Agenda

Scheduled Council Meeting

Tuesday 17 June 2025 at 6pm

Council Chamber,
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang

City of Whittlesea

Councillors

Cr Martin Taylor, Mayor	South Morang Ward
Cr Daniela Zinni, Deputy Mayor	Bundoora Ward
Cr Nic Brooks	Thomastown Ward
Cr Blair Colwell	Mill Park Ward
Cr Lawrie Cox	Ganbul Gulinj Ward
Cr Deb Gunn	Painted Hills Ward
Cr Jarrod Lappin	Mernda Ward
Cr David Lenberg	Epping Ward
Cr Christine Stow	North Ward

Executive Leadership Team

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

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Note:

At the Chair'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: https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/about-us/council/council-meetings/

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 Council's Governance Team prior to any Council Meeting on (03) 9217 2170.

1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Chair, Cr Martin Taylor will open the meeting and introduce the Councillors and Chief Executive Officer:

Cr Daniela Zinni, Deputy Mayor
Cr Nic Brooks
Cr Blair Colwell
Cr Lawrie Cox
Cr Deb Gunn
Cr Jarrod Lappin
Cr David Lenberg
Cr Christine Stow
Craig Lloyd, *Chief Executive Officer*

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;*
Debbie Wood, *Director Infrastructure and Environment;*
Aaron Gerrard, *Acting Director Corporate and Customer Services*
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 will read the following statement:

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

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

1.4 Diversity and Good Governance Statement

The Chair will read the following statement:

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

1.5 Acknowledgements

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT Council confirm the Minutes of the preceding meeting as circulated:

1. **Scheduled Meeting of Council held on 20 May 2025.**

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 State Government Planning System Reform - Submissions

Director/Executive Manager: Director Planning & Development

Report Author: Strategic Planner

In Attendance: Acting Manager Strategic Futures
Strategic Planner

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Department of Transport and Planning's (DPT) proposed review of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Act) and present the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Local Government Sector submission to the review process for endorsement by Council. The report also presents Council's submission to the recently held *Inquiry into on Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274* conducted by the Select Committee of the Victorian Parliament. This report presents the outcomes of this inquiry including the Select Committee's final report.

The Act is the primary legislation guiding the use and development of land in Victoria. A review of the Act was first mooted as an action identified in the *Victoria's Housing Statement, the decade ahead 2024-2034 Statement* (the Housing Statement) which was released by the State Government in September 2023. The objective of the review was identified 'to build a modern, fit-for-purpose planning system'. The review of the Act forms part of the State Government's broader planning reform program.

In parallel to the review process, the State Government has introduced significant reforms to the planning system. These include a suite of planning scheme amendments introducing various changes to the Victoria Planning Provisions, the release of *Plan for Victoria* - a state-wide strategy for Victoria, and the introduction of the Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Bill. These changes, together with the proposed changes to the Act, have far-reaching implications for planning in Victoria and calls into question the approach that DTP is undertaking in reviewing the Act.

It is noted that a number of planning scheme amendments introduced by the Minister for Planning have recently been inquired into by the *Select Committee on Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257 (Housing Choice and Transport Zone and Built Form Overlay), VC267 (Townhouse and Low-Rise Code) and VC274 (Precinct Zone)*.

Council officers provided a submission to the Inquiry on behalf of Council. A number of other Councils also made submissions and presented to the inquiry.

This report recommends endorsing the MAV's submission *Reforming Victoria's Planning System: Local Government Sector Submission* (refer to *Attachment 1*) as Council's submission to the broader planning reform process. Council officers have contributed to the sector wide submission. The submission raises concerns about the process being undertaken by DTP, particularly the lack of genuine engagement between the state government, who are the system designers, with local government, who are the primary administrators of the planning system.

The MAV submission proactively recommends 'a better way' forward consisting of a comprehensive review of the planning system, undertaken in partnership with local government to design and build a better planning system. The MAV submission calls for a review which places integrity, housing, sustainability and local communities front and centre.

The submission also makes specific recommendations for the review of the Act to consider reforms that address the critical challenges facing planning in Victoria, including housing supply, location and affordability, climate change, natural hazards and environmental sustainability, and the delivery of infrastructure.

The report also recommends that Council note the officer submission provided to *Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274* (refer to *Attachment 2*). The Select Committee's report was tabled on 13 May 2025 and is included at *Attachment 3*. The Committee found that there is common support for the policy objective of facilitating increased housing in well located areas however that "the Victorian Government failed to adequately consult on the three amendments and the Committee is of the view that the Minister for Planning inappropriately exempted herself from expected consultation". The Committee also made a series of other findings which are recommendations discussed in the report, including impacts of the new planning controls on environmentally sustainable design, tree canopy coverage and consideration of natural hazards. The report recommends that Council note the Select Committee's final report at *Attachment 3*.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Note the Department of Planning and Transport is proposing to review the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as part of its planning reform program.**
2. **Note the Municipal Association of Victoria's submission 'Reforming Victoria's Planning System: Local Government Sector Submission – April 2025' to the State Government's proposed revision of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* at *Attachment 1* which proposes a planning reform model where state government partner with local government to design and build a better planning system.**
3. **Endorse the Municipal Association of Victoria Local Government Sector Submission – April 2025' as Council's submission to the State Government's proposed review of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987.***
4. **Note the Council officer submission to *Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274* at *Attachment 2*.**
5. **Note the Select Committee's final report in respect to the *Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274* at *Attachment 3*.**
6. **Write to the local members of parliament advising of Council's support for the Municipal Association of Victoria's submission 'Reforming Victoria's Planning System: Local Government Sector Submission – April 2025'.**

Background / Key Information

Background

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Act) sets out the rules about the use, development and protection of land in Victoria. There have been many attempts to review the Act to reduce its complexity and improve efficiency which to date have not been fully successful. The four most recent reviews of the planning system which commenced within the last four years, were only partially implemented or were not completed (*refer to section 4.5 in Attachment 1*).

On 20 September 2023 the Victorian Government released *Victoria's Housing Statement, the decade ahead 2024-2034* (the Housing Statement), which included a commitment to review and rewrite the Act. The objective of the review is 'to build a modern and fit-for-purpose planning system that establishes and clarifies timeframes for decisions, and looks at roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the planning system, including councils, the Minister for Planning, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).'

Despite the expectation from local government and other stakeholders that the Act review and rewrite would be a complete review and rewrite, resulting in a new principal Act to replace the 1987 Act, information provided to local government planners about the focus of the review suggests otherwise. It appears that the current review is to only focus on the planning scheme amendment and planning permit processes and the restructuring of the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP).

Since September 2023 four Acts of Parliament that amend or will amend the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* were introduced to Parliament. Some of the proposed changes cover matters highlighted for review as part of DTP's initial focus for the Act review.

In addition, the State Government has continued to introduce new planning reforms including the new *Plan for Victoria*, together with a suite of planning scheme amendments that make significant changes to the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) which potentially impacts the scope of the Act review.

These matters are detailed further below.

The Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill

On 27 November 2024, the Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Bill 2024 (The Bill) was introduced into parliament. The Bill proposes a suite of changes to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, which affects the planning scheme amendment process, planning panels and planning permit application process.

These include the following changes to the planning scheme amendment process:

- A process for proponent led planning scheme amendments. Councils will be required to make a decision within a given time period and then advise the proponent and the Minister for Planning of its decision. The Minister for Planning can decide to continue a planning scheme amendment if abandoned by the planning authority.
- A formal process for seeking authorisation to prepare planning scheme amendments.
- A new pathway for low-impact amendments exempting them from the requirement to refer submissions to a Planning Panel and giving the planning authority the power to make a decision to adopt, change or abandon the amendment after considering submissions.

The proposed changes to the planning scheme amendment process will impact some of Council's previous decision-making powers in that Council will be required to consider proposed planning scheme amendment proposed by third party proponents and the Minister for Planning will have the ability to proceed with a planning scheme amendment abandoned by the Council in its role as the planning authority.

The Bill proposes the following changes to Planning Panels:

- Planning authorities can deem a submission frivolous, vexatious or wholly irrelevant and will have an obligation not to refer these submissions to a Planning Panel.
- Submissions that are the same or substantially the same may be treated as one submission.
- Enabling a Planning Panel to hold conferences of experts or prepare a joint experts report, rather than the previous informal "expert conclave" process.
- Planning Panels can consider matters on written materials if there is no major issue of policy.

The proposed changes to the Planning Panels process are supported and will likely result in a reduction of Council resources being required to be allocated to some Planning Panel processes compared to the current requirements in the Act.

The Bill proposes the following changes to permit applications:

- Clarifying how a responsible authority is to give notice where it considers planning permit applications to be incomplete.
- Increased default expiry dates for planning permits.
- Previously, under section 97E(1) the Minister must refer any objections or submissions received in respect to any planning permit application that has been called in by the Minister under sections 97B or 97C, to a Panel appointed under Part 8. This has been amended to be a discretion with the intended effect being to enable the Minister to more efficiently intervene in applications that are experiencing unreasonable delays.

The proposed changes will likely improve clarity in respect to these statutory planning processes.

The Bill also proposes changes relating to the Metropolitan Planning Levy and VCAT proceedings. The Bill's commencement date is in November 2025. It is expected that there will be further information given to Council about these changes before its commencement.

Operation Sandon Report

The Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission's (IBAC) Operation Sandon Special Report was released in July 2023. Operation Sandon was an investigation into the allegations of corrupt conduct by councillors and developers associated with City of Casey. The report provides recommendations addressing the integrity, accountability and transparency of the planning system, a number of which requiring amendments to the Act. The State Government has stated that many of the recommendations will be implemented as part of its review into the Act.

Other Planning Reforms

Since the release of the Housing Statement in September 2023, there have been several planning scheme amendments to introduce a range of changes to the planning system which predominantly seek to facilitate residential development. These cumulative changes to the VPP have resulted in major structural changes to the planning system with no or limited engagement with key stakeholders or the community. The implications of these changes on local planning schemes are still being worked through with the potential implications on the scope of the Act Review currently unknown. These changes include:

- Amendment VC242 (Development Facilitation Provisions) introduced new particular provisions to facilitate significant residential development, allowing development outside usual height, set back and garden area requirements.
- Amendment VC243 (Res Code Update and Future Homes) codified residential development standards, expanded the Future Homes project and removed permit requirements for single dwellings on lots 300sqm or more.
- Amendment VC257 (Activity Centre Program) introduced the Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) and the Built Form Overlay (BFO) into the Victorian Planning Provisions. The aim of the amendment is to support housing growth in and around activity centres, such as the Epping Metropolitan Activity Centre, and other well-serviced locations. The HCTZ aims to facilitate a diversity of housing at increased densities and the BFO sets specific design and built form requirements.
- Amendment VC267 (Townhouse and Low-Rise Code) aims to streamline the planning assessment process for residential developments, in particular multi-residential dwellings, by introducing the new townhouse and low-rise code at Clause 55 of the planning scheme. A more detailed briefing will be provided to Council on this Amendment in June 2025.

- Amendment VC280 (Great Design Fast Track) introduced the new 'Great Design Fast Track' particular provision, an approval pathway for apartment and townhouse developments that are of high-quality design and have higher sustainability ratings. The Minister will be the decision maker for these applications.
- Amendment VC274 (Precinct Zone) introduces a new Precinct Zone (PRZ) to the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes in Victoria. The Precinct Zone supports housing and economic growth in priority areas.
- Amendment GC252 (Activity Centre Pilot Program Implementation) introduced new planning controls including application of the HCTZ and BFO which were introduced as part of VC257 along with other supporting changes to existing controls for the pilot activity centres including the Epping Metropolitan Activity Centre. The new controls affect 5,080 properties in the suburbs of Epping and Lalor.

In addition, the Victorian Government is currently proposing reform to the development contributions system with the objective "to create a fairer system for property developers to contribute to funding for local infrastructure, parks and services in the suburbs where they build more homes." The DTP established a Local Government Advisory Group comprising the CEO's of four Councils as their engagement with the Local Government sector. Engagement with this advisory group has now concluded. Council officers are also contributing to a DCP Reform working group established by the MAV to inform their advocacy on this issue. The reform has the potential to have a significant impact on the collection and management of development contributions. The pilot activity centres including the Epping Metropolitan Activity Centre have been identified as the pilot for the new development contributions system which is proposed to commence on 1 January 2027. The Epping Activity Centre has been identified as a declared area for a new contribution levy in the updated Ministerial Direction on the Preparation of Infrastructure Contribution Plans gazetted on 11 April 2025.

Plan for Victoria

On the 28 February 2025 the *Plan for Victoria*, a long-term plan that sets a state-wide vision for how Victoria will grow over time, was released. *Plan for Victoria* includes a range of Actions that will require changes to the VPP. It is unclear whether these matters will be considered as part of the current review of the Act or whether it is intended to undertake a further review at a later time.

Select Committee Inquiry into Victorian Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274

In April 2025, the Victorian Upper House (Legislative Council) of the Victorian Parliament established a parliamentary Select Committee to conduct an *Inquiry into the Victorian Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274*.

The three Amendments considered at the inquiry are summarised above and are:

- VC257 (Activity Centre Program amendment),
- VC267 (Townhouse and Low-Rise Code amendment), and
- VC274 (Precinct Zone amendment).

The Select Committee was established to consider and report back on whether the amendments are appropriate and give effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria and the objectives of the planning framework as set out in section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The Select Committee sought public input from impacted stakeholders on their views on the changed planning requirements. Submissions were called for on the 14 April 2025 and were due by 24 April 2025. In response, City of Whittlesea provided an officer submission to the Inquiry, relying in part on the sector submission from the MAV (see Attachment 1 and 2).

The City of Whittlesea officer submission raised concerns in respect to the lack of consultation with the local government sector and the erosion of third-party rights, meaning there are fewer circumstances in which community can challenge planning decisions. The submission also emphasised that the introduction of “planning reforms” that significantly reduce the ability for Councils to negotiate better housing outcomes has increased the challenges in meeting Council’s vision for the delivery of higher density housing and high quality, affordable housing.

The submission also highlighted the contrast between the requirements of Councils to ensure changes to planning schemes are evidence-based in comparison to the lack of transparency around the reasoning leading to recent changes made to planning schemes by the DTP. Further concern was raised that the planning changes will decrease the quality and diversity of homes. In turn, this reduction in quality could undermine the quality and amenity of local streets and neighbourhoods.

The Select Committee held three days of public hearing in its inquiry, which were held on the 17, 29 and 30 of April. During this time, the Committee heard from officers from Department of Transport and Planning, planning experts, interest groups and community organisations. A number of local councils were also invited to present to the inquiry. Whittlesea was not invited to present to the inquiry.

It is recommended that Council note the officer submission made to the inquiry included at *Attachment 2*.

The inquiry finalised and publicly released its report on 13 May 2025 (refer *Attachment 3*). The report reflected many of the key points raised in Council's submission and the submissions and evidence of other Councils who presented to the Inquiry.
Significantly, the Committee found that "the Victorian Government did not properly consult on the three amendments, and the Minister has inappropriately exempted herself from expected consultation". The Committee also found that there was little convincing evidence that the changes will guarantee additional housing or affordable housing.

The report also raised concern in respect to the exemption for planning permit applications to consider risks to human life and health and the environment. In particular, consideration of contaminated land, the effect of the environment, and flood, erosion or fire hazard risks. The report also acknowledged concern with respect to the new controls and the impacts on heritage, tree canopy coverage and environmentally sustainable design standards.

The report makes a number of recommendations to the State Government, including:

- Modification of planning scheme amendments should be undertaken after a round of genuine consultation with councils and communities.
- Provide a notice period of 28 days for future Victorian Planning Provision amendments.
- Review the expert advisory mechanism and consultation methods for the first 10 activity centres.
- Create a performance and review oversight mechanism for the Victorian Planning Provisions.
- Implement a range of changes in relation to the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code Amendment, including reinstating the application of Clause 65 Decision Guidelines (in relation to risks to human life and health), improving the Tree Canopy Cover standards and lifting the Environmentally Sustainable Design standards.

However, it is noted that the Committee made no conclusions about whether Amendment VC257 (Housing Choice and Transport Zone and Built Form Overlay) or Amendment VC274 (Precinct Zone) gives proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria. This was one of the questions to which the Select Committee was established to consider.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 Review

There is a notable lack of publicly available information and no public consultation on the review of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to date. There is no public report clearly outlining the purpose, strategic objectives, approach/process or scope of the review. It is noted that the Housing Statement progress update released by the State Government in September 2024, states that review is underway with aims to "cut red tape" and streamline processes to facilitate the delivery of additional housing.

Council officers were invited to attend a workshop in February 2025 to receive an update on and input into the review of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987.* The purpose of the workshop was to seek feedback from planning practitioners.

The workshop provided additional insight into the purpose and scope of the review, outlining the three key areas it will focus on as part of an initial partial review. These include the structure and content of the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) and Planning Schemes, the Planning Scheme Amendment process and the Planning Permit process. The initial review would encompass a restructuring of the VPP and some Parts of the principal Act and is expected to be complete within 2025.

The initial review focuses on the same Parts of the Act that the Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment considered. The lack of publicly available information on the review together with the introduction of legislation and other major structural changes to the planning system introduced prior to the completion of the Act Review raise significant concern about how this process is responding to standards of good governance, transparency and accountability. The cumulative effect of the reforms may have unintended consequences that compromise the objectives of the Housing Statement.

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Submission

The MAV has prepared a submission to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* review on behalf of all 79 municipalities within the State. City of Whittlesea officers have participated in the MAV Planning Reform Working Group and contributed to the document: *Reforming Victoria's Planning System – Local Government Sector Submission April 2025* (Attachment 1).

Since the release of the Housing Statement, major structural changes to the planning system have been made prior to a comprehensive review and rewrite of the Act. The submission asserts that with the significant recent changes to the planning system, the initial review project proposed by DTP will become a 'tidying-up' exercise rather than a comprehensive review that considers the planning system as a whole.

The MAV submission also criticises the lack of meaningful engagement with local government and community consultation. Engagement with local government is important to provide insight to how the planning scheme is operating in a local context and the challenges faced by the administrators of the planning system. Consultation with the community also is important as an opportunity to allow communities to contribute to planning strategies and builds community understanding and support for the planning framework.

The MAV supports a comprehensive review and rewrite of the Act to create a planning system that provides integrity, accountability, and transparency. It raises concerns about the recent planning reforms that create pathways which enable significant discretion and centralise decision-making to the Minister, reducing Council's role in decision making and potentially risking integrity in the planning system and the recommendations of the Sandon Report.

The submission proposes a comprehensive review program that includes the involvement of local government. It asserts that conducting another system-wide review while past reviews have yet to be fully implemented risks being a complex undertaking that repeats past mistakes.

The submission recommends that the review prioritise reforms that will meet the current challenges including housing supply, location and affordability, climate change, natural hazards and environmental sustainability and the delivery of infrastructure. Specific recommendations are included in respect to each of these in the submission at *Attachment 1.*

It is recommended that Council endorse the MAV submission at *Attachment 1* as Council's submission to the broader planning reform process.

Discussion

The review of the Act offers a significant opportunity to undertake real reform of the planning system to improve the manner in which it operates for the benefit of the community.

However, there is concern that the approach to the review has been haphazard and driven solely on facilitating development (i.e. more housing), rather than a comprehensive approach that considers the broader system holistically. The City of Whittlesea has long taken a proactive approach to facilitating development and supporting growth and the provision of new housing. This is represented in Council's continued and projected growth data and statistics which represent the timely processing of planning permit applications. However, we recognise that new housing needs to be balanced with a range of other considerations including environmental impacts, natural hazards, heritage, supporting infrastructure, jobs and creating high amenity places for people to live. It is also important to note that planning is only one 'piece of the puzzle' in respect to housing delivery and there are many other factors which are influencing the current housing affordability crisis.

It is recognised that some of the proposed administrative changes to the Act and Victorian Planning Provisions will likely result in improvements to the system and a number of these are supported in the MAV submission.

However, officers have significant concerns as to the unintended consequences of some of the more significant recent and proposed planning reforms and the manner they have been developed, consulted on and implemented. This is likely to impact on Council's ability to plan for its community, deliver infrastructure, achieve high quality design and environmental outcomes, and consider community concerns and local context in its decision making. Of particular concern is the ongoing reduction in Council's decision-making role for planning matters which affect its community and potential 'fee sharing' arrangements with the State Government.

The MAV submission calls for 'a better way': a comprehensive review process where the system designers, state government, partner the system administrators, local government, to design and build a better planning system. The MAV submission also calls for a review which places integrity, housing, sustainability and local communities front and centre. This 'better way' offers a pragmatic approach to addressing the current challenges and opportunities by working together. It is recommended that Council endorses the MAV submission as its advocacy position for this reform process.

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.

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.

Sustainable Environment

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

Alignment: The submissions align with the priorities contained in Council plan and advocates the planning reform program to be conducted in partnership with local government, noting our significant and front-facing role to community and industry. The MAV submission argues that the program should prioritise reform that will meet the current challenges including housing supply, location and affordability, climate change, natural hazards and environmental sustainability and the delivery of infrastructure.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

It is not expected that the review process of the Act will incur costs to Council. The implementation of specific changes to the Act including development contributions and planning fees, including a potential 'fee sharing process' may have impact on Council's financial management. The MAV submission opposes the establishment of a 'fee sharing process' with the State Government for planning applications.

Community Consultation and Engagement

There is no information proposed about the extent of community consultation and engagement proposed by DTP.

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) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.

(f) Collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought.

(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

It is expected that the review of the Act will have implications for environmental sustainability however the implications are not clear from the information currently available. The submissions advocate for improved environmental outcomes from the review including response to climate change, natural hazards and environmental sustainability.

Social, Cultural and Health

The outcomes of the review of the Act may have social cultural and health impacts however the implications are not clear from the information currently available. The submissions advocate for improved social outcomes from the review process including housing.

Economic

The outcomes of the review of the Act will likely have economic impacts however the implications are not clear from the information currently available.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The outcomes of the review of the Act may have resourcing implications however the implications are not clear from the information currently available. The changes to the Act under the Bill may increase the number of proponent led Amendments considered by Council which will have an impact on strategic planning resourcing.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Communication around changes to the planning system will be the responsibility of the DTP.

Critical Dates

The initial review pf the Act is expected to be completed in 2025.
The Legislative Council Select Committee finalised its report on the inquiry into Victorian Planning Provisions Amendments on 13 May 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. Municipal Association of Victoria - Submission to the Review of the Planning and Environment Act [**5.1.1** - 86 pages]
2. City of Whittlesea Submission to the Select Committee Inquiry into the Victorian Planning Provisions Amendments [**5.1.2** - 3 pages]
3. Select Committee Inquiry into the Victoria Planning Provision Amendments Final Report [**5.1.3** - 50 pages]

Reforming Victoria's Planning System

Local Government Sector Submission

April 2025



MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

No one understands the challenges and opportunities facing Victoria in the 21st century better than local councils. From rapidly evolving technology to social changes, shifting economies to environmental pressures, our local communities and the governments that represent them–are at the forefront of multiple transformations happening simultaneously.

As the peak body for the Victorian local government sector, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) offers councils a one-stop shop of services and support to help them serve their communities.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

DISCLAIMER AND COPYRIGHT

This submission has been prepared by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). The MAV is the statutory peak body for local government in Victoria, representing all 79 municipalities within the state. © Copyright MAV

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR PLANNING IN VICTORIA[1]

SUSTAINABILITY – LOCAL DEMOCRACY – PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENTS

MAV MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

A HIGH-IMPACT, LOW-FOOTPRINT PLANNING SYSTEM



- Increasing clarity, prescription and direction
- Streaming applications by risk
- Consistent and decision-ready applications

DELIVERING THE HOUSING VICTORIANS NEED



- Mandatory social and affordable housing contributions
- Strategic planning that supports housing capacity
- Converting approvals into supply

SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS



- Addressing a changing climate
- Sustainable transport hierarchy
- Making invisible costs visible

GOOD DECISIONS GROUNDED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES



- Enhancing local democracy
- Properly resourcing the planning system
- A framework for regional and state-wide issues

SOCIAL LICENCE OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM



- Delivering on community expectations for their neighbourhoods
- Delivering the infrastructure Victorians needs
- State and Local Governments partnering to deliver place-based density

INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY



- Transparency and accountability across the whole planning system
- Removing inappropriate influence
- The role of independent panels

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



- Improving the planning scheme amendment process
- Utilising local government expertise in planning reform
- Monitoring reform against measurable benchmarks

[1] Endorsed by MAV State Council in October 2023.

1 Executive Summary

The MAV welcomes the Victorian Government's commitment to review and rewrite the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The opportunity to modernise and reimagine the planning system to meet Victorians' needs now and into the future is important and exciting.

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* provides the framework for communities to clarify their view of the future through strategic planning. The Act sets rules about the use and development of land, and it establishes a framework for making, amending, administering and enforcing those rules. It sets out how elected decision makers, professional planners, local communities and developers interact to plan every part of our state.[2]

Despite having grown to three times its original length, the Act has mostly served Victorians well. But it is now 37 years old and, like the planning system it enables, it is overdue for comprehensive review and reform.

The history of planning reform in Victoria is a difficult one. Frequent attempts to alter the planning system to reduce complexity, provide certainty and improve efficiency have failed to live up to their objectives. A primary cause has been the dislocation of planning system designers in state government from the planning system's primary administrators in local government. The failure to reconnect them despite repeated recommendations in past planning system reviews is frustrating.

Some details have started to emerge about the scope of the state government's latest review: an 'initial review' is to be conducted in 2025 and a more comprehensive review will be a question for the future. Local government is concerned that these proposals will repeat past mistakes and will not lead to a fit-for-purpose planning system.

There is a better way.

This submission proposes a planning reform model that will integrate system designers in state government with system administrators in local government. It will allow for new ideas and mechanisms to be tested before they are introduced. It prioritises reforms that will meet the foremost challenges of the day: housing supply, location and affordability; climate change, natural hazards and environmental sustainability; and delivering infrastructure where and when it is needed. The submission makes 16 recommendations to achieve this.

A comprehensive program of reform that balances all the objectives that a planning framework must deliver is not an easy undertaking. But the prize for all Victorians will be worth it.

If state and local government together builds a planning system based on integrity, accountability and transparency, with locally and regionally responsive planning that enables public participation and confidence, we will create the social licence necessary to facilitate transformative change. If Victoria is to meet its housing, climate, environmental, economic and infrastructure challenges, nothing short of transformative change will do.

Local government stands ready to facilitate that change. We want to bring about thriving, resilient and inclusive communities. It is in that spirit that the MAV puts forward this submission: a comprehensive program for Victorian planning system reform.

[2] Adapted from the Planning Minister's second reading speech, p492, Legislative Council Hansard 24.03.1987

2 Recommendations

The 16 recommendations found throughout this submission are consolidated here. References to "the reform program" mean the Victorian Government's September 2023 commitment to review and rewrite the Act.

Recommendation		Ref
1	That the Government maintain its commitment to review and rewrite the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and, by extension, the planning system, subject to the other recommendations in this submission. A comprehensive review is necessary if the planning system is to effectively facilitate the transformational change needed for Victoria to meet its housing, climate, environmental, economic and infrastructure challenges, while maintaining its social licence.	5.1
2	That the reform program adopt as an objective the design of a planning system that provides integrity, accountability and transparency in decision-making in relation to all decision-makers.	5.2
3	That the reform program be rephased to ensure that the performance of the planning system as a set of integrated frameworks can be considered as a whole, with a view to consolidating duly considered reviews of each framework into one Bill to introduce a new principal Act to replace the 1987 Act, and to avoid piecemeal changes to the 1987 Act and planning system before then.	5.9
4	That the reform program avoid the situation of two principal Planning and Environment Acts being in operation concurrently other than to allow for a short transitionary period.	5.9
5	That the reform program be redesigned to allow for: 1. The collection of relevant data and evidence; 2. Start-to-end oversight by a collaborative body of state and local government system designers and administrators; 3. A shared understanding of the causes of problems in the planning system; 4. A shared agreement of reform objectives and performance measures; 5. A shared agreement on a strategy for regulatory expression; and 6. Strong public communication about the purposes and progress of the program.	6.7
6	That a statutory body including a balance of state and local government system designers and administrators, with provision for additional expert advisors, be established to oversee the continuous review and improvement of the VPP and to maintain a structured approach to planning system user feedback and engagement.	6.8
7	That a review of the objectives of planning, and the objectives of the planning framework, be conducted as part of the redesigned reform program. This review should enable meaningful public discussion and consider: 1. A new objective "to achieve and maintain net zero greenhouse gas emissions"; 2. Expanding the objectives of the planning framework to include integrity, accountability and transparency in decision-making, provide for subsidiarity, provide food security, facilitate high-quality and sustainable design and provide a sustainable transport hierarchy.	7
8	That the new Act: 1. Update the definition of affordable housing;	8.2

	2. Provide a head of power to enable, in future, a modest affordable housing contribution to be required with new development generally. 3. Provide a head of power to enable mandatory affordable housing contributions through planning controls, to allow for future strategic planning work to introduce such controls where justified.	
9	That the Government fast-track completion of Stage Two of the ESD Roadmap in a way that gives full effect to the local government 'Elevating ESD Targets' planning scheme amendments, providing full coverage of strong ESD standards through the particular provisions to all new buildings.	9.2
10	That the Government apply a new method for introducing and updating flood- and erosion-related land management overlays in planning schemes. The method should provide for: 1. One amendment, exhibition, panel and adoption per strategic exercise (e.g. per catchment or per coastal region); 2. The relevant Minister or delegate being the planning authority; 3. The amendment being considered by a specialist standing panel; and 4. Affected councils, being the primary administrators of municipal planning schemes, being guaranteed significant opportunities to make submissions.	9.3
11	That the new Act consolidate Development, Infrastructure and Open Space contributions in such a way that: 1. Ensures all state and local infrastructure requirements can be met on a fair and equitable basis; 2. Funding gaps are quantified and funding shortfalls provided for; 3. Existing contributions schemes that work well are grandfathered; 4. Both the state and local portions of infrastructure contributions being expended in the precinct or region in which they were collected; 5. No council is worse off under a new scheme; and 6. Provides transparent and regular reporting on infrastructure revenue and expenditure at the state, municipal and precinct level.	10
12	That the government commit to reviving Regional Growth Plans for each region in the state (including metropolitan Melbourne), co-designing those plans with councils with generous public engagement, and expressing the policies in the Planning Policy Framework at the regional scale.	11
13	That the reform options in the 'structure and content of the VPP and planning schemes' not proceed until a detailed paper setting out the purpose, objectives and strategy of the reform program, as well as proposed consultation mechanisms and meaningful opportunities to test the new provisions, are provided. In the interim, ensure that proposed changes to the VPP are published at least 60 days prior to introduction to allow for meaningful consultation with system administrators.	12.6
14	That the reform options in the 'planning scheme amendment process' theme be pursued subject to the conditions set out in the submission, after first exploring and co-designing the new provisions with planning system administrators in local government.	13.7
15	That the reform options in the 'planning permit process' theme be pursued (with the exception of the 'no objection' deeming provision for referrals, and the proposed fee sharing arrangement, which should be abandoned) after first co-designing the new provisions with planning system administrators in local government.	14.8
16	That the reform program ensures that the other frameworks enabled by the Act are adequately reviewed by state and local government planning administrators working together, before consolidating updated provisions into the new Act.	15.4

3 About this submission

Purpose of this submission

The purpose of this submission is to set out a consolidated local government position on how Victoria's planning system should be reformed. It calls for a planning system that can meet current and future challenges while producing better development and land management outcomes.

This submission does not respond to a formal request for submissions. It does, however, seek to influence the scope, timing and methodology of the Victorian Government's review of the planning system.

This submission cannot be a complete account of Victorian councils' views about the planning system. It documents local government's aspirations and concerns for the planning system at a particular moment in time, with the intention that it will inform future more detailed submissions and advocacy initiatives by the MAV.

How this submission was written

This submission was informed by:

- *Local Government's Vision for Planning in Victoria* (see page 3);
- other resolutions of the MAV State Council;
- past submissions from MAV to the Victorian Government on planning and environment policy matters;
- responses to requests for information from local government planners; and
- a limited review of available literature.

This submission was drafted under the guidance of the MAV's Planning Reform Working Group, established to advise the MAV on planning system reform. The working group membership includes executives and senior officers overseeing statutory and strategic planning functions across 20 councils, from inner, middle and outer metropolitan Melbourne, growth and peri-urban regions, regional cities and rural councils.

A discussion paper foreshadowing the contents of this submission (including drafts of sections 12, 13 and 14) was circulated to planners in all councils in March 2025. This submission was updated to reflect feedback received. The submission was informed by specific case studies, data, insights and critique from across Victoria's 79 councils, while also being informed by MAV State Council resolutions made by all member councils present. The submission was endorsed by the MAV Board on Friday 11 April 2025.

Definitions

In this submission:

- 'the Act' means the *Planning and Environment Act 1987.*
- 'DTP' means the Department of Transport and Planning.
- 'VPP' means the Victoria Planning Provisions, subordinate legislation of the Act that determines the structure of planning schemes, including statewide controls and policies common to all planning schemes.

4 Victoria's planning system

4.1 The Act

On 20 September 2023, the then Premier of Victoria announced *Victoria's Housing Statement, the decade ahead 2024-2034.* The Housing Statement contained the first commitment by Government to review and rewrite the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* since it commenced nearly 36 years earlier:

> ***Build a modern, fit-for-purpose planning system***
>
> *We'll review and rewrite the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to build a modern, fit-for-purpose planning system. We'll look to establish and clarify timeframes for decisions, as well as looking at the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in our planning system – including councils, the Minister for Planning, the Victorian Planning Authority and the Department of Transport and Planning.*

The 1987 Act, itself an overhaul of the previous *Town and Country Planning Act 1961*, originally contained 210 Sections across 11 Parts. Today, the Act contains 630 Sections across 25 Parts, and will expand again to encompass 26 Parts by September 2025.[3]

The bulkiness of the Act today, and the proliferation of subordinate legislation it has enabled over 37 years, has attracted a myriad of critics. While planning practitioners and all users of the planning system may disagree on the causes and solutions for problems with the planning system, most agree that a review of the principal Act is overdue. The MAV is among them:

> *The MAV has long been calling for reform to the Planning and Environment Act. It's more than 35 years old and while it's been tinkered with around the edges, it needs to be reimagined to meet the challenges of the 21st century and beyond.*[4]

The original 1987 Act was a notable achievement by the Office of Chief Parliamentary Counsel in providing a simpler and more accessible style, implementing the Attorney General's Ministerial Statement of 7 May 1985, *Plain English Legislation.*[5] Its first Section is a prime example:

> ***Planning and Environment Act 1987 – Section 1***
>
> *The purpose of this Act is to establish a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians.*

The second reading speech introducing the Bill for the 1987 Act is informative. The then Minister for Planning and Environment argued that planning legislation should:

- *recognise that planning is an activity involving elected officials, appointed advisers, interested members of the public, individually or in groups, and professional practitioners;*

[3] The result of the *Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Act 2024*
[4] MAV President, by media release, 20 October 2023
[5] p2 and p6, Law Reform Commission of Victoria, 2017. *Plain English and the Law: the 1987 report republished*.

- *provide for continual strategic planning, attempting to clarify our view of the future;*
- *ensure that values can be made explicit, through articulation of objectives and policies;*
- *provide an ability to set rules about the use and development of land;*
- *establish a framework for making, amending, administering and enforcing those rules by appropriate levels of government;*
- *provide a framework for the resolution of disputes about the way land should be used and developed; and*
- *provide for compensation for those whose land is or will be required for a public purpose.*[6]

These legislative purposes have been quoted in many formal reviews of the planning system since 1987 and remain relevant today. If the Act is to be rewritten, as the Victorian Government has stated it intends, questions about the extent to which the Act has lived up to its original promise, and reasons for why it may have fallen short, are foundational considerations.

4.2 The planning system

The Act is 'enabling' legislation, refraining from precisely defining how planning should be done or the rules that should apply to land use and development. Such detail is dealt with in subordinate legislation.

The present planning system has been built on the enabling provisions of the Act, but has evolved through a series of amendments to the Act and subordinate legislation. The most significant system change was the 1996 introduction of new format planning schemes within a structure determined by the VPP. Implementation of the new format planning schemes was mostly concluded by 1999, and completed by 2001.

The objectives of the VPP and new format planning scheme reforms were to:

- Facilitate development;
- Reduce local variation;
- Improve strategic planning;
- Reduce the size and complexity of planning schemes;
- Provide greater certainty; and
- Make schemes more efficient and less costly to administer.

These objectives from 1996 are almost identical to those being proposed by the DTP in 2025 (see section 5.3).

The process of translation by councils of old municipal planning schemes into new format planning schemes consistent with the VPP increased the average length of planning schemes from 127 pages to 524 pages, more than four times their previous length. This is despite the government's reform objective 'to reduce the size' of planning schemes.[7]

The original VPP, introduced 9 January 1997 through amendment V0, allowed for 25 zones, 19 overlays and 30 particular provisions.[8] As at 1 April 2025, the VPP now allows for 33 zones, 29 overlays and 122 particular provisions (counting clauses 54, 55, 57 and 58 as one provision each). Every addition was approved by the Planning Minister of the day.

[6] p492, Legislative Council Hansard, 24 March 1987
[7] p54 in Buxton, Michael, Goodman, Robin and Budge, Trevor, 2005. 'Planning and deregulation' in *Australian Planner*, 42:2, pp52-58.
[8] Victoria Planning Provisions historical records, Version: V0 – Thursday 9 January 1997.

While the 1987 Act enables wide community involvement and politically vested powers, the 1996 reforms introduced through the VPP created a framework of policies and controls that rejected rigidity, instead preferring provisions couched in discretionary terms. The principal Act and the 1996 version of the VPP, taken together, form the basis of one of the prominent characteristics of Victoria's planning system: a broad range of permissible outcomes and a heavy reliance on appeal mechanisms.

Changes to the VPP since 2001 can be seen, in part, as a reaction to the 1996 reforms. The reassertion of 'clarity' is a common justification for new approval pathways that remove the possibility of appeal, change the decision-maker or otherwise diminish dispute. However, these changes have also greatly expanded the size of the VPP and planning schemes and led to a proliferation of mechanisms that exempt applications from standard provisions in the principal Act.

Section 6(2) of the Act lists the permissible exemptions that planning schemes may apply. In order of their introduction into the Act, they are:

- (ka), allowing classes or land, use or development to be exempt from requiring planning permission or consent (1989);
- (kc), allowing classes of applications to be exempt from giving notice (1993);
- (kd), allowing classes of applications that attract objections to be exempt from the possibility of appeal by a third party (1993);
- (kca), stopping decision makers from requesting more information of applicants in respect of classes of applications for permits (2012);
- (kcb) and (kda), allowing classes of applications for permits to be exempt from being assessed under Section 60 of the Act, which ordinarily requires decision-makers to consider not only the planning scheme but also the objectives of planning in Victoria, objections to the application, referral authority responses, significant environmental effects, significant social and economic effects, and certain other policy (2012).

The availability of these exemptions is necessary. The planning system cannot possibly handle the volume of decisions today that were imagined in 1987 *without* a reasonable level of exemption from standard provisions for certain classes of application. All planners accept that there are classes of application that are generally unobjectionable and ought not be the subject of unreasonable delay.

When exemptions from standard provisions in the principal Act become the norm and not the exception, however, the principal Act suffers a loss of relevance and public support. With most homes forecast in the *Plan for Victoria's* statewide settlement strategy (i.e. 70 per cent of new homes are to be built inside established urban areas) likely to be facilitated through exempting VPP controls from certain Section 60 requirements, the relevance of the principal Act is brought into question.

The planning system is much more than the principal Act. It is the Act *extended, modified and clarified* by the VPP. It is also the planning schemes and other subordinate legislation, related relevant primary legislation (often triggered by clauses in the VPP, e.g. the *Subdivision Act 1988*), Ministerial Directions, policies and practices. It is upheld by hundreds of decision-makers and thousands of practitioners and it has coverage of all land in the State, with the exception of Commonwealth owned land.

Any review of the planning system is therefore a far larger undertaking than a review of the principal Act alone. It is inevitable, however, that reviewing the Act will invite a system-wide review, because changes to the heads of power are likely to have far-reaching consequences for the expression of regulatory language in subordinate legislation, as well as for accrued property rights and principles of fairness.

4.3 State and local government

Victoria's planning system, like the systems in other states, divides responsibilities between state and local government. While the state maintains responsibility for the design and oversight of the planning system, most administration of the system occurs at the local government level.

This is what the Act intends, with the Minister for Planning retaining ultimate control of the planning system (through holding final approval power over all content in all planning schemes) and with municipal councils exercising planning authority, responsible authority and referral authority responsibilities within planning scheme frameworks based on municipal boundaries.

This arrangement has its advantages ("the opportunity for coordinated high-level policy setting and regulatory consistency throughout the state") but it also has its disadvantages ("those who become most intimately familiar with the operation of the system, local government planners, have limited ability to fix problems they encounter").[9]

Councils are by far the largest employer of planners in Australia.[10] Victorian councils and their planners are the most prolific users of the Act, and therefore the level of government most exposed to planning system changes.

Local government planners must grapple with any planning system structural dysfunction. They must understand and apply VPP changes quickly, in a time when exposure drafts and well-drafted transitional arrangements are increasingly rare. They are the first to inform members of the public about how planning decisions are made and how new planning approvals pathways will or will not alter their rights and interests. They are the most accessible and visible practitioners in the planning system, and therefore inevitably exposed to more vitriol than system designers and consultants.

The coordination between planning system designers in state government and planning system administrators in local government has steadily deteriorated in the 24 years since the introduction of the new format planning schemes. There have only been a couple of exceptions to this trend. Submissions by MAV on past reviews of the planning system have charted this course, but so too has the Auditor General. In *Managing Victoria's Planning System for Land Use and Development,*[11] published in 2017, the Auditor General noted the absence of any state-wide system performance monitoring and feedback framework, and the non-implementation of its 2008 recommendation to establish one. In 2025 there is still no such framework.

This absence of meaningful and continuous connection between planning system central designers and local administrators has contributed to the proliferation of new parent controls (see section 4.2), with too many of these new controls increasing, not reducing, administrative complexity. It is frustrating that the finger is pointed at councils for being the major contributor to system complexity. This is given that every new parent control introduced since 1999, whether zone, overlay or particular provision, was an addition by the Minister for Planning, and given all new local schedules to those controls were also authorised and approved by the Minister.

[9] See p294 in Rowley, Stephen, 2023. *The Victorian planning system: practice, problems and prospects*. 2nd edition. The Federation Press Annandale, NSW
[10] Fallding, J and Williams, D, 2023. State of the Profession Report, prepared for Planning Institute of Australia.
[11] *Managing Victoria's Planning System for Land Use and Development*, March 2017.

Important events that have led to the current nadir in state-local coordination also include the abandonment by the State Government of the Victorian State-Local Government Agreement[12] after November 2014. That agreement included an express commitment that:

> *Where the Victorian Government intends for local government to administer or enforce new primary legislation, or new or revised regulation, the relevant lead department shall, subject to exceptional circumstances, consult with local government in accordance with the Victorian Guide to Regulation. In doing so, the relevant department shall consider the impacts of the regulation on local governments, including any cost and resource impacts on local governments of administering the regulation.*

Another event is the introduction of the Housing Statement on 20 September 2023 with planning system changes gazetted the same day. Those changes, made without prior notice or the ability for local government planners to correct errors or suggest improvements, included the transferral of some decision-making powers from councils to the Minister. A consequence has been that councils are still required to provide technical advice and permit conditions and also assist the department with notice given councils hold accurate property data, but without collecting any fees. While such changes to the VPP are technically possible, they defeat the purposes of the principal Act, and their cumulative effect has been to undermine local expertise and the integrity of the underlying structure of the VPP (see Section 5.7).

The MAV has attempted to redress the dislocation of planning system designers from planning system administrators. At the first opportunity following the release of the Housing Statement, the MAV State Council resolved:

> *To commit to good faith engagement with the State Government to work in genuine partnership on further planning reforms, including and especially a thorough review of the* Planning and Environment Act 1987 *and the development of Plan Victoria and Activity Centres, in the interests of ensuring a system that works to provide supply and affordability while retaining integrity, accountability, transparency and the ability for local communities to add value to community, regional, metropolitan and State-wide plans and development;*
>
> *To formally request that the Planning Minister enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the MAV that establishes this partnership and enables genuine input and improvement from the Local Government sector to any and all fundamental planning system reforms.*[13]

The MAV implemented the resolution by extending a formal proposal to the Minister for Planning. While the terms of a compact between the Minister and the MAV President was eventually agreed in principle nearly a year later in September 2024, it was not signed, and the parties have not met under it.

Since September 2023, the Plan for Victoria has been completed and announced, the locations of the Activity Centres have been chosen, and the Planning and Environment Act review is well progressed. The State-Local partnership of the type proposed by the MAV in September 2023 is no longer possible.

In March 2024, following the Victorian Government's establishment of an interdepartmental Taskforce to implement the Operation Sandon recommendations (see section 5.2), the MAV also requested membership of that Taskforce. This too was declined.

[12] Victorian State-Local Government agreement
[13] pp4-5, MAV State Council resolutions, 13 October 2023

We are disappointed that the Victorian Government's recent approaches to reform have avoided and rejected meaningful consultation or partnership with the planning system's primary administrators in local government, or the MAV as Victorian councils' peak body.

We maintain that it is not possible to pursue far-reaching reforms to the planning system and have them succeed without testing proposals with local government planners first.

The exclusion of local government is not only a Victorian problem. The Australian Local Government Association and Equity Economics recently found[14] that the omission of any mention of local government in The National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness, or recognition by the Commonwealth and States as an important delivery partner in meeting housing targets, has caused regional variation and community- and place-based needs to be misunderstood. This in turn has led to inefficiency, despite stated aims to make planning systems more efficient and effective.

4.4 Social licence

The objectives of the planning framework established by the Act are set out in Section 4, and include:

- (h) to establish a clear procedure for amending planning schemes, **with appropriate public participation** in decision making;
- (i) to ensure that **those affected by proposals** for the use, development or protection of land or changes in planning policy or requirements **receive appropriate notice**;
- (j) to provide an **accessible process for just and timely review of decisions** without unnecessary formality …

The ability for the Minister to exempt themself from the notice and exhibition requirements of planning scheme amendments that they prepare has existed since 1987. Their ability to exempt permit applications from notice and review were introduced in 1993. Over the years, the use of exemptions has increased. Today, the patchwork approach to third party notice and review is more complicated than it has ever been. It will become more complicated again if recently canvassed reform options are pursued without a holistic review of the planning system (see sections 5.3, 12, 13 and 14).

While the ability to make exemptions is necessary and while development costs and uncertainty associated with delays caused by appeals to the tribunal are a real problem, the value of the underlying objectives of the planning framework must not be forgotten. The political value of a planning system that empowers community members to participate in strategic planning exercises that clarify our collective view of the future should not be underestimated.

There is a question of scale here. Just as a state-wide plan for Victoria cannot articulate the future of regions, neighbourhoods and streets, public participation on a state-wide plan cannot be a proxy for public participation in regional and local planning. The ability to plan at the scale of communities of interest has been, and could again be, one of the greatest strengths of the Victorian planning system.

With third party rights on individual planning applications frequently exempt, and with changes to the VPP frequently made without public consultation, it is regional, municipal and local strategic planning that maintains the social licence of the planning system today.

[14] *Addressing the Housing Crisis: Unlocking Local Government's Contribution*, August 2024.

Further changes to the planning system that limit public participation, or limit local planning authorities from balancing statewide objectives, environmental constraints and community ownership (e.g. switching off planning controls and policies for local opportunities and policy imperatives), will likely remove the remnant potential to achieve social licence altogether.

A planning system that empowers landowners, broader communities and municipal planning authorities to meaningfully shape their own futures will achieve democratic legitimacy and the social licence necessary to achieve transformational change. A planning system that prevents these opportunities will not.

4.5 Past reviews of the planning system

The planning system was overhauled in 1996, with the VPP and new format planning schemes introduced by 1999 with implementation complete by 2001. The objectives of that reform are set out in section 4.2.

The reviews and reports that informed the structure of the VPP disclose why certain system design choices were made. The 1997 *Report of the Advisory Committee on the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs)*[15] found that "[t]he use of schedules is one of the most important characteristics of the VPPs. It is by these means that planning schemes will be tailored to identify and respond to the local characteristics of municipalities. They will work together with the Local Planning Policy Framework as the lynch pins of day to day decision-making."

There have been 13 major reviews of the planning system in the 24 years since 2001:

1. ***Using and Interpreting Local Policy***, a report by a Minister-appointed reference group on decision-making processes (September 2002);
2. ***Better Decisions Faster*** (August 2003);
3. ***Cutting Red Tape in Planning*** (August 2006);
4. ***Making Local Policy Stronger*** (2007);
5. ***Melbourne 2030: Audit Expert Group Report*** (March 2008) and the Government's response, ***Planning for All of Melbourne***;
6. ***Victoria's Planning Framework for Land Use and Development***, a report by the Auditor-General (May 2008);
7. ***Modernising Victoria's Planning Act*** (2009);
8. The initial report of the Victorian Planning System Ministerial Advisory Committee (May 2012), usually referred to as the *'**Underwood Review**'*;
9. ***Managing Victoria's Planning System for Land Use and Development***, a report by the Auditor-General (March 2017);
10. *Reforming the Victoria Planning Provisions* (October 2017), which facilitated the '**Smart Planning**' reform program of 2016-2021;
11. ***Turning Best Practice into Common Practice***, by Better Regulation Victoria (Discussion paper 2019; final report November 2021), sometimes referred to as the 'Red-Tape Commissioner's review';
12. The interim report of the ***Inquiry into the Protections Within the Victorian Planning Framework*** by the Environment and Planning Committee of the Legislative Council (August 2022); and
13. The ***Operation Sandon Special Report***, a report by IBAC (July 2023), and the Government's response (March 2024), discussed in section 5.2 of this submission.

Just as the stated objective of the VPP reforms of 1996-2001 was to reduce complexity, provide certainty and improve efficiency, the explicit or implicit objective of nine out of 13

[15] *Report of the Advisory Committee on the Victoria Planning Provisions*, August 1997.

reviews since has been to do the same. Overwhelmingly, these reviews have concentrated on urban planning control complexities, with little consideration of rural areas.

The current 'review and rewrite' commissioned by the Housing Statement in September 2023 is the latest in this tradition but is notable for its absence of any public report first setting out the overarching purposes and strategic directions of the review. There is no indication that the history of planning system reform in Victoria, or the consistent failure to properly identify the causes of complexity before pursuing remedies, is being adequately considered in this latest 'review and rewrite'.

The four most recent reviews, all within the last four years, have not been completed:

10. The **Smart Planning** reform of 2016-21 was to involve three phases: 'Improve', 'Reform' and 'Transform'. The 'Transform' phase was abandoned. The *Reforming the Victoria Planning Provisions* report underpinning the Smart Planning package of reforms identified system complexity as a problem but was not clear about the causes of that complexity.[16] Criticism of Smart Planning included that, while it started with logical 'quick wins', it proceeded without a coherent overarching strategy.[17] Proposals to introduce or upgrade digital platforms were mostly implemented, however, facilitating significant efficiency and access improvements in planning administration including at the local government level.
11. The ***Turning Best Practice into Common Practice*** report was implemented, in part, by two amending Acts of Parliament: the *Planning and Environment Amendment Act 2021* and the *Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Act 2024.* While the latter amending Act has received Royal Assent, it will not commence until 25 November 2025 (or earlier on a day to be proclaimed). It is discussed at section 5.7 of this submission. Beyond these two amending Acts, some recommendations of the *Turning Best Practice into Common Practice* report are still outstanding, particularly those that relate to performance standards for state government decisions.
12. The ***Inquiry into the Protections Within the Victorian Planning Framework*** interim report included one recommendation, that the next (current) Parliament refer a broad inquiry into the Victorian planning framework to the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee. This was not taken up, but events have overtaken it (i.e. the Government has announced its own 'review and rewrite').
13. The ***Operation Sandon Special Report*** recommendations, while generally supported by Government, are yet to be incorporated into any program to review and rewrite the act, as discussed at section 5.2 of this submission. These recommendations address the integrity of the planning system, which cannot be separated from questions of planning system efficiency.

Conducting another system-wide review while past reviews are yet to be fully implemented invites complexity and the repetition of mistakes. Any comprehensive review and rewrite of the Act and planning system should first consider the success or failure of past reviews, the reasons for success or failure, and what can be learned as a result.

If this does not occur, and the Victorian Government proceeds with a restructuring of the VPP with a view to removing a foundational element of the Victorian planning system (the ability to tailor policy and controls to meet local and regional environmental demands) without first clearly understanding and defining the problem to be solved, the 'solution' will fail.

[16] *Reforming the Victoria Planning Provisions, A discussion paper*, October 2017.
[17] p287 in Rowley, Stephen, 2023. *The Victorian planning system : practice, problems and prospects*. 2nd edition. The Federation Press Annandale, NSW

It has not been possible in the time available to conduct a review of the literature in relation to the implementation of these past reviews, though a notable analysis of the reviews, considered together, has been published by Dr Stephen Rowley.[18] He argues that:

> *There is little reflection [by Government] as to why so many similar initiatives across two decades of reform have been ineffective or even counter-productive; or what this may suggest about the prevailing wisdom about how to fix the system.*[19]

The Auditor General's 2017 findings may provide the most succinct analysis of Victoria's planning system reform inertia:

> *Past reforms have had little impact on fixing other systemic problems impeding the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of planning schemes. As a result, many of the issues prevalent before the 1996 overhaul of the planning system have re-emerged.*
>
> *These include:*
> - *vague and competing state planning policy objectives and strategies, with limited guidance for their implementation, which reduce the clarity of the planning system's direction in meeting state planning objectives*
> - *a lack of specific guidance to address key planning challenges, such as social and affordable housing, climate change and environmentally sustainable development*
> - *an overly complex system of planning controls in local planning schemes—councils add and amend policies and controls to try to provide clarity and certainty to their schemes in the absence of clear guidance at a state level*
> - *[The Department's] and councils' performance measurement frameworks being unable to measure whether the objectives of the Act or state planning policies are being achieved*
> - *lengthy delays in the processing of planning proposals, leading to set time frames not being met and unnecessary costs for applicants.*
>
> *These systemic weaknesses exist because of the poor uptake and implementation of review recommendations.*
> …
> *As a result, the planning system is difficult to navigate and implement, and it places an unnecessary burden on local government, [the Department] and applicants to administer and use.*[20]

These findings are manifestly relevant today. Particularly notable is the lack of meaningful progress since 2017 on "specific guidance to address key planning challenges". In the absence of state-wide policy and control on affordable housing, climate change and environmentally sustainable development, councils have pursued policy and control in local planning schemes at tremendous cost and mostly without success. The housing and climate crises remain inadequately addressed by the planning system. We have much more to say about these key planning challenges in Sections 7 to 9.

The MAV considers that there are ten mistakes that have been made in the implementation (or non-implementation) of past reviews that are likely to be repeated in the Government's

[18] ibid, pp281-298.
[19] ibid, p289
[20] *Managing Victoria's Planning System for Land Use and Development*, March 2017.

current reform program. All can be avoided if they are first acknowledged, and if the reform program is redesigned to address them.

The ten common mistakes of Victorian planning system reform attempts

1. Commencing reform implementation before clearly identifying the problem;
2. Commencing reform implementation before setting the objectives and strategy of the reform program;
3. Excluding local government from questions of system design;
4. Pursuing 'efficiency' in ways that reduce transparency or increase administrative burden, creating new types of inefficiencies;
5. Conflating 'certainty' with 'speed' or 'approval';
6. Failing to adopt a strategy for precision in regulatory expression;
7. Being overly preoccupied with the pursuit of 'streamlining' decision pathways at the expense of considering the quality of outcomes;
8. Failing to consider the effect on the Victorian planning objectives, or the integrity and accessibility of the underlying structure of the VPP, when introducing new controls that bypass that structure;
9. Overlooking those parts of the planning system that perform well; and
10. Failing to establish continuous review and improvement mechanisms.

The next section will consider what we know about the Victorian Government's current reform program.

5 What we know about the Victorian Government's reform program

5.1 The original scope of the review

The origin of the proposal to review and rewrite the Planning and Environment Act is found in Victoria's Housing Statement, released on 20 September 2023:

> *We'll look to establish and clarify timeframes for decisions, as well as looking at the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in our planning system – including councils, the Minister for Planning, the Victorian Planning Authority and the Department of Transport and Planning.*[21]

Since September 2023, the MAV and other bodies with a direct interest in the structure and operation of the planning system have sought to understand the scope of this review, and what is meant by a "rewrite."

In August 2024, Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) officials advised staff within councils that a series of issues papers were being developed for release in September via Engage Victoria. While this did not eventuate, in September 2024, the Housing Statement one year report card implied that a "full review" was still underway.[22]

In November 2024, the Hon Harriet Shing MLC advised the Legislative Council that the review of the Act would be broad and comprehensive:

> *The review of the Planning and Environment Act is, as you know, one which is necessarily of a very, very broad remit. The Act itself contains a number of frameworks. It is 30 years old, so it is no longer fit for purpose, and one of the things that we know we need to do is review that entire framework for the purpose of a more contemporary application of systems to the way in which those matters are addressed.*[23]

From September 2023 until February 2025, the MAV, like other stakeholders, assumed that the Act review and rewrite would be a *complete* review and rewrite, resulting in a new principal Act to replace the 1987 Act.

The MAV welcomed the proposal to review and rewrite the Act (see section 4.1). The proposal's context, the Housing Statement released amid a housing crisis, implied that a primary objective of the review and rewrite was to ensure that the planning system is capable of meeting demand for new homes. We have always supported this objective and continue to do so. Provided the review and rewrite of the Act is comprehensive and considers the integrated relationship of all the frameworks enabled by the principal Act so that unintended consequences of system reform can be avoided, the housing supply objective should be made explicit.

Local government supports the original scope of the review: a comprehensive review and rewrite the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to build a modern, fit-for-purpose planning system.

[21] P Victoria's Housing Statement, 20 September 2023
[22] p3, Victoria's Housing Statement Progress Update, September 2024
[23] p4453 and p4456, Legislative Council Hansard, 14 November 2024

Recommendation 1

That the Government maintain its commitment to review and rewrite the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and, by extension, the planning system, subject to the other recommendations in this submission. A comprehensive review is necessary if the planning system is to effectively facilitate the transformational change needed for Victoria to meet its housing, climate, environmental, economic and infrastructure challenges, while maintaining its social licence.

5.2 Operation Sandon

On 20 March 2024, the Victorian Government responded[24] to each of the recommendations made by IBAC in its Operation Sandon Special Report.[25]

In a media release accompanying the Government's response, the Victorian Government stated:

> *Many of IBAC's recommendations to reduce the risk of corruption in the planning system and make it more transparent and consistent will be implemented as part of a review into the Planning and Environment Act.*
>
> *This review was announced as part of the Housing Statement, the biggest shake-up to planning and housing in generations.*
>
> *… The Government will establish an interdepartmental Taskforce to facilitate cooperation across government and support the implementation of IBAC's recommendations. It will report back to the public within 18 months.*[26]

These statements made clear the Victorian Government's intention to include implementation of Operation Sandon recommendations in the project to review and rewrite the Act, and also implied that the interdepartmental Taskforce overseeing the implementation of those recommendations will report by 20 September 2025.

The Government accepted all the Operation Sandon recommendations (in whole or in part, in principle or in full). The recommendations that would require amendments to the Act are:

- Recommendation 3, to provide for transparency and accountability in authorising planning scheme amendments;
- Recommendation 4, to limit discretion at the adoption and approval stages of planning scheme amendments;
- Recommendation 6, to require decision-makers to record reasons for their decisions in relation to planning scheme amendments;
- Recommendation 7, to provide for mandatory disclosure of reportable donations;
- Recommendation 9, to clarify penalties so as to deter submitters from improperly influencing decision-makers; and
- Recommendation 11, to remove responsible authority powers from councillors and introduce determinative panels in their stead.

[24] Government response to IBAC's Operation Sandon Special Report, released 20 March 2024
[25] IBAC's Operation Sandon Special Report, released 27 July 2023
[26] Premier, Planning Minister and Local Government Minister, by media release, 20 March 2024

Some other recommendations make changes to the planning system outside the Act.

Recommendation 11, which would likely require the most significant structural changes to the Act, elicited this response from the Government:

> *The option to implement new decision-making models will be considered as part of the review and rewrite of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 that the government has committed to as part of its recently released Victoria's Housing Statement…*

The Taskforce is theoretically 12 months into its (up to) 18 month review, but local government has received no updates on its progress.

It is disappointing that, since the publication of the Operation Sandon report, the Victorian Government has introduced new types of planning approval pathways that move decisions away from predictable, accountable and transparent processes. These include new particular provisions at clauses 53.22 ('significant economic development') and 53.23 ('significant residential development with affordable housing'). While they may have important policy objectives, these pathways enable extraordinary discretion while centralising decision-making within the Planning Minister's office and Department and away from public scrutiny. These are practices warned against in the Operation Sandon report and which may have increased integrity risks in the planning system.[27]

Another example was announced[28] as recently as 6 April 2025: a new approval pathway for 'Great Design' townhouses and apartments between two and eight storeys. The new provision makes the Minister the responsible authority in place of the councils and allows the usual height and set back requirements to be varied. The new provisions also switch off third party appeal: final decisions will therefore be made out of public sight. The announcement ends the long-held notion that the Planning Minister's role in deciding individual permit applications is reserved for matters of 'state significance.'

The Operation Sandon Special Report is a serious matter and deserves a serious response. There are strong and mixed views from councils about some of its recommendations. The MAV has raised significant concerns about the consequences of recommendations not being implemented carefully. There is however widespread support across local government for the report's purpose: to improve the integrity, accountability and transparency of planning decisions in relation to all decision-makers.

The MAV submits that any program to review and rewrite the Act must aim to create a planning system that provides integrity, accountability and transparency.

We seek an outright ban on all donations from developers (and related interests) to decision-makers throughout the planning system.[29]

Any review and rewrite of only those Parts of the Act that the Victorian Government is initially focusing on (see section 5.3) that comes before the report of the interdepartmental Taskforce is published risks leaving the purpose of the Operation Sandon report unfulfilled. This in turn risks a piecemeal approach to reform, with the constant amending and re-amending of the same Parts of the 1987 Act rather than consideration of the planning system as a whole.

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[27] p28, *Shaping metropolitan Melbourne: A discussion paper for the Municipal Association of Victoria*, SGS Economics and Planning

[28] Planning Minister, by media release, 6 April 2025

[29] MAV State Council resolution, May 2021: "That, in the wake of the [IBAC] investigations, the [MAV] calls upon the State Government to: 1. Ban all political gambling industry and developer donations, including donations from town planning, property developer, developer and gambling industry consultants and lobbyists; 2. Reduce the maximum allowable amount for electoral donations."

These Parts of the Act will *also* be amended by the *Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Act 2024* when it commences on 25 November 2025 (or earlier on a date to be proclaimed). The potential for legislative confusion is significant.

Recommendation 2

That the reform program adopt as an objective the design of a planning system that provides integrity, accountability and transparency in decision-making in relation to all decision-makers.

5.3 A revised scope for the review

On 24 February 2025, the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) held workshops with local government planners to provide information about the focus of the review. While the title of the workshops was "Planning and Environment Act review and rewrite" (that is, a rewrite of the Act was still envisaged), the content of the workshops focused only on a partial review.

For the purposes of this submission, we refer to this partial review as the 'initial review.'

At these workshops and in answers to questions from local government planners, DTP advised that:

1. The implementation of the Government's responses to the Operation Sandon recommendations would not be part of the initial review (other than perhaps a partial implementation of recommendations relating to how planning scheme amendments must be handled);
2. The focus of the initial review of the Act would only be on planning permit and planning scheme amendment processes (i.e. Parts 1, 1A, 2, 3, 4 and 8 of the Act);
3. The initial review would encompass a restructuring of the VPP (and, by extension, all planning schemes) *as well as* some Parts of the principal Act; and
4. This initial review would conclude within 2025.

At most, 105 of the principal Act's 630 discrete Sections – plus the VPP – are affected by this 'initial review'. No advice was provided about how and when the remainder of the Act would be reviewed and rewritten.

This was the first time that local government was informed that the review would include the restructuring of the VPP. This part of the reform program appears to be far more significant than the proposed amendments to the principal Act.

A complete response to the 'reform options' proposed by DTP on 24 February 2025 is found at sections 12 to 14 of this submission.

5.4 Plan for Victoria

Plan for Victoria was released on 28 February 2025,[30] later that same week.

The Plan proposed that:

> *We'll explore simpler rules for affordable housing as part of the review of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 so the Minister for Planning and councils can obtain a fair and equitable affordable housing contribution as part of a new development.*

The Plan's Action 9 ("Streamline community infrastructure developer contributions") also contains directions to amend the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. These two Actions account for another (up to) 170 of the Act's 630 Sections, in addition to the 105 sections identified in the revised scope (see section 4.3).

The MAV strongly supports the inclusion of affordable housing mechanisms and reformed infrastructure charging in the scope of the review and rewrite of the Act. (These are discussed further in Sections 8 and 10 of this submission.)

Neither were included within the scope of the 'initial review'.

Action 10 of *Plan for Victoria* provided that:

> *In the longer term, we'll continue to partner with Traditional Owners to understand, recognise and embed Traditional Owners' rights, interests and aspirations in Victoria's planning system, including through the review of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.*

This was the first public indication that the 'review of the Act' may be a 'longer term' proposition.

Many of the Plan for Victoria's Actions (at least Actions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22) require changes to the VPP. There is no indication if these changes will be made in 2025 or later. It will not be possible to make all changes within 2025.

The Plan also implies planning system changes to implement the housing capacity targets. These too will require changes to the VPP. These changes seem to preclude the implementation of Recommendation 11 of the Operation Sandon report (to remove responsible authority powers from councillors and introduce determinative panels in their stead), because the Plan only foreshadows limitations on councils' planning authority duties, and not their responsible authority duties – but this has not been made explicit.

In summary, the *Plan for Victoria* and what it implied about the scope of the program to review and rewrite the Act was significantly different to the 'initial review' proposed by DTP earlier that week. Both clearly fall short of the original scope announced on 20 September 2023, a comprehensive review and rewrite of the Act.

5.5 Amendments to the Act since September 2023

Since September 2023, four Acts of Parliament that amend or will amend the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* have received Royal Assent. They are:

[30] Plan for Victoria, released 28 February 2024.

Table 1: Acts amending the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* after September 2023

Amending Act	How the Amending Act changes the Principal Act *(Planning and Environment Act 1987)*
State Taxation Amendment Act 2024 Assent Date: 4.6.24 Commencement Date*: 5.6.24	Modest amendments to metropolitan planning levy (ss96T-96V) and growth areas infrastructure contributions (S201RF) provisions.
Climate Change and Energy Legislation Amendment (Renewable Energy and Storage Targets) Act 2024 Assent Date: 26.3.24 Commencement Date*: 26.3.25	New definition added ("emissions reductions target"); new objective for planning in Victoria added ("to provide for explicit consideration of the policies and obligations of the State relating to climate change, including but not limited to greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and the need to increase resilience to climate change, when decisions are made about the use and development of land") and new requirements on decision-makers to have regard to climate change.
Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Act 2024 Assent Date: 26.11.24 Commencement Date*: 10.9.25 or on an earlier day to be proclaimed.	New Part 9AB inserted ("Precinct project development") to provide for the delivery of precinct projects using the project powers in the *Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009*. **The current Authorised Version of the principal Act does not yet incorporate these amendments.**
Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Act 2024 Assent Date: 18.3.25 Commencement date*: 25.11.25 or on an earlier day to be proclaimed. *These amending Acts amend multiple principal Acts. The commencement date provided here is for amendments to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.	Parts of the Act relating to planning scheme amendments, permit application processes, planning panels, metropolitan planning levy (MPL), VCAT and compensation amended, to implement various Better Regulation recommendations and Housing Statement commitments, providing: • New 'low impact amendment' pathways; • Formalised proponent-led amendments provisions; • Options to re-enliven abandoned amendments; • Options to void incomplete permit applications; • Redefinition of 'material detriment'; • Longer default permit expiry provisions; • More flexibility for Ministerial call-ins; • Ability to dismiss irrelevant panel submissions; • Deadlines for release of panel reports; • Allowing panel hearings 'on the papers'; • Ability to group parties and dismiss meritless claims at VCAT; • Exemptions from paying the MPL; and • That interest be payable on compensation. **The current Authorised Version of the principal Act does not yet incorporate these amendments.**

The commencement dates for the relevant part of the latter two Acts are 10 September 2025 and 25 November 2025, or an earlier day to be proclaimed. The last Act, the *Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Act 2024* (the CPLA Act) amends the same Parts of the principal Act that DTP is now focusing on in its 'initial review' (see section 5.3): planning scheme amendments and permit applications.

These amendments to the principal Act, especially those caused by the CPLA Act, will confound any review and rewrite of the Act – including any 'initial review' – that concludes in 2025.

5.6 How these five reform programs affect the Act

The original scope (see section 5.1), the matters being considered by the Operation Sandon interdepartmental Taskforce (see section 5.2), the 'initial review' (see section 5.3), the directions in Plan for Victoria (see section 5.4) and the upcoming amendments to the Act made by the *Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Act 2024* (section 5.5) all affect different Parts of the Act.

Table 1 indicates which Parts of the Act (and subordinate legislation) are affected by each of these five programs.

Table 2: Parts of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* affected by reform programs

Part of Act	Original scope of review 20.9.23	Sandon Taskforce established 20.3.2024	'Initial review' scope 24.2.25	Plan for Victoria actions 28.2.25	Act changes commencing on or before 25.11.25
Part 1	X		X	X	X
Part 1A	X		X		
Part 2 (planning schemes)	X	X	X		X
Part 3 (amendments)	X	X	X		X
Part 3AAA	X				
Part 3AA	X				
Part 3AAB	X				
Part 3AAC	X				
Part 3A	X				
Part 3AB	X			X	
Part 3B	X			X	
Part 3C	X				
Part 3D	X				
Part 4 (permits)	X	X	X		X
Part 4AA	X				
Part 4A	X				
Part 5 (compensation)	X				X
Part 6 (enforcement)	X				
Part 7 (advisory committees)	X				X
Part 8 (panels)	X	X	X		X
Part 9 (administration)	X				
Part 9A	X				
Part 9AB					X (insertion)
Part 9B	X			X	
Part 10 (regulations)	X				
Part 11	X				X
New Parts required		X		X	
Subordinate legislation Victoria Planning Provisions			X	X	

5.7 Amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions since September 2023

Since the release of the Housing Statement on 20 September 2023, major structural changes to the planning system have been made through amendments to the VPP.

These structural changes have preceded the project to review and rewrite the Act. The cumulative effect of these piecemeal yet significant changes to the VPP must be understood if government is to make informed decisions about further major changes to the planning system.

Notable examples of VPP changes since the release of the Housing Statement are:

Table 3: The most significant VPP changes since 20 September 2023

Amend't	Description	Regulatory impact on local govt.	Local govt. consultation
VC242 20.09.23	New particular provisions to facilitate 'significant residential development' (inclusive of 10% affordable housing)[31] and 'significant economic development'. These allow development outside usual height, set back and garden area requirements, and make the Minister the decision-maker.	Councils still required to conduct an assessment in order to provide accurate technical advice and permit conditions, but do not collect the fee. Councils still required to prepare notice, because state does not always hold details of surrounding properties. Where outcome is cash-equivalent gift to Homes Vic, no affordable homes will be built on site but infrastructure to support denser-than-planned population will fall on rate-payers via local govt to deliver, and there is no requirement that Homes Vic uses cash to build social housing locally.	None.
VC243 29.11.23	Codify residential development standards, expanded the Future Homes project, remove permit requirements for single dwellings on lots of 300sqm or more, introduce VicSmart stream for single dwellings on lots less than 300sqm.	Moving dwellings to VicSmart is a significant departure from the pathway's original intent. Very fast assessment timeframes for small but complicated proposals risks procedural error. Design quality, covenants, or site vegetation no longer able to be improved through negotiation. No transitional provisions.	Some workshops on draft standards. No consultation on detail of provisions.
VC257 25.02.25	Introduces the Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) and Built Form Overlay (BFO), intended mainly for Activity Centres.	Still being assessed by MAV. Zone and overlay yet to be applied to any precincts. The BFO requires local schedules to each contain a 'development framework'. How these will be developed has not been explained.	Draft controls provided to peak bodies and affected councils for comment.
VC274 28.02.25	Introduces the Precinct Zone (PRZ), intended for SRL precincts and other priority precincts.	Still being assessed by MAV. Zone yet to be applied to any precincts.	Draft controls provided to affected councils for comment.
VC267 06.03.25	New townhouse and low-rise code at clause 55, replacing the old ResCode two or more dwellings on a lot. Up to four storeys.	Still being assessed by MAV. Errors in transitional arrangements caused significant administrative inefficiency. Extinguishment of local policies and schedules has removed ability to meet local tree canopy and ESD objectives.	Some principles-based workshops. Draft controls not provided.
VC280 07.04.25	New 'Great Design Fast Track' particular provision at clause 53.25, an approval pathway for apartment and townhouse developments that exhibit 'high quality' design and higher sustainability ratings. Minister the decision-maker. Minister can waive usual height, set back and garden area requirements.	Councils will still need to assess proposals in order to provide accurate advice and permit conditions, and assist with notice, but will not collect fee. The provision casts serious doubt on local govt ESD planning and the state's ESD Roadmap. Making the Minister the responsible authority for individual sites that are not 'state significant' is novel; may invite forum-shopping and reduce transparency.	None.

[31] While described in clause 53.23 as a 10% affordable housing mechanism, the DTP website states that affordable housing can be contributed as 3% of dwellings gifted, or cash equivalent to 3% of the development cost to Homes Victoria, or 10% of dwellings sold at a 30% discount rate to a Registered Housing Agency, or similar. Minimum tenure requirement negotiable. The contribution rate can also be reduced under clause 53.23 (without the Minister's decision-making status being removed).

With very few exceptions, these changes:

- Are far-reaching (causing unintended consequence stemming from inadequate transitional arrangements),
- Were not meaningfully consulted on prior to their gazettal,
- Have created significant regulatory impacts on local government, and
- Are not being measured in terms of uptake, performance and effect.

These changes also give rise to the prospect that the 'review and rewrite' project will become a 'tidying up' of structural changes already made, rather than a comprehensive exercise that considers the performance of the planning system as a whole. This would not be a strategic approach.

VC267, which implements the *Townhouse and Low-Rise Code* is notable for its scope: it aims to facilitate a very significant proportion of the new homes envisaged by the housing settlement strategies of *Plan for Victoria*. It is also notable for the absence of any publicly released modelling, testing and justification, with the detailed provisions seen for the first time when the amendment was gazetted on 6 March 2025.

The novelty and complexity of the provisions in the new code, and the extent of exemptions from parent provisions in the VPP and principal Act, have already given rise to significant concerns about unintended consequences. These include the removal of landscaping objectives, incompatibility of the 10% tree canopy cover with the 30% target in Plan for Victoria, new incentives to clear a site of vegetation, the incompatibility of highly complicated provisions with fast deemed-to-comply verification, the 'switching off' of local ESD policies that are more ambitious than the code provides for, the 'switching off' of local policies and zone schedules that provide deep soil planting and urban forest targets, unnecessarily reducing front set backs, and the incompatibility of the code with the mandatory Garden Area requirement in some residential zones.[32,33,34]

Case study: Nillumbik Shire Council

Nillumbik's neighbourhood character is predominantly influenced by heavily vegetated areas including significant indigenous, native and non-native canopy and amenity trees. The Council's local neighbourhood character policy encourages retention of existing vegetation, especially large indigenous trees, and seeks to minimise the impacts on the landscape from erosion and excavation.

VC267 switched off this local policy and instead requires a 10% canopy cover - substantially less than the existing almost 40% canopy coverage of many developable lots.

The cost, time and diversion of labour involved in translating neighbourhood character policies to overlays, to re-apply vegetation retention provisions to land subject to the new deemed-to-comply provisions of clause 55, would be inordinate.



[32] Rowley, Stephen, 30 March 2025: 'What Does 10% Tree Canopy Cover Look Like?', blog post
[33] Aubrey, Sophie, 13 March 2025: 'Melbourne tree canopy goal 'impossible' without ripping out roads', *The Age*.
[34] City of Monash, 12 March 2025, published response to a media enquiry from *The Age*.

The Code also prevails over local variations to controls that implement Councils' housing and settlement strategies. Where those housing strategies incorporate neighbourhood character studies, the cost to implement them in planning schemes can be in the order of hundreds of thousands of dollars. They have been pursued to enable housing growth that considers proximity to infrastructure while taking account for environmental considerations and natural hazards, in accordance with Planning Practice Notes 90 and 91. Invariably, these planning scheme amendments were authorised by the Minister for Planning and drafted in collaboration with DTP officers, who have expressly supported placing local neighbourhood character variations in local schedules to zones. At no time were councils pursuing these amendments told that these local variations would become redundant, which is what occurred on 6 March 2025.

Local government agrees with the stated objective of the reforms: to support efficient subdivisions and townhouse approvals. Insofar as the planning framework limits these, it should be reviewed. However, we do not support compromising the integrity of the VPP and environmental outcomes in the pursuit of those objectives. It is possible to facilitate housing supply without those compromises, but the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code falls short. The MAV and CASBE are already sharing some data with the DTP to inform improvements to the code.

Like VC267, many of the significant VPP changes are still being understood and implemented by councils. The scale of these changes, and the inability to measure their success before pursuing another restructure of the VPP, will confound any review of the planning system that concludes in 2025.

Councils remain the usual first point of contact by members of the public seeking to understand how any planning proposal will be handled. The burden of explaining an increasingly complicated planning system to the public inevitably falls on local government planners.

5.8 Missing from the revised scope of the review

Not found in the 'initial review' are any of the other matters that are provided for in the principal Act (or other Acts linked to from the VPP) that we would expect to be part a comprehensive review.

Our concerns extend to the following frameworks:

- Reforming **infrastructure charges** including **Open Space Contributions** (with a view to achieving fairness and the ability to meet every community's infrastructure needs);
- Redefining **affordable housing** and creating a new head of power to require mandatory affordable housing contributions;
- Ensuring that **climate change, natural hazard and environmental risk** planning objectives are given effect in the planning system;
- Reforming provisions relating to offences and **enforcement**;
- Ensuring that the **compensation** provisions remain fair and fit for purpose;
- Reforming **fees** (with a view to achieving fairness and cost recovery);
- Limiting **speculation** (including removing incentives for land banking and permit flipping, especially where such activity inflates land value);
- Consolidating **special parts of the Act** that have been grafted on since 1987; and
- Updating the **Regulations** (especially the 2015 Regulations).

Sections 8 to 11 and 15 of this submission make high level recommendations about each of these.

We ask that the review of individual frameworks and provisions be done in a way that considers the cumulative effect of all changes on:

- The accessibility of the planning system to all of its users, potential users and the public generally;
- The social licence of the planning system; and
- The standards of good governance, transparency and accountability.

Section 6 of this submission considers how that might be done.

5.9 Conclusions and implications

We are concerned that the program to review and rewrite the Act, and by extension the planning system, has been designed (or is being pursued without design) in such a way that it will repeat 'the ten common mistakes of Victorian planning system reform attempts' identified in section 4.5 of this submission.

1. The problems with the planning system have not been clearly articulated;
2. The objectives and strategy for the reform program have not been established;
3. To date, local government has been excluded from questions of system design;
4. Reform options pursue 'efficiency' in ways that will reduce transparency and increase administrative burden;
5. 'Certainty' is being conflated with 'speed' and/or 'approval';
6. To date, a strategy for precision in regulatory expression has not been adopted;
7. Reform options pursue 'streamlining' of decision pathways at the expense of considering the quality of outcomes;
8. Reform options do not consider, and in some instances require decision-makers to disregard, the Victorian planning objectives; and propose new approval pathways that do not consider the impact on the underlying structure of the VPP;
9. Reform options overlook parts of the planning system that perform well (especially where local strategic planning enables community influence and trust); and
10. No continuous review and improvement mechanisms are proposed.

If the program to review and rewrite the Act abandons its objective of writing an entirely new consolidated principal Act within 2025, which we believe has effectively already occurred, three considerations arise.

The first consideration is whether it is feasible to complete only the 'initial review' (as defined at section 5.3) within 2025. The timing difficulties with the 'initial review' will likely confound stakeholders and the legislature while failing to generate public support (see section 5.6). If the 'initial review' is pursued alone, with all other parts of the planning system considered later, we think it is very likely that the mistakes identified above will be committed and the government will prevent itself from being able to consider the performance of the integrated parts of the planning system as a whole.

We therefore suggest that the 'initial review' is not feasible. We nevertheless respond to the three review themes proposed by DTP in sections 12, 13 and 14 of this submission.

Recommendation 3

That the reform program be rephased to ensure that the performance of the planning system as a set of integrated frameworks can be considered as a whole, with a view to consolidating duly considered reviews of each framework into one Bill to introduce a new principal Act to replace the 1987 Act, and to avoid piecemeal changes to the 1987 Act and planning system before then.

The second consideration, if the review is to be rephased, is how and when the principal Act will be amended.

The outcome that we wish to avoid is one where multiple principal Acts are in operation concurrently. This is what has happened to the Local Government Act, with two principal Acts in force since 2020 (the 1989 and 2020 Acts). The 1989 Act retains almost all of the provisions for rates and charges. These have not been consolidated and transferred to the 2020 Act because the rating review was never implemented. The review was completed five years ago. Departmental resources and priorities have moved on, and local government must work to two principal Acts for the foreseeable future. This has prevented the realisation of one of the purposes of creating a new consolidated Local Government Act in the first place: to provide ease of access to local government primary legislation in one document.

The complications for the Planning and Environment Act would be far more significant, for the reasons that have already been set out. The various frameworks enabled by the principal Act are intricately connected and these connections need to be understood together before the Act can be rewritten with confidence.

Recommendation 4

That the reform program avoid the situation of two principal Planning and Environment Acts being in operation concurrently other than to allow for a short transitionary period.

The third consideration, if the review is to be rephased, is how to design a reform program that will be comprehensive and successful. That is the subject of the next Section.

6 A better way

Local government proposes eight principles for planning system reform. Section 6 of this submission is broken into eight corresponding sub-sections.

6.1 Know the history

This submission has described a cycle of continuous reform programs that have failed to meet their stated objectives of reducing complexity, providing certainty and improving efficiency. If government does not understand this history and the reasons for the repetition of mistakes, it is destined to repeat them. A short account of this history is set out in sub-section 4.5 of this submission.

We recommend that a synthesis of this history and literature analysing the success and failures of past reform attempts be completed. This could be done as part of the Auditor General review proposed below.

6.2 Collect the evidence

If the Act is to be replaced and, by extension, the planning system is to be substantially reformed, we need to start with the facts about how the system is performing. Assertions that the system is inefficient are not enough. Evidence that shows the *causes of the inefficiency* must be established.

As the Victorian Auditor General's audits of the planning system were in 1999, 2008 and 2017, and as the government is embarking on a review and rewrite of the entire system, another VAGO audit is timely. The audit should:

- Consider the ways information is being managed across all parts of local and state government;
- Consider consents and permissions that are common but not well defined in the principal Act;
- Extend to the new approval pathways (where applications or permits are exempt from standard provisions in the principal Act, especially the new pathways facilitated by particular provisions at clauses 53.19 to 53.24);
- Consider the planning scheme amendment types and frequency of exemption from exhibition and submission processes, and who the planning authority is in each case. (See section 12.2 of this submission for all data that should be collected in relation to planning scheme amendments.)

If a VAGO review and report is not possible, the data should nevertheless be collected to inform a serious and comprehensive review of the system. Local government, as primary system administrators, stands ready to assist with a comprehensive data collection and reporting exercise.

A broader regulatory audit of the VPP that considers plan delivery and planning system efficiency would also yield important data. A regulatory audit should consider:

- Whether regulatory provisions reflect strategic intent;
- Whether provisions accord with regulatory best practice;
- Whether the types of provisions align with the complexity of matters;

- Whether processing and assessment of applications is aligned with the most appropriate decision-maker.[35]

Separately, a review of the case law and tribunal decisions will be necessary to identify where frequent interpretational disputes exist and consider how they might be remedied, or where major consequences still need to be resolved (e.g. *Myers v Southern Grampians Shire Council*, 2023).

We understand the DTP has stated they have done some of this work to inform the present review and rewrite. Unfortunately, the DTP has been unable or unwilling to share their regulatory audit with system stakeholders. The MAV understands that the DTP has not sought data from local government.

6.3 Assemble the right people

As discussed in section 4.3 of this submission, a major problem with the ongoing stewardship of the planning system is the disconnect between planning system designers in state government and the primary system administrators in local government.

A beginning-to-end planning reform steering committee that includes more than just system overseers in state government would provide a broader perspective, and be able to identify and offer solutions to problems more efficiently.

There are any number of ways to approach this. The steering committee could take the form of a Ministerial Advisory Committee, or an Advisory Council to the Department. Under any model, however, the objectives for the steering committee should be:

1. To include a critical number of planning system administrators with recent significant experience; and
2. To ensure that the committee meets regularly enough, and with a level of predictability and continuity, that allows it to generate collegiality, trust and productivity.

A Planning System Ministerial Advisory Committee model could, for example:

- Include 12 members:
    - 5 representatives of state government (1 political appointee of the Minister; 1 chair or appropriately senior member of Planning Panels Victoria; 3 DTP),
    - 5 representatives of local government (1 MAV; 4 planning system administrators from a representative sample of councils and balancing for skill, experience and region e.g. inner metro, outer metro or growth, peri-urban or regional, and small rural),
    - 2 representatives of the relevant planning professional peak bodies (1 PIA (Victoria), 1 VPELA).
- Be supported by DTP as Secretariat, in turn supported by MAV where local government sector-wide input requires facilitation.
- Develop the reform program (defining the problem, setting the objectives and charting a timeline and process for reviewing each framework) and, subject to the Minister's approval of that program, oversee its implementation.
- Coordinate the work of subsidiary committees that consider individual frameworks enabled by the Act (infrastructure charges, compensation, enforcement, fees and cost recovery, etc), those subsidiary committees to draw from subject matter experts

[35] See p33 of *Shaping metropolitan Melbourne: A discussion paper for the Municipal Association of Victoria*, SGS Economics and Planning

and representatives from state government, local government, industry and professional bodies.
- Regularly publish progress reports online, to give all planning practitioners, industry and community certainty about timelines for review and how component reviews fit together.
- Disband upon completion of all reviews and a consolidated report and recommendations for a new Act and related legislation.

6.4 Define the problem together

As discussed in section 4.5 of this submission, most reviews of the planning system have not first defined the problem. Consideration of the evidence (per section 6.2), by the right mix of people who will steer a reform program from beginning to end (per section 6.3), will generate a shared understanding of the problems that need to be solved.

The steering committee (however defined) should publish a synthesis of the evidence and an articulation of the problems to be solved. Unlike the 2012 Ministerial Advisory Committee 'Underwood Review' report, the 2019 discussion paper by Better Regulation Victoria, and the 2023 Operation Sandon Special Report by IBAC, most planning system reforms since 1999 have pursued solutions without attempting to clearly identify the problems that they seek to solve – and publishing them upfront.

In no cases have state and local government conferenced to seek shared understanding of the causes of the problems.

If state and local government were to partner on planning reform, a holistic perspective of the causes of the problems with the planning system may emerge. For example, while 'complexity' may be a generally agreed problem, views on the causes of the problem will tend to differ from the point of view of system designer compared to system administrator. The former may see the cause as an excessive number of local schedules, while the latter may see the cause as deficiencies in the parent provisions. A holistic view, possible only through a deliberative process where system designers and administrators can understand one another, might make important findings and proposals about the underlying strategy for regulatory expression of the VPP, and whether the purpose of strategic planning is to identify conflicts or to resolve them.

In the published synthesis and proposition about the problem, the steering committee should also set the objectives for the reform program.

6.5 Set the objectives

The objectives for the reform program should be set by the steering committee of system administrators and designers (see section 6.3) and recommended to the Minister for approval.

We suggest that the draft objectives of the reform program should include:
1. Those objectives adopted by DTP for the 'initial review', being to "facilitate the implementation of Plan for Victoria", "efficiency", "certainty" and "transparency and integrity";
2. To facilitate the changes necessary to meet housing, climate, environmental and infrastructure challenges;
3. To maintain social licence and democratic legitimacy in the planning system;

4. To create a strategy for regulatory expression that will enable the objectives listed above, and that will follow through to practice notes about scheme drafting;
5. To create a mechanism for continuous improvement and system coordination (see section 6.8);
6. To ensure that all of the frameworks enabled by the Act are reviewed, and then the planning system and Act reviewed together;
7. To result in a single Bill to introduce a new principal Act; and
8. To maintain clear public communication on progress and purpose throughout.

Performance indicators for each of the objectives should be agreed upfront.

6.6 Strategies for regulatory expression

In his book, Dr Stephen Rowley writes about 'Rethinking the Paradigm: Strategy-based Regulation.'[36] It provides one approach to establishing a strategy for regulatory expression:

A strategy-based regulation model

Rather than seeing the accumulation of strategy-based planning decisions at permit stage as the key means of implementation, the strategy-based regulation model prioritises resolution of strategic guidance, embodiment of strategy in fit-for-purpose regulatory provisions, and more targeted use of discretion through the permit process.

Key assumptions of this paradigm are:

- The regulatory planning system should proceed from clear statements of strategic vision.
- Strategy should resolve strategic dilemmas wherever possible, and communicate those resolutions as clearly as possible.
- The regulatory planning system should implement those strategic resolutions using regulatory best practice, with principle-based, performance-based and prescriptive provisions used in a fit-for-purpose manner.
- Regulatory intervention should be targeted and effective, to ensure regulatory burden (footprint) is justified by the public benefit achieved (impact).
- Discretion through the planning permit process remains important, but is not the favoured point of policy resolution. The ideal uses for discretion are situations where full codification of outcomes is not possible, to preserve flexibility for site-specific circumstances, and for applications raising novel questions.
- The planning system needs to be managed as a constructive partnership between state and local government. Both levels of government need to be empowered to initiate system improvements.

In seeking to influence Plan for Victoria, the MAV commissioned SGS Economics and Planning to write two discussion papers on metropolitan and rural and regional planning. These discussion papers considered planning system design and potential approaches to system streaming. The proposed framework[37] builds on Dr Rowley's framework for strategy-based regulation. We modify the framework further to account for what we know about the scope of the Victorian Government's review and rewrite of the Act and planning system:

[36] See pp289-290 in Rowley, Stephen, 2023. *The Victorian planning system : practice, problems and prospects*. 2nd edition. The Federation Press Annandale, NSW
[37] See pp34-35 of *Shaping metropolitan Melbourne: A discussion paper for the Municipal Association of Victoria*, SGS Economics and Planning

Best Practice Planning System Design

There is a need for a realignment of the planning system to provide more clarity in the management of the system and to ensure that responsibilities are vested with the most appropriate body at all levels of the system.

Alongside this, the provisions themselves need comprehensive review to ensure that planning schemes are providing clear guidance and proportionate assessment pathways.

The following diagram illustrates how some of these regulatory design principles can be aligned with appropriate governance arrangements in the development assessment system.

Alignment of responsibilities and system responses in the planning system

Complexity	Simple	Moderate; foreseeable but hard to codify	Strategically important and consequential, novel, complex
Policy design	Codify and remove from the system	Clear descriptions of intended outcomes (e.g. use, density and height)	Principle-based controls
Assessment type	(None; has been removed from system)	Primarily technical assessment	Policy interpretation and judgment required: may raise significant policy questions
Notification and review		Limited to directly impacted parties	Available to third parties (unless compelling case otherwise)
Assessment / recommendation		Council officers	Council officers
Decision-maker		Council officers	The elected responsible authority

This framework conceives of applications within a spectrum of increasing impact and risk, and associated assessment complexity. This can approximately be divided into three categories: low impact applications that raise few if any genuine planning issues; the common applications requiring assessment, but which raise known or foreseeable issues; and more strategically complex or novel applications. This seeks to embed the following principles of system design:

The system should be targeted to where it adds value
At the level of policy and scheme design, the system should aim to remove the simple applications from the system wherever possible, by better targeting the system to define acceptable outcomes and remove permit requirement.

The system should give clear answers to common dilemmas
Common applications are less likely to be removed from the system, but schemes should aim to give as much clarity about intended outcomes as possible, for example through detailed descriptive policy or form-based codes (a density measure such as Floor Area Ratio, a core element in all planning controls in NSW, could be considered).

The system should provide a principles-based framework for novel matters
For complex applications, there is less likely to be clear policy guidance and the principles-based guidance of the Planning Policy Framework becomes more important to guide first-principles strategically driven decisions. (The Victorian system is currently well-attuned to this kind of application.)

Assessment pathways should align with risk, importance, and complexity
Assessment pathways should follow from the above scheme settings. Simple applications ideally will not require assessment. Planning judgement will be required for the common applications, although this should primarily involve assessment against codes and guidance formalised in the scheme. The complex and novel applications require more first-principles policy judgement and strategic decision-making.

Notice and review rights are an important part of the system
Notice and review rights have long been embedded in the Victorian system and play an important role in maintaining the system's democratic accountability and integrity. These rights should not be removed or traded as part of fast-tracking exercises. Instead, the extent of third-party involvement should flow from the importance of the matter. The tribunal should be resourced to deal with any matters efficiently.

The decision-maker should align with the importance and impact of decisions
The choice of decision-maker should follow in a logical manner from this framework. Councils should remain central to processing of the applications, with the bulk of common applications processed at officer level. More significant applications can then be elevated to council decision-making. It is appropriate for the Minister to make decisions on matters of genuine state significance, with a genuine role for input and support from councils.

Elected decision-makers should always respond to independent and publicly available reasons
The Victorian Auditor-General has previously expressed concern about governance of Ministerial decision-making, particularly with regards to the reasons provided for decisions (as the Minister does not typically provide or respond to a publicly available assessment). Regardless of decision-maker, assessments and recommendations by professional planners should be published before or alongside decisions (as the case warrants), in the interests of applicant and decision-maker accountability.

This framework is materially different to that proposed by DTP in its 'initial review', though both rely on streaming application types by complexity. (We discuss the DTP proposal further in section 14 of this report.)

Artificial intelligence

Any strategy for regulatory expression should also consider the quickly emerging and potentially transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning and automation in assisting planning applications and assessments.

Victoria's planning system is not currently designed for automation, making automation or AI interpretation difficult without introducing errors. However, councils are already experimenting with third party generative AI assistants where codified planning pathways are in place. The MAV understands that many councils are exploring AI & automated decision making in planning and other public service delivery.

The Act and the planning system it enables rely on authorised decision-makers to determine compliance and assess applications. It is inevitable that, where AI is used to assist in applications or assessments, questions of risk and liability will arise.

There may well be a useful and time-saving role for AI in planning applications and assessments, where codified pathways are simple, deal with uncontroversial matters, do not require planner discretion, and are not prone to interpretative error. These benefits will be maximised where relevant provisions are machine-readable. Any strategy for addressing the use and regulation, including monitoring and evaluation of outcomes, of AI in planning functions is one that should be developed by system designers and administrators in state and local governments working together.

Case study: MAVLab

The MAV and Greater Dandenong City Council are collaborating on the delivery of a Local Government Housing Innovation Program with the support of a grant from the Commonwealth Housing Support Program.

As part of this program, MAVLab is leading the Advancing AI Innovation in Local Government (AAII) project to build an evidence base for guidance and recommendations for interventions into the use and procurement of AI and automated decision-making tools for statutory planning in councils.

The report will be released soon after this sector submission is published.

6.7 Resource the program

The reform program cannot be anything other than a multi-year program. But it must have some consistency from beginning to end to ensure that an overarching strategy is followed, and those charged with overseeing it establish and maintain a strong working relationship.

The reform program therefore needs a multi-year resourcing commitment.

The MAV will play its part in coordinating and supporting local government within the reform program.

Recommendation 5

That the reform program be redesigned to allow for:
1. The collection of relevant data and evidence;
2. Start-to-end oversight by a collaborative body of state and local government system designers and administrators;
3. A shared understanding of the causes of problems in the planning system;
4. A shared agreement of reform objectives and performance measures;
5. A shared agreement on a strategy for regulatory expression; and
6. Strong public communication about the purposes and progress of the program.

6.8 Continually improve

The Auditor General in 2008 recommended:

> ***Measuring the performance of the state's planning framework***
> - *[The Department], in conjunction with stakeholders, should assume the lead role in developing a more comprehensive framework for measuring the performance of the state's planning system. The framework should include key performance indicators, targets and reporting arrangements for assessing:*
> - *the achievement of planning outcomes at the local and whole-of-state levels*
> - *the effectiveness and efficiency of key planning permit and planning scheme amendment processes, including the performance of councils and [the Department] in the administration of those processes*
> - *the administrative impact on councils arising from their compliance with statutory processes and the extent to which implemented reforms have achieved their objectives and/or reduced such impacts*
> - *the effectiveness of the full suite of VPP provisions for ensuring certainty and consistency in decision-making on an ongoing basis, including the degree to which any amendments made have improved the operation of the provisions*
> - *the extent to which councils have fulfilled their obligations under the Act as planning and responsible authorities*
> - *[the Department's] overall performance in managing and supporting the state's planning framework (Recommendation 4.1).*
> - *To support and complement the operation of the performance measurement framework, [the Department] should also establish an ongoing program for obtaining stakeholder feedback on:*
> - *the operation of the Act and the VPP, and implementation of statutory processes, as a basis for identifying matters for further investigation and action in concert with results from the performance measurement framework*

  - *the timeliness and quality of [the Department's] advisory and support services to stakeholders, so that any opportunities for improvement can be identified and pursued*
  - *any emerging issues or trends that require attention (Recommendation 4.2).*
- *[The Department] should develop a comprehensive strategy with detailed timelines for the further development and implementation of the performance measurement framework (Recommendation 4.3).*
- *[The Department] should review and revise the existing performance targets for the planning scheme amendment process so that they accurately reflect the elapsed time for decisions to be made on authorisations and approvals (Recommendation 4.4).*

In the next Auditor General report in 2017, the Government was heavily criticised for not taking up the 2008 recommendations.

A new recommendation was provided:

> *We recommend that the Department …:*
> *2. strengthen its approach to overseeing and continuously improving the planning system, by:*
> - *incorporating a requirement in the revised Victoria Planning Provisions for its regular review*
> - *facilitating the development of a technical committee to undertake regular reviews of the Victoria Planning Provisions and its content …*
>
> *6. work with councils to complete the performance measurement framework for the planning system so that it provides the relevant information and data at the state and local levels to assess the effectiveness of the planning system, measure the achievement of planning policies and support continuous improvement of the planning system through monitoring the effectiveness of reforms…*

These recommendations were also not taken up.

Though it should have been in place since at least 1999, there is no better time than during a review and rewrite of the principal Act to propose a durable mechanism for continuous review and improvement of the VPP, which requires system designers and system administrators to work together to ensure that decisions drive system efficiency, accountability, transparency and integrity.

Such a mechanism should come in the form of a statutory body that:

1. Is attached to Part 1A of the Act (or equivalent in the future consolidated Act);
2. Is charged with continuously reviewing, and making recommendations for the improvement to, the VPP;
3. In doing so must consider system efficacy and not only throughput;
4. May also provide advice on related planning system matters including legislative proposals;
5. Establishes and maintains a structured approach to planning system user feedback and engagement;
6. Includes no more than 50% state government appointees (e.g. 4), but requires the committee to make decisions by super-majority;
7. Includes places for expert advisors from neither state nor local government (e.g. 2);
8. Includes a critical mass of local government planning system administrators (e.g. 4), drawn from a pool of potential appointees, one per council, and with an appointment mechanism that overcomes any risks of manipulation;
9. Does not bar the local government appointees from discussing the matters being debated by the statutory body with the remainder of the pool and the MAV;

10. Has made available to it the data and analysis it needs to understand the performance of all parts of the planning system (including tribunal decisions of importance);
11. Meets regularly enough, and with a level of predictability and continuity, that allows its members to generate collegiality, trust and productivity; and
12. Publicly reports at least annually.

This statutory body should not be an alternative to broad consultation on major VPP planning scheme amendments, but – if the body is performing as intended – its advice on how to go about major VPP planning scheme amendments will have been persuasive prior to their drafting.

Statutory bodies of state government and non-state government member oversight of subsidiary legislation is not unusual: the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, for example, is an independent statutory body established under section 210 of the *Building Act 1993.*

Recommendation 6

That a statutory body including a balance of state and local government system designers and administrators, with provision for additional expert advisors, be established to oversee the continuous review and improvement of the VPP and to maintain a structured approach to planning system user feedback and engagement.

7 The Victorian planning objectives

7.1 The current objectives

The objectives of planning in Victoria, and the objectives of the planning framework established by the Act, are found at Section 4 of the Act.

The objectives of planning in Victoria are—

(a) to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land;
(b) to provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;
(c) to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria;
(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;
(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;
(f) to facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e);
(fa) to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria;
(g) to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The objective at (fa) was inserted in 2017. The objective has demonstrably failed, and more serious affordable housing mechanisms are required if it is to be realised (see section 8.2).

Despite this, we consider the objectives to be generally sound. We are uncomfortable with the extent of planning pathways that have been created that 'switch off' the requirements on responsible authorities under Section 60 ('What matters must a responsible authority consider?') to consider 'the objectives of planning in Victoria' found at Section 4. Though the objectives are high level and the specificity of provisions in planning schemes will always provide the stronger decision-making guidance, it is important that every planning decision is grounded in clear purpose. The cumulative effect of planning pathways that 'switch off' consideration of the planning objectives is to prioritise process over purpose. Both are important.

Section 4 of the Act goes on to list the objectives of the planning framework. They are—

(a) to ensure sound, strategic planning and co-ordinated action at State, regional and municipal levels;
(b) to establish a system of planning schemes based on municipal districts to be the principal way of setting out objectives, policies and controls for the use, development and protection of land;
(c) to enable land use and development planning and policy to be easily integrated with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels;
(d) to ensure that the effects on the environment are considered and provide for explicit consideration of social and economic effects when decisions are made about the use and development of land;
(da) to provide for explicit consideration of the policies and obligations of the State relating to climate change, including but not limited to greenhouse gas emissions

reduction targets and the need to increase resilience to climate change, when decisions are made about the use and development of land;

(e) to facilitate development which achieves the objectives of planning in Victoria and planning objectives set up in planning schemes;

(f) to provide for a single authority to issue permits for land use or development and related matters, and to co-ordinate the issue of permits with related approvals;

(g) to encourage the achievement of planning objectives through positive actions by responsible authorities and planning authorities;

(h) to establish a clear procedure for amending planning schemes, with appropriate public participation in decision making;

(i) to ensure that those affected by proposals for the use, development or protection of land or changes in planning policy or requirements receive appropriate notice;

(j) to provide an accessible process for just and timely review of decisions without unnecessary formality;

(k) to provide for effective enforcement procedures to achieve compliance with planning schemes, permits and agreements;

(l) to provide for compensation when land is set aside for public purposes and in other circumstances.

The objectives of the planning framework are more detailed than the objectives of planning, and it is easier to see that some have not been met. Notably:

Table 4: Objectives of the planning framework that are generally not being met

Objective	Commentary
(a) aims for co-ordinated action at State, region, municipal levels	Section 4 of this submission explains the loss of co-ordination over time.
(c) aims to integrate policies in relation to development decisions	The objective has suffered under the introduction of new codified pathways and VicSmart streams that embed some policy within them but otherwise remove links to the remainder of the planning policy framework, preventing the integration of environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies – in favour of 'speed and certainty'
(d) aims for the consideration of environmental, social and economic effects	While some strategic planning exercises do this well, the planning system lacks a strong mechanism for environmental assessment of high impact matters;[38] the social effects mechanism introduced by the current government in 2015 (to make the number of objectors a relevant consideration in whether a proposal has a significant social effect[39]) has been frequently 'switched off' since; and the lack of interest in maintaining regional and metropolitan plans that set out economic strengths and opportunities continues to hold back the integration of planning with economic development strategies.
(f) aims for a single authority to issue permits	Recent Ministerial approval pathways have created 'options' for applicants which invite forum shopping and erode transparency (see section 5.7).
(i) aims to ensure that those affected by proposals receive appropriate notice	The patchwork of notice exemptions has led to significant complexity and while simple applications could reasonably be exempt from notice, exemptions now frequently extend to very significant developments, often because they are bundled with appeal exemptions, defeating the 'fair notice' objective. We say more about modernising notice in section 14.
(j) aims for timely appeal processes without unnecessary formality	The tribunal is increasingly formal and inaccessible. Its pre-COVID waiting times to have matters heard were inordinately long.
(k) aims for effective enforcement and compliance	Section 15.1 of this submission explains the challenges to effective enforcement and compliance.
(l) aims to provide for compensation when land is set aside for public purposes	This has been mostly lost in the many changes to the VPP since 1996.

[38] See p294 in Rowley, Stephen, 2023. *The Victorian planning system : practice, problems and prospects*. 2nd edition. The Federation Press Annandale, NSW

[39] See *Planning and Environment Amendment (Recognising Objectors) Act 2015.*

Planning framework objective (da) is new: it commenced on 26 March 2025, 12 months after the Assent of the *Climate Change and Energy Legislation Amendment (Renewable Energy and Storage Targets) Act 2024.* Its objective of ensuring "explicit consideration of the policies and obligations of the State relating to climate change" therefore did not apply to VPP changes VC257, VC274 and VC267, all introduced in the 30 days prior (though these amendments do make some limited provision for environmentally sustainable design). We query if this was the intention of the legislature.

7.2 Ideas for new objectives

Changing the objectives is not simple; they are intended to be relevant to the entire planning system. A process of the type set out in section 6 is therefore necessary: if part of a holistic review of the planning system, changes to the objectives could be durable.

The objectives were written in a different time. Housing was more affordable, governments played a larger role in the provision of public housing, and climate change and net-zero carbon emissions were only emerging as concepts. The importance of walkable communities and other more sustainable transport options, especially in densifying urban areas, is now much better understood in Australia, and the planning profession, knowledge and literature have expanded substantially.

The objectives should therefore be reviewed to consider whether they are ambitious enough to meet the transformational change necessary to meet Victoria's current and future challenges.

We put forward some ideas for consideration as part of a planning system-wide review:

Ideas for changes to the objectives of planning in Victoria

- Objective (c) should extend to 'healthy': "to secure a pleasant, efficient, healthy and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria".

- A new objective that gives effect to the *Climate Change Act 2017*: "to achieve and maintain net zero greenhouse gas emissions". That Act defines the term 'net zero greenhouse gas emissions' and sets 2045 as the date by which net zero is to be achieved. If we are rewriting the Act to last another 40 years, this objective, or a similar or more ambitious objective, will be necessary.

- Currently objective (f) seeks "to facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e)." This does not apply to the objectives (fa) ("to facilitate the provision of affordable housing"), (g) ("to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians") and the new objective above regarding greenhouse gas emissions. Consideration should be given to extending (f) to apply to all of the other objectives.

Ideas for new objectives of the planning framework

- A new objective: "to provide for integrity, accountability and transparency in decision-making". The purpose of the objective is to ensure that permit triggers, referrals and other decision gateways are clear, predictable, consistent and transparent, to generate trust in the planning system as a whole.

- A new objective: "to provide subsidiarity". The purpose of the objective is to ensure that the planning system can achieve a social licence – see section 4.4.

- A new objective: "to ensure that the effects on Victoria's food security are considered". The purpose of the objective is to implement Recommendation 24 of the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee's report on its inquiry into food security in Victoria,[40] which we agree with.

- A new objective: "to facilitate high quality and sustainable design". The purpose of the objective is to recognise that high quality design has long term environmental and operational affordability benefits.

- A new objective: "to set out a sustainable transport hierarchy". The purpose of the objective is to better integrate land use and development spatial planning with transport policy considerations.

In lieu of advice from the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council or the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, we have not proposed specific words for a new objective relating to Caring for Country. These bodies should be consulted on the adequacy of the objectives in the Act, and whether the legal delineation of the Planning and Aboriginal Heritage frameworks remain fit for purpose.

We acknowledge that there must be a distinction between the purposes of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, which empowers Traditional Owners as protectors of their cultural heritage, and the purposes of the Planning and Environment Act. The planning objectives must not duplicate or erode the purposes of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*; they should complement them.

7.3 Measuring progress

The reform program should develop ways of measuring progress against the objectives. This is discussed further in section 6.

Recommendation 7

That a review of the objectives of planning, and the objectives of the planning framework, be conducted as part of the redesigned reform program. This review should enable meaningful public discussion and consider:
1. A new objective "to achieve and maintain net zero greenhouse gas emissions";
2. Expanding the objectives of the planning framework to include integrity, accountability and transparency in decision-making, provide for subsidiarity, provide food security, facilitate high-quality and sustainable design and provide a sustainable transport hierarchy.

[40] Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee, November 2024, *Food security in Victoria*.

8 Housing supply, location and affordability

MAV Housing Taskforce Submission to a Plan for Victoria

The MAV's position on housing supply, location and affordability was developed by the MAV Housing Taskforce, informed by an evidence-base provided by RMIT's Centre for Urban Research, and provided in our August 2024 submission to *Plan for Victoria*.

It remains directly relevant to questions of Victorian planning system reform.

The submission agreed that while housing capacity targets have a role in informing local planning, they are by no means sufficient to address the housing affordability problem: many other factors and system-wide considerations need attention. Its recommendations include clarifying that the role of housing targets is to indicate housing capacity.

It argues that growth and change must come with an enduring 'liveability return', and achieving this requires dealing councils in to the planning and development process, and for all levels of government to proactively invest in local amenity and infrastructure improvements to improve liveability and local pride in areas of change.

8.1 Housing capacity targets

The MAV is encouraged to see that the final *Plan for Victoria* clarified that housing targets will be measured as housing *capacity* targets.

We are also encouraged that *Plan for Victoria* proposes to "consider" setting percentage-based targets for new social or affordable homes. The research commissioned by MAV for the Housing Taskforce submission considers the sorts of housing capacity and affordability target mechanisms are likely to succeed. Further opportunities to consider housing diversity and quality should also be considered.

The MAV and member councils have broadly supported the overarching settlement strategy in *Plan for Victoria*, with 70 per cent of new homes to be facilitated inside established urban areas. How the planning system can be reformed to facilitate this without compromising its other objectives remains a formidable challenge.

The DTP has begun a program of consultation with local government planners about the methodology underpinning the housing capacity targets. The *Housing Capacity Assessment Platform (HCAP)* and *Access To Opportunities and Services (ATOS)* tools show great potential, establishing a consistent and dynamic state-wide approach to measuring and modelling housing capacity. An obvious benefit will be the potential for reducing the costs to councils of conducting individual housing capacity studies. Where these have been pursued, however, and especially where they have only recently been completed or are nearing completion, those local studies should not be discarded. (They may in fact offer very useful bases to test and improve the HCAP and ATOS.)

Unfortunately, these tools are being presented after the targets have been set. A genuine commitment to open cooperation with councils in applying and refining the tools will be necessary to improve the implementation process.

The translation of housing capacity targets into planning schemes, and details about the procedure and timing of that translation, have not yet been resolved. The MAV wants to see an efficient, effective procedure that adequately considers the identification of opportunities and risks by councils and communities. This will be vital to generating understanding and support for state-wide, regional, municipal and sub-municipal settlement strategies. Achieving this within the timeframes indicated by the state, likely by the November 2026 State election, will not be possible without a harmonised advisory panel process and a stronger public engagement strategy.

Perhaps the most important policy consideration in translating housing capacity targets into planning schemes will be how the targets will be applied over time. It remains unclear if capacity commensurate with the 2051 target is intended to be released immediately, and if the targets are intended to be periodically refreshed.

Housing capacity targets alone are no panacea for the housing crisis. The planning system and its various decision-makers cannot force developers to act on approved planning permits, and the planning system does not regulate the cost of materials and labour. Nor can it regulate land tax or coerce property ownership and investment trends.

The MAV, and councils, want to see reforms that unlock new housing supply across the metropolitan region as well as rural Victoria and our regional cities. Councils are concerned though that reforms designed for the metropolitan Melbourne context as the standard will lead to failures or confusion in the planning system elsewhere, either:

- Geographically: unintended consequences in small towns and regions, if controls and codes designed for metropolitan areas are imposed;
- Temporally: the foremost challenge facing the planning system in 10 years may be substantially different to today; or
- Structurally: policies and controls designed to uphold other objectives of planning in Victoria being unnecessarily devalued in the pursuit of housing approvals.

Housing capacity targets have the potential to be a very important tool as part of integrated planning reform and complementary measures to address housing supply and affordability barriers. We look forward to their further development. But they must be considered in a broader economic, geographic and environmental context.

8.2 Affordable housing

While embedding housing capacity targets in planning schemes does not require any changes to the principal Act, facilitating affordable housing contributions does.

The *Planning and Building Legislation Amendment (Housing Affordability and Other Matters) Act 2017* introduced into the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* a new objective of planning in Victoria: “to facilitate affordable housing supply.” The Act enabled a clearer process for making voluntary affordable housing contributions but, as these cannot be mandatory, the new objective was not picked up by objective (f): “to facilitate development in accordance with the [other] objectives.”

The government has not put in place the investment and legislative settings to meet Victoria’s urgent social and affordable housing need. The planning system is not structured to deal with the shortfall and, due to the construction of the objectives of planning in Victoria in the Act, the Act does not identify this as a problem.

Councils experience the problems associated with voluntary agreements seeking social and affordable housing contributions. Voluntary agreements are inconsistent, expensive,

resource intensive and can be an add-on cost for developers who may not have factored in such a contribution at purchase or feasibility stage.

Current settings are no substitute for a clearly identified, upfront and easy-to-interpret mandatory contribution. Any review and rewrite of the Act must take the opportunity to create heads of power to enable such a mechanism.

In a paper commissioned by the MAV, SGS Economics & Planning propose[41] that:

> *[Any] Social and Affordable Housing Contribution should ensure a broad base of development is liable (including on non-residential development, and in areas outside metropolitan Melbourne and regional cities), contribution amounts are as clear as possible, and to minimise disruptions to existing development (i.e. introduced with a reasonable lead time of say 2-3 years and then phased up with the rate of contribution low initially and increasing over time).*

The broad application of the charge, and an independent, predictable and moderate process to alter the rate of the charge, will be essential to establish fairness and confidence. A modest rate could be phased in as the market recovers.

Precincts, where development rights are deliberately increased through strategic planning, are suitable for substantially higher mandatory contributions. These also need to be established upfront, to ensure that the cost is absorbed in land value and not passed on to the unit purchaser.

This two-tier approach is informed by seven resolutions of the MAV State Council from May 2019 to August 2024, all calling for heads of power to enable mandatory affordable housing contributions.

The 'review and rewrite' of the Act should also consider the relationship between the new heads of power and the definition of 'affordable housing', and consider updates to that definition (and any additional definitions required, such as 'key-worker housing'. We note that the City of Melbourne has tested such a definition,[42] which is worthy of further consideration). While the Act currently defines affordable housing through income measures, the cost of housing varies significantly across the state. What is affordable housing in one area will not be in another.

Recommendation 8

That the new Act:
1. Update the definition of affordable housing;
2. Provide a head of power to enable, in future, a modest affordable housing contribution to be required with new development generally.
3. Provide a head of power to enable mandatory affordable housing contributions through planning controls, to allow for future strategic planning work to introduce such controls where justified.

[41] See p41 in *Shaping regional and rural Victoria: A discussion paper for the Municipal Association of Victoria*, SGS Economics and Planning. (Mirrored in the metropolitan Melbourne paper, p38)
[42] City of Melbourne, 2024, *Defining key worker housing*.

9 Climate change, environmental sustainability and natural hazards

9.1 Legislative and policy misalignment

Concepts of adaptation and resilience, and mitigation, are intrinsically linked with land use and development. A more systemic approach to consideration of climate change, environmental sustainability and natural hazards in the planning framework is necessary.

The Auditor General found in 2017 that a lack of specific guidance to address key planning challenges ("social and affordable housing, climate change and environmentally sustainable development") formed part of the systemic problems in the planning system impeding effectiveness, efficiency and economy of planning schemes (see section 4.5).

Eight years later, progress is still weak, and the planning framework falls short of addressing the formidable heat, flood, biodiversity and energy efficiency challenges facing Victoria. In the absence of strong state-wide policy and control on environmentally sustainable development in the VPP, councils have pursued policy and control in local planning schemes at tremendous cost and mostly without success.

There is no shortage of policy-making at the state level on climate and environment. Policies and reviews with direct relevance to Victoria's planning framework that are underway or complete include:

- The Climate Change Strategy (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), 2021);
- Recycling Victoria: A new economy (DELWP, 2020);
- Victoria's Zero Emissions Vehicle Roadmap (DELWP, 2021);
- Gas Substitution Roadmap (DELWP, 2021);
- Victorian Renewable Energy Zones Development Plan (DELWP, 2021);
- Integrated Water management forums (and strategic directions) (ongoing);
- Victoria's Resilient Coasts 2100+ (place based coastal adaptation) (ongoing);
- Local Coastal Hazard Assessments (four pilots plus the unreleased Port Phillip Bay CHA);
- Cooling and Greening (Melbourne) (ongoing);
- Review of the Building Code (aligned with updates to the National Construction Code) (ongoing);
- Victoria's ESD Roadmap (ongoing); and
- Built Environment Adaptation Action Plan (draft, DELWP 2021).

(Many of these policies do not adequately consider agricultural land impacts and food security, which is discussed further in section 11 of this submission.)

The extent to which these policies are integrated with the planning framework is inconsistent. While the overarching climate policy for Victoria, *Victoria's Climate Change Strategy,*[43] contains aspirations to improve land use and development planning, these are very high level (e.g. "Ensure relevant legislation, standards and codes support the use of best available climate change data and adaptive planning principles as part of decision making, particularly as it relates to infrastructure, development and land use changes"). Detailed reform has been slow. The professional association of planners is now well ahead of government on proposals to improve the planning for the built environment to meet the challenges of climate change.[44]

[43] Victorian Government, May 2021, Victoria's Climate Change Strategy
[44] See policies on Planning Institute of Australia website

The role for Councils is difficult in this context. They do not have stewardship of the state-wide planning provisions, but they are required to give effect to those provisions while also upholding their duties under the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Climate Change Act 2017.*

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires at Section 9 that Councils must, in the performance of their roles, give effect to certain overarching governance principles. These include "achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations" and promoting "environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks."

The *Climate Change Act 2017* enables Councils to make a 'Council pledge', "a statement in respect of greenhouse gas emissions reductions resulting from the performance of the Council's powers and duties under the Local Government Act".

How these provisions relate to Councils' duties as planning authorities under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* is a matter for debate. How Councils can fully realise their duties within a VPP that limits local climate solutions and ambition remains a challenge.

We think that the starting point for further integration of the climate, local government and planning legal frameworks is to ensure that it is an explicit objective of the planning framework to address climate change. A suggestion of how this could be expressed is found in section 7.2 of this submission.

9.2 Built environment

The most succinct analysis of barriers in the planning system to addressing climate change is found in a report by Hansen Partnership, commissioned by the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) and the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances.[45] Its summary finds that:

> *This project has arisen as a result of the disconnect between high level policy positions on climate change, both by State and local government, and the day-to-day decisions that are being made. In practice, local government decision-makers routinely report that the adoption of a zero-emission target and commitments to adaptation have not yet 'trickled down' to inform decision-making within the built environment, and more particularly, to decisions made through Victoria's planning system.*

It goes on to make 41 detailed recommendations for systemic change in Victoria's planning system. Its overarching recommendation for regulatory expression reflects the thesis of this submission:

> ***Shifting the balance of decision-making***
>
> *'High level' legislative obligations are important in driving change at the more fine-grained level. Planning is structured to flow from legislative requirements to objectives, which are then supported by the application of zones and overlays and the articulation of strategies. In turn, these are implemented by standards and guidelines. Failing to include, as part of legislative obligations, robust and comprehensive references to climate change, and to highlight the key role decisions made within the planning system play can compromise support for climate action.*

[45] Hansen Partnership, 2021, *Climate Change & Planning In Victoria: Ensuring Victoria's planning system effectively tackles climate change*.

> *How we live our lives is strongly influenced by the places we inhabit and these are the remit of planning. Ensuring that these places are focused on the twin goals of adaptation and mitigation has the potential to make a significant contribution to global objectives in responding to climate change.*

Progress on Victoria's *Environmentally sustainable development of buildings and subdivisions, A roadmap for Victoria's planning system* (the ESD Roadmap)[46] has been slow and piecemeal. Stage one of the ESD Roadmap, now complete, was to update the Planning Policy Framework. Stage two of the ESD Roadmap, underway, is to update particular provisions relating to classes of residential development, and add new standards for commercial and industrial developments: clauses 53, 54, 55, 56 and 58. The particular provisions still to be updated are those regulating residential development over four storeys, and non-residential development.

Since the release of the Roadmap, councils have been increasingly concerned about the lack of ambition in proposed policies and controls. The May 2021 State Council sought to translate the work of local councils to a state-wide ESD policy that is suitably ambitious to respond to the challenges of climate change and the welfare of future populations, including by providing comprehensive coverage in the particular provisions and allowing for local variation through schedules where higher standards are warranted. With no progress in the intervening period, the October 2022, October 2023 and May 2023 State Councils renewed this call.

The state government has not agreed with this approach, though it has included some ESD standards in the recently announced updates to residential development particular provisions, including the *Townhouse and Low-Rise Code* at clause 55. While this has come with the benefit of state-wide application, it also extinguishes local policies, some of which have been in place and delivered higher standard ESD outcomes since 2015. Where those local policies included stronger standards than the new Code requires (which is true for 27 of 79 councils), it is not possible to ensure developments meet best practice environmental standards. The strategic basis of the 'Elevating ESD Targets' planning scheme amendment (a joint exercise of the same 27 councils) is now also in doubt, with the new Code removing the largest class of housing application type from the intended coverage of the 'elevated' ESD targets.

The Code also requires faster decision-making and a requirement to not have regard to the objectives of planning in Victoria. This includes objectives relating to sustainable use and development of land, the protection of natural resources and the maintenance of ecological processes, and balancing the present and future interests of Victorians.

The obvious problem is that where the ESD standards are not adequate to provide for strong energy, waste and water performance of new buildings, Victoria will struggle to meet its emissions reduction targets in the built environment. The cost to occupiers of the buildings will also be inflated: while the current housing affordability crisis is rightly concerned with the sale price and rents for homes, the ongoing occupancy costs associated with heating, cooling, airing, dehumidifying and repairing inadequately designed buildings can be considerable.

We are disappointed that the state government has not recognised the expertise within councils, CASBE and – for example – the Built Environment Sustainability Scorecard (BESS) Tool and the City of Melbourne's Green Factor Tool, to provide effective and efficient solutions to regulating the energy, waste, integrated water management, indoor environment quality and greening of the built environment.

[46] Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2020, *Environmentally sustainable development of buildings and subdivisions, A roadmap for Victoria's planning system*

We do not think that treating higher ESD standards as a 'special case', as the newly announced Great Design Fast Track does, is an adequate approach to measuring and improving the quality of new building stock in Victoria. While recognising exemplary design is a laudable objective, the standards of *all* new development needs to be adequate to adapt to a changing climate. Linking higher ESD standards to more secretive decision-making pathways and the removal of third party review is challenging, as it assumes that well-designed, higher density and high performing development should be separated from community consideration. This misunderstands the appetite of councils and Victorians to support strategies for the distribution of well-designed infill housing. Generating widespread support for such buildings is going to be essential if Victoria is to meet its strategies for the rapid distribution of infill housing.

Case study: Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE)

CASBE has considered the effect of the new *Townhouse and Low-Rise Code* on ESD outcomes with respect to three case study townhouses in inner Melbourne, by comparing new provisions (which extinguish local policy and rely on new Standards at Clause 55 as well as the National Construction Code) with previous provisions (which included local ESD policies harmonised across 27 local councils).

Significant differences include:

Performance under local ESD policy	**Performance under new Clause 55 and NCC**
Passive design	
Effective shading to north facing glazing	55.05-4 allows ineffective shading
Effective shading to east & west facing glazing	55.05-4 covers north only
Ventilation to all habitable rooms	55.03-10 requires single breeze path through one room per dwelling only to comply
Double glazing to bedrooms	7-star NatHERS and dwelling-wide maximum loads can be achieved with single glazing
North facing living areas	Clause 55 is silent, though the August 2024 draft controls included this
Integrated Water Management	
Rainwater collection and use for potable water reduction, stormwater flow reduction and stormwater quality improvement	Clause 55 provides for stormwater quality only; Rainwater tank no longer in building/plumbing regulations
Water efficient landscaping	Clause 55 is silent
Urban Ecology	
Vegetation cover beyond canopy trees	Clause 55 canopy tree – around 12% site cover and other vegetation lost
Transport	
Bicycle parking – 1 per dwelling	Clause 55 developments excluded from 52.34
Electric vehicle charging	Townhouses excluded in NCC 2022
Operational energy	
Energy efficient appliances or solar PV	NCC2022 allows for either, doesn't require both

The new objective of the planning framework enabled by the Act, found in Section 4 of the Act, commenced on 26 March 2025:

(da) to provide for explicit consideration of the policies and obligations of the State relating to climate change, including but not limited to greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and the need to increase resilience to climate change, when decisions are made about the use and development of land.

This objective will need to be considered in the next round of reviews of planning schemes by councils. This will be difficult to do now that ESD is largely regulated via the particular provisions and not local policies.

An ongoing mechanism for review of the state's particular provisions will be necessary.

Recommendation 9

That the Government fast-track completion of Stage Two of the ESD Roadmap in a way that gives full effect to the local government 'Elevating ESD Targets' planning scheme amendments, providing full coverage of strong ESD standards through the particular provisions to all new buildings.

9.3 Natural hazards

Climate change is causing an increase in the frequency and severity of heat waves, floods and erosion in Victoria, yet the mechanisms to keep planning controls current and relevant are more cumbersome than they have ever been.

It is disappointing that the opportunities to reform planning scheme amendments (discussed in section 13.2) and restructure the VPP (discussed in section 12.3 and 12.4) have not adequately identified this problem. On the contrary, if the planning system is to see more and more Code-based development approval pathways that require the responsible authority to disregard evidence held by government about the risk to life and the environment identified in the latest flood, bushfire and coastal erosion modelling, the planning system will surely fail to bring about climate resilient regions, towns and cities.

The planning system has the capacity to identify and resolve conflicting policy imperatives. But this is only possible where planning controls are properly expressed and able to be updated quicky, efficiently and fairly.

Many of the planning responses to environmental risk and natural hazard are best tackled at the regional level. The state government understood this when it introduced the Wildfire Management Overlay in 2004 (now the Bushfire Management Overlay), and reformed the provisions of the Overlay and expanded its application to land following major fires. It understood that BMO controls should be consistent across municipal boundaries, and that one unified process (not one process per municipal planning scheme) is necessary to translate the latest evidence about bushfire risk into planning controls. The same logic applies to floods and erosion, but the state government has left councils to update land management overlays on a council-by-council basis.

This is not efficient. Consider the case of new flood modelling that applies to an entire catchment that expands across multiple local government areas (though one can just as easily substitute 'sea-level rise' for 'flood' and 'coastal region' for 'catchment'):

1. The assumptions underpinning the flood modelling would be equally relevant to all planning schemes;

2. If the amendment process challenges assumptions underpinning the modelling and those challenges are upheld by an expert panel, the consequences would also be relevant to all planning schemes;
3. It follows that there should be one statutory process of exhibition, panel and approval, not multiple;
4. Affected parties should not be required to follow multiple processes when one will do;
5. The costs involved in facilitating multiple amendments rather than one are significant;
6. The modelling is generally commissioned and held by state agencies, not councils.

The Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee Inquiry into the 2022 flood event in Victoria recognised this inefficiency in its final report,[47] and recommended an obvious solution (our emphasis):

> *Recommendation 17: That the Victorian Government fast-track the implementation of flood studies into planning schemes. This should be done cooperatively with local councils and relevant stakeholders,* ***group together flood studies into regional amendments, and use the Minister for Planning's powers as required,*** *within two years of completion.*

The Victorian Government's response,[48] one of "support in principle", was accompanied by commentary that suggests that the government will stop short of appointing single planning authorities to progress updates to flood related land management overlays through regional amendments:

> *DTP will work with floodplain management authorities and councils to explore options to further improve efficiency to achieve updates to planning scheme flood controls within two years from completion of flood studies. This may involve legislative and governance changes, along with expanding the scope of current initiatives and consideration of interim flood controls.*

The commentary goes on to acknowledge the Regional Flood-related Amendments Program to support regional councils to accelerate planning scheme updates, and acknowledges a new Flood-related Amendment Standing Advisory Committee which can be accessed by both metropolitan and regional councils, but that "These initiatives are available to councils that request to use them."

With respect, this commentary misunderstands the scale of the problem, and it confuses the meaning of 'regional.' (The meaning of 'regional' in recommendation 17 of the Inquiry Report is akin to 'multi-council', whereas the meaning of 'regional' in the government response is akin to 'non-metropolitan'.) It will do nothing to accelerate the implementation of regionally consistent Land Subject To Inundation overlays and other flood-related land management overlays.

Such matters cannot be left to building law to address. This is especially true where planning controls apply height limits but building overlays require raised ground floor levels. Much of the new population envisaged in Plan for Victoria will require settlement in Activity Centres and precincts subject to flooding. In parts of inner Melbourne, the difference in ground floor levels supported by planning and building overlays can be over 2 metres. The consequences for orderly planning, administrative ease for applicants and design outcomes where buildings integrate with the public realm, are significant. The cleanest way to address this is through fast and fair planning scheme amendments with state-appointed planning authorities.

[47] Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee, July 2024, *The 2022 flood event in Victoria: Inquiry final report*
[48] Victorian Government, January 2025, *Victorian Government Response to the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Committee Inquiry into the 2022 flood event in Victoria*

The mechanisms to efficiently process regional planning scheme amendments with a single planning authority already exist in the Act (see section 13.2 for discussion about this), they just need to be applied.

The same logic applies to coastal erosion, with the non-implementation of the Port Phillip Bay Coastal Hazard Assessment data into planning schemes – to use one example – now causing significant land use and development conflicts. The efficient way to implement the data is through a single strategic planning exercise that applies a consistent approach to all affected municipalities.

A comprehensive review of the Act and planning system should also consider the role of planning in responding to environmental emergencies in the recovery phase. Given the frequency and duration of these events, this will only become more important.

Recommendation 10

That the Government apply a new method for introducing and updating flood- and erosion-related land management overlays in planning schemes. The method should provide for:
1. One amendment, exhibition, panel and adoption per strategic exercise (e.g. per catchment or per coastal region);
2. The relevant Minister or delegate being the planning authority;
3. The amendment being considered by a specialist standing panel; and
4. Affected councils, being the primary administrators of municipal planning schemes, being guaranteed significant opportunities to make submissions.

10 Infrastructure

Three of the five pillars in *Plan for Victoria* require a transformational change to infrastructure planning, funding and provision if they are to succeed:

- Housing for all Victorians;
- Accessible jobs and services; and
- Great places, suburbs and towns.

The MAV has long advocated the need to reform the infrastructure contributions system in a way that delivers essential infrastructure and services to new and growing communities. The prospect of simpler, fairer, more transparent, more predictable and easier to administer infrastructure contributions schemes is appealing. It is important that this be done well, to avoid unintended consequences including, most obviously, the creation of insurmountable infrastructure funding gaps.

The Victorian Government is currently undertaking a review of the infrastructure contributions system, including:

- Part 3B of the Act (Development Contributions)
- Part 3AB of the Act (Infrastructure Contributions)
- Part 9B of the Act (Growth Areas Infrastructure Contributions)
- Division 5A of Part 4 of the Act (Metropolitan Planning Levy); and
- The *Subdivision Act 1988* insofar as it enables Open Space Contributions at the point of subdivision, with triggers cross-referenced in the VPP at clause 52.01.

We understand that options to consolidate the infrastructure charges into a simpler, single charge are being explored.

This review follows the Victorian Auditor General's report *Managing Development Contributions* (March 2020) and the report of the Infrastructure Contributions Advisory Committee, which has not been publicly released.

We believe that a comprehensive review that also considers the windfall gains tax is warranted. A review should not be rushed, and will need to be consultative, to avoid unintended consequences. If the aim is to consolidate charges into a single Part in the new Act, a reference group subsidiary committee of the type described in section 6.3 of this report would be appropriate.

The matters that a new consolidated charge will need to consider are many. Any new infrastructure contributions scheme should:

- Measure, publish and consider the methodology so that the total expected infrastructure cost, and the total expected contributions, can be accurately predicted state-wide and by municipality and precinct;
- Identify funding sources for the gap between the local contribution and the local cost of infrastructure, noting that the gap cannot be taken up by rates alone;
- Enable the delivery of infrastructure before or with, not after, rapid population growth;
- Be easy to interpret to allow for confident development financing strategies (which in turn will limit costs passed on to apartment purchasers);
- Be no more complicated than it needs to be, with minimal regulatory burden for developer and administrator;
- Despite this, carve out land, or make commensurate accommodation, where contributions schemes that work well are already in place (and which would be extremely complicated to transfer);

- Avoiding councils being worse off under the new scheme compared to the old schemes;
- Be equitable within and across precincts and municipalities;
- Create a nexus between location of contribution and proximity of infrastructure;
- Be transparently reported to hold contributors, councils and the state government to account; and
- Consider emerging commercial housing products that do not subdivide land and therefore avoid the Open Space Contribution altogether (such as Build-To-Rent).

We note that *Plan for Victoria* does not seek to fully implement the Government's *Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne 2021*, which proposes the development of a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework for open space contributions and expenditure. With 70 per cent of new homes proposed for Victoria to be built in established urban areas, open space strategies are important. While some Activity Centre and SRL precinct planning has proposed new parks within walking distance of new populations, the lack of connection between the density of the populations and the sizes of the new parks gives rise to more inconsistency in open space planning across the metropolitan area.

We also note that, in a constrained financial environment and with the cost of land relatively much higher than when the open space contribution parameters were set down in the *Subdivision Act 1988*, council open space contributions are necessarily increasingly spent on open space upgrades rather than acquisitions. A consolidated view of state and local government open space provision responsibilities and capacities is necessary.

Recommendation 11

That the new Act consolidate Development, Infrastructure and Open Space contributions in such a way that:
1. Ensures all state and local infrastructure requirements can be met on a fair and equitable basis;
2. Funding gaps are quantified and funding shortfalls provided for;
3. Existing contributions schemes that work well are grandfathered;
4. Both the state and local portions of infrastructure contributions being expended in the precinct or region in which they were collected;
5. No council is worse off under a new scheme; and
6. Provides transparent and regular reporting on infrastructure revenue and expenditure at the state, municipal and precinct level.

11 Planning for rural Victoria

MAV and SGS discussion papers on regional, rural and metropolitan planning

In December 2023 SGS completed and published two discussion papers commissioned by the MAV, with the purpose of influencing the development and content of a new *Plan for Victoria.*



Shaping regional and rural Victoria: A discussion paper



Shaping metropolitan Melbourne: A discussion paper

The thesis of the papers is that a single Plan for Victoria is not sufficient, because it cannot possibly recognise or distinguish Victoria's distinct communities of interest and their unique spatial characteristics and needs. This is as true for metropolitan Melbourne, an integrated labour market requiring inter-connected thinking about housing, employment centres and clusters, transport and the environment, as it is for each of the regions, whether defined on the boundaries of the former Regional Growth Plans or otherwise.

Victoria is much more than the zones that permit residential use. Of all land in Victoria, 62% is rural zones and 32% is Crown land. Less than 10% of the land will take 100% of the housing growth forecast in the *Plan for Victoria,* while the plan only makes high-level planning policy statements and actions about the remaining 90% of land. Housing supply is of paramount importance to state and local government and a deep concern to our communities and individuals shut out of home ownership or experiencing severe housing stress – but the planning system is about more than housing supply alone.

It became clear with the release of the *Plan for Victoria,* and during information sessions on the implementation of the housing capacity targets, that the Regional Growth Plans (from 2014) will likely be deleted from all planning schemes. There is no proposal to replace them with a refreshed vision for the sustainable development and growth of rural and regional Victoria as separate to, though interconnected with, the metropolitan region.

