

### 5.4.9 Draft Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan

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**Attachments:**

1. DRAFT Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan [5.4.9.1 - 41 pages]

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Present the draft City of Whittlesea *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan*, outlining Council's ongoing investment in sport, leisure, and community infrastructure priorities.
- Seek endorsement of the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* for community consultation.

The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* articulates the principles for planning, design, delivery and activation of community facilities and ensures that proposed projects are responsive and adaptive to the City of Whittlesea's growing and changing community needs.

#### Brief Overview

Council currently invests in the delivery, maintenance and operation of 140 community buildings and sporting precincts across the City of Whittlesea. As the fifth fastest-growing municipality in Victoria, the City of Whittlesea must plan for the increased demand for community infrastructure in growth areas, while balancing the expansion and renewal of existing facilities in established areas.

The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* (the draft Plan) establishes an evidence-based approach to guide and prioritise Council's investment in community infrastructure across the municipality. The draft Plan responds to the opportunities and challenges of providing timely and fit-for-purpose infrastructure, including expected population growth, a changing policy landscape, external investment and partnerships, innovative design and integration, and place-based planning.

The draft Plan, which takes a long-term outlook, was developed with consideration for existing and future strategic planning, Council's service delivery models and supporting innovative approaches and partnerships to infrastructure planning and delivery. It also outlines the priority capital projects proposed in the short term (0-5 years) and medium to long term (5-10 years) interventions to enable timely delivery of community infrastructure, balancing community needs, financial responsibility and equity across the municipality.

### Recommendation

#### THAT Council:

1. **Endorses the draft City of Whittlesea *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* at Attachment 1 for community consultation.**
2. **Notes that targeted consultation on the draft City of Whittlesea *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* will be undertaken with key advisory and stakeholder representatives including the City of Whittlesea Youth Advisory Council, Whittlesea Disability Network, Whittlesea Community Futures and Yarra Plenty Regional Library Corporation. Consultation will also include relevant state departments, state sporting bodies, sporting clubs, arts industry stakeholders and users of existing facilities.**
3. **Notes the final *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* incorporating feedback from community consultation will be presented to Council for endorsement at the 19 December 2023 Council Meeting.**
4. **Notes that each project identified in the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* (Attachment 1) will be subject to business case development and Council's budget processes.**

### Key Information

The City of Whittlesea is the fifth most populous local government area in Victoria, with a population of 244,119 in 2023. By 2040, the population is forecast to grow to 355,144.

Much of the City of Whittlesea's population growth is expected to occur in the municipality's northern corridor, in the suburbs of Donnybrook, Wollert, and Epping/Epping North. Donnybrook's population alone is forecast to grow by 823%, surging from 5,210 residents in 2023 to 48,123 in 2041.

The expected rate of population growth throughout the municipality, together with Victorian Government policy reform, presents a challenge for Council to address local demand for essential services and infrastructure, including early childhood education (3 and 4-year-old kindergarten), Maternal and Child Health (MCH), support for older residents, sport and leisure activities, youth engagement, health and human services, and library programs.

Between 2021 and 2031, age forecasts for the City of Whittlesea predict a 60.9% increase in population of residents at retirement age. This will be accompanied by increased demand for ageing well services including preventative programs, in home services, care and support, health and allied health services, and community transport.

By 2041, the number of 0–4-year-olds will increase by almost 10,000 children. In addition to population pressures, demand for kindergarten services in the City of Whittlesea is projected to increase in response to the Victorian Government’s ‘Best Start, Best Life’ initiative, which seeks to provide subsidised 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten programs, as well as an increase in hours (15 hours for 3-year-old kindergarten by 2029, and 30 hours for 4-year-old kindergarten by 2032).

Population growth will continue to generate significant demand for meeting spaces and opportunities for social participation. With nearly half all City of Whittlesea residents born overseas, providing culturally safe spaces and programming plays an integral role in making residents feel welcome and creating a sense of belonging.

Similarly, libraries play a significant role in improving social outcomes and building community capacity. Most library users (94% of survey respondents) physically attend a branch – but people are not just visiting to access a collection; they are coming to be part of a community. In a 2006 library poll, less than half (47%) of library users believed libraries were a hub for community activities and connections. In 2022 that figure leapt to 82%. *(Inside our public libraries, Findings of the Victorian Public Library Survey and Victorian Public Library Census 2022)*

Sport and leisure infrastructure continues to form a strong basis for improving health and wellbeing outcomes in the City of Whittlesea. In the south of the municipality, including Bundoora, Mill Park, Thomastown and Lalor, there is sufficient sport and leisure infrastructure to meet current and future demand, but many facilities will require renewal over the next two decades. Conversely, rapid population growth in the north is placing excessive demand on established sports clubs, particularly in Epping. New communities in Wollert and emerging communities in Donnybrook are also seeking fit-for-purpose local sport and leisure facilities.

The City of Whittlesea has one of the highest levels of community mental health contacts per capita, most prevalent in people aged 18-24 years. Having infrastructure available in developing communities is critical in supporting access to services and providing spaces for young people to connect.

The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* aims to address the service needs identified above through a planned approach to infrastructure development.

While Council's role in community infrastructure is substantial, it is not the sole provider of infrastructure that supports recreation, health and wellbeing, culture, life-long learning, social and leisure programming. The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* outlines Council's role as a provider, facilitator and advocate for infrastructure delivery in the City of Whittlesea.

In developing short and medium-term infrastructure priorities, guiding principles were developed to support equitable provision of community infrastructure. This people-focussed planning approach ensures evidence-based decision-making is at the forefront of the prioritisation process.

The guiding principles include:

- Community needs based approach
- Welcoming, safe, inclusive and accessible
- Flexible and multipurpose
- Collaboration and partnership driven
- Optimised investment
- Sustainable.

The above guiding principles were ultimately used to establish the prioritisation process (outlined below) for the proposed community infrastructure in the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan*.

- Step 1:** Identification of the community infrastructure required to address community need by service type
- Step 2:** Preliminary identification of potential community infrastructure projects by place
- Step 3:** Scoring and ranking of potential community infrastructure projects

#### Community Consultation and Engagement

In developing the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan*, an extensive consultation and engagement process was undertaken to ensure that community infrastructure principles and proposed infrastructure priorities align with community need, sentiment and identified service gaps.

The engagement process took shape in the following forms:

- **Whittlesea 2040 community consultation** – over 4,000 people participated through submissions, workshops and forums; online, paper-based and in-person activities.
- **Community Plan 2021 – 2025 ‘Let’s Talk’ consultation program** – More than 1,300 people joined the conversation, giving Council a strong understanding of community sentiment through community surveys, online and face-to-face events, pop-up stalls and targeted focus groups.
- **Community focus groups** - held over 2 sessions in June to help shape the key directions for Council’s goals ‘connected community’ and ‘liveable neighbourhoods’, as well as dedicated sessions for the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan*.  
If the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* is endorsed for consultation, focus group participants will be re-engaged to seek feedback and ensure their input has been captured accordingly.
- **Infrastructure and service needs community consultation** was undertaken to inform infrastructure requirements for specific service areas as follows:
  - Ageing Well: 2 x community member focus groups; 7 community member telephone interviews; Interviews with 5 key stakeholder group; Interviews and 2 workshops with Council officers (These took place between September 2022 and March 2023)
  - Youth services: Engagement workshop with service providers; Community survey completed by 50 young people; Engagement workshop with group of young people (August – September 2022)
  - Children and Family Services: Post-card survey completed by 248 parents; Targeted stakeholder interviews; Workshops and one on one discussions with Council officers
  - Library Services Review: A series of workshops with staff and stakeholder (YPRL) – 3 general, 2 social infrastructure specific

Consultation will continue through individual projects, where stakeholder engagement will help inform project scope and concept design. This process is designed to create infrastructure that is reflective of the service and program needs of service users, community and sporting groups, staff, and the local community.

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

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

#### 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.

The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* is one of seven strategies that form part of Council's Integrated Planning Framework, contributing to our community vision, *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all*.

The development of the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* complements and aligns to the following strategies:

- Connected Community Strategy
- Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Strong Local Economy Strategy
- Sustainable Environment Strategy
- High Performing Organisation Strategy
- Reconciliation Strategy.

The above documents help to inform Council's *Community Plan 2021-2025*, which articulates what Council plans to achieve between 2021 and 2025, how it will prioritise its resources and effort, and how it will measure success by meeting the needs of its community.

The *Community Plan 2021-2025* identified that our community has growing and diverse support needs, with residents imploring Council to reduce barriers to services and facilities, to achieve improved health, wellbeing, and developmental outcomes. Through evidence-based planning and prioritisation, the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* aims to deliver on this commitment of well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres.

## Considerations

### Environmental

In determining the infrastructure requirements of the municipality, an asset assessment was undertaken, with an environmental sustainability lens, to ascertain which existing facilities would be suitable for optimisation and enhancement, as opposed to renewal or a new build. This step in the infrastructure identification process helped to determine whether service needs can be met in a sustainable way, with reduced environmental impact.

Similarly, the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* was developed with consideration for Council's *Environmental Design Guidelines*, with all projects presenting the opportunity to maximise sustainability performance in design and construction.

As a subset of the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan*, functional briefs for each project will outline sustainability benchmarks, in accordance with Council's Project Management Framework.

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

Feedback from Council's *Community Plan 2021-2025* consultation revealed that community facilities, activities and services are highly valued by City of Whittlesea residents and deliver wide ranging and critically important benefits for all members of the community. Most notably, community infrastructure:

- Helps create social interactions
- Creates a sense of place and connects residents to their neighbourhood, community and city
- Provides affordable, accessible and inclusive programs and activities for people, regardless of their financial and socio-economic situations
- Makes communities safer by reducing crime and harmful behaviour by providing productive, safe and skill-building activities and services for at-risk cohorts in our city
- Fosters individual and family health and wellness across all ages, interests and abilities
- Provides environments that enable a meaningful commitment to Reconciliation.

### **Economic**

Council's *Community Plan 2021-2025* commits to prioritising support for local business, local employment, economic development, delivering libraries, schools and early years education, technology and innovation and creating employment pathways.

Infrastructure drives economic growth by facilitating investment, stimulating enterprise opportunities, generating employment and providing people with access to basic services.

The strategic co-location of Council infrastructure and key visitor locales, e.g., Town Centres, schools, shops, and attractions, enables dual economic benefit:

1. Creating jobs through the development of new builds and commercial enterprises. This includes employment for project design and construction staff, Maternal and Child Health nurses, early years educators, Centre Operations Officers, library staff, and leisure and recreation support staff.
2. Providing convenient pedestrian access to commercial business, enhancing opportunities for residents and visitors to shop local, contributing to a strong local economy.

### Financial Implications

The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* was developed in the context of Council's expected annual budget, existing and potential revenue and funding streams, and public/private partnerships. As each of the projects identified in the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* are at differing stages in their project life cycle, the cost of each initiative will be determined as part of Council's business case processes, with formal approval through Council's Project Management Framework and budget processes.

### Link to Strategic Risk

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

Timely delivery of community infrastructure, in pace with population growth and essential service demand, will alleviate the risks associated with delayed infrastructure provision including:

- Poor health and wellbeing outcomes
- Social isolation
- Limited access to early childhood education
- Reduced early intervention for family and gender-based violence
- Minimal civic participation
- Reduced opportunities for reconciliation.

The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan*, establishes a roadmap to facilitate, advocate and provide for the critical infrastructure required to meet the needs of our growing community, allowing residents the opportunity to participate, engage and thrive.

### Implementation Strategy

#### Communication

A five-week community engagement period is proposed for the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan*, comprising of:

- Key stakeholder engagement, targeting existing networks
- Community focus group
- Broader community consultation, incorporating engagement via digital platforms as well as dedicated community pop-ups.

Communications for the draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* will take into consideration the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) profile of City of Whittlesea residents. A customised action plan will be put in place to ensure that communication methods are targeted and user-friendly.

**Critical Dates**

Milestone	Date
Communication and engagement activities	Between 25 September and 27 October 2023
Presentation of final <i>Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan</i> for endorsement	19th December 2023

**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.

**Conclusion**

The draft *Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan* provides Council with a blueprint to continue providing the community with access to required facilities in a challenging growth and policy environment. The draft Plan capitalises on innovative and integrated models for infrastructure delivery to maximise community benefit, considering measurable impacts, place equity, access, partnerships, financial viability, risks and project preparedness.



# Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan



# Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We 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.

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# Executive summary

In 2040 the City of Whittlesea is a place for all. Our facilities and spaces are welcoming, inclusive and safe. Our community infrastructure provides local opportunities to create social connections and interactions and access to services and activities that support our health, wellbeing and lifelong learning.

*The Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* has been developed to guide Council’s ongoing investment in community infrastructure, defined as the buildings and spaces Council has a responsibility for that support the delivery of community services, programs, organised activities, sport and recreation. Taking a long-term outlook, the Plan uses evidence-based analysis and prioritisation, with a focus on equitable and timely community infrastructure provision, supporting our long-term community vision, **Whittlesea 2040: A place for all.**

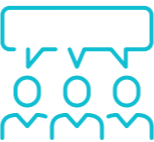
In developing the *Community Infrastructure Plan* a planning methodology and prioritisation approach was established to guide Council’s community infrastructure investment.

- Decision-making is based on robust evidence, with a strong focus on community engagement and service-based reviews that prioritise the delivery of community spaces and places according to local community need
- Community infrastructure principles set out the underlying philosophy that guides the prioritisation, planning, design, operation and activation of community infrastructure
- Place-based planning ensures the distinct needs and aspirations of local areas can be considered holistically.

Recognising the substantial investment required to accommodate the needs of a growing and changing population, Council’s role in providing community infrastructure is focused on maximising the capability, capacity and utilisation of existing community infrastructure. Where a substantial renovation or rebuild is required, or it is necessary to build new community infrastructure, Council will work in partnership with community service providers, other local councils, state and federal government and other relevant stakeholders to deliver and operate community infrastructure and maximise utilisation.

A key desired result of the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* is balancing the need for a long-term understanding of the community infrastructure priorities to address current and future community needs and aspirations, while providing the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. Consequently, the Plan outlines strategic and capital delivery actions expected to commence in the next 10 years, subject to review as part of the annual budget process taking into consideration: ongoing investigation of the condition and capacity of our assets, evolving service requirements, changing community needs and state and federal government policy changes influencing funding for, and provision of, services and infrastructure.

# How we engaged



**Whittlesea 2040 community consultation**  
**More than 4,000 people participated**  
through submissions, workshops and forums online, paper-based and in-person activities.



**Community Plan 2021–25**  
Let’s Talk: Shaping the Community Plan 2021–25 consultation program that included community surveys, online and face-to-face events, pop-up stalls and targeted focus groups.



**Infrastructure and service needs community consultation 2023**  
**About 400 people**  
representing community members, local business and community organisations participated in workshops, focus groups, in-depth telephone interviews and surveys.



**2021 Household Survey**  
**1,545 people completed the household survey**  
including questions about participation in sport and recreation, leisure arts and cultural activities, and access to services and facilities.



**Community focus groups 2023**  
Shaped the key directions for Council’s goals; Connected Community and Liveable Neighbourhoods, as well as dedicated sessions for the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan*.



**Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan staff consultation 2023**  
Council stakeholder meetings and workshops identified potential projects and refined priorities.

“We desperately need a sports and aquatic centre with a swimming pool... and a good big gym!”

“Open community gardens in high-density areas.”

# How we plan

## An integrated and people-focused approach

The *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* is one of seven strategies that outlines Council's commitments, the outcomes we strive for and the actions we will deliver for our community.

The seven strategies are known as Council's Integrated Planning Framework. Each strategy expands on our long-term 20-year community vision, Whittlesea 2040: *A place for all*, and our *Community Plan 2021–2025*, to provide our community with more information about Council's priorities and our overall strategic direction.

Achievement of the outcomes and commitments outlined in the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* rely on Council's collaboration with our community, community service providers, other levels of government, special interest groups and other relevant stakeholders. In referring to "our approach", Council acknowledges the need to work closely with these partners to achieve the best outcomes for our community.

## Equity at the heart of 2040

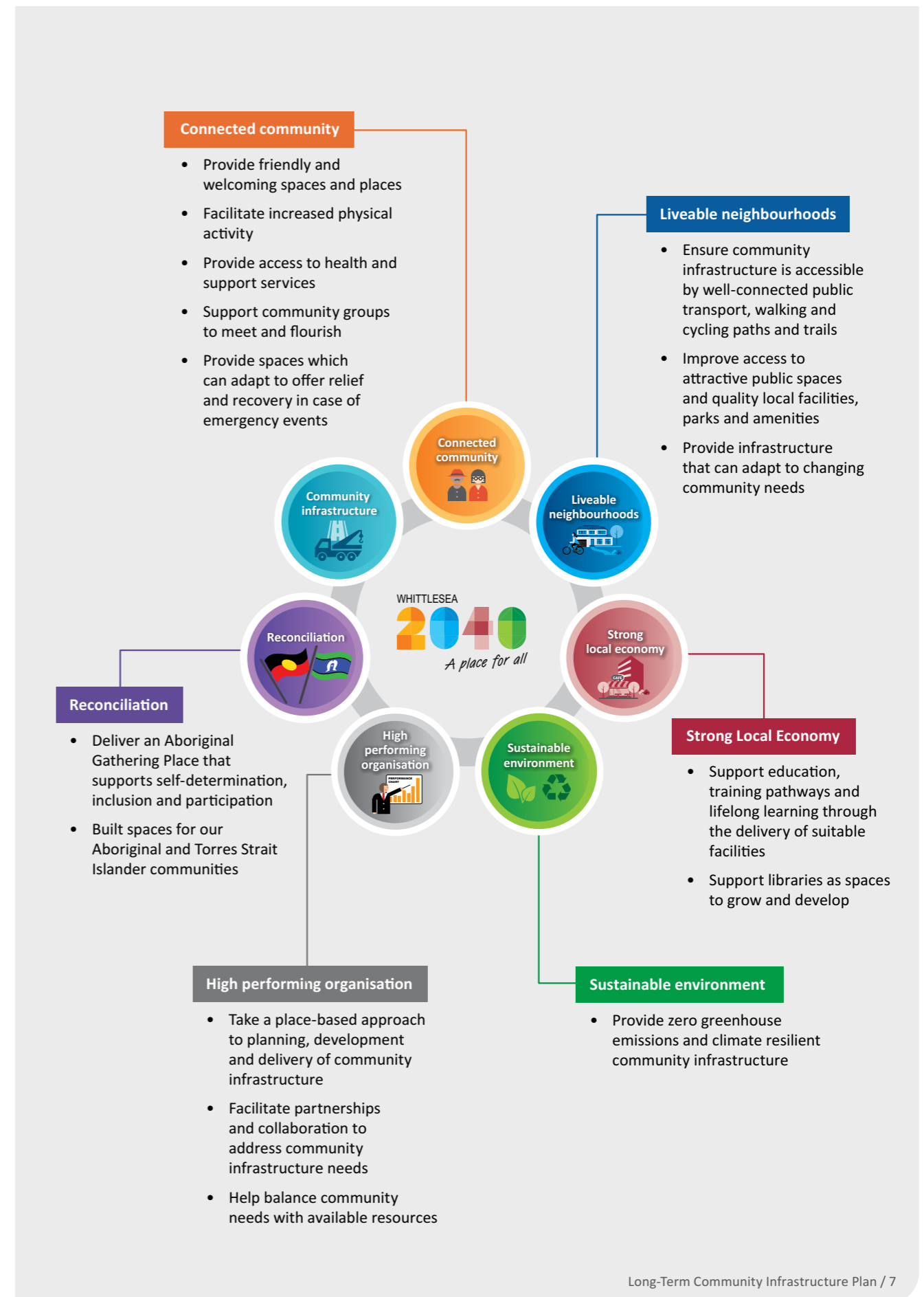
Equity and inclusion sit at the heart of our Whittlesea 2040 vision of a place for all. Actions arising from this Plan will consider the experiences and needs of Aboriginal people, people within the LGBTIQ community and those of different genders, abilities, ages and cultural, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds,

Council is legislated to consider the differing needs of people of all genders and promote gender equality in the way we plan and build our infrastructure in the municipality and has a responsibility to remove barriers for people with disability in order that all community members can participate in public life.

Capital projects and strategic actions arising from the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* will include specific consideration of gender equality.



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### Place-based planning

**The Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan takes a place-based approach that is responsive to the distinct needs and aspirations of local communities.**

The City of Whittlesea has made significant progress in achieving positive outcomes by placing a strong emphasis on local communities. Our approach involves understanding and addressing the specific aspirations and needs of each community within our municipality, with the goal of directly addressing these when delivering initiatives and creating a place for all.

Our key priorities are to recognise and appreciate the distinct characteristics across our municipality; embrace and celebrate the rich diversity; work in partnership and collaboration with various stakeholders, including residents, community groups and organisations to coordinate our services, programs, and infrastructure planning. Adopting a localised approach allows Council to facilitate equal opportunities for community members to participate and engage within their local areas, fostering strong social connections and building resilience within our communities.



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# Providing community infrastructure for a diverse and growing community

The City of Whittlesea is the fifth most populous local government area in Victoria and the fifth fastest growing in the last 10 years. Between 2023 and 2040 the population is estimated to grow by more than 45 per cent from 244,119 to 355,144 people, which is about 6,531 new residents per year.

Like other municipalities experiencing rapid population growth, having the resources available to deliver the services, spaces and places to service community needs is challenging, as is finding the balance between addressing significant increased demand for community infrastructure in new suburbs with expansion and renewal of existing facilities to accommodate growth in established areas.


## Infrastructure implications of population growth

Between 2023 and 2040 an additional




**10,446 children aged 5 and under** will require access to services including **Maternal and Child Health, childhood immunisation and early childhood education and care.**

**More than 70 additional kindergarten rooms** will be needed to meet demand for **3- and 4-year-old kindergarten.**



**The number of young people aged between 10 and 25 years will increase by more than 35 per cent,** significantly increasing demand for **library services, sport and leisure facilities** and welcoming spaces to collaborate, study and socialise.



**Residents aged 50 years and over are forecast to increase by 66 per cent, with the 75+ population anticipated to grow by 119 per cent.**

This will create substantial increases in demand for **health and wellbeing services and social activity opportunities**, including informal recreation especially in more established areas such as Thomastown, Lalor, Mill Park and Epping.



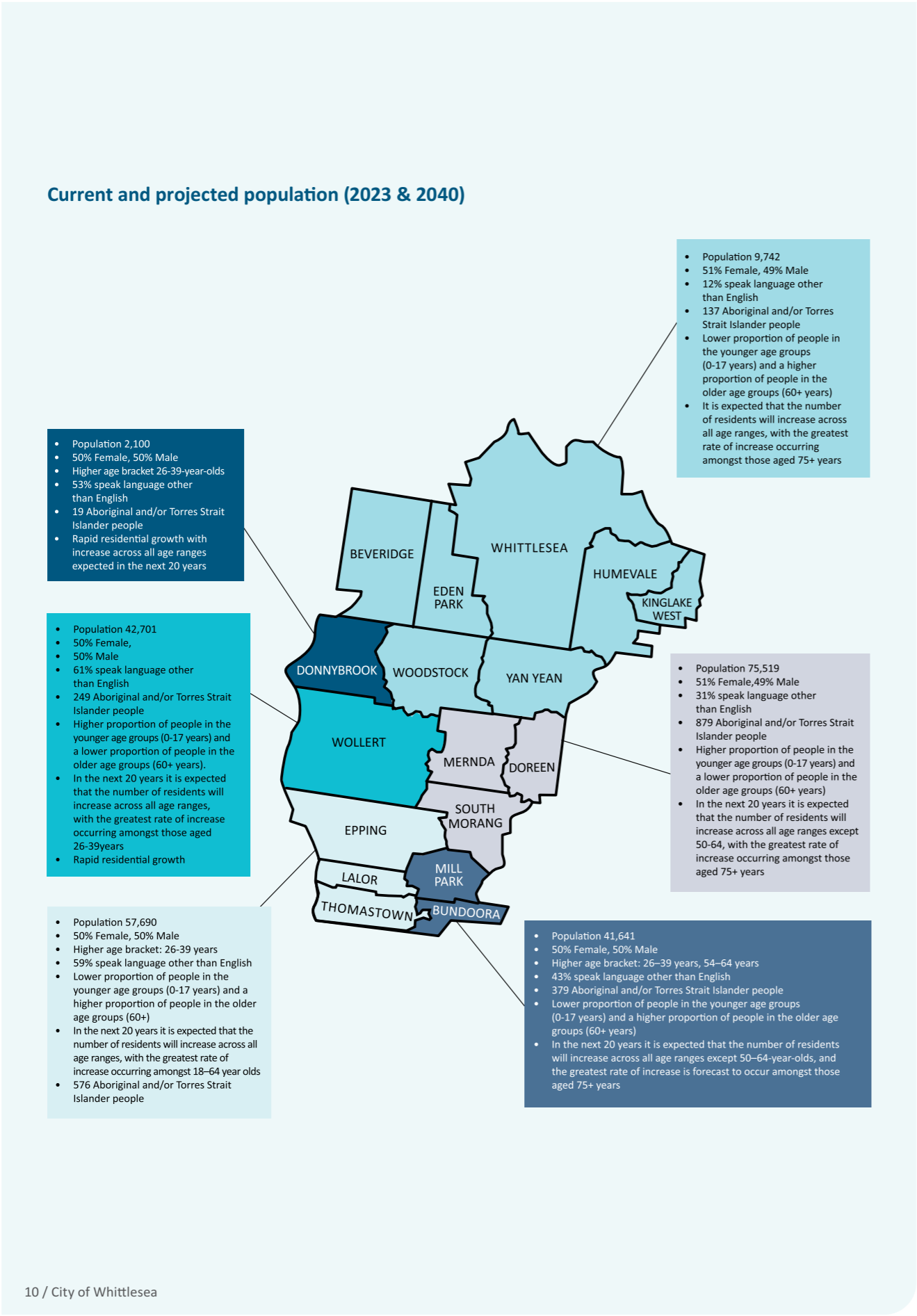
There is significant cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) in the City of Whittlesea, with **almost half of the population speaking a language other than English at home, and 37.6 per cent of the population born overseas.**

The CALD profile of each suburb within the City of Whittlesea is uniquely diverse, strengthening the need for tailored delivery of services and infrastructure that will continue to play a significant role in creating social connections and **facilitating a welcoming environment for new migrant residents.**



**Residents identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doubled between 2011 and 2021, with almost half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years or under.**

**Creating welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe spaces** where all Aboriginal people have a sense of belonging and can strengthen culture is a priority for Council.



