



Minutes

Scheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 17 March 2026 at 6pm

Council Chamber,
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



**City of
Whittlesea**

Councillors

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

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UNCONFIRMED

1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting at 6pm.

“Welcome to this Scheduled Council Meeting of 17 March 2026 which is being held in person in the Council Chamber at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang and also being live streamed.

I am Cr Lawrie Cox, Mayor of the City of Whittlesea and I would like to introduce our Councillors in attendance tonight.

Deputy Mayor, Cr Blair Colwell, Cr Michael Labrador, Cr Jarrod Lappin, Cr David Lenberg, Cr Aidan McLindon, Cr Christine Stow, Cr Martin Taylor and Cr Daniela Zinni.

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

“Good evening everyone, I would like to introduce:

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; and
Jacinta Stevens, Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO.

Thank you Chair.”

1.2 Apology

I note Cr Gunn is an apology.

1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair 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 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

The following acknowledgements were made:

Mernda Incident

On behalf of Council and the community I wish to offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Aidan Becker who died at Mernda train station on 6 March. This loss has been felt deeply by many people across our community. Aidan’s actions were brave and selfless, and that courage will be remembered.

Incidents like this affect not only those directly involved, but also the wider community who are trying to process what has happened. There is no place for violence in our community. At times like this, it’s important that we support one another and look out for those who may be struggling.

We thank the first responders and the work of Victoria Police as they continue their investigation.

New Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor

I am pleased to congratulate Emma Fasciani and Gabrielle Charman, who 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 are a passionate group of young people, who meet monthly and provide feedback on matters referred to them from Council, as well as advocate on important issues, challenges and opportunities for young people.

We wish Emma and Gabrielle all the best in their role and look forward to working closely with the Youth Council over the next 12 months.

Community Awards

At the Community Festival on Sunday, it was my pleasure to announce the recipients of the 2025 City of Whittlesea Community Awards.

We received a high number of nominations, testament to the amazing work being done right across our municipality by people going above and beyond. A big thanks to our Community Awards Committee for their work in assessing all the nominations.

Congratulations to our award recipients:

- Dr Swati Sharma, Citizen of the Year
- Barrie Stewart, Senior Citizen of the Year
- Mia Llewellyn, Young Citizen of the Year
- Ahmed Abumeis, Access and Inclusion Citizen of the Year
- Liz Buckley, Sustainable Environment Citizen of the Year

I thank these people for their outstanding contribution to our community.

International Women's Day

On 8 March we acknowledged and celebrated International Women's Day.

International Women's Day is an opportunity for us to celebrate the resilience, strength and spirit of women from all walks of life and honour their achievements, contributions and invaluable presence in both the City of Whittlesea and the broader community.

Cultural Diversity Week

Next week, we are looking forward to celebrating Culture Diversity Week and Harmony Day. The City of Whittlesea is proud to be one of the most culturally diverse municipalities in Australia.

The 2026 theme "Culture connects us all" highlights how culture brings people together and encourages us to celebrate our own cultural stories and learn about the cultures of others. There are several local events to celebrate the week and to showcase stories, performances, art, music, cultural clothing, and delicious cuisine. Visit Council's website for all the details.

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No declarations.

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT Council confirm the minutes of the:

1. Scheduled Council Meeting held on 17 February 2026, as circulated.
2. Unscheduled Council Meeting held on 24 February 2026, as circulated.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Zinni</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Taylor</i>

THAT Council confirm the minutes of the:

1. Scheduled Council Meeting held on 17 February 2026, as circulated.
2. Unscheduled Council Meeting held on 24 February 2026, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4 Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters

4.1 Public Question Time

Question 1: From Rachael Rafferty of Mernda

Will the Whittlesea Councillors and the CEO commit to increasing funding for HACC for people who are being left behind?

Response:

The Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP) provides support services to people under 65 years of age who have a disability, chronic illness, or other health-related support needs. The program aims to help individuals live safely and independently in their homes and communities by providing services such as domestic assistance.

The program is funded by the Victorian Government through the Department of Health. The City of Whittlesea receives funding from the Victorian Government to deliver these services locally on its behalf. However, Council does not have the ability to increase the overall funding available, as funding levels and program eligibility are determined by the Victorian Government.

