

Agenda

Youth Council Meeting
Monday 6 October 2025 at 6pm

Council Chamber,
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

Jacinta Stevens

Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Bobbie-Lea Bright

Unit Manager Compliance & Governance

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1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Youth Mayor will open the meeting and welcome everyone in attendance.

1.2 Apologies/Absent

1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair will read the following statement:

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

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

1.4 Youth Council Charter

The Chair will read the following statement:

“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

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council confirm the Minutes of the Youth Council Meeting held on 1 September 2025, as circulated.

4 Andrew Giles MP

Minister Giles will be attending virtually to gain an insight into the youth perspective and exploring how he can contribute positively.

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 Introduction: Strong Local Economy Strategy 2026-2036

Director/Executive Manager: Director Planning & Development

Report Author: Industry Development Officer, Agri-Food

In Attendance: Manager Economic Development
Unit Manager Business Engagement & Support
Industry Development Officer, Agri-Food

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

Executive Summary

This report and presentation (Attachment 1) are to introduce the development of the *Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036* and seek feedback from the Youth Council as part of the pre-consultation.

The City of Whittlesea is developing the next *Economic Growth Strategy 2026–2036*. The current *Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022–2026* set the foundation for creating a stronger, more resilient economy. As our city continues to grow and evolve, it is time to build on this work and shape the next 10 years.

The *Economic Growth Strategy* (Strategy) aims to support a Strong Local Economy, one of five key goals in the City of Whittlesea's long-term community vision, Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All (W2040). A strong economy means more than just business success – it means more jobs, better education, and a more inclusive community.

The new 10-year Strategy will set a cohesive and sustainable direction for Council, aligned with the goals of W2040. It will guide Council's activities over the next decade, focusing on sustainable, inclusive, and innovative opportunities that drive long-term economic growth and prosperity across the region.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council provide feedback to assist the development of the discussion papers for the Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036.

Background / Key Information

In 2022 the *Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026* was endorsed following consultation with community, businesses, industry and educational institutions. The strategy was guided by the Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All (W2040), a comprehensive long-term vision designed to guide Council's actions and its partnerships with the community and other stakeholders.

Since its inception, the *Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026* has achieved tangible outcomes and strengthened relationships between the business community and Council. Whilst there is one more year remaining of the current strategy and action plan, a substantial amount of has been achieved already, including:

- the development and implementation of five Tier 3 plans – Agri-Food Plan, Circular Economy Plan, Destination Plan, Economic Participation Plan and Investment Attraction Plan;
- development and implementation of key operational projects such as the Whittlesea Business Network, Whittlesea Business Awards and Shopfront Improvement Grants program; and
- improvements in key statistics including increased number of medium and small businesses, increased number of local jobs and increased investment in key commercial and industrial areas.

With the current Strategy concluding in 2026, the Economic Development Department, in collaboration with Urbis Pty Ltd, will be developing a new, comprehensive *Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036*, that will provide strategic direction and a clear framework to guide the activities of Council over the next 10 years.

As the City of Whittlesea continues to grow and evolve, there is a critical need to ensure that the *Economic Growth Strategy* reflects these changes, capitalising on the opportunities for growth in emerging sectors and cultural shift post-pandemic e.g., working from home, technological advancements, alongside addressing any residual challenges resulting from the pandemic.

The development of a new *Economic Growth Strategy* is essential to creating a cohesive, sustainable approach that will guide the work of Council over the next decade and help meet the objectives set out in **W2040**.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Businesses and broader community will be regularly engaged throughout the development of the *Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036* and provide the opportunity to contribute feedback.

Pre-consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders to inform the development of the discussion papers and identify key themes, priorities, opportunities, and challenges. This will include the feedback received from the Youth Council at the Youth Council meeting on 6 October 2025.

Further consultation with key stakeholders and community (including the Youth Council) will be conducted to ensure the themes, opportunities and challenges presented in the discussion papers is captured accurately. Feedback provided will be collected and assessed to help inform the development of a background paper, which will then inform the development of a draft strategy.

A final round of consultation with key stakeholders and community (including the Youth Council) will be conducted to ensure the draft strategy has captured the priorities and opportunities accurately. Feedback provided will be collected and assessed to help finalise the strategy for endorsement.

Critical Dates

Dates	Activity
15 – 30 September 2025	Phase One <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted Pre-Consultation - Preliminary Findings Report Due
October – December 2025	Phase Two <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and community consultation of Discussion Papers - Papers to be noted at Council Briefing prior to consultation - Youth Council engaged at meeting on 1 December 2025 - Background Report completed
Early 2026	Phase Three <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Strategy developed
Early – Mid 2026	Phase Four <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Strategy consultation
Mid 2026	Phase Five <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final Strategy endorsed

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

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

Attachments

1. Introduction to Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036 Development

Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036

Enhancing a Strong Local Economy

Introduction

Youth Council 6 October 2026



Introduction



The current Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026 concludes in 2026

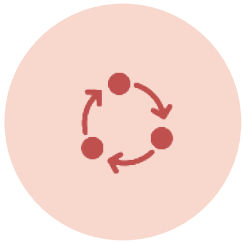


Now developing a new 10-year Economic Growth Strategy 2026-2036



New strategy to be developed in collaboration with Urbis Pty Ltd.