# Benefits of community infrastructure



Development of the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* starts with listening to what the community has told us about the importance of community infrastructure and its timely provision.

### What is community infrastructure?

For the purposes of this Plan, community infrastructure is defined as the buildings and spaces Council has responsibility for that support the delivery of community services, programs, organised activities, sport and recreation. This includes community centres, halls, neighbourhood houses, kindergartens, Maternal and Child Health centres, libraries, performing arts spaces and sports and leisure facilities, including sports grounds, stadiums, courts, pavilions and aquatic and leisure centres.

### Out of scope

Parks and playgrounds, public toilets, council offices and transport infrastructure, including roads, car parks and footpaths, are not included in the scope of this document.

### Community facilities in the City of Whittlesea...

- 1

Provide spaces that are **welcoming, accessible, safe and inclusive** for all
- 2

Help create **social connections and interactions**
- 3

**Create a sense of place and connect residents** to their neighbourhood
- 4

Deliver local access to **lifelong learning**
- 5

**Foster individual and family health and wellbeing** through locally accessible services and activities
- 6

Provide local access to **early education** services and supports
- 7

Provide environments that encourage **increased physical activity** for all ages and abilities
- 8

Provide **adaptable and multi-functional spaces** that enable community groups to thrive
- 9

Provide facilities that **help build resiliency** and ensure we are **prepared for climate change and hard-to-predict events** such as natural disasters and pandemics.



# Community infrastructure context in the City of Whittlesea

## Council’s role in community infrastructure delivery

Investment in the delivery, maintenance and operation of community infrastructure by Council includes more than 140 community facilities and sporting precincts, providing an array of recreation, culture, life-long learning, social and leisure opportunities across the City of Whittlesea. While Council’s investment in community infrastructure is substantial, it is not the sole provider of infrastructure.

In line with the *Whittlesea 2040 Strategy*, Council predominantly plays one of three roles in supporting community infrastructure delivery:



Council’s focus as a **provider** is to deliver community facilities to address the gaps in community need that are not being met by local business or other providers. As part of this role, Council has the responsibility to deliver community infrastructure identified in precinct structure plans prepared to guide the development of new growth areas. This community infrastructure is partly funded using developer contributions levied from these areas.



**Facilitating partnerships** to deliver new infrastructure and shared utilisation of facilities such as community access to school gyms is critical, particularly in growth corridors experiencing rapid population expansion.



**Advocacy** is also crucial. Additional funding from federal and state governments is needed to enable timely delivery of regional community infrastructure and for the expansion of health and wellbeing services and supports. The *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* will help guide Council’s community infrastructure advocacy priorities.



### Community infrastructure quick facts



The **Spring Street Hall** in Thomastown is the oldest community centre in our municipality, built in **1924**



Our **3 aquatic centres** had more than **900,000 visits in the last 12 months**



Council took more than **6,500 bookings** in the **first six months of 2022** and our **community centres** are used for around **62,870 hours per year**



Council continues to make significant capital investments in community infrastructure. **In the last 10 years** Council has been involved in the delivery of **9 new kindergartens, 2 kindergarten room extensions on existing facilities, 9 new community centres, 1 new council services hub, 5 new sporting precincts** and **new sporting infrastructure on a further 6 recreation reserves**.

### Highlights from 2023 include:

- The Mernda Social Support Centre located next to the Mernda Village Community Centre is providing day respite and social support services for older residents living in the municipality’s rapidly growing northern suburbs.
- Three new kindergartens on school sites in Epping, Lalor and Wollert
- The Whittlesea Service Hub is enabling residents in the north to connect with Council closer to home.



Shifting practice in design, activation and delivery

In the past, community facilities were mostly built to deliver a single service. This is evident in the established southern parts of the municipality, including Lalor and Thomastown, where there are many stand-alone community facilities including kindergartens, Maternal and Child Health centres, libraries and community halls.

In recent years, the trend has moved to delivering larger facilities that can accommodate a range of services. This approach has many benefits. It is cost effective, maximises efficient land use and provides the flexibility to adapt to changing community needs over time. Additionally, it enables community members to travel to a single destination to access multiple services. When service model planning and facility design occur at the same time, this can support and encourage seamless service delivery and service integration. This approach is important for improving health and wellbeing outcomes, with increasing recognition that strengthening links between service providers can better address the complex needs and issues faced by many community members.

Traditional planning for community infrastructure has relied on benchmarking – a standard to guide the level, scale and quantity of diverse types of community infrastructure for a given population expressed as a ratio. For example, one multipurpose room per 1,400 people. Disregarding the challenge in finding agreed benchmarks for service provision, this approach can be helpful in setting aside sufficient land for community infrastructure, such as open spaces, community centres and schools when planning for new precincts and suburbs. It does not, however, account for the distinct characteristics of the local community, nor the Victorian rate cap that continues to have a significant ongoing impact on Council’s ability to keep pace with the service delivery and infrastructure requirements of our growing community.

Given the resourcing challenges faced by Councils, the recognition of the benefits of seamless service delivery and service integration, and the differing needs and characteristics of our local communities, Council has undertaken a service-led approach to infrastructure planning.



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# How we make decisions about community infrastructure

Decision-making in relation to the prioritisation, investment, design and delivery of community infrastructure is based on robust evidence, with a strong focus on community engagement and service-based reviews that prioritise the delivery of community spaces and places according to local community need.

The consistent application of guiding principles supports the identification of infrastructure priorities and informs the design and location of community infrastructure and how we operate and activate community facilities.

Place-based planning ensures the distinct needs and aspirations of local areas can be considered holistically, taking into account opportunities to optimise utilisation of existing community infrastructure.

The community infrastructure planning process is developed and implemented in a way that allows for responsive planning over time and includes regular review to respond to changing circumstances.

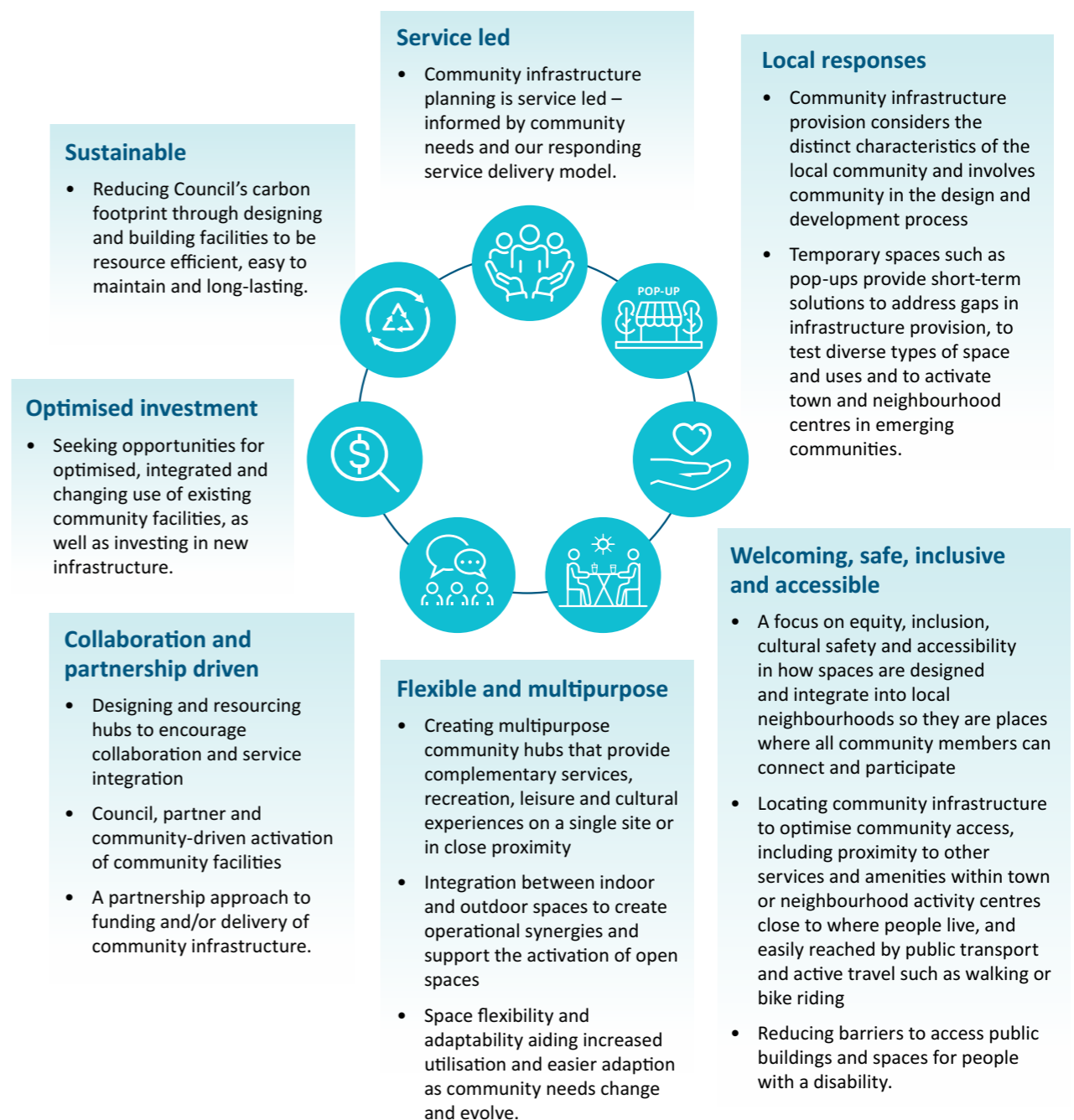


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# Community infrastructure principles

The following community infrastructure principles set out the underlying philosophy that guides the prioritisation, planning, design, operation and activation of community infrastructure.

The community infrastructure principles have been developed considering community and stakeholder feedback, and our integrated people-focused, social, environmental and economic planning approach.



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# The community infrastructure planning process





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# Service planning

The first step in developing the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* involved undertaking detailed planning for future services and infrastructure needs across the many services that the community use in the City of Whittlesea.

Starting with an understanding of the unique social characteristics of a local area and community needs and aspirations, Council then investigated usage patterns including barriers to access, emerging trends, policy changes and best practice service delivery to develop a service delivery model.

This model informed the type and location of spaces and places required for each service. Analysis of the capacity of existing facilities used for that service, as well as planned infrastructure investment, determined the likely shortfall/surplus of facilities available and the resulting infrastructure priorities.

The following is a summary of the community infrastructure and service provision needs and infrastructure priorities by service area. These include strategic actions that will be undertaken in the short term to optimise use of community facilities, seek out partnerships and other forms of investment and increase our understanding of opportunities and barriers to access. These actions will continue to inform our community infrastructure investment.

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Children and family services

Council’s role in supporting children and families in the City of Whittlesea is diverse, including delivery of universal and enhanced Maternal and Child Health services; immunisations; facilitating and supporting playgroups; providing training, education and support for parents and educators, operating a kindergarten central application system to allocate kindergarten places and the contract management of kindergarten provision in Council facilities.

Additionally, Council makes substantial investment in the planning, provision and maintenance of infrastructure to support the delivery of early years services.

Key reforms being driven by the Victorian Government will have a significant impact upon the provision of kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health services over the next decade. The increase in kindergarten hours (15 hours for 3-year-old kindergarten by 2029 and 30 hours for 4-year-old kindergarten/pre-prep by 2032), and the subsidising of kindergarten to make it free for all families as part of the *Best Start, Best Life* initiative is placing significant pressure on the sector, both in relation to infrastructure provision and workforce planning. Furthermore, expansion of the Maternal and Child Health Key Age and Stage model from 6.45 hours to 8 hours per child over the next four years, combined with policies targeting improved childhood immunisation rates have heightened pressure on Maternal and Child Health immunisation and universal access provision.

These Victorian Government reforms, combined with rapid population growth, workforce shortages, more children and families presenting to local services with additional and complex needs and increased infrastructure costs, has created multi-faceted pressure within the sector. In response to these pressures Council will continue to roll out infrastructure in partnership with the Department of Education. It will also facilitate access by allied health and family support services to spaces in community infrastructure to encourage those services to have and maintain a presence in communities.



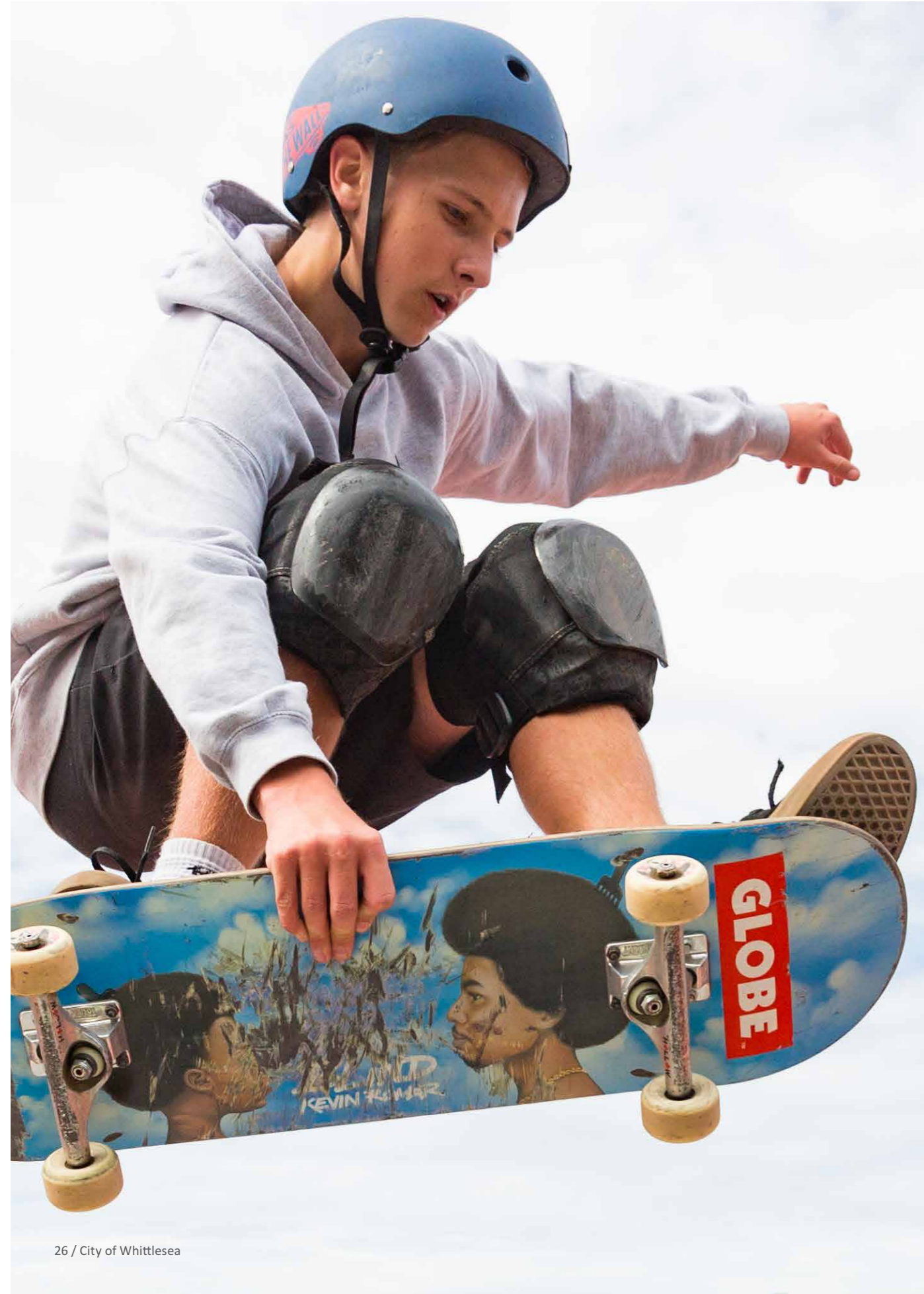
Our priorities for action

- In early 2024 Council will develop an options paper and implementation plan to provide strategies and recommendations on future service modelling, delivery and infrastructure to inform Council’s response and delivery of the *Best Start, Best Life* kindergarten reform
- Investigate the feasibility of expansion/renewal of single room kindergartens and potential integration with other early years services in established areas, as well as considering the location of future consulting suites for Maternal and Child Health to ensure a joined-up model
- Respond to population growth and the roll out of kindergarten reform and Maternal and Child Health services by providing some capacity in new, planned for community centres in the northern growth areas (balancing demand for early years infrastructure with wider community needs)
- Work in partnership with the Victorian Government to ensure adequate provision of early years facilities to accommodate increased demand for kindergarten, through delivery of new community centres, expansion of existing kindergarten services and delivery on school sites
- Undertake a review of Maternal and Child Health consulting spaces in South Morang, Mernda and Doreen to determine where services should remain and opportunities to provide access to consulting spaces for other service providers.



The number of children aged 5 and under will grow by 49% between 2023 and 2040.

49% ↑



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Youth services

**Council’s approach to supporting young people aged 10 to 25 years and their families is to take an early intervention, preventative and strength-based activities approach that responds to locally identified community needs.**

This includes a strong focus on collaboration and partnerships to ensure young people and families can access additional support and resources from specialist services when required.

In terms of trends, the City of Whittlesea has one of the highest levels of community mental health contacts per capita, most prevalent in people aged 18 to 24 years. This is heightened in new and emerging communities, which are at a higher risk of health concerns due to a lack of services and facilities, and the absence of strong social connections. This, combined with the multiple negative effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on young people, has increased the pressure on already limited youth support services operating in the City of Whittlesea.

Council is the lead tenant and provides overarching support for the Edge youth facility. Located in the Westfield Plenty Valley shopping centre, the Edge operates as a co-located services space with youth mental health service providers. Functionality of the space is limited as the configuration makes it difficult for programs and activities to occur at the same time clinical mental health services are offered. In addition to the Edge, place-based service delivery occurs in a multitude of spaces across the community according to local need, and where young people already gather including schools, libraries, community centres, parks, leisure centres and shopping centres. Increasingly, event and program delivery are constrained by and often tailored to suit the infrastructure available, and there is a need for youth-focused, multi-use spaces suitable for a variety of activities.

Victoria’s Youth Strategy 2022-2027 highlights the importance of providing support to young people and recognises the critical role youth hubs play. A priority in the Strategy is to partner with local government and the community sector to provide local youth hubs, co-designed with young people, in priority areas across the state. The City of Whittlesea has been identified as a priority location and Council is currently partnering with the Victorian Government and other partners to explore opportunities to meet demand for youth focused spaces.



Our priorities for action

- Following completion of the *Youth Service Model and Infrastructure Response*, identify the spaces and infrastructure required to support the needs of young people living, studying or working in the City of Whittlesea
- Continue to partner with the Victorian Government and other stakeholders to explore opportunities to meet demand for youth-focused spaces
- Consider options to create a family services hub that includes access to allied health and parenting support services and a separate but interconnected middle years/youth space to service emerging communities in the north of the municipality.



**The City of Whittlesea has one of the highest levels of community mental health contacts per capita, most prevalent in people aged 18-24 years.**



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Ageing well

Council predominantly supports older adults from 50 years of age who live in the City of Whittlesea in two key focus areas – supporting older adults 65 and over with ageing in place assistance (personal care, meals, domestic assistance) and promoting positive ageing through a combination of place-based and centre-based services.

The Australian Government aged care reforms, as a result of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, have fundamentally changed how support and care are funded and provided for older people. The Victorian Government’s Ageing Well in Victoria and research via ‘Ageing is everyone’s business’ report identified issues of loneliness and isolation in older people. Policy reforms, combined with rapid population growth of people over 50 will significantly increase demand for ageing well services in the next 10 to 20 years.

Council acknowledges that although we are one in the vast array of community, government and commercial organisations that support older members of the community, increased service and facility provision by Council will be crucial in meeting demand. Delivering new and upgraded multipurpose facilities with an ‘age-friendly’ lens will support activity preferences, demand for health and wellbeing opportunities and desire for more multigenerational activities, encouraging our community to age well. To meet the growing demand for services, Council will consider the delivery of new ageing well hubs in the north and south of the municipality, and potential expansion of services in the central area to continue to partner with other aged care providers and community groups for co-location of complementary health and wellbeing services.



Our priorities for action

- Evaluate the Mernda Social Support Centre model to ascertain learnings and applicability to other Council community centres
- In the long term, investigate the feasibility of delivering wellness hubs designed to support partnership approaches with other aged care providers and community groups for co-location of a range of complementary health and wellbeing services. (Potential sites include the Barry Road Community Centre in Lalor, expansion of the Mernda Social Support Centre and a planned for community centre in the north of the municipality).



72 seniors clubs use our community facilities.



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Community Activation

Community activation is guided by the key directions within the Connected Communities goal for Council’s *Whittlesea 2040 vision A Place for All*.

Council works with people in their local community to develop capacity that fosters community wellbeing through supporting community-led initiatives; linking residents into activities and services; and working with community groups and partner organisations to deliver a program of events and activities. Delivery occurs both in council-owned facilities and local parks, as well as non-Council-owned places such as faith-based group facilities, scout halls and schools.

Council also undertakes the management and operation of Council-owned community centres, halls and community pavilions. These are available for hire by local groups with some facilities also available for social functions. In addition to operating one local neighbourhood house, Council supports other neighbourhood house providers, the majority of whom operate from Council-owned facilities.

Local governments are identified as the lead agency for relief and recovery at the local level in the Victorian Government *Emergency Management Manual Victoria*, as such selected community centres and halls strategically placed throughout the municipality support evacuation as relief centres.

Similar to all service areas, the demands of population growth, COVID-19 impacts and the high portion of the City of Whittlesea population born overseas continues to influence the future provision of community meeting and activity spaces in the City of Whittlesea. There is changing and growing demand for and use of community facilities as established groups decline, and new groups seek opportunities to connect and run programs and activities. There is also growing demand for programmed activities and increased and diversified low-cost and no-cost programming will continue to support and encourage re-engagement from participants who have not returned after COVID-19 lockdowns, those keen to re-connect and welcome new residents.



Our priorities for action

- Complete a community halls evaluation to better understand the challenges and opportunities for uses in community halls across the eastern suburbs and recommend sites for renewal
- Explore models for activation of Council-owned community facilities
- Review Council’s relevant community infrastructure strategies, policies and guidelines to ensure they provide best practice functional understanding of flexible, adaptable space design and service delivery aligned with the community infrastructure principles
- Review and define Council’s position and approach to community facilities available for hire including halls, community centres and sporting infrastructure considering access, allocation and fees and charges
- Evaluate the success of the Whittlesea Service Hub and conduct regular needs analysis and benchmarking of our growing community to determine if and where additional council service hubs are required to support our community
- Deliver new multipurpose community centres in the northern growth areas that provide complementary services, recreation, leisure and cultural experiences on a single site, including investigating the scope of selected community centres to deliver neighbourhood house services in partnership with a local service provider
- In consultation with local stakeholders, review and implement community hall, neighbourhood house and community centre renewal, taking into consideration: facility condition and fitness for purpose; compliance; emerging community needs; opportunities for optimisation and expansion, as well as service co-location and integration.



38% of the population was born overseas. Providing culturally safe spaces and amenities and activity programming plays an important part in making new residents feel welcome and creating a sense of belonging.



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Libraries

Local libraries are an important universal service that provide free, safe and accessible places and resources to support community development, lifelong learning and a distinct sense of place.

The purpose of libraries is evolving and they have become much more than a place to borrow books. Libraries provide a range of recreational, educational, social, information and employment-related benefits for community members of all ages, interests and backgrounds. This includes involvement in programs and services, accessing computers and other technology, interacting with staff and undertaking informal recreation.

