



Agenda

Council Meeting

Monday 14 April 2025, 7:00 pm
Dandenong Civic Centre, 225 Lonsdale Street,
Dandenong, Victoria 3175



Council Meeting Details

At the time of printing this Agenda, the Council Meeting to be held on Monday 14 April 2025, will be open to the public to attend in person but will be subject to venue seating capacity. This will be a hybrid meeting consisting of Councillors attending in person and remotely.

If we are unable to accommodate you indoors, you will still be able to watch the webcast live on the Urban Screen in Harmony Square. To view the webcast and stay informed about the status of Council Meetings please visit Council's [website](#).

The Civic Centre basement carpark will be opened to all members of the public during library opening hours. Any parking in this area will be subject to availability and time limits as notified by any signage posted.

Your Councillors

[Mayor Jim Memeti](#)

[Cr Bob Milkovic](#)

[Deputy Mayor Sophaneth \(Sophie\) Tan](#)

[Cr Sean O'Reilly](#)

[Cr Phillip Danh](#)

[Cr Loi Truong](#)

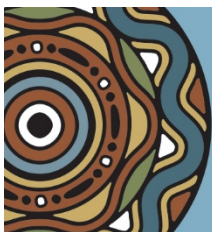
[Cr Isabella Do](#)

[Cr Melinda Yim](#)

[Cr Lana Formoso](#)

[Cr Rhonda Garad](#)

[Cr Alice Phuong Le](#)



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

 (03) 8571 1000

 council@cgd.vic.gov.au

 greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au



TTY: 133 677

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Online: relayservice.gov.au



TIS: 13 14 50



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COUNCIL OBLIGATIONS AND AGENDA REPORTS

Council has several obligations in relation to its Community Vision, Council Plan, Instruments of Legislation and Council policy. These are summarily considered in each Agenda report and further details are added as required. The obligations are as follows:

Community Vision 2040 (Community Vision | Greater Dandenong Council)

After consultation with the Greater Dandenong community on what kind of future they wanted for themselves and our city, the Greater Dandenong People's Panel developed a new Community Vision for 2040:

*The City of Greater Dandenong is a home to all.
It's a city where you can enjoy and embrace life through celebration and equal opportunity.
We harmonise the community by valuing multiculturalism and the individual.
Our community is healthy, vibrant, innovative and creative.
Our growing city is committed to environmental sustainability.
Welcome to our exciting and peaceful community.*

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.

The Council Plan 2021-25 (Council Plan 2021-25 | Greater Dandenong Council)

The Council Plan describes the kind of future the Council is working for, and how Council will do this over four years. The Council Plan has the following key strategic objectives:

- *A socially connected, safe and healthy city*
- *A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts*
- *A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods*
- *A green city committed to a sustainable future*
- *A city that supports entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes*
- *A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.*

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.

The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020

Section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles. These are:

- a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;
- b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations;
- c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;
- d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;
- e) innovation and continuous improvement are to be pursued;
- f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;
- g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;
- h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;
- i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

Also, in giving effect to the overarching governance principles above, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles:

- a) the community engagement principles (section 56);
- b) the public transparency principles (section 58);
- c) the strategic planning principles (section 89);
- d) the financial management principles (section 101);
- e) the service performance principles (section 106).

Reports in this Agenda will identify when any of the above principles are relevant.



The Gender Equality Act 2020

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* came into operation on 31 March 2021 and requires councils to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and to promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services. The objects of the Act are as follows:

- a) to promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women; and
- b) to support the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs and delivery of services in workplaces and communities; and
- c) to recognise that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes; and
- d) to redress disadvantage, address stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and violence, and accommodate persons of different genders by way of structural change; and
- e) to enhance economic and social participation by persons of different genders; and
- f) to further promote the right to equality set out in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Council is obligated to think about how its programs and services affect different people and different communities and how we can avoid reinforcing unintentional inequalities. Reports authors must consider the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and Council's Diversity, Access and Equity Policy when asking Council to consider or review any issues which have a direct or significant impact on members of the Greater Dandenong community.

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

Council, Councillors and members of Council staff are a public authority under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and, as such, are all responsible to act in accordance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006* (the Charter). The Charter is founded on the following principles:

- human rights are essential in a democratic and inclusive society that respects the rule of law, human dignity, equality and freedom;
- human rights belong to all people without discrimination, and the diversity of the people of Victoria enhances our community;
- human rights come with responsibilities and must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights of others;
- human rights have a special importance for the Aboriginal people of Victoria, as descendants of Australia's first people, with their diverse spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters.

Given this municipality's diversity and inclusiveness, when developing or preparing a report for Council consideration, report authors are required to ensure their report is consistent with the standards set by the Charter.



Consideration of Climate Change and Sustainability

One of the overarching governance principles of the *Local Government Act 2020* is that the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted.

In January 2020, this Council joined a growing number of cities around Australia and declared a “Climate and Ecological Emergency” and committed this Council to emergency action on climate change. Council has developed a Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30 to help the City of Greater Dandenong become a resilient, net zero carbon emission city with an active community prepared for the challenges of changing climate.

When developing or preparing a report for Council consideration, report authors are required to consider what impacts their issue has on Council's Declaration on a Climate and Ecological Emergency, Council's Climate Change Emergency Strategy and the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* in relation to the overarching principle on climate change and sustainability.

Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks

Report authors will consider how their report aligns with existing Council policies, strategies, frameworks or other documents, how they may affect the decision of this report or are relevant to this process.



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1 MEETING OPENING

1.1 OPENING OF MEETING BY CHAIR

1.2 ATTENDANCE



1.3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF LAND

Those who wish to stand for the acknowledgement to country are welcome to do so.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters and we also pay our respect and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders present here today, in acknowledging their journey.

1.4 OFFERING OF PRAYER, REFLECTION OR AFFIRMATION

As part of Council's commitment to recognising the cultural and spiritual diversity of our community, the prayer, reflection or affirmation this evening will be offered by Pannasobhana Thero, a member of the Greater Dandenong Interfaith Network.



1.5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Meeting of Council held 24 March 2025.

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held 24 March 2025 be confirmed.

1.6 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Any interest that a Councillor or staff member has deemed to be significant and has disclosed as either a material or general interest is now considered to be a conflict of interest. Conflict of Interest legislation is detailed in Division 2 – Conflicts of Interest: sections 126, 127, 128, 129 & 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. This legislation can be obtained by contacting the Greater Dandenong Governance Unit on 8571 5216 or by accessing the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website at www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

If a Councillor discloses any interest in an item discussed at any Council Meeting (whether they attend or not) they must:

1. complete a disclosure of interest form prior to the meeting;
2. advise the chairperson of the interest immediately before the particular item is considered (if attending the meeting); and
3. leave the chamber while the item is being discussed and during any vote taken (if attending the meeting).

The Councillor will be advised to return to the chamber or meeting room immediately after the item has been considered and the vote is complete.



1.7 ADOPTION OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Audit and Risk Committee held a meeting on 6 March 2025 and Minutes of this meeting, as summarised in the following table, are presented to Council for adoption.

Item	Topic
1.	The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed actions arising from previous meetings.
2.	The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed, discussed and noted the following reports with Council officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Executive Officer's Report• Risk Management Update• Quarterly Financial and Performance Report - Q2 2024-25• Procurement Development Program Update• Procurement Exemptions• Review of Nominated Officer List – s 132 <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>• Dandenong Market Audit and Risk Update
3.	The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed, discussed and noted the following reports with Council officers and the external auditor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Audit and Strategy Memorandum for the financial year ending 30 June 2025
4.	The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed, discussed and noted the following reports with Council officers and the internal auditor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HLB Mann Judd - Internal Audit Status Report• South East Leisure – Review of Compliance with Child Safe Standards• Review of Process for Managing and Reporting Sexual Harassment• Integrity Body Reports

Officer Recommendation

That the unconfirmed minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 6 March 2025 be adopted.



2 OFFICERS REPORTS - PART 1

2.1 PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

2.1.1 Petitions and Joint Letters

Responsible Officer: Manager Governance, Legal & Risk
Attachments: 1. Petitions Joint Letters [2.1.1.1 - 2 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That this report and its attachment be received and noted.

Executive Summary

1. Council receives a number of petitions and joint letters on a regular basis that deal with a variety of issues which have an impact upon the City.
2. Issues raised by petitions and joint letters will be investigated and reported back to Council if required.
3. A table containing all details relevant to current petitions and joint letters is provided in Attachment 1. It includes:
 - a) the full text of any petitions or joint letters received;
 - b) petitions or joint letters still being considered for Council response as pending a final response along with the date they were received; and
4. the final complete response to any outstanding petition or joint letter previously tabled along with the full text of the original petition or joint letter and the date it was responded to.

Petitions and Joint Letters Tabled

5. Council received no new petitions and one (1) joint letter prior to the Council Meeting of 14 April 2025.
 - Council has received a joint letter signed by 42 stallholders. This joint letter has been referred to the appropriate Council Business unit for further action.

Date Received	Petition Text (Prayer)	No. of Petitioners	Status	Responsible Officer Response
7/02/2025	<p>Petition to City of Greater Dandenong to Rename “Afghan Bazar” to “Little Bamyan”</p> <p>https://www.change.org/p/petition-to-city-of-greater-dandenong-to-rename-afghan-bazar-to-little-bamyan</p>	-	In Progress	Responsible Officer: Executive Manager Strategic Growth & Advocacy
7/02/2025	<p>Petition to keep the name “Afghan Bazar”</p> <p><i>NB Small extract of prayer from one petition only:</i></p> <p>We, the undersigned business and property owners in Dandenong, strongly oppose the proposed renaming of Afghan Bazar to Bamyan Bazar. Afghan Bazar is an established name that holds significant cultural, historical, and economic value for our businesses and the wider community.</p>	-	In Progress	Responsible Officer: Executive Manager Strategic Growth & Advocacy
24/03/2025	<p>Dandenong Market Request</p> <p>We are writing to urgently request the Dandenong City Council’s intervention in addressing critical issues at the Dandenong Market that are severely impacting traders, visitors, and the market’s long-term viability. As stakeholders deeply invested in the success of this community asset, we are deeply concerned by the Market Management’s recent actions and lack of accountability.</p> <p>Unjustified 7% Rent Increase</p> <p>Despite ongoing financial pressures on small businesses and no clear improvements to services or facilities, traders are being burdened with a 7% rent hike. This increase</p>	42	Completed	<p>Responsible Officer: Executive Director City Futures</p> <p>Outcome sent 8/04/2025 to head petitioner:</p> <p><i>“Thank you for your email expressing your concern regarding some critical issues at the Dandenong Market facing traders, visitors and the markets long-term viability.</i></p> <p><i>As I have been recently appointed to the Dandenong Market Pty Ltd Board, I acknowledge your issues raised.</i></p>

Date Received	Petition Text (Prayer)	No. of Petitioners	Status	Responsible Officer Response
	<p>threatens the livelihoods of long-standing vendors and risks reducing the market's diversity and vibrancy.</p> <p>Market Management has repeatedly ignored formal correspondence (last letter attached) from traders and stallholders. This dismissive approach undermines trust and collaboration, leaving critical concerns</p> <p>Management has expanded office staff numbers without justification, raising concerns about fiscal responsibility. We urge the Council to initiate an independent audit to ensure public funds and trader fees are being used appropriately.</p> <p>Our Requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Immediate freeze on the 7% rent increase pending a transparent review. - Independent audit of Market Management's staffing, finances, and service contracts. - Facilitated dialogue between traders, Council, and Management to address grievances. Most welcome any councillor to our market meet at 27/3 at 2 pm. <p>The Dandenong Market is a cultural and economic cornerstone of our community, and its mismanagement risks irreversible damage. We implore the Council to act swiftly to protect traders, visitors, and the market's future.</p>			<p><i>I understand Ian Sumpter, General Manager Dandenong Market, has responded to your letter dated the 14 March 2025 addressing all your concerns (as per the attached).</i></p> <p><i>In relation to your requests raised in your email, I would like to emphasise that DMPL is an independent board, and we encourage the traders to work closely with the market to resolve these matters.</i></p> <p>Sanjay Manivasagasivam, Executive Director City Futures"</p>



3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Question Time at Council meetings provides an opportunity for members of the public in the gallery to address questions to the Councillors, Delegates and/or officers of the Greater Dandenong City Council. Questions must comply with s. 4.5.8 of Council's Governance Rules.

QUESTIONS FROM THE GALLERY

Questions are limited to a maximum of three (3) questions per individual. Where time constraints deem it likely that not all questions can be answered within the time allowed for Question Time, the Mayor at his/her discretion may determine only the first question may be presented verbally with others deferred to be managed in the same manner as public questions not verbally presented.

Priority will be given to questions that relate to items on the Council Agenda for that meeting. Questions including any preamble should not exceed 300 words.

- a) All such questions must be received in writing on the prescribed form or as provided for on Council's website and at Ordinary meetings of Council. Where there are more than three (3) questions received from any one individual person, the Chief Executive Officer will determine the three (3) questions to be considered at the meeting.
- b) All such questions must clearly note a request to verbally present the question and must be received by the Chief Executive Officer or other person authorised for this purpose by the Chief Executive Officer no later than:
 - i) the commencement time (7.00pm) of the Ordinary meeting if questions are submitted in person; or
 - ii) noon on the day of the Ordinary meeting if questions are submitted by electronic medium.
- c) A question can only be presented to the meeting if the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the question:
 - i) does not relate to a matter of the type described in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (confidential information);
 - ii) does not relate to a matter in respect of which Council or a Delegated Committee has no power to act;
 - iii) is not defamatory, indecent, abusive or objectionable in language or substance, and is not asked to embarrass a Councillor, Delegated Member or Council officer; and
 - iv) is not repetitive of a question already asked or answered (whether at the same or an earlier meeting).
- d) If the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer has determined that the question may not be presented to the Council Meeting or Delegated Committee, then the Chairperson and/or Chief Executive Officer:
 - i) must advise the Meeting accordingly; and
 - ii) will make the question available to Councillors or Members upon request.
 - iii) The Chairperson shall call on members of the gallery who have submitted an accepted question to ask their question verbally if they wish.
- e) The Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer or delegate may then direct that question to be answered by a nominated Councillor or member of Council staff.



-
- f) No debate on, or discussion of, a question or an answer will be permitted other than for the purposes of clarification.
 - g) A Councillor, Delegated Committee Member or member of Council staff nominated to answer a question may:
 - i) seek clarification of the question from the person who submitted it;
 - ii) seek the assistance of another person in answering the question; and
 - iii) defer answering the question, so that the answer may be researched and a written response be provided within ten (10) working days following the Meeting (the question thereby being taken on notice).
 - h) Question time for verbal presentations is limited in duration to not more than twenty (20) minutes. If it appears likely that this time is to be exceeded then a resolution from Council will be required to extend that time if it is deemed appropriate to complete this item.
 - i) The text of each question asked and the response will be recorded in the minutes of the Meeting.



4 OFFICERS REPORTS - PART 2

4.1 PROCUREMENT

4.1.1 2425-11 Pillars Rd Reconstruction - Springvale Rd to Perry Rd (Stage One & Two)

Responsible Officer: Executive Director City Futures

Attachments: 1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Contingency Allowance Pillars Road Reconstruction Stage 1 2 2425 11 [4.1.1.1 - 1 page]

Purpose

1. To seek approval to award Contract No. 2425-11 for the Pillars Road Reconstruction to Prestige Paving Pty Ltd (ABN 84 140 970 912).

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **AWARDS** Contract No. 2425-11 for the Pillars Road Reconstruction to Prestige Paving Pty Ltd (ABN: 84 140 970 912) for a fixed lump sum price of Two Million Five Hundred and Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Forty-One Dollars and Forty-Eight Cents (\$2,508,941.48) including GST of \$228,085.59;
2. **AUTHORISES** the Chief Executive Officer to execute the contract agreements and any associated documentation; and
3. **DELEGATES** the Chief Executive Officer to make expenditure variations up to and not exceeding the contract contingency amount as specified in the confidential attachment.

Executive Summary

2. This report recommends that Council awards **Contract 2425-11 to Prestige Paving Pty Ltd ABN: 84 140 970 912** for a fixed lump sum price of Two Million Five Hundred and Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Forty-One Dollars and Forty-Eight Cents (\$2,508,941.48) including GST of \$228,085.59.
3. This is a Lump Sum Contract and not subject to rise and fall. Council will receive a saving of \$25,000 including GST by awarding Stages 1 and 2 to Prestige Paving Pty Ltd.

