relevant trends identified by the strategy and considered by the investment attraction plan are:
 - Businesses expressing that they want to feel connected with and supported by Council.
 - Access to information is imperative for businesses & investors, particularly on transport accessibility (roads and public transport), amenity, workforce demographics, incentives, industry and employment trends
 - The need for links between education institutions and industry to ensure relevance and employability of graduates
 - An increased desire to work from home – hence a need for connectivity, coworking spaces

Source: City of Whittlesea’s Economic Development Strategy 2017-21

Prepared for City of Whittlesea

SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Directions	Goals
Strive to build a healthy, prosperous, resilient community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support business community in a coordinated way, with the right programs, events & networking opportunities ▪ Support new & emerging businesses by facilitating establishment of business incubator & co working spaces, and delivering the right education programs & resources ▪ Map and attract opportunities for future workforce needs ▪ Track business engagement so relationships are maintained
Foster an environment that encourages a vibrant local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase number of local businesses providing goods & services to Council by 10% by 2021 ▪ Cut red tape by introducing case management model – a seamless, centralised & integrated business liaison process ▪ Develop priority application approval process for developments that trigger jobs & investment ▪ Collaborate internally to establish a risk based approach to compliance and enforcement ▪ Collaborate to actively promote and attract investment to Epping Central ▪ Facilitate three viable social enterprises by 2021.
Capitalise on the city’s human, natural & business resources to maximise local employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural land to be protected from urban growth – support agribusiness sector ▪ Position as a nationally significant food hub ▪ Collaborate with operators and land owners to promote natural and built attractions
Promote the municipality as an attractive place to invest, work, live, and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an investment prospectus for the City of Whittlesea ▪ Actively engage developers & government to attract investment and jobs ▪ Celebrate business success & diversity ▪ Actively strengthen & promote local visitor economy ▪ Support local food manufacturers to increase their profiles & export rates
Collaborate with business, government and community to deliver resources & opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate with NORTH Link & State Government to develop and implement a regional investment attraction strategy for Melbourne’s North ▪ Develop a business case for a City Deal for Melbourne’s North ▪ Facilitate improved connectivity to data communications

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KEY POLICY 3: NORTH LINK – UNLOCKING HIGH VALUE JOBS IN MELBOURNE’S NORTH

- This document assessed current and future industrial land available for development in Melbourne’s North (including City of Whittlesea).
- The assessment is relevant to the investment attraction plan as it identifies enablers and barriers to supply of developable industrial land which can accommodate new and growing businesses.
- The key enablers for City of Whittlesea are employment precincts Cooper Street West and Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal (BIFT), which offer a significant share of developable industrial land (current and future) in Melbourne’s North.
- Delivery of supporting infrastructure at BIFT is critical to unlocking its industrial land supply, highlighting the importance of infrastructure advocacy to investment attraction.
- These enablers and barriers are addressed in the investment plan.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT

- Ernst & Young was engaged by NORTH Link to provide an assessment (dated Sep 2020) of current and future industrial land available for development in Melbourne’s North (including City of Whittlesea), based on:
 - Infrastructure connectivity and serviceability
 - Remaining supply of existing zoned land
 - Supply of land earmarked for future rezoning to industrial use
- Supply of developable industrial land in Melbourne’s North is summarised in the adjacent table.
- The assessment is relevant to the investment attraction plan as it identifies the following enablers and barriers to supply of developable industrial land that can accommodate new and growing businesses in City of Whittlesea.
- These barriers and enablers are addressed in the investment attraction plan:
 - Barriers include constraints around connectivity to existing transport network and services, uncertainty over delivery of major projects, inappropriate lot sizing and planning readiness.
 - City of Whittlesea’s key enablers are employment precincts Cooper Street West and Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal (BIFT), which offer a significant share of developable industrial land supply in Melbourne’s North.
 - Infrastructure advocacy is also highlighted as critical to unlocking BIFT’s developable industrial land supply, which requires services and supporting infrastructure drivers.

Source: *Unlocking high value jobs in Melbourne’s north (Ernst & Young, 2020)*

SUMMARY OF AVAILABLE DEVELOPABLE LAND IN MELBOURNE’S NORTH

Sub-precincts	Vacant Land – Ha. (zoned)	Future Land - Ha. (unzoned)
Mickleham	128	96
Cooper Street	50	0
Somerton – Cooper Street West	300	280
Thomastown	1	0
Craigieburn North	595	240
Melbourne Airport	0	0
Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal	0	800
Total	1,074	1,416

KEY POLICY 4: THE FUTURE WORKFORCE – MELBOURNE’S NORTH

- This document assessed employment skills in Melbourne’s North (including City of Whittlesea).
- The assessment is relevant to the investment attraction plan as it identifies enablers and barriers to a skilled local workforce who can support new and growing businesses in Melbourne’s North (including City of Whittlesea).
- The key enabler is a growing culture of education which is fostering an increasingly educated resident population.
- However, local businesses in Melbourne’s North are facing recruitment challenges due to poor links between education institutions and industry, as well as low levels of apprenticeship.
- The investment plan addresses these enablers and barriers.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT

- In 2015, NORTH Link, in partnership with local governments and education institutions in Melbourne’s North, engaged National Institute of Economic & Industry Research (NIEIR) to assess employment skills in Melbourne’s North.
- The assessment is relevant because it identifies a potential barrier to investment attraction in Melbourne’s North (including City of Whittlesea):
 - Relatively poor links between education institutions and industry have resulted in local businesses facing recruitment challenges.
- This highlights the importance of education & training institutions as stakeholders in investment attraction.
- Education & training institutions have therefore been consulted as part of developing the investment attraction plan.
- The investment attraction plan also addresses the need for stronger connections between education & training institutions, and local businesses.
- Whilst the assessment proposes sector opportunities such as Victorian Government priority sectors (indicated adjacent), the investment attraction plan is tailored to sector opportunities at a more local City of Whittlesea level (discussed in the next section).

Source: *The Future Workforce – Melbourne’s North*

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO ENHANCE SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY

-  Leverage Victorian Government Priority Sectors
-  Focus development on highest value adding sectors (typically high-tech)
-  Encourage local businesses to adopt modern technologies & business models
-  Encourage continual improvement of resident skills
-  Grow exports of products & services
-  Develop clusters of excellence – industry/research
-  Fast track infrastructure investment

KEY POLICY 5: FOOD & BEVERAGE GROWTH PLAN – MELBOURNE’S NORTH

- This plan is a regional strategic growth plan for the food & beverage (F&B) sector in Melbourne’s North (including City of Whittlesea)
- It is relevant to the investment attraction plan as it identifies enablers and barriers to investment attraction in the food & beverage sector, which is a key sector in City of Whittlesea.
- The key enabler is Melbourne Market’s central role as a major fresh produce market that connects buyers and sellers across the food &

beverage sector.

- However, food & beverage businesses face challenges with networking and sharing of ideas, innovation, as well as recruitment.
- The investment plan addresses these enablers and barriers.

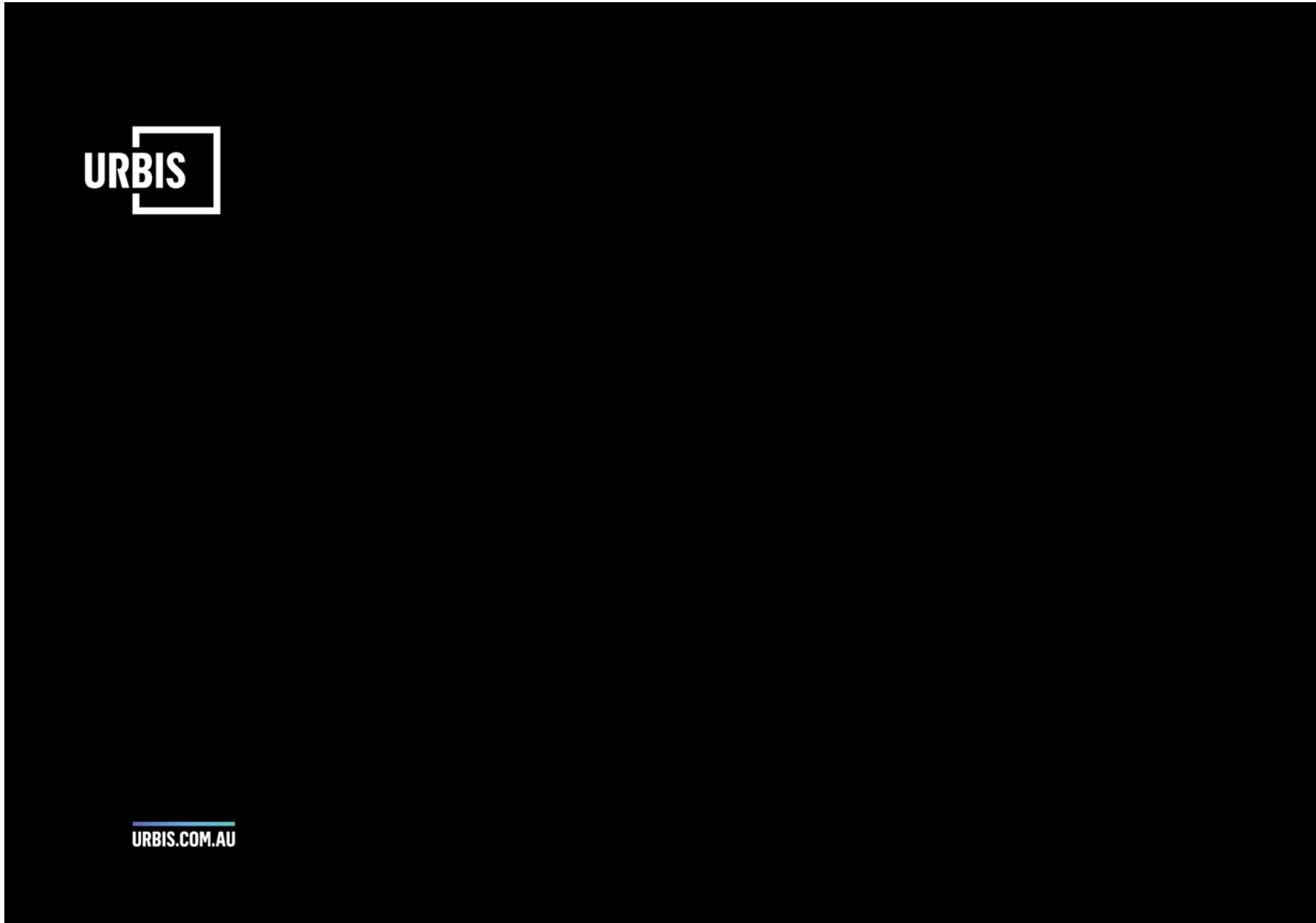
OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT

- In 2014, the Northern Melbourne Regional Development Australia Committee and its partners developed the “Food & Beverage Growth Plan: Melbourne’s North”, a regional strategic growth plan for the food & beverage (F&B) sector in Melbourne’s North (including City of Whittlesea).
- The plan’s proposed strategy is summarised in the table adjacent.
- This plan is relevant because firstly, it recognises City of Whittlesea’s strengths in the food & beverage sector:
 - Epping-based Melbourne Market’s central role as a major fresh produce market that connects buyers and sellers in the food & beverage sector
 - After only Hume, Whittlesea offers the highest business value added (wages, salaries, business income) from F&B manufacturing.
 - Compared with other LGAs in Melbourne’s North, employment in Whittlesea’s F&B sector is relatively more diversified across Meat, Bakery, Dairy. Other Food & Grain & Cereal sectors were also experiencing strong job growth.
- The F&B sector was therefore consulted as part of developing the investment attraction plan.
- Further, the plan identifies enablers and barriers to investment attraction in the F&B sector (summarised adjacent), which the investment plan addresses.