The City of Whittlesea Library Service is delivered on behalf of Council by Yarra Plenty Regional Library Corporation (YPRL). Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, existing regional library corporations, including YPRL, must be wound up by 2031 and transition to a new corporate entity. Council’s review of the model has recommended the City of Whittlesea commit to a shared-service model for library service delivery. This model will support integration with the *City of Whittlesea Community Plan*, broader Council services and operations, as well as ensure adaptation to changing community need.

Provision of library services is not evenly distributed across the municipality. Council will ensure local access to library services through a network of library services. In the short-term this includes expanded access through inclusion of community library hubs in newer community centres and libraries on short-term leases, supplemented by mobile library coverage to test and evaluate temporary solutions to meet the needs of growth communities. In the longer-term it will include renewing ageing library infrastructure to create modern library spaces and planning for additional library services in a co-located way that enables community members to access multiple services in the single location.



Our priorities for action

- Increase access to library services through a network of library provision, including increased mobile library coverage, additional community library hubs, mini-branch libraries and branch libraries



82% ↑

In a 2006 library poll, less than half (47%) of library users believed libraries were a hub for community activities and connections. In 2022 that figure leapt to 82%.



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Sport and leisure

Council is responsible for the delivery and maintenance of sport and leisure facilities including sports grounds, stadiums, indoor and outdoor courts, pavilions, golf courses and aquatic and leisure centres.

These facilities create opportunities for the community to be physically active, improve health and wellbeing and connect with others. Council’s focus as a provider of sport and leisure infrastructure is to address the gaps in community need that are not being met by local businesses or community organisations, prioritising local competition and training. Infrastructure that supports higher levels of elite performance is usually funded by state and federal governments as they support participants from a wider catchment, beyond the municipality.

Population growth is increasing demand for both formal and informal sport and leisure facilities, while an expanding ageing population will influence the mix of activity preferences. For example, population growth is increasing demand for soccer in the north of the municipality, while the growing older population is creating demand for new age-friendly sports such as walking football.

Other trends influencing sport and leisure include smart technology changing the way people choose to engage in physical activity, in part overcoming barriers to access including time constraints, lack of transport and participation costs. A growing number of women and girls are playing traditionally male-dominated sports, including Australian Rules Football, increasing demand for access to playing fields and changerooms. A new policy enacted by the Victorian Government’s - Fair Access Policy Roadmap prioritises the access to, and use of, community sports infrastructure for women and girls with eligibility for infrastructure funding for councils and clubs linked to gender equitable access and use policies.

Council is moving away from delivery of single sports grounds to promote club sustainability and co-location of facilities for formal and informal sports participation and wider community use. Multi-use sports precincts are identified in multiple growth suburbs, whilst infrastructure renewal in the established areas will be focused on fair access for all and optimising utilisation of existing access. Furthering partnerships with schools and retaining open space are also key features in ensuring community sport and leisure needs can continue to be met in the long-term.

Council’s Leisure Centres are very well utilised with more than 900,000 visits a year across Mill Park Leisure, Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre and Whittlesea Swim Centre, and a membership base which is more than 10,000 members. The Regional Aquatic and Sports Centre planned for Mernda will address a significant demand for indoor and outdoor courts, aquatic and health and wellbeing facilities to the north of the municipality.



Our priorities for action

- Speaking directly to schools, partner with Sport and Recreation Victoria and the Department of Education to develop a standardised Joint User Agreement policy to benefit schools and communities through the provision of increased access to meeting and activity spaces
- Develop operation and management guidelines to improve community access and experience of using sporting pavilions and facilities outside of traditional sporting times
- Develop an allocation policy to ensure equitable access to sport and leisure facilities for women and girls and provide a welcoming ‘place for all’
- Update the Sports Infrastructure Renewal Manual to incorporate fair access principles and pavilion upgrade priority program
- Deliver new local sporting precincts, where possible adjacent to other community facilities, designed for both shared use by sports with similar requirements and the co-location of formal and informal sports participation
- Ongoing review to improve/upgrade/renew ageing sport and leisure infrastructure to ensure facilities remain fit for purpose and to increase capacity where desired and feasible
- Deliver Stages 1 and 2 of the Regional Aquatic and Sports Centre at Mernda – a regional level indoor and outdoor sports, leisure and aquatic facility. Continue to seek co-investment for Stage 3.



In 2022 47 clubs with a total of 11,240 players used our sport and leisure infrastructure on a regular basis.



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Arts and culture

Arts and cultural activities can play a key role in fostering a connected and cohesive community through supporting social cohesion, helping to understand different perspectives and cultures and creating social connections.

Council plays a significant role in delivering, funding, hosting, supporting and promoting arts and culture in the community through the activation of Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC), an extensive program of festivals and events, arts and engagement programs and public art exhibitions.

The Australian Government National Cultural Policy Revive: *a place for every story, a story for every place* is a five-year plan that commenced in 2023 to renew and revive Australia’s arts, entertainment and cultural sector. Similar to Revive, the Victorian Government policy *Creative State 2025* outlines a four-year plan to restore economic prosperity and social wellbeing via effective creative industries planning. These policies, the impacts of COVID-19 and the evolving landscape of the arts industry, continues to shape Council’s response in supporting the ongoing transformation of the arts industry.

The key asset response identified to support the arts is the transition of PRACC to a new operating model (Creative Industries Hub) to increase precinct vibrancy and drive utilisation across all spaces. Proposed plans include a new gallery space. Additionally, the long-term scope of planned for community centres in the north to host dedicated arts and culture spaces will be explored, considering identified community need, existing provision of infrastructure (such as school theatres and private studios), customisation for local need, and partnership opportunities with state and federal funding bodies and philanthropic organisations to ensure a financially sustainable service delivery model.



Our priorities for action

- Ensure new and renewed libraries and community centres have the flexibility to support place-based arts and cultural programming. For example, public art installations, hosting of events and festivals and walls suitable for displaying visual arts exhibitions
- Implement a new operating model for the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre to increase utilisation and precinct vibrancy and investigate options to house a gallery within the centre
- In the long-term investigate the feasibility of dedicated arts and cultural spaces in the north of the municipality.



31% of people who participated in some form of arts activity showed higher instances of self-reporting their general health as very good, compared to 23% of those who had not participated.



Human services

Council has a role to protect, improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the community.

Some of the ways it does this is by advocating for provision of services and infrastructure and working in partnership with local organisations to facilitate collaborative responses to specific service gaps, unmet demand and emerging issues. Council’s commitment to our role is highlighted in the delivery of the Epping Community Services Hub. The hub attracts a diverse range of not-for-profit service providers and service types to the municipality and co-locates them in a Council-owned and managed premises. The operational model of the hub fosters collaboration and strengthens network links between local service providers, with improved outcomes for community. Additional consultation rooms and meeting spaces are also available via some of Council’s community centres. For example, Kirrip Community Centre in Wollert offers two for-hire consult rooms for services and allied health professionals.

Engagement with Hub stakeholders and findings of the *City of Whittlesea 2023 Human Service Needs Analysis*, undertaken by services working in the municipality, have identified an increased need for support services relating to: ongoing issues of mental health exacerbated by COVID-19; cost of living pressures; increased family violence; a current lack of culturally safe services and population growth – intensified in new suburbs to the north.

Advocating for additional health and wellbeing services, and an integrated community services hub in the north of the municipality, are key focus areas for the Council in supporting community need for human services over the next 20 years.



Our priorities for action

- Optimise use of existing resources through facilitating access to Council-owned buildings or consult rooms and meeting spaces in Council-owned community centres
- In the long-term investigate the feasibility of delivering a community services hub in the north of the municipality in partnership with local health and wellbeing service providers, to encourage service delivery and collaboration in the north of the municipality
- Advocate to increase provision of community transport to facilitate improved access to health and wellbeing services.



34% of culturally and linguistically diverse residents have difficulty or are not able to access health or social support services



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Aboriginal services

The City of Whittlesea has the second largest Aboriginal community in metropolitan Melbourne.

Consultation with our local Aboriginal community has identified Aboriginal people living in the City of Whittlesea have limited local access to culturally appropriate services that respond to their immediate and long-term cultural needs. Plans are underway to deliver an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland in South Morang. This will be the first of its kind delivered in the City of Whittlesea and follows the success of similar Gathering Places located across Victoria. Co-designed with the Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place Advisory Group, the Gathering Place will support and facilitate a variety of cultural activities and programs that incorporate art, music, language and storytelling that strengthen culture and enhance wellbeing.



Our priorities for action

- Build an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland in South Morang.



In 2021, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was 2,270 people



# Community infrastructure priorities

Once community facilities and spaces required to meet community needs were determined a place-based lens was applied to identify potential community infrastructure projects.

This approach, the second step in the community infrastructure planning process, ensured collaborative and coordinated planning focusing on distinct local community needs and aspirations.

Consideration was given to provision at both a regional level – that is, those services and facilities that cater to the broader population, including in other municipalities – as well as a local level.

For the purpose of this plan, six geographical areas were used. These areas were chosen based on local transport patterns and to account for differences between current and future growth and established areas within the municipality.

All place-based projects were then further assessed using a number of prioritisation criteria aligned with the community infrastructure principles. This third step has resulted in a list of prioritised community infrastructure projects.

This section outlines the priority capital project actions Council will focus on delivering over the next 10 years. It includes investment in the delivery of new, upgraded or expanded community infrastructure. It does not include routine maintenance and renewal to ensure our community infrastructure remains compliant and fit for purpose. This is considered in Council’s Asset Plan.

- **Short-term actions (2024 – 2028)** are underway or expected to commence in the next five years.
- **Medium- and long-term actions (2029 – 2033)** are expected to commence in the next five to 10 years.

Projects expected to commence later than 10 years have not been included in the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* and will continue to be considered as part of future long-term planning.

The Plan will be reviewed as part of the annual budget process taking into consideration ongoing investigation of the condition and capacity of our assets, evolving service requirements, changing community needs and state and federal government policy changes influencing funding for, and provision of, services and infrastructure.

A list of Council owned and or / operated community infrastructure and proposed projects is provided in Appendix 1.

Regional level community infrastructure

While the *Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan* adopts a localised, place-based approach to planning, some community infrastructure services a broader population. Regional level community facilities are built for and used by people across the municipality and beyond. Examples of regional infrastructure include large performing arts facilities, regional parks and competition level sporting infrastructure that supports elite performance.

Within the City of Whittlesea, the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre has local audiences for events including school productions and dance recitals, while well-known performers attract audiences from across Victoria. Epping Soccer Stadium is a professional soccer facility based in Epping, which has regularly been used by local, national and international football teams as a training and match venue. In addition to providing for local clubs and school athletics competitions, the Meadowglen International Athletics Stadium offers an international standard athletics facility that hosts district and state competitions.

As regional infrastructure draws a wide catchment, provision of regional level facilities takes into account the planning and delivery of regional infrastructure in neighbouring municipalities. It also requires working closely with other municipalities, and advocating to state and federal government to invest in regional community infrastructure to provide the facilities and services that enhance conditions for economic growth, liveability and sustainability, benefiting our rapidly expanding, diverse population.

Following are the priority regional level capital projects that are underway or expected to commence within the next 10 years.

Regional				
Site	Action	Suburb	Short Term*	Medium – Long Term**
Regional Aquatic and Sports Centre at Mernda	Stage design and delivery of the Regional Aquatic and Sports Centre at Mernda	Mernda	✓	
Aboriginal Gathering Place	Complete design and build an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland in South Morang	South Morang	✓	
Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre	Implement a new operating model for the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre to increase utilisation and precinct vibrancy and investigate options to house a gallery within the centre	South Morang	✓	
Epping Central	Continue to progress planning for the long-term development of Epping Central, designated as a metropolitan activity centre	Epping	✓	
Cloverton (Kalkallo)	Contribute to Cloverton master planning and service provision considerations as a combined initiative between Hume City Council, Mitchell Shire and City of Whittlesea	Cloverton (Hume)		✓

\*Has already commenced or is expected to commence in the next five years (2024–2028)  
\*\*Is expected to commence in the next five to 10 years (2029–2033)

Donnybrook

High population growth is driving a significant increase in demand for additional community facilities and services

The emerging community of Donnybrook is anticipated to experience population growth of more than 40,000 people between 2023 and 2040. The area has limited access to services, activities and infrastructure, with inadequate provision of major roads and public transport making it difficult for residents to utilise community facilities in neighbouring areas. While a partnership with a local developer has been invaluable in enabling early provision of services, including Maternal and Child Health, pop-up library and gathering space from Olivine Place, as the population has grown, so too has demand. In addition to a shortage of consulting spaces for Maternal and Child Health, meeting spaces are sought after for use by community groups and council program activation.

The Eucalyptus Parade kindergarten service, located on a school site, combined with two kindergarten rooms (built as part of the Patterson Drive Community Centre) and a planned ‘kinder on school site’ to open in 2024 will meet short-term demand for kindergarten services. In the medium- and long-term, substantial additional kindergarten programming will be required to meet increased demand for three- and four-year-old kindergarten resulting from population growth and the Victorian Government *Best Start, Best Life* early years reform. A partnership approach is required to ensure sufficient resources are available to accommodate growing demand for both early years services and sport and leisure activities, and to attract health and wellbeing services to the north.

Considered planning is required to ensure the considerable number of community facilities and sporting precincts identified in Precinct Structure Plans are optimised and have the adaptability to accommodate growing and changing needs for services, programs and activities. This includes finding a balance between significant demand for early years services and meeting the diverse needs of the wider community, including the older population aged 50 and over.

Following are the priority capital projects that are underway or expected to commence within the next 10 years in Donnybrook.

Donnybrook				
Site	Action	Suburb	Short Term*	Medium – Long Term**
Donnybrook Primary School Kindergarten	Work in partnership with the Victorian Government to deliver a kindergarten on school site	Donnybrook	✓	
Olivine Place	Investigate options for future community service provision – and corresponding infrastructure – from Olivine Place	Donnybrook	✓	
Patterson Drive Community Centre	Complete construction of community centre including kindergarten, MCH consulting rooms, community spaces and community library hub	Donnybrook	✓	
Darebin Creek Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options for a new community centre	Donnybrook	✓	
Family services hub and youth space	Review opportunities to create a family services hub that includes access to allied health and parenting support services and a separate but interconnected middle years/ youth space (site TBC)	Donnybrook	✓	
Shenstone Park Community Centre and Neighbourhood House	Investigate preferred service delivery and design and construction options for a new community centre taking into consideration potential integration of community centre and community pavilion to service adjacent sports reserve	Donnybrook	✓	
Donnybrook Farmhouse Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery and design and construction options of a new community centre	Donnybrook		✓
Olivine Sports Reserve	Work in partnership with developer to complete delivery of oval playing fields and community pavilion	Donnybrook	✓	
Shenstone Park Sporting Precinct	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	✓	
Darebin Creek Sports Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook		✓

\*Has already commenced or is expected to commence in the next five years (2024–2028)  
\*\*Is expected to commence in the next five to 10 years (2029–2033)

Donnybrook



- 1 Darebin Creek Community Centre (service delivery mix TBD)

2 Darebin Creek Sports Reserve (sporting infrastructure, pavilion)

3 Donnybrook Farmhouse Community Centre (service delivery mix TBD)

4 Donnybrook Primary School Kindergarten (Kindergarten)

5 Eucalyptus Parade Kindergarten (kindergarten)

6 Olivine Place (MCH, library, community spaces)
- 7 Olivine Sports Reserve (ovals, pavilion)

8 Patterson Drive Community Centre (MCH, kindergarten, library, community space)

9 Shenstone Park Community Centre (service delivery mix TBD)

10 Shenstone Park Sporting Precinct (sporting infrastructure, pavilion)

11 Family Services Hub and Youth Space (family support, youth services)

# Whittlesea township and surrounding rural area

Small and moderately growing population with a large and increasing proportion of people aged 50 years and over

The current population of Whittlesea Township and surrounding rural area is 8,761. While minimal growth is anticipated, the population is ageing, increasing demand for already highly utilised community meeting and activity spaces, as well as accessible health and wellbeing services.

Services and infrastructure for this rural community are predominantly located in the Whittlesea Township. For a small community, the area is well serviced for sport and leisure infrastructure. It has a variety of well-utilised local facilities including sports courts (tennis and basketball/netball), ovals (cricket and football), BMX and skate park facilities, as well as the Whittlesea Swim Centre. Two golf courses, located in the surrounding rural areas of Humevale and Yan Yean service both the local as well as regional population.

The Whittlesea Community Activity Centre is a highly activated hub in the Whittlesea Township including branch library, Maternal and Child Health consulting rooms, early learning centre and meeting and activity spaces. The Whittlesea Community House hosts a diverse program of classes and activities. Both facilities are ageing and at utilisation capacity. Kindergarten provision from the early learning centre located in the Whittlesea Community Activity Centre and nearby Whittlesea Preschool is meeting current demand for early education. In the medium-term, additional kindergarten programming will be required to meet increased demand for three- and four-year-old kindergarten resulting from the Victorian Government *Best Start, Best Life* early years reform.

The newly opened Whittlesea Service Hub is responding to local need in enabling residents in the north to connect with Council closer to home, while the preferred location for delivery of courts to meet demand for outdoor netball is currently being investigated.

Following are the priority capital projects that are underway or expected to commence within the next 10 years in the Whittlesea Township.

Whittlesea township and surrounding rural area				
Site	Action	Suburb	Short Term*	Medium – Long Term**
Whittlesea Park	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Whittlesea	✓	
Laurel St Modulars	Refurbishment of existing modular buildings to support delivery of kindergarten reform	Whittlesea		✓
Whittlesea netball courts	Undertake masterplan for provision of netball courts (site TBC)	Whittlesea		✓

\*Has already commenced or is expected to commence in the next five years (2024–2028)  
\*\*Is expected to commence in the next five to 10 years (2029–2033)

## Whittlesea township and surrounding rural area



- 1

AF Walker Recreation Reserve  
(sport & leisure)
- 2

Growling Frog Golf Course  
(sport & leisure)
- 3

Laurel St Modulars  
(kindergarten)
- 4

TH Hurrey Reserve  
(sport & leisure)
- 5

Whittlesea Bowls Club  
(sport & leisure)
- 6

Whittlesea Community Centre  
(kinder, MCH, community space, library)
- 7

Whittlesea Community House  
(neighbourhood house)
- 8

Whittlesea Park  
(sport & leisure)
- 9

Whittlesea Preschool  
(kindergarten)
- 10

Whittlesea Service Hub  
(civic services)
- 11

Whittlesea Swim Centre  
(community space)
- 12

Woodstock Community Hall  
(community space)

# Wollert

The current population of 31,300 is projected to grow rapidly, driving increased demand for services and facilities

A substantial population increase has occurred in Wollert over the last 20 years, a trend set to continue with the number of people living in the area predicted to grow by more than 35,000 people, to 66,928 people by 2040.

In recent years Council has delivered new multi-purpose community centres with a strong focus on the provision of early years services. This is fulfilling current demand for spaces for community activation, as well as kindergarten and Maternal Child Health services. The inclusion of a kindergarten on a newly opened primary school site and private childcare centres in Wollert are also responding to increasing demand for kindergarten services in the short-term. The soon-to-be operational community library hub in the Kirrip Community Centre will address a gap in library services for the Wollert community in the short-term.

Tennis courts, located in Tuttle Recreation Reserve are the only existing sport and leisure infrastructure for Wollert. Investment in new sporting facilities has not kept up with rapid population growth and this is placing excessive demand on infrastructure to the south, in particular established soccer clubs in Epping.

Population growth will increase demand for local access to spaces and places to play a diverse range of sport, to exercise and stay active and to meet and build social connection. Population growth combined with kindergarten reform will increase demand for co-located and integrated provision of early years services including kindergarten, Maternal and Child Health, playgroups and family support services. In the longer-term a branch library will be required to meet increased demand for library services.

Considered planning is required to ensure sites identified in Precinct Structure Plans for community use are optimised and have the adaptability to accommodate growing and changing needs for services, programs and activities. Additionally, a partnership approach is required to ensure sufficient resources are available to accommodate growing demand for services.

Following are the priority capital projects that are underway or expected to commence within the next 10 years in Wollert.

Wollert				
Site	Action	Suburb	Short Term*	Medium – Long Term**
Edgars Creek Sports Reserve	Design and construction of outdoor rectangular courts, oval playing field and community pavilion	Wollert	✓	
Sports Reserve (Alkira Boulevard)	Design and construction of rectangular playing fields and community pavilion	Wollert	✓	
North Wollert Sports Reserve	Design and construction of rectangular playing fields and a community pavilion	Wollert		✓
Sports Reserve (Baltrum Drive)	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Wollert		✓
Kirrip Community Library Hub	Internal refurbishment to establish a community library hub in the Kirrip Community Centre	Wollert	✓	
West Wollert Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery options, design and construction of a new community centre	Wollert	✓	
Baltrum Drive Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery options, design and construction of a new community centre	Wollert		✓
North Wollert Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery options, design and construction of a new community centre taking into consideration potential integration of community centre and community pavilion to service adjacent sports reserve	Wollert		✓
East Wollert Centre	Determine need for infrastructure to support early years/alternate use on this site based on Kinder Reform Options recommendations	Wollert		✓
Wollert Central Primary School Kindergarten	Work in partnership with the Victorian Government to deliver a kindergarten on school site	Wollert	✓	

\*Has already commenced or is expected to commence in the next five years (2024–2028)  
\*\*Is expected to commence in the next five to 10 years (2029–2033)

Wollert



KEY: ● Existing ● Existing (upgrade) ● New build

- 1

Baltrum Drive Community Centre  
(service delivery mix TBD)
- 2

Barrawang Primary School Kindergarten  
(kindergarten)
- 3

East Wollert Centre  
(service delivery mix TBD)
- 4

Edgars Creek Secondary College Oval  
(sport & leisure)
- 5

Edgars Creek Sports Reserve  
(sport & leisure)
- 6

Ganbu Gulinj Community Centre  
(kindergarten, MCH, community space)
- 7

Kirrip Community Centre  
(kindergarten, MCH, library, community spaces)
- 8

Korin Korin Child and Family Centre  
(kindergarten, MCH)
- 9

North Wollert Community Centre  
(service delivery mix TBD)
- 10

North Wollert Sports Reserve  
(sport & leisure)
- 11

Sports Reserve (Alkira Boulevard)  
(sport & leisure)
- 12

Sports Reserve (Baltrum Drive)  
(sport & leisure)
- 13

Tuttle Recreation Reserve  
(sport & leisure)
- 14

West Wollert Community Centre  
(service delivery mix TBD)
- 15

Wollert Central Primary School Kindergarten  
(kindergarten)
- 16

Wollert Community Centre  
(community space)

# South Morang, Mernda and Doreen

## Continued moderate growth with a significant increase in the older population

Major growth occurred in the central east suburbs of South Morang, Mernda and Doreen in the early 2000s and this area is currently home to more than 79,500 people. Moderate growth is projected between now and 2040 with a significant increase of residents aged 50 and over.

The central east has good access to early years education and services to meet current demand. In addition to nine kindergarten programs, operating mostly from multi-purpose community centres, several private childcare providers in the area offer funded kindergarten programs. Additional kindergarten programming will, however, be required to accommodate additional hours of three- and four-year-old kindergarten resulting from the Victorian Government *Best Start, Best Life* early years reform. As the population has aged, a reduction in demand for Maternal and Child Health services (currently operating from seven sites) provides an opportunity for consulting suites to be used by other health and service providers.

Although there are seven community hubs in the area, three of these have an early years’ focus and additional spaces for community groups to meet is sought after, including increased capacity for youth service programming and activities. A mobile service has been servicing the central suburbs with stops in Epping, Doreen and Mernda. A soon-to-open mini-branch library operating from retail space in the Mernda Town Centre will create a physical space and provide additional room for community to gather. In the medium-term, a larger branch library will be built adjacent to the Mernda Town Centre. The additional floor space will mean an expansion of library services and increased opportunities for programming and activities.

While there is local access to ovals, tennis courts, indoor courts and BMX, the supply of sporting and leisure infrastructure is insufficient to meet demand. Rectangular playing fields as well as aquatic, health and fitness facilities and additional courts are required to address the current and future shortfall. Delivery of sport and leisure infrastructure to be built as part of the Regional Aquatic and Sports Centre will serve a dual purpose of servicing the population across the municipality, as well as meet the need for local facilities.

