

# Council Meeting

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## Agenda

**Tuesday, 24 June 2025**

Civic Centre, 15 Anderson Street, Lilydale  
and via Videoconference

## Information for Councillors and the community

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

### COUNCIL VISION

Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we care for country, how inclusive and connected our communities are, and how sustainable balanced growth makes this the best place in the world.

### VALUE OF HISTORY

We acknowledge that history shapes our identities, engages us as citizens, creates inclusive communities, is part of our economic well-being, teaches us to think critically and creatively, inspires leaders and is the foundation of our future generations.

### COUNCILLOR COMMITMENT

We'll be truthful, represent the community's needs, be positive and responsive and always strive to do better.

### OUR COUNCILLORS

**Billanook Ward:** Tim Heenan  
**Chandler Ward:** Gareth Ward  
**Chirnside Ward:** Richard Higgins  
**Lyster Ward:** Peter McIlwain  
**Melba Ward:** Mitch Mazzarella

**O'Shannassy Ward:** Jim Child  
**Ryrie Ward:** Fiona McAllister  
**Streeton Ward:** Jeff Marriott  
**Walling Ward:** Len Cox

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & DIRECTORS

**Chief Executive Officer,** Tammi Rose  
**Director Built Environment & Infrastructure,** Hjalmar Philipp  
**Director Communities,** Leanne Hurst

**Director Corporate Services,** Vincenzo Lombardi  
**Director Planning and Sustainable Futures,** Kath McClusky

### GOVERNANCE RULES

All Council and Delegated Committee meetings are to be conducted in accordance with Council's Governance Rules, which can be viewed at: <https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Corporate-documents/Policies-strategies/Governance-rules>

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS

Members of the community can participate in Council meetings in any of the following ways:

- making a verbal submission for up to 5 minutes on matters not listed on the agenda.
- submitting a question.
- speaking for up to 5 minutes to a specific item on the agenda. For planning applications and policy issues, the Chair will invite one person to speak on behalf of any objectors and one person to speak on behalf of the applicant. For other matters on the agenda, only one person will be invited to address Council, unless there are opposing views. At the discretion of the Chair, additional speakers may be invited for items of large interest.
- speaking for up to 5 minutes to a petition to be presented at a meeting.

For further information about how to participate in a Council meeting, please visit: <https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-meetings/Submissions-questions-petitions-to-Council>

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The Minutes produced after each Council Meeting form the official record of the decisions made by Yarra Ranges Council.

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## **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

In the case of an emergency during a meeting held at the Civic Centre, 15 Anderson Street, Lilydale, you should follow the directions given by staff and evacuate the building using the nearest available exit. You should congregate at the assembly point at Hardy Street car park.

## **CONTACT US**

Post	PO Box 105, Anderson Street Lilydale, VIC 3140
Telephone	1300 368 333
Email	<a href="mailto:mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au">mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au</a>

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## **YARRA RANGES COUNCIL**

**AGENDA FOR THE 626<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY  
24 JUNE 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.00PM IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC  
CENTRE, ANDERSON STREET, LILYDALE AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

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### **1. MEETING OPENED**

## 2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

### **3. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS PRESENT**

#### **OUR COUNCILLORS**

Billanook Ward: Tim Heenan  
Chandler Ward: Gareth Ward  
Chirnside Ward: Richard Higgins  
Lyster Ward: Peter McIlwain  
Melba Ward: Mitch Mazzarella  
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Director Built Environment & Infrastructure, Hjalmar Philipp  
Director Communities, Leanne Hurst  
Director Corporate Services, Vincenzo Lombardi  
Director Planning & Sustainable Futures, Kath McClusky

**4. APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received prior to the commencement of this meeting.

## 5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

*In accordance with Chapter 7, Rule 4, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.*

*The Local Government Act 2020 defines two categories of conflict of interest:*

- *a general conflict of interest, which is defined as “...a relevant person has a general conflict of interest in a matter if an impartial, fair-minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty”, and*
- *a material conflict of interest, which is defined as “...a relevant person has a material conflict of interest in respect of a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter. The benefit may arise or the loss incurred (a) directly or indirectly; or (b) in a pecuniary or non-pecuniary form.”*

*In accordance with section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020, a conflict of interest must be disclosed in the manner required by the Governance Rules and the relevant person must exclude themselves from the decision-making process.*

No Conflicts of Interest have been received prior to the Agenda being printed.

**6. MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**



**7. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**RECOMMENDATION**

*That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held Tuesday 10 June 2025, as circulated, be confirmed.*

## **8. QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

*In accordance with Chapter 3, Rules 57 and 59, of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.*

A person may make a submission to Council on matters that are not listed on the Agenda. A submission may be on any matter except if it:

- (a) is considered malicious, defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial, or objectionable in language or substance;
- (b) is substantially the same as a submission made to a Council meeting in the preceding 12 months;
- (c) relates to confidential information as defined under the Act;
- (d) relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer; or
- (e) relates to any other matter which the Council considers would prejudice the Council or any person.

There were no Submissions from the Public received prior to the Agenda being printed.

## PETITION TO COUNCIL

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Report Author: Senior Governance Officer  
 Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services  
 Ward(s) affected: Streeton; Lyster;

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

## CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

## SUMMARY

The following petitions be received:

### General Petition

1. Request Yarra Ranges Council to remove reflector poles along Fairhaven Rd, Mount Dandenong.  
 8 valid signatures.
  
2. Request Yarra Ranges Council to introduce a Special Charge Scheme for Sealing of Gallemonda Park Road Menzies Creek, from Ridge Road entrance into Jackson Hill Road.  
 34 valid signatures.

## RECOMMENDATION

***That the following General Petitions be received, noted and referred to the appropriate officers.***

- 1. Yarra Ranges Council to investigate the removal of reflector poles along Fairhaven Rd, Mount Dandenong.***
- 2. Yarra Ranges Council to investigate the introduction of a Special Charge Scheme for Sealing of Gallemonda Park Road Menzies Creek, from Ridge Road entrance into Jackson Hill Road.***

## **EASTERN REGION GROUP OF COUNCILS (ERG) - STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029**

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Report Author: Executive Strategic Advisor

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

This item is to be considered at a public Council meeting.

### **SUMMARY**

The Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) is a collaborative network of councils proximal to Yarra Ranges Council.

The ERG Strategic Plan for 2025-2029 (Draft) was endorsed by the ERG at its meeting on 16 April 2025.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

***That Council notes the Eastern Region Group of Councils' Strategic Plan 2025-2029.***

### **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council noted the ERG Strategic Plan 2021-2025 at its Council Meeting on 12 October 2021.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### ***Purpose and Background***

The ERG comprises five local government authorities of outer eastern Melbourne – Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges. The ERG recognises that collective advocacy and partnership approaches are key to addressing regional challenges. ERG Councils collaborate and partner on shared

priorities through advocacy, integrated planning, shared services and joint procurement to benefit the communities of the region.

With the conclusion of the current Strategic Plan in 2025, the ERG member council representatives have worked together to develop a strategic plan for the 2025-2029 period on major issues of mutual benefit and/or regional need.

Key partners involved in the development of the Strategic Plan have included Mayors, Councillors and CEOs of the member councils, together with Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action, the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance, the Eastern Transport Coalition, Melbourne's Eastern Region Economic Development Group as well as key council officers.

The intent of the ERG Strategic Plan is to:

- amplify each council's voice and impact,
- improve each council's efficiency and effectiveness, and
- improve community access to infrastructure and services across the region.

The Plan identifies five key priorities to be delivered through 14 strategic initiatives, summarised on page 10 of the attached document.

This ERG Strategic Plan continues to advocate for known community issues that have regional impacts and has an additional emphasis on joint procurement and shared service provision across member councils. While Council's participation in any opportunities will be assessed on its merits and progress through appropriate governance pathways, this Plan outlines a commitment to:

- explore, develop and implement appropriate shared services with ERG partner councils with short-, medium- and longer-term objectives;
- explore options for innovation, entrepreneurship, direct service provision, partnered services with other agencies or outsourced service provision;
- establish appropriate governance arrangements to facilitate shared services outcomes; and
- assist in the development of a regional shared services best practice model as an exemplar for the local government sector more broadly.

This innovative approach to regional collaboration has the potential to create new efficiencies within the organisation and community facing services in the region.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

Yarra Ranges Council pays an annual contribution of \$35,000 to be a member of ERG as part of its Advocacy Program. This funds administration of the group and delivery of the strategic plan outcomes, as well as providing support to deliver

Council's own Advocacy Agenda. Expenditure is within current budget, and participation in ERG is achieved within existing resources.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

This report contributes to the following Council Plan action:

- Consolidate and strengthen advocacy through evidence and stronger relationships to ensure other levels of government are effectively and efficiently engaged to support local services and programs.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

Section 9 of the *Local Government Act 2020* outlines overarching principles, including the expectation that councils seek to collaborate with other councils, government entities and statutory bodies.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

There are possible cost savings to Yarra Ranges Council of shared procurement, IT integration and shared services that are a key priority in the ERG Strategic Plan.

### ***Social Implications***

With 79 councils in Victoria, advocacy can be enhanced with regional representation which actively amplifies the community needs of a single council.

### ***Environmental Implications***

A key initiative in the ERG plan is integrated transport, which has strong alignment with Council's *Integrated Transport Strategy* and *Liveable Climate Plan*. As the outermost Council in ERG, Yarra Ranges has the most to gain from enhanced transport corridors.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No direct community engagement has been undertaken for this piece of work. However, the plan reflects a range of community issues that impact at a regional level, including enhanced transport and council financial efficiency.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

By engaging in regional collaboration, councils can more effectively advocate for local priorities. The ERG provides an active and collaborative forum to raise and address community issues with our neighbouring councils.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

There are no identified risks to noting the ERG Strategic Plan.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. ERG Draft Strategic Plan 2025-2029

# Strategic Plan 2025 - 2029

DRAFT

Version

- 1 Working draft
- 2 Draft for circulation

Date

February 2025  
16 April 2025

Status

Not circulated  
Following ERG - 11 April meeting

**Add images and council logos**



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### Indigenous acknowledgement

The ERG recognises the Traditional Owners of the land we call the eastern region. We acknowledge their rich cultural heritage and spiritual connection to the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and value their ongoing contribution to the cultural heritage of the region.

# Background & context

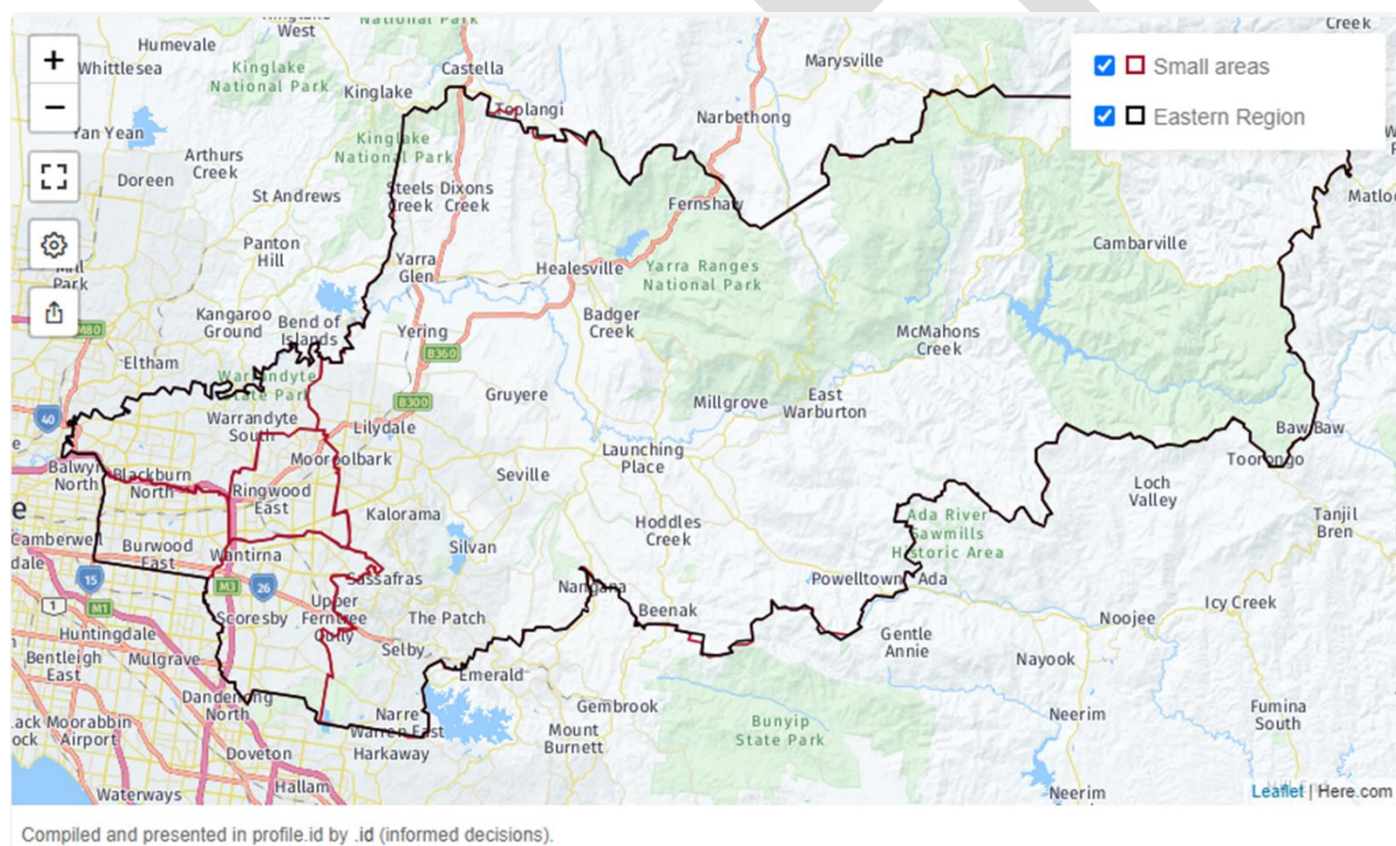
## Who we are

The Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) comprises five local government authorities of eastern Melbourne - Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse, and Yarra Ranges.

The eastern region is the traditional home of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

ERG councils collaborate and partner on shared priorities through advocacy, integrated planning, shared services, and joint procurement to benefit the communities of the region.

The region extends from 15 kilometres to Melbourne's CBD eastwards into the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. It is a major population centre with a significant industry base. Specialisations are in advanced manufacturing, wholesale /distribution, health services, education (including Universities and TAFE institutes), as well as retail, tourism, and other service industries. The area includes the Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre, Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre, the Bayswater Business Precinct, and major education and health services.



Residents enjoy a choice of health and recreation facilities, local and regional shopping destinations, access to leading schools and tertiary institutions, and some of Victoria's best recreational areas. The region functions as Melbourne's lungs, with extensive green wedge and natural areas, mature canopy trees and is Melbourne's primary water catchment.

Recent State Government commitments to housing growth seek a 71 per cent increase in housing by 2050. Without a commitment to ensure community infrastructure keeps pace with growth existing levels of amenity will be impacted.

The region's economy is significant, hosting 11 per cent of Greater Melbourne's jobs and generating over \$49 billion Gross Regional Product. While the manufacturing sector is of greatest value it is not the largest employer. The top five employing industries are health care & social assistance, retail trade, education & training, manufacturing, and construction.



**Total population**

**746,067**

(Approximately 14% of Greater Melbourne's total)



**Total Land areas (hectares)**

**282,120**

(28% of Greater Melbourne's 999,251 hectares)



**Gross regional product (\$M)**

**\$49,478**

(Approximately 11% of Greater Melbourne's total)

## What we do

**'Our vision is for the region to be connected, healthy, sustainable and prosperous, supported by financially secure, high performing councils.'**

### To achieve our vision the ERG will:

- be a catalyst for collaboration and trusted voice on regionally significant matters
- work to create an enabling operating environment
- support councils to be more efficient and effective
- advocate and plan to improve access to infrastructure and services across the region

### To be successful we focus on:

- activities that benefit all ERG councils and reduce duplication
- projects that have active support and are achievable
- avoiding competing interests and tensions
- strong engagement and building productive working relationships critical to our success
- good governance and management of ERG resources

### How we work:

Collaboration and partnerships are critical to how we work. Our collective concerns are informed both by their impacts and by our ability to impact change and achieve shared outcomes

Many external factors impact on the region, others involve shared responsibilities, and many are often beyond local government's direct control.

Our responses range from awareness raising to direct action in support of our vision and four pillars. Our Strategic Plan is implemented through a focussed number of regional actions that consider the following criteria:

- is it a big issue for the region (impacting and/or benefitting all councils)?
- will our action lead to better community outcomes?
- is it achievable – will we make a difference?
- will we create shared value for ERG councils?
- will we reduce duplication / competition?

# What's important to us

The ERG councils have more in common than what sets the group apart. Through extensive community engagement, Councils identified what is most important to their communities, and together for the region. These are grouped into four areas, or pillars: People, Places, Economy, and Environment and a longer-term regional outcome and key stakeholders have been identified for each.

## People



### PEOPLE

**Resilient, cohesive communities who enjoy an improving quality of life, great access to services and better health and wellbeing.**

- Eastern Health
- Eastern Volunteers
- Eastern Access Community Health (EACH)
- Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA); Homelessness & Social Housing Charter Group
- VicHealth and Departments including Education; Health; Families, Fairness & Housing; Emergency Management Victoria

Improving community health and wellbeing is central to diverse, inclusive and cohesive communities, better able to withstand major shocks and stresses. Equity of access to opportunity and addressing hardship and disadvantage builds social cohesion and increases community safety, while improving employment and life outcomes.

Increasing rates of crime, particularly family violence remains a complex issue for all levels of government. A more strategic, regional response for community safety is needed, and to address underlying causal factors such as access to secure and affordable housing, education and employment.

Rapid population growth is the biggest challenge facing ERG councils in their efforts to support communities. It will directly impact communities' ability to access the services and community infrastructure they depend on. The perception of government that the region can simply absorb and accommodate growth without the focussed funding support available to Melbourne's growth areas will compound these impacts.

Opportunities in the region exist to share council services to make them more efficient and effective. This may relate to internal council functions or to service areas such as immunisation, school crossing supervisors, animal management, environmental health, parks and gardens to regional library administration.

## Places



### PLACES

**Great places that foster social cohesion, equality of opportunity, are resource efficient and healthy, in a region that's easy to get around by active or public transport for short distances.**

- Infrastructure Victoria
- Department of Transport and Planning
- Transport advocacy groups such as Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF), Bicycle Victoria (BV), Eastern Transport Coalition (ETC)
- Eastern Region Trails Working Group (ERTWG)
- Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA)
- Planning and development industry peaks (PIA, PCV, UDIA, etc.)
- Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments (CASBE)

Population growth increases demands on public spaces and facilities and changes how we move around. Active centres build neighbourhoods and support economic, social and cultural activities. Vibrant activity centres are essential for high amenity neighbourhoods and to achieve living locally. Housing targets set by the State Government in *Plan for Victoria* require ERG Councils to plan for an additional 212,500 dwellings by 2050, an increase of 71 per cent on existing dwelling stock. This has significant implications for community infrastructure that will either need to be newly provided or

upgraded to meet future demand. Collaboration is required to clearly communicate these community infrastructure needs to State Government and ensure that they are provided for in key locations in the region.

