



# Agenda

## Scheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 6pm

Council Chamber,  
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



**City of  
Whittlesea**

# Councillors

Cr Aidan McLindon, Mayor	Kirrip Ward
Cr Daniela Zinni, Deputy Mayor	Bundoora Ward
Cr Nic Brooks	Thomastown Ward
Cr Blair Colwell	Mill Park Ward
Cr Lawrie Cox	Ganbul Gulinj Ward
Cr Deb Gunn	Painted Hills Ward
Cr Stevan Kozmevski	Lalor Ward
Cr Jarrod Lappin	Mernda Ward
Cr David Lenberg	Epping Ward
Cr Christine Stow	North Ward
Cr Martin Taylor	South Morang Ward

# Executive Leadership Team

Craig Lloyd	Chief Executive Officer
Emma Appleton	Director Planning & Development
Agata Chmielewski	Director Community Wellbeing
Sarah Renner	Director Customer & Corporate Services
Debbie Wood	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Janine Morgan	Executive Manager Public Affairs
Jacinta Stevens	Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

## Order of Business

1	Opening .....	6
1.1	Meeting Opening and Introductions.....	6
1.2	Apologies .....	6
1.3	Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement .....	6
1.4	Diversity and Good Governance Statement .....	7
1.5	Acknowledgements .....	7
2	Declarations of Conflict of Interest .....	7
3	Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s.....	7
4	Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters .....	8
4.1	Public Question Time .....	8
4.2	Petitions.....	8
4.2.1	Dust Levels - Botanica Park Residents .....	8
4.3	Joint Letters .....	8
5	Officers' Reports.....	9
5.1	Q1 & Q2 Community Grants Update .....	9
5.2	Sarissa Street, Lalor - Proposed Partial Road Discontinuance and Sale.....	23
5.3	Tender Evaluation 2024-114: Regional Sport Precinct Main Works - Stage 2 .....	66
5.4	Waste Taskforce - Preventing Illegal Dumping .....	72
5.5	Internal Resolution Procedure.....	81
5.6	Election Period Policy .....	91
5.7	Governance Report.....	106
6	Notices of Motion.....	150
7	Urgent Business.....	150
8	Reports from Councillors and CEO Update .....	150

9 Confidential Business .....	150
9.1 Variation to Parks Maintenance Contract CT 2023 - 118.....	150
10 Closure.....	150



**Note:**

At the Chair's discretion, the meeting may be closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The provision which is likely to be relied upon to enable closure is set out in each item. These reports are not available for public distribution.

**Question Time:**

Council will hold public question time for up to 30 minutes at each Scheduled Council Meeting to allow for public questions, petitions or joint letters from our community to be read out by the Chief Executive Officers delegate and responses will be provide by the Chief Executive Officer.

Questions are required to be submitted in writing no later than 12 noon on the day prior to a Scheduled Council Meeting.

Priority will be given to questions or statements that relate to agenda items. Any questions submitted after 12 noon the day prior will be held over to the following Council Meeting.

The Public Question form can be downloaded from Council's website. Refer:

<https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/>

Council is committed to ensuring that all residents and ratepayers of the municipality may contribute to Council's democratic process and therefore, if you have special requirements, please telephone Council's Governance Team prior to any Council Meeting on (03) 9217 2170.

## **1 Opening**

### **1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions**

The Chair, Cr Aidan McLindon will open the meeting and introduce the Councillors and Chief Executive Officer:

Cr Daniela Zinni, Deputy Mayor

Cr Nic Brooks

Cr Blair Colwell

Cr Lawrie Cox

Cr Deb Gunn

Cr Stevan Kozmevski

Cr Jarrod Lappin

Cr David Lenberg

Cr Christine Stow

Cr Martin Taylor

Craig Lloyd, *Chief Executive Officer*

The Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd will introduce members of the Executive Leadership Team:

Emma Appleton, *Director Planning and Development;*

Agata Chmielewski, *Director Community Wellbeing;*

Sarah Renner, *Director Corporate and Customer Services;*

Debbie Wood, *Director Infrastructure and Environment;*

Janine Morgan, *Executive Manager Public Affairs;* and

Jacinta Stevens, *Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO.*

### **1.2 Apologies**

### **1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement**

The Chair, Cr McLindon will read the following statement:

*“On behalf of Council, I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.*

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

#### **1.4 Diversity and Good Governance Statement**

The Chair, Cr McLindon will read the following statement:

*“At the City of Whittlesea we are proud of our diversity and the many cultures, faiths and beliefs that make up our community. We strive to be an inclusive welcoming City that fosters active participation, wellbeing and connection to each other and this land. We commit as a Council to making informed decisions to benefit the people of the City of Whittlesea now and into the future, to support our community’s vision of A Place For All.”*

#### **1.5 Acknowledgements**

### **2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

### **3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s**

#### **Recommendation**

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

- **Council Meeting held on 18 February 2025; and**
- **Unscheduled Council Meeting held on 25 February 2025.**

## **4 Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters**

### **4.1 Public Question Time**

### **4.2 Petitions**

#### **4.2.1 Dust Levels - Botanica Park Residents**

A petition has been received from 25 residents of Botanica Park requesting Council investigate the levels of dust that is affecting residents of Scarlet Drive Bundoora, which is being caused by the development at McKimmies Road.

#### **Recommendation**

##### **THAT Council:**

- 1. Note the petition.**
- 2. Refer the matter to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration.**
- 3. Note the Chief Executive Officer will report back to Council at a future Council Briefing on any action taken in relation to the petition.**

### **4.3 Joint Letters**

No Joint Letters

## 5 Officers' Reports

### 5.1 Q1 & Q2 Community Grants Update

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer & Corporate Services

**Report Author:** Grants Coordinator

**In Attendance:** Manager, ePMO & Change  
Grants Coordinator

#### Executive Summary

This report is to provide a brief overview of the grants processed for the Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, 2024-2025 Financial Year, from 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024.

As this was an election year, to ensure we adhered to the requirements during this period, notifications to grant recipients were delayed until after the election period. This did not significantly impact the grant applications submitted during this period, however, has delayed the reporting of Quarter 1.

The Grant Management Steering Group (Management Panel) met twice during this period to consider and approve medium and large grants and requests for additional funding for an addendum to the six Neighbourhood Houses across our municipality.

For Q1 and Q2 of this financial year, a total of 134 applications for grants has been received and processed across 8 programs. To date, we have managed to approve at least 50% of the applications received. This is a 6-7% increase in approval rates since the last report.

#### Officers' Recommendation

**THAT Council note:**

- 1. The Quarter 1 & Quarter 2 Management Panel Report attached.**
- 2. That from 1 March 2025 – 31 March 2025, small and individual grants will be off-line due to staff leave.**

## Background / Key Information

Community Grants continued to be processed during the election period this year, however, notifications on the outcome of grant applications were slightly delayed until after the election period ended.

In October 2024, clarification was received that the grants were available to community owned/ operated building projects, for “Building projects, capital works or facility maintenance fixed or permanent equipment, building maintenance or extension, capital improvements (such as heating or cooling systems, shade sails, solar panels, portable buildings etc)”. This is considered a further enhancement to the grants program for our community.

The Centralised Grants team are currently working with the Building & Planning Department on the workflows to ensure Council risk in issuing grants for this purpose is minimised. This has included adding additional requirements in the application form, to ensuring the Building & Planning Department assess and make recommendations to the Management Panel to make an informed decision on whether or not to approve grants for community owned/ operated capital.

This quarter also saw the payment of the Seniors 2024-2025 Club Grants. Due to the election period, the model for this Financial Year, a hybrid model was applied.

The model requires a minimum of 30 members in the club, includes a flat rate base rate for all clubs and per member payment according to only the number of members residing in the City of Whittlesea. Groups who met the new model were paid according to the new model, however, to ensure no groups were disadvantaged during the election period, for those not meeting the new model, these groups received the same grant amount to the 2023-2024 financial year.

All Seniors clubs for 2024-2025 were advised that the new funding model would be applied from 2025-2026.

## Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

### High Performing Organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

The Centralised Grants team continue to consider continuing improvement and quality assurance processes in all aspects of the grants cycle, where applicable. This includes working with internal program areas seeking funds for the grant pool to offer a Council driven program or grant initiative not otherwise available through the current Community Grants on offer.

### Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

#### Financial Management

The cost is included in the current budget.

#### Community Consultation and Engagement

The following presentations were delivered to community, networks and staff across the two quarters.

##### Quarter 1

- 5 September 2024 – Grant Information Sessions;
- Mernda CAC – morning session;
- North Epping/ Wollert Galada CAC – evening session; and
- 11 September 2024 – Grant Writing Workshop, Mernda Social Support Centre.

##### Quarter 2

- 1 October – Aquatic & Leisure Centre Partner Workshop;
- 10 October – Community Hubs Team; and
- 19 November – Early Years Partnership Network.

### Other Principles for Consideration

#### Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

#### Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.

## Council Policy Considerations

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

In Quarter 1, Deakin University was approved for the 'Building for a Greener Future: Promoting Sustainable Housing Practices Through Community Education'.

The Management Panel approved the grant with the following conditions to work collaboratively with Deakin University:

1. Information to be developed in conjunction with Council's sustainability department.
2. Council's branding to be included in the information and for Council to be invited to community sessions.
3. Council's access to intellectual property for the videos (to host them on our website) and to be considered a partner for the initiative.

### Social, Cultural and Health

The Centralised Grants was the first program to test the Gender Impact Assessment process developed and delivered through the Change team.

### Economic

The Management Panel approved \$12,000 to allow the six Neighbourhood Houses to provide support to communities it services during the Christmas period. This was approved due to the limited support available across the municipality during this period.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

Exploring the operational delivery of allowing grant applicants to seek a grant for community owned/operated capital will require staff in these teams to review and assess applications for capital.

## Implementation Strategy

### Communication

Centralised Grants team to work with Communications Team regarding advice of grants going off-line. Targeted communication will go out to the following key teams:

- Community Wellbeing.
- Economic Development.

### Critical Dates

1 March to 31 March – small and individual grants will be taken off-line.



## Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* 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.

## Attachments

1. 2024-2025 Q1 Q2 Overview Report [5.1.1 - 9 pages]



**Year to Date  
Quarter 1 & 2  
Overview Report  
Centralised Grants  
1 July 2024 – 31 December 2024**

**Contents**

Executive Summary .....2  
    Grants Approval Process Flow .....3  
    Assessments .....3  
Overview Q1 & Q2 .....4  
Grants Approved .....7  
Acquittal Comments and Photos .....8



## Executive Summary

This report is to provide both a brief overview of the grants applied for and allocated funding for the current year to date from 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024.

As this was an election year, to ensure we adhered to the requirements during this period and to err on the side of caution, notifications to grant recipients were delayed until after the election period. This did not have much impact on the grant applications submitted during this period.

The following presentations were delivered to community, networks and staff across the two quarters.

### Quarter 1

- 5 September 2024 – Grant Information Sessions
  - Mernda CAC – morning session
  - North Epping/ Wollert Galada CAC – evening session
- 11 September 2024 – Grant Writing Workshop, Mernda Social Support Centre.

### Quarter 2

- 1 October – Aquatic & Leisure Centre Partner Workshop
- 10 October – Community Hubs Team
- 19 November – Early Years Partnership Network

For the 2024-2025 Q1 & Q2 period, a total of 134 applications were received as follows:

Grant Program	No. Applications	No. Applications Approved	Amount Requested	Amount Approved
Individual	7	6	\$ 6,899	\$ 5,650
Small	18	9	\$ 39,448	\$ 18,053
Medium	16	8	\$ 175,900	\$ 57,162
Large	4	3	\$ 149,030	\$ 71,351
Building & Relocation	7	0	\$ 278,500	\$ -
Seniors 24-25 Club Grants	74	74	\$ 281,079	\$ 281,079
Neighbourhood Houses Christmas addendum	6	6	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
Funding Agreements (ANZAC Day & Luna Festival)	2	2	\$ 12,700	\$ 12,700
<b>Totals</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>\$ 955,556</b>	<b>\$ 457,995</b>

The overall approval rate across Individual, Small, Medium, Large and Building & Relocation Grants processed and reported is 50%.

### Funding Agreements

This quarter two Funding Agreements for three years were offered and accepted by Epping RSL for ANZAC Day and the Whittlesea Chinese Association for Luna New Year.

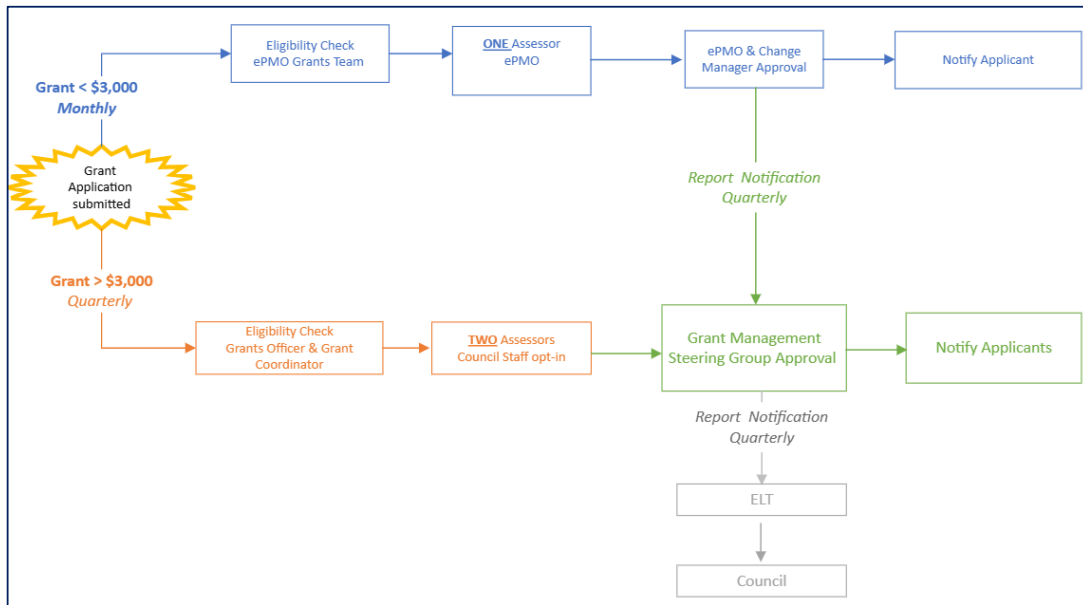
### Neighbourhood Houses Christmas addendum

The Management Panel approved Christmas relief to cover support Neighbourhood Houses (NH) provide due to the limited services on offer across the municipality during the Christmas period. Each NH received an additional \$2,000 to cover this period.



### Grants Approval Process Flow

Diagram 1 below provides an overview of the grant approval and notification process applied to both Quarters 1 & 2. Community have been advised that the assessment and approval process will take approximately 6 weeks from the time a round of grants is closed.



### Assessments

In Quarter 2 we trialed running assessments with an assessment panel made of Council staff. This was a preferred option selected by the majority of assessors. On Thursday 23 January, the Grants Team provided Secretariat support and delivered the first grants assessment panel to consider medium and large grants. A week before the meeting, all assessors were provided access to the Applications and additional documentation through files saved to SharePoint in preparation for the Assessment Panel Report.

We had a total of 8 Assessors attend the assessment panel. Feedback has been sought from the assessors regarding quality improvement or further considerations following this first Assessment Panel. This will be considered in time before the next Quarterly report to consider whether assessment via an Assessment Panel or individually is preferred.

For both quarters, a total of 24 Individual staff members have assessed across all the applications to date. The Governance Team have confirmed that all assessors will be required to be noted on the Personal Interest Register.

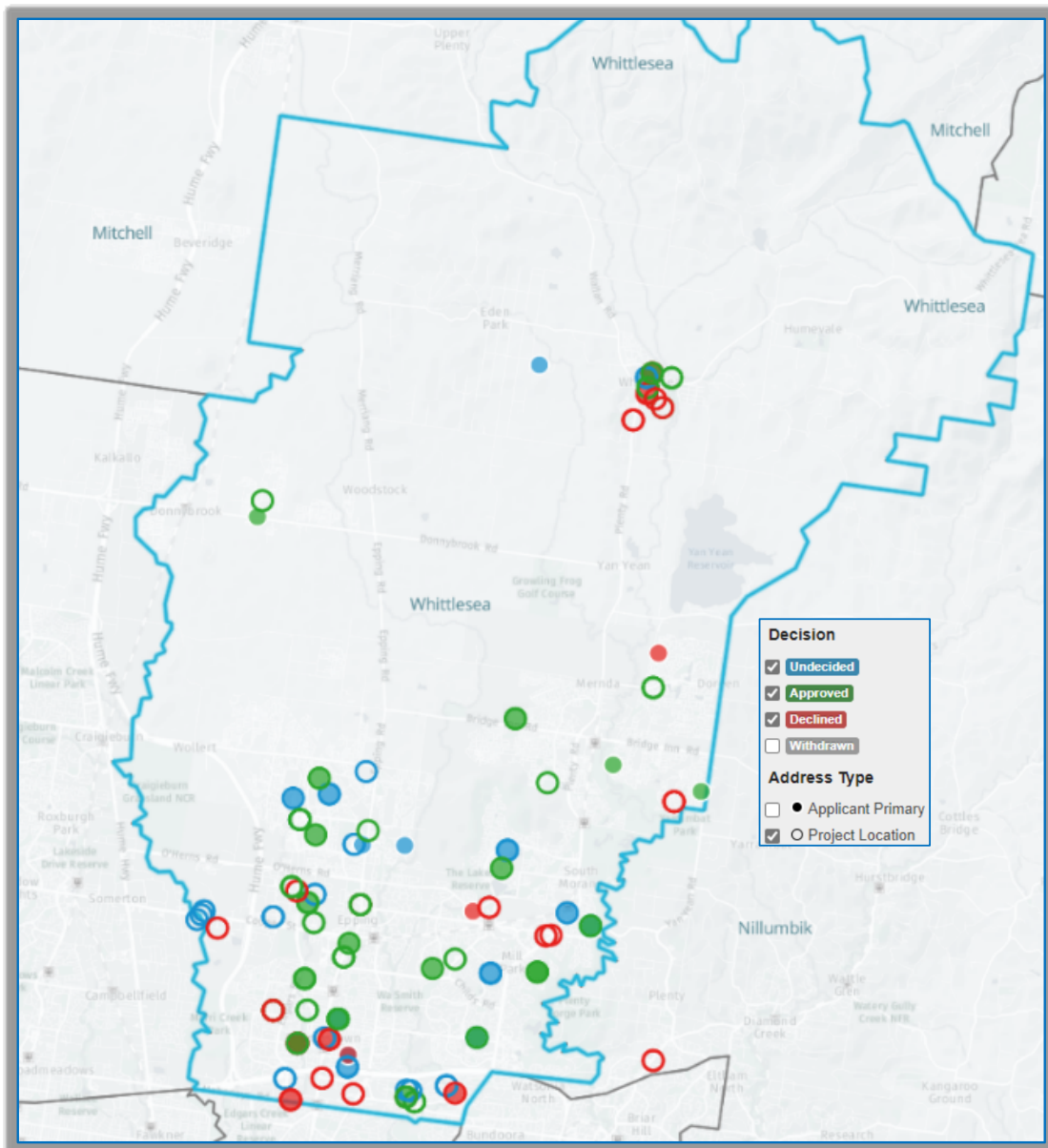
Directorate	No. Assessors
Community Wellbeing	11
Customer & Corporate Services	6
Infrastructure & Environment	2
Planning & Development	3
Public Affairs	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

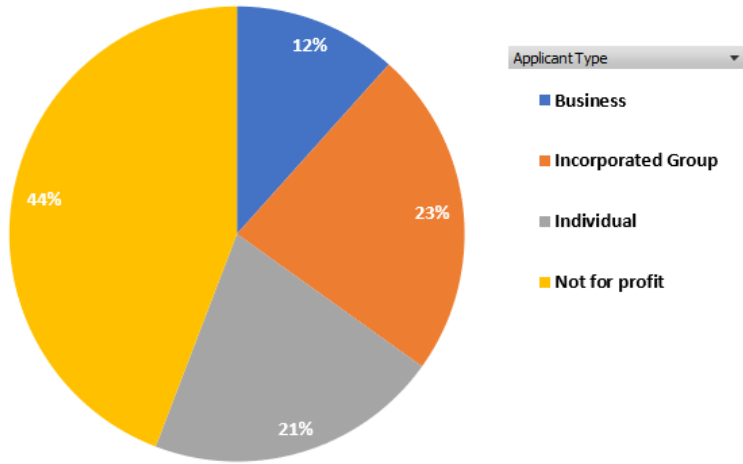


## Overview Q1 & Q2

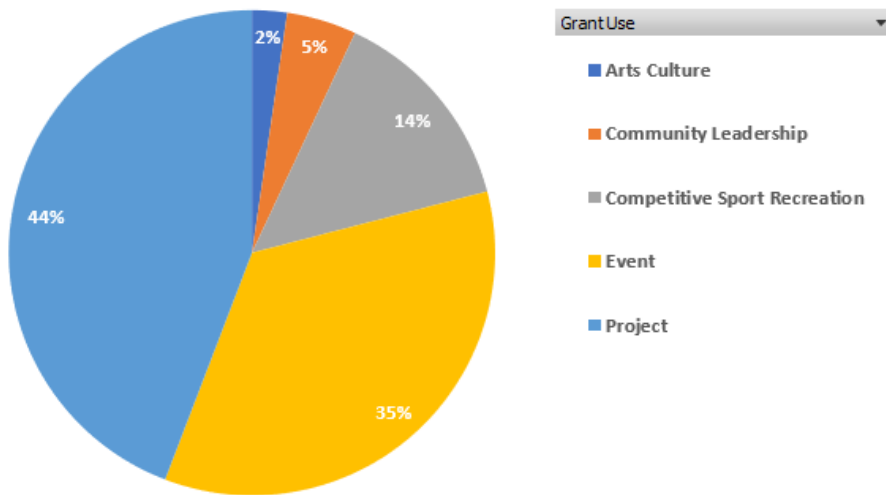
The map below is a visual of all grants that have been approved, declined and yet to be approved over these two quarters. The graph below is showing the applications received under the Centralised Grants in Smarty Grants across 11 Programs including NHs and Seniors.

Further information is provided on the following page with key information across Applicant Type, Grant Use, Target Groups, 2040 Goals and amounts reported across the two quarters. The remainder of this report shows the grants considered over these two quarters and decisions made regarding funding.

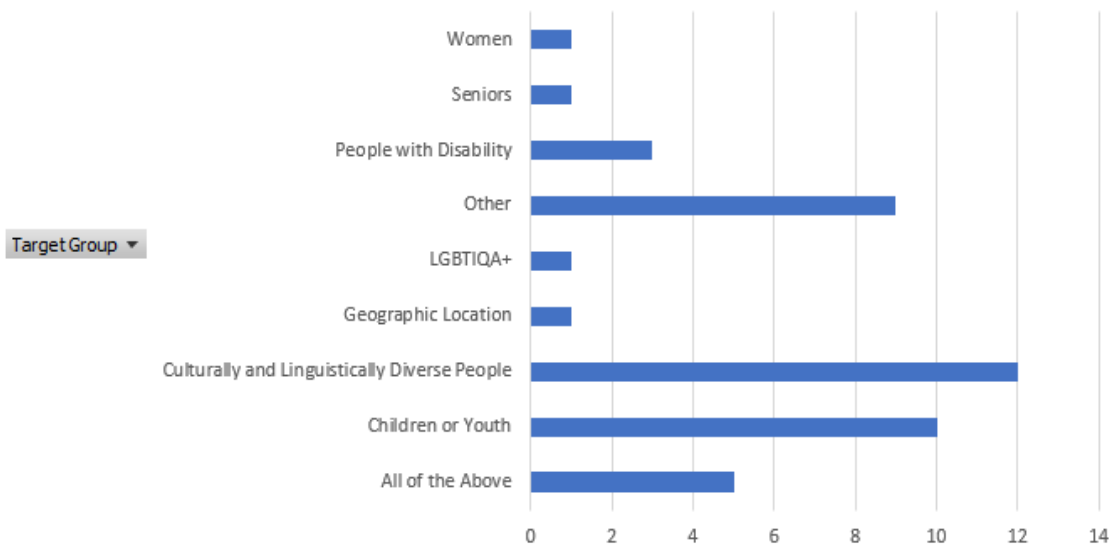




No. Applications by Grant Use

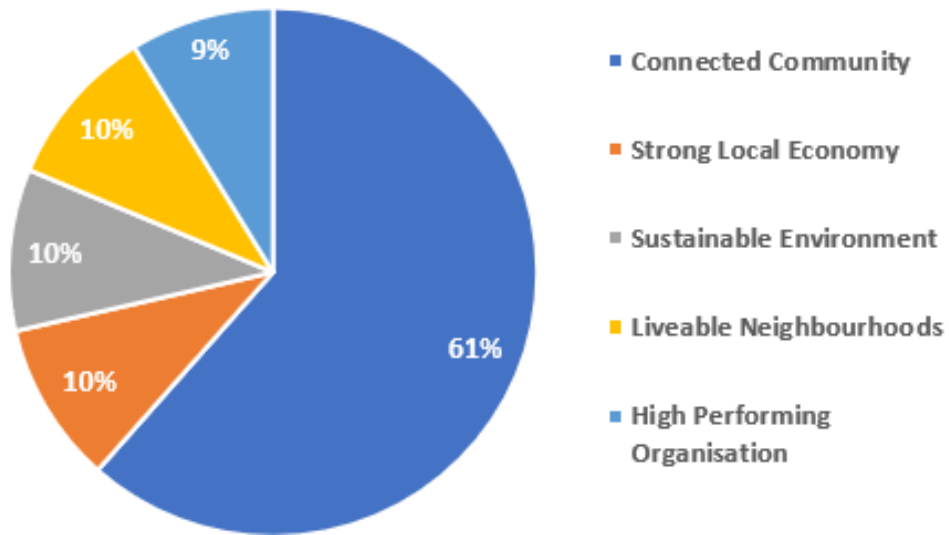


No. Applications by Target Group

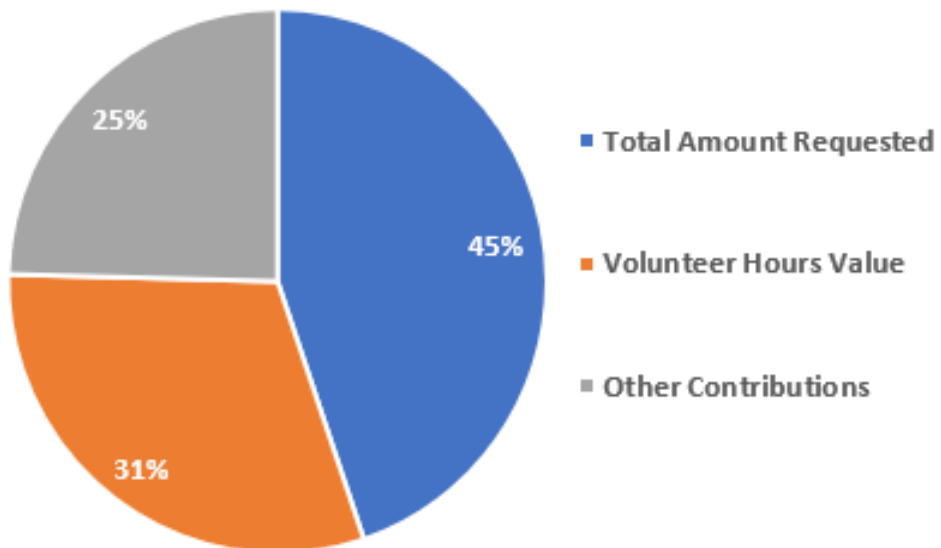




### 2040 Goals



### Amounts Reported





## Grants Approved

Grant Type	Grant Recipient	Project Title
Individual Grant	A Apostolopoulos	Hip Hop International World Competition
Individual Grant	J Berged	Theatre Workshops
Individual Grant	S Andriopoulos	Elite Cheer AASCF National Championships
Individual Grant	I Karanfilovski	Elite Cheer AASCF National Championships
Individual Grant	D Andriopoulos	Elite Cheer AASCF National Championships
Individual Grant	T Tayla	Softball National U16 Girls Championships
Small Grant	Jacaranda Preschool Inc.	Jacaranda Preschool's 21st Birthday
Small Grant	Friends of Westgarthtown Inc.	Thomastown/ Lalor Bush Kinder Meeting Circle
Small Grant	Vipanchika Grandhasal Inc.	Christmas and New Year Celebration
Small Grant	Australian Rwandan Community Association in Victoria Inc.	Rwandan Community mid ear cultural day - Umuganura
Small Grant	Zambian Association of Victoria	ZAV Youth Connect & Thrive
Small Grant	North Church Epping (Crossway North Baptist Church)	First Aid upgrade
Small Grant	Northern BMX Club	Replacement Club Portable Tents
Small Grant	Northern Melbourne Marathi Mandal Inc.	NMMM Dahi Handi 2025
Medium Grant	Valley Presbyterian Church	Doreen Community Carols
Medium Grant	Macedonian Teachers' Association of Victoria Pty Ltd	Macedonian Storytime
Medium Grant	Lets Braai Pty Ltd	Fire & Flavour: A Community Braai (BBQ) Celebration
Medium Grant	Olivine Community Group Inc.	International Expo 2025
Medium Grant	Mill Park Football Club Inc.	Portable Equipment for Mill Park FC
Medium Grant	South Morang Football Netball Club	Launching SMFNC's First Junior Netball Program
Medium Grant	Darebin Creek Management Committee Inc.	Darebin Creek Corridor Tools for Success
Medium Grant	Walking Football 4 Health Victoria Inc.	Walking Football 4 Health at Thomastown
Medium Grant	Landcare Victoria Inc.	Funky Flashpackers for Frogs and Fish
Medium Grant	Donnybrook Primary School	Stride Together: Equine Therapy for All Abilities
Large Grant	Deakin University	Building for a Greener Future: Promoting Sustainable Housing Practices Through Community Education
Large Grant	Amazing Parents	Bond & Bloom: Support & Play Circle
Large Grant	That's Amore Cheese	Ricotta Festival



## Acquittal Comments and Photos

### Whittlesea Garden Expo



There was a good variety of stallholders. The presentations by both key presenters and stallholders were well attended and generated numbers of questions from the audience to the presenters. Children's activities were again popular. The Rotary second-hand gardening book stall was again a hit. The social occasion for the stallholders provided us with useful feedback, both complimentary and constructive. Good involvement from local groups/clubs.