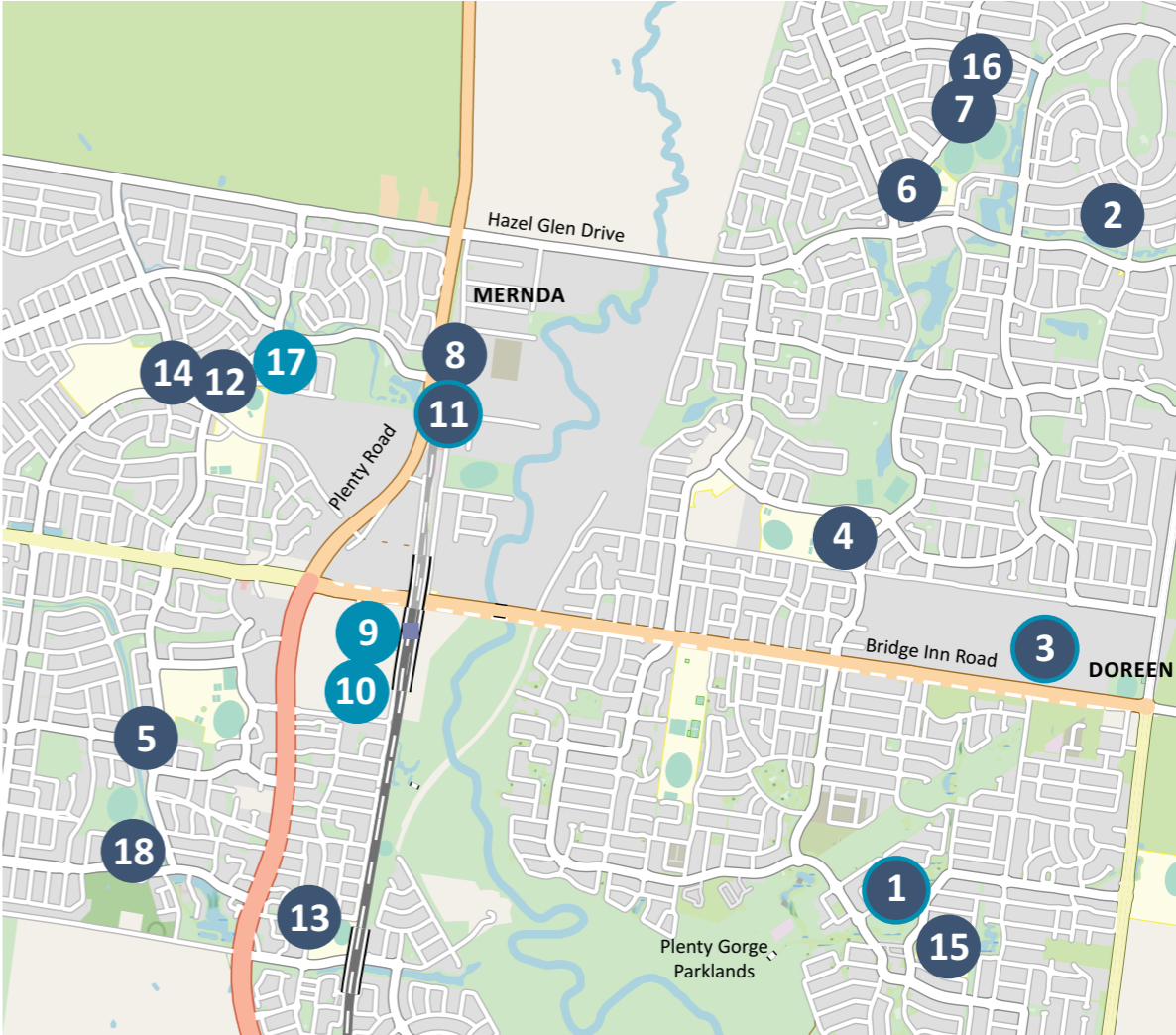
Following are the priority capital projects that are underway or expected to commence within the next 10 years in South Morang, Mernda and Doreen.

South Morang, Mernda and Doreen

South Morang, Mernda and Doreen				
Site	Action	Suburb	Short Term*	Medium – Long Term**
Mernda mini-branch library	Deliver a mini-branch library in retail space in the Mernda Town Centre shopping centre to provide services until construction of permanent Mernda branch library is complete	Mernda	✓	
Mernda Library	Investigate preferred service delivery options, design and construction of a permanent branch library	Mernda	✓	
Mernda Recreation Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Mernda	✓	
Hillsview Recreation Reserve	Deliver infrastructure improvements to provide female friendly facilities	South Morang	✓	
Hawkestone Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	South Morang	✓	
Ashley Park Sporting Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Doreen	✓	
Doreen Recreation Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Doreen	✓	

\*Has already commenced or is expected to commence in the next five years (2024–2028)  
\*\*Is expected to commence in the next five to 10 years (2029–2033)

Mernda and Doreen



- 1** Ashley Park (sport & leisure)

**2** Brookwood Community Centre (community space)

**3** Doreen Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

**4** Hazel Glen Child and Family Centre (kindergarten, MCH, community space)

**5** Jindi Family and Community Centre (kindergarten, MCH, community space)

**6** Laurimer Community Centre (community space)

**7** Laurimer Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)
- 8** Mernda Community House (neighbourhood house)

**9** Mernda Library (library)

**10** Mernda mini branch library (library)

**11** Mernda Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

**12** Mernda Social Support Service (Ageing well)

**13** Mernda South YMCA Early Learning Centre (kindergarten, MCH)
- 14** Mernda Village Community Activity Centre (kindergarten, MCH, community space)

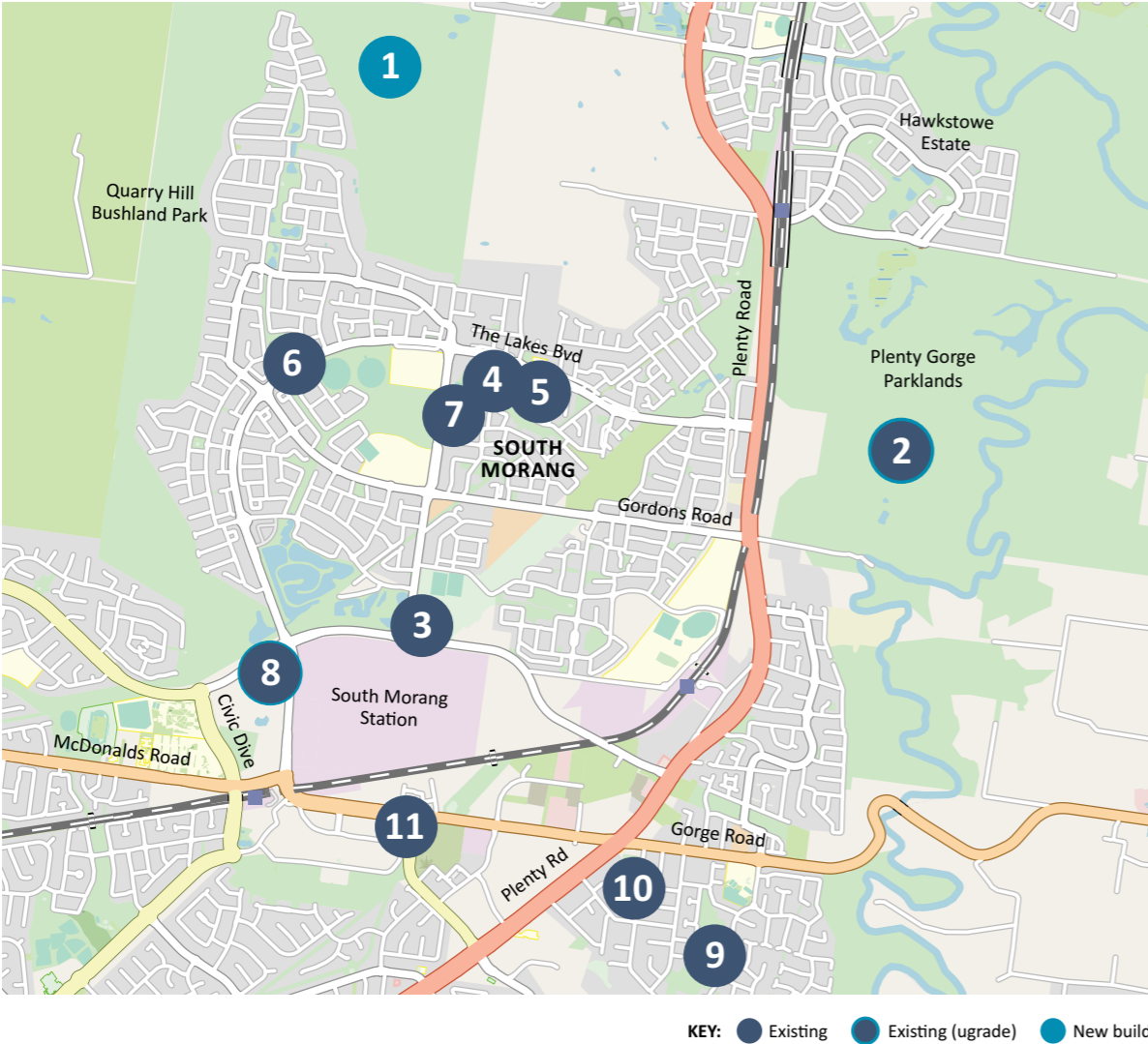
**15** Orchard Road Community and Early Learning Centre (kindergarten, MCH, community space)

**16** Painted Hills Recreation Reserve & community Pavilion (sport & leisure, community space)

**17** Regional Aquatic and Sports Centre at Mernda (sport & leisure)

**18** Waterview recreation reserve (sport & leisure)

South Morang



- 1 Aboriginal Gathering Place

2 Hawkestone Reserve (sport & leisure)

3 Hillsvie Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

4 Mill Park Lakes MCH (MCH)

5 Mill Park Lakes Preschool (kindergarten)

6 Mill Park Lakes Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)
- 7 Mill Park Lakes Tennis Club (sport & leisure)

8 Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (arts & culture)

9 Riverside Community Activity Centre (community space)

10 South Morang Preschool - Reid St (kindergarten)

11 The Edge (youth services)

Mill Park and Bundoora

Population growth in this established part of the municipality will continue steadily over the next 20 years

In contrast to rapidly expanding populations in the north, growth in the south-eastern suburbs of Mill Park and Bundoora will be slower, with an additional 6,083 residents anticipated by 2040.

Community infrastructure is characterised by ageing, often single purpose facilities. While service provision is generally adequate there is increased demand for services and support that facilitate ageing well and additional spaces are sought to support large community group activities.

The two community centres and neighbourhood house are used extensively and have limited capacity to accommodate additional demand, including for large meeting spaces. The recently refurbished Mill Park Library is well used with programs attracting large audiences.

Provision of early years infrastructure is sufficient for now, but additional kindergarten programming will be required to meet population growth and increased demand for three- and four-year-old kindergarten resulting from the Victorian Government *Best Start, Best Life* early years reform. The considerable number of single room kindergartens will be challenged in how they can implement this reform. There is an opportunity to look closely at these sites to identify whether they remain fit for purpose, whether there are opportunities for consolidating to fewer sites, or whether they can be expanded to support future demand for kindergarten.

Across the south east there are several sport and leisure facilities that provide for a variety of sports including bowling, tennis, basketball, aquatic and gym fitness, football, cricket, soccer, netball, softball/baseball, skate and gymnastics. Most of these facilities are ageing and will require upgrade or renewal over the next two decades to remain fit for purpose.

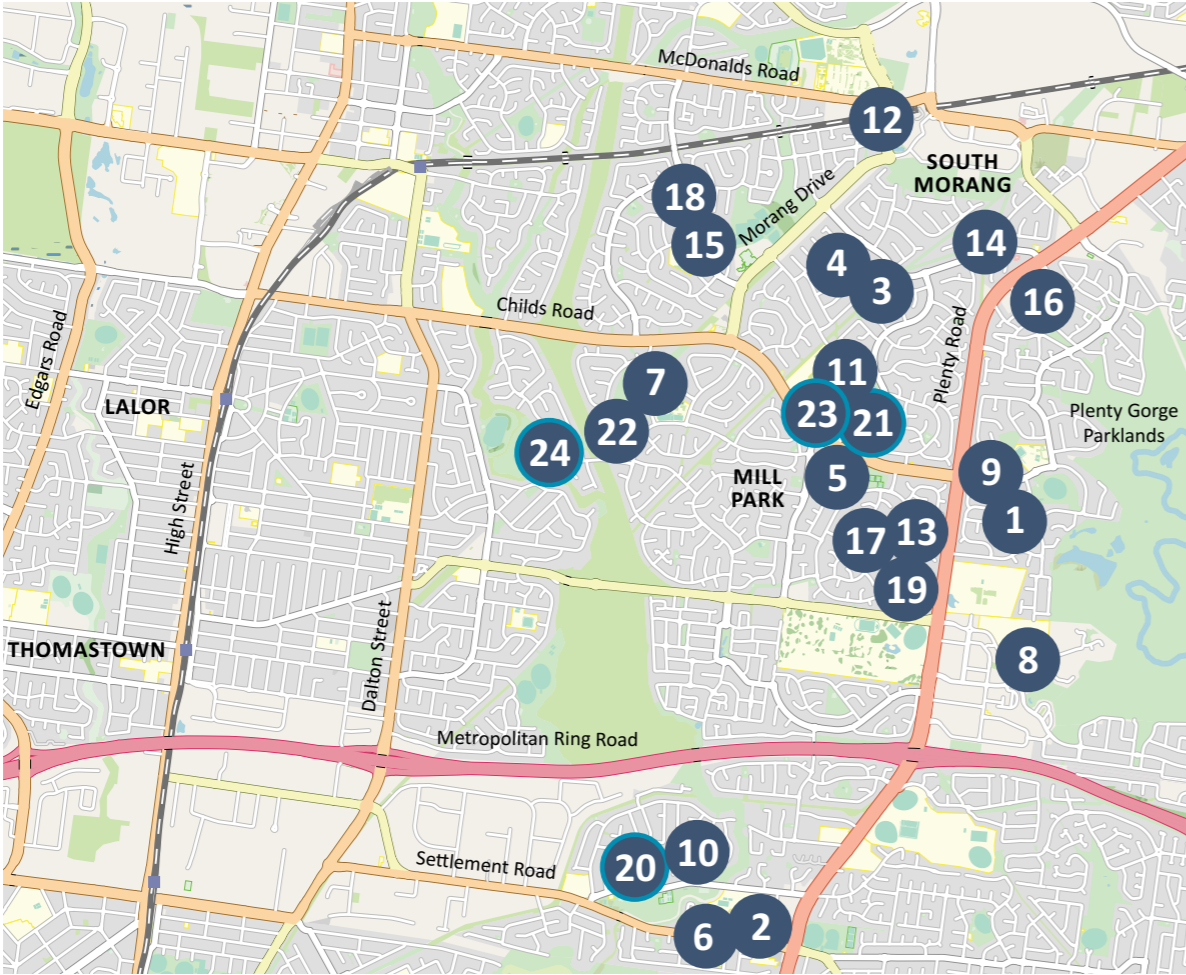
Following are the priority capital projects that are underway or expected to commence within the next 10 years in Mill Park and Bundoora.

Mill Park and Bundoora				
Site	Action	Suburb	Short Term*	Medium – Long Term**
Stables Kindergarten	Redevelop and expand kindergarten	Mill Park	✓	
WA Smith and Sycamore Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Mill Park / Lalor	✓	
Dr Harry Jenkins Reserve	Undertake tennis courts renewal to support equitable access	Mill Park	✓	
Redleap Recreation Reserve	Upgrade oval playing field	Mill Park	✓	
Norris Bank Reserve	Undertake tennis court redevelopment	Bundoora	✓	

\*Has already commenced or is expected to commence in the next five years (2024–2028)

\*\*Is expected to commence in the next five to 10 years (2029–2033)

Mill Park and Bundoora



KEY: ● Existing ● Existing (upgrade) ● New build

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 Blossom Park Kindergarten (kindergarten)                      | 9 Kelynack Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)                       | 17 Mill Park Preschool (kindergarten)              |
| 2 Bundoora MCH Centre (MCH)                                     | 10 McLeans Road Kindergarten (kindergarten)                           | 18 Mill Park Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)  |
| 3 Centenary Drive Kindergarten (kindergarten)                   | 11 Mill Park Basketball Stadium (sport & leisure)                     | 19 Miller Community Centre (community space)       |
| 4 Centenary Drive MCH (MCH)                                     | 12 Mill Park Children's Centre (MCH, human services)                  | 20 Norris Bank Reserve (sport & leisure)           |
| 5 Dr Harry Jenkins Reserve & Mill Park Tennis (sport & leisure) | 13 Mill Park Drive MCH (MCH)  | 21 Redleap Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)    |
| 6 Edward Street Preschool (kindergarten)                        | 14 Mill Park Heights Childcare Centre and Kindergarten (kindergarten) | 22 Roycroft Kindergarten (kindergarten)            |
| 7 Findon Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)                   | 15 Mill Park Leisure (sport & leisure)                                | 23 Stables Kindergarten (kindergarten)             |
| 8 Janefield Community Centre (community space)                  | 16 Mill Park Library (library)  | 24 WA Smith and Sycamore Reserve (sport & leisure) |

# Lalor, Thomastown and Epping

The large population of more than 76,000 will continue to grow, placing pressure on existing services and infrastructure

The established south-west area of Lalor, Thomastown and Epping will increase by over 19,000 people between 2023 and 2040 to 95,614.

There are many community facilities that include spaces for community activation including two library branches and a click and collect library service operating from the Galada Community Centre in the north of Epping, three halls, six community centres, two neighbourhood houses, a senior citizens centre, men's shed and community pavilions. With the exception of some recent community infrastructure delivered to service growing community in the north of Epping, infrastructure is ageing, several facilities have limited capacity to support increased use and some groups currently miss out on access. There is also unmet demand for spaces suitable for Men's Sheds and Community Sheds in the area and increased demand for services and supports that facilitate ageing well.

Provision of early years infrastructure is extensive. In addition to four Maternal and Child Health facilities and 17 kindergarten programs operating mostly from stand-alone facilities, several private childcare providers in the area (predominantly in Epping) and two kindergarten programs operate on school sites with more planned, including one to be delivered and operated by the Victorian Government under the *Best Start, Best Life* early years reform. Additional kindergarten programming will be required to meet population growth and increased demand for three- and four-year-old kindergarten resulting from the Victorian Government Best Start, Best Life early years reform, and the considerable number of single room kindergartens will be challenged in how they can implement this reform. There is an opportunity to look closely at these sites to identify whether they remain fit for purpose, whether there are opportunities for consolidating to fewer sites or whether they can be expanded to support future demand for kindergarten.

Across the south-west there are 25 sites that provide sport and leisure infrastructure catering for diverse sport and leisure activities, including tennis, soccer, gymnastics, bocce, cricket, football, athletics, skating, tennis, swimming and gym fitness. These facilities are sufficient to meet both current needs and to service the growing population in Lalor and Thomastown. However, many of these facilities are ageing and will require upgrade or renewal over the next two decades to remain fit for purpose.

There is a growing need for youth-focused, multi-use spaces suitable for a variety of activities, including creative arts spaces, general programming spaces and quiet spaces for generalist support and specialist service provision. Council is partnering with the Victorian Government and other partners to explore opportunities for meeting this demand.

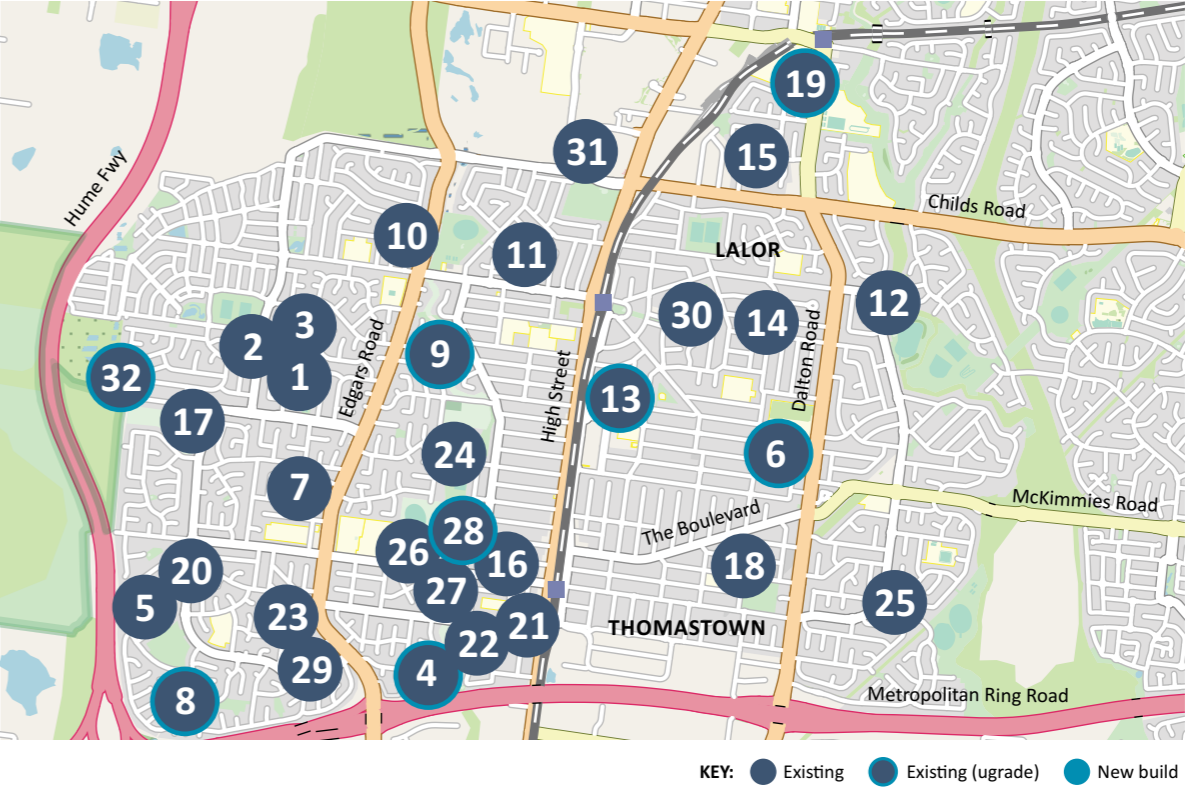
Following are the priority capital projects that are underway or expected to commence within the next 10 years in Lalor, Thomastown and Epping.

