

# Agenda

Scheduled Council Meeting Tuesday 20 August 2024 at 6pm

You are advised that a Meeting of Council has been called by the Chief Executive Officer on Tuesday 20 August 2024 at 6 pm for the transaction of the following business.

This meeting will be held in the Great Hall at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang and will be <u>livestreamed via Council's website</u>.

C Lloyd Chief Executive Officer



# Administrators

Lydia WilsonChair of CouncilPeita DuncanAdministratorChristian Zahra AMAdministrator

On 19 June 2020 the Acting Minister for Local Government appointed the Panel of Administrators for the City of Whittlesea and appointed Lydia Wilson as Chair of the Panel. The Panel of Administrators comprises of Lydia Wilson, Peita Duncan and Christian Zahra who will undertake the duties of the Council of the City of Whittlesea until the CEO calls the first Council meeting after the October 2024 Local Government Election.

# **Senior Officers**

Craig Lloyd	Chief Executive Officer
Emma Appleton	Director Planning & Development
Agata Chmielewski	Director Community Wellbeing
Sarah Renner	Director Customer & Corporate Services
Debbie Wood	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Janine Morgan	Executive Manager Public Affairs
Jacinta Stevens	Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO



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#### Note:

At the Chair of Council's discretion, the meeting may be closed to the public in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The provision which is likely to be relied upon to enable closure is set out in each item. These reports are not available for public distribution.

#### **Question Time:**

Council will hold public question time for up to 30 minutes at each Scheduled Council Meeting to allow for public questions, petitions or joint letters from our community to be read out by the Chief Executive Officers delegate and responses will be provide by the Chief Executive Officer.

Questions are required to be submitted in writing no later than 12 noon on the day prior to a Scheduled Council Meeting.

Priority will be given to questions or statements that relate to agenda items. Any questions submitted after 12 noon the day prior will be held over to the following Council Meeting.

The Public Question form can be downloaded from Council's website. Refer: <a href="https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/">https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/</a>

Council is committed to ensuring that all residents and ratepayers of the municipality may contribute to Council's democratic process and therefore, if you have special requirements, please telephone the Governance Team prior to any Council Meeting on (03) 9217 2170.



# 1 Opening

#### **1.1** Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will open the meeting and introduce the Administrators and Chief Executive Officer:

Administrator, Peita Duncan; Administrator, Christian Zahra; and Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd.

The Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd will introduce members of the Executive Leadership Team:

Emma Appleton, Director Planning and Development; Agata Chmielewski, Director Community Wellbeing; Sarah Renner, Director Corporate and Customer Services; Debbie Wood, Director Infrastructure and Environment; Janine Morgan, Executive Manager Public Affairs; and Jacinta Stevens, Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO.

#### 1.2 Apologies

#### **1.3** Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will read the following statement:

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

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

#### 1.4 Diversity and Good Governance Statement

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson will read the following statement:

"At the City of Whittlesea we are proud of our diversity and the many cultures, faiths and beliefs that make up our community. We strive to be an inclusive welcoming City that fosters active participation, wellbeing and connection to each other and this land. We commit as a Council to making informed decisions to benefit the people of the City of Whittlesea now and into the future, to support our community's vision of A Place For All."

#### 1.5 Acknowledgements



## 2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

# **3** Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

#### Recommendation

THAT the following Minutes of the preceding meeting as circulated, be confirmed:

• Scheduled Meeting of Council held on 16 July 2024.



# 4 Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters

- 4.1 Public Question Time
- 4.2 Petitions No Petitions
- 4.3 Joint Letters No Joint Letters



# 5 Officers' Reports

### 5.1 Whittlesea Business Network update

Director/Executive Manager:	Director Planning & Development
Report Author:	Senior Business Engagement Officer
In Attendance:	Acting Manager Economic Development Senior Business Engagement Officer

#### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to present to Council an update on the membership, outcomes, and to seek endorsement of the updated Terms and Conditions of the City of Whittlesea Business Network (Network).

The Network was endorsed by Council on 21 March 2022 to enhance and complement the Economic Development departments engagement with the local business community. In the resolution it was agreed that the progress of the Network would be reported to Council.

The Network aligns with Council's Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026 and the key direction to support successful, innovative local businesses to ensure a strong local economy.

Outcomes of the Network to date include:

- 378 businesses have joined the Network;
- Seven network events have been hosted and attended by 248 businesses;
- 77 members accessed business learning opportunities;
- 74 members nominated in the 2024 City of Whittlesea Business Awards;
- 254 members opted in to be listed on Council's business directory online platform; and
- One Network member sits on Council's Business Advisory Panel.

The Network is supported by City of Whittlesea Business Network Terms and Conditions (Terms and Conditions) that detail membership eligibility and benefits. The Terms and Conditions have been updated to support the membership needs and maintain the integrity of the Network.

After two years of operation the Network holds its position as a vital program that strengthens business to business connections and capacity building.



The Network is operational, and members of the Network have no delegation of authority or decision-making powers. Due to the operational and administrative nature of the Network, it is proposed that it will continue to be managed through the Economic Development department.

#### Officers' Recommendation

**THAT Council:** 

- 1. Endorse the updated City of Whittlesea Business Network Terms and Conditions at Attachment 3 and note any future updates to the Terms and Conditions will be endorse by the Director Planning and Development and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 2. Note the success of the City of Whittlesea Business Network (Network) since its establishment on 21 March 2022 as outlined in the body of this report.
- 3. Note the results of the recent 'Shaping the future of the City of Whittlesea Business Network' engagement survey at Attachment 2 conducted between 5 February 2024 and 18 February 2024.
- 4. Note the Network will continue to be managed by the Economic Development department.



#### Background / Key Information

The Network was endorsed by Council on 21 March 2022 to enhance and complement the Economic Development department's engagement with the local business community. In the resolution it was agreed that the progress of the Network would be reported to Council.

The Network provides a central network for all businesses. The Network aligns with the Council's Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026 and the key direction of fostering successful, innovative local businesses to ensure a robust local economy. The Network is managed by the Economic Development department.

Terms and Conditions have been established for the Network, which include membership eligibility and benefits.

The membership offers:

- Exclusive invitation to Network only events;
- Eligibility to enter the City of Whittlesea Business Awards;
- Business listing on Council's business directory online platform;
- Exclusive access to opportunities for increased business skills, capability and lifelong learning; and
- Opportunity for one Network member to sit on Council's Business Advisory Panel.

Brand elements and marketing materials support the promotion and the identity of the Network. To drive membership, the Network is actively promoted through the business eNewsletter and face-to-face business engagement as well as supported through Council's corporate channels including Local Scoop, the corporate website and social media channels. The target of the Network is to increase membership by 100 members per year. This target will be reviewed in line with the development of any new Economic Development Strategy.

Members of the network have no delegation of authority or decision-making powers.

#### Membership

Since its inception, 378 businesses have joined the Network. These members vary in size, based on employee numbers and industry sectors, as shown in the Business Network Membership Snapshot (Attachment 1).

Among the members, 86 businesses have fewer than five employees. The professional services sector has the highest representation, with 76 members, followed by the health care and social assistance sector, with 56 members.



Additionally, 44 businesses applied for membership but were deemed ineligible according to the Terms and Conditions due to not being located within the City of Whittlesea and/or having a valid ABN.

Reflecting global 'work from home' trends, the Network includes 172 home-based business operators residing in the City of Whittlesea. Businesses using co-working spaces within the municipality are also part of the membership.

#### Network Engagement Survey

In February 2024, a Network engagement survey was conducted among members. The survey aimed to understand the key motivations for membership, the most valued aspects by members, and the benefits they have gained. A total of 32 members responded to the survey (Attachment 2).

The key findings are as follows:

- Networking opportunities offered by the Network have the highest engagement with 78% of respondents attending an event;
- 63% of respondents reported experiencing benefits or advantages through connections made at Network events;
- 72% of respondents have attended two or more Network events.

When asked about the benefits or advantages experienced, responses included new business relationships, new customers, referrals, and professional development opportunities.

Respondents also indicated that one of the barriers to attending events was the fixed schedule, specifically events held on Thursdays from 9am to 11am. This feedback has been addressed, and events are now scheduled on different days of the week, resulting in an increased number of registrations.

Day	Time	Location	# of Registrations
Tuesday 30 April	9:00am – 11:00am	Base, South Morang	62
2024			
Wednesday 31 July	9:00am – 11:00am	Slices, Doreen	71
2024			
Thursday 21	5:30pm – 7:30pm	TBC, Epping	ТВС
November 2024			

The new event schedule is as follows:



#### Networking Events

Seven networking events were exclusively hosted for Network members, attracting a total of 248 businesses.

Day	Location	# of Attendance
28 July 2022	Republic Tavern, Epping	42
6 September 2022	Whittlesea Tech School, Epping	27
23 February 2023	Farm Vigano, South Morang	40
24 August 2023	Slices, Doreen	31
15 November 2023	PRACC, South Morang	29
30 April 2024	Base, South Morang	33
31 July 2024	Slices, Doreen	46
21 November 2024	TBC, Epping	pending
	Total	248

Here is a breakdown of attendance for each event:

#### **Business Learning Opportunities**

Members have been provided learning opportunities through an externally hosted online portal. Currently, 77 businesses have registered for portal access, with 35 members having completed the full suite of modules covering topics such as Business Strategy, Growth, Digital transformation and Innovation.

However, there is low awareness and engagement of the current static online learning format. There is an opportunity to revitalise the learning experience for members including hosting smaller, more frequent face-to-face workshops and seminars. These sessions would involve industry professionals, offering not only relevant content but also valuable networking opportunities.

This face-to-face approach has been tested with successful 'spin-off sessions'. Two spin of sessions were held in May and June 2024 and consisted of 1.5-hour workshops presented by local business subject matters experts on the topics of Cyber Security and Growth Acceleration. These sessions delivered tailored learning content and fostered networking amongst participants.

#### **Business Listing**

254 businesses have chosen to feature on Council's online business directory platform. Updates have been implemented on the platform in conjunction with the new Council website, promising a more personalised experience for members, enabling them to independently manage their business listing.



The business directory will be actively promoted through various Council communication channels, including Local Scoop, social media platforms, the Council's website, the Economic Development eNewsletter, and through regular individual business interactions. One notable advantage of the directory is its potential to facilitate cross-promotion within the Network, fostering growth as part of our internal business directory listing approval process.

#### **City of Whittlesea Business Awards**

74 businesses nominated in the 2024 City of Whittlesea Business Awards 42 were existing members of the Network. An additional 32 businesses joined the Network specifically to participate in the awards program. These awards are extensively promoted through all Council communication channels. They provide businesses with a platform to enhance their brand, build trust, and establish themselves as leaders in their industry. The 2024 event saw attendance from over 200 business representatives.

#### **Business Advisory Panel**

Through an expression of interest process, one member from the Network is appointed for a two-year period to the Business Advisory Panel. This offers the opportunity for the member to provide advice to the Business Advisory Panel that represents the voice of the Network members.

#### **Terms and Conditions**

Following the review of the Network, the Terms and Conditions (Attachment 3) have been revised to formalise operational adjustments made since their initial endorsement. These changes are aimed at enhancing the integrity of the Network and ensuring its exclusivity for the City of Whittlesea business community.

Key updates include:

- Updating the eligibility criteria from 'operates in the City of Whittlesea' to 'located in the City of Whittlesea';
- Removing the \$10 membership fee;
- Deleting reference to operational duration and future management, which were originally included in the Council-endorsed Terms and Conditions;
- Restricting attendance at events to a maximum of two representatives per business membership; and
- The Economic Development Department can modify the Terms and Conditions to be responsive to the Network's needs which are required to be authorised by the Director Planning and Development and endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer.



Below details the updates to the Terms and Conditions.

#### **Membership**

Updates include general changes to the format and wording for clarity. The key updates are as follows:

- Eligibility criteria from 'operates in the City of Whittlesea' to 'located in the City of Whittlesea' to support and focus on local businesses and their growth;
- Adding the wording, 'Approved membership is ongoing until such a time they cease to be a member or circumstance change'. The reason for the change is due to the removal of the fee, the term of membership becomes inconsequential provided eligibility is still met; and
- Adding the following wording, to ensure good governance and maintain the integrity of the network.
  - 1) Membership is open to all businesses that:
    - (d) 'are not owned by a current employee or Councillor of the City of Whittlesea'
  - 4) Membership will cease under the following circumstances:
    - a) By request of the member to Economic Development;
    - b) The business no longer holds a valid ABN; and
    - c) The business ceases to operate from a physical location within the City of Whittlesea municipal boundaries.

#### **Membership Benefits for Business**

Updates to the Membership Benefits for Business include general changes to the format and wording for clarity as well as to formalise benefits that are being offered that were not identified in the endorsed Terms and Conditions.

The key updates are as follows:

- Education
  - Automatic subscription to Economic Development's monthly eNews.
- Business Awards
  - Exclusive eligibility to enter the annual City of Whittlesea Business Awards.

#### Membership Fee

The Council endorsed the Terms and Conditions, which included a \$10 membership fee. However, a cost-benefit analysis demonstrated that administering this fee, including setup and collection costs, was not financially sustainable for the Council. Consequently, membership is now offered free of charge, limited to businesses located within the City of Whittlesea and holding a valid Australian Business Number (ABN). The wording has been updated to:

• 'Membership is free of charge'.



#### <u>Management</u>

The following wording has been included to provide clarity that the Network is managed by the Economic Development department:

• 'The Network is managed by the Economic Development department and will be reviewed in line with the development of any new Economic Development Strategy'.

#### <u>Term</u>

The following wording has been included to ensure the City of Whittlesea can cease the Network as needed:

 'The management of the Network has no set end date however the Economic Development department has the power to cease management of the Network at its discretion, related to operational priorities'.

#### Code of Conduct

The following wording has been included to ensure members are transparent and honest regarding their eligibility:

• 'Members must advise the Economic Development department of any change in circumstance that directly impacts membership eligibility'.

#### Amendment, Modification or Variation

The following wording has been included or amended to ensure that the Terms and Conditions are to be reviewed annually by the Economic Development Department and give the authority to the Director Planning and Development to amend, modify or make a variation to the Terms and Conditions as required:

- 'The Terms and Conditions and Membership will be subject to review every year to support the Network to grow and adapt to business needs.'
- All amendments, modification and/or variations must be authorised by the Director Planning and Development endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer.

The Network was designed with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency and transitioning to external management by 1 July 2026. Over its two years of operation, the Network has provided the Economic Development department with valuable insights into the local business community, solidifying the Network as a crucial program supporting the robust local economy.

Due to the mutual benefit derived from the Network being managed by City of Whittlesea, it is proposed that the Network is continued to be managed by the Economic Development department.

Council Officers leverage their extensive knowledge of Network members, the broader business community, and industry trends to enhance member experiences through introductions and referrals.



Through ongoing management and strengthened Terms and Conditions, mechanisms are in place to foster continued growth of the Network. This includes offering training and programs that meet the evolving needs of businesses both now and in the future.

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

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

#### **Strong Local Economy**

Our City is a smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry as well as supporting local businesses to be successful, enabling opportunities for local work and education.

Key Direction Three Successful and Innovative Local Businesses:

- 1. Our businesses innovate and thrive by adapting to technology and the circular economy.
- 2. Our economy has a diverse base that fosters small business development.
- 3. Our community has vibrant and competitive business precincts.

#### Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

#### **Financial Management**

The cost is included in the current budget.

#### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

An engagement survey with members was undertaken in February 2024 to understand the main drivers for membership and what aspects are most valued by members. There were 32 respondents to the survey and the results have informed this report.

#### **Other Principles for Consideration**

#### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

(c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.

#### **Public Transparency Principles**

(c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.

#### **Council Policy Considerations**

#### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

The Network will continue to connect local businesses to increase local goods and service transactions. Fostering local trade can contribute to reducing transportation, carbon emissions and waste management.



#### Social, Cultural and Health

The Network will continue to provide the opportunity to improve mental health and wellbeing through connections with peers particularly for those working from home and in isolated conditions.

#### Economic

The Network supports economic outcomes and aligns with Whittlesea 2040's vision: A place for all. It offers local businesses opportunities to thrive, upskill, and increase business-tobusiness transactions. All costs associated with networking events are reinvested locally to support our local economy.

#### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

#### Implementation Strategy

#### Communication

The Network is actively marketed and will continue to be communicated and promoted through the Economic Development department channels including the business eNewsletter, and face-to-face business engagement.

Promotion is supported though Council's corporate channels including, Local Scoop, the website and social media channels. Cross promotion also occurs through the Business Awards program and other Council or Economic Development department events. Following a decision by Council the following will need to occur:

- Notification to members of the updated Terms and Conditions.
- Updated Terms and Conditions published on Council's website.

#### **Critical Dates**

No critical dates.

#### **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. Business Network Membership Snapshot [5.1.1 1 page]
- 2. Business Network Engagement Survey [5.1.2 9 pages]
- 3. City of Whittlesea Business Network Terms and Conditions July 2024 [5.1.3 3 pages]

#### Business Network Membership Snapshot as at 31 May 2024

Member by size (Number of Employees)	
Unspecified	5
Sole trader	42
Less than 5	186
5-19 Employees	103
20-200 Employees	39
More than 200	3
TOTAL	378

Members by Industry	
Accommodation and Food Services	30
Administrative and Support Services	10
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2
Arts and Recreation Services	12
Construction	14
Education and Training	15
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	7
Finance and insurance Services	15
Health Care and Social Assistance	56
Information Media and Telecommunications	11
Manufacturing	33
Other Services	35
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	76
Public Administration and Safety	1
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	8
Retail Trade	41
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2
Wholesale Trade	10
TOTAL	378

Network Event Attendance		
Date	Location	Member Attendance
28th July 2022	Republic Tavern	42
6th September 2022	Whittlesea Tech School	27
23rd February 2023	Farm Vigano	40
24th August 2023	Slices	31
15th November 2023	PRACC	29
30th April 2024	Base South Morang	33
31 July 2024	Slices	46
TOTAL		248

#### Business Network Engagement Survey

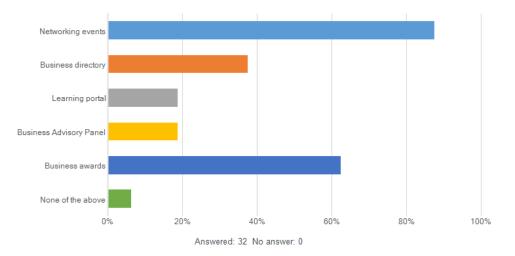
Name: "Shaping the future of the City of Whittlesea Business Network"

Survey Period: Monday 5th February - Sunday 18 February 2024

Invited Respondents: 319

Completed Surveys: 32

The City of Whittlesea Business Network is available to the local business community and open to businesses from all industries and sizes through a free membership program. Thinking of the Whittlesea Business Network and your membership, which of the following are you aware of? Please tick all that apply.



#### About the business directory

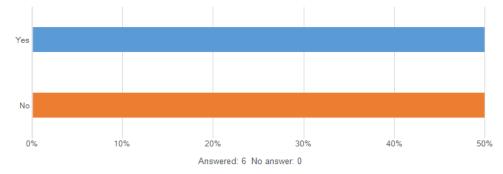
How do you rate the following statements about the business directory?



Verbatim Themes: More promotion of the directory is required.

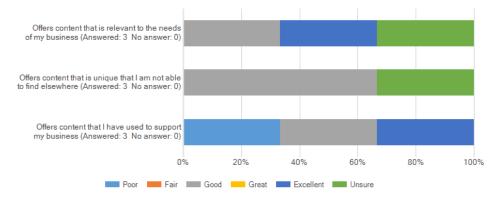
#### About the learning portal

Have you ever used the 25eight Academy learning portal?



Why haven't you been able to use the learning portal?

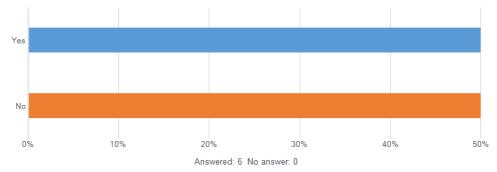
Verbatim Themes: Content not suitable for needs and more advertising required



#### How do you rate the following aspects of the learning portal?

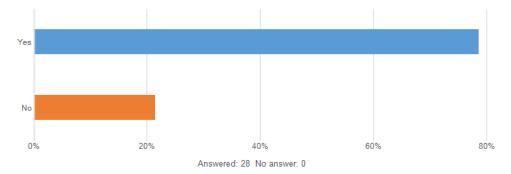
#### About the business advisory panel

Are you aware that you can be part of the business advisory panel through an expression of interest process?

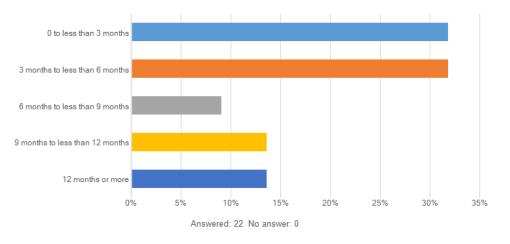


#### About networking events

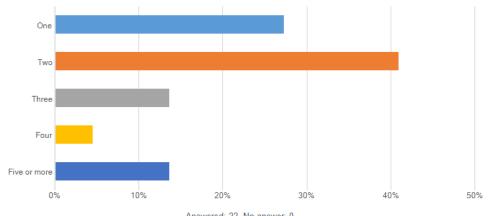
Have you ever attended a Whittlesea Business Networking event?



#### When was the last time you attended a Whittlesea Business Networking event?



#### How many Whittlesea Business Networking events have you ever attended?



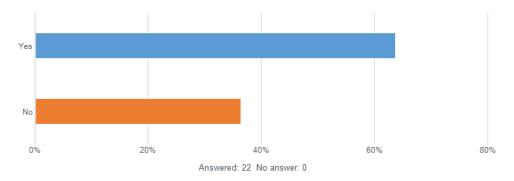
Answered: 22 No answer: 0

What motivates you to attend Whittlesea Business Networking events? Please think about all the reasons why you have attended in the past and list them here.

# businesse(12)other(8)networking(6) businesses(6)owners(5)meeting(5)local(5)people(4)

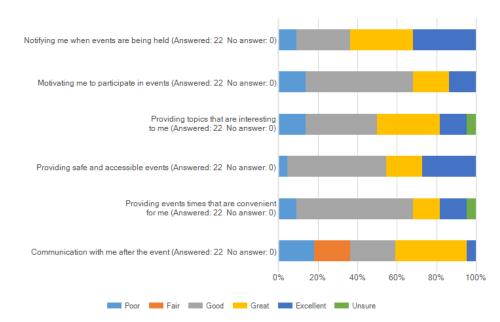
new(4) opportunities(3) sharing(3) community(3) meet(3) like(3) minded(3) experiences(2) connections(2) myself(2) speakers(2) connect(2)

Have you experienced any benefits or advantages because of a connection made through a business networking event ran by the City of Whittlesea?



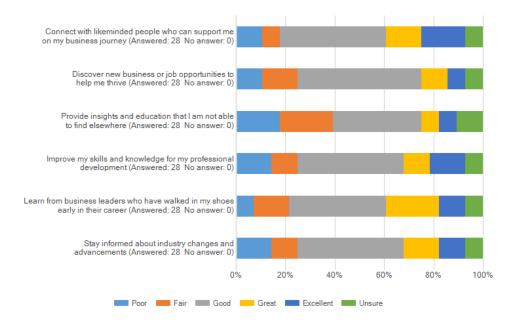
#### What benefits or advantages have you experienced?





#### How does the Whittlesea Business Network perform in terms of the following?

For the next question, we are interested in your opinion of the events that are ran as part of the Whittlesea Business Network (even if you have not had the opportunity to attend). Thinking about Whittlesea Business Networking events, how do you rate the following? The Whittlesea Business Network events provides the opportunity to....



You mentioned that you have never attended a Whittlesea Business Networking event. What are all the reasons you have not been able to attend? This information will help us with develop events that appeal to a broader audience.

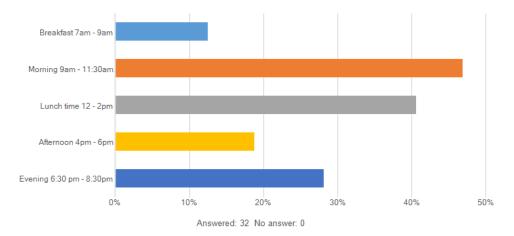
Verbatim themes: Timing conflicts

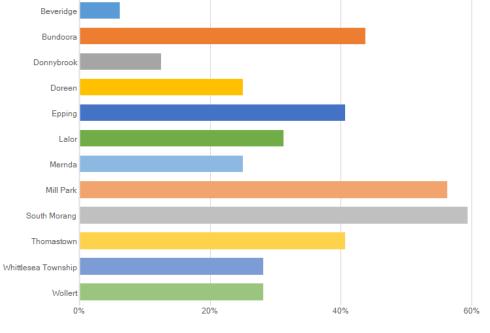
What can Council do to make it easier for you to attend business networking events in the future?

**Verbatim themes:** variation in times and days, increased numbers, advanced notice of events, reputable speakers.

#### About networking preferences - timing, location and venue

What time of the day do you find it most convenient to attend networking events from Monday to Friday? Please select all that apply.

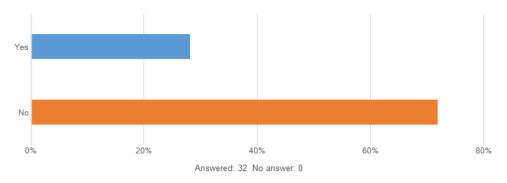




Which area of the municipality is your preferred location for business networking events to be held? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 32 No answer: 0

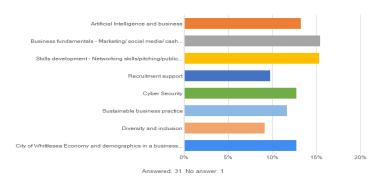
#### Do you know of a space that would be suitable to hold a networking event?



Verbatim themes: Libraries, Mantra, Brewer Sisters, Slices, Council offices/PRACC, Dosa Hut, Bluestone

#### About networking preferences – topics

What topics would attract you to attend a networking event in 2024? Please rank the items from 1 to 8 in order of your preference of topics.



#### What other topics would attract you?

Verbatim themes: Business trends, Circular economy, Local issues, Networking only, grants and tax

#### About networking preferences - structure and format



What other format or structure of networking events do you find beneficial, if any?

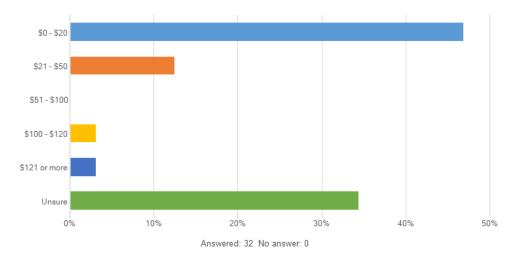
Verbatim themes: More networking, matching businesses, more opportunities to meet people.

Do you have any other feedback or comments about networking events?

Verbatim themes: Valuable, Local

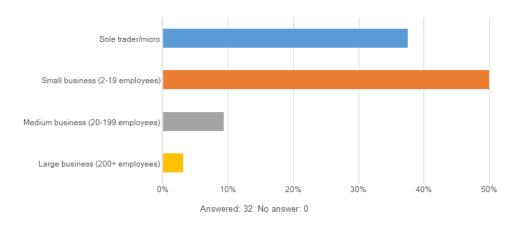
#### Fee introduction

The Whittlesea Business Network membership currently offers free entry to networking events; access to 25eight Academy (learning portal); business listing on Council's online platform; eligibility for the Whittlesea Business Awards; and the opportunity to join the Business Advisory Panel. If council were to introduce a fee to enhance the business network and what is offered to members, what price would you consider value of money for an annual membership?

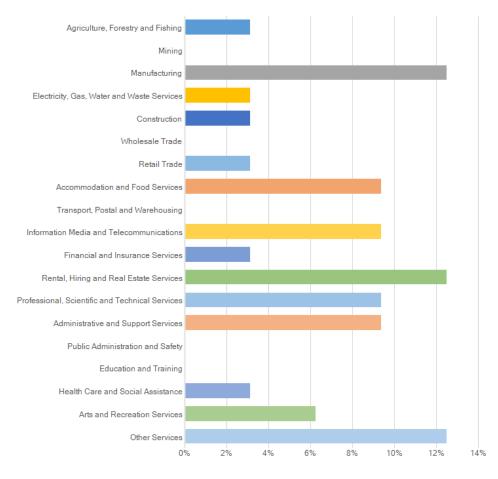


#### About your business

#### What size if your business?



#### What industry does your business operate in?



Answered: 32 No answer: 0

Home Commercial premises (retail/office/warehouse etc.) Co working space Other 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% Answered: 32 No answer: 0

Where do you operate your business from? If you operate your business out of more than one location, please select that location where you operate from the most.

Do you have any other feedback or comments about the Whittlesea Business Network?

Verbatim themes: more local emphasis, great, welcomed.



# **City of Whittlesea Business Network - Terms and Conditions**

#### **Purpose**

The City of Whittlesea Business Network (Network) is an informal business network designed for our business community, welcoming local businesses of all industries and sizes through a membership program.

The Network aims to unite businesses across the City of Whittlesea, fostering collaboration, networking, and increased business-to-business transactions.

The Network will help achieve key objectives and enhance advocacy for a Strong Local Economy (Goal 3 W2040). W2040 supports and promotes the City of Whittlesea as a hub for successful, innovative local businesses that offer employment and education opportunities to our community.

#### Membership

- 1) Membership is open to all businesses that:
  - a) hold a valid ABN,
  - b) are located in the City of Whittlesea,
  - c) complete and submit a membership application form and be approved by the Economic Development department,
  - d) are not owned by a current employee or Councillor of the City of Whittlesea, and
  - e) agree to the Terms and Conditions of the City of Whittlesea Business Network.
- 2) Membership is held in the name of the business.
- 3) Approved membership is ongoing until such a time they cease to be a member or circumstance change.
- 4) Membership will cease under the following circumstances:
  - a) By request from the member to the Economic Development department
  - b) The business no longer holds a valid ABN
  - c) The business ceases to operate from a physical location within the City of Whittlesea municipal boundaries.
- 5) All members must agree to these Terms and Conditions at the time of application.

#### Membership Benefits for Business

The annual membership may include, and not be limited to.

- a. Events program attendance
  - Members will be given the opportunity to attend invite-only networking events and other industry related events free of charge or at a discounted rate. The Economic Development department reserves the right to limit attendance at any event to two representatives per business membership.
  - Councillors may attend an event through invitation only and/or at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

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City of Whittlesea Business Network Term and Conditions – July 2024



- b. Networking
  - Industry targeted face to face and online opportunities
  - Free Business Listing on Council's online platforms.
- c. Education
  - o Automatic subscription to Economic Development's monthly eNewsletter.
  - Exclusive access to learning opportunities for increased capability and lifelong learning.
  - Free mentoring opportunities through programs facilitated by the Economic Development department.
- d. Council's Business Advisory Panel
  - The Network will provide an opportunity for one business member to sit on Council's Business Advisory Panel through an Expression of Interest process. The representative will be selected by the Business Advisory Panel to represent the best interest of all businesses across the City of Whittlesea
- e. Business Awards
  - Exclusive eligibility to enter the annual City of Whittlesea Business Awards

#### **Membership Fee**

Membership is free of charge.

#### Management

The Network will be managed by the Economic Development department and will be reviewed in line with the development of any new Economic Development Strategy.

#### Term

The Management of the Network has no set end date however the Economic Development department has the power to cease management of the Network at its discretion, related to operational priorities.

#### **Code of Conduct**

All Network members are expected to:

- Operate with integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and openness
- Declare any potential conflict of interest
- Maintain effective working relationships with other members
- Members must advise the Economic Development department of any change in circumstance that directly impacts membership eligibility

City of Whittlesea Business Network Term and Conditions – July 2024

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#### Amendment, Modification or Variation

The Terms and Conditions and Membership will be subject to review every year to support the Network to grow and adapt to business needs.

The Director Planning and Development is authorised to amend, modify or make variation to the Terms and Conditions.

All amendments, modifications and/or variations must be endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer.

#### Definitions

**Business:** The term business refers to an organisation or enterprising entity engaged in commercial, industrial, or professional service where the purpose of business is economic production of goods, services, employment and/or education.

**Director Planning and Development** - The City of Whittlesea officer appointed to the role or authorized to act on behalf of or in the role

**Located in the City of Whittlesea** - Includes residential property, co-working space, or commercial premises where rates or rent are paid, and the intent of the business carried out at the location is permanent and ongoing in nature.

**Valid ABN** - A valid ABN is determined as being current and registered with the Australian Business Registry as current and active.



# 5.2 Planning Scheme Amendment C266 - Rezoning 240 O'Herns Road, Epping - Request for Authorisation

Director/Executive Manager:	Director Planning & Development
Report Author:	Strategic Planner
In Attendance:	Acting Manager Strategic Futures Coordinator Strategic Land Use Planning

#### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to request authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit Planning Scheme Amendment C266 (the proposed Amendment). The proposed Amendment applies to 240 O'Herns Road, Epping (refer to Attachment 1) and proposes to rezone the subject site from the current Farming Zone to Comprehensive Development Zone Schedule 4: Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan (CDZ4). This will facilitate urban development of the site in accordance with the adopted strategic plans for the precinct.

In 2007, the majority of land in the Aurora precinct was rezoned to facilitate urban development. However, smaller individual parcels within the Aurora precinct that were in separate ownership at the time, including the subject site, were not rezoned and remained in the Farming Zone. The subject site is one of three properties remaining in the Farming Zone (refer to Attachment 2).

The initial Planning Scheme Amendment also applied planning controls to implement strategic plans to guide future development of the Aurora precinct. These plans were the *Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan* (ACDP) and the *Aurora Development Plan Part 2* (ADP2) (refer to Attachment 2 for the ADP2 Land Use Plan).

The plans nominate the subject site to be developed for a number of uses including commercial uses at the O'Herns Road frontage, mixed use incorporating high density residential in the centre of the site and medium density residential development in the northern half of the site.

The proposed Amendment will facilitate the development in accordance with the strategic plans and is limited to only changing the zoning of the land. The proposed Amendment will not apply any additional overlay or other planning controls, as they are already in place.



This follows the same approach taken for other properties not rezoned by the initial Amendment.

It is a Council requirement that prior to the rezoning of land in the Aurora precinct, the landowner must enter into a standardised Section 173 Agreement to specify relevant infrastructure contribution payments to provide the Aurora Infrastructure Requirements. The landowner for 240 O'Herns Road Epping has now entered into this agreement and will make the infrastructure contribution payments upon the development of the land.

Based on alignment with the strategic plans for the area, the proposed Amendment is deemed administrative in nature. The recommendation of this report is for Council to request the Minister for Planning authorise Council to prepare and exhibit the Amendment. Given the administrative nature of the Amendment, officers intend to apply to the Minister for Planning for an exemption to give notice of the Amendment in a newspaper and the Government Gazette. Adjoining owners and occupiers and relevant government agencies will be notified.

Noting the upcoming Local Government election, the recommendation notes that should the Minister for Planning grant authorisation, that the exhibition period will not commence until after the conclusion of the Local Government elections. The Amendment process will require Council to consider any submissions received from the exhibition period to be considered at a future Council Meeting.



#### Officers' Recommendation

#### **THAT Council:**

- 1. Seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit an Amendment to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to amend the planning controls for the land at 240 O'Herns Road, Epping as follows:
  - a) Rezone the site from Farming Zone to Comprehensive Development Zone Schedule 4 in accordance with Attachment 3.
- 2. Note, should the Minister for Planning authorise Council to exhibit the Amendment:
  - a) Under delegated authority officers will apply to the Minister for Planning in accordance with section 20(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to exempt Council from publishing a notice of the Amendment in a newspaper and in the Government Gazette.
  - b) The exhibition of the Amendment will not commence until after the Local Government elections which conclude on 26 October 2024.
  - c) Any submissions received during the exhibition period will be subject to a subsequent report to the incoming Council.
- 3. Note that officers will advise the owner of 240 O'Herns Road, Epping of Council's decision.



#### Background / Key Information

#### Site Context

The subject site is located at 240 O'Herns Road Epping and is approximately 1.8ha in area. The site currently supports a dwelling and large shed. The site is generally rectangular in shape and is bounded by O'Herns Road to the south, Edgars Creek to the east, and future development land (zoned CDZ4) to the north and west. The site is in the southern extent of the Aurora precinct. It is approximately 500m west of the future Aurora Southern Town Centre and 1,500m south of the partially delivered Aurora Northern Town Centre. It is approximately 400m to the east of the O'Herns Road/Hume Freeway diamond interchange.

On the southern side of O'Herns Road is the Cooper Street Employment Area. The site is currently affected by the Development Plan Overlay Schedule 23 (DPO23), the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 (VPO2) and the Rural Floodway Overlay (RFO).

The overlay controls are not proposed to be altered under this Amendment. The site is one of the last three properties in Aurora to be rezoned from Farming Zone (refer Attachment 2 – Aurora Precinct Zoning).

#### **Background Context- Aurora Estate History and Process**

The subject site is part of the original urban growth precinct of Aurora which covers part of the suburbs of Epping and Wollert. Whittlesea's growth areas since expanded to the north with the extension of the Urban Growth Boundary and the gazettal of seven additional Precinct Structure Plans.

Amendment C41wsea Pt 1 which was gazetted in 2007, rezoned the majority of land within the Aurora precinct (approximately 87%) to CDZ4, incorporated the Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan, applied a Development Plan Overlay to the whole precinct (including the subject site), and exhibited the Aurora Development Plan. This development plan, the ADP2, was prepared in accordance with the Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan and Development Plan Overlay Schedule 23. The ADP2 was exhibited during the exhibition of C41wsea Pt1, and comment was invited. The APD2 was subsequently approved by Council in 2007. An amended version of the plan was approved in 2016.

The ADP2 provided the strategic plan for the development of the Aurora Precinct. This includes:

- Residential development for approximately 25,000 new residents
- Two town centres
- Two Community Activity Centres
- A rail corridor for the future Wollert Rail including two potential stations



- A library
- Three schools

## Development Contributions

As the majority of the Aurora precinct was under one ownership, Development Victoria (Vic Urban at the time), it was determined that development contributions would be managed under Section 173 Agreements, rather than a Development Contributions Plan Overlay. For the remaining private land holdings in the precinct, such as the subject site, the individual owners are required to enter into a Section 173 Agreement for Development Contributions when they are ready to develop their land. Once the agreement is executed, a Planning Scheme Amendment to rezone the land to the CDZ4 can commence.

Since the gazettal of Amendment C41wsea Pt 1, the Aurora precinct has been progressively developed in accordance with the ADP2. Land not rezoned with the initial Amendment has been rezoned via subsequent amendments C41 Pts 2-4 (2008, 2009 & 2012), C69 (2017) and C90 (2016) following the signing of Section 173 Agreements securing Development Contributions as part of the future development of the subject land.

## **Amendment Process and Proposal**

Council received the request to rezone the site via the owner's planning consultants, Human Habitats, in January 2022. The drafting of the Section 173 Agreement was based on the existing template for Aurora's private landholdings. The Agreement imposes the liability to pay Development Contributions as the site is developed and details the per hectare rate to be applied and the indexation method. The relevant Agreement was signed by Council officers under delegated authority on 16 November 2023.

Once the agreement was signed, the Amendment has been able to progress. The updated Amendment documents have subsequently been submitted by the proponent and reviewed by Council officers.

The Amendment proposes to rezone the subject site to the CDZ4 (refer to Attachment 3), which references the incorporated document, *Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan*. No other changes to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme are required as other planning controls have already been applied to the site as part of Amendment C41 Part 1 which implemented the planning controls to the broader Aurora precinct. These planning controls included:

- Development Plan Overlay Schedule 23,
- Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2,
- Incorporated the Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan.



ADP2 has subsequently been approved under Development Plan Overlay Schedule 23 and provides for a range of uses across the subject site (refer to Attachment 2). The O'Herns Road frontage is nominated for commercial development, the centre of the site for mixed use development incorporating high density residential use and the rear half nominated for medium density residential development. Along the eastern boundary of the site will be a waterway reserve incorporating the Edgars Creek environs.

The application of CDZ4 is required to permit the uses nominated for the site in the APD2.

## **Request for Exemption from Notification**

Due to the administrative nature of the Amendment and the previous significant and extensive exhibition of the original C41 Amendment and the 2016 amendment to the APD2, Council officers have had preliminary discussions with officer at the Department of Transport and Planning in respect to possible exemption from some of the statutory notification requirements for the Amendment by the Minister for Planning.

Amendments C41 pt 2-4, C69 and C90 which also rezoned private landholdings within Aurora, received either full or partial exemption from notification.

Noting the previous public exhibition of C41 and the ADP2 2016 amendment, the Department of Transport and Planning have indicated that they would likely support a partial exemption from broad notification of this Amendment. It is proposed that Council directly notify adjoining properties owners and occupiers, Prescribed Ministers and relevant statutory authorities of the Amendment. Council officers have "in principle" exemption from the Minister for Planning for broader advertising in newspapers and the Government Gazette.

## **Contaminated Land Assessment**

The initial submission of Amendment documents and supporting assessments included a Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) analysing the site's potential for land contamination. Due to the presence of an above ground storage tank and the previous importation of fill from unknown sources, the PSI found the site posed a medium risk of land contamination. In accordance with Planning Practice Note 30, Council officers requested further assessment be performed to determine if the site is potentially contaminated.

Soil sampling has occurred on site in response to the request for further assessment. This has advised there is no contamination on site including in the imported fill. The updated assessment has advised the site does not meet the definition of potentially contaminated land and there is no risk to human health.



In accordance with Ministerial Direction 19 – Amendments that may impact on the environment, amenity and human health, Council has engaged the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide preliminary advice on the Amendment. Noting, the presence of the above ground storage tank, the EPA's preliminary advice recommends that a Preliminary Risk Screening Assessment (PRSA) be undertaken to review the preliminary site investigation and subsequent sampling, to confirm the adequacy of the assessment and that it has been done in accordance with the relevant standards. Noting, that the initial assessments have concluded that the site is not contaminated, it is considered that the PRSA and review can occur concurrently with the authorisation process and be finalised prior to exhibition.

## **Rationale for Recommendation**

The proposed Amendment is considered strategically justified, as it aligns with all strategic plans for the Aurora area, applies the Aurora-specific Comprehensive Development Plan Zone Schedule 4 and adopts the approach taken to previous rezonings of properties within the Aurora precinct.

The Amendment is therefore considered administrative in nature. The report recommends Council resolve to begin the formal Amendment process through requesting Authorisation to prepare and exhibit the Amendment from the Minister for Planning.

If the recommendation is accepted, the future elected Council will be able to consider the merits of the Amendment and public submissions at a future Council Meeting and ultimately decide on whether the Amendment is adopted or abandoned.

## 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.

Aurora has been master-planned through the Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan and the Aurora Development Plan Part 2. This has provided for an innovative and environmentally sustainable approach to estate planning, has secured land for a future rail line extension and new stations, has oriented town centres around these future public transport hubs, has provided areas of commercial use, residential use and mixed use which support the urban area, and is complementary to surrounding development. This report continues to support the implementation of this plan.



## Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

## **Financial Management**

The proponent is required to pay statutory fees to Council for the processing of the Amendment. Prior to Council submitting the Authorisation request, the proponent will also be required to agree to pay the costs of any Planning Panel which may be required for the Amendment. Council would need to cover the costs of any representation required at a Planning Panel. Noting the administrative nature of the Amendment it is considered that any issues to be reviewed by a Panel would be minor in nature.

## **Community Consultation and Engagement**

If the Minister for Planning provides authorisation to prepare and exhibit the Amendment, it will be exhibited to adjoining landowners and occupiers for one month, in accordance with S19(1)(b) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987.* Notice will also be given to prescribed Ministers and relevant statutory authorities. As noted in the report, it is proposed that Council will apply to the Minister for Planning for an exemption to giving notice in newspapers and the Government Gazette, noting that previous consultations completed and administrative nature of the Amendment.

Any submission received during exhibition will be reported to Council at a future Council Meeting and incorporated into consideration of the merit of the Amendment.

## **Other Principles for Consideration**

## **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.
- (h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making.

## **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.

## **Council Policy Considerations**

## **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

The Amendment will implement the *Aurora Development Plan Part 2* which imposes a waterway reserve along the eastern portion of the site protecting and enhancing the existing natural feature, Edgars Creek.



## Social, Cultural and Health

The Amendment will facilitate the delivery of diverse housing types through high and medium density dwellings. This creates more choice and opportunity for alternative household types to what was traditionally considered in growth area planning.

## Economic

The nomination of the site for commercial uses as part of a secondary activity centre in the ADP2 will see varied and complementary uses to the adjacent Southern Town Centre. This creates and encourages the prospect of employment attracting uses, such as offices, providing the opportunity for living and working locally.

## Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications. A Preliminary Site Investigation has concluded that the site is not contaminated.

## **Planning Assessment**

The Amendment responds to and implements a number of policy objectives from the Whittlesea Planning Scheme at the subject site. This is detailed in the Amendments draft Explanatory Report included at Attachment 4.

A summary of key relevant clauses from the Municipal Planning Strategy is outlined below:

- 02.03-1 Settlement Urban Growth:
- 02.03-5 Built environment and heritage Urban and building design through retention of local environmental features and landscape qualities.
- 02.03-5 Built environment and heritage Neighbourhood character through incorporation of elements of the natural environment in the future development.
- 02.03-6 Housing Housing Diversity by supporting greater housing choice in terms of size, type, and style to meet the needs of a diverse and changing population.
- 02.03-9 Development infrastructure and contributions by requiring development and infrastructure contributions to support the delivery of essential infrastructure in the growth areas and in established areas undergoing renewal.

A summary of key relevant clauses from State and Local Planning Policy is outlined below:

- 11.02-2S Structure Planning by implementation of the ADP2.
- 12.01-1L Protection of biodiversity by facilitating the provision of buffers along waterways, wetlands and between sites of biodiversity value and urban infrastructure.
- 12.03-1S River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs by:
  - Protecting the environmental, cultural, landscape values of all waterway systems as significant economic, environmental and cultural assets.



- Sensitively design and site development to maintain and enhance the waterway system and the surrounding landscape setting, environmental assets, and ecological and hydrological systems.
- 11.04-1S Contaminated and potentially contaminated land by ensuring contaminated or potentially contaminated land is or will be suitable for the proposed use, prior to the commencement of any use or development.
- 16.01-1S Housing supply by:
  - facilitating diverse housing that offers choice and meets changing household needs by widening housing diversity through a mix of housing types.
  - implementation of the ADP2 which in a growth area context provides for a mix of housing types through a variety of lot sizes, including higher housing densities in and around activity centres.
- 17.01-1S Diversified Economy by protecting and strengthen existing and planned employment areas and plan for new employment areas.
- 17.02-1S Business by supporting development that meets the community's needs for retail, entertainment, office and other commercial services.
- 19.03-1L Development and infrastructure contributions by apportioning costs fairly between landowners for development to the degree that each is assessed as contributing to the need for each item of infrastructure.

## **Implementation Strategy**

## Communication

Council officers will notify the proponent for the Amendment of Council's decision. As noted in the report above, if the Amendment proceeds to exhibition, adjoining landowners and occupiers will be notified of the Amendment.

## **Critical Dates**

- Execution of Section 173 Agreement securing Development Contributions: November 2023.
- Council Meeting to resolve to seek Authorisation: 20 August 2024.
- Local Government Elections (caretaker period): 17 September 26 October 2024.