Background

4. This Contract is for the reconstruction of Pillars Road, between Springvale and Perry Roads, Bangholme.
5. Council carried out a geotechnical investigation of Pillars Road to analyse the condition of the existing pavement. The investigation concluded that the existing pavement surface and subgrade are in poor condition. The subgrade consists of reactive swamp and lake deposits coupled with inadequate pavement thickness, crocodile cracking and scattered patching, these issues necessitate the reconstruction of the road.



6. The area's general topography is flat with a commercial and industrial district to the east and residential areas to the west of the site. The immediate vicinity along Pillars Road is primarily rural in character.
7. Followed by the investigation the pavement design was completed with two distinctive stages;
 - a. Separable Portion - Stage 1 (CH 0.00 to 1880.00), and
 - b. Separable Portion - Stage 2 (CH 1880.00 to 3752.65).
8. Tenderers were requested to provide their lump sum price per stage using Council provided Bill of Quantities (BOQ) for Stages 1 and 2 of the project. Tenderers were also invited to offer a discount for the award of both stages 1 and 2.
9. The reconstruction of Pillars Road also coincides with South East Water's (SEW) Dingley Recycled Water Scheme project, which involves installing a recycled pipeline beneath Pillars Road. We are coordinating closely with SEW to ensure the project is executed efficiently, avoiding any duplication of efforts and maintaining high-quality standards. Consequently, the project will be delivered over the current and next fiscal year.

Tender Process

This tender was advertised in The Age Newspaper and on Council's website on Saturday 7 December 2024 and at the close of tenders at 2.00pm, Wednesday 29 January 2025, eight (8) tender submissions were received as follows:

- a. **The Trustee for Blue Peak Constructions Family Trust – ABN 88 660 064 079**
 - b. **CDN Constructors Unit Trust – ABN 62 884 294 341**
 - c. **Etheredge Mintern Pty Ltd – ABN 36 006 521 151**
 - d. **Fulton Hogan Industries Pty Ltd – ABN 54 000 538 689**
 - e. **Mocon Construction Group Pty Ltd – ABN 25 623 601 436**
 - f. **Parkinson Group (Vic) Pty Ltd – ABN 8 168 742 925**
 - g. **Prestige Paving Pty Ltd – ABN 84 140 970 912**
 - h. **Crete Concrete Contractors Pty Ltd – ABN 40 055 492 683**
10. Tenderers were requested to provide lump sum pricing per stage using Council's Bill of Quantities issued with the tender documents.
 11. Tenderers were also required to be registered with Rapid Global (Council's Workforce Management Software – Health and Safety Compliance) prior to the tender closing date at risk level one (1).

Tender Evaluation

12. The evaluation panel consisted of Council's Coordinator Civil Projects, Project Engineer (Civil), Drainage Planning Officer and the Procurement Officer with Occupational Health & Safety and Environmental Management consultants providing specialist advice via Rapid Global. The Tenders were evaluated using Council's Weighted Attributed Value Selection Method. The advertised evaluation criteria and the allocated weightings for evaluation are as follows:



	Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
1	Price	40%
2	Relevant Experience (Past Performance & Similar Work)	25%
3	Capability - (Methodology and Program)	10%
4	Capability - (Resources)	10%
5	Social Procurement	5%
6	Local Industry	5%
7	Environmental	5%
8	OH&S Systems (Pass / Fail)	Pass / Fail
9	Environmental System (Pass / Fail)	Pass / Fail

The Evaluation Criteria 1-7 are given a point score between 0 (Not Acceptable) and 5 (Excellent) as detailed in the following table.

13. Evaluation Criteria 8 and 9 are given a Pass or Fail via the Rapid Global (Council's Workforce Management Software – Health and Safety Compliance).
14. Tenders were ranked by panel members against each criterion. Points were awarded on a scale 0 to 5 based on the score parameters listed below.

Score	Description
5	Excellent
4	Very Good
3	Good, better than average
2	Acceptable
1	Marginally acceptable (Success not assured)
0	Not Acceptable

15. Each submission was assessed against all evaluation criteria, to ensure that the tenderers met the standards required for Council contractors. Having a fail in any criterion would automatically exclude tenderers from further consideration for this contract.
16. Tender submissions were assessed against all evaluation criteria to ensure that the tenderers met the standards required for Council contractors. The weighted attribute points scores resulting from the assessment are shown in the following table:

Tender Name	Price Points	Non-Price Points	Total Score	OH&S	EMS	Rapid Global
Prestige Paving	1.46	2.12	3.58	PASS	PASS	Compliant
Fulton Hogan	1.05	2.28	3.33	Assessed	Assessed	Documents to be verified
Etheredge Minter	1.28	1.87	3.15	PASS	PASS	Compliant
CDN Constructors	0.98	1.86	2.84	PASS	PASS	Compliant
V Crete Contractors	1.02	1.64	2.66	PASS	PASS	Compliant
Blue Peak Constructions	0.73	1.83	2.56	PASS	PASS	Compliant
Parkinson Group	0.13	1.36	1.49	PASS	PASS	Complaint
Mocon Construction	0.08	0.00	0.08	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Registered



17. At the completion of the tender evaluation process described above, the Evaluation Panel agreed that the tender submission from **Prestige Paving Pty Ltd ABN: 84 140 970 912** would provide the best value for money outcome to Council for these works.

The Company

18. **Prestige Paving Pty Ltd** has been a trusted contractor for Council for 21 years, specialising in asphalt reinstatement and civil works. Their extensive experience includes successful collaborations with over 10 regional and metropolitan local councils. They have a proven track record in asphalt paving, premix concrete, road reconstruction, and traffic management.

Relevant Experience/Track Record

19. Rehabilitation of South Park Drive Dandenong South, successfully delivered recently. Project value is approximately \$800,000.
20. Prestige has successfully completed various resurfacing and road rehabilitation projects for the City of Greater Dandenong this recently, with a total value exceeding \$2 million. Their quality of works, workmanship and worksite management have consistently met acceptable levels in the past.
21. Prestige has delivered similar projects for other local government including, Queens Ave Road and Shared Path Construction (Glen Eira City Council), Maddens Lane Road Rehabilitation (Yarra Ranges City Council), Cheddar Road Reconstruction and Traffic Signals (City of Darebin), etc.
22. As part of assessing safety, Prestige Paving were noted as fully compliant with Rapid Global and demonstrated to have the appropriate safe working systems in place.
23. It is noted that Prestige Paving experienced a worksite incident in February 2024 within Greater Dandenong. The outcome of this incident was determined by WorkSafe that there was no adverse findings or offences under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.
24. Since this time, Prestige Paving have continued to carry out works for the Greater Dandenong City Council in a safe and appropriate manner.
25. The evaluation matrix and other supporting documents have been placed on the relevant tender file.
26. Note:
- The higher the price score – lower the tendered price.
 - The higher the non-price score – represents better capability and capacity to undertake the service.

Corporate Scorecard and Due Diligence

27. A report was run through our third-party corporate scorecard due diligence process. No major risks were found, and the reference checks were completed. A pass was noted on the scorecard with these recommendations:

Bank guarantee

28. In view of the contract size, consideration should be given to obtaining security in the form of an appropriate Bank Guarantee or Unconditional Performance Bond, for the duration of the contract and any warranty/defects liability period.



Counterparty risk

29. Consideration should be given to obtaining a director's personal guarantee from the subject's sole Director, covering all contractual and financial obligations undertaken by the subject. If this option is taken up, verification of assets owned by Director should be undertaken.
30. **Please Note:** Rapid Global is a third-party pre-qualification and verification system used by Council and ten (10) other Victorian Councils enabling the sharing of OH&S data. It is a Risk and OH&S system where contractors can upload their Occupational Health & Safety, Risk and Environment Plans and Policies as well as up to date insurances.
31. As a result of the above findings from the Corporate Scorecard, Council will be seeking an appropriate Bank Guarantee at 5% of the contract value.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

32. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial / Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

33. The resource requirements associated with this report total \$2,508,941.48 including GST (\$2,280,855.89 excluding GST), which is within the approved budget allocation of \$6,446,941.00 for the Road Reconstruction Program for the financial year 2024/25.
34. Please note that the year-to-date expenditure and commitments under this program are approximately \$3,800,000.00, allowing Council to fully fund the project with the remaining program funds.

Asset Implications

35. This item relates to a current CIP project and does not change the scope, timeframe and budget for the project.

Legal/Risk Implications

36. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report.

Environmental Implications

37. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

38. There was no requirement for community consultation.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

39. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
 - Not Applicable
40. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
 - Not Applicable



Legislative and Policy Obligations

41. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:

- The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Social Procurement

42. **Prestige Paving Pty Ltd – ABN 84 140 970 912** - Provided good responses to all questions in Council's Social Procurement Questionnaire.
43. They have policies and company statements covering Social Procurement, Equal Employment Opportunity, Indigenous, Modern Slavery, Prohibition of Child & Forced Labour, an Anti-Bullying Harassment and Local Content First.
44. They engage with Social Enterprises and have demonstrated their diverse workforce, ranging from gender type to disadvantaged groups.

Local Industry

45. **Prestige Paving Pty Ltd – ABN 84 140 970 912** are a business operating from their office in Bayswater North. They have two (2) staff members who reside within the Council boundary. Prestige Paving have estimated the following types of expenses that may be spent within Greater Dandenong, should they be the successful tenderers for this Contract.
46. Prestige Paving anticipates allocating approximately 13% of the contract value to local expenditures. Additionally, the company plans to procure concrete and quarry materials, amounting to 8.5% of the contract value, from businesses within Greater Dandenong.



4.2 POLICY AND STRATEGY

4.2.1 Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy

This item was deferred at the Council Meeting of 24 March 2025 for so that further clarification could be sought, and is now being tabled again for consideration.

Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer Manager Governance, Legal & Risk
Attachments:	1. Draft Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy 2025 [4.2.1.1 - 12 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council ADOPTS the Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy as per Attachment 1 of this report.

Executive Summary

1. The policy if adopted will contribute to Council's good governance framework and ensures interstate and overseas travel undertaken by Councillors remains transparent, accountable and in the best interest of the Greater Dandenong Community.
2. The policy clarifies the approval process, class of travel and accommodation, incidental costs and reporting requirements associated with interstate and overseas travel undertaken by Councillors.

Background

3. Council recognises that on occasions Councillors may need to undertake interstate or overseas travel for official business pertaining to the function of Council and to meet mandatory training requirements as outlined in the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.
4. The matters set out in this policy supports the Council to comply with the following provisions of the *Local Government Act 2020*:
 - section 42 (Resources and facilities for the Mayor and Councillors);
 - section 40 (Reimbursement of expenses of Councillors); and
 - section 57 (Public Transparency Policy), which requires Council to maintain a register of interstate and overseas travel.

Key Issues and Discussion

5. At the Council meeting held 8 April 2024 in the context of considering Councillor attendance at the Local Government Association 2024 National General Assembly council resolved:

“4. officers review associated policies in line with best practice in early 2025 after a new Council term commences.”
6. The Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy has been prepared and is now presented to Council for adoption.



7. The Policy is intended to ensure:
- a transparent approval process for Councillors undertaking interstate or overseas travel;
 - all interstate and overseas travel contributes to the achievement of Council objectives and the Council Plan;
 - effective reporting mechanisms are in place; and
 - the process for reimbursement of expenses associated with travel is clearly outlined.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

8. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

9. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Legal/Risk Implications

10. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report, however if adopted this policy will contribute to Council's good governance framework, specifically in the areas of transparency and accountability.

Environmental Implications

11. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

12. There was no requirement for community consultation.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

13. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
- Not Applicable
14. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
- A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

15. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
- The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
 - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.



Councillor Interstate and Overseas Travel Policy

Policy Endorsement:	Council		
Policy Superseded by this Policy:	Formerly contained in the Greater Dandenong Travel Policy		
Directorate:	Corporate Service		
Responsible Officer:	Manager, Governance Legal and Risk		
Policy Type:	Discretionary		
File Number:		Version No:	01
1 st Adopted by Council	Minute No.	Last Adopted by Council:	Minute No.
Review Period:		Next Review:	

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE (OR PURPOSE)

This policy has been developed to ensure that interstate and overseas travel undertaken by Councillors in their official roles as Elected Members remains transparent, accountable and in the best interests of the Greater Dandenong community.

This Policy ensures:

- Transparent approval process for Councillors undertaking interstate and overseas travel;
- That all travel contributes to the achievement of Council objectives and the Council Plan;
- Effective reporting mechanisms are in place; and
- Outlines the process for reimbursement of expenses associated with such travel.

2. BACKGROUND

Changes to the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA2020) made in 2024 require Councillors to participate in ongoing annual professional development (s33A). To achieve this, on occasion, it may be necessary for Councillors to undertake interstate and overseas travel.

Council also recognises that on occasions, Councillors may need to undertake interstate and overseas travel for official business pertaining to the function of Council and Local Community.

The matters set out in this policy, link to s42 of the LGA2020 (Resources and facilities for the Mayor and Councillors) and s40 of the LGA2020 (Reimbursement of expenses of Councillors). A register showing the details of Councillor interstate and overseas travel is published under the provisions of Council's Public Transparency Policy, which is required under s57 of LGA2020.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Greater Dandenong City Councillors undertaking interstate or overseas travel in their official capacity as an Elected Member.

4. DEFINITIONS

In this policy:

Official Business means business conducted on behalf of, and approved by Greater Dandenong City Council, to either fulfil a legislative requirement or to achieve a benefit for the municipality.

Interstate Travel means travel within Australia.

Overseas Travel means travel outside of Australian and New Zealand.

5. POLICY

5.1 Advance Approval Prior to Travel

Pre-approval for all interstate and overseas travel by a Councillor seeking to attend events such as Councillor development opportunities (i.e. training, conferences and seminars) and representation at other events that provide significant benefits to the City, should be by resolution of the Council.

The Governance Business Unit will prepare a Council Report which must identify the following:

- Background;
- Purpose of the travel;
- Type of travel (interstate or overseas);
- How the travel meets Council objectives in line with the Council Plan;
- How the travel meets the requirements of ongoing professional development for the Councillor;
- Benefits to Council and/or Community or legislative requirements;
- Transferability of relevant learning outcomes that will occur by undertaking the travel;
- Proposed cost of travel (airfare, accommodation, event registration, meals etc); and
- Name(s) of Councillor(s) to undertake the travel.

Where interstate travel is to be undertaken and timeframes do not permit for approval in advance by resolution of Council, written approval must be sought from the Mayor in consultation with the CEO. In the case of travel by the Mayor, joint written approval must be sought from the CEO and Deputy Mayor.

Councillors must seek approval for all interstate and overseas travel in a timely manner to allow Council to take advantage of early bird discounts.

Where a Councillor undertakes interstate or overseas travel of their own accord, they must not represent Council in any official capacity, without the prior approval via a Council resolution.

5.2 Principles for Approving Travel

When considering the appropriateness of interstate and overseas travel requests, the Council or where appropriate the Mayor in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer must consider:

- Advice from the Commonwealth Government Smart Traveller service regarding any safety or security matters for the destination;
- Whether it is appropriate for Council to be funding the travel;
- Will the travel contribute to the achievement of Council objectives and the Council Plan; and
- Is the proposed means of travel cost effective, with due consideration given to lower emission travel.

5.3 Air Travel

When travelling for official business travel arrangements must represent best-value to Council.

Class of Service - Interstate

Air travel will be by economy class for all Councillors, unless otherwise determined by way of Council resolution or as per Workplace Adjustment Guidelines.

Councillors may upgrade the class of travel at their own expense.

Councillors may accept offers to upgrade by airlines provided there is no extra cost to Council.

Council's, Coordinator Mayor and Councillors Office will be responsible for booking interstate travel.

Airline tickets are not transferable and cannot be used for defraying or offsetting any other costs, including the costs of other persons accompanying a Councillor.

Class of Service - Overseas

When travelling overseas Premium Economy or where this is not available or appropriate business class travel is permitted subject to the best available airfare options being sourced.

Councillors may upgrade the class of travel at their own expense.

Council's, Coordinator Mayor and Councillors Office will be responsible for booking all overseas travel.

Rewards and Loyalty Programs

Councillors are not permitted to use flights paid for by Council to accrue personal travel or loyalty rewards.

5.4 Ground Travel and Transfers

For transfers between the airport and accommodation, the most cost-effective option should be taken (e.g. airport/hotel bus, train or other form of public transport) wherever possible.

For interstate travel, taxi vouchers can be obtained from the Coordinator Mayor and Councillor Office. Any unused taxi vouchers must be returned to the issuing officer immediately after the proposed travel event, including where part or all the proposed travel has not taken place.