Lalor, Thomastown and Epping

Lalor, Thomastown and Epping				
Site	Action	Suburb	Short Term*	Medium – Long Term**
Whittlesea Public Gardens	Complete second stage of the Whittlesea Public Gardens redevelopment including skate park, rock climbing wall and basketball court	Lalor	✓	
Huskisson Reserve	Construct six new courts and community pavilion	Lalor	✓	
Partridge Recreation Reserve	Convert one existing rectangular field to synthetic surface and install new sports lighting to support synthetic field use	Lalor	✓	
Lalor Recreation Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Lalor	✓	
V R Michael Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to improve site condition and facilities	Lalor	✓	
Epping Recreation Reserve	Construct new netball courts, as well as renew existing tennis court surfaces.	Epping	✓	
Harvest Home Road Recreation Reserve	Complete replacement of the synthetic soccer pitch	Epping	✓	
HR Uren Recreation Reserve	Upgrade existing community pavilion	Thomastown	✓	
Sports Reserve (Cerridwen St)	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Epping		✓
Epping Regional Rec Reserve	Undertake a feasibility study to assess site conditions, service demand and sport and leisure infrastructure requirements	Epping		✓
Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre	Undertake renewal works including sustainability upgrades	Thomastown	✓	
Lalor Library and Conference Room, Lalor Neighbourhood House, May Road Senior Citizens Centre, French Street Hall	Undertake masterplan of the May Street precinct in Lalor to investigate opportunities to upgrade and integrate facilities, enhance access and utilisation, unlock public realm potential, and improve perceptions of safety	Lalor	✓	
Epping Memorial Hall	Complete a community halls evaluation to better understand the challenges and opportunities for uses in community halls across the eastern suburbs and recommend sites for renewal. Undertake a masterplan of the site as part of broader consideration of the Memorial Avenue precinct.	Epping	✓	
Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre	Complete facility extension and upgrade works	Thomastown	✓	
Boori Children's Service and Derby Meadows Preschool	Design and construction of an integrated kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health facility	Epping	✓	
Dalton Road Preschool and Dalton Road Maternal and Child Health Centre	Design and construction of an integrated kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health facility	Thomastown	✓	

\*Has already commenced or is expected to commence in the next five years (2024–2028)  
\*\*Is expected to commence in the next five to 10 years (2029–2033)

Lalor and Thomastown



- 1 Barry Road Community Centre (community space, ageing well)

2 Barry Road Preschool (kindergarten)

3 Barry Road Tennis Club (sport & leisure)

4 Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre (kindergarten)

5 Carrington Children's Centre (playgroups)

6 Dalton Road Preschool and Dalton Road MCH (kindergarten, MCH)

7 Harbard Street Kindergarten (kindergarten)

8 HR Uren Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

9 Huskisson Reserve (sport & leisure)

10 Jacaranda Preschool - Kingsway Drive (kindergarten)

11 Jacaranda Preschool - Nebel St (kindergarten)
- 12 Lalor East Preschool (kindergarten)

13 Lalor Library and Neighbourhood House, May Road Senior Citizens Centre, French Street Hall (community spaces, library, neighbourhood house)

14 Lalor Primary School Kindergarten (kindergarten)

15 Lalor Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

16 Main Street Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

17 Mosaic Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

18 Nick Ascenzo Community Centre (community space)

19 Partridge Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

20 RGC Cook Community Pavilion & Reserve (sport & leisure, community space)

21 Spring St Hall (community space)
- 22 Spring St Kindergarten (kindergarten)

23 Thomastown Childcare Centre (childcare, kindergarten)

24 Thomas St Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

25 Thomastown East Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)

26 Thomastown Library (library, MCH)

27 Thomastown Neighbourhood Centre (neighbourhood house)

28 Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre (sport & leisure)

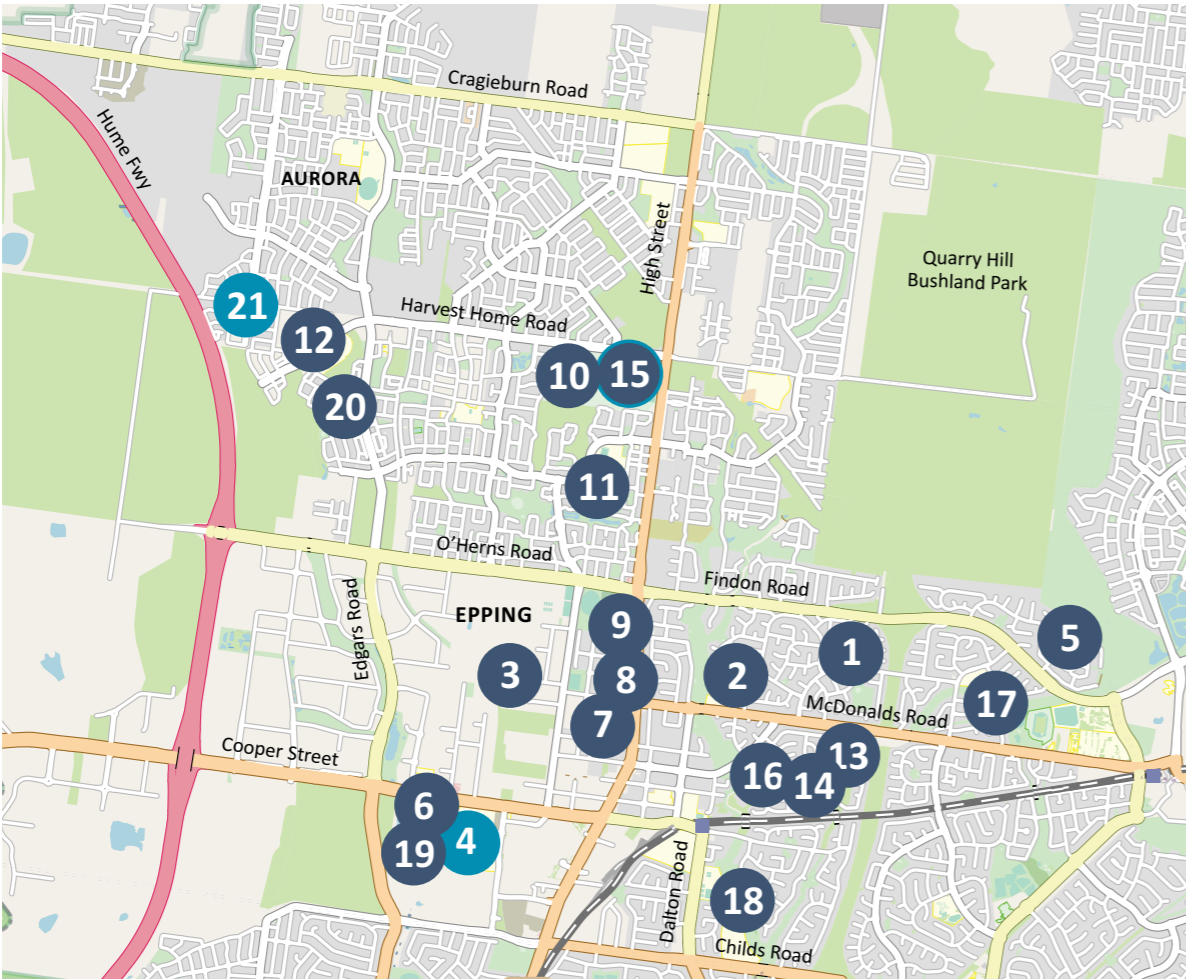
29 Thomastown West Kindergarten (kindergarten)

30 Vasey Park Preschool (kindergarten)

31 VR Michael Reserve (sport & leisure)

32 Whittlesea Public Gardens (sport & leisure)

Epping



KEY: Existing Existing (upgrade) New build

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1 Boori Children's Centre and Derby Meadows Preschool (kindergarten, MC, plagroup) | 8 Epping Preschool (kindergarten)  | 15 Harvest Home Road Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)        |
| 2 Darebin Creek Parklands (sport & leisure)  | 9 Epping Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)                                      | 16 Lowalde Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)                  |
| 3 Duffy St Recreation Reserve (sport & leisure)                                    | 10 Epping Soccer stadium (sport & leisure)   | 17 Meadow Glen International Athletics Reserve (sport & leisure) |
| 4 Epping Central (community space, library, arts & culture)                        | 11 Epping Views Family and Community Centre (children & families, community space) | 18 Oakbrook Kindergarten (kindergarten)                          |
| 5 Epping Community Centre & Epping North Preschool (community space, kindergarten) | 12 Galada Community Centre (children & families, community space, library)         | 19 Pacific Epping MCH (MCH)                                      |
| 6 Epping Community Services Hub (human services)                                   | 13 Greenbrook Community House (neighbourhood house)                                | 20 Prism Park (sport & leisure)                                  |
| 7 Epping Memorial Hall (community space)   | 14 Greenbrook Kindergarten (kindergarten)  | 21 Sports Reserve (Cerridwen Street) (sport & leisure)           |



# Appendix 1

## Community infrastructure

The following is a list of Council owned and or/operated community infrastructure and proposed projects:

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
Aboriginal Gathering Place	Complete design and build an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland in South Morang	South Morang	short-term
AF Walker Recreation Reserve	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council’s ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Whittlesea	subject to Council’s maintenance and renewal program
Ageing Well Hub – north	Investigate the feasibility of delivering wellness hubs designed to support partnership approaches with other aged care providers and community groups for co-location of a range of complementary health and wellbeing services. (Potential sites include the Barry Road Community Centre in Lalor, expansion of the Mernda Social Support Centre and a planned for community centre in the north of the municipality)	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
Ashley Park Sporting Reserve	Undertake site masterplan and commence design of rectangular fields and community pavilion	Doreen	short-term
Baltrum Drive Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre	Wollert	medium/long-term
Barrawang Primary School (Kindergarten)	Consider infrastructure improvements to the kindergarten on the school site as part of Council’s ongoing maintenance and renewal program	Wollert	subject to Council’s maintenance and renewal program
Barry Road Community Centre	In the long term, investigate the feasibility of delivering wellness hubs designed to support partnership approaches with other aged care providers and community groups for co-location of a range of complementary health and wellbeing services, considering Barry Rd Community Centre as a potential site to support community in the South of the municipality	Thomastown	beyond 10 years
Barry Road Preschool	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council’s response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Thomastown	short-term
Barry Road Tennis Club	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council’s ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Thomastown	subject to Council’s maintenance and renewal program

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
Blossom Park Kindergarten	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council’s response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Mill Park	short-term
Boori Children’s Service and Derby Meadows Preschool	Design and construction of an integrated kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health facility	Epping	short-term
Brookwood Community Centre	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council’s ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Doreen	subject to Council’s maintenance and renewal program
Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre	Complete facility extension and upgrade works	Thomastown	short-term
Bundoora MCH Centre	Leased facility. Consider internal improvements as part of Council’s routine maintenance and renewal program	Bundoora	subject to Council’s maintenance and renewal program
Carrington Children’s Centre	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council’s response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Thomastown	short-term
Centenary Drive Kindergarten and maternal and child health centre	Consider kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health provision as part of the options paper to inform Council’s response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Mill Park	short-term
Community Services Hub	In the long-term investigate the feasibility of delivering a community services hub in the north of the municipality in partnership with local health and wellbeing service providers, to encourage service delivery and collaboration in the north of the municipality	Donnybrook / Wollert	beyond 10 years
Dalton Road Preschool and Dalton Road Maternal and Child Health	Design and construction of an integrated kindergarten and Maternal and Child Health facility	Thomastown	short-term
Darebin Creek Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options for a new community centre	Donnybrook	short-term
Darebin Creek Parklands skate facility	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council’s ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council’s maintenance and renewal program
Darebin Creek Sports Reserve	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	medium/long-term
Donnybrook Farmhouse Community Centre	Investigate preferred service delivery and design and construction options of a new community centre	Donnybrook	medium/long-term

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Donnybrook Farmhouse Sports Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Donnybrook Primary School (Kindergarten)</b>	Work in partnership with the Victorian Government to deliver a kindergarten on school site	Donnybrook	short-term
<b>Doreen Recreation Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Doreen	short term
<b>Dr Harry Jenkins Reserve</b>	Undertake tennis courts renewal to support equitable access	Mill Park	short-term
<b>Duffy St Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>East Wollert Centre</b>	Determine need for infrastructure to support early years/alternate use on this site, based on Kinder Reform Options recommendations	Wollert	medium/long-term
<b>East Wollert Sports Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Edgars Creek Secondary College oval</b>	Continue to maintain the oval surface and upgrade infrastructure improvements in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Wollert	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Edgars Creek Sports Reserve</b>	Design and construction of outdoor rectangular courts, oval playing field and community pavilion	Wollert	short-term
<b>Edward Street Preschool</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Bundoora	short-term
<b>English St Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options for this site	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Epping Central Health and Wellbeing Community Hub / Epping Central Information Learning and Cultural Hub</b>	Continue to progress planning for the long-term development of Epping Central, designated as a metropolitan activity centre	Epping	short-term
<b>Epping Community Centre (contains Epping North Preschool)</b>	Consider infrastructure improvements as part of Council's routine maintenance and renewal program  Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Epping Community Services Hub</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Epping Memorial Hall</b>	Complete a community halls evaluation to better understand the challenges and opportunities for uses in community halls across the eastern suburbs and recommend sites for renewal  Undertake a masterplan of the site as part of broader consideration of the Memorial Avenue precinct	Epping	short-term
<b>Epping North Community Centre (Aurora Estate)</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre	Epping	beyond 10 years
<b>Epping North West Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Epping North West Sports Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Epping Preschool</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Epping	short-term
<b>Epping Recreation Reserve</b>	Construct new netball courts, as well as renew existing tennis court surfaces	Epping	short-term
<b>Epping Regional Recreation Reserve</b>	Undertake a feasibility study to assess site conditions and sport and leisure infrastructure requirements	Wollert	medium/long-term
<b>Epping soccer stadium</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Epping Views Family and Community Centre</b>	Consider infrastructure improvements as part of Council's routine maintenance and renewal program	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Epping West ovals</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Epping	beyond 10 years
<b>Eucalyptus Parade Kindergarten</b>	Consider infrastructure improvements to the kindergarten on the school site as part of Council's maintenance and renewal program	Donnybrook	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Family services hub and youth space</b>	Review opportunities to create a family services hub that includes access to allied health and parenting support services and a separate but interconnected middle years/youth space (site TBC)	Donnybrook	short-term
<b>Findon Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mill Park	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>French St Hall</b>	Undertake masterplan of the May Street precinct in Lalor to investigate opportunities to upgrade and integrate facilities, enhance access and utilisation, unlock public realm potential, and improve perceptions of safety	Lalor	short-term
<b>Galada Community Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Ganbu Gulinj Community Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Wollert	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Greenbrook Community House</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Greenbrook Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Epping	short-term
<b>Growling Frog Golf Course</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Yan Yean	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Harbard Street Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform.	Thomastown	short-term
<b>Harvest Home Road Recreation Reserve</b>	Complete replacement of the synthetic soccer pitch	Epping	short-term
<b>Hawkestone Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	South Morang	short-term
<b>Hayes Hill Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Hazel Glen Child and Family Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Doreen	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Hillsview Recreation Reserve</b>	Deliver infrastructure improvements to provide female friendly facilities	South Morang	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>HR Uren Recreation Reserve</b>	Upgrade existing community pavilion and provide lighting to the synthetic pitch	Thomastown	short-term
<b>Huskisson Reserve</b>	Construct six new courts and community pavilion	Lalor	short-term
<b>Jacaranda Preschool – Kingsway Drive</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Lalor	short-term
<b>Jacaranda Preschool – Nebel St</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Lalor	short-term
<b>Janefield Community Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Bundoora	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Jindi Family and Community Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mernda	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Kelynack Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mill Park	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Kirrip Community Centre and community library hub</b>	Internal refurbishment to establish a community library hub in the Kirrip Community Centre	Wollert	short-term
<b>Korin Korin Child and Family Centre</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Wollert	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Koukora Drive Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Koukora Drive Sporting precinct</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Lalor East Preschool</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Lalor	short-term

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Lalor Library and conference room</b>	Undertake masterplan of the May Street precinct in Lalor to investigate opportunities to upgrade and integrate facilities, enhance access and utilisation, unlock public realm potential, and improve perceptions of safety	Lalor	short-term
<b>Lalor neighbourhood house</b>	Undertake masterplan of the May Street precinct in Lalor to investigate opportunities to upgrade and integrate facilities, enhance access and utilisation, unlock public realm potential, and improve perceptions of safety	Lalor	short-term
<b>Lalor Primary School (Kindergarten)</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Lalor	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Lalor Recreation Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Lalor	short term
<b>Laurel St Kindergarten Modulars</b>	Refurbishment of existing modular buildings to support delivery of kindergarten reform	Whittlesea	medium/long-term
<b>Laurimer Community Centre</b>	Complete a community halls evaluation to better understand the challenges and opportunities for uses in community halls across the eastern suburbs and recommend sites for renewal	Doreen	short-term
<b>Laurimer Recreation Reserve</b>	Consider infrastructure improvements to the kindergarten on the school site as part of Council's routine maintenance and renewal program	Doreen	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Lockerbie East Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Lockerbie East Sports Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Lowalde Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Main Street Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Thomastown	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>May Road Senior Citizens Centre</b>	Undertake masterplan of the May Street precinct in Lalor to investigate opportunities to upgrade and integrate facilities, enhance access and utilisation, unlock public realm potential, and improve perceptions of safety	Lalor	short-term

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>McLeans Road Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Bundoora	short-term
<b>Meadow Glen International Athletics Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mernda Community House</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mernda	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mernda Library</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options, design and construction of a permanent branch library	Mernda	short-term
<b>Mernda mini-branch library</b>	Deliv a mini-branch library in retail space in the Mernda Town Centre shopping centre to provide services until construction of permanent Mernda branch library is complete	Mernda	short-term
<b>Mernda Recreation Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Mernda	short-term
<b>Mernda Social Support Centre</b>	Evaluate the Mernda Social Support Centre model to ascertain learnings and applicability to other Council community centres and consider long-term expansion	Mernda	short-term
<b>Mernda South YMCA Early Learning Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mernda	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mernda Village Community Activity Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mernda	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Basketball Stadium</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mill Park	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Children's Centre</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Mill Park	short-term
<b>Mill Park Drive MCH</b>	Investigate the feasibility of integrating Maternal and Child Health services with the adjacent Mill Park Preschool (located within the Miller Community Centre) as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life kindergarten reforms	Mill Park	short-term

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Mill Park Heights Childcare Centre and Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Mill Park	short-term
<b>Mill Park Lakes MCH</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	South Morang	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Lakes Preschool</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	South Morang	short-term
<b>Mill Park Lakes Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	South Morang	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Lakes Tennis Club</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	South Morang	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Leisure</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mill Park	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Library</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mill Park	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Preschool</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Mill Park	short-term
<b>Mill Park Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mill Park	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Mill Park Tennis Club</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	South Morang	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Miller Community Centre</b>	Investigate the feasibility of integrating Maternal and Child Health services with the adjacent Mill Park Preschool (located within the Miller Community Centre) as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life kindergarten reforms	Mill Park	short-term
<b>Mosaic Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Lalor	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Nick Ascenzo Community Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Thomastown	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Norris Bank Reserve</b>	Upgrade tennis infrastructure in line with Council's renewal program	Bundoora	short-term
<b>North Wollert Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options, design and construction of a new community centre taking into consideration potential integration of community centre and community pavilion to service adjacent sports reserve	Wollert	medium/long-term
<b>North Wollert Sports Reserve</b>	Design and construction of rectangular playing fields and a community pavilion	Wollert	medium/long-term
<b>Oakbrook Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Epping	short-term
<b>Olivine Place</b>	Investigate options for future community service provision – and corresponding infrastructure – from Olivine Place	Donnybrook	short-term
<b>Olivine Sports Reserve</b>	Work in partnership with developer to complete delivery of oval playing fields and community pavilion	Donnybrook	short-term
<b>Orchard Road Community and Early Learning Centre</b>	Consulting rooms leased for Council provision of Maternal and Child Health services	Doreen	
<b>Pacific Epping MCH</b>	Consulting rooms leased for Council provision of Maternal and Child Health services	Epping	
<b>Painted Hills Community Pavilion and Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Doreen	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Patridge Recreation Reserve</b>	Convert one existing rectangular field to synthetic surface and install new sports lighting to support synthetic field use	Lalor	short-term
<b>Patterson Drive Community Centre</b>	Complete construction of community centre including kindergarten, MCH consulting rooms, community spaces and community library hub	Donnybrook	short-term
<b>Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre</b>	Implement a new operating model for the Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre to increase utilisation and precinct vibrancy and investigate options to house a gallery within the centre	South Morang	short-term
<b>Prism Park</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Epping	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Quarry Hills Central Multipurpose Sports Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	South Morang	beyond 10 years
<b>Quarry Hills Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre	South Morang	beyond 10 years
<b>Redleap Recreation Reserve</b>	Upgrade oval playing field	Mill Park	short-term
<b>Regional Sports and Aquatic Facility</b>	Deliver Stages 1 and 2 of the Regional Aquatic and Sports Centre at Mernda – a regional level indoor and outdoor sports, leisure and aquatic facility Continue to seek co-investment for Stage 3	Mernda	short-term
<b>RGC Cook Community Pavillion &amp; Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Thomastown	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Riverside Community Activity Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	South Morang	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Roycroft Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Mill Park	short-term
<b>Shenstone Park Community Centre and Shenstone Park Neighbourhood House</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery and design and construction options for a new community centre taking into consideration potential integration of community centre and community pavilion to service adjacent sports reserve	Donnybrook	short-term
<b>Shenstone Park Sporting Precinct</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	short-term
<b>South Morang Preschool – Reid St</b>	Develop an options paper and implementation plan to provide strategies and recommendations on future service modelling, delivery and infrastructure to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life kindergarten reform. This will include investigating the feasibility of expansion/renewal of existing stand-alone kindergartens	South Morang	short-term
<b>Sports Reserve (Alkira Boulevard, Wollert)</b>	Design and construction of rectangular playing fields and community pavilion	Wollert	short-term
<b>Sports Reserve (Baltrum Drive)</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Wollert	medium/long-term

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Sports Reserve (Cerridwen Street, Epping)</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Epping	medium/long-term
<b>Sports Reserve (corner Epping and Cragieburn Rd)</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Spring St Hall</b>	Complete a community halls evaluation to better understand the challenges and opportunities for uses in community halls across the eastern suburbs and recommend sites for renewal	Thomastown	short-term
<b>Spring St Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Thomastown	short-term
<b>Stables Kindergarten</b>	Redevelop and expand kindergarten	Mill Park	short-term
<b>TH Hurrey Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Yan Yean	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>The Edge – City of Whittlesea Youth Services</b>	Following completion of the Youth Service Model and Infrastructure Response, identify the spaces and infrastructure required to support the needs of young people living, studying or working in the City of Whittlesea	South Morang	short-term
<b>Thomas St Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Thomastown	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Thomastown Childcare Centre</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Thomastown	
<b>Thomastown East Recreation Reserve</b>	Consider infrastructure improvements as part of Council's routine maintenance and renewal program	Thomastown	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Thomastown Library (includes Main St MCH Centre and Thomastown Neighbourhood Centre)</b>	In the long-term undertake renewal of Thomastown Library to maintain compliance and meet fit-for-purpose requirements	Thomastown	beyond 10 years
<b>Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre</b>	Undertake renewal works including sustainability upgrades	Thomastown	short-term
<b>Thomastown West Kindergarten</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Thomastown	short-term

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Tuttle Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Wollert	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Vasey Park Preschool</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Lalor	short-term
<b>VR Michael Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to improve site condition and facilities	Lalor	short-term
<b>WA Smith and Sycamore Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Mill Park / Lalor	short-term
<b>Waterview Recreation Reserve</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Mernda	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>West Wollert Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options, design and construction of a new community centre	Wollert	short-term
<b>Westgarth Heritage and Lutheran Church and Ziebell's Farm</b>	Consider development of a Masterplan for the Westgarthtown Pinoneer Precinct in consultation key stakeholders  In consultation with Heritage Victoria, consider improvements to infrastructure of Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum  Investigate a stronger integration and relationship between Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and the Westgarthtown Pioneer Precinct Reserve in consultation with key stakeholders	Thomastown	beyond 10 years
<b>Whittlesea Service Hub</b>	Evaluate the success of the Council Service Hub in Whittlesea and conduct regular needs analysis and benchmarking of our growing community to determine if and where additional council service hubs are required to support our community	Whittlesea	short-term
<b>Whittlesea Bowls Club</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Whittlesea	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Whittlesea Community Centre (includes library) &amp; Early Learning Centre including Laurel St Preschool</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Whittlesea	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Whittlesea Community House</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Whittlesea	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program

Site	Action	Suburb	Timeline
<b>Whittlesea Netball Courts</b>	Undertake masterplan for provision of netball courts (site TBC)	Whittlesea	medium/long-term
<b>Whittlesea Park</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Whittlesea	short-term
<b>Whittlesea Preschool</b>	Consider kindergarten provision as part of the options paper to inform Council's response and delivery of the Best Start, Best Life early years reform	Whittlesea	short-term
<b>Whittlesea Public Gardens</b>	Complete second stage of the Whittlesea Public Gardens redevelopment including skate park, rock climbing wall and basketball court	Lalor	short-term
<b>Whittlesea Swim Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Whittlesea	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Wollert Central Primary School Kindergarten</b>	Work in partnership with the Victorian Government to deliver a kindergarten on school site	Wollert	short-term
<b>Wollert Community Centre</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Wollert	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program
<b>Wollert Major Town Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre and outdoor active space	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Wollert MTC Indoor Leisure Centre</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Wollert MTC Performing Arts Space</b>	In the long-term investigate the feasibility of dedicated arts and cultural spaces in the north of the municipality	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Wollert Regional Recreation Reserve (Wollert Multipurpose-sports reserve)</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Wollert	beyond 10 years
<b>Woodlands Community Centre</b>	Investigate preferred service delivery options and design and construction options of a new community centre	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Woodlands Sports Reserve</b>	Undertake site masterplan to review site conditions and confirm project scope, including sport and leisure infrastructure provision	Donnybrook	beyond 10 years
<b>Woodstock Community Hall</b>	Continue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure in line with Council's ongoing maintenance and renewal programs	Woodstock	subject to Council's maintenance and renewal program



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## 5.5 Connected Communities

### 5.5.1 Draft Connected Community Strategy

**Responsible Officer:** Director Community Wellbeing

**Author:** Unit Manager, Social Planning

**In Attendance:** Acting Manager Community & Place  
Unit Manager Social Planning

**Attachments:**

1. Draft Connected Community Strategy [5.5.1.1 - 36 pages]

#### Purpose

This report:

- Presents the draft Connected Community Strategy 2023 -2028 (draft CCS).
- Seeks Council endorsement for community consultation on the draft CCS.

#### Brief Overview

The draft Connected Community Strategy 2023 -2028 (draft CCS) at **Attachment 5.5.1.1** is one of seven strategies comprising Council's Integrated Planning Framework and relates to Goal 1: Connected Community in *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All*.

The draft CCS outlines how Council will contribute to fostering an inclusive, healthy, safe, and participating community, where all community members in the City of Whittlesea are supported and have a sense of belonging.

Twenty-four (24) priorities for the future are presented across eight Key Focus Areas, informed by the Background Research Report 2022, extensive community and stakeholder engagement and the consolidation of 36 individual policies and strategies. The draft CCS Key Focus Areas are:

1. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities
2. Arts, Culture and Events
3. Multicultural Communities
4. Access, Inclusion and Discrimination
5. Physical and Mental Health
6. Life Stages
7. Community Safety
8. Community Participation

Once the final Connected Community Strategy 2023 -2028 is endorsed, action plans will be developed in response to the priorities in each focus area. These plans will articulate the specific work Council will undertake and will also identify how we will measure progress.

### Recommendation

#### THAT Council:

1. **Endorses the draft City of Whittlesea Connected Community Strategy at Attachment 1 for community consultation.**
2. **Notes that targeted consultation on the draft City of Whittlesea Connected Community Strategy will be undertaken with key stakeholder groups including Whittlesea Youth Advisory Committee, Whittlesea Disability Network, Whittlesea Community Futures and the Yarra Plenty Regional Library Corporation.**
3. **Notes the final Connected Community Strategy incorporating feedback from community consultation will be presented to Council for endorsement at the 19 December 2023 Council Meeting.**

### Key Information

#### Background

##### Integrated Planning Framework

In 2021, Council adopted an Integrated Planning Framework (IPF) approach to rationalise more than 100 existing community-facing policies and strategies across the organisation. The IPF uses a four-tier hierarchy to articulate all strategic and operational documents, with *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All* being tier one with seven new strategies at tier two. The tier two strategies are the Connected Community Strategy, Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy, Strong Local Economy Strategy, Sustainable Environment Strategy, High Performing Organisation Strategy, Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan and the Reconciliation Action Plan.