Source: Food & Beverage Growth Plan – Melbourne’s North

STRATEGY MAP

Challenge Addressed	Strategy
Cultural unwillingness by businesses to network, cooperate & share ideas	Grow industry connections and capability
Underinvestment in R&D which is needed for the F&B sector to be internationally competitive	Drive innovation and product differentiation
Challenges recruiting managerial staff and labour with relevant skillsets, graduates from relevant courses in education institutions are seen as not being “job-ready”	Address skills development and labour availability
The opportunity to attract more F&B companies as some global companies may relocate overseas	Position Melbourne’s North as a Food & Beverage Hub



6.4 SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

ITEM 6.4.1 FOR DECISION - COOPER STREET WEST RESOURCE RECOVERY HUB - PROPOSALS TO LEASE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME

Attachments:	1	Site Plan ↓
	2	Proposed Occupancies Site Plan ↓
Responsible Officer:	Director Corporate Services	
Author:	Consultant	

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Council resolve following the completion of the community engagement process in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's *Community Engagement Policy*, to enter into leases on its properties at 480 Cooper Street and at 335-355 O'Herns Road, Epping.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

- Council presently holds two lease agreements within the Cooper Street Hub that are approaching expiry in 2021 (at 480 Cooper Street) and 2022 (at 335-355 O'Herns Road).
- Prior to entering new lease agreements, it was decided to take the opportunity to ensure Council's significant land holdings within the Cooper Street Hub are contributing to positive environmental outcomes. An industry wide Expression of Interest (EOI) has been undertaken.
- The EOI process related solely to the occupation and leasing of Council owned property within the Cooper Street Hub, negotiation of waste disposal contracts has been managed by a separate procurement activity.
- Three viable submissions were received in response to the EOI process.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The intention to lease Council properties was presented to Council at its meeting on 4 May 2021 and was followed by a community engagement process.

A lengthy process was undertaken to source the best combination of occupiers at the Council owned property known as the Cooper Street Waste & Resource Recovery Hub (CSRRH). The proposed leases will be subject to appropriate terms and conditions including the specification and formalisation of in-kind benefits.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The proposed agreements will not only deliver financial benefit to Council but will continue current and expand on future recycling programs benefitting the Whittlesea community.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Council officers will continually monitor terms and conditions to ensure best practices and services to the community are maintained during the lease period.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

Council owns the properties known as 480 Cooper Street, Epping, and 335-355 O’Herns Road, Epping (totalling 77Ha) (*Attachment 1 – Site Plan*). The two sites are predominantly vacant land with part of the property being a landfill site with gas extraction facilities still in place, whilst the balance is made up of internal roads and hardstand areas.

An integral part of delivering a cohesive and integrated waste and resource recovery system is the concept of waste and resource recovery hubs. A hub is a facility, or group of facilities, that manage or recover waste or material streams. Hubs are described across three levels, state, regional and local. A hub of state significance can be part of a broader industrial or employment precinct. The Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan 2016 (Metro Implementation Plan) and Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan (SWRRIP) identifies 14 Hubs of State Importance within metropolitan Melbourne. These plans identify the Cooper Street Precinct in Epping as a Hub of State and Metropolitan importance.

Council presently holds two lease agreements within the CSRRH with operators that provide, amongst other services, organic and construction & demolition (C & D) materials processing. These leases are approaching expiry in 2021 (at 480 Cooper Street) and 2022 (at 335-355 O’Herns Road). The expiry of these leases presented Council with an opportunity to reflect on the contribution its significant land holdings within the Cooper Street Hub could make to our local and regional environmental outcomes. To this end it was decided that an Expression of Interest (EOI) process would be used to identify the most suitable lessee(s).

Expression of Interest - Initial Assessment

Seven formal submissions received in response to the EOI were assessed using the matrix below. Four were shortlisted for further consideration.

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting	VEOLIA	EcoSmart	Re-purpose it	ACM	Biolektra	Closed Loop	New Soil
Maximise resource recovery in the region, reducing quantities of waste going to landfill.	20%	2.3	0.5	1.8	0.5	4.1	1.4	0.5
Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.	20%	2.3	0.5	1.8	0.5	4.1	1.4	0.5
Support for innovation.	10%	3	3	4	5	4	4	2
Increase employment opportunities for WCC residents (also disadvantaged members of the community).	5%	1	2	2	1	3	4	1
Benefits to Council and community.	20%	1	4	4	4	3	2	3
Best practice standards.	10%	3	3	3	4	4	3	3
Skill, experience and capacity.	10%	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
Utilisation of available land.	5%	2	3	4	2	2	2	2
Acknowledgement of land constraints and any necessary infrastructure upgrades.								
Financial viability.	10%	1	5	5	5	5	5	5
Contribution to Council’s future vision.	10%	4	4	4	4	3	3	1
	100%	2.4	3.1	3.6	3.3	3.8	2.9	2.4
<i>Estimated Precinct Investment</i>		<i>MAUDs</i>	<i>\$4M</i>	<i>MAUDs</i>	<i>\$6M</i>	<i>\$120M</i>	<i>MAUDs</i>	<i>\$1M</i>
		Subject to waste contracts	Mostly on private property	Solar farm not finalised	Total project estimate			

The four shortlisted applicants were asked to present to the working group in order to further clarify details of their submission. At that stage Bioelektra withdrew their interest when officers restated that Council’s waste service contracts were subject to separate tender processes and therefore feedstock from Council’s waste operations would not be guaranteed. Presentations were provided by the three remaining applicants in late March 2020.

In-Kind Benefits

The remaining three applicants became the focus of further consideration, predominantly to determine, in addition to a site rental to be paid to Council, what in-kind benefits they might provide to Council and the community (e.g. landfill diversion, resident vouchers for drop-off of green waste and other materials, processing of contractor materials such as parks maintenance green waste, etc.).

- Suez, Ecodynamics, Smart Recycling, Salvos Stores Consortium (SESS)
 - Expressing interest in Cooper Street
- Repurpose It (RPI)
 - Expressing interest in Cooper Street and O’Herns B
- Aurora Construction Materials (ACM).
 - Expressing interest in O’Herns B

The table below shows which applicant’s proposed uses are likely to provide in-kind benefits. Only proposed uses on Cooper Street and/or O’Herns A, B, and C were considered.

PROPOSED SITE USES	IN-KIND BENEFIT OPPORTUNITY?	COOPER STREET			O’HERNS A & C			O’HERNS B		
		ECOSMART	RPI	ACM	ECOSMART	RPI	ACM	ECOSMART	RPI	ACM
FOGO: Open windrow	YES		Existing							
FOGO: In-vessel	YES		Planned / proposed							
Timber recovery and recycling	YES	Existing								
Soil blending	YES				Planned / proposed					
C&D materials	YES				Planned / proposed					Existing
Retail [garden]			Planned / proposed							
Building material re-use	YES				Planned / proposed					
Timber pallet collection, repair, re-use	YES	Existing								
Solar farm										Planned / proposed
Contribution to utilities upgrades	YES	Planned / proposed	Planned / proposed							
Road maintenance	YES	Planned / proposed	Planned / proposed							Planned / proposed

It is worth noting that RPI have pre-existing plans to construct in-vessel FOGO facilities on their property at 460 Cooper Street.

Applicant Lease Proposal

The table below shows the general lease terms being sought by the remaining three applicants.

	480 COOPER STREET Lease Areas 2 and 3	480 COOPER STREET Lease Areas 1 and 4	335-355 O'HERNS ROAD 'B'	335-355 O'HERNS ROAD 'A' & 'C'
Tenant	Repurpose It [RPI]	EcoSmart	Aurora Construction Materials [ACM]	Repurpose It [RPI]
Term [TBC]	10 + 10	10 + 10	10 + 10	10 + 10
Annual Rent [ex GST]	\$45,944 → \$300,000 ^{NB1}	\$40,000 → \$58,244	\$45,770.74 → \$71,84.22	\$50,000 → \$110,834.43
Investment	\$TBC ^{NB3} Drop-off / Transfer facilities	\$4,052,500 General plant and equipment.	\$6,000,000 Budget estimate for Solar farm project [under development]. ^{NB7}	\$TBC Hardstand and minor infrastructure.

Waste Processing Services	Council Resident			Council Resident			Council Resident			Council Resident		
	Processed?	In-Kind Benefits		Processed?	In-Kind Benefits		Processed?	In-Kind Benefits		Processed?	In-Kind Benefits	
Co-mingled Food & Garden Organics	✓	Discounted	NA	x			x			x		
Garden Organics	✓	Free	Free	x			x			x		
Timber - General	x			✓	Free	Free ^{NB5}	x			x		
Timber - Pallets	x			✓	Free	Free ^{NB6}	x			x		
Bricks & rubble	✓	Free	Free	x			x			x		
Building & Household Products	NB4	TBD	TBD	x			x			x		
Clean concrete	x	Free	Free	x			✓	Free	Free	✓		
Paddock rock	x	Free	Free	x			✓	Free	Free	✓		
General construction & demolition material	x	Free	Free	x			x			✓		

Products	Supplied?	Discount offered		Supplied?	Discount offered		Supplied?	Discount offered		Supplied?	Discount offered	
	Compost, mulch, and soil improvers	✓	10%	NA	x			x			x	
Mulch [recycled garden]	x			✓	10%	NA	x			x		
Mulch [pine bark and soft fall]	x			✓	5%	NA	x			x		
Sand	x			x			x			✓	5%	NA
Aggregates, crushed rocks, and road base	x			x			✓	5%	5%	✓	5%	NA
Fill	x			x			✓	5%	5%	x		
Standard, coloured, and decorative concrete	x			x			✓	5%	5%	x		
E-Crete™	x			x			✓	5%	5%	x		

^{NB1} Ranges from amount 'offered' to June 2020 rent determination value.
^{NB2} \$300,000 is based on discounted FOGO processing offer [2020 non-conforming FOGO Tender response]
^{NB3} Also multi-million dollar 'in-vessel FOGO' investment on adjacent RPI land at 460 Cooper Street.
^{NB4} On adjacent RPI land at 460 Cooper Street.
^{NB5} 5% discount for local business drop-off
^{NB6} 5% discount for local business collection [full truck only]
^{NB7} The Solar Farm Project occupies a separate lease area adjacent to ACM's operations. Project feasibility will determine the timing of this lease.