Rideshare services may be used if they are determined to be the most practical and cost-effective mode of transport. The cost of travel for rideshare service will need to be paid up front by the Councillor and costs will be reimbursed on presentation of a tax invoice.

Rental Car

If a rental car is required, a car is to be arranged bearing in mind cost and travel requirements.

Parking Fees

Where costs for parking are less than the cost of a return taxi or rideshare fare from the Councillor's private residence to the Airport, Council will meet the cost of airport parking, including the travel cost of the Councillor's private vehicle for the duration of the trip based on Council's travel expenses reimbursement practices.

Use of Private Vehicle

Where a Councillor uses their private vehicle to attend an approved interstate meeting, conference, seminar or engagement the total reimbursement for use of the vehicle shall not exceed the cost of air travel at the specified class including transfers.

Use of Council Vehicle

Permission will be required for use of Council vehicles to travel interstate so long as the cost of the use of the Council vehicle does not exceed the cost of air travel at the specified class including transfers.

Use of Council vehicle must be in accordance with Council's Motor Vehicle Code of Practice.

Where practical it is preferred that Councillors use public transport to move around the area they are located in.

Infringements

The cost of any penalties incurred by the Councillor for road, traffic or parking infringement, or other similar penalties or fines, will not be reimbursed by Council and remain the personal responsibility of the relevant Councillor.

Councillors are also responsible for ensuring they hold the appropriate licenses to drive a vehicle whether hire or personal and must adhere to the local laws both interstate and overseas in relation to driving including blood alcohol limits and drug use etc.

5.5 Accommodation

When travelling for official business travel arrangements must represent best-value to Council.

Accommodation will be at standard hotel/motel business class/4 star in single room accommodation where reasonably possible.

Where possible all accommodation must be pre-booked prior to Councillor travel, with the accommodation venue to charge expenses back to Council.

The cost of non-essential room extras such as the mini bar or in-house movies will not be reimbursed by Council. Refer to section 5.8 *Non-Allowable Expenditure* of this policy.

Where deemed appropriate one (1) additional night's accommodation pre or post event may be approved.

5.6 Meals

Reasonable daily meal costs will be reimbursed by Council on presentation of a tax invoice.

Reasonable daily meals would be considered breakfast lunch and dinner and a light refreshment for morning and afternoon tea, where not otherwise provided.

Reasonable daily meal costs will be based on the Australian Taxation Office's annual determination for Meals and Incidentals when undertaking business related domestic or overseas travel.

5.7 Reimbursement of Incidental costs

All reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed by Council on presentation of a tax invoice. No reimbursement will be made without a tax invoice. Guidelines for the reimbursement of costs to Councillors is detailed in the Councillor Support, Reimbursement and Accountability Policy.

Reasonable expenses include:

- Ground Transfers
- Accommodation
- Meals
- Parking
- Event Registration
- Immigration visa entry and exit fees
- Immigration departure taxes
- Laundry expenses where the travel period exceeds 5 days

Where a Councillor has incurred additional cost not covered by this policy, the Councillor must reimburse Council within 14 days upon return.

5.8 Non-Allowable Expenditure

Council will not reimburse expenditure in relation to the following items:

- Passports associated with overseas travel
- alcohol
- Snacks (except items in 5.6 of this policy)
- Costs associated with accommodation that are outside room and breakfast (ie mini bar, tips and gratuities, (except items in 5.6 of this policy)
- Laundry where the period of travel is less than 5 days,
- Excess baggage claims that are for personal use
- Lost or stolen items (not covered under Council's Travel Insurance Policy)
- Tourism related costs (i.e. Day trips, Sightseeing)
- Reading materials (including newspapers and magazines)
- Traffic, parking or speeding infringement and the like.
- Travel costs not associated with the approved travel
- Entertainment
- Personal gifts, goods, services or souvenirs
- Any cost incurred for family or other persons travelling with the Councillor

5.9 Spouse, Partners and Carers

In instances where a spouse or another family member accompanies a Councillor on an approved trip, the Councillor shall meet the full cost incurred for the accompanying party. These costs should be paid for in full to Council prior to the trip being undertaken, if practicable. Any additional costs incurred by the Councillor, spouse or family member shall be reimbursed to Council within 14 days of return from travel.

Exceptions

If there is no additional accommodation cost for the spouse/family member then Council will bear the full cost of the accommodation.

Where the accompanying person is a person who provides fulltime carer support to the Councillor, council will cover the costs of the accompanying person in accordance with the conditions outlined in this policy and the Councillor Support and Reimbursement Policy.

5.10 Passport and Visas

Councillors travelling overseas are responsible for ensuring they have a current passport and relevant visas.

Costs associated with obtaining and maintaining individual passports will not be reimbursed by Council.

Immigration visa entry and exist fees will be reimbursed by Council.

5.11 Travel Insurance

Council provides comprehensive business travel insurance through JLT Risk Solutions Pty Ltd for all Councillors.

Individual Councillor are responsible for checking the applicability of the travel insurance provided by Council against their personal needs. If a Councillor requires additional coverage the cost will be borne by the Councillor.

5.12 Injury or Illness

Councillors who suffer from injury or illness preventing them from attending pre-approved travel, should notify the Mayor and CEO in writing immediately, preferably with enough notice for Council to either substitute an alternative Councillor or to cancel the intended travel and accommodation arrangement and any associated fees.

Failure to inform Council of non-attendance may result in Council seeking reimbursement from the Councillor.

5.13 Council Owned Devices and Network Access

In accordance with Council's Information Security Policy, Council owned devices (iPhones, iPads, Laptops etc) must not be taken overseas. Councillor not located in Australia will be blocked from accessing the Council network remotely.

In accordance with Council's Mobile Device Policy global/overseas roaming for international calls will NOT be enabled for Council issued devices.

Exemption to this directive may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Requests for exemptions must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Information Officer. The request will be reviewed based on necessity and security measures in place. Approval must be obtained prior to taking any Council owned device overseas. Failure to comply may result in a breach of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

5.14 Reporting Requirements and Public Register Compliance

A post detailed written report must be submitted to Council by the Councillor(s) who have travelled interstate or overseas on official business within three (3) Council Meetings upon return. The report shall provide comment on the following:

- Summary of the purpose of the travel;
- How the travel contributed to the achievement of Council objectives and the Council Plan;
- Contribution to Councillor's professional development;
- Contribution to the Local Community;
- Learning Outcomes; and
- Recommendations for further action (if relevant).

Where a Councillor has attended an interstate training, conference or seminar (professional development) the Councillor must give a verbal report at an open meeting of Council during Reports from Councillors/Delegates and Councillor Questions at the first available Council Meeting upon their return, noting a report will be submitted to a subsequent Council Meeting.

Where more than one Councillor has attended the same interstate training, conference or seminar a nominated Councillor may speak on behalf of all Councillor attendees.

Councillors who have undertaken interstate or overseas travel are responsible for submitting a Travel Register form within 14 days upon return, including all supporting documentation and tax invoices (or equivalent for overseas travel) relating to the cost of the travel to the Governance Business Unit for inclusion in Council's Travel Register.

The date and minute number of the resolution of Council approving interstate or overseas travel must be recorded in the Interstate and Overseas Travel Register. Where travel has been approved by the Mayor, CEO and/or Deputy Mayor the approving authority and date approved must be recorded in the Interstate and Overseas Travel Register.

5.15 Remote attendance

Where available and appropriate Councillors are encouraged to attend interstate and overseas training, conferences and seminars remotely to reduce costs to Council.

6. RESPONSE TO THE OVERARCHING GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2020

The overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020 have been considered and addressed in the development of this Policy.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND CHILD SAFE COMPLIANCE

Greater Dandenong City Council policies comply with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, the Gender Equality Act 2020, the Climate Change Act 2017 and the Child Safe Standards contained in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Amended).

[Response to Climate Change](#)

When making transport arrangements for all interstate and overseas travel strong consideration must be given to offsetting carbon emissions in line with Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Councillors are responsible for:

- Ensuring they understand and comply with the requirements of this Policy;
- Providing relevant information to the Co-ordinator Mayor and Councillors Office to assist with the preparation of a report to Council seeking approval for travel;
- Ensuring they have the relevant current travel documents (passport, visa);
- Ensuring the applicability of Council's travel insurance against their personal needs;
- Ensuring they confirm all flights before travel and arrive in a timely manner to proceed through check-in and security procedures;
- Submitting a post travel report to Council outlining the outcomes and benefits of the travel within three (3) Council Meetings of returning; and
- Submitting a Travel Register form to the Governance Business Unit within 14 days upon return.

Governance Business Unit is responsible for:

- The maintenance of the Interstate and Overseas Travel Register on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer.

Co-ordinator Mayor and Councillors Office is responsible:

- Preparing a report to Council seeking pre-approval for Interstate and Overseas travel to be undertaken by a Councillor; and
- For booking all pre-approved interstate and overseas travel and accommodation for Councillors.
- Co-ordinating the reimbursement of any costs between Council and Councillors.

9. BREACH OF THIS POLICY

A breach of this policy may constitute a breach of the *Local Government Act 2020* and/or the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

Penalties apply for false or incomplete travel expenses, and for failing to lodge within the time frames.

10. REPORTING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Reporting A Councillor who has undertaken interstate or overseas travel in an official capacity must complete and submit a Travel Register Form within 14 days of returning.

A Councillor who has undertaken interstate or overseas travel in an official capacity must provide details of their travel by way of a verbal and then written report to Council on their attendance, in accordance with section 5.14 *Reporting Requirements and Public Register Compliance* of this policy.

Monitoring The Manager Governance Legal and Risk is responsible for the monitoring of this policy.

Review This policy will be reviewed by the Manager Governance Legal and Risk 6 months prior to a Local Government Election or because of changes to applicable legislation.

11. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

Legislation

- *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Child Safe Standards*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Model Councillor Code of Conduct*

Related Council and Other Policies, Procedures, Strategies, Protocols, Guidelines

- Greater Dandenong City Council Access, Diversity and Equity Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action Plan 2020-30
- Greater Dandenong City Council Councillor Expenses, Support and Accountability Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council International Relations Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Mobile Devices Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Motor Vehicle Code of Practice

- Greater Dandenong City Council Public Transparency Policy
- Greater Dandenong City Council Travel Register Form
- Greater Dandenong City Council Workplace Adjustment Guidelines
- Greater Dandenong City Certificate of Currency - Travel

Administrative Updates

It is recognised that from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, the change to an existing policy or document referred to in this policy and minor updates to legislation and the like which does not have a material impact. All changes or updates which materially alter this policy must be made by resolution of Council.



4.3 OTHER

4.3.1 Resolving Naming Issues for the Precinct around Thomas Street Precinct (Afghan Bazaar)

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer
Attachments: Nil

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. NOTES that significant feedback from the community indicates that the terms ‘Afghan Bazaar’ or ‘Afghan Precinct’ does not fully align with the principle of fostering a shared sense of belonging and inclusion for all, and does not align with the Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) naming rules;**
- 2. NOTES the formal name of Thomas Street, Dandenong will remain unchanged, regardless of the outcome of any Council’s consideration of a potential marketing name for a part of the Thomas Street area;**
- 3. CEASES to use any marketing term/s to refer to the precinct within Thomas Street Dandenong, formerly referred to as the ‘Afghan Bazaar’ or ‘Afghan Precinct’;**
- 4. NOTES a future report will be provided for Council’s consideration in May 2025 outlining the proposed initiation of a community consultation process with businesses and traders regarding a potential marketing name (including if any precinct name is required) for the area in Thomas Street Dandenong based on Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) naming rules; and**
- 5. NOTES that Council will continue collaborating with the Australian and Victorian Governments and other local municipalities to strengthen the South-East Social Cohesion initiative.**

Executive Summary

1. Central Dandenong is home to a diverse and growing community from Afghanistan, representing a wide range of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. This diversity enriches the local area and contributes to the vibrancy of Central Dandenong. However, recent concerns and tensions surrounding the naming of the precinct around Thomas Street, commonly referred to as the “Afghan Precinct”, have underscored the need for a structured and collaborative approach to fostering relationships, strengthening community cohesion, and promoting inclusivity.
2. The term “Afghan Bazaar” has never been formally registered with the Geographic Names Victoria, and the area remains officially designated as Thomas Street, Dandenong. The term was originally adopted for marketing and economic development purposes to attract visitors and tourists to the area.
3. On 11 March 2025, Council endorsed Notice of Motion No.6 – “Stronger Together: Towards Peace and Cohesion in Our Community”, reaffirming that every resident in the City of Greater Dandenong should feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. Council recognises that the formal naming of public places should seek to build consensus rather than divide the community.
4. Feedback from the community over several months has indicated that there does not appear to be community consensus about the alternative names proposed to fully align with the principle of fostering a shared sense of belonging and inclusion for all.



Consideration of a Formal Naming Process

5. Council has the option to initiate a formal renaming process for Thomas Street, Dandenong. However, based on advice from Geographic Names Victoria (GNV), renaming a road is generally discouraged unless the existing name is offensive or poses challenges for emergency services. Names are expected to be enduring.
6. Furthermore, changing a street name can cause logistical challenges, as updates to addresses for essential services—including emergency services (000), the State Government, and Australia Post—may take time. While some updates occur quickly, others can take 6 to 12 months. Given these factors, any decision to rename the street must be based on a robust and well-justified rationale.

Exploring an Alternative Approach

7. Instead of renaming Thomas Street, Council can reconsider the trading name of “Afghan Bazaar” through community engagement. This would allow for broader consultation and a more inclusive approach to reflecting the identity of the area. Council can also seek GNV’s approval to register the name as a legacy name, ensuring formal recognition while maintaining continuity.

Broader Community Development Initiative

8. As part of Notice of Motion No.6, Council has also committed to providing further advice on a long-term community development initiative. This initiative aims to facilitate dialogue and positively engage Australians from diverse ethnic backgrounds across South-East Melbourne on broader community issues.
9. Initial discussions have taken place with the Department of Home Affairs, the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), Casey City Council, and Cardinia Shire Council.
10. The Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs has indicated its willingness to contribute Commonwealth resources to support this partnership, ensuring a coordinated and well-resourced approach to strengthening social cohesion in the region.
11. Council remains committed to fostering a sense of unity, respect, and inclusion for all residents of Greater Dandenong.

Next Steps

Recognising Community Perspectives

12. Council acknowledges the diverse and strong held views concerning the marketing name for Thomas Street. Any resolution should foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for all. Council also reaffirms that the formal name of Thomas Street will remain unchanged.

Community Engagement on a Trading Name

13. Council will initiate a community engagement process to seek feedback on an inclusive trading name for the area currently referred to as “Afghan Bazaar”. Details of this engagement process will be announced by mid-May 2025.

Ongoing Collaboration on Strengthening Social Cohesion

14. Council will continue working with state and federal governments to advance the Social Cohesion in South East initiative, ensuring a coordinated and collaborative approach to strengthening community connections.



Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

15. This item does not have an impact on existing human resources.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

16. The financial implications associated with this report will involve the estimated costs of the proposed community consultation, which will be the subject of a separate report for Council consideration in May 2025. The other costs associated with this report are minimal and can be absorbed within existing operating budgets and staff resources.

Asset Implications

17. This item does not materially affect any existing assets at this time. The removal of signage will be minimal. The effects if a new precinct name is decided by Council would be considered in a subsequent report following detailed community consultation with nominated stakeholders.

Legal/Risk Implications

18. The deep community concerns about the issues contained within this report represent significant reputational risk to Council. The proposed approach is designed to minimise these risks and proposes a high-quality community engagement and consultative approach, guided by the Naming Rules for Places in Victoria to achieve an outcome which is acceptable to the various stakeholders.

Environmental Implications

19. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

20. The proposed community consultation approach will be the subject of a separate report in May 2025, for Council consideration and approval.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

21. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:

- Safe and peaceful community.
- Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.

22. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:

- A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
- A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
- A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods.
- A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.