## **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

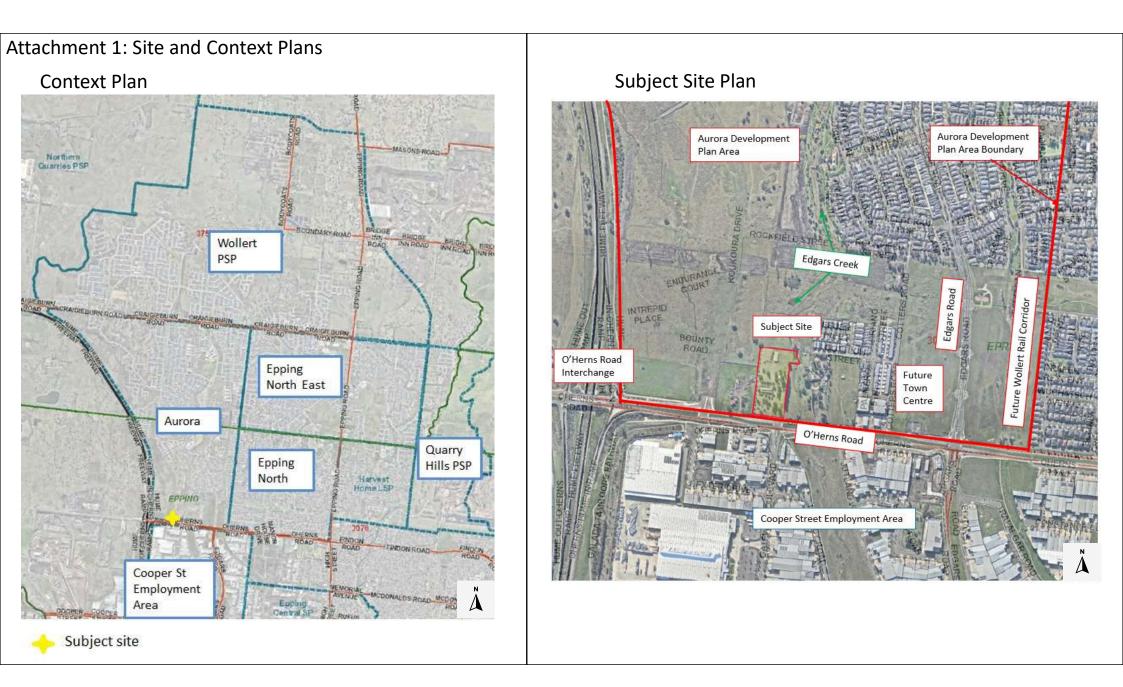
Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

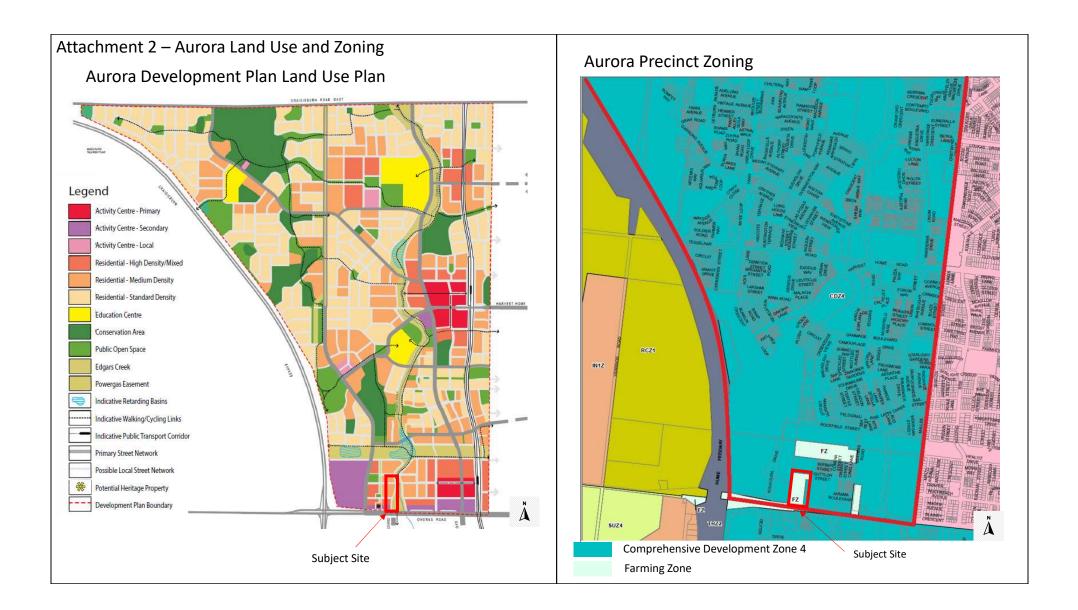
The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

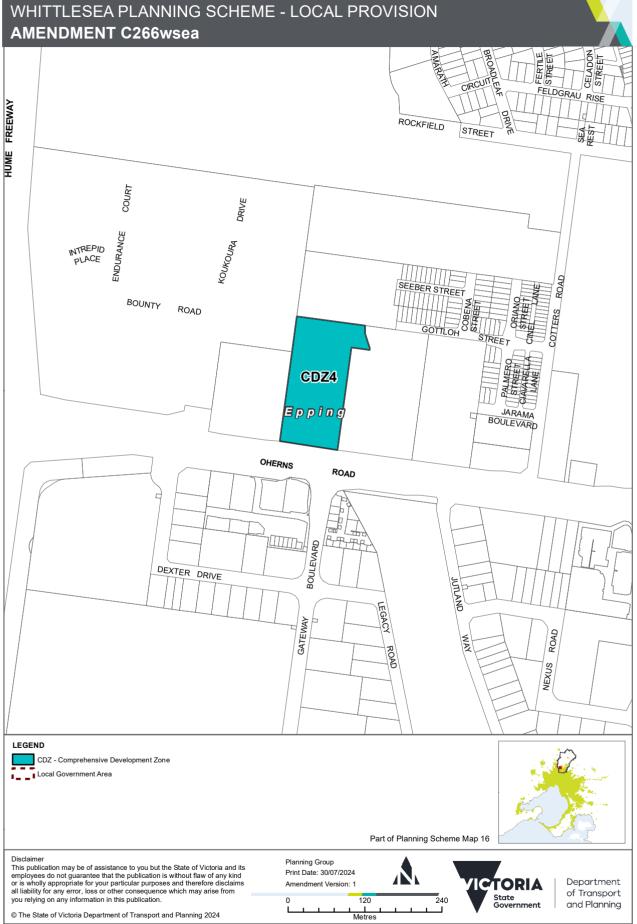


# Attachments

- 1. Subject Site and Context Plan [5.2.1 1 page]
- 2. Aurora Land Use and Zoning Plan [5.2.2 1 page]
- 3. C266 Proposed Zoning Plan [5.2.3 1 page]
- 4. C266 Draft Explanatory Report [5.2.4 11 pages]







Planning and Environment Act 1987

# Whittlesea Planning Scheme

# Amendment C266wsea

# **Explanatory Report**

# **Overview**

This Amendment applies to the land at 240 O'Herns Road, Epping (Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 825302J). The amendment rezones this land from the Farming Zone to the Comprehensive Development Zone – Schedule 4.

This Amendment will seek to match into Amendment C41 (Part 1) which rezoned the land surrounding the subject site from Farming Zone (FZ) to Comprehensive Development Zone Schedule 4 (CDZ4), and made other changes to the overlay and ordinance provisions.

The amendment will allow the subject site to be developed for urban purposes in line with surrounding land forming part of the broader Aurora Estate development.

# Where you may inspect this amendment

The amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

Whittlesea City Council Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport and Planning website at <u>http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection</u> or by contacting the office on 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the amendment documentation.

# **Submissions**

Any person may make a submission to the planning authority about the amendment. Submissions about the amendment must be received by [insert submissions due date].

A submission must be sent to:

- Post:
  - Whittlesea City Council

Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang

• Email:

strategic.planning@whittlesea.vic.gov.au

# **Panel hearing dates**

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- Directions hearing: [insert directions hearing date]
- Panel hearing: [insert panel hearing date]

# Details of the amendment

# Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the City of Whittlesea who is the planning authority for this amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of the landowner.

# Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to land known as 240 O'Herns Road, Epping 3076.

The land is formally described as VOLUME 08635 FOLIO 231, Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 825302J.



# What the amendment does

The amendment rezones 240 O'Herns Road, Epping 3076, from Farming Zone to Comprehensive Development Zone – Schedule 4. This will allow the site to be developed for urban uses in accordance with the applied Development Plan, as detailed below.

This is the only change the Amendment proposes. The site is already subject to DPO23 and VPO2. These were applied with Planning Scheme Amendment C41wsea.

# Strategic assessment of the amendment

# Why is the amendment required?

The amendment is required to rezone the land to allow the subject site to be developed for urban use.

The subject site is part of the growth precinct Aurora. Planning Scheme Amendment C41wsea Pt 1 rezoned the majority of land within the Aurora precinct (approximately 87%) for urban use, introduced Schedule 4 to the Comprehensive Development Zone, incorporated the Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan, applied a Development Plan Overlay to the whole precinct (not just the rezoned land, including the subject site), and exhibited the Aurora Development Plan.

This development plan, known as the *Aurora Development Plan Part 2* (ADP2) was prepared in accordance with the Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan and Development Plan Overlay Schedule 23. The ADP2 was exhibited during the exhibition of C41wsea Pt1, during which comment was invited. It was subsequently approved by Council in 2007.

Following the gazettal of Amendment C41wsea Pt 1, the Aurora precinct has been progressively developed in accordance with the ADP2. Land not rezoned with the initial Amendment has been rezoned via subsequent amendments C41 Pts 2-4 (2008, 2009 & 2012), C69 (2017) and C90 (2016).

At the time of Amendment C41wsea it was determined that Development Contributions would be secured via Sections 173 Agreements. For the sites not rezoned with C41wsea, the signing of the agreement was a pre-requisite for rezoning. This amendment seeks to apply this longstanding procedural approach for the subject site on the basis that the relevant Section 173 agreement has been signed.

The amendment represents a procedural mechanism to implement the established strategic intent for land ultimately forming part of the ADP2 area.

# How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

In accordance with the objectives of planning in Victoria as outlined in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environmental Act 1987*, the Amendment will:

(a) Provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land

The proposed Amendment will implement this objective by allowing for the development of the site in accordance with the approved strategic plan for the area, the *Aurora Development Plan Part 2*. This plan was produced in response to DPO23 and the *Aurora Comprehensive Development Plan*. This provides for the orderly and coordinated development of the area for urban use incorporating residential, commercial, retail, educational, recreational uses.

(b) provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity

The ADP2 implements a waterway reserve along the Edgars Creek corridor which will protect and enhance this natural waterway. The reserve will run through the subject site and is to separated from urban development through an interface road.

(d) to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value

The Edgars Creek is of aesthetic, historical and cultural value. The waterway reserve to be provided in accordance with the ADP2 will ensure its protection and enhancement.

(e) to protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community

The approach to Development Contributions for the Aurora area has been, rather than the application of a Development Contributions Plan Overlay, for development contributions to be secured via Section 173 Agreements with the landowners prior to an Amendment to rezone their land. Regarding the subject site, this agreement has been entered into and registered on title.

# How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

## Environmental Effects

The amendment will provide positive environmental outcomes by concentrating

urban land uses within a designated metropolitan urban growth area. The planning framework seeks to reduce private vehicle use and encourage walkability, establish higher-density housing in support of public transport and provide opportunities for the use of solar energy in proposed dwellings as listed within ADP2.

Water conservation and demand management initiatives such as water-sensitive urban design, rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling will be investigated and implemented at the development stage.

The ADP2 has been influenced and informed by a number of specialist background investigations relating to flora, fauna and habitat values, Aboriginal and European cultural heritage, River Red Gum health and condition and recreational needs.

## Social and Economic Effects

The amendment will provide positive social and economic outcomes. The subject site will be able to contribute to the delivery of a Secondary Activity Centre and accommodate a range of housing types at higher density scales. This will allow for a broader and more diverse demographic to settle than in traditional growth areas.

The employment needs of new residents can be locally accommodated within the extensive Cooper Street Employment Precinct and Epping Principal Activity Centre to the immediate south and the proposed activity centres within the Aurora development area. These employment destinations will be accessible by public transport modes, shared paths and road networks.

The proposed development contributions framework will allow both physical and social infrastructure to be provided in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner.

# Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

No part of the subject land is located within the Bushfire Management Overlay and the proposed amendment is considered meet the objectives and strategies associated with *Clause 13.05-1 Bushfire Planning Strategies and Principles* of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme. Any future development proposed for the subject sites will be required to be in accordance with *Clause 22.03- Bushfire Management Policy* of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

Noting the above, as the sites are located within a nominated Bushfire Prone Area, development will be required to be meet the built form standards and bushfire risk mitigation measures found within the *Victorian Building Act (1993)*.

The proposal will not increase the likelihood of bushfire in the area, and any future development of land will be required to meet built form and subdivision layout requirements designed to mitigate any potential bushfire threats posed to the future community.

# Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any other Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The Amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning

Section 7(5) of the Planning and Environment Act (1987).

Under section 12(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* the following Minister's Direction is applicable to the consideration of this amendment:

## Ministerial Direction 1 – Potentially Contaminated Land

The amendment is also affected by Ministerial Direction 1, which seeks to ensure that potentially contaminated land is suitable for a use which is proposed to be allowed under an amendment to a planning scheme. A Soil Contamination Assessment has been prepared in support of the amendment application. It confirms that in accordance with the DELWP *Planning Practice Note 30 – Potentially Contaminated Land (PPN30)*, the site does not meet the definition of 'potentially contaminated land' as no land uses listed in Table 2 of PPN30 as having a high or medium potential for contamination have been found to have occurred at the site.

These assessments will be further reviewed by an Environmental Auditor through a Preliminary Riske Screen Assessment, as per the advice of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

## Ministerial Direction 9 - Metropolitan Strategy

The amendment complies with Direction No. 9 as it is consistent with Plan Melbourne 2017- 2050 (DELWP, 2017). *Map 2 shows the area as Urban Land.* 

The Amendment and subsequent development of the subject site will implement a number of Directions identified in Plan Melbourne including:

- 1.2 Improve access to jobs across Melbourne and closer to where people live
- 2.2 Deliver more housing closer to jobs and public transport
- 2.5 Provide greater choice and diversity of housing
- 3.2 Improve transport in Melbourne's outer suburbs
- 4.4 Respect Melbourne's heritage as we build for the future
- 5.4 Deliver local parks and green neighbourhoods in collaboration with communities
- 6.5 Protect and restore natural habitats

Ministerial Direction 11 - Strategic Assessment of Amendments

The amendment complies with Minister Direction No. 11 (Strategic Assessment of Amendments) under section 12 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The amendment is consistent with this direction which ensures a comprehensive strategic evaluation of a planning scheme amendment and

the outcomes it produces. The amendment is consistent with the relevant policy as described in examples throughout this report.

Ministerial Direction 15 – The Planning Scheme Amendment Process

The amendment will be processed in accordance with this direction.

<u>Ministerial Direction 19 – on the preparation and content of Amendments that may</u> <u>significantly impact the environment, amenity and human health</u>

The Amendment complies with this direction having had the Preliminary Site Investigation and subsequent Soil Sampling referred to the EPA for review. Their advice that further review, in the form of a PRSA, of those assessments by an Environmental Auditor is proposed to be made a condition on exhibition.

# How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

Amendments C41(Parts 1-4) and C90 supported the relevant State Planning Policy Framework. Accordingly, given that this amendment is supplementary to those, it is considered that the amendment furthers the objectives of the relevant State Planning Policy Framework.

Overall, the rezoning will assist in ensuring a sufficient supply of land is available within the urban area of Metropolitan Melbourne for urban use. The site is located within an area already designated for urban growth and will facilitate the development of the land in accordance with the approved strategic documents and State Planning policy.

# How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

This strategic consideration only applies if the planning scheme includes an MPS at Clause 02.

The amendment is consistent with the Municipal Framework Plan at Clause 02.04-1, which earmarks the land as urban.

Clause 02.03-1 advises that 'Whittlesea's population is expected to reach 300,000 by 2030, with growth concentrated in the developing areas of Mernda/Doreen, South Morang, Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook/Woodstock. Meeting the demands of a rapidly expanding population is one of Whittlesea's greatest challenges. With changes to the Urban Growth Boundary in 2010, detailed planning has occurred for a number of future precincts that will accommodate a population of over 150,000. These future precincts will either be largely self-contained or close to metropolitan or major town centres.

Council aims to manage urban growth by:

- Reinforcing the Urban Growth Boundary.
- Protecting the non-urban breaks between growth areas.
- Planning development in locations where required infrastructure can be provided

effectively and in a timely manner.

- Supporting the logical and orderly staging of development to ensure the timely delivery of affordable infrastructure and services.
- Providing opportunities for mixed use, employment generating centres that are aligned with public transport (including light and heavy rail extensions) and roads.
- Minimising adverse amenity impacts from industry and future rail infrastructure on residential areas.
- Protecting environmental assets.
- Avoiding incursions into non-urban or environmentally sensitive areas from urban expansion.
- Avoiding compromising longer-term strategic approaches to the allocation of land uses through incremental decision-making'.

The subject site aligns well with the objectives of Clause 02.03-1 noting that it sits within an approved Development Plan (ACDP / ADP2) and has been earmarked for urban use.

The amendment will allow for the land to be developed generally in accordance with the ACDP2 which has been comprehensively addressed through Amendment C41 and subsequent parts.

The amendment is further consistent with the objectives and implementation strategies of the following clauses of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

A summary of key relevant clauses from the Municipal Planning Strategy is outlined below:

- 02.03-1 Settlement Urban Growth:
- 02.03-5 Built environment and heritage Urban and building design through retention of local environmental features and landscape qualities.

• 02.03-5 Built environment and heritage – Neighbourhood character through incorporation of elements of the natural environment in the future development.

• 02.03-6 Housing – Housing Diversity by supporting greater housing choice in terms of size, type, and style to meet the needs of a diverse and changing population.

• 02.03-9 Development infrastructure and contributions by requiring development and infrastructure contributions to support the delivery of essential infrastructure in the growth areas and in established areas undergoing renewal.

A summary of key relevant clauses from State and Local Planning Policy is outlined below:

• 11.02-2S Structure Planning by implementation of the ADP2.

• 12.01-1L – Protection of biodiversity by facilitating the provision of buffers along waterways, wetlands and between sites of biodiversity value and urban infrastructure.

• 12.03-1S River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs by:

• Protecting the environmental, cultural, landscape values of all waterway systems as significant economic, environmental and cultural assets.

• Sensitively design and site development to maintain and enhance the waterway system and the surrounding landscape setting, environmental assets, and ecological and hydrological systems.

• 11.04-1S Contaminated and potentially contaminated land by ensuring contaminated or potentially contaminated land is or will be suitable for the proposed use, prior to the commencement of any use or development.

16.01-1S Housing supply by:

• facilitating diverse housing that offers choice and meets changing household needs by widening housing diversity through a mix of housing types.

• implementation of the ADP2 which in a growth area context provides for a mix of housing types through a variety of lot sizes, including higher housing densities in and around activity centres.

• 17.01-1S Diversified Economy by protecting and strengthen existing and planned employment areas and plan for new employment areas.

• 17.02-1S Business by supporting development that meets the community's needs for retail, entertainment, office and other commercial services.

• 19.03-1L Development and infrastructure contributions by apportioning costs fairly between landowners for development to the degree that each is assessed as contributing to the need for each item of infrastructure.

# Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The proposed zone change from the Farming Zone to the Comprehensive Development Zone is necessary to successfully implement Council's and the State's planning objectives for Epping/Wollert growth areas and provide clarity for relevant stakeholders. The overlay controls applying to the site are still appropriate and will remain unchanged.

# How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The Amendment has incorporated the views of the Environmental Protection Agency in requiring further assessment regarding the potential for contaminated land.

# Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

Requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010 have already been considered as part of C41 Part 1 and there are no further requirements.

# **Resource and administrative costs**

# What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The proposed amendment will not pose unreasonable resource and administrative costs on the responsible authority in its capacity as a growth area municipality and planning authority.

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# Attachment 1 – Mapping reference table

Location	Land /Area Affected	Mapping Referenc e	Address	Proposed Zone changes	Proposed Overlay changes	Proposed deletion changes
240 O'Herns Road, Epping	240 O'Herns Road, Epping	CDZ4	240 O'Herns Road, Epping	Rezone from FZ to CDZ4	None	None



# 5.3 Planning Scheme Amendment C251 - Rezoning 307 Bridge Inn Road & 390 Masons Road, Mernda - Exhibition Outcomes

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Planning & Development

Report Author: Strategic Planner

In Attendance: Acting Manager Strategic Futures Coordinator Strategic Land Use Planning

Attachment 6 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 personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

## **Executive Summary**

This report details the outcomes of the public exhibition of Planning Scheme Amendment C251 and includes consideration of submissions and the recommended next steps.

Amendment C251 applies to approximately 56 hectares of land across two parcels of land at 307 Bridge Inn Road and 390 Masons Road, Mernda (subject site). The sites are bisected by the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), with the land within the UGB currently zoned Farming Zone (FZ) and the land outside the UGB zoned Green Wedge Zone (GWZ).

The Amendment proposes to rezone the urban land within both parcels, totalling 21Ha, from FZ to General Residential Zone 1 (GRZ1), apply the Development Plan Schedule 27 (DPO27), and the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 1 (VPO1) to the rezoned land to guide its future development. The balance 35 hectares of non-urban land will remain in the existing Green Wedge Zone (GWZ). Please refer to Attachment 1 for a context plan of the subject sites.

The Amendment will facilitate the development of the 'urban' land for residential purposes including opportunities for housing at similar densities to adjoining residential areas and potential for retirement living and aged care, which will be further resolved at the Development Plan stage of the planning process.

The amendment also facilitates the assemblage of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland (the Parkland), now known as Quarry Hills Parkland, with the GWZ land transferred to Council and incorporated into the Parklands. The new residential community will benefit from the amenity and recreational opportunities afforded by being in close proximity to the Parkland.



Council resolved to requested Authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit the Amendment at its March 2023 Council Meeting. The Amendment (refer to Attachment 2) was then exhibited to surrounding owners, occupiers and potentially affected agencies and prescribed Ministers in August and September 2023. Sixty-eight owners and occupiers were notified, including the owners and operators of the Wollert Landfill which is approximately one kilometre to the west of the subject site.

Nine submissions were received including; one from the Landfill operator, four from residents, two from consultants (one on behalf the proponent and one on behalf of a potential purchasers), one from a local real estate agent and one from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). One resident's submission included a petition signed by 175 residents opposing the Amendment.

The issues raised in submissions included: land use compatibility with the nearby landfill, noise and disruption during development, impact on the road network, loss of open space and views, and current noise and odour issues from the landfill operations. These issues are discussed in more detail in the body of the report. All submissions are summarised and recommended officer responses provided in Attachment 3.

As a number of submissions can not be resolved, the report recommends that Council request that the Minister for Planning appoints an independent Planning Panel to consider all submissions. Further, in line with standard practice, the report recommends that Council Officers be authorised to continue discussions to seek resolution of unresolved submissions in the lead up to the Planning Panel hearing.

Following the hearing, the report and recommendations of the Planning Panel will be reported to a future Council. Council will be required to consider the Panel report and make a decision on the proposed Amendment.

## **Officers' Recommendation**

THAT Council:

- 1. Request the Minister for Planning appoint an independent Panel to consider all submissions made in relation to Planning Scheme Amendment C251 to the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.
- 2. Note that officers will refer all submissions to the Panel once appointed by the Minister for Planning.
- 3. Note that for the purposes of submissions to the Planning Panel, the preferred Amendment Documents should be generally in the form of the exhibited documents at Attachment 2.



- 4. Authorise officers to continue discussions to seek resolution of unresolved submissions prior to the Panel Hearing, consistent with the officer recommendations within this report and Attachment 3.
- 5. Advise the proponent, submitters and Planning Panels Victoria of point 1 above.



## Background / Key Information

## Subject Site

The subject site consists of two properties located in Mernda between Bridge Inn Road to the south, Masons Road to the south, west of the established residential and east of Darebin Creek (refer to Attachment 1). The properties are located at the interface of the urban area of Mernda and Green Wedge land. The properties are currently used for farming, mainly grazing.

To the south and east of the properties, the land is residential and was developed in accordance with the Mernda Strategy Plan and Amendment VC68 (Delivering Melbourne's Newest Sustainable Communities) which expanded the UGB in 2010. Land to the north and west is in the Green Wedge. The two sites total approximately 56 hectares in area, 21 hectares of which is proposed to be rezoned for residential development. The balance of 35 hectares is proposed to be transferred to Council and incorporate into the Quarry Hills Parkland.

#### Expansion of Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

In 2010, Planning Scheme Amendment VC68 (Delivering Melbourne's Newest Sustainable Communities) was enacted by the Minister for Planning and expanded the UGB around Melbourne's growth areas. The UGB is a boundary around Melbourne which directs all metropolitan growth and activity inside this boundary and protects the land outside the boundary for peri-urban and rural uses (known as the 'green wedge'). The VC68 process identified new parcels of non-urban land which were potentially suitable for urban development and incorporated them into the UGB. This was in response to the directions from Plan Melbourne (*Melbourne @ 5 million*) which identified that an additional 600,000 dwellings would need to be accommodated within Melbourne over the following 20 years.

The subject land was partially brought into Metropolitan Melbourne for residential use as part this amendment (refer to Attachment 4), with the UGB expanded to bisect the sites at the 185m contour line. The zoning did not change with the Amendment and remained nonurban (Farming Zone) with the direction being that it could be rezoned for urban use subject to further strategic planning and assessments.

#### **Quarry Hills Parkland**

Quarry Hills Parkland (the Parkland) was first proposed in the South Morang Local Structure Plan (SMLSP), approved in February 1997. The subdivision of land within the SMLSP facilitated the transfer of the first landholding for the Parkland to Council. The Parkland has since been designated a regional park due to its environmental and cultural significance, as well as the major facilities to be provided.



The North Growth Corridor Plan (GAA, 2012), draft Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2021) and Whittlesea Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) recognise the Quarry Hills Parkland as regional open space.

The Parkland has been master-planned by Council to expand the former Quarry Hills Bushland Park ensuring vital recreation, habitat and biodiversity facilities are protected and enhanced. The transfer of land for the Parkland from private ownership to Council ownership has been linked to the rezoning of land brought into the UGB since the 2010 expansion. As the UGB is determined by the 185m contour line, rather than property boundaries, most properties feature land both inside and outside of the UGB. As landowners seek the rezoning of the urban portion of their properties, the non-urban portion is transferred to Council for use in the Parkland. This is secured via a voluntary Section 173 Agreement.

The Parkland currently comprises 400 hectares in Council ownership, with the ultimate size being potentially 1,100 hectares by 2040. The parkland will also contribute to Department of Transport and Planning's strategy for establishing a Grassy Eucalypt Woodland Protected Area (MSA 2021).

The *Quarry Hills Regional Parklands Future Directions Plan* has been prepared in partnership with DELWP, through collaboration with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and through consultation with the community and stakeholders.

The Plan has identified five key objectives to achieve the vision for the Parkland:

- The creation of 1100 hectares of Parkland will be valued for its ancient and ongoing Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung connection and the opportunities for exchange of knowledge.
- Council commits to a process of self-determination, to return cultural practices on Country, to Traditional Owners.
- The Parkland will be regenerated to ecological health and vitality, to underpin health and wellbeing of the community.
- The Parkland will provide rich cultural, and landscape experiences for the community, a place for exploration, reconciliation healing and learning.
- Lead by a governance model where Council, and Traditional Owners become partners in the future direction of the Parkland.



## Amendment Process

In 2020, Council received the request to begin the rezoning process from the landowners, Pitamara Pty Ltd. (the proponent). As mentioned above, before the Planning Scheme Amendment process begins, the transfer of the non-urban land to Council following rezoning must be secured via a Section 173 Agreement.

In respect to the open space land the agreement requires that the land be transferred to Council within 90 days of the Gazettal date of this Amendment. The agreement also requires that the land be free of encumbrances and contamination prior to transfer.

This agreement also covers the requirement to pay Development Contributions to fund local infrastructure, open space and community facilities in the surrounding area and the imposition of a Growth Area Infrastructure Contribution (GAIC) equivalent contribution. This is a contribution is usually charged by the State to fund higher order infrastructure in the broader area. In this instance, the State GAIC is not triggered as the land will not be rezoned to the Urban Growth Zone. In lieu of this, Council imposes an equivalent charge which Council will manage and use to contribute to the provision of higher order infrastructure.

The Section 173 Agreement was signed and sealed by the Council delegate on 25th August 2022.

## **Amendment Proposal**

Council resolved to requested Authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit the Amendment at its March 2023 Council Meeting.

The Amendment proposes to rezone the urban portion of the subject site within the UGB from Farming Zone to the General Residential Zone to enable development for residential purposes consistent with the North Growth Corridor Plan (Growth Areas Authority (GAA), 2012). The Amendment will facilitate the development of the 'urban' land for residential purposes including opportunities for housing at similar densities to adjoining residential areas and potential for retirement living and aged care, which will be further resolved at the Development Plan stage of the planning process.

The new residential area will benefit from the amenity and recreational opportunities afforded by its proximity to the Quarry Hills Parkland. The new homes will be also well serviced by existing services and infrastructure in Mernda including schools, shops, community and recreational facilities.

In addition, it is proposed to apply the Development Plan Overlay (Schedule 27) and the Vegetation Protection Overlay (Schedule 1) to the land proposed to be rezoned.



This is in line with the rezoning of neighbouring sites which were brought into the UGB with the 2010 expansion and have subsequently been rezoned. The DPO and VPO will ensure logical, coherent development that considers conservation values. The future Development Plan assessment will consider appropriate interfaces to the Quarry Hills, ensuring its protection from urban encroachment.

Land to be transferred to the Quarry Hills Parkland will be retained in the Green Wedge Zone.

## New EPA buffer distances – December 2022 exhibition

In December 2022 the EPA exhibited new draft guidelines for industry separation and landfill buffer distances. The proposal saw the current landfill buffer distance increase from 500 metres to 1,500 metres.

This had the potential to bring the subject site within the proposed buffer distance of the existing Wollert Landfill. Council Officers consulted with the EPA to determine if the Amendment would be impacted by the new draft guidelines.

The EPA provided Council officers with a plan of the landfill site identifying former, current and future approved landfill cells, and advised features to measure from to determine the separation distance. It was determined and confirmed by the EPA that the subject sites remained outside the proposed 1500 metre buffer distances (refer Attachment 5). With this advice, exhibition of the Amendment was advanced.

## 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.

Residential development of the subject sites will be guided by a Development Plan to ensure well planned and orderly development. The land to be incorporated into the Parkland will provide for active and passive recreation for future and existing residents.

## Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

## **Financial Management**

The cost of conducting the Panel Hearing will be borne by the proponent.

In accordance with the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the proponent is also required to pay Council a fee to assist with the resources required to consider submissions.



Council will be responsible for covering the cost of any representation or evidence it requires at the planning panel which will be from its operational budget.

A Section 173 Agreement has been signed with the proponent which provides for the transfer of the non-urban land for \$1 consideration. The agreement also requires that the land is free of encumbrances and contamination.

The Section 173 Agreement also implements the requirement to pay development contributions and a GAIC equivalent contribution to contribute to infrastructure.

# Community Consultation and Engagement Exhibition Details

The Amendment was publicly exhibited from 29th August 2023 to 1st October 2023. Notifications were sent to 68 owners and occupiers adjacent to the subject sites, to seven potentially affected agencies, including the EPA, and prescribed Ministers. Notification was also published in the Northern Star Weekly on Tuesday 29th August and in the Government Gazette on 31st August.

Nine submissions were received during the exhibition. The key issues are discussed below and summarised in Attachment 3.

## **Submissions Response**

## Hanson Submission

Hanson, the operator of the Wollert Landfill submitted an objection to the Amendment. The submission stated the Amendment would create land use incompatibility by allowing a sensitive use to establish within the landfill odour buffer. It continues that this is due to the subject sites falling within the draft EPA 1,500m buffer distance. It advised that the EPA supported measurements, detailed above, were incorrect and failed to account of all future approved landfill cells. Hanson also noted the Amendment contained no justification for an apparent reduction to the buffer or any details on how this reduction would be managed and risks mitigated.

Having received this submission, Council officers engaged further with the EPA to establish the distance between the subject site and all former, current and future approved landfill cells. Council officers had relied on the EPA for this calculation as they issue the Works Authority that approves the landfill use and the area to which it applies.

This re-evaluation found the full extent of the Works Authority area had not been shared with Council, with landfill cells further east than originally advised. This brought the subject sites within the 1,500m buffer, with 307 Bridge Inn Road approximately 1,130 metres from the eastern most cell and 390 Masons Road 1,030 metres from the nearest cell.



The draft guidelines feature a noted advising "The 1500m buffer may be varied to a minimum of 1000m with an appropriate odour risk assessment that demonstrates an alternative buffer is acceptable."

The EPA and Council advised the proponent of the new calculations and the need for the odour risk assessment to determine if a reduced buffer was appropriate in this situation. The Amendment was paused while this assessment was undertaken.

The odour assessment, performed by PEC, found that due to the prevailing winds at the Landfill, the risk to health and amenity posed by odour was acceptable in the area 1,000m-1,500m from the landfill at the subject site. EPA has reviewed and endorsed the outcomes of the assessment. They noted the assessment measured the odour risk from the eastern most landfill cell only. They request additional assessment from other cells north of the assessed cell be undertaken for completeness, advising it is unlikely that this will change the results of the assessment. This further assessment has been performed and again finds that due to the prevailing winds, the risk to health and amenity posed by odour was acceptable at the subject sites.

Council officers will forward this onto the EPA for their review. It is considered the Amendment process, and the scheduling of the Planning Panel can progress in the meantime noting the assessment again supports the reduced odour buffer.

## **Objection and Petition from adjoining Residents**

Four submissions were received from neighbouring residents. The submissions included three objections and one advising of their concerns with the Amendment. One submission included a petition signed by 175 residents (refer confidential Attachment 6) from the broader Mernda area objecting to the Amendment.

## The key issues raised in the submission are listed below:

## Construction noise and disruption

One submission noted concerns about disruption during development including increased traffic on the roads, dust, noise and other disruptions. This issue has been reviewed and it is noted that any future permit will require a Construction Management Plan be endorsed by Council and implement control measures to minimise disruptions on existing residents.

Noise and dust are also managed by noise and environmental regulations respectively and compliance action can be taken if the contractors do not accord with the endorsed plans or regulations.



## Traffic and congestion post-development

Three submissions raised concerns in respect to traffic and congestion. The Amendment proposes to apply DPO27 to the rezoned land to guide future development.

This includes the requirement to prepare a transport strategy which will include a detailed assessment of the existing conditions and response to ensure the additional development is acceptable from a transport and traffic management perspective.

The DPO27 requires the network to have a high degree of connectivity and permeability. There is the opportunity to provide multiple connections from the existing local road network to the development site to appropriately distribute and manage traffic. There are three existing roads that will be extended into 307 Bridge Inn Road from the east and two which will be extended into 390 Masons Road from the east. There is also an opportunity to investigate new connections to Masons Road to improve the distribution of traffic. The development of the site has been factored into higher order transport analysis in respect to the arterial road network.

## Loss of open space, habitat, views, and community identity

Three submissions were concerned that the Amendment would result in the loss of open space, habitat, views and community identity. In response, it is considered that the proposed Amendment will significantly benefit the provision of and protection of open space as it will facilitate the inclusion of 35 hectares of land into the Quarry Hills Parkland at no cost to the community. The Quarry Hills Parkland will be approximately 1,100 hectares in size once completely assembled and will provide residents with a range of passive and active recreation opportunities and provide an enduring and permanent development boundary preventing any further urban expansion. The Parkland will also protect and conserve significant land of conservation and landscape values.

## Landfill impacts

One resident's objection was based solely around concern for the negative amenity impact caused by the Wollert Landfill. This includes smoke and noise from the incinerator and general odour. As discussed above, in response to this issue an odour risk assessment has been undertaken to determine the impact of the landfill on the subject sites. The assessment found that the impact on human health and amenity on sensitive uses at the subject site from the landfill is acceptable. The Assessment has been reviewed, evaluated and accepted by the EPA.

## **Rationale for recommendation**

The objections received have all recommended that Council abandon the Amendment for the reasons outlined above. The submissions contain no requested changes to the Amendment or the proposed planning controls.



In accordance with S23(1)(a) - (c) of the *Planning and Environment Act 19*87, Council has the following options:

- change the amendment in the manner requested; or
- refer the submission to an independent panel appointed under Part 8; or
- abandon the amendment or part of the amendment.

Noting that the submissions do not request changes, there is no opportunity to amend the proposed planning controls in response to the submissions.

It is considered that the strategic basis for the Amendment remains sound, and the Amendment will produce a net community benefit through the transfer of open space to Council. Therefore, it is recommended that Council request that the Minister for Planning to appoint a Panel and that the submissions received be referred to the independent panel.

The Planning Panel process provides an opportunity for independent Panel to consider the issues raised in the submissions and for the submitters to make representations to the Panel. The Panel will ultimately make recommendations to Council as the Planning Authority on the Amendment. A report will be presented to a future Council meeting on the outcomes of the Planning Panel process and Council will have an opportunity to make a final decision on the Amendment.

It is noted that, in accordance with S30 (1) (a)-(b) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, that the Amendment automatically lapses if it is not adopted by the planning authority within two years of the commencement of exhibition. For this Amendment the date would be 29 August 2025. As such, it is important to keep the Amendment process progressing to provide sufficient time for Council to make a decision on the Amendment prior to this date.

## Other Principles for Consideration

## **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

## **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.



## **Council Policy Considerations**

## **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

The Amendment will protect land of environmental importance by incorporation of land into the Quarry Hills Parkland. This is in line with a number of Council policies that reference or guide the planning of the Quarry Hills Parkland including:

- South Morang Local Structure Plan (1997);
- Open Space Strategy (2016);
- Green Wedge Management Plan (2023);
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2013);
- Quarry Hill Bushland Park Masterplan (2009); and
- Quarry Hills Parkland Future Directions Plan (2023).

The DPO27 features a number of sustainability focused requirements for the development of the site. These include:

- Retention of existing native vegetation;
- Incorporation of a cycling network within the street network;
- Innovative subdivision layout, urban design and built form responses that respond to the site and park interface;
- A landscape strategy that is to consider the enhancement of habitat values in open spaces; and
- A stormwater management strategy which considers water sensitive urban design principles which provides for protection of natural systems and integrated water management.

## Social, Cultural and Health

The Quarry Hills Parkland Future Directions Plan was created in close collaboration with the traditional owners, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. A key part of the plan is to return cultural practices to Country.

## Economic

The development will have a positive economic impact through the development of the site for housing.

## Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The recommendation of this report is to progress the Amendment to a Planning Panel at which Council may require legal representation to assist with its submissions.



With respect to Strategic Risks, the Amendment implements the Parkland assemblage method Council first adopted in the South Morang Local Structure Plan (1997) and which has continued to be a strategic priority. Should the Amendment be abandoned, the continued assemblage of the Quarry Hills Parkland will be put at risk.

The Section 173 Agreement which secures the transfer of the land into the Quarry Hills Parkland ensures that the land is to be transferred free of encumbrances and contamination.

## **Planning Assessment**

## Municipal Planning Strategy

- Clause 02.03-1 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (Settlement Urban growth) seeks to protect the non-urban breaks between growth areas, to reinforce the urban growth boundary while protecting environmental assets.
   *Response*: In rezoning the land, a hard border between urban and Green Wedge land is implemented with protection of the green wedge land a prime consideration.
- Clause 02.03-9 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (Settlement Open space) seeks to facilitate the assembly of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.
   *Response:* In facilitating the proposed rezoning of part of the subject site, Council will be transferred the balance of 35 hectares of land for the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.

## Planning Policy Framework

- Clause 11.01-1L of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (Green wedge areas) seeks to define boundaries that preserve the integrity of both rural and urban areas. *Response:* The amendment supports a natural, landscape-based boundary to urban growth, including use of identified open space, such as Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.
- Clause 11.02-3S of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (Sequencing of development) seeks to require new development to make a financial contribution to the provision of infrastructure such as community facilities, public transport, and roads. *Response:* If the Amendment is gazetted, the payment of Development Contributions and Growth Area Infrastructure Contribution (equivalent) will be required in accordance with the existing Section 173 Agreement between Council and the landowner.
- Clause 16.01-1S of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme (Housing supply) seeks to ensure an appropriate quantity, quality and type of housing is provided. *Response:* The proposed rezoning will facilitate 21 hectares of additional residential land in the growth area of Mernda.

The preparation of a Development Plan in accordance with DPO27 will guide the delivery of high-quality residential development and neighbourhood design.



## State Government Planning Strategies

The Amendment is consistent with and implements:

- The North Growth Corridor Plan (2012) which identifies the urban land for residential use and the non-urban land for open space as part of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.
- Plan Melbourne (2014) which identifies the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.
- Draft Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan (2021) which seeks to secure a 15year supply of housing and protect the green wedge.

## Implementation Strategy

## Communication

All submitters and the proponent to the Amendment will be notified of the Council Meeting date and the outcome of the Council meeting as per resolution no. 4.

## **Critical Dates**

- Section 173 Agreement detailing transfer of non-urban land to Council was signed: 25 August 2022
- Council Resolution to seek Authorisation to prepare and exhibit Planning Scheme Amendment C251: 21 March 2023
- Authorisation granted by the Minister for Planning: 24 July 2023
- Exhibition of Amendment: 29 August 2023 1 October 2023
- Date the Amendment will lapse if not adopted: 29 August 2025

## **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.

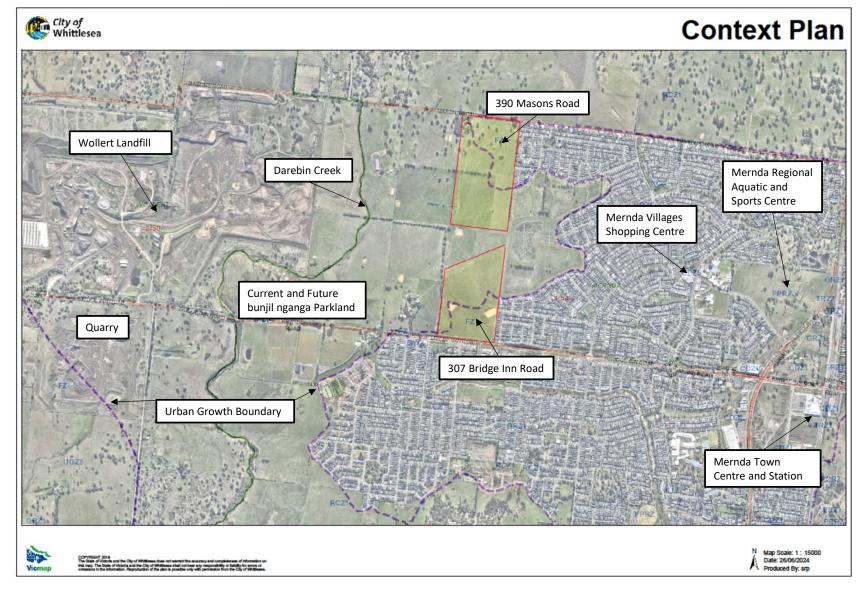
The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

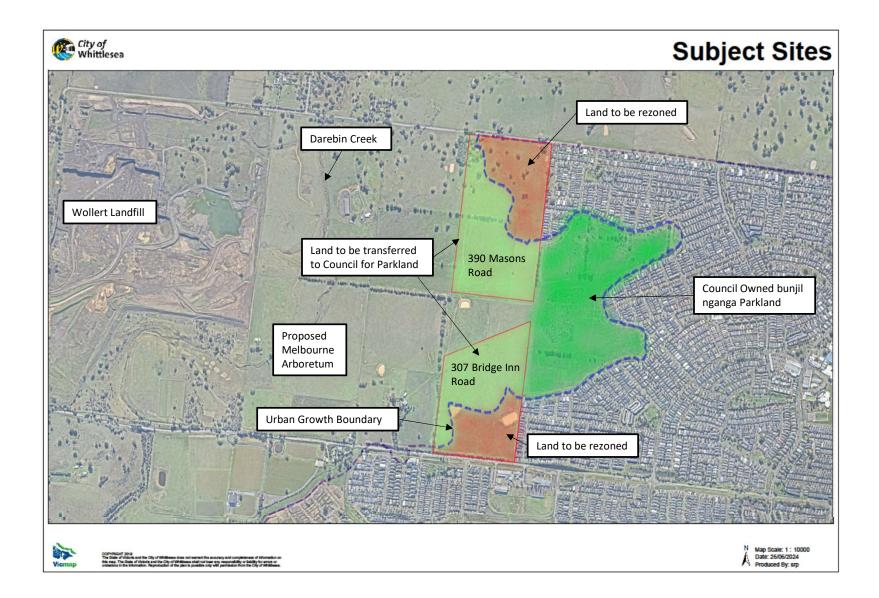


# Attachments

- 1. Context Plans [5.3.1 2 pages]
- 2. Amendment Documents Exhibition Version [5.3.2 11 pages]
- 3. Submissions Table and officer response [5.3.3 9 pages]
- 4. Northern Growth Corridor Plan [5.3.4 1 page]
- 5. Landfill Buffer Plan [5.3.5 2 pages]
- CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED Petition Opposition to Amendment C251wsea [5.3.6 -14 pages]

Attachment 1 – Context Plans





Planning and Environment Act 1987

## WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME

# **AMENDMENT C251wsea**

### EXPLANATORY REPORT

#### Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the City of Whittlesea, which is the planning authority for this amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of Pitamara Pty. Ltd., the land-owner.

#### Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to 307 Bridge Inn Road and 390 Masons Road, Mernda. The land to be rezoned is the land within the Urban Growth Boundary currently zoned Farming Zone. This is shown in red outline in the figure below.



#### What the amendment does

The amendment seeks to undertake a number of planning scheme changes to the subject property in order to:

• Facilitate residential development inside the Urban Growth Boundary;

• Create a lot to be transferred to the City of Whittlesea for the purposes of a regional parkland:

Specifically, the amendment proposes to:

- Rezone part of 307 Bridge Inn Road and part of 390 Masons Road, Mernda from Farming Zone (FZ) to General Residential Zone 1 (GRZ1);
- Apply a Development Plan Overlay (DPO27) to the rezoned GRZ1;
- Apply a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO1) to the land rezoned GRZ1;
- Delete the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1 and ESO5) from part of the site.

#### Strategic assessment of the amendment

#### Why is the amendment required?

The intention of the proposed Amendment is to enable residential development on the parts of the properties currently zoned Farming Zone and facilitate the assemblage of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland with the balance land.

In order to achieve this, changes to the zones and overlays affecting the sites are required. The land affected by the Farming Zone, located within the Urban Growth Boundary, is proposed to be rezoned to the General Residential Zone 1 with the application of a Development Plan Overlay, Vegetation Protection Overlay and the deletion of the Environmental Significance Overlay.

The Environmental Significance Overlay is to be removed as the Vegetation Protection Overlay is considered to more appropriately address the matters identified in the Environmental Significance Overlay including the protection of significant native vegetation (River Red Gum Grassy Woodland) within an urban context.

The proposal is within the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland and will contribute to Council's continued assemblage of the parkland in line with previous rezonings in the precinct. This Amendment will facilitate the appropriate development of land located within the Urban Growth Boundary, through the application of the Zone and Development Plan Overlay, while also triggering the transfer of 35 hectares of land into public ownership for the purpose of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.

Having further regard to the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland, the proposed Amendment is supported by the *Quarry Hills Bushland Park Masterplan (2009)* as the 35 hectares of land to be transferred into public ownership is nominated for inclusion within the Masterplan. It is noted that the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland and its assemblage is also supported through the *Northern Growth Corridor Plan (2015)*, and *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 (2017)*, which both identify the full extent of the parkland.

The proposed amendment will have a significant net community benefit as it will facilitate the inclusion of 35 hectares of land into Quarry Hills Regional Parkland at no cost to the community. The Quarry Hills Regional Parkland will be approximately 1,100 hectares in size once completely assembled and will provide residents with a range of passive and active recreation opportunities and provide an enduring and permanent development boundary.

#### How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The proposal implements the objectives of planning in Victoria as outlined in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, on the basis that it will provide for the orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of the land, and secures a pleasant living and recreational environment.

The proposed Amendment will also assist in the conservation of the Quarry Hills which are of a high aesthetic, environmental and cultural significance.

The Amendment brings the zoning in line with the Growth Corridor Plans thorough the rezoning of the Farming Zone land to General Residential Zone for land within the Urban Growth Boundary.

#### How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The Amendment has sought to ensure that the planning outcome proposed addresses the environmental, social and economic effects as identified in the Planning and Environment Act (1987).

The Amendment will facilitate the transfer of 35 Hectares of land into public ownership for the purpose of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. The land has previously been subdivided, at that time Council Officers ensured the alignment of the subdivision resulted in the retention of the two high points and connecting ridge, the richest features of the site, in the part of the land to be transferred to Council. The Quarry Hills Regional Parkland will provide for a range of positive environmental, social and economic effects in the medium to long term future of the region.

The amendment will deliver important social benefits by contributing to housing choice and diversity in the local area, which features existing social infrastructure, such as an activity centre, education facilities and regional and local open space.

Land located inside the Urban Growth Boundary will be developed for the purposes of the residential development. The development of this land will provide existing and future residents with a diverse range of housing opportunities that are close to a town centre, and direct access to both local and regional open space.

#### Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

No part of the subject land is located within the Bushfire Management Overlay and the proposed amendment is considered to meet the objectives and strategies associated with *Clause 13.02-1 Bushfire Planning Strategies and Principles* of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.

Noting the above, as the sites are located within a nominated Bushfire Prone Area, residential development at the interface of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland will be required to be meet the built form standards and bushfire risk mitigation measures found within the *Victorian Building Act (1993)*.

