



Agenda

Hearing of Submissions

Committee Meeting

Thursday 11 June 2026 at 6pm

Council Chamber,
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



**City of
Whittlesea**

Attendance

Councillors

Cr Blair Colwell, Deputy Mayor
Cr Michael Labrador
Cr Jarrod Lappin
Cr Martin Taylor

Officers

Debbie Wood, Acting Chief Executive Officer
Emma Appleton, Director Planning & Development
Agata Chmielewski, Director Community Wellbeing
Jordan Glancy, Acting Director Customer & Corporate Services
Arashdeep Singh, Acting Director Infrastructure & Environment
Janine Morgan, Executive Manager Public Affairs
Jacinta Stevens, Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Apologies

Cr Christine Stow

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair will open the meeting by reading the following Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners 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."

Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair will ask those in attendance the following question: *"Does any Councillor or Officer have a conflict of interest in any matter on the agenda today?"*

Order of Business

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1 Reports from Officers

1.1 Doreen RSL Lease Proposal for Brookwood Community Centre

Director/Executive Manager: Director Planning & Development

Report Author: Amanda Allen, Manager Strategic Property & Portfolio Development

In Attendance: Amanda Allen, Manager Strategic Property & Portfolio Development
Anthony Traill, Manager Active Places & Communities

This attachment has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains personal information, being information which if released would result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about any person or their personal affairs.

Report Status

- This report is intended to go to a Council Briefing on 7 July 2026.
- This report is intended to go to a Council Meeting on 21 July 2026.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is for the Hearing of Submissions Committee (the Committee) to hear all submitters who wish to speak in support of their written submission received by Council regarding the proposal to lease to Doreen RSL part of the premises at 25 Hazel Glen Drive, Doreen (Brookwood Community Centre).

Background / Key Information

At the Council meeting of 21 April 2026, Council considered a proposal for the future use of Brookwood Community Centre as a permanent base for the Doreen RSL following a \$1.6 million federal funding commitment.

Council resolved to undertake community consultation on Option B, which proposed:

- Doreen RSL to have exclusive use of the Hazel Glen Room, community office, and adjoining corridor.
- Alcohol sales not permitted.
- Food sales not permitted within the operating hours of the adjoining café.
- Outdoor alfresco area, a smoking area, or gaming facilities not permitted. Television screens could not be used to broadcast sporting or other content for gaming or wagering purposes.
- The remainder of the facility would continue to be Council-managed and available for community hire.
- Occupancy would be through an initial five-year lease with a five-year extension option (by mutual agreement).
- Any facility modifications would be delivered within the \$1.6 million funding allocation, with no contribution by Council.

Council also requested a detailed business plan and evidence demonstrating that the Doreen RSL has the operational capacity and financial resources to operate, deliver, fund and manage the obligations associated with a lease arrangement.

As per Council's statutory obligations under section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, notice of intention to lease was given on 4 May 2026 on Council's website and in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy. Submissions were invited from the community between the period of 4 May 2026 to 31 May 2026 and Council received:

- 419 online responses registered
- 254 written submissions were received
- 35 submitters requesting to be heard
- 8 requested proxy representation.

Overall, 104 supported the proposal and 314 opposed the proposal.

The full submissions of those who have requested to be heard and those who have requested another person to speak on their behalf have been provided as a Confidential Attachment.

A report will be presented to the Council meeting of 21 July 2026, including the Committee proceedings and a summary of hearings and all written submissions received.

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

No Implications.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Council has met its statutory obligations under section 115 of the *Local Government Act 2020* with regard to community engagement including publishing a notice of intention to lease and providing information on Council website.

Consultation and engagement on the notice of intention to lease also included:

- Letterbox drop to 470 residents within a 500m radius;
- Email to 1,593 registered users of the Engage Whittlesea platform;
- Two posts on Council's social channels;
- Letter to all regular hirers;
- Flyer displayed onsite; and
- Letter to Doreen RSL advising of Council meeting outcome and provision of the stakeholder letter for information.

Prior engagement included a discussion with the Doreen RSL to obtain a formal proposal, alongside discussions with Department of Veterans' Affairs as the Federal Government funding agency for this election commitment. Service user surveys of Brookwood Community Centre regular hirers were also completed in December 2025.

Other Principles for Consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

- (a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law.
- (i) The transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Public Transparency Principles

- (a) Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act.
- (b) Council information must be publicly available unless -
 - (i) the information is confidential by virtue of the *Local Government Act* or any other Act; or
 - (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest.
- (c) Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.
- (d) Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.

Council Policy Considerations

Environmental Sustainability Considerations

No Implications.

Social, Cultural and Health

No Implications.

Economic

No Implications.

Legal, Resource and Strategic Risk Implications

No Implications.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Not applicable.

Critical Dates

Council Briefing – 7 July 2026.

Council Meeting – 21 July 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. Submissions for HOS Report - June 2026 [**1.1.1** - 96 pages]

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Ellen Marsden Doreen RSL Affiliate Member	Ellen Marsden
Submission I write to you in relation to the current community consultation regarding the future use of the Brookwood Community Centre, and in particular Council's consideration of Options B through D for the Doreen RSL Sub-Branch (10B). At the heart of this decision is not simply a question of tenancy — it is a question of how our growing community chooses to support its veterans, serving members, and affiliated emergency services personnel. The Doreen RSL Sub-Branch operates under a 10B classification, meaning it is not a gaming or commercial hospitality venue. It exists to deliver: • Veteran welfare and advocacy services • Social connection and mental health support • Commemorative and educational activities • A safe, inclusive gathering place for current and former service members, including Police, Ambulance, Fire Rescue and SES personnel • This is a community service model, not a profit-driven enterprise. Concerns with Option B While Option B has been identified as Council's preferred position, it presents significant structural and financial limitations that would undermine the long-term viability of the Sub-Branch: • The proposed rent of \$40,670 per annum (plus full outgoings) is not financially sustainable for a volunteer-led, not-for-profit organisation. • The prohibition on alcohol service removes a critical and widely accepted revenue stream used by RSL Sub-Branches across Victoria to fund welfare activities. • Restrictions on use further limit the ability to generate income, while still requiring expanded operating hours and service delivery. In effect, Option B creates a model where the Sub-Branch is expected to deliver expanded community outcomes without a viable means to fund them. Support for Option D (With Balanced Conditions) Option D provides the most appropriate framework to achieve long-term sustainability, service delivery, and alignment with the original Federal funding intent. However, it is understood that Council must balance:		

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- Financial stewardship of public assets
- Equity across community groups
- Amenity impacts and community access

With these considerations in mind, a balanced approach to Option D is both possible and reasonable.

Amenity Management and Community Consideration

It is acknowledged that Council must carefully consider neighbourhood amenity impacts, particularly given the residential interface of the Brookwood Community Centre.

In response to these considerations, the Doreen RSL proposal can incorporate clear and enforceable safeguards:

- The existing designated smoking area would remain in its current location and form, with no expansion proposed, ensuring there is no increased impact beyond current site conditions
- Any proposed outdoor alfresco area would be restricted to daylight hours only, limiting its use to low-impact periods and avoiding late evening noise or disturbance
- The alfresco space is intended as a quiet outdoor area for reflection and social connection, not as an extension of high-activity bar operations
- Operational practices, including patron management and closing procedures, would be designed to minimise noise during arrival and departure times

These measures provide a practical and proportionate response to amenity concerns, ensuring the facility operates in a way that is respectful to surrounding residents while still delivering meaningful community benefit.

Proposed Commercial Framework

To address Council's concerns regarding revenue and fairness, the following model could be considered:

- A peppercorn base rent, recognising the Sub-Branch's community service role and alignment with the Federal funding intent
- and/ or
- A modest revenue-sharing model, such as 5% of bar sales, ensuring Council receives a fair and ongoing return while allowing the Sub-Branch to remain viable

In addition:

- The Doreen RSL could fund all outgoings (utilities, maintenance, compliance costs)
- The Sub-Branch could fund non-grant-covered fit-out elements (including bar infrastructure)
- Operations would remain strictly non-gaming, low-scale, and community-focused

This approach achieves:

- Financial participation for Council

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- Sustainability for the RSL
- Protection of the community asset

Community Benefit and Strategic Alignment

The proposal directly supports Council's:

- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (social connection, mental health support)
- Connected Communities Strategy (inclusive, safe community spaces)
- Community Plan 2025–2029 (supporting seniors, families, and community participation)

Importantly, it also helps address veteran isolation, a known and ongoing issue, by providing a stable and recognisable place of belonging.

Equity and Precedent

While it is acknowledged that full facility occupation differs from Council's typical multi-use model, this proposal is not comparable to general community hire:

- It is backed by a \$1.6 million Federal Government commitment
- It serves a specific, high-need cohort
- It delivers ongoing, structured welfare outcomes, not casual use
- Where appropriate and practical, the venue could continue to accommodate community access or shared use, ensuring broader community benefit remains a consideration.

A tailored arrangement is therefore justified on the basis of demonstrated community need and external investment.

Conclusion

This is an opportunity for Council to deliver a lasting, positive outcome that honours service, strengthens community connection, and makes effective use of significant external funding.

Option B, as currently structured, is unlikely to succeed.

Option D, with appropriate safeguards and a fair financial model, represents a balanced, sustainable and community-aligned solution.

Importantly, the proposed safeguards around outdoor use and smoking ensure that community amenity is protected, directly addressing one of the key risks identified in Council's assessment.

I respectfully urge Council to reconsider its position and support a modified Option D that enables the Doreen RSL Sub-Branch to operate effectively while protecting Council's interests.

Thank you for your time and please see the draft motion below for your consideration.

Refined Motion for Councillors

Motion:

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That Council:

1. Acknowledges the significant role of the Doreen RSL Sub-Branch (10B) in delivering welfare, support and social connection for veterans, serving personnel and affiliated emergency services.
2. Notes the limitations of Option B, including its financial unsustainability and restricted operational capacity for a not-for-profit organisation.
3. Resolves to adopt Option D (exclusive occupancy, excluding café) as the preferred model in principle, subject to the development of a balanced and sustainable lease framework.
4. Directs Council officers to negotiate lease terms with the Doreen RSL that include:
 - A peppercorn base rent and/ OR a revenue-sharing model (e.g. 5% of bar sales)
 - Responsibility for all outgoings borne by the tenant
 - No electronic gaming machines and no expansion into high-impact hospitality operations
 - Appropriate conditions addressing amenity, parking, and community interface
5. Requires the Doreen RSL to:
 - Demonstrate operational and financial capacity
 - Fund all non-grant capital works (including bar infrastructure)
 - Obtain all required planning, liquor and regulatory approvals
6. Requests a further report to Council following community consultation and negotiations outlining:
 - Final lease terms
 - Community benefit outcomes
 - Financial and operational impacts
7. Affirms Council's commitment to supporting veterans and service personnel through sustainable, community-focused infrastructure.

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Terri Goodwin Local resident Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Terri Goodwin
Submission Local groups use this building to run groups for many age ranges within the community. Bringing in the RSL will mean limited access for these groups and is meaning so many kids will have no space for them to grow.		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Karley O'Dwyer Local resident Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Karley O'Dwyer
Submission If the RSL were to attain exclusive use of the room, it would completely eliminate the single biggest user of the Community Centre (Dance Power) which acts as local employment and a safe space for over 300 young girls and women. If the RSL were to attain exclusive use of the room, it would completely eliminate the single biggest user of the Community Centre (Dance Power) which acts as local employment and a safe space for over 300 young girls and women. Is it really worth displacing and eliminating an entire community for the temporary use (and we say temporary because they'll either outgrow or fail to afford it) as an RSL. Council has failed on multiple occasions to provide Dance Power with alternative options, leaving the school completely in the dark and stranded with nowhere to go. As someone who has attended RSL on multiple occasions through the years, I do not like the idea of BYO alcohol which has been discussed. I have on multiple occasions witnessed drink driving from multiple members of the RSL and it's not behaviour I wish to condone, specifically as I live only a few doors down from said centre. The noise is also another issue as they do stay quite late into the night There is also a football club that is in dire need for an upgrade, and linking an RSL to a sporting/leisure activity has long been successful and effective for the rehabilitation of return veterans but also for the community. Myself and frankly a lot of people are really really struggling to see how this community centre is the only place the RSL must go. It is quite literally one of the worst locations, it has 23 car parks yet estimating a minimum of 30-60 people each night. They will block the roads and clog the streets up. At least at the football club there is ample parking space. I also know that the RSL has been donated a plot of land, so are you willing to permanently displace community users and aggravating a huge portion of your community for the sake of temporarily pleasing a small group of people that aren't planning to stay long term. If they're planning to leave, why can't they lease the room regularly just like the rest of the community users until they're ready to move. The Brookwood community centre is just an extremely poor location that was so obviously a political promise made by Rob Mitchel at the last hour to gain votes. It's incredibly sad that the users of the centre and RSL have been used as pawns for a vote, but it's up to council to do the right thing by the majority of the community, not cater to the small handful.		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Annessa Nikolaou Dance Power co-owner	Annessa Nikolaou
Submission My name is Annessa Nikolaou and together with my mother Lola, proudly run Dance Power, a recreational community dance school that has operated continuously from Brookwood Community Centre for more than 23 years (3 evenings and Sat mornings during Feb – Nov no school holidays). Background Dance Power was established following requests from local families and Council during the early growth of Laurimar and Doreen, when the area had very limited community services and activities for young people and families. I had danced from the age of 2 and outside my full-time employment was teaching at a dance school in Eltham. What began as 3 small dance classes on a Saturday morning operating from Delfin/Lendlease's sales office with just 39 students slowly grew alongside the local community itself. As more families moved into the area, Dance Power evolved with them. The community helped shape the school and Brookwood into what it is today and Dance Power grew up alongside Doreen and Laurimar and the wider community. What started as a small local program become a long-standing community institution that has supported more than 10,000 local families over more than two decades. Throughout all these years, I continued working full-time while raising three kids and running Dance Power largely as a labour of goodwill and love for the community. While my own passion for dance was what first drew me to teaching, what kept me going over all these years was witnessing the profound impact Dance Power had on young people, families and the broader community. Dance is often seen as a privileged activity that can become financially out of reach for many families. From the beginning, one of my priorities was ensuring local children had the opportunity to participate. Keeping Dance Power affordable, accessible, convenient and community focused has always been one of the most important principles guiding the school. I never set out to build a dance school. We simply responded to a community need because we did not want to let local children and families down. Over time, something meaningful grew from that. Many of our original founding families are still connected to Dance Power today, which speaks volumes about the deep sense of belonging and community that has been created over the years. Community Hub Brookwood was not simply a venue we hired. Brookwood, Dance Power and the Community have grown and evolved together.		

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During our class times, Brookwood becomes a genuine community hub, alive with physical activity, social connection, wellbeing and family interaction across both community halls, the foyer and surrounding outdoor areas.

Parents walk down pushing prams, children ride bikes or walk with friends to classes, and families come and go throughout the evening between sport, homework and dinner routines. Later at night, once younger children are settled, adult students/mums arrive for their own classes — reconnecting with friends, exercising and enjoying time for themselves.

This is what a thriving community centre and hyper-local participation looks like — people of all ages connecting, participating and supporting one another in a safe, active, welcoming and local environment close to home.

This level of community activation and local participation was specifically recognised during the early development of Laurimar, with Dance Power regularly referenced as contributing to social connection and community identity in a newly established growth corridor. This is precisely why the Delfin Board flew in from Sydney in the early years of development — to witness firsthand how Dance Power was helping to build social connection and community identity in a newly established growth area and why it was later used in their marketing of emerging communities and has become the model for new subdivisions nationally.

Over many years, Dance Power continued to invest in the facility, the community and local young people in reliance upon ongoing understandings that the school would continue to have a long-term place within the Brookwood Community Centre.

When Brookwood transitioned from Delfin to Council ownership, it was a condition that Dance Power would remain and Council advised it would work toward a lease or long-term arrangement to provide certainty for our hours and maintain affordable community access to keep similar hire rates (originally \$11,000pa for same usage hours vs over \$40,000pa today). For more than 2 decades there have been ongoing discussions regarding a long-term hire agreement recognising Dance Power's longstanding contribution to the Centre and broader community. In reliance upon those understandings, Dance Power continued to build and invest in the program and facility (originally running at a loss), including contributing toward flooring, installation of mirrors, provision of equipment and ongoing community use infrastructure which benefitted all users of the Centre.

Today

Today, Dance Power services more than 400 participants in 27 classes per week, predominantly children, young people and women, with classes operating at capacity and waitlists across multiple programs. We currently utilise both rooms concurrently to meet strong and growing community demand. Our timetable is set out in Annexure A which illustrates the different classes for different ages which run in both rooms at the same time.

Dance Power has consistently demonstrated that it is more than a dance school — we are a safe hub for youth engagement, physical activity, affordable and community connection. We currently have boys and girls participating ranging from 3 – 50+ years of age and our program includes a range of different classes for all ages:

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- Dance styles such as Jazz, Ballet, Contemporary, Tap, Hip Hop
- Boys Hip Hop
- Cheerleading and Acrobatics,
- Musical Theatre, Drama and Singing
- Inclusive classes for children and adults (ages 3 to 50+)
- Weekly free skills and technique classes (fully funded by Dance Power)
- Leadership and employment opportunities for 18–30 local youths

We support students regardless of ability or background, including those with disabilities and those experiencing financial or emotional hardship. Approximately 15% of our students attend on waived or subsidised fees.

For many students, Dance Power is their primary pathway to:

- physical activity, fitness and mental health
- confidence building and self-esteem
- social connection and belonging
- leadership and mentoring opportunities
- teamwork and creative expression and
- participation within a safe and inclusive local environment.

Whilst we do have a popular boys hip hop class, boys participating in other classes and a male drama teacher, the overwhelming majority of participants are girls and young women. At a time where governments and councils are actively seeking to improve female participation, equitable access and safe community spaces for young women, the displacement of one of the area's largest and longestrunning female-focused participation programs would represent a substantial loss to the broader community.