Question 2: From Justin Mastroianni of Wollert

Given the documented spot fires on February 27 (at coordinates 37°37'04.0"S 144°59'25.5"E) and the FRV's confirmed inability to compel action; will Council (as Chair of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee) now exercise its authority to hold the Department of Transport to its mandatory fire prevention duty under Section 43 of the CFA Act to clear the hazardous 1000mm+ fuel loads along the Galada-Tamboree pathway?

Response:

The land concerned is under the management and ownership of the Victorian State Government's Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). In accordance with the Road Management Act, DTP own and are legally responsible for its maintenance.

Appropriate maintenance of this land has been raised by the CFA at the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer Forum, and the CFA are taking the lead in addressing this matter directly with DTP.

Council considers CFA management of the matter as the most appropriate approach.

Additionally, Council officers have escalated their concerns by writing directly to the local Members of Parliament, Minister for Roads and the Executive Director for our Region at the Department of Transport seeking urgent action.

More broadly, Council has been continually advocating for the state to increase the maintenance of DTP-owned assets for several years, alongside other Victorian Councils.

Question 3: From Daniel Meissner of Wollert

Is there any plans to develop the open space area that was being used as part of the staging area on the corner of Epping Road and Craigieburn East Road?

Response:

The land located on the south-west corner of Craigieburn Road and Epping Road in Wollert, is owned by the City of Whittlesea. The site is currently being used as a site compound by a state government roads contractor for the Epping Road upgrade.

The land is subject to the Epping North East Development Plan, which has identified it for future active open space. The site has been identified for preparation of a future masterplan.

Question 4: From Rodney Cummings of Wollert and Julie Ahmad of Wollert

Will Council be lodging a submission to the Parliamentary inquiry regarding the development of waste incinerators in Victoria.

This approach ensures Council can deliver regional facilities while continuing to support grassroots sport and everyday community use across the municipality.

Response:

Yes. Council officers will be lodging a submission to the inquiry in due course, aligned to endorsed Council policies and strategies.

UNCONFIRMED

4.2 Petitions

4.2.1 Petition - School Crossing Request at McLeans Road, Bundoora

An electronic petition has been received from 154 residents and 450 non-residents (604 total) requesting Council install a supervised school crossing on McLeans Road, Bundoora directly in front of Northside Christian College.

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note the petition.
2. Refer the matter to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration.

Cr Zinni moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Zinni</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Labrador</i>

THAT Council:

1. **Note the petition.**
2. **Refer the matter to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Zinni, Cr Labrador

VOTING

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox</i> <i>Cr Colwell</i> <i>Cr Labrador</i> <i>Cr Lappin</i> <i>Cr Lenberg</i> <i>Cr McLindon</i> <i>Cr Stow</i> <i>Cr Taylor</i> <i>Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

4.2.2 Petition - Skate Park at Norris Bank Reserve

A petition has been received from 81 residents and 24 non-residents requesting Council consider the development of a skate park at Norris Bank Reserve, Bundoora.

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note the petition.
2. Note the petition will be referred to Finance to include with future budget submissions received.

Cr Colwell moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Cr Colwell</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr McLindon</i>

THAT Council:

1. **Note the petition.**
2. **Note the petition will be referred to Finance to include with future budget submissions received.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Colwell, Cr Lenberg, Cr McLindon, Cr Zinni

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox Cr Colwell Cr Labrador Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr McLindon Cr Stow Cr Taylor Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

4.3 Joint Letters

No Joint Letters

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 Quarterly Corporate Performance Report - Q2 ended 31/12/2025

Director/Executive Manager: Director Customer & Corporate Services

Report Author: Coordinator Financial Performance & Reporting

In Attendance: Unit Manager Financial Strategy & Performance

Executive Summary

This report provides the Quarterly Corporate Performance (Q2) outcomes and comprehensive summary for the period ended 31 December 2025 provided at Attachment 1 relating to:

- Council's financial performance.
- Community Action Plan 2025-26.
- Good Governance Actions.
- 2025-26 Capital Works program.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council note the:

1. Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for the period ended 31 December 2025 in Attachment 1.
2. Financial performance for the period ended 31 December 2025 contained within Attachment 1.

