

JUNE 2026

Local SCOOP

Your City of Whittlesea news



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major projects**

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for South Morang**

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Celebrating
our local heroes

Connect with us

- Civic Centre, South Morang**
25 Ferres Boulevard
Monday to Friday, 8.30am–5pm
- Whittlesea Service Hub**
63 Church Street
Monday to Friday, 9.30am–5pm
- 9217 2170
(including after hours emergencies)
National Relay Service
133 677 (ask for 9217 2170)
- Locked Bag 1,
Bundoora MDC VIC 3083
- whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Upcoming Council Meetings

Tuesday 16 June, 6pm

Tuesday 21 July, 6pm

Tuesday 18 August, 6pm

Council meetings are held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang.

Meetings can be viewed live on the City of Whittlesea YouTube channel.

For more information visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/councilmeetings

The information provided in this newsletter was accurate at the time of print. Visit Council's website for the latest information.

Printed on PEFC™ certified paper using vegetable inks.

Free telephone interpreter service
131 450

Your Councillors



Mayor Cr Lawrie Cox
Ganbu Gulinj Ward
0476 205 715
lawrie.cox@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Deputy Mayor Cr Blair Colwell
Mill Park Ward
9438 8087
blair.colwell@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr Daniela Zinni
Bundoora Ward
9438 8084
daniela.zinni@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr David Lenberg
Epping Ward
9438 8088
david.lenberg@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr Aidan McLindon
Kirrip Ward
03 9438 8081
aidan.mclindon@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr Michael Labrador
Lalor Ward
0407 286 873
michael.labrador@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr Jarrod Lappin
Mernda Ward
9438 8085
jarrod.lappin@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr Christine Stow
North Ward
9438 8090
christine.stow@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr Deb Gunn
Painted Hills Ward
9438 8082
deb.gunn@whittlesea.vic.gov.au



Cr Martin Taylor
South Morang Ward
0448 904 630
martin.taylor@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

Thomastown Ward
Vacant

Visit our website to find out which ward you live in and who is your local Councillor.
whittlesea.vic.gov.au/Councillors

Inside this edition



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New Youth Hub for South Morang

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Arabic خدمة الترجمة الهاتفية المجانية
Chinese Simplified 免费电话传译服务
Chinese Traditional 免費電話傳譯服務
Greek Δωρεάν τηλεφωνική υπηρεσία διερμηνέων
Italian Servizio di interpretariato telefonico gratuito

Macedonian Бесплатна телефонска услуга за преведување
Persian/Farsi خدمات مترجم شفاهی تلفنی رایگان
Punjabi ਮੁਫਤ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੇਵਾ
Turkish Ücretsiz telefonla tercümanlık servisi
Vietnamese Dịch vụ thông dịch qua điện thoại miễn phí

CONNECTED COMMUNITY



ABOVE Dr Swati Sharma received her Citizen of the Year award at the Community Festival in March.



"It feels overwhelming and incredible. Even though the award has my name on it, it belongs to everybody in the community. It's great to be living in the City of Whittlesea."

- Dr Swati Sharma

Celebrating our local heroes

Congratulations to our City of Whittlesea 2025 Community Award recipients. These awards recognise the outstanding contributions of people in our community who go above and beyond.



Senior Citizen of the Year
Barrie Stewart

Barrie developed and runs the Big Man's

Luncheon. The program provides meals and encourages mateship between participants, helping those in need. Barrie also volunteers at the Whittlesea Community Garden and Whittlesea Community House, helping with gardening, maintenance and a range of other activities.



Sustainable Environment Citizen of the Year
Liz Buckley

Liz volunteers at Wollert

Community Farm and plays an active role in conserving the Curly Sedge Creek, contributing to ecological surveys and hands-on environmental protection. Liz is also a founder member and pioneer of the Whittlesea Climate Action Network and regularly volunteers at Mernda Neighbourhood House.



Citizen of the Year
Dr Swati Sharma

Through her Miles for Happy Smiles mobile dental program, Dr. Sharma has

reached children and families who might otherwise miss out on preventive oral healthcare. Dr. Sharma is also passionate about protecting the environment and fostering connections and inclusion.