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) is yet to be updated to reflect *Plan for Victoria*. Currently, local planning schemes include the same statewide provisions in the PPF: a settlement strategy to ensure that the local settlements are planned in accordance with their relevant Regional Growth Plan. The regional policy then provides the relevant regional settlement strategies. While these are out of date and require a review, they show that the PPF comfortably caters for three tiers of aspirational policy expression. This structure was created in 2018, following an extraordinarily administratively burdensome translation exercise from the old State PPF and Local PPF into the consolidated PPF.

The MAV and rural and regional councils see the forthcoming proposed deletion of the Regional Growth Plans as a missed opportunity, and at worst ignoring the aspirations for rural and regional Victorians. It may become another example of planning system designers not understanding the nuances of rural and regional planning, and the interconnectedness of agriculture, landscape, environment, settlement, and industry in the regions.

Regional policy done well requires the continual evaluation of planning and expression of values and visions for the future: these are important exercises to generate shared purpose and give effect to community participation and influence. It is also a lifeline to small rural councils with one, two or three planners on staff. In rural councils, where there is every type of zone, one must become an expert on different types of land use conflict for different types of industry: constantly refreshing the suite of zones and parent controls using metropolitan Melbourne as the standard simply will not facilitate efficient planning decisions.

We fear that, without separate plans for rural and regional Victoria and a plan for metropolitan Melbourne, the government will fail to understand the integrated economies and labour markets that makes Melbourne a city and that supports regional employment. We also fear that regional growth 'anywhere', rather than in accordance with regional plans that integrate housing distribution with job creation, transport and infrastructure, and consider the ever-increasing competition for rural land and the sustainability of agricultural uses, will fail to facilitate sustainable and affordable growth.

Most reviews of the planning system, including the four recent reviews discussed in detail at section 4.5, have failed to consider the rural suite of zones, agricultural land uses, the distinctive landscapes, natural resources, and environmental hazards, of the regions. Any program of planning system reform must consider the reality of planning at the regional scale. We make practical suggestions for regional planning scheme amendments in sections 9.3 and 13.2.

Recommendation 12

That the government commit to reviving Regional Growth Plans for each region in the state (including metropolitan Melbourne), co-designing those plans with councils with generous public engagement, and expressing the policies in the Planning Policy Framework at the regional scale.

12 Restructuring the Victoria Planning Provisions

On 24-27 February 2025, DTP announced at a series of workshops with local government planners that the reform program would focus on three themes:

1. The structure and content of the VPP and planning schemes;
2. The planning scheme amendment process; and
3. The planning permit process.

While the MAV does not agree with this 'initial review' scope of reform (see section 5.9) and would like to see a different approach adopted (see section 6) we respond to the reform options proposed under each of the three themes in sections 12, 13 and 14 of this submission. These sections and the recommendations made under them should be read together.

12.1 What is being proposed

The four reform options put forward by DTP under the theme about **the structure and content of the VPP and planning schemes** are:

(1) Requiring scheme amendments to be consistent with state and regional plans. (*Reform option:* Require the Minister to be satisfied, when authorising and approving planning scheme amendments, that the proposed amendment is consistent with prescribed state and regional plans.)

(2) Re-establishing state-wide consistent zones and overlays with limited scope to make variations. (*Reform option:* Review the VPP and establish a new set of zones and overlays with variation limited to a narrow range of prescribed matters, and provide for new zones to be applied to established areas.)

(3) Explicitly linking VPP policies to controls specified in zones and overlays. (*Reform option:* Support integrated reforms to Victoria's planning laws (e.g. codification) by permitting only those policies that are linked to controls or particular provisions to be relevant to permit decision-making.)

(4) Inserting clear transitional arrangements for changes to the VPP. (*Reform option:* Require a minimum notice period for changes to the VPP, including specifying whether the changes are applicable to existing permit applications (or VCAT reviews) or only new applications/reviews.)

12.2 Requiring scheme amendments to be consistent with state and regional plans

DTP reform option	Local government response
Require the Minister to be satisfied, when authorising and approving planning scheme amendments, that the proposed amendment is consistent with prescribed state and regional plans.	**Support**, subject to being provided with an opportunity to critique the draft provision.

We question why the reform is necessary. While the Act does not place limits on the Minister's consideration of the merits of an amendment, it does allow the Minister to ask for more information from the planning authority, and over time it has become necessary to

issue guidance about how planning scheme amendments will be authorised and assessed. This guidance is found in Ministerial directions 9 and 11 and, especially, Planning Practice Note 46 – Strategic assessment guidelines. PPN46 requires any amendment to demonstrate how it supports or gives effect to the Planning Policy Framework, which includes State and Regional policy and plans. The guidance is sound, provided it is applied consistently.

We raise no objection to enshrining the requirements in the principal Act, but caution against doing so in such a way that leads to inflexibility in authorising imperfect amendments that can be improved through the amendment process, or an over-reliance on Ministerial exemptions from the standard. Any new provision in the Act will need to be the right balance of precision and flexibility. It will need to be considered alongside the reforms to the planning scheme process (see section 13).

The reform option appears to contradict the government's indication that there will be no new regional or metropolitan plans developed to sit underneath *Plan for Victoria*. An example of the potential problem that may arise is a council that wishes to develop a plan for a town that is not mentioned in the Plan for Victoria, and there is no robust regional plan in place to guide growth: will a planning scheme amendment that facilitates growth for that town be authorised? We have more to say about this in Section 11 of this submission.

12.3 Re-establishing state-wide consistent zones and overlays with limited scope to make variations

DTP reform option	Local government response
Review the VPP and establish a new set of zones and overlays with variation limited to a narrow range of prescribed matters, and provide for new zones to be applied to established areas	**Oppose**. The reform option will not reduce complexity, but it will prevent planning responses to local and regional environmental considerations while removing the benefits of public participation and confidence. Much more information is needed about the purported objectives and benefits of this reform option.

It is unclear if DTP considers the recent introduction of new zones and overlays, and the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code, to be the commencement of the implementation of this reform option, or if the reform option only proposes a future comprehensive restructure.

Reforms already implemented: new zones and overlays (25-28 February 2025)

The government has introduced two new zones and one new overlay to the VPP since 25 February 2025, to be applied to established areas:

- The Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) and the Built Form Overlay (BFO) were introduced to facilitate the new Activity Centres on 25 February 2025; and
- The Precinct Zone (PRZ) was introduced to facilitate the Suburban Rail Loop precincts and other priority precincts on 28 February 2025.

These new controls abandon naming conventions and blur the lines between the existing Activity Centre Zone, Design and Development Overlay, Transport Zone and various residential zones.

The PRZ and the BFO parent provisions are notable for their ability to be varied by schedules, with the main building envelope parameters all pushed to those schedules. The PRZ requires local schedules to set out a "use and development framework plan" and the BFO requires local schedules to set out a "development framework".

This is, of course, the opposite of 'limiting variation to a narrow range of prescribed matters'. It provides extensive local flexibility and the proliferation of local schedules.

It is also the result of different parts of the Victorian Government producing different suites of new controls, without a coordinated attempt to change the controls that already exist or to design one new control that would work for both Activity Centres and priority precincts.

Reforms already implemented: the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code (6 March 2025)

Clause 55 was replaced on 6 March 2025 with new deemed-to-comply provisions for two or more dwellings on a lot.

While this alone has not extinguished local schedules to residential zones, it has had a similar effect wherever proposed development meets the criteria for the code. The policy implications have included the extinguishment of local environmentally sustainable design and tree canopy policies. Where the code's requirements for canopy coverage is far less than the local policy would otherwise require, the effect of the code is to materially weaken the environmental outcomes of new development. This is discussed further in the next sub-section.

Potential future application

If the reform option does not simply refer to the reforms already implemented, and is intended to apply to the rest of the VPP, i.e. a complete overhaul of zones, we urge caution.

We say this not only because of unfulfilled purposes of past reforms (most notably, the residential zone reviews of 2013-17 which promised but failed to deliver clarity) but also because of the consequences for work completed and underway by councils to ensure that local variations can meet statewide objectives (including housing supply) while responding to local environmental constraints.

Councils' strategic planning efforts involve a level of local and regional place-based knowledge that cannot possibly be catered for in one-size-fits-all statewide controls. Victoria contains significantly diverse landscapes and communities, and that diversity must be catered for by VPP that allow reasonable local and regional responses. It also contains areas of intensive development and brownfield and greyfield redevelopment, where the state government itself has relied on local schedules and special purpose zones to ensure orderly planning – most significantly in activity centres (over decades; not only the recent program) and in and around the central city.

Case study: Mornington Peninsula Shire

Planning Scheme Amendment C219morn changes existing residential zones and planning controls to enable housing growth in appropriate locations. It seeks local variations to residential zones to promote the preferred distribution of building footprints without reducing yield.

The material pay-off for increased setbacks is more walls on side boundaries. This approach enables deep soil planting for significant vegetation including canopy trees and creates more functional open spaces around buildings. These elements improve cooling, biodiversity and visual appeal.

These superior environmental outcomes that do not limit housing supply will not be possible if local variations in schedules to zones are disallowed, or 'switched off' through codified approval pathways.

If taken to its logical conclusion, this reform option could result in one of two outcomes. If the state government retains its commitment to disallow local schedules to zones while refusing to consider poor planning outcomes that emerge, poorly designed development that is not responsive to local environmental conditions will proliferate. If, on the other hand, the state government retains its commitment to disallow local schedules to zones while seeking new planning controls to respond to local and regional environmental constraints, the outcome will be the proliferation of new zones. Either option leads to structural dysfunction of the VPP and poor planning outcomes.

If this reform proposal is a response to planning system complexity, we query whether the causes of that complexity are properly identified. The lack of effective review of the VPP over time, as well as the recent tendency to use the particular provisions to drive far-reaching changes to planning outcomes in ways that challenge the design of the VPP, are the main contributors to rapid expansion in the length of planning scheme ordinance (see section 4.2).

Case study: Mansfield Shire Council



In 2022, Mansfield Shire Council adopted a new Mansfield Planning Strategy, setting out land use and development principles for the municipality until 2024, at a cost of $220,000. The strategy found that growth rates in Mansfield have been higher than the Victoria in Future forecasts, requiring the council to identify additional land for residential development. The Strategy has been translated into amendment C60mans, which will shortly make its way to the Minister requesting approval for public exhibition.

The amendment makes extensive use of the schedules to the zones and overlays in the VPP. This is the result of two years of work and extensive community consultation, with the full and ongoing support of the Department of Transport and Planning.

If the reform option to limit local variation of zones and controls is implemented, the basis for the amendment will be lost, the expense incurred will have been wasted and the community's influence on strategic planning will have been removed.

The reform option also has the potential to undermine the democratic legitimacy of the planning system (see section 4.4). Local schedules to vary controls, along with local planning policies to guide how permit applications should be assessed, are usually the product of time-consuming and costly strategic planning projects undertaken by councils. This work must carefully navigate the local environmental circumstances with the needs and desires of locally engaged communities. These studies and community consultation programs are among the most important opportunities to allow communities to shape planning strategies and to build community understanding and support for the planning framework. The reform option appears to ignore these benefits entirely.

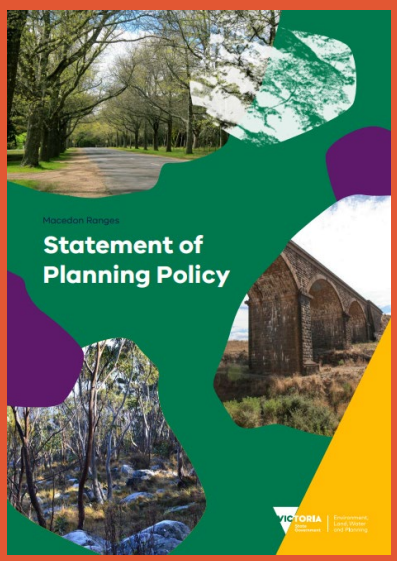
When read alongside the reform options relating to reforming planning permit processes (see section 13), the reform option to limit local variation is particularly worrying because of its consequences for the social licence of the planning system.

No serious attempt has been made by DTP to identify the policy objective of this reform or its purported benefits. If those benefits could be estimated, a serious discussion about the advantages, disadvantages and pay-offs could be conducted. In lieu of that, we are deeply concerned about the proposal and suspect that – like so many VPP reviews since 2001 – it has not correctly identified the causes of 'complexity' and will not provide certainty or improved planning outcomes.

There is no easy, quick and mechanical solution that can be simply applied to all parts of the state. Zone and overlay simplification is no substitute for integrated decision-making and place-responsive planning.

Case study: Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Part 3AAB, Distinctive areas and landscapes, was inserted into the Act in its current form in 2018. It provides for a declaration that an area is a 'distinctive area and landscape', which in turn requires a Statement of Planning Policy by the Minister. The *Macedon Ranges Statement of Planning Policy 2019* (MSRPP) applies to the entire shire and, under the Act, its objectives are binding on responsible public entities such as the Council.



One objective is: *"To plan and manage growth of settlements in the declared area consistent with protection of the area's significant landscapes, protection of catchments, biodiversity, ecological and environmental values, and consistent with the unique character, role and function of each settlement."*

It is highly unlikely that this objective will be met if, in future, the ability to vary zones and controls by local schedule is removed. Already, in a current strategic planning project, the Council has found that adopting state standard provisions to the development of parts of Riddells Creek would fail to uphold the MSRPP objectives.

What could be done instead?

A shared agreement on strategies for regulatory expression would better understand the causes of complexity in the system and balance the objective of reducing complexity with all other objectives necessary for an orderly and fair planning system (see section 6).

Opportunities to consolidate some zones, and fully consider the consequences of doing so, could then be considered.

12.4 Explicitly linking VPP policies to controls specified in zones and overlays

DTP reform option	Local government response
Support integrated reforms to Victoria's planning laws (e.g. codification) by permitting only those policies that are linked to controls or particular provisions to be relevant to permit decision-making.	**Oppose**. We request a detailed paper setting out the purpose, objectives and strategy of the reform option, as well as proposed consultation mechanisms and meaningful opportunities to test the new provisions.

It is very unclear whether the reform option will apply to the entire VPP, or is only a reference to those reforms already made since 6 March 2025.

Reforms already implemented: the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code (6 March 2025)

Clause 55 was replaced on 6 March 2025 with new deemed-to-comply provisions for two or more dwellings on a lot. The policy implications have included switching off local environmentally sustainable design and tree canopy policies. Where the code's requirements for canopy coverage is far less than the local policy would otherwise require, the effect of the code is to materially weaken the environmental outcomes of new development. This has been discussed in media recently.[49]

The code is notable for its requirement on decision makers to not have regard for the objectives of planning in Victoria as well as other matters that would ordinarily be required to be taken into consideration (such as any "significant effects which the responsible authority considers the use or development may have on the environment, or which the responsible authority considers the environment may have on the use or development"). But it is the extinguishment of state and local policies discussing environmental risks that we are most worried about.

Where government holds evidence of environmental risks (such as site contamination, erosion, flooding, sea level rise, proximity to high pressure pipelines and so on), and the need to manage these risks is referred to in the Planning Policy Framework or is in the process of being introduced through planning controls, none of the evidence may be taken into account when assessing the application. The code, in expressly requiring council planners to disregard known risks to human health and safety, creates new ethical conflict for professional planners.

Either the code should be amended to allow for the consideration of known environmental risks (by enlivening the Planning Policy Framework and all of Section 60 of the Act), or the Victorian Government must provide the resources necessary to fast-track the introduction of overlays that regulate known environmental risks.

[49] *Melbourne tree canopy goal 'impossible' without ripping out roads*, The Age, 13 March 2025

The treatment of all residentially zoned parts of the state as being equally suitable for application of the code irrespective of the slope of the land, the exposure to natural hazard and environmental risk, the health and capacity of the soil, the local and regional ecological vegetation class and the existence or absence of enabling infrastructure, is likely to lead to unintended outcomes. We are not aware of any modelling conducted by DTP to anticipate them.

We are also concerned about the impact of the code on areas declared by the Governor in Council to be 'distinctive areas and landscapes' under Part 3AAB of the Act. It appears that some development may be deemed to comply under Clause 55 whether or not it is consistent with the Minister's directions in the Statement of Planning Policy for the distinctive area and landscape.

Potential future application

If the reform option is interpreted at face value and assumed to apply, in future, to all codified planning pathways, the consequences need to be anticipated.

Most state and local policies in the Planning Policy Framework are intended to apply universally, and be considered in the assessment of applications when relevant. It is the application and assessment process that considers whether a policy is relevant. A future system where some codes include all relevant policy, and others describe which policies are relevant and which are not, is likely to lead to new structural complexity. Such a structure is unlikely to improve the quality and maintenance of the Planning Policy Framework (both state and local elements).

If policies are liable to being switched off at any time (without notice, if recent practice continues), we ask: How will a planning authority confidently conduct a strategic planning exercise to introduce or update a policy? And if planning authorities cannot conduct strategic planning exercises with confidence, what impetus is there to keep policies current and relevant?

Policy does not only serve to support applicants and decision-makers in satisfying permit assessment criteria. Even where the responsible authority is required to ignore local policy, that policy may still serve the purpose of influencing the applicant when designing the development proposal. Cross-references to important policy about flooding, erosion, contamination and other local conditions may – even if not a decision consideration – encourage a higher quality proposal. Pushing these considerations to the building permit stage, where major redesigns may be required necessitating amendments to the planning permit, is hardly an efficient process. None of these benefits of planning policy are considered in the reform option.

The reform option's implications on Clause 74.01 (Application of zones, overlays and provisions) and schedules in each planning scheme is unclear. Any implementation would also need to consider mechanisms to avoid policies being overlooked where cross-references to that policy may not have been updated.

What could be done instead?

A shared agreement on strategies for regulatory expression would better understand the causes of complexity in the system and balance the objective of providing clarity with all other objectives necessary for an orderly and fair planning system (see section 6).

12.5 Inserting clear transitional arrangements for changes to the VPP

DTP reform option	Local government response
Require a minimum notice period for changes to the VPP, including specifying whether the changes are applicable to existing permit applications (or VCAT reviews) or only new applications/reviews.	**Support in principle**. We request a detailed paper setting out the purpose, objectives and strategy of the reform option, as well as proposed consultation mechanisms and meaningful opportunities to test the new provisions.

We support this option and that it be a requirement in the Act. The minimum notice period should be 60 days to allow for feedback from system administrators and time to correct errors, with a reduction only possible if the Minister publishes reasons for the urgency.

Councils have reported to the MAV that each time the VPP are changed without consultation or forewarning, they must:

- Re-assess all affected applications;
- Instantly notify applicants, submitters and referral authorities;
- Amend internal systems to facilitate online application registers; and
- Adjust fees, including returning application fees.

The time taken to do this across 79 councils is difficult to quantify. We do know, however, that the delays to other applications caused by administrative disruptions can be significant.

We note that none of the recent changes to the VPP have observed a notice period of any length, including those made after the DTP proposed this reform option on 24 February.

A notice provision is necessary because of a failure of other mechanisms to provide the notice necessary to inform local government – the primary administrators of the planning system – of major planning system restructures. As discussed in section 4.3, the decision by the Victorian Government to cease observing the Victorian State-Local Government Agreement[50] and its requirement on departments to consult with local government before any new or altered regulation with cost and resource implications is introduced has had detrimental consequences for both state and local governments.

12.6 Summary

There is not enough detail provided to know if the reform options, taken together, will provide a benefit to the planning system without compromising administrative efficiency, transparency and accountability, requisite discretion and variation to respond to local environmental considerations, community engagement and public support.

Recommendation 13

That the reform options in the 'structure and content of the VPP and planning schemes' not proceed until a detailed paper setting out the purpose, objectives and strategy of the reform program, as well as proposed consultation mechanisms and meaningful opportunities to test the new provisions, are provided. In the interim, ensure that proposed changes to the VPP are published at least 60 days prior to introduction to allow for meaningful consultation with system administrators.

[50] Victorian State-Local Government agreement

13 Reforming planning scheme amendment processes

13.1 What is being proposed

The five reform options put forward by DTP under the theme about **the planning scheme amendment process** are:

(1) Planning scheme amendments – Proportionality of the process. (*Reform option:* Implement three pathways for planning scheme amendments that are proportionate to complexity, risk and the potential impact of the amendment. This will deliver time and cost savings, and provide greater certainty and predictability to development proponents and the community regarding the process to be followed.)

Stream 1 (3-4 months)	Stream 2 (6-12 months)	Stream 3 (9-18 months)
Authorisation Targeted consultation Submission to Minister Minister decision Gazettal Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee (SARC) consideration and tabling in Parliament	Authorisation Public exhibition Published response to issues raised in submissions (no Panel hearing) Adoption and Submission to Minister Minister decision Gazettal SARC consideration and tabling in Parliament	Authorisation Public exhibition Panel review Published report and recommendations to Minister Minister decision Gazettal SARC consideration and tabling in Parliament

(2) Recalibrating the role and conduct of planning panels. (*Reform option*: Make clear that the role and function of a panel is to provide an impartial review of the amendment, with the panel having discretion over who it chooses to hear from during public hearings.)

(3) Making notice requirements clear. (*Reform option:* Require planning authorities to design a public engagement plan for transparent, accessible engagement, and allow the Minister to require adherence to this plan as a condition of authorisation.)

(4) Creating more explicit processes for the initiation of amendments. *(Reform option:* Build on CPLA Bill reforms to develop formalised procedures, statutory timeframes, and cost recovery provisions for proponent-led amendments.)

(5) Providing additional structure and statutory timeframes for authorisation of amendments. *(Reform option:* Prescribe criteria for Ministerial decision-making at authorisation (including consistency with state plans) as well as timeframes for further information requests and final decision.)

13.2 Planning scheme amendments – Proportionality of the process

DTP reform option	Local government response
Implement three pathways for planning scheme amendments that are proportionate to complexity, risk and the potential impact of the amendment. This will deliver time and cost savings, and provide greater certainty and predictability to development proponents and the community regarding the process to be followed.	**Support in principle**, subject to: 1. Further detail and opportunities to influence the criteria for 'complexity, risk and impact' that would determine which stream is enlivened; 2. The ability for municipal planning authorities to refuse to pursue a Stream 1 amendment if it considers that the amendment would not facilitate the objectives of planning in Victoria or the planning policy framework, or the cost to the council of facilitating the amendment cannot be justified. 3. Stream 1 amendments' 'targeted consultation' not removing the requirement to publish the amendment online. 4. Stream 2 amendments including an optional post-exhibition referral to stream 3 if complicated matters are raised and the planning authority considers they are best heard by a panel. 5. Stream 3 amendments requiring the Minister's delegate to provide the panel with an assessment of the amendment in terms of compatibility with the VPP and Section 4 of the Act. 6. Stream 3 amendments including a stage where the amendment is adopted by the planning authority. 7. All planning scheme amendments requiring prompt decisions by the Minister under S35. 8. All planning scheme amendments being disallowable instruments. 9. Clearer provisions being made for regional planning scheme amendments. 10. Modernising advertising requirements.

Local government welcomes opportunities to simplify, speed-up and otherwise improve the planning scheme amendments (PSA) process. This must of course apply to planning authorities (regardless of which person or body within state and local government the planning authority is), the Minister in their authorisation/approval capacities, and planning panels.

The option for 'three streams' may provide a sound framework for reform, but we request further details and a more developed understanding of the problem that is being addressed.

The reform option may be confounded by the *Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Act 2025*, the planning law elements of which will commence on 25 November 2025 (or an earlier day to be proclaimed). This Act introduces a 'low-impact amendments' stream. It is unclear if stream 1 is a proxy for 'low-impact amendments'. This Act will also provide an option for panels to consider amendments and submissions 'on the papers'. It is unclear if the stream 3 amendments is intended to include the sorts of amendments that could be considered 'on the papers'.

Clarifying the problem

During the DTP workshops on 24-27 February 2025, a statistic often cited was that two-thirds of PSAs are pursued without the notice, submission and scrutiny provisions of Section 19 of the Act. That is, they are mostly approved under Section 20(4). The implication seemed to be that councils were responsible for this proliferation of exemptions from the standard, but we are quite sure that that is not the case: 20(4) exemptions apply mostly to amendments that the Minister is responsible for preparing. Most of these would be changes to the VPP (which Section 4B requires be treated as PSAs) and editorial corrections amendments.

We request the publication of data setting out, in the case of every PSA since 1999:

- The planning authority;
- The amendment type (C, VC, etc);
- The notice pathway (S19, or S20(4), etc);
- An appropriate proxy measure for the size or complexity of the amendment;
- The length of time from request for authorisation to decision on authorisation;
- The length of time from decision on authorisation to commencement of exhibition;
- The length of time from end of exhibition to commencement of planning panel hearings (if relevant);
- The length of time from receipt of planning panel report to amendment adoption or abandonment (if relevant); and
- The length of time from adoption to Ministerial approval (if relevant).

The 'three streams' reform option

Local government welcomes the idea of streaming PSAs by significance. We request further detail and opportunities to influence the criteria for 'complexity, risk and impact' that would determine which stream would be enlivened in relation to classes of amendment. The distinction between stream 1 and stream 2 is particularly unclear.

The reform option should not create an entitlement or expectation that proponent-led PSAs will be taken up by councils. Where site- or precinct-specific amendments are needed and supported by policy, and where the council has the capacity to facilitate the amendment on a cost-recovery basis, the amendment should not reasonably be denied. However, not all site- or precinct-specific amendments will meet this standard, and we do not wish to see undue pressure on councils to prioritise their facilitation over more urgent strategic planning work.

While we accept that the lists of stages under the three streams are likely incomplete, we urge that:

- In relation to 'stream 1 amendments', 'targeted consultation' should not remove the requirement that the amendment be published online. The consistency in approach to all amendments – through online publication – will give legitimacy to all of the streams, and to restrictive consultation programs for stream 1. Such transparency also leads to higher quality proposals given the potential for general scrutiny.

- In relation to 'stream 2 amendments', an optional post-exhibition referral to stream 3 be provided for, in those instances where the planning authority considers that complicated matters arising from the exhibition are best heard by a panel.

- In relation to 'stream 3 amendments', the reinstatement of the planning scheme amendment adoption by the planning authority. Without this stage, the planning authority will still need to be prepare a full assessment of the panel recommendations and provide the Minister with advice; that assessment ought not be shielded from a

public decision-making process. The consequences for community dissatisfaction and disconnection from the strategic planning process would also be significant.

While planning authorities mostly err on the side of upholding planning panel recommendations, there are times where the planning authority should be able to disagree with recommendations in part or in full and advise the Minister as to the reasons for that disagreement. Sometimes, the reasons will be informed by local environmental considerations that the Minister should be briefed about before making a final decision. No clear reason has been given for why this stage should be removed, along with the accountability and transparency that it provides to the strategic planning process.

- In relation to 'stream 3 amendments', there be a requirement that a delegate of the Minister provide the planning panel with a technical assessment of the planning scheme amendment, to set out any concerns about the compatibility of the amendment with the VPP and the objectives of the planning framework (found at Section 4 of the Act). The purpose of the requirement is to establish any concerns by the state government at a time when they can be tested, and reduce the growing tendency of DTP to raise novel policy questions after the panel process has concluded and the planning authority has adopted the amendment. We are very concerned about the denial of procedural fairness to the planning authority and all submitters that is created by post-adoption scrutiny on matters that could have been tested during the panel process but were not.

- In relation to all streams, there be a requirement on the Minister to make decisions promptly. In recent years the major bottlenecks have been decisions under S8A(4) (being a Ministerial decision to authorise a council to prepare an amendment, or indicate that the application requires further review, or refuse authorisation) and under S35 (approval, with or without changes, and subject to any conditions, or refusing approval, of amendments that have been adopted by the planning authority). The 'authorisation' issue is dealt with in another DTP reform option and is discussed in sections 13.4 and 13.6. But the approval stage is not adequately addressed. Just as the Parliament has required faster decisions for parts of the amendment process that councils are responsible for, so too is it important that the Minister and delegates be accountable for the speed with which they make decisions.

Case study: Melbourne City Council

The most recent *Melbourne Planning Scheme Review* in 2023 found that:

- The average time it takes to pursue a planning scheme amendment from beginning to end has grown considerably since 2018;
- Most delays are caused by very slow Ministerial decisions to authorise and approve amendments, but also by long lead times to secure hearing dates with Planning Panels Victoria;
- The delays cause significant uncertainty for developers and workforce planning challenges for the council; and
- Changes in departmental practice may also be a contributing factor, with more thorough reviews of amendments at the authorisation stage resulting in significant conditions, and the re-prosecution of amendments after their adoption despite the planning authority implementing the panel's recommendations.

Planning scheme amendments as disallowable instruments

The reform option refers to a final amendment stage under each of the three streams being consideration of amendments by the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee (SARC), and tabling of the amendments in parliament. We are not sure of the purpose of giving such prominence to the SARC as the final stage.

A majority of members of the SARC are also members of the party of Government. It is no substitute for the reserve powers of the legislature to disallow amendments – especially amendments that facilitate changes to the VPP – that frustrate the purposes of the principal Act. In an ideal world that power will never need to be exercised, because approved amendments will be procedurally in order and consistent with statewide policy frameworks. But it is the presence of that reserve power that keeps a check on the orderliness and policy consistency of every amendment.

The power of either house of parliament to revoke an amendment (found in Section 38 of the Act) has been available since the commencement of the 1987 Act. Until 2021, the power applied to all planning scheme amendments; thereafter, amendments prepared by the Suburban Rail Loop Authority were exempt. This submission is not the place to make arguments about the merits of the Suburban Rail Loop. We simply observe that the introduction of a dual system of opportunities to disallow amendments has changed the relationship between the legislature and the executive, introduced complexity, and set a precedent that could lead to further exemptions.

We are generally opposed to further exemptions from the option to disallow planning scheme amendments – especially changes to the VPP – because we believe that, as a matter of principle, the legislature should have the ability to debate whether the VPP is giving effect to, or frustrating, the purposes of the principal Act. We believe that this reserve power generates cross-partisan support for the planning system, as it requires the legislature – and not only the executive – to consider what responsible custodianship of the planning system looks like. We also think that the presence of reserve powers gives democratic legitimacy to the planning system and, given the policy directions of some of the other reform options which remove community influence over strategic and statutory planning, questions of democratic legitimacy are not unimportant.

We therefore urge the retention of Section 38 in the new principal Act, ideally in a simpler form that applies to all planning scheme amendments, including and especially all VPP changes. The Government of the day should have confidence that the provision will be rarely if ever be used and that its political program will be carried.

Regional planning scheme amendments

If DTP is seriously exploring opportunities to redefine planning scheme amendment typologies in the principal Act, it should also look at the issue of scale and the practicality of different planning authorities performing different roles.

Sections 8, 8A, 8B, 9 and 9A enable the Minister, councils, councils in relation to adjoining councils, other Ministers and the Suburban Rail Loop Authority, respectively, to be planning authority: the statutory bodies authorised to prepare amendments to planning schemes.

The Section 9 provision to authorise Ministers other than the Planning Minister to be planning authorities in relation to one or more planning schemes is rarely exercised. In lieu of the state government ‘opting in’ to this Section in relation to policy matters that cover multiple local government areas – especially those concerning flooding and coastal erosion – expectations have fallen on individual councils to pursue amendments of regional importance. The current town-by-town, council-by-council approach is a highly inefficient

way to amend planning schemes at the flood catchment or coastal region level, where the catchment or region covers multiple councils. This gives rise to inconsistent controls from one municipality to the next.

The purpose of Section 9 is to deal with such policy matters efficiently. There is nothing in the principal Act stopping the Minister for Water, for example, from being the planning authority in relation to new flood overlays in a catchment that covers 2 or more local government areas.

We would like to see Section 9 and the way the principal Act allocates planning authority responsibilities improved, so that regional (multi-local government area) planning scheme amendment pathways are more frequently taken up with state government appointed planning authorities where logical to do so.

Amendments to Section 9 of the Act could include clarity that it applies to catchment-based and regional planning scheme amendments that cover more than one local government area. Other amendments should provide that, where multi-council amendments of this type are pursued, the affected municipal councils are guaranteed a special status as submitters to amendments and planning panels.

Modernising advertising requirements

Given the link with the reform option relating to 'making notice requirements clear', we provide discussion of this issue in section 13.4.

13.3 Recalibrating the role and conduct of planning panels

DTP reform option	Local government response
Make clear that the role and function of a panel is to provide an impartial review of the amendment, with the panel having discretion over who it chooses to hear from during public hearings.	**Support**, subject to being provided with an opportunity to critique the draft provision.

It is already the role and function of a panel to provide an impartial review of a planning scheme amendment, and so the purpose of the first part of the reform option is unclear.

Where done well, panels provide an invaluable role in improving an amendment and contemplating the consequences of complicated proposals. Too often, however, costs associated with panels are unreasonable, often exceeding the costs to prepare the strategic basis for the amendment in the first place. Reasonable steps to keep the timing and costs of panels proportionate with the complexity and impact of the amendment are welcome.

Any new provisions relating to limiting the rights of interested parties to address panels, or to question expert witnesses, will need to be carefully drafted to avoid the possibility of denying procedural fairness or inviting legal dispute. They will also need to consider the needs of all community members, not only those assisted by counsel.

13.4 Making notice requirements clear

DTP reform option	Local government response
Require planning authorities to design a public engagement plan for transparent, accessible engagement, and allow the Minister to require adherence to this plan as a condition of authorisation.	**Support**, subject to clarification about the interaction of this amendment with SS19-20 of the Act, and noting that this would apply to all planning authorities. Consideration should be given to the creation of engagement toolkits to assist planning authorities.

Where councils are the planning authority, public engagement plans are already established and followed. Embedding these in conditions of authorisation is unlikely to cause any problems, provided that this mechanism is not used to add unreasonable costs to be borne by the planning authority, and does not require unnecessary activities.

The problems with an absence of public consultation on planning scheme amendments is common, however, wherever the Minister is the planning authority, the authoriser and the approver. There was no public engagement prior to the introduction of the new Townhouse and Low-Rise Code via VC267, nor was there public engagement on the expansion of the Development Facilitation Program via VC242. There has been no public engagement on the Act rewrite itself. VPP changes are facilitated by planning scheme amendments: will these now require a public engagement plan?

The relationship between this reform option and Sections 19 and 20 of the Act will be important to consider. Some broad amendments (e.g. those with municipality-wide coverage) that make only moderate changes to policy can be extremely costly to advertise under Section 19. Section 19(1A) provides an ability to opt out of providing notice if the planning authority considers it impractical to notify all property owners individually, but there is much doubt about how and when this provision should apply.

It should be possible, if a planning authority provides a robust community engagement proposal, for the Minister to authorise the amendment and concurrently approve the use of S19(1A) to limit the extent of mail. Such an authorisation would put questions of procedural fairness beyond doubt. Mail is not unimportant, but it has decreased in importance relative to other communication methods.

Requirements to “publish a notice of any amendment it prepares in a newspaper generally circulating in the area to which the amendment applies” (S19(2)) should also be removed. Newspaper advertisement could be one mechanism to create awareness of the amendment as part of a public engagement plan, but often a newspaper advertisement will not be the most efficient and effective way of doing this. The newspaper advertisement requirement is an original provision from the 1987 Act.

Consideration should be given to the creation of engagement toolkits to assist planning authorities. This would be especially helpful for small councils where the cost of planning scheme amendment notice and consultation can be a significant proportion of the council’s operating expenditure.

13.5 Creating more explicit processes for the initiation of amendments

DTP reform option	Local government response
Build on CPLA Bill reforms to develop formalised procedures, statutory timeframes, and cost recovery provisions for proponent-led amendments.	**Support**, subject to being provided with an opportunity to critique the draft provisions.

We support the reform option, subject to being provided with an opportunity to critique the draft provisions.

Reform options should not create an entitlement or expectation that proponent-led planning scheme amendments will be facilitated. Where there is clear evidence and strategic justification for site- or precinct-specific amendments and these are generally supported by the Planning Policy Framework, and where the council has the capacity to facilitate the amendment on a cost-recovery and staff capacity basis, the amendment should not reasonably be denied. However, not all site- or precinct-specific amendments will meet this standard, and we do not wish to see undue pressure on councils to prioritise their facilitation over more important strategic planning work.

If proponent-led planning scheme amendments do become an entitlement, the integrity of the VPP will be threatened. Practice since 1996 has been to ensure that the section 2 uses in zones allow a broad range of uses; in part, this is to avoid the need for site-specific controls and amendments. The proliferation of specialised controls for individual sites would undermine this strategy and the accessibility, and public understanding, of the planning system.

In the last four years there has also been the introduction of new Ministerial planning approval pathways that overcome some land use restrictions in zones, and the *Consumer and Planning Legislation Amendment (Housing Statement Reform) Act 2025* will soon introduce provisions for the Minister to take on site-specific planning scheme amendments where the council has determined that it should not.

The presumption in law should therefore be, in relation to any individual site or precinct, that the controls and policies of the planning scheme in place at the time will remain. The presumption should not be that the existing controls can be easily changed on request.

13.6 Providing additional structure and statutory timeframes for authorisation of amendment

DTP reform option	Local government response
Prescribe criteria for Ministerial decision-making at authorisation (including consistency with state plans) as well as timeframes for further information requests and final decision.	**Support**, subject to the authorisation criteria including timeframes, and being provided with an opportunity to critique all of the draft provisions.

The reform option has the capacity to greatly assist councils in work-planning. Current uncertainty around Ministerial or delegated Departmental timeframes for progressing amendments – especially at the 'authorisation' and 'approval' stages – can create significant inefficiencies for developers and councils. Delays also significantly erode community trust in the planning process.

Many councils have experienced frustration with decisions by Planning Ministers and delegates under S8A of the Act. For example, while sub-section (4) allows the Minister to decide that a request to prepare a planning scheme amendment can 'require further review', sub-section (5) does not require reasons to be provided, let alone detailed reasons. At times, decisions to require further review are, in effect, decisions to delay an amendment indefinitely and get around the '10 business days' decision-making timeline in sub-section (7). The lack of clarity and accountability can cause significant disruptions for the planning authority.

Many councils have also experienced frustration with securing authorisation due to DTP requirements that certain authorities first provide express support for the amendment. If support is not in-principle support (with the authority reserving the right to make submissions during exhibition and panel to make further improvements), and instead is support of the kind that demands very detailed modelling of future development to meet all of the authority's detailed concerns, the planning scheme amendment process can be significantly delayed before Ministerial authorisation has even been provided. This can also be procedurally unfair to submitters on the amendment once authorised and exhibited: they may not know how the 'pre-authorisation' negotiations have already locked in a particular way of expressing controls. The only efficient way of addressing this problem is for DTP to clarify the role of, and support, authorities to make appropriate requests and decisions at this 'pre-authorisation' stage.

We would like to see more expansive reasons for decisions being provided, so that the basis for refusing, approving or conditioning work by councils can be clearly understood. At the same time, the decisions and reasoning need to be applied consistently and reasonably to all planning authorities.

If the reform option creates new criteria and timeframes for Ministerial and delegated decisions that set standards that allow the Minister to exempt themselves from meeting those standards, decisions to exempt should *also* be accompanied by published reasons.

Separately, we would like to see continued improvement to ATS Authoring (Keystone), which remains insufficiently user-friendly. We also propose that amendment progress on 'planning scheme amendments online' provide further detail on how amendments are tracking, how recently the status changed, and how recently the page was reviewed, to further improve accountability.

13.7 Summary

While there is not enough detail provided to know if the reform options, taken together, will provide a benefit to the planning system without compromising administrative efficiency, transparency and accountability, and community engagement and public support, the overarching directions should be explored further.

Recommendation 14

That the reform options in the 'planning scheme amendment process' theme be pursued subject to the conditions set out in the submission, after first exploring and co-designing the new provisions with planning system administrators in local government.

14 Reforming planning permit processes

14.1 What is being proposed

The five reform options put forward by DTP under the theme about **the planning permit process** are:

(1) Planning permits – Proportionality of the process. (*Reform option:* Implement three pathways for planning permit assessment that enable procedural steps and timeframes that are proportionate to the risk and complexity associated with the permit application. This will also reduce the number of discretionary decisions about process that a responsible authority must make.)

Stream 1 Simple, low risk proposals	**Stream 2** Assessed against codes/policies	**Stream 3** More complex, impact assessed
• A code-based assessment pathway, similar to VicSmart • Not required to be assessed against policy • No public notice, no referral • **Examples (in a General Residential Zone)*:** Single dwellings (including additions, alterations and small second dwellings), two dwellings on a lot *n.b. subject to codification of ResCode*	• For applications that depart from codes or propose something that is expected but not codified • Assessed against relevant codes, guidelines and policy • No public notice, no referral, but longer timeframe for assessment than under stream 1 • **Examples (in a General Residential Zone):** Variation of any codified requirement in Stream 1, subdivision <10 lots that is compliant with ResCode	• The presumed default assessment stream – mirrors existing process • Higher level of assessment requiring balancing of policy and determining appropriateness against the controls in place • Referral, Public notice, objections • **Examples (in a General Residential Zone):** Most other development applications, any other use application

(2) Limiting consideration of objections. (*Reform option*: Allow responsible authorities to reject objections deemed frivolous, vexatious or irrelevant, and require that objections must be submitted by the person objecting (with the exception of petitions.)

(3) Imposing controls on requests for further information (RFIs) while preserving ability to raise concerns. (*Reform option:* Prescribe the form and content of RFIs to ensure there is a clear link to the assessment being undertaken, while enabling a new concerns letter process that does not automatically stop the clock.)

(4) Seeking to reduce delays associated with referral authority responses. *(Reform option:* Prescribe a timeframe for sending of referrals, make clear that failure of a referral authority to respond within the required timeframe is deemed 'no objection', and establish a fee sharing process.)

(5) Establishing a more proportionate approach to permit amendments. *(Reform option:* Establish three streams for permit amendments, in line with the permit streams.)

14.2 Planning permits – Proportionality of the process

DTP reform option	Local government response
Implement three pathways for planning permit assessment that enable procedural steps and timeframes that are proportionate to the risk and complexity associated with the permit application. This will also reduce the number of discretionary decisions about process that a responsible authority must make.	**Support in principle**, subject to: 1. First defining the problem clearly with system administrators; 2. Co-designing the mechanism for measuring 'proportional risk and complexity' and defining streams with planning system administrators in local government; 3. Not simultaneously implementing the 'structure and content of the VPP and planning schemes' reform options; 4. Consideration of the cumulative effect of the reform option on the integrity of the VPP and the purposes of the principal Act; 5. More realistic 'statutory clock' timeframes for the 'stream 3' approval pathway so as to facilitate higher quality outcomes and minimise the risk of procedural defect; 6. Modernising the notice requirements; and 7. First building and applying one statewide applications and permits system for all applicants, responsible authorities, referral authorities, objectors and observers to use.

Local government welcomes opportunities to simplify, speed-up and otherwise improve the permit application and approval process. This should not be conflated with support for an extension of past approaches to codes and VicSmart provisions; simply replicating the complexity inherent in the design of those provisions will not lead to effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

The option for 'three streams' based proportionally on risk and complexity may provide a sound framework for the future. If it is to succeed, system designers and administrators will need to work together to ensure careful consideration of the principal Act and the VPP are made together.

We request further details and a more developed understanding of the problem that is being addressed.

Clarifying the problem

A comprehensive audit of permit types and timeframes should be conducted by the state and councils together to inform any reform options. Choosing the solution before understanding the problem – especially when so many other reforms have already been agreed but are yet to commence and be measured (see sections 5.5 and 5.7 of this submission) – will create unnecessary complexity and risk unintended outcomes.

Another Victorian Auditor General's audit of the planning system is now timely as the government is embarking on a review and rewrite of the entire system. This is discussed in section 6 of this submission.

Any new audit should extend to the new approval pathways (where applications or permits are exempt from standard provisions in the principal Act, especially the new pathways facilitated by particular provisions at clauses 53.19 to 53.24) and consider the ways information is being managed across all parts of local and state government.

The 'three streams' reform option

Streaming permit processes based on risk and complexity is generally supported, however we believe that much more work is required to accurately define the three streams. We request further detail and opportunities to influence the criteria for 'risk and complexity' that would determine which stream would be enlivened in relation to classes of permit application, and further detail and opportunities to influence the definition and scope of the three streams.

In the draft reform option, both streams 1 and 2 appear to rely on codification, while stream 3 is a very broad category for 'everything else'. We suspect that this approach will be unlikely to provide a proportional treatment of application types, but we cannot be sure as no information, examples or data explaining the strategy for the three streams has been released. We would also like to understand where applications processed through the Development Facilitation Program fit within these streams.

The choice to make stream 1 code- and VicSmart-reliant rather than move to a mechanism where very simple and unobjectionable planning approval types are removed from the system altogether appears to be a missed opportunity. If an application of such simplicity only warrants a straightforward assessment that requires no discretion on the part of the assessor, it is surely the sort of deemed approval that could be provided without a permit. More and more VicSmart-like provisions will only over-complicate the system and preoccupy qualified planners with matters that do not require their professional judgment.

Subject to better understanding the problem and being part of the deliberations about system design solutions, we cautiously suggest that 'stream 1' should be targeted to 'very simple, very low-risk proposals' that can avoid permit trigger altogether. The legitimacy of and trust in the system would, of course, require that the criteria be genuinely 'very simple' and 'very low-risk'.

We caution against 'stream 2' applications considering matters that are not compliant with standards in codes while also extinguishing notice requirements entirely.

Given the intention of the government to review and rewrite the principal Act, new permit streams should be considered in the context of reforming the Act and the VPP together. If that does not occur, and streams are arrived at through piecemeal changes to the VPP (perhaps recent amendments to the VPP are an indication that more of this will come), the obvious risk will be the proliferation of VicSmart-like provisions being attached to the VPP with Zones becoming increasingly cluttered with language to define which application types are captured and which are not. This would simply repeat past mistakes with planning system reform, while inviting more and more legal dispute and tribunal or court directions about how applications are to be classified.

Only the principal Act can provide an effective framework for the efficient allocation of applications to streams and the resolution of dispute about allocation.

The reform option should not open the door to an over-application of new codes. There is nothing inherently wrong with code-based approval pathways, but recent trends towards one-size-fits-all codes that capture more than just the simple application types have generated unintended consequences, such as the significant diluting of ESD provisions and policies. This illustrates inadequate strategic justification, modelling and consultation for programs to develop the new codes. It is very difficult to amend codes once they are in place, and far better to test them comprehensively with local government before they are introduced.

If the reform option is pursued, a standard program of development, testing and consultation on any future new codes should be established. (This program will also need to consider emerging AI, machine reading and automation applications – we have more to say on this in section 6.6.)

The statutory clock

The opportunity to genuinely align the VPP and principal Act with different streams of permit application based on 'risk and complexity' would allow for a range of consequential benefits. For example, if timeframes for 'stream 3' are more realistic, the instance of 'failure to determine' appeals to the tribunal should reduce. (We note that the government, like councils, cannot feasibly hold to the 60 day 'statutory clock' timeframe in relation to the largest and most complicated infill permit applications.) An over-reliance on permit conditions that push matters to 'secondary consent' should also reduce.

Any streaming of permits should therefore be aligned to a review of the 'statutory clock'. Such a review should consider:

- Starting the clock at the point that a complete application has been lodged. 'Completeness' should, for codified pathways, be subject in the first instance to a straightforward verification process.
- A mechanism to allow for minor technical errors in an application to be made without stopping the clock.
- Pausing the clock during the statutory notification period.
- Longer overall timeframes for complicated proposals, e.g. 90 days if certain thresholds for application significance are unarguably met.
- The ability to place applications on hold by mutual agreement between the responsible authority and applicant.
- More substantial and comprehensive reforms that balance applicant and assessor interests.

The inefficiency created by rushed decisions must not be overlooked in any review of the statutory clock.

Impact on the courts

If more and more significant and complicated applications become the subject of code-based planning approvals with applicant or third party appeal rights extinguished, we do not consider that that will necessarily reduce legal dispute. The consequence of a permit streaming framework that extinguishes most opportunities to appeal decisions at the tribunal will be to push dispute from the tribunal to the Supreme Court.

We note that 'potential applicant or third party appeal' has not been included as a step in stream 3. If this implies the removal of appeal provisions altogether, the consequences must be considered, including the erosion of the social licence of the planning system. We would prefer to see a properly-resourced tribunal than the removal of third party rights in relation to large and complicated proposals. Third party notice and review should stem from the complexity of the application, not from a capitulation that tribunal efficiency cannot be improved.

Modernising the notice requirements

It would be a lost opportunity if permit streaming were to be pursued without also modernising and aligning the notice requirements. Due to the complexity of notice, and the usual treatment of notice, objection and review as a package, notice requirements have often been extinguished where they ought not to have been, and have been retained where

the administrative burden exceeds the relative significance of the application. A new approach should be pursued, with system designers and administrators working together to consider options.

New communication methods should be considered in any such review.

One matter that ought to be considered is an amendment to Section 52 of the Act to provide that, where there is an obligation to notify "owners… and occupiers of allotments or lots adjoining the land to which the application applies" of an application, and the adjoining land is a strata titled property, notice to the owners corporation would suffice. This would allow for the reinstatement of third party notice (if not necessarily third party appeal – that is a separate consideration) in urban areas targeted for densification. Too often, notice has been extinguished in these areas because of the administrative burden involved in providing notice to every individual owner and occupier, the fear of associated procedural error, and the bundling of notice rights with appeal rights.

Information management

The proliferation of approval pathways, including through new and novel particular provisions in the VPP, is the cumulative effect of decisions by Planning Ministers over time. Most of the new pathways escape public scrutiny and rely on new systems to store applications, permits and related documents. Meanwhile, the 79 councils as responsible authorities each choose their own information management systems in relation to the approval pathways they have responsibility for. The inefficiency of this system as a whole has led to the inability to effectively measure its performance. This in turn has led to the pursuit of planning system efficiency improvements that are unsupported by evidence.

As the government is now embarking on a complete review and rewrite of the Act and, by extension, the planning system, now is the time to plan one statewide applications and permits system for all applicants, responsible authorities, referral authorities, objectors and observers to use. Adequate resources will need to be allocated to ensure that this project is completed effectively and efficiently. We note that NSW has recently moved towards a similar model, with the 'NSW Planning Portal' expanding to take in most types of permit application.

An alternative 'three streams' approach

We provide an alternative approach in section 6 of this submission.

14.3 Limiting consideration of objections

DTP reform option	Local government response
Allow responsible authorities to reject objections deemed frivolous, vexatious or irrelevant, and require that objections must be submitted by the person objecting (with the exception of petitions).	**Support in principle** subject to being provided with an opportunity to critique the draft provision.

We support the reform option in principle subject to being provided with an opportunity to critique the draft provision. We support the concept of allowing responsible authorities to reject objections, rather than requiring them to do so, to avoid unnecessary administrative burden.

Provisions will need to be carefully drafted to define 'frivolous, vexatious or irrelevant' in a precise way that avoids procedural unfairness. We think that it may be difficult to do this in a way that avoids the risk of new types of legal dispute.

If the purpose of the reform option is to quash instruments that trigger third party appeal (i.e. under stream 3 only), it may be better to approach the issue in a holistic fashion when reviewing the interrelationship of permits, objections, third party appeal rights and the tribunal's duties together.

The tribunal should also be given the power to dismiss applications that have no prospect of success.

14.4 Imposing controls on requests for further information (RFIs) while preserving ability to raise concerns

DTP reform option	Local government response
Prescribe the form and content of RFIs to ensure there is a clear link to the assessment being undertaken, while enabling a new concerns letter process that does not automatically stop the clock.	**Support in principle** subject to being provided with an opportunity to critique the proposed provisions and prescribed forms, and a more thorough review of the statutory clock and application provisions.

We support the reform option in principle subject to being provided with an with an opportunity to critique the proposed provisions and prescribed forms. The reform option could be inefficient and an administrative burden if not designed well.

There is a risk that, if the RFI process is standardised, the ability to request contextual information will be limited. There are occasions when contextual information is necessary to make an orderly and fully-informed decision (and which a developer will wish to provide for the same reason), for example in relation to potentially contaminated land, infrastructure co-ordination, land assembly and heritage significance.

The reform should not be piecemeal: a more thorough review of the statutory clock is needed, and provisions to ensure complete applications are lodged where it is possible to do so should also be made. We discuss these matters in section 14.2.

14.5 Seeking to reduce delays associated with referral authority responses

DTP reform option	Local government response
Prescribe a timeframe for sending of referrals, make clear that failure of a referral authority to respond within the required timeframe is deemed 'no objection', and establish a fee sharing process.	**Support in principle** the prescribing of timeframes for sending referrals, subject to those timeframes not preventing the vetting of information ahead of referral. **Oppose** the 'no objection' deeming provision. **Oppose** the establishment of a fee sharing process. This is no substitute for a necessary comprehensive review of all fees and the consideration of a new structure that provides reasonable cost recovery and fairness.

This reform option, as proposed, will likely lead to undesirable consequences. A more thorough review of the referral mechanisms should be conducted instead.

We support in principle the prescribing of timeframes for sending referrals, but only if those timeframes do not prevent the vetting of information ahead of referral – and if they are accompanied by greater clarity about when referrals are to be made. The Act, in combination with the Regulations and VPP, already provides difficulty in knowing the extent of what should or should not be referred to a referral authority, with 'over-referral' the safe option. Limiting the time available to critically consider how a referral can be framed will inevitably lead to inefficient framing. This in turn will not assist referral authorities to respond efficiently.

The 'no objection' deeming provision is opposed outright. Referral authority mechanisms have a purpose, most often to ensure that the responsible authority is equipped with the technical information necessary to make conditions that will facilitate human safety and avert environmental catastrophe. The solution to improving referral authority response times is to resource referral authorities adequately, not to deem that the referral authority has declared that a development proposal that poses risks to human life is unobjectionable.

The 'fee sharing process' is also opposed outright. This cannot be designed other than in a way that reduces revenue to the responsible authority, eroding cost recovery. Again, this is no substitute for the proper resourcing of referral authorities. Councils cannot subsidise state government departments and agencies that act as referral authorities.

Recent changes to the particular provisions have made the Minister the responsible authority for certain classes of application instead of councils, for classes that still rely on councils to make a near-complete assessment of the proposal in order to furnish the Minister with advice and a list of permit conditions. The fees, collected by the Minister, are not being shared with councils in this instance.

What could be done instead?

The 'reform option' is no substitute for a full review of all planning fees and the resourcing of referral authorities. As the government is embarking on a full review and rewrite of the Act and planning system, a comprehensive review of planning fees is timely. This review should be undertaken by a 'subsidiary committee' as described in section 6.3.

14.6 Establishing a more proportionate approach to permit amendments

DTP reform option	Local government response
Establish three streams for permit amendments, in line with the permit streams.	**Support in principle**, subject to the same considerations as apply to the three streams for permit applications.

We support the reform option, subject to the same considerations as apply to the three streams for permit applications (see section 13.2).

14.7 Limiting speculation

As the government intends to pursue a complete review and rewrite of the Act and, by extension, the planning system, now is the time to consider what changes to the provisions in the principal Act, if any, should be pursued to limit land-banking and the awarding of planning permits that are not intended to be acted on (but which increase the value of the land).

14.8 Summary

While there is not enough detail provided to know if the reform options, taken together, will provide a benefit to the planning system without compromising administrative efficiency, transparency and accountability, and community engagement and public support, the overarching directions should be explored further.

Recommendation 15

That the reform options in the 'planning permit process' theme be pursued (with the exception of the 'no objection' deeming provision for referrals, and the proposed fee sharing arrangement, which should be abandoned) after first co-designing the new provisions with planning system administrators in local government.

15 Other frameworks requiring review

15.1 Compliance and enforcement

Enforcing planning schemes and permit conditions is an important duty of councils, necessary to ensure the legitimacy of the planning system. Resourcing constraints on councils and an ever-changing regulatory environment can make planning compliance difficult to communicate and enforce.

Councils do their utmost to enforce the scheme of the day. However, the array of enforcement issues continues to grow and includes general amenity like noise and odour, vegetation removal and illegal demolition. Each enforcement case can present complex individual challenges. Limited time is generally available, in particular in small councils where individual planning officers hold statutory, strategic and enforcement responsibilities.

More broadly, challenges are presented as the Planning Minister increases their responsible authority footprint across the Victorian planning system. Councils, which usually remain the planning enforcement body, must enforce permits issued by the Minister for decisions that may not have considered local contexts, challenges or risks. The state's propensity to unilaterally amend planning schemes without consultation with local government's planning and local laws enforcement teams risks unintended consequences and expense.

Local enforcement priorities and challenges directly influence how permits are granted and conditions are written. A clearer system-wide understanding of the enforcement challenge would likely reduce current risk-averse approaches.

Current enforcement settings

The framework for undertaking compliance is at best confusing and at worst unwieldy, and is not disincentivising planning scheme breaches. The current Act does not provide an option for enforcement officers to issue a "Notice to Comply' or 'Stop Works' notice, unlike other Acts. The cumbersome process of seeking an interim enforcement order, coupled with the risk of the applicant (usually Council) potentially having to give undertakings as to damages when making the application, means that Councils are increasingly avoiding them.

Councils do have a range of options when managing a planning enforcement matter. They can issue an infringement, issue a charge and summons via the Magistrates Court or seek an enforcement order through VCAT. However, for more complex or serious planning matters, Council must seek a prosecution through the Magistrates Court and then a remedy for the breach through an enforcement order at VCAT.

In recent years there have been several high-profile cases where illegal demolition, vegetation removal and amenity breaches have led to unacceptable outcomes to the community. These cases highlight the need for a review and update of enforcement approaches and penalties as a real deterrent. Current fines are not proportionate with the social, environmental and economic damage that some breaches cause, nor do they provide an adequate deterrent, and nor do they cover council's enforcement costs.

From enforcement to prevention

The MAV and councils have identified a number of options to reform enforcement of the planning scheme and encourage compliance from the outset. Broadly, this could include expanding penalty types and severity for non-compliance by:

- Introducing a tiered compliance process for breaches, to enable clear compliance pathways for enforcement, with the Act clearly defining minor, moderate and significant breaches.
- Appropriately limited but well defined powers to stop work and enter sites, especially where irreparable environmental and other damage is underway.
- Notices to Comply carrying automatic financial penalties for failure to comply. This may assist Council in stopping matters before they proceed to Court or VCAT.
- Removing property rights previously granted under the Act for severe breaches.

Consideration should be given to granting VCAT consolidated powers to impose penalties and cancel permits along with enforcement orders, in order to limit unnecessary delays and costs in the interests of all parties.

15.2 Fees and cost recovery

The MAV submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services[51] described the increasingly constrained fiscal environment councils are operating within. Yet, the range of services and responsibilities undertaken by local government has never been greater or more complex. The situation is worsening under ongoing cost-shifting to local government.

Cost-shifting takes numerous forms but in each case contributes to the erosion of council's capacity to perform their roles. In areas such as building regulation the Victorian Government demands significant responsibilities of councils without a revenue stream to resource them. In planning, an increase in the number of application types that make the Minister the responsible authority but which still require councils to conduct full assessments of proposals – without collecting the fee – have also been imposed (we discuss these in sections 5.7). New proposals to further erode fee revenue have also emerged (see section 14.4).

In adding complexity to the system, the Development Facilitation Program has undone the original premise of the current statutory fee schedule - that the bigger fees would help offset high workload smaller fee applications. Councils are now losing their biggest fee paying applications to the Planning Minister and DTP. The MAV understand that loss of income to Councils because of the Development Facilitation Program has cost some councils up to 40% of their statutory planning fee revenue.

For planning permit applications, fees must be adequate for the responsible authority to perform the duties required of it.

We understood the state was looking to make legislative change to create a pass-through mechanism from the State to the relevant council to reflect the work councils still need to undertake where council is not the responsible authority. It appears that this work was abandoned.

Without legislation, councils will look to other mechanisms and agreements to receive acceptable revenue for the work they do on behalf of the state. None of these mechanisms will be as efficient to local or state government as an update to the schedule of fees. A full review of planning fees should be conducted as part of comprehensive planning system reform.

[51] MAV, 2024, submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services.

15.3 Heritage

The size and capacity of Victoria's heritage consultancy industry is limited and it struggles to meet the strategic planning and statutory referral demands of 79 councils, state government and developers - even if the resources were available to secure their services.

Councils have consistently called for a refresh of Planning Practice Note 01. The current version (August 2018) does not expressly support or define the contemporary grading nomenclature preferred by heritage consultants and Planning Panels Victoria ('significant', 'contributory' and 'non-contributory'), giving rise to subtly different definitions of these terms from council to council. This does not assist in the easy understanding of the local heritage framework. A review of PPN01 may result in a more accessible framework while potentially also reducing the size and complexity of heritage studies.

The Heritage Council of Victoria's State of Heritage Review[52] (2020) makes a number of recommendations to meet challenges in maintaining the local heritage framework.

15.4 The Regulations

Many of the DTP 'initial review' reform options require changes to *Planning and Environment Regulations 2015*. The review of the Regulations must form part of the current review and be part of a holistic review of the system as described in section 6.

We anticipate that the reform options that would necessitate changes to the Regulations are:

- Requiring scheme amendments to be consistent with state and regional plans (see section 12.2)
- Planning scheme amendments – Proportionality of the process (see section 13.2)
- Making notice requirements clear (see section 13.4)
- Creating more explicit processes for the initiation of amendments (see section 13.5)
- Providing additional structure and statutory timeframes for authorisation of amendments (see section 13.6)
- Planning permits – Proportionality of the process (see section 14.2)
- Imposing controls on requests for further information (RFIs) while preserving ability to raise concerns (see section 14.4) and
- Seeking to reduce delays associated with referral authority responses (see section 14.5)

Recommendation 16

That the reform program ensures that the other frameworks enabled by the Act are adequately reviewed by state and local government planning administrators working together, before consolidating updated provisions into the new Act.

[52] Heritage Council of Victoria, 2020, *State of Heritage Review: Local Heritage*

MAV would be pleased to provide clarification on any information in this submission. For further information, please contact James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, at jmclean@mav.asn.au

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24 April 2025

Select Committee on Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274
Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

To whom it may concern

City of Whittlesea Submission to the Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274.

The City of Whittlesea welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274.

Noting the short timeframe for submissions, City of Whittlesea officers will rely, in part, on the sector submission of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to reflect concerns with the level of consultation with the local government sector, and the erosion of third-party rights, during this process of "planning reform". City of Whittlesea officers have participated in the MAV Planning Reform Working Group and have contributed to the document: *Reforming Victoria's Planning System – Local Government Sector Submission*.

City of Whittlesea will consider the MAV sector submission at its June Council meeting, with officers recommending formal endorsement of the submission by Council.

As a growth Council, the City of Whittlesea has accommodated a significant increase in housing in recent decades which is forecast to continue. Our population is expected to rise from over 250,000 people to more than 360,000 people by 2041. Council's strategic land use plans and the policy contained in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme are responsive to the housing needs of the community and have been developed to provide opportunities for a diversity of well-designed and well-located housing.

With respect to the subject amendments, we note that VC274 introduced the Precinct Zone which is not included in the Whittlesea Planning Scheme at present. However, Amendments VC257 and VC267 have significant impacts for planning outcomes at the City of Whittlesea.

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Amendment VC257 affects City of Whittlesea's Epping Central Metropolitan Activity Centre and surrounding suburban areas. Although there was some consultation with Council officers, there was little information provided during the consultation about how the proposed controls would operate. This, combined with timeframes that precluded formal Council consideration, meant that consultation was in the "informing" category. Communication from residents to Council officers during the exhibition period reflected similar frustration with the level of information provided. The schedule detail of the Built Form Overlay for Epping that was introduced by VC257 has only emerged in the last couple of weeks (GCC252). The Housing Choice and Transport Zone has been applied to parts of Lalor that were previously Neighbourhood Residential Zone. Council Officers are still working to summarise the changes, and the implications, for communication to Council and the community.

The codified controls introduced by VC267 are likely to incentivise town house development over the development of apartments. Apartments deliver more dwellings, are generally higher amenity for occupants, and are more accessible forms of housing than town houses. The municipality of City of Whittlesea includes both established suburbs where infill development delivers the majority of new housing, and greenfield areas being developed under existing strategic frameworks. In both environments, town houses and single dwellings on a lot are the dominant development proposal due to reluctance from the development industry to deliver higher density outcomes. The introduction of "planning reforms" that significantly reduce the ability for Councils to negotiate better housing outcomes on behalf of current and future residents has increased the existing challenges in meeting Council's strategic vision for the delivery of higher density housing and high quality, affordable housing. It is particularly concerning that the same controls will apply in 'green wedge' areas including peri-urban townships such as Whittlesea as in urban areas of metropolitan Melbourne without any regard to site or character or context.

One important element of the strategic vision for infill development in our established suburbs was a zone schedule variation (General Residential Zone Schedules 4 and 5) that increased canopy tree coverage in medium density developments. To have that amendment authorised by the Minister for Planning and ultimately gazetted, substantial evidence was developed showing that tree canopy coverage in our established suburbs was well below that of other Councils, and that intervention to increase canopy trees in the private realm was needed to address urban heat. These schedule variations have been switched off without notice by the controls introduced with VC267 because there is a "deemed to comply" provision in the controls for canopy trees. Council officers were not consulted prior to this change being introduced, so were not given the opportunity to review the changes or provide feedback to ensure there was an equivalent urban cooling outcome from the "deemed to comply" provision. There is a marked contrast between the requirements of Councils to ensure

changes to planning schemes are evidence-based and the transparency around the reasoning leading to recent changes made to planning schemes by the Department of Transport and Planning.

We are concerned that the impact of the planning changes will decrease the quality and diversity of homes across Melbourne. The 'deemed to comply' provisions are likely to deliver less efficient site plans and reduce architectural and landscape quality of our homes. This reduction in design quality could cumulatively undermine the quality and amenity of streets and neighbourhoods. In addition, we are concerned that the 'deemed to comply' provision may not deliver housing or achieve the intended objectives of the Housing Statement; instead conferring development rights with value uplift realised by the landowner/ developer without actually building a home. We have raised this through consultation, seeking permits to have reduced opportunity for time limits to be extended.

Please note the attachment that forms part of this submission: Reforming Victoria's Planning System – Local Government Sector Submission. The attached MAV report accurately and comprehensively outlines a better way to reform the planning system including integrating system designers in local government with system administrators in local government. In contrast to this, unintended consequences are likely from a rushed and narrowly informed planning reform process. The decision not to bring the community along on the process is contrary to objectives of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, particularly Sections 4(1)(d) and 4(2)(h).

Should you have any questions in relation to this submission, please contact Emma Appleton, Director Planning and Development via email emma.appleton@whittlesea.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Craig Lloyd
Chief Executive Officer

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Select Committee on Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274

Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274

May 2025

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About the Committee

Functions

The Select Committee will inquire into, consider and report whether the amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions made through VC257, VC274 and VC267 give proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria, and the objectives of the planning framework, as set out in section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

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Terms of reference

Inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274

That a Select Committee of nine members be appointed to inquire into, consider and report by 13 May 2025, whether the amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions made through VC257, VC274 and VC267 give proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria, and the objectives of the planning framework, as set out in section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Final Report due by 13 May 2025.

Chair's foreword

Housing is one of the great policy challenges of our time. It is clear that Victoria needs many more homes, especially more genuinely affordable homes, in well located areas near public transport, jobs and services.

This is what the Government has sought to address with its Victoria Planning Provisions amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274. The amendments change statewide planning provisions to enable denser housing in activity centres, including in middle ring suburbs, while also making the most significant changes to ResCode since 2001, moving townhouse and low-rise approvals to a stricter 'deemed-to-comply' framework.

The amendments are made on the promise of certainty and speed, largely at the expense of third party involvement and decision-making discretion. It is inevitable that planning reforms that involve such significant trade-offs will be contested.

I commend the Government for seriously seeking to address Victoria's housing challenges. The Committee found widespread support for the Government's objectives of increasing housing supply and affordability in well located areas, and a strong appetite from Victorians to be involved in discussions about the future of their state, city and neighbourhoods.

A major problem facing the Committee was the absence of requested modelling from the Government, to demonstrate that the amendments will achieve their objectives. Without that modelling, the Committee was reluctant to downplay the many unintended consequences arising from the new planning provisions that were identified by users of the planning system.

Of the many unintended consequences identified by stakeholders, the most concerning for me related to the new townhouse and low-rise code: the removal of consideration of flood risks from the planning process, the reduction of environmentally sustainable development standards in major local government areas, and the excessive removal of existing trees. Surely we can address Victoria's housing challenges without also creating these new risks.

Many community groups and councils felt strongly that they were not adequately consulted and that their concerns were not taken into consideration. While some resistance to planning reform will always exist, I worry that the Government is overlooking the benefits of consultative and collaborative engagement with councils and communities. More work is necessary if Victoria's housing distribution policies, and the mechanisms that will bring those policies about, are to achieve widespread public support.

Given the dramatic scope of these planning amendments, the Committee felt that a process of monitoring these changes and seeking to improve their efficacy over time

is needed. This is consistent with previous recommendations of the Victorian Auditor General in 2008 and 2017 — recommendations which the Government has not acted on.

I hope the Government will embrace the findings and recommendations in this report and make changes to the new planning provisions so that Victorians can have confidence that the Government's planning reforms have been chosen for the right reasons.

As one witness put to us, this is a once in a generation opportunity to get it right.

We must ensure that we do.

I wish to thank all those who contributed to this inquiry, either through submissions or at public hearings. The short time available to the Committee meant that we were not able to explore every issue in the report to the extent we would have liked. However, this important evidence has been published online and I hope it will inform policy makers in the years to come.

I would also like to thank my fellow Committee members for their diligence and hard work throughout the inquiry. Notwithstanding the vigorous debate reflected in the report, that it was adopted unanimously by the Committee, bodes well for the prospects of successful and durable planning reform.

Finally, I wish to thank the Secretariat staff, many of whom were directed from other projects to assist the Committee in completing its work in such a short amount of time. Keir Delaney, Matt Newington, Kieran Crowe, Whitny Kappa, Julie Barnes, Sylvette Bassy and Elektra Banikos: thank you for outstanding work on this inquiry.



David Ettershank MLC
Chair

Findings and recommendations

1 Introduction

FINDING 1: The Committee finds that the Department of Transport and Planning and other agencies of government have not provided requested materials and background documents sought by the Committee during this inquiry and that the explanations are not accepted. 4

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Department of Transport and Planning and other agencies are required by the Committee to provide all sought documents and materials. If these are provided after the Committee has reported, the Committee Secretariat place these documents on the Committee's website for at least 2 months to make them available to the community and council. 4

FINDING 2: The Minister for Planning, Sonya Kilkenny did not appear at the Inquiry. 4

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Minister should provide to the Inquiry and the Parliament the briefs or other material on which she relied supporting the gazettal of the three planning scheme amendments. 4

2 Issues raised

FINDING 3: All witnesses appearing before the Committee expressed support for the policy objective of facilitating significant increases in well-located housing. While some witnesses argued strongly that the new planning provisions introduced under the amendments will be inefficient, or ineffective, or will create unintended consequences, their criticism was focused on the design of the planning provisions rather than the policy aims of the planning scheme amendments. Other witnesses argued that the reforms could contribute to the construction of more homes. 14

FINDING 4: The Committee was not provided with any modelling about the expected effect of any of the amendments on housing supply generally, and the effect of increased supply on house prices. 16

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Victorian Government publish publicly modelling to demonstrate how the planning scheme amendments will impact on housing supply and affordability. 17

FINDING 5: Little convincing evidence was advanced to the Inquiry that the State Government's announced planning changes will guarantee additional housing and no substantive evidence was advanced that the Government's plan would with certainty provide additional affordable housing. 17

FINDING 6: The Victorian Government did not properly consult on these three amendments and the Committee is of the view that the Minister has inappropriately exempted herself from expected consultation. 18

RECOMMENDATION 4: At a minimum, modification of planning scheme amendments should be undertaken after a round of genuine consultation with councils and communities. 18

FINDING 7: Where local councils are expected to implement new planning provisions introduced under amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions, it is reasonable that they be given notice of the full detail of those provisions with enough time to prepare for their commencement. This did not occur in relation to amendment VC267. 19

RECOMMENDATION 5: That the Victorian Government make a policy, by 30 June 2025, that applies to all amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions, other than prescribed amendments, to require an informal notice period in which all amendment documents are published for no less than 28 days before the amendment is gazetted, and to require that those documents are brought to the attention of the responsible authorities whose duty it will be to administer the new provisions. 19

FINDING 8: The Committee makes no conclusions about whether amendment VC257 gives proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria, but finds that the controls introduced by VC257 have the potential to give proper effect to the objectives depending on how their local schedules are drafted and where they apply. 20

FINDING 9: The Committee acknowledges that the concerns expressed by many submitters that heritage and heritage values are at serious risk of being compromised by these planning amendments are valid. Protections should be available to protect our city and its magnificent heritage buildings and zones. 22

FINDING 10: There is a significant difference between the views of the Department of Transport and Planning, and the views of planning system users outside of the Department, about the adequacy of the consultation that led to VC257. While the Department provided some evidence of a high quantity of consultation, others tended to criticise the quality of that consultation. 24

FINDING 11: The speed with which the activity centres program and planning controls were developed was a factor that contributed to the under-utilisation of the expert Activity Centre Standing Advisory Committee. 24

RECOMMENDATION 6: That the Victorian Government review the expert advisory mechanism and consultation methods (with planning experts, local councils and communities) for the first 10 activity centres and make improvements about both in relation to the next 50 activity centres. 24

FINDING 12: The advice of the Standing Committee on Activity Centres specifically provided advice to change the planning scheme amendments to protect heritage. This advice was not followed by the Minister for Planning. 25

FINDING 13: Victoria Planning Provisions amendment VC267's exemption in clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions from the requirements of the decision guidelines at clause 65 represents a substantial change to how residential development assessments are conducted where planning permits are required. 28

FINDING 14: The clause 65 decision guidelines of the Victoria Planning Provisions assist in guiding sound planning decisions. The most important are the guidelines that require consideration of risks to human life and health, and to the environment. These include:

- any significant effects the environment, including the contamination of land, may have on the use or development
- the effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area
- factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality
- the extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction
- the degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard. 29

RECOMMENDATION 7: The decision guidelines of clause 65 of the Victoria Planning Provisions should apply to all decisions made under clause 55. This is most important where risks to human life and health, and to the environment, should be identified and managed. 29

RECOMMENDATION 8: The Victorian Government work with councils to manage flood, bushfire and climate hazard risks and improve identification of risks to human life and health, and to the environment, in the Victoria Planning Provisions, including the planning scheme amendment process for overlays with up to date modelling. 29

FINDING 15: Without being presented with any evidence to the contrary, the Committee is concerned that clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions may lead to the excessive removal of existing trees and reduce tree canopy. 30

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the Victorian Government publish and release modelling regarding the expected impact of the planning scheme amendments on tree canopy and vegetation in areas affected by the changes. 30

RECOMMENDATION 10: That the Victorian Government make improvements to clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions including the addition of a separate landscaping objective and standards, and changes to the tree canopy cover objective and standards. The introduction of any improvements should be undertaken as early as possible. 30

FINDING 16: New environmentally sustainable development standards now consistently apply to residential developments under clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions for all parts of the state, where they did not apply before. However, the effect of clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions and the exemptions from clause 65 and the ability to consider local planning policies has had the effect of lowering some environmentally sustainable development standards in 28 local government areas. Whether the lifting of environmentally sustainable development standards across the state, and the lowering of some environmentally sustainable development standards in 28 local government areas, creates a net benefit overall, has not been proven. 31

RECOMMENDATION 11: That the Victorian Government promptly review and improve the environmentally sustainable development standards in clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions with a view to ensuring the statewide standards meet the higher standards found in 28 local government areas. 32

FINDING 17: The performance of clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions, including its performance in relation to the administrative process, must be measured. 32

FINDING 18: The planning amendments mark a reduction in long standing third party appeal rights in the planning system. 32

FINDING 19: The Committee makes no conclusions about whether amendment VC274 gives proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria, but finds that the controls introduced by VC274 have the potential to give proper effect to the objectives depending on how their local schedules are drafted and where they apply. 33

FINDING 20: The Victorian Government failed to implement the recommendations of the Victorian Auditor-General in 2008 and 2017 to create a performance and continuous improvement mechanism for the Victoria Planning Provisions. This has contributed, in part, to the problems with the planning system that the amendments are trying to solve. 34

RECOMMENDATION 12: That, after consultation with relevant stakeholders, the Victorian Government act on the recommendations of the Victorian Auditor-General from 2008 and 2017 in relation to the performance and continuous improvement of the Victoria Planning Provisions. 34

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background

The motion to establish the Select Committee's inquiry into Victoria Planning Provisions amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274 (the VPP amendments) was passed by the Legislative Council on 2 April 2025. The terms of reference require the inquiry to consider and report by 13 May 2025 on whether proposed changes to the Victoria Planning Provisions are in line with the objectives of planning in Victoria, and the objectives of the planning framework, as set out in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Planning and Environment Act).

The objectives of the Planning and Environment Act and the planning framework are set out below in Box 1.1 and Box 1.2.

Box 1.1 The objectives of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

The objectives of the planning and environment act, as set out in Section 4(1) are:

(a) to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land;

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

(c) to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria;

(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;

(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;

(f) to facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e)

(fa) to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria;

(g) to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

Source: *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), s 4(1).

Box 1.2 The objectives of the planning framework

The objectives of the planning framework, as set out in Section 4(2) are:

(a) to ensure sound, strategic planning and co-ordinated action at State, regional and municipal levels;

(b) to establish a system of planning schemes based on municipal districts to be the principal way of setting out objectives, policies and controls for the use, development and protection of land;

(c) to enable land use and development planning and policy to be easily integrated with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels;

(d) to ensure that the effects on the environment are considered and provide for explicit consideration of social and economic effects when decisions are made about the use and development of land;

(da) to provide for explicit consideration of the policies and obligations of the State relating to climate change, including but not limited to greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and the need to increase resilience to climate change, when decisions are made about the use and development of land;

(e) to facilitate development which achieves the objectives of planning in Victoria and planning objectives set up in planning schemes;

(f) to provide for a single authority to issue permits for land use or development and related matters, and to co-ordinate the issue of permits with related approvals;

(g) to encourage the achievement of planning objectives through positive actions by responsible authorities and planning authorities;

(h) to establish a clear procedure for amending planning schemes, with appropriate public participation in decision making;

(i) to ensure that those affected by proposals for the use, development or protection of land or changes in planning policy or requirements receive appropriate notice;

(j) to provide an accessible process for just and timely review of decisions without unnecessary formality;

(k) to provide for effective enforcement procedures to achieve compliance with planning schemes, permits and agreements;

(l) to provide for compensation when land is set aside for public purposes and in other circumstances.

Source: *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), s 4(1).

1.2 The inquiry process

The Committee was established on 2 April 2025 with a reporting date of 13 May 2025. This allowed 41 days to call for evidence, hold public hearings and produce a report.

1.2.1 Call for submissions

Given the short time available, the Committee sought to encourage submitters to focus on key questions arising from the Terms of Reference. In its call for submissions on 16 April 2025, the Committee informed stakeholders it was interested in their views on:

- Whether the VPP amendments appropriately balance the objectives of planning in Victoria.
- Whether the VPP amendments are likely to create any significant unintended outcomes.
- Whether consultation on the VPP amendments was adequate.
- Whether the exemptions provided for in clause 55 of the VPP, as amended by VC267, are appropriate.
- What specific changes would you seek to the amendments.
- Whether the VPP that existed prior to these amendments, these amendments, or alternative proposals are appropriate to meet the housing needs of the state and local communities.

The deadline was 24 April 2025, allowing 8 days for stakeholders to prepare their submissions. The Committee accepted some late submissions on a case-by-case basis. A total of 299 submissions were received, suggesting a depth of community sentiment on this issue. Appendix A contains a full list of submitters.

1.2.2 Public hearings

The Committee held three days of public hearings on:

- Thursday 17 April 2025
- Tuesday 29 April 2025
- Wednesday 30 April 2025.

At the hearings, the Committee heard from a range of witnesses including planning practitioners, industry peak bodies, academics, think tanks, community groups, government departments and local councils. Appendix A contains a full list of those who gave evidence at the public hearings.

The Committee thanks all who took the time to provide their expertise and experience as part of this inquiry.

The transcripts of their evidence are included as Appendix B of this report.

1.2.3 Non-provision of requested material and documents

The Committee has requested key materials from the Department of Transport and Planning and the Victorian Planning Authority which have not been provided as requested.

Key documents that have not been provided to the Committee include the materials presented to Minister Kilkenny to support the action of gazetting the amendments that are the subject of this Committee's reference and GC252. These briefs are readily accessible, and several have been sought by the Legislative Council weeks earlier. They were first requested at the hearing on 17 April 2025 and again requested on 30 April 2025.

The Committee was told by the Department, 'In relation to the requests for Ministerial approval documents for the VC and GC amendments and infrastructure modelling, I am instructed that Government cannot respond to the request for these documents within the Committee's timeframes'.

The claim that these documents could not be provided in time is not accepted by the Committee.

FINDING 1: The Committee finds that the Department of Transport and Planning and other agencies of government have not provided requested materials and background documents sought by the Committee during this inquiry and that the explanations are not accepted.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Department of Transport and Planning and other agencies are required by the Committee to provide all sought documents and materials. If these are provided after the Committee has reported, the Committee Secretariat place these documents on the Committee's website for at least 2 months to make them available to the community and council.

1.2.4 Minister's non-appearance at inquiry

The Minister for Planning did not appear before the Inquiry despite a request being extended to her. The Minister in correspondence did not even explain why she would not attend. The Minister also did not provide a written submission to the Inquiry.

FINDING 2: The Minister for Planning, Sonya Kilkenny did not appear at the Inquiry.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Minister should provide to the Inquiry and the Parliament the briefs or other material on which she relied supporting the gazettal of the three planning scheme amendments.

1.2.5 The scope of the report

The Committee received a considerable amount of evidence, reflecting a wide range of views and concerns, including on the broader implications of planning policy.

Given the short time available, precedence has been given to matters relating to the VPP amendments, their technical application and the operation of the Victoria Planning Provisions. As a result, the report is not a traditional long-form document that reflects in depth all the issues presented to it.

The Committee considers one of its key roles during this inquiry has been a consultative one. It has spoken widely with key stakeholders on the VPP provisions, and their views have been made available online in submissions, transcripts and in answers to questions on notice for all to access. It is the Committee's hope that the information provided will inform debates on planning policy and ultimately influence the shape and character of our growing State.

1.2.6 The role of the Legislative Council

The Legislative Council holds some responsibility for ensuring that amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions give proper effect to the section 4 objectives. The legislative context for this responsibility is that the Act:

- makes the Minister for Planning responsible for preparing, or authorising others to prepare, all amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions (section 4B)
- requires that the Minister and other planning authorities implement the objectives of planning in Victoria (section 12) and amend planning schemes in accordance with a particular procedure (part 3)
- requires that the Legislative Council be notified of the approval of every amendment (section 38)
- allows the Legislative Council to revoke the amendment wholly or in part (section 38).[1]

1.3 The Victoria Planning Provisions amendments

The three amendments in question, VC257, VC267 and VC274 are amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions.

1.3.1 The Victoria Planning Provisions

The Victoria Planning Provisions are a statutory device established under Part 1A of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. They allow the Minister for Planning to make

1 *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), s 38(1); however, under s 38(6), this does not apply to land to which a Suburban Rail Loop planning area declaration applies.

planning provisions that apply across the state, to ensure a consistent and coordinated planning framework,[2] akin to 'a state rule book'[3] that provides for a toolkit to be used by planning authorities, including local governments. A presentation from the Department of Transport and Planning given to the Committee at a public hearing gave the following description:

> It is a statutory device to ensure that consistent provisions for various matters are maintained across Victoria and that the construction and layout of planning schemes is always the same.[4]

The Minister must publish notice of an amendment to the Victoria Planning Provisions in the Government Gazette.[5] The amendments come into operation once they are published, or at a later date specified in the notice.[6] This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

1.3.2 The Housing Statement and Plan for Victoria

The Victorian Government's Housing Statement and Plan for Victoria give context to the introduction of amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274.

The Housing Statement, released in September 2023 articulated issues associated with worsening housing affordability and rising rents. It proposed a number of areas to unlock housing supply and improve affordability in Victoria.[7] This included 'streamlining the planning process for medium to high density residential developments that meet the set criteria' and to 'Increase housing choice in activity centres'.[8]

The Plan for Victoria, released in 2025, sets a vision about how Victoria will grow over time. One of the five pillars of the vision is housing for all Victorians. This involves 'a choice of a well-designed home at an affordable price and close to daily needs'.[9] According to the Department of Transport and Planning, the activity centre program, which will be discussed in the following section, is a core initiative in delivering this vision.[10]

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2 *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), s 4A(1).

3 Andrew McKeegan, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

4 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 6.

5 *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), s 4D.

6 *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), s 4D.

7 Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Victoria's Housing Statement*: *the decade ahead 2024–2034*, Melbourne, September 2023, p. 7.

8 Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Victoria's Housing Statement*: *the decade ahead 2024–2034*, Melbourne, September 2023, p. 7.

9 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 4.

10 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 4.

Andrew McKeegan, Deputy Secretary at the Department of Transport and Planning told the Committee that these were 'the strategic intent documents that underpin the decisions in relation to the planning provisions'.[11]

1.3.3 An overview of VC257

Victoria Planning Provisions amendment VC257 (amendment VC257) was gazetted on 25 February 2025. It introduced a new zone and an overlay into the Victoria Planning Provisions: the Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) and Built Form Overlay (BFO). The Department of Transport and Planning provided the Committee with the following information about the HCTZ and BFO:

The Housing Choice and Transport Zone

- Enables a diversity of housing in the catchments, and other well-serviced locations with convenient access to jobs, public transport and services.
- Does not introduce any changes to planning approval pathways.
- Intended to apply to existing residentially zoned land.

Built Form Overlay

- Standardises planning controls in activity centre 'cores'.
- Will be used to specify building heights and design rules.
- Introduces a new streamlined planning pathway to allow more homes to be built faster, including exemptions from all notice and review provisions.[12]

Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning at the Department of Transport and Planning informed the Committee that the new provision is in line with the Housing Statement and creates 'a suite of planning tools that can be implemented to support the development of additional housing in and around activity centres and in other well-serviced locations.'[13]

Figure 1.1 shows how the Housing Choice and Transport Zone and the Built Form Overlay apply to activity centres that have access to jobs, public transport and services.

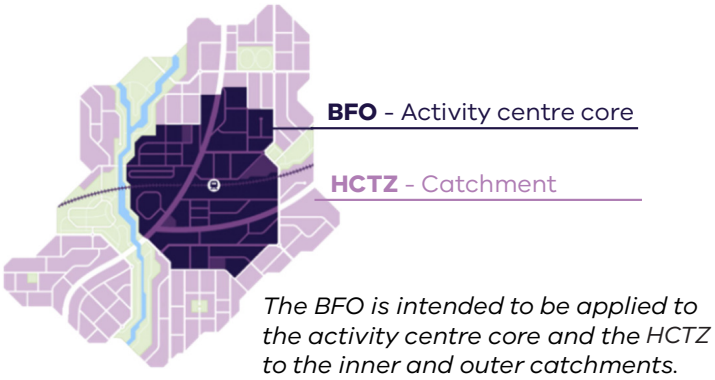
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11 Andrew McKeegan, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 2.

12 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 6.

13 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3.

Figure 1.1 The application of the Housing Choice and Transport Zone and the Built Form Overlay to activity centres enabled by VC257.



Source: Department of Transport and Planning, Presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 6.

Ms Peterson informed the Committee that the spatial application of the HCTZ was intended to be applied to 'residentially zoned land that is within easy walking distance of a key transport node, which would typically be a railway transport station. The distance typically would be an 800-metre walking.'[14]

In relation to the spatial application of the BFO, she said: 'The built form overlay is a standardised overlay that typically would be applied to the core of an activity centre, and that is land that would be typically zoned for commercial land uses'.[15]

It should be noted that amendment VC257 only makes available the tools to implement the BFO and HCTZ, it does not apply to any land. However, planning scheme amendment GC252 was recently approved, which amends 12 metropolitan planning schemes to apply the HCTZ and BFO in relation to 10 activity centres.[16]

The BFO exempts third party notice and review rights of the Act unless a schedule to the overlay specifies otherwise. The schedules to the overlay applied by amendment GC252 did not reinstate third party notice and review rights. One consequence of this is that neither the Planning Scheme Amendments nor the applications that will be made under the new planning controls were or will be subject to public notice.

1.3.4 An overview of amendment VC267

Amendment VC267 implements new residential development planning assessment provisions to boost housing construction. The amendment commenced operation on 31 March 2025.

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14 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

15 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

16 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 6.

VC267 replaces clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions, which had been known as the ResCode. The new clause 55 is also known as the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code (the townhouse code) which now applies to residential buildings up to three storeys. It also introduces a new clause 57, which applies to four storey apartment standards.[17]

Clause 55 – the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code

The new clause 55 applies to applications for the construction of residential developments of two or more dwellings on a lot, up to and including three storeys, in a number of residential zones.[18] This includes the Housing Choice and Transport Zone provided for by amendment VC257.[19]

Clause 55 provides a new 'deemed to comply' decision making process for assessing applications. If a development meets a set of standards outlined in clause 55 which correspond to the objectives of the clause, then the requirements are deemed to be met, and the application is exempt from third party review rights.[20]

Planning authorities are exempt from considering other decision guidelines or policies, including other planning scheme guidelines, and matters under section 60 of the Planning and Environment Act.[21] Only if a development does not meet a standard, can a responsible authority consider the applicable decision guidelines in determining whether the corresponding objective is met.[22] If a development does not meet a standard then the third party review rights resume.[23]

Ending the requirement to consider clause 65

Under the old clause 55 (ResCode), planners were required to consider holistically whether a development applied in a qualitative sense to a number of objectives outlined in clause 65 of the Victoria Planning Provisions. Figure 1.2 below gives a list of the considerations a planner must have regard for under clause 65.

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17 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4; Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 13.

18 There are: Mixed Use Zone, Township Zone, Residential Growth Zone, General Residential Zone, Neighbourhood Residential Zone (Department of Transport and Planning, *Townhouse and Low-rise Code Guidelines: clause 55 two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings,* Melbourne, May 2025, p. 3.)

19 Department of Transport and Planning, *Townhouse and Low-rise Code Guidelines: clause 55 two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings*, Melbourne, May 2025, p. 3; Department of Transport and Planning, Presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 13.

20 Department of Transport and Planning, *Townhouse and Low-rise Code Guidelines: clause 55 two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings*, Melbourne, May 2025, p. 3.

21 Department of Transport and Planning, *Townhouse and Low-rise Code Guidelines: clause 55 two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings*, Melbourne, May 2025, p. 2.

22 Department of Transport and Planning, *Townhouse and Low-rise Code Guidelines: clause 55 two or more dwellings on a lot and residential buildings*, Melbourne, May 2025, p. 3.

23 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5.

Figure 1.2 Clause 65 of the Victoria Planning Provisions

65 DECISION GUIDELINES
Because a permit can be granted does not imply that a permit should or will be granted. The responsible authority must decide whether the proposal will produce acceptable outcomes in terms of the decision guidelines of this clause.

65.01 APPROVAL OF AN APPLICATION OR PLAN
Before deciding on an application or approval of a plan, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- The matters set out in section 60 of the Act.
- Any significant effects the environment, including the contamination of land, may have on the use or development.
- The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- The purpose of the zone, overlay or other provision.
- Any matter required to be considered in the zone, overlay or other provision.
- The orderly planning of the area.
- The effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area.
- The proximity of the land to any public land.
- Factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality.
- Whether the proposed development is designed to maintain or improve the quality of stormwater within and exiting the site.
- The extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction.
- Whether native vegetation is to be or can be protected, planted or allowed to regenerate.
- The degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard.
- The adequacy of loading and unloading facilities and any associated amenity, traffic flow and road safety impacts.
- The impact the use or development will have on the current and future development and operation of the transport system.

This clause does not apply to a VicSmart application.

Source: Victoria Planning Provisions as at 5 May 2025

Dr Stephen Rowley, a planning academic and practitioner, said the application of clause 65:

> allows a general ability to catch things not specifically addressed by the controls but it is broader; it means if it suddenly becomes apparent that land is in a floodway, for example, you have got an ability under clause 65 to assess it.[24]

Under the new clause 55, if a development meets the standards outlined in the clause, then it is deemed to comply, and the considerations outlined in clause 65 cannot be applied when granting planning permission. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 2.

New clause 57

Amendment VC257 introduces a new clause 57, which applies to applications for the construction of four-storey residential developments in a residential zone. There is no 'deemed to comply' element in clause 57 for the consideration of planning approval of

24 Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 30.

four-storey buildings. As such, the consideration of decision guidelines and policies, including clause 65 and section 60 of the Planning and Environment Act remain in place.

1.3.5 An overview of VC274

Amendment VC274 came into operation on 28 February 2025. It introduces a new zone, the Precinct Zone (PRZ) in new clause 37.10 of the Victoria Planning Provisions. The PRZ is a special purpose zone that provides a framework for the implementation of strategic work in priority precincts. When applied the PRZ will 'support a streamlined assessment process for planning permit applications' which will 'support improved housing affordability by facilitating additional housing supply and choice of housing type.'[25]

The Department of Transport and Planning informed the Committee that the PRZ will be applied to 'priority precincts where substantial change in use and development is planned including SRL [Suburban Rail Loop] precincts and other priority precincts identified in Plan for Victoria.'[26]

The Department also noted 'Under the PRZ, an application under any provision of the planning scheme is exempt from the third-party notice and decision requirements, and third-party review rights of the Act unless a schedule to the zone specifies otherwise.'[27]

Suburban Rail Loop East draft structure plans and draft planning scheme amendments, which propose to apply the PRZ closed for feedback on 22 April 2025.[28]

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25 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 17.

26 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 16.

27 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 16.

28 Department of Transport and Planning, presentation to the Committee at a public hearing on 17 April 2025, p. 18.

Chapter 2
Issues raised

2.1 Support for the aims of the Victoria Planning Provisions amendments

Common to all three amendments were explanatory reports stating that the purposes of the amendments included: to *increase* housing, and to implement Victoria's Housing Statement.[1]

There was a high level of general agreement among witnesses – the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), local councils, industry and professional peak bodies, academics, lobby groups and community groups – about the policy issues that the amendments are seeking to address:

- whether described as a 'crisis' or a 'shortage', most witnesses acknowledged the need to enable the construction of more homes, including more affordable homes (however defined)[2]
- most witnesses acknowledged that this will require significant urban infill especially in well-located areas[3]
- most witnesses supported the notion that the planning system warrants review and reform.[4]

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1 Department of Transport and Planning, *Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes: amendment VC257 explanatory report*, Melbourne, February 2025, p. 5 ('VC257 explanatory report'); *Department of Transport and Planning, Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes: amendment VC267 explanatory report*, Melbourne, March 2025, p. 4 ('VC267 explanatory report)' ; *Department of Transport and Planning, Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes: amendment VC274 explanatory report ('*VC274 explanatory report'*)*, Melbourne, February 2025, pp. 4–6.

2 See, for example, Robert Pradolin, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Housing All Australians, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 18 ('crisis'); Jonathan O'Brien, Lead Organiser, YIMBY Melbourne public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 19 ('shortage'); Patrick Fensham, President, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 9 (on the role the planning system should play with affordable housing through a mandated contribution); Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), *Submission 101*, 24 April 2025, p. 5; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 50 ('council agrees that … [the amendments aimed at increasing the supply of social and affordable housing] is needed to provide social affordable housing in well-located areas').

3 See, for example, James Brooks, Economist, Committee for Economic Development of Australia, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 31 ('it is quite clear that increasing densities in well-located areas and transport is ultimately going to be good for key workers').

4 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 33, 37; Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 34; Mark Sheppard, Board President, Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4.

The witnesses differed significantly, however, on *how* the policy aims should be achieved. Matters on which the witnesses most often disagreed included:

- the causes of planning and building delays[5]
- the extent to which matters that sit outside the planning system contribute to the policy problems[6]
- whether planning controls regulate permits or create incentives to act on permits[7]
- whether the building system is adequate to address matters not addressed in the planning system[8]
- the design of new planning provisions, especially when and how to 'codify'
- types of development.[9]

FINDING 3: All witnesses appearing before the Committee expressed support for the policy objective of facilitating significant increases in well-located housing. While some witnesses argued strongly that the new planning provisions introduced under the amendments will be inefficient, or ineffective, or will create unintended consequences, their criticism was focused on the design of the planning provisions rather than the policy aims of the planning scheme amendments. Other witnesses argued that the reforms could contribute to the construction of more homes.

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5 See, for example, some witnesses referred to '[t]hird-party appeals' (Jonathan O'Brien, Lead Organiser, YIMBY Melbourne public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 26) or the fact that '[the developers of a particular activity centre] are not starting construction, so it is not the approvals that are causing the problem' (Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 59). See also, for example, Annaliese Battista, Director, Planning and Place, Stonnington City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 59 ([we have] permits that are not acted on … because the cost of construction is too high at the moment).

6 See, for example, Brendan Coates, Program Director, Housing and Economic Security, Grattan Institute, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 61 ('the planning system is not the only thing that affects how much housing gets built in the short term. … If interest rates come down, we will see more housing being constructed. The Reserve Bank has been clear that every 1 percentage point increase in interest rates reduces housing approvals by 7 per cent the following year').

7 See, for example, Brendan Coates, Program Director, Housing and Economic Security, Grattan Institute, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 61 ('[w]hat our research shows is that a lot of Melburnians or Victorians would actually choose denser forms of housing if it was made available'); Mark Sheppard, Board President, Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 8 (on 'planning controls to encourage and incentivise the development of more compact forms of housing').

8 See Section 2.5.2 and Section 2.5.4 of this report.

9 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 43 ('[i]n principle the idea of codifying what the right balance of densification and character looks like is exactly the road we should be going down, and that is how you resolve that … but codifying based on a sort of 90s-originating, early-2000s medium-density villa unit control and working backwards to generate your code was absolutely not the right way to do that'); Brendan Coates, Program Director, Housing and Economic Security, Grattan Institute, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 62 (in support of 'directly upzoning well-located land and better codifying' and in support of Victorian government reforms); Patrick Fensham, President, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3 ('VC267, we believe, has been flawed from conception in seeking to codify a set of controls that were designed as discretionary').

2.2 Facilitating the provision of affordable housing

While each of the three amendments seek to facilitate an increase in housing, according to the explanatory reports, only two give effect to the objective of planning in Victoria 'to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria'.[10] These are amendments VC257 and VC274, which both enable a mechanism, through the BFO and PRZ respectively, to produce a 'public benefit uplift' that could include affordable housing as defined in the Act.[11]

None of the amendments make provision for mandatory affordable housing contributions.[12] Some submitters pointed out that mandatory contributions are not possible under the current Act, and referred to the Plan for Victoria to show the Government's future intentions about requiring affordable housing contributions.[13]

Plan for Victoria proposes two short term milestones, being to 'Consider setting policy targets for percentage of new homes that are social or affordable' and to 'Review the legislative framework that supports the delivery of social and affordable homes'.[14] It also proposes an outcome:

> The affordability of homes in new development and the amount of dedicated social housing will become explicit matters considered in the planning system when changing planning schemes or considering development application.[15]

Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274 all commenced before the implementation of the Plan for Victoria milestones and outcomes.[16]

One of the Government's intentions with the Victoria Planning Provision (VPP) amendments is to decrease the cost of housing by increasing housing supply.[17]

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10 *VC257 explanatory report*, p. 5; *VC274 explanatory report*, p. 4; affordable housing is defined by section 3AA of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 Act (Victoria) as 'housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following—(a) very low income households; (b) low income households; (c) moderate income households'.

11 *VC257 explanatory report*, p. 2; *VC274 explanatory report*, p.1.

12 See, for example, Patrick Fensham, President, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3.

13 See, for example, Patrick Fensham, President, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3 ('a mandated contribution to social and affordable housing is the best way for planning to make a meaningful contribution to affordability. We do not see that in the controls yet; there is some discussion about it in *Plan for Victoria*. So the intent of these controls for affordability is missing the key aspect, which is the need for a mandated contribution to provide housing, to put housing within the reach of the estimated 10 to 15 per cent of households in rental stress').

14 Department of Transport and Planning, *Plan for Victoria*, Melbourne, 2025, p. 69.

15 Department of Transport and Planning, *Plan for Victoria,* Melbourne, 2025, p. 69.

16 Plan for Victoria was released on the 28th of February 2025.

17 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 4 ('[t]he Grattan Institute's research shows that if we provide 50,000 more dwellings per year over a 10-year period above and beyond what is expected, that will have a 20 per cent reduction in the price of both rents and housing prices. So that information gives us confidence that if we improve the supply of housing in general, that does put downward pressure on housing, recognising that the solutions particularly for very low and low income earners need to be dealt with separately. But in terms of the broader issue of housing affordability, supply is certainly part of the solution').

FINDING 4: The Committee was not provided with any modelling about the expected effect of any of the amendments on housing supply generally, and the effect of increased supply on house prices.

It is also not clear to the Committee whether the Government intends, in future, to apply the Plan for Victoria initiatives in relation to affordable housing to the Activity Centres, Precincts and residential zones that are impacted by the three amendments under inquiry.

The Committee notes that the Government has implemented other reforms which directly target housing affordability, which are outside the scope of the three planning amendments examined by this inquiry. Housing affordability remains a major concern for Victorians.

The Committee was asked, by the Department of Transport and Planning, YIMBY Melbourne and others, to trust that the amendments would have a likely positive effect on the supply of new homes in Victoria, and that the increased supply would have a significant positive effect on the affordability of homes.[18]

The Property Council of Australia (Victoria), Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria), the Housing Industry Association (Victoria) and the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) and many local councils pointed to factors outside the planning system that prevent significant construction and housing affordability gains.[19]

Housing All Australians and others also provided statements emphasising how affordable housing was necessary to address homelessness,[20] warning of the negative impacts that the delays in affordable housing planning will continue to have on future generations.[21]

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18 See, for example, Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 4, 15; Jonathan O'Brien, Lead Organiser, YIMBY Melbourne public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 29 (through lowering market rents); Dr Peter Tulip, Chief Economist, Centre for Independent Studies, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 20; James Brooks, Economist, Committee for Economic Development of Australia, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 23.

19 See for example, Cath Evans, Executive Director, Property Council of Australia (Victorian Division), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 50; Ashley Williams, Board Member, Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 50; Keith Ryan, Executive Director, Victoria, Housing Industry Association (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 50–51; Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), *Submission 101*, 24 April 2025, pp. 13–14; Jeff Green, Director, City Development, Whitehorse City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 45–46; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 50; Bayside City Council, *Submission 82*, 24 April 2025, p. 12.

20 See, for example, James Brooks, Economist, Committee for Economic Development of Australia, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p.21; Dr Peter Tulip, Chief Economist, Centre for Independent Studies, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 31; Robert Pradolin, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Housing All Australians, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 18; YIMBY Melbourne public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 19.

21 See, for example, Robert Pradolin, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Housing All Australians, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 29 ('my concern is that we are heading for civil unrest').

Evidence from the Government about the likely effect of the three amendments on housing supply and housing affordability would have assisted the Committee, and would also assist Victorians in understanding the objectives of the Government's planning reform program and the Housing Statement.

In response to questions on notice regarding the evidence or modelling used to underpin the Government's arguments regarding the impact of the planning scheme amendments on supply and affordability of housing, the Department of Transport and Planning provided 3 papers that outlined conflicting information.[22] Curiously, one of the papers, published by the NSW Parliamentary Research Office in August 2024, demonstrated the lack of strong evidence in the Australian context to support the notion that the planning system is preventing increased supply of housing, or that increasing supply of market-rate housing has any significant impact on affordability.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Victorian Government publish publicly modelling to demonstrate how the planning scheme amendments will impact on housing supply and affordability.

The Committee heard evidence that these planning changes are a 'missed opportunity' to address housing affordability in Victoria. Testimony regarding mechanisms to increase access to affordable housing for low and very low-income households included increasing community and public housing stock, raising the rate of welfare payments (such as job seeker and rent assistance) and mandating affordable housing contributions. Several witnesses considered inclusionary zoning in combination with increased housing supply as the best way to achieve affordability.

FINDING 5: Little convincing evidence was advanced to the Inquiry that the State Government's announced planning changes will guarantee additional housing and no substantive evidence was advanced that the Government's plan would with certainty provide additional affordable housing.

One witness described the Government's reform as 'an experiment'. Brendan Coates from the Grattan Institute said, 'I think the most important thing is that we roll out the reforms and we basically run the experiment'.[23]

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22 Response from Department of Transport and Planning to Questions on Notice, received 1 May 2025, Attachments 1–3.

23 Brendan Coates, Program Director, Housing and Economic Security, Grattan Institute, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 62.

2.3 Notice of Victoria Planning Provisions amendments to local councils

Also common to all three amendments were 'reasons for decision to exercise power of intervention under section 20(4) of the [Act]'. That is, the power of the Minister to exempt herself from the requirements to give notice of the amendments, where it is in the interests of Victoria to do so.

There is clear concern from many councils and communities that the Allan Labor Government did not consult adequately before gazetting the three planning scheme amendments and the associated GC 252 amendment.

FINDING 6: The Victorian Government did not properly consult on these three amendments and the Committee is of the view that the Minister has inappropriately exempted herself from expected consultation.

RECOMMENDATION 4: At a minimum, modification of planning scheme amendments should be undertaken after a round of genuine consultation with councils and communities.

The Committee received evidence that the section 20(4) exemptions are frequently applied to amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions because of the impracticality of providing notice for planning provisions with statewide application.[24]

Some submitters gave evidence that, although the Minister has the power to exempt themselves from the requirements to give notice of the amendments, the absence of notice created administrative problems.[25] This was particularly the case for the local councils seeking to implement the new clause 55 introduced by amendment VC267.[26]

The Department of Transport and Planning gave evidence that the transitional period for the new clause 55, being March 6 2025 to March 31 2025, was an adequate period to allow local councils to prepare for applications under that clause.[27] The local councils, and the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), gave evidence that new systems and templates for notice and other correspondence needed to be applied

24 Response from Department of Transport and Planning to Questions on Notice, received 1 May 2025, p. 4.

25 See, for example, Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35; James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 39, 42.

26 See, for example, Jeff Green, Director, City Development, Whitehorse City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 45; Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 48.

27 Colleen Peterson, Head, State Planning, Metropolitan Melbourne, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 84–85.

from 6 March 2025, the same day that amendment VC267 was gazetted and the first time that the full detail of the new clause 55 was known.[28]

The MAV proposed that a reasonable notice period be applied before any new planning provisions introduced under VPP amendments commence. This idea was put to the local councils during the hearings and was generally agreed.[29]

FINDING 7: Where local councils are expected to implement new planning provisions introduced under amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions, it is reasonable that they be given notice of the full detail of those provisions with enough time to prepare for their commencement. This did not occur in relation to amendment VC267.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That the Victorian Government make a policy, by 30 June 2025, that applies to all amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions, other than prescribed amendments, to require an informal notice period in which all amendment documents are published for no less than 28 days before the amendment is gazetted, and to require that those documents are brought to the attention of the responsible authorities whose duty it will be to administer the new provisions.

2.4 Amendment VC257

2.4.1 VC257 and the objectives of the Planning and Environment Act

As discussed in Chapter 1, VC257 creates the head controls for the Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) and Built Form Overlay (BFO) but did not apply those controls to land. In the case of the first 10 activity centres, the application of the HCTZ and BFO to land was facilitated by amendment GC252, which was gazetted on 11 April 2025.[30]

Though many witnesses provided evidence about amendment GC252 and challenged the adequacy of the program of consultation that preceded it,[31] amendment GC252 was outside of the scope of the inquiry and is therefore not the subject of either findings or recommendations.

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28 See, for example, James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35; Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 64.

29 Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35. See also, for example, Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 73; Jonathan Guttmann, General Manager, Planning and Place, Kingston City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 73–74.

30 Department of Transport and Planning, *Amendment GC252 explanatory report*, Melbourne, April 2025, pp. 3–5.

31 See, for example, Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 52; Hannah McBride-Burgess, Manager, City Futures, Stonnington City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 52; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 52.

Many witnesses argued that the application of VC257 has the potential to properly balance the objectives of planning in Victoria, and provide for orderly and efficient planning, but that this will depend on how the local schedules are drafted.[32]

Some witnesses were concerned about the impact the amendments would have on protecting heritage, especially those who were concerned about protecting the integrity of heritage precincts.[33] Other witnesses gave evidence that existing heritage overlays would continue and suffice as protection.[34]

As amendment VC257 created the BFO and HCTZ but none of its local schedules, the performance of these planning controls cannot be assessed. As a result, it is not possible for the Committee, under the terms of this inquiry, to make conclusions about whether amendment VC257 gives proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria.

FINDING 8: The Committee makes no conclusions about whether amendment VC257 gives proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria, but finds that the controls introduced by VC257 have the potential to give proper effect to the objectives depending on how their local schedules are drafted and where they apply.

2.4.2 Heritage

Heritage is one of the most significant concerns of many submitters to the Inquiry.

The Heritage Council of Victoria raised many issues in its submission. The Heritage Council of Victoria said:

> The gazettal of multiple, significant VPP amendments since February 2025, without an overall overarching accompanying explanation and detailed description as to how they precisely operate, creates uncertainties and challenges for stakeholders, practitioners, and the community. Clarity has been sought by the Council. A Government briefing is scheduled for the Council on 1 May 2025.
>
> ...
>
> The Council emphasises that:
>
> - cultural heritage protection, conservation and adaptation can contribute to change rather than be viewed as a constraint to override;

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32 See, for example, Colleen Peterson, Head, State Planning, Metropolitan Melbourne, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 3 ('I think it is important to recognise that amendment VC257 did not in and of itself apply the controls to any land in Victoria but really put them into the toolkit'); Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 37.

33 See, for example, Professor Michael Buxton, Charter 29, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 55. Christina Branagan, Boroondara Heritage Group for Advocacy and Protection public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 4, 7–8; Heritage Council of Victoria, *Submission 133*, 24 April 2025, p. 12.

34 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 38 ('those are arguments we are used to seeing play out in terms of how to put a replacement building in a heritage streetscape, so it is not necessarily a fatal concern for me').

- the amenity of our cities and towns, which is highly valued by communities, can be enhanced by the retention and adaptation of cultural heritage places;
- heritage is a key economic and tourism driver in many communities (and is hoped to be for many Victorian goldfields locations) and provides connections to place;
- conservation of cultural heritage can contribute positively to Victoria's growth and planning strategies, climate mitigation response and housing initiatives;
- balanced and considered growth, respectfully, should weigh both heritage values and development outcomes that will work together to serve the community and future generations who will inherit the legacy.

...

Likely significant unintended outcomes

Inadequate or an absent focus on the context for new development may compromise the setting and context of State-registered places, and places and precincts of regional and/or local significance:

Examples from the three amendments as to how this could arise are:

- the provisions for activity centres which include locations with significant heritage values and State-registered heritage places but where the new provisions do not provide the requirement and framework for these to be acknowledged or considered;
- the lack of any reference to places that have identified special cultural values in the purpose of the BFO (clause 43.06) and the purpose of the HCT (clause 32.10);
- the ability of schedules to the BFO to specify that if there is any inconsistency between the outcomes and standards in the Overlay or a schedule to the Overlay and any other provision in this planning scheme, the outcomes and standards in the Overlay or a schedule to the Overlay prevail;
- the removal of neighbourhood character provisions and policy considerations in residential areas in situations where heritage and broader preferred design outcomes are entwined.

...

At a high level, the Council suggests changes to the three amendments that:

- provide clarity and certainty, where that might not currently be the case as described in this submission;
- ensure that assessments with respect to heritage places are not 'switched off', including permission for demolition;
- ensure the deemed to comply provisions do not override the assessments required under other controls for locations and places with already-identified special cultural values;
- related to the above point, retain discretion to allow for heritage values and contexts to be considered alongside the deemed to comply standards;

- exclude override provisions operating for heritage places and settings relevant to State-registered places.
- provide incentives and provisions to encourage the use, retention and adaptation of heritage places, such as a 'public benefit' provision in the BFO.[35]

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria submitted and said:

> As we have detailed, the three Amendments, especially VC257, would have a major adverse impact on the maintenance of heritage under the Heritage Overlay. As the Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee Reports showed, the HCTZ would be incompatible with the proper functioning of the HO. Moreover, the tendency throughout the three Amendments is to curtail community, neighbourhood and third-party participation in planning discussion, and obliging the responsible authority to issue permits without regard for the impact of the proposal on the community.
>
> The Royal Historical Society of Victoria therefore submits that the Committee should recommend rejection of VC257, VC267 and VC274.[36]

FINDING 9: The Committee acknowledges that the concerns expressed by many submitters that heritage and heritage values are at serious risk of being compromised by these planning amendments are valid. Protections should be available to protect our city and its magnificent heritage buildings and zones.

2.4.3 The adequacy of consultation leading up to amendment VC257

The Committee received many submissions and evidence during the hearings about the adequacy of the activity centres program and the development of the draft controls to support the first 10 activity centres, implemented in part by amendment VC257.[37]

Many submitters drew the Committee's attention to the Activity Centre Standing Advisory Committee.[38] That Committee, drawn from a pool of appointed experts,

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35 Heritage Council of Victoria, *Submission 133*, 24 April 2025, pp. 5–7.

36 Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc, *Submission No 65*, 17 April 2025, p. 9.

37 See, for example, Boroondara Heritage Group for Advocacy & Protection, *Submission 68*, 17 April 2025, p. 10; Highett Progress Association, *Submission 134*, 24 April 2025, p. 3–5; Mark Cassar, Liveable Moonee Valley, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 3; Jane Oldham, Boroondara Community Group, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5; Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 47; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p 49–50; Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 63–64.

38 See, for example, James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 36; Jeff Green, Director, City Development, Whitehorse City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 45; Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 47; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 49.

was tasked with providing advice on referred matters within 10 business days of receipt of any letter of referral.[39]

The first Advisory Committee report is relevant to VC257 because it considered draft versions of the new controls. However, the report provides extensive discussion about how the Committee's requirement to report within 10 business days, and the inconsistencies in the matters referred to it, among other limitations, led the [Advisory] Committee to advise that the report 'should not be taken as a comprehensive merits review of the draft [controls] or their strategic basis'.[40]

On the first day of hearings, the Department of Transport and Planning argued that there had been 'extensive consultation' on the activity centres program.[41] On the final day of hearings, the Department cited the number of written submissions and survey responses made by members of the public under the activity centres program as evidence of the breadth of public consultation.[42] The Activity Centre Standing Advisory Committee noted in its first report that no submissions were referred to it.[43]

The Department did not provide evidence about whether it considered the independent expert advisory mechanism, the Activity Centre Standing Advisory Committee, to have been successful, or what had been learned from the experience.[44]

The local councils affected by GC252 providing evidence to the Select Committee argued strongly that the consultation with councils on the proposed controls for the activity centres was inadequate.[45]

The Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) submitted that there is 'little evidence of, or transparency around, modelling or testing of the reforms … and the process for delivery of new controls appears to have prioritised haste over a demonstration of good planning principles and processes, including public participation'.[46]

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39 Department of Transport and Planning, *Terms of Reference: Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee*, Melbourne, August 2024, p. 2.

40 Planning Panels Victoria, *Referral 1: Draft Built Form Overlay and draft Walkable Catchment Zone: Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee Report*, Melbourne, 6 November 2024, p. 10.

41 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5

42 Colleen Peterson, Head, State Planning, Metropolitan Melbourne, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 84.

43 Planning Panels Victoria, *Referral 1: Draft Built Form Overlay and draft Walkable Catchment Zone: Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee Report*, Melbourne, November 2024, pp. 6, 7 ('[n]o submissions were referred to the Committee … [and] [t]he Committee was not able to independently verify the accuracy or comprehensiveness of the summary of issues raised in submissions in the DTP Report').

44 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 5 (in relation to the activity centres standing advisory committee).

45 See, for example, Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 52; Hannah McBride-Burgess, Manager, City Futures, Stonnington City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 52; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 52.

46 Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), *Submission 101,* 24 April 2025, p. 5.

The Committee heard evidence from some local Councils about housing capacity studies and activity centre plans that they had undertaken themselves, but which were superseded by the Victorian Planning Authority's activities centre programs. Some argued that their knowledge about local places and communities would lead to better quality plans if the Councils and not the State Government had been the lead agencies.[47]

FINDING 10: There is a significant difference between the views of the Department of Transport and Planning, and the views of planning system users outside of the Department, about the adequacy of the consultation that led to VC257. While the Department provided some evidence of a high quantity of consultation, others tended to criticise the quality of that consultation.

FINDING 11: The speed with which the activity centres program and planning controls were developed was a factor that contributed to the under-utilisation of the expert Activity Centre Standing Advisory Committee.

The Committee heard evidence from Professor Andrew Butt, some local councils and the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) about the risks of applying the HCTZ and BFO to land without a clear plan for the timely provision of infrastructure.[48]

While this is not a matter that needs to be addressed in the head controls for the HCTZ and BFO, the Committee agrees that the activity centres should be accompanied by clear commitments about how and when infrastructure of all types will be delivered.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That the Victorian Government review the expert advisory mechanism and consultation methods (with planning experts, local councils and communities) for the first 10 activity centres and make improvements about both in relation to the next 50 activity centres.

The Committee heard evidence that the Activity Centre Standing Advisory Committee, process for examining proposed activity centres was not satisfactory. The Boroondara Community Group and the Bayside City Council provided evidence pointing directly to failures in process. The Committee timelines were inadequate preventing full

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47 See, for example, Sophie Torney, Mayor, City of Boroondara, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 61–62, ('trust the councils to deliver. They are already doing the work. We have all done so much work for many years on this. We are delivering. Work with us. Let us do the plans. We know the communities, we know where the growth can happen and we know we can do it in the right way, so let the councils be part of it. Give us 12 months. Give us the time to develop the plans to deliver the targets').

48 See, for example, Professor Andrew Butt, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 63–64, ('[a] lot of evidence that we have in our own research centre around particularly urban greenfield areas is that the late provision of public transport means people just do not ever use it, even when it comes' and noting that he 'would take the view that there are deficiencies in some of them that could be remedied by the inclusion of additional elements, particularly that element of requiring the linking between infrastructure and planning and infrastructure and housing'); Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), *Submission 101*, 24 April 2025, p. 5; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 50; Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 53.

consideration and consultation. Further, it was asserted the Committees were not provided with all the information needed. The Select Committee heard evidence from community groups that key recommendations relating to heritage in the City of Boroondara were not taken into account by the Government.[49]

FINDING 12: The advice of the Standing Committee on Activity Centres specifically provided advice to change the planning scheme amendments to protect heritage. This advice was not followed by the Minister for Planning.

2.5 Amendment VC267

2.5.1 The adequacy of consulation leading up to amendment VC267

A number of local councils who spoke with the Committee were highly critical of the consultation process on the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code (the townhouse code). When the amendment was gazetted on 6 March 2025, many councils noted the short timeframe for responding,[50] the overlap with the local elections,[51] the impact of extinguishment of local policies,[52] and the extent of new information (including the clause 65 exemption outlined in Chapter 1) being provided for the first time.[53]

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49 Boroondara Community Group, *Supplementary Submission No 19a*, 24 April 2025, p. 7 (see paragraphs under 'Rejection of independent Committee's recommendations'); Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 49–50 ('We find ourselves in a planning system that is becoming more minister-centric, especially through the use and potential overuse of the development facilitation program, which operates largely behind closed doors, and then a reform process where the very advisory committees that had been established to review certain parts of the reform process itself have even expressed caution in their reports, outlining the limitations in their own reports because of the very limited role they have been asked to play and the extremely short timeframes that they have been asked to work within, as well as their concerns of having been restricted from accessing information that may have otherwise been of assistance to them. On any review, the recent reports of the standing advisory committee on the 10 activity centres are extraordinary and are clear and loud alarm bells. In the context of what each 10 advisory committee has stated, I ask this committee whether there can be any doubt that the VC amendments before them are a reflection of the Victorian government simply wanting to get its reform agenda in place rather than being open and transparent about the planning reform. In our submission the reform process has failed to meet the most basic requirements in relation to transparency. It is all the more disconcerting that the reform process has not been based on an even mildly solid base of strategic planning, which has been a traditional approach in the Victorian planning system and which has been a hallmark of large-scale reforms in the past.').

50 See, for example, Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 64.

51 See, for example, Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 47; Matthew Cripps, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Bayside City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 50.

52 See, for example, Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 34 (on the impact of making local planning scheme amendments void); Jeff Green, Director, City Development, Whitehorse City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 45 ('[r]eforms like VC267 introduce tick-the-box pathways that remove local policy, neighbourhood character guidelines and, most significantly, appeal rights. These are not just technical changes; they fundamentally alter the way decisions are made and who is a part of them. Planning for housing delivery appears to be becoming an administrative task, not an integrated process that considers infrastructure provision, liveability and sustainability').

53 See, for example, Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35 ('[l]ocal planners learned about the full extent of exemptions in clause 65 on 6 March when the controls were gazetted and came into effect'); Kate Murphy, Strategic Planner, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 73; Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 73 ; Jonathan Guttmann, General Manager, Planning and Place, Kingston City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 73.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council called for the repeal of amendment VC267 to allow time to improve the townhouse code, and reinstate performance-based decision making before reintroducing it.[54]

The Department of Transport and Planning argued that the following measures were evidence of the commitment to work with councils to implement the townhouse code effectively:

- workshops held with councils before amendment VC267 was gazetted
- the issuing of guidelines on 28 March 2025
- making amendments to the Code through amendment VC276 (which corrected errors in VC267 and was gazetted on 2 April 2025).[55]

In addition, Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning at the Department of Transport and Planning, gave evidence that she had advised council planners to email her if they wished.[56]

The submission by Knox City Council argues that the workshops were 'one-hour information sessions for council officers... and were the sole form of direct engagement. No formal training or additional support has since been offered'.[57] The submission also argued that the guidelines published on the Department's website on Friday 28 March about how to assess 'deemed to comply' standards are not able to be considered if the application is 'deemed to comply', for the reason that section 60(1A)(g) of the Act, which would normally allow the decision-maker to consider guidelines published by the Department, is made exempt by clause 55 (in short 'switched off').[58]

In the Committee's view, amendment VC267 constitutes the most fundamental changes to the way residential development is assessed in Victoria since ResCode (see Chapter 1) commenced in August 2001.[59] The scale of change should have been met with a well-resourced and orderly program of transition. Given the scale of the change, it is perhaps inevitable that some practitioners who conduct those assessments will be critical of the changes, no matter how robust the program of transition. However, it is clear to the Committee that the process leading up to, and following the commencement of amendment VC267 should have been significantly more accountable, orderly, transparent and informative. The Committee's conclusions about these matters are reflected in Finding 2 and Recommendation 1 in this report.

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54 Mornington Peninsula, *Submission 241*, 24 April 2025.

55 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 92; Response from Department of Transport and Planning to Questions on Notice, received 1 May 2025, pp. 4, 5.

56 Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 92.

57 Knox City Council, *Submission 206*, 24 April 2025, p. 8.

58 Knox City Council, *Submission 206*, 24 April 2025, p. 8.

59 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 30 ('profound change').

2.5.2 Exemption of clause 65 decision guidelines

The Committee heard evidence from councils, the MAV, the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) and Dr Stephen Rowley, a planning academic and practitioner, about unintended consequences that could materialise under the 'deemed to comply' mechanism in the townhouse code.[60]

Chapter 1 gives an overview of the 'deemed to comply' mechanism under the new clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions (also known as the townhouse code) which exempt the application of the usual requirements to consider certain matters listed under clause 65 of the decision guidelines.

While the exemption from clause 65 was included in the gazetted amendment VC267, the Committee was informed that the exemption was not disclosed in consultation on earlier drafts of the townhouse code.[61]

The Committee heard from the Department, the Property Council Australia (Victoria), the Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria), the Housing Institute Australia (Victoria) and YIMBY Melbourne, that the 'deemed to comply' mechanism would support fast decision-making.[62]

The Committee was assured by councils and other witnesses that the purpose of the clause 65 decision guidelines was not to obstruct development but, instead, to ensure that certain matters that should be addressed during planning could be factored into decisions.[63] This includes matters that require consideration of risks to health and the environment. Including:

- any significant effects the environment, including the contamination of land, may have on the use or development
- the effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area
- factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality

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60 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p '[i]n principle the idea of codifying what the right balance of densification and character looks like is exactly the road we should be going down, and that is how you resolve that … but codifying based on a sort of 90s-originating, early-2000s medium-density villa unit control and working backwards to generate your code was absolutely not the right way to do that'); Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 33–34 (on 'unintended consequences'); Patrick Fensham, President, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 2–3.

61 See, for example, Kate Murphy, Strategic Planner, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 73.

62 Colleen Peterson, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 6; Property Council of Australia (Victorian Division), *Submission 90*, 24 April 2025, pp. 7, 8; Housing Industry Association (Victoria), *Submission 111*, 24 April 2025, Transcript of evidence, pp. 1, 3; Linda Allison, Chief Executive Officer, Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 43; YIMBY Melbourne, *Submission 115*, 24 April 2025, pp. 14, 16.

63 See for example, James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35; Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 64.

- the extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction
- the degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard.[64]

The Department argued that problems with the townhouse code could be addressed as they are identified and that certain matters can be left to the Building Code to address.[65] However, some councils, the MAV, the Planning Institute Australia (Victoria) and Dr Rowley strongly disagreed that this was an adequate or appropriate approach.[66]

The Plan for Victoria commitment in relation to flooding is: '[t]o ensure development decisions account for new information about flood risk, we'll include new modelling data in planning schemes…'.[67] Exempting the clause 65 decision guidelines from decisions to be made under clause 55 would appear to remove the ability to consider new information about flood risk, if that new information has not yet been applied to land in the form of a planning overlay.[68]

FINDING 13: Victoria Planning Provisions amendment VC267's exemption in clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions from the requirements of the decision guidelines at clause 65 represents a substantial change to how residential development assessments are conducted where planning permits are required.

Some local councils, the MAV, the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) and Dr Rowley argued that the very broad statewide application of the townhouse code to a range of environmental conditions, natural hazard risks and low- and high-density scenarios means that some discretion should be allowed to ensure that the decisions made under clause 55 avoid poor outcomes.[69] They also argued that the use of the clause 65 decision guidelines is restrained by past tribunal decisions, and would not restrict housing approvals or development investment.[70]

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64 Clause 65 of the *Victoria Planning Provisions*; also see, for example, James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35; Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 64.

65 Colleen Peterson, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 14, 15.

66 See, for example, Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p.33 ('[i]t is too late to be left to a building code; it needs to be part of a planning code'); Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 40.

67 Department of Transport and Planning, *Plan for Victoria*, Melbourne, 2025, p. 87.

68 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 30, 40; Jane Keddie, Vice-President, Victorian Division, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 18 ('where we know there is a flood hazard but we do not have an overlay, things like potentially contaminated land and things like other environmental hazards that now are very problematic in terms of the assessment process').

69 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 40; Jane Keddie, Vice-President, Victorian Division, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 10; James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 35, 39, 40, 41; Brett Walters, Director, Strategy and Planning, Moonee Valley City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 64.

70 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 40; Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 34.

FINDING 14: The clause 65 decision guidelines of the Victoria Planning Provisions assist in guiding sound planning decisions. The most important are the guidelines that require consideration of risks to human life and health, and to the environment. These include:

- any significant effects the environment, including the contamination of land, may have on the use or development
- the effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area
- factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality
- the extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction
- the degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard.

RECOMMENDATION 7: The decision guidelines of clause 65 of the Victoria Planning Provisions should apply to all decisions made under clause 55. This is most important where risks to human life and health, and to the environment, should be identified and managed.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The Victorian Government work with councils to manage flood, bushfire and climate hazard risks and improve identification of risks to human life and health, and to the environment, in the Victoria Planning Provisions, including the planning scheme amendment process for overlays with up to date modelling.

2.5.3 The potential effect on tree canopy retention and removal

The Committee heard conflicting evidence about the likely effect of clause 55 on the retention of trees in residential areas that may arise from an increase in housing density as a result of amendment VC267.

Dr Rowley argued strongly that the absence of a separate landscaping objective in the townhouse code, and the inadequacy of the tree canopy cover objective and standard, could create incentives to remove trees.[71] The MAV and some councils agreed with Dr Rowley's arguments, while the Department did not.[72]

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71 Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 32, 33–35, 41.

72 See for example, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 33*;* Jeff Green, Director, City Development, Whitehorse City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 57; Jonathan Guttmann, General Manager, Planning and Place, Kingston City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 66; Colleen Peterson, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 100.

The Committee heard evidence about the possible excessive removal of existing mature trees from sites that already hold canopy cover in excess of the new standard in the townhouse code.[73]

The Committee also heard that the townhouse code might produce outcomes that make it difficult to achieve the Plan for Victoria target for 30 per cent tree canopy cover in urban areas.[74]

On the final day of hearings, the Department of Transport and Planning provided evidence that it is considering a new planning control, separate to clause 55, that requires a permit to remove a canopy tree over 5 metres in height.[75] The timing and application of that new control, and how that control will or will not relate to clause 55, was not disclosed.

The Committee was not presented with evidence from the Department about the likely changes to tree canopy cover across urban areas that are expected under clause 55.

FINDING 15: Without being presented with any evidence to the contrary, the Committee is concerned that clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions may lead to the excessive removal of existing trees and reduce tree canopy.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the Victorian Government publish and release modelling regarding the expected impact of the planning scheme amendments on tree canopy and vegetation in areas affected by the changes.

RECOMMENDATION 10: That the Victorian Government make improvements to clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions including the addition of a separate landscaping objective and standards, and changes to the tree canopy cover objective and standards. The introduction of any improvements should be undertaken as early as possible.

2.5.4 The potential effect on environmentally sustainable development standards

The Committee heard significant evidence from the Council Alliance for the Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) councils, the MAV, the Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association, the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria),

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73 See, for example, Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 33.

74 See, for example, Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 33.

75 Colleen Peterson, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 95.

Dr Rowley and others, about the effect of the townhouse code on environmentally sustainable development (ESD) outcomes.[76]

The townhouse code applies ESD standards to all homes in all local government areas. In many areas, these standards now exist where no standards existed previously.[77] The concern from many witnesses was about the lowering of ESD standards in those local government areas that have a local planning policy on ESD that is stronger than the ESD standards set out in clause 55.[78] The 28 CASBE councils account for the majority of the State in terms of population and planning activity.[79]

The Committee heard evidence from the Department that, while it would consider improvements to the townhouse code necessary to address insufficient ESD standards, many ESD matters could be left to the Building Code to address.[80] Dr Rowley, the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), the MAV and the CASBE councils disputed this argument and argued that ESD, especially in relation to 'passive design', is better addressed in the planning system.[81]

FINDING 16: New environmentally sustainable development standards now consistently apply to residential developments under clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions for all parts of the state, where they did not apply before. However, the effect of clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions and the exemptions from clause 65 and the ability to consider local planning policies has had the effect of lowering some environmentally sustainable development standards in 28 local government areas. Whether the lifting of environmentally sustainable development standards across the state, and the lowering of some environmentally sustainable development standards in 28 local government areas, creates a net benefit overall, has not been proven.

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76 See, for example, Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment, *Submission 246*, 24 April 2025, pp. 19–22; Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 33; James McLean, Planning and Sustainable Development Lead, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp 40–41; Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 40, 46; Jane Keddie, Vice-President, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 10, 18; Mark Sheppard, Board President, Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association, public hearing, Melbourne, 29 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 18; Jeff Green, Director, City Development, Whitehorse City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 46.; Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 48; Jonathan Guttmann, General Manager, Planning and Place, Kingston City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence,* p. 66.

77 Colleen Peterson, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 96, 97.

78 See, for example, Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 33; Jeff Green, Director, City Development, Whitehorse City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 46; Scott Walker, Director, Urban Living, Boroondara City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p, 48.

79 Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 33.

80 Colleen Peterson, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 14.

81 Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 40; Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria), *Submission 101*, 24 April 2025, pp. 9, 12; Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 33; Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment, *Submission 246*, 24 April 2025, pp. 9–10.

RECOMMENDATION 11: That the Victorian Government promptly review and improve the environmentally sustainable development standards in clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions with a view to ensuring the statewide standards meet the higher standards found in 28 local government areas.

2.5.5 The potential effect of changes to objector process and appeal rights

The Committee heard evidence from Dr Rowley and councils in relation to clause 55 that there may be problems with the timing and content of advice to be issued to objectors about whether or not objectors hold appeal rights. This is because notice of the application must be issued before the application's compliance with standards has been assessed, and because finding non-compliance with a standard may come late in the assessment process.[82] The Committee, while concerned about the impact of this issue, is unable to reliably predict the extent of this problem and makes no findings or recommendations about it.

The Committee also heard evidence from the Department, Dr Rowley and councils that there may be a significant role for the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in the short term in resolving disputes about whether or not applications have met the numerical standards.[83] The Committee, at this time, is unable to estimate the scale of this potential administrative burden and makes no findings or recommendations about it.

FINDING 17: The performance of clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions, including its performance in relation to the administrative process, must be measured.

FINDING 18: The planning amendments mark a reduction in long standing third party appeal rights in the planning system.

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82 See, for example, Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, pp. 33–34 ('[w]hen you get these very legalistic interpretations, the councils are then vulnerable to challenge in terms of whether they have issued a permit incorrectly, and then you get into legal disputes'); Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 33–34.

83 See, for example, Colleen Peterson, Deputy Secretary, Planning and Land Services, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 27; Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 34 ('[t]he sixth point is that because so much hinges on determining in black-and-white terms whether each and every numerical standard has been complied with, that will be the new locus for dispute. So there is going to be a significant call on the tribunal to make orders about whether standards have been met'); Dr Stephen Rowley, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, Transcript of evidence, p. 43; Jonathan Guttmann, General Manager, Planning and Place, Kingston City Council, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 74 (about VCAT).

2.6 Amendment VC274

As outlined in Chapter 1, amendment VC274 creates the head controls for a new zone called the Precinct Zone (PRZ) but did not apply those controls to land. Like the BFO, the PRZ creates 'deemed to comply' standards for higher density development, but requires that many of the standards be established in local schedules. The local schedules must also set out the land uses, and may establish a 'public benefit uplift framework'.[84]

Without any local schedules for the PRZ having yet been applied to land, or being available to the Committee in draft form,[85] it is not possible for the Committee to consider whether the PRZ does or does not give proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria or the objectives of the planning framework.

FINDING 19: The Committee makes no conclusions about whether amendment VC274 gives proper effect to the objectives of planning in Victoria, but finds that the controls introduced by VC274 have the potential to give proper effect to the objectives depending on how their local schedules are drafted and where they apply.

2.7 Oversight of the Victoria Planning Provisions

Oversight of the Victoria Planning Provisions is primarily the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and their delegates.

It is nevertheless in the interests of all users of the planning system that the structure and strategy for the Victoria Planning Provisions are understood and generate a consensus about how planning can be done efficiently and effectively.

It was brought to the Committee's attention that proposals to create an oversight mechanism, to measure the performance of the VPP and create a feedback mechanism to enable continual improvement to the VPP, were recommended by the Victorian Auditor-General in 2008 and 2017, but were not taken up by the Government.[86]

The MAV, Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) and YIMBY Melbourne all supported the creation of an oversight and continuous improvement mechanism.[87] The MAV argued that the body could generate a stronger consensus between planning

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84 *VC274 explanatory report*, p. 1;Colleen Peterson, Head of State Planning, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 6 ('VC274 does not apply the zone to any land in particular' and it was noted 'that the precinct zone has a public benefit uplift provision so that where mandatory heights are exceeded then there is a requirement for there to be some public benefit of which affordable housing is a tool that can be used').

85 Colleen Peterson, Head, State Planning, Metropolitan Melbourne, Department of Transport and Planning, public hearing, Melbourne, 17 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 6.

86 Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35.

87 Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35; Jonathan O'Brien, Lead Organiser, YIMBY Melbourne public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 31.

system designers in the Victorian Government and planning system users in local government.[88] YIMBY Melbourne argued that the body should be concerned with ensuring that the outcomes promised under new codes and other planning provisions are measured transparently.[89]

The Committee notes that such a body would be advisory only and that the Minister for Planning would retain the power to amend the Victoria Planning Provisions and individual planning schemes. Such a mechanism may also reduce the need for future inquiries by Select Committees into VPP amendments.