Proposed Lease Allocations

(see Attachment 2 – Proposed Occupancies Site Plan)

Following a detailed review of the submissions received as part of the EOI process and subsequent discussions and negotiations with preferred firms (potential tenants/partners), the following lease allocations (and partnerships) are proposed:

1. Repurpose It (RPI)

As RPI have been the successful tenderer for Council's recently awarded FOGO contract, have invested heavily in their own site adjoining Council's Cooper Street Waste & Resource Recovery Hub (CSRRH) and their EOI offer was the most attractive (financially and also with in-kind benefits), we propose a lease of two parcels of land within the CSRRH.

RPI purchased adjoining land at 460 Cooper Street, Epping, in March 2017 and specialise in construction material recycling (500,000 tonnes pa). They have 50 full time staff and 50 part time, currently have a 24/7 operation with full compliance to Council and EPA regulations. They are an innovative firm (Westpac business awards - top 20/2400) and have a high sustainability reputation. They have established a partnership with Downer who is seeking large scale investment in resource recovery technology (including establishment of education facility and research testing lab) and are open to partnerships with other proposed tenants on CSRRH. They also have proposals for waste transfer, timber recycling and R&D.

Part 480 Cooper Street, Epping

Situated at the rear of the site with a land area of approximately 11.524 hectares, this parcel will be utilised by RPI specifically for Council's FOGO contract. It is proposed that the occupancy of this parcel mirror the term of the FOGO contract which is an initial term of ten years with an option of ten years (at Council's discretion). RPI have offered an annual rental

of \$300,000 for each year in the first ten year term as well as the second ten year term should Council exercise its option to continue both the FOGO contract and the lease. The FOGO contract gives Council the flexibility to exercise the second term from between 1 to 10 years and it is intended that the proposed lease will mirror this flexibility. One of numerous conditions that will be part of the proposed lease agreement is for RPI to meet all fire requirements on Council's land made by Fire Rescue Victoria.

Part 335-355 O'Herns Road, Epping

This parcel can be described as the "dog-leg" portion of the site with an area of approximately 14.3 hectares and the centre portion of the site of 13.5 hectares, which will both be utilised by RPI to assist with the many waste and resource recovery activities that they are involved. It is also proposed that the occupancy of this parcel mirror the term of the FOGO contract which is an initial term of ten years with an option of ten years (at Council's discretion). RPI have offered an annual rental of \$50,000 for each year in the first ten year term.

2. Ecodynamics

The SESS Consortium (SESS) submission to Council's EOI process dissolved following Suez's unsuccessful FOGO tender bid. (EcoSmart) provided an acceptable revised offer with Ecodynamics operating as the head lessee. Ecodynamics is an existing tenant at the CSRRH and have an established and successful relationship with Council. Established in 1988, Ecodynamics Group is a vertically integrated landscaping construction, materials supply, nursery and services company, employing more than 150 people across three states. As the only business of its kind in the Australian landscaping industry, Ecodynamics Group consists of four distinct yet complementary businesses which have been assembled to provide a seamless, risk free service to our client base, primarily encompassing the civil infrastructure industry. Ecodynamics are experienced at bringing new people to the construction environment and training them to have long, safe and fulfilling careers. They recognise and celebrate their ability to create lasting good through their work: providing rewarding careers, building strong communities, and creating healthy environments as lasting legacies for local asset holders. It is with this vision in mind that Ecodynamics intend to further develop the Cooper Street Waste Precinct into a world class facility by demonstrating the positive impact of the circular economy to Council and its community members.

Part 480 Cooper Street, Epping

Situated at the front of the site with a land area totalling approximately 14.609 hectares, this parcel will be utilised by Ecodynamics in the same way as it is currently utilised. Ecodynamics will occupy 7.962 hectares themselves and sub-lease 6.647 hectares to Smart Pallets (a timber pallet recycling firm). This will ensure that the full drop-off recycling range of services continues to be offered to the Whittlesea community. This voucher based drop-off service will continue to be provided to the community, which currently consists of green waste drop-off (approximately 10,432 collections annually) timber drop-off (approximately 2,200 collections annually) and rubble drop-off (approximately 874 collections annually). These in-kind services save the community approximately \$1.23 million per annum.

Ecodynamics have offered an annual rental of \$40,000 to occupy the 14.609 hectares plus continuing the in-kind benefits of recycling drop-off at Cooper Street for all Whittlesea residents. It is proposed that Ecodynamics be offered a lease term of ten years, an option of ten years with annual CPI rental increases.

One of numerous conditions that will be part of the proposed lease agreement is for RPI to meet all fire requirements on Council's land made by Fire Rescue Victoria.

3. Aurora Construction Materials (ACM)

ACM has been the existing tenant at 335 O'Herns Road since 2007 (through a 15 year lease/permit recycled concrete and quarry operations and has invested \$20 million on Council's land to date). ACM is 100% Australian owned and operated and employs over 100

staff with 60 located at Epping (four sites overall) with a further 124 jobs to be created if awarded a new lease. They contribute a direct and indirect income of approximately \$7 million annually in the local economy (200 suppliers), reprocesses 400,000 tonnes of waste rock and producing over 120,000 cubic metres of concrete product containing recycled material. ACM has also stated that they will partner with a solar panel provider to offset electricity costs, similar to the trial run at Wollert landfill, and have invested \$2 million in E-crete as a more sustainable alternative to concrete. It is proposed that a new lease be given to ACM essentially continuing to operate under similar terms of their existing lease with Council.

Part 335-355 O'Herns Road, Epping

This is the parcel of the site slightly set back from the front boundary with an area of approximately 10.2 hectares. ACM have offered an annual rental of \$42,000 to occupy the 10.2 hectares plus in-kind benefits consisting of:

- The establishment of free of charge community drop-off facilities for relevant construction and demolition products.
- Products to be discounted for Council, Council's agents, and City of Whittlesea residents.

It is proposed that ACM be offered a lease term of ten years, with an option of ten years with annual CPI rental increases.

ACM have also stated that when the solar project is finalised, they would also propose a lease of approximately 7.73 hectares of land at the front of 335-355 O'Herns Road, Epping, for an annual rental of \$32,000.

PROPOSAL

To seek Council approval to enter into lease negotiations, including appropriate terms and conditions and the specification and formalisation of in-kind benefits, with the three remaining short-listed applicants, at the Council owned property known at the Cooper Street Waste & Resource Recovery Hub (CSRRH).

CONSULTATION

Initial consultation was undertaken by Council via an information session open to the wider waste industry, which received 75 registrations. A subsequent Expression of Interest (EOI) campaign was then communicated to the wider waste industry. This consultation and EOI resulted in seven formal submissions.

Subsequent to short-listed applicants being identified, an IAP2 'Inform' level of community consultation has been undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. A community engagement process in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, and in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy, has been undertaken and no feedback on the proposed leases was received by Council. Community consultation included placing all the information on the lease proposals on Council's website (Hive) via an engagement page. The engagement page also includes contact details of one of Council's Officers involved in this project as an opportunity to obtain additional information.

CRITICAL DATES

Council presently hold two existing leases within the CSW Resource Recovery Hub which expire in 2021 (480 Cooper Street) and 2022 (335-355 O'Herns B) respectively.

By completing community consultation on the proposed leases, Council has met its obligations under Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's Community Engagement Policy. No submissions or comments were received from the community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications related to awarding the above leases fall into two categories, annual rent and in-kind benefits.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Under Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council must undertake a community engagement process in accordance with its community engagement policy, which has now been achieved.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Contaminated Land - Failure to prevent significant negative impact of Council's decisions and management relating to contaminated sites*

The expression of interest campaign has enabled current and prospective Tenants to develop and implement new and sustainable practices within Council's existing former landfill sites and gas extraction areas.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Sustainable environment
Key Direction	Leaders in clean, sustainable living

To ensure Council's significant land holdings within the Cooper Street Hub are contributing to positive environmental outcomes, whilst maximising in-kind benefits and long-term capital investment for the community.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The Expression of Interest Campaign resulted in three viable submissions. No community feedback has been received in response to the community consultation undertaken. The proposed leases for use of Council owned property within Cooper Street Waste and Resource Recovery Hub (being specifically 480 Cooper Street and 335-355 O'Herns Road parcels A, B, and C), will contribute to positive environmental outcomes as well as maximising in kind benefits and longer-term capital investment for the community.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

1. Note that a community engagement process in accordance with Section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy has been undertaken and no feedback on the proposed leases was received by Council
2. Enter into the following leases:
 - a) Part 480 Cooper Street, Epping (approximately 11.524 hectares) to Repurpose It (RPI) for an initial term of ten years with an option of ten years, at an annual rental of \$300,000 for each year of both terms plus "in-kind" benefits.
 - b) Part 335-355 O'Herns Road, Epping (an area of approximately 14.3 hectares and the centre portion of the site of 13.5 hectares) to Repurpose It (RPI) for an initial term of ten years with an option of ten years at an annual rental of \$50,000 for each year plus "in-kind" benefits.
 - c) Part 480 Cooper Street, Epping (situated at the front of the site with a land area totalling approximately 14.609 hectares) to Ecodynamics at an annual rental of \$40,000 plus in-kind benefits for a term of ten years with an option of ten years with annual CPI rental increases.
 - d) Part 335-355 O'Herns Road, Epping (with a land area of approximately 10.2 hectares) to Aurora Construction Materials (ACM) at an annual rental of \$42,000 plus in-kind benefits for a term of ten years with an option of ten years.
3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise all terms and conditions and sign the leases on behalf of Council.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

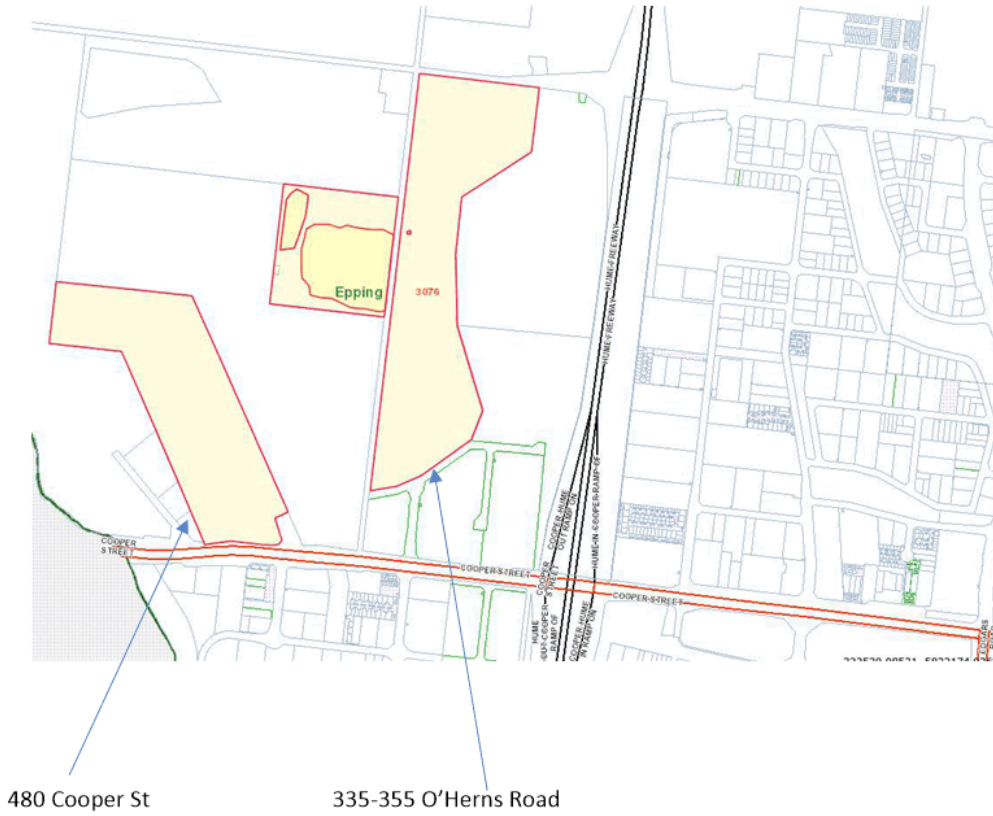
MOVED: *Chairperson Wilson*

SECONDED: *Administrator Eddy*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