Dr. Sharma served as the founder and secretary of the Sanskriti Community Group for Women and currently serves as Vice President of the Whittlesea Interfaith Network.



Access and Inclusion Citizen of the Year
Ahmed Abumeis

As a Youth Councillor

and member of the Cultural Connections Group and Amplify programs, Ahmed advocates for young people from diverse and multicultural backgrounds, ensuring their voices are heard and that they feel supported, valued, and connected within their community. As a soccer coach Ahmed trains and mentors players of all abilities and also helps with community events that promote inclusivity and strengthen community connections.



Young Citizen of the Year
Mia Llewellyn

Eighteen-year-old Mia

has been a volunteer firefighter at the South Morang CFA since she was 16 years old. In that time, Mia has attended more than 150 call outs and recently spent three days at the Longwood fire with the Yarrambat Fire Brigade. Mia also recently joined the Mernda CFA and completed training to enable her to deliver Truck Time sessions in local kindergartens.



Message from the Mayor

Cr Lawrie Cox

Councillors out and about

Welcome to the June edition of Local Scoop.

At our Community Festival earlier this year, I had the privilege of announcing the recipients of our Community Awards. We received a high number of nominations, and the Community Awards Committee were faced with the difficult decision of choosing our recipients. As you will see on page 3, our five award winners truly are helping make our community better for all.

As we approach the end of the financial year, we turn our attention to our priorities for the coming year. Our 2026-27 Budget and 2026-27 Community Action Plan are scheduled to be presented at the June Council Meeting. The Budget outlines what we will be investing in over the coming year to support our community while the Community Action Plan identifies key priorities and projects we will focus on. You can view how your feedback has helped us develop these documents at

engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

We are also excited to be rolling out the food and garden waste bin for all households. Almost two thirds of households already had a food and garden waste bin, with the remainder due to receive their new bin this month. This will mean that even more waste will be kept out of landfill, with the food and garden waste collected being turned into valuable compost. To learn about what goes into your new bin visit

whittlesea.vic.gov.au/food-garden

Later this month, at a gala awards ceremony at the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre, we will be holding our 2026 Business Awards. Congratulations to all our finalists, and we look forward to celebrating the many wonderful businesses we have here in the City of Whittlesea.

In May, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) conducted a by-election to fill the Thomastown ward vacancy. We expect that the VEC will announce the results of the by-election in the coming weeks. We look forward to welcoming our new Councillor at that time.

To stay up to date on all the latest news, events and ways that you can have your say, sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at

whittlesea.vic.gov.au/news

Mayor, Cr Lawrie Cox



ABOVE Mayor Cr Cox at the Whittlesea Bakehouse – winner of the best hot cross bun; Mayor Cr Cox at Coffee with Council.



ABOVE Cr McLindon, Mayor Cr Cox, Deputy Mayor Cr Colwell, Cr Stow, Cr Zinni, Cr Lenberg and Cr Taylor at wat djerring Animal Facility.



ABOVE Cr Taylor with the Filipino Seniors Club; Mayor Cr Cox, Cr Zinni, Cr Lappin, Deputy Mayor Cr Colwell and Cr Gunn at the opening of the Aboriginal Gathering Place.



ABOVE Mayor Cr Cox is a member of the Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel.

ADVOCACY



ABOVE Supporting young people through the delivery of a Youth Hub is a key priority for Council.

Working Together for a stronger City of Whittlesea

The City of Whittlesea is advocating for the services and infrastructure we need now and into the future.

Council relies on other levels of government to help provide the infrastructure and services our community needs.

From better roads and public transport to more affordable housing and improved community facilities, Council is advocating to the State and Federal Governments to seek investment in these priority projects and deliver real outcomes for residents.

Key advocacy priorities include supporting young people through the delivery of a Youth Hub, increasing access to affordable housing, assisting those experiencing homelessness, and closing the Maternal and Child Health funding gap giving local families the best possible start.

Council is also advocating for improved bus services, the delivery of major transport projects like Wollert Rail and the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road/E6,

and upgrading key roads to ease congestion and enhance safety.

We are calling on government to protect our natural environment by securing the Grassy Eucalypt Woodlands, while also keeping neighbourhoods clean through stronger action on illegal dumping.