FINDING 20: The Victorian Government failed to implement the recommendations of the Victorian Auditor-General in 2008 and 2017 to create a performance and continuous improvement mechanism for the Victoria Planning Provisions. This has contributed, in part, to the problems with the planning system that the amendments are trying to solve.

RECOMMENDATION 12: That, after consultation with relevant stakeholders, the Victorian Government act on the recommendations of the Victorian Auditor-General from 2008 and 2017 in relation to the performance and continuous improvement of the Victoria Planning Provisions.

Adopted by the Select Committee on Victoria Planning Provisions Amendments VC257, VC267 and VC274
Parliament of Victoria, East Melbourne
8 May 2025

88 Kat Panjari, Director, Strategic Foresight and Partnerships, Municipal Association of Victoria, public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 35.

89 Ethan Gilbert and Jonathan O'Brien, Co-Lead Organisers, YIMBY Melbourne public hearing, Melbourne, 30 April 2025, *Transcript of evidence*, p. 31.

5.2 Q3 Community Grants Update

Director/Executive Manager: Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services

Report Author: Grants Coordinator

In Attendance: Manager ePMO & Change
Grants Coordinator

Executive Summary

This report is to provide a brief overview of the grants processed for Quarter 3 of the 2024-25 Financial Year from 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025.

A total of 22 applications were received across the individual, small, medium, large and the Business Relocation and Growth grant programs. Of the 22 applications received, 11 were approved for funding. The approval rate of applications continues to steadily rise, with an increase from 50% to 55% approval of submitted grant applications seen this quarter.

The Centralised Grants team worked with the Leisure and Recreation Team to open another round of Female Inclusion in Sport Grant Program and another round of Community Based Emergency Services grants. The latter grant was open by invitation only to Country Fire Authorities and State Emergency Services servicing our Municipality.

The centralised grants budget has actual and committed forecast amounts totalling $2.2 million, representing 80% of the budget. Further details are provided in the attached Management Panel report.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council note the attached 2024-25 Q3 Overview Report.

Background / Key Information

During this period, the Centralised Grants Team have been working with the Sport & Leisure team and DPV Health to open another round of the Female Inclusion in Sport Grant. This grant opened on 14 April 2025 and closed on 11 May 2025.

In addition, the team worked with the Emergency Management and Regulatory Programs team to open a private round for Community Based Emergency Services applications for 2024-25 funding. This private round opened on 1 April 2025 and closed 31 May 2025.

This quarter saw the successful allocation of the whole $200,000 under the Business Relocation and Growth Program (BRGP). Over the life of the program, 11 companies were awarded dollar matched grants to support them relocating to or within the City of Whittlesea or expanding their operations. The program saw three companies come to our municipality, four retained and another four businesses expand operations through new equipment that facilitated more efficient production. The grant required each organisation to bring on one FTE employee who was a City of Whittlesea resident, thereby supporting our community with increased employment opportunities. In reviewing the program, feedback from the Business Advisory Panel (BAP) was very positive as it keeps City of Whittlesea competitive with many other municipalities that offer grant programs for business. The BRGP is beneficial in supporting a strong local economy and is currently being reviewed as to how a revised grant program could be leveraged further for additional employment and broader business and community benefits.

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.

In alignment to applications submitted for our Community Grants, the community continue to select, ‘Connected Communities’ as the main 2040 Goal they aim to deliver against in the grant applications submitted this quarter.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management
The centralised grants budget has actual and committed forecast amounts totalling $2.2 million, representing 80% of the budget.

Community Consultation and Engagement

The team delivered presentations to networks and staff during this period:

- 25 February – Whittlesea Playgroup Network
- 16 March – Community Festival
- 27 February – Meeting with Kirrip Punjabi Seniors

All presentations were in collaboration with program areas to continue supporting the community.

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.

(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

No implications.

Social, Cultural and Health

No implications.

Economic

Business Relocation & Growth Grant Program funds were fully allocated.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No implications.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

The Centralised Grants Team continue to work with the Communications Team to deliver eNews updates to community members subscribed to receiving eNews regarding Community Grants offered by Council.

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. 2024-2025 Q3 Overview Report [**5.2.1** - 4 pages]

Year to Date
Quarter 3 - Overview Report
Centralised Grants
1 January 2025 – 31 March 2025

Contents

Executive Summary 2
Grants Approval Process 2
Overview Q3 2024-2025 3
Approved Grants – Q3 2024-2025 4

Executive Summary

This report is to provide both a brief overview of the grants applied for and where applicable, allocated funding for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 March 2025.

For the 2024-2025 Q3 financial period, a total of 22 applications were received as follows:

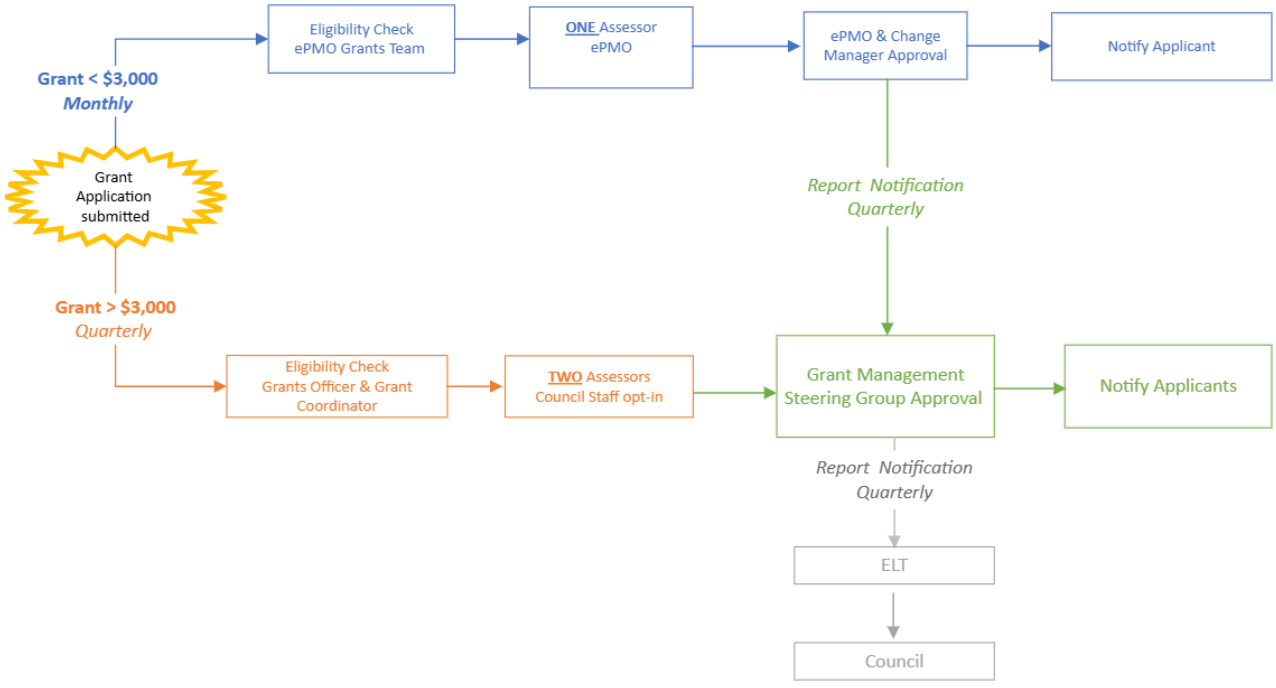
Grant Program	No. Applications	Amount Requested	% Applications Approved	Amount Approved
Individual Grant	4	$ 4,000	75%	$ 3,000
Small Grant	9	$ 24,752	56%	$ 9,953
Medium Grant	5	$ 50,936	40%	$ 8,876
Large Grant	2	$ 68,956	50%	$ 9,000
Business Relocation Growth Program	2	$ 80,000		$ -
Totals	**22**	**$ 228,644**	**55%**	**$ 30,829**

The overall approval rate across all Grants processed and reported here is 55%.

In this quarter, the Business Relocation Growth Grant Program funds were fully allocated and approved for applications submitted in Quarter 2. The decisions made in Q3 were a result of seeking and obtaining additional information from the applicants.

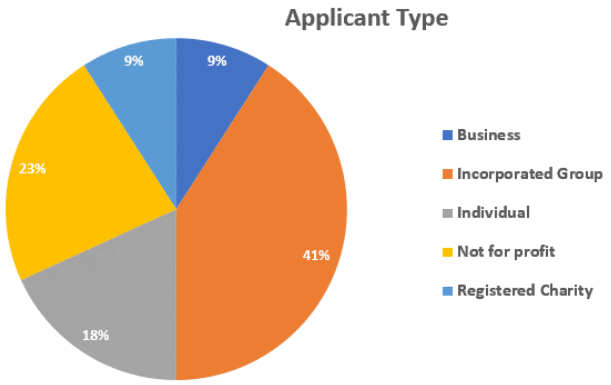
Grants Approval Process

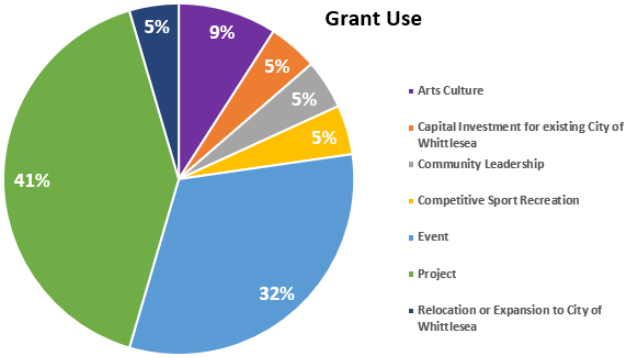
The diagram below provides an overview of the grant approval and notification process applied to Quarter 3. Community have been advised that the assessment and approval process will take approximately 6 weeks from the time a round of grants is closed.

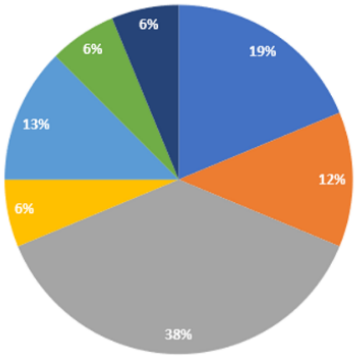


Overview Q3 2024-25

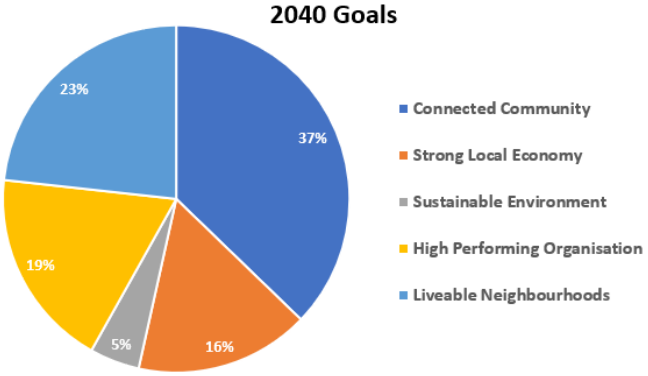
The following key information is a dashboard of the reporting metrics for Quarter 3.

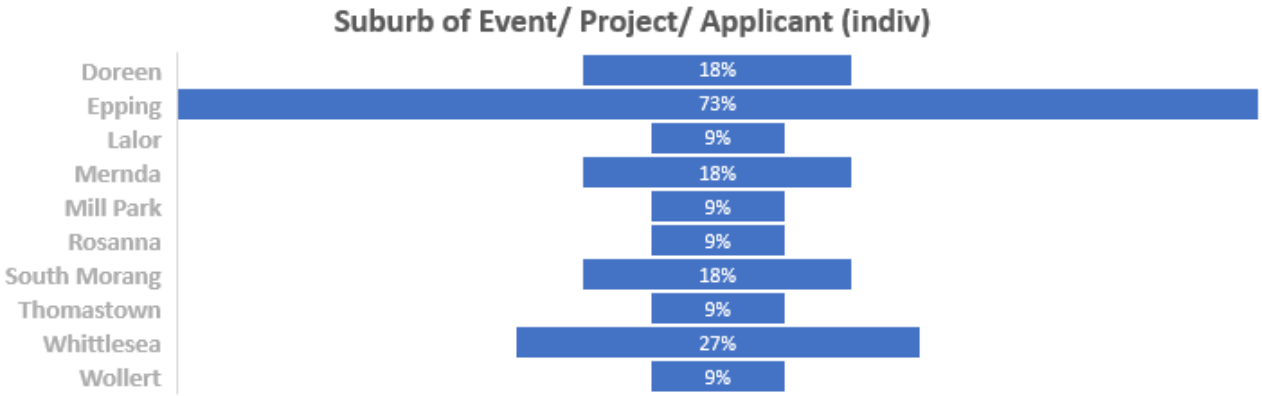






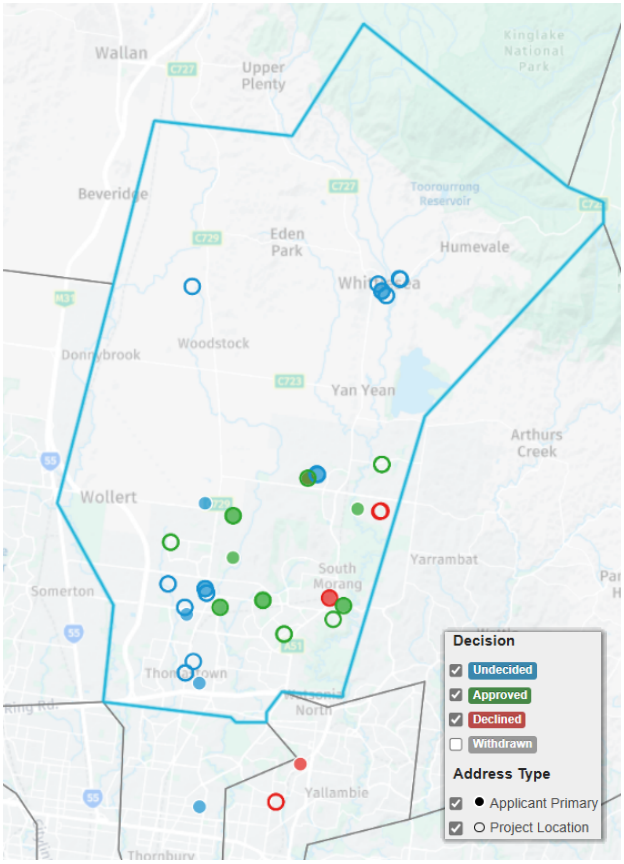






Approved Grants – Q3 2024-2025

Grant Program	Applicant Name	Title
Individual Grant	J Baker	2025 National Softball Championship
Individual Grant	A Adhikari	Community Awareness about depression For CALD people
Individual Grant	A Marangos	Tenpenchii
Small Grant	Melbourne Konkan Community Inc.	MKC Basket Ball
Small Grant	Libyan Women's Association Incorporated	Iftar ramadan and eid elfitar and eid aladha
Small Grant	AUSTRALIA SRI LANKA CULTURAL AND WELFARE ASSOCIATION INC.	Valentine's Night 2025
Small Grant	Valley Presbyterian Church	Easter Sunday in the Park
Small Grant	Northern Runners Inc	First Aid Safety for members
Medium Grant	Wollert Community Pathshala Incorporated	Multicultural Eid Festival
Medium Grant	Aurora Support Services Inc	High Performance Editing Computer
Large Grant	Northern Health Foundation	WellAhead Open Days



5.3 Community Vision

Director/Executive Manager: Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services

Report Author: Senior Research Officer

In Attendance: Manager ePMO & Change
Grants Coordinator

Executive Summary

Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All was reviewed internally from December 2024 to March 2025. A background paper for the Community Vision was produced and circulated to ELT and Council. The conclusion of this internal review and background paper was that the current community vision continued to meet the needs and reflect community-identified priorities.

During April 2025, Council engaged with community through focus groups, in-person pop-ups and an online survey (31 people participated in focus groups, 100 through the pop-ups and 20 online) to reaffirm the vision. The participants reflected the demographics of the community. Community affirmed their support for the alignment of the community vision with community need (94%) and its continued relevance (93%).

The revised Community Vision, *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All* is at Attachment 1.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council adopt the City of Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All Community Vision.

Background / Key Information

A Community Vision is vital for ensuring that Council has heard and is directing efforts towards the aspirations of the community they serve. The Community Vision sets the strategic direction for the work of Council. Under Section 88 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the following stipulations are made regarding the Community Vision:

(1) A Council must maintain a Community Vision that is developed with its municipal community in line with its deliberative engagement practices.
(2) The scope of the Community Vision is a period of at least the next 10 financial years.
(3) A Community Vision must describe the municipal community's aspirations for the future of the municipality.
(4) A Council must develop or review the Community Vision in accordance with its deliberative engagement practices and adopt the Community Vision by 31 October in the year following a general election.
(5) The Community Vision adopted under sub-section (4) has effect from 1 July in the year following a general election.

Following the general election in October 2024, the City of Whittlesea Council needed to review the current Community Vision – *Whittlesea 2040: A Place For All* and consult with community in line with deliberative engagement practices and adopt by 31 October 2025.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

Connected Communities
We work to foster an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming community where all ways of life are celebrated and supported.

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.

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.

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

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.

Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All was reviewed internally from December 2024 to March 2025. A background paper for the Community Vision was produced and circulated to ELT and Council. The conclusion of this internal review and background paper was that the current community vision and the goals identified above continued to meet the needs and reflect community-identified priorities.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management
The cost to review and revise the Community Vision is included in the current budget.

Community Consultation and Engagement
During April 2025, Council engaged with community through focus groups, in-person pop-ups and an online survey (31 people participated in focus groups, 100 through the pop-ups and 20 online) for a period of 4 weeks. The participants reflected the demographics of the community. Community affirmed their support for the alignment of the community vision with community need (94%) and its continued relevance (93%).

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.
(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
Policies continue to align with the revised *Whittlesea 2040 Vision: A Place For All.*

Social, Cultural and Health
Policies align with the revised *Whittlesea 2040 Vision: A Place For All.*

Economic

Policies align with the revised *Whittlesea 2040 Vision: A Place For All.*

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

An adopted Community Vision is required in accordance with Section 88 of the *Local Government Act 2020.* The revised *Whittlesea 2040 Vision: A Place For All* meets all stipulations under the Act.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

We will undertake a comprehensive communications campaign to inform our community of the vision review. Through a variety of methods and channels, including online and traditional channels, as well as direct communications where possible, we will share information about the vision and provide details of the consultation program undertaken.

Critical Dates

The revised Community Vision, *Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All* is at Attachment 1 and is to be adopted by 31 October in the year following a general election.

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. CoW 2040 Vision - A Place for All [**5.3.1** - 15 pages]

City *of* Whittlesea

2040 VISION

A place for all



City of Whittlesea



Artwork © Mandy Nicholson, 2017

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.

The lands along the Birrarung River and its tributaries -the Merri, Edgars and Darebin Creeks and the Plenty River were home to the Wurundjeri Willum and Taungurung Peoples. These lands offered more than just sustenance; they provided fresh water, food, shelter and a thriving environment rich with fish and birdlife.

For countless generations, these lands and waterways were not only places of living, but of gathering. Cultural ceremonies, trade and important business were conducted at sacred sites -places that continue to hold deep cultural and spiritual significance today. More than seventy of these sites remain in the City of Whittlesea, along with many scarred trees, standing as living testaments to an enduring connection to Country.

In acknowledging this heritage, we honour the knowledge, resilience and custodianship of the Traditional Owners, whose care for this land stretches back tens of thousands of years and continues today.

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Message from the Councillors

As a newly elected council, we are delighted to present the Whittlesea 2040 vision: *A Place for All.*

Our community first developed the Vision for the City of Whittlesea as *A Place for All* in 2018.

Since then, our City has grown and changed significantly and the people who call City of Whittlesea home, have new challenges and needs.

Together we have reviewed the Vision, and our latest data and research is guiding us to stay on course towards life in 2040, where we will ensure our City remains a welcoming place for all.

As part of our review, we sought community feedback to fully understand whether the vision and its goals continue to be our community priorities and our community aspirations. We were pleased to see that we have encouraging community support.

Our vision is driven by five interconnected goals; Connected Community, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy, Sustainable Environment and High Performing Organisation.

Council is committed to bringing this vision to life; fostering a strong sense of belonging, where people from all walks of life are valued for who they are and the qualities they bring and where diversity is celebrated.

The City of Whittlesea is a wonderful place to live, to work and to enjoy life and we hope that it will continue to be seen as a place where everyone feels welcome, truly a place for all.

City of Whittlesea Councillors

Cr Nic Brooks, Cr Blair Colwell, Cr Lawrie Cox, Cr Deb Gunn, Cr Jarrod Lappin, Cr David Lenberg, Cr Christine Stow, Cr Martin Taylor, Cr Daniela Zinni

Whittlesea now and in the future

The City of Whittlesea is one of Melbourne's largest and most diverse municipalities. The community is one of the fastest growing areas in Victoria and our population is expected to increase by almost 40% from 2025 to 2040.

Our community

The community is proud of its diversity with a large Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and local residents coming from all parts of Melbourne, Australia and overseas. The cultural mix is starting to change with new residents moving into the area from countries such as India, Sri-Lanka, China and Iran. This diversity has contributed to the development of lively communities and interesting urban cultures that make our unique suburbs attractive to future residents and visitors.

The City of Whittlesea is seen as a leader in the way it builds inclusive and cohesive communities and will continue to welcome people of all backgrounds and from all places into the future. The City of Whittlesea is a family-friendly place. More of our households consist of families with children compared to the Northern Melbourne region and Metropolitan Melbourne. Although the population will age into the future, the community will remain predominantly younger families.

Our neighbourhoods

The City of Whittlesea has around 93,000 homes distributed throughout our established urban areas in the south, new urban areas in our residential growth corridors, and our rural areas in the north. By 2040, a mix of new housing types will be required to cater for the needs of our growing community.

There will also be a need for new education, community, recreation and aged care services and facilities and infrastructure such as roads, streets and parks to connect our communities.

What we know



355,144
the estimated population by 2040[2]



38% residents born overseas[2]



4th highest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders among Victorian metropolitan councils[2]



54%
of households are families with children



45%
of residents speak a language other than English at home[7]



34
the median age in the municipality. Anticipated to be 39 by 2040[8]



49%
of people work from home at least one day a week [10]

[2] Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021. Compiled and presented in profile .ID by .id

[3] Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021. Compiled and presented in profile .ID by .id

[4] SGS Economics and Planning (2018). Whittlesea 2040 Background Paper. Accessed 08/04/2025: https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/about-us/news/whittlesea-2040-a-place-for-all/whittlesea-2040-background-research-paper.pdf

[5] SGS Economics and Planning (2018). Whittlesea 2040 Background Paper. Accessed 08/04/2025: https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/about-us/news/whittlesea-2040-a-place-for-all/whittlesea-2040-background-research-paper.pdf

[6] GS Economics and Planning (2018). Whittlesea 2040 Background Paper. Accessed 08/04/2025: https:/www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/about-us/news/whittlesea-2040-a-place-for-all/whittlesea-2040-background-research-paper.pdf

[7] Source: 2021 census

[9] Source: .id 2023 population projections

[10] Source: Community Insights wav 1.1, January 2024

Our economy and transport network

A large proportion of our residents work in the health care and social assistance and industrial sectors, with fewer employed in jobs that require formal qualifications. However, the nature of work is changing. Routine jobs are increasingly becoming automated with the changes in technology and globalization.

Access to ongoing education and training will be important in the future as jobs continue to change. With educational facilities like La Trobe, RMIT and Melbourne Polytechnic located within close proximity, the community is well placed to broaden their skills for the future.

The separation of residential neighbourhoods from major employment areas, and limited access to public transport, means many residents are dependent on cars and experience long travel times to work. In the future, rapid population growth will increase vehicle trips and exacerbate congestion. However, this growth is also creating opportunities to attract more businesses, increase the number of local jobs and make services, community organisations and clubs more viable and accessible for residents.

Our environment

Our municipality boasts beautiful forests, national parks, grasslands of national significance, red gum woodlands, and a network of rivers, creeks and wetlands. However, our climate is changing. By 2040, we will experience increased temperatures and more extreme weather events like heatwave, fire, drought and floods. Some residents and properties will be more vulnerable to these risks.

Through careful planning and action we are working together to mitigate risks and challenges posed by a changing climate.

Our challenge and opportunity

Rapid growth in the City of Whittlesea is a challenge for all levels of government, making it hard to keep up and develop infrastructure like roads and public transport, and vital community assets like schools, libraries, sports and health facilities.

We are exploring new and innovative ways to meet the community's needs like upgrading existing facilities, developing flexible hubs, co-locating services, working in partnership and identifying alternate funding sources. The future will also see more opportunities for citizens to work together with government to solve local challenges. A growing and changing community provides us with an opportunity to create the city and neighbourhoods that the community and Council want for the future.

What we know

30% work locally

65% work outside the local area[3]

5% mobile workers, no fixed location

40% of current jobs are anticipated to be automated by 2040[4]

77% of residents drive to work[6]

113,000 additional cars by 2040[4]

90% increase in demand for public transport by 2040[4]

Annual temperatures are anticipated to rise between **2 and 3 degrees** by 2040[4]

[3] Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021. Compiled and presented in profile .ID by .id

[4] SGS Economics and Planning (2018). Whittlesea 2040 Background Paper. Accessed 08/04/2025: https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/about-us/news/whittlesea-2040-a-place-for-all/whittlesea-2040-background-research-paper.pdf

[6] GS Economics and Planning (2018). Whittlesea 2040 Background Paper. Accessed 08/04/2025: https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/documents/about-us/news/whittlesea-2040-a-place-for-all/whittlesea-2040-background-research-paper.pdf



The Process: Creating a Vision for our City

Whittlesea 2040: A place for all, builds on the achievements of Shaping Our Future Whittlesea 2030 and provides a new long term vision for the City of Whittlesea. Over 10 months, in 2018 we conducted research, workshopped priorities, and spoke with thousands of people as well as community groups and organisations across the municipality.

STEP 1:

December 2017-January 2018

Research on growth and trends

What changes will the future bring?

STEP 2:

March 2018

Councillor workshop to identify priority themes

What are the top priorities for the future?

STEP 3:

Mid-March to Mid-June 2018

Community consultation

What does our community:

- Love about their local area?
- Hope for their local area in 2040?

STEP 4:

July to September 2018

Develop Vision and test with the community

- What do we want Whittlesea to be like in 2040?
- What are our shared priorities?
- Have we got it right?

STEP 5:

October 2018

Finalise and launch Whittlesea 2040 Vision

Time to make it happen!

Research, trends and data

We undertook research to understand where the City of Whittlesea is at now and the trends that will shape the future, in particular:

"What are the key changes, challenges and opportunities that will impact Whittlesea in the future?"

As part of this work, SGS Economics and Planning prepared the Whittlesea 2040: Background Paper, which discussed:

- The growth and scale of change expected in the next 20-30 years;
- Key challenges and opportunities across five themes: services and infrastructure, employment, climate change, transport infrastructure, and the community; and
- The potential roles Council can have to support and manage change, and make the most of opportunities.

Councillor input

Council has played a guiding role in the development of the Whittlesea 2040 vision. First, it reviewed the research to determine:

'What are the top priorities for the future?'

These priorities were then tested and refined through the community consultation.

Council's role is to ensure that the Whittlesea 2040 vision sets the direction for the work of Council to respond accurately to community needs and to ensure that it is a shared vision for the future.

Community input

Over three months, we asked anyone who lives, works, studies, plays in or visits the City of Whittlesea to answer up to three questions:

'What are the things you love about your local area?'

'What are your favourite places in the City of Whittlesea and why?'

'What are your hopes for your local area by 2040?'

Over 4,000 individuals, community groups and organisations shared their ideas through workshops, surveys, online maps, postcards, children's drawing sheets, events and special activities held across our City. Visit whittlesea.vic.gov.au for a summary of what the community told us.

A detailed Community Engagement Findings Report was developed identifying six emerging priority themes which represented thousands of ideas. This feedback informed the development of 'the Whittlesea 2040 vision' with 'Whittlesea 2040: A place for all'.



Reviewing the Whittlesea 2040 Vision

Following the election of the new Council in October 2024, and in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, we reviewed the Whittlesea 2040 Vision. We reviewed research and engagement trends and data internally and with Councillors. We conducted community engagement to understand the ways the Whittlesea 2040 Vision now connects with our diverse and growing 2025 community. Our research and community engagement affirmed that the Whittlesea 2040 Vision continues to be relevant and reflect community need.

STEP 1:

December 2024 to January 2025

Councillor induction
Background research paper developed

STEP 2:

February to April 2025

Councillor engagement sessions

STEP 3:

April to May 2025

Community consultation
Council review sessions

STEP 4:

June 2025

Finalise review
Reaffirm Whittlesea 2040 Vision

Research, trends and data

Our quarterly community insights research helped us understand where the City of Whittlesea is at now and the trends that are shaping our future.

We also conducted a rigorous community consultation program to reaffirm the Whittlesea 2040 Vision.

Councillor input

Council has played a guiding role in the review of the Whittlesea 2040 Vision.

A detailed background document was presented to Council and discussed at review sessions conducted between December 2024 and April 2025.

Community input

Consultation was undertaken via three forums – dedicated focus groups, in-person pop-up sessions across the municipality and through an online survey.

Our community were asked the following questions:

Thinking about life in Whittlesea in 2040:

What do you hope to see achieved under each goal?

What would you like to see delivered?



Our Vision is that in 2040, the City of Whittlesea is a place for all

In 2040, compassion is at the heart of our community. A compassionate community makes sure that everyone feels cared for and supported in a deep and meaningful way. It makes our city increasingly welcoming, whether you've just arrived or your family has been here for generations.

What that feels like is different for everyone. It might be having a job you like within easy reach or knowing your neighbour's name. Or maybe something even simpler, like hearing birds in the trees outside your window.

Our community offers a sense of place that includes everyone, where people from all walks of life are valued for who they are and the qualities they bring with them.

The City of Whittlesea is an inviting place to live with beautiful natural and urban spaces. We are proud to live here. The special blend of old and new – rural heritage and hospitality with just the right amount of urban convenience. The shops, schools and health services you need are around the corner, and the city is only an easy train or tram ride away.

Putting down roots is effortless and people have a shared belief that things will keep getting better as we grow. Community cohesion is deep and strong with the support of facilities and opportunities designed to make life more fulfilling, secure and inclusive.

By encouraging every new resident to add their own vibrant touch, our community is the place we envisaged, and even more welcoming in the decades to come.

Integrated Planning Framework: Five Interconnected Goals

Whittlesea 2040: A place for all is our long-term vision for the City of Whittlesea, guiding everything we do, from daily operations to future partnerships with the community and others.

We're focused on making this vision a reality with five main goals:





GOAL 1

Connected Community

We want to be a city that welcomes and includes everyone, and where we are inspired and work together to make it a better place.

We value feeling part of our community and the way people from all ages and backgrounds are accepted and celebrated, and we want this to be strengthened in the future.

We love participating in the wide range of activities, festivals and events that bring our community together and we want to continue to celebrate in the future through a great variety of affordable activities. We love our libraries, community centres and neighbourhood houses.

We hope that community infrastructure is available across the municipality, particularly in growth areas so sections of the community don't miss out.

We value our easy access to the doctor, hospitals and other health services, and in the future we hope for expanded or upgraded hospitals and a variety of medical, emergency and support services.

Our community has diverse support needs and while we currently value the services we have, we hope for a wider range and number to cater for more people and emerging challenges.

We love that our homes are safe, peaceful and close to friends and family. Feeling secure in our homes and neighbourhood is a priority for the future and we will look to the authorities to help reduce crime, support those who are vulnerable or troubled and ensure everyone feels safe at home and in public spaces.

Connected community

Key Directions

1.1 A socially cohesive community

This means:

- Friendly and welcoming
- Sense of community and belonging
- Embracing and celebrating diversity
- Opportunities to connect and build social networks

1.2 A healthy and safe community

This means:

- Good health and wellbeing
- Increased physical activity
- Access to health and support services
- Safety at home and in public

1.3 A participating community

This means:

- Well informed
- Local decision making
- Volunteering and leadership
- Vibrant community groups

Our community said

"I love... Whittlesea Community Festival and playgroups"
– Resident, Epping, 9

"We hope to see a well-connected happy community and [deepened] sense of community"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"I hope to see stronger neighbourhood connections"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025

"I hope there are more events to connect cultures and neighbours"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025

"We would like safer public spaces through CCTV and improved lighting"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"We would like to see a welcome pack for new residents that introduces services and community groups of interest"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"We hope to have more events that connect community to each other including First Nations"
– Focus Group, 2025

"I love... that I feel valued in this municipality. Community involvement enhances my sense of belonging."
– Resident, Epping, 20

"I love... that anyone can be anything they want here."
– Resident, Whittlesea Township, 77



GOAL 2

Liveable Neighbourhoods

We love that our neighbourhoods are beautiful, clean and tidy and many of the services and facilities we need are in easy reach of our homes.

We love that the things we need, like shops, schools, parks, sports facilities, playgrounds, libraries and community spaces are close by.

We hope that all these facilities are even better in the future, with upgrades to parks, new facilities and more attractions.

We hope to have access to a variety of quality homes that are affordable and suitable for our needs. We value our unique mix of busier, established suburbs, new neighbourhoods and rural areas, and it is extremely important to us that this mix remains as we grow.

We love that in some parts we have great access to public transport but we hope this network will be enhanced in the future to keep up with our growth. This includes extended networks, more frequent services and better transport links. We love the pathways, tracks and trails that mean we can ride or walk for leisure or to commute, but as we grow in the future these will need to be made safer and be better connected to public transport so we can choose not to drive.

We value that our roads are continually being maintained and extended and provide easy access to the city and airport, however growth is causing congestion.
We hope to reduce traffic congestion and our impact on the environment by having other innovative travel options like share cars and electric vehicles.



Key Directions

2.1 Smart, connected transport network

This means:

- Road networks that flow
- Well-connected public transport
- Paths and trails – walking and cycling

2.2 Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres

This means:

- Attractive streetscapes and public spaces
- Easy access to local shops and major commercial centres
- Access to quality local facilities, parks and amenity

2.3 Housing for diverse needs

This means:

- Quality and varied housing options
- Housing that is affordable and accessible

Our community said

"The geographic location has good amenity and access to the services and transport options I need."
– Resident, Bundoora, 68

"I love... walking areas, parks and playgrounds."
– Resident, Epping, 48

"We hope for good local connected public transport to make it easier to commute within the local area"
– Focus Group, April, 2025

"Better road connections from East to West"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025

"Places you can go for a walk and have a coffee in open spaces"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025

"3D printed infrastructure"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025

"The fact it is still country but close to shopping centres, supermarket, fast food. Where we live is very community focused which I love."
– Resident, Mernda, 43



GOAL 3

Strong Local Economy

We really value our local businesses for the services they provide and the opportunities they create for us to work locally.

We hope that growth in local business in the future will provide more local jobs for people of all ages and skills.

We look forward to new business growth as a result of technology and investment. We hope to reduce the need to travel altogether through local employment and working from home.

We hope for more local, quality education facilities and programs, from kindergarten through to tertiary and adult learning, and that this will create opportunities and cater for our growing population and their unique learning needs.

We love the variety of products and dining options we get at our local shops, shopping centres and markets and we hope these can be expanded, upgraded and open longer hours in the future. We also hope to see smaller retail outlets flourish with unique products and local produce.

Strong local economy

Key Directions

3.1 Increased local employment

This means:

- Residents employed locally
- Variety of jobs to meet local needs
- Job seeker and employment support

3.2 Education opportunities for all

This means:

- Local access to quality education and lifelong learning
- Flexible training and skills for jobs
- Community engaged in learning

3.3 Successful, innovative local businesses

This means:

- Local business investment and growth
- Local producers, enterprises and start ups
- Variety of local services, trades and commercial centres

Our community said

"We hope for thriving small business community"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"Location is perfect to commute to the city. Good small businesses for restaurants and community/culture specific avenues."
– Resident, Mill Park, 38

"We would like to see leadership programs to build confidence, employability and networking"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"Better work readiness through school"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025

"More co-working spaces"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025

"I love...the education opportunities, the different types of schools "
– Youth Council Focus Group Member, April 2025

"...economic and social growth opportunities..."
– Resident, Donnybrook, 39

"We hope for job opportunities close to home"
– Focus Group, April 2025



GOAL 4

Sustainable Environment

We highly value our natural spaces; our trees, landscapes, waterways and the wildlife around us.

Our strong hope for the future is that we maintain, enhance and protect our natural environments through prioritising habitat corridors and significant areas and making sure new development respects its surrounds. Our leafy and green neighbourhoods with many trees and gardens must be maintained in the future.

We love having access to beautiful parks and we feel great being socially and physically active outdoors.

We hope that people of all ages and abilities continue to enjoy a variety of clean, dog and family-friendly parklands, trails and reserves in the future.

We hope to continue to enjoy the clear air and fresh, local produce by being a community that is more conscious and active in living in a clean and sustainable way. We hope that in the future we are a leading example of a community working together to reduce our impact on the environment.

Sustainable environment

Key Directions

4.1 Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity

This means:

- Protect and improve local biodiversity
- Sustainable land management
- Appreciation of local natural environment

4.2 Climate ready

This means:

- More trees for cooling and shelter
- Infrastructure built to withstand the changing climate
- Building community resilience

4.3 Leaders in clean, sustainable living

This means:

- Reduce waste and increase recycling
- Reduce energy use and carbon emissions
- Renewable energy
- Water efficiency

Our community said

"I love that City of Whittlesea is environmentally diverse"
– Youth Council Focus Group Member, April 2025

"I love... the natural resources and parks – Plenty Gorge is lovely..."
– Resident, South Morang, 41

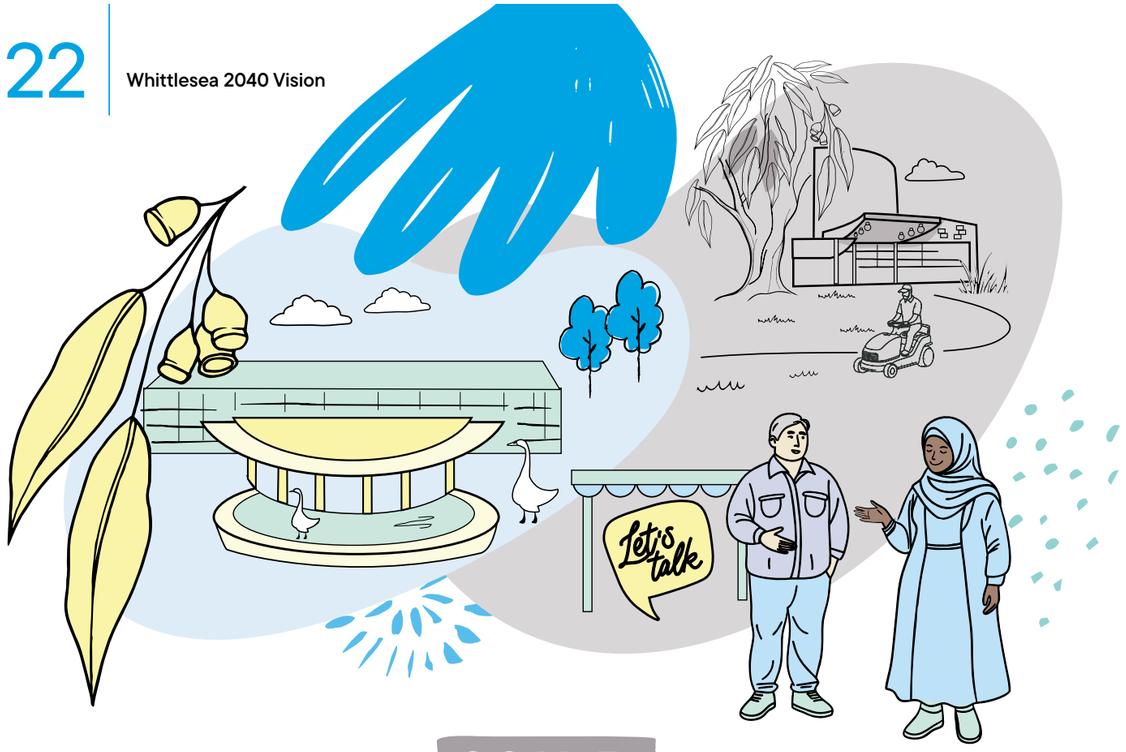
"Increase our green spaces with a variety of appropriate trees"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"We would like to see City of Whittlesea invest and promote renewable energy"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"Improved e-waste services"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"Promotion to help make business more sustainable"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"I love... the diverse landscape and cultural heritage."
– Resident, Wollert, 40



GOAL 5

High Performing Organisation

Our Council will engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of, and deliver value to, our community.

The City of Whittlesea is responsible for enabling the rapid growth and development of our region, meeting the ever-expanding needs of our community, and maintaining a commitment to excellence as they serve our municipality.

We value our Council being innovative, adopting new technology and planning strategically to meet the needs and priorities of an ageing population and a growing number of families. Our resources need to be utilised wisely, to remain financially sustainable and manage our existing and planned assets to an appropriate level of service into the future. Using local approaches to Council planning, service and infrastructure delivery, we hope our Council will be responsive to the distinct needs and aspirations of local communities.

We value our Councillors and Council officers making evidence informed decisions, aligning operations with community needs and priorities, and providing transparency around resources and services. We love being informed and engaged through a variety of channels and encouraged to participate in local democracy, offer solutions and lead initiatives that will make a difference to our community. Our Council needs to be easy to connect with, offering a great customer experience when delivering all infrastructure, services and programs across the municipality.

We hope the City of Whittlesea will advocate and build relationships with other levels of government and other stakeholders to seek investment and reforms necessary for our community as we make the City of Whittlesea a place for all.

High performing organisation

Key Directions

5.1 Driving better community outcomes

This means:

- Council values and responds to needs of communities
- Community members find it easy to interact with Council
- Community members are informed about Council services, programs and activities

5.2 More informed Council decisions

This means:

- Decisions are informed and made in the best interest of the community
- Our community has confidence in Council
- Our communities engage with us on issues that affect them

5.3 More cost-effective investment

This means:

- We have the right people in the right roles to deliver for the community
- Our community is confident Council can fund community needs into the future
- Our assets meet community needs now and in the future

Our community said

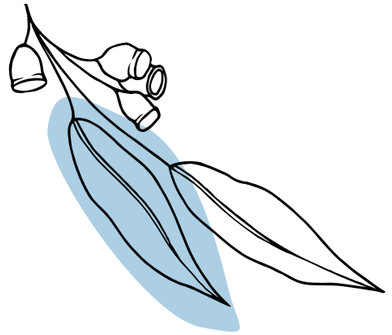
"We would like to see Council consult with community before making decisions and set spending based on community feedback."
– Focus Group, April 2025

"A "no wrong door" policy (and lived experience) when interacting with council"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"Council communicates how finances were spent and are transparent about any mismanagement"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"We hope Council is connected to the community and responsive to changing needs"
– Focus Group, April 2025

"Council staff are diverse and reflective of the diverse community they serve"
– Focus Group Member, April 2025



Priority Indicators

We will monitor our progress towards the Vision using the following priority indicators. These will be reported against each year in the Annual Report.

Connected Community

	Key direction	Outcome indicator	Measure
1	1.1 A socially cohesive community	Social cohesion	Residents average rating of social connection in the community
2	1.2 A healthy and safe community	Physical activity	Percent of residents who do moderate to vigorous exercise for at least 2.5 hours a week
3	1.2 A healthy and safe community	Mental health	Percent of residents who report that they experience high or very high levels of psychological distress
4	1.2 A healthy and safe community	Safety in public areas	Percent of residents who feel safe in their local neighbourhood
5	1.3 A participating community	Civic Participation	Percent of residents who got involved in activities to influence decision makers

Liveable Neighbourhoods

	Key direction	Outcome indicator	Measure
6	2.1 Smart, connected transport network	Commuter travel time	Percent of workers who spent at least 90 minutes getting to and from work each day
7	2.1 Smart, connected transport network	Ease of walking and cycling	Household rating for ease of local walking and cycling
8	2.2 Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres	Access to open space	Percent of households located within 400m of neighbourhood open space (minimum 1 ha)
9	2.2 Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres	Access to services and facilities	Level of household satisfaction with access to services and facilities
10	2.3 Housing for diverse needs	Housing affordability	Percent of housing affordable to very low and low-income households (divided into purchase and rent)

Strong Local Economy

	Key direction	Outcome indicator	Measure
11	3.1 Increased local employment	Local jobs	Ratio of local jobs to residents in the workforce
12	3.2 Education opportunities for all	Access to education	Level of household satisfaction with access to suitable local education options
13	3.3 Successful, innovative local businesses	Gross Regional Product	Value of City of Whittlesea's local economy (Bn $ per capita)

Sustainable Environment

	Key direction	Outcome indicator	Measure
14	4.1 Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity	Biodiversity Protection	Hectares of on ground biodiversity actions
15	4.2 Climate ready	Tree canopy coverage	Percent of tree shade across the City of Whittlesea, divided into urban and rural areas
16	4.2 Climate ready	Carbon emissions	Total carbon emissions produced across the City of Whittlesea and total emissions per capita
17	4.3 Leaders in clean, sustainable living	Waste diversion	Percentage of kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill

High Performing Organisation

	Key direction	Outcome indicator	Measure
18	5.1 Driving better community outcomes through improved service access, satisfaction and advocacy	Community satisfaction with Council decision-making	Community satisfaction with Council decision-making
19	5.1 Driving better community outcomes through improved service access, satisfaction and advocacy	Customer satisfaction	Percentage of customer interactions that customers rated positively
20	5.2 More informed Council decisions based on strong advice and community consultation and engagement	Community Engagement	Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement
21	5.3 More cost-effective investment through better return on investment, efficiency and an engaged workforce	Financial sustainability	Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue
22	5.3 More cost-effective investment through better return on investment, efficiency and an engaged workforce	Workforce Engagement	Overall staff ‘favourable score’ on annual Staff Engagement Survey



City of Whittlesea

COUNCIL OFFICES
Civic Centre
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

Opening hours
Monday – Friday, 8.30am-5pm

Whittlesea Services Hub
63 Church Street,
Whittlesea VIC 3752

Opening hours
Monday – Friday, 9.30am-5pm

Telephone 03 9217 2170
National Relay Service 133 677
(ask for 9217 2170)

Postal address
Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC, VIC 3083

info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
whittlesea.vic.gov.au
facebook.com/cityofwhittlesea
CityWhittlesea

5.4 Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Director/Executive Manager: Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services

Report Author: Unit Manager Strategic Revenue

In Attendance: Acting Chief Financial Officer

Executive Summary

Under the *Local Government Act 2020*, Councils are required to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan (Plan) by 30 June following a general election, covering a minimum period of four years. The Revenue and Rating Plan forms a critical part of Council's integrated planning framework.

This Plan establishes the guiding principles for calculating and raising the revenue necessary to fund Council's operations. It also outlines how the funding will be equitably distributed among ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services.

While the Plan does not set specific revenue targets, it provides the strategic framework and key decisions that determine how revenue will be calculated and collected to ensure Council's financial sustainability and its ability to deliver essential services and infrastructure for the community.

The Plan determines the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for Council, which in conjunction with other income sources will adequately finance the delivery of the Community Plan and Council's operations.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Acknowledge and thank the community for their valuable contributions that assisted with the development of the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29.**
2. **Adopt the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 at Attachment 1.**
3. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor editorial changes, formatting and design to the Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 document, if required.**

Background / Key Information

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires each council to prepare a Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. The Plan establishes the revenue-raising framework within which the Council proposes to work.

This Plan is an important part of Council's integrated planning framework, all of which is designed to help Council achieve its vision of "A place for all" and guide efforts to keep pace with the rapid changes and growth of our municipality over the coming years.

The purpose of the Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for the City of Whittlesea, which, in conjunction with other income sources, will adequately finance the delivery of the Community Plan.

The strategies outlined in the Plan align with the initiatives contained in the Community Plan and will feed into Council's budgeting and long-term financial planning documents.

Council provides a wide range of services and facilities to the local community, and in doing so, must collect sufficient revenue to cover the costs associated with delivering these services and facilities.

Council's revenue sources include:

- **Rates and charges:** These are levies that each property owner within the municipality pays, which contribute significantly to funding local services such as waste management, roads and community facilities.
- **User fees:** Council collects fees from users of specific services, such as leisure centres, libraries and parking, to ensure that those who benefit directly from the services contribute towards their cost.
- **Statutory fees and fines:** These fees are set by legislation and cover activities such as building permits, animal registrations and penalties for breaches of local laws, which help to enforce regulations and maintain order within the community.
- **Grants:** Funding from other levels of government, including state and federal grants, which support specific projects or programs aimed at enhancing community welfare and infrastructure.
- **Developer contributions:** Cash and non-cash contributions made by developers, generally required through statutory mechanisms such as development contributions plans or agreements, to fund infrastructure and services necessary to support new development and population growth.
- **Other income**: This includes revenue generated from interest on Council managed investments and the sale of minor assets, materials, and other operational activities.
- **Asset sales:** Revenue generated from the sale of assets such as land, buildings, or equipment, which can be reinvested into future projects or used to reduce debt.

Rates and charges are Council's most significant revenue source, accounting for approximately 48% of annual income. This Revenue and Rating Plan outlines Council's reliance on rate income and explores options to actively manage this reliance.

Council delivers a wide range of services to the community, often for a fee that does not fully recover the costs incurred. The nature of these fees and charges depends on whether they are statutory or discretionary. Statutory fees, such as those for planning services, are set by State Government legislation, leaving Council with limited control over pricing. For discretionary services, Council determines fees and charges based on the principles outlined in this Revenue and Rating Plan.

Council's revenue can also be significantly influenced by changes in funding from other levels of government. Some grants are tied to the delivery of specific Council services, while others support the development of new community assets such as roads or sports facilities.

It is essential for Council to strategically assess the grants it applies for, considering the impacts and obligations these grants create in service delivery or infrastructure development.

The Plan will be effective for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029. During this period, reviews of the Plan will be undertaken and enhancements to Council's revenue and rating strategies implemented incrementally during the life of this Plan.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

High Performing Organisation
We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

The Plan ensures the most appropriate rating and revenue raising methodology is used to construct Council's budget and the Community Plan.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management
The cost is included in the current budget.

Community Consultation and Engagement

An extensive program of community engagement has been conducted to inform the development of the Plan. Throughout August – September 2024, Council asked the community to tell us what was important to them to help shape Council's Revenue and Rating Plan. More than 880 people shared their thoughts both online and at 13 community-based pop-ups.

Our community told us their top five priorities were roads, public transport and footpaths; parks, playgrounds and open space; community facilities; community safety; and arts, culture and events.

We again checked in with the community during December 2024 and January 2025 to confirm the priorities identified. Of the 133 people that participated, the majority (75%) agreed with the order of the priority areas.

In February 2025, 46 community members, representing the diverse demographics of the community, participated in three focus groups to discuss local priorities. They identified key service areas they valued most and wished to see maintained or enhanced. Local business support, youth services, public health and safety, waste management and ageing well services emerged as top priorities for continued or increased support. Participants also provided support for maintenance of areas such as animal management, creative communities, community strengthening, biodiversity, land management and sustainable planning and design.

The community was invited to provide their suggestions for inclusion, support or changes to the Plan for community consultation during April and May 2025. A total of 78 participants contributed to the consultation either online or at one of eight community-based pop-ups.

Respondents were also provided with the option to speak to their submission in person at the Hearing of Submissions Committee of Council, with four submitters opting to do this. 81% were supportive of the Proposed Revenue and Rating Plan.

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.

Public Transparency Principles

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

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 comprehensive multi-channel communications campaign promoted the opportunity for community to provide their feedback and make a submission on the Proposed Revenue and Rating Plan.

Critical Dates

- Community consultation to inform drafts was undertaken in August – September 2024 and December – February 2025.
- Council considered the Proposed Revenue and Rating Plan to be released for further community consultation at Council Meeting on Tuesday 15 April 2025.
- The community was invited to provide their suggestions for inclusion, support or changes to the Plan for community consultation during April and May 2025.
- The Hearing of Submissions Committee met to consider community feedback and submissions on Tuesday 6 May 2025.
- The Revenue and Rating Plan will be considered for endorsement by Council at a Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 17 June 2025 following consideration of community feedback and any submissions to Council.

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. Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 [**5.4.1** - 41 pages]



Revenue and Rating Plan

2025-26 to 2028-29

City of Whittlesea

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and the Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.



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Overview

Under the *Local Government Act 2020,* Councils are required to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan (Plan) by 30 June following a general election, covering a minimum period of four years. The Revenue and Rating Plan forms a critical part of Council's integrated planning framework.

This Plan establishes the guiding principles for calculating and raising the revenue necessary to fund Council's operations. It also outlines how the funding will be equitably distributed among ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services. While the Plan does not set specific revenue targets, it provides the strategic framework and key decisions that determine how revenue will be calculated and collected to ensure Council's financial sustainability and its ability to deliver essential services and infrastructure for the community.

The Plan will incorporate consideration of:

- **Rates revenue:** How revenue will be generated through rates on properties across different property classes
- **Service charges:** Application of fixed service charges for services such as waste or recycling
- **Fees and charges:** Policies governing fees and charges for programs and services, including pricing strategies
- **Developer contributions:** Contributions from developers and other sources of revenue
- **Asset revenue:** Income generated from the use or allocation of Council assets, including the application of discounts and waivers
- **Grants:** Recurrent and non-recurrent operational and capital grants from other levels of government
- **Other income:** Includes interest from investments and revenue from minor asset sales and operational activities

Transparency and Budget Assumptions

The assumptions underpinning the budget must be transparent and directly linked to the preparation of individual service and program budgets, service standards, and major initiatives (both operational and capital).

The Plan must clearly identify all revenue sources included in the budget and articulate the policy rationale and assumptions underpinning these sources. This ensures that Council's financial planning remains aligned with its strategic objectives and responsive to community needs.

1. Executive Summary

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires each council to prepare a Revenue and Rating Plan to cover a minimum period of four years following each Council election. The Revenue and Rating Plan establishes the revenue-raising framework within which the Council proposes to work.

The purpose of the Revenue and Rating Plan is to determine the most appropriate and affordable revenue and rating approach for the City of Whittlesea, which, in conjunction with other income sources, will adequately finance the objectives in the Council Plan.

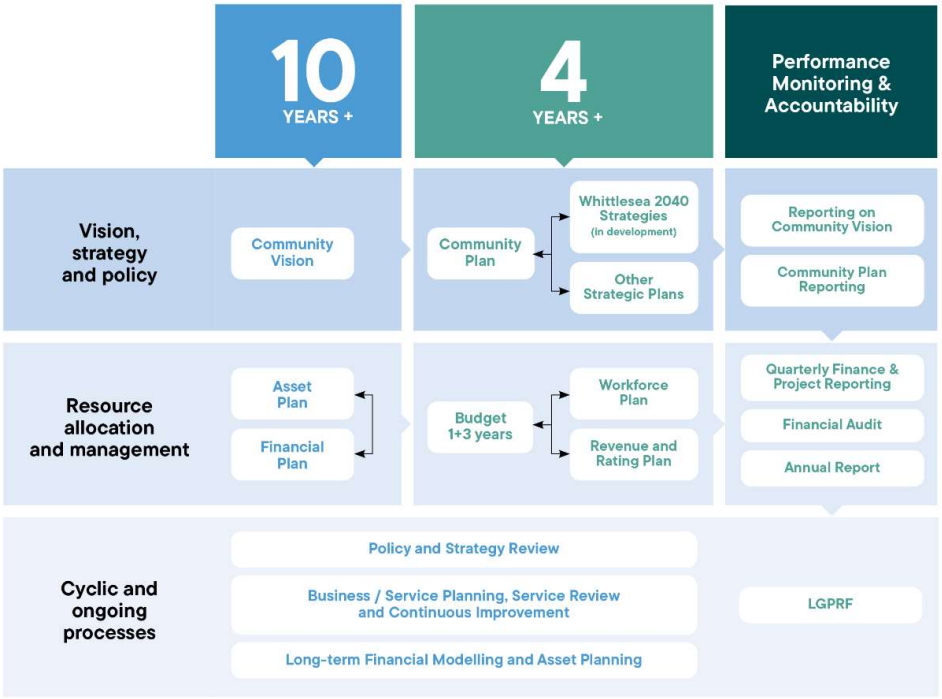
This Plan is an important part of Council's integrated planning framework, all of which is designed to help Council achieve its 2040 vision of "A place for all" and guide efforts to keep pace with the rapid changes and growth of our municipality over the coming years. Our values are:

- Deliver for our community
- Work as one team
- Care for each other

Whittlesea 2040: A place for all is the long-term vision for the City of Whittlesea. It guides all of Council's work and future partnerships with the community and others. Council delivers services and initiatives under 26 major service areas. Each service area contributes to achieving Council's strategic objectives, which are grouped under five goals:

- Connected community
- Sustainable environment
- Liveable neighbourhoods
- Strong local economy
- High performing organisation

Strategies and policies outlined in this Plan align with the objectives contained in the Plan and feed into budgeting and long-term financial planning documents, as well as other strategic planning documents under Council's strategic planning framework. This process and interrelationships are outlined in the following diagram.



The Plan explains how Council calculates the revenue needed to fund its activities and how the funding will be apportioned between ratepayers and other users of Council facilities and services.

This Plan sets out decisions that Council has made regarding the rating options available under the *Local Government Act 1989* to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of rates across property owners. It also outlines the principles used in decision-making for other revenue sources, such as fees and charges.

It is important to note that this Plan does not set revenue targets for Council. Instead, it outlines the strategic framework and decisions that inform how Council will calculate and collect its revenue.

2. Introduction

Council provides a wide range of services and facilities to the local community, and in doing so, must collect sufficient revenue to cover the costs associated with delivering these services and facilities.

Council's revenue sources include:

- **Rates and charges:** These are levies imposed on properties within the municipality, which contribute significantly to funding local services such as waste management, roads, and community facilities
- **User fees:** Council collects fees from users of specific services, such as leisure centres, libraries, and parking, to ensure that those who benefit directly from the services contribute towards their cost
- **Statutory fees and fines:** These fees are set by legislation and cover activities such as building permits, animal registrations, and penalties for breaches of local laws, which help to enforce regulations and maintain order within the community
- **Grants:** Funding from other levels of government, including state and federal grants, which support specific projects or programs aimed at enhancing community welfare and infrastructure
- **Contributions:** Cash and non-cash contributions from developers, community groups, and other parties help fund infrastructure development and community programs, ensuring that growth is sustainable and meets local needs
- **Other income:** This includes revenue generated from interest on Council managed investments and the sale of minor assets, materials, and other operational activities
- **Asset Sales:** Revenue generated from the sale of assets such as land, buildings, or equipment, which can be reinvested into future projects or used to reduce debt

Rates and charges are Council's most significant revenue source, accounting for approximately 48% of annual income. This Revenue and Rating Plan outlines Council's reliance on rate income and explores options to actively manage this reliance.

Council delivers a wide range of services to the community, often for a fee that does not fully recover the costs incurred. The nature of these fees and charges depends on whether they are statutory or discretionary. Statutory fees, such as those for planning services, are set by State Government legislation, leaving Council with limited control over pricing. For discretionary services, Council determines fees and charges based on the principles outlined in this Revenue and Rating Plan.

In addition to rates and user fees, Council's revenue is also significantly impacted by changes in funding from other levels of government. Fluctuations in grant funding can influence service delivery and long-term financial planning, reinforcing the importance of a diversified and resilient revenue base.

3. Rates and Charges

Rates are property taxes that enable Council to generate revenue to fund public services and infrastructure that benefit the municipal population.
This taxation system allows councils the flexibility to incorporate various tools into their rating structure to address equity and ensure fairness for all ratepayers.

Council's rating structure is composed of the following elements:

- General Rates (including Farm Rates): These are based on property values using the Net Annual Valuation (NAV) methodology. Property value serves as an indicator of a ratepayer's capacity to pay and forms the primary basis of the rating system under the *Local Government Act 1989*
- Service Charges: These reflect a 'user-pays' approach, ensuring that ratepayers benefiting from specific services contribute proportionally to their cost

Striking a balance between these elements is vital to achieving equity in the distribution of rates across the community.

Community Engagement

Community engagement on the setting of Council revenue and rates was conducted as part of the consultation process for Council's proposed budget. Submissions and feedback were invited from the community, providing valuable insights and contributions that helped shape this Plan.

Differential Rates

To enhance equity, Council applies differential rates based on the property's use, such as residential, commercial/industrial, or farming. This approach ensures that each category of property contributes fairly, taking into account the benefits derived from Council services and infrastructure.

Council's current differential rates are:

- General Rates (Residential/Commercial/Industrial): 100%
- Farm Rates: 60%

The formula for calculating General Rates (excluding additional charges, arrears, or supplementary rates) is:

- Valuation (Net Annual Value) x Rate in the Dollar (Differential Rate Type)

The specific rate in the dollar for each rating category is determined and published annually in Council's budget.

Contribution of Rates and Charges

Rates and charges are a critical revenue source, accounting for over 48% of Council's total operating revenue. These funds are essential for delivering services and infrastructure projects that meet the needs of the community.
Future rate planning is a core element of Council's long-term financial planning, ensuring sustainable service delivery and infrastructure investment to support a growing population.

Balancing Revenue and Community Impact

Council is mindful of balancing its reliance on rate revenue with community sensitivity to rate increases. The introduction of the State Government's Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) caps annual rate increases to a limit declared by the Minister for Local Government, which is announced annually for the following financial year.

Waste Service Charges

A waste service charge is a fee charged by Council for the collection, disposal and processing of waste. This charge supports a range of essential services, including household waste and recycling collection, drop-off facilities, waste education programs, street litter bin servicing, and the management and rehabilitation of closed landfill sites.

Unlike general rates, waste service charges are not subject to the Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) cap, allowing Council to recover the full cost of service provision in a transparent and sustainable manner.

Charges are itemised on rates notices to provide clarity for ratepayers. They are set to support the ongoing delivery of waste services, ensure compliance with regulatory and environmental standards, and fund future landfill rehabilitation works.

Council remains committed to ensuring waste charges are fair, affordable, and reflective of community needs, while continuing to provide high-quality, value-for-money waste services.

3.1 Rating Legislation

The legislative framework provided by the *Local Government Act 1989* governs Council's ability to establish a rating system. This framework offers significant flexibility, allowing councils to design a system that meets their specific needs while ensuring fairness and equity in the distribution of rates and charges.

Rate and Charge Types

Under Section 155 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council may declare the following rates and charges on rateable land:

- **General Rates** (Section 158)
- **Municipal Charges** (Section 159)
- **Service Rates and Charges** (Section 162)
- **Special Rates and Charges** (Section 163)

Strategies relating to municipal charges, service rates and charges, and special rates and charges are discussed later in this plan.

Valuation Bases for Rating

Section 157(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides Council with three valuation methodologies for determining property values when levying rates:

1. **Site Valuation (SV):** Based on the value of land only
2. **Capital Improved Valuation (CIV):** Based on the total value of land and improvements (buildings, structures, etc.)
3. **Net Annual Value (NAV):** Based on the rental value of the property, typically calculated as 5% of the CIV for residential properties

The advantages and disadvantages of each valuation methodology are detailed later in the Plan.

Historically, the City of Whittlesea has used the Net Annual Value (NAV) method to distribute municipal rates among property owners/tenants. At present, there are no plans to transition to an alternative valuation method.

Differential Rates

As the City of Whittlesea employs the NAV methodology, Section 161A of the *Local Government Act 1989* restricts Council's ability to apply differential rates to specific categories, including "general," "farm," "urban farm," and "residential use" rates.

Annual Budget Requirements

Section 94(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt a budget by 30 June each year (or another time set by the Minister). The budget must include:

a) The total revenue Council intends to raise via rates and charges
b) A statement indicating whether rates will be raised through a uniform rate or differential rates
c) A description of any fixed components of rates, if applicable
d) Specific details for uniform rates as outlined in Section 160 of *the Local Government Act 1989*
e) Specific details for differential rates as outlined in Section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*

Additionally, Section 94(3) requires Council to include, if applicable:

a) A statement of intent to apply for a special order to exceed the State Government's rate cap
b) A statement that Council has applied to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) for such an order and is awaiting a decision
c) Confirmation of any approved special orders and the applicable average rate cap for the financial year(s)

Fair Go Rates System

The Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) establishes a cap on the maximum percentage by which councils can increase rates annually. The cap is set by the Minister for Local Government, based on a formula developed by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) and agreed upon by the State Government.

Under the Fair Go Rate Cap the cap is calculated by a formula provided by the ESC and agreed by the State Government is:

$$\frac{\text{Adopted General Rate and Municipal Charge Income + Annualised Supplementary Rate and Municipal Charge Income}}{\text{Number of Assessments as at 30 June}} = \text{Base Average Rate}$$

$$\text{Base Average Rate} \times (1 + \text{Prescribed Rate Cap}) = \text{Maximum allowable Capped Average Rate}$$

The rate cap limits the maximum amount a council can increase its average rates in a rating year. The rate cap applies to general rates and municipal charges only. It does not include other charges and levies such as service rates and charges, special rates and charges, revenue in lieu of rates or the fire services levy.

The FGRS cap applies only to general rates and municipal charges. Other charges, such as service rates and charges, special rates and charges, revenue in lieu of rates, and the fire services levy are excluded.

3.2 Rating Principles

When developing a rating strategy, particularly regarding differential rates, Council considers the following good practice taxation principles:

- Equity
- Efficiency
- Benefit
- Capacity to pay
- Diversity
- Simplicity
- Wealth tax

Equity

- **Horizontal Equity:** Ratepayers in similar situations should pay similar rates. This is achieved through accurate property valuations, consistent classification into homogenous property classes, and providing ratepayers the right to appeal valuations

- **Vertical Equity**: Those who are better off (based on property value) should contribute more in rates than those who are worse off. This reflects a "relativity" dimension, akin to progressive taxation principles, ensuring fairness in the distribution of tax contributions

Efficiency

Economic efficiency is measured by how minimally rates affect the production and consumption decisions of individuals and businesses. An efficient rates system should avoid distorting economic behaviour.

Benefit

This principle assesses the extent to which there is a direct link between the consumption of Council services or the benefits derived by ratepayers and the rates they are charged.

Capacity to Pay

Council considers the capacity of ratepayers or specific groups to pay rates. Recognising that property values may not always align with financial capacity, Council provides mechanisms such as hardship provisions and a pensioner rebate policy to assist ratepayers facing financial difficulties.

Diversity

Acknowledging the varied circumstances and financial capacities of ratepayers within a group, Council seeks to ensure that its rating system is flexible and responsive to the diversity within the municipality.

Simplicity

A rates system should be easy for ratepayers to understand and straightforward for Council to administer. Clarity and transparency in the rates process are essential to building community trust and ensuring compliance.

Wealth Tax

The principle of a "wealth tax" implies that rates are based on the value of a ratepayer's real property. There is no direct correlation between the rates paid by individual ratepayers and their consumption of services or the perceived benefits derived from the expenditure of rates revenue.

Balancing the Rating Challenge

The key challenge for Council is balancing these competing principles to create a fair, equitable, and efficient rating system. While municipal rates are primarily distributed based on property values (NAV methodology), Council strives to support fairness through:

- Accurate and consistent property valuations
- Homogenous property classifications
- Valuation appeal rights for ratepayers

Council adheres to the principle that ratepayers in similar circumstances—particularly regarding property value—should pay similar rates. While recognising that property value may not always reflect capacity to pay, Council mitigates this through support measures such as hardship provisions and pensioner rebates.

Limited Differential Rates

Council currently applies two limited differential rates:

- General Rate
- Farm Rate

This approach aligns with the legislative restrictions of the Net Annual Value (NAV) rating system. Differential rates are applied as equitably as possible and in compliance with the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating (2013).

Ongoing Review and Application

As part of its commitment to good governance and financial sustainability, Council will:

- **Review rates annually** to ensure fairness, consistency, and alignment with Council's Vision and strategic priorities
- **Ensure minimal year-to-year fluctuations** to provide ratepayers with certainty and stability
- **Set rates at levels sufficient to fund current expenditure commitments** while delivering on the Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan

Council will continue to apply limited differential rates equitably and in compliance with legislative requirements, ensuring rates are a fair reflection of property value and community benefit.

3.3 Valuation Base

Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council has three options for determining the valuation base for rates:

- Capital Improved Value (CIV): The total value of land and all improvements on it
- Site Value (SV): The value of the land only
- Net Annual Value (NAV): The annual rental value of the property, based on CIV

Capital Improved Value (CIV)

CIV is the most commonly used valuation base in local government, with over 90% of Victorian councils applying this method. It reflects the market value of a property, including both land and improvements, making it generally easier for ratepayers to understand.

Under Section 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a council may apply differential rates if:

a) CIV is the valuation base and
b) It determines that differential rates contribute to the equitable and efficient performance of its functions

If a council does not use CIV, its ability to apply differential rates is restricted to farm land, urban farm land, or residential use land.

Advantages of CIV	Disadvantages of CIV
Reflects both the land and property improvements, offering a more comprehensive assessment of "capacity to pay."	Rates are based on total property value, which may not correlate with income levels (e.g., pensioners or low-income earners may own high-value properties but struggle to pay rates).
Aligns with the equity principle by considering the full development value of the property.	

Advantages of NAV	Disadvantages of NAV
With annual valuations, market values are more predictable, reducing the frequency of objections.	
Easy for ratepayers to understand, as it corresponds to market property values.	
Widely adopted across Victoria, facilitating comparison between councils	
Allows for differential rates, enhancing Council's ability to distribute rates equitably. For example, higher differentials on commercial/industrial properties can help offset residential rates.	

Site Value (SV)

This method places a value on the land only and does not consider any value of any buildings constructed on the land. It is not considered to result in the most equitable distribution of the rate effort.

No Victorian councils currently use SV as a valuation base. SV considers only the value of the land, excluding improvements, and allows for very limited application of differential rates.

In the City of Whittlesea, adopting SV would disproportionately shift the rate impact from the industrial/commercial sectors to residential properties, undermining fairness and equity. Modern townhouse developments on small land parcels would pay lower rates, while older homes on larger blocks would face higher rates, regardless of property condition.

Advantages of SV	Disadvantages of SV
Perceived to promote development, particularly in commercial and industrial sectors, although evidence for this is limited.	Significant shift in rate contributions from industrial/commercial sectors to residential sectors.
Potential for concessions for urban farm land and residential use land.	Disadvantages property owners with large land parcels, such as farmers, even if the dwellings are modest.
	Limited ability to levy differential rates, reducing Council's flexibility to address inequities.
	Difficult for ratepayers to understand, leading to confusion and increased inquiries to Council.

Net Annual Value (NAV)

NAV represents the annual rental value of a property. For residential and farm properties, NAV is calculated as 5% of the CIV. For commercial and industrial properties, NAV is determined by the greater of the estimated annual rental value or 5% of the CIV.

While NAV is conceptually linked to rental value, in practice, it is based on CIV for residential and farm properties, making it less intuitive for ratepayers.

Advantages of NAV	Disadvantages of NAV
Aligns closely with CIV for residential and farm properties.	Artificial rental estimates may not reflect actual market value, making it harder for ratepayers to understand.
Allows for differentiation between property types (e.g., rental valuation for commercial/industrial properties).	Reduces transparency compared to CIV.

Recommended Valuation Base

The City of Whittlesea uses the Net Annual Value (NAV) rating system, calculated as follows:

- For residential and farm properties: 5% of CIV
- For commercial and industrial properties: The greater of the annual rental value or 5% of CIV

This system ensures that all rateable land contributes equitably to Council's financial requirements. Council applies two limited differential rates—General and Farm—and believes this approach is fair and equitable to all ratepayers. Limited differential rates will be reviewed as part of the ongoing review of this plan.

Property Valuations

Under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*, the Victorian Valuer-General conducts annual property valuations. Valuations are determined based on the highest and best use of land at the time of assessment.

The value of land is always derived by the principal of valuing land for its highest and best use at the relevant time of valuation.

Supplementary Valuations

In addition to annual valuations, supplementary valuations are conducted monthly for reasons such as:

- Rezoning, subdivisions, or amalgamations
- Renovations, new constructions, or extensions
- Occupancy changes or corrections

These valuations ensure that affected properties align with the general valuation of other properties in the municipality. Council currently receives approximately $3.66 million in supplementary rate revenue annually.

Objections to Property Valuations

Under Part 3 of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*, property owners or tenants may object to a valuation or the Australian Valuation Property Classification Code (AVPCC) within two months of receiving a Rates Notice (or four months if the notice was not issued to the occupier).

Objections must be lodged via the Valuer General Victoria's portal: https://ratingvaluationobjections.vic.gov.au/.

Property owners can also object to site valuations upon receiving their Land Tax Assessment from the State Revenue Office.

3.4 Rating Differentials

As outlined, the City of Whittlesea uses the Net Annual Value (NAV) rating system. Historically, Council has applied two limited differential rates:

- General Rate: Applied to all rateable land except land classified as "farm."
- Farm Rate: Applies to properties classified as "farm land" under the *Valuation of Land Act 1960*, which defines farm land as:
  - A parcel of land not less than 2 hectares in area
  - Land used primarily for agricultural purposes such as grazing, dairying, horticulture, or crop-growing
  - Land used by a business with a significant commercial purpose, aiming for profit on a continuous or repetitive basis

The Farm Rate reflects a 40% discount compared to the General Rate, a level established in 2017–18 (increased from 15%) and maintained since. Council considers this discount fair, equitable, and sustainable.

Objectives of Differential Rates

The primary objective of Council's differential rates is to ensure adequate funding for strategic, statutory, and community services while maintaining a fair and equitable distribution of rates. The distinction between the General and Farm rates reflects the cost and benefits derived from Council services by different property categories.

Review of the Rating System

Council will undertake a comprehensive review to assess the suitability of continuing with the NAV rating system versus transitioning to the Capital Improved Value (CIV) system. This review will include consultation with the community and key stakeholders to determine the most appropriate differential rates for General and Farm properties.

Advantages of Differential Rating	Disadvantages of Differential Rating
Flexibility: Enables the equitable distribution of rates across property categories, considering the ability to pay and the tax-deductibility of rates for commercial and industrial properties.	Complexity: Justifying and explaining differential rates to various groups can be challenging, leading to complaints or misunderstandings.
Equity: Addresses unique circumstances, such as providing relief to farming enterprises, ensuring fairness in rate allocation.	Administrative Burden: Properties transitioning between categories (e.g., from farm to general) require regular updates, necessitating meticulous data management.

3.5 Municipal Charge

A municipal charge is one of the rating options available to councils under Section 159 of the *Local Government Act 1989*. This charge can be declared by Council to recover a portion of its administrative costs. However, the legislation does not provide a definitive definition of "administrative costs" nor require Council to specify what expenses are covered by the charge.

Purpose and Application

The municipal charge is a fixed fee applied to all rateable properties, irrespective of their valuation. This approach ensures that a portion of Council's revenue is generated through a flat charge rather than being solely reliant on the Capital Improved Value (CIV) rating method.
Under the *Local Government Act 1989*, revenue raised from a municipal charge cannot exceed 20% of the total sum of revenue collected from both the municipal charge and general rates in any given financial year.
The key characteristics of a municipal charge include:

- Equitable cost distribution: Since the charge applies equally to all properties, it spreads a portion of administrative costs across all ratepayers, independent of property value
- Fixed revenue component: Provides a stable revenue source that is not influenced by fluctuations in property valuations

Current Approach

At present, the City of Whittlesea does not levy a municipal charge under Section 159 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

Future Considerations

As part of the upcoming review of the Revenue and Rating Plan, Council will assess the potential benefits and implications of introducing a municipal charge. This review will consider:

- Equity and fairness in distributing administrative costs
- Financial sustainability and the impact on ratepayers
- Comparisons with other councils that apply a municipal charge

Any potential introduction of a municipal charge will be subject to further community engagement and assessment of its alignment with Council's financial strategy.

3.6 Special Rate Scheme

Under Section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, councils have the authority to levy special rates and special charges to fund capital infrastructure and initiatives that provide a specific benefit to certain properties. These charges allow Council to recover the costs of works or services that directly enhance the value or usability of properties within a defined area.

Purpose and Application

Special rates and charges can be used to fund a range of community infrastructure projects, including:

- Road construction
- Kerb and channelling
- Footpath provision
- Drainage improvements
- Landscaping and environmental enhancements
- Fire prevention initiatives
- Marketing and business development programs

Current Special Rate Schemes

The City of Whittlesea currently applies special rates under Section 163 of the *Local Government Act 1989* to support marketing and business development initiatives for designated retail precincts. These special rates assist local businesses in:

- Funding marketing and promotional activities to enhance commercial precincts.
- Supporting business development initiatives to increase foot traffic and sales.
- Encouraging networking and collaboration among local businesses.
- Managing business-related planning and operational issues.

Council currently has one Special Rate and Charge scheme in operation:

Scheme Name	Finish Date
Lalor Marketing and Business Development	June 2026

3.7 Service Charge

The Local Government Legislative Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022 received Royal Assent in August 2022, introducing amendments to Part 2—*Local Government Act 1989 (Division 1: Service Rates and Charges).* These changes came into effect on 20 June 2023, unless proclaimed earlier. Council will continue to monitor legislative updates and adjust its approach accordingly.

Legislative Framework

Under Sections 162 and 221 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, councils are empowered to levy service rates and charges for the following services:

a. Water supply services (repealed from the Act)
b. Waste, recycling, or resource recovery services (amended wording to align with modern waste management practices)
c. Sewerage services (repealed from the Act)
d. Any other prescribed service

A key amendment under Section 162(b) updates the definition from "the collection and disposal of waste" to "waste, recycling, or resource recovery services." This change broadens the scope of services that can be funded through service charges to reflect contemporary waste management practices, including:

- Collection, transport, processing, storage, and treatment of waste and recyclable materials
- Alignment with the *Circular Economy Act 2021* and the Victorian Government's Recycling Reforms

Waste Service Charges in the City of Whittlesea

The City of Whittlesea applies a service charge for waste collection and disposal:

- Urban properties: Compulsory waste charge
- Rural properties: Optional waste charge
- Municipal waste services: Covers public waste infrastructure, including street litter bins

Council introduced the itemisation of waste charges on rates notices to enhance transparency regarding the costs associated with service provision. The cost of waste services continues to rise due to factors such as the Victorian Government's Landfill Levy and the mandated transition to a four-bin collection system under the Recycling Victoria Strategy.

Historically, Council has subsidised kerbside waste collection services, including offsetting the increasing Victorian Government's Landfill Levy. However, with ongoing increases in the landfill levy, Council is no longer able to continue subsidising this cost. Moving forward, the full levy cost will be passed on to ratepayers to ensure the sustainability of waste services and other essential community services.

Council remains committed to keeping waste charges affordable while ensuring ongoing investment in essential waste services. Charges are set to support:

- Ongoing waste collection and processing
- Compliance with regulatory and environmental standards
- Future rehabilitation obligations for Council's landfill once it reaches the end of its useful life

Even with necessary adjustments, waste charges in the City of Whittlesea will remain among the lowest compared to neighbouring and growth councils, ensuring ongoing value and sustainability for residents.

Future Considerations

Council will continue to assess the long-term sustainability of its waste service charges, ensuring they:

- Support the transition to a circular economy
- Align with State and Federal waste management policies
- Maintain fair and equitable pricing for residents and businesses

Regular reviews will be conducted to evaluate cost recovery levels, taking into account:

- Operational efficiency improvements
- Changes in waste generation patterns
- Potential future waste management initiatives

3.8 Collection and Administration of Rates and Charges

This section outlines the rate payment options, processes, and support available to ratepayers, including financial hardship assistance.

Liability to Pay Rates

The owner of the land is liable to pay the rates and charges on that land. In certain cases, the occupier, mortgagee or licensee holder is liable to pay the rates.

The *Local Government Act 1989* declares the unpaid rate or charge, interest and costs to be the first charge upon the land, when the land is sold; ensuring Council receives the outstanding monies prior to the discharge of any mortgage and or charges on the land.

Payment Options

In accordance with Section 167(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, ratepayers can pay rates and charges in four instalments on the following prescribed dates:

- First instalment: 30 September
- Second instalment: 30 November
- Third instalment: 28 February

- Fourth instalment: 31 May

The City of Whittlesea also provides the following alternative payment options:

- One lump sum payment on or before 15 February of the following year
- Nine monthly payments via direct debit
- Agreed alternative arrangements, subject to Council approval upon application

Available Payment Methods

Council offers a range of payment options including

- In-person at Council offices (cheque, money order, EFTPOS, credit/debit card, and cash)
- Online via Council's website
- BPAY through banking institutions
- Direct debit
- Online through eNotices
- Credit card via Council's 24-hour phone service
- Australia Post (in-person, over the phone, or online via credit card)
- Mail (detach and return the bottom portion of the rate notice with a cheque)

Interest on Overdue Rates and Charges

Interest on rates and charges is calculated in accordance with Section 172 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, noting the amendments to that Act as a result of the *Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022*. The rate is set by the Attorney General under the *Penalty Interest Rates Act 1983* and gazetted each year. The *Local Government Legislation Amendment (Rating and Other Matters) Act 2022* also empowers the Minister, in consultation with the Essential Services Commission, to set a maximum amount of interest that may be levied on unpaid rates and charges.

Interest is calculated from the due date of each quarterly instalment, regardless of whether the ratepayer has opted for instalment or lump sum payments.

Pensioner Rebates

Pensioners may qualify for a maximum 50% State Government rate rebate (to a gazetted maximum) for the home in which they are living. A rebate will apply for the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund. To be eligible, a ratepayer must hold one of the following concession cards:

- A Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card or Veteran Affairs Pension Concession Card
- A Veteran Affairs Gold Card (TPI or War Widow status only)

Other than administrative costs, this State Government Rebate scheme is cost neutral to Council as this is fully funded by the State Government.

Once approved, ongoing eligibility is automatically maintained unless rejected by Centrelink or the Department of Veteran Affairs during annual verification.

Rates Financial Hardship Policy and Deferred Payments

Council acknowledges that ratepayers may experience financial hardship due to various circumstances. The Financial Hardship Policy provides options for ratepayers struggling to meet rate obligations.
Assistance may include:

a) Waiver of charges, including penalty interest, legal costs
b) Deferral of rates, allowing delayed payment (Under Section 170 of the *Local Government Act 1989*)

Waivers of general rates are not generally granted. However, in cases such as those associated with severe hardship, Council may grant waivers through the Hardship Assistance Policy, taking in to account the economic conditions at the time and other assistance measures in place across State and Commonwealth Government agencies. Applications to defer Rates must be received in writing or by email.

Debt Recovery Process

Ratepayers are responsible for ensuring their contact details are updated with Council. Under Sections 230 and 231 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, property owners, buyers, and their legal representatives must notify Council of any disposition or acquisition of land.
If an account becomes overdue, Council has established procedures and guidelines for the collection of the debt. This creates a consistent approach to debt collection and ensures that all ratepayers are treated equally and fairly.
The purpose of the collection guidelines is to act as a genuine deterrent to ratepayers who might otherwise fail to pay rates on time, to allow Council to recover the administrative cost of following up unpaid rates and to recover any interest cost the Council may incur due to lost investment opportunities. The principle in providing for such penalty is that ratepayers who pay within the required timeframe should not have to subsidise or bear any cost of ratepayers who default in payment. Details of Council's collection framework is contained in Council's Debt Collection Policy.

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

The Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF), formerly known as the Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL), is an annual levy collected by councils via Rates Notices on behalf of the State Government, in accordance with the *Fire Services Property Levy Act 2012*. This levy ensures that property owners in Victoria contribute annually to the funding of the state's fire services.

Revenue raised from the ESVF accounts for 87.5 per cent of the budget for Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) and 77.5 per cent of the budget for the Country Fire Authority's (CFA).

The levy is property-based and operates under the following principles:

- Councils are responsible for collecting the levy via Rates Notices
- The levy is calculated based on the capital improved value (CIV) of a property
- The levy consists of a fixed component and a variable component, with the latter calculated as a percentage of the property's CIV
- The fixed component differs between residential and non-residential properties
- The levy rate varies across different property types, such as residential, industrial, commercial, and primary production

The ESVF is not subject to the rate cap and changes to the levy are at the discretion of the State Government.

Holders of a Pensioner Concession Card and the Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card are eligible for a $50 concession on the fixed charge for their Principal Place of Residence (PPR). Farmers operating multiple properties as a single enterprise may qualify for a single fixed charge under the Single Farming Enterprise Exemption.

From 1 July 2025, eligible CFA and Victorian State Emergency Service (VICSES) volunteers and life members will be entitled to a rebate on the ESVF on their principal place of residence or farm, which will be administered by the State Government through the Department of Government Services.

4. Other Revenue Items

4.1 User Fees

Council provides a diverse range of goods and services to the community. As part of responsible financial management, all Council services are periodically reviewed to determine whether they should attract user fees and charges. Services classified as public infrastructure such as roads, parks, footpaths, drainage, and trees are typically provided free of charge, with associated costs fully funded by rates and/or grants.

For services provided on an individual basis, Council may charge a fee. However, the ability to set these fees can be influenced by State and Federal Government legislation or funding conditions, which may impose pricing ceilings or prohibitions. Certain fees, such as planning fees, are set by State Government statute, and are commonly referred to as 'statutory fees,' over which councils typically have no control.

For all other fees and charges, Council assesses whether a service is of a commercial or community-benefit nature. Services are considered community-benefit if they provide broad advantages to the wider population and ensure equitable access for vulnerable community members. Additionally, some fees and charges such as fines, serve a regulatory purpose, discouraging non-compliant behaviour rather than generating revenue.

Fee-setting Framework

Council reviews its fees and charges annually as part of the budget process. This process is guided by the Pricing Policy – Fees and Charges, which ensures a structured, transparent, and equitable approach to pricing of Council services. The policy enables evidence-based decisions regarding which services should be subsidised due to their community benefits and which should operate on a full cost-recovery basis where they provide significant commercial advantages.

The policy balances community and commercial interests while promoting fairness, transparency, and financial sustainability. It ensures:

- fair and consistent pricing of Council services
- fees reflect actual service delivery costs, while considering affordability and community benefit
- responsible financial management to maintain service quality and long-term sustainability
- compliance with legislative requirements and competitive neutrality principles
- equitable access to services for all community

Pricing Methods

There are a variety of pricing methods that Council uses when setting prices for services.

Pricing Basis	Description
Full Cost Recovery	Council recovers all direct and indirect cost of the service.
Partial Cost Recovery	Council recovers less than the full cost (as defined above) - the reasons for this may include broader community service benefits.
Legislative Requirements	Price of the service is determined by legislation and dependent on price, may or may not recover the full cost.
Market Based Pricing	The price of the service is determined by examining alternative prices of surrounding service providers (this also may or may not recover the full cost). e.g., Family and Children's Services and Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre.
Zero Cost Recovery	Some services may be provided free of charge and the whole cost determined as a community service benefit.
Incentive Pricing	This would include Full Cost Recovery as defined above in addition to a profit margin to factor in a return to Council for assets employed or to provide an incentive to encourage compliant behaviour.

User Fee Pricing Policy objectives

- Establish a structured framework for fair and equitable pricing
- Ensure both direct and indirect costs are considered in fee setting
- Balance accessibility, affordability, and efficiency in service delivery
- Maintain compliance with competitive neutrality requirements
- Promote financial sustainability while supporting community needs

Annual Review and Community Engagement

- Council reviews fees and charges annually as part of the budget process
- Proposed changes are published in the Annual Budget, providing an opportunity for community feedback before final adoption

- Council remains committed to transparency and accountability in its fee-setting approach, ensuring pricing aligns with strategic objectives and community expectations

4.2 Statutory Fees and Fines

Statutory fees and fines are collected by Council as required under legislation or government directives. The rates for these fees and fines are generally set by the responsible State Government departments, and Council has limited discretion in their application.
Examples of Statutory Fees and Fines are:

- Planning and subdivision fees
- Building and inspection fees
- Infringements and fines
- Land Information Certificate fees

Penalty and Fee Units in Victoria

Many statutory fees and fines in Victoria are determined using penalty units and fee units, as prescribed in Acts and Regulations.

Penalty Units

Penalty units are used to determine the amount payable for various fines. For example, the fine for selling tobacco to a person under 18 is calculated as a specific number of penalty units.
The rate for penalty units is indexed annually to align with inflation, with updates taking effect on 1 July each year.

Fee Units

Fee units are used to calculate the cost of certificates, registrations, and licences set out in Acts and Regulations.
The value of fee units is also indexed annually, with adjustments typically occurring at the start of each financial year.

Calculation of Fees and Penalties

The total cost of a statutory fee or fine is calculated by multiplying the relevant number of penalty or fee units by the current unit value. The final amount may be subject to rounding.

4.3 Grants

Grant revenue is a key source of funding for Council, typically received from State and Federal Governments. Grants may be:

- One-off (Non-recurrent) – Linked to specific infrastructure projects, programs, or initiatives
- Ongoing (Recurrent) – Provided regularly, sometimes tied to service delivery but not always linked to a specific project

Some grants are tied to the delivery of specific Council services, while others support the development of new community assets such as roads or sports facilities. It is essential for Council to strategically assess the grants it applies for, considering the impacts and obligations these grants create in service delivery or infrastructure development.

Council's Approach to Grant Funding

Council takes a proactive approach to securing grant funding by advocating to other levels of government to support vital community infrastructure and services. Where appropriate, Council may allocate its own funds to co-contribute to grant applications, leveraging greater external funding and maximising financial opportunities for the municipality.

Grant Planning and Decision-Making

When developing its Financial Plan, Council assesses:

- The project pipeline and funding priorities
- Advocacy strategies aligned with community needs
- Available grant programs and funding cycles
- Potential co-funding opportunities to enhance financial sustainability

To ensure strategic alignment, Council will only apply for and accept grants that:

- Align with the Community Vision and Council's strategic priorities
- Do not compromise or distort the Council Plan and long-term financial sustainability

All grant funding assumptions are transparently documented in Council's annual budget. No project reliant on grant funding will commence until a signed funding agreement is in place to ensure financial accountability and certainty.

4.4 Contributions

Contributions represent funds received by Council, typically from non-government sources, and are usually linked to specific infrastructure projects or community initiatives. Contributions can be provided in two forms:

- Monetary Contributions – Cash payments made to Council
- Non-Monetary Contributions – Physical assets transferred to Council, usually as part of development projects

Types of Contributions

Monetary Contributions include:

- Payments from developers under planning and development agreements
- Funds collected through Developer Contribution Plans (DCPs) and Infrastructure Contribution Plans (ICPs) to support community infrastructure
- Contributions from user groups toward the upgrade of community facilities

Non-Monetary Contributions include:

- Assets transferred to Council upon completion of a subdivision, such as:
  - Roads
  - Drainage infrastructure
  - Streetlights
  - Open space and public amenities

Management and Governance of Contributions

- All contributions must be linked to a planning or funding agreement to ensure transparency and accountability.
- No contribution-funded project will commence without a signed agreement that clearly defines the contribution details.
- Contributions associated with developments may be received well before Council incurs any expenditure. In these cases, funds will be held in financial reserves and allocated strictly for the agreed-upon works.

4.5 Other Income

Other income includes revenue generated from sources outside of Council's primary revenue streams, such as interest on investments and operational sales.

Sources of Other Income

- Interest on investments: Council earns interest on funds held in its investment portfolio, which includes:

  - Surplus cash held before planned expenditure
  - Funds allocated for special purposes or reserves
  - Short-term and long-term investments aligned with Council's Investment Policy
- Other sales: Revenue from sales of minor assets, materials, and other operational activities

Investment Portfolio Management

Council's investment portfolio is managed in accordance with its Investment Policy, ensuring:

- The best possible return on funds within a low-risk framework
- Compliance with legislative requirements and Council's risk management strategies
- Sufficient liquidity to meet operational and capital funding requirements

4.6 Asset Sales

Asset sales refer to the disposal of Council-owned assets that are no longer required for operational or strategic purposes. These may include land, buildings, vehicles, plant and equipment, or other infrastructure assets.

Council undertakes asset sales as part of its broader Asset Management Plan to ensure the optimal use of resources and to maintain financial sustainability. Assets considered for sale are assessed based on current and future community needs, usage, condition, maintenance costs, and strategic alignment with Council priorities.

Revenue generated from asset sales can be utilised in two main ways:

- Reinvestment in Community Infrastructure: Proceeds may be directed towards funding new capital works projects or enhancing existing facilities and services. This supports improved service delivery and infrastructure renewal without increasing debt or placing additional pressure on rates revenue.
- Debt Reduction and Financial Sustainability: Funds from asset sales may also be used to reduce existing debt, strengthen Council's financial position, and increase long-term capacity to invest in future community priorities.

All asset sales are conducted in accordance with Council's Asset Disposal Policy and relevant legislative requirements, ensuring a transparent, fair, and accountable process that delivers maximum value to the community.

4.7 Borrowings

While not a direct source of income, borrowings play a key role in Council's financial strategy, enabling responsible cash flow management and funding of significant infrastructure projects.

Principles for Borrowing

All new borrowings must be:

- Approved by Council resolution and included in the Annual Budget or Revised Budget
- Financially sustainable, ensuring repayment obligations align with the Financial Plan
- Restricted to capital investment, meaning borrowings cannot be used to fund ongoing operations
- Used for large-scale capital projects that deliver long-term community benefits across multiple generations

Debt Management Strategy

To ensure financial sustainability, Council maintains debt at prudent levels by adhering to the following benchmarks:

- Indebtedness Ratio: Borrowings must remain below 60% of rates and charges revenue
- Debt Servicing Ratio: Annual debt repayments must be less than 6% of total rate revenue

Council regularly reviews its borrowing strategy as part of its broader financial planning framework, ensuring debt remains at a level that balances current needs with intergenerational equity.

5. Strategies and Plans

The City of Whittlesea has an integrated planning framework designed to align the Council's strategic direction with community needs, ensuring a bold, inspirational, and sustainable future. The Revenue and Rating Plan is a key component of this framework, supporting financial sustainability while delivering essential services and infrastructure.

5.1 Strategic Vision and Framework

Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All

Council's long-term vision, Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All, provides a clear roadmap for our community's future. It outlines five key goals:

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

These goals guide Council's strategic direction and inform the development of policies, strategies, and action plans that support the community's evolving needs.

5.2 Integrating Planning Framework

Council's planning framework operates across four levels, ensuring a structured and transparent approach to decision-making and service delivery.

Document Hierarchy	Integrated Planning Framework Component
Level 1 – Vision Sets vision and overarching strategic priorities.	Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All
	Community Plan (Incl. Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan and Disability Action Plan)
Level 2 – Strategy Sets strategic direction and outlines priority actions for delivery. Documents traditionally endorsed by Council.	IPF Strategies Features desired outcomes and overview of strategy themes/topics
	IPF Strategy Action Plan One action plan for each strategy that combines actions across all themes
Level 3 – Approach Provides intricate detail to support long term planning and guide implementation.	Long Term Plans (Incl. Infrastructure and Asset Management Plans) Multiple standalone plans that provide detailed rationale to support strategy direction and guide implementation. May feature key initiatives/focus areas but not detailed actions or an action plan.
Level 4 – Operations Internal documents used to guide day to day services and manage our people.	Processes Incl. Guidelines and Frameworks

Level 1 – Guiding Community Vision

Documents at this level set the overarching vision for Council.

- Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All: The long-term strategic vision guiding all Council activities
- Community Plan (four-year cycle): Defines Council priorities for each term, supported by an Annual Community Action Plan

Level 2 – Strategies and Action Plans

Council's five strategic goals are supported by corresponding medium- to long-term strategies, replacing previously reported strategies. Each strategy is further refined through short-term action plans detailing key initiatives over the next 1–2 financial years.
Key supporting plans include:

- Long-Term Community Infrastructure Plan: A framework for sustainable community infrastructure development
- Aboriginal Action Plan: A commitment to supporting and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal communities

Level 3 – Long-Term Plans and Legislative Requirements

While Level 2 strategies set overarching goals, Level 3 plans provide subject-matter-specific guidance. These documents, primarily known as 'plans', align with strategic objectives but do not include direct reporting components. Examples include:

- Workforce Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Waste Management Plan

- Financial Hardship Policy (aligned with recommendations from the Victorian Ombudsman's 2021 report)

Level 4 – Operational Documents

These documents guide day-to-day operations, ensuring alignment with higher-level strategies and plans. They include:

- Directorate and department guidelines
- Workplans and service delivery frameworks
- Performance development plans (PDPs) for employees.

5.3 Current Strategies and Plans

Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All

Whittlesea 2040 outlines the long-term community vision and strategic direction for the municipality. This vision guides all Council operations and partnerships, ensuring that Whittlesea remains a great place to live now and, in the future, while preparing for emerging challenges and opportunities.

Community Plan

Council's Community Plan outlines key priorities and initiatives, shaping strategic decision-making and service delivery. The plan is implemented through the Annual Plan and Budget, which determines funding priorities each year.
Performance against the plan is tracked in the Annual Report. Any initiatives from the Council Plan not captured in the Revenue and Rating Plan will be included in subsequent years.

Community Action Plan

The Community Action Plan details specific initiatives supporting the long-term vision of "A Place for All." This plan translates strategic goals into tangible actions, ensuring Council remains responsive to community needs, emerging challenges, and evolving priorities. Key focus areas include:

- Infrastructure and service improvements to enhance liveability
- Community programs and partnerships fostering engagement and inclusion
- Sustainability initiatives supporting environmental and climate resilience
- Economic development actions to strengthen local businesses and job opportunities
- Ongoing evaluation and reporting, ensuring transparency and accountability

Council will review and update the Community Action Plan regularly to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with community expectations and strategic priorities.

Connected Communities

The Connected Community Strategy guides Council's commitment to fostering an inclusive, healthy, safe and welcoming place where all community members are celebrated and supported. Informed by the analysis of trends and engagement with community, the strategy:

- Provides an overview of Council's demographic profile
- Identifies the challenges and opportunities facing our community
- Articulates the impact we are seeking to make to deliver for our community
- Defines Council's priority areas for action and what we will do to contribute to community connection
- Outlines how we will monitor community outcomes to ensure we continue to respond to the changing needs of our community

Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy

The Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy sets Council's approach to creating and maintaining Liveable Neighbourhoods that are attractive and well-planned with open spaces and town centres that are convenient and vibrant places for all.
The strategy aligns and contributes to the Liveable Neighbourhoods key directions in Council's vision under Whittlesea 2040:

- Smart, connected transport network
- Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres
- Housing for diverse needs.

Strong Local Economy Strategy

The Strong Local Economy Strategy outlines Council's contribution toward building a prosperous and inclusive economy for all. Informed by the analysis of trends impacting our economy and engagement with local businesses, institutional stakeholders, partner organisations, and the wider community, the strategy:

- Sets out the economy we want and outlines how this will positively impact our community
- Provides an overview of Council's existing economy
- Identifies the challenges and opportunities facing our local economy
- Defines Council's priority areas for action and what we will do to contribute to strengthening our local economy
- Outlines how we will monitor our economy to ensure our actions respond to what our community needs

Sustainable Environment Local Strategy

The Sustainable Environment Strategy advances Council's commitment toward securing a sustainable, net zero emissions, and climate resilient future for all. Informed by the analysis of

trends impacting our environment and engagement with communities, local businesses, institutional stakeholders, and partner organisations, the strategy:

- Sets out the environment we want and outlines how this will positively impact our community
- Provides an overview of the Council's existing environment
- Identifies challenges and opportunities facing our local environment
- Defines Council's priority areas for action and what we will do to contribute to protecting and enhancing our local environment
- Outlines how we will monitor our environment to ensure our actions respond to what our community needs

High-Performing Organisation Strategy

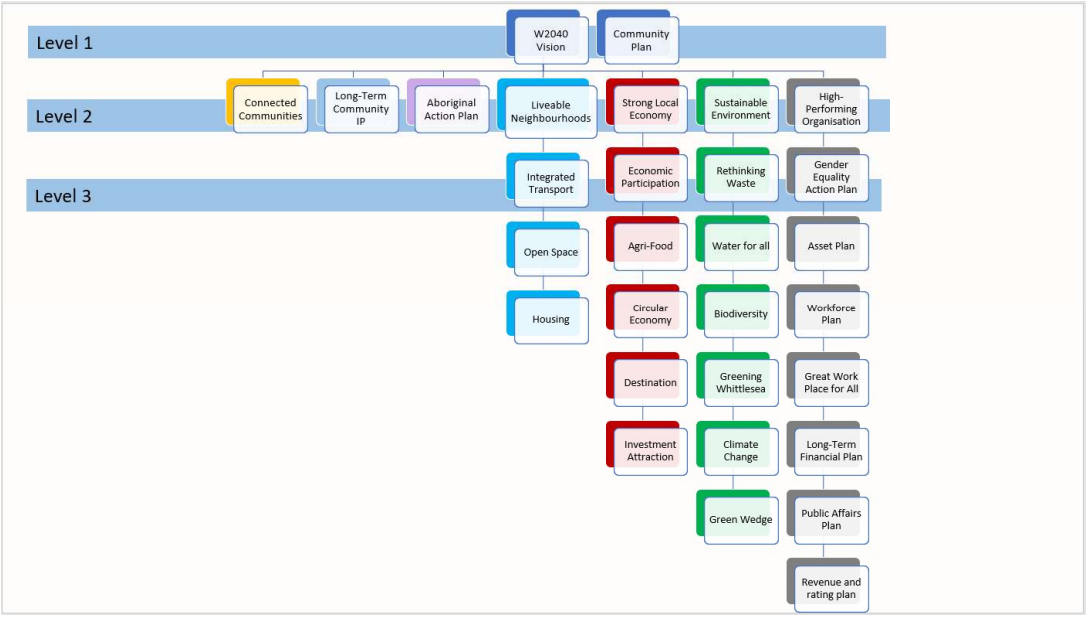
The High Performing Organisation Strategy outlines Council's approach to becoming a High Performing Organisation, where we consistently achieve exceptional results and lead the sector in terms of productivity, employee engagement, innovation, customer experience and other key performance indicators. The strategy defines what a High Performing Organisation means for us:

- The outcomes we will deliver in creating a High Performing Organisation
- Relevant strategies and plans required under the *Local Government Act 2020*
- Council's current climate and operations, and the challenges facing our organisation
- Council's priority themes and areas for action within each theme
- How we will monitor the outcomes to ensure we deliver a High Performing Organisation

Level 1-4 Document breakdown

Council's strategic framework is structured to ensure clear alignment between long-term vision, strategy development, and operational execution. The structured hierarchy provides transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to emerging challenges and opportunities.

This approach allows the City of Whittlesea to maintain financial sustainability, meet community expectations, and drive innovative, high-impact service delivery.


Level 1
Level 2
Level 3
W2040 Vision
Community Plan
Connected Communities
Long-Term Community IP
Aboriginal Action Plan
Liveable Neighbourhoods
Strong Local Economy
Sustainable Environment
High-Performing Organisation
Integrated Transport
Economic Participation
Rethinking Waste
Gender Equality Action Plan
Open Space
Agri-Food
Water for all
Asset Plan
Housing
Circular Economy
Biodiversity
Workforce Plan
Destination
Greening Whittlesea
Great Work Place for All
Investment Attraction
Climate Change
Long-Term Financial Plan
Green Wedge
Public Affairs Plan
Revenue and rating plan

6. Conclusion

The requirement for local governments to develop a four-year Revenue and Rating Plan was introduced under the *Local Government Act 2020.* This plan provides a structured, transparent, and sustainable approach to revenue generation and rating strategies, ensuring the City of Whittlesea can effectively deliver essential services and infrastructure.

As economic conditions, legislative requirements, and community needs evolve, Council will regularly review and update this plan to reflect emerging challenges and opportunities. A four-year action plan has been developed to guide continuous improvement, ensuring that:

- Revenue and rating practices remain fair, transparent, and financially sustainable
- Community and stakeholder feedback informs policy adjustments
- Legislative changes and best practices are incorporated into future updates
- Economic conditions and growth trends are closely monitored to refine financial strategies

Council remains committed to ongoing engagement and review, ensuring that the Revenue and Rating Plan continues to align with Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All and supports the long-term prosperity of the community.

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Website 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:

Free telephone interpreter service
131 450

City of Whittlesea

5.5 Budget 2025-26 and Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35

Director/Executive Manager: Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services

Report Author: Acting Chief Financial Officer

In Attendance: Acting Chief Financial Officer

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the Budget 2025-26 (the 'Budget', Attachment 2), and the Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35 (the 'Financial Plan', Attachment 3) which have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The Budget and Financial Plan have been developed to align with community priorities identified through consultation and Council's key strategic directions.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Note all submissions received regarding the Proposed Budget 2025-26 and the Proposed Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35 at Attachment 1.**
2. **Acknowledge and thank the community for their valuable contributions that assisted with the development of the Budget 2025-26 and Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2024-35.**
3. **Adopt the:**
    a. **Budget 2025-26 at Attachment 2; and**
    b. **Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35 at Attachment 3.**
4. **Note the amount Council intends to raise through its total Rates and Charges for 2025-26 is $241,890,803. Full details on Rates and Charges are contained within the Budget document.**
5. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor editorial changes, formatting and design to the Budget and Financial Plan documents, if required, noting no changes will be made to financial amounts.**

Background / Key Information

The Budget and Financial Plan have been carefully drafted to ensure Council remains financially responsible while meeting the current needs of our growing community and securing a strong, sustainable future. These documents reflect Council's commitment to prudent financial management, ensuring resources are allocated efficiently while maintaining essential services and delivering long-term infrastructure projects.

The Budget and Financial Plan provide for the ongoing delivery of high-quality essential services for our community including kerbside waste collection, maternal and child health, libraries and the upgrade of our existing facilities and assets, the maintenance and protection of our natural environment and open spaces, and the delivery of new infrastructure projects that will accommodate our rapidly growing diverse community.

Over the next ten years, Council will invest $5.14 billion with an initial $460.56 million in 2025-26 to deliver community services and invest in essential infrastructure. This includes a $1.07 billion capital works investment over ten years, with $110.69 million allocated in 2025-26 to improve community assets and create a lasting legacy for residents.

Background

The Budget and Financial Plan have been developed using the principles of responsible financial management, ensuring Council remains financially sustainable despite increasing cost pressures. External factors such as inflation, interest rates and global uncertainty continue to impact operating costs, requiring prudent financial planning to maintain essential services and infrastructure investment.

With population projections indicating a 40% increase by 2041; adding more than 6,000 new residents each year, Council faces the challenge of an expanding capital program to meet the needs of this rapidly growing municipality. The demand for roads, parks and community facilities is increasing at an unprecedented rate. Committed to delivering high-quality infrastructure, the gap in development contributions funding places additional pressure on financial sustainability, making strategic prioritisation of capital projects essential. The Budget and Financial Plan outline our approach and defines how we will invest in the resources needed to support critical service delivery while driving efficiencies to ensure the needs of the community are met.

Despite these financial challenges, Council remains committed to making strategic decisions today that will safeguard future generations from unnecessary financial pressures while continuing to deliver essential services. Through rigorous budgeting, operational efficiencies, and responsible financial management, Council will ensure that the City of Whittlesea remains well-positioned to navigate financial pressures while investing in a strong, well-serviced future for the community.

At the same time, Council remains committed to supporting those experiencing vulnerability within our community. We continue to subsidise State and Federal contracted services, such as Aged Care, ensuring critical services remain accessible. In addition, Council will invest $18.2 million in community grants over the next ten years to foster social connection, support volunteers, and deliver programs that enhance wellbeing and resilience.

Financial hardship support is also being maintained, with flexible payment arrangements, rate deferrals, and fee waivers available for those experiencing financial difficulties. Council also continues to partner with community organisations to provide essential food and material aid.

The Fair Go Rates System caps Council's rate increases to a rate set by the Victorian Government, with the 2025-26 cap set at 3 per cent. While this presents budgetary challenges, Council has worked diligently to identify operational efficiencies, reduce costs, and prioritise spending, ensuring it can continue to deliver critical services without seeking a variation to the rate cap for the 2025-26 year.

Additionally, the State Government has replaced the Fire Services Property Levy with a newly introduced Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund, shifting the funding model for further funding of emergency services for Council to collect on behalf of the Victorian Government. This change is expected to cause a significant rise in costs, with most property owners facing an increase of at least double the current charge. Despite this transition, local councils must administer and collect the levy on behalf of the State Government, effectively acting as intermediaries in the process. The increased costs and ongoing collection responsibilities raise concerns about the financial impact on communities and the administrative demands placed on councils.

Waste Charges

In 2018-19 the City of Whittlesea introduced the itemisation of waste charges on rates notices to provide transparency on the costs associated with this service provision. The cost of providing waste services continues to increase each year due to various factors including the Victorian Government's Landfill Levy and the requirement to transition to a four-bin collection system in line with the Victorian Government's, Recycling Victoria Strategy.

Historically, Council has subsidised the cost of the provision of kerbside waste collection services to rate payers in our municipality, including offsetting the increasing Victorian Government's Landfill Levy.

The Victorian Government's landfill levy will increase by 28% per tonne in 2025-26, further adding to the financial strain on waste management operations. As a result, Council is no longer able to continue to subsidise the landfill levy charge for waste management.

The full cost of the levy will now be passed on, ensuring Council can continue to manage waste services and other essential services sustainably. As a result, waste charges in 2025-26 have been set at $409.95 for the average household.

Waste charges provide for a weekly garbage collection, fortnightly recycling, and monthly glass bin collection for residential households. The FOGO bin is available as an optional service for eligible properties, at a cost of $95.30 per annum as a separate charge.

Waste charges for commercial properties will be $437.95 with a landfill levy of $166.60. This provides for a weekly garbage and fortnightly recycling kerbside collection.

Council is committed to keeping waste charges affordable for our community. Even with necessary adjustments, our waste charges will remain among the lowest when compared to our neighbouring and growth councils, ensuring continued value and sustainability for our residents.

The Minister's Good Practice Guidelines for Local Government Service Rates and Charges were released in December 2023 and Council is working towards understanding the implications of these guidelines on future annual budgets.

Budget and Financial Plan highlights

Key highlights from Council's Budget and Financial Plan include:

- Operating revenue of $502.42 million in 2025-26 and $5.45 billion over ten years (including developer contributions, non-monetary assets, and non-recurrent capital grants).
- Operating expenditure of $349.88 million in 2025-26 and $4.07 billion over ten years.
- Adjusted underlying deficit of $15.5 million in 2025-26 and $4.6 million over ten years (excluding developer contributions, non-monetary assets and non-recurrent capital grants). Council anticipates being in a surplus position once reserve funding for operating expenditure is taken into consideration.
- Continue investing in essential services for our community such as:
    - Resource recovery and waste management with $35.37 million in 2025-26 and $525.68 million over ten years.
    - Family, children and youth services with $15.52 million in 2025-26 and $180.35 million over ten years.
    - Aged services with $11.46 million in 2025-26 and $132.98 million over ten years.
    - Supporting local businesses and communities in services such as business event programs and economic development with $2 million in 2025-26 and $22.23 million over ten years.
    - Leisure, recreation and community facilities with $12.6 million in 2025-26 and $157.47 million over ten years.
    - Libraries with $6.90 million in 2025-26 and $89.16 million over ten years.

    - Parks and open space with $31.24 million in 2025-26 and $421.53 million over ten years.
    - Transport network improvements with $24.9 million in 2025-26 and $296.59 million over ten years.
- Continue building and maintaining essential roads and infrastructure and investing in new facilities such as libraries, community centres, parks and playgrounds.
- Increase community emergency resilience and preparedness, including a focus on at-risk people and communities.

The Council Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 (Community Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29) is currently being developed with a newly elected Council, in accordance with the *Local Government Act*, with a requirement for it to be formally adopted by 31 October 2025. The draft plan will undergo extensive community consultation to ensure it reflects the needs and priorities of residents. Once finalised, it will serve as a clear roadmap for the city's future, aligning services, infrastructure, and financial planning with community expectations.

Capital Works

Our Budget and Financial Plan delivers a focused $110.69 million in 2025-26 reflecting the ongoing challenges to the supply and availability of labour and materials and $1.07 billion Capital Works Program over the next ten years that invests in planning for shovel-ready projects to maximise our opportunities for grant funding in future years.

Highlights include:

- Continue construction of the Regional Sports Precinct.
- Complete the construction of Murnong (Patterson Drive) community centre in Donnybrook.
- Continue construction of West Wollert Community Centre.
- Complete the upgrade of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park.
- Continue the roll out of the Food and Garden Organics bin service.
- Commence the development of Johnsons Road housing precinct in Mernda.
- Commence the upgrade of Huskisson Reserve Multipurpose facility.
- Delivery of local road restoration and resurfacing.
- Ongoing programs to upgrade playgrounds and landscaping.

Alignment to Community Plan, Policies or Strategies

Alignment to Whittlesea 2040 and Community Plan 2021-2025:

High Performing Organisation

We engage effectively with the community, to deliver efficient and effective services and initiatives, and to make decisions in the best interest of our community and deliver value to our community.

The Budget and Financial Plan are key enablers for planning and managing Council's financial sustainability. They outline the key services and actions Council prioritises for delivery in the financial year 2025-26 and beyond, specifying the program of work with a focus on implementing the Council Vision 'Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All' effectively.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

The cost is included in the current budget.

Community Consultation and Engagement

An extensive program of community engagement has been conducted to inform the development of the Budget and Financial Plan. Throughout August – September 2024 Council asked the community to tell us what was important to them to help shape Council's Budget 2025–26 and Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35. More than 880 people shared their thoughts both online and at 13 community-based pop-ups.

Our community told us their top five priorities were roads, public transport and footpaths; parks, playgrounds and open space; recreational, leisure and community facilities; community safety; and arts, culture and events. The Budget includes $57.25 million for roads, public transport and footpaths; $51.02 million for parks, playgrounds and open space; $49.96 million for recreational, leisure and community facilities; $8.52 million for community safety; and $1.99 million for arts, culture and events.

We again checked in with the community during December 2024 and January 2025 to confirm the priorities identified. Of the 133 people that participated, the majority (75%) agreed with the order of the priority areas.

In February 2025, forty-six community members, representing the diverse demographics of the community, participated in three focus groups to discuss local priorities. They identified key service areas they valued most and wished to see maintained or enhanced. Local business support, youth services, waste management, and ageing well services emerged as top priorities for continued or increased support. The Budget includes $2 million for local business support; $1.32 million for youth services; $37.75 million for waste management; and $11.46 million for ageing well services.

Participants also provided support for maintenance of areas such as animal management, creative communities, community strengthening, biodiversity, land management, and sustainable planning and design.

The community was invited to provide their suggestions for inclusion, support or changes to the Proposed Budget and the Proposed Financial Plan for community consultation during April and May 2025. A total of 78 participants contributed to the consultation either online or at one of eight community-based pop-ups.

Respondents were also provided with the option to speak to their submission in person at the Hearing of Submissions Committee of Council, with four people opting to do this. Eighty-five percent of participants were supportive of the Proposed Budget and 89% supported the Proposed Financial Plan.

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

(g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council 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 Budget and Financial Plan prioritise the City of Whittlesea's key actions in the environmental space for the financial year 2025-26, in line with the community vision articulated in 'Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All' and the Sustainable Environment Goal and associated strategy

Social, Cultural and Health

The Budget and Financial Plan prioritise the City of Whittlesea's key actions in the social, cultural and health space for the financial year 2025-26 and beyond, in line with the community vision articulated in 'Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All' and the Connected Community and Liveable Neighbourhoods Goals and associated strategies.

Economic

The Budget and Financial Plan prioritise the City of Whittlesea's key actions in the economic space for the financial year 2025-26 and beyond, in line with the community vision articulated in 'Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All' and the Strong Local Economy Goal and associated strategy.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

In 2025-26 Council will spend $460.56 million to deliver community services and invest in essential infrastructure.

This includes a focused $110.69 million capital works program, with projects to build and upgrade community centres, sporting facilities, playgrounds, roads, bike paths and footpaths across our new and established areas.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

We will undertake a comprehensive communications campaign to inform our community of the Budget and financial documents.

Through a variety of methods and channels, including online and traditional channels, as well as direct communications where possible, we will share information about the documents, providing details of the consultation program undertaken, and how feedback has shaped the development and outcomes of the documents.

Critical Dates

- Community consultation to inform drafts was undertaken in August-September 2024 and December-February 2025.
- Council endorsed the Proposed Budget and Proposed Financial Plan to be released for further community consultation at Council Meeting on Tuesday 15 April 2025.
- Consultation was from is proposed from Wednesday 16 April 2025 to Sunday 4 May 2025.
- The Hearing of Submissions Committee met to consider community feedback and submissions on Tuesday 6 May 2025.
- Under Section 91 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a Council must develop or review the Financial Plan in accordance with its deliberative engagement practice and adopt the Financial Plan by 31 October in the year following a general election.
- Under Section 94 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, a "Council must prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent 3 financial years by (a) 30 June each year", i.e., 30 June 2025 for the 2025-26 financial year.

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. Submissions [**5.5.1** - 12 pages]
2. Budget 2025-26 [**5.5.2** - 108 pages]
3. Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2034-35 [**5.5.3** - 46 pages]

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

No	Submitter Details	Present in person?
1	Jasmin	No

Submission

Please invest more funding for young people in the City of Whittlesea. I have worked in mental health and youth services in the area for 10years and have seen funding dropped from the area over this time while family violence increases. We need to invest in early intervention and engagement activities for our young people to ensure they feel safe and supported. Local youth workers and youth programs have the ability to create a sense of belonging, purpose and identify for youth. This creates opportunities for them to connect to positive role models and build healthy relationships with prosocial peers. As a result, young people will be less likely to look for connections in places and people that have antisocial tendencies. Investing in youth benefits community by providing opportunities for young people to connect and give back to community rather than disrupt and act out at community. Thank you for listening.

Officer Comment

The needs and experiences of young people have changed significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic, with new challenges around mental health, education, employment and social connection reshaping how we support young people. In the proposed 2025–26 Budget, we've included a review of our strategic direction to ensure our youth services continue to meet the changing needs of young people in our community.

We will continue to offer events and programs that help young people connect with others and enjoy meaningful experiences, such as:

- Our popular school holiday program
- Library takeover events and provision of youth-friendly spaces
- A Youth Summit for young people to explore issues that matter to them
- Programs that support young people's mental health, particularly through important transition periods
- Leadership and development programs such as the FReeZA music event

We will also build on our partnerships and support the expansion of services to ensure young people have access to a range of supports close to home.

Funding of $1.324 million is allocated for support in Budget 2025-26.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

No	Submitter Details	Present in person?
2	Clive Denholm	Yes

Submission

As a concerned ratepayer, I wish to draw attention to the inadequate investment in Youth Services compared to Community Strengthening and Aboriginal Reconciliation over the past three budget periods.

Youth Services
2023–24 Actual: $12.35
million 2024–25 Forecast:
$11.86 million 2025–26
Budget: $12.41 million
Overall Change: +0.5% over two years
Key Concern: Despite the growing needs of young people in education, mental health, employment and social inclusion, this area has seen no meaningful increase.

Community Strengthening
2023–24 Actual: $1.73 million 2024–25 Forecast: $1.62 million 2025–26 Budget: $1.99 million
Overall Change: +15.5% increase

Aboriginal Reconciliation

2023–24 Actual: $482,000
2024–25 Forecast: $1.05 million 2025–26 Budget: $1.165 million
Overall Change: +141.7% increase

Summary

While it is encouraging to see meaningful increases in Community Strengthening and Aboriginal Reconciliation, Youth Services have remained effectively flat, despite being one of the most critical areas for long-term community wellbeing.

Council must reconsider its priorities and allocate a fairer share of funding to youth — ensuring the next generation is supported, included and empowered in a rapidly growing municipality.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

I am also concerned that you haven't actively looked at reducing waste and engaged staff in identifying cost savings. What can be cut back to minimise rate rises for the community? Are you willing to relook at the budget with a goal of reducing annual expenditure by 5%? How can you support community groups to leverage the dollars spent in supporting people struggling in the community. Could you work with the State Government using people doing community service to clean up rubbish on road edges, maybe negotiating with Vic Roads to clean their roads for a fee to ensure the LGA has pride in the cleanliness of the area.
Officer Comment The needs and experiences of young people have changed significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic, with new challenges around mental health, education, employment and social connection reshaping how we support young people. In the proposed 2025–26 Budget, we've included a review of our strategic direction to ensure our youth services continue to meet the changing needs of young people in our community. We will continue to offer events and programs that help young people connect with others and enjoy meaningful experiences, such as: • Our popular school holiday program • Library takeover events and provision of youth-friendly spaces • A Youth Summit for young people to explore issues that matter to them • Programs that support young people's mental health, particularly through important transition periods • Leadership and development programs such as the FReeZA music event We will also build on our partnerships and support the expansion of services to ensure young people have access to a range of supports close to home. With regards to the comment about cost savings, Council ensures a robust review of its expenditure every year with a view to finding cost savings and efficiencies to ensure the best value to community. The cost of providing services does increase each year and the City of Whittlesea continues to grow so it always a balancing act. Funding of $1.324 million is allocated for support in Budget 2025-26. We also have an extensive Community Grant program which offers support for community groups to support the important work they are doing in our local community. Last year the grant program delivered $1.903 million. With regards to cleaning up roadsides, we are working to ensure our City of Whittlesea roads are well maintained. While we can advocate to the Victorian Government, it is ultimately up to them to determine how their roadsides will be maintained, and not something in Council's control.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

No	Submitter Details	Present in person?
3	Rivergum Cricket Club	Yes

Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to document our concerns with the facilities and surrounding areas at Kelynack Reserve.

Given that community facilities is one of top 3 priorities for the City of Whittlesea, we believe the redevelopment of Kelynack Reserve clubrooms should be seriously considered in the budget plans moving forward.

We are aware that there is a Master Plan for our reserve, but the redevelopment of the clubrooms is a long-term focus. We believe given the state of the facility; it is hindering female participation in our club. We believe new/upgraded facilities will promote and enhance female participation at our club (and reserve).

The Rivergum Cricket Club is a relatively young sporting club formed in the late 1990s. We have grown from our initial membership base of about 30 adult members to now having 100+ adult members (with approximately 20 being female) and 80+ junior members (with approximately 20% being girls).

Our club's membership has grown significantly in recent times, with the introduction of a Women's team and an increase in junior participation (both boys and girls). Our strategic plan is for this area of our club to continue to grow. We have grown our Cricket Club to become a true Community Club.

Please read the attached document for further feedback on our submission: Rivergum_CC_-_Facilities_Issues_2025.pdf

Officer Comment

Over the past four years, Council has been progressively delivering the Kelynack Reserve Masterplan. So far, we have completed a range of upgrades, including landscaping improvements, a new playground and BBQ facilities, a basketball half-court, a table tennis table, and enhanced pathways. We have also undertaken minor improvements to external lighting and the viewing area, and we continue to monitor and address maintenance needs as they arise.

While the pavilion is in reasonable condition, we recognise that the existing change room facilities do not meet current standards for inclusivity, particularly for people of all genders and abilities. As part of our broader program to upgrade pavilion amenities across the City of Whittlesea, Kelynack Reserve is scheduled for improvements within the next three years. A full pavilion redevelopment has been identified as a longer-term priority. The timing of this project will be informed by the upcoming review of our Sports and Infrastructure Renewal Program, scheduled for later this year.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

No	Submitter Details	Present in person?
4	Northern BMX Club	Yes

Submission

Northern BMX Club supports the responsible and community-focused direction of the 2025/26 draft budget and appreciates Council's ongoing commitment to local infrastructure.

We are, however, concerned by the absence of critical safety-related capital works at the Sycamore BMX track in the current budget draft. As outlined in the attached proposal, urgent investment is needed to address significant surface deterioration, drainage issues, track area access and safety, inadequate lighting, and a lack of safety signage. We believe that these works could be accommodated within existing budget lines. These improvements are modest in cost, but high in impact.

Sycamore BMX track is a high-use community facility, accessed daily by local families, young riders, and the broader public. Our club is now one of the largest in Victoria and a leader in female and junior participation. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to deliver these safety upgrades and to establish a long-term maintenance partnership that protects this vital asset.

Please see our attached proposal for full details. Thank you for your consideration.

25-26_City_of_Whittlesea_Budget_Submission_-_NBMX.pdf
Photographs_-_Sycamore_BMX_Track.pdf
Sycamore_BMX_Track_Repair_Quote_-_May_2025.pdf

Officer Comment

In 2022–2023, Council invested $80,000 in bitumen works at the BMX track, with a $20,000 contribution from the Northern BMX Club. Council is undertaking maintenance at the track site, which includes removing encroaching grass and improving drainage in the grassed infield. These works are currently underway and expected to be completed in June 2025. Once these maintenance activities are complete, Council will begin discussions with the club to develop a long-term maintenance plan that clearly outlines the responsibilities of both Council and the club.

Additionally, we are in the process of engaging a track specialist to conduct a comprehensive audit of the facility. This will help identify any future improvement needs, including amenities such as bins and signage. We aim to have the specialist appointed by the end of June 2025. Upgrades to lighting at the starting hill will be considered through Council's renewal program. The forthcoming Public Open Space Lighting Guidelines, expected mid-year, will inform future business cases for lighting improvements in public open spaces, including the Sycamore BMX Track.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

No	Submitter Details	Present in person?
5	RGC Cook Reserve (Thomastown)- Plenty Valley Lions Soccer Club (Cathy Burneski)	No

Submission

To Deputy Counsellor Daniella Zinni and Councillor Nic Brooks,

I am writing to you as a resident who lives in Bundoora Ward for more than 20 years and the mother of a 15-year-old boy who plays at the local sporting club of Plenty Valley Lions (Thomastown Ward), which operates from RGC Cook Reserve. This is the third consecutive year my son has decided to continue playing at this wonderful local grassroots soccer club. Prior to joining this club my son was seeking to join a local sporting club that held the values of strong sense of community, allowed for peer support and friendships, and was run by a group of committee members and coaches who value diversity amongst youth, and recognised and valued their strengths. As his parent, I have seen these attributes operate within this club.

Together with my son, we've travelled on game days to many local soccer clubs within the local government area of Whittlesea, and I have seen vast differences in the facilities and resources amongst these clubs, and I would often wonder how resources/funds within local clubs are distributed, and why some clubs are well resourced and others seem to be just getting by or neglected. Within this state of curiosity, I've spent the last few weeks speaking to other clubs and to my son's soccer club about how club/ facility upgrades/maintenance operate within this sphere of our community, and as you can imagine that lead me to asking many more questions and also reaching some roadblocks. I'm aware that each club has a mix grid of how its finances are made up (eg, club fees, fundraisers, state government funding, local government grants etc). My thoughts and curiosity coincided with the recent announcement of the Whittlesea Council's Proposed Budget 2025-2026, and asking for community feedback. When reading this document, it came to my attention that $41.9 million (I hope I read this correctly) will be allocated to leisure and community facilities for capital works/maintenance and upgrades to invest on sporting facilities. I respect the well thought out process and sophisticated governance on how local council budgets are established and managed. I'm taking this opportunity to provide my response to the proposed 2025-2026 budget, in light of the much-needed attention this club needs.

I have provided the above background to give you some context as to why I feel the need to write to both of you, and what I hope will the beginning of much needed dialogue between Whittlesea Council and Plenty Valley Lions Soccer club (PVL), and I request for your support on making this happen and creating a pathway forward. Please be aware, I'm writing to you as a parent who feels the need to speak up, to bring to local council and counsellors' attention the good work this club delivers to its local community members.

I wanted to find out a bit more about how a local community sporting club operates, before I sent this email. To find out more about PVL journey on how it arrived at its current status, on a few occasions I managed to speak to the highly dedicated PVL president, Michael Tsakmakis. Michael volunteers a significant amount of his personal time to the operations of the club. Below is what I have learnt about how this club supports and practices the vision,

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

purpose and values which Whittlesea Council uphold:

- PVL is a place for all
- it does contribute to making local children and youth lives better
- together with the coaching staff, committee members, volunteers, and parents PVL does work as one and cares for each junior player's overall wellbeing

Below is a comprehensive summary of my conversations with the club's president (his comments are on *Italic* font), and I was amazed and very proud to be associated with a club which represents diversity and multiculturalism (age, gender, cultural background) within our community. I feel it strives to provide a supportive environment for troubled youth who show desperation to feel socially included, and I have witnessed this in my short time associated within this club. It provides an avenue for civic participation for all through developing friendships, creating a supportive team environment, and comradeship, and place to belong.
These are a few questions I asked Michael:

1. How long has the club been at this facility?
    a. *The club has been at RGC Cook Reserve (Thomastown) since the beginning of 2019. It relocated from Sycamore Reserve in Mill Park, after spending around 7-9 years in that particular facility.*
    a. *It's an Incorporated Association - so in essence, not for profit. There is no ABN and operate under the Association name "Lerinski Sela" which incorporates Plenty Valley Lions FC - the soccer club.*
2. How many players at the club, juniors and seniors?
    a. *Currently, we have the following age groups registered with the club: Men over 18yrs = 54 enrolments*
    *Boys and Girls 12-18yrs = 29 enrolments (9 girls, 20 boys) *This number will increase slightly, adding numbers to the groups with late team inclusions.*
    *Boys and Girls 5-11yrs = 50 (20 girls, 30 boys) *This number will increase slightly, adding to the groups with late team inclusions.*
    Total = 133 enrolments across the club. Taking into consideration the under 18 numbers, there is a Female/Male split of around 37% Female participation at the club.
2. How many families utilise the club?
    a. *We currently cater for 79 families in the under 18yrs age group, which approximately 30 are siblings. Around 40 families at minimum attend our facility every training, and gameday session.*
4. Approximately how many different cultural backgrounds are represented at this club?
    a. *There is a wide range of cultural backgrounds represented within our club members, to mention a few: Iraqi, Asyrian, Macedonian, Lebanese, Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Italian, English (UK), Greek, Spanish, Maltese, Croatian, Serbian, Turkish, Vietnamese, Nepalese. We don't discriminate or favour certain ethnicity; we are an inclusive club.*

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

5. How would you describe the socio-economic representation of the families?

PVL supports a wide range of socio-economic families within our establishment. Being mindful of not breaching our families privacy or confidentiality there are a number of low socio-economic families, and there are families which the club provides support with heavy financial discounts for their children to participate in the sport. We have also had the honour to support people who are wanting to improve their English skills and self confidence by volunteering in gameday operations (canteen, marshalling, customer service) . As the president, I regularly provide letters of reference upon request. The club's external supporting mechanisms are of similar middle-class business operators providing financial support to the club, and its constituents.

6. *Do you have* a current council grant or recently applied for a grant?
    a. *PVL do not have a grant and have not recently applied for a grant. It is quite difficult for the club to satisfy the requirements as we do not have an ABN and 90% of the grants offered are unattainable for us. In addition to this, there is not enough support staff within the committee to devote time to apply for such processes/grants, and it is this reason alone that the club fall on the wayside with this particular operation/opportunity. The club has sought assistance from our Sports and Recreation team representatives though the club has been left to its own devices and resources unfortunately.*
    In saying this, the club have successfully applied for grants in the past, though for amounts which were of no significance to provide any immediate financial impact. There needs to be facility/capital upgrades and a real commitment from Whittlesea Council to support us to continue to provide a safe and functional space for many families and children within our local government area.
7. *Are you* needing capital works or small grants (max is $40k)?
    a. *a. Capital Works = Yes*

    Small Grants = Depends on the type. An example here of a small grant was a few years ago there was a device improvements grant (projectors, computers, electronics, etc) which I started to apply for, and I believe the total requested was approximately $3k (laptop, projector, camera) which could not progress any further than at quote phase as the grant required an ABN.

The capital works needed are:

1. Improved Light
   Cost around $300,000.00 to improve the lighting on our main Pitch (North/South facing). This currently uses old style heat lamps, and we cannot use this for any night games which would provide added revenue support to the club.
2. Concrete footpaths around the ground
   We have met with our sports and recreation team representatives' numerous times to request paths to pitches, but this has not taken any effect. Our members struggle to access Pitch 2 during the colder months as the grounds are waterlogged and muddy. The is no clear pathways, and it is common for parents to lose shoes and other items of clothing within the mud pit.
3. Wire fencing around one of the grounds/pitches
   In order to stop all playing groups from constantly chasing balls which end up into garden beds and paddocks, this is a safety concern as there is not enough lighting in that area. We have requested fencing around Pitch 2.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

4. Complete the high fencing, only one side was installed in 2024.
   A risk assessment was conducted at the site, and it was agreed that a ball catcher (high fence) was only required at the car park end of the pitch. This makes no sense as the opposite side of Pitch 1 is dark, and we have had children cut themselves within bushes and trees retrieving balls which sail over the low fence at this location.

The club president is very passionate in ensuring this club remains relevant for its local community, I could feel his passion when answering my questions. I wanted to gain a better understanding of how this club has not had the same upgrades as the other local surrounding soccer clubs. So I asked more questions, below is a summary of my conversation with Michael (club president) providing a brief historical background to demonstrate how passionate the club is to continue to strive to be improve and remain available for our children participating in the sport:

In 2018, the club fielded 240 playing members across 18 or so teams.
This 240 quickly reduced to around 70 in 2019 after our move from Sycamore Reserve (Mill Park) to our now current facility RGC Cook Reserve.

In 2020, the season was cancelled due to Covid-19. This would ultimately position our club from being prosperous, to near-on closure. Season 2021 we started with 2x senior teams, 1x Under 13 team, and 1x Under 7 team. In comparison to 240 members in 2018, we had approx. 30 members in 2021. Now in 2025 there are 133 enrolments, and more are interested.

The current sitting committee has worked tirelessly to restore our once thriving community club. From 2x junior teams in 2021, we have grown to field 8 quality teams in 2025, along with an additional 3rd senior team.

For some idea of how tirelessly some Committee members work:
The current Constitutional President dedicates between 30-50 hours per week as a volunteer. The current Constitutional Vice President dedicates between 15-30 hours per week as a volunteer The current Constitutional Secretary dedicates between 15-30 hours per week as a volunteer.
The current Constitutional Treasurer dedicates between 10-15 hours per week as a volunteer.
*My father, a long-standing club supporter and committee member (*Public Officer) dedicates around 50 hours per week as a volunteer.*

None of us are paid. In fact, two of our current committee members are club sponsors which give funds to us so we can do what we do for the community.
Our club congratulates the other local clubs within Whittlesea who have managed to secure funds for capital works and improvements:

- *Lalor United, across the last 5 years, has been awarded around $5M in facility upgrades (Synthetic pitch, pathways, fencing, lighting, pavilion, car park upgrades).*
- *Whittlesea United, across the last 3 years, has been awarded a further $500k in facility improvements (scoreboard, goal infrastructure) - this is after a purpose built multi-Million-dollar facility was built for the team at Mosaic.*

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

- *Mill Park SC has just come away winners with a $2.7M synthetic pitch upgrade with new fencing and pathways.*
- *Whittlesea Ranges synthetic pitch was replaced at a cost of around $1.9M last year.*

Our facility (RGC Cook Reserve) was gifted a car park sign so people could see where they were.

Michael concluded by saying there have been previous communications sent to Council but seemingly not acted upon, or no further dialogue. The club does not have the resources or people power to create a master plan, but this barrier should not allow for the council to not have any further consideration into improving the overall environment since we were sent here.

Plenty Valley Lions has been operating since 1999, and has successfully connected local community members through sport, physical activity, youth peer support/growth through their highly committed coaches/ parents who volunteer their time. It wants to continue to meet the needs of local families and their children, and it's one of the more affordable club fees locally which meets the needs of the demographics within this area, and for this to continue to be achievable, it needs more support from its local council, don't let it slip away and seem neglected or less appealing to potential new families joining the club. The current families and children deserve better.

I recently watched an online council meeting which many councillors encouraged community members to read the proposed budget documents, provide feedback and have a say. My rational for my email, reaching out to both of you, is basically I feel the need for this club to be recognized and valued for the amazingly great work it provides/delivers for our children within a very low maintained facility/environment compared to the other nearby local clubs. I feel in comparison, PVL are not asking for too much. I'm adding my voice and support to this sporting club and plan to work alongside them to try and make the much- needed improvements become a reality.
I do plan to further speak to the club president about formally inviting representatives from local council and councillors to visit this vibrant, grass roots club, and move forward on how to begin to work together.

I look forward to hearing from you and working together on how to begin this very much needed dialogue and begin the process. Any comments and feedback is welcomed. I can be contacted on 0408 129 112.

Kind Regards,
Cathy Burneski

Office Comment

Council determines funding priorities for sporting upgrades based on a range of factors, including how each reserve is used and the level of community participation.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

At RCG Cook Reserve, both soccer pitches currently meet Australian Standards for local training use. Additionally, Pitch 2 complies with standards for local competition and has recently begun hosting night fixtures.