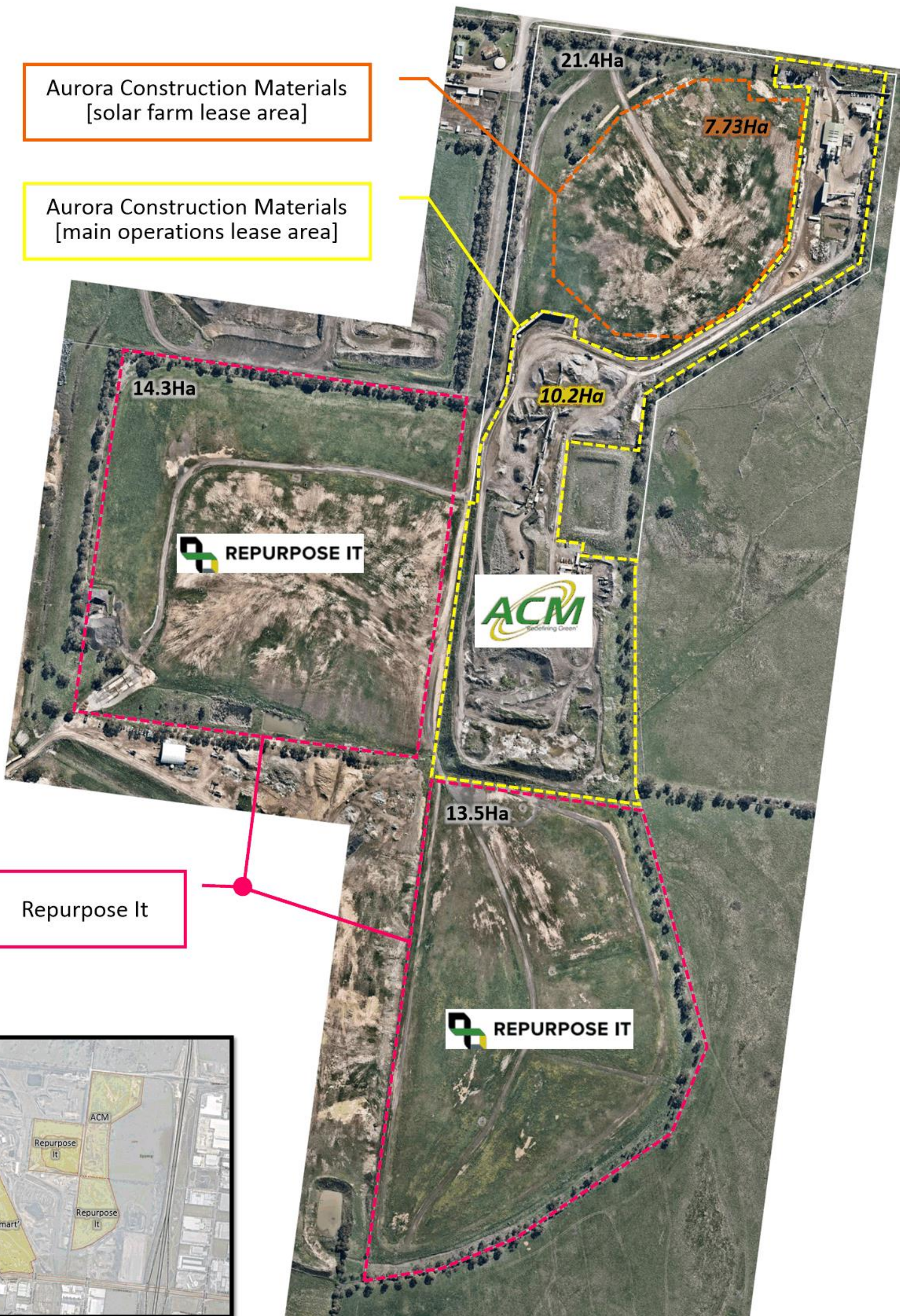
Attachment 1 - Site Plan



480 Cooper Street, Epping [26.133Ha]



335-355 O'Herns Road, Epping [49.2Ha]



**ITEM 6.4.2 FOR DECISION - RESPONSE TO PETITION FOR REPLACEMENT OF TREES
ALONG FIELDING DRIVE, MERNDA****Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure & Environment**Author:** Senior Arborist Planning & Risk**RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY**

THAT Council resolve to:

1. Note the progress report and actions undertaken to date.
2. Consult with all residents along Fielding Drive, Mernda (including the head petitioner and signatories) regarding the final investigation outcomes.
3. Prepare a subsequent report to the Scheduled Council Meeting dated 2 August 2021 to finalise the matter.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

- Council has received a petition from 15 residents requesting the removal of nature street trees from Fielding Drive, Mernda. The petition was signed by 13 residents of Fielding Drive, one resident of Harriers Street, and one resident of Dorobolo Street.
- Council Officers met with the head petitioner and other interested residents on site at a meeting dated 19 May 2021 to discuss their respective concerns and the items raised within the petition.
- Council commissioned two independent assessments: an arboricultural assessment and an engineering report which outlined the likely impacts of the existing trees on the abutting properties. The recommendations within these reports remain under review.
- Following the detailed consideration of the two independent assessments, additional consultation is required with all residents along Fielding Drive, Mernda (including the head petitioner and signatories) to ensure the final investigation outcomes appreciate and resolve the concerns raised.
- It is proposed to present a subsequent report to the Scheduled Council Meeting dated 2 August 2021.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The recommendations above are proposed in line with the Council's endorsed Greening Whittlesea Strategy and Street Tree Management Plan for the management of mature trees within a streetscape.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Council's existing tree assets continue to be managed in a sustainable way consistent with the Council-adopted Street Tree Management Plan (2019), whilst ensuring key concerns of residents are addressed where possible.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

A range of available proposals are being explored to address the overarching concerns of residents. Regardless of the final investigation outcome, the site will be monitored regularly to assess the success of the desired outcomes.

REPORT**INTRODUCTION**

At its meeting dated 2 February 2021, Council tabled a petition from residents requesting the removal and replacement of the existing nature street trees from Fielding Drive, Mernda. The petition was signed by 13 residents of Fielding Drive, one resident of Harriers Street, and one resident of Dorobolo Street.

Council investigated the request looking at core issues and commissioned independent arboricultural and engineering assessments to evaluate the status of current tree assets. Issues raised in the petition were concerned mainly on the size of the trees and the mess created from excessive leaf shed.

BACKGROUND

Fielding Drive, Mernda is a streetscape dominated by a combination of mature *Eucalyptus* trees including Brittle Gum, Wallangarra Gum and Red Ironbark. Eucalyptus trees are an evergreen tree listed on Council's approved street tree species list and classified as a medium to large tree. The two main species planted in Fielding Drive in Wallangarra and Brittle Gum, are in the top 10 most common street trees in the City of Whittlesea. Together they combine for a total 8.7 per cent of our street trees. These trees are all currently managed and maintained proactively by Council on a biannual program.

A petition was received on 2 February 2021 signed by 15 residents requesting that Council remove the existing nature strip trees and replant with new trees as part of the Street Tree Renewal Plan. The grounds on which the signatories believe that the current trees are unsuitable include:

- Trees dropping debris including leaves
- Frequency of street sweeping (messy street)
- Leaf shedding become unsafe for foot traffic
- Canopy spread and size
- Branches cracking under wind and weather
- Darkness created from canopy cover.

Council has commissioned two independent reports: an arboricultural assessment to assess the current health status, and an engineering assessment to review the likely impacts of the trees on the abutting houses. The recommendations made within these reports are currently under review.

Council is also investigated the Fielding Drive trees to assess property clearances in line with the guidelines set out in the Street Tree Management Plan (STMP). The STMP defines the levels of service provided for Council's street trees and the criteria by which Council does (and does not) remove trees. In many instances' property clearances were insufficient, and there is significant inconsistency to property setbacks on the street.

Furthermore, there are currently two claims against Council for tree related damage in Fielding Drive, Mernda. These are being dealt with through Council's claim process and the individual claimants.

A range of available proposals are being explored to address the overarching concerns of residents. These proposals were presented to Council at its meeting dated 4 May 2021, where it resolved to:

...defer consideration of Item 6.4.1 – Petition to Replace Trees Along Fielding Drive, Mernda to the 1 June 2021 Council Meeting and, in the interim the Director Infrastructure and Environment and other relevant Council Officers meet with the head petitioner and other interested residents on site to discuss their concerns.

A further progress report was presented to Council at its meeting dated 1 June 2021 where it resolved to:

...defer consideration of Item 6.4.3 – Petition to Replace Trees Along Fielding Drive, Mernda to the July 2021 meeting and, in the interim the Director Infrastructure and Environment and other relevant Council Officers meet with the head petitioner and other interested residents on site to discuss their concerns.

This updated progress report now provides an update to Council on the actions of Officers regarding the investigation and outlines the next steps.

PROPOSAL

Council is currently reviewing the recommendations made within the independent arboricultural and engineering assessments, and how they impact the issues identified by the signatories in the petition.

As such, a range of available proposals are being considered including increased proactive inspections and tree pruning, amendments to maintenance service programs and even removal / replacement of the existing nature strip trees. Regardless of the final response and investigation outcomes, the site will be monitored regularly to assess the success of the desired benefits.

CRITICAL DATES

It is proposed to present the final investigation outcomes to the Scheduled Council Meeting dated 2 August 2021.

CONSULTATION

Initial consultation for this petition was delivered via the head petitioner, in accordance with Council's guidance on petitions management. This has included both verbal updates and written correspondence to the head petitioner. Officers have also responded to further representations for updates by individual signatories.

Council Officers met with the head petitioner and other interested residents on site at a meeting dated 19 May 2021 to discuss their respective concerns and the items raised within the petition.

Following the detailed consideration of the two independent assessments, further consultation is required with all residents along Fielding Drive, Mernda (including the head petitioner and signatories) to ensure the final investigation outcomes appreciate and resolve the concerns raised.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The investigation remains ongoing. However, Council has two options to resolve the items raised by the petitioners, as follows:

- Remove and replace the existing nature strip trees. This cost is estimated at \$27,900.
- Amend and increase the maintenance regime. This cost is estimated at \$2,425 per annum (calculated at \$1,425 per annum for tree pruning services and \$1,000 per annum for additional street sweeping services).