In addition, we are pushing for better mobile and internet connectivity, smarter planning for growing communities, and greater investment in community safety.

Our advocacy priorities are about making everyday life better for you, our community.

Strong advocacy needs community support

To learn more about council's advocacy priorities, partnerships and how we engage with all levels of government to address community needs,

Our advocacy priorities are about making everyday life better for our community.



Housing

Affordable housing and homelessness

Community Services and Infrastructure

Community safety and amenity

Youth Hub

Maternal Child Health funding

Planning reforms

Mobile and broadband coverage



Public Transport

Wollert Rail

Better bus services



Roads

Outer Metropolitan Ring Road/E6

Key road upgrades



Environmental Sustainability

Securing the Grassy Eucalypt Woodlands

Waste and illegally dumped rubbish



or to get a toolkit to help you advocate for important issues, visit our website. Together, we can create a stronger, more connected future for our community.



For more information, visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/Advocacy



Everton Drive and Sissinghurst Parade roundabout

The upgraded intersection at Everton Drive and Sissinghurst Parade in Mernda was opened to vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians last month. The former T-intersection was converted into a four-leg roundabout to improve safety and traffic flow through the area, including to the regional sports precinct once opened. Works included new lighting, two raised pedestrian crossings on Everton Drive, a shared path linking Sissinghurst Parade to Stourhead Avenue and drainage upgrades.

The project was funded by the Victorian Government through the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution program.



West Wollert Community Centre

Construction of the new community centre is on track to open in early 2027. The new multi-purpose centre will include a kindergarten, Maternal and Child Health services, a community hall and a mini-library. All structural works are complete, internal finishes are well advanced, and works are underway on the outdoor play area and car park. Over the coming weeks, major building works will be finalised, car park construction will near completion and the commissioning and testing of building services will begin.

The \$16.2 million project is jointly funded by City of Whittlesea and the Victorian Government.



Huskisson Recreation Reserve sporting facilities upgrade

The \$9.5 million upgrade of sporting facilities at Huskisson Recreation Reserve in Lalor continues to progress well. In-ground services are complete, along with retaining walls, electrical and stormwater works across the site. Steel framing works for the multi-purpose facility are underway. Tennis court works are progressing well, with in-ground services, earthworks and footings for light tower and fence post nearing completion. The upgraded car park is on track for completion mid-year, with overall project completion anticipated in late 2026.

The project is funded and delivered by Council with the Victorian Government providing \$220,000 and the West Lalor Tennis Club \$50,000.



Nappy change facilities

Our Kinder Change Facilities Project is upgrading nappy change facilities in kindergartens to better support the growing number of three-year-old children attending kinder. The project delivers compliant nappy change tables with slide-out steps, improved toilet privacy and safer, more accessible facilities that meet occupational health and safety requirements. Since starting in 2023, upgrades have been completed at 14 kindergarten sites, with four delivered this financial year. Planning is now underway for the next round of upgrades.

The project is fully funded by Council.



Stables Kindergarten

Construction of the new Stables Kindergarten in Mill Park continues to progress well with foundation works, framing and roofing all finished. The modern, purpose-built kindergarten – which is on track to open in January 2027 – will provide up to 132 places. When complete, it will feature a two-room kindergarten, landscaped outdoor play area, staff room and facilities and on-site car park.

The \$5.575 million project is funded and delivered by Council, with support from a \$4 million contribution from the Victorian Government's Building Blocks Program.



Ferres Boulevard and Findon Road shared path

The shared path along the south side of Findon Road, between Civic Drive and Ferres Boulevard, has now been completed, closing an important gap in the shared path network. Works along the west side of Ferres Boulevard are progressing well, with the section between Findon Road and the entry road into Council's Civic Precinct is expected to be finished shortly. The remaining section through to McDonalds Road will be completed this month.

The project is fully funded through the Victorian Government's Growth Areas Infrastructure Program.

A better Boulevard for Thomastown

A prominent commercial precinct in Thomastown is undergoing a major facelift to boost safety and accessibility.

Construction works to revitalise The Boulevard's shopping strip began in February and are expected to continue until early 2027.