Transport connections across the region have not kept pace with needs, and increasing congestion has made travel to jobs and services more difficult. There are opportunities for advocacy and collaborative integrated transport planning with State Government; to review and invest in bus services; and for other practical and cost-effective improvements that support people to access work, study and services. Other opportunities for joint procurement, integrated planning, and for shared services exist around asset management and to leverage regional strengths and knowledge through centres of excellence.

## Economy



### ECONOMY

**Local employment opportunities support a diverse and adaptable workforce who enjoy a connected, competitive, and prosperous future.**

- Melbourne's East Regional Economic Development Group (MEREDG)
- North-East Local Jobs & Skills Taskforce
- Economic Growth Victoria
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS)
- Secondary and Tertiary education sectors
- Industry groups such as SEMMA and NORTH Link

The region's economy is significant and diverse and enjoys well-developed infrastructure and access to a highly skilled workforce. In our activity centres and across specialised activity clusters are 11 per cent of Greater Melbourne's jobs that contribute around \$50 billion in Gross Regional Product (GRP). A growing number and diversity of local jobs and businesses are needed to sustain local communities and support a high quality of life. While regional employment has grown, the number of positions advertised online has decreased nearly 50 per cent since the peak of 10,489 in July 2022.

Opportunities exist around a shared vision and effective collaboration for increasing local employment in activity centres, business precincts such as Bayswater, and to support key sectors such as tourism and agriculture in the outer east. Leveraging State Government precinct planning could result in better local employment outcomes. Resource conservation and climate action can also stimulate uptake of new technologies and create new industries and jobs.

## Environment



### ENVIRONMENT

**Environmental stewardship and regional responses to sustainability, with spaces for people and nature where healthy ecosystems support healthy people and growing economies.**

- Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA)
- Sustainability Victoria
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Melbourne Water
- Integrated Water Management Forum
- Eastern Region Trails Working Group
- Recycling Victoria; Sustainability Victoria; Tourism Victoria

Globally there is significant concern about the future of the planet and the need to address climate change and resource consumption for sustainable living. Human activity is leading to a hotter, drier climate with more extreme weather events causing fires, floods and landslides. Access to clean air, water and to nature are central to health and wellbeing.

While the region is known for its extensive parks and leafy suburbs, redressing the fastest rate of tree canopy loss in Melbourne will be more challenging with growth. Linking open spaces across the region for biodiversity, urban heat reduction and active transport is a focus for action. Resilience to the impacts of climate change is a common focus, particularly in areas of flooding around the Yarra River and Dandenong Creek, with greater alignment required between flood agencies. Councils in the region aspire to achieve and maintain carbon neutrality.

Resource conservation and climate action can also help stimulate economic activity and enhance social cohesion.



## Our strategic priorities

To support the four pillars, five strategic priorities have been identified, informed by the emerging Council Plans. For each, actions are identified that seek multiple benefits across pillars, supported by ERG governance, operations and advocacy.

### Strategic Priority 1 - Build shared services and increase joint procurement

Shared services and joint procurement present opportunities to maintain and improve council services in a rate-capped, fiscally constrained environment.

Despite potential benefits, significant technical, financial, political and risk barriers exist. The ERG is committed to developing a longer-term, logical pathway to increase shared services and joint procurement by councils in the region and to undertake the foundational work required to see this occur. This would:

- interrogate previous collaborative work by councils and LGV to inform shared service opportunities
- leverage regional knowledge and expertise to identify opportunities (both quick wins and longer term)
- benchmark IT platforms and forward commitments to create a 10–20-year vision towards a common platform
- understand corporate governance options best suited to benefit realisation and managing risk and reward.

#### Priority 1: Build shared services and increase joint procurement initiatives

**1: Shared Services Roadmap:** detailed analysis of short-listed opportunity areas to develop an implementation plan.

**2: IT Integration Vision:** 10-20-year vision to align ICT / ERP platforms and approaches.

**3: Pilot** one or two shared services / joint procurements that meet the agreed criteria.

### Strategic Priority 2 - Enhance regional infrastructure

With a 71 per cent increase of housing by 2050 (212,500 additional dwellings), new and upgraded community infrastructure will be needed to meet future residents' demand. *Plan for Victoria* fails to demonstrate how and where additional infrastructure will be delivered.

While Infrastructure Victoria's draft new *30-year Infrastructure Plan* recognises the challenges of providing infrastructure in a fiscally constrained environment, the assumption remains that community infrastructure needs in established areas can simply be absorbed and provided for by local government without significant disruption.

A regional approach to quantify and spatially understand future community infrastructure is an important first step to:

- optimise use and maximise access to community infrastructure - considering cross-border cooperation
- advocate for changes to funding models
- prioritise investment and the sequencing of infrastructure delivery, including future open space connectivity needs.

#### Priority 2: Enhance regional infrastructure initiatives

**4: Community Infrastructure Needs Analysis** - spatial analysis of impact of housing targets against community infrastructure provision benchmarks to address the likely gap over time, supported by a community infrastructure prioritisation tool. This would map the region's community infrastructure and develop GIS layers.

**5: Open Space Connectivity Strategy** - to identify regional opportunities for open space connectivity, biodiversity and urban greening.

### Strategic Priority 3 - Transform movement in the East

The eastern region is highly car dependent, with 79 per cent of trips made by car and only 7.3 per cent by public transport. With 59 per cent of households having two or more vehicles, projected growth would bring 330,000 more vehicles and congestion to the region. There is significant opportunity to reduce the number of short trips made by car and encourage more walking, cycling and public transport use.

Infrastructure Victoria research found that buses are a huge opportunity for Melbourne as the most cost-efficient public transport system which is true for the eastern region. Weaknesses and opportunities in the region's bus network are well documented and priority bus lanes, route extensions, increased frequency and other interventions are recommended.

Big build projects (LXR, SRL, NEL) are having a major impact on the region but are not place-making projects and our ability to influence is low. Safe and attractive walking and cycling routes and trails (including for e-bikes to counter distance and topography) to and within activity centres and corridors is a key objective of the ERG councils.

A *Sustainable and Integrated Transport Plan* is the necessary first step to transform movement in the east and to have more impact on how places transform. This would:

- synthesize and bring together the significant council work to date
- engage directly with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and key stakeholders to strengthen collaboration across centres, along corridors and on major projects
- build the evidence base to support planning and advocacy.

### Priority 3: Transform movement in the East initiative

**6: Sustainable & Integrated Transport Plan** - with DTP, bring together the significant work done in this area and share transport data to:

- agree on a prioritised, evidenced list for improvements to all modes (train, tram and bus) regarding route changes, service frequency changes, gaps and on-demand services
- agree on a prioritised, evidenced list for improvements to road infrastructure
- identify key corridors and their needs
- agree best practice principles for centres including greening and active transport
- update the Regional Trails Strategy considering the impact of North East Link and Suburban Rail Link and preferred commuter and local cycling routes
- establish consistent requirements for EV charging stations
- set up a sustainable mobility monitoring index.

### Strategic Priority 4 - Support community safety

Communities in the eastern region are increasingly concerned about safety with crime statistics indicating double digit growth in crime rates for most ERG councils.

While Victoria Police is the key agency responsible for community safety, the draft *National Urban Policy* highlights several areas relevant to community safety, and that our 'urban areas are safe' when there is: Inclusivity and safety in public spaces; Safety for marginalised groups; Crime prevention; and Safety in movement.

With an objective to: *Ensure community safety through policing, law enforcement and prevention activities*, the indicators<sup>1</sup> used by VicPol are:

- Community safety during the day and at night
- Community safety on public transport
- Crime statistics
- Number of road fatalities
- Number of road injuries.

Placemaking and well-maintained public spaces can play a part to discourage crime through measures such as adequate lighting, passive surveillance, and sightlines. Creating safe places must be central to the fast rollout of new housing.

Local government cannot address community safety issues alone. It can help to facilitate a place-based coordinated response between federal and state government and service agencies. A roundtable would assist in role clarity, information sharing, well targeted actions and clear communications to support improved community safety and perceptions of safety.

#### Priority 4: Support community safety initiatives

**7: Community safety regional roundtable** - bring community safety stakeholders together to share information, discuss collaborative actions, and establish a role and responsibility 'RASCI' to ensure role clarity and clear communications. The RASCI framework is: Responsible, Accountable, Supportive, Consulted or Informed.

#### Strategic Priority 5 - Develop local employment

Growing local businesses and local activities grows local employment.

Despite strong levels of employment self-containment in the eastern region, challenges remain for people with a disability, women over 45, culturally and linguistically diverse people, disengaged youth, and First Nations people in accessing employment.

The contribution of creative industries to the Victorian economy is growing year on year (\$40.5B in 2022-23) and utilises council infrastructure (galleries, museums, performing arts venues, libraries and the public realm). Festivals, events, public art and cultural programs build community and create local employment.

The ERG seeks to enhance cooperative economic development activities regionally. There is an opportunity to take a strategic approach to programming to make better use of regional infrastructure and support development pathways for artists and the region's creative industries. This should increase opportunities, leverage investments and reduce duplication.

#### Priority 5: Develop local employment initiatives

**8: Foster co-operative economic development opportunities** - identify and deliver short and longer-term opportunities for collaboration and shared activity.

**9: Develop pathways for artists in the east** - explore how artistic talent and the creative industries can be cultivated within the region.

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2023-24 Budget Paper No. 3 Service Delivery and [Victoria Police Corporate Plan 2022-2023: Priority area - Community safety](#)



## Actions summary: 2025 - 2029

#	Actions to support strategic priorities	Year				Partner	Project type				Alignment			
		1	2	3	4		JP: Joint Procurement SS: Shared Services IP: Integrated Planning Ad: Advocacy				People	Economy	Environment	Places
							JP	SS	IP	AD				
1	Shared Services Roadmap					LGV, MAV					✓	✓	✓	✓
2	IT Integration Vision										✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Shared Services/Joint Procurement Pilots										✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Community Infrastructure Needs Analysis					DTP/IV					✓			✓
5	Open Space Connectivity Strategy					SRV					✓		✓	✓
6	Sustainable & Integrated Transport Plan					DTP					✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Community safety regional roundtable					VicPol					✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Foster co-operative economic development opportunities										✓	✓		✓
9	Develop pathways for artists in the east										✓	✓		
<b>ERG Governance, Operations and Advocacy</b>														
10	Foster productive relationships with key stakeholders and facilitate sharing of best practice approaches to organisational development and service delivery.										✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Support regional responses to legislative and regulatory reviews impacting councils (P&E Act review)										✓	✓	✓	✓
12	As a single trusted voice on regionally significant matters, coordinate and support strategic and opportunistic advocacy to benefit ERG councils (e.g. longer council plan cycle; State election advocacy)										✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Deliver ERG meetings, CEO meetings, project support & communications (annual report, website & social media)										✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Council elections, Council Plan alignment and ERG Strategic Plan mid-term and full review										✓	✓	✓	✓

■ ERG discrete project   ■ Implementation / monitoring project outcomes   ■ Ongoing / BAU activity

draft

## AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR APPOINTMENT

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Report Author: Executive Officer, Governance Risk & Compliance

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### SUMMARY

This report recommends the appointment of Mr. David Ashmore as the Chair of Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee (the Committee) for the period 1 July 2025 to 1 August 2027. The length of tenure is reflective of remainder of Mr Ashmore's current term as an independent member.

Mr Ashmore's nomination as Chair was unanimously supported by the other independent members.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That Council endorse the appointment of Mr. David Ashmore as the Chair of the Yarra Ranges Council Audit and Risk Management Committee for the period 1 July 2025 to 1 August 2027.***

### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

11 February 2025 Council endorsed the Audit and Risk Management Committee Charter (the Charter).

25 March 2025 Council endorsed Mr. Schinck as the Chairperson of Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee through to 30 June 2025.

## DISCUSSION

Section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires Council to establish the Committee. The terms of reference of the Committee are outlined in the Charter.

The Charter requires that the composition of the Committee include:

- Up to five members, three independent members and two councillor representatives.

Council is required to appoint a Chairperson for the Committee, the Chairperson being one of the Independent Members.

During its meeting of 2 June 2025, the independent members nominated Mr. Ashmore unanimously for the role Chairperson of Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Mr. Ashmore is currently an Independent Member of the Committee. Mr. Ashmore is a highly experienced private and public sector.

Mr. Ashmore brings a wealth of experience and advice to the Committee across a range of domains including, but not limited to risk, financial, fraud, cyber security and auditing management practices. Mr. Ashmore's experience leading and being an independent member for various Council Audit Committee's will ensure the Committee continues to perform at its highest potential and provide oversight and support to Council.

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

All financial implications associated with this recommendation are accommodated through existing operational budgets.

Section 12.5 of the Charter states that remuneration will be paid to each Independent Member and the Chair on a per meeting basis, with fees being indexed in alignment with the rate cap each 1 July. From 1 July 2025, the Independent Member Chair remuneration is \$1,825.66 per meeting (excluding GST).

## APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan: The appointment of an Independent Chair to the Committee links to the Council's Key Strategic Objective – High Performing Organisation and meets Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## RELEVANT LAW

The Act requires Council to establish the Committee, appoint Independent Members and a Chair, adopt, and maintain a Charter and provide a bi-annual report to Council.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS*****Economic Implications***

The appointment of an experienced and qualified Chair for the Committee supports sound financial governance and oversight of Council's risk management practices.

***Social Implications***

Strong governance and risk management practices, overseen by a capable Committee Chair, help protect Council's ability to deliver critical services and programs to the community. This supports social sustainability by safeguarding Council's capacity to meet community needs over time.

***Environmental Implications***

Effective risk management and governance overseen by the Committee do support Council's ability to address environmental risks and pursue sustainability initiatives.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement has been undertaken in preparing this recommendation.

**COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

No collaboration with other Councils, Governments or statutory bodies was sought for this appointment.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

There is no foreseen risk associated with this recommendation.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

## COUNCILLOR EXPENDITURE POLICY - REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES FOR CR MCALLISTER

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Report Author: Senior Governance Officer  
 Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services  
 Ward(s) affected: Ryrie;

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) governs the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors and members of a delegated committee. This requires Council to reimburse reasonable, bona fide out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing their respective roles.

The Yarra Ranges Councillor Expenditure Policy (the Policy) requires all claims for the reimbursement of expenses to be made within three months of the date an expense has been incurred.

Claims submitted that fall outside this three-month period must be considered by Council.

In accordance with the Policy, approval is sought to reimburse out-of-pocket expenses relating to travel, to the value of \$1210.32 incurred by Cr McAllister during the period 9 November 2024 through to 26 January 2025.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That Council approve the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses of \$1210.32 incurred by Cr McAllister during the period 9 November 2024 through to 26 January 2025.***

### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Yarra Ranges Councillor Expenditure Policy was adopted by Council on 11 August 2020.

## **BACKGROUND**

Council must reimburse a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee for out-of-pocket expenses, provided that Council is satisfied that these expenses:

- Are bona fide expenses.
- Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
- Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

In cases where expenses have been incurred more than three months prior to the claim being submitted, these claims are referred to Council for consideration.

The claim made by Cr McAllister is for the reimbursement of expenses incurred more than three months prior to his claim being submitted and has therefore been referred to Council for consideration.

Officers have determined that the travel claim for reimbursement relates to Cr McAllister performing the role of a Councillor and is in accordance with the provisions of both the Act and the Policy.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

The reimbursement of Councillor expenses are met from within current operational budgets.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

The Policy sets out the circumstances under which Councillors may incur and seek reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

The Act requires Council to reimburse reasonable, bona fide out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Councillors while performing their duties as a Councillor.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no foreseeable or known economic, social or environmental impacts arising from this report.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

As the report is operational and administrative in nature, community engagement was not undertaken on this matter.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

No collaboration with other Councils, Governments or statutory bodies was sought.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

There are no known or foreseeable risks associated with this report.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Nil



## COUNCILLOR EXPENDITURE POLICY

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Report Author: Coordinator Governance & Integrity

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

## CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

## SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires Council to adopt and maintain a policy governing the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses that have been reasonably incurred by a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee in the performance of their role, and which are reasonably necessary for them to perform that role.

The existing Councillor Expenditure Policy (the Policy) has been reviewed to align with the new Council term and to ensure the Policy reflects best practice governance.

## RECOMMENDATION

***That Council adopt the Yarra Ranges Council Councillor Expenditure Policy.***

## RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At its meeting on 11 August 2020, Council adopted the current Councillor Expenditure Policy.

## DISCUSSION

Section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt a Council Expenses (Expenditure) Policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees.

The Policy is designed to support Councillors and members of delegated committees in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Act. It ensures that reasonable expenses incurred while performing their roles are reimbursed.

The policy review captured legislative changes and ensured processes reflected the principles the policy was designed to uphold. In addition, general formatting and language improvements were made throughout the document to enhance clarity, consistency, and ease of understanding.

The most significant amendment resulting from this review is the introduction of a new requirement for overseas travel by Councillors. Under the updated policy, any international travel must now be approved through a formal resolution of Council prior to the commencement of any travel planning or arrangements.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

Cost associated with reviewing the policy are covered in operational budgets.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

This report contributes to the following strategic objective in the Council Plan: High Performing Organisation. The updated Policy aligns with and supports Council's:

- Governance Rules
- Model Code of Conduct & Yarra Ranges Councillor Code of Conduct
- Public Transparency Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedures
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy
- Fraud Control Policy

## **RELEVANT LAW**

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Integrity) Act 2024.*

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

The Policy promotes transparent and ethical decision-making, which can positively impact Council's financial management and resource allocation.

***Social Implications***

A robust Policy fosters public trust in local government and promotes positive relationships between Councillors and the community they serve.

***Environmental Implications***

While not directly related to environmental outcomes, the Policy emphasis on ethical behaviour and good governance can support environmentally responsible decision-making.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement has been undertaken in the review of the Councillor Expenditure Policy.

**COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

As part of a commitment to continuous improvement, the policy review involved benchmarking against Councillor Expenditure Policies from other Councils to identify opportunities for alignment with sector best practices.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

Adopting the Policy mitigates several risks including reputational risk by demonstrating commitment to high ethical standards and governance risk through clear guidelines and decision-making processes.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Yarra Ranges Council Councillor Expenditure Policy



# Yarra Ranges Council Councillor Expenditure Policy

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Version:	3.0
Adopted by Council:	TBC
Review Date:	TBC
Policy Owner:	Manager Organisational Performance & Integrity
Applicable to:	Councillors, members of delegated committees and Council Officers.

