

Agenda

Youth Council Meeting
Monday 5 May 2025 at 6pm

You are advised that a Youth Council Meeting will be held on Monday 5 May 2025 at 6pm for the transaction of the following business.

This meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang.

Youth Councillors

Cr Kaynat Virk	Youth Mayor
Cr Emily Tricarico	Deputy Youth Mayor
Cr Angelica Banquil	
Cr Dean Connelly-Carpenter	
Cr Bavleen Kaur	
Cr Mustafa Khraim	
Cr Zachary Melvaine	
Cr Angela Rolevska	
Cr Tanya Sharma	
Cr Sandy Tran	
Cr Elly Watson	
Cr Sophie Winter	

Officers

Jacinta Stevens	Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO
Bobbie-Lea Bright	Unit Manager Compliance & Governance

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1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

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

1.2 Apologies

1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair will read the following statement:

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

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

1.4 Youth Council Charter

The Chair will read the following statement:

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

1.5 Acknowledgements

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT the following Minutes of the preceding Youth Council Meeting as circulated, be confirmed:

- **Youth Council Meeting held on 7 April 2025.**

4 Officers' Reports

4.1 Charter of Rights Feedback

Director/Executive Manager: Director Community Wellbeing

Report Author: Youth Development Officer

In Attendance: Unit Manager Youth Development
Youth Development Officer

Executive Summary

Purpose

This document outlines young people's rights to feel safe and to be safe when engaging with the City of Whittlesea. It explains how we protect young people, what to do if a concern arises, and the support available.

Background

The City of Whittlesea is committed to child safety and complies with relevant Victorian legislation, including the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme. This information is being presented to Youth Councillors to raise awareness of their rights and the rights of all young people that engage with CoW programming, the responsibilities of adults around them, and the avenues available for reporting concerns.

High-Level Issues

- Young people must know they have the right to feel and be safe.
- Clear reporting pathways must be communicated and trusted.
- Confidentiality is respected, but mandatory reporting obligations apply when safety risks are identified.
- Additional support services are available for young people seeking help beyond City of Whittlesea staff and volunteers.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council:

1. Review the draft information on young people's rights to feel and be safe.
2. Provide feedback on the clarity, tone, and accessibility of the document.
3. Recommend any changes to improve how this information is communicated to young people.

Background / Key Information

The City of Whittlesea actively engages with children and young people aged 8–25 through a diverse range of programs, events, and initiatives. These include weekly youth programs, school holiday activities, and the FReeZA program, which empowers young individuals to plan and deliver drug, alcohol, smoke, and vape-free music and cultural events. Additionally, the Youth Council provides a platform for young people to participate in local decision-making processes.

Given these regular interactions, this document has been developed to clearly communicate these rights, outline how concerns can be raised, and demonstrate our commitment to child safety across all areas of our work with young people. Young people will be presented with this document each time they participate in a City of Whittlesea program or event, and will be asked to acknowledge and agree to it by signing.

For your information, please also see attached a graphically finalised example completed and currently used by Merri-bek City Council.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Youth Councillors are requested to review the draft document during the Youth Council meeting and provide feedback. This will be used to refine and finalise the information before it is shared more broadly with young people participating in City of Whittlesea programs and initiatives. Future communication will include making the information available online and at youth events, programs, and venues.

Critical Dates

- **Monday, 5 May 2025:** Youth Council provide feedback.
- **Following two weeks:** Feedback is reviewed and incorporated. Child Safety Officers will be consulted. Document is presented to the Manager Community Strengthening.
- **Mid-May:** Document is sent to the Communications Team for youth-friendly adaptation that is visually appealing.
- **Mid-Year:** First draft from Communications Team presented to Youth Development Team.
- **Post Mid-Year:** Final version approved, and communication rollout begins.

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. Your Rights [4.1.1 - 2 pages]
2. Child Safe Complaints Flyer [4.1.2 - 4 pages]

Your Rights

You Have the Right to Feel Safe and Be Safe.

Being safe means, you are free from abuse, harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate behaviour. Feeling safe means, you are comfortable in the places where you spend time and trust the adults around you.

You have a right to:

- be safe and feel safe
- expect that the adults around you are keeping you safe
- be given information about how to raise a safety concern
- be listened to and for action to be taken if you have a safety concern.

There are Laws to Keep You Safe.

In Victoria, there are laws to keep you safe. Some of these laws are the **Child Safe Standards** and the **Reportable Conduct Scheme**. The City of Whittlesea will take your concern seriously and do something about it. We will listen to you and support you to be safe and to feel safe.