Our school continues to grow as a majority of students do not leave. Many current and former students now return with their own children, creating strong intergenerational community connections and female leadership pathways that have developed organically over more than 23 years. This unique sense of community and continuity is most visibly celebrated at our end-of-year concerts, where multiple generations of families — including mothers performing alongside their children — regularly share the stage together, reflecting the deep and enduring connection families have formed through Dance Power and the Brookwood community.

A defining feature of Dance Power is the extraordinary long-term retention and connection of our students. Each year we celebrate numerous students who have been with the school for 10 and 20 years — a reflection of the genuine sense of belonging, continuity and community built through the program. In coming years, we will begin celebrating our first 25-year students, highlighting the unique multi-generational history and long-term community connection that has developed through Dance Power and Brookwood Community Centre over more than two decades.

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre**Contribution to Local Community**

Dance Power also provides leadership and employment opportunities for approximately 20 local teachers and assistant teachers each year, many of whom commenced as students themselves and have transitioned into mentoring and teaching roles.

In addition, we regularly provide dance programs, workshops and costumes to local schools, including Laurimar Primary School, Mernda Primary School, St Helena Secondary College, Plenty Valley Christian College and Ivanhoe Grammar School. We also actively contribute to community initiatives such as Dance for Sick Kids, Relay for Life, Laurimar Christmas event – further strengthening our role in supporting community wellbeing and connection.

The program contributes broadly to the local community through:

- affordable and accessible physical activity
- youth engagement and wellbeing
- inclusive non-competitive participation opportunities for local children and families
- social connection and community wellbeing
- local employment, leadership development and mentoring opportunities for local teachers and assistant teachers
- school workshops and programs and supply of costumes
- charitable initiatives including Dance for Sick Kids and Relay for Life
- regular use of Council facilities including Plenty Ranges Arts & Convention Centre, contributing approximately \$65,000 annually in revenue to Council-operated venues

Statistics have shown that Dance has the highest participation rate for girls than any other sport or activity. We have never requested or received Council funding or corporate sponsorship nor do we have an overarching body supporting or providing funding or a canteen. Instead, we have reinvested surplus funds into community resources — including audio equipment, training equipment, costumes, shoes, cleaning supplies, and mirror installations in both rooms at Brookwood. We funded the flooring in the Community Room, mirrors and outfitted Brookwood spaces to make them suitable for community use, which benefitted all centre users.

Teachers & Intergenerational Connection

One of the things I am most proud of is the incredible group of teachers and assistant teachers Dance Power has developed over the years – many of whom started as young Dance Power students themselves.

Finding teachers aligned to Dance Power's values was never easy, particularly in the early years while the school was growing as I worked full time and simply could not teach every class myself. Over time, Dance Power has largely developed its own teachers from within. Many started as young children at Dance Power themselves, which is why they naturally embody the exact values Dance Power has promoted skills training, kindness, confidence, leadership, inclusiveness, community and giving back.

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Our priority was never creating an elite or intimidating dance environment focused solely on technical perfection. We wanted children to feel welcomed, included, supported and genuinely excited to attend each week. Fun, friendship, confidence and belonging have always sat at the heart of what we do. That approach is not easy to find in the dance industry and many struggle with this approach and also don't have the expertise or skills necessary to teach multiple styles — including ballet, tap, jazz and contemporary — within the one short session. Our teachers trained within do this with enormous care, patience and professionalism, and they have become incredible role models for the next generation of children coming through Dance Power.

Some of my former students are now teaching my own children and, before long, will likely teach their children (some of whom dance today). That kind of intergenerational connection is incredibly rare and deeply special. It says so much about the strength of the community, trust and belonging that Dance Power and Brookwood have created over more than two decades.

Responsible Facility Use

Over many years, Dance Power has always attempted to work collaboratively with both Council and other user groups to maximise shared community benefit. Our bookings evolved with the community and are managed efficiently with back-to-back scheduling in both rooms to maximise time and space and shared use for others.

Our continued success, longevity, and community trust are testaments to our contribution to local life. We assist other users and also take great pride in the appearance of the Centre to our families regularly cleaning kitchen, toilets, foyer, community rooms, taking rubbish out from left over parties or users, emptying dishwasher and assisting with fitout, cleaning and kitchen supplies, audio equipment, mirror installation, flooring, ballet barres which benefitted all centre users.

Fairness and Long-Term Arrangements

When Brookwood transitioned to Council ownership, for more than 2 decades, there have been discussions with Council about establishing a special use arrangement to recognise our long-standing contribution. More recently a hire agreement to lock in our hours. Nothing eventuated.

We note other community groups providing similar benefits to the community — particularly sporting clubs—have secured long-term, low-cost lease arrangements for council facilities. Similarly the café operating within Brookwood today. Given our proven track record, contribution to youth engagement, and role in building and connecting communities, we believe a similar arrangement should now be finalised with Dance Power.

Dance Power's Community-Based and Accessible Model Dance Power operates very differently to many traditional commercial dance schools. Dance has generally been a privileged sport and we wanted all families and students to be able to participate and experience the joy. A key principle of Dance Power has always been to reduce barriers to participation. The school has consistently:

- maintained comparatively affordable fees (lowest fee structure)
- offered discounts, fee waivers and subsidised participation for families experiencing hardship or sickness

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- provided free weekly additional skills classes
- welcome children with disabilities and varying abilities in an inclusive environment
- structured classes to incorporate multiple dance disciplines within the one session reducing the need for families to enrol in multiple separate classes each week
- minimised costume and shoe costs through extensive sustainable costume reuse, shared costume libraries and low cost hire arrangements
- supplied tights and merchandise at cost sourced from overseas
- no exams or competition or compulsory uniforms
- sibling discounts

As mentioned, I have always worked full-time while running Dance Power, providing this service largely as a labour of goodwill to the community, because of the profound impact we have seen it have on young people, families and the broader community over many years.

Surplus funds have been reinvested back into the school to support affordability, accessibility, costumes and community outcomes.

It is important to note that since we began in Laurimar, there were and continue to be many dance schools in the area. The reason we have been successful is because we have worked hard to offer a professional dance school service at a low cost. Dance fees are only one cost element, dance costumes (usually start at \$80-\$120 per costume and students may require up to 8 costumes) and attire adds to the general expensive nature of dancing. We do not impose this cost on our families as we have sourced shoes and costumes ourselves and hire them to our students for a nominal fee and encourage sustainability by facilitating the recycling of shoes amongst parents to keep costs down.

These measures have allowed many local families to continue participating in a community-based physical activity who may otherwise be unable to afford it.

Dance Power was not created as a commercial venture imposed upon the community. It was created by the community, for the community.

It is therefore inaccurate to characterise Dance Power simply as a “commercial business” in the ordinary sense of that term. While fees are necessarily charged to sustain operations, payment of teachers, insurances and venue hire, the school has operated for more than two decades as a deeply community oriented and accessible local program delivering substantial demonstrated social benefit. Unlike many sporting clubs, Dance Power does not have the benefit of an overarching sporting body, volunteer based coaching model, canteen revenue, significant sponsorship support or long term low cost lease certainty. Dance Power pays its teachers and assistant teachers, carries its own operational costs and pays Council facility hire charges.

Contribution to Local Businesses

The broader economic contribution of Dance Power to surrounding local businesses should also be recognised. Over more than two decades, the school has generated consistent foot traffic and local economic activity through hundreds of weekly family visits associated with classes, rehearsals

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and performances. Local families regularly support nearby cafés especially JoJayz who without Dance Power their future viability is significantly impacted as well as other takeaway businesses and small local traders in connection with Dance Power activities and events. The value Dance Power brought to the broader precinct was recognised during the development of the town centre.

Dance Power also engages a range of local suppliers and service providers associated with performances, trophies, costumes, printing, florist, hospitality, videographers, photographers.

The displacement or significant reduction of the program would therefore have broader flow-on impacts extending beyond participants and teachers themselves and into the surrounding small business ecosystem that has developed around long-standing community activity at Brookwood.

Proposed Lease Concerns

The proposed lease raises several significant concerns.

1. Displacement without a viable alternative

There is currently no equivalent local facility capable of replicating or accommodating Dance Power's size and the way we operate, including dual-space concurrent programming.

Brookwood and Dance Power evolved and upgraded together as Laurimar/ Doreen grew. Originally we ran classes in the community room whilst Delfin used the carpeted room to sell house and land packages and over time we worked with the space, fitted out the old offices to create a second hall invested back into the facility and built the program around how Brookwood operates today.

The reality is Brookwood is the only community facility capable of accommodating our size. There are no industrial areas or commercial spaces within Laurimar or Doreen large enough to replicate what currently exists.

Council is already aware, through previous temporary relocations including during the past Brookwood fire and election use of the facility, how difficult actually impossible it was to relocate even part of our school elsewhere, even for one night.

Although the proposal may be described as affecting only one hall, Dance Power operates both rooms at the same time. The other hall is already fully booked and cannot absorb displaced classes. The practical effect is that more than 200 children and participants would be directly impacted, with no realistic ability to relocate them elsewhere. Further operating the other children's classes alongside an exclusive social or members-based use also raises unresolved child safety, supervision, access, foyer/toilet use, drop-off/pick-up and perceived safety concerns.

The practical consequence of this proposal is therefore not simply relocation, but likely closure or substantial reduction of a 23-year established community program. The consequence would extend far beyond dance classes themselves and would include:

- the loss of one of the area's longest running community programs

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- reduced access to affordable local physical activity particularly during a cost of living crisis
- a disproportionate impact on girls and young women's participation
- loss of local employment and leadership opportunities for teachers and students
- reduced economic support for surrounding local businesses
- detrimental impacts on children and families' wellbeing, mental health and social connection.

Dance Power's success is not just about the classes themselves but also the local accessibility and community environment Brookwood provides. Parents walk down pushing a pram, kids ride bikes or walk with friends to class, parents are able to drop children off before heading home to organise dinner or take siblings to other activities. Later in the evening, once younger children are settled, adult students arrive for their own classes, reconnecting with friends, exercising and enjoying time for themselves. This type of hyper-local participation is increasingly rare and represents exactly the kind of connected, walkable and community-centred activity modern growth suburbs are striving to create.

Retaining accessible local activities within the Laurimar community is important given the existing congestion and transport pressures along Yan Yean and Plenty Road and surrounding arterial roads. Requiring families to travel significant distances multiple nights each week would create additional financial, logistical and time pressures on local families.

Dance Power currently requires:

- access to two large spaces simultaneously (different classes operate in different rooms)
- after-school and evening availability 3 nights per week
- Saturday morning access
- suitable flooring and studio functionality
- waiting and supervision areas for families
- accessible parking and safe access arrangements.

These requirements cannot realistically be replicated elsewhere locally. As a result, relocation:

- splitting classes across multiple venues (which in itself is unlikely due to our large class sizes and lack of infrastructure)
- reduced class availability, meaning kids, teens, young adults and adults miss out
- increased participation and operational costs
- longer travel times for families
- disruption to long-established friendship groups and support networks
- loss of students unable to travel further or absorb additional costs or lack of convenience (many families have their own kids of different ages participating in different classes at same time).
- loss of teachers unable to move between fragmented venues
- cancellation of classes due to operational impracticalities
- increased inconvenience for families

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Taking all the above into account, the issue is not simply relocation. The cumulative effect of these impacts would fundamentally undermine the viability of what Dance Power stands for and place at serious risk the school that has been built alongside the Brookwood and local community over more than 23 years.

2. Loss of long-standing community infrastructure and history

Dance Power has become part of the social fabric and history of the Doreen and Laurimar community.

Former students now return with their own children. Local students transition into leadership and employment roles both within the school and in the workforce. Long-standing social and family connections have developed around the Brookwood precinct itself over multiple generations.

This proposal risks dismantling a long-established ecosystem of participation, mentoring, volunteering and community connection that has been built incrementally over more than two decades.

3. Impact on participation, wellbeing and inclusion

The proposal would displace hundreds of weekly participants, many of whom rely on the program as their primary form of physical activity, creative expression and social connection.

The impact would fall disproportionately on children, girls and young women and would remove one of the area's most accessible and affordable recreational programs during a significant cost-of-living period.

In an environment where many young people are increasingly isolated by screen time, social media pressures and online engagement, Dance Power offers children and teenagers a safe, face-to-face community environment built around friendship, teamwork, creativity, movement and genuine social connection.

For many students, attending classes is one of the few regular opportunities each week to disconnect from screens, build healthy peer relationships and engage positively with their local community in person.

This role has become increasingly important at a time where young people are facing growing mental health challenges, including anxiety, bullying, social isolation and self-harm related behaviours. Through long-term friendships, mentoring, teamwork and a strong sense of belonging, Dance Power has helped provide stability, confidence and emotional support for many children and young people across the community.

The value of these protective social connections and safe community environments should not be underestimated when considering the broader wellbeing impact of displacing a long-established youth-focused program from Brookwood Community Centre.

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Importantly, the sense of connection created through Dance Power extends far beyond the students themselves. Lifelong friendships and support networks have also formed amongst parents, teachers and families over many years. For many people, Brookwood is not simply somewhere children attend classes — it has become a place where families feel connected, supported and part of a genuine community – a true Dance Family.

4. Inconsistency with shared community access and previous representations

Brookwood Community Centre has historically operated as a shared, multi-use community facility accessible to a broad cross-section of the community.

The introduction of an exclusive lease arrangement represents a significant shift away from a child and family-focused shared community facility and previous representations made by Council to Dance Power.

5. Child safety and co-location considerations

The introduction of an exclusive social use (with or without alcohol consumption) within a residential area and a facility predominantly utilised by children, young people and families raises legitimate safeguarding, appropriateness and perceived safety considerations which require careful assessment.

Importantly, both Council and community organisations operating within Council facilities are subject to obligations under Victoria's Child Safe Standards and broader child safeguarding frameworks. These obligations extend beyond responding to actual incidents and require proactive consideration of environments, supervision arrangements, cultural safety, perceived safety, access management and the suitability of shared-use settings involving children and young people.

These considerations should not be treated as secondary operational matters, but as central issues requiring careful assessment before any long-term change to the nature and use of the facility is approved.

6. Alcohol Consumption vs Sale of Alcohol

While Option B refers to alcohol sales not being permitted from the facility, Council's publicly released FAQ material confirms that alcohol consumption would still be permitted within the proposed exclusive-use areas. This distinction is significant.

In practical terms, permitting alcohol consumption within an exclusive social or members-based environment still introduces many of the same operational, governance, safeguarding, amenity and risk considerations ordinarily associated with licensed or alcohol-related activity. The absence of direct alcohol sales does not remove the broader implications associated with alcohol consumption occurring within a residential area and a facility predominantly utilised by children, young people and families.

These issues require careful and transparent assessment, particularly given the long-standing nature of Brookwood as a highly activated youth and

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family community hub.

7. Alignment with Council's strategic objectives

The continued operation of Dance Power at Brookwood strongly aligns with Council's broader objectives relating to:

- gender equity and female participation
- community wellbeing and preventative health
- equitable participation and inclusion
- affordable access to community activities
- youth engagement and leadership development
- female participation and empowerment
- social connection and community cohesion
- activation of local community infrastructure
- child- and family-focused community spaces

Dance Power represents an example of an existing, proven community program already delivering measurable participation, activation and wellbeing outcomes at scale.

Doreen RSL and Other User Groups

We fully support our veterans and the important role the RSL plays in providing advocacy, support, rehabilitation and social connection within the community. Importantly contemporary veteran wellbeing approaches are centred on inclusion, mental health and community participation and strengthening social connection – not the displacement of existing community participation and established community groups.

It is also relevant to note that the Doreen RSL previously utilised the Hazel Glen Room for gatherings before determining that the space was not suitable for its operational needs and relocating activities to the football club environment. This raises legitimate questions as to whether Brookwood Community Centre is an appropriate short or long-term fit for the type of exclusive social or members-based use now proposed.

Importantly, Dance Power is not the only group impacted. The proposal would also affect a number of other regular community users who currently rely on Brookwood as an accessible shared community space.

This is therefore not a question of one group over another. It is a question of whether Brookwood continues to operate as a genuinely shared and accessible community facility, or transitions to an exclusive-use model that displaces an established, high-impact and predominantly female participation program, together with a number of other regular community users.

The proposal should not result in a net loss to the broader community by displacing existing participation, reducing access to inclusive community programming and undermining long-standing community activation where no realistic equivalent alternative exists due to the lack of suitable

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infrastructure and where the broader social, wellbeing, safeguarding and participation impacts remain unresolved.

Working Collaboratively

Since the election commitment last year and discussions surrounding the proposal, we have remained willing to work constructively with Council, the RSL, all users, neighbours and the broader community to explore solutions that maximise positive outcomes for everyone involved and the community as a whole. This remains our position despite public commentary that has at times been inaccurate, misleading and personally difficult for our family, students and community to experience.

This community and the wider community is deeply important to us and has been for more than two decades.

Dance Power Request

Accordingly, I respectfully request that Council not support the proposal and prioritise an outcome that:

- preserves existing community participation and continuity
- recognises the longstanding contribution and history of Dance Power within the community
- protects affordable and inclusive opportunities for local children, girls, young women and families including providing Dance Power with appropriate long-term surety of access and equitable hire arrangements for all dance schools operating within council facilities consistent with arrangements provided to other long-standing community and sporting organisations
- avoids displacement of an established community program without a viable alternative in Laurimar/Doreen

This approach would more closely align with Council's commitments to equitable participation, community wellbeing, inclusion, child safety and sustainable community development.

Further this position is strongly supported by the significant level of community response already provided to Council, including:

- a petition of over 1,200 signatures
- extensive direct submissions from families
- sustained public concern regarding the loss of accessible community programs

This level of community engagement is not typical and should be afforded appropriate weight in Council's decision-making. We have been genuinely overwhelmed by the sheer volume of responses, support and personal stories shared by families, past and present students and the wider community. It has reinforced just how much Dance Power and Brookwood mean to so many people across the community.