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

Review of the Fielding Drive, Mernda petition request has been completed in accordance with the following Council policies:

- *Whittlesea 2040 – A Place for All* Community Plan (2018)
- *Greening Whittlesea* City Forest Strategy 2020
- *Greening Our Streets* Street Tree Management Plan (2019).

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Community and Stakeholder Engagement - Ineffective stakeholder engagement resulting in compromised community outcomes and/or non-achievement of Council's strategic direction*

The City of Whittlesea Street Tree Management Plan (2019) outlines how Council will respond to requests for tree removal from the community and communicates the evaluation criteria whereby Council will support tree removals.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Sustainable environment
Key Direction	Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity

The proposal acknowledges the value of streetscapes in our local community and the contribution of these trees to local amenity, biodiversity and urban shading/cooling.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The petition from 15 residents requesting removal and replacement of the existing street trees remains under review.

A range of potential service measures are being explored to address the concerns of petitioners which mitigate the impacts on amenity of the street, including increased proactive inspections and tree pruning, amendments to maintenance service programs and even removal / replacement of the existing nature strip trees.

Council Officers have previously met with the head petitioner and other interested residents on site. However, additional consultation is required with all residents along the street following appreciation of the recommendations within the two independent arboricultural and engineering assessments.

A subsequent report will be presented at the Scheduled Council Meeting dated 2 August 2021 to finalise the matter.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

- 1. Note the progress report and actions undertaken to date.**
- 2. Consult with all residents along Fielding Drive, Mernda (including the head petitioner and signatories) regarding the final investigation outcomes.**
- 3. Prepare a subsequent report to the Scheduled Council Meeting dated 2 August 2021 to finalise the matter.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Chairperson Wilson*
SECONDED: *Administrator Duncan*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

6.5 HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATION**ITEM 6.5.1 FOR NOTING - UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING**

Attachments: 1 **Unconfirmed Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee Meeting - 27 May 2021** [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: **Executive Manager Governance**

Author: **Internal Compliance Officer**

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

That Council resolve to note the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 27 May 2021.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

As required under Council's Audit & Risk Committee Charter, this report presents the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 27 May 2021.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Council is required to comply with the requirements of the Audit & Risk Committee Charter and the *Local Government Act 2020*.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Council will comply with its Audit & Risk Committee Charter and meet its legislative requirements.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Provision of Audit & Risk Committee meeting minutes, ensures that the Council is regularly informed of the operations of the Audit & Risk Committee.

REPORT**BACKGROUND**

The Audit & Risk Committee is an independent advisory committee of Council and its role is to report to Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters presented to it. It acts in this capacity by monitoring, reviewing and advising on issues within its scope of responsibility and assisting Council's governance obligations to its community.

The Audit & Risk Committee meets at least four times a year and its Charter requires that minutes from Committee meetings are presented to Council.

The Audit & Risk Committee considered a number of reports at the meeting held on 27 May 2021, as well as confirming minutes from the previous meeting held on 25 February 2021.

Main agenda items included:

- In-camera discussion with the CEO
- Audit & Risk Committee Work Plan
- CEO's Update
- Financial Report:
 - Corporate Performance Report for the Quarter Ended 31 March 2021
 - Summary of Changes to Model Financial Report for the year ending 30 June 2021
 - System Implementation Matters
- Risk Management Update
- Internal Audit:
 - Internal Audit Status Report
 - Internal Audit Reviews
 - Outstanding Action Items Report from Previous Internal Audits
 - Strategic Internal Audit Plan
- Draft Interim Management Letter – Year Ending 30 June 2021
- Internal Control Environment Update
- Panel Contract Expenditure Distribution Report and Adopted Procurement Policy 2021
- Asset Management Strategy Implementation Update
- Internal Compliance Reviews
- Quarterly Compliance Update – Monitoring Compliance with the Governance Principles
- External Agency Examinations

A copy of the minutes from the 27 May 2021 Audit & Risk Committee meeting is attached (Attachment 1).

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

The Audit & Risk Committee is established in accordance with Division 8, Section 53 and 54 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

The Committee's responsibilities and requirements are outlined in the Audit & Risk Committee Charter.

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Governance - Ineffective governance of Council's operations and activities resulting in either a legislative or policy breach*

The Audit & Risk Committee assists Council in monitoring its governance requirements and provides advice to Council to assist with fulfilling its oversight responsibilities.

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	High-performing organisation
Key Direction	More informed Council decisions based on strong advice and community consultation and engagement

The establishment of the Audit & Risk Committee and the reports it receives are reflective of Council's commitment to the implementation of good governance principles. The Committee provides advice to Council to assist with fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for the financial and non-financial reporting process; internal controls; the audit process; risk management; and Council's process for monitoring compliance with legislation, regulations and the Code of Conduct.

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

The Audit & Risk Committee met on 27 May 2021. The minutes of that meeting are attached to this report for noting by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to note the Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 27 May 2021.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Administrator Eddy*
SECONDED: *Chairperson Wilson*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED

Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
Thursday 27 May 2021



Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
2.30pm Thursday
27 May 2021

Location: Microsoft Teams

Members	Present	Apology
Independent:		
Geoff Harry, Chairperson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Ulbrick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theresa Glab	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrators:		
Lydia Wilson (Chair of Council)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Officers:		
Craig Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amy Montalti, Director Corporate Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kate McCaughey, Director Community Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Justin O'Meara, Director Planning & Development (Item 8.2)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debbie Wood, Director Infrastructure & Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Frank Joyce, Executive Manager Governance (<i>Joined the meeting at 3.30pm</i>)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
David Gauci, Internal Compliance Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Samantha Boyle, Risk Coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mark Montague, Chief Financial Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In attendance:		
Martin Thompson, Partner, Crowe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lynda Cooper, Manager, Crowe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kathie Teasdale, Partner, RSD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
Thursday 27 May 2021



**City of
Whittlesea**

Observer:

Chris Eddy (Administrator)



DRAFT

Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
Thursday 27 May 2021



Matters in Discussion

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee opened the meeting by reading the following Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement.

On behalf of the Whittlesea City Council I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the traditional owners of this place.

In-Camera Discussion

The meeting commenced with the Committee holding an in-camera discussion. The CEO was present for a portion of this discussion.

Committee Chairperson's Introductory Comments

Following the in-camera discussion, the Committee Chairperson commenced the open section of the meeting by welcoming all those in attendance. The Chairperson also congratulated Mr Eddy on his appointment as Administrator to the City of Whittlesea.

1. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ITEM 2.1 Resolution:

That the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 25 February 2021 be noted and confirmed.

Moved by: Ms Glab
Seconded by: Mr Ulbrick

CARRIED

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

ITEM 3.1 The Outstanding Items Register from Previous Meetings report was presented for review. The Committee briefly went through the list and noted the items that would remain open following this meeting.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

ITEM 3.2 **REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS**

The Chairperson recommended that the following items be taken as read:
Item 6.2 – Summary of Changes to Model Financial Report for the year Ending 30 June 2021
Item 9.1 – Draft Interim Management Letter – Year Ending 30 June 2021

Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
Thursday 27 May 2021



Item 9.2 – Outstanding Action Items from External Audit Reports
 Item 10.3 – Panel Contract Expenditure Distribution Report and Adopted Procurement Policy 2021
 Item 10.5 – Chief Executive Officer and CEO Executive Assistants' Corporate Credit Card Expenses
 Item 10.6 – Administrator Expenses
 Item 11.2 – Quarterly Compliance Update – Monitoring Compliance with the Governance Principles

Resolution:

That the Committee agree these Agenda items be taken as read.

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
 Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

4. AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

ITEM 4.1 The Annual Work Plan was presented for the Committee's information.

Potential dates for 2022 Committee meetings were provided:

- 24 February 2022
- 26 May 2022
- 18 August 2022
- 24 November 2022

The Committee Chairperson requested that the Work Plan for the 2021/2022 Committee year be provided for consideration at the 19 August 2021 Committee meeting.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
 Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

5. CEO'S UPDATE

ITEM 5.1 The CEO highlighted several key points for the Committee's information. These included:

- The Organisational Realignment project is progressing well with the recruitment of manager positions nearing finalisation. The Committee requested that a high-level overview of the Organisation Structure be provided, either at the next Committee meeting or between meetings if available.
- Work on the rationalisation of Policy and Strategy documents is continuing to progress well.
- Activities to ensure compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020* are ahead of schedule.
- There are currently no concerns from a significant risk or legal perspective.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
Thursday 27 May 2021



Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

ITEM 6.1 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The Director Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer presented the Corporate Performance Report for the period ended 31 March 2021 and responded to questions from the Committee.

The Committee discussed the current status of the delivery of the Capital Works Program against budget. Management advised that the delivery of the program is monitored continuously, and it is expected that a high completion rate will be achieved by year end. The Committee was also advised that Management is currently considering the structure of Capital Works budget to ensure it reflects current practices.

Discussion concluded with the Committee complimenting management on the revised format of the Corporate Performance Report and the information included in the report.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
Seconded by: Administrator Wilson

CARRIED

ITEM 6.2 SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO MODEL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2021

The Summary of Changes to Model Financial Report for the year ending 30 June 2021 report was taken as read.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Ms Glab
Seconded by: Mr Ulbrick

CARRIED

ITEM 6.3 VERBAL UPDATE - SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS

The Director Corporate Services advised the Committee that management has commissioned an external assurance review of the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics 365 due to a number of issues being experienced since the implementation of the system. The Committee will be provided with a copy of the final report.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the update.

Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
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Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

ITEM 7.1 RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Risk Coordinator presented the Risk Management report and highlighted the current areas of focus, which include; changes to the process for monitoring Strategic Risks; the work of the Risk Management Working Group; and responding to the latest developments with the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
Seconded by: Administrator Wilson

CARRIED

Frank Joyce, Executive Manager Governance joined the meeting at 3.30pm.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT

ITEM 8.1 INTERNAL AUDIT STATUS REPORT

Mr Thompson from Crowe presented the Internal Audit Status report and responded to questions from the Committee.

Mr Thompson also advised the Committee that Crowe were currently assisting management with a number of additional audit activities that sit outside of the Internal Audit Program.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Ms Glab
Seconded by: Mr Ulbrick

CARRIED

ITEM 8.2 INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEWS

Follow-Up of Selected Higher Risk Matters Raised in Prior Internal Audit Reports Review (2018-2019)

Crowe presented the Follow-Up of Selected Higher Risk Matters Raised in Prior Internal Audit Reports Review (2018-2019) report and gave an overview of the findings. Officers responded to the report and questions from the Committee.

The Committee briefly discussed the underlying causes of internal audit management actions being closed before they are fully completed. Management advised the Committee of the steps it is taking to improve the processes around the closure of management actions.

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Statutory Planning

Julian Edwards, Manager Building & Planning joined the meeting for this item.

Crowe presented the Statutory Planning report and gave an overview of the findings. Officers responded to the report and questions from the Committee.