Cr Labrador moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Labrador</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Lappin</i>

THAT Council note the:

1. Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for the period ended 31 December 2025 in Attachment 1.
2. Financial performance for the period ended 31 December 2025 contained within Attachment 1.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Lappin, Cr McLindon

VOTING

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox</i> <i>Cr Colwell</i> <i>Cr Labrador</i> <i>Cr Lappin</i> <i>Cr Lenberg</i> <i>Cr McLindon</i> <i>Cr Stow</i> <i>Cr Taylor</i> <i>Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

UNCONFIRMED

5.2 2025-2026 Q2 Community Grants

Director/Executive Manager: Director Customer & Corporate Services

Report Author: Unit Manager Community Grants

In Attendance: Manager EPMO & Change
Unit Manager Community Grants

Executive Summary

This report is to provide an overview of the community grants program for the Quarter 2 period of the 2025-2026 Financial Year from 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2026. A total of 113 applications were submitted across seven grant programs that included Round 1 of the Business-to-Business Grant Program.

Grant payments totalling \$362,143.04 were processed during this quarter, which included Year 2 payments for groups under a Funding Agreement to deliver Diwali, Whittlesea Cruise Night, Whittlesea Show and preparation for the Chinese New Year Celebrations.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council note the 2025-2026 Q2 Community Grants Program Summary at Attachment 1.

Cr Colwell moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Colwell</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr McLindon</i>

THAT Council note the 2025-26 Q2 Community Grants Program Summary at Attachment 1.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Colwell, Cr McLindon

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox</i> <i>Cr Colwell</i> <i>Cr Labrador</i> <i>Cr Lappin</i> <i>Cr Lenberg</i> <i>Cr McLindon</i> <i>Cr Stow</i> <i>Cr Taylor</i> <i>Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

UNCONFIRMED

5.3 Youth Hub Business Case

Director/Executive Manager: Director Community Wellbeing

Report Author: Unit Manager Youth Development

In Attendance: Manager Community Strengthening
Unit Manager Youth Development

Attachments 5 and 6 have been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that they contain Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

Executive Summary

This report responds to Council's resolution of 16 December 2025, which requested the preparation of a Business Case to identify a suitable site for the establishment of a Youth Hub in the City of Whittlesea.

The Business Case evaluates four potential sites, informed by the 2024 City of Whittlesea Youth Needs Analysis and Youth Hub Feasibility Study, and considers delivery feasibility, financial sustainability and youth engagement outcomes.

The report recommends that Council endorse site Option 3b: which is located on Council's Civic Centre site, near the main vehicle entry from Ferres Boulevard.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Resolve to approve Civic Centre (South), South Morang as the preferred site for the development of a Youth Hub, outlined as Option 3b in the Business Case at Attachment 1.
2. Resolve to allocate \$4–6 million as part of the 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 financial year budget allocation process for detailed design and delivery of the Youth Hub.
3. Note officers will continue advocating to the Victorian Government on behalf of Council for external funding to support the delivery of the Youth Hub.
4. Note the Youth Hub will operate within a broader hub-and-spoke service model, with additional spoke locations to be explored and activated over time.

Cr Lenberg moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

MOTION	
Moved:	<i>Cr Lenberg</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr McLindon</i>

THAT Council:

1. Resolve to approve Civic Centre (South), South Morang as the preferred site for the development of a Youth Hub, outlined as Option 3b in the Business Case at Attachment 1.
2. Resolve to allocate \$4–6 million as part of the 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 financial year budget allocation process for detailed design and delivery of the Youth Hub.
3. Note officers will continue advocating to the Victorian Government on behalf of Council for external funding to support the delivery of the Youth Hub.
4. Note the Youth Hub will operate within a broader hub-and-spoke service model, with additional spoke locations to be explored and activated over time.

Cr Labrador proposed the following amendment to Cr Lenberg, as the mover of the substantive motion and Cr McLindon, as the seconder. Cr Lenberg did not accept the amendment.