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## **1. Introduction**

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- 1.1 Council is committed to supporting the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and members of delegated committees (Members) in performing their role and effectively undertaking their duties.
- 1.2 This Councillor Expenditure Policy (Policy) includes details of the allowances, facilities, services and resources that are made available to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors and also sets out the circumstances under which both they and members of delegated committees may incur and seek reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.
- 1.3 This Policy is to be read as being the Council Expenses Policy required to be adopted by Council in accordance with Section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act).
- 1.4 Section 40 of the Act requires Council to reimburse a Councillor and members of a delegated committee for expenses which the Council is satisfied:
  - (a) Are bona fide expenses.
  - (b) Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
  - (c) Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

## **2. Objectives**

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- 2.1 The Policy is designed to:
  - (a) Comply with the requirements of legislation and the overarching governance principles provided for in the Act, together with any recommendations made by the Council's auditors.
  - (b) Provide a transparent and accountable process for the payment of allowances and reimbursement of expenses.
  - (c) Ensure that the activities of the Council are conducted professionally.

## **3. Strategic links**

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- 3.1 This Policy was developed in accordance with:
  - (a) Sections 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43 of the Act.
  - (b) The Councillor Model Code of Conduct, which states that Councillors will comply with council's adopted Expenses (Expenditure) policy.
  - (c) The Victorian Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, specifically Section 8 (recognition and equality before the law) and Section 18 (take part in Public Life).

## **4. Scope**

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- 4.1 This Policy applies to:
- (a) All Councillors and members of delegated committees.
  - (b) Officers who administer the payment of allowances, who may incur expenditure on behalf of Councillors, and, who process and approve claims made by Councillors for the reimbursement of expenses.

## **5. Monitoring Compliance**

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- 5.1 Individual Councillors and Members are responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of this Policy.
- 5.2 This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Council's Internal Auditors, with the findings being presented to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Mayor via the Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC). The ARMC will also receive regular updates to monitor the progress of any actions required to address issues of concern.
- 5.3 Council will provide details of all reimbursements made to Councillors and Members to the ARMC on a periodic basis (minimum yearly).

## **6. Resources and Facilities for the Mayor and Councillors**

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- 6.1 Councillors will be provided with the following resources and facilities to use in performing their duties:
- (a) Administrative support for the Mayor and Councillors, such as diary and correspondence management, research, preparation of speeches etc.
  - (b) An office for the Mayor.
  - (c) A Councillor lounge and meeting room.
  - (d) A smart phone.
  - (e) A dedicated land line for internet/telephone at their place of residence (if required)
  - (f) A laptop computer and if requested, a tablet device.
  - (g) If required, installation of wireless broadband connection at their place of residence
  - (h) A printer and cartridges as required
  - (i) A small selection of Yarra Ranges Council branded clothing, if required.
  - (j) Basic stationery items, such as pens and note pads.
- 6.2 In respect of costs associated with the provision of a smart phone and/or landline, connection fees, service charges and the cost of business calls will be met by Council.
- 6.3 The Mayor will be provided with a Council vehicle, if desired, to be selected from those prescribed by the Motor Vehicle Policy and will be available for full official and private use during the Mayoral term. All conditions and requirements outlined by the Motor Vehicle Policy will apply to the use of this vehicle.



## **7. Allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors**

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### **Allowances Payable**

- 7.1 The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive an allowance in accordance with a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*. The Tribunal is required to make an annual adjustment to the values of allowances.
- 7.2 The allowance payable to a Councillor commences on the day that the Councillor takes the oath or affirmation of office.
- 7.3 Subject to paragraph 7.1, the Mayor or Deputy Mayor are not entitled to receive a Councillor allowance while receiving an allowance as a Mayor or a Deputy Mayor.
- 7.4 If a Councillor is appointed to act as Acting Mayor under section 20B of the Act for a continuous period exceeding 30 days, the Acting Mayor may be paid a Mayoral allowance instead of a Councillor allowance for the period that they are acting as Mayor.
- 7.5 The Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect to receive the total allowance, a partial allowance or no allowance.<sup>1</sup>
- 7.6 A Councillor elected to be Mayor is entitled to receive a Mayoral allowance from the date they are elected.
- 7.7 The payment of the allowance for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors is coordinated through the Governance and Finance Teams. Payments are made monthly in advance, on the first week of the month.

### **Withholding Allowances**

- 7.8 Council will withhold payment of allowances until a Councillor has completed induction training and made the written declaration required by section 32(3) of the Act.

### **Allowances and Tax**

- 7.9 At the end of each financial year, Councillors will receive a statement showing the amount paid to them in allowances and expenses for carrying out their duties as a Councillor.
- 7.10 Tax is not deducted from the allowance paid to Councillors but allowances do need to be included in tax returns. Any personal taxation implications from the

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 39(5) of the Local Government Act 2020

receipt of allowances are the responsibility of individual Councillors. *Councillors are advised to seek their own advice in respect of their personal tax affairs.*

- 7.11 For further information, Councillors are advised to contact the Australian Taxation Office.

### **Payment of Allowances in an Election year**

- 7.12 In an election year, all allowances outlined in this Policy will cease to be paid from 6.00am on the day of an election, when the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors vacate office.
- 7.13 Following an election, allowances will only be paid from the date each Councillor takes the oath of office.

### **Leave of Absence for Councillors**

- 7.14 If a Councillor is required to take leave of absence, the Councillor:
- (a) May continue to be a Councillor but must not perform the duties or functions of a Councillor during the period of leave.
  - (b) Remains entitled to receive a Councillor allowance unless the Act otherwise provides.
  - (c) Is not entitled to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses during the period of leave.
  - (d) Must return all Councillor equipment and materials to the Council for the period of leave if Council requires.
- 7.15 If the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor is required to take a leave of absence, the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor is, for the duration of the leave, to be considered as is incapable of performing the duties of the office of Mayor or Deputy Mayor. The provisions of paragraph 7.14 will apply to the Mayor or Deputy Mayor as if they were a Councillor, with this also to include any vehicle that has been provided by Council.

### **Eligible Local Governing Body Status**

- 7.16 Council can decide to become an 'Eligible Local Governing Body' (ELGB).
- 7.17 As an ELGB, Councillors are deemed employees for superannuation purposes and superannuation contributions will be made, as of right, and allowances will be pre-taxed.
- 7.18 The Council is not an ELGB and any change to this would need to be determined by a unanimous resolution of Council.

## **8. Reimbursement of Expenses incurred by Councillors and Members**

### **When Expenses can be Reimbursed**

- 8.1 For clarity and transparency:

- (a) The circumstances whereby Councillors can claim reimbursement of expenses are:
  - (i) Council meetings and meetings of delegated committees of Council.
  - (ii) Formal briefing sessions convened by Council, Mayor or Chair of a delegated committee.
  - (iii) Civic or ceremonial functions convened by Council or Mayor.
  - (iv) Meetings scheduled by Council or the Mayor.
  - (v) A meeting, function or other official role attended as representative of Council or Mayor.
  - (vi) Meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which the Councillor has been appointed a Council delegate or is authorised by Council, but the reimbursement by Council is to be reduced by however much the body pays travelling expenses directly.
  - (vii) Inspections of a street, property or area, or to discuss with any person, any matter affecting or affected by Council and/or to attend to carry out activities in the capacity of a Councillor.
  - (viii) Discussions with officers on any matter relating to Council.
  - (ix) Meetings, or to participate in delegations or deputations to which the Councillor has been appointed as a representative by Council, the CEO or the Mayor.
- (b) The circumstances whereby members of delegated committees can claim reimbursement of expenses are:
  - (i) Council meetings and meetings of delegated committees of Council.
  - (ii) Formal briefing sessions convened by the Council, Mayor or Chair of a delegated committee.
  - (iii) Discussions with officers on any matter relating to Council.

- 8.2 Circumstances in which a Councillor or Member will generally not be taken to be performing their duties include, but are not limited to:
- (a) Where the conduct of a Councillor contravenes Council's Councillor Model Code of Conduct.
  - (b) Where a Councillor or Member is campaigning for election (including Local, State or Federal elections).
  - (c) Where a Councillor or Member is acting unlawfully.
  - (d) Where a Councillor or Member is acting solely in their capacity as a private individual.
  - (e) Where a Councillor or Member is carrying out work in their capacity as a worker or deemed worker of another individual, company organisation, or other body, or as a self-employed person.

### **Travel and Car Mileage Expenses**

- 8.3 Councillors and Members may make a written request for reimbursement of the travel costs incurred for the use of their own private vehicle or the cost of public transport fares when performing duties as a Councillor or Member.

- 8.4 Councillors and Members should understand that all travel must be undertaken in the most cost/time efficient and effective manner and that travel costs for partners/others will not be met by Council.
- 8.5 Reimbursement of car mileage can be claimed from the Councillor's or Member's normal place of residence or work to the location of the event and return by the most direct route.
- 8.6 To ensure that private and Council related travel is clearly separated, Councillors and Members are to retain a log of:
- (a) The date and location of Council or Delegated Committee related events/meetings attended.
  - (b) Purpose of business.
  - (c) Odometer reading.
  - (d) Any tax invoices relating to travel costs e.g. parking fees.
- 8.7 While travelling on Council business, Councillors or Members may incur tolls including those associated with the use of City Link and East Link. Councillors or Members may seek reimbursement of costs associated with tolls, including the use of day passes or those transactions incurred as part of existing personal e-tag accounts. Copies of relevant supporting documentation must be provided.
- 8.8 Where private vehicles are used, Councillors and Members are able to claim reimbursement for each kilometre of travel associated with performing their duties as a Councillor or a Member. This will be reimbursed at the rate adopted by Council for the claims made by officers.
- 8.9 Councillors are required to lodge travel and mileage expenses via Council's electronic claim form.

#### **Use of Council Pool Vehicles**

- 8.10 Council has a number of Council "pool vehicles" available for business use only. These vehicles can be booked using Council's Fleet booking system and use is at no cost to the councillor.

## **General Expenses**

- 8.11 Throughout the year there are various other expenses incurred by Councillors that are connected with undertaking their duties. General expenses incurred by Councillors may include:
- (a) Expenses for a meal for the Councillor (inclusive of food and beverages but excluding alcohol) either immediately prior to, or after, an official function/meeting (for example, opening a facility).
  - (b) Car parking associated with attending a meeting/function.
  - (c) Councillor ticket to a function/event (see Expenses for Partners or Guests for clarification about tickets for partners).
  - (d) Council related books.
  - (e) Council related subscriptions.
  - (f) Hire of halls and other venues for meetings with the community.
  - (g) Dry cleaning for attire provided by Council.

## **Expenses for Partners or Guests**

- 8.12 Reimbursement can be claimed for a Councillor and their partner or guest (inclusive of the meal and beverages but excluding alcohol) for costs associated with the attendance at functions for which the Councillor (and guest) have received a formal invitation (in writing).

## **Expenses for Carers in a Care Relationship**

- 8.13 Councillors' or Members' families may require support as a result of the Councillor undertaking their public duties. It is important to recognise that providing care for family is not limited to children, but this extends to a Councillor or a Member who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*.
- 8.14 Expenses for carers in a care relationship will only be reimbursed for care provided by:
- (a) A recognised childcare or care provider.
  - (b) A person who does not:
    - (i) Have a financial or pecuniary relationship with the Councillor or Member.
    - (ii) Reside either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor or Member, except where a live-in (professional) helper such as a nanny is required to work extra time at extra expense because of the Councillor's or Member's duties.
    - (iii) Have a relationship with the Councillor, the Member or their partner such that it would be inappropriate for Council to reimburse monies paid to the Care provider.
    - (iv) Have a relationship as a family member as defined in section 126 of the Act.

- 8.15 Councillors or Members shall engage the most cost effective option for delivery of care as is practicable given industry practices and the relevant circumstances.

### **Expenses that Cannot be Reimbursed**

- 8.16 Apart from expenses for partners/guests previously mentioned in this Policy, it is not appropriate for a Councillor or Member to request payment or reimbursement for expenses relating to their:
- (a) Personal business.
  - (b) Private business.
  - (c) Own employment.
  - (d) Election campaign (including Local, State or Federal elections)
- 8.17 Any expenditure incurred that is not specified in this Policy will be the responsibility of the Councillor or Member.
- 8.18 Claims for expenses, other than those included in this Policy, will not be reimbursed, except in exceptional circumstances after approval by a resolution of Council.

## **9. Submitting a Claim for Reimbursement**

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- 9.1 All claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor or Member should be made in writing, using the appropriate electronic form, providing full details and original receipts and supporting documentation.
- 9.2 The following information is required to support any request for reimbursement:
- (a) A tax invoice or a receipt clearly identifying the nature of the expense, the date it was incurred and ABN where applicable. If receipts cannot be produced, Councillors or Members may be required to provide a statutory declaration.
  - (b) The appropriate electronic claim form, fully completed with documentation attached (if applicable).
- 9.3 Claims that relate to care provided in support of a Councillor or Member undertaking their duty must be accompanied by a copy of an invoice, receipt, including date and time of care and the reason care was required.
- 9.4 Reimbursement will be provided for meals, car parking and tickets only where a written formal invitation (which may be an email confirming the details of the event/invitation) is provided with the receipt. A diary entry is not sufficient.
- 9.5 Claims for reimbursement that are not supported with the required information will not be considered until all of the necessary documentation is provided.
- 9.6 The claim form will be deemed to have been submitted by a councillor or Member if:

- (a) A claim form is signed by a Councillor or Member.
  - (b) A claim form is received via email from a Councillor or Member.
- 9.7 All claims for reimbursement should be submitted by Councillors and Members on a monthly basis, with this being a recommendation made by Council's Auditor.
- 9.8 Notwithstanding paragraph 9.7, claims must be made within three months of the date an expense has been incurred. If the claim is made after three months, the claim must be determined by a resolution of Council.
- 9.9 Claims by a Councillor for a previous term or prior to ceasing to be a Councillor must be finalised within one month of a Council election or by-election. After this time, the entitlement of the Councillor to claim the expense ceases.
- 9.10 Once approved, reimbursement will be made only by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the Councillor's or Member's nominated bank account.

## **10. Approval of Claims for Reimbursement of Expenses**

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- 10.1 All claims for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by a Councillor or Member will be considered by the Director Corporate Services or the Manager Organisational Performance & Integrity.

## **11. Conferences, seminars, training and Councillor development**

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- 11.1 It is a requirement for Councillors to undertake professional development throughout their term of office, with this to be based on the relevance to the role and responsibilities of the respective Councillor and any specific professional development needs identified. This may include:
- (a) Courses and training that relate directly to Council duties.
  - (b) Sessions organised by Local Government peak bodies such as:
    - (i) The Municipal Association of Victoria.
    - (ii) The Victorian Local Governance Association.
    - (iii) The Australian Local Government Association.
    - (iv) The Australian Local Government Women's Association.
  - (c) Specialist training related to Council duties, as agreed by the CEO.
  - (d) The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) course or any other suitable courses approved by the CEO (in consultation with the Mayor) related to governance and leadership.
  - (e) Specific needs-based training including, but not limited to, media and public speaking.

### **Accommodation**

- 11.2 Where the seminar, conference, or training course requires accommodation to be booked, the cost of a standard room will be met by Council from the day of registration until the conference/course concludes.

- 11.3 If registration is early in the day or the event finishes late in the evening, accommodation may be booked the night before the commencement or the night of the conclusion where no other practical option exists.
- 11.4 Accommodation booked in conjunction with official travel must be arranged through the EA Mayor and Councillors.

### **Approval Processes**

- 11.5 All requests to attend a seminar, conference or training course together with details about the event are to be forwarded to the EA Mayor and Councillors.
- 11.6 Requests will be considered by the Director Corporate Services or the Manager Organisational Performance & Integrity, who will check and endorse the request if it relates to performing duties as a Councillor and is in accordance with this Policy.
- 11.7 Registration and payment will be organised through the EA Mayor and Councillors.

### **Report to Council**

- 11.8 Councillors attending conferences and seminars will provide a report to Council on their attendance. This may be done under the regular item "Reports from Delegates" that is included on the Agenda for each Council Meeting.

## **12. Professional Memberships**

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- 12.1 Council will organise and pay for Councillors' membership of local government bodies, including but not limited to:
  - (a) The Victorian Local Governance Association.
  - (b) The Australian Local Government Association.
  - (c) The Australian Local Government Women's Association.

## **13. Interstate Travel**

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- 13.1 Interstate travel will be booked by the EA Mayor and Councillors.
- 13.2 When travelling interstate, the following guidelines need to be followed by Councillors or Members:
  - (a) The use of taxis or rideshare should be considered where transport is required at an interstate or international location, particularly when the numbers attending do not make the use of a hire vehicle a viable alternative.
  - (b) Vehicles may be hired, with the focus being on using the least expensive vehicle that is practical for the purpose.
  - (c) A Councillor or Member will not be reimbursed for the cost of any infringement incurred for road, traffic or parking violations.



- (d) Where air travel is required, the cost of an economy class ticket will be covered. Councillors or Members may accept travel upgrades as long as there is no additional cost to Council.
- 13.3 Claims for reimbursement of any out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing the duties of a Councillor or Members must be submitted to the EA Mayor and Councillors within 14 days of the date of travel. Once checked, these will then be submitted to Finance for payment.
- 13.4 Details of all Interstate travel will be recorded in the Travel Register that will be publicly available, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 12(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2015.
- 13.5 Should a partner be travelling with the Councillor, travel arrangements can be made on their behalf, however the Councillor must reimburse Council for the full cost of their partner's travel within four weeks of the date of travel.
- 13.6 Any reimbursements not received within four weeks will be deducted from the next expense claim lodged by the Councillor or the next Councillor allowance payment.

#### **Overseas Travel**

- 13.7 Any overseas travel must be approved by a formal resolution of Council prior to any travel arrangements being made. Such travel will only be considered where the proposed learning outcomes cannot be reasonably achieved within Australia. A comprehensive business case must accompany the request, clearly outlining the purpose of the travel, expected benefits, and relevance to Council's strategic objectives. Upon return, the traveller is required to present a detailed report to Council summarising the key learning outcomes, insights gained, and how these will be applied to benefit the community.
- 13.8 All interstate travel requirements included in 13.1-13.6 also apply to overseas travel arrangements.

#### **Passport and Visas**

- 13.9 Councillors or Members travelling overseas are responsible for ensuring that they have a current passport and visa.
- 13.10 Should a Councillor or Member be required to travel overseas as part of their role, the cost of a visa can be paid or reimbursed by the Council.

### **14. Public Transport**

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- 14.1 Councillors or Members have access to a Council supplied Myki card to enable travel on trains, trams, buses and light rail journeys while conducting Council

business within and outside the municipality. This is available upon request from the EA Mayor and Councillors.

## **15. Taxis / Rideshare / taxi vouchers**

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- 15.1 Councillors or Members incurring out-of-pocket expenses through using a taxi or Rideshare in the course of performing their duties should ensure that they obtain a receipt for their journey. The receipt must be submitted with the relevant electronic claim form.
- 15.2 Taxi vouchers are available from the EA Mayor and Councillors for use by a Councillor or Member when attending Council endorsed conferences or, when no other options exist, to allow for attendance at Council meetings or Council organised events. 5 days notice is required for a taxi voucher to be issued.

## **16. Ward Meetings**

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- 16.1 The reasonable costs of venue hire associated with Councillors holding meetings with residents and/or consultations within their ward can be reimbursed.

