

Minutes

Scheduled Council Meeting
Tuesday 16 May 2023 at 6:30pm

Council Chamber at Civic Centre,
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang

Administrators

Lydia Wilson Chair of Council

Peita Duncan Administrator

Christian Zahra AM Administrator

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

Senior Officers

Craig Lloyd Chief Executive Officer

Agata Chmielewski Director Community Wellbeing

Justin O'Meara Director Planning & Development

Sarah Renner Director Customer & Corporate Services

Debbie Wood Director Infrastructure & Environment

Frank Joyce Executive Manager Strategy & Insights

Janine Morgan Executive Manager Public Affairs

Sarah Rowe Interim Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

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1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson opened the meeting at 6.30pm.

“Welcome to this Council Meeting of 16 May 2023 which is being held in person in the Council Chamber at Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang and also being live streamed.

I am Lydia Wilson, Chair of Council and I would also like to introduce my Panel colleagues, Administrators Peita Duncan and Christian Zahra.

I would also like to introduce our Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd and ask that he in turn introduce the members of the Executive Leadership Team in attendance today.”

“Good evening everyone, we also have with us:

Director Community Wellbeing, Agata Chmielewski;
Director Planning & Development, Justin O’Meara;
Director Customer & Corporate Services, Sarah Renner;
Director Infrastructure & Environment, Debbie Wood;
Executive Manager Strategy & Insight, Frank Joyce;
Executive Manager Public Affairs, Janine Morgan; and
Interim Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO, Sarah Rowe.

These members of the Executive Leadership Team will join us during the meeting.”

1.2 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

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

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

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

1.3 Diversity and Good Governance Statement

The Chair of Council read the following statement:

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

1.4 Acknowledgements

The Chair of Council made the following acknowledgements:

1.4.1 National Growth Area Alliance Award

I am really delighted to announce that Council received an award for advocacy at the recent National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) Awards. You will note the awards on the table to my left.

The first award recognises the joint efforts of the City of Whittlesea, Mitchell Shire Council and Hume City Council in securing funding for the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal project, which we are really delighted with the recent announcement regarding that particular project.

The City of Whittlesea also received a Commendation for the Mernda Social Support Facility.

We'd like to formally acknowledge the extensive efforts of our staff in relation to the commendation and to the award. If you could please ensure that this recognition is passed onto our staff, thank you.

1.4.2 National Volunteer Week

If I could also acknowledge that it is National Volunteer Week this week – and that is obviously a time to celebrate the outstanding efforts of our amazing volunteers who very selflessly give their time and energy to support members of our community.

We will be presenting awards to our volunteers later this week, I am really looking forward to being part of that process. The awards are for volunteers who have contributed five and 10 years of service within the City of Whittlesea. Clearly, that is a real milestone achievement and a testament of those volunteers to their dedication to serve the community.

We are most grateful to all of our volunteers – and we acknowledge their willingness in giving their time and effort to serve our community.

On behalf of Council, it's a very sincere thank you and a recognition of the kindness and generosity, made by so many people across the municipality which really make a big difference in the lives of so many. We are very grateful for those efforts.

Administrator Duncan made the following acknowledgements:

1.4.3 IDAHOBIT

Tomorrow, May 17 is IDAHOBIT, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia.

IDAHOBIT is the anniversary of May 17, 1990, when the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from the Classification of Diseases.

National research conducted by La Trobe University reported that discrimination of LGBTIQ+ community members is still occurring. 68% of LGBTIQ+ identifying young people and 1 in 3 adults had experienced harassment or abuse, including verbal insults, verbal abuse and threats, due to their identity. While research like this is important, I note that these figures don't capture all community members and numbers are likely to be much higher than reported.

The City of Whittlesea stands against discrimination in all its forms and strives to be an inclusive community for people from all backgrounds and experiences.

Tomorrow we will raise the rainbow flag and in addition to this symbolic gesture, we're working to ensure our LGBTIQ+ community is supported through policy and action so that we can realise our Whittlesea 2040 vision of: A place for all.