Project Stages



PHASE ONE: PRE-CONSULTATION
(SEPTEMBER 2025)



PHASE TWO: DISCUSSION PAPERS
(NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025)



PHASE THREE: DRAFT STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT
(EARLY 2026)

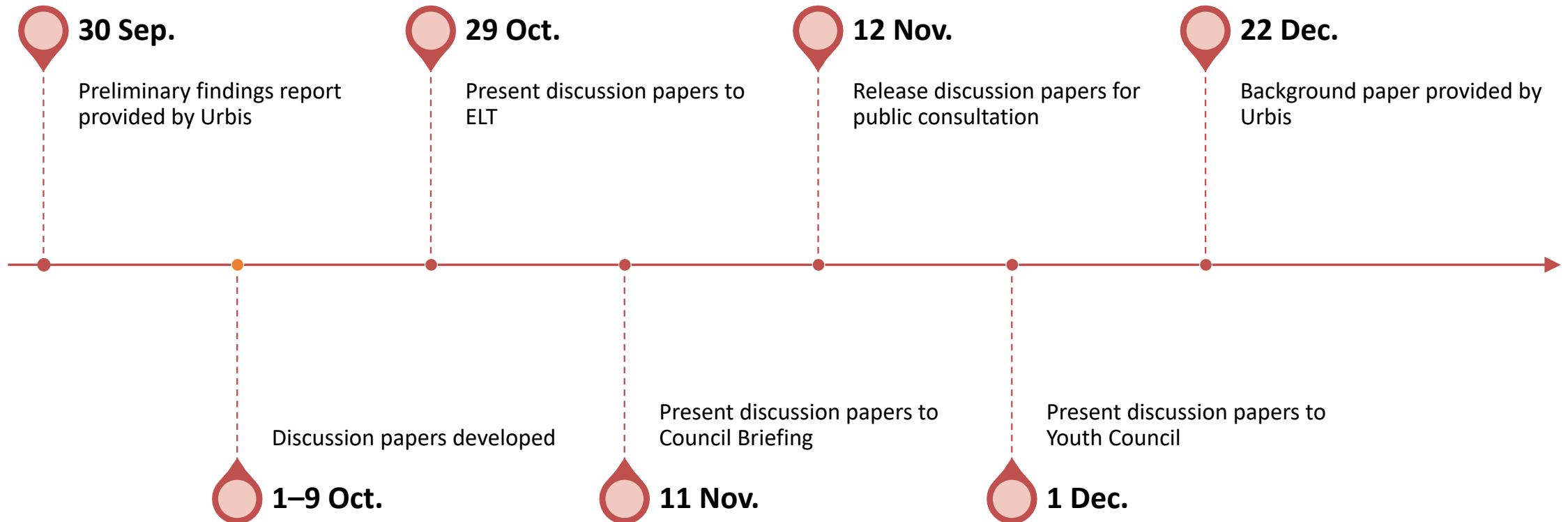


PHASE FOUR: DRAFT STRATEGY CONSULTATION
(MID 2026)



PHASE FIVE: FINAL STRATEGY
(MID 2026)

Next Steps





City of Whittlesea – Economic Growth Strategy Development 2026–2036

Youth Council

Shaping the Whittlesea's Future

Economy

Project Context

The City of Whittlesea is creating a new *Economic Growth Strategy 2026–2036* to help shape the future of jobs, businesses, and opportunities in the area. This *Strategy* will guide Council's actions over the next ten years, focusing on sustainable, inclusive, and innovative ways to grow the local economy.

A strong economy isn't just about businesses—it means more job opportunities, better training and education, and a community where everyone can thrive.

Consultation Process

Urbis has been asked to speak with community stakeholders to gather ideas for the new *Economic Growth Strategy 2026–2036*. Through focus groups and interviews, Urbis will explore what's working well, the challenges, and the opportunities ahead to help shape the *Economic Growth Strategy 2026–2036*.

See the Q&A on the next page to learn more about the consultation process and how you can get involve.

Key Indicators – 2024

Population

253,204

Local Jobs

85,195

Gross Regional Product

\$12.21_{bn}

Local Businesses

22,808

Employed Residents

129,014

Top 5 Industries of Employment

1.

Health Care and
Social
Assistance



2.

Constructi
on



3.

Retail
Trade



4.

Manufacturing



5.

Education
and
Training



Q&A

What will I have to do?