Closing

I am incredibly proud of what Dance Power has provided to this community over the past 23 years. But the truth is, while Dance Power has helped shape the lives of so many families, those same families have equally shaped us.

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The friendships, support, loyalty and sense of community built within Brookwood have become something far greater than a dance school. It has become part of people's lives, memories and identity, and that is something deeply special worth protecting.

Over the years, I have also come to understand that behind every family and every child is a story we may never fully see — challenges, hardship, loss, anxiety, loneliness or struggles quietly carried at home. To be able to provide children and families with a safe, welcoming and joyful place where they can escape those pressures for an hour or two each week is something my mother Lola and I feel deeply privileged to have been part of.

That sense of connection, belonging and happiness is what makes Dance Power so important to so many people in this community.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Lola Nikolaou Regular hirer (currently hire a space regularly)	Annessa Nikolaou on behalf of Lola Nikolaou
Submission My name is Lola Nikolaou and together with my daughter Annessa, I have proudly helped build and operate Dance Power from Brookwood Community Centre for more than 23 years, following requests from Council and local families. I fully support and adopt the submission made by Annessa Nikolaou and respectfully ask Council to carefully consider the broader impact this proposal may have on the many children, families, teachers and community connections built around Brookwood over more than two decades. For 23 years we have strived and worked hard for community engagement and connection and respectful shared use of Brookwood. This election pledge and proposed lease has caused deep divisions, stress and anxiety within the community, including among families and neighbours. This process has unfairly affected Dance Power's reputation and it has been deeply hurtful to see Dance Power's name unfairly criticised or misrepresented despite more than two decades of positive contribution to local children, families and the broader community. How Dance Power Began -in the then Delfin/Lendlease Sales Office When we first started Dance Power at Brookwood (when it was the Delfin/Lendlease Sales Office), we never imagined what it would eventually become. We simply wanted to provide local children with not only the performing arts experience but somewhere safe, happy and affordable to dance, connect and belong especially in this outer growth area which had very limited services for young people. Not everyone is into competitive sports (which are heavily subsidised by Council) and dance fills this void especially for young girls, teenagers and adults. Dance is recognised as having the highest participation rates for females than any other sports or activity. More Than Dance Classes Over the years, I have watched thousands of children walk through the doors of Brookwood. I have seen nervous little three-year-olds arrive holding tightly onto their parents before eventually growing into confident teenagers and young adults standing proudly on stage in front of 1000s of people surrounded by lifelong friends. Some of those same children now return as teachers and mentors for the next generation of students - teaching the children of former students. That kind of intergenerational connection is something incredibly rare and deeply special. Dance Power became far more than dance classes. It became part of people's lives, routines, friendships and memories. Entire families grew up		

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together through Brookwood. Parents formed friendships sitting in the foyer and backstage while children danced together for years. Many of our original families are still connected to Dance Power today. Often previous families will pop in for a chat whilst going for walks or calling into the cafe -these strong bonds continue for many years.

While reports and written submissions are helpful, they cannot fully capture the lived experience and connection built at Brookwood over the past 23 years.

I have linked below a few short videos prepared by one of our senior students. They reflect the genuine community spirit of Dance Power, and I encourage Council to take the time to view them or better still, to visit Brookwood during our class times and see this vibrant community in action.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DJWUIJFPJPE/?igsh=emw1aGk3ZGgycW92>.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DUuTIXhj9B3/?igsh=ZW5manFoMW8zYXI%3D>,

<https://www.instagram.com/reels/DYynChKvk5m/>

https://www.instagram.com/reels/DY3_vOSiW7S/

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DWILDOWjTlp/?igsh=cmthYWt1cmNhY2Fq>

A Safe and Supportive Place for Children, Young Adults and Families

Over the years, I have also come to understand that behind every child and every family is a story we may never fully see struggles, hardship, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm, loneliness or challenges quietly carried at home. To be able to provide children and families with a safe, welcoming and happy place where they feel supported and can escape those pressures for a few hours each week has been one of the greatest privileges of my life.

Impact of the Proposed Lease

The proposed lease would mean that more than 200 students could no longer participate in their current classes, as Dance Power runs concurrent sessions in both rooms. There are no local facilities with two suitable rooms capable of accommodating the school, whether in community, commercial or industrial areas.

Past experience has also shown that some industrial areas can raise additional safety concerns at night, including traffic, poor lighting and unsafe conditions for young girls, women and families attending evening classes.

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With so many disengaged youth and so much sadness and anxiety in society we have strived to create Brookwood as a vibrant and happy place for students and families - the music, the dancing, the hard work of learning new skills and routines and then the excitement before concerts, costumes, children helping one another backstage, teachers encouraging nervous students, families gathering together and generations of children growing up side by side. These are the moments that stay with people long after dance classes finish.

Respect for the RSL and Other Community Needs

Our position has never been against the RSL or veterans in any way. We fully respect the important role the RSL plays within the community and understand the value of connection, belonging and support for veterans and their families.

Our concern has simply always been about protecting the continuity of the school. The area is sadly lacking in community buildings and infrastructure, places where families, young people - and especially females can keep fit and feel safe.

While we respect the RSL and the important support it provides to veterans and their families, an adult social or members-based club operating beside girls' dance classes is not a minor operational issue. Dance Power students include very young children, primary school-aged girls, teenagers and young women who use shared entry points, kitchen, foyers, toilets, waiting areas, outdoor spaces and car parks before and after class. Many classes finish in the evening, when children, teachers, older students and families are moving through the car park in the dark.

Co-locating these activities with an exclusive adult social or members-based use, particularly where alcohol consumption may occur, raises serious questions about child safety, supervision, access control, late-night car park safety, amenity and perceived safety.

Allowing regular alcohol consumption within a shared community facility used by hundreds of children and families each week also raises broader safeguarding and wellbeing concerns. These concerns are not limited to child safety. For some community members, regular alcohol-related activity may be distressing or triggering, including for people affected by addiction, family violence, trauma or mental health challenges. These issues deserve careful consideration, particularly in a municipality where family violence and community wellbeing are already significant issues recognised in Victorian Government and Crime Statistics Agency data.

Years of Uncertainty

We have been on this roller coaster of uncertainty for four years now -it first came to light before the last State election in 2022 when we first heard that the Doreen RSL wanted Brookwood. We were initially told it was not happening and not given any information or much detail until recently. We have continued under this dark cloud because the children and families have always been our priority and they need local, affordable

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avenues for fitness and social connection. It has been deeply disheartening, particularly as we are an example of a successful grassroots community program that Council and local families originally requested and grew alongside a developing suburb and also the thousands of families, children and young people who have come through our doors over more than two decades. Brookwood, Dance Power and the Community have grown and evolved together. We did not set out to build a school we simply responded to a community need and, over time, helped create something meaningful for local families.

Dance Power is not a commercial business in the ordinary sense. Yes, fees are charged because teachers must be paid, hire fees must be met, insurances must be maintained, costumes sourced and the school must be able to operate. But for us, Dance Power has always been a community service built on passion, hard work and commitment to local families. We have kept fees affordable, supported families doing it tough, reused costumes, provided free classes, reduced costs wherever possible and reinvested back into the school and Brookwood and wider community including many local schools. After 23 years, Dance Power has never been about making money it has been about giving children, young people and families a safe, happy and affordable place to connect and belong.

Dance Power's Contribution

We have never asked Council for any support - we have contributed financially to the infrastructure in both rooms and operated professionally to balance our finances to cover hire fees, payment for 20 locals as teachers and assistant teachers and all other operational costs.

But most importantly over 23 years we have helped shape 10,000 plus families lives in a safe and positive environment whilst providing dance skills training and an appreciation of the arts and theatre. Our youth are the future and we need to embrace and foster their development pathways by not creating barriers.

Conclusion

I respectfully request that Council not support the proposed exclusive lease of the Hazel Glen Room, and instead prioritise an outcome that allows Dance Power and other existing Brookwood users to continue providing affordable, inclusive and safe opportunities for local children, girls, young women and families to keep fit and healthy.

I ask Council to find a solution that supports veterans and the RSL without displacing children, families and long-standing community users who already rely on Brookwood.

This community is incredibly special to us. Dance Power helped shape the lives of so many families, but those same families equally shaped us. The love, loyalty and support shown by the community throughout this process has been overwhelming and we are very humbled by their gratitude.

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Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Matthew Luczek Local resident Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Annessa Nikolaou on behalf of Matthew Luczek
Submission As a parent, I have seen first hand the positive impact that local community groups that run in the Brookwood Community Centre have on residents and in our case - pertaining to a group such as Dance Power - the impact it has on young children. These groups provides children with a safe and supportive environment where they can build confidence, stay physically active, develop friendships, and feel a sense of belonging. In a world increasingly dominated by screens and social media, opportunities like this are incredibly valuable for our daughter and have lasting benefits well beyond her years of enrolment in the class. I believe Council has a responsibility to support all members of the community fairly and equitably, not just selected groups or organisations. If groups such as Dance Power are to be displaced, then Council should also take responsibility for helping source a suitable alternative venue so local families and children are not left without access to an important community program. I also feel it is disappointing that some council representatives who voted in favour of this proposal do not actually live in Doreen and may not fully understand the direct impact this decision will have on local families and residents. Additionally, I have concerns about replacing a long-standing community centre with a venue centred around alcohol consumption, and the message this sends about community priorities and wellbeing. It will almost certainly lead to an increase in domestic violence cases and inappropriate, unwelcome behaviour outside the venue.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Emma Gardiner Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Annessa Nikolaou on behalf of Emma Gardiner
Submission As a teacher at Dance Power for over 10 years, I've seen firsthand how important this hall is for our students and wider community. This space is so much more than just a hall — it's a safe, welcoming environment where children build confidence, friendships, teamwork and a love for dance. Over the years, I've watched shy students completely blossom. We also have homeschool children who rely on these classes as an important social and physical activity. Taking this space away means taking away opportunities for so many young people who genuinely benefit from being here. What's also being overlooked is that this hall is used by many different community groups, not just Dance Power. There are numerous people and organisations who depend on this shared space, and it doesn't seem fair that they should all miss out because alternative solutions haven't been properly explored. There are also important questions that still haven't been answered. How long is this arrangement even intended to last? If it is only temporary or for a couple of years, why completely disrupt long-standing community programs, children's activities and multiple groups that have built their place here over many years? There are other halls and options that could be considered for the RSL. Community spaces should remain for the community — especially programs that support children, families and local connection. There are also concerns from parents about unfamiliar people regularly hanging around during children's dance classes. Parents deserve to feel comfortable and confident that their children are in a safe and appropriate environment while participating in activities they love. If both groups are going to be operating at the same time, will the RSL also be ensuring that appropriate Working With Children Checks and safeguarding measures are in place? I truly hope council and decision makers reconsider and work towards a solution that supports everyone, rather than removing a space that has meant so much to so many families for years.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Ethan White Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Annessa Nikolaou on behalf of Ethan White
Submission My name is Ethan White. For half of my life, I lived in Canberra, ACT, raised by my father, Wayne White, who was serving in the Australian Navy. I am also one of many siblings, two of whom are Tiffany and Fiona White, who have also served in the Navy. I was raised a Navy brat, attended the Anzac Day Dawn service every year, went to see the March and would wait patiently as my Dad and sisters went for their yearly 2-up. Unfortunately, in my late teens, my father passed away from Cancer. The community that surrounded my Father when he was diagnosed was a mixture of veterans who had served with Wayne, members of the local RSL and local communities that Wayne had been a volunteer for. My Rugby union team, the Little Athletics groups, and our local Circus school, very strange, but very welcome. It was this circus group that showed me that other small communities existed outside of the military and sports. As I left Canberra and moved down to Melbourne, I met my now wife and joined one of the small communities of Doreen, at Dance Power. I am the only male teacher at Dance Power, but I'm not the only male attending. With boys' hip hop classes and the drama class that I now teach, we have male and other gendered students growing up in this community. This community is a beautiful group that has helped children grow up to have a safe place to practice what it is they love. To be surrounded by kids/teenagers/adults of various ages, creating a space for them to build their social skills, and keeping them active. What I have come to love about the Brookwood Community Centre is the calendar on the wall showing all the various groups that use the facility, sharing the space throughout the week. A lot of these communities have reached a size that only the Brookwood Community Centre can hold. It's a safe place for so many individuals. So it's seeing this proposal that has me torn. I am and will always have the Australian Defence Force be a part of my life, and I truly believe that what the Doreen RSL deserve is a space for their community, but they deserve a space that fits them. I understand that some days may only have 30 People, but Fridays can have up to 130 people, which is a disaster waiting to happen. The community car park holds 22 spaces total. We already have days where parents are dropping off their kids for classes at the centre, which causes a lot of cars to need to park on the street. However, these are drop-offs where the cars quickly leave. Having a space that is used on a Friday night, for 130 people, would have cars stationed outside for more than a few hours, creating a hazard in the area and a nuisance for those who live around the community centre. I call back to my story in the beginning, how the communities gathered together to support my father, it's a memory that I hold with me always, teaching me about respect and loyalty to those in my community. To call it out, Rob Mitchell made a last-minute promise right before the election,		

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and this promise, I believe, is a disrespect to the Doreen RSL and the Community as a whole. This has created a divide in our community, which has only gotten larger due to misinformation from all sides. My suggestion is that as a community, we need the Federal Government to change their pledge, an increase to the amount promised should be given to the Doreen RSL, in partnership with the Laurimar Football Club, to create a larger building for the football club, which has a space for the Doreen RSL to use whenever they need. This would allow the RSL to rent out the space when they don't use it, for events, which will help continue raising funds for their community. While a safe space is one thing the RSL needs, it's just one of many things we can do to bring up the Doreen RSL, and keep all our small communities. If this proposal to lease the Brookwood Community Centre were to go ahead, what would affect me is that many Dance Power classes would need to be cancelled, with many of our students turned away. But it will have a larger impact on the other communities as well, a lot of groups use both rooms at the same time, and this proposal will have them fighting for the only room available to them. Rather than being frustrated at those who approved this proposal, the communities will turn to the group using the room that was taken from them, which is not right. The Council needs to recognise that this proposal cannot continue without causing significant harm to the Community. Please find a way to help the Doreen RSL, and the Veterans that have served to protect this country, but don't take from the community that has been building from the beginning.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Belinda Reginato Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Belinda Reginato
Submission I wish to formally object to the proposed lease of part of the Brookwood Community Centre to the Doreen RSL and ask Council to reconsider this proposal and explore alternative solutions that better serve the entire community. Firstly, I would like to make it clear that I fully support the Doreen RSL having a permanent home within our community. Our veterans and serving members deserve respect, recognition, and access to facilities that allow them to provide support, welfare services, and a sense of belonging for current and former service personnel and their families. My objection is not to the Doreen RSL itself. Rather, it is to the proposed location and the significant impact this decision will have on existing community groups that have relied upon Brookwood Community Centre for many years. Brookwood is already a well-utilised community asset. For decades it has provided a home for a range of established community groups that have built strong local connections, delivered valuable services, and generated ongoing revenue for Council through their tenancy and use of the facility. These groups have invested years of effort into building their communities around Brookwood, and many now face permanent displacement without any clearly identified alternative accommodation. It is difficult to understand why a proposal designed to support one community organisation should come at the expense of several others that are already successfully using the facility for its intended purpose. Council's proposal states that part of the centre will remain available for community use. However, the practical reality appears to be that the proposed lease would grant the Doreen RSL exclusive access to key areas of the facility, significantly reducing the flexibility and availability that has allowed existing users to operate successfully. The proposal does not appear to adequately address how current users will continue their activities, nor does it provide any certainty or indeed, any actual options regarding suitable alternative venues. As a parent of two children who attend Dance Power at Brookwood Community Centre, I have seen firsthand the enormous positive impact that this facility has on local families. Dance Power is one of the most welcoming, inclusive, supportive, and affordable dance schools we have encountered. Prior to joining Dance		

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Power, we attended other dance schools but never experienced the same sense of community and belonging that we have found at Dance Power. My children have built friendships, confidence, creativity, and resilience through their participation there.

Like many families, we carefully manage household expenses. I genuinely do not know whether we could afford to send our children to another dance school if Dance Power were forced to relocate or significantly increase fees due to higher operating costs at an alternative location (if one can even be found). Nor do I believe my children would easily adapt to moving to a new school and losing the community they have become part of if Dance Power could no longer continue to run. Losing Dance Power would mean losing a part of themselves.

The impact extends beyond the dance classes.

As a working mother juggling full-time employment, family commitments, and children with complex medical conditions and learning difficulties, opportunities for social connection are few and far between. My personal support network is very small and my spare time is limited.

For me, Brookwood is more than a building. It is a place where I connect with other parents, where I feel part of a community, and where I can briefly step away from the pressures of daily life.

Sometimes on a Saturday morning, the plate of fruit toast lovingly handed around by Lola is the only time I've had to stop for breakfast that morning and sharing a cup of tea and a gossip with one of the other parents or teachers is the only social interaction I have had time for all week. Sometimes, while I wait for Monday's Drama class to finish it's the only time I have seen my best friend in weeks. Those seemingly small moments contribute significantly to my wellbeing.

If Brookwood is no longer available to the groups that currently call it home, my family will lose much more than a venue and a dance school. We will lose a community and a place that has become an important part of our lives.

I also question whether Brookwood Community Centre is the most appropriate long-term solution for the Doreen RSL. The Federal Government's commitment of \$1.6 million reflects the importance of providing the RSL with a permanent base. Given that level of investment, surely our veterans deserve a facility that is specifically designed or selected to meet their needs, rather than adapting an existing community centre, that is already heavily utilised by multiple community organisations.