### Doreen Community Carols

We love putting on the carols because in a public park all people feel safe and welcome to participate. With multiple free activities even those with a low income can enjoy the day.



**Dark Lake**



*Our performances in Whittlesea were sold out and we were thrilled to see a variety of ages groups attending. We had a large number of young people present, which we anticipated, but we were surprised to see a significant number of people aged 50+ attending also. We had many people of varying cultural backgrounds.*



**Thai Pongal**



No matter how far from the motherland, our people and our roots, Indians and Sri lankan people carry traditions and festivities along with them. Festivals are markers of togetherness among communities, of cultural bonding among communities, of wearing traditional garments (in the case of Pongal, ornate silk sarees for women and veshti for men), of preparing traditional food and remembering the loved ones. By celebrating New Year as a festival with other cultural activities, these traditions have been also passed down through generations, maintained in the present and grown on as a legacy for future

## 5.2 Sarissa Street, Lalor - Proposed Partial Road Discontinuance and Sale

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Planning & Development

**Report Author:** Project Manager Community Infrastructure

**In Attendance:** Manager Strategic Property & Portfolio Development  
Project Manager Community Infrastructure

### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to finalise the statutory procedures under the *Local Government Act 1989* and *Local Government Act 2020* for the discontinuance and potential future sale of a section of road in Sarissa Street, Lalor (including road splays).

This report seeks to inform Council of the submissions received in response to the public notice for the proposal to discontinue and sell part of Sarissa Street, Lalor, and to provide recommendations for a Council decision.

The discontinuance of Sarissa Street in Lalor will remove the 'road' status and formally nullify the identified section as a road. The section of road being considered for discontinuance and potential sale is shown as the 184sqm approx. highlighted area marked 'Subject Land' on the road discontinuance and sale plan (Attachment 1) and is contained in certificate of title Volume 11355 Folio 699, registered in Council's name. It forms part of Plan of Subdivision PS634223T.

The proposal forms part of the Downs Road residential development project, identified in the *Whittlesea Public Gardens master plan 2018* (Attachment 2), endorsed by Council in September 2018. The plan identified a 25-lot residential subdivision along the Public Garden edge, which would provide housing close to amenity and improve public safety of the park.

The section of Sarissa Street being considered for discontinuance and potential future sale connects to the former Downs Road, an 8,495sqm (approx.) section of road that was formally discontinued in 2019 as it was no longer reasonably required for general public use.

### Key considerations

- Commencement of the statutory processes for the proposed discontinuance and sale of the section of road was authorised, under delegation, by Council's Chief Executive Officer on 20 November 2024.
- The statutory process commenced on 26 November 2024 with a public notice of the intention published in the *Whittlesea Review* newspaper and on Council's website for the duration of the statutory 28-day submission period. The consultation period ended on 23 December 2024.
- Letters were issued to 54 neighbouring residents and landowners informing them of the process, including the landowner directly adjacent to the Subject Land at 107 Sarissa Street, Lalor.
- Three submissions were received during the public notice period from residents and landowners, opposing the discontinuance. One submission was received regarding a perceived absence of public toilets in the area and two submissions were received regarding the perceived impacts of possible social housing in the new residential development.
- No submitters wished to be heard in support of their submission.
- An officer's consideration of the submissions confirms that new public toilet facilities are available nearby, within the recently upgraded Whittlesea Public Gardens, and that the inclusion of any social housing will be addressed in the project business case for the residential development. Respondents have been advised that community consultation about the proposed residential development and the possible inclusion of affordable housing is proposed to follow this statutory discontinuance and sale process, if approved.
- Consultation regarding the proposed discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street was also undertaken with service authorities during the public notice period, with service authorities seeking clarification that easement rights be saved.

### Officers' Recommendation

#### THAT Council:

1. **In accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and sections 206, 207A and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*:**
  - a. **by giving public notice in the *Whittlesea Review* newspaper on 26 November 2024;**
  - b. **having received and considered three submissions in response to the public notice; and**
  - c. **by recording that no submitters requested to be heard.**

**Forms the view that the 184sqm section of road located adjacent to 107 Sarissa Street, Lalor (Subject Land), forming part of the Plan of Subdivision PS634223T and contained in Volume 11355 Folio 699, is no longer reasonably required for general public use for the following reasons. The proposal:**



- i. does not restrict any public rights of use or access as the road is unused;
  - ii. will not affect neighbouring properties as the road is not used for vehicular access by neighbouring properties;
  - iii. will not impact on the movement of pedestrians or vehicles within the vicinity of the road; and
  - iv. will not impede access to services, through maintenance or relocation of Council and/or service authority assets.
2. Resolve to discontinue and sell the Subject Land and publish a notice in the *Victoria Government Gazette* confirming the discontinuance and proposed sale, in accordance with section 206 and clause 3(a) of Schedule 10 to the *Local Government Act 1989* and section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Resolve that the north-eastern splay of the Subject Land will be offered for sale by private treaty to the owner of 107 Sarissa Street, Lalor.
4. Authorise the negotiation and coordination with service authorities, where relevant, for the relocation of service assets to enable the residential development.
5. Direct that any easements, rights, or interests required to be created or saved over the road by any public authority, and which cannot be relocated, be applied.
6. Authorise the amendment of Council's Register of Public Roads to reflect the discontinuation of the section of road following publication of the Resolution in the *Victoria Government Gazette*.
7. Notify all submitters who have made written submissions of Council's decision and reasons for the decision.
8. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer, or any such person whom the Chief Executive Officer delegates, to sign all documents relating to the sale of the discontinued road (Subject Land) including the splays, and any other action required to affect the land sale.

## Background / Key Information

Council, at its meeting held on 4 September 2018, endorsed the *Whittlesea Public Gardens master plan* (Attachment 2), which provided a blueprint for redeveloping the park to meet the recreation needs of Lalor's changing community.

The master plan recommended the establishment of a 'new road and residential housing facing onto the gardens, along Downs Road, to improve passive surveillance and public safety in the reserve' (Attachment 2, page 6).

At the Council meeting held on 5 March 2019, Council resolved to undertake the statutory process required to discontinue the land known as Downs Road and invite submissions on the proposal. Following this community consultation process, at the Council meeting held on 7 May 2019 (meeting minutes included as Attachment 3), Council resolved to discontinue the section of Downs Road under Section 206 of the *Local Government Act 1989* for the purpose of consolidation and potential sale as part of a new residential subdivision overlooking Whittlesea Public Gardens. The *Victoria Government Gazette* notice was published on 16 May 2019 and later corrected in a subsequent notice issued on 23 July 2020 to include easement rights for Yarra Valley Water.

The section of Downs Road, south of Sarissa Street, has been discontinued and the road status has been removed. However, the concept plan of subdivision (Attachment 4) proposes the development of a section of Sarissa Street, north of the former Downs Road. The development proposes the subdivision of a portion of road that was not part of the earlier Downs Road discontinuance process, specifically where the former Downs Road meets Sarissa Street.

On 20 November 2024, the Chief Executive Officer, under delegation, authorised the commencement of the statutory process for the discontinuance of part of Sarissa Street, Lalor, where it intersects with the former Downs Road, labelled 'Subject Land' in Figure 1.

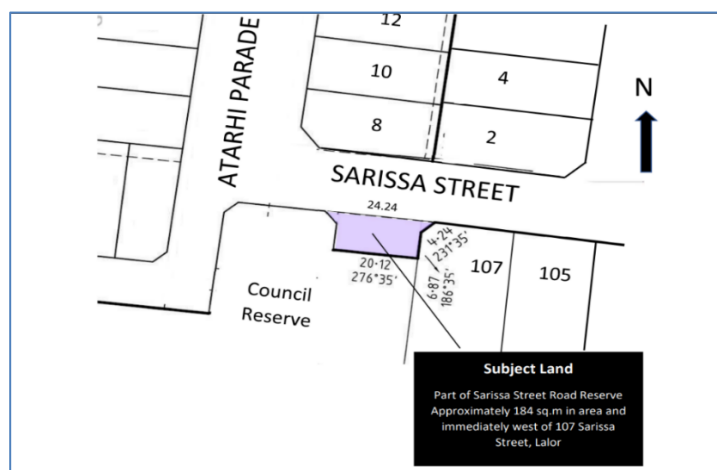


Figure 1: Location plan, Sarissa Street part discontinuance

A public notice for the discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street was published in the *Whittlesea Review* newspaper (Attachment 5) and on Council's website on 26 November 2024. A letter was also issued to 54 neighbouring residents and landowners advising of the proposal, the planning permit advertising period, and the broader residential development project. A webpage was also created for the proposal, inviting submissions, and linking to the broader residential development project webpage.

Submissions were open from 26 November 2024 until 23 December 2024, as per the statutory requirement.

Three submissions were received during the community engagement period; all opposed to the discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street, Lalor. The submissions are included in Attachment 6 and a summary and consideration of the feedback is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Summary and consideration of submissions**

Submission	Feedback (summary)	Officer consideration
1	Subject Land better suited as a public toilet.	A public toilet is provided within the Whittlesea Public Gardens, near the playground, approximately 250 metres from Subject Land and approximately 40 metres from the children's play tower.
2 & 3	Social housing could negatively impact the estate and surrounding areas.	<p>The discontinuance does not commit Council to allocating the land for affordable housing.</p> <p>The inclusion of affordable housing in the proposed residential development is a matter to be explored as part of a project business case.</p> <p>If affordable housing is to be an integrated component, a model managed by a Community Housing Provider would prioritise long-term stability and a strong sense of community while maintaining high standards of oversight and care.</p>

If resolved by Council, the north-eastern splay of the Subject Land (approx. 4.325m<sup>2</sup>) will be offered for sale by private treaty to the owner of 107 Sarissa Street, Lalor (refer attachment 7 for approximate size and location).

### Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

#### High Performing Organisation

*We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.*

The discontinuance and proposed sale of part of Sarissa Street in Lalor aligns with Council's goal of being a High Performing Organisation by ensuring that decisions are made in the best interest of the community through effective engagement and transparent decision-making.

By following the statutory process and providing opportunities for public input, including a public notice and direct mailout, demonstrates the project's commitment to engaging the community in decisions that affect them.

The proposal also reflects Council's focus on delivering commercially viable initiatives, as the proposal will support the broader Downs Road residential development project, which aims to enhance public safety, increase housing options, and create a revenue stream for Council to reinvest into community infrastructure and/or services.

### Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020) Principles*

#### Financial Management

The cost of the discontinuance process is included in the current project budget. No further funds are being sought to enable the discontinuance of part of Sarissa Street.

As part of the Downs Road residential development project, a certified valuation will be obtained post-discontinuance, and within 6 months of any potential sale of land or residential lots, to ensure that the land is transacted in accordance with section 114 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

#### Community Consultation and Engagement

Community consultation and engagement for the proposed discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street, Lalor, has been conducted in accordance with statutory requirements and Council's *Community Engagement Policy 2023-2027*.



A public notice outlining the proposal was published in the *Whittlesea Review* newspaper and on Council's website on 26 November 2024, with submissions open for the statutory 28-day period. To ensure stakeholders were informed of the discontinuance and sale, letters were sent to 54 neighbouring properties. A dedicated webpage was created to facilitate online submissions and provide project details. This approach allowed the community to provide feedback via an online form, in addition to email, phone or post, and linked to the broader residential development project page, ensuring transparency and accessibility in the consultation process.

The following service authorities have been advised of the proposed discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street, Lalor, and have been asked to respond to the question of whether they have any existing assets in the road, with rights that should be saved under section 207C of the *Local Government Act 1989*:

- APA Group;
- AusNet;
- Jemena;
- Melbourne Water;
- NBN;
- Optus;
- Telstra;
- VicRoads; and
- Yarra Valley Water.

APA Group, Jemena, Melbourne Water, Telstra and Optus have advised that they do not hold any objections to the proposal. Yarra Valley Water and AusNet have both requested easement rights to be saved over the Subject Land. As the registration of easements over the Subject Land would impede the ability to build a dwelling on the land, the relocation of services has been explored in the development's draft civil drawings and will be further negotiated and coordinated with the relevant service authorities ahead of the detailed design process. NBN provided no comment or response to the proposal.

As part of the consultation process, Officers also engaged with internal departments to seek their feedback on the proposed discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street, Lalor. The Urban Design and Transport department noted the location of existing drainage, which will be addressed as part of the detailed design process for the road and civil infrastructure of the residential development.

The Development Engineering team noted the original development plan's intention to create a north-south connection from the Mosaic Living estate to Barry Road, which has already been considered as part of the discontinuance of Downs Road. No further internal responses were received.

In addition, and aligned with this discontinuance process, the community has also been engaged in a formal planning permit process for the subdivision of this and the former Downs Road land. Coordinated by the Planning department, it is anticipated that this matter will be brought for consideration at a future Council meeting.

Internal partners and external stakeholders will continue to be engaged as part of the Downs Road residential development project and contribute to the project's detailed design and construction phases.

### Other Principles for Consideration

#### Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.

#### Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.

### Council Policy Considerations

#### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

The proposed discontinuance of part of Sarissa Street, Lalor does not have any environmental sustainability considerations in itself, however, the future development and sale of the land will adhere to environmental sustainability principles, including the use of energy-efficient building practices, waste reduction strategies, and the incorporation of green spaces into the urban design. Furthermore, the project provides an opportunity to create a sustainable, well-integrated community that supports environmental goals in the context of urban growth.

#### Social, Cultural and Health

The proposed discontinuance of part of Sarissa Street and the proposed residential development will contribute to the community's social fabric by providing new housing options that face onto Whittlesea Public Gardens, promoting a sense of connection and safety. The development aims to enhance public safety by improving passive surveillance, which is expected to have positive effects on the wellbeing of residents and park users. Moreover, the development will consider the inclusion of social housing, which, if included, will contribute to improving housing affordability in the area.

The proposed development's design will also ensure that the community's cultural and recreational needs are met, offering improved access to public spaces and facilities that support physical and mental health.

### **Economic**

The proposed discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street will have a positive economic impact by facilitating the development of residential housing that will help meet local demand. The project is expected to generate increased economic activity through the construction phase, creating job opportunities and local business engagement. Additionally, the proposed sale of the land will contribute to Council's financial resources, which could be reinvested into other community infrastructure projects. The introduction of new residents to the area will also have long-term benefits, such as increased local spending and the potential for new businesses and services to cater to the growing population.

### **Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications**

The statutory process for the discontinuance and sale of part of Sarissa Street is being carried out in compliance with the *Local Government Act 1989* and the *Local Government Act 2020*, ensuring that all legal requirements are met. However, there are strategic risks associated with potential opposition to the broader residential development project, particularly regarding concerns about the inclusion of social housing and the impact on surrounding properties.

These risks are being actively managed through community consultation and engagement, as well as a clear communication strategy that clarifies the scope of the project. Resource implications are being closely monitored, with sufficient staff and financial resources allocated to manage the statutory process and ensure the successful delivery of the project.

## **Implementation Strategy**

### **Communication**

If the discontinuance and sale is approved by Council, a formal notice will be published in the *Victoria Government Gazette*, confirming the discontinuance and sale of the land. Additionally, Officers will update the dedicated webpages with the outcome, providing clear details about the decision and next steps.

A follow-up communication, via email or direct letter, will be sent to the submitters, thanking them for their input and outlining how their concerns were addressed in the decision-making process. Local residents and other key stakeholders will be notified of the outcome through a letter to ensure transparency.

### Critical Dates

Council decision date:	18 March 2025 Date of the Council meeting where the discontinuance and sale proposal is considered.
Government Gazette Notice:	A formal notice will be published in next available edition of the <i>Victoria Government Gazette</i> confirming the discontinuance and potential sale of the land (or once agreement on the relocation of service assets has been reached).
Update Council website:	Within 2 days of the Council meeting, the dedicated project and proposed discontinuance webpages will be updated with the decision and any relevant details about the next steps, including the outcome of the consultation and how concerns were/will be addressed.
Notification to submitters:	Within 7 days of the Council meeting, a letter or email will be sent to the submitters, thanking them for their feedback and outlining how their concerns were considered in the decision.
Stakeholder notification:	Within 7 days of the Council decision, letters will be sent to local residents and landowners to inform them of the outcome and provide additional information on the project's next steps.

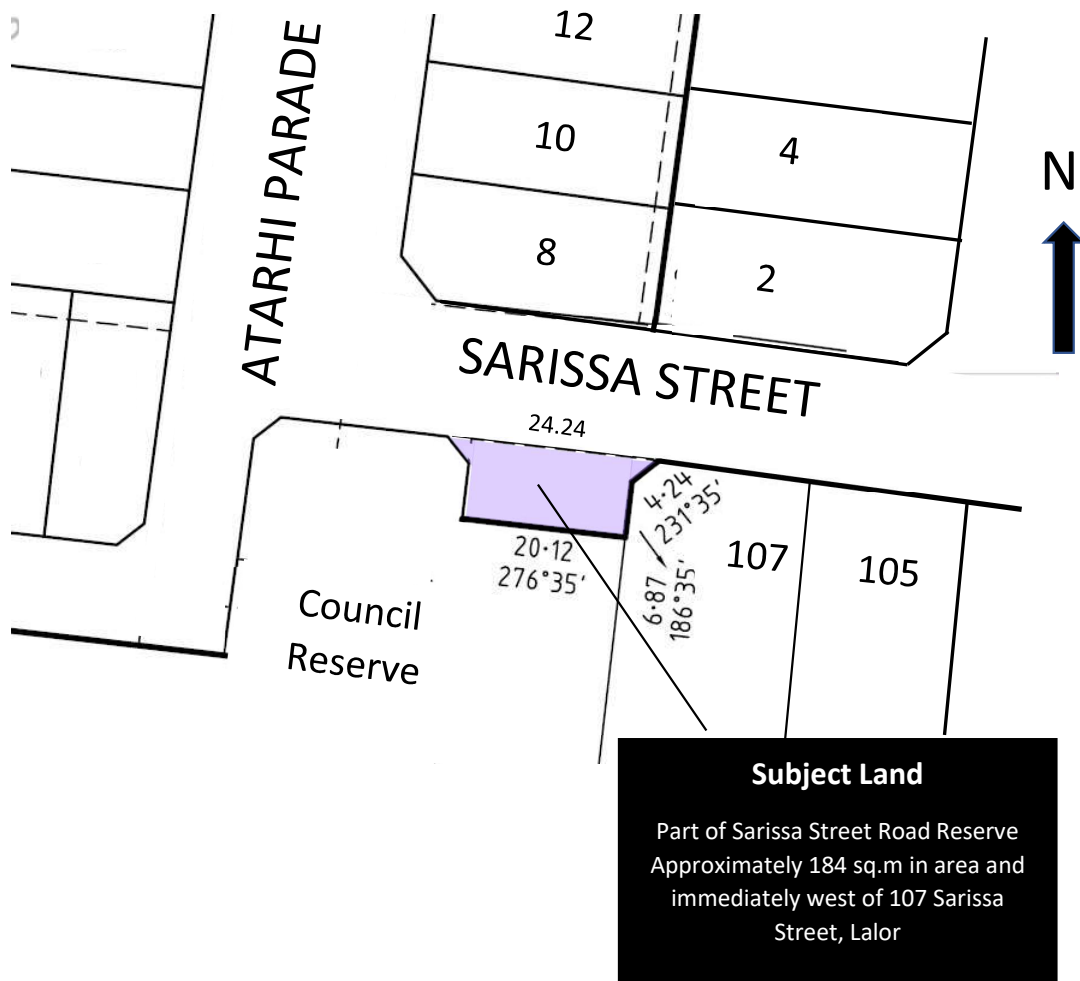
### Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* 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.

### Attachments

1. Road discontinuance and sale plan [5.2.1 - 1 page]
2. Whittlesea Public Gardens master plan [5.2.2 - 21 pages]
3. Council Meeting Minutes - 7 May 2019 [5.2.3 - 6 pages]
4. Concept plan of subdivision [5.2.4 - 1 page]
5. Whittlesea Review - Public Notice - Sarissa Street, Lalor - 26 November 2024 [5.2.5 - 1 page]
6. Sarissa Street part-discontinuance - Submissions [5.2.6 - 2 pages]
7. Land (splay) offered for potential sale Sarissa Street Lalor [5.2.7 - 1 page]







# WHITTLESEA PUBLIC GARDENS MASTER PLAN

JULY 2018



## Contents

Introduction	3
Project Process	4
Open Space Context	5
Community Consultation	6
Land Management And Planning Controls	7
Existing Conditions	8
Site Access And Security	9
Lake and Wetlands	10
Park Infrastructure	11
Community Festival and Events	13
Environmental And Cultural Heritage Values	14
Garden Vegetation Management	15
Passive Surveillance and Public Safety	16
Master Plan Implementation	18
Master Plan Implementation Works	20
Bibliography	21

## Figures and Plans

<i>Figure 1: Major Community Parks</i>	3
<i>Figure 2: Project Process Flowchart</i>	4
<i>Figure 3: Open Space Context</i>	5
<i>Figure 4: Regional Context - Merri Creek Marron Baba Parklands</i>	5
<i>Figure 5: Information leaflet and questionnaire #1</i>	6
<i>Figure 6: Existing Land Management</i>	7
<i>Figure 7: Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay</i>	7
<i>Figure 8: Existing Conditions Plan</i>	8
<i>Figure 9: Proposed Lighting Along the 2.5m Concrete Path</i>	17
<i>Figure 10: Master Plan</i>	18
<i>Figure 11: Master Plan Images</i>	19

The *Whittlesea Public Gardens Master Plan* has been prepared for **Whittlesea City Council** by **Thompson Berrill Landscape Design P/L**.

Version	Revision	Date
Draft	V1	Oct 2017
Revised Draft	V2	May 2018
Final	V3	July 2018



## Introduction

Whittlesea Public Gardens is a 14.78 hectare reserve located in Lalor at the western end of Barry Road.

The Gardens and lake were opened to the public in 1994 and hosted the popular Whittlesea Community Festival from 1998 up until this year.

Following completion of the Hume Freeway Craigieburn Bypass in 2004 the City of Whittlesea developed a Master Plan to guide further development of facilities at the Gardens. Implementation of this plan included installation of the public toilet, playground, picnic shelter and extensive planting. However persistent drought conditions dried out the lake and damaged the liner such that it could not sustain permanent water.

More recently, as new residential development proceeded to the north, a series of water quality treatment wetlands were completed and new facilities such as the dog off leash park and fitness station have been added to bring new users to the park.

The City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy nominated Whittlesea Public Gardens as one of four most important municipal open spaces within the municipality. The Gardens will provide open space for the expanding local community as well as the main eastern visitor access point into the 650ha Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands. Following completion of the final missing link in Merri Creek Trail between Bolinda Road and Mahoneys Road, the Gardens will also form the start/end point of the 21km Merri Creek Trail providing off road pedestrian and cycling access all the way to the Melbourne CBD attracting increasing regional visitation.