The Chair sought a seconder for Cr Labrador's amendment. Cr McLindon indicated his intention to second the amendment; however, in accordance with Section 26.2 of Council's Governance Rules, an amendment may be proposed or seconded by any Councillor except the mover or seconder of the original motion or the Chair. Accordingly, Cr McLindon was not permitted to second the proposed amendment.

The Chair sought another seconder for Cr Labrador's amendment.

AMENDMENT	
Moved:	<i>Cr Labrador</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Taylor</i>

THAT Council:

1. Resolve to approve Civic Centre (South), South Morang as the preferred site for the development of a Youth Hub, outlined as Option 3b in the Business Case at Attachment 1.
2. Resolve to allocate \$4–6 million as part of the 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 financial year budget allocation process for detailed design and delivery of the Youth Hub.
3. Note officers will continue advocating to the Victorian Government on behalf of Council for external **dollar-for-dollar** funding to support the delivery of the Youth Hub.

4. Note the Youth Hub will operate within a broader hub-and-spoke service model, with additional spoke locations to be explored and activated over time.

Cr Labrador withdrew his amendment, therefore the original motion remained as the substantive motion.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION

THAT Council:

1. Resolve to approve Civic Centre (South), South Morang as the preferred site for the development of a Youth Hub, outlined as Option 3b in the Business Case at Attachment 1.
2. Resolve to allocate \$4–6 million as part of the 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 financial year budget allocation process for detailed design and delivery of the Youth Hub.
3. Note officers will continue advocating to the Victorian Government on behalf of Council for external funding to support the delivery of the Youth Hub.
4. Note the Youth Hub will operate within a broader hub-and-spoke service model, with additional spoke locations to be explored and activated over time.

The Chair put the substantive motion to the vote.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Lenberg</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr McLindon</i>

THAT Council:

1. **Resolve to approve Civic Centre (South), South Morang as the preferred site for the development of a Youth Hub, outlined as Option 3b in the Business Case at Attachment 1.**
2. **Resolve to allocate \$4–6 million as part of the 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 financial year budget allocation process for detailed design and delivery of the Youth Hub.**
3. **Note officers will continue advocating to the Victorian Government on behalf of Council for external funding to support the delivery of the Youth Hub.**
4. **Note the Youth Hub will operate within a broader hub-and-spoke service model, with additional spoke locations to be explored and activated over time.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Colwell, Cr Lappin, Cr Lenberg, Cr McLindon, Cr Zinni

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox</i> <i>Cr Colwell</i> <i>Cr Labrador</i> <i>Cr Lappin</i> <i>Cr Lenberg</i> <i>Cr McLindon</i> <i>Cr Stow</i> <i>Cr Taylor</i> <i>Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

UNCONFIRMED

5.4 Planning Scheme Amendment C287 - Heritage Overlay at 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda - Exhibition Outcomes

Director/Executive Manager: Director Planning & Development

Report Author: Strategic Planner

In Attendance: Unit Manager Strategic Planning
Strategic Planner

Executive Summary

This purpose of this report is to inform Council of the outcomes of the public exhibition of Planning Scheme Amendment C287wsea (Amendment C287) which proposes to apply heritage controls to part of the land at 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda (refer *Attachment 1*). The report recommends that Council adopts the amendment and submits it to the Minister for Planning for approval.

Amendment C287 proposes to apply a permanent Heritage Overlay to the house located at 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda and its surrounding curtilage. The proposed Amendment will provide permanent protection to conserve a heritage place identified as being of local aesthetic and historic significance in accordance with a heritage assessment prepared for the site by an independent heritage advisor (refer *Attachment 2*).

Built in circa 1891, the house at 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda was one of the first substantial houses to be built in Mernda. It was home to the first resident doctor and later the first Methodist parsonage in the settlement. It is of aesthetic significance as a late Victorian villa with distinctive detailing.

At its meeting on 17 December 2024, Council resolved to seek authorisation of Amendment C287 and noted that interim heritage controls had been requested for the subject site via Planning Scheme Amendment C286wsea (Amendment C286). Authorisation of Amendment C287 was granted by the Minister for Planning on 14 October 2025. Following review from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), the extent of curtilage was reduced slightly prior to exhibition of the Amendment.