Rather than displacing existing users, Council should work collaboratively with the Federal Government, the Doreen RSL, and other stakeholders to identify a more suitable and fit-for-purpose location that allows the RSL to establish a permanent home without negatively impacting established community groups.

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Brookwood Community Centre was provided as a community asset and, for many years, has fulfilled that purpose exceptionally well. It currently supports a diverse range of users who collectively contribute to the social wellbeing, health, recreation, inclusion, and connectedness of the local community. Reducing access to this facility risks undermining that legacy.

I am also disappointed by the consultation process to date. At the last council meeting in April, community members were advised that questions raised that were not answered directly in that meeting, would be addressed through a public question-and-answer section on the Engage website. However, scrolling through the page I have been left feeling that important questions remain unanswered or insufficiently addressed. Meaningful community consultation requires transparency, responsiveness, and genuine consideration of concerns raised by affected stakeholders. There were many questions raised about child safety, alcohol consumption on premises, about displacement of current users of Brookwood and it seems many of the proposed questions at the previous meeting have been met with silence.

The public discussion surrounding this proposal has unfortunately become increasingly polarised. While many residents strongly support providing a permanent home for the Doreen RSL, legitimate concerns about the displacement of existing community groups should not be dismissed or interpreted as opposition to veterans or a lack of respect for service personnel. I believe most members of our community share the same goal: finding an outcome that supports the Doreen RSL while preserving the valuable community activities already taking place at Brookwood.

I urge Council to reconsider the proposed lease in its current form and pursue alternative options that allow both the Doreen RSL and existing Brookwood users like Dance Power to continue serving our community without one group's success coming at the expense of another.

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	David Reginato Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre Local resident	Belinda Reginato on behalf of David Reginato
Submission I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal of modifying the current community use of the Brookwood Community Centre to add extensive use of the centre as a Doreen RSL space which is likely to remove or drastically reduce the existing community activities such as dance programs and other local services. In stating my opposition I do wish to notify Council and community that I support the Doreen RSL having its own local place to congregate and meet (which I understand they already do so temporarily at Laurimar Sporting Club), but the Brookwood Centre is not fit for this purpose, from a size, intended use and quiet residential location perspective. I request that Council and the Federal government consider other better suited locations for supporting the Doreen RSL in getting an appropriate permanent space they deserve. It is my understanding that Delfin Lend Lease gifted the land and centre to Council, for the sole purpose as a community facility (not as an RSL) and the Brookwood Centre has been a broad based community centre, playing a vital role as an inclusive, accessible, and affordable space for a wide range of local residents and users. In honouring the developer's generosity and intended community benefit, Council (as the full beneficiary of the 'free' centre) must be making decisions regarding its future to prioritise broad community benefit, social wellbeing, and equitable, diverse access. Reducing access to this facility for broad community services risks undermining the legacy Delfin Lend Lease have given the community. I am a parent of two children that attend Dance Power and the family have been attending the centre for over 10 years. We have chosen Dance power for the inclusivity of our children and us as a family and the true community feel it and its members bring to us and each other. We took our kids to other dance schools prior settling with Dance Power and these schools do not have the same community feel or inclusiveness than that offered by Lola and Annessa and their team. They have generated a community for us to belong to and for our kids to thrive. Both our kids have complex medical conditions and learning challenges and Dance Power is an essential part of their week to bring physical and mental wellbeing. If Dance Power were to be forced out of the centre, we will be forced to take the kids out of the school as its local position is the only logistical option available for us to get the kids to the school, given both parents work in the city and any distance travel to other suburbs is not viable for us. Like many local families, we must carefully manage household budgets and I cannot see a way that we could afford to send our children to another dance school if Dance Power were forced to relocate or significantly increase fees due to higher operating costs at a new centre. My children would not cope with losing the community they have become part of if Dance Power could no longer continue to run at Brookwood.		

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The existing services using the centre have been long standing, in particular Dance Power, operating since the centre opened and under the direct request of Council to support community involvement in the local area. These groups have established continued participation and strong local support and reflect long standing demonstrated community need. Replacing these groups with a new use risks displacing well-used, valued programs for a new user, undermining all the hard work and community spirit earned by these groups over a long period.

The community centre and the groups that use it are more than buildings they are places where local relationships have been built and sustained. Removing or reducing these uses weakens community cohesion and undermines the purpose of a shared civic facility. Whilst the intended proposal states that one room of the centre will remain available for community use, in reality it appears to be that the proposed lease would grant the RSL exclusive access to key areas of the facility, significantly reducing the flexibility and availability to other existing users to operate as they have and need to operate successfully. Council's proposal does adequately address how current users will continue their activities, nor does it provide certainty regarding suitable alternative venues if users are forced out by Council to enable the RSL to use the centre.

In my line of work I am exposed to the delivery of community projects and infrastructure provision and cannot see how the Brookwood Community Centre is the most appropriate long-term solution for the Doreen RSL. The Federal Government's commitment of \$1.6 million (for capital works only), demonstrates a significant public investment in the importance of providing the RSL with a permanent base. However it does not look to cover the true costs of providing the RSL with a fit for purpose space, able to support the long term viability of the Doreen RSL. Given the level of public investment, surely our RSL veterans and their families deserve a facility that is located appropriately in the community, designed and built to meet their full needs, rather than adapting an existing community centre in a quiet residential neighbourhood, that is already heavily utilised by multiple community organisations over a long period of time.

Council, State and Federal Government should be working collaboratively with Veteran Affairs departments and the broader RSL ,to support the Doreen RSL chapter to identify a more suitable and fit-for-purpose location that allows the RSL to establish a permanent home without displacing long established community groups and impacting on local residents already in the area not expecting an RSL on their doorstep.

Given the proposal looks to potentially push out existing users for a new important stakeholder in the RSL, the public discussion surrounding this proposal has been polarising. While many residents strongly support providing the Doreen RSL a permanent home, legitimate concerns about the displacement of existing long standing community groups should not be dismissed or interpreted as a lack of respect for service personnel and veterans. I believe most community members share the same sentiments, find an outcome that supports the Doreen RSL while preserving all the community activities already taking place at Brookwood.

Council must reconsider the proposal and pursue alternative options for housing the Doreen RSL, that seeks to ensure both the RSL and existing

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Brookwood users continue serving our local community without one group's proposal coming at other's expense.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Harvey Reginato Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Belinda Reginato on behalf of Harvey Reginato
Submission I am in a Boy's hip Hop class at Dance Power and have been dancing for 5 years. I love dancing. As a boy, it's hard to find a boy's only hip hop class and if dance power has to close because it can't find a new place to run classes or it has to move to far away for me to go to, I will be so sad. I cannot play contact sport as I have Juvenile Arthritis. I need a physical activity that is safe for me to take part in an Hip hop is so much fun and I get to hang out with and make friends with others outside of school and still get to experience what it's like to be part of team, without the worry of being hurt or making my legs feel worse. I also love to be creative and sometimes boys aren't always encouraged to dance but I feel like Dance Power is a place I can be myself and everyone is there to cheer each other on. Please don't go ahead with taking Brookwood centre away from us. My teachers are the best and Lola and Annessa look after us and care for us like we are their family. My sister also dances there and she would also be so sad and lost if she didn't get to go anymore. Please find a way to let us stay using Brookwood community Centre and also find a better place for the RSL men and women to have a place of their own too as they are very important too.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Matilda Reginato Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Belinda Reginato on behalf of Matilda Reginato
Submission I love dance power because I get to express myself and I get to enjoy myself by moving freely. ©If I didn't have dance power, I wouldn't get to experience the fun and the energy and how fun everyone is. The teachers are lovely and supportive and I haven't had the same experience at other dance schools. If the council takes away Brookwood from Dance power and the other communities who use the building, they're taking away other people's fun and joy and chances to express themselves and their personalities. ©I love Dance Power so much. It is nothing like others dance schools, it is so inclusive. Everyone gets to dance freely together, make new friends. Be comfortable together so that everyone can express themselves and be who they want to be. If I lose Dance power because we can't use Brookwood community centre anymore, I won't get to express myself and be who I am and that will change my life in a very negative way.		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Danielle Stewart Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Danielle Stewart
Submission I oppose the proposed lease to the Doreen RSL at Brookwood Community Centre. I took my first-ever dance class at Dance Power when I was 33 years old. Despite being 20 years behind some of my peers in terms of skill, I have always been made to feel welcome, supported, and included. My son has participated in the boys' hip-hop classes, which have greatly improved his confidence. My daughters also dance at Dance Power and are now in their fourth year. They look forward to their costumes and performing at the annual concert all year round. If the room is converted as proposed, it will either become unavailable or unsuitable not only for Dance Power but also for other groups that currently hire the space. As there are no suitable alternative venues that allow Dance Power to run two classes simultaneously, this proposal would likely bring my own, very short, dancing journey to an end. Doreen RSL members have indicated on social media that they are unhappy with the current proposal. I can sympathise with that position, as it is not what they originally asked for or deserve. However, what the Doreen RSL has indicated it wants and deserves is not suitable for Brookwood Community Centre. Given the unsuitability, it is not unreasonable to assume that if a better offer came along (that likely coincides with an election) the lease would not be renewed. In that scenario, ratepayers would lose both the community benefits currently provided by the centre and the rental income generated from multiple users of the space. Community centres should remain accessible to all members of the community on an equal basis. Granting an exclusive lease to any one group undermines the very purpose		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Neutral	Mario Cattapan Local resident	Mario Cattapan
Submission By way of background, I am a former Deputy Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, both in Victoria and interstate. I fully understand the need for the RSL to provide essential services to the veteran community and that to do so the RSL has had to venture into associated activities involving the wider community. My observations and comments, which inform this submission, are made as a local resident living in the vicinity of the Brookwood Community Centre, observing how it operates and, like many other retirees and young families, enjoying local walks, visiting the diner and enjoying the tranquility, peace and quiet that Laurimar/Doreen offers. BROOKWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE (BCC) As noted in the Council's material, the BCC is a council-owned facility with three spaces suitable for small meetings and mid-sized gatherings. The BCC currently provides regular and casual hire for small groups. At any one time there are a small number of people on location with the car park generally meeting requirements for parking. There are many days with little or no activity at all and, on the few days that there are activities, they cease by mid-afternoon with most vehicles gone by 4pm. The Diner with the BCC is an integral part of the living in 'Laurimar' experience, surrounded by an environment providing tranquility, peace and quiet enjoyment for all and, in particular, the local residents who were part of its development and growth and others who moved into the area for these very reasons. The proposal to lease the BCC to the RSL will undermine all that Doreen (Laurimar) stands for and is articulated in the documentation presented at the 21 April 2026 Council meeting. This presents a significant number of challenges and threats to the enjoyment of current living conditions in Laurimar. I am in full support of the Council's response to the Federal Government's funding commitment to provide a home for the Doreen RSL and welcome the opportunity as a local resident to provide feedback.		

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However, the decision that this home be the BCC has raised a number of issues and concerns regarding the proposed use by the RSL.

The process involved to date, proposed use, impact on local residents, logistics, particularly car parking, noise and hours of operation, have been articulated throughout documentation presented to Council at its 21 April 2026 meeting but no indication has been given on how matters, issues and concerns will be explored and resolved.

Fundamentally, the Council has identified constraints including car parking, noise, BCC capacity (currently limited to 50 people) where the RSL patronage would be in excess of 130 for major events and limitations within the premises regarding toilets, kitchenette. These constraints would indicate that the BCC is not fit for purpose for the RSL.

Other than the RSL having exclusive access to the Hazel Glen Room, Community office and adjoining corridor, it is not clear how these areas will work with a scaling down from their originally proposed greater use including for major events accommodating in excess of 130 people at any one time and permanent activities, events, entertainment and hospitality until 10 pm on some nights.

A detailed business plan is to be provided to Council by 1 June 2026. This is after residents can make submissions (31 May 2026). Consequently, there is a significant absence of vital information available to residents to enable informed submissions.

IMPACT ON LOCAL RESIDENTS

The impact on local residents is noted in documentation presented to the Council on 21 April 2026. An analysis of the impacts is provided but no information is available such as an Impact Statement detailing how the issues will be addressed including environment and noise restrictions (music). Restriction on any future (associated) proposals by the RSL are not identified.

There is no reference to traffic management. This needs to be addressed by Council as a matter of priority.

Car parking is very limited both at the BCC and surrounding streets. For example, Burgan Street is narrow, has 6 houses either side and residents struggle to accommodate their own vehicles.

Car parking requirements are misleading. The basis of assessing the number of vehicles is 0.3 parking bays per number of people in attendance. From observing what happens at RSL premises, most vehicles have one or two occupants (many requiring special parking) which would result in

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excess of 80 vehicles, (which is in excess of the 39 assessed by Council). The BCC has 23 bays which will not be for the exclusive use of the RSL. Some of the car parking space will be taken up for other purposes eg, rubbish bins, skip for empty bottles, etc.

Council documentation presented to the meeting identifies that parking in local streets will be to the detriment of residents. In addition, people constantly going to and from their vehicles at all hours of the day, particularly to 8pm and 10pm at night will threaten the right to 'quiet enjoyment' and the very fabric of living in Laurimar.

House values will be affected by traffic, local street parking, people noise and activities running until 10pm at the BCC.

The concern is that no resolution is available for consideration by the local community as part of this consultation process.

FIT FOR PURPOSE LOCATION FOR THE RSL: NOT THE BROOKWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE (BCC)

The RSL provides essential services, welfare and support for veterans and their families. However, the Doreen RSL, as a Sub-Branch, is looking to go beyond this with social and community activities. This takes the use of the BCC beyond what its purpose is.

There is no commentary by Council on the number and types of permits that will be issued and/or proposed with future expanded use. Furthermore, what are the requirements and limitations and how will these limitations/requirements within those permits/approvals be enforced?

Subsequent to the Council proposing at its meeting on 21 April 2026 to make available the Hazel Glen Room, Community Office and adjoining corridor there is no detail on what is proposed by the RSL in response this and therefore it is impossible to comment on this as part of the feedback process.

Discussion would need to take place on the RSL's Planning Permit Application. However, Council advises that any arrangements between Council and RSL would be confidential and it would be a breach of privacy to release such details to the public or any person.

- This prevents any resident raising any issues after the approval.
- Council advised that any complaints should be directed to police as Council officers are not empowered to act.

Of note is that residents will have no knowledge of what is or is not allowed (restrictions, tolerances, allowable noise levels) without checking the Council website and guessing what does or does not apply and would have no right of recourse in raising complaints as police potentially will

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correctly not see a resident complaint as a priority.

In Council documentation it is noted that, because the site is already established, there are limitations on what recourse of action can be implemented. This is not in the interest of residents nor the Council and arrangements need to be very clear in any permit/s, leases and other relevant documentation for the complaints management process.

RSL PATRONAGE AT THE BROOKWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE (BCC)

The RSL's proposed use is 3pm to 8pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 3pm to 10pm on Fridays, 12pm to 10pm on Saturdays and 12pm to 8pm on Sundays. Furthermore, patronage is stated at 30 – 60 people on weekdays, 60 – 130 people on Fridays (into the evening) and 30 – 80 on weekends.

It is recognized that RSL members, visitors, veterans and their families may have different needs, eg veterans and families will seek a quiet place, discuss entitlements and seek support.

The RSL needs to articulate what services will be provided and expected make up of patronage of the BCC. This needs to be indicated for its core servicer to veterans and their families and for detailed social events and entertainment.

The work the RSL does in these areas is commended and necessary.

However, it appears that the Doreen Sub-Branch of the RSL is venturing into providing social gatherings, entertainment and hospitality, which will attract many more people. The requirement of accommodating a larger number of patrons (at times in excess of 130) at the BCC, which is generally limited to up to 50 people, must be specified, discussed and resolved as a matter of priority.

FUNDING AND INCOME CONSIDERATIONS RE THE BROOKWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE (BCC)

It is of note that the Federal Government provided \$1.6 million in funding for the RSL to re-locate and that the cost to complete all necessary works based on the Council's estimates could exceed \$3.1m.

Leasing a substantial part of the BCC to the RSL on a permanent basis (5-year lease) with ongoing reviews, whilst guaranteeing income to the Council, takes away the ability for the Council, through the BCC, to enable provision for others to provide community activities – the very basis for having the BCC.

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There is no issue about the RSL receiving funds for a re-location to provide essential services to veterans and their families. However, the Doreen RSL Sub-Branch proposal (or what is known of it) goes beyond that, for good reason. Consequently, the BCC is not fit for purpose and would require substantial funding above the Federal Government's allocation to meet Council building requirements and related costs.

It is noted that additional funding can be sought from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, however DVA has indicated that any funding would be for services to support veterans and their families, not for hospitality.

The Council and RSL need to be transparent about how the total costs will be met.

IN SUMMARY

- Residents deserve to enjoy what Laurimar offers, including tranquility, peace and quiet enjoyment for older and young families. This is threatened by the RSL occupying the Brookwood Community Centre, particularly with regard to the hours of operation, activities and number of people attending – at any one time possibly in excess of 130 looking for parking.
- The Doreen RSL needs to be transparent regarding the activities that will take place at the BCC and how local community concerns will be addressed and resolved as part of the business plan to be submitted to Council, relevant details of which should be shared with local residents as part of the consultation process.
- The RSL has been asked to reconsider and scale down their proposal, as the BCC is not suitable and the impact on residents significant in relation to what is currently proposed by the RSL. This would need considerable discussion with the Council and local residents.
- Any consideration to relocate the Doreen RSL to the BCC needs to be supported by:
 - Local Resident Impact Statement
 - Traffic Management Plan
 - Details of existing and proposed licences, permits and approvals, zoning (if applicable), approvals that relate to the RSL's operation and use of the BCC, including restrictions for any future proposals/approvals.

NEXT STEPS

The Council needs to articulate to local residents how it will address the issues identified in the analysis provided to the Council meeting of 21 April 2026 . There is much unknown and it is unclear how the Council's own obligations to the community (local residents) will be dealt with and resolved,

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now and in the future. This needs to be dealt with prior to any approvals.