The Open Space Strategy identified the following key issues to be addressed in the development of the new Master Plan:

- Improvement to the landscape character and quality to broaden the appeal and use of the Gardens;
- Continue to seek State Government funding of facilities for the regional visitors and;

- Improvement to the visibility and safety by way of upgrading the eastern interface to the park.

The Master plan will inform the Council’s capital works program, funding applications and priorities for infrastructure renewal, replacement and redevelopment and over the next decade. Key objectives for the Master Plan include:

- Create an iconic regional park for the northern suburbs and gateway/destination within the Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Regional Parklands;
- Support existing local community use and improve access to the Gardens.
- Provide new open space facilities to cater for the expanding local community and to attract new visitors to the area
- Improve public safety and reduce opportunity for illegal activities and vandalism of new and existing facilities.
- Improve parkland interface treatment including removal of redundant security fencing.
- Develop an integrated water management strategy to resolve the future of the former lake, uses for harvested/recycled stormwater and enhancement of existing wetlands.
- Upgrade and expand the existing playground, BBQ and picnic facilities
- Upgrade/replace the existing toilet facility and improve security and safety.
- Upgrade the existing path network to improve all weather, all ability access.

- Provide new way finding and interpretive signage regarding cultural and environmental values.
- Renew existing planting and update vegetation management to improve sustainability, diversity and public safety.
- Ensure the spatial arrangement of the existing and new facilities maximises opportunities for community events and festivals.
- Designate differential levels of service for different open space areas within the Gardens to minimise ongoing maintenance and asset renewal costs.
- Integrate future residential development to enhance the Gardens environment.

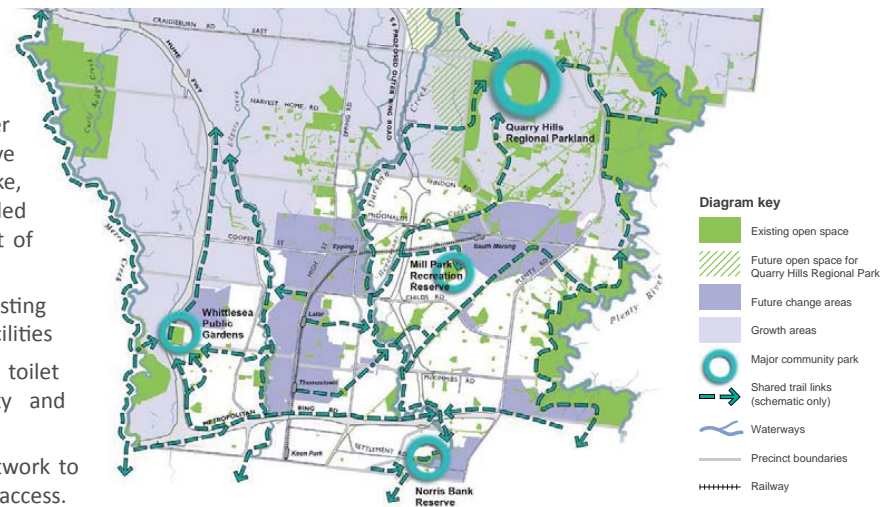


Figure 1: Major Community Parks (Whittlesea Open Space Strategy 2016)



# Project Process

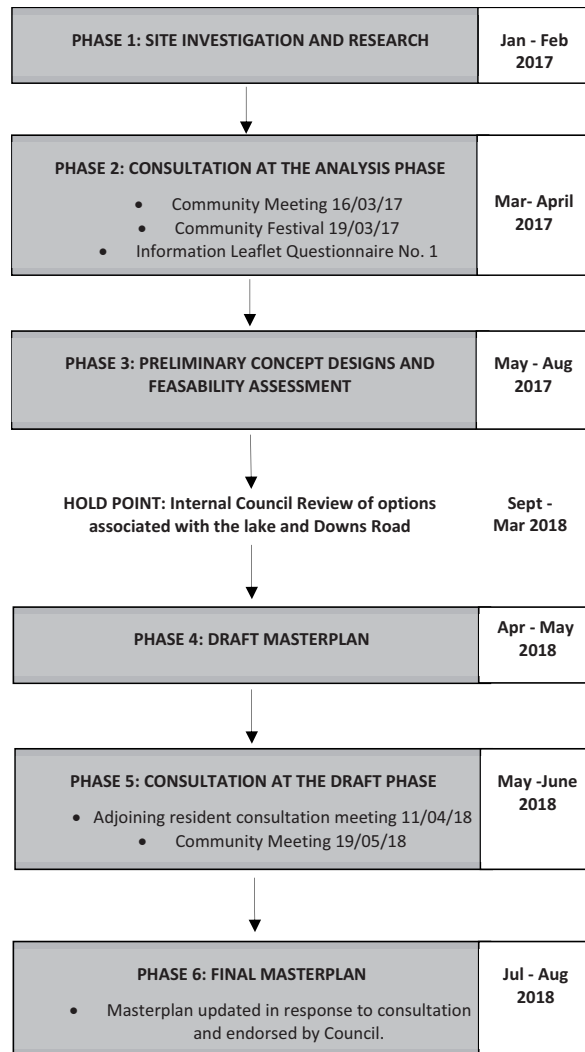


Figure 2: Project Process Flowchart



### Council Strategies and Plans

A number of existing strategic planning documents, policies and strategies have influenced the development of The Whittlesea Public Gardens Master Plan. These have been reviewed and have informed key directions recommendations relevant to the Master Plan Appendix 1.

#### Melbourne Water

- Shared Pathway Guidelines

#### Parks Victoria

- Merri Creek Marran Baba Parklands: Strategic Management Plan

### City of Whittlesea

- Shaping Our Future Whittlesea 2030 Strategic Community Plan
- Recreation Strategy 2012-2017
- Open Space Strategy 2016
- Playspace Planning Framework and Policy 2013-16
- Spaces 8 to 12+: Creating Engaging Places for Young People
- Dog Off-leash Area Policy and Management Plan 2016-2026
- Multiple Sports Strategy 2017-2026
- Natural and Built Shade Policy/Heatwave Plan

## Open Space Context

Merri Creek begins in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range and flows for 60 kilometres to its confluence with the Yarra River at Dights Falls in Abbotsford. Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands extend along a 15 kilometre stretch of Merri Creek south from Craigieburn to Lalor covering an area of approximately 650 hectares of public open space. The parklands fall within two local government areas, City of Whittlesea and City of Hume, with the majority of land under direct management of Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water.

The Hume Fwy Craigieburn Bypass forms a barrier along the eastern boundary of the parklands for residents in Lalor and Thomastown. Whittlesea Public Gardens is the gateway and largest developed open space on the eastern side of the creek with direct access to the parklands and Merri Creek Trail via the concrete shared pedestrian-bicycle path bridge over the freeway. Following completion of the final missing link in the Merri Creek Trail between Bolinda Road

and Mahoneys Road the Gardens will become the start-end point for the 21km Merri Creek Trail providing continuous off road shared cycling access right through to the Melbourne CBD.

RGC Cook Reserve has two soccer fields, pavilion, toilets and playground. The reserve is connected to the gardens by an unsealed walking path and is used for overflow public parking during major events such as the Community Festival. Links between the RGC Cook Reserve and the Gardens will eventually be upgraded to a sealed shared trail improving off road access for existing residents in Thomastown and new residential development planned south of Barry Road along the freeway.

Mosaic Recreation Reserve is being upgraded to include two new soccer pitches with associated community pavilion, carparking and sportsground lighting. The reserve is linked to the gardens via Sarissa Street and Rotino Crescent.

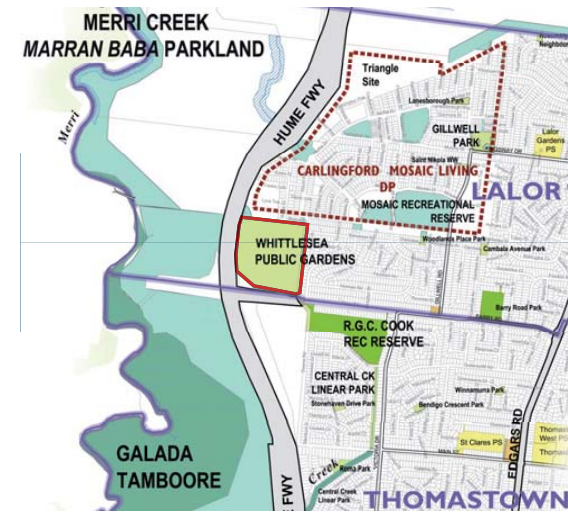


Figure 3: Open Space Context (Whittlesea Open Space Strategy 2016)



Figure 4: Regional Context - Merri Creek Marran Baba Parklands



# Community Consultation

Community Consultation at the Analysis Phase included:

**Community Stakeholder Workshop#1** Thursday 16/3/17 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at the Lalor Library.

**Community Festival Consultation** Information Stall Sunday 19/3/17 from 11:00am – 6:00pm at Whittlesea Public Gardens.

**Information leaflet and questionnaire #1** was prepared to seek feedback from the local community to inform preparation of the Draft Whittlesea Public Gardens Master Plan.

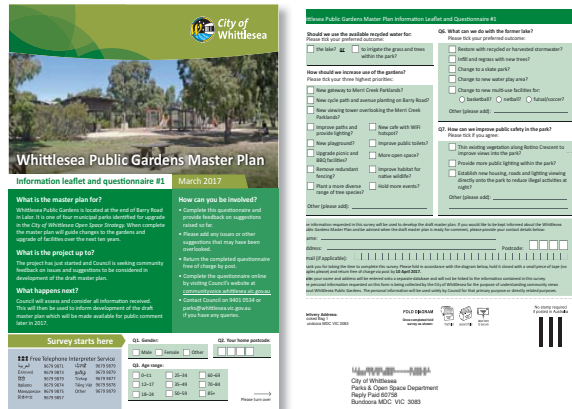


Figure 5: Information leaflet and questionnaire #1 March 2017

A total 214 questionnaires were completed and returned by closing date of 10/4/2017. 45 Questionnaires were completed by visitors to the festival.

**Where did respondents come from?**

- 43% Lalor
- 26% Thomastown
- 24% Other postcodes
- 7% Not completed

**How should we use available recycled water?**

- Restore The Lake (48%)
- Irrigate the grass and trees in the park (48%)

**Top five responses to how should we increase use of the Gardens?**

- Improve paths and lighting (45%)
- Upgrade picnic and BBQ facilities (41%)
- New playground (35%)
- New café with WiFi hotspot (31%)
- Improve public toilets (29%)

**What should we do with the former lake?**

- Restore with recycled or harvested stormwater (30%)
- Change to a water play area (26%)
- Change to new multi-use facilities for basketball, netball, futsal/soccer (18%)
- Infill and regrass with new trees (16%)
- Change to skate park (4%)
- Other (5%)

**What type of multi-use facility would you like to see?**

- Futsal/Soccer (58%)
- Basketball (26%)
- Netball (13%)

**How can we improve public safety in the park?**

- Provide more public lighting (68%)
- Establish new housing, roads and lighting viewing directly onto the park to reduce illegal activities at night (43%)
- Thin existing vegetation along Rotino Crescent to improve views into the park (23%)
- Other (11%)

This feedback was considered by Council in development of the Draft Master Plan.

**Community Consultation on the Draft Master Plan included:**

**Downs Road Local Resident Consultation** Wednesday 11/3/18 from 7:30-9:00pm at Barry Road Community Activity Centre. The drop in session was held to notify adjoining residents of the potential for new residential development on Downs Road so they could ask questions and find out more information about the proposed changes from Council Officers prior to the release of the Master Plan.

Following the local resident meeting, the Whittlesea Public Gardens Draft Master Plan was exhibited for public display to obtain wider community comment and feedback on the 20 recommendations during April and May. This included:

- Letter drop including a copy of the draft master plan to 1,400 properties within a 1km radius of The Gardens
- Letter or email including a copy of the Draft Master Plan issued to 55 community groups or organisations
- Social media posts on various platforms
- Inclusion in the weekly Leader Council Column
- Presence on the City of Whittlesea – Have Your Say website
- Interactive map via Social Pin Point to allow specific comments on key recommendations
- A pop-up session with Council Officers on 19th May at the reserve between 11am and 1pm.
- Sign boards erected at the entrances to the reserve.

Community feedback received during the public exhibition phase was considered in finalisation of the Master Plan. The feedback received from the community demonstrated support for the proposed recommendations. There were seven objections to the establishment of a new road and residential housing along Downs Road Road Reserve. This is however a key strategy for improving safety in the Gardens and other respondents demonstrated their understanding of this both at the analysis and Draft Master Plan phases.

## Land Management and Planning Controls

Whittlesea Public Gardens is owned and managed by Whittlesea City Council. The site is zoned Public Use Zone - Local Government (PUZ6) in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. The undeveloped Downs Road Reserve on the eastern boundary of the gardens is zoned General Residential (GRZ1).

The Hume Freeway and undeveloped section of Barry Road are owned and managed by VicRoads. The wide Barry Road Reserve allows for potential future duplication and connection to the Hume Freeway.

Council manage two parcels of undeveloped Crown Land as committee of management on either side of the Barry Road Reserve along the freeway. The Merri Creek *Marram Baba* Parklands is managed predominantly by Parks Victoria. Melbourne Water manage Merri Creek and Galada Tamboore.

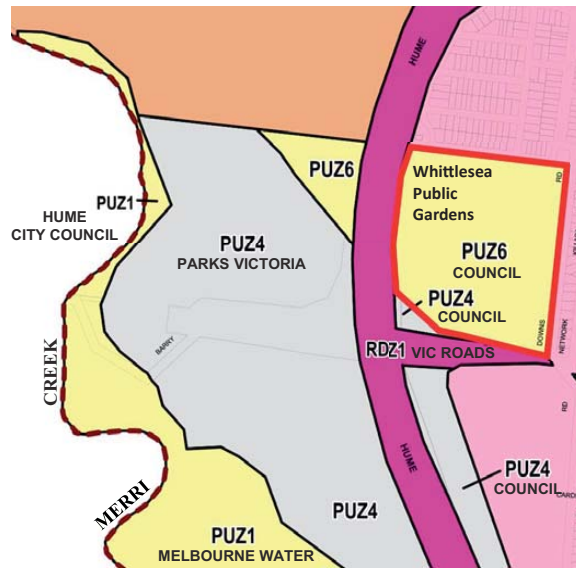


Figure 6: Existing Land Management (Whittlesea Planning Scheme)

### Design and Development Overlay (DDO):

The Design and Development Overlay (DD02) applies to 135-161 Barry Road and the former Downs Road Reserve. The overlay is to ensure the development of the land establishes high quality housing with density and lot sizes that are generally compatible with the predominant residential character in the surrounding area, has proper regard to the Downs Road reserve and high-pressure gas easement, and provides high quality native vegetation and environmental conservation outcomes.

### Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay (MAEO2)

Whittlesea Public Gardens and Downs Road are included in the Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay (MAEO2). This overlay indicates areas subject to moderate levels of aircraft noise. A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works for a use in this area.



Figure 7: Melbourne Airport Environs Overlay (Whittlesea Planning Scheme)



Photo 1: Downs Road Reserve

### Existing Services

There is a high-pressure gas pipeline and easement located along the Downs Road Reserve and eastern boundary of the Gardens.

The pipeline is managed by the APA Group and future development of Downs Road will require changes to this easement.

There are high voltage electricity transmission lines located along Barry Road and the southern boundary of the gardens. Vegetation below the lines is actively maintained to minimize fire risk.

There is a Telstra Mobile phone tower located in the north west corner of the Gardens at the end of Rotino Crescent.



Photo 2: Existing High Voltage Transmission Lines



# Existing Conditions



Photo 3: Former Lake



Photo 4: Existing Picnic Area and Playground



Photo 5: Existing Car park

Figure 8: Existing Conditions Plan



## Site Access and Parking

### CAR PARKING

The main car park is accessed from Barry Road. The car park is sealed with lighting and has 58 line marked spaces with one disabled car parking space. It allows for long vehicle and coach access but does not have dedicated long vehicle parking spaces.

The car park is not visible from adjoining roads or properties. Gates have been used to restrict after hour access however these are frequently left open and have proven ineffective in controlling vandalism and anti-social behaviour within the reserve.

During major events such as the Whittlesea Festival open grass areas along east of the wetlands and at RGC Cook Reserve are used for overflow parking. Downs Road is fenced off and not used during events.



Photo 6: Main car park



Photo 7: Community festival overflow parking at RGC Cook Reserve

### BARRY ROAD MAIN ENTRY

The main entry into the Gardens is from Barry Road. There is no signage identifying the gardens and extensive security fencing and the off set alignment creates a poor sense of arrival for visitors.

The western end of Barry Road Reserve is owned and managed by VicRoads. It is unlikely that an on/off link to the Hume Freeway will be provided in this location and therefore Barry Road is also unlikely to be duplicated.

There is no shared trail link in to the park and only an unsealed walking path connection through the RGC Cook Reserve.



Photo 8: Barry Road Main Entry

### ROTINO CRESCENT

Rotino Crescent is located along the northern boundary of Whittlesea Public Gardens.

Approximately 13-15 on street parking spaces are available along Rotino Crescent however parking on the Gardens side of the street can restrict access for through traffic.



Photo 9: Rotino Crescent

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The closest train station to Whittlesea public gardens is Lalor station, located 3.5km east along Barry Road. There is a public bus service connecting to the station.

The closest bus stop for bus services 554 and 557 is the corner of Barry Road and Victoria Drive, approximately 800m from the Gardens main entry.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Upgrade the popular path link from Sarissa to Barry Road to concrete and install new lighting and seating. Safety and security on this path will be improved by thinning of vegetation and establishment of the new residential housing facing onto the Gardens along Downs Road. Refer page 16.
- Realign the entry road to provide access to new residential development and to improve passive surveillance into the Gardens from passing vehicles. Remove redundant fencing and improve path links through to RGC Cook Reserve and along Barry Road.
- Establish an off road shared trail/cycle path and avenue tree planting along Barry Road to improve links and entry to the Gardens.
- In partnership with Parks Victoria and the Wurrundjeri seek to commission a new gateway/entry sculpture at the end of Barry Road as the main entry to the Merri Creek Parklands.
- Establish a small off street public car park (3-5 spaces) with access from Rotino Crescent.
- Advocate for re-routing of the 554 or 557 bus service on Barry Road to include the Gardens to improve links to Thomastown and Lalor Railway Stations.
- Liaise with VicRoads to confirm future management of the Barry Road Reserve at the Freeway.

## Lake and Wetlands

### FORMER LAKE

The existing lake is located in the middle of Whittlesea Public Gardens. It has an estimated area of 5,500m<sup>2</sup> and a capacity of 1.65ML with a continuous concrete wall to all sides. The lake has two inlet connections to the west and an outlet connection to the stormwater drainage system to the east, it receives inflow from only a small catchment area within the Gardens west of the lake.

Average inflow from the lake catchment is approximately only 1.05ML/year and with evaporation the lake is expected to be dry for 50% of the time without the use of potable water. The lake is oversized compared to its catchment and during water restrictions of the early 2000 period, without access to potable water, the lake dried out and the clay liner became compromised. This means the lake does not successfully hold water for long periods even when there is inflow from the catchment after rainfall.

The existing lake design also does not meet contemporary standards for sustainable water quality. The turnover of water in the lake is poor and risk of algal blooms high with no wetland recirculation system and limited area for aquatic planting to improve and manage water quality.

### WATER TANKS

The Gardens have access to harvested stormwater from the Melbourne Markets Stormwater Harvesting and Reuse system. The stormwater is pumped from a large underground concrete storage tank (3ML) at the Mosaic

Recreational Reserve to three above ground 85KL storage tanks located at the southern entry of the Gardens, near the Barry Road entry. Two pumps installed in the Mosaic Recreational Reserve wet well pump water via a rising main to the above ground tanks within the Gardens. They are filled slowly during the day and can store several days of irrigation supply for sports fields. The tanks can be topped up with potable water from the local main water supply when needed.

The tanks could provide irrigation water for the Gardens as well as the two sports fields at RGC Cook Reserve however there is no irrigation system currently operation and there is no current allocation of this water to the lake or to the Gardens.

### WETLANDS

The constructed wetlands located along the eastern boundary form the upper catchment of Central Creek and treat urban stormwater runoff from the Mosaic Estate, located north of Rotino Crescent.



Photo 10: Existing Water Tanks



Photo 11: Former Lake

The wetlands are not connected to the lake and existing levels mean a gravity feed connection is not possible. Pumping water from the wetlands at the southern end after treatment could be used to restore the lake however modelling indicates the lake will still be too big in its current form to establish a healthy ecosystem.



Photo 12: Existing Wetlands

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Reinststate only the southern end of the lake (smaller in size with stormwater harvesting/recirculation system utilising the existing wetlands to ensure all year round sustainability.
- Infill the central section of the former lake to provide a direct land bridge between the playground and open grass areas west of the lake with additional seating areas overlooking water
- Establish two new multi-use hard courts with night lighting within the northern section of the former lake. Retain the existing lake concrete edging to enclose the courts and act as a low seating wall and provide an additional picnic shelter overlooking the courts. Refer page 19.
- Longer term, as visitation increases investigate establishment of a new café/community facility at the southern end of the lake and free WiFi in the park (subject to a detailed business case).



## Park Infrastructure

To promote and encourage use of open space Whittlesea Public Gardens is one four key existing open space reserves selected to become destination community parks. The upgrade will focus on providing facilities that encourage informal and unstructured recreation activities and increased use of open space. Key requirements include a regional playground, multiuse courts, fitness stations, picnic/barbecue facilities, public toilets and car parking. The works must incorporate universal access and design principles and cater to and promote contemporary events and celebrations that target all age groups in a high quality and distinctive landscape setting. The majority of existing facilities at the Gardens were established almost 20 years ago and will need to be upgraded/replaced to meet this requirement.

### PLAYGROUND

The existing playground area at Whittlesea Public Gardens is ideally suited for upgrade to a regional playspace. The site adjoins existing picnic, toilet and car parking facilities and can be expanded north and west to increase the footprint and incorporate established mature trees and opportunities for more diverse play equipment utilising grade changes adjoining the former lake embankment. Redevelopment of the lake to establish the proposed land bridge and multiuse courts will also provide a more direct connection from the playspace to large open grass areas west of the lake.

Regional playspaces are large, signature playspace that have



Photo 13: Existing Playground

special physical and natural qualities that will attract users from all parts of the municipality and beyond and provide facilities that allow for stays of a half to a full day. Generally regional playspaces have a theme or features that makes the playspace unique, not just within the municipality but within the region. They provide a broad range of play opportunities through a diverse selection of activities catering for all ages and abilities providing universal access for all. They are designed to cater for all of the four main play types: physical, social, creative and cognitive with a specific focus on natural and landscaped elements.

Concept development for a new nature based regional playground at the Gardens will incorporate cultural and environmental themes/elements associated with the adjoining Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands.

However, new play equipment is expensive to install and maintain and the current lack of passive surveillance of the playground, picnic and toilets will likely result in higher levels of vandalism and cost. These issues should be addressed prior to redevelopment of the playground. Refer page 16.

### TOILET FACILITY

There is an existing toilet facility located between the playground and carpark. It includes separate male and female toilets and accessible facilities. The building is twenty years old and has suffered significant wear and tear and needs upgrade/replacement.



Photo 14: Existing Toilet block

There is significant amount of timber in the structure and complete replacement may be more cost effective than attempting to refurbish the existing facilities.

### PICNIC SHELTER

The large existing timber picnic shelter is constructed in timber and matches the distinctive architectural style of the toilet block and playground. The electric BBQ and adjoining playground make this a popular facility for larger group and family gatherings.

The establishment of a new regional playground and future completion of the Merri Creek Trail will significantly increase use of the Gardens and additional picnic and BBQ facilities will be required.



Photo 15: Existing Picnic Shelter and BBQ

### FITNESS STATION

The fitness station is located at the southern end of the park next to the basketball half court. It is a full gym consisting of stretch station (step up, push up, stretch post), rowing machine, cycle seat, dip bars, cross trainer, stepper and ab cruncher. There is no path connection or shade at this area.

## Park Infrastructure



Photo 16: Existing Fitness Station

### BASKETBALL HALF COURT

The basketball half court is located next to the fitness station. This is the only available equipment for teenagers and young adults in the park. There is no seating or path connection.



Photo 17: Existing Basketball half court

### DRINKING FOUNTAIN

There are new stainless steel drinking fountains located at the playground and dog off leash area.



Photo 18: Existing Drinking Fountain

### WALKING PATHS

There are a range of unsealed circuit walking paths within the Whittlesea public gardens. The north south walking path link from Sarissa Street to Barry Road is the most popular path within the Gardens and connects into the playground. A lack of lights and dense vegetation in close proximity to the path and playground contribute to public perceptions of a lack of safety on this path.



Photo 19: Existing Walking Paths

### OFF LEASH DOG AREA

The large dog off-leash area is located at the southern end of the park adjoining the unused Barry Road Reserve. The fenced area is over 8,000sqm with a single entry/exit gate system to enforce control and management of the area.

This popular fenced off leash dog area enables dogs and their owners to walk/run within a controlled and safe environment, providing important healthy and social interaction for owners and dogs alike. This can potentially reduce behavioral problems such as nuisance barking and roaming around the Gardens.



Photo 20: Existing Off Leash Dog Area

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Upgrade the popular path link from Sarissa Street to Barry Road to concrete and install new lighting and seating.
- Support continued use of the Gardens for festival and major events.
- Replace and expand the existing playground to a regional park standard.
- Provide direct land bridge between the playground and open grass areas west of the lake to maximise available space and connectivity within the park.
- Replace the existing public toilets with a new all abilities public toilet and a Changing Places facility to meet current standards.
- Retain and resurface existing unsealed walking path network to improve all weather access.
- Add new seats and another dog water bowl to the dog off lead area
- Establish two new multi-use hard courts with night lighting within the northern section of the existing lake. Retain the existing lake concrete edging to enclose the courts and act as a low seating wall and provide an additional picnic shelter overlooking the courts for spectators.
- Provide new picnic facilities including additional shelters and BBQs for large family and community groups.
- Upgrade existing signage and consider renaming of the reserve to Lalor Public Gardens.



## Community Festival and Events

### COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

The Whittlesea Community Festival was held at the Gardens in March/April for twenty years until 2017. At its peak the festival attracted up to 15,000 people annually, with visitors attending from all parts of Melbourne.