The draft CCS relates to Goal 1: Connected community in *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All* (Whittlesea 2040).

##### Connected Community Strategy

Development of the draft CCS involved analysis of data and research detailed in the Background Research Report 2022, community and stakeholder engagement and consolidation of 36 policies and strategies. Over 80 internal subject matter experts were engaged through this process and contributed to the development of outcomes, benefits, and indicators across eight Connected Community Key Focus Areas: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities

1. Arts, Culture and Events
2. Multicultural Communities
3. Access, Inclusion and Discrimination

4. Physical and Mental Health
5. Life Stages
6. Community Safety
7. Community Participation

Based on Whittlesea 2040 goals and key directions and aligned with the City of Whittlesea Outcomes Measurement Framework, the draft CCS establishes the following outcomes for three Connected Community Key Directions. Each of the Key Focus Areas are reflected in the outcomes.

**Key Direction 1: A socially cohesive community**

- All members of our community feel that they belong, are valued and respected
- Our community strengthens connections between diverse cultures
- Our community values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and celebrates their rich diverse cultures

**Key Direction 2: A healthy and safe community**

- Our community is healthy, well, and physically active
- Our community can live independently and safely
- Our children and young people are supported to thrive
- Our community experiences financial wellbeing
- Our community feels safe and supported
- Our community experiences healthy, equal, and respectful relationships, and live free from abuse and family violence
- Our community is prepared and able to respond and recover from emergencies

**Key Direction 3: A participating community**

- Our community is empowered and enabled to participate in decision-making
- Our community values and acknowledges volunteering

**Action Plans**

If the final Connected Community Strategy is endorsed in December 2023, action planning will commence for each focus area. Two-year action plans will determine the specific work that Council will undertake to respond to the key priorities in each focus area and will also outline how Council will measure successful delivery.

## Community Consultation and Engagement

Each focus area in the draft CCS has been informed by extensive community consultation and engagement.

### **Whittlesea 2040: A place for all**

In 2018, Council engaged with over 4,000 people, through submissions, workshops, and forums to inform the preparation of *Whittlesea 2040*.

### **Community Plan: 2021–2025**

In early 2021, Council consulted with community on the development of the Community Plan 21-25 to identify Council priorities for the next four years. The consultation process engaged with more than 1,300 people.

### **Household Survey 2021**

In 2021 a total of 1,545 individual respondents completed the Household Survey. Residents were asked about a range of topics, including their housing, health and wellbeing, employment, and community participation.

### **Community Priorities Focus Group**

Two Community Priorities Focus Group sessions were held in June 2023 to directly inform development of the draft CCS Key Priorities. The Focus Group comprised 16 residents, representing a diversity of age groups, genders, abilities, cultural backgrounds, suburbs, and household structures. If the draft CCS is endorsed for consultation, Community Priorities Focus Group participants will be re-engaged to seek feedback and ensure their input has been captured accordingly.

### **Integrated Planning Framework Consultation**

As part of the final round of community consultation for the Connected Community Strategy, Liveable Neighbourhood Strategy and Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plans additional input will be sought from Council Advisory Committees.

## 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.

This draft CCS is aligned with the following Council Strategic documents:

- Whittlesea 2040: A place for all
- Community Plan 2021-2025
- Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026
- Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032
- High Performing Organisation Strategy 2024-2034
- Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan 2024-2034
- Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy 2024-2034
- Stretch Reconciliation Plan 2023-2027

### Considerations

The close synergies between the draft CCS, the draft Long Term Community Infrastructure Plan and the Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy should be noted. The project teams for each of these three strategies worked in close collaboration to ensure an integrated approach and also took a coordinated approach to community consultation and engagement.

#### Environmental

The draft CCS links to the Sustainable Environment Strategy in the following ways:

- Support good health and wellbeing in a changing climate
- Improve access to better and safer public open spaces
- Support the community to achieve food security
- Empower the community to take action to create a sustainable environment and value and protect the Green Wedge

#### Social, Cultural and Health

The draft CCS sets out the vision for the social, cultural and health considerations for the City of Whittlesea for the next 10 years.

#### Economic

The draft CCS links to the Strong Local Economy Strategy in the following ways:

- Support education, training pathways and lifelong learning
- Improving economic participation for target groups
- Support libraries as spaces to grow and develop

#### Financial Implications

Financial implications for delivery of the final Connected Community Strategy will be determined through the development of two-year Connected Community Action Plans and be subject to Council's budget processes.

The first two-year Action Plan will be developed in 2024.

### Link to Strategic Risk

#### **Strategic Risk** *Financial Sustainability - Inability to meet current and future expenditure*

Implementation of the final Connected Community Strategy 2023 -2028 will require a commitment to the delivery of services and infrastructure that are essential for community wellbeing. The action planning phase will address this risk.

### Implementation Strategy

#### **Communication**

If endorsed, the final Connected Community Strategy will be promoted to City of Whittlesea community, including residents and other stakeholders.

Communications for the Connected Community Strategy will take into consideration the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) profile of City of Whittlesea residents. In 2021, 15,215 non-English speakers in the City of Whittlesea reported difficulty speaking English. The Connected Community Action Plan will ensure that communication methods are targeted and user-friendly.

#### **Critical Dates**

A six-week community consultation period on the draft CCS is proposed across September and October 2023 with the final Connected Community Strategy 2023 - 2028 being presented to Council for endorsement on 19 December 2023.

### 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.

### Conclusion

The draft CCS has been informed by extensive research and consultation. It consolidates and builds on existing policies and articulates Council's priorities towards a connected community over the next five years.



# Connected Community Strategy

2023 – 2033

# Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and the Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of this place.

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# Executive Summary

The Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033 (the Strategy) outlines the City of Whittlesea's commitment to fostering an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming place where all community members are celebrated and supported.

The Strategy 2023 - 2033 is one of seven strategies comprising Council's Integrated Planning Framework and relates to Goal 1: Connected Community in Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All.

The Strategy presents eight Key Focus Areas that respond to the needs and aspirations of the community.

Each Focus Area provides priorities for action that have been informed by background research, extensive community and stakeholder engagement and the review and consolidation of 36 individual policies and strategies.

Informed by the analysis of trends and engagement with community, the Strategy:

- Provides an overview of the City of Whittlesea's demographic profile
- Identifies the challenges and opportunities facing our community
- Articulates the impact we are seeking to make through the Strategy
- Outlines how we will monitor (the Strategy) to ensure we continue to respond to the changing needs of our community.

## Key Focus Areas



**Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities**



**Arts, Culture and Events**



**Multicultural Communities**



**Access, Inclusion and Discrimination**



**Physical and Mental Health**



**Life Stages**



**Community Safety**



**Community Participation**

## Vision

"In 2040 the City of Whittlesea is a place that opens its arms to every resident, where all walks of life are celebrated and supported. Our community is compassionate and welcoming. We are healthy and can easily access the support services we need. People of all backgrounds, ages and abilities feel that they are an essential part of the community. We work together, making our community a better place for all."

*Whittlesea 2040: A place for all*

## How we engaged



### **Whittlesea 2040**

#### **community consultation:**

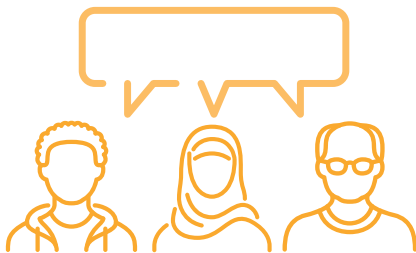
more than 4,000 people participated through submissions, workshops and forums; and online, paper-based and in-person activities



### **Let's Talk: Shaping the**

#### **Community Plan 2021-25:**

the consultation program included community surveys, online and face-to-face events, pop-up stalls and targeted focus groups



### **Community priorities focus groups:**

community members from a diversity of age groups, genders, abilities, cultural backgrounds, suburbs and household structures participated in a series of focus groups to shape the direction of the Connected Community Strategy



### **Council workshops:**

staff participated in internal stakeholder workshops to establish outcomes to be achieved in delivering the Connected Community Strategy.

### **A collaborative approach**

Achievement of the outcomes and commitments outlined in the Strategy rely on Council's collaboration with our community and stakeholders, including community service providers, other levels of government and special interest groups. In referring to "our approach", Council acknowledges the need to work closely with our partners to achieve the best outcomes for our community.

# How we plan – an integrated people focused approach

**The Connected Community Strategy is one of seven strategies that outlines Council's commitments, the outcomes we strive for and the actions we will deliver for our community.**

The seven strategies form Council's Integrated Planning Framework. Each strategy expands on our long-term 20-year community vision, Whittlesea 2040: A place for all and the Community Plan 2021–2025, which details Council's priorities and our overall strategic direction.

**Our approach to a Connected Community is provided via:**

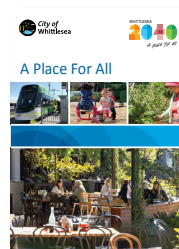
**Connected Community Strategy 2023–2028** – Outlines our overall strategic direction across all focus areas in delivering on our vision for a Connected Community.

**Connected Community Action Plan** – Commencing in 2024, a Connected Community Action Plan will be developed every two years. The plan will outline actions Council will take in line with the priorities in the Connected Community Strategy.

Action plans will be developed in response to the priorities in each focus area. These plans will articulate the specific work Council will undertake and will also identify how we will measure progress.

## Level 1: Vision

Council's overarching vision



Whittlesea 2040



Community Plan

## An equity approach

The principle of equity is consistent with a social justice and human rights approach which highlights the importance of equality, democracy, participation, transparency, accountability and inclusion. The City of Whittlesea is bound by the Victorian Charter of Human Rights.

For Council, taking an equity approach means that some population groups, geographical areas and social issues need to receive a greater share of Council resources, services or attention through policy because they are unfairly disadvantaged or experience significant barriers to participation in that service or program.

Providing this helps to achieve equality in the community – where everyone has what they need, and there are no barriers to participation.

## Connected Community Strategy links to other Council strategies



# Our strategic direction

In developing the Strategy, Council has incorporated the goals and aspirations set out in Whittlesea 2040 and the key directions established in the Community Plan 2021-2025. Shared community outcomes have been identified under each key direction to progress the Strategy and provide a focus towards strengthening social connections and building community.

The following diagram articulates the strategic outcomes we want to achieve and the outcome indicators that will support us to monitor our success.





# A connected community

“In 2040 the City of Whittlesea is a place that opens its arms to every resident, where all walks of life are celebrated and supported. Our community is compassionate and welcoming. We are healthy and can easily access the support services we need. People of all backgrounds, ages and abilities feel that they are an essential part of the community. We work together, making our community a better place for all.”

*Whittlesea 2040: A place for all*

The following table lists the outcomes that have been established under each Key Direction for the Strategy which will provide benefits to our local community.

 <p><b>Key direction 1:</b> <b>A socially cohesive community</b></p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All members of our community feel that they belong, are valued and respected</li> <li>• Our community strengthens connections between diverse cultures</li> <li>• Our community shares stories and learns from one another</li> <li>• Our community values and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and celebrates their rich diverse cultures</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key direction 2:</b> <b>A healthy and safe community</b></p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our community is healthy, well and physically active</li> <li>• Our community can live independently and safely</li> <li>• Our children and young people are supported to thrive</li> <li>• Our community experiences financial wellbeing</li> <li>• Our community feels safe and supported</li> <li>• Our community experiences healthy, equal and respectful relationships, and live free from abuse and family violence</li> <li>• Our community is prepared and able to respond and recover from emergencies</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key direction 3:</b> <b>A participating community</b></p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our community is empowered and enabled to participate in decision-making</li> <li>• Our community values and acknowledges volunteering</li> </ul>
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# The City of Whittlesea Community

The City of Whittlesea is one of Melbourne's largest and fastest growing municipalities, covering a land area of 489 square kilometres. It has established urban areas across Bundoora, Epping, Lalor, Mill Park and Thomastown, growth precincts in Mernda, Doreen, South Morang, Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook and rural areas that are characterised by farming and historic township communities, including Whittlesea Township.

Our highest population growth over the next 20 years will be in Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook. The established areas will continue to grow, especially Mernda, Doreen, Epping Central (Epping), Plenty Valley Town Centre (South Morang), Thomastown, Lalor and University Hill (Bundoora). Approximately 70 per cent of the municipality is rural, with the other 30 per cent being urban, comprising houses, shops and factories.

The City of Whittlesea has a diverse population with a significant percentage of people born overseas and a higher proportion of non-English languages spoken at home compared to the wider Victorian population. The major differences in ancestries and languages spoken at home reflect the area's cultural diversity, with Italian and Macedonian being prominent ancestries and Macedonian, Arabic, Punjabi and Italian being widely spoken languages.



Population forecasts assume that from 2021 to 2041 the population of Whittlesea municipality will increase by **60%**

**2041**



Population forecast for 2023 is 244,124 and is forecast to grow to **360,692 by 2041**



33,808 children aged 0-9; forecast to increase **70% by 2041**



45,645 young people aged 10-25 living in Whittlesea; forecast to increase by **62% by 2041**



**Largest household** structure is couples with children



**37.6%** of residents were born overseas



**43%** households have a mortgage



Median age of residents is **35**



**21.2%** of the population is aged between 0 and 15



**41%** of the population of the City of Whittlesea is couples with children



**63%** of the population participate in the workforce



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population 2,268 people, the second **largest in Metropolitan Melbourne**



**45.1%** of residents speak a language other than English at home

# Place-based approach

The City of Whittlesea has made significant progress in achieving positive outcomes by placing a strong emphasis on local communities.

Our approach involves understanding and addressing the unique aspirations and needs of each local community within our municipality, with the goal of directly addressing these when delivering initiatives and creating a place for all.

Adopting a localised approach allows Council to facilitate equal opportunities for community members to participate and engage within their local areas, fostering strong social connections and building resilience within our communities

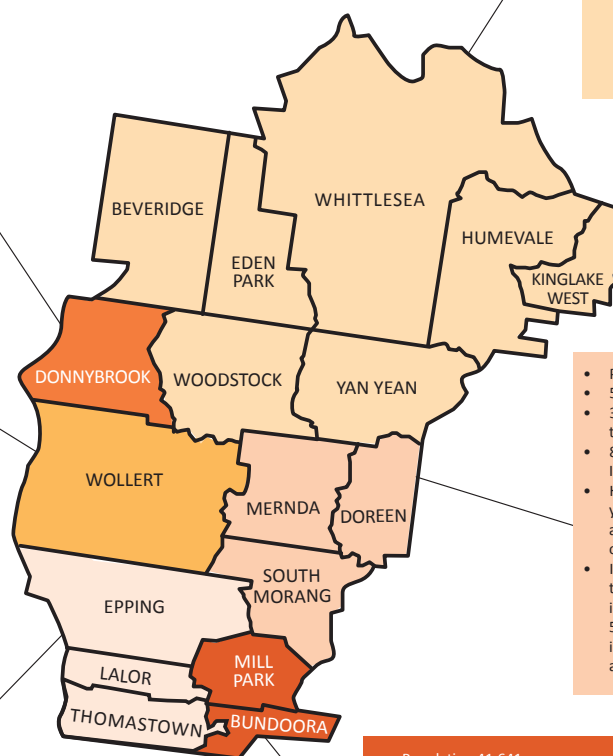
Our key priorities are to:

- Recognise and appreciate the distinct characteristics of our communities
- Embrace and celebrate the rich diversity of the municipality
- Work in partnership and collaboration with various stakeholders, including residents, community groups and organisations, to coordinate our services, programs and infrastructure planning.

- Population 2,100
- 50% Female, 50% Male
- Higher age bracket 26-39-year-olds
- 53% speak language other than English
- 19 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- Rapid residential growth with increase across all age ranges expected in the next 20 years

- Population 42,701
- 50% Female, 50% Male
- 61% speak language other than English
- 249 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- Higher proportion of people in the younger age groups (0–17 years) and a lower proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years).
- In the next 20 years it is expected that the number of residents will increase across all age ranges, with the greatest rate of increase occurring amongst those aged 26–39 years
- Rapid residential growth

- Population 57,690
- 50% Female, 50% Male
- Higher age bracket: 26–39 years
- 59% speak language other than English
- Lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (0–17 years) and a higher proportion of people in the older age groups (60+)
- In the next 20 years it is expected that the number of residents will increase across all age ranges, with the greatest rate of increase occurring amongst 18–64 year olds
- 576 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people



- Population 9,742
- 51% Female, 49% Male
- 12% speak language other than English
- 137 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- Lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (0–17 years) and a higher proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years)
- It is expected that the number of residents will increase across all age ranges, with the greatest rate of increase occurring amongst those aged 75+ years

- Population 75,519
- 51% Female, 49% Male
- 31% speak language other than English
- 879 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- Higher proportion of people in the younger age groups (0–17 years) and a lower proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years)
- In the next 20 years it is expected that the number of residents will increase across all age ranges except 50–64, with the greatest rate of increase occurring amongst those aged 75+ years

- Population 41,641
- 50% Female, 50% Male
- Higher age bracket: 26–39 years, 54–64 years
- 43% speak language other than English
- 379 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- Lower proportion of people in the younger age groups (0–17 years) and a higher proportion of people in the older age groups (60+ years)
- In the next 20 years it is expected that the number of residents will increase across all age ranges except 50–64-year-olds, and the greatest rate of increase is forecast to occur amongst those aged 75+ years

# Opportunities and challenges

The City of Whittlesea is committed to building welcoming, healthy and connected communities. Being part of a community has a positive effect on mental health and emotional wellbeing and provides a sense of belonging and social connectedness. Informed by community needs and aspirations, we will work to respond to opportunities and challenges. We strive to build on the priorities and values of our community and on our strengths and achievements.<sup>1</sup>



## Responsive services and infrastructure provision

The City of Whittlesea's demographic and geographic diversity, which includes established, rural and growth communities, requires a nuanced response to service and infrastructure delivery. Timely and appropriate access to high quality services and infrastructure is needed to address barriers to participation and access to support for communities across the municipality.



## Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community have been significant. Social, emotional and health impacts are still evident, which means that the way people participate and connect in the community has changed. It is important to adapt how we work with the community to respond to these changes, particularly regarding the way Council provides opportunities for social connections, recreation and physical activities.



## Partnering to prevent and respond to family violence

Family violence rates in the municipality remain high and are one of the most common types of crime in the municipality. Council has a unique opportunity to partner with local community and family services to respond appropriately to affected community members, as well as to prevent family violence through promoting gender equality and respect in the community.



## Rising cost of living

Increasing costs of living requires a considered response to support members of our community who are experiencing financial challenges, including rental and mortgage stress and access to health services. It is important that Council reduces as many barriers to participation as possible, particularly for our most vulnerable community members.



## Celebrating cultural diversity

The City of Whittlesea has a rich culture and heritage. This is characterised by our multicultural community where almost half of our residents speak a language other than English at home. We also have the second largest Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population in metropolitan Melbourne. However, racism and discrimination are part of the lives of many in the community and are leading to a higher likelihood of emotional distress, depression and anxiety by affected communities<sup>2</sup>. Providing opportunities to support and celebrate contemporary cultural and community heritage while connecting with traditions and the past, helps to foster a sense of shared identity.



## Enhancing Community Safety

Crime rates across the municipality are trending down, however many residents, particularly women, still feel unsafe at night.<sup>3</sup> Council will continue to seek opportunities for improving safety and perceptions of safety for our community through activating public spaces and places, supporting community vibrancy, and helping people to feel safe and supported.



## Increasing Community Participation

The capacity of our community to participate and influence local decision-making and engage in activities such as volunteering has decreased in recent years.<sup>4</sup> Council is committed to empower all people living, working, studying and doing business within the City of Whittlesea to have their voices heard and considered in decision-making that influences the future of our city and the delivery of our services.

<sup>1</sup> W2040

<sup>2</sup> Whittlesea anti-racism community project, Victoria University, 2022

<sup>3</sup> City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021

<sup>4</sup> City of Whittlesea Connected Communities Background Research Report, 2023

# Key Focus Areas

Council recognises that communities are strengthened by their connections with others and the importance of aligning strategic outcomes with the needs and aspirations of our community. Informed by an understanding of our community and research on the challenges and opportunities related to achieving a connected community, this Strategy has eight key focus areas.

## Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities

The local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities are made up of many different and distinct groups, each with their own cultures, languages, beliefs, protocols and practices. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples live in urban, regional and remote areas and are present in all communities, not necessarily on their traditional Countries.

## Arts, Culture and Events

Participation in arts and culture can improve our health and social connection and economic participation. A creative community provides opportunities for connection by sharing stories that increase understanding between different groups.

## Multicultural Communities

Multicultural communities are characterised by people of different races, ethnicities and nationalities living together in the same community. Having a diversity of cultures and backgrounds allows for different perspectives and new ideas.

## Community Participation

A participating community can take many forms, including involvement in democratic processes and volunteering. Participation in community life leads to a healthier, more informed and more connected community.

## Access, Inclusion and Discrimination

An inclusive and accessible community supports people of all backgrounds and abilities and reduces vulnerability to marginalisation, isolation and discrimination.

## Community Safety

Community safety creates a sense of security for all people who live, work and play in our community. Feeling safe improves levels of social connection and trust.

## Life Stages

Life stages are the different phases that individuals pass through in their lifetime. It is important to promote and respond to the specific needs of all people in the community, stages of life.

## Physical and Mental Health

Taking care of physical health is closely linked to improving mental wellbeing. Physical and mental health can each be improved through exercise, recreational activities, healthy eating, connection with others and nature, and access to health services.



# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



**We will be respectful of Aboriginal communities, acknowledging and embracing their history, culture, heritage and the talents Aboriginal people bring to our community and our business – City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Inclusion Charter 2020**



## Communities

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people live across the City of Whittlesea and have a culture that is holistic in approach, this includes a strong spiritual connection to land, waters and Country.
- Building better relationships between the wider Whittlesea community and local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people will ensure that they are supported to live, work, learn and play in safe environments that promote their cultural identity, free from discrimination.
- The number of residents identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander has doubled from 2011 to 2021 in the Whittlesea municipality and its neighbouring local government areas. This is a greater rate of increase than recorded across the Greater Melbourne area and Victoria.
- Racism is widely experienced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## City of Whittlesea Data



**Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population in the City of Whittlesea has grown by 37.8% from 2016 to 2021**

Census of Population and Housing 2016/2021



**Younger age profile of under 10 years of age, larger proportion of 18-year olds, fewer older adults, 50 years or over**

Census 2021



**102% increase in residents identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders**

Census 2021



**46.5% of adults in Whittlesea report feelings of being valued by society, compared with 51.6% for Victoria**

Victorian Population Health Survey 2020



### What have we done so far?

- Planned for future construction of the Aboriginal Gathering Place in South Morang which will be a welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe space where Aboriginal people can enjoy a sense of belonging, with access to programs and services that strengthen culture and enhance wellbeing
- Adopted an Aboriginal Inclusion Charter which will continue the process of reconciliation between Council and Aboriginal people living, working or visiting the City of Whittlesea
- Council created an Aboriginal Communities Department to support self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the City of Whittlesea
- Implemented a new Child Safe Policy, improving culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- Reviewed the Maternal and Child Health service to improve cultural safety for our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities
- Developed Aboriginal online community hub on Engage Whittlesea that identifies projects that Council is working on to support the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities



### Our priorities for action

#### Building respect

Council is committed to reconciliation and supporting opportunities for improved cultural, social and health outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Council will continue to build respect for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the community, allowing for self-determination and equity by providing opportunities in areas of socio-economic participation and cultural development free from discrimination.

#### Improving health and wellbeing

Council will continue to lead and support initiatives and activities that build better relationships between the wider Whittlesea community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, increasing opportunities to develop and implement culturally responsive programs for families, young people and children, and Elders.

#### Celebration and acknowledgement of culture

Council is committed to continuing to support our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to live, work, learn and play in safe environments that respect and promote their cultural identity. Council will continue to work towards increasing the visibility of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and culture by building awareness through events and education.



Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033 / 15

# Arts, Culture and Events



**When people are drawn into something from a place of fun, then barriers are reduced, and people are open to other experiences – Community Consultation June 2023**



## Communities

- Arts, cultural activities and events encourage social cohesion by creating avenues for cultural awareness and community connection.
- Participation in activities and events helps people from all backgrounds feel included and welcome in our community.
- Arts, cultural activities and events provide links to support services, foster safe spaces and create opportunities for shared enjoyment and fun.
- Participating in arts, cultural activities and events works in many ways to strengthen our sense of community and support us on every level: physical, mental, emotional and social. The benefits are many and the provision of free and/or low-cost activities is important to encourage participation by all.
- Celebrating contemporary cultural and community heritage and connecting with traditions and the past through public art, community festivals and participation in local heritage programs and groups, helps to foster a sense of shared identity and belonging.