1.4.4 National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week

Finally, on Friday next week May 26, is National Sorry Day, which marks the beginning of National Reconciliation Week, and this runs from May 26 to June 3.

National Sorry Day is held every year on May 26 to commemorate the release of the Australian Human Rights Commission's 1997 Bringing Them Home Report.

The City of Whittlesea invites the community to join the Wurundjeri Elders and members of the Stolen Generations for the annual Sorry Walk with Uncle Herb Patten and a keynote address from Yoorrook Justice Commission here at the Civic Centre on May 26 from 11am.

The theme of this year's National Reconciliation Week is "Be a Voice for Generations", which urges all Australians to work towards a more just, equitable and reconciled country.

The City of Whittlesea is focused on advancing Reconciliation through the development of its new Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with our local Aboriginal community.

Administrator Zahra made the following acknowledgements:

1.4.5 Road Safety Week

This week is National Road Safety Week, and I would like to take the opportunity to urge all drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to be careful on our roads.

We at the City of Whittlesea are acutely aware of the devastating impact road trauma has on our community and over the past 20 years, the City of Whittlesea has been successful in securing more than \$25 million in state and federal funding to improve notorious black spots in our community. This funding is in addition to the \$30 million Council has spent during the same period on road safety measures across our network.

Together with several neighbouring councils, the City of Whittlesea is a member of RoadSafe North-East which delivers educational and promotional programs to improve driver safety.

I urge everyone to heed the road safety message and not just during Road Safety Week, but every time you get behind the wheel.

1.4.6 Neighbourhood House Week

Last week we celebrated Neighbourhood House week. We recognise the important contribution our seven local Neighbourhood Houses make in the City of Whittlesea. They really do amazing work.

The theme this year 'Building resilience by bringing people together' highlights the important role Neighbourhood Houses play in our local communities. They contribute strongly to the City of Whittlesea goal of Connected Communities by providing welcoming environments that foster mutual support and a diverse and constantly evolving range of positive social, health, educational and economic outcomes for individuals, families, and communities, particularly for those experiencing disadvantage.

The Chair of Council made one final acknowledgement as follows:

1.4.7 Farewell Justin

Unfortunately, our Director of Planning and Development, Justin O'Meara is leaving the City of Whittlesea to take on the position of Executive Director Metropolitan Melbourne, with the Victorian Planning Authority and this is Justin's last Council Meeting, hence we want to formally acknowledge and recognise the enormous contribution that Justin has made over the past two and a half years here at Whittlesea.

We thank you so much Justin for your leadership and the very tangible achievements that you have made over that two-and-a-half-year period. Your expertise is extensive, and you will be sorely missed. We thank you for each and every contribution that you have made.

We wish you well in your future endeavours and we hope that you might return again in the near future. We thank you and acknowledge your enormous contribution.

1.5 Attendance

Members:

Lydia Wilson, Chair of Council

Peita Duncan, Administrator

Christian Zahra AM, Administrator

Officers:

Craig Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer

Agata Chmielewski, Director Community Wellbeing

Justin O'Meara, Director Planning & Development

Sarah Renner, Director Customer & Corporate Services

Debbie Wood, Director Infrastructure & Environment

Frank Joyce, Executive Manager Strategy & Insights

Janine Morgan, Executive Manager Public Affairs

Sarah Rowe, Interim Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Apology:

Nil

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No declarations.

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

COUNCIL RESOLUTION	
Moved:	<i>Administrator Christian Zahra</i>
Seconded:	<i>Administrator Peita Duncan</i>

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

Scheduled Meeting of Council 18 April 2023.

CARRIED

4 Public Questions, Petitions and Joint Letters

4.1 Public Question Time

The Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd advised the meeting that Council have received five public questions for this evening.

I have reviewed the submissions in accordance with our Governance rules and have determined that one question is a repeat of, or similar in nature to a question asked of Council within the prior six months and therefore will not be read. In accordance with the Governance Rules a written response will be sent following this meeting. I have also determined that the remaining four questions are offensive in nature and will not be read this evening. In accordance again with the Governance rules, a written response will be provided to the questions following the meeting.