The proposal will not increase the likelihood of bushfire in the area, and any future development of land will be required to meet built form and subdivision layout requirements designed to mitigate any potential bushfire threats posed to the future community.

# Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The Amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Section 7(5) of the *Planning and Environment Act (1987)*.

Under section 12(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* the following Minister's Direction is applicable to the consideration of this amendment:

#### Direction No 1 – Potentially Contaminated Land

Thorough investigations were carried out to determine that the land is not potentially contaminated and is therefore suitable for a sensitive (residential) use, which will be facilitated by the proposed rezoning.

#### Direction No 9 – Metropolitan Planning Strategy

The amendment complies with Direction No. 9 as it is consistent with *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* (DELWP, 2017), particularly outcome 2 – *Melbourne provides housing choice in locations close to jobs and services.* The amendment provides for further housing opportunities in Mernda in accordance with the North Growth Corridor Plan and the Mernda Strategy Plan, which aim to create a series of interconnected neighbourhoods around the sub-regional activity centre of Mernda.

#### Ministerial Direction No 11 – Strategic Assessment of Amendments

The amendment is prepared in accordance with Ministerial Direction No 11 to ensure a comprehensive strategic evaluation of the planning scheme amendment and the outcomes it will produce. This explanatory report is in a form that complies with this Direction.

#### Ministerial Direction 15 – The Planning Scheme Amendment Process

The Amendment will comply with the requirements in this Ministerial Direction through the public exhibition of the amendment, the consideration of submissions and the referral to a Planning Panel where appropriate.

# Ministerial Direction 19 – Amendments that may significantly impact on the environment, amenity and human health

Council has complied with this direction by consulting with the EPA regarding the proposed new landfill odour buffer distances. The proposed extended buffer distances, though not in effect and still requiring consideration of submissions and further deliberation, had the potential to bring the subject site within the buffer from the municipal landfill at 55 Bridge Inn Road Wollert. Council engaged the EPA to ensure how measurements were to be taken and any other guidance they could provide. Following their advice Council confirmed with the EPA that the subject sites exceeded the draft new buffer distances, and no further assessment was required.

# How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The amendment supports the Planning Policy Framework (PPF), giving effect to the principles and specific policies contained within the SPPF. The following objectives and strategies of the PPF are relevant to this Amendment The PPF outlines that:

 Planning is to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing and future communities through provision of zoned and serviced land for housing, employment, recreation and open space, commercial and community facilities and infrastructure.

- Planning is to recognise the need for, and as far as practicable contribute towards...diversity
  of choice, economic viability, accessibility....a high standard of urban design and
  amenity....."
- Planning is to facilitate sustainable development that takes full advantage of existing settlement patterns and investment in transport, utility, social, community and commercial infrastructure and services.

General Objectives relevant to the subject land include:

#### Clause 11- Settlement:

Planning is to anticipate and respond to the needs of existing and future communities through provision of zoned and serviced land for housing, employment, recreation and open space, commercial and community facilities and infrastructure.

The amendment shall provide for the residential development of land within the Urban Growth Boundary. The Development Plan Overlay will ensure an opportunity for the subdivision to be well designed, which would provide for a diverse housing stock and high standards of urban design interface with Quarry Hills Regional Park.

#### Clause 11.02 Managing Growth

- To ensure a sufficient supply of land is available for residential, commercial, retail, industrial, recreational, institutional, and other community uses.
- To facilitate the orderly development of urban areas.
- To manage the sequence of development in areas of growth so that services are available from early in the life of new communities.

#### Clause 12- Environmental and Landscape Values:

12.05-1S - To protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas.

# 12.05-2S - To protect and enhance significant landscapes and open spaces that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments.

The Amendment seeks to protect the significant Quarry Hills land which is to be transferred into public ownership for the purposes of the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. Development will be sensitive to the existing views and vistas from the subject site and would not detract from its natural qualities and aesthetic values.

#### Clause 15- Built Environment and Heritage:

- Planning should ensure all land use and development appropriately responds to its surrounding landscape and character, valued built form and cultural context.
- Planning should protect places and sites with significant heritage, architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural value.
- Planning should promote development that is environmentally sustainable and should
  minimise detrimental impacts on the built and natural environment.
- Planning should promote excellence in the built environment and create places that:
  - Are enjoyable, engaging and comfortable to be in.
  - Contribute positively to local character and sense of place.
  - Reflect the particular characteristics and cultural identity of the community.
  - Enhance the function, amenity and safety of the public realm.

The Development Plan Overlay Schedule 27 that is to be applied to the rezoned land includes provisions to ensure that development identifies and responds to the features of the land and its setting, such as slope, existing native vegetation, and interfaces with open space.

#### Clause 16- Housing:

16.01-1S To facilitate well-located, integrated and diverse housing that meets community needs.

#### 16.01-3S To identify land suitable for rural residential development.

The amendment rezones the subject land to provide for housing that is well located in regard to local services, shopping, employment, transport and open space. The surrounding development has been guided by the Mernda Local Strategy Plan which has delivered rail extension, local and major town centres, expanded road network, schools and community centres all within proximity to the subject site.

# How does the amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the Municipal Strategic Statement?

Not applicable as Whittlesea Planning Scheme does not contain an MSS.

#### How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

The amendment implements and is supported by the objectives and strategies in the Municipal Planning Strategy relating to settlement, urban growth, neighbourhood character, housing – in particular housing diversity and housing affordability, and infrastructure.

The Strategic directions at Clause 02.03, under Whittlesea Planning Scheme outline:

#### 02.03-1 Green Wedge Zone:

Council aims to protect green wedge areas by:

- Conserving and enhancing the rural and natural landscape character.
- Encouraging agricultural and tourism uses compatible with the environmental values of the green wedge.
- Supporting emerging forms of agriculture in rural areas.
- Protecting natural and cultural heritage.
- Maintaining designated non-urban breaks.
- Protecting identified viewing corridors that offer important visual access to rural and natural areas.
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and environmental values.
- Reducing land use conflict between the green wedge areas and urban and rural communities.
- Supporting natural, cultural and landscape values for tourism and recreation.
- Discouraging development that would diminish the significant rural character of the green wedge areas.

#### 02.03-2 Environmental and Landscape values

Council aims to:

- Protect areas of biodiversity and native vegetation including conservation areas protected for urban growth areas.
- Increase connectivity between key habitat areas whether regional or local.
- Avoid incremental incursions into environmentally sensitive areas beyond the boundaries of land reserved for future urban development.
- Prioritise vegetation offsets in areas of Red Gum Woodlands beyond the urban fringe
- Protect River Red Gum trees due to their intrinsic value in establishing a character and identity, especially for newly developing areas but also in existing rural areas.

#### Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The proposed amendment utilises the most appropriate planning tools within the Victorian Planning Provisions.

The land will be rezoned in line with all adjoining properties, applying a General Residential 1 Zone, a Development Plan Overlay and Vegetation Protection Overlay which is consistent with adjoining properties.

#### How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

Council has sought guidance and support from the EPA, as discussed below, the Department of Transport and Planning on potential road connection from Bridge Inn Road. The Amendment has responded to these agencies feedback.

#### Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The proposed amendment will have no significant impact on the transport system as defined in Section 3 of the *Transport Integration Act 2010*. Any proposed developed of land within the Urban Growth Boundary will be required to provide for all transport services as necessary, including the creation of bicycle lanes, and bus facilities as defined by the Act.

No statement of policy principals prepared under Section 22 of the *Transport Integration Act 2010* apply to the subject property.

#### Resource and administrative costs

The proposed amendment is unlikely to have a significant impact on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority.

While some residential development will be facilitated through the rezoning of land inside the Urban Growth Boundary, the number of potential planning applications associated with a parcel of this size would be unlikely to present a significant increase in workload for Council.

#### Where you may inspect this amendment

The amendment can be inspected free of charge at the City of Whittlesea website at <a href="https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/building-planning-development/planning-scheme-and-amendments/">https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/building-planning-development/planning-scheme-and-amendments/</a>

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport and Planning website at <a href="http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection">www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection</a> or by contacting 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the amendment documentation.

#### Submissions

Any person who may be affected by the amendment may make a submission to the planning authority. Submissions about the amendment must be received by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023.

A submission must be sent to:

Chief Executive Officer

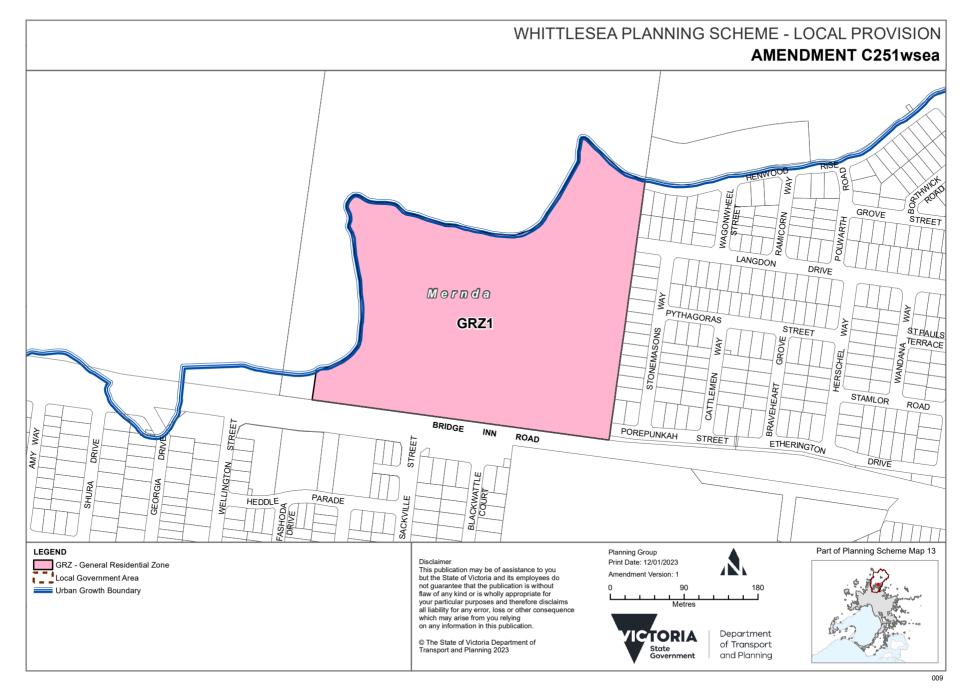
Whittlesea City Council Locked Bag 1 BUNDOORA MDC VIC 3083

Or via email to: <u>Strategic.planning@whittlesea.vic.gov.au</u>

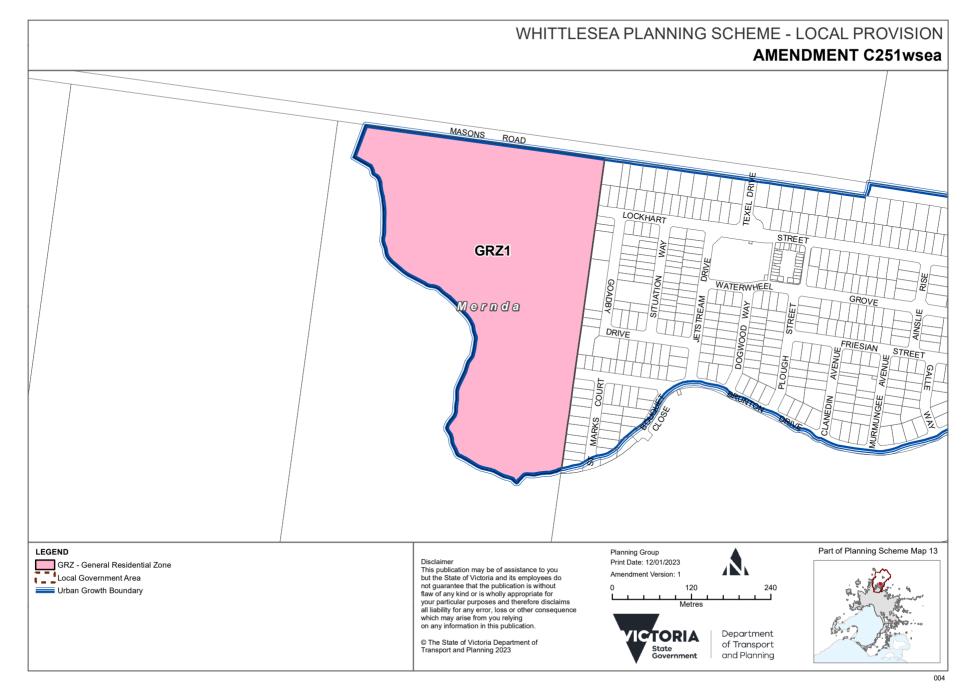
#### Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- directions hearing: Week of 30th October 2023
- panel hearing: 27th November 2023



### Att 5.3.2



#### Planning and Environment Act 1987

#### WHITTLESEA PLANNING SCHEME

#### AMENDMENT C251wsea

#### INSTRUCTION SHEET

The planning authority for this amendment is the City of Whittlesea.

The Whittlesea Planning Scheme is amended as follows:

#### Planning Scheme Maps

The Planning Scheme Maps are amended by a total of ten attached map sheets.

#### Zoning Maps

1. Amend Planning Scheme Map No13 in the manner shown on the attached maps marked "Whittlesea C251wsea 004znMap13 Exhibition" and "Whittlesea C251wsea 009znMap13 Exhibition".

#### **Overlay Maps**

- 2. Amend Planning Scheme Map No 13 in the manner shown on the eight attached maps marked "Whittlesea C251wsea 001d-esoMap13 Exhibition"
  - "Whittlesea C251wsea 002d-esoMap13 Exhibition"
  - "Whittlesea C251wsea 006d-esoMap13 Exhibition"
  - "Whittlesea C251wsea 007d-esoMap13 Exhibition"
  - "Whittlesea C251wsea 003dpoMap13 Exhibition"
  - "Whittlesea C251wsea 008dpoMap13 Exhibition"
  - "Whittlesea C251wsea 005vpoMap13 Exhibition"
  - "Whittlesea C251wsea 010vpoMap13 Exhibition"

End of document

# Attachment 3: Submission and Officer Response Summary Table

Submission	Officer Response
Hanson Quarry and Landfill	
The submitter is concerned the proposal will result in land use conflict threatening the amenity of any future residents of the amendment site and the continued operation and viability of the landfill.	<b>Not supported.</b> The initial EPA advice received by Council measured the site as outside of the EPA's draft buffer distance (1,500m from 500m). This advice did not take into account cells that had been approved by the EPA but were not yet active. As a result of this submission, this matter was further reviewed and the land to be rezoned was found to be within the draft 1,500m buffer distance. The EPA advised an odour assessment would be required to support a reduction of the buffer distance in accordance with their draft guidelines.
The submission quotes the Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan "It is important that urban planning allows adequate buffers and planning controls to protect the amenity surrounding communities and prevent establishing incompatible uses that could impact on the functionality of the site over the long term."	Not supported. It is considered that an adequate buffer is provided between the two uses (1,000m) as supported by the additional information including an 'odour assessment'.
It is noted that the EPA new draft guidelines for landfill buffer to sensitive uses advises a buffer of 1500m. The submitter measures the amendment site as being approximately 1000m from the Works Authority boundary of future landfill cells.	Noted.
It is advised that the EPA appear to have miscalculated the distance between the amendment site and the landfill, having not taken into account future approved cells.	Noted. This issue has been followed up with the EPA which confirmed there are additional cells approved which were not known of at the time of their previous advice. With these new cells, they confirm the distance now falls within the buffer distance.
The submitter finds the amendment does not include anything demonstrating that the sensitive uses proposed will not be subject to risk of harm posed by the	Supported. An assessment of a reduced buffer in respect to potential odour impacts has now been undertaken. The assessment

landfill, or that the above risks can be mitigated and managed or that a reduced buffer is acceptable. The submitter requested the amendment be abandoned.	concludes that a reduced buffer can be provided in this location due to the prevailing wind pattern in the area. EPA have reviewed and support the assessment's recommendation. <b>Not supported.</b> This request is not supported. The amendment is considered to be strategically justified and consistent with overarching strategic documents including the North Growth corridor
Lead petitioner	plan.
The submitter strongly objects to the amendment.	Noted.
The submitter cites noise pollution, increased traffic, and congestion during the development period as reasons for the objection.	Noted, no changes recommended. It is considered that these impacts can be satisfactorily managed through the Development Plan and planning permit processes. Construction noise is managed by noise regulations, noise and site access is also managed by construction management plans which are approved as part of future planning permit applications. The land has been earmarked for residential development and accounted for in the planning for the broader transport network. In respect to the local network, the draft DPO27 schedule (which is proposed to be applied to the site as part of the Amendment) requires a more detailed Transport Strategy to be prepared as part of the Development Plan process. This strategy will include a more detailed assessment on existing traffic conditions and recommendations on how traffic and transport movements from the development will be appropriately managed. The design of development on the rezoned land will need to respond to this and is required to increase connectivity and permeability. The site contains multiple opportunities for connections to be made to distribute traffic within the local road network and it is

	considered that the additional traffic generated will be able to be accommodated within the local road network.
The objection is also based on the loss of natural beauty and tranquillity of the neighbourhood, disruption of local ecosystems and wildlife that reside in the amendment area and increased pressure on local infrastructure due to the increased population.	Noted, no changes recommended. This Amendment aligns with the legislated Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and provides for the protection 35ha of non- urban land through integration into the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. The Parkland has been masterplanned and will provide for passive and active recreation and help protect the landscape and conservation values forever It is considered that the development can be catered by existing and planned local infrastructure. The development will be required to make a contribution to local infrastructure consistent with other developments in the area.
Regarding traffic and congestion, Lockhart St, Brunton Dr, Langdon Dr, Henwood Rise and Masons Rd are noted as overburdened.	Noted, no changes recommended. The land has been earmarked for residential development and accounted for in the planning for the broader transport network. In respect to the local network, the draft DPO27 schedule (which is proposed to be applied to the site as part of the Amendment) requires a more detailed Transport Strategy to be prepared as part of the Development Plan process. This strategy will include a more detailed assessment on existing traffic conditions and recommendations on how traffic and transport movements from the development will be appropriately managed. The design of development on the rezoned land will need to respond to this and is required to increase connectivity and permeability. The site contains multiple opportunities for connections to be made to distribute traffic within the local road network and it is

	considered that the additional traffic generated will be able to be accommodated within the local road network.
The Amendment came as a surprise as the developer of their property advised them the subject sites could never be developed.	Noted, no changes recommended.This is outside the scope of the Amendment considerations.The site referred to by the submitter was brought into theUGB with the same amendment (VC68) as the subject site.
The submission is accompanied by a petition signed by 175 persons from 150 households objecting to the amendment.	The petition is noted.
Resident A	
The submitter objects to the Amendment.	
It is submitted the new residences would be too close to the landfill, providing a measurement of 500m to the landfill.	Not supported. In response to this and other submissions, the matter has been further investigated. The EPA have supported an Odour Risk Assessment performed on the subject site which concludes the buffer distance to the landfill (1,030m and 1,130m, respectively) is appropriate.
It is submitted that the site's current use as farmland has allowed habitats for birds and animals to develop.	Noted, no changes recommended. A Flora and Fauna assessment submitted with the Amendment request found that due to the clearing of the sites for agricultural use, there is little habitat use. However, some common species fauna was observed. Management of the conservation values of the site will be addressed at the Planning Permit stage. The Amendment protects land with landscape and conservation values through incorporation into the Quarry Hills Parkland.
It is submitted the subject sites are within 300m of protected platypus habitat of Darebin Creek.	Noted, no changes recommended. At its closest, the Darebin Creek is over 700m from the subject sites. The Darebin Creek in the neighbouring

	properties will eventually be incorporated into the Quarry Hills Parkland, providing ongoing protection.
The submitter advises they experience the adverse effects of the incinerator at the landfill, advising this would be even worse for residents at the subject sites if the Amendment goes ahead. Adverse effects include the noise from incinerator use, poor air quality due to incinerator emissions and odour. This puts limits on time outdoors and air conditioner use.	<b>Noted, no changes recommended.</b> The Odour Risk assessment has determined that the subject sites will be safe from the odour risk posed by the landfill.
Other impacts from the landfill include the dropping of scavenged items by birds into properties.	<b>Noted, no changes recommended.</b> This is outside the scope of the Amendment considerations.
Disruption is also caused by the increasing truck traffic related to the landfill.	<b>Noted, no changes recommended.</b> Truck movements from the landfill are outside the scope of the Amendment considerations.
As well as objecting to the Amendment the submitter asks for the incinerator use to be stopped and the landfill moved further from dwellings.	Noted, no changes recommended. This is outside the scope of the Amendment. It is noted that the landfill has strategic support to remain in its location including as a state significant waste and resource recovery hub in the Statewide Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Plan. Appropriate buffers have been implemented between the landfill site and nearby residential developments to minimise any potential land use conflict.
Resident B	
The submitter advises they have solar panels, which they are quite reliant on, facing the amendment site and worry about these being blocked.	Noted, no changes recommended. Consideration of the impact of overshadowing on existing solar energy systems is a decision guideline when assessing applications in the General Residential Zone at Clause 32.08- 14 of the Whittlesea Planning Scheme.
The submitter is concerned for the loss of views when the subject site develops.	Noted, no changes recommended.

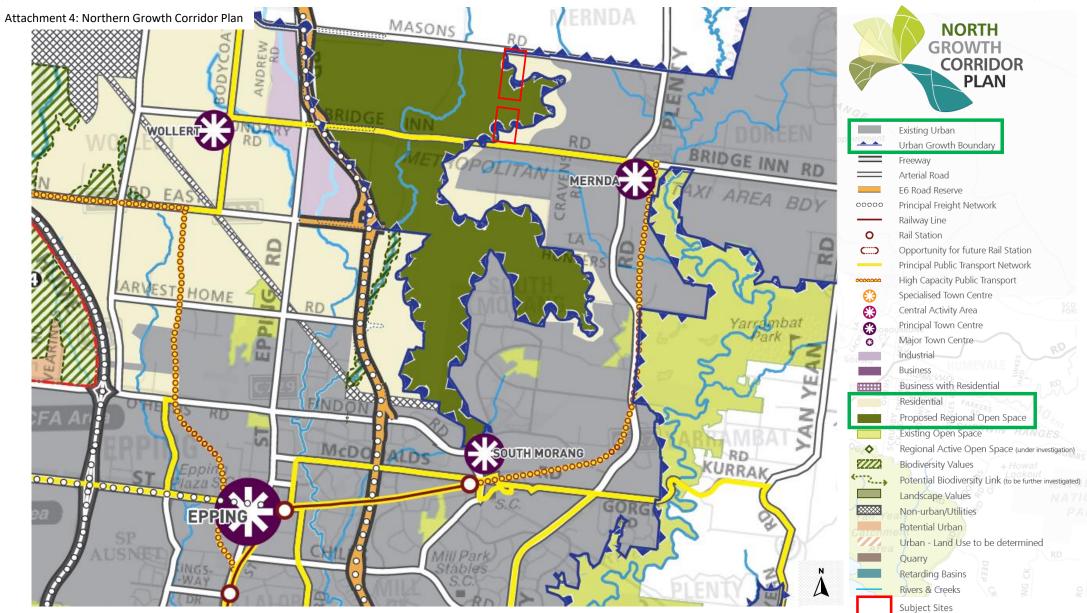
	This is outside the scope of the Amendment. Views from private properties are not a planning consideration. Whilst the Amendment proposed the urbanisation of part of the properties in accordance with existing strategic plans, the landscape values of the Quarry Hills and Darebin Creek will be protected.
It is submitted that Brunton Ave is already overburdened and will not manage additional demand generated by future development.	Noted, no changes recommended. The land has been earmarked for residential development and accounted for in the planning for the broader transport network. In respect to the local network, the draft DPO27 schedule (which is proposed to be applied to the site as part of the Amendment) requires a more detailed Transport Strategy to be prepared as part of the Development Plan process. This strategy will include a more detailed assessment on existing traffic conditions and recommendations on how traffic and transport movements from the development will be appropriately managed. The design of development on the rezoned land will need to respond to this and is required to increase connectivity and permeability. The site contains multiple opportunities for connections to be made to distribute traffic within the local road network and it is considered that the additional traffic generated will be able to be accommodated within the local road network.
It is also submitted that the subject sites will be too close to the landfill and result in negative impacts.	Noted, no changes recommended. In response to this and other submissions, the matter has been further investigated. The EPA have supported an Odour Risk Assessment performed on the subject site which advises the buffer distance to the landfill is appropriate and will protect human health.
Resident C	
The submitter asked for clarity on a number of issues relating to the Amendment.	Clarifications and answers to the queries were provided by officers.

The submitter advised their concern about existing congestion on Brunton	Noted, no changes recommended.
Drive. It is feared this will only get worse with more demand from new	The land has been earmarked for residential development
residents.	and accounted for in the planning for the broader transport
	network. In respect to the local network, the draft DPO27
	schedule (which is proposed to be applied to the site as part
	of the Amendment) requires a more detailed Transport
	Strategy to be prepared as part of the Development Plan
	process. This strategy will include a more detailed assessment
	on existing traffic conditions and recommendations on how
	traffic and transport movements from the development will
	be appropriately managed. The design of development on the
	rezoned land will need to respond to this and is required to
	increase connectivity and permeability. The site contains
	multiple opportunities for connections to be made to
	distribute traffic within the local road network and it is
	considered that the additional traffic generated will be able
	to be accommodated within the local road network.
Also shared is concern for the disruption of construction and associated	Noted, no changes recommended.
negative impacts, such as crime.	This is outside the scope of the Amendment
	considerations. Construction noise is managed by noise
	regulations and construction management plans which are
	approved as part of future planning permit applications. The
	design of the future development will need to consider
	design elements to make it safe for future residents.
David Townshend, Consultant for 390 Masons Road	
Supportive of the amendment.	This is noted
Mat Wilson, Consultant for potential purchaser	
Supportive of the amendment.	This is noted
Jon Michael, Real Estate Agent	
Supportive of the amendment.	This is noted
EPA	

The EPA acknowledge that Council has satisfied itself that the site is not potentially contaminated. No further work is needed on this.	This is noted
It is asked that Council consider land use compatibility with the neighbouring GWZ and agricultural activities and Wollert Landfill.	<b>Noted.</b> The subject sites are currently used for grazing with a direct interface to the existing residential use. This has not produced any issues. The future development of the subject sites would provide for a considered and deliberate interface response between the urban use and agricultural and future parkland use of the neighbouring land.
It is noted this is due to the potential for agriculture and landfill to produce off- site impacts such as noise, dust, and odour.	Noted. The EPA have supported an Odour Risk Assessment performed on the subject site which advises the buffer distance to the landfill is appropriate and will protect human health. The Development Plan is required to produce an interface treatment to the Parklands that ensures compatible use. The Parklands themselves will also provide a buffer to any agricultural uses on the land not yet incorporated into the Parklands.
Regarding the new draft buffer distances and previous advice on measuring distances, the EPA advise that since first providing advice to Council stating the subject sites were outside the proposed extended 1500m buffer distance from the landfill, new information has come to light which alters that advice.	Noted. The Odour Risk Assessment has been undertaken in response to this matter.
The Works Authority issued to Hanson at allows for use of the eastern portion of the site as landfill, which brings the subject site within the 1500m buffer.	This is noted

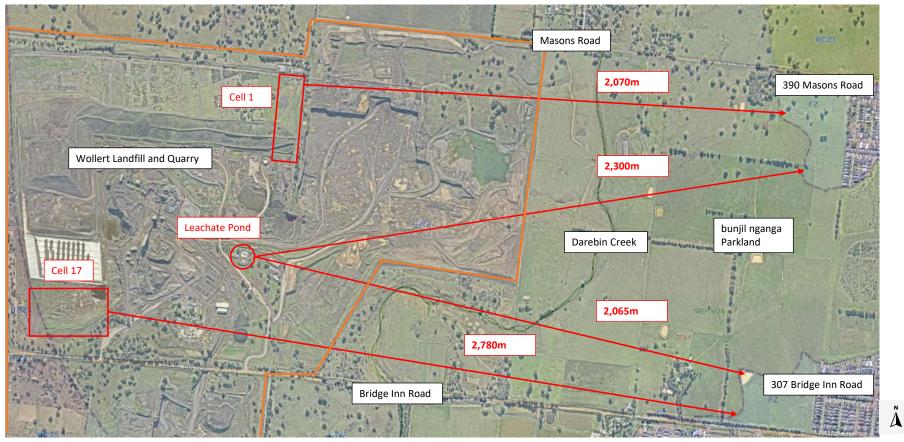
"The proponent (as the agent of change) will need to undertake a risk	Supported.
assessment to demonstrate that a variation to the recommended buffer distance is appropriate in that a reduced buffer would still:	Council Officers requested the proponent produce an odour Assessment evaluating whether a reduced buffer could be supported. This has been completed. The assessment concluded that a reduced buffer is acceptable in this circumstance. The EPA have revied and supported the outcomes of the report.
protect human health and amenity from the effects of pollution and waste associated with an operating landfill; and	
protect landfill operations from inappropriate land use and development nearby that may constrain int operations.	
The Amendment shouldn't progress until this work is undertaken."	<b>Supported.</b> The Amendment was paused while the work was undertaken. Noting that the assessment has been completed, the Amendment can progress.
Regarding noise stemming from Bridge Inn Road, the EPA advise that dwellings should be setback more than 30 metres from the road, consistent with existing development on the opposite side of Bridge Inn Road. If this is not provided for, it is recommended additional sound attenuation measured should be considered within the planning controls.	Noted, no changes recommended. Further information and evidence as to the impacts of noise on dwellings is required to inform any design or sound attenuation response. This is is best addressed as part of the Development Plan stage of development. The proposed DPO27 schedule is a consistent schedule applied to all development properties in the Mernda Western Strip. As such, no changes are proposed to the Amendment documents. It should be noted that development on the opposite side of Bridge Inn Road is set back because of future road widening rather than to manage noise impacts.

### AGENDA - Scheduled Council Meeting 20 August 2024



# Attachment 5: Landfill Buffer Measurements

Figure 1: Initial advice on separation distances (pre-exhibition)





## Figure 2: Updated advice on separation distances (post-exhibition)

Att 5.3.5

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# 5.4 VR Michael Reserve Master Plan

Director/Executive Manager:	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Report Author:	Open Space Planner
In Attendance:	Manager Urban Design & Transport Coordinator Open Space Planning

## **Executive Summary**

- The VR Michael Reserve Master Plan was initiated in response to a petition tabled at the Council meeting on 12 December 2022, requesting an increase to car parking spaces and accessible parking at VR Michael Reserve in Lalor. The Council resolved to:
  - Undertake a park masterplan in the 2023-24 Financial Year for a more comprehensive approach to park planning for existing and future uses.
- The Open Space Planning Team has developed the VR Michael Reserve Master Plan which provides a vision, objectives, recommendations and prioritisation for future development of the park over 10 years.
- Consultation and engagement for the VR Michael Reserve Master Plan have now concluded, and changes have been made to the final document for endorsement. The consultation responses on the draft master plan demonstrate strong community support for the Master Plan.
  - As a result, nine new or amended recommendations have been included to address the community's feedback. These are outlined in the Community Consultation and Engagement section.
- The Master Plan significantly improves accessibility and car park provision in response to the petition. In addition to the recently upgraded lower car park, the master plan further recommends extending the main car park and adding a vehicle drop-off area next to the Bocce Social Club.

The purpose of the report is to:

- Provide an update on the outcomes of the community consultation for draft VR Michael Reserve Master Plan; and
- Seek endorsement of the VR Michael Reserve Master Plan for implementation.



# Officers' Recommendation

# **THAT Council:**

- 1. Endorse the VR Michael Reserve Master Plan;
- 2. Note the draft VR Michael Reserve Master Plan has been revised to reflect the Youth Council and broader community feedback gathered during the phase two consultation undertaken from 22 April to 20 May 2024;
- 3. Note the funding for the implementation of VR Michael Reserve master plan actions will be subject to Capital Works program budget considerations in future years; and
- 4. Thank all submitters to the VR Michael Reserve master plan for their contribution.



# Background / Key Information

# **Overview of Master Plan**

The VR Michael Reserve Master Plan (the Master Plan) guides and provides direction for future upgrades and improvements to VR Michael Reserve.

The Master Plan proposes a variety of facilities in VR Michael Reserve to cater to different age groups, ensuring that everyone from children to the elderly can enjoy the space. These facilities are designed not only to meet the current needs of the community but also to accommodate the future needs of Epping's growing population as the area develops. The range of existing and proposed methods of access to VR Michael Reserve, as outlined in the Epping Central Structure Plan, will facilitate access to VR Michael Reserve for future communities. This thoughtful planning ensures that the park will contribute to the proposed network of open spaces in Epping Central and will continue to be a valuable and well-used resource for years to come.

The Master Plan responds to insufficient car parking (on days of Bocce Club gatherings), safety issues, connectivity and community needs along with recommendations to improve the natural environment.

The master plan will enhance Council's preparedness for advocacy, contributing to better open space and urban design outcomes. This includes addressing challenges such as rail corridor land acquisition and ensuring a balanced approach to open space loss.

As per the Council resolution, a plan to upgrade the existing gravel parking lot located in the southeast of VR Michael Reserve has been completed. The upgrade includes the construction of a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant shared path from the car park to the Lalor Bocce Social Club within the reserve, the extension of the existing footpath along High Street as well as the provision of 24 car parking bays.

### **Context**

VR Michael Reserve (the Reserve) has an area of approximately 7.4 hectares which is generally characterised by open grassed area comprising several facilities including play space, Lalor United Bocce Social Club, basketball court, picnic facilities, public toilet and car parking. The Playground equipment was upgraded in 2018. The site exhibits varied topography, particularly noticeable on the eastern side, with a steep slope between High Street and the Bocce Social Club. It is bounded by High Street to the east, Deveny Street to the north and residential back fences on the west and south.

The Reserve is outlined in the City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy as a Municipal Open Space Reserve in Lalor which is characterised as a predominantly non-sporting reserve.



The Open Space Strategy recommends maintaining the park and providing exercise equipment, more seating and shelters with BBQs.

Geotechnical investigations were completed in 2012, revealing a history that includes basalt quarrying prior to 1960. Subsequently, during the 1960s and 1970s, the area served as a municipal tip, likely operated by the City of Whittlesea. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has confirmed its recognition as a former municipal landfill, operational from 1974 to 1978, spanning 7.5 hectares and accumulating approximately 250,000m<sup>3</sup> of waste.

The Epping Central Structure Plan 2023 outlines a proposed off-road shared path and two options for the alignment of the future Wollert Rail Corridor that passes through the eastern side of the reserve diagonally. Council Advocacy Prospectus 2023-25 advocates for the construction of the rail corridor by 2030, however, the Victorian Government has not yet committed to the timing or funding of this project.

The Reserve was identified as one of the most popular in Lalor and Epping in the community survey undertaken in 2018 for the Whittlesea Open Space Strategy.

Key data for Lalor include:

- 23,587 residents in 2021;
- 46.5% of households are couples with children;
- 32% of households are couples without children;
- 23.4% of population are 60+ years of age;
- 30.2% of population are less than 25 years of age;
- Median age is 37;
- 53% were born overseas;
- 70% speak a language other than English at home;
- 35-39 is the dominant age group forming 7.9% of Lalor's population;
- Italian and Indian are the dominant cultures/groups in Lalor after Australians;
- 6.51% canopy cover (Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy, 2020-2040);
- 24 square meter provision of usable (unencumbered) open space per resident (Open Space Plan, 2016); and
- 19 square meter projected provision of usable open space per resident (projected population 2041).

The Dog off-leash Area Policy & Management Plan 2016-2026 proposes VR Michael Reserve as future dog off-leash area. It is outlined as 'open unstructured' dog off-leash area with an allocation of 1.353ha of 7.07ha reserve.



# The vision of the Draft Master Plan

VR Michael Reserve is an accessible, inclusive and vibrant reserve that offers a variety of informal recreational opportunities for individuals and families, catering to the diverse interests of our community. This reserve is a hub of inclusivity and engagement, where residents can celebrate and share cultural identity and diversity.

# Objectives

- Promote inclusivity and accessibility;
- Enhance recreational opportunities;
- Improve aesthetics and environmental sustainability;
- Provide meaningful and safe play; and
- Activate and enhance spaces and interfaces of the future Wollert Rail Overpass.

The Master Plan sets out recommendations which are articulated through the key themes of Movement and Access, Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure, and Environment and Landscape, to achieve the following outcomes for the community (Refer to Attachment 1 - VR Michael Reserve Master Plan Report).

# **Movement and Access**

<u>Enhanced Accessibility</u>: The realigned and upgraded concrete paths will make the park more accessible to a wider range of community members, including those with mobility challenges.

<u>Improved Parking Convenience</u>: The integrated and upgraded car parks, along with the proposed lighting and a proposed drop-off area adjacent to the Bocce Social Club, will enhance convenience for park users, ensuring a safer and more accessible parking experience.

<u>Welcoming Entrances:</u> Upgraded entrances with wayfinding signage, feature paving, and landscaping will create a more welcoming atmosphere, guiding visitors and enhancing the overall park experience.

<u>Enhanced Accessibility for Bocce Club Users:</u> Upgraded path connections between the central car park and the Bocce Social Club, proposed drop-off area, and DDA-compliant path from the lower car park to the Bocce Social Club, will significantly improve accessibility for Bocce Club members, ensuring a seamless and inclusive experience for all users. This enhancement will promote ease of access and participation in club activities.



# **Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure**

Increased Youth-Oriented Recreational Opportunities: The proposed outdoor gathering spaces featuring a solar-powered shelter/work station, fitness stations, and diverse informal recreational facilities beneath the future rail overpass including multi-use ball court, table tennis tables, skate features and bouldering wall will increase opportunities for social interaction, and physical activity within the reserve for young adults.

<u>Safe and Diverse Play Experiences</u>: The play space enhancements, including relocation to space further-away from roads, and the addition of nature-based areas, will provide a safe and enjoyable environment for children, fostering community engagement.

<u>Improved Park Support Facilities</u>: The addition of park furniture, signage, and regulated dog park areas will improve overall amenities, creating a more comfortable and informative park experience.

<u>Enhanced public toilet</u>: The proposed medium-term action to relocate the public toilets closer to the existing and proposed play space and picnic area, along with the short-term action of upgrading the access path to the existing public toilet, ensures immediate improvements in accessibility but also creates a more inclusive and convenient public toilet experience in the future.

# **Environment and Landscape**

<u>Enhanced Visibility and Safety:</u> The reduction of dense vegetation, improved lighting and activation of the southwest area of the reserve, will enhance visibility, and reduce visual barriers, ensuring a safer environment for park users. Additionally, the proposed bocce court offers passive surveillance opportunities, enhancing public safety for the play space, picnic area, toilet, and exercise station within the vicinity.

<u>Ecological Sustainability</u>: The careful management of vegetation, including planting shade trees and maintaining buffer planting, will contribute to ecological sustainability and create a more environmentally friendly park.

<u>Aesthetic Improvements</u>: Replacing overgrown understory planting with low-maintenance plants and removing dead trees will lead to aesthetic improvements, creating a visually appealing and inviting park.



# 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.

# 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.

Well-planned, accessible open space is proven to have preventative health benefits including opportunities for the community to socially interact and undertake physical activities. The W2040 Liveable Neighbourhoods goal includes an indicator to increase use of open space. Providing additional value in existing open spaces and increased accessibility to these facilities is important to the health of the community.

# Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

# **Financial Management**

The estimated budget required to implement the Master Plan is subject to further design development. The initial high-level costing estimates the total cost of Master Plan implementation at \$4.8m. The inclusion of CPI adjustments over the life of delivery estimates overall implementation to be \$6m.

Most of the improvements will be subject to consideration as projects within Council Capital Works programs including Asset Renewal Program, Playground Renewal Program and Greening Whittlesea.

Of the required \$4.8m of funding, approximately \$1.6m will be funded by existing asset renewal programs. Items requiring additional funding will be referred to Council's annual budget process and external grant opportunities.

The plan also justifies the council's advocacy for the proposed facilities beneath the rail to be funded by the state government as part of the future Wollert rail project. With the estimated current cost for these facilities being approximately \$590,000.

The operational and maintenance estimate to maintain the fully implemented master plan is \$15,866p/a. This figure is in addition to maintaining existing elements proposed to be retained.



# **Community Consultation and Engagement**

Feedback from the community and stakeholders have informed the development of the VR Michael Reserve Master plan. The engagement comprised of two phases:

- a) Phase one, Information Gathering, 26 June to 24 July 2023.
- b) Phase Two, Draft Master Plan Exhibition, 22 April to 20 May 2024.

The second phase of consultation was undertaken between the 22 April 2024 to the 20 May 2024 and involved engaging key stakeholders previously consulted in phase 1 and the broader community through pop-up sessions and on Council's digital engagement platform. The purpose of this engagement was to receive community feedback on the Draft VR Michael Reserve Master Plan and key recommendations, and their preferred priority upgrades to ensure that the future of the reserve reflects our community's needs. Council officers continued engagement with key stakeholders during phase two consultation.

The project engage page received 226 visitors with 85 community members completing the online survey or providing feedback through pop-up sessions.

Council Officers spoke with 67 people across the three community pop-ups and had a separate meeting with the Lalor Bocce Social club committee.

The following stakeholders were invited to participate:

- Residents within 400m;
- Lalor Bocce Social Club committee and members;
- Epping Primary school;
- Peter Lalor Secondary College;
- Lalor Primary School;
- Lalor Secondary College;
- CALD women and girl groups; and
- Youth Council.

There were 54 contributions to the survey with most respondents supportive of the Master Plan and recommendations.

The following masterplan recommendations have been identified as the communities' top four priorities for improvement:

- 1. Proposed lighting along the extended carpark;
- 2. Proposed integrated and upgraded carpark, comprising over 65 car parking spaces;
- 3. Realign and upgrade main paths within the reserve to concrete paths; and
- 4. Relocate the toilet block in proximity to the proposed play space and picnic area.



The consultation responses demonstrate the community supports the Master Plan with the inclusion of the following new or amended recommendations. Below is a summary of the community's comments and changes to the master plan reflecting their feedback:

Community's Comments	Changes to Master Plan
Specify the number of DDA car park spaces	Provide additional DDA parking bays,
that could be allocated from the additional	including two parking bays near the Bocce
proposed car parking spaces;	Social Club and one in the middle of the car
	park
Provide a delivery access path with a	Develop a trolley access path to the Bocce
loading zone and trolley access path to the	Social Club's delivery door with a loading
club delivery door located on the eastern	zone
side of the Bocce Social Club;	
Provide an informal bicycle track/learn to	Develop a graphical bike loop for children
ride loop to be far away from roads;	as part of the proposed path and a short
	learn-to ride loop for younger kids next to
	the nature play area
Additional facilities including more seating	Provide sensor lighting for after dark use
and drinking fountains;	activities including lighting next to the dog
	park entry/exit and next to the sport court
	beneath the rail.
	<ul> <li><u>Note</u>: The public toilet will be closed</li> </ul>
	during evening hours and night time,
	so no lighting is required for this area
	and the access path.
	<ul> <li><u>Note</u>: The proposed development of</li> </ul>
	a City Public Realm Lighting
	Guidelines will guide decision-
	making in this area.
Fence off the proposed open unstructured	Change the proposed unfenced dog off-
dog off-lead area	lead area to a fenced-off area.
	<ul> <li><u>Note</u>: In the medium term, reassess</li> </ul>
	the need for separated spaces for
	larger and smaller dogs, and
	consider if a more structured dog
	park is needed
Inclusion of public art in the reserve	Investigate the provision of integrated
	public art in the reserve and murals on the
	future Wollert rail corridor piles.



Youth Council's Feedback	Changes to Master Plan
Provide youth-targeted areas within the	Council to advocate for the proposed
reserve to include popular Leisure/sports	youth-oriented facilities beneath the rail to
activities for youths such as basketball,	be delivered by the state government as
skateboarding, volleyball, tennis and	part of the future Wollert rail project.
general outdoor exercising using gym	Install a solar-powered shelter/workstation
equipment, additional facilities such as	in the proposed gathering area, providing
playgrounds, modern seating areas, solar-	renewable energy for device charging, Wi-Fi
powered tables for studying outdoors	connectivity and outdoor studying
	opportunities
Safety concerns and request for additional	As mentioned above, the Master Plan has
lighting and security cameras	proposed lighting for evening use activities.
	Regarding safety, the proposed and
	relocated facilities provide passive
	surveillance opportunities across the
	reserve. While the ability to propose
	activities on the eastern interface is limited
	due to the topography and steepness of the
	site, the proposed shared path from High
	Street and the new entry from the corner
	of High Street and Deveny Road will
	activate this interface and provide
	additional passive surveillance
	opportunities.
	<ul> <li><u>Note:</u> Council does not have an</li> </ul>
	established CCTV program for the
	implementation of CCTV in public
	open space, which is paramount in
	ensuring privacy of park users.

The successful implementation of the actions/recommendations outlined in the master plan is contingent upon securing adequate funding and alignment with the priorities of Council's capital works program. In the event of sufficient budgetary allocation, it is anticipated that these actions could commence as early as the next financial year (2025-2026). Refer to financial implications for more information.

# Other Principles for Consideration

# **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

(b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.



- (c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
- (d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

# **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.

# **Council Policy Considerations**

# **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

The VR Michael Reserve Master Plan will contribute to a healthier and more sustainable environment through increased tree canopy cover, biodiversity, and sustainable infrastructure including integrated water management in the car park, passive irrigation of the native pollinator garden and new infrastructure.

# Social, Cultural and Health

The VR Michael Reserve Master Plan will provide opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and relaxation. It can foster a sense of community and provide spaces for residents to come together, leading to improved social cohesion.

# Economic

Upgrade of existing facilities in VR Michael Reserve and activating underutilised spaces will attract more people to the local area, enhance passive surveillance, improve perception of safety of the precinct, boost property values, and provide a positive impact on local economy contributing to economic growth.

# Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

# Implementation Strategy

# Communication

Two phases of the consultation were undertaken as follows:

- 26 June to 24 July 2023: Community Engagement Phase one (Information Gathering).
- 22 April to 20 May 2024: Community Engagement Phase Two (Draft Master Plan Exhibition).

# **Critical Dates**

Late August 2024: Closing the loop and providing update to the community with the final Master Plan.



# 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. VR Michael Reserve Master Plan Report [5.4.1 - 34 pages]



# Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

A

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.



Version	Date	Issue
V1	17/07/2024	Draft Master Plan Report for ELT Briefing
V2	06/08/2024	Draft Master Plan Report for Council Briefing
V3	20/08/2024	Final Master Plan Report for Council Meeting

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# Introduction.

2 | VR Michael Reserve | OPEN SPACE PLANNING CITY OF WHITTLESEA

The reserve has an area of approx. 7.4 hectares which is generally characterised by open grass area comprising several facilities including play space, Lalor United Bocce Social Club, basketball court, picnic facilities, public toilet and car parking. The Playground equipment was upgraded in 2018.

VR Michael Reserve was identified as one of the most popular open spaces in Lalor and Epping in the community survey undertaken in 2018 for the Whittlesea Open Space Strategy.

# **1.0 Introduction**

# 1.1 Overview

VR Michael Reserve is situated in Lalor which extends from Merri Creek in the west to Darebin Creek in the east and is relatively central in the established areas.

Lalor adjoins Thomastown to the south and Epping to the north. The Hume Freeway, Edgars Road, High Street, Dalton Road and Mernda Railway corridor present barriers to safe walking access to open space within the suburb.

The forecasted residential population change in Lalor is a 9 percent increase of approximately 3,861 people by 2026.

67 percent of the forecasted additional dwellings will be located in the Carlingford and Mosaic Living Development Plan area west of Edgars Road.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census data 2021 provided information on the demographics, cultural and language diversity of Lalor.



# POPULATION

23,587 residents in 2021

Population density 3,143 persons per square km

+ 4000 more residents by 2041

23.4% of population are 60+ years of age

30.2% of population are less than 25 years of age

Median age is 37

(The Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (ABS) 2021)



# **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

53% were born overseas

70% speak a language other than English at home

Italian and Indian are the dominant cultures/groups in Lalor after Australians

(The Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (ABS) 2021)



# **URBAN HEAT**

5-10°C hotter above the non-urban baseline

(Cooling and greening Melbourne, Urban Heat Data 2018)





with children

32% of households are couples without children

19.3% are one parent family

(The Australian Bureau of Statistics census data (ABS) 2021)

46.5% of households are couples



24 square meters provision of usable (unencumbered) open space per resident (Open Space Strategy, 2016)

19 square meters projected provision of usable open space per resident (2041)

Recommended minimum open space provision is 20-25 sqm per resident

6.51% canopy cover

(Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy 2020-2040)

# **VR MICHAEL RESERVE**

VR Michael Reserve is one of the City of Whittlesea's open space reserves in Lalor, an established area of the municipality.