If you have a concern about a City of Whittlesea staff member or volunteer, you can contact the City of Whittlesea Child Safe Officer by email: childsafety@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or by phone: (03) 9217 2170. *Please call Ph 131 450 for languages other than English.* In an emergency, always contact Ph: 000.

For further information, please visit: [Resources for children and young people | City of Whittlesea](#)

Disclosure Statement

Everything you tell a worker is kept confidential within the service. However, sometimes there are things you might tell us that we have a duty of care, or mandated under law, to share with those who can help keep you safe. This is particularly the case when you tell us anything that relates to *harm*:

- You are being (or at risk of being) harmed by someone;
- You are harming (or thinking of harming) yourself; and/or,
- You are harming (or thinking of harming) somebody else.

Support

If you need to talk to someone for support outside of City of Whittlesea, please reach out to a trusted adult (this could be a parent/carers, teacher, etc). Or, contact:

Kids Help Line: 1800 55 1800

Lifeline: 13 11 14



Merri-bek
City Council



Turkish Türkçe

Bengali বাংলা

Pashto پښتو

Urdu اردو

Arabic العربية

Nepali नेपाली

**CHILD SAFETY
READY
SET
SPEAK
UP!**

YOU HAVE RIGHTS!

If you are scared for your safety, or the safety of another child, or young person, **call triple zero (000)** and ask for the police.

HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

YOU CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT TO COUNCIL IN DIFFERENT WAYS

TALK TO AN ADULT YOU TRUST



TALK TO A COUNCIL WORKER



When you're at a Council program, service, event or facility

CALL A CHILD SAFE OFFICER



Call **9240 1111** and ask to speak with a child safe officer

EMAIL

Send us an email to
childsafem@merri-bek.vic.gov.au

TEXT

Text/SMS your complaint to
0447 034 922

SCAN



Access the reporting page on our website

It takes courage to speak up!

You might feel nervous or worried – just do your best.

An adult **you trust** can help you, or make a complaint for you.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

A Child Safe Officer will receive your complaint



We will tell you what we are going to do



You can ask questions, we will answer them



If it will take some time to work out, we will give you updates



We treat complaints confidentially – this means we won't tell other people. But if you or someone you know is hurt or might be hurt, we will have to tell someone else to protect you or them

FEELING SAFE

- ✓ You should **always** feel safe and protected
- ✓ If you ever feel scared, afraid, uncomfortable or unsafe or if you are worried one of your friends is unsafe, tell an adult **you trust**
- ✓ No matter what an adult says, if something bothers you, **never** keep it a secret

YOU CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT...

- ➔ a Merri-bek Council service
- ➔ the way a Merri-bek staff member or another adult, child or young person has treated you
- ➔ the way a problem was handled

IT IS ALWAYS OK TO SPEAK UP IF YOU...

- ✓ don't feel safe
- ✓ are being hurt
- ✓ are unhappy about how you're being treated
- ✓ have concerns about a Council service, program or event



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

YOU HAVE RIGHTS TO...

- ✓ be and feel safe
- ✓ be listened to, believed and have your complaint taken seriously
- ✓ be respected and treated fairly
- ✓ be the boss of your own body
- ✓ be protected from harm and abuse (no-one is allowed to hurt you or make you feel unsafe)
- ✓ be able to have a say on things that affect you or that you care about
- ✓ be and feel included no matter your appearance or abilities
- ✓ have your cultural identity valued and respected
- ✓ have your privacy respected
- ✓ express your gender

AT COUNCILS THIS MEANS...

- ➔ you can expect that the adults that work here know how to keep you safe
- ➔ you can tell an adult at Council if you don't feel safe and they must help you
- ➔ if you make a complaint we will listen, take it seriously and respond quickly

**REMEMBER,
YOUR VOICE MATTERS,
WE ARE HERE TO HELP,
WE WILL LISTEN AND ACT.**

For more information

📞 merri-bek.vic.gov.au/child-safety

If you need more support

Reach out to Kids Helpline

📞 **1800 55 1800**

📞 kidshelpline.com.au

If you are scared for your safety, or the safety of another child, or young person, **call triple zero (000)** and ask for the police.

4.2 Rainbow Youth Leadership Program

Director/Executive Manager: Director Community Wellbeing

Report Author: Youth Development Officer

In Attendance: Youth Development Officer

Executive Summary

The Rainbow Leadership Program is a new 12-week leadership, advocacy, and civic engagement initiative supporting Rainbow young people, and their allies, aged 15 – 25. Delivered in partnership with Headspace Plenty Valley, the program is the first of its kind for the City of Whittlesea and only the second delivered by a Victorian Council.

