

Minutes

Youth Council Meeting
Monday 1 December 2025 at 6pm

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

Youth Councillors

Youth Cr Kaynat Virk

Youth Mayor

Youth Cr Emily Tricarico

Deputy Youth Mayor

Youth Cr Osama Akkad

Youth Cr Angelica Banquil

Youth Cr Bavleen Kaur

Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim

Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine

Youth Cr Angela Rolevska

Youth Cr Tanya Sharma

Youth Cr Sandy Tran

Youth Cr Elly Watson

Youth Cr Sophie Winter

Officers

Agata Chmielewski

Director Community Wellbeing

Bobbie-Lea Bright

Unit Manager Compliance & Governance

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1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Youth Mayor opened the meeting at 6pm.

Welcome to this Youth Council Meeting of 1 December 2025 which is being held in person in the Council Chamber at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang.

I am Kaynat Virk, Youth Mayor and I would like to introduce the Youth Councillors in attendance tonight:

Emily Tricarico, Deputy Youth Mayor
Angelica Banquil
Bavleen Kaur
Mustafa Khraim
Zachary Melvaine
Angela Rolevska
Tanya Sharma
Sandy Tran
Elly Watson
Sophie Winter

We also have in attendance Agata Chmielewski, Director Community Wellbeing and Bobbie-Lea Bright, Unit Manager Compliance & Governance.

1.2 Apologies/Absent

Apology:

Osama Akkad

1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Youth Mayor read the following statement:

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

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

1.4 Youth Council Charter

The Youth Mayor read the following Youth Council Charter:

“We, the members of the City of Whittlesea Youth Council, commit to advocating for and being the voice of the youth within our municipality. We ensure a safe space for all, to engage in constructive collaboration on matters affecting young people. We aim to empower and foster community connectedness in our youth so they feel valued and supported to achieve their aspirations.”

1.5 Acknowledgements

The Youth Mayor made the following acknowledgements:

Youth Council – End of Term

As this is the final Youth Council Meeting of our term, I would like to extend a big thank you and congratulations to all the members of the Youth Council for the amazing work that has been achieved in this two-year term. From being involved in and leading events, and campaigns, to being able to provide valuable feedback on a range of plans and initiatives, it has been wonderful to see the voices of young people helping to shape the City of Whittlesea. Youth Council should be proud of the work they've done and the impact they've had on young people across our community.

Recruitment – New Youth Council

Recruitment has been underway for the new Youth Council. The current Youth Councillors have been working closely with the City of Whittlesea's Youth Development team throughout the recruitment process and have been part of the reading panel, supported the group interviews, helped work through the 98 applications and met with 48 incredible young people. Thank you to everyone involved in this process, that will no doubt lead to a fantastic group of new Youth Councillors for the City of Whittlesea.

City of Whittlesea Community Awards

The City of Whittlesea Community Awards are currently open for nominations. The awards celebrate the contributions of those who live, work, volunteer or study in our municipality, and who go above and beyond for the community. Last year, Youth Council member Zachary Melvaine was awarded the Young Citizen of the Year award, recognising his leadership and efforts to create positive change for young people. If you know someone in the community deserving of recognition, please consider nominating them via the City of Whittlesea website. Awards will be presented at the Community Festival in March.

Carols by Candlelight

On Friday 12 December, Council will be hosting the annual Carols by Candlelight event, here on the terrace lawns at the Civic Centre. The event will feature Team Dream to kick off the evening with a festive dance show, as well as the Community Carols choir and Diamond Valley Brass Band, and Glenn Starr and band, who will perform all the beloved Christmas hits. I encourage everyone to head down for a magical community evening.

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No declarations.

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Youth Cr Sophie Winter</i>
Seconded:	<i>Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim</i>

THAT the Youth Council confirm the Minutes of the Youth Council Meeting held on 6 October 2025, as circulated.

CARRIED

Youth Cr Sophie Winter left the meeting at 6:16pm.

4 Officers' Reports

4.1 Community Priorities 2026 Community Consultation

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Public Affairs

Report Author: Unit Manager Community Engagement

In Attendance: Manager EPMO & Change
Unit Manager Community Engagement

Brief Overview

Each year, Council develops an annual Budget that sets out how we invest in services and infrastructure to meet the needs of our rapidly growing community. This financial year Council has an operating budget of \$347m. We need to know what services and assets our community value to help us shape key documents that will guide Council's activities over the next 5-10 years.

To help shape the 2026–27 Budget and other long-term plans, we invited community members to tell us what services and priorities matter most to them — now and for the future.

This engagement will guide several key Council documents, including the **2026–27 Budget**, **Community Action Plan 2026–27**, and **Economic Growth Strategy 2026–36**.

Between 1 September to 5 October, Council delivered the first phase of our Community Priorities community engagement, a broad consultation to hear from people who live, work, study or visit the City of Whittlesea. Engagement included both online and in-person activities to ensure everyone had a chance to participate.