The \$4.2 million project will deliver a range of upgrades designed to make it easier for customers and clients to visit the shops on foot, by bike or by car.

Improvements include wider roads, footpaths and trading areas, a new shared cycling and pedestrian path, an upgraded intersection with new pedestrian crossings, additional parking, landscaping, new seating, improved drainage and more.

The project continues Council's commitment to strengthening the local economy by supporting businesses through its Town Centre Revitalisation Program. The program's past projects include upgrades to the Tramoo Street shopping centre in Lalor, the Alexander Avenue shopping precinct in Thomastown and the Gorge Road shopping precinct in South Morang.

Thomastown resident Alyssa said she was looking forward to seeing the ageing shopping precinct transformed.

"I think it'll be a much nicer and safer place to shop once the works are finished," she said.



ABOVE Local resident Alyssa is looking forward to seeing the ageing shopping precinct transformed.

"At the moment it's not a very inviting place – you just want to do your shopping and go – but these changes will make it a much more welcoming place to visit."

– Alyssa, local resident

The project is supported by a \$2.8 million grant from the Australian Government's Thriving Suburbs Program Fund and a \$100,000 grant from the Transport Accident Commission.

New playground completes overhaul

Residents can now park, shop and play in one convenient location following the completion of a series of upgrades to a popular retail and recreation precinct in South Morang.

The playground at Reid Street Park has undergone a transformation with the installation of new play equipment, nature-based play elements, improved landscaping and footpaths.

The \$400,000 project, supported by a \$200,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Living Local – Suburban Grants Program, followed a comprehensive upgrade of the Reid Street car park to improve safety and accessibility.

The upgraded car park includes more than 80 parking spots, improved public lighting, updated drainage, new trees and landscaping, better footpaths and new signage and line marking. The car park redevelopment itself followed Council's \$1.2 million revitalisation of the adjoining Gorge Road shopping precinct.



ABOVE The playground upgrade at Reid Street Park was completed in April.

Supported by a \$425,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Growing Suburbs Fund, the project delivered an expanded outdoor dining area, seating, tables, bins, bike racks and more.

The Reid Street Park playground continues Council's commitment to providing quality facilities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy.

Seven more parks are scheduled to be renewed under the 2025-26 Parks Renewal Program, with upgrades to Virginia Park and Ashbrook Park in Bundoora and Freeman Park and Centenary Park in Mill Park complete.

Planning is underway on upgrades to Northumberland Drive Park in Epping and Stage Coach Park and Poppy Park in South Morang.



For more information on our major projects visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/majorprojects



ABOVE City of Whittlesea Youth Councillors at the location for a new Youth Hub in South Morang.

New Youth Hub for South Morang

Young people in our community are one step closer to having a dedicated space to connect, grow and feel supported, with Council endorsing a preferred location for a new Youth Hub in South Morang.

The Youth Hub will be a safe, welcoming and inclusive place where young people can spend time, access support services, and take part in programs that build confidence, wellbeing and pathways into education and employment.

This project has been shaped by young people from the very beginning. Through surveys, workshops and consultation, local young people shared what matters most to them.

City of Whittlesea Youth Mayor, Emma Fasciani said this process highlights the empowerment of young people in the municipality, giving them a genuine voice in decision-making in the development of this space.

“The Youth Hub will provide a safe and inclusive space for all young people within the City of Whittlesea. It is more than just a place to spend time; it will offer programs and access to support services.”

– Youth Mayor, Emma Fasciani

“It is a positive step towards ensuring the needs of a rapidly expanding youth population are not only met but exceeded.”

The South Morang site was selected for its easy access to public transport, strong community presence and opportunities for both indoor and outdoor activities. The hub will form part of a broader network of youth spaces and programs across the City of Whittlesea, helping more young people stay connected no matter where they live.

Council has committed up to \$6 million toward the project and will continue advocating to the Victorian Government for additional funding.

There will be more opportunities for young people and the wider community to have their say as designs progress – helping ensure the Youth Hub truly reflects the voices, ideas and future of our community.



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/youthhub



ABOVE City of Whittlesea Youth Mayor Emma Fasciani and Deputy Youth Mayor Gabrielle Charman.