## **17. Councillors Reimbursing Council**

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- 17.1 A Councillor is able to reimburse Council for personal expenses paid by Council, by:
  - (a) Providing written authorisation to the CEO to deduct the amount from their next allowance payment.
- 17.2 Failure to reimburse the Council for costs incurred through personal use will be considered to be a breach of this Policy.

## **18. Fines and Infringements**

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- 18.1 Councillors and Members are personally responsible for the payment of their own fines and infringements.

## **19. Insurance**

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- 19.1 The Council's insurance policies cover Councillors when discharging, in good faith, their Council duties including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council representatives, for:
  - (a) Public liability
  - (b) Professional indemnity
  - (c) Personal accident
  - (d) Councillors' and Officers'.

- 19.2 The Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of a claim made against a Councillor arising from carrying out their Council duties in good faith, where that claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.
- 19.3 Equipment provided to Councillors by the Council is covered for damage or theft under Council's insurance policies. Councillors are expected to exercise due care in protecting the equipment from damage or theft.

## **20. Legal Advice and Expenses**

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- 20.1 The CEO will obtain legal advice on behalf of the Council or will be authorised to do so by a resolution of Council.
- 20.2 Although a Councillor can seek legal advice, they must not direct officers to do this on their behalf.
- 20.3 Costs for legal work or representation, where this is initiated, organised or commissioned by a Councillor should be personally met by the Councillor and will not be reimbursed by the Council.

## **21. Indemnity**

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- 21.1 Section 43 of the Act requires that Council indemnify all Councillors and Members against actions and claims made against them while conducting their duties as a Councillor or Members in good faith.
- 21.2 Councillors or Members, unlike state and federal members of parliament, do not have parliamentary privilege and so can be subject to civil action by a person who considers that a Councillor or Member has defamed them or has acted in a way that improperly harms them, whether this occurs in the Council Chamber or not.
- 21.3 Councillors or Members may have legal protection against defamation under 'qualified privilege' when undertaking their duties, however, only when comments are made by them in good faith and without malice.
- 21.4 If a Councillor or Member is subject to a civil action, they will have to deal with the matter as an individual, even if Council is paying the legal costs.
- 21.5 In some cases, Council or its insurers may refuse to provide indemnity for a Councillor's or Member's actions or statement. This is because the action or statement was either not considered to have occurred in the course of performing a Council duty or not to be done in good faith.
- 21.6 In the event a Councillor or Member makes an intentional defamatory comment, Council will not provide resources to legally defend the Councillor or Member, the Councillor or Member may face action under the Councillor Code of Conduct and could be sued.

## **22. Decision Review**

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- 22.1 If a Councillor or Member is not satisfied with a decision made by officers in line with this Policy, the matter can be referred to a panel consisting of the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor if the matter relates to the Mayor) and CEO (or delegate, who cannot be the original decision maker).
- 22.2 The panel shall jointly consider the application in accordance with the Policy and can determine to support the application, not support the application or refer the matter to Council for consideration.

## **23. WorkCover entitlement for Councillors**

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- 23.1 A Councillor injured while carrying out duties as a councillor may be entitled to claim under WorkCover following changes to the *Accident Compensation Act 1985*. The Council will be deemed to be the employer of a Councillor while they are carrying out duties as a councillor.
- 23.2 The Council's Return to Work and Injury Management Business Partner will be able to provide assistance but any enquiries should first be directed to the CEO.

## **24. Reporting of expenses claims**

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- 24.1 The Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020<sup>2</sup> require Council's Annual Report to include details of the expenses, including reimbursement of expenses, for each Councillor and member of a Council committee paid by the Council, categorised separately as:
- (a) Travel expenses.
  - (b) Car mileage expenses.
  - (c) Childcare expenses.
  - (d) Information and communication technology expenses.
  - (e) Conference and training expenses.
- 24.2 To ensure open and transparent governance, a report will also be prepared on a quarterly basis outlining the claims received and processed over the period. The report will be made available on the Council's website and provide year to date expenditure relating to the aforementioned expenses.
- 24.3 Council's ARMC will review quarterly reporting of Councillor and Member expenses claimed.

## **25. Policy Review**

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- 25.1 This Policy will be reviewed every four years, within 12 months of a Council election.
- 25.2 From time to time, circumstances may require minor administrative or consequential amendments to be made to this Policy. Where such an

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<sup>2</sup> See Regulation 10 (g)

amendment does not materially alter the Policy, this may be made administratively by the CEO.

- 25.3 Any amendment which materially alters the Policy must be approved by resolution of Council.

## 26. Revision History

Version	Date	Summary of revisions
2.0	August 2020	Updated to reflect and comply with the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
3.0	TBC	Updates include: Requirement for Overseas Travel to require a resolution of Council, various administrative changes to better reflect current practice and minor formatting changes

## COUNCILLOR INTERNAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

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Report Author: Coordinator Governance & Integrity  
 Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services  
 Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

## CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

## SUMMARY

The *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires all Councillors to observe the Model Councillor Code of Conduct (Model Code of Conduct). The Model Code of Conduct is prescribed the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.

In accordance with the Act and the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*, Council must implement and adopt an Internal Resolution Procedure (IRP), to be observed when dealing with alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

An IRP (Attachment 1) has been prepared for Council's consideration and adoption.

## RECOMMENDATION

***That Council adopt the Yarra Ranges Council Internal Resolution Procedure.***

## RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

During its meeting of 8 April 2025 Council adopted a Yarra Ranges Councillor Code of Conduct.

## DISCUSSION

### *Purpose and Background*

All Councillors are required to comply with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, as outlined in Schedule 1 of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

The Model Code of Conduct establishes the minimum expected standards of behaviour for Councillors in the performance of their official duties. Yarra Ranges has chosen to maintain a specific Councillor Code of Conduct that is to be read in addition to the Model Code.

Disagreements between Councillors can occur in various contexts. Under section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and Schedule 1A of the Governance and Integrity Regulations, Councils must adopt and implement an Internal Resolution Procedure (IRP) by 1 July 2025. This procedure is to be followed when managing alleged breaches of the Model Code.

The IRP applies specifically to situations where one councillor (the Complainant) claims that another councillor (the Respondent) has breached the Model Councillor Code of Conduct. The IRP does not relate to disputes between Council officers and Councillors.

The IRP has been prepared based on a template and advice from Maddocks Lawyers. The proposed IRP has been created to ensure the processes and procedures are lawful and based on best practice advice for the local government sector.

In accordance with section 150 of the Act, the Chief Executive Officer must also appoint a member of Council staff to be the Councillor Conduct Officer. The role of the Councillor Conduct Officer is to provide the Mayor with the administrative support necessary to arrange and conduct a conciliation. In preparation for any matters which may arise that require a Councillor Conduct Officer, an Instrument of Appointment and Authorisation is currently in force which outlines:

- Director Corporate Services is appointed to be the Councillor Conduct Officer and can perform the relevant functions under the Act.
- Manager Organisational Performance and Integrity is appointed to be the Councillor Conduct Officer, if the Director Corporate Services is absent.

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The financial implications of preparing the IRP, have been managed through existing operational budgets.

## APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective in the Council Plan: High Performing Organisation.

- Provides a clear framework for both parties to a dispute with support and encouragement to resolve the dispute in a manner that enables the Councillors to move forward and maintain effective working relationships.
- Safeguards Council's reputation and integrity by establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour for elected representatives.
- Promotes accountability and transparency in Council operations by clearly defining the expected process for dispute resolution.

## RELEVANT LAW

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.*

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

### *Economic Implications*

There are no economic impacts resulting from the preparation and adoption of the IRP.

### *Social Implications*

There are no impacts on any social groups resulting from the preparation and adoption of the IRP.

### *Environmental Implications*

The preparation and adoption of the IRP does not present any environmental sustainability issues or opportunities.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is no legislative requirement to conduct community consultation prior to the adoption of the IRP by Council.

## COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

No collaboration with other Councils, Governments or statutory bodies was sought. Innovation was not relevant in this case.



## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Adopting the IRP mitigates several risks demonstrating commitment to high ethical standards. The IRP is designed to minimise disruption of disputes to Council and individual Councillors and, where possible, avoid disputes escalating and becoming the subject of an internal arbitration.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Yarra Ranges Councillor Internal Resolution Procedure



# Yarra Ranges Council Internal Resolution Procedure

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## 1. Purpose

This Internal Resolution Procedure (**Procedure**) is adopted under and in accordance with section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Act)* and regulation 12A of the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.

This Procedure will be observed when dealing with alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

### 1.1 Dispute Definition

A dispute between Councillors, for the purpose of this procedure, refers to interpersonal conflicts, disagreements, or conduct issues that arise between individual Councillors, excluding differences of opinion relating to policy or decision-making matters, which are appropriately addressed through Councillor debate and voting during Council meetings.

This procedure does not apply to:

- Disputes between Councillors and Council staff, which are managed by the Chief Executive Officer in accordance with their responsibilities under section 46 of the Local Government Act.
- Disputes between Councillors and members of the public, which are addressed through the Yarra Ranges Councillor Code of Conduct or referred to the appropriate external agency.
- Allegations of sexual harassment.
- Disclosures made under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012, which must be directed to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).
- Allegations of criminal misconduct, which must be referred immediately to Victoria Police or the relevant integrity agency

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## 2. Internal Resolution Procedure

Disputes between Councillors may arise in a variety of circumstances. This Procedure is to apply to those disputes in which one Councillor (**the Complainant**) alleges that another Councillor (**the Respondent**) has breached the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

This Procedure provides both parties to a dispute with support and encouragement to resolve the dispute in a manner that enables the Councillors to move forward and maintain effective working relationships.

This Procedure is designed to minimise cost and disruption of disputes to Council and individual Councillors and, where possible, avoid disputes escalating and becoming the subject of an internal arbitration.

It is acknowledged that this Procedure will not be suitable for resolution of all disputes between Councillors.

An overview of the Procedure is annexed, in the form of a flowchart.

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### 3. First Stage of Internal Resolution Procedure – Discussion

A Complainant is encouraged to raise their issue directly with the Respondent in a respectful and courteous manner, either in person or in writing, where they feel comfortable to do so.

Councillors are encouraged to recognise that:

- (a) certain behaviours and communications may be perceived by others to be causing issues or offence that may not have been intended.
- (b) it can provide useful insight to reflect on their own behaviour or motivation and possible contribution to the dispute, whether intended or not; and
- (c) dealing with the dispute early is more likely to avoid the issue escalating and resolve it before it threatens the effective operation of Council.

It is useful to frame any issue from the Councillor's perspective (eg "I felt disrespected when you said / did ..."), rather than accusing another person of holding a particular position or taking a negative action deliberately. A Councillor should let the other Councillor know how they feel and ask for an explanation, rather than making accusations or assumptions.

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### 4. Second Stage of Internal Resolution Procedure – Conciliation

Where a direct conversation between Councillors has not been successful in resolving the dispute, or a Councillor does not feel comfortable communicating directly with another Councillor, the second stage of this Procedure is conciliation.

#### 4.1 Initiating conciliation

A Complainant initiating conciliation must notify the Mayor and the Respondent of the dispute by completing a **Conciliation Application Form**. That form (see Attachment 1 to this Procedure) must:

- (a) specify the names of the Complainant and Respondent;
- (b) specify the provision (or provisions) of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct alleged to have been breached;
- (c) detail what was said or done by the Respondent to constitute a breach of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct;
- (d) attach any supporting information to provide examples of the behaviour complained of (eg screenshots or emails); and
- (e) be dated and signed by the Complainant.

#### **4.2 Participating in conciliation**

Councillors are not obliged to engage in conciliation but should only decline to participate if they honestly and reasonably believe that their participation would adversely affect their health or wellbeing or would otherwise be unsafe.

A Respondent declining to participate in the conciliation must advise the Complainant and the Mayor of their unwillingness to participate, and the reasons for it. That advice must be provided no more than one week after receiving the Conciliation Application Form.

#### **4.3 Conduct of conciliation**

Conciliation is to be conducted by the Mayor except when the Mayor is a party to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct conciliation. In that case the Deputy Mayor will assume the role of the Mayor in the conciliation process. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are parties to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct the conciliation, the role of the Mayor must be performed by a Councillor jointly chosen for the purpose by the parties.

When, in this Procedure, reference is made to the Mayor it includes:

- (a) the Deputy Mayor; and
- (b) a Councillor jointly chosen for the purpose by the parties,

when the Mayor and/or the Deputy Mayor are parties to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct a conciliation.

#### **4.4 Roles and responsibilities**

The role of the Mayor is to provide guidance to the parties to the dispute about the Standards of Conduct in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, and actively explore whether the dispute can be resolved by agreement between them.

The role of the Complainant and Respondent is to explain their respective positions and, in a show of goodwill, actively explore the possibility of resolving the dispute by agreement.

All Councillors are responsible for conducting themselves in a courteous and respectful manner at all times during the conciliation.

The role of the Councillor Conduct Officer is to provide the Mayor with the administrative support necessary to arrange and conduct the conciliation.

#### **4.5 Support from Council**

Council, through the Councillor Conduct Officer, will provide administrative assistance to the Mayor when arranging a time and place for conciliation, including any technical assistance that may be required. Council will make a venue available to the Councillors within Council's offices that is private and suited to the conciliation process.

Council will not provide any substantive guidance or advice about the subject matter of the dispute, or pay the costs of legal advice or representation for any Councillor in connection with this Procedure. Parties to a dispute may seek their own legal or other advice at their own cost, if they choose to do so.

#### **4.6 End or termination of conciliation**

Conciliation will end or be terminated if any of the following occurs:

- (a) the parties cannot jointly choose a Councillor to conduct the conciliation within one week of being asked to do so;
- (b) the Respondent notifies the Mayor that they do not wish to participate in conciliation, and the reasons for it, within one week of receiving the Conciliation Application Form;
- (c) the Respondent does not respond to the Conciliation Application Form at all within two weeks of receiving it;
- (d) conciliation has not occurred within four weeks of the Complainant submitting the Conciliation Application Form;
- (e) conciliation has occurred and the parties have been unable to resolve the dispute; or
- (f) the dispute has been resolved.

The time for conciliation may be extended by agreement between the parties to the dispute, whether or not the matter has been escalated to one of the formal dispute resolution procedures outlined in the Act.

#### **4.7 Confidentiality**

Parties and other participants are expected to maintain confidentiality concerning the dispute and the operation of this Procedure.

#### **4.8 Record of outcome**

The Mayor must document any agreement that is reached between the Complainant and Respondent. The agreement must be signed by the Complainant, Respondent and Mayor. Copies must be provided to the Complainant and Respondent, and the original must be retained by the Mayor. Again, parties and the Mayor are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the agreement reached.

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### **5. Internal Resolution Procedure does not Apply in these Circumstances**

The following disputes are not covered by this Procedure:

- (a) differences between Councillors in relation to policy or decision making, which are appropriately resolved through discussion and voting in Council meetings;
- (b) complaints made against a Councillor or Councillors by a member or members of Council staff, or by any other external person;
- (c) allegations of sexual harassment;
- (d) disclosures made about a Councillor under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*, which can only be made to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission; and
- (e) allegations of criminal misconduct, which should be immediately referred to Victoria Police or the relevant integrity authority.

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## **6. Formal Dispute Resolution Procedure**

This Procedure operates alongside, and does not replace, the formal dispute resolution procedures outlined in the Act.

The formal dispute resolution procedure applies to misconduct, serious misconduct and gross misconduct.

Section 141 of the Act provides for an internal arbitration process concerning a breach of the Standards of Conduct set out in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

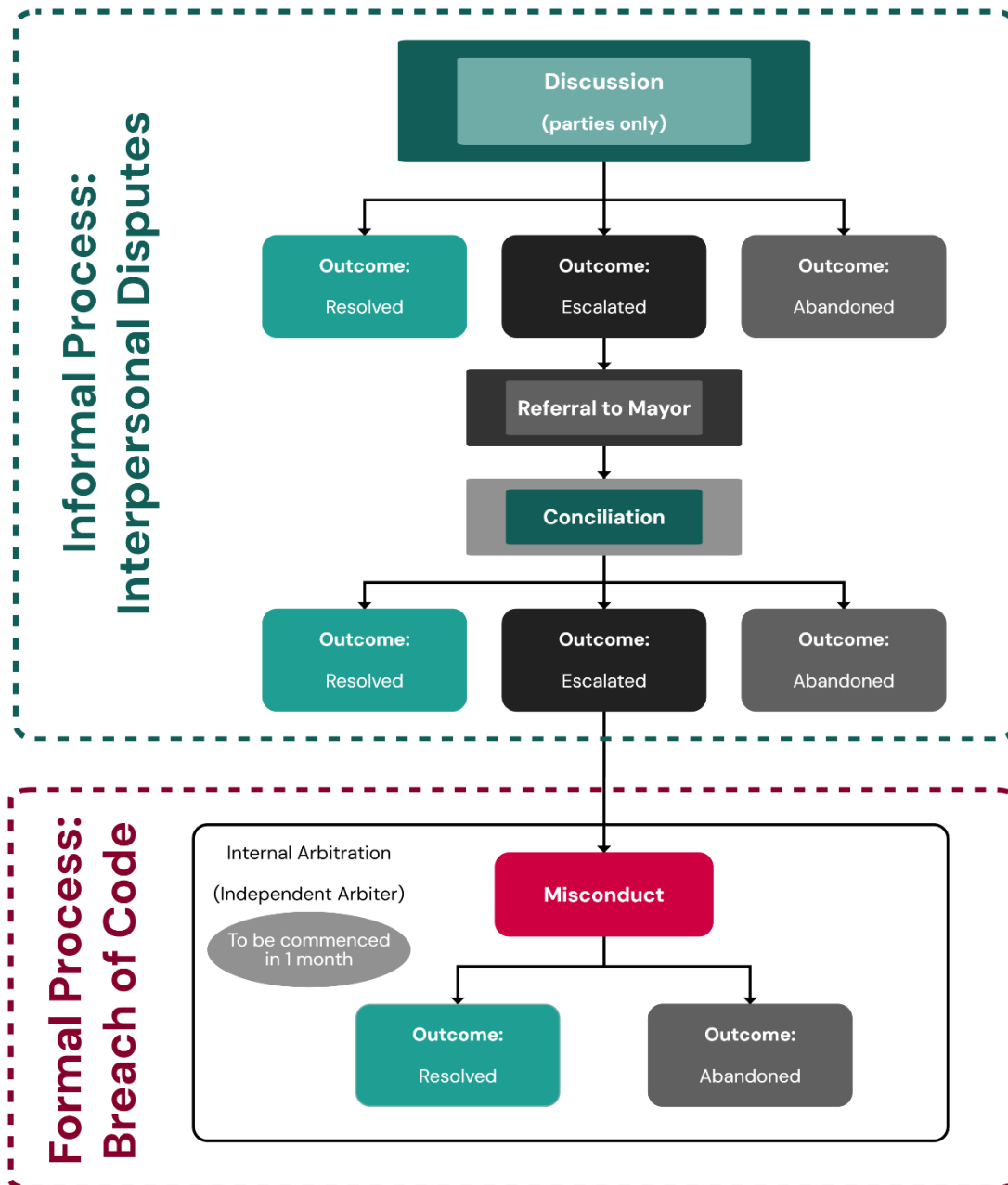
## Attachment 1 Conciliation Application Form

<b>Complainant:</b>	
<b>Respondent:</b>	
<b>Provisions of Model Councillor Code of Conduct breached:</b>	
<b>Action constituting breach:</b>	
<b>(Include dates, times and detailed descriptions of the action complained of. Attach further documents as necessary.)</b>	

Signed by ..... )  
 on ..... )

## Annexure

### INTERNAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FLOWCHART





## DRAFT PATHS AND TRAILS PLAN 2025-2035 RELEASE FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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Report Author: Executive Officer Recreation & Sport  
 Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure  
 Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### SUMMARY

The Draft Paths and Trails Plan 2025-2035 (Attachment 1) provides guidance for the development of the network of paths and trails in Yarra Ranges with a particular focus on improving health, wellbeing and community connectivity. The Plan considers and builds on the existing Hike and Bike Strategy (2005).

The Draft Paths and Trails Plan 2025-2035 aims to:

- Identify levels of service for Shared Use and Walking Trails to define construction and maintenance standards.
- Identify and map Shared Trails and Council owned or maintained Walking Trails in the Yarra Ranges.
- Identify action areas relating to the future of the paths and trails network.
- Identify priority of works including upgrades to sections of existing trails, new/improved crossings and addressing missing link to paths and trails.

This report provides Councillors with a summary of the consultation which took place in 2024, an update of the changes made to the draft plan and seeks Council support to release the plan for final community consultation.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That Council endorse the release of the Draft Paths and Trails Plan 2025-2035 for Community Consultation.***

## RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- Adopted the *Hike & Bike Strategy 2005* which outlined a network of paths and trails across the municipality to improve connections and promote tourism.
- September 2018 - Adopted the *Eastern Regional Trail Strategy 2018* which provided the strategic direction required to allow local government and other land management authorities to work together towards an interconnected and well-used trail network over the next decade.
- Adopted ‘*Connected*’ the *Integrated Transport Strategy 2020*, which creates the framework and direction to align transport investment and policy decisions with the aspirations the community hold for the Yarra Ranges of the future.

## DISCUSSION

### ***Purpose and Background***

This report has been prepared to provide Council with an update on the consultation that occurred in 2024 subsequent changes to the Draft Paths and Trails Plan and seek approval to undertake the final round of consultation before consideration of adoption in October 2025. The plan has been part-funded through a Sport and Recreation Victoria “*Community Facility Funding Planning Grant*”.

The plan provides the strategic intent regarding the Paths and Trails network in Yarra Ranges. It identifies categories of trails, levels of service, and expectations regarding supporting infrastructure. A key role of the plan is to catalogue the existing network, identify any gaps and establish a proposed program of works for the next 10 plus years which, subject to funding, will improve and enhance the existing network.

The Priority Trails Program was developed using a specifically designed set of twelve weighted evaluation criteria as a priority matrix to assess each priority trail and determine a “total priority score”, to a maximum of 100 for each project.

These weighted criteria cover all aspects of trail use in relation to:

- Access and social cohesion
- Health and wellbeing
- Trail network connectivity
- Visitation and activity

Updates to the draft plan following preliminary consultation in 2024 have included:

- The addition of plan objectives in the Introduction section,
- Changes to wording and formatting throughout the document, particularly in the Conclusion section,
- Additional context on how Council’s Capital Works Program is implemented,
- Providing greater clarity regarding Trail Classifications (i.e. Level 1 Trail, Level 2 Trail, etc.),
- Updating names of trails as needed to match official trail title,

- Inclusion of trail projects in maps and priority lists that have been suggested by residents and supported after officer review, and,
- Expansion of the Community Consultation section of the draft plan to include most recent community consultation findings (July-August 2024).

### ***Options considered***

During the consultation in July 2024, we received 145 suggestions for new/upgraded paths and trails. Of those suggestions 33 were already included in our project priorities and an additional 13 were assessed as feasible and have been added into the draft plan for consideration as future trail projects.

When assessing paths and trails suggestions, and to determine project priority, the following criteria was used:

- Improve access to regional open space & community facilities
- Improve access to natural landscapes
- Enables active trips long enough to generate user health benefits
- Improves access to train station or bus stops
- Improves network connectivity
- Connecting town centres/ activity centres/ industrial precincts
- Improves access to primary/ secondary/ tertiary education
- Improves access to cultural heritage
- Provides service to disadvantaged residents
- Inclusive of all abilities
- Size of population catchment within 1km of path
- Generates visitors from outside the municipality

### ***Recommended option and justification***

Note the feedback received from consultation and subsequent changes to the draft Paths and Trails Plan.

Support the release of the Draft Paths and Trails Plan for Community Consultation.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

Full implementation of the plan is estimated to cost approximately \$55 million. This includes upgrades to existing trails, crossings and new trails that fill gaps in the network. Cost per metre from similar trail projects have been used to calculate estimated costings, with finalised budgets to be determined through detailed design.

The projects will be assessed to identify opportunities for upcoming grants and capital funding allocation from the capital investment assessment process. It is not expected that the plan will be fully implemented within the 10-year period. Any trails that have not been constructed will roll over into the next Paths and Trails Plan. A

mid-term review of priorities will be undertaken to ensure the plan remain relevant, while an annual review to assess projects suitable for consideration in Council's capital works program will also occur.

The estimated costs for the \$55M implementation programs includes:

- Upgrades - \$10M
- Crossings - \$5M
- New/Missing links - approximately \$39.9M

In addition to the initial capital cost to build trails, operational budget needs to be allocated to maintain new and increased levels of service within our paths and trail network. As part of capital works planning, projects should have an operational plan and budget before commencement.

## **Funding**

Potential avenues to seek development funding for trails include federal, state and local government, regulatory bodies, community organisations / partners, grant funding, commercial sponsorship, commercial ventures and philanthropic donations.

Trails have close links with the health, tourism and natural environment, and therefore funding opportunities from federal and state governments are becoming more frequent.

In addition to the weighted criteria specifically designed for trail assessment, the Capital Investment Planning Team has developed a weighted criteria that is used to assess capital projects to develop a capital pipeline for project delivery. New trail and upgrades to existing trail projects will be assessed as part of this process.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

The Council Plan 2021-25 highlighted the importance of paths and trails to the community. The strategic objective of Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places referencing that 'Our townships are designed to improve liveability and support health and wellbeing through improved footpaths, trails, lighting and infrastructure.'

This is reinforced with the inclusion of the following major initiative that is to "Become a world class trails and eco-tourism destination through project development, delivery, advocacy and partnerships, including the delivery of the Ridges and Rivers projects."

The draft Paths and Trails Plan contributes to the following strategic objective in the Council Plan: Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places

- Quality facilities and infrastructure meets current and future needs. Places are well planned and are hubs of activity that foster wellbeing, creativity and innovation.

The Draft Paths and Trails Plan 2025-2035 contributes to the following strategic objective in the 2021-2025 Health and Wellbeing Plan:

- Priority 4: 'increase active living'.
- This goal aims to ensure people in Yarra Ranges have capacity to walk and be physically active through accessible footpaths, trails, parks, play spaces and an inclusive culture that supports participation in all forms of physical activity.

The Eastern Regional Trails Strategy (ERTS) 2018 noted the vision of Yarra Ranges Council to create world class trails-based tourism destinations in the Yarra Ranges. Currently there are seven regional trails (existing and proposed) in the Eastern Regional Trails Strategy that are either entirely or partially located within Yarra Ranges. The Yarra Valley Trail is the highest ranked new trail in the Strategy. The other priority regional trails are:

- Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail (extension to Lilydale)
- Heathmont to Belgrave (Belgrave Rail Trail)
- O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail
- Tarralla Creek Trail (Carrum Warburton Trail)
- Lilydale Warburton Rail Trail
- Yarra River Paddle Trail

Yarra Ranges Council's *Integrated Transport Strategy: 'Connected'* closely aligns with the principles and priorities of the Paths and Trails plan. As part of 'Connected' a comprehensive framework tailored for the development of bicycle paths, particularly within the road reserve is being established. This framework is designed with a broader scope, enabling the identification and prioritisation of linkages outside of the scope of this project. Connected also made the following recommendations:

- Expand the footpath network across Yarra Ranges, using a prioritisation framework,
- Capitalise on large infrastructure projects which may include installing safer crossing and wider footpaths,
- Continue the footpath building program – to provide a complete network of footpaths in the built-up areas of Yarra Ranges and connect into the trail network, using the Footpath Prioritisation, and,
- Footpath Framework prepared as part of 'Connected'.

There are a wide range of outdoor exercise equipment options available that may be appropriate supporting infrastructure to Level 1 trails. The determination of these trails, along with the location and type of equipment, should be considered as per the Active Recreation Plan (2023-2033).

## RELEVANT LAW

A Draft Gender Impact Assessment has commenced. The GIA will be reviewed following the consultation and options and recommendations considered. These will then be applied to the plan where appropriate prior to adoption.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

Implementation of the draft Plan has the potential to provide economic benefit to local communities and businesses. Research has shown that people walking or cycling to destinations are more likely to shop locally, visit more frequently and spend longer visiting local businesses.

This plan encourages active modes of transport to destinations by making them easily accessible to residents of Yarra Ranges.

The improvement to and/or provision of facilities is also expected to contribute to the local economy through employment opportunities and as a source of materials and equipment.

Improving overall health through physical activity has an economic benefit through preventative health outcomes that can lessen the burden on health facilities.

### ***Social Implications***

There are strong links to social and community impacts resulting from the development and improvement of active recreation spaces such as paths and trails, which include:

- Enhanced community access to infrastructure that encourages alternative health and wellbeing outcomes,
- Revitalisation of local communities; and,
- Reduction of social isolation.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies high levels of obesity, dementia, and poor mental health as significant issues for our community. Provision of safe and accessible active recreation opportunities, as well as other diverse social active recreation opportunities are important contributors to improved health.

### ***Environmental Implications***

A highly valued aspect of the Yarra Ranges municipality is its unique nature and natural setting. The landscape provides the opportunity to walk, exercise, sit and take in the view, and/or watch children play or cycle on one of our many trails. A consistent message through the consultation was that this unique connection and access to nature is what sets the area apart and why a lot of people choose to live in the Yarra Ranges.

The preservation, enhancement, and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities is a key driver for improvement underpinning recommendations. It is also vital that throughout this, proper care and environmental consideration is taken wherever any upgrades or facility installations are implemented, to ensure sustainable materials are sourced and that the natural habit and connection to nature and the environment is maintained.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council has provided opportunities for the community to engage with and be involved in assisting the determination of priorities for paths and trails within the municipality over a 5-year period.

This has included specific consultation of paths and trails users through online and intercept surveys as well as the utilisation of consultation undertaken for related projects such as the Recreation and Open Space Strategy and the Integrated Transport Plan.

The most recent consultation occurred between 5 July 2024 and 2 August 2024, using a range of different communications and engagement methods to make sure that the entire community had the means, and notice, to provide feedback if they wished.

A summary of the consultation undertaken includes:

- Social media posts
  - 11,300+ post reach
  - 34 comments
  - 140+ link clicks through to engagement page
- 580+ link clicks from newsletters to engagement page
- 145 people completed the online survey via the Shaping Yarra Ranges
  - Of these 145 new/upgraded paths and trails suggestions:
    - 33 were already included
    - 13 were deemed feasible and added into the draft
    - 99 were assessed and did not meet requirements/could not be delivered feasibly. E.g. Not on Council owned land.

During this consultation we asked community to provide feedback on the vision and principles of the plan as well as gave them the opportunity to let us know if we have missed any key paths and trails that may needs upgrading or any missing links in the network. The below table summarises key feedback received and the changes that were made to the plan to address this.

Feedback Received	Changes Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking/cycling trails are the most frequently visited open spaces on a daily occurrence within the municipality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to 'Connected' - the Integrated Transport Strategy, to ensure a unified approach on the establishment and maintenance of trails and bike lanes.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges to accessing the trails include network gaps, terrain, and conflicting needs of different trail users.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work completed to identify gaps within the network includes highlighting missing crossing/footpath connections. The plan also includes a commitment to work with the relevant teams within Council to ensure development/delivery of these missing connections.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community expectations include better connections, amenities, safety measures, and targeted local initiatives that have shown improvements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly outlined levels of services for the different categories of paths and trails as well as the trail infrastructure that can be expected.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking to services/townships is too hard because the distances are too great and gradients too steep.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action areas specifically relating to activation of existing trails. Including identifying local walking circuits to and around townships. This also includes provisions for upgrading/additional paths/trails to complete these circuits.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wayfinding is poor and more information/education along the trails is required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action area relating to improved signage and wayfinding on key routes/circuits.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information about paths and trails needs to be easier to find (i.e. promoted on Yarra Ranges Website).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to updating website information/providing printable maps to improve promotion of paths and trails.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vegetation management throughout the network should be prioritised to enhance the user experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of action item to continue to provide operation budget for maintenance along trails</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>145 suggestions for new/upgraded trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All suggestions were assessed against the prioritisation criteria and 13 feasible paths &amp; trails were added to the plan</li> </ul>

The Recreation team presented at the June Disability Advisory Committee meeting where a discussion was held around the importance of the accessibility of paths and trails to gain an understanding of how these assets can be improved.



This report seeks support for the final round of community engagement following finalisation of the draft. The purpose of this engagement will be to ensure that the plan meets community expectations and gaps and priorities have been successfully identified. Feedback obtained will be considered in the context of broad community benefit. This will confirm the validity of proposed improvements and may result in modifications, deletions, or additional recommendations for Council's consideration in the revised draft Paths and Trails Plan.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

A recommendation within the plan relates specifically to agency cooperation and commits to investigating opportunities for paths and trails across multiple land tenures and management bodies. This will result in collaboration and generate opportunities for innovation through delivery of projects and builds on the work identified within the Eastern Trails Strategy.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The plan aims to reduce risks associated with the paths and trails network by determining the priority works for new/missing trails as well as upgrades to existing network that propose a risk to users in their current state. Individual risk assessments will be completed for individual projects as they commence.

This plan needs to be finalised to avoid further reputational risk to Council from funding partners and risk to future grant opportunities.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Draft Paths and Trails Plan 2025-2035





Yarra Ranges Council

# DRAFT Paths and Trails Plan 2025–2035

Page 78





## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nations as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands and waterways.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past, present, and emerging, who have been, and always will be, integral to the story of our region.

We proudly share custodianship to care for Country together.

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# Introduction

**Vision:** People in Yarra Ranges can easily access and use our paths and trails network for active transport, recreation, and relaxation. Our trail network includes a range of different trail types that connect our communities, facilitate connection to our unique natural environment and help our communities to be active.

Paths & trails are essential components of the municipality's open spaces, streetscapes, and road network. These linear movement corridors connect places and people, as well as benefit the community by encouraging active lifestyles and outdoor exercise, promoting sustainable modes of transport, supporting tourism outcomes, and stimulating local businesses. Yarra Ranges Council plays an important role in creating a healthy and connected community through the provision and management of a diverse paths and trails network. The network will assist people to get from A to B within their neighbourhood, provide opportunities for recreation and engagement, relaxation, and encourage people to connect with nature. The purpose of this plan is to facilitate a diverse and accessible path and trail network that caters for a variety of user groups. The plan's objectives are:

- Establish trail upgrade priorities and develop an advocacy program for the next 10 years,
- Establish a program of new trails in response to community consultation and feedback,
- Establish clear and transparent processes and frameworks for Council to develop, deliver, promote and maintain paths and trails within each category.

To deliver the above objectives, a series of actions and opportunities for Yarra Ranges to improve the delivery of paths and trails has been developed. In addition to these actions, a priority program for both upgrades to existing trails and construction of missing links is provided within this plan. The funding required to deliver priority projects identified in this plan will be sourced from Council's annual budget process, as well as suitable grant opportunities for trail developments that support recreation, active transport and economic development.

The planning of paths and trails are integrated with bike lanes, this plan does not include street bike facilities. For this information please refer to Yarra Ranges Council's *'Connected' Integrated Transport Strategy: 'Connected'*.

The Paths and Trails Plan will be reviewed annually and updated every 10 years. An assessment tool has been developed so new trails presented to Council within this period can be assessed against consistent criteria (this can be found on page 30) and be added to the program where appropriate.

**We will achieve the vision through consideration of the following principles:**



### **Connectivity**

Trails provide links between key destinations such as townships, employment hubs and public transport.



### **Connection to Nature**

Trails showcase and allow users to connect and engage with the natural environment.



### **Tourism**

Trails attract visitors from all over Australia and internationally, encouraging tourism spend in the local townships.



### **Health and Wellbeing**

Trails enable and encourage more people to get active.



### **Accessibility**

Trails are easily accessible, free to use and safe.



### **Environment Protection**

Planning for new trails will consider the impact on the natural environment.



### **Cultural Significance**

Trails provide opportunities for greater cultural heritage connection.



# Yarra Ranges Council Overview

Yarra Ranges is home to over 150,000 people and covers approximately 2,500km<sup>2</sup>. The municipality stretches from the densely populated outer suburbs into the foothills, agricultural valleys and forested areas of the Great Dividing Ranges.

Around 70% of the population lives in urban areas, which represent only 3% of the Yarra Ranges' landmass.

Yarra Ranges has long been recognised for its natural beauty and diverse habitats. The combination of national parks, state forests, private gardens, and its proximity to Melbourne makes the area unique.

Some of Victoria's most environmentally important areas are located in the Yarra Ranges. The mountainous landscapes and Yarra Valley contain significant native vegetation and provide important habitats for wildlife.

The *Council Plan 2021-25* highlighted the importance of paths and trails to the community. The strategic objective of Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places referencing that 'Our townships are designed to improve liveability and support health and wellbeing through improved footpaths, trails, lighting and infrastructure.'

This is reinforced with the inclusion of the following major initiative that is to "Become a world class trails and eco-tourism destination through project development, delivery, advocacy and partnerships, including the delivery of the Ridges and Rivers projects."







# Background Information

## Eastern Regional Trails Strategy 2018

The Eastern Regional Trails Strategy (ERTS) 2018 noted the vision of Yarra Ranges Council to create world class trails-based tourism destinations in the Yarra Ranges. Currently there are seven regional trails (existing and proposed) in the Eastern Regional Trails Strategy that are either entirely or partially located within Yarra Ranges. Yarra Valley Trail is the highest ranked new trail in the Strategy. The other priority regional trails are:

- Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail (extension to Lilydale)
- Heathmont to Belgrave (Belgrave Rail Trail)
- O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail
- Tarralla Creek Trail (Carrum Warburton Trail)
- Lilydale Warburton Rail Trail
- Yarra Valley Trail
- Yarra River Paddle Trail



## Why do we need Paths and Trails?

Paths and trails play a crucial role in shaping the way we interact with our environment and each other. Beyond their practical function of facilitating navigation and ensuring safety, these routes serve as conduits for various aspects of human life. They provide a structured means of connecting locations, fostering connectivity within communities. Well-designed trails contribute to environmental conservation by directing foot traffic away from fragile ecosystems, reducing soil erosion, and preserving biodiversity. Additionally, paths offer opportunities for recreation, promoting physical health and well-being through activities such as hiking, biking, and jogging. Many trails have historical or cultural significance, preserving traditional routes and connecting us to our past. From a tourism perspective, trails can attract visitors, contributing to local economies and encourage the development of supporting infrastructure. Trails also create communal spaces that promote social interaction and a sense of community. In essence, paths and trails are not merely physical routes but integral components of a healthier, more connected, and sustainable living environment.