Established overstorey trees, large areas of open space and expansive overflow parking at RGC Cook Reserve mean the Gardens will continue to be an important site for community events. However the following issues have been identified with major events at the Gardens:

- Melbourne Airport flight path restrict use of fireworks during evening events.
- Lack of connection to public transport.
- Existing dry lake reduces amenity and restricts connection to larger open grass areas on the western side or the Gardens.
- Area can be exposed to the elements with a lack of shelter for larger and smaller events.

The Master Plan recommendations seeks to address these issues and the Gardens will continue to be the main event space for the south west section of the City of Whittlesea.



Photo 21: Connection to overflow parking at RGC Cook Reserve

### PARK RUN

Parkrun is held every Saturday in the Gardens from 8.00am. A free event organised by volunteers runners start/end at the Gardens and complete a 5km circuit along the freeway shared trail. Proposed upgrades to the path network in Merri Creek Parklands will also enable extension of the run into more natural areas. Increased use of the Gardens as the start/end point for organised running and fitness groups including local schools is expected following completion of the 4km off road circuit around Galada tamboore. Refer Figure 4.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Support continued use of the Gardens for festivals and major events.
- Provide new picnic facilities including additional shelters and BBQs for large family and community groups.
- Advocate for improved access to public transport via extension of bus routes (554 and 557 bus service).
- Extend off road pedestrian cycle links along Barry Road.
- Improve direct pedestrian connection between the picnic area and open grass areas by infilling the central area of the lake to improve connection to other open grass areas.
- As part of new public toilet/changing place development review and upgrade provision of event power supply.



Photo 22: Lalor Park Run



Photo 23: Community Festival 1998



Photo 24: Community Festival 2017

## Environmental and Cultural Heritage Values

### ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The Merri Creek corridor provides important habitat and connectivity for a range of flora and fauna species. Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands contain some of the best and largest remaining examples of grasslands that once covered the plains to the north of Melbourne. This vegetation community is protected under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (FFG Act) as Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act) as Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plains. Establishment of the Hume Freeway separated Whittlesea Public Gardens from the Merri Creek corridor however remnant areas of grassland can be found within the north western section of the gardens and south along the eastern edge of the freeway.



Photo 25: Existing Shared Trail Link over Hume Fwy

The Galada Tamboore Gorge is regarded as one of the most distinctive topographical features of the Merri Creek catchment and a major landscape feature within northern Melbourne. It is a site of State significance for its geology and geomorphology. It is an example of exposed unconformity between basalt and Silurian bedrock. The vegetation, geology and aquatic values of the parkland provide a diversity of habitats for numerous fauna species, ranging from common species to critically endangered species. The wide expanses of grassland support a large population of Eastern Grey Kangaroos. These can be viewed roaming freely within 25km of the Melbourne CBD less than a 5 minute walk from the Gardens.

The proposed completion of a second bridge across the Merri Creek by Parks Victoria near Horne Street will enable visitors to the Whittlesea Public Gardens to complete extended walking loop and immersive environmental experience of just over 4km (1hr) through the remnant grasslands and around the Galada Tamboore basin via the gorge.



Photo 26: Barry Road Gorge



Photo 27: Merri Creek Grasslands



Photo 28: Merri Creek Grasslands

### CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Whittlesea Public Gardens are located within the traditional 'Country' of the Wurundjeri Willum clan, part of the Woiwuring language group. The Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council is the Registered Aboriginal Party for the area including the Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands. Whilst much of the Gardens has been subject to significant ground disturbance with past establishment of the Hume Freeway, constructed wetlands and ornamental lake the Merri Creek Parklands contains numerous cultural heritage places as well as scar trees, stone artefacts and fragments or debris which are evidence of toolmaking processes registered with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV). This connection of place, spirit and history continues for the Wurundjeri community today and the Gardens, as the main eastern entry and to the Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands and start/end point of the Merri Creek Trail, provide an opportunity to acknowledge this ongoing connection and provide further information to visitors regarding cultural heritage values of Wurundjeri.

Other sites of cultural significance within walking distance of Whittlesea Public Gardens include the ruins of the Barber & Son Flour Mill (c1849), located near Merri Creek just north of Mahoneys Road, and the remains of dry stone walls, a cobbled road and pipe crossing at the termination of Barry Road on the Merri Creek.



Photo 29: Native grassland areas at west end of Rotina Crescent



## Gardens Vegetation Management

There has been extensive indigenous revegetation undertaken at the Gardens since the mid 1990's. Planting includes a mix of Yellow Gum *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*, Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora*, River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon*, Lightwood *Acacia implexa* and Sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata* and the Gardens has an established framework of overstorey trees. However infill shrub planting to the park perimeter including Hedge Wattle *Acacia paradoxa*, Sweet Bursaria *Bursaria spinosa*, Tree Violet *Melictytus dentata*, Bottlebrush *Callistemon sp.* and Swamp Paperbark *Melaleuca ericifolia* around the wetlands and adjoining the playground has in some areas become very dense, limiting views into and along paths within the Gardens impacting on passive surveillance and perceptions of public safety within the reserve.

The constructed wetlands, form the upper catchment of Central Creek and have become well established with a diverse mix of indigenous sedge, rush and aquatic marsh species. The wetlands perform both a water quality treatment function and provide important habitat for wildlife including a range of frogs and birdlife. Other grass areas within the gardens become extremely dry over summer. This has enabled protection and recovery of some native grassland patches however in high use recreational areas in and around the picnic area the lack of sustainable grass cover reduces public amenity and useability of these areas.

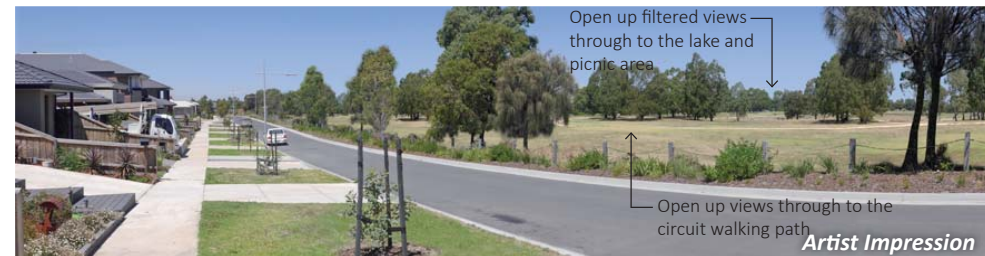
### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Thin and selectively remove existing thick shrub vegetation to improve sightlines and passive surveillance throughout the entire reserve.
- Protect existing grassland conservation areas and improve habitat links.
- Establish new recycled water irrigation system for selected open grass areas and to enable establishment of more diverse tree planting within the gardens.



Existing Conditions

Existing view from Rotino Crescent



Open up filtered views through to the lake and picnic area

Open up views through to the circuit walking path

Artist Impression

Rotino Crescent proposed vegetation thinning



Existing Conditions

Existing views to playground from Downs Road



Artist Impression

Proposed vegetation thinning at playground

## Passive Surveillance and Public Safety

Initial establishment of Whittlesea Public Gardens required use of continuous chainmesh fencing around the perimeter to protect the park from illegal motorbike and other off road vehicle use. The Hume Freeway sound walls mean there are no direct views into the Gardens on the west side. Motorbikes continue to use the bridge and completed sections of the Merri Creek Trail to access the Gardens from Campbellfield and there are several well-worn tracks indicating a high frequency of use. Motorbikes can access the same areas as bicycles so there is no method to restrict motorbike access without disadvantaging genuine users of the Gardens and path network.

The alignment of the entry from Barry Road and dense planting means that there are no views into the main car park from adjoining roads or houses. Gates are used to restrict after-hours access however rates of vandalism and other illegal activities are far higher at Whittlesea Public Gardens than at other similar sizes reserves across the city. Community consultation indicates that the impact of these activities on facilities and a general perception that the area is unsafe prevent many residents and other visitors from coming to the Gardens.

### DOWNNS ROAD

The unused Downs Road reserve forms the eastern boundary of the Gardens. This grass area extending from Sarissa Street right through to Barry Road is fenced and not currently zoned or used as public open space. Removal of the fencing and thick perimeter vegetation to establish a new road and residential development facing onto the Gardens along Downs Road will improve passive surveillance and public safety at key areas around the toilet block, car park and playground. The use of double storey housing is preferred with views focused west out over the adjoining wetlands and further into the Gardens with restricted views from the second storey east into the backyards of existing adjoining properties along Network Drive and Kilara Street. Revenue generated by Council from sale of the road reserve as housing can be reinvested in the new facilities proposed for the Gardens.

### ROTINO CRESCENT

Recent completion of new residential development along Rotino Crescent has established some houses facing directly onto the Gardens. However views from these houses into the Gardens are obstructed by dense perimeter planting. Thinning vegetation along Rotino Crescent will improve views to the northern path network there is no view through to the more vulnerable areas of the Gardens around the toilet block, car park and playground from this side.



Photo 30: Existing Downs Road Reserve



View A: Views to wetlands north along Downs Road



View A: New path, lighting and residential development along Downs Road



## Passive Surveillance and Public Safety



View B: Views to wetlands south along Downs Road



View B: View south to new path, lighting and residential development along Downs Road



View B: Evening view south to new path and lighting along Downs Road

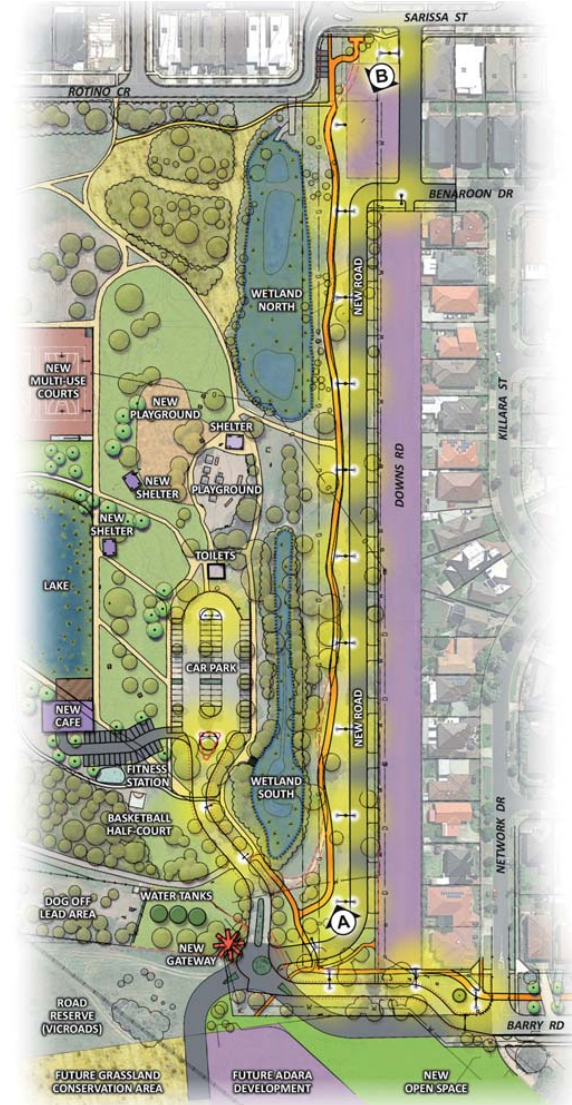


Figure 9: Proposed Lighting Improvements





# WHITTLESEA PUBLIC GARDENS MASTER PLAN

## OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Whittlesea Public Gardens is one of four major community parks identified for upgrade and renewal in the City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy (2016). The Gardens are located in Lalor at the western end of Barry Road and comprises an area of approximately 14.78 hectares. When complete, the master plan will guide and provide direction on how the public gardens will be upgraded in the short term and into the future. Key master plan objectives include:

- Improvement to the landscape character and quality to broaden the appeal and use of the public gardens
- Create safe, connected and well maintained public open space
- Aid in seeking State Government or external funding for facilities of regional context and significance
- Promote environmental sustainability practices through well considered landscapes and water sensitive urban design
- Improvement to the visibility and safety by the way of upgrading the eastern interface to the park

## IMPLEMENTATION

The large number of facilities and complexity of replacing older asset at Whittlesea Public Gardens mean that staging of works will be required. The staging and timing for delivery of the works is subject to external agency funding and implementation of some works may need to be delayed or bought forward, i.e. due to the need for urgent maintenance or as part of cost-effective delivery of other projects. In all cases priorities should be viewed as a guide only.

- (H) High (1-3 years)
- (M) Medium (4-6 years)
- (L) Low (7-10 years)

### DRAWING KEY

	EXISTING TREE		EXISTING UNSEALED PATH
	NEW TREE		EXISTING PLAYGROUND
	SHRUBS		EXPANDED PLAY AREA
	GRASS		TIMBER POST AND WIRE FENCE
	GRASSLAND CONSERVATION AREA		CHAIN MESH FENCE
	NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT		POST AND CABLE FENCE
	WETLAND PLANTING		PICNIC TABLE
	NEW ROAD		SEAT
	NEW 2.5m CONCRETE PATH		BBQ
	EXISTING CONCRETE PATH		DRINKING FOUNTAIN
			NEW PUBLIC ARTWORK

OVERALL MASTERPLAN  
DWG NO. PWG\_MP\_01  
JULY 2018



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Upgrade the popular path link from Sarissa to Barry Road to concrete and install new lighting and seating. (H)
- 2 Thin and selectively remove existing thick vegetation to improve sightlines and passive surveillance throughout the entire reserve. (H)
- 3 Realign the entry road, remove redundant fencing and improve path links through to RGC Cook Reserve. (H)
- 4 Replace the existing public toilets to an all abilities public toilet and a Changing Places facility. (H)
- 5 Retain and resurface existing unsealed walking paths to improve all weather access. (H)
- 6 Add new seats and dog water bowl to the dog off lead area. (H)
- 7 Protect existing grassland conservation areas and improve habitat links. (H)
- 8 Reinstate the southern end of the lake (smaller size with stormwater harvesting/recirculation system utilising the existing wetlands) including circuit walking path, new direct link between the playground and open grass areas west of the lake and additional seating areas overlooking water. (M)
- 9 Establish two new multi-use hard courts with night lighting within the northern section of the existing lake. Retain the existing lake concrete edging to enclose the courts and act as a low seating wall and provide an additional picnic shelter overlooking the courts. (M)
- 10 Establish new recycled water irrigation system for selected open grass areas and to enable establishment of more diverse tree planting within the gardens. (M)
- 11 Establish new road and residential housing facing onto the gardens along Downs Road to improve passive surveillance and public safety in the reserve. (M)
- 12 Replace and expand the existing playground to a regional park standard. (M)
- 13 Provide new picnic facilities including additional shelters and BBQs for large family and community groups. (M)
- 14 Upgrade existing signage and consider renaming of the reserve to Lalor Public Gardens. (M)
- 15 Establish shared trail/cycle path and avenue tree planting along Barry Road. (L)
- 16 In partnership with Parks Victoria and the Wurrundjeri seek to commission a new gateway/entry sculpture at the end of Barry Road as the main entry to the Merri Creek Parklands. (L)
- 17 Establish a small off street public car park (3-5 spaces) with access from Rotino Crescent. (L)
- 18 Investigate establishment of a new café/community facility at the southern end of the lake and free WiFi in the park (subject to a detailed business case). (L)
- 19 Support continued use of the gardens for festivals and major events. (H)
- 20 Advocate for re-routing of the 554 or 557 bus service on Barry Road to include the Gardens to improve links to Thomastown and Lalor Railway Stations. (L)

Figure 10: Master Plan





# WHITTLESEA PUBLIC GARDENS MASTER PLAN

## MASTER PLAN IMAGES



Example of multi-use hard courts with night lighting



Examples of regional park standard playground



Example of accessible toilets with change facilities



Examples of regional park standard playground



Example of Park Shelters (Landmark Pro Longreach)



Examples of regional park standard playground



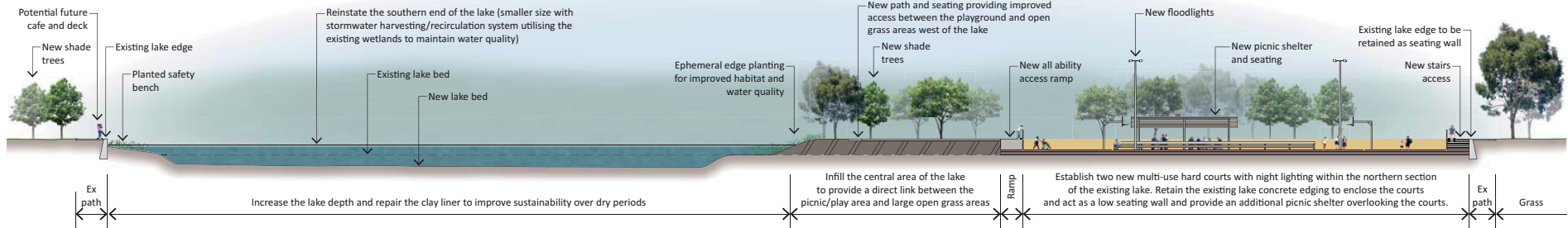
(A) Artist's impression of wetland south path and lighting upgrade



(B1) Artist's impression of wetland north path and lighting upgrade



(B2) Artist's impression of wetland north path and lighting upgrade - night time



(C) Sketch cross-section through lake and new multi-use courts

Figure 11: Master Plan Images

OVERALL MASTERPLAN  
DWG NO. PWG\_MP\_02  
JULY 2018



## Master Plan Implementation Works

The adoption of the Whittlesea Public Gardens Master Plan by Council does not constitute a decision to proceed with any identified opportunities. It provides a long-term concept to guide decision making and will be subject to future decisions and funding considerations by Council.

### STAGE 1 WORKS (1-3 years)

The three year plan for Whittlesea Public Gardens aims to improve park facilities and safety for existing and future users. There will be a mixture of maintenance and capital works improvements including thinning of existing vegetation, new paths and toilet facilities to improve facilities for existing residents and community groups who already use the reserve.

#### Stage 1 Actions:

- Upgrade the popular path link from Sarissa to Barry Road to concrete and install new lighting and seating.
- Thin and selectively remove existing thick vegetation to improve sightlines and passive surveillance throughout the entire reserve.
- Remove redundant fencing and improve path links through to RGC Cook Reserve.
- Replace the existing public toilets.
- Retain and resurface existing unsealed walking paths to improve all weather access.
- Protect existing grassland conservation areas and improve habitat links.
- Complete detailed design for redevelopment of the lake.
- Complete detailed design for the new regional playground.
- Commence planning process for rezoning and redevelopment of Downs Road (road reserve) as residential housing to improve passive surveillance and security within the park.
- Support continued use of the Gardens for festivals and major events.

### STAGE 2 WORKS (4-6 years)

The second phase of works will seek to increase use of the gardens focusing on-ground delivery of Stage 1 design and planning including the lake reinstatement, new hard courts, irrigation system and planting works. Timing for installation of new expensive and high maintenance items such as the new playground and picnic facilities will be dependent on the improvement in surveillance and security to be provided by establishment of new residential development along the Downs Road reserve.

#### Stage 2 Actions:

- Reinststate the southern end of the lake (smaller size with stormwater harvesting/recirculation system utilising the existing wetlands) including circuit walking path, new land bridge linking the playground and open grass areas west of the lake and additional seating areas overlooking water.
- Establish two new multi-use hard courts with night lighting within the northern section of the existing lake. Retain the existing lake concrete edging to enclose the courts and act as a low seating wall and provide an additional picnic shelter overlooking the courts.
- Establish new recycled water irrigation system for selected open grass areas and to enable establishment of more diverse tree planting within the gardens.
- Realign the entry road and establish new residential housing overlooking the gardens along Downs Road to improve passive surveillance and public safety in the reserve.
- Replace and expand the existing playground to a regional park standard.
- Provide new picnic facilities including additional shelters and BBQs for large family groups.
- Upgrade existing signage and consider renaming of the reserve Lalor Public Gardens.

### STAGE 3 WORKS (7-10 years)

The third phase of works for Whittlesea Public Gardens will seek to upgrade facilities at the gardens consistent with its status as one of the four Major Community Parks. Upgrade of facilities will aim to cater for existing and new residents and the completion of missing links in the Merri Creek Trail (north of Mahoneys Rd to Bolinda Rd by Hume City Council/ Parks Victoria) is expected to also substantially increase regional visitation to the gardens, which will become the start/end points for recreational trail users and visitors to the Merri Creek Parklands.

#### Stage 3 Actions:

- In partnership with Parks Victoria and the Wurrundjeri seek to commission a new gateway/entry sculpture at the end of Barry Road as the main entry to the Merri Creek Marram Baba Parklands.
- Establish shared trail/cycle path and avenue tree planting along Barry Road.
- Liaise with VicRoads to confirm the future use of the Barry Road Reserve.
- Liaise with Transport for Victoria to advocate for re-routing of the 554 or 557 bus service on Barry Road to include the Gardens to provide direct links to Thomastown and Lalor Railway Stations.
- Establish a small off street public car park (3-5 spaces) with access from Rotino Crescent.
- Investigate establishment of a new café/community facility at the southern end of the lake and free WiFi in the park (subject to a detailed business case).

## Bibliography

City of Whittlesea, *Bicycle Plan 2016-2020*, City of Whittlesea, 2016

City of Whittlesea, *Dog Off-leash Area Policy and Management Plan 2016-2026*, City of Whittlesea, August 2016

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**Ordinary Council Minutes****Tuesday 7 May 2019****6.4.5 PART OF DOWNS ROAD THOMASTOWN - WHITTLESEA GARDENS - ROAD DISCONTINUANCE - COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION**

**Attachments:**                   1    **Site Plan** [↓](#)  
  2    **Advertising Plan** [↓](#)

**Responsible Officer:**       **Director Corporate Services**

**Author:**                       **Senior Property Officer**

**RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY**

1. Note that no public submissions were received in response to the proposed discontinuance of the section of Downs Road Reserve (being approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup>) which adjoins Council's Whittlesea Gardens, Lalor.
2. Discontinue and vest the section of Downs Road Reserve for the purposes of consolidation and potential sale as part of a new residential subdivision overlooking the Whittlesea Public Gardens.

**KEY FACTS AND / OR ISSUES**

- Council, at its meeting held on 5 March 2019, formally resolved to discontinue a section of Downs Road Reserve which adjoins Council's Whittlesea Gardens, Lalor.
- The land (being approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup> in total), which is not considered essential for road purposes in its present form, would be discontinued and sold/developed for the purposes of servicing a new residential subdivision. The proposed development would improve passive surveillance in the reserve along with creating a suitable revenue stream which will be reinvested to the improvements proposed under the Whittlesea Gardens master plan.
- No submissions were received at the close of the advertising period (10 April 2019, 12 noon). A memo was sent to the Committee of Council on Wednesday 10 April 2019, advising that no public submissions were received and the Committee of Council hearing would not be required.



**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

Council, at its meeting held on 5 March 2019, formally resolved to discontinue a section of Downs Road Reserve which adjoins Council's Whittlesea Gardens, Lalor.

The land (being approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup> in total), is not considered essential for road purposes in its present form and is proposed to be discontinued and sold/developed for the purposes of servicing a new residential subdivision. The proposed development would improve passive surveillance in the reserve along with creating a suitable revenue stream which will be reinvested to the improvements proposed under the Whittlesea Gardens master plan (see *Attachment 1 – Site Plan & Attachment 2 – Advertising Plan*).

The road, which is approximately 20m in width and 422m in length, cannot suitably accommodate the development itself, and will require a re-alignment of a section of the Whittlesea Gardens to enable the construction of a new road that will service each of the proposed residential allotments.

**PROPOSAL**

To seek Council's final recommendation in consideration of the public submissions received (none) in response to the proposed discontinuance of the section of Downs Road Reserve (being approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup>) which adjoins Council's Whittlesea Gardens, Lalor.

**COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL**

An Advisory Committee of Council, comprising of Mayor Cr Cox, Cr Kozmevski, Cr Pavlidis, and Cr Montelleone, was appointed to consider any written submissions received in response to Council's public notice advertised in the Whittlesea Leader on Tuesday 12 March 2019.

No submissions were received at the close of the advertising period (10 April 2019, 12 noon). A memo was sent to the Advisory Committee on Wednesday 10 April 2019, advising that no public submissions were received and the Committee hearing would not be required.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The estimated budget required to implement the master plan recommendations is subject to further design development; however initial estimates places the cost at \$5.0 to \$5.8 million.

The discontinuance and redevelopment of Downs Road (residential opportunities) may provide a suitable revenue stream to offset the expenditure incurred in delivering the master plan recommendations.

A further report (together with various options) will be presented to Council seeking approval in relation to the proposed disposal of this land. The land will be sold in accordance with the *'Local Government Best Practice Guideline for the Sale and Exchange of Land (March 2008)*.

All additional costs associated with the road discontinuance, i.e. surveying, advertising and registration, will also be borne by Council (approximately \$5,000).

**POLICY STRATEGY AND LEGISLATION**

Council has sought public submissions on the proposed discontinuance under Section 206 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. Submissions were invited for a period of no less than 28 days and referred on to an appointed Committee of Council for consideration. The appointed Committee has been advised that no submissions were received.

## Ordinary Council Minutes

Tuesday 7 May 2019

**LINKS TO WHITTLESEA 2040 AND THE COUNCIL PLAN**

<b>Whittlesea 2040 Goal</b>	<b>Liveable neighbourhoods</b>
<b>Whittlesea 2040 Key Direction</b>	<b>Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres</b>
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>We have neighbourhoods defined by attractive, well connected streets and public spaces</b>
<b>Council Priority</b>	<b>Planning and Infrastructure</b>

**DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Under section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* officers providing advice to Council must disclose any interests, including the type of interest.

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

**CONCLUSION**

It is recommended that the proposed discontinuance and vesting of the section of Downs Road Reserve (being approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup> in total) proceed for the purposes of consolidation and potential sale as part of a new residential subdivision overlooking the Whittlesea Public Gardens.