Council will continue to monitor participation growth at the Plenty Valley Lions Soccer Club and assess the need for lighting upgrades to Pitch 1 as part of our ongoing Sports Lighting Renewal Program.

Over the next three years, Council also plans to undertake pathway improvement works at the reserve.

Regarding fencing, Council maintains a mix of fenced and unfenced sports grounds to support multi-purpose use by both clubs and the broader community. In 2024, a ball-catching fence was installed behind the southern goals on Pitch 1 to enhance safety. A fence at the northern end was assessed and determined not to be required.

Council remains committed to working closely with the Plenty Valley Lions Soccer Club on future enhancements. Council officers have previously met with club representatives to discuss topics including fencing, pathway access, risk management, and lighting—all of which have been actioned accordingly.

2025-26 – Budget Submissions

No	Submitter Details	Present in person?
6	Better Deal Whittlesea (Nick Brain)	Yes

Submission

Various matters

Better Deal Whittlesea – Budget submission.pdf



Budget
2025-26

City of Whittlesea

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and the Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.



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Mayor and Chief Executive Officer's Introduction

Message from the Mayor and CEO

We are pleased to present the City of Whittlesea's 2025–26 Budget to our community.

This budget has been shaped by extensive consultation with more than 1,100 community members who shared their views through online surveys, pop-up sessions, focus groups, and formal submissions. Your priorities including improvements to roads, public transport, parks and open space, community safety, and support for young people, older adults, and local businesses are reflected throughout this budget.

Listening and Responding to Community Needs

Through our budget submission hearings, we have listened closely and responded. This year's budget prioritises ongoing maintenance and improvement of community and sporting facilities across the municipality ensuring vibrant, active spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Delivering Essential Services

The 2025–2026 Budget allocates $350 million to enable council to continue to deliver a wide range of essential services to support our rapidly growing population. This includes:
1. Kerbside bin collections,
2. Services for children, families, and older residents,
3. Libraries,
4. Support for local businesses; and
5. Management of parks, leisure centres, playgrounds, and community facilities.

We remain committed to supporting our most vulnerable community members. Ensuring continued access to critical services like Aged Care remains a key priority.

We will also continue to invest in local events, programs, and community led initiatives through our Community Grants Program.

Investing in Vital Infrastructure

A further $111 million has been committed to Council's Capital Works Program, which will build, upgrade, or expand key infrastructure across our city.
Key highlights include:
1. The next stage of construction of the Mernda Regional Sports Precinct,
2. Completion of the Murnong Community Centre in Donnybrook,
3. Upgrade of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park, and
4. Ongoing road and playground upgrades across the municipality.

Ensuring Financial Sustainability

This budget ensures we continue to deliver for our community while maintaining the long-term financial sustainability of Council. We have identified operational efficiencies to reduce costs and ensure that spending is focused on what matters most. Over the next twelve months, we will remain focused on identifying further savings and efficiencies.

Rates for 2025–2026 will increase by an average of 3%, consistent with the Victorian Government's 'Fair Go Rates cap'.

One of the key financial challenges we face is the escalating cost of waste management. While Council has historically subsidised waste charges, the Victorian Government's landfill levy is set to rise by a further 28% per tonne in 2025–2026. Consequently, Council can no longer fully absorb this cost. Waste charges have therefore been set at $409.95 for the average household. Despite this adjustment, our waste charges remain among the lowest compared to neighbouring and other growth area councils.

Thank you

Thank you to every community member who contributed their feedback and helped shape this budget. Your voices have been heard.

We remain committed to delivering on your priorities, supporting our growing community, and ensuring that the City of Whittlesea continues to be a great place for all.

Cr Martin Taylor
Mayor

Craig Lloyd
Chief Executive Officer

2025-26 Budget

Operating highlights



$494m
Operating income/revenue



$347m
Operating expenditure



$146.9m
Operating surplus/deficit



$27m
Family, children, youth and aged services



$31.2m
Parks and open space



$35.4m
Resource recovery and waste management



$24.9m
Transport network improvements



$11.1m
Leisure, recreation and community facilities



$8.5m
Public health, safety and emergency management



$6.9m
Libraries



$2m
Local businesses and communities



$2m
Community grants

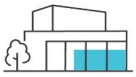
Capital works highlights



$116.6m
Capital works program



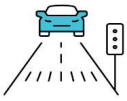
$37.4m
Investment in renewing and expanding assets



$79.2m
Investment in new assets



$41.9m
Recreation, leisure and community facilities



$16.4m
Roads



$19.6m
Parks and open space

Chief Financial Officer's Report

The City of Whittlesea's Budget 2025-26 sets a financially responsible path forward for the organisation to continue to deliver critical investment in services and key infrastructure to support our rapidly growing community.

The budget aims to continue Council's commitment to invest in services and infrastructure in a financially responsible way by balancing the needs of our community while achieving long-term financial sustainability.

In 2025-26, Council is budgeting for a full year operating surplus of $152.54 million. This is largely driven by revenue received from non-monetary developer contributions of $109.35 million, monetary developer contributions of $34.69 million and capital grant income of $26.5 million.

Operating Budget Snapshot

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Total Income / Revenue	498,166	**502,419**
Total Expenses	310,658	**349,878**
***Operating Surplus/(Deficit)**	187,508	**152,541**
****Adjusted underlying surplus/(deficit)**	9,830	**(15,498)**

*Whilst the operating surplus may appear large, it is calculated to comply with the requirements of Australian Accounting Standards and importantly does not equate to excess cash available for Council to spend. This is due to the fact that Council's surplus is largely made up of either non-cash items such as asset contributions from developers or cash items that are restricted by legislation in how they can be used by Council in the future.

**The calculation for adjusted underlying result takes into consideration adjusted revenue and total expenses (including expenditure that is funded via Development Contribution Plan reserves). The main factor contributing to an underlying operating deficit is works in kind reimbursement payments to be paid to the developer relating to the Developer Contribution Plan. These payments are entirely funded by the Development Contribution Plan reserve. In addition, the deficit is expected to be managed through careful financial oversight and strategic reserve allocations, ensuring a return to a surplus position.

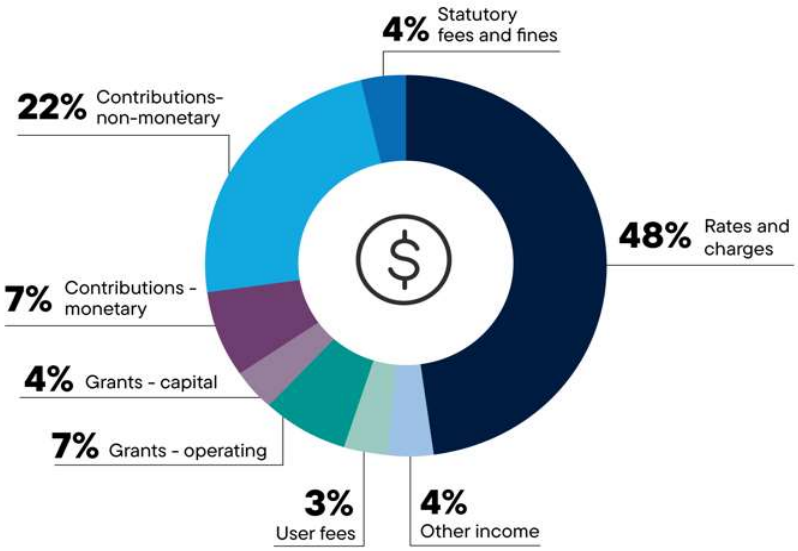
Capital Works Budget Snapshot

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Total capital works expenditure	108,651	**110,685**
Represented by		
New asset expenditure	74,467	**74,212**
Asset renewal expenditure	21,553	**23,916**
Asset upgrade expenditure	12,631	**12,557**
Asset expansion expenditure	-	**-**

Where Council's money comes from

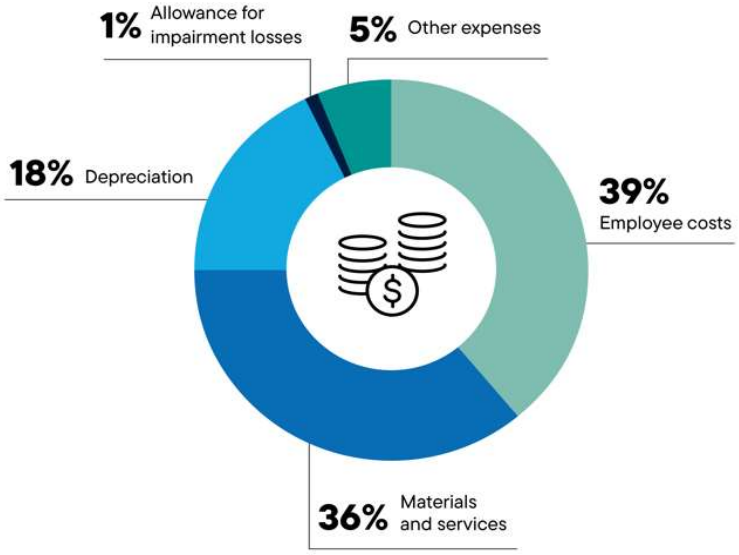
Council's income comes from a number of sources including:

- Rates and charges
- Statutory fees and fines
- Charging user fees for some of our services
- Operating grants funding from the Federal and State Government
- Capital grants funding from the Federal and State Government
- Monetary contributions from developers
- Non-monetary contributions from developers
- Share of net profits/(losses) of associates and joint ventures
- Other income.



How Council's money is spent

Council uses the money it receives from rates and other sources to deliver services to our community, including providing new facilities and maintaining, renewing and upgrading our existing community infrastructure assets.



Budget Highlights

Key highlights from Council's Budget 2025-26 include:

- Operating revenue of $502.42 million (including 33.4% or $168.04 million of total revenue relating to developer contributions, non-monetary assets and non-recurrent capital grants)
- Operating expenditure of $349.88 million
- Adjusted underlying deficit of $15.5 million (excluding developer contributions, non-monetary assets and non-recurrent capital grants). Council anticipates being in a surplus position once reserve funding for operating expenditure is taken into consideration.
- Continue investing in essential services for our community such as:
  - Resource recovery and waste management with $35.37 million
  - Family, children and youth services with $15.52 million
  - Aged services with $11.46 million
  - Leisure, recreation and community facilities with $12.60 million
  - Libraries with $6.90 million
  - Parks and open space with $31.24 million
  - Transport network improvements with $24.90 million
  - Supporting local businesses with $2 million.

Capital Works Program Highlights

Our Budget delivers a focused $110.69 million capital works program that reflects the ongoing challenges to the supply and availability of labour and materials and ensures project readiness to maximise our opportunities for grant funding in future years.

Highlights include:

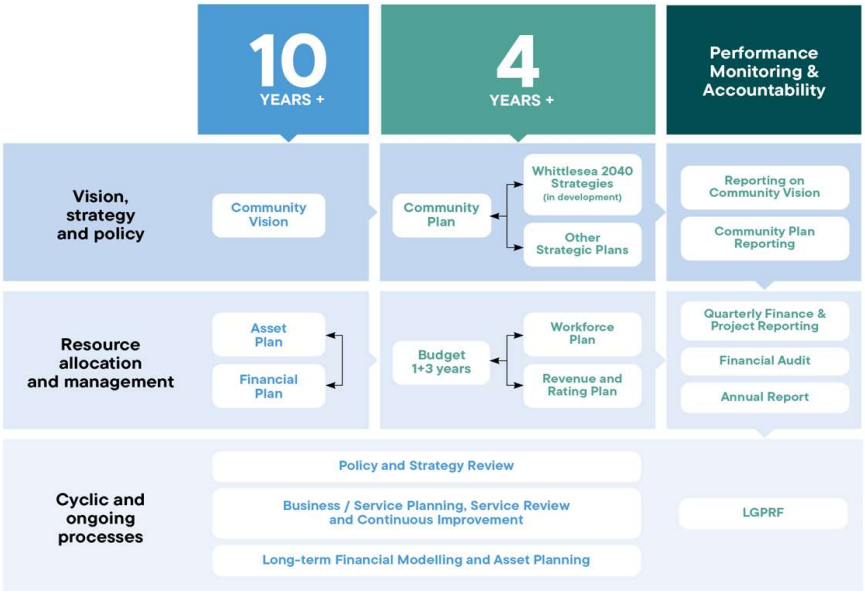
- Continue construction of the Regional Sports Precinct in Mernda
- Complete the construction of Murnong (Patterson Drive) community centre in Donnybrook
- Continue construction of West Wollert Community Centre
- Complete the upgrade of Peter Hopper Lake in Mill Park
- Continue the roll out of the Food and Garden Organics bin service
- Commence the development of Johnsons Road housing precinct in Mernda
- Commence the upgrade of Huskisson Reserve Multipurpose facility
- Delivery of local road restoration and resurfacing
- Ongoing programs to upgrade playgrounds and landscaping.

1. Link to the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

This section describes how the Budget links to the achievement of the Community Vision and Council Plan within an overall integrated strategic planning and reporting framework. This framework guides the Council in identifying community needs and aspirations over the long term (Community Vision and Financial Plan), medium term (Council Plan, Workforce Plan, and Revenue and Rating Plan) and short term (Budget) and then holding itself accountable (Annual Report).

1.1 Legislative planning and accountability framework

The Budget is a rolling four-year plan that outlines the financial and non-financial resources that Council requires to achieve the strategic objectives described in the Council Plan. The diagram below depicts the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework that applies to local government in Victoria. At each stage of the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework there are opportunities for community and stakeholder input. This is important to ensure transparency and accountability to both residents and ratepayers.



The timing of each component of the integrated strategic planning and reporting framework is critical to the successful achievement of the planned outcomes.

1.1.1 Key planning considerations

Service level planning

Although councils have a legal obligation to provide some services— such as animal management, local roads, food safety and statutory planning—most council services are not legally mandated, including some services closely associated with councils, such as libraries and sporting facilities. Furthermore, over time, the needs and expectations of communities can change. Therefore councils need to have robust processes for service planning and review to ensure all services continue to provide value for money and are in line with community expectations. In doing so, councils should engage with communities to determine how to prioritise resources and balance service provision against other responsibilities such as asset maintenance and capital works. Community consultation needs to be in line with a councils adopted Community Engagement Policy and Public Transparency Policy.

1.2 Our purpose

Our Vision

Whittlesea 2040: A place for all

The City of Whittlesea's vision guides our effort to keep pace with the rapid changes to and growth of our municipality over the next few years.

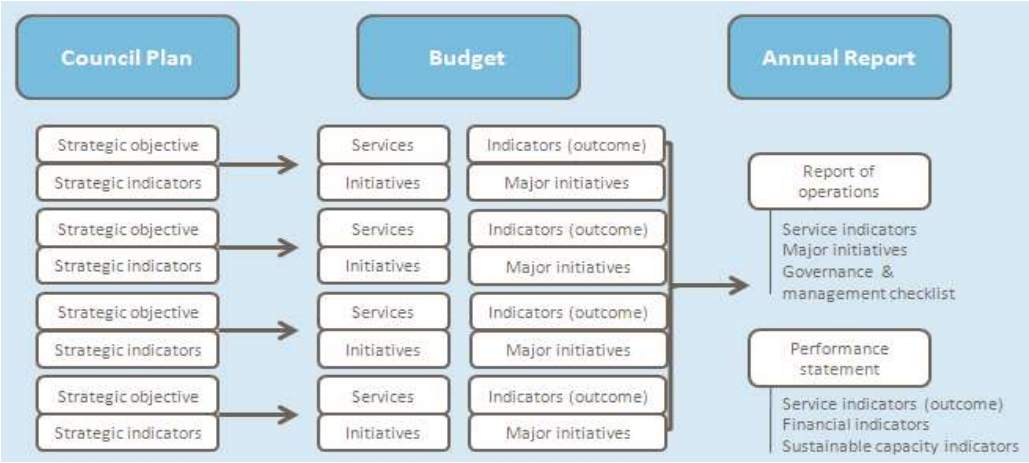
1.3 Strategic objectives

Council delivers services and initiatives under 26 major service groups. Each contributes to achieving Council's strategic objectives, which are grouped under five goals.

Goal	Description
Connected community	In 2040, the City of Whittlesea is a place that opens its arms to every resident, where all walks of life are celebrated and supported. Our community is compassionate and welcoming. We are healthy and can easily access the support services we need. People of all backgrounds, ages and abilities feel that they are an essential part of the community. We work together, making our community a better place for all.
Liveable neighbourhoods	In 2040, the City of Whittlesea is well-planned and beautiful. Our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play. Everything we need is close by. We have a variety of quality housing that suits our life stages and circumstances. Every resident is able to get where they need to go with ease and can leave the car at home.
Strong local economy	In 2040, the City of Whittlesea is the smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry. People of all ages have opportunities to learn and develop skills locally. There are many opportunities to gain employment and build careers not too far from home. Residents support local business and we are renowned for our successful local economy.
Sustainable environment	In 2040, the City of Whittlesea's superb landscapes and natural environment are an enduring source of pride. Our iconic River Red Gums, local biodiversity and precious natural assets are protected for future generations. Locals and visitors enjoy spending time in our natural environments and our leafy suburbs. Together, we are working to reduce our impact on the environment and adapt to the changing climate.
High performing organisation	Council delivers a range of internal functions and activities enabling the delivery of efficient and effective services and initiatives. Council's goal is to be a high-performing organisation which delivers best value to the community.

2. Services and Service Performance Indicators

This section provides a description of the services and initiatives to be funded in the Budget for the 2025-26 year and how these will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives outlined in the Community Plan. It also describes several initiatives and service performance outcome indicators for key areas of Council's operations. Council is required by legislation to identify major initiatives, initiatives and service performance outcome indicators in the Budget and report against them in their Annual Report to support transparency and accountability. The relationship between these accountability requirements in the Council Plan, the Budget and the Annual Report is shown below.



Source: Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Key actions

The Council Plan 2025-29 (Community Plan 2025-29) is currently being developed with a newly elected Council, in accordance with the Local Government Act, with a requirement for it to be formally adopted by 31 October 2025. Once the Community Plan 2025-29 draft is complete, it will be made available for community consultation to ensure the plan effectively addresses the needs and priorities of our community.

2.1 Connected community

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

		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Aboriginal reconciliation	Income	0	0	0
	Expense	482	1,053	1,165
	Surplus / (deficit)	(482)	(1,053)	(1,165)

We work with our Aboriginal residents to achieve meaningful Reconciliation and work with the community to facilitate services and infrastructure which is inclusive, welcoming and pays respect to cultural identity. We seek to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through building strong organisational, stakeholder and community relationships. We facilitate the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group to foster reconciliation, run programs and events that raise awareness and promote discussion.

Ageing well	Income	8,316	8,620	9,537
	Expense	10,872	10,794	11,463
	Surplus / (deficit)	(2,556)	(2,174)	(1,926)

We support older residents to age well by providing services, programs and activities such as delivered meals, domestic assistance, personal care, seniors' clubs support, positive ageing programs and social connection. We help older residents to access user-directed aged care services and facilitate partnerships for services and infrastructure.

Animal management	Income	1,588	1,330	1,377
	Expense	2,902	2,773	2,948
	Surplus / (deficit)	(1,314)	(1,443)	(1,571)

We ensure people and their pets can live together harmoniously and safely in our community. We reunite lost pets with their owners, facilitate pet adoptions, operate the wat djerring Animal Facility, investigate animal incidents and complaints, establish and monitor measures put in place to mitigate the risks posed by dangerous and restricted breed dogs, attend to wandering livestock, and audit animal-related businesses to ensure welfare standards are upheld. We keep a register of cats and dogs that live in the City of Whittlesea and promote responsible pet ownership through a series of communication campaigns and events each year.

Community facilities	Income	2,487	2,584	2,302
	Expense	5,776	6,514	7,257
	Surplus / (deficit)	(3,289)	(3,930)	(4,955)

We plan, construct, manage and maintain Council-owned and operated facilities to support valued community services, events, leisure activities and community-run activities and groups. Specific Council services supported include maternal and child health, early childhood and social support activities. External services supported include other allied health and community services.

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Community strengthening	Income	1,117	1,019	1,170
	Expense	4,326	4,852	5,668
	Surplus / (deficit)	(3,209)	(3,833)	(4,498)

We build inclusive, empowered and connected communities through the planning and delivery of evidence-based place-based programs and services in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

Creative communities	Income	8	31	29
	Expense	1,725	1,620	1,993
	Surplus / (deficit)	(1,717)	(1,589)	(1,964)

Through arts and culture, we bring people together and provide great experiences, regardless of background, income, age or ability.
Our strategic approach:
• enables a creative sector that is vibrant and viable
• delivers events that showcase and celebrate our strengths and cultural diversity
• preserves and promotes our history, our living traditions and the co-creation of cultures
• ensures that Aboriginal, historic cultural and natural heritage places, assets and features are retained, conserved and integrated into the urban design and neighbourhood character of our municipality.

Customer services and community communications	Income	196	0	0
	Expense	10,595	10,215	10,267
	Surplus / (deficit)	(10,399)	(10,215)	(10,267)

We put customers and the community at the heart of how we deliver valued council services and civic events, and how we communicate, engage and consult with our community. We continue to invest in facilities, processes, people and systems to improve our services, and advocate to all levels of government to support our community now and into the future.

Children and family services	Income	7,678	6,507	6,138
	Expense	11,234	13,207	14,192
	Surplus / (deficit)	(3,556)	(6,700)	(8,054)

We aim to improve health, social and educational outcomes for children and families within the City of Whittlesea. We provide high quality, evidence-based services, programs and activities to strengthen family wellbeing, capacity and connection. Key services include maternal and child health and early years management and support.

Leisure and recreation	Income	1,145	3,557	3,309
	Expense	2,447	5,599	5,347
	Surplus / (deficit)	(1,302)	(2,042)	(2,038)

We strategically plan and manage leisure and recreation facilities within the City of Whittlesea. We support individuals and groups to participate in sport and recreation activities and organisations using Council spaces. We liaise with sports clubs to support their development, community participation and effective use of sports grounds, pavilions and other facilities.

Libraries	Income	0	0	0
	Expense	5,798	6,417	6,904
	Surplus / (deficit)	(5,798)	(6,417)	(6,904)

We offer library services through Yarra Plenty Regional Library in partnership with Banyule and Nillumbik Councils. We seek to build a skilled community that has a sense of wellbeing, inclusion and belonging through free access to relevant collections, public programs and welcoming, accessible spaces for learning.

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Public health and safety	Income	9,427	11,194	11,467
	Expense	7,537	7,654	8,519
	Surplus / (deficit)	1,890	3,540	2,948

We protect and enhance community health, safety and wellbeing by:
- educating the community about their responsibilities to contribute to public health and safety
- enforcing state and local laws
- delivering immunisation programs
- working with emergency service agencies to plan and respond to emergencies
- deliver evidence-based projects and programs to address major health and wellbeing issues faced by the community.

Youth services	Income	211	39	44
	Expense	1,674	1,195	1,324
	Surplus / (deficit)	(1,463)	(1,156)	(1,280)

Our Youth Services provide a range of programs, activities and events for young people aged 10-25 years and their families. Council also facilitates networks and advocates for inclusive social and physical infrastructure that support all young people, and work closely with a range of external organisations.

Service Performance Outcome Indicators

Service	Indicator	Actual 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	Budget 2025-26
Animal management	Health and safety	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Aquatic facilities	Utilisation	4.22	4.51	4.51
Governance	Consultation and engagement	51	51	51
Maternal and child health	Participation	73.60%	72.00%	72.00%
	(Aboriginal) Participation	80.71%	80.00%	80.00%
Food safety	Health and safety	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Libraries	Membership	18.94%	20.00%	20.00%

* refer to table at end of section 2.5 for information on the calculation of Service Performance Outcome Indicators

2.2 Liveable neighbourhoods

In 2040, the City of Whittlesea is well-planned and beautiful. Our neighbourhoods and town centres are convenient and vibrant places to live, work and play. Everything we need is close by. We have a variety of quality housing that suits our life stages and circumstances. Every resident is able to get where they need to go with ease and can leave the car at home.

Services

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Parks and open space	Income	334	50	398
	Expense	22,786	24,794	31,239
	Surplus / (deficit)	(22,452)	(24,744)	(30,841)

We provide, manage and maintain Council's parks and open space assets such as parks, playgrounds, street trees, sports fields and lawns. We also plan strategically for future parks and open space projects.

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Planning and building	Income	4,374	4,179	3,540
	Expense	12,352	11,856	12,411
	Surplus / (deficit)	(7,978)	(7,677)	(8,871)

We administer and enforce building and planning legislation, and how land is being used and developed from a strategic and statutory perspective. This includes policy and master plan preparation and implementation, and approval of infrastructure and public spaces associated with urban development.

Traffic operations and safety	Income	7,107	6,885	7,194
	Expense	8,055	9,700	10,290
	Surplus / (deficit)	(948)	(2,815)	(3,096)

We seek to ensure a safe and efficient road network for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. Programs include staffing school crossings at flagged and un-flagged crossings, and running community education programs about safe traffic behaviour around schools.

Transport network improvements	Income	6,222	11,007	5,961
	Expense	23,019	23,017	24,902
	Surplus / (deficit)	(16,797)	(12,010)	(18,941)

We plan, provide and maintain accessible, functional, safe and well-connected local transport infrastructure within the municipality. We advocate with State agencies for better transport outcomes for upgrading existing and providing new transport infrastructure, and better public transport services.

Service Performance Outcome Indicators

Service	Indicator	Actual 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	Budget 2025-26
Roads	Condition	97.24%	94.80%	93.50%
Statutory planning	Service standard	67.84%	70.00%	69.36%

* refer to table at end of section 2.5 for information on the calculation of Service Performance Outcome Indicators

2.3 Strong local economy

In 2040, the City of Whittlesea is the smart choice for innovation, business growth and industry investment.

People of all ages have opportunities to learn and develop skills locally. There are many opportunities to gain employment and build careers not too far from home. Residents support local business and we are renowned for our successful local economy.

Services

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Investment attraction and growth	Income	0	0	0
	Expense	17	47	84
	Surplus / (deficit)	(17)	(47)	(84)

We encourage new and support reinvestment within the City of Whittlesea through networking, relationship management with stakeholders and promotion of the opportunities and initiatives available.

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Local business support	Income	223	5	5
	Expense	2,265	2,191	2,004
	Surplus / (deficit)	(2,042)	(2,186)	(1,999)

We support our businesses by guiding and making it easy for them to engage with Council, promoting funding and employment opportunities, facilitating networking with complementary businesses, promoting business initiatives to increase customer base, coordinating special rate schemes, supporting trader associations, and case managing issues and planning applications.

Pathways for employment and education	Income	0	0	0
	Expense	188	1,074	493
	Surplus / (deficit)	(188)	(1,074)	(493)

We facilitate and encourage collaboration between educational institutions, local businesses, industry and stakeholders to align educational offerings and employment pathways with the current and future needs of the community.

2.4 Sustainable environment

In 2040, the City of Whittlesea's superb landscapes and natural environment are an enduring source of pride.

Our iconic River Red Gums, local biodiversity and precious natural assets are protected for future generations. Locals and visitors enjoy spending time in our natural environments and our leafy suburbs. Together, we are working to reduce our impact on the environment and adapt to the changing climate.

Services

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Biodiversity, land management, sustainable planning and design	Income	117	62	230
	Expense	4,858	5,086	5,535
	Surplus / (deficit)	(4,741)	(5,024)	(5,305)

Through our role as a statutory authority, we play a crucial role in delivering an environmentally sustainable city. We facilitate sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation on public and private land across urban and rural areas. We educate and empower the community to undertake biodiversity conservation activities and sustainable land management.

Climate change	Income	0	0	0
	Expense	40	62	60
	Surplus / (deficit)	(40)	(62)	(60)

We provide services to support the community's adaptation and mitigate climate change risks. We work to reduce the urban heat island effect and support urban greening, deliver walking and cycling paths supporting active travel for the community. We show leadership by avoiding, minimising and offsetting greenhouse gas emissions from our operations. We improve infrastructure, and help the community prepare for the unavoidable impacts of our changing climate, including increases in extreme weather events. We educate and empower the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Integrated water management	Income	21	0	0
	Expense	1,008	1,315	1,274
	Surplus / (deficit)	(987)	(1,315)	(1,274)

We work alongside State Government agencies and utility providers to develop and deliver integrated water management services for our community, protecting and restoring our natural waterways. Council manages its water assets to ensure that they are planned, delivered, and maintained effectively. We are committed to ensuring water is used efficiently throughout our city. We support the community to understand and appreciate the water cycle and use water wisely.

Resource recovery and waste management	Income	1,694	1,900	1,840
	Expense	30,436	31,579	35,367
	Surplus / (deficit)	(28,742)	(29,679)	(33,527)

We provide sustainable solutions for the collection, disposal and recovery of waste materials generated within the community and through our own operations. We develop strategic policy, education programs and operational maintenance activities to avoid, minimise and recover waste and keep our city clean, healthy and safe. We undertake compliance and enforcement for illegal waste dumping in our municipality. We support and empower the community transition to a circular economy.

Service Performance Outcome Indicators

Service	Indicator	Actual 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	Budget 2025-26
Waste management	Waste diversion	44.46%	45.00%	46.00%

* refer to table at end of section 2.5 for information on the calculation of Service Performance Outcome Indicators

2.5 High-performing organisation

Council delivers a range of internal functions and activities enabling the delivery of efficient and effective services and initiatives. Council's goal is to be a high-performing organisation which delivers best value to the community.

Services

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Our finance and assets	Income	5,741	4,903	4,427
	Expense	39,711	34,603	48,695
	Surplus / (deficit)	(33,970)	(29,700)	(44,268)

We ensure Council is managed in a financially sustainable way where resources are allocated effectively to support the delivery of the desired community outcomes. This includes rate setting and revenue generation, prudent financial planning and management, procurement of goods and services, and effective asset management.

Our governance	Income	370	586	609
	Expense	8,294	9,955	10,239
	Surplus / (deficit)	(7,924)	(9,369)	(9,630)

We ensure Council has adequate structures and processes in place to manage the business of local government in an effective and compliant manner. This includes key strategic planning, communications, decision-making and monitoring/reporting activities to achieve Council's purpose of delivering the best outcomes for the local community.

Service Group		Actual 2023-24 $'000	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Our people	Income	84	94	117
	Expense	6,383	7,490	8,970
	Surplus / (deficit)	(6,299)	(7,396)	(8,853)

We ensure the City of Whittlesea has adequate labour capacity (numbers) and capability (skills and knowledge) to provide services to our community now, and into the future in an efficient, effective, and sustainable manner.

Our systems and knowledge	Income	183	0	0
	Expense	13,786	15,426	16,108
	Surplus / (deficit)	(13,603)	(15,426)	(16,108)

We ensure our users can rely on an effective working environment in terms of technology, applications, information management, research, insights and analytics. We provide the key platforms enabling service and infrastructure delivery across the organisation.

Service Performance Outcome Indicators

Service	Indicator	Performance Measure	Computation
Governance	Consultation and engagement	The community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the consultation and engagement efforts of the council. (This includes consulting and engaging directly with the community on key local issues requiring decisions by council).	Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with how Council has performed on community consultation and engagement
Statutory planning	Service standard	The percentage of regular and VicSmart planning application decisions made within legislated time frames.	[Number of planning application decisions made within 60 days for regular permits and 10 days for VicSmart permits / Number of planning application decisions made] x100
Roads	Condition	The percentage of sealed local roads that are below the renewal intervention level set by Council and not requiring renewal.	[Number of kilometres of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kilometres of sealed local roads] x100
Libraries	Participation	Library membership (The percentage of resident municipal population who are registered library members).	[Number of registered library members / Population] x100
Waste management	Waste diversion	The percentage of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins that is diverted from landfill.	[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100
Aquatic facilities	Utilisation	The number of visits to aquatic facilities per head of municipal population.	[Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Population]
Animal management	Health and safety	The percentage of animal management prosecutions which are successful.	[Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Total number of animal management prosecutions] x100
Food safety	Health and safety	The percentage of critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications that are followed up by Council.	[Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance outcome notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance outcome notifications about food premises] x100
Maternal and child health	Participation	The percentage of children enrolled who participate in the MCH service.	[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the financial year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100
		The percentage of Aboriginal children enrolled who participate in the MCH service.	[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the financial year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100

2.6 Reconciliation with budgeted operating result

	Surplus/ (Deficit)	Expenses	Income/ Revenue
	$'000	$'000	$'000
Connected community	(41,672)	77,046	35,374
Liveable neighbourhoods	(61,750)	78,843	17,093
Strong local economy	(2,576)	2,581	5
Sustainable environment	(40,167)	42,236	2,069
High-performing organisation	(78,859)	84,012	5,153
Total	**(225,024)**	**284,718**	**59,694**
Expenses added in:			
Depreciation	(62,952)		
Amortisation - intangible assets	(71)		
Amortisation - right of use assets	(918)		
Borrowing costs	(1,113)		
Finance costs - leases	(104)		
Deficit before funding sources	**(290,182)**		
Funding sources added in:			
Rates and charges	241,891		
Grants commission	19,955		
Contributions - monetary	34,691		
Contributions - non-monetary	109,348		
Non recurrent capital grants	24,000		
Interest received	12,838		
Total funding sources	**442,723**		
Surplus/(deficit) for the year*	**152,541**		

*This surplus reported, includes all revenue recognised in the financial period, including gifted subdivisional assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the operating surplus is not a cash surplus; therefore, it does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

3. Financial Statements

This section presents information in regard to the Financial Statements and Statement of Human Resources. The budget information for the year 2025-26 has been supplemented with projections to 2028-29.

This section includes the following financial statements prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.

Comprehensive Income Statement
Balance Sheet
Statement of Changes in Equity
Statement of Cash Flows
Statement of Capital Works
Statement of Human Resources

Comprehensive Income Statement

For the four years ending 30 June 2029

	NOTES	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projections 2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Income / Revenue						
Rates and charges	4.1.1	220,969	**241,891**	258,531	271,518	285,017
Statutory fees and fines	4.1.2	22,454	**20,834**	21,041	21,561	22,427
User fees	4.1.3	12,675	**12,587**	13,208	13,603	13,982
Grants - operating	4.1.4	35,661	**36,129**	36,433	37,344	38,278
Grants - capital	4.1.4	18,761	**26,495**	21,269	2,495	2,495
Contributions - monetary	4.1.5	54,211	**34,691**	16,691	17,691	14,691
Contributions - non-monetary	4.1.5	107,204	**109,348**	111,535	113,766	116,041
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		763	**783**	803	823	843
Share of net profits/(losses) of associates and joint ventures		200	**200**	200	200	200
Other income	4.1.6	25,268	**19,461**	19,372	18,781	19,203
Total income / revenue		498,166	**502,419**	499,083	497,782	513,177
Expenses						
Employee costs	4.1.7	124,425	**135,352**	136,880	141,517	146,298
Materials and services	4.1.8	102,753	**126,002**	116,696	127,997	131,069
Depreciation	4.1.9	59,353	**62,952**	61,641	66,081	69,641
Amortisation - intangible assets	4.1.10	71	**71**	66	-	-
Depreciation - right of use assets	4.1.11	939	**918**	928	930	1,052
Allowance for impairment losses		2,973	**3,186**	3,170	3,240	3,405
Borrowing costs		85	**1,113**	3,167	4,601	4,257
Finance costs - leases		123	**104**	79	43	209
Other expenses	4.1.12	19,936	**20,180**	21,030	21,706	22,839
Total expenses		310,658	**349,878**	343,657	366,115	378,770
Surplus/(deficit) for the year*		187,508	**152,541**	155,426	131,667	134,407
Total comprehensive result		187,508	**152,541**	155,426	131,667	134,407

*This surplus reported, includes all revenue recognised in the financial period, including gifted subdivisional assets (non-monetary), developer contributions and grants towards capital works projects. It is important to note that the operating surplus is not a cash surplus; therefore, it does not convert to immediately available cash for Council. Significant amounts of the surplus are restricted by legislation and must be used for future infrastructure investment.

Balance Sheet

For the four years ending 30 June 2029

	NOTES	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projections 2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Assets						
Current assets						
Cash and cash equivalents		35,581	**23,549**	23,790	24,013	24,229
Trade and other receivables		52,608	**53,038**	53,584	54,050	54,572
Other financial assets		354,807	**381,807**	374,166	367,881	375,338
Inventories		79	**79**	79	79	79
Other assets		7,580	**7,580**	7,580	7,580	7,580
Total current assets	4.2.1	450,655	**466,053**	459,199	453,603	461,798
Non-current assets						
Other non-financial assets		22	**22**	22	22	22
Investments in associates, joint arrangement and subsidiaries		2,926	**3,126**	3,326	3,526	3,726
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment		4,941,090	**5,098,954**	5,293,870	5,452,620	5,571,108
Right-of-use assets	4.2.4	2,680	**2,473**	1,545	856	3,162
Intangible assets		137	**66**	-	-	-
Total non-current assets	4.2.1	4,946,855	**5,104,641**	5,298,763	5,457,024	5,578,018
Total assets		5,397,510	**5,570,694**	5,757,962	5,910,627	6,039,816
Liabilities						
Current liabilities						
Trade and other payables		35,135	**34,312**	33,462	31,481	30,565
Trust funds and deposits		68,760	**68,760**	68,760	68,760	68,760
Contract and other liabilities		20,900	**20,900**	20,900	20,900	20,900
Provisions		22,869	**24,878**	25,159	26,011	26,890
Interest-bearing liabilities	4.2.3	1,593	**3,230**	6,251	9,107	9,696
Lease liabilities	4.2.4	919	**957**	995	972	1,004
Total current liabilities	4.2.2	150,176	**153,037**	155,527	157,231	157,815
Non-current liabilities						
Provisions		2,526	**2,748**	2,779	2,873	2,970
Interest bearing liabilities	4.2.3	6,032	**23,838**	54,154	74,085	65,832
Lease liabilities	4.2.4	1,689	**1,443**	448	(283)	2,071
Total non-current liabilities	4.2.2	10,247	**28,029**	57,381	76,675	70,873
Total liabilities		160,423	**181,066**	212,908	233,906	228,688
Net assets		5,237,087	**5,389,628**	5,545,054	5,676,721	5,811,128
Equity						
Accumulated surplus		3,208,069	**3,356,620**	3,519,362	3,656,590	3,783,862
Reserves		2,029,018	**2,033,008**	2,025,692	2,020,131	2,027,266
Asset Revaluation Reserves		1,744,419	**1,744,419**	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419
Asset Development Reserves		220,439	**225,434**	229,286	234,355	236,692
Asset Replacement Reserves		64,160	**63,155**	51,987	41,357	46,155
Total equity		5,237,087	**5,389,628**	5,545,054	5,676,721	5,811,128

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the four years ending 30 June 2029

	NOTES	Total $'000	Accumulated Surplus $'000	Revaluation Reserve $'000	Other Reserves $'000
2025 Forecast					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		5,049,579	3,047,819	1,744,419	257,341
Impact of adoption of new accounting standards		-	-	-	-
Adjusted opening balance		5,049,579	3,047,819	1,744,419	257,341
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		187,508	187,508	-	-
Transfers to other reserves		-	(75,386)	-	75,386
Transfers from other reserves		-	48,128	-	(48,128)
Balance at end of the financial year		5,237,087	3,208,069	1,744,419	284,599
2026 Budget					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		**5,237,087**	**3,208,069**	**1,744,419**	**284,599**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		**152,541**	**152,541**	**-**	**-**
Transfers to other reserves	4.3.1	**-**	**(47,692)**	**-**	**47,692**
Transfers from other reserves	4.3.1	**-**	**43,702**	**-**	**(43,702)**
Balance at end of the financial year	4.3.2	**5,389,628**	**3,356,620**	**1,744,419**	**288,589**
2027					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		5,389,628	3,356,620	1,744,419	288,589
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		155,426	155,426	-	-
Transfers to other reserves		-	(25,846)	-	25,846
Transfers from other reserves		-	33,162	-	(33,162)
Balance at end of the financial year		5,545,054	3,519,362	1,744,419	281,273
2028					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		5,545,054	3,519,362	1,744,419	281,273
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		131,667	131,667	-	-
Transfers to other reserves		-	(23,265)	-	23,265
Transfers from other reserves		-	28,826	-	(28,826)
Balance at end of the financial year		5,676,721	3,656,590	1,744,419	275,712
2029					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		5,676,721	3,656,590	1,744,419	275,712
Surplus/(deficit) for the year		134,407	134,407	-	-
Transfers to other reserves		-	(19,717)	-	19,717
Transfers from other reserves		-	12,582	-	(12,582)
Balance at end of the financial year		5,811,128	3,783,862	1,744,419	282,847

Statement of Cash Flows

For the four years ending 30 June 2029

	NOTES	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projections 2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
		Inflows (Outflows)	**Inflows (Outflows)**	Inflows (Outflows)	Inflows (Outflows)	Inflows (Outflows)
Cash flows from operating activities						
Rates and charges		220,570	**241,263**	258,032	271,128	284,612
Statutory fees and fines		22,864	**17,842**	17,846	18,259	18,918
User fees		12,602	**12,590**	13,186	13,589	13,969
Grants - operating		35,661	**36,129**	36,433	37,344	38,278
Grants - capital		18,761	**26,495**	21,269	2,495	2,495
Contributions - monetary		54,211	**34,691**	16,691	17,691	14,691
Interest received		15,500	**12,838**	12,581	11,772	12,011
Trust funds and deposits taken		25,578	**7,418**	7,418	7,418	7,418
Other receipts		9,769	**6,623**	6,791	7,009	7,192
Net GST refund / payment		-	**-**	-	-	-
Employee costs		(123,663)	**(133,121)**	(136,568)	(140,571)	(145,322)
Materials and services		(102,753)	**(126,002)**	(116,696)	(127,997)	(131,069)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments		(798)	**(822)**	(850)	(1,981)	(916)
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(7,418)	**(7,418)**	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)
Other payments		(19,936)	**(20,180)**	(21,030)	(21,706)	(22,839)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	4.4.1	160,948	**108,346**	107,685	87,032	92,020
Cash flows from investing activities						
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(108,651)	**(110,685)**	(143,364)	(109,366)	(70,347)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		(814)	**-**	(855)	(876)	(898)
(Payments)/Redemption of investments		(39,807)	**(27,000)**	7,641	6,285	(7,457)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities	4.4.2	(149,272)	**(137,685)**	(136,578)	(103,957)	(78,702)
Cash flows from financing activities						
Finance costs		(85)	**(1,113)**	(3,167)	(4,601)	(4,257)
Proceeds from borrowings		-	**22,870**	39,612	31,457	1,562
Repayment of borrowings		(1,566)	**(3,427)**	(6,275)	(8,670)	(9,226)
Interest paid - lease liability		(123)	**(104)**	(79)	(43)	(209)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(917)	**(919)**	(957)	(995)	(972)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	4.4.3	(2,691)	**17,307**	29,134	17,148	(13,102)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash & cash equivalents		8,985	**(12,032)**	241	223	216
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		26,596	**35,581**	23,549	23,790	24,013
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		35,581	**23,549**	23,790	24,013	24,229

Statement of Capital Works

For the four years ending 30 June 2029

	NOTES	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projections 2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Property						
Land		-	**1,000**	1,900	-	-
Land improvements		-	**60**	350	1,271	1,100
Total land		-	**1,060**	2,250	1,271	1,100
Buildings		11,859	**13,180**	14,250	9,071	412
Building improvements		9,790	**7,985**	16,695	16,459	3,450
Total buildings		21,649	**21,165**	30,945	25,530	3,862
Total property		21,649	**22,225**	33,195	26,801	4,962
Plant and equipment						
Plant, machinery and equipment		2,895	**1,952**	1,794	2,904	1,746
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		300	**335**	137	77	79
Computers and telecommunications		780	**250**	1,509	1,127	1,027
Total plant and equipment		3,975	**2,537**	3,440	4,108	2,852
Infrastructure						
Roads		24,486	**14,815**	27,121	23,238	21,580
Bridges		100	**298**	300	300	650
Footpaths and cycleways		5,274	**7,240**	9,179	6,891	6,268
Drainage		878	**650**	1,260	1,950	2,700
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		20,594	**37,355**	36,087	23,680	8,478
Waste management		661	**2,382**	30	-	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes		18,794	**19,784**	29,946	18,833	20,552
Off street car parks		1,050	**1,150**	1,005	85	90
Other infrastructure		11,190	**2,249**	1,801	3,480	2,215
Total infrastructure		83,027	**85,923**	106,729	78,457	62,533
Total capital works expenditure	4.5.1	108,651	**110,685**	143,364	109,366	70,347
Represented by:						
New asset expenditure		74,467	**74,212**	90,171	56,360	30,722
Asset renewal expenditure		21,553	**23,916**	29,085	35,290	28,073
Asset expansion expenditure		-	**-**	-	-	-
Asset upgrade expenditure		12,631	**12,557**	24,108	17,716	11,552
Total capital works expenditure	4.5.1	108,651	**110,685**	143,364	109,366	70,347
Funding sources represented by:						
Proceeds from sales		763	**783**	855	876	898
External funding		21,313	**26,944**	21,270	2,494	2,495
Contributions		5,113	**7,130**	6,125	2,259	5,778
Council cash		59,864	**43,251**	55,907	57,683	57,402
Reserves		21,598	**9,707**	19,595	14,597	2,212
Borrowings		-	**22,870**	39,612	31,457	1,562
Total capital works expenditure	4.5.1	108,651	**110,685**	143,364	109,366	70,347

Statement of Human Resources

For the four years ending 30 June 2029

	Forecast	Budget	Projections		
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Staff expenditure					
Employee costs - operating	120,669	**131,116**	132,619	137,161	141,844
Employee costs - capital	3,756	**4,236**	4,261	4,356	4,454
Total staff expenditure	124,425	**135,352**	136,880	141,517	146,298
	FTE	**FTE**	FTE	FTE	FTE
Staff numbers					
Employees	995.0	**1,043.5**	1,048.5	1,053.5	1,058.5
Total staff numbers	995.0	**1,043.5**	1,048.5	1,053.5	1,058.5

Note: Future year full-time equivalent (FTE) gender figures presented in this statement are projections based on current workforce gender composition. Council remains committed to promoting gender equality in all recruitment practices, consistent with the objectives outlined in our Gender Equality Action Plan.

A summary of human resources expenditure categorised according to the organisational structure of Council is included below:

Department	Budget	Comprises			
		Permanent		Casual	Temporary
	2025-26	Full Time	Part time		
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Office of the CEO	**469**	469	-	-	-
Executive	**6,143**	6,047	96	-	137
Community Wellbeing	**37,770**	16,098	21,672	735	639
Planning and Development	**25,601**	13,256	12,345	-	299
Infrastructure and Environment	**31,615**	30,804	811	-	1,430
Customer and Corporate Services	**21,704**	17,976	3,726	200	2,225
Shared Services	**1,972**	976	996	87	90
Total permanent staff expenditure	**125,274**	85,626	39,646	1,022	4,820
Other employee related expenditure	**5,842**				
Capitalised labour costs	**4,236**				
Total expenditure	**135,352**				

Employee costs include all labour related expenditure such as salaries, wages, allowances and on-costs such as leave entitlements, superannuation and WorkCover.

A summary of the number of full time equivalent (FTE) Council staff in relation to the above expenditure is included below:

Department	Budget	Comprises			
		Permanent		Casual	Temporary
	2025-26	Full Time	Part time		
Office of the CEO	**1.0**	1.0	-	-	-
Executive	**44.5**	44.0	0.5	-	0.6
Community Wellbeing	**282.2**	145.3	136.8	5.9	5.7
Planning and Development	**204.4**	152.9	51.5	-	3.6
Infrastructure and Environment	**261.0**	255.8	5.2	-	12.0
Customer and Corporate Services	**157.4**	134.0	23.4	1.8	17.6
Shared Services	**14.8**	5.1	9.7	0.8	1.0
Total permanent staff expenditure	**965.3**	738.1	227.2	8.6	40.5
Other employee related expenditure	**49.0**				
Capitalised labour FTE	**29.2**				
Total staff	**1,043.5**				

Summary of Planned Human Resources Expenditure

For the four years ending 30 June 2029

	2025-26 $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Office of the CEO				
Permanent - Full time	**469**	473	487	501
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**469**	473	487	501
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Office of the CEO	**469**	473	487	501
Executive				
Permanent - Full time	**6,047**	6,091	6,274	6,462
Women	**4,553**	4,587	4,724	4,866
Men	**754**	759	782	806
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**740**	745	767	790
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**96**	97	100	103
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**96**	97	100	103
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**137**	138	142	147
Women	**137**	138	142	147
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Executive	**6,143**	6,188	6,373	6,565
Community Wellbeing				
Permanent - Full time	**16,098**	16,301	17,025	17,771
Women	**10,959**	11,095	11,417	11,749
Men	**3,086**	3,125	3,215	3,309
Persons of self-described gender	**115**	116	120	123
Vacant positions	**1,689**	1,710	1,760	1,811
New positions	**248**	254	514	779
Permanent - Part time	**21,672**	21,941	22,577	23,233
Women	**17,744**	17,965	18,485	19,022
Men	**808**	818	842	866
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**3,119**	3,158	3,250	3,344
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**639**	647	666	685
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**97**	98	101	104
Vacant positions	**542**	549	565	581
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Casuals	**735**	759	784	810
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**735**	759	784	810
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Community Wellbeing	**37,770**	38,242	39,602	41,003

	2025-26 $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Planning and Development				
Permanent - Full time	**13,255**	13,437	14,014	14,609
Women	**6,319**	6,405	6,590	6,781
Men	**6,047**	6,129	6,306	6,489
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**703**	713	733	755
New positions	**186**	190	385	584
Permanent - Part time	**12,345**	12,512	12,874	13,247
Women	**6,664**	6,754	6,950	7,151
Men	**4,954**	5,022	5,167	5,317
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**727**	736	758	780
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**299**	303	312	321
Women	**214**	217	223	230
Men	**85**	86	88	91
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Planning and Development	**25,601**	25,949	26,888	27,856
Infrastructure and Environment				
Permanent - Full time	**30,804**	31,132	32,198	33,298
Women	**8,564**	8,657	8,915	9,183
Men	**20,243**	20,455	21,075	21,715
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1,872**	1,894	1,951	2,011
New positions	**124**	127	257	389
Permanent - Part time	**811**	819	843	868
Women	**197**	199	205	211
Men	**380**	384	395	407
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**233**	236	242	250
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**1,430**	1,445	1,487	1,531
Women	**64**	65	67	68
Men	**609**	615	633	652
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**758**	765	788	811
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure and Environment	**31,614**	31,951	33,041	34,166
Customer and Corporate Services				
Permanent - Full time	**17,976**	18,146	18,750	19,372
Women	**10,042**	10,137	10,440	10,754
Men	**6,541**	6,602	6,797	6,999
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1,331**	1,344	1,384	1,425
New positions	**62**	63	128	195
Permanent - Part time	**3,726**	3,760	3,872	3,986
Women	**2,804**	2,830	2,914	3,000
Men	**737**	744	766	788
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**185**	186	192	198
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**2,225**	2,246	2,312	2,381
Women	**681**	688	708	729
Men	**410**	414	426	439
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1,134**	1,144	1,178	1,213
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Casuals	**200**	206	213	220
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**200**	206	213	220
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Customer and Corporate Services	**21,702**	21,906	22,621	23,359

	2025-26 $'000	2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Shared Services				
Permanent - Full time	**976**	982	1,012	1,042
Women	**298**	300	309	318
Men	**332**	334	344	354
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**347**	349	359	370
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**996**	1,002	1,032	1,063
Women	**753**	758	781	804
Men	**85**	85	88	90
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**158**	159	164	169
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**90**	91	93	96
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**90**	91	93	96
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Casuals	**87**	90	93	96
Women	**66**	68	70	72
Men	**15**	15	16	16
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**7**	8	8	8
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Shared Services	**1,972**	1,985	2,044	2,105
Permanent - Full time	**85,626**	86,562	89,759	93,055
Permanent - Part time	**39,645**	40,132	41,297	42,500
Temporary and other expenditure	**4,821**	4,870	5,013	5,161
Casuals	**1,023**	1,056	1,090	1,126
Casuals, temporary and other expenditure	**5,844**	5,926	6,103	6,287
Capitalised labour costs	**4,236**	4,261	4,356	4,454
Total staff expenditure	**135,351**	136,879	141,516	146,296

Note: Future year full-time equivalent (FTE) gender figures presented in this statement are projections based on current workforce gender composition. Council remains committed to promoting gender equality in all recruitment practices, consistent with the objectives outlined in our Gender Equality Action Plan.

	2025-26 FTE	2026-27 FTE	2027-28 FTE	2028-29 FTE
Office of the CEO				
Permanent - Full time	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Office of the CEO	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
Executive				
Permanent - Full time	**44.0**	44.0	44.0	44.0
Women	**32.0**	32.0	32.0	32.0
Men	**6.0**	6.0	6.0	6.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**6.0**	6.0	6.0	6.0
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**0.5**	0.5	0.5	0.5
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**0.5**	0.5	0.5	0.5
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**0.6**	0.6	0.6	0.6
Women	**0.6**	0.6	0.6	0.6
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Executive	**44.5**	44.5	44.5	44.5
Community Wellbeing				
Permanent - Full time	**145.3**	147.3	149.3	151.3
Women	**99.0**	99.0	99.0	99.0
Men	**27.0**	27.0	27.0	27.0
Persons of self-described gender	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
Vacant positions	**18.3**	18.3	18.3	18.3
New positions	**-**	2.0	4.0	6.0
Permanent - Part time	**136.8**	136.8	136.8	136.8
Women	**113.0**	113.0	113.0	113.0
Men	**6.0**	6.0	6.0	6.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**17.8**	17.8	17.8	17.8
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**5.7**	5.7	5.7	5.7
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**0.8**	0.8	0.8	0.8
Vacant positions	**4.8**	4.8	4.8	4.8
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Casuals	**5.9**	5.9	5.9	5.9
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**5.9**	5.9	5.9	5.9
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Community Wellbeing	**282.2**	284.2	286.2	288.2

	2025-26 FTE	2026-27 FTE	2027-28 FTE	2028-29 FTE
Planning and Development				
Permanent - Full time	**152.9**	154.4	155.9	157.4
Women	**75.0**	75.0	75.0	75.0
Men	**68.9**	68.9	68.9	68.9
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**9.0**	9.0	9.0	9.0
New positions	**-**	1.5	3.0	4.5
Permanent - Part time	**51.5**	51.5	51.5	51.5
Women	**29.7**	29.7	29.7	29.7
Men	**18.4**	18.4	18.4	18.4
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**3.4**	3.4	3.4	3.4
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**3.6**	3.6	3.6	3.6
Women	**2.6**	2.6	2.6	2.6
Men	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**-**	-	-	-
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Planning and Development	**204.4**	205.9	207.4	208.9
Infrastructure and Environment				
Permanent - Full time	**255.8**	256.8	257.8	258.8
Women	**65.5**	65.5	65.5	65.5
Men	**173.2**	173.2	173.2	173.2
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**17.1**	17.1	17.1	17.1
New positions	**-**	1.0	2.0	3.0
Permanent - Part time	**5.2**	5.2	5.2	5.2
Women	**1.1**	1.1	1.1	1.1
Men	**2.3**	2.3	2.3	2.3
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1.9**	1.9	1.9	1.9
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**12.0**	12.0	12.0	12.0
Women	**0.4**	0.4	0.4	0.4
Men	**6.0**	6.0	6.0	6.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**5.6**	5.6	5.6	5.6
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure and Environment	**261.0**	262.0	263.0	264.0
Customer and Corporate Services				
Permanent - Full time	**134.0**	134.5	135.0	135.5
Women	**79.0**	79.0	79.0	79.0
Men	**45.0**	45.0	45.0	45.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**10.0**	10.0	10.0	10.0
New positions	**-**	0.5	1.0	1.5
Permanent - Part time	**23.4**	23.4	23.4	23.4
Women	**17.8**	17.8	17.8	17.8
Men	**4.2**	4.2	4.2	4.2
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1.4**	1.4	1.4	1.4
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**17.6**	17.6	17.6	17.6
Women	**5.0**	5.0	5.0	5.0
Men	**3.0**	3.0	3.0	3.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**9.6**	9.6	9.6	9.6
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Casuals	**1.8**	1.8	1.8	1.8
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1.8**	1.8	1.8	1.8
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Customer and Corporate Services	**157.4**	157.9	158.4	158.9

	2025-26 FTE	2026-27 FTE	2027-28 FTE	2028-29 FTE
Shared Services				
Permanent - Full time	**5.1**	5.1	5.1	5.1
Women	**2.0**	2.0	2.0	2.0
Men	**1.1**	1.1	1.1	1.1
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**2.0**	2.0	2.0	2.0
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**9.7**	9.7	9.7	9.7
Women	**7.1**	7.1	7.1	7.1
Men	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1.6**	1.6	1.6	1.6
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
Women	**-**	-	-	-
Men	**-**	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**1.0**	1.0	1.0	1.0
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Casuals	**0.8**	0.8	0.8	0.8
Women	**0.6**	0.6	0.6	0.6
Men	**0.1**	0.1	0.1	0.1
Persons of self-described gender	**-**	-	-	-
Vacant positions	**0.1**	0.1	0.1	0.1
New positions	**-**	-	-	-
Total Shared Services	**14.8**	14.8	14.8	14.8
Permanent - Full time	**738.1**	743.1	748.1	753.1
Permanent - Part time	**227.2**	227.2	227.2	227.2
Temporary and other expenditure	**40.5**	40.5	40.5	40.5
Casuals	**8.6**	8.6	8.6	8.6
Permanent FTE	**965.3**	970.3	975.3	980.3
Casuals and temporary staff	**49.0**	49.0	49.0	49.0
Capitalised labour	**29.2**	29.2	29.2	29.2
Total staff numbers	**1,043.5**	1,048.5	1,053.5	1,058.5

Note: Future year full-time equivalent (FTE) gender figures presented in this statement are projections based on current workforce gender composition. Council remains committed to promoting gender equality in all recruitment practices, consistent with the objectives outlined in our Gender Equality Action Plan.

4. Notes to the Financial Statements

This section presents detailed information on material components of the financial statements. Council needs to assess which components are material, considering the dollar amounts and nature of these components.

4.1 Comprehensive Income Statement

4.1.1 Rates and charges

Rates and charges are required by the Act and the Regulations to be disclosed in Council's budget.

As per the *Local Government Act 2020,* Council is required to have a Revenue and Rating Plan which is a four year plan for how Council will generate income to deliver the Council Plan, program and services and capital works commitments over a four-year period.

In developing the Budget, rates and charges were identified as an important source of revenue. Planning for future rate increases has therefore been an important component of the financial planning process. The Fair Go Rates System (FGRS) sets out the maximum amount councils may increase rates in a year. For 2025-26 the FGRS cap has been set at 3%. The cap applies to both general rates and municipal charges and is calculated on the basis of Council's average rates and charges.

The level of required rates and charges has been considered in this context, with reference to Council's other sources of income and the planned expenditure on services and works to be undertaken for the community.

To achieve these objectives while maintaining service levels and a strong capital expenditure program, the average general rate and the municipal charge will increase by 3% in line with the rate cap. This will raise total rates and charges for 2025-26 to $241.89 million.

4.1.1(a) The reconciliation of the total rates and charges to the Comprehensive Income Statement is as follows:

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
General Rates*	189,416	**201,235**	11,819	6.24%
Service rates and charges	26,588	**35,721**	9,133	34.35%
Special rates and charges	281	**105**	(176)	(62.63%)
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	3,584	**3,580**	(4)	(0.11%)
Interest on rates and charges	1,100	**1,250**	150	13.64%
Total rates and charges	**220,969**	**241,891**	**20,922**	**9.47%**

*These items are subject to the rate cap established under the Fair Go Rates System (FGRS)

4.1.1(b) The rate in the dollar to be levied as general rates under section 158 of the Act for each type or class of land compared with the previous financial year

Type or class of land	2024-25 cents/$NAV	2025-26 cents/$NAV	Change %
General rate for residential properties[2]	0.046835790	**0.04728680**	0.96%
General rate for commercial properties[2]	0.046835790	**0.04728680**	0.96%
General rate for industrial properties[2]	0.046835790	**0.04728680**	0.96%
General rate for farm properties[2]	0.028101470	**0.02837208**	0.96%

[2]Subject to certified valuation data being received from the Valuer General Victoria.

4.1.1(c) The estimated total amount to be raised by general rates in relation to each type or class of land, and the estimated total amount to be raised by general rates, compared with the previous financial year

Type or class of land	2024-25 $	2025-26 $	Change $	Change %
Residential[3]	156,247,749	**164,209,862**	7,962,113	5.10%
Commercial[3]	15,196,969	**16,666,998**	1,470,029	9.67%
Industrial[3]	16,919,626	**19,249,149**	2,329,523	13.77%
Farm[3]	1,051,276	**1,108,816**	57,540	5.47%
Sub-total amount to be raised by general rates	**189,415,620**	**201,234,825**	**11,819,205**	**6.24%**
Annualised 2024-25 supplementary rate revenue	5,958,017	**-**		
Total amount to be raised by general rates	**195,373,637**	**201,234,825**	**5,861,188**	**3.00%**

[3]Note the amount to be raised by general rates for 2025-26 is subject to the final certified valuations for 1 January 2025 being received from the Valuer General Victoria and the completion of the 2024-25 supplementary rates.

4.1.1(d) The number of assessments in relation to each type or class of land, and the total number of assessments, compared with the previous financial year

Type or class of land	2024-25 Number	2025-26 Number	Change Number	Change %
Residential[4]	94,038	**97,354**	3,316	3.53%
Commercial[4]	3,085	**3,093**	8	0.26%
Industrial[4]	4,739	**5,001**	262	5.53%
Farm[4]	130	**96**	(34)	(26.15%)
Total number of assessments	**101,992**	**105,544**	**3,552**	**3.48%**

[4]Note the number of assessments for 2025-26 may change as further supplementary valuations are completed.

4.1.1(e) The basis of valuation to be used is the Net Annual Value (NAV)

4.1.1(f) The estimated total value of each type or class of land, and the estimated total value of land, compared with the previous financial year

Type or class of land	2024-25 $	2025-26 $	Change $	Change %
Residential[5]	3,336,075,865	**3,472,636,371**	136,560,506	4.09%
Commercial[5]	324,473,426	**352,466,183**	27,992,757	8.63%
Industrial[5]	361,254,200	**407,072,360**	45,818,160	12.68%
Farm[5]	37,410,000	**39,081,250**	1,671,250	4.47%
Total value of land	**4,059,213,491**	**4,271,256,164**	**212,042,673**	**5.22%**

[5]Note the value of land for 2024-25 is subject to the final certified valuations for 1 January 2024 being received from the Valuer General Victoria.

4.1.1(g) The rate or unit amount to be levied for each type of service rate or charge under Section 162 of the Act compared with the previous financial year

Type of Charge	Per Rateable Property 2024-25 $	Per Rateable Property 2025-26 $	Change $	Change %
Waste Kerbside Service Charge	205.70	**208.80**	3	1.51%
Commercial Waste Kerbside Service Charge	267.30	**271.35**	4	1.52%
Food and Green Waste	105.15	**95.30**	(10)	(9.37%)
Landfill Levy - Waste Kerbside Service Charge	14.20	**105.85**	92	645.42%
Landfill Levy - Commercial Waste Kerbside Service Charge	19.80	**166.60**	147	741.41%
Landfill Levy - Other	16.65	**15.45**	(1)	(7.21%)

4.1.1(h) The estimated total amount to be raised by each type of service rate or charge, and the estimated total amount to be raised by service rates and charges, compared with the previous financial year

Type of Charge	2024-25 $	2025-26 $	Change $	Change %
Waste Kerbside Service Charge	17,969,638	**19,076,523**	1,106,885	6.16%
Commercial Waste Kerbside Service Charge	1,286,103	**698,825**	(587,279)	(45.66%)
Food and Green Waste	5,800,000	**5,699,708**	(100,292)	(1.73%)
Landfill Levy - Waste Kerbside Service Charge	1,224,651	**9,357,034**	8,132,384	664.06%
Landfill Levy - Commercial Waste Kerbside Service Charge	78,547	**670,898**	592,352	754.14%
Landfill Levy - Other	229,171	**217,969**	(11,202)	(4.89%)
Total	**26,588,109**	**35,720,957**	**9,132,848**	**34.35%**

4.1.1(i) The estimated total amount to be raised by all rates and charges compared with the previous financial year

	2024-25 $	2025-26 $	Change $	Change %
Residential	156,247,749	**164,209,862**	7,962,113	5.10%
Commercial	15,196,969	**16,666,998**	1,470,029	9.67%
Industrial	16,919,626	**19,249,149**	2,329,523	13.77%
Farm rate	1,051,276	**1,108,816**	57,540	5.47%
Waste Kerbside Service Charge	17,969,638	**19,076,523**	1,106,885	6.16%
Commercial Waste Kerbside Service Charge	1,286,103	**698,825**	(587,279)	(45.66%)
Food and Green Waste	5,800,000	**5,699,708**	(100,292)	(1.73%)
Landfill Levy - Waste Kerbside Service Charge	1,224,651	**9,357,034**	8,132,384	664.06%
Landfill Levy - Commercial Waste Kerbside Service Charge	78,547	**670,898**	592,352	754.14%
Landfill Levy - Other	229,171	**217,969**	(11,202)	(4.89%)
Supplementary rates and rate adjustments	3,584,000	**3,580,000**	(4,000)	(0.11%)
Total Rates and charges	**219,587,729**	**240,535,782**	**20,948,053**	**9.54%**

4.1.1(j) Fair Go Rates System Compliance

The City of Whittlesea is required to comply with the State Government's FGRS. The table below details the budget assumptions consistent with the requirements of the Fair Go Rates System.

		2024-25		2025-26
Total Rates	$	189,415,620	**$**	**201,234,825**
Number of rateable properties		101,992		**105,544**
Base Average Rate	$	1,807.46	**$**	**1,851.11**
Maximum Rate Increase (set by the State Government)		2.75%		**3.00%**
Capped Average Rate	$	1,857.17	**$**	**1,906.64**
Maximum General Rates and Municipal Charges Revenue	$	189,415,988	**$**	**201,234,825**
Budgeted Supplementary Rates	$	3,500,000	**$**	**3,700,000**
Budgeted Total Rates and Municipal Charges Revenue	$	192,915,988	**$**	**204,934,825**

4.1.1(k) Any significant changes that may affect the estimated amounts to be raised by rates and charges

There are no known significant changes which may affect the estimated amounts to be raised by rates and charges. However, the total amount to be raised by rates and charges may be affected by:

- The making of supplementary valuations (2025-26: estimated $3,700,000 and 2024-25: $3,500,000)
- The variation of returned levels of value (e.g. valuation appeals)
- Changes of use of land such that rateable land becomes non-rateable land and vice versa
- Changes of use of land such that residential land becomes business land and vice versa.

4.1.1(l) Differential rates

The rate and amount of rates payable in relation to land in each category of differential are:

- rate of 0.0472868 in the NAV dollar in respect of residential, commercial and industrial use land (of a non-farm nature)
- rate of 0.02837208 in the NAV dollar in respect of farm land.

Each differential rate will be determined by multiplying the Net Annual Value of each rateable land (categorised by the characteristics described below) by the relevant percentages indicated above.

Council considers that each differential rate will contribute to the equitable and efficient carrying out of its functions. Details of the objectives of each differential rate, the types of classes of land, which are subject to each differential rate and the uses of each differential rate, are set out below.

General rate

The general rate for rateable residential, commercial and industrial properties applies to all properties which do not fall into the farm rate classification (see below).

Farm rate

The farm rate may be applied to some properties within the Municipality which are classified by Council as Farm Land as defined in Section 2(1) of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* which states, "farm land" means any rateable land:

(a) that is not less than 2 hectares in area; and

(b) that is used primarily for grazing (including agistment), dairying, pig-farming, poultry-farming, fish-farming, tree-farming, bee-keeping, viticulture, horticulture, fruit-growing or the growing of crops of any kind or for any combination of those activities; and

(c) that is used by a business— (i) that has a significant and substantial commercial purpose or character; and (ii) that seeks to make a profit on a continuous or repetitive basis from its activities on the land; and (iii) that is making a profit from its activities on the land, or that has a reasonable prospect of making a profit from its activities on the land if it continues to operate in the way that it is operating.

The objective of Council's differential rates, is to ensure that Council has adequate funding to undertake its strategic, statutory, service provision and community services obligations and to ensure that the differential rate in the dollar declared for both "general" and "farm" properties is fair and equitable, having regard to the cost and the level of benefits derived from provision of Council services.

4.1.2 Statutory fees and fines

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Infringements and costs	10,055	**10,275**	220	2.19%
Court recoveries	1,425	**1,590**	165	11.58%
Permit fees	9,361	**6,826**	(2,535)	(27.08%)
Certificates and regulatory service fees	1,613	**2,143**	530	32.86%
Total statutory fees and fines	**22,454**	**20,834**	**(1,620)**	**(7.21%)**

Statutory fees and fines relate mainly to fees and fines levied in accordance with legislation and include parking infringements, animal registrations, Health Act registrations, building control permits, statutory planning permits and subdivision supervision fees. The statutory fees are projected to be less than 2024-25 primarily due to decrease in regulatory and subdivision supervision fees.

4.1.3 User fees

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Aged and health services	942	**1,234**	292	31.00%
Family and children services	349	**223**	(126)	(36.10%)
Registrations	2,669	**2,786**	117	4.38%
Leisure centre fees	2,072	**1,520**	(552)	(26.64%)
Property leases and rentals	4,137	**4,229**	92	2.22%
Waste management services	1,336	**1,336**	-	0.00%
Other fees and charges	1,170	**1,259**	89	7.61%
Total user fees	**12,675**	**12,587**	**(88)**	**(0.69%)**

User fees relate to the recovery of service delivery costs through the charging of fees to users of services. These include fees for the use of leisure facilities, entertainment, equipment hire and other community facilities and the provision of human services such as family day care and home help services. User fees are projected to decrease primarily relating to the decrease in sport and recreation leisure facilities income.

4.1.4 Grants

Grants are required by the Act and the Regulations to be disclosed in Council's budget.

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Grants were received in respect of the following:				
Summary of grants				
Commonwealth funded grants	30,331	**39,096**	8,765	28.90%
State funded grants	24,091	**23,528**	(563)	(2.34%)
Total grants received	**54,422**	**62,624**	**8,202**	**15.07%**
(a) Operating Grants				
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government				
Financial assistance grants	19,468	**19,955**	487	2.50%
Aged care	7,056	**7,591**	535	7.58%
Immunisation	30	**30**	-	0.00%
Recurrent - State Government				
Aged care	874	**869**	(5)	(0.57%)
School crossing supervisors	1,113	**1,105**	(8)	(0.72%)
Early years	356	**483**	127	35.67%
Family day care	410	**410**	-	0.00%
Maternal and child health	4,905	**4,456**	(449)	(9.15%)
Immunisation	124	**124**	-	0.00%
Public health	24	**26**	2	8.33%
Resilience and emergency management	60	**60**	-	0.00%
Youth services	35	**35**	-	0.00%
Sustainability	-	**169**	169	100.00%
Community development	65	**97**	32	49.23%
Other	163	**133**	(30)	(18.40%)
Total recurrent grants	**34,683**	**35,543**	**860**	**2.48%**
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government				
Non-recurrent - State Government				
Social Policy	400	**-**	(400)	(100.00%)
Maternal and child health	150	**150**	-	0.00%
Kindergarten	177	**235**	58	32.77%
Resilience and emergency management	140	**140**	-	0.00%
Sustainability	111	**61**	(50)	(45.05%)
Total non-recurrent grants	**978**	**586**	**(392)**	**(40.08%)**
Total operating grants	**35,661**	**36,129**	**468**	**1.31%**

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
(b) Capital Grants				
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government				
Roads and infrastructure	2,497	**2,495**	(2)	(0.08%)
Total recurrent grants	**2,497**	**2,495**	**(2)**	**(0.08%)**
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government				
Recreational, leisure and community	-	**8,725**	8,725	100.00%
Parks, open space and streetscapes	1,280	**300**	(980)	(76.56%)
Non-recurrent - State Government				
Buildings	6,336	**8,475**	2,139	33.76%
Roads and infrastructure	3,162	**650**	(2,512)	(79.44%)
Footpaths and cycleways	-	**1,025**	1,025	100.00%
Recreational, leisure and community	1,264	**4,425**	3,161	250.08%
Parks, open space and streetscapes	4,222	**400**	(3,822)	(90.53%)
Total non-recurrent grants	**16,264**	**24,000**	**7,736**	**47.57%**
Total capital grants	**18,761**	**26,495**	**7,734**	**41.22%**
Total grants	**54,422**	**62,624**	**8,202**	**15.07%**

4.1.5 Contributions

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Monetary	54,211	**34,691**	(19,520)	(36.01%)
Non-monetary	107,204	**109,348**	2,144	2.00%
Total contributions	**161,415**	**144,039**	**(17,376)**	**(10.76%)**

Monetary contributions are those contributions and reimbursements from organisations such as sporting clubs for works carried out on their behalf, as well as contributions from developers towards specific capital works projects. Non-monetary contributions are those assets that have been transferred to Council by developers. The contributions are projected to decrease in line with anticipated growth of developments throughout the municipality.

4.1.6 Other income

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Sales	880	**583**	(297)	(33.75%)
Interest	15,500	**12,838**	(2,662)	(17.17%)
Reimbursements	8,907	**6,045**	(2,862)	(32.13%)
Other	(19)	**(5)**	14	(73.68%)
Total other income	**25,268**	**19,461**	**(5,807)**	**(22.98%)**

The budget anticipates a decrease in interest income from term deposits due to forecasted interest rate cuts from the Reserve Bank of Australia.

4.1.7 Employee costs

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Wages and salaries	107,178	**115,768**	8,590	8.01%
Workcover	4,952	**5,898**	946	19.10%
Superannuation	12,145	**13,546**	1,401	11.54%
Fringe benefits tax	150	**140**	(10)	(6.67%)
Total employee costs	**124,425**	**135,352**	**10,927**	**8.78%**

Employee costs include all labour related expenditure such as salaries, wages, allowances and on-costs such as leave entitlements, superannuation and WorkCover.

In recent years employee numbers have not kept pace with the City of Whittlesea's population growth. We have sought to address this shortfall with continued investment in growing our workforce in 2025-26. This investment ensures we have the resources needed to support critical service delivery for our growing population whilst we continue to drive efficiencies.

Employee costs are also estimated to increase due to positions which have been funded from specific grants and salary movements through banding adjustments and the Enterprise Agreement.

4.1.8 Materials and services

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
External works (contractors)	71,583	**95,506**	23,923	33.42%
Support services	8,197	**5,781**	(2,416)	(29.47%)
Design work	56	**48**	(8)	(14.29%)
Facilities management	3,213	**3,166**	(47)	(1.46%)
Supplies and services	9,260	**8,025**	(1,235)	(13.34%)
Plant and fleet operations	1,932	**2,102**	170	8.80%
Computer services	5,702	**8,497**	2,795	49.02%
Communications	1,526	**1,581**	55	3.60%
Catering supplies and services	235	**243**	8	3.40%
Construction materials	842	**894**	52	6.18%
Travel and accommodation	122	**72**	(50)	(40.98%)
Consumable Materials	85	**87**	2	2.35%
Total materials and services	**102,753**	**126,002**	**23,249**	**22.63%**

Materials and services include the purchase of supplies and consumables, payments for the provision of services, and fleet costs. Material and services is budgeted to increase compared to forecast of 2024-25 mainly due to reimbursements associated with the provision by developers of land and construction projects that are funded through the levies collected under various Development Contribution Plans and Infrastructure Contribution Plans and increased spending on garden bed maintenance and parks maintenance in line with the new contract.

4.1.9 Depreciation

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Property	7,497	**7,935**	438	5.84%
Plant & equipment	2,567	**2,765**	198	7.71%
Infrastructure	49,289	**52,252**	2,963	6.01%
Total depreciation	**59,353**	**62,952**	**3,599**	**6.06%**

Depreciation is an accounting measure to allocate the value of an asset over its useful life. The depreciation is expected to increase compared to the 2024-25 forecast, due to the projected increase in the revaluation of Council's assets combined with the addition of gifted and constructed assets.

4.1.10 Amortisation - Intangible assets

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Intangible assets	71	**71**	-	0.00%
Total amortisation - intangible assets	**71**	**71**	**-**	**0.00%**

4.1.11 Depreciation - Right of use assets

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Property	528	**506**	(22)	(4.17%)
Vehicles	308	**308**	-	0.00%
Plant and equipment	103	**104**	1	0.97%
Total depreciation - right of use assets	**939**	**918**	**(21)**	**(2.24%)**

4.1.12 Other expenses

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Change $'000	Change %
Contributions and donations	9,287	**8,947**	(340)	(3.66%)
Utilities	5,858	**6,013**	155	2.65%
Mayor and Councillors allowances	375	**591**	216	57.60%
Auditing	287	**287**	-	0.00%
Other costs	4,129	**4,342**	213	5.16%
Total other expenses	**19,936**	**20,180**	**244**	**1.22%**

Other expenses include a range of unclassified items including utilities, community grants, contributions, audit fees and administrator fees.

4.2 Balance Sheet

4.2.1 Assets

Cash and cash equivalents include cash and investments such as cash held in the bank and in petty cash and the value of investments in deposits or other highly liquid investments with short term maturities. Current assets are expected to increase by $15.4 million during the year, primarily reflecting additional borrowings in 2025-26, effective cash flow management and higher interest earnings on investments.

The increase in non-current assets is the net result of the capital works program and transfer to Council of non-monetary assets $109.35 million, partly offset by the depreciation of non-current assets $62.95 million.

4.2.2 Liabilities

Current liabilities are expected to increase due to bonds and guarantees for infrastructure development, repayments of borrowings and annual and long service leave staff entitlements (provisions) which are expected to increase in line with an increasing labour cost base.

Trade and other payables (being the amounts that Council owes to suppliers) are expected to decrease in line with materials and services expenditure (see Comprehensive Income Statement) and short term lease repayments.

Non-current liabilities (that is, obligations Council must pay beyond the next financial year) will increase due to new borrowings being taken out in 2025-26.

4.2.3 Borrowings

The table below shows information on borrowings specifically required by the Regulations.

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projections 2026-27 $'000	2027-28 $'000	2028-29 $'000
Amount borrowed as at 30 June of the prior year	9,191	**7,625**	27,068	60,405	83,192
Amount to be borrowed	-	**22,870**	39,612	31,457	1,562
Amount projected to be redeemed	(1,566)	**(3,427)**	(6,275)	(8,670)	(9,226)
Amount of borrowings as at 30 June	**7,625**	**27,068**	**60,405**	**83,192**	**75,528**

4.2.4 Leases by category

As a result of the introduction of *AASB 16 Leases* , right-of-use assets and lease liabilities have been recognised as outlined in the table below.

	Forecast 2024-25 $'000	Budget 2025-26 $'000
Right-of-use assets		
Property	1,456	1,661
Vehicles	923	615
Others	301	197
Total right-of-use assets	**2,680**	**2,473**
Lease liabilities		
Current lease Liabilities		
Property	505	526
Vehicles	313	326
Others	101	105
Total current lease liabilities	**919**	**957**
Non-current lease liabilities		
Property	821	1,007
Vehicles	665	339
Others	203	97
Total non-current lease liabilities	**1,689**	**1,443**
Total lease liabilities	**2,608**	**2,400**

Where the interest rate applicable to a lease is not expressed in the lease agreement, Council applies the average incremental borrowing rate in the calculation of lease liabilities. The current incremental borrowing rate is 4.76%.

4.3 Statement of changes in Equity

4.3.1 Reserves

	Balance at beginning of reporting period	Transfers to Reserve	Transfers from Reserve	Balance at end of reporting period
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Asset revaluation reserve	**1,744,419**	**-**	**-**	**1,744,419**
Asset development reserves				
Parklands contribution	15,331	2,500	-	17,831
Developer contribution plan (DCP) reserves	200,453	31,654	(29,130)	202,977
Planning permit drainage levy	2,431	100	(50)	2,481
Net gain compensation	1,452	-	(79)	1,373
Plenty road duplication	84	-	-	84
Street tree contributions reserve	686	-	-	686
Total asset development reserves	**220,437**	**34,254**	**(29,259)**	**225,432**
Asset replacement reserves				
Native vegetation offset site maintenance	1,042	-	(200)	842
Lutheran Church and Cemetery	380	-	-	380
Strategic investment reserve	36,347	8,266	(6,275)	38,338
Technology improvement	2,898	4,922	(4,336)	3,484
Traffic light construction	943	-	-	943
Synthetic turf pitches	40	-	-	40
Strategic properties reserve	5,229	-	(1,000)	4,229
Non standard street lighting contributions	3,901	250	(250)	3,901
LASF defined benefit plan liability	3,739	-	-	3,739
Transport infrastructure	28	-	-	28
Waste reserve	3,395	-	(2,382)	1,013
Aboriginal Gathering Place	-	-	-	-
Strategic operational projects	2,516	-	-	2,516
Regional Sports Precinct reserve	1,374	-	-	1,374
Resilience and emergency management	449	-	-	449
Plant replacement	1,221	-	-	1,221
Community grant	660	-	-	660
Total asset replacement reserves	**64,162**	**13,438**	**(14,443)**	**63,157**
Total reserves	**2,029,018**	**47,692**	**(43,702)**	**2,033,008**

Asset development reserves

These funds must be applied for specified statutory purposes in accordance with various legislative and contractual requirements. Whilst these funds earn interest revenue for Council, they are not available for other purposes.

Asset replacement reserves

There are no restrictions on the use of these funds other than as Council may itself impose. In this case Council has made decisions regarding the future use of these funds and, unless there is a Council resolution to change those decisions, these funds should be used for those earmarked purposes. The decisions about future use of these funds will be made in the context of the long term funding requirements as set out in the plan.

4.3.2 Equity

Total equity is expected to increase by $152.54 million and made up of the following components:

- Asset Revaluation Reserve represents the difference between the previously recorded value of assets and their current valuations.
- Other Reserves are funds that Council has set aside to meet a specific purpose in the future and to which there is no existing liability. These amounts are transferred from the Accumulated Surplus of Council and are separately disclosed.
- Accumulated surplus, which is the value of all net assets less Reserves that have accumulated over time.

4.4 Statement of Cash Flows

This section analyses the expected cash flows from the operating, investing and financing activities of Council for the 2025-26 year. Budgeting cash flows assists in determining the balance between the level of cash available for investment in Council services and infrastructure, whilst ensuring long term financial sustainability of Council.

This analysis is based on three main categories of cash flows:

- Operating activities - Refers to the cash generated or used in the normal service delivery functions of Council. Cash remaining after paying for the provisions of services to the community may be available for investment in capital works, or repayment debt.
- Investing activities - Refers to the cash generated or used in the enhancement or creation of infrastructure and other assets. These activities also include the acquisition and sale of other assets such as vehicles, property and equipment.
- Financing activities - Refers to the cash generated or used in financing of Council functions and include borrowing from financial institutions and advancing of repayable loans to other organisations. These activities also include repayment of the principal component of loan repayment of the year.

4.4.1 Net cash flows provided by/used in operating activities

The reduction in cash flow from operating activities is primarily attributed to a $23.25 million increase in materials and services payments and a $19.52 million decrease in monetary contributions income. This is partly offset by increase in rates and charges income by 3% in line with the State Government rate cap.
The net cash flows from the operating activities does not equal the operating result of the year as the expected revenues and expenses of Council include non-cash items which have been excluded from the Cash Flow Statement.

4.4.2 Net cash flows provided by/used in investing activities

The decrease in payments for investing activities represents $27 million of funds invested in 2025-26 and an increase in capital works expenditure $2.03 million over the 2024-25 forecast. Redemption/(payments) for investments (maturing later than 90 days) relate to financial assets which are cash investments (predominantly term deposits) that have a maturity date greater than 90 days. To improve Council's cash flow (and maximise interest revenue), investments are either redeemed or placed throughout the year depending on the receipt of revenue and the timing of expenditure.

4.4.3 Net cash flows provided by/used in financing activities

The increase in cash flow from financing activities is driven by new borrowings of $22.87 million expected to be drawn down during the 2025-26 financial year. Proceeds from borrowings relate to funding received under loan obligations that Council must pay beyond the next financial year. These funds are generally applied to fund capital projects undergone in the financial year the loan was obtained.

4.5 Capital Works program

This section presents a listing of the capital works projects that will be undertaken for the 2025-26 year, classified by expenditure type and funding source.

4.5.1 Summary

	Forecast 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Change	
	$'000	$'000	$'000	%
Property	21,649	**22,225**	576	2.66%
Plant and equipment	3,975	**2,537**	(1,438)	(36.17)%
Infrastructure	83,027	**85,923**	2,896	3.49%
Total	**108,651**	**110,685**	**2,034**	**1.87%**

The capital works program for the 2025-26 year is expected to be $116.6 million.

	Project Cost	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New	Renewal	Upgrade	Expansion	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property	**22,225**	17,540	2,455	2,230	-	8,475	6,280	7,470	-
Plant and equipment	**2,537**	2,397	-	140	-	783	-	1,754	-
Infrastructure	**85,923**	54,275	21,461	10,187	-	18,470	850	43,734	22,870
Total	**110,685**	**74,212**	**23,916**	**12,557**	**-**	**27,728**	**7,130**	**52,958**	**22,870**

4.5.2 Current Budget

Capital Works Area	Project Cost	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New	Renewal	Upgrade	Expansion	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property									
17 - 19 Johnsons Road, Mernda	**1,000**	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-
Total land	**1,000**	**1,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1,000**	**-**
Huskisson Recreation Reserve residential development, Lalor	**60**	60	-	-	-	-	-	60	-
Total land improvements	**60**	**60**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**60**	**-**
Design - Edgars Creek Reserve Masterplan Implementation	**450**	450	-	-	-	-	450	-	-
Construct Community Activity Centre - Patterson Drive, Donnybrook	**2,280**	2,280	-	-	-	2,250	30	-	-
Construct community centre - West Wollert	**10,000**	10,000	-	-	-	4,200	5,800	-	-
Development Contribution Projects Pipeline Planning	**450**	450	-	-	-	-	-	450	-
Total buildings	**13,180**	**13,180**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**6,450**	**6,280**	**450**	**-**
Energy Efficiency Program - Various	**250**	-	-	250	-	-	-	250	-
Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre (TRAC) renewal and mechanical upgrades	**400**	-	400	-	-	-	-	400	-
Redevelopment and expansion of the Stables Kindergarten	**3,300**	3,300	-	-	-	2,025	-	1,275	-
Redevelopment of Dalton Road Kindergarten and MCH	**550**	-	-	550	-	-	-	550	-
Planned renewal (Minor works) - Future Year Budgets	**2,055**	-	2,055	-	-	-	-	2,055	-
Disability Action Plan	**150**	-	-	150	-	-	-	150	-
Office Refurbishment and Alterations	**150**	-	-	150	-	-	-	150	-
Derby Meadows Preschool and Boori Childrens Centre	**500**	-	-	500	-	-	-	500	-
Kindergarten nappy change facilities and privacy stall doors for regulatory compliance	**100**	-	-	100	-	-	-	100	-
Thomastown Library Amenity Upgrade	**460**	-	-	460	-	-	-	460	-
Community Facility Accomodation Remodelling	**70**	-	-	70	-	-	-	70	-
Total building improvements	**7,985**	**3,300**	**2,455**	**2,230**	**-**	**2,025**	**-**	**5,960**	**-**
Total property	**22,225**	**17,540**	**2,455**	**2,230**	**-**	**8,475**	**6,280**	**7,470**	**-**
Plant and equipment									
Replacement of Council Fleet - Ongoing Program	**1,852**	1,852	-	-	-	783	-	1,069	-
Implementation of Signage Management Plan - Various	**100**	100	-	-	-	-	-	100	-
Total plant, machinery and equipment	**1,952**	**1,952**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**783**	**-**	**1,169**	**-**
Acquisition of Visual Art - Civic Centre	**10**	10	-	-	-	-	-	10	-
Design and Delivery of Public Art (Murals)	**65**	65	-	-	-	-	-	65	-
MCH Consult Rooms Early Learning Child Care Centre - Wollert (Andrews Road) Primary School	**35**	35	-	-	-	-	-	35	-
Kindergarten on a School Site (KOSS) - The Lakes South Morang College (Primary Campus)	**225**	225	-	-	-	-	-	225	-
Total fixtures, fittings and furniture	**335**	**335**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**335**	**-**
IT - ICT Network Infrastructure	**50**	30	-	20	-	-	-	50	-
IT - Hardware	**200**	80	-	120	-	-	-	200	-
Total computers and telecommunications	**250**	**110**	**-**	**140**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**250**	**-**
Total plant and equipment	**2,537**	**2,397**	**-**	**140**	**-**	**783**	**-**	**1,754**	**-**

Capital Works Area	Project Cost	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New	Renewal	Upgrade	Expansion	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Infrastructure									
Downs Road residential development, Lalor	**350**	350	-	-	-	-	-	350	-
Local Road Resurfacing Works - Future Year Budgets	**8,000**	-	8,000	-	-	2,495	-	5,505	-
Local Road Reconstruction / Rehabilitation Program - Future Year Budgets	**4,000**	-	4,000	-	-	-	-	4,000	-
Findon Road and Williamsons Road intersection upgrade	**97**	-	-	97	-	-	-	97	-
Quarry Hills Regional Park - Trunk Infrastructure	**1,070**	1,070	-	-	-	-	-	1,070	-
Install roundabout at Crescendo Boulevard /Bellavista Drive / The Parade intersection, Wollert	**100**	100	-	-	-	-	-	100	-
25-26 Collector Road traffic management - Various locations	**238**	119	-	119	-	-	-	238	-
25-26 Upgrade disabled parking bays to DDA requirements - Various locations	**110**	-	-	110	-	-	-	110	-
Total roads	**14,815**	**2,389**	**12,000**	**426**	**-**	**3,145**	**-**	**11,670**	**-**
Boardwalk / bridges refurbishment	**298**	-	298	-	-	-	-	298	-
Total bridges	**298**	**-**	**298**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**298**	**-**
Construct Shared Path - McDonalds Road (north side) - Darebin Creek to Civic Drive	**750**	750	-	-	-	-	-	750	-
Construct Shared Path - Yan Yean Pipe Track - Childs Road to Bush Boulevard, Mill Park	**1,000**	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	-
Footpath Reconstruction / Renewal	**2,910**	-	2,910	-	-	-	-	2,910	-
25-26 Missing Footpath Links Program (Small Links) - Various locations	**600**	600	-	-	-	-	-	600	-
Ferres Boulevard Active Travel Infrastructure Upgrades	**800**	800	-	-	-	800	-	-	-
Darebin Creek Trail SUP (Greenbrook Drive to Epping Station)	**800**	800	-	-	-	800	-	-	-
25-26 Bicycle facilities	**100**	80	-	20	-	-	-	100	-
25-26 Kerb Ramp DDA Upgrades - Kerb Alignment	**60**	-	-	60	-	-	-	60	-
25-26 Safe Routes to Schools	**50**	25	-	25	-	-	-	50	-
25-26 Lighting of Shared User Paths Program	**120**	120	-	-	-	-	-	120	-
Total footpaths and cycleways	**7,240**	**4,175**	**2,910**	**155**	**-**	**1,600**	**-**	**5,640**	**-**
WSUD (Water Sensitive Urban Design) Asset Renewal	**350**	-	350	-	-	-	-	350	-
Drainage improvement works (Various Locations)	**250**	250	-	-	-	-	-	250	-
Quarry Hills Drainage Interface - Problem Spot E & F	**50**	25	-	25	-	-	-	50	-
Total drainage	**650**	**275**	**350**	**25**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**650**	**-**

Capital Works Area	Project Cost	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New	Renewal	Upgrade	Expansion	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Sporting Infrastructure Major improvement works - Sport Club Contribution Policy	**20**	20	-	-	-	-	-	20	-
Construct two soccer pitches and pavilion - Ashley Park (Orchard Road)	**500**	500	-	-	-	-	500	-	-
Concept Design of Sports Reserve - Central Wollert SR03 (Alkira)	**250**	250	-	-	-	-	250	-	-
Sporting Net Upgrade and Installation (various locations)	**25**	-	-	25	-	-	-	25	-
Sports Ground Lighting Upgrade Program	**700**	-	-	700	-	-	-	700	-
Hill Top Splash Park and Playground	**800**	800	-	-	-	800	-	-	-
RSP - Regional Sports Precinct - Design & Construct	**33,920**	33,920	-	-	-	11,050	-	-	22,870
Painted Hills Recreation Reserve - Lighting Upgrade	**140**	-	-	140	-	-	-	140	-
Hillsview Recreation Reserve Synthetic Soccer Pitch Upgrade	**500**	-	-	500	-	500	-	-	-
Public Toilet Amenity Plan	**500**	250	250	-	-	-	-	500	-
Total recreational, leisure & community facilities	**37,355**	**35,740**	**250**	**1,365**	**-**	**12,350**	**750**	**1,385**	**22,870**
Extension of the FOGO bin - municipal wide	**2,382**	2,382	-	-	-	-	-	2,382	-
Total waste management	**2,382**	**2,382**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**2,382**	**-**
Huskisson Reserve - Multi Purpose Facility	**5,000**	-	-	5,000	-	-	-	5,000	-
Botanica Park master plan implementation	**350**	70	-	280	-	-	-	350	-
Local Area Traffic Management and Streetscape Improvements - Study and Implementation in Local Areas 26, 32 and 42 in Mill Park and South Morang	**400**	400	-	-	-	-	-	400	-
Whittlesea Park Master Plan, Whittlesea Township	**500**	500	-	-	-	-	-	500	-
Stormwater Harvesting Systems Audit and Rectifications	**210**	210	-	-	-	-	-	210	-
Peter Hopper Lake renewal and upgrade	**642**	-	321	321	-	300	-	342	-
Main Roads and High Profile Streetscapes Planting Program	**300**	300	-	-	-	-	-	300	-
Parks Tree and Major Facilities Planting Program	**450**	450	-	-	-	-	-	450	-
Conservation Reserves Tree Planting Program	**200**	200	-	-	-	-	-	200	-
Quarry Hills - Atrium Reserve Entrance Node	**900**	900	-	-	-	200	-	700	-
Quarry Hills - Regent Street Entrance Node	**900**	900	-	-	-	200	-	700	-
Residential Street Tree Renewal Planting Program	**300**	300	-	-	-	-	-	300	-
Programmed Parks and Open Space Renewal	**455**	50	405	-	-	-	-	455	-
The Boulevard Shops, Thomastown	**820**	-	820	-	-	-	-	820	-
VR Michael Reserve - Master Plan	**245**	245	-	-	-	225	-	20	-
Nick Ascenzo Reserve Masterplan	**85**	64	21	-	-	-	-	85	-
Conservation reserves fencing program	**50**	50	-	-	-	-	-	50	-
Dr Harry Jenkins Park and Playground Redevelopment	**50**	25	-	25	-	-	-	50	-
LTFP Project Management Fees	**3,676**	3,676	-	-	-	-	-	3,676	-
Koukoura (Cerridwen) Park Temporary Park	**350**	-	-	350	-	-	-	350	-
Lalor Recreation Reserve Master Plan Implementation	**250**	188	63	-	-	-	-	250	-
Mill Park Lakes Play Space	**1,000**	-	500	500	-	-	-	1,000	-
25-26 Vehicle Exclusion Fencing	**50**	38	13	-	-	-	-	50	-
25-26 Renewal of playgrounds and general landscape improvements	**2,200**	-	1,760	440	-	-	-	2,200	-
High Street Epping Streetscape Upgrade (Coulstock Street)	**100**	-	-	100	-	-	100	-	-
Sporting Infrastructure Major improvement works	**250**	-	250	-	-	-	-	250	-
Total parks, open space and streetscapes	**19,784**	**8,615**	**4,153**	**7,016**	**-**	**925**	**100**	**18,759**	**-**

Capital Works Area	Project Cost	Asset expenditure types				Summary of Funding Sources			
		New	Renewal	Upgrade	Expansion	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Car Park Rehabilitation Program - Future Year Budgets	**250**	-	250	-	-	-	-	250	-
Gravlier Way Carpark (Swamp Gum Gully)	**600**	-	-	600	-	-	-	600	-
Whittlesea Public Gardens STAGE 2 Implementation - Car Parks	**300**	300	-	-	-	-	-	300	-
Total off street car parks	**1,150**	**300**	**250**	**600**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1,150**	**-**
Streetlight Replacement Program	**1,250**	-	1,250	-	-	450	-	800	-
Public Lighting in Local Streets	**200**	-	-	200	-	-	-	200	-
Infrastructure Planning and Feasibility Studies for Future Projects	**400**	-	-	400	-	-	-	400	-
Water Efficiency Program - Ongoing Program	**250**	250	-	-	-	-	-	250	-
Electric Vehicle Charging at Council Facilities	**150**	150	-	-	-	-	-	150	-
Total other infrastructure	**2,250**	**400**	**1,250**	**600**	**-**	**450**	**-**	**1,800**	**-**
Total infrastructure	**85,923**	**54,275**	**21,461**	**10,187**	**-**	**18,470**	**850**	**43,734**	**22,870**
Total Capital Works	**110,685**	**74,212**	**23,916**	**12,557**	**-**	**27,728**	**7,130**	**52,958**	**22,870**

4.6 Summary of Planned Capital Works Expenditure

For the years ending 30 June 2027, 2028 and 2029

2026-27	Asset Expenditure Types					Summary of Funding Sources				
	Total	New	Renewal	Expansion	Upgrade	Total	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property										
Land	1,900	1,900	-	-	-	1,900	-	-	1,900	-
Land improvements	350	350	-	-	-	350	-	-	350	-
Total land	2,250	2,250	-	-	-	2,250	-	-	2,250	-
Buildings	14,250	14,250	-	-	-	14,250	3,375	825	-	10,050
Building improvements	16,695	1,975	3,075	-	11,645	16,695	1,975	-	9,045	5,675
Total buildings	30,945	16,225	3,075	-	11,645	30,945	5,350	825	9,045	15,725
Total property	**33,195**	**18,475**	**3,075**	**-**	**11,645**	**33,195**	**5,350**	**825**	**11,295**	**15,725**
Plant and equipment										
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,794	1,794	-	-	-	1,794	855	-	939	-
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	137	137	-	-	-	137	-	-	137	-
Computers and telecommunications	1,509	619	-	-	890	1,509	-	-	1,509	-
Total plant and equipment	**3,440**	**2,549**	**-**	**-**	**890**	**3,440**	**855**	**-**	**2,585**	**-**
Infrastructure										
Roads	27,121	12,871	12,000	-	2,250	27,121	2,495	-	21,626	3,000
Bridges	300	-	300	-	-	300	-	-	300	-
Footpaths and cycleways	9,179	6,028	2,914	-	238	9,179	-	-	9,179	-
Drainage	1,260	660	350	-	250	1,260	-	-	1,260	-
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	36,087	32,687	2,850	-	550	36,087	10,450	5,300	3,650	16,687
Waste management	30	30	-	-	-	30	-	-	30	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes	29,946	16,039	7,012	-	6,895	29,946	2,975	-	22,772	4,200
Off street car parks	1,005	230	85	-	690	1,005	-	-	1,005	-
Other infrastructure	1,802	602	500	-	700	1,802	-	-	1,802	-
Total infrastructure	**106,729**	**69,146**	**26,010**	**-**	**11,573**	**106,729**	**15,919**	**5,300**	**61,623**	**23,887**
Total capital works expenditure	**143,364**	**90,170**	**29,085**	**-**	**24,108**	**143,364**	**22,124**	**6,125**	**75,502**	**39,612**

2027-28	Asset Expenditure Types					Summary of Funding Sources				
	Total	New	Renewal	Expansion	Upgrade	Total	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property										
Land	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Land improvements	1,271	1,271	-	-	-	1,271	-	-	1,271	-
Total land	1,271	1,271	-	-	-	1,271	-	-	1,271	-
Buildings	9,071	9,071	-	-	-	9,071	-	125	-	8,946
Building improvements	16,459	-	6,267	-	10,192	16,459	-	-	10,784	5,675
Total buildings	25,530	9,071	6,267	-	10,192	25,530	-	125	10,784	14,621
Total property	**26,801**	**10,342**	**6,267**	**-**	**10,192**	**26,801**	**-**	**125**	**12,055**	**14,621**
Plant and equipment										
Plant, machinery and equipment	2,904	2,904	-	-	-	2,904	876	-	2,028	-
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	77	77	-	-	-	77	-	-	77	-
Computers and telecommunications	1,127	581	-	-	546	1,127	-	-	1,127	-
Total plant and equipment	**4,108**	**3,562**	**-**	**-**	**546**	**4,108**	**876**	**-**	**3,232**	**-**
Infrastructure										
Roads	23,238	7,060	14,500	-	1,678	23,238	2,495	-	18,743	2,000
Bridges	300	-	300	-	-	300	-	-	300	-
Footpaths and cycleways	6,891	3,721	2,910	-	260	6,891	-	-	6,891	-
Drainage	1,950	1,000	700	-	250	1,950	-	-	1,950	-
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	23,680	18,280	4,850	-	550	23,680	-	2,134	6,710	14,836
Waste management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes	18,833	10,083	5,180	-	3,570	18,833	-	-	18,833	-
Off street car parks	85	-	85	-	-	85	-	-	85	-
Other infrastructure	3,483	2,313	500	-	669	3,483	-	-	3,483	-
Total infrastructure	**78,458**	**42,457**	**29,024**	**-**	**6,977**	**78,458**	**2,495**	**2,134**	**56,993**	**16,836**
Total capital works expenditure	**109,367**	**56,361**	**35,290**	**-**	**17,716**	**109,367**	**3,371**	**2,259**	**72,280**	**31,457**

2028-29	Asset Expenditure Types					Summary of Funding Sources				
	Total	New	Renewal	Expansion	Upgrade	Total	External Funding	Contributions	Council Cash/Reserves	Borrowings
	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000	$'000
Property										
Land	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Land improvements	1,100	1,000	-	-	100	1,100	-	-	1,100	-
Total land	1,100	1,000	-	-	100	1,100	-	-	1,100	-
Buildings	412	412	-	-	-	412	-	350	-	62
Building improvements	3,450	125	2,125	-	1,200	3,450	-	-	3,450	-
Total buildings	3,862	537	2,125	-	1,200	3,862	-	350	3,450	62
Total property	**4,962**	**1,537**	**2,125**	**-**	**1,300**	**4,962**	**-**	**350**	**4,550**	**62**
Plant and equipment										
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,746	1,746	-	-	-	1,746	898	-	848	-
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	79	79	-	-	-	79	-	-	79	-
Computers and telecommunications	1,027	411	-	-	616	1,027	-	-	1,027	-
Total plant and equipment	**2,852**	**2,236**	**-**	**-**	**616**	**2,852**	**898**	**-**	**1,954**	**-**
Infrastructure										
Roads	21,580	5,252	14,500	-	1,828	21,580	2,495	-	17,585	1,500
Bridges	650	250	400	-	-	650	-	-	650	-
Footpaths and cycleways	6,268	2,803	2,913	-	553	6,268	-	-	6,268	-
Drainage	2,700	1,750	700	-	250	2,700	-	-	2,700	-
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	8,478	5,428	440	-	2,610	8,478	-	5,428	3,050	-
Waste management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes	20,552	10,352	6,405	-	3,795	20,552	-	-	20,552	-
Off street car parks	90	-	90	-	-	90	-	-	90	-
Other infrastructure	2,214	1,114	500	-	600	2,214	-	-	2,214	-
Total infrastructure	**62,532**	**26,949**	**25,948**	**-**	**9,636**	**62,532**	**2,495**	**5,428**	**53,110**	**1,500**
Total capital works expenditure	**70,347**	**30,722**	**28,073**	**-**	**11,552**	**70,347**	**3,393**	**5,778**	**59,614**	**1,562**

4.7 Proposals to Lease Council Land

This section presents a summary of Council's proposals to lease council land to external parties in the 2025-26 financial year.

Under the s.115(3) of the Local Government Act 2020, Council is required to include any proposal to lease land in a financial year in the budget, where the lease is for:

(a) one year or more and -
  i. the rent for any period of the lease is $100,000 or more a year; or
  ii. the current market rental value of the land is $100,000 or more a year; or

(b) 10 years or more.

Council proposes to offer new leases to the tenants listed below and subject to mutual agreement, the new tenancy arrangements are to be in place during the financial year 2025-26.

Tenant	Location	Street No.	Street	Suburb	Use of Property	Term	Future Term
TBC	Oivine reserve	31W	Olivine Boulevard	Thomastown	Recreation Reserve	10	10
TBC	Meadow Glen Athletics Reserve	146-176	McDonalds Road	Epping	Recreation Reserve	10	10
TBC	Quarry Hills Park	105	Hunters Road	South Morang	Recreation Reserve	10	10
TBC	Bellevue Park	1W	Bloomfiled Drive	South Morang	Recreation Reserve	10	10

5. Performance Indicators

5a. Targeted performance indicators

The following tables highlight Council's current and projected performance across a selection of targeted service and financial performance indicators. These indicators provide a useful analysis of Council's intentions and performance and should be interpreted in the context of the organisation's objectives.
The targeted performance indicators below are the prescribed performance indicators contained in Schedule 4 of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. Results against these indicators and targets will be reported in Council's Performance Statement included in the Annual Report.

Targeted performance indicators - Service

Indicator	Measure	Notes	Actual	Forecast	Target	Target Projections			Trend
			2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	+/o/-
Governance									
Consultation and engagement (Council decisions made and implemented with community input)	**Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement** Community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the consultation and engagement efforts of Council	1	51	51	**51**	52	52	53	+
Roads									
Condition (sealed local roads are maintained at the adopted condition standard)	**Sealed local roads below the intervention level** Number of kms of sealed local roads below the renewal intervention level set by Council / Kms of sealed local roads	2	97.24%	94.80%	**93.50%**	93.50%	93.50%	93.50%	-
Statutory planning									
Service standard (planning application processing and decisions are in accordance with legislative requirements)	**Planning applications decided within the relevant required time** Number of planning application decisions made within the relevant required time / Number of planning application decisions made	3	67.84%	70.00%	**69.36%**	70.75%	71.00%	70.00%	+
Waste management									
Waste diversion (amount of waste diverted from landfill is maximised)	**Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill** Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins	4	44.46%	45.00%	**46.00%**	48.00%	50.00%	52.00%	+

Targeted performance indicators - Financial

Indicator	Measure	Notes	Actual 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	Target 2025-26	Target Projections 2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Trend +/o/-
Liquidity									
Working Capital (sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due)	**Current assets compared to current liabilities** Current assets / current liabilities	5	268.65%	300.08%	**304.54%**	295.25%	288.49%	292.62%	-
Obligations									
Asset renewal (assets are renewed as planned)	**Asset renewal compared to depreciation** Asset renewal and upgrade expense / Asset depreciation	6	82.19%	57.60%	**57.94%**	86.29%	80.21%	56.90%	-
Stability									
Rates concentration (revenue is generated from a range of sources)	**Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue** Rate revenue / adjusted underlying revenue	7	72.11%	68.95%	**72.34%**	73.43%	74.12%	74.52%	+
Efficiency									
Expenditure level (resources are used efficiently in the delivery of services)	**Expenses per property assessment** Total expenses / no. of property assessments	8	$2,892	$3,046	**$3,315**	$3,177	$3,302	$3,333	o

5b. Financial performance indicators

The following table highlights Council's current and projected performance across a range of key financial performance indicators. These indicators provide a useful analysis of Council's financial position and performance and should be interpreted in the context of the organisation's objectives.
The financial performance indicators below are the prescribed financial performance indicators contained in Part 3 of Schedule 3 of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*
Results against these indicators will be reported in Council's Performance Statement included in the Annual Report.

Indicator	Measure	Notes	Actual	Forecast	Budget	Projections			Trend
			2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	+/o/-
Operating position									
Adjusted underlying result (an adjusted underlying surplus is generated in the ordinary course of business)	**Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)** Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue	9	(2.58)%	3.07%	**(4.63)%**	2.39%	0.06%	0.96%	+
Liquidity									
Unrestricted cash (sufficient cash that is free of restrictions is available to pay bills as and when they fall due)	**Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities** Unrestricted cash / current liabilities	10	(184.29)%	(225.52)%	**(231.77)%**	(223.20)%	(217.11)%	(220.69)%	+
Obligations									
Loans and borrowings (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	**Loans and borrowings compared to rates** Interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	11	4.43%	3.45%	**11.19%**	23.36%	30.64%	26.50%	+
Loans and borrowings (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	**Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates** Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue		1.24%	0.75%	**1.88%**	3.65%	4.89%	4.73%	+
Indebtedness (level of long term liabilities is appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities)	**Non-current liabilities compared to own-source revenue** Non-current liabilities / own source revenue		4.70%	3.63%	**9.48%**	18.32%	23.48%	20.74%	+
Stability									
Rates effort (rating level is set based on the community's capacity to pay)	**Rates compared to property values** Rate revenue / CIV of rateable properties in the municipal district	12	0.27%	0.27%	**0.29%**	0.30%	0.31%	0.32%	o

Indicator	Measure	Notes	Actual 2023-24	Forecast 2024-25	Budget 2025-26	Projections 2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Trend +/o/-
Efficiency									
Revenue level (resources are used efficiently in the delivery of services)	**Average rate per property assessment** General rates and municipal charges / no. of property assessments	13	$1,795	$1,869	**$1,917**	$1,961	$2,005	$2,049	**o**

Key to Forecast Trend:

\+ Forecasts improvement in Council's financial performance/financial position indicator

o Forecasts that Council's financial performance/financial position indicator will be steady

\- Forecasts deterioration in Council's financial performance/financial position indicator

Notes to indicators

5a. Targeted performance indicators

1. Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement

We are committed to implementing our Community Engagement Policy, which prioritises meaningful engagement with underrepresented groups and enhances deliberative practices. Our goal is to reduce barriers and create inclusive opportunities for our community to have their say.

2. Sealed local roads below the intervention level

We have greater confidence in our data regarding the condition of public roads following a recent condition assessment conducted in 2024. Currently, we are developing a four-year road renewal program to address road assets in poor condition, supported by inspections and maintenance outlined in the Council's Road Management Plan.
The R2 score remains unchanged from the previous reporting cycle due to two key factors. First, newly added roads from developers in the Council's Asset Register are in excellent condition. However, this has been offset by a slight increase in roads classified as poor or very poor (intervention level) due to reduced investment in recent Road Renewal Programs, as detailed in the Council's Transport Asset Management Plan (Appendix A), which aims to maintain existing service levels.

3. Planning applications decided within the relevant required time

We anticipate a consistent trend over the next few years as we refine process and system improvements, and the current economic climate settles, noting that upcoming changes to legislation may influen

4. Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill

The 2025-26 target takes into consideration the impact of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) which means that significant volumes of glass and recycling are no longer processed by the kerbside bin service. A small increase is planned with the continue push for resident to utilise the FOGO service. As such, 46% is deemed to be likely and achievable target.

5. Working Capital

The proportion of current liabilities represented by current assets. Working capital is forecast to decrease over the following years due to funding large capital projects.

6. Asset renewal
This percentage indicates the extent of Council's renewal against its depreciation charge (an indication of the decline in value of its existing capital assets). A percentage greater than 100 indicates Council is maintaining its existing assets, while a percentage less than 100 means its assets are deteriorating faster than they are being renewed and future capital expenditure will be required to renew assets.

7. Rates concentration
Reflects the extent of reliance on rate revenues to fund all of Council's ongoing services. Trend indicates Council's rates concentration is expected to slightly increase over the future years. Rate revenue continues to be an important source of revenue for Council to be able to deliver services and renew its assets.

8. Expenditure level
This indicator is forecast to consistent in future years mainly due to growth in property assessments being in line with expenditure level.

5b. Financial performance indicators

9. Adjusted underlying result
The adjusted underlying operating result excludes the impact of non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions and contributions from developers to fund capital expenditure. It is an indicator of the sustainable operating result required to enable Council to continue to provide core services and meet its objectives.

10. Unrestricted Cash
This represents cash funds which are free of all specific Council commitments and are available to meet daily cash flow requirements, unexpected short term needs and any Budget commitments.

11. Debt compared to rates
This indicator observes Council's ability to repay its debts using its key source of income, rates revenue. Trend indicates Council's increased use of debt to fund significant capital projects.

12. Rates effort
Council rates have moved in a consistent proportion to property values and the indicator is forecast not to reflect any significant changes.

13. Revenue level
This indicator has increased in line with the rates revenue and the same is expected to occur in future years to align with forecast rates increases.



Fees and Charges Schedule

2025-2026

City of Whittlesea

This appendix presents the fees and charges of a statutory/non-statutory nature which will be charged in respect to various goods and services during the FY 2025-26.

Note that this schedule only includes fees set by Council. There are other fees that are set by statute and charged by Council in addition to this listing. These are statutory fees, and are made in accordance with legislative requirements. These fees are updated as of 1 July 2025 and will be reflected on Council's website.

Fees and charges are based on information available at the time of publishing and may vary during the financial year subject to any changes in Council's policy or legislation.

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Planning Services							
Planning Permits							
Class 1	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 2	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 3	Per permit	N	$694.00	$711.35	2.50%	$17.35	Statutory
Class 4	Per permit	N	$1,420.70	$1,456.20	2.50%	$35.50	Statutory
Class 5	Per permit	N	$1,535.00	$1,573.35	2.50%	$38.35	Statutory
Class 6	Per permit	N	$1,649.30	$1,690.50	2.50%	$41.20	Statutory
Class 7	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 8	Per permit	N	$473.60	$485.40	2.49%	$11.80	Statutory
Class 9	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 10	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 11	Per permit	N	$1,265.60	$1,297.20	2.50%	$31.60	Statutory
Class 12	Per permit	N	$1,706.50	$1,749.15	2.50%	$42.65	Statutory
Class 13	Per permit	N	$3,764.10	$3,858.20	2.50%	$94.10	Statutory
Class 14	Per permit	N	$9,593.90	$9,833.75	2.50%	$239.85	Statutory
Class 15	Per permit	N	$28,291.70	$28,998.95	2.50%	$707.25	Statutory
Class 16	Per permit	N	$63,589.00	$65,178.70	2.50%	$1,589.70	Statutory
Class 17	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 18	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 19	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 20	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 21	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 22	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Planning Permits Amendments							
Class 1	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 2	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 3	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 4	Per permit	N	$694.00	$711.35	2.50%	$17.35	Statutory
Class 5	Per permit	N	$1,420.70	$1,456.20	2.50%	$35.50	Statutory
Class 6	Per permit	N	$1,535.00	$1,573.35	2.50%	$38.35	Statutory
Class 7	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 8	Per permit	N	$473.60	$485.40	2.49%	$11.80	Statutory
Class 9	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 10	Per permit	N	$220.50	$226.00	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Class 11	Per permit	N	$1,265.60	$1,297.20	2.50%	$31.60	Statutory
Class 12	Per permit	N	$1,706.50	$1,749.15	2.50%	$42.65	Statutory
Class 13	Per permit	N	$3,764.10	$3,858.20	2.50%	$94.10	Statutory
Class 14	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 15	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 16	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 17	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 18	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory
Class 19	Per permit	N	$1,453.40	$1,489.70	2.50%	$36.30	Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Planning Applications							
Public Notice on Site	Per notice	N	$256.80	$266.55	3.80%	$9.75	Non-Statutory
Notice to Adjoining Owners/ Occupiers	Per letter	N	$16.35	$16.95	3.67%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Planning Application – Amendments							
Amend an Application for a Permit After Notice (Advertising) has been given but not yet determined for every Class of Application (other than Class 4 application where there is no fee) listed under Regulation 7	Per application	N	Statutory fee that is variable based on a percentage of the cost of development				Statutory
Amend an Application for a Permit After Notice of the Application has been given but not yet determined for every Class of Application (other than Class 5 Application where there is no fee) listed under Regulation 8B	Per application	N	Statutory fee that is variable based on a percentage of the cost of development				Statutory
Planning Certificates							
Certificates of Compliance – Section 97N	Per certificate	N	$359.30	$368.25	2.49%	$8.95	Statutory
Satisfaction Matters	Per matter	N	$359.30	$368.25	2.49%	$8.95	Statutory
Planning Scheme – Amendments							
Stage 1	Per amendment stage	N	$3,364.00	$3,448.10	2.50%	$84.10	Statutory
Stage 2 – up to and including 10 Submissions	Per amendment stage	N	$16,672.90	$17,089.70	2.50%	$416.80	Statutory
Stage 2 – 11 (and including) 20 Submissions	Per amendment stage	N	$33,313.20	$34,146.00	2.50%	$832.80	Statutory
Stage 2 – exceed 20 Submissions	Per amendment stage	N	$44,531.90	$45,645.20	2.50%	$1,113.30	Statutory
Stage 3	Per amendment stage	N	$530.70	$543.95	2.50%	$13.25	Statutory
Stage 4	Per amendment stage	N	$530.70	$543.95	2.50%	$13.25	Statutory
Subdivision							
Small Second Dwelling Street Addressing	Per application	N	$0.00	$92.65	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
For Certification of a Plan of Subdivision	Per application	N	$192.70	$197.50	2.49%	$4.80	Statutory
Resort & Recreation Open Space Contribution	Per application	N			Percentage of land value		Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Subdivision [continued]							
Alteration of Plan Under Section 10(2) of the Act	Per application	N	$122.50	$125.55	2.49%	$3.05	Statutory
Amendment of Certified Plan Under Section 11(1) of the Act	Per application	N	$155.10	$158.95	2.48%	$3.85	Statutory
Checking of Engineering Plans	Per plan	N	0.75% of estimated cost of works				Statutory
Engineering Plan Prepared by Council	Per plan	N	3.5% of cost				Statutory
Supervision of the Works		N	2.5% of estimated cost				Statutory
Development Plans Amendments							
Development Plan Fee (includes Amendment)	Per amendment	N	$1,030.45	$1,069.60	3.80%	$39.15	Non-Statutory
Planning Fees							
Extension of Time to a Planning Permit	Per permit	N	$330.80	$343.35	3.79%	$12.55	Non-Statutory
Demolition Approvals (S29A Building Act)	Per approval	N	$92.50	$94.80	2.49%	$2.30	Statutory
Planning Information Request	Per request	N	$165.85	$218.30	31.62%	$52.45	Non-Statutory
Amend or End Sec 173 Agreement	Per amendment	N	$726.70	$744.85	2.50%	$18.15	Statutory
File Retrieval Off-site	Per retrieval	N	$108.45	$112.55	3.78%	$4.10	Non-Statutory
File Retrieval On-site	Per retrieval	N	$65.00	$67.45	3.77%	$2.45	Non-Statutory
Title Search (Simple)	Per search	N	$55.25	$57.35	3.80%	$2.10	Non-Statutory
Title Search (Complex)	Per search	N	$71.55	$74.25	3.77%	$2.70	Non-Statutory
Secondary Consent - Single Dwellings	Per application	N	$330.80	$343.35	3.79%	$12.55	Non-Statutory
Secondary Consent - Other	Per application	N	$0.00	$773.30	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Planning Copy Fees							
Permit Fee (per Copy)							
Electronic Copy of Permit (If Available)	Per permit	N	$65.00	$67.45	3.77%	$2.45	Non-Statutory
Approved Plans (per Copy)							
Electronic Copy of Plans (If Available)	Per permit	N	$65.00	$67.45	3.77%	$2.45	Non-Statutory
Copy of Documentation							
Copy of Planning Application Register (per Month)	Per retrieval	N	$37.95	$39.35	3.69%	$1.40	Non-Statutory
Copy of Advertised Documentation (Plans and Reports)	Per retrieval	N	$27.05	$28.05	3.70%	$1.00	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Building Services							
Residential Permits (Owner Builder)							
Dwelling Extensions/Alterations (All) (includes Class 1b) over $150,000	Per permit	Y	$1,717.10	$1,888.80	10.00%	$171.70	Non-Statutory
Dwellings Extensions/Alterations (All) (includes Class 1b) (includes Brick Garages) up to $150,000	Per permit	Y	$1,323.35	$2,000.00	51.13%	$676.65	Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (Between $300,000 and $600,000 requiring more than 4 Inspections)	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (Between $300,000 and $600,000 up to 4 Inspections)	Per permit	Y	$2,820.25	$3,102.25	10.00%	$282.00	Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (over $600,000)	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (up to $300,000 requiring more than 4 Inspections)	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (up to $300,000 up to 4 Inspections)	Per permit	Y	$2,568.75	$2,825.65	10.00%	$256.90	Non-Statutory
Outbuildings, Steel Garages, Brick Garages, Carports, Verandas, Decks, Retaining Walls, Underpin, Fences and Sheds under 100m2 (does not include Re-Blocking or Re-Stumping)	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$847.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Re-Stumping or Re-Blocking	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
Sheds over 100m2	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$880.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Minor Dwelling Alterations (including Removal of Internal Wall, increasing a Window size)	Per permit	Y	$770.60	$990.00	28.47%	$219.40	Non-Statutory
Demolitions (where Protection Work not required)	Per permit	Y	$719.20	$900.00	25.14%	$180.80	Non-Statutory
Residential Permits (Registered Builder)							
Demolitions (where Protection Work Not Required)	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$900.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Dwelling Extensions/Alterations (All) (includes Class 1b) over $150,000	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
Dwellings Extensions/Alterations (All) (includes Class 1b) (includes Brick Garages) up to $150,000	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$1,717.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Minor Dwelling Alterations (including Removal of Internal Wall, Increasing a Window Size)	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$880.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (between $300,000 and $600,000 requiring more than 4 Inspections)	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (between $300,000 and $600,000)	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$2,989.20	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (over $600,000)	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (up to $300,000 requiring more than 4 Inspections)	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
New Dwelling (up to $300,000)	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$2,722.10	∞	∞	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Residential Permits (Registered Builder) [continued]							
Outbuildings, Steel Garages, Brick Garages, Carports, Verandas, Decks, Retaining Walls, Underpin, Fences and Sheds under 100m2 (does not include Re-Blocking or Re-Stumping)	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$816.20	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Protection Works Notices Hourly Fee (for more than 3 Hours Work)	Per application	Y	$0.00	$150.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Re-stumping or Re-blocking	Per permit	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
Sheds over 100m2	Per permit	Y	$0.00	$880.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Volume Permits (20+) – Price on Application		Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
Multi Unit Development (Each Dwelling)	Per permit	Y	$959.95	$1,055.95	10.00%	$96.00	Non-Statutory
Multi Unit Development (Over $300,000 Each Unit)	Per permit	Y	$1,713.85	$1,885.25	10.00%	$171.40	Non-Statutory
Protection Work Notices (up to 3 Hours of Work)	Per permit	Y	$395.85	$435.45	10.00%	$39.60	Non-Statutory
Swimming Pools & Safety Barriers							
Form 23 - Certificate of Pool and Spa Barrier Compliance (Additional Inspection Fee)	Per application	Y	$0.00	$150.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Form 23 - Certificate of Pool and Spa Barrier Compliance (One Inspection Only)	Per application	Y	$526.40	$350.00	-33.51%	-$176.40	Non-Statutory
Infringements Pools and Spas	Per compliance follow up	N	$396.20	$406.10	2.50%	$9.90	Statutory
Lodgement Certificate of Compliance	Per certificate	N	$22.55	$23.10	2.44%	$0.55	Statutory
Lodgement Certificate of Non-Compliance	Per certificate	N	$425.85	$436.50	2.50%	$10.65	Statutory
Pool Registration	Per registration	N	$35.15	$36.00	2.42%	$0.85	Statutory
Search Fee	Per search	N	$52.20	$53.50	2.49%	$1.30	Statutory
Swimming Pools	Per inspection	Y	$954.55	$1,200.00	25.71%	$245.45	Non-Statutory
Commercial Works							
All Commercial Works	Per inspection	Y			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
Building Fees							
Additional Hoarding Inspections (greater than 4 inspections)	Per lodgement	N	$120.00	$124.55	3.79%	$4.55	Non-Statutory
Alternate Solution	Per lodgement	Y	$390.50	$405.30	3.79%	$14.80	Non-Statutory
Building Permit - External Application Fee on top of Project Fees	Per permit	Y	$251.70	$257.95	2.48%	$6.25	Statutory

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Building Fees [continued]