## Factors influencing Path and Trail usage

Various factors, such as age, gender, ability, disability, cultural background, socio-economic status, and personal preferences, impact the use of paths and trails. Research and participation data primarily focus on age and gender, recognising that these factors intersect with others, shaping people's identities and experiences. All of these factors collectively influence how people get active in the Yarra Ranges. Yarra Ranges Council is committed to providing equitable access to opportunities and resources, as stated in the *Council Plan 2021-25* and other strategic documents. This plan considers the various factors influencing trail use, aiming to make paths and trails accessible, safe, and appealing to all members of the community.

Under the Gender Equality Act, Council is required to undertake Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) to ensure we think critically about how Council's policies, programs and services will meet the different needs of women, men and gender diverse people. A GIA has been completed and is considered a supporting document for this plan.

## Activation of our Paths and Trails Network

Identifying gaps and areas for new and upgraded trails and supporting infrastructure within the network is one way of improved experiences across paths and trails within Yarra Ranges. Further to this, improved trail experiences can occur in the form of enhanced trail activation. Paths and trails can be activated through various ways that enhance their accessibility, appeal, and utility. Socially, activated paths become communal spaces that foster a sense of belonging and community interaction. They serve as meeting points, encouraging socializing, and creating a shared experience among residents. Additionally, activated trails can boost local economies by attracting tourism and supporting nearby businesses.

Yarra Ranges Council currently hosts several events utilising the paths and trails network including park runs, walking groups, trail runs and organized bike rides.

# Community Consultation

## How we engaged

Community consultation has been an integral part of developing this plan. Yarra Ranges Council has provided opportunities for the community to engage and be involved in assisting in the determination of priorities for paths and trails within the municipality across a number of different projects. Previous consultation that has been undertaken over a 5 year period has included;

- **1,234** Community Surveys and 11 Listening Posts - Recreation and Open Space Strategy (2019)
- **137** online survey responses, survey sent to a sample of schools and 4 on-street pop-up events - Paths and Trails Survey Phase 1 (2019)
- **469** online survey responses - Paths and Trails Survey Phase 2 (2019)
- **596** online survey responses, community pop-ups, external reference groups and Councillor sessions- Integrated Transport Strategy (2019)

- Intercept surveys were conducted at **8 locations** over 8 days - Trail Evaluation and Monitoring Pilot Project (2020)
- Trail Satisfaction Report 2022
  - Lillydale Lake Trail **36** surveys
  - Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail **91** surveys
  - Yarra Valley Trail **62** surveys

More recently, a community survey was undertaken through July - August 2024. This survey asked the community for suggestions on how Council can improve and enhance the Paths and Trails network throughout the Shire of Yarra Ranges, with a particular focus on identifying missing trails and connections.

Overall, 145 responses were received through this process. The most popular suggestions related to New Trails/Paths (38%), Trail Connections (26%), Trail Surfaces and Maintenance (17%) and Concerns with Trail Safety (17%).



## Consultation summary

Feedback collected has been summarised into four key focus areas. The following are examples of comments received relating to the importance of usability, exercise, natural environment, and social connection when it relates to paths and trails.



### Exercise

- Walking/cycling trails are the most frequently visited open spaces on a daily occurrence within the municipality.
- Walking to services/townships is too hard because the distances are too great and gradients too steep.



### Social Connection

- Public art opportunities with nodes that promote gathering and meeting are valued along paths and trails.
- Paths and trail networks service social interactions by providing recreation activities, modes of transport and social spaces.



### Usability

- Wayfinding is poor and more information/education along the trails is required.
- Community expectations include better connections, amenities, safety measures, and targeted local initiatives that have shown improvements.
- Challenges to accessing the trails include network gaps, terrain, and conflicting needs of different trail users.
- Information about paths and trails needs to be easier to find (i.e. promoted on Yarra Ranges Website).
- Concerns regarding the condition of pathways, and the need for regular cleaning and repairs to damaged sections.




### Natural Environment

- A high portion of respondents believe the provision of trails is the most important aspect to their health and wellbeing providing them an important connection to the environment.
- Nature and scenery were the most frequently cited responses to the most enjoyable aspects of the trail/s.
- Vegetation management throughout the network should be prioritised to enhance the user experience.

# What are the different Paths and Trails?

Yarra Ranges has an extensive network of 866 kilometres of paths and trails, including 661 kilometres of footpaths and 205 kilometres of recreational trails used for activities such as hiking, cycling, and horse-riding. The existing network connects various townships and neighbouring Councils, emphasizing the need for regional amenities. The vast majority of paths and trails in the Yarra Ranges can be grouped into the following three categories: *shared trails*, *walking trails* and *footpaths*.

Beyond these commonly used trail categories, this plan also considers trails that serve a unique purpose, such as Equestrian Trails, Mountain Bike Trails and Canoe Trails. These paths and trails cater to the preferences and needs of different user groups. The variety allows communities to enjoy diverse outdoor activities while promoting healthy lifestyles and connecting with nature.

 <b>Shared Trails</b>	 <b>Walking Trails</b>	 <b>Footpaths</b>
<p>Shared trails are designed for multiple user groups, accommodating activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, and horse riding. These trails are inclusive and intended for a diverse range of recreational purposes. Users are expected to share the trail space responsibly, following guidelines for safety and courtesy.</p>	<p>Walking trails are dedicated paths primarily designed for pedestrians in open space. These trails offer a peaceful and scenic environment, encouraging individuals to engage in walking for exercise, relaxation, or nature appreciation. Walking trails may vary in difficulty, providing options for people of different fitness levels.</p>	<p>Footpaths are typically urban or suburban pathways designed for pedestrians. They are commonly found in residential areas, road reserves, and urban landscapes. Footpaths are essential for promoting safe and convenient walking within communities, connecting residential areas to amenities like schools, parks, and public spaces.</p> <p><i>Council's Integrated Transport Strategy – "Connected" identified a key action to expand the footpath network using a footpath prioritisation framework.</i></p>



## Mountain Bike Trails

Mountain bike trails are specifically designed for off-road cycling, typically in natural or wooded areas. These trails often include features such as challenging terrain, obstacles, and elevation changes to provide an exciting experience for mountain biking enthusiasts. Mountain bike trails are marked to indicate difficulty levels.

Mountain bike trails are categorised by a rider's skills level. The grading system allows you to choose a track that matches your skill level, fitness, and experience.

The mountain bike trail grading system considers trail width, trail surface and obstacles, trail gradient, and fitness and skill level required to ride the trail. Each of these factors contribute to the trail's overall grade.

Yarra Ranges Council provides mountain bike infrastructure at Lillydale Lake and as part of the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination. Council also supports trail connections to other facilities in Silvan and Lysterfield.

## Equestrian Trails

A range of equestrian activities occurs at public and private facilities, riding grounds, showgrounds, and racecourses. This activity is generally self-sufficient due to the specialised nature of the requirements, however, some funding support is provided by Council primarily to pony clubs to support local-level facilities.

Trails used by equestrians range from purpose-built trails, such as Lillydale Warburton Rail Trail, designed to accommodate equestrians to more informal roadside trails and verges. The more informal mixed-use trails are used for both recreational purposes and to gain access to equestrian facilities. Many riders enjoy the natural environment and require safe riding routes. Examples of the more informal routes include the Wellington Road Trail and the local roadside trails in Macclesfield. Equestrian use of trails also brings the potential for economic benefit through commercial operators providing tourism experiences based around horse riding on the trails.





## Canoe Trails

The ERTS found that paddle-sport activity in the eastern region is largely confined to the Yarra River. This includes use by youth-focused groups, such as Scouts, as well as dedicated paddle clubs. The 2010 *Participation in Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey* estimated that 0.8% of the Victoria population participated in some form of canoeing and/or kayaking activity within the preceding year, and Maritime Safety Victoria estimates that 352,100 Victorians, or approximately 5% of the population, own at least one paddle craft. The frequency of use is also low with 93% of ERTS survey respondents who indicated involvement in paddle sports, undertook the activity 'a few times per year' or less.



The *Canoeing Victoria Strategic Facilities Plan* recognises Lilydale Lake as a venue for introduction to canoeing and recreation and the Lower Homestead Road to Wittons Reserve section of the Yarra River, and the Yarra River around Warburton as priority wildwater canoeing locations. Popular one-way canoe trails between Yarra Glen and Mount Lofty include:

- Yarra Glen to Spadoni's Reserve offering 7 km of flat water through farming land with carparking and canoe launching ramps at each end.
- Spadoni's Reserve to Lower Homestead Road offering 15 km of flat water for more experienced canoeists with occasional rapids through Yering Gorge bushland with carparking and canoe launching ramps at each end.
- Lower Homestead Road to Wittons Reserve offering 5 km of popular wildwater canoeing with several grade 2 rapids.

Factors preventing more widespread use of the Yarra River include:

- A lack of easy river access/launch points with gaps of up to 15 km between public river access points between Wonga Park and Yarra Glen. These distances mean that large sections of the river are suited only to confident and experienced paddlers.
- A wide variety of hazards and obstacles including rapids, snags, and willow infestations. It is noted that snags are an important part of river ecology, and removal of all snags to aid easy and safe navigation would come at an environmental cost.
- Water quality concerns, particularly after rain.

The ERTS recommended actions aimed at strengthening the role of the Yarra River as a paddle trail be targeted to shorter lengths where limiting factors such as poor scenic value, lack of infrastructure, and user safety can be avoided or more easily addressed. The ERTS also found that there are opportunities to take advantage of any potential synergies between water and land-based trails as land-based trails, in accessing waterways, often share the same river corridors.

The Burndap Birrarung burndap umarkoo (*Yarra Strategic Plan 2022–32*) recognises the Birrarung (Yarra River) as a living and integrated natural entity, it gives effect to the community's 50-year vision for the river and supports collaborative management of the river and its lands. The Plan recommends identifying and mapping locations and options for improved on-water experience for kayak/canoe and boating access points at key locations (considering health and safety and being fit-for-purpose) and providing signage and information for on-water journeys. Boat launching sites identified in the Plan include:

- Spadonis Reserve
- Yarra Glen Recreation Reserve
- Everard Park
- Launching Place
- Warburton





## Strategic Cycling Corridors

The *Strategic Cycling Corridor Network Overview 2020* identified a Strategic Cycling Corridors (SCC) network that supports the needs of commuter trips (to work or education) and other important transport trips such as to stations, shops or schools. The five key principles that underpin the SCC network are trails that are destination focused, safe, direct, connected and integrated. The SCC identified 'specialised cycling' classifications and mapped C1 and C2 routes. Within Yarra Ranges several C2 routes, which provide additional connections to state significant destinations, as well as connections to major activity centres and key railway stations, were identified including:

- Green Spine Trail (including an extension to Lilydale)
- Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail (including an extension to Lilydale)
- Carrum Warburton Trail
- Lilydale section of Lilydale Warburton Rail Trail
- Heathmont to Belgrave Rail Trail

As part of "Connected" a comprehensive framework tailored for the development of bicycle paths, particularly within the road reserve is being established. This framework is designed with a broader scope, enabling the identification and prioritisation of linkages outside of the scope of this project.



## Gravel Riding

Gravel Riding has emerged as a popular activity amongst the cycling community. It is commonly undertaken on unsealed roads and trails, with participants often seeking experiences with natural settings. Existing unsealed trails and gravel roads within Yarra Ranges are popular options for Gravel Riding, further emphasising the need for sound trail construction methodology and regular trail upkeep to accommodate this emerging activity. As Gravel Riding comes in many forms and uses existing unsealed trails and roads, no grading system has been developed specifically for Gravel Riding in this plan.

## Destination Trails

Yarra Ranges Council prides itself on being a trail destination, which is showcased through the Ridges and Rivers program. These trails are a celebration of all that makes the Yarra Ranges one of Victoria's most iconic and popular destinations.

Consisting of three signature outdoor attractions – the Yarra Valley Trail, ngurrak barrinj RidgeWalk and Warburton Mountain Bike Destination, – Ridges and Rivers takes locals and visitors alike from the forested ridges of the Dandenongs and Yarra Ranges, through to the lush pastures and alpine fresh rivers of the Yarra Valley.

Through an increased network of improved trails and walking tracks, Ridges and Rivers will help to connect local townships and provide convenient, easy access to walking, cycling and mountain biking opportunities, delivering significant economic and health and wellbeing benefits for Yarra Ranges communities.







## Levels of Service

To ensure paths and trails in the Yarra Ranges adequately service trail users, this plan documents the aspired targets as level of service, based on the best practice suggested by the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA):

- Provision
- Development
- Operations

The provision level of service determines the amount and type of paths and trails in the Yarra Ranges and its townships, with municipal and township targets calculated per capita or by proximity. The development level of service outlines the quality and quantity of path assets, while the operation level of service sets standards for path maintenance. This approach enhances planning and management, providing a clear framework for paths and trails across the community. The following pages will outline the level of service for the different path and trails categories in the Yarra Ranges that Council will transition to over time.

Quality Standard	Description
<b>Shared Trail</b>	
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical combined pedestrian &amp; cyclist peak usage over 200 per hour at any point.</li> <li>• 3.0m – 4.0m path width.</li> <li>• Signed as a shared use path as per Victorian Road Rules and designed to AustRoads 6A Guideline for a Regional Path</li> <li>• Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred).</li> <li>• Concrete is preferred with asphalt or high quality stabilized crushed rock also permitted.</li> <li>• High maintenance level.</li> <li>• <i>Furniture, drinking fountains and lights are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 1 Shared Trail.</i></li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical combined pedestrian &amp; cyclist peak usage less than 200 per hour at any point.</li> <li>• 2.0m – 3.0m path width.</li> <li>• Signed as a shared use path as per Victorian Road Rules and designed to AustRoads 6A Guideline for a Local Path</li> <li>• Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred).</li> <li>• Concrete is preferred with asphalt or high-quality stabilized crushed rock also permitted.</li> <li>• <i>Furniture and drinking fountains are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 2 Shared Trail.</i></li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-urban mixed-use trails in road verges or parks. Low traffic (&gt;50 per hour).</li> <li>• 1.0m – 2.0m width.</li> <li>• Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred).</li> <li>• Toppings (or approved equivalent) is the preferred surface.</li> <li>• Vegetation on trails with equestrian use managed to provide adequate clearance for horses and riders</li> <li>• <i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a Level 3 Shared Trail however in sections of high usage furniture or drink fountains may be appropriate.</i></li> </ul>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth surface mixed use trail.</li> <li>• 0.6m – 1.5m wide. Minimal vegetation management to keep corridor accessible.</li> <li>• Generally, no crushed rock surface and minimal drainage works.</li> <li>• Grades are dependent on topography, soil stability and steps to be avoided. <i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a Level 4 Shared Trail.</i></li> </ul>

Quality Standard	Description
<b>Walking Trail</b>	
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking trails that are also suitable for children's cycling.</li> <li>1.0m - 1.5m width.</li> <li>Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred).</li> <li>Concrete preferred with asphalt or high-quality stabilized crushed rock also permitted.</li> <li>Cyclists can select travel speeds freely, and bypass other users.</li> <li><i>Furniture, drinking fountains and lights are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 1 Walking Trail.</i></li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.0 – 1.2m width.</li> <li>Flat to steep grades over short distances (1:20 gradient preferred).</li> <li>Toppings is the preferred surface.</li> <li>Minimal use of steps.</li> <li><i>Furniture and drinking fountains are examples of trail infrastructure that may be found on sections of a Level 2 Walking Trail.</i></li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity for visitors to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural environments along defined and distinct tracks with minimal (if any) facilities.</li> <li>0.6m - 1.0m width.</li> <li>Grades limited to environmental and maintenance considerations.</li> <li>Toppings is the preferred surface.</li> <li>Steps may be common.</li> <li><i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a level 3 Walking trail.</i></li> </ul>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity for visitors to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural environments along defined and distinct tracks with minimal (if any) facilities.</li> <li>Grades are limited to environmental and maintenance considerations.</li> <li>No surface treatment, unless required due to topography / drainage.</li> <li>Steps may be appropriate and used to stop erosion.</li> <li><i>It is unlikely that any trail infrastructure would be located along a level 4 Walking trail.</i></li> </ul>





## Footpaths

For this project, it's important to clearly distinguish between footpaths and trails.

A footpath refers to a pathway within a township that helps residents reach key community facilities. These are usually located within the road reserve and run alongside roads.

In contrast, a trail connects different townships or parts of a township and is mainly used for tourism or recreational purposes. Trails are often found in open spaces or reserves, although many of the connections identified in this study are also within road reserves.

To give some perspective, the cost of a single trail project can be similar to the total annual budget for the footpath program, which typically covers one to two years.

In 2020, Council adopted the *Integrated Transport Strategy 2020-2040 – “Connected”* which made the following recommendations:

- Expand the footpath network across Yarra Ranges, using a prioritisation framework,
- Capitalise on large infrastructure projects which may include installing safer crossing and wider footpaths,
- Continue the footpath building program – to provide a complete network of footpaths in the built-up areas of Yarra Ranges and connect into the trail network, using the Footpath Prioritisation Framework prepared as part of ‘Connected’.

To prioritise the many requests for new footpaths which are received every week, a Footpath Prioritisation Framework has been developed. The framework identifies projects which are of higher priority or overall benefit for the community. The consideration and priority of projects depends on the following factors:

<b>Project ranking</b>	Higher ranked projects are generally prioritised to be delivered earlier. Footpath prioritisation is based on a range of criteria including proximity to public transport, schools, shops and other key facilities.
<b>Delivery efficiencies</b>	If two high-priority projects are near each other they will be delivered together. This will bring delivery efficiencies and enhance connectivity in the local area.
<b>Adjacent projects</b>	Where other capital works projects or development projects are likely to induce pedestrian demand. The projects will be brought forward to be delivered in conjunction with those projects.
<b>Funding availability</b>	The availability of funding in any year may determine the projects that are recommended for delivery in any given financial year.
<b>External funding opportunities</b>	Projects that meet the relevant criteria for external grant fund funding may be elevated in priority for delivery.

The highest priority projects each year will be scoped and forwarded for consideration for Council's Capital Expenditure Program. Along with this program Council has an annual budget for the maintenance of both gravel and sealed footpaths.

# Trail Infrastructure Level of Service

## Trail Furniture & Structures

All trail furniture and structures should be installed in line with Yarra Ranges Council Landscape Design Guidelines for Council Managed Open Space. The location of all furniture must be assessed based on the specific site conditions. When allowing for seats within public areas, consideration should be made to provision at frequent intervals and in positions where space is provided on at least one side for wheelchairs and prams. Depending on the intended location and furniture provision of surrounding areas, the selection of seat type may require the inclusion of features such as seatbacks and armrests to meet the access needs of a wide range of users.