The Committee discussed a number of findings from the report in detail, in particular:

- Finding 4.2: Conflict of Interest – The Committee requested the timing of this action be brought forward.
- Finding 4.3: Planning Decision Delegation – The Committee requested further consideration be given to the recommendations and agreed management actions to ensure they are consistent with the expectations of the Council.
- Finding 4.8: Security of Credit Card Payment Details – The Committee noted that this finding touches on issues of broader Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCIDSS) compliance, which has learnings that can be applied to other areas of the organisation.
- Finding 4.10: Credential Checking During Recruitment: Qualifications – The Committee noted that this is potentially an issue across the broader organisation. Management advised that the People & Culture Department are currently considering this issue and an update on the matter will be provided at the 19 August 2021 Committee meeting.

Based on the discussions of this report, the Committee requested that Crowe and Management review a number of the actions included in the Statutory Planning report and provide an updated report to the Committee at the 19 August 2021 meeting.

The Committee also requested that management consider its approach to gaining assurance that the organisation understands its obligations and how best assurance can be gained regarding compliance with the PCIDSS standards. This may be through either internal audit or management assurance initiatives.

Various Financial Controls

Crowe presented the Various Financial Controls report and gave an overview of the findings. Officers responded to the report and questions from the Committee.

Management also provided the Committee with a brief overview of how Corporate Credit Card transactions are monitored and changes to the use of Cards it intends to make in the future.

Resolution

That:

1. **The Committee note the contents and findings of Crowe's internal audit reviews:**
 - **Follow-Up of Selected Higher Risk Matters Raised in Prior Internal Audit Reports Review (2018-2019).**
 - **Statutory Planning.**
 - **Various Financial Controls.**
2. **Following review, the updated Statutory Planning report be provided to the Committee at the 19 August 2021 meeting.**
3. **An update be provided at the 19 August 2021 Committee meeting outlining any actions undertaken by management to consider the broad implications**

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of PCIDSS compliance for the organisation.

Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

ITEM 8.3 OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS FROM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

The Outstanding Action Items Report from Previous Internal Audits was presented. Management responded to questions from the Committee.

The Committee noted that a number of actions included on the register have had their implementation dates extended from their original agreed date.

Resolution:

That the Committee:

- 1. Note the report.**
- 2. Note that a number of actions included on the register have had their implementation dates extended from their original agreed date.**

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

ITEM 8.4 STRATEGIC INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Crowe presented their Strategic Internal Audit Plan (Plan) and responded to questions from the Committee. A brief overview of how the Plan was developed was provided.

The Committee discussed the reviews to be included in the Plan and requested further consideration be given to whether or not Climate Change and Fraud Management should be included in the Plan. The Committee requested that following consideration of these areas, the Plan be brought back to the Committee at the 19 August 2021 meeting for endorsement. The Committee also advised that it was happy for work to commence on the audits scheduled to commence in the early part of the Plan.

Issues related to PCIDSS compliance and Contaminated Land were also discussed. The Committee requested management consider the best approach to undertaking reviews in these areas.

Discussion concluded with the Committee noting that Management currently has a number of audits / assurance activities taking place across the organisation. The Committee requested that Management include a section in future Risk Management reports that provides an update on assurance activities undertaken outside of the Internal Audit Program.

Resolution:

That:

- 1. The Strategic Internal Audit Plan July 2021 to July 2024 be reviewed and updated based on the Committees discussion.**
- 2. The updated Strategic Internal Audit Plan July 2021 to July 2024 be provided to the Committee at the 19 August 2021 meeting for endorsement**

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and forwarding to Council.

Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Mr Ulbrick

CARRIED

ITEM 8.5 REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDITOR'S PERFORMANCE

This report will be deferred to the 19 August 2021 Committee meeting.

9. EXTERNAL AUDIT

ITEM 9.1 DRAFT INTERIM MANAGEMENT LETTER - YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2021

The Draft Interim Management Letter - Year ending 30 June 2021 report was taken as read.

The Committee noted that the interim audit had been finalised and everything was on track to undertake the year end audit as scheduled.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Ms Glab
Seconded by: Administrator Wilson

CARRIED

ITEM 9.2 OUTSTANDING ACTION ITEMS FROM EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

The Outstanding Action Items from External Audits Reports report taken as read.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

10. SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

ITEM 10.1 INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

The Executive Manager Governance and Risk Coordinator presented the report on the Internal Control Environment and the policies and procedures that currently comprise this environment.

The Committee briefly discussed the various processes in place at Council to review and approve policies and procedures and which specific policies should be provided to the Committee for review. Management advised that it would provide an update at the 19 August 2021 Committee meeting outlining the policies it believes should be reviewed by the Committee.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

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Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Mr Ulbrick

CARRIED

ITEM 10.2 DELEGATIONS FROM COUNCIL

The Executive Manager Governance presented the report on the Delegations from Council.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Ms Glab
Seconded by: Administrator Wilson

CARRIED

ITEM 10.3 PANEL CONTRACT EXPENDITURE DISTRIBUTION REPORT AND ADOPTED PROCUREMENT POLICY 2021

The Panel Contract Expenditure Distribution Report and Adopted Procurement Policy 2021 report was taken as read.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

ITEM 10.4 ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Nick Mazzeralla, Acting Director Infrastructure & Environment and Michael Buter, Team Leader Asset Management joined the meeting for this item.

A presentation was provided on the progress of implementing the Asset Management Strategy. The Committee commended the quality of the presentation and the information provided.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

ITEM 10.5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND CEO EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS' CORPORATE CREDIT CARD EXPENSES

The Chief Executive Officer and CEO Executive Assistants' Corporate Credit Card Expenses report was taken as read.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

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Thursday 27 May 2021



Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
Seconded by: Administrator Wilson

CARRIED

ITEM 10.6 ADMINISTRATOR EXPENSES

The Administrator Expenses report was taken as read.

Administrator Wilson noted that she had raised a concern with the use of the 'Miscellaneous' category and that this will be rectified in the future.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Ms Glab
Seconded by: Mr Ulbrick

CARRIED

11. COMPLIANCE

ITEM 11.1 INTERNAL COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

An update on the status of the Internal Compliance Review Program was provided with officers responding to questions from the Committee.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Administrator Wilson
Seconded by: Ms Glab

CARRIED

ITEM 11.2 QUARTERLY COMPLIANCE UPDATE - MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The Quarterly Compliance Update – Monitoring Compliance with the Governance Principles report was taken as read.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Mr Ulbrick
Seconded by: Administrator Wilson

CARRIED

ITEM 11.3 EXTERNAL AGENCY EXAMINATIONS

An update on recent reports published by external agencies was provided.

The Committee briefly discussed the impacts on staff from the actions being undertaken in relation to the findings from the *Sexual Harassment in Local Government* report.

The Committee also discussed the findings outlined in the *Investigation into how Local Councils Respond to Ratepayers in Financial Hardship* Victorian

**Audit & Risk Committee Minutes
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Ombudsman's report and sought management's view of the findings. Management noted that a response to this report will be provided at the 19 August 2021 Committee meeting, along with how the findings from the report have been incorporated into Council's Hardship Policy.

Resolution:

That the Committee note the report.

Moved by: Ms Glab
Seconded by: Mr Ulbrick

CARRIED

12. OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Nil

13. CORRESPONDENCE

Nil

14. GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS

The Committee discussed the Procurement Policy and the importance of ensuring that policies are provided in a way that ensures that they are able to be clearly understood by those with obligations to ensure compliance. Management noted that the Policy was developed in collaboration with seven other councils and that the City of Whittlesea also has its own set of supporting procedures and guidelines available to staff which provide more detailed guidance.

The Executive Manager Governance advised Committee members that the 19 August 2021 Committee meeting is scheduled to commence at 9am.

15. CONFIRMATION OF DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

- 19 August 2021 (9am – 12pm)
- 25 November 2021

16. IN-CAMERA DISCUSSION WITH INTERNAL AUDITOR

This item will be deferred until the 19 August 2021 meeting.

Meeting concluded at 5.22 pm

Signed.....

Date...../...../2021

Mr Geoff Harry (Chairperson)

ITEM 6.5.2 FOR DECISION: FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY

- Attachments:**
- 1 **Draft Financial Hardship Policy** [↓](#)
 - 2 **Covid 19 Financial Hardship Policy** [↓](#)

Responsible Officer: **Director Corporate Services**

Author: **Director Corporate Services**

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

1. Adopt the updated Financial Hardship Policy with application from 1 October 2021 (Attachment 1).
2. Extend the current COVID-19 Hardship Policy, including the suspension of interest charges, to 30 September 2021 (Attachment 2).

BRIEF OVERVIEW

The existing COVID-19 Hardship Policy is due to expire 30 June 2021. An updated Hardship Policy has been drafted with the intent of responding to those experiencing hardship in an empathetic manner while also making the process less cumbersome for our customers.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The City of Whittlesea is committed to providing assistance to those in our community that are experiencing financial hardship and are having difficulty meeting their financial obligations to Council. This policy ensures that regardless of their circumstances our community will face no judgement, and will be treated with understanding, dignity and respect. Financial hardship assistance will help reduce additional penalties and costs that are being incurred by those in the community that can least afford them. Council is committed to continual improvement through our learning, working with our partners and experts in the field of financial vulnerability.

IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The new Hardship Policy will provide assistance to those in our community that are experiencing financial hardship and are having difficulty meeting their financial obligations to Council. This policy ensures that regardless of their circumstances our community will face no judgement, and will be treated with understanding, dignity and respect.

WHAT MEASURES WILL BE PUT IN PLACE TO MANAGE IMPACTS

Council will recruit a Hardship Support Officer to support the implementation of the policy and to provide the community with a dedicated trained professional to support them through the hardship application process. Supporting procedures and appropriate delegations will be developed prior to the 1 October 2021 implementation date of the new Financial Hardship policy.

REPORT**BACKGROUND**

The City of Whittlesea is committed to providing assistance to those in our community that are experiencing financial hardship and are having difficulty meeting their financial obligations to Council. This policy ensures that regardless of their circumstances our community will face no judgement, and will be treated with understanding, dignity and respect. Financial hardship assistance will help reduce additional penalties and costs that are being incurred by those in the community that can least afford them. Council is committed to continual improvement through our learning, working with our partners and experts in the field of financial vulnerability.

Council has an existing Rates Hardship Policy which only applies to our community members who are experiencing difficulty in paying their council rates. In April 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic (pandemic), Council adopted a COVID-19 Hardship Policy. This policy simplified the hardship application process along with expanding the financial support to all financial obligations to Council rather than just rates debts. This policy expires on 30 June 2021.

Financial hardship is a key focus area in the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan as limited income and access to economic resources are one of the fundamental causes of negative health and wellbeing outcomes. These factors determine access to material goods and services, ability to pay for health-related expenses, housing, education and capacity to choose healthy lifestyle behaviours and participate in the community. Prior to the pandemic Whittlesea already had high levels of disadvantage:

- City of Whittlesea ranked as the 36th most disadvantaged municipality out of the 79 Victorian local government areas in Victoria. Thomastown (ranked as 68/2,672 Victorian suburbs) and Lalor (ranked as 93/2,672 Victorian suburbs), are among the most socioeconomically disadvantaged suburbs in Victoria.
- A greater number of City of Whittlesea residents live in poverty compared to Greater Melbourne (17% compared to 12.6%). Women, children and young people are more likely to experience poverty and in Thomastown, 40% of children are living in poverty.