MEET YOUR Youth Mayor and Youth Deputy Mayor

Earlier this year, Emma Fasciani and Gabrielle Charman were elected to lead the City of Whittlesea’s Youth Council for the next 12 months as Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor.

The Youth Council empowers young people to have a voice in local decision-making and actively shape initiatives that impact their community.

“I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve as Youth Mayor in 2026. I am committed to ensuring all voices within our community are heard and look forward to working alongside the other Youth Council members. I am excited to work towards creating positive and meaningful change.”

– Youth Mayor, Emma Fasciani



Have you applied for Kinder in 2027?

Kinder is FREE for all children

3 and 4 year old kindergarten programs help children prepare for school by building confidence.

Apply by 30 June to be considered in the first round of offers.

Every big dream starts small



To learn more or apply, scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/kinder

Inclusion in action Local clubs leading change

Inclusion can start with a simple question, and in local clubs across our community, it’s leading to real, positive change.

At Uni Hill Eagles Football Club, Vice President Assad Chahine noticed their merchandise didn’t cater for one of their players, Fatima, who wore a hijab.

By listening and working with Fatima, the club created a branded hijab so she could wear her team colours with pride.

It’s a small change, but it made a big difference – showing that inclusion often starts with action, not perfection.

“It was a simple question that made a big difference. With a bit of care and persistence, we helped Fatima feel she truly belonged on the team.”

– Assad, Uni Hill Eagles Football Club, Vice President

Council’s Fair Access Policy, supports safe, inclusive sporting environments.

Across the City of Whittlesea, clubs are taking action – Epping Tennis Club introduced an all-abilities program, while Laurimar Cricket Club led a Family Violence Round to raise awareness and encourage conversation.

Each initiative is different, but the message is the same – inclusion takes awareness, listening and action.



To find out more scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/fairaccess

BELOW Fatima and Assad from Uni Hill Eagles Football Club in their team gear, including a custom-designed hijab developed to ensure all players can wear the club colours.



Whittlesea Disability Network

Connect, share and belong

The Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN) is helping people with disability and their carers feel more connected, informed and supported in their local community.

Through regular catch-ups, WDN provides a welcoming space to share experiences, build friendships and learn from one another.

Recent sessions across Wollert, Whittlesea, Thomastown and South Morang talked about changes to the NDIS, offering a relaxed environment to hear updates, ask questions and connect with others navigating similar experiences.

Beyond information, WDN fosters a strong sense of belonging.

“Being part of the Whittlesea Disability Network means I am not alone on my disability journey. It feels good to know my voice is valued,” said community member, Mary.

WDN also creates opportunities for community feedback, helping shape local services and supports.

The next community-wide meeting will be held on Tuesday 30 June at the Civic Centre, South Morang.



To join WDN scan the QR code or visit engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/wdonline

Turn your food scraps into compost

Food and garden waste bins are coming

If you don't already have a food and garden waste bin, get ready, your brand-new bin is on its way.

Deliveries start in June, with kerbside collections to begin on 6 July 2026. Along with your bin, you'll receive a kitchen caddy and a roll of 150 compostable liners to make recycling your food scraps easier than ever.

This rollout to all households helps Council meet the Victorian Government's Recycling Victoria Policy, which requires all councils to provide a four-bin system by 2030.

About 55,000 households in the City of Whittlesea are already making a difference with their food and garden waste bin. And with another 35,000 homes to start using the service in July, even more food and garden waste will be kept out of landfill, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and turning scraps into high-quality compost for local parks, gardens, schools, and community spaces.

Already have a green lid bin? Keep using it – nothing changes.

For updates and more information, visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/food-garden

How it works

- ✔ Your food and garden waste bin (green lid) will be collected every two weeks, alternating with recycling (yellow lid).
- ✔ Your rubbish bins (red lid) will be collected weekly.
- ✔ Your glass recycling bin (purple lid) will be collected every four weeks.
- ✔ The cost for this service is included in the overall waste charge on your rates.

What goes in your food and garden waste bin?