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Easement Report (when Structure Built) - Non-Statutory Component	Per report	Y	$170.00	$176.45	3.79%	$6.45	Non-Statutory
Easement Report (when Structure Built) - Statutory Component	Per property	N	$311.80	$319.60	2.50%	$7.80	Statutory
Hoarding – Weekly Occupation Fee/Charge	$1 per sqm capped at $100 p/ week	N				$1 per sqm Capped at $100 p/week Min. Fee: $4.00	Statutory
Hoarding Application - Reg 116	Per lodgement	N	$325.00	$333.10	2.49%	$8.10	Statutory
Hoarding Permit Renewal	Per renewal	N	$90.00	$93.40	3.78%	$3.40	Non-Statutory
Report and Consent Advertising Fee per Regulation	Per application	N	$212.70	$220.75	3.78%	$8.05	Non-Statutory
Report and Consent Advertising per Property	Per application	N	$318.75	$330.85	3.80%	$12.10	Non-Statutory
Section 137B Owner Builder Reports (Defect Reports)	Per property	Y	$850.00	$882.30	3.80%	$32.30	Non-Statutory
Siting Report (when Structure Built) - Non-Statutory Component	Per property	Y	$170.00	$225.00	32.35%	$55.00	Non-Statutory
Siting Report (when Structure Built) - Statutory Component	Per property	N	$311.80	$459.45	47.35%	$147.65	Statutory
Subdivision of Existing Buildings Report	Per application	Y		$800 min or $170 per unit for larger subdivisions		Min. Fee: $800.00	Non-Statutory
Report & Consent (Siting)	Per application	N	$448.25	$459.45	2.50%	$11.20	Statutory
Build Over Easement Consent or Flood Prone Land Consent	Per application	N	$321.15	$329.15	2.49%	$8.00	Statutory
Stormwater Drainage Asset Information	Per retrieval	N	$231.40	$237.15	2.48%	$5.75	Statutory
Property Information	Per retrieval	N	$51.30	$52.55	2.44%	$1.25	Statutory
Lodgement Fee	Per lodgement	N	$132.50	$135.80	2.49%	$3.30	Statutory
Combining of Essential Safety Measure Schedule Reg. 1206	Per application	N			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
Building Permit Extension of Time	Per permit	Y	$256.85	$300.00	16.80%	$43.15	Non-Statutory
Amendment of Building Permit/ Occupancy Permit/Warranty Certificate	Per permit	N	$143.10	$148.50	3.77%	$5.40	Non-Statutory
Change of Use (Other)	Per application	N			Price on Application		Non-Statutory
Change of Use (Home Occupation)	Per application	N	$727.80	$1,000.00	37.40%	$272.20	Non-Statutory
Report for the Purposes Liquor Licensing	Per report	N	$309.10	$700.00	126.46%	$390.90	Non-Statutory
Section 29A Report and Consent	Per property	N	$91.85	$94.15	2.50%	$2.30	Statutory
Additional Inspections Above Allowed by Building Permit	Per inspection	Y	$184.90	$200.00	8.17%	$15.10	Non-Statutory
Weekend Inspections	Per inspection	Y	$298.25	$350.00	17.35%	$51.75	Non-Statutory
Place of Public Entertainment (POPE) Base Fee (not including Temporary Structures)	Per structure	N	$791.15	$1,650.00	108.56%	$858.85	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Building Fees [continued]							
Place of Public Entertainment (POPE) Per Structure (In Addition to Base Fee)	Per structure	N	$0.00	$900.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Place of Public Entertainment (POPE) Amendment Fee (After Issued)	Per structure	N	$0.00	$500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Section 57 Prescribed Temporary Structure on Council Land Siting	Per structure	N	$621.00	$636.50	2.50%	$15.50	Statutory
Building Copy Fees							
Any Search that Exceeds 1 Hour Will Incur an Additional Fee Per Hour or Part Thereof	Per search	N	$27.05	$28.05	3.70%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Copy of Residential Plans	Per plan	N	$121.45	$174.85	43.97%	$53.40	Non-Statutory
Copy of Commercial Plans/Multi Unit Site (Search Fee Only) + Charges Per Copied Sheet	Per plan	N	$231.00	$280.00	21.21%	$49.00	Non-Statutory
Copy of Building Permit or Occupancy Permit	Per permit	N	$56.35	$92.65	64.42%	$36.30	Non-Statutory
City Design and Transportation							
Subdivision							
Supervision of Works	Per cost of works	N	2.5% of cost of works under the Subdivision Act 1988 **Last year fee** 2.5% of cost of works under the Subdivision Act 1988				Statutory
Checking of Engineering Plans	Per cost of works	N	0.75% of cost of works under the Subdivision Act 1988 **Last year fee** 0.75% of cost of works under the Subdivision Act 1988				Statutory
Engineering Plans							
Engineering Plans Assessment Fee – for Developments up to 2 Units	Per assessment	N	$91.50	$94.95	3.77%	$3.45	Non-Statutory
Engineering Plans Assessment Fee – for Developments 3 to 10 Units	Per assessment	N	$183.00	$189.95	3.80%	$6.95	Non-Statutory
Engineering Plans Assessment Fee – for more than 10 Units, Small Commercial/Industrial Developments	Per assessment	N	$366.50	$380.40	3.79%	$13.90	Non-Statutory
Engineering Plans Assessment Fee – for Large Commercial/Industrial Developments	Per assessment	N	$733.00	$760.85	3.80%	$27.85	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Asset Protection							
Asset Protection - Commercial							
Infrastructure Protection Fee (2-5 Residential Units)	Per permit	N	$1,059.65	$1,099.90	3.80%	$40.25	Non-Statutory
Asset Inspection Permit Fee – Commercial $500,000 to $1,000,000	Per permit	N	$2,545.00	$2,641.70	3.80%	$96.70	Non-Statutory
Asset Inspection Permit Fee – Commercial $1,000,001 to $2,500,000	Per permit	N	$3,652.70	$3,791.50	3.80%	$138.80	Non-Statutory
Asset Inspection Permit Fee – Commercial $1,000,001 to $10,000,000	Per permit	N	$0.00	$3,791.50	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Asset Inspection Permit Fee – Commercial $10,000,001 plus	Per permit	N	$0.00	$5,496.95	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Asset Inspections							
Re-inspection Fee	Per request	N	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Asset Inspection - Application Fee - Domestic	Per permit	N	$469.60	$487.40	3.79%	$17.80	Non-Statutory
Permit Fee – Building Site Bins (Council Land)	Per permit	N	$194.60	$201.95	3.78%	$7.35	Non-Statutory
Occupation of Council Land - Application Fee	Per permit	N	$194.60	$201.95	3.78%	$7.35	Non-Statutory
Asset Protection (Works in Road Reserve Permits)							
Minor Works - Vehicle Crossing or Crossover Permit	Per permit	N	$146.10	$151.65	3.80%	$5.55	Non-Statutory
Minor Works (Service Connection where Excavation is Limited to within Nature Strip)	Per permit	N	$94.95	$97.30	2.47%	$2.35	Statutory
Nature Strip Modification Permit	Per permit	N	$66.75	$69.25	3.75%	$2.50	Non-Statutory
Reinstatement of Nature Strip	Per square metre	N				Min. Fee: $364.00	Cost recovery
Road Occupation Fees - Commercial, Industrial Property or Two or More Units	Per permit	N	$10.35	$10.60	2.42%	$0.25	Statutory
Road Occupation Fees - Domestic, Private Single Dwelling or Local Shop Trader	Per permit	N	$5.15	$5.25	1.94%	$0.11	Statutory
Traffic Management Plan Fee	Per permit	N	$110.10	$114.25	3.77%	$4.15	Non-Statutory
Reinstatement of Concrete Footpaths & Vehicle Crossings	Per square metre	Y				Min. Fee: $721.00	Non-Statutory
Reinstatement of Concrete Kerb & Channel as per Council's Standard	Per lineal metre	Y				Min. Fee: $663.00	Non-Statutory
Reinstatement of Damaged Nature Strips and Garden Beds	Per square metre	Y				Min. Fee: $598.00	Non-Statutory
Removal of Waste from Nature Strips or Other Council Public Areas	Per square metre	Y				Min. Fee: $402.00	Non-Statutory
Removal of Non-Compliant Nature Strips and Reinstatement	Per square metre	Y				Min. Fee: $803.00	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Asset Protection (Works in Road Reserve Permits) [continued]							
Council Road where Speed Limit is greater than 50km/hr	Per permit	N	$705.90	$723.55	2.50%	$17.65	Statutory
Council Road where Speed Limit is 50km/hr or less	Per permit	N	$384.85	$394.45	2.49%	$9.60	Statutory
Council Road where Speed Limit is greater than 50km/hr	Per permit	N	$384.85	$394.45	2.49%	$9.60	Statutory
Council Road where Speed Limit is 50km/hr or less	Per permit	N	$98.25	$100.70	2.49%	$2.45	Statutory
Council Road where Speed Limit is greater than 50km/hr	Per permit	N	$152.30	$156.10	2.50%	$3.80	Statutory
Council Road where Speed Limit is 50km/hr or less	Per permit	N	$152.30	$156.10	2.50%	$3.80	Statutory
Council Road where Speed Limit is greater than 50km/hr	Per permit	N	$98.25	$100.70	2.49%	$2.45	Statutory
Council Road where Speed Limit is 50km/hr or less	Per permit	N	$98.25	$100.70	2.49%	$2.45	Statutory
City Presentation							
Reinstatements							
Footpaths 100mm Concrete (Reinforced)	Per square metre	N	$208.60	$216.50	3.79%	$7.90	Non-Statutory
Footpaths 125mm Concrete (Reinforced)	Per square metre	N	$231.70	$240.50	3.80%	$8.80	Non-Statutory
Footpaths & Crossovers 150mm Concrete (Reinforced)	Per square metre	N	$243.25	$252.45	3.78%	$9.20	Non-Statutory
Footpaths & Crossovers 200mm Concrete (Reinforced)	Per square metre	N	$276.25	$286.75	3.80%	$10.50	Non-Statutory
DDA Tactile Tiles – less than 2 sqm	Per square metre	N	$380.85	$395.30	3.79%	$14.45	Non-Statutory
DDA Tactile Tiles – greater than 2 sqm	Per square metre	N	$378.70	$393.05	3.79%	$14.35	Non-Statutory
Road General	Per square metre	N	$198.15	$205.65	3.79%	$7.50	Non-Statutory
Deep Lift Asphalt	Per square metre	N	$258.65	$268.45	3.79%	$9.80	Non-Statutory
Kerb & Channel	Per metre	N	$244.35	$253.60	3.79%	$9.25	Non-Statutory
Footpath Granitic Sand	Per square metre	N	$124.30	$129.00	3.78%	$4.70	Non-Statutory
Footpath Asphalt	Per square metre	N	$121.60	$126.20	3.78%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Waste Management							
Food and Green Waste							
240 Litre Food and Green Waste Charge	Per bin	N	$105.15	$95.30	-9.37%	-$9.85	Non-Statutory
Additional Bin Charges							
120 Litre Environmental Charge Garbage - Domestic	Per bin	N	$315.10	$319.85	1.51%	$4.75	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Additional Bin Charges [continued]							
120 Litre Environmental Charge Garbage - Domestic - Delivery Fee	Per bin	N	$61.80	$62.75	1.54%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
240 Litre Environmental Charge Garbage - Commercial	Per bin	N	$767.30	$778.80	1.50%	$11.50	Non-Statutory
240 Litre Environmental Charge Garbage - Commercial - Delivery Fee	Per bin	N	$67.15	$68.15	1.49%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
240 Litre Environmental Charge Recycle - Commercial	Per bin	N	$124.75	$126.65	1.52%	$1.90	Non-Statutory
240 Litre Environmental Charge Recycle - Domestic	Per bin	N	$124.75	$126.65	1.52%	$1.90	Non-Statutory
Waste Kerbside Service Charge							
120 Litre Garbage, 240 Litre Recycle and 120 Litre Glass Bins	Per bin	N	$205.70	$208.80	1.51%	$3.10	Non-Statutory
Landfill Levy*	Per landfill levy	N	$14.20	$105.85	645.42%	$91.65	Non-Statutory
*Historically, the City of Whittlesea has subsidised waste management charges for our residents but in 2025-26 the Victorian Government's landfill levy will further rise by 28% per tonne and Council can no longer continue to subsidise this charge.							
Commercial Waste Kerbside Service Charge							
240 Litre Garbage and Recycle Bins	Per bin	N	$267.30	$271.35	1.52%	$4.05	Non-Statutory
Landfill Levy*	Per landfill levy	N	$19.80	$166.60	741.41%	$146.80	Non-Statutory
*Historically, the City of Whittlesea has subsidised waste management charges for our residents but in 2025-26 the Victorian Government's landfill levy will further rise by 28% per tonne and Council can no longer continue to subsidise this charge.							
Other							
Landfill Levy* - No Bin Service	Per landfill levy	N	$16.65	$15.45	-7.21%	-$1.20	Non-Statutory
*Historically, the City of Whittlesea has subsidised waste management charges for our residents but in 2025-26 the Victorian Government's landfill levy will further rise by 28% per tonne and Council can no longer continue to subsidise this charge.							
Parks and Urban Design							
Street Trees							
Tree Replacement Fee (New or Juvenile) less than 5 Metres	Per tree less than 5 metres	N	$651.60	$676.35	3.80%	$24.75	Non-Statutory
Street Tree Replacement Fee (Other Trees) greater than 5 Metres	Per tree greater than 5 metres	N	Value (V) = Basic Value ($) x Species (S) x Aesthetics (A) x Locality (L) x Condition (C) Min. Fee: $675.00				Non-Statutory
Subdivision							
Padlock Fees	Per unit	Y	$165.00	$198.00	20.00%	$33.00	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Subdivision [continued]							
Engineering Plans Checking Fees – Landscape Works Plan	Each plan submission (usually stage based)	N	0.75% of landscape construction costs under the Subdivisions (Fees) Regulations 2016 - Regulation 9 **Last year fee** 0.75% of landscape construction costs under the Subdivisions (Fees) Regulations 2016 - Regulation 9				Statutory
Engineering Surveillance Fees – Landscape Works	Each plan submission (usually stage based)	N	2.5% of landscape construction costs under the Subdivision (Fees) Regulations 2016 - Regulation 11 **Last year fee** 2.5% of landscape construction costs under the Subdivision (Fees) Regulations 2016 - Regulation 11				Statutory
Native Vegetation Management Costs							
Native Vegetation Offset Management Costs – per Hectare, per Year	Per hectare per year	N	$7,938.40	$8,240.05	3.80%	$301.65	Non-Statutory
Parks and City Forest - Parks Access Permit to Undertake Works							
Key Replacement	Per key	Y	$280.70	$291.35	3.79%	$10.65	Non-Statutory
Park Access Permit/Admin Charges	Per application	N	$280.70	$291.35	3.79%	$10.65	Non-Statutory
Financial Services							
Revenue							
Land Information Certificates per Property (Standard)	Per property	N	$29.70	$30.40	2.36%	$0.70	Statutory
Land Information Certificates per Property (Urgency Fee)	Per property	N	$44.50	$46.15	3.71%	$1.65	Non-Statutory
Duplicate Rate Notice per Property (Current year)	Per property	N	$16.60	$17.20	3.61%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Duplicate Rate Notice per Property (per Non-Current Year)	Per property	N	$26.25	$27.25	3.81%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Cheque Dishonour – Bank	Per dishonour	N	$11.40	$11.80	3.51%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Cheque Dishonour – Australia Post	Per dishonour	N	$15.40	$15.95	3.57%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Direct Debit Dishonour (Bank Account)	Per dishonour	N	$37.65	$39.05	3.72%	$1.40	Non-Statutory
Rates Transaction Statement (per Property)	Per property	N	$52.95	$54.95	3.78%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Rates Search Fee – Per 0.5 hrs for Searching Archives per Property	Per property	N	$71.30	$74.00	3.79%	$2.70	Non-Statutory
Processing Fee for Title Search per Property	Per property	N	$79.25	$82.25	3.79%	$3.00	Non-Statutory
Civic Administration							
Freedom of Information							
Freedom of Information Application Fee	Per application	N	$32.70	$33.50	2.45%	$0.80	Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Freedom of Information [continued]							
FOI – Charge for Search Time (per Hour or Part of an Hour)	Per hour	N	$24.50	$25.10	2.45%	$0.60	Statutory
FOI – Charge for Supervision (per Quarter Hour or Part of a Quarter Hour)	Per quarter hour	N	$6.13	$6.25	1.96%	$0.13	Statutory
FOI – Charge for Providing Black and White Photocopy (per A4 Page, Single Sided)	Per A4 page, single sided	N	$0.20	$0.20	0.00%	$0.00	Statutory
Local Laws							
Local Laws							
Filming Permit - Commercial Operator	Per permit	N	$216.90	$225.10	3.78%	$8.20	Non-Statutory
Local Law - General Application or Permit Fee - Applies where No Fee is Prescribed	Per application or permit	N	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Municipal Law Fines - per Penalty Unit (New Local Government Act)	1 State of Victoria penalty unit	N	1 State of Victoria Penalty Unit				Statutory
Towing Fee	Per tow	N	At external contractor's cost				Non-Statutory
Use Building Site for Camping. C14.1 Building Site Code, General Municipal Law (No. 1 Of 2014)	Per offence	N	$1,035.00	$1,060.85	2.50%	$25.85	Statutory
Release Fee – for Impounded Item	Per item	N	$110.05	$114.20	3.77%	$4.15	Non-Statutory
Release Fee – for Impounded Vehicle	Per vehicle	N	$412.55	$428.20	3.79%	$15.65	Non-Statutory
Litter Offences Asset Protection – 'On the Spot' Fines – Minimum	Per litter offence	N	$1,368.85	$1,403.05	2.50%	$34.20	Statutory
Litter Offences Asset Protection – 'On the Spot' Fines – Maximum	Per litter offence	N	$2,052.70	$2,104.00	2.50%	$51.30	Statutory
Infringement Courtesy Letter (Final Notice) Fee	Per notice	N	Penalty Fee as set by State of Victoria				Statutory
Street Activities							
A Frame/Tear Drop Signs - per Sign - Annual Application Permit Fee	Per sign	N	$94.30	$97.85	3.76%	$3.55	Non-Statutory
Clothing Bins - per Bin	Per bin	N	$220.10	$228.45	3.79%	$8.35	Non-Statutory
Domestic Skip Bin Permit - Public Land - per Bin	Per bin	N	$94.30	$97.85	3.76%	$3.55	Non-Statutory
Footpath Dining - Ancillary Items - per Item (eg Umbrellas, Outdoor Heaters and Portable Barriers)	Per item	N				No Fee	Non-Statutory
Footpath Trading - Dining & Display of Goods - Annual Fee per 1m2	Per annual permit	N	$54.20	$56.25	3.78%	$2.05	Non-Statutory
Fundraising & Soliciting Permit - Application Fee	Per application	N	$187.15	$194.25	3.79%	$7.10	Non-Statutory
Fundraising Permit - Registered Charity Organisations	Per permit	N				No Fee	Non-Statutory
Impound Holding Fee (After 14 Days) - per Day	Per day	N	$0.00	$32.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Street Activities [continued]							
Real Estate Pointer Boards - per Real Estate Agency - Annual Fee	Per permit	N	$401.85	$417.10	3.79%	$15.25	Non-Statutory
Roadside Trading Permit - 12 Months	Per permit	N	$1,540.90	$1,599.45	3.80%	$58.55	Non-Statutory
Roadside Trading Permit - 3 Months	Per permit	N	$384.95	$399.55	3.79%	$14.60	Non-Statutory
Roadside Trading Permit - 6 Months	Per permit	N	$770.65	$799.90	3.80%	$29.25	Non-Statutory
Roadside Trading Permit - 9 Months	Per permit	N	$1,155.95	$1,199.85	3.80%	$43.90	Non-Statutory
Shipping Container Permit - per Container	Per container	N	$220.10	$228.45	3.79%	$8.35	Non-Statutory
Animal Management							
Foster Organisations Registration - Annual Fee per Organisation	Per organisation	N	$53.15	$55.15	3.76%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Rescue / Foster Carer Dog Registration Fee - per Dog	Per dog	N	$7.40	$7.65	3.38%	$0.25	Statutory
Rescue/Foster Carer Cat Registration Fee - per Cat	Per cat	N	$4.25	$4.35	2.35%	$0.10	Statutory
Domestic Animal Business Registration - Annual	Per annual registration	N	$343.85	$352.45	2.50%	$8.60	Statutory
Excess Animal Permit Application Fee	Per application	N	$110.05	$114.20	3.77%	$4.15	Non-Statutory
Replacement Animal Registration Tag Fee	Per tag	N	$10.95	$11.35	3.65%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Inspection of Animal Registration Records - per Animal	Per inspection	N	$21.95	$22.75	3.64%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Livestock							
Livestock Transport	At contractor's cost	N			At contractor's cost **Last year fee** At contractors cost		Non-Statutory
Release Fee – per Animal	Per animal	N	$106.35	$110.35	3.76%	$4.00	Non-Statutory
Keeping/Feeding Fee - Impounded Livestock - per Day, per Animal	Per day, Per animal	N	$41.75	$43.30	3.71%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Animal Registration							
Dog							
Restricted breed, Dangerous Dog, Menacing Dog	Per dog	N	$341.25	$354.20	3.79%	$12.95	Non-Statutory
Standard Registration Fee – Guard Dog/Protective Services	Per dog	N	$170.65	$177.10	3.78%	$6.45	Non-Statutory
Standard Registration Fee – Dog Unsterilised	Per dog	N	$170.15	$176.60	3.79%	$6.45	Non-Statutory
Standard Registration Fee – Dog Sterilised, or Trained by an Approved dog obedience training organisation.	Per dog	N	$55.00	$57.00	3.64%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Pensioner – Dog – Unsterilised	Per dog	N	$84.70	$87.90	3.78%	$3.20	Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Dog [continued]							
Pensioner – Dog – Sterilised, Subject to Veterinary Advice (less than 12 months old), or Trained by an Approved Dog Obedience Training Organisation	Per dog	N	$27.50	$28.50	3.64%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Pro-Rata Registrations – less than 6 Months - 50% of Applicable Registration Fee	Per dog	N			50% of registration		Non-Statutory
Cat							
Standard Registration Fee – Cat Unsterilised	Per cat	N	$98.90	$102.65	3.79%	$3.75	Non-Statutory
Standard Registration Fee – Cat Sterilised Registered Member of Approved Feline Association	Per cat	N	$28.55	$29.60	3.68%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Pensioner – Cat – Unsterilised	Per cat	N	$49.40	$51.25	3.74%	$1.85	Statutory
Pensioner – Cat – Sterilised or Registered Member of Approved Feline Association.	Per cat	N	$14.25	$14.75	3.51%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Pro-Rata Registrations – less than 6 Months - 50% of Applicable Registration Fee	Per cat	N			50% of registration		Non-Statutory
Fire Prevention							
Fire Prevention Administrative Fee - First Offence	Per subsequent fine	N	$106.35	$110.35	3.76%	$4.00	Non-Statutory
Fire Prevention Administrative Fee - Subsequent Offences	Per subsequent fine	N	$549.80	$570.65	3.79%	$20.85	Non-Statutory
Parking							
Parking Infringement - Offence Codes 621,701-714	Per Infringement	N			0.5 Penalty units		Statutory
wat djerring Animal Facility							
Adoption Fee - Cat	Per animal	Y	$50.00	$50.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Adoption Fee - Dog	Per animal	Y	$400.00	$400.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Adoption Fee - Kitten (under 6 Months)	Per animal	Y	$150.00	$150.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Adoption Fee – Puppy	Per animal	Y	$616.30	$600.00	-2.64%	-$16.30	Non-Statutory
Adoption Fee – Rabbits and Other Small Animals	Per animal	Y	$51.30	$50.00	-2.53%	-$1.30	Non-Statutory
Cat Box	Each	Y	$11.65	$12.00	3.00%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Desexing - Cat (Female)	Per animal	Y	$127.60	$160.00	25.39%	$32.40	Non-Statutory
Desexing - Cat (Male)	Per animal	Y	$90.35	$100.00	10.68%	$9.65	Non-Statutory
Dog Collar	Each	Y	$5.25	$12.00	128.57%	$6.75	Non-Statutory
Dog Lead	Each	Y	$5.25	$12.00	128.57%	$6.75	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
wat djerring Animal Facility [continued]							
Impounded Animals - Medical Fees & Other Disbursements	At cost	N				Cost Recovery. **Last year fee** External contractor's rate.	Non-Statutory
Keeping/Feeding Fee - Cats - per Day	Per cat, Per day	N	$16.15	$16.75	3.72%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Keeping/Feeding Fee - Dogs - per Day	Per dog, Per day	N	$21.55	$22.35	3.71%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Microchipping	Per animal	Y	$37.15	$38.55	3.77%	$1.40	Non-Statutory
Release Fee – Registered Cat – Same Day Collection	Per cat	N	$26.55	$27.55	3.77%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Release Fee – Registered Dog – Same Day Collection	Per dog	N	$26.55	$27.55	3.77%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Release Fee - Unregistered Cat - Same Day Collection	Per cat	N	$55.00	$57.05	3.73%	$2.05	Non-Statutory
Release Fee - Unregistered dog - Same Day Collection	Per dog	N	$55.00	$57.05	3.73%	$2.05	Non-Statutory
Surrender for Euthanasia - Dog (greater than 20kg)	Per dog	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Surrenders - (Dog greater 20kg)	Per dog	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Surrenders - Cat	Per animal	Y	$21.25	$55.00	158.82%	$33.75	Non-Statutory
Surrenders - Dog	Per animal	Y	$42.50	$55.00	29.41%	$12.50	Non-Statutory
Surrenders for Euthanasia - Cat	Per cat	Y	$0.00	$50.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Surrenders for Euthanasia - Dog (less than 20kg)	Per dog	Y	$0.00	$75.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Vaccination	Per animal	Y	$53.10	$55.10	3.77%	$2.00	Non-Statutory

Plenty Ranges Arts & Convention Centre

Room Hire

Eucalypt

5 Hour Hire

Community Rate: Hourly Rate	Per booking	Y	$332.60	$257.40	-22.61%	-$75.20	Non-Statutory
Hourly Rate	Per booking	Y	$375.00	$280.00	-25.33%	-$95.00	Non-Statutory

Blue/Red Gum

5 Hour Hire

Community Rate: Hourly Rate	Per booking	Y	$138.90	$128.70	-7.34%	-$10.20	Non-Statutory
Hourly Rate	Per booking	Y	$191.85	$143.00	-25.46%	-$48.85	Non-Statutory

Lakeview

5 Hour Hire

Community Rates: Hourly Rate	Per booking	Y	$85.55	$33.30	-61.08%	-$52.25	Non-Statutory
Hourly Rate	Per booking	Y	$95.00	$37.00	-61.05%	-$58.00	Non-Statutory

Woodstock Theatre

Community Rate: Hourly Rate	Per hour	Y	$124.30	$112.50	-9.49%	-$11.80	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Woodstock Theatre [continued]							
Community Rate: Performance Rate	Per hour	Y	$288.70	$135.00	-53.24%	-$153.70	Non-Statutory
Dark Theatre	Per day	Y	$575.00	$625.00	8.70%	$50.00	Non-Statutory
Hourly Rate	Per hour	Y	$175.00	$125.00	-28.57%	-$50.00	Non-Statutory
Lighting Plot	Per hour	Y	$120.00	$95.00	-20.83%	-$25.00	Non-Statutory
Penalty	Per hour	Y	$151.00	$156.70	3.77%	$5.70	Non-Statutory
Performance Rate	Per hour	Y	$299.00	$150.00	-49.83%	-$149.00	Non-Statutory
Yan Yean Theatre							
Community Rate: Hourly Rate	Per hour	Y	$313.20	$221.40	-29.31%	-$91.80	Non-Statutory
Community Rate: Performance Rate	Per hour	Y	$541.50	$257.40	-52.47%	-$284.10	Non-Statutory
Dark Theatre	Per day	Y	$1,200.00	$1,230.00	2.50%	$30.00	Non-Statutory
Hourly Rate	Per hour	Y	$332.00	$246.00	-25.90%	-$86.00	Non-Statutory
Lighting Plot	Per hour	Y	$750.00	$95.00	-87.33%	-$655.00	Non-Statutory
Penalty	Per hour	Y	$435.00	$451.50	3.79%	$16.50	Non-Statutory
Performance Rate	Per hour	Y	$565.00	$286.00	-49.38%	-$279.00	Non-Statutory
PRACC Staff							
Commercial							
Staff Penalty	Per hour	Y	$0.00	$110.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Venue Support, Staff Supervision and Compliance (Monday to Friday)	Per hour (minimum 3 hours)	Y	$0.00	$68.20	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Venue Support, Staff Supervision and Compliance (Saturday)	Per hour (minimum 3 hours)	Y	$0.00	$79.20	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Venue Support, Staff Supervision and Compliance (Sunday)	Per hour (minimum 3 hours)	Y	$0.00	$82.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community							
Staff Penalty	Per hour	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Venue Support, Staff Supervision and Compliance (Monday to Friday)	Per hour (minimum 3 hours)	Y	$0.00	$53.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Venue Support, Staff Supervision and Compliance (Saturday)	Per hour (minimum 3 hours)	Y	$0.00	$63.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Venue Support, Staff Supervision and Compliance (Sunday)	Per hour (minimum 3 hours)	Y	$0.00	$73.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Ticketing							
Commercial							
Booking Fee (Visitor Fee)	Per ticket sold	Y	$0.00	$2.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Commercial [continued]							
Inside Charge (Hirer Fee)	Per ticket sold	Y	$0.00	$2.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community							
Booking Fee (Visitor Fee)	Per ticket sold	Y	$0.00	$2.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Inside Charge (Hirer Fee)	Per ticket sold	Y	$0.00	$1.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Equipment							
Blinder	Per day	Y	$0.00	$50.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
DI Box	Per day	Y	$0.00	$10.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Foldback Speaker	Per day	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Haze Machine	Per day	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Laptop	Per day	Y	$0.00	$150.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Lectern and Microphone	Per day	Y	$0.00	$80.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
LED UV Effect	Per day	Y	$0.00	$50.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Mic & Music Stands	Per day	Y	$0.00	$5.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Mirrorball	Per day	Y	$0.00	$50.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Moving Light (Wash)	Per day	Y	$0.00	$400.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Pinboard	Per day	Y	$0.00	$50.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Portable Staging Platform	Per day	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Projection Cyclorama Screen	Per day	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Projector with Media Server	Per day	Y	$0.00	$500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Sling, Wire Dropper and Shackle Set	Per day	Y	$0.00	$5.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
White Sharkstooth Scrim	Per day	Y	$0.00	$100.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Whiteboard	Per day	Y	$0.00	$50.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Wired Microphone	Per day	Y	$0.00	$10.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Wireless Comms	Per day	Y	$0.00	$50.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Wireless Microphone	Per day	Y	$0.00	$85.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Family, Children and Young People							
Family Services							
Kindergarten							
Kindergarten Applications (Combined 3 & 4 Year Olds)	Per application	N	$47.00	$48.75	3.72%	$1.75	Non-Statutory
Kindergarten Applications	Per application	N	$25.45	$26.40	3.73%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Early Years							
Early Years Services Property Lease	Annual fee	Y	$148.57	$154.20	3.79%	$5.63	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Family Day Care							
Annual Registration Fee	Per new child registration	N	$33.45	$34.70	3.74%	$1.25	Non-Statutory
Administration Levy	Per hour of care per child	N	$2.00	$2.15	7.50%	$0.15	Non-Statutory
Late Fee	Per late annual re-registration	N	$49.50	$51.35	3.74%	$1.85	Non-Statutory
Playgroups							
Rental of Community Space (per Group) for Carrington Children's Centre	Per hour	Y	$7.55	$7.85	3.97%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Rental of Community Space (per Group) for Laurel Street Portables Whittlesea	Per hour	Y	$7.55	$7.85	3.97%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Rental of Community Space (per Group) for Mill Park Drive Children's Centre	Per hour	Y	$7.55	$7.85	3.97%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Rental of Community Space (per Group) for Vasey Park Pre School	Per hour	Y	$7.55	$7.85	3.97%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Other Fees							
Mental Health First Aid	Per unit	Y	$8.47	$13.75	62.34%	$5.28	Non-Statutory
School Holiday Activities 1	Per unit	Y	$5.50	$5.50	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
School Holiday Activities 2	Per unit	Y	$11.00	$8.80	-20.00%	-$2.20	Non-Statutory
School Holiday Activities 3	Per unit	Y	$0.00	$16.50	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Public Health							
Food Act							
Registration							
Add Fee for Each Staff Member in Excess of 5	Per registration	N	$27.75	$28.40	2.34%	$0.65	Statutory
Follow Up Inspection	Per registration	N	$159.35	$163.30	2.48%	$3.95	Statutory
Request Inspection Priority Fee (within 5 Working Days)	Per inspection	N	$433.65	$450.10	3.79%	$16.45	Non-Statutory
Request Inspection Fee (within 10 Working Days)	Per inspection	N	$314.35	$326.30	3.80%	$11.95	Non-Statutory
Plans Approval (Class 1, 2, 3 & 3A)	Per approval	N	$217.85	$226.10	3.79%	$8.25	Non-Statutory
Food Sampling Analysis Recoup	Per registration	N	$341.25	$354.20	3.79%	$12.95	Non-Statutory
Food Safety Program							
Registration – Initial							
Class 3A Premises	Per registration	N	$532.00	$545.30	2.50%	$13.30	Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Registration – Initial [continued]							
Class 1 Premises	Per registration	N	$1,065.00	$1,091.60	2.50%	$26.60	Statutory
Class 2 Premises	Per registration	N	$762.80	$781.85	2.50%	$19.05	Statutory
Class 3 Premises	Per registration	N	$532.00	$545.30	2.50%	$13.30	Statutory
Registration – Renewal							
Class 3A Premises	Per registration	N	$384.00	$393.60	2.50%	$9.60	Statutory
Class 1 Premises	Per registration	N	$909.75	$932.45	2.50%	$22.70	Statutory
Class 2 Premises	Per registration	N	$619.95	$635.45	2.50%	$15.50	Statutory
Class 3 Premises	Per registration	N	$384.00	$393.60	2.50%	$9.60	Statutory
Public Health & Wellbeing Act							
Registration							
Initial Registration Fee	Per registration	N	$360.15	$369.15	2.50%	$9.00	Statutory
Renewal Registration Fee	Per registration	N	$246.30	$252.45	2.50%	$6.15	Statutory
Hairdresser Registration Fee (One Off Fee)	One off fee	N	$360.15	$369.15	2.50%	$9.00	Statutory
Accommodation Houses	Per registration	N	$440.90	$451.90	2.49%	$11.00	Statutory
Plans Approval – General	Per approval	N	$230.65	$239.40	3.79%	$8.75	Non-Statutory
Plans Approval – Accommodation	Per approval	N	$366.25	$380.15	3.80%	$13.90	Non-Statutory
Request Inspection Priority Fee (within 4 Working Days)	Per inspection	N	$296.65	$307.90	3.79%	$11.25	Non-Statutory
Request Inspection Fee (within 10 Working Days)	Per inspection	N	$219.90	$228.25	3.80%	$8.35	Non-Statutory
Caravan Permit	Per permit	N	$192.95	$200.25	3.78%	$7.30	Non-Statutory
Registration – Transfer							
Transfer of Registration – General	Per registration	N	$123.15	$126.20	2.48%	$3.05	Statutory
Transfer of Registration – Accommodation	Per registration	N	$220.45	$225.95	2.49%	$5.50	Statutory
Aquatic Fees							
Additional Pool Fee (Each Pool greater than 1 Pool)	No. of additional pools	N	$69.30	$71.00	2.45%	$1.70	Statutory
Base Aquatic Facility Fee (includes 1 Pool)	Per aquatic facility	N	$234.95	$240.80	2.49%	$5.85	Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Sharps Containers							
4 Litres	Per container	Y	$27.50	$28.55	3.82%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
21 Litres	Per container	Y	$44.00	$45.65	3.75%	$1.65	Non-Statutory
Septic Tank							
Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) Amend a Permit Fee	10.38	N	$169.50	$173.70	2.48%	$4.20	Statutory
Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) Exemption Assessment Fee	14.67	N	$240.25	$246.25	2.50%	$6.00	Statutory
Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) Installation Additional hourly fee (greater than 8.2 hrs)	6.12	N	$100.25	$102.75	2.49%	$2.50	Statutory
Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) Installation Permit Fee	48.88	N	$798.20	$818.15	2.50%	$19.95	Statutory
Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) Minor Alteration Permit Fee	37.25	N	$608.30	$623.50	2.50%	$15.20	Statutory
Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) Renew a Permit Fee	8.31	N	$135.70	$139.05	2.47%	$3.35	Statutory
Onsite Wastewater Management System (OWMS) Transfer a Permit Fee	9.93	N	$162.20	$166.25	2.50%	$4.05	Statutory
Request for Information on a Septic Tank	Per request	N	$77.05	$79.95	3.76%	$2.90	Non-Statutory
Immunisation							
Chicken Pox Vaccine	Per injection	Y	$63.00	$70.00	11.11%	$7.00	Non-Statutory
Influenza Vaccine	Per injection	Y	$15.95	$23.00	44.20%	$7.05	Non-Statutory
Meningococcal B	Per injection	Y	$127.00	$140.00	10.24%	$13.00	Non-Statutory
Hepatitis B (20 Years & Over)	Per injection	Y	$30.30	$32.00	5.61%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Combined Hepatitis A & B (20 Years and Over)	Per injection	Y	$81.35	$84.40	3.75%	$3.05	Non-Statutory
Meningococcal ACWY	Per injection	Y	$102.05	$90.00	-11.81%	-$12.05	Non-Statutory
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (Boostrix)	Per injection	Y	$40.35	$54.00	33.83%	$13.65	Non-Statutory
Immunisation Workplace Program							
Workplace Influenza – Over 21 Employees	Per injection	Y	$25.65	$27.00	5.26%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Workplace Immunisation Extra Nurse Fee (per Hour) (1 Extra Nurse)	Per hour	Y	$159.75	$165.80	3.79%	$6.05	Non-Statutory
Flat Fee for Workplace Vaccination Visit – Under 21 Employees	One off - flat fee	Y	$513.35	$533.00	3.83%	$19.65	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Active & Creative Communities							
Venue Hire							
Bond - High Risk	One off fee	N	$1,000.00	$1,000.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Bond - Low Risk	One off fee	N	$100.00	$100.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Bond - Standard	One off fee	N	$500.00	$500.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Playgroup 2 Hour Session (Conditions Apply)	Per 2 hour session	Y	$20.00	$20.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Seniors Group (Conditions Apply)	Per hour	Y	$6.05	$6.25	3.31%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Consult Room							
Consult Room - Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$16.85	$17.45	3.56%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Consult Room - Community	Per hour	Y	$8.40	$8.70	3.57%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Consult Room - Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$13.00	$13.50	3.85%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Barry Road Community Activity Centre							
Casual/Business							
Hall Whole with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$743.00	$771.20	3.80%	$28.20	Non-Statutory
Hall Whole	Per hour	Y	$61.85	$64.20	3.80%	$2.35	Non-Statutory
Hall 1 or 2	Per hour	Y	$47.75	$49.55	3.77%	$1.80	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$37.40	$38.80	3.74%	$1.40	Non-Statutory
Community							
Hall Whole	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Hall 1 or 2	Per hour	Y	$24.50	$25.40	3.67%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.55	$10.95	3.79%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Hall Whole	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Hall 1 or 2	Per hour	Y	$36.10	$37.45	3.74%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.85	$16.45	3.79%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$28.00	$29.05	3.75%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Brookwood Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$41.95	$43.55	3.81%	$1.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$20.60	$21.35	3.64%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Community							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$22.10	$22.90	3.62%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$11.60	$12.05	3.88%	$0.45	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Regular Group							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$15.95	$16.55	3.76%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Epping Community Centre							
Regular Group							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$42.00	$43.55	3.69%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$12.25	$12.70	3.67%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$22.15	$23.00	3.84%	$0.85	Non-Statutory
Community							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$30.30	$31.45	3.80%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$8.20	$8.50	3.66%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$16.25	$16.85	3.69%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Casual/Business							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$53.25	$55.25	3.76%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Hall with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per Package	Y	$622.80	$646.45	3.80%	$23.65	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$16.35	$16.95	3.67%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$28.30	$29.35	3.71%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Epping Views Family and Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Foyer, Display Space, Kitchenette	Per hour	Y	$35.00	$36.30	3.71%	$1.30	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$17.45	$18.10	3.72%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$19.20	$19.90	3.65%	$0.71	Non-Statutory
Community							
Foyer, Display Space, Kitchenette	Per hour	Y	$18.65	$19.35	3.75%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.90	$10.25	3.54%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Foyer, Display Space, Kitchenette	Per hour	Y	$26.75	$27.75	3.74%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$13.95	$14.45	3.58%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Epping Memorial Hall							
Casual/Business							
Function Room - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$1,056.50	$1,096.60	3.80%	$40.10	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$1,270.10	$1,318.35	3.80%	$48.25	Non-Statutory
Function Room	Per hour	Y	$118.50	$123.00	3.80%	$4.50	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall	Per hour	Y	$142.45	$147.85	3.79%	$5.40	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$20.90	$21.65	3.59%	$0.75	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Regular Group							
Function Room	Per hour	Y	$88.70	$92.05	3.78%	$3.35	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall	Per hour	Y	$128.40	$133.25	3.78%	$4.85	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Community							
Function Room	Per hour	Y	$58.35	$60.55	3.77%	$2.20	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall	Per hour	Y	$85.20	$88.40	3.76%	$3.20	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$10.50	$10.90	3.81%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
French Street Hall							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$38.50	$39.95	3.77%	$1.45	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$29.10	$30.20	3.78%	$1.10	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Galada Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.45	$22.25	3.73%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$19.20	$19.90	3.65%	$0.71	Non-Statutory
Social Support Suite Room 1	Per hour	Y	$23.35	$24.20	3.64%	$0.85	Non-Statutory
Social Support Suite Whole	Per hour	Y	$44.60	$46.30	3.81%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$61.85	$64.20	3.80%	$2.35	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room Whole	Per hour	Y	$37.30	$38.70	3.75%	$1.40	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room 1	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room 2	Per hour	Y	$22.10	$22.90	3.62%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Community							
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.60	$11.00	3.77%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.90	$10.25	3.54%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Social Support Suite Room 1	Per hour	Y	$11.65	$12.05	3.43%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Social Support Suite Whole	Per hour	Y	$22.24	$23.05	3.64%	$0.81	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room Whole	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room 1	Per hour	Y	$11.60	$12.05	3.88%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room 2	Per hour	Y	$13.95	$14.45	3.58%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.90	$16.50	3.77%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Social Support Suite Room 1	Per hour	Y	$17.50	$18.15	3.71%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
Social Support Suite Whole	Per hour	Y	$35.00	$36.30	3.71%	$1.30	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room Whole	Per hour	Y	$25.60	$26.55	3.71%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room 1	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room 2	Per hour	Y	$17.45	$18.10	3.72%	$0.65	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Ganbu Gulinj Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$32.85	$34.05	3.65%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$16.65	$17.25	3.60%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Community							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$18.65	$19.35	3.75%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$9.70	$10.05	3.61%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$26.25	$27.20	3.62%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$13.10	$13.60	3.82%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Greenbrook Community House							
Casual/Business – Meeting Room 3 (per Hour)	Per hour	Y	$12.55	$13.00	3.59%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Community - Meeting Room 3	Per hour	Y	$8.90	$9.20	3.37%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Regular – Community Room	Per hour	Y	$18.65	$19.35	3.75%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Casual/Business – Community Room	Per hour	Y	$25.10	$26.05	3.78%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Community – Community Room	Per hour	Y	$16.20	$16.80	3.70%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Regular - Meeting Room 3	Per hour	Y	$10.50	$10.90	3.81%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Harvest Home Road Pavilion Social Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$30.80	$31.95	3.73%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$24.65	$25.55	3.65%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Janefield Community Centre							
Casual							
Community Room 1	Per hour	Y	$40.80	$42.35	3.80%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Community Room 2	Per hour	Y	$31.75	$32.95	3.78%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$14.65	$15.20	3.75%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Community Room 1	Per hour	Y	$31.75	$32.95	3.78%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
Community Room 2	Per hour	Y	$23.70	$24.60	3.80%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$11.30	$11.70	3.54%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Community							
Community Room 1	Per hour	Y	$21.45	$22.25	3.73%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Community Room 2	Per hour	Y	$15.80	$16.40	3.80%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$7.80	$8.10	3.85%	$0.30	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Jindi Family and Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Community Room Whole with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$561.30	$582.60	3.79%	$21.30	Non-Statutory
Community Room Whole	Per hour	Y	$49.00	$50.85	3.78%	$1.85	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$33.80	$35.05	3.70%	$1.25	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$13.95	$14.45	3.58%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Community							
Community Room Whole	Per hour	Y	$24.55	$25.45	3.67%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$17.45	$18.10	3.72%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$8.05	$8.35	3.73%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Community Room Whole	Per hour	Y	$36.15	$37.50	3.73%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$25.60	$26.55	3.71%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$11.60	$12.05	3.88%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Kirrip Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$61.85	$64.20	3.80%	$2.35	Non-Statutory
Hall with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$743.00	$771.20	3.80%	$28.20	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$13.25	$14.55	9.81%	$1.30	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$19.10	$19.80	3.66%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Community Group							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.60	$11.00	3.77%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$7.19	$7.90	9.87%	$0.71	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$9.50	$9.85	3.68%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.90	$16.50	3.77%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.50	$10.45	10.00%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$14.25	$14.75	3.51%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Lalor Library Conference Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$42.00	$43.55	3.69%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$20.95	$21.75	3.82%	$0.80	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Laurimar Community Activity Centre							
Casual/Business							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$19.20	$19.90	3.65%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$36.15	$37.50	3.73%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Community							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.90	$10.25	3.54%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$27.70	$28.75	3.79%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Main Street Pavilion Social Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$30.80	$31.95	3.73%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$24.65	$25.55	3.65%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
May Road Senior Citizens Centre							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$6.05	$6.25	3.31%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Mernda Villages Community Activity Centre							
Casual/Business							
Hall with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$743.00	$771.20	3.80%	$28.20	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$19.20	$19.90	3.65%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$61.85	$64.20	3.80%	$2.35	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$17.45	$18.10	3.72%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Community							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.90	$10.25	3.54%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.55	$10.95	3.79%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$14.65	$15.20	3.75%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$13.95	$14.45	3.58%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.85	$16.45	3.79%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Mernda Village Social Support Suite							
Casual Group							
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Casual Group [continued]							
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$17.45	$18.10	3.72%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
Program 1 and 2	Per hour	Y	$41.05	$42.60	3.78%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Program 1, 2 or 3	Per hour	Y	$31.40	$32.60	3.82%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.85	$16.45	3.79%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$13.95	$14.45	3.58%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
Program 1 and 2	Per hour	Y	$31.40	$32.60	3.82%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
Program 1, 2 or 3	Per hour	Y	$23.50	$24.35	3.62%	$0.85	Non-Statutory
Community Group							
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.55	$10.95	3.79%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Program 1 and 2	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Program 1, 2 or 3	Per hour	Y	$15.65	$16.25	3.83%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$53.25	$53.25	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$32.70	$33.95	3.82%	$1.25	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$12.70	$13.15	3.54%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$42.00	$43.55	3.69%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$24.50	$25.40	3.67%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$9.35	$9.70	3.74%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Community							
Hall	Per hour	Y	$30.30	$31.45	3.80%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$16.20	$16.80	3.70%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$6.95	$7.20	3.60%	$0.25	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Lakes Social Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$30.80	$31.95	3.73%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$24.65	$25.55	3.65%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Mosaic Pavilion Social Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$30.80	$31.95	3.73%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$24.65	$25.55	3.65%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Nick Ascenzo Centre							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$52.50	$54.50	3.81%	$2.00	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Nick Ascenzo Centre [continued]							
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$39.65	$41.15	3.78%	$1.50	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$25.60	$26.55	3.71%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Olivine Pavilion Community Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$30.80	$31.95	3.73%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$24.65	$25.55	3.65%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Painted Hills Community Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$49.00	$50.85	3.78%	$1.85	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$24.50	$25.40	3.67%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$36.15	$37.50	3.73%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Patterson (Murnong) Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Activity Room	Per hour	Y	$35.15	$36.45	3.70%	$1.30	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$61.85	$64.20	3.80%	$2.35	Non-Statutory
Hall with kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$743.00	$771.20	3.80%	$28.20	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$19.20	$19.90	3.65%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Community Group							
Activity Room	Per hour	Y	$28.00	$29.05	3.75%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.60	$11.00	3.77%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.90	$10.25	3.54%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Activity Room	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.90	$16.50	3.77%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
RGC Cook Pavilion social Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$30.80	$31.95	3.73%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$24.65	$25.55	3.65%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Riverside Community Centre							
Regular Group							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$28.00	$29.05	3.75%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$42.00	$43.55	3.69%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$12.25	$12.70	3.67%	$0.45	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Regular Group [continued]							
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$21.75	$22.55	3.68%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Community							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$30.30	$31.45	3.80%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$8.25	$8.55	3.64%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$16.20	$16.80	3.70%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Casual/Business							
Community Room	Per hour	Y	$35.14	$36.45	3.73%	$1.31	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$53.25	$55.25	3.76%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Hall with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$622.80	$646.45	3.80%	$23.65	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$16.40	$17.00	3.66%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$27.75	$28.80	3.78%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Spring Street Hall							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$41.95	$43.55	3.81%	$1.60	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$32.65	$33.85	3.68%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$20.95	$21.75	3.82%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Whittlesea Community Activity Centre							
Casual/Business							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$19.20	$19.90	3.65%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$743.00	$771.20	3.80%	$28.20	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall	Per hour	Y	$61.85	$64.20	3.80%	$2.35	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$29.10	$30.20	3.78%	$1.10	Non-Statutory
Community							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.90	$10.25	3.54%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall Whole	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.60	$11.00	3.77%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$16.20	$16.80	3.70%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Memorial Hall Whole	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.90	$16.50	3.77%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room	Per hour	Y	$22.10	$22.90	3.62%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Wollert							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$36.15	$37.50	3.73%	$1.35	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Wollert [continued]							
Community	Per hour	Y	$23.25	$24.10	3.66%	$0.85	Non-Statutory
Waterview Community Pavilion Social Room							
Casual/Business	Per hour	Y	$30.80	$31.95	3.73%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Community	Per hour	Y	$10.25	$10.60	3.41%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group	Per hour	Y	$24.65	$25.55	3.65%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
West Wollert Community Centre							
Casual/Business							
Activity Room	Per hour	Y	$35.15	$36.45	3.70%	$1.30	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$61.85	$64.20	3.80%	$2.35	Non-Statutory
Hall with Kitchen - 10 Hour Package	Per package	Y	$743.00	$771.20	3.80%	$28.20	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$21.25	$22.05	3.76%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$19.20	$19.90	3.65%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
Community Group							
Activity Room	Per hour	Y	$19.80	$20.55	3.79%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$31.45	$32.60	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$10.60	$11.00	3.77%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$9.90	$10.25	3.54%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Regular Group							
Activity Room	Per hour	Y	$28.00	$29.05	3.75%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Hall	Per hour	Y	$45.40	$47.10	3.74%	$1.70	Non-Statutory
Kitchen	Per hour	Y	$15.90	$16.50	3.77%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
MCH Program Room	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Sporting Fields							
Harvest Home Road Recreation Reserve South - Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.50	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.80	Non-Statutory
Harvest Home Road Recreation Reserve Synthetic - Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Harvest Home Road Recreation Reserve West - Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.50	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.80	Non-Statutory
Mosaic Recereation Reserve Synthetic - Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Mosaic Recreation Reserve East - Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Painted Hills Recreation Reserve Synthetic - Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Painted Hills Recreation Reserve West - Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Casa D'Abruzzo (North) – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Casa D'Abruzzo (South) – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Doreen Rec Reserve, Doreen – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$1,176.05	3.80%	$43.05	Non-Statutory

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Sporting Fields [continued]

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Duffy St Reserve, Epping – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Epping Recreation Reserve East – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Epping Recreation Reserve West – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Findon Reserve (Cricket) – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Findon Reserve North (Main Pitch) – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Findon Reserve South East – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$1,176.05	3.80%	$43.05	Non-Statutory
Hillsview Reserve – West – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Hillsview Reserve – East – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
HR Uren Reserve South – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,752.55	$1,836.85	4.81%	$84.30	Non-Statutory
HR Uren Reserve North – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Huskisson Reserve – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Kelynack Reserve, Mill Park – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Lalor Rec. Reserve – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Laurimar East – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Laurimar West – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,836.85	29.85%	$422.30	Non-Statutory
Lowalde Reserve, Epping – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$1,176.05	3.80%	$43.05	Non-Statutory
Main Street Reserve East – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Main Street Reserve West – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Meadowglen Reserve – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$1,176.05	3.80%	$43.05	Non-Statutory
Mernda Rec. Reserve, Mernda – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$1,176.05	3.80%	$43.05	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Lakes Reserve – East – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,836.85	29.85%	$422.30	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Lakes Reserve – West – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Reserve, Mill Park – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Partridge Street Reserve West – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Partridge Street Reserve East (synthetic)– Class A	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,836.85	29.85%	$422.30	Non-Statutory
Partridge Street Reserve Rooball – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Redleap Reserve – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
RGC Cook Reserve West – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
RGC Cook Reserve East – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$1,176.05	3.80%	$43.05	Non-Statutory
Sycamore Reserve North (Main) – Class A	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Sycamore Reserve Central South – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Thomas Street Reserve – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Thomastown East Reserve North – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Sporting Fields [continued]							
Thomastown East Reserve South – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
W.A. Smith Reserve South – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
W.A. Smith Reserve North – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$1,176.05	3.80%	$43.05	Non-Statutory
Walker Reserve, Whittlesea – Class B	Per season	Y	$1,414.55	$1,468.30	3.80%	$53.75	Non-Statutory
Whittlesea Secondary College – Class C	Per season	Y	$1,133.00	$0.00	-100.00%	-$1,133.00	Non-Statutory
Waterview Recreation Reserve – Class A (Both Grounds)	Per season	Y	$1,769.60	$1,836.85	3.80%	$67.25	Non-Statutory
Sports Pavilions							
Bond	One off fee	N	$513.75	$500.00	-2.68%	-$13.75	Non-Statutory
Harvest Home Road - Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.10	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.10	Non-Statutory
Mosaic Recreation Reserve - Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.10	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.10	Non-Statutory
Painted Hills Recreation Reserve - Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.10	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.10	Non-Statutory
Duffy St Reserve, Epping – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Epping Rec Reserve, Epping – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Findon Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Hillsview Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
HR Uren Reserve South – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Huskisson Reserve – Class 2	Per season	Y	$1,061.65	$1,102.00	3.80%	$40.35	Non-Statutory
Kelynack Reserve, Mill Park – Class 2	Per season	Y	$1,061.65	$1,102.00	3.80%	$40.35	Non-Statutory
Lalor Rec. Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Laurimar – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Main Street Reserve East – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Mernda Rec. Reserve, Mernda – Class 3	Per season	Y	$849.15	$881.40	3.80%	$32.25	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Lakes Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Reserve, Mill Park – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Partridge Street Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Redleap Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
RGC Cook Reserve West – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Sycamore Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Thomas Street Reserve – Class 2	Per season	Y	$1,061.65	$1,102.00	3.80%	$40.35	Non-Statutory
Thomastown East Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
W.A. Smith Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory
Walker Reserve, Whittlesea – Class 2	Per season	Y	$1,061.65	$1,102.00	3.80%	$40.35	Non-Statutory
Waterview Recreation Reserve – Class 1	Per season	Y	$1,238.15	$1,285.20	3.80%	$47.05	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Sports – Casual							
Charity Events	Per booking	Y	$101.55	$105.40	3.79%	$3.85	Non-Statutory
Commercial Use	Per booking	Y	$1,351.40	$1,402.75	3.80%	$51.35	Non-Statutory
Schools	Per booking	Y	$189.20	$196.35	3.78%	$7.15	Non-Statutory
Community Groups	Per booking	Y	$189.20	$196.35	3.78%	$7.15	Non-Statutory
Utility Fee	Per booking	Y	$53.65	$56.35	5.03%	$2.70	Non-Statutory
Personal Trainers	Per booking	Y	$189.20	$196.35	3.78%	$7.15	Non-Statutory
Pavilion Fees	Per hour	Y	$40.80	$42.35	3.80%	$1.55	Non-Statutory
Pavilion Fees (Daily)	Per day	Y	$189.20	$196.35	3.78%	$7.15	Non-Statutory
Line Marking Fee AFL	Per use	Y	$513.90	$533.40	3.79%	$19.50	Non-Statutory
Line Marking Fee Cricket	Per use	Y	$149.50	$155.15	3.78%	$5.65	Non-Statutory
Line Marking Fee Soccer	Per use	Y	$217.20	$225.45	3.80%	$8.25	Non-Statutory
Sports – Sole User per Year							
Epping Soccer Stadium							
Bond							
Bond Fee	One off fee	N	$1,872.20	$1,500.00	-19.88%	-$372.20	Non-Statutory
Ground Hire							
Training Session Ground Hire – Max. 2 Hours Field Time	Per booking	Y	$378.35	$392.70	3.79%	$14.35	Non-Statutory
Match Session Ground Hire – Max. 3 Hours Field Time	Per booking	Y	$810.55	$841.35	3.80%	$30.80	Non-Statutory
Lighting Charge							
Lighting Fee	Per booking	Y	$196.15	$203.60	3.80%	$7.45	Non-Statutory
Line Marking							
Line Marking Fee	Per use	Y	$217.20	$225.45	3.80%	$8.25	Non-Statutory
Miscellaneous							
Installation and Removal of Nets	Per use	Y	$217.20	$225.45	3.80%	$8.25	Non-Statutory
Installation & Removal of Portable Goals & Nets	Per use	Y	$217.20	$225.45	3.80%	$8.25	Non-Statutory
Cleaning							
Pavilion Only	Per booking	Y	$337.50	$350.30	3.79%	$12.80	Non-Statutory
Entire Facility	Per booking	Y	$2,701.70	$2,804.35	3.80%	$102.65	Non-Statutory
Hillsview Synthetic Soccer Ground							
Synthetic Pitch – Training							
Local Club	Per hour	Y	$121.30	$125.90	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Utility Fee	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.85	4.97%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Local School	Per hour	Y	$121.30	$125.90	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Non Local Club	Per hour	Y	$155.30	$161.20	3.80%	$5.90	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Synthetic Pitch – Training [continued]							
Non Local School	Per hour	Y	$155.30	$161.20	3.80%	$5.90	Non-Statutory
Local Community Event/ Fundraising	Per hour	Y	$121.30	$125.90	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Commercial Use	Per hour	Y	$202.00	$209.65	3.79%	$7.65	Non-Statutory
Local Club – Pre Season (3 Hour Session – No Lights)	Per 3 hour session	Y	$115.50	$119.85	3.77%	$4.35	Non-Statutory
Synthetic Pitch – Matches							
Local Club	Per match	Y	$235.90	$244.85	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Local School	Per match	Y	$235.90	$244.85	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Non Local Club	Per match	Y	$296.55	$307.80	3.79%	$11.25	Non-Statutory
Non Local School	Per match	Y	$296.55	$307.80	3.79%	$11.25	Non-Statutory
Local Community Event/ Fundraising	Per match	Y	$235.90	$244.85	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Commercial Use	Per match	Y	$405.15	$420.55	3.80%	$15.40	Non-Statutory
Utility Fee	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.85	4.97%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Commercial Night Use	Per match	Y	$471.85	$489.75	3.79%	$17.90	Non-Statutory
Mill Park Secondary College							
Synthetic Pitch – Training							
Local Club	Per hour	Y	$121.30	$125.90	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Local School	Per hour	Y	$121.30	$125.90	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Non Local Club	Per hour	Y	$161.15	$167.25	3.79%	$6.10	Non-Statutory
Non Local School	Per hour	Y	$161.15	$167.25	3.79%	$6.10	Non-Statutory
Local Community Event/ Fundraising	Per hour	Y	$121.30	$125.90	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Commercial Use	Per hour	Y	$202.00	$209.65	3.79%	$7.65	Non-Statutory
Local Club – Pre Season (3 Hour session – No Lights)	Per 3 hour session	Y	$121.30	$125.90	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Synthetic Pitch – Matches							
Local Club	Per match	Y	$235.90	$244.85	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Local School	Per match	Y	$235.90	$244.85	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Non Local Club	Per match	Y	$296.55	$307.80	3.79%	$11.25	Non-Statutory
Non Local School	Per match	Y	$296.55	$307.80	3.79%	$11.25	Non-Statutory
Local Community Event/ Fundraising	Per match	Y	$235.90	$244.85	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Commercial Use	Per match	Y	$474.20	$492.20	3.80%	$18.00	Non-Statutory
Ancillaries							
Utility Fee Night	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.85	4.97%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Cleaning Fee	Per training session	Y	$29.05	$30.15	3.79%	$1.10	Non-Statutory
Cleaning Fee	Per match	Y	$108.65	$112.75	3.77%	$4.10	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Tennis							
Ground Hire							
Tennis Court Fees	Per court	Y	$288.35	$299.30	3.80%	$10.95	Non-Statutory
Tennis Pavilion Fees	Per pavilion	Y	$334.05	$346.70	3.79%	$12.65	Non-Statutory
Bocce							
Ground Hire							
Bocce	Per court	Y	$140.05	$145.35	3.78%	$5.30	Non-Statutory
Bocce	Per pavilion	Y	$323.55	$335.85	3.80%	$12.30	Non-Statutory
Whittlesea Secondary College Basketball Stadium							
Court Hire							
Basketball Stadium Hire	Per court, Per hour	Y	$32.95	$34.20	3.79%	$1.25	Non-Statutory
Hire of Mini Bus							
Group 3 (Internal and Community)							
Hourly	Per hour	Y	$24.55	$25.45	3.67%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Daily (8 Hours)	Per day (8 hours)	Y	$128.40	$133.25	3.78%	$4.85	Non-Statutory
Weekend	Per weekend	Y	$338.75	$351.60	3.79%	$12.85	Non-Statutory
Meadowglen Athletics Track							
Association Carnivals	Per carnival	Y	$691.85	$718.10	3.79%	$26.25	Non-Statutory
Athletics Club Junior - Seasonal Fee	Per member	Y	$14.60	$15.15	3.77%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Athletics Club Senior - Seasonal Fee	Per member	Y	$27.05	$28.05	3.70%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Casual Track Hire Schools	Per hour	Y	$34.05	$35.30	3.67%	$1.25	Non-Statutory
Casual Track Sporting Clubs	Per hour	Y	$39.65	$41.15	3.78%	$1.50	Non-Statutory
CoW School Sports Day - Basic Equipment Hire	Per carnival	Y	$533.00	$553.25	3.80%	$20.25	Non-Statutory
Non CoW School Sports Day - Basic Equipment Hire	Per carnival	Y	$639.65	$663.95	3.80%	$24.30	Non-Statutory
Personal Trainers	Per hour	Y	$55.50	$57.60	3.78%	$2.10	Non-Statutory
Stadium Lighting	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Meadowglen Stadium Function Room							
Bond	Per booking	N	$308.25	$300.00	-2.68%	-$8.25	Non-Statutory
Commercial User - Full Day	Day hire	Y	$611.45	$634.65	3.79%	$23.20	Non-Statutory
Commercial User - up to 4 Hours	Half day hire	Y	$500.25	$519.25	3.80%	$19.00	Non-Statutory
Community User - Full Day	Day hire	Y	$510.30	$529.65	3.79%	$19.35	Non-Statutory
Community User - up to 4 Hours	Half day hire	Y	$396.85	$411.90	3.79%	$15.05	Non-Statutory
Regular User - per Hour	Per hour	Y	$52.05	$43.60	-16.23%	-$8.45	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Meadowglen Stadium Function Room [continued]							
Regular User (Not-For-Profit - per Hour)	Per hour	Y	$37.35	$31.45	-15.80%	-$5.90	Non-Statutory
School Carnival Hire	Per carnival	Y	$141.75	$147.10	3.77%	$5.35	Non-Statutory
Edgars Creek Secondary College							
Synthetic Pitch - Training							
Commercial Use	Per hour	Y	$202.00	$209.65	3.79%	$7.65	Non-Statutory
Local Club	Per hour	Y	$121.40	$126.00	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Local Club - Pre Season	Per 3 hour session	Y	$121.40	$126.00	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Local Community Event/ Fundraising	Per hour	Y	$121.40	$126.00	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Local School	Per hour	Y	$121.40	$126.00	3.79%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
Non Local Club	Per hour	Y	$161.15	$167.25	3.79%	$6.10	Non-Statutory
Non Local School	Per hour	Y	$161.15	$167.25	3.79%	$6.10	Non-Statutory
Synthetic Pitch - Matches							
Commercial Use	Per match	Y	$474.20	$492.20	3.80%	$18.00	Non-Statutory
Local Club	Per match	Y	$235.85	$244.80	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Local Community Event/ Fundraising	Per match	Y	$235.85	$244.80	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Local School	Per match	Y	$235.85	$244.80	3.79%	$8.95	Non-Statutory
Non Local Club	Per match	Y	$296.50	$307.80	3.81%	$11.30	Non-Statutory
Non Local School	Per match	Y	$296.55	$307.80	3.79%	$11.25	Non-Statutory
Ancillaries							
Cleaning Fee	Per training session	Y	$29.05	$30.15	3.79%	$1.10	Non-Statutory
Cleaning Fee	Per match	Y	$108.65	$112.75	3.77%	$4.10	Non-Statutory
Utility Fee Night	Per hour	Y	$15.10	$15.85	4.97%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Meadowglen Stadium Event Hire							
Commercial - Full Day	Day hire	Y	$2,835.10	$2,942.80	3.80%	$107.70	Non-Statutory
Commercial - Half Day (up to 4 Hours)	Half day hire	Y	$1,417.50	$1,471.35	3.80%	$53.85	Non-Statutory
Community - Full Day	Day hire	Y	$680.35	$706.20	3.80%	$25.85	Non-Statutory
Community - Half Day (up to 4 Hours)	Half day hire	Y	$340.20	$353.10	3.79%	$12.90	Non-Statutory
Ageing Well							
Centre Based Long Day Program	Per session	N	$18.00	$18.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Centre Based Social Support Short Day Sessions	Per session	N	$15.00	$15.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Client In Service Kilometre	Per unit	N	$1.45	$1.60	10.34%	$0.15	Non-Statutory
Domestic Assistance	Per hour	N	$9.00	$10.00	11.11%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Flexible Respite	Per hour	N	$9.00	$10.00	11.11%	$1.00	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Ageing Well [continued]							
Home Modifications	Per hour	N	$20.00	$22.00	10.00%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Meals - Large/Premium	Per unit	N	$9.00	$10.00	11.11%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Meals - Small/Budget	Per unit	N	$5.00	$5.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Meals - Superior	Per unit	N	$11.00	$12.00	9.09%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Personal Care	Per hour	N	$9.00	$10.00	11.11%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Property Maintenance	Per hour	N	$20.00	$22.00	10.00%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Public Home Support Holiday Service	Per hour	N	$18.00	$20.00	11.11%	$2.00	Non-Statutory
Social Support Individual	Per session	N	$9.00	$10.00	11.11%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Leap Program							
LEAP Active Ageing Program (MAC Registered)	Per session	N	$5.00	$8.00	60.00%	$3.00	Non-Statutory
LEAP Full Day Activities/Trips (MAC Registered)	Per session	N	$40.00	$40.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Senior Luncheon - (MAC Registered)	Per session	N	$20.00	$25.00	25.00%	$5.00	Non-Statutory
LEAP Full Day Activities/Trips	Per person, per event	N	$60.00	$60.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
LEAP Active Ageing Program	Per person, per event	N	$8.00	$15.00	87.50%	$7.00	Non-Statutory
Senior Luncheon	Per person, per event	N	$40.00	$45.00	12.50%	$5.00	Non-Statutory
HACCPYP							
Client In Service Kilometre HACCPYP	Per unit	N	$1.45	$1.45	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Community Care HACCPYP	Per hour	N	$6.00	$6.20	3.33%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Meals - HACCPYP	Per unit	N	$6.00	$6.20	3.33%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Property Maintenance HACCPYP	Per hour	N	$12.00	$12.45	3.75%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Leisure Centres							
Whittlesea Swim Centre							
Aquatics							
Spectator Casual Entry	Per entry	Y	$2.00	$2.20	10.00%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Adult Swim	Per entry	Y	$7.25	$7.50	3.45%	$0.25	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Adult Swim	Per adult	Y	$66.30	$67.50	1.81%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
Child Swim - Single Entry	Per entry	Y	$4.75	$4.90	3.16%	$0.15	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Child Swim	Per child	Y	$43.05	$44.10	2.44%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Concession/Student Swim - Single Entry	Per entry	Y	$5.70	$5.90	3.51%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Concession/Student Swim	Per concession	Y	$51.50	$53.10	3.11%	$1.60	Non-Statutory
Family Swim - Single Entry	Per entry	Y	$18.15	$18.80	3.58%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Family Swim	Per family pass	Y	$164.45	$169.20	2.89%	$4.75	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Aquatics [continued]							
Super Summer Single Pass (Start of Season)	Per season pass	Y	$179.45	$186.25	3.79%	$6.80	Non-Statutory
Super Summer Single Pass (from 1st Feb)	Per season pass	Y	$89.80	$93.20	3.79%	$3.40	Non-Statutory
Swim Lessons							
Primary, Preschool,Teen, Adult	Per swim lesson	N	$9.80	$9.80	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory
Private Lesson 1:1	Per swim lesson	N	$43.90	$45.55	3.76%	$1.65	Non-Statutory
Access & Inclusion 1:1 Lesson	Per swim lesson	N	$25.45	$26.40	3.73%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Schools Swim lessons							
Schools Group Entry	Per entry	N	$3.60	$3.70	2.78%	$0.10	Non-Statutory
School Carnival	Per booking	N	$1,486.95	$1,543.45	3.80%	$56.50	Non-Statutory
School Lessons 1-10 Ratio 45 Minutes	Per swim lesson	N	$10.20	$10.55	3.43%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
School Lessons 1-7 Ratio 45 Minutes	Per swim lesson	N	$12.80	$13.25	3.52%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Group Exercise							
Aqua Class- Single Entry	Per entry	Y	$9.55	$9.90	3.66%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Group Fitness Class	Per adult	Y	$83.50	$89.10	6.71%	$5.60	Non-Statutory
Older Adult program							
Access, LEAP Group Fitness Class	Per class	Y	$8.20	$8.50	3.66%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
10 Visit Access LEAP Group Fitness Class	Per person	Y	$73.65	$76.40	3.73%	$2.75	Non-Statutory
Children's Programs							
Birthday Party Un-catered	Per child	Y	$21.85	$22.65	3.66%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Facility Hire							
Lane Hire	Per lane, per hour	Y	$48.75	$50.60	3.79%	$1.85	Non-Statutory
Miscellaneous							
Dive in Movie Single	Per single entry	Y	$11.25	$11.65	3.56%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Dive in Movie Family	Per family entry	Y	$36.70	$38.05	3.68%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Thomastown Recreation & Aquatic Centre & Mill Park Leisure							
Aquatics							
20 Adult Swim, Spa and Sauna Pass	Per adult	Y	$228.60	$239.40	4.72%	$10.80	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Aquatics [continued]							
20 Concession Swim, Spa and Sauna Pass	Per concession	Y	$187.15	$194.25	3.79%	$7.10	Non-Statutory
20 Family Swim Pass	Per family	Y	$350.90	$369.00	5.16%	$18.10	Non-Statutory
20 Swim - Adult	Per adult	Y	$138.25	$144.00	4.16%	$5.75	Non-Statutory
20 Swim - Child	Per child	Y	$107.90	$113.40	5.10%	$5.50	Non-Statutory
20 Swim - Concession	Per concession	Y	$107.90	$112.00	3.80%	$4.10	Non-Statutory
Adult Swim - Women's Swimming Program	Per lesson	Y	$6.05	$6.25	3.31%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Spectator Casual Entry	Per entry	Y	$2.00	$2.20	10.00%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Adult Swim	Per entry	Y	$7.60	$8.00	5.26%	$0.40	Non-Statutory
Child Swim	Per entry	Y	$6.05	$6.25	3.31%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Concession Swim	Per concession	Y	$6.05	$6.25	3.31%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Family Swim	Per entry	Y	$19.20	$20.50	6.77%	$1.30	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Adult Swim	Per adult	Y	$68.85	$72.00	4.58%	$3.15	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Child Swim	Per child	Y	$54.45	$56.50	3.76%	$2.05	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Concession Swim	Per concession	Y	$54.45	$56.50	3.76%	$2.05	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Family Swim	Per entry	Y	$173.20	$184.50	6.52%	$11.30	Non-Statutory
Adult Swim, Spa and Sauna	Per entry	Y	$12.65	$13.30	5.14%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
Concession Swim, Spa and Sauna	Per concession	Y	$10.30	$10.65	3.40%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Adult Swim, Spa and Sauna	Per entry	Y	$114.80	$119.70	4.27%	$4.90	Non-Statutory
10 Pass Concession Swim, Spa and Sauna	Per concession	Y	$93.75	$97.30	3.79%	$3.55	Non-Statutory
Swim, Spa and Sauna After Class	Per entry	Y	$5.95	$6.15	3.36%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Swim Lessons							
Access 1-1 Ratio Lesson 30 Minutes Fortnightly Fee	Per lesson	N	$55.50	$57.60	3.78%	$2.10	Non-Statutory
Child Swim Lesson – 30 Minutes	Per lesson	N	$19.85	$21.20	6.80%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Adult Swim Lesson – 45 Minutes	Per lesson	N	$31.40	$32.55	3.66%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Access & Inclusion 1-1 Ratio Lesson 30 Minutes	Per lesson	N	$27.70	$28.75	3.79%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Private Swim Lesson	Per lesson	N	$58.60	$60.80	3.75%	$2.20	Non-Statutory
Schools Swim lessons							
25m Pool Carnival Hire	One off fee	Y	$249.35	$258.80	3.79%	$9.45	Non-Statutory
25m Pool Carnival Hire After Hours	One off fee	Y	$403.20	$418.50	3.79%	$15.30	Non-Statutory
Carnival/Group Booking Entry Fee	One off fee	Y	$5.95	$6.15	3.36%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
School Fun Day Session	One off fee	Y	$17.85	$18.50	3.64%	$0.65	Non-Statutory
Water Safety Session	Per lesson	N	$19.60	$18.50	-5.61%	-$1.10	Non-Statutory
1-10 Ratio 45 Minutes - per Child	Per lesson	N	$9.95	$10.30	3.52%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
1-7 Ratio 45 Minutes - per Child	Per lesson	N	$12.55	$13.00	3.59%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
Additional child (If Less than 2 Hour Booking)	One off fee	N	$4.30	$4.45	3.49%	$0.15	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Group Exercise							
Reformer Pilates - Single Entry	Per entry	Y	$26.95	$27.95	3.71%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Reformer Pilates - Single Entry - Concession	Per concession	Y	$18.85	$19.55	3.71%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
School Gym/Group Fitness Session	Per entry	Y	$14.71	$15.25	3.67%	$0.54	Non-Statutory
Group Fitness – All Classes	Per entry	Y	$16.85	$17.45	3.56%	$0.60	Non-Statutory
Group Fitness – All Classes Concession	Per entry	Y	$13.55	$14.05	3.69%	$0.50	Non-Statutory
9 Pass Group Fitness	Per entry	Y	$151.55	$157.30	3.79%	$5.75	Non-Statutory
9 Pass Group Fitness Concession	Per concession	Y	$121.85	$126.45	3.78%	$4.60	Non-Statutory
LEAP Program							
LEAP Aqua / Movers / Gym	Per entry	Y	$8.20	$8.50	3.66%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
10 Pass LEAP	Per entry	Y	$73.65	$76.40	3.73%	$2.75	Non-Statutory
LEAP Gym Fitness Assessment and Program	Per entry	Y	$43.05	$44.65	3.72%	$1.60	Non-Statutory
Personal Training							
Member 1 x 30 Minutes Session	Per half hour	Y	$46.30	$48.05	3.78%	$1.75	Non-Statutory
Non Member 1 x 30 Minutes Session	Per half hour	Y	$52.35	$54.30	3.72%	$1.95	Non-Statutory
Member 10 x 30 Minutes Sessions	Per pass	Y	$439.30	$432.00	-1.66%	-$7.30	Non-Statutory
Non Member 10 x 30 Minutes Sessions	Per pass	Y	$498.40	$488.70	-1.95%	-$9.70	Non-Statutory
Member 1 x 60 Minutes Session	Per hour	Y	$75.35	$78.20	3.78%	$2.85	Non-Statutory
Non Member 1 x 60 Minutes Session	Per hour	Y	$84.85	$88.05	3.77%	$3.20	Non-Statutory
Member 10 x 60 Minutes Sessions	Per pass	Y	$714.50	$703.80	-1.50%	-$10.70	Non-Statutory
Non Member 10 x 60 Minutes Sessions	Per pass	Y	$805.90	$792.90	-1.61%	-$13.00	Non-Statutory
Share 2 person – Member 1 x 60 Minutes	Per hour	Y	$91.75	$95.20	3.76%	$3.45	Non-Statutory
Share 2 person – Non Member 1 x 60 Minutes	Per hour	Y	$110.35	$114.55	3.81%	$4.20	Non-Statutory
Share 2 person – Member 10 x 60 Minutes	Per pass	Y	$871.95	$856.80	-1.74%	-$15.15	Non-Statutory
Share 2 person – Non Member 10 x 60 Minutes	Per pass	Y	$1,048.15	$1,030.50	-1.68%	-$17.65	Non-Statutory
Childrens' Programs							
Additional Staff for 16 Children or more	One off fee	Y	$77.65	$80.60	3.80%	$2.95	Non-Statutory
Birthday Party - Catered, per Child	Per child	Y	$30.25	$31.50	4.13%	$1.25	Non-Statutory
Birthday Party Non-Catered (Standard 12-15 Children) per Child	Per child	Y	$18.30	$19.00	3.83%	$0.70	Non-Statutory
School/Group Entry	One off fee	Y	$12.90	$13.35	3.49%	$0.45	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Creche							
1 Child per 1 Session	Per hour	Y	$7.85	$8.15	3.82%	$0.30	Non-Statutory
2 Children per 1 Session	Per hour	Y	$9.95	$10.30	3.52%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
3 or more Children per 1 Session	Per hour	Y	$12.15	$12.60	3.70%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
10 Pass – 1 Child per 1 Session	Per pass	Y	$71.25	$72.90	2.32%	$1.65	Non-Statutory
10 Pass – 2 Children per 1 Session	Per pass	Y	$90.15	$93.55	3.77%	$3.40	Non-Statutory
10 Pass – 3 or more Children per 1 Session	Per pass	Y	$109.90	$114.05	3.78%	$4.15	Non-Statutory
Occasional Care							
Per Child per Session	Per hour	Y	$9.70	$10.05	3.61%	$0.35	Non-Statutory
Facility Hire							
Court - Casual Use per Person	Per entry	Y	$4.95	$5.10	3.03%	$0.15	Non-Statutory
Full Court – After 4pm Weekdays and Weekends	Per hour	Y	$52.55	$54.50	3.71%	$1.95	Non-Statutory
Full Court – Before 4pm Weekdays	Per hour	Y	$44.00	$45.65	3.75%	$1.65	Non-Statutory
Group Fitness Room Rental per Hour	Per hour	Y	$46.25	$48.00	3.78%	$1.75	Non-Statutory
Meeting Room Hire (Next to Cafe)	Per hour	Y	$46.30	$48.05	3.78%	$1.75	Non-Statutory
25m Pool Lane Hire – Permanent	Per lane, per hour	Y	$31.40	$32.60	3.82%	$1.20	Non-Statutory
25m Pool Lane Hire – Casual	Per lane, per hour	Y	$47.40	$49.20	3.80%	$1.80	Non-Statutory
Hydro Pool Hire (1/2 Pool)	Per hour	Y	$91.45	$94.90	3.77%	$3.45	Non-Statutory
Hydro Pool Hire	Per hour	Y	$182.15	$189.05	3.79%	$6.90	Non-Statutory
Miscellaneous							
Locker	Per locker	Y	$2.65	$2.75	3.77%	$0.10	Non-Statutory
RFID Band	Per RFID band	Y	$14.71	$15.25	3.67%	$0.54	Non-Statutory
Club Memberships (New fee structure)							
Active Whittlesea - Weekly Fee	Per week	Y	$24.15	$25.05	3.73%	$0.90	Non-Statutory
Active Whittlesea Membership Concession	Per week concession	Y	$25.15	$17.50	-30.42%	-$7.65	Non-Statutory
Bronze - Concession PIF 3 Months	Per quarter concession	Y	$232.35	$241.15	3.79%	$8.80	Non-Statutory
Bronze - PIF 3 Months	Per quarter	Y	$299.35	$310.70	3.79%	$11.35	Non-Statutory
Bronze - PIF Adult 12 Months	Per annum	Y	$965.50	$1,002.15	3.80%	$36.65	Non-Statutory
Bronze - PIF Concession 12 Months	Per annum concession	Y	$774.75	$804.15	3.79%	$29.40	Non-Statutory
Bronze - Weekly Fee	Per week	Y	$17.45	$18.50	6.02%	$1.05	Non-Statutory
Bronze Concession - Weekly Fee	Per week	Y	$12.15	$12.60	3.70%	$0.45	Non-Statutory
DPV - Casual Entry	Per entry concession	Y	$5.95	$6.15	3.36%	$0.20	Non-Statutory
Gold - Health Club, Group Fitness & Aquatics - Adult PIF 3 Months	Per quarter	Y	$374.55	$388.75	3.79%	$14.20	Non-Statutory

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Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Club Memberships (New fee structure) [continued]							
Gold - Health Club, Group Fitness & Aquatics - Concession PIF 3 Months	Per quarter concession	Y	$261.75	$271.65	3.78%	$9.90	Non-Statutory
Gold - Health Club, Group Fitness & Aquatics PIF 12 Months	Per annum	Y	$1,208.30	$1,254.20	3.80%	$45.90	Non-Statutory
Gold - Health Club, Group Fitness & Aquatics PIF 12 Months Concession	Per annum concession	Y	$1,173.10	$1,217.65	3.80%	$44.55	Non-Statutory
Gold - Weekly Fee	Per week	Y	$21.85	$23.00	5.26%	$1.15	Non-Statutory
Gold Concession - Weekly Fee	Per week	Y	$15.25	$16.00	4.92%	$0.75	Non-Statutory
Health Club - Casual Entry	Per entry	Y	$21.65	$22.45	3.70%	$0.80	Non-Statutory
Health Club - Casual Entry - Concession	Per entry concession	Y	$15.10	$15.65	3.64%	$0.55	Non-Statutory
Platinum (Reformer Pilates) Membership - Weekly Fee	Per week	Y	$35.95	$37.30	3.76%	$1.35	Non-Statutory
Platinum (Reformer Pilates) Membership - Weekly Fee - Concession	Per week	Y	$26.95	$27.95	3.71%	$1.00	Non-Statutory
Silver - Weekly Fee	Per week	Y	$19.65	$20.60	4.83%	$0.95	Non-Statutory
Silver- Weekly Fee Concession	Per week	Y	$25.50	$14.40	-43.53%	-$11.10	Non-Statutory
Creative Communities							
Ziebell's Farmhouse Museum Entry Fee							
Children Under 5 Years	Per entry	Y	$0.00	$0.00	0.00%	∞	Non-Statutory
Children 5 - 18 Years	Per entry	Y	$0.00	$5.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Adult	Per entry	Y	$0.00	$8.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Family (2 Adults; and up to 3 Children)	Per entry	Y	$0.00	$25.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
School Holiday Workshop	Per entry	Y	$0.00	$10.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Cultural Engagement Workshop	Per entry	Y	$0.00	$20.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Festival and Events Bonds							
Under 1,000 people							
Moderate risk							
Commercial Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,200.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Commercial Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$300.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Major risk							
Commercial Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Commercial Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,200.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,200.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
1,000 - 4,999 people							
Low risk							
Commercial Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$2,500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Commercial Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$2,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Neighbourhood Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Moderate risk							
Commercial Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$2,500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Commercial Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$3,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Major risk							
Commercial Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$3,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Commercial Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$4,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,200.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory

continued on next page ...

Name	Unit	GST	2024-25 Fee (incl. GST)	2025-26 Fee (incl. GST)	Increase/ Decrease %	Increase/ Decrease $	Basis of Fee
Major risk [continued]							
Private Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,200.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Over 5,000 people							
Moderate risk							
Commercial Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$4,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Commercial Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$5,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,500.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Major risk							
Commercial Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$5,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Commercial Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$8,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Community Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$3,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - Municipal Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$1,800.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Private Event - State/Regional Open Space	Per festival/ event	N	$0.00	$3,000.00	∞	∞	Non-Statutory
Whittlesea Community Festival							
Site Fees Community							
Market Stalls without Infrastructure	Per booking	N	$100.00	$120.00	20.00%	$20.00	Non-Statutory
Food Stalls without Infrastructure	Per booking	N	$100.00	$120.00	20.00%	$20.00	Non-Statutory
Site Fees Commercial							
Market Stalls without Infrastructure	Per booking	N	$175.00	$180.00	2.86%	$5.00	Non-Statutory
Food Stalls without Infrastructure	Per booking	N	$246.25	$275.00	11.68%	$28.75	Non-Statutory
Carols by Candlelight							
Site Fee with Power - Commercial	Per booking	N	$250.00	$275.00	10.00%	$25.00	Non-Statutory
Site Fee with Power - Community	Per booking	N	$100.00	$100.00	0.00%	$0.00	Non-Statutory

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preferred language:

Free telephone interpreter service
131 450

City of Whittlesea



Financial Plan

2025-26 to 2034-35

City of Whittlesea

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and the Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.



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1. Introduction

Background

The Financial Plan (Plan) is a key strategic document that guides Council in managing its resources effectively to meet its strategic objectives and the needs of the community over the next 10 years. It provides a long term financial framework that supports Council's ability to meet both current and future financial capacity to deliver the required level of services and infrastructure for a growing community, while ensuring that Council is financially sustainable.

The *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act) requires Councils to prepare a 10 years Financial Plan in the year following a general election. It aligns with the Community Vision, Council Plan (referred as Community Plan) and other strategic plans of Council.

Objectives

The primary objective in developing Council's Financial Plan is striking a balance between maximising support for our community in the present, while maintaining a sound financial position to enable long term support for our growing community.

The Financial Plan has been developed to achieve the following objectives for Council:

- Establishing a clear link between Council's Community Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 and the financial resources required to achieve this in the medium term as well as our Whittlesea 2040 Community Vision in the longer term
- Establish a financial framework against which Council's strategies, policies and financial performance can be measured against
- Ensure that Council complies with sound financial management principles, as required by the Act.

The short to medium-term objectives of Council's Financial Plan are to:

- Ensure an appropriate balance between investment in new infrastructure to support our growing community and the renewal of our existing assets in established areas
- Generate sufficient operating surpluses to continue to provide the existing level of services and meet community demands and expectations
- Adapt future service levels to align with the evolving needs and expectations of the community, in accordance with service delivery plans
- Maintain a strong cash position to ensure we remain financially sustainable for future generations
- Determine the appropriate funding sources to support investment decisions in line with Council's Capital Management policies (Investment Policy and Borrowing Policy)
- Ensure our rates, fees and charges are manageable and support the delivery of key services and infrastructure investment
- Ensure decisions are made having regard to their financial effects on future generations.

The plan also considers key financial challenges, risks, and broader social, economics and environmental factors, including population growth, cost of living pressures, infrastructure renewal, climate change impacts and cost shifting from other levels of government. Additionally, it accounts for external economic and political influences such as inflation, rate cap, interest rate fluctuations, global economic conditions, and legislative reforms. By maintaining a balanced and prudent approach to financial management, Council aims to responsibly invest in community services, transport networks, and upgrading and delivering essential infrastructure over the next decade.

Financial Plan 2026-35

Operating highlights



$5.4b
Operating income/revenue



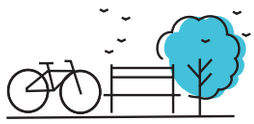
$4.1b
Operating expenditure



$1.4b
Operating surplus/deficit



$313.3m
Family, children, youth and aged services



$421.5m
Parks and open space



$525.7m
Resource recovery and waste management



$296.6m
Transport network improvements



$157.5m
Leisure, recreation and community facilities



$99.2m
Public health, safety and emergency management



$89.2m
Libraries



$22.2m
Local businesses and communities



$18.2m
Community grants

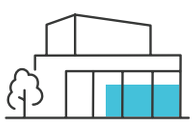
Capital works highlights



$1.1b
Capital works program



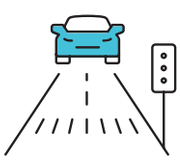
$442.7m
Investment in renewing and expanding assets



$632.1m
Investment in new assets



$249.8m
Recreation, leisure and community facilities



$220.7m
Roads



$190.5m
Parks and open space

The development of Council's Financial Plan is supported by a number of underlying assumptions which are outlined in section 3.3. When reviewing key assumptions and financial information, there are a number of important considerations that require some additional context as outlined below.

Our operating surplus / performance

Council's operating surplus is calculated as our total revenue received (from sources including rates, fees and charges, grants etc.) less our total operating expenses (employee costs, cost of goods and services etc.).

On face value, the operating surplus over the 10 years may look like a significant surplus, it is important to note that it is not a cash surplus or immediately available funds for Council. A significant portion of this surplus is tied to non-cash items or restricted by legislation as per the following:

a) **Contributions non-monetary**: These are gifted assets received from developers such as roads, parks or infrastructure from developers
b) **Contributions monetary**: These are contributions received from or paid to developers and are restricted by legislation on how and when they can be used
c) **Non-recurrent capital grants**: Grant received for a specific infrastructure project and usage is restricted by the funding agreement; and
d) **Capital Works program**: A significant portion of the available surplus is invested towards maintaining, upgrading or delivering new critical infrastructure for our growing community.

If the above items from a) to c) were removed, the adjusted underlying deficit is ($4.60) million over the 10 years.

The table below presents the underlying results, which reflect the sustainable operating performance required to continue to deliver essential services and meet its strategic objectives.

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Total income/revenue	502,419	499,083	497,782	513,177	529,111	547,463	559,990	579,751	599,698	620,644
Total expenses	349,878	343,657	366,115	378,770	390,621	411,055	428,778	450,022	464,155	483,652
Surplus/ (deficit)	**152,541**	**155,426**	**131,667**	**134,407**	**138,490**	**136,408**	**131,212**	**129,729**	**135,543**	**136,992**
Less adjustments										
Non recurrent capital grants	(24,000)	(18,775)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contributions - monetary	(34,691)	(16,691)	(17,691)	(14,691)	(14,691)	(14,691)	(9,691)	(8,691)	(7,691)	(7,691)
Contributions - non-monetary	(109,348)	(111,535)	(113,766)	(116,041)	(118,362)	(120,729)	(123,144)	(125,607)	(128,119)	(130,681)
Total adjustments	**(168,039)**	**(147,001)**	**(131,457)**	**(130,732)**	**(133,053)**	**(135,420)**	**(132,835)**	**(134,298)**	**(135,810)**	**(138,372)**
Adjusted underlying surplus/ (deficit)*	**(15,498)**	**8,425**	**210**	**3,675**	**5,437**	**988**	**(1,623)**	**(4,569)**	**(267)**	**(1,380)**

*The calculation of the adjusted underlying result excludes reimbursement payments to developers, which are accounted for as expenditure. If these reimbursements were included in the calculation, Council would generate a modest underlying surplus in most years.

Infrastructure

Council will invest $1.07 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years, delivering essential infrastructure to support the needs of our growing community, enhance essential services, creating hundreds of construction jobs and stimulating our local economy.

This record infrastructure investment will require Council to borrow up to $190.82 million over the next 10 years. We will also require financial support and grants from the Victorian and Federal Governments to deliver this Financial Plan.

Our rates and charges

Rates and charges are Council's primary source of income and integral to funding the delivery of services and infrastructure investment.

With the introduction of the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rating System in 2016, Council's rates and charges are now subject to an annual cap which is outlined annually by the Minister for Local Government. The impact of this has meant that the growth in costs associated with supporting our growing community often far exceeds the increases in our revenue base available to fund such costs.

The Financial plan assumes an annual rate increase of 3% over the financial plan.

City of Whittlesea continues to maintain one of the lowest average rates across Councils located outside the Melbourne fringe.

Our available cash

Similar to our operating surplus, while Council's cash position may appear significant, the reality is quite different. Over 56% of Council's cash is restricted for future use and therefore not at Council's discretion in how it is spent. Council's strategy is to maintain a cash balance that covers short-term financial obligations, whilst also providing adequate funding for future community infrastructure investment.

Advocacy

Council will continue to advocate to both the State and Federal governments on behalf of our community, seeking funding to support the delivery of important infrastructure projects and service outcomes for the community. This is a key area of focus for Council, as obtaining external funding for projects frees up Council's cash reserves which can be invested in other areas for further community benefit.

2. Integrated Planning Framework

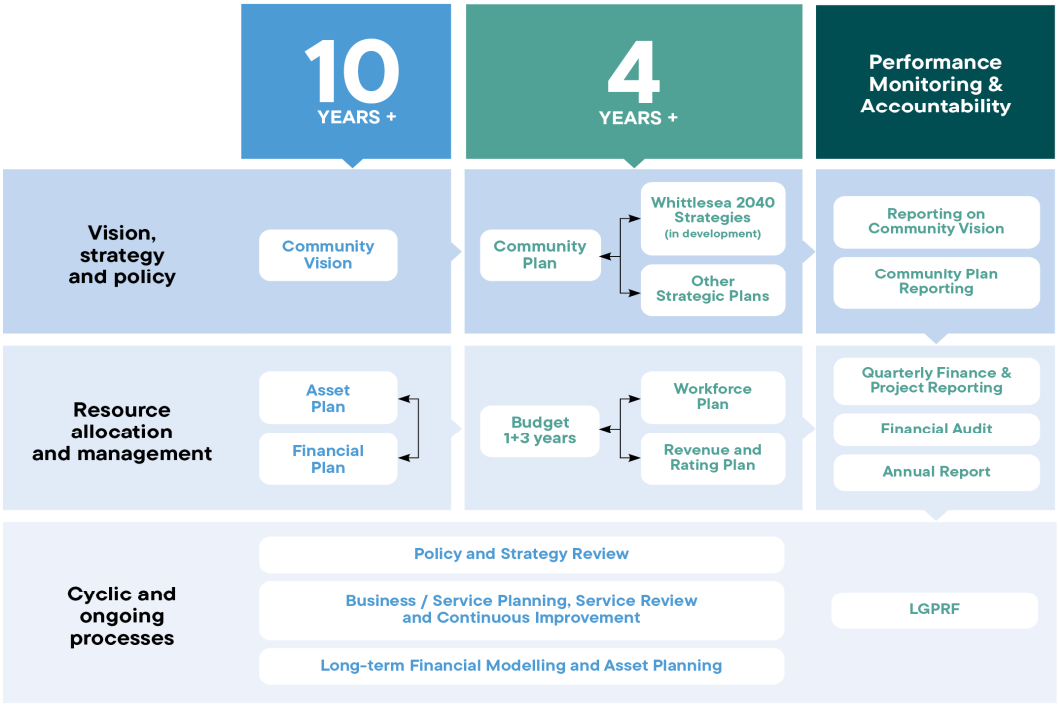
This section describes how the Financial Plan links to the achievement of the Community Vision and the Council Plan within the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting framework. This framework guides Council in identifying community needs and aspirations over the long term (Community Vision), medium term (Council Plan referred as Community Plan) and short term (Annual Budget) and then holding itself accountable (Annual Report).

The following diagram provides an overview of the core legislated elements of an integrated strategic planning and reporting framework and outcomes.



2. Integrated Planning Framework (cont)

The following diagram demonstrates how each element might inform or be informed by other parts of the integrated framework.



2.1 Strategic planning principles

The Financial Plan provides a 10 year financially sustainable projection regarding how the actions of Community Plan may be funded to achieve the Community Vision. The Financial Plan is developed in the context of the following strategic planning principles:

- Council has an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting
- Council's Financial Plan addresses the Community Vision by funding the aspirations of the Community Plan. The Community Plan aspirations and actions are formulated in the context of the Community Vision
- The Financial Plan statements articulate financial resources necessary to implement the goals and aspirations of the Community Plan to achieve the Community Vision
- Council's strategic planning principles identify and address the risks to effective implementation of the Financial Plan
- The Financial Plan provides for the strategic planning principles of progress monitoring and reviews, to identify and adapt to changing circumstances.

2.2 Financial management principles

The Financial Plan demonstrates the following financial management principles:

- Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions are managed in accordance with Council's financial policies and strategic plans
- Management of the following financial risks:
  - The financial viability of Council (refer to section 3.1 Financial policy statements)
  - The management of current and future liabilities of Council. The estimated liabilities over 10 years are disclosed in section 4.2 Balance sheet
  - The beneficial enterprises of Council (where appropriate)
- Financial policies and strategic plans are designed to provide financial stability and predictability to the community
- Council maintains accounts and records that explain its financial operations and financial position (refer section 4 Financial Plan Statements).

2.3 Engagement principles

The Local Government Act 2020 requires Council to use deliberative engagement to develop Community Vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan and Asset Plan. The deliberative engagement encourages community members to critically test, weigh up and consider a range of information, perspectives, inputs and evidence to make a recommendation or reach consensus if needed.

Council uses the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Engagement to guide our planning. The IAP2 Spectrum is a useful, widely recognised tool that identifies five levels of participation. For each level, there are corresponding goals and actions. It makes clear the role of the community in decision-making at each level.

The Financial Plan was created through the 'involve' level of public participation, where we collaborated closely with community members to understand their concerns and aspirations. These insights were carefully considered and integrated into the plan wherever feasible. Additionally, we communicated how participants' contributions shaped the development of the Financial Plan. This approach to public participation was carried out using deliberative engagement practices, in compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020* .

As stated in our Community Engagement Policy, deliberative engagement is a process used to reach an outcome or decision for complex issues. It is an inclusive and transparent process in which participants are provided with:

- a clearly defined purpose, scope and objectives of the decision/project
- relevant and timely information to participate meaningfully in the engagement
- sufficient time to explore, assess and discuss options
- reasonable support to enable participation in the process.

2.3 Engagement principles (cont)

Community consultation

An extensive community engagement program has been conducted to inform the development of the Financial Plan. Throughout August and September 2024 Council asked the community to tell us what was important to them to help shape the Financial Plan along with other Proposed Financial Strategic documents including the Budget and Revenue and Rating Plan. More than 880 people shared their thoughts both online and at 13 community-based pop-ups.

Our community told us their top five priorities were roads, public transport and footpaths; parks playgrounds and open space; community facilities; community safety; and arts, culture and events. We again checked in with the community during December 2024 and January 2025 to confirm the priorities identified. Of the 133 people who participated, the majority (75%) agreed with the order of the priority areas, with the remainder suggesting an alternate order or priority.

Community priorities focus group

In February 2025, 46 carefully selected community members, representing the diverse demographics of the community, participated in three focus groups to discuss local priorities. The group represented a broad cross section of the community, including residents, business owners, workers, ratepayers, carers, parents, seniors, youth, and members of the LGBTIQA+ community.

They identified key service areas they valued most and wished to see maintained or enhanced. Local business support, youth services, public health and safety, waste management, and ageing well services emerged as top priorities for continued or increased support. Participants also provided support for the maintenance of areas such as animal management, creative communities, community strengthening, biodiversity, land management, and sustainable planning and design.

Following Council endorsement, the community was invited to provide their suggestions for inclusion, support or changes to the Proposed Financial Plan for community consultation during April and May 2025. A total of 78 participants contributed to the consultation either online or at one of eight community-based pop-ups.

Respondents were also provided with the option to speak to their submission in person at the Hearing of Submissions Committee of Council, with four people opting to do this. Eighty-nine percent of participants were supportive of the Proposed Financial Plan. Based on the feedback from community consultation and after consideration of all submissions, the Hearing of Submissions Committee may make recommendations to Council at the Council Meeting on Tuesday 17 June 2025.

2.4 Service performance principles

Council services are designed to be targeted towards community needs and value for money. The service performance principles are listed below:

- Services are provided in an equitable manner and are responsive to the diverse needs of the community. The Community Plan is designed to identify the key services and projects to be delivered to the community. The Financial Plan provides the mechanism to demonstrate how the service aspirations within the Council Plan may be funded
- Services are accessible to the relevant users within the community
- Council provides quality services that provide value for money to the community. The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) is designed to communicate Council's performance regarding the provision of high-quality and efficient services
- Council is developing a performance monitoring framework to continuously improve its service delivery standards
- Council is developing a service delivery framework that considers and responds to community needs, feedback and complaints regarding service provision.

2.5 Asset Plan integration

Integration between the Financial Plan and Asset Plan is a key principle of Council's strategic financial planning principles. The purpose of this integration is designed to ensure that future funding is allocated in a manner that supports service delivery in terms of the ongoing effective management and future plans of Council's assets.

The Asset Plan identifies the operational and strategic practices which will ensure that Council manages assets across their life cycle in a financially sustainable manner. The Asset Plan, and associated asset management policies, provide Council with a sound base to understand the risk associated with managing its assets for the community's benefit.

The Asset Plan is designed to inform the Financial Plan by identifying the amount of capital renewal, backlog and maintenance funding that is required over the life of each asset category. The level of funding will incorporate knowledge of asset condition, the risk assessment issues as well as the impact of reviewing and setting intervention and service levels for each asset class.

In addition to identifying the operational and strategic practices for managing assets across their life cycle in a financially sustainable manner, the Asset Plan quantifies the asset portfolio and the financial implications of those practices. Together the Financial Plan and Asset Plan seek to balance projected investment requirements against projected budgets.

2.6 Revenue and Rating Plan integration

Integration between the Financial Plan and the Revenue and Rating Plan is a key principle of Council's strategic financial principles. The purpose of this integration is to ensure that Council's revenue is raised from the community in a manner that supports Council's longer term financial plans and broader plans as set out in the Council Vision.

The revenue raised by a local government is for delivering services and infrastructure to benefit those providing the revenue – the local community. The Revenue and Rating Plan is therefore linked to planned expenditure in the annual budget and strategic financial planning. They cannot be separated as any increase in spending by a Council must be matched by revenue.

The Revenue and Rating Plan provides the framework for the setting of fees and charges, statutory charges, rates, and other Council income sources. It also makes assumptions regarding the levels of non-controlled revenues that Council expects to generate over the four years, such as grants, subsidies, and contributions.

Additionally, it defines the amounts of rates to be generated either through a uniform rate, or from different ratepayer/property classes through municipal charges, differential rates, service rates and charges, and special rates and charges (where they have been adopted).

The Revenue and Rating Plan therefore defines what each source of revenue is, how income will be raised and the policy rationale/assumptions for each, to fund Council's proposed expenditure detailed in their budget.

3. Financial Plan Context

This section describes the internal and external contexts which informed the 10-year financial projections and assumptions.

3.1 Financial policy statements

See below the policy statements and associated measures which demonstrate how Council plans to fund the aspirations of the Community Vision and the Community Plan in a sustainable way.

Policy Statement	Target	Budget 2025-26	Projection 2026-27	Projection 2027-28	Projection 2028-29	Projection 2029-30	Projection 2030-31	Projection 2031-32	Projection 2032-33	Projection 2033-34	Projection 2034-35
Council achieves an adjusted underlying surplus (operating surplus less contribution, less non-recurrent capital grants)*	**>(5%)**	(4.63%)	2.39%	0.06%	0.96%	1.37%	0.24%	(0.38%)	(1.03%)	(0.06%)	(0.29%)
Council maintains a liquidity ratio greater than or equal to 1.1	**>100%**	304.54%	295.25%	288.49%	292.62%	295.05%	282.71%	268.31%	261.02%	246.68%	223.65%
Allocate adequate funds towards renewal capital in order to replace assets and infrastructure as they reach the end of their service life	**>50%**	57.94%	86.29%	80.21%	56.90%	59.28%	56.74%	53.35%	53.79%	51.70%	50.02%
Council applies loan funding to new capital and maintains total borrowings in line with rate income and growth of the municipality	**<60%**	11.19%	23.36%	30.64%	26.50%	23.22%	21.56%	21.30%	21.89%	20.12%	23.03%
Council able to pay long-term financial obligations (non-current liabilities) from the revenue it generates itself	**<30%**	9.48%	18.32%	23.48%	20.74%	18.19%	16.52%	15.98%	15.98%	14.22%	16.83%

*The calculation of the adjusted underlying result excludes reimbursement payments to developers, which are accounted for as expenditure. If these reimbursements were included in the calculation, Council would generate a modest underlying surplus in most years.

3.2 Strategic actions

Following a series of community engagement activities, Council has identified the following strategic actions that will support the aspirations of the Community Plan.

The strategic actions are included in the 10-year Financial Plan and, where appropriate, referenced in the commentary associated with the 10-year Comprehensive Income Statement and the 10-year Statement of Capital Works.

Some of Council's key strategic actions include:

- Rate cap increase in accordance with current CPI information
- Setting of waste charge at a sustainable level that covers the cost of providing the service
- Drive operational efficiencies by conducting service reviews to identify areas where processes can be streamlined, technology leveraged, and resources better allocated to improve productivity
- Setting of Council's fees and charges at a level that achieves balance between community benefit and financial sustainability
- Continuing to identify sources of alternative revenue streams and advocate for external funding to reduce the burden on rate revenue
- Monitor Council's investment in asset renewal to ensure an appropriate balance between new infrastructure for growth areas and asset renewal for established areas
- Advocate to State and Federal Government for the funding of infrastructure projects and services
- Maintaining a strong cash position, ensuring Council remains financially sustainable in the long term
- Invest in Innovation and Digital Transformation exploring opportunities to modernise service delivery through smart technologies and automation, reducing manual effort and improving customer experience.

3.3 Assumptions to the financial plan statements

This section presents information regarding the assumptions to the Comprehensive Income Statement for the 10 years from 2025-26 to 2034-35. The assumptions comprise the annual escalations / movement for each line item of the Comprehensive Income Statement.

Assumptions	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
Rate cap increase	3.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Population growth	2.62%	2.61%	2.55%	2.54%	2.45%	2.35%	2.29%	2.23%	2.10%	2.00%
Statutory fees and fines	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
User fees	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%
Grants - operating	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Grants - capital	No growth assumption used. Capital grants only included upon receipt of a signed funding agreement.									
Contributions - monetary	Based on forecasted funding commitment									
Contributions - non-monetary	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Other income	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Employee costs (EBA)	2.70%	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%
Materials and services	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%
Depreciation and amortisation	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%	2.85%
Other expenses	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%

3.3.1 Rates and charges

The introduction of the Fair Go Rates System by the Victorian Government from 2016 now requires all Victorian Councils to comply with an annual rate cap. This applies to general rates and municipal charges.

The rate cap for 2025-26 was set at 3% as approved by the Minister for Local Government, in comparison to 2.75% for 2024-25.

The Financial Plan is based on Council complying with the annual rate cap, which for the purposes of this document is assumed to be 2.5% for future years.

Supplementary rates reflect additional revenue generated through new properties that come online during the financial year, as developments are completed. It is anticipated that an additional $3.7 million per annum will be driven by supplementary rates, growing at a rate of 2.5% per annum over the life of the Financial Plan.

Further information about rating principles can be found in Council's Revenue and Rating Plan 2024-25 to 2028-29.

3.3.2 Statutory fees and fines

The Financial Plan indexes statutory fees, set by legislation, according to the estimated annual rate of CPI. This may be a 'best case scenario' as some fees are outside Council's control and therefore may be subject to increases less than the annual rate of CPI.

3.3.3 User fees

User fees and charges are those that Council charge to recover proportions of the costs of delivering services to the community.

A key consideration in setting user fees and charges is to ensure access to key services and infrastructure is affordable, while balancing the financial capacity of Council to subsidise these services.

3.3.4 Grants

Council receives various grant funding and recognises the importance of actively pursuing grant funding to deliver significant projects and services to the community. Operating grants are expected to increase in line with CPI increases for future years. Council only allows for confirmed capital grant funding in budget allocations. Capital grants are essential for Council to deliver projects that will have intergenerational benefits.

3.3.5 Contributions

Council receives contributions from developers. These represent funds to enable Council to provide the necessary infrastructure, and infrastructure improvements, to accommodate development growth. The contributions are for specific purposes and often require Council to outlay funds for infrastructure works before receipt of this income source. These contributions are statutory contributions and are transferred to a restricted reserve until utilised for a specific purpose through the capital works program or delivered as works in kind by developers.

3.3.6 Other income

Revenue from other income mainly comprises interest income and rental income received from the hire of Council buildings and facilities.

3.3.7 Employee costs

Employee costs is one of the largest costs incurred by Council to support the community and meet organisation commitments. Employee costs constitute a combination of direct wages and salaries, including on-costs such as superannuation, workcover, leave entitlements, training and temporary staff arrangements. The Financial Plan assumes a 4.68% increase for employee costs that reflect a combination of salary increases of 2.7% (90% of the rate cap), 0.5% superannuation increment, 1% banding movements for all staff pursuant to the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement as well as increased staff resources of 0.48% to meet the demand for delivery of Council services as the municipality continues to grow.

3.3.8 Materials and services

Material costs include items required for the maintenance and repair of Council buildings, roads, drains and footpaths which are governed by market forces based on availability. Cost of Council maintenance contracts for parks and open space are expected to exceed the CPI due to the continued growth in Council assets and also the cost of raw materials like concrete, asphalt and other road items that continue to exceed CPI. These costs have been set accordingly.

Other associated costs included under this category are utilities, materials and consumable items for a range of services. Council also utilises external expertise on a range of matters, including legal services and audit. These costs are kept to within CPI levels year on year.

3.3.9 Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation assumptions have been based on the projected capital spending contained within this Financial Plan document. Depreciation has been further increased by the indexing of the replacement cost of Council’s fixed assets and as Council continues to receive contributed assets.

3.3.10 Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs comprise the interest expense to service Council's loan portfolio that is described in Section 6.1 Borrowing Strategy.

3.3.11 Other expenses

Other expenses include costs such as utilities, insurance, contributions and other administration costs associated with the day-to-day running of Council.

3.4 Other matters impacting the 10 years financial projections

There are a range of challenges Council continues to face which may impact future assumptions in the Financial Plan. Examples include but are not limited to:

- **Population growth –** City of Whittlesea continues to be one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria which will continue to create cost pressures for Council
- **Rate capping –** The ongoing impact of rate capping will force Council to continue to review its services and capital works investment, and seek alternative sources of revenue in order to remain financially sustainable into the future
- **Cost shifting –** Cost shifting occurs where Local Government provides a service to the community on behalf of the State or Federal Government. Over time the funds received by Local Governments do not increase in line with real cost increases. Examples include areas such as Maternal and Child Health, Immunisation Services and Library Services, where the level of payment received by Council from the State Government does not reflect the real cost of providing the service to the community
- **Asset renewal gap –** The need to ensure that Council is investing appropriately in the renewal and upgrade of existing infrastructure assets
- **Development contributions funding gap –** The need to identify and manage potential shortfalls between monetary contributions received from developers and the costs associated with the future delivery of infrastructure across the municipality
- **Global uncertainty** – The affect on Council due to policy changes by State and Federal Governments.

4. Financial Plan Statements

This section presents information regarding the following Financial Plan Statements for the 10 years from 2025-26 to 2034-35.

Comprehensive income statement
Balance sheet
Statement of cash flows
Statement of changes in equity
Statement of capital works
Statement of human resources

4.1 Comprehensive income statement

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Income / revenue										
Rates and charges	241,891	258,531	271,518	285,017	298,673	313,658	328,990	344,891	361,506	378,798
Statutory fees and fines	20,834	21,041	21,561	22,427	22,982	23,199	23,773	24,742	25,354	25,582
User fees	12,587	13,208	13,603	13,982	13,951	14,078	14,318	14,718	15,196	15,618
Grants - operating	36,129	36,433	37,344	38,278	39,235	40,216	41,221	42,252	43,308	44,391
Grants - capital	26,495	21,269	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495
Contributions - monetary	34,691	16,691	17,691	14,691	14,691	14,691	9,691	8,691	7,691	7,691
Contributions - non-monetary	109,348	111,535	113,766	116,041	118,362	120,729	123,144	125,607	128,119	130,681
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	783	803	823	843	864	886	908	931	938	938
Share of net profits/(losses) of associates and joint ventures	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Other income	19,461	19,372	18,781	19,203	17,658	17,311	15,250	15,224	14,891	14,250
Total income / revenue	**502,419**	**499,083**	**497,782**	**513,177**	**529,111**	**547,463**	**559,990**	**579,751**	**599,698**	**620,644**
Expenses										
Employee costs	135,352	136,880	141,517	146,298	151,227	156,309	161,550	166,953	172,525	178,270
Materials and services	126,002	116,696	127,997	131,069	134,845	146,475	154,630	164,981	169,671	178,156
Depreciation	62,952	61,641	66,081	69,641	72,279	74,951	78,372	82,203	85,714	89,402
Amortisation - intangible assets	71	66	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation - right of use assets	918	928	930	1,052	1,056	1,018	971	934	509	15
Allowance for impairment losses	3,186	3,170	3,240	3,405	3,481	3,461	3,538	3,724	3,808	3,781
Borrowing costs	1,113	3,167	4,601	4,257	3,970	3,897	4,005	4,240	4,084	4,770
Finance costs - leases	104	79	43	209	183	141	97	52	20	9
Other expenses	20,180	21,030	21,706	22,839	23,580	24,803	25,615	26,935	27,824	29,249
Total expenses	**349,878**	**343,657**	**366,115**	**378,770**	**390,621**	**411,055**	**428,778**	**450,022**	**464,155**	**483,652**
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	**152,541**	**155,426**	**131,667**	**134,407**	**138,490**	**136,408**	**131,212**	**129,729**	**135,543**	**136,992**
Less										
Non recurrent capital grants	(24,000)	(18,775)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contributions - monetary	(34,691)	(16,691)	(17,691)	(14,691)	(14,691)	(14,691)	(9,691)	(8,691)	(7,691)	(7,691)
Contributions - non-monetary	(109,348)	(111,535)	(113,766)	(116,041)	(118,362)	(120,729)	(123,144)	(125,607)	(128,119)	(130,681)
Underlying surplus/(deficit)	**(15,498)**	**8,425**	**210**	**3,675**	**5,437**	**988**	**(1,623)**	**(4,569)**	**(267)**	**(1,380)**

4.2 Balance sheet

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Current assets										
Cash and cash equivalents	23,549	23,790	24,013	24,229	24,405	24,575	24,709	24,837	24,960	25,077
Trade and other receivables	53,038	53,584	54,050	54,572	55,047	55,527	56,064	56,671	57,260	57,821
Other financial assets	381,807	374,166	367,881	375,338	380,579	362,218	341,724	333,483	308,722	272,151
Inventories	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
Other assets	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580	7,580
Total current assets	**466,053**	**459,199**	**453,603**	**461,798**	**467,690**	**449,979**	**430,156**	**422,650**	**398,601**	**362,708**
Non current assets										
Other non-financial assets	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
Investments in associates, joint arrangement and subsidiaries	3,126	3,326	3,526	3,726	3,926	4,126	4,326	4,526	4,726	4,926
Property, infrastructure, plant & equipment	5,098,954	5,293,870	5,452,620	5,571,108	5,697,366	5,849,536	6,002,760	6,145,083	6,300,073	6,487,174
Right-of-use assets	2,473	1,545	856	3,162	3,565	2,547	1,576	642	133	118
Intangible assets	66	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total non current assets	**5,104,641**	**5,298,763**	**5,457,024**	**5,578,018**	**5,704,879**	**5,856,231**	**6,008,684**	**6,150,273**	**6,304,954**	**6,492,240**
Total assets	**5,570,694**	**5,757,962**	**5,910,627**	**6,039,816**	**6,172,569**	**6,306,210**	**6,438,840**	**6,572,923**	**6,703,555**	**6,854,948**
Current liabilities										
Trade and other payables	34,312	33,462	31,481	30,565	29,538	28,473	27,355	26,195	23,361	22,083
Trust funds and deposits	68,760	68,760	68,760	68,760	68,760	68,760	68,760	68,760	68,760	68,760
Contract and other liabilities	20,900	20,900	20,900	20,900	20,900	20,900	20,900	20,900	20,900	20,900
Provisions	24,878	25,159	26,011	26,890	27,796	28,730	29,693	30,686	31,710	32,766
Interest-bearing liabilities	3,230	6,251	9,107	9,696	10,513	11,306	12,609	14,938	16,842	17,668
Lease liabilities	957	995	972	1,004	1,005	998	1,003	445	11	-
Total current liabilities	**153,037**	**155,527**	**157,231**	**157,815**	**158,512**	**159,167**	**160,320**	**161,924**	**161,584**	**162,177**
Non current liabilities										
Provisions	2,748	2,779	2,873	2,970	3,070	3,173	3,279	3,389	3,502	3,619
Interest bearing liabilities	23,838	54,154	74,085	65,832	58,844	56,317	57,479	60,564	55,891	69,582
Lease liabilities	1,443	448	(283)	2,071	2,525	1,527	524	79	68	68
Total non current liabilities	**28,029**	**57,381**	**76,675**	**70,873**	**64,439**	**61,017**	**61,282**	**64,032**	**59,461**	**73,269**
Total liabilities	**181,066**	**212,908**	**233,906**	**228,688**	**222,951**	**220,184**	**221,602**	**225,956**	**221,045**	**235,446**
Net assets	**5,389,628**	**5,545,054**	**5,676,721**	**5,811,128**	**5,949,618**	**6,086,026**	**6,217,238**	**6,346,967**	**6,482,510**	**6,619,502**
Equity										
Accumulated surplus	3,356,620	3,519,362	3,656,590	3,783,862	3,917,439	4,072,530	4,224,516	4,362,694	4,521,589	4,695,369
Reserves	2,033,008	2,025,692	2,020,131	2,027,266	2,032,179	2,013,496	1,992,722	1,984,273	1,960,921	1,924,133
Total equity	**5,389,628**	**5,545,054**	**5,676,721**	**5,811,128**	**5,949,618**	**6,086,026**	**6,217,238**	**6,346,967**	**6,482,510**	**6,619,502**

4.3 Statement of changes in equity

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Accumulated surplus										
Balance at beginning of the financial year	3,208,069	3,356,620	3,519,362	3,656,590	3,783,862	3,917,439	4,072,530	4,224,516	4,362,694	4,521,589
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	152,541	155,426	131,667	134,407	138,490	136,408	131,212	129,729	135,543	136,992
Transfers to other reserves	(47,692)	(25,846)	(23,265)	(19,717)	(19,896)	(19,421)	(15,522)	(14,562)	(14,318)	(13,369)
Transfers from other reserves	43,702	33,162	28,826	12,582	14,983	38,104	36,296	23,011	37,670	50,157
Total accumulated surplus	**3,356,620**	**3,519,362**	**3,656,590**	**3,783,862**	**3,917,439**	**4,072,530**	**4,224,516**	**4,362,694**	**4,521,589**	**4,695,369**
Asset revaluation reserve										
Balance at beginning of the financial year	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419	1,744,419
Transfers to other reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfers from other reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total asset revaluation reserve	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**	**1,744,419**
Asset development reserve										
Balance at beginning of the financial year	220,439	225,434	229,286	234,355	236,692	239,475	217,782	192,080	178,998	149,069
Transfers to other reserves	34,254	16,254	17,254	14,254	14,254	14,254	9,254	8,254	7,254	7,254
Transfers from other reserves	(29,259)	(12,402)	(12,185)	(11,917)	(11,471)	(35,947)	(34,956)	(21,336)	(37,183)	(49,707)
Balance at the end of the year	**225,434**	**229,286**	**234,355**	**236,692**	**239,475**	**217,782**	**192,080**	**178,998**	**149,069**	**106,616**
Asset replacement reserve										
Balance at beginning of the financial year	64,160	63,155	51,987	41,357	46,155	48,285	51,295	56,223	60,856	67,433
Transfers to other reserves	13,438	9,592	6,011	5,463	5,642	5,167	6,268	6,308	7,064	6,115
Transfers from other reserves	(14,443)	(20,760)	(16,641)	(665)	(3,512)	(2,157)	(1,340)	(1,675)	(487)	(450)
Balance at the end of the year	**63,155**	**51,987**	**41,357**	**46,155**	**48,285**	**51,295**	**56,223**	**60,856**	**67,433**	**73,098**
Total equity	**5,389,628**	**5,545,054**	**5,676,721**	**5,811,128**	**5,949,618**	**6,086,026**	**6,217,238**	**6,346,967**	**6,482,510**	**6,619,502**

4.4 Statement of cash flows

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Cash flows from operating activities										
Rates and charges	241,263	258,032	271,128	284,612	298,263	313,208	328,530	344,414	361,008	378,279
Statutory fees and fines	17,842	17,846	18,259	18,918	19,434	19,712	20,166	20,902	21,473	21,774
User fees	12,590	13,186	13,589	13,969	13,952	14,074	14,310	14,704	15,179	15,603
Grants - operating	36,129	36,433	37,344	38,278	39,235	40,216	41,221	42,252	43,308	44,391
Grants - capital	26,495	21,269	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495	2,495
Contributions - monetary	34,691	16,691	17,691	14,691	14,691	14,691	9,691	8,691	7,691	7,691
Interest received	12,838	12,581	11,772	12,011	10,276	9,780	7,518	7,337	6,792	5,987
Trust funds and deposits taken	7,418	7,418	7,418	7,418	7,418	7,418	7,418	7,418	7,418	7,418
Other receipts	6,623	6,791	7,009	7,192	7,382	7,531	7,732	7,887	8,099	8,263
Employee costs	(133,121)	(136,568)	(140,571)	(145,322)	(150,221)	(155,272)	(160,481)	(165,850)	(171,388)	(177,097)
Materials and services	(126,002)	(116,696)	(127,997)	(131,069)	(134,845)	(146,475)	(154,630)	(164,981)	(169,671)	(178,156)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments	(822)	(850)	(1,981)	(916)	(1,026)	(1,065)	(1,118)	(1,160)	(2,835)	(1,278)
Trust funds and deposits repaid	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)	(7,418)
Other payments	(20,180)	(21,030)	(21,706)	(22,839)	(23,580)	(24,803)	(25,615)	(26,935)	(27,824)	(29,249)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	**108,346**	**107,685**	**87,032**	**92,020**	**96,056**	**94,092**	**89,819**	**89,756**	**94,327**	**98,703**
Cash flows from investing activities										
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	(110,685)	(143,364)	(109,366)	(70,347)	(78,390)	(104,562)	(106,577)	(96,996)	(110,647)	(143,884)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	-	(855)	(876)	(898)	(921)	(944)	(967)	(992)	(1,000)	(1,000)
(Payments)/redemption of investments	(27,000)	7,641	6,285	(7,457)	(5,241)	18,361	20,494	8,241	24,761	36,571
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities	**(137,685)**	**(136,578)**	**(103,957)**	**(78,702)**	**(84,552)**	**(87,145)**	**(87,050)**	**(89,747)**	**(86,886)**	**(108,313)**
Cash flows from financing activities										
Finance costs	(1,113)	(3,167)	(4,601)	(4,257)	(3,970)	(3,897)	(4,005)	(4,240)	(4,084)	(4,770)
Proceeds from borrowings	22,870	39,612	31,457	1,562	3,834	9,550	14,980	19,605	13,237	34,112
Repayment of borrowings	(3,427)	(6,275)	(8,670)	(9,226)	(10,005)	(11,284)	(12,515)	(14,191)	(16,006)	(19,595)
Interest paid - lease liability	(104)	(79)	(43)	(209)	(183)	(141)	(97)	(52)	(20)	(9)
Repayment of lease liabilities	(919)	(957)	(995)	(972)	(1,004)	(1,005)	(998)	(1,003)	(445)	(11)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	**17,307**	**29,134**	**17,148**	**(13,102)**	**(11,328)**	**(6,777)**	**(2,635)**	**119**	**(7,318)**	**9,727**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(12,032)	241	223	216	176	170	134	128	123	117
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year	35,581	23,549	23,790	24,013	24,229	24,405	24,575	24,709	24,837	24,960
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	**23,549**	**23,790**	**24,013**	**24,229**	**24,405**	**24,575**	**24,709**	**24,837**	**24,960**	**25,077**

4.5 Statement of capital works

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Property										
Land	1,000	1,900	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Land improvements	60	350	1,271	1,100	100	100	100	100	-	-
Total land	**1,060**	**2,250**	**1,271**	**1,100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**-**	**-**
Buildings	13,180	14,250	9,071	412	7,063	19,500	16,547	15,855	13,437	21,720
Building improvements	7,985	16,695	16,459	3,450	8,050	7,300	6,950	6,750	6,950	9,950
Total buildings	**21,165**	**30,945**	**25,530**	**3,862**	**15,113**	**26,800**	**23,497**	**22,605**	**20,387**	**31,670**
Total property	**22,225**	**33,195**	**26,801**	**4,962**	**15,213**	**26,900**	**23,597**	**22,705**	**20,387**	**31,670**
Plant and equipment										
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,952	1,794	2,904	1,746	2,009	1,444	967	992	1,000	1,000
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	335	137	77	79	79	81	81	81	85	85
Computers and telecommunications	250	1,509	1,127	1,027	927	927	977	927	977	927
Total plant and equipment	**2,537**	**3,440**	**4,108**	**2,852**	**3,015**	**2,452**	**2,025**	**2,000**	**2,062**	**2,012**
Infrastructure										
Roads	14,815	27,121	23,238	21,580	24,218	27,178	20,997	19,228	20,883	21,474
Bridges	298	300	300	650	399	400	498	599	19,108	9,993
Footpaths and cycleways	7,240	9,179	6,891	6,268	8,869	7,890	6,901	8,449	8,104	7,616
Drainage	650	1,260	1,950	2,700	1,800	2,243	3,603	3,585	3,085	2,833
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	37,355	36,087	23,680	8,478	4,325	14,574	25,189	20,298	21,667	58,102
Waste management	2,382	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parks, open space and streetscapes	19,784	29,946	18,833	20,552	18,372	20,878	21,728	17,841	13,344	9,184
Off street car parks	1,150	1,005	85	90	100	199	399	941	657	100
Other infrastructure	2,249	1,801	3,480	2,215	2,079	1,848	1,640	1,350	1,350	900
Total infrastructure	**85,923**	**106,729**	**78,457**	**62,533**	**60,162**	**75,210**	**80,955**	**72,291**	**88,198**	**110,202**
Total capital works expenditure	**110,685**	**143,364**	**109,366**	**70,347**	**78,390**	**104,562**	**106,577**	**96,996**	**110,647**	**143,884**
Represented by:										
New asset expenditure	74,212	90,171	56,360	30,722	35,544	62,036	64,765	52,777	66,333	99,161
Asset renewal expenditure	23,916	29,085	35,290	28,073	28,275	28,853	28,483	34,024	31,825	32,587
Asset upgrade expenditure	12,557	24,108	17,716	11,552	14,571	13,673	13,329	10,195	12,489	12,136
Total capital works expenditure	**110,685**	**143,364**	**109,366**	**70,347**	**78,390**	**104,562**	**106,577**	**96,996**	**110,647**	**143,884**
Funding sources represented by:										
Proceeds from sales	783	855	876	898	921	944	967	992	1,000	1,000
External funding	26,944	21,270	2,494	2,495	2,495	2,494	2,495	2,494	2,495	2,495
Contributions	7,130	6,125	2,259	5,778	7,679	27,276	27,167	13,818	35,436	47,871
Council cash	43,251	55,907	57,683	57,402	58,734	59,867	58,251	57,322	57,689	57,581
Reserves	9,707	19,595	14,597	2,212	4,727	4,431	2,717	2,765	790	825
Borrowings	22,870	39,612	31,457	1,562	3,834	9,550	14,980	19,605	13,237	34,112
Total funding Sources	**110,685**	**143,364**	**109,366**	**70,347**	**78,390**	**104,562**	**106,577**	**96,996**	**110,647**	**143,884**

4.6 Statement of human resources

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Staff expenditure										
Employee costs - operating	131,116	132,619	137,161	141,844	146,672	151,652	156,788	162,084	167,546	173,179
Employee costs - capital	4,236	4,261	4,356	4,454	4,555	4,657	4,762	4,869	4,979	5,091
Total staff expenditure	**135,352**	**136,880**	**141,517**	**146,298**	**151,227**	**156,309**	**161,550**	**166,953**	**172,525**	**178,270**

	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE
FTE numbers										
Employees	1,043.5	1,048.5	1,053.5	1,058.5	1,063.5	1,068.5	1,073.5	1,078.5	1,083.5	1,088.5
Total staff numbers*	**1,043.5**	**1,048.5**	**1,053.5**	**1,058.5**	**1,063.5**	**1,068.5**	**1,073.5**	**1,078.5**	**1,083.5**	**1,088.5**

*Note: Future year full-time equivalent (FTE) gender figures presented in this statement are projections based on current workforce gender composition. Council remains committed to promoting gender equality in all recruitment practices, consistent with the objectives outlined in our Gender Equality Action Plan.

4.7 Summary of planned human resources expenditure

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Office of the CEO										
Permanent - Full time	**469**	**473**	**487**	**501**	**517**	**532**	**548**	**565**	**582**	**600**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	469	473	487	501	517	532	548	565	582	600
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Office of the CEO	**469**	**473**	**487**	**501**	**517**	**532**	**548**	**565**	**582**	**600**
Executive										
Permanent - Full time	**6,047**	**6,091**	**6,274**	**6,462**	**6,657**	**6,858**	**7,066**	**7,281**	**7,502**	**7,731**
Women	4,554	4,587	4,724	4,866	5,013	5,165	5,321	5,483	5,650	5,822
Men	754	759	782	806	830	855	881	908	935	964
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	740	745	767	790	814	839	864	891	918	946
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**96**	**97**	**100**	**103**	**106**	**109**	**112**	**116**	**119**	**123**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	96	97	100	103	106	109	112	116	119	123
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**137**	**138**	**142**	**147**	**151**	**156**	**160**	**165**	**170**	**176**
Women	137	138	142	147	151	156	160	165	170	176
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Executive	**6,143**	**6,188**	**6,373**	**6,565**	**6,763**	**6,967**	**7,179**	**7,397**	**7,622**	**7,854**

4.7 Summary of planned human resources expenditure (cont)

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Community Wellbeing										
Permanent - Full time	**16,098**	**16,301**	**17,025**	**17,771**	**18,537**	**19,326**	**20,138**	**20,973**	**21,832**	**22,717**
Women	10,959	11,095	11,417	11,749	12,091	12,445	12,810	13,187	13,576	13,977
Men	3,086	3,125	3,215	3,309	3,405	3,505	3,608	3,714	3,823	3,936
Persons of self-described gender	115	116	120	123	127	130	134	138	142	146
Vacant positions	1,689	1,710	1,760	1,811	1,864	1,918	1,975	2,033	2,093	2,155
New positions	248	254	514	779	1,050	1,328	1,612	1,902	2,199	2,502
Permanent - Part time	**21,672**	**21,941**	**22,577**	**23,233**	**23,910**	**24,609**	**25,331**	**26,076**	**26,845**	**27,640**
Women	17,744	17,965	18,485	19,022	19,577	20,150	20,741	21,351	21,981	22,631
Men	808	818	842	866	891	917	944	972	1,001	1,030
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	3,119	3,158	3,250	3,344	3,442	3,542	3,646	3,753	3,864	3,978
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**639**	**647**	**666**	**685**	**705**	**726**	**747**	**769**	**792**	**815**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	97	98	101	104	107	110	113	117	120	124
Vacant positions	542	549	565	581	598	616	634	652	672	691
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Casuals	**735**	**759**	**784**	**810**	**836**	**863**	**891**	**920**	**950**	**981**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	735	759	784	810	836	863	891	920	950	981
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Community Wellbeing	**37,770**	**38,242**	**39,602**	**41,003**	**42,447**	**43,935**	**45,469**	**47,049**	**48,678**	**50,356**
Planning and Development										
Permanent - Full time	**13,256**	**13,437**	**14,014**	**14,609**	**15,220**	**15,850**	**16,497**	**17,164**	**17,850**	**18,556**
Women	6,319	6,405	6,590	6,781	6,978	7,182	7,392	7,609	7,833	8,065
Men	6,047	6,129	6,306	6,489	6,678	6,872	7,074	7,281	7,496	7,717
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	703	713	733	755	776	799	823	847	872	897
New positions	186	190	385	584	788	996	1,209	1,426	1,649	1,877
Permanent - Part time	**12,345**	**12,513**	**12,874**	**13,248**	**13,633**	**14,031**	**14,442**	**14,866**	**15,303**	**15,755**
Women	6,664	6,755	6,950	7,151	7,359	7,574	7,796	8,025	8,261	8,505
Men	4,955	5,022	5,167	5,317	5,471	5,631	5,796	5,966	6,142	6,323
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	727	736	758	780	802	826	850	875	901	927
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**299**	**303**	**312**	**321**	**330**	**340**	**350**	**360**	**371**	**381**
Women	214	217	223	230	236	243	250	258	265	273
Men	85	86	88	91	94	96	99	102	105	108
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Planning and Development	**25,601**	**25,949**	**26,889**	**27,856**	**28,853**	**29,880**	**30,939**	**32,029**	**33,153**	**34,311**

4.7 Summary of planned human resources expenditure (cont)

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Infrastructure and Environment										
Permanent - Full time	**30,804**	**31,133**	**32,198**	**33,298**	**34,434**	**35,606**	**36,815**	**38,063**	**39,352**	**40,682**
Women	8,564	8,657	8,915	9,183	9,459	9,744	10,039	10,343	10,658	10,983
Men	20,243	20,455	21,075	21,716	22,378	23,062	23,769	24,500	25,255	26,035
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1,872	1,894	1,951	2,011	2,072	2,136	2,202	2,270	2,340	2,412
New positions	124	127	257	389	525	664	806	951	1,099	1,251
Permanent - Part time	**811**	**819**	**843**	**868**	**893**	**920**	**947**	**975**	**1,004**	**1,034**
Women	197	199	205	211	217	224	231	237	245	252
Men	380	384	395	407	419	431	444	457	471	485
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	233	236	242	250	257	265	272	281	289	298
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**1,430**	**1,445**	**1,487**	**1,531**	**1,576**	**1,623**	**1,671**	**1,721**	**1,772**	**1,826**
Women	64	65	67	68	70	73	75	77	79	82
Men	609	615	633	652	671	691	711	732	754	777
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	758	765	788	811	835	860	885	912	939	967
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure and Environment	**31,614**	**31,951**	**33,041**	**34,166**	**35,327**	**36,525**	**37,762**	**39,039**	**40,356**	**41,716**
Customer and Corporate Services										
Permanent - Full time	**17,976**	**18,146**	**18,750**	**19,373**	**20,015**	**20,678**	**21,362**	**22,068**	**22,796**	**23,547**
Women	10,042	10,137	10,441	10,754	11,078	11,413	11,759	12,116	12,485	12,866
Men	6,541	6,602	6,797	6,999	7,207	7,422	7,644	7,874	8,110	8,355
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1,331	1,344	1,384	1,425	1,467	1,511	1,556	1,603	1,651	1,701
New positions	62	63	128	195	263	332	403	475	550	626
Permanent - Part time	**3,726**	**3,760**	**3,872**	**3,986**	**4,105**	**4,228**	**4,354**	**4,485**	**4,619**	**4,759**
Women	2,804	2,830	2,914	3,001	3,090	3,182	3,277	3,376	3,477	3,582
Men	737	744	766	788	812	836	861	887	913	941
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	185	186	192	198	204	210	216	222	229	236
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**2,225**	**2,246**	**2,312**	**2,381**	**2,452**	**2,525**	**2,601**	**2,679**	**2,759**	**2,842**
Women	681	688	708	729	751	773	796	820	845	870
Men	410	414	426	439	452	466	480	494	509	524
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1,134	1,144	1,178	1,213	1,249	1,286	1,325	1,365	1,406	1,448
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Casuals	**200**	**206**	**213**	**220**	**227**	**234**	**242**	**250**	**258**	**266**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	200	206	213	220	227	234	242	250	258	266
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Customer and Corporate Services	**21,702**	**21,906**	**22,621**	**23,359**	**24,120**	**24,906**	**25,716**	**26,553**	**27,416**	**28,306**

4.7 Summary of planned human resources expenditure (cont)

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Shared Services										
Permanent - Full time	**976**	**983**	**1,012**	**1,042**	**1,073**	**1,106**	**1,139**	**1,174**	**1,209**	**1,246**
Women	298	300	309	318	328	338	348	359	369	381
Men	332	334	344	354	365	376	387	399	411	423
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	347	349	359	370	381	392	404	417	429	442
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**996**	**1,002**	**1,032**	**1,063**	**1,095**	**1,128**	**1,162**	**1,197**	**1,234**	**1,271**
Women	753	758	781	804	828	853	879	905	933	961
Men	85	85	88	90	93	96	99	102	105	108
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	158	159	164	169	174	179	185	190	196	202
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**90**	**91**	**93**	**96**	**99**	**102**	**105**	**108**	**112**	**115**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	90	91	93	96	99	102	105	108	112	115
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Casuals	**87**	**90**	**93**	**96**	**99**	**103**	**106**	**109**	**113**	**117**
Women	66	68	70	72	74	77	79	82	85	87
Men	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	19	19
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	10
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Shared Services	**1,972**	**1,985**	**2,044**	**2,105**	**2,169**	**2,234**	**2,301**	**2,371**	**2,443**	**2,517**
Total staff expenditure										
Permanent - Full time	85,626	86,562	89,760	93,056	96,454	99,956	103,566	107,288	111,124	115,078
Permanent - Part time	39,646	40,132	41,297	42,500	43,742	45,024	46,348	47,715	49,126	50,582
Temporary and other expenditure	4,821	4,870	5,013	5,161	5,314	5,471	5,634	5,802	5,976	6,155
Casuals	1,023	1,056	1,090	1,126	1,162	1,200	1,239	1,279	1,321	1,364
Temporary, other expenditure and casuals	**5,844**	**5,926**	**6,103**	**6,287**	**6,476**	**6,671**	**6,873**	**7,082**	**7,297**	**7,519**
Capitalised labour costs	**4,236**	**4,261**	**4,356**	**4,454**	**4,555**	**4,657**	**4,762**	**4,869**	**4,979**	**5,091**
Total staff expenditure	**135,352**	**136,880**	**141,517**	**146,298**	**151,227**	**156,309**	**161,550**	**166,953**	**172,525**	**178,270**

Note: Future year full-time equivalent (FTE) gender figures presented in this statement are projections based on current workforce gender composition. Council remains committed to promoting gender equality in all recruitment practices, consistent with the objectives outlined in our Gender Equality Action Plan.

Employee costs include all labour related expenditure such as salaries, wages, allowances and on-costs such as leave entitlements, superannuation and WorkCover.

4.8 Summary of planned human resources staff numbers

	Budget 2025-26 FTE	Projection 2026-27 FTE	Projection 2027-28 FTE	Projection 2028-29 FTE	Projection 2029-30 FTE	Projection 2030-31 FTE	Projection 2031-32 FTE	Projection 2032-33 FTE	Projection 2033-34 FTE	Projection 2034-35 FTE
Office of the CEO										
Permanent - Full time	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Office of the CEO	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**
Executive										
Permanent - Full time	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**	**44.0**
Women	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0	32.0
Men	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**	**0.5**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.6**
Women	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Executive	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**	**44.5**

4.8 Summary of planned human resources staff numbers (cont)

	Budget 2025-26 FTE	Projection 2026-27 FTE	Projection 2027-28 FTE	Projection 2028-29 FTE	Projection 2029-30 FTE	Projection 2030-31 FTE	Projection 2031-32 FTE	Projection 2032-33 FTE	Projection 2033-34 FTE	Projection 2034-35 FTE
Community Wellbeing										
Permanent - Full time	**145.3**	**147.3**	**149.3**	**151.3**	**153.3**	**155.3**	**157.3**	**159.3**	**161.3**	**163.3**
Women	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.0
Men	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0	27.0
Persons of self-described gender	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Vacant positions	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.3
New positions	-	2.0	4.0	6.0	8.0	10.0	12.0	14.0	16.0	18.0
Permanent - Part time	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**	**136.8**
Women	113.0	113.0	113.0	113.0	113.0	113.0	113.0	113.0	113.0	113.0
Men	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**	**5.7**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Vacant positions	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Casuals	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**	**5.9**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Community Wellbeing	**282.2**	**284.2**	**286.2**	**288.2**	**290.2**	**292.2**	**294.2**	**296.2**	**298.2**	**300.2**
Planning and Development										
Permanent - Full time	**152.9**	**154.4**	**155.9**	**157.4**	**158.9**	**160.4**	**161.9**	**163.4**	**164.9**	**166.4**
Women	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0	75.0
Men	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9	68.9
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0
New positions	-	1.5	3.0	4.5	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.5	12.0	13.5
Permanent - Part time	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**	**51.5**
Women	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.7	29.7
Men	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4	18.4
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**	**3.6**
Women	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Men	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Planning and Development	**204.4**	**205.9**	**207.4**	**208.9**	**210.4**	**211.9**	**213.4**	**214.9**	**216.4**	**217.9**

4.8 Summary of planned human resources staff numbers (cont)

	Budget 2025-26 FTE	Projection 2026-27 FTE	Projection 2027-28 FTE	Projection 2028-29 FTE	Projection 2029-30 FTE	Projection 2030-31 FTE	Projection 2031-32 FTE	Projection 2032-33 FTE	Projection 2033-34 FTE	Projection 2034-35 FTE
Infrastructure and Environment										
Permanent - Full time	**255.8**	**256.8**	**257.8**	**258.8**	**259.8**	**260.8**	**261.8**	**262.8**	**263.8**	**264.8**
Women	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5	65.5
Men	173.2	173.2	173.2	173.2	173.2	173.2	173.2	173.2	173.2	173.2
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1
New positions	-	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0	9.0
Permanent - Part time	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**	**5.2**
Women	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Men	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**	**12.0**
Women	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Men	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Infrastructure and Environment	**261.0**	**262.0**	**263.0**	**264.0**	**265.0**	**266.0**	**267.0**	**268.0**	**269.0**	**270.0**
Customer and Corporate Services										
Permanent - Full time	**134.0**	**134.5**	**135.0**	**135.5**	**136.0**	**136.5**	**137.0**	**137.5**	**138.0**	**138.5**
Women	79.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	79.0	79.0
Men	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0	45.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
New positions	-	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5
Permanent - Part time	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**	**23.4**
Women	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.8
Men	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**	**17.6**
Women	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Men	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Casuals	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**1.8**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Customer and Corporate Services	**157.4**	**157.9**	**158.4**	**158.9**	**159.4**	**159.9**	**160.4**	**160.9**	**161.4**	**161.9**

4.8 Summary of planned human resources staff numbers (cont)

	Budget 2025-26 FTE	Projection 2026-27 FTE	Projection 2027-28 FTE	Projection 2028-29 FTE	Projection 2029-30 FTE	Projection 2030-31 FTE	Projection 2031-32 FTE	Projection 2032-33 FTE	Projection 2033-34 FTE	Projection 2034-35 FTE
Shared Services										
Permanent - Full time	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**	**5.1**
Women	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Men	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Permanent - Part time	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**	**9.7**
Women	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1
Men	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Temporary and other expenditure	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**	**1.0**
Women	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Casuals	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**	**0.8**
Women	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Men	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Persons of self-described gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vacant positions	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
New positions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Shared Services	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**	**14.8**
Total staff numbers										
Permanent - Full time	738.1	743.1	748.1	753.1	758.1	763.1	768.1	773.1	778.1	783.1
Permanent - Part time	227.2	227.2	227.2	227.2	227.2	227.2	227.2	227.2	227.2	227.2
Temporary and other expenditure	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5	40.5
Casuals	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6	8.6
Total temporary, other and casuals FTE	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**	**49.0**
Capitalised labour FTE	29.2	29.2	29.2	29.2	29.2	29.2	29.2	29.2	29.2	29.2
Total staff numbers	**1,043.5**	**1,048.5**	**1,053.5**	**1,058.5**	**1,063.5**	**1,068.5**	**1,073.5**	**1,078.5**	**1,083.5**	**1,088.5**

Note: Future year full-time equivalent (FTE) gender figures presented in this statement are projections based on current workforce gender composition. Council remains committed to promoting gender equality in all recruitment practices, consistent with the objectives outlined in our Gender Equality Action Plan.

5. Financial Performance Indicators

The following tables highlight Council's current and projected performance across a selection of targeted service and financial performance indicators. These indicators provide a useful analysis of Council's intentions and performance and should be interpreted in the context of the organisation's objectives.

The targeted performance indicators below are the prescribed performance indicators contained in Schedule 4 of the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* . Results against these indicators and targets will be reported in Council's Performance Statement included in the Annual Report.

Indicator	Measure		Target	Target Projections									Trend
		Notes	Budget 2025-26	Projection 2026-27	Projection 2027-28	Projection 2028-29	Projection 2029-30	Projection 2030-31	Projection 2031-32	Projection 2032-33	Projection 2033-34	Projection 2034-35	Trend +/o/-
Operating position													
Adjusted underlying result (an adjusted underlying surplus is generated in the ordinary course of business)	**Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)** Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit) / Adjusted underlying revenue	1	(4.63%)	2.39%	0.06%	0.96%	1.37%	0.24%	(0.38%)	(1.03%)	(0.06%)	(0.29%)	+
Liquidity													
Working capital (sufficient working capital is available to pay bills as and when they fall due)	**Current assets compared to current liabilities** Current assets / current liabilities	2	304.54%	295.25%	288.49%	292.62%	295.05%	282.71%	268.31%	261.02%	246.68%	223.65%	-
Unrestricted cash (sufficient cash that is free of restrictions is available to pay bills as and when they fall due)	**Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities** Unrestricted cash / current liabilities	3	(231.77%)	(223.20%)	(217.11%)	(220.69%)	(222.71%)	(209.94%)	(195.39%)	(188.16%)	(174.03%)	(150.64%)	+

5. Financial Performance Indicators (cont)

Indicator	Measure	Notes	Target	Target Projections									Trend
			Budget 2025-26	Projection 2026-27	Projection 2027-28	Projection 2028-29	Projection 2029-30	Projection 2030-31	Projection 2031-32	Projection 2032-33	Projection 2033-34	Projection 2034-35	Trend +/o/-
Obligations													
Loans and borrowings (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	**Loans and borrowings compared to rates** Interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	4	11.19%	23.36%	30.64%	26.50%	23.22%	21.56%	21.30%	21.89%	20.12%	23.03%	+
Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates (level of interest bearing loans and borrowings is appropriate to the size and nature of Council's activities)	**Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates** Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / rate revenue	5	1.88%	3.65%	4.89%	4.73%	4.68%	4.84%	5.02%	5.34%	5.56%	6.43%	+
Indebtedness (level of long term liabilities is appropriate to the size and nature of a Council's activities)	**Non-current liabilities compared to own-source revenue** Non-current liabilities / own source revenue	6	9.48%	18.32%	23.48%	20.74%	18.19%	16.52%	15.98%	15.98%	14.22%	16.83%	+
Asset renewal (assets are renewed as planned)	**Asset renewal compared to depreciation** Asset renewal and upgrade expense / Asset depreciation	7	57.94%	86.29%	80.21%	56.90%	59.28%	56.74%	53.35%	53.79%	51.70%	50.02%	-
Stability													
Rates concentration (revenue is generated from a range of sources)	**Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue** Rate revenue / adjusted underlying revenue	8	72.34%	73.43%	74.12%	74.52%	75.41%	76.12%	77.02%	77.42%	77.93%	78.54%	+
Rates effort (rating level is set based on the community's capacity to pay)	**Rates compared to property values** Rate revenue / CIV of rateable properties in the municipality	9	0.29%	0.30%	0.31%	0.32%	0.33%	0.33%	0.34%	0.35%	0.36%	0.37%	o

5. Financial Performance Indicators (cont)

Indicator	Measure	Notes	Target	Target Projections								Trend
			Budget 2025-26	Projection 2026-27	Projection 2027-28	Projection 2028-29	Projection 2029-30	Projection 2030-31	Projection 2031-32	Projection 2032-33	Projection 2033-34	Projection 2034-35	Trend +/o/-
Efficiency													
Expenditure level (resources are used efficiently in the delivery of services)	**Expenses per property assessment** Total expenses/ no. of property assessments	10	$3,315.00	$3,176.64	$3,301.69	$3,332.50	$3,352.95	$3,442.29	$3,503.13	$3,587.01	$3,609.43	$3,669.31	o
Revenue level (resources are used efficiently in the delivery of services)	**Average rate per property assessment** General rates and municipal charges / no. of property	11	$1,917.35	$1,961.20	$2,005.05	$2,048.89	$2,092.74	$2,136.59	$2,180.43	$2,224.28	$2,268.12	$2,311.96	o

Notes to indicators

1. Adjusted underlying result

The adjusted underlying operating result excludes the non-recurrent capital grants, non-monetary asset contributions and contributions from developers to fund capital expenditure. It is an indicator of the sustainable operating result required to enable Council to continue to provide core services and meet its objectives.