4.2 Petitions

No Petitions

4.3 Joint Letters

No Joint Letters

5 Officers' Reports

5.1 Connected Communities

No reports

5.2 Liveable Neighborhoods

No reports

5.3 Strong Local Economy

No reports

5.4 Sustainable Environment

No reports

5.5 High Performing Organisation

5.5.1 Petition for Removal and Replacement of Nature Strip Trees along Harrison & Kilpatrick Street, Mernda

Responsible Officer	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Author	Unit Manager Parks & City Forest
In Attendance	Acting Manager Maintenance & Operations

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the response to a petition received from 21 residents, requesting that Council remove 19 trees along the nature strips lining Harrison Street and Kilpatrick Street, Mernda, due to concerns with excessive leaf and bark drop, structural damage to nature strips and footpaths, as well as risks to the public and property. They are also requesting that these trees be replaced with other appropriate tree species.

Recommendation

THAT Council in response to the petition received from 21 residents requesting Council remove all nature strip trees along Harrison Street and Kilpatrick Street, Mernda, write to the head petitioner to advise that:

1. An independent arborist assessment was undertaken of all the nature strip trees on Harrison and Kilpatrick Streets, Mernda and it was deemed that all trees did not display any safety risks that would require their removal.
2. Additional root plate stability testing will be carried out on selected trees, to determine if there are imminent risks of failure because of wind-tunnel effects and if deemed necessary, those trees affected will be removed.
3. The 10 manna gum trees are currently deemed to be in good health. However, they will be inspected on an annual basis, as they are nearing the end of useful life.
4. Street sweeping is carried out every 8-12 weeks and the program will be monitored to ensure debris will not pose issues to road guttering and drainage systems. The requirement for additional street sweeping during periods of heavy leaf litter will be monitored.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Administrator Peita Duncan</i>
Seconded:	<i>Chairperson Lydia Wilson</i>

THAT Council in response to the petition received from 21 residents requesting Council remove all nature strip trees along Harrison Street and Kilpatrick Street, Mernda, write to the head petitioner to advise that:

- 1. An independent arborist assessment was undertaken of all the nature strip trees on Harrison and Kilpatrick Streets, Mernda and it was deemed that all trees did not display any safety risks that would require their removal.**
- 2. Additional root plate stability testing will be carried out on selected trees, to determine if there are imminent risks of failure because of wind-tunnel effects and if deemed necessary, those trees affected will be removed.**
- 3. The 10 manna gum trees are currently deemed to be in good health. However, they will be inspected on an annual basis, as they are nearing the end of useful life.**
- 4. Street sweeping is carried out every 8-12 weeks and the program will be monitored to ensure debris will not pose issues to road guttering and drainage systems. The requirement for additional street sweeping during periods of heavy leaf litter will be monitored.**
- 5. Council requests a further update following the root plate stability testing being undertaken and the annual inspection of the 10 manna gum trees.**

CARRIED

5.5.2 Nick Ascenzo Reserve Draft Masterplan

Responsible Officer	Director Infrastructure & Environment
Author	Open Space Planner
In Attendance	Unit Manager Landscape & Open Space Planning Open Space Planner

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Inform Council on the preparation of the draft Nick Ascenzo Reserve Master Plan;
- Seek endorsement on the draft Nick Ascenzo Reserve Master Plan to progress to community consultation from the 19 May 2023 to 16 June 2023.

Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the draft Nick Ascenzo Reserve Master Plan to be placed on community exhibition from 19 May 2023 to 16 June 2023.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Chairperson Lydia Wilson</i>
Seconded:	<i>Administrator Peita Duncan</i>

THAT Council:

1. Endorse the draft Nick Ascenzo Reserve Master Plan to be placed on community exhibition from 19 May 2023 to 16 June 2023.
2. Requests that officers identify priority projects in the final masterplan to be endorsed by Council, e.g. to address safety and visibility concerns, improved connection and general accessibility for referral to the 2024-2025 capital expenditure process, and consideration during the 2023-2024 financial year should savings be identified in the capital program.