The Reserve was developed in the 1950s and is a predominantly non-sporting reserve, located on the south east corner of Deveny Road & High Street in Lalor. It has an extensive connected path system, open grassed areas and play facilities and occupies an area of 7.07 hectares.

The Open Space Strategy 2016 identifies the reserve as a municipal open space which is characterised as a larger predominantly non-sporting reserve which has an extensive connected path system, open grassed areas and play facilities.

The Reserve was identified as one of the most popular in Lalor and Epping in the community survey undertaken in 2018 for the Whittlesea Open Space Strategy. In terms of hierarchy, it is identified as a municipal open space with 500m walking catchment. The open Space strategy recommends maintaining the park and providing exercise equipment, more seating and shelters with BBQs.

Additionally, VR Michael Reserve is proposed as future dog off-leash area in the Dog off-leash Area Policy & Management Plan. it is outlined as 'open unstructured' dog off-leash area with an allocation of 1.353 ha of 7.07ha reserve.

### **HISTORY OF VR MICHAEL RESERVE**

Vic Michael was a past councillor, Shire President, and Mayor.

- Shire of Whittlesea Councillor from: 1954-1988
- ▶ Shire President 1958-1960, 1971-72, 1979-80, 1987-1988
- First Mayor as the City of Whittlesea 1988
- City of Whittlesea Councillor 1988-90

Mr Michael was an early resident of Lalor moving in 1951. He represented the growing urban areas of the municipality at a time when the Council was dominated by rural interests.

He received an MBE (Member of the British Empire) for services to the Lalor Community. The Great Hall, City of Whittlesea is also named after Vic Michael.

# **1.2 Purpose of Master Plan**

As per the Open Space Strategy, Master Plans are recommended to be prepared when major works are required for State, Regional and Neighbourhood open spaces which have a broader catchment of users and frequently a range of community stakeholder groups such as community organisations and sporting clubs.

This project is raised as a council resolution in relation to matters raised in a petition requesting an increase to the number of parking spaces and accessible parking at VR Michael Reserve in Lalor.

The petition was tabled at the Council meeting on 19 September 2022; Council resolved to note the petition from 99 signatories (60 residents and 39 non-residents) requesting Council increase the parking spaces and accessible parking spaces for elderly citizens at VR Michael Reserve. The Council resolution was to "Undertake a park master plan in the 2023/24 Financial Year for a more comprehensive approach to park planning for existing and future uses".

The purpose of this Landscape Master Plan is to guide the future development and management of VR Michael Reserve.

The master plan endeavours to:

- Create a safe and inclusive, highly accessible reserve that supports and encourages use by people of all ages and abilities;
- Promote environmental sustainability through ecological conservation and improvement, increased tree canopy cover and water sensitive urban design;
- ► Improve community safety through a well-considered functional layout as well as adherence to CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Urban Design) principles and applying gender-sensitive lens;
- ▶ Inform future capital works, as stand-alone projects, or staged with a logically cumulative sequencing;
- Recommend necessary improvements to the reserve to achieve a high-quality landscape setting while protecting and enhancing its existing character.

The Australian Urban Observatory (AUO) in 2021 provided information on the liveability criteria for Lalor, as follows:

# $\heartsuit$ **LIVEABILITY 98.6**

The Liveability Index is a composite indicator was calculated based 13 domains: Community Centres, Culture and Leisure, Early Years, Education, Health and Social Services, Sport and Recreation, Food, Convenience, Walkability, Public Transport, Public Open Space, Housing Affordability, and Local Employment.

(100 is average)

# **SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE 98.6**

Social infrastructure refers to community and individual support services and resources such as health, education, early childhood, community support, community development, culture, sport and recreation, parks and emergency services. (/15)



# LARGE PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WITHIN 400M 39.8

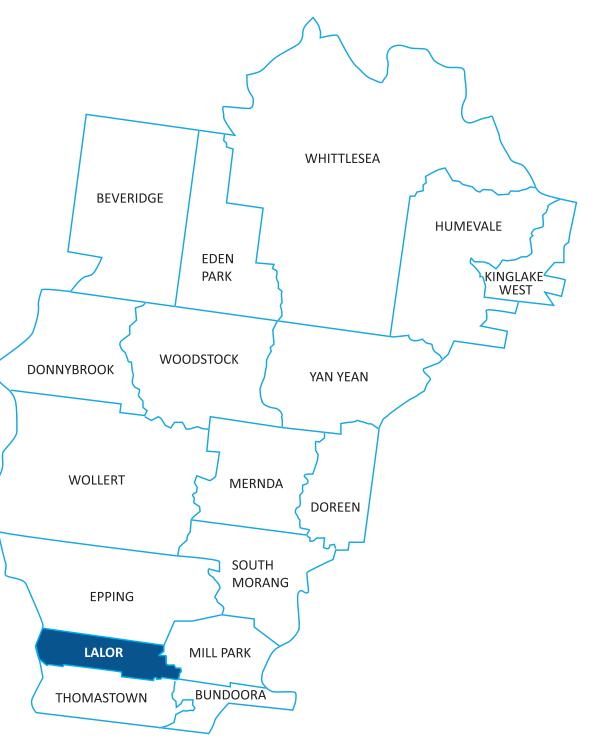
Percentage of dwellings within 400m of public open space larger than 1.5 hectares.

(%)



Walkability for transport is calculated based on three key factors: land use mix and services of daily living (something to walk to); street connectivity (a way to get there); and dwelling density (higher population densities are associated with increased populations needed to supply services and different land uses).

(0 is average)



# **\$**] ال **HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRESS 28.1**

The Liveability Index is a composite indicator was calculated percentage of households in the bottom 40% of incomes spending more than 30% of income on housing costs.

(%)



# **REGULAR PUBLIC ACCESS 48.9**

Percentage of dwellings within 400m of public transport with regular 30 minute weekday service (7am-7pm).

(%)

Source: The Australian Urban observatory (AUO), 2021

01. IMAGE Site Location

<sup>4 |</sup> VR Michael Reserve | OPEN SPACE PLANNING CITY OF WHITTLESEA

CITY OF WHITTLESEA OPEN SPACE PLANNING | VR Michael Reserve | 5



Open Space & Public Realm Opportunities Identified by Epping Central Structure Plan



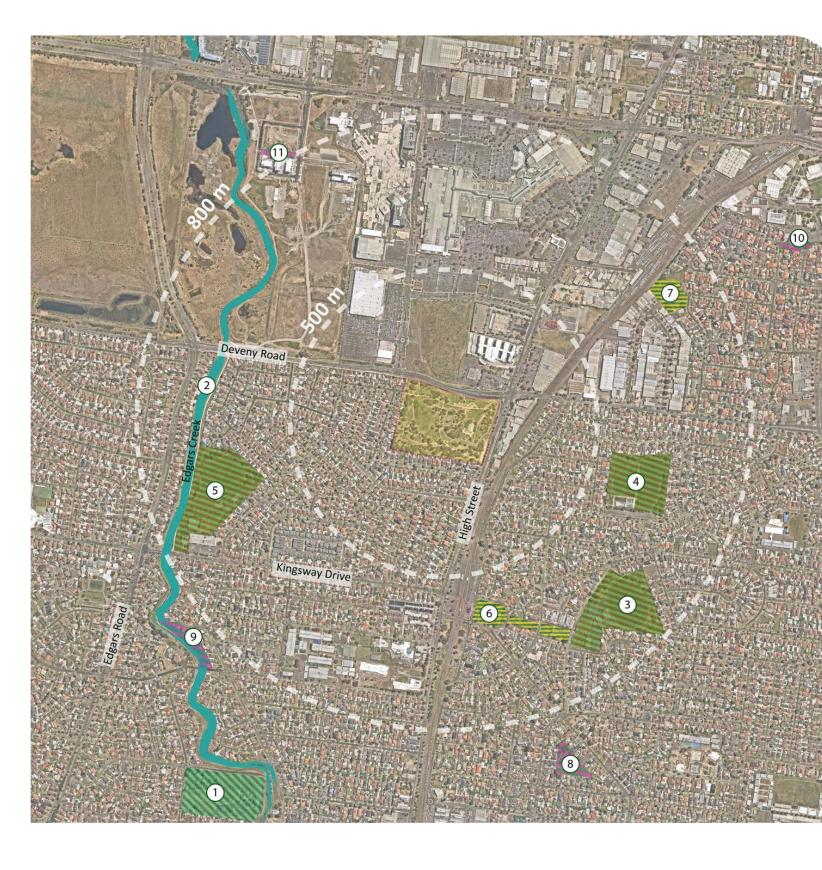
### 02. IMAGE Context Plan

6 | VR Michael Reserve | OPEN SPACE PLANNING CITY OF WHITTLESEA

# LEGEND

CO	NTEXT PLAN
	Site Boundary
	Open Space (Recreation)
	Lalor Recreation Reserve
2	Partridge Street Reserve
3	Stockade Park
4	Huskisson Recreation Reserve
5	Ziebells Farmhouse & Lutheran Church Land
6	Supply Park
	Education & Health
1	Lalor North Primary School
2	High Street early Learning & kinder
3	Outer Northern trade Training Centre
4	Merriang Special Development School
5	Peter Lalor Secondary College
6	Northern School for Autism
7	St Catherine's Primary School
8	Lalor Gardens Primary School
9	St Lukes Primary School
10	Vasey Park Preschool
11	Lalor Primary School
12	Lalor Secondary College
13	Northern Hospital Epping
	Community Facilities
1	Mill Park Soccer Club
2	Medical diagnostic imaging center
3	Wedding venue
4	Aged Care Service
5	Bocce Social Club
6	Rochdale Medical Centre
7	Links Community Garden
8	Lalor Community Garden
	Commercial Facilities
1	Fast food restaurant
2	Costco Wholesale
3	Pacific Shopping Mall
4	Rochdale Square Shops

Industrial



# LEGEND

# **OPEN SPACE HIERARCHY**

## State

- 1 Ziebells farmhouse
- & Lutheran Church Land
- 2 Edgars Creek Corridor

# Municipal

- 3 Lalor Recreation Reserve
- Partridge Street Reserve
- 5 Huskisson Recreation Reserve

# Neighbourhood

- 6 Stockade Park
- 7 Supply Park

# Local

- 8 Vasey Avenue Park
- (9) Kalara Close Park
- (10) Monica Court Park
- (11) woorike jellicka

# Site Boundary

03. IMAGE Open Space Hierarchy



# **1.3 Project Method**

The development of the Master Plan has involved a comprehensive review of background documents as well as extensive engagement with the community and consultation with key external and internal stakeholders.

Informed by consultation and site understanding, key recommendations were developed for the overall site.

In preparing this report, our team initially conducted background research and reviews of existing documents, as summarised below, as well as analysis of the study area, to build our understanding of the context. Our analysis focused on the study area's existing conditions, current issues and challenges and opportunities to improve the site.

Our background analysis and site understanding were expanded by a visit to the study area. The project process then focused on the Stakeholder/Community Engagement process, which sought inputs from nearby residents, traders of adjoining shops, Lalor United Bocce Social Club members, general users of the reserve and internal stakeholders.

The purpose of these engagement activities was to gain greater knowledge about the issues, opportunities and priorities for VR Michael Reserve, to form a more detailed 'brief' for the planning work going forward in the project, and to provide the foundations for developing a Vision for the VR Michael Reserve. The Stakeholder Engagement Findings Report can be found in Appendix 2.

In the next stage, the project process focuses on the development of the concept plan for the site. Then, the project process focuses on the second phase of the community engagement to have community feedback on the draft master plan.

The diagram illustrates the steps for the project.

# BACKGROUND REVIEW AND SITE ANALYSIS

• Background review of relevant plans, policies and strategies and how they influence the master plan

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (INFORMATION GATHERING)

- Meetings with key internal and external stakeholders
- Online survey through the project engage page
- On site pop up consultation

- SITE ANALYSIS
- Detailed site analysis of physical conditions to identify issues, opportunities, challenges and constraints

# DRAFT MASTER PLAN

- Vision and objectives
- Master plan recommendations
- Workshop concept design with PWG, PCG and key stakeholders
  Concept design

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (MASTER PLAN EXHIBITION)

- On site public exhibition
- Online exhibitionDistribution to key stakeholders (internal and external)

### FINAL MASTER PLAN

• Final update to Master Plan to reflect community feedback

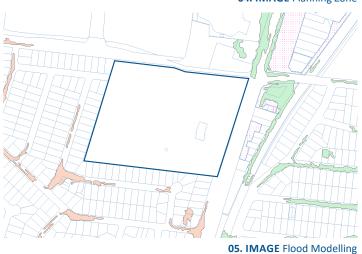
# COUNCIL ADOPTION OF PLAN

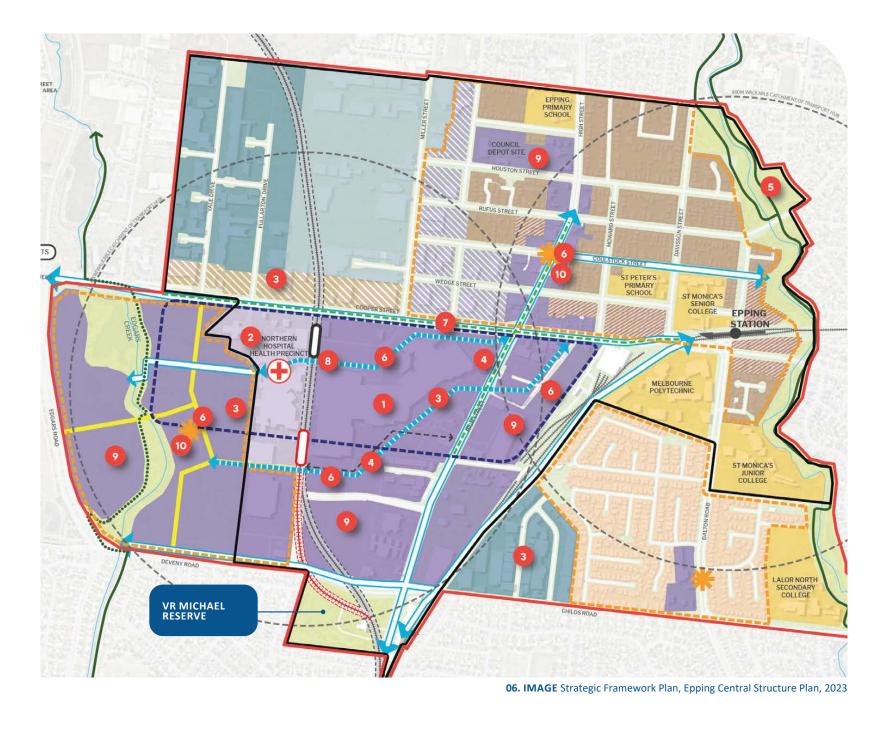
# **1.4 Planning Controls**

VR Michael Reserve is located within a Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ), next to an Activity Centre Zone (ACZ1), State Transport Infrastructure Zone (TRZ1), General Residential Zone – Schedule 4 (GRZ4) and Public Use Zone – Service & Utility (PUZ1), as presented in Figure 04.

The Lalor Bocce Social Club within VR Michael Reserve (shown in blue) is Council owned land that has been leased out. According to the flood modelling, this area is not in a floodplain zone, as **Figure** 05.







# LEGEND

# **EPPING STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN**

Potential Wollert Rail Corridor

Proposed Alternative Rail Alignment

Future Train Station Interchange Potential Alternate Train Station

# Background.

10 | VR Michael Reserve | OPEN SPACE PLANNING CITY OF WHITTLESEA

# Whittlesea 2040 - A Place For All

To be ready for the challenges and opportunities that the future will bring, ensuring that the City of Whittlesea is a great place to live now and in the future.

# Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy

More than ever, our public spaces and infrastructure need to perform even more roles to meet the needs of all of our community. For example, our local parks need to cater to all ages and abilities – and even dogs!

# Connected Community Strategy

Improve 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.

# The Dog off-leash Area Policy & Management Plan 2106-2026

Proposes VR Michael Reserve as future dog off-leash area. It is outlined as 'open unstructured' dog off-leash area with an allocation of 1.353 ha of 7.07ha reserve.

# The Epping Central Structure Plan 2023

Outlines a proposed off-road shared path and two options for the alignment of the future Wollert Rail Corridor that passes through VR Michael Reserve.

The Plan also identifies going through the reserve. Council Advocacy Prospectus 2023-25 suggests the construction of the rail corridor for 2030, as **Figure 06**.

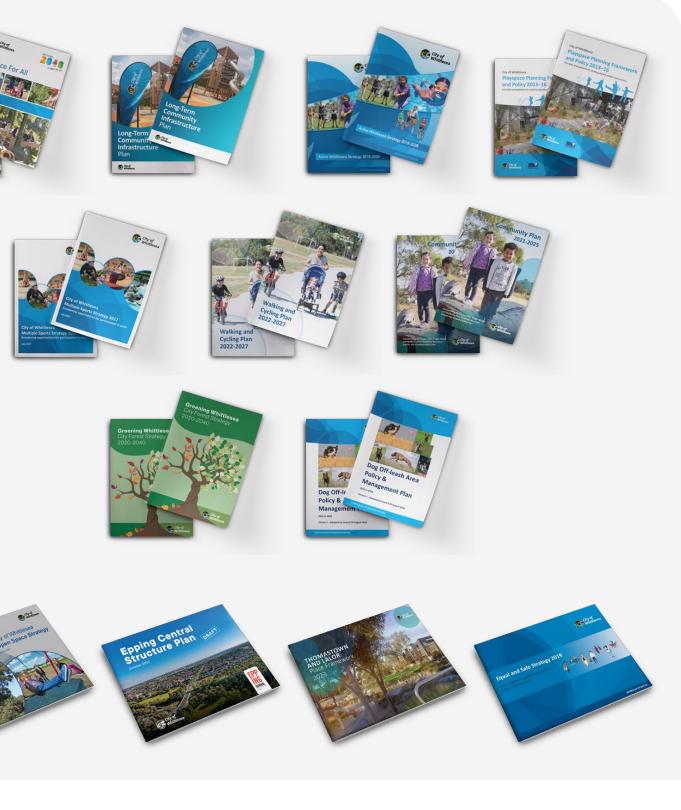
# **2.0 Council Strategies** and Plans

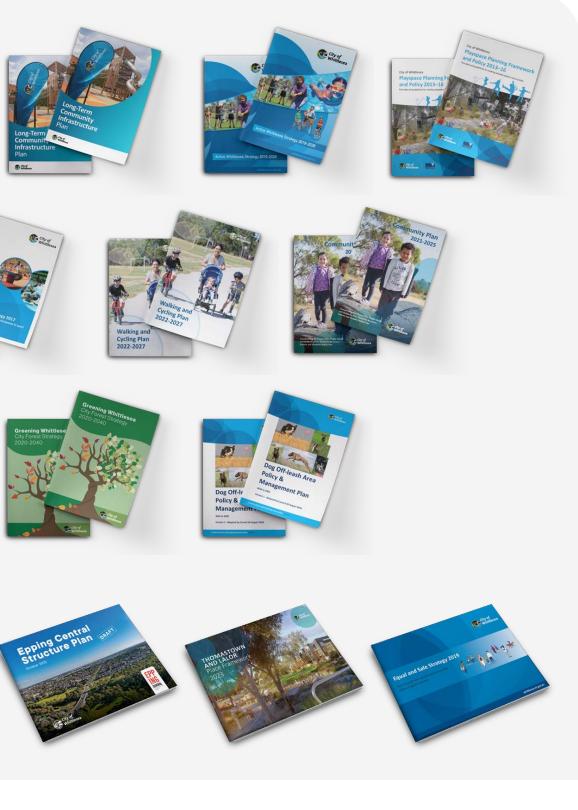
Several existing strategic planning documents, policies and strategies have influenced the VR Michael Reserve Master Plan. A review and summary of each including key directions relevant to the Reserve is included in Appendix 1.

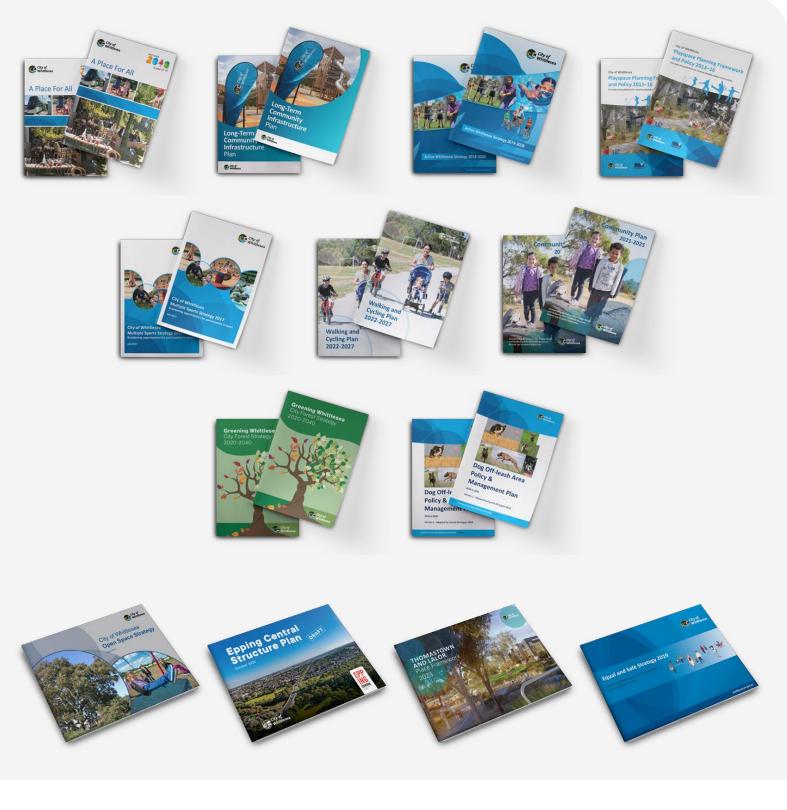
The documents reviewed are as follows:

- Whittlesea 2040 A place for all
- Whittlesea Open Space Strategy 2016
- Thomastown and Lalor Place Framework 2023
- Long-Term community Infrastructure Plan
- Epping Central Structure Plan 2023
- Dog Off-Leash Area Policy and Management Plan 2016–2026
- ▶ Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027
- Active Whittlesea Strategy 2019-2028
- Community Plan 2021-2025
- Sport and Leisure Infrastructure Plan 2021-2041 (Draft)
- Multiple Sports Strategy 2017-2026
- Play Space Planning Framework and Policy 2013-16
- Thriving Children, Young People and Families Strategy
- Spaces 8 to 12+: Creating Engaging Places for Young People 2013-2018
- Greening Whittlesea
- Equal and Safe Strategy 2019
- Your Ground Project 2021
- Signage Management Plan
- Disability Action Plan 2017-2021
- Natural and Built Shade Policy 2016
- Park Lighting Strategy 2006
- ► Lighting for Shared User Paths (SUPs) Guiding Principles, City of Whittlesea - Arup 2022









# Site Analysis.

12 | VR Michael Reserve | OPEN SPACE PLANNING CITY OF WHITTLESEA

The site has undergone geotechnical investigations, revealing a history that includes quarrying for basalt prior to 1960.

Subsequently, during the 1960s and 1970s, the area served as a municipal tip, likely operated by the City of Whittlesea. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has confirmed its recognition as a former municipal landfill, operational from 1974 to 1978, spanning 7.5 hectares and accumulating approximately 250,000m3 of waste.

# 3.0 Site Existing Conditions & Analysis

# 3.1 Site Conditions

This section of the plan provides a summarised of existing conditions categorised into the following themes:

- Movement & Access
- Recreation and Park Infrastructure
- Environment & Landscape

VR Michael Reserve is identified in the City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy as a Municipal Open Space Reserve with a 500m walking catchment in Lalor which is about 10-15 minute walk, however this catchment is limited by Deveny Road and High Street on the north and east side of the site. Refer to **Figures 07** and **08**.

The site exhibits varied topography, particularly noticeable on the eastern side, with an approximate elevation difference of 3-4 meters between High Street and the area near the Lalor Bocce Social Club.



# LEGEND

# WALKING CATCHMENT

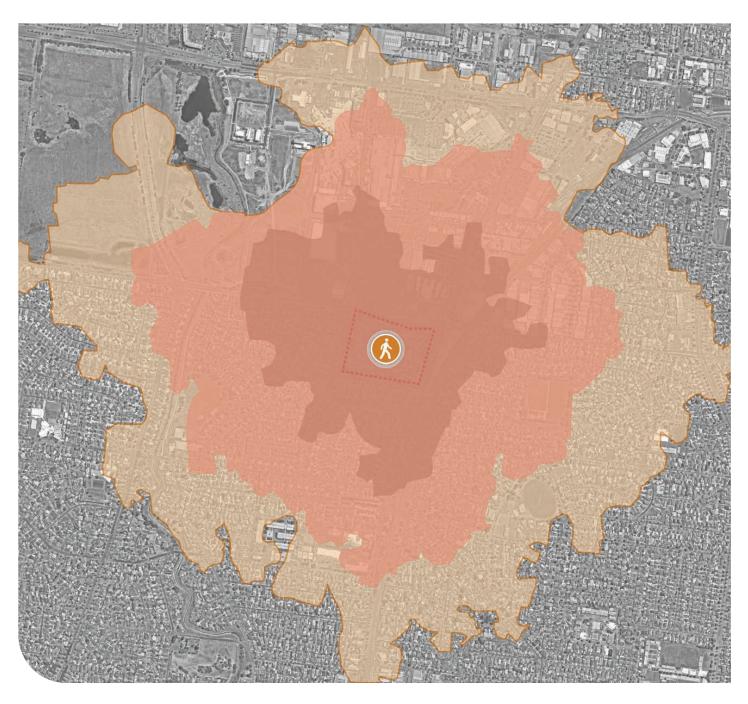
Site Boundary [\_] 500m Walking Catchment





- 555 Bus Route and Bus Stops - 554 & 557 Bus Route and Bus Stops

07. IMAGE Walking Catchment



# LEGEND

# PEDESTRIAN SHED







**08. IMAGE** Pedestrian Shed (Source: TravelTime - https://app.traveltime.com/)

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# 3.1.1 Movement & Access

Access to the study site is exceptionally versatile, offering the community a range of convenient methods. Public transport is a key player in accessibility, with two nearby bus stations situated at the High Street and Deveny Road intersection, providing efficient and wellconnected services. The Lalor Station, serving the Mernda rail corridor, is within a 10-minute walk from the reserve, enhancing the public transportation options.

In terms of active transport, the community can utilise the on-road cycle lanes along High Street and Deveny Road. Pedestrians can also benefit from clearly defined pathways to the reserve, including shared-use paths along both High Street and Deveny Road. These paths will connect to VR Michael Reserve as outlined in the reserve master plan recommendations. Additionally, existing signalised pedestrian crossings at High Street and Deveny Road intersection, and on Deveny Road near Costco, will further facilitate access.

The reserve is within a 15-minute walk from the Edgars Creek Corridor Shared User Path, which provides additional active transport option for pedestrian to reach VR Michael Reserve.

The range of existing and proposed methods of access, as outlined in the Epping Central Structure Plan, will facilitate access to VR Michael Reserve for Epping's growing population. Refer to Figure 10. These include:

- A proposed train station serving the future Wollert Rail Corridor, located next to Epping Northern Hospital
- A proposed Edgars Creek shared trail that will connect to the existing trail along the Edgars Creek corridor
- A proposed on-road bike lane connecting Cooper Street and Deveny Road
- A proposed shared path along the future Wollert Rail corridor

# PATH NETWORK

The study area has relatively good walking facilities in place, with footpaths provided along Deveny Road and High Street.

There is a combination of formalised and unformalised footpaths in the Reserve which provides a loop walking path around the reserve from the reserve entrances in the surrounding streets.

A few locations in the study area have been identified to be lacking in pedestrian connection and footpaths. These are along High Street near the lower car parking area, along the vehicle access road into the reserve from High Street and the pedestrian-desire line from the bus stop on High Street into the reserve. The missing shared path along High Street was develop as part of the VR Michael Reserve car park project in July 2024.

The main entrance from High Street requires an upgrade to its physical features (i.e. paving/planting) as well as reconfiguring to improve sight lines and highlight the entry.

# **CAR PARKING**

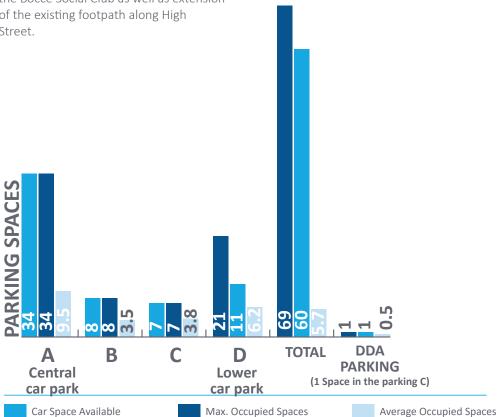
Car parking for VR Michael Reserve is provided within the reserve in four areas, including:

- 7 car parking spaces in front of the existing Bocce Social Club, including one DDA compliant parking bay
- 8 car parking spaces near the existing public toilet
- 34 car parking spaces in the central car park
- A lower car parking on the southeast side of the reserve with granitic sand.

The lower car park car was upgraded in July 2024, providing 24 car park spaces, a DDA compliant path from the car park to the Bocce Social Club as well as extension of the existing footpath along High Street.

The Council's Traffic and Transport Team undertook onsite investigation from 18 to 25 October 2022. The findings from the investigation indicate that the current parking demands in the reserve is high on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Refer to Figure 09.

There are 49 on-site parking spaces in total, which according to a recent traffic assessment, with 400 Bocce club members and a capacity of roughly 190 members, there are not enough car park spaces to meet the demands of the club or park users.



Investigations indicate the parking area closest to the Lalor Bocce Social Club (parking area C) is the most accessible car park to the club and the most utilised. Whereas, the lower car park which is the least accessible due to the gradient, lack footpath, and informal surface, is the least occupied.

# PARK ENTRANCES

The main entry to the Reserve is from High Street, with two pedestrian entries from Deveny Road and one from Bellarine Drive.

The Reserve is surrounded on two sides by residential properties, with back fences facing the Reserve.

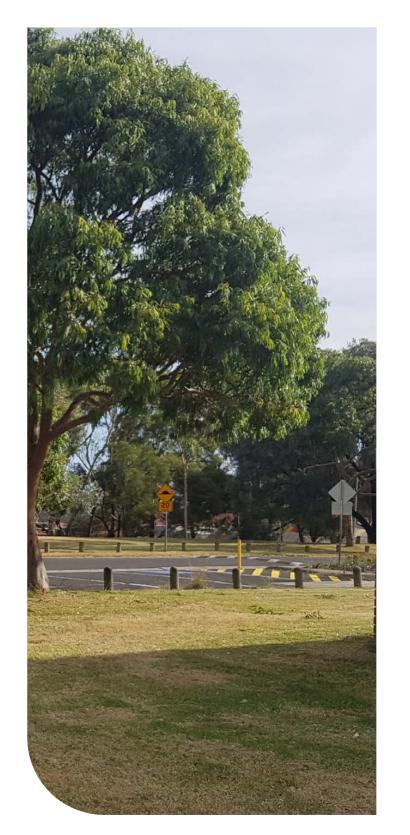




10. IMAGE Pedestrian & Bicycle Transport Movement Plan, Epping Central Structure Plan, 2023

	LEFTING CLINTKAL STRUCTURE
	PLAN BOUNDARY
(HHH)	PROPOSED WOLLERT RAIL LINE
0	FUTURE TRAIN STATION INTERCHANC
<b>•····</b>	PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY MOVEMENT
	CORRIDOR (INDICATIVE ALIGNMENT)
$\leftrightarrow$	PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN LINK
K3	POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN LINK
$\leftrightarrow$	EXISTING ON-ROAD BIKE LANE
$\leftrightarrow$	EXISTING OFF-ROAD SHARED PATH
$\leftrightarrow$	EXISTING OPEN SPACE TRAIL
····>	PROPOSED ON-ROAD BIKE LANE
····>	PROPOSED OFF-ROAD SHARED PATH
·····	PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL
all the	PRIORITY ROAD REDEVELOPMENT ZONE
•	END OF TRIP CYCLE FACILITIES

**09. IMAGE** Car Park Survey



# **3.1.2 Informal Recreation and Park**

# INFRASTRUCTURE

The site currently contains the following facilities:

- Bocce social club
- Toilets
- Playground
- Picnic facilities
- Two shelters
- Half basketball court
- Car parks
- Walking tracks

VR Michael Reserve currently includes an average provision of community infrastructure and social amenities, which are generally well used, however these facilities would benefit from rationalisation and upgrading where appropriate. In terms of park furniture, there is a need for more drink fountains, particularly one with a dog bowl.

# PLAYSPACE

The playspace includes a slide, climbing ropes and a sliding pole. There are swings, wobble boards, trampolines and a rock climbing wall. Playground equipment was upgraded in 2018.

The operating hours are Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 4 pm; the busiest days are Tuesdays and Saturdays. On busy days the club has recorded an attendance of 190 people. According to the Club president, the club has 400 members, and the majority of the members are senior citizens with mobility issues.

The toilet facility requires a complete upgrade or replacement to bring it up to today's standard.

# **3.1.3 Environment & Landscape**

VR Michael Reserve's landscape character is fairly consistent throughout the reserve and is characterised by extensive and mature native vegetation. There are over 660 individual trees within VR Michael Reserve, a mixture of 273 Australian, 374 Victorian and 41 exotic species. Of those, thirty-five (35) Eucalyptus (Eucalyptus sp.) were at the end of their useful life expectancy

The canopy cover of trees with more than 3m height at VR Michael Reserve is 2025 sqm which is approx. 29.27% of the study area.

The following pages provide images of a summarised analysis of existing conditions. Refer to Figure 12.

# **RECREATION & COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

The main sporting/recreation facility present at the reserve is the Bocce rink. Other provisions for sport in the reserve is basketball half court. Less formal provision includes the open grass area central to the reserve which currently has no goals.

The Lalor United Bocce and Social Club (the Club), established in 1996, is a non-profit organisation providing social, cultural, recreational, and welfare support to all members of the Maltese Community in the State of Victoria. Located in VR Michael Reserve, the Club provides activities and services such as Bocce and billiards competitions, line dancing, bingo, Maltese language classes, Maltese festivals and social events all year round.



# LEGEND

# **CANOPY COVER**

Site Boundary

Canopy cover (>3m height)

(Source: Nearmap)

11. IMAGE Canopy Cover



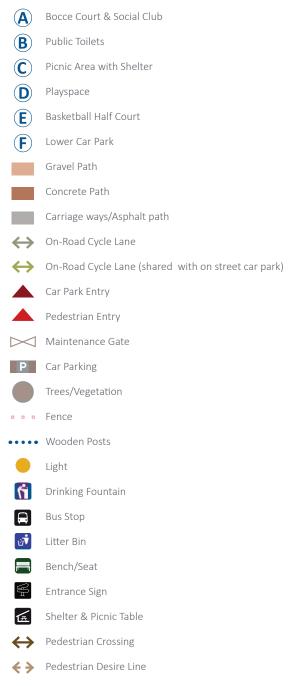
### 12. IMAGE Site Feature

 $\bigcirc^{\mathbb{N}}$ 

18 | VR Michael Reserve | OPEN SPACE PLANNING CITY OF WHITTLESEA

# LEGEND

# SITE FEATURE







**B** Basketball Half Court and Playspace



(C) Shelters and BBQ Facilities







(K) Playspace









J ) Western Slide



I ) Circuit Path



(H) Lower Car Park





13. IMAGE Existing Facilities

# 3.2 Site Analysis

This section of the plan provides a summarised analysis of existing conditions. The purpose of the analysis is to provide commentary on issues and deficiencies identified by the project team ensuring recommendations to mitigate the issues can be constructed logically.

The analysis covers findings categorised into the following themes:

- Movement & Access
- Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure
- Environment & Landscape

# 3.2.1 Movement and Access

## **KEY ISSUES**

### PATH

- Pathways within the reserve are predominantly compacted gravel around the open grassed area with varying widths. These informal footpaths meet minimum Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements, however, can be increasingly expensive to maintain and do not meet the needs of people with limited mobility
- > Pathways within the reserve are inconsistent in surface treatment e.g. Concrete to gravel connection Pathway areas are subject to water logging in wet weather
- ► No DDA access path to the public toilet
- Lack of continuous footpath along High Street
- ▶ Lack of pedestrian access/entry from the bus station and traffic light on High street to the reserve
- Lack of connection/pedestrian path from the parking to the playspace and picnic area
- Lack of connection from the existing path to the second shelter
- ► No footpath connecting the main entrance from High Street to the reserve
- A narrow path from the central car park to the rear side of the club with no connection to the main entrance of the club
- Poor access path (no DDA compliance path) from the lower car parking to the Bocce Social Club

### CAR PARKING

- Lack of lighting in the central car park
- ▶ No Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) initiatives associated with car parks or buildings at the site
- Disconnected car parks throughout the reserve
- Insufficient peak-use car parking

### ENTRANCE

- Inconsistent and poor wayfinding signage at reserve entrances
- ► Lack of pedestrian safe crossing facilities, particularly from High Street to the main entrance of the reserve

# **KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

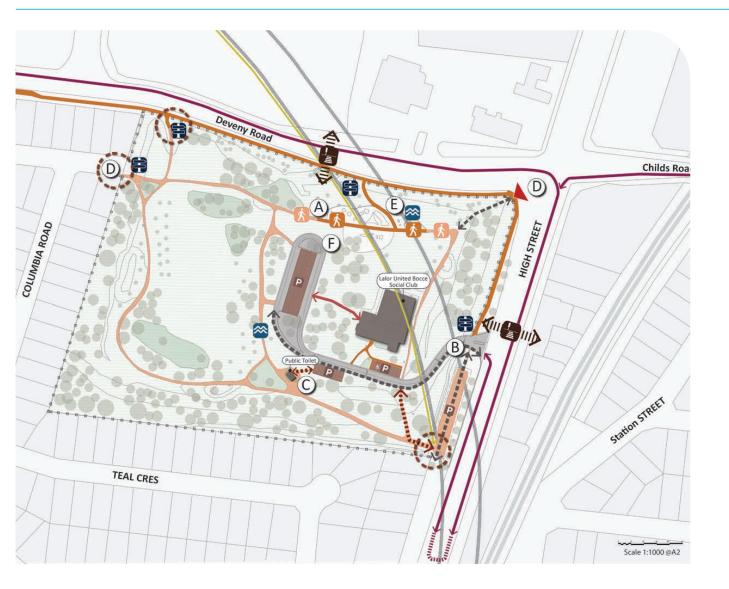
- Investigate improved drainage systems such as permeable paver in pathway areas to mitigate flooding and ensure usability even during wet seasons
- Provide a shared path along the lower car park and connect it to the North-South footpath on High Street
- Provide Pedestrian access/entry to the northeast corner of the reserve from the bus stop on High Street, enhancing accessibility and encouraging more visitors to use public transportation to access the reserve
- Provide a path connecting the central car park to the playspace and picnic area
- Provide a path from the existing path to the second shelter
- Provide a shared path along the entrance path from High Street to the existing central car park
- Investigate alternative path connecting the central car park to the entrance of the Bocce Social Club
- ► A DDA compliant and all weather path from the lower car park to the Bocce Social Club
- Additional (solar) lighting to illuminate the central car park at night
- Investigate relocation or integration of the car park areas
- ► Investigate increasing car park spaces next to the Bocce Social Club
- ▶ Improve the entrance from Bellarine Drive to create an attractive, welcoming gateway to the reserve
- Establish wayfinding signage for entrance nodes to direct people to existing facilities within the reserve and surrounding area
- Investigate pedestrian crossing facilities on High Street to improve safety and accessibility for visitors using the main entrance of the reserve
- Investigate pedestrian crossing facilities on High Street

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# **KEY ISSUES**



- Single vehicle access/entrance from High Street into the reserve resulting in more distant and complicated access for visitors
- Investigate formalising the main existing paths within reserve to concrete to create consistency within the reserve and minimise maintenance cost



# LEGEND

- High maintenance gravel Path 🕅 🕅 Inconsistency in surface treatment
- Lack of footpath
- Poor & no DDA Compliant path
- Lack of pedestrian entry

### Poor entrances

- Lack of pedestrian crossing facilities
- Complicated vehicle access
- Inconsistent & poor way finding signage
- Areas subject to water logging



P Scattered & insufficient peak hour car parking

entrance

- ###### Proposed Wollert rail line (Source: Epping Central Structure Plan, 2023)
- $\leftrightarrow$  Proposed off-road shared path (Source: Epping Central Structure Plan, 2





Pathways are inconsistent in surface reatment



B Lack of pedestrian access to the reserve from High Street



No DDA access path to the public toilet & subject to flooding



**D** Poor entrance from Bellarine Drive

Pathway areas are subject water logging in wet weather



E Lack of connection from the central car park to the playspace



# 3.2.2 Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure

# **KEY ISSUES**

PLAYSPACE

- Safety concern due to the close proximity of the playspace to Deveny Road
- ► Lack of play facilities for older kids /teenagers
- ► Lack of shade within the play space, limiting longer stays during sunny days.

INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES

- The existing toilet is in poor condition (based on the toilet assessment report)
- The toilet is situated far from the playground, but it is easily accessible from the main entrance.
- ► Lack of existing outdoor facilities to support the bocce clubs's users
- Notable dog population in Lalor and deficiency of dog off leash are across the suburb (only Whittlesea Public Gardens includes dog off-leash area)
- No designated/flexible spaces for events such as regular markets, multicultural events and structured events during school holidays

PARK SUPPORT FACILITIES

- ► Facilities are predominantly located on the east side of the reserve and not equally distributed throughout the reserve
- Shortage of rubbish bins
- ► A need for more drink fountains, particularly one with a dog bowl
- Lack of seating next to the existing half basketball court
- Lack of shade in seating areas
- Lack of grouped seating arrangements which foster face to face interaction and gathering
- ► Lack of historical/educational signage

# **KEY ISSUES**

# **KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

- Upgrade the toilet block to improve safety and amenity
- Investigate relocation of the toilet block closer to the playground area
- Utilise adjacent space to the Bocce Social Club for the club's supporting facilities and outdoor gathering area
- Investigate providing a dog off-lead area as per the Dog off-leash Area policy & Management plan, 2016-2026
- Providing physical barriers around the playspace due to the nearby street
- Investigate the development of flexible spaces for community events, workshops, and performances to encourage social interactions, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen community ties
- Consider diversity in play comprising nature play elements and increase play space size in future playground upgrade
- Expand the play space comprising of more challenging features for older children and teenagers
- Increase canopy cover around the play space and walking track where possible
- Provide additional park furniture such as drinking fountains, bins, bike racks, seating areas and informal and structured coverage where required
- Provide outdoor gathering opportunities and install grouped seating arrangements to encourage face-toface interaction and social gathering
- Install educational/informative signage along pedestrian paths



# LEGEND

- ←→ Complicated and far access
- A Lack of shade within the playspace
- Safety concern due to the close proximity of the Playspace to Deveny Rd
- 📝 Insufficient rubbish bins
- Lack of grouped seating arrangements Lack of seating
- next to the basketball court
- No designated/flexible spaces for events Lack of cultural heritage/educational signage 强 Lack of drinking fountain with a dog bowl



A The tonet is stream from the playground The toilet is situated at a distance



B Close proximity of the Playspace to Deveny Rd





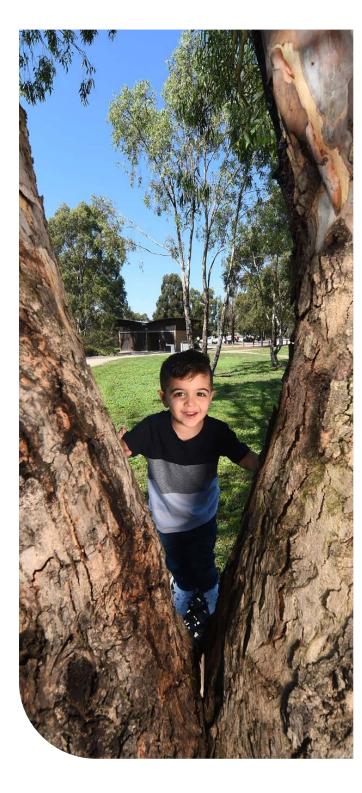
C Lack of shade within the play space D Lack of seating next to the existing half basketball court



E Lack of grouped seating arrangements



No designated/flexible spaces for events such as regular markets and multicultural events



# **3.2.3 Environment & Landscape**

# **KEY ISSUES**

LANDSCAPE & VEGETATION

- Hidden areas and visual barriers due to shrubs and bushes around the public toilet
- Lack of shade trees near the existing benches next to the playground
- ► Lots of trees at the end of their useful life expectancy (ULE)
- Some sections of the reserve near the neighbouring properties lack any planting and could benefit from additional buffer planting
- Some areas such as the area next to the shelters are subject to water logging in winter
- ► The landscape is disjointed due to the car park which segregates the open space landscapes
- No Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) initiatives associated with car parks or buildings at the site
- Limited ability for proposing activities on interfaces due to the topography and steepness of the site, particularly on the east side

## LOOK & FEEL

- Lack of passive surveillance in the southwest corner of the park due lack of pathway
- Understory planting and thick bushes surrounding the toilet block limit visibility and passive surveillance into the public toilet
- No pathway lighting in the west side of the reserve
- Anti-social activity around the public toilet
- Approximately 50% of the frontages are inactive with residential properties backing onto the reserve

# **KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

- Improve visibility to the reserve by thinning out overgrown understory planting or replacing with more suitable greenery where required
- Potential additional buffer planting on the west side of the reserve maintaining an appropriate distance from neighbouring properties
- Additional tree planting
- Remove trees at the end of their useful life expectancy
- Investigate additional lighting with the Public Realm Lighting Plan
- Investigate activating the southwest corner of the reserve through more benches, path extension and or developing a dog park
- Establish wayfinding signage to support pedestrian navigation across the reserve

# **KEY ISSUES**



# LEGEND

**54** Hidden areas & visual barriers lack of shade trees 💮 Dead trees

Insufficient lighting Lack of passive surveillance 📛 Disjointed landscape

### Anti-social activity

(NV) Inactive frontages and lack of buffer 













Disjointed landscape due to the car park



D Lack of trees in the west side of the reserve

E Lack of passive surveillance in the Southwest corner of the park

F Inactive frontages

# Consultation Summary.

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# Quotes from our community

- The public toilet is too far from the playground and has many bushy areas that are not visible. Put the toilets closer to the playground where they're clearly visible.
- utation in the area, it needs to b salvaged so families can feel safe to u
- The entrance to the reserve looks too uninviting and does not provide you with a sense of safety.

# 4.0 Consultation Summary

## This section provides a summary of consultation activities.

The purpose of the community consultation was to gain an understanding of how the community use the reserve and how they would like to be using the reserve in the future. Two phases of consultation were undertaken with the results from both phases used to directly inform the key directions of the Master Plan.

# METHODOLOGY

The community were consulted on the VR Michael Reserve Master Plan in two phases:

**Phase 1** Capturing challenges and opportunities of the site, June and July 2023

Phase 2 Presentation of the draft master plan, April and May 2024

A range of methods and tools were used to engage with the community and key stakeholders over the two phases of consultation. These included the following:

- Meeting with key Council internal stakeholders
- Meeting with key external stakeholders
- Direct mail outs
- Surveys
- Social map
- Onsite pop-up sessions

## **KEY INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Several key stakeholder meetings were held with Council staff from a range of departments and with various subject matter expertise.

## **KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Meetings were held with representatives from various key external stakeholders including the following:

- Members of the Lalor United Bocce Social Club
- Reserve Users
- Local Businesses
- Residents

# 4.1 Consultation Phase 1

The purpose of this engagement was to assist Council to identify key issues, challenges and opportunities of the site and discover the key ideas for the park improvement. Refer to Appendix 1 for the full report.

# OUTCOME

Feedback was received from 172 participants including users of the Lalor Bocce Social Club, residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods and visitors to the VR Michael Reserve.

Overall, we heard that the area's infrastructure is degrading and in need of repair, paths and carparking areas do not meet current standards of compliance and existing land uses in the precinct can be better connected. Residents and visitors perceive the area as 'unsafe', 'uninviting' and 'dull'.