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
-----------------------

**THAT Council resolve to:**

- Note that no public submissions were received in response to the proposed discontinuance of the section of Downs Road Reserve (being approximately 8,000m<sup>2</sup>) which adjoins Council's Whittlesea Gardens, Lalor.**
- Discontinue and vest the section of Downs Road Reserve under Section 206 of the *Local Government Act 1989* for the purposes of consolidation and potential sale as part of a new residential subdivision overlooking the Whittlesea Public Gardens.**

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
---------------------------

**MOVED:** *Cr Joseph*  
**SECONDED:** *Cr Sterjova*

*The above Recommendation was adopted unchanged as part of an en bloc Resolution Moved by Cr Joseph, Seconded by Cr Sterjova. See Section 6 - Officers' Reports for further information on items adopted en bloc.*

**CARRIED**



**ATTACHMENT 1 – SITE PLAN & PHOTO**



Council's Whittlesea Gardens

Road discontinuance - Downs Road Thomastown



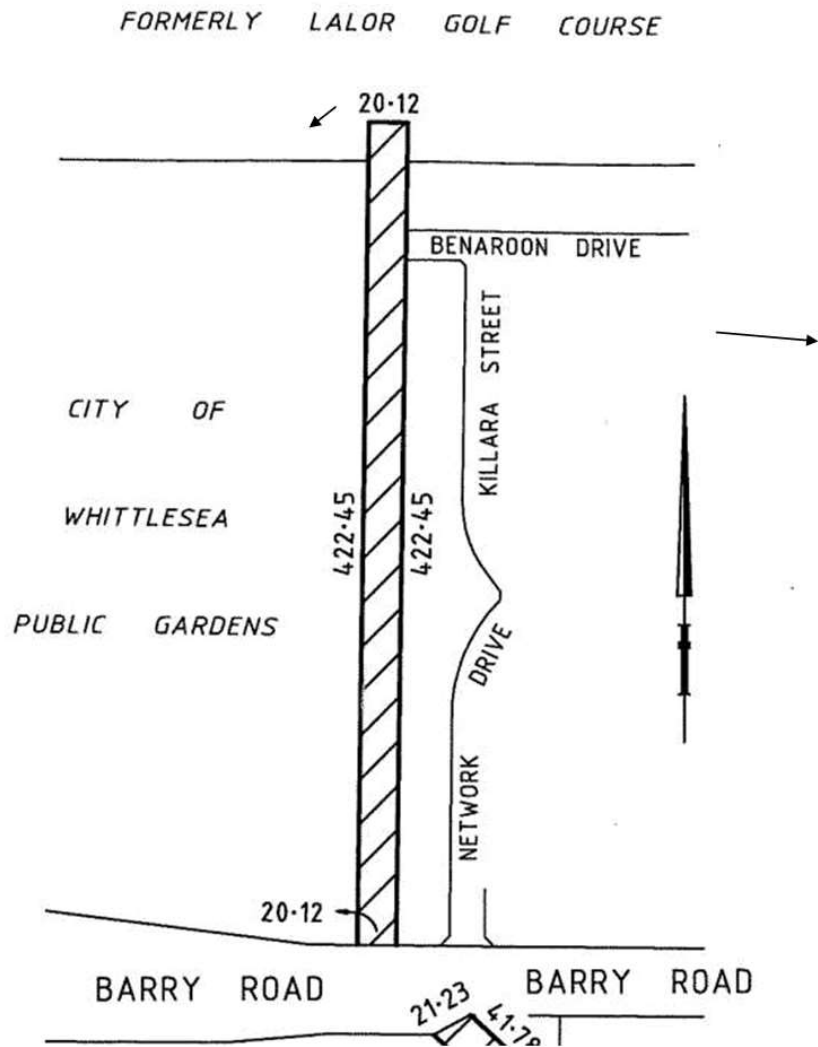
Ordinary Council Minutes

Tuesday 7 May 2019

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ATTACHMENT 2 - Advertising Plan





**LEGEND**

-  Site Boundary
-  Residential Lots
-  Landscape Reserve

**LAND BUDGET**

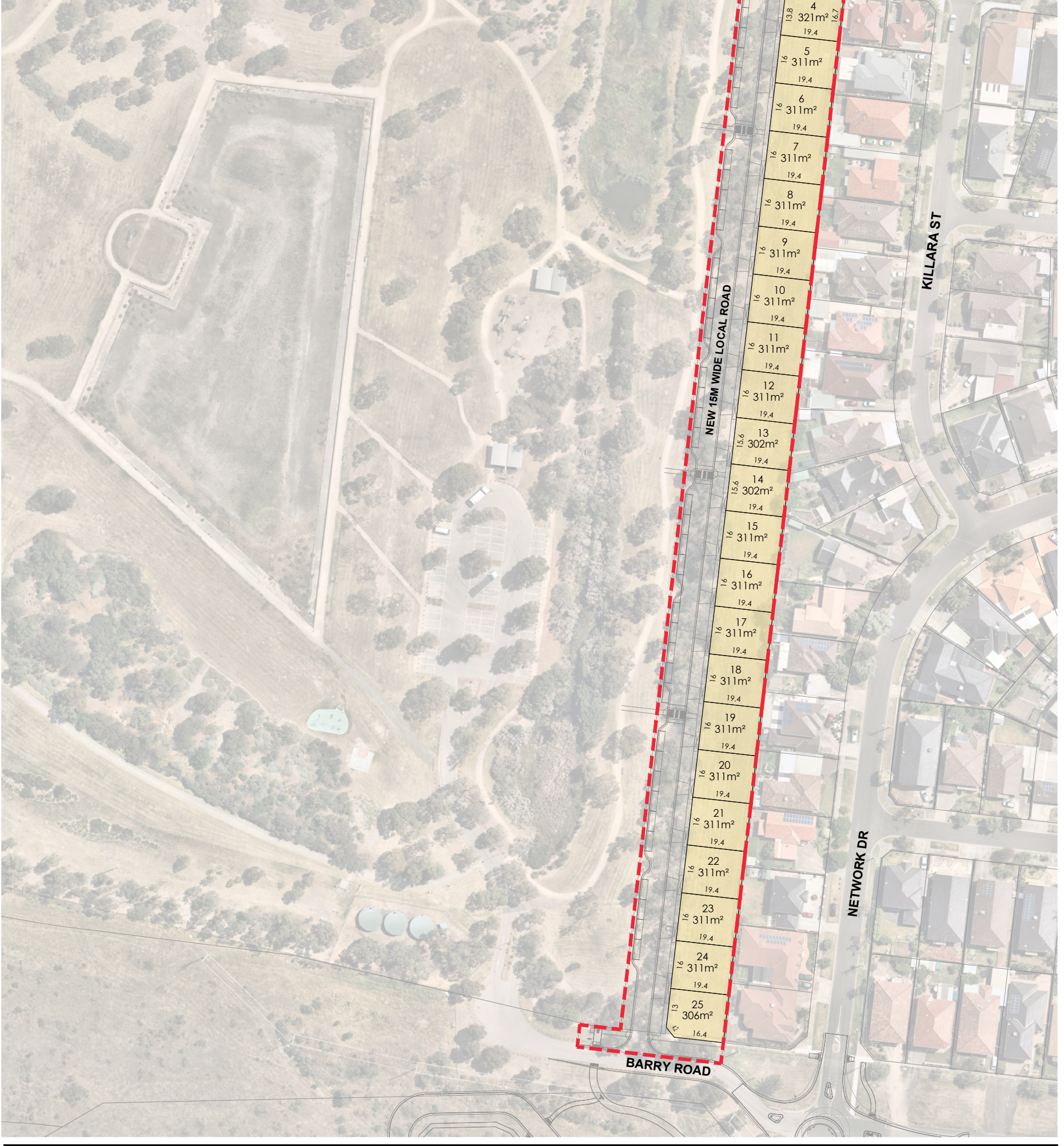
	Area (ha)	% of Site
<b>SITE AREA</b>	1.58	100%
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>		
LANDSCAPE RESERVE	0.09	5.4%
<b>NET DEVELOPABLE AREA (HECTARE) (NDHa)</b>	1.49	94.6%
RESIDENTIAL AREA	0.81	51.5%
INTERNAL ROADS NETWORK	0.68	43.1%

**YIELD SUMMARY**

Total Residential Lots	25 Lots
Average Lot Area	325m <sup>2</sup>
Total Car Park Bays	41

**NOTE:**

1. Crossovers are subject to FLP approval post-planning permit
2. Roundabout constructed as part of Marran Run Estate

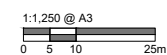


**Whittlesea Public Gardens Residential Edge**  
Concept Plan of Subdivision

Level 12, 120 Collins Street | Melbourne VIC 3000 AUSTRALIA | +61 3 8663 4888 | URBIS Pty Ltd | ABN 50 105 256 228

**DISCLAIMER**  
Copyright © URBIS Pty Ltd. This drawing or parts thereof may not be reproduced for any purpose or used for another project without the consent of URBIS. The plan must not be used for ordering, supply or installation and no reference should be placed on this plan for any financial dealing of the land. This plan is conceptual and is for discussion purposes only and subject to further detail study, Council approval, engineering input, and survey. Coloured boundaries, areas and dimensions are approximate only. Written figured dimensions shall take preference to scaled dimensions.

**CLIENT**  
City of Whittlesea



**PROJECT NO.** P0016047  
**DRAWING NO.** 01  
**DATE** 03.12.2024  
**REVISION** F





City of  
Whittlesea

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**PROPOSED DISCONTINUANCE AND SALE OF PART OF SARISSA STREET, LALOR (INCLUDING ROAD SPLAYS)**

Whittlesea City Council (Council) gives notice under section 206 and clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1989 and section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 that it proposes to discontinue and sell a section of road reserve (with splays) within Sarissa Street, Lalor, which is shown as the shaded and referred to as the 'Subject Land' on the plan below.



**Subject Land**  
Part of Sarissa Street Road Reserve  
Approximately 184 sq.m in area and immediately west of 107 Sarissa Street, Lalor

If discontinued, Council proposes to sell the Subject Land (or any part of the Subject Land) by public tender or private treaty in accordance with its policy.

As part of its community engagement process, Council is inviting submissions on this proposal. Any person wishing to make a submission must do so in writing to the undersigned by no later than **Monday 23 December, 2024**.

A person making a submission is entitled to request in the submission that they wish to appear in person, or to be represented by a person specified in the submission, in support of the submission at a meeting of the Council or its Committee on a date, time and place to be determined by the Council.

All submissions will be considered in accordance with section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Following the consideration of any submissions, Council may decide to discontinue and sell the road reserve, part of the road reserve or not to discontinue and sell the road reserve.

All enquiries should be directed to the George Vassiliadis Unit Manager Strategic Property on 92172170 or [propmgmt@whittlesea.vic.gov.au](mailto:propmgmt@whittlesea.vic.gov.au)

Submissions quoting reference '**Sarissa Street, Lalor**' should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and can be hand delivered to the Council's Municipal Offices at 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang, emailed to [propmgmt@whittlesea.vic.gov.au](mailto:propmgmt@whittlesea.vic.gov.au) or posted to the following address:

**Craig Lloyd**

Chief Executive Officer, Whittlesea City Council  
Locked Bag 1 - BUNDOORA, MDC, VIC, 3083

**Sarissa Street part-discontinuance - Submissions**

Submission	Submission source	Submitter	Feedback	Officer consideration
1	Online form	Submitter 1	I think it would be better suited as a toilet block as there's no public toilet access in the area. Yet there's a beautiful toddler appropriate playground in the area.	A public toilet is provided within the Whittlesea Public Gardens, near the playground, approximately 250 metres from Subject Land and approximately 40 metres from children's play tower.
2	Email	Submitter 2	<p>Thank you for the informative phone call in regards the discontinuance of Sarissa street in Lalor and the connected project of building the 25 townhouses on the nature strip facing the Whittlesea gardens.</p> <p>As already discussed with you, I would like to raise my concerns in regards to this project.</p> <p>Without any further information regarding how many of the 25 townhouses will be designated to social housing there are quite a few factors to consider that could negatively impact the estate and surrounding areas.</p>	<p>The discontinuance does not commit Council to allocating the land for social and affordable housing.</p> <p>The inclusion of social and affordable housing in the residential development will be explored as part of the Business Case.</p>
3	Email	Submitter 3	<p>As a local resident of the Whittlesea Council and a father of 2 children, who lives in the Mosaic estate, Lalor. It has been brought to my attention that there is a proposed plan to develop 25 townhouses with governmental housing included.</p> <p>My family and I are extremely concerned an oppose against such development especially if governmental housing will also be included.</p>	<p>The discontinuance does not commit Council to allocating the land for social and affordable housing.</p> <p>The inclusion of social and affordable housing in the residential development will be explored as part of the Business Case.</p>

**Sarissa Street part-discontinuance - Submissions**

			<p>Our estate is filled with a lot of young a families with children who we do not wish to have exposed to such housing which could potentially pose a risk.</p> <p>Our estate is now around the million dollars price range with now also selling on the opposite side of the park of Barry's Road high \$900000s.</p> <p>Developing government housing will not only put our children at risk of their safety but also decrease the value in our properties, especially to put such housing near a park is extremely unsafe and not to mention dangerous. It is unofficial invitation to welcome people to loiter around and engage in potential criminal activity such as drinking alcohol or using or cultivating drugs.</p> <p>I am all for people making money and working but not at the expense of the safety of the others, especially if their are young children involved who are so easily impressionable by their surroundings.</p> <p>We have a responsibility and owe a better and safer future to our children!</p> <p>WITH ALL DUE RESPECT I AM VOTING A BIG NO GOVERNMENT HOUSING IN MY ESTATE AND WOULD LIKE MY VOICE TO BE HEARD AND ACKNOWLEDGED AND ACCEPTED!</p>	<p>If affordable housing is to be an integrated component, a model managed by a Community Housing Provider would prioritise long-term stability and a strong sense of community while maintaining high standards of oversight and care.</p>
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Land offered (splay) for potential sale, Sarissa Street, Lalor



## 5.3 Tender Evaluation 2024-114: Regional Sport Precinct Main Works - Stage 2

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

**Report Author:** Acting Unit Manager Procurement

This attachment has been designated as confidential in accordance with 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.

### Executive Summary

This report summaries the evaluation of the five tender submissions received for the Regional Sport Precinct Main Works - Stage 2.

The tender evaluation panel advises that:

- Five tenders were received.
- Council engaged Anne Dalton and Associates as the independent probity advisors to oversee the integrity of the RFT process.
- The recommended tender was not the highest ranked but is considered best value because it offers a better risk profile for Council compared to the highest-ranked tenderer.
- Collaborative tendering was not undertaken in relation to this procurement because it is not listed in the Northern Councils Alliance consolidated contract register and this contract relates to a unique need for the City of Whittlesea.

### Officers' Recommendation

**THAT Council:**

1. **Resolve to award the following contract to Devco Project & Construction Management Pty Ltd:**
  - Number:** 2024-114
  - Title:** Regional Sports Precinct Main Works – Stage 2
  - Cost:** A lump sum of \$42,140,000 (excluding GST)

**subject to the following conditions:**

- a) **Contractor providing contract security and proof of currency for insurance cover as required in the tender documents.**
  - b) **Price variations to be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the conditions of contract.**
- 2. Approve the funding arrangements as detailed in the confidential attachment.**
  - 3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and execute the contract on behalf of Council.**
  - 4. Request the Chief Executive Officer to investigate options and related costs for the inclusion of retractable 'Grandstand' style seating to be provided, as part of the construction of the Stadiums Show Court, and report back to Council for consideration as part of the budget process.**

## Background / Key Information

The purpose of this contract is to deliver the Main Works package as part of the Regional Sports Precinct project. The project involves the delivery of four indoor sports courts and eight outdoor sports courts with the inclusion of amenities for players and staff, such as bathrooms, office space, meeting rooms, first aid room, storage areas, reception, a kitchen/kiosk, and an outdoor pavilion. A significant portion of the project also involves landscaping, footpaths, and roads connecting the indoor and outdoor courts, as well as the entrances, exits, and car parks.

The Main Works contract follows on from the Early Works contract 2024-37.

Tenders for the contract closed on 20 December 2024. The tendered prices and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachment.

One member of the Tender Evaluation Panel declared a conflict of interest, but it was deemed not to affect the evaluation. The member remained on the panel, and the evaluation proceeded fairly. Importantly, this tender was scrutinised by an independent tender probity advisor throughout all stages of the tender evaluation, including development of the Request for Tender Documentation and the Tender Probity and Evaluation Plan.

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:

- Price 50%
- Capability 27.5%
- Capacity 17.5%
- Sustainability 5%

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:

<b>Tenderer</b>	<b>Conforming</b>	<b>Competitive</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Tenderer A	Yes	Yes	71.4	4
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	92.6	1
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	75.0	3
Tenderer D - Devco Project & Construction Management Pty Ltd	Yes	Yes	86.6	2
Tenderer E	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

Refer to the confidential attachment for further details of the evaluation of all tenders.

The highest ranked tenderer was not recommended for award of this contract because they presented a higher risk profile, which could lead to greater challenges for Council, and their proposal did not offer the best value for money.

### **Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies**

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

#### **Connected Communities**

We work to foster and inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

#### **Liveable Neighbourhoods**

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

#### **High Performing Organisation**

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

### **Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles**

#### **Financial Management**

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the budget for Regional Sport Precinct Project.

#### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, consideration was given as to whether there were any opportunities to collaborate with other Councils and public bodies or to use any existing collaborative procurement arrangements.

Collaborative tendering was not undertaken in relation to this procurement because this contract relates to a unique needs for the City of Whittlesea.

Community consultation and engagement was not required in relation to the subject matter of this report as it relates to commercial arrangements and contractual obligations that are confidential.

## Other Principles for Consideration

### Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

### Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

## Council Policy Considerations

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Considerations have been made to ensure that environmental sustainability practices are adopted which includes the reuse of excavated materials on-site, sourcing local quarry materials to reduce emissions, and use of recycled materials where practicable.

### Social, Cultural and Health

Socially, supporting local talent through training programs and procuring materials from within the City of Whittlesea region.

### Economic

Economically, to support and promote resource efficiency and stimulate the local economy by prioritising local suppliers and contractors.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

Contractor Management - Failure to manage contractors to deliver agreed outcomes. Suitably qualified, experienced, and supported Council staff will oversee the construction activities. The project will be delivered in partnership by contractors with a proven record for delivering projects of a similar scale and scope.

## Implementation Strategy

### Communication

There is no requirement to communicate the contract award decision of this report to the community beyond the Council minutes. However, information regarding the proposed works will be provided via Council's communication channels and also to relevant stakeholders.

### Critical Dates

It is anticipated that the project will commence in April 2025 with an estimated timeline of completion of November 2026.

## Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* 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.

## Attachments

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - 2024 114 Council evaluation report [5.3.1 - 11 pages]

## 5.4 Waste Taskforce - Preventing Illegal Dumping

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

**Report Author:** Manager Assets & Facilities

**In Attendance:** Manager Assets & Facilities

### Executive Summary

Despite the comprehensive and environmentally sustainable hard waste services provided by Council, there has been an unprecedented increase in illegal dumping. This is often linked to seasonal times and is usually noticeable over the summer and holiday periods and remains an ongoing issue.

Illegally dumped rubbish has severe environmental, health, social, and economic impacts. It pollutes land, waterways, and air, harming ecosystems. Additionally, it negatively affects the community's well-being, creating a sense of neglect and reducing the perception of public safety.

The escalating cost of cleaning up illegal dumping falls on Council, with financial implications that divert resources from essential services and key priorities.

In response to this escalating matter, Council has established a dedicated Waste Taskforce comprising key business units working collaboratively to implement prevention strategies. The Taskforce aims to enhance community safety and well-being, protect public health through swift waste management, and safeguard the environment by preventing long-term damage. It also focuses on reducing clean-up costs through proactive enforcement, holding offenders accountable to deter future dumping, and promoting responsible waste disposal through public education. Additionally, by maintaining clean public spaces, the initiative seeks to boost community pride, improve liveability, and attract investment.

### Officers' Recommendation

**THAT Council:**

- 1. Note this report and the additional efforts being taken to address illegal dumping.**
- 2. Request the Chief Executive Officer write to the local State Members of Parliament, Minister for Environment and Treasurer to request funding from the Landfill Levy be provided to Council to offset expenses associated with the increase of illegal dumping.**
- 3. Request the Chief Executive Officer to, as part of the plans to promote the services available to our community, and the work being undertaken to address illegal dumping, consider:**



- a. publicising when offenders are caught illegally dumping commercial quantities of waste. This may include:**
  - i. publicly disclosing their names, photos, and details of the offending (where legally permissible), through official media and social media channels.**

## Background / Key Information

In addition to proactive collections conducted by the Council's Manual Litter Unit, residents have reported 3,242 cases of illegally dumped rubbish since 11 September 2024, when the Council launched the Customer Portal. This raises significant concerns, including:

- Health and amenity risks to the community;
- The increasing rate and volume of illegally dumped rubbish; and
- Escalating financial costs for the Council to mitigate risks and dispose of waste.

There are several reasons why illegal dumping continues to occur, including:

- A lack of community knowledge regarding available waste disposal options and proper disposal practices;
- A disregard for environmental regulations;
- Avoidance of disposal costs, as some individuals and businesses choose to illegally dump rather than pay for proper disposal;
- Restricted operating hours of landfill sites; and
- Escalating costs to residents and Council through increases in the State Government Waste Levy.

Illegal dumping often occurs in areas and at times when enforcement is minimal—during late evenings, weekends, or holiday periods, as was evident during the January 2025 holiday period. Dumped rubbish is frequently observed in remote or secluded locations, including newly developed estates such as Mason Quarter, The Patch, Wollert Rise, Findonview, Stonefields, Lyndarum North, and Arramont Estates, which have now been identified as hotspots.

Illegal dumping encompasses a wide range of waste types, including:

- Household items
- Construction materials
- Hazardous material
- Electronic waste
- Green waste, and
- Automotive parts.

Each type of waste poses distinct environmental and public health risks, and Council incurs significant financial costs to dispose of waste, with escalated expenses associated with both the type and volume of material.

**Appendix 1, Dumped Rubbish at the City of Whittlesea** provides a visual demonstration of the hotspots for illegally dumped rubbish. Wollert reported the highest number of incidents at 680, followed by Epping at 628, Thomastown at 477, Lalor at 268, South Morang at 250, and Mill Park at 236 incidents.

Addressing the issue of illegal dumping of rubbish requires stricter enforcement, increased public awareness, and improved waste management options. Therefore, the newly developed Taskforce has adopted a three-pronged approach to prevent the illegal dumping of rubbish. These include:

### **1. Prevention**

- *Strengthening Council policies and regulations* by collaborating with relevant authorities to ensure legislative compliance by builders and developers in verifying the disposal of commercial and construction waste.
- *Increasing surveillance and enforcement* through a proposed joint effort with the Environmental Protection Authority, Victoria Police, WorkSafe, and Council's Enforcement Units to conduct both covert and publicised compliance operations targeting hot spots and the building, developer, and business sectors.
- *Developing community education and awareness campaigns* for schools, youth, adults, community groups, sporting organisations, and seniors, focusing on the impacts of illegally dumped rubbish and highlighting available, responsible hard waste disposal services.
- *Launching a communication campaign*, including the relaunch of the 'Love Where You Live' campaigns.
- *Behavioural Change* applying behavioural science to the problem of curb side illegal dumping.

### **2. Rapid Response**

- *Establishing a dedicated reporting line* for illegally dumped rubbish allowing an expedited response by Council's enforcement teams.
- *Exposing offenders*, Council is committed to enforcing strict measures and holding offenders to account. Those who blatantly violate waste disposal laws will be identified and publicised through approved social media, publications, and other strategies, reinforcing Council's commitment to a cleaner community.
- *Publicising the success of enforcement interventions* to serve as a deterrent and informing the community of social justice outcomes.
- *Establishing dedicated rapid collection teams* for the proactive collection of illegally dumped rubbish across the city.
- *Expanding the Council's waste disposal options* to include white goods and other recycling opportunities.

- *Partnering with community groups and businesses* to educate new residents and local businesses on the options and responsibilities for preventing illegal dumping on their properties.

### **3. Short- to Medium-Term Solutions**

- *Utilising smart technology* to enhance hard waste service bookings, reporting of dumped rubbish, and expanding the use of CCTV surveillance cameras.
- *Beautifying illegal dump hotspots* by transforming them into community areas of interest—either as open spaces or with added amenities—to restore community pride.
- *Advocating* to the State Government for the cost of the Landfill Levy for the disposal of illegally dumped rubbish to be reinvested into preventative and mitigation strategies.

### **Outcomes from Waste Taskforce Interventions**

In addition to the hard waste collection and manual litter services provided by the Council, and since the establishment of the Taskforce in early February 2025, several noticeable outcomes have been achieved:

1. Two dedicated rapid collection crews have been established, operating five days per week with the capacity to collect hard waste from up to 50 sites per day or use heavy equipment to remove commercial waste from designated sites, with the ability to collect up to 2.1 tonnes of waste.
2. Two designated compliance and enforcement operations were conducted targeting Mason Quarter, The Patch, Wollert Rise, Findonview, Stonefields, Lyndarum North, and Arramont Estates. These operations responded to 403 incidents of illegally dumped rubbish, resulting in the issuing of 179 Notices to Comply instructing the removal of illegally dumped rubbish within a specified period from private properties, 58 infringements, and the removal of dumped rubbish from 63 public sites.
3. Between 1 February 2025 and 19 February 2025, Council's Enforcement Teams—including Litter Enforcement, City Compliance, and Asset Protection—issued a combined total of 196 Notices to Comply and 230 infringements related to illegally dumped rubbish and damages to Council assets, totalling \$467,000.

This has resulted in noticeable improvements, with additional operations scheduled for Donnybrook on 5 March 2025, Epping on 19 March 2025, and Wollert on 27 March 2025.

By taking a firm stance, Council aims to deter unlawful dumping and ensure residents witness visible action against those disregarding the law.



A comprehensive approach that integrates preventive, response, and long-term measures is essential for effectively combating illegal dumping, ensuring a cleaner environment, greater community accountability, and long-term cost savings.

### Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

#### Connected Communities

We work to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

#### Liveable Neighbourhoods

Our City is well-planned and beautiful, and our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

#### Sustainable Environment

We prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, preserve local biodiversity, protect waterways and green space and address climate change.

#### High Performing Organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

### Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

#### Financial Management

The Taskforce, which will operate for five months, has several financial commitments totalling \$251,000.

Resources will be managed within existing budgets and monitored accordingly.

#### Community Consultation and Engagement

Community feedback across all channels has informed the development of the Taskforce and the action plan.

### Other Principles for Consideration

#### Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.

- (c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.
- (f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought.
- (g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

- (d) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

## **Council Policy Considerations**

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

The deliverables of the Waste Taskforce align with the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-32, delivering on:

- Valuing natural landscape and natural diversity; and
- Clean sustainable city.

### **Social, Cultural and Health**

Illegally dumped rubbish poses significant social, cultural, and health risks. It degrades public spaces, reduces community pride, and increases crime while impacting on Council's resources. It discourages social engagement and reflects environmental neglect. Health hazards may include the spread of disease, pollution of air and water, and physical dangers from hazardous waste. Addressing this issue requires enhanced enforcement, public education, and sustainable waste management solutions.

### **Economic**

Illegally dumped rubbish has significant economic consequences, affecting Council's finances with clean-up costs, with the potential to divert funds from essential services and delivery of priority projects. It has an impact on the reputation and liveability of the City of Whittlesea, impacting the value of property and investment by business.

## Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

**Legal Risks:** Illegal dumping constitutes non-compliance with various laws, including environmental regulations and local laws, posing potential legal risks to Council, especially if enforcement efforts are insufficient. Establishing the Taskforce requires strict adherence to legislative compliance and prosecution laws, ensuring diligence in investigations, fines, and prosecutions while mitigating the risk of legal challenges from offenders.

**Resource Risks:** Implementing the Taskforce requires substantial financial, operational, and human resources. Costs include staffing, surveillance technology, enforcement actions, and awareness campaigns. Without adequate funding and support, the effectiveness of the Taskforce may be compromised, leading to inefficiencies in combating illegal dumping.

**Strategic Risks:** Failure to address illegal dumping effectively can undermine public confidence, environmental sustainability, and overall liveability. Resistance from stakeholders, lack of community engagement, and insufficient interagency collaboration can further hinder its effectiveness.

## Implementation Strategy

### Communication

A detailed communication plan has been developed and will operate for five months from the adoption of this report.

### Critical Dates

- Taskforce will operate for five months commencing from February 2025 to the end of June 2025.
- Monthly Progress Reports will be provided to Council with a formal evaluation report provided to Council in June 2025.

## Declaration of Conflict of Interest

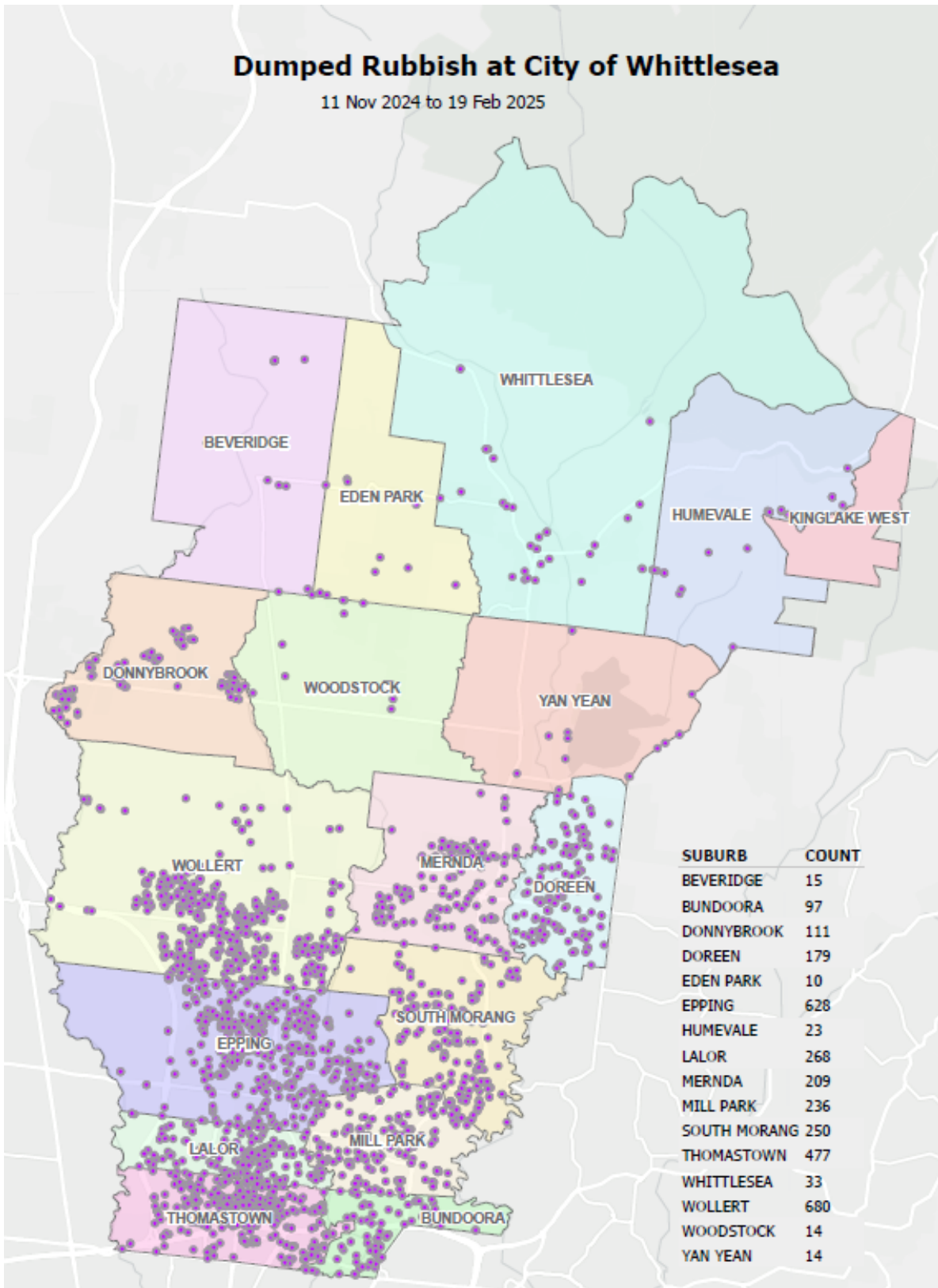
Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

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.

## Attachments

1. Appendix 1 Dumped Rubbish at the City of Whittlesea [5.4.1 - 1 page]

**Appendix 1: Dumped Rubbish at the City of Whittlesea**





## 5.5 Internal Resolution Procedure

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Councillors with the Internal Resolution Procedure (**Procedure**) which encourages Councillors to resolve a dispute in a manner that enables the Councillors to move forward and maintain an effective working relationship.

The Procedure has been developed in accordance with the requirements under section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Act)*, regulation 12A and Schedule 1A of the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020 (Regulations)*. Further, the Regulations require Council to adopt the prescribed Procedures by 1 July 2025.

It should be noted that the Procedure will not be suitable for all disputes between Councillors, as such a Councillor or group of Councillors may wish to proceed directly to Internal Arbitration (misconduct), Councillor Conduct Panel (serious misconduct) or VCAT (Gross misconduct) depending on the nature of the alleged breach.

Information on the prescribed Procedures are outlined in the background/key information section of this report.

### Officers' Recommendation

**THAT Council:**

- 1. Adopt the Internal Resolution Procedure at Attachment 1 to this report.**
- 2. Note the Internal Resolution Procedure only covers the first stage – Discussion; and second stage – Conciliation in attempt to resolve disputes for alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.**
- 3. Note the processes for making application for alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct through Internal Arbitration, Councillor Conduct Panel or VCAT must be done in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.**

## Background / Key Information

To ensure good governance and standards of conduct are observed and maintained by Council, the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* introduced the requirement for Council's to adopt Procedures dealing with alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct (**Code**).

The Regulations specify the Procedures must include a conciliation process that is to be conducted by the Mayor, or if the Mayor is a party to the matter or unable to perform the role, functions and duties of the conciliator for any reason, the Deputy Mayor or another person, and may include any other process Council considers appropriate.

In addition, the Procedure must:

- detail how a matter subject to an alleged breach of the Code is to be dealt with, including circumstances in which the available processes may be used to deal with a matter; and
- detail how a Councillor can access the Procedure, including how a Councillor may initiate a request to have a matter dealt with through the available processes; and
- detail, for the purposes of the conciliation process, the:
  - roles and responsibilities of the parties to a matter; and
  - the role, functions and duties of the person responsible for conducting the relevant process; and
  - any support Council is to make available to the parties or the person conducting the relevant process; and
  - the form and availability of a record of any agreement, resolution or outcome reached through the process.

The Procedure clearly outlines circumstances not covered under the Procedure; such as:

- (a) differences between Councillors in relation to policy or decision making, which are appropriately resolved through discussion and voting in Council meetings;
- (b) complaints made against a Councillor or Councillors by a member or members of Council staff, or by any other external person;
- (c) allegations of sexual harassment;
- (d) disclosures made about a Councillor under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*, which can only be made to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission; and
- (e) allegations of criminal misconduct, which should be immediately referred to Victoria Police or the relevant integrity authority.

## Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

### High Performing Organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

## Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

### Financial Management

There are no financial implications with the adoption of the Internal Resolution Procedures. Should Councillors determine alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct are better suited to Internal Arbitration, Councillor Conduct Panel or VCAT process, depending on the nature of the alleged breach, there are financial implications as they relate to the appointment of external arbitrators, transcription and recording services and potential legal representation costs.

### Community Consultation and Engagement

There are no requirements for the Procedure to undertake a community consultation process.

## Other Principles for Consideration

### Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

### Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

## Council Policy Considerations

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

No implications.

### **Social, Cultural and Health**

The Procedure has been developed to encourage early resolution of disputes between Councillors and to minimise potential health and wellbeing impacts on parties should disputes go unresolved.

### **Economic**

No implications.

### **Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications**

The Internal Resolution Procedure has been developed by Council's lawyers to maximise compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.

## **Implementation Strategy**

### **Communication**

Once adopted, a copy of the Internal Resolution Procedure will be provided to all Councillors and placed on the Councillor Portal.

### **Critical Dates**

The Internal Resolution Procedure must be adopted by 1 July 2025.

## **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* 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.

## **Attachments**

1. Internal Resolution Procedure [5.5.1 - 6 pages]





## INTERNAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

### 1. Purpose

This Internal Resolution Procedure (**Procedure**) is adopted under and in accordance with section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Act)* and regulation 12A of the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.

This Procedure will be observed when dealing with alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

### 2. Internal Resolution Procedure

Disputes between Councillors may arise in a variety of circumstances. This Procedure is to apply to those disputes in which one Councillor (**the Complainant**) alleges that another Councillor (**the Respondent**) has breached the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

This Procedure provides both parties to a dispute with support and encouragement to resolve the dispute in a manner that enables the Councillors to move forward and maintain effective working relationships.

This Procedure is designed to minimise cost and disruption of disputes to Council and individual Councillors and, where possible, avoid disputes escalating and becoming the subject of an internal arbitration.

It is acknowledged that this Procedure will not be suitable for resolution of all disputes between Councillors.

An overview of the Procedure is annexed, in the form of a flowchart.

### 3. First Stage of Internal Resolution Procedure – Discussion

A Complainant is encouraged to raise their issue directly with the Respondent in a respectful and courteous manner, either in person or in writing, where they feel comfortable to do so.

Councillors are encouraged to recognise that:

- (a) certain behaviours and communications may be perceived by others to be causing issues or offence that may not have been intended;
- (b) it can provide useful insight to reflect on their own behaviour or motivation and possible contribution to the dispute, whether intended or not; and
- (c) dealing with the dispute early is more likely to avoid the issue escalating and resolve it before it threatens the effective operation of Council.

It is useful to frame any issue from the Councillor's perspective (eg "I felt disrespected when you said / did ..."), rather than accusing another person of holding a particular position or taking a negative action deliberately. A Councillor should let the other Councillor know how they feel and ask for an explanation, rather than making accusations or assumptions.



#### 4. Second Stage of Internal Resolution Procedure – Conciliation

Where a direct conversation between Councillors has not been successful in resolving the dispute, or a Councillor does not feel comfortable communicating directly with another Councillor, the second stage of this Procedure is conciliation.

##### 4.1 Initiating conciliation

A Complainant initiating conciliation must notify the Mayor and the Respondent of the dispute by completing a **Conciliation Application Form**. That form (see Attachment 1 to this Procedure) must:

- (a) specify the names of the Complainant and Respondent;
- (b) specify the provision (or provisions) of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct alleged to have been breached;
- (c) detail what was said or done by the Respondent to constitute a breach of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct;
- (d) attach any supporting information to provide examples of the behaviour complained of (eg screenshots or emails); and
- (e) be dated and signed by the Complainant.

##### 4.2 Participating in conciliation

Councillors are not obliged to engage in conciliation but should only decline to participate if they honestly and reasonably believe that their participation would adversely affect their health or wellbeing or would otherwise be unsafe.

A Respondent declining to participate in the conciliation must advise the Complainant and the Mayor of their unwillingness to participate, and the reasons for it. That advice must be provided no more than one week after receiving the Conciliation Application Form.

##### 4.3 Conduct of conciliation

Conciliation is to be conducted by the Mayor except when the Mayor is a party to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct conciliation. In that case the Deputy Mayor will assume the role of the Mayor in the conciliation process. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are parties to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct the conciliation, the role of the Mayor must be performed by a Councillor jointly chosen for the purpose by the parties.

When, in this Procedure, reference is made to the Mayor it includes:

- (a) the Deputy Mayor; and
- (b) a Councillor jointly chosen for the purpose by the parties,

when the Mayor and/or the Deputy Mayor are parties to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct a conciliation.



#### 4.4 Roles and responsibilities

The role of the Mayor is to provide guidance to the parties to the dispute about the Standards of Conduct in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, and actively explore whether the dispute can be resolved by agreement between them.

The role of the Complainant and Respondent is to explain their respective positions and, in a show of goodwill, actively explore the possibility of resolving the dispute by agreement.

All Councillors are responsible for conducting themselves in a courteous and respectful manner at all times during the conciliation.

The role of the Councillor Conduct Officer is to provide the Mayor with the administrative support necessary to arrange and conduct the conciliation.

#### 4.5 Support from Council

Council, through the Councillor Conduct Officer, will provide administrative assistance to the Mayor when arranging a time and place for conciliation, including any technical assistance that may be required. Council will make a venue available to the Councillors within Council's offices that is private and suited to the conciliation process.

Council will not provide any substantive guidance or advice about the subject matter of the dispute, or pay the costs of legal advice or representation for any Councillor in connection with this Procedure. Parties to a dispute may seek their own legal or other advice at their own cost, if they choose to do so.

#### 4.6 End or termination of conciliation

Conciliation will end or be terminated if any of the following occurs:

- (a) the parties cannot jointly choose a Councillor to conduct the conciliation within one week of being asked to do so;
- (b) the Respondent notifies the Mayor that they do not wish to participate in conciliation, and the reasons for it, within one week of receiving the Conciliation Application Form;
- (c) the Respondent does not respond to the Conciliation Application Form at all within two weeks of receiving it;
- (d) conciliation has not occurred within four weeks of the Complainant submitting the Conciliation Application Form;
- (e) conciliation has occurred and the parties have been unable to resolve the dispute;  
or
- (f) the dispute has been resolved.

The time for conciliation may be extended by agreement between the parties to the dispute, whether or not the matter has been escalated to one of the formal dispute resolution procedures outlined in the Act.



#### **4.7 Confidentiality**

Parties and other participants are expected to maintain confidentiality concerning the dispute and the operation of this Procedure.

#### **4.8 Record of outcome**

The Mayor must document any agreement that is reached between the Complainant and Respondent. The agreement must be signed by the Complainant, Respondent and Mayor. Copies must be provided to the Complainant and Respondent, and the original must be retained by the Mayor. Again, parties and the Mayor are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the agreement reached.

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### **5. Internal Resolution Procedure does not Apply in these Circumstances**

The following disputes are not covered by this Procedure:

- (a) differences between Councillors in relation to policy or decision making, which are appropriately resolved through discussion and voting in Council meetings;
- (b) complaints made against a Councillor or Councillors by a member or members of Council staff, or by any other external person;
- (c) allegations of sexual harassment;
- (d) disclosures made about a Councillor under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*, which can only be made to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission; and
- (e) allegations of criminal misconduct, which should be immediately referred to Victoria Police or the relevant integrity authority.

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### **6. Formal Dispute Resolution Procedure**

This Procedure operates alongside, and does not replace, the formal dispute resolution procedures outlined in the Act.

The formal dispute resolution procedure applies to misconduct, serious misconduct and gross misconduct.

Section 141 of the Act provides for an internal arbitration process concerning a breach of the Standards of Conduct set out in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.





## Attachment 1 Conciliation Application Form

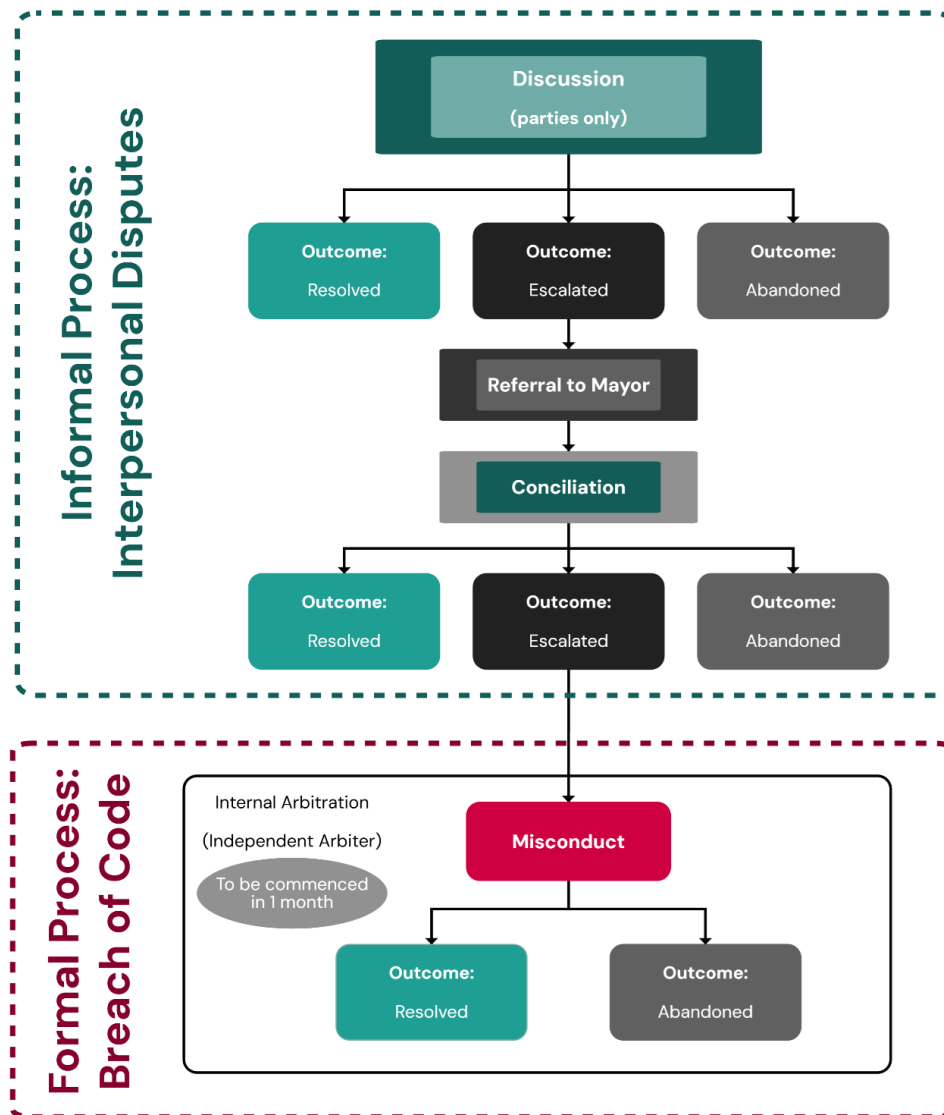
<b>Complainant:</b>	..... .....
<b>Respondent:</b>	..... .....
<b>Provisions of Model Councillor Code of Conduct breached:</b>	..... ..... ..... .....
<b>Action constituting breach:</b>  (Include dates, times and detailed descriptions of the action complained of. Attach further documents as necessary.)	..... ..... ..... ..... ..... .....

Signed by ..... )  
 )  
 on ..... )



**Annexure**

**INTERNAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FLOWCHART**



## 5.6 Election Period Policy

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's consideration and approval of the Election Period Policy (**Policy**) following community consultation between the period 26 February 2025 and 12 March 2025.

Three community members advised they understood the amendments made comment to the draft Policy with no feedback provided. Further information on the community engagement is contained within the Community Consultation and Engagement section of this report.

The amendments made to the Policy, as outlined in the Background/Key Information section of this report, are primarily enhancements to strengthen the obligations of Council officers should they nominate as a candidate in any local, state or federal election.

### Officers' Recommendation

**THAT Council resolve to adopt the Election Period Policy at Attachment 1.**

## Background / Key Information

Section 69 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires an Election Period Policy (**Policy**) to be established and incorporated in Council's Governance Rules. The proposed amendments to the Policy have no impact on any aspect of the Governance Rules.

To ensure prospective candidates and nominated candidates, whether a Councillor or Council officer, maintain integrity leading up to and during an election, the Policy was slightly amended to strengthen the requirements, primarily for any officers considering candidacy. The Policy also provides for minor administrative updates.

An example of amendments made to the Policy are:

- Councillors are prohibited from promoting their election campaign or individual policy positions during any Council meeting.
- Council officers are prohibited from approaching Councillors leading up to an election in attempt to gain an advantage or benefit in exchange for a formal decision to be made by the Council.
- A Councillor or Council officer must not place any election materials on or in any Council owned or operated facility or land.
- A Council officer will not use their position or their access to other Council officers and resources to gain media attention in support of an election campaign.

## Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

### High Performing Organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

## Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

### Financial Management

There are no costs associated with amending the Policy.

### Community Consultation and Engagement

In accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy, officers sought community feedback on the draft Policy during the period 26 February to 12 March 2025. At the time of closing there were 91 unique public visitors and four contributions made by three contributors. Of the contributions made, no feedback or suggested amendments were provided.



## Other Principles for Consideration

### Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
  - (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

### Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

## Council Policy Considerations

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

No implications.

### Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

### Economic

No implications.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The Policy complies with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## Implementation Strategy

### Communication

The Policy will be made available on Council's website.

### Critical Dates

It is proposed that Council adopt the Policy prior to the upcoming Federal Election.

### Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* 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.

### Attachments

1. Election Period Policy Final - March 2025 [5.6.1 - 11 pages]



## Appendix 2 – Election Period Policy

### Policy statement

This Policy has been developed in order to ensure that general elections and by-elections for the Council are conducted in a manner that is ethical, fair and equitable, and are publicly perceived as such.

It specifies procedures intended to ensure the Council makes appropriate decisions, takes appropriate actions or uses resources appropriately during the Election Period before a general election, a by election and at other times as specified in this policy.

Further, this policy:

- (a) facilitates the continuation of the ordinary business of local government in the Council throughout the Election Period in a responsible and transparent manner;
- (b) ensures the authority of an incoming council is not restricted by decisions to which it may find itself unreasonably bound and unable to change. This could include significant contractual matters;
- (c) establishing procedures to ensure that access to information held by Council is made equally available and accessible to candidates during the Council, Federal or State elections;
- (d) places limits on public consultation and the scheduling of Council events during the Election Period;
- (e) requires that materials produced by the Council and Whittlesea Council must not contain matter that will affect voting at the election;
- (f) sets out the requirements for a Councillor who is a candidate in an election, including a Council, Federal or State election.

### Background

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* which requires Council to include an election period policy in its Governance Rules to be applied by Council during the election period, a by election and at other times as specified in this policy.

### Scope

This Policy relates to the Council, Councillors, Council Committees, the CEO and Council officers, their behaviour and decision making during the 'caretaker' period.

This policy replaces and overrides any previous policy that refers to the Election Period.

### Relevant Documents

All City of Whittlesea policies comply with:

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities  
*Local Government Act 2020*  
*Freedom of Information Act 1982*  
 Public Transparency Policy



## Procedural Guidelines

### 1. Application of Policy

Council will function in accordance with this Policy during the election period commencing at **noon, 21 days prior to the fourth Saturday in October, or earlier if declared by the Minister for Local Government.**

#### 1.1 Role of Chief Executive Officer

In addition to the CEO statutory responsibilities, the CEO has the following responsibilities in supporting the implementation and application of the Policy:

- (a) All Councillors and Council Officers are informed of and supported in the application of this policy at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the Election Period;
- (b) Make a public statement or media release that corrects inaccurate information or statements about Council made by candidates without naming the candidate, where they deem it appropriate; and
- (c) Matters of Council business requiring decisions prohibited during the Election Period by this Policy or the Act are, where possible, scheduled for Council to enable resolution prior to the commencement of the Election Period or deferred where appropriate for determination by the incoming Council.

### 2. Decisions by Council

- 2.1.1 In accordance with section 69 of the Act Council is prohibited from making any decisions during the Election Period for a general election that:
  - (a) relates to the appointment or remuneration of the CEO, but not to the appointment or remuneration of an Acting CEO;
  - (b) commits the Council to expenditure exceeding one per cent of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year;
  - (c) the Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or
  - (d) the Council considers should not be made during an Election Period.
- 2.1.2 Council is prohibited from making any Council decisions during the Election Period for a general election or a by-election that would enable the use of Council's resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence, voting at the election.
- 2.1.3 During the Election Period, the Council, a Committee of Council, the CEO, of Council officer acting under delegation will not:





- (a) approve, amend or repeal any policy, plan or strategy, including those contained in or related to the Whittlesea Council Planning Scheme, which has been adopted by the Council; or
- (b) use their position to influence Council officers, or access Council resources of information in support of any election campaign or candidacy.

2.1.4 A Council decision made in contravention of subsection (a) or (b) above is invalid under the Act.

2.1.5 Council can continue to make town planning decisions under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* during the election period and they will still be processed in accordance with usual practices and statutory timelines.

### 2.2.1 Prohibition on Council

Council or a Council Officer under delegation is unable to make Major Policy Decisions and any major policy decision made during the election period is deemed to be invalid under the Act and may be compensable.

### 2.1.3 Extraordinary Circumstances

If Council considers that there are extraordinary circumstances which require the making of a major policy decision during the Election Period that in doing so would breach the Act, the Council may apply in writing request an exemption from the Minister for Local Government.

## 2.2 Council Meetings

Scheduled Council meetings will continue to take place during the Election Period. However, the following adjustments will be made to the Agenda:

- (a) Public Question Time will be suspended
- (b) Notice of Motions will not be allowed
- (c) Councillors will limit their discussion during debate to the topic under consideration and will avoid raising Electoral Matter
- (d) Reports for the consideration of Council will be referred to the CEO for approval before inclusion on the meeting agenda

Councillors are prohibited from promoting their election campaign or individual policy positions during any Council meeting.

Council officers are prohibited from approaching Councillors leading up to an election in attempt to gain an advantage or benefit in exchange for a formal decision to be made by Council.

## 3. Application of Resources

3.1.1 The use of Council resources, including, but not limited to, vehicles, staff, services, property, equipment, stationery, IP, websites, social media and hospitality for any Council, Federal or State election campaign purposes is prohibited.

3.1.2 Where the use of Council resources appears to relate to the election campaign of a Councillor standing in or for re-election, the matter must be referred to the CEO or their delegate.