The Council clearly understands its obligations to ensure the needs of local residents are heard and to be transparent on how such concerns will be addressed and resolved. The process will take time and must ensure that the RSL provides clarity on what it proposes and this should be discussed with residents, not just presented to residents as part of a feedback process.

As part of the consultation process, Council officers should provide a detailed response to the issues raised in any analysis of a revised RSL proposal.

There are still significant consultation and further consideration of issues, including the RSL's business plan/case and the timeframe for Council decision (21 July) does not adequately allow for that. It is essential that the 'Report' itself be discussed with interested parties (residents) prior to Council decision.

Required community engagement cannot be limited to one meeting, particularly as there is no clarity on what is proposed, the relevant impacts and considerations. The community (local residents) have been presented with a document referring to a proposal; an outline of a number of considerations and inviting feedback. There is an absence of detail to enable informed feedback.

RECOMMENDATION

Council officers should report to Council that, as requirements, limitations and issues are yet to be fully identified and need clarification, the consultation process needs to be extended to allow full and proper consideration of requirements, issues and impacts on all impacted by any proposal.

Required community engagement cannot be limited to one meeting, particularly as there is no clarity on what is proposed, the relevant impacts and considerations. The community (local residents) have been presented with a document referring to a proposal; an outline of a number of considerations and inviting feedback. There is an absence of detail to enable informed feedback.

Such discussions could take place at the BCC and managed by Council officers responsible for reporting to Council. Furthermore, councillors could be invited to such information meetings to gain a "real" understanding of issues and resolutions. This would inform their decision making.

FINALLY

As Deputy Commission for Veterans' Affairs, I was instrumental in gaining funding for veterans and their families, working with the RSL. Examples of

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my successes include a 'drop-in center' and 'listening post' for veterans and their families, operated by veterans and their families.

What is up for discussion, as part of the feedback process, is the potential for the RSL to go beyond its responsibility for these activities and meetings for the benefit of veterans and their families, which, as noted in documentation, introduces a wide range of concerns and issues in relation to the BCC. This is clearly evidenced by the operation of other RSLs within the Whittlesea area which are in fit-for-purpose accommodation.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Amandeep Kaur Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre Local resident	Amandeep Kaur
Submission I oppose Council's proposed lease arrangement with Doreen RSL. Let me state in the begining. I respect the role of the RSL however, I oppose the handing over a important , multi-purpose public community facility to a single organization on a regular basis or ongoing basis. I believe that such leasing out to any organisation or a group will severely restrict community/public access and goes against the core purpose of a community centre. It is also to be noted that a growing community like Doreen/Mernda needs more access to such facilities, rather than the reduced one. Our local population is expanding rapidly. With more young and diverse families and residents moving into the area, our need for accessible, shared public space is growing, not shrinking. Denying our friends, families, and neighbors access to this central hub is a step backward for local infrastructure. This leasing arrangement also means loss of space for family functions and social connections. Broowood Community Centre is the heart of our local life, where we hold our family, cultural functions, religous, literary and artistic gatherings. Shifting this space to a group means residents will no longer have an affordable, local venue to bring people together. Initiatives like this require flexible, open-access community spaces to thrive and spread their message. Standardizing the space under an RSL lease effectively shuts the door on these emerging local groups. I am a everyday local resident like amny others who rely on this space. We do not have the resources to fight complex bureaucratic decisions, but we care deeply about our community's future and feel compelled to speak up before a vital asset is permanently locked away. This centre should remain an open, flexible, and inclusive space available to all members of the public, rather than being handed over for exclusive or restrictive use. I therefore request that the Council reconsider this lease agreement and look for alternative locations for the RSL that do not compromise the everyday needs of Doreen's growing resident base. Thank you for considering this feedback.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Rajwinder Kaur and Manubir Singh Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre Local resident	Rajwinder Kaur and Manubir Singh
Submission I am very disappointed with Council's decision that intends to lease out this facility on a regular basis to the Doreen RSL Infact I oppose this community facility to be leased out to any one organsiastion or group on a regular basis as this means effectively the denial of the use of this facility to other social groups or individuals. Therefore in my view this leasing arrangement with RSL is wrong in principal and is discriminatory to others. The Doreen RSL that currently meets at the Laurimar Recreation Reserve under arrangements with the resident sporting clubs could continue to do so. This continuation will facilitate the use of Brookwood Community Centre to be used by other organisations and individuals. If the RSL is looking to move from casual hire of the current venue to a permanent, dedicated space and expand its hours of operation, it could look at other options which do not deny the use of the Brookwood Community Centre by the other social, spiritual and community groups. Given the RSL seems financially in a much better position with \$1.6million Federal Government funding and its own resources, as compared to other individuals and social groups, it should genuinely look for other venues or options that do not discriminate other community groups and members. It should also be noted that more families are moving into Doreen, Mernda and Hawkstowe areas and our local population is expanding rapidly. With more young families and residents specifically with diverse cultural background moving into the area, the needs of the community for accessible, shared public/community space is growing, not shrinking. Denying such community facilities to other social and cultural groups to this central hub is a discriminatory step, which must not occur. It should also be noted that complete or limited denial of the use of this facility for family functions and making social connections is a retrogate step. This community centre is the heart of our local life where the families and social groups hold functions, cultural programs, and neighborhood gatherings. Leasing out this facility to the RSL club means that the family and social, cultural and spiritual groups will no longer have an affordable, local venue to bring people together. It is therefore strongly urged that Council do not proceed with the proposed lease arrangement with the Doreen RSL In April 2025, the Federal Government made a funding commitment of \$1.6 million for the establishment of a permanent base for the Doreen RSL		

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at the Council-owned Brookwood Community Centre in Doreen.

At the April 2026 Council Meeting, Council considered a range of options that would allow the Doreen RSL use of the centre and resolved that the preferred option is to lease part of the Brookwood Community Centre to the Doreen RSL, while maintaining the remainder of the centre for community use.

The proposal outlines the following conditions:

Doreen RSL will have exclusive access of the Hazel Glen Room, community office and adjoining corridor

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Jessica Cutler Local resident Other: Occasionally use the space	Jessica Cutler
Submission I am extremely concerned about this proposal; it would set a precedent that should concern every resident in the Whittlesea Shire, turning over a community centre for the exclusive use by one group is a terrible idea. I am concerned about the existing users being kicked out and having nowhere else to go. Currently the users provide positive social activities for a broad range of people. Turning over the centre to the RSL for drinking, smoking and eating fried foods are not positive social outcomes. I feel very sorry for the residents surrounding the centre, the damage to the value of their properties by even having this proposal put forward would be significant, who would buy a house next to an RSL? I am concerned that the proposal would not be financially viable, even with option D which is the option that the RSL has on their website as their preferred one, it would still not be financially viable. It is well known that the margins are very tight in hospitality and I would be very concerned that after well over 3 million dollars of taxpayer money has been spent, the RSL would seek Poker Machine licenses because it was losing money. The Doreen community had made its opposition to Poker Machines very clear; we don't want them. My biggest concern is that the lack of financial viability is well known by the powers that be and that the ultimate goal is Poker Machines in Doreen. The block of land from the original Poker Machine venue proposal is still sitting vacant. I think that the RSL needs to accept that it isn't 1950 anymore and there is no longer such a thing as a cheap block of land or a cheap venue. My personal view is that they should get behind the construction of a Mernda Community Leisure Centre that is built with rooms that community groups can hire. The idea that the community should fund, at great expense, a venue for one group is absurd, it is just not viable in 2026.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Harjinder Singh Local resident; Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre Other: Intend to use this facility more for educational and cultural programs in the future. I am a member of Punjabi Community in Doreen and Mernda. The cultural and educational needs of the community are growing and are expected to grow more in the times to come.	Harjinder Singh
Submission This lease to RSL will virtually deny the opportunity to the local residents such as fine arts, literary activities, educational and cultural activities, no play and dance groups, religious activities such as of the church, and other groups to effectively use this facility. Most of these users or groups are young and active groups who and use this facility currently and even more productively in the near future unlike a group of some retired people. The RSL, as it has received significant financial assistance for the government, is relatively much better placed financially than many such social groups in Mernda, Hawkstowe and Doreen. Therefore the RSL could look for other places for its activities. That would also assist the cultural and other social groups in our area to continue to undertake our social and cultural activities with being compromised. I sincerely hope that Council will do serious consideration to our submission and not lease out this facility to the RSL.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Bikram Sekhon Local resident; Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre; Other: We have a local artist group and also use this space earlier and now have plan to hire for classes.	Bikram Sekhon
Submission I am writing to formally log our strong opposition to the Council's Notice of Intention to Lease a section of the Brookwood Community Centre to the Doreen RSL. While we respect the role of the RSL, handing over a vital, multi-purpose public community hub to a single organization will severely restrict public access and goes against the core purpose of a community centre. Our opposition is based on the following critical points: A Growing Community Needs More Access, Not Less: Our local population is expanding rapidly. With more young families and residents moving into the area, our need for accessible, shared public space is growing, not shrinking. Denying our friends, families, and neighbors access to this central hub is a step backward for local infrastructure. Loss of Space for Family Functions and Social Connection: Community centres are the heart of local life they are where we hold family milestones, cultural functions, and neighborhood gatherings. Shifting this space to a group means residents will no longer have an affordable, local venue to bring people together. Halting Local Grassroots Initiatives: We have active plans to enrich our neighborhood from within, including the initiation of a local artists' exhibition and workshop group. I am a member of local Multipurpose Theatre Group and already have initiated Art, theatrical shows and we need a space for rehearsals, talks, story sharing and there places. Initiatives like this require flexible, open-access community spaces to thrive and spread their message. Standardizing the space under an RSL lease effectively shuts the door on these emerging local groups. How can Council decide to limit our activities, we are pay rates and it's very frustrating		

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We Are Residents, Not Activists: We are not an organized political group or seasoned activists; we are simply everyday local residents, families, and neighbors who rely on this space. We do not have the resources to fight complex bureaucratic decisions, but we care deeply about our community's future and feel compelled to speak up before a vital asset is permanently locked away.

A community centre should remain exactly that: an open, flexible, and inclusive space available to all members of the public, rather than being handed over for exclusive or restrictive use.

We urgently request that the Council reconsider this lease agreement and look for alternative locations for the RSL that do not compromise the everyday needs of Doreen's growing resident base.

Thank you for considering this feedback. I look forward to your response and an update on the community consultation process.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Ruby Lee Lois de Kretser Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	de Kretser representative
Submission Being able to dance somewhere in my local area is amazing I have made so many friendships and I couldn't imagine life without the beautiful dance community where young families are supported because in Laurimar there isn't any other facilities for cultural activities.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Gavin de Kretser Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	de Kretser representative
Submission The brookwood community centre needs to service the needs of the young families in Laurimar. There are almost no facilities in laurimar for young kids to participate in Dance groups, shirking the capability would force families to have to travel and or quit having their kids in Dance. While the DRSL needs a home, in no way is this facility appropriate.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Jessica Angelovich Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Jessica Angelovich
Submission I have been a proud Doreen resident for 5 years, and have 3 young children who attend school/childcare in Doreen. I specifically moved to Doreen for the family-focused community, and after living in the city and then inner northern suburbs I can't imagine living anywhere else. I am truly saddened and concerned to hear about the proposed changes to Brookwood Community Centre where the Doreen RSL will have exclusive use of one of the rooms, and the impact this will have on all tenants -particularly Dance Power where my 5 year old daughter attends dance classes.. The strong sense of community that Dance Power creates is evident in the number of classes it runs and the joy that it brings the students. In the last class for term 1, it truly brought me joy to watch my daughter's class perform for all the parents and then watch the students giggle as they got all the parents up to have a dance as well. While the classes are running, parents and younger siblings bring business to JoJays cafe and enjoy toast that the Dance Power team bring around for the younger siblings. I specifically mention the toast as it's a true example of the strong sense of community and belonging that focusses on children -this can't be manufactured, it's truly organic and is what makes Doreen unique. We are reminded every day in the news of the devastating consequences when children don't feel a sense of safety and belonging in their community. All tenants of Brookwood Community centre support the same ethos as Dance Power -to provide a safe space for families and children to connect in wholesome activities that promote and support mental and physical health. Dance Power offer a LOCAL and AFFORDABLE activity. Many families within Doreen have to travel to other suburbs for our children's activities, especially as there is no sports or aquatic centres locally. Having access to a local business that promotes fitness and is reasonably priced is something that we all must protect. The RSL are an extremely important and valued group. HOWEVER I don't understand why they are allowed to have exclusive use of a space which is already used by other groups. Supporters of the RSL have mentioned in social media groups that funding was provided to RSL to ONLY use at the		

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Brookwood Community Centre. I believe the real issue at play here, is that the Council/Government need to find an alternative venue for the RSL that is NOT already being used by another group.

A Councillor summarized the issue well at the April council meeting by stating the RSL have been give a bat but no ball. Doreen RSL haven't been given enough funding to build a new facility, however I don't believe RSL (or any other group) can come and take over a space that is already used by other well established group. RSL are of course welcome to book the space when it is available.

I trust the Council will acknowledge this and will ensure there are no disruptions at all to the current usage of the centre.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Tara Anderson Local resident	Tara Anderson
Submission I am a local resident in the area living not far from this site. I come from a long line of service man with the Australian army and recognise the support that is needed. However, I do not believe this is the right location. The site is in a suburban area with the community homes living so close the site. I don't want this space to become a local drinking spot with late hours and noise. I would be pretty disappointed. I ask what is happening with the vacant land space that has been sitting vacant for years with a fence around it? Do you not want to use it that space considering that is also close the shrine. I am worried about the loss of a quite town feel which is why is moved to this section of doreen in the first place.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	John Edmonds Regular hirer (currently hire a space regularly)	John Edmonds
Submission I am writing on behalf of Doreen Baptist Church to express our opposition to the proposal to grant a permanent lease and exclusive use of part of the Brookwood Community Centre to the Doreen RSL. Firstly, I want to acknowledge the important and valued role the RSL plays in supporting veterans, their families and the broader community. This submission is not opposition to the RSL itself, but rather concern about whether Brookwood Community Centre is the appropriate location for a permanent and exclusive arrangement of this nature. Doreen Baptist Church has been part of the Brookwood Community Centre community since close to the beginning of the building's operation. For over twenty two years, our congregation has met there consistently and respectfully alongside numerous other community groups who rely on the centre as a shared local facility. Over that time, we have seen Brookwood become much more than simply a building. It has become a genuine community hub where people gather, form relationships, support one another and build community connection. The success of the centre has always come from its shared and inclusive nature. It was established to serve a broad range of community needs and continues to provide one of the very few accessible and flexible community spaces available within Doreen. As Councillors would be aware, Doreen has experienced significant growth over recent years and continues to expand rapidly as part of Melbourne's northern growth corridor. With thousands of new families moving into the area, demand for community facilities, meeting spaces and local support networks has increased substantially. Unfortunately, the availability of suitable community infrastructure has not kept pace with that growth. For this reason, we are deeply concerned about the long-term impact of granting permanent exclusive use of part of Brookwood Community Centre to a single organisation. Such a decision would fundamentally change the purpose, functionality and accessibility of the facility and permanently reduce opportunities for a wide range of community groups, both current and future. We understand there are currently around eleven (11) community groups who either actively use the centre or may reasonably depend on it in		

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the future. Allocating permanent exclusive use to one organisation risks leaving these groups without a suitable home and further limits the already restricted availability of community facilities within Doreen.

For Doreen Baptist Church specifically, there are no equivalent alternative facilities currently available locally that would allow the church to continue operating in the same way. If displaced from Brookwood Community Centre (which granting the Doreen RSL their exclusive use as per the Future Use of Brookwood Community Centre Option B, C or D would do), the church would likely be forced, for its ongoing survival, to transition toward a home church model. This would inevitably create additional parking and traffic pressures within residential streets and impact nearby residents' issues that are currently avoided through the use of an appropriate community facility.

Parking and traffic at Brookwood Community Centre are already challenging during busy periods. The centre is located in close proximity to residential homes and was designed as a shared-use community facility rather than as a permanent exclusive-use premises for a single organisation. Increased ongoing activity associated with a permanent lease arrangement would place additional strain on parking availability and surrounding residential amenity.

We also question whether Brookwood Community Centre is the most appropriate location for an RSL facility when more suitable alternatives appear to exist. In particular, a location associated with the football club precinct would seem to provide a more practical long-term option. Such a site is better aligned with the scale, parking requirements and operational nature of an RSL, while also being less likely to displace the many community groups currently relying on Brookwood Community Centre.

Importantly, while a football club precinct may suit the needs of an RSL, it would not necessarily be appropriate or workable for the many smaller community groups who require flexible, accessible and family-oriented community spaces such as Brookwood.

Whilst we realise that the funding allocated from the Federal Government is tied to the Brookwood Community Centre, we believe it is only fair to ask the government to release the funding from Brookwood to enable a more purpose built and functional facility for the RSL without displacing multiple community groups and dividing the community.

There is also nothing stopping the Doreen RSL from hiring the Hazel Glen Room at Brookwood in the same way they do at the moment and in the same way that every other hirer (community group or personal) currently does.

We respectfully ask Council to carefully consider the broader long-term implications of this proposal for the entire Doreen community. Community facilities within Doreen are already limited relative to the area's rapid growth, and once shared public space is lost to permanent exclusive use, it is extremely difficult to replace.

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Brookwood Community Centre has served the community well because it has remained a shared, inclusive and accessible space for many different groups and individuals. We believe preserving that principle is in the best interests of the wider Doreen community both now and into the future.