According to the total responses, the top six priorities for change are as follows:

- General safety
- Car park
- Public toilet
- Walking track/paths
- Pedestrian access to the reserve
- More greenery
- Central lawn

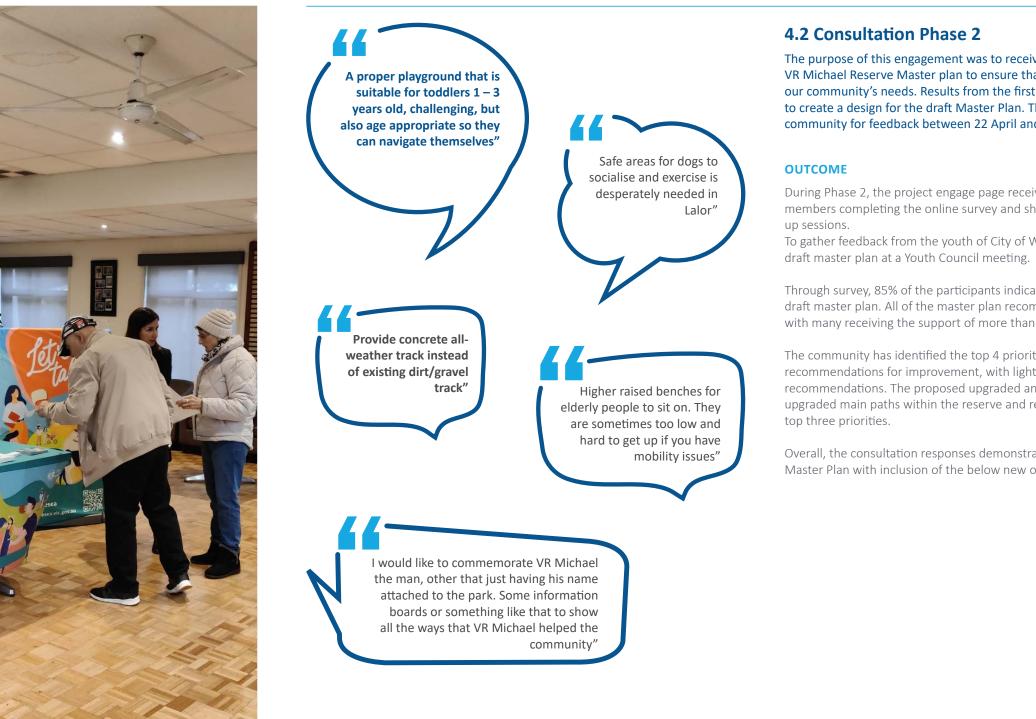
Our community engagement highlighted the main issues as follows:

- > Poor perceptions of safety in the area such as lack of lighting at night-time, and poor passive surveillance
- Pedestrian safety and access
- Close proximity of the playspace to Deveny Road is a concern of the community
- Insufficient peak-hour car parking
- Lack of play facilities for teenagers

# **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the feedback received from the key stakeholders and the community, the following recommendations are made for inclusion in the Master Plan:

- Provide passive surveillance opportunities and improve perception of safety
- ▶ Upgrade the existing paths and improve access to the reserve including access from Deveny Road to the playspace and DDA compliant access from the off-site car park to the Bocce Social Club
- Investigate the potential for providing a dog off-lead area as per the Council 'Dog off-leash Area Policy and Management Plan'
- Consider the development of facilities/activities for different user groups to provide range of play experiences
- Investigate the development of flexible spaces for community events, workshops, and performances to encourage social interactions, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen community ties
- Investigate the development of spaces for exercise encouraging physical and mental well-being
- ► Investigate the potential for providing physical barriers around the playspace due to nearby street
- Investigate potential for upgrades/relocation of the existing toilet block
- Increase canopy cover around the play space and walking track where possible
- Upgrade and additional solar lighting to car parking and main entrances to the reserve Incorporating warmer colours in the park entrances and light at varying levels to cover planting and pathways considering Shared User Paths (SUPs) Guiding Principles
- Improve entry node with feature landscaping and paving, access, educational/historical and wayfinding signage
- Explore the possibility of integrating a community herb garden and sensory garden within the reserve plan, enhancing its appeal and offering unique interactive experiences for visitors
- Improve maintenance of the central lawn
- Provide additional park furniture such as drinking fountains, bins and seating where required



The purpose of this engagement was to receive community feedback on the Draft VR Michael Reserve Master plan to ensure that the future of the site reflects our community's needs. Results from the first phase of consultation were used to create a design for the draft Master Plan. This plan was then exhibited to the community for feedback between 22 April and 20 May 2024.

During Phase 2, the project engage page received 226 visitors with 85 community members completing the online survey and shared their ideas through three pop

To gather feedback from the youth of City of Whittlesea, Council presented the

Through survey, 85% of the participants indicated they felt positive toward the draft master plan. All of the master plan recommendations were well received with many receiving the support of more than 90% of participants.

The community has identified the top 4 priorities from the proposed recommendations for improvement, with lighting being the highest-ranked recommendations. The proposed upgraded and integrated Car park, Realigned & upgraded main paths within the reserve and relocated toilet block were the next

Overall, the consultation responses demonstrate the community supports the Master Plan with inclusion of the below new or amended recommendations.

# **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the feedback received from key stakeholders, the community and Youth Council, the following recommendations are made for inclusion of the master plan:

- Specify the number of DDA car park spaces that could be allocated from the additional proposed car parking spaces
- Provide a delivery access path with a loading zone and trolley access path to the club delivery door located on the eastern side of the Bocce Social Club
- Investigate the potential for providing an informal bicycle track/learn to ride loop as part of the proposed paths
- Provide additional seating next to the proposed play area
- Provide a drinking fountain next to the proposed half-basketball court
- ▶ Investigate lighting opportunities for evening/after dark use activities such as dog-off lead park and informal recreation activities beneath the Wollert rail corridor (Lighting is raised by both the local community and Youth Council)
- Develop a fenced-off unstructured dog off-lead area

Note: According to the community feedback, we've changed the open unstructured dog-off lead area to a fenced unstructured one. In the medium term, we will reassess and upgrade it to a structured dog park if required.

- Provide a range of play experiences for different age groups as part of the proposed playspace
- Investigate the provision of integrated public art in the reserve and murals on rail corridor piles

The following recommendations are in consideration of the feedback received from the Youth Council.

Youth-targeted areas/activities:

• Council to advocate for the proposed youth-oriented facilities beneath the rail to be delivered by the state government as part of the future Wollert rail project.

Outdoors studying spaces:

▶ Investigate opportunities for solar-powered tables/shelters in the proposed gathering area, providing renewable energy for device charging, Wi-Fi connectivity and outdoor studying opportunities.

Lighting and security cameras:

► As mentioned above, we will investigate lighting opportunities for evening use activities.





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# Have

Have a bicycle track on the perimeter of the park. I am bit sceptical getting my children to use the bike tracks adjacent to the main roads/vehicles"

Move children play area away from McDonalds so they are not tempted. Besides McDonalds also has its own play area."

The play area should be fully fenced, similarly to all abilities park in South Morang. BBQ, shaded areas, flying fox, a new playground for all ages and basketball courts would be great for young families to bring their children to play."

Dog park area is wonderful to see but it is unclear if that area is fenced off. It really needs to be fenced off, I would not feel safe letting my dog off lead without a fence, particularly with the roads around it and pedestrians"

Community member



It says over 65 car parking spots, doesn't specify the exact amount and how many disabled car parking spots there will be. The more car parking the better. I don't understand why the new proposed path from the lower car park to the social club isn't more direct instead of going up and then coming back. The elderly struggle to walk up the hill from the lower car park"

- Community member

# Separate area for babies/ toddlers to play"

- Community member

More gathering places for adults/parents when they are supervising their kids rather than standing on the path (bikes etc ride past quickly. Especially at the play area people come from McDonalds and they struggle to find a place to sit"

- Community member

Have any spaces where there is seating to be visible and have clear lines of vision. This will help women feel safer and provide passive surveillance"

- Community member

# Master Plan.

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# 5.0 Master Plan

The site analysis and community consultation undertaken have resulted in a vision to improve the functional layout of VR Michael Reserve as a Municipal Reserve upon the delivery of five key objectives:

# 5.1 Vision & Key Objectives

# VISION

VR Michael Reserve is an accessible, inclusive and vibrant reserve that offers a variety of informal recreational opportunities for individuals and families, catering to the diverse interests of our community. This reserve is a hub of inclusivity and engagement, where residents can celebrate and share cultural identity and diversity.





Enhance recreational



Improve aesthetics and environmental sustainability







Provide meaningful and safe play



Activate and enhance spaces and interfaces of the Future Wollert Rail Overpass



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# **5.2 Recommendations**

The VR Michael Reserve Master Plan sets out recommendations which are articulated through the key themes of Movement & Access, Informal Recreation and Park Infrastructure, and Environment and Landscape.

We have proposed a variety of facilities in the park to cater to different age groups, ensuring that everyone from children to the elderly can enjoy the space. These facilities are designed not only to meet the current needs of the community but also to accommodate the future needs of Epping's growing population as the area develops. The range of existing and proposed methods of access to VR Michael Reserve, as outlined in the Epping Central Structure Plan, will facilitate access to VR Michael Reserve for future communities. This thoughtful planning ensures that the park will contribute to the proposed network of open spaces in Epping Central, and continue to be a valuable and well-used resource for years to come.

# **MOVEMENT AND ACCESS**

## PATH

- Realign and upgrade main paths within the reserve to concrete paths, comprised of two walking/jogging loops
- Relocate the toilet block in proximity to the proposed playspace and picnic area incorporating all-gender parent/carer rooms, a disabled toilet and labels indicating available facilities without specifying gender, as a mid to long term action
- ▶ Upgrade the surface material of the access path to the existing toilet block to provide a DDA-compliant access path as a short-term action
- Proposed 2.5m shared path along the lower carpark connecting the existing footpath on High Street
- Proposed an entrance and 2m path from the north-east corner of the reserve
- Proposed 2m path connecting the central car park to the existing playspace
- Proposed 1.5m path connecting the existing path to the second shelter
- Proposed concrete shared path along the access road from High Street to the reserve with 2.5m width
- Upgrade and realign the existing path to connect the central carpark to the Bocce Social Club
- ▶ Realign and upgrade the 2.5m DDA compliant shared path accessing from the lower carpark to the reserve providing access to the Bocce Social Club
- Proposed delivery access path to the social club's delivery door with a loading zone and trolley access path
- Proposed 1.5m learn-to-ride loop
- Proposed 1.5m informal bicycle track

## CAR PARKING

- Proposed lighting along the extended car park
- Proposed integrated and upgraded car park with a water-sensitive approach, comprising over 65 car parking spaces
- Upgraded lower car park comprising 24 car parking spaces
- Proposed vehicle drop-off area next to the Bocce Social Club
- Proposed entry/exit to the lower car park from the entrance road to the reserve providing safe access to the car park

## ENTRANCE

- Upgrade the north entrances as well as the entrance from Bellarine Drive as more significant and welcoming entrances by providing wayfinding signage, feature paving, lighting, and landscaping
- Proposed wayfinding signage for entrance nodes to direct people to existing facilities within the reserve and surrounding area
- Investigate pedestrian crossing facilities on High Street to improve safety and accessibility for visitors crossing from the main entrance of the reserve
- Improve the forecourt of the Bocce Social Club including a vehicle drop off area and the direct access path

# **INFORMAL RECREATION AND PARK INFRASTRUCTURE**

**INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES** 

- Proposed outdoor gathering space in proximity to the Bocce Social Club
- Proposed fenced off-lead dog area in the southwest corner of the reserve with seating, a shelter, and a drinking fountain with a dog bowl. (In the medium term, reassess the need for separated spaces for larger and smaller dogs and consider if a more structured dog park is needed)
- Proposed multi use space comprising smaller areas with social seating, drinking fountain, solar-powered shelter/work station and shade trees
- Proposed fitness and exercise station with equipment arranged in groups to allow for socialising

# PLAYSPACE

- Proposed playspace with a safe distance from Deveny Road, with shorter-term provision of fence on the north side
- Proposed playground including a range of play experiences and nature-based area
- Plant additional trees throughout the reserve with raised tree canopies to strengthen ecological biodiversity
- Remove the existing trees in the playspace and increase shade through more canopy cover around the proposed play space and walking track where possible
- Proposed picnic area with picnic tables, BBQs and shelters
- > Proposed bouldering wall beneath the future Wollert Rail Corridor
- Investigate a community garden or a native pollinator garden

beneath the future Wollert Rail Corridor that use rainwater run-off to support the growth of species

- Proposed skate feature beneath the future Wollert Rail Corridor
- Proposed half basketball court beneath the future Wollert Rail Corridor

PARK SUPPORT FACILITIES

- Proposed additional park furniture including drinking fountains, bins and social seating
- Proposed social seating such as picnic seating to provide a blend of private and public seating
- Establish interpretive signage along the proposed main paths that provide education on the history of VR Michael
- Establish dog park regulation signs indicating the designated dog park area

# ENVIRONMENT AND LANDSCAPE

LANDSCAPE AND VEGETATION

- ► Thin and selectively remove the existing thick vegetation to improve sightlines and passive surveillance throughout the reserve
- Remove the existing trees next to the seating areas around the playspace and plant shade trees near the existing benches and the proposed play space and walking track where possible
- Continue regular assessment and maintenance of trees
- Additional buffer planting maintaining an appropriate distance from neighbouring properties

LOOK & FEEL

- Investigate lighting the reserve's internal paths and elements with the holistic Public Realm Lighting Plan
- Improve visibility into the reserve by thinning out overgrown understory planting and replace with low maintenance plants to eliminate visual barriers
- Proposed sensor lighting along the car park, entry/exit nodes to the dog-off lead park and next to the sport court

# 5.3 Master Plan

The VR Michael Reserve master plan guides and provides direction for future upgrades and improvements to VR Michael Reserve. The master plan responds to insufficient peak-hour car parking, safety issues, connectivity and community needs along with recommendations to improve the natural environment.

The section in the following page illustrate the Future Wollert Rail Corridor which passes through the reserve and the proposed activities that proposed by the master plan to be located beneath the Wollert Rail. Refer to Figure 15.

1	Flexible central lawn for games, evo	ents and p	icnics
2	Proposed fenced unstructured dog	off-leash	area
3	Proposed playspace including climit range of play experiences	bing eleme	ents and
4	Proposed nature play area		
5	Proposed picnic area with shelters, drinking fountain and bins	, picnic set	tings,
6	Proposed fitness and exercise station	on	
7	Proposed toilet block with shorter of the safety and amenity of the ex		
8	Proposed social seating and gather	ring area	
9	Proposed outdoor gathering space		
10	Relocate the Bocce Court		
11	Remove the central car park and ex west creating an integrated and su approx. 62 car park spaces and 3 D	stainable o	car park with
12	Proposed vehicle drop-off area nex	kt to the so	ocial club
13	Potential site for a community or a garden using rain water tank for irr investigated as per the Council's pr	rigation (w	llinator ill be further
14	Proposed multi use area with socia powered shelter/work station	al seating a	and a solar-
15	Proposed skate feature		
16	Proposed sport court with half bas and table tennis	ketball co	urt
17	Proposed bouldering wall		
GEN	ID		
Со	ncrete Path (2-2.5m wide)	T	Proposed Lighting
Gr	anitic Sand Path (1.5m wide)	101	Proposed Shelter
	oposed Drinking Fountain	I	Proposed Barbecue

Proposed Trees

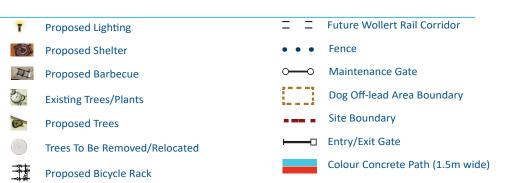
Proposed Dog Signs

Proposed Seating Area

Proposed Bin

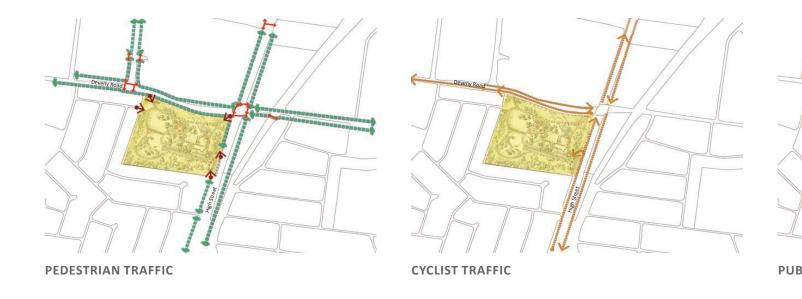
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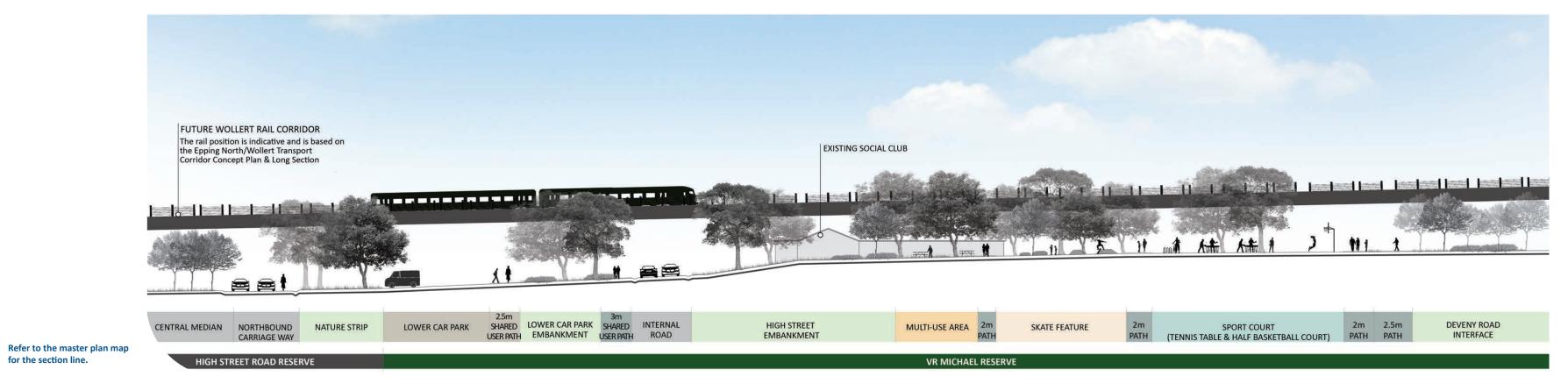
- 18 Proposed entry/exit to the lower car park
- **19** Upgrade car park (24 car park bays)
- 20 Proposed shared path along the lower car park
- Proposed DDA compliant path connecting the lower car park with the Bocce Social Club
- 22 Realign and upgrade circuit path (2-2.5m concrete path)
- 23 Proposed shelter with a drinking fountain, seats and a dog sign
- 24 Improve entry nodes with way finding signage
- **25** Proposed entry from the intersection of Deveny Road and High Street
- 26 Proposed shared path from Boronia Street to the reserve
- 27 Improve the forecourt of the Social club, including a path from a vehicle drop-off area
- 28 Increase shade through more canopy cover around the play space and walking track where possible
- 29 Remove the existing playspace, basketball hoop and picnic area
- 30 Upgrade the reserve internal vehicle exclusion fencing
- 31 Proposed delivery access path to the club delivery door with a loading zone and a trolley access
- 32 Proposed sensor lighting along the car park, entry/exit nodes to the dog-off lead park and next to the sport court
- **33** Proposed informal bicycle track
- 34 Proposed learn-to-ride loop





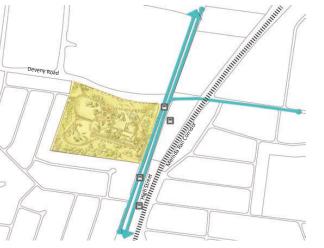
14. IMAGE Master Plan



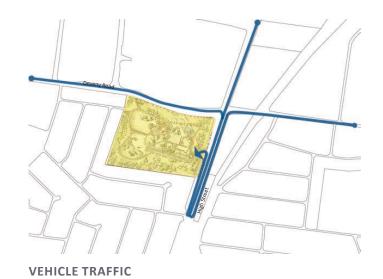


**15. IMAGE** Section A-A From the Proposed Wollert Rail Corridor and Activities Beneath It

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT





LEGEND



16. IMAGE Site Access & Movement Analysis



**ACCESS & CIRCULATION** 







CONCRETE PATH

FEATURE PAVING





RECREATION



MULTI-AGE PLAY EQUIPMENT

# FACILITIES





RUBBER MOUNDS

NATURE PLAY





SOLAR-POWERED SHELTER



SOLAR & ELECTRIC PEDESTRIAN LIGHT BIKE HOOPS AND VEHICLE

EXCLUSION FENCE

The images illustrated are only examples and the recommendations provided may vary in their actual result.

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# SPORT COURT (beneath future Wollert rail overpass)





LEARN TO RIDE LOOP

PERMEABLE CAR PARK



SKATE FEATURE







TABLE TENNIS

# **VEGETATION & SIGNAGE**



CLIMBING ELEMENTS



HALF BASKETBALL COURT

FEATURE PLANTING







WAYFINDING SIGNAGE





MULTI-USE AREA WITH SOCIAL SEATING





PARK FURNITURE







**BOULDERING WALL** 

ENTRY SIGNAGE

The images illustrated are only examples and the recommendations provided may vary in their actual result.

# Master Plan Implementation.

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The implementation of the Master Plan will be mostly procured through Council funding, however, some additional funding through State Government Grants will contribute to certain proposed initiatives within the overall Master Plan. A summary of the project packages, actions, approximate cost and time frames for each precinct are outlined below.

The estimated budget required to implement the Master Plan is subject to further design development. The initial high-level costing estimates the total cost of master plan implementation at \$4.8m.

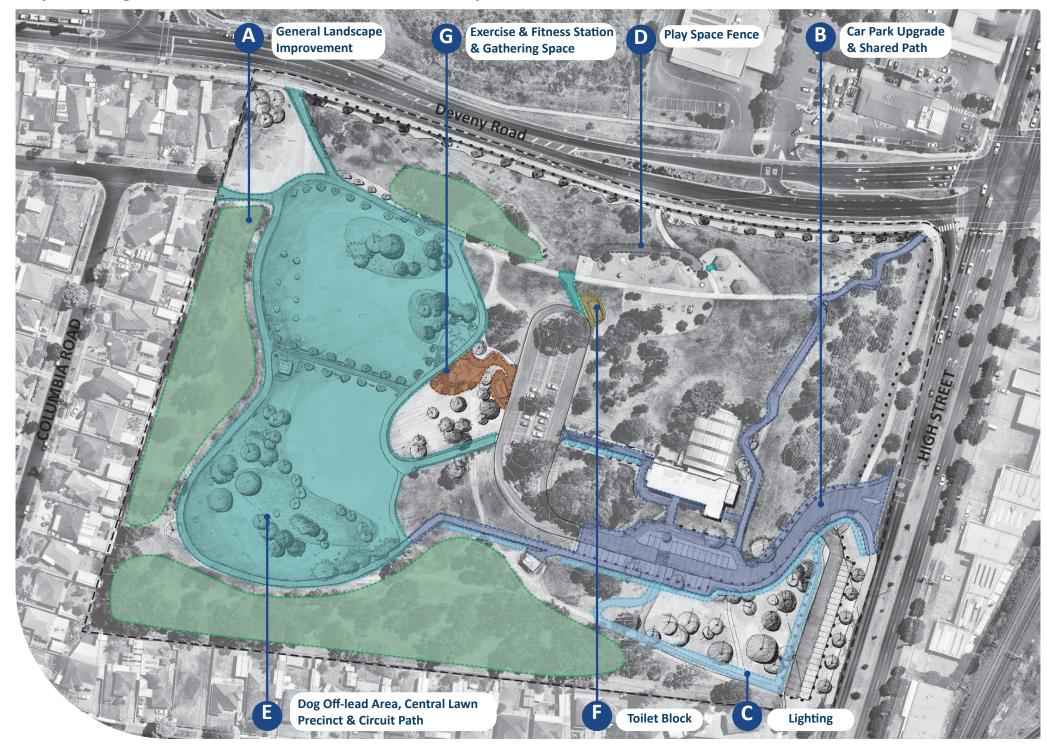
The operational and maintenance estimate to maintain the fully implemented master plan is \$15,900 p/a, this figure is in addition to maintaining existing elements retained.

Priorities of projects and actions from this master plan are a guide and are subject to holistic Council Capital Works project prioritisation.

Note: The cost estimation has been calculated using rates from 2024.

Reference/Area	Project Package	Priority
Α	General Landscape Improvement	Short term
В	Car Park Upgrade & Shared Path	Short term
С	Lighting	Short term
D	Play Space Fence	Short term
E	Dog Off-lead Area, Central Lawn Precinct & Circuit Path	Short term
F	Toilet Block	Medium term
G	Exercise & Fitness Station & Gathering Space	Medium term
н	Car Park Extension & Paths	Medium to long term
I.	Playspace & Nature Play Area	Long term
J	Picnic Area	Long term
К	Indoor Bocce Court (exclude building cots)	Long term
L	Outdoor Gathering Area, Pollinator Garden & Multi-use Area	Long term
М	Youth Activity Area (Sport Court, Skate features & Bouldering Wall)	Long term
N	Tree Planting	Short to Long term

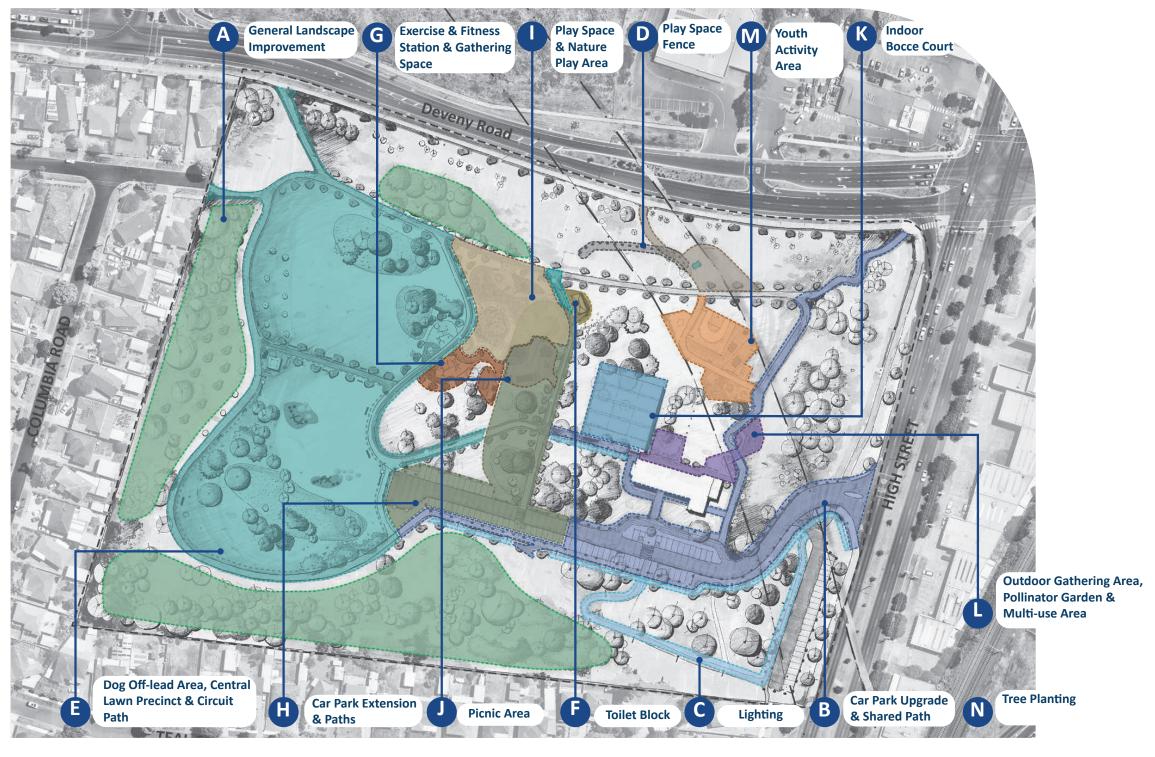
SHORT TERM (1-3 years) MEDIUM TERM (4-7 years) LONG TERM (8-10 years)



# Project Packages Master Plan - Short to Medium-term Projects

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# Project Packages Master Plan - Full Projects



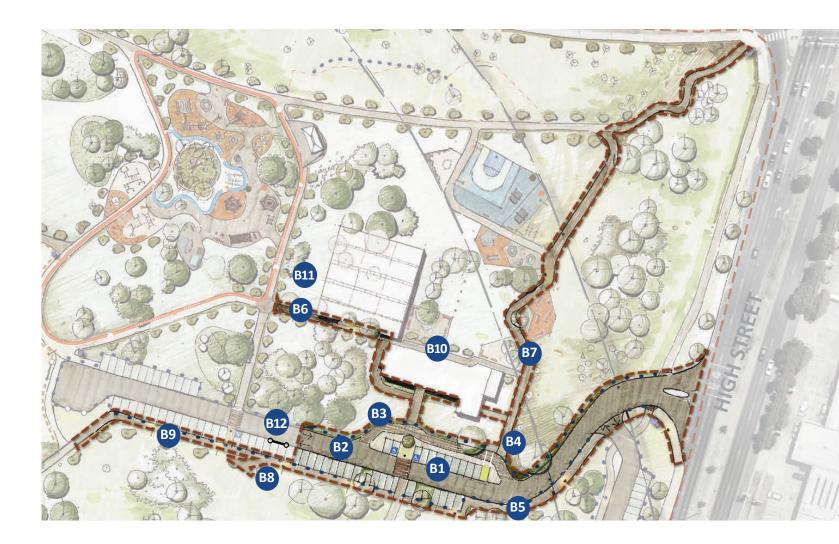


Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
A	Remove understory planting and open sightlines (General plant reduction by one third in garden beds)	Short term		N/A

# Area A: General Landscape Improvement



Key Plan



Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
<b>B1</b>	Remove the asphalt from the car park bays to be replaced with permeable surface	Short term		Water Authority
B2	Upgrade the car park including approx. 25 car park spaces with permeable pavement	Short term		
<b>B3</b>	Creation of vehicle drop-off area next to the bocce social club	Short term		
<b>B4</b>	Creation of a delivery access path to the social club's delivery door with a loading zone and trolley access path	Short term		
85	New 2.5m concrete shared path along the upgraded car park, starting from High Street and extending up to the proposed dog off-lead area	Short term		
B6	New 2m concrete footpath from the central car park to the Bocce Social Club	Short term		
87	Realign and upgrade the existing gravel path to a 2m concrete path including, an entry and access path from the corner of High Street and Deveny Road	Short term		
B8	Upgrade the existing access path to the public toilet block	Short term		
<b>B9</b>	Upgrade the fence along the car park (Post and cable fencing)	Short term	Vehicle Exclusion Fencing Program	
B10	Remove the existing concrete path next to the club to allow for new works	Short term		
B11	Remove the existing access path from the central car park to the Bocce Social Club to allow for new works	Short term		
B12	New maintenance access gate (temporary until creation of the entire parking area)	Short term		

# Area B: Car Park Upgrade & Shared Path





Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
<b>C1</b>	Lighting along the car park and the proposed DDA compliant path from the lower car park to the Bocce Social Club	Short term		
<b>C2</b>	Lighting along the footpath from the central car park to the Bocce Social Club	Short term		
C3	Solar lighting along the lower car park and standard lighting along the DDA compliant path from the lower car park to the Bocce Social Club	Short term		

# Area C: Lighting



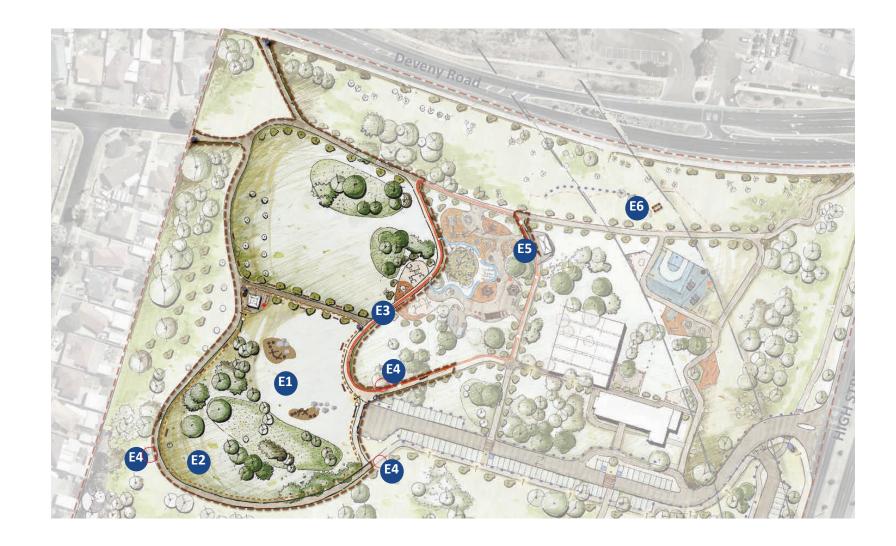
Key Plan



Reference/Ar	a Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
D1	New barrier (hoops & planting) on the north side of the existing play scape (temporary until creation of a new play space)	Short term	Minor Works Program	

# Area D: Playspace Fence





Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
<b>E1</b>	New fenced unstructured dog off-lead area including a shelter, a drinking fountain, a bin, dog signs, benches and two entry/exit gates and a lighting pole next to the each gate (In the medium term, reassess the need for spaces for larger and smaller dogs and consider if a more structured dog park is needed)	Short term		State Government
E2	Remove the existing gravel circuit path to allow for new works	Short term		
E3	Realign and upgrade 2.5-3m concrete circuit path	Short term		
E4	Remove/relocate the tree to allow for new works	Short term		
E5	New 1.5m concrete footpath from the central car park to the existing play space	Short term		
E6	New 1.5m concrete footpath from the existing path to the second shelter in the existing picnic area	Short term		
	SUB-TOTAL COST ESTIMATE		\$ 687,538.44	







F	Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
	<b>E1</b>	Remove the existing toilet block and the access path to it to allow for new works	Medium term		
	<b>F2</b>	New toilet block next to the proposed play space and picnic area	Medium term	Asset Renewal Program	

# Area F: Toilet Block



Key Plan

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Key Plan

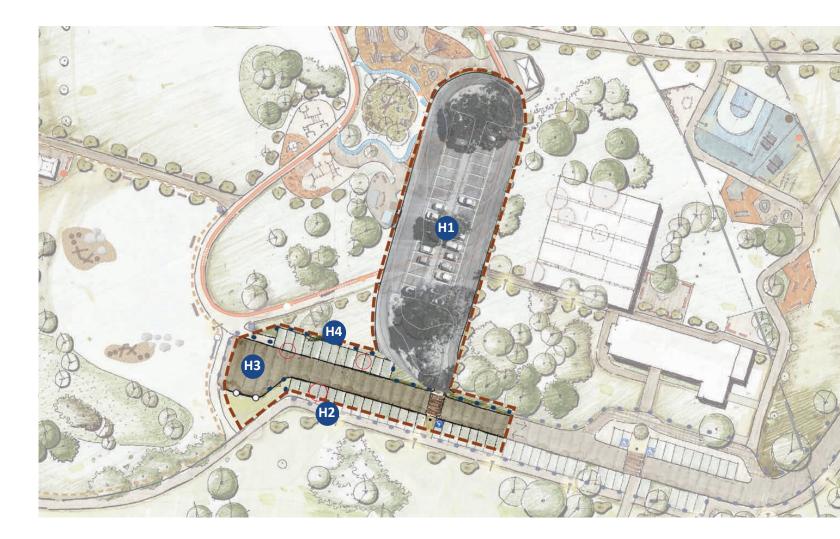


Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
G1	Creation of an outdoor exercise/fitness area with exercise equipment for different age groups including clear instructional signage and QR codes to show people how to use the equipment	Medium term		State Government
<b>G2</b>	New gathering area including social seatings, a platform and a solar-powered shelter/work station	Medium term		
G3	Relocate the existing trees to allow for new works	Medium term		

# Area G: Exercise & Fitness Station & Gathering Space



Key Plan



Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
H1	Remove the existing central car park, fences, kerbs and channels along it to allow for new works	Medium term		
H2	Relocate the existing trees to allow for new works	Medium term		
НЗ	Extend the car park to west creating an integrated and sustainable car park including approx. 62 car park spaces and 3 DDA compliant car park spaces in total, fences and gate		Car park Renewal & Vehicle Exclusion Fencing Programs	Water Authority
H4	Line mark the extended car park	Medium term		

# Area H: Car Park Extension and Paths





Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
(1	Remove the existing play space and basketball area and investigate if the play equipment could be used for the new play space	Long term		
12	Remove the trees (four Stone Pines) from the existing play space	Long term		
13	Creation of a play space with seating and play equipment including range of play experience and climbing elements	Long term	Playground Renewal Program	State Government
14	Creation of a nature play area utilising the existing trees and proposed plants to learn, explore and play. Inclusion of small details that creates an element of surprise and curiosity such as timber logs and mud rock	Long term		State Government
15	New 1.5m coloured concrete and marked bicycle loop as part of the realigned and upgraded path	Long term		
16	New 1.5m coloured concrete and marked learn-to-ride loop and a bicycle rack	Long term		

# Area I: Playspace & Nature Play Area



Key Plan



Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
11	Remove the existing picnic area and investigate if the existing shelters and picnic facilities could be used for the new picnic area	Long term		State Government
J2	Remove the existing concrete path next to the picnic area	Long term		State Government
J3	Creation of a picnic area with shelters, benches, picnic settings, a drinking fountain and a bin	Long term		

# Area J: Picnic Area





Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
K1	Demolish the existing bocce court structure to allow for new works	Long term		State Government
K2	Remove the existing trees to allow for new works	Long term		State Government
КЗ	New indoor bocce court	Long term		State Government

Area K: Indoor Bocce Court



Key Plan



Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
1	Creation of an outdoor gathering space with a shade trees and seating areas	Long term		State Government
12	Investigate creation of a native pollinator garden using rain water tank for irrigation	Long term		State Government & Water Authority
L3	Creation of a multi-use area with social seating	Long term		State Government
L4	New 1.5m concrete path connecting the new bocce court to the multi-use area	Long term		State Government

# Area L: Outdoor Gathering Area, Pollinator Garden, & Multiuse Area





Reference/Area	Project Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
M1	Creation of a sport court including a half basketball court, tennis tables, a drinking fountain, a bike rack, a bin and sensor lighting	Long term		State Government
M2	New skate features	Long term		State Government
МЗ	New bouldering wall	Long term		State Government
M4	Relocate the existing trees to allow for new works	Long term		State Government
M5	New 1.5m concrete footpath connecting the above mentioned facilities	Long term		State Government





Area M: Youth Activity Area (Sport Court, Skate features & Bouldering Wall)

Reference/Area Projec	ect Package	Timeframe	Council Renewal Programs	Potential Grant opportunity
	tional tree planting within along the proposed paths, next to the proposed play space and picnic area and on north side of the site g Deveny Road	Short to long term		Greening Whittlesea Park Planting

# Area N: Tree Planting & Removal



Key Plan

# Appendix 1. Review of Plans, Policies and Strategies

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# Appendix 2. Community Engagement

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# **COUNCIL OFFICES**

25 Ferres Boulevard South Morang VIC 3752

info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au whittlesea.vic.gov.au

**POSTAL ADDRESS** City of Whittlesea Locked Bag Bundoora MDC VIC 3083 Phone: 9217 2170 National Relay Service: 133 677 (ask for 9217 2170)

Connect with us in your preferred language:







# **5.5 Delegation to Register for Carbon Offsets**

Director/Executive Manager:	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Report Author:	Sustainable Organisation Officer
In Attendance:	Manager Sustainable Environment Sustainable Organisation Officer

# Executive Summary

The City of Whittlesea applied and has been offered a grant as part of the State Government's BushBank program to revegetate a section of the Quarry Hills Parkland. There is the potential to generate carbon offsets as part of the project in the form of Australian Carbon Credit Units. The registration of carbon credits occurs under the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011* with the Clean Energy Regulator.

To enable Council to register with the Clean Energy Regulator, Council must provide evidence that the executive officer has authority to act and sign on behalf of our organisation. The officer recommendation is seeking the necessary authority for the CEO to progress the registration process.

# **Officers' Recommendation**

# THAT Council:

- **1.** Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to act on Council's behalf under the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011.*
- 2. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and execute agreements with the Clean Energy Regulator on behalf of Council.



# Background / Key Information

# Quarry Hills Releaf Project (BushBank grant)

City of Whittlesea applied for, and has been offered, a \$585,225 grant to revegetate 44 hectares of the western slopes of Quarry Hills. This is from the State Government's BushBank program which supports revegetation and carbon offsetting. An additional \$742,043 financial & in-kind contribution from the City of Whittlesea forms part of this project.

While not required to achieve the grant outcomes, this project has the potential to generate formalised carbon offsets.

### **Carbon offsets**

Sequestered carbon is carbon captured from the atmosphere that can be used to 'offset' carbon emitted. The clearest way to verify sequestered carbon as offsets in Australia is through the Clean Energy Regulator. Offsets are generated in the form of Australian Carbon Credit Units (ACCUs) under the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011. An ACCU represents one tonne of sequestered carbon. ACCUs can either be retired to offset our emissions or sold to fund additional projects.

# **Generating ACCUs from Quarry Hills**

The Quarry Hills Releaf Project (BushBank grant) is predicted to sequester 13.7 tonnes of carbon per hectare per year. A total of 15,070 tonnes over the 25-year time horizon. This is potentially 15,000 ACCUs, approximately \$500,000 at the current ACCU price, or \$30,000 per year. The project must be registered to generate ACCUs before the final investment decision is made.

As there has been limited participation in this market by Councils to date, we do not have a clear pathway to follow for ACCU registration, therefore being able to generate and participate in the offset market for this project is not guaranteed. Issues may also arise around registering the project for the generation of ACCUs. Therefore, the ability for council staff to be delegated powers under the act is necessary to proceed with registration.

Enabling officer delegation to participate in the *Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative*) Act 2011 including entering into agreements, unlocks the opportunity for Council to participate in the generation of formal carbon credits, and potentially generate income for future climate and biodiversity actions.



### Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

#### **Sustainable Environment**

We prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, preserve local biodiversity, protect waterways and green space and address climate change.

This project is aligned to the following action under the Sustainable Environment Action Plan 2024-26.

• Outcome 1.2 Our land management and land use are sustainable- continue to explore opportunities to generate local carbon sequestration offsets on Council owned and private land.

### Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

#### **Financial Management**

Generating carbon credits could provide the City of Whittlesea with an additional income stream.

#### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

Consultation on the Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-32 was undertaken prior to the strategies endorsement.

### **Other Principles for Consideration**

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
- (f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought.
- (g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.
- (h) Regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making.

#### **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.



# **Council Policy Considerations**

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

The project supports the council's Sustainable Environment Strategy across multiple focus areas including biodiversity, climate change, green wedge and water. The revegetation at the core of the Quarry Hills Releaf project improves biodiversity, green wedge and water. The development of a ACCU generating project support the climate change focus area and may support the achievement of our Net Zero aims.

Providing a potential return on revegetation work through creation of ACCUs supports this work and potentially provides resourcing for more projects.

### Social, Cultural and Health

The project will help us achieve additional greening and urban cooling.

**Economic** No implications.

# Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

#### Implementation Strategy

**Communication** N/A.

### **Critical Dates**

Registration of offsetting project with the Clean Energy Regulator is required to occur before the final investment decision is made.

# 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



# 5.6 Tender Evaluation Report 2024-56 Hilltop Playground & Splash Park

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author:	Unit Manager Parks Development
In Attendance:	Unit Manager Parks Development Senior Landscape Architect

This attachment has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:

- (i) relates to trade secrets; or
- (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

### Executive Summary

This report summarises the evaluation of the tender submissions received for the Tender 2024-56, Construction of Hilltop Playground & Splash Park.

The Tender Evaluation Panel advises that:

- 12 tenders were received for Separable Portion A (Park and Landscape Works).
- 11 tenders were received for Separable Portion B (Car Park Works).
- The recommended tenderer was the highest ranked and is considered best value.
- This contract relates to a Federal and State Government grant funded project.

# **Officers' Recommendation**

THAT Council:

- 1. Resolve to award the Hilltop Playground & Splash Park, Contract 2024-56 Parts A and B, to Warrandale Industries Pty Ltd at a lump sum price of \$2,465,529 excl.
- 2. Note any price variations will be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the conditions of contract.
- 3. Approve the funding arrangements as detailed in the confidential attachment to this report.
- 4. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and execute the contract on behalf of Council.



# Background / Key Information

Hilltop Park, Doreen is a 5.18 hectare municipal level open space in a residential area within a 15-minute walk from the Laurimar Town Centre, and a 20-minute drive for all of Doreen.

The park has facilities for active and passive recreation with supporting amenities to encourage longer stays. These include a large play area (approximately 1,100 square metres), a large picnic shelter and barbeque, public toilets, and a small car park. In addition, the park has over 11,000 square metres of open grassed area for informal active recreation, and a path network into the suburban streets for ease of access from all edges.

This project proposes to upgrade the park and playground to include a splashpad and supporting services. This will be the only free public access splashpad in the northern area of the City of Whittlesea and will provide a new type of outdoor recreation facility for the residents of Mernda and Doreen. In addition, the project will improve the play provision in the park to address the changing demographic of the area, bringing the play experiences in line with current best practice and introducing nature play elements.

The proposed contract is made up of two parts – Separable Portion A being the overall park and playground construction including the public amenities and services, and Separable Portion B being construction of the car park.

Public tenders for the contract closed on 9 July 2024. The tendered prices and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachment.

No member of the Tender Evaluation Panel declared a conflict of interest to this tender evaluation.

A Tender Probity and Evaluation Plan was designed specifically for this tender process and was authorised prior to the tender being advertised. All tenders received were evaluated in accordance with that plan. The evaluation involved scoring of conforming and competitive tenders according to procurements standard criteria and weightings:

- Price 60%
- Capability 15%
- Capacity 15%
- 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 allocated weightings are standard as per Council's Procurement Procedures.

Only tenders that were conforming and competitive were fully scored. Tender submissions that were evaluated as non-conforming or not sufficiently competitive were set aside from further evaluation. In cases where this occurred, the reasons for that outcome are detailed in the confidential attachment.

Tenderer	Conforming	Competitive	PART A	PART B	Combined	Rank
			Score	Score	Score	
Tenderer A	Yes	Yes	92.6	82.3	91.7	1
Warrandale Industries						
Pty Ltd						
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	81.0	87.4	81.5	2
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	79.8	87.9	80.5	3
Tenderer D	Yes	Yes	78.6	76.4	78.4	4
Tenderer E	Yes	Yes	77.8	70.8	77.2	5
Tenderer F	Yes	Yes	72.9	62.9	72.1	8
Tenderer G	Yes	Yes	72.8	77.7	73.2	6
Tenderer H	Yes	Yes	72.7	68.3	72.3	7
Tenderer I	Yes	Yes	68.8	59.2	68.0	9
Tenderer J	Yes	No	-	69.6	-	10
Tenderer K	Yes	No	-	68.6	-	11
Tenderer L	No	N/A	-	N/A	-	12

# The evaluation outcome was as follows:

### 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 existing park and playground at Hilltop Park was designed and constructed in 2005 and is currently on Council's Park and Playground Renewal Program for upgrading. The project will improve the play provision in the park to address the changing demographic of the area, bringing the play experiences in line with current best practice and introducing nature play elements.



# Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

### **Financial Management**

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the 202425 Capital Program for Hilltop Splash Park and Playground (CW-11066) along with a \$1.5M Federal Government Grant from the Investing in Our Communities Program and a \$500,000 State Government Grant from the Open Space for Everyone - Better Parks and Playgrounds Program.

# **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 collaborate procurement arrangement. In this instance, collaborative tendering was not undertaken in relation to this procurement because it is not listed in the Northern Council's Alliance consolidated contract register, and this contract relates to a Federal and State Government grant funded project and relates to a unique need for the City of Whittlesea.

Community consultation and engagement for this project was carried out in two phases in accordance with the project's Communication and Engagement Plan. The first phase occurred in mid-November 2023 to ascertain community comments of the proposed plan and the type of play equipment and splash park features. A total of 712 contributions were received of which 78% of respondents provided positive comments and feedback. The second phase occurred through March to April 2024 for the draft concept plan to understand community expectations and the current and future needs of groups currently using the space.

### **Other Principles for Consideration**

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (d) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—

(i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or

(ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.



- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

### **Council Policy Considerations**

#### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

Considerations have been made where possible to salvage or repurpose site material through the contract delivery. Recyclable material will be separated from general waste and disposed of at registered local recycling facilities. The design of infrastructure and pumps servicing the water play area includes a recycled water reticulation system which substantially reduces demand on potable water.