- ✔ Food scraps: fruit, vegetables, meat, bones, dairy, leftovers
- ✔ Garden waste: grass clippings, leaves, small branches

Quick tips to get started

- ✔ Keep a small caddy in the kitchen for scraps
- ✔ Use the compostable liners for easy emptying
- ✔ Chop larger garden clippings to fit more in your bin

Your food and garden waste bin sorted



Fruit, vegetable and left over food scraps
Including bread, coffee grounds, loose tea leaves



Meat and bones




Dairy and egg shells



Small branches, prunings and grass clippings

WHICH BIN?




Make your bin day easy

The City of Whittlesea's official Which Bin? app makes bin day easy.

- ✔ Find your collection day and see which bin goes out each week
- ✔ Set reminders and get alerts for public holiday changes or service disruptions
- ✔ Access waste services
- ✔ Search the A-Z guide
- ✔ Keep up to date with recycling collection events.

Never miss bin day again.



Free to download. Scan the QR code to download the app from our website.

Celebrate World Environment Day

Friday 26 June, 6pm-9pm
PRACC, 35 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang
Cost: \$5 per person

Enjoy kids' activities, face painting, nature crafts, composting demos, plus live music and food. Then, relax in the cinema for a screening of WALL-E.

Book your spot pracc.com.au

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT



ABOVE Sarvesh in front of the River Red Gum at Mill Park Recreation Reserve; Inset: Sarvesh's winning photograph.

Life is cooler with River Red Gums

Congratulations to Sarvesh from South Morang whose sun-kissed photograph of a River Red Gum at the Mill Park Lakes Recreation Reserve was named the winning entry of the 2026 Favourite Tree Competition.

It's no surprise that several entries featured River Red Gums. These iconic trees are deeply connected to the character of the City of Whittlesea and are admired for their natural beauty, resilience and presence in our local landscape.

Sarvesh chose to capture this tree because, as he shared, it has "witnessed the wins and the losses at South Morang Cricket Club and still stands tall," making it a meaningful part of the local community.

The Favourite Tree Competition isn't just about the great photos, it's about celebrating the important role trees play in our lives. Trees contribute to our wellbeing by providing shade, cooling our streets and creating greener, more inviting spaces. They also provide essential habitat for wildlife, supporting our local ecosystem and are an integral part of the City of Whittlesea's identity.

This year's competition attracted many wonderful entries. Thank you to everyone who took part and shared their stories.

Explore all the photographs and read the personal stories behind each photo at engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/trees

National Tree Day planting events

Help plant 25,000 trees and wildflowers at bunjil nganga Parkland Quarry Hills and be part of creating a vibrant parkland, supporting native wildlife, and boosting our local tree canopy.

Saturday 11 July and Sunday 26 July
10am-1pm
30 Harvest Home Road, Wollert

Everyone is welcome. Enjoy coffee, a sausage sizzle, and face painting, while planting trees that improve air quality, provide shade, and creating better habitat for native animals.

We're working to increase City of Whittlesea tree canopy by 20 per cent by 2040 and have set a goal of planting 25,000 trees and wildflowers this winter.

Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/events



ABOVE Suneeti loves making a difference for her community.

Become a nature steward

The Nature Stewards course is back. This 10-week program, which will run on Saturdays from 12 September to 28 November, turns curiosity into action.

Learn about local plants, animals and ecosystems, build practical skills, and discover ways to get involved in your community.

Local resident Suneeti Sharma, who helped start the Whittlesea Climate Action Network, says the course gave her confidence to make a difference.

"One of the most valuable lessons I received was that you don't need to know everything to work with nature, you just need curiosity, love for nature, sensitivity and passion."

-Suneeti

Registrations are now open, but places are limited.

Supported by the City of Whittlesea and delivered by the Victorian National Parks Association.

Scan the QR code or visit vnpa.org.au





ABOVE Planning changes across Victoria will influence how housing, industry and neighbourhoods develop in the City of Whittlesea.

Understanding Victoria's planning changes

The Victorian Government has introduced new planning rules that will change how homes and apartments are approved across the state, including here in the City of Whittlesea. Over time, these changes may affect the character of some streets and neighbourhoods.

What's changing?