Interim heritage controls were approved by the Minister for Planning on 1 October 2025. The interim controls were applied for a period of 12 months to provide protection to the heritage place while permanent controls are being progressed via Amendment C287. Amendment C287 was exhibited between 8 December 2025 and 16 January 2026. This included notice in the local newspaper and the Government Gazette as well as notification to the property owner and occupier, and prescribed Ministers.

No submissions were received in response to the public exhibition of the Amendment. Therefore, it is recommended that Amendment C287 be adopted by Council and submitted to the Minister for Planning for approval as contained in *Attachment 4* of this report.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note there were no submissions received through the exhibition process for Amendment C287wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, which proposes to apply a Heritage Overlay to 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda.
2. Adopt Amendment C287wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme as contained in Attachment 4 of this report.
3. Submit Amendment C287wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to the Minister for Planning for approval.
4. Note officers will advise the landowner of 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda of Council's resolution.

Cr Lappin moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Cr Lappin</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Taylor</i>

THAT Council:

1. **Note there were no submissions received through the exhibition process for Amendment C287wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme, which proposes to apply a Heritage Overlay to 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda.**
2. **Adopt Amendment C287wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme as contained in Attachment 4 of this report.**
3. **Submit Amendment C287wsea to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to the Minister for Planning for approval.**
4. **Note officers will advise the landowner of 1470 Plenty Road, Mernda of Council's resolution.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Lappin, Cr Taylor

VOTING

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox Cr Colwell Cr Labrador Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr McLindon Cr Stow Cr Taylor Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

UNCONFIRMED

5.5 2017-75A: Awarding of Contract Variation for Kerbside Garbage, Recycling and Green Waste Collection Services

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Unit Manager Resource Recovery

In Attendance: Manager Sustainable Environment
Unit Manager Resource Recovery

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

Contract 2017-75A Landfill Waste, Recyclables and Green Organics Collection is Councils' primary service contract for the collection of kerbside bins. We are seeking a financial variation to cover the costs of collections for the endorsed contract up until 30 June 2028.

It is proposed that contract number 2017-75A for Landfill Waste, Recyclables and Green Organics Collection is varied to suit operational requirements including:

- Municipal growth over the life of the contract;
- Roll out of mandatory Food and Garden Waste collection service, from July 2026; and
- Ongoing operational service improvements.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note at the 31 October 2017 Council meeting, Contract 2017-75A Landfill Waste, Recyclables and Green Organics Collection was awarded to JJ Richards. A subsequent contract extension was approved by Council at its meeting on 27 June 2022, taking the contract end date to 30 June 2028.
2. Note the performance under the contract to date has been exceptional, demonstrating consistently high standards and achievement of all Key Performance Indicators.
3. Resolve to approve a financial variation in the amount of \$26,028,740 ex GST for the remaining two years of Contract 2017-75A Landfill Waste, Recyclables and Green

Organics Collection, to incorporate the extension of the Food and Garden Waste bin service, allowance for growth and service improvements.

Cr Lappin moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Cr Lappin</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr McLindon</i>

THAT Council:

- Note at the 31 October 2017 Council meeting, Contract 2017-75A Landfill Waste, Recyclables and Green Organics Collection was awarded to JJ Richards. A subsequent contract extension was approved by Council at its meeting on 27 June 2022, taking the contract end date to 30 June 2028.**
- Note the performance under the contract to date has been exceptional, demonstrating consistently high standards and achievement of all Key Performance Indicators.**
- Resolve to approve a financial variation in the amount of \$26,028,740 ex GST for the remaining two years of Contract 2017-75A Landfill Waste, Recyclables and Green Organics Collection, to incorporate the extension of the Food and Garden Waste bin service, allowance for growth and service improvements.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Lappin, Cr McLindon

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox Cr Colwell Cr Labrador Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr McLindon Cr Stow Cr Taylor Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

5.6 Governance Report

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

Report Author: Unit Manager Council Governance

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 for the following governance related matters:

- Cost of Whittlesea Commission of Inquiry; and
- Summary Minutes of 24 February 2026 Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting.

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

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Note the Governance Report for March 2026.
2. Note on 18 February 2026 Council received an invoice for the Commission of Inquiry (Col). The total cost to Council incurred for the Col was \$552,639.82 ex GST.
3. Note the 24 February 2026 Audit and Risk Committee unconfirmed summary of minutes at Attachment 1.