## City of Whittlesea Data



**86% of residents feel that it is important to have access to artistic, cultural and lifestyle community events**

Community Research Silverlining Strategy 2021



**44% of people participate in community-based arts and culture activities**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



**Whittlesea residents who participate in arts or cultural activities are almost 10% more likely to report very good general health than those who have not participated**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



### What have we done so far?

- Developed the Whittlesea Arts Hub online portal providing information on a diverse arts program, including exhibitions, festivals and performances
- Delivered an annual program of mural commissions that has enhanced the vibrancy of place
- Worked with communities and local artists to increase creative participation in Council events, providing a prominent platform for community members at key events
- Delivered arts programs and events with a place-based approach, ensuring local characteristics are celebrated and recognised
- Utilised the City of Whittlesea's key cultural facilities, Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre and Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum and Heritage Garden as hubs for community connection.



### Our priorities for action

#### Enhancing opportunities for participation and community delivery of arts, creative and cultural activities

Council will continue to support the delivery of free and low-cost locally based and municipal-wide arts and creative activities, programs and events that encourage participation and engagement. Council will also enhance the delivery of, and participation in, creative and cultural experiences, by strengthening avenues of support that enable our community to deliver their own art, culture and heritage activities.

#### Enhancing Council's cultural infrastructure as hubs of community connection and creativity

Council will continue to promote community access to arts and cultural spaces. A place-based approach will be central in increasing access to the arts and cultural expression opportunities for our community, supporting community-led initiatives and delivering programs that contribute to neighbourhood vibrancy.



Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033 / 17

# Multicultural Communities



**We need to educate one another on culture, to discourage racism and encourage acceptance of each other – Community Consultation June 2023**



## Communities

- City of Whittlesea has a diverse, growing multicultural population from 114 countries.
- A multicultural community allows us to look beyond ourselves. It gives people different experiences of diversity, inclusion and culture.
- A connected multicultural community enhances opportunities for work, education, friendship, understanding and compassion.
- Community connections across cultures help people to feel safe and supported in their lives. They also help people to proudly stay connected with their culture.



## City of Whittlesea Data



**37.6% of people in City of Whittlesea were born overseas**

Census 2021



**Almost half of all local residents (more than 86,000 residents) spoke a language other than English at home**

Census 2021



**13.6% of people in Whittlesea speak English not well or not at all**

Census 2021



**City of Whittlesea residents come from 114 countries, speak more than 93 languages and follow more than 40 faiths**  
(2021, Census, compiled by .id)



**59% of culturally and linguistically diverse residents have experienced racism**

City of Whittlesea Anti-racism community Project, Vic Uni, 2022



**34% of culturally and linguistically diverse residents have difficulty or are not able to access health or social support services**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



### What have we done so far?

- Celebrated various cultural dates of significance, such as Refugee Week, to inform the community about different cultures and promote acceptance and harmony
- Delivered place-based programs to build the capacity of our multicultural communities, liaising with community members, community groups and faith leaders to increase skills, improve access to interpreting and translation support and build confidence to be actively involved in decision-making
- Provided information sessions for multicultural groups on a broad range of topics, such as parent visa information sessions and heart health sessions
- Established the International Student Information Hub to provide easy access to support and information for international students
- Partnered with Belgravia Leisure to offer concessions at leisure centres for people seeking asylum
- Implemented a swimming program for culturally and linguistically diverse women to improve swimming skills
- Delivered the Program for Refugee Immunisation Monitoring and Education (PRIME) which increases the ability of refugees and people seeking asylum to receive catch-up immunisation, information and support.



### Our priorities for action

#### **Celebrating diversity and creating connections and understanding between cultures**

Council will work with the community to provide welcoming places for people to come together, creating opportunities to celebrate and acknowledge our diverse heritage and culture.

#### **Fostering cultural safety through partnerships and a community-wide approach**

Council will bring together communities, organisations and service providers to address racism and cultural safety, empower communities and improve support for those in the community who experience racism.

#### **Enhancing access to inclusive and culturally appropriate services and facilities**

Council is committed to improving the cultural responsiveness of planning and equitable access to health and community services for our multicultural communities.



Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033 / 19

# Access, Inclusion and Discrimination



Recognition of the needs of diverse minority groups is important  
– Community Consultation June 2023



## Communities

- Access, inclusion and freedom from discrimination support people to have safe, healthy and connected lives. They allow people to feel a sense of belonging and to feel valued and respected.
- The health and safety of all community members depends upon timely and equitable access to services and infrastructure.
- Feeling included and connected is essential for physical and mental wellbeing. Social isolation and mental ill-health can occur when people are not included in community life.
- Creating a community free from discrimination is important, where the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people, based on age, race, ability, colour, immigrant status, sex, gender or other qualities, is challenged and addressed.
- In the City of Whittlesea there are people for whom access, inclusion and freedom from discrimination are a significant issue.
- There is an increase in the demand for services, social connections and support for vulnerable members of our community.



## City of Whittlesea Data



**Almost 60% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and multicultural residents, have experienced racism**

City of Whittlesea Anti-racism community Project, Vic Uni, 2022



**21% of Whittlesea residents have a permanent or long-term disability**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



**62% of Whittlesea residents said 'Yes, definitely' in response to whether multiculturalism makes life in their area better**

Tolerance of diversity VPHS, 2021



**63% of women are in the lowest and medium-lowest income quartiles compared with 43% of men**

Census 2021



**6.3% of the population in City of Whittlesea reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability**

Census 2021

## In Victoria



**34.2% of LGBTIQ+ adults experienced discrimination or were treated unfairly by others compared to less than half that proportion in heterosexual, non-LGBTIQ+ adults (15.6%)**

Victorian Agency for Health and Information 2017



### What have we done so far?

- Gained Rainbow Tick accreditation for Council's Youth Service, which ensures that our youth programs are safe and inclusive for the LGBTIQ+ community
- Supported the Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN), including the establishment of a new WDN online hub
- Engaged with and supported community initiatives and events that raise awareness and celebrate inclusion for all people, regardless of gender, sex or sexual orientation
- Participated in a local Anti-Racism Project 2022, which informed the development of a Roadmap<sup>5</sup> on how to improve reporting and support services for those in the City of Whittlesea impacted by racism.



### Our priorities for action

#### Embedding gender equality

Council is committed to advancing gender equality across our community. Gender equality supports our community to be inclusive, respectful, fair and safe for people of all genders. We seek to ensure that all people have the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities, and that everyone's contributions and efforts will be valued equally regardless of gender. Council will enhance the delivery of gender equity initiatives within the community, through grants, events and partnerships.

#### Continuing to provide equitable access to council services, facilities and programs

Council recognises the importance of equitable access and equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their circumstances or abilities. Council will continue to support the planning and development of inclusive and safe spaces, services, activities and events for all members of the community.

#### Supporting and sustaining freedom from discrimination

Council will continue to improve our community's understanding of what discrimination is, the impact that discriminatory behaviour can have on the health of those affected and to focus on opportunities to better address discrimination, so that all residents can feel safe and supported.

<sup>5</sup> Whittlesea Anti-Racism Community Project Report  
- Whittlesea Community Connections



# Physical and Mental Health



**There is a need for Council to promote local health services, information and activities – Community Consultation June 2023**



## Communities

- Physical and mental health are interconnected. Taking care of physical health is closely linked to improving mental wellbeing and vice versa.
- Exercise has been shown to increase wellbeing as well as reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Mental health is both influenced by and can influence community connections. When people are socially connected, they are more likely to make healthy choices.
- Regular physical activity is one of the most important things we can do for our health. Inclusive sporting opportunities contribute to positive physical and mental health and create a sense of belonging.
- The ability to meet everyday living expenses creates a sense of wellbeing, whilst financial hardship impacts our mental health, raising levels of distress, anxiety and depression.
- Community experience of gambling harm can lead to financial hardship for some households, along with impaired relationships, social life, employment and poor mental health.<sup>6</sup>
- Travelling outside the region for work and study causes time and other pressures, which directly influence wellbeing.



## City of Whittlesea Data



**The most common long-term health condition is mental health. Just under one -in-10 Whittlesea residents report a mental health condition**

Census 2021



**The incidence of a self-reported mental health condition is notably higher amongst females than males**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



**41% of residents meet physical activity guidelines**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



**Ranked the sixth highest among Victorian local government areas for poker machine losses**

VLGA 2023



**Ranked 12th of 79 Victorian local government areas for homelessness. Of all people experiencing homelessness those aged 12-24 years are at most risk**

Census 2021



**In 2020 10% of Whittlesea adults ran out of money to buy food**

Vic Health Survey 2020



**Fifth most socio-economically disadvantaged of Victoria's 31 metropolitan municipalities**

Census 2021



### What have we done so far?

- In partnership with government and non-government agencies, planned for the development and construction of a First Response Youth Service in South Morang. This will provide housing and support services for young people
- Supported the establishment of the Whittlesea Mental Health and Wellbeing Local Service for adults and older adults, which supports people aged 26 and over to get mental health and wellbeing treatment, care and support closer to home
- Endorsed a new Community Grants Framework to ensure more funds are available to more people in the City of Whittlesea to support local programs, projects and activities
- Built and upgraded a range of community centres, sporting and leisure facilities to provide our community with opportunities to participate in physical activity and connect socially
- Advocated for poker machine reforms to reduce the impact of gambling harm on our community
- Established a Financial Hardship Policy that aids those in our community experiencing financial difficulties.



### Our priorities for action

#### **Adapting opportunities for physical activity in response to changes in participation**

Council will continue to facilitate, advocate and plan for the delivery of spaces, programs and activities that increase community participation in formal and informal physical activities, ensuring communities are inclusive, active, healthy and connected.

#### **Working with partners to support mental wellbeing**

Council will continue to work with our partners in the community services sector and connect people to services, monitor service gaps, create opportunities for collaboration and advocate for additional investment in mental health services, including addressing homelessness and gambling harm prevention.



Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033 / 23

# Life Stages

**We need to respond to the different needs across life stages - having spaces and opportunities for everyone to connect and share skills and experiences**

– Community Consultation June 2023



## Communities

- Life stages are the different phases that individuals pass through in their lifetime: infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood.
- Creating multigenerational and flexible spaces, programs and activities where children, youth, adults and older adults can interact, assists in building community participation and connections.
- Young families with mortgages are particularly susceptible to increasing costs of living pressures and family/work commitments.
- A life stage approach recognises that a person's capacity fluctuates throughout their life and an integrated range of interventions may be required.
- The number of young children with a disability in the municipality has increased significantly requiring the delivery of targeted support services.
- Young people in growth areas can face increased social isolation and require spaces, programs and activities to foster social connection and wellbeing.
- As people age and are no longer working there is an increased risk of social isolation and loneliness impacting physical and mental health.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social and emotional development of children and young people is an ongoing concern.<sup>7</sup>



## City of Whittlesea Data



**All age groups are forecast to grow in number over the next 20 years with the greatest proportion occurring amongst 75+ year olds**

Census 2021



**One-fifth of Whittlesea's population are young people aged 10-25 years**

Census 2021



**Just under a third of older adults are aged 50+**

Census 2021



**26–49-year-olds are our largest population group**

Census 2021



**Young people missed critical socialisation development years due to COVID-19 lockdowns**

aced 2021



**7.4% of children in their first year of school are developmentally on track for social competence**

aedc 2021





### What have we done so far?

- Partnered with Headspace National and Mind Australia to open a Headspace service at Plenty Valley Westfield to support young people's mental health
- Supported residents to transition to the National Aged Care and disability systems
- Continued the business transformation of the City of Whittlesea aged care services in response to aged care reforms
- Provided sector support for Commonwealth Home Support Program providers to prepare for aged care reforms
- Completed the Mernda Social Support Centre and Council, with partner organisations, will provide services to older people
- Delivered the Bringing Up Kids Expo which brings together family support agencies to provide information on services, programs and events available to the City of Whittlesea community
- Implemented the Best Start Best Life program, including increased hours for 3- and 4-year-old kindergartens.



### Our priorities for action

#### Enhancing intergenerational connections

Council will enhance opportunities for our community to live well by encouraging intergenerational activities and relationships between young and older people which have long-term mutual benefits. Council will continue to find ways for people in the community to connect, learn and teach new skills across all stages of life.

#### Provide services and facilities for all life stages

Council is committed to ensuring that all community voices are heard across the life stage journey and that all residents be given the opportunity to access relevant Council services. Council will continue to maintain strong partnerships to enhance collaborative planning for intergenerational services and facilities where all ages and stages of life are valued, supported and connected.

#### Supporting older adults to live safely, independently and participate in community

Council will continue to take a proactive approach to positive ageing through the planning and delivery of spaces, programs and activities that provide connection with others and maintain physical and mental wellbeing. Council will also continue to work with our partners and provide high quality and responsive aged care services in line with aged care reforms so that older adults can live safely and independently.

#### Supporting families, children and young people to thrive

Council will continue to support avenues for children and young people to engage in programs that enhance their social and emotional wellbeing and deliver programs and services that promote positive wellbeing, development and community connections for families, children and young people.



# Community Safety

**We need to connect with neighbours and locals to feel safer**  
– Community Consultation June 2023



## Communities

- Ensuring a safe environment to live, work and play builds and strengthens communities and leads to better physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Family violence is a significant safety and health issue in our municipality and has a considerable impact on individuals and on the community.
- A resilient community is one where strong community connections can minimise the impacts of disasters and build safer communities.
- Nuisance animals can have an impact on the safety of our communities and require close management to prevent damage to the environment and wildlife.



## City of Whittlesea Data



**In 2021, 77% of family members affected by family violence were female**

Vic Gov, Crimestatistics 2022



**26.15% of residents reported they felt “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe” in the municipality at night**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



**30.44% of women feel somewhat or very unsafe at night; 6.98% of women feel somewhat safe or very safe at night; 21.61% of men feel somewhat or very unsafe at night**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



**75.66% of residents know what types of emergency risks or hazards can occur in the community**

City of Whittlesea, Preparing for an emergency survey 2022



**Libraries are increasingly recognised by users as a hub for community activities and connections, providing a safe space that welcomes people from all walks of life**

Background Research Report 2022





### What have we done so far?

- Partnered with Whittlesea Community Connections to deliver the Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project that supports culturally and linguistically diverse communities, newly arrived migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to break the cycle of family violence and empower those communities to respond to the challenges of preventing violence against women
- Partnered with the Men's Project at Jesuit Social Services to deliver the Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) project, an innovative training program to address the harmful gender stereotypes that are linked to violence against women and help participants to become active role models for other men and boys
- Partnered with Monash University YXX Lab to deliver the Your Ground Project to identify public places where people do not feel safe
- Partnered with Neighbourhood Watch public awareness program, Remove It, Lock It or Lose It, to reduce thefts from vehicles
- Reviewed the Community Local Law and delivered the Community Local Law and Safer Communities Road Show
- Introduced the 24-hour Cat Confinement Law to help protect our wildlife
- Piloted person-centred emergency preparedness training, as part of the Resilient Communities Project, and launched new video series to help residents understand and prepare for emergencies
- Facilitated the review and update of the Municipal Fire Management Sub-Plan and the Municipal Storm and Flood Management Sub-Plan
- Prepared for the establishment of the Community Sub-Committee of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC)
- Prepared the Climate Change Action Plan 2022 -2032 that outlines Council's role in supporting the community to respond to the impacts of climate change.



### Our priorities for action

#### Improving perceptions of safety

Council will respond to perceived and actual safety concerns by collaborating with local police and relevant agencies to implement initiatives that provide a safer environment for our community.

#### Prevent family violence for all our community

Council will continue to promote gender equality through partnering with our community in prevention awareness raising programs and working with our community partners to prevent and respond to family violence. Our Maternal and Child Health service will continue to provide a response to parents experiencing family violence, while promotion of equality and respect in our sporting environments remains a key priority.

#### Improving preparedness and resilience to emergencies

In partnership with emergency services and relief agencies, Council will support our community to be more connected, prepared and safe, and more resilient to emergency incidents, climate change and natural disasters through increased access to information and education.

#### Promoting responsible pet ownership

Council will continue to promote responsible pet ownership to reduce the adverse impact of nuisance animals on the community, improving safety around animals, protecting both our wildlife and the environment.

# Community Participation

**Building confidence in people, giving them the ability to speak up, have their say and put forward ideas – Community Consultation June 2023**



## Communities

- Participating in community life strengthens community connections and helps to build strong and resilient communities.
- Participation by the community in both political and non-political ways increases the capacity of individuals and communities to build connections and influence matters affecting their lives.
- Participation through volunteering assists in building strong and resilient communities by providing opportunities for individuals to support those in need, connect with others and learn new skills.
- Supporting organisations to find ways to make volunteering easier increases vital volunteer support in the community, which leads to a healthier and more connected community.



## City of Whittlesea Data



**7.6% of the Whittlesea community volunteer**

Census 2021



**Digital inclusion in Whittlesea is improving faster than the national average and performing well against other LGAs**

Aust Digital Inclusion Index 2022



**35% of residents have participated in local decision-making opportunities**

City of Whittlesea Household Survey 2021



### What have we done so far?

- Enhanced the *Engage City of Whittlesea Hub*, providing an online platform for our community to have a say about the future of our municipality
- Delivered an inclusive Community Leadership Program, supporting individuals to develop leadership skills
- Funded Whittlesea Community Connections to build the volunteering capacity of community service organisations
- Established the Youth Advisory Committee to bring issues of importance to local young people to Council
- Delivered the “Love Where We Live” campaigns to promote community participation in improvements in their local area
- Reviewed our community grant guidelines to improve access to funding for community groups and individuals.



### Our priorities for action

#### Enabling participation

Council will enhance the provision of resources, information and education about activities and programs available in our community that support social connections.

#### Participation in governance and democracy

Council is committed to building the capacity of local and diverse community members to participate in decision-making through leadership programs and community development opportunities.

#### Valuing and facilitating volunteering

Council will continue working with our partners to support and promote opportunities for participation in volunteering across the community.



Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033 / 29

# Making it happen

**The Strategy will be delivered through implementation of a Connected Community Action Plan, which will be developed every two years. The first Action Plan will be developed upon endorsement of the Strategy by Council.**

The Action Plan will outline the specific actions Council is committed to delivering, based on the priorities for the future outlined in this Strategy. The Action Plan will also help to facilitate and strengthen our partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders to increase our collective effectiveness in achieving positive community outcomes.

## Gender Impact Assessment Statement

In the development of the Strategy consideration has been given to the impact of gender and other characteristics such as culture, Aboriginality, age and disability on community connection, participation and safety. The action plan (to be developed) will include specific actions to address inequality, including key gendered inequalities and/or barriers.



# Monitoring progress

**Council has prepared an evaluation framework to monitor the trends and performance of our work to promote a connected community.**

The priority indicators below provide an overview of the change we want to see overtime. Measures are being developed to assess our progress towards meeting the outcomes identified in this Strategy.

Council will continue to monitor the priority indicators and will work with other levels of government, as well as partners in the private and non-for-profit sectors and our broader community, to influence these indicators for the better. The Strategy will be reviewed in 2028 to update demographic profiles where needed and update challenges and opportunities in response to changing community needs and aspirations.



## Key direction 1:

### A socially cohesive community

- Improved feeling of being valued by society
- Decreased loneliness
- Decreased experience of discrimination
- Improved attitudes to multiculturalism
- Increased participation in creative and cultural experiences
- Increased community-led creative initiatives
- Increased cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities
- Increased visibility and accessibility of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage



## Key direction 2:

### A healthy and safe community

- Improved knowledge and skills to take preventative health actions
- Increased participation in physical activity by target population groups
- Delayed loss of physical and cognitive functions that impact daily activities of living in older adults
- Increased life satisfaction
- Decreased developmental vulnerability of children
- Increased rates of participation in education, training and employment pathways
- Reduced proportion of population that experience financial stress
- Improved awareness of the risks and harms of gambling
- Increased responsible pet ownership
- Increased perceptions of safety
- Improved understanding and awareness of family violence and elder abuse
- Improved community readiness for emergencies
- Improved social connections



## Key direction 3:

### A participating community

- Increased confidence to engage in democratic processes
- Increased volunteering

# Glossary

**Accessibility** – Is the quality of being able to be used by people of all abilities, commonly referring to the built environment, modes of communication and technology.

**A human rights and social justice approach** – “Social justice and human rights both highlight the importance of equality, democracy, participation, transparency, accountability and inclusion. And both place the concept of “justice” front and centre in efforts to forge a more stable and equitable world.” (UN)

**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity** – Encompasses a range of aspects including a person’s country of birth, their ancestry, where their parents were born, what language/s they speak, and their religious affiliation.<sup>i</sup>

**Community participation** – Refers to how individuals and groups involve themselves in their community in both political and non-political ways. This includes volunteering, joining community groups and participating in local decision-making processes.

**Digital Inclusion Index** – Measures digital inclusion across three areas of Access, Affordability and Digital Ability.<sup>8</sup>

**Disability** – A permanent or long-term impairment, not related to ageing, that causes substantially reduced capacity in at least one area of daily life (for instance, around self-care, self-management, mobility, communication).

**Discrimination** – The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or disability or other attributes protected under law.

**Elder abuse** – Has been defined by the World Health Organisation as “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person”. Elder abuse can take various forms, including financial, physical, psychological, emotional and sexual abuse, or neglect.<sup>ii</sup>

**Financial hardship** – A person or household experiences financial hardship when they have difficulty meeting everyday living expenses (e.g. food, housing, transport, utilities and telephone bills, insurance, healthcare, education, leisure or recreation activities), managing debts and/or raising funds in an emergency.

**Genderequity** – Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. It is not about the equal delivery of services, or distribution of resources – it is about recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need, to ensure equal outcomes for all. Gender equity acknowledges that women and men have different access to resources, power, responsibilities and life experiences and that different strategies are often necessary to address disadvantages and achieve equal outcomes for women and men, girls and boys.

**Gender equality** – Is the outcome reached through gender equity – it means equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women, men and trans and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and trans and gender diverse people will become the same. Rather, it means that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of all people will not depend on their gender and that all people’s contributions and efforts will be valued equally, regardless of gender.

**Inclusion** – Occurs when people feel, and are, valued and respected regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstance.

**IDAHOBIT** – Is the International Day Against Homophobia Biphobia and Transphobia, also known as International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination.

**LGBTQIA+** – Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex Asexual+

**NDIS** – National Disability Insurance Scheme

**Outcome indicators** – Specify what changes we need to see to achieve the outcomes statements; they set the direction of change. Outcome indicators reflect the key drivers and influences on progress towards an outcome.

**Racism** – Is the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race. Racism is more than just prejudice in thought or action. It occurs when this prejudice – whether individual or institutional – is accompanied by the power to discriminate against, oppress or limit the rights of others.<sup>iii</sup>

**Social cohesion** – Refers to positive and happy social relationships - it is the bond or ‘glue’ that binds and connects people.

**Social isolation** – Is seen as the state of having minimal contact with others. It differs from loneliness, which is a subjective state of negative feelings about having a lower level of social contact than desired.<sup>iv</sup>



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<sup>iii</sup> What is Racism? | Australian Human Rights  
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<sup>iv</sup> (Peplau & Perlman 1982) as quoted on Social  
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Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)

<sup>iv</sup> Home - Australian Digital Inclusion Index



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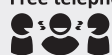
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Bundoora MDC VIC 3083

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**131 450**

## 5.5.2 Youth Council

**Responsible Officer:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

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

**Attachments:**  
No attachments

### Purpose

This report seeks Council endorsement to transition from a Youth Advisory Committee to a Youth Council.

### Brief Overview

Young people find it difficult to have engagement with Council and action avenues for civic participation, particularly in relation to issues that impact them and their relationship with their community.

Youth Councils are one of many models of young engagement and participation which can provide an avenue for young people to have a formalised opportunity to engage in civic life and effect change.

The Youth Advisory Committee explored Youth Civic participation models across a number of Council's, including models at Greater Bendigo, Geelong and Darebin for the purpose of exploring their models and learnings in establishing a Youth Council.

This report seeks to transition from a Youth Advisory Council to a Youth Council effective from February 2024.

### Recommendation

#### THAT Council:

1. **Resolve to transition from the current Youth Advisory Committee to a Youth Council.**
2. **Note an expression of interest process seeking young community members to join the Youth Council will take place during the month of October 2023.**
3. **Note Youth Council meetings will be held in the same manner and adopt the same governance rules as those adopted for Council's incoming elected Council.**
4. **Note officers will provide an induction program, including the election of a Youth Mayor and Youth Deputy Mayor prior to the proposed first Youth Council meeting in February/March 2024.**

## Key Information

Council's Youth Council will represent young people by:

- Providing advice to Council on plans, strategies, policies and projects directly related to young people
- Provide avenues for young people to engage with Council and have a voice
- Act as a representative to Council, advocating for opportunities, barriers and or issues impacting you people in our municipality
- Determine and setting Youth Council agenda and priorities
- Referring issues to the elected Council for consideration
- Consider relevant matters referred from the Council to the Youth Council for input and feedback prior to Council's formal decision
- Represent young people in the municipality through press releases, official statements, speeches and media correspondence

### Membership and Eligibility

Council's Youth Council will comprise of a minimum of fifteen Youth Councillors and a maximum of eighteen Youth Councillors who live, work and or study within the municipality.