CARRIED

5.5.3 2022-51 Harvest Home Recreation Reserve synthetic soccer pitch replacement- Tender Evaluation

Responsible Officer: Director Infrastructure & Environment

Author: Unit Manager Parks Development

In Attendance: Manager Capital Delivery
Unit Manager Parks Development

Purpose

It is proposed that contract number 2022-51 for Harvest Home Recreation Reserve Synthetic Soccer Pitch Replacement is awarded to

- Polytan Asia Pacific PTY LTD
- for the lump sum price of \$2,003,437 (excl. GST)

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. **Accept the tender submitted by Polytan Asia Pacific PTY LTD for the following contract:**
Number: 2022-51
Title: Harvest Home Recreation Reserve Synthetic Soccer Pitch Replacement
Cost: A lump sum of \$2,003,437.00 (excluding GST)
subject to the following conditions:
 - a) **Tenderer to provide proof of currency of insurance cover as required in the tender documents.**
 - b) **Price variations to be in accordance with the provisions as set out in the tender documents.**
 - c) **Tenderer to provide contract security as required in the tender documents.**
2. **Approve the funding arrangements detailed in the confidential attachment.**

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Administrator Christian Zahra</i>
Seconded:	<i>Administrator Peita Duncan</i>

THAT Council adopt the recommendation for the tender evaluation for Contract 2022-51 Harvest Home Recreation Reserve synthetic soccer pitch replacement.

CARRIED

5.5.4 Community Grants Framework

Responsible Officer Director Customer & Corporate Services

Author Grants Coordinator

In Attendance Manager EPMO & Change

Purpose

It is proposed that the new draft Community Grants Guidelines (attachment A) are released for community consultation. The draft guidelines are prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Recommendation

THAT Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to release the new draft Grant guidelines (attachment A) for community consultation.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Administrator Christian Zahra</i>
Seconded:	<i>Chairperson Lydia Wilson</i>

THAT Council adopt the recommendation for the Community Grants Framework.

CARRIED

5.5.5 Quarterly Corporate Performance Report - Q3 ended 31 March 2023

Responsible Officer	Director Customer & Corporate Services
Author	Acting Unit Manager Financial Development
In Attendance	Chief Financial Officer

Purpose

To inform Council of the Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for the period ended 31 March 2023 (Attachment 1) including financial, capital work, good governance and Community Plan Action Plan action status.

Recommendation

THAT Council:

1. Notes the Quarterly Corporate Performance Report for March 2023 (Attachments 1 - 3).
2. Notes the financial performance for the period ended 31 March 2023.
3. Approves the establishment of a new reserve 'Resilience and Emergency Management' to ensure Council has funds to rapidly respond to incidents and emergency situations that may arise in our community.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Chairperson Lydia Wilson</i>
Seconded:	<i>Administrator Christian Zahra</i>

THAT Council adopt the recommendation for the Quarterly Corporate Performance Report - Q3 ended 31 March 2023.

CARRIED

6 Notices of Motion

No Notices of Motion

7 Urgent Business

No Urgent Business

8 Reports from Council Representatives and CEO Update

8.1 Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson

Chair Administrator Wilson's report was provided verbally at the 16 May 2023 Scheduled Council Meeting. Since the last Council Meeting Chair of Council, Lydia Wilson attended:

- City of Whittlesea Business Advisory Panel Meeting.
- Two Citizenship Ceremonies with 140 conferees at each.

8.2 Administrator Peita Duncan

Administrator Duncan's report was provided verbally at the 16 May 2023 Scheduled Council Meeting. Since the last Council Meeting Administrator, Peita Duncan attended:

- City of Whittlesea Business Advisory Panel Meeting.
- One Citizenship Ceremony with 140 conferees attending.

8.3 Administrator Christian Zahra AM

Administrator Zahra didn't have anything to report this month.

8.4 Chief Executive Officer, Craig Lloyd

The Chief Executive Officer's report was provided verbally at the 16 May 2023 Scheduled Council Meeting:

Federal Road Funding

The City of Whittlesea is pleased to have received a funding allocation from the Federal Government via its Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) grants program.