4.3.2 South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) - Membership

Responsible Officer: Executive Director City Futures

Attachments:

1. SECCCA Priority Projects [4.3.2.1 - 4 pages]
2. SECCCA Strategic Plan 2024-28 [4.3.2.2 - 13 pages]

Purpose

1. This report outlines the rationale for Greater Dandenong City Council proposing to withdraw from its membership of the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) from 1 July 2025, due to the increasing costs associated with annual membership and the limited benefits the membership offers the Council.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **APPROVES** the cessation of the Greater Dandenong City Council's membership of South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) from 1 July 2025;
2. **WRITES** to SECCCA to formally confirm that it will be ceasing its membership from 1 July 2025; and
3. **NOTES** that Council should:
 - a. **focus on its own climate change priorities, including transitioning from gas to renewable electricity, the installation of solar panels, increasing Council's tree planting program, and/ or improving support to residents and businesses to adapt to the challenges of climate change; and**
 - b. **continue to participate in the Greater South East Melbourne (GSEM) climate change initiatives.**

Executive Summary

2. SECCCA have developed its 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. To support the plan, SECCCA have introduced an additional mandatory \$75,000 project contribution that each Council is required to pay annually, in addition to the membership fee.
3. Council officers have held concerns regarding the quality and relevance of projects undertaken by SECCCA historically. In addition, officers are of the view that the Strategic Plan will have limited benefit to Greater Dandenong City Council.
4. Council now needs to determine whether to continue its membership with SECCCA for the final three (3) years of the Strategic Plan (and fund it accordingly) or withdraw from the alliance.
5. Officers recommend that Council ceases its membership due to increasing costs and the limited benefits being achieved, and rather focuses on its own priorities.



Background

6. SECCCA is an alliance of currently eight Councils in south-east Melbourne. SECCCA began as the Westernport Alliance for Greenhouse Action in 2004 before pivoting to its current model and name in 2009. Greater Dandenong has been a member of SECCCA since 1 July 2013.
7. Prior to 1 July 2024, SECCCA primarily operated on the basis of each member Council paying a membership fee, and then opting in or out of projects. For those projects Council's opted into, they paid an additional fee, if required.
8. In 2023, SECCCA developed its 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. This plan sets out, among other matters, nine priority projects that SECCCA and its member Council's will undertake during the four-year period. It also changes the funding model to retain the membership fee, and add a mandatory project contribution of \$75,000 per annum for each Council. Each member Council was then required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the four-year period.
9. Council officers have noted concerns about the historical quality and relevance of projects undertaken by SECCCA. Additionally, officers questioned the relevance of the nine priority projects outlined in the Strategic Plan to the Council, with only two of the nine considered to potentially benefit Greater Dandenong. Although these two projects may provide some advantages, officers are concerned that the associated costs may significantly exceed the potential benefits.
10. In 2024, SECCCA made a number of staffing changes, including the recruitment of a new CEO, and are now currently seeking a new Communications lead. These changes have been seen as a positive, and a step in the right direction.
11. In 2024, Council considered whether to continue its membership with SECCCA in light of the new Strategic Plan and fee structure. Council determined to continue the membership and sign the MoU for a period of one year only to allow time for the new staff to establish themselves, and for Council to consider the outcomes achieved in the first year of the new Strategic Plan.
12. It is now time for Council to consider whether to continue its SECCCA membership for the remaining three years of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. If Council determines to continue its membership, it will also need to allocate \$353,249 in the budget over this three-year period, which is \$225,000 more than is currently in the budget. It will also have to continue to allocate staffing resources. Alternatively, Council could withdraw from SECCCA and continue to focus on CGD beneficial climate change activities, while also continuing to be involved in GSEM climate initiatives.

Key Issues and Discussion

13. As stated above, the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan sets out nine priority projects as follows (more information on each of these projects can be found in Attachment 1):
 - Asset Vulnerability Assessment Phase 2 Support
 - BriefEzy
 - EV/ Hydrogen Heavy Duty Truck Investigation*
 - Business Energy Support Project
 - Residential Resilience Ratings Pilot Project
 - Small Business Climate Adaptation Toolkit*
 - Climate Risk Project
 - Carbon Sink Project*



- Financing Flood Resilient Infrastructure*

14. Of the nine projects, only five are now fully funded through project fees required. The remaining four (4), are subject to separate funding.
15. Only the Business Energy Support Program and the Financing Flood Resilient Infrastructure projects are considered to have some benefit to Greater Dandenong. However, with each of these projects there are concerns with the cost and likely outputs achievable (see Attachment 1 for further details).
16. In terms of activities occurring over the last year, officers note the staffing changes that have occurred recently, and the benefits these have brought. Other key activities in the past year include the delivery of the Enhancing Community Resilience Project, creating Net Zero Roadmap for the GSEM/ SECCCA region, and expanding the BriefEzy tool, along with various advocacy actions.
17. However, of this work, only the Net Zero Roadmap is considered to be of benefit to Greater Dandenong. Given this is a GSEM project, Council would still be involved in this even if it was not a member of SECCCA.
18. Officers have also had concerns regarding the quality and relevance of some of the work undertaken by SECCCA in previous years. These projects included the first round of Asset Vulnerability Assessments (AVA's), Enhancing Community Resilience and Regional Community Climate Change Action Plan projects. Council provided various forms of support for these projects, however the projects did not achieve the expected outcomes.
19. In terms of financial implications of retaining the SECCCA membership, the following table sets out the costs over the three-year period (more detail can be found in the 'Governance Compliance' section below):

Cost Requirements	Currently Budgeted	Not Currently Budgeted	Total
Membership Fee	\$128,249		
Project Contribution		\$225,000	
Staff Salary Cost	\$55,000		
Total	\$183,249	\$225,000	\$408,249

20. If Council is to continue its membership, it will need to allocate an additional \$225,000 in the budget over the three-year period. This amount will need to be funded from another existing Council budget, potentially being the capital works budget.
21. Alternatively, Council could invest the currently budgeted membership fee (\$128,249) and staff time into sustainability projects that would directly benefit Greater Dandenong. This could include activities such as design or implementation work to transition existing Council facilities from gas to renewable electricity, installing solar panels on Council buildings, increasing Council's tree planting program, and/ or supporting our residential and business sector to adapt to the challenges of climate change.



22. The following table sets out a summary of the benefits and challenges of retaining the SECCCA membership:

Benefits	Challenges
On-going access to SECCCA's regional data, information and projects, where relevant.	Lack of relevance / benefit of the key projects set out in the Strategic Plan to Greater Dandenong.
On-going support from SECCCA with climate change action. If Greater Dandenong relevant projects were proposed, this could improve efficiencies, and the direct cost and staffing required by Council.	Significant additional cost for membership resulting from the new Strategic Plan, which is not currently fully budgeted, and is not considered to be value for money.
Potential additional advocacy and grant funding opportunities, where successfully undertaken by SECCCA.	Historical concerns regarding the quality and relevance of work undertaken by SECCCA.
Recent staffing changes with the appointment of a new CEO, and the inclusion of a Communications Lead are positive improvements, and may lead to improved outcomes moving forward.	Staff time and cost required to support SECCCA activities is not considered to be value for money.

23. While it is acknowledged that it is challenging in a regional alliance to develop projects that are of benefit to all members, officers do not consider that priority projects provide enough benefit to the City of Greater Dandenong for it to justify the financial costs and staff time required to support SECCCA.
24. It is also acknowledged that a further Council withdrawing from SECCCA (Frankston recently withdrew) would create financial challenges for SECCCA and remaining member councils.
25. However, given the lack of relevance to the City of Greater Dandenong of the nine priority projects, the lack of benefit that Council has obtained from SECCCA activities in recent years, and the significant additional cost, it is recommended that Council ceases its SECCCA membership on 1 July 2025, and rather focuses on its own climate change priorities, and continues to participate in GSEM climate change initiatives.

Governance Compliance

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

26. This item affects 2 x EFT. If Council was to continue its membership, approximately 16 hours per EFT per month would need to continue to be allocated to SECCCA. It is also important to note that should the projects have been of more relevance to Council, this is likely to result in additional officer time being required.



Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

27. The financial implications associated with this report involve a cost in the 2025/26 financial year of \$116,699, \$75,000 of which is not currently within Council's annual budget. The membership fee then increases by CPI each year.
28. As such, if Council was to determine to continue its SECCCA membership past 1 July 2025, it will need to allocate an additional \$75,000 in the annual budget for the next three years of the Strategic Plan (\$225,000 over the three years). This amount would need to be drawn from a separate existing budget, potentially the capital works budget, meaning a reduction in capital works able to be undertaken. In total, Council would need to allocate \$353,249 over the next three years in the budget.
29. In addition, the 16 hours required by two staff members per month to support SECCCA activities would total approximately \$55,000 in salary costs over the three years.
30. Overall, Council would need to allocate approximately \$408,249 to SECCCA activities over the next three years.

Asset Implications

31. This item does not affect any existing assets.

Legal/Risk Implications

32. There are no legal / risk implications relevant to this report.

Environmental Implications

33. While it is acknowledged that SECCCA's primary focus is to improve the environment of our region, it is considered that by Council focusing directly on its own climate change/ environmental priorities, it can have a greater positive impact on the environment of Greater Dandenong.

Consultation

34. There was no requirement for community consultation.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

35. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
- Sustainable environment.
36. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
- A green city committed to a sustainable future.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

37. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
- Climate Change and Sustainability.

SECCCA 2024-28 Strategic Plan: Priority project alignment with CGD

SECCCA Strategic Plan Priority Project	Funding Source	What's involved?	Officer comment
Asset Vulnerability Assessments (AVA) Phase 2: Support	Project Fees	<p>Following the development of the AVAs to assist councils in understanding the impacts of climate change on their assets, Phase 2 seeks to support capacity building among councils to ensure the value of the AVA project is maximised.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to five online workshops on topics as requested. 2. One-on-one support from expert consultants. 3. Evaluation report to track progress, update methodologies/AVA toolkit and recommendations for next steps. 	<p>Not supported. The AVAs undertaken in Phase 1 related to coastal inundation and bushfire, both of which are unlikely to impact CGD. Also, the software utilised is not compatible with CGD programs, which is a barrier to utilisation of the data.</p> <p>In 2021 an additional vulnerability assessment in relation to heatwave vulnerability was undertaken as a SECCCA led project, however the project was stalled. After some time, the project was ultimately passed back to Council to be expedited due to financial reasons. This project was separate to the Phase 1 scope.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the project seeks to support Council's in implementing the findings of Phase 1. As no new case studies are proposed in Phase 2, and there is no intent from SECCCA to revisit the software utilised to make it more accessible to member councils, this is not considered beneficial to CGD. CGD has been progressively undertaking its own AVAs separate to SECCCA, to provide us with the relevant information.</p>
BriefEzy	Project Fees	<p>The existing BriefEzy tool outlines the sustainability requirements for council building projects. It is now proposed to expand the existing tool to include civil works, improve usability through a web interface and promote it to new councils.</p>	<p>Not supported. CGD have not used this tool due to Council's existing Sustainable Buildings Policy and specifications, which effectively replicate the BriefEzy tool. This includes current work to expand its focus to include ESD requirements for civil and open space projects.</p>

<p>Electric Vehicle Heavy Duty Truck feasibility investigation</p>	<p>TBC – No funding allocated</p>	<p>Investigate opportunities for transitioning to electric or hydrogen heavy-duty vehicles in council fleets, or council contractors' fleets and joint procurement.</p>	<p>Not supported. In line with Council's fleet transition plan, this is not of benefit to CGD in the next four years. Council's focus is on transitioning our passenger fleet at this time. Technology is still some time away from being able to effectively transition heavy vehicles, so officers do not believe it is an appropriate time to invest money into this type of project. This project has not been allocated funds and is on hold.</p>
<p>Business Energy Support Program</p>	<p>Project Fees</p>	<p>Provide engagement across business sectors to reduce emissions to net zero by 2050. This will include the employment of 1EFT officer, and promotion of various energy efficiency measures through SECCCA.</p>	<p>Principle supported. The project appears to be in progress, however it is unclear how much progress SECCCA has made. The project is supported in principle, however its cost is not and there appears to be minimal benefit for CGD.</p> <p>There is merit in Greater Dandenong prioritising the engagement of industrial partners given the sector is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. However, to be effective, this project would require more than 1EFT to be provided by SECCCA, given it will be covering the business sectors across all eight member Council areas. 1EFT is highly unlikely to be able to undertake a level of engagement that would result in meaningful change and outcomes.</p> <p>Council currently undertakes some engagement with our business sector in regards to promoting energy efficiency measures, however there are opportunities through existing connections (SEBN/ SEMMMA etc.) to improve this, which would result in a much better outcome for CGD.</p>
<p>Residential Resilience Ratings Pilot</p>	<p>Project Fees</p>	<p>Partner with the Resilient Building Council to trial a</p>	<p>Not supported. This project has focused on bushfire risk. Greater Dandenong has low 'traditional'</p>

		resilience rating tool to assess and rate a home's ability to withstand climate impacts along with recommendations for improvements.	bushfire risk, so the application of the project's findings will be limited to Council.
Small Business Climate Adaptation Toolkit	TBC – No funding allocated	Upscale existing pilot toolkit. Undertake a full trial with many more businesses utilising the toolkit and participating in case studies.	<p>Not supported. The development of the toolkit has been completed, and SECCCA are seeking to expand the application of the toolkit to large businesses.</p> <p>The project is not supported as there has been minimal uptake of the existing toolkit to date. Whilst the project has merit given the scale of climate risks to big business and volume of large businesses in Greater Dandenong, officers are wary of creating another item that is not well utilised due to resourcing pressures.</p> <p>For this project to be effective with SECCCA, greater staffing resources would be required. Council has made some progress in this space outside of SECCCA and would like to continue this as a priority moving forward.</p> <p>This project has not been allocated funds and is on hold.</p>
Climate Risk Program	Project Fees	Enable council executives and managers to understand the levels of risk to their operations and how to respond to mitigate climate risk.	<p>Not supported. Greater Dandenong has already completed a lot of work in this space and is ahead of other Councils.</p> <p>Furthermore, the objectives for this project are unclear and appear not to build on work Council has already completed.</p>
Carbon Sink Project	TBC – No funding allocated	Consider the opportunities for SECCCA members to be either purchasers of regional carbon offsets, facilitators of regional offsets or	<p>Not supported. Modelling demonstrated the opportunities for CGD were effectively not viable (due to our more constrained land usage), and we would need to partner with other councils with more green space (such as Bass</p>

		direct generators.	Coast or Mornington). This project would have very limited direct benefit to CGD. This project has not been allocated funds and is on hold.
Financing Flood Resilient Infrastructure	Grant Funded	<p>SECCCA were awarded a \$4.2 million grant to fund this project from the Disaster Ready Fund.</p> <p>The project will identify critical infrastructure at risk from extreme flood events and prepare recommendations for funding models to reduce climate risk and improve cost-benefits to the community and council.</p> <p>Following the development of case studies, the project will produce a governance model and communications plan for participating Councils to attract investment for critical infrastructure.</p>	<p>Principle supported. Greater Dandenong has not been chosen to be a 'participating' Council due to limited flood risks in comparison with other member Councils. As an observer Council the benefit of this project is low.</p> <p>Council is already working in partnership with Melbourne Water to update flood modelling and identify flood risks for the water catchment. SES has also released revised flood risks which are relevant to the Dandenong catchment.</p> <p>This project is also linked to the Asset Vulnerability Assessments which, for Greater Dandenong are not relevant to this project.</p>

SECCCA STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028



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

Disclaimer and Copyright

The South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) Strategic Plan 2024-2028 has been prepared by SECCCA to set directions for SECCCA that respond to member councils needs to activate a scaled response to emission reduction and climate adaptation. Prepared by Helen Steel, SECCCA Chief Executive Officer – admin@seccca.org.au.

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The Climate Emergency We All Face



Increasing impacts of climate change and nature degradation.

In Southeast Melbourne we are experiencing:

- More extreme weather events.
- Increased average maximum temperatures.
- More heatwaves leading to extreme heat and extreme fire.
- Increased flooding extent and depth due to severe storm cells or prolonged periods of high rainfall.
- More coastal inundation and sea level rise due to increased severity and frequency of coastal storm surge events.

The world is not on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

- There are growing concerns on Australia's ability to meet its climate change commitments as a party to the Paris Agreement, and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

SECCCA councils have declared a climate emergency and seek urgent action.

- Each council is responding with their own plans and actions, identifying it as the single biggest risk to their communities.
- SECCCA is an Alliance of eight councils that brings a 20-year track record of collective action allowing councils to deliver more, and respond faster, through economies of scale and enhanced capability.

SECCCA is uniquely positioned to amplify each individual council's response.

- SECCCA is owned and operated by member councils, but given its operating model, is agile and able to act at scale.
- SECCCA is a trusted partner in supporting climate action in the communities that are affected by climate change.

SECCCA's imperative is to accelerate climate action, so that by 2028:

- Southeast Melbourne councils and communities (households, businesses, and emitting industries) will have shifted their behaviours to meet evidence-based targets.
- All member councils are ready for the risks and opportunities that climate change will bring to the communities, people, and biodiversity of Southeast Melbourne.
- Climate transition activities are underway and real-world impact measures are improving.
- Southeast Melbourne leads Australia in climate action and continues to innovate.