Cr Lenberg moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Cr Lenberg</i>
Seconded:	<i>Cr Lappin</i>

THAT Council:

1. **Note the Governance Report for March 2026.**
2. **Note on 18 February 2026 Council received an invoice for the Commission of Inquiry (Col). The total cost to Council incurred for the Col was \$552,639.82 ex GST.**
3. **Note the 24 February 2026 Audit and Risk Committee unconfirmed summary of minutes at Attachment 1.**

CARRIED

COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Cr Lenberg, Cr Taylor

VOTING

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Cr Cox Cr Colwell Cr Labrador Cr Lappin Cr Lenberg Cr Stow Cr Taylor Cr Zinni</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Cr McLindon</i>

UNCONFIRMED

6 Notices of Motion

No Notices of Motion

7 Urgent Business

No Urgent Business

8 Reports from Councillors and CEO Update**8.1 Reports from Councillors****Cr Colwell**

- Commenced with offering sincere condolences to the family and friends of Aidan Becker. Attended the memorial service on Friday 13 March 2026.
- Attended the opening of Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook.
- Attended the new Olivine Skate Park Launch in Donnybrook, which was delivered by Mirvac, in partnership with the City of Whittlesea, and supported by the State Government's Growing Suburbs Fund.
- Attended the Chinese New Year event at Epping Memorial Hall with Whittlesea Chinese Association.
- Attended the Whittlesea Community Festival, highlighting what a wonderful day it was. Thanked all staff for their efforts in creating such a great event.
- Recognised the Mayor of Murrindindi Shire Council, Damien Gallagher, who recently acknowledged the contribution of the Local Government sector in response to the recent Longwood Bushfires. In particular, he highlighted the contribution from City of Whittlesea staff in providing over 80 days of support in the affected area, recognised this taxing work and thanked staff for their efforts. Cr Gallagher highlighted Response, Relief and Recovery – in addition to the traditional 3 R's of Council being Roads, Rates and Rubbish and that we do play an important role in that emergency management process.

Cr Zinni

- Attended a meeting with the developers of McKimmies Road new housing estate alongside Council officers and residences of Botanica Park Estate, Bundoora. Is hopeful that there will be a positive outcome for the future.
- Celebrated success of years of advocacy from locals and parents of St Damien's Primary School in Bundoora for changing the speed limit to 40kms on Plenty Road in accordance with school hours. Thanked Colin Brooks, MP for Bundoora for assisting in this process.
- Attended the Whittlesea Community Festival with her family and was so happy to see such a wonderful turnout and great event for our community.

Cr Lenberg

- Attended several events with Councillors
- Acknowledged events unfolding in the Middle East and acknowledged the struggles those in the community may be facing during this time.
- Cr Lenberg encouraged the community to have *compassion and understanding* for each other during these difficult times.

Cr Labrador

- Apologised to fellow Councillors for not attending many events the past month due to illness.
- Attended the Police Forum in the Great Hall, spoke to Local Members of State Parliament and local police about what is affecting our local community. Crime in the municipality is down in comparison to the rest of the state, but there have been significant crimes and events that have made us stand out lately. Was a very insightful event. shout out to our brave Police for all their hard work and keeping the community safe.

Cr McLindon

- Attended the Whittlesea Community Festival. Fantastic layout, great to see so many local small businesses there. Congratulations and well done to all the staff who made this event successful.
- It was great to meet the new Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor at the Community Festival.
- Acknowledged all those who are celebrating St Patricks Day today.
- Made a public statement in the interest in public disclosure:
 - Advised that he has taken on a new role as CEO of the Aligned Council of Australia. This peak body represents over 1.8m people across Australia in 39 member groups. Made this declaration and advised that it will be added to his Public Interest Return. He also made not that he will ensure that both roles will be kept separate and any conflicts of interest separate will be disclosed.

Cr Lappin

- Visited PRACE in Mernda and met with staff to discuss the incredible services they provide. Very impressed by how their model works, how they ensure students wellbeing is prioritised and the way in which they help students who disengaged from, or not thrived in, mainstream schooling. Council has a great relationship with PRACE already and hopes that this continues.