To be eligible as a Youth Council Councillor the following criteria will apply:

- Youth Council Councillors will be aged 12 to 22 (noting Youth Councillors are required to resign when they turn 23)
- Youth Councillors must live, work and or study in the City of Whittlesea
- Hold a valid working with children check and police check, if 18 years or older
- Not be an employee of the City of Whittlesea

### First Nations Position

A dedicated position will be reserved for a First Nations young person. This position is reserved to prioritise representation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person on the Youth Council. It should be noted, should this position not be filled during the expression of interest process, the position will continue to remain open until such time it is filled by a First Nations young person.

### Term of Office

Each Youth Council term will be for a period of two year. Youth Councillors have the ability to reconsider their position according to work, study or personal commitment during their term.

### **Payment**

In recognition of the time commitment and contribution to the municipality and community, Youth Council members will be paid an honorarium fee either fortnightly or monthly. The honorarium fee is to reward and recognise the Youth Councillors contributions in making a difference to and contributing to the municipality young voice.

The Youth Council Mayor and Deputy Mayor will receive a separate higher level honorarium payment based on their respective roles to recognise their higher level of commitment required for the position.

Youth Councillors will be eligible for additional payments, at the discretion of Council's administration, to assist their attendance of Youth Council meetings.

### **Child Safety**

The Youth Council will be required to undergo training from Council's Child Safe team to ensure their responsibilities in relation to child safety concerns are adequately reported and addressed in accordance with Child Safety Standards.

### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

The Youth Council will engage with young people and organisations for the purpose of ensuring young people's voices are heard across the municipality. Engagement with the Youth Council by community members wanting to raise local issues of relevance to young people will be monitored by Council's administration to ensure any open youth community engagements are appropriate and meet the Child Safety Standards.

### **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.

### **Considerations**

#### **Environmental**

Youth participation

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

There is a need to ensure genuine pathways for young people to engage in an exchange with government systems whereby young people can have meaningful engagement and influence change across our municipality.

Youth participation in local government offers multiple benefits to both youth and community, particularly in the form of youth participation.

**Economic**

Youth participation in leadership and civic engagement opportunities provides development in workspace skills and employability not only within a local government context but more broadly a range of sectors.

**Financial Implications**

The anticipated cost associated with the establishment of a Youth Council has been considered in Council's current operating budget.

**Link to Strategic Risk**

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

A risk has been identified should adequate resourcing, training and support not be provided to the Youth Council to ensure their success.

**Implementation Strategy****Communication**

A communications plan is being developed around the Youth Council model detailing what is involved, how young people can apply to be a young Councillor and how community and Council can engage with the Youth Council.

**Critical Dates**

Officers are seeking endorsement of the transition from a Youth Advisory Committee to a Youth Council in September 2023 to allow the expression of interest process to take place in the month of October. These timelines will ensure the Youth Council can be established no later than February/early March 2024 prior to the proposed first Youth Council meeting.

**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.

## Conclusion

The transition of the Youth Advisory Committee to a Youth Council is identified as a key initiative in the City of Whittlesea Community Plan 2021-25 and will provide our young community members an opportunity to have a say in the strategic direction of the Council.

### 5.5.3 Tender Evaluation Design & Construction of the Aboriginal Gathering Place Quarry Hills Regional Park (Contract No 2023-67)

**Responsible Officer:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

**Author:** Senior Project Manager

**In Attendance:** Manager Capital Delivery  
Unit Manager Community Infrastructure Delivery

**Attachments:**

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - 2023-67, Design & Construction of an Aboriginal Gathering Place, Tender Evaluation Summary [5.5.3.1 - 4 pages]
2. Appendix Concept Designs of Aboriginal Gathering Place [5.5.3.2 - 2 pages]

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 Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released. In particular the attachment contains information regarding tender amounts submitted by a contractor which give direct insight into the contractor's detailed pricing information that is commercially confidential.

#### Purpose

It is proposed that contract number 2023-67 for the Design and Construction of an Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Regional Park is awarded to 2Construct Pty Ltd for the lump sum price of \$5,494,469 for Option 2 concept design façade treatment (excluding GST).

#### Brief Overview

The vision for the Aboriginal Gathering Place is to create a welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe space, where all Aboriginal people have a sense of belonging and have access to a range of community supported programs, services and activities which strengthen culture and enhance wellbeing. An Aboriginal Gathering Place has been an aspiration of community members for many years and aims to:

- Improve social, physical, cultural and emotional health and wellness.
- Strengthen identity and wellbeing through reflection, recognition and connection to culture.
- Empower Aboriginal people to thrive through self-determination.
- Create opportunities to educate, learn about and celebrate Aboriginal culture through storytelling, knowledge sharing, cultural events and structured programming.

This report summarises the evaluation of the tender submissions received for the design and construction of an Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Regional Park.

The tender evaluation panel advises that:

- The recommended tender was considered best value because it is competitive compared to the pre-tender cost estimation and has demonstrated that it has the ability to deliver the project in accordance with Council's specified requirements.

### **Recommendation**

**THAT Council:**

- 1. Accept the tender submitted by 2Construct Pty Ltd for the following contract:**

**Number: 2023-67**

**Title: Design & Construction of an Aboriginal Gathering Place, Quarry Hills Regional Park.**

**Cost: A lump sum of \$5,494,469.00 (excluding GST)**

**subject to the following conditions:**

- a) Tenderer to provide proof of currency of insurance cover as required in the tender documents.**
  - b) Price variations to be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the tender documents.**
  - c) Tenderer to provide contract security as required in the tender documents.**
- 2. Approve the funding arrangements detailed in the confidential attachment.**
  - 3. Delegates to the Chief Executive Officer the authority to approve Option 2 Concept Design (enhanced façade treatment) of the Aboriginal Gathering Place, subject to further design detail provided within one month of the commencement of the contract.**
  - 4. Delegates to the Chief Executive Officer authority to sign and execute the contract on behalf of Council.**

## Key Information

The purpose of this contract is for the design and construction of an Aboriginal Gathering Place at Quarry Hills Regional Park.

Tenders for the contract closed on Tuesday 2 August 2023. The tendered prices and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachment.

No member of the Tender Evaluation Panel declared any conflict of interest in relation to this tender evaluation.

A Tender Probity and Evaluation Plan was designed specifically for this tender process and 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 20%
- Capacity 20%
- Sustainability 10%

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.

The tender received from 2Construct Pty Ltd was deemed to be a conforming and competitive and therefore was fully scored.

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

Tenderer	Conforming	Competitive	Score	Rank
2Construct Pty Ltd	Yes	Yes	89.3	1

The preferred option for the building is Option 2 (enhanced façade treatment). In this regard, the tenderer shall provide further design details of this option within 4 weeks of the contract, for approval by the Chief Executive Officer. If this is not approved, then Option 1 (simplified façade treatment) will be the preferred concept design option for design and construction of the works.

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

## 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. The outcome was as follows:

Due to the highly specialised nature of the design, it was not possible to undertake any collaborative procurement methods.

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.

## 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.

**City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Inclusion Charter:** Acknowledgement of the rights of local Aboriginal communities can expect to have put into practice across Council work.

**City of Whittlesea Reconciliation Policy:** A Council policy that encourages building better relationships between Aboriginal people and the wider Australian community and for the benefit of all Australians.

**Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021:** State Government Strategy that aims to progress Aboriginal self-determination and reconciliation through mutual control, shared power and decision-making, fairness, respect, and trust.

**City of Whittlesea Reconciliation Action Plan:** A Council plan that outlines targeted actions that enhance opportunities and outcomes for local Aboriginal communities.

## Considerations

### Environmental

The contract management includes Key Performance Indicators that relate to the management of environment, waste, and site throughout the contract.

**Social, Cultural and Health**

The contract management will include Key Performance Indicators that relate to Occupational Health and Safety and traffic and pedestrian management to ensure a safe work site is maintained throughout the contract.

**Economic**

The project will provide the Aboriginal and wider community with a fit for purpose, compliant and accessible facility that will increase participation and create community connection.

**Financial Implications**

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the Capital Program for the construction of an Aboriginal Gathering Place.

**Link to Strategic Risk**

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

**Strategic Risk *Contractor Management*** - Failure to manage contractors to deliver agreed outcomes. Awarding this contract will enable Council to provide the community with adequate and safe community infrastructure that meet current needs of the community and increase community participation.

**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 social media communication channels and to relevant stakeholders.

**Critical Dates**

It is anticipated that the construction of the Aboriginal Gathering Place will be completed by the end of 2024.

**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.

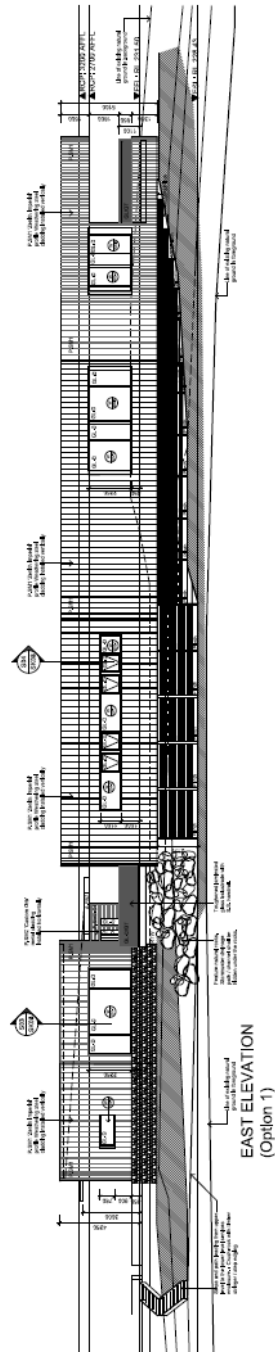
The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

## Conclusion

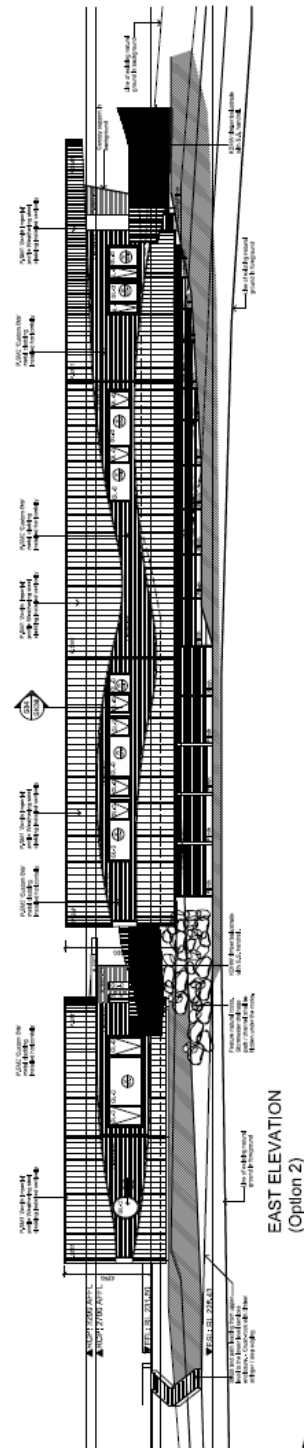
The tender from 2Construct Pty Ltd was determined to be best value and that this company can perform the contract to the required standards.

## CONCEPT DESIGNS

### Option 1 – Elevation view from East



**Option 2 - Elevation view from East**



### 5.5.4 Audit & Risk Committee Report on Activity

**Responsible Officer:** Executive Manager Strategy & Insights

**Author:** Corporate Assurance Advisor

**External in Attendance:** Geoff Harry, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee

**Attachments:**

1. ARC Annual Activity Report F Y 23 Signed 050923 [5.5.4.1 - 6 pages]

#### Purpose

To provide Council with an overview of key activities undertaken by the Audit and Risk Committee during the period 12 September 2022 to 5 September 2023. This report is intended to be included in the City of Whittlesea 2022-2023 Annual Report.

#### Brief Overview

The Audit and Risk Committee Report on Activity provides Council with information on the progress of its Annual Work Plan and activities for the period 12 September 2022 to 5 September 2023. It contains the activities that the Committee monitors and reviews to ensure it complies with the requirements under the Committee Charter. The report contains details of discussions and recommendations made relating to the key activities of risk management, financial and performance reporting, systems of internal control, internal assurance, internal audit, external audit, compliance and governance.

#### Recommendation

**THAT Council notes:**

1. **The Audit and Risk Committee's Report on Activity for the period 12 September 2022 to 5 September 2023.**
2. **That the Audit and Risk Committee have provided valuable support to Council and discharged their responsibilities under the Audit and Risk Committee charter; including providing oversight on financial reporting, risk management, internal control, audit and assurance activities.**

#### Key Information

The Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) is an independent advisory committee of Council, and its role is to report to Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters presented to it. The Committee acts in this capacity by monitoring, reviewing and advising on issues within its scope of responsibility and assisting Council's governance obligations to its community.

In accordance with Section 54 (5) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the Committee is required to prepare a biannual report on its activities. A copy of that report is to be provided

to the Chief Executive Officer for tabling at a Council Meeting. At its 12 November 2020 meeting, the Committee determined that it would prepare a report for Council on its activities following the March and September Committee meetings each year.

The Committee Report on Activity (attached) provides Council with information on the progress of its Annual Work Plan and activities for the period 12 September 2022 to 5 September 2023. It contains the activities that the Committee monitors and reviews to ensure it complies with the requirements under the Committee Charter. The report contains details of discussions and recommendations made relating to the key activities of risk management, financial and performance reporting, systems of internal control, internal assurance, internal audit, external audit, compliance and governance.

The report was approved by the Committee at the meeting held on 5 September 2023. The Independent Committee Chair, Geoff Harry, will attend the Council Meeting to discuss the report.

### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

The Audit and Risk Committee is a non-delegated Committee of Council and therefore, no community consultation and engagement is required.

### **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 establishment of the Audit and Risk Committee and the reports it receives are reflective of Council's commitment to the implementation of good governance principles. The Committee provides advice to Council to assist with fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for the financial and non-financial reporting process, internal controls, the audit process, risk management and Council's process for monitoring compliance with legislation and regulations and the Code of Conduct.

## Considerations

### Environmental

No Implications

### Social, Cultural and Health

No Implications

### Economic

No Implications

### Financial Implications

The cost is included in the current operating budget.

## Link to Strategic Risk

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

The Audit and Risk Committee assists Council in monitoring its governance requirements and provides advice to Council to assist with fulfilling its oversight responsibilities.

## Implementation Strategy

### Communication

This report is one method by which Council is informed of the activities of the Audit and Risk Committee.

### Critical Dates

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Audit and Risk Committee Charter, the Audit and Risk Committee's Report on Activities is to be tabled at the subsequent Council Meeting.

## 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.

## Conclusion

In accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council is provided with the Audit and Risk Committee's Report on Activities for the period 12 September 2022 to 5 September 2023.

**City of Whittlesea**  
**Annual Report of the Audit & Risk Committee**  
**2022/2023**

**Role of the Audit & Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee (the Committee) is an independent committee of Council. Its purpose is to support and advise Council in fulfilling its responsibilities related to financial reporting, risk management, maintenance of sound systems of internal control, assurance activities including internal and external audit and Council's performance regarding legislative and regulatory compliance. It acts in this capacity by monitoring, reviewing, and advising on issues within its scope of responsibility.

The Committee reports to Council on the outcomes of its work programme and provides advice and recommendations on matters relevant to its Charter. The Committee may also endorse key reports for consideration by Council.

**Independence**

An independent Audit & Risk Committee is a fundamental component of a strong corporate governance culture. Council's Committee is independent of management and is not involved in any operational decisions. Committee members do not have any executive powers, management functions or delegated financial responsibilities.

**Reporting Period of this Report**

This report covers Committee activity over the past year from 12 September 2022 to 5 September 2023, including meetings held on 12 September and 1 December 2022, and 16 February, 25 May, and 5 September 2023.

**Purpose of this Report**

This report has two purposes as follows:

- 1- It meets the reporting requirements to Council as mandated by section 54(5) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA), whereby the Committee is required to biannually report to Council on its activities, findings and recommendations. The Committee did also provide a mid-year activity report to Council in March 2022; and
- 2- It meets Council's governance requirements whereby Council requires its various Committees to report on their activities at least annually.

**Committee Charter**

The Committee's Charter is set by Council and was last reviewed and approved by Council on 21 March 2023.

### Committee Membership

The Committee has four independent members and two Administrator members. The independent members collectively have skill sets and experience as mandated in section 53 of the LGA, including skills in financial management and reporting, risk management, audit and assurance programs, compliance management and internal control frameworks. The Chair of the committee is an independent member. The mix of independent and Administrator members enables open discussion based on best practice and gives Administrators' insights into Council's governance practices.

The composition of the Committee remained stable during the year, with the continuity of four independent members and one Administrator member. Independent member, Chris Eddy's membership ceased in December 2022, when he resigned as Administrator, creating a vacancy, which was temporarily filled by Administrator Peita Duncan, until Administrator Christian Zahra was appointed to the Committee in May 2023.

### Meeting Attendance

Meeting date	Independent Members				Administrator Members			
	Geoff Harry	Jen Johanson	Bruce Potgieter	Dr Marco Bini	Lydia Wilson	Chris Eddy	Peita Duncan	Christian Zahra
12 Sept 2022	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended		
1 Dec 2022	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended		
16 Feb 2023	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended		Attended	
25 May 2023	Attended	Attended	Apology	Attended	Attended			Attended
5 Sep 2023	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended			Attended

### Senior management Team

The Committee has been strongly supported by Council's senior management team who have attended all meetings during the year.

### External Service Providers

In addition, both the internal audit team (Crowe) and the agent of the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) have attended as required, and in fact have attended most meetings during the reporting period.

The Committee enjoys strong and professional working relationships with the entire support team, which is a critical element in ensuring the Committee delivers positive and insightful support and advice to Council.

### Annual Work Plan

The agendas for the five meetings in the reporting period have been driven by the Committee's Annual Work Plan (AWP), which reflects its responsibilities as set out in the Committee Charter. The AWP is reviewed frequently to ensure that it remains reflective of Council's business activities and ever-changing contextual environment.

The work of the Committee is summarised below in each of the key areas.

### Financial & Performance Reporting

The Committee monitored the quality, content, and commentary of the financial and performance reports provided to Council, which were tracked against the approved Budget and Council Plan; and their impact on Council's annual report.

The Committee was satisfied with the quality of the financial performance reporting. The Committee also obtained assurance from the external auditors at the conclusion of their work, which indicated that there were no substantial concerns identified.

The Committee endorsed both the annual financial report and the annual performance statement for the year ended 30 June 2023 for Council approval.

### **Risk Management**

The Committee monitor risk management at all meetings, including reviews of:

- Progress of Strategic and Operational Risks
- Changes to Council's Risk Appetite Statement
- Updates on Insurance Claims Management
- The Business Continuity Plan
- Insurance Program renewal
- Updates on significant insurance and legal matters
- Briefings from Council Staff on emerging industry risks including:
  - IT & Cyber Security
  - Data Governance
  - Child Safety Standards
  - Climate Change.

The Committee is pleased with the maturity of the risk management framework, program and controls, and the Business Continuity Plan.

### **Strategic Internal Audit Plan**

The Committee monitored the Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP), which was developed by our internal auditors in consultation with the Committee, the Executive Leadership Team, and the Risk & Assurance Team.

The Plan is usually reviewed in the meeting held before the end of the financial year, however, owing to the appointment of a new internal audit service provider in July 2023, the Committee has scheduled to review and endorse the Plan at the 12 September 2023 Committee meeting.

### **Internal Audit**

The internal audit function was outsourced to Crowe Australasia (Crowe) a global accounting network under an agreement that commenced in July 2018 and concluded on 30 June 2023. A competitive tender process was undertaken resulting in the appointment of Pitcher Partners to provide internal audit services from 1 July 2023 for 3 years, with an option to extend 3 years.

The Committee also monitored the progress of each internal audit scheduled under the SIAP, and the progress of high and medium rated recommendations falling out of those internal audit reviews as follows:

Internal Audit Reviews
Business Continuity Planning (Aug 2022)
Cyber security (Aug 2022)
Food & Public Health Act Compliance (Dec 2022)
Whittlesea Community Connections (May 2023)
Various Financial Controls (May 2023)
Follow-up of Completed Internal Audit Actions (May 2022)

As indicated above, there has been a significant amount of internal audit activity for the reporting period. The Committee regularly monitors management performance in closing out recommendations for improvement and is particularly alert to high rated actions that are not closed by the target dates. The Committee is satisfied that there is appropriate management focus on the actions, bearing in mind that some recommendations require system changes or enhancements that can have long lead times. The Committee acknowledges that many actions have been closed over the past twelve months with a concerted effort to prioritise actions closure by management.

### **Compliance & Integrity**

The Committee monitored Council's compliance with the Act and provided advice on:

- Systems and processes for monitoring legislative compliance.
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register to assess fraud risk and conflict of interest compliance
- Key Personnel Expenses (including Administrators, CEO, and the CEO's Executive Assistant), to assess fraud & integrity.
- Internal Assurance Program, which included a review of the City of Whittlesea Social Club Governance.
- Regulatory Integrity Report Review program, which screens for investigations and reports by State integrity agencies (including VAGO, IBAC, Ombudsman Victoria and the Local Government Inspectorate) with officers providing briefings, recommendations, and best practice insights to be implemented where a gap exists.

### **Systems of Internal Control**

The Committee considered several reports on the review of policies, systems and controls during the reporting period. The key matters monitored and subject to review included the following:

- Delegations of Authority
- Alignment of policies and procedures with the Overarching Governance Principles
- The review schedule of key internal policies
- Significant breakdowns in internal controls (as required)
- Targeted areas:
  - Procurement
  - Significant Contracts & Projects
  - Developer contributions.

**External Audit**

The Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) appointed Richmond Sinnott & Delahunty (RSD) as its agent to undertake the annual external audit of Council's annual financial report and annual performance statement.

The Committee was briefed on RSD's draft external audit strategy for the 2022/23 annual performance statement at the meeting on 16 Feb 2023, which focused on the need to improve local roads, community infrastructure and material misstatements affecting plant and equipment depreciation. The Committee gave advice to management on preparing for the audit and responding to improvement opportunities.

The Committee reviewed RSD's closing report on the Annual Financial Report, and the Annual Performance Statement for 2022/23 at its meeting on 5 September 2023, noting that there were no significant issues raised, and some improvement opportunities relating to ownership of infrastructure assets and the review of IT Policies and Procedures. The Committee continues to monitor management's implementation of the improvement initiatives.

**Reporting to Council**

To advance the transparency of Committee decision making, advice and deliberations:

- All Committee meeting minutes are reported to the next ordinary Council meeting after Committee in-principle approval.
- The Committee Six-Monthly report (Biannual Report) was tabled at the 21 March 2023 Council meeting, which contained information on the Committee's activities from October 2022 to March 2023; and
- The Annual Financial Report, which was audited by the appointed external auditors was tabled at Council's September 2022 meeting.

**Committee Performance Assessment**

The Committee assessed its performance using an anonymous survey completed by six Committee Members and five Council Officers who interact regularly with the Committee. Analysis of the results shows a high satisfaction rate on all indicators. At its December 2022 meeting, the Committee discussed the themes relating to the agenda, papers and minutes and discussed survey comments, which resulted in some continuous improvement initiatives. The Committee discussed the possibility of engaging an independent consultant to undertake the next performance assessment. The results of the survey were shared with Council at the meeting held 21 March 2023.

**Conclusion**

The Committee is satisfied that it has fully discharged its responsibilities as set out in its Charter. It has given advice to management to reduce its risk exposure and is confident that Council has a solid control environment that continues to mature and has well-established prudent financial management practices.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all Committee members, to thank the Administrators for their commitment and contributions to the Committee. I also want to acknowledge the support of Council's senior officers in the preparation of agendas, minutes, reports, and presentations, all of which ensure that the Committee remains well-briefed and effective.

Geoff Harry

Chair, on behalf of the Audit & Risk Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Harry', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Date: 5 September 2023

## **6 Notices of Motion**

No Notices of Motion

## **7 Urgent Business**

No Urgent Business

## **8 Reports from Council Representatives and CEO Update**

## **9 Confidential Business**

### **9.0.0 Close Meeting to the Public**

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

### **9.1 Confidential Liveable Neighbourhoods**

No Reports

### **9.2 Confidential Strong Local Economy**

No Reports

### **9.3 Confidential Sustainable Environment**

No Reports

## **9.4 Confidential High Performing Organisation**

### **9.4.1 CEO Employment Matters**

**Responsible Officer:** Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

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

This report and attachments have 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. In particular the attachments contain information regarding CEO employment matters.

## **9.5 Confidential Connected Communities**

No Reports

## **10 Closure**