The program complements Council's broader youth leadership suite, including the Young Women's Leadership Program, Young Men's Leadership Program, and Young Multicultural Leadership Program.

Week 11 of the program represents a core milestone, designed to strengthen connections between young people and Council's Governance Structure. Proposed activities include direct engagement with the CEO, Governance Team, and City of Whittlesea Youth Councillors, participant presentations, and the sharing of advocacy ideas focused on local Rainbow community needs.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council:

- 1. Support officer engagement with Governance and the Office of Council & CEO (OCCEO) to finalise program and Youth Councillor involvement.**
- 2. Endorse participation in the Week 11 program session, including opportunities for Youth Councillors to engage with Rainbow Leadership Program participants.**
- 3. Provide feedback at the Week 11 session (date and details to be provided at a later date).**
- 4. Identify how reflections and advocacy actions from Week 11 can complement and inform the Youth Council's 12-month Action Plan.**

Background / Key Information

The Rainbow Leadership Program provides Rainbow Young People and their allies aged 15 – 25 with skills in leadership, advocacy, civic engagement, and system navigation. Through a mix of internal and external facilitation, participants explore lived experience narratives, government structures, and youth-led advocacy projects.

The program complements Council's Youth Services suite of leadership programs including, the Young Women's* Leadership Program, Young Men's Leadership Program, and the Young Multicultural Leadership Program.

The Rainbow Leadership Program is complimented by several Council Plans, Strategies, and Priorities, which include:

YouthPlan 2030+

The program supports key commitments under YouthPlan 2030+, including:

- Helping young people make sense of their identities and attitudes.
- Connecting young people to culture and community.
- Promoting gender equity, non-discrimination, and respectful relationships.
- Advocating for a service system that supports all young people's wellbeing.

Whittlesea 2040: A Place for All and Community Plan 2021–2025

The program aligns with Goal One – Connected Community:

- Delivering an inclusive leadership program for community members.
- Strengthening engagement through advisory groups and networks for young people.
- Advocating for expanded mental health services and preventative programs.

Connected Community Strategy 2023–2033 and Action Plan 2024–2026

The program supports key directions:

- **Direction 1:** Building a socially cohesive community by celebrating diversity and fostering cultural safety.
- **Direction 2:** Supporting healthy and safe communities through advocacy and leadership development.
- **Direction 3:** Enabling participation by creating frameworks to better engage underrepresented cohorts, including Rainbow young people.

Key related actions include:

- Developing culturally safe programs and activities.
- Celebrating days of significance.
- Establishing advisory groups with LGBTQIA+ community members.
- Advocating to build a responsive service system for young people.

Week 11 is a critical session proposed to be co-facilitated by Council representatives, including Youth Councillors within the Council Chambers. The session is proposed to include:

- An introduction from the CEO, Governance Team, and Youth Councillors.
- An overview of Council's structure, decision-making processes, and how young people can influence outcomes.
- A Q&A session with Council representatives focused on leadership, values, and community impact.
- Participant group presentations sharing their learnings, reflections, and proposed advocacy actions addressing issues affecting Rainbow young people.
- A personal commitment from each participant outlining their ongoing advocacy intentions.

Aims of the Week 11 session:

- Create a meaningful and empowering space for participants to engage directly with Council leadership and Youth Councillors.
- Strengthen connections between young people and local government structures.
- Affirm participants as active contributors to civic life.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will feel recognised, supported, and confident in engaging with local government.
- Council and Youth Council will gain insights into the perspectives and priorities of LGBTIQ+ young people.
- Feedback will inform future iterations of the program and broader Rainbow community engagement strategies.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Officers will continue working with Governance, Executive, and Communications to finalise the program framework and promotional strategy. Upon completion, a recruitment campaign targeting Rainbow young people aged 15 – 25 will commence across youth networks, education providers, and community providers.

Council representatives, including the CEO, Governance Team, and Youth Councillors, will be invited to participate in the Week 11 session. Preparatory briefings and supporting materials will be provided

Critical Dates

Early June – Feedback from Youth Council provided to officer.

Mid-June 2025 – Finalisation of program framework.

July 2025 – Rainbow Leadership Program commencement.

Mid-July 2025 – Invitation sent to OCCEO & Youth Councillors for Week 11 session in November.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

Attachments

Nil

- 5 Notices of Motion**
No Notices of Motion
- 6 General / Urgent Business**
- 7 Closure**