- 3.1.3 In accordance with section 304 of the Act, a Councillor or Council officer must not use Council resources in a way that is intended to or is likely to affect the result of an election under this Act.
- 3.1.4 A Councillor or Council officer must not use Council resources to intentionally or recklessly print, publish or distribute or cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed any electoral material during the Election Period on behalf of, or purporting to be on behalf of, the Council unless the electoral material only contains information about the election process or is otherwise required in accordance with, or under, any Act or regulations.
- 3.1.5 A Councillor or Council officer must not at any time intentionally or recklessly disclose, information they know, or should reasonably know is confidential.
- 3.1.6 A Councillor or Council officer must not place any election materials on or in any Council owned or operated facilities or land.

#### **4. Candidacy**

A Councillor or Council officer must not use Council resources for candidacy, or any purpose that may be perceived as being used either as an individual or political party. This applies to a Councillor or Council officer standing in a Council, Federal or State election, and for any other elected position, for example, positions on boards. Such use would constitute misuse of position.

#### **5. Federal and State Government Elections**

- 5.1.1 Councillor will ensure there is a demonstrable distinction between their obligations to Council and their personal interests as a candidate, or member of a political party, in an election period prior to or during a Federal or State election.
- 5.1.2 Once a Councillor or Council officer becomes an endorsed candidate of a registered political party or publicly expresses an intention to run as a candidate in a Federal or State election, they must provide written advice to the CEO, as soon as practicable. The CEO will then advise all Councillors.

#### **6. Public Consultation and Council Events**

- 6.1.1 Public consultation activities may be necessary during the election period to ensure that the community is continuing to be consulted in decision making processes. Where it is within Council's control to do so, Council will seek to avoid actions which will require Councillor or Council officer public consultation during the election period. Councillors and Council officers will not attend or be involved in public consultation.
- 6.1.2 Any public consultation will avoid express or implicit links to the election.

#### **7. Council Events**

Council will ensure that any significant Council events are scheduled to occur outside the election period. Where a Council event must be held during the election period, Councillor involvement will be minimised.

#### **8. Council Publications**



## 8.1 Prohibition on Publishing Material during the Election Period

- 8.1.1 The Chief Executive Officer will only certify electoral advertisements and information about the election process.
- 8.1.2 A Councillor or Council officer will not print, publish or distribute, or be involved in the printing, publishing or distribution of an electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice during the election period if the electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice has not been certified by the Chief Executive Officer.

## 8.2 Certification of Publications

- 8.2.1 Local election process publications which require certification include:
- (a) Brochures, pamphlets, handbills, flyers, magazines and books;
  - (b) Reports (other than Agenda papers and Minutes);
  - (c) Advertisements and notices, except newspaper notices of Meetings;
  - (d) New website material;
  - (e) Social media publications or social media posts;
  - (f) Emails with multiple addresses, used for broad communication with the community;
  - (g) Mass mail outs or identical letters sent to a large number of people by or on behalf of the Council;
  - (h) Media releases;
  - (i) Material to publicise a function or event; and
  - (j) Any publication or distribution of Councillor's speeches.
- 8.2.2 Application should be made to the Chief Executive Officer who will seek certification of the publication of election advertisements.
- 8.2.3 Copies of all certified documents and applications will be retained for three (3) years by the City of Whittlesea.

## 8.3 Prohibited Material

'Electoral matter' is taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on:

- (a) The election;
- (b) A candidate in the election; or
- (c) An issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election.

It's therefore likely that "electoral matter" will include material which:



- (d) Publicises the strengths or weaknesses of a candidate;
- (e) Advocates the policies of the Council or of a candidate;
- (f) Responds to claims made by a candidate; or
- (g) Publicises the achievements of the elected Council or particular Councillors.

#### **8.4 Council Publications Including Councillor Information**

Council publications printed, published or distributed during the local election period will not include any reference to individual Councillors, unless Council is legally obliged to include any such reference.

#### **8.5 Website**

- 8.5.1 Councillor contact information will remain available on the website during the local election period, but Councillors' profiles will be removed.
- 8.5.2 Any news published on Council's website during the local election period must be certified by the Chief Executive Officer.

#### **8.6 Annual Report**

- 8.6.1 Council is required to produce and put on public display a copy of its Annual Report. The Annual Report may be published by the CEO, or delegate during the election period. The Annual Report will not contain any electioneering or material that could promote individual Councillors.
- 8.6.2 The Annual Report does not require certification by the CEO; however, any publication of an extract or summary of the Annual Report will require certification.

#### **8.7 Council and Committee Agendas and Minutes**

Agenda papers and Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings require certification by the CEO, or delegate, prior to being printed or published for wider distribution.

#### **8.8 Social Media**

- 8.8.1 Any publication on social media sites including Facebook, X (formally Twitter), blogs and wiki pages during the local election period must be certified by the CEO, or delegate.
- 8.8.2 Staff responsible for administering Council's social media sites will monitor them during the local election period and use moderation features where available to ensure no electoral matter is posted.
- 8.8.3 Councillors who stand as a candidate in any Local, State or Federal election must comply with the Councillor Social Media Policy.





## 9. Council Resources

### 9.1 Application of Resources

- 9.1.1 Council resources, including email addresses, photos, offices, vehicles, staff, hospitality, services, property (including intellectual property), equipment and stationery must be used exclusively for normal Council business during the election period and must not be used in connection with any election campaign or issue.
- 9.1.2 Any Councillor misusing their position to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or any other person or to cause or attempt to cause detriment to Council or another person may breach section 123 of the Act. Circumstances involving the misuse of a position include using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised may be prosecuted.
- 9.1.3 Any Council officer misusing their position to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or any other person or to cause or attempt to cause detriment to Council or another person may breach the Employee Code of Conduct. Circumstances involving the misuse of a position that is improper or unauthorised may result in disciplinary action.

### 9.2 Role of Executive Assistant to Mayor and Councillors

The Executive Assistant to Mayor and Councillors cannot be asked to undertake any tasks connected directly or indirectly with a Councillor's election campaign.

### 9.3 Use of Council Equipment by Councillors

Councillors (including those standing for re-election) must give back all Council owned equipment (such as laptops, printers, security passes etc.) prior to 6pm on the day of the local election. The timing is to be agreed prior to the election period. Councillors standing for re-election must not use Council equipment such as printers as a resource to assist with election campaigns.

### 9.4 Councillors Entitlement to Reimbursement

Reimbursements of Councillors' out-of-pocket expenses during the election period will only apply to costs that have been incurred in the performance of normal Council duties and not for expenses that support or relate to a candidate's election campaign.

### 9.5 Council Branding

Council logos, letterheads, or other corporate branding or intellectual property must not be used for, or linked in any way to, a candidate's election campaign.

### 9.6 Reporting

Where the use of Council resources appears to relate to the election campaign of a Councillor standing for election or re-election, the matter must be referred to the CEO or Delegate.

## 10. Media Services

### 10.1 Restriction on Services

- 10.1.1 During the election period, the Council's Public Affairs and Customer Service Departments' services must not be used in any way that might promote a Councillor as an election candidate.



10.1.2 Council publicity during the election period will be restricted to communicating normal Council activities and initiatives and is subject to CEO, or delegate approval and certification.

#### **10.2 Media Releases/Spokespersons**

10.2.1 Media releases will minimise references to specific Councillors and will not promote a Councillor as an election candidate. The CEO or Delegate will be referenced instead.

10.2.2 All Media releases and statements must be certified by the CEO or delegate.

#### **10.3 Councillors**

Councillors will not use their position as elected representatives or their access to Council Officers and other Council resources to gain media attention in support of an election campaign.

Councillors are strongly encouraged to take formal leave of absence well before the commencement of campaigning in parliamentary elections in order to both avoid the risk of breaching conflict of interest and misuse of position provisions in the Act.

#### **10.4 Council Employees**

In accordance with the Employee Code of Conduct, during the election period, no Council employee may make any public statement that relates to an election issue unless prior approval has been obtained from the CEO or Delegate.

Council employees will not use their position or their access to other Council employees and other Council resources to gain media attention in support of an election campaign.

#### **11. Assistance to Candidates**

##### **11.1 Role of Returning Officer**

All election related enquiries from candidates, whether sitting Councillors or not, will be directed to the VEC / AEC Returning Officer or, where the matter is outside the responsibilities of the Returning Officer, to the CEO or Delegate.

##### **11.2 Candidate Information**

11.2.1 The VEC will provide candidates with a Councillor Candidate Information Kit to assist them in running and nominating for Council.

11.2.2 Candidates will complete a Nomination Form, which will be available from the VEC Returning Officer, accompanied by the prescribed nomination fee.

11.2.3 Candidates will complete and submit an Election Campaign Donation Return in the prescribed form within 40 days after election day to the Chief Executive Officer. The return must contain details of any campaign donation or gift valued at more than the gift disclosure threshold (currently \$500 as at June 2022) which was received between the date 30 days after the previous election and the date 30 days after the current election.

##### **11.3 Access to Information & Candidate Information**

11.3.1 A Councillor may continue to access Council information only as it is necessary for them to perform their role as a Councillor.



- 11.3.2 All election candidates have equal rights to Council information relevant to their election campaign from the Council administration in accordance with the Council's Public Transparency Policy and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.
- 11.3.3 Neither Councillors nor Candidates will receive information or advice from Council officers that may improperly advantage Candidates in the election.
- 11.3.4 Council will provide Candidates with a copy of a Councillor Candidate Information Kit (if any) produced by the Victorian Electoral Commission to assist them in running and nominating for Council.

#### 11.4 Information Request Register

The Governance team will maintain and publish an Information Request Register during the Election Period.

#### 12 Staff member as a candidate

- 12.1.1 Section 34 of the Act prohibits a person who is a staff member of Whittlesea City Council serving as a Whittlesea City Council Councillor.
- 12.1.2 Under s 256(8) of the Act a member of Staff is not prevented from nominating as a candidate at an election if for the duration of the Election Period for that election if:
  - (a) the person has taken leave from that office or position; and
  - (b) the person does not perform any of the duties of that office or position.
- 12.1.3 A Staff member cannot take the oath or affirmation of office as a Whittlesea City Council Councillor unless they resign from that office or position before taking the oath or affirmation of office.
- 12.1.4 In the event that a Council officer nominates as a candidate for a Council, Federal or State election, the officer will immediately notify their Director or Executive Manager in writing with a copy to the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO. On receiving such notice the relevant manager will enter into an agreed work plan with the staff member to ensure:
  - There is no conflict of interest between the staff member's duties as a Council employee or access to information and their role as an election candidate;
  - The staff member does not have access to information that would place them at an advantage over other candidates in the election; or
  - No Council resources are used in support of the staff member's candidacy.
- 12.1.5 The agreed work plan must be approved by the relevant Director and forwarded to the CEO and Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO.



### Definitions

Where terms used in this Policy are defined in the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act), their use in this Policy is consistent with the definitions in the Act.

Words	Meaning/Definition
<b>Act</b>	means the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (Vic).
<b>Candidate</b>	means a person who is nominated to stand for a Council, Federal or State election.
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	means the person appointed by Council to be its Chief Executive Officer, or any person acting in that position.
<b>Community Consultation</b>	means the process in which City of Whittlesea and Municipal Community connect with each other to exchange views, ideas and information to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) inform decisions;</li> <li>(b) build capacity; and</li> <li>(c) strengthen relationships.</li> </ul>
<b>Councillor</b>	A person who holds the office of Member of Council or a person appointed as an Administrator for City of Whittlesea who performs the role of a Councillor for the purposes of section 28 of the Act.
<b>Councillor Candidate Information Kit</b>	means the Councillor Candidate Information Kit provided by the Victorian Electoral Commission.
<b>Council Meeting</b>	means a Council meeting that complies with the Act.
<b>Delegate</b>	means a Director or Executive Manager as appointed.
<b>Election Day</b>	means the day of an election as determined under the Act.
<b>Election period</b>	has the same meaning as 'election period' in section 3(1) of the Act and means the period that starts on the last day on which nominations for that election can be received and ends at 6pm on election day.
<b>Electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice</b>	means any document that is produced for the purpose of communicating with the community and which contains electoral matter, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Newsletters and other circulars (including those sent by email);</li> <li>(b) Media releases;</li> <li>(c) Leaflets, pamphlets, handbills, flyers, magazines and brochures;</li> <li>(d) Any new email, web based publications or social media posts; and</li> <li>(e) Mailouts to multiple addresses.</li> </ul>
<b>Electoral Material</b>	means an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notices that contains Electoral Matter, but does not include an advertisement that is only announcing the holding of a meeting.
<b>Electoral Matter</b>	means matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any electoral material produced by or on behalf of the election manager for the purposes of conducting an election. Electoral matter is to be taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the election; or</li> <li>(b) a candidate in the election; or</li> <li>(c) an issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election</li> </ul>





<b>Inappropriate decisions</b>	Includes any of the following: (a) decisions that would affect voting in an election; or (b) decisions that could reasonably be made after the election.
<b>Information Request Register</b>	This Information Request Register will be a public document that records all requests relating to Electoral Matters and non-routine requests for information by Councillors and Candidates, and the responses given to those requests.
<b>Member of Council Staff</b>	means a natural person appointed by the Chief Executive Officer (other than an independent contractor under a contract for services or a volunteer) to enable: (a) the functions of the Council to be carried out; and (b) the Chief Executive Officer to carry out their functions. The Chief Executive Officer is also a member of Council Staff.
<b>Public consultation</b>	A process that involves an invitation or invitations to individuals, groups or organisations or the community generally to comment on an issue, proposed action or proposed policy, and includes discussion of that matter with the public.
<b>Publish</b>	means publish by any means including by publication on the internet.
<b>Major Policy Decision</b>	Is defined by the Act to mean a decision (a) Relating to the employment or remuneration of a CEO, other than a decision to appoint an acting CEO; (b) To terminate the appointment of a CEO; To enter into a contract the total value of which exceeds 1% of Council's total revenue from rates and charges in the preceding financial year.
<b>Significant decision</b>	In the context of this policy, significant decisions include: (a) decisions that may irrevocably commit the incoming Council to substantial expenditure or to other significant actions; and (b) decisions that may have an irrevocable and significant impact on the municipality or a significant section of the community.

## 5.7 Governance Report

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Manager Community Strengthening  
Unit Manager Council Governance  
Compliance & Governance Officer

Attachment 1 has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

### Executive Summary

In accordance with best practice, good governance principles, transparent and accountable reporting, officers deem it appropriate to consolidate governance and administrative reports into one standing report to provide a single reporting mechanism for a range of statutory compliance, transparency and governance matters. This also ensures compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council's Governance Rules and related regulations.

The purpose of this report is to provide information and endorsement or noting for the following related matters:

- Whittlesea Reconciliation Group Membership Endorsement;
- Summary of Informal Meetings of Council;
- Council Meetings Schedule for July 2025 to December 2025;
- Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 25 February 2025;  
and
- Rescinding the Event Approvals Policy.

Further information on the above listed matters are located within the body of this report.

## Officers' Recommendation

### THAT Council:

1. Note the Governance Report for March 2025.
2. Approve the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG) membership contained within the confidential Attachment 1, Table 1, for an initial period of 12 months and acknowledge and thank community members for their interest in WRG expression of interest.
3. Note the summary of Informal Meetings of Council for the period 11 November 2024 to 11 March 2025 at Attachment 2.
4. Adopt the Council meeting schedule for the remainder of 2025, noting all meetings will commence at 6pm and public notice will be given for the below Council meetings:

COUNCIL MEETING DATE	LOCATION
Tuesday 22 July 2025 – Scheduled Council Meeting	Council Chamber Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang
Tuesday 19 August 2025 – Scheduled Council Meeting	Council Chamber Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang
Tuesday 23 September 2025 – Scheduled Council Meeting	Council Chamber Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang
Tuesday 21 October 2025 – Scheduled Council Meeting	Council Chamber Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang
Tuesday 18 November 2025 – Scheduled Council Meeting	Council Chamber Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang
Tuesday 16 December 2025 – Scheduled Council Meeting	Council Chamber Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang

5. Note the 25 February 2025 Unconfirmed summary minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee at Attachment 3 to this report.
6. Resolve to rescind the Event Approvals Policy.

## Background / Key Information

### **Whittlesea Reconciliation Group Membership Endorsement**

Seeking endorsement of the recommendations for Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG) membership.

The purpose of the WRG is to strengthen relationships between First Peoples and Council and provide advice to Council on policies, programs, and decisions that affect First Peoples communities.

The WRG Terms of Reference were adopted by Council in December 2024, following which a 10-week membership Expression of Interest Process (EOI) was undertaken. The EOI was advertised on Council's website, on social media, through stakeholders and community networks.

An assessment of applications was undertaken based on eligibility criteria and ensuring diverse representation of the local community as per the Terms of Reference. An initial proposed list of members for the first year is provided for Council's endorsement in confidential Attachment 1, Table 1. The remaining three vacancies will continue to be advertised and presented for Council's future endorsement.

### **Informal Meetings of Council**

Chapter 5 of the Council Governance Rules requires a summary of the matters discussed at a meeting of Councillors that:

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors.
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- is not a Council meeting or Delegated Committee meeting.

The summary of matters discussed at the meeting must be:

- tabled quarterly at Council meetings; and
- recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The record of Informal Meetings of Council at Attachment 2 is reported to Council in accordance with this requirement.

### **Council Meetings**

Council Meetings are conducted throughout the year so that Council can make formal decisions and to give the community an opportunity to participate in this decision-making process on issues that affect the community. Council Meetings also provide the community with the ability to participate in Council Meetings through Public Question Time.

At the City of Whittlesea, Council Meetings are conducted monthly in accordance with the Governance Rules. It is proposed that Council Meetings will be held on the last Tuesday of the month.

### **Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 25 February 2025**

The Audit and Risk Committee (Committee), an independent advisory committee of Council, has the responsibility of reporting to the Council and offering expert advice and recommendations on matters brought before it. The Committee fulfills this role by monitoring, reviewing, and providing guidance on issues relating to financial matters, risks and supporting the Council in meeting its governance obligations to the community.

The Committee discussed the following matters at the scheduled meeting of 25 February 2025:

- The quarterly Risk Management Report detailing risk treatment plans for both strategic and operational risks along with Business Continuity activities.
- The fraud and corruption risk report detailing the roles and responsibilities of Council staff against the Fraud and Corruption Control System.
- The IT and Cybersecurity Risk Report detailing Council's cybersecurity profile, phishing exercises and training initiatives.
- The progress of the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 Annual Internal Audit Programs, including completed internal audit reports, endorsed internal audit scope, and actions arising from previous audits.
- The Corporate Performance Report.
- The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Report including an update on Quarter 2 2024-2025.
- The bi-annual report on Council's Policy and Procedure governance.
- The bi-annual report on the progress of the CX/DX Program implementation.
- The Internal Assurance Report outlining the 2024-2025 Internal Assurance Program and its implementation progress.
- Compliance and governance matters as detailed in the Committee's Annual Work Plan.

To provide transparency and to comply with the requirements of the Committee's Charter, the unconfirmed meeting minutes is provided at Attachment 3 for noting by Council.

### **Rescinding of Council Policy**

The Event Approvals Policy was initially adopted by Council on 5 April 2016, providing a framework for regulating outdoor events held in public spaces across the City of Whittlesea. The policy established guidelines for event organisers to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and alignment with community standards.



On 26 June 2024, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) approved a new Event Permit Policy. This updated policy is designed to streamline the event approval process, improve operational efficiency, and incorporate current best practices in event management.

In the light of the new adopted Event Permit Policy on the 26 June 2024, it is recommended that Council formally rescind the Event Approvals Policy adopted in 2016.

### Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

#### High Performing Organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

### Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

#### Financial Management

There are no financial implications relating to this report.

#### Community Consultation and Engagement

Consultation is required for community feedback from the period 21-27 August on the amended Election Policy. Following consultation, a further report will be prepared seeking the formal adoption of the policy.

### Other Principles for Consideration

#### Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

#### Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

## Council Policy Considerations

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

No implications.

### Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

### Economic

No implications.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

## Implementation Strategy

### Communication

Council will provide public notice of Council's meeting schedule on Council's website and the schedule will be promoted through Council's social media platforms. Members of the community will be encouraged to attend Council meetings in person or watch by live-stream or recording at their convenience.

Updates to the Policy and Strategy lists are communicated via several communication channels. Council-endorsed policies are made available on Council's website.

### Critical Dates

The Council meeting schedule is required to be adopted to enable meeting dates for the remainder of 2025 to be publicly advertised.

Additional policy reviews and rescissions may be brought to Council at future Council meetings.

## Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* 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.

## Attachments

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Table 1 WRG Member Recommendations [5.7.1 - 2 pages]
2. Informal Meetings of Council [5.7.2 - 21 pages]
3. Unconfirmed Summary Minutes Audit and Risk Committee Meeting Minute [5.7.3 - 16 pages]

# Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Date of Meeting</b>	11 November 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Induction Program Overview</li> <li>2. Councillor Mandatory Training</li> <li>3. Mayor &amp; Deputy Mayor Mandatory Training</li> <li>4. Annual Professional Development</li> <li>5. Meeting Cycle</li> <li>6. In Person/Hybrid Attendance</li> <li>7. Communications</li> <li>8. Post Election Legislative Requirements</li> <li>9. Allowances</li> <li>10. Monitors</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
<p>Mayor, Cr McLindon  Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni  Cr Brooks  Cr Colwell  Cr Cox  Cr Gunn  Cr Lappin  Cr Lenberg  Cr Stow  Cr Taylor</p>	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
<p>Chief Executive Officer  Director Planning &amp; Development  Director Community Wellbeing  Director Customer &amp; Corporate Services  Director Infrastructure &amp; Environment  Executive Manager Public Affairs  Executive Manager Office of Council &amp; CEO</p>	
<b>Others present</b>	
Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

# Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Date of Meeting</b>	12 November 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maddocks Presentation on Local Government Fundamentals, Councillor Conduct Obligations &amp; Councillor Integrity Obligations</li> <li>2. Our Community</li> <li>3. Community Vision</li> <li>4. Organisational Overview</li> <li>5. ICT Acceptable Use Policy</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
<p>Mayor, Cr McLindon          Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni          Cr Brooks          Cr Colwell          Cr Cox          Cr Gunn          Cr Lappin          Cr Lenberg          Cr Stow          Cr Taylor</p>	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
<p>Chief Executive Officer          Director Planning &amp; Development          Director Community Wellbeing          Director Customer &amp; Corporate Services          Director Infrastructure &amp; Environment          Executive Manager Public Affairs          Executive Manager Office of Council &amp; CEO</p>	
<b>Others present</b>	
Representative from Maddocks	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil



## Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Date of Meeting</b>	14 November 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administration and Social Media</li> <li>2. Councillor Portal</li> <li>3. Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor</li> <li>4. Governance</li> <li>5. Significant Reports</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
<p>Mayor, Cr McLindon          Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni          Cr Brooks          Cr Colwell          Cr Cox          Cr Gunn          Cr Kozmevski          Cr Lappin          Cr Lenberg          Cr Stow          Cr Taylor</p>	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
<p>Chief Executive Officer          Director Planning &amp; Development          Director Community Wellbeing          Director Customer &amp; Corporate Services          Director Infrastructure &amp; Environment          Executive Manager Public Affairs          Executive Manager Office of Council &amp; CEO</p>	
<b>Others present</b>	
Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

## Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Date of Meeting</b>	19 November 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CEO update</li> <li>2. Induction presentation with Leadership Victoria</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
Mayor, Cr McLindon	
Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni	
Cr Brooks	
Cr Colwell	
Cr Cox	
Cr Gunn	
Cr Kozmevski	
Cr Lappin	
Cr Lenberg	
Cr Stow	
Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
Chief Executive Officer	
Director Planning & Development	
Director Community Wellbeing	
Director Customer & Corporate Services	
Director Infrastructure & Environment	
Executive Manager Public Affairs	
Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
<b>Others present</b>	
Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	21 November 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introducing our Organisation</li> <li>2. 2024-25 Fire Season Briefing</li> <li>3. Emergency Management Guidelines</li> <li>4. Unreasonable Complainant Conduct</li> </ol>	

# Informal Meetings of Council



**Councillors Present**

Mayor, Cr McLindon  
 Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni  
 Cr Brooks  
 Cr Colwell  
 Cr Cox  
 Cr Gunn  
 Cr Kozmevski  
 Cr Lappin  
 Cr Lenberg  
 Cr Stow  
 Cr Taylor

**Staff in attendance**

Chief Executive Officer  
 Director Planning & Development  
 Director Community Wellbeing  
 Director Customer & Corporate Services  
 Director Infrastructure & Environment  
 Executive Manager Public Affairs  
 Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Others present**

Monitors

**Conflict of Interest**

Nil

**Date of Meeting** 26 November 2024

**Type of Meeting** Council Induction

**Matters considered**

1. Planning Overview – Planning Scheme Amendments, Planning Applications and Planning Delegations
2. Waste to Energy Facility
3. Regional Sports Precinct
4. Parks and Tree Maintenance
5. Resource Recovery and Waste Services
6. Committees

# Informal Meetings of Council



**Councillors Present**

Mayor, Cr McLindon  
 Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni  
 Cr Brooks  
 Cr Colwell  
 Cr Cox  
 Cr Gunn  
 Cr Kozmevski  
 Cr Lappin  
 Cr Lenberg  
 Cr Stow  
 Cr Taylor

**Staff in attendance**

Chief Executive Officer  
 Director Planning & Development  
 Director Community Wellbeing  
 Director Customer & Corporate Services  
 Director Infrastructure & Environment  
 Executive Manager Public Affairs  
 Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Others present**

Monitors

**Conflict of Interest**

Nil

**Date of Meeting**

30 November 2024

**Type of Meeting**

Council Workshop Draft Budget

**Matters considered**

1. CEO Update
2. Local Government Enquiry Funding and Services
3. Finance Workshop
4. Legislative Obligations
5. Key Financial Documents
6. Audit & Risk Committee
7. Accounting Concepts and Terminology
8. Council Rates
9. Pricing Policy
10. Growth Council Challenges

# Informal Meetings of Council



<p>11. Capital Works Investment                  12. Council Reserves                  13. Asset Plan 2026-35</p>	
<p><b>Councillors Present</b>                  Mayor, Cr McLindon                  Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni                  Cr Brooks                  Cr Colwell                  Cr Cox                  Cr Gunn                  Cr Kozmevski                  Cr Lappin                  Cr Lenberg                  Cr Stow                  Cr Taylor</p>	
<p><b>Staff in attendance</b>                  Chief Executive Officer                  Director Planning &amp; Development                  Director Community Wellbeing                  Director Customer &amp; Corporate Services                  Director Infrastructure &amp; Environment                  Executive Manager Public Affairs                  Executive Manager Office of Council &amp; CEO</p>	
<p><b>Others present</b>                  Monitors</p>	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	1 December 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<p><b>Matters considered</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Vision</li> <li>2. Council Plan 2025-29</li> <li>3. Council Action Plan 2025-26</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Councillors Present</b>                  Mayor, Cr McLindon                  Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni                  Cr Brooks                  Cr Colwell</p>	