The projections indicate fluctuations over the forecast period. Notably, the calculation of the adjusted underlying result excludes reimbursement payments to developers, which are accounted for as expenditure. If these reimbursements were included in the calculation, the Council would generate a modest surplus in most years.

2. Working capital

Working capital indicator is a key liquidity indicator of Council's ability to meet financial obligations as they become due. A working capital ratio above 100% signifies that Council can comfortably cover its short-term expenses. Council's working capital indicator is at a healthy level.

3. Unrestricted cash

The definition of unrestricted cash subtracts cash and equivalents from current restrictions (primarily trust funds, statutory reserves and grants received in advance) but importantly does not include term deposits classified as other financial assets under current assets. Under this definition, we exceed our available cash on hand and we have sufficient cash balance to meet these commitments.

4. Loans and borrowings to rates

This indicator measures the level of Council's total debt as a percentage of rate revenue. The indicator is forecast to increase in future years due to planned borrowings to fund future infrastructure investment.

5. Financial Performance Indicators (cont)

Notes to indicators (cont)

5. Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates

This indicator measures the percentage of rate revenue required to service that debt respectively. The indicator is forecast to increase in future years in line with our expected borrowings to fund future infrastructure investment.

6. Indebtedness

This indicator evaluates Council's ability to pay long term financial obligations (non-current liabilities) from the revenue it generates itself. The indicator is projected to increase due to planned borrowings but will reduce in future years as own source revenue increases while Council repays borrowings.

7. Asset renewal

This percentage indicates the extent of Council's renewal against its depreciation charge (an indication of the decline in value of its existing capital assets). A percentage greater than 100 indicates Council is maintaining its existing assets, while a percentage less than 100 means its assets are deteriorating faster than they are being renewed and future capital expenditure will be required to renew assets. Outer years forecast more moderate levels of capital works expenditure which is driven by the level of funding allocated to asset renewals and upgrades as part of the planning and budgeting process and priorities based on asset condition. Council continues to renew and maintain its asset base and has set a target of 50%.

8. Rates concentration

Reflects the extent of reliance on rate revenues to fund all of Council's on-going services. Trend indicates Council's rates concentration is expected to remain consistent over the future years. Rate revenue continues to be an important source of revenue for Council to be able to deliver services and renew its assets.

9. Rates effort

This indicator assesses whether councils set rates at an appropriate level. Lower the proportion of rate revenue suggests a reduced rate burden on the community. This indicator forecast to remain fairly stable.

10. Expenditure level

This indicator measures the expenditures Council incurs to provide services per property assessment. This indicator is forecast to be consistent in future years mainly due to growth in property assessments being in line with expenditure level.

11. Revenue level

This indicator assesses whether resources are being used efficiently to deliver services. This indicator is forecast to increase in line with the rate cap.

6.1 Borrowing Strategy

This section describes the internal and external contexts which informed the 10-year financial projections and assumptions.

6.1.1 Current debt position

In developing the Financial Plan, borrowings were identified as an important funding source for Capital Works Program. It is expected that the City of Whittlesea will undertake new borrowings over the 10 years to bridge the funding shortfall for the significant capital works investments in these years.

6.1.2 Future borrowing requirements

The following table highlights the City of Whittlesea's projected loan balance, including new loans and loan repayments for the 10 years of the Financial Plan.

	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Opening balance	**7,625**	**27,068**	**60,405**	**83,192**	**75,528**	**69,357**	**67,623**	**70,088**	**75,502**	**72,733**
New loans	22,870	39,612	31,457	1,562	3,834	9,550	14,980	19,605	13,237	34,112
Principal repayment	(3,427)	(6,275)	(8,670)	(9,226)	(10,005)	(11,284)	(12,515)	(14,191)	(16,006)	(19,595)
Closing balance	**27,068**	**60,405**	**83,192**	**75,528**	**69,357**	**67,623**	**70,088**	**75,502**	**72,733**	**87,250**

6.1.3 Performance indicators

The following table highlights projected performance across a range of debt management performance indicators. Over the period of 10 years, on average, the City of Whittlesea aims to be in line with target performance indicators.

Performance indicator	Target	Budget 2025-26 %	Projection 2026-27 %	Projection 2027-28 %	Projection 2028-29 %	Projection 2029-30 %	Projection 2030-31 %	Projection 2031-32 %	Projection 2032-33 %	Projection 2033-34 %	Projection 2034-35 %
Total borrowings / Rate revenue	Below 60%	11.19%	23.36%	30.64%	26.50%	23.22%	21.56%	21.30%	21.89%	20.12%	23.03%
Debt servicing / Rate revenue	Below 10%	1.88%	3.65%	4.89%	4.73%	4.68%	4.84%	5.02%	5.34%	5.56%	6.43%
Debt commitment / Rate revenue	Below 30%	9.48%	18.32%	23.48%	20.74%	18.19%	16.52%	15.98%	15.98%	14.22%	16.83%
Indebtedness / Own source revenue	Below 30%	9.15%	19.29%	25.48%	22.11%	19.57%	18.31%	18.28%	18.84%	17.40%	20.04%

Total borrowings / rate revenue

This measures Council’s ability to pay its interest-bearing loan obligations with the rate revenue it generates. Being well below the target of 60%, Council has the ability to borrow to fund major capital works projects in the future.

Debt servicing / rate revenue

This measures Council's ability to pay its debt obligations with the rate revenue it generates.
Being well below the target of 10%, means Council can pay its loan interest from rates instead of looking at alternative funding streams.

Debt commitment / rate revenue

This measures Council's ability to pay its debt obligations with the rate revenue it generates.
Being well below the target of 30%, means Council can pay its loan principal repayments and interest from rates instead of looking at alternative funding streams.

Indebtedness / own source revenue

This measures Council's ability to pay its long-term obligations with the revenue it generates internally (i.e. excludes external grants and contributions).
Being well below the target of 30% means Council's level of long-term obligations can easily be met without relying on external funding sources.

6.2 Reserve Strategy

The objective of reserves accounting is to ensure that Council exercises appropriate control and transparency over its cash reserves that are either restricted through legislation or have an intended purpose in how they are used by Council.

6.2.1 Current reserves

Parklands contributions (open space)

Purpose - The Open Space Reserve holds funds contributed by developers for works associated with developing and improving public open space and recreational facilities within Council. Funds are contributed in accordanœ with Sec*tion 18 of the Subdivision Act* and transfers are restricted to the purpose of creating open space such as parks, playgrounds, pavilions and other such items where it is deemed that these works should occur at a later point than the initial development.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) comprise contribution income received from subdividers. Transfers from the reserve (outflows) are applied to fund open space capital projects.

Developer Contribution Plan (DCP) reserves

Purpose - This reserve retains funds received from developers for infrastructure provision related to Council's Development Contributions Plans.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) comprise of monetary levies and in-kind associated with developments. Transfers from the reserve (outflows) are applied to fund capital works for development infrastructure projects and community infrastructure projects and funds refunded to developers for capital works completed directly by the developer.

Planning permits drainage

Purpose - Development levy for development in established areas where the existing drainage infrastructure could not cater for additional flows from the redeveloped sites.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) comprise of levies associated with development. Transfer from the reserve(outflows) are aligned to Council's capital works schedule.

Net gain compensation

Purpose - Funds contributed by developers for the maintenance cost of trees/bushland areas for a 10-year period.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) comprise of levies associated with development. Transfers from the reserve (outflows) are applied to fund maintenance cost of trees/bushland areas.

Plenty road duplication

Purpose - Contributions coming in from developments within Laurimar. Following completion of constructions works on plenty road this reserve will fund any contributions requested by VicRoads from this fund.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

6.2.1 Current reserves (cont)

Street tree contributions reserve

Purpose - Contributions received from developers to maintain street trees which Council takes on responsibility for.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

Native vegetation offset site maintenance

Purpose - Reserve established to fund native vegetation works which Council take over from Developers.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) comprise of levies associated with development. Transfer from the reserve(outflows) are aligned to Council's capital works schedule.

Lutheran Church and Cemetery

Purpose - Council has an agreement with Lutheran Church to purchase the site at a future point in time. This reserve will fund the purchase.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

Strategic investment reserve

Purpose - Reserve was established to capture surplus cash funds generated by Council for future investment in Council projects and to assist with bridging Council's renewal gap.

Movements – Transfers from the reserve (outflows) are aligned to Council's long-term strategy to fund major capital work projects and diversity Council's income stream via investing in income generating assets to reduce Council's reliance on rates income.

Technology improvement

Purpose - The reserve was established to enable organisational capability and fund digital transformation.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) consist of identified amounts when Council achieves a cash surplus outcome at the conclusion of the financial year or specific funding allocations as directed and approved by Council resolution. Transfer from the reserve(outflows) are to take-up strategic opportunities and digital transformation projects where there is no other source of funding available.

Traffic light construction

Purpose - Contributions from developers for developer funded traffic signals.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

Synthetic turf pitches

Purpose - Reserve was established to capture contributions from sporting clubs towards funding future investment in synthetic turf replacement.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

6.2.1 Current reserves (cont)

Strategic properties reserve

Purpose - Reserve used for strategic property management, and for funding strategic property acquisitions.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) are from proceeds of strategic and surplus land sales and the net income from Council's rental property portfolio. Transfers from the reserve (outflows) are aligned to Council's long-term strategy to fund major capital work projects and diversity Council's income stream via investing in income generating assets to reduce Council's reliance on rates income.

Non standard street lighting contributions

Purpose - Reserve is used to cover additional maintenance costs of Non-standard street lighting for new sub-division developments.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) comprise of contributions from developers for a non-legislative fee. Transfer from the reserve(outflows) are used to cover additional maintenance costs of Non-standard street lighting.

LASF defined benefit plan liability

Purpose - Reserve was established to plan for future defined benefits liability calls and fund Council's liability.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

Transport infrastructure

Purpose - Reserve was established to fund investment in future Transport Infrastructure.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

Waste reserve

Purpose - Reserve was established to capture any surplus from waste operations to ensure legislative compliance.

Movements – Transfers to the reserve (inflows) comprise of surplus from waste operations. Transfer from the reserve (outflows) are aligned to waste management related programs.

Strategic operational projects

Purpose - Reserve was established to capture surplus cash funds generated by Council for opportunities that may arise for operational projects.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

Resilience and emergency management

Purpose - Reserve was established to fund future emergency management projects.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

6.2.1 Current reserves (cont)

Plant replacement

Purpose - This reserve is to set aside funds to replace Council's plant and equipment at the end of the service life.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

Community grant

Purpose - Reserve was established to provide funds for community grants.

Movements – No movements are projected within the following 10 years.

6.2.2 Reserve usage projections

The table below discloses the balance and projected annual movement for each reserve (with movement) over the 10-year life of the Financial Plan. Total amount of reserves, for each year, aligns with the Statement of Changes in Equity, excluding the Asset Revaluation Reserve.

Reserves	Restricted/ Discretionary	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Asset development reserves											
Parklands contribution	Restricted										
Opening Balance		**15,331**	**17,833**	**18,189**	**18,901**	**19,400**	**20,251**	**20,228**	**21,087**	**22,223**	**24,133**
Transfer to reserve		2,501	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Transfer from reserve		-	(2,144)	(1,788)	(2,002)	(1,649)	(2,523)	(1,641)	(1,364)	(590)	(724)
Closing balance		**17,832**	**18,189**	**18,901**	**19,399**	**20,251**	**20,228**	**21,087**	**22,223**	**24,133**	**25,909**
Developer contribution plan (DCP) reserves	Restricted										
Opening Balance		**200,453**	**202,976**	**206,505**	**210,899**	**212,775**	**214,749**	**193,126**	**166,613**	**152,448**	**120,666**
Transfer to reserve		31,654	13,654	14,654	11,654	11,654	11,654	6,654	5,654	4,654	4,654
Transfer from reserve		(29,131)	(10,125)	(10,260)	(9,778)	(9,680)	(33,277)	(33,167)	(19,819)	(36,436)	(48,872)
Closing balance		**202,976**	**206,505**	**210,899**	**212,775**	**214,749**	**193,126**	**166,613**	**152,448**	**120,666**	**76,448**
Planning permit drainage levy	Restricted										
Opening Balance		**2,431**	**2,481**	**2,531**	**2,581**	**2,631**	**2,681**	**2,731**	**2,781**	**2,831**	**2,881**
Transfer to reserve		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Transfer from reserve		(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	-
Closing balance		**2,481**	**2,531**	**2,581**	**2,631**	**2,681**	**2,731**	**2,781**	**2,831**	**2,881**	**2,981**
Net gain compensation	Restricted										
Opening Balance		**1,452**	**1,373**	**1,290**	**1,205**	**1,116**	**1,024**	**928**	**829**	**726**	**619**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		(79)	(83)	(85)	(89)	(92)	(96)	(99)	(103)	(107)	(111)
Closing balance		**1,373**	**1,290**	**1,205**	**1,116**	**1,024**	**928**	**829**	**726**	**619**	**508**
Plenty road duplication	Restricted										
Opening Balance		**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**	**84**

6.2.2 Reserve usage projections (cont)

Reserves	Restricted/ Discretionary	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Street tree contributions reserve	Restricted										
Opening Balance		**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**	**686**
Total asset development reserve	**Restricted**										
Opening Balance		**220,437**	**225,433**	**229,285**	**234,356**	**236,692**	**239,475**	**217,783**	**192,080**	**178,998**	**149,069**
Transfer to reserve		34,255	16,254	17,254	14,254	14,254	14,254	9,254	8,254	7,254	7,254
Transfer from reserve		(29,260)	(12,402)	(12,183)	(11,919)	(11,471)	(35,946)	(34,957)	(21,336)	(37,183)	(49,707)
Closing balance		**225,432**	**229,285**	**234,356**	**236,691**	**239,475**	**217,783**	**192,080**	**178,998**	**149,069**	**106,616**

Asset replacement reserves

Native vegetation offset site maintenance	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**1,042**	**842**	**634**	**418**	**195**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		(200)	(208)	(216)	(223)	(195)	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**842**	**634**	**418**	**195**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Lutheran Church and Cemetery	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**	**380**
Strategic investment reserve	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**37,720**	**39,711**	**28,073**	**21,725**	**25,276**	**27,018**	**28,579**	**32,947**	**36,155**	**41,319**
Transfer to reserve		8,266	3,862	4,261	3,713	3,892	3,417	4,518	4,558	5,314	4,365
Transfer from reserve		(6,275)	(15,500)	(10,609)	(161)	(2,150)	(1,856)	(150)	(1,350)	(150)	(100)
Closing balance		**39,711**	**28,073**	**21,725**	**25,276**	**27,018**	**28,579**	**32,947**	**36,155**	**41,319**	**45,584**
Technology improvement	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**2,898**	**3,484**	**6,071**	**3,294**	**4,794**	**5,417**	**6,917**	**7,540**	**9,040**	**10,540**
Transfer to reserve		4,922	5,480	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Transfer from reserve		(4,336)	(2,893)	(4,277)	-	(877)	-	(877)	-	-	-
Closing balance		**3,484**	**6,071**	**3,294**	**4,794**	**5,417**	**6,917**	**7,540**	**9,040**	**10,540**	**12,040**
Traffic light construction	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**	**943**

6.2.2 Reserve usage projections (cont)

Reserves	Restricted/ Discretionary	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Synthetic turf pitches	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**	**40**
Strategic properties reserve	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**5,229**	**4,229**	**2,329**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		(1,000)	(1,900)	(1,271)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**4,229**	**2,329**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**	**1,058**
Non standard street lighting contributions	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**3,901**	**3,901**	**3,892**	**3,872**	**3,843**	**3,803**	**3,751**	**3,689**	**3,614**	**3,527**
Transfer to reserve		250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Transfer from reserve		(250)	(259)	(270)	(279)	(290)	(302)	(312)	(325)	(337)	(350)
Closing balance		**3,901**	**3,892**	**3,872**	**3,843**	**3,803**	**3,751**	**3,689**	**3,614**	**3,527**	**3,427**
LASF defined benefit plan liability	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**	**3,739**
Transport infrastructure	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**	**28**
Waste reserve	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**3,395**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		(2,382)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**	**1,013**
Strategic operational projects	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**	**2,516**

6.2.2 Reserve usage projections (cont)

Reserves	Restricted/ Discretionary	Budget 2025-26 $'000	Projection 2026-27 $'000	Projection 2027-28 $'000	Projection 2028-29 $'000	Projection 2029-30 $'000	Projection 2030-31 $'000	Projection 2031-32 $'000	Projection 2032-33 $'000	Projection 2033-34 $'000	Projection 2034-35 $'000
Resilience and emergency management	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**	**449**
Plant replacement	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**	**1,221**
Community grant	Discretionary										
Opening Balance		**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**
Transfer to reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer from reserve		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing balance		**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**	**660**
Total asset replacement reserves	**Discretionary**										
Opening Balance		**64,161**	**63,156**	**51,988**	**41,356**	**46,155**	**48,285**	**51,294**	**56,223**	**60,856**	**67,433**
Transfer to reserve		13,438	9,592	6,011	5,463	5,642	5,167	6,268	6,308	7,064	6,115
Transfer from reserve		(14,443)	(20,760)	(16,643)	(663)	(3,512)	(2,158)	(1,339)	(1,675)	(487)	(450)
Closing balance		**63,156**	**51,988**	**41,356**	**46,155**	**48,285**	**51,294**	**56,223**	**60,856**	**67,433**	**73,098**
Reserve summary	**Restricted and Discretionary**										
Opening Balance		**284,598**	**288,589**	**281,273**	**275,712**	**282,847**	**287,760**	**269,077**	**248,303**	**239,854**	**216,502**
Transfer to reserve		47,693	25,846	23,265	19,717	19,896	19,421	15,522	14,562	14,318	13,369
Transfer from reserve		(43,703)	(33,162)	(28,826)	(12,582)	(14,983)	(38,104)	(36,296)	(23,011)	(37,670)	(50,157)
Closing balance		**288,588**	**281,273**	**275,712**	**282,847**	**287,760**	**269,077**	**248,303**	**239,854**	**216,502**	**179,714**

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City of Whittlesea

5.6 Asset Plan 2025 - 2035

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Manager Assets & Facilities

In Attendance: Manager Assets & Facilities

Executive Summary

The Asset Plan 2025–35 (the Plan) is a strategic framework for managing public assets over the next decade and beyond, ensuring their sustainability for current and future generations. It aligns with the Whittlesea 2040 objectives and its vision of "A Place for All", fostering a community-friendly environment. Additionally, the Plan informs the public about how assets will be managed to support these objectives.

The Plan focuses on optimising capital and maintenance investments, balancing new assets and growth with existing infrastructure, and delivering services that adapt to evolving community needs. It promotes evidence-based decision-making, enhances community and Council engagement in asset management, and strengthens the link between costs and service levels while addressing key challenges and risks.

As a planning tool, the Asset Plan ensures the efficient allocation of resources by maintaining, improving, and replacing essential public assets such as roads, parks, buildings, and drains. It provides expenditure forecasts to guide long-term financial planning, maintenance, and capital projects, ensuring responsible budget management and asset sustainability for future generations (Attachment 1 - Asset Plan 2025-35 draft).

Council has prepared the Plan in compliance with Section 92 of the Victorian Local Government Act 2020, which requires the use of deliberative engagement in its development. Engagement with the community and stakeholders resulted in the establishment of eight asset planning principles, guiding the creation of an integrated, long-term, and transparent plan to ensure the best outcomes for the community over a minimum period of 10 years.

The Plan reinforces Council's commitment to inclusive, transparent, and best-practice asset management for the benefit of current and future generations.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Acknowledge and thank the community for their valuable contributions that guided the development of the Asset Plan 2025-35.**
2. **Adopt the Asset Plan 2025-35 at Attachment 1.**

Background / Key Information

Council provides a wide range of essential services that contribute to making the community *a great place for all.* These services rely on infrastructure assets, including buildings, roads, parks, and heritage sites, which play a crucial role in delivering services and enhancing community well-being. These assets—whether old or new, natural, or built—belong to the entire community and provide opportunities for people to work, live, play, and enjoy a safe and comfortable environment both now and in the future.

The Plan details how Council will optimise capital and maintenance requirements, balance new assets and growth with existing infrastructure, and deliver services in line with evolving community needs and expectations.

The Plan aims to support consistent, evidence-based decision-making, engage the community and the Council in asset management performance reporting, improve links between costs and service levels, and articulate our challenges and risks. All of this will result in more informed community engagement and the best use of Council assets in the interest of the community, to achieve the Whittlesea 2040 community aspirations.

In compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, deliberative engagement was undertaken with the community and stakeholders to inform the development of the Plan. Stakeholder consultation included the community, Traditional Owners, and various community and user groups. Three focus group sessions were conducted, comprising community members representative of the municipality's diversity, along with an internal focus group. These sessions aimed to develop a set of asset planning principles to guide decision-making in asset planning, development, and maintenance, ensuring that infrastructure aligns with the diverse needs of the community. The asset management principles are outlined in Table A: Asset Planning Principles**.**

Table A: Asset Planning Principles

Principle	Objective
Active & Healthy Community	Assets support and encourage an active and healthy lifestyle.
Connected Community	Infrastructure fosters strong community connections.
First Peoples Recognition	Assets acknowledge and reflect connections to First Peoples.
Safe Community	Asset risks are minimised to ensure public safety.
Community-Focused	Assets are designed to meet the evolving needs of a diverse community.
Equitable & Accessible	Infrastructure is planned to be inclusive and available to all members of the community.
Sustainability	Asset management decisions consider environmental, social, and financial sustainability.
Usability	Assets are optimised for efficiency, functionality, and practicality.

The draft Plan was presented to the community for feedback between 16 April 2025 and 11 May 2025, during which community members were asked whether they supported the Plan. A total of 66 participants contributed to the consultation process (4 online and 62 at community pop-up stalls), with 94% indicating support for the Plan. The remaining 6% did not support the Plan.

Over time, assets deteriorate due to age, damage, disasters, or obsolescence. To ensure their longevity, Council carefully manages its budget to maintain and upgrade infrastructure, keeping it durable, sustainable, and functional in the long term. The Plan categorises Council-owned assets into 11 asset portfolios with a total replacement cost of over $4.03B. Considering the financial magnitude of the asset portfolio, there must be alignment with financial reporting, renewal programming, and maintenance services and contracts. The physical and financial state of these assets is detailed in Table B: Asset Portfolio Summary.

Table B: Asset Portfolio Summary

Asset Portfolio	Replacement Cost ($'000)	Fair Value ($'000)	Asset Health (%)
1. Road Infrastructure	$1,812,655	$1,410,040	77.8%
2. Stormwater	$757,015	$511,323	67.5%
3. Buildings	$501,866	$401,814	80.1%
4. Pathways	$334,834	$270,863	80.9%
5. Park & Streetscape Infrastructure	$196,797	$100,533	51.1%
6. Bridges & Boardwalks	$145,411	$75,405	51.9%
7. Playgrounds	$101,139	$55,522	54.9%
8. Road Ancillary	$63,906	$34,851	54.5%
9. Landscape & Environment	$42,049	$30,235	71.9%
10. Car Parks	$35,367	$27,326	77.3%
11. Sporting Infrastructure	$30,717	$15,553	50.6%

The community expects these assets to be maintained at high standards to ensure public safety, functionality, and accessibility, supporting the delivery of quality services and programs. However, balancing community expectations with financial sustainability is essential, as needs evolve due to demographic changes, climate shifts, and technological advancements. Given the finite budget available, a planned and strategic approach to asset management is crucial for ensuring a fair and fiscally responsible long-term financial plan.

When making decisions about renewing, maintaining, or investing in new assets, the Plan outlines the process for life cycle planning and analysis to assess appropriate service levels before finalising budgets to ensure investments align with community aspirations and long-term sustainability goals.

Therefore, the Asset Plan:

- Defines service levels to ensure assets meet expected performance standards in availability, quality, risk, accessibility, and suitability. High-demand assets receive more frequent inspections, maintenance, and prioritisation within renewal programs to maintain reliability. Service levels are based on community expectations, legislative requirements, and asset management standards, with decisions on maintenance, renewal, and upgrades driven by asset criticality, utilisation, and available resources.
- Promotes inclusive infrastructure to ensure all residents and visitors can fully participate in community life. Council integrates gender equality considerations into the planning, design, delivery, and maintenance of infrastructure, ensuring safe, welcoming, and accessible public spaces for women, men, gender-diverse individuals, people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
- Commits to intergenerational equity, ensuring that current investments in assets do not place an undue financial burden on future generations. This approach balances the needs of present residents while preserving resources, opportunities, and infrastructure for future generations.
- Integrates climate resilience and sustainability strategies into asset management to mitigate risks related to flooding, municipal emergencies, and environmental sustainability.

The Asset Plan ensures sustainable, inclusive, and resilient infrastructure that meets community needs while aligning with financial responsibility and environmental sustainability. By integrating technological advancements, climate adaptation strategies, and intergenerational equity principles, Council remains committed to delivering high-quality services and infrastructure that support the well-being of both current and future generations.

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.

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.

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

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
The cost for the development of the Plan is included in the current budget.

Community Consultation and Engagement
Council has prepared the Plan in compliance with Section 92 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, which mandates the use of deliberative engagement in its development.

In 2024, three community focus groups and one internal focus group were conducted to ensure diverse representation and meaningful discussions on asset planning. These sessions provided residents with opportunities to engage in discussions aimed at developing a set of asset planning principles. Feedback was collected through written surveys, table discussions, and whole-room conversations, ensuring inclusive participation. The insights gained from these discussions helped identify, assess, and prioritise eight guiding asset planning principles. This collaborative approach resulted in balanced principles that reflect community perspectives while aligning with best practices in contemporary asset management and supporting the Community Vision.

The draft Plan was presented to the community for feedback between 16 April and 11 May 2025. Community members were asked whether they supported the proposed Plan and, if not, to provide reasons for their position. Feedback was collected through the Engage Whittlesea Community Vision Review project page and at a series of eight community pop-up stalls held at high foot traffic locations across the municipality. There was an overwhelming support for the draft Plan, whilst opposing views cited concerns related to community safety, a desire for cleaner and more appealing neighbourhoods, and the cost of living.

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) The municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making.
(e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.
(g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.
(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

The Plan reaffirms Council's commitment to integrating climate change adaptation, flooding mitigation, municipal emergency management, and sustainability into responsible asset management.

When designing new infrastructure or maintaining existing public assets, decisions are guided by the following key considerations:

- Climate-proofing assets to enhance long-term durability.
- Improving the resilience of buildings and road infrastructure to withstand climatic events.
- Minimising reliance on high-risk assets to reduce vulnerabilities.
- Investing in eco-friendly materials to promote sustainability.
- Implementing sustainable operations to reduce environmental impact.

This approach ensures that public infrastructure remains resilient, sustainable, and capable of adapting to future environmental challenges.

Social, Cultural, and Health

The Plan considers social, cultural, and health factors by ensuring that infrastructure is inclusive, accessible, and supportive of community well-being.

- Socially, it prioritises equitable access to essential services, public spaces, and recreational facilities, fostering community connectivity and engagement.
- Culturally, it acknowledges and reflects the heritage and identity of diverse communities, including Traditional Owners, through respectful planning and design.

- From a health perspective, the plan promotes active lifestyles by maintaining safe parks, pathways, and sporting facilities, while also ensuring public infrastructure supports clean, sustainable, and healthy environments.

Economic

The Plan considers economic factors to ensure long-term financial sustainability and efficient resource management.

- **Financial Responsibility**: The Plan aligns asset management with the Opex and Capex budgets and programs and the Long-Term Financial Plan to ensure that maintenance, renewal, and upgrades are cost-effective and fiscally responsible.
- **Economic Growth**: By investing in key infrastructure, such as transport networks, business precincts, and community facilities, the plan supports local economic activity, job creation, and business growth.
- **Cost-Effective Asset Management:** A lifecycle approach to asset management minimises long-term costs by optimising asset performance, extending lifespan, and reducing the need for premature replacements.
- **Sustainable Investment:** The plan considers climate resilience and sustainability, reducing operational costs through energy-efficient infrastructure, eco-friendly materials, and smart technologies.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The Plan ensures infrastructure is compliant, efficient, and aligned with Council's Integrated Planning Framework by addressing legal, resource, and strategic implications.

- **Legal Considerations:** The Plan ensures compliance with Section 92 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*. It also adheres to planning, safety, and environmental standards to mitigate legal risks and incorporate public liability and risk management to protect community interests.
- **Resource Considerations:** The Plan balances financial, human, and material resources to maintain and develop assets efficiently. It implements a lifecycle approach to asset maintenance, ensuring optimal use of resources, and uses technology and data-driven decision-making to enhance asset efficiency and reduce costs.
- **Strategic Considerations:** The Plan aligns with the City of Whittlesea 2040, the Community Plan 2025-35 (Council Plan), and the Long-Term Financial Plan to ensure that infrastructure meets future needs. It supports economic development, sustainability, and service delivery priorities, while also adapting to changing demographics, climate impacts, and technological advancements to enhance resilience and future readiness.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

If approved by Council, a comprehensive communications campaign will be undertaken to inform the community of the endorsed Plan.

Information about the Plan will be shared through a variety of methods and channels, including online, traditional media, and direct communications, outlining the community engagement process undertaken and how feedback has shaped the development and outcomes of the Plan.

Critical Dates

If Council endorses the Officers' recommendation, the Plan will be valid from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2035, or if Council elects to renew the Plan, whichever occurs first.

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. Asset Plan 2025-35 [**5.6.1** - 39 pages]



Asset Plan
2025-35

City of Whittlesea

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and the Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.



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The City of Whittlesea offer various language services to help you communicate with us.

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National Relay Service: 133 677
(ask for 9217 2170)

Connect with us in your preferred language

Interpreter

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Section A

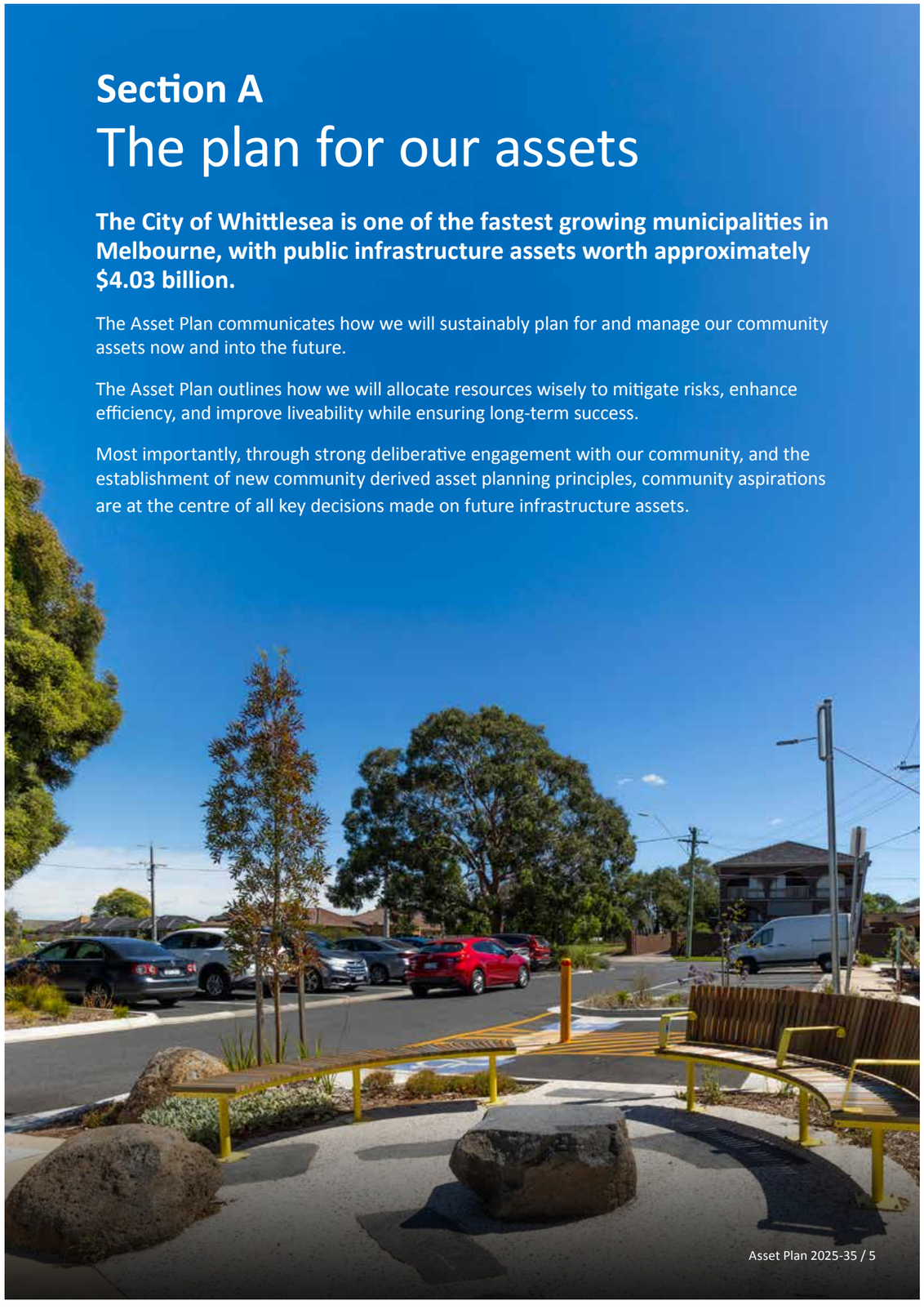
The plan for our assets

The City of Whittlesea is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Melbourne, with public infrastructure assets worth approximately $4.03 billion.

The Asset Plan communicates how we will sustainably plan for and manage our community assets now and into the future.

The Asset Plan outlines how we will allocate resources wisely to mitigate risks, enhance efficiency, and improve liveability while ensuring long-term success.

Most importantly, through strong deliberative engagement with our community, and the establishment of new community derived asset planning principles, community aspirations are at the centre of all key decisions made on future infrastructure assets.



1. Our city at a glance

This Asset Plan aligns with the City of Whittlesea's community vision as outlined in *Whittlesea 2040: A place for all* and the Long-Term Financial Plan to ensure assets meet the community's long-term needs. It upholds intergenerational equity; balancing investment so future generations inherit well-maintained assets.
In addition to infrastructure assets, we have an extensive property portfolio. Land and property are fundamental to how services are delivered, either directly or indirectly to the community.

The City of Whittlesea is the fifth most populated local government area in Victoria and the fifth fastest growing in the last 10 years. Between 2023 and 2040 the population is estimated to grow by more than 45 per cent from 245,029 to 360,692 people, which is about 6,857 new residents per year.

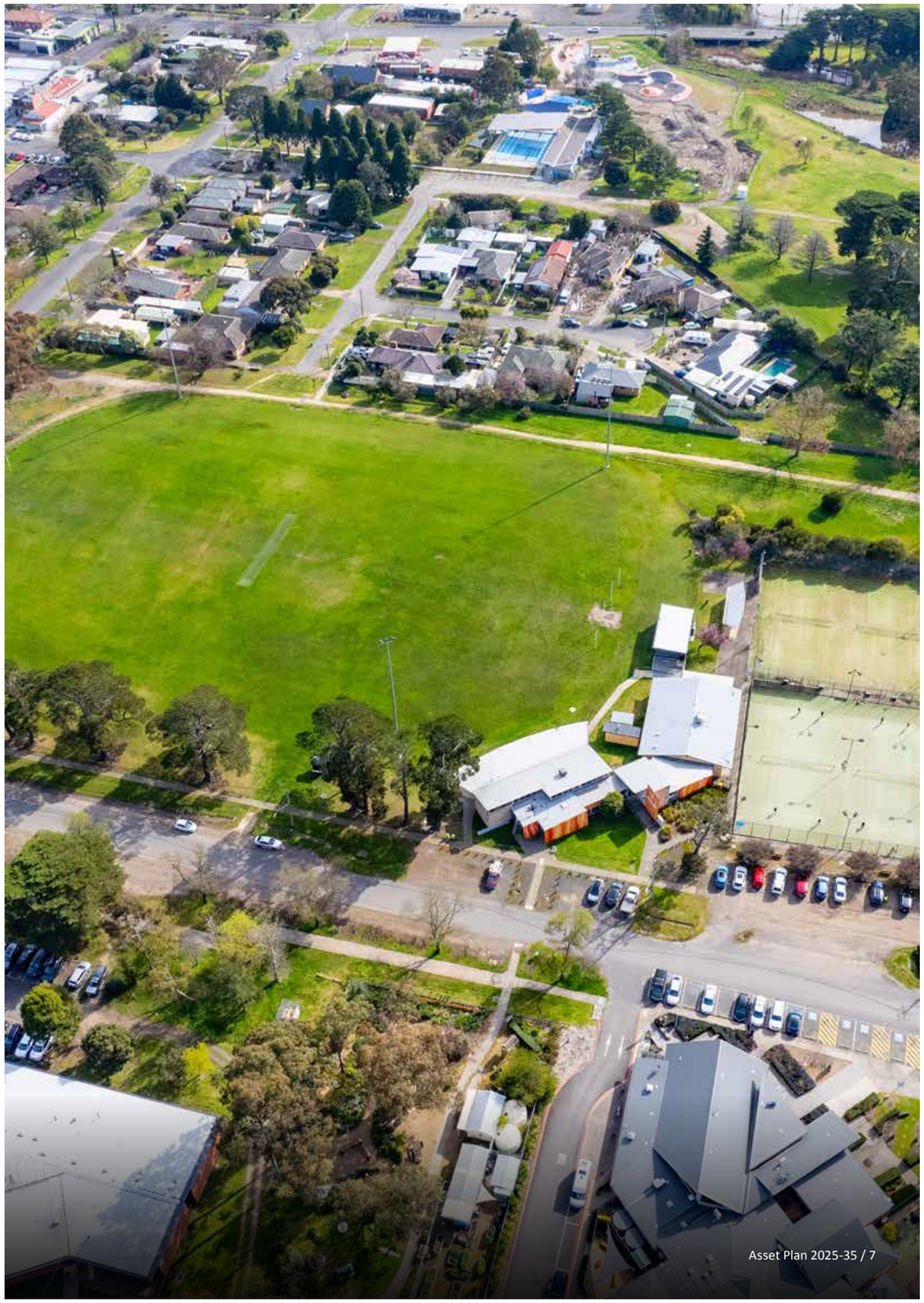
As our city grows and attracts more people, our existing infrastructure wears out, increasing the demand for new infrastructure, therefore placing a strong importance on robust asset plans and management practices. Our infrastructure assets benefit our community through enhancing safe connected communities, liveable neighbourhoods, a strong local economy and supporting a sustainable environment.

Similar to challenges facing other municipalities with rapid population growth, we need to prioritise available resources to deliver services, spaces and places to meet community needs. Consideration needs to be given for renewal and maintenance of existing facilities in established areas compared with investment in new community infrastructure in the growing suburbs.

To determine what we can afford, we must understand how population growth and challenges like climate change impact long term maintenance and renewal costs. As assets wear over time and community expectations change, we must be transparent about our service standards and levels to balance economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors within available budget.

This ensures our assets support the services and amenities our community needs and expects, both now and in the future, providing sustainable benefits for all residents.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for further information about our community.



2. Our assets story on a page

Our asset story

$4.03B

Infrastructure asset portfolios

- Road infrastructure
- Car parks
- Pathways
- Stormwater
- Road ancillary
- Bridges and boardwalks
- Buildings
- Parks and streetscape infrastructure
- Playgrounds
- Landscape and environment
- Sporting infrastructure

Health check

$27M
Projected average annual renewal allocation

Asset value per capita
$16K
Infrastructure value per head of population

Cost per capita
$111
Value of infrastructure renewal expenditure per head of population

Renewal ratio
59%
Ratio of current budget and desired budget

Asset health*
72.3%
Proportion of remaining life left in our assets

Challenges and opportunities

- Growth
- Demographic change
- Technology shift
- Ageing infrastructure
- Performance
- Climate change

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected as a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

Our Assets

1,414km
Sealed roads

2,085km
Drainage pipes

181
Sporting courts/fields

190
Council buildings

Our Plan

Long term decision making

- Balancing community needs with responsible spending
- Optimising available funding to reduce long term risk
- Transparency in allocating funding to individual program
- Prioritising capital expenditure (new, upgrade and renewal works) with the focus on future needs

Financial planning

- Average annual capital expenditure = $27M
- Infrastructure value per capita = $16K
- Infrastructure spend per capita = $111
- Asset Funding Renewal Ratio[1] 59%
- Consumption Ratio[2] = 72.3%

Challenges and opportunities

- Ageing Infrastructure
- Balancing community expectations against available budgets and affordability
- Climate change impacts
- Population growth and demographic shift

Strategic improvement initiatives

- Develop and review the Asset Plan using Deliberative Community Engagement
- Ensure assets are utilised, fit for purpose and sustainable
- Conduct annual review of level of service vs investment
- Implement a climate resilient infrastructure plan
- Consultation with Traditional Owners

[1] Renewal Funding Ratio: Planned renewal budget for the next 10 years / Desired renewal costs for the next 10 years (as per the desired service level).

[2] Consumption Ratio: Written down Value of an asset / Gross Replacement costs measured using the remaining life of an asset or its component

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the Asset Plan

The purpose of this Asset Plan is to provide principles for the City of Whittlesea to make sound asset investment decisions using best practice asset management.

The Asset Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for managing public assets over the next decade and beyond, ensuring their sustainable use for current and future generations. It is a public-facing document that informs the community about how we will manage community assets to achieve the Whittlesea 2040 objectives and its vision statement: ***a place for all***.

The Asset Plan details how we will optimise capital and maintenance requirements, balance new assets and growth with existing infrastructure, and deliver services in line with evolving community needs and expectations. Our aim is to support consistent, evidence-based decision-making, engage the community and the Council in asset management performance reporting, improve links between costs and service levels, and articulate our challenges and risks. All of this will result in more informed community engagement and the best use of Council assets in the interest of the community, to achieve the Whittlesea 2040 community aspirations outlined in section 4.4 Strategic Alignment.

The Asset Plan serves as a mechanism for Council to strategically plan for the services, infrastructure, and land that will be needed in the future. An asset plan is a guide that helps the community and local government take care of important public assets like roads, parks, buildings, and drains. It explains how these assets will be maintained, improved, and replaced over time so they stay in good condition for everyone to use.

The Asset Plan makes sure that money is spent wisely by balancing new projects with the upkeep of existing assets. It helps the community understand how decisions are made about public spaces and services. By planning ahead, we can make sure future generations will have well-maintained and useful assets to enjoy. It also provides expenditure forecasts that will guide future maintenance, renewal programs, and capital projects, impacting long-term financial planning and annual budgets.

Compliance with the Local Government Act

Council has prepared this Asset Plan in compliance with Section 92 of the *Victorian Local Government Act 2020* which requires councils 'to include integrated, long-term, and transparent asset plans to achieve the best outcomes for the community with a timeline of at-least 10 years.'





3.2 Caring for country

We are committed to delivering our asset management practices and processes respectfully, with an awareness of the relationship between First Peoples and Country, inclusive of land, water, plants, animals and cultures.

In collaboration with the Wurundjeri and Taungurung Peoples, Traditional Owners and First Peoples community, we continue to respect and care for Country, as we ensure preserving our open space and parklands for all, and development is responsible and sustainable.

We recognise that Country is fundamental to developing infrastructure. Our infrastructure asset planning will respect the principles of Council's Aboriginal Action Plan which includes the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy, and centred on seven strategic pillars:

- Culture, respect and trust
- Awareness and engagement
- Accountability and direction
- Governance and participation
- Economic participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Resourcing and funding

As we implement this Asset Plan, we will continue to build our relationship with the First Peoples community.

3.3 Our future challenges and opportunities

Council develops and implements a range of plans and strategies to support and guide our decision making and planning to meet the needs and aspirations of our community, now and into the future. These plans and strategies set clear actions and goals to deliver on the Whittlesea 2040 Vision.

When developing strategic objectives for the Asset Plan, key priorities and challenges identified in these strategies were considered. This process also included input from targeted stakeholder consultation sessions conducted during the preparation of Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All. As part of this work, the Whittlesea 2040: Background Paper was prepared which briefly summarises these challenges and opportunities below.

Population and demographic change
Planning Council services and infrastructure to support our growing population including an ageing population. Collaborative property management approach to balance growth, service and sustainability.

Climate change
Delivery of adaptation and carbon neutral approaches and supporting community and industry resilience.

Regional economy
Supporting strong local economy and employment, including local business, investment attraction, tourism and activation.

Transport
Making it easier to get around including road upgrades, pedestrian and cycle networks but especially public and community transport, and reduction of travel times.

Sport, recreation and green space
Planning for sport, recreation and open space.

Inclusion and wellbeing
Whittlesea has long recognised the importance of mechanisms to activate communities and is progressing on many indicators of community cohesion, inclusion and wellbeing.

Technology shift
Explore new and innovative delivery approaches.

4. Strategic context

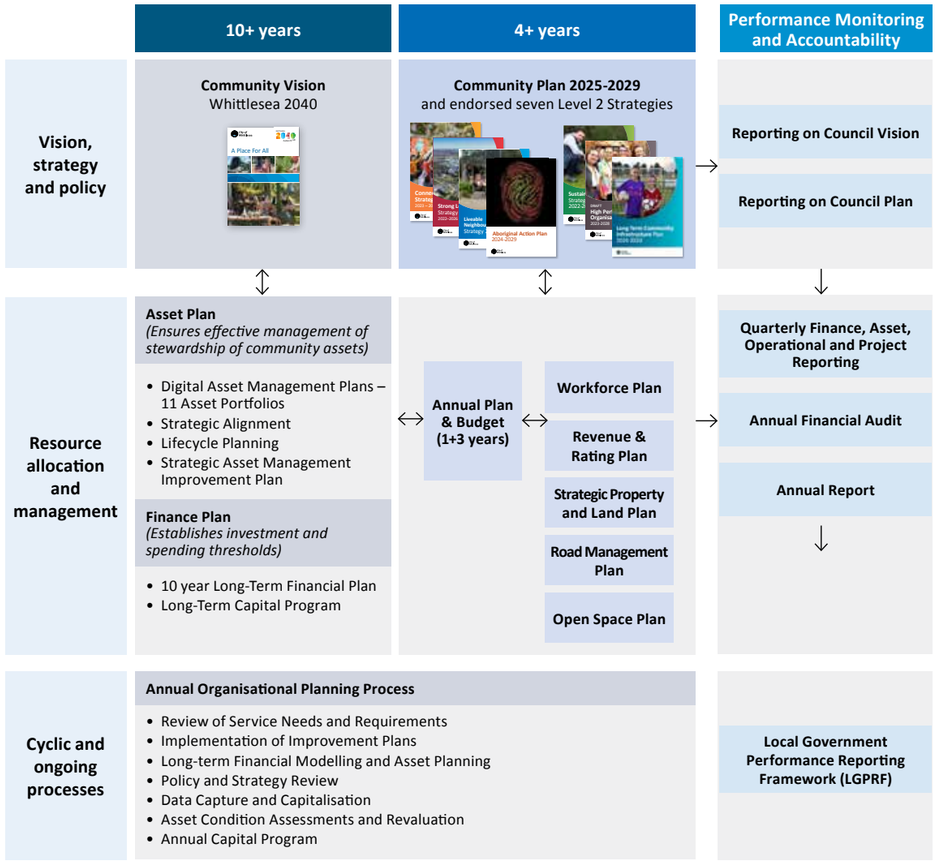
4.1 Asset management planning

Our asset management practices are guided by the Asset Management Policy, the Asset Plan, and supporting strategies and documents.

The Asset Management Policy and the processes that support it will facilitate the following outcomes:

- Achievement of the management objectives for community, infrastructure and operational assets to meet the present and future needs of the community, with inclusion of climate change considerations
- Custodianship of natural and heritage assets in perpetuity
- Rationalisation of existing, and the development of appropriate new assets, to meet the needs of the community for services at an appropriate level now and in the future
- Delivery of assets at the right cost, at the right time with the right standard
- Council's ability to report within the Integrated Planning Framework
- Development of appropriate systems, procedures and controls.

These processes are supported by technology, data, systems, and people and are informed by key corporate and strategic plans. Our Asset Management Framework is shown below.

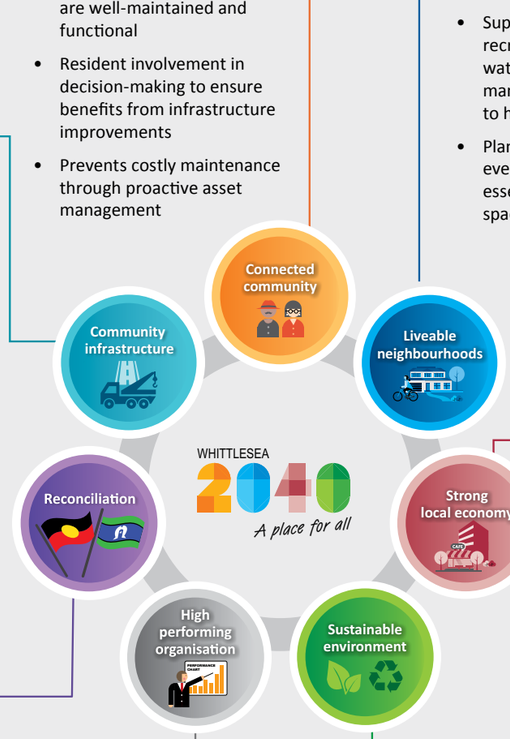


Please refer to Appendix 2 for how this plan supports the delivery of actions against our key community goals.



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Council Plan/Strategies
Asset Plan interaction with Council Plans and Strategies



Connected community

- Ensures roads, bridges, public transport, and utilities are well-maintained and functional
- Resident involvement in decision-making to ensure benefits from infrastructure improvements
- Prevents costly maintenance through proactive asset management

Liveable neighbourhoods

- Supports walkability, bike paths, and public transit
- Supports access to recreational spaces, clean water, and efficient waste management, contributing to healthy living
- Planning to ensure everyone has fair access to essential services, public spaces, and facilities

Community Infrastructure

- Create a sense of place and connect residents to their neighbourhood
- Deliver spaces that are welcoming, accessible, safe and inclusive for all
- Support adaptable and multi-functional spaces that enable community groups to thrive
- Provide environments that encourage increased physical activity for all ages and abilities

Strong Local Economy

- Support for council facilities as spaces for learning, health and play
- Ensure streetscapes are designed to support local business
- Ensure road and bridge infrastructure is maintained to support freight

Reconciliation

- Acknowledges Traditional Owners and cultural sites in planning and development
- Incorporates Traditional Owners' perspectives on land and resource management
- Integrates Indigenous knowledge in environmental and sustainability practices

High performing organisation

- Ensures high-quality service delivery to residents, clients, or users
- Provides data-driven insights for better long-term planning and investment
- Aligns assets with Councils strategic plans and service delivery
- Ensures assets meet safety, environmental and legal standards

Sustainable environment

- Encourages circular economy practices, such as reuse and recycling
- Supports low-emission and renewable energy solutions
- Ensures infrastructure is designed for long-term environmental resilience
- Implements strategies to mitigate climate risks

Asset Plan 2025-35 / 15

4.2 Lifecycle approach to asset management

We use a lifecycle approach to asset management, considering the resources needed to operate, maintain, repair, and replace assets to meet service level requirements and ensure they last as long as expected.

To make the most of our asset spending, we plan for the entire life of an asset from when it is built or purchased to when it is replaced or disposed of. This approach helps us get the best value from our assets while maintaining the required service levels in the most cost-effective way.

1. Planning and design

When deciding what assets are needed for the future, we think about the total cost over time which is referred to as 'whole of costs'. We also consider things like affordability, fairness, ease of access, how easy it is to maintain, and its impact on the environment.

2. Creation and acquisition

Before building or buying something new, we look at other options like leasing or forming strategic partnerships. Any new asset should fit within an approved plan and match the Council's Long-Term Infrastructure or Strategic Property and Land Plans. We also calculate how much it will cost to maintain assets over a 10-year period, as well as whether we will need to build or acquire assets. All this information informs the Financial Plan for long term maintenance and renewal of assets.

3. Maintenance and operations

In addition to periodic inspection, a detailed condition audit of each asset is conducted every four years to monitor its condition, safety, and usefulness. We carry out planned maintenance to prevent expensive repairs and failures. This helps keep everything running properly while meeting safety and service standards.

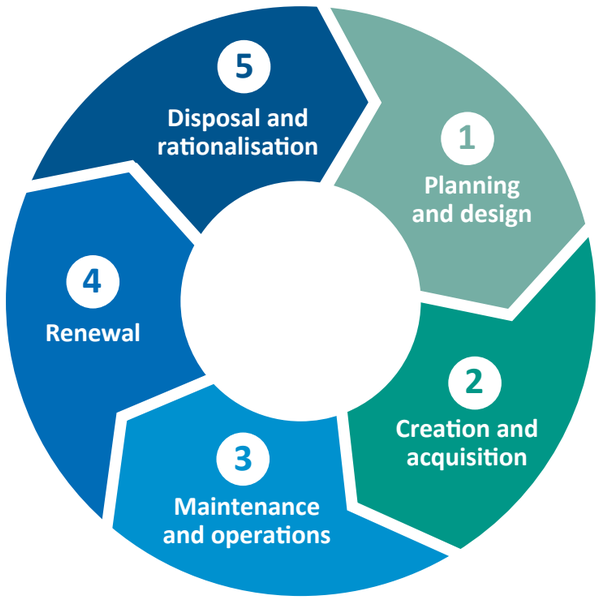
4. Renewal and upgrade

As assets are consumed and deteriorate over time, assets are only replaced when they can no longer meet the required service level. The most important assets are upgraded or replaced first, based on how critical they are to the community.

5. Disposal and rationalisation

If an asset is no longer useful or needed, we look at options to sell or re-purpose, saving resources on reactive and preventative maintenance. This is part of planning for future financial sustainability.

> Asset information – inventory, condition, functionality and capacity are recorded in our enterprise systems. Our funding is based on scenario planning using a service level-based approach. Condition Assessment is undertaken by a suitably qualified professional.



4.3 Strategic asset management targets

The target state, where we aim to be, has been established based on several key considerations. From an asset management perspective, our goal is to set intervention standards that maintain assets in a manageable state, ensuring we do not create a burden for future generations. The factors guiding these targets include:

- **National benchmarks:** The National State of the Assets recommends keeping assets in ***Poor and Very Poor Condition (PVP)*** below 10%, typically comprising of 6% in Poor and 4% in Very Poor.
- **Industry standards:** The Victorian Auditor General Office suggest sustainable investment in infrastructure ranges from 50-100%.
- **Strategic asset planning:** We assess individual asset class management plans, considering recommended intervention scenarios and performance indicators. These plans are then balanced at the portfolio level to ensure a cohesive approach.
- **Affordability and achievability:** The 10-year capital renewal plan must be financially viable and deliverable, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively within budget constraints.
- **Asset Health:** Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected as a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.



Strategic asset management targets

City of Whittlesea – Target State

< 5%	50% > 80%	> 65%
PVP future years	Asset renewal funding ratio	Asset health

4.4 Asset investment categories

For the purposes of this Asset Plan, our asset spending is categorised in a way that helps us to plan our budgets and track how we spend our money on assets and services.

Expenditure Type	Asset management activity	Description
Operational	Maintenance	Scheduled work to keep assets operating at the required level of service, or reactive work to repair defects and ensure that assets meet their service life and don't require early renewal.
	Operations	Recurrent expenditure that is required to use an asset such as utility costs, audit and inspection programs, cleaning or fees paid to other organisations.
Capital	Renewal	Works on assets that are at the end of life that restore their ability to deliver or facilitate the delivery of the desired service.
	Upgrade	Works that increase the quality of the existing service that can be delivered through an existing asset.
	Expansion	Works that increase the quantity of the same services that can be delivered through an existing asset.
	New	Works that generate an asset that can provide a service that does not currently exist.
Acquisition	Gifted or Contribution	Assets handed over to Council's possession as part of sub development and growth.



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5. Our community's role

We are committed to engaging with our community and ensuring transparency in our decision-making by providing opportunities for input into decisions that affect asset and service delivery.

In compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020,* we seek feedback from the community at key points in the decision-making process to ensure we provide services and assets that are sustainable and available for future generations.

Our stakeholders:

- The community
- Traditional Owners
- The Council
- User groups
- Community groups

5.1. Council's community engagement principles

We are committed to providing a structured and transparent framework for purposeful, genuine and meaningful community engagement, Our Community Engagement Policy guides our approach to community engagement and outlines how we will provide opportunities for our diverse community to share ideas, opinions and feedback to ensure their voices are heard and considered in Council decision making.

In line with Council's Community Engagement Policy, we will engage with our community in relation to decisions that affect asset and service delivery. We will use deliberative engagement practices in the development of key strategic asset management plans.

There are many ways members of the community can inform and influence decisions about our assets, including through our annual budget process, regular community surveys and through our online engagement platform.

5.2 Asset planning principles

In 2024, we held three focus groups, consisting of community members representative of our diverse municipality, as well as an internal focus group, to help provide an opportunity for residents to engage in valuable discussion to develop a set of asset planning principles.

Feedback was sought through an individual written survey, discussion at table level and whole room group discussion to ensure everybody's voice was heard. Insights from these sessions helped identify, assess, and prioritise eight guiding asset planning principles. This approach enabled us to achieve balanced principles that were informed by the community's perspectives and reflect our commitment to a best practice contemporary approach to asset management and support our Community Vision.

Active community
Assets promote an active and healthy community

First peoples
Assets demonstrate connection to First Peoples

Connected community
Assets promote community connectivity

Community focused
Assets meet the diverse and changing needs of the community

Safe community
Asset risks are minimised to keep the community safe

Equitable and accessible
Assets are equitable and accessible to the whole community

Useability
Assets are optimised for useability

Sustainability
Infrastructure decisions consider environmental, social and financial sustainability

6. How we manage our assets

6.1 Our assets support our services

Council provides many important services to help make the community a great place for everyone. These services are grouped into specific categories that reflect the services offered.

Infrastructure assets that Council is responsible for include physical things like buildings, roads, parks, and heritage sites that help deliver these services and improve public well-being. These assets, whether old or new, natural or built, belong to the whole community. They give people opportunities to work, live, play, and enjoy a safe and comfortable environment, both now and in the future.

Over time, these assets wear out due to age, damage, disasters, or becoming outdated. Council carefully manages its budget to make sure these assets are properly maintained. This helps keep them in good condition and ensures the infrastructure remains strong and sustainable for the long term.

The assets owned and operated by Council as presented in this Asset Plan, are broken down into 11 asset portfolios that align to financial reporting, renewal programming and maintenance contracts. Section B in this document outlines the state of these assets physically and financially.

6.2 Why is asset management important?

Our community expects assets to be provided to a standard that ensures public safety, functionality and accessibility and to support the delivery of quality services and programs.

We need to balance delivering what our community needs and expects with what our community can afford.

Over time, our community needs, and expectations are bound to change – with demographics, climate and technology constantly evolving.

With a finite budget for investment in assets, a planned and measured approach to asset management is necessary to ensure a fair and fiscally prudent long-term financial plan.

6.3 How our assets support community needs

Our assets exist to support the delivery of Council services and public facilities that, in turn, support our community's social and economic needs as identified in Whittlesea 2040. When making decisions about renewal or maintenance of our assets and/or prioritising our new asset investments, we always undertake life cycle analysis and determine what the appropriate levels of service are for an asset prior to setting budgets, to ensure our community aspirations are achieved.

6.4 Levels of service

Our service levels are defined by our expectations of the standard at which an asset needs to perform. We define our service levels with respect to availability of the service, quality of the service, risk posed by service deficiency, accessibility of the service and suitability of the service. We acknowledge that where a higher service level provision is required, due to higher utilisation and need, there is an increase in the importance of the asset providing the service. These assets will be attributed with a higher level of hierarchy to ensure more frequent inspections, increased maintenance provisions and a higher priority within renewal programs.

Service levels are set by the Council based on community expectations, legislated levels of service and standards and detailed within the respective Asset Management Plans.

Our decisions on maintenance, renewal and upgrades are driven by these service level interventions and are based on the criticality of the asset (service), utilisation and available resources.

When determining appropriate service levels, we focus on the following key considerations:

- Appropriate intervention level
- What is the ongoing investment needed to fund minimum service levels; and
- Finding the balance based on priority, risk and utilisation.

6.5 Our asset response to gender equality

To ensure that every resident and visitor to our city can fully participate in community life, our infrastructure must be usable, welcoming, relevant and safe for everyone.

Globally, many disadvantaged groups miss out on opportunities to improve their lives because the infrastructure around them isn't built with their needs in mind. This means that services are likely to be experienced differently and have different outcomes for people of different genders.

We are committed to considering gender equality in planning, delivering, maintaining, and managing our infrastructure assets to support equal access to services.

This commitment begins with an inclusive design that ensures our infrastructure works for everyone, including women, men, gender-diverse people, people with disabilities, refugees, and the CALD – culturally and linguistically diverse – community.

6.6 Our asset response to intergenerational equity

We are committed to evaluating intergenerational equity when considering borrowings for building assets for current and future generations.

This is achieved through maximising the benefits for the current generation whilst also preserving resources, opportunities, and assets that allow future generations to thrive and ensuring financial decisions don't unduly burden future generations with repayment obligations.

Council is committed to:

- Reviewing the timelines and funding of upgrades, renewals and delivery of new assets
- Ensuring residents have good access to health, community and sporting infrastructure
- Analysing when further borrowings are required
- Continually reviewing the Levels of Service and managing risk
- Continually assessing and inspecting the condition of existing infrastructure.

6.7 Our asset response to climate change

We are committed to ensuring climate change, flooding, municipal emergency management, and sustainability are considered with respect to responsible asset management. When designing new or maintaining our current asset infrastructure base, we will ensure that our decisions are based on:

- Climate-proofing assets
- Improving the resilience of buildings and road infrastructure to withstand climatic events
- Limiting high-risk assets
- Investment in eco-friendly materials
- Sustainable operations.

6.8 Our asset response to technological advancements

We are committed to investigating how technology will help drive outcomes and Levels of Service (LoS) improvements. Technology can help and assist in providing sustainable service, reduce or even eliminate risk, improve performance and significantly reduce operating costs. Technological advancements that could assist in managing infrastructure assets include:

- Integration of sensors into infrastructure to lower energy consumption and water usage
- Integration of sensors into infrastructure to help predict maintenance requirements
- Adoption of machine learning to improve accuracy and cost of condition assessments
- More efficient design enhancements
- Optimisation of big data analytics to help inform capital programming and operations
- Development of further remote operations.

7. Funding for the future

To ensure responsible and sustainable stewardship of our assets, we are committed to balancing our community's needs and aspirations with what is affordable for ratepayers.

Making decisions about funding our assets requires ongoing balancing of service levels, risk and the need to adequately maintain and renew assets. Our aim is to achieve long-term asset sustainability.

7.1 Integration with the Financial Plan

To ensure the resources needed to manage our assets are provided in our financial planning instruments, integration of the Asset Plan and the Financial Plan is critical.

The balance between maintaining and renewing our assets and accommodating funding for improvement and growth is a constant challenge – underfunding the renewal of an asset can lead to lower levels of service and deferring an important asset upgrade can mean that the asset is no longer fit-for-purpose.

Our Asset Plan has considered a minimum of two options, linked to Community Levels of Service. The adopted expenditure included in this Asset Plan is consistent with our affordability after considering at-least two scenarios per service/class.

All funding requirements identified for each asset portfolio have been allocated in the Financial Plan. This will require future monitoring and further analysis as new asset information becomes available such as new asset condition data. Funding requirements may potentially change which will require adjustment to the Asset Plan and the Financial Plan.

7.2 Our asset investment strategies

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, our approach is to be prudent in our investment decisions using a holistic lifecycle approach to asset management.

This means that we will aim to plan our assets so that they will continue to support quality living, economic development, and environmental sustainability in the long-term.

Investment in asset maintenance and renewal will be balanced by significant investment in new and upgraded assets to meet current and future demand across the region as we grow and change.

Maintaining integration between our Asset Plan and Financial Plan is key to ensuring that future funding is allocated in a way that supports service delivery and effective asset management.

Our asset investment strategies align with our asset management and financial planning principles.

We will aspire to:

- Optimise asset life through timely and effective maintenance
- Continue to place a high priority on renewing our ageing assets
- Manage the impacts of growth by being strategic in how we plan for our future asset needs
- Comply with our obligations by actioning legislated standards in asset planning and development
- Provide affordable services by balancing community needs and aspirations with what ratepayers can afford
- Build resilient assets that not only deliver the best outcome for our community but also the best outcome for the environment.

Section B

The state of our assets



1. Asset management functions

Asset planning is not a set and forget process. It needs to be flexible to ensure our assets and levels of service are responsive to changes in population and demographics and the ongoing challenge of climate change, can capitalise on emerging trends and opportunities, and continue to meet agreed requirements as priorities change over time.

1.1 Strategic Asset Management Plan reviews and updates

This Asset Plan will be formally reviewed and updated every four years in line with the new Council term to provide opportunities for the new Council to make any required changes.

An annual review of the Asset Plan will be presented to Council for formal endorsement ensuring asset management strategies remain effective, aligned with organisational goals, and adaptable to changing conditions. It involves assessing asset performance, reviewing financial planning, and optimising maintenance strategies to ensure compliance with key priorities and decisions of Council.

1.2 Strategic Property and Land Plan

The City of Whittlesea owns more than 2,000 properties and manages a high-volume of leases and licenses across our municipality. Property plays a pivotal role in the everyday lives of our community members.

The Strategic Property and Land Plan provides a structured approach to ensure that our property assets are aligned with long-term goals, community needs and service delivery priorities. It outlines a clear framework and supports informed decision-making across the functions of acquisition, divestment, leasing and licencing and strategic land use. It centres on assessing current and future needs and aligning assets with strategic priorities. It promotes innovation and flexibility, financial sustainability, ensuring regulatory compliance and maximising community benefit.

Our key challenges include ageing and inefficient assets, limited funding, increasing population and regulatory pressures and the need to future-proof assets in response to environmental and technological shifts. Our opportunities lie in optimising property use, reducing costs, unlocking value through rationalisation or redevelopment, enhancing service delivery and supporting broader economic, housing and environmental goals.

The Strategic Property and Land Plan is a vital tool for ensuring our property and land portfolio continues to deliver long-term value to the community.



1.3 Condition assessment and valuation

We have adopted a cyclical condition audit and revaluation program that ensures that each asset portfolio is assessed for condition every four years. The condition for all asset classes are assessed using a 1 to 5 rating system as shown below:

1.4 Reporting

Our Asset Plans have a life of four years in line with the council election cycle. They are fully reviewed and updated within two years of each council election. They are also reviewed during the annual budget planning process and updated to recognise any material changes in service levels or resources available to provide those services as a result of budget decisions.

Reporting on service levels and other performance measures is undertaken as part of our Annual Report.

1.5 Continuous improvement

We acknowledge that significant annual expenditure is required to manage and maintain our existing infrastructure. This highlights the importance of maintaining high-level skills and practices to ensure services are delivered economically and sustainably. We are committed to continuously working to improve our knowledge, skills and operational practices in line with sector-wide best practice.

The financial analysis and projections in this Asset Plan are based on existing data, processes, systems, and standards. We are committed to identifying ways to achieve a more robust evidence base and analysis and to improving our practices to achieve this. One of the keys to this will be engaging with our community to establish optimised service levels that are affordable over the long term.

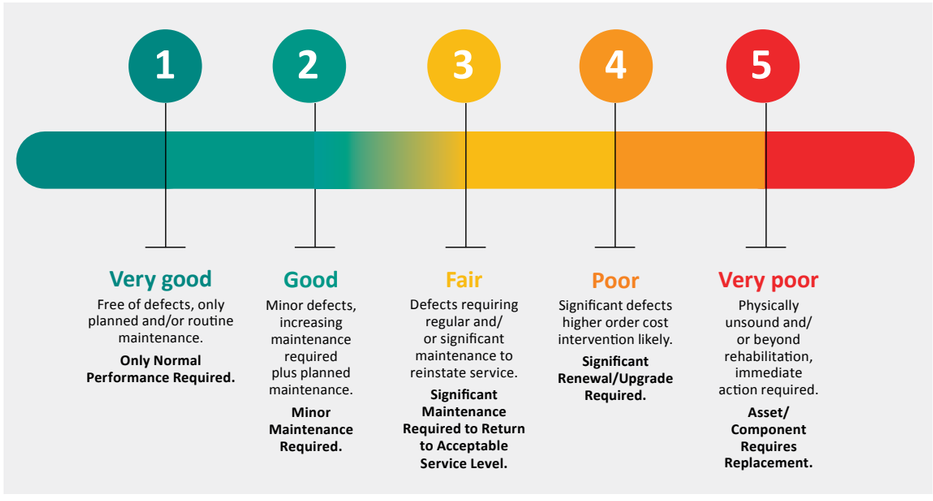


Figure 1 – Asset Condition Assessment Rating

Whilst the condition assessment is being undertaken, asset attributes including material, model/make and measure are confirmed in the field. Condition Audits are performed by a combination of external consultants and internal Council Officers, depending on the level of expertise and assessment equipment/technology required to perform the assessment.

The condition assessment data collected informs future renewal and maintenance programming, performance analysis of existing asset treatments and revaluation to ensure assets are being recognised at their true market value.

2. Overview of our assets

2.1 Asset portfolio overview

The infrastructure assets owned and operated by our Council cross 11 asset portfolios: totalling over $4.03B in replacement costs.

The mix of infrastructure is shown in the diagram below as a percentage of the total replacement value. These infrastructure assets support almost every part of our daily lives. They help keep us safe, healthy, connected, and employed. Maintaining existing infrastructure is just as important as building new infrastructure.

The distribution of the City of Whittlesea's asset portfolio by asset category and replacement value is shown below in Table 4.

Asset Portfolio	Replacement Cost ($,000)	Fair Value ($,000)	Asset Health
Road Infrastructure	$1,812,655	$1,410,040	77.8%
Stormwater	$757,015	$511,323	67.5%
Buildings	$501,866	$401,814	80.1%
Pathways	$334,834	$270,863	80.9%
Parks and Streetscape Infrastructure	$196,797	$100,533	51.1%
Bridges and Boardwalks	$145,411	$75,405	51.9%
Playgrounds	$101,139	$55,522	54.9%
Road Ancillary	$63,906	$34,851	54.5%
Landscape and Environment	$42,049	$30,235	71.9%
Car Parks	$35,367	$27,326	77.3%
Sporting Infrastructure	$30,717	$15,553	50.6%

Table 4: Asset infrastructure portfolio distribution

Asset Health is a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio. The figure above displays the current asset health by asset portfolio.

Council is responsible for delivering services to the community. Many of these services rely on a large and diverse portfolio of physical assets for delivery. Understanding the current state of these assets, their service performance, costs, and risks, enables us to plan and prioritise maintenance and management to best meet the needs of the community. To better manage their unique characteristics and challenges, assets are categorised into asset classes.

This Asset Plan presents a high-level summary of the state of the assets and their sustainability. Detailed data on each asset portfolio, as well as intervention levels and service monitoring, future financial sustainability options and consequences, can be found in the relevant asset management plan.

When we consider asset performance, we consider current state but, most importantly, take a long-term view to ensure future sustainability and minimise any burden on future generations. This section presents the anticipated performance of our **$4.03 billion** asset portfolio over the next 10 years.

2.2 What it will cost

As indicated in Council's Long-term Financial Plan, over the next 10 years we expect to spend:



$297M Renewing our assets

$127M Enhancing and upgrading existing assets

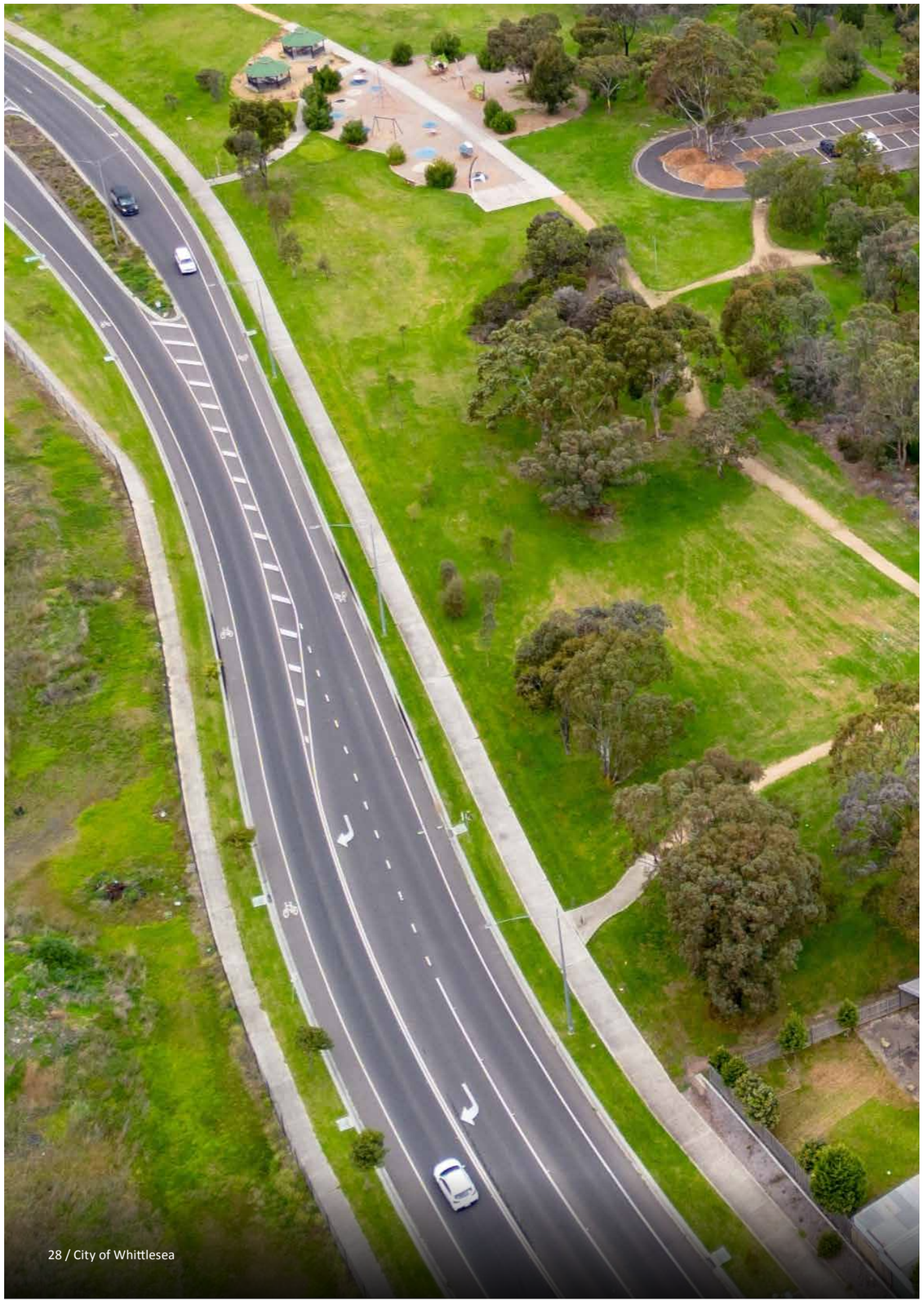
$595M creating new ones

$677M Operating and maintaining our assets

Which equates to a combined investment of **$1.697B** making sure our assets remain safe and fit-for-purpose.
A summary of the planned total expenditure by asset function for the 2025-2035 period is shown in the Table below.

Infrastructure Asset Portfolios	Maintenance costs ($'000)	Renewal costs ($'000)	Upgrade costs ($'000)	New costs ($'000)	Total ($'000)
Road Infrastructure	$89,063	$147,500	$17,786	$42,422	**$296,771**
Stormwater	$22,049	$10,300	$1,775	$16,950	**$51,074**
Buildings	$86,993	$30,272	$61,917	$173,778	**$352,960**
Pathways	$43,138	$41,531	$8,425	$27,456	**$120,550**
Parks & Streetscape Infrastructure	$35,015	$24,624	$13,516	$83,655	**$156,810**
Bridges & Boardwalks	$1,568	$3,984	$0	$28,560	**$34,112**
Playgrounds	$19,374	$20,260	$9,815	$1,916	**$51,365**
Road Ancillary	$21,047	$6,125	$1,869	$15,494	**$44,535**
Landscape and Environment	$324,651	$0	$0	$0	**$324,651**
Car Parks	$1,568	$2,906	$1,675	$530	**$6,679**
Sporting Infrastructure	$32,669	$9,890	$10,275	$204,335	**$257,169**
Total	**$677,135**	**$297,392**	**$127,053**	**$595,096**	**$1,696,676**

Table 5: Planned total 10 year expenditure by asset portfolio



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3. Asset portfolio summaries

3.1 Roads infrastructure

This portfolio includes:

1,414km
Sealed roads

2,407km
Kerbs

5238
Traffic management devices (TMDs)

77km
Unsealed roads

17km
Road barriers

Asset portfolio value:
$1.812B
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
77.8%

Why do we have these assets?

Our roads, kerbs and traffic management devices are essential for a safe, efficient, and well-connected transport network. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Safe and efficient movement – Roads facilitate the flow of vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians, ensuring accessibility for all.
- Traffic regulation and safety – Kerbs and traffic management devices (e.g., traffic islands, roundabouts, speed humps) control traffic flow, reduce congestion, and prevent accidents.
- Stormwater management – Kerbs delineate road edges, guide driver behaviour, and play a key role in directing stormwater from road surface flows into underground stormwater pipes, via stormwater pits, preventing flooding and road deterioration.
- Pedestrian and cyclist protection – bollards, fencing, and median barriers improve visibility and separate vulnerable road users from traffic, reducing the risk of accidents.
- Road condition and maintenance support – Reflectors, rumble strips, and drainage systems help maintain road integrity, improve visibility in low-light conditions, and reduce hazards such as skidding and water pooling.

By maintaining these assets, we ensure a safe, functional, and sustainable transport system that supports the needs of the community now and into the future.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.1 Roads infrastructure

What does our work involve[3]?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Maintenance and repairs to roads such as patching potholes • Operational servicing such as street sweeping, vegetation management and weed spraying • Routine maintenance of road signage, guardrails, and traffic signals to ensure visibility and functionality • Regular cleaning, repairs, and repainting of line markings and roadside assets.	• Resurfacing of existing roads • Road reconstruction or major patching of road failures • Replacement of kerb and traffic management device assets • Replacement of aged or deteriorated (very poor condition) roadside barriers and fencing for improved road safety.	• New constructed and gifted assets by developers • Road safety improvements such as installation of crash barriers and, intersection upgrades • Sealing of unsealed roads • Construction of roundabouts, installation of speed humps, and other measures to slow traffic • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage.

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$7,618	$7,879	$8,149	$8,428	$8,716	$9,015	$9,324	$9,644	$9,974	$10,317	**$89,064**
Renewal Cost	$12,000	$12,000	$14,500	$14,500	$14,500	$14,500	$14,500	$17,000	$17,000	$17,000	**$147,500**
Upgrade Cost	$1,867	$2,150	$1,528	$1,828	$2,334	$5,827	$560	$612	$544	$546	**$17,786**
New Costs	$2,070	$9,681	$5,410	$3,052	$6,384	$5,851	$5,938	$1,116	$872	$2,048	**$42,422**
Total											**$296,772**

Table 6 – Road infrastructure projected expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $297 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's road infrastructure.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our road network.

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our road infrastructure assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

[3] The following described works are typical examples of activities undertaken and do not represent an exhaustive list. They are provided for general information purposes to illustrate the types of work involved.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased freight task	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• The increased demand on local roads and their connections with State government managed arterial and collector roads due to population growth and increased dwelling density.	• The increased deterioration of our road network due to an increased number of heavy vehicles and increased gross loadings.	• The lack of availability of sustainable transport options, including public transport • The increased risk of damage to our transport assets due to more frequent and more extreme weather events • The need to consider resilience in the design and construction of new assets.	• The need to ensure compliance with the *Road Management Act 2004* • The need to meet the requirements of our Asset Management Plan • The need to ensure clarity on which roads we are responsible for • Ensure compliance with our Road Management Plan and the statutory requirements of the *Road Management Act.*

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Transport Asset Management Plan including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue road and kerb asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning and lifecycle management.
- Continue with cyclic condition inspection programs for roads, kerbs, and traffic management devices, incorporating results into renewal and maintenance programs.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs for roads, kerbs, and Traffic Management Device (TMD) assets based on condition assessments, risk and criticality requirements.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Resurface and rehabilitate deteriorated roads and replace kerbing in very poor condition to improve safety and levels of service.
- Continue re-sheeting unsealed roads to maintain safe and functional unsealed roads.
- Implement road safety and TMD initiatives, such as new pedestrian crossings, speed humps, roundabouts, and median islands, to improve traffic flow and reduce risks.
- Trial innovative road treatments, including recycled materials, permeable pavements, and smart road technologies.



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3.2 Stormwater

This portfolio includes:

2,085 km
Pipes

80948
Pits

197
Gross pollutant traps

1693
Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) areas

Asset portfolio value:
$757M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
67.5%

Why do we have these assets?

Our stormwater drainage network helps manage rainwater runoff, prevent flooding, and protect the environment. These assets play a critical role in maintaining public health and infrastructure integrity by:

- Flood prevention and water management – Stormwater pipes, culverts, and drainage pits collect and direct rainwater to prevent localised flooding and road damage
- Protecting public infrastructure – Well-designed stormwater systems prevent water damage to roads, buildings, and public spaces
- Environmental protection – Gross pollutant traps, bio-retention basins, and wetlands filter pollutants, improving water quality before it reaches waterways
- Supporting urban growth – Proper drainage infrastructure ensures new developments effectively manage stormwater without impacting existing properties
- Sustainability and water reuse – Some systems capture stormwater for reuse in irrigation and environmental projects, reducing reliance on potable water.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.2 Stormwater

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Routine cleaning and desilting of pits, pipes, and culverts • Inspection and monitoring of drainage systems for blockages and damage • Pipe and pit maintenance, including clearing of blocked pipes and pits as a result of debris and tree roots • Emergency response to flooding and drainage failures	• Replacement of ageing or damaged drainage pipes and culverts • Rehabilitation of stormwater channels and swales • Relining of stormwater pipes to extend service life • Renewal of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) devices	• New constructed and gifted assets by developers • Upgrading of undersized drainage infrastructure to meet current capacity needs • Installation of new flood mitigation infrastructure such as detention basins • Integration of WSUD elements such as bio-retention basins • New stormwater harvesting and reuse schemes to improve sustainability • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$1,867	$1,935	$2,005	$2,078	$2,154	$2,233	$2,314	$2,399	$2,486	$2,577	**$22,049**
Renewal Cost	$350	$350	$700	$700	$700	$700	$1,700	$1,700	$1,700	$1,700	**$10,300**
Upgrade Cost	$25	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	$0	$0	**$1,775**
New Costs	$525	$1,112	$3,163	$2,721	$1,330	$1,543	$1,903	$1,885	$1,635	$1,133	**$16,950**
Total											**$51,074**

Table 7 – Stormwater Drainage Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $51 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's stormwater drainage system.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our stormwater network.

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our stormwater assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset portfolio is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Ageing infrastructure and increased demand	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased urbanisation leading to greater stormwater runoff and higher demand on existing drainage systems. • The need for smarter water management solutions as neighbourhoods grow and impervious surfaces increase.	• Older drainage systems may struggle to cope with increased stormwater volumes, requiring major upgrades. Many pipes and pits are considered under capacity given changes in weather patterns and changes in standards. • Opportunity to implement smart drainage systems with real-time monitoring and predictive maintenance.	• More intense rainfall and extreme weather events increasing flood risks and system overload. • The need to incorporate water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) and natural drainage solutions like wetlands and retention basins. • Opportunity to use stormwater harvesting for irrigation and reducing reliance on potable water.	• The need to ensure compliance with the *Road Management Act 2004.* • The need to meet the requirements of our Asset Management Plan • Need to comply with environmental regulations for stormwater quality and pollutant control. • Stricter requirements for stormwater management in new developments. • Opportunity to align stormwater planning with sustainability and climate resilience goals.

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Stormwater Asset Management Plan, including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue stormwater asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning and compliance.
- Implement a network strategic sampling CCTV condition inspection program on an annual basis and incorporate the results into the operational budget.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs for drainage infrastructure based on CCTV condition assessments and flood capacity studies.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Construct new drainage identified in flood management plans and urban development frameworks.
- Continue pipe relining and maintenance programs to extend the lifespan of existing drainage assets.
- Trial innovative water management solutions, such as stormwater harvesting and biofiltration systems.
- Implement flood mitigation and resilience initiatives, including upgrades to high-risk drainage networks.



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3.3 Buildings

This portfolio includes:

190
Buildings

57
Storage facilities

Asset portfolio value:
$501M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
80.1%

Why do we have these assets?

Our buildings provide essential spaces for community services, governance, and recreation. They support a range of functions that benefit residents, businesses, and visitors, including:

- Community services and activities – Libraries, community halls, and sports pavilions offer spaces for learning, social events, and recreational activities.
- Public safety and emergency response – Facilities such as works depots, and emergency service buildings support public safety and disaster response.
- Civic administration and governance – Council offices and chambers provide spaces for decision-making, service delivery, and public engagement.
- Health and wellbeing – Recreation centres and public toilets contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community.
- Sustainability and energy efficiency – Well-maintained buildings reduce energy consumption and support environmental initiatives like solar power and water reuse.

By managing and maintaining these buildings, we ensure safe, accessible, and functional facilities that meet the evolving needs of the community.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.3 Buildings

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Routine maintenance, including plumbing, electrical, and HVAC servicing • Cleaning, security, and pest control for council buildings • Energy efficiency management, including lighting and heating system optimisations • Minor repairs to walls, ceilings, and fittings	• Refurbishment or replacement of building components such as roofs, fitouts, and floor coverings • Structural repairs and reinforcements to extend building lifespan • Accessibility upgrades to ensure compliance with regulations • Repainting and surface maintenance of council buildings	• Construction of new community buildings, halls, and council facilities to cater for increased demand • Expansion of existing facilities to accommodate growth and increased usage • Installation of solar panels and other sustainable energy solutions • Development of new public facilities such as public toilets, changerooms, and storage facilities

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$6,999	$7,621	$7,911	$8,211	$8,523	$8,847	$9,183	$9,532	$9,895	$10,271	**$103,205**
Renewal Cost	$2,705	$3,075	$6,267	$2,125	$2,800	$2,800	$1,800	$2,100	$2,300	$4,300	**$30,022**
Upgrade Cost	$7,230	$15,945	$10,192	$1,200	$3,750	$3,500	$5,150	$4,650	$4,650	$5,650	**$61,917**
New Costs	$16,730	$16,225	$9,070	$538	$8,564	$24,538	$20,575	$23,901	$27,916	$25,721	**$173,778**
Total											**$352,960**

Table 8 – Buildings Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $353 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's buildings portfolio.

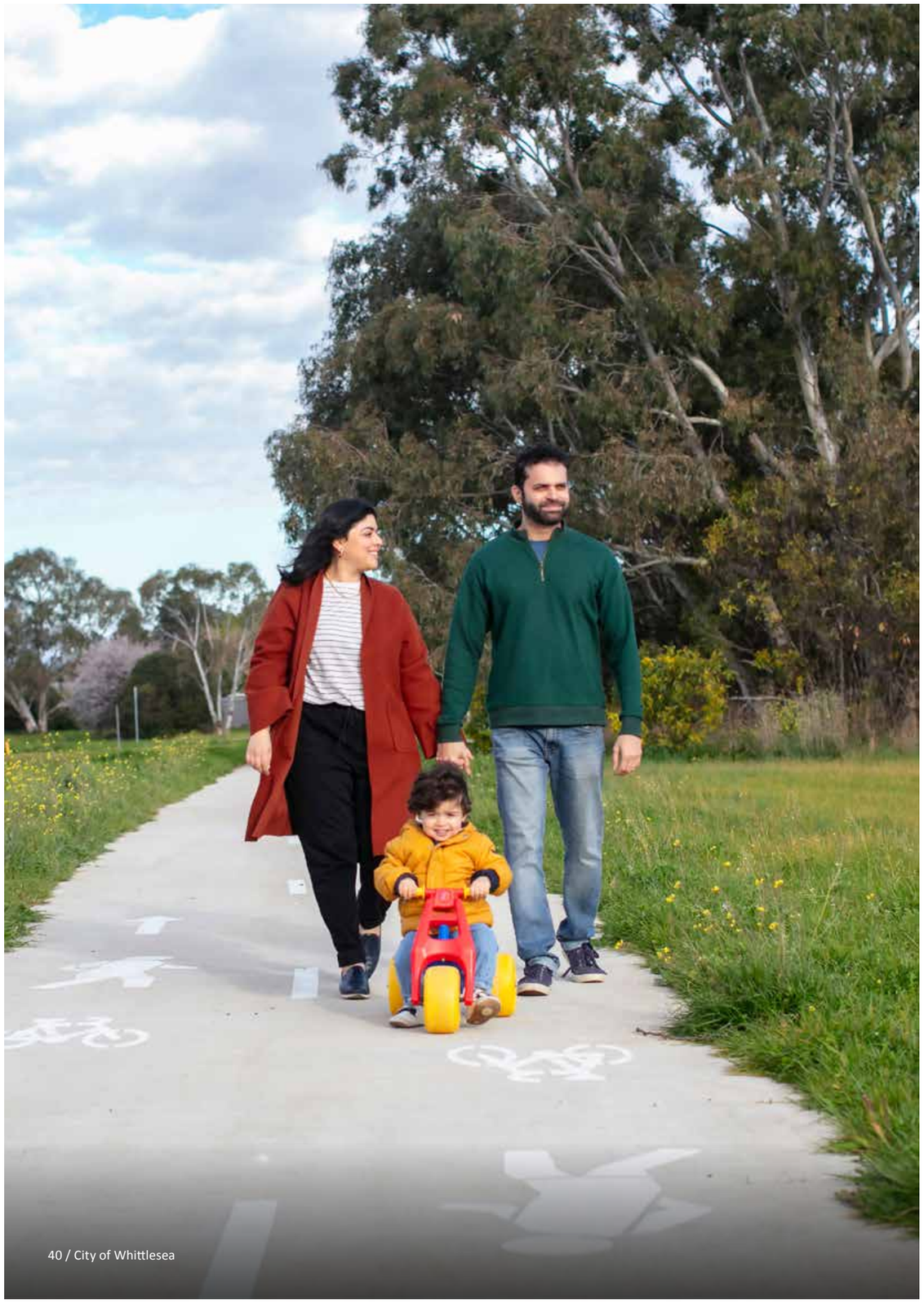
We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our buildings network.This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our building assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Ageing infrastructure and increased usage	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for community facilities due to population growth. • Pressure on existing buildings to accommodate new services, requiring expansion or repurposing of assets.	• More frequent maintenance and upgrades needed to keep buildings safe and functional as usage increases. • The challenge of balancing heritage preservation with modernisation needs.	• Increased risks to buildings due to extreme weather events such as storms, heatwaves, and flooding. • Higher energy costs and the need for more sustainable and climate-resilient buildings. • Opportunity to incorporate renewable energy solutions and energy-efficient designs.	• Changing building regulations, accessibility requirements, and environmental standards. • Need to ensure compliance with Work Health & Safety (WHS), disability access laws, and building codes.

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Buildings Asset Management Plan, including technical and community levels of service.
- Asset data maintenance and data cleansing to improve accuracy and planning.
- Implement annual renewal programs based on asset condition assessments.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Construct new community facilities and upgrades as identified in strategic plans and precinct structure plans such as the *Donnybrook-Woodstock Precinct Structure Plan and the Epping Central Structure Plan*
- Continue building refurbishment programs, including roof replacements, HVAC upgrades, and accessibility improvements.
- Trial energy-efficient and sustainable building technologies to progress towards carbon neutrality.
- Implement building safety and compliance initiatives, including fire safety, disability access, and emergency preparedness measures.
- Consider land uses including sale and redevelopment as part of an asset renewal strategy.



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3.4 Pathways

This portfolio includes:

2,606km
Footpaths

319km
Shared paths

10km
Cycle paths

Asset portfolio value:
$335M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
80.9%

Why do we have these assets?

Our pathways are essential for a safe, efficient, and well-connected transport network. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Safe and efficient movement – Pathways facilitate the flow of cyclists, and pedestrians, ensuring accessibility for all.
- Pedestrian and vehicle separation – Pathways provide safe walking spaces, while kerbs help separate pedestrians from vehicles, improving safety.
- Public transport – Pathways provide access to public transport nodes including bus stop and railway stations.

By maintaining these assets, we ensure a safe, functional, and sustainable transport system that supports the needs of the community now and into the future.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.4 Pathways

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Maintenance and repairs to pathways such as grinding programs and removal of trip hazards • Operational servicing such as vegetation management and weed spraying	• Replacement of sections of existing pathways to an equivalent standard	• New constructed and gifted assets by developers • Extension of existing pathway network to address gaps in connectivity • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$3,634	$3,770	$3,912	$4,059	$4,211	$4,369	$4,534	$4,704	$4,881	$5,064	**$43,138**
Renewal Cost	$2,910	$2,914	$2,910	$2,913	$4,299	$4,300	$4,800	$5,494	$5,500	$5,491	**$41,531**
Upgrade Cost	$155	$238	$260	$553	$2,186	$1,300	$523	$1,387	$1,379	$444	**$8,425**
New Costs	$4,175	$6,028	$3,721	$2,803	$2,384	$2,291	$1,578	$1,569	$1,225	$1,682	**$27,456**
Total											**$120,550**

Table 9 – Pathway Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $121 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's pathways.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to minimise the deterioration of our pathways network. This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our pathway assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased usage and changing transport trends	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for safe, accessible, and connected footpath networks due to population growth and urban densification. • Higher pedestrian traffic requiring wider footpaths, improved surfaces, and better connectivity between key locations such as schools, shopping areas, and public transport hubs. • Need to accommodate diverse users, including pedestrians, cyclists, mobility scooters, and prams, within shared paths. • Community expectations for better-lit pedestrian and cycling paths to improve safety and accessibility. • Need for improved pedestrian and cyclist crossings at busy intersections. • Need for better integration with footpaths and cycleways to improve accessibility and encourage active transport.	• Growing popularity of active transport (walking, cycling, e-scooters) increasing wear and tear on footpaths. • Demand for shared paths and improved crossings to ensure safety and accessibility. • Need for better integration with public transport infrastructure, such as bus stops and train stations, to encourage sustainable travel.	• Extreme weather events (heatwaves, heavy rainfall) impacting footpath durability and increasing maintenance needs. • Increased risk of tree root damage to footpaths as vegetation adapts to changing climate conditions. • Opportunity to introduce cool pavement technologies and shade structures to improve pedestrian comfort in hotter climates.	• Compliance with *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA) standards, ensuring footpaths are accessible for all users, including those with mobility impairments. • Ensure compliance with our Road Management Plan and the statutory requirements of the *Road Management Act*

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Pathways Asset Management Plan including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue pathway asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning, compliance, and lifecycle management.
- Continue with cyclic condition audit program every four years for footpaths and shared pathways, incorporating results into renewal and maintenance programs.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs for pathways based on condition assessments, risk, criticality, and community needs.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Resurface and rehabilitate footpaths in very poor condition to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility.
- Construct new pathways and shared-use trails in high-growth areas, as identified in master plans and precinct structure plans.
- Continue upgrading footpaths to meet accessibility standards, including kerb ramps which comply to current standards of the day and installation of tactile paving for users with impaired vision.



3.5 Park and streetscape infrastructure

This portfolio includes:

1,492
Park lighting

461
Minor structures

5,858
Park furniture

409 km
Fencing

Asset portfolio value:
$196M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
51.1%

Why do we have these assets?

Our park and streetscape infrastructure, including fencing, public lighting, open spaces, irrigation systems, and minor structures, play a vital role in enhancing public safety, aesthetics, and recreational opportunities within the community. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Community recreation and wellbeing – Parks, gardens, and open spaces provide safe, accessible areas for exercise, social gatherings, and relaxation, contributing to physical and mental health.
- Urban aesthetics – Streetscape infrastructure, such as landscaping, garden beds, and decorative lighting, enhances the visual appeal of public spaces, making them more inviting and vibrant.
- Public safety and accessibility – Fencing, lighting, and well-maintained pathways improve safety in parks, playgrounds, and streetscapes, ensuring secure and accessible spaces for all users.
- Environmental and climate benefits – Green spaces and irrigation systems support urban cooling, biodiversity, and improved air quality, while water-sensitive landscaping reduces stormwater runoff and enhances sustainability.
- Supporting events and community activities – Park infrastructure, including seating, shelters, and minor structures, enables community events, markets, and cultural activities, fostering social connections.
- Active and sustainable transport – Streetscape design integrates footpaths, cycling lanes, and shaded walking routes, encouraging walking and cycling while reducing reliance on cars.

By maintaining and enhancing these assets, we ensure safe, attractive, and functional public spaces that support community connection, sustainability, and improved quality of life.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.5 Park and streetscape infrastructure

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Routine maintenance of fencing, public lighting, irrigation systems, and minor structures to ensure safety and functionality. • Regular painting, and minor repairs of park structures, signs, and public facilities. • Inspection and servicing of irrigation systems to ensure efficient water use and plant health.	• Replacement of aged or very poor-condition fencing, park seating, shelters, and lighting to improve safety and aesthetics. • Repair or replacement of damaged street furniture, bike racks, and drinking fountains in very poor condition.	• Installation of new park and streetscape infrastructure, including shelters, seating, and street furniture, to support growing community needs. • Expansion of street and park lighting networks to improve visibility and security in high-use areas. • Ensure future long-term vision is encapsulated in Master Plans yet to be developed • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$2,618	$2,751	$2,929	$3,120	$3,325	$3,545	$3,782	$4,036	$4,309	$4,602	**$35,015**
Renewal Cost	$1,522	$2,073	$3,140	$4,365	$2,686	$3,163	$1,994	$3,396	$1,184	$1,101	**$24,624**
Upgrade Cost	$1,051	$1,845	$3,070	$3,295	$3,755	$500	$0	$0	$0	$0	**$13,516**
New Costs	$6,995	$13,699	$7,848	$8,342	$8,180	$12,793	$11,452	$8,415	$5,005	$926	**$83,655**
Total											**$156,810**

Table 10 – Parks and Streetscape Infrastructure Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $157 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's parks and streetscapes.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our parks and streetscape infrastructure network.

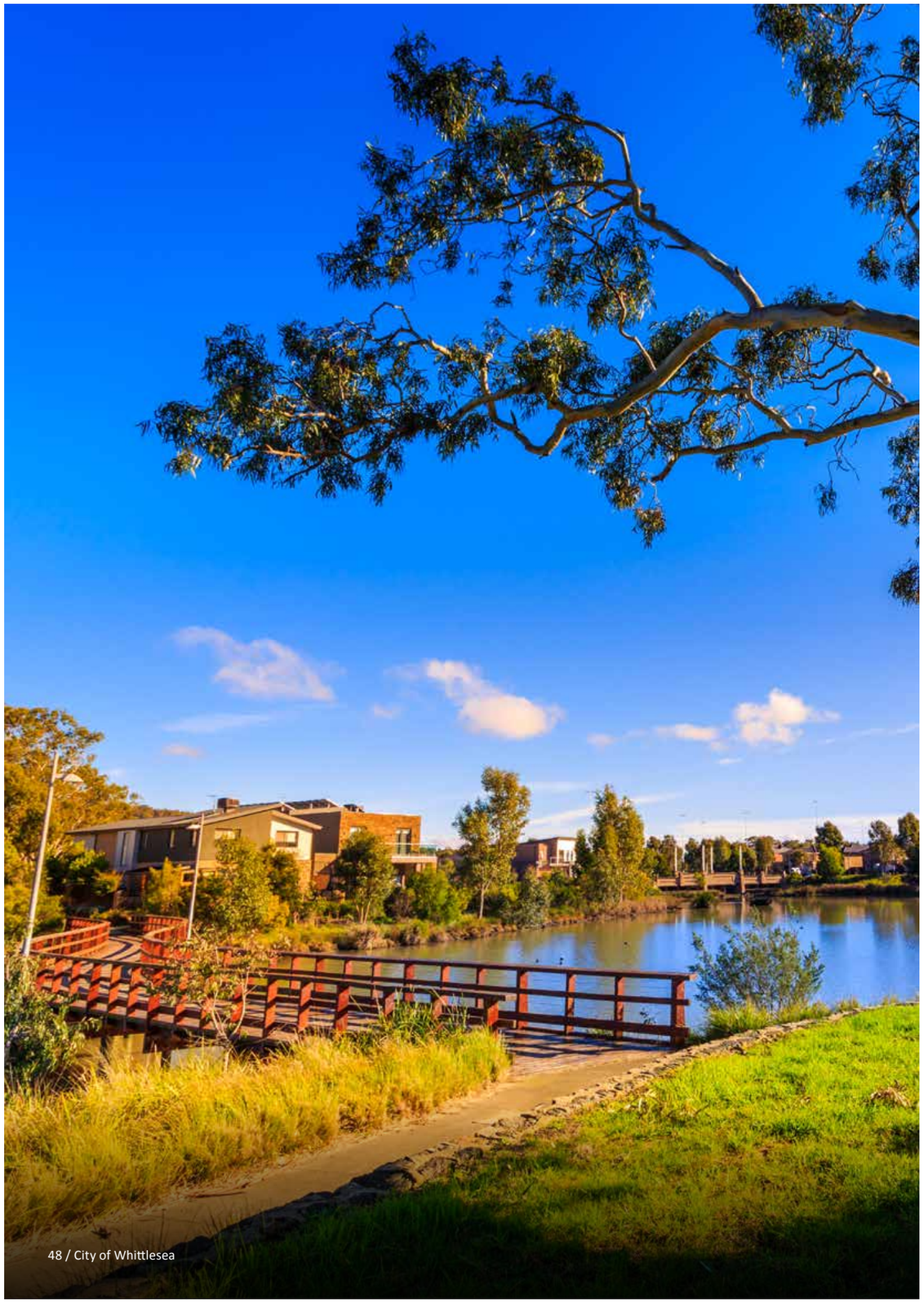
This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our parks and streetscape assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased usage and changing urban trends	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for well-maintained parks, streetscapes, and public spaces due to population growth and urban densification. • Higher community expectations for quality open spaces, requiring enhanced amenities such as seating, shade, lighting, and play areas. • Need for improved accessibility to ensure parks and streetscapes are inclusive for all users, including people with disabilities and older adults.	• Greater use of public open spaces for recreation, events, and exercise, increasing wear and tear on fencing, minor structures, and pathways. • Growing demand for smart urban infrastructure, such as sensor-based irrigation, adaptive lighting, and real-time park usage data to improve efficiency. • Increased focus on urban greening and biodiversity, requiring more tree planting, green walls, and nature-based design solutions.	• Extreme heat and drought conditions increasing the need for climate-resilient landscaping, efficient irrigation, and shaded areas. • More frequent storms and high winds causing damage to fences, lighting, and park structures, requiring stronger and more durable materials. • Opportunity to introduce sustainable solutions, such as solar-powered lighting, rainwater harvesting for irrigation, and recycled materials in infrastructure projects.	• Compliance with public safety standards for fencing, lighting, playground equipment, and public amenities. • Need to meet water efficiency and environmental sustainability regulations for irrigation systems. • Accessibility requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) ensuring public spaces accommodate all users. • Opportunity to integrate smart technology for monitoring and maintenance, reducing long-term costs and improving infrastructure reliability.

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Park and Streetscape Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue with asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning and compliance.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs based on condition, capacity and functionality datasets, including masterplans and strategies.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Plan and schedule works outlined in park Master Plans.
- Consider opportunities for developing underutilised land and deliver active frontages to parks to increase their safety and use.



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3.6 Bridges and boardwalks

This portfolio includes:

38
Road bridges

86
Major culverts

95
Footbridges

115
Boardwalks

59
Viewing platforms

Asset portfolio value:
$145M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
51.9%

Why do we have these assets?

Our bridges and boardwalks are essential for providing safe, reliable, and accessible connections across natural and built environments. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Connectivity and access – Bridges and boardwalks allow pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles to cross waterways, rail corridors, and other obstacles, improving accessibility between communities and key destinations.
- Transport and mobility – Road bridges support freight, emergency services, and everyday traffic, ensuring efficient movement across the network.
- Active and recreational use – Pedestrian bridges and boardwalks encourage walking, cycling, and nature-based recreation, promoting healthy and active lifestyles.
- Environmental protection – Boardwalks provide controlled access to sensitive natural areas such as wetlands and parklands, minimising erosion and habitat disturbance.
- Safety and flood resilience – Well-maintained bridges ensure safe crossings during extreme weather events, while elevated boardwalks reduce the impact of flooding on walking trails.
- Sustainability and heritage preservation – Many bridges and boardwalks are constructed using sustainable, long-lasting materials, and some hold historical or cultural significance, requiring preservation efforts.

By maintaining and improving these assets, we ensure a safe, well-connected, and accessible transport and recreational network, supporting community mobility, environmental sustainability, and long-term resilience.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.6 Bridges and boardwalks

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Routine inspections and maintenance of bridges, and boardwalks, to ensure safety and functionality. • Regular cleaning, painting, and corrosion protection for steel and timber structures. • Clearing debris and blockages from bridge waterways and drainage systems to reduce flooding risks.	• Replacement of aged or very poor-condition bridge components, including decking, bearings, and expansion joints. • Structural strengthening and refurbishment of bridges and boardwalks in very poor condition to extend service life.	• Construction of new bridges and boardwalks to improve connectivity and accommodate growth. • Upgrading bridges and boardwalks at end of life, to meet modern design standards, including improved load capacity and accessibility. • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage.

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$134	$139	$143	$148	$153	$159	$164	$170	$176	$182	**$1,568**
Renewal Cost	$298	$300	$300	$400	$399	$400	$498	$599	$691	$100	**$3,984**
Upgrade Cost	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	**$0**
New Costs	$0	$0	$0	$250	$0	$0	$0	$0	$18,417	$9,893	**$28,560**
Total											**$34,112**

Table 11 – Bridges and Boardwalks Ancillary Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $34 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's bridges and boardwalks.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our bridges and boardwalks network.

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our bridges and boardwalk assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased usage and changing transport trends	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for safe and accessible crossings due to population growth and urban expansion. • Higher pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicle usage requiring stronger, wider, and more durable structures. • Need for better connectivity between residential areas, commercial precincts, and recreational spaces.	• Growth in freight transport increasing load stresses on road bridges, requiring structural upgrades. • Increased demand for shared-use pathways on bridges and boardwalks to accommodate active transport modes. • Opportunity to improve public access and wayfinding, integrating bridges and boardwalks with parks and waterfronts.	• More frequent extreme weather events (flooding, storms, rising sea levels) increasing risks to structures. • Greater need for resilient materials and flood-resistant designs to withstand harsher conditions. • Opportunity to use sustainable, low-maintenance materials like composite decking, reinforced concrete, and recycled timber.	• Compliance with modern load-bearing standards and safety regulations for bridges and boardwalks. • Need for DDA-compliant accessibility, including ramps, handrails, and anti-slip surfaces. • Opportunity to implement smart monitoring systems with sensors detecting structural weaknesses, water levels, and maintenance needs. • Ensure compliance with our Road Management Plan and the statutory requirements of the *Road Management Act*

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Bridges and Boardwalks Asset Management Plan including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning, compliance, and lifecycle management.
- Continue with cyclic condition Level 1 and Level 2 inspection programs, incorporating results into renewal and maintenance programs.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs based on condition assessments, risk, criticality, and community needs.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Renew assets and/or structural elements in very poor condition.



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3.7 Playgrounds

This portfolio includes:

1,299
Play equipment

81
Exercise equipment

100,519sqm
Playground surfacing

Asset portfolio value:
$101M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
54.9%

Why do we have these assets?

Our playground facilities are essential for providing safe, engaging, and inclusive recreational spaces for the community. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Recreation and child development – Playgrounds support physical activity, social interaction, and cognitive development for children of all ages and abilities.
- Health and wellbeing – Access to well-maintained play areas encourages outdoor activity, reducing screen time and promoting healthier lifestyles.
- Community connections and social inclusion – Playgrounds and recreational spaces bring families and communities together, fostering a sense of belonging.
- Safety and accessibility – Modern playgrounds incorporate soft-fall surfaces, shade structures, and inclusive play equipment to ensure a safe and accessible environment for all users.

By maintaining and upgrading these assets, we ensure safe, fun, and engaging play spaces that support healthy childhood development, social interaction, and lifelong active lifestyles for the community.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.7 Playgrounds

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Routine inspections and maintenance of play equipment, exercise equipment and soft-fall surfaces to ensure safety and compliance. • Regular cleaning, repainting, and graffiti removal on playground structures and recreational spaces. • Checking and maintaining accessibility features, such as inclusive swings and ramps, to support all users.	• Replacement of aged or very poor condition play equipment, swings, slides, and climbing structures to maintain safety and functionality. • Renewal of deteriorated soft-fall surfaces (rubber, mulch, sand) to maintain impact safety standards. • Refurbishment of park seating, picnic tables, and shade structures that are in poor condition.	• Installation of new playgrounds in areas of growth or high demand. • Expansion of playgrounds with new equipment to provide greater variety and accessibility for all abilities. • Development of nature-based play areas, incorporating logs, rocks, and water play for enhanced outdoor experiences. • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage.

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$1,455	$1,528	$1,626	$1,730	$1,842	$1,962	$2,090	$2,229	$2,377	$2,536	**$19,374**
Renewal Cost	$2,260	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	**$20,260**
Upgrade Cost	$965	$850	$500	$500	$500	$500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	$1,500	**$9,815**
New Costs	$825	$350	$0	$0	$275	$20	$200	$246	$0	$0	**$1,916**
Total											**$51,365**

Table 12 – Playgrounds Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $51 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's playgrounds.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that will not keep pace with the deterioration of our playground network. This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our playground assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased usage and changing recreational trends	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for safe and engaging play spaces as urban density grows, requiring more playgrounds, skate parks, and BMX facilities. • Higher community expectations for diverse and inclusive play areas, ensuring accessibility for children of all abilities. • Need to balance structured play equipment with nature-based play areas to enhance child development and social interaction.	• Increased wear and tear on play equipment, surfaces, and infrastructure, requiring regular maintenance and renewal. • Opportunity to introduce interactive and digital play features, such as smart playgrounds with motion-sensing games.	• Increased risk of heat exposure on playgrounds, requiring more shaded areas, heat-resistant materials, and water play elements. • More extreme weather events (storms, heavy rainfall) leading to faster degradation of play equipment and soft-fall surfaces. • Opportunity to use sustainable materials, including recycled plastics, rubber soft-fall, and nature-based play elements.	• Compliance with Australian playground safety standards to ensure all play areas are safe and structurally sound. • Meeting accessibility requirements (DDA compliance) by providing inclusive play equipment, ramps, and sensory play elements. • Ensuring proper maintenance and inspection schedules to prevent injuries and equipment failures.

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Playgrounds Asset Management Plan, including technical and community levels of service, and continue asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning and compliance.
- Implement a structured playground condition inspection program and incorporate the results into the operational budget for maintenance and renewal planning.
- Construct new playgrounds in high-growth areas and as identified in precinct structure plans.
- Continue replacement of aged or very poor-condition playground equipment to improve safety, accessibility, and compliance with Australian standards.
- Trial innovative and interactive play elements, including nature-based play, digital interactive equipment, and inclusive play structures.
- Implement safety and resilience initiatives, including shaded play areas, heat-resistant surfaces, and climate-adaptive landscaping around playgrounds.



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3.8 Road ancillary

This portfolio includes:

152
Bus shelters

78
Traffic signals

18,864
Public lighting

41,043
Telecommunication pits

Asset portfolio value:
$63.9M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
54.5%

Why do we have these assets?

Our road ancillary assets, including public lighting, road signage and traffic signals, are essential for ensuring a safe, efficient, and well-regulated transport network. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Improved night-time safety – Streetlights and pedestrian crossing lighting enhance visibility, reducing the likelihood of night-time accidents and increasing personal security.
- Traffic flow and efficiency – Smart traffic signals and adaptive lighting systems help manage congestion, prioritise emergency vehicles, and optimise traffic movement across busy intersections.
- Traffic safety and regulation – Road signs, traffic signals, and line markings control vehicle movements, regulate intersections, and reduce accident risks by providing clear guidance to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.
- Wayfinding and navigation – Directional signage, street name signs, and distance markers assist motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians in navigating the road network safely and efficiently.
- Public facilities and accessibility – Bus stops, seating, and bike racks support public and active transport users, encouraging sustainable travel choices.

By maintaining and upgrading these assets, we ensures a safer, more efficient, and accessible transport network, reducing risks for all road users while supporting sustainability and enhancing public safety.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.8 Road ancillary

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Routine maintenance • Inspection and maintenance of public lighting and street poles to ensure safe operation. • Vegetation management around lighting to maintain clear sightlines.	• Replacement of damaged, aged, or very poor-condition assets to meet safety standards. • Replacement of old, faulty, or very poor-condition traffic signals with modern, efficient systems. • Replacement of damaged, aged, or very poor-condition road signs, street lighting and traffic signals to meet safety standards. • Refurbishment or replacement of failed, aged or non-compliant street furniture (e.g., bus shelters, seating, bike racks).	• Expansion of public lighting networks in high-traffic and high-risk areas to improve visibility. • Installation of smart lighting systems with motion sensors and dimming controls to improve energy efficiency. • Installation of new wayfinding and directional signage to support navigation for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$1,804	$1,865	$1,928	$1,993	$2,061	$2,130	$2,202	$2,277	$2,354	$2,433	**$21,047**
Renewal Cost	$1,250	$540	$540	$540	$540	$541	$542	$543	$544	$545	**$6,125**
Upgrade Cost	$200	$200	$269	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	$0	**$1,869**
New Costs	$150	$3,350	$1,810	$2,353	$1,510	$1,510	$310	$511	$2,479	$1,511	**$15,494**
Total											**$44,535**

Table 13 – Road Ancillary Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $45 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's road ancillary assets.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our road ancillary network.

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our road ancillary assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Changing transport trends	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for public lighting in newly developed areas, including residential streets, parks, and public spaces.	• Greater focus on safety improvements, including additional lighting in high-risk areas such as school zones and busy intersections. • Integration of public lighting with traffic signals and bus shelters to improve visibility and security. • Growth in public transport, cycling, and e-scooter usage requiring better signal phasing for multiple transport modes. • Opportunity to implement adaptive traffic signal technology, which adjusts signal timing based on real-time traffic flow. • Growth in public transport patronage requiring more shelters at key locations, including schools, commercial areas, and high-density residential developments. • Need for real-time passenger information displays to improve commuter experience.	• Climate change increases risks from extreme weather, flooding, and heatwaves, impacting infrastructure durability. • Future-proofing requires climate-resilient designs, including heat-resistant materials, water-sensitive bus shelters, storm-resistant traffic signals, and renewable energy-powered public lighting. • Opportunity to install solar-powered signals and energy-efficient LED lighting to reduce carbon footprint.	• Compliance with lighting standards for roads, pedestrian areas, and public spaces to enhance safety. • Need to meet sustainability targets, including reducing energy use and switching to renewable-powered lighting. • Accessibility standards for pedestrian signals, including audio and tactile indicators for users with impaired vision. • Compliance with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements for accessibility, including ramps, seating, and space for mobility aids at bus shelters. • Ensure compliance with our Road Management Plan and the statutory requirements of the Road Management Act

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Road Ancillary Asset Management Plan including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning, compliance, and lifecycle management.
- Continue with cyclic four-year condition inspection programs, incorporating results into renewal and maintenance programs.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs based on condition assessments, risk, criticality, and community needs.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Renew assets in very poor condition.
- Construct new assets, as identified in master plans and traffic studies.



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3.9 Landscape and environment

This portfolio includes:

2,740,203m²
Garden beds

Asset portfolio value:
$42M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
71.9%

Why do we have these assets?

Our landscape and environment assets, including park sites, garden beds, and hard surfaces, play a crucial role in maintaining sustainable, aesthetically pleasing, and functional public spaces. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Green spaces and urban cooling – Parks and landscaped areas help reduce heat build-up in urban environments, improving comfort and air quality for residents.
- Biodiversity and habitat protection – Well-maintained garden beds and natural landscapes support native flora and fauna, contributing to local biodiversity and ecosystem health.
- Public aesthetics – Landscaped environments enhance the visual appeal of parks, streetscapes, and community spaces, making them more inviting and enjoyable.
- Recreation and wellbeing – Landscaped areas provide relaxing green spaces, supporting mental health, exercise, and social interaction within the community.
- Sustainable land management – Water-efficient irrigation, drought-tolerant plants, and mulching techniques help reduce maintenance costs and improve resilience to climate change.

By investing in well-designed, sustainable, and resilient landscape and environmental assets, we ensure healthier, greener, and more liveable communities for future generations.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.9 Landscape and environment

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Upgrade and new
• Vegetation management, including tree pruning, garden bed maintenance, and lawn care. • Renewal of soft landscaping, such as garden beds and turf, where plant health has significantly declined • Development of new landscaped areas and green infrastructure, such as urban forests and rain gardens, to enhance climate resilience.	• New constructed and gifted assets by developers • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$23,865	$25,130	$26,860	$28,720	$30,720	$32,872	$35,188	$37,680	$40,363	$43,252	**$324,651**
Total											**$324,651**

Table 14 – Landscape and Environment Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $324 million on maintaining and improving the City's landscape and environment assets.

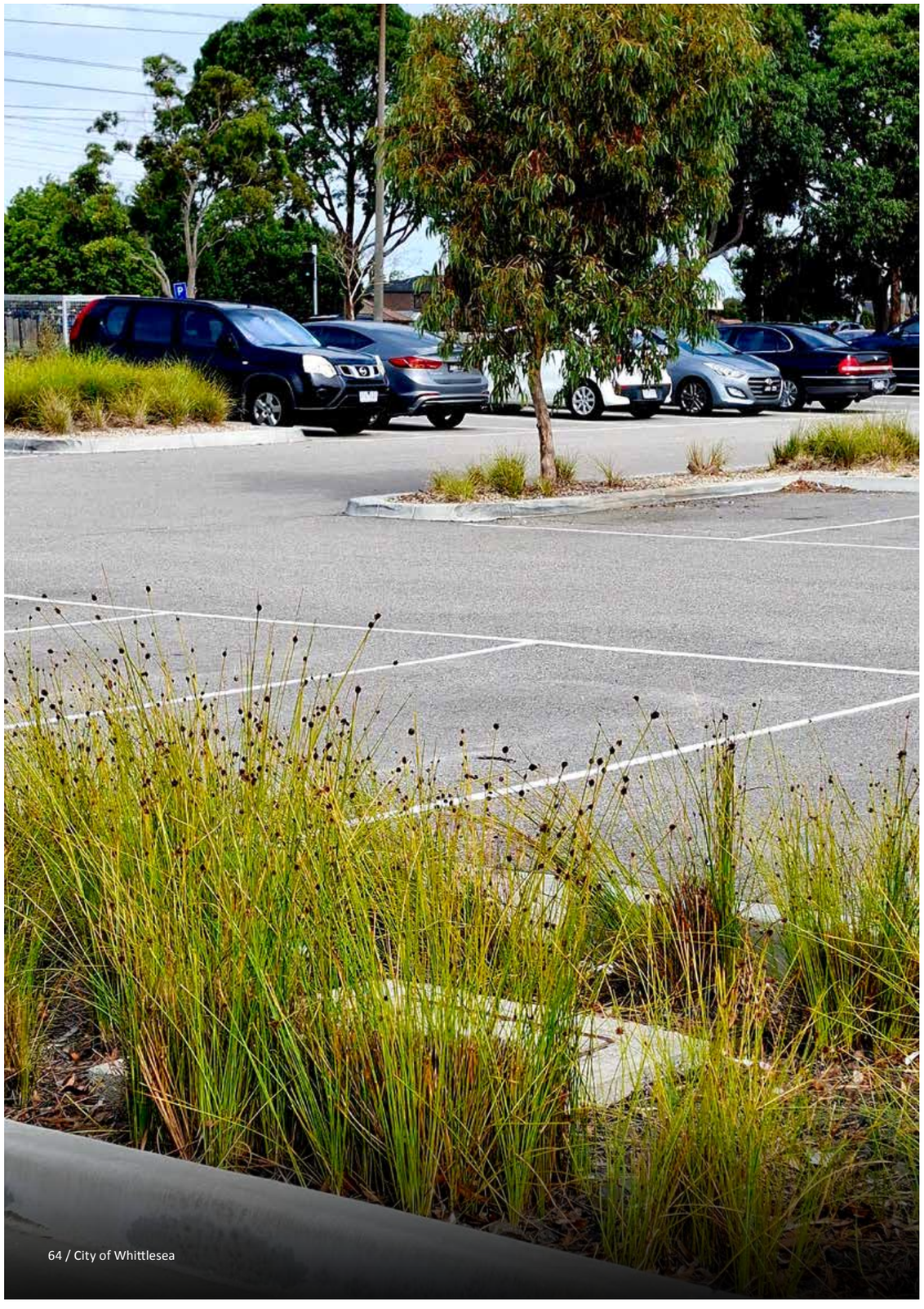
We plan to allocate maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our landscape and environment network.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased usage and changing urban trends	Climate change
• Increased demand for well-maintained parks, gardens, and landscaped areas as urban density grows. • Higher community expectations for green spaces that support recreation, relaxation, and biodiversity. • Need for better integration of landscape and environment assets with urban development to enhance liveability.	• Greater foot traffic and events in park sites and garden areas, leading to higher wear on hard surfaces, pathways, and seating areas. • Increased demand for low-maintenance, drought-resistant plants and sustainable landscaping to reduce long-term costs. • Opportunity to use nature-based solutions, such as urban forests, rain gardens, and green corridors, to improve environmental outcomes.	• Rising temperatures and extreme weather events requiring heat-resistant plant species, shaded spaces, and climate-adaptive landscaping. • Increased risk of soil erosion, plant stress, and hard surface deterioration due to prolonged drought and heavy rainfall. • Opportunity to expand sustainable landscape practices, including rainwater harvesting, permeable paving, and biofiltration gardens to manage stormwater and support cooling.

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Landscape and Environment Asset Management Plan, including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue with asset data maintenance and cleansing to improve planning and compliance.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs based on condition, capacity and functionality datasets, including masterplans and strategies.



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3.10 Car parks

This portfolio includes:

3,809
On road car parks

134
Off road car parks

Asset portfolio value:
$35M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
77.3%

Why do we have these assets?

We offer designated spaces for vehicles, improving access to local businesses, public areas, and residential zones.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.10 Car parks

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Maintenance and repairs to car parks such as patching potholes • Operational servicing such as vegetation management and weed spraying	• Resurfacing of existing car parks • Car park reconstruction or major patching of road failures	• New constructed and gifted assets by developers • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$134	$139	$143	$148	$153	$159	$164	$170	$176	$182	**$1,568**
Renewal Cost	$250	$85	$85	$90	$100	$199	$399	$941	$657	$100	**$2,906**
Upgrade Cost	$710	$815	$150	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	**$1,675**
New Costs	$300	$230	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	**$530**
Total											**$6,679**

Table 15 – Car parks Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $7 million on maintaining, renewing and improving our car parks.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims that won't keep pace with the deterioration of our car park network.

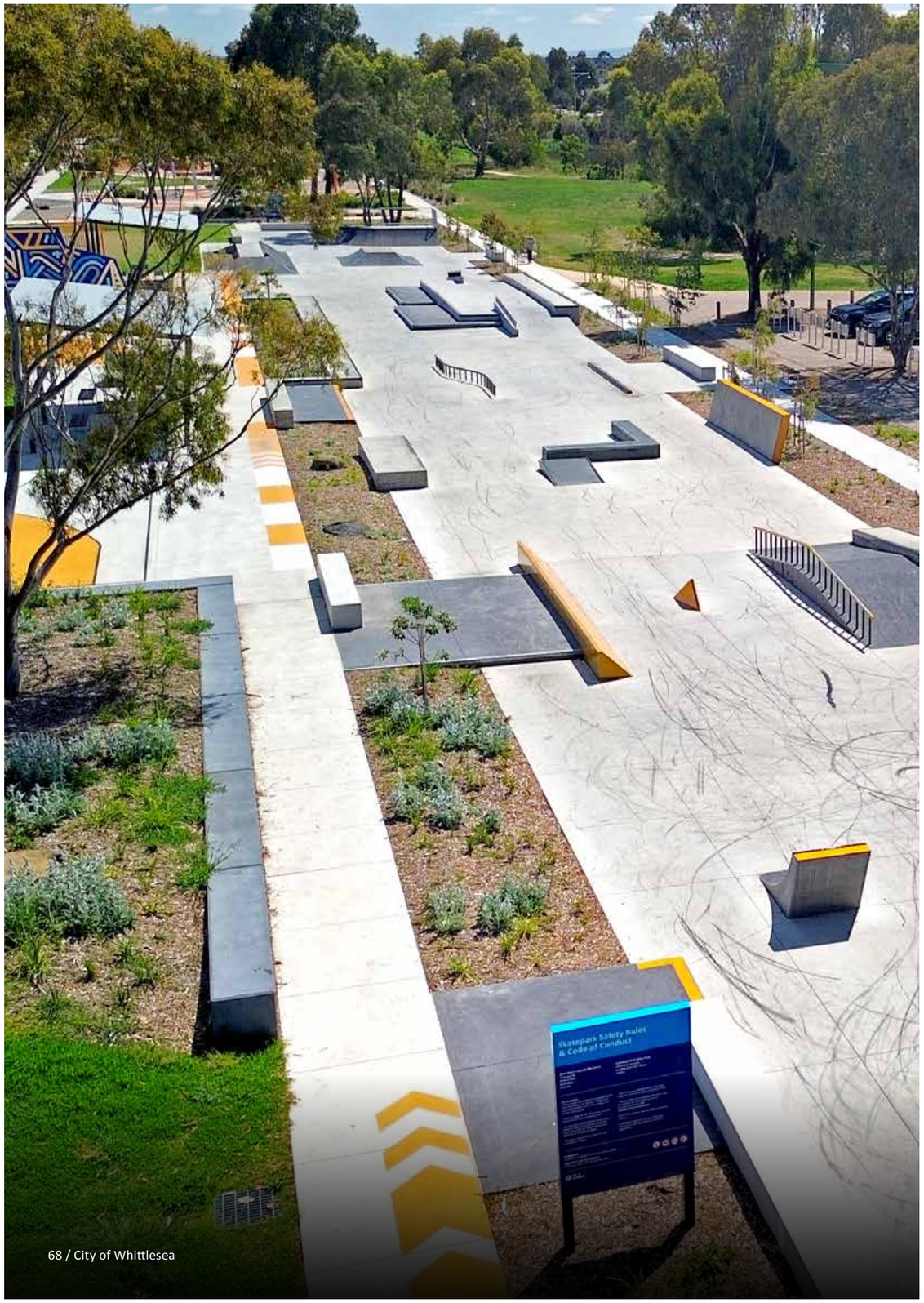
This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our car park assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on asset condition. An asset condition audit and revaluation management plan ensure that each asset class is assessed for condition every four years.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased vehicle demand and changing transport trends	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for parking spaces due to population growth and higher dwelling density. • Pressure on existing car parks to accommodate more vehicles, leading to congestion and reduced availability. • Need for better integration of car parks with public transport and active transport networks to reduce reliance on private vehicles.	• Higher vehicle ownership rates placing strain on existing parking infrastructure. • Greater demand for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations within car parks as adoption of EVs increases. • Potential shift towards rideshares and car-sharing services, altering parking needs and demand for designated pick-up/drop-off areas.	• Increased heat exposure in uncovered car parks, requiring heat-resistant materials, shading solutions, and green infrastructure. • More frequent extreme weather events (flooding, storms) increasing the need for better drainage and climate-resilient car park designs. • Opportunity to introduce permeable pavements and water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) to improve stormwater management.	• The need to ensure compliance with the *Road Management Act 2004*. • The need to meet the requirements of our Asset Management Plan. • Need to ensure compliance with parking regulations, disability access requirements (DDA standards), and environmental standards. • Clarity on Council vs. private sector responsibilities for car park maintenance and upgrades. • Opportunity to adopt smart parking technologies to enhance efficiency, reduce congestion, and provide real-time availability data. • Ensure compliance with our Road Management Plan and the statutory requirements of the *Road Management Act.*

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Update the Car Parks Asset Management Plan including technical and community levels of service.
- Continue asset data maintenance and data cleansing.
- Work towards achieving our asset management targets detailed in Section 4.3.
- Continue with cyclic four-year condition inspection programs, incorporating results into renewal and maintenance programs.
- Assess land use opportunities including use of air rights to maximise long-term value and community benefit.



3.11 Sporting infrastructure

This portfolio includes:

181
Sporting courts/ fields

12
Skate parks/ BMX facility

433
Sports lighting

334
Sporting boxes and goals

Asset portfolio value:
$30.7M
(as at 30 June 2024)

Asset health*:
50.6%

Why do we have these assets?

Our sporting infrastructure, including sporting fields, courts, goalposts, and coaches' boxes, provides essential facilities for community health, recreation, and organised sports. These assets serve multiple purposes, including:

- Encouraging active lifestyles – Well-maintained sports fields and courts support physical activity, fitness, and overall well-being for people of all ages.
- Community and social engagement – Sporting facilities provide gathering spaces for local teams, clubs, and families, fostering community connections and inclusivity.
- Support for organised sport and recreation – Infrastructure such as goalposts, cricket nets, and basketball hoops enables a variety of competitive and recreational sports to take place.
- Youth development and participation – Sporting grounds offer structured play opportunities, encouraging youth engagement, teamwork, and personal development.
- Multipurpose and accessible facilities – Many sporting venues cater to multiple activities, ensuring diverse recreational opportunities for all residents, including people with disabilities.
- Sustainability and efficient land use – Smart irrigation, durable synthetic surfaces, and solar-powered lighting help reduce environmental impact and long-term maintenance costs.
- Youth recreation and active lifestyles – Skate parks and BMX facilities provide safe, dedicated spaces for young people to develop skills, socialise, and engage in active play.

By maintaining and upgrading these assets, we ensure that safe, high-quality sporting facilities remain available, promoting active, healthy, and connected communities for the future.

* Asset Health refers to the life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio and is reflected a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio.

3.11 Sporting infrastructure

What does our work involve?

Operations and maintenance	Renewal	Upgrade and new
• Routine inspections and maintenance of sporting fields, courts, goalposts, coaches' boxes, skate parks, and BMX facilities to ensure safety and usability. • Regular line marking, surface cleaning, and minor repairs to maintain playing conditions. • Irrigation system maintenance to ensure water efficiency and field longevity.	• Replacement of aged or very poor-condition goalposts, backboards, and netting to maintain playing standards. • Rehabilitation of heavily compacted or degraded grassed sporting fields to improve playing conditions. • Resurfacing of worn synthetic and natural playing surfaces to improve safety and performance. • Renewal of damaged or outdated seating, coaches' boxes, and scoreboards.	• Construction of new sporting fields, courts, and supporting infrastructure in high-growth or under-serviced areas. • Installation of all-weather synthetic surfaces to increase field availability and durability. • Integration of smart technology, such as automated irrigation and lighting systems, to enhance sustainability. • Development of multi-purpose sporting hubs that cater to a wider range of recreational activities. • Introduction of climate-adaptive features, such as shaded spectator areas and heat-resistant playing surfaces. • Upgrading skate parks and BMX tracks that have deteriorated due to heavy use or environmental conditions. • Condition assessment of new gifted assets provided at handover of subdivisional stage

How much do we forecast to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure ($'000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Operations and Maintenance	$2,419	$2,544	$2,715	$2,899	$3,096	$3,308	$3,536	$3,781	$4,044	$4,328	**$32,669**
Renewal Cost	$250	$2,850	$4,850	$440	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250	**$9,890**
Upgrade Cost	$865	$550	$550	$2,610	$550	$550	$450	$550	$3,250	$350	**$10,275**
New Costs	$39,770	$28,250	$18,280	$5,428	$3,500	$10,945	$20,740	$13,032	$6,638	$57,752	**$204,335**
Total											**$257,169**

Table 16 – Sporting Infrastructure Projected Expenditure 2025-2035

What does our Financial Plan achieve?

Over the next 10 years we expect to spend around $257 million on maintaining, renewing and improving the City's sporting infrastructure.

We plan to allocate renewal and maintenance funding at a level that aims to keep pace with the deterioration of our sporting infrastructure network.

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased usage and changing recreational trends	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• Increased demand for sporting fields, courts, and facilities as population growth leads to higher participation in local sports. • Need for multi-use sports infrastructure to accommodate diverse sporting activities and maximise community use. • Rising community expectations for high-quality, well-maintained playing surfaces and amenities.	• More frequent use of sports fields, courts, and equipment, leading to greater wear and tear on turf, goalposts, and seating areas. • Growth in female and inclusive sports, requiring upgrades to change rooms, lighting, and facilities. • Opportunity to introduce synthetic playing surfaces and smart irrigation systems to improve durability and reduce maintenance costs. • Growing popularity of skateboarding and BMX riding, increasing demand for modern, well-designed skate and BMX parks.	• Increased drought conditions and water restrictions impacting natural grass fields, requiring more efficient irrigation and drought-resistant turf solutions. • Extreme heat events affecting player safety, increasing demand for shaded spectator areas, cooling zones, and heat-reflective surfaces. • Opportunity to implement solar-powered lighting and water harvesting systems to reduce environmental impact and operational costs. • Ensure the recycling of synthetic surface at end of life. • Opportunity to integrate smart technology for scheduling and usage tracking, improving field allocation and reducing overuse.	• Compliance with sports field safety standards and accessibility requirements, ensuring safe and inclusive facilities. • Meeting regulatory requirements for field lighting, synthetic turf, and water management. • Ensuring ongoing asset inspections and maintenance to prevent hazards, such as damaged goalposts, uneven playing surfaces, and deteriorating seating areas.

What key actions will we take, including significant projects?

- Implement a structured condition inspection program for playing surfaces, goalposts, lighting, and supporting infrastructure, incorporating results into renewal and maintenance programs.
- Implement annual renewal and upgrade programs for sporting fields, courts, goalposts, lighting, and associated infrastructure based on condition assessments and safety compliance.
- Construct new sporting fields, courts, skate parks, BMX and multi-use facilities in high-growth areas or as identified in strategic and master plans.
- Continue resurfacing and rehabilitation of natural and synthetic playing surfaces to improve safety, usability, and durability.
- Upgrade sports lighting to energy-efficient LED technology and replace units in very poor condition.
- Trial innovative sports surface solutions, such as heat-resistant turf, water-efficient irrigation systems, and low-maintenance synthetic surfaces.
- Implement resilience and sustainability initiatives, including improved drainage, water harvesting for irrigation, and shaded.
- Consider opportunities for developing underutilised land and deliver active frontages to sporting precincts to increase their safety and use.

Appendix 1: Our community and population

The City of Whittlesea is a large and growing municipality located about 20km north of the Melbourne CBD. It is one of Melbourne's largest municipalities, covering a land area of approximately 490 square kilometres. It consists of established urban areas in the south, and growth areas and rural areas in the north. It is currently home to 245,029 people and this is forecast to increase to just over 360,692 by 2040 (forecast.id 2023).