Thank you for considering our submission.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Michelle Sanders Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre Local resident	TBC
Submission I have utilised the Brookwood Community Centre for many years through a range of community-based programs, including HGC school transition activities, yoga and meditation classes, and most significantly, through my three children's involvement with Dance Power from 2012 to the present day. While I fully acknowledge and respect the importance of dedicated spaces for RSL members, it is equally important to recognise the critical role that inclusive community environments play in supporting the wellbeing, confidence, and development of women, girls, and families. As a strong advocate for programs that support women and girls, I find it deeply disappointing that consideration is being given to granting the RSL shared and exclusive use of this valued community facility. Girls' and women's self-esteem is profoundly shaped by the environments in which they feel seen, supported, respected, and safe. Community spaces such as Brookwood Community Centre provide far more than physical venues for activities – they foster confidence, belonging, connection, and positive identity formation. Programs that encourage participation in dance, wellbeing activities, mentoring, movement, and social connection create opportunities for women and girls to develop resilience, self-worth, leadership skills, and healthy community engagement. For many families, particularly single-parent households and vulnerable community members, these programs become essential support networks. They provide stability, encouragement, and a safe space where young people can express themselves freely, build friendships, and develop confidence in who they are. These opportunities are invaluable and have long-term positive impacts on emotional wellbeing, mental health, and social inclusion. At the same time, I acknowledge the significance of preserving exclusive venues for RSL members. These spaces hold deep cultural and community importance, providing veterans and members with a dedicated environment for camaraderie, support, reflection, and shared experience. The important role of the RSL within the community deserves respect and ongoing support. However, Brookwood Community Centre is a leased community facility, not a permanent private premises. Granting exclusive rights over the majority of the building would inevitably displace existing organisations that have spent years building trusted, inclusive, and supportive programs		

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for local families. This raises serious concerns about equity, accessibility, and the future of established community groups that already rely on this space. How does the City of Whittlesea Council intend to support these established entities should they lose access to the Brookwood Community Centre?

Children are among the most vulnerable members of our community. Dance Power has provided my children with a safe and supportive environment where they have been encouraged to grow in confidence, express themselves freely, and truly shine. More than a dance school, it is a family and a community hub for hundreds of local families.

As a single parent of three children, finding a community-based dance school that prioritised inclusion, encouragement, and personal growth was incredibly important to me. Dance Power has offered exactly that for many years. The prospect of displacing these children, families, and programs is deeply concerning. Where will these established groups go, and what guarantees are there that equivalent community spaces will be made available?

During the council meeting, it was stated that if redevelopment costs exceeded the allocated funding, Council would not be required to contribute additional financial support. Given this, why is the available funding not being considered for the development of a purpose-built facility that could accommodate the RSL without displacing existing and well-established community groups currently operating from the Brookwood Community Centre site?

Preserving the integrity and purpose of RSL member spaces is important, but so too is protecting inclusive community programs that actively support the wellbeing, confidence, and social participation of women, girls, children, and families. These outcomes should not come at the expense of one another when alternative solutions may exist.

I urge Council to carefully consider the long-term social impact that the loss of these programs and spaces would have on local children, families, women's activities, and the broader community.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Miriam Mollema Casual hirer (hire a space occasionally) Local resident Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Miriam Mollema
Submission I am writing to formally express my OPPOSITION to the proposed Notice of Intention to Lease -Brookwood Community Centre. I have lived in the area for nearly 20 years and am a regular user, including as a weekly church group participant, a private hirer for workshops and classes for home-educated students, and through my children's long-time drama involvement. I care deeply about the centre's accessibility and ongoing role in our community. I support the RSL's need for a stable meeting space, but the proposal raises questions about public space, the impact on current users, and broader implications for Doreen. I respectfully request alternatives that protect broad access and ensure transparent, inclusive planning. Public Space and Accessibility Brookwood Community Centre is a valuable shared asset supporting recreational, social, sporting, and cultural activities. Leasing most of the facility primarily to one organisation would reduce public access and diminish benefits for residents. Accessible public spaces foster connection, inclusion, physical activity, and wellbeing for many different people. Any usage shift should preserve Brookwood's role as a versatile, community-wide venue. Impact on Current Users The proposed layout would limit remaining community use to a single room with no storage, no dedicated kitchen or supporting facilities (tables and chairs), and only toilet access available to them. The addition of memorabilia on walls and TVs would further constrain flexibility for current groups and events. This combination of limited space, lack of storage, fixed displays, and reduced facilities would significantly reduce functionality for community groups, families, seniors, and other regular users, creating ongoing barriers to accommodating diverse needs. Clear details on accommodation and protection for current users, including storage solutions and flexibility for memorabilia and displays, are essential.		

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Brookwood Community Centre already experiences parking pressures during peak periods and events. Expanding on-site activity under a long-term exclusive lease would likely worsen congestion, reduce safety, and create inconvenience for residents and visitors. The proposal does not adequately address how existing parking limitations and traffic impacts will be managed.

Broader Community Impact

I believe that community centres should remain inclusive and neutral spaces that support a wide range of local activities and users. Leasing the majority of Brookwood Community Centre to a single organisation risks altering the facility's character, reduce accessibility, and limit opportunities for broader community participation. Doreen continues to grow and needs more accessible shared spaces now more than ever; a more inclusive approach would preserve Brookwood Community Centre as a genuinely shared public facility.

Conclusion

The council's efforts to support the local RSL are appreciated, but in its current form the Notice of Intention to Lease -Brookwood Community Centre would negatively impact public access, current users, parking availability, and overall community amenity.

I urge the Council to reject or revisit and substantially revise the proposal to prioritise the broader community needs, ensure Brookwood Community Centre remains a genuinely shared and accessible public facility, and adopt a transparent, community-inclusive process.

Thank you for considering my submission.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Kate O'Halloran Local resident	Kate O'Halloran
Submission I am writing as a resident whose property backs directly onto the Brookwood Community Centre and would like to raise several concerns regarding the proposed lease and extended operating hours of the centre for the Doreen RSL. While I acknowledge the important role community organisations play within the municipality and appreciate that conditions have been included within the proposal, I remain deeply concerned about the significant impact this proposal is likely to have on surrounding residents and the overall residential amenity of the area. In particular, I believe the proposal represents a substantial intensification of use within what is fundamentally a quiet residential setting. A key concern is that this proposal represents a significant shift in the intended use and character of the community centre. Historically, the facility has operated as a shared community space that supports a range of local groups and activities. The proposal to provide ongoing and extended access to a single organisation changes the nature of the venue from a flexible community facility to one that operates with greater frequency and intensity, particularly during evenings and weekends. This shift has the potential to reduce accessibility and amenity for the broader community and alter the character of the facility in a way that was not originally anticipated by surrounding residents. Although I was aware of the existence of the community centre when I purchased my home and understood it to be part of the local amenity, I did not reasonably anticipate that the facility would operate at the scale, frequency and extended evening hours as outlined within this proposal. The changes now proposed go well beyond what nearby residents could reasonably have foreseen when choosing to live in the area. My primary concern relates to the proposed operating hours, particularly the extension of regular Friday and Saturday evening operations until 10:00pm. While the centre currently hosts occasional evening events, the proposal represents a substantial increase in the frequency and duration of late-evening activity. Increased evening operations are likely to result in ongoing noise, vehicle movement, patron activity and general disturbance during times when residents would reasonably expect peace and quiet within their homes and outdoor living spaces. Despite the proposal stating that an outdoor alfresco and smoking areas will not be permitted at the back of the centre, informal use of these external areas already occurs during current evening events held at the centre. Due to the layout of the site, noise carries directly into adjoining backyards and creates the impression that activity is occurring within our own outdoor spaces. These disturbances have significantly impacted my		

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ability to peacefully enjoy my property and outdoor living areas and, on occasions, have forced me to retreat indoors due to the level of noise and disruption. I am concerned that increasing the frequency and duration of evening operations will inevitably increase the informal use of these outdoor areas and further exacerbate these impacts for nearby residents including myself.

In addition to noise generated within the venue itself, I am concerned about the cumulative impacts associated with patrons arriving at and departing from the centre. Vehicle movements, car doors closing, conversations within the car park and surrounding streets, and patrons dispersing after events all contribute to noise disturbances that are particularly intrusive during evening hours and inconsistent with the quiet residential character of the area.

I am also concerned about the adequacy of parking provisions to support the attendance numbers identified in the proposal. With anticipated attendance reaching up to 130 patrons on peak Friday evenings and approximately 80 attendees on weekends, it is highly likely that overflow parking will occur throughout surrounding residential streets. Parking availability within the area is already limited, and increased congestion, traffic movements and associated noise from arriving and departing patrons will place additional strain on local residents and neighbourhood amenity.

I also wish to acknowledge the important role the community centre currently plays in supporting a range of local community groups who rely on the facility for regular activities and programs. In particular, organisations such as Dance Power provide valuable opportunities for local children and families to participate in structured activities close to home without the need to travel significant distances. These programs contribute positively to the local community and reflect the original intent and purpose of the facility as an accessible and shared community space. I am concerned that the proposed changes may impact the ongoing accessibility and availability of the centre for these broader community-based uses.

Finally, I am concerned about the longer-term implications of approving this proposal. While a number of operating conditions have been outlined, it remains unclear how these conditions would be monitored, managed and enforced over time. Once a lease arrangement is established, neighbouring residents may be left dealing with ongoing amenity impacts with limited avenues for meaningful resolution.

I respectfully ask Council to carefully consider:

- the suitability of the proposed operating hours within a residential setting;
- the cumulative noise impacts associated with increased evening and weekend activity;
- the informal use of outdoor areas and associated impacts on neighbouring properties;

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- the adequacy of parking provisions and likely impacts on surrounding residential streets;
- the long-term effect this proposal may have on residential amenity for neighbouring properties.

Given the concerns outlined above, I request that Council reconsider the proposal in its current form. In my view, the existing arrangements for use of the community centre better reflect the expectations and amenity of the surrounding residential community and are more consistent with the intended purpose of the facility.

While I acknowledge and respect the valuable contribution the Doreen RSL makes to the broader community, I do not believe that the Brookwood Community Centre is an appropriate long-term venue for the scale, frequency and nature of the activities proposed.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Jesse Dass Local resident	Jesse Dass
Submission This proposal fails to consider the scale of disruption to the multiple groups that use the Brookwood Community Centre, such as a dance group and a church. Dance Power has over 300 enrolled students that far outnumbers the number of people that would use the RSL. Community activities that are perceived as "feminine" and enjoyed by women and girls should not be seen as less important than "masculine" RSLs. This proposal will also displace a local church community, as it would be render the space no longer suitable for services. This proposal to build an RSL appears to be political, as RSL members typically vote for conservative parties and this proposal is seen by the community as an appeal towards conservative votes. Partisan politics should not influence the needs of the community. Further, there are Council members who are on committee for the Doreen RSL which is an inherent conflict of interest. Lastly, I am deeply concerned about the provision of alcohol and gambling services provided at RSLs. This would promote a culture of alcoholism by veterans instead of engaging with mental health services to deal with the trauma of war.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Jaimie Yates Local resident Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Jaimie Yates
Submission I write to you with my deepest concern over the proposed site of the new Doreen RSL and subsequent displacement of current community services. Brookwood Community Centre is currently home to many community groups, one in particular which is very close to my heart - Dance Power. I have had the privilege of being involved with this wonderful school for 20 years now as a student, teacher and most recently as a parent. As a student, Dance Power is where I grew up surrounded by some of the warmest most kind and caring people I have ever met. They have shown me unwavering support for 20 years now and truly given me a home away from home. I cannot understate the impact that Dance Power has had on my life and the confidence, happiness and sense of family it has given me. As a teacher, Dance Power is where I got my first job. It's where I learnt leadership skills and responsibility. It's where I was given a chance to grow and find a sense of purpose. Being able to watch the young children that come to the school and thrive both physically, mentally and socially is truly special and something I still cherish to this day as I continue on with my 17th year teaching at this wonderful school. Most recently, as a parent Dance Power is where I get to watch as my daughter embarks on her own journey supported by the same dance family that has supported me all these years. Watching her face light up with joy every time she steps in the room is truly a gift and is something I hope my sons will also get a chance to be a part of someday. The beautiful Annessa and Lola are more than just people. They are the heart and soul of Dance Power and absolute pillars of our community. Dance Power is more than just a dance school, we are a family and Brookwood Community Centre is our home. While I wholeheartedly support the idea of a Doreen RSL I urge you to consider the existing importance of the Brookwood Community Centre to families like mine. While your plans for the Community Centre have undoubtedly created much excitement it has also created great sadness and stress to the hundreds of families in our community whose lives have been touched by Dance Power. I fear that while your plan aims to accommodate all and provide a fair and reasonable outcome for each party involved, in reality it would likely lead to the breakdown of our dance family who would struggle to maintain the level of service required to continue. I can imagine this is an extremely difficult decision for Council as you consider the potential ramifications of your proposal but I hope my		

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submission provides even a small glimpse into the importance of the Brookwood Community Centre as it is and to Dance Power itself. I completely support the idea of the Doreen RSL finding a permanent home but not at the expense of other existing groups who have already found theirs.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Emily Collett Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Emily Collett
Submission I will be sharing the following submission on June 11th 2026: My name is Emily Collett, and I am here this evening to dispute the proposal of partial lease of the Brookwood Community Centre to the Doreen RSL, and strongly advocate for local dance school and family run business, Dance Power, to remain operating as is within its home of 23 years - the Brookwood Community Centre. Tonight, I am here to share my lived experience as both a Dance Power student and staff member of 19 years. I'd like to take you back to one Saturday morning some 23 years ago when I walked into my very first dance lesson at Dance Power. I was a new resident to Doreen at the time, so was very unfamiliar with the area and had minimal social connections, so I really wasn't too sure whether this "Dance Power place" would be for me. I was warmly greeted and welcomed in by the dance teacher - Anessa, and her mum -Lola who managed front of house. I could instantly tell (even at the young age of 8) that Anessa and Lola were two salt of the earth women, who genuinely cared about the health and wellbeing of children and wanted to give back. They encouraged me to simply "give it a go" without any pressure or expectation. Well, I wish I could bottle that feeling and give it to you all today. To describe it in a few short words -it was nothing less than - joy, warmth, comfort, peace and safety. I had found my home away from home and a place that truly felt like the beating heart of Doreen. From here, I jumped at any opportunity to give a new class a go and to spend more time at the Brookwood Community Centre. Without much delay, I was soon engaged in tap, jazz, ballet, contemporary, hip hop and drama classes, and was then asked to join the teaching team as an assistant teacher, and then later, the lead drama teacher. I regularly spent any time outside of dancing with the wonderful and lifelong friends I had made there. We are all still close friends to this day and continue to dance through life together -some of our children now the next generation of performers to have walked through the doors of Dance Power. Whilst I have this platform, I think it is important to outline just how much Dance Power has shaped me and how it has given me so many opportunities in this life. I am currently working as a Senior Occupational Therapist supporting children and young people with disability, mental health and school disengagement, and will soon be commencing lecturing at Latrobe University later this year. I can confidently and proudly say I would not be where I am today without the unwavering support and guidance I have had from Anessa and Lola over the years, and the life changing experiences I have shared together with the rest of my Dance Power family. Since the inception of Dance Power over 23 years ago, the school has serviced over 10,000 students and continues to maintain an enrolment of 350		

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today. My story is the story of just one of these many students. Imagine how many more stories there are that are just like mine?

I implore you to reconsider the proposal of a partial lease of the Brookwood Community Centre to the Doreen RSL as this will not allow for Dance Power to continue operating as is, as it requires concurrent use of multiple spaces across the community centre at once to ensure it caters to the needs of all students and families.

Dance Power is more than just a dance school, it is more than just a business, it is a place for everyone -a true family. It is a part of who I am and always will be. I will finish tonight with some lyrics from one of my favourite songs. And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance, I hope you dance.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Travis Drake Local resident Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Travis Drake
Submission My family and I moved from St Kilda to [REDACTED] because we wanted a quieter, more stable environment to raise our child. We accepted longer commutes specifically to enjoy the peace that Doreen offers. The proposed RSL lease at the Brookwood Community Centre directly undermines that expectation. Our concern is that the proposed location is not equipped to deal with any medium to large events, based on the size, parking and surrounding residential streets, I am concerned the centre is not suitable for regular medium sized evening gatherings of 60 to 120 people particularly given its location within a quiet residential pocket. Sound really travels on Hazel Glen, even when the venue is hired out you can hear noise and especially bass from very far away. Thankfully this is infrequent but, on the times, I have called the police due to events going past 11 and being loud keeping my family awake nothing is done anyway, due to reasons out of councils control, Police presence in the area can be lacklustre and to allow any evening business operating outside of a main commercial space will stretch them even thinner regardless of the use case. As such I personally don't understand why somewhere closer to the commercial end of Laurimar / Doreen cannot be used to the safety of the tenants and peace of the surrounding houses. I was disappointed when the Liberal Party used this situation as an opportunity to buy votes and then doubly disappointed when Labor did the same thing without any noticeable community engagement. I am frustrated that this issue is now brought to Council to resolve and while I do appreciate the conditions which have been laid out are on the closer side to reasonable, I am concerned this can become a bigger political hot potato if the council provide any compromise at all. As over time there's no guarantee in that conditions will not change, be stretched or ignored at all, especially since I note that our Federal Member, Rob Mitchell, has publicly criticised council over this process and urged them to stop the delays' and support the RSL. This political pressure makes me less confident that strict conditions, once imposed, will be maintained over time. So with that in mind, how are we to feel comfortable that and a further Federal or State Government proposal will not just move this issue closer and closer to being a standard RSL. I am sympathetic to the genuine needs of Returned Service Men and Women and acknowledge the current proposal for Doreen RSL at Brookwood excludes gaming, TAB and alcohol sales. However, given the broader history of RSL venues in Victoria and their reliance on gaming revenue, I am concerned about 'mission creep' over time, future councils or governments may be pressured to relax these conditions and convert this into a more typical RSL model. Rather than forcing a compromise that satisfies no one and neither side is happy, I believe a more suitable long - term solution should be explored.		