# Informal Meetings of Council



Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Kozmevski Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b> Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Customer & Corporate Services Director Infrastructure & Environment Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
<b>Others present</b> Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	5 December 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meeting prep time</li> <li>2. Governance Rules</li> <li>3. Governance Local Law</li> <li>4. Motions and Amendments</li> <li>5. Using Docs on Tap</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b> Mayor, Cr McLindon Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Kozmevski Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow	

# Informal Meetings of Council



Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
Chief Executive Officer	
Director Planning & Development	
Director Community Wellbeing	
Director Customer & Corporate Services	
Director Infrastructure & Environment	
Executive Manager Public Affairs	
Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
<b>Others present</b>	
Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	10 December 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Briefing
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning Scheme Amendment C269: Rezoning of 149 McKimmies Road, Bundoora: Planning Panel Outcomes and Adoption.</li> <li>2. Planning Scheme Amendments C286 and C287 – Heritage Overlay at 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda – Request for Authorisation and Interim Heritage Protection.</li> <li>3. Victorian Government’s Housing Statement – Update on Plan for Victoria, Activity Centre Program and other Planning Reforms.</li> <li>4. Waste to Energy Facility – 510 Summerhill Road, Wollert.</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
Mayor, Cr McLindon	
Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni	
Cr Brooks	
Cr Colwell	
Cr Cox	
Cr Gunn	
Cr Kozmevski	
Cr Lappin	
Cr Lenberg	
Cr Stow	
Cr Taylor	

# Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
Chief Executive Officer	
Director Planning & Development	
Director Community Wellbeing	
Director Customer & Corporate Services	
Director Infrastructure & Environment	
Executive Manager Public Affairs	
Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
Manager Strategic Futures	
Manager Building & Planning	
Unit Manager Strategic Planning	
Priority Development Planner	
<b>Others present</b>	
Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	19 December 2024
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction

<b>Matters considered</b>
1. Councillor Readiness Training

<b>Councillors Present</b>
Mayor, Cr McLindon
Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni
Cr Brooks
Cr Colwell
Cr Cox
Cr Gunn
Cr Kozmevski
Cr Lenberg
Cr Stow
Cr Taylor

<b>Staff in attendance</b>
Chief Executive Officer
Director Planning & Development
Director Community Wellbeing
Director Customer & Corporate Services
Director Infrastructure & Environment

# Informal Meetings of Council



Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
<b>Others present</b> Representative from Hunt & Hunt Lawyers Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	21 January 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b> 1. IBAC Presentation	
<b>Councillors Present</b> Mayor, Cr McLindon Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Kozmevski Cr Lenberg Cr Stow	
<b>Staff in attendance</b> Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Customer & Corporate Services Director Infrastructure & Environment Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
<b>Others present</b> Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

## Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Date of Meeting</b>	28 January 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Briefing
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amendment C249 – Planning Scheme Review Implementation – Exhibition Outcomes and Recommendations</li> <li>2. Amendment C275 – Local Policies Update – Exhibition Outcomes and Recommendations</li> <li>3. Planning Amendment GC249 – Beveridge Intermodal Precinct, Stage 1A – Council Submission</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni	
Cr Brooks	
Cr Colwell	
Cr Cox	
Cr Gunn	
Cr Kozmevski	
Cr Lappin	
Cr Lenberg	
Cr Stow	
Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
Chief Executive Officer	
Director Planning & Development	
Director Community Wellbeing	
Director Customer & Corporate Services	
Director Infrastructure & Environment	
Executive Manager Public Affairs	
Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
Manager Strategic Futures	
Unit Manager Strategic Planning	
Coordinator Planning Policy & Implementation	
Strategic Planner	
<b>Others present</b>	
Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil



## Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Date of Meeting</b>	4 February 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Briefing
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CEO Updates</li> <li>Waste Task Force</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
Mayor, Cr McLindon	
Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni	
Cr Brooks	
Cr Colwell	
Cr Cox	
Cr Gunn	
Cr Kozmevski	
Cr Lappin	
Cr Lenberg	
Cr Stow	
Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
Chief Executive Officer	
Director Planning & Development	
Director Community Wellbeing	
Director Customer & Corporate Services	
Director Infrastructure & Environment	
Executive Manager Public Affairs	
Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
<b>Others present</b>	
Representative from Justitia	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	6 February 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Plan</li> </ol>	

# Informal Meetings of Council



**Councillors Present**

Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni  
 Cr Brooks  
 Cr Colwell  
 Cr Gunn  
 Cr Kozmevski  
 Cr Lappin  
 Cr Lenberg  
 Cr Stow  
 Cr Taylor

**Staff in attendance**

Chief Executive Officer  
 Director Planning & Development  
 Director Community Wellbeing  
 Director Customer & Corporate Services  
 Director Infrastructure & Environment  
 Executive Manager Public Affairs  
 Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Others present**

Monitors

**Conflict of Interest**

Nil

**Date of Meeting**

11 February 2025

**Type of Meeting**

Council Briefing

**Matters considered**

1. Rainbow Advisory Committee – TOR
2. 2025 Infrastructure Grant Opportunities
3. Quarterly Corporate Performance Report – Q2 ended 31/12/2024
4. Pricing Policy – Fees and Charges
5. Amendment to Rural Residential Precinct 4a Outline Development Plan – Council decision
6. Strategic Property and Land Plan - Council Induction Presentation
7. Affordable Housing Plan – Council Induction Presentation
8. Contract Variation 2018-58 Cloud Infrastructure Services

**Councillors Present**

Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni  
 Cr Brooks  
 Cr Colwell

# Informal Meetings of Council



Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Kozmevski Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b> Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Infrastructure & Environment Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO Chief Financial Officer Manager Strategic Futures Manager Strategic Property & Portfolio Development Unit Manager Corporate Planning Unit Manager Financial Strategy & Performance Coordinator Capital Programming & Reporting Coordinator Strategic Land Use Planning Affordable Housing Policy & Project Officer Senior Strategic Planner	
<b>Others present</b> Monitor	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	13 February 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b> 1. Community Plan	
<b>Councillors Present</b> Mayor, Cr McLindon Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Kozmevski Cr Lappin	

# Informal Meetings of Council



Cr Lenberg Cr Stow Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b> Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Customer & Corporate Services Director Infrastructure & Environment Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO Unit Manager Corporate Planning	
<b>Others present</b> Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	20 February 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Briefing & Induction
<b>Matters considered</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft Election Period Policy</li> <li>2. Update to Councillor Communications Policy and Councillor Social Media Policy</li> </ol>	
<b>Councillors Present</b> Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b> Chief Executive Officer Director Planning & Development Director Community Wellbeing Director Customer & Corporate Services Director Infrastructure & Environment	

## Informal Meetings of Council



Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO Manager Communications & Engagement	
<b>Others present</b> Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	25 February 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Briefing
<b>Matters considered</b> 1. Variation to Parks Maintenance Contract CT 2023 - 118	
<b>Councillors Present</b> Mayor, Cr McLindon Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni Cr Brooks Cr Colwell Cr Cox Cr Gunn Cr Kozmevski Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b> Chief Executive Officer Director Infrastructure & Environment Executive Manager Public Affairs Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO Manager Maintenance & Operations Head of Operations Coordinator Parks Management	
<b>Others present</b> Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil



## Informal Meetings of Council



<b>Date of Meeting</b>	27 February 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Induction
<b>Matters considered</b>	
1. Draft Community Plan	
<b>Councillors Present</b>	
Mayor, Cr McLindon	
Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni	
Cr Brooks	
Cr Colwell	
Cr Cox	
Cr Gunn	
Cr Kozmevski	
Cr Lappin	
Cr Lenberg	
Cr Stow	
Cr Taylor	
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	
Chief Executive Officer	
Director Planning & Development	
Director Community Wellbeing	
Director Customer & Corporate Services	
Director Infrastructure & Environment	
Executive Manager Public Affairs	
Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO	
<b>Others present</b>	
Monitors	
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	Nil

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	4 March 2025
<b>Type of Meeting</b>	Council Briefing
<b>Matters considered</b>	
1. Meeting Procedures	
2. CEMAC	
3. Internal Resolution Procedure	
4. Community Grants Presentation	
5. Q1 & Q2 Community Grants Update	
6. Sarissa Street, Lalor – proposed partial road discontinuance and sale	

# Informal Meetings of Council



- 7. Tender Evaluation 2024-11: Regional Sport Precinct Main Works – Stage 2
- 8. Waste Taskforce – Preventing Illegal Dumping

**Councillors Present**

- Mayor, Cr McLindon
- Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni
- Cr Brooks
- Cr Colwell
- Cr Cox
- Cr Kozmevski
- Cr Lappin
- Cr Lenberg
- Cr Stow
- Cr Taylor

**Staff in attendance**

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director Planning & Development
- Director Community Wellbeing
- Director Customer & Corporate Services
- Director Infrastructure & Environment
- Executive Manager Public Affairs
- Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
- Manager Assets & Facilities
- Manager Strategic Property & Portfolio Development
- Project Manager Community Infrastructure
- Grants Coordinator
- Coordinator Open Space Projects

**Others present**

- Representative from DCWC (External)
- Monitors

**Conflict of Interest** Nil

**Date of Meeting** 6 March 2025  
**Type of Meeting** Council Induction

**Matters considered**  
 1. Community Plan

# Informal Meetings of Council



**Councillors Present**

Mayor, Cr McLindon  
 Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni  
 Cr Brooks  
 Cr Colwell  
 Cr Cox  
 Cr Kozmevski  
 Cr Lappin  
 Cr Lenberg  
 Cr Stow  
 Cr Taylor

**Staff in attendance**

Chief Executive Officer  
 Director Planning & Development  
 Director Community Wellbeing  
 Director Customer & Corporate Services  
 Director Infrastructure & Environment  
 Executive Manager Public Affairs  
 Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO  
 Manager Community Strengthening  
 Manager Sustainable Environment  
 Unit Manager Corporate Planning  
 Unit Manager Research and Analytics  
 Senior Research Officer  
 Corporate Planner

**Others present**

Monitors

**Conflict of Interest**

Nil

**Date of Meeting**

11 March 2025

**Type of Meeting**

Council Briefing

**Matters considered**

1. Yarra Plenty Regional Library Briefing
2. Update of the Public Toilet Amenity Plan
3. Open Space Master Planning Councillor Briefing
4. Flood Mapping Project with Melbourne Water
5. Planning 101

# Informal Meetings of Council



**Councillors Present**

- Deputy Mayor, Cr Zinni
- Cr Brooks
- Cr Colwell
- Cr Cox
- Cr Gunn
- Cr Kozmevski
- Cr Lappin
- Cr Lenberg
- Cr Stow
- Cr Taylor

**Staff in attendance**

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director Planning & Development
- Director Community Wellbeing
- Director Customer & Corporate Services
- Director Infrastructure & Environment
- Executive Manager Public Affairs
- Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
- Manager Active Places & Communities
- Manager Capital Delivery
- Acting Unity Manager Sustainable Project Planning
- Manager Urban Design & Transport
- Unit Manager Landscape & Open Space Planning
- Coordinator Open Space Planning
- Manager Sustainable Environment
- Integrated Water Management Specialist
- Manager Strategic Futures
- Manager Building & Planning
- Unit Manager Strategic Planning

**Others present**

- Monitor
- Representative from Maddocks

**Conflict of Interest**

Cr Stow declared a conflict of interest in relation to the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Briefing and left the meeting during the discussion.



# Summary Minutes

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday 25 February 2025 at 2:00 pm

Council Chamber at Civic Centre,  
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## Attendees

### Present

#### Members

#### Independent

Geoff Harry, Chairperson  
Bruce Potgieter  
Dr Marco Bini  
Lisa Tripodi

#### Councillors

Cr Aidan McLindon, Mayor  
Cr Martin Taylor

#### Council Officers:

Craig Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer (*left 4:01pm and returned 4:03pm*)  
Sarah Renner, Director Customer & Corporate Services  
Jacinta Stevens, Executive Manager Office of Council CEO  
Bobbie Bright, Unit Manager Compliance & Governance

#### Monitors

Peita Duncan (*arrived 2:03pm; left 3:41pm and returned 3:44pm*)  
Jude Munro (*joined virtually 2:13pm and left 3:28pm*)

#### Invited Guests:

Natasha Volpe, Risk Advisor  
Debbie Wood, Director Infrastructure & Environment  
Asaad Qureshi, Chief Information Officer  
Chaminda Samararatne, Enterprise Security Architect  
Ryan Allot, Manager Compliance & Environmental Health  
Emma Appleton, Director Planning & Development  
Rahul Shah, Unit Manager Financial Strategy & Performance  
Phoebe Maprock, Unit Manager Financial Compliance and Control  
Alessandra San Vicente, Unit Manager Corporate Planning  
Sarah Rowe, Chief Customer Officer

#### External Attendees:

Graham Noriskin, Partner – Aster Advisory (*left 4:23pm*)  
Jordan McFadden, Senior Manager – Aster Advisory  
Nick Walter, Partner – HLB Mann Judd (*attended 4:39pm and left 4:47 pm*)  
Ping Teoh, Manager – HLB Mann Judd (*attended 4:39pm and left 4:47 pm*)

#### Minutes:

Ilker Destan, Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Apologies

Cr Aidan McLindon, Mayor  
Aaron Gerrard, Chief Financial Officer

## Summary Minutes - Audit &amp; Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## Register of Interests

<b>City of Whittlesea Audit and Risk Committee Personal Interests Register</b>		
<b>Geoff Harry</b>	Department of Government Services	ARC Chair
	Agriculture Services Victoria ARC	Chair
	Bayside City Council ARC	Chair
	Brimbank City Council ARC	Chair
	Chisholm Institute of TAFE	ARC Chair & Board Member
	City of Greater Dandenong ARC	Chair
	City of Kingston ARC	Independent Member
	City of Knox ARC	Chair
	City of Melbourne ARC	Chair
	City of Whittlesea ARC	Chair
	GD & JD Harry Superannuation Fund	Member
	JDH Investments Australia Pty Ltd	Director
	One Roslyn Street Brighton	Chairman & Manager
	PricewaterhouseCoopers (retired 31 December 2006)	Retired Partner
<b>Dr Marco Bini</b>	Darebin City Council ARC	Independent Member
	Governance Institute of Australia	Victorian State Council Member
	Royal Australian College of GPs	Senior Legal Business, Partner, Data Privacy & Compliance
<b>Bruce Potgieter</b>	City of Hume ARC	Independent Member
	Maroondah City Council ARC	Independent Member
	Melton City Council ARC	Independent Member
	Bass Coast Shire Council ARC	Independent Member
	Bayside City Council ARC	Independent Member
	RSM Australia (resigned Sept 2012)	Senior Manager
	Yarriambiack Shire Council ARC	Chair
	Regional Australia Institute	Chair and Non-Executive Director

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## Table of Contents

Attendees.....	2
Register of Interests .....	3
1 In-Camera Discussion.....	6
2 Previous Meeting.....	6
2.1 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting .....	6
2.2 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings .....	7
3 Audit & Risk Committee Work Plan .....	7
3.1 Progress of Annual Work Plan.....	7
4 CEO’s Update .....	8
5 Risk Management .....	8
5.1 Risk Management Report – Quarter Ending 31 December 2024.....	8
5.2 Presentation on Directorate Risk Profile.....	9
5.3 Review Awareness of Fraud and Corruption Risk .....	9
5.4 IT and Cyber Security Risk .....	9
6 Internal Audit.....	10
6.1 Internal Audit Plan Delivery Status Report .....	10
6.2 Internal Audit Review Scopes for Endorsement .....	10
6.3 Internal Audit Reports on Completed Reviews .....	10
6.4 Internal Audit Open Actions Report.....	11
7 Financial and Performance Reporting .....	11
7.1 Corporate Performance Report .....	11
7.2 Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – Quarter 2 2024-2025 Update .....	12
8 Systems of Internal Control .....	12
8.1 Policy and Procedure Governance .....	12
8.2 CX/DX Program.....	12

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

9 Internal Assurance .....13

9.1 Internal Assurance Report .....13

10 External Audit .....13

10.1 External Audit Report.....13

11 Compliance .....13

11.1 Review Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register .....13

11.2 Review Key Personnel Expenses .....14

12 Compliance .....14

12.1 Integrity Body Reports .....14

12.2 Report to Council on Audit and Risk Committee Activities .....15

12.3 Committee Meeting Dates .....15

13 Other Matters .....16

14 Meeting Reflection .....16

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## 1 In-Camera Discussion

The meeting commenced at 1:54 pm, attended by the independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee, the CEO, the Executive Manager of the Office of Council & CEO, and the Monitors, Peita Duncan, and Jude Munro (attended virtually at 2.13 pm).

An in-camera session with the Audit and Risk Committee members and Monitors commenced at 2:38pm.

### Welcome

All other officers and external attendees joined the meeting at 2:50 pm.

The Chair opened the formal section of the meeting, welcoming all attendees.

The Chair welcomed Monitors, Jude Munro and Peita Duncan.

The Chair welcomed and congratulated Lisa Tripodi on her appointment to the Committee.

The Chair acknowledged that Committee members had submitted questions on notice regarding the agenda, and a summary of responses was provided prior to the meeting.

### Apologies

Apologies were noted from Mayor McLindon and Aaron Gerrard, Chief Financial Officer.

### Conflict of Interest

The Chair confirmed the conclusion of his term as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee at Department of Premier & Cabinet on 31 December 2024.

While not a conflict of interest, Monitor Peita Duncan disclosed a perceived conflict due to her position as Chair of the Board for Greyhound Race Victoria where Lisa Tripodi, a member of this Committee, is also a Member of the Board.

## 2 Previous Meeting

### 2.1 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee with the meeting minutes from the 3 December 2024 Committee meeting for review and confirmation.

#### Committee Resolution

**The 3 December 2024 Committee meeting minutes be confirmed.**

**Moved** : Marco Bini

**Seconded:** Bruce Potgieter

**CARRIED**



Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## 2.2 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Audit and Risk Committee on the status of actions arising from previous meetings, detailing those that have been completed and those currently in progress.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the status of actions arising from previous Audit and Risk Committee meetings at Attachment 1 to this report.

**CARRIED**

## 3 Audit & Risk Committee Work Plan

### 3.1 Progress of Annual Work Plan

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive update on the status and progress of the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and to provide confirmation that all planned activities to date have been reported and reviewed in alignment with the AWP.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

1. The status of the Annual Work Plan 2025.
2. There are no proposed changes to the Annual Work Plan at this meeting.
3. The draft Annual Work Plan 2026 to be tabled at the next meeting.

**CARRIED**

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

#### 4 CEO's Update

**Responsible Officer:** Chief Executive Officer

This report has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 on the grounds that it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released. The report contains information regarding potential regulatory proceedings.

##### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a verbal CEO's update and quarterly CEO questionnaire.

##### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the CEO questionnaire.

**CARRIED**

#### 5 Risk Management

##### 5.1 Risk Management Report – Quarter Ending 31 December 2024

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Risk Advisor

##### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of risk management activities during the quarter ending 31 December 2024.

##### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

1. The status of the risk treatment plans as at 31 December 2024.
2. The public liability insurance claims for the period ending 31 December 2024.
3. The Business Continuity activities undertaken and those scheduled for 2025.

**CARRIED**

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## 5.2 Presentation on Directorate Risk Profile

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to verbally present the service risks of the Infrastructure and Environment Directorate.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the verbal presentation provided in relation to the Infrastructure and Environment Directorate Risk Profile.

**CARRIED**

## 5.3 Review Awareness of Fraud and Corruption Risk

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Council's commitment to enhancing awareness of fraud and corruption risks.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

1. The update on the review of awareness of Fraud and Corruption Risks as detailed in the Fraud and Corruption Plan.
2. That further efforts to strengthen fraud and corruption control practices are underway and will be reported as required under the Committee's Annual Work Plan in December 2025.

**CARRIED**

## 5.4 IT and Cyber Security Risk

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer and Corporate Services

**Report Author:** Chief Information Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on IT and Cyber Security Risk.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted IT and Cyber Security Risk report.

**CARRIED**

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## 6 Internal Audit

### 6.1 Internal Audit Plan Delivery Status Report

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of internal audit activities for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 programs.

#### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

- 1- Internal Audit Plan Delivery Status Report.
- 2- Internal Audit status Report at Attachment 1.

**CARRIED**

### 6.2 Internal Audit Review Scopes for Endorsement

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the scope of the internal audit on Cybersecurity for the Audit and Risk Committee's review and acknowledgement.

#### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

- 1- Internal Audit Review Scopes for Endorsement Report.
- 2- Internal audit scope for Cybersecurity at Attachment 1.

**CARRIED**

### 6.3 Internal Audit Reports on Completed Reviews

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer and Corporate Services  
Director Planning and Development

Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the completed audits of wat djerring Animal Facility and Core Financial Controls for review and acknowledgement.

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the following completed reviews:

- 1- Internal audit report at Attachment 1-2:
  - a. wat djerring Animal Facility; and
  - b. Core Financial Controls.

CARRIED

### 6.4 Internal Audit Open Actions Report

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of audit actions.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Internal Audit Open Actions Report.

CARRIED

## 7 Financial and Performance Reporting

### 7.1 Corporate Performance Report

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer and Corporate Services

**Report Author:** Unit Manager Financial Strategy & Performance

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Performance Report for the quarter ending 31 December 2024.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Corporate Performance Report for the period ending 31 December 2024 at Attachment 1.

CARRIED



Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## 7.2 Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – Quarter 2 2024-2025 Update

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer and Corporate Services  
**Report Author:** Unit Manager Corporate Planning

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Audit and Risk Committee about key performance areas of Council as measured by the LGPRF system, for Quarter 2 of 2024-25.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework – Quarter 2 2024-2025 Update.

**CARRIED**

## 8 Systems of Internal Control

### 8.1 Policy and Procedure Governance

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO  
**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide and update on Council's key policies and procedures.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

1. The progress of the review of key control documents.
2. Council's compliance with the Overarching Governance Principles.

**CARRIED**

### 8.2 CX/DX Program

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer and Corporate Services  
**Report Author:** Acting Chief Customer Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the final highlights of the CX/DX Program and future commitments.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the progress of the CX/DX Program and its transition to business as usual.

**CARRIED**

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

## 9 Internal Assurance

### 9.1 Internal Assurance Report

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the 2024-25 Assurance Audit Plan.

#### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the update on the Assurance Audit Program outlined in the body of this report.

CARRIED

## 10 External Audit

### 10.1 External Audit Report

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Customer & Corporate Services

**Report Author:** Unit Manager Financial Compliance & Control

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present draft external Audit Strategy for the financial year ending 30 June 2025.

#### Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the draft Audit Strategy for the year ended 30 June 2025.

CARRIED

## 11 Compliance

### 11.1 Review Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee with an update on the management of gifts, benefits and hospitality accepted or declined by Councillors and Council staff between the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

### Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee noted:

1. The Staff Gift Register attached at Appendix 1 to this report relating to gifts, benefits or hospitality received or declined by staff during the period 1 July to 31 December 2024.
2. The Councillor Gift Register attached at Appendix 2 to this report relating to gifts, benefits or hospitality received or declined by staff during the period 1 July to 31 December 2024.
3. A copy of the Gift Registers will be made available on Council's website.

CARRIED

## 11.2 Review Key Personnel Expenses

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee with a detailed account of expenses and reimbursements for key personnel, including the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the CEO's Executive Assistant (EA), the Administrators and Councillors for the period 1 October to 31 December 2024.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee noted:

1. The key personnel expenses incurred for the period 1 October to 31 December 2024 as detailed in Table 1 of this report.
2. Reimbursements and expenses incurred during the reporting period as detailed within the Administrator Expenses, Table 2, of this report are being presented in accordance with Section 40(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
3. Reimbursements and expenses incurred during the reporting period as detailed within the Councillor Expenses, Table 3, of this report are being presented in accordance with Section 40(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

CARRIED

## 12 Compliance

### 12.1 Integrity Body Reports

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee with an overview of integrity body publications from October 2024 to December 2024, highlighting key findings relevant to local government and sector-specified issues.

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

### Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee noted:

1. The integrity body report for the period October 2024 to December 2024 at Attachment 1.
2. Relevant staff have been provided sections of the summary report as they relate to their respective areas for information and consideration.

**CARRIED**

## 12.2 Report to Council on Audit and Risk Committee Activities

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee's Bi-Annual Report for the period from September 2024 to February 2025 for approval.

### Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee:

1. Reviewed and provided feedback on the Draft Audit and Risk Committee's Bi-Annual Report for the period of September 2024 to February 2025.
2. Approved the Audit and Risk Committee's Bi-Annual Report for the period of September 2024 to February 2025, subject to the incorporation of feedback received during the meeting.
3. Noted that the Audit and Risk Committee Chair will present the final Bi-Annual Report at the next available Council briefing.

**CARRIED**

## 12.3 Committee Meeting Dates

**Director/Executive Manager:** Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO

**Report Author:** Compliance and Governance Officer

### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the proposed 2025 meeting dates for the Audit and Risk Committee for discussion and final approval.

### Committee Resolution

**THAT the Audit & Risk Committee resolved to schedule 2025 meeting dates out of session.**

**CARRIED**

Summary Minutes - Audit & Risk Committee 25 February 2025

### **13 Other Matters**

The Executive Manager of the Office of Council and CEO noted the following:

- Annual personal interest returns will be sent out on 3 March and must be completed by the end of March.
- The annual personal interest returns of independent members of the Committee will not be published on the Council's website.

With the return of Councillors, the Chair requested that the Committee Charter be reviewed out of session to gather feedback and make any necessary adjustments, and when appropriate present the Charter to the Council for adoption.

### **14 Meeting Reflection**

The Committee highlighted the following:

- The meeting agenda was concise and clear.
- The Chair effectively chaired the meeting.
- Management is encouraged to provide more direct and concise responses to questions submitted through the Questions on Notice process.

The Chair thanked the Monitors and all Council Officers who attended the meeting.

The Chair closed the meeting at 5:02pm.

**6 Notices of Motion**

No Notices of Motion

**7 Urgent Business**

**8 Reports from Councillors and CEO Update**

**9 Confidential Business**

Under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* a meeting considering confidential information may be closed to the public. Pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**Recommendation**

**THAT the meeting be closed to the public for the purpose of considering details relating to the following confidential matter in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* as detailed.**

**9.1 Variation to Parks Maintenance Contract CT 2023 - 118**

**10 Closure**