A Message from the CEO

It is a privilege to share with you the SECCCA Strategic Plan 2024-2028, which sets the direction for our organisation's activities over the next four years.

As a council owned and operated organisation, SECCCA is dedicated to supporting and advocating for councils with respect to reducing emissions and building climate resilience in the southeast.

As my first strategic plan as CEO, I have been struck by the notable change in the context in which South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) and our member councils are operating. Since SECCCA's last strategic plan was developed in 2021, all SECCCA members, with elected council representatives, have declared a climate emergency, acknowledging the existential threat that climate change presents and the need to urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Most recently, the Australian Government introduced mandatory climate-related financial disclosures for large entities and corporations. Although not yet applying to the local government sector, this marks a significant shift in the way Australian businesses consider their climate-related risks and greenhouse gas emissions.

SECCCA member councils are increasingly aware of the effect of climate-related events on local economies and the financial impact to council infrastructure and the ability to deliver services.

I also believe it is important for SECCCA to adopt national and global best practice standards when reporting on our work, to ensure we are contributing towards the collective goals. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) were adopted by all United Nations members in 2015, providing a roadmap for peace and prosperity for people and planet.

The SDG goals and related indicators have become a global standard reporting mechanism to track improvements as we progress towards a healthy and thriving world, including on climate change and environmental degradation. SECCCA intends to track our activity against a number of these goals to inform members and stakeholders of the Alliance's collective progress towards these objectives.

The priorities outlined in this plan are designed to strategically support and amplify each council's response to the climate crisis, leveraging SECCCA's unique ability to provide efficiencies and economies of scale in collective action. They focus on activities that will better equip our members to adapt and build climate resilience within their councils, to improve the region's response to the climate crisis. They will enable us to deliver on our mission to ensure a vibrant, prosperous, and climate-safe Southeast Melbourne.

I am excited about the opportunities presented to us and invite other councils, all tiers of government, business and expert organisations to join with us to deliver the best possible outcomes for our region as we transition toward a net zero future.

Helen Steel





SECCCA's Role and Activities for 2024-2028

To deliver on our ambition and meet the needs of our council members, SECCCA has identified three areas of strategic priority: Convene, Catalyse and Champion. These priorities will be underpinned by an effective communications approach.

SECCCA's Strategic Priorities

Convene

- Develop a common agenda
- Act as thought leader to members & stakeholders
- Upskill, mentor and train council on best practice
- Identify risks and opportunities
- Advance and connect community of practice
- Foster peer-to-peer learning to accelerate outcomes

Catalyse

- Drive collective action across members, stakeholders and all levels of government
- Create innovative practice: tools, projects, support
- Support councils to embed and maximise benefit from SECCCA assets
- Deliver key regional projects (see key projects section)

Champion

- Elevate the voice of SECCCA LGAs in policy development and act as a thought leader
- Advocate for the common agenda - regulation, legislation, incentives
- Represent SECCCA at critical bodies and meetings
- Ensure public advocacy needs are met

Supporting Communication Activity

- Improved evaluation and reporting on SECCCA projects and activities
- Narrative development and supporting message delivery through toolkits/resources and external commentary on critical topics
- Partner with council communications teams to motivate behaviour change and to support the shift of the public narrative from threat to opportunity
- Communicate with key stakeholders to advance SECCCA mission and strategic priorities
- Deliver communications templates e.g. community resilience communications plan template

These three priorities represent the core business of SECCCA.

SECCCA Purpose, Vision and Mission

It has never been more important for the Alliance to work together to drive scalable solutions across the region.

As 2030 national climate targets approach, we recognise that the 2024-2028 timeframe is the most critical response window the Alliance has faced.

By 2028, SECCCA would like to see a world where everyone who lives, works or has influence in Southeast Melbourne believes net zero is achievable and are acting accordingly. SECCCA believes that the Alliance can contribute to this future by operating with agility, at scale and through collective action.

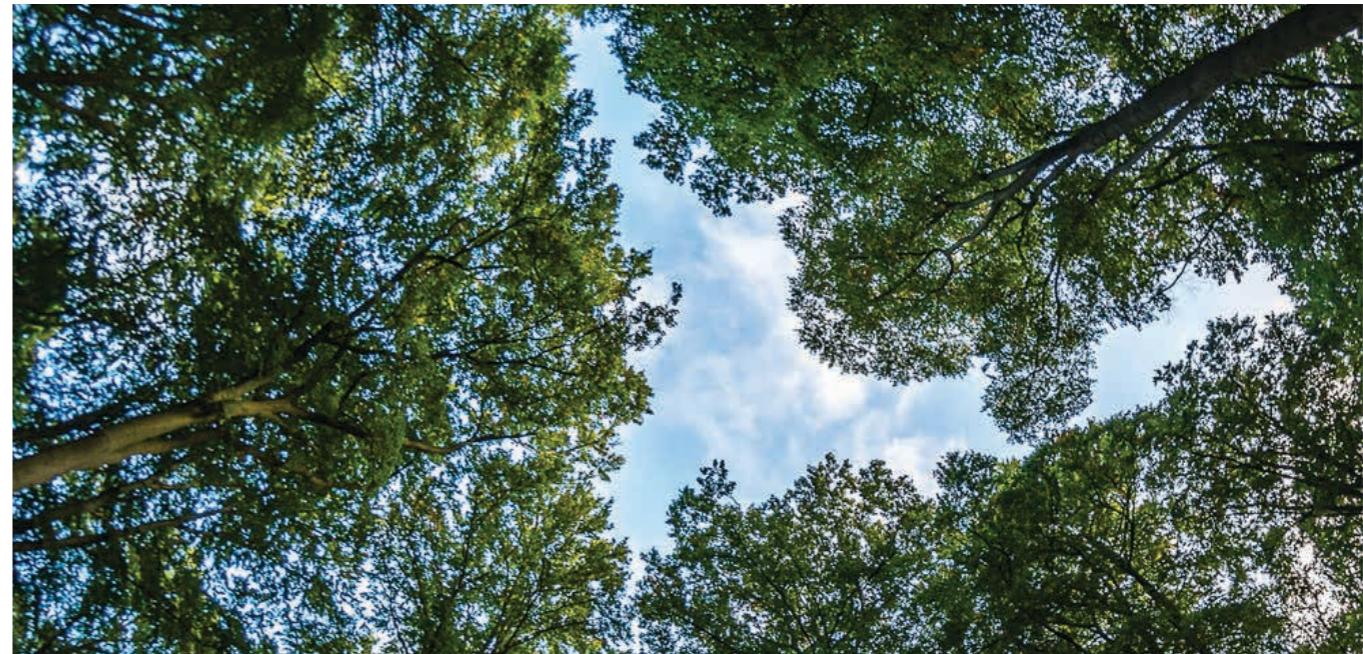
Our **ambition** is that by 2028 all Southeast Melbourne councils are:

- Effectively managing the risks of climate change for their communities and nature.
- Seizing the opportunities of climate change across assets and partnerships e.g. jobs and skills.
- On track to achieve evidence-based targets in climate, biodiversity, and related measures.

Purpose:
To accelerate climate action for Southeast Melbourne

Vision:
A vibrant, prosperous and climate-safe Southeast Melbourne

Mission:
Activate a scaled response to emissions reduction and climate adaptation



SECCCA Workstreams

SECCCA has developed nine workstreams, or areas of focus, to shape our response to the climate crisis for 2024-2028 and to enable a vibrant, prosperous and climate-safe Southeast Melbourne.

1

Leaders Forums

- Convening stakeholders across the region annually to unite perspectives and ensure a cohesive, regional response across council & community
- Ongoing CEO and council executive engagement

4

Catalyse Emissions Reduction

- Deliver regional projects including:
 - Business energy support
 - BriefEzy

7

Evaluation and measurement

- Incorporate evaluation, measurement and reporting frameworks for SECCCA and projects
- Align reporting with global, federal and state indicators

2

Roundtables

- Convening key stakeholders, partners and member councils on emerging issues that impact community e.g. climate and biodiversity

5

Catalyse Climate Adaptation

- Deliver regional projects including:
 - Asset vulnerability assessment (AVA)
 - Climate risk program
 - Small business climate adaptation toolkit
 - Residential resilience ratings pilot project
- Seek additional opportunities including National Disaster Ready Fund (NDRF) grant project

8

Collaboration and partnerships

- Partner and collaborate with groups, business and the philanthropic sector who align with our mission
- Support other stakeholder's work on emissions reduction and climate adaptation

3

Advocacy

- Championing the emissions reduction and climate adaptation needs of Southeast Melbourne with local council, state and federal governments

6

Communications

- Develop and deliver a communication plan to improve delivery and understanding of emissions reduction and climate adaptation
- Develop a community resilience communications plan template to assist councils in delivering climate change communication to community

9

Innovation

- Attend forums and integrate into the climate change system across Victoria and Australia
- Best practice identification and upskilling
- Pilot new innovative projects

SECCCA Key Projects

SECCCA has a strong track record in delivering scalable and innovative projects, roadmaps, and tools, for deployment by member councils.



The specific projects identified for delivery in 2024-2028 offer practical programs, tools, and insights to actively reduce emissions and increase resilience for the region.

SECCCA has selected these projects using an extensive consultation process, ensuring alignment with Council's climate change objectives and SECCCA's purpose, vision, and mission.

This list of Key Projects is not inclusive of any future opportunities that may arise during the strategic timeframe.

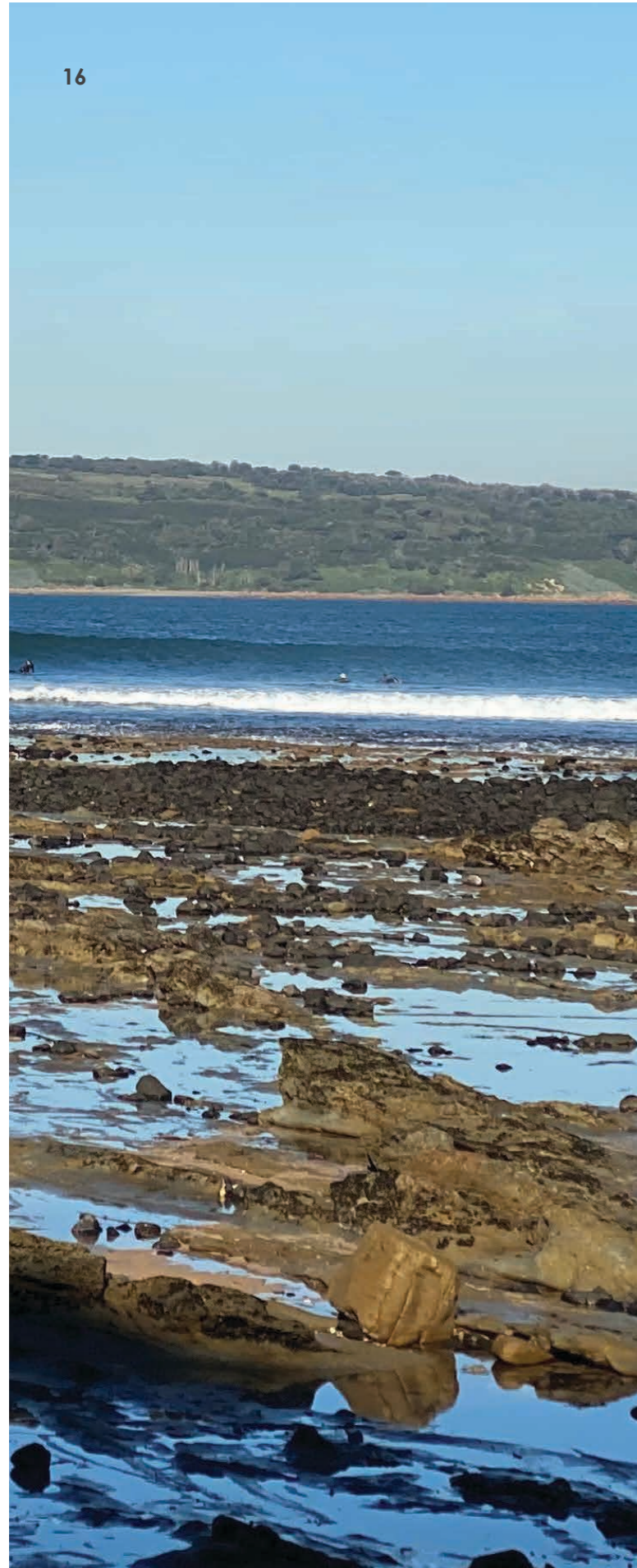


Key 2024-08 Projects

1. Asset Vulnerability Assessment Phase 2 Support
2. BriefEzy
3. EV/Hydrogen Heavy Duty Truck Investigation*
4. Business Energy Support Project
5. Residential Resilience Ratings Pilot Project
6. Small Business Climate Adaptation Toolkit*
7. Climate Risk Project
8. Carbon Sink Project*
9. Financing Flood Resilient Infrastructure^

* Subject to external funding

^ Subject to funding from the National Disaster Ready Fund



SECCCA Supporting Strategies and Plans

These core strategic priorities collectively aim to create the conditions required to advance SECCCA's common agenda and deliver on the Alliance's collective ambition.



Communications plan that will outline how the enhanced convene, catalyse, and champion approaches will be implemented.

- An overall communications strategy to magnify receptivity and accelerate impact of activities. This will include internal and external communications. Thought leadership, public communication and how SECCCA can support council communications teams will also be included in this plan.
- Convening focus for 2024-2025 covering key topics of interest to enable councils to improve practice and better navigate upcoming requirements and opportunities.



A prioritised advocacy plan and approach to improve policy and regulation that supports a net zero transition and climate resilience.

- The identification of natural partners, who have shared goals and ambitions and may be able to support the delivery of the strategic plan. These may be commercial or non-traditional stakeholders within and outside the SECCCA region.



A risk assessment and mitigation approach to help councils optimise their climate response plans.

- Identification of climate related risks across council assets and communities.
- Best practice mitigation and opportunity exploration for climate adaptation.



An updated measurement and evaluation framework to demonstrate the impact of SECCCA's work and projects.

- A baseline measurement process, alignment of indicators that show real world impact with global and local frameworks, and development of framework for future evaluation.
- Retrospective evaluation process, demonstrating the impact of SECCCA's work over the last 20 years.

Measuring our Impact

SECCCA's Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals

The priorities outlined in SECCCA's strategic plan resonate with the ambition of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), reinforcing the commitment to a better future for people and the planet.

These global goals, adopted by all UN member states in 2015, aim to create a more sustainable and equitable world by 2030.

The SDGs consist of 17 interconnected objectives designed to promote peace, prosperity, and environmental stewardship. While they are not legally binding, they serve as a valuable framework for measuring progress across environmental, economic, and community dimensions.

SECCCA will assess and measure the impact of its initiatives against specific SDG targets and indicators. By doing so, SECCCA will contribute to the broader global effort to address critical challenges.

SECCCA's work aligns with several SDGs including:

SDG 7:
Affordable and Clean Energy

SDG 9:
Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

SDG 11:
Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 13:
Climate Action



Appendix

SECCCA's Values

SECCCA's values are critical to how the strategic plan will be delivered.

These values guide the behaviour of the Alliance, members and the dedicated SECCCA team.

These values alongside our purpose guide our decision-making and enable the Alliance to navigate competing priorities and allocate resources effectively.



Committed to Community

We work with a community-first mindset, ensuring a just transition, and climate safe region for our communities and nature



Grounded in Evidence

We seek knowledge and insights to inform rational evidence-based decision-making so we can offer better paths for councils and communities



Act with Courage

We are steadfast in our commitment to act now to protect the health and wellbeing of our community and nature, being courageous today for a resilient tomorrow



Deliver through Collaboration

We collaborate and consult with stakeholders to magnify the impact of our work and we share generously to widen our impact beyond our region

SECCCA Strategy on a Page



Conclusion

SECCCA enables our council members to respond to the climate emergency through economies of scale and enhanced capability in order to accelerate climate action for Southeast Melbourne.

We feel confident that our strategic plan provides a pathway to effectively navigate the risks and capitalise on the opportunities that will be encountered as SECCCA delivers on its vision to enable a vibrant, prosperous and climate-safe Southeast Melbourne.