Who we heard from

We heard from 1,052 people, with 870 captured at in-person engagement activities.

Feedback was captured from a wide cross-section of our diverse community as below:

Gender	63% female, 32% male, 3% non-binary
Age	All age groups represented – largest: over 65 (27%), 36–45 (21%), 46–55 (15%)
Suburbs	Participants from 15 suburbs; strongest participation from Epping, Doreen, and Mernda
Cultural diversity	35% spoke a language other than English at home
People with disability/carers	11%

LGBTIQ+	4%
First Peoples	2%

What we heard

Community feedback highlighted strong, consistent themes about what people value most and where they would like to see investment.

Top five priorities:

1. **Community Safety** – lighting in public spaces, crime prevention, and local law enforcement.
2. **Roads, Public Transport and Footpaths** – local road maintenance, traffic management, walking and cycling paths, and better transport options.
3. **Ageing Well Services** – positive ageing programs, home support, and social connection opportunities.
4. **Community Facilities** – libraries, sporting and aquatic centres, and community activity spaces.
5. **Community Wellbeing** – mental health support, inclusion, connection, and cost-of-living support.

Other key themes:

- **Parks and open space:** maintenance, biodiversity, more shade, and accessible amenities.
- **Sustainable environment:** reducing waste, tree planting, and education about recycling and climate action.
- **Youth:** more free and inclusive activities, mental health support, and safe social spaces.
- **Local business and jobs:** more local employment opportunities, small business support, and vibrant retail areas.
- **Family and children:** accessible kindergartens, playgroups, and play spaces.

Top priorities for youth participants

As part of the consultation, we heard from 96 people aged under 25 years. The top priorities for this group were:

1. **Arts, culture and events** – festivals, events, community arts, municipal art exhibitions and public art.
2. **Youth** – youth leadership, mental health and wellbeing and social recreation.
3. **Family and Children** – MCH services, kindergarten, supported playgroup, family day care, training and education.
4. **Local employment and support for local business** – business support, investment attraction, visitor economy, retail precincts and local employment opportunities.

5. **Community safety** - lighting in public spaces, crime prevention and local law enforcement.

Other key themes:

- **Parks, playgrounds and paths.**
- **Spaces for youth to meet - Community Centres, Festivals and arts events.**
- **Education, information and resources** - about future path employment, mental health and many other important topics for youth.
- **Youth are feeling isolated and experiencing loneliness and the above should be focussed on more than social media strategies.**

Next steps – Phase 2

In phase two we share the top five priorities identified through the first phase of consultation and ask participants if they agree with the priorities we’ve presented. Consultation is predominantly online, but also at key Council events including Bundoora Beats and Carols.

We are seeking input of the Youth Council as part of this wider community engagement process to ensure their voice is considered. Feedback from the session will be presented and considered as part of the wider community consultation that is active at engage.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/priorities2026.

Officers’ Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council Provide feedback during the meeting to assist in developing key documents including the Budget 2026-27, Community Action Plan 2026-27 and other plans and projects.

Youth Cr Angela Rolevska moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Youth Cr Angela Rolevska</i>
Seconded:	<i>Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico</i>

THAT the Youth Council Provide feedback during the meeting to assist in developing key documents including the Budget 2026-27, Community Action Plan 2026-27 and other plans and projects.

CARRIED

YOUTH COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Youth Cr Angela Rolevska, Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Youth Mayor Kaynat Virk</i> <i>Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico</i> <i>Youth Cr Angelica Banquill</i> <i>Youth Cr Bavleen Kaur</i> <i>Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim</i> <i>Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine</i> <i>Youth Cr Angela Rolevska</i> <i>Youth Cr Tanya Sharma</i> <i>Youth Cr Sandy Tran</i> <i>Youth Cr Elly Watson</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

4.2 Youth Engagement Feedback Workshop

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Public Affairs

Report Author: Unit Manager Community Engagement

In Attendance: Unit Manager Community Engagement

Brief Overview

This presentation aims to gather feedback and insights from the Youth Council on how we can better engage with young people.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council provide feedback on how Council can better engage with young people within the municipality.

Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim</i>
Seconded:	<i>Youth Cr Angelica Banquil</i>

THAT the Youth Council provide feedback on how Council can better engage with young people within the municipality.

CARRIED

YOUTH COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Youth Cr Angelica Banquil, Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim and Youth Cr Angelica Banquil

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Youth Mayor Kaynat Virk</i> <i>Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico</i> <i>Youth Cr Angelica Banquil</i> <i>Youth Cr Bavleen Kaur</i> <i>Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim</i> <i>Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine</i> <i>Youth Cr Angela Rolevska</i> <i>Youth Cr Tanya Sharma</i> <i>Youth Cr Sandy Tran</i> <i>Youth Cr Elly Watson</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

4.3 Economic Growth Strategy Discussion Papers

Director/Executive Manager: Director Planning & Development

Report Author: Industry Development Officer (Agri-Food)

In Attendance: Unit Manager Business Engagement & Support
Unit Manager Investment Attraction & Business Growth
Industry Development Officer (Agri-Food)

External Attendees: Associate Director, Urbis Pty Ltd
Research Analyst, Urbis Pty Ltd

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report and presentation (**attachment 1**) is to provide an update on the Economic Growth Strategy 2026–2036 and seek feedback from the Youth Council as part of the discussion paper consultation.