This has been further exacerbated by increasing unemployment and under-employment from the pandemic. Impacts of the pandemic included;

- Whittlesea recorded a higher number of job losses than for Victoria (-5.8% compared to -5.2%)
- Prior to COVID 19, households in Whittlesea reported experiencing high rates of mortgage (20.3%) and rental stress (33.8%) compared to Greater Melbourne (15.6% and 30% respectively)
- New postcode modelling indicates where the financial impact of the pandemic was categorised as 'medium', the impact is now categorised as 'high' to 'extreme' range
- Residents also report low levels of savings prior to COVID 19, and 1 in 4 residents identify that they would be unable to access \$2000 in an emergency (Community Attitudes and Liveability Survey, 2018)

Council developed a Financial Vulnerability Advocacy and Action Plan which involved consultation with key local community health and welfare agencies including Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership, Whittlesea Community Connections and Uniting Kildonan.

Key themes and feedback received regarding financial hardship included;

- Maintain dignity and privacy – it is difficult to identify yourself as a person facing financial hardship and unable to cover daily living expenses etc. Council policy, procedures and staff interactions need to reflect this
- Ideally, reduce the number of staff the resident needs to interact and limit (where possible) the need to explain the situation multiple times
- Assistance should be made available to all Council payments, proportionate to the level of need and outstanding costs
- Policy and procedures need to be clear, easy to understand and easily accessible
- All information regarding financial hardship support should be made available across Council media avenues and included on rates information and notices
- Actively support referrals to other local welfare and community organisations where appropriate
- Explore training opportunities for staff to undertake sensitivity training related to financial hardship.

The recently released Victorian Ombudsman report 'Investigation into how local councils respond to ratepayers in financial hardship' (the report) highlighted the lack of support that local councils provided customers who are facing financial hardship. In the report the Ombudsman stated *'The public sector is expected to act in the public interest more than the private sector – but in dealing with hardship, local councils lag behind utility and other companies, including banks. We would be rightly concerned if our bank was doing more to meet its social obligations than our council'*. The report further provided recommendations as to what a good approach to hardship looked like.

A recent Local Government Inspectorate report into the Yarriambiack Shire Council stated 'Council rates are a necessary impost on the community to help fund services and asset purchase and renewal. It is important that councils apply an equitable imposition of rates and charges across the municipality. Failure to recover outstanding rates means it fails this objective and provides a disadvantage to ratepayers'.

As a result of the emerging evidence on the impacts of COVID-19, consultation with community organisations, and the Victorian Ombudsmen report, Council recognises that it needs a hardship policy which supports all our community, is responsive to their personal needs, tailors the application process commensurate with the assistance being requested and ensures that the support provided provides for equitable collection of rates across the municipality. All the aforementioned evidence and information was considered in the drafting of the updated Financial Hardship Policy.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that council adopt the updated Financial Hardship Policy and support the recruitment of a Hardship Support Officer to support the implementation of the policy and to provide our community with a dedicated trained professional to support them through the hardship application process.

CONSULTATION

Council developed a Financial Vulnerability Advocacy and Action Plan which involved consultation with key local community health and welfare agencies including Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership, Whittlesea Community Connections and Uniting Kildonan. All recommendations identified through this consultation have been included in the updated Financial Hardship Policy.

Consultation, subsequent to the drafting of this policy, has been undertaken with officers from the Rates, Health Planning and Equity and Inclusion teams.

CRITICAL DATES

Council's COVID-19 Hardship Policy ends on 30 June 2021, at which time Council's Rates Harship Policy will apply. The Rates Harship Policy only applies to our community members who are experiencing difficulty in paying their council rates which means that any community members requiring support with any other amounts owing to council will not have a current avenue for support. The COVID-19 Hardship Policy allows our community to request assistance with all amounts owing to Council and by extending this policy, whilst preparing for the application of the updated Financial Hardship Policy, we will ensure that our community has this continued broader support.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$104,000 of resourcing is required to recruit a Hardship Support Officer to implement the updated Hardship Policy and support customers through the application process by providing a much improved personalised service. Currently Council outsources it's debt collection, with these costs being oncharged to the ratepayer. The Harship Support Officer will also undertake debt collection processes with the aim of collecting Council's outstanding debt while reducing penalties and costs being incurred by the community.

POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION

A number of sources were considered in the drafting of this policy including;

- Local Government Act 2020
- Council Revenue and Rating Plan
- Municipal Association of Victoria, Hardship Policy Guidelines (November 2013)
- Whittlesea 2040 A place for all
- Financial Vulnerability Advocacy and Action Plan 2020-22
- Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2017-21
- Equal and Safe Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021

LINK TO STRATEGIC RISKS

Strategic Risk *Not linked to the risks within the Strategic Risk Register.*

LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN

Goal	Connected community
Key Direction	A healthy and safe community

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Rule 47 of the *Governance Rules 2021*, officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

CONCLUSION

This policy will support those most vulnerable in our community and ensure that they are treated with understanding, dignity and respect when facing financial hardship. Their circumstances will be kept confidential and they will be provided tailored support commensurate with their individual needs.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council resolve to:

1. **Adopt the updated Financial Hardship Policy with application from 1 October 2021.**
2. **Extend the current COVID-19 Hardship Policy, including the suspension of interest charges, to 30 September 2021.**

UNCOUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: *Chairperson Wilson*
SECONDED: *Administrator Duncan*

THAT Council resolve to adopt the Recommendation.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



Financial Hardship Policy

Policy statement

The City of Whittlesea is committed to providing assistance to those in our community that are experiencing financial hardship and are having difficulty meeting their financial obligations to Council. This policy ensures that regardless of their circumstances our community will face no judgement, and will be treated with understanding, dignity and respect. Financial hardship assistance will help reduce additional penalties and costs that are being incurred by those in the community that can least afford them. Council is committed to continual improvement through our learning, working with our partners and experts in the field of financial vulnerability.

Principles

The Financial Hardship policy is informed by the following City of Whittlesea Community Building Principles:

Equity, access and inclusion

Council understands that different community members have different life experiences and access to resources. We seek to ensure that community members do not face additional disadvantage as a result of financial hardship.

Community outcomes

Council is focused on achieving positive and equitable community outcomes by reducing, harm of disadvantage and hardship.

Objective(s)

The Financial Hardship Policy will:

- provide a mechanism that enables our community to feel comfortable and supported when approaching Council to discuss their financial circumstances, including any difficulties they may be experiencing in meeting their financial obligations to Council;
- encourage a proactive approach in identifying and assisting those experiencing financial hardship;
- encourage and support access to legal, welfare and financial counselling support services;
- reduce the number of instances that are referred to Council's debt collection agency and reduce the number of Court actions instigated by Council, by enabling more appropriate ways for Council to seek payment other than through the legal system.

Definition of financial hardship

Financial hardship refers to difficulty meeting everyday living expenses. Financial hardship may lead to debt accumulation and financial exclusion, where an individual lacks access to appropriate and affordable financial services and products, such as transaction accounts,

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insurance and credit. A person is in serious financial hardship when they are unable to provide the following for themselves, their family or other dependents:

- food;
- accommodation;
- clothing;
- health care;
- transport costs
- education; and
- other basic necessities.

Council acknowledges the following group(s) as the some of the most vulnerable within our community:

- people impacted by family violence;
- people impacted by problem gambling;
- low income and sole parent families;
- those with refugee status;
- people receiving income support from Centrelink, including aged pension, unemployment benefits, disability support pension, parenting payments and those with low income healthcare cards.

Context/Rationale

Council is reliant on the timely collection of revenue to ensure adequate provision of services and capital works projects it undertakes for the community; and to fulfil broader business management and corporate governance responsibilities.

Council strives to implement best practice for the collection of revenue by offering multiple payment options, including flexible payment arrangements, for people that may be experiencing financial hardship.

Council recognises that managing instances of financial hardship is a shared responsibility and we are committed to working with our community to support those experiencing financial hardship in a supportive and respectful manner.

Scope

Assistance provided under this Policy is available to any person, business or group who have a financial obligation to Council.

The following will be considered when assessing granting assistance under this policy:

- the applicant has displayed a history of attempting to pay the debt to Council,
- the applicant has initiated contact with Council to discuss the debt,
- the applicant is experiencing exceptional circumstances impacting their ability to meet their financial obligations to Council. This could be wide and varied and will be considered on a case by case basis.
- the applicant is experiencing any of the identified compassionate grounds as follows;

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1. **Family violence*** – when a person has reported being a victim of family violence
2. **COVID-19** - Significantly impacted from COVID 19 pandemic including unemployment or illness
3. **medical treatment** - when a person needs to pay for medical treatment for themselves or a dependant
4. **mortgage assistance** – when a person needs to prevent their home from being sold by a lender
5. **modification to your home or motor vehicle** - in the case of a disability a person needs to modify their home or vehicle to accommodate their own needs or the needs of a dependant
6. **palliative care** – when a person needs to pay for palliative care
7. **funeral expenses** - when a person needs to pay expenses associated with a funeral
8. **natural disaster** – when a person attends to emergency spending caused by a natural disaster event

***Family violence** - Any instance where a person is identified as being affected by family violence, the person will be referred to Councils' Hardship Support Officer to be case managed, no legal action or additional debt recovery cost will be incurred during this process. The Hardship Support Officer undertakes ongoing training that includes training focused specifically on family violence. This is due to the complexity and sensitive nature of the person's circumstances and the possible increased risk to their safety. Council has an internal process to ensure their details are managed with the highest degree of privacy and sensitivity.

Policy Options

Whilst Council is unable to waive rates we are able to offer various other avenues of support for those experiencing financial hardship including deferrals, payment plans, waivers of interest and collection costs, referral to other financial assistance programs that might be available, or referral to appropriate support services (family violence and financial hardship).

The Chief Executive Officer has the delegated power to provide waivers.

Eligibility assessment and application

There is no formal assessment criteria used to determine eligibility. All applicants are assessed on a case by case basis and are based on a meaningful two-way conversation. Councils' Financial Hardship Support Officer will support our community through the application process. The information requested to support an application will be commensurate with the level of support being sought.

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Some of the indicators that may highlight a community members need for additional assistance, including the previously identified compassionate grounds, are listed below:

- a history of frequent requests for payment extensions or payment arrangements that have not been met
- unable to afford the costs of current financial obligations, even if smoothed over a 12-month period
- a payment history that indicates past difficulty of meeting their financial obligations to Council,
- eligibility for Government funded concessions (e.g. Health Care Card, Centrelink benefit),
- sudden change of circumstances that adversely affects their financial capacity to pay,
- through referral from a financial counselling agency or community organisation,
- identify themselves as having affordability issues,
- asylum seekers or refugees who have limited access to financial stability
- people experiencing health and mental health issues
- having a low level of income, that is unlikely to change; and
- are currently unemployed.