### Social, Cultural and Health

The project will have a positive social, economic and environmental impact, with the most positive impacts on social benefits. Public open spaces, and play spaces in particular, are well documented to provide safe places for fostering well-functioning communities and improving social cohesion. When completed the park and splash pad will provide for a new facility providing a service not currently accessible and at no cost to use by visitors.

The below positive social impacts have been identified:

- Improved wellbeing of young people and promoting positive interactions with their family, peers, and wider community, by creating a space for young people to act independently, have fun, feel safe and secure, and feel positive about themselves.
- Improved sense of community through local ownership of the public open space and a shared vision of the community and park.

### Economic

The development of the park and playground including the contract expenditure will contribute to a short-term economic impact, while the future maintenance and visitation to the park will provide long term economic benefits to the precinct. Economic benefits will also be realised by utilising local organisations and sub-contractors during the construction period.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

Service Delivery - Inability to plan for and provide critical community services and infrastructure impacting on community wellbeing. Construction of the playground and splash park will provide a place for community activities and passive recreation to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.



Life Cycle Asset Management - Failure to effectively plan for the construction, on-going maintenance and renewal of Council's assets. Internal stakeholder engagement included sharing plans and seeking input from various departments so that the built environment can be managed and maintained effectively. All new assets will be added to Council's Asset Management System to inform future maintenance and renewal programs.

Contractor Management - *Failure to manage contractors to deliver agreed outcomes.* Suitably qualified, experienced, and supported Council staff will oversee the construction activities. The project will be delivered by contractors with a proven record in delivering projects of a similar scale and scope.

### Implementation Strategy

### Communication

The decision to award this contract will be communicated via the standard process for Council Meeting outcomes. In addition, given this will be a project of high interest among the Doreen and Mernda communities, there will be communication prior and during each of the construction phases via Council's regular communication channels.

### **Critical Dates**

The project construction is expected to begin in October 2024 and is programmed for completion in mid-2025.

# **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. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - 2024 56 Tender Evaluation Report [5.6.1 - 9 pages]



# 5.7 Tender Evaluation - Contract No 2024-55 - Quarry Hills Regional Park, Trunk Services Infrastructure, Civil and Associated Works

Director/Executive Manager:	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Report Author:	Senior Project Manager
In Attendance:	Manager Capital Delivery Unit Manager Community Infrastructure Delivery

This attachment has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:

- (i) relates to trade secrets; or
- (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

# Executive Summary

This report summaries the evaluation of the six tender submissions received for Contract No. 2024-55, Granite Hills Major Community Parklands and Aboriginal Gathering Place, located in Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.

The tender evaluation panel advises that:

- 6 tenders were received.
- The recommended tenderer was ranked equal highest and is considered best value and least risk because of the demonstrated capability and capacity to deliver this project in accordance with Council's specified requirements, as well as the reduced contractual risk as explained in the confidential attachment.

### Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

- 1. Resolve to award the Quarry Hills Regional Parkland, Trunk Services Infrastructure, Civil and associated works, Contract number 2024-55, to 2Construct Pty Ltd at a lump sum price of \$6,264,469 excl. GST.
- 2. Note price variations will be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the conditions of contract.
- **3.** Approve the funding arrangements as detailed in the confidential attachment to this report.
- 4. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and execute the contract on behalf of Council.



# Background / Key Information

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the award of Contract No. 2024-55 for the construction of Trunk Infrastructure Services, Civil and Associated Works for the Granite Hills Major Community Park and Aboriginal Gathering Place located at Quarry Hills Regional Parkland. The Trunk Services Infrastructure, Civil and Associated Works will provide services (water, sewer, electricity and communication), access road and car parking to both the Aboriginal Gathering Place and the Granite Hills Major Community Park facilities.

At the Council Meeting of 6 December 2021, Council endorsed the business case for the construction of the Granite Hills Major Community Park. At the Council Meeting of 18 July 2022, Council endorsed the business case for the construction of the Aboriginal Gathering Place. Both business cases included a commitment for construction of trunk services infrastructure and civil works to service the above two facilities in the park.

At the Council Meeting of the 18 July 2023, Contract No 2022-107, Trunk Services Infrastructure & Civil Works for the Quarry Hills Regional Park was awarded to a civil contractor (Maca Pty Ltd) in July 2023. The contract was later terminated due to unresolved issues with regards to the Ausnet high voltage power supply through the site and its impact to the contract works. Negotiations with Ausnet have progressed and their requirements have now been defined in relation to the relocation of the high voltage powerline through the site. On this basis, the project has been re-tendered along with a greater scope of work that includes the access road and car park to the Aboriginal Gathering Place (which were originally to be tendered separately).

The delivery of this contract will provide approximately 1200 meters of sealed access road, 149 car parks, a roundabout and 600 metres of sewer, water and telecommunication services. Provision has also been included for the installation of 1,000 meters of high voltage powerlines to resolve the conflicting issues with the current Ausnet high voltage powerline.

Public tenders for the contract closed on the 11 June 2024. The tendered prices and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachment.

### Evaluation

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 it 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 60%
- Capability 15%
- Capacity 15%
- 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 allocated weightings are standard as per Council's Procurement Procedures.

Only tenders that were conforming and competitive were fully scored. Tender submissions that were evaluated as non-conforming or not sufficiently competitive were set aside from further evaluation. In cases where this occurred the reasons for that outcome are detailed in the confidential attachment.

Council received six tender submissions, which were evaluated based on the contract conformance and evaluation criteria set out above. Out of six tender submissions only four tender submissions (Tenderer B, C, D and E) were considered to be conforming and competitive. Two tenderers (A and F) did not sufficiently meet the contract requirements or were significantly more than 20% above the average tender price.

Tenderer	Conforming	Competitive	Score	Rank
Tenderer A	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	88.2	1
2Construct Pty Ltd				
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	85.3	2
Tenderer D	Yes	Yes	88.2	1
Tenderer E	Yes	Yes	57.7	3
Tenderer F	Yes	No	N/A	N/A

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

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

The equal highest ranked tenderer was recommended for the award of this contract as they demonstrated greater capability and capacity as outlined in the confidential attachment and were better able to address the project risks.



# 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.

#### 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.

# Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

#### **Financial Management**

The financial details are included in the confidential attachment.

#### **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. In this instance, collaborative tendering was not undertaken in relation to this procurement because it is not listed in the Northern Council's Alliance consolidated contract register, and this contract relates to a unique need for the City of Whittlesea.

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. However, community consultation and engagement was undertaken for the development of the Granite Hills Major Community Park and the Quarry Hills Future Directions Plan, that included elements of this project.

#### **Other Principles for Consideration**

#### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.



(b) Council information must be publicly available unless—

(i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or

(ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.

#### **Council Policy Considerations**

#### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

The contract management incudes Key Performances Indicators that relate to the management of environment, waste and site throughout the contract. A comprehensive Environmental Management Plan will be prepared and implemented during the construction phase

### Social, Cultural and Health

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

#### Economic

Economic benefits will be realised through the construction activity. In addition, the project will provide infrastructure that will enable community use of the Granite Hills Major Community Park and the Aboriginal Gathering Place.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

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 communication channels and also to relevant stakeholders.

### **Critical Dates**

It is anticipated that the project will commence in late 2024 and be completed in mid-2025.



# **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. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Confidential Tender Evaluation Summary [**5.7.1** - 9 pages]



# 5.8 Contract Award: 2024-44 Peter Hopper Lake Rehabilitation Works

Director/Executive Manager:	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Report Author:	Coordinator Civil Engineering Delivery
In Attendance:	Manager Capital Delivery Unit Manager Engineering Design & Construction

This attachment has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 on the grounds that it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:

- (i) relates to trade secrets; or
- (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage.

### Executive Summary

It is proposed that Contract Number 2024-44 Peter Hopper Lake Rehabilitation Works, Mill Park is awarded to Field Form Pty Ltd for the lump price of \$2,533,035.95 (excluding GST).

The Tender Evaluation Panel advises that:

- This contract was publicly tendered on 24 April 2024 and tenders closed on 4 June 2024;
- Five tenders were received;
- The recommended tenderer is the highest ranked and has demonstrated the required capability, capacity and qualification;
- Collaborative tendering was not undertaken in relation to this procurement because this contract relates to a unique need for the City of Whittlesea; and
- This contract commits capital budget in the 2024-25 Council Budget.



# Officers' Recommendation

**THAT Council:** 

- 1. Resolve to award the Peter Hopper Lake Rehabilitation Works, Contract number 2024-44 to Field Form Pty Ltd at a lump sum price of \$2,533,036 excl. GST.
- 2. Note price variations will be in accordance with the provisions set out in the conditions of contract.
- 3. Approve the funding arrangements as detailed in the confidential attachment to this report.
- 4. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and execute the contract on behalf of Council.



# Background / Key Information

Peter Hopper Lake is situated in Redleap Recreation Reserve, Mill Park and is one of Council's largest waterbodies. It attracts visitors from the local community as well as beyond the municipality. The lake has experienced numerous algae outbreaks and water quality issues, impacting on local wildlife. The local community group, Friends of Peter Hopper Lake have advocated for the lake to be improved and Council has been successful in a \$2 million Federal Government grant to undertake these improvements.

The rehabilitation of the lake includes two main parts – the first part being desilting of the lake, which was recently completed separate to this contract. The purpose of this contract (2044-44) is to reconstruct the lake with a new lake bed profile to remove the central island and to also construct a new gross pollutant trap, sediment basin and raingarden to improve the quality of stormwater before it enters the lake.

Public tenders for the contract closed on 4 June 2024. 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 it 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 60%
- Capability 15%
- Capacity 15%
- 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 to achieve best value. The allocated weightings are standard as per Council's Procurement Procedures.

Only tenders that were conforming and competitive were fully scored. Tender submissions that were evaluated as non-conforming or not sufficiently competitive were set aside from further evaluation. In cases where this occurred the reasons for that outcome are detailed in the confidential attachment.



Council received five tender submissions, which were evaluated based on the evaluation criteria set out above and contract conformance. Out of five tender submissions only three tender submissions (Tenderer A, B and C) were considered to be conforming and competitive. Tenderer D and E were not sufficiently competitive as their prices were more than 20% above the average tender price and were not considered value for money.

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

Tenderer	Conforming	Competitive	Score	Rank
Tenderer A	Yes	Yes	76.31	1
Field Form Pty Ltd				
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	75.85	2
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	71.13	3
Tenderer D	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
Tenderer E	Yes	No	N/A	N/A

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

# Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

### Sustainable Environment

We prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, preserve local biodiversity, protect waterways and green space and address climate change.

This lake rehabilitation works will:

- improve stormwater quality that enters the lake to suit a range of purposes, including irrigation and ecological habitat;
- improve the amenity of the water body and attraction of desired ecology;
- substantially reduce the likelihood of toxic algal blooms and associated wildlife impact; and
- improve treatment of all stormwater discharged from the lake.

# Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

### **Financial Management**

Funding for this contract is available in the Capital Program. The total project cost is \$4.7M which includes a \$2M contribution from a Federal Government grant. Refer to the confidential attachment for further information.



# **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.

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.

However, community consultation and engagement was undertaken for the project development using a number of means as well as meetings with Mr Peter Hopper (former City Engineer of the City of Whittlesea) and also with the 'Friends of Peter Hopper Lake'.

### **Other Principles for Consideration**

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (c) The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.
- (d) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the Local Government Act or any other Act.

### **Council Policy Considerations**

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

A comprehensive environmental management plan will be prepared and implemented during the construction phase to ensure environmental, and biodiversity impact can be minimised. Ecologist will be engaged to monitor the construction activity to ensure the environmental management plan is implemented correctly.

The contract works are subject to the attainment of all permits and approvals.

### Social, Cultural and Health

This lake rehabilitation works will deliver a healthy lake and revitalise the lake ecosystem to ensure it becomes a thriving habitat for diverse flora and fauna. At the same time, the lake transformation will improve the lake amenity which further promotes the lake as a place for surrounding community to have social and cultural gathering.



# Economic

Economic benefits will be realised by utilising local businesses or subcontractors during the construction period.

# Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

A formal contract will be executed between Council and the successful tenderer prior to the works commencing.

# 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 communication channels and to relevant stakeholders.

### **Critical Dates**

It is anticipated the project will commence in September 2024 with a timeline for completion of mid-2025. However, this is subject to the attainment of all permits and approvals.

### **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. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - 2024 44 Tender Evaluation Summary [5.8.1 - 5 pages]



# 5.9 Regional Sports Precinct - Early Works Package Tender

**Director/Executive Manager:** Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Unit Manager Procurement

This attachment has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains private commercial information, being information provided by a business, commercial or financial undertaking that:

- (i) relates to trade secrets; or
- (ii) if released, would unreasonably expose the business, commercial or financial undertaking to disadvantage

**Executive Summary** 

This report summaries the evaluation of the tender submissions received for Tender 2024-37, Regional Sports Precinct - Early Works Package.

The tender evaluation panel advises that:

- 3 tenders were received.
- The recommended tender was the highest ranked and is considered best value.
- In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, this procurement process meets the requirements of collaborative procurement as it was or undertaken using the State Government Department of Transport Prequalified Panel arrangement.
- This contract relates to a unique need for the City of Whittlesea.
- This contract relates to a Federal or State Government grant funded project.

### **Officers' Recommendation**

THAT Council:

- Resolve to award the Regional Sports Precinct Early Works Package, Contract number 2024-37, to Unyte Southern Pty Ltd at a lump sum price of \$5,867,560 excl. GST.
- 2. Note price variations to be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the conditions of contract.
- 3. Approve the funding arrangements as detailed in the confidential attachment to this report.
- 4. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and execute the contract on behalf of Council.



# Background / Key Information

The purpose of this contract is to deliver the Early Works package as part of the Regional Sports Precinct project.

Tenders for the contract closed on 10 July 2024. 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 it 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 the standard criteria and weightings:

- Price 60%
- Capability 20%
- Capacity 15%
- Sustainability 5%

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.

Only tenders that were conforming and competitive were fully scored. Tender submissions that were evaluated as non-conforming or not sufficiently competitive were set aside from further evaluation. In cases where this occurred the reasons for that outcome are detailed in the confidential attachment.

Tenderer	Conforming	Competitive	Score	Rank
Tenderer A	Yes	Yes	96.1	1
Unyte Southern Pty Ltd				
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	79.3	2
Tenderer C	Yes	No	47.2	3

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

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



### 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.

# **Connected Communities**

We work to foster and inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

### 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.

# Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

### **Financial Management**

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the budget for RSP – Regional Sports Precinct.

### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

In accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, this procurement process meets the requirements of collaborative procurement as it was or undertaken using the State Government Department of Transport Prequalified Panel arrangement.

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.

### **Other Principles for Consideration**

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.



- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the Local Government Act or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

#### **Council Policy Considerations**

#### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

Considerations have been made to ensure that environmental sustainability practices are adopted which includes the reuse of excavated materials on-site, sourcing local quarry materials to reduce emissions, and use of recycled materials where practicable.

#### Social, Cultural and Health

Socially, supporting local talent through training programs and procuring materials from within the City of Whittlesea region.

#### Economic

Economically, to support and promote resource efficiency and stimulate the local economy by prioritising local suppliers and contractors.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

Contractor Management - Failure to manage contractors to deliver agreed outcomes. Suitably qualified, experienced, and supported Council staff will oversee the construction activities. The project will be delivered in partnership by contractors with a proven record for delivering projects of a similar scale and scope.

# 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 communication channels and also to relevant stakeholders.

### **Critical Dates**

It is anticipated that the project will commence in September 2024 with an estimated timeline of completion of April 2025.



# 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. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - RASC Early Works Package Tender Report [5.9.1 - 8 pages]



# 5.10 Terms of Reference - Whittlesea managed Advisory Committees

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

**Report Author:** 

Unit Manager Governance

**Executive Summary** 

In preparation for the return of elected Councillors a review of all external facing Community Advisory Committees (Committees) that require Councillor appointments was conducted.

Following the review, the following Terms of References (ToR) outlined in Table 1 required a refresh to ensure a consistent approach to enhanced governance and transparency practices, for example the expression of interest recruitment processes, membership eligibility, reporting back to Council and the requirement to have Committee agendas, minutes and membership being published on Council's website.

The ToR for the City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee, which is also an external facing Committe and represents a cross-section of the community to promote and administer the City of Whittlesea awards, had a slight delay with the review therefore will be presented to the incoming Council for their consideration and adoption.

Advisory Committee	Committee Summary
City of Whittlesea Business Advisory Panel	The Business Advisory Panel enables business members to work together with Council in delivering the key objective and advocacy for a Strong Local Economy (one of the four overarching objectives in the Council's 2040 Plan).
Visual Art & Civic History Collections Acquisitions Advisory Group	The Acquisitions Advisory Group is established to make recommendations to Council regarding acquisitions and deaccessions for the City of Whittlesea's Visual Art and Civic History Collections, as guided by the Visual Art and Civic History Collections Policy.
Whittlesea Reconciliation Group	The Group commenced in 2001 as a community-based committee to be a key reference group for Council on the continuing reconciliation process and to foster understanding of historical, cultural and contemporary issues impacting

### Table 1 - Advisory Committees



Advisory Committee	Committee Summary
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is a key
	reference group for Council.

# Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

- 1. Adopt the Terms of Reference at Attachments 1 to 3 to this report.
- 2. Note the Terms of References will come into effect upon the incoming Council appointing Councillor members to all Advisory Committees, external organisations, and Board at its December 2024 Council meeting.
- 3. Note the City of Whittlesea Community Awards Committee Terms of Reference will be presented to the incoming Council for their consideration and adoption.
- 4. Note the Terms of References at Attachments 1 to 3 will be made publicly available on Council's website after the December 2024 Council meeting.



# Background / Key Information

Council has established several Committees to facilitate community participation and input into policy and service development, to assist with facility management, projects and event management.

These Committees typically comprise one or more Councillor, Council Officers and a number of community representatives. The community representatives must be local residents or stakeholders appointed in their own right or representatives of service authorities, support agencies or community organisations.

The main enhancements to the Terms of References outlined in Table 1 of the Executive Summary are:

- A consistent structure of each Terms of Reference
- Inclusion of a Transparency section that includes what will be published on Council's website
- Speaking times to ensure all members have an opportunity to speak
- Recruitment process via an expression of interest and eligibility of individuals wishing to be appointed
- Conflict of interest and the declaration of any general or material interest
- Reporting requirements of the Advisory Committees to Council on a bimonthly basis outlining the activities undertaken

### 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.

### Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

#### **Financial Management**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

The is no community consultation or engagement required for the review of the Terms of Reference.

The amended Terms of Reference were consulted with relevant staff and the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group.



### **Other Principles for Consideration**

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (b) Priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

#### **Public Transparency Principles**

(a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.

#### **Council Policy Considerations**

#### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

No implications.

### Social, Cultural and Health

In relation to the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG) Terms of Reference, consideration was given to the cultural knowledge Aboriginal members bring to the Committee. As such, it was determined, pending Council's adoption of the ToR, that a \$100 sitting fee would be provided to Aboriginal members for each full WRG meeting attended.

#### Economic

No implications.

#### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

#### Implementation Strategy

#### Communication

Following the Council meeting, the adopted Terms of References will be communicated to each applicable Committee and published on Council's website after the December 2024 Council meeting.

### **Critical Dates**

The Terms of References are being considered by Council at its August meeting to ensure the incoming Council are setup for success when appointed to the range of Advisory Committees.



# 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. Whittlesea Business Advisory Panel Terms of Reference [5.10.1 5 pages]
- 2. Visual Art Civic History Collections Acquisitions Advisory Group Terms of Reference [5.10.2 5 pages]
- 3. Whittlesea Reconciliation Group Terms of Reference [5.10.3 7 pages]



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# TERMS OF REFERENCE City of Whittlesea Business Advisory Panel

#### Purpose

The Business Advisory Panel (the Panel) will enable business members to work together with Council in delivering the key objectives and advocacy for a Strong Local Economy (one of the four overarching objectives in Council's 2040 Plan (the Plan).

The Plan, endorsed in 2020, outlines the need for the City of Whittlesea to be home to successful, innovative local businesses, who offer employment and education for our community.

#### Delegation

The Advisory Panel has no formal delegation, and their role is to provide advice to the Council or a Delegated Committee.

Membership and TenureMembership is comprised of up to nineteen members, including:

- a) Up to two City of Whittlesea Councillors
- b) Director Planning and Development
- c) Manager Economic Development
- d) Up to 15 Business Industry Professionals.

Each representative shall be appointed for a term of two years with all positions undertaken on a voluntary basis. Members can renominate for an additional term. Should a position not be filled an Expression of Interest process will be undertaken.

Councillor representatives will be appointed annually for a one-year term.

#### **Code of Conduct**

All members are expected to:

- Operate with integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and openness
- Declare any potential conflict of interest
- Dedicate appropriate time and effort to the functions of the Panel
- Prepare for and actively participate in meetings
- Exercise independent judgment
- Maintain effective working relationships with each other.
- All members are also bound by Council's Code of Conduct.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

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#### Chair

The position of Chair will be an independent member (not Councillor) and will be based on nominations received and voted on by members. The position of Chair will be reviewed on an annual basis.

#### Panel

The role of the Panel is to provide considered advice, insight and feedback to Council:

- On the current outlook for the local economy
- On industry specific opportunities and challenges that impact the local business community
- On policies and strategic objective involving its business community
- That will help develop new incentives and programs, assisting activities from the Economic Development Department
- Deliver advocacy efforts in partnership with Council
- Act as a sounding board for future Council funded proposals and projects.

Where the Panel is unable to reach consensus, a vote shall be conducted, and a simple majority shall be sufficient. Council officers are not entitled to vote.

The Panel's purpose and objectives will be underpinned by a Terms of Reference.

Council will provide secretariat support and officers will coordinate membership of the Panel and provide expertise and context as required. Council officers will prepare documentation including meeting agendas, required readings and all other documents.

#### **Ordinary Meetings**

The Business Advisory Panel is required to keep minutes of its meetings and will formally report to Council at least biannually on its activities. These reports will summarise the Advisory Panel's activities and progress. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every four years or more frequently, if required, and provide recommendations to Council on proposed improvements. Changes to the Terms of Reference that have no material effect may be made by the Manager Economic Development.

- The agenda and supporting documentation will be delivered to Panel members one week in advance of each meeting.
- Meeting agendas will be set by the Manager Economic Development, in consultation with the Panel Chair.
- All members will be asked to provide any meeting agenda items at least eight days prior to the meeting date.
- Minutes will be prepared and disseminated within one week of the meeting. These Minutes will be titled a 'Record of Proceedings', reflecting the legal status of the Panel in being an advisory body, providing advice to Council.

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#### **Meeting Frequency**

- The Panel will generally meet up to five times annually
- Meetings will be approximately two hours in duration
- Other representatives will attend meetings as appropriate or requested
- Meetings will take place across the City of Whittlesea with the Economic Development Department coordinating locations and venues
- Further Panel meetings may arise from time to time as issues dictate
- Members of the Panel may be approached to provide further input into the development of programs or issues that fall outside of the formal meeting cycle.

#### Quorum

A quorum of members must be present before a meeting can proceed. A quorum is half plus one of the business representatives in attendance. When a quorum is not achieved the members of the Panel may, at the discretion of the Chairperson, continue the meeting, but any decisions made at the meeting must be ratified at the next Panel meeting, or by email within one month.

#### Notice and Attendance of Meetings

- Within reason members are expected to attend all meetings
- If a business member fails to attend two consecutive meetings a new member will be sought through an expression of interest process.

#### Transparency

In order to maintain transparency of the operations and in alignment with Council's Governance Rules the following information is to be published on Council's website:

- The Terms of Reference
- The names of all members (where appropriate)
- Minutes of meetings
- Reports of activities (as reported bimonthly to Council) as prepared by Council Officers.

#### **Speaking Times**

The Chair is to ensure:

- only one member is speaking at a time- when any member is speaking all other members are not to speak;
- that one item is discussed at a time;
- that everyone has an opportunity to participate and speak on agenda items; and
- that input is respected even when there is a disagreement.

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#### **Recruitment Process**

Council officers will facilitate the recruitment of members. Applications to the Panel will be via an Expression of Interest responding to selection criteria. The vacancy will be advertised on the Council's website.

If through resignation or completion of a full-term vacancies become available, the following recruitment process will be followed for all eligible individual/s.

#### Eligible individuals:

- A local business owner, operator or manager located in the City of Whittlesea for the duration of the appointment
- Willing to commit a minimum 10 hours per annum (five meetings annually) and additional hours when required per annum for post meeting related activities
- Willing to attend key business-related functions and events (e.g. Women in Business)
- Willing to act as an ambassador for the Panel and Council's business-related activities
- Willing to participate in and provide input to stakeholder engagement activities to the support the strategic activities of Council. This will include deliberative engagement activities of Council as required by the *Local Government Act 2020*.
- Eligible members must not be a current employee of City of Whittlesea or an employee who has left City of Whittlesea within a two-year period.

#### Business representatives must have:

- Demonstrated business experience
- An understanding of the key issues facing businesses in Whittlesea and the northern region
- An understanding of the challenges and issues experienced by businesses within their industry
- Established networks and/or affiliations with peak industry associations
- The ability to work collaboratively with other businesses, government and key stakeholders.

#### **Co-opted Members:**

The Panel may invite suitably skilled persons to a meeting of the Panel in an advisory capacity, for a specified purpose and for a specified period. Co-opted members are not entitled to vote.

#### **Resignation or expulsion**

Committee members may resign at any time in writing to the Manager Economic Development.

Membership may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- The member's business (and/or employment) is no longer within the City of Whittlesea.
- Failure to attend two consecutive meetings without prior notice.
- The member does not declare a conflict of interest, breaches confidentiality or exhibits behaviour unbecoming a member of this Panel.

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• The member expresses views on behalf of the Panel or Council.

If members resign or Council is required to terminate membership of any Advisory Panel member, the vacancy will be advertised on the Council's website.

#### **Conflicts of Interest**

The City of Whittlesea is committed to conflicts of interest (COI) are avoided and managed as they arise.

Declaring COI is applicable to all members of this Advisory Panel.

**General Conflict** - You have a General Conflict if an impartial fair-minded person would consider that your private interests could result in you acting in a way that is contrary to your Public Interest Duty.

**Material Conflict** - You have a Material Conflict if you or a Family Member or Close Friend could gain a benefit or suffer a loss (directly or indirectly) depending on the outcome.

In the event of a COI arising, a Panel member will disclose the interest prior to the matter being considered. The Chair will determine if the member remains or leave the room whilst the matter is discussed.

Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the applicable meeting.

#### **Reporting Requirements**

- The details of the meetings including topics discussed, attendees and any conflicts of interest declared will be reported by Council Officers within the Reports of Activities (as reported bimonthly to Council).
- Meeting minute records and reports are to be sent to Governance for inclusion on the website.
- Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the meeting and record whether the person who disclosed a conflict of interest was excused from meeting for the relevant discussion.

#### **Reimbursement of Expenses**

In accordance with Council's Volunteer Policy, individual members of the Panel attending as volunteers, may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that have arisen whilst undertaking duties on behalf of Council. Prior authorisation by a nominated council officer must be given, otherwise claims for out-of-pocket expenses may not be met.

#### **Public Statements**

Members of the Committee will agree to follow Council's Communication Policy and cannot make public statements on behalf of Council.

#### Review

This Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 4 years, at the beginning of each new Council term, or as otherwise required.

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# TERMS OF REFERENCE Visual Art & Civic History Collections Acquisitions Advisory Group

### Purpose

The Acquisitions Advisory Group (AAG) is established to make recommendations to Council regarding acquisitions and deaccessions for the City of Whittlesea's Visual Art and Civic History Collections, as guided by the Visual Art and Civic History Collections Policy.

### Delegation

The AAG has no formal delegation, and their role is to provide advice to the Council or a Delegated Committee.

### Membership and Tenure

Membership is comprised of six members, including:

- a) Three community members to collectively represent a diverse range of arts and cultural expertise. At least one of these members to be a practicing artist.
- b) Two industry professionals with demonstrated experience in curation, collection management and/or gallery management.
- c) One Council Officer or their delegate.

Each representative shall be appointed for a term of two years with all positions undertaken on a voluntary basis.

The meetings will be chaired by the City of Whittlesea Officer representative.

#### **Co-opted Members**

The Group may invite suitably skilled persons to a meeting of the AAG in an advisory capacity, for a specified purpose and for a specified period. Co-opted members are not entitled to vote.

The Cultural Collections Curator will coordinate membership of the group and provide expertise and context as required. Council officers are not entitled to vote.

#### **Code of Conduct**

All members are bound by the Council's Code of Conduct and are expected to:

- Operate with integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and openness;
- Declare any potential conflict of interest;
- Dedicate appropriate time and effort to the functions of the AAG;
- Prepare for and actively participate in meetings;
- Exercise independent judgment;
- Maintain effective working relationships with each other.

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### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of the AAG is to:

- Make recommendations to Council for acquisitions and deaccessions over \$2,000 in value for the Visual Art and Civic History collections;
- Provide a forum for any matters or issues arising in relation to the Visual Art and Civic History components of the Cultural Collection;
- Be conversant with relevant Council plans and policies, particularly those related to the arts and the Cultural Collection;
- Be aware of the activities, interests and concerns of the arts and cultural organisations and groups in the municipality, and the broader community in general;
- Act as a champion and advocate for the arts in the City of Whittlesea.

Decisions for recommendations for acquisition will be made by consensus. Where the group is unable to reach consensus, a vote shall be conducted, and a simple majority shall be sufficient.

The Cultural Collections Curator will prepare documentation including meeting agendas, required readings and all other documents.

### **Reimbursement of Expenses**

In accordance with Council's Volunteer Policy, individual members of the AAG attending as volunteers, may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that have arisen whilst undertaking duties on behalf of Council. Prior authorisation by a nominated council officer must be given, otherwise claims for out-of-pocket expenses may not be met.

### **Ordinary Meetings**

- The AAG will meet two times per annum, with meetings being convened at other times if required;
- Meetings will be 1 to 1.5 hours in duration;
- Other representatives will attend meetings as appropriate or requested.

### Quorum

A quorum of members must be present before a meeting can proceed. A quorum is half plus one of the memberships. When a quorum is not achieved the members of the AAG may, at the discretion of the Chairperson, continue the meeting, but any decisions made at the meeting must be ratified at the next AAG meeting, or by email within one month.

### Notice and Attendance of Meetings

- Within reason members are expected to attend all meetings;
- If a community member fails to attend two consecutive meetings a new member will be sought through an expression of interest process;
- The agenda and supporting documentation will be delivered to Group members one week in advance of each meeting;

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 Minutes of Group meetings will be prepared and disseminated within one week of the meeting.

### Transparency

In order to maintain transparency of the operations and in alignment with Council's Governance Rules the following information is to be published on Council's website:

- The Terms of Reference;
- The names of all members (where appropriate);
- Minutes of meetings;
- Reports of activities (as reported biannually to Council) as prepared by Council Officers.

### **Speaking Times**

The Chair is to ensure:

- only one member is speaking at a time- when any member is speaking all other members are not to speak;
- that one item is discussed at a time;
- that everyone has an opportunity to participate and speak on agenda items; and
- that input is respected and congruent with the code of conduct even when there is a disagreement.

**Recruitment Process** If vacancies become available, it will be advertised as an Expression of Interest (EOI) on the Council's website and the EOI process will be followed and conducted by Council as follows:

- Potential members will be required to complete the EOI form.
- The appointed Council Officer will consult with the Chair on all submissions received.
- The Chair and appointed Council Officer will present the recommendations to the Committee for endorsement.
- The Director Community Wellbeing or their delegate will seek formal resolution of the Council.
- The appointed Council Officer will liaise with applicants and notify them of the outcome.

### Eligible individuals:

- Live, work or study in the City of Whittlesea for the duration of the AAG's appointment
- Are committed to the AGG purpose, vision and aims;
- Are committed to the AGG Code of Conduct;
- Are reasonable committed to attending all ordinary meetings and all AAG planned events;
- Must not be a current employee of the City of Whittlesea or an ex-employee or former Councillor who has left the City of Whittlesea within a two-year period.

### **Resignation or expulsion**

Committee members may resign at any time in writing to the City of Whittlesea officer representative.

Membership may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

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- The member's no longer lives, works or studies within the City of Whittlesea.
- Failure to attend two consecutive meetings without prior notice.
- The member does not declare a conflict of interest, breaches confidentiality or exhibits behaviour unbecoming as a member of the Group.
- The member expresses views on behalf of the AAG or Council.

If members resign or Council is required to terminate membership of any Committee member, the vacancy will be advertised on the Council's website.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The City of Whittlesea is committed to ensuring that its decision-making has integrity, is fair and is in the best interests of the community and that in making decisions conflicts of interest (COI) are avoided and managed as they arise.

Declaring COI is applicable to all members of the AAG.

A group member is considered to have a conflict of interest if the member:

- has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the matter; and/or
- has a direct connection with a proposed artist/artwork; and/or
- believes that their interest in the matter may conflict with their proper performance of duties in respect to the matter.

### Disclosure

If a member has a conflict of interest with a matter that is to be, or is likely to be, discussed at a Group meeting, the member must:

- disclose the nature of the conflict of interest immediately before the discussion; or
- if not intending to be present at the meeting, disclose the nature of the conflict of interest to the Cultural Collections Curator before the meeting is held.

While any discussion or vote is taken relating to the matter, the member must:

- leave the room and notify the Chairperson that they are doing so; and
- remain outside the room or other area in view or hearing of the room.

After the discussion, the Chairperson must notify the member that they may return to the room. The declaration and nature of the conflict of interest must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**General Conflict** - You have a General Conflict if an impartial fair-minded person would consider that your private interests could result in you acting in a way that is contrary to your Public Interest Duty.

**Material Conflict** - You have a Material Conflict if you or a Family Member or Close Friend could gain a benefit or suffer a loss (directly or indirectly) depending on the outcome.

For more information on COI's please refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy Guidelines 2023.

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Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the applicable meeting.

#### **Reporting Requirements**

- The details of the meetings including topics discussed, attendees and any conflicts of interest declared will be reported by Council Officers within the Reports of Activities (as reported bimonthly to Council).
- Meeting minute records and reports are to be sent to Governance for inclusion on the website.
- Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the meeting and record whether the person who disclosed a conflict of interest was excused from meeting for the relevant discussion.

#### **Public Statements**

Members of the AAG will agree to follow Council's Communication Policy and cannot make public statements on behalf of Council.

#### Review

This Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 4 years, at the beginning of each new Council term, or as otherwise required.

Date of Adoption

Next Review Date

**Directorate Responsible** 

**Department Responsible** 

20 August 2024

**Creative Communities** 

August 2028

**Community Wellbeing** 

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# TERMS OF REFERENCE Whittlesea Reconciliation Group

### Acknowledgement

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.

#### Background

As defined by Reconciliation Australia; reconciliation is about building better relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal Peoples for the benefit of all Australians.

City of Whittlesea (Council), at its meeting on 28 August 2001 resolved to establish the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group (WRG). The WRG commenced in November 2001 as a community-based committee to be a key reference group for Council on the continuing reconciliation process and to foster understanding of historical, cultural and contemporary issues.

At its meeting on 17 September 2002 Council formally adopted an inaugural Indigenous Reconciliation Policy, the Australian Declaration towards Reconciliation and the Statement of Commitment to Reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This Council resolution formally cemented Council's reconciliation journey.

At its meeting on 25 August 2015 Council formally adopted the Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy building on the inaugural 2001, the updated policy states:

The City of Whittlesea values local Aboriginal communities and cultures; Council recognises they hold a special place as the First Peoples of Australia. Council is committed to inclusivity, equity and engagement with local Aboriginal people and communities.

A key objective of the 2015 Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy is to provide ongoing support to the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group.

#### Vision

The vision of the WRG is a connected community respecting Aboriginal Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia, their history and culture through actions supporting reconciliation.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the WRG is to provide advice to Council and assist Council to increase understanding of Aboriginal Peoples and Aboriginal culture, as well as bring all people together to support reconciliation.

The WRG embeds a genuine partnership approach with the Aboriginal community in the development of Council's strategies and plans.

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### Delegation

The Committee has no formal delegation. Their role is to provide advice to:

- Enable an Aboriginal voice on and through Council policies, programs and strategic plans;
- Promote involvement of the local Aboriginal community in significant events and celebrations;
- Foster local community awareness of reconciliation issues;
- Promote and strengthen Aboriginal Peoples' sense of belonging and connectedness;
- Build networks and relationships within and across communities;
- Support actions identified from the Aboriginal Action Plan.

The WRG will be provided support by Council Officers, who will primarily:

- Provide secretarial support to the WRG;
- Source requested information to inform WRG meetings and advice to Council.

### Membership and Tenure

Membership of community members will be appointed for an initial period of one year, with the option to extend the appointment for a further two by one-year appointments, for a maximum member term of three years (1+1+1).

Individual members may reapply for a further term, after a period of three years as a non-member. At Council's discretion, further extension of a member's tenure may be considered and approved, dependent on their skill, experience and contribution.

Efforts will be made to ensure the membership of the WRG is diverse and representative of the local community including young people, Traditional Owners, people of all abilities, Elders and culturally diverse individuals.

The Director Community Wellbeing will act as a sponsor and Co-Chair to the group (non-voting member):

- In addition to a Councillor, the group will consist of up to 16 voting members (half of the voting members will be Aboriginal members);
- No more than one representative from any one community group or organisation will be appointed.

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### Code of Conduct

All members are expected to:

- Operate with integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty and openness.
- Declare any potential conflict of interest.
- Dedicate appropriate time and effort to the functions of the Committee.
- Prepare for and actively participate in meetings.
- Exercise independent judgment.
- Maintain effective working relationships with each other.
- All members are also bound by Council's Code of Conduct.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs will:

- Chair each meeting (including opening and closing meetings). In the absence of the Director
  of Community Wellbeing, a City of Whittlesea Councillor will Co-Chair with the WRG CoChair.
- Follow the agreed agenda, keep discussions focused, inclusive and respectful.
- Ensure only one member speaks at a time.
- Ensure only one item is discussed at a time.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate and speak on agenda items.
- Ensure that member input is respected and congruent with the City of Whittlesea Employee Code of Conduct.

### Minute taker and meeting organiser

The supporting Council Officers are responsible for minute-taker duties, recording:

- Main points of discussion;
- Attendance and apologies;
- Date, time and place of meetings;
- Confirmation of accuracy of previous minutes;
- Declarations of Conflict of Interest;
- Correspondence;
- Reports to be tabled by the Co-Chairs, and other relevant undertakings.

### **Proxy Voting**

- Absent members may vote via proxy through completion and signature of the proxy voting template.
- Proxy votes will be taken 'after' an item is discussed but 'before' voting is taken.
- Verbal disclosure of proxy votes will be made at the commencement of an agenda item discussion.

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### **Ordinary Meetings**

An annual schedule of six ordinary meetings will be held. Additional meetings and an annual planning meeting will be scheduled by agreement between the Co-Chairs.

WRG meetings may be held in person, online or in hybrid format and are closed to the public. Working groups may be established as required for a specific purpose and on a limited time frame to enable a focus on a specific task or project. These are subject to approval by the Director Community Wellbeing after consideration of their specific need, the availability of resources to support their operation and agreed time frames and tenure.

Special guests / subject matter experts may be invited to meetings at the discretion of Co-Chairs.

#### Quorum

A quorum shall comprise of 3 Aboriginal and 3 non-Aboriginal members, plus one additional voting member.

If there is no quorum the Co-Chairs may choose to continue the meeting informally, but decisions must be ratified at the next scheduled meeting.

#### Sitting Fee for Aboriginal Community Membership

In recognition of the intellectual property of Aboriginal members, and taking into account the multiple responsibilities, Council will provide Aboriginal WRG members with a sitting fee of \$100.00 for each full WRG meeting attended.

The sitting fee will be paid to members bi-annually based on the number of meetings attended. Payments will be made to a member's nominated bank account.

#### **Notice of Meetings**

- Members will be given notice of meetings at least 2 weeks prior via email.
- An annual meeting schedule will be provided to all members during the November meeting.
- Meeting agendas will be developed by Council Officers in collaboration with the Co-Chairs.
- An agenda and meeting pack with all required readings will be distributed to all members at least one week before the meeting.
- People wishing to nominate agenda items are required to provide notice in writing to Council Officers one week before the scheduled meeting. Additional items can be tabled during general business if time permits.

#### Attendance

• All members are required to attend a minimum of four meetings per year, otherwise they will be automatically disqualified from the WRG.

#### Absenteeism

• All members are required to attend a minimum of four ordinary meetings per year.

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- Members who miss two consecutive meetings without apology, they will have disqualified themselves from membership.
- An annual schedule of six ordinary meetings will be held. Additional meetings and an annual planning meeting will be scheduled by agreement between the Co-Chairs.
- Members may attend by hybrid methods should they not be able to attend in person and are closed to the public.
- Working groups may be established as required for a specific purpose and on a limited time frame to enable a focus on a specific task or project. These are subject to approval by the Director Community Wellbeing after consideration of their specific need, the availability of resources to support their operation and agreed time frames and tenure.
- Special guests / subject matter experts may be invited to meetings at the discretion of Co-Chairs.
- Members are to be given notice of meetings at least 2 weeks prior via email.
- A set agenda and meeting pack with all required readings will be distributed all members at least one week before the meeting.

### Transparency

In order to maintain transparency of WRG operations and in alignment with Council's Governance Rules, the following information is to be published on Council's website:

- WRG Terms of Reference.
- The names of all members (where appropriate).
- Minutes of WRG meetings.
- Reports of WRG activities (as reported biannually to Council) prepared by Council officers in collaboration with the Co-Chairs.

### **Speaking Times**

- only one member is speaking at a time- when any member is speaking all other members are not to speak;
- that one item is discussed at a time;
- that everyone has an opportunity to participate and speak on agenda items; and
- that input is respected and congruent with the code of conduct even when there is a disagreement.

### **Recruitment Process**

If members resign or Council is required to terminate membership of any Committee member, the vacancy will be advertised on the Council's website.

### Eligible individuals:

- Must follow the Expression of Interest process outlined below.
- Live, work or study in the City of Whittlesea for the duration of their WRG term.
- Are committed to the WRG purpose, vision and aims.
- Are committed to the City of Whittlesea Employee Code of Conduct.

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- Are committed to attending a minimum of four ordinary meetings per year and all WRG planned events.
- Must not be a current employee of the City of Whittlesea or an ex-employee or former Councillor who has left the City of Whittlesea within a two-year period.
- Must have current Police and Working with Children Checks.

### Expression of Interest (EOI) Process:

If vacancies become available, it will be advertised as an Expression of Interest (EOI) on the Council's website and the EOI process will be followed and conducted by Council as follows:

- 1. Individuals wishing to join the group must complete the WRG Expression of Interest (EOI) form and submit it to the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Unit.
- 2. Council Officers will consult with WRG Co-chairs on all EOI received.
- 3. Co-Chairs supported by Council Officers will present the EOI recommendations to the WRG members for endorsement.
- 4. The Director Community Wellbeing as Co-Chair will seek Council approval through the CEO.
- 5. Council Officers will liaise with applicants and notify them of the outcome.

Council Officers will facilitate the recruitment of new members with input from WRG members. Council officers will ensure promotion of membership opportunities through networks, media channels, local schools, Council's website and other mediums as appropriate.

### Co-Chair appointment and tenure

The WRG will be Co-Chaired by the Director of Community Wellbeing and a member of the WRG.

A non-Council WRG Co-Chair will be nominated (self-nominations are accepted) and voted by members of the group at the first meeting following the annual appointment of Councillors to committees (usually November/December). Where possible, the non-Council WRG Co-Chair, will be nominated from the Aboriginal member representatives.

The appointment of the WRG member Co-Chair will be for a term of one year.

### **Resignation or expulsion**

Committee members may resign at any time in writing to the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal Communities Unit.

Membership may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- The member's no longer lives, works or studies within the City of Whittlesea.
- Failure to attend two consecutive meetings without prior notice.
- The member does not declare a conflict of interest, breaches confidentiality or exhibits behaviour unbecoming as a member of the Committee.
- The member expresses views on behalf of the Committee or Council.

If members resign or Council is required to terminate membership of any Committee member, the vacancy will be advertised on the Council's website.

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### **Conflicts of Interest**

The City of Whittlesea is committed to ensuring that its decision-making has integrity, is fair and is in the best interests of the community and that in making decisions conflicts of interest (COI) are avoided and managed as they arise.

Declaring COI is applicable to all members of this committee.

**General Conflict** - You have a General Conflict if an impartial fair-minded person would consider that your private interests could result in you acting in a way that is contrary to your Public Interest Duty.

**Material Conflict** - You have a Material Conflict if you or a Family Member or Close Friend could gain a benefit or suffer a loss (directly or indirectly) depending on the outcome.

For more information on COI's please refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy Guidelines 2023.

Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the applicable meeting.

#### **Reporting Requirements**

- Meeting minute records and reports are to be sent to Council for inclusion on the public record.
- Disclosed COIs are to be noted in the minutes of the applicable meeting and record whether the person who disclosed a conflict of interest was excused from meeting for the relevant discussion.
- Written reports of the Committee must include any disclosures of conflicts of interest and the outcome.

### Budget

- The WRG will make recommendations to Council regarding the annual reconciliation program.
- Financial recommendations will be made by consensus at WRG meetings. In instances where decisions cannot be reached the nominated Councillor will cast the final and decisive vote.

#### **Public Statements**

Members of the Committee will agree to follow **Council's media policy** and cannot make public statements on behalf of Council.

#### Review

This Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 4 years, at the beginning of each new Council term, or as otherwise required.

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## 5.11 Governance Report

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

**Report Author:** 

Unit Manager Governance

### Executive Summary

In accordance with best practice, good governance principles, transparent and accountable reporting, officers deem it appropriate to consolidate governance and administrative reports into one standing report to provide a single reporting mechanism for a range of statutory compliance, transparency and governance matters. This also ensures compliance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council's Governance Rules and related regulations.

The purpose of this report is to provide information and endorsement or noting for the following related matters:

- Summary of Informal Meetings of Administrators.
- Five Council policies and two Council Strategies which have been identified as no longer relevant to Council's function.
- Instrument of Sub-Delegation under the Environment Protection Act 2017 (s18).
- Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (s11A).
- Election Period Policy seeking endorsement to go out for community engagement.
- 2024-25 Statutory Fees set by State Government, effective 1 July 2024.
- Findon Pony Club location, transition and future sale of land.

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



### Officers' Recommendation

### THAT Council:

- 1. Note the Governance Report for August 2024.
- 2. Note the summary of Informal Meetings of Administrators for the period June to August 2024 at Attachment 1.
- 3. Resolve to rescind the following policies and strategies:
  - a) Capital Management Policy;
  - b) Council Official Logo Policy;
  - c) Multiple Sports Strategy;
  - d) Aboriginal Reconciliation Policy;
  - e) Soccer Strategy;
  - f) Sports Club Contribution Policy; and
  - g) Sports Lighting Policy.
- 4. Resolve to delegate to the members of staff holding the relevant positions the powers, duties and functions set out in the Instrument of Sub-Delegation (S18) under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (s18) attached at Attachment 2.
- 5. Resolve to commence operation of the Instrument of Sub-Delegation (S18) under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* at Attachment 2 immediately upon the common seal of Council being affixed to the Instrument.
- 6. Resolves to appoint the Council Officer as an Authorised Officer as set out in the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (s11A) under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* at Attachment 3.
- 7. Resolve to commence the operation of the Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (s11A) under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* at Attachment
  3 immediately upon the common seal of Council being affixed to the Instrument.
- Resolve to release the amended Election Period Policy at Attachment 4 for community feedback between the period 21 August 2024 to 27 August 2024 on Council's Engage web page. Note following engagement, a further report will be presented at a future Council meeting seeking adoption of the revised Election Period Policy.
- 9. Note the State Government Statutory Fees came into effect on 1 July 2024 and will be made available on Council's website.
- 10. Note during the adoption of the 2021-22 Budget, officers were to report back to Council on the status of the Findon Pony Club. An updated status is outlined in the body of this report.



### Background / Key Information

### Informal Meetings of Administrators

Chapter 5 of the Council Governance Rules requires a summary of the matters discussed at a meeting of Councillors (Administrators) that:

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors (Administrators);
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- is not a Council meeting or Delegated Committee meeting.

The summary of matters discussed at the meeting must be:

- tabled quarterly at Council meetings; and
- recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

The record of Informal Meetings of Councillors (Administrators) at Attachment 1 is reported to Council in accordance with this requirement.

### **Rescinding of Council Policies and Strategies**

In May 2024, officers commenced a review of all Council policies and strategies with the main purpose of rescinding older policies and strategy documents that are outdated and covered by other existing policies, strategies or plans.

This prompted a large-scale review of existing policies to determine whether they are current, need to be updated, or are obsolete and able to be rescinded. During the review, five Council policies and two Council strategies are identified as no longer relevant to Council's function or are covered by other existing policies or plans.