- Attended a Northern Alliance Greenhouse Action Committee Meeting where they endorsed their strategy for the next 4 years. The 4 strategic priorities committed to were:
 - to support our vulnerable communities;
 - to facilitate decarbonisation;
 - transition to a zero emissions transport system; and
 - progress the greening of our supply chain – encouraging a circular economy and strengthening of using sustainable resources.

All these priorities are geared towards what can be achieved at a Council level, whilst continuing to build the capacity of the alliance between Councils, sharing data and knowledge and making sure we deliver a safer environment and climate for our communities.

- Visited WaterMarc in Banyule City Council, where staff demonstrated how they are transitioning from their gas pool heating system to a more renewable system which has made the pool much more cost effective to run and reduced their overall Council-generated emissions.
- Attended the vigil for Aidan Becker at the Mernda Train Station. Acknowledged the strength of the victim's family and how impactful and important this event was. The community coming together and the care and compassion shown by everyone in attendance showed a great legacy left behind by Aidan.

Cr Taylor

- Focus has been standing strong with community engagement and staying connected with community through email and phone communication.
- Continued to advocate in relation to community safety issues that have been raised by the community.
- Attended the Police Forum and special shout out to the Assistant Commissioner Brett Curran, and also in particular Superintendent Kerry Lawson for answering very difficult questions honestly. They provided effective feedback in relation to the issues that were raised by those in attendance. There has been a reduction in drug-related offences within our municipality, however they appears to have been a dramatic increase in other offences.
- Attended the candlelight vigil alongside Councillor colleagues and the CEO.
- Attended the Whittlesea Mental Health and Wellbeing Opening Day which was a fantastic event.
- Attended alongside the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cr Lenberg the Peter Hopper Lake Stage 1 Opening. Look forward to Stage 2 commencing shortly.
- Attended the Tarang 2026 Season 3 Dance competition at PRACC along with the Mayor.
- Attended Yarra Plenty Regional Library and Council Audit and Risk Management Committee Meetings.

- Participated in a 2-day workshop with other Councillors in relation to budget discussions.

Cr Stow

- Attended the vigil for Aidan Becker. Sent condolences and thoughts to the family.
- Attended the Police Forum.
- Spent time in the community over the past month speaking directly to Donnybrook and Whittlesea residents. Concerns raised were:
 - safety around train stations and parking;
 - Donnybrook Road continues to be a major issue;
 - more school crossing supervisors are required at Donnybrook Primary School.
- Issues expressed in Whittlesea include the Dam and road use whilst the Dam is being built. This continues to be an ongoing issue, with Illegal soil dumping a growing concern especially around new development.
- Attended the turning of the sod at Acclaim Estate in Donnybrook.
- Attended the VLGA Incivility Conference where alarming statistics were mentioned about threatening and intimidating behaviour experienced by Councillors.
- Attended the VLGA International Women's Day Event.

Cr Cox

- Attended the internal session on budget processes with all Councillors.
- Attended the Murnong Community Centre Opening and the Olivine Skate Park Opening with the Deputy Mayor and Local State Member of Parliament.
- Attended the Northern Councils Alliance first meeting for 2026, which considered its Advocacy Program and working on strategy in the lead up to the State Election.
- Attended the sod turn event at The Boulevard in Thomastown along with the Federal Member for Scullin, Andrew Giles.
- Attended the Chinese New Year Event.
- Attended the Planet Fitness Centre Opening in Epping.
- Attended several briefings with Local MPs, with questions raised in relation to where support may lie from the Opposition and Local MP's.
- Attended the Tarang Festival of Sports and Arts at PRACC
- Attended the Municipal Association of Victoria launch of "The Future is Local".
- Attended the Northern Business Achievement Awards with Cr Stow and Cr Linberg.
- Attended Coffee with Council at the Rathdowne Estate.
- Attended the Peter Hopper Lake Stage 1 Opening.
- Attended the Casa D'Abruzzo 44th Anniversary.
- Attended the Whittlesea Community Festival, which included awarding Community Award winners.
- Officiated at a Citizenship Ceremony in Lower Plenty with 250 conferees.