Fast-tracked planning for housing

New rules for townhouses, low-rise apartments and mid-rise buildings are designed to speed up housing approvals.

If a proposal meets the state's requirements, Council has limited ability to refuse it.

Fewer opportunities to object under State Planning Reform

Residents have fewer chances to be notified about, object to, or appeal planning permit applications.

Trees and green space

New provisions aim to keep suburbs green by protecting existing canopy trees and increasing canopy tree cover in new developments, balancing housing growth with environmental sustainability.

A planning permit is required to remove mature trees – contact Council's Statutory Planning Team to check if you require a permit.

Car parking changes

Developments near public transport may be allowed to provide fewer car parks to support walking, cycling and public transport use.

What this means for our community

City of Whittlesea Mayor, Councillor Lawie Cox said Council has consistently advocated for good design, environmental sustainability and neighbourhood amenity to be prioritised in any planning reform, and remains concerned that the new 'codes' for townhouses and mid-rise housing may not deliver quality homes and streets.

"We will continue to work with industry to 'raise the bar' as we deliver housing at scale."

Looking ahead

Growth in places like Epping will help bring more homes, jobs and services together, supporting a vibrant and connected future for our municipality.



To learn more, visit the Victorian Government Planning website or view our FAQs at

whittlesea.vic.gov.au/planning

Be ready: Simple steps to stay safe

Now is the time to prepare for emergencies. Bushfires, storms and floods can all affect our community.

Start by making an emergency plan with your household. Talk about where you'll go, what you'll take and how you'll stay in touch. Pack an emergency kit with water, a torch, first aid, important documents and a battery radio.

At home, clean gutters, trim trees, secure loose outdoor items and check smoke alarms.

Stay informed by downloading the VicEmergency app and setting up alerts.

For more information, visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/emergency



Winter pool and spa safety

Pool and spa barriers must stay safe all year round.

All residential pools and spas must be registered and have a current compliance certificate. If yours is due in 2026, book your inspection early. Check gates self-close, remove climbable items, and keep barriers clear. Safe barriers help protect children and prevent accidents.

For more information, visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/pools



Small hands, bring big hearts

A simple act of kindness has warmed hearts at the wat djerring Animal Facility, showing how compassion can start young and make a difference.

After rescuing two stray cats, a young local family brought them to wat djerring for care. One of the cats was adopted by the same family, an experience that inspired their two children to think about how they could help other animals still waiting for loving homes.

Over the following 12 months, the children saved \$240 from their own pocket money to support cats in need. When they learned cash donations weren't accepted, the family instead purchased soft, cosy kitten blankets and returned the next day to donate them, delighting staff and animals alike.

wat djerring Animal Facility provides care, rehabilitation and rehoming for

lost, stray and surrendered animals across the City of Whittlesea, giving them the best chance at a healthy and happy future. All animals are health checked, desexed and temperament assessed, helping families find the right pet for their home.

"We love seeing families like this share their kindness; every donation and adoption helps give animals a second chance at a happy life."

– staff member, wat djerring Animal facility



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/AnimalFacility



Helping local businesses thrive

Being a Business Friendly Council means we make it easier for local businesses to start, grow and succeed.

Whether you're starting out or established, we offer practical advice, connections and opportunities.

Our Business Concierge service can guide you through permits and

regulations, while our Business Network helps you connect with others. We also provide workshops, events, mentoring and grants to support your business journey.



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/Business



Looking for your next outing?

Explore cafés, eateries, farm gates and hidden foodie gems across the City of Whittlesea. There's something for everyone to enjoy.

For an easy plan, check out our ready-made food trail itineraries. Choose from 1, 2 or 3-day options and follow a simple guide to great food, local spots and unique experiences.



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/food-trails



Discover local flavours

There's never been a better time to explore the food and drink offerings in the City of Whittlesea.

Our local makers and producers are earning national recognition, including awards for Whittlesea Bakehouse, Bertocchi, Brazen Brownies and several local cheesemakers.

Behind these achievements is a strong local industry, with the food and beverage sector employing 12,000+ residents and contributing over \$1.1 billion to the local economy. Every coffee, meal or takeaway bought locally helps support jobs and businesses in our community.