Further Information

South East Councils Climate Change Alliance

Email: admin@seccca.org.au
www.seccca.org.au





4.3.3 Response to Notice of Motion No.3 - Opening Councillor Briefing Sessions to the Public

Responsible Officer: Manager Governance, Legal & Risk
Attachments: 1. Draft Public Briefing Protocol [4.3.3.1 - 5 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES** the introduction of open online Councillor Briefing Sessions in New South Wales (NSW) and Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Victoria. These sessions aim to improve information dissemination, public transparency, and community engagement;
2. **MONITORS** the implementation of these aforementioned sessions for six (6) months and provide a report to Council by the end of November 2025. Based on the findings, consider implementing livestreaming Councillor Briefing Sessions in 2026, subject to budget capacity;
3. **DEVELOPS** guidelines and protocols for managing the livestreaming process, including handling confidential information and ensuring all participants are aware of the protocols;
4. **ENSURES** accessibility by making Council livestreams easily accessible on various devices and platforms;
5. **PROVIDES** training and support to Councillors and staff to ensure they are comfortable with livestreaming technology and understand the protocols; and
6. **REGULARLY MONITORS** and evaluate the effectiveness of the livestreaming initiative, gathering feedback from the community and making adjustments as needed.

Executive Summary

1. A Notice of Motion was adopted at the Council Meeting on 10 February 2025, calling for a report on livestreaming Councillor Briefing Sessions.
2. This report considers Council's legislative and policy obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Background

3. Councillor Briefing Sessions are a common means by which Councillors, not just in Victoria but more broadly, ask questions of clarification and seek information about matters that are likely to come before the Council for a decision.
4. They exist to provide information to Councillors to assist with the performance of their role.
5. They are not a decision-making forum and as a result, the Governance Rules do not apply however the Councillor Model Code of Conduct applies.



6. The Councillor Briefing Sessions may be used by the Administration to get an understanding of options and issues that Councillors may seek to consider as part of a strategy or policy development process.
7. Debate on a matter is not permitted as debate should take place in a Council Meeting.
8. The custom and practice of Councillor Briefing Sessions at Council is similar to other Victorian local governments.

Key Issues and Discussion

Opportunities for public engagement and input into Council decisions

9. Council has made a commitment to thorough, consistent, and genuine community engagement that will inform responsible decision making for the benefit of the community. Council recognises that decision making, and service provision are enhanced when the community has an opportunity to provide input and express its expectations, aspirations, and ideas.
10. To ensure that engagement is best practice, Council adopted a Community Engagement Policy which outlines Council's commitment to thorough, consistent, and genuine community engagement that will inform responsible decision making for the benefit of the community.
11. In addition to the broad range of engagement activities conducted through the framework of the Community Engagement Policy, there are also opportunities to input into Council's decision-making processes, including:
 - a. Contacting any Councillor through publicly available phone and email addresses,
 - b. Submitting and asking questions at every Council Meeting,
 - c. Contacting or being part of one of Council's Advisory Committees and/or Community Reference Groups, and
 - d. On Council's various social media channels.

Changes to Councillor Briefing Sessions in other jurisdictions

12. In 2024, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, in response to a Notice of Motion, resolved to open Councillor Briefing Sessions to the public. A proposal to achieve this was the subject of community consultation which ended in late February 2025 and the outcome of that process is not yet known.
13. Mornington Peninsula Shire Council have developed a protocol to give effect to the abovementioned 2024 resolution, in which a distinction is made between a Councillor Briefing Session and a workshop, noting that the workshop will not be made open to the public.
14. The CEO, in consultation with the Mayor, is responsible for deciding whether an item or matter will be presented and discussed at a Councillor Briefing Sessions or at a workshop. There is a provision to ensure confidential or sensitive information remains protected and is not available to the public.
15. In 2024, the NSW State Government announced a series of proposed changes to the legislated framework and associated processes around how Council Meetings and Councillor Briefing Sessions will be conducted. One of the proposals is to require local governments to conduct their Councillor Briefing Sessions as open meetings.



16. Feedback on this proposal closed in late February 2025, and the NSW State Government will provide further details on the consultation process's outcome. However, it is clear that the intent of the State is for matters to be dealt with in '*formally constituted committee meetings*' which is more akin to a Council Meeting.

Considerations for livestreaming Councillor Briefing Sessions

17. As noted above, Councillor Briefing Sessions are a common means by which local governments, not just in Victoria but more broadly, can ask questions of clarification and seek information about matters that are likely to come before the Council for a decision. They exist to provide information to Councillors to assist with the performance of their role.
18. Since the implementation of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the adoption of the Governance Rules and the Community Engagement Policy, there are increased opportunities for the community to input into Council decision making. Further, Council Meetings are open to the public and livestreamed. The papers provided to Councillors are also made available to the public, except when the matter is confidential. Councillors are accessible to the community individually and collectively.
19. Training and support for Councillors and staff would be required, prior to any change, to ensure understanding of the livestreaming technology and meeting protocols in the new operating environment. In addition, administrative changes would be required to internal processes to ensure the integrity of the Councillor Briefing Session agenda items.
20. Considering the increased responsibilities regarding psychological safety in the workplace, Occupational Health and Safety implications must be considered in terms of public criticism of Councillors and Officers. This may result in requests for meetings outside the structured Councillor Briefing Sessions which would not be an effective use of resources and runs counter to the purpose and intent of the Councillor Briefing Sessions where all Councillors attend and participate.

Human Resource Implications (consider Workforce Planning and Service Statements)

21. Implications would be an increase the current workload of the Governance, IT and Communication departments dependant on the frequency of Councillor Briefings and Council Meetings.

Financial/Asset Resource Implications (consider Service Statements, Budget, Long Term Financial Strategy and Asset Plan)

Operating Budget Implications

22. There will be financial implications in terms of training, staffing costs and system changes.

Asset Implications

23. This item increases the use of council assets. The ongoing maintenance costs have been assessed and can be included in operating and resource costings.

Legal/Risk Implications

24. There are several risks including failure to consider and determine the impacts experienced by Mornington Peninsula Shire Council and NSW government. From an administration perspective, there is risk associated with failing to allow adequate time to develop and implement required change management plans across Governance, IT and Communications. E.g. amended governance protocols to ensure the protection of confidential and sensitive information during livestreamed Councillor Briefing Sessions.
25. The upside risks associated with transitioning to livestreaming Councillor Briefing Sessions include increased transparency, leading to increased community trust.



Environmental Implications

26. There are no environmental implications relevant to this report.

Community Consultation

27. Community consultation will occur in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Links to Community Vision, Council Plan, Strategy, Notice of Motion

28. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:

- Safe and Peaceful Community
- Embrace diversity and multiculturalism

29. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:

- A socially connected, safe and healthy city.

30. This report relates to:

*"MINUTE No.60 Moved by: Cr Rhonda Garad. Seconded by: Cr Bob Milkovic
That Council officers will present a report to Council no later than two months for Councillors to consider, including details on the implementation, associated costs and the support made available for Council staff and Councillors to facilitate the transition to livestreaming the Councillor Briefing Sessions."*

Legislative and Policy Obligations

31. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied is the Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE COUNCIL
PROTOCOL FOR BRIEFINGS AND WORKSHOPS**

Approved on [##] 2024

[9582896:46220610_1]

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 23 July 2024, Council resolved that Briefings are to be made open to the public online.
- 1.2 This Resolution accords with Council's commitment to transparency, accountability, community engagement and principles of good governance.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Protocol is to give effect to the Resolution and outline principles for its implementation, while providing for the presentation and discussion of routine items, confidential information and sensitive information in forums that are closed to the public.

2. Definitions

Act means the *Local Government Act 2020*.

Briefing means a public meeting conducted under the auspices of the Council at which Council officers provide information to Councillors to assist with the performance of their role in relation to items of significant public interest (as determined by the CEO under clause 5). For the avoidance of doubt, a Briefing is not a Council meeting for the purposes of the Act or Council's Governance Rules.

CEO means the Chief Executive Officer of Council and any person acting in that position.

Chairperson means the Mayor or, if the Mayor is not available, the Deputy Mayor or, if the Deputy Mayor is not available, the Councillor chosen to be the Chairperson by a majority of the Councillors in attendance.

Confidential information has the same meaning as in the Act.

Sensitive information means information the disclosure of which would be contrary to the public interest or to any applicable legal obligation.

Workshop means an internal Council forum in which Councillors and Council officers may consider and discuss issues to assist Councillors to perform their role and that may include confidential information or sensitive information or are routine items that by their nature or level of public interest do not warrant public broadcasting.

3. Briefings

- 3.1 Briefings provide a valuable opportunity to enhance Council decision-making by allowing Councillors to become better informed on issues and seek further clarification about matters coming before Council for decision at a future Council meeting.
- 3.2 Briefings also provide a valuable opportunity to promote transparency and community engagement by allowing the preliminary discussions on items of significant public interest by Councillors to be available to the public online.
- 3.3 Importantly, Briefings are not used for:
 - 3.3.1 conducting the general business of Council or making decisions; or

- 3.3.2 considering and discussing confidential information or sensitive information.
 - 3.4 The Chairperson of a Briefing may give such directions as are necessary to promote its orderly conduct, including to:
 - 3.4.1 limit time for discussion on any item;
 - 3.4.2 require a participant to withdraw any inappropriate question, statement or comment; and
 - 3.4.3 call a person to order if their behaviour is disruptive or interferes with the conduct of the Briefing.
 - 3.5 Briefings will be made open to the public online in a manner determined by the CEO and Mayor.
-

4. Workshops

- 4.1 Workshops provide an opportunity for Councillors and Council officers to share information and to explore proposals that are in their preliminary stages before embarking on a more detailed assessment of them. They also promote learning outcomes for Councillors and Council officers in relation to items that may later come before Council for decision.
- 4.2 Like Briefings, Workshops are not used for conducting the general business of Council or making decisions.
- 4.3 Unlike Briefings, Workshops are internal forums and will not be made open to the public. Workshops will be used to discuss and explore matters, including matters which might be of significant public interest, which:
 - 4.3.1 require the presentation and discussion of confidential information and/or sensitive information, where the release of such information may be contrary to legislation, mislead the public or otherwise be contrary to the public interest;
 - 4.3.2 involve the presentation of information to Councillors for the purposes of initial, preliminary or exploratory discussion; or
 - 4.3.3 are routine in nature and do not affect the community, or otherwise due to their nature and level of public interest do not warrant public broadcasting.
- 4.4 As a general proposition, it is expected that most matters will be better suited to discussion at a Workshop rather than a Briefing, given the nature of information most commonly presented to and discussed by Councillors in these forums.
- 4.5 The Chairperson of a Workshop may give such directions as are necessary to promote its orderly conduct, including to:
 - 4.5.1 limit time for discussion on any item;
 - 4.5.2 require a participant to withdraw any inappropriate question, statement or comment; or
 - 4.5.3 call a person to order if their behaviour is disruptive or interferes with the conduct of the Workshop.

5. Setting the agenda for Briefings and Workshops

- 5.1 The CEO, in consultation with the Mayor, is responsible for:
- 5.1.1 deciding whether an item or matter will be presented and discussed at a Briefing or at a Workshop; and
 - 5.1.2 setting the agenda for Briefings and Workshops.
- 5.2 In making a decision under clause 5.1, the CEO may take into account any factor that they consider relevant, including but not limited to:
- 5.2.1 which forum is best suited to ensuring that the Mayor and Councillors are supported in the performance of their roles;
 - 5.2.2 which forum is best suited to ensuring that Council receives timely and reliable advice;
 - 5.2.3 the extent of public interest in an item and whether it is so significant as to warrant public broadcasting of the related discussion;
 - 5.2.4 whether an item for discussion may involve the presentation and discussion of confidential information or sensitive information; and
 - 5.2.5 the Public Transparency Policy adopted by Council and as amended from time to time.
- 5.3 In assessing under clause 5.2.3 whether there is significant public interest in an item, the CEO may have regard to any factor they consider relevant, including but not limited to:
- 5.3.1 the level of community involvement in or discussion about the item;
 - 5.3.2 the number of people within the Shire or elsewhere that may have an interest in or be affected by the item; and
 - 5.3.3 whether the item has strategic or general significance for the municipality or is of a more routine or typical nature.
- 5.4 The CEO will determine whether information to be presented in with an item is confidential information by assessing it against the definition of 'confidential information' in s 3(1) of the Act.
- 5.5 In assessing whether information to be presented with an item is sensitive information, the CEO may have regard to, among other factors:
- 5.5.1 the sensitivity of the information;
 - 5.5.2 whether the information comprises a draft or is otherwise no longer current;
 - 5.5.3 any adverse effect that releasing the information may have on the effectiveness of Council's decision-making processes;
 - 5.5.4 whether the information was provided to Council in confidence;
 - 5.5.5 whether the information is of a preliminary nature, such that its release might mislead the community with respect to Council's position on a matter or have an adverse effect on the economy of the municipal district;

- 5.5.6 whether public presentation and discussion of the information would prejudice discussions or negotiations between Council and any other party in relation to a contract, legal proceeding or any other matter; and
- 5.5.7 whether public presentation and discussion of the information would impair or otherwise impact on:
 - (a) Council's ability to obtain similar information in future;
 - (b) negotiations with respect to employment arrangements for Council officers; or
 - (c) defence, prosecution or settlement of legal proceedings.
- 5.6 For the avoidance of doubt, if information to be presented with an item is:
 - 5.6.1 confidential information, it will only be presented and discussed at a Workshop, no matter the level of public interest in an item; or
 - 5.6.2 sensitive information, may be presented and discussed at a Workshop, even if it is an item of significant public interest,unless Council resolves to be presented with and discuss the particular item in a Briefing.

6. Review

This Protocol will be reviewed 6 months after its initial approval, and every 12 months after that, unless it is revoked sooner.



4.3.4 Leave of Absence - Cr Rhonda Garad

Responsible Officer: Manager Governance, Legal and Risk
Attachments: Nil

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **APPROVES** a Leave of Absence to Councillor Rhonda Garad from 11 April 2025 to 4 May 2025.
2. **NOTES** Councillor Garad will not be utilising any Council resources during the Leave of Absence; and
3. **NOTES** Councillor Garad's apology for all Council Meetings, Councillor Briefing Sessions, Pre-Council Meetings and any other meetings scheduled to occur throughout the Leave of Absence.

Executive Summary

1. This report is submitted in conjunction with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and Council's Governance Rules which state that any Councillor may request a leave of absence in writing submitted to the Chief Executive Officer and state the dates they require the leave and the reason for which it is sought.

Background

2. Councillor (Cr) Rhonda Garad has been selected as the Greens' Party preferred candidate to contest the by-election for the Federal electoral seat of Bruce.
3. Cr Garad requests a Leave of Absence commencing 11 April 2025 to 4 May 2025.
4. During this Leave of Absence, Cr Garad will not use any Council equipment to ensure she runs her federal election campaign independently of Council.
5. Further, under section 35(4) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, Council must grant any reasonable request for leave.
6. This report is submitted in conjunction with Council's Governance Rules which state that any Councillor may request a leave of absence in writing submitted to the Chief Executive Officer or Mayor and state the dates they require the leave and the reason for which it is sought.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

7. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
 - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*.



4.3.5 List of Registered Correspondence to Mayor and Councillors

Responsible Officer: Manager Governance, Legal & Risk

Attachments: 1. List of Registered Correspondence to Mayor and Councillors [4.3.5.1 - 2 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That the listed items for the period 17 March 2025 to 4 April 2025 provided in Attachment 1 to this report be received and noted.

Executive Summary

1. Subsequent to past Council resolutions in relation to the listing of registered incoming correspondence addressed to the Mayor and Councillors, Attachment 1 to this report provides a list of this correspondence for the period 17 March 2025 to 4 April 2025.

Objective

CONNECTED. COLLABORATIVE. COMMUNITY.

Correspondences addressed to the Mayor and Councillors received between 17/03/25 & 04/04/25 - for officer action - total = 3

Correspondence Name	Correspondence Dated	Date Record Created	Objective ID	User Assigned
An email expressing concerns regarding Noble Park safety and homelessness.	18-Mar-25	18-Mar-25	fA344300	Mayor & Councillors Office
An email expressing community concerns regarding the approved waste transfer station in Hampton Park.	18-Mar-25	18-Mar-25	fA344249	Mayor & Councillors Office
An email addressing traffic safety concerns in Bangholme.	4-Apr-25	4-Apr-25	fA345700	Mayor & Councillors Office

NB: Users assigned may have changed by the time of the Council Meeting. Correct at time of report production only.

Objective

CONNECTED. COLLABORATIVE. COMMUNITY.

Correspondences addressed to the Mayor and Councillors received between 17/03/25 & 04/04/25 - for information only - total = 3

Correspondence Name	Correspondence Dated	Date Record Created	Objective ID	User Assigned
An invitation from Springvale Fire Brigade to the Mayor for the 2025 Brigade Annual Dinner.	19-Mar-25	19-Mar-25	A11877121	Mayor & Councillors Office
An email Newsletter from Australia Post regarding government affairs for April 2025.	1-Apr-25	1-Apr-25	A11899459	Mayor & Councillors Office
An invitation from ARVN Rangers Association of Victoria Australia to the Mayor for the ANZAC Day ceremony organised by Vietnamese Veterans.	3-Apr-25	3-Apr-25	A11905606	Mayor & Councillors Office

NB: Users assigned may have changed by the time of the Council Meeting. Correct at time of report production only.