Our community

245,029
total population

3% growth (between 2022-2023)

58 babies are born in the City of Whittlesea each week

34 years is the median age of residents

27% of population aged 0-19 years

18% of population aged over 60 years

50% Males

50% Females

16% of residents living with a disability

86,961
residential properties

85%
of residents live in detached houses

41% of households are couples with children

21% of households are couples without children

32% of workers who live in the municipality work within the City of Whittlesea

21,969 registered businesses

34,354
Epping – suburb with the largest population (14% of population)

841
Humevale, Yan Yean and Kinglake West – suburbs with the smallest population (0.3% of population)

2,663
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (1% of population)

38% of residents born overseas

45% of residents speak a language other than English at home

The most common languages spoken other than English include:

Arabic	5%
Macedonian	4%
Punjabi	4%
Italian	4%
Greek	3%

Source: 2021 Census, ABS and .id



Appendix 2: Strategic alignment

Whittlesea 2040: A place for all sets out the five goal areas: ***Connected Community, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Strong Local Economy, Sustainable Environment, and High Performing Organisation***.

Each of these goals has supporting key directions and measures for the community's aspirations to be more A Place for All.

Over the next 10 years we will work towards the following focus areas that will contribute to our Whittlesea 2040 vision of being A Place for All. The following tables outline the key action areas and how assets help support the delivery of the community vision and key priority areas.

Whittlesea 2040 strategic alignment to the 10-year Asset Plan 2025-2026 to 2034-35

This table identifies how our assets support the delivery of each of these action areas as they align to each community aspiration and goal.

Key Directions 2025-29	4 Year Objectives	Road Infrastructure	Stormwater Infrastructure	Buildings	Pathways		Park and Streetscape Infrastructure	Bridges and Boardwalks	Playgrounds	Roads Ancillary	Landscape and Environment	Car Parks	Sporting Infrastructure
Goal 1: Connected Community													
1.1 A socially cohesive community			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.2 A healthy and safe community		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
1.3 A participating community		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 2: Liveable Neighbourhoods													
2.1 Smart, connected transport network		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	
2.2 Well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.3 Housing for diverse needs		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 3: Strong Local Economy													
3.1 Increased local employment		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.2 Education opportunities for all				✓									
3.3 Successful, innovative local businesses				✓			✓				✓		
Goal 4: Sustainable Environment													
4.1 Valued natural landscapes and biodiversity		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.2 Climate ready		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.3 Leaders in clean, sustainable living		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 5: High performing organisation													
5.1 Driving better community outcomes		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.2 More informed Council decisions		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.3 More cost-effective investment and engaged workforce		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2: Whittlesea 2040 strategic alignment

Council Offices
25 Ferres Boulevard
South Morang VIC 3752

Email: info@whittlesea.vic.gov.au
Website 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)

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City of Whittlesea

5.7 Draft Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan

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In Attendance: Unit Manager Landscape & Open Space Planning
Coordinator Open Space Planning

Executive Summary

Edgars Creek, a tributary of the Merri Creek, flows through Wollert, Epping, Lalor and Thomastown in the City of Whittlesea. Managed by state authorities, Council and private entities, the creek's design and community interaction have evolved over time. While older sections reflect a primarily engineered approach, newer areas emphasise on conservation and accessibility for the community.

The 2001 Edgars Creek Corridor Master Plan aimed to naturalise the creek corridor within the City of Whittlesea, with shared paths, canopy trees, and improved integration with nearby sporting reserves. However, many initiatives were not implemented, and infrastructure upgrades have fallen short of the plan's vision.

The draft Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan (LIP) outlines a vision for the creek's future, focusing on infrastructure development, native vegetation restoration, ecological enhancement, and creating a resilient corridor. The plan aims to develop diverse landscape experiences, a continuous shared trail, and an inviting corridor while supporting community care for the creek, fostering connections to nature, and advocating for enhancements. The creek corridor is divided into six precincts, each offering unique characteristics and opportunities, including new residential areas, industrial sites, and heritage listed properties.

Key proposed actions include planting native vegetation, improving water quality through natural filtration, and naturalising sections of the creek. It also emphasises better access with pathways and crossings, enhanced public spaces featuring picnic shelters and community gardens, and promoting safe, active travel.

Next steps involve presenting the draft to Council for endorsement, initiating Phase 2 community consultation, and refining the plan based on the feedback.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Note the Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan at attachment 1.**
2. **Endorse the Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan for public exhibition and consultation between the period 20 June to 18 July 2025.**

3. **Note a subsequent report seeking approval of the Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan will come back to Council for formal adoption following the public exhibition and consultation period.**

Background / Key Information

Background

Edgars Creek is a tributary to the Merri Creek, flowing from Wollert through Epping, Lalor, and Thomastown to Edwardes Lake in Reservoir, and joining the Merri Creek down stream of Coburg lakes in Coburg. The entire length of the creek corridor is approximately 20km with 13km in the City of Whittlesea, 5km in Darebin City Council, and 2km in Merri-bek City Council. Management of the creek in Whittlesea is by state authorities, Council and private entities.

The Edgars Creek corridor in the City of Whittlesea showcases a variety of landscapes as it flows from the planned growth areas in the north to the more established southern sections, shaped by European settlement in the late 19th century. The evolution of urban waterway design is evident along its length, with newer sections focusing on conservation and ecological enhancement, contrasting with older, engineered approaches aimed at control. Community interaction has also evolved, with properties now facing the creek and greater demand for open spaces supporting recreation and social connection.

Existing Master Plan

Infrastructure management and development along the Edgars Creek corridor in the City of Whittlesea is currently guided by a 2001 master plan. This plan envisioned a naturalised creek corridor featuring shared paths, canopy trees, revegetation, integration with sporting reserves, new bridge connections, and potential property acquisitions to improve access and visibility. However, many initiatives were not implemented, and infrastructure upgrades have fallen short of the plan's vision.

While most shared path connections along the corridor have been completed, some sections remain unfinished, particularly within narrower areas of the corridor. Property ownership and management complexities have further delayed infrastructure improvements.

Related works

Cultural Values Study (CVS)

A parallel project, partnering with Wurundjeri, Merri-bek, and Darebin is to undertake a whole creek study to better understand the history and cultural significance to traditional owners. The CVS will ultimately inform a future direction plan for the entire creek corridor complimenting Edgars Creek LIP.

State Planning waterway protection measures

The Department of Transport and Planning are reviewing the planning controls for protecting waterways in the northern catchment of the Yarra River including Edgars Creek Corridor. Whilst this project will not directly impact any infrastructure improvements within Edgars Creek corridor, the outcomes regarding planning controls will be referenced accordingly in the final plan. The project is expected to be completed by June 2025.

Draft Landscape Improvement Plan

Purpose

The draft Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan outlines a vision and priorities for infrastructure development within the City of Whittlesea. Primarily a capital improvement plan, it focuses on opportunities and actions within Council's jurisdiction.

The draft LIP serves as a cohesive infrastructure plan to enhance:

- Native vegetation and ecological systems;
- Climate resilience;
- Waterway protection and quality;
- Visitor experiences and open space amenities;
- Connectivity and public access;
- Safety and visibility; and
- Interfaces with adjacent properties and communities.

By consolidating existing management plans and development master plans, the draft LIP provides a coordinated vision for reserves along the creek corridor. It proposes specific actions for smaller precincts, prioritising them based on community needs. These priorities will guide the final plan, aiding in securing funding through Council’s capital works program and external grants.

The draft does not currently address the cultural values of the creek corridor or provide pathway to support Traditional Owner self-determination. This gap will be informed by the completion of Cultural Values Study (CVS).

Themes

Actions and opportunities in the plan are aligned with specific themes and objectives. The overarching themes and their objectives are summarised below:

Ecology and Biodiversity

- Restore and enhance native vegetation and ecological systems within the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Build resilience in the corridor to withstand climate change and urban development impacts.
- Improve ecological function by implementing blue-green infrastructure to capture, slow, and treat stormwater.

Recreation and Accessibility

- Create diverse landscape experiences that complement surrounding infrastructure and communities.
- Develop a continuous Edgars Creek trail with strong connections to neighbouring areas.
- Establish a recognisable, accessible, and welcoming creek corridor.

Social and Community Engagement

- Support the community in protecting and caring for the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Foster stronger connections to nature through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Advocate for improvements to the corridor with adjacent landowners and government authorities.

Precincts

The Edgars Creek corridor in the City of Whittlesea is divided into six precincts, each offering unique characteristics and opportunities. A summary of the precincts is below:

- **Precinct 1**: Spanning Boundary Road to Craigieburn Road East, this area features new and ongoing residential developments.
- **Precinct 2**: Covering Craigieburn Road East to O'Herns Road, it includes the Aurora housing estate, open spaces, and integrated wetland systems.
- **Precinct 3**: Extending from O'Herns Road to Cooper Street, this precinct features the Cooper Street Employment Area, grassland conservation zones, and large Integrated Water Management (IWM) infrastructure.
- **Precinct 4**: Located between Cooper Street and Deveny Road, it includes wetland infrastructure, a quarry lake, and fenced landscapes.
- **Precinct 5**: Encompassing low-density residential areas of Thomastown and Lalor, with channelized creek sections and steep embankments. It stretches from Deveny Road to the M80 motorway.
- **Precinct 6**: Bordered by the M80 motorway and Mahoneys Road, this industrial area is dominated by exotic grasses and weeds.

Precincts 1–4 lack council management plans and rely on development master plans tied to subdivision applications and precinct structure plans. Open spaces in these areas are primarily funded through developer contributions.

Precinct 5 is guided by the *Edgars Creek Corridor Master Plan 2001*, *Open Space Strategy 2016*, and *Huskisson Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2019*.
Precinct 6 has no specific plan, with open space provision guided by the *Open Space Strategy 2016*.

Opportunities and Actions

The LIP outlines detailed opportunities and actions for each precinct, supported by maps and imagery to facilitate location identification and outcome visualisation.
Opportunities are identified as needing further investigation or feasibility studies before being actioned in built or programmatic outcomes. Actions are identified as being ready for implementation through an established program, capital works, or strategy.

All opportunities and actions are aligned with the themes and objectives, with a summary of key actions provided below:

Ecology and Biodiversity

- Plant and manage native vegetation to support local wildlife.
- Improve water quality through natural filtration systems and stormwater treatments.
- Naturalize sections of the creek to improve ecological functionality.
- Establish wildlife corridors by planting native species along streets.
- Involve residents in planting native species in their gardens.

Recreation and Accessibility

- Develop paths and crossings to improve creek access.
- Promote safe travel through traffic calming measures.
- Support the development of future path networks and open spaces.
- Install signage and public art to enhance navigation and appreciation of the area.
- Add picnic shelters, seating, and community gardens to public spaces.
- Organise community events and educational programs to encourage engagement.

Social and Community Engagement

- Install signage to highlight the creek's significance.
- Engage residents to foster community pride and awareness.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to improve wetlands and ecological areas.
- Encourage private landowners to create better open space interfaces and adopt sustainable practices.

Next Steps

- Commence Phase 2 community consultation and engagement.
- Revise draft Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan with consideration of community consultation and engagement outcomes.
- Develop business case for implementation of plan.
- Present revised plan and business case to Enterprise Project Board for inclusion in long term financial plan.
- Present revised plan and business case to Council for endorsement.

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.

The Edgars Creek Corridor landscape improvement plan proposes improving accessibility and safety along the creek corridor, physically connecting the communities and creating more opportunities for social connection.

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 Edgars Creek Corridor landscape improvement plan contributes to a well-planned city with accessible and considered open space, creating a vibrant place to live, work and play.

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.

The Edgars Creek Corridor landscape improvement plan supports local business in creating opportunities for visitation by creating destinations for the local community and visitors from abroad.

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

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.

Well-planned and 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, increased accessibility, and safer spaces in existing open spaces, and ensuring adequate provisioning of open spaces is important to the health of the community.

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

The Edgars Creek Corridor LIP will form the basis of a business case for the staged long-term renewal and improvement of assets in the corridor. Implementation actions of the final plan is holistically costed with consideration of delivery timeframes and utilises the latest proven market rates. Implementation actions are subject to holistic capital works prioritisation and budgeting. The LIP will provide strong evidence for external funding opportunities from State and Federal grant programs.

Community Consultation and Engagement

The Edgars Creek Corridor LIP review was initiated by the Thomastown and Lalor Place Framework, an outcome driven largely by the community feedback. The Edgars Creek Corridor LIP has been informed by community feedback collected during the place framework development as well as community feedback for reserves along the creek corridor.

A draft communications and engagement plan has been developed for consultation and engagement activities. Key stakeholders and interested community groups have been identified and engagement activities will be targeted to ensure diverse community involvement.

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.

(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 Edgars Creek Corridor LIP contribute to a healthier and more sustainable environment through planned increase to 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 Edgars Creek Corridor LIP provides improved opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and relaxation, in turn fostering a sense of community and providing spaces for residents to come together, leading to improved social cohesion and connections.

Economic

The Edgars Creek Corridor LIP activate opens spaces, attracting more visitors to the municipality, enhancing passive surveillance, improving perceptions of safety of the precincts, boosts property values, and provides a positive impact on local economy contributing to long term economic growth.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

The Edgars Creek Corridor LIP reduces the legal, resource and strategic risks of asset management through a cohesive and holistic approach to asset improvement planning and renewal. The inclusion of staged community engagement further lowers risks with transparency of planning and asset management and ensures voices of directly affected residents and stakeholders are considered in the long term strategic planning of assets.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Communications plan is to complement the scheduled consultation and engagement activities and is outlined in the consultation and engagement plan.

Critical Dates

Consultation and engagement activities are scheduled to commence from 19 June 2025.

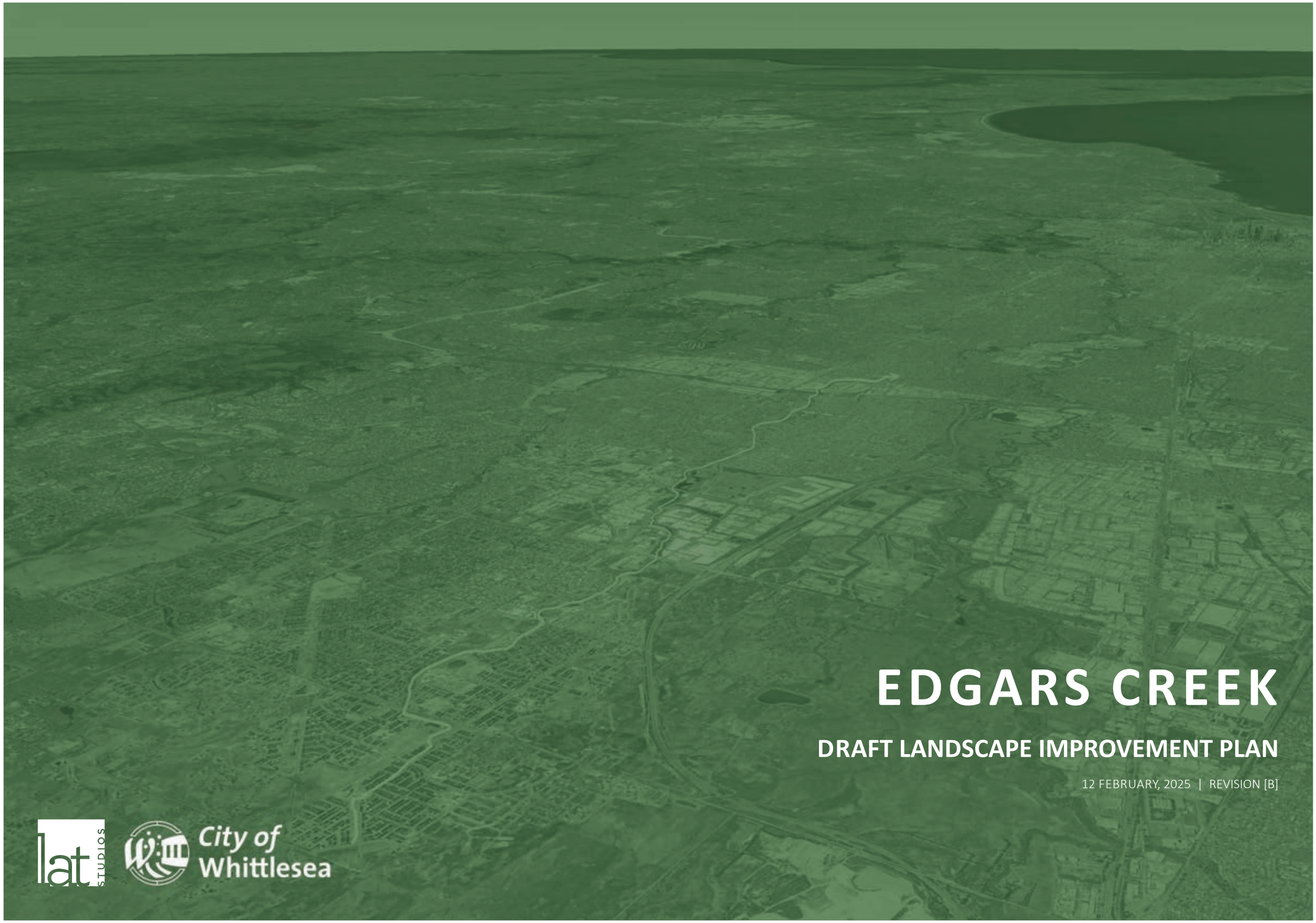
Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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. Draft Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan [**5.7.1** - 72 pages]



EDGARS CREEK

DRAFT LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

12 FEBRUARY, 2025 | REVISION [B]

lat STUDIOS

City of Whittlesea

DOCUMENT REGISTER

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

LatStudios acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters and skies that this project is situated on, the Wurundjeri Willum people of the Kulin Nation. We pay deep respects to Elders past and present.

LatStudios commit to supporting the health and wellbeing of Country, by respecting, valuing and being guided by First Nations people.

Background Photo: Image taken of a Eucalyptus torquata along the creek line at Huskisson Recreation Reserve.

01
INTRODUCTION

PROJECT SUMMARY

This Landscape Improvement Plan, prepared by LatStudios for the City of Whittlesea, identifies current and future challenges and opportunities for the Edgars Creek Corridor, which stretches from Wollert in the north to Thomastown in the south. The plan is underpinned by extensive background research, on-site analysis, and best-practice methodologies for the ecological and recreational master planning of creek corridors.

It establishes a clear vision for the Edgars Creek Corridor, addressing critical themes such as Traditional Owner connection to Country, connectivity and public access, safety and visibility, interfaces with adjacent properties, waterway protection and enhancement, and the integration of on-site facilities and amenities.

Aligned with existing City of Whittlesea policies and strategies, the plan emphasises improved access and increased community engagement. Furthermore, actions and initiatives derived from this process have been prioritised to support efficient project funding and implementation.



Figure 01: Regional Context Map

02
SITE APPRECIATION

Edgars Creek is a vital waterway that runs through the City of Whittlesea, embedded with cultural values and ecological significance.

Edgars Creek's story intertwines with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, as evidenced by scarred trees and sacred sites. European settlement in the 1800s led to farmsteads and, later, post-war development in Thomastown and Lalor. Today, the creek winds through a changing landscape, from industrial pockets in Epping to new residential areas with shared paths and native plantings.

The following paragraphs explore the site of Edgars Creek through the lens of land, its Indigenous and post settlement history and analyses the creek as we know it today.

THE LAND

The landscape of the City of Whittlesea features a gradual slope, descending from a high point in the north to a low point in the south, culminating in the hills of the Great Dividing Range within the Kinglake National Park at the municipality's northern edge. This terrain is creased by the valleys of various waterways, including Merri Creek, Edgars Creek, Darebin Creek, and Plenty River.

Along with several unnamed tributaries, all generally flow in a north to south direction through the neighbourhoods of the City of Whittlesea and beyond. The predominant ecological vegetation classes (EVCs) shaping this landscape are Plains Grassland, Creekline Grassy Woodland, and Plains Grassy Woodland.

HISTORY

As stated in 'Turning Back To Edgars Creek. A Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Waterway':

"The waterway that is now called Edgars Creek is 16 kilometres long, it begins as puddles in Wollert grasslands, flows through Epping, Thomastown and Lalor, and joins Merri Creek in North Coburg. Merri Creek flows into the Yarra River, and then into Port Phillip Bay. Edgars creek flows through the Country of the Wurundjeri Willum clan of the Woi Wurrung language group, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, who are part of the East Kulin nation."

The City of Whittlesea area is home to numerous protected and sacred scarred trees, as well as other sites of profound significance to the Wurundjeri People. Scarred trees, often used for crafting bark canoes or serving as boundary markers for distinct tribal groups, are a testament to Wurundjeri's rich cultural heritage and unbroken connection to this landscape. Additionally, majestic river red gums, which are scattered throughout the municipality, are a powerful living legacy of the City of Whittlesea's natural landscape identity.

HISTORIC SETTLEMENT PERIOD

British, German, and Wendish farming families settled along Edgars Creek in the late 1840s and 1850s in the parish of Keelbundora, named after a Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung boy. The intact buildings of the Westgarthtown Precinct, including a Lutheran Church, cemetery and five residential houses of the original Wendish settlers - all of which were located to take advantage of proximity to Edgars Creek, provide evidence of this German/Wendish influence.

Significant development occurred in Thomastown and Lalor in the post-war years, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, when large numbers of migrants from Greece, Italy, Malta, and Macedonia moved into the area. The subdivision of farms along Edgars Creek began in the 1960s, resulting in houses being built with their backs to the creek, while children continued to play along its banks.

EDGARS CREEK TODAY

Thomastown and Lalor serve as the southern gateway to the City of Whittlesea along High Street. Although the southern end of Thomastown - between Mahoneys Road and the Western Ring Road - is industrial, these two suburbs form the most populous and well-established residential area in the corridor. Thomastown and Lalor contain some of the oldest housing in the municipality and the State


1

1950 - Edgars Creek Waterfall (Coburg Historical Society)


2

1946 - Westgarthtown



1958 - Westgarthtown



1978 - Westgarthtown


3

1956 - Edgars Creek & Trinity German Lutheran Church (Ewald Steiniger)


4

1985 - Channelised Edgar

Background Photo: Image taken on-site along the creek line behind Thomastown Lutheran Church on Ziebells Farmhouse.

Significant Thomastown Industrial Area. The future Suburban Rail Loop will connect to Reservoir, two stops south of the City of Whittlesea's southernmost train station, potentially expediting population growth.

North of Lalor, Edgars Creek runs through Epping; a suburb that is comprised of starkly industrial areas adjacent to new communities and recent suburban growth. Southern Epping is predominantly industrial, although projects like New Epping suggest a potential future increase in residential land uses. In northern Epping and Wollert, rapid residential growth, as forecasted by the Epping Central Structure Plan (2020) and Cooper Street Employment Area Development Plan (2018), is evident. The creek meanders through new communities, with new shared path trails and mass creekline plantings. While the City of Whittlesea extends north into a more rural setting - culminating in the Great Dividing Range - Edgars Creek ends just north of Craigieburn Road where it is diverted into a roadside swale.



s Creek (Ernest Raetz)



2015 - Edgars Creek (Friends of Edgars Creek)



Figure 02: Local Context Map

03
WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

A WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG WATERWAY

Edgars Creek is a waterway embedded with a rich Indigenous history and ecological significance. This seasonal creek, which can dry up in summer and flood during heavy rains, is a vital waterway in the region. The creek is situated on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, part of the East Kulin Nation, who are recognised as the Traditional Owners of this area (Owens, 2021).

According to Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung tradition, Bunjil the wedge-tailed eagle formed the land of the Woi Wurrung people and is the creation ancestor of men. Pallian the bat formed the oceans, rivers, and creeks, and is the creation ancestor of women (Owens, 2021).

For thousands of years, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people have lived in harmony with the land surrounding Edgars Creek. Before European colonisation, they practiced sustainable resource management, gathering freshwater mussels and trapping eels (Northey, 2007). The Wurundjeri employed traditional fire practices to encourage the growth of important native plants, such as Murnong (Yam Daisy), which in turn supported local wildlife like emus and kangaroos (Owens, 2021). Remnants of this traditional stewardship can still be seen in the ancient Red Gums that are scattered along the creek, marking a landscape rich in spiritual and cultural significance.

The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people historically travelled across the diverse landscapes—creeks, rivers, wetlands, and grasslands—maintaining a deep connection to these environments, which provided food, water, and shelter. Their relationship with the land is rooted in a cyclical understanding of seasonal changes, reflecting a worldview markedly different from European perspectives (Owens, 2021).

As European settlers arrived in the 1830s, the Wurundjeri faced displacement, violence, and disease, dramatically altering their way of life. The creek, originally named Dry Creek or Blind Creek by settlers, was later named Edgars Creek after what some believe to be a local farmer's, Abel Thorpe, son. The settlers utilised the creek for agriculture, shaping the land significantly (Owens, 2021).

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE TODAY

Today, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people continue to advocate for their cultural heritage and environmental stewardship. Since the establishment of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in the 1980s, they have worked towards self-determination and the recognition of their rights (WWCHAC, 2024). The City of Whittlesea, which encompasses their traditional land, has developed an Aboriginal Action Plan (AAP) for 2024-2029. The AAP aims to support the local Aboriginal community by prioritising culture, addressing trauma, and supporting healing, tackling racism, and promoting cultural safety. It emphasises the importance of prioritising decision-making power in areas that impact their communities (City of Whittlesea, 2024).

In partnership with local Aboriginal groups, the AAP reflects a commitment to reconciliation, honouring the rich history of the Wurundjeri people while addressing contemporary challenges. The journey to reconciliation includes acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal rights, listening to, and supporting Aboriginal voices, celebrating Aboriginal culture, and empowering local communities. Additionally, it recognises the significant role the Wurundjeri have played as custodians of the land for millennia (City of Whittlesea, 2024).

Currently, more than 2,250 Aboriginal people call the City of Whittlesea home, making this community the second largest Aboriginal community in metropolitan Melbourne, which is situated on the Country of the Wurundjeri and Taungurung Peoples (ABS, 2021). The community has grown significantly, underscoring the ongoing connection of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people to their land and heritage.

The City of Whittlesea will partner with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Traditional Owners to undertake a cultural values assessment that will inform the key themes and outcomes of the final Edgars Creek Landscape Improvement Plan. These will provide opportunities to deliver a future vision for Edgars Creek that reflects the values of all members of our community.


6

John Cotton, Aboriginal camp on the banks of the Yarra, c.1845. Image from the State Library Victoria.


7

Charles Troedel, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People at Merri Creek. Image from the National Gallery Victoria.


8

An Aboriginal Scar Tree located within the City of Whittlesea.


9



An Aboriginal Gathering Place being constructed in the City of Whittlesea, due to open in 2025.

Background Photo: Image taken of a Corymbia citriodora along the creek line at Huskisson Recreation Reserve.



10 THIS SITE IMAGE ILLUSTRATES THE THE LAYERS OF THE HISTORY OF THIS PLACE. AT THE CENTRE, A REMNANT RIVER RED GUM IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF THE AREA'S ONGOING ECOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE IDENTITY.

04
CREEK CONTEXT

Background Photo: Image taken of a Corymbia citriodora along the creek line at Huskisson Recreation Reserve.

LAND USE

Edgars Creek traverses various zones of the City of Whittlesea planning scheme. In the northern section of the creek corridor, much of the area falls within growth or development zones. This includes urban growth zones, commercial development zones, and residential growth zones, highlighting the significant changes projected for this part of the catchment as the suburbs of Wollert and Epping develop.

In Epping, south of Cooper Street, the creek passes through a mix of industrial, special use, and mixed-use zones. This area is also adjacent to the activity centre zones of Epping Central, indicating a high level of commercial use and activity surrounding the creek here.

Further south, the creek runs through the established general residential zones of Lalor and Thomastown. These zones illustrate the more historic, developed suburban residential development that encompasses this area. This part of the creek corridor is likely to see less change, though some growth is anticipated around the Thomastown and Lalor train stations east of the creek. At the southern end of Thomastown, Edgars Creek enters another industrial zone.

The Edgars Creek Landscape Improvement Plan will address the diverse land use contexts, including industrial areas, residential growth zones, established residential areas, and conservation areas, contributing to the creek's varied character.

LEGEND

- Edgars Creek
- 800m Creek Walking Catchment*
- City of Whittlesea Boundary
- Activity Centre
- Commercial Zones
- Commonwealth Land (not controlled by the planning scheme)
- Development / Growth Zones
- Farming / Rural Zones
- Residential Zones
- Industrial Zones
- Mixed Use Zones
- Open Space (Includes Open Space, Sport & Recreation, Environmental Management, Conservation, As Well As Identified Regional Ecosystems)
- Special Use Zones
- Public Use Zones
- Urban Floodway Zones

*Based on Victoria's '20-minute Neighbourhoods' strategy, an 800-metre walking catchment boundary has been included to represent the area within a 20-minute walk to the creek and back.

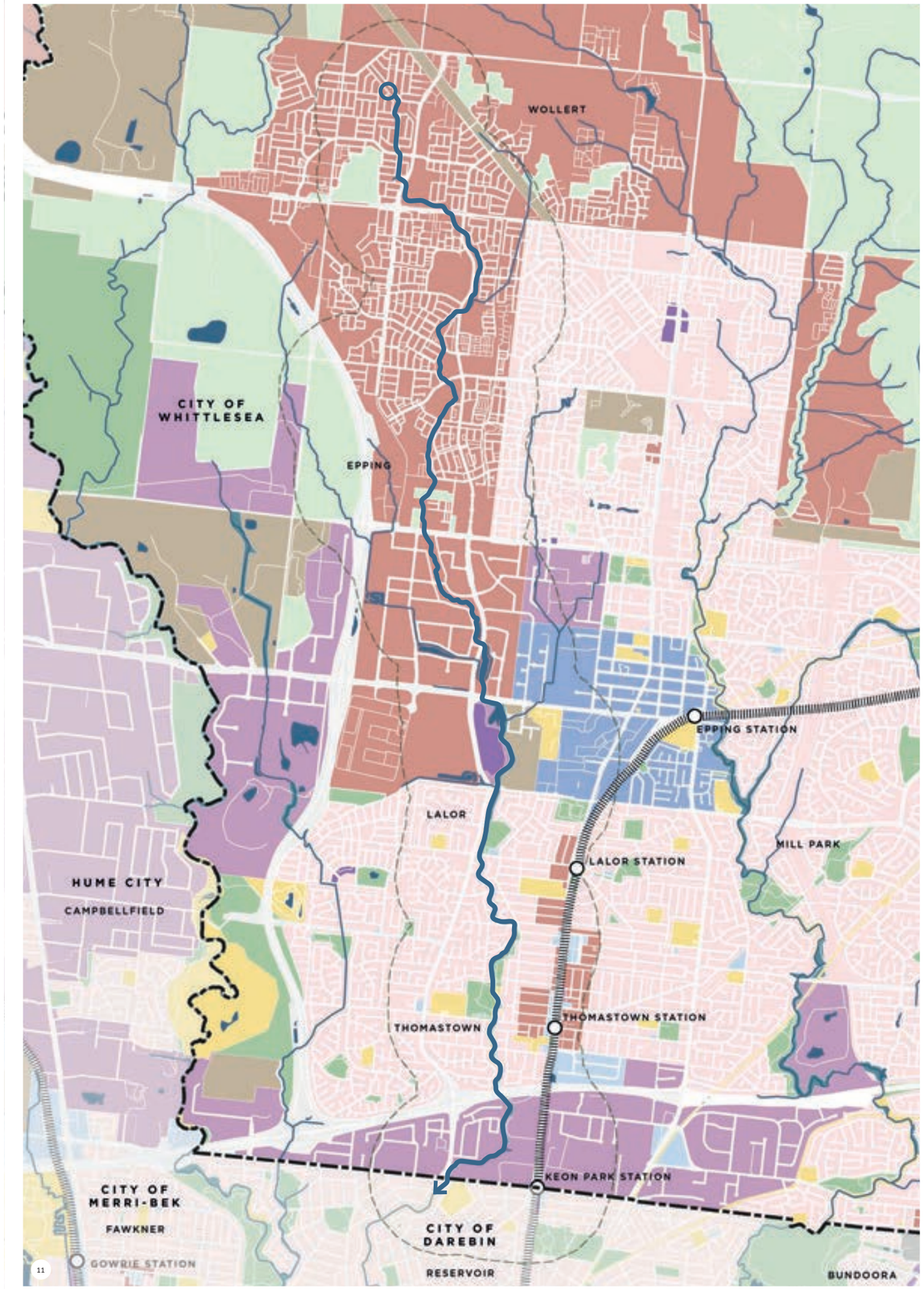


Figure 03: Edgars Creek: Existing Land Use Map

0 2km

PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

The City of Whittlesea is home to a diverse range of communities, with many residents speaking Arabic, Italian, Macedonian, Indian, and Vietnamese alongside English. The southern section of the Edgars Creek corridor is well established and unlikely to change rapidly. However, the northern suburbs of Epping and Wollert are expected to undergo significant growth in the coming decades. Several key precinct structure plans (PSP), local structure plans (LSP), and development plans cover different stretches of the creek corridor, providing insight into its future development.

North of O'Herns Road, the creek runs through new community development areas covered by the Wollert PSP and Aurora Development Plan. These areas were predominantly farmland until the early 2000s but are now rapidly growing residential communities. The Aurora Town Centre sits directly abutting the creek's west bank at Harvest Home Road, with the Epping YMCA and Harvest Home Primary School forming a community hub on the opposite side of the creek in the same location. South of the Aurora Development area, the creek enters the Cooper Street Employment Area, a commercial and industrial hub expected to become a major employment area for the City of Whittlesea, characterised by commercial factories and shopping precincts.

Further south, Edgars Creek enters the New Epping Master Plan area. The master plan for this yet-to-be-built residential community shows that the creek is intended to serve as a central, high-quality ecological open space corridor for the surrounding residential suburb. This site also sits adjacent to the Northern Hospital and Epping Central Activity Centre, highlighting the location's potential for community growth.

South of Deveny Road, the creek flows through the more historically established residential communities of Lalor and Thomastown. Several community groups, such as the Friends of Edgars Creek, are active throughout the area and will be important in planning and implementing ways to increase stewardship over the creek.

LEGEND

- Edgars Creek
- 800m Creek Walking Catchment*
- City of Whittlesea Boundary
- Open Space
- Public Use Area
- Tertiary Institution
- Government School
- Non-Government School
- Northern Hospital, Epping
- Wollert PSP Area, 2022 (Ongoing greenfield development est. 2018)
- Northern Quarries Investigation Area
- Aurora Development Plan, 2005 & 2016 (Ongoing greenfield development est. 2003)
- Epping North East, 2008 (Residential development est. 2009)
- Epping North LSP, 2002 (Residential development est. early 2000's)
- Cooper Street West, 2017 (Former landfill, ongoing industrial area with future conservation areas identified)
- Cooper Street Employment Area, 2018 (Industrial and commercial area est. 1990's)
- Epping Central Structure Plan, 2023 (Future regional centre with mixed use, health, commercial, residential and community precinct, est. 1980-90's)
- New Epping Renewal Site, 2020 (Former quarry, master planned new residential community, construction began in 2020)
- Future Melbourne Food and Innovation Hub
- Lalor (Established residential suburb,formerly part of Thomastown until separated in 1945)
- Thomastown (Oldest residential area in Whittlesea, est. 1840s with rapid growth in 1970-80's)
- Thomastown Industrial Precinct (State-significant industrial area with a plan guiding development of the area into an employment business hub)

*Based on Victoria's '20-minute Neighbourhoods' strategy, an 800-metre walking catchment boundary has been included to represent the area within a 20-minute walk to the creek and back.

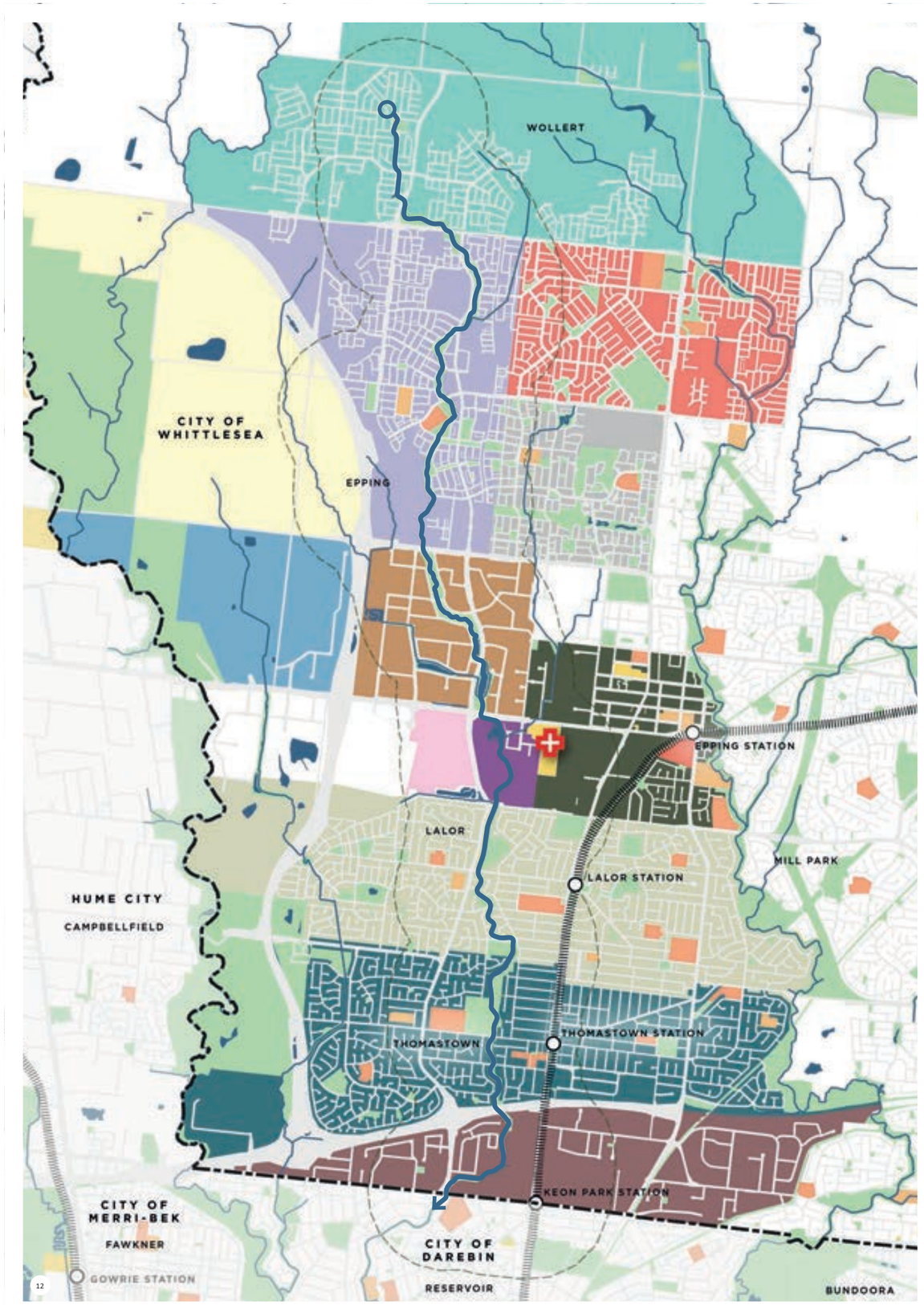


Figure 04: Edgars Creek: People & Communities Map

0 2km

HYDROLOGICAL CONTEXT

Edgars Creek is a heavily modified and urbanised waterway that changes significantly in form and function as it traverses a variety of natural and urban contexts.

In Wollert, the creek starts as an ephemeral catchment, gathering water from surrounding farmland and new residential areas. It is only visible through the remnant river red gums at Verdon Playground and a water management median strip along La Tour Boulevard. South of Jardin Boulevard, the creek becomes more defined, growing as it collects water from Epping's drainage channels. Initially in good condition with new riparian vegetation, the creek's state deteriorates south of Edgars Creek Oval and through the Aurora Development area.

In southern Epping, Edgars Creek flows through industrial areas with large wetlands and retarding basins for water quality management present either side of Cooper Street. Grassland conservation areas along the creek's banks add to its environmental sensitivity in this area. South of Cooper Street, the creek and its surroundings are covered by a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO), while north of Cooper Street it is covered by a Floodway Overlay (FO), both of which have statutory implications for the Landscape Improvement Plan process and may influence proposed open space designs within the creek corridor.

Entering Lalor and Thomastown, the creek is diverted into steep-banked concrete drainage channels in some stretches. In areas where the creek is not channelised, it is enclosed by steep, weedy banks, making access difficult. The Landscape Improvement Plan aims to improve water quality through water-sensitive urban design (WSUD) initiatives such as wetland revegetation, ponds, rock pools, and riffles.

LEGEND

- Edgars Creek
- 800m Creek Walking Catchment*
- City of Whittlesea Boundary
- Wetlands
- Floodway Overlay (FO)
- Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO)
- Creek Is Culverted Into a Concrete Channel
- Elevation

*Based on Victoria's '20-minute Neighbourhoods' strategy, an 800-metre walking catchment boundary has been included to represent the area within a 20-minute walk to the creek and back.

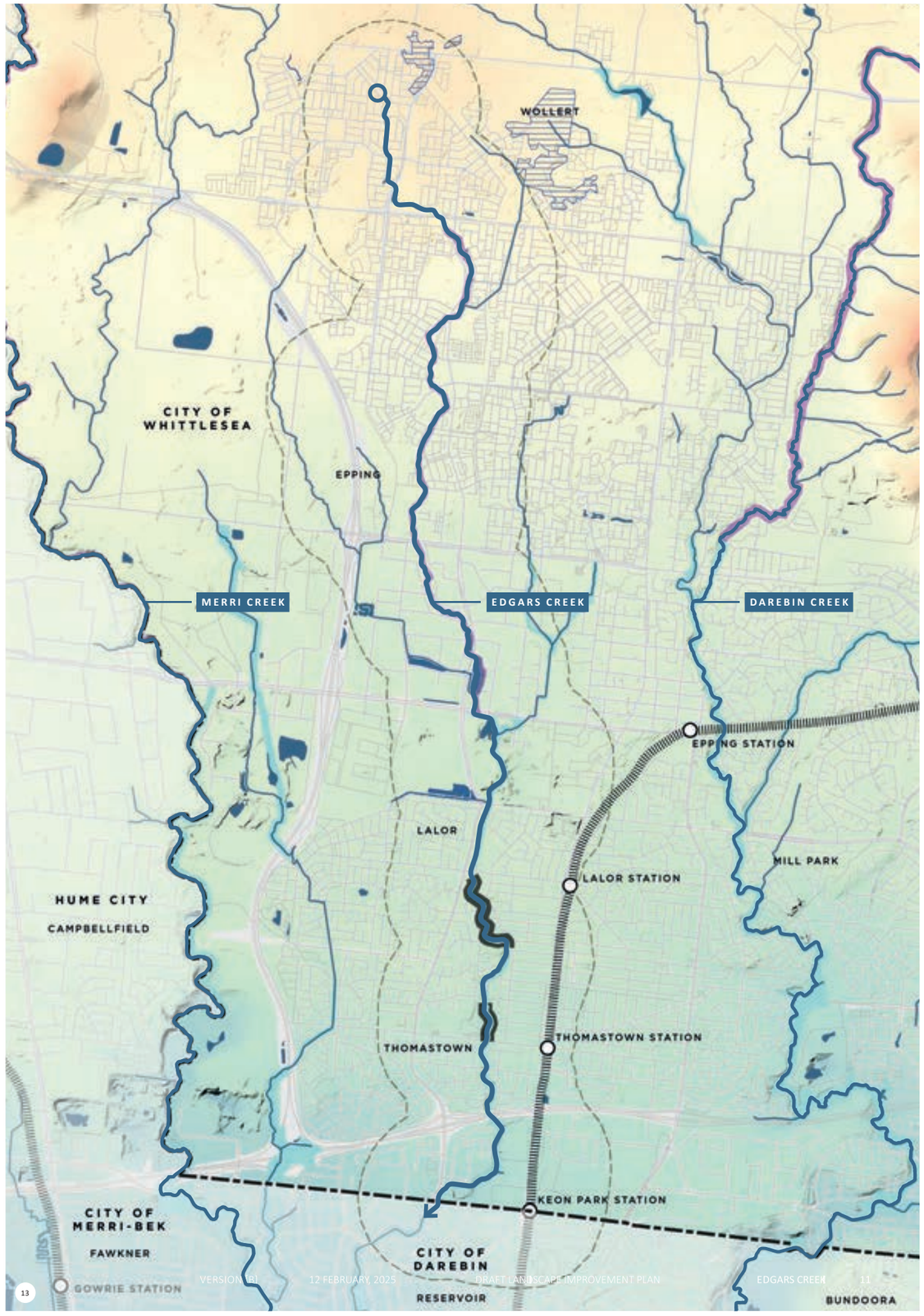


Figure 05: Edgars Creek: Hydrological Context Map

0 2km

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Prior to European settlement, the Edgars Creek corridor was defined by five predominant ecological vegetation classes (EVCs): plains grassland, plains grassy woodland, creekline grassy woodland, grey clay drainage-line aggregate, and escarpment shrubland. Plains grassland and plains grassy woodland dominated the area. However, since European arrival the extent of these EVCs has been drastically reduced by agriculture and urbanisation.

Today, conservation reserves offer glimpses into the pre-1788 landscape of the Edgars Creek catchment. Shown on the adjacent map, the conservation reserves near Edgars Creek are defined by three authorities: the City of Whittlesea, the Victorian Planning Authority, and the Melbourne Strategic Assessment (Victorian Government). There is a significant Melbourne Strategic Assessment-defined conservation area to the west of Edgars Creek, around the O'Herns Road Conservation Area and Craigieburn Road East and West Conservation Areas, with additional pockets of conservation area in north Epping and along Darebin Creek.

Two recognised conservation areas directly adjoin Edgars Creek, both of which are grasslands in Epping, one located just north of Harvest Home Road and the other just south of O'Herns Road. Transmission line easements, as well as waterways and future rail connections, illustrate potential ecological corridors that can connect various habitats to boost native biodiversity. Remnant river red gums, a major ecological symbol of the Edgars Creek corridor, are scattered throughout the area along with sightings of other endangered flora and fauna which further highlight the importance of Edgars Creek in its broader ecological context.

LEGEND

- Edgars Creek
- 800m Creek Walking Catchment*
- City of Whittlesea Boundary
- Existing Conservation Area (Combined conservations areas from the City of Whittlesea, VPA Open Space categories and the Melbourne Strategic Assessment)
- Ecological Corridor (indicative)
- Transmission Line Corridor
- Threatened Flora Observation (iNaturalist)
- Threatened Fauna Observation (iNaturalist)
- Plains Grassland (1750 EVC extent)
- Plains Grassy Woodland (1750 EVC extent)
- Creekline Grassy Woodland (1750 EVC extent)
- Grey Clay Drainage-Line Aggregate (1750 EVC extent)
- Escarpment Shrubland (1750 EVC extent)

*Based on Victoria's '20-minute Neighbourhoods' strategy, an 800-metre walking catchment boundary has been included to represent the area within a 20-minute walk to the creek and back.

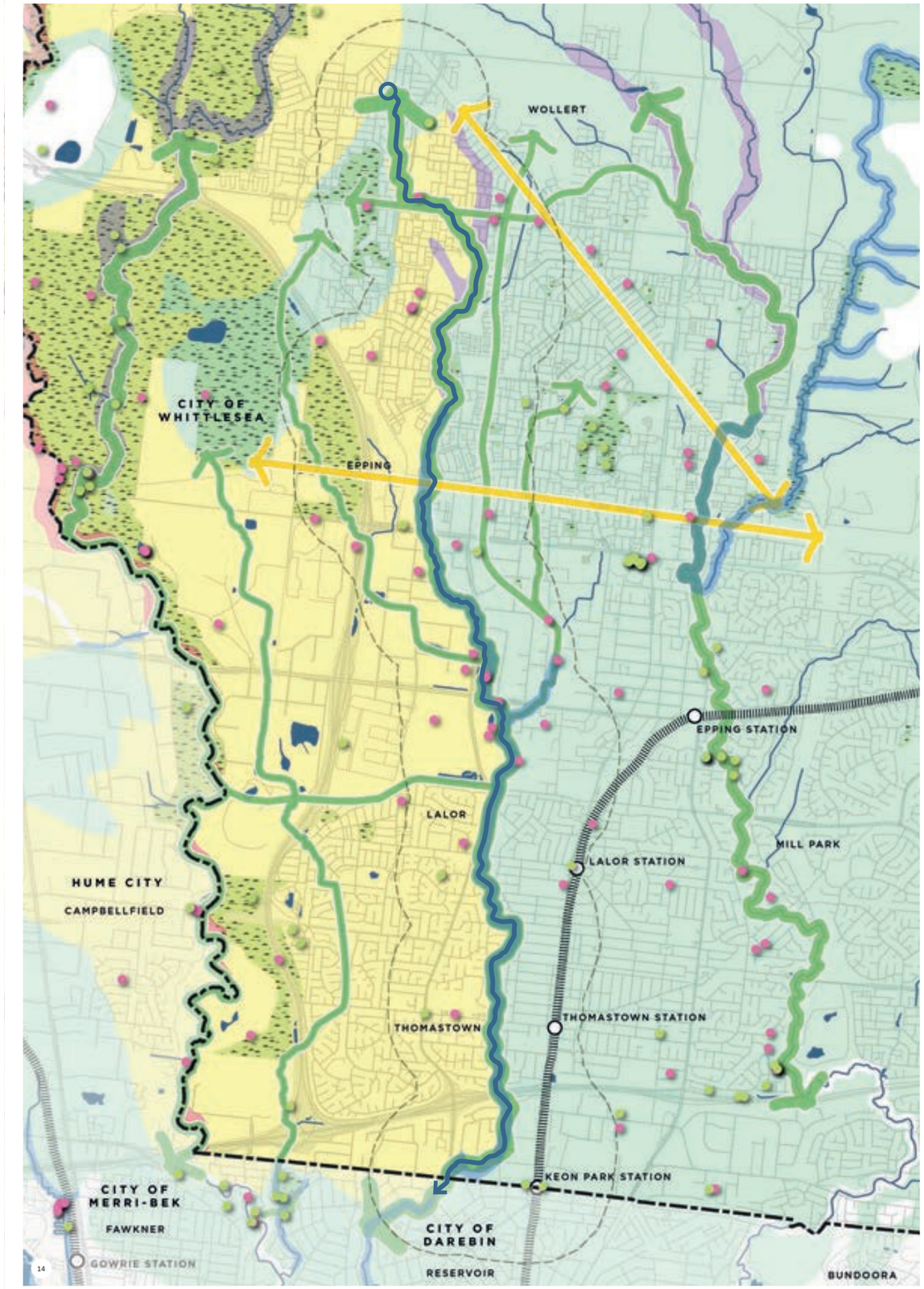


Figure 06: Edgars Creek: Environmental Context Map



15 MAJOR. PHOTO LOOKING SOUTH TOWARDS THE ROBERT STREET BRIDGE. THE STEEP BANKS OF THE CONCRETE CHANNEL WITHIN WHICH EDGARS CREEK RUNS THROUGH MUCH OF PRECINCT 5 PRESENT A CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGE FOR NATURALISATION EFFORTS.

05
PROJECT FRAMEWORK

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROCESS

The Edgars Creek Corridor Landscape Improvement Plan process is comprised of a multitude of phases, which are detailed below:



Background Literature Review

The background document review focused on core documents, key strategies, and reports impacting the Edgars Creek Corridor, along with related projects, nearby development plans, and best practice reports to guide a successful site-specific Edgars Creek Landscape Improvement Plan.

Analysis

During the analysis phase, information has been gathered, summarised, and contextualised in order to inform and guide the development of a comprehensive and well-founded Landscape Improvement Plan.

Vision

Based on the learnings of the analysis phase, a Landscape Improvement Plan vision is created to articulate a clear, inspiring, and strategic long-term goal for the Edgars Creek corridor, which will be used to guide the development and implementation of the Landscape Improvement Plan.

Themes

Three Landscape Improvement Plan project themes have been created to help structure the information gathered in the analysis phase and to facilitate balanced development of the Landscape Improvement Plan, focused planning, and effective implementation. These are detailed in the following chapter.

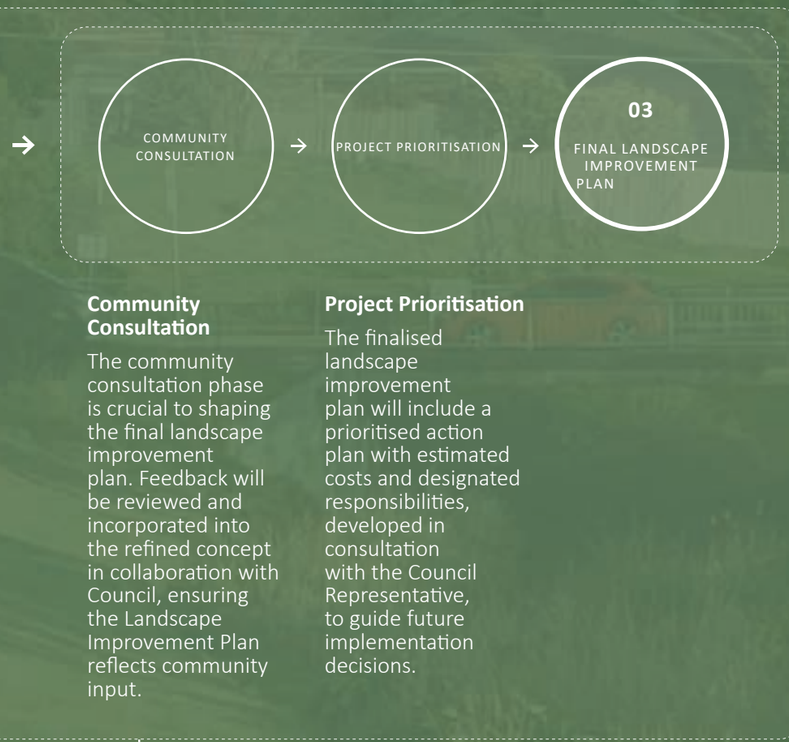
Objectives

Nine project objectives- detailed in the following chapter- have been developed to define specific, measurable goals that ensure the Landscape Improvement Plan successfully translates the three project themes and overarching project vision into actionable steps and achievable outcomes.

Opportunities & Actions

Key opportunities and actions have been developed to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor, building upon the strengths identified in the analysis phase whilst aligning with the established vision, themes, and objectives.

Background Photo: Image taken along a channelised section of the creek at Main Street Reserve in Thomastown.



Community Consultation

The community consultation phase is crucial to shaping the final landscape improvement plan. Feedback will be reviewed and incorporated into the refined concept in collaboration with Council, ensuring the Landscape Improvement Plan reflects community input.

Project Prioritisation

The finalised landscape improvement plan will include a prioritised action plan with estimated costs and designated responsibilities, developed in consultation with the Council Representative, to guide future implementation decisions.

CULTURAL VALUES ASSESSMENT & FUTURE DIRECTIONS PLAN

The City of Whittlesea is partnering with the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to undertake a dedicated Cultural Values Assessment and Future Directions Plan process for the Edgars Creek Landscape Improvement Plan. This is a fundamental part of the process and will enable meaningful engagement with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people and inform the development and planning of the Edgars Creek corridor within the City of Whittlesea and beyond.

The Cultural Values Assessment will be a foundational step in protecting and honouring the cultural significance of Edgars Creek and incorporating Traditional Owner knowledge and input for the future management of the entirety of the Creek corridor. This comprehensive assessment will be conducted as a collaborative effort involving the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, the City of Whittlesea, the City of Darebin, and Merri-bek City Council, with funding already secured from the City of Whittlesea.

Following this assessment, a Whole of Creek Future Directions Plan will be developed in authentic partnership with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. This Future Directions Plan, with Wurundjeri input, will act as a strategic guide for the development and long-term stewardship and enhancement of the Creek, ensuring cultural values, environmental health, and community connections are harmoniously integrated.

06
THE VISION

VISION STATEMENT

The Edgars Creek Corridor will be a well-connected vibrant and inclusive green spine that celebrates the rich Aboriginal and recent history, culture, and communities of the City of Whittlesea. The creek corridor will be a place of thriving biodiversity, offering a harmonious blend of recreational, cultural, and social spaces that invite all community members to gather, explore, connect, and thrive.

Background Photo: Image taken along a channelised section of the creek at Main Street Reserve in Thomastown.

07
PROJECT THEMES

Three overarching project themes have been identified through the Background Literature Review and the Site Analysis & Visioning Report process. These themes will be used as a framework to identify key objectives, actions and opportunities.

1. ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY

This theme relates to the ongoing ecological health of the creek system. These outcomes will be measured through the corresponding objectives.

The types of things that will be considered as part of this ecological understanding will be the presence and quality of remnant ecologies, the opportunities for habitat corridor connections, and understanding the hydrological function and health of water travelling through Edgars Creek.

2. RECREATION & ACCESSIBILITY

The second project theme focuses on enhancing the corridor's connectivity.

This includes improving landscape amenities, outdoor recreation and passive facilities, shared user path access, surrounding Edgars Creek Trail connections, lighting, public open space facilities, wayfinding, and signage. The Landscape Improvement Plan will prioritise uninterrupted active travel paths and create a network of inviting open spaces.

3. SOCIAL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The third theme refers to the creek's ability to cater to the diverse human communities that interact with it.

This involves community initiatives — such as volunteer events, community gardening, and education — that foster a sense of stewardship. This also means making the corridor feel safe for all cultures, genders, ages, and abilities and advocating with stakeholders to sustain a shared vision for the creek's ongoing health.

08
PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Each of the three project themes has a further three corresponding objectives. These project objectives will be used to both guide and measure the success of the actions and opportunities identified in the Landscape Improvement Plan.

1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.

1.2. Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.

1.3. Enhance the corridor's overall water quality and hydrological function.


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2.1. Improve and enhance the recreation infrastructure of the Edgars Creek corridor.

2.2. Develop a continuous Edgars Creek Trail that is well connected to adjacent neighbourhoods.

2.3. Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.


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3.1 Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.

3.2. Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.

3.3. Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to the Edgars Creek corridor.


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09
PROJECT OBJECTIVES & CORRESPONDING STRATEGIES

ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY

This chapter outlines the strategies identified throughout the corridor to achieve the actions and opportunities developed in the Landscape Improvement Plan. These strategies are designed to directly address and ensure the fulfilment of each objective.

1.1. RESTORE AND ENHANCE THE NATIVE VEGETATION AND ECOLOGIES OF THE EDGARS CREEK CORRIDOR.

- Implement widespread understorey and tree plantings along the Creek, prioritising Indigenous species and protecting existing mature trees.
- Establish and strengthen biodiversity corridors that intersect the Edgars Creek corridor, through strategic planting and connecting existing green infrastructure.
- Trial new biodiversity initiatives such as tiny forests, habitat logs and riparian plantings.

1.2. CREATE A RESILIENT EDGARS CREEK CORRIDOR THAT CAN WITHSTAND THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

- Create a more resilient Growling Grass Frog population by introducing buffer planting and frog fencing where appropriate.
- Plant a diversity of climate resilient tree species along the Creek corridor.
- Implement low-impact and adaptive lighting solutions along the Edgars Creek corridor where appropriate, to support active transport, recreation and site biodiversity.

1.3. ENHANCE THE CORRIDOR'S OVERALL WATER QUALITY AND HYDROLOGICAL FUNCTION

- Advocate for improvements to existing Melbourne Water stormwater infrastructure.
- Implement new blue-green infrastructure, such as hyporheic zones and wicking fields to improve aquatic plant health, water quality and improve habitat for aquatic organisms.
- Return channelised sections of the Edgars Creek corridor to a more naturalistic creek environment.


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RECREATION & ACCESSIBILITY

This chapter outlines the strategies identified throughout the corridor to achieve the actions and opportunities developed in the Landscape Improvement Plan. These strategies are designed to directly address and ensure the fulfilment of each objective.

2.1. IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE EDGARS CREEK CORRIDOR.

- Introduce additional open space infrastructure such as seating, shelters, and public toilets in areas that lack adequate amenity.
- Create a diversity of unique and identifiable recreation and open space infrastructure along the Creek, which stimulate community interest, interaction and exploration.
- Introduce recreation infrastructure which connects and compliments existing community and open space infrastructure.

2.2. DEVELOP A CONTINUOUS EDGARS CREEK TRAIL THAT IS WELL CONNECTED TO ADJACENT NEIGHBOURHOODS.

- Construct missing sections of shared user path along the Edgars Creek Trail.
- Introduce pedestrian and cyclist priority crossings where the Edgars Creek Trail intersects with roads, where possible.
- Enhance path legibility along the Edgars Creek Trail by introducing consistent line markings and directional signage.
- Improve surrounding active transport connections into the Edgars Creek Trail.

2.3. ESTABLISH AN IDENTIFIABLE, NAVIGABLE, AND INVITING EDGARS CREEK CORRIDOR.

- Implement a clear and consistent wayfinding and interpretive signage strategy along the length of the Edgars Creek corridor, to improve navigation and acknowledge the cultural, historical and ecological significance of the Creek.
- Improve pedestrian access to the Creek through the introduction of new paths, lighting, and creek crossings.
- Establish inviting entry points and arrival experiences that contribute to the Corridor's identity.
- Consider views to the Creek when undertaking new development to improve visual access to the Creek corridor.
- Implement inclusive, safe and interconnected infrastructure, which is thoughtfully designed to accommodate people of all abilities and genders, ensuring equitable access and usability for everyone.


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24

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

This chapter outlines the strategies identified throughout the corridor to achieve the actions and opportunities developed in the Landscape Improvement Plan. These strategies are designed to directly address and ensure the fulfilment of each objective.

3.1 FOSTER A DEEPER COMMUNITY CONNECTION TO THE EDGARS CREEK CORRIDOR.

- Establish community gardens along the creek to promote activity within the corridor, fostering interaction and custodianship.
- Develop and promote water and nature-based activities that educate the community about the creek's ecology and heritage.
- Educate the surrounding residents and businesses about the ecological significance of the Edgars Creek Corridor.
- Cultivate a sense of community stewardship of the creek through targeted events, programs, and ongoing engagement.

3.2. SUPPORT AND EMPOWER EXISTING COMMUNITY GROUPS THROUGH EDUCATION, VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS, AND COMMUNITY EVENTS.

- Continue to support existing hands-on environmental education programs (e.g. Bush School).
- Consider community activities and events (e.g. markets and fun runs) when planning and introducing new open space infrastructure.
- Empower and support existing Edgars Creek volunteer groups to take active stewardship of the Creek corridor, fostering community engagement and long-term care.
- Collaborate with Traditional Owners, community groups, sports clubs, schools, and environmental organisations to identify shared needs, aspirations, and opportunities along the Creek corridor.

3.3. ADVOCATE FOR ADJACENT LANDHOLDERS AND GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES TO ENHANCE THE EDGARS CREEK CORRIDOR.

- Advocate for improvements to stormwater infrastructure and wetland management to reduce stormwater runoff and improve the ecological function of the Creek corridor.
- Work with Creek-adjacent businesses and landholders to improve interfaces with the Corridor (e.g. improving natural surveillance of the Creek from adjacent buildings).
- Advocate for revised planning controls that improve development outcomes and amenity along the Creek corridor (e.g. through a Design and Development Overlay).
- Establish and strengthen strategic partnerships with other management authorities and councils to support and advocate for the development, restoration, enhancement and activation of the Corridor.
- Where appropriate look for opportunities to purchase land to improve open space outcomes


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ACTIONS FROM *THE ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN, 2024-2029.*

In late 2024, the City of Whittlesea released their Aboriginal Action Plan for 2024-2029. This report includes a number of actions that have been workshopped with the Aboriginal community of Whittlesea and are of relevance to the Edgars Creek Landscape Improvement Plan. These actions should be considered alongside this document, and they should both inform any resulting projects or future works.

As an overarching vision, the Aboriginal Action Plan aims to recognise and enable Aboriginal self-determination by:

- Prioritising culture
- Addressing trauma and supporting healing
- Addressing racism and promoting cultural safety
- Prioritising decision-making power in areas that impact their communities.

Some of the key specific actions from the Aboriginal Action Plan are summarised in the adjacent list.

PLANNING CONTROLS & PROTECTIONS

'Areas of cultural heritage sensitivity' relate to landforms and soil types where Aboriginal places are likely to be present- this includes land within 200 metres of named waterways. These areas are defined in the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018.

The entirety of the Edgar's Creek corridor and the majority of open spaces that interface with the Creek is designated 'areas of cultural heritage sensitivity'. Regulations dictate that if any 'high impact activity' is carried out resulting from the Edgar's Creek Landscape Improvement Plan, a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) must be prepared before any permits are issued or works commenced. These management plans are important for determining the significance of any cultural heritage places within the subject site.

ACTIONS FROM THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S *ABORIGINAL ACTION PLAN, 2024-2029.*

1. Embed traditional owner languages, culture and people in the naming of council places and spaces.
2. Review and update council's signage management plan and relevant signage in consultation with traditional owners.
3. Collaborate with traditional owners and place naming committee to develop place naming protocols for council's assets in accordance with council's naming policy for features.
4. Engage with and support traditional owners (wurundjeri/taungurung) to share climate resilience and care for country practices, as well as provide input on the protection of aboriginal cultural heritage
5. Partnering with traditional owners (wurundjeri/taungurung), to collaborate on the protection of aboriginal cultural heritage, environmental management and the sharing of care of country practice, in alignment with council's sustainable environment action plan 2022-2024 relevant action items and future planning.
6. Integrate knowledge gained from the cultural landscapes approach across council land use policies, plans and operations, including strategic planning, statutory approvals, open space, urban design, assessments, sustainable environment, land use planning and communications.
7. Honour, respect and value aboriginal peoples experience, expertise and knowledge by supporting first nations resourcing and opportunities
8. Support sustainable and effective grant and funding models to assist on-going traditional owners, aboriginal organisations and peoples engagement, activities and initiatives.

FURTHER STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Included in the Aboriginal Action Plan are actions that are taken from other strategic documents from the City of Whittlesea. These are outlined below:

ACTIONS FROM THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S *LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS STRATEGY 2023-2033.*

- Protect and celebrate sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance
- Acknowledge and celebrate the Aboriginal cultural heritage of our municipality

ACTIONS FROM THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S *SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY 2022-2032.*

- Integrate Traditional Owner custodianship into the management of Country through collaboration and partnerships
- Recognise the rights of Traditional Owners and their deep connection and knowledge of Country
- Increase awareness of traditional land custodianship and cultural practice

ACTIONS FROM THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S *HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATION STRATEGY 2023-2028.*

- Collaborate and partner with Traditional Owners to inform Council decisions
- Always consider cultural heritage and raise internal awareness of traditional cultural practice

ACTIONS FROM THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S *CONNECTED COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2023-2033.*

- Enhance cultural safety in built spaces for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

ACTIONS FROM THE CITY OF WHITTLESEA'S *LONG-TERM COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN 2024-2033*

- Enhance cultural safety in built spaces for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities



The City of Whittlesea's *Aboriginal Action Plan, 2024-2029.*

EMBEDDING GENDER SENSITIVE DESIGN IN THE EDGARS CREEK LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

GENDER EQUITY AND GENDER-SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN

The Edgars Creek Landscape Improvement Plan (ECLIP) incorporates the principles of gender-sensitive urban design to ensure public spaces are inclusive, equitable, and welcoming to all. Gender-sensitive urban design acknowledges that public spaces are experienced differently by individuals based on gender and identity and seeks to address inequalities that arise from these gendered social structures.

The integration of gender-sensitive urban design within the ECLIP is crucial for several reasons:

- The ECLIP aims to create public spaces that are safe and accessible to all, particularly for women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals who experience public spaces differently due to safety concerns and social barriers.
- Ensuring that initiatives, such as new shared user paths, are designed with diverse needs in mind encourages greater community engagement and usage.
- By removing physical and social barriers in the built environment, the ECLIP helps create a more inclusive space where people of all genders and backgrounds can equally enjoy and benefit from the landscape improvements.
- The ECLIP aligns with broader legislative including the Gender Equality Act (2020) ensuring the project contributes to broader gender equity goals.

Several key documents have informed the development of the ECLIP, including:

- ***Gender Sensitive Urban Design (GSUD) Implementation Toolkit (2023)*** – Provides a structured approach to integrating gender considerations into urban design, ensuring that spaces are accessible and inclusive for all.
- ***City of Whittlesea Gender Equity in Design Guidelines (2017)*** – Establishes a framework for removing design barriers that limit participation in community facilities.
- ***City of Whittlesea Gender Impact Assessment*** – Offers insights into how gender influences experiences in context specific spaces and helps shape design strategies that promote inclusivity.

DESIGN STRATEGIES AND ELEMENTS

The ECLIP embeds several key strategies from the GSUD Toolkit:

- Safety and Visibility: Clear sightlines, consistent lighting, and passive surveillance ensure that users feel safe. For instance, pathways are designed to avoid blind spots, with lighting installed along main routes to improve visibility after dark.
- Accessibility: Continuous, barrier-free paths to accommodate prams, wheelchairs, and bicycles, as well as wayfinding measures make navigation intuitive and inclusive.
- Sociability and Inclusiveness: The ECLIP emphasises flexible, welcoming spaces that encourage social interaction. Urban furniture, shaded seating areas, and recreational zones cater to diverse age groups and activities, promoting community connections.
- Cultural Identity: Collaboration with the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung community ensures that spaces reflect and celebrate First Nations culture.
- Comfort and Image: Sensory qualities, such as shade, shelter, and natural elements like trees and greenery, are prioritised to enhance the overall experience of spaces and make them vibrant and inviting.
- Co-Design: Engaging directly with diverse community groups, including women, youth, and those with disabilities, ensures that the design process reflects lived experiences, identifies barriers and highlights opportunities.

THE ROLE OF THE GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

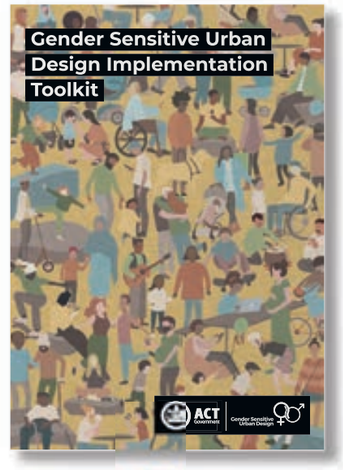
As part of the ECLIP, a Gender Impact Assessment was undertaken. This assessment informed both the community consultation process and the actions and initiatives that have been identified within ECLIP.

The GIA evaluated the gendered impacts of proposed actions, such as constructing shared user paths, implementing lighting and wayfinding and improving accessibility.

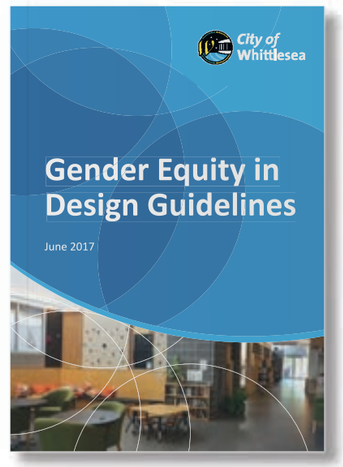
The GIA follows four stages:

- ***Define the Issue:*** Identified the specific challenges the ECLIP sought to address and considered how gender shaped these issues (e.g., safety, accessibility, equitable resource allocation). This stage informed community consultation by highlighting key concerns that needed validation and further input from affected groups
- ***Understand the Context:*** Analysed who was impacted by the project, their lived experiences, and how different groups may experience public spaces. Community consultation at this stage helped to capture diverse perspectives and ensure the assessment reflected real-world experiences.
- ***Evaluate Options:*** Assessed proposed actions, weighing gendered benefits, costs, and the overall impact of each design option. Community feedback was incorporated to test assumptions, refine solutions, and ensure interventions aligned with local needs.
- ***Recommend Changes:*** Identified adjustments to ensure the ECLIP promoted gender equity and mitigated potentially negative impacts. Consultation findings helped shape these recommendations by validating concerns and ensuring solutions were responsive to community priorities.

By embedding gender-sensitive design and adopting a collaborative approach, the Edgars Creek Landscape Improvement Plan will create a safer, more inclusive public environment that benefits all community members, regardless of their gender or identity.



ACT Government's *Gender Sensitive Urban Design Implementation Toolkit 2023*



The City of Whittlesea's *Gender Equity in Design Guidelines 2017*



28 AURORA DEVELOPMENT TREATMENT POND, PRECINCT 2.

10
PRECINCT CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Background Photo: Image by Victoria Native Seed of a recently rehabilitated Seed Production Area in Daylesford Victoria.

PRECINCT BREAKDOWN

The Edgars Creek Corridor is comprised of six distinct precincts. Understanding the differences between these precincts and appreciating their unique characteristics is essential for identifying site-specific opportunities and actions along the creek corridor.

The precinct boundaries were determined through on-site inspections, reviews of existing documents, analysis of neighbouring development plans, and research into land use and other relevant elements.

The following section provides an overview of the six precincts, framing the opportunities and actions that have been mapped as the core component of this landscape improvement plan.



Figure 07: Precinct Breakdown

PRECINCT 1 - WOLLERT

Precinct 1 stretches between Boundary Road and Craigieburn Road East. This precinct includes new and in-progress residential development, WSUD assets and a stormwater catchment south of the Arramont Development.

PRECINCT 2 - AURORA DEVELOPMENT

Precinct 2 is characterised mostly by the new and in-progress residential and commercial development of the Aurora housing estate. This precinct stretches between Craigieburn Road East and O'Herns Road and includes several open spaces and integrated wetland systems.

PRECINCT 3 - COOPER STREET EMPLOYMENT AREA

Precinct 3 continues on from O'Herns Road in the north to Cooper Street in the south. This precinct is characterised by the recently developed Cooper Street Employment Area and includes grassland conservation areas, large-scale Integrated Water Management (IWM) infrastructure and extensive, maintained lawn areas.

PRECN CT 4 - NEW EPPING

Precinct 4 is currently characterised by wetland infrastructure, a large quarry lake and large areas of fenced landscape. This precinct sits between Cooper Street to the north and Deveny Road to the South.

PRECINCT 5 - LALOR & THOMASTOWN

Precinct 5 consists of established low density residential areas of Thomastown and Lalor. Within the northern part of Precinct 5, stretches of the creek are channelised with steep embankments. This Precinct is bound by Deveny Road in the north and the M80 motorway to the south.

PRECN CT 6 - THOMSATOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA

Precinct 6 primarily abuts industrial sites and a power line easement. The M80 motorway to the north and Mahoneys Road to the south frame this precinct which is mostly dominated by exotic grasses and weeds.







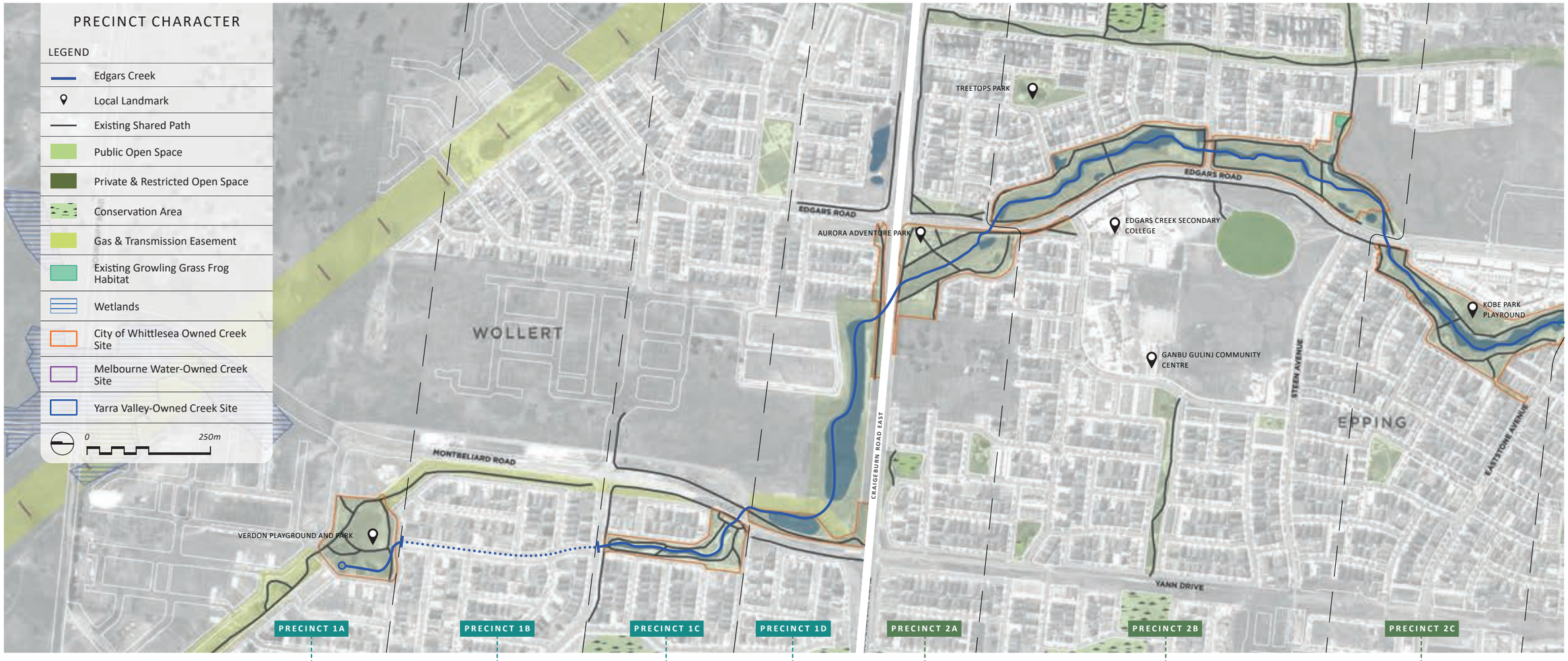






PRECINCT 1, WOLLERT

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT



Precinct 1A - Verdon Playground and Park

Precinct 1A centres around Verdon Street Park and Playground, where Edgars Creek first begins to take a visible form in Wollert. This park is defined by remnant river red gums in good condition and native plantings along its western edge, visually marking the commencement of the Edgars Creek corridor. Generous areas of mulch and native plantings are located along the former creek alignment, enhancing the natural character of the park. Additionally, the park features a playground and a large central green space.



Precinct 1B - Verdon Drive to Jardin Road

The creek is culverted underneath La Tour Boulevard, which is characterised by a central median strip comprised of a bio-retention swale, featuring predominantly native planting and a double row of eucalyptus trees. The central median is flanked on either side by a road, nature strip, footpath, and one- and two-storey suburban homes, which face the road and are set back by approximately 3 meters within the property.



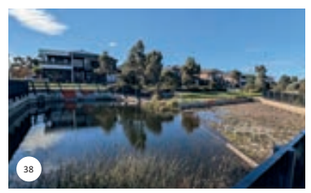
Precinct 1C - Jardin Road to Montbeliard Road - Arramont Waterway

The creek forms a linear open space typically 35 meters wide, widening to 75 meters in the south. This part of Precinct 1 is significant as it marks the first point where any water flow is visible, it also includes the first section of shared path along the creek corridor. The landscape is characterised by a wide, flat creek banks with established, healthy riparian plant communities and native plgrasses along the water line. At the edge of the corridor is a green space/grassed area that includes rest stops, footpaths, and a shared path.



Precinct 1D - Southern Wollert Stormwater Treatment Wetland

The creek moves through a large, fenced-off and poorly-maintained wetland just north of Craigieburn Road East. The creek appears weedy, full of rubbish and lacks mature tree canopy. There is a lack of dedicated pedestrian access along the western and southern sides. This part of the creek interfaces with the busy Craigiburn Road East to the south which creates a barrier for access from the rest of the creek further south. The western edge borders local roads and residential homes, while the northern interface is earmarked for a future Council recreation reserve.



Precinct 2A - Aurora Adventure Park (Craigieburn Road East to Timbarra Parkway)

The creek passes underneath Craigieburn Road East and enters into Precinct 2, which is within the the Aurora Development. The creek has a naturalistic appearance with established native plantings and trees. It appears well-maintained and free of significant llitter. The eastern side of the creek interaces the Aurora Adventure Park, which features play equipment, a shelter, and a medium-sized kick-about space. To the west is a shelter and grassed area.



Precinct 2B - Timbarra Parkway to Edgars Road

The creek is flanked by the Edgars Creek Secondary School on the western side and the residential homes of the Aurora development on the eastern side. Both the school and the residential homes are separated from the creek by local roads. The southern portion of this stretch of the creek features small stormwater treatment ponds and intersects with a grassland conservation area, including a long boardwalk that overlooks the grassland. The creek appreas well-maintained, and retains a naturalistic appearance with gentle banks, established native plants, and mature trees



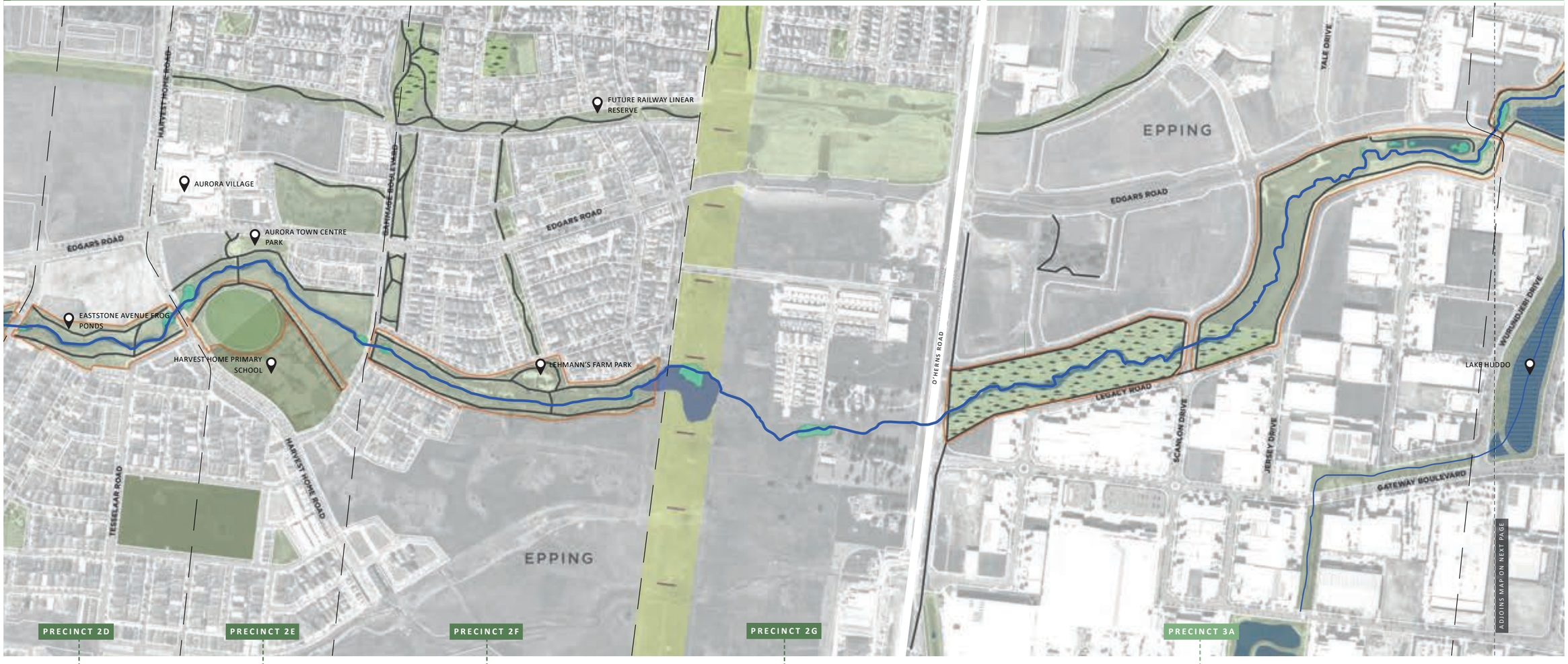
Precinct 2C - Kobe Park Playground

Through northern Epping, the eastern bank of the creek interfaces with Kobe Park Playground. This playground is defined by its close proximity to the creek, surrounded by trees and native plantings, as well as a diverse range of play equipment, including climbing structures, trampolines, nature play areas, and a play tower. This stretch of the creek also directly interfaces with the neighbouring Aurora development townhouses without a road separating the houses. Minimal weeds are present and vegetation appears healthy.



PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT

PRECINCT 3, COOPER ST EMPLOYMENT AREA



Precinct 2D - Edgars & Harvest Home Rds

The eastern side of this section interfaces with a large, open plot of land not yet developed as part of the Aurora project. The western side features a mix of new houses and townhouses. A unique feature of this section is the way that some townhouses directly front onto the corridor without being separated by a road. In this area the creek corridor is very flat and open. It has a cared-for, yet naturalistic appearance, with established native plantings and trees. Some riparian weeds are present.



The creek passes another school with a sports oval; Harvest Home Primary School. To the east, the creek borders Aurora Town Park Playground. This playground and park features a blend of formal exotic tree plantings, a large open grassed area, generous picnic facilities, and distinctive art sculptures. Its play area includes a small combination unit and some other play elements. Vegetation in this stretch of the creek becomes more weedy, particularly with invasive riparian grasses and reeds.



Precinct 2F - Lehmann's Farm Park

South of Gammage Boulevard, the creek passes Lehmann's Farm Park. This local landmark stands out along the Edgars Creek Corridor due to its historic bluestone farm buildings. The park features interpretive play, signage, and furniture, a mix of native and exotic trees, and small to medium open grassed areas. Whilst the trees here appear healthy, the creek is choked with invasive reeds and grasses that inhibit water flow and trap rubbish.



Precinct 2G - Rockfield Street to O'Herns Road

South of Rockfield Street, the corridor is bordered on both sides by undeveloped land of the Aurora development, with some newly constructed townhouses to the east. Just north of O'Herns Road, the creek flows between two established farmhouse dwellings. The creek has a flat, naturalistic meandering form. It has been filled with bluestone masonry blocks, presumably sourced from the removal of surrounding farming drystone walls. Trees are well-established, however the aquatic vegetation is mostly invasive, exotic species.



Precinct 3A - O'Herns Rd to Edgars Road

Precinct 3A, redeveloped under the Cooper Street Employment Area Development Plan, features wide footpaths along the eastern interface and Edgars Road, a large constructed wetland to the south, and a well-maintained native landscape with trees and mown grass. The Legacy Conservation Reserve here contains remnant grassland, though it lacks signage and proper edge conditions. This precinct features healthy looking grassland areas to the north, including Growling Grass Frog habitat around waterbodies and wetlands near Edgars Road. The grassland appears weedy and lacks proper edge conditions or maintenance.



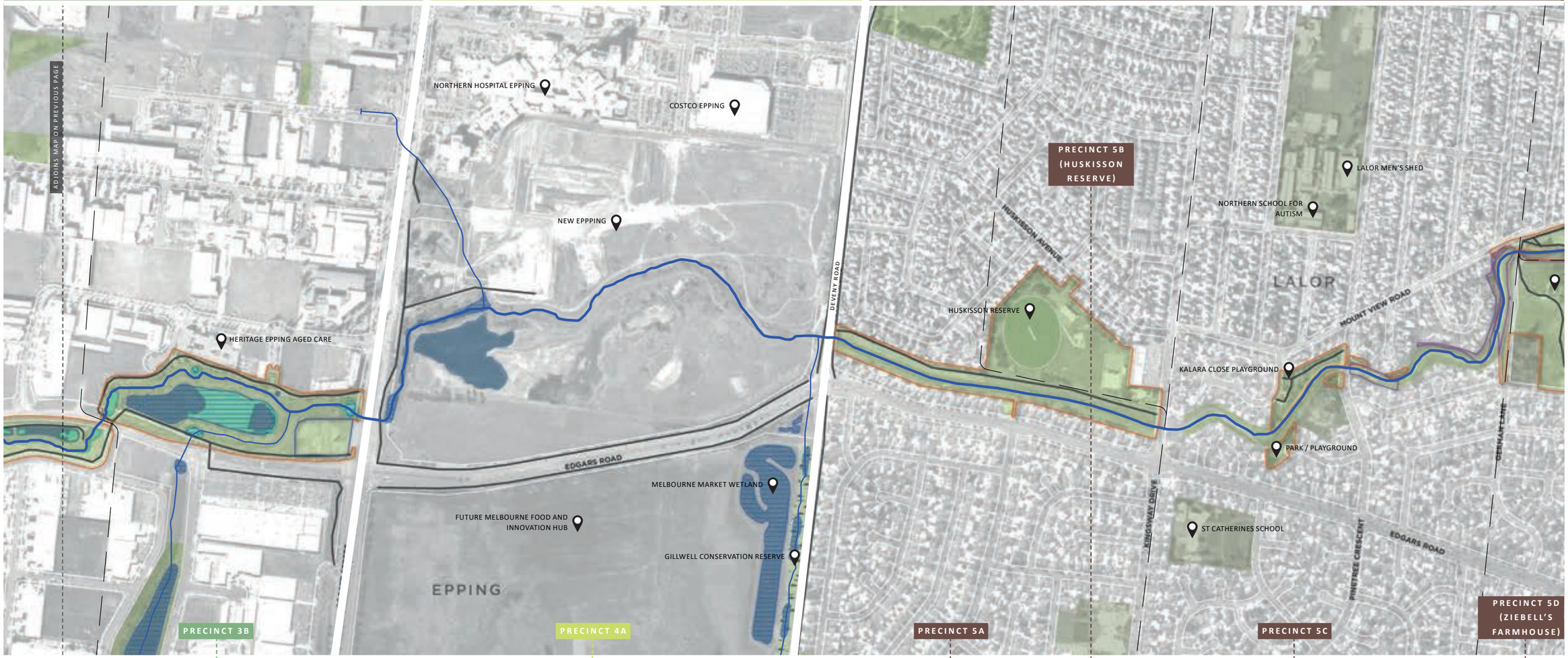


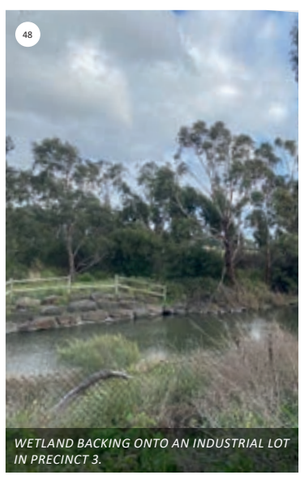
IMAGE LOOKING SOUTH ALONG LEGACY ROAD ADJACENT AN EXISTING CONSERVATION AREA.

PRECINCT 3, COOPER ST EMPLOYMENT AREA

PRECINCT 4, NEW EPPING

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN





WETLAND BACKING ONTO AN INDUSTRIAL LOT IN PRECINCT 3.

Precinct 3B - Edgars Road to Cooper Street

This stretch of Edgars Creek is currently being redeveloped based on the Cooper Street Employment Area Development Plan. The Edgars Creek shared path wraps around the eastern flank of the creek with another wide footpath following Edgars Road to the west. There is a large, relatively new wetland in this location - which includes Growling Grass Frog habitat - as well as high quality native landscaping with canopy trees, there are also large areas of mown grass. There are water weed species present, particualrly at the water's edge. There is a significant amount of rubbish visible.



Precinct 4A - Coopers Street - Deveny Road

Edgars Creek passes through the New Epping Renewal Site, a location that is currently being redeveloped based on the Epping Central Precinct Structure Plan. The shared path will continue along the eastern flank of the creek with a connection to the south on Deveny Road. There is a large quarry lake abutting Cooper Street, which is the biggest body of water in the creek corridor with an existing area of native revegetation. Growling Grass Frog habitat will be improved as part of the development.



Precinct 5A - Deveny Road to Kingsway Drive

The creek interfaces with residential back fences to the north towards Deveny Road before it opens up to Huskisson Reserve to the east and Edgars Road Neighbourhood Park to the west, where there is a bridge connection across the creek. To the south, the creek interfaces with residential back fences to the west and a Tennis Club to the east. The creek corridor is dominated by exotic grasses, severely lacking in diverse, native understorey planting. The waterway itself is also full of weed species.



Section 5B - Huskisson Recreation Reserve

Huskisson Reserve is an important open space that abuts the creek in Lalor, featuring clusters of mature native trees, large open grassed areas, a senior AFL oval with a cricket pitch, cricket nets, and a playground. A new shared path with lights and seating nodes lines the eastern edge of the creek. There is an opportunity to better connect the creek and its amenities with Huskisson Reserve. There are may healthy, mature native trees - including river red gums - however there is a distinct lack of diverse mid and unerstorey planting.



Precinct 5C - Kingsway Drive to German Lane

The creek mostly interfaces with residential back fences apart from a large central interface with Kalara Close on the eastern bank. The creek corridor varies in width becoming very narrow in places. The edge condition is also very steep in some areas particularly towards Kingsway Drive and on the northern bank near German Lane. This portion of the creek is characterised by a fully channelised waterway - some portions within a concrete channel and some within a sloped turf channel - with few trees.

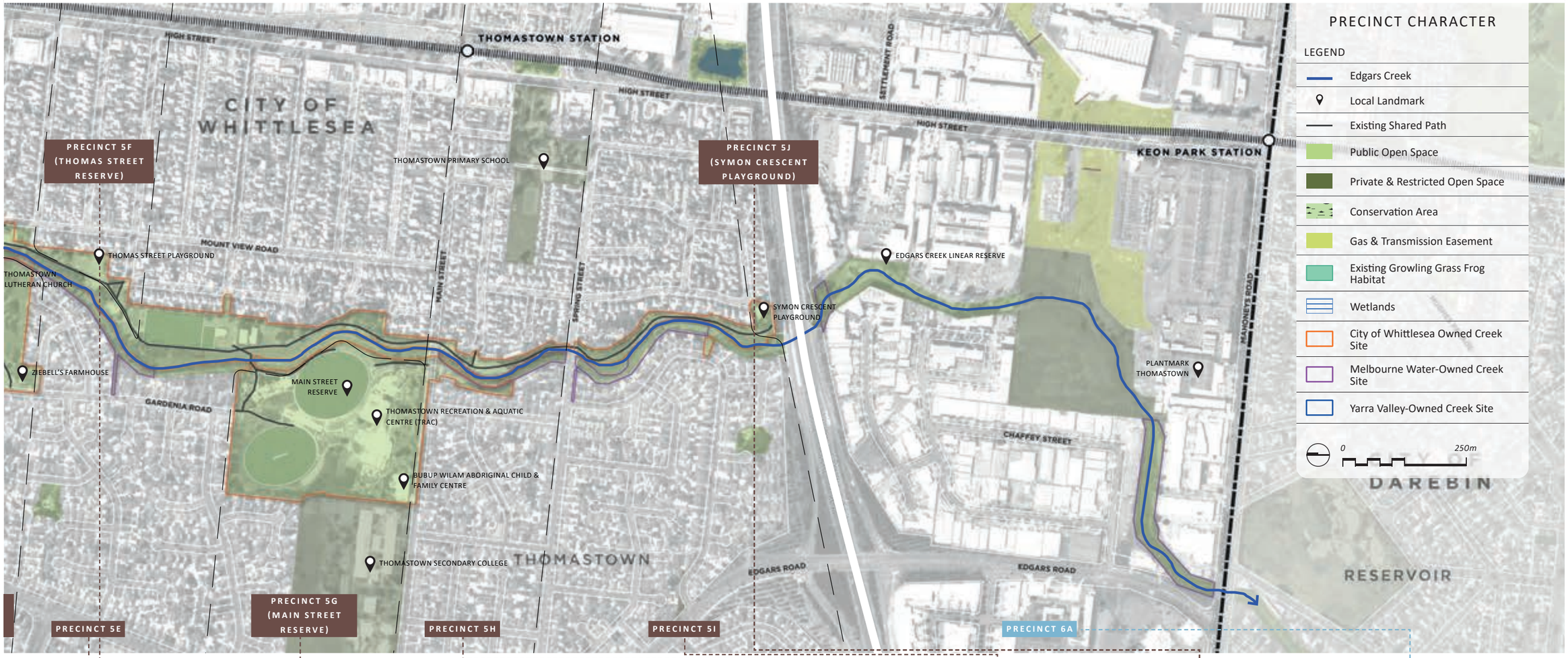


The creek passes nearby significant local heritage landmarks; Ziebell's Farmhouse and the Thomastown Lutheran Church. These two icons of Thomastown history feature a heritage bluestone church, clusters of mature native and exotic trees extending into the creek corridor, and a drystone wall alongside the creek with a steep grassed embankment. This location is dominated by mown grass, lacking diverse mid and understorey planting.



PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN

PRECINCT 6, THOMASTOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA



The creek primarily interfaces with residential back fences to the west before it opens to Main Street Recreation Reserve. The creek is not celebrated and appears more as a drainage channel than a significant waterway. It has a riparian zone of mown grass as well as areas of weedy exotic vegetation and trees. The creek is channelised from Main Street Reserve. There is a shared user path running along the eastern side of the creek corridor.

Precinct 5F - Thomas Street Recreation Reserve Playground

Thomas Street Recreation Reserve Playground features a playground, high-quality landscaping, an interface with the Edgars Creek shared path and Thomas Street, and a natural, unchannelised section of Edgars Creek. This stretch of the creek has less steep, channelised banks, but they are still dominated by invasive grass, lacking a native understorey. Weeds line the water's edge.

Precinct 5G - Main Street Recreation Reserve

The creek flows east of Main Street Reserve and the Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Centre, forming part of a major community hub alongside the Bubup Wilam Aboriginal Child and Family Centre and Thomastown Secondary College. Main Street Recreation Reserve features clusters of mature native trees, large open grassed areas, a playground, and sports facilities. There is a bridge crossing and path connections to Gardenia Road and nearby sports facilities. The creek runs predominantly through a concrete channel in this stretch.

Precinct 5H - Main Street to Spring Street

The creek interfaces with residential back fences apart from its eastern interface with Caroline Street. It feels forgotten and unloved. This portion of the creek has less steep embankments, but is characterised by a riparian zone of mown grass and weedy exotic vegetation and some landscaped areas with native grasses. There is a wide path running along the eastern side of the creek corridor. There are few trees and some invasive Willow species.

Precinct 5I - Spring Street to M80

The creek interfaces with residential back fences on both sides before it opens up to Symon Crescent Playground to the south-east. This portion of the creek is channelised with a riparian zone of mown grass, rocks and rubble banks, and weedy shrubs. There are rows of mature eucalyptus trees. There is a wide footpath on the eastern side which connects to Symon Crescent and the M80 Trail. The footpath underneath the M80 feels unsafe.

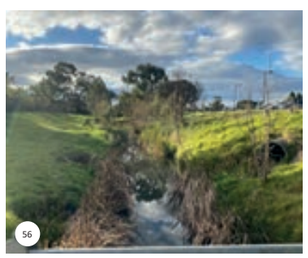
Precinct 5J - Symon Crescent Playground

The southernmost playground that abuts the creek before it passes underneath the M80 motorway is Symon Crescent Playground, on the eastern bank. Symon Crescent Playground features clusters of native plantings with canopy trees, complemented by high-quality native landscaping and a playground. Edgars Creek is not channelised in this area with a riparian area of mown grass and low quality aquatic vegetation.

Precinct 6A - M80 to Mahoneys Road

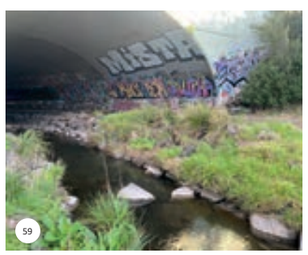
In Precinct 6, the creek flows through the Thomastown Industrial Area, characterised by industrial buildings, open grassy areas, and a large lawn at the centre. These are significant open spaces that could house a diversity of flora and fauna. The creek is lined with intermittent plantings of medium to large trees and marks the termination point of the creek corridor within the City of Whittlesea, passing under Mahoneys Road into the City of Darebin.


55

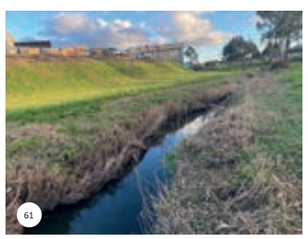

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11
PRECINCT OPPORTUNITIES & ACTIONS

Background Photo: Image taken of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) Conservation Area in Wollert with a dense river red gum population.



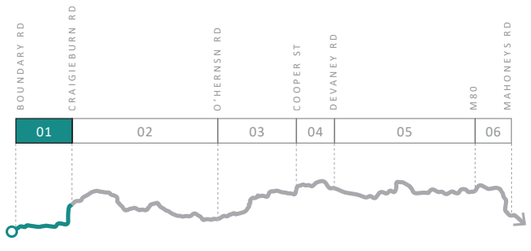
11.1 PRECINCT 1, WOLLERT

ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

Precinct 1 encompasses the northern stretch of Edgars Creek and lies entirely within the Wollert PSP area. It is characterised by recently developed subdivisions, with homes lining La Tour Boulevard and fronting Edgars Creek. The area is enriched by river red gums, extensive native plantings, and open parklands. Edgars Creek connects to important green corridors, including a transmission easement to the east, a conservation area to the west and public open space such as Verdon Street Park.

Significant sections within Precinct 1 include the Southern Wollert Stormwater Treatment Wetland, an expansive but fenced area showing signs of neglect, with limited access and bordered by busy roads. Meanwhile, the linear corridor from Jardin Road to Montbeliard Road forms an open green space, introducing water flow and providing shared paths, rest stops, and creek-adjacent native plantings.

To enhance the Creek's appearance, ecological health and community accessibility, several initiatives are recommended. These include establishing a connected movement network along the length of the Creek, enhancing connections to biodiversity corridors, and promoting community engagement with the Creek through signage and way-finding features.



PRECINCT KEY


62

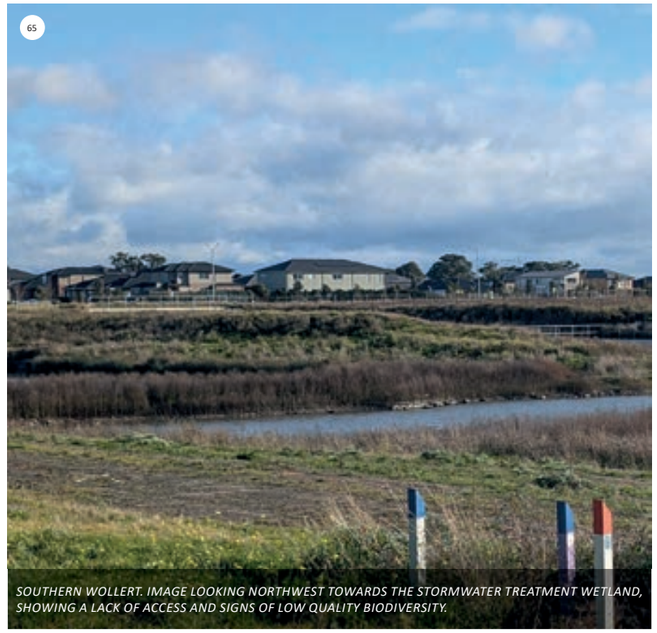
VERDON PARK AND PLAYGROUND - MARKING THE BEGINNING OF THE CREEK CORRIDOR. IMAGE LOOKING WEST TOWARDS THE RECENTLY COMPLETED PLAYGROUND UPGRADES AND REMNANT RIVER RED GUMS IN THE BACKGROUND.


63

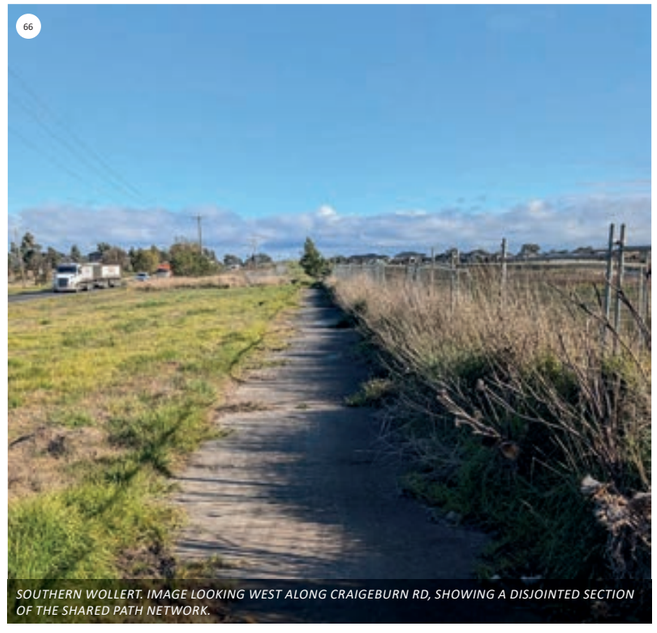
SOUTH OF VERDON DRIVE. IMAGE LOOKING ALONG LA TOUR BLVD SHOWING THE CREEK CULVERTED UNDERNEATH THE CENTRAL MEDIAN STRIP.


64

BCS CONSERVATION AREA. IMAGE LOOKING SOUTH FROM JARDIN RD SHOWING THE CRUCIAL IMPACT THAT THE REMNANT RIVER RED GUMS HAVE ON THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE IDENTITY.


65

SOUTHERN WOLLERT. IMAGE LOOKING NORTHWEST TOWARDS THE STORMWATER TREATMENT WETLAND, SHOWING A LACK OF ACCESS AND SIGNS OF LOW QUALITY BIODIVERSITY.


66

SOUTHERN WOLLERT. IMAGE LOOKING WEST ALONG CRAIGEBURN RD, SHOWING A DISJOINTED SECTION OF THE SHARED PATH NETWORK.

PRECINCT 1, WOLLERT - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
01	Implement interpretive signage to enhance Verdon Playground as a gateway to Edgars Creek and foster community connection and exploration.	1A		A	
02	Engage with surrounding residents to provide a sense of community, build awareness and imbue a sense of pride in the Creek.	1A	O		
03	Explore understorey re-vegetation and restoration opportunities at Verdon Playground where there are remnant River Red Gums.	1A	O		
04	Consider ways of calming traffic and promoting a shared zone along La Tour Boulevard to provide a direct active travel connection from Verdon Playground and Park to the Edgars Creek Trail at Arramont Waterway, south of Jardin Road.	1B		A	
05	Plant diverse understorey planting and native street trees in the verges and median strip of Jardin Road. Further strengthen this route as a biodiversity corridor by engaging with residents to plant native species in their front gardens.	1B		A	
06	Install interpretive signage at the beginning of the shared user path on Jardin Road to celebrate the Creek's cultural and ecological importance, discourage littering and engender a feeling of stewardship over the waterway.	1C	O		
07	Acknowledge the Edgars Creek corridor when developing the future sports field through signage, way-finding and landscape initiatives.	1C	O		
08	Activate the Creek's edge and linear park with picnic shelters and seating nodes to provide opportunities for respite.	1C		A	
09	Introduce a signalised crossing at Montbeliard Road to complete a missing link in the movement network and provide uninterrupted access to the Creek corridor.	1C		A	
10	Extend the existing shared user path from Montbeliard Road to Craigieburn Road, north of the Southern Wollert Stormwater Treatment Wetland, to bridge a critical gap in the shared user path network.	1D		A	
11	Advocate for Melbourne Water to improve the interfaces, community access and ecological function of the Southern Wollert Stormwater Treatment Wetland.	1D	O		
12	Establish a visual link between the Edgars Creek Corridor and either side of Craigieburn Road through tree planting.	1D	O		
13	Develop a biodiverse understorey by creating a native grassland meadow using the seed-sowing method established by Katherine Horsfall's ***Royal Park Direct Seeding Project***.	1A	O		
14	Install signage and consider public artworks to inform people about the significant native grassland reserves in the area, including aiding navigation to the Legacy Conservation Reserve and Aurora Grassland Reserve along Edgars Creek, as well as the nearby Craigieburn Grassland Reserve.	1C		A	

The adjacent table indexes the actions and opportunities that have been identified for Precinct 1. The table includes a description, classification (opportunity, action, or both), and identifies which project objectives have been addressed. A map ID is given for each item which corresponds to the map on the following page.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
- Objective 1.3: Enhance the corridor's overall water quality and hydrological function.
- Objective 2.1: Improve and enhance the recreation infrastructure of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 2.2: Develop a continuous Edgars Creek Trail that is well connected to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PREINCT 1, WOLLERT - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

EXISTING

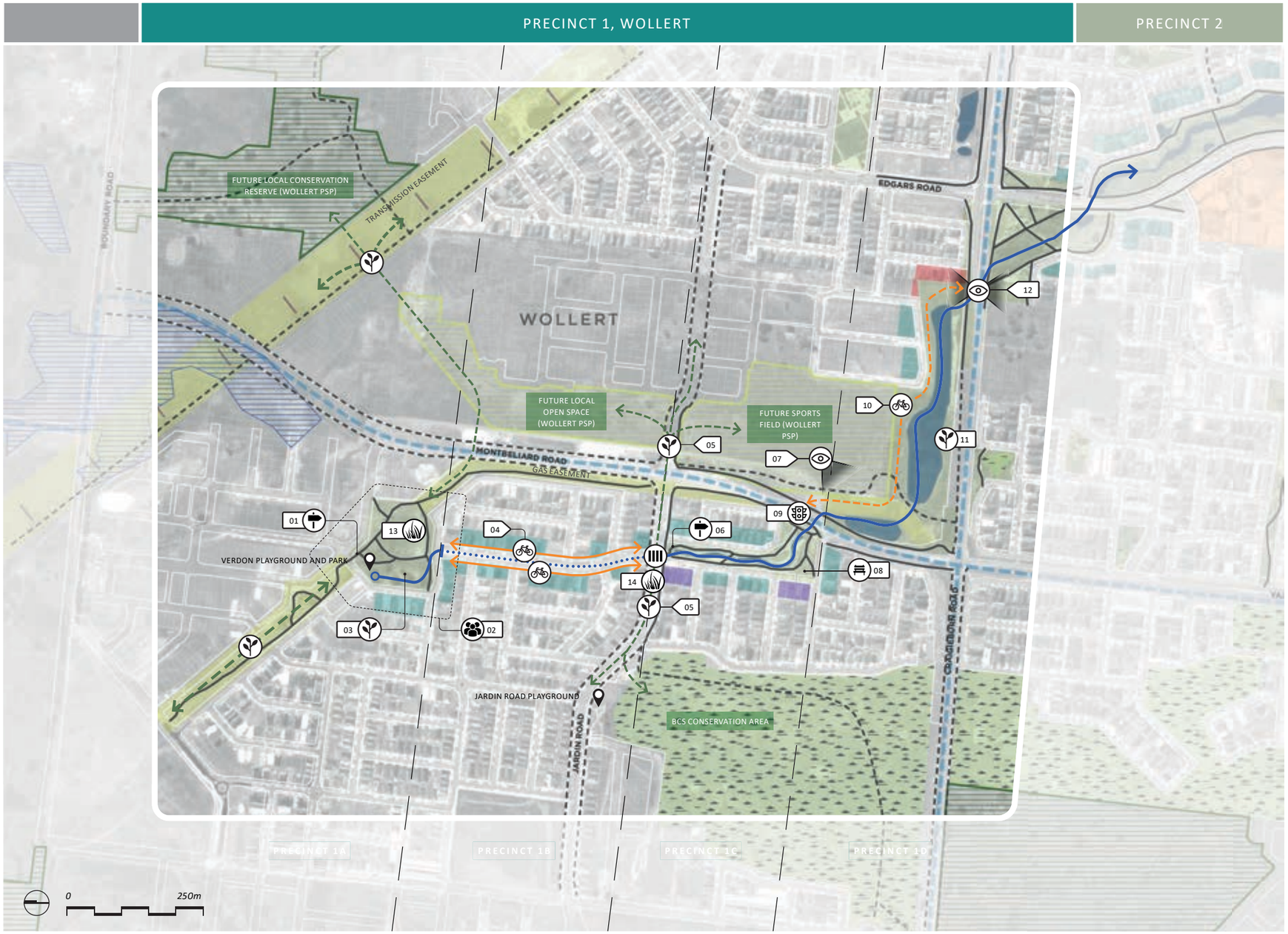
- Edgars Creek
- Local Landmark
- Existing Shared Path
- Strategic Cycling Corridor
- Public Open Space
- Private & Restricted Open Space
- Conservation Area
- Gas & Transmission Easement
- Existing Growling Grass Frog Habitat
- Residential Area Directly Fronting Creek
- Residential Area Fronting Creek, Separated by a Road
- Back Fences Fronting Creek - No Visual or Physical Access

FUTURE PROPOSED WORK BY OTHERS

- Future Open Space
- Future Conservation Area
- Future Shared Path

PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Proposed Major Biodiversity Connection
- New Active Travel Link (Shared User Path)
- New Active Travel Link (Sharrows)
- Planting Initiative
- Signalised Crossing
- Pedestrian Priority Crossing
- Information or Interpretive Signage
- Community Initiative
- Improve Visual Connection to the Creek
- Improve Streetscape & Park Amenity
- Native Grassland Initiative



PRECINCT 1, WOLLERT - OPPORTUNITIES PRECEDENTS

PRECINCT 1, WOLLERT

PRECINCT 1A



INSTALL INTERPRETIVE WAYFINDING SIGNAGE AT THE START OF THE EDGARS CREEK TRAIL. EXAMPLE SHOWN OF SIGNAGE STRATEGY ALONG THE MERRI CREEK TRAIL.



EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH RESIDENTS SURROUNDING THE CREEK TO IMBUE A SENSE OF STEWARDSHIP AND PRIDE. AN EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION GROUPS IS THE FRIENDS OF MERRI CREEK.

PRECINCT 1B



INSTALL SHARROWS ON LA TOUR BOULEVARD TO FILL A GAP IN THE EXISTING CYCLE NETWORK BETWEEN VERDON PLAYGROUND AND CRAIGIEBURN ROAD.



EXAMPLE OF NATIVE STREET TREES & DIVERSE UNDERSTOREY PLANTING CREATING A POTENTIAL BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR OF CONNECTED STREETSCAPE HABITATS. PLANTING BY APACE WA.

PRECINCT 1C



INSTALL INTERPRETIVE WAYFINDING SIGNAGE AT THE START OF THE SHARED PATH ON JARDIN ROAD. EXAMPLE SHOWN OF SIGNAGE STRATEGY ALONG THE MERRI CREEK TRAIL.



CONSIDER THE PLACEMENT OF SHELTERED SEATING AREAS TO PROVIDE PLACES OF RESPITE ALONG THE CREEK CORRIDOR. AN EXAMPLE SHOWN ABOVE FROM CURTAIN UNIVERSITY, WA.

PRECINCT 1D



EXTEND THE SHARED PATH FROM MONTBELIARD ROAD TO CRAIGIEBURN ROAD, NORTH OF THE SOUTHERN WOLLERT STORMWATER TREATMENT WETLAND.



ADVOCATE FOR MELBOURNE WATER TO IMPROVE THE ECOLOGICAL AND HYDROLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE SOUTHERN WOLLERT STORMWATER TREATMENT WETLAND IN A SIMILAR MANNER TO THE NATURALISATION PROJECT IN IPSWICH, QLD SHOWN ABOVE.



ESTABLISH A STRONGER VISUAL CONNECTION TO THE CREEK FROM CRAIGIEBURN ROAD, LOOKING BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH.



76 SOUTHERN WOLLERT: IMAGE LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS CRAIGIEBURN ROAD SHOWING RIPARIAN PLANTING NEAR THE AURORA ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND IN THE NORTHERN SECTION OF PRECINCT 2.

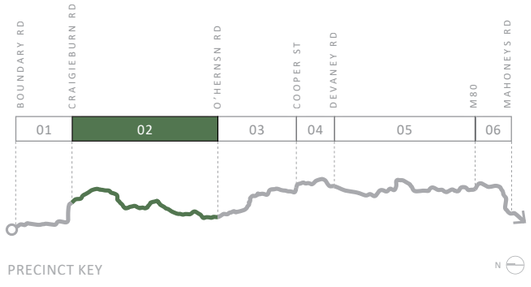
11.2 PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT

ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

Precinct 2 is entirely within the Aurora PSP area, encompassing Wollert to the north and Epping to the south. This precinct is defined by its ongoing residential and commercial developments within the Aurora housing estate. The creek corridor features relatively new, high-quality native landscaping, shared pathways, and pockets of protected remnant vegetation. The area includes a blend of industrial and residential properties along the creek frontage.

Edgars Creek serves as a vital connection to key green corridors, including a transmission easement to the south near Rockfield Street. Significant sites within Precinct 2 include the Aurora Adventure Playground, federally protected grasslands south of Edgars Creek Oval, Kobe Park Playground, Aurora Town Park Playground, and Lehmann's Farm Park. The linear creek corridor along Timbarra Parkway and Edgars Road offer shared pathways, rest areas, exercise stations, and native plantings.

There are opportunities to enhance the creek's role as a wildlife movement corridor while fostering community engagement. Initiatives such as 'Bush Schools' at parks and reserves adjacent to the creek could strengthen these connections and encourage stewardship of the local environment.



PRECINCT KEY



77 KOBE PARK PLAYGROUND - AN IMPORTANT LOCAL PLAYSPACE WITH RECENT UPGRADES LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE CREEK BETWEEN HARVEST HOME PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EDGARS CREEK SECONDARY COLLLEGE.



78 SOUTHERN WOLLERT. IMAGE TAKEN LOOKING NORTH FROM CONTEMPO BOULEVARD ONTO A WATER TREATMENT POND. A NUMBER OF SIMILAR WATER TREATMENT PONDS ARE IN THIS SECTION OF THE CREEK.



79 LEHMANN'S FARM PARK IS A UNIQUE OPEN SPACE ON THE SITE OF A FORMER DAIRY FARM. THIS LOCAL LANDMARK PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A FOCUS FOR LOCAL ACTIVITY AND IDENTITY WITHIN THE CREEK CORRIDOR.



80 NORTHERN EPPING. IMAGE TAKEN EAST OF THE CREEK CORRIDOR LOOKING NORTH-EAST FROM EDGARS ROAD ONTO RECENT RIPARIAN PLANTING IN A NEWLY CREATED RETARDING BASIN, WITH THE TRANSMISSION EASEMENT BEHIND.



81 AURORA ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND MARKS THE NORTHERN ENTRY POINT INTO THE AURORA DEVELOPMENT. COMPLETED IN 2018, THE PLAYGROUND FEATURES STATE-OF-THE-ART PLAY EQUIPMENT, FREE WIFI AND BBQ FACILITIES. ITS HIGH AMENITY MAKES IT A KEY DESTINATION WITHIN PRECINCT 2.

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
01	Plant supplementary planting and revegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek.	2A		A	
02	Complete the missing links in the existing shared user path along Craigeburn East Road to provide uninterrupted access along the Creek corridor.	2A		A	
03	Implement wayfinding measures and interpretive signage at Aurora Adventure Park that aids navigation, fosters community connection and exploration of the Creek corridor.	2A		A	
04	Launch engagement initiatives at Aurora Adventure Park such as 'Bush School', creation of a community garden and the establishment of a community events space to strengthen Council's connection to the community, and foster interaction and 'knowledgeable custodianship' of the Creek.	2A	O		
05	Advocate for Melbourne Water to improve the ecological function of the treatment pond at Timbarra Parkway.	2B	O		
06	Plant street trees and diverse understorey planting - as well as engaging with residents to plant natives on private properties - along Macedon Parade and Bendoc Street to develop a biodiversity corridor from the Creek to Treetops Park, the Future Wollert Railway Reserve and to Edgars Creek Primary School.	2B		A	
07	Manage the dense stand of Tall Marsh, north of Contempo Boulevard, where Common Reed dominates, to increase the habitat value for Growling Grass Frog.	2B		A	
08	Plant supplementary planting and revegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek.	2B	O		
09	Activate the shared user path with picnic shelters and seating nodes to provide opportunities for respite and quiet enjoyment of the natural surrounds.	2B	O		
10	Install a pedestrian priority crossing - consider a raised wombat crossing, zebra crossing or similar - and implement wayfinding measures at Contempo Boulevard to complete a missing link in the shared user path network along the Creek corridor.	2B		A	
11	Install a signalised crossing at Edgars Road/Contempo Boulevard intersection to support connections across the Creek corridor.	2B		A	
12	Install a pedestrian priority crossing - consider a raised wombat crossing, zebra crossing or similar - and implement wayfinding measures at Edgars Road to complete a missing link in the shared user path network along the Creek corridor.	2B		A	
13	Plant street trees and diverse understorey planting - as well as engaging with residents to plant natives on private properties - along Macedon Parade and Steen Avenue to develop a biodiversity corridor from the Creek to Macedon Parade Linear Reserve, through the future Aurora Conservation area and north to Bellavista Park and the transmission easement open space.	2B		A	
14	Engage with Ganbu Gulinj Community Centre and Edgars Creek College students to support environmental education and build ecological awareness and pride in Edgars Creek.	2B	O		
15	Ensure Kobe Park Playground is an accessible and responsive public space and implement interpretive signage and wayfinding measures to celebrate the Creek.	2C		A	
16	Install a pedestrian priority crossing - consider a raised wombat crossing, zebra crossing or similar - at Eaststone Avenue to complete a missing link in the Edgars Creek Trail.	2C		A	
17	Engage with residents living adjacent to Kobe Park Playground to better design the interface of their properties with public spaces to allow for passive surveillance and to create a sense of guardianship over the Creek.	2C	O		
18	Deliver events, festivals and markets at Kobe Park Playground and start a community gardening program to improve activation of open space along the Creek corridor and encourage engagement and custodianship of the area.	2C	O		

The adjacent table indexes the actions and opportunities that have been identified for Precinct 2. The table includes a description, classification (opportunity, action, or both), and identifies which project objectives have been addressed. A map ID is given for each item which corresponds to the map on the following page.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
- Objective 1.3: Enhance the corridor's overall water quality and hydrological function.
- Objective 2.1: Improve and enhance the recreation infrastructure of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 2.2: Develop a continuous Edgars Creek Trail that is well connected to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX (CONTINUED)

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
19	Advocate for Melbourne Water to upgrade the Eaststone Avenue Frog Ponds to improve their ecological function and provide areas of habitat connecting the existing Growling Grass Frog habitats.	2D		A	
20	Increase vegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek and improve the waterway health, including improved habitat for Growling Grass Frogs in the Eaststone Avenue Frog Ponds.	2D		A	
21	Increase vegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek and improve the waterway health, including improved habitat for Growling Grass Frogs in the Eaststone Avenue Frog Ponds.	2E		A	
22	Deliver events, festivals and markets at Aurora Town Centre Park and start a community gardening program to improve activation of open space along the Creek corridor and encourage engagement and custodianship of the area. Explore ways to leverage the 'Park Run' community.	2E	O		
23	Engage with Harvest Home Primary School students to support environmental education and build awareness and pride.	2E	O		
24	Explore opportunities to create a new Growling Grass Frog wetland with buffer planting, adhering to best-practice habitat design guidelines.	2E		A	
25	Improve the legibility of the shared user path (i.e. line markings) to prioritise ease of use for pedestrians and enhance active travel and implement wayfinding elements to ease navigation through the corridor.	2F		A	
26	Launch engagement initiatives at Lehmann's Farm Park such as 'Bush School', creation of a community garden and the establishment of a community events space to strengthen Council's connection to the community, and foster interaction and 'knowledgeable custodianship' of the Creek.	2F	O		
27	Plant street trees and diverse understorey planting - as well as engaging with residents to plant natives on private properties - along Gammage Boulevard to develop a biodiversity corridor from the Creek to Harvest Home Primary School, Gammage park and the Future Railway Reserve Linear Park.	2F		A	
28	Establish a biodiversity corridor along Edgars Road through native street tree planting and diverse understorey vegetation.	2F		A	
29	Plant street trees and diverse understorey planting - as well as engaging with residents to plant natives on private properties - to connect open spaces as a biodiversity corridor from the Creek to the future conservation area, Zinnober Gardens, Legg Adventure Park and into the Future Railway Linear Reserve.	2F		A	
30	Establish a biodiversity corridor through the transmission easement - which is planned to become an open space as part of the Aurora Development - with native tree planting and diverse understorey vegetation as well as landscaping uplift around the future shared path.	2G		A	
31	Increase vegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek and connect to the existing biodiversity corridor along the transmission easement adjacent to Rockfield Street.	2G		A	
32	Enhance and protect existing Growling Grass Frog habitat through buffer planting, addition of habitat features, or any other improvements necessary.	2G		A	
33	Construct a shared user path from Rockfield Street south to O'Hern's Road to complete major missing link in the movement network.	2G		A	
34	Install a signalised crossing at O'Hern's Road, adjacent to Gateway Boulevard to complete a missing link in the movement network.	2G		A	
35	Install a public toilet at Aurora Adventure Park to increase amenity and use of the area.	2A		A	

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
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- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX (CONTINUED)

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
36	Utilise stormwater harvesting sites to irrigate Edgars Creek Secondary College Sports/Playing Field.	2B	O		
37	Install Gross Pollutant Traps (GPT) to capture coarse sediments and gross pollutants from stormwater run off South of Harvest Home Rd.	2E	O		
38	Utilise stormwater harvesting sites to irrigate Harvest Home Primary Sports/Playing Field.	2E	O		
39	Naturalise sections of the Edgars Creek corridor to improve ecological function through channel and floodplain revegetation.	2E - 2G	O		
40	Introduce a series of Sponge Landscape Rehydration areas to assist in the process of infiltration, evaporation and soil moisture in dehydrated riparian areas north of Gammage Boulevard.	2E	O		
41	Disconnect underground drainage and stormwater pipes north of Gammage Boulevard to allow water to provide natural filtration systems that contribute to the restoration of a more natural water cycle and improve local soil moisture.	2E	O		
42	Provide amenity and shade along the shared user path network through the planting of channel and floodplain revegetation.	2F		A	
43	Introduce a Sponge Landscape Rehydration area to assist in the process of infiltration, evaporation and soil moisture in dehydrated riparian areas South of Rockfield Street.	2G	O		
44	Install signage and consider public artworks to inform people about the significant native grassland reserves in the area, including aiding navigation to the Legacy Conservation Reserve and Aurora Grassland Reserve along Edgars Creek, as well as the nearby Craigieburn Grassland Reserve.	2A		A	
45	Install signage and consider public artworks to inform people about the significant native grassland reserves in the area, including aiding navigation to the Legacy Conservation Reserve and Aurora Grassland Reserve along Edgars Creek, as well as the nearby Craigieburn Grassland Reserve.	2B		A	
46	Apply Adrian Marshall's edge condition design guidelines from ***Start with the Grasslands: Design Guidelines to Support Native Grasslands in Urban Areas*** around the grassland conservation area. Incorporate buffer planting, a mown strip with an attractive fence, and edge planting to promote appreciation of the reserve. Consider adding an open boardwalk through the grassland reserve.	2B - 2C		A	
47	Develop a biodiverse understorey by creating a native grassland meadow using the seed-sowing method established by Katherine Horsfall's ***Royal Park Direct Seeding Project***.	2G		A	

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
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- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.



82 *SOUTHERN WOLLERT. IMAGE LOOKING SOUTH FROM TIMBARRA PARKWAY ONTO A A NEW PIECE OF HYDROLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE THAT LINES EDGARS CREEK.*

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

EXISTING

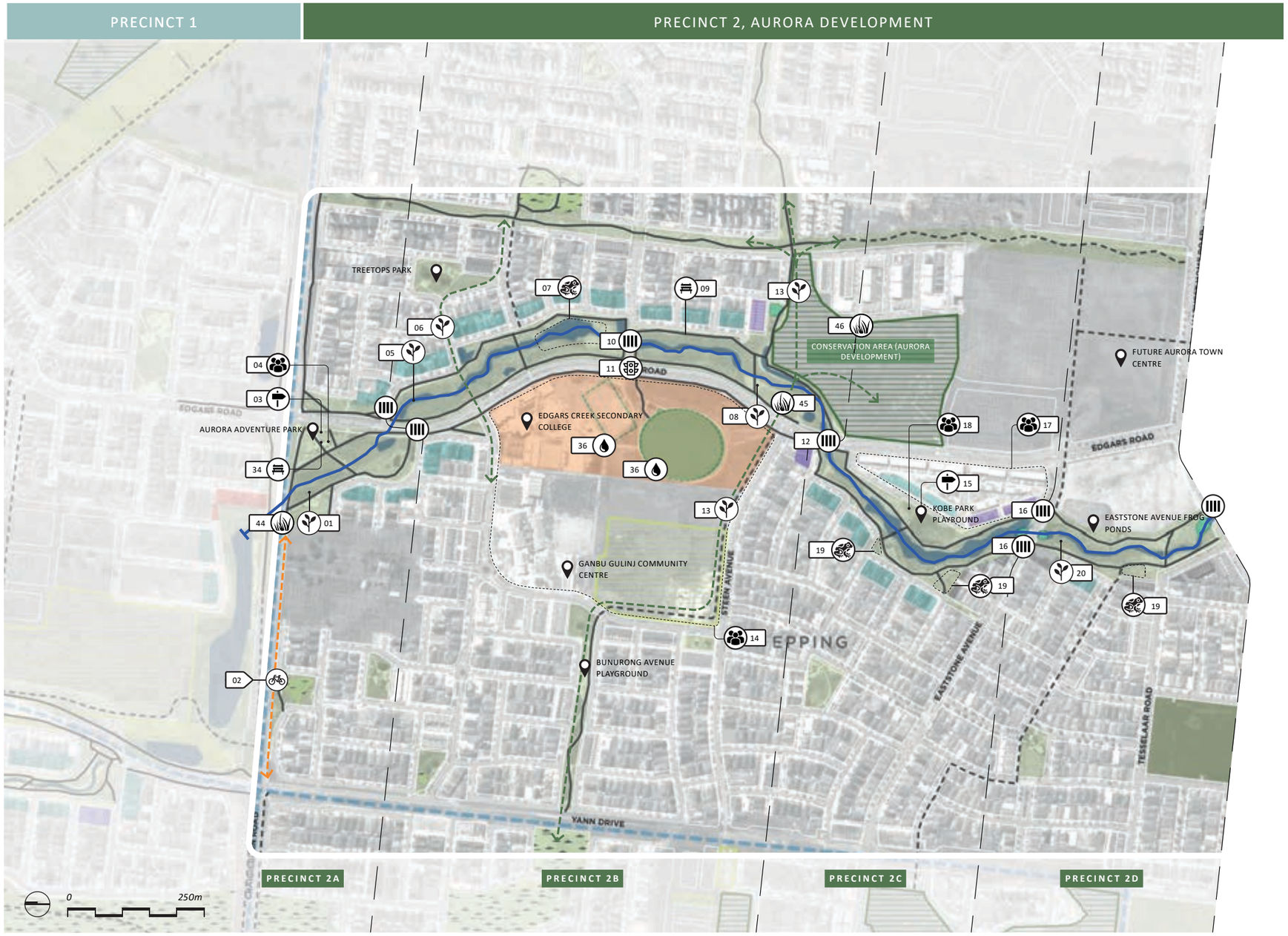
- Edgars Creek
- Local Landmark
- Existing Shared Path
- Strategic Cycling Corridor
- Public Open Space
- Private & Restricted Open Space
- Gas & Transmission Easement
- Existing Growling Grass Frog Habitat
- Residential Area Directly Fronting Creek
- Residential Area Fronting Creek, Separated by a Road
- Community Facility Fronting Creek

FUTURE PROPOSED WORK BY OTHERS

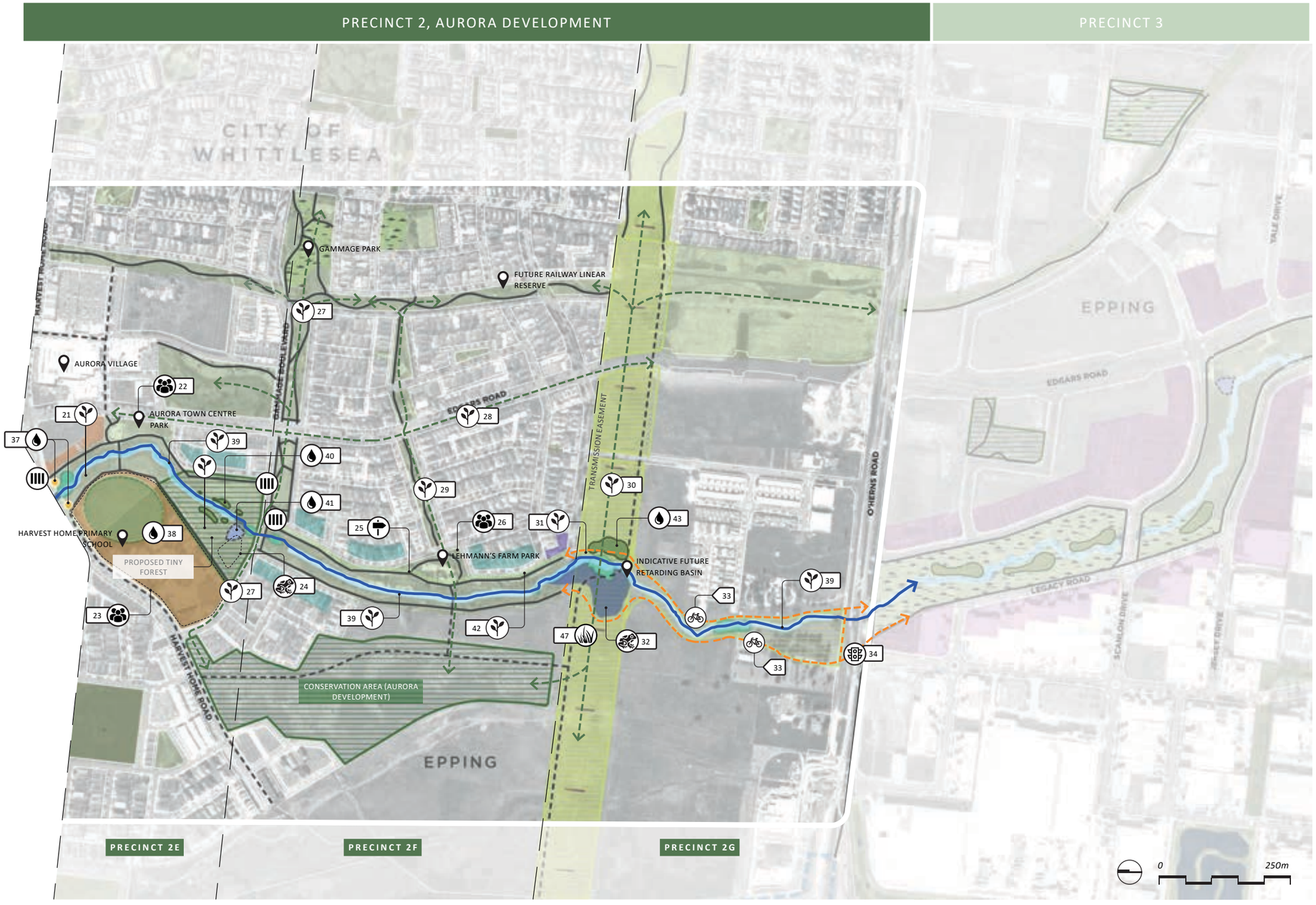
- Future Open Space
- Future Conservation Area
- Future Shared Path

PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Proposed Major Biodiversity Connection
- New Active Travel Link (Shared User Path)
- Planting Initiative
- Signalised Crossing
- Pedestrian Priority Crossing
- Information or Interpretive Signage
- Community Initiative
- Improve Streetscape & Park Amenity
- Growling Grass Frog Habitat
- Hydrological Initiative
- Native Grassland Initiative
- Naturalise Creek
- Improve Shared User Path Amenity



PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN (CONTINUED)



PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT - OPPORTUNITIES PRECEDENTS

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT

PRECINCT 2A



83

03

EXPLORE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION OF THE CREEK AND ACTIVE RECREATION THROUGH INTERPRETIVE WAYFINDING ELEMENTS. PHOTO SHOWS SCULPTURAL PLAY ELEMENTS AT THE GLENTHORNE NATIONAL PARK NATURE PLAYSPACE BY TCL.



84

04

EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RUN COMMUNITY INITIATIVES SUCH AS A 'BUSH SCHOOL' PROGRAM AT AURORA ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND, ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO INTERACT WITH AND ENJOY THE CREEK.

PRECINCT 2B



85

08

ADVOCATE FOR MELBOURNE WATER TO UNDERTAKE RIPARIAN REVEGETATION EFFORTS AT TIMBARRA PARKWAY AND ESTABLISH AN ECOLOGICAL TREATMENT POND SIMILAR TO ASPECT STUDIO'S LIGHTSVIEW ESTATE (SHOWN ABOVE).



86

09

IMPROVE THE AMENITY OF THE CREEK CORRIDOR BY PROVIDING SHELTERED SEATING NODES ALONG THE SHARED PATH. AN EXAMPLE SHOWN ABOVE IS A SEATING SPACE AT BARRAMBIN PARK, BRISBANE.