Your personal Council portal

We're making it easier than ever for you to get things done online with our Customer Portal.

The Customer Portal is your convenient, one-stop place to connect with Council services, whenever it suits you. Whether you need to report a pothole, request a missed bin collection, or update your details, it's all just a few clicks away.

Once you've signed up, you can view the status of your requests.



Scan the QR code or visit customerportal.whittlesea.vic.gov.au



lodge requests



manage your details



keep up to date with your requests

Get started today

Signing up for the Customer Portal is quick and easy.

- ✔ Visit our website
- ✔ Click on the Customer Portal link (in the top right-hand corner of the home page or under Quick Links on a mobile)
- ✔ Create your account in just a few minutes.



2026-27 Budget and Community Action Plan

Our 2026-27 Budget and 2026-27 Community Action Plan are scheduled to be presented for endorsement at the June Council Meeting.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback across four phases of community consultation from September 2025 through to April 2026.

Your feedback helped us prepare these plans, with a focus on investing in the priorities that matter most to our community.



To view the draft documents scan the QR code or visit

✔ engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/cp2026



To learn about our latest projects scan the QR code or visit engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

What's on this season



Refugee Week

Sunday 14 – Saturday 20 June

Celebrate Refugee Week and the remarkable contributions refugees have made to our community. Enjoy a fun day filled with music, dance, multicultural performances, and more.



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/refugeeweek



Winter school holiday program

Saturday 27 June – Sunday 12 July

There's plenty to do these school holidays! We've got a great line-up of low-cost or free activities for young people aged 8-18 years.



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/youthevents



Positive Ageing Expo

Tuesday 23 June, 10am-3pm
PRACC

35 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang

A community event celebrating positive ageing and promoting respect and dignity for older people.



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/events

Morning Melodies – Brian Espiner

Tuesday 30 June, 10am-12pm,
Barry Road Community Activity Centre

Part of our LEAP program for residents aged 50 and over, Brian has your music style covered with his warm vocals.



Scan the QR code or visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au/events



PRACC

Kids Holiday Program

Spike the Echidna
Tuesday 30 June, 11am
PRACC

35 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang

The Farmy Farm
Tuesday 7 July, 11am
PRACC

Join a fun-filled adventure with *Spike the Echidna* and *The Farmy Farm*.

Packed with music, storytelling and colourful characters, these lively performances are perfect for young audiences and families.



Scan the QR code or visit to book tickets pracc.com.au

PRACC on show

Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre
35 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



The Australian Ballet Workshops

Wednesday July 1, 10.30am (Youth) & 2.30pm (Senior)

Discover the joy of movement with these workshops led by teaching artists from the Australian Ballet. From gentle, welcoming sessions for seniors to imaginative, story-led experiences inspired by *Wonderland*.



The Next Verse

Saturday 20 June, 7pm-9pm

Experience an evening of original music as local participants from *The Next Verse Songwriting Program* take the stage.



Crescendo Screen Classics Showcase

Saturday 22 August, 7pm-8.30pm

Enjoy iconic film music performed live by Crescendo. Featuring beloved scores from classic movies, this concert is an uplifting celebration of music from the big screen.



Scan the QR code or visit pracc.com.au

Let's talk

Get involved and have your say

Ever wondered what we mean when we talk about community engagement? Well, it's all about giving you, our community, a voice in local decisions.

It's about hearing your thoughts, ideas and opinions and using that feedback and insight to help shape a stronger, more connected community for everyone.

There are plenty of ways for you to get involved:

- ✔ Share your thoughts via our Engage Whittlesea platform and sign up for updates so you don't miss your chance to have your say
- ✔ Visit us at a pop-up across the community
- ✔ Drop into information sessions
- ✔ Join workshops, meetings or community focus groups.



To learn about our latest projects scan the QR code or visit engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au

These events may be subject to change. Please check whittlesea.vic.gov.au/events for the latest information.



WALKING THOMASTOWN

A night of art, lights and fun

FREE
EVENT

Saturday
29 August | 6PM-9PM



Starting at Main Street Recreation Reserve to Ziebell's Farmhouse

 whittlesea.vic.gov.au/walkingthomastown