Public toilets are unlikely to be located along the trail network, however, they may be appropriate at starting points or at nodes on Level 1 trails. The length of the trail network means that the provision of shelter needs to be focused on points where it is most needed. These points logically include trailheads, key destinations and stopping points. Where shelters are provided, other facilities are also likely to be appropriate, including seating, drinking fountains and bins. Where bins are located, the number and types of bins provided will be determined in consultation with Council's Resource Recovery team.

Drinking fountains provide opportunities for trail users to rehydrate while using the trail. They are particularly popular with people undertaking exercise on trails during warmer weather. Walkers and joggers are more likely to use them than cyclists, who have more opportunity to carry their own water bottles. Drinking fountains are most efficiently provided when they are associated with parks, where water connections are likely already in place.

Bike racks should be provided along or near shared paths and trails. The location of bike racks should not impede pedestrian movement. Ideally, spread the location of bike rack 'hubs' along streetscapes or at multiple locations within reserves to give users a broader choice of access. If bike racks are to be included within open space or streetscapes, it is preferred that multiple racks are installed, as space permits. Where appropriate, bike repair and E-bike charging stations may also be installed.

There are a wide range of outdoor exercise equipment options available that may be appropriate supporting infrastructure to Level 1 trails. The determination of these trails, along with the location and type of equipment, should be considered in consultation with the *Active Recreation Plan (2023-2033)*.



## Trail Signage

A sign provides information related to a path or trail and its use, including directional signs, advisory signs, descriptive signs, interpretive signs, regulatory signs, and warning signs.

The types of informational signs and their purposes are detailed below:

<b>Advisory</b>	A sign which specifies recommended equipment and safety precautions for using the trail.
<b>Descriptive</b>	A sign which specifies the characteristics of a track and is generally placed at the starting point of the trail.
<b>Interpretive</b>	A sign which conveys educational material about a natural, cultural or heritage feature of the trail.
<b>Regulatory</b>	A sign which conveys legal requirements and regulations associated with use of the trail including shared use path signage.
<b>Warning</b>	A sign which warns users of a particular danger or hazardous condition.
<b>Trail Marker</b>	A sign or object (arrow or MTB colour code/shape) which identifies the direction of a trail.

Below is an example of the standard signage guidelines to be applied to Yarra Ranges Council's paths and trail network.





## Trail Lighting

Lighting of trails may be considered where a trail is a Shared Trail level 1 and 2, or a Walking Trail level 1, and also meets one or more of following conditions:

- The trail is already well-used outside daylight hours.
- The trail is within 1 km of, and a direct connection to, railway stations, major bus stops, or activity centres.
- The trail lighting is associated with other night-time sport or recreation use of a park.
- The trail has an identified safety risks for trips, falls, collisions, or potential personal security risks.
- The trail is not located amongst, or near to, natural bushland habitats.

The decision to install trail lighting needs to include a case-by-case analysis of whether lighting would encourage use of an area that is isolated or unsafe at night, or indirectly lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour in the area at night-time. The design of the trail lighting should also consider:

AS/NZS 1158.3.1 Road Lighting – Part 3.1: Pedestrian area (Category P) lighting. Choosing the right lighting standard for the location and use. This will impact on the pole height and spacing and the lux level of the light.

Using the lowest level lighting compatible with human safety and navigation.

Directing light downwards and only where it is needed; avoid light spill into nearby habitat and tree canopies.

Turning off, or dimming, lights outside of peak periods and using motion sensors to increase illumination when required.

Using Solar LED lights, connected to a desktop monitoring system, where lights are not easily connected to the electricity grid or where trenching of power supply would impact natural bushland habitats.

Appendix 1 highlights proposed levels of service for trail infrastructure on shared and walking trails.

# Action Areas & Implementation

This plan identifies a broad range of opportunities to expand the path and trail network. All identified action areas will be further examined during implementation phases with the development of individual projects and programs. High-level cost estimates are allocated to each recommendation to help with long-term financial planning.

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Review and maintain existing paths and trail network  Continue funding of operations, maintenance and renewal of existing paths and trails network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit and review conditions of the paths and trails network</li> <li>Implement consistent trail standards across the network as per levels of service</li> <li>Carry out required maintenance to improve safety and accessibility</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Internal resources
Improve safety and accessibility of existing shared use paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement proposed program of priority works</li> <li>Identify and provide supporting infrastructure</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Scope and budget to be determined through capital delivery programs
Provide missing links in paths and trails network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> <li>Support delivery of Integrated Transport Strategy Recommendations relating to footpaths</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Scope and budget to be determined through capital delivery programs

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Provide local walking circuits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a 1000 m walking trail for each township and population cluster, preferably looped, level 1 and within 800 m of town centres.</li> <li>Identify and promote an accessible 20 minute short walking circuit for each township.</li> <li>Identify a 5km walking trail for each township, preferably looped and within 2km of town centres or well serviced by accessible car park.</li> <li>Signpost and upgrade the selected paths and promote walking trails on the website, including interactive map and printable maps.</li> </ul>	Medium	<p>Internal resources to identify loops and develop promotional material through websites/mappings</p> <p>Any upgrades/ maintenance required for establishment of loops to be determined through operational/capital works programming</p>

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Activating existing trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equip existing trails with proper signage and safety measures.</li> <li>Organize community events, guided walks, or outdoor fitness classes along the paths in line with the Yarra Ranges Active Recreation Plan (2023-2033).</li> <li>Integrate public art installations, murals, or landscaping along the level 1 shared trails to create visually appealing surroundings (as demonstrated in projects such as ngurrak barring/Ridge Walk).</li> <li>Utilize technology such as mobile apps or QR codes to provide information about the trails, share stories, or offer virtual tours.</li> <li>Develop marketing campaigns to raise awareness about the trails and their benefits.</li> <li>Incorporate educational components along the paths to raise awareness about local flora, fauna, and ecosystems. Interpretive signs, educational displays, or guided nature walks can make the trails both recreational and educational.</li> <li>Continue to grow the number of events utilising Yarra Ranges paths and trail networks.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Internal resourcing</p> <p>Funded through recreation activation programming and other grants/funding opportunities</p>

Recommendation	Actions	Priority	Est. Resource
Destination Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue delivery and advocacy for Council's Ridges and Rivers projects including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Yarra Valley Trail</li> <li>→ ngurrak barring/Ridge Walk</li> <li>→ Warburton Mountain Bike Destination</li> <li>→ Investigate opportunities for future expansion of key destination paths and trails projects.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Short - Medium	Projects funded through Ridges and Rivers program
Community led trail projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to investigate community initiated trail proposals.</li> <li>Advocate for community proposals that align with council objectives.</li> <li>These projects include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Birrarung Valley Walk,</li> <li>→ Melbourne to Marysville,</li> <li>→ Olinda Creek Extension,</li> <li>→ Warburton to Upper Yarra,</li> <li>→ Warburton to Walhalla.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Ongoing	Internal Resources
Agency Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where appropriate Investigate opportunities for paths and trails across multi land tenures.</li> <li>Support land use agreements as required.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Internal Resources

# Project Prioritisation

There are twelve evaluation criteria assessed against each priority trail to determine the total priority outcome. These are:

<b>Improve access to regional open space &amp; community facilities</b>	<b>Improve access to natural landscapes</b>	<b>Enables active trips long enough to generate user health benefits</b>
<b>Improves access to train station or bus stops</b>	<b>Improves network connectivity</b>	<b>Connecting town centres/ activity centres/ industrial precincts</b>
<b>Improves access to primary/ secondary/ tertiary education</b>	<b>Improves access to cultural heritage</b>	<b>Provides service to disadvantaged residents</b>
<b>Inclusive of all abilities</b>	<b>Size of population catchment within 1km of path</b>	<b>Generates visitors from outside the municipality</b>

The tables below outline the proposed program of works for upgrades to existing paths and trails, crossing works as well as a list for new paths and trails, or missing links.

## Upgrades to Existing Trails

Trail	Suburb	Existing LOS	Proposed LOS
Belgrave Rail Trail	Belgrave	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 1
Lovers Lane	Belgrave	Walking Trail 2	Walking Trail 1
Switchback Road Trail	Chirnside	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2
Badger Creek Road Trail	Healesville	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2
Lilydale Warburton Trail (Lilydale Recreation Reserve)	Lilydale	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 1
Lilydale Warburton Trail (Mt Lilydale College)	Lilydale	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 1
Old Gippsland Road	Lilydale	Shared Trail 3 & 4	Shared Trail 3
David Hill Road Trail	Monbulk	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2
Cambridge Road Trail	Mooroolbark	Shared Trail 2	Shared Trail 2
Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Mount Evelyn	Shared Trail 3	Shared Trail 2



## Upgrades to Existing and Construction of New Road Crossings

Lilydale Warburton Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
Anderson Street	Lilydale	New zebra crossing
Old Gippsland Road	Lilydale	Island/raised pavement
Monbulk Road	Mount Evelyn	Zebra crossing upgrade
Warburton Highway	Wandin North	New signalised pedestrian-operated signal (POS) crossing
Sebire Avenue	Wandin North	Raised pavement
Wellington Road	Wandin North	Raised pavement
Warburton Highway	Yarra Junction	Signalised POS crossing
Corduroy Road	Yarra Junction	Raised pavement
Park Road	Yarra Junction	Raised pavement
Settlement Road	Yarra Junction	TBC
Station Road	Warburton	Realigned crossing
Warburton Highway	Warburton	New signalised POS crossing
Little Yarra Trail Connection	Suburb	Recommendation
Warburton Highway	Yarra Junction	New signalised POS crossing
Yarra Valley Trail Connection	Suburb	Recommendation
Bell Street	Yarra Glen	Refuge & line marking
Symonds Street	Yarra Glen	Upgraded refuge & line marking
Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
York Road	Mount Evelyn	Signalised POS crossing
Olinda Creek Trail	Suburb	Recommendation
Swansea Road	Lilydale/Mt Evelyn	Signalised POS crossing

<b>Morrison Reserve Connection</b>	<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Hereford Road	Mount Evelyn	TBC
<b>Brushy Creek Trail</b>	<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Maroondah Highway	Chirnside Park	At grade crossing
Pembroke Road	Mooroolbark	Signalised POS crossing
Cambridge Road	Mooroolbark	Refuge & line marking
<b>Cambridge Road Trail</b>	<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Lawson Road	Mooroolbark	Raised pavement
Cambridge Road (Pembroke Road)	Mooroolbark	Refuge & line marking
Durham Road	Kilsyth	Realigned crossing & refuge
<b>ngurrak barring / RidgeWalk Connection</b>	<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Mt Dandenong Tourist Road (Kalorama Oval)	Kalorama	Refuge & line marking
Kallista Roundabout	Kallista	Signalised POS crossing
Mt Dandenong Tourist Road	Mt Dandenong	Refuge & line marking
Mt Dandenong Tourist Road (Olinda Township)	Olinda	Signalised POS crossing
Mountain Highway (Sassafras Township)	Sassafras	Signalised POS crossing
<b>Belgrave Rail Trail</b>	<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
McNicol Road	Tecoma	Raised pavement & trail realignment
<b>Ferny Creek Trail (Birdsland connection)</b>	<b>Suburb</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Glenfern Road	Upwey	Pedestrian Refuge

## New Trails/Missing Links

Trail Name	Area
Ringwood to Lilydale Rail Trail	Urban
Carrum Warburton Trail (Melba Park section)	Urban
Little Yarra River Trail (Stage 1B)	Upper Yarra
Brushy Creek Trail (missing sections)	Urban
Olinda Creek Trail (Swansea Road section)	Urban
Little Yarra River Trail (Pipe Track section)	Upper Yarra
Mooroolbark to Doongalla Trail	Urban
Lincoln to Manchester SUP (bike lane connection)	Urban
Liverpool Road Trail	Urban
Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (East Warburton extension)	Upper Yarra
Mount Evelyn to Monbulk Trail	Hills
Don Road Trail (Stage 2)	Yarra Valley
Little Yarra River Trail (Little Yarra River Crossing)	Upper Yarra
Healesville Station / Lilydale Road Shared Use Path	Yarra Valley
Green Spine Trail (Lilydale extension)	Urban
Canterbury Road Trail	Urban
Nelson Road (missing section)	Urban
Puffing Billy Trail (Belgrave to Menzies Creek)	Hills
Black Springs Road Trail	Urban
Carrum Warburton Trail (Kipling Avenue section)	Urban
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Don Road connection)	Upper Yarra
Swansea Road Trail (Leith Rd extension)	Urban
Glasgow Road Trail	Urban

Trail Name	Area
Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Doon Road connection)	Upper Yarra
Little Yarra River Trail (Warburton Highway section)	Upper Yarra
Big Pats Creek Trail (Walk into History Trail connection)	Upper Yarra
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dalry Road connection)	Upper Yarra
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dee Road connection)	Upper Yarra
O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Yuonga Road connection)	Upper Yarra
York Road Shared Use Path (extension)	Urban
Birmingham Road Trail	Urban
Ferny Creek Trail (Birdsland connection)	Hills
Maroondah Reservoir Circuit	Yarra Valley
Launching Place Yarra River Trail	Upper Yarra
Steels Creek Trail (Old Kinglake Road extension)	Yarra Valley
Bailey Road Trail	Urban
Olinda Creek Trail (Quinn Reserve connection)	Urban
Chirnside to Wonga Park Trail	Urban
Kilsyth Pipe Track Trail	Urban
Montrose Pipe Track Trail	Urban
Maroondah Aqueduct Trail (Sugarloaf section)	Yarra Valley
Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail (Swansea Road section)	Urban
Old Gippsland Road Trail (extension)	Urban
Old Gippsland Road Trail (Jurat Road connection)	Urban
Water Race Trail (York Road extension)	Urban

# Investment

The estimated costs for the implementation programs include:

- Upgrades \$10M
- Crossings \$5M
- New/Missing links Approximately \$39.9M

In addition to the initial capital cost to build trails, operational budget needs to be allocated to maintain new and increased levels of service within our paths and trail network. As part of capital works planning, projects should have an endorsed operational plan and budget before commencement.

## Funding

Not only is sourcing funding for the construction of trails crucial, but ongoing funding for maintenance and renewal of the trail network is equally vital.

It is typically easier to seek funding for capital development of a trail than it is for ongoing operational funds.

Potential avenues to seek development funding for trails include:

- federal, state and local government
- regulatory bodies
- community organisations / partners
- grant funding
- commercial sponsorship
- commercial ventures
- philanthropic donations

Given the close links that trails have with the health, tourism and natural environment, funding from federal and state governments is becoming increasingly common.



# Conclusion

Yarra Ranges boasts many high-quality paths and trails within the municipality. The projects identified within this plan will significantly enhance connection and contribute to community health and wellbeing outcomes.

This Plan identifies a broad range of opportunities to improve and expand our paths and trails network. Investing in the priority projects identified will provide a connected and accessible trail network, showcase and protect the natural environment, and will increase visitation to the region through the delivery of key destination projects, such as projects linked to the Ridges and Rivers initiative.





# Appendix 1

## Trail Infrastructure Levels of Service

Shared and Walking Trails	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Bike Racks</b>	High quality, provided where required to meet demand at nodes.	Standard quality, provided where required to meet demand at nodes.	X	X
<b>Car Parking Onsite</b>	Where appropriate at access points. Kept to a minimum. Unsealed or sealed.	Where appropriate at access points. Kept to a minimum. Unsealed.	X	X
<b>Drinking Fountains</b>	Where appropriate. High quality, functional design, located near shelters and meeting/ access points.	Where appropriate. Standard quality, functional design, located near shelters and meeting/access points.	X	X
<b>Entrance Sign</b>	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	X	X
<b>Exercise Equipment</b>	Permitted where demand supports installation.	Permitted where demand supports installation.	X	X
<b>Fencing and Barriers</b>	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.
<b>Footbridges</b>	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.	Where appropriate.
<b>Gardens</b>	Where appropriate at nodes.	X	X	X
<b>Interpretive / Educational Signs</b>	High quality sign/s where appropriate and in accordance with Yarra Ranges signage guidelines.	Standard quality sign/s where appropriate and in accordance with Yarra Ranges signage guidelines.	X	X

Shared and Walking Trails	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Lighting</b>	Where appropriate, of high quality, functional in design. Located at nodes and access/ meeting points and where trails connect directly to public transport.	Where appropriate, of standard quality, functional in design. Located at nodes and access/ meeting points and where trails connect directly to public transport.	X	X
<b>Public Use Mains Power</b>	If supporting other infrastructure such as E-bike charging stations.	X	X	X
<b>Paths</b>	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.	Sealed in urban areas, un-sealed in rural or natural settings.
<b>Public Art</b>	Permitted where project intent supports installation (i.e. ngurrak barring RidgeWalk).	(May be considered in specific circumstances)	(May be considered in specific circumstances)	X
<b>Public Toilets</b>	Where appropriate at trail nodes.	X	X	X
<b>Rubbish bins</b>	Pedestal or Metal Surround bins (dependent on location/ township) where appropriate/ required to meet demand at nodes/ access points. Must be in consultation with Resource Recovery Team.	X	X	X



<b>Shared and Walking Trails</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 4</b>
<b>Seats</b>	2 high quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.	1 standard quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.	1 standard quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.	1 standard quality seats per lineal kilometre and where associated with shelters, located at each node.
<b>Shelters</b>	High quality functional shelter for 8 people, located at each node.	X	X	X
<b>Picnic Setting</b>	1 high quality picnic setting located at each node.	1 standard quality picnic setting located at each node.	X	X
<b>Trees</b>	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.	Minimum of 30% of site covered by tree canopy.
<b>Viewing Platforms</b>	Permitted where appropriate. High quality materials.	Permitted where appropriate. Standard quality materials.	X	X
<b>Water Points</b>	At nodes.	X	X	X
<b>Wayfinding Signage</b>	Where appropriate. High quality.	Where appropriate. Standard quality.	Minor as required.	Minor as required.

The following maps highlight the shared trail network across the Yarra Ranges including existing trails and the proposed new/upgrades.