The City of Whittlesea is developing the Economic Growth Strategy 2026–2036. This plan will guide how our local economy grows and changes over the next 10 years. It builds on the Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026 and supports Goal 3 of Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All - which is all about creating a thriving, inclusive economy with more local jobs, better education and training, and strong business growth. We also want a community that is connected and resilient.

Phase One is now complete, following extensive pre-consultation led by Urbis Pty Ltd (Urbis). Urbis also conducted an analysis on how other councils approach economic development. Feedback was summarised in a report delivered on 30 September 2025.

A series of themed discussion papers have been developed, highlighting key opportunities, challenges, examples from other regions and posing three ambitious questions to help imagine the future of the City of Whittlesea:

- Unlocking Business Growth and Innovation
- Building Jobs, Skills and Training
- Driving Investment, Infrastructure and Industry Forward
- Growing Economies through Culture and Connection

During the Youth Council session Urbis will be seeking feedback on the discussion papers to gather their perspectives and insights (attachment 2). The Youth Council's feedback will provide valuable input on priorities for young people in areas such as employment, skills development, innovation, and community connection.

This contribution, along with feedback from other stakeholders, will help shape a background paper that pulls together data, trends and community input. The background paper will form the foundation for the final Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036, ensuring it is evidence-based, locally relevant, and aligned with the City of Whittlesea’s long-term vision.

Officers’ Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council provide feedback to help shape a background paper that will guide the development of the Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036.

Youth Cr Angelica Banquil moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Youth Cr Angelica Banquil</i>
Seconded:	<i>Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico</i>

THAT the Youth Council provide feedback to help shape a background paper that will guide the development of the Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036.

CARRIED

YOUTH COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Nil

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Youth Mayor Kaynat Virk Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico Youth Cr Angelica Banquil Youth Cr Bavleen Kaur Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine Youth Cr Angela Rolevska Youth Cr Tanya Sharma Youth Cr Sandy Tran Youth Cr Elly Watson</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

Youth Mayor, Kaynat Virk sought a Procedural Motion to extend the meeting for an additional 30 minutes to allow for officers to present their reports.

THAT the meeting be extended for an additional 30 minutes to allow for officers to present their reports.

PROCEDURAL MOTION	
Moved:	<i>Youth Cr, Emily Tricarico</i>
Seconded:	<i>Youth Cr Angela Rolevska</i>

THAT the meeting be extended for an additional 30 minutes to allow for officers to present their reports.

CARRIED

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Youth Mayor Kaynat Virk Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico Youth Cr Angelica Banquil Youth Cr Bavleen Kaur Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine Youth Cr Angela Rolevska Youth Cr Tanya Sharma Youth Cr Sandy Tran Youth Cr Elly Watson</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

4.4 Youth Hub Location

Director/Executive Manager: Director Community Wellbeing

Report Author: EA to Director to Community Wellbeing

In Attendance: Manager Community Strengthening
Unit Manager Youth Development

Brief Overview

This Presentation aims to gather feedback from Youth Council regarding the Youth Hub Location.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council provide feedback on potential locations for a Youth Hub within City of Whittlesea.

Youth Cr Angela Rolevska moved the Officers' Recommendation as the motion:

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Youth Cr Angela Rolevska</i>
Seconded:	<i>Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine</i>

THAT the Youth Council provide feedback on potential locations for a Youth Hub within City of Whittlesea.

CARRIED

YOUTH COUNCILLOR/S WHO SPOKE TO MOTION

Youth Cr Angela Rolevska

VOTING		
FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED (vote against the motion)
<i>Youth Mayor Kaynat Virk</i> <i>Deputy Youth Mayor Emily Tricarico</i> <i>Youth Cr Angelica Banquill</i> <i>Youth Cr Bavleen Kaur</i> <i>Youth Cr Mustafa Khraim</i> <i>Youth Cr Zachary Melvaine</i> <i>Youth Cr Angela Rolevska</i> <i>Youth Cr Tanya Sharma</i> <i>Youth Cr Sandy Tran</i> <i>Youth Cr Elly Watson</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>

5 Notices of Motion

No Notices of Motion

6 General / Urgent Business

No Urgent Business

7 Closure

There being no further business the Mayor formally closed the meeting at 7:56pm.

Confirmed this on 2nd day of February 2026.

Youth Cr Kaynat Virk
Youth Mayor