- We're hosting an in-person focus group to help shape Whittlesea's next Economic Growth Strategy. The focus group will run for about 45 minutes and is a chance to share your ideas on the challenges and opportunities for local jobs and businesses over the next decade—and how the Strategy can help build a stronger, fairer economy for everyone.

How we will collect and store information from the interview

- All data gathered from the focus group will be treated confidentially and will be managed and stored in accordance with the requirements of the Privacy Act 1998. Only the Urbis team has access to your responses.
- Your ideas might be included in the summary report we write for the City of Whittlesea, but your name or any details that could identify you won't be shared. If we use something you said, we'll only describe you in a general way, like "stakeholder" or "Youth Council member."
- After the consultation, all information will be stored safely on password-protected computers and only the research team will have access. Your data will only be used for this project and, following research guidelines, will be securely deleted five years after the Strategy is completed.
- In accordance with relevant Australian privacy and other relevant laws, you have the right to request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the research team. You also have the right to request that any information you disagree with be corrected. Contact details are listed at the end of this form if you wish to request access to

this information.

If you have any questions about the project please feel free to contact:

Vicki Triantis, Associate Director, Urbis
E: vtriantis@urbis.com.au
T: (03) 8639 9799

What we've heard so far...

What's working well...

- *Whittlesea is a diverse and growing area with a lot of small businesses*
- *A strong manufacturing sector, particularly in food and beverages*
- *High quality health facilities in Epping*
- *Good location close to the CBD and a gateway to the north of Victoria*
- *Council works hard to consult with stakeholders and support businesses*

What needs improving...

- *Better transport options across the LGA*
- *More local jobs*
- *Reduce the cost of living and costs of doing business*
- *Access to childcare*
- *More people trained in skills*

Some opportunities for youth...

- *A jobs and volunteering event to learn about the businesses and opportunities in the City of Whittlesea*
- *Create more study hubs*
- *Better bus connections*
- *More and better libraries*



Discussion Questions

Introduce yourself. How long have you lived in the City of Whittlesea? Are you studying, working or volunteering?

Part 1

- What makes the City of Whittlesea a great place to live, work and play in? What do you think is working well?
- What do young people in the City of Whittlesea like about living and studying in this area?



Part 2

- What do you think young people in the City of Whittlesea dislike about living in this area?
- What is missing in the City of Whittlesea?
- What are some challenges or issues that you've heard or experienced?

Part 3

- Thinking 10 years into the future, the year is 2035, what would a thriving City of Whittlesea look like for young people?
- What would make the City of Whittlesea an even better place to live, study, work and play in? What needs to change and why?
- How can Council support young people to study and work in the area?
- Are young people seeking entrepreneurship opportunities after leaving school, or wanting to start their own business? What support do they need?

5.2 Youth Council Meetings Schedule for 2026

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

Report Author: Councillor Support Officer

In Attendance: Councillor Support Officer

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is for the Youth Council to adopt the proposed Youth Council Meeting schedule for the period 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026, noting no meeting will be scheduled in the month of April.

Youth Council Meetings are conducted monthly so that the Youth Council may engage with Council Officers at Youth Council meetings for the purpose of providing expert advice to Council on topics and issues relevant to young people.

It is proposed that Youth Council Meetings are conducted on the first Monday of the month commencing in February 2026.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council:

1. **Adopt the Youth Council meeting schedule outlined below, noting all meetings will commence at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang:**
 - **Monday 2 February 2026**
 - **Monday 2 March 2026 – Election of Youth Mayor & Youth Deputy Mayor**
 - **Monday 4 May 2026**
 - **Monday 1 June 2026**
 - **Monday 6 July 2026**
 - **Monday 3 August 2026**
 - **Monday 7 September 2026**
 - **Monday 5 October 2026**
 - **Monday 9 November 2026**
 - **Monday 7 December 2026**
2. **Note it is proposed a Council Briefing dinner with Councillors will be scheduled during March and August 2026, to inform Council of identified issues of priorities, projects and portfolio work undertaken by the Youth Council.**

Background / Key Information

Youth Council Meetings are conducted throughout the year so that the Youth Council may engage with Council Officers at Youth Council meetings for the purpose of providing expert advice to Council on topics and issues relevant to young people.

At the City of Whittlesea, Youth Council Meetings are conducted monthly in accordance with the Youth Council Terms of Reference. It is proposed that Youth Council Meetings will be held on the first Monday of the month commencing in February.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Youth Council is required to set the date, time and place of Youth Council Meetings and that reasonable notice is provided to all the Youth Councillors.

Critical Dates

The Youth Council meeting schedule is required to be adopted to enable meeting dates for 2026 to be formally advertised.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

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

Attachments

Nil

6 Notices of Motion

No Notices of Motion

7 General / Urgent Business

No Urgent Business

8 Closure