## Hills

Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Mount Evelyn to Monbulk Trail	New
2	David Hill Road Trail	Upgrade
3	Belgrave Rail Trail	Upgrade
4	Ferny Creek Trail (Birdsland connection)	New
5	Lover's Lane	Upgrade
6	Puffing Billy Trail (Belgrave to Menzies Creek)	New
7	ngurrak barring   RidgeWalk	Existing
8	Birdsland Reserve	Existing
9	Dargon Track	Existing (managed by others)
10	Logan Park Track	Existing (managed by others)
11	Wellington Road Horse Trail	Existing
12	Eastern Dandenong Ranges Trail	Existing
13	Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Existing



NILLUMBIK

YERING

COLDSTREAM

CHIRNSIDE PARK

LILYDALE

MOOROOLBARK

MOUNT EVELYN

MONTROSE

KILSYTH

MAROONDAH

## URBAN REGION

- New or upgraded trails
- - - Trails to be built by others
- Existing or under construction trails
- - - Trails managed by others
- ✕ Road crossing upgrade
- 🚆 Metro train station
- 🚲 MTB trails
- 🚲 Pump track
- 🚲 BMX track
- 📌 Learn to ride
- Road



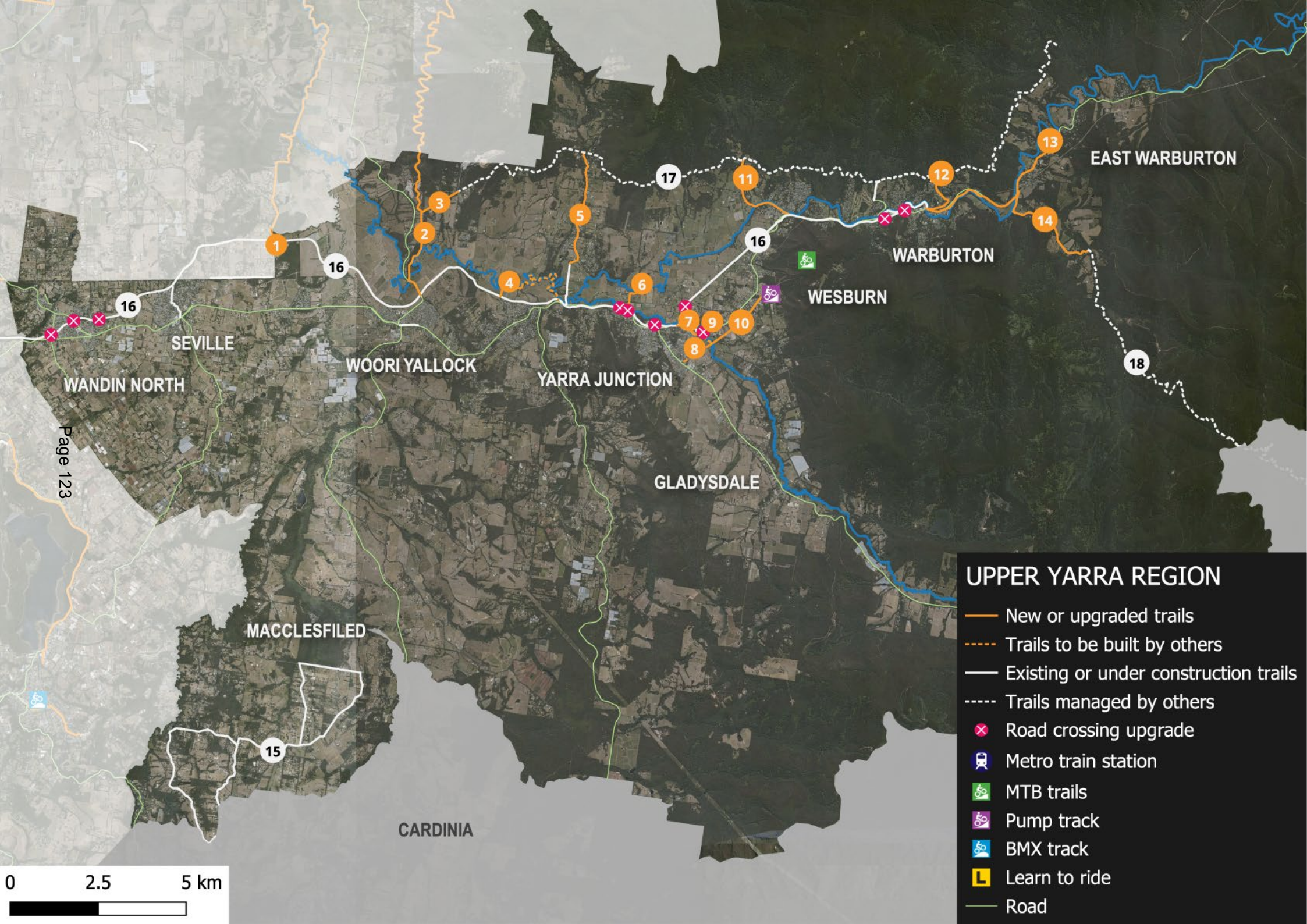


## Urban

Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Yarra Valley Trail Southern Loop	New
2	Chirnside to Wonga Park Trail	New
3	Black Springs Road Trail	New
4	Switchback Road Trail	Upgrade
5	Nelson Road Trail (missing section)	New
6	Green Spine Trail (Lilydale extension)	New
7	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Lilydale Recreation Reserve)	Upgrade
8	Carrum Warburton Trail (Melba Park section)	New
9	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Mount Lilydale Mercy College)	Upgrade
10	Ringwood Lilydale Rail Trail	New (to be built by others)
11	Lincoln to Manchester SUP (bike lane connection)	New
12	Brushy Creek Trail (missing sections)	New
13	Carrum Warburton Trail (Kipling Avenue section)	New
14	Cambridge Road Trail	Upgrade
15	Kilysth Pipe Track Trail	New
16	Montrose Pipe Track Trail	New
17	Liverpool Road Trail	New
18	Canterbury Road Trail	New (to be built by others)
19	Glasgow Road Trail	New
20	Mooroolbark to Doongalla Trail	New
21	Swansea Road Trail (Leith Rd extension)	New
22	Olinda Creek Trail (Swansea Road section)	New (to be built by others)

Map Ref	Name	Status
23	Birmingham Road Trail	New
24	Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail (Swansea Road section)	Upgrade
25	Olinda Creek Trail (Quinn Reserve connection)	New
26	Water Race Trail (York Road extension)	New
27	York Road Shared Use Path (extension)	New
28	Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Upgrade
29	Old Gippsland Road Trail (extension)	New
30	Jurat Road connection	New
31	Old Gippsland Road Trail	Upgrade
32	Bailey Road Trail	New
33	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3A	New
34	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1	Existing
35	Green Spine Shared Path	Existing
36	Brushy Creek Trail	Existing
37	Carrum Warburton Trail	Existing
38	Canterbury Road Trail	Existing
39	ngurrak barring   RidgeWalk	Under Construction
40	Swansea Road Trail	Existing
41	Olinda Creek Trail	Existing
42	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail	Existing
43	Lillydale Lake Circuit	Existing





## UPPER YARRA REGION

- New or upgraded trails
- - - Trails to be built by others
- Existing or under construction trails
- - - Trails managed by others
- ✕ Road crossing upgrade
- 🚆 Metro train station
- 🚴 MTB trails
- 🚴 Pump track
- 🚴 BMX track
- 🚲 Learn to ride
- Road



## Upper Yarra

Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3A	New
2	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3B	New
3	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dalry Road connection)	New
4	Launching Place Yarra River Trail	New
5	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Don Road connection)	New
6	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (Doon Road connection)	New
7	Little Yarra River Trail (Warburton Highway section)	New
8	Little Yarra River Trail (Stage 1B)	New (to be built by others)
9	Little Yarra River Trail (Little Yarra River crossing)	New (to be built by others)
10	Little Yarra River Trail (Pipe Track section)	New
11	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Dee Road connection)	New
12	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail (Yuonga Road connection)	New
13	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail (East Warburton extension)	New
14	Big Pats Creek Trail (Walk into History Trail connection)	New
15	Macclesfield Equestrian Trail	Existing
16	Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail	Existing
17	O'Shannassy Aqueduct Trail	Existing (managed by others)
18	Walk Into History	Existing (managed by others)

NILLUMBIK

MURRINDINDI

STEELS CREEK

CHUM CREEK

TARRAWARRA

YARRA GLEN

HEALESVILLE

BADGER CREEK

## YARRA VALLEY REGION

- New or upgraded trails
- - - Trails to be built by others
- Existing or under construction trails
- - - Trails managed by others
- ✕ Road crossing upgrade
- 🚆 Metro train station
- 🚴 MTB Trails
- 🚴 Pump Track
- 🚴 BMX Track
- 🚲 Learn to ride
- Road



## Yarra Valley

Map Ref	Name	Status
1	Steels Creek Trail (Old Kinglake Road extension)	New
2	Maroondah Aqueduct Trail (Sugarloaf section)	New
3	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 2B	New
4	Healesville Station / Lilydale Road Shared Use Path	New
5	Maroondah Reservoir Circuit	New
6	Badger Creek Road Trail	Upgrade
7	Don Road Trail Stage 2	New
8	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3A	New
9	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 3B	New
10	Mount Jerusalem Track	Existing (managed by others)
11	Steels Creek Trail	Existing
12	Yarra Valley Trail Northern Loop	Under construction
13	Breakneck	Existing
14	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 1	Under construction
15	Yarra Valley Trail Stage 2A	Under construction
16	Chum Creek Trail	Existing
17	Maroondah Reservoir Park	Existing (managed by others)
18	Don Road Trail	Existing

Yarra Ranges Council  
PO Box 105  
Lilydale VIC 3140

**1300 368 333**  
**[www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au)**  
**[mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au)**



## WARBURTON HIGHWAY BUS STOP SAFETY CONCERNS - CR CHILD

Ward(s) affected: O'Shannassy;

*In accordance with Governance Rule 26 developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.*

### SUMMARY

The existing guard rail at the intersection of Don Road and Warburton Highway is obstructing safe pedestrian movement.

To address this issue, the guard rail requires modification and/or upgrading to meet current design standards.

As the guard rail is an asset managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), it is DTP's responsibility to undertake the necessary upgrades. Council is requesting DTP's commitment to delivering a solution that ensures safe pedestrian access as a matter of priority.

### COUNCILLOR MOTION

#### ***That Council***

- 1. Notes the ongoing public safety concern regarding pedestrian movement near the intersection of Warburton Highway and Don Road.***
- 2. Writes to the Hon. Melissa Horne, Minister for Transport and Planning, and Ms Cindy McLeish MP, State Member for Eildon, advocating on behalf of the community for the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to modify and/or upgrade their asset and address this safety issue as a priority.***

## **12. ITEMS THROUGH THE CHAIR**



### **13. REPORTS FROM DELEGATES**

**14. DOCUMENTS FOR SIGNING AND SEALING**

*In accordance with Clause 87 of the Meeting Procedures and Use of Common Seal Local Law 2015, as prescribed by Section 14(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 2020.*

There were no Documents for Signing and Sealing listed for this meeting prior to the Agenda being printed.

## 15. INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

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Report Author: Governance Officer  
 Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services  
 Ward(s) affected: All Wards

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public

### SUMMARY

Chapter 8, Rule 1, of the Governance Rules requires that records of informal meetings of Councillors must be kept and that the Chief Executive Officer must ensure that a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the Minutes of that Council meeting.

An 'informal meeting of Councillors' is defined in the Governance Rules as a meeting of Councillors that:

- is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors;
- is attended by at least one member of Council staff; and
- is not a Council meeting, Delegated Committee meeting or Community Asset Committee meeting.

The records for informal meetings of Councillors are attached to the report.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That the records of the Informal Meetings of Councillors, copies of which are attached to the report, be received and noted.***

### ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. 20 May 2025 – Council Briefing
2. 20 May 2025 – Council Forum
3. 3 June 2025 – Council Briefing
4. 3 June 2025 – Council Forum

## Informal Meeting of Councillors

### Public Record

<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Council Briefing	
<b>Date:</b>	20 May 2025	Start Time: 5.42pm    Finish Time: 5.48pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference	
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p><b>Councillors:</b> Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister, Cr Cox, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott</p> <p><b>CEO/Directors:</b> Tammi Rose, Leanne Hurst, Hjalmar Philipp, Amanda Kern (Acting Director Planning and Sustainable Futures) and Ben Waterhouse (Acting Director Corporate Services)</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> Amee Cooper, Gina Walter, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson, Mel Villani, Amanda Kern, Liam Routledge, Karen Greer and Lucy Proctor</p> <p><b>Externals:</b> Nil</p>	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor Tim Heenan, Vincenzo Lombardi and Kath McClusky	
<b>Disclosure of COI:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nil</li> </ul>	
<b>Matter/s Discussed:</b>	This briefing covered the following items of business to be considered at the 27 May 2025 Council Meeting.	
	10.1	YR-2023/386 - 1 Badger Creek Road, Healesville - Planning Report
	10.2	CT7440 Bushland Maintenance Contract
	10.3	CT7762 Provision of Plants - Procurement Pane
	10.4	EOI6246 Solar and Battery System Specialists Panel Refresh
	10.5	Old Warburton Road Bridge Tender Report

<b>Completed By:</b>	10.6	Kirkham Road (from Courtneys Rd to Retreat Rd) Belgrave South Special Charge Scheme Final Costing
	Gina Walter	

## Informal Meeting of Councillors

### Public Record

<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Council Forum	
<b>Date:</b>	20 May 2025	Start Time: 5.00pm      Finish Time: 9.06pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference	
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p><b>Councillors:</b> Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister, Cr Cox (Exited at 8.28pm), Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott</p> <p><b>CEO/Directors:</b> Tammi Rose, Leanne Hurst, Hjalmar Philipp, Amanda Kern (Acting Director Planning and Sustainable Futures) and Ben Waterhouse (Acting Director Corporate Services)</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> Ameer Cooper, Gina Walter, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson, Mel Villani, Amanda Kern, Katie Douglas, Gavin Crawford, Liam Routledge, Bumeke Jayasinghe, Karen Greer, Lucy Proctor, Declan Jamieson, Jonathon Makaay, Garry Detez, Jo Colley and Nathan Islip</p> <p><b>Via Zoom:</b> Enrique Gutierrez, Anne Blakeway and Alanna Ford</p> <p><b>Externals:</b> Nil</p>	
<b>Apologies</b>	Councillor Tim Heenan, Vincenzo Lombardi and Kath McClusky	
<b>Disclosure of COI:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nil</li> </ul>	
	1.1	Acknowledgement of Country
	1.2	Declaration of Interest
	1.3	Action and Agreement Record – 6 May 2025
	2.1	YR-2023/386 - 1 Badger Creek Road, Healesville (Oonah) Planning Report - Verbal Update
	3.1	Review of the Public Agenda for Council's Meeting on 27 May 2025



<b>Completed By:</b>	4.0	Mayor & CEO Update
	5.0	General Business
	5.1	2025-2026 Budget Discussion - Verbal Update
	6.0	Dinner
	7.1	Draft Council Plan, Asset Plan, Long Term Financial Plan
	Gina Walter	

## Informal Meeting of Councillors

### Public Record

Meeting Name:	Council Briefing			
Date:	3 June 2025		Start Time: 6.13pm	Finish Time: 6.25pm
	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference			
	Attendees:			
	Councillors:	Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister, Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott		
	Via Zoom:	Cr Cox		
	CEO/Directors:	Tammi Rose, Hjalmar Philipp, Kath McClusky and Vincenzo Lombardi		
	Via Zoom:	Leanne Hurst		
	Officers:	Amee Cooper, Gina Walter, Beck Stevens, Joanne Hammond, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson, Nathan Islip and Anne Blakeway		
	Externals:	Nil		
	Apologies:	Nil		
Disclosure of COI:	Nil			
Matter/s Discussed:	This briefing covered the following items of business to be considered at the 10 June 2025 Council Meeting.			
	10.1	Adoption of Budget		
	10.2	Adoption of Revenue and Rating Plan		
	10.3	Amendment C225 - Erosion Management Overlay Mapping seeking Authorisation to Commence Exhibition		
	10.4	Flag Policy Review		
	10.5	Review of Delegations Made to Chief Executive Officer and Council Staff		
	10.6	Electric Line Clearance Contract		
	Completed By:	Gina Walter		



## Informal Meeting of Councillors

### Public Record

<b>Meeting Name:</b>	Council Forum		
<b>Date:</b>	3 June 2025	Start Time: 5.30pm	Finish Time: 8.37pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference		
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p><b>Councillors:</b> Cr Child (Chair), Cr Higgins (Deputy Chair), Cr McAllister (From 5.36pm), Cr Heenan, Cr McIlwain, Cr Ward, Cr Mazzarella and Cr Marriott</p> <p><b>Via Zoom:</b> Cr Cox (Exited at 7.33pm)</p> <p><b>CEO/Directors:</b> Tammi Rose (From 5.36pm), Hjalmar Philipp, Kath McClusky and Vincenzo Lombardi</p> <p><b>Via Zoom:</b> Leanne Hurst</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> Ameer Cooper, Gina Walter, Beck Stevens, Joanne Hammond, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson, Anne Blakeway, Nathan Islip, Claire Rock, Jane Sinnamon, Dudu Ormon, Lisa Balaban, Jo Colley, Phil Murton, Catherine Bennett and Sarah Brophy</p> <p><b>Via Zoom:</b> Shannon Maynard</p> <p><b>Externals:</b> Leigh Harry – (Yarra Ranges Tourism Chair)</p> <p><b>Externals</b> Elizabeth Johnstone (Executive Officer – ERG)  <b>Via Zoom:</b> Cr Deirdre Diamante (Chair, ERG)</p>		
<b>Apologies</b>	Nil		
<b>Disclosure of COI:</b>	Nil		
	1.1	Acknowledgement of Country	
	1.2	Declaration of Interest	
	1.3	Action and Agreement Record – 14 May 2025	
	1.4	Action and Agreement Record – 20 May 2025	

<b>Completed By:</b>	2.1	Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) Strategic Plan 2025-2029
	2.2	Visitor Economy Partnership Update
	3.1	Review of the Public Agenda for Council's Meeting on 10 June 2025
	5.1	TAC L2P Learner Driver Mentor Program
	5.2	Doon Reserve Caravan Park Lease
	5.3	Facility Management and Leisure Services Contract – Objectives and Outcomes
	5.4	Final Budget Discussion Prior to the 10 June 2025 Council Meeting - Verbal
	6.0	Mayor & CEO Update
	7.0	General Business
	8.0	Items For Noting
	8.1	Disability Action Plan 2024-2028 - Final
	8.2	Paid Parking & Enforcement Update
	Gina Walter	

**16. URGENT BUSINESS**

*In accordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules developed by Council  
in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.*



## **17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

*In accordance with Chapter 3 Rule 24 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.*

There were no Confidential Items listed for this meeting.

**18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Council is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 8 July 2025 commencing at 7.00pm, at Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Anderson Street, Lilydale and via videoconference.



**In providing for the good governance of its community, Councillors are reminded of their obligation to abide by the provisions as set within the Local Government Act 2020 and the Code of Conduct for Councillors.**

**When attending a Council Meeting, Councillors should adhere to the procedures set out in the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.**

The following is a guide for all Councillors to ensure they act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of Yarra Ranges as a whole.

1. Councillors will respect the personal views of other Councillors and the decisions of Council.
2. Councillors may publicly express their own opinions on Council matters but not so as to undermine the standing of Council in the community.
3. The Mayor is the official spokesperson for Council.
4. Councillors will incur expenditure in a responsible manner and in accordance with the Councillor Expenditure and Policy.
5. Councillors will avoid conflicts of interest and will always openly disclose any direct and indirect interests where they exist.
6. Councillors will act with integrity and respect when interacting with Council staff and members of the public.
7. Councillors will demonstrate fairness in all dealings and conduct and be open with and accountable to the community at all times.
8. Councillors will conduct themselves in a manner that does not cause detriment to Council or the Yarra Ranges community.