8.2 Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd Update

Peter Hopper Lake revitalisation

Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park is set to welcome back residents and wildlife following the completion of a multimillion-dollar revitalisation project.

Council commenced the multi-stage revitalisation project in early 2024.

The project involved removing more than 10,000 cubic metres of silt and other pollutants from the lakebed, draining the lake and then installing a range of water-filtering equipment. It has been an enormous undertaking to return the lake to good health and I thank the Council staff for their hard work and dedication in seeing it through.

I would also like to thank the Friends of the Peter Hopper Lake Group and Federal Member of Parliament, Andrew Giles for his financial support. The City of Whittlesea contributed \$3 million towards the project, with the Australian Government providing \$2 million from its Urban Rivers and Catchments Program.

The Boulevard

Last month we broke ground on a major project to upgrade the shopping strip at The Boulevard in Thomastown.

The project will support local businesses by improving the precinct's safety and accessibility.

The project is part of our Town Centre Revitalisation Program, which in recent years has delivered upgrades to the Tramoo Street shopping precinct in Lalor, Alexander Avenue shopping precinct in Thomastown and the Gorge Road shopping precinct in South Morang.

The upgrade will deliver wider footpaths and larger trading areas, a shared cycling and pedestrian path, new pedestrian crossings and an upgraded intersection, additional car spaces, new street furnishings, landscaping and updated drainage.

Council's \$1.3 million contribution is supported by \$2.8 million from the Thriving Suburbs Program and a \$100,000 Local Government Grant from the Transport Accident Commission.

Everton Drive-Sissinghurst Parade roundabout

This month we are starting work on building a new roundabout at the intersection of Everton Drive and Sissinghurst Parade in Mernda.

This project will provide drivers, cyclists and pedestrians with safe and efficient access to the regional sports precinct, which is under construction. In addition to the roundabout, there will be a shared cycling and pedestrian path from Sissinghurst Parade to Stourhead Avenue, raised pedestrian crossings, upgraded street lighting and upgraded stormwater drainage.

This project is supported by funding from the Victorian Government's Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution program.

Olivine Skate Park

The young and young-at-heart have a new place to have fun and socialise following the official opening of the Olivine Skate Park at Donnybrook late last month.

The skate park - featuring ramps, rails and quarter pipes suitable for skaters of all ages and abilities and was built by developer Mirvac and will be managed by the City of Whittlesea. This project continues a partnership that has delivered the Olivine Recreation Reserve and community infrastructure such as sports ovals, cricket nets, netball and futsal courts, a dog park, playground community pavilion.

The skate park was supported by a \$300,000 contribution from the Victorian Government's Growing Suburbs Fund.

9 Tabled Reports

9.1 Gender Equality Letter from the Minister for Local Government

The Minister for Local Government, Hon Nick Staikos MP has written to Council's inviting them to play a leading role in advancing gender equality across Victoria, letter was tabled for information.

10 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 confidential matters in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* as detailed:

10.1 Family Day Care Service Review Findings & Recommendations

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

THAT Council:

- 1. Resolve to expand the Whittlesea Family Day Care service in accordance with the key findings and recommendations of a recent review as outlined in the Confidential Attachment 1.**
- 2. Note that a report will be provided to Council annually until 2028 outlining the progress of the Family Day Care Service expansion, financial sustainability, service performance and regulatory compliance requirements.**
- 3. Note that Council officers will directly advise current contracted educators and enrolled families of Council's resolution.**
- 4. Resolve that any changes to legislation or compliance requirements affecting the Family Day Care Service that may alter or increase Councillor liability, including requirements such as the appointment of a Person with Management or Control (PMC), be reported to Council prior to implementation for Council's consideration of the continued delivery of the service.**
- 5. Resolve to make the Council resolution public.**

CARRIED

COUNCIL RESOLUTION**Moved:** *Cr Labrador***Seconded:** *Cr Cowell***THAT Council adopt the recommendation to close the meeting to the public.****CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

The Chair closed the open meeting to the public at 7:36pm.

11 Closure

There being no further business the Mayor formally closed the meeting at 8:17pm.

Confirmed this 21st day of April 2026.

Cr Lawrie Cox
Mayor

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