Table 1 lists Council policies and strategies identified for rescission, the rationale for rescinding and where the content is now documented / located.

Policy Name	Date of Council Endorsement	Rationale for Rescission	New Location
Capital	04/07/2020	Policy has been replaced	Borrowing Policy
Management Policy		by the Borrowing Policy	and Investment
		and Investment Policy	Policy
Council Official Logo	21/06/2021	Policy has been	Communications
Policy		integrated into the	Policy
		Communications Policy	

### Table 1: Council Policies and Strategies for Rescission



Policy Name	Date of Council	<b>Rationale for Rescission</b>	New Location
	Endorsement		
Multiple Sports	08/08/2017	The policy has been	Active Whittlesea
Strategy		integrated into the	Policy
		Active Whittlesea Policy	
Aboriginal	25/08/2015	The policy has been	Aboriginal Action
Reconciliation Policy		integrated into the	Plan
		Aboriginal Action Plan	
Soccer Strategy	03/04/2018	The strategy has been	Active Whittlesea
		integrated into the	Policy
		Active Whittlesea Policy	
Sports Club	25/03/2019	The policy has been	Active Whittlesea
Contribution Policy		integrated into the	Policy
		Active Whittlesea Policy	
Sports Lighting	07/12/2020	The policy has been	Active Whittlesea
Policy		integrated into the	Policy
		Active Whittlesea Policy	

### S18 Instrument of Sub-Delegation under the Environment Protection Act 2017

The instrument of sub-delegation under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* ensures staff are exercising the correct powers, duties and functions on behalf of Council.

Delegations are made to positions, not to individuals ensuring they do not become obsolete or ineffective in the event of a position being vacant or a delegate being absent on leave. In such instances, delegated powers are automatically transferred to staff acting in their positions.

The Instruments of Delegations are reviewed to reflect either recent changes in legislation or after organisational structural changes are made to position titles. The Instrument of Sub-Delegation under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* was last adopted by Council on 6 September 2021.

The most recent review and updated Instrument of Sub-Delegation under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* at Attachment 2 included various changes to position titles because of recent position realignments and adding limitations for each nominated position.

## S11(A) Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the Planning and Environment Act 1987

Section 188(2)(c) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires Council, by resolution, appoint authorised officers to exercise their powers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This power cannot be delegated to the CEO.



The Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 has been prepared at Attachment 3 for a new member of staff who requires authorisation in relation to the administration and enforcement of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and carry out the functions outlined in section 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020.* 

### **Election Period Policy**

In June 2024 the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024* passed through Parliament amending the Election Period commencement date for the October 2024 General Local Elections.

The Election Period commencement date is now set for 17 September 2024 commencing at 12 noon, previously it was 24 September 2024.

To ensure Council's Election Period Policy aligns with the Act, minor amendments have been made to the Application of Policy section.

### 2024-25 Statutory Fees

At the 21 May 2024 Council meeting, Council adopted fees and charges of a statutory and non-statutory nature as part of the 2024-25 budget. The statutory fees are made by the State Government in accordance with legislative requirements and are updated and effective as at 1 July each year.

Of note, the Fees and Charges Scheduled adopted as part of the 2024-25 budget contained a statement that the statutory fees, effective 1 July 2024 will be updated on Council's website.

For transparency, officers are formally advising the statutory fees as set by the State Government, effective 1 July 2024, will be reflected in Council's Fees and Charges Schedule and made available on Council's website.

### Findon Pony Club

The Findon Pony Club have used the land at 70W Regent Street Mernda since 1964, and the land at 65W Regent Street until recently. The Club undertakes a range of community activities including monthly meets, providing opportunities for local community members including those who do not own a horse to participate and also host regular events such as an Easter Egg hunt as well as Come and Try Days.

Since 2012 the Club has been aware of the growth boundary expansion across several areas including Mernda and the impact on this site and the need for the Club to relocate.



In 2019 the land was formally rezoned from a Farming Zone to a general Residential Zone designation and an independent feasibility study was undertaken which outlined there was no other Council land suitable for use by the Club. Council officers have worked with the club for a number of years and both initiated and supported feasibility studies and masterplans to explore multiple alternative sites for relocation. During this time the Club's lease agreement for the use of the site at Regent Street, Mernda has received multiple extensions whilst Council provides support to the Club in seeking a suitable alternative site and facilitating a move to a new location.

In 2021-22 the Findon Pony Club submitted a Budget Submission to receive support in relocating from its Regent Street site which was endorsed as part of the adoption of the 2021-22 Council budget. The resolution regarding Findon Pony Club including the following: *Request officers to prepare a Council report to confirm new site tenure and transition agreements for the Findon Pony Club and to provide a timeline on the sale of the land.* 

Since this submission Council officers have worked closely with the Club in facilitating discussions with Melbourne Polytechnic regarding the Club's use of Melbourne Polytechnics' Northern Lodge campus. The proposed agreement between Council and Melbourne Polytechnic would facilitate Council allocating access to the Pony Club at the Northern Lodge campus with Council supporting International Students studying locally at the Melbourne Polytechnic Epping Campus in undertaking sport and recreation activities. Council officers are currently finalising this agreement with Melbourne Polytechnic with Strategic Property undertaking further work regarding the future use of the land at both 70W and 65W Regent Street, with both pieces of land valued at 3.1 million dollars.

### 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.

### Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

### **Financial Management**

There are no financial implications relating to this report.

### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

Consultation is required for community feedback from the period 21-27 August on the amended Election Policy. Following consultation, a further report will be prepared seeking the formal adoption of the policy.



### **Other Principles for Consideration**

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

### **Council Policy Considerations**

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

No implications.

### Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

### Economic

No implications.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

### Implementation Strategy

### Communication

Updates to the Policy and Strategy lists are communicated via several communication channels. Council-endorsed policies are made available on Council's website.

### **Critical Dates**

Additional policy reviews and rescissions may be brought to Council at future Council meetings.



### **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. Informal Meetings of Administrators [5.11.1 4 pages]
- Instrument of Sub Delegation under the Environment Protection Act [5.11.2 4 pages]
- 3. Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation under the Planning Act [**5.11.3** 2 pages]
- 4. Election Period Policy August 2024 [5.11.4 11 pages]

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RECORDS OF DISCUSSION						
ASSEMBLY DETAILS	ADMINISTRATOR ATTENDEES	OFFICER ATTENDEES	OTHERS PRESENT	MATTERS CONSIDERED	CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES	
4 June 2024 Council Briefing	Chair of Council Wilson Administrator Duncan	Craig Lloyd Emma Appleton Agata Chmielewski Debbie Wood Sharon Durantini Janine Morgan Jacinta Stevens Andrew George Nick Mazzarella Asaad Qureshi Taras Rego Pratap Sapkota Maurice Serruto Louisa Tesimale Catherine Thwaites Gemmy Timotius Anthony Traill George Vassiliadis Liam Wilkinson		<ul> <li>Q3 Community Grants Update</li> <li>LXRP Request for Declaration of Road – Keon Parade Railway Carpark Entrance</li> <li>1025 Yan Yean Road Doreen Development Plan</li> <li>Sport Fair Access Policy – Post Consultation Approval</li> <li>Tender 2023-104 – Construction of Baltrum Drive Extension and Associated Drainage Works</li> <li>Administrator Priorities Update</li> <li>General Business</li> </ul>	Nil	





RECORDS OF DISCUSSION						
ASSEMBLY DETAILS	ADMINISTRATOR ATTENDEES	OFFICER ATTENDEES	OTHERS PRESENT	MATTERS CONSIDERED	CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES	
2 July 2024 Council Briefing	Chair of Council Wilson Administrator Duncan Administrator Zahra	Sarah Renner Agata Chmielewski Debbie Wood Aaron Gerrard Ricardo Ramos Janine Morgan Jacinta Stevens Andrew Chau Tim D'Agostino Zoe Fitzgibbon Susan Hecker Linda Martin-Chew Jarrod Manevski Nick Mazzarella Sepideh Movahed Sarah Oldman Stephen Parker Taras Rego Maurice Serruto Louisa Tesimale Gemmy Timotius		<ul> <li>Community Grants Guidelines Update</li> <li>Tender 2024-3 Construction of a Signalised Intersection at Findon Rd and Williamsons Rd, South Morang</li> <li>Integrated Transport Plan - Council Endorsement</li> <li>Draft Mill Park Place Framework</li> <li>Quarry Hills Parkland Naming</li> <li>485 Cooper Street Epping Development Plan</li> <li>Station Road Mernda Development Plan</li> <li>Mernda Precinct 2A (part) Development Plan</li> <li>General Business</li> </ul>	Nil	





RECORDS OF DISCUSSION						
ASSEMBLY DETAILS	ADMINISTRATOR ATTENDEES	OFFICER ATTENDEES	OTHERS PRESENT	MATTERS CONSIDERED	CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE	
		Russell Tricker Liam Wilkinson				
6 August 2024	Chair of Council Wilson	Craig Lloyd		Terms of Reference –		
Council Briefing	Administrator Zahra	Emma Appleton		Whittlesea managed Advisory		
		Agata Chmielewski		Committees		
		Sarah Renner		Whittlesea Business Network		
		Debbie Wood		update		
		Janine Morgan		<ul> <li>Activity Centres Program,</li> </ul>		
		Jacinta Stevens		Epping Central Planning controls		
		Andrew Chau		Request to prepare Amendment		
		Mark Corea		C266 – 240 O'Herns Road		
		Ilker Destan		Epping Rezoning		
		Amanda Dodd		<ul> <li>Amendment C251 – Rezoning</li> </ul>		
		Phillip Harkin		307 Bridge Inn Road & 390		
		Susan Hecker		Masons Road, Mernda		
		Michelle Isherwood		Exhibition Outcomes		
		Nick Mazzarella		VR Michael Reserve Master Plan		
		Sepideh Movahed		• Delegation to register for		
		Adrian Napoleone		carbon offsets		
		Annette Osman				

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RECORDS OF DISCUSSION						
ASSEMBLY DETAILS	ADMINISTRATOR ATTENDEES	OFFICER ATTENDEES	OTHERS PRESENT	MATTERS CONSIDERED	CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES	
		Daniela Parisella Stephen Parker Fiona Ryan Maurice Serruto Justine Smith Mark Tomasiello James Walden Tom Walker Scott Widdicombe Liam Wilkinson		<ul> <li>Contract Award: 2024-44 Peter Hopper Lake Rehabilitation Works</li> <li>Tender Evaluation Report 2024- 56 Hilltop Playground &amp; Splash Park</li> <li>Contract No 2024-55 – Quarry Hills Regional Park, Trunk Services Infrastructure &amp; Civil Works</li> <li>Garden Bed Contract CT2023-1 - Council Variation Report</li> <li>Contract 2016-201B – Tree Maintenance Variation Report</li> <li>General Business</li> </ul>		

S18 Instrument of Sub-Delegation under the Environment Protection Act 2017

Whittlesea City Council

**Instrument of Sub-Delegation** 

to

Members of Council staff

July 2024 Update

### **Instrument of Sub-Delegation**

By this Instrument of Sub-Delegation, in exercise of the power conferred by s 437(2) of the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (**'Act'**) and the Instrument of Delegation of the Environment Protection Authority under the Act dated 4 June 2021, the Council:

- 1. delegates each duty and/or function and/or power described in column 1 of the Schedule (and summarised in column 2 of the Schedule) to the member of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the office or position described in column 3 of the Schedule;
- 2. record that references in the Schedule are as follows:

Abbreviation	Position	Limitation
ASPO	Asset Protection Officer	5.1.2
UMASP	Unit Manager Asset Protection	5.1.2
CAP	Coordinator Asset Protection	5.1.2
BI	Building Inspector	5.1.2
BS	Building Surveyor	5.1.2
UMEH	Unit Manager Environmental Health	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
CEH	Coordinator Environmental Health	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
DIE	Director Infrastructure and Environment	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
DPD	Director Planning and Development	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
EHO	Environmental Health Officer	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
IPO	Infrastructure Protection Officer	5.1.2
MAF	Manager Assets and Facilities	5.1.2
MBP	Manager Building and Planning	5.1.2
MCEH	Manager Compliance and Environmental Health	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
MEMRP	Manager Emergency Management & Regulatory Programs	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
CA	Coordinator Appeals	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
CP	Coordinator Prosecutions	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
PRSO	Prosecutions Support Officer	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
UMRS	Unit Manager Regulatory Services	5.1.1 & 5.1.2
MBS	Municipal Building Surveyor	5.1.2
UMPE	Unit Manager Planning Enforcement	5.1.2
SPEO	Senior Planning Enforcement Officer	5.1.2
PEO	Planning Enforcement Officer	5.1.2
SBI	Senior Building Inspector	5.1.2
SBS	Senior Building Surveyor	5.1.2
UWIPO	Utility Works & Infrastructure Protection Officer	5.1.2

- this Instrument of Sub-Delegation is authorised by a resolution of Council passed on 20 August 2024 pursuant to a power of sub-delegation conferred by the Instrument of Delegation of the Environment Protection Authority under the Act dated 4 June 2021;
- 4. the delegation:
  - 4.1 comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to this Instrument of Sub-Delegation;
  - 4.2 remains in force until varied or revoked;
  - 4.3 is subject to any conditions and limitations set out in sub-paragraph 5, and the Schedule; and
  - 4.4 must be exercised in accordance with any guidelines or policies which Council from time to time adopts; and

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- 5. this Instrument of Sub-Delegation is subject to the following limitations:
  - 5.1 the powers, duties and functions described in column and summarised in column 2 of the Schedule are only delegated for the purpose of regulating:
    - 5.1.1 onsite wastewater management systems with a design or actual flow rate of sewage not exceeding 5000 litres on any day; and
    - 5.1.2 noise from the construction, demolition or removal of residential premises;
- 6. the delegate must not determine the issue, take the action or do the act or thing:
  - 6.1 if the issue, action, act or thing is an issue, action or thing which Council has previously designated as an issue, action, act or thing which must be the subject of a Resolution of Council;
  - 6.2 if the determining of the issue, taking of the action or doing of the act or thing would or would be likely to involve a decision which is inconsistent with a
    - (a) policy; or
    - (b) strategy
    - adopted by Council;
  - 6.3 if the determining of the issue, the taking of the action or the doing of the act or thing cannot be the subject of a lawful delegation; or
  - 6.4 the determining of the issue, the taking of the action or the doing of the act or thing is already the subject of an exclusive delegation to another member of Council staff.

#### Council seal

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# SCHEDULE

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT 2017					
Column 1 Column 2 Column 3		Column 3	Column 4		
PROVISION	THING DELEGATED	DELEGATE	CONDITIONS & LIMITATIONS		
s 271	Power to issue improvement notice	DIE, MAF, ASPO, UWIPO, IPO, DPD, MCEH, CEH, EHO, MBP, PEO, MBS, SBS, BS, SBI, BI, UMASP, CAP, UMEH, MEMRP, CA, CP, PRSO, UMRS, UMPE, SPEO	Refer to the limitations recorded in the reference table at Clause 2 of this instrument		
s 272	Power to issue prohibition notice	DIE, MAF, ASPO, UWIPO, IPO, DPD, MCEH, LLEO, CEH, EHO, MBP, PEO, MBS, SBS, BS, SBI, BI, UMASP, CAP, UMEH, MEMRP, CA, CP, PRSO, UMRS, UMPE, SPEO	Refer to the limitations recorded in the reference table at Clause 2 of this instrument		
s 279	Power to amend a notice	DIE, MAF, ASPO, UWIPO, IPO, DPD, MCEH, CEH, EHO, MBP, PEO, MBS, SBS, BS, SBI, BI, UMASP, CAP, UMEH, MEMRP, CA, CP, PRSO, UMRS, UMPE, SPEO	Refer to the limitations recorded in the reference table at Clause 2 of this instrument		
s 358	Functions of the Environment Protection Authority	DIE, MAF, ASPO, UWIPO, IPO, DPD, MCEH, CEH, EHO, MBP, PEO, MBS, SBS, BS, SBI, BI, UMASP, CAP, UMEH, MEMRP, CA, CP, PRSO, UMRS, UMPE, SPEO	Refer to the limitations recorded in the reference table at Clause 2 of this instrument		
s 359(1)(b)	Power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of the Environment Protection Authority's functions and duties and to enable the Authority to achieve its objective.	DIE, MAF, ASPO, UWIPO, IPO, DPD, MCEH, CEH, EHO, MBP, PEO, MBS, SBS, BS, SBI, BI, UMASP, CAP, UMEH, MEMRP, CA, CP, PRSO, UMRS, UMPE, SPEO	Refer to the limitations recorded in the reference table at Clause 2 of this instrument		
s 359(2)	Power to give advice to persons with duties or obligations	DIE, MAF, ASPO, UWIPO, IPO, DPD, MCEH, CEH, EHO, MBP, PEO, MBS, SBS, BS, SBI, BI, UMASP, CAP, UMEH, MEMRP, CA, CP, PRSO, UMRS, UMPE, SPEO	Refer to the limitations recorded in the reference table at Clause 2 of this instrument		

July 2024 Update page 3 S11A Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (Planning and Environment Act 1987)

Whittlesea City Council

# Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation

(Planning and Environment Act 1987 only)

### Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*)

In this instrument "officer" means -

**Toby Waters** 

### By this instrument of appointment and authorisation Whittlesea City Council -

- 1. under s 147(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 appoints the officer to be an authorised officer for the purposes of the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 and the regulations made under that Act; and
- 2. under s 313 of the *Local Government Act 2020* authorises the officer either generally or in a particular case to institute proceedings for offences against the Acts and regulations described in this instrument.

### It is declared that this instrument -

- comes into force immediately upon its execution;
- remains in force until varied or revoked.

This instrument is authorised by a resolution of the Whittlesea City Council on 20 August 2024.

### Council seal

Date: 20 August 2024





# **Appendix 2 – Election Period Policy**

### **Policy statement**

This Policy has been developed in order to ensure that general elections and by-elections for the Council are conducted in a manner that is ethical, fair and equitable, and are publicly perceived as such.

It specifies procedures intended to ensure the Council makes appropriate decisions, takes appropriate actions or uses resources appropriately during the Election Period before a general election, a by election and at other times as specified in this policy.

Further, this policy:

- facilitates the continuation of the ordinary business of local government in the Council throughout the Election Period in a responsible and transparent manner;
- ensures the authority of an incoming council is not restricted by decisions to which it may find itself unreasonably bound and unable to change. This could include significant contractual matters;
- establishing procedures to ensure that access to information held be Council is made equally available and accessible to candidates during the Council, Federal or State elections;
- places limits on public consultation and the scheduling of Council events during the Election Period;
- requires that materials produced by the Council and Whittlesea Council must not contain matter that will affect voting at the election;
- sets out the requirements for a Councillor who is a candidate in an election, including a Council, Federal or State election.

### Background

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic) which requires Council to include an election period policy in its Governance Rules to be applied by Council during the election period, a by election and at other times as specified in this policy.

### Scope

This Policy relates to the Council, Councillors, Council Committees, the CEO and Council officers, their behaviour and decision making during the 'caretaker' period.

This policy replaces and overrides any previous policy that refers to the Election Period.

### **Relevant Documents**

All City of Whittlesea policies comply with:

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic) Public Transparency Policy





### **Procedural Guidelines**

### 1. Application of Policy

Council will function in accordance with this Policy during the election period commencing on <u>at noon</u> midnight on Tuesday <u>24-17</u> September 2024 and ending 6pm on Saturday 26 October 2024.

While nominations for the general election will close at noon on 24 September 2024, the definition of the term "election period" in the Act indicates that the "election period" commences at the beginning of that day – that is, immediately after midnight.

### 1.1 Role of Chief Executive Officer

In addition to the CEO statutory responsibilities, the CEO has the following responsibilities in supporting the implementation and application of the Policy:

- All Councillors and Council Officers are informed of and supported in the application of this policy at least 30 days prior to the commencement of the Election Period;
- Make a public statement or media release that corrects inaccurate information or statements about Council made by candidates without naming the candidate, where they deem it apporpirateappropriate; and
- Matters of Council business requiring decisions prohibited during the Election Period by this Policy or the Act are, where possible, scheduled for Council to enable resolution prior to the commencement of the Election Period or deferred where appropriate for determination by the incoming Council.

### 2. Decisions by Council

- 2.1.1 In accordance with section 69 of the Act Council is prohibited from making any decisions during the Election Period for a general election that:
  - (a) relates to the appointment or remuneration of the CEO, but not to the appointment or remuneration of an Acting CEO;
  - (b) commits the Council to expenditure exceeding one per cent of the Council's income from general rates, municipal charges and service rates and charges in the preceding financial year;
  - (c) the Council considers could be reasonably deferred until the next Council is in place; or
  - (d) the Council considers should not be made during an Election Period.
- 2.1.2 Council is prohibited from making any Council decisions during the Election Period for a general election or a by election that would enable the use of Council's resources in a way that is intended to influence, or is likely to influence, voting at the election.
- 2.1.3 During the Election Period, the Council, a Committee of Council, the CEO, of Council officer acting under delegation will not:



- (a) approve, amend or repeal any policy, plan or strategy, including those contained in or related to the Whittlesea Council Planning Scheme, which has been adopted by the Council; or
- (b) use their position to influence Council officers, or access Council resources of information in support of any election campaign or candidacy.
- 2.1.4 A Council decision made in contravention of subsection (a) or (b) above is invalid under the Act.
- 2.1.5 Council can continue to make town planning decisions under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* during the election period and they will still be processed in accordance with usual practices and statutory timelines.

### 2.2.1 Prohibition on Council

Council or a Council Officer under delegation is unable to make Major Policy Decisions and any major policy decision made during the election period is deemed to be invalid under the Act and may be compensable.

### 2.1.3 Extraordinary Circumstances

If Council considers that there are extraordinary circumstances which require the making of a major policy decision during the Election Period that in doing so would breach the Act, the Council may apply in writing request an exemption from the Minister for Local Government.

### 2.2 Council Meetings

Scheduled Council meetings will continue to take place during the Election Period. However, the following adjustments will be made to the Agenda:

- (a) Public Question Time will be suspended;
- (b) Notice of Motions will not be allowed;
- (c) Councillors will limit their discussion during debate to the topic under consideration and will avoid raising Electoral Matter; and
- (d) Reports for the consideration of Council will be referred to the CEO for approval before inclusion on the meeting agenda.

### 3. Application of Resources

- 3.1.1 The use of Council resources, including, but not limited to, vehicles, staff, services, property, equipment, stationery, websites, social media and hospitality for any Council, Federal or State election campaign purposes is prohibited.
- 3.1.2 Where the use of Council resources appears to relate to the election campaign of a Councillor standing in or for re-election, the matter must be referred to the CEO or their delegate.
- 3.1.3 In accordance with section 304 of the Act, a Councillor or Council officer must not use Council resources in a way that is intended to or is likely to affect the result of





### an election under this Act.

- 3.1.4 A Councillor or Council officer must not use Council resources to intentionally or recklessly print, publish or distribute or cause, permit or authorise to be printed, published or distributed any electoral material during the Election Period on behalf of, or purporting to be on behalf of, the Council unless the electoral material only contains information about the election process or is otherwise required in accordance with, or under, any Act or regulations.
- 3.1.5 A Councillor or Council officer must not at any time disclose, use or release information provided to them in the course of their role which is confidential.

### 4. Candidacy

A Councillor must not use Council resources for candidacy, or any purpose that may be perceived as being used either as an individual or political party. This applies to a Councillor standing in a Council, Federal or State election, and for any other elected position, for example, positions on boards. Such use would constitute misuse of position.

### 5. Federal and State Government Elections

- 5.1.1 Councillor will ensure there is a demonstrable distinction between their obligations to Council and their personal interests as a candidate, or member of a political party, in an election period prior to a Federal or State election.
- 5.1.2 Once a Councillor becomes an endorsed candidate of a registered political party or publicly expresses an intention to run as a candidate in a Federal or State election, is a 'Prospective Candidate' will provide written advice to the CEO, as soon as practicable. The CEO will then advise all Councillors.

### 6. Public Consultation and Council Events

- 6.1.1 Public consultation activities may be necessary during the election period to ensure that the community is continuing to be consulted in decision making processes. Where it is within Council's control to do so, Council will seek to avoid actions which will require Councillor public consultation during the election period. Councillors will not attend or be involved in public consultation.
- 6.1.2 Any public consultation will avoid express or implicit links to the election.

### 7 Council Events

Council will ensure that any significant Council events are scheduled to occur outside the election period. Where a Council event must be held during the election period, Councillor involvement will be minimised.





### 8. Council Publications

### 8.1 Prohibition on Publishing Material during the Election Period

- 8.1.1 The Chief Executive Officer will only certify electoral advertisements and information about the election process.
- 8.1.2 A Councillor or Council Officer will not print, publish or distribute, or be involved in the printing, publishing or distribution of an electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice during the election period if the electoral advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notice has not been certified by the Chief Executive Officer.

### 8.2 Certification of Publications

- 8.2.1 Election process publications which require certification include:
  - (a) Brochures, pamphlets, handbills, flyers, magazines and books;
  - (b) Reports (other than Agenda papers and Minutes);
  - (c) Advertisements and notices, except newspaper notices of Meetings;
  - (d) New website material;
  - (e) Social media publications (which includes Facebook and Twitter posts and video footage);
  - (f) Emails with multiple addresses, used for broad communication with the community;
  - (g) Mass mail outs or identical letters sent to a large number of people by or on behalf of the Council;
  - (h) Media releases;
  - (i) Material to publicise a function or event; and
  - (j) Any publication or distribution of Councillor's speeches.
- 8.2.2 Application should be made to the Chief Executive Officer who will seek certification of the publication of election advertisements.
- 8.2.3 Copies of all certified documents and applications will be retained for three (3) years by the City of Whittlesea.

### 8.3 Prohibited Material

'Electoral matter' is taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on:

- (a) The election;
- (b) A candidate in the election; or
- (c) An issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election.

It's therefore likely that "electoral matter" will include material which:





- (d) Publicises the strengths or weaknesses of a candidate;
- (e) Advocates the policies of the Council or of a candidate;
- (f) Responds to claims made by a candidate; or
- (g) Publicises the achievements of the elected Council or particular Councillors.

### 8.4 Council Publications Including Councillor Information

Council publications printed, published or distributed during the election period will not include any reference to individual Councillors, unless Council is legally obliged to include any such reference.

### 8.5 Website

- 8.5.1 Councillor contact information will remain available on the website during the election period, but Councillors' profiles will be removed.
- 8.5.2 Any news published on Council's website during the election period must be certified by the Chief Executive Officer.

### 8.6 Annual Report

- 8.6.1 Council is required to produce and put on public display a copy of its Annual Report. The Annual Report may be published by the CEO, or delegate during the election period. The Annual Report will not contain any electioneering or material that could promote individual Councillors.
- 8.6.2 The Annual Report does not require certification by the CEO; however, any publication of an extract or summary of the Annual Report will require certification.

### 8.7 Council and Committee Agendas and Minutes

Agenda papers and Minutes of Council and Committee Meetings do not require certification by the CEO, or delegate, unless they are printed or published for wider distribution.

### 8.8 Social Media

- 8.8.1 Any publication on social media sites including Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wiki pages during the election period must be certified by the CEO, or delegate.
- 8.8.2 Staff responsible for administering Council's social media sites will monitor them during the election period and use moderation features where available to ensure no electoral matter is posted.





#### 9. Council Resources

### 9.1 Application of Resources

- 9.1.1 Council resources, including email addresses, photos, offices, vehicles, staff, hospitality, services, property (including intellectual property), equipment and stationery must be used exclusively for normal Council business during the election period and must not be used in connection with any election campaign or issue.
- 9.1.2 Any Councillor misusing their position to gain or attempt to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for themselves or any other person or to cause or attempt to cause detriment to Council or another person may breach section 76D of the Act. Circumstances involving the misuse of a position include using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised may be prosecuted.

#### 9.2 Role of Executive Assistant to Mayor

The Mayor's Executive Assistant cannot be asked to undertake any tasks connected directly or indirectly with a Councillor's election campaign.

### 9.3 Use of Council Equipment by Councillors

Councillors (including those standing for re-election) must give back all Council owned equipment (such as laptops, printers, security passes etc.) prior to 6pm on the day of the election. The timing is to be agreed prior to the election period. Councillors standing for re-election must not use Council equipment such as printers as a resource to assist with election campaigns.

### 9.4 Councillors Entitlement to Reimbursement

Reimbursements of Councillors' out-of-pocket expenses during the election period will only apply to costs that have been incurred in the performance of normal Council duties and not for expenses that support or relate to a candidate's election campaign.

### 9.5 Council Branding

Council logos, letterheads, or other corporate branding or intellectual property must not be used for, or linked in any way to, a candidate's election campaign.

### 9.6 Officers' Discretion

Where the use of Council resources appears to relate to the election campaign of a Councillor standing for re-election, the matter must be referred to the CEO or Delegate.

### 10. Media Services

### 10.1 Restriction on Services

10.1.1 During the election period, the Council's Public Affairs and Customer Service Departments' services must not be used in any way that might promote a Councillor as an election candidate.



10.1.2 Council publicity during the election period will be restricted to communicating normal Council activities and initiatives and is subject to CEO, or delegate approval and certification.

#### 10.2 Media Releases/Spokespersons

- 10.2.1 Media releases will minimise references to specific Councillors and will not promote a Councillor as an election candidate. The CEO or Delegate will be referenced instead.
- 10.2.2 Media releases will require certification by the CEO or delegate.

### 10.3 Councillors

Councillors will not use their position as elected representatives or their access to Council Officers and other Council resources to gain media attention in support of an election campaign.

### 10.4 Council Employees

In accordance with the staff Code of Conduct, during the election period, no Council employee may make any public statement that relates to an election issue unless prior approval has been obtained from the CEO or Delegate.

### 11. Assistance to Candidates

### 11.1 Role of Returning Officer

All election related enquiries from candidates, whether sitting Councillors or not, will be directed to the Returning Officer or, where the matter is outside the responsibilities of the Returning Officer, to the CEO or Delegate.

### 11.2 Candidate Information

- 11.2.1 Council will provide candidates with a Councillor Candidate Information Kit to assist them in running and nominating for Council.
- 11.2.2 Candidates will complete a Nomination Form, which will be available from the Returning Officer, accompanied by the prescribed nomination fee.
- 11.2.3 Candidates will complete and submit an Election Campaign Donation Return in the prescribed form within 40 days after election day. The return must contain details of any campaign donation or gift valued at more than the gift disclosure threshold (currently \$500 as at June 2022) which was received between the date 30 days after the previous election and the date 30 days after the current election.

### 11.3 Access to Information & Candidate Information

11.3.1 A Councillor may continue to access Council information only as it is necessary for them to perform their role as a Councillor.



- 11.3.2 All election candidates have equal rights to Council information relevant to their election campaign from the Council administration in accordance with the Council's Public Transparency Policy and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic).
- 11.3.3 Neither Councillors nor Candidates will receive information or advice from Council officers that may improperly advantage Candidates in the election.
- 11.3.4 Council will provide Candidates with a copy of a Councillor Candidate Information Kit (if any) produced by the Victorian Electoral Commission to assist them in running and nominating for Council.

### 11.4 Information Request Register

The Governance team will maintain and Information Request Register during the Election Period.

### 12 Staff member as a candidate

- 12.1.1 Section 34 of the Act prohibits a person who is a staff member of Whittlesea City Council serving as a Whittlesea City Council Councillor.
- 12.1.2 Under Section 256(8) of the Act a member of Staff is not prevented from nominating as a candidate at an election if for the duration of the Election Period for that election if:

(a) the person has taken leave from that office or position; and

- (b) the person does not perform any of the duties of that office or position.
- 12.1.3 A Staff Member cannot take the oath or affirmation of office as a Whittlesea City Council Councillor unless they resign from that office or position before taking the oath or affirmation of office.
- 12.1.4 In the event that a Council officer nominates as a candidate for a Council, Federal or State election, the officer will immediately notify their Director or Executive Manager in writing with a copy to the Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO. On receiving such notice the relevant manager will enter into an agreed work plan with the staff member to ensure:
  - There is no conflict of interest between the staff member's duties as a Council employee or access to information and their role as an election candidate;
  - The staff member does not have access to information that would place them at an advantage over other candidates in the election; or
  - No Council resources are used in support of the staff member's candidacy.
- 12.1.5 The agreed work plan must be approved by the relevant Director and forwarded to the CEO and Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO.





### Definitions

Where terms used in this Policy are defined in the *Local Government Act 2020* (Act), their use in this Policy is consistent with the definitions in the Act.

Words	Meaning/Definition
Act	means the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).
Candidate	means a person who is nominated to stand for a Council, Federal or State election.
Chief Executive Officer	means the person appointed by Council to be its Chief Executive Officer, or any person acting in that position.
Community	means the process in which City of Whittlesea and Municipal Community
Consultation	connect with each other to exchange views, ideas and information to:
	(a) inform decisions;
	(b) build capacity; and
	(c) strengthen relationships.
Councillor	A person who holds the office of Member of Council or a person appointed as an Administrator for City of Whittlesea who performs the role of a Councillor for the purposes of section 28 of the Act.
Councillor Candidate	means the Councillor Candidate Information Kit provided by the Victorian
Information Kit	Electoral Commission.
Council Meeting	means a Council meeting that complies with the Act.
Delegate	means a Director or Executive Manager as appointed.
Election Day	means the day of an election as determined under the Act.
Election period	has the same meaning as 'election period' in section 3(1) of the Act and
	means the period that starts on the last day on which nominations for that
	election can be received and ends at 6pm on election day.
Electoral advertisement,	means any document that is produced for the purpose of communicating with the community and which contains electoral matter, such as:
handbill, pamphlet or	(a) Newsletters and other circulars (including those sent by email);
notice	(b) Media releases;
	(c) Leaflets, pamphlets, handbills, flyers, magazines and brochures;
	(d) Any new email, web based publications or social media posts; and
	(e) Mailouts to multiple addresses.
Electoral Material	means an advertisement, handbill, pamphlet or notices that contains Electoral Matter, but does not include an advertisement that is only announcing the holding of a meeting.
Electoral Matter	<ul> <li>means matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election but does not include any electoral material produced by or on behalf of the election manager for the purposes of conducting an election. Electoral matter is to be taken to be intended or likely to affect voting in an election if it contains an express or implicit reference to, or comment on: <ul> <li>(a) the election; or</li> <li>(b) a candidate in the election; or</li> <li>(c) an issue submitted to, or otherwise before, the voters in connection with the election</li> </ul> </li> </ul>





Inappropriate	Includes any of the following:
decisions	(a) decisions that would affect voting in an election; or
	(b) decisions that could reasonably be made after the election.
Information Request	This Information Request Register will be a public document that records all
Register	requests relating to Electoral Matters and non-routine requests for
	information by Councillors and Candidates, and the responses given to those
	requests.
Member of Council	means a natural person appointed by the Chief Executive Officer (other than
Staff	an independent contractor under a contract for services or a volunteer) to
	enable:
	<ul><li>(a) the functions of the Council to be carried out; and</li></ul>
	(b) the Chief Executive Officer to carry out their functions.
	The Chief Executive Officer is also a member of Council Staff.
Public consultation	A process that involves an invitation or invitations to individuals, groups or
	organisations or the community generally to comment on an issue, proposed
	action or proposed policy, and includes discussion of that matter with the
	public.
Publish	means publish by any means including by publication on the internet.
Major Policy Decision	Is defined by the Act to mean a decision
	(a) Relating to the employment or remuneration of a CEO, other than a
	decision to appoint an acting CEO;
	(b) To terminate the appointment of a CEO;
	To enter into a contract the total value of which exceeds 1% of Council's total
	revenue from rates and charges in the preceding financial year.
Significant decision	In the context of this policy, significant decisions include:
	(a) decisions that may irrevocably commit the incoming Council to
	substantial expenditure or to other significant actions; and
	(b) decisions that may have an irrevocable and significant impact on the
	municipality or a significant section of the community.



### **5.12 Final Administrators Report**

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

Report Author:

Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to publicly present the final Administrators report which incorporates the significant achievements during their four-year term.

The attached detailed report provides:

- Highlights of key achievements during the Administrators four-year term
- The status of actions implemented to address the Municipal Monitor's recommendations which led to the appointment of the Panel of Administrators
- Outcomes of the Good Governance Action Plan established at the outset of the Administrators appointment
- The status of processes and practices undertaken and embedded to restore and enhance good governance

The detailed report highlights an incredibly successful and rewarding four-year term with significant achievements not only in relation to good governance but also in strategic planning, responsible financial management, innovation, community engagement, which collectively have created a stable high performing organisation.

A busy and productive four years have seen the organisation transform with fit-for-purpose processes and technology that make it easier for the community to interact with Council, a comprehensive integrated planning framework, best practice governance, exemplary customer service and a comprehensive community engagement program.

### **Officers' Recommendation**

THAT Council:

- 1. Note the final Administrator report at Attachment 1 for the period of June 2020 to August 2024.
- 2. Note a copy of the final Administrator report was provided to the Hon. Melissa Horne, Minister for Local Government and Executive Director Local Government Victoria on 15 August 2024.



### Background / Key Information

On 19 June 2020 the Acting Minister for Local Government appointed a Panel of Administrators for the City of Whittlesea under the provisions of the *Local Government (Whittlesea City Council) Act 2020.* The Chair of the Panel of Administrators took on the role, functions and duties of the Mayor and the Administrators took on the roles, duties and functions of a Councillor. Together the Panel of Administrators formed the Council of the City of Whittlesea.

During the four-year term of Administrators there were a number of changes to the Panel; The Hon Bruce Billson resigned in March 2021 and was replaced by Chris Eddy who later resigned in December 2022 and was replaced in March 2023 by Christian Zahra AM.

Upon their appointment the Administrators immediately set an ambitious program of improvements to enhance the governance, strategic planning, responsible financial management and community engagement functions and practice of the Council.

### **Good Governance**

Administrators have focused on embedding good governance at the City of Whittlesea in accordance with the Municipal Monitor's report which recommended: *"Administrators develop, implement and publicly report on an action to embed good governance at the Council taking into account the reform opportunities of the Local Government Bill 2019."* 

Administrators consistently supported a culture of good governance at the Council with all decision-making underpinned by rigorous due diligence and transparency. To continue the culture of good governance, a substantial amount of work has been completed establishing a roadmap for the newly elected Councillors' Induction Program.

### **Responsible Financial Management**

Fostering a culture of responsible financial management has enabled Council to continue to deliver 147 critical services for the community whilst continuing to invest in much-needed infrastructure and renewal. Careful planning, allocation and monitoring of funds has strengthened accountability and ensured the City of Whittlesea's financial sustainability.

In the past four years the community has experienced economic challenges from the pandemic followed by increasing cost of living pressures. Cognisant of these challenges, Council has made every effort to boost community resilience and reduce the financial burden.



### **Transforming Organisational Planning**

Council's Community Plan 2021-2025 builds on and re-endorses the long-term community vision – *Whittlesea 2040, A Place for All* – and incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Disability Action Plan and Pandemic Recovery Plan actions into the one overarching document. Developed following extensive community consultation, the Community Plan focuses on public safety, festivals, events, social connection and sports facilities as well as thriving town centres, new and upgraded parks and playgrounds, transport improvements, clean streets and road safety.

To support the implementation of the plan, yearly Community Plan Actions Plans are developed that outline the key actions delivered each financial year.

### **Integrated planning**

During the term Council focused on developing an integrated, long-term approach to strategic planning driven by extensive community engagement and an evidence-based outcomes framework.

This transformed the way planning is undertaken at the City of Whittlesea and this innovative approach has been recognised by the sector in the 2024 LGPro Awards for Excellence when the City of Whittlesea was a finalist in the Innovation Management category.

A lean, well-defined strategic planning framework saw the development of seven core strategies aligned to each of the goal areas under the vision of *A Place for All* with an outcomes framework that supports and enhances extensive reporting mechanisms, articulating the impact on community.

### **Customer Service**

With a rapidly growing and diverse municipality, delivering excellence in customer service has been a focus of the past four years. With the introduction of a new post-service delivery survey to monitor satisfaction levels with customer service; satisfaction scores increased from 48% in November 2022 to 84% in July 2024.

### **Community Engagement**

Council has invested significantly in rebuilding community trust through a comprehensive program of genuine community engagement to ensure the community's voice is considered during Council decision-making.



### Advocacy

During the term of administration Council has taken a collaborative approach to work in partnership with other tiers of government and regional Local Government associations to create and enhance the conditions for economic growth, liveability, and sustainability to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding population.

A strong advocacy program, compelling submissions and grant applications, strategic relationship-building and project preparedness have delivered pleasing results over the term.

### Representation

During the Administrators term, representation was made on various state-wide, metropolitan, regional, and Whittlesea-based organisations which enabled Council to further its advocacy and engagement goals, and to gather information about sector opportunities and emerging issues to inform decision-making.

Internally, Administrators formed part of the CEO Employment Matters Advisory Committee with an independent external chairperson, and across the four-year term, Chair Administrator Wilson and one other Administrator were actively represented on Council's Audit and Risk Committee along with four independent external members.

### **Pandemic Response**

The City of Whittlesea played an important role in responding to and supporting local community recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A partnership approach with other levels of government, key community agencies including Northern Health, DPV Health and local community networks was paramount to boost local vaccination rates and ensure compliance with health directives.

Supporting immediate needs through lockdowns with food and material supplies was the initial priority which then shifted in focus towards recovery with initiatives to support our community to get back to doing what they love, from dining to leisure and social activities. Council collaborated with and listened to our community to help shape many of our plans and priorities and advocated on their behalf to other levels of government.

Throughout this time, business continuity was a focus and service delivery and good governance continued.

### **Connected Community**

During the term Council has sought to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.



This was achieved through strategic planning, ageing well activities and programs, community grant program and a range of community programs, including the establishment and induction of a Youth Council, safety and wellbeing programs, libraries and the way library services are delivered, and sports and recreation programs.

### Liveable Neighbourhoods

During the term Council has sought to ensure our City is well planned and that our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

### **Strong Local Economy**

During the term Council has sought to make our City a smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry investment as well as supporting local businesses to be successful, enabling opportunities for local work and education.

### Sustainable Environment

During the term Council has sought to prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, preserve local biodiversity, protect waterways and green spaces and address climate change.

### **High Performing Organisation**

During the term Council has sought to ensure Council engages effectively with the community, delivers efficient and effective services and initiatives, makes decision in the best interest of the community and delivers value to the community.

For information of the extensive highlights and incredible work undertaken by the Panel of Administrators refer to Attachment 1.

### 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.

### Considerations of Local Government Act (2020) Principles

### **Financial Management**

There are no financial implications with publicly providing the final Administrator Report.

### **Community Consultation and Engagement**

N/A.



### **Other Principles for Consideration**

### **Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles**

(i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

### **Public Transparency Principles**

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless—
  (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
  - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

### **Council Policy Considerations**

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

No implications.

### Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

### Economic

No implications.

### Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

### Implementation Strategy

### Communication

A copy of the Administrator Report will be made available on Council's website prior to and after the Election Period.

### **Critical Dates**

N/A.



### **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. City of Whittlesea Panel of Administrators Final Report 2020-2024 [5.12.1 - 30 pages]







# **Contents**

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Strong Local Economy	
Sustainable Environment	
High Performing Organisation	
Innovation and best practice	
Awards	

# 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.

COVER IMAGE Aboriginal Gathering Place sod turn June 2023

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# **Executive** Summary

On 19 June 2020 the Acting Minister for Local Government appointed a Panel of Administrators for the City of Whittlesea following a report from Municipal Monitor Yehudi Blacher.

Lydia Wilson was appointed Chair of the Panel of Administrators supported by Administrators Peita Duncan and The Hon Bruce Billson.

During the four-year term of Administrators there were a number of changes to the Panel; The Hon Bruce Billson resigned in March 2021 and was replaced by Chris Eddy who later resigned in December 2022 and was replaced in March 2023 by Christian Zahra AM.

The Panel appointed Craig Lloyd as the permanent CEO in March 2020.

Upon their appointment the Administrators immediately set an ambitious program of improvements to enhance the governance, strategic planning, responsible financial management and community engagement functions and practice of the Council. This program was documented in the Administrator Action Plan 2020-2024 (Attachment 1) and was subsequently embedded into the City of Whittlesea Community Plan 2021-2025 (Attachment 2).

The program was underpinned by a commitment to restoring the reputation of the Council with the community and within the sector and to providing much-needed stability to the organisation while fostering an effective working relationship with leadership and staff.

A busy and productive four years have seen the organisation transform with fit-for-purpose processes and technology that make it easier for the community to interact with Counci including a new Customer Service Hub in Whittlesea township a comprehensive integrated planning framework, best practice governance, exemplary customer service and a comprehensive community engagement program.

Administrators and Council Senior Officers have worked collaboratively with a shared vision and purpose to support the growing community of the City of Whittlesea. Many initiatives have now become business as usual with a clear line of sight to long-term initiatives which are progressively being implemented.

The Panel is confident the organisation is well prepared to welcome back the return of elected officials in October 2024.





# Good governance

Administrators have focused on embedding good governance at the City of Whittlesea in accordance with the Municipal Monitor's report which recommended:

"Administrators develop, implement and publicly report on an action to embed good governance at the Council taking into account the reform opportunities of the Local Government Bill 2019."

On 6 April 2021 the Administrators endorsed the Administrator Action Plan 2020-2024 (Action Plan) confirming actions and commitments to ensure continued good governance during their term. The Action Plan outlined priorities in line with Council's Community Vision, Whittlesea 2024: A Place for All, and the Community Plan 2021-2025. The Action Plan also considered the Local Government Act and needs of the community in responding and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure good governance in the best interests of the community and to provide transparency, six-monthly updates were publicly reported on the Action Plan on key strategic decisions and work undertaken by Council. From March 2022, as communicated to the former Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Shaun Leane, MP on 21 April 2022, priorities within the Action Plan were reported via Council's Community Plan and Financial quarterly performance reports, and through a six-monthly report outlining the Administrators keys achievements and Administrator engagement with the community. A copy of the Action Plan as of March 2022, is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

Administrators consistently supported a culture of good governance at the Council with all decision-making underpinned by rigorous due diligence and transparency. To continue the culture of good governance, a substantial amount of work has been completed establishing a roadmap for the newly elected Councillors' Induction Program.

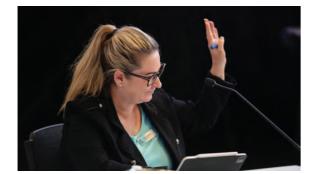
In preparation for the return of elected Councillors, and to enhance good governance practices, all policies relating to Councillors were thoroughly reviewed, released for community consultation, and where required, adopted by Council.



### **Good governance**

## Highlights

- Increased transparency of decision making with percentage of Council decisions in confidential meetings reducing from 13% as of 30 June 2020 to 6% as of 24 July 2024
- 598 open Council agenda items between 1 July 2020 to 24 July 24
- 36 closed confidential agenda items between 1 July 2020 to 24 July 24
- Attendance at scheduled and unscheduled Council meetings:
- Chair of Council Lydia Wilson 50/53
- Administrator Peita Duncan 52/53
- Administrator Chris Eddy 18/21
- Administrator The Honourable Bruce Wilson 10/10
- Administrator Christian Zahra AM 16/18



- Updated Governance Rules, including an updated election period policy
- Review and update to Audit & Risk Committee Charter
- Recruitment process to appoint a new Independent Chair of the CEO Employment Matters Advisory Committee
- Updated CEO Employment Matters Policy incorporating CEO protocols

- Annual Reports
- · 2020-2021
- · 2021–2022
- · 2022-2023
- 2023-2024 in progress
- All relevant policies and plans have been endorsed and implemented:
  - Community Engagement Policy
  - Hardship Policy and payment plans
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Public Transparency policy
- Councillor Gift policy
- Borrowing Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Councillor Communications Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure Procedures
- Councillor Support and Expense Policy
- Councillor Staff interaction Protocol
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Embedded regular performance reporting to community including financials
- Recruitment of CEO
- The introduction of livestreaming of Council Meeting
- The introduction of community-based Council Meetings held in Mernda, Whittlesea and Lalor
- The introduction of a Diversity Statement at the start of every Council Meeting
- First Joint Council Meeting in Victoria with Hume City Council and Mitchell Shire Council
- Implementation of all requirements under the Local Government Act 2020
- Transition of the City of Whittlesea's Youth Advisory Committee to a Youth Council In February 2024.





# **Responsible financial management**

Fostering a culture of responsible financial management has enabled Council to continue to deliver 147 critical services for the community whilst continuing to invest in much-needed infrastructure and renewal.

Careful planning, allocation and monitoring of funds has strengthened accountability and ensured the City of Whittlesea's financial sustainability.