Communication

Council will communicate this policy to our community through a variety of channels including, but not limited to, social media pages, council website, print media, on council rate notices and via key local support agencies.

Measurement

The outputs and outcomes related to this Policy will be assessed according to the tools available through Council's Evaluation Framework and reported to Council on a periodic basis. Records will be kept in relation to how many applications are received and approved, and the level of financial assistance provided by Council. Confidentiality is paramount and reporting will not provide personal details of applicants.

Key linkages

All City of Whittlesea policies comply with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*.

This policy has clear linkages to a range of codes, charters, legislation and Council documents.

- Local Government Act 2020
- Council Revenue and Rating Plan
- Municipal Association of Victoria, Hardship Policy Guidelines (November 2013)
- Whittlesea 2040 A place for all
- Financial Vulnerability Advocacy and Action Plan 2020-22

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- Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2017-21
- Equal and Safe Strategy Action Plan 2020-2021

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COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy

Policy statement

The City of Whittlesea is committed to providing support to those within the community who are experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any person or business that owes money to the City of Whittlesea and is experiencing hardship because of the COVID-19 pandemic may apply for support through this hardship policy. Support will be provided through removing penalties and costs that would otherwise be incurred under normal conditions.

Principle

The COVID-19 Financial Hardship policy is informed by the following City of Whittlesea Community Building Principles:

Equity, access and inclusion

Council understands that different community members have different life experiences and access to resources. We seek to ensure that community members do not face additional disadvantage as a result of financial hardship.

Community outcomes

Council is focused on achieving positive and equitable community outcomes by reducing, harm of disadvantage and hardship.

This policy seeks to treat all debtors consistently and fairly, considering their capacity to pay, the impact of hardship and ensuring the best outcome for all parties in a difficult time.

Objectives

- To provide clarity to the City of Whittlesea on the financial relief they can expect from Council.
- To provide direction to Council officers when collecting and providing for debts owed to Council and to ensure Council takes into consideration the financial hardship of sundry, residential, business, clubs and commercial debtors caused by COVID-19.
- To ensure Council can provide assistance to those in financial hardship in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989, while ensuring it does not jeopardise the funding of its operations.

Scope

This policy addresses temporary financial hardship due to impacts of COVID-19. It applies to sundry debtors, residents, business, clubs and commercial ratepayers in the City of Whittlesea who are unable to meet their payment obligations to Council

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Context/Rationale

COVID-19 is a new virus that can cause an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness. COVID-19 spreads through close contact with an infected person.

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic on 30 January 2020 and a State of Emergency was declared in Victoria on 16 March 2020. The restrictions placed on all Australians to contain the spread of the virus has significantly impacted small and large businesses and employment. Rates, fees and charges received from residents and businesses are the primary source of revenue that Council relies on to deliver critical services to the community. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic will cause significant financial hardship for some community members Council will, in such circumstances, provide assistance.

Definition of financial hardship

Financial hardship refers to difficulty meeting everyday living expenses. Financial hardship may lead to debt accumulation and financial exclusion, where an individual lacks access to appropriate and affordable financial services and products, such as transaction accounts, insurance and credit. A person is in serious financial hardship when they are unable to provide the following for themselves, their family or other dependents:

- food;
- accommodation;
- clothing;
- health care;
- education; and
- other basic necessities.

Policy options

Payment plan and interest hold

Council will encourage sundry debtors, residents, business, clubs and commercial ratepayers to work with Council to agree to a payment plan tailored specifically to their needs, to reduce the amount of debt owing after the pandemic.

Council will not charge interest on debt accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interest hold will begin from the 29 February 2020 until 30 June 2021 to allow ample time for the debt to be paid without interest. If any debt is still outstanding at 1 July 2021, Councils existing Financial Hardship Policy for Residential Property Owners (Municipal Rates & Charges) will apply.

Total deferral of all financial responsibilities can cause a secondary bout of financial stress when the event has concluded, and bills are owed. Council's aim is to provide assistance to sundry debtors, residents, business, clubs and commercial ratepayers throughout the COVID-19 event without creating additional financial stress when the pandemic has been resolved.

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Deferral and interest hold

If the sundry debtor, resident, business, clubs or commercial ratepayer is unable to enter into a payment plan, Council will consider an application to defer the debt accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic and will not charge interest on this debt from the 29 February 2020 until 30 June 2021. This will allow ample time for the debt to be paid without interest. If any debt is still outstanding at 1 July 2021, Councils existing Financial Hardship Policy for Residential Property Owners (Municipal Rates & Charges) will apply.

Debt recovery

Council will make a reasonable attempt to contact a resident or business about their overdue account. This may include a reminder letter, account statement, email or phone call.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Council will hold off on all legal action for the collection of sundry fees and rates and charges.

How to Apply

A person or business requiring access to the Council COVID19 Financial Hardship Policy can make an application on Council's website or request a hardcopy form by calling 9217 2170.

Key linkages

All City of Whittlesea policies comply with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*.

This policy has clear linkages to a range of codes, charters, legislation and Council documents.

- Local Government Act 1989
- Council Rating Strategy
- City of Whittlesea Financial Hardship Policy for Residential Property Owners (Municipal Rates & Charges)
- Municipal Association of Victoria, Hardship Policy Guidelines (November 2013)
- Whittlesea 2040 A place for all

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7. NOTICES OF MOTION

NIL

8. QUESTIONS TO OFFICERS

NIL

9. URGENT BUSINESS

NIL

10. REPORTS COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES AND CEO UPDATE**10.1 ADMINISTRATOR PEITA DUNCAN REPORT**

Administrator Duncan's report was provided verbally at the 5 July 2021 Council meeting, the report is as follows:

"Just two items I really wanted to note, I attended the community grants online celebration, which was fantastic, so well done to council officers and everybody involved in putting that event together. It was quite good fun. And also, the reconciliation group meeting, Whittlesea Reconciliation Group meeting was held again. So I attended that and it was very productive and well worthwhile, as it always is, I must say, and I think we're really starting to get some traction there, and mutual understanding and outcomes."

10.2 ADMINISTRATOR CHRIS EDDY REPORT

Administrator Eddy's report was provided verbally at the 5 July 2021 Council meeting, the report is as follows:

"Since the last meeting, we obviously had a period of time where there were not many events. We have started to return to a more normal way of operating, and one of the highlights for me was representing the council last week at the turning of the sod for the new Mernda town centre, along with the local member, Danielle Green, who spoke very eloquently about the development in the area that is planned. That was a highlight. Really looking forward to seeing that project take shape. I have to mention the Audit and Risk Committee that I have attended as an observer. Other than that, looking forward to getting back into the thick of things as we return to something that looks a little bit like normal in the weeks ahead."

10.3 CHAIR OF COUNCIL LYDIA WILSON REPORT

Chairperson Wilson's report was provided verbally at the 5 July 2021 Council meeting, the report is as follows:

"I would like to make a brief report. I also attended the Audit and Risk Committee over the last months, I have participated with the Interface Council Group, also had a board meeting of Whittlesea Community Connections, participated with the Northern Councils Alliance and also as chair of the Yarra Plenty regional library board, we had a board meeting during the last month. But also, we have been very busy, mostly alongside the Chief Executive Officer, with a number of meetings with local members of Parliament. We had a joint meeting with Colin Brooks MP, Bronwyn Halfpenny MP and Danielle Green MP, in relation to the Investment Attraction Strategy. We had a meeting with Tania Maxwell MP regarding the inquiry into homelessness in Victoria, and then we had a meeting with Cindy McLeish MP in relation to a regional tourism arrangements. I also participated in the COVID-19 Community Recovery Fund Budgeting Group, which we resolved on that particular item earlier this evening, which was most informative. We had a meeting with Hope Street Youth in relation to the first response youth service. A meeting with Danielle Green MP alongside representatives from the City of Nillumbik. All Administrators participated with the community yarn, alongside the CEO and other council officers and as I indicated earlier, I participated in the launch of the financial wellbeing booklet with Whittlesea Community Connections last Friday."

10.4 FOR NOTING - CEO UPDATE - 5 JULY 2021**Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer****Author: Chief Executive Officer**

The CEO Update was provided verbally by the Chief Executive Officer at the 5 July 2021 Council meeting, the report is as follows:

“June was another big month for our community, and council, as we both supported each other through the period of COVID disruption. I would like to thank our staff who undertook 75,00 face-to-face meetings with businesses throughout our shopping precincts and thank you to our partners at the Department of Health, Victoria Police and WorkSafe in supporting that. It is a significant effort on top of people's normal work holds. Also thank you to the officers who were redeployed into COVID cleansing throughout that time too.

Council made an important decision to support the public health of our community by hosting a mass vaccination hub at PRACC next door here. It is now operated by Northern Health and is currently operating seven days a week and we thank them for the work that they are doing and have reached their 50 thousand vaccine last week at that centre which is quite an effort on behalf of our community.

Our highly anticipated \$25 million redevelopment of the Mill Park leisure centre is complete, with the aquatics area opening last Friday. It is pleasing to see that memberships have now passed 2,500 and more than 1,800 learn-to-swim enrolments have already been achieved. We are planning a community opening day next month and that will be advertised quite widely very soon.

In addition to NAIDOC Week, which the Chair has already touched on.

This week is also Youth Week so a number of activities are under way as part of that week:

- Our youth team is holding a tree planting tomorrow,
- On Wednesday, there is a screening of the movie Cruella at the Village Cinema. There is still a couple of seats left for that if people are interested.

It's good to see community events coming back to life. This coming Saturday, the Church Street Whittlesea will be the focus of our winter weekend series there are activities, crafts, face painting and live music from 10am and the farmers market is also back again on the 17th of July at the council offices here.

Finally, I touched on this briefly earlier on, I would like to thank three of our staff, Neville Kurth, who has been deployed off to the Yarra Ranges to assist the council there in a crisis team capacity; also to Rochelle Maile and Spiros Kynigopoulos. They have spent two weeks assisting Latrobe City Council in the really affected area of Traralgon. They are both environmental health officers and they have been out in the field working with local emergency services and staff to help them with this recoveries.”

11. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

11.1 CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

NIL REPORTS

11.2 LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

NIL REPORTS

11.3 STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY

NIL REPORTS

11.4 SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

NIL REPORTS

11.5 HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATION

11.5.1 FOR DECISION - FINANCIAL RESERVES REVIEW & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

11.6 NOTICES OF MOTION

NIL REPORTS

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

MOVED: Administrator Eddy
SECONDED: Administrator Duncan

THAT Council resolve that the meeting be closed to the public for the purpose of considering details relating to the following confidential matters in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that the report contains as follows:

11.5.1 FOR DECISION - FINANCIAL RESERVES REVIEW & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This report is presented to Council as a confidential document on the grounds that it contains:

- Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

In particular the report/attachment contains information regarding Council's strategies for future investment which if publicly disclosed may bring unreasonable prejudice against Council.

CARRIED

12. CLOSURE

ACCORDINGLY, THE MEETING WAS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC AT 8.45PM.

CONFIRMED THIS 2ND DAY OF AUGUST 2021.



**LYDIA WILSON
CHAIR OF COUNCIL**