4.3.6 Draft Minutes of Advisory Committee Meetings

Responsible Officer:	Executive Director Community Strengthening
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Draft Minutes of Positive Ageing Advisory Committee Meeting 13 February 2025 [4.3.6.1 - 2 pages]2. Draft Minutes of Disability Advisory Committee Meeting 17 February 2025 [4.3.6.2 - 3 pages]3. Draft Minutes of Arts Advisory Board Meeting 18 February 2025 [4.3.6.3 - 3 pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES** the draft Minutes of the meeting for the Positive Ageing Advisory Committee held on 13 February 2025 (per Attachment 1);
2. **NOTES** the draft Minutes of the meeting for the Disability Advisory Committee held on 17 February 2025 (per Attachment 2); and
3. **NOTES** the draft Minutes of the meeting for the Arts Advisory Board held on 18 February 2025 (per Attachment 3).

Executive Summary

1. At the Council meeting held 23 April 2018, Council resolved in part to *invite Advisory Committees and Reference Groups to submit meeting minutes for Council endorsement*. This resolution also allowed interested Councillors (and those that attend these Committees and Reference Groups) to speak to the meeting about items discussed at these meetings.
2. This report recommends that the draft Minutes of the following Advisory Committee meetings be noted by Council:
 - a) Positive Ageing Advisory Committee held on 13 February 2025 (Attachment 1),
 - b) Disability Advisory Committee held on 17 February 2025 (Attachment 2), and
 - c) Arts Advisory Board held on 18 February 2025 (Attachment 3).

Background

3. Greater Dandenong Council is represented on a wide range of Committees, Reference Groups and Advisory Groups which frequently reflect the interests of individual Councillors in serving the broader community in their role. A full listing of these appointments is confirmed each November at Council's Meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and is available via Council's website.
4. The resolution of Council made on 23 April 2018 provides for Minutes of meetings held by Advisory Committees or Reference Groups to be submitted to Council for information purposes and for noting. To ensure they are provided to Council in a timely manner, Minutes of these Advisory Committees or Reference Groups are submitted to Council typically in a draft form (in that they have not yet been adopted by the relevant Committee). If significant material changes occur when they are adopted by the Advisory Committee or Reference Group, then those particular Minutes would then be resubmitted to Council for noting.



5. As such, draft Minutes are provided as attachments to this report.
6. There are no financial implications associated with the development and submission of this report.

Links to Community Vision and Council Plan

7. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
 - Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
 - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
 - Mind, body and spirit.
 - Art and culture.
8. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
 - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
 - A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
 - A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods.
 - A city that supports entrepreneurship, quality education and employment outcomes.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

9. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
 - The Overarching Governance Principles of the *Local Government Act 2020*.
 - *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*.
 - Related Council Policies, Strategies or Frameworks.



Positive Ageing Advisory Committee Minutes

Date	Thursday 13 February 2025		
Time	1.30pm–3pm		
Venue	Springvale Community Hub Community Room 1 and Microsoft Teams		
Chair	Julie Klok		
Attendees	Christine Green, Jeanette Keane, Mark Osborne, Carol Drummond, Maria Erdeg, Manager Community Care (City of Greater Dandenong [CGD]), Coordinator Community Access (CGD), Positive Ageing Team Leader (CGD), Cr Melinda Lim (CGD), Open Space Contracts Coordinator (CGD), Team Leader Conservation & Horticultural Services (CGD)		
Apologies	Lauris Attard, Vinh-Quang Luong, Erica Moulang		
Minutes	Business Support Officer (CGD)		
	ITEM	ACTION	ACTION BY
1.	<p>Welcome - Acknowledgement of Country <i>We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respects to their Elders past and present.</i></p> <p><i>We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters and we also pay our respects and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their Elders present here today, in acknowledging their journey.</i></p>		
2.	<p>Business arising from previous minutes Update on investigations into fish in Wetlands Investigation is awaiting further feedback.</p> <p>December 2024 minutes were accepted – moved Jeanette Keane and seconded Carol Drummond.</p>	Provide updates.	Manager Community Care
3.	<p>Better Parks and Playground – Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve and Sense Trail</p> <p>Council has been awarded a grant of \$220,000 from the State Government Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) as part of their Better Parks and Playground program.</p> <p>The funding towards the revitalisation of Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve and Sense Trail in Springvale South aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Ecological Watering in Alex Wilkie • Improve accessibility and function of the existing open space • Conduct landscape improvements to the Sense Trail • Increase visitor attendance <p>The Parks Services Team presented the initial concept plan for feedback from the Committee including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding interpretive signage • Large clock signage at entrance to advise when the park closes – similar to the one at Wilson Botanic Park Berwick • Mini shuttle cart • Accessible car park and more car spaces • Advertise through brochures, community groups, networks, Council’s Living Well Newsletter/City News and schools 		



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QR codes to access multilingual audio and information <p>The Committee provided initial feedback on the needs of older people in open spaces. Community consultation is proposed in March and updates to be provided to the Committee.</p>	Provide updates to the Committee on Community consultation.	Parks Services Team
4.	<p>Social Connections</p> <p>The Positive Ageing Team Leader discussed with the Committee the activities and outings that were the most successful during 2024, and then led a discussion with the Committee on any suggestions for new activities and outings Positive Ageing could offer during 2025.</p> <p>The Committee members suggested a few new destinations and programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Springvale Steamers Railway Wiser Driver Program – car safety tips and planning for future driving as you become older Morning Melodies at the Arts Centre ‘Cultural Visits Tour’ similar to the Interfaith tours Cultural groups to meet and share their experiences Seniors Transport sessions – public transport education Day trips participants could have an option to meet at a train station, travel to a location to have lunch or morning tea in Council’s Community Bus which may help seniors gain confidence in utilising public transport into the future. <p>There was also a discussion about the possibilities of Council partnering with other local groups or businesses to offer new programs and activities.</p>	Provide any further suggestions for new activities or opportunities for partnering in the offering of new activities to the Positive Ageing Team Leader.	PAAC members
5.	<p>Government Online Apps</p> <p>Discussion was held on security requirements by various organisations to keep details secure and prevent unauthorised access to personal account information including myGov.</p> <p>The use of multi-factor authentication (MFA) of two or more actions to verify your identify such as a code sent by SMS text message adds an extra layer of protection against cybercriminals to take over your account.</p> <p>With a significant number of scams increasing, it is vital user awareness and education in mitigating many types of cyber threats.</p> <p>The Committee agreed cybersafety and password protection education programs in partnership with the Libraries Team would benefit community.</p>	Investigate possible education programs that could be offered in partnership with the Libraries Team.	Positive Ageing Team Leader
6.	<p>Other Business</p> <p>One of the PAAC members informed the Committee how the organisation he works for has created a Community Values Award to acknowledge and reward the valuable contributions individuals, communities and businesses.</p>	For noting.	Committee Members
Meeting Closed at 2.55pm			



Disability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes			
Date	Monday 17 February 2025		
Time	4pm–5.30pm		
Venue	Dandenong Civic Centre - 225 Lonsdale St, Dandenong Meeting Room 2NE/NW and Microsoft Teams		
Chair	Catherine Rampant		
Attendees	Norma Seip, Sharon Harris, Lionel Gee, Manager Community Care (City of Greater Dandenong [CGD]), Coordinator Community Access (CGD), Disability Planning Officer (CGD), Cr Melinda Yim (CGD), Open Space Contracts Coordinator (CGD)		
Apologies	Frank Cutuli, Deborah Lee, Tam Nguyen		
Minutes	Business Support Officer (CGD)		
	ITEM	ACTION	ACTION BY
1.	<p>Welcome - Acknowledgement of Country <i>We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respects to their Elders past and present.</i></p> <p><i>We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters and we also pay our respects and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders present here today, in acknowledging their journey.</i></p> <p>Due to the absence of the Chair, Catherine agreed to Chair this meeting.</p>		
2.	<p>Business arising from previous minutes Access Gate to All-Abilities Playground The Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK) operable latch system on two gates are working well. The community is encouraged to report any issues to Council via the Snap Send Solve App.</p> <p>Noble Park Community Centre (NPCC) Accessible Toilet A project officer has been appointed with initial planning to commence subject to Capitals Works budget.</p> <p>Drum Theatre Toilet doors opening outwards Further investigations are underway with relevant Council officers. Discussed high-visibility signage should be used to warn visitors to be cautious of doors that may open unexpectedly, and the area should be kept clear for safety and accessibility reasons.</p> <p>Accessibility viewing area Tet Lunar New Year Festival A Committee member raised the issue of no accessibility for wheelchair users to view the performances under the shaded stage at the Springvale Tet Lunar New Year festival event at the last Committee meeting.</p> <p>After discussions with the independent committee, this year's Tet Lunar New Year Festival had accessible space near the front of the stage available for community members.</p>	<p>For noting.</p> <p>For noting.</p> <p>Provide further update to Committee members once investigation is complete.</p> <p>For noting.</p>	<p>Manager Community Care</p>
3.	<p>Better Parks and Playground – Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve and Sense Trail Council has been awarded a grant of \$220,000 from the State Government Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) as part of their Better Parks and Playground program.</p>		



	<p>The funding towards the revitalisation of Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve and Sense Trail in Springvale South aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Ecological Watering in Alex Wilkie • Improve accessibility and function of the existing open space • Conduct landscape improvements to the Sense Trail • Increase visitor attendance <p>The Parks Services Team presented the initial concept plan for feedback from the Committee including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding interpretive signage through the reserve • Open green space for picnic rugs near the Education Centre • Open constantly over the weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sundays) as this is the pivotal time spent as a family • Advertising and marketing Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve • Interpretive signs on native plant and species of birds to encourage community members to learn as they move along the tracks • Accessible car park and more car spaces • Updating paths with compacted sand <p>The Committee provided initial feedback on the needs of people with a disability in outdoor spaces. Community consultation is proposed in March and updates to be provided to the Committee.</p>	<p>Provide updates to the Committee on outcomes of Community consultation.</p>	<p>Parks Services Team</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>International Day of People with a Disability (IDPwD) The Coordinator Community Access advised the IDPwD event held on Tuesday 3 December 2024 in Noble Park was a successful celebration with significant positive feedback received.</p> <p>Discussion was held on this year’s event planning including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially looking at another venue • Snorkel information for people of all ages and abilities <p>A Committee member wished to express her gratitude to Council’s Disability Inclusion Officer for all her hard work and dedication in planning a wonderful event for our inclusive and diverse community. All members of the DAC present agreed that Council’s Disability Inclusion Officer had done a wonderful job in organizing the IDPwD 2024 event.</p>	<p>Thank you to the Disability Inclusion Officer to acknowledge her work in organising the IDPwD event on behalf of the DAC.</p>	<p>Coordinator Community Access</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Disability Action Plan The Coordinator Community Access provided an update on the draft three open-ended questions for the new Disability Action Plan which are simple, short and sharp questions encouraging individuals to share their thoughts which provides richer insights and feedback.</p> <p>The timeframe for the community consultation will be shared in the coming weeks and will focus on the main issues and barriers for people with a disability. This will take a variety of forms including online and face to face and reaching out to various stakeholder groups.</p>	<p>Send a copy of the questions to the Committee for review.</p>	<p>Coordinator Community Access</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Disability matters/issues identified by the community</p>	<p>Develop an article for inclusion in</p>	



	<p>A Committee member raised concerns of community members engaging with her assistance dog and challenges when accessing taxis with refusal to transport her assistance dog.</p> <p>Assistance animals are specially trained to support and alleviate the barriers people with disability experience in daily activities.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed unlawful denial of access to places/transport is common for people with assistance animals, which may be due to lack of understanding about these access rights. It was agreed information and an article in Council's monthly News magazine on assistance animals should be developed to educate the community.</p> <p>A Committee member raised her concerns of the disappearance of the kangaroos at Dandenong Police Paddocks Reserve over the past few months as they were prominent wildlife at the reserve.</p> <p>A Committee member raised the issue with accessible toilets next to the indoor pool hall not closing properly.</p>	<p>Council's News magazine on Assistance Animals.</p> <p>Follow up with relevant Council department.</p> <p>Follow up with relevant Council department.</p>	<p>Coordinator Community Access</p> <p>Disability Planning Officer</p> <p>Disability Planning Officer</p>
<p>Meeting Closed at 5:35pm</p>			



Arts Advisory Board Meeting Minutes			
Date	Tuesday 18 February 2025		
Time	6pm–8pm		
Venue	Drum Theatre, Committee Room		
Chair	Leng Te		
Attendees	Leng Te (LT), Roh Singh (RS), Mish Eisen (ME), Emily Siddons (ES), Oz Malik (OM), Councillor Isabella Do (ID), Manager Creative and Engaged City, City of Greater Dandenong (CGD), Coordinator Experiences and Partnerships (CGD), Team Leader Programming and Cultural Development (CGD)		
Apologies			
Minutes	Venue Experience Officer (CGD)		
Item No	Item	Action	Actioned by
1.	Welcome - Acknowledgement of Country <i>"We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters and we also pay our respects and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their Elders present here today, in acknowledging their journey."</i>		
2.	Conflicts of Interest No conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda.		
3.	Arts Story ES shared insights from the ACMI Symposium on immersive experience and the role of arts in driving social discourse and change. Discussion points included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing entertainment with critical engagement The importance of maintaining meaningful, community-driven narratives within immersive projects and what is a nice and perfect immersive experience. Case study including Adrian Hong's research on immersive art practices and technology across theatre, game conventions and museums. 		
4.	Apologies N/A		
5.	Review of Minutes Previous Arts Advisory Board Meeting held on Tuesday 26 November 2024. No further action required. Moved: ES Seconded: ME		
6.	Service Update and Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upcoming programs The upcoming exhibition at Walker Street Gallery: Confluence by Dylan Singh and Little Projector Company HOME 2025 		



	<p>The exhibition is scheduled to open from 24 June to 26 September across multiple sites including Walker Street Gallery, Heritage Hill, Drum Theatre, and other public spaces across Central Dandenong. Council officer provided an update on program structure, audience engagement, and integration with public spaces via a walking tour and welcomed feedback from Board members regarding HOME map, day trips, visitor experience and logistics.</p> <p>Regarding visitor experience, the Board members suggested curated experiences, guided tours, interactive installations and wayfinding to maximise engagement. The discussion points included local audience, age range, bus capability, actual walking time, clusters of food stations and mini festival hubs, wayfinding, extended open hours, weather conditions and the potential of engaging Economic Development Team on working with local business. Also discussed were potential partnerships with local businesses to enhance visitor offerings.</p> <p>It was suggested to encourage both audiences from outside of Dandenong and within the City of Greater Dandenong including Keysborough and other surrounding suburbs.</p> <p>Promotions team is refining the promotional strategy to create a cohesive experience covering digitals, prints, screens, wayfinding and influencer campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights about the Drum and hubs; Fritz, a one-rabbit magic show; Of the Land on Which We Meet, a First Nation led circus, performance is embedded in Reconciliation. Film Screening of Barat Ali Batoor’s documentary and Our Beat are also planned. • Audience Engagement Research: Surveyed 300 participants, revealing that people in our community typically visit cultural venues as family units. The final analysis/report is expected in March 2025 and will be shared in the next meeting. 	<p>Finalise report and share with the Committee.</p>	<p>Council Officers</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Partnerships Update: <i>Swinburne University of Technology</i> Early-stage collaboration on digital screens across Dandenong, and student-led digital projects. A workshop has been conducted at Walker Street Gallery by Swinburne peer team and students in Screen and Media, for knowledge sharing and skills development in digital storytelling. A committee group was formed at Swinburne with culturally diverse members.</p> <p><i>RMIT Future Play Lab</i> MOU signed for a 2-year partnership emphasises the three key focuses: immersive public art, creative placemaking and exhibition collaborations.</p>		
<p>8.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Update: <i>PEP demolition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance issues identified for PEP; the building is not viable for continued use. The demolition will be scheduled soon, alternative programming spaces being explored. • Board members discussed the importance of decentralising cultural activities and programming beyond a single site. <p><i>Walker Street Gallery façade</i></p>		<p>Council Officers</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful Arts Community Workshop was conducted by Connection Arts Space and Council Officers, featuring significant community input for redesigning the exterior of Walker Street Gallery. The workshop focused on the design for the façade and signage colours, community involvement, and the integration of community garden beds/First Nation plantings. • Design finalisation by Connection Arts Space members is expected in March. Project completion is scheduled for mid-year. The outcome/design will be shared in the next meeting. 	Share design with the Committee.	
9.	<p>Working Group Chair Reports</p> <p><i>Public Arts Working group updates:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ME gave an update on mural and public art projects, including the commissioning process of Drum Façade and the substantial Keysborough public artwork. • Review of delayed Muderra Way due to Metro’s engineering/ OH&S requirements <p><i>Community Connection Working Group updates:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes of group members due to personal commitment • Discussion around the ideas of souvenirs; members shared ideas for different sites in Dandenong and different business models of merchandise in various settings. <p><i>Creative Infrastructure Working group update:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board members discussed the future focus following PEP demolition and the long-term strategic planning for cultural venue utilisation. 		
10.	<p>Arts Advisory Board Recruitment</p> <p>Another round of AAB recruitment will be in place late February–early March. Advertising channels are Council website, social media, local newspaper and arts networks. Current board members are welcome to re-apply. Selection considerations are around diversity, experience in community arts and strategic alignment.</p>	Finalise recruitment and share details with the Committee.	Council Officers
11.	<p>Sector Updates</p> <p>Art Tour Bus initiative: CGD team look forward to the potential integration with HOME 2025 programs and to coordinate with ACMI and local venue for future tours.</p>		
12.	<p>Other Business</p> <p>Not discussed.</p>		
13.	<p>Next Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 27 May, 6pm-8pm • Venue: To be confirmed, potentially Walker Street Gallery – Confluence exhibition 		



4.3.7 Draft Minutes of Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee (MAPSAAC) Meeting 11 February 2025

Responsible Officer: Executive Manager Strategy Growth & Advocacy

Attachments: 1. Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee MAPSAAC Minutes 11 Feb 2025 [4.4.3.1 - 7 Pages]

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

1. **NOTES** the draft Minutes of the meeting for the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee as provided in Attachment 1 to this report; and
2. **APPROVES** the Committee's recommendation for the Council to advocate for individuals considered unlawful citizens (undocumented citizens), supporting efforts to provide legal assistance, raise awareness, and promote fair treatment.