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Options could include:

Permanent use of inside one of the many Federally Funded State ran School halls which are abundant and may be underutilised if used at all through a negotiated arrangement, where parking is more appropriate and the community already expects evening activity.

Repurposing space at the Laurimar Community Activity Centre.

Locating the RSL within the Laurimar or Bridge Inn commercial precincts, where hospitality style activity is already normalised and better supported by infrastructure

If none of my proposals are to be considered as a reality at the very least the business hours should be moved to finish at 8pm each day no exceptions and remove any ability to serve food for financial gain. I do not see how the genuine needs of RSL members such mentioned in the proposal cannot be achieved within a 12-8pm window.

Residents deserve confidence that their neighbourhood will remain residential, peaceful and predictable. The current proposal does not provide that confidence.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Opposes	Andrew Nicholls Local resident Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Andrew Nicholls
Submission Having witnessed the late night drinking culture this group undertakes, this is not appropriate to have this in a built up area of the community with young children. It is also kicking out a huge proportion of the community that utilises this space for children's sport/dancing to appease a small group of people that already have an allocated room up at the football/cricket club. I also live directly across the road from this facility and witnessed the late night drinking culture they displayed when they were last in this facility. The proposal does not outline how many nights of the week this will be in place.		

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Sheena Wridgway Casual hirer (hire a space occasionally)	Doreen RSL representative
Submission My name is Sheena Wridgway & I have been a member of the Doreen RSL since 2017 & later, became a committee member in 2019. My connection & passion for the RSL & the important function & support it provides to our local community, stems directly from being the wife of a veteran. I wish to support the proposal to lease the Brookwood Community Centre to the Doreen RSL. However, I know that Option B would simply not be viable due to the terms proposed. The amount of rent that the RSL could afford would be directly affected by the limits placed on any income generation in the new space. Looking at a comparison against the other RSL operating in Whittlesea is Epping RSL. Council gave them a huge parcel of land & a suitable building to use for their veterans for rent of just \$1 a year. Option B isn't even in the ballpark of the support shown to the Epping Veterans. I can't explain how grateful we would all be to see that gap reduced. With this in mind, the best option would be option D. I understand that this wasn't the preferred option put forward by council. I'd hope that you'd agree that people don't always make the right choice, if all of the information isn't in front of them to consider. I'm hoping that the content of my submission may assist in offering further information that the decision makers are not currently aware of. I'd like to first talk about the homes we've had to date. When the Doreen RSL initially started up, our Friday night Socials were held in Jo Jayz café in the same Brookwood CC. The RSL was meeting at the cafe every Friday night & would hire the Hazleglen Room once a month for the end of month meets where the additional attendees needed to overflow into the extra space offered in the larger room. This continued up until the COVID lockdowns started in 2020 & the cafe was later sold. Before the last lockdowns finished, the new cafe owners had moved in & started trading. They do not open on an evening & were unable to host the RSL on Friday nights. Both the Laurimar Football Club & Cricket Club have been kind enough to share their spaces with us ever since. There was a period of around 8 months that the Doreen United Soccer Club also hosted us on Friday nights after there was a fire at the Laurimar Clubrooms & the repairs took several months to be completed. We have formed solid relationships with each of these clubs & demonstrated that the RSL is well experienced in co-operating with other groups. This arrangement has been critical in our veterans' maintaining their camaraderie which is crucial for their mental health. The RSL members being able to meet each week has formed such a great connection with each other & the wider communities. However, along with the positives, comes		

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some negatives too. The difficulties we have include, the noise of the room. The concrete walls & ceiling makes it very noisy & many of our veterans & members have hearing issues, hearing aids, etc which provides challenges around conversations. Many of our veterans & first responders are suffering from PTSD from their service & have advised their medical condition prevents them from attending due to the volume of noise in the room. Over the winter months, the room is quite cold & we have some veterans that simply don't attend because of this. The two split systems need to be turned on many hours before we meet to enable the room to be comfortable for our veterans & elderly to be comfortable. That's not always possible due to access to the building. Sometimes the sporting clubs have games or activities happening on Friday nights too. So, the limited parking can be difficult for those with walking aids & limited mobility. There have been some instances where veterans have driven down, been unable to get a spot in the carpark & driven back home. The food & drinks on offer are run by the sporting teams, so aside from selling some raffle tickets on the night, there's no opportunity for the RSL to generate any other income to assist with expenses. There is no fit area for any advocacy work or welfare work to be undertaken. The saying "A problem shared is a problem halved" has been demonstrated over & over again in our RSL. This is currently challenging for our veterans, without a private space for private discussion & just a noisy space not conducive to private discussions. We don't have adequate storage for our equipment used. We have had a considerable amount of defence related memorabilia donated to our club, which we currently have nowhere to display. In summary, we've had great connections with all of the places that we've had temporary homes, being Jo Jayz & all three sporting clubs, just the spaces we've had to operate in haven't been ideal.

On the back of that, I'd like to publicly respond to a question asked by Dance Power Co-founder Lola Nicolaou in a recent online article posted by the Northern Star Weekly.

And I quote, How can you have a group of mostly male veterans in one room & young girls in tutus in another? Very easily. You educate those girls & the boys, about what a veteran is. You explain to them what sacrifices & horrific things they've experienced to earn the title of a veteran. You share with them the fact, that they signed up for a difficult job knowing the risks of physical injury, mental injury & even death, to serve their country. You acknowledge that those, who haven't served our country, would not have the freedom to live their free & privileged lives had it not been for our veterans. You remind them that those veterans are the same ones invited to their child care centres & their schools each year to talk about the ANZACs & Remembrance & pass around the medals they've been awarded. You reassure them that many of those same veterans socialising in the room next door, are also brothers, uncles, fathers & grandfathers of young girls in tutus. And those girls are privileged to have that connection to such an honourable person.

Our veterans have been meeting in spaces shared by many young children for years. In fact right now, the juniors football teams train every Friday night at the same time that the RSL is operating. Many of those same players, coaches & families come into the RSL & use the same space. I'm confident in saying that none of the junior players or their parents have any concerns that veterans are meeting in the same building. Our RSL is very well respected in the wider community. We have solid connections with the local sporting clubs, schools & childcare centres, aged care homes, etc. where we are invited every year to conduct education sessions around ANZAC Day & Remembrance Day. This year alone there were more than 23 presentations given in these venues.

Which leads me to share what the RSL does. It's not just a bunch of fellas meeting for a booze up. Our membership consists of a mix of veterans,

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affiliates (relatives of veterans) & social members across all ages. We have many female members & entire families with kids in our membership. The work we do in the community is not in people's faces as much as other groups. We quietly operate in the background, in fact our most important & critical work we do, is behind closed doors. Most people see the fundraising we do. The volunteers selling ANZAC badges & Poppies during our two appeals periods.

Some of the things you don't see include:

Driving veterans to medical appointments / Organise & pay for crisis accommodation for homeless or those escaping domestic violence(rent, beds, doonas, kids clothes, school fees & books, uniforms, fuel cards, removal costs, phone bill, overdrawn bank account) / sponsoring service dogs for veterans / Gardening & maintenance / Tree lopping / Smart watch purchase with fall alert for an elderly veteran / purchasing a specialised shopping cart & aids after surgery / installing an awning for weather protection on an external door / purchasing supplements not covered by DVA for required post cancer treatment / paying bills when a veteran was unable to work due to health issues (mortgage, groceries, utilities, insurances) / Mobility scooter hire post surgery / flower, hampers visits for hospital admissions / providing service recognition at funerals / sending International Care Packages to those serving overseas / sponsoring local sporting teams / sponsorship of a local para-Olympian.

Then we organise many outings to keep our veterans active & socially connected including:

Veterans connection Dinners at our local eateries / darts nights / picnic & games days / golf / archery/ fishing / lawn bowls / ten pin bowling / go-carting / movie days / high teas / river cruises / excursions to Canberra War Memorial weekend, Phillip Island Veteran museum, The Shrine, Seymour Vietnam Memorial.

All the time taken to do this is by 100% volunteers. We use our own time & fuel to carry out our support work.

The Royal Commission found that male veterans are 30% more likely to die by suicide compared to a male civilian employed in alternative fulltime employment. In veterans who served at a front line or in a security role, that statistic rose to 100%. That's two veterans to every one civilian. In the years I've been with the RSL I personally know of 3 veterans that would no longer be with us, had it not been for the support we offer them. Our veterans' desperately need the support which we can only provide if we have the space to do so.

Despite the comments in recent social media, the RSL is only too willing to share the space with other groups too.

Please help us find a fit for purpose home.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Wes Wridgway Local resident Other: Doreen resident and veteran of over 23 years	Doreen RSL representative
Submission The Doreen RSL was created in 2017 by CoW Councillor John Butler, Lieutenant Colonel Ret, RIP. His vision was to create a traditional RSL Sub-Branch where veterans could come and socialise with other veterans and like-minded people and their families. The inaugural members originally met at JoJayz cafe located within the Brookwood Community Centre (BCC) as it is now known. Between 2017 & 2020 whilst the DRSL met there every Friday night, the cafe maintained a liquor licence and at no time were there any issues with RSA, noise, people coming and going from the carpark or people socialising outside the building in better weather. Unfortunately, LtCol Butler was diagnosed with an aggressive illness and sadly passed away in September 2017. I then became President of the Doreen RSL and have been advocating to fulfill his wishes and satisfy his legacy ever since. I have been looking for a full-time home for the Doreen RSL, our veterans, our first responders, their families and our members ever since. About 110 years ago when RSL's were originally created, local councils and local communities assisted them by providing land or buildings for them to start out in. Unfortunately, times have changed quite a bit and in 2017 and beyond both land and buildings are much more valuable and sadly land or buildings are not readily forthcoming. I have identified several plots of both state and commonwealth land that would be suitable for an RSL Sub-Branch as well as several buildings that would be suitable over the past nine years only to have the ideas dismissed by City of Whittlesea (CoW). To assist you with understanding what it means to become a RSL Sub-Branch currently, it is as simple as an area or a person from an area proving to RSL Victoria that there is a need for a new Sub-Branch. Once RSL Vic approves, they put it up to RSL Australia and upon approval, they create the required paperwork and issue you with a 'Charter' authorising you to be a Sub-Branch. You are then pretty much on your own to improve your membership and grow accordingly. It is also up to the Sub-Branch to identify and locate a suitable position to establish a full-time home. Starting with nothing and no revenue, we have no choice but to rely on Council and the community to assist with establishing a home of our own. Our low-cost membership fees and 3 for \$5 raffle tickets will take a very long time to raise enough funds to purchase a facility or land in the Doreen/Mernda area. The DRSL has worked hard over the past nine years to locate a full-time home for their members. As you now know, 12 months ago at the last Federal Election, we were able to secure \$1.6m in federal funding, from Federal Labour Politician Rob Mitchell MP to establish a traditional RSL		

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Sub-Branch. The Honourable Rob Mitchell MP then negotiated with the CoW CEO, Mr Craig Lloyd on how best to use the funds to establish a home for the DRSL.

An announcement was made a couple of days later by the current Minister for Defence, the Honourable Richard Marles MP with the CEO present. The announcement was that the Brookwood Community Centre would be renovated using the \$1.6m to create a home for the DRSL. We were also told it would be at a 'peppercorn rent'.

The DRSL was not given any other choice of a location, it was the BCC and the BCC only, which was Council's choice. The report and subsequent letter to DRSL states that we 'initiated' the proposal which is 100% false and created miss leading information to the public and other hire groups with regards to this matter.

A meeting was later held with CoW Council, the CEO, Rob Mitchell MP and members of the DRSL Committee. At that meeting the DRSL was asked to submit a best-case scenario of what they wanted the building to look like after the funds were spent on renovations to the BCC. That submission was created and supplied to council by the deadline requested in Oct 2025.

We now know that document was made public with the submission from Council to Councillors in the lead up to the April 21 Council meeting. I have been absolutely disrespected and insulted in the way that report went public. It was presented as 'gospel' instead of the 'best case scenario' which we were asked for. The report reflected that the DRSL 'initiated' this proposal which is 100% false. This was a CoW Council decision and idea not that of the DRSL. The way that whole report was drafted painted the DRSL in a negative light no matter who read it and that is reflected in the personal phone calls and messages I have received from members of the public as well as local business owners.

After reading that report and council proposals, I am of the belief that the DRSL has been set up to fail, and the proposal has effectively pitted two well respected groups against each other and forced members of our community to take sides based on very little information or miss leading information. As a result, the DRSL and their members have been subjected to a smear campaign within the Doreen and Mernda communities.

I believe that a community meeting held 12 months ago explaining how the proposal came about, what Councils intention was and for us to explain what a 'traditional RSL' looked like would have helped the community be fully informed and understand what the outcome could have been. Instead, the Council has created a huge community division with one commercial business creating a 'smear campaign' against a not-for-profit charity that provides several benefits for not only veterans and their families but also many groups within the local community.

What is a 'traditional RSL'? It's a low-key building that displays historical military memorabilia with a lounge area for veterans and members to meet and socialise, low background music at best with a refreshment serving area. No Pokies, No Gambling in any way, no dining room, no function room, no rock bands etc. The Subbranch is a place where veterans can come to meet up with other veterans and like-minded people to break social isolation. A place for veterans to seek welfare and wellbeing assistance, involve themselves in social inclusion activities, community participation and connection, as well as traditional commemorative and remembrance reflection activities. There has never been any suggestion that the DRSL wants any sort of gaming or gambling within the premises.

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As a veteran of almost 24 years, I find it very disrespectful to be offered a room the size of which we have already outgrown (the people drafting the report actually knew that), not allowed a serving area to at least create some sort of revenue, dictated that we can't open on gazetted public holidays (which would include ANZAC Day) and then be told Council would want over \$40kpy rent. Add council prohibiting veterans and members from watching sport socially in their own RSL is extremely insulting. I ask how Council feel they can dictate those things to the very people who have provided the blanket of security they sleep under and think it's acceptable. These veterans have served in some of the most inhospitable locations around the world and asked to do and see some of the most horrific things in the service of our country & they are told they can't watch sport on their subbranch tv -just think about that for a minute.

Option B is unacceptable for the DRSL due to the small size, no ability to offer refreshments and raise revenue, the ridiculous rent required without a revenue stream, limited TV choices and the list goes on.

I respectfully seek the CoW Councilors to see that the proposed plan of a total renovation of the BCC to provide for a full and inclusive traditional RSL to be the most appropriate option, which is option D.

That option would allow the DRSL to provide all the services required by our veterans and members, be community minded and respectful of the neighbors. Option D would also allow the DRSL to share the facility with other community groups at mutually agreed times and days.

Points to note:

- The report submitted by council refers to the recent \$8k+ council grant to the DRSL. Let it be known that the DRSL did not see a cent of that money as it was used to pay for the audio-visual teams and 2 screens at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service for the 4000+ members of the community in attendance.
- Council doesn't dictate to any other club ie: football, cricket, soccer etc, what they can or can not watch on their tv's, why is the RSL treated differently?
- Council doesn't dictate what days other clubs can or can not open, why is the RSL being treated differently. (can't open on gazetted public holidays - Info contained within the lease document)
- The BCC was originally a sales centre owned by developer Drapac & I am of the belief it was donated to council or similar about 20 years ago. If that's the case, why can't council consider now donating the building (less the cafe) to the RSL so we can have a fit for purpose RSL for our veterans and members moving forward for years to come?
- Regardless of what option council decide to offer the DRSL, why can't the council consider providing similar assistance they gave to the Epping RSL for them to be where they are now and a consistent level of rent that they pay.
- The JoJayz cafe used to have a liquor licence for years whilst the DRSL originally met there with no issue. The Dance Power Mums & Dads used to take advantage of that liquor licence whilst their kids were in class -Why is the RSL being treated differently?
- The DRSL will not be a 'pub' full of disrespectful fools causing loud noises or trouble but a social gathering site for veterans and their families to meet and socialise with likeminded people.