Under phase four of the \$750 million program, Council will receive a total of \$2,235,000 to help deliver important road and infrastructure upgrades in the municipality.

The funding is comprised of \$1,417,408 to spend on road and community infrastructure projects, with an additional \$817,592 set aside solely for road projects, and we thank the Federal Government for this increased level of funding.

Council will consider how the funding can best benefit the community and allocate it to projects in accordance with the LRCI guidelines set down by the Federal Government.

Council will continue to advocate to all levels of government for further funding to invest in the region's road network.

Women in Business event

Recently we held our annual Women in Business event at the new Five Vineyard in Mernda. The day was a wonderful success with a great turnout. I'm looking forward to our inaugural Business Network Awards later this week.

We were thrilled to receive 88 nominations for our six awards which is a testament to how many thriving and successful businesses we have in the City of Whittlesea.

We'll look forward to announcing the winners publicly, in due course.

New traffic lights

Traffic lights have been installed at the intersection of Edgars Road and Rockfield Street in Epping, resulting in improved traffic flow and reduced congestion.

The City of Whittlesea-led project started in March 2022 and was funded by a \$675,000 grant from the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure program.

Edgars Road is a key road connecting residential communities in the north of Epping and Wollert to employment, commercial and entertainment precincts in the south.

The already busy intersection will receive a further influx of traffic when Development Victoria finishes the final section of Edgars Road, between Rockfield Street and O'Herns Road, in the coming months.

Completion of that missing link will see Edgars Road provide motorists with an alternative north-south route through the municipality.

Wollert Church relocation

Late last month we were delighted to see the official unveiling of the Wollert Methodist Church at its new home at the Carome Homestead in Mernda.

The heritage-listed church, which was built in 1878, had stood for more than 140 years on the corner of Lehmanns and Epping roads in Wollert.

But since the church was decommissioned in 2006 it had fallen into disrepair, and the Epping Road upgrade announcement cast doubts over its future.

To prevent the loss of such a historic building, the City of Whittlesea worked with Major Road Projects Victoria to carefully dismantle and relocate the church to the Carome Homestead.

Now, the rebuilt and refurbished church, which will be managed by Working Heritage Inc, will have a second life as a community asset.

Nature Play Week

Nature Play Week was celebrated between 17-30 April and here at the City of Whittlesea we held two successful events for our community. A nature discovery walk was held on Sunday 23 April at Epping North Conservation Reserve, with over 300 people attending and making the most of the autumn sunshine while learning about our environment.

We followed that up with another popular event – a pop-up bush playgroup at Laurimar Conservation Reserve in Doreen. With an amazing 280 people attending, it was a great way to showcase how nature play can be incorporated into playgroup activities.

9 Confidential Business

9.0.0 Close Meeting to the Public

Under section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* a meeting considering confidential information may be closed to the public. Pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66(5) of the Local Government Act 2020.

Recommendation

THAT the Chair of Council recommends that the meeting be closed to the public for the purpose of considering details relating to the following confidential matters in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020* as detailed.

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

Moved:	<i>Administrator Peita Duncan</i>
Seconded:	<i>Administrator Christian Zahra</i>

THAT Council adopt the recommendation to close the meeting to the public.

CARRIED

9.1 Confidential Connected Communities

No Reports

9.2 Confidential Liveable Neighbourhoods

No Reports

9.3 Confidential Strong Local Economy

No Reports

9.4 Confidential Sustainable Environment

No Reports

9.5 Confidential High Performing Organisation

9.5.1 Findon Road Extension

This report has been designated as confidential in accordance with sections 66(5) and 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* on the grounds that it contains Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released. In particular, the report contains information regarding legal advice and commercial offers to be considered for negotiation purposes.

10 Closure

There being no further business the Chair of Council closed the open portion of the 16 May 2023 Scheduled Council Meeting at 7:30pm.

Confirmed this 27th day of June 2023.

Lydia Wilson
Chair of Council