Executive Summary

1. At the Council meeting held 23 April 2018, Council resolved in part to *invite Advisory Committees and Reference Groups to submit meeting minutes for Council endorsement*. This resolution also allowed interested Councillors (and those that attend these Committees and Reference Groups) to speak to the meeting about items discussed at these meetings.
2. This report recommends that the draft Minutes of the Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 February 2025 as provided in Attachment 1 to this report be noted by Council.
3. That the recommendation of the Committee noted at section 5 of the Minutes be endorsed by the Council.

Background

4. Greater Dandenong Council is represented on a wide range of Committees, Reference Groups and Advisory Groups which frequently reflect the interests of individual Councillors in serving the broader community in their role. A full listing of these appointments is confirmed each November at Council's Meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and is available via Council's website.
5. The resolution of Council made on 23 April 2018 provides for Minutes of meetings held by Advisory Committees or Reference Groups to be submitted to Council for information purposes and for noting. To ensure they are provided to Council in a timely manner, Minutes of these Advisory Committees or Reference Groups are submitted to Council typically in a draft form (in that they have not yet been adopted by the relevant Committee). If significant material changes occur when they are adopted by the Advisory Committee or Reference Group, then those particular Minutes would then be resubmitted to Council for noting.
6. As such, draft Minutes are provided as Attachment 1 to this report.
7. There are no financial implications associated with the development and submission of this report.



Links to Community Vision and Council Plan

8. This report is consistent with the following principles in the Community Vision 2040:
 - Safe and peaceful community.
 - Education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.
 - Embrace diversity and multiculturalism.
9. This report is consistent with the following strategic objectives from the Council Plan 2021-25:
 - A socially connected, safe and healthy city.
 - A city that respects and celebrates diversity, our history and the arts.
 - A city of accessible, vibrant centres and neighbourhoods.
 - A Council that demonstrates leadership and a commitment to investing in the community.

Legislative and Policy Obligations

10. This report has considered Council's legislative and policy obligations (where applicable) as outlined in the Report Considerations section detailed in the front of this Agenda. The applicable obligations considered and applied are:
 - The Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020.
 - Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006.

Multicultural and People Seeking Asylum Advisory Committee (MAPSAAC) Minutes	
Date	11 February 2025
Time	9.30am-11.30am
Venue	Meeting Rooms 2-NW and 2-NE Dandenong Civic Centre (225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong Victoria 3175)
Chairperson	Kylie Reid (Chisholm Institute – Foundation College)
Attendees	Mayor Cr Jim Memeti (City of Greater Dandenong [CGD]), Ifrin Fitlock (Sisterworks), Peter McNamara (South East Community Links [SECL]), Meghan Brownbrooke (Life Without Barriers), Marziyah Razi (Settlement Service International [SSI]), Malkanthi Walton (South East Monash Legal Service), Chaw Po (Community Member), Riny R Kenyang (Department of Justice and Community Safety South East Metropolitan Region), Sarah Saberi (Victorian Afghan Association Network [VAAN]), Adwin Town (Voice of Outer South East), Abbas Amiry (Guest – NASAVic group [ASRC]), Oli Pajic (Chisholm Institute), Johny C. Mattom [MI Smart Life], Scot Walker (Guest – Emergency Management Coordinator CGD), Coordinator Community Advocacy (CGD), Community Development Support Officer (CGD).
Apologies	Jacque McBride (Monash Health), Diversity and Literacy Librarian (CGD), Jonathan Richards (Australian Red Cross), Sri Samy (Friends of Refugees)

Item No.	Item	Lead	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country and Introductions</p> <p><i>We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong People, and pay respects to their Elders past and present.</i></p> <p><i>We recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters and we also pay our respects and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their Elders present here today, in acknowledging their journey.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair and the Committee welcomed the new Mayor, Cr Jim Memeti to MAPSAAC. 	Chair	
2.	<p>Roundtable introductions</p> <p>Members were provided with an opportunity to introduce themselves to the group.</p>	Mayor & All	
3.	<p>Topic: City of Greater Dandenong emergency management and housing response during extreme weather events</p>	Guest Speaker Emergency Management Coordinator CGD	

<p>Emergency Preparedness Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Dandenong has developed plans for extreme heat, fire, floods, and storms, including detailed maps for flood-prone areas. • Information on these plans is available on the Council website, which supports multilingual accessibility with translation in 103 languages. • Promoted the Vic Emergency App and the BOM Weather App for real-time updates on emergencies and weather forecasts. • Traditional emergency response systems rely on 000 calls and first responders. • Council’s website provides information on emergency preparedness, covering topics such as heatwaves, storms, and recovery. • Hard copies of this resource are available for distribution, and organisations are encouraged to share them. <p>Insurance Challenges in the Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underinsurance is a significant issue, with over 50 per cent of homes affected by recent incidents lacking insurance coverage. • Many renters lack awareness about house and contents insurance, and landlords often carry only basic property insurance. • Suggestions were made to work with insurers and banks to promote affordable insurance solutions for renters and homeowners. <p>Webpages and Applications to visit or download –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vic Emergency home page and link at the bottom to download the app https://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/ - Council’s Emergency Management page https://www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/emergencies - Council’s Emergency Prepare website https://www.emergencyprepare.com.au/ - The BOM Weather app page http://www.bom.gov.au/app/ - Monash Health Emergency Departments https://monashhealth.org/patients-visitors/emergency-departments/ - Monash Health ED (Dandenong) live wait times https://monashhealth.org/patients-visitors/emergency-departments/dandenong-wait-time/ - Department of Health - Extreme Heat Community Resources https://www.health.vic.gov.au/environmental-health/extreme-heat-community-resources 		<p>Relevant links shared to Committee members after the Meeting.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department of Health Translations https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/ - CFA Fire Bans, ratings and Restrictions https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/warnings-restrictions/fire-bans-ratings-and-restrictions <p>Discussion and Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee member highlighted limitations for those without mobile phones or technology access and the need for multilingual emergency alerts. • Council partners with organisations like the Red Cross and Salvation Army to provide immediate support during emergencies (e.g., clothing, accommodation, food). • Monash Health remains an active partner, providing outreach programs and presentations to community networks and staff on emergency preparedness and response. 		
<p>4.</p>	<p>Guest Speaker - Discussion on housing challenges in the community and sharing insights/resources.</p> <p>Challenges in Housing for Asylum Seekers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The housing crisis and affordability issues are particularly severe for asylum seekers in the local area. • Many asylum seekers are on bridging visas (A, C, and E), with some having work rights while others do not. • Those without work rights face significant financial hardship, making it difficult to secure stable housing. • Ineligibility for mainstream housing support services further exacerbates their situation. • Lack of rental history and proof of income are barriers when applying for private rentals. <p>Priority Groups for Housing Assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASRC prioritises the most vulnerable individuals, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single mothers - Individuals with physical or mental health challenges - Those actively engaged in the protection visa application process - Families with children <p>Types of Housing Support Provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance with rent, bond, and rental arrears to help individuals stay in their current housing where possible. • Crisis accommodation support ranging from one night to long-term solutions, depending on available resources. • Collaboration with mainstream housing services such as Wayss and Launch Housing. 	<p>Abbas Amiry (ASRC) & Malia O'Brien (NASAVic Group)</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular participation in initiatives like the Dandenong Zero project. • Engagement with organisations like the Red Cross and Salvation Army to provide financial and rental assistance. <p>Current Housing Market Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While there are more rental properties available in areas like Dandenong, affordability remains a significant barrier. • Rental prices are still too high for the earnings of many residents in the area. <p>Discussion and Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor raised concerns about rental affordability in Dandenong, despite an increase in available properties. Rental prices remain too high for many local residents, with three-bedroom houses costing around \$600 per week and older two-bedroom units at \$450, which is unaffordable for those earning lower wages. • The rising cost of living, including higher interest rates and insurance, has caused landlords to ask for higher rent, making it harder for people to afford homes. • More people are overcrowding houses to save money, which can lead to safety problems, like uninsured properties and dangerous living conditions. • Committee members highlighted that vulnerable groups, particularly people seeking asylum, are being pushed into illegal boarding houses, which have been linked to safety hazards such as fires. • South East Community Links highlighted available financial counselling and rental support services aimed at helping tenants remain in their homes, though resources are limited. • Committee members highlighted that scams are becoming more common, with people fraudulently renting out rooms and disappearing with deposits, leaving victims homeless. 		
<p>5.</p>	<p>Topic: Unlawful residents in Victoria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of unlawful non-citizens in Victoria is significantly increasing, particularly since 1980's. • The discussion acknowledged the sensitivity surrounding the topic, especially with the upcoming election and recent trends towards deportation influenced by broader political movements. • The estimated number of unlawful residents is around 70,000 to 80,000, although official figures remain undisclosed due to their sensitive nature. The emotional impact on these individuals was highlighted, 	<p>Adwin Town (Voice of Outer South East)</p>	

	<p>emphasising their lack of identity and access to basic services such as education and healthcare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adwin proposed to leverage immigration legislation to allow community organisations to sponsor unlawful residents, providing them a potential pathway to legal status and support. The importance of access to education, skill development, and work rights was emphasised as essential so that these individuals could contribute positively to Australia. • The importance of providing hope to unlawful residents was highlighted, as despair could lead to extreme actions. Ensuring access to mental health resources was deemed critical for this vulnerable population. <p>Discussion and Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor expressed support for the committee's recommendations regarding unlawful citizens and confirmed his willingness to follow up with the Minister on this advocacy issue. • A member asked about the backgrounds of unlawful residents, pointing out that many come from countries considered safe. They discussed the risks of false claims in refugee applications, which could lead to immediate deportation. • Committee members were concerned about how unlawful residents manage their basic living expenses without legal status, highlighting the need for solutions to provide them with stability and support. • The committee discussed the importance of following up with relevant ministers and advocating for recommendations that could provide relief for unlawful residents. The need for ongoing support and communication with government officials was emphasized. 		<p>The committee agreed to make recommendation to Council regarding advocacy for unlawful citizens.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Introduction & Current Connection within the Community. Request by speaker that it be moved to the agenda for the next meeting. Speaker: Hamish Fernando & Riny Kenyang (Department of Justice and Community Safety South East Metropolitan Region)</p>		<p>Add item No.6 to next Meeting Agenda.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Discussion: Services available at SSI This item was not discussed due to time constraints, and the speaker agreed to move it to the agenda for the next meeting. Speaker: Marziyah Razi (Settlement Service International)</p>		<p>Add item No.7 to next Meeting Agenda</p>

	<p>Cultural Diversity Week & Refugee Week – Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on upcoming events and potential involvement from MAPSAAC member organisations. • Refugee Week 2025 will be celebrated from June 15 to June 21, recognising refugee contributions to the community. • Proposal for the MAPSAAC Committee to lead this year’s Refugee Week planning, with Council supporting logistics and promotions. <p>Discussion and Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SisterWorks expressed interest in taking the lead this year for Refugee Week. Planning and collaboration will be discussed further to ensure a coordinated approach. • Other committee members will have the opportunity to express interest in contributing to the planning and execution of the event. <p>Theme for Next Meeting: Poverty Alleviation has been decided as the theme for the next meeting</p>	<p>Community Development Support Officer (CGD) & All</p>	<p>Venue and date to be confirmed, dates to support planning and collaboration.</p> <p>Share Expression of Interest (EOI) with MAPSAAC Members</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Other Business Updates</p> <p>Upcoming Event: Bring Your Bills Day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date: 18th March 2025 • Location: Springvale Town Hall • Time: 10:30 AM to 3:00 PM • This event has been running for approximately 2 years, with a focus on providing residents immediate assistance for utility bills, financial hardship support, and payment plan setups. • There are currently 27 stakeholders involved, including utility providers and Services Australia. <p>The City of Greater Dandenong is conducting the 2025 Physical Activity Participation Survey from Monday 3 February to Sunday 30 March 2025. [For more details: 2025 Physical Activity Participation Survey - Resources Greater Dandenong Council]</p> <p>Customer Experience Strategy: Manager Communications & Customer Experience (CGD) Introduction to Council’s new customer experience strategy, shifting from traditional customer service to a more seamless experience.</p> <p>Introduction of the Customer service wondering (survey)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should we provide a great digital experience for people to self-serve? 	<p>All</p>	<p>Circulate flyer for the "Bring Your Bills" event within all networks once available.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much do people value in-person or phone service? • What are the priorities we should focus on? <p>Language/literacy barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does digital and ‘in your own time’ help? • Any feedback on phone interpreters • Myths and legends? <p>[For more details https://yoursay.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/CXStrategy]</p>		
9.	<p>Meeting close 11.35am</p> <p>Next meeting May 13 Tuesday 2025, in person meeting at Formal Meeting Room Dandenong Civic Centre (225 Lonsdale Street, Dandenong Victoria 3175).</p> <p>Time 9:30 am – 11:30 am</p>	Chair	



5 NOTICES OF MOTION

A Notice of Motion is a notice setting out the text of a motion proposed to be moved at the next relevant meeting. It must be in writing, signed by a Councillor, and be lodged with the Chief Executive Officer in sufficient time for them to give each Councillor at least 72-hours notice of such notice.

The guidelines for submitting a notice of motion to a Council meeting are included in the current Governance Rules.



6 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/DELEGATED MEMBERS AND COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

The principal purpose of this item in the Council Meeting Agenda is for Councillors to report on their attendance, observations or important matters arising from their liaison or representation with groups for which the Councillor has been formally appointed by Council. In accordance with the documented 'protocol' that applies to either liaisons or representatives, Councillors should raise matters of importance during this item. Other matters may also be reported.

If a Councillor chooses to speak, the name of the conference/event and the Councillor will be noted in the Minutes for that meeting. If a Councillor requires additional information on the conference/event to be listed in the Minutes, they must submit it in writing to a Governance staff member by 12.00pm the day following this Council Meeting.

Question time is provided to enable Councillors to address questions to members of Council staff. The guidelines for asking questions at a Council meeting are included in the current Governance Rules.

Councillors have a total of 15 minutes each to report on their attendances at meetings, conferences or events and to ask questions of Council staff.



7 URGENT BUSINESS

No business may be admitted as urgent business unless it:

- a) relates to or arises out of a matter which has arisen since distribution of the Agenda; and
- b) cannot safely or conveniently be deferred until the next ordinary meeting and unless agreed to by a majority of those Councillors present at the meeting.



8 CLOSE OF BUSINESS