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- Council doesn't have an issue with local cricket clubs, football clubs, soccer clubs, some basketball stadiums, lawn bowls clubs, golf clubs, tennis clubs etc having a licence & sell alcohol to their members, why is an RSL different? Not allowing veterans to have a drink whilst socialising with their mates is nothing more than 'Un Australian'
- I am of the belief that at least one Dance Power owner worked for the CoW for almost 30 yrs or similar and spent many of those years as the PA to the CEO -If Cr Deb Gunn has to conflict herself out of anything to do with this matter then why hasn't any council employee (including directors) if they know or are still friends with her?
- Any offer or suggestion by council less than Option D is clearly not consistent with the Honourable Rob Mitchell MP's intent when providing the \$1.6m funding and conversation with the CoW CEO 12 months ago.
- The report and subsequent letter to DRSL stating that we 'instigated' the proposal is 100% false. Council then state they are not obliged to fulfill the proposal to which I disagree. The Honourable Rob Mitchell negotiated with the CEO regarding the funding and location of a permanent home for the DRSL which ended up at the BCC -With those points made, I believe that CoW DO have an obligation to fulfill the proposal as discussed between the CEO and MP.
- This is a magnificent opportunity for the CoW to use the funding and bring that building up to the year 2026, beautify that corner and create a traditional RSL the members, community and CoW can be proud of.
- I have been advocating for the DRSL to get a full-time home for nine years. I have dealt with all councillors, administrators and different sections of council in that time and have continually felt that there is no support. I fail to understand why the CoW do not wish to assist the DRSL and the people who have served in all three services of the Australian Defence Force, nor has that been explained to me.
- There has been a lot of noise from other user groups of the BCC with regards to this matter. One group in particular has created a smear campaign within the community against the DRSL 'taking over the building'. It may be a timely reminder that one group has used the majority of that building for a very long time, has a sense of ownership and is clearly a profitable business enterprise. The DRSL is a non-for-profit charity, run by volunteers that significantly contributes to the community and provides a wellbeing service for our veterans.
- Lastly let's not lose sight of the freedoms our veterans have fought for. Surely the CoW can appreciate that and respect their service and give something back in the way of a place they can call home that is fit for purpose and appropriately costed for an achievable rent with minimal revenue ability.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Kev Blacker Local resident	Doreen RSL representative
Submission I am writing to make a submission with respect to the Council's Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre. I am not going to discuss the benefits of a Returned and Services League (RSL) nor try and justify why the Doreen and Mernda Communities should have an RSL. If that is not already understood and appreciated then we are all wasting our time and money even going through this Community consultation process. First and foremost, I respectfully advocate for and provide my ongoing support for the establishment of a dedicated RSL facility within our local Doreen and Mernda community. Such a facility would provide substantial social, health, cultural and community benefits not only for Veterans and their families, but also for the broader community as a whole. I agree with the intention of Council to lease the Brookwood Community Centre to the RSL however, I reject the proposal of Option B that has been put forward by Council. There were 4 options put forward at the Apr 26 Council meeting. Council should have presented ALL 4 options to the community for consultation rather than limit the Community to responding on only one option that contains a very restrictive set of lease arrangements which are not in line with the RSL requirements and needs. At the very least Council should have put forward the RSL's requirements and not the Council's own recommendations. That said, I fully support the option D proposal with some minor amendments. Firstly, the RSL should be given an indefinite lease for as long as they wish to utilise the premises. A 5+5 yr term lease is too restrictive. If there is going to be in excess of \$1.6M spent on the facility by utilising the Labour Government grant and additional RSL funding then the RSL deserves the certainty of a far longer lease period if not indefinite. It should be noted that the \$1.6M grant was offered for specifically upgrading the Brookwood Community Centre for the benefit of the RSL, not for the benefit of the Council or other organisations. The RSL have clearly stated that they are committed to working with existing Community Groups in order to provide continued access to the Brookwood facility and I believe that should form part of the consideration and lease terms to provide appropriate assurance to the other Community Groups. Providing the RSL with a workable solution not only will benefit the RSL and its members but also the other Community Groups that utilise the facility. Any option other than Option D would be too restrictive and too small and would not provide the RSL with an appropriate and functional facility.		

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Option D however, would allow the RSL Committee and its members to function as a traditional RSL and to be able to best support Veterans, their families and the wider community in a facility that would feel and could be called their own.

The second issue is that of the amount of the annual lease payment. An annual lease payment of \$40K is neither fair or appropriate for a Community based not-for-profit organisation. Council should offer the lease under a peppercorn arrangement. Not only is \$40K ridiculous, it will take valuable funds away from the operating budget of the RSL that goes towards supporting Veterans in need.

I strongly encourage Council to consider and approve Option D and provide the Doreen RSL with the opportunity to establish a permanent and secure home for Veterans, their families, members, and the wider community.

If Council cannot consider and approve Option D then I urge and request Council to urgently identify other such facilities within the Doreen Community and offer them to the Doreen RSL to achieve the outcomes required.

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Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Samantha Barratt RSL Member and Daughter of a Veteran	Doreen RSL representative
Submission I write in strong support of Council adopting Option D for the Doreen RSL at the Brookwood Community Centre, including: exclusive occupancy of the facility by the Doreen RSL; • responsible alcohol service provisions; • a modest alfresco area; • a compliant designated smoking area; • a small storage shed; • fair and reasonable rental costs; and • an extended lease agreement that provides long-term operational certainty. The Doreen RSL represents far more than a social venue. It is a valued community organisation that provides support, connection, and recognition for veterans, emergency service personnel, their families, and the broader Doreen community. As Doreen continues to grow rapidly, the need for stable and community-focused organisations and facilities becomes increasingly important. Community Benefit and Long-Term Stability Providing exclusive occupancy would allow the Doreen RSL to establish a permanent and reliable community hub capable of delivering: veteran welfare and advocacy services; • commemorative services including ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day activities; • community events and social gatherings; • fundraising and volunteer initiatives; • support programs for older residents and local families; • partnerships with schools, sporting clubs, and community organisations. A consistently occupied and active facility also improves passive surveillance, community safety, and utilisation of public assets. To deliver these long-term community outcomes effectively, the Doreen RSL requires lease certainty. An extended rental agreement beyond the initial five-year period would provide confidence for investment, planning, membership growth, and community programming. A longer-term lease structure demonstrates Council's commitment to fostering sustainable community organisations rather than short-term		

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tenancy arrangements.

Fair and Reasonable Rental Costs

As a not-for-profit organisation focused on community service rather than commercial profit, it is important that rental costs remain fair, reasonable, and reflective of the social value delivered by the Doreen RSL.

Affordable rental arrangements would:

- support financial sustainability;
- allow funds to be reinvested into veteran and community services;
- reduce operational pressure on volunteers and members;
- encourage ongoing activation and maintenance of the facility;
- ensure accessibility for local community groups and events.

Importantly, the proposal already limits financial exposure for Council through:

- no direct Council operational funding contribution;
- Doreen RSL responsibility for bar installation and associated infrastructure;
- facility modifications remaining within the allocated \$1.6 million funding envelope.
- This represents a strong value-for-community outcome with minimal financial risk to Council.

Responsible Hospitality and Alcohol Service

Allowing alcohol sales within the facility is both practical and appropriate for a modern RSL environment. The proposed installation of a bar, draught beer taps, wine shelving, and cool room infrastructure would assist the venue in operating sustainably while creating a welcoming and controlled social environment.

Importantly:

- no gaming or wagering facilities are proposed;
- televisions would not be used for gambling or betting purposes;
- food sales restrictions during café operating hours demonstrate a respectful and cooperative approach to neighbouring businesses.

This is a measured and responsible hospitality model focused on community engagement rather than commercial entertainment.

Inclusion of an Alfresco Area

A modest outdoor alfresco area would significantly improve the amenity and usability of the venue.

Benefits include:

- improved accessibility and comfort for older patrons and veterans;
- additional seating capacity during community events;

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- a family-friendly outdoor environment;
- reduced internal crowding;
- activation of surrounding public space in a safe and positive manner.

A well-managed alfresco area would complement the facility without creating unreasonable impacts on nearby residents.

Designated Smoking Area

A compliant designated smoking area should also be supported as part of Option D.

Providing a controlled smoking area:

- supports responsible patron management;
- prevents smoking near entrances and public walkways;
- improves safety and amenity outcomes;
- enables clearer compliance with Victorian smoking regulations.

Need for a Storage Shed

The inclusion of a modest storage shed is practical and necessary to support ongoing operations.

The Doreen RSL requires secure storage for:

- commemorative and ceremonial equipment;
- flags and event materials;
- tables, chairs, and furniture;
- maintenance and operational supplies;
- fundraising and community event equipment.

Dedicated storage would improve operational efficiency while maintaining the presentation and functionality of the facility.

Conclusion

Option D represents a balanced, community-focused, and financially responsible outcome for both Council and the wider Doreen community.

By supporting:

- exclusive occupancy;
- fair and reasonable rent arrangements;
- an extended lease agreement;
- responsible alcohol service;
- a modest alfresco area;
- a compliant smoking area; and

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- a practical storage shed,

Council would enable the Doreen RSL to establish a sustainable long-term community hub that delivers lasting social, commemorative, and community benefits.

This is an opportunity to support an organisation that contributes significantly to community wellbeing, local identity, and veteran recognition while ensuring strong value from public infrastructure investment.

I strongly encourage Council to adopt Option D with these inclusions and long-term considerations.

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Phil Wood Casual hirer (hire a space occasionally)	Doreen RSL representative
Submission I am writing to respectfully advocate for the establishment and ongoing support of a dedicated Returned and Services League (RSL) facility within our local Doreen and Mernda community. Such a facility would provide substantial social, health, cultural and community benefits not only for Veterans and their families, but also for the broader community as a whole. As a Veteran with 17 years of Royal Australian Air Force service , I understand firsthand the challenges many Veterans face when transitioning from military life back into civilian communities. Like many former service personnel, I have personally struggled with service-related issues following my military career. These experiences have reinforced for me how important connection, understanding, peer support and community are for Veterans and their families. For many Veterans, the transition from military service to civilian life can present significant challenges, including social isolation, loss of identity, mental health struggles and difficulty reconnecting with community networks. A dedicated RSL building would provide a safe and welcoming environment where Veterans can reconnect through shared experiences, camaraderie and peer support from others who genuinely understand military service and its lasting impacts. Importantly, an RSL is far more than a social venue. It serves as a vital hub for welfare assistance, advocacy services, mental health support, transition assistance, commemorative activities and community engagement. It creates opportunities for Veterans of all generations to support one another while preserving military heritage and traditions for future generations. I feel a dedicated RSL facility would deliver the following benefits to the Doreen and Mernda community: • Provide a central and trusted location for Veterans and First Responder welfare and support services. • Reduce social isolation and improve mental wellbeing through community connection and peer support. • Offer a venue for commemorative services such as ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day events. • Preserve local military history and honour the service and sacrifice of Veterans. • Support younger Veterans transitioning into civilian employment and community life. • Provide support networks for Veterans' families and carers. • Encourage volunteerism, mentoring and continued community service. • Strengthen intergenerational relationships between Veterans and the wider public. • Create opportunities for local schools and community groups to engage with Veteran history and education initiatives.		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

- Provide a respectful and culturally familiar environment where Veterans can speak openly and seek support without judgement.
- Serve as a potential emergency support and outreach hub during times of hardship or crisis.

Beyond supporting Veterans, a dedicated RSL facility would become a valuable community asset. It would strengthen local identity, foster civic pride, create and strengthen opportunities for partnerships with schools, sporting clubs, emergency services, charities and community organisations.

Veterans have served their nation in times of conflict, peacekeeping, disaster relief and humanitarian operations. I personally have been involved in 5 flood event relief efforts in my time within the RAAF. Establishing a dedicated RSL facility demonstrates that their contribution and service to something larger than themselves continues to be recognised, respected and supported long after active military service ends.

From personal experience, I know how critical Veteran connection and support networks can be. Having a dedicated place where Veterans feel understood, welcomed and supported can make a meaningful difference in people's lives and wellbeing.

I respectfully ask you to consider supporting the development of a dedicated RSL facility in our community as an investment in community wellbeing, social connection, remembrance and local heritage by adopting Option D for the Doreen RSL.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further.

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Gareth Newman WARD Other: President, Richmond RSL	Gareth Newman WARD
Submission I have supported the search for a home for the Doreen RSL for some 5 years. As Chairman of State Region 1 Forum, the forum & the State RSL have been supporting the newest RSL Sub-Branch in their collective endeavour's to solve this issue. The Doreen RSL has a significant membership (+150) and an enthusiastic Committee who have worked tirelessly to create a long-term home for the Doreen Sub-Branch. This Sub-Branch has an expanding catchment area and I envisage that it's membership will continue to grow significantly once a home can be established. It is bewildering that some in the community would be opposed to such a proposal in recognition of the service that the veterans have given to our country and those members of the community that take such sacrifice for granted. Gareth N. WARD President Richmond RSL & Past Chairman State RSL Region 1 Forum		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Simon Clouting Local resident Other: Veteran	Simon Clouting
Submission The veteran community within the Whittlesea area require a place to belong, not just turn up. This is not a venue to conduct sporting events, gambling, skylarking or other such activities. It is a place where a veteran can turn up any day and discuss issues with other like minded individuals that the general public cannot understand or assist. The veteran community issues are not just political pawn pieces to be argued about. They are real issues affecting real men and women who need help now and many have mobility issues. Context: open arms counselling 1.45h wait and then call back 5 days later. Psychologist that understands defence related conditions is average 8 months wait. An RSL within the community that has its own permanent space offers immediate help. If you use the term "thank you for your service", please show it with actions NOW.		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Brendon Agpasa Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre Local resident Other: Community visitor/NDIS participant	Brendon Agpasa
Submission First look, we have a long-term lease of Brookwood Community Centre to the RSL Doreen for expanded improvements of the renovated building, there's weekly dance classes, music at discos for both people with disability and nightclub-style people aged 18+, functions, rock bands for live music, dining room with combined international buffet bistro and breakfast buffet, gaming (they used to be old Tabaret and which is now Tabcorp Gaming Solutions), TAB, Sky Racing channel, pay TV sports channels via satellite and streaming (Fox Sports, ESPN, beIN Sports, Racing.com, Main Event, UFC, Stan Sport, Kayo Sports, Paramount+ Sport, Optus Sport at Stan, WWE), non-sport pay TV service provider (Foxtel channels), RSL club, meeting rooms, the LGBTQIA+ pride are ranging from music and dancing to gay and lesbian activities for community, Nightlife and crowd DJ offer fully licensed music (now includes Crowd DJ music touchscreens), University of Third Age group, Probus club group, games and activities, courtesy bus tours, free copy of distributing newspapers like The Senior, The Local Paper and your local free newspaper Star Weekly, reception desks, offices, sport activities, satellite dishes, TV antennas and many more, it's been a great success for our combined licensed venue of RSL club with your local metropolitan community centre, we will see our partners, supporters and Doreen RSL to establish a permanent base at the Council-owned Brookwood Community Centre on Hazel Glen Drive, in Doreen, as it was committed by community groups would be included in the inclusion of key community services (as approved, funded by the Federal Government, and it's declared in post-budget by the Federal Government on July 1st 2026), Cheers to you, Thank you very much for your community visitor at all.		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Bethany Setter Attend a group/class/meeting at Centre	Bethany Setter
Submission I believe what the council has done has gone against what the council originally promised the Doreen RSL The cancel and its restrictions of the RSL is unconstitutional the council should either give the RSL the whole building as it's Club or the cancel must build a purpose-built RSL building the council restricting the RSL to no alcohol goes against tradition and the council is going against cancel traditions for our Australia ever since World War I Wes would purposely build or give a building to the local RSL club. They did this with the Epping RSL. Why cannot they not do this for the Doreen RSL? Council set a precedence The Dorian RSL is not asking for poker machines it does not want poker machines. It wants a home a castle. It's about time the council started doing the right thing.		

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Clint Brewster RSL Victoria, on behalf of the Doreen RSL	Clint Brewster
Submission On behalf of RSL Victoria, I write to strongly support the Doreen RSL Sub-Branch's proposal to occupy a space within Council owned premises at the Brookwood Community Centre. RSL Sub-Branches are community based, volunteer led organisations that exist to support veterans and their families, commemorate service, and strengthen local community connection. The City of Whittlesea is experiencing sustained population growth and, with it, a growing veteran and contemporary service cohort. Since its establishment, Doreen RSL has been built by local volunteers to provide commemorative services, advocacy and community connection for current and former serving members and their families. A traditional Sub-Branch presence in the north-east growth corridor provides an accessible front door for veterans who may otherwise be isolated, particularly younger veterans and families seeking peer connection, wellbeing support and a sense of belonging. The findings and ongoing national response to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide underscore the importance of local, trusted, face-to-face connection points. Sub-Branches play a practical role in prevention by reducing isolation, encouraging help seeking, and providing pathways to advocacy, compensation and wellbeing supports. We acknowledge the issues raised through the Notice of Intention to Lease public consultation process, including equitable community access, compatibility with existing centre users, safety and amenity, and any concerns associated with a basic hospitality offering. Doreen RSL is committed to operating as a respectful community tenant, including by: working with Council to ensure shared spaces remain available to other community groups, and that any Sub Branch activities are scheduled transparently and cooperatively; • implementing appropriate governance, insurance and risk management consistent with RSL Victoria requirements; • maintaining a safe, welcoming environment with clear codes of conduct and member/community engagement practices; • with a bar operations included, ensuring responsible service of alcohol, appropriate supervision, and operating hours that protect the amenity of neighbouring users and residents; and • supporting practical measures for parking, access, noise management and security as required by Council. To deliver the community benefit intended by a Sub-Branch tenancy, the space must be fit for purpose. A larger area than currently proposed is required to provide a dignified and accessible setting for social inclusion activities and meetings, as well as a modest hospitality offering (including a		

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bar) that enables social connection and ability to grow membership and generate revenue. We also note the Government's election commitment reflected through the grant offered for this initiative. This intent to support veteran focused community infrastructure should be honoured through an outcome that enables the Doreen RSL Sub-Branch to operate effectively and sustainably.

Finally, we note the limited capacity of traditional Sub-Branches to generate revenue. Unlike historical models, many traditional Sub Branches rely heavily on volunteers and modest fundraising to exist. If rent is set at a level that is not aligned to realistic earning capacity, it may compromise the Sub Branch's ability to sustain operations and deliver the very community outcomes Council seeks. We encourage Council to consider a rental arrangement and space allocation that reflects demonstrated community benefit, supports long-term viability, and enables the Sub Branch to build a stable, inclusive presence at Brookwood.

RSL Victoria stands ready to work with Council and Doreen RSL to ensure the tenancy delivers positive outcomes for veterans, families and the broader community. Please contact me if you would like to discuss this support further.

Hearing of Submissions Committee: Notice of Intention to Lease - Brookwood Community Centre

Position	Submitter Connection with Brookwood Community Centre	Name(s) of presenter(s)
Supports	Kristy Nagle Local resident	Kristy Nagle
Submission Why are they unable to serve food and alcohol? Isn't this how they make a profit? How is any different to Jo Jays currently there? If they are leasing, funded by federal government why are you denying them. The football club Laurimar serve alcohol with children around? This is allowed also in council CAC? Why is it different to RSL Doreen. They were allowed to have both food and alcohol while at football club. As a child my parents supported local RSL we would have dinner once a week. It showed my respect towards elders, supportive environment and we loved it. I would love to know why council allow a football club to serve alcohol (Laurimar adjoining a primary school) however an RSL isn't able. They fought for our country the support we give in return matters and helps every return service man and woman. Again like the Laurimar football club parents can choose if they take children into these environments. I would support a local RSL any day.		

2 Close Meeting