87

14

EXPLORE WAYS TO SET UP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE ONE SHOWN ABOVE RUN BY OZFISH WITH THE GANBU GULINJ COMMUNITY CENTRE AND STUDENTS FROM EDGARS CREEK COLLEGE TO FOSTER ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS.



88

46

APPLY ADRIAN MARSHALL'S EDGE CONDITION DESIGN GUIDELINES FROM 'START WITH THE GRASSLANDS: DESIGN GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT NATIVE GRASSLANDS IN URBAN AREAS AROUND THE GRASSLAND CONSERVATION AREA'. INCORPORATE BUFFER PLANTING, A MOWN STRIP WITH AN ATTRACTIVE FENCE, AND EDGE PLANTING TO PROMOTE APPRECIATION OF THE RESERVE. CONSIDER ADDING AN OPEN BOARDWALK THROUGH THE GRASSLAND.

PRECINCT 2C



89

15

IMPLEMENT INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING MEASURES AT KOBE PARK PLAYGROUND TO CELEBRATE THE PLAYSPACE'S CONNECTION TO THE CREEK. PHOTO SHOWS AN EXAMPLE OF SIGNAGE AT GLENNIFER RESERVE, NSW.



90

17

ENGAGE WITH RESIDENTS LIVING ADJACENT TO KOBE PARK PLAYGROUND TO BETTER DESIGN THE INTERFACE OF THE PLAYSPACE WITH THE CREEK AND THE ABUTTING HOUSES, TO PROMOTE A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE.

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT - OPPORTUNITIES PRECEDENTS (CONTINUED)

PRECINCT 2, AURORA DEVELOPMENT

PRECINCT 2D



ADVOCATE FOR MELBOURNE WATER TO UPGRADE THE EASTSTONE AVENUE FROG PONDS TO IMPROVE THEIR ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION AND CONNECT THE EXISTING GROWLING GRASS FROG HABITAT AREAS. SHOWN ABOVE IS A FROG HABITAT WETLAND IN ROCKBANK.



UNDERTAKE REVEGETATION EFFORTS WHERE NATIVE VEGETATION IS CURRENTLY PATCHY TO ENHANCE THE EXISTING RIPARIAN ZONE OF EDGARS CREEK. EXAMPLE SHOWN OF MOOMBA PARK WETLAND, MELBOURNE WATER AND MERRI-BEK COUNCIL.

PRECINCT 2E



EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITY TO START A COMMUNITY GARDENING PROGRAM TO IMPROVE ACTIVATION OF OPEN SPACE ALONG THE CREEK CORRIDOR AND ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTODIANSHIP OF THE AREA.



EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER EVENTS AND FESTIVALS TO IMPROVE ACTIVATION OF OPEN SPACE ALONG THE CREEK CORRIDOR AND ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTODIANSHIP OF THE AREA.

PRECINCT 2F



PLANT STREET TREES AND DIVERSE UNDERSTOREY PLANTING ALONG GAMMAGE BOULEVARD TO DEVELOP A BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR FROM THE CREEK TO HARVEST HOME PRIMARY SCHOOL, GAMMAGE PARK AND THE FUTURE RAILWAY RESERVE LINEAR PARK.



PLANT STREET TREES AND DIVERSE UNDERSTOREY PLANTING TO CONNECT A BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR FROM THE CREEK TO THE FUTURE CONSERVATION AREA, ZINNOBER GARDENS, LEGG ADVENTURE PARK AND INTO THE FUTURE RAILWAY LINEAR RESERVE.

PRECINCT 2G



EXPLORE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FILL A GAP IN THE MOVEMENT NETWORK BY CONSTRUCTING A SHARED USER PATH FROM ROCKFIELD STREET TO O'HERN'S ROAD. EXAMPLE SHOWN OF DAREBIN YARRA TRAIL LINK BY VICROADS.



DEVELOP A BIODIVERSE UNDERSTOREY BY CREATING A NATIVE GRASSLAND MEADOW USING THE SEED-SOWING METHOD ESTABLISHED BY KATHERINE HORSFALL'S ROYAL PARK DIRECT SEEDING PROJECT, SHOWN IN THE IMAGE ABOVE.

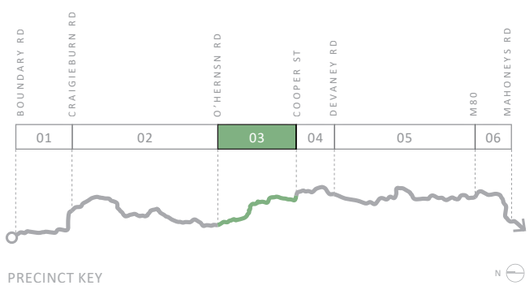
11.3 PRECINCT 3, COOPER STREET EMPLOYMENT AREA

ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

Precinct 3 is an industrial section of the creek corridor in central Epping, bounded by O'Herns Road to the north and Cooper Street to the south. This precinct is covered by the Cooper Street Employment Area Development Plan (2018), which aims to establish the area for employment-generating uses, predominantly industrial and commercial activities. This poses a threat to the hydrological and ecological health of the creek in this precinct, as runoff and contamination are significant concerns.

Several wetlands and waterbodies in this section of the creek corridor provide opportunities to capture and treat potentially polluted water. Additionally, the Legacy Conservation Reserve, just south of O'Herns Road, contains significant native and remnant vegetation, as well as areas of existing and potential future frog habitat.

Edgars Road presents a major barrier for pedestrians and cyclists following the creek corridor, suggesting an opportunity to improve and connect the movement network. It will also be important to provide rest, shelter, and respite areas along the creek in Precinct 3, particularly at key features such as the local waterbodies, as the surrounding industrial and commercial land use creates an inhospitable environment for pedestrians and cyclists. There are also significant opportunities for revegetation projects to support the hydrological and ecological health of the creek and to strengthen existing conservation areas within this precinct.



PRECINCT KEY



99

VOLCANIC ROCK BOULDERS AND REMNANT DRYSTONE WALLS ARE FOUND IN PRECINCT 3, FORMING PART OF THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IDENTITY.



101

SEVERAL WATERBODIES AND WETLANDS LINED WITH REMNANT RIVER RED GUMS SIT AMONGST INDUSTRIAL BLOCKS OF PRECINCT 3. IMAGE TAKEN EAST OF EDGARS ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH.



102

SEVERAL RETARDING BASINS AND WETLANDS IN PRECINCT 3 SERVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE HYDROLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL HEALTH OF THE CREEK. THEY PRESENT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ENHANCEMENT THROUGH REVEGETATION. IMAGE TAKEN LOOKING EAST FROM EDGARS ROAD.



100

RUBBISH DUMPING IS AN ISSUE IN PRECINCT 3 WHERE THE SURROUNDING INDUSTRIAL LAND USE RESULTS IN VERY LITTLE PASSIVE SURVEILLANCE, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT.



103

DESPITE SIGNIFICANT FLORA AND FAUNA IN THE AREA, THE LEGACY CONSERVATION RESERVE SHOWS SIGNS OF DEGRADATION, WEED PRESENCE AND A LACK OF NATIVE VEGETATION. IMAGE TAKEN LOOKING NORTH-EAST FROM LEGACY ROAD.

PRECINCT 3, COOPER STREET EMPLOYMENT AREA - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
01	Advocate for Lendlease and other landowners to implement stormwater treatment initiatives to improve the ecological performance of the Creek.	3A	O		
02	Increase tree canopy coverage along Legacy Road, Jersey Drive, Jutland Way, Scanlon Drive and Edgars Road to soften the interface between the adjacent industrial areas and Creek.	3A		A	
03	Explore the opportunity to construct frog fences from O'Hern's Road south to Edgars Road to prevent Growling Grass Frogs from exposure to the risks presented by adjacent industrial sites.	3A		A	
04	Install a pedestrian priority crossing - consider a raised wombat crossing, zebra crossing or similar - at Scanlon Drive/Legacy Road to complete missing link in the shared user path network.	3A		A	
05	Design future development to front onto Edgars Creek rather than rear storage areas and loading docks.	3A	O		
06	Advocate for Melbourne Water to enhance the quality of existing wetlands through clean-up maintenance and revegetation efforts to improve the ability for these waterbodies to filter stormwater runoff from surrounding industrial sites.	3B	O		
07	Enhance and protect existing Growling Grass Frog habitat through buffer planting, addition of habitat features, or any other improvement necessary.	3B		A	
08	Revegetate areas where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek and to connect to and strengthen the biodiversity corridor to the west via Lake Huddo.	3B		A	
09	Update signage to correctly show the route of the shared user path and aid navigation as well as providing educational and interpretive signage at the wetlands to explain the ecological, historical, cultural and hydrological function of the landscape.	3B		A	
10	Explore ways to upgrade the existing shared user path and increase its legibility to encourage use, as well as providing seating and areas for sheltered respite.	3B	O		
11	Engage with adjacent landowners to improve passive surveillance of pedestrians and cyclists on the Edgars Creek Trail.	3B	O		
12	Introduce a series of Sponge Landscape Rehydration areas to assist in the process of infiltration, evaporation and soil moisture in dehydrated riparian areas between O'Herns Road and Jersey Drive.	3A	O		
13	Where possible, naturalise the sections of Edgars Creek to improve ecological function, water quality and habitat diversity without disturbing or affecting the management of the EPBC conservation area.	3A	O		
14	Daylight underground drainage and stormwater flows south of Scanlon Drive to allow water to provide natural filtration systems that contribute to the restoration of a more natural water cycle and improve local soil moisture.	3A	O		
15	Apply Adrian Marshall's edge condition design guidelines from ***Start with the Grasslands: Design Guidelines to Support Native Grasslands in Urban Areas*** around the grassland conservation area. Incorporate buffer planting, a mown strip with an attractive fence, and edge planting to promote appreciation of the reserve. Consider adding an open boardwalk through the grassland reserve.	3A	O		

The adjacent table indexes the actions and opportunities that have been identified for Precinct 3. The table includes a description, classification (opportunity, action, or both), and identifies which project objectives have been addressed. A map ID is given for each item which corresponds to the map on the following page.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
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- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 3, COOPER STREET EMPLOYMENT AREA - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

EXISTING

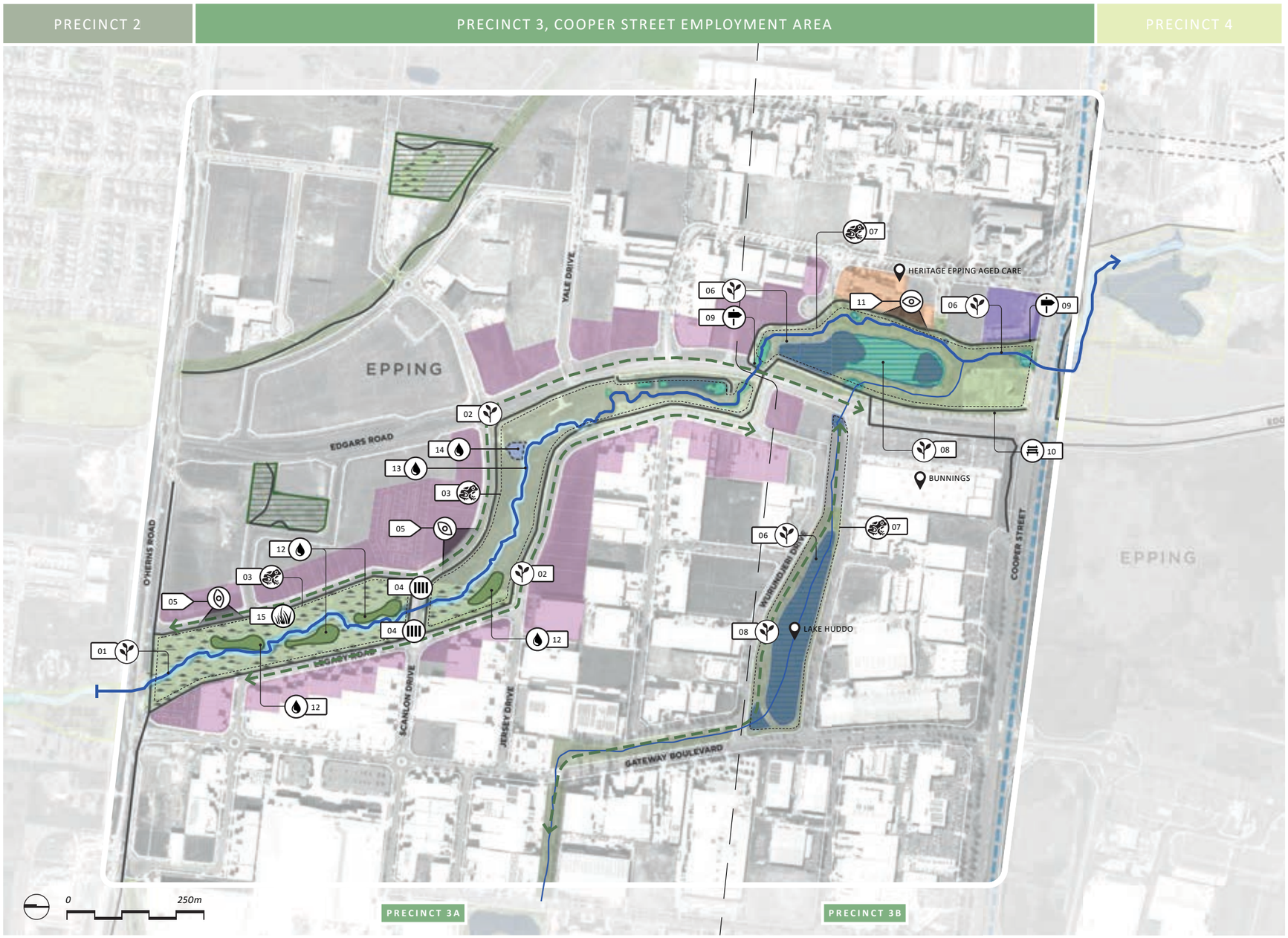
- Edgars Creek
- Local Landmark
- Existing Shared Path
- Strategic Cycling Corridor
- Public Open Space
- Private & Restricted Open Space
- Conservation Area
- Existing Growling Grass Frog Habitat
- Residential Area Directly Fronting Creek
- Industrial Area Fronting Creek
- Community Facility Fronting Creek

FUTURE PROPOSED WORK BY OTHERS

- Future Open Space
- Future Conservation Area
- Future Shared Path

PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Proposed Major Biodiversity Connection
- Planting Initiative
- Pedestrian Priority Crossing
- Information or Interpretive Signage
- Improve Visual Connection to the Creek
- Growling Grass Frog Habitat
- Hydrological Initiative
- Native Grassland Initiative
- Naturalise Creek



PRECINCT 3, COOPER STREET EMPLOYMENT AREA

PRECINCT 3A



ADVOCATE FOR LENDLEASE AND OTHER LANDOWNERS TO IMPLEMENT STORMWATER TREATMENT INITIATIVES, INCLUDING THE BOLSTERING OF NATIVE RIPARIAN VEGETATION, TO IMPROVE THE ECOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE AND WATER QUALITY OF THE CREEK.



INCREASE TREE CANOPY COVER ALONG LEGACY ROAD, JERSEY DRIVE, JUTLAND WAY, SCANLON DRIVE AND EDGARS ROAD TO SOFTEN THE INTERFACE BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIAL AREAS AND CREEK. IMAGE SHOWING TREES PLANTED IN WYNDHAM (DEECA).



INSTALL A PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY CROSSING AT SCANLON DRIVE/LEGACY ROAD TO COMPLETE MISSING LINK IN THE SHARED USER PATH NETWORK.

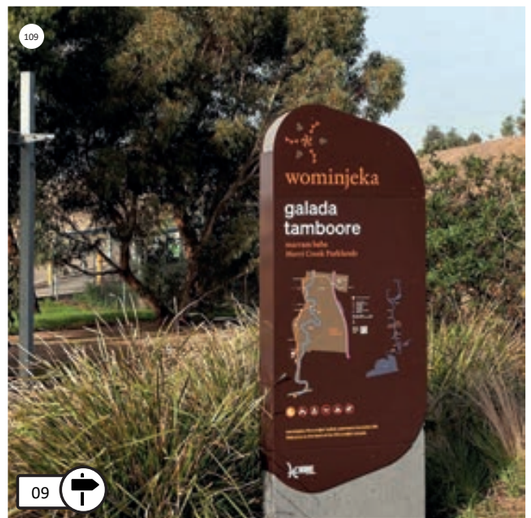
PRECINCT 3B



ADVOCATE FOR MELBOURNE WATER TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF EXISTING WETLANDS THROUGH MAINTENANCE AND REVEGETATION EFFORTS. IMAGE SHOWS MOOMBA PARK WETLAND.



EXPLORE WAYS TO UPGRADE THE EXISTING SHARED PATH SEATING AND AMENITY, AS WELL AS INCREASE ITS LEGIBILITY TO ENCOURAGE USE. IMAGE SHOWS NEWQUAY CENTRAL PARK BY ASPECT STUDIOS.



UPDATE SIGNAGE TO IMPROVE LEGIBILITY OF THE SHARED PATH AND PROMOTE GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CREEK, ITS CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE AND ITS HYDROLOGICAL FUNCTION. IMAGE SHOWS DIANA WELLS' MARRAM BABA MERRI CREEK PARKLANDS SIGNAGE.

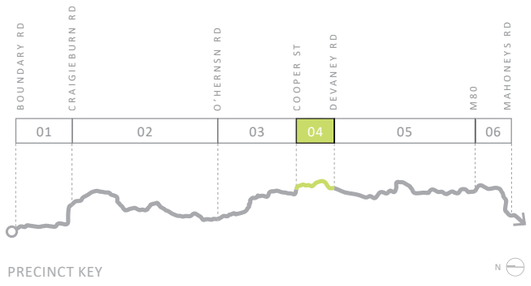
11.4 PRECINCT 4, NEW EPPING

ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

Precinct 4, bounded by Cooper Street to the north and Deveny Road to the south, forms the section of the Edgars Creek corridor running through New Epping. Designated for renewal as a residential suburb under the Epping Central Structure Plan, New Epping is a key area for ecological and community-focused development. This section of the creek corridor is addressed by the New Epping Landscape Master Plan, which seeks to revitalise the creek and its surrounding open spaces, supporting the habitat of the Growling Grass Frog and generating opportunities for passive recreation.

In the northern part of Precinct 4, a former quarry is now a permanent, deep waterbody through which the creek flows. Surrounding this waterbody, the Landscape Landscape Improvement Plan proposes a series of smaller wetlands that extend further south along the creek. These wetlands are designed to provide critical habitat for the Growling Grass Frog while regulating water flow and improving water quality. The Landscape Landscape Improvement Plan also includes the creation of an interconnected active travel network, enabling safe and seamless movement for pedestrians and cyclists and linking this area with other parts of the Edgars Creek corridor.

There is an opportunity to successfully integrate the area covered by the New Epping Landscape Master Plan into its surroundings, including Precinct 3 to the north of Cooper Street, Precinct 5 to the south of Deveny Road, and the proposed Melbourne Food and Innovation Hub west of Edgars Road. Habitat connections and revegetation projects across Edgars Road, involving the Gillwell Conservation Reserve and Melbourne Market Wetland, are essential for strengthening ecological corridors and enhancing the overall landscape of the creek corridor.



PRECINCT KEY



110

IMAGE LOOKING NORTH-WEST FROM THE WESTERN BANK OF EDGARS CREEK. A WATERBODY IN A FORMER QUARRY SITS AT THE CENTRE OF THE NEW EPPING DEVELOPMENT.



111

IMAGE LOOKING EAST FROM GREENGATE WAY, AT THE HEART OF THE NEW EPPING DEVELOPMENT. A PORTION OF THE NEW EPPING DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED, DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE TRAVEL, PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND OPEN SPACE TO THE DEVELOPMENT.



112

IMAGE LOOKING SOUTH FROM DEVENY ROAD, THE BORDER OF LALOR AND EPPING.DEVENY ROAD PRESENTS A MAJOR BARRIER TO BOTH ACTIVE TRAVEL AND HABITAT CONNECTIONS AT THE SOUTHERN END OF PRECINCT 4.



113

IMAGE LOOKING NORTH INTO THE NEW EPPING DEVELOPMENT FROM DEVENY ROAD. THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE CREEK IN THE NEW EPPING DEVELOPMENT AREA IS POOR, WHICH THE PROJECT'S LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLAN SEEKS TO ADDRESS.

PRECINCT 4, NEW EPPING - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
01	Enhance and protect existing Growling Grass Frog habitat through buffer planting and the addition of habitat features. Explore the opportunity to construct frog fences from Coopers Street to Deveny Road to prevent Growling Grass Frogs from exposure to the risks presented by the Epping Renewal Site.	4A		A	
02	Support the development of a future shared user path network at the Epping Renewal Site - as set out by the New Epping Landscape Master Plan - to increase accessibility to Edgars Creek.	4A	O		
03	Support the development of future open space, public realm works and seating nodes adjoining either side of Edgars Creek, as set out by the New Epping Landscape Master Plan.	4A	O		
04	Advocate for private landowners to design active or semi-active frontages facing open space areas to improve interfaces.	4A	O		
05	Advocate to private landowners to utilise water sensitive urban design elements and implement sustainable stormwater management practices - such as rain gardens and permeable surfaces - to reduce the impact of the Epping Renewal site's development on Edgars Creek.	4A	O		
06	Enhance Edgars Road as a biodiversity corridor through native street tree planting and diverse understorey vegetation planting in the verges and median strip.	4A		A	
07	Explore ways to connect the new Epping open spaces and Growling Grass Frog pond habitats to the Melbourne Market Wetland and Gillwell Conservation Reserve west of Edgars Road.	4A	O		
08	Naturalise sections of Edgars Creek to improve ecological function, water quality and habitat diversity through channel and floodplain revegetation.	4A	O		
09	Install Gross Pollutant Traps (GPT) to capture coarse sediments and gross pollutants from stormwater run off South of Cooper Street.	4A	O		
10	Utilise stormwater harvesting sites at the Melbourne Market Wetlands and wetlands south of Cooper Street to irrigate surrounding open spaces and can also be diverted through a rising main as far south-east as the Thomastown Recreation Reserve.	4A	O		

The adjacent table indexes the actions and opportunities that have been identified for Precinct 4. The table includes a description, classification (opportunity, action, or both), and identifies which project objectives have been addressed. A map ID is given for each item which corresponds to the map on the following page.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
- Objective 1.3: Enhance the corridor's overall water quality and hydrological function.
- Objective 2.1: Improve and enhance the recreation infrastructure of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 2.2: Develop a continuous Edgars Creek Trail that is well connected to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCTS 4, NEW EPPING - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

EXISTING

- Edgars Creek
- Local Landmark
- Existing Shared Path
- Strategic Cycling Corridor
- Public Open Space
- Private & Restricted Open Space
- Conservation Area
- Gas & Transmission Easement

FUTURE PROPOSED WORK BY OTHERS

- Future Open Space
- Future Conservation Area
- Future Shared Path

PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Proposed Major Biodiversity Connection
- New Active Travel Link (Shared User Path)
- Planting Initiative
- Improve Visual Connection to the Creek
- Improve Streetscape & Park Amenity
- Growling Grass Frog Habitat
- Hydrological Initiative
- Naturalise Creek



PRECINCT 4, NEW EPPING - OPPORTUNITIES PRECEDENTS

PRECINCT 4, NEW EPPING

PRECINCT 4A

114



06

ENHANCE EDGARS ROAD AS A BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR THROUGH NATIVE STREET TREE PLANTING AND DIVERSE UNDERSTOREY VEGETATION PLANTING IN THE VERGES AND MEDIAN STRIP, AS PER THE ABOVE EXAMPLE IN GREATER BENDIGO.

115



03

SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE OPEN SPACE, PUBLIC REALM WORKS AND SEATING NODES ADJOINING EITHER SIDE OF EDGARS CREEK, AS SET OUT BY THE NEW EPPING LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN. IMAGE: AN EXAMPLE OF A SHELTER AT EDWARDS PARK, PERTH.

116



05

ADVOCATE TO PRIVATE LANDOWNERS WITHIN THE NEW EPPING DEVELOPMENT TO UTILISE WATER SENSITIVE URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS. IMAGE: GORDON BARNARD RESERVE RAINGARDEN.

118



02

SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SHARED PATH NETWORK THROUGHOUT PRECINCT 4, AS SET OUT BY THE LANDSCAPE LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PLAN.

117



04

ADVOCATE FOR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS ADJACENT TO THE CREEK TO DESIGN ACTIVE OR SEMI-ACTIVE FRONTAGES FACING OPEN SPACE AREAS TO ENSURE THE CREEK CORRIDOR IS A CELEBRATED CENTRAL GREEN SPINE OF THE NEW EPPING COMMUNITY.



119 *THOMASTOWN. IMAGE LOOKING SOUTH TOWARDS MAIN STREET FROM THE MAIN STREET RESERVE SPORTS FIELD. RESIDENTS WALK THE EDGARS CREEK TRAIL THROUGH LALOR AND THOMASTOWN, DESPITE THE LACK OF PASSIVE SURVEILLANCE DUE TO BACK FENCES LINING THE CREEK.*

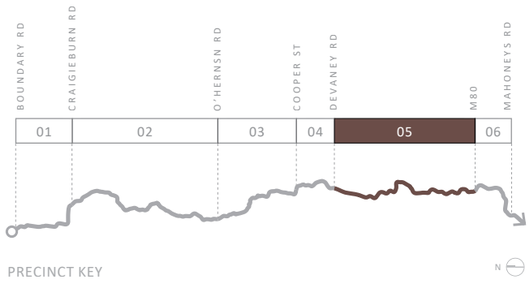
11.5 PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN

ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

Precinct 5 encompasses the portion of the Edgars Creek corridor within Lalor and Thomastown, stretching from Deveny Road to the Metropolitan Ring Road (M80). These established residential suburbs feature some of the municipality's oldest buildings, including heritage bluestone houses, church structures, and historic drystone walls. The area is characterised by low-lying, single-storey homes that back onto the creek, with tall, impermeable fences lining the corridor. This layout isolates the waterway from the community, limiting connectivity and creating an environment with poor passive surveillance.

Precinct 5 features several key open spaces and playgrounds along the creek, including Huskisson Reserve, Kalara Close Playground, Thomas Street Reserve, Main Street Reserve, and Symon Playground. The Edgars Creek Trail runs through much of this precinct, though sections between Kingsway Drive and Kalara Close Playground, and from Pinetree Crescent to German Lane, remain incomplete due partly to the difficulty posed by the creek's steep embankments. These steep slopes, along with the channelised nature of the creek in many areas, also present challenges for undertaking naturalisation projects.

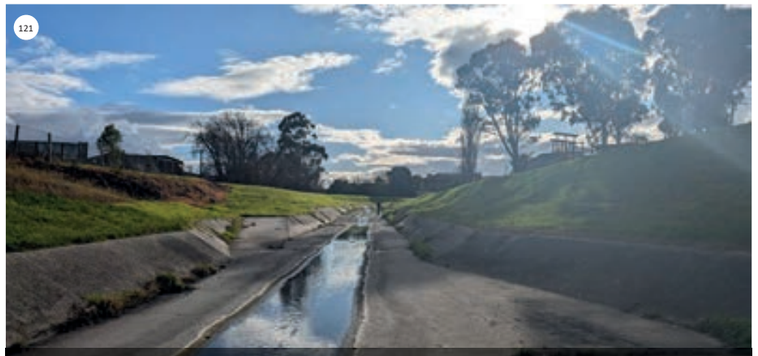
Precinct 5 offers significant opportunities to strengthen community connection by enhancing its use as a key space for passive recreation. This may involve completing the missing sections of the Edgars Creek Trail and addressing the sense of disconnection and lack of safety caused by the wall of back fences that line the creek. Efforts should be made to encourage community initiatives that open properties onto the creek and increase passive surveillance. Additionally, creek naturalisation and revegetation projects can improve waterway health and provide vital ecological habitats, particularly in the channelised sections of the creek.



PRECINCT KEY



120 LALOR. IMAGE LOOKING WEST ONTO EDGARS CREEK FROM HUSKISSON RESERVE. A RECENT SECTION OF THE EDGARS CREEK TRAIL HAS BEEN COMPLETED ALONGSIDE HUSKISSON RESERVE, INCLUDING SEATING AREAS AND OVERHEAD LIGHTING.



121 LALOR. IMAGE LOOKING NORTH-WEST ALONG THE LINE OF THE CREEK ADJACENT TO KALARA CLOSE PARK & PLAYGROUND. MUCH OF THE CREEK IS DIVERTED INTO A CONCRETE CHANNEL THROUGH PRECINCT 5, PRESENTING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR NATURALISATION PROJECTS.



122 THOMASTOWN. IMAGE OF THE MAIN STREET RECREATION RESERVE PLAYGROUND. RECENT UPGRADES TO THE PLAYSPACE AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE AT MAIN STREET RESERVE INCORPORATE NATIVE PLANT SPECIES TO COMPLIMENT EXISTING EUCALYPTS AND OTHER TREES.



123 LALOR. IMAGE LOOKING EAST ONTO THE EDGARS CREEK TRAIL JUST SOUTH OF DEVENY ROAD. BACK FENCES LINE THE CREEK THROUGHOUT MUCH OF PRECINCT 5, ISOLATING THE CREEK FROM ITS HUMAN CONTEXT AND REDUCING SAFETY.



124 IMAGE LOOKING SOUTH FROM GERMAN LANE ONTO THE THOMASTOWN LUTHERAN CHURCH. HERITAGE BLUESTONE BUILDINGS - SUCH AS THE THOMASTOWN LUTHERAN CHURCH - AND REMNANT AGRICULTURAL DRYSTONE WALLS ARE ICONIC OF THIS PART OF THOMASTOWN.

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
01	Plant avenue trees along Kingsway Drive and along the shared user path to increase the canopy cover, enhancing comfort for active travel and strengthening habitat connectivity across the Creek corridor.	5A		A	
02	Construct a switchback path from Huskisson Reserve down to the existing shared user path to improve access to the Creek corridor.	5A		A	
03	Construct community gardens along Huskisson Reserve to encourage informal interaction with the Creek corridor.	5A		A	
04	Advocate for revised built form controls i.e. Design and Development Overlay, to improve the Creek interface.	5A	O		
05	Advocate for private landowners to design active or semi-active frontages facing open space areas to improve interfaces.	5A	O		
06	Plant supplementary planting and revegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek.	5A		A	
07	Introduce understorey planting on the periphery of Huskisson Recreation Reserve to provide crucial habitat for insects and small animals, as well as to soften the back fence line of surrounding houses.	5B		A	
08	Ensure Huskisson Recreation Reserve is an accessible and responsive public space and implement interpretive signage and wayfinding measures to celebrate the Creek.	5B		A	
09	Deliver events, festivals and markets at Huskisson Recreation Reserve and start a community gardening program to improve activation of open space along the Creek corridor and encourage engagement and custodianship of the area.	5B		A	
10	Create clear sightlines from Huskisson Recreation Reserve to the Creek corridor to improve opportunities for passive surveillance.	5B		A	
11	Support the existing 'Bush Kinder' program at Huskisson Recreation Reserve to strengthen Council's connection to the community, and foster 'knowledgeable custodianship' of the Creek.	5B	O		
12	Naturalise the channelised sections of Edgars Creek Corridor to improve ecological function, water quality and habitat diversity. Preference Indigenous species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	5C		A	
13	Implement interpretive signage and wayfinding at Kingsway Drive to aid navigation to Lalor Station.	5C		A	
14	Install a pedestrian priority crossing - consider a raised wombat crossing, zebra crossing or similar - at Kingsway Drive to complete a missing link in the shared user path network.	5C		A	
15	Support the development of a future shared user path network from Kingsway Drive to German Lane to increase accessibility to Edgars Creek and provide opportunities for passive surveillance.	5C		A	
16	Advocate for revised built form controls i.e. Design and Development Overlay, to improve the Creek interface.	5C	O		
17	Establish points of interest to increase visual connection along Edgars Creek to surrounding landmarks, including the key heritage site at 70 Robert Street.	5C		A	
18	Explore opportunity to enhance endangered Stony Knoll Shrubland and revegetate stony knolls that are currently mown.	5D	O		

The adjacent table indexes the actions and opportunities that have been identified for Precinct 5. The table includes a description, classification (opportunity, action, or both), and identifies which project objectives have been addressed. A map ID is given for each item which corresponds to the map on the following page.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
- Objective 1.3: Enhance the corridor's overall water quality and hydrological function.
- Objective 2.1: Improve and enhance the recreation infrastructure of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 2.2: Develop a continuous Edgars Creek Trail that is well connected to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX (CONTINUED)

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
19	Create a cross-creek connection from Hurtle Street to the Lutheran Church to improve pedestrian accessibility across the Creek corridor.	5E		A	
20	Implement interpretive signage and wayfinding measures at Ziebells Farmhouse & Lutheran Church site to celebrate the site's cultural significance and showcase connections to the wider area (i.e. Whittlesea Gardens).	5D		A	
21	Improve visual link between Edgars Creek and German Lane to promote accessibility and use.	5D		A	
22	Advocate for Ziebells Farmhouse & Lutheran Church landowners to deliver events, festivals and markets to improve activation of open space along the Creek corridor and encourage engagement and custodianship of the area.	5D	O		
23	Embellish entry points to Westgarthtown Pioneer Precinct to mark it as a key heritage location.	5D		A	
24	Engage with Friends of Edgars Creek Thomastown to support a thriving ecosystem and community enjoyment of the Creek.	5D	O		
25	Revegetate areas where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek and strengthen the Creek as a biodiversity corridor. Preference Indigenous species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	5E		A	
26	Install a pedestrian priority crossing - consider a raised wombat crossing, zebra crossing or similar - at German Lane to complete a missing link in the shared user path network.	5E		A	
27	Engage with residents fronting the Creek corridor to improve opportunities for passive surveillance and create a sense of guardianship over the Creek.	5E	O		
28	Advocate for revised built form controls i.e. Design and Development Overlay, to improve the Creek interface.	5E	O		
29	Retain River Red Gums and Eucalypts present on site to strengthen the Creek as a biodiversity corridor.	5E		A	
30	Revegetate areas where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek and strengthen the Creek as a biodiversity corridor. Preference Indigenous species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	5F		A	
31	Ensure Thomas Street Recreation Reserve is an accessible and responsive public space and implement interpretive signage and wayfinding measures to celebrate the Creek.	5F		A	
32	Advocate for revised built form controls i.e. Design and Development Overlay, to improve the Creek interface.	5F	O		
33	Deliver events, festivals and markets at Thomas Street Recreation Reserve and start a community gardening program to improve activation of open space along the Creek corridor and encourage engagement and custodianship of the area.	5F	O		
34	Embellish entry points to 77 Mountview Road to mark it as a key heritage location. (Opportunity extracted from the ***Thomastown & Lalor Place Framework***)	5F		A	
35	Naturalise the channelised sections of Edgars Creek corridor to improve ecological function, water quality and habitat diversity. Revegetate areas where native vegetation is currently patchy, to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek and strengthen the Creek as a biodiversity corridor. Preference Indigenous species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	5G	O		
36	Ensure that Main Street Recreation Reserve is an accessible and responsive public space by implementing interpretive signage and wayfinding measures to celebrate the Creek and aid pedestrian navigation.	5G		A	

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
- Objective 1.3: Enhance the corridor's overall water quality and hydrological function.
- Objective 2.1: Improve and enhance the recreation infrastructure of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 2.2: Develop a continuous Edgars Creek Trail that is well connected to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX (CONTINUED)

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
37	Launch engagement initiatives at Main Street Recreation Reserve such as 'Bush School' and the creation of a community garden to strengthen the Creek's connection to the community, and foster a local sense of 'knowledgeable custodianship' of the Creek.	5G		A	
38	Deliver events, festivals and markets at Thomas Street Recreation Reserve to improve activation of open space along the Creek corridor and encourage engagement.	5G		A	
39	Plant supplementary planting and revegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek. Preference Indigenous species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	5H		A	
40	Implement interpretive signage and improved wayfinding and lighting along the existing shared user path network to aid navigation and increase accessibility and safety.	5H		A	
41	Upgrade the cross-creek connection at Main Street to improve pedestrian accessibility across the Creek corridor.	5H		A	
42	Advocate for revised built form controls i.e. Design and Development Overlay, to improve the Creek interface.	5H	O		
43	Engage with residents to improve opportunities for passive surveillance of pedestrians and cyclists on the Edgars Creek Trail, and create a sense of guardianship over the Creek.	5H	O		
44	Plant supplementary planting and revegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek. Preference Indigenous species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	5I		A	
45	Engage with residents to improve opportunities for passive surveillance of pedestrians and cyclists on the Edgars Creek Trail, and create a sense of guardianship over the Creek.	5I	O		
46	Advocate for revised built form controls i.e. Design and Development Overlay, to improve the Creek interface	5I	O		
47	Plant supplementary planting and revegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek. Preference Indigenous species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	5J		A	
48	Create a cross-creek connection from Symon Crescent to Earlwood Court to improve pedestrian accessibility across the Creek corridor.	5J		A	
49	Ensure Symon Crescent Playground is an accessible and responsive public space through implementation of interpretive signage and wayfinding measures to celebrate the Creek and aid navigation.	5J		A	
50	Start a community gardening program to improve activation of open space along the Creek corridor and encourage local engagement and custodianship of the Creek corridor.	5J		A	
51	Install a signalised pedestrian crossing at Edgars Road to cross into Edgars Road Neighbourhood Park Playground, facilitating access to the Creek corridor for people in the residential area to the west of Edgars Road which is lacking open space provision. (Opportunity extracted from the ***Thomastown & Lalor Place Framework***)	5A		A	
52	Improve wayfinding to Whittlesea Gardens and regional trails from German Lane. (Opportunity extracted from the ***Thomastown & Lalor Place Framework***)	5C		A	
53	Facilitate connections to and promote the Westgarthtown Walking Trail through improved signage. (Opportunity extracted from the ***Thomastown & Lalor Place Framework***)	5C		A	
54	Create a north-south shared user path connection between the Edgars Creek Trail and Lalor Station.	5A		A	

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
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- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
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- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX (CONTINUED)

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
55	Improve wayfinding to public amenity locations and rest stops along Edgars Creek Trail	5C		A	
56	Daylight underground drainage and stormwater flows south of Huskisson Recreation Reserve to allow water to provide natural filtration systems that contribute to the restoration of a more natural water cycle and improve local soil moisture.	5A	O		
57	Utilise the playing field at Huskisson Reserve should to apply trial passive wicking technologies to improve resilience and playability of the field year round.	5B	O		
58	Naturalise sections of Edgars Creek to improve ecological function, water quality and habitat diversity through channel and floodplain revegetation. Channel diversity and a chain of ponds should be incorporated through further earthworks and revegetation.	5A - 5B	O		
59	Install Gross Pollutant Traps (GPT) to capture coarse sediments and gross pollutants from stormwater run off South of Mount View Road.	5C 5E	O		
60	Implement light-touch engineering to naturalise sections of Edgars Creek, enhancing ecological function, water quality, and habitat diversity. This approach will promote exfiltration, leading to improved groundwater recharge, natural sediment accumulation, and vegetation recruitment.	5C 5E 5H	O		
61	Naturalise sections of Edgars Creek to improve ecological function, water quality and habitat diversity through channel and floodplain revegetation.	5E 5I	O		
62	Provide amenity and shade along the shared user path network through the planting of channel and floodplain revegetation.	5E 5F 5I		A	
63	Utilise stormwater harvesting sites at the Thomas Street Soccer Pitch and Main Street Sportfield 1 & 2 to irrigate surrounding open spaces.	5E 5G	O		

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
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- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

EXISTING

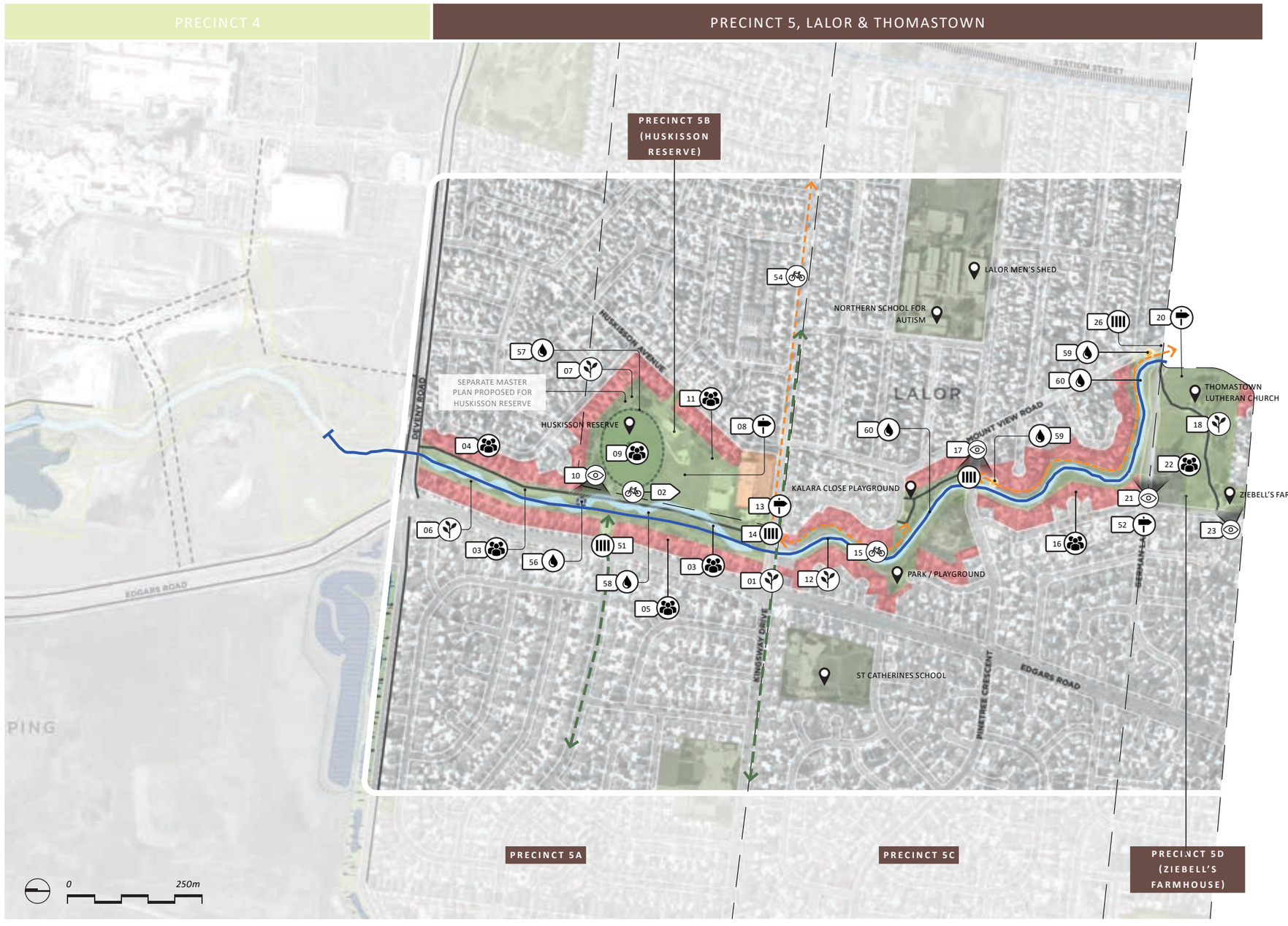
- Edgars Creek
- Local Landmark
- Existing Shared Path
- Strategic Cycling Corridor
- Public Open Space
- Private & Restricted Open Space
- Back Fences Fronting Creek - No Visual or Physical Access
- Community Facility Fronting Creek

FUTURE PROPOSED WORK BY OTHERS

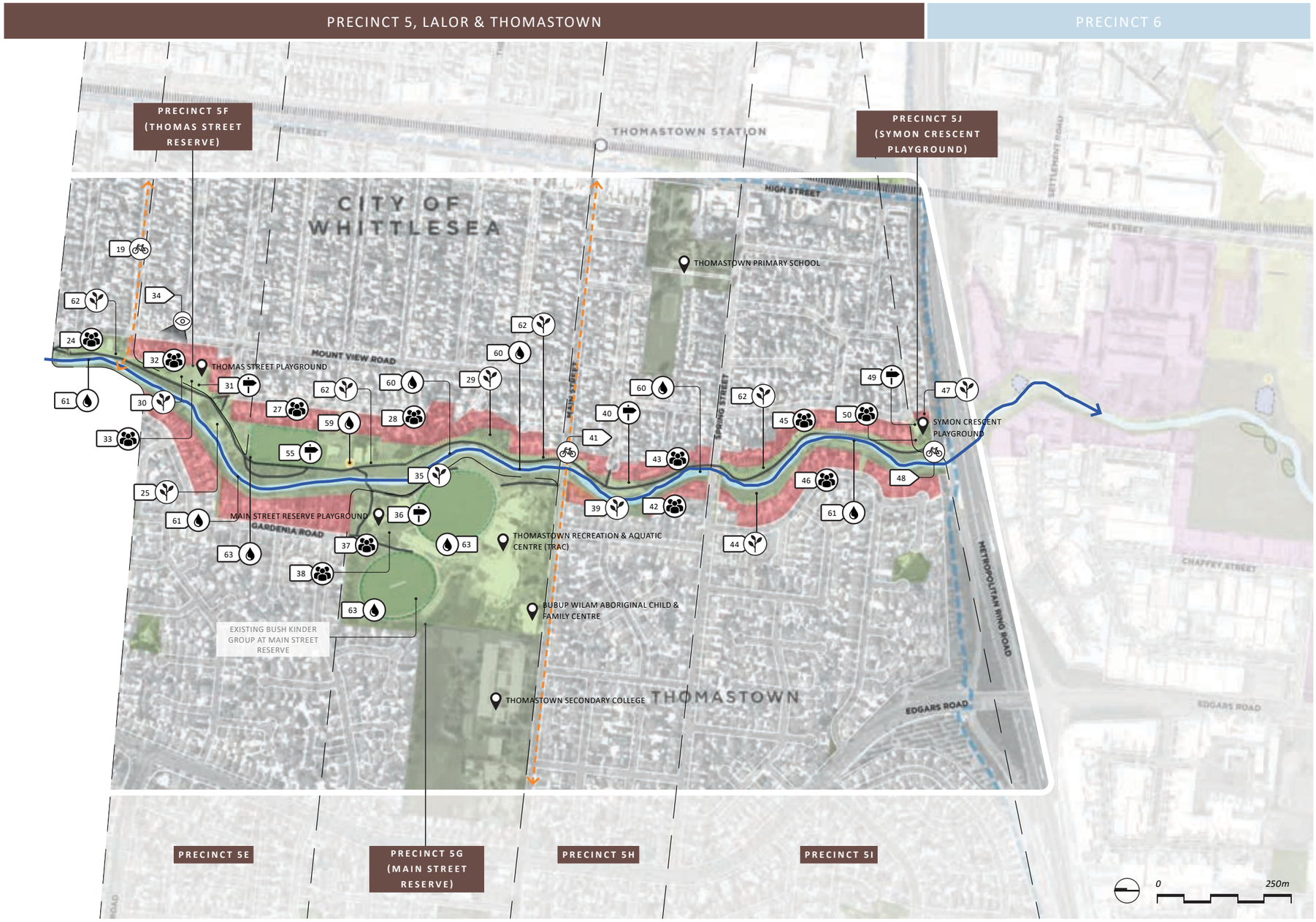
- Future Shared Path

PROPOSED INITIATIVES

- Proposed Major Biodiversity Connection
- New Active Travel Link (Shared User Path)
- Planting Initiative
- Pedestrian Priority Crossing
- Information or Interpretive Signage
- Community Initiative
- Improve Visual Connection to the Creek
- Improve Streetscape & Park Amenity
- Hydrological Initiative
- Naturalise Creek
- Improve Shared User Path Amenity



PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN (CONTINUED)



PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES PRECEDENTS

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN

PRECINCT 5A

125



03

CONSTRUCT COMMUNITY GARDENS ALONG HUSKISSION RESERVE TO ENCOURAGE INFORMAL INTERACTION WITH THE CREEK CORRIDOR, PROMOTING ACTIVITY AND INCREASING FEELINGS OF SAFETY. IMAGE SHOW VEGOUT COMMUNITY GARDENS IN ST KILDA.

126



56

DAYLIGHT UNDERGROUND DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER FLOWS SOUTH OF HUSKISSON RECREATION RESERVE TO ALLOW WATER TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RESTORATION OF A MORE NATURAL WATER CYCLE.

PRECINCT 5B

127



09

DELIVER EVENTS, FESTIVALS AND MARKETS AT HUSKISSION RECREATION RESERVE TO IMPROVE ACTIVATION OF OPEN SPACE ALONG THE CREEK CORRIDOR.

128



07

INTRODUCE UNDERSTOREY PLANTING ON THE PERIPHERY OF HUSKISSION RECREATION RESERVE TO PROVIDE CRUCIAL HABITAT FOR INSECTS AND SMALL ANIMALS. IMAGE BY WILL SALTER.

PRECINCT 5C

129



13

IMPLEMENT INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING AT KINGSWAY DRIVE TO AID NAVIGATION TO LALOR STATION, AND CELEBRATE THE PRESENCE OF THE CREEK CORRIDOR.

130



14

INSTALL A PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY CROSSING SUCH AS A ZEBRA CROSSING AT KINGSWAY DRIVE TO COMPLETE A MISSING LINK IN THE SHARED USER PATH NETWORK.

PRECINCT 5D

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CREATE A CROSS-CREEK CONNECTION FROM HURTLE STREET TO THE LUTHERAN CHURCH TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS THE CREEK CORRIDOR. IMAGE: HANLON PARK BY TRACT.

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IMPLEMENT INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING MEASURES AT ZIEBELLS FARMHOUSE & LUTHERAN CHURCH SITE TO CELEBRATE THE SITE'S CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE, SIMILAR TO THE SIGNAGE AT O'HERNS ROAD HOMESTEAD.

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PROMOTE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STONY KNOLLS AS BEING INTEGRAL TO THE STRUCTURE OF NATIVE GRASSLANDS. IMAGE: NATIVE GRASSLANDS AND A RIVER RED GUM BY ELIZABETH DONOGHUE.

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN - OPPORTUNITIES PRECEDENTS (CONTINUED)

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN

PRECINCT 5E



PROVIDE AMENITY AND SHADE ALONG SHARED USER PATH NETWORK THROUGH THE PLANTING OF CANOPY TREES.



REVEGETATE AREAS WHERE NATIVE VEGETATION IS CURRENTLY PATCHY TO ENHANCE THE EXISTING RIPARIAN ZONE OF EDGARS CREEK AND STRENGTHEN THE CREEK AS A BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR. IMAGE SHOWING COMMUNITY EFFORTS AT STONY CREEK.

PRECINCT 5F



EXPLORE WAYS TO IMPROVE ACTIVATION OF THOMAS STREET RECREATION RESERVE TO MAKE IT FEEL BETTER INTEGRATED WITH THE SURROUNDING HOUSING THAT BACKS ONTO IT. EXAMPLE SHOWS WELLINGTON SQUARE PLAYGROUND IN PERTH.



DELIVER EVENTS, FESTIVALS AND MARKETS AT THOMAS STREET RECREATION RESERVE TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY CONNECTION. IMAGE: ST ANDREWS MARKET.



UNDERTAKE REVEGETATION EFFORTS WHERE NATIVE VEGETATION IS CURRENTLY PATCHY TO ENHANCE THE EXISTING RIPARIAN ZONE OF EDGARS CREEK. PHOTO SHOWING A REVEGETATION SITE BY THE FRIENDS OF EDGARS CREEK.

PRECINCT 5G



LAUNCH ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES AT MAIN STREET RECREATION RESERVE SUCH AS 'BUSH SCHOOL' TO STRENGTHEN THE CREEK'S CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY, AND FOSTER 'KNOWLEDGEABLE CUSTODIANSHIP' OF THE CREEK.



ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH EDGARS CREEK AND IMPROVE ACTIVATION OF OPEN SPACE ALONG THE CREEK CORRIDOR.

PRECINCT 5H



IMPLEMENT IMPROVED LIGHTING ALONG THE SHARED USER PATH NETWORK TO AID NAVIGATION AND INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY.



CREATE A CROSS-CREEK CONNECTION AT MAIN STREET TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS THE CREEK CORRIDOR. IMAGE SHOWS SKELETON CREEK BRIDGE BY SITE OFFICE.

PRECINCT 5, LALOR & THOMASTOWN

PRECINCT 5I



NATURALISE SECTIONS OF EDGARS CREEK TO IMPROVE THE ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION, WATER QUALITY AND HABITAT DIVERSITY THROUGH CHANNEL AND FLOODPLAIN VEGETATION.



ADVOCATE FOR REVISED BUILT FORM CONTROLS (E.G. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY) TO IMPROVE THE CREEK INTERFACE THROUGH ELEMENTS SUCH AS VISUALLY PERMEABLE FENCING.



PROVIDE SHADE ALONG THE EDGARS CREEK TRAIL TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRANSPORT AND IMPROVE AMENITY.

PRECINCT 5J



START A COMMUNITY GARDENING PROGRAM TO IMPROVE ACTIVATION OF OPEN SPACE ALONG THE CREEK CORRIDOR AND FOSTER A SENSE OF CUSTODIANSHIP OF EDGARS CREEK.



CREATE A CROSS-CREEK CONNECTION FROM SYMON CRESCENT TO EARLWOOD COURT TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS THE CREEK CORRIDOR.



ENSURE SYMON CRESCENT PLAYGROUND IS AN ACCESSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING MEASURES TO CELEBRATE EDGARS CREEK AND AID NAVIGATION.



149 *THOMASTOWN. PHOTO LOOKING SOUTH TOWARDS MAIN STREET RESERVE. SECTIONS OF THE CREEK WHERE THE BANKS BECOME LESS STEEP NATURALLY BEGIN TO GATHER SEDIMENT AND ARE LIKELY TO BE MORE EASILY NATURALISED.*

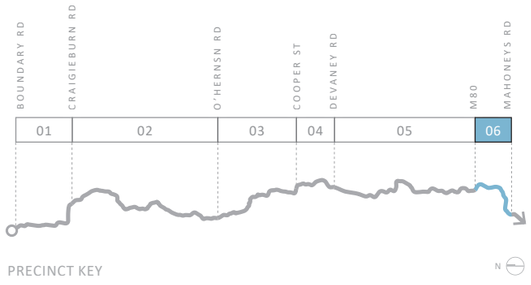
11.6 PRECINCT 6, THOMASTOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA

ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

Precinct 6 encompasses the section of the Edgars Creek corridor running through the state-significant Thomastown Industrial Area, located south of the Metropolitan Ring Road (M80) and extending to Mahoneys Road, where the creek crosses into the City of Darebin. Although it is possible to follow the creek through a tunnel beneath the M80, this stretch of the creek feels inaccessible to the public.

The creek is bordered by large, windowless industrial factories and car parking lots, with an open expanse of weedy, mown lawn flanking either side of the creek in the centre of Precinct 6. The creek then continues towards the busy intersection of Edgars and Mahoneys Roads, before exiting the City of Whittlesea and flowing downstream into Reservoir to eventually meet the Merri Creek.

Precinct 6 is overrun with weeds and lacks active travel paths or connections to the broader corridor, giving it an industrial backwater feel. However, the large central open space that the creek runs through offers potential for creek naturalisation and revegetation, which could improve waterway health and reduce pollution risks from surrounding industry. Additionally, the southern portion of Precinct 6 could serve as an entry point to the City of Whittlesea, with a high-quality landscape or naturalisation project acting as a gateway marker.



PRECINCT KEY



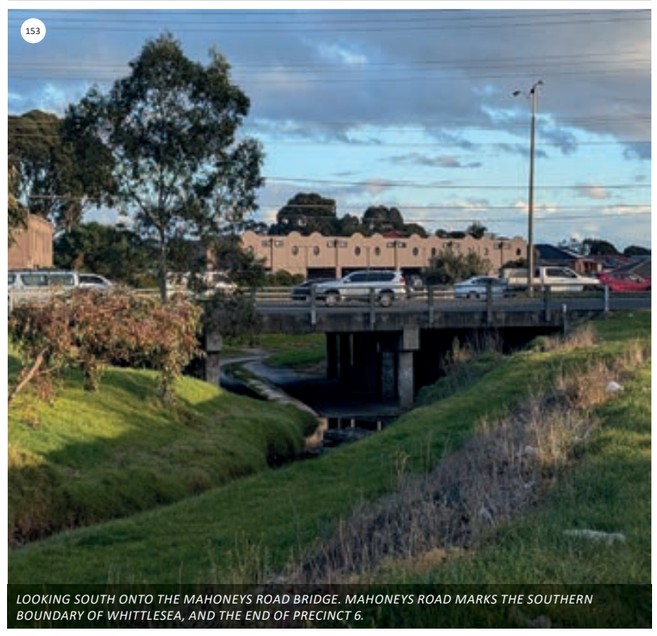
LOOKING NORTH FROM UNDERNEATH THE METROPOLITAN RING ROAD (M80). THE CREEK PASSES UNDERNEATH THE HIGHWAY WHERE IT ENTERS PRECINCT 6: THOMASTOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA.



LOOKING SOUTH INTO THE TUNNEL UNDERNEATH THE METROPOLITAN RING ROAD (M80). THE CREEK CAN BE FOLLOWED ON FOOT BUT FEELS UNSAFE.



LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE METROPOLITAN RING ROAD (M80). THE CREEK FEELS INACCESSIBLE TO PEDESTRIANS THROUGH THIS PRECINCT IN THE THOMASTOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA.



LOOKING SOUTH ONTO THE MAHONEYS ROAD BRIDGE. MAHONEYS ROAD MARKS THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OF WHITTLESEA, AND THE END OF PRECINCT 6.

PRECINCT 6, THOMASTOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA - OPPORTUNITIES INDEX

MAP ID	DESCRIPTION	PRECINCT ID	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION	OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED
01	Advocate for Melbourne Water to construct a sediment treatment wetland adjacent to the Thomastown Terminal Station.	6A	O		
02	Plant supplementary planting and revegetation where native vegetation is currently patchy to enhance the existing riparian zone of Edgars Creek. Include Indigenous understorey species consistent with the underlying Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC).	6A	O		
03	Construct a new shared user path from Symon Crescent Playground to Mahoney's Road to complete a missing link in the movement network.	6A		A	
04	Create a cross-creek connection from Austarc Avenue to Tuscan Court to improve pedestrian accessibility across the Creek corridor.	6A		A	
05	Implement interpretive signage and wayfinding at Mahoney's Road to aid navigation to Keon Park Station.	6A		A	
06	Develop new Municipal Open Space along the west side of Edgars Creek between the Metropolitan Ring Road and Mahoney's Road.	6A		A	
07	Engage private landowners to design future development to front Edgars Creek rather than rear storage areas and loading docks, to increase passive surveillance.	6A	O		
08	Construct screen fencing with native plantings to improve the Creek's interface with adjacent industrial sites.	6A		A	
09	Extend the existing shared user path beyond the end of the Precinct 5, continuing underneath the M80 overpass and linking into the proposed shared user path network for Precinct 6.	6A		A	
10	Provide an alternate connection to the Edgars Creek Trail along Austarc Avenue from High Street. (Opportunity extracted from the ***Thomastown & Lalor Place Framework***)	6A		A	
11	Construct a new shared user path connecting High Street down to the shared user path network along Edgars Creek.	6A		A	
12	Daylight underground drainage and stormwater flows west of Austarc Avenue and High Street to allow water to provide natural filtration systems that contribute to the restoration of a more natural water cycle and improve local soil moisture.	6A	O		
13	Install Gross Pollutant Traps (GPT) to capture coarse sediments and gross pollutants from stormwater run off South of High Street.	6A	O		
14	Naturalise sections of Edgars Creek to improve ecological function, water quality and habitat diversity through channel and floodplain revegetation. Channel diversity and a chain of ponds should be incorporated through further earthworks and revegetation.	6A	O		
15	Introduce a series of Sponge Landscape Rehydration areas to assist in the process of infiltration, evaporation and soil moisture in dehydrated riparian areas between High Street and Chaffey Street.	6A	O		

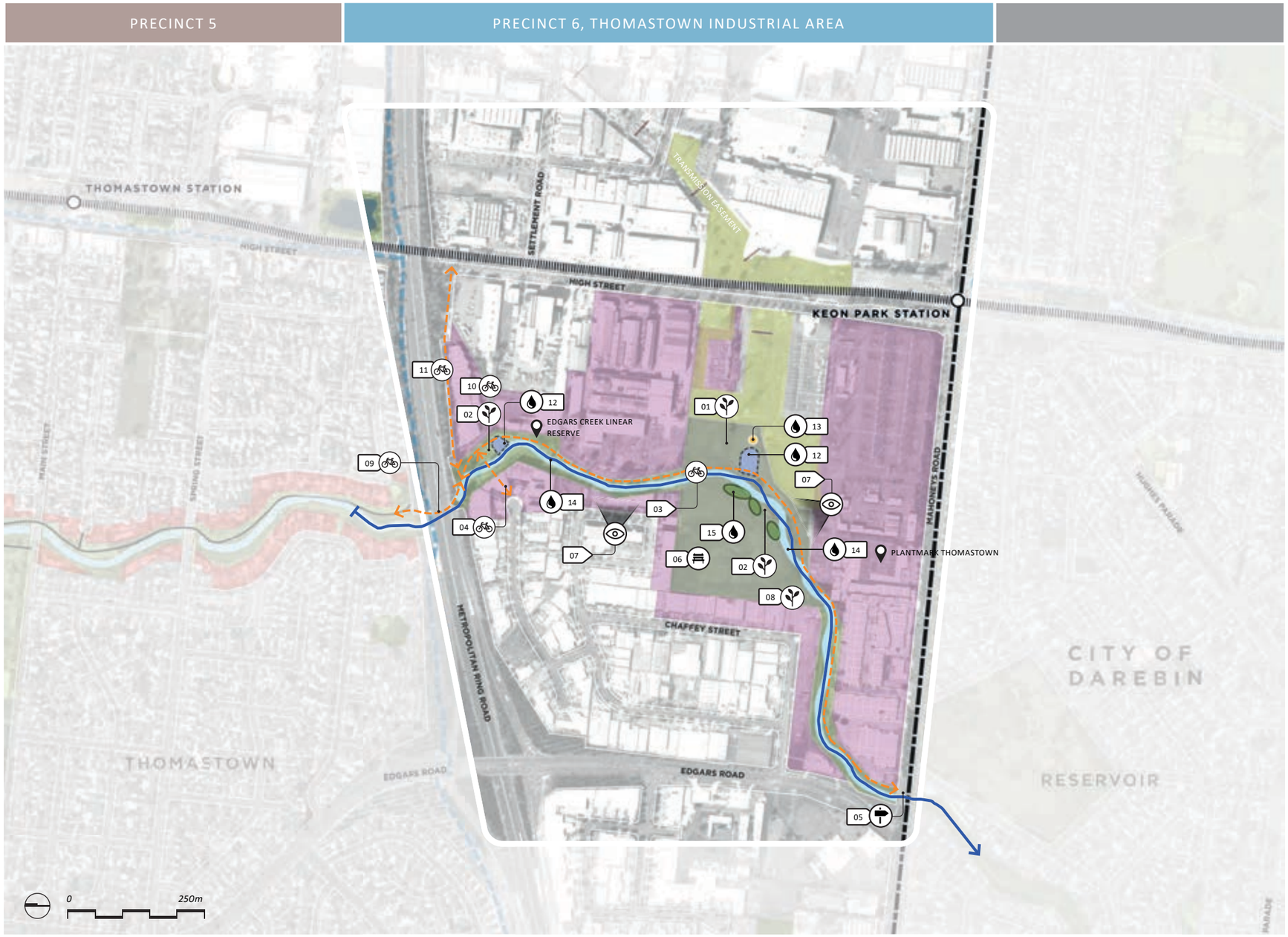
The adjacent table indexes the actions and opportunities that have been identified for Precinct 6. The table includes a description, classification (opportunity, action, or both), and identifies which project objectives have been addressed. A map ID is given for each item which corresponds to the map on the following page.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. Restore and enhance the native vegetation and ecologies of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 1.2: Create a resilient Edgars Creek corridor that can withstand the impacts of climate change and urban development.
- Objective 1.3: Enhance the corridor's overall water quality and hydrological function.
- Objective 2.1: Improve and enhance the recreation infrastructure of the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 2.2: Develop a continuous Edgars Creek Trail that is well connected to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Objective 2.3: Establish an identifiable, navigable, and inviting Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.1: Foster a deeper community connection to the Edgars Creek corridor.
- Objective 3.2: Support and empower existing community groups through education, volunteer programs, and community events.
- Objective 3.3: Advocate for adjacent landholders and government authorities to enhance the Edgars Creek corridor.

PRECINCT 6, THOMASTOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA - OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

EXISTING
Edgars Creek
Local Landmark
Existing Shared Path
Strategic Cycling Corridor
Public Open Space
Private & Restricted Open Space
Gas & Transmission Easement
Industrial Area Fronting Creek
FUTURE PROPOSED WORK BY OTHERS
Future Shared Path
PROPOSED INITIATIVES
New Active Travel Link (Shared User Path)
Planting Initiative
Information or Interpretive Signage
Improve Visual Connection to the Creek
Improve Streetscape & Park Amenity
Hydrological Initiative



PRECINCT 6, THOMASTOWN INDUSTRIAL AREA

PRECINCT 6A



UNDERTAKE REVEGETATION EFFORTS WHERE NATIVE VEGETATION IS CURRENTLY PATCHY TO ENHANCE THE EXISTING RIPARIAN ZONE OF EDGARS CREEK. PHOTO SHOWING REVEGETATION WORK AT TARRELLA CREEK.



EXAMPLE OF A CONSRRUCTED STORMWATER TREATMENT WETLAND NEAR A RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BY MELBOURNE WATER.



DEDICATED NATIVE TREE PLANTING AS BUFFER TO ADJACENT LAND USES/INDUSTRIAL SITES. EXAMPLE IMAGE TAKEN ALONG THE MARIBYRNONG, FOOTSCRAY, DEMONSTRATING INTEGRATED SHARED USER PATH, BUFFER PLANTING AND INDUSTRIAL INTERFACES.



IMPROVED CROSS CREEK CONNECTION AIDING IN THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SHARED USER PATH NETWORK. IMAGE OF REALMSTUDIO'S 're-imagining your creek' PROJECT ALONG ARNOLDS CREEK, BLIND CREEK, AND STONY CREEK.



EXAMPLE IMAGE DEMONSTRATING SHARED USER PATH CONNECTION.



EXAMPLE IMAGE SHOWING A CONNECTED AND ACTIVATED SHARED USER PATH. CAPITAL CITY TRAIL, MELBOURNE.



ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW OPEN SPACE, INCLUDING OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTIVE AND PASSIVE PLAY FOR THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY.

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BACKGROUND PHOTO: IMAGE TAKEN OF A EUCALYPTUS TORQUATA ALONG THE CREEK LINE AT HUSKISSON RECREATION RESERVE.

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5.8 2025-38: Fuel Contract

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Head of Operations

In Attendance: Manager Maintenance & Operations
Head of Operations

These attachments have been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains 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

The purpose of this contract is to provide fuel and lubricant products for the operation of Council fleet including heavy and light vehicles, and mobile plant equipment.

Council's fuel, fuel cards, oil and lubricants have been provided through a collaborative procurement contract facilitated via the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV). A variation to the contract was approved in June 2024 for a 12-month period and will expire on 30 June 2025.

To ensure continuity of supply and value, MAV engaged the National Procurement Network (NPN) to undertake a procurement process for the ongoing supply of bulk fuel, fuel card services, oils, lubricants, and vehicle care products. That engagement resulted in contract NPN1.17-2, referenced internally as 2025-38. Contract 2025-38 is a ten-year contract with an option to extend a further two years.

That contract establishes a panel of preferred suppliers for the supply of bulk fuel, fuel cards and vehicle lubricants on behalf of participating NPN members, including Local Government Procurement (LGP) and MAV providing value for money, operational efficiency, and environmental sustainability.

Due to low usage and the close proximity of public fuel stations, the Epping works depot has ceased its on-site refuelling service. Bulk fuel is unlikely to be required moving forward.

NPN's collaborative contract utilises the following suppliers:

- Fuel, Fuel Cards, Bulk Fuel

    - AMPOL, BP Australia, Barcourt Pty Ltd, Business Fuel Cards Pty Ltd, WEX Australia for fuel cards
- Oil, lubricants, AdBlue and vehicle care products
    - AMPOL, Castrol Australia Pty Limited, for oil, lubricants, AdBlue and vehicle care products

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Resolve to use the head contract panel arrangement established by the National Procurement Network (NPN) on behalf of the Municipal Association of Victoria for the provision of fuel and lubricants at an amount not exceeding $10,111,044 ex. GST over the 10 year term of the contract ending 31 January 2035, as detailed in the confidential attachments.**
2. **Through the NPN head contract arrangement, resolve to enter into contracts with:**
    a. **AMPOL as the primary supplier for fuel cards and BP as the secondary supplier; and**
    b. **AMPOL for the supply of oil and lubricants as the primary supplier and Castrol as the secondary supplier.**
3. **Approve the funding arrangements as detailed in the confidential attachments.**
4. **Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to sign and execute the contract on behalf of Council.**

Background / Key Information

The City of Whittlesea owns and operates a total of 234 vehicles, segmented as follows:

- 54 heavy vehicles (waste trucks, tippers, compactors etc.);
- 106 light commercial vehicles (Utes, vans, buses);
- 58 passenger vehicles; and
- 16 mobile plant (mini sweepers, backhoes, mowers etc.).

That number includes eight electric vehicles (EVs), four plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and 35 hybrid vehicles. Council's fleet is utilised to deliver essential services to the community directly, and indirectly.

Council requires the provision of fuel cards to enable users to access a network of fuel sites within proximity to the municipality. Lubricant products are required for the service and maintenance of vehicles and plant.

In the last four years Council's fuel expenditure increased by 25.21%. The total expenditure for fuel increased from $690,576 in 2021 to $864,670 in 2024. The impacts of COVID-19 temporarily lowered fuel spending throughout 2021 and 2022, as Council fleet utilisation declined throughout the lockdown period. The continued impact of Covid saw prices rebound shortly after lockdown ended and continue to rise in subsequent years.

The introduction of eight EVs, four PHEV and 35 hybrid vehicles is gradually beginning to offset fuel costs and support Council's sustainability objectives.

Council will continue to pursue cost reductions and advance its sustainability objectives by investing in additional electric, hybrid, and fuel-efficient vehicles, implementing efficient fleet management practices, and utilising telematics for route optimisation.

On 31 July 2024 LGP, as the lead agency for NPN released a request for tender (RFT) for provision of bulk fuel (Requirement 1), fuel cards (Requirement 2) and Oil and Lubricants (Requirement 3). Tenders closed on 9 September 2024.

Contract NPN1.17-2, referenced internally as 2025-38, will be a ten-year contract commencing 18 June 2025, and expiring on 31 January 2035 with an option to extend for a further two year period.

On closure, a total of 13 tenders were received alongside one late submission (Maxi-Tankers Pty Ltd). Tender applicants were listed as follows:

No	Supplier Response received from
1	Ampol Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd
2	BP Australia Pty Ltd

No	Supplier Response received from
3	Bracourt Pty Ltd
4	Business Fuel Cards Pty Ltd
5	Castrol Australia Pty Limited
6	Fuchs Lubricants Australia
7	Gulf Western Premium Quality Lubricating Oils (Australia) Pty Limited
8	Park Pty Ltd
9	Patdove Pty Limited
10	Valvoline (Australia) Pty Ltd
11	Viva Energy Australia Pty Ltd
12	Wex Australia Pty Ltd
13	Wurth Australia Pty Ltd
14	Maxi-Tankers Pty Ltd

The tendered price and a summary of the evaluation are detailed in the confidential attachments. A review of the recommendations paper provided by the NPN confirms that:

- The process was conducted thoroughly and with due regard to probity; and
- The panel of suppliers recommended by NPN presents better value for money than Council would likely be able to achieve by tendering on its own.

The evaluation involved scoring of conforming and competitive tenders according to the following pre-determined criteria and weighting:

Qualitative Criteria Weights	Weight %
1. Conformance/Compliance	25%
2. Demonstrated Experience	25%
3. Product & Service Delivery	20%
4. Customer Service	10%
5. Corporate Social Responsibility	10%
6. Price	10%

The sections and questions in the online advertised differed to the original weighting reported above, and was corrected to align to the following:

eProcure Criteria	eProcure Description	Weight
Conformance/Compliance	Compliance	25%
Demonstrated Experience	Demonstrated Experience	25%
Product & Service Delivery	Conditions of Participation (Breaches, Investigations, WHS, QA, Acknowledgements)	25%
Customer Service	Customer Service Contract Management and Reporting	10%

eProcure Criteria	eProcure Description	Weight
Corporate Social Responsibility	Sustainability	5%
	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	0%
Price	Price	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 limited to) demonstrated experience in a range of capabilities, ability to achieve outcomes, ability to deliver, quality, sustainable procurement, and contract management requirements which were likely to have the most impact on the achievement of best value.

On evaluation, the following suppliers were awarded for panel supply through NPN:

- AMPOL, BP Australia, Barcourt Pty Ltd, Business Fuel Cards Pty Ltd, WEX Australia -- for the supply of fuel; and
- AMPOL, Castrol Australia Pty Limited – for the supply of oil, lubricants and AdBlue.

The recommended tenders were the successful suppliers for their respective categories and are considered best value because they offer low prices with greater discounts presenting pricing superiority to market rates. It is expected that the Council will on average receive a minimum of 4 cents per litre discount on fuel card usage and on a range of oil and lubricant product when bulk ordering.

The contractor's prices have been checked and are considered competitive.

Council's current annual spend on fuel is approximately $657,850 as of April this year. Across the ten-year term of the contract, it's likely that Council will continue to expand its adoption and utilisation of electric and hybrid vehicles, which may reduce total annual fuel spend. That potential reduction, however, will be hampered by the availability of electric vehicles, particularly electric models of heavy service vehicles, within the Australian market. It's also likely that continued municipal growth, including the growth of serviceable assets, and the expansion of the community, will result in Council expanding its fleet in line with organisational expansion, to meet the growing needs of the community.

Officers recommend the award of 2025-38 for a price not exceeding $10,111,044 excluding GST across the ten-year term of the contract.

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.

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

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the budget for FY 2024-25 and FY2025-26. Subsequent funding will be subject to Council's annual budget review process.

Community Consultation and Engagement

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.

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

(e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

(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.

(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.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Entering this contract will ensure Council have access to competitive fuel, oil and vehicle lubricant prices. Council will continue to transition its fleet to hybrid and electric vehicles over the contract period.

Social, Cultural and Health
No implications.

Economic
No implications.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications
No implications.

Implementation Strategy

Communication
No new communications are required for the implementation of this contract.

Critical Dates
The contract will commence 1 July 2025, and the current approved end date is 31 January 2035.

Options exist to extend the contract up to 31 January 2037. Notification of extension is required to be given three months prior to 31 January 2035.

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 - National Procurement Network (NPN) - Recommendation Report [**5.8.1** - 26 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Confidential Tender Evaluation Summary Fuel Contract [**5.8.2** - 1 page]

5.9 2025-16: Construction of Stables Kindergarten

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Acting Coordinator Major Works

In Attendance: Manager Capital Delivery
Acting Coordinator Major Works

Attachment 1 has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains 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 15 tender submissions received for contract 2025-16, Construction of The Stables Kindergarten, Mill Park.

The Tender Evaluation Panel advises that:

- 15 tenders were received.
- The recommended tender was the highest ranked. Though not the lowest in price, it was deemed the best value due to their demonstrated capability and capacity to deliver the project in line with Council's specified scope and quality requirements.
- Collaborative tendering was not undertaken in relation to this procurement because it is not listed in the Northern Councils Alliance consolidated contract register and this contract relates to a State Government grant funded project.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Resolve to award contract 2025-16 to Izza Group Pty Ltd for the provision of The Stables Kindergarten construction for a lump sum cost of $4,175,871.89 (ex. GST).**
2. **Approve the funding arrangements as detailed in the confidential attachment.**
3. **Note any price variations will be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the conditions of contract.**
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 seek endorsement of the award of Contract No. 2025-16 for the redevelopment of The Stables Kindergarten located in Mill Park.

This contract will deliver a new kindergarten facility featuring two kindergarten rooms, children's amenities, storage areas, shared kitchen, and an outdoor play space. It will also include staff facilities, a public foyer with amenities, and all necessary fittings and furniture, with existing items reused where appropriate. Supporting infrastructure will comprise IT systems, a sealed car park, bicycle parking, accessible pathways, landscaping, and a bin enclosure. The works will also involve demolition of the existing outdated single kindergarten room facility, with building waste disposed to a recycling facility. To ensure service continuity during the construction period, the kindergarten operation will be temporarily relocated to the recently upgraded Mill Park Drive Children's Centre.

Tenders for the contract closed on 3 April 2025. 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 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.

The evaluation outcome was as follows:

Tenderer	Conforming	Competitive	Score	Rank
Tenderer A	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Tenderer B	Yes	Yes	85.40	2
Tenderer C	Yes	Yes	80.99	4
Tenderer D	Yes	Yes	82.03	3
Tenderer E Izza Group Pty Ltd	**Yes**	**Yes**	**94.30**	**1**
Tenderer F	Yes	Yes	75.6	5
Tenderer G	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Tenderer H	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Tenderer I	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Tenderer J	Yes	Yes	71.2	6
Tenderer K	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Tenderer L	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Tenderer M	No	No	N/A	N/A
Tenderer N	No	No	N/A	N/A
Tenderer O	No	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:

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 capital program budget for The Stables Kindergarten Redevelopment project.

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.

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 during construction including waste management 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, traffic and pedestrian management to ensure a safe work site is maintained throughout the contract.

Economic

Economic benefits will be realised through an increase in weekly learning sessions for 66 kindergarten placements—36 more than the current capacity. The project will also support access to two years of free kindergarten, leading to increased local employment and contributing to local business growth.

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 August 2025 and be completed by late 2026.

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 [**5.9.1** - 8 pages]
2. Proposed Floor Plan [**5.9.2** - 1 page]
3. Internal Elevation and 3 D Images [**5.9.3** - 3 pages]
4. External Elevation and 3 D Images [**5.9.4** - 3 pages]
5. Site Plan [**5.9.5** - 1 page]



1 **PROPOSED FLOOR FINISHES PLAN**
SCALE: 1 : 100

LEGEND

	CSF-01	CONCRETE SURFACE SEALANT AS SPECIFIED
	CTF-01	CARPET TILES TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	MTF-01	ENTRY MAT RECESS AS SPECIFIED
	MWF-01	MODWOOD DECKING AS SPECIFIED AND SCHEDULED
	PAV-03	CONCRETE PAVING TYPE 3 REFER STRUCTURAL ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
	RUG-01	RUG TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	RUG-02	RUG TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
	SVF-01	SHEET VINYL SAFETY TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	VNF-01	SHEET VINYL TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	VNF-02	SHEET VINYL TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
	VNF-03	SHEET VINYL TYPE 3 AS SPECIFIED

NOTE:
REFER FINISHES SCHEDULE AND SPECIFICATION

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REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE
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CLIENT CITY OF WHITTLESEA

ADDRESS 284 CHILDS ROAD, MILL PARK VIC. 3082

PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING PROPOSED FLOOR FINISHES PLAN

0 1000 2500 5000
SCALE: 1:100 @A1

PROJECT NO 24.011

SCALE 1 : 100@ A1

DRAWN BY NC

CHECKED BY NC

CD-A111 REV T0



INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE OF PLAYROOM 2



INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE OF PLAYROOM 1



INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE OF FOYER



INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE OF AMENITIES

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ADDRESS 284 CHILDS ROAD, MILL PARK VIC. 3082

City of Whittlesea

PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING PROPOSED INTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

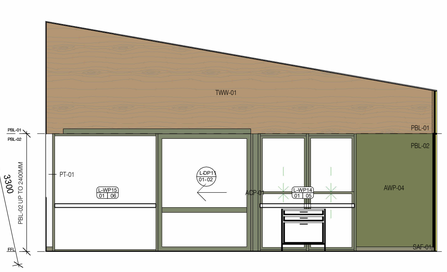
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CD-A451 REV T0



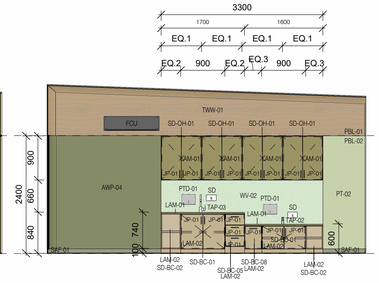
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SCALE: 1 : 50



1 PLAYROOM 01 - ELEVATION 1

REFER: A710
SCALE: 1 : 50



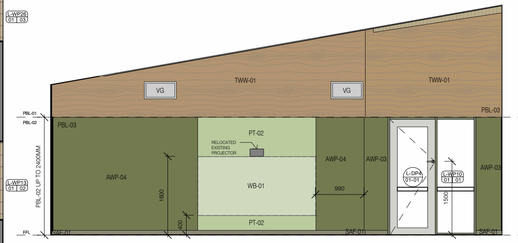
7 PLAYROOM 01 - ELEVATION 2

SCALE: 1 : 50



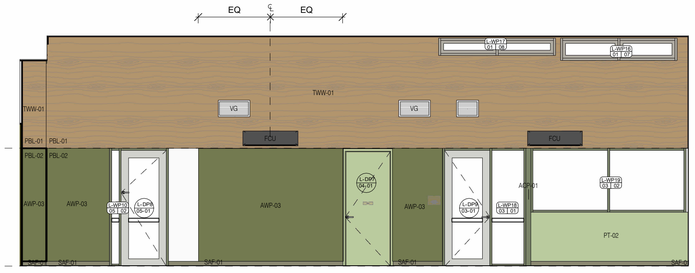
2 PLAYROOM 01 - ELEVATION 3

REFER: A611
SCALE: 1 : 50



3 PLAYROOM 01 - ELEVATION 4

REFER: A710
SCALE: 1 : 50



4 PLAYROOM 01 - ELEVATION 5

REFER: A710
SCALE: 1 : 50



5 3D View 1 - PLAYROOM 1

SCALE:



6 3D View 2 - PLAYROOM 1

SCALE:

LEGEND

ACP-01	POWDERCOATED ALUMINIUM COVER PLATE TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
AWP	ACOUSTIC WALL PANEL AS SPECIFIED
AWP-03	ACOUSTIC WALL PANELS TYPE 3 AS SPECIFIED
AWP-04	ACOUSTIC WALL PANELS TYPE 4 AS SPECIFIED
FB	FLOOR BOX. REFER ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS DRAWINGS
FCU	FAN COIL UNIT REFER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS
FW	FLOOR WASTE REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
LAM-01	LAMINATE TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
LAM-02	LAMINATE TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
PBL-01	13MM PLASTERBOARD ABOVE 2100MM UNO AS SPECIFIED
PBL-02	13MM IMPACTCHEK PLASTERBOARD UP TO 2100MM UNO AS SPECIFIED
PBL-03	2 X LAYERS PLASTERBOARD: INSIDE FACE 13MM PLASTERBOARD - OUTSIDE FACE 13MM IMPACTCHEK TO 2100MM W/13MM PLASTERBOARD ABOVE
PT-01	PAINT FINISH TYPE 1 - REFER TO MATERIALS AND FINISHES SCHEDULE
PT-02	PAINT FINISH TYPE 2 - REFER TO MATERIALS AND FINISHES SCHEDULE
PTD-01	PAPER TOWEL DISPENSER TYPE 1
RUG-01	RUG TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
RUG-02	RUG TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
SAF-01	ALUMINIUM SKIRTING TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
SD	SOAP DISPENSER AS SPECIFIED
TAP-02	TAP TYPE 2 REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
TAP-03	TAP TYPE 3 REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
TR-01	TROUGH TYPE 1 REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
TWW-01	TIMBER WALLPAPER TYPE 1 AS SCHEDULED AND SPECIFIED
VG	VENTILATION GRILL AS PER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS & SPECIFICATION
VNF-01	SHEET VINYL TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
WB-01	WHITEBOARD TYPE-01 AS SPECIFIED REFER INTERNAL ELEVATIONS FOR LOCATIONS
WV-02	WALL VINYL TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED

NOTE :
REFER DRAWING A000 SERIES FOR GENERAL INTERNAL ELEVATION NOTES

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CLIENT CITY OF WHITTLESEA

ADDRESS 284 CHILDS ROAD, MILL PARK VIC, 3082

PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING PROPOSED INTERNAL ELEVATIONS - SHEET 01

0 500 1250 2500
SCALE: 1:50 @A1

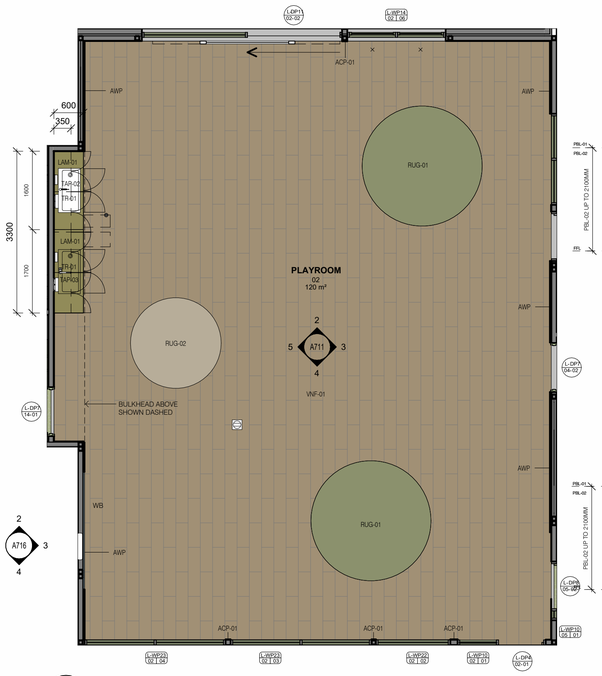
PROJECT NO 24.011

SCALE 1 : 50@ A1

DRAWN BY NC

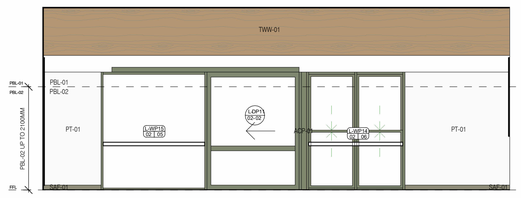
CHECKED BY NC

CD-A710 REV T0



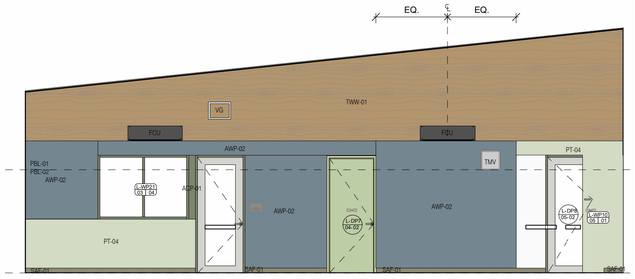
1 PLAYROOM 02 - I.E

SCALE: 1 : 50



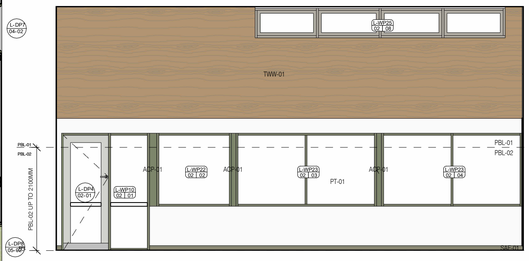
2 PLAYROOM 02 - ELEVATION 1

REFER: A711
SCALE: 1 : 50



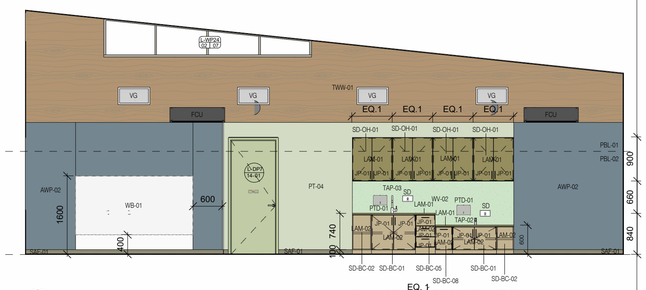
3 PLAYROOM 02 - ELEVATION 2

REFER: A711
SCALE: 1 : 50



4 PLAYROOM 02 - ELEVATION 3

REFER: A711
SCALE: 1 : 50



5 PLAYROOM 02 - ELEVATION 4

REFER: A711
SCALE: 1 : 50



6 3D View 1 - PLAYROOM 2

SCALE:



7 3D View 2 - PLAYROOM 2

SCALE:

LEGEND

ACP-01	POWDERCOATED ALUMINIUM COVER PLATE TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
AWP	ACOUSTIC WALL PANEL AS SPECIFIED
AWP-02	ACOUSTIC WALL PANELS TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
FCU	FAN COIL UNIT REFER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS
LAM-01	LAMINATE TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
LAM-02	LAMINATE TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
PBL-01	13MM PLASTERBOARD ABOVE 2100MM UNO AS SPECIFIED
PBL-02	13MM IMPACTCHEK PLASTERBOARD UP TO 2100MM UNO AS SPECIFIED
PT-01	PAINT FINISH TYPE 1 - REFER TO MATERIALS AND FINISHES SCHEDULE
PT-04	PAINT FINISH TYPE 4 - REFER TO MATERIALS AND FINISHES SCHEDULE
PTD-01	PAPER TOWEL DISPENSER TYPE 1
RUG-01	RUG TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
RUG-02	RUG TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
SAF-01	ALUMINIUM SKIRTING TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
SD	SOAP DISPENSER AS SPECIFIED
TAP-02	TAP TYPE 2 REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
TAP-03	TAP TYPE 3 REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
TMV	THERMOSTATIC MIXING VALVE REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
TR-01	TROUGH TYPE 1 REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
TWW-01	TIMBER WALLPAPER TYPE 1 AS SCHEDULED AND SPECIFIED
VG	VENTILATION GRILL AS PER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS & SPECIFICATION
VNF-01	SHEET VINYL TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
WB-01	WHITEBOARD TYPE-01 AS SPECIFIED REFER INTERNAL ELEVATIONS FOR LOCATIONS
WV-02	WALL VINYL TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED

NOTE :
REFER DRAWING A000 SERIES FOR GENERAL INTERNAL ELEVATION NOTES

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PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING PROPOSED INTERNAL ELEVATIONS - SHEET 02

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SCALE: 1:50 @A1

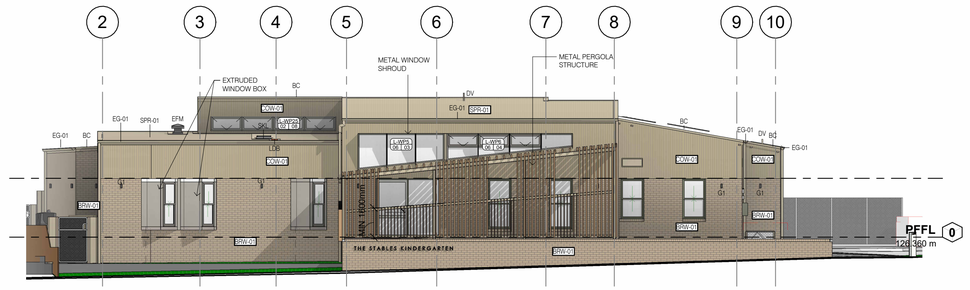
PROJECT NO 24.011

SCALE 1 : 50@ A1

DRAWN BY NC

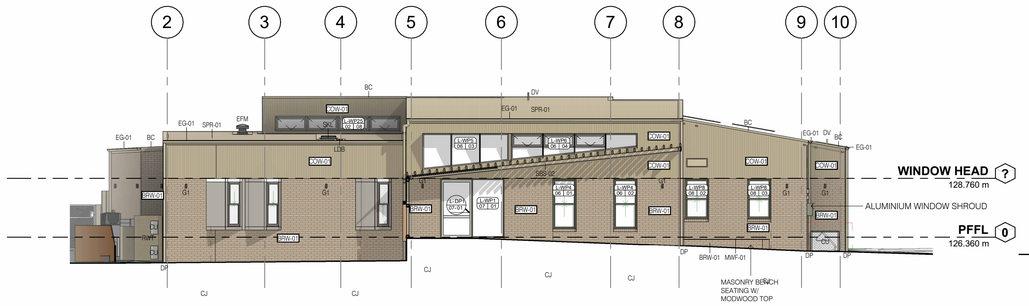
CHECKED BY NC

CD-A711 REV T0



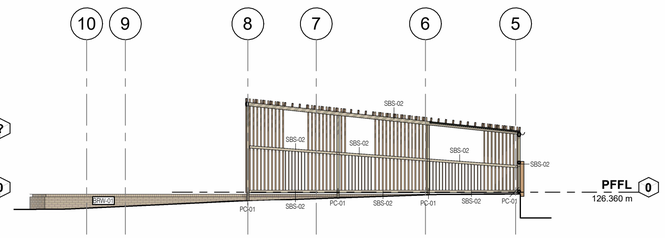
3 PROPOSED SOUTH WEST COLOURED ELEVATION (STREET VIEW)

SCALE: 1 : 100



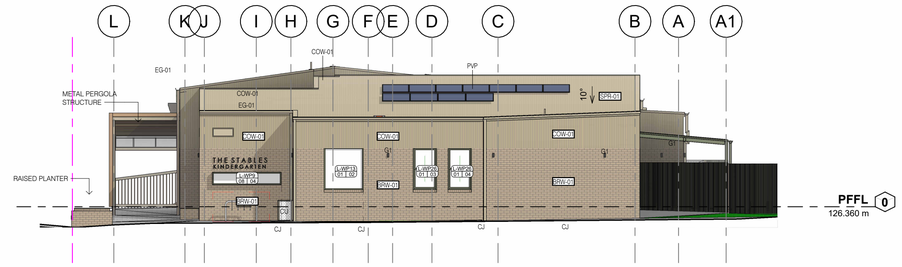
4 PROPOSED SOUTH WEST COLOURED ELEVATION

SCALE: 1 : 100



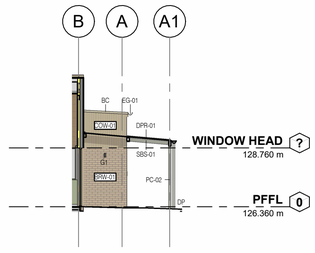
2 PROPOSED NORTH EAST COLOURED ELEVATION (ENTRY)

SCALE: 1 : 100



5 PROPOSED SOUTH EAST COLOURED ELEVATION

SCALE: 1 : 100



1 PROPOSED PART SOUTH EAST COLOURED ELEVATION

SCALE: 1 : 100

LEGEND

BC	COLORBOND BARGE CAPPING AS SPECIFIED & DETAILED
BRW-01	BRICK WORK TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
CJ	CONTROL JOINT AT 6000MM MAX.
COW-01	COLORBOND CUSTOM ORB WALL CLADDING SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
CU	AIR CONDITIONER CONDENSER AS PER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS CONTRACTOR TO PROVIDE CONCRETE PAD & MECHANICAL PLANT SCREEN AS SPECIFIED IN ARCHITECTURAL SPECIFICATION
DP	DOWN PIPES, REFER ROOF PLAN
DPR-01	DANPAL ROOF SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SCHEDULED AND SPECIFIED
DV	DRAINAGE VENT ROOF PENETRATION REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEERS DRAWINGS
EFM	VENTILATION FAN REFER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS
EG-01	150mm SLOTTED EAVES GUTTER TYPE 1 AS SCHEDULED [WIDTH TO SUIT DOWNPIPE DIA. 100mm] INCLUDING GUTTER GUARD AS SPECIFIED
G1	WALL LIGHT REFER ELECTRICAL DRAWINGS
LDB	LADDER BRACKET AS SPECIFIED
MWF-01	MODWOOD DECKING AS SPECIFIED AND SCHEDULED
PC-01	POWDER COAT TYPE 1 - REFER TO MATERIALS AND FINISHES SCHEDULE
PC-02	POWDER COAT TYPE 2 - REFER TO MATERIALS AND FINISHES SCHEDULE
PVP	PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR PANNELS REFER ELECTRICAL DRAWINGS
RWT	RAIN WATER TANK. REFER CIVIL ENGINEERS DRAWINGS
SBS-01	STEEL BEAM TYPE 1 [PAINTED] REFER STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
SBS-02	STEEL BEAM TYPE 2 [PAINTED] REFER STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
SKL	SKYLIGHT AS SPECIFIED
SPR-01	COLORBOND SPANDEK ROOF SHEETING TYPE 1 OVER SAFETY MESH, SISALATION AND INSULATION AS SPECIFIED

	BRW-01	BRICK WORK TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	BRW-02	BRICK WORK TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
	COW-01	COLORBOND CUSTOM ORB WALL CLADDING SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	DPR-01	DANPAL ROOF SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	SPR-01	COLORBOND SPANDEK ROOF SHEETING TYPE 1 OVER SAFETY MESH, SISALATION AND INSULATION AS SPECIFIED

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PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING PROPOSED EXTERNAL COLOURED ELEVATIONS - SHEET 01

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SCALE: 1:100 @A1

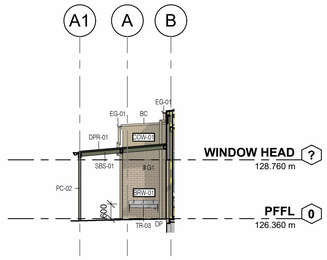
PROJECT NO 24.011

SCALE 1 : 100@ A1

DRAWN BY NC

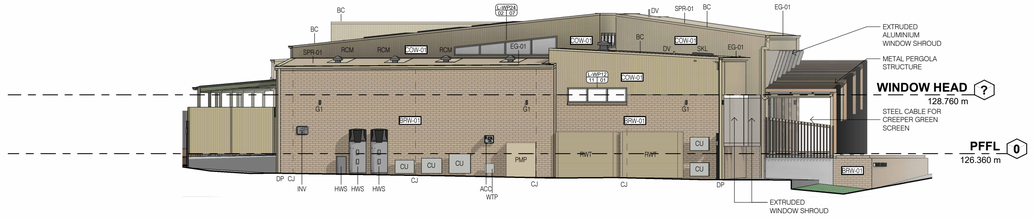
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CD-A412 REV T0



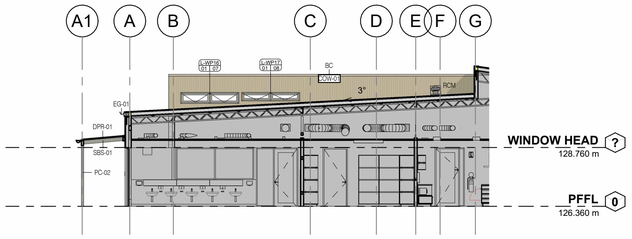
3 PROPOSED PART NORTH WEST COLOURED ELEVATION

SCALE: 1 : 100



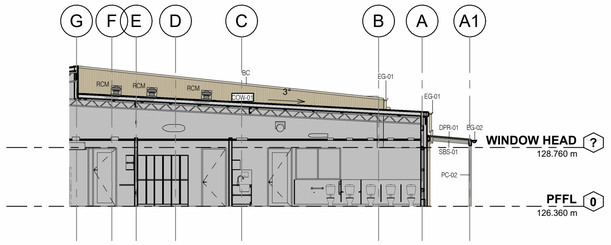
1 PROPOSED NORTH WEST COLOURED ELEVATION

SCALE: 1 : 100



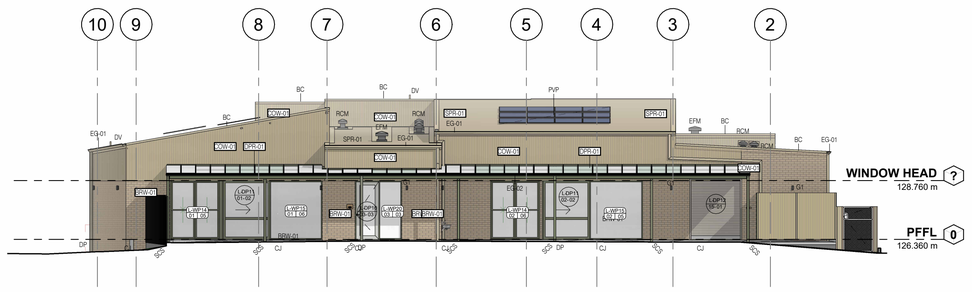
4 PROPOSED NORTH WEST COLOURED ELEVATION (OVER AMENITIES)

SCALE: 1 : 100



5 PROPOSED SOUTH COLOURED EAST ELEVATION (OVER AMENITIES)

SCALE: 1 : 100



2 PROPOSED NORTH EAST COLOURED ELEVATION

SCALE: 1 : 100

LEGEND

ACC	IRRIGATION CONTROLLER REFER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT DRAWINGS
BC	COLORBOND BARGE CAPPING AS SPECIFIED & DETAILED
BRW-01	BRICK WORK TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
CJ	CONTROL JOINT AT 6000MM MAX.
COW-01	COLORBOND CUSTOM ORB WALL CLADDING SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
CU	AIR CONDITIONER CONDENSER AS PER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS CONTRACTOR TO PROVIDE CONCRETE PAD & MECHANICAL PLANT SCREEN AS SPECIFIED IN ARCHITECTURAL SPECIFICATION
DP	DOWN PIPES, REFER ROOF PLAN
DPR-01	DANPAL ROOF SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SCHEDULED AND SPECIFIED
DV	DRAINAGE VENT ROOF PENETRATION REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
EFM	VENTILATION FAN REFER MECHANICAL DRAWINGS
EG-01	150mm SLOTTED EAVES GUTTER TYPE 1 AS SCHEDULED [WIDTH TO SUIT DOWNPIPE DIA. 100mm] INCLUDING GUTTER GUARD AS SPECIFIED
EG-02	150mm SLOTTED EAVES GUTTER TYPE 2 AS SCHEDULED [WIDTH TO SUIT DOWNPIPE DIA. 100mm] INCLUDING GUTTER GUARD AS SPECIFIED
G1	WALL LIGHT REFER ELECTRICAL DRAWINGS
HWS	HOT WATER SERVICE REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
INV	SOLAR PANEL PHOTOVOLTAIC INVERTER REFER ELECTRICAL DRAWINGS
PC-02	POWDER COAT TYPE 2 - REFER TO MATERIALS AND FINISHES SCHEDULE
PMP	WATER PUMP REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
PVP	PHOTOVOLTAIC SOLAR PANNELS REFER ELECTRICAL DRAWINGS
RCM	ROOF COWL MECHANICAL DRAWINGS
RWT	RAIN WATER TANK. REFER CIVIL ENGINEERS DRAWINGS
SBS-01	STEEL BEAM TYPE 1 [PAINTED] REFER STRUCTURAL ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
SCS	STEEL COLUMN [PAINTED] REFER STRUCTURAL ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS AND A900 SERIES
SKL	SKYLIGHT AS SPECIFIED
SPR-01	COLORBOND SPANDEK ROOF SHEETING TYPE 1 OVER SAFETY MESH, SISALATION AND INSULATION AS SPECIFIED
TR-03	TROUGH TYPE 3 REFER HYDRAULIC ENGINEER'S DRAWINGS
WTP	WATER TANK PUMP REFER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT DRAWINGS

	BRW-01	BRICK WORK TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	BRW-02	BRICK WORK TYPE 2 AS SPECIFIED
	COW-01	COLORBOND CUSTOM ORB WALL CLADDING SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	DPR-01	DANPAL ROOF SYSTEM TYPE 1 AS SPECIFIED
	SPR-01	COLORBOND SPANDEK ROOF SHEETING TYPE 1 OVER SAFETY MESH, SISALATION AND INSULATION AS SPECIFIED

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PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING PROPOSED EXTERNAL COLOURED ELEVATIONS - SHEET 02

0 1000 2500 5000
SCALE: 1:100 @A1

PROJECT NO 24.011

SCALE 1 : 100@ A1

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CHECKED BY NC

CD-A413 REV T0



PERSPECTIVE VIEW 1 FROM CHILDS ROAD



PERSPECTIVE VIEW 2 FROM CHILDS ROAD



PERSPECTIVE VIEW FROM REAR PLAY AREA

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PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING PROPOSED EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

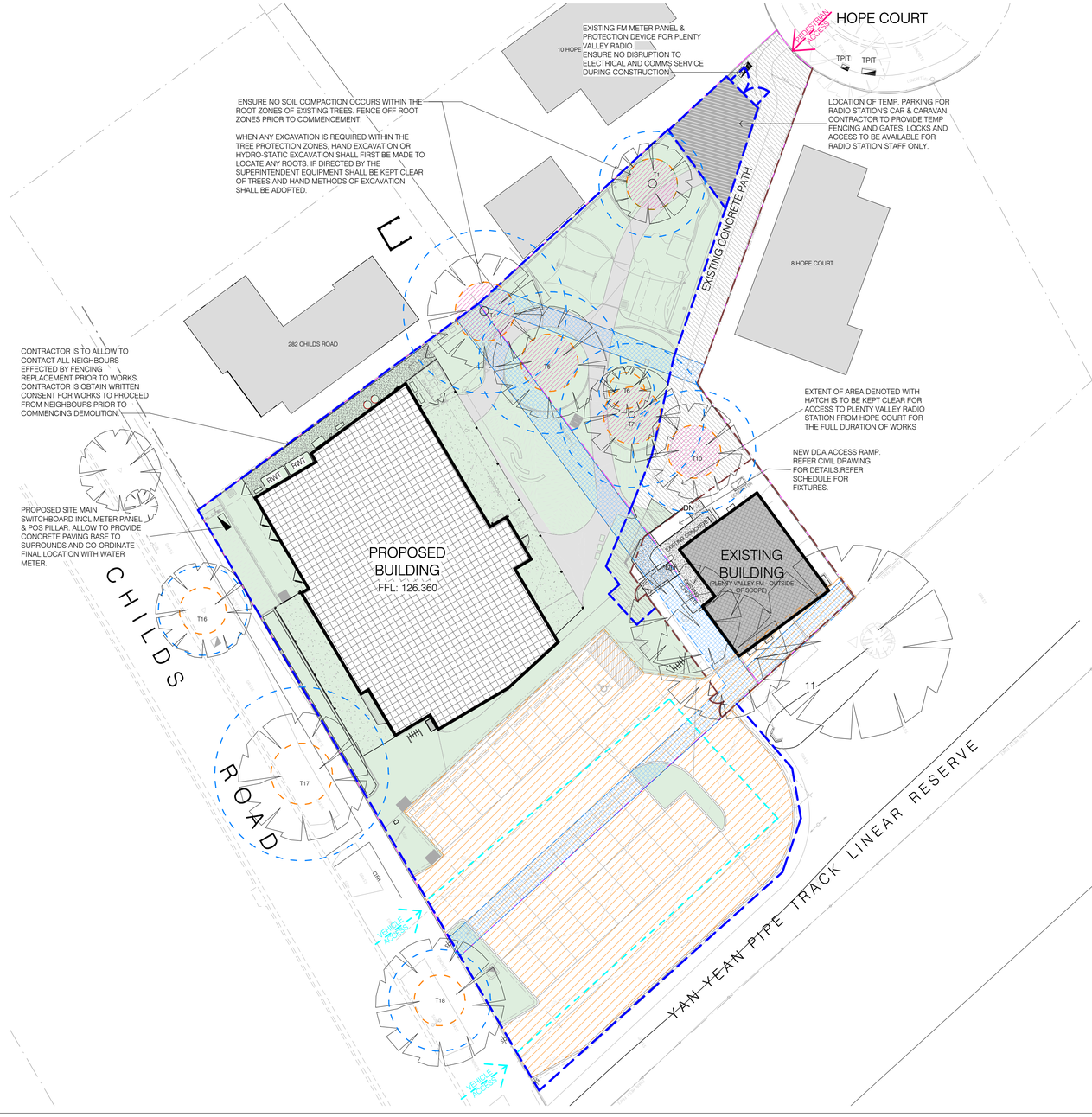
PROJECT NO 24.011

SCALE @ A1

DRAWN BY NC

CHECKED BY NC

CD-A450 REV T0



LEGEND

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- EXTERNAL SITE WORKS, REFER TO CIVIL PLANS FOR DETAILS
- PROPOSED BUILDING
- AREA OF PROPOSED LANDSCAPING/CIVIL WORKS, REFER CIVIL/LANDSCAPE PLANS
- AREA OF PROPOSED CARPARKING WORKS, REFER CIVIL PLANS
- TREE TO BE DEMOLISHED, TX DENOTES TREE NUMBER (REFER TO ARBORIST REPORT FOR DETAILS)
- EXISTING STRUCTURAL ROOT ZONE. (REFER TO ARBORIST REPORT FOR DETAILS)
- EXISTING TREE PROTECTION ZONE. (REFER TO ARBORIST REPORT FOR DETAILS)
- EXISTING EASEMENT
- EXISTING NEIGHBOURING BUILDING
- EXISTING ONSITE BUILDING OUTSIDE OF PROJECT SCOPE
- EXISTING BOUNDARY FENCE TO REMAIN
- PROPOSED CONTRACTORS TEMPORARY FENCING
- VEHICULAR ACCESS
- PEDESTRIAN ACCESS POINT
- EXTENT OF AREA TO BE KEPT CLEAR AT ALL TIMES AND MAINTAINED FOR PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO PLENTY VALLEY RADIO BUILDING
- LOCATION OF TEMPORARY CARAVAN PARKING & STORAGE FOR USE BY PLENTY VALLEY RADIO ONLY, NO CONTRACTOR ACCESS TO AREA INDICATED

NOTE :
REFER DRAWING A000 SERIES FOR GENERAL SITE PLAN NOTES

SCOPE OF WORKS

CONTRACTOR TO REFER TO DOCUMENTATION AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR FULL EXTENT OF WORKS. REFER TO SITE STAGING PLANS FOR INDICATIVE LOCATIONS FOR CONTRACTORS COMPOUNDS, SITE SHEDS & AMENITIES AND ACCESS POINTS.

REFER TO SERVICES AND ENGINEERING DOCUMENTS FOR FULL EXTENT OF SITE WORKS AND SERVICES INCLUDING ALL CIVIL AND LANDSCAPING WORKS.

CONSTRUCTION WORKS

- PROVIDE SECURE CONTRACTOR FENCING WITH SHADE SAIL SCREENING TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE AREA INDICATED OR AS OTHERWISE AGREED PRIOR TO WORKS COMMENCING.
- CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CHILDCARE CENTRE INCLUDING EXTERNAL COVERED AREAS / VERANDAHS, SERVICES ENCLOSURES AND ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL SITE WORKS, SERVICES AND LANDSCAPING
- CONSTRUCTION OF ALL GENERAL EXTERNAL SITE WORKS AND LANDSCPAING INCLUDING GRASSED AREAS, PAVING & GARDEN BEDS
- CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ENCLOSED CHILDCARE PLAY SPACE ASSOCIATED WITH NEW CHILDCARE CENTRE INCLUDING ALL PLAY EQUIPMENT, SURFACE TREATMENTS, SERVICES AND EXTERNAL STRUCTURES & SHADE SAILS. REFER TO CIVIL PLANS, LANDSCAPE PLANS AND SERVICES DRAWINGS FOR DETAILS.
- CONSTRUCTION OF NEW EXTERNAL CARPARK INCLUDING ALL SURFACE TREATMENTS, LINEMARKING, BOLLARDS, LIGHTING AND OTHER OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS.
- CONSTRUCTION OF ALL NEW FENCING, REFER TO A014 FENCING PLAN FOR DETAILS INCLUDING TYPES, LOCATION & EXTENT.

THE CONTRACTOR SHALL ENSURE THAT AT ALL TIMES THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT, ACCESS TO EXISTING PLENTY VALLEY RADIO BUILDING IS MAINTAINED AND THERE ARE NO DISRUPTIONS TO EXISTING SERVICES SUPPLY, ANY WORKS WHICH MAY IMPACT OPERATIONS OR ACCESS TO THE EXISTING RADIO STATION BUILDING ARE TO BE CONFIRMED AND AGREED TO BY SUPERINTENDENT, PRINCIPAL AND RADIO STATION STAFF PRIOR TO ANY WORKS OCCURING.
REFER TO SITE STAGING PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS

TREE PROTECTION NOTES

CONTRACTOR SHALL ALLOW TO UNDERTAKE ALL WORKS WITHIN TREE PROTECTION ZONES (TPZ) OR STRUCTURAL ROOT ZONES (SRZ) IN STRICT ACCORDANCE WITH REQUIRMENTS WITHIN THE INCLUDED ARBORIST REPORT.

THE CONTRACTOR SHALL ALLOW TO PROVIDE ALL PROTECTION MEASURES AS NOTED WITHIN REPORT TO THE EFFECTED AREAS OF WORKS AND EMPLOY NON DESTRUCTUVE DIGGING VIA MEANS OF HAND EXCAVATION OR BORING ONLY OR AS OTHERWISE NOMINATED OR AGREED TO BY PROJECT ARBORIST.

ANY EXCAVATION WORKS WITHIN TPZ OR SRZ AREAS ARE TO ONLY BE COMPLETED UNDER SUPERVISION BY QUALIFIED ARBORIST.

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PROJECT THE STABLES KINDERGARTEN RE-DEVELOPMENT

DRAWING SITE STAGING PLAN - PROPOSED WORKS

0 2000 5000 10000
SCALE: 1:200 @A1

PROJECT NO 24.011
SCALE As indicated@ A1
DRAWN BY NC
CHECKED BY BT

CD-A013 REV T0

5.10 2018-132: Supply of Road Drainage & Associated Street Lighting Works

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Coordinator Civil Infrastructure Renewal

In Attendance: Manager Capital Delivery
Unit Manager Engineering Design & Construction

These attachments have been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a).

Executive Summary

Contract 2018-132 Supply of Road, Drainage and Associated Street Lighting Works enables the provision of civil infrastructure construction services via several civil contractors. It is proposed that this panel contract be varied by extending the contract term by twelve months, up to 30 June 2026, to meet operational requirements and provide additional time to complete the procurement process for a new civil panel contract.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Note on 10 December 2019, Council resolved to award this contract to a panel of six contractors, as detailed in the Background/Key Information section of this report.**
2. **Approve a non-financial contract extension for a period of 12 months from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 to enable the current procurement process for the provision of a new civil panel contract to be finalised.**
3. **Note sufficient budget is available within this contract to cover the 12 month extension period.**

Background / Key Information

This contract was awarded as an Annual Supply Contract to a panel of six contractors, following Council's resolution on 10 December 2019. It is a Schedule of Rates contract with provisions for annual rate adjustments and a total expenditure limit of $45 million (excl. GST). The initial term was three years, with an option to extend for a further two years.

The contract was structured in two parts and was awarded to the following contractors:

Part A: Road Rehabilitation Project

- Metro Asphalt Pty Ltd

Part B: Civil Capital Project

- Metro Asphalt Pty Ltd
- Fercon Pty Ltd
- Axis Infrastructure Pty Ltd
- Conbi Contractors Pty Ltd
- Little Rock Pty Ltd

The original contract term was from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2022. Two-time extensions were exercised in accordance with Council's resolution on 10 December 2019 and the Chief Executive Officer's delegated authority, extending the contract term to 30 June 2025. A further six-month extension period was approved by the CEO to undertake the procurement process for a new contract. *Please refer to Attachment 1 for the Contract 2018-132 Council Resolution 10 December 2019.*

All contractors have performed well under the contract, noting that Fercon Pty Ltd did not undertake any works under the contract due to their unavailability.

The total expenditure under this contract as of the end of April 2025 was $31,206,044.07 million (excl. GST), which has been allocated against relevant project budgets within the Capital Works Program. This expenditure is significantly lower than the original approved contract sum of $45 million (excl. GST). The underspend over the contract period is primarily attributed to high-value civil projects exceeding $750,000 (incl. GST) (increased to $1 million incl. GST, effective 18 March 2025), which are required to undergo a separate tender process in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy and therefore this panel contract is not utilised for such projects.

The proposed twelve-month extension, from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, does not require any financial variation to the existing contract sum. *Please refer to Confidential Attachment 2 for the Financial Summary of Contract.*

This contract extension will enable Council to continue meeting operational requirements by facilitating the delivery of planned civil capital works for the 2025–2026 financial year while it continues to finalise the procurement process for a replacement contract.

It is noted that Council has access to other panel arrangements, including the Victorian Government State Purchase Contract and the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) Pre-qualified Contractors, as potential alternatives to the current contract. However, these contracts do not operate under a Schedule of Rates model and require procurement processes similar to Council's own tendering procedures, which involve significant time and resource commitments. Additionally, DTP pre-qualified contractors are typically suited to large-scale infrastructure projects and are not well aligned with the scope, scale, or delivery model of Council-level civil works. These contractors also tend to be more costly compared to this contract.

Importantly, the current contract's Schedule of Rates have been specifically tailored to meet Council's unique project requirements, operational demands, and risk profile—ensuring greater cost certainty, streamlined delivery, and enhanced value.

Given the panel contractors' proven performance and the alignment of the contract with Council's needs, extending the existing arrangement is assessed to provide the best overall value for the requested extension period.

As a separate matter, Council officers are preparing a replacement contract, and it is proposed to award the replacement tender via a Council Meeting by mid 2026. The new contract will contain with significant improvements including:

- improvements to annual price indexation mechanism;
- updates to the existing terms and conditions;
- restructuring of the contract format;
- opportunities to introduce new rates items and;
- enhanced provisions for the provision of sustainable construction material alternatives and methodologies.

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.

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

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management

Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the budget under Council's various programs and projects associated with the annual Capital Work Program.

Community Consultation and Engagement

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.

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

(e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

(g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.

(i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

(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.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Contractors are required to demonstrate their commitment to social and environmentally sustainable work practices such as using recycled products as far as possible, site specific environmental management plan, etc.

Social, Cultural and Health

Well maintained civil infrastructures and newly build civil infrastructures like car parks, shared path, footpaths etc throughout the municipality fosters improved health and wellbeing outcomes, promotes both active and passive recreation, and enhances social cohesion and connectedness.

Economic

The variation to this contract will continuously support the engagement of local contractors to support the local economy.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

Contractors must comply with, and ensure that its employees, subcontractors and agents comply with, any Acts, Regulations, Local Laws and By-Laws applicable to the performance of this contract's services. The contractors' responsibilities extend to include any statutory requirements that may be specific to Local Government entities, such as traffic management plans.

The contract includes stringent provisions for resource and risk management, enabling Council to select the most appropriate contractor based on pre-determined criteria, including price, availability and project timeframe. The panel contract has multiple contractors that allows Council to seek competitive prices for each project.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

No further communication is required other than informing contractors of the contract extension. Residents affected by the proposed works will be notified prior to commencement, in accordance with the provisions of the contract.

Critical Dates

The contract commenced on 1 July 2020 and the current approved end date is 30 June 2025. Existing contractors will be notified once Council approves the proposed contract extension to 30 June 2026.

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 - Contract 2018-132 Council Resolution 10 Dec 2019 [**5.10.1** - 6 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Financial Summary of Contract [**5.10.2** - 2 pages]

5.11 2019-78: Supply of Asphalt Works & Materials

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Report Author: Coordinator Civil Infrastructure Renewal

In Attendance: Manager Capital Delivery
Unit Manager Engineering Design & Construction

These attachments have been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains confidential meeting information, being the records of meetings closed to the public under section 66(2)(a).

Executive Summary

Contract 2019-78 – Supply of Asphalt Works facilitates the provision of road resurfacing services via a panel of asphalt contractors. It is proposed that this panel contract be varied by extending the contract term by twelve months, to 30 June 2026 and to increase the contract sum by $12 million (excl. GST) to accommodate the estimated costs of planned road resurfacing and rehabilitation works during this proposed extension period. This extension will ensure operational road resurfacing requirements are met and provide additional time for Council Officers to complete the procurement process for a new panel contract.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Note on 2 June 2020, Council resolved to award this contract at a cost of $37 million (ex. GST) to a panel of five contractors, as detailed the Background/Key Information section of this report.**
2. **Approve an extension of the contract by 12 months from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 at a cost of $12 million (ex. GST) bringing the cumulative contract value to $50.818 million (ex. GST) to enable the current procurement process for the provision of the supply of asphalt works and materials to be finalised.**
3. **Note during the 12-month extension period, planned road resurfacing and rehabilitation works will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Road Renewal Program.**

Background / Key Information

This contract was awarded as an Annual Supply Contract to a panel of five contractors, following Council's resolution on 2 June 2020. It is a Schedule of Rates contract with provisions for annual rate adjustments and a total initial expenditure limit of $37 million (excl. GST). The initial term was three years, with an option to extend for a further two years.

The contract was structured in two parts and was awarded to the following contractors:

Part A: Supply, Deliver and Lay of Asphalt

- Boral Resources Victoria
- RABS Paving Service
- Asphaltech Victoria

Part B: Supply of Asphalt

- Boral Resources Victoria
- Asphaltech Victoria

The original contract term was from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023, with two time extensions, of one year each in duration, were exercised in accordance with Council's resolution on 2 June 2020, extending the contract term to 30 June 2025. *Please refer to attachment Att. 5.1 for the Contract 2019-78 Council Resolution 2 June 2020.*

The original approved contract sum was varied by $1,818,181.81 million (excl. GST) on 2 September 2024, in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy, increasing the total contract sum to $38,818,181.81 million (excl. GST). As at end of April 2025, the total expenditure of this contract was $37.48 million (excl. GST) which has been expensed against relevant project budgets in the Capital Program.

A proposed extension of twelve months' duration from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, and a $12 million (excl. GST) variation is required for the delivery of Council's Road Renewal Programs for the 2025/26 financial year. With this variation, the new contract value will be $50,818,181.81 million (excl. GST), and the revised contract expiry date will be 30 June 2026. *Please refer to attachment Att. 5.2 for the Financial Summary of Contract.*

Among the various panel contracts available in the market, only the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Statewide Roads Contract operates under a Schedule of Rates model to undertake major road resurfacing works.

While this panel contract provides standardised Schedule of Rates arrangements, Council's existing Annual Supply Contractors have consistently performed to a satisfactory level under the current contract, reliably delivering works to the required standard over the past five years.

Accurate rate comparisons are difficult between the three contracts, given the different descriptions of work and bracket quantities, however a review of selected comparisons do not indicate any advantage to Council by utilising the MAV contract over the existing Annual Supply Contract. Feedback received from the current panel indicated that their schedule of rates for Council do not have overheads / margins as compared to the MAV panel.

Importantly, the current contract's Schedule of Rates has been specifically tailored to meet Council's unique project requirements, operational demands, and risk profile — ensuring greater cost certainty, streamlined delivery, and enhanced value.

Given the panel contractors' proven performance and the alignment of the contract with Council's needs, extending the existing arrangement is assessed to provide the best overall value for the requested extension period.

As a separate matter, Council officers are preparing a replacement contract, and it is proposed to award the replacement tender with Council approval within the 2025/26 financial year, with significant improvements over the existing contract including:

- improvements to annual price indexation mechanism;
- updates to the existing terms and conditions;
- restructuring of the contract format;
- opportunities to introduce new rate items and;
- enhanced provisions for the provision of sustainable construction material alternatives and methodologies.

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.

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

Considerations of *Local Government Act (2020)* Principles

Financial Management
Sufficient funding for this contract is available in the budget under Council's local road resurfacing, reconstruction/rehabilitation programs in the Capital Program.

Community Consultation and Engagement

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.

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

(e) Innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued.

(g) The ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured.

(I) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

(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.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

Contractors are required to demonstrate their commitment to social and environmentally sustainable work practices such as using recycle products as far as possible and site specific environmental management plan.

Social, Cultural and Health

Well maintained roads throughout the municipality enhance connectivity between neighbourhoods, promoting social interaction and access to cultural and recreational facilities.

Economic

The variation to this contract will continuously support the engagement of local contractors to support the local economy.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

Contractors must comply with, and ensure that its employees, subcontractors and agents comply with, any Acts, Regulations, Local Laws and By-Laws applicable to the performance of the contract's services. The contractors' responsibilities extend to include any statutory requirements that may be specific to local government entities, including appropriate traffic management plans, etc.

The contract includes stringent provisions for resource and risk management, enabling Council to select the most appropriate contractor based on pre-determined criteria, including price, availability and project timeframe. The panel contract has multiple contractors that allows Council to seek competitive prices for each project.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

No further communication is required other than informing contractors of the contract extension. Residents affected by the proposed works will be notified prior to commencement, in accordance with the provisions of the contract.

Critical Dates

The contract commenced on 1 July 2020 and the current approved end date is 30 June 2025. Existing contractors will be notified once Council approves the proposed contract extension to 30 June 2026.

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 - Contract 2019-78 Council Resolution 2 June 2020 [**5.11.1** - 5 pages]
2. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Financial Summary of Contract [**5.11.2** - 2 pages]

5.12 Governance Report

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

Report Author: Compliance & Governance Officer

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 matter:

- Unconfirmed Summary Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 13 May 2025.

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

Officers' Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Note the Governance Report for June 2025.**
2. **Note the 13 May 2025 Unconfirmed Summary Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee at Attachment 1 to this report.**

Background / Key Information

Unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 13 May 2025

The Audit and Risk Committee (Committee), an independent advisory committee of Council, has the responsibility of reporting to the Council and offering expert advice and recommendations on matters brought before it. The Committee fulfills this role by monitoring, reviewing, and providing guidance on issues relating to financial matters, risks and supporting the Council in meeting its governance obligations to the community.

The Committee discussed the following matters at the scheduled meeting of 13 May 2025:

- 2025-2026 Annual Work Plan detailing the reporting requirements for each meeting in the 2025-2026 year.
- The quarterly Risk Management Report detailing risk treatment plans for both strategic and operational risks along with Business Continuity activities.
- The progress of the 2024-2025 Annual Internal Audit Program, including one completed internal audit report and actions arising from previous audits.
- 2025-2026 Internal Audit Plan including the list of internal audits planned for 2025-2026.
- The Corporate Performance Report providing the outcomes for the period ended 31 March 2025 relating to Council's financial performance, the Community Plan Action Plan 2024-25, Good Governance actions and the 2024-25 Capital Works Program.
- Asset Valuation Report detailing Council's method for assessing the fair value of non-current assets.
- The Instruments of Delegations Report detailing the progress on the review of the delegations.
- The Internal Assurance Report outlining the 2024-2025 Internal Assurance Program and its progress.
- The Draft Interim Management Letter for the year ending 30 June 2025.
- Compliance and governance matters as detailed in the Committee's Annual Work Plan.

To provide transparency and to comply with the requirements of the Committee's Charter, the unconfirmed meeting minutes is provided at Attachment 1 for noting by Council.

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

No community consultation or engagement is required in relation to this report.

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

No implications.

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. Unconfirmed Summary Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee Meeting [**5.12.1** - 13 pages]

Unconfirmed

Summary Minutes

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Tuesday 13 May 2025 at 2:00pm

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

Attendees

Present

Members

Independent
Geoff Harry, Chairperson
Bruce Potgieter
Dr Marco Bini
Lisa Tripodi *(Arrived 2:20pm, left 4:41pm and returned 4:44pm)*

Councillors
Cr Martin Taylor, Mayor
Cr David Lenberg

Council Officers:
Craig Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer
Sarah Renner, Director Customer & Corporate Services
Adis Cindrak, Acting Chief Financial Officer
Jacinta Stevens, Executive Manager Office of Council CEO *(left 4:10pm and returned 4:20pm)*
Bobbie Bright, Unit Manager Compliance & Governance

Monitors
Peita Duncan *(joined virtually at 2:12pm)*

Invited Guests:
Rahul Shah, Unit Manager Financial Strategy and Performance
Matthew Barresi, Coordinator Development Contributions and Infrastructure
Ella Edwards, Senior Development Contributions Accountant
Liam Wilkinson, Manager Strategic Futures
Emma Appleton, Director Planning & Development
Natasha Volpe, Acting Unit Manager Risk
Sarah Oldman, Manager Communications and Engagement
Amanda Reed, Coordinator Capital Programming and Reporting
Adrian Napoleone, Manager EPMO and Change
Phoebe Maprock, Unit Manager Financial Compliance and Control
Amanda Dodd, Acting Director Infrastructure and Environment
Jim Karabinis, Manager Assets and Facilities
Michael Johnston, Unit Manager Asset Management

External Attendees:
Jordan McFadden, Senior Manager – Aster Advisory
Nick Walter, Partner – HLB Mann Judd *(attended 4:17pm and left 4:59pm)*
Ping Teoh, Manager – HLB Mann Judd *(attended 4:17pm and left 4:59pm)*

Minutes:
Ilker Destan, Compliance and Governance Officer

Apologies
Janine Morgan, Executive Manager Public Affairs
Aaron Gerrard, Chief Financial Officer
Graham Noriskin, Partner - Aster Advisory

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Unconfirmed

1 In-Camera Discussion

The meeting commenced at 2:00pm with members of the Audit and Risk Committee only. The Chair noted that the independent member Lisa Tripodi was running late.

In-camera session with the CEO and Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO commenced at 2:12pm. Monitor, Peita Duncan, attended virtually at 2:12pm. Independent member, Lisa Tripodi, joined at 2:20pm.

Welcome

All other officers and external listed in attendance joined the meeting at 2:23pm.

The Chair opened the formal section of the meeting, welcoming all attendees.

The Chair congratulated the newly elected Mayor, Councillor Taylor.

The Chair welcomed the Acting Chief Financial Officer.

The Chair acknowledged Committee members had submitted questions on notice regarding the agenda, and a summary of responses was provided prior to the meeting.

Bruce Potgieter has requested that his interest register be updated to include his membership on the Audit and Risk Committee at Brimbank Council.

Apologies

The following apologies were noted:

- Janine Morgan, Executive Manager Public Affairs
- Aaron Gerrard, Chief Financial Officer
- Graham Noriskin, Partner at Aster Advisory

Conflict of Interest

No declarations.

Unconfirmed

2 Previous Meeting

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee with the meeting minutes from the 25 February 2025 Committee meeting for review and confirmation.

Committee Resolution

The 25 February 2025 Committee meeting minutes be confirmed.

CARRIED

2.2 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Audit and Risk Committee on the status of actions arising from previous meetings, detailing those that have been completed and those currently in progress.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the status of actions arising from previous Audit and Risk Committee meetings at Attachment 1 to this report.

CARRIED

3 Audit & Risk Committee Work Plan

3.1 Progress of Annual Work Plan

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive update on the status and progress of the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and to provide confirmation that all planned activities to date have been reported and reviewed in alignment with the AWP.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the status of Annual Work Plan, as detailed in Attachment 1 to the report.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

3.2 Review of Annual Work Plan

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) Annual Work Plan (AWP) to fulfill its responsibilities under their Charter.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee adopted the 2025-2026 Annual Work Plan at Attachment 1, subject to the proposed changes.

CARRIED

4 CEO's Update

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

This report has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2020 on the grounds that it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released. The report contains information regarding potential regulatory proceedings.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a verbal CEO's update and quarterly CEO questionnaire.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the CEO questionnaire.

CARRIED

5 Risk Management

5.1 Risk Management Report – Quarter Ending 31 December 2024

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Acting Unit Manager Risk

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) on the status of risk management activities during the quarter ending 31 March 2025.

Unconfirmed

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

1. **The status of the risk treatment plans.**
2. **The addition of three new high operational risks that have been identified.**
3. **The Business Continuity Plan activities for the period ending 31 March 2025.**
4. **The public liability insurance claims for the period ending 31 March 2025.**

CARRIED

5.2 Presentation on Directorate Risk Profile

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Public Affairs
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to verbally present the service risks of the Executive Services – Public Affairs.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the verbal presentation provided in relation to the Executive Services – Public Affairs.

CARRIED

6 Internal Audit

6.1 Internal Audit Plan Delivery Status Report

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of internal audit activities for the 2024-25 program.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

1. **Internal Audit Plan Delivery Status Report.**
2. **Internal Audit status Report at Attachment 1.**

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

6.2 Internal Audit Reports on Completed Reviews

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) with the Development Contributions completed audit for review and acknowledgement.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted:

1. **The Internal Audit Reports on completed reviews.**
2. **The internal audit report of Development Contributions as Attachment 1.**

CARRIED

6.3 2025-2026 Internal Audit Plan

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) with an update on the 2025-2026 Annual Internal Audit Plan and to seek the Committee's feedback and endorsement.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee:

1- **Noted the 2025-2026 Internal Audit Plan Report.**
2- **Provided feedback on the 2025-2026 Internal Audit Plan.**
3- **Endorsed the 2025–2026 Internal Audit Plan, subject to the inclusion of the sixth audit, where appropriate.**

CARRIED

6.4 Internal Audit Open Actions Report

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of audit actions.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Internal Audit Open Actions Report.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

7 Financial and Performance Reporting

7.1 Corporate Performance Report

Director/Executive Manager: Director Customer and Corporate Services
Report Author: Unit Manager Financial Development & Accountability

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Corporate Performance Report for the quarter ending 31 March 2025.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for the period ended 31 March 2025 at Attachment 1.

CARRIED

7.2 Asset Valuation

Director/Executive Manager: Director Infrastructure and Environment
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to verbally present an update on the asset valuation.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the verbal presentation provided in relation to the Asset Valuation and Council's Method for Assessing the Fair Value of Non-Current Assets.

CARRIED

8 Systems of Internal Control

8.1 Review of Instruments of Delegations

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update on the operation and oversight of Council's delegations as required under the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee) Annual Work Plan.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the Instrument of Delegations update as outlined in the body of this report.

CARRIED

Unconfirmed

9 Internal Assurance

9.1 Internal Assurance Report

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the 2024-25 Assurance Audit Plan.

Committee Resolution

The Audit and Risk Committee noted the update on the Assurance Audit Program outlined in the body of this report.

CARRIED

10 External Audit

10.1 Review External Audit Management Letters and Council's Response

Director/Executive Manager: Director Customer & Corporate Services
Report Author: Unit Manager Financial Compliance & Control

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Draft Interim Management Letter for the year ending 30 June 2025 is being presented to the Audit and Risk Committee for noting.

Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee noted the draft Interim Management Letter for year ending 30 June 2025.

CARRIED

10.2 Council's Method for Assessing the Fair Value of Non-Current Assets

This report was considered and discussed with Item 7.2 – Asset Valuation of the agenda.

11 Compliance

11.1 Review Key Personnel Expenses

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee with an update on the detailed account of expenses and reimbursements for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the CEO's Executive Assistant (EA) and Councillors for the period 1 January to 31 March 2025.

Unconfirmed

Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee noted:

1. **The Chief Executive Officer and Executive Assistant expenses incurred during the period 1 January to 31 March 2025 as detailed in Table 1 of this report.**
2. **Reimbursements and expenses incurred during the reporting period as detailed within Table 2 - Councillor Expenses of this report.**
3. **The information is being presented in accordance with section 40 (2) of the *Local Government Act 2020*.**

CARRIED

12 Compliance

12.1 Integrity Body Reports

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit and Risk Committee with an overview of integrity body publications from December 2024 to February 2025, highlighting key findings relevant to local government and sector-specified issues.

Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee noted the integrity body report for the period December 2024 to February 2025 at Attachment 1.

CARRIED

12.2 Proposed Approach to Performance Assessment

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council and CEO
Report Author: Compliance and Governance Officer

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review the proposed approach to performance assessment of the Audit and Risk Committee (Committee).

Committee Resolution

The Audit & Risk Committee noted the Review of Proposed Approach to Performance Assessment Report.

CARRIED

13 Other Matters

Nil.

Unconfirmed

14 Meeting Reflection

The Chair acknowledged the recent challenging circumstances under which the Council has been operating.

The Chair appreciated the completion of work related to asset valuation.

The Chair thanked the external auditors and the Acting Chief Financial Officer.

Mayor, Councillor Taylor thanked the Chair for addressing the recent issues.

The Monitor expressed gratitude to the independent members of the Committee and Council staff, extended best wishes to the Councillors for the future, and noted that the final Monitors report will be submitted to the Minister shortly.

The Chair thanked the Monitors.

The Chair also acknowledged that this was Dr. Marco Bini's final meeting and expressed appreciation for his contributions to the Committee.

The Chair closed the meeting at 5:05pm.

Unconfirmed

6 Notices of Motion

No Notices of Motion

7 Urgent Business

8 Reports from Councillors and CEO Update

9 Tabled Reports

No reports

10 Confidential Business

No confidential business

11 Closure