In the past four years the community has experienced economic challenges from the pandemic followed by increasing cost of living pressures.

Cognisant of these challenges, Council has made every effort to boost community resilience and reduce the financial burden including:

- Introduction of a COVID-19 Hardship Policy
- Broadening the scope of the Financial Hardship Policy in 2021 to include rates, fees and charges and widening eligibility to individuals, businesses and groups
- The creation of a dedicated Hardship Support Officer position
- Continued subsidisation of waste charges
- Minimal changes to fees and charges
- Membership of Thriving Partnerships program
- Keeping rates within the Fair Go Rating System
- \$2 million COVID-19 Community Recovery Fund
- Boosted funding to Community Grants program by 33% to \$2.6 million [2023-2024, 2024-2025]

Rigorous and responsible financial management has been a priority during the term.

## Highlights

- Development of the Long-Term Financial Plan 2021-2031
- Yearly Budget informed by comprehensive community engagement processes including hearings of public submissions



- · 2021-2022
- 2022-2023
- 2023-2024
- 2024-2025
- Development of a new Investment Policy
- Development of a new Borrowings Policy
- Application of a conservative borrowing strategy in accordance with a revised Borrowings Policy
- Secured \$41.81 million in capital grant funding from the Federal and State Government
- Review and update of Council's Financial Reserves Policy
- VAGO provided each year an unqualified opinion for both financial statements and performance statement
- Review and update of Council Financial Delegations to the CEO and members of Council staff.

# Transforming organisational planning

Council's Community Plan 2021-2025 builds on and re-endorses the long-term community vision – Whittlesea 2040, A Place for All – and incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Disability Action Plan and Pandemic Recovery Plan actions into the one overarching document.

Developed following extensive community consultation, the Community Plan focuses on public safety, festivals, events, social connection and sports facilities as well as thriving town centres, new and upgraded parks and playgrounds, transport improvements, clean streets and road safety.

To support the implementation of the plan, yearly Community Plan Actions Plans are developed that outline the key actions delivered each financial year

### Highlights

Community Plan Action Plan 2021-2022
 **100%** 

of actions delivered

Community Plan Action Plan 2022-2023
 100%

of actions delivered

• Community Plan Action Plan 2023-2024

**98%** 

of actions delivered

Community Plan Action Plan 2024-2025
 in progress

Council has also conducted a large-scale audit and review of the policy framework of the organisation to determine whether they are current, need to be updated to reflect current legislation, or are obsolete and able to be rescinded. This has consolidated policy positions, removed duplication, conflicts and ensured strategic alignment.

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### Integrated planning

During the term Council has focused on developing an integrated, long-term approach to strategic planning driven by extensive community engagement and an evidence-based outcomes framework.

This has transformed the way planning is undertaken at the City of Whittlesea and this innovative approach has been recognised by the sector in the 2024 LGPro Awards for Excellence when the City of Whittlesea was a finalist in the Innovation Management category.

A lean, well-defined strategic planning framework saw the development of seven core strategies aligned to each of the goal areas under the vision of A Place for All with an outcomes framework that supports and enhances extensive reporting mechanisms, articulating the impact on community.

These strategies are now embedded across the organisation driving organisational effort.

Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033

• Liveable Neighbourhood Strategy 2023-2033

Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026
 Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032

High Performing Organisation Strategy 2023-2028

Long Term Community Infrastructure Strategy 2024-2033

• Aboriginal Action Plan 2024-2029

# **Customer service**

With a rapidly growing and diverse municipality, delivering excellence in customer service has been a focus of the past four years.

# Highlights

- The creation of a dedicated Customer Experience/Digital Experience program to transform the way our community interacts with us online
- The creation of the Whittlesea Service Hub; a dedicated customer service centre located in the heart of the Whittlesea township to better service the north of the municipality.
- The delivery of a contemporary new easy-to-use and intuitive website to make it easier for the community to find the information they need and to interact with Council online
- A comprehensive future-focused digital transformation program ensuring systems are fit-for-purpose to drive efficiency and deliver the best community outcomes
- The delivery of an online customer portal; where more transactions can be completed online such as requesting a bin, booking a hard waste collection, reporting an issue or paying a bill. It will be quick and easy on the portal which is easily accessible from Council's new website. Residents can sign in and view all their requests in the one place
- Council has introduced a new post-service delivery survey to monitor satisfaction levels with customer service; satisfaction scores have increased from 48% in November 2022 to 84% in July 2024
- A Customer Charter clearly articulates what customers can expect of their council to increase accountability and continuous improvement.



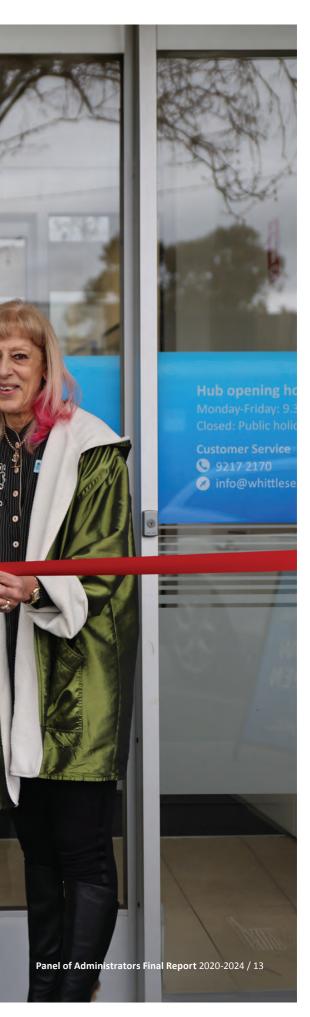
Whittlesea Whittlesea Service Hub





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# **Community engagement**

Council has invested significantly in rebuilding community trust through a comprehensive program of genuine community engagement to ensure the community's voice is considered during Council decision-making.

# Highlights

 Comprehensive community engagement far exceeding legislative requirements



Community-based pop-ups



Project based focus and reference groups



**16,562** Online contributions

27 Informational/educational pop-ups



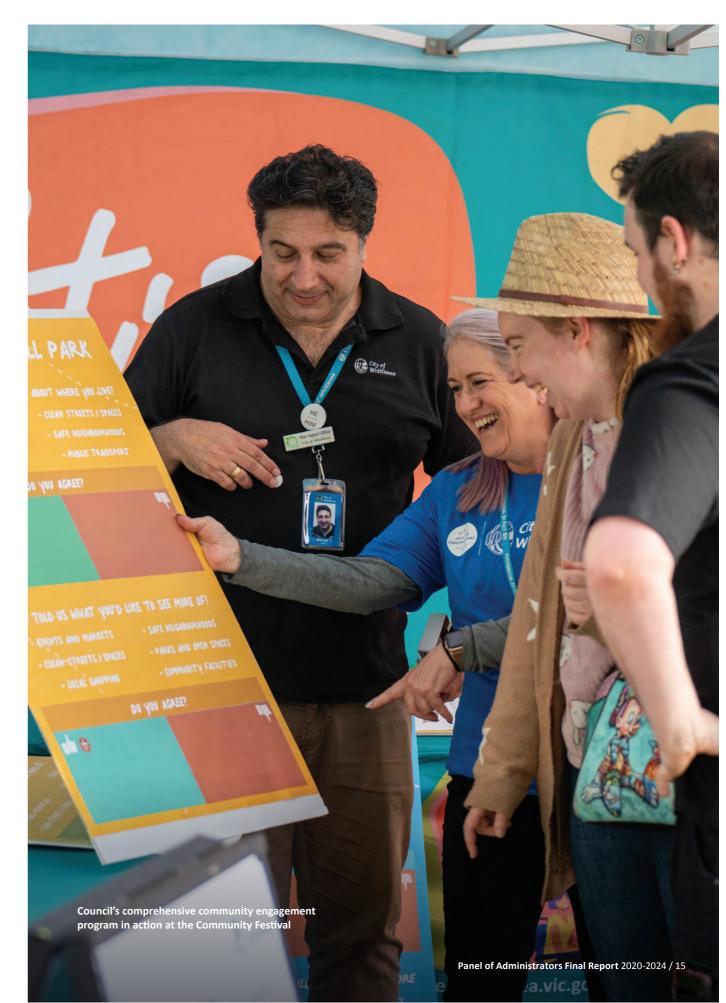
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campaigns promoting opportunities for people to have their say on local issues sent to 84,298 recipients

- In December 2023 Council's Community Engagement Policy was revised strengthening Council's commitment to purposeful, genuine and meaningful engagement
- In 2022, Council began a monthly Coffee with Council drop-in session. Held at coffee shops around the municipality, the sessions gave unprecedented access for community to Administrators and senior leadership; 19 sessions have been held to date



- Community-based Council Meetings were enhanced with engaging community forums in Whittlesea Township, Mernda and in Lalor featuring stalls on local topics of interest, performances by local community groups and opportunity for networking with local community members and groups ahead of Council Meetings
- As part of a growing program of deliberative engagement, a group of community representatives helped shape Council's \$2 million investment into COVID-19 recovery initiatives to support residents, businesses and groups to thrive following the pandemic
- In December 2022, Council launched the Whittlesea Disability Network Hub – an online space where people with disability, their carers and support network can provide feedback to Council on what people with disability need to live independently and safely in the community.





# Advocacy

During the term of administration Council has taken a collaborative approach to work in partnership with other tiers of government and regional Local Government associations to create and enhance the conditions for economic growth, liveability, and sustainability to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding population.

A strong advocacy program, compelling submissions and grant applications, strategic relationship-building and project preparedness have delivered pleasing results over the term.

# **Highlights**

• Development of the Advocacy Prospectus 2023-2025 highlighting 18 key initiatives seeking State and Federal Government co-investment across the following domains and in alignment with delivery of Council's goals and vision:



Affordable housing Roads

Employment







population growth rates

election commitments

2022 State Government election

• The development and execution of the



Advocacy Plan which sets out Council's approach

to advocating to all levels of government, industry

and the private sector to influence positive change

and secure vital infrastructure required to meet our

• A successful Advocacy Showcase held during the

• Strong advocacy efforts during the Victorian State Election resulted in over \$42 million in



Environmental

sustainability

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- State Government Growing Suburbs Fund
- State Government's Community Sports Infrastructure Stimulus Program
- State Government's Growth Area Infrastructure
- the precinct.

• \$20 million in funding to support the delivery of a regional aquatic and sports precinct in Mernda Ongoing advocacy in partnership with Mitchell Shire and Hume Council to the Federal Government resulting in a commitment to deliver the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal; a \$1.8 billion project adding \$3.5 billion to the economy each year and generating nearly 20,000 local jobs

Engaging and leveraging the power of collective, regional advocacy partnerships with the Northern Council's Alliance, National Growth Areas Alliance, Interface Councils and neighbouring Councils

• Successfully securing increased investment in mobile and broadband coverage across our municipality through the State Government's Connecting Victoria program, with mobile towers across 12 locations in the City of Whittlesea, and continuing to advocate for increased investment and awareness in this space through a Telecommunications Study and community storytelling

Advocating for increased investment and funding in social and affordable housing across and homelessness support services across our municipality, including securing investment for Hope Street – a youth homelessness service provider in our municipality

• External funding contributions:

- State Government's Building Works Stimulus Package
- Federal Government's Housing Support Program

• Contributions Fund: secured \$10 million funding for **Regional Sports Precinct Transport Infrastructure** Project to deliver the enabling infrastructure for

# Representation

During the Administrators term, representation was made on the following state-wide, metropolitan, regional, and Whittlesea-based organisations which enabled Council to further its advocacy and engagement goals, and to gather information about sector opportunities and emerging issues to inform decision-making:

- Australian Local Government Women's Association
- Community Awards Committee
- Whittlesea Reconciliation Group
- Business Advisory Panel
- Northern Councils Alliance
- Northern Growth Councils Alliance
- Yarra Plenty Regional Library Corporation (YPRL) Board
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council Meeting Representative
- Business Assistance Grants program
- Victorian Local Governance Association
- Interface Councils group

The CEO Employment Matters Advisory Committee (CEMAC) consisted of an independent external chair and all three Administrators. The composition of CEMAC and the policy developed, and updated on several occasions, reinforced Council's commitment to good governance practices and provided a consistent, fair and transparent framework for employment matters relating to the Chief Executive Officer's recruitment, contract terms, performance monitoring and annual review.

Over the four-year term, Chair Administrator Wilson and one other Administrator were actively represented on Council's Audit and Risk Committee along with four independent external members and a highly-experienced Independent Chair to monitor Council's compliance with the overarching governance principles, financial sustainability, risk and fraud systems and controls, and Council's internal and external audit functions.





# **Pandemic response**

The City of Whittlesea played an important role in responding to and supporting local community recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

A partnership approach with other levels of government, key community agencies including Northern Health, DPV Health and local community networks was paramount to boost local vaccination rates and ensure compliance with health directives.

Supporting immediate needs through lockdowns with food and material supplies was the initial priority which then shifted in focus towards recovery with initiatives to support our community to get back to doing what they love, from dining to leisure and social activities. Council collaborated with and listened to our community to help shape many of our plans and priorities and advocated on their behalf to other levels of government.

Throughout this time, business continuity was a focus and service delivery and good governance continued.

# Highlights

- Council endorsing the Municipal Pandemic Readiness and Recovery Plan on 2 February 2021, which contained 51 actions
- Supporting the Department of Health and local partners in establishing COVID-19 testing sites and mass vaccination venues at Council facilities



- A \$500,000 Emergency Relief Fund for local service providers supporting immediate local emergency relief needs
- A COVID-19 Hardship Policy provided residents, businesses, groups and clubs with relief from Council rates, fees and charges
- A \$2 million COVID-19 Community Recovery Fund shaped by local representatives
- A \$500,000 Business Assistance and Resilience Program included educational webinars, a business development program and shop local initiatives
- Securing more than \$500,000 through the State Government's Outdoor Eating and Entertainment Package encouraged outdoor dining with additional table and chair installations across several local retail precincts
- Delivering more than 400 COVIDSafe bags and more than 210 infrared thermometers to support businesses operate in a COVIDSafe manner
- A business support and compliance program monitored and advised businesses on COVIDSafe operating requirements
- A COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund for Creative Communities, provided small grants of up to \$2,000 for projects that directly responded to the impact of COVID-19
- Supporting vulnerable people including with data SIM cards to access online MCH appointments; distraction packs for our local Aboriginal community focussing on mindfulness, mental health, family games and gardening; and an outreach program for isolated groups and individuals in partnership with local support agencies
- Establishing an International Student Wellbeing Hub to provide non-medical health and social connection opportunities to students studying at RMIT and La Trobe universities



- Employing more than 200 people through the Working for Victoria Program
- Fee subsidies for groups using community activity centres and sporting facilities
- \$500,000 waived in registration fees for 1180 local businesses
- Activating an Emergency Management Team included 137 staff from 23 departments. The team directly engaged with over 3,606 residents and supported 3,254 residents in isolation with food and material relief in 2021-22
- Providing COVID-19 emergency recovery grants to 17 community organisations who supported 3,272 families with emergency food relief and other essential items
- A mass vaccination hub at Council's Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre (PRACC). Operated by Northern Health, the centre opened in June 2021, when local vaccination rates were well below the state average, and closed on 5 December, as the City of Whittlesea double dose vaccination rates hit 90 per cent. During this time, 241,190 vaccines were administered. The vaccination hub reopened in 2022 for third doses
- A dedicated, children's vaccination centre at the Civic Centre on 10 January 2022
- Delivering the Multicultural Awareness of COVID Immunisations (MACI) program to increase culturally and linguistically diverse community members' accessibility and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination. This included pop-up vaccination sessions, which saw 7,561 vaccinations administered

 Free online Q&A "Vax Chat" with experts from Northern Health to answer community questions about vaccinations to help boost vaccination rates. This included sessions specifically on child vaccinations, vaccinations for seniors and a multilingual vax chat

• Information booths were set up at pop-up locations from mid-October 2021 until June 2022, to provide information and assist community members with bookings for vaccinations. This included in-language information packs and language aides from Whittlesea Community Connections to assist CALD community groups access information

• Supporting the community to understand changing health and pandemic information and regulations through regular communications, including audio-visual and in-language resources

• 7,933 business visits to support businesses to remain compliant to COVID-19 restrictions

• Implementation of Council's Financial Hardship Policy to support financially vulnerable residents and established a team to support this work

• Partnered with Whittlesea U3A to deliver free digital literacy classes for seniors

• Rollout of the Dine Out(side) campaign to encourage residents to support local food businesses

• Delivery of a 10-week Gardening Together Again program.



# **Connected Community**

During the term Council has sought to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

# Highlights

### **Strategic planning**

- Connected Community Strategy 2023-2033 developed and implementation underway including yearly action plans. This plan articulates how Council will support a socially cohesive, healthy and safe and participating community
- Signing of a Kindergarten Infrastructure Service Plan and Building Blocks Partnership Agreement with the Victorian Government to plan, build, expand and improve early years infrastructure to ensure local families can continue to access great local kindergarten programs, no matter where they live
- Implemented the Victorian Government-funded 3-year-old kindergarten service together with the early childhood sector and delivered infrastructure projects at key sites
- Aboriginal Action Plan 2024-2029 developed in consultation with local Aboriginal community and implementation underway. This plan will guide Council's reconciliation efforts and focuses on improving cultural, health, education and employment outcomes
- Design and construction underway of an Aboriginal Gathering Place designed in partnership with local Aboriginal community who have been advocating for this for the past 20 years. The Aboriginal Gathering Place 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
- Aboriginal Heritage Study conducted to inform Quarry Hills Future Directions Plan
- Advocating for more mental health services and prevention programs including for young people







### Ageing Well

• Ageing Well Expo delivered each year along with other programs to support older residents

• Council has committed to continuing as a provider of aged care services and recently endorsed becoming a provider of Home Care Packages. This expansion supports Council's commitment to supporting older residents to remain independent for as long as possible

### Sommunity

• Annual City of Whittlesea Community Awards Program recognising a Citizen of the Year, Senior Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, Access and Inclusion Citizen of the Year and Sustainable Environment Citizen of the Year

• Community Grants Program launched with 355 applications across 12 programs. Since its inception, Council has allocated \$1.18m in grant funding

• Community Leadership Program developed and implemented with more than 100 participants to strengthen local leadership skills ahead of the return to a locally elected Council

• Comprehensive Dates of Significance Program highlighting local culturally important dates on the annual calendar

### **Connected Community**

• Conferred 9,621 (to July 2024) new citizens, with a very small waiting list of just over 100 people



- Execution of Love Where We Live campaign focussing on activating local areas with vibrant events, and developing community pride
- Supported and developed local advisory groups including for businesses, young people, people with a disability and Aboriginal communities
- Transitioned our Youth Advisory Committee to a Youth Council to empower our young people to contribute to the governance of the City. The Youth Council has 13 members aged between 12-22 years of age and meets monthly to provide valuable advice to Council on matters affecting young people, advocated for the interests, challenges and opportunities faced by young people and offer input and feedback on matters referred from the Council before formal decisions are made
- Management and operation of Ziebells Farmhouse and Heritage Gardens moved to Council to further support local heritage
- Development and delivery of Young Women's Leadership Program to provide a structured approach to enhance young women's skills, confidence and leadership opportunities in a supportive peer learning environment

### Safety & Wellbeing

- Bolstered emergency and disaster resilience through increased access to information and education
- Worked with local service providers and the community to support family and gender-based violence prevention and response
- Improve perceptions of safety in public spaces including for people with disabilities and their carers, women, girls and gender diverse people
- Opened the Mernda Social Centre to assist older residents to improve their physical and mental health and provide day respite



- Established a headspace satellite service for youth mental health
- Community preparedness programs developed to support local people during and after an emergency
- Safe Routes to Schools approach implemented to improve road safety around pick up and drop off times, create safe walking, cycling and scooting routes to school to encourage active travel

there we live City of Whittlese

Council's Love Where We Live campaign activated loo areas to boost community pride and connection



### **Connected Community**

### **Libraries**

- Library Review conducted to help shape future service delivery for a growing and diverse community. While continuing to invest in traditional libraries, the review also explored innovative alternatives to suit new and emerging communities
- Innovative approach to library services with the establishment of a pop-up library at the Galada Community Centre and the Mernda Library mini-branch in a shop front in Mernda Town Centre with 30,000 visits in the first six months



• Refurbishment of the Mill Park, Thomastown and Lalor Library branches.

### Sport and recreation

- Vibrant program of local community events and festival including Christmas Carols, Community Festival, Super Kids Sunday, annual art exhibition, Walking Thomastown, Summer Series as well as activating local spaces
- Improved access to physical activity and social connection by providing accessible, multi-use sports infrastructure
- Fair Access Policy developed and endorsed to ensure equitable access to sporting facilities
- Endorsed the initial business case for a regional sports and aquatic precinct in Mernda to help meet the growing demand for quality sporting facilities across the region and to help improve the health and wellbeing of the community; approved the concept design for Stages 1 and 2 with early works underway



- New youth space at Norris Bank Reserve constructed to provide a place for young people to connect and have fun in their local community
- Whittlesea Swim Centre upgraded to support summer recreation in the north of the municipality
- A number of successful programs at Council's three aquatic and leisure facilities have resulted in significant growth in participation and financial performance since the COVID-19 pandemic.





During the term Council has sought to ensure our City is well planned and that our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play.

# Highlights

### **Strategic Planning**

- Liveable Neighbourhood Strategy 2023-2033 developed and implementation underway with yearly action plans focussing on a smart, connected transport network, well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres and housing for diverse needs
- Adopted the Whittlesea Township Plan to set the vision and direction for the planning and development of the area over the next 15-20 years
- Developed an online planning portal to help customers easily access and manage planning applications
- Co-signed a historic regional partnership with Hume City Council and Mitchell Shire for the development of the new city of Cloverton
- Progressed four significant Planning Amendments to facilitate the delivery of over 18,500 homes
- Adoption of five significant residential Development Plans which will deliver over 4,000 homes
- Adoption of updated Epping Central Structure Plan to guide the future development of the Epping Central Metropolitan Activity Centre
- Adoption of Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 that outlines the vision, objectives and strategic directions for the Whittlesea Green Wedge
- Approval of a Development Plan for the Epping Renewal Site to deliver a mixed use precinct supporting over 2000 new homes including affordable housing, the New Epping Health Precinct, commercial development, open space and a neighbourhood activity centre
- Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into food security in Victoria
- Progressed Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes Study in partnership with Wurundjeri and Taungurung Land and Waters Council
- Dry Stone Wall history documented and toolkit developed to support local history preservation
- Following an extensive period of community consultation endorsed a new 10 Year Community

Local Law that strikes a balance between safety, personal freedom, and community responsibility to help people live harmoniously by addressing a wide range of important community issues including fire safety, animal welfare, property regulations, vehicle management, and public behaviour

• Integrated Transport Plan developed to improve transport outcomes in the municipality. This Plan will allow Council to strategically plan for, and respond to, future challenges and opportunities, inform advocacy for our transport needs and guide the development and expansion of the transport network

• Nature Strip Guidelines developed to promote biodiversity and community pride

 Neighbourhood Design Guidelines developed to set clear standards for future development and promote quality design

• Northern Regional Trails Strategy developed to identify the priority walking and cycling trails for Council to advocate for over the next 10 years

• Public Toilet Amenities Plan developed and implementation underway to ensure accessible and inclusive public toilets across the municipality

• Regional Affordable Housing Action Plan 2021-22 developed to guide our partnership in the planning, facilitation and advocacy for affordable housing across Whittlesea, Hume and Mitchell Councils

• Thomastown Lalor Place Framework developed to identify priority projects that improve streets, public spaces, community precincts and transport

• Urban Design Framework developed to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable planning, landscaping and engineering in new developments

• Walking and Cycling Plan 2022-2027 developed to improve walking and cycling conditions in the municipality, raise awareness about the opportunities for walking and cycling and increase the level of walking and cycling participation

· Joint operations with EPA and Vic Pol tackling non-compliance in building to improve local community amenity





- Engaged Beyond Housing to fund, build and manage 27 social and affordable homes on Council land at 1F Ashline Street, Wollert to boost local affordable housing
- Supported the delivery of 151 new social and affordable homes a part of the New Epping development

### Playgrounds & Open Space

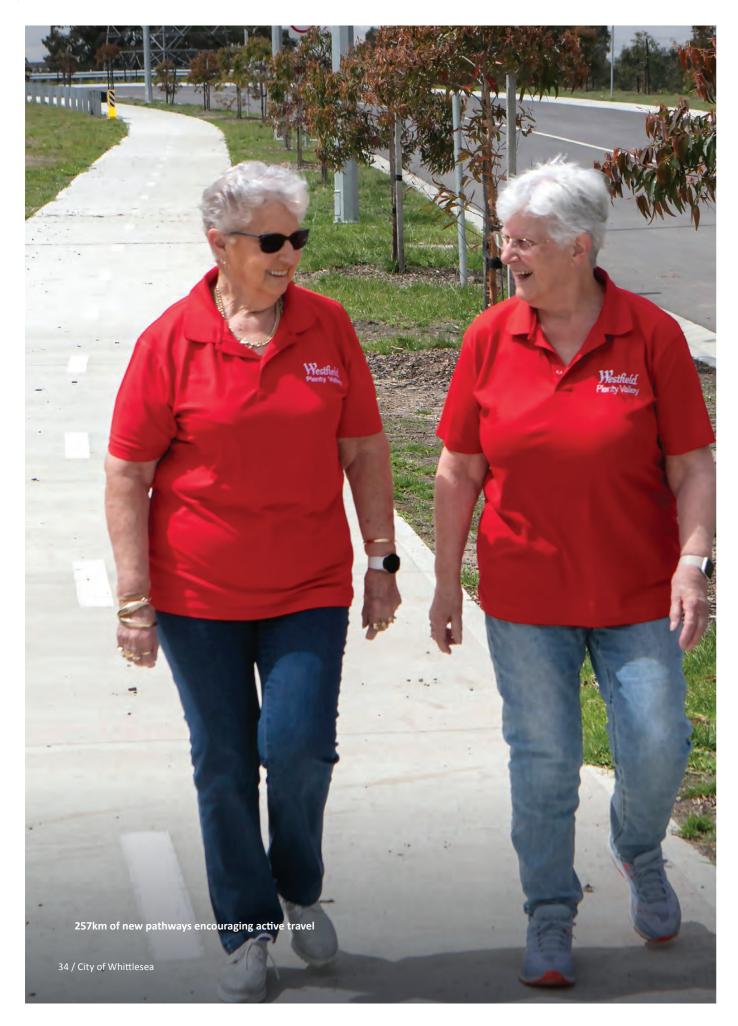
- Constructed and upgraded 35 playgrounds, including two major community parks – the popular All Abilities Playspace in Mill Park & Norris Bank Reserve in Bundoora
- Design and start construction of the Granite Hills Regional Playground at Quarry Hills in Mernda
- Open space development across the municipality through master plans:
  - Nick Ascenzo Reserve in Thomastown
  - Kelynack Reserve in Mill Park
  - Whittlesea Park in Whittlesea
  - Lalor Recreation Reserve in Lalor
  - VR Michael Reserve in Lalor
  - Work is underway on master plans for Lowalde Recreation Reserve in Epping, Mernda Recreation Reserve in Mernda, WA Smith Recreation Reserve in Lalor and Sycamore Reserve in Mill Park
- Development of the Parks and Open Space Asset Management Plan to ensure assets are maintained in a way that meets community expectations and are safe, effective and cost-efficient
- Quarry Hills Regional Park future directions plan developed in partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Redevelopment of Whittlesea Public Gardens in Lalor delivering a new playground, a learn-to-ride area, a 100-metre-long street-style skate park, two half-court basketball courts, a rock-climbing wall and two large shelters with barbecues
- Increased the number of waste and recycling bins in public spaces and parks



- Sportsfield upgrades including:
- Mill Park Recreation Reserve softball practice nets
- AF Walker Reserve new cricket nets
- Barry Road Tennis Club lighting upgrade to LED
- Epping Rec Reserve new car park and Scoreboard upgrade
- Harvest Home Rec Reserve synthetic pitch upgrade
- HR Uren Reserve new synthetic pitch and lighting, new Community pavilion
- Laurimar Rec Reserve new cricket nets
- Main Street Rec Reserve Pavilion
- Olivine Rec Reserve 2 x ovals and Community Pavilion
- Painted Hills Reserve 2 x pitches and Community Pavilion
- TH Hurrey Reserve new pavilion and 2 x new courts
- Waterview Rec Reserve lighting upgrade
- Harvest Home Recreation Reserve in Epping a new FIFA accredited soccer pitch







### Construction

- Construction of Community Centres & Kindergartens
  - Gambu Gulinj Community Centre in Epping North 0
- Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook
- Kirrip Community Centre in Wollert
- Mernda Social Support Centre constructed
- Mernda Library constructed
- McLeans Road Kindergarten in Bundoora
- Spring Street Kindergarten in Thomastown 0
  - South Morang upgraded
- 0
- Stables Kindergarten in Mill Park planning for 0 redevelopment under way
- Dalton Road Preschool and Maternal Child 0 and Health Centre in Thomastown - planning underway for redevelopment
- Centre in Epping planning under way
- Designed and upgraded local streetscapes and shopping precincts to make it easier to move about, celebrate local culture, heritage and character and connect people to the
- Rochdale Square Shopping Centre, Lalor

- Riverside Community Centre and Reserve in
- Whittlesea Community Centre upgrade works
- Bubup Wilam Children and Family Centre extension and heating and cooling system upgrade
- West Wollert Community Centre design under way

- Boori and Derby Meadows Family Children's
- natural environment







- 2)z
- Constructed the Edgars Road link to support local traffic flow







• Approximately 89km of road has been reconstructed and approximately 4km of footpath has been reconstructed since 2020



- Station Street and May Road Lalor
- High Street Thomastown
- Gorge Road, South Morang
  - scheduled for construction this financial year
- Alexander Avenue, Thomastown
- scheduled for construction this financial year • Tramoo Street, Lalor
  - scheduled for construction this financial year
- Mill Park Basketball Stadium \$2.8m redevelopment
- Mill Park Leisure \$25 million refurbishment



### **Roads and footpaths**

- Improved disability access to public transport with the installation of bus shelters
- Findon Road extension completed, delivering a critical new east-west link to ease congestion and cut down on travel times

• 160 km of new roads and 237km of pathways constructed

### Animals

- Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 developed following extensive community consultation and implementation underway. This Plan outlines Council services, programs and policies established to address the administration of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, and Council's management of cat and dog issues in the community
- Dog parks constructed and upgraded across the municipality:
  - Delacombe Reserve Dog Park, South Morang, upgraded, 2023
  - Katandra Rise Dog Park, Doreen, developer build, 2020
  - Redleap Recreation Reserve, Mill Park, built 2020
  - Portofino Way, Wollert, developer build, 2021
  - Norris Bank Reserve, Bundoora, built 2020
- Creek Park Dog Park, Mernda, built 2021
- Allumba Park, Wollert, to be constructed this financial year
- Whittlesea Public Gardens,Lalor, to be upgraded this financial year
- Following extensive community consultation, introduced a 24-hour cat containment and mandatory desexing of newly registered cats to create a safer and more harmonious environment for cats, wildlife, and their owners. Council undertook a comprehensive education program to support the community to prepare for the changes. Since the introduction of the new regulations complaints about cats have reduced by 70%



- Introduction of Annual Pet Expo to support responsible pet ownership
- wat djerring Animal Management Centre brought under City of Whittlesea management with a re-brand and upgrade; innovative partnership with Merri-Bek and Darebin Councils for service delivery



- Advocated for better public transport including rail, tram and bus infrastructure with the Northern Council's alliance
- Advocated for increased public transport and connected cycling and walking networks for the municipality
- Advocated for new or upgraded roads including Epping Road, Bridge Inn Road, E6, Yan Yean Road, Findon Road and Donnybrook Road
- Began consultation on Council new Asset Management Plan using deliberative engagement practices.



# Strong Local Economy

During the term Council has sought to make our City a smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry investment as well as supporting local businesses to be successful, enabling opportunities for local work and education.

# Highlights

### Strategic Planning

- Strong Local Economy Strategy 2022-2026 developed and implementation underway with yearly action plan. The strategy sets a vision for building a prosperous and inclusive local economy and priorities for action to achieve success
- Investment Attraction Plan 2021-2026 developed and implementation underway to create a strong and attractive investment environment for local businesses, organisations and residents to thrive
- Agri-Food Plan 2023-2026 developed and implementation underway to support the agri-food sector through increased awareness and demand for local agriculture and food products, targeted programs, advocacy and collaboration
- Approved a 140-hectare employment precinct on Vearings Road, Wollert
- Destination Plan 2023-2026 developed and implementation underway. The plan provides direction for tourism development and growth within the City of Whittlesea, with the primary objective of increasing tourism visitation, length of stay and spend
- Economic Participation Plan 2023-2026 developed and implementation underway. The plan champions equality of access to economic participation opportunities in the local community with a focus on vulnerable groups who face barriers to employment
- Supported the creation of employment precincts in collaboration with the Victorian Government and key stakeholders to progress planning for Epping Central, Beveridge Intermodal Precinct, Melbourne Food, Innovation & Export Hub and Vearings Road employment precinct
- Epping Central Structure Plan developed to play a role in guiding future development and ensuring the Activity Centre can respond to the needs of a growing and changing population
- Establishment of a Business Advisory Panel to provide a voice to Council from the business community. The panel has 12 members from local business and industries together with Administrator and senior Officer representation

- Launched the Explore Whittlesea website to showcase the recreational and tourism opportunities in the municipality
- Vacant to Vibrant shopfront activation program helping fill empty shops with short-term business rentals

### **Business Support**

- Business Concierge Service developed to support local business through the Council approval processes
- Business Relocation Growth Program grants launched to support existing and new businesses to relocate into the City of Whittlesea's commercial and industrial precincts which in turn will boost local employment
- Encouraged employment pathways and sustainable land management practices at the Whittlesea Community Farm and Food Collective
- Established the Whittlesea Business Network to help businesses to connect and grow; currently 400 plus members



• Establishment of the City of Whittlesea Business Awards to support and celebrate local businesses with awards for customer service, innovation and enterprise, sustainability and environment, community contribution, workplace diversity, home-based business and business of the year with over 130 applications received since the inaugural awards in 2023



- Establishment of Women in Business Network to support local women with networks and connections to help their businesses thrive
- Jobs Fair delivered to connect local job seekers with business and support local employment







- South Morang Farmers and Makers Market supported local makers and growers to sell to their local community
- Developed the Business Opportunity Explorer (BOE), an interactive web-based tool to provide prospective businesses the information they require to choose the City of Whittlesea as a place to locate their business and invest
- Support local campaign and incentive program launched during COVID recovery



- Local work, training and apprenticeships program developed with local partners to support people with barriers to employment
- Delivered 55 Shopfront Improvement Program grants to help businesses refresh their shops and attract and retain customers

### **COVID** recovery

- Business Relief and Resilience Program developed to support local business
- · Dine Outside campaign delivered to support COVID recovery for business by promoting outside dining opportunities
- Facilitated connections and employment opportunities through the Local Jobs Program and Jobs Advocates Program during COVID.

Panel of Administrators Final Report 2020-2024 / 39

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# **Sustainable Environment**

During the term Council has sought to prioritise our environment and take action to reduce waste, preserve local biodiversity, protect waterways and green spaces and address climate change.

# **Highlights**

### **Strategic Planning**

- Sustainable Environment Strategy 2022-2032 developed and implementation underway with yearly action plans. The strategy outlines the City of Whittlesea's contribution toward securing a sustainable, net zero emissions, and climate resilient future for all
- Advocated on behalf of the local community, on climate change, water security and quality, vulnerable flora and fauna, waste reduction and reuse
- Circular Economy Plan 2023 developed and implementation underway. The plan provides direction to transition to a circular economy by supporting and working with business and industry to reuse, recycle, resale and repair
- Climate Change Plan 2022-2032 developed and implementation underway. The plan outlines Council's role in minimising its own emissions, and supporting the community to take climate action to mitigate and adapt to climate change to 2032
- Extreme heat impacts analysis conducted to inform future planning
- Green Wedge Management Plan 2023-2033 developed and implementation underway. With more than 60 percent of land in the City of Whittlesea Green Wedge, the plan seeks to protect and enhance these areas for the local community to enjoy
- Greening Whittlesea City Forest Strategy 2020-2040 developed and implementation underway. This strategy sets out plans for the protection, growth and management of the City of Whittlesea's trees and green cover



Att 5.12.1

• Established a partnership with the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation's Narrap Rangers unit to share knowledge about traditional fire practices

• Rethinking Waste Plan 2021-2030 developed and implementation underway. The plan supports community to take on a leadership role in sustainable living and guide waste management and resource recovery services. It includes 34 actions to meet targets including reducing waste sent to landfill and reducing waste generated per person

• Whittlesea Water for All 2020-2030 developed and implementation underway. The plan outlines how Council will plan, use and manage water including stormwater, drinking water, wastewater, rainwater and the health of local waterways



### **Sustainable Environment**



- Energy Efficient Street Lighting program developed and implementation underway to continue to reduce emissions
- EV charging station installed in Whittlesea township to support the transition to electric vehicles



• Installed solar system on community facilities to support energy savings

# Greening

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- 72,000 trees have been planted in new subdivisions, Council capital works projects, and Greening Whittlesea Tree planting programs in streets, parks and conservation reserves including:
  - Main Roads and High-Profile Streetscapes Planting Program
  - Parks Tree and Major Facilities Planting Program
  - Residential Street Tree Renewal Planting Program
  - Conservation Reserves Tree Planting Program
  - Creek Corridor Planting Program
- Tree Infill program



- Established a Litter Enforcement Team to tackle the challenge of dumped rubbish and promote responsible disposal of unwanted items
- FOGO food and organic waste recycling program rolled out to the kerbside collection in the City of Whittlesea



- Introduced new local recycling drop off points to support community to recycle right and to reduce the amount of waste in landfill
- Repair cafés at Mernda and Donnybrook set up to support community to fix broken items and reduce the amount of goods ending up in landfill
- Zero Waste Rebates Program to incentivise people to choose environmentally friendly products

# Water

- Improved the quality and activation of local water networks, sourced more water from alternative water supplies and used less water through water efficiency upgrades
- Upgrade of Peter Hopper Lake to mitigate algae outbreaks and water quality issues.

### Waste

- Endorsed the Environmental Upgrade Agreement which offers finance to local businesses to access to low-interest, long-term loans to undertake upgrades to become more sustainable
- Glass recycling program rolled out in alignment with the Victorian Government's requirements





# **High Performing Organisation**

During the term Council has sought to ensure Council engages effectively with the community, delivers efficient and effective services and initiatives, makes decision in the best interest of the community and delivers value to the community.

# **Highlights**

### Strategic Planning

- High Performing Organisation Strategy 2023-2028 developed and implementation underway with yearly action plans to ensure that as an organisation we have the people, processes and systems in place to effectively deliver outstanding services to our community
- Community Plan 2021-25 developed outlining deliverables under the key Whittlesea 2040 goals of Connected Community, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy, Sustainable Environment and High Performing Organisation. The plan has a yearly action plan
- Financial Plan 2021-2031 developed and implementation underway. The plan provides an overview of Council's financial position and how it plans to responsibly invest in community services and infrastructure over the next decade
- Great Workplace for All Plan 2022-2026 developed and implemented to assist with attracting and retaining high quality staff
- Buildings and Facilities Asset Management Plan developed and implementation underway. The plan outlines how Council will manage its building portfolio to facilitate the delivery of services in a way that meets community expectations in a safe, effective and cost-effective manner
- Community Engagement Policy updated to strengthen focus on increasing deliberative engagement practice
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 developed and implementation underway to ensure we create a diverse and inclusive workplace
- Public Affairs Plan developed and implementation underway to deliver best practice community engagement and communications, so our community feels informed and able to have their say on matters that are important to them

• Quarterly Reporting to support public transparency

• Revenue & Rating Plan 2021-2025 developed and implementation underway to provide a medium-term plan for how Council will generate income to deliver on the Council Plan, program and services and capital works commitments over a four-year period

• Transformed organisational planning to embed data-driven decision-making to ensure the best outcomes for community

• Transport Asset Management Plan developed and implementation underway. The plan outlines how Council will manage transport assets in a way that meets the community's expectations in a safe, effective, and cost-efficient manner

• Workforce Plan 2021-2025 developed and implementation underway to ensure we have the right people in the right jobs at the right time to deliver on our community vision

• Implemented Inclusive Employment Program supporting local people with barriers to employment to secure work experience with a target of ten placements per annum

### **High Performing Organisation**

### **Customer Focus**

- Business improvements including introduction of cloud-based telephony
- Centralised research, analytics and reporting function
- Customer post transaction survey implemented to provide data and information to foster ongoing improvements to customer experience; satisfaction scores have increased from 48% in November 2022 to 84% in July 2024
- · Customer charter developed to help manage customer expectations and ensure high standards of customer service
- Creation of the Customer Experience/Digital Experience (CX/DX) program to implement digital solutions to support community interaction with Council including a new customer request management system
- Implemented place planning to ensure Council responds to local needs
- Implemented technology initiatives to support efficiencies and best practice



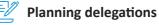
### Communication

- Comprehensive multi-channel communications program ensuring our community and staff are well informed about initiatives, decisions, services, programs and events
- Expansion of delivery of bimonthly Local Scoop newsletter to every household and business

## Governance and structures

- Delegations and Authorisations formalised to support Good Governance
- Enterprise Agreement No 10 agreed and implemented
- Established a Regulatory Programs Team to provide specialist regulatory enforcement, appeals and prosecutions systems.
- Establishment of an enterprise Portfolio Management Office (ePMO) to support planned and efficient delivery of projects across the organisation
- Establishment of a dedicated Change Unit to ensure that changes are implemented effectively and benefits are fully realised
- · Governance Rules updated to support good governance practices.

# **Innovation and best practice**



• A new Delegations Policy encourages delegation of decision-making including planning matters to staff members with the right skills and knowledge within the organisation. This structure aims to increase efficiency by allowing decisions to be made at the most appropriate level within the organisation and ensures the best outcomes for Council and the community. This approach allows the Council to focus more on broad strategic policies rather than everyday administrative or operational issues.

## Aged care services

• During the term, Council has focussed on improving service delivery models and operations to deliver the best care possible to our senior residents, maximise efficiencies, reduce duplication and minimise future cost increases. The City of Whittlesea provides a range of Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP) and Council subsidised aged care services for our ageing population.

Annually, Council supports close to 15,000 clients including those accessing CHSP, HACC PYP and Let Everyone Actively Participate (LEAP), as well as members of the 80 senior citizen clubs. Service improvements have included internal reviews of processes, recruitment drives for Home Support Workers, successful negotiations with the Federal Government, competitive tendering processes and a review and change in the procurement of meals. As a result, Council has reduced its service subsidy by \$2 million while continuing to provide the same level and quality of care to our local residents

### Online public planning portal and planning excellence

 In June 2021 Council moved its planning permit application process online using the Salesforce Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform. Council was the first in the sector to implement an entirely digital process and the result has seen significant improvements to the customer experience.

### Partnership approach to animal management

 In 2022 the City of Whittlesea brought the management of its pound in-house to achieve the best possible outcomes for animals and the community. In an innovative partnership approach, the facility also provides pound services to Merri-bek and Darebin councils enabling the delivery of services with a regional lens. The unique model is designed to reunite the maximum number of animals with their owners or find them loving new homes and reduce euthanasia rates.

 In 2023 the facility was renamed wat djerring after consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. Meaning "we together" the name reinforces the connection with animals and reuniting pet owners.

 The facility has successfully reunited hundreds with their loved pets and rehomed many more to new families.

### Innovation and best practice

# 24 hour cat curfew

- Following on from feedback gained through the development of council's Domestic Management Plan the City of Whittlesea embarked on extensive consultation about the development of cat confinement regulations. As a result, it endorsed 24-hour cat confinement and mandatory cat desexing regulations which came into effect 1 August 2023.
- A robust 12-month plan to help the community transition to the new rules included workshops, videos, community pop-ups and a range of traditional and digital media initiatives.
- This communication and engagement campaign gave pet owners a significant amount of time and empowerment to transition to the new rules meaning the changes were seamlessly adopted by the local community.

#### 矗 **Governance Rules**

• Council's updated Governance Rules have taken into consideration recommendations from the Sandon Report particularly in relation to prohibiting moving items en bloc, recording who spoke to an agenda item and how they voted therefore removing the requirement to ask for a division.

# Audit & Risk

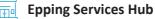
• Over the four-year term, Chair Administrator Wilson and one other Administrator were actively represented on Council's Audit and Risk Committee along with four independent external members to monitor Council's compliance with the overarching governance principles, financial sustainability, risk and fraud systems and controls, and Council's internal and external audit functions.

### **Developing an Integrated Planning Framework**

- The City of Whittlesea Integrated Planning Outcomes Framework has transformed corporate planning and reporting.
- This streamlined approach ensures that all plans, align with our endorsed Community Vision, with a focus on tangible community outcomes and benefits.
- The framework involved developing core strategies for each of our goals under our vision and the development of an outcomes framework that supported and enhanced extensive reporting mechanisms.
- A major highlight of the framework was the reduction from over 100 policies and plans to seven core strategies, increasing focus and transparency of priorities and community outcomes rather than outputs.
- This framework has been recognised as an industry-leading piece of work with the City of Whittlesea named a finalist in several awards.

### Library Review

- Faced with a growing and diverse community, the City of Whittlesea conducted an extensive review into its library service delivery model.
- While continuing to invest in traditional libraries, the review also explored alternatives to suit new and emerging communities.
- · As a result, Council is delivering library services from a shop front in Mernda and creating a library hub at a community centre in Wollert.
- The review fed into Council's Long-term Community Infrastructure Plan to ensure a pipeline of future library services and branches.



- · Council's Epping Services Hub has been recognised as a leading model for delivering community services to a rapidly growing population.
- The Hub brings together community services and strengthens links between partner organisations aiming to address the increasing fragmentation and isolation within the community services system. It seeks to reform the way practitioners work and collaborate to enhance seamless service delivery to clients.
- Since its inception, some 27 organisations have provided programs and services from this one location. The hub has attracted significant attention from other Local Governments and in 2023 it was the recipient of the LGPro Award for Excellence - Community Partnership Initiative.

### Supporting Financial Hardship

- In 2021 Council adopted a Financial Hardship Policy and has invested in dedicated staff resourcing to support our community to navigate the challenges associated with hardship.
- The policy provides options for those struggling to pay Council rates, fees or charges.
- The City of Whittlesea has signed up to the Thriving Communities Australia program that enables cross organisation collaboration to support people facing hardship.

A new customer portal and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system will further enhance the ability of people to interact with Council online and in a time and way that suits them. A post-service survey implemented to monitor customer satisfaction has led to significant process change and satisfaction levels consistently above 80 percent.



### **Digital transformation**

· Council has embarked on a significant program of change to support improved customer service with an investment in technology, systems and staff. The digital transformation program has resulted in a new Council website developed with a greater focus on usability and ease of search.

### **Community grants**

 In August 2023 Council endorsed a new Community Grants program to make it easier for community groups and individuals to access funds to deliver important local initiatives. The new program has a robust governance framework that ensure accountability and transparency in the allocation of Council funding.

• The program offers year-round grants with approvals conducted on a monthly and quarterly basis as well as emergency grants to support community organisations and businesses requiring immediate assistance.

• Since the program launched Council has received 355 applications across 12 programs including community-based emergency services, community relief, economic development, emergency grants, female participation in sport, service agreements for annual community events, individual grants, large, medium and small grants, senior citizens and unincorporated groups.

• Since its inception, Council has allocated \$1.18m in grant funding.





#### 2024 KABV Tidy Towns & Cities Sustainability Awards

Community

### 2024 Parks and Leisure Australia Awards of Excellence

- Finalist: Community Based Initiative of the Year
- Strategic And Masterplanning Award
- Finalist: Play space Award (>\$500K)

### 2024 NGAA Awards

- Built Environment
- Partnerships
- Leadership in Growth Areas

### 2024 Maggolee Award- Reconciliation Victoria

• Maggolee Award for the Quarry Hills Future Directions Plan.

#### 2024 Victorian Landscape Architecture Award

 State Chapter Award – Quarry Hills Future Directions Plan

### 2024 National Sports Convention Awards

• Finalist: Places and Spaces Design



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**Postal address** City of Whittlesea Locked Bag Bundoora MDC VIC 3083 **Phone:** 9217 2170 National Relay Service: 133 677 (ask for 9217 2170)

For help with this strategy in your preferred language contact:







### 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

### **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 Contract 2016-201B Tree Maintenance Variation Report
- 9.2 Garden Bed Contract CT2023-1 Council Variation Report
- 10 Closure