

Council Meeting

Agenda

Tuesday, 28 October 2025
Civic Centre, 15 Anderson Street, Lilydale

Information for Councillors and the community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples 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 OAM

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.

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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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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

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YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

**AGENDA FOR THE 633RD COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY
28 OCTOBER 2025 COMMENCING AT 7.00PM IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC
CENTRE, ANDERSON STREET, LILYDALE / VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

1. MEETING OPENED

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



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

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3. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS PRESENT

OUR COUNCILLORS

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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 14 October 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 Questions to Council or Submissions from the Public received prior to the Agenda being printed.

9. PETITIONS

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

A person may submit a petition to Council on matters that are not listed on the Agenda. Every petition or joint letter submitted to Council must:

- a) identify a 'Lead Petitioner' who Council can correspond with;*
- b) be legible and in permanent writing;*
- c) be clear and state on each page the matter and action sought from Council. Every page of a petition or joint letter must be a single page of paper and not be posted, stapled, pinned or otherwise affixed or attached to any piece of paper other than another page of the petition or joint letter;*
- d) not be derogatory, defamatory or objectionable in language or nature;*
- e) not relate to matters outside the powers of Council; and*
- f) clearly state the names and addresses of at least seven (7) people who live, work, study or do business in the Municipal district.*

There were no Petitions received prior to the Agenda being printed.

MCDERMOTT AVENUE RESERVE MASTER PLAN - CONSIDERATION FOR CONSULTATION

Report Author: Manager Design and Place
 Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Sustainable Futures
 Ward(s) affected: Melba;

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

Since the relocation of organised netball to Pinks Reserve, Kilsyth in 2015, the McDermott Avenue Reserve at 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark has remained a vacated and under-utilised open space.

On 27 January 2015 Council passed a resolution that the land be rezoned for housing and sold. This was not acted on at the time.

In late 2020, Council officers began initial research and preliminary community engagement to explore future uses for the site. The project was paused due to other priorities and resumed in late 2024 including site investigations and initial community engagement.

A review of the 2015 resolution has established that, based on population projections and contemporary open space service levels, there is a shortfall in open space provision in this area of Mooroolbark and that a Neighbourhood level reserve of minimum one hectare (1 hectare) is still needed at the site to service local open space needs.

This report provides a draft Master Plan for the future use of the site that responds to both the previous Council resolution as well as the recent findings on open space needs. Officers recommend proceeding to community consultation with the attached Draft McDermott Ave Reserve Masterplan (Attachment 1) that includes developing most of the site for public open space (Neighbourhood level) and that a separate housing investigation still be carried out for the southwest corner. This is recommended to include advocacy to Victorian Government for an exemption to Windfall Gains Tax and seek more viable delivery options for housing and improved open space outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. *Abandon the previous resolution of Council, 27 January 2015, relating to 52 McDermott Avenue.***
- 2. *Retain the land at 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark.***
- 3. *Support progressing community consultation for the Draft McDermott Avenue Reserve Masterplan (Attachments 1 and 2), including provision of Public Open Space (Neighbourhood level) with partial site investigation for localised housing options which may result in a reduced parcel of subdivision and disposal***
- 4. *Receive a further report considering submissions to the Masterplan.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

On 27 January 2015, Council resolved to:

... commence procedures to appropriately re-zone the properties at 8 Cherry Hill Way, Chirnside Park and 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark on the basis that they are surplus to requirement and are being made ready for possible future sale.

The 2015 resolution has not been actioned.

DISCUSSION

Purpose

This report considers future plans for 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark, taking into account legislative, statutory and open space planning requirements. It reviews the previous Council resolution in the context of contemporary open space service levels, outlines options for its future use considered during master plan development, and recommends proceeding with community consultation on the Draft McDermott Avenue Reserve Masterplan.

Background

Site Attributes

The property at 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark (Image 1 below) is owned by Council and zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ). The 1.726 hectare site was previously home to the Lilydale and Yarra Ranges Netball Association, however netball has since been relocated to Pinks Reserve, Kilsyth in 2015. The site has not been remediated and has remained vacant. It has been informally used by residents for open space and informal recreation however the space has not been designed to support this type of community use and does not offer features that meet community needs. The remnant pavilion is in very poor condition and suitable for demolition and

removal. There are no current tenant clubs or user groups active at the site. No site contamination was detected during soil tests.



Image 1 – Aerial image of existing site

McDermott Avenue Reserve is an irregularly shaped, terraced multi-level complex site. The site features 10 disused and deteriorating asphalt netball courts split over two levels, as well as a redundant pavilion and two car parking areas.

Most neighbouring properties currently back onto the reserve with extensive inactive fences, resulting in poor public safety outcomes through negligible opportunities for passive surveillance of the area. As a result, the site is underutilised and at times experiences antisocial behaviour and vandalism. The site levels are also leading to overlooking (Image 2) which impacts privacy of residential properties at the southwest corner.

There is a substantial level change with 13.5 metre fall from Wyuna Walk to McDermott Avenue, and three metre crossfall along Wyuna Walk frontage. There is a substantial five-metre-high retaining wall to the northwest (Image 3). There is no accessible path through the site.



Image 2 - Lower court level, overlooking neighbours



Image 3 - Retaining wall

Key Issues

Future Land Use

Following the relocation of netball to Pinks Reserve, Council resolved on 27 January 2015 to rezone the site for future sale. This would require a Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) and approval from the Minister for Planning, along with public notification and exhibition requirements in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This process has not commenced.

Sale of the land would also attract Windfall Gains Tax of 50 percent of the value uplift, as well as a Public Open Space Contributions levy.

In late 2020, Council officers began research and review of the 2015 Council resolution to better understand the current and potential use of the site, including any population changes that may influence future open space needs in the area.

The community was engaged in 2020 to understand how the site is used and identify any issues or opportunities for its future use. In late 2024 Council officers commissioned site surveys and soil investigations then re-engaged with the local community in early 2025 to confirm preferences around social recreation options.

A summary of the community engagement and background research undertaken is provided in the Draft Masterplan (Attachment 1). Copies of the engagement and research reports have been published on the McDermott Avenue Reserve project page on Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges site.

Feasibility Study

At the same time officers commenced an updated assessment of open space provision in Mooroolbark to determine if McDermott Avenue Reserve was still considered surplus to open space requirements. Updated legal advice was also sought regarding the potential rezoning and disposal of the site.

The status of 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark was investigated from a legislative, statutory and open space planning perspective, with the findings now summarised in the Draft Masterplan. These indicated that there is no surplus of open space in this local area of Mooroolbark and that a neighbourhood level reserve of at least one hectare is still needed.

Options considered

The following options have been considered:

Option 1: Sale of the entire site, in accordance with the Council resolution of 27 January 2015 to rezone and sell the land for housing.

Option 2: Present the Draft McDermott Avenue Reserve Masterplan to community for feedback and comment, including site reactivation for Public Open Space (Neighbourhood level) and partial investigation for future housing options.- Recommended Option.

Option 3: Carry out remediation works only at the site including demolition of the pavilion and retaining wall and basic landscape works.

Option 1 – Sale of the entire site for housing

Option 1 proposes the sale of the entire parcel of land at 52 McDermott Avenue, in accordance with the 2015 Council resolution to commence rezoning of the land for possible future sale. This was based on an analysis at the time using the previous Recreation & Open Space Strategy (2013) which indicated an excess of open space.

Deficit of open space

The 2015 Council resolution determined at the time that the site was surplus to requirements. However, a recent application of the ROSS principles and updated population projections and associated service levels – alongside the proposed service levels in the State Government's draft Guide for Open Space Strategies – indicates that the site is not surplus.

The site is needed to meet both the original ROSS standard for a local park and the more recent State Government classification of a Neighbourhood park. This confirms a clear demand for Public Open Space at this location.

A recent review of open space provision and gap analysis has determined that removing McDermott Avenue Reserve from the open space network creates a gap in local level of provision which applies a 400 metre catchment radius (Images 4 and Image 5) and a gap at a Neighbourhood level provision which uses an 800 metre catchment radius.

Without McDermott Avenue Reserve as a contributor to open space provision, the local level gap would directly affect approximately 382 households to the south-west of the reserve, equating to an estimated 1,146 residents (based on an average of three persons per household in Mooroolbark).

This area of Mooroolbark lacks a Neighbourhood level of social recreation space of one hectare minimum, consistent with draft State Government standards. Hookey Park and Red Earth to the south are closest for this local community but are outside a 10-minute walking distance with direct access inhibited by the rail line. Image 5 shows the 555 properties (1665 residents) that are not currently serviced by local parks but would fall into the 800m catchment of McDermott Avenue Reserve if retained.

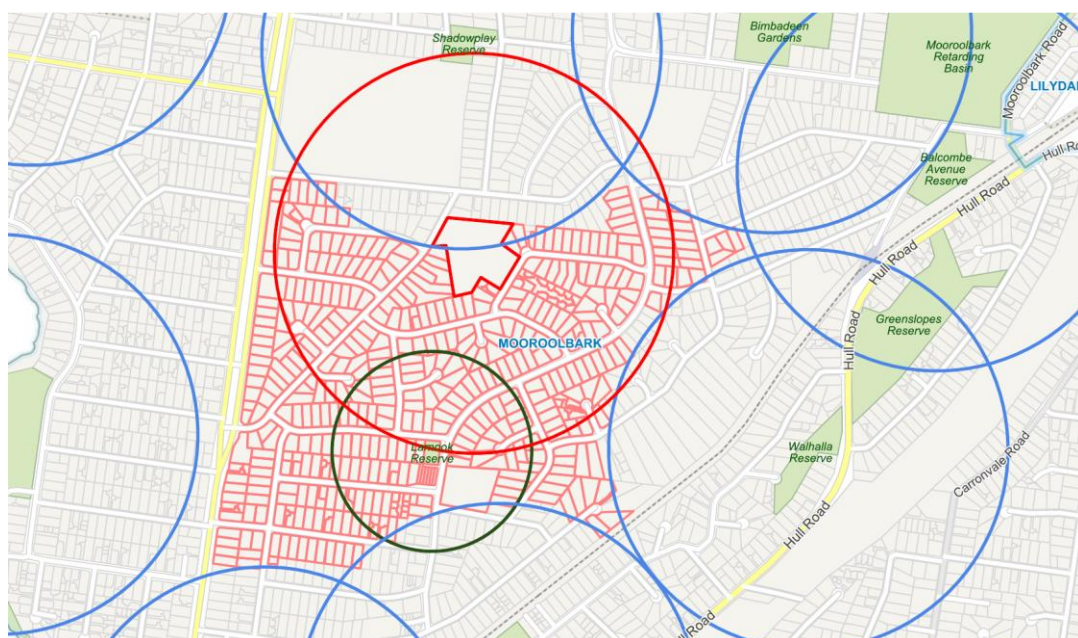


Image 4 Gap in provision showing 400m Local (blue) and 200m Pocket (green) catchments, McDermott Avenue Reserve 400m (red)

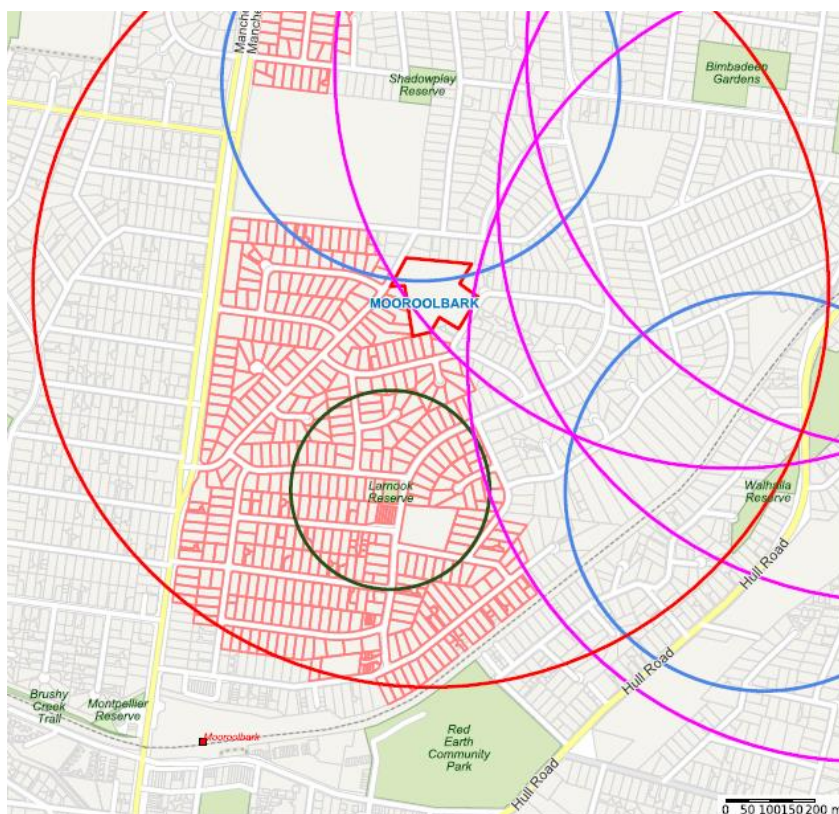


Image 5: Gap in provision showing 800m Neighbourhood catchment (pink), McDermott Avenue Reserve 800m (red)

The projected increase in population (3,550) and increased housing density (1,545 dwellings) in Mooroolbark to 2046, creates an even greater demand for open space and a potential increase in number of people impacted by the gap in provision.

Planning implications

To strategically justify a Planning Scheme Amendment to rezone the land from PPRZ to another zone, Council would need to demonstrate that there is a surplus of public open space and another use is in higher need (in this scenario residential land). The above assessment shows the site is needed to service a gap in the local and neighbourhood open space catchment and hence a surplus of public open space would be very difficult to demonstrate at Planning Panel. Rezoning the entire site is therefore unlikely to meet the strategic justification requirements and is unlikely to be supported by Department Transport and Planning or the Minister for Planning.

It is estimated that the sale of the land, taking in costs associated with planning requirements, land preparation costs, windfall gains tax and public open space contributions levy, could return a nett potential income of approximately \$4.131 million.

While there is no known test case for this, if Council was compelled to purchase equivalent replacement open space land within Mooroolbark to offset the loss, this is estimated to cost around \$16.5m at current market rates. This results in a potential

\$12.4 million nett loss to Council. These amounts reflect land cost only and does not include any embellishments.

Council's ability to acquire new affordable and suitable public open space in this catchment area is limited and likely to be more expensive than the income from selling the existing site. It is recommended that Option 1 not proceed, and a new Council resolution be supported that proceeds with a new direction for the site.

Option 2 – Present the Draft McDermott Avenue Reserve Masterplan to community for feedback and comment, including site reactivation for Public Open Space (Neighbourhood level) and partial investigation for future housing options

A review of Council's adopted standards under the Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013 (ROSS, currently under review), as well as contemporary draft State Government standards for open space, suggests that a minimum of one hectare / 10,000 square metres of open space may be required at 52 McDermott Avenue. Having considered these standards and the number of households within McDermott Avenue Reserve's catchment, Option 2 proposes a Draft Masterplan that retains approximately 1.4 hectares of the site as 'social recreation' public open space.

Social recreation parks support areas for community to meet and socially gather and offer environments for play, relaxation and informal recreation activities, but are not intended for formal/club-based sport.

Key design objectives are:

- Provide a mix of recreation opportunities suited to the diverse community (age, gender, culture and ability).
- Maintain linkages with abutting streets and schools.
- Enhance biodiversity and support indigenous planting.
- Ensure car parking provision is appropriate for future usage.
- Seek to reduce risks associated with the concealed southern corner and overlooking.

Site and Gender Impact Assessments for the site have identified a lack of passive surveillance for the whole reserve, with sections that are perceived as difficult to access and have personal safety concerns, especially for women. To mitigate these risks a concept design has been developed to create a more safe and accessible open space that delivers quality elements of a neighbourhood park, whilst reducing the safety / Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and overlooking issues.

The Draft Masterplan includes a concept plan (Attachment 1) that shows the potential layout of social recreation features focusing landscape development in the central and northern sections of the site. This design would meet the current and emerging community social recreation needs now and well into the future.

There are design limitations due to the site layout, in particular poor residential interfaces to most boundaries, challenging topography and associated budget implications.

Cost breakdown – Option 2

Site Preparation

- Single-stage: \$2.003 million, or
- Staggered delivery:
 - Early works: \$1.415 million
 - Remaining works: \$722,900
 - Total staggered cost: \$2.138 million
 (Extra cost due to staging: ~\$135,404)

Open Space Development (Masterplan works)

- Cost: \$1.945 million

Total Capital Cost

- \$4.095 million

Maintenance Cost (Operational budget)

- Over 15 years: \$374,000

Stage 1 – Site preparation

The estimated cost to redevelop the entire site into a baseline, usable open space is approximately \$2.003 million. This would involve removal of the 10 existing asphalt courts, approximately half of the asphalt car park areas, and the retaining wall. The works would also include reshaping sections of the open space and hydroseeding to establish a usable grassed open space area.

If funds are limited, then a reduced scope could be achieved by focusing only on the north and east sections of the site and leaving the lower asphalt netball courts to the south. This would offer some interim value to community and would cost approximately \$1.415 million. These interim works would achieve improved sight lines and design outcomes, address current concerns over the pavilion and retaining walls and would make the site feel safer. However staggering the Site preparation would come at a cost penalty, with additional works still needing to be carried out prior to commencement of the masterplan delivery.

Stage 2 – Remainder of site preparation

If the interim, reduced scope approach was used in Stage 1, then the remainder of the site preparation would be around \$722,900. Further information regarding the scope of works for this remaining stage can be found in Attachment 1 (7.2 Proposed Implementation Cost Plan). This staggering of the Site Preparation would incur an

additional \$135,000 cost due to multiple site establishment and on-costs. The total cost for Site preparation if staggered would be approximately \$2.138 million.

Stage 3 – Open space development

Stage 3 includes development of social recreation infrastructure in line with the Draft Masterplan. Site improvements such as a playspace, path networks, activity areas, landscaping, shelter and amenities would cost approximately \$1.945 million.

Maintenance

Maintenance of the site over the first 15 years of master plan implementation is projected to cost approximately \$374,000. This would need to be allocated annually to Council's Operational budget. The final design and associated costs will be informed by future community feedback on the draft concept plan, included in the draft Master Plan.

Housing investigation

Option 2 sets aside the southwest corner for future housing investigation, allowing time to advocate to State Government for an exemption to Windfall Gains Tax and explore other housing options. It gives flexibility to either proceed with the housing if the investigations are effective, or converting this to public open space to integrate with the remainder of the site if the investigations are not successful. In the meantime minimal works will be carried out in this part of the site.

The southwest corner presents some amenity challenges. Feedback from local residents and Council's maintenance crews have advised of incidents and evidence of anti-social behaviour in this part of the site. This affects the quality and amenity of the open space. Other contributing factors include the lack of active edges, blank fences and no public sightlines from any streets. The elevated ground levels also create overlooking issues into the adjacent residential private open space.

This option partially responds to the original Council resolution, while being more able to demonstrate strategic justification for the reduced area of rezoning. A Planning Scheme Amendment would still be required to subdivide and rezone part of the land for residential development. If the Amendment is successful for the subdivided portion, then Council is less likely to have a legal requirement to purchase replacement open space as an offset.

Overall Option 2 offers inclusive and attractive open space that meets the service levels required for the local Mooroolbark community. It seeks to reduce existing site issues, preserves open space for the local catchment and offer flexibility to investigate housing that would improve safety and amenity within the open space areas. The Draft Masterplan concept reflects community feedback and includes a range of elements that maximise value and options for community use. The difficult topography is broken down into a sequence of terraces that facilitate an accessible compliant path from one end of the site to the other. Play, picnic and grassed areas offer a range of valuable social recreation activities.

This option is recommended.

Option 3 – Carry out remediation works only at the site including demolition of the pavilion and retaining wall and basic landscape works.

This option would retain the land in Council ownership but would only include minimal works including demolition of the retaining wall and pavilion and minimal landscape and earth works. It would deliver the 'reduced scope' option in Stage 1 above but would not remediate the full site or deliver any open space improvements. It would offer some improved open space outcomes for community but would not meet the service levels required of a Neighbourhood level Public Open Space. The cost for these works would be approximately \$1.415 million.

This option would only be suitable as an interim solution as part of a more significant plan for the site, but would be inadequate as a long term open space outcome for the local community. Hence this option is not recommended.

Recommended option and justification

Option 2 is recommended as it provides the most flexibility and seeks to partially implement the original Council resolution while delivering a neighbourhood level Public Open Space with attractive social recreation opportunities for current and future residents in the Neighbourhood catchment (800 metres) and visitors to the area. It includes staging options to work with available budgets and offers strong community benefit.

The concept plan included in the draft Master Plan aligns closely with community feedback. If the housing component is unsuccessful then the Masterplan allows for this section of site to be established as part of the open space.

A requirement for replacement open space is considered unlikely yet still possible if the investigation leads to a housing outcome in the southwest corner.

Option 1, whilst consistent with the 2015 Council resolution, is not recommended. Updated legal advice and investigations indicate that rezoning the whole reserve is not likely to be able to be strategically justified, especially as Council cannot demonstrate that there is a surplus of open space in this area. This option does not align with community feedback.

Option 3 would not achieve the levels of service required for a neighbourhood level Public Open Space, however it would mitigate some latent risks on site. This would not be a suitable long-term plan for and accordingly is not recommended.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Option 2 provides the required open space for the community on existing Council-owned land, and through smart design and earthworks this option makes the open space more accessible, safe and inclusive.

Delivery of Option 2 would cost approximately \$2.138 million for site preparation and a further \$1.945 million for the Open Space development. Funding for this would be sought through the Open Space Fund in Council's capital program as well as advocacy and applications for external funding through State and Federal grant programs.

Council currently has approximately \$350,000 allocated in the 2025-26 capital works program to carry out early works to the site, however additional funds are needed to address immediate onsite concerns. These will be sought through Council's capital expenditure program.

Option 3 would have a lower cost initially, at around \$1.415m, however if Council decided to proceed with full development of the site in the future then this would incur additional site establishment costs and be more expensive overall. The most efficient approach is to deliver all works within the one contract, reducing duplication and maximising on-site efficiency.

Windfall Gains Tax

Council would rezone the southwest corner parcel to Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) prior to sale. Rezoning would increase the underlying land value. Where the taxable value uplift is \$500,000 or more a tax rate of 50 percent applies (Table 1). This Windfall Gains Tax (WGT) is payable at the time of rezoning and once the Valuer General for the State Government has valued the land. The tax is calculated as 50 per cent of the value uplift arising from the change of zone.

It is recommended that, as part of the Housing Investigation area in Option 2, Council lobby the Victorian Government for an exemption to the WGT given the land could be repurposed for housing outcomes that align with the State's Housing Statement objectives. Inclusion of Social and Affordable Housing options would be closely aligned with State objectives and may make an exemption more likely.

Public Open Space Contributions Levy

A public open space contributions levy of five percent is applicable when the land is subdivided. This levy is payable upon finalisation of subdivision and once a valuation has been undertaken.

If Council proceed with a housing solution it could sell the land as a superlot to a developer who would then carry out subdivision into individual housing lots. Alternately, if Council seeks greater confidence in the design outcomes for the site, then it could subdivide the land into individual lots prior to sale. Both scenarios trigger the levy when subdivision occurs, at around \$100,000. A public open space contribution may be required only once for the land to be subdivided.

A compromise may be to sell a superlot with a pre-approved planning permit for development, which could also provide some confidence in the design outcomes for the site.

Implementation Costs

The Draft Master Plan – Proposed Implementation Cost Plan (Attachment 1) provides the estimated implementation costs and timing of a staged approach to Option 2. Implementation costs associated with each option and the separate costs of providing replacement open space, are summarised in Table 1 of this report. Applicable taxes and levies have also been factored into the cost to Council of each option.

Site preparation costs would be around \$2.003 million if delivered in one stage. They would be needed for Options 1 and 2. Option 3 would only partially carry out this scope.

A single stage Site Preparation delivery would be most efficient and more cost effective.

However a reduced site preparation may be possible to enable early delivery of works. This approach would focus on demolition of the ageing retaining wall, old pavilion and half of the asphalt courts along with associated earthworks. This reduced scope would cost around \$1.415 million.

Additional funding would still be required to complete the remaining site preparation stage, with asphalt removal and car park works at a cost of around \$722,900. Hence a staggered site preparation would cost an extra approx. \$135,404, totalling around \$2.138 million.

Funding of \$350,000 has already been allocated in Council's 2025/26 budget towards these works, and a further \$300,000 is being planned for 2026/27. Based on a Quantity Surveyor estimate, a further \$1.488 million approximately will still be required to complete major earth works, removal of asphalt courts and part of car parks, and removal of old pavilion infrastructure and area preparation in one stage, in readiness for future construction of the Masterplan concept.

Stage 3 delivery of the social recreation infrastructure proposed requires a further \$1.94 million including cost escalations. Up to 50 percent of the cost would be sought from State and/or Federal Government grants however these have become more difficult to secure.

Operational maintenance of the completed open space infrastructure is estimated to cost approximately \$374,000 over the first 15 years. This would need to be built into the baseline operating costs for outdoor maintenance budgets.

The Melba Ward public open space contributions fund balance is currently \$4,826,452, of which \$350,000 has been committed in the 2025/26 Council Budget. This balance may also be drawn down in future for other planned open space improvements. On average, approximately \$900,000 is received in the Melba ward public open space fund each year.

Whilst public open space contributions provide a relatively stable revenue stream, it is subject to fluctuations based on housing development activity. The current public open space contributions mechanism is triggered by subdivision but does not account for increased demand arising from non-subdivision developments (e.g. build-to-rent, small second dwellings) or population growth. This results in Council bearing additional financial responsibility for meeting the open space needs of increased population growth. Proposed State planning reforms may also create further inequity in contributions payable to councils, but there are not details of these at this stage.

In total the proposed McDermott Avenue Reserve redevelopment and improvements (Option 2) have been estimated at \$4.47 million including maintenance costs over 15 years, and it is expected that there would be sufficient Ward funds to support the staged redevelopment over the 10-15 years, or less if external funding is obtained.

Maintenance would be funded through operational budgets, as they are ineligible to access public open space funds.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the newly adopted Council Plan 2025-2029:

- **Healthy Connected Communities:** McDermott Avenue Reserve has the opportunity to provide safe, inclusive, and accessible public open space with quality infrastructure, recognising the role of open space in encouraging active lifestyles for all ages, supporting mental health through connection to nature, and fostering social cohesion through opportunities for unstructured recreation and community interaction.
- **Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places:** The recommendations in this report seek to develop well-planned, safe and quality infrastructure with adequate open space to meet current and future community needs. The draft master plan (Option 2) retains the site, reactivating approximately 1.4 hectares as open space for social recreation, enhances linkages to the local path network, transport, primary and secondary schools and will fill the gap in provision of open space to the south of the reserve. The plan includes further investigation into housing outcomes in the remaining 3,000 square metres to the south of the site.
- **Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment:** The recommendation in this report reflects the value the community places on preserving natural open space by replacing approximately 70 per cent of existing asphalt with grass and permeable surfaces, reducing urban heat and improving water absorption. The proposed Master Plan enhances canopy cover, native vegetation, and water filtration to support both community use and local wildlife, while increasing resilience.

The project and recommendations remain aligned with the objectives outlined in the Council Plan 2025-2029 .

Other relevant plans and strategies that have been considered for the development of McDermott Avenue Reserve include, but not limited to:

- Open Space for Everyone 2021, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Plan for Victoria 2025, Department of Transport and Planning
- Guide for Open Space Strategies (draft), Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.
- Recreation and Open Space Strategy, 2013 – 2023 (under review)
- Sale of Land Policy, 2014

- Housing Strategy, 2024
- Liveable Climate Plan, 2020 – 2030
- Tree Canopy Strategy, 2024- 2044
- Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme:
 - Clause 19.02-6L Open Space: this clause includes strategic guidance concerning provision of open space, including providing open space and recreation facilities for urban areas that includes a local park of approximately one hectare within 400 metres of residential areas and a centralised district park for community events and activities.

RELEVANT LAW

The property is a combination of five titles, two of which hold Reserve status and all are zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone. The implications of these are outlined below.

Subdivision Act 1988, Local Government Act 1989 and Planning and Environment Act 1987

Land which is zoned PPRZ under the Planning Scheme is deemed to be Public Open Space under the *Subdivision Act 1988*. Ordinarily, land zoned for Public Open Space can only be sold where replacement Public Open Space has been provided.

Should Council proceed with rezoning and sale of the southwest corner, the Subdivision Act stipulates that Council must use the proceeds in accordance with Section 24A(8) of the Act.

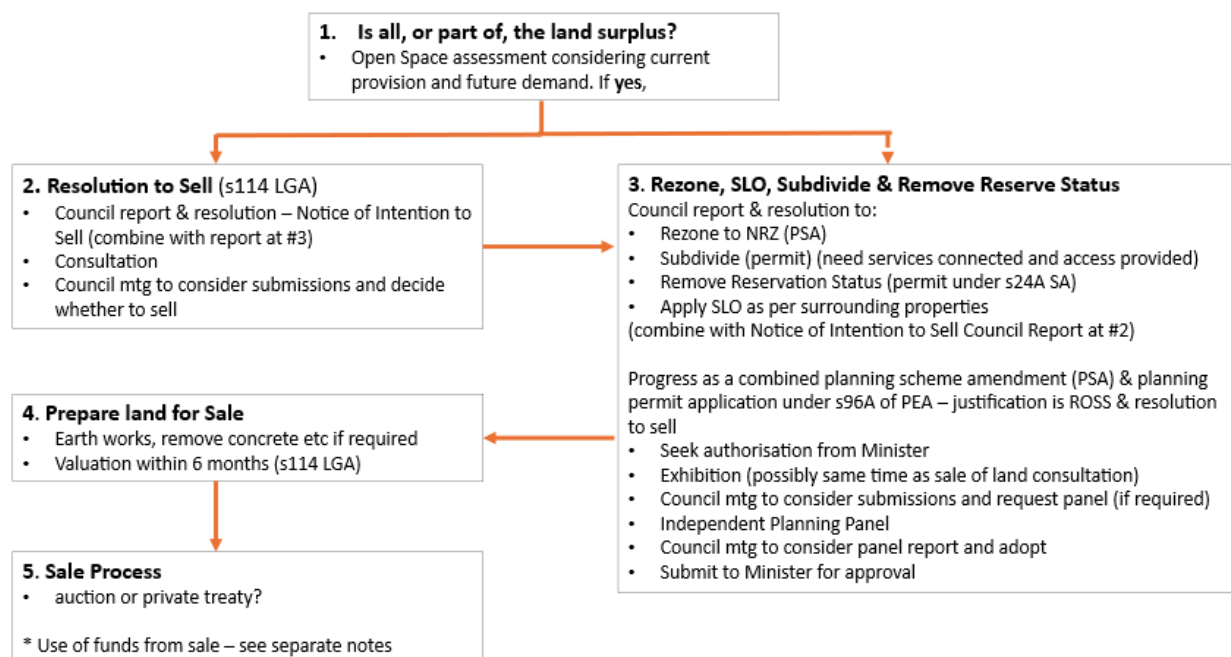
Council may also apply to remove the reserve status from two of the property titles by way of a planning application pursuant to Section 24A of the Subdivision Act.

The area of the site proposed for housing investigation would be rezoned to Neighbourhood Residential Zone 1 (NRZ1) and a Significant landscape Overlay SLO023 applied, consistent with surrounding properties.

Statutory and Legal Process

The cost to Council associated with a Planning Scheme Amendment to rezone the land have been estimated at \$30,530.

To initiate a Planning Scheme Amendment and progress the sale of land, the following processes would be required under options 1 and 2 should further investigations progress to a housing outcome.



SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

Options 1 and potentially Option 2 would increase housing supply within Mooroolbark, offering improved diversity and affordability. The conditions of sale may provide opportunity to direct a portion of the land to be used for social housing. The increased population would support local business while offering improved open space activation.

Options 2 and Option 3 would attract a wider catchment of open space users thereby supporting local business and enabling small local events.

All costs incurred by Council relating to the sale of a property will be recovered from the proceeds of their sale.

Should Council proceed with retaining and improving some public open space on the site, construction, maintenance and management activities are expected to generate supplementary economic benefits through procurement of labour and materials.

Open space improvements also support a wellbeing economy, through the provision of quality, accessible infrastructure that encourages health and wellbeing outcomes.

There are high costs associated with earthworks to prepare the land for sale and/or future use, including: removal of asphalt courts, netball pavilion and court infrastructure, the failing five-metre-high retaining wall, and drop off areas overlooking neighbouring properties. It has been estimated approximately \$2.138 million would be required to prepare the land for future use. The required works will provide significant employment opportunities for local construction companies.

Social Implications

Sale of all or part of the 52 McDermott Avenue property would result in a loss of open space provision for residents of the surrounding neighbourhood. Public open space is of high importance to the community, and Option 1 in particular would be to the detriment of the immediate 382 dwellings (1,146 persons approximately) to the southwest of the reserve that are not serviced within a 400 metre local park catchment and 35 dwellings (105 persons) within an 800 metre neighbourhood catchment of local parks and reserves.

Quality public open space within a 10 minute walking distance (400 – 800 metres) of where people live, also referred to as the 20-minute neighbourhood (Plan for Victoria, 2025), encourages people to be more active, improving mental and physical health. Having local spaces that people can walk to reduces traffic. The natural environment of open space provides an opportunity for air and water filtration for a healthy environment. Community bonds are strengthened by more chance encounters as neighbours use the space, including a space for connection for young people to meet and enjoy time together.

Reports from the community and outdoor maintenance crews regarding vandalism and antisocial behaviour, along with findings from a Gender Impact Assessment for the site, highlighted perceived and actual safety concerns – particularly affecting women and other vulnerable community members. These concerns were considered when formulating recommendations for the site's future use options and are best addressed through Option 2 and partially through Option 3. The draft Master Plan concept design has been drafted to improve visibility through the reserve, improving safety and passive surveillance. Proposed improvements to support use of the area by all include terracing of the landscape and a strong visual interface attributable to the housing in Option 2.

Housing affordability is highlighted as a concern in the Mooroolbark area. Option 2 provides for diverse and high amenity housing options on the subdivided 3000 square metre southwest corner. This will benefit the community with additional housing stock in a good location with access to transport, schools and services.

Options 2 proposes retention of open space embellished to Neighbourhood park level, providing infrastructure to support family and community gatherings with barbecues, shelter, toilets, playspace, youth activity areas and other spaces for interacting. This level of park provides an opportunity for social cohesion and strengthening which in turn supports mental health and wellbeing.

Option 3 would retain the current site as open space offering some value and amenity for community, but would not develop it to the Neighbourhood park level and would continue to experience issues with the poor safety outcomes to the south corner.

Environmental Implications

Aligned with Council's Tree Canopy Strategy and response to climate change resilience, the options that retain a portion for open space will include an increase in tree canopy, particularly around playspaces and pedestrian routes. Mooroolbark is situated in the urban zone of Yarra Ranges which has some of the lowest tree canopy percentages in the municipality, and was identified in the Strategy as having a reduction in tree canopy of 2.9 percent from 2014 – 2018.

Significant heat island effect reduction and water absorption benefits are possible with Options 2 and 3 due to the removal and conversion of large sections of asphalt to grass and/or other permeable surfaces such as gardens.

Existing trees of value/significance will be retained wherever possible. The draft Masterplan includes additional tree canopy and native vegetation that will enhance the user experience and attract additional wildlife. Perimeter planting of trees will create natural shade and reduce the overlooking of properties as they mature.

Water sensitive urban design principles have been considered and will provide opportunities for storm water to be filtered through the landscape, with the use of swales and biofiltration systems. The removal of the large expanses of paved surfaces will increase percolation of rainwater and reduce flooding and stormwater impacts.

The location within walking distance to large numbers of residents supports sustainable and active transport modes, reducing emissions, and encourages active lifestyles.

Aligned with Council's Liveable Climate Plan, applicable elements of the draft Master Plan will consider recycled and sustainable materials and minimum life cycle maintenance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Council engaged the community in late 2020 to understand how the community use the site, their vision and any issues and opportunities they attributed to McDermott Avenue Reserve. This engagement took place during pandemic restrictions and was conducted online, with over 340 submissions received. It was clear from this feedback that many local community members did not support the sale of the site. The Consultation Summary is available in the Draft Masterplan (Attachment 1) and on the Shaping Yarra Ranges page for this site.

In late 2024 the project was resumed and site investigations undertaken. The community was re-engaged informally through correspondence, ad-hoc conversations on site and in early 2025 at pop-up sessions at the Chin Community Festival and Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival.

The more recent engagement enabled officers to confirm the Mooroolbark community's most popular outdoor social activities. Feedback was consistent with earlier findings, and both rounds of engagement have been used to inform the concept plans for all options with retention for open space. These informal check ins also

enabled officers to engage with diverse groups, such as young people from the Chin community.

The community was provided with the Background Research Report (June 2025), available on Council's Shaping Yarra Ranges page for this project. A summary of the findings of the subsequent Feasibility Study is contained in the draft Master Plan (Attachment 1).

This report seeks Council support to proceed with the draft master plan developed (generally in accordance with Attachments 1 and 2) to consultation. The community will be provided with a copy of the draft Master Plan, including the Option 2 concept design. Comment and feedback on the master plan content, concept design and open space inclusions will be invited through a variety of means including online survey, in person pop ups and school incursion sessions.

Subject to Council consideration for endorsement, and community feedback to the draft Master Plan, the Master Plan will be refined and presented to Council for consideration for adoption in mid-2026.

A summary of the proposed Engagement Phases is provided in Attachment 3.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Internal collaboration was sought in the formation of the three options presented. Consultation in the form of workshops, meetings and correspondence was sought from Strategic Planning, Strategic Property Advisor and Council Valuer, Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, Recreation and Sport, Housing and Homelessness Officer and Planning Services to develop a suite of opportunities for the land.

Liaison with officers from the Department of Transport and Planning was undertaken to determine the feasibility of a proposed Planning Scheme Amendment. Advice received indicated that demonstration of a surplus of open space should be the basis for a planning scheme amendment.

Innovation and continuous improvement have been demonstrated through the three options, by proposing modern design inclusions with interfacing affordable housing in the less desirable part of the land.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks associated with the options include:

Reputation and Stakeholder Relationships: Community sentiment regarding the rezoning and subdivision for housing of 3000 square metres of McDermott Avenue Reserve may be negative. Furthermore, if Council assesses that the retained Open Space at McDermott successfully fills the open space provision gap and therefore does not purchase replacement open space, there may be a perception that this approach is not beneficial to the local community despite the replacement space's \$4 million cost to Council.

Financial: Legal advice has advised that the obligation to purchase replacement open space may not apply if the land is rezoned first. While there is no known test case, this may still be challenged. A ruling against Council would change the financial implication for Option 2 by incurring an additional \$4 million approx. to purchase replacement open space elsewhere. Land sale values are dependent on market conditions which can fluctuate, and hence income from sale remains an estimate only.

Environmental: Leaving the existing conditions with ageing retaining walls and deteriorating asphalt netball courts could lead to environmental harm such as erosion, flooding and downstream impacts on habitat. These risks may be alleviated by the proposed terraced design treatment with permeable surfaces. Contamination testing has been carried out and indicated no issues, however it is unclear if there remain concealed issues within the soil fill that had been used to create the current site levels. This must be managed carefully through planning conditions and site works.

Planning Approval: A Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) for rezoning of part or all of the site relies on authorisation by the Minister for Planning and requires strategic justification. Option 1 is considered difficult to justify as explained earlier whereas the remaining two options may have sound strategic foundation and more likely to be supported for an Amendment. If Option 3 investigations result in retention of whole site as public open space, then it would not be affected by a PSA as it is already zoned as PPRZ.

Safety and crime: The safety and anti-social behaviour concerns raised by local residents observed at the south end of the site are likely to continue to present challenges in Option 3 and will need careful management and design to alleviate to the extent possible. Historic research by Victoria Police indicates inactive blank fences in suburban settings are the most common indicator of likelihood for house break-ins around parks. The site will continue to have large expanses of these back fence conditions. The removal of most of the asphalt will prevent opportunity for 'hooning' on the courts. The development of the space as a welcoming social recreation space will introduce positive activation of the area, providing passive surveillance and reduced likelihood of anti-social behaviour.

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 McDermott Avenue Reserve Masterplan
2. Draft McDermott Avenue Reserve Masterplan Summary
3. Engagement Phases



MCDERMOTT AVENUE RESERVE

DRAFT MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2025





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples 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.

First Peoples are advised that this document may contain images and names of people now passed and content of cultural significance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The provision of quality infrastructure within our recreation reserves supports Yarra Ranges Council's vision for a healthy and active Yarra Ranges community.

In 2015 when netball usage moved from McDermott Avenue to Pinks Reserve in Kilsyth, Council resolved to commence proceedings to sell the 17,260m² (1.7 hectare) property at 52 McDermott Avenue. Background research underpinning this Master Plan reviewed the prior Council decision with a current statutory and strategic lens, with consideration of community open space needs into the future.

Options to sell all of the land in line with a previous Council resolution, or to retain the land for a mix of open space and residential offerings, were interrogated through a Feasibility Study undertaken in 2025. Retaining at least 10,000m² (1 hectare) of public open space for social recreation, whilst exploring the potential for multiple dwellings on the remainder of the site, was identified as the most viable option to maximise community benefit.

PURPOSE

The Master Plan for 52 McDermott Avenue Mooroolbark (herein called McDermott Avenue Reserve or 'the reserve'), provides the strategic framework for modification of the site's topography, for better accessibility and visual connectivity. The provision of new infrastructure and environment improvements will facilitate improved open space outcomes and green infrastructure, and opportunity to participate in social sport and recreation, play and community events.

The Master Plan ('the Plan') takes a fresh approach and responds to community feedback to reinvigorate this disused site into an active community destination.

The Plan will consider open space provision in the area and the demand from the community for housing and social recreation space.

AREA PROFILE

Mooroolbark (Figure 1) is bounded by the southern edge of the East Ridge Business Park, Manchester Road and the Maroondah Highway in the north, Mooroolbark Road, Hull Road, the suburb of Lilydale, the Melbourne Water Pipe Track and Belfast Road in the east, Cambridge Road, Hawthory Road and the locality of Kilsyth in the south, Marion Avenue, Hull Road, Lincoln Road, Newman Road, Sherlock Road and Brushy Creek in the west (.id(informed decisions)), September 2024).

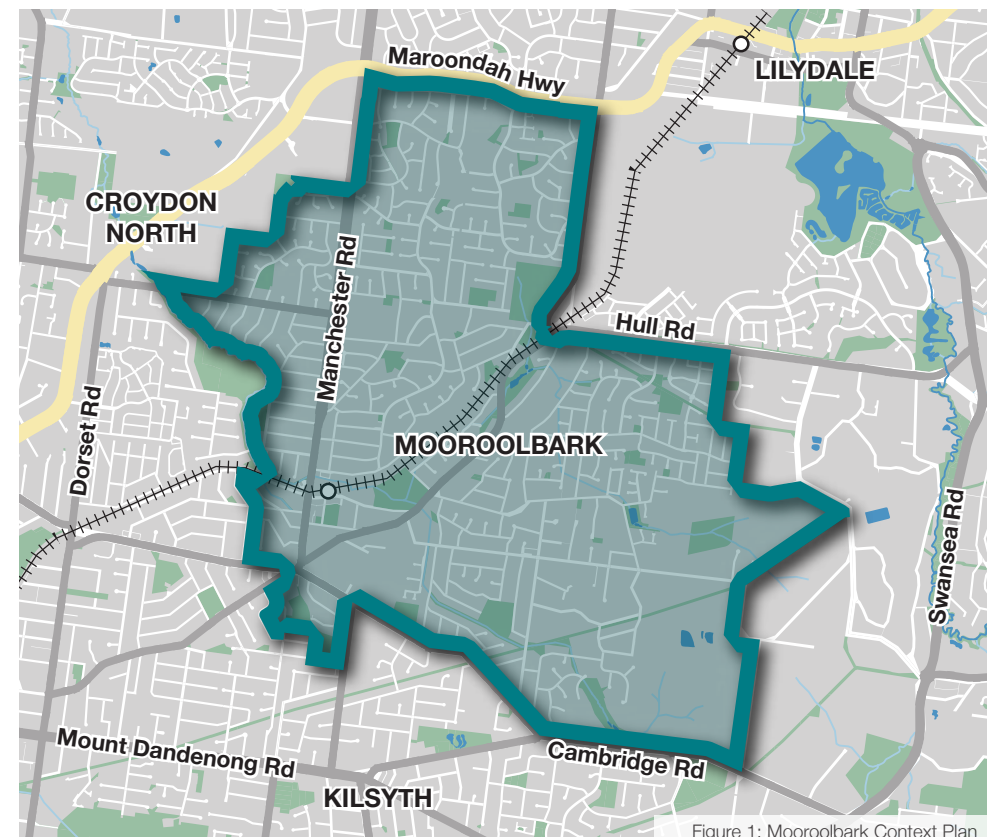


Figure 1: Mooroolbark Context Plan



Looking northwards along Manchester Road, from the railway crossing, 1950.

(Source – Mooroolbark College website, accessed 21 November 2024)

Image 1: 1950 photo

SITE HISTORY

Mooroolbark the name, has always been understood to mean ‘red earth’, however there is also an understanding that its meaning is that of ‘the land of Moorool’ which relates to a great body of water. It is said that the area comprising Mooroolbark and surrounds was once underwater. Mooroolbark is also viewed as a derivation of the Wurundjeri word Moorool-bik.

By the 1890s Mooroolbark had become predominately dairy country. The railway and the station ensured that local milk could be easily and quickly transported to the factory at Box Hill and that any other produce could be sent on to the markets in the city.

Slowly but surely, the spread of suburbia began to take hold and local dairy farmers were impacted by fast development of large-scale pasture farming in Gippsland.

Subsequent housing estates around McDermott Avenue, Batterbee Drive and Rolling Hills were the areas which extended Mooroolbark residential land so that they became “little more than a stone’s throw from the Maroondah Highway” (James, ‘Border Country, 1984).

By the 1960s -1970s as so much land was being released, and support facilities and services were required, including secondary schools and sporting grounds. The McDermott Avenue netball courts would soon take off by the late sixties with several local teams established, and other teams around the district competing at the venue.

There have been recollections shared to the Mooroolbark History Group on Facebook, regarding the landfill site where the netball courts were later constructed. It appears the courts were built over an old dam, which needed to be drained and backfilled prior to construction.

The Lilydale and Yarra Ranges Netball Association relocated from McDermott Avenue Reserve to Pinks Reserve, Kilsyth in 2015 and Council resolved to rezone and sell the land for housing. This was not acted on.

Since 2015, 52 McDermott Avenue has remained a vacated and under-utilised open space, other than when used as a Covid testing station in 2019-2020.

2. BACKGROUND

LOCAL CONTEXT

The study site 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark (Figure 2), is a 1.726ha property located at the western end of the Yarra Ranges between McDermott Avenue and Wyuna Walk.

McDermott Avenue Reserve is an irregularly shaped, terraced multi-level complex site. The site features 10 disused and deteriorating asphalt netball courts split over two levels, as well as a redundant pavilion and two car parking areas.

Local residents currently use the reserve as a walking, bike skills training and dog exercise area, plus thoroughfare to the nearby Mooroolbark College. The site in its current condition is underutilised and not welcoming.

Most neighbouring properties currently back onto the reserve, resulting in overlooking and poor public safety outcomes through negligible opportunities for passive surveillance (a sense of 'eyes on the park'), of the area. As a result, the site is underutilised and experiences unsafe behaviour and vandalism.

There is a substantial level change with a 13.5 metre fall from Wyuna Walk to McDermott Avenue, and 3 metre crossfall along Wyuna Walk frontage.

- There is a substantial five-metre-high retaining wall to the north west that is showing signs of potential failure. There is no accessible path through the site.
- The old play equipment was decommissioned and removed approximately five years ago. The closest playspace is 600m away at Shadowplay Reserve.



Image 2: McDermott Netball Courts



Image 3: Lower Court Overlooking Neighbours



Image 4: Retaining Wall



McDermott Avenue

Corrong Crescent

Wyuna Walk

Wyuna Walk



0 10 20 30 40 50m

Figure 2: Study Site - 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark

LOCAL FACILITIES & SERVICES

Walking distance to nearby facilities and services (Figure 3):

1. Mooroolbark College	500m
2. Bimbadeen Primary School	500m
3. Shadowplay Reserve playspace	600m
4. Larnook Reserve playspace	700m
5. Bimbadeen Gardens playspace	950m
6. Manchester Road bus stops	590m
7. Mooroolbark Railway Station	1300m
8. Local shopping centre	1400m

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Image 5: McDermott Reserve Aerial

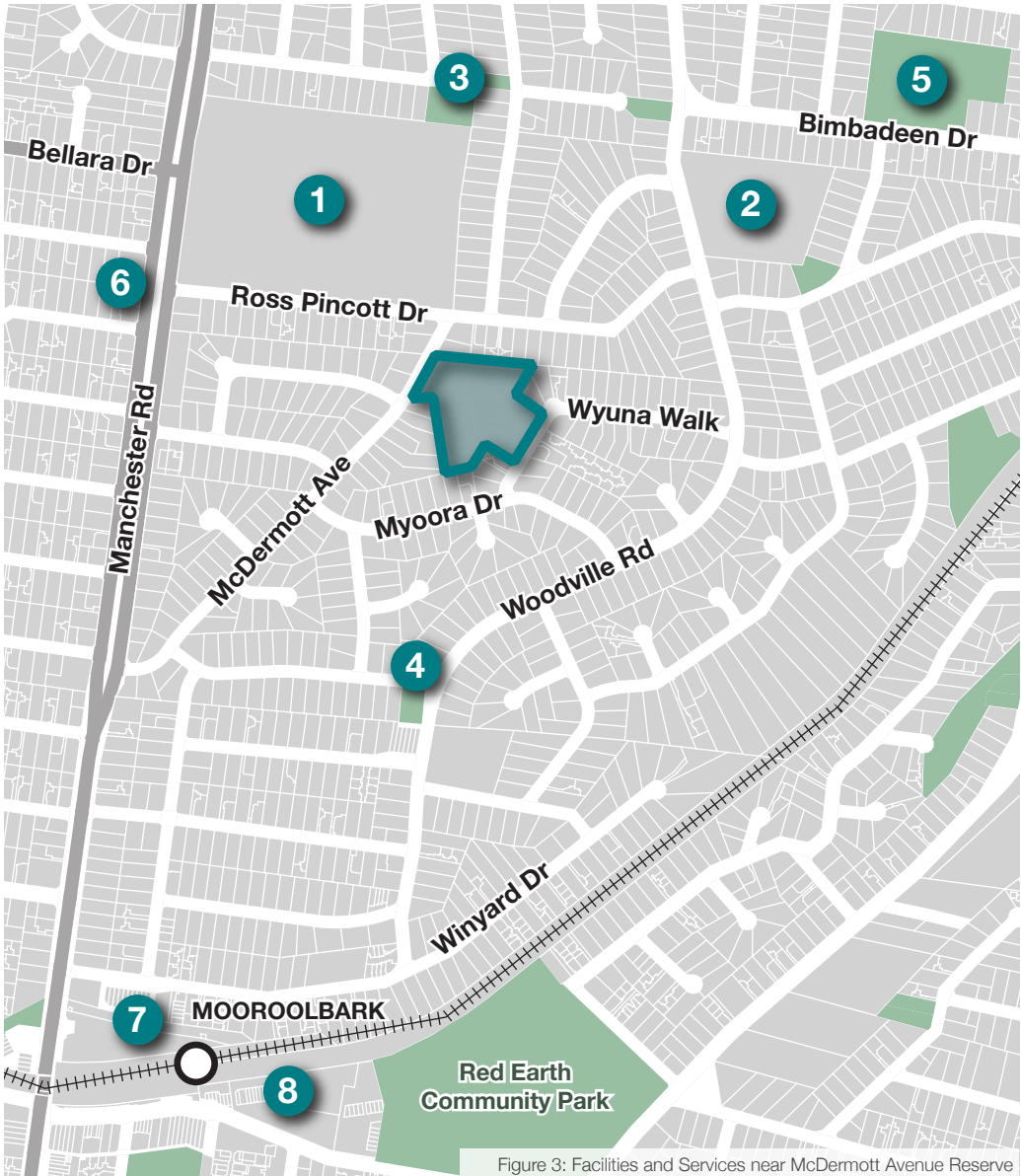


Figure 3: Facilities and Services near McDermott Avenue Reserve

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

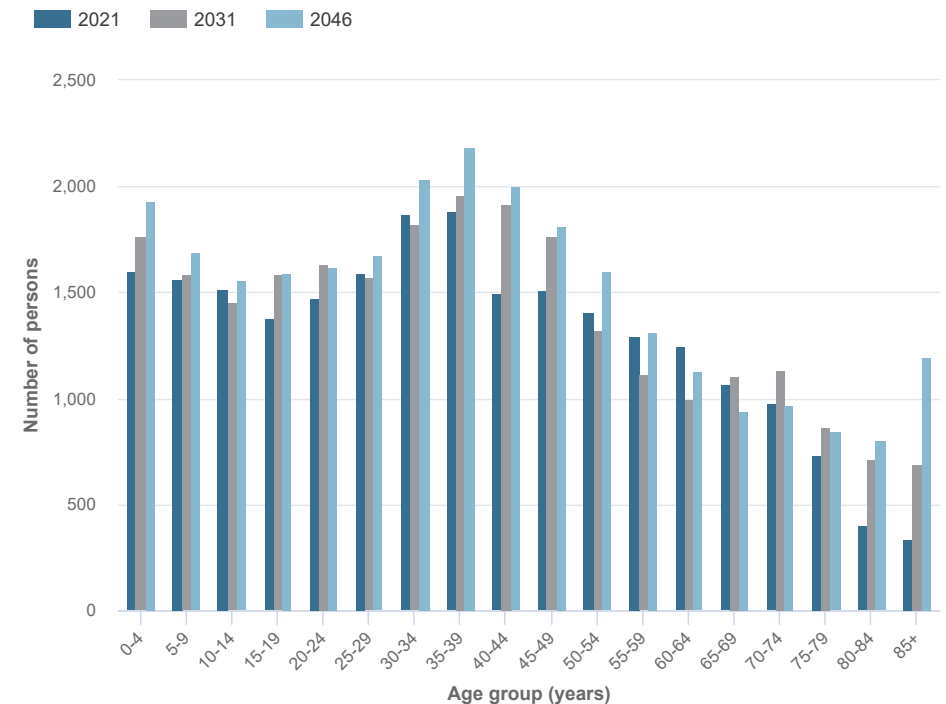
Mooroolbark is projected to become the second most populous suburb in the Yarra Ranges. Demographic data (.id informed decisions, 2024) underpinning recommendations in the Draft Master Plan, include:

- In 2021, the population of the urban area of Yarra Ranges was 82,346. By 2046, this number is expected to grow to 107,115. This is an increase of 24,769 people (30% overall increase, or about 1.06% growth per year).
- In Mooroolbark, the population is expected to grow by 3,550 people, from 23,349 in 2021 to 26,899 in 2046. This is a 15.2% increase overall, or 0.57% per year.
- In 2021, the largest age group in Mooroolbark was 35 to 39 years old, making up 8.1% of the population.
- The largest increase in persons between 2021 and 2031 is forecast to be in ages 40 to 44, which is expected to increase by 426 and account for 7.7% of the total persons.
- The largest 5-year age group in 2031 is 35 to 39 years, with a total of 1,961 persons.
- Between 2031 and 2046 there is forecast to be an extra 1,885 persons, the 35-39 years olds most dominant (8.1%) followed by 30 to 34 years (7.6%) and 0 to 4 years (7.2%).
- By far the greatest change between 2021 and 2046 is the migration into the 85+ bracket, being an additional 859 persons.
- The number of dwellings in Mooroolbark is forecast to grow from 8,628 in 2021 to 10,173 in 2046, with the average household size falling from 2.77 to 2.71 by 2046.

Figure 4: Population Forecast 2021-2048

Forecast age structure - 5 year age groups

Mooroolbark - Total persons



Source: Population and household forecasts, 2021 to 2046, prepared by .id (informed decisions), September 2024.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Council Plan 2025 - 2029

This Master Plan contributes to the following strategic objectives in the Council Plan 2025 - 2029:

- **Healthy Connected Communities:** McDermott Avenue Reserve has the opportunity to provide safe, inclusive, and accessible public open space with quality infrastructure, recognising the role of open space in encouraging active lifestyles for all ages, supporting mental health through connection to nature, and fostering social cohesion through opportunities for unstructured recreation and community interaction.
- **Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places:** The recommendations in this Master Plan seek to develop well-planned, safe and quality infrastructure with adequate open space to meet current and future community needs. The preferred option retains most of the site as open space, enhances linkages to the local path network, transport, primary and secondary schools and will meet open space need to residents in the vicinity of the reserve.
- **Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment:** The draft concept plan developed in the Master Plan reflects the value the community places on preserving natural open space by replacing approximately 70% of existing asphalt with grass and permeable surfaces, reducing urban heat and improving water absorption. The proposed Master Plan enhances canopy cover, native vegetation, and water filtration to support both community use and local wildlife, while strengthening environmental sustainability.

The project and recommendations remain aligned with the updated objectives outlined in the Draft Council Plan 2025-2029 which has yet to be adopted.

Yarra Ranges Housing Strategy 2024

Council's adopted Housing Strategy (2024) identifies actions related to the treatment of Council owned land. This includes:

Action 46: As a general principal, where practical, retain land suitable for housing within residential zones to enable the opportunities for provision of housing and to ensure that land is not lost to other land uses, subject to detailed assessment being undertaken in each case.

Action 47: Commission feasibility studies on the development of sites appropriate for social and affordable housing.

The Urban Area (of Lilydale and Mooroolbark) currently exhibits a social housing occupancy rate of approximately 1.3%, below the state average of 3.0%, and with housing affordability challenges for lower-income groups. Although the Urban area has a higher proportion of social housing than the rest of the region, this is mainly attributed to inner proximity to the metro direction and its higher density of population. This population density and its growing trajectory is also attributable to the acute and growing homelessness cohort in the area. With anticipated growth, an increased shortfall of approximately 1500 social housing units by 2041 is projected, particularly for one and two-bedroom units aimed at single occupants or smaller households.



Other relevant plans and strategies that have been considered for the development of McDermott Avenue Reserve include, but not limited to:

- Open Space for Everyone 2021, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Plan for Victoria 2025, Department of Transport and Planning
- Guide for Open Space Strategies (draft), Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025 – 2029
- Recreation and Open Space Strategy, 2013 – 2023 (Section 3. Open Space Assessment)
- Sale of Land Policy, 2014
- Liveable Climate Plan, 2020 – 2030
- Active Recreation Plan 2023
- Disability Action Plan 2025 - 2029
- Child and Youth Strategy 2014-2024
- Playspace Plan 2019 – 2029
- Nature Plan 2024 – 2034
- Liveable Climate Plan 2020 – 2030
- Tree Canopy Strategy 2024 - 2044
- Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme:
Clause 19.02-6L Open Space: this clause includes strategic guidance concerning provision of open space, including providing open space and recreation facilities for urban areas that includes a local park of approximately one hectare within 400 metres of residential areas and a centralised district park for community events and activities.

Relevant Law

The property is a combination of five titles, two of which hold Reserve status, and all are zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone. The implications of these are outlined below.

Subdivision Act 1988, Local Government Act 1989 and Planning and Environment Act 1987

Land which is zoned PPRZ under the Planning Scheme is deemed to be Public Open Space under the Subdivision Act 1988. Ordinarily, land zoned for Public Open Space can only be sold where replacement Public Open Space has been provided.

Should Council proceed with rezoning and sale, the Subdivision Act stipulates that Council must use the proceeds in accordance with Section 24A of the Subdivision Act.

Council can also undertake procedures to remove the reserve status from two of the property titles, by way of a planning application pursuant to Section 24A of the Subdivision Act.

The area of the site being considered for housing would be rezoned to Neighbourhood Residential Zone 1 (NRZ1) and a Significant landscape Overlay SLO023 applied, consistent with surrounding properties.

3. OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT

FEASIBILITY STUDY

In 2015, the area was deemed to have adequate open space and the site was not needed for open space. This informed the Council decision to sell the land.

As of 2025, there has been no progress in advancing the sale of the land. The former pavilion and 10 netball courts have remained underutilised, with minimal intervention, for the last 10 years. There was no progress to rezone the land through a Planning Scheme Amendment process.

Local residents have voiced their support for 52 McDermott Avenue to be retained and upgraded for public open space and social recreation. Population numbers and housing densities in the area are increasing and thus demand on open space increases. It was timely to revisit the feasibility of the sale of land at 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark.

In mid 2025 a Feasibility Study was undertaken including an open space strategic planning assessment and gap analysis provision to consider the current and future needs in the area. The feasibility study reviewed the site with key findings now in this Draft Master Plan. It tested whether the Council resolution to sell 52 McDermott Avenue still has the same strategic support, taking into consideration:

- Subdivision Act 1988
- Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme
- Population projections
- Open space requirement for the area, now and projected
- Council's open space, sale of land and housing policies
- Land optimisation and development opportunities
- Cost implications of land sale
- Legal advice.



RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

Council's endorsed Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013-2023 (ROSS, currently under review) incorporates a strategic framework, to guide Council's decision-making process in providing recreation and open space services and facilities in Yarra Ranges. It has a focus on providing sufficient open space for the population of Yarra Ranges now and into the future.

The ROSS identifies a range of social, environmental and economic benefits derived from engaging with open spaces. In addition, it considered current and future demographic implications for providing open space, including:

- Emerging Chin, Burmese and Indian communities in the urban areas: providing inclusive participation opportunities and club cultures that respect the cultural differences will be important.
- Catering for the high percentage of young people who use a range of both organised sporting facilities (i.e. playing fields, sports courts) and unstructured open space and facilities (i.e. skate and BMX facilities, half courts, play spaces, etc.).
- Providing a mix of activity spaces that encourage family participation including social recreation parks.

Updated population forecasts indicate a rise in projected population density, placing increased pressure on the provision of public open space. Recent amendments to State Government legislation allows two dwellings per lot without subdivision occurring. This may have had a dual impact: reducing the amount of private backyard space available and increasing the number of residents who rely on access to high-quality public open space to support their health and wellbeing

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The ROSS establishes a planning framework and levels of service for open space, considering:

- Function (purpose) of open spaces
- Hierarchy and catchment (the sphere of influence of an open space)
- Location, size and distribution of open space in the area
- Accessibility, visibility
- Site features (vegetation, existing support infrastructure)
- Interface with neighbouring properties
- Opportunity for improved design and community outcomes.

The ROSS provides for Local parks (minimum 1 hectare) within 400m-500m of every household, and a District park (minimum 2 hectare) centrally located within the precinct. This is also reflected in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme (Section 19.02-6L Open Space). More than a decade has passed since the development of these standards and whilst this assessment is grounded in the provision standards of the ROSS, a look at the contemporary context of open space planning to consider what is relevant to the future residents of Mooroolbark has been pursued.

In addition to Local-level parks, preliminary State Government guidance recommends provision of 'Neighbourhood' level parks. Neighbourhood parks may have a catchment of approximately 800m and be 1.0-5.0ha in size (Draft Guide for Open Space Strategies, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action 2024). This proposed hierarchy adds another layer to the ROSS standards by providing a Neighbourhood park within 800m of households and with increased levels of infrastructure above Local level.

A recent accurate application of the principles of the ROSS and its associated service levels indicates the site is not surplus to need and there is demand for a Local Park at this location under the ROSS hierarchy as well as a Neighbourhood level Public Open Space based on draft Guidelines for Open Space from the Victorian Government.

McDermott Avenue Reserve previously had an organised sport function under the ROSS. Given the transition of this function to an alternative site, there are opportunities for the reserve to fulfil an important Social Recreation Park role in the network.

Social recreation parks support areas for families and friends to meet and socially gather and offer environments for play, relaxation and informal recreation activities.



Image 6: McDermott Avenue Reserve Netball Courts & Pavilion



Image 7: McDermott Avenue Reserve Netball Courts

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE NETWORK

Currently in Mooroolbark there exists a diverse range of open space distributed throughout the suburb. An analysis, excluding roadside parcels of land, identified a total 84.3 hectares of land as having the potential to perform requirements of public open space. Of this, 42 land parcels were identified as suitable to be used by residents for the purposes of structured and unstructured activity.

The makeup of the open space network under the proposed hierarchy includes three District parks (8.8ha), 14 Neighbourhood parks (53.4ha), 24 Local parks (19.4ha) and eight Pocket parks (2.7ha) in Mooroolbark.

The parks in the vicinity of McDermott Avenue Reserve (Figure 5), perform a range of functions within the network including social recreation, sport, conservation, general landscape and linear/trails providing a vast array of opportunities for residents to engage with nature and be active. Hookey Park (1.4ha) and Red Earth Community Park (7.5ha), located to the south of McDermott Avenue Reserve, are identified as District-level open space with a Social Recreation Park function in Mooroolbark. However, both parks are located beyond the railway line barrier, at the southern boundary of the suburb and their ability to service the population to the north of Mooroolbark is limited.

Open Space catchments near McDermott Avenue Reserve:

- Neighbourhood Park 800m (pink),
- Local Park 400m (blue),
- Pocket Park 200m (green)



Image 8: Bimbadeen Gardens (Neighbourhood Park)



Image 9: Shadow Play Reserve (Local Park)



Image 10: Larnook Reserve (Pocket Park)

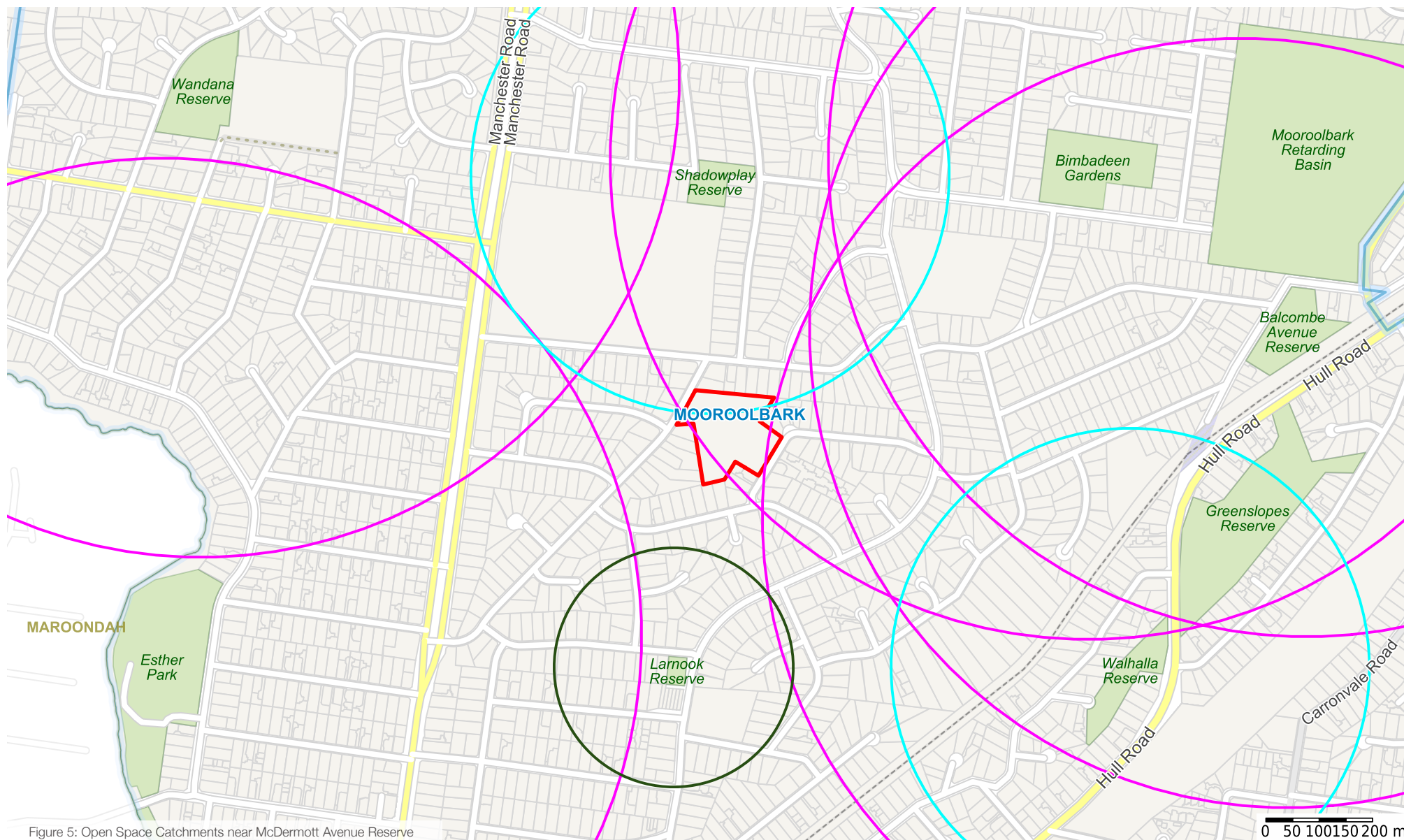


Figure 5: Open Space Catchments near McDermott Avenue Reserve

GAP ANALYSIS

An open space gap analysis was undertaken, applying the proposed park hierarchy framework to parks and reserves closest to the McDermott Avenue Reserve.

It should be noted that in many instances, the actual walking distance may be considerably greater than the direct radial catchment, especially if access is hindered by a physical barrier such as a main road or railway line. In this locality, Mooroolbark Road to the west and the railway line to the south create access barriers and inhibit likelihood of participation at parks and reserve that would require crossing these barriers, especially when walking with children.

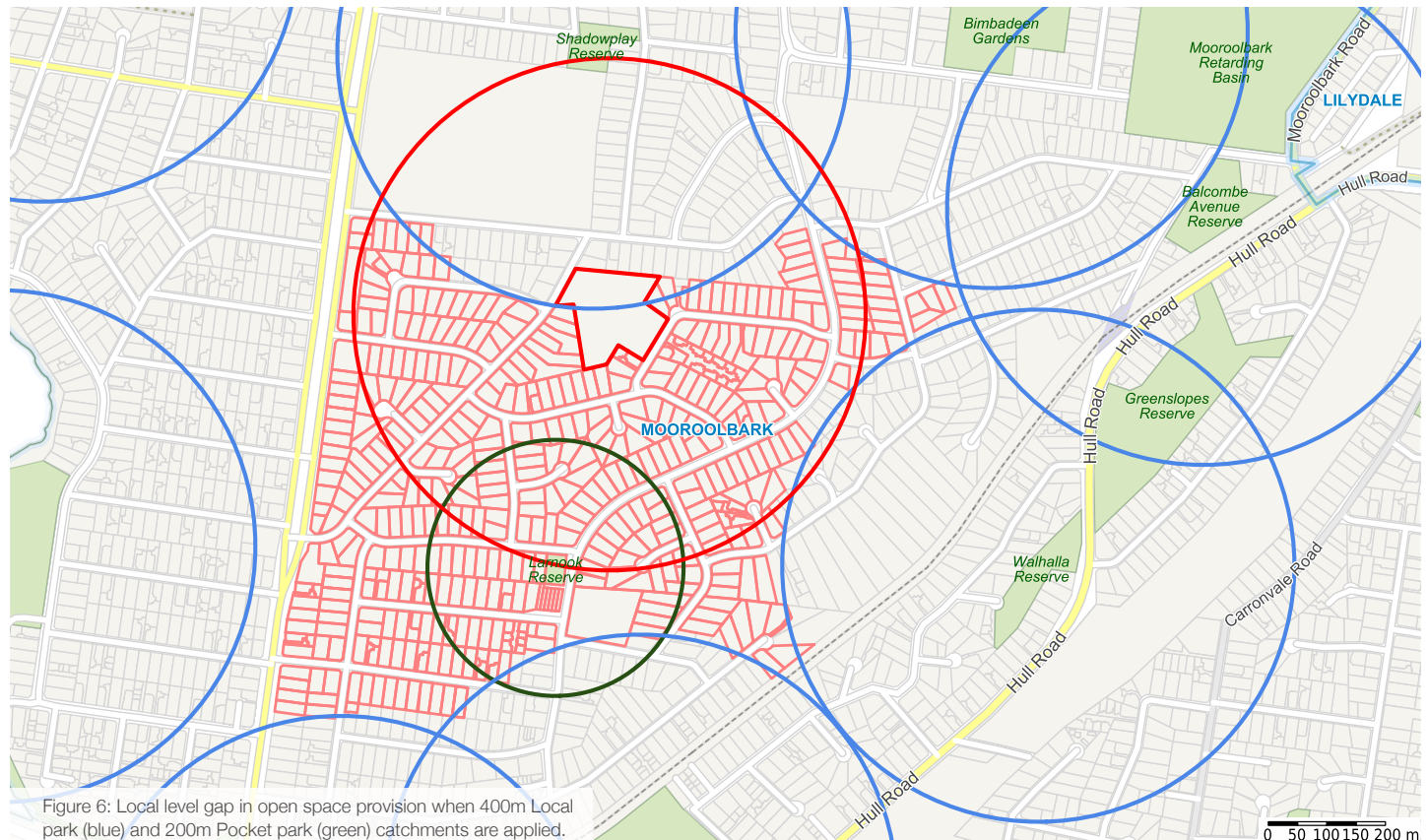
However, when assessing provision of open space in a given area, Council is guided by the requirement that at a minimum, people should have access to open space within a Local walkable catchment, i.e. 400m.

In addition to Local-level parks, preliminary State guidelines recommend a Neighbourhood-level of parks, servicing a broader catchment (800m) and offering a greater level of embellishment. Whilst these higher order parks are intended to serve a wider catchment, they may also act as the Local-level park for those residents within 400m walking distance.

Local level gap analysis

The gap analysis applying the proposed hierarchy of Local park (400m - blue) and Pocket park provision (200m – green) within the immediate vicinity of McDermott Avenue Reserve demonstrates that the removal of McDermott Avenue Reserve creates a gap in Local level open space provision for approximately 382 households to the south-west of the reserve, equating to an estimated 1146 residents (based on an average of three persons per household in Mooroolbark). If the pocket park at Larnook Reserve is not included, the gap increases to 483 dwellings, equating to approximately 1,449 persons (Figure 6).

The 400m radius around McDermott Avenue Reserve (red circle) shows the area of catchment a Local level of open space provision would have. A facility of this level would reduce the number of properties not served by a Local park to 169 or 237. However, a gap in Local-level provision still exists to the south of the reserve as shown, plus more on the west of Mooroolbark Road not captured within the blue circles.



Neighbourhood level gap analysis

When the next level of hierarchy for a Neighbourhood park (800m catchment) is applied, there is a gap in Neighbourhood-level open space provision of 35 dwellings (105 persons).

When reviewing open space catchments, other councils have recently been utilising the more accurate methodology of assessing actual walking distance, rather than 'as the crow flies' radial distance. This accounts for factors such as actual walking distance and speed, topography, and physical barriers (such as major arterials and railway lines).

Applying a very simple version of this technique demonstrates that access to existing Neighbourhood and District level parks and reserves south of the railway line, and to the west of Mooroolbark Road, would be hampered for residents in the McDermott Avenue area. The subsequent gap analysis (Figure 7) would reveal a far greater gap in provision that could be almost met by a Neighbourhood-level facility at McDermott Avenue Reserve, benefitting approximately 555 properties (1665 persons).

Other reserves in the area serve their local catchments only. A social recreation facility at McDermott would service the gap in provision identified to the south.

Overall, the Gap Analysis shows that McDermott Avenue Reserve is not surplus to the open space needs to this specific location and the broader Mooroolbark provision.

Based on this gap analysis an application for a Planning Scheme Amendment to re-zone the land would be challenging. This assessment confirms that a minimum of 1ha of open space should be retained at McDermott Avenue Reserve with a development level of Neighbourhood park providing an increased level of infrastructure over a Local park, and a change in open space function from Sports to Social Recreation is required.

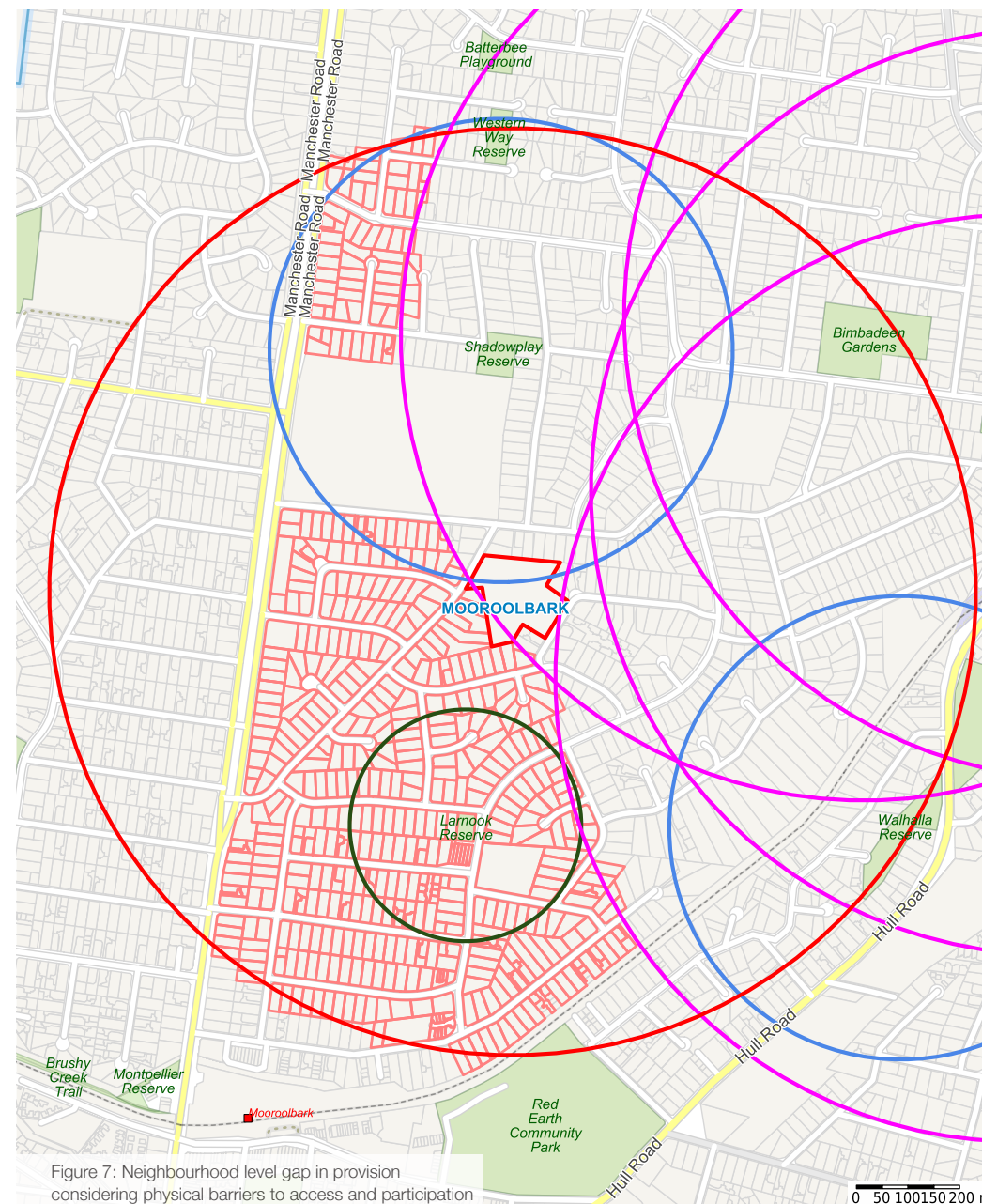


Figure 7: Neighbourhood level gap in provision considering physical barriers to access and participation



Corrong Crescent

McDermott Avenue

Wyuna Walk

Wyuna Walk

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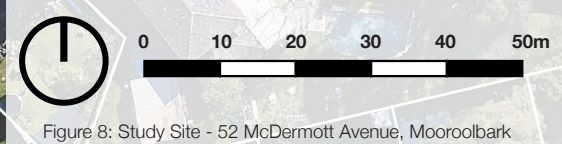


Figure 8: Study Site - 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark

4. SITE ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

McDermott Avenue Reserve (Figure 8) is an irregular, multi-level complex site. Major features for consideration include:

- Extensive bitumen car park areas:
 - McDermott Avenue (western frontage) - 29 spaces
 - Wyuna Walk (eastern frontage) - 112 spaces
- Extensive, redundant bitumen netball courts (10) over two levels
- Decommissioned netball pavilion
- Massive retaining wall to the east of the McDermott Avenue car park
- Elevated (overlooking) position with steep drop off to neighbouring fence lines on the north, south and west boundaries.
- Mature canopy of valuable trees within the Wyuna Walk car park area.

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SITE INVESTIGATIONS

Site investigations were undertaken to provide a detailed picture of conditions at McDermott Avenue Reserve. The findings together with site specific comments received during consultation with Council officers and members of the community underpin the Master Plan. Investigations undertaken include:

- Feature and Level Survey (July 2022)
- Environmental Assessment (2020 then revised in July 2024)
- Asset condition Report (March 2023)
- Asbestos and Synthetic Mineral Fibre Compliance Survey (February 2024)
- Preliminary Tree Assessment (2020 then revised in July 2024)
- Soil Assessment Report (September 2024)
- Retaining Wall Assessment (2025).

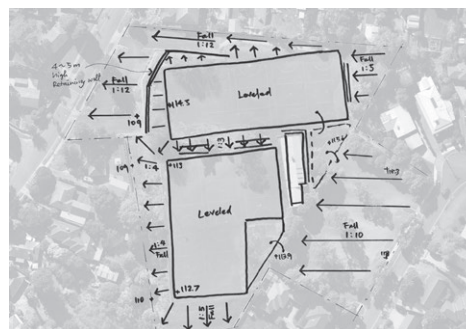


Figure 9: Site Analysis Plan - Topography

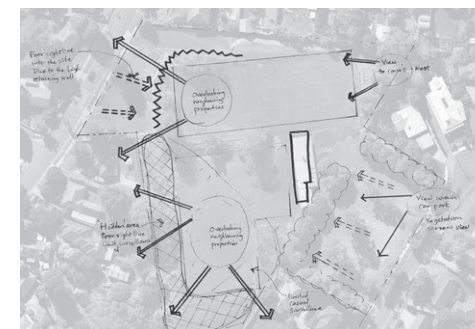


Figure 10: Site Analysis Plan - Viewlines

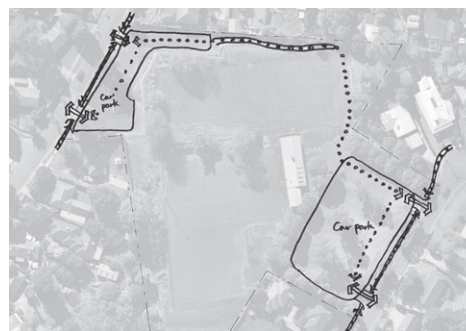


Figure 11: Site Analysis Plan - Pedestrian Access



Figure 12: Site Analysis Plan - Vegetation



Figure 13: Site Analysis Plan - Drainage

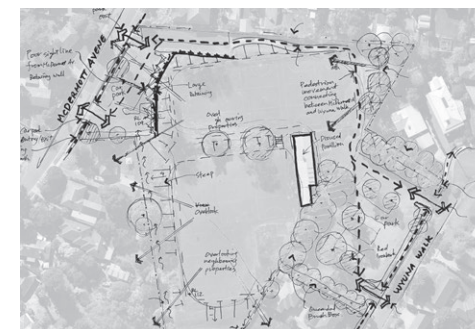


Figure 14: Full Site Analysis Plan

SITE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SUMMARY

Table 1: Issues and Opportunities Identified

FEATURE OR THEME	ISSUE	OPPORTUNITY
Neighbour privacy	Neighbours to the west and south are overlooked from court level.	- Create a vegetative barrier to restrict line of site into neighbouring properties - Consider residential interface option.
Topography	Two to four metre drop over short distance into earth drain on the western boundary interface creating an issue to maintain and provides secluded areas.	Landscape treatment to open up the area to greater usage and passive surveillance, including modifying site levels.
Drainage	Open drain along southern and western fence lines.	Apply water sensitive urban design (WSUD) consideration and recommendations for the entire site.
Courts and car parks	- Asphalt is a heat sink and impervious surface, adding to drainage issues elsewhere on site. - Court area is underutilised. It is unpleasant and lacks sport and recreation opportunities. - Car park areas are not aligned with current or anticipated future level of use.	- Reduce the amount of hard surface (asphalt) to allow greater water penetration through the soil. - Remove asphalt courts and replace with grassed open space. - Decrease car park areas, replacing with activity zones and/or grassed open space.
Retaining wall	- Poor sight lines through the site due to the high and extensive retaining wall. - The wall is showing signs of deterioration so a structural assessment has been sought to better understand its condition and longevity.	Create a terraced layout through the site.
Trees and vegetation	Sparse vegetation since weed species were removed. Increased lack of privacy for neighbours on west and south boundaries.	Create a landscape plan as part of the future design concept development featuring indigenous and native trees and plants.
Safety	- Vandalism (pavilion), antisocial behaviour (i.e. inappropriate use of reserve, broken glass on courts). - Site and Gender Impact Assessments have identified a lack of passive surveillance for the reserve, resulting in safety concerns for reserve users.	- Demolish the pavilion and remaining lighting infrastructure. - Reactivate the site, increasing usage and opportunities for passive surveillance.
Security	- Reserve lacks residences that front on to the reserve providing passive surveillance, other than six that have frontages on the other side of McDermott Avenue and Wyuna Walk. - Most properties (18) back onto the reserve.	- Activation of the site and improved line of sight through the reserve. - Investigate inclusion of housing in the southern section of the site to introduce an active frontage.
Decommissioned infrastructure	Former netball pavilion has been decommissioned and attracts graffiti and vandalism.	Remove existing building, consider better positioning of basic infrastructure (toilets, shade, seating etc.) to support use of the reserve for community events and social recreation.
Paths	Indirect path of travel through the reserve to the Mooroolbark College located nearby to the north west.	Landscape design to include better orientation of the connecting path within an accessible path network.

SITE ANALYSIS

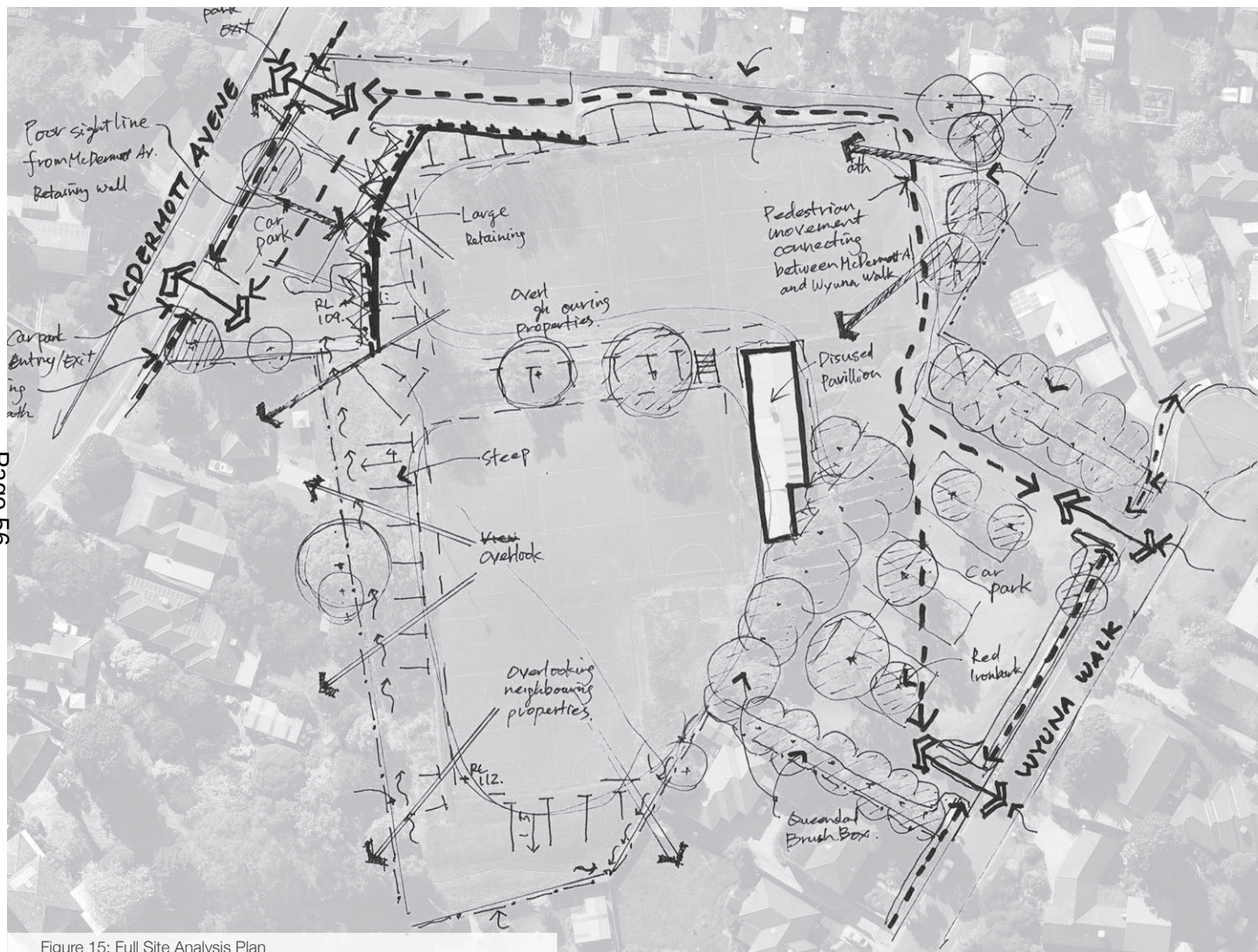


Figure 15: Full Site Analysis Plan

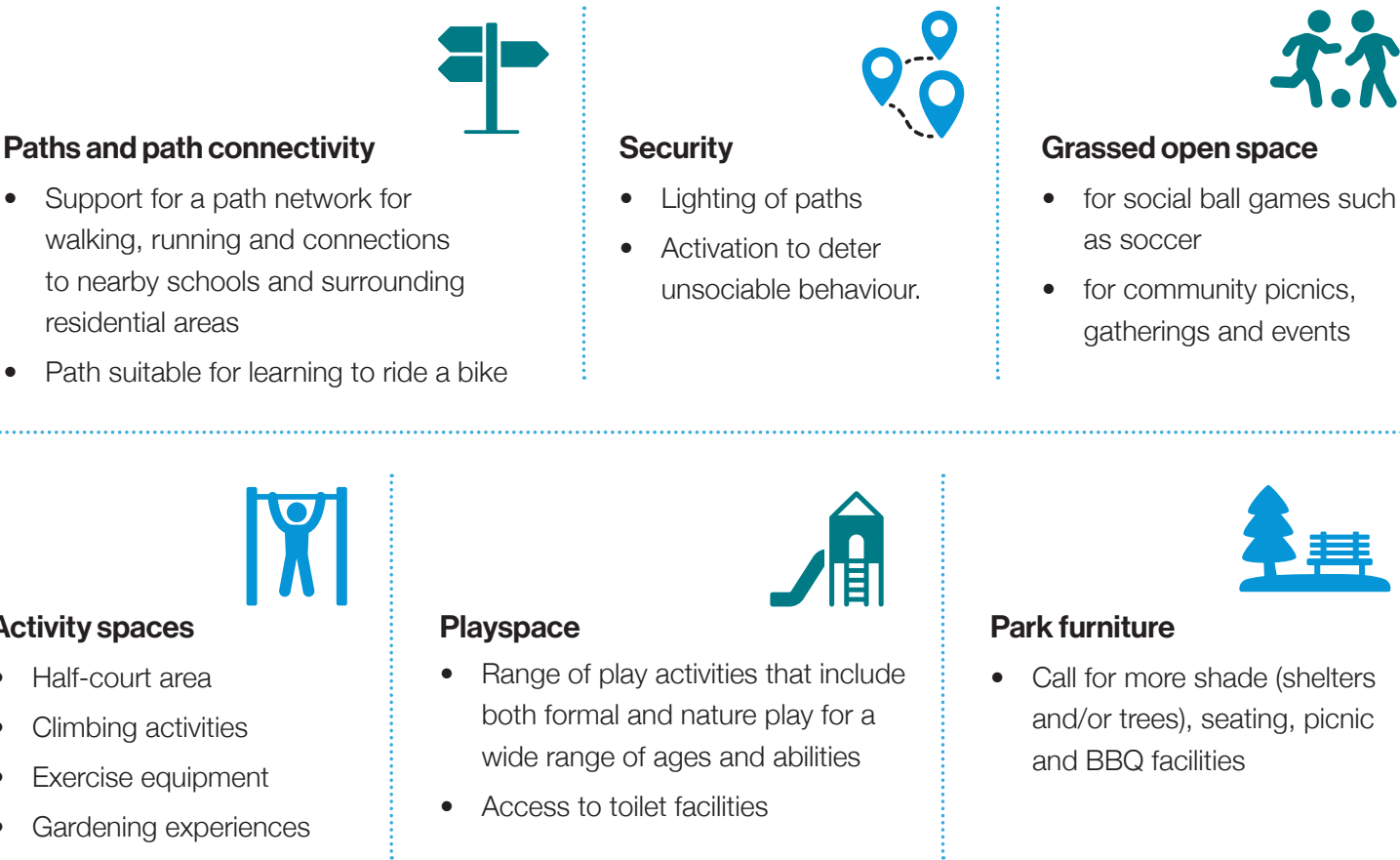
Following extensive research and analysis of the relevant strategies, plans and planning documentation, the preferred option for the future configuration of 52 McDermott Avenue is to retain a minimum of one hectare as open space for social recreation purposes. The southern portion will be reserved for further investigations into housing options.

This option provides social recreation for all ages, genders and abilities. It seeks to reduce the risks associated with concealed corners and overlooking, by introducing increased passive surveillance through design and construction initiatives. Council will undertake further investigation for a reduced localised development of housing in the south west corner.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - DECEMBER 2020

Initial research including community and stakeholder engagement was conducted in the second half of 2020. The community engagement sought to understand how the community had used the reserve area at 52 McDermott Avenue since the netball competition moved to new premises at Pinks Reserve, Kilsyth and understand their vision for the future.

Figure 16: 2020 Community Consultation Summary Key Themes



CONSULTATION 2025

Internal

In preparing the Draft Master Plan, officers were asked to review issues and opportunities previously identified to ensure they were still current. Internal teams were also engaged as part of the site analysis and review of the previous Council decision in 2015 to sell the land.

Community

Chin Community Festival 22 February

While not directly targeted at McDermott Avenue, members of the Chin Community were asked what activities they most liked to participate in or would like to do in the outdoor space.

Most community members that engaged were upper primary school aged through to young adults. Each participant was provided five dots to link to favourite activities.

Activities identified (Table 2) reflect the feedback received in December 2020, with the more recent emphasis on volleyball by both male and female respondents of the Chin community. Young males also indicated soccer as a favourite team activity. Social gatherings, walking and relaxing were popular with all age groups.

Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival 16 March 2022

At the Mooroolbark Festival, engagement with community members confirmed the key outdoor activities enjoyed by Mooroolbark residents (Table 2).

Respondents came from a wide age range and genders. They valued local outdoor space for passive and active pursuits. What the community has told us confirms the feedback we received in 2020 and has been captured in the separate Community Engagement 2020 Summary.

Table 2: 2025 Community Consultation Summary

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	
	Chin Community Festival	Celebrating Mooroolbark Festival
Picnics, BBQs or gathering with friends and family	25	10
Volleyball, Sepak Takraw	22	1
Walking or running	21	13
Soccer	19	3
Relaxing in a quiet outdoor space alone	18	8
Playing basketball / netball / pickleball	14	3
Playground equipment	13	5
Bike riding or scooting	11	10
Dance (including traditional dance)	8	0
Visiting community gardens	7	6
Walking the dog	6	7
AFL football (3), cricket (1), golf (1)	5	0
Climbing, Parkour	4	4
Events including outdoor cinema and festivals	4	10
Skateboarding	1	3
Swimming at the pool	0	8
TOTAL	178	91
Number of respondents	40	19

6. CONCEPT PLAN

SITE REACTIVATION INCLUDING OPEN SPACE (NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL)

It is proposed that Council do not act on the 2015 decision to sell the land with a new motion: to retain the site at 52 McDermott Avenue Mooroolbark and investigate housing opportunities in the southern portion of the land (approximately 3000m²).

A draft concept plan (Figure 17) has been developed to show the potential layout of the social recreation area (minimum one hectare).

The land at 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark is already zoned PPRZ. Key considerations for development as community open space for social recreation include, but are not limited to:

- Ensure the plan for the area provides a mix of recreation opportunities suited to the diverse community (age, gender, culture and ability).
- Re-terracing of the site to provide improved sightlines through the reserve, activity zones and accessibility.
- Maintain linkages with abutting streets, schools etc.
- Enhance biodiversity and support indigenous planting.
- Ensure parking provision is appropriate to future usage.

Utilising the southern section for housing eliminates problem sections that have poor safety and obstructed visibility, by providing housing that looks out onto the new open space area, offering passive surveillance. It also responds to identified issues of overlooking from the reserve into surrounding residential properties along the south boundary. This shaded section has been reserved for further investigation and feasibility as a potential housing opportunity.



Image 11: Example of Rope Climbing Element



Image 12: Example of Concrete Climbing Wall



Image 13: Example of Climbing Space Elements



Image 14: Example of Playspace Equipment



Figure 18: Artist Impression - View of Climbing Play Space

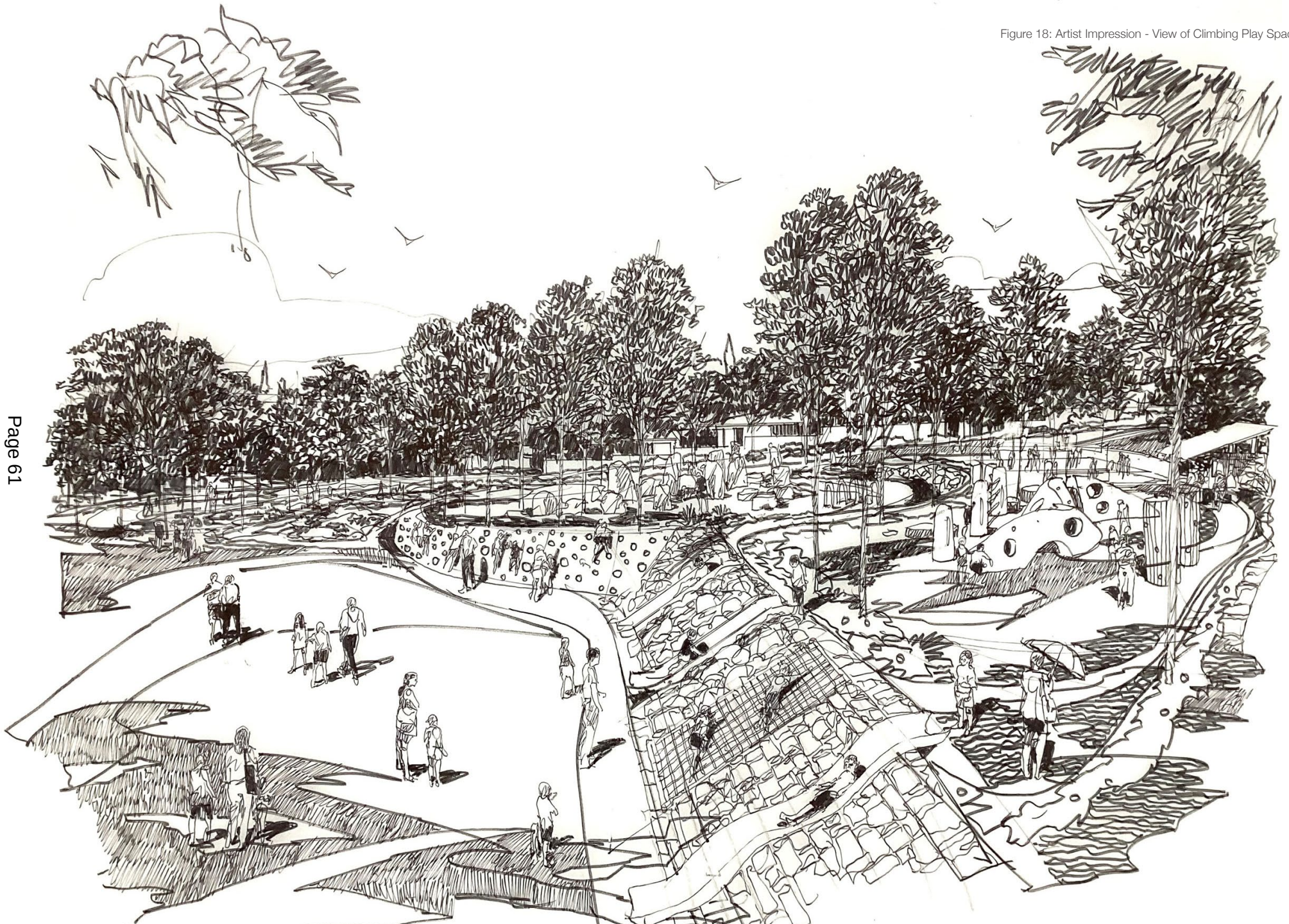


Figure 19: Artist Impression - View from Carpark



7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following staged implementation process (Figure 8) is based on the recommended redevelopment of 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark. Infrastructure elements and layout are to be confirmed through community consultation and subsequent Master Plan refinement.

Stage 1 Early works (yellow)

Removal of redundant and failing infrastructure including:

- Large retaining wall,
- Redundant netball pavilion
- Northern five asphalt courts and fencing.
- Preliminary ground works to improve sightlines through the space

Create useful grassed community open space terraces.

Estimated cost \$1,415,972

Of this cost, Council has committed to funding of \$350,000 in the 2025/26 Council Budget and proposed a further \$300,000 for 2026/27.

Stage 2: Secondary site preparation (orange)

- Removal of the remaining five asphalt courts,
- Further earthworks and grassing to reshape the extended social infrastructure area for construction of social infrastructure (Stage 3).
- Estimated cost \$722,900

Stage 3: Construction of active and social infrastructure (yellow and orange areas)

- Improvements may include: playspace, social area, kickabout area, ball games court space, climbing activities, path network, as shown on the provisional concept (Figure 7)
- Preliminary cost estimate \$1,944,800



Figure 20: McDermott Avenue - Staged Redevelopment Plan

The development of this reserve will incur a maintenance cost of approximately \$374,000 over a 15-year implementation period.

The blue area is reserved for further investigation to determine the feasibility of housing opportunities.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION COST PLAN

Table 3: Proposed Implementation Cost Plan

McDermott Avenue Reserve Community Open Space Site Improvements	Estimated Cost	Timeframe*			Potential Funding Contributions** (not confirmed)	
		Years 1 – 5 2025/26 to 2029/30	Years 6 – 10 2030/31 to 2034/35	Years 11 – 15 2035/36 to 2039/40	Council	State / Federal Government Grants
Investigative Studies (completed)	\$13,000					
Site Preparation Works						
Stage 1: northern section including: - removal of retaining wall, asphalt on upper courts, pavilion infrastructure - major earthworks to re-terrace the land	\$1,415,971	2025/26: \$350,000 Committed funds 2026/27: \$300,000 Provisional funds Extra \$765,971 required, subject to available funds			\$1,415,971	N/A
Stage 2: mid section and part of car parks, including: - removal of asphalt on lower courts and sections of the car parks, - remainder of earthworks to prepare the land for the construction of social infrastructure	\$722,900	2029/30: \$722,900 subject to available funds			\$722,900	Potential grant opportunity if grouped with Stage 3 infrastructure works
Social Recreation Infrastructure						
Stage 3a: Construction of paths, playspace, social and activity areas	\$1,944,800		\$1,727,600		\$1,000,000	\$944,800
Stage 3b: Construction of solar path lighting, half court				\$217,200	\$374,000	N/A
Maintenance costs	\$374,000	\$64,000	\$162,000	\$148,000		
TOTAL COST ESTIMATE	\$4,470,671					

*Timeframe may vary subject to funding availability. Funding is not confirmed except where indicated.

**Funding contributions are indicative only. Council funding is unconfirmed and is subject to annual reviews of the Council Budget.



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Open Space Strategy and Planning
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MCDERMOTT AVENUE RESERVE

DRAFT MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2025



CONCEPT PLAN

SITE REACTIVATION INCLUDING OPEN SPACE (NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL)

It is proposed that Council do not act on the 2015 decision to sell the land with a new motion: to retain the site at 52 McDermott Avenue Mooroolbark and investigate housing opportunities in the southern portion of the land (approximately 3000m²).

A draft concept plan (Figure 1) has been developed to show the potential layout of the social recreation area (minimum one hectare).

The land at 52 McDermott Avenue, Mooroolbark is already zoned PPRZ. Key considerations for development as community open space for social recreation include, but are not limited to:

- Ensure the plan for the area provides a mix of recreation opportunities suited to the diverse community (age, gender, culture and ability).
- Re-terracing of the site to provide improved sightlines through the reserve, activity zones and accessibility.
- Maintain linkages with abutting streets, schools etc.
- Enhance biodiversity and support indigenous planting.
- Ensure parking provision is appropriate to future usage.

Utilising the southern section for housing eliminates problem sections that have poor safety and obstructed visibility, by providing housing that looks out onto the new open space area, offering passive surveillance. It also responds to identified issues of overlooking from the reserve into surrounding residential properties along the south boundary. This shaded section has been reserved for further investigation and feasibility as a potential housing opportunity.



Image 1: Example of Rope Climbing Element



Image 2: Example of Concrete Climbing Wall



Image 3: Example of Climbing Space Elements



Image 4: Example of Playspace Equipment



Figure 1: McDermott Avenue Reserve Draft Concept Plan

Figure 2: Artist Impression - View of Climbing Play Space



Figure 3: Artist Impression - View from Carpark





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McDermott Avenue Reserve - Engagement Phases

Phase One: *Initial Internal consultation* (completed)

Timing	Mid - late 2020
Type (IAP2)	Involve, collaborate
Objectives	- Understand any issues with the site - Explore opportunities
Actions	- Engage relevant officers to undertake preliminary investigative studies to inform further research. - Preliminary Tree assessment and Environmental assessment undertaken.

Phase Two: *Initial community consultation* (completed)

Timing	November - December 2020
Type (IAP2)	Consult, Involve, Collaborate
Objectives	- Understand the community's vision for the site - Identify issues and opportunities - Identify the items and activities that the community would like to see and do at the site
Actions	- Consultation 3 November – 13 December 2020. - Mail out to 600 residents, inviting participation in an online survey or email comments. - Face-to-face consultation was not possible due to pandemic restrictions at the time. - Feedback sought from Council's Advisory Groups. 406 survey views, 340 responses collated, and key themes identified. Refer to McDermott Reserve Background Research – Initial Community Engagement summary report 2020. - Basis for further research, collaboration and draft master plan development.

Phase Three: *External consultant consultation* (completed)

Timing	2022 - 2024
Type (IAP2)	Consult
Objectives	Provide a detailed assessment of physical conditions to inform further research and master plan development.

Actions	• Feature and Land Survey (July 2022) • Asset condition report – pavilion (March 2023) • Asbestos and Synthetic mineral Fibre Compliance Survey (February 2024) • Environmental assessment – revision (July 2024) • Tree Assessment – revision (July 2024) • Soil Assessment Report (September 2024).
---------	--

Phase Four: *General community consultation* (completed)

Timing	February – March 2025
Type (IAP2)	Consult, Involve
Objectives	• Engage with members of the Mooroolbark community, particularly youth and emerging cultures, to confirm current open space sport and recreation preferences.
Actions	• Face -to-face sessions at the Chin Community Festival (22 February 2025 and the Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival (16 March 2025). • Engaged with 59 people of wide age ranges and various cultural backgrounds. • 269 responses received. Refer to summary in McDermott Reserve Background Research July 2025.

Phase Five: *Community engagement – report on research and consultation* (completed)

Timing	Mid 2025
Type (IAP2)	Inform
Objectives	• Provide the community with an update on the research and consultation findings so far.
Actions	Update the McDermott Shaping Yarra Ranges page with: • McDermott Avenue Reserve Community Engagement (2020) Summary. • McDermott Avenue Reserve Background Research Report July 2025. • Frequently Asked Questions.

Phase Six: *Further Site investigation* (in progress)

Timing		Late January – February 2026 (insufficient time in December)
Type (IAP2)	Consult	
Objectives	• Provide a detailed assessment of the structural integrity of the retaining wall, including geotechnical soil studies. • Provide recommendations for actions required including any risk mitigation short term.	
Actions	• To be determined once the report is received.	

Phase Seven: *Council consideration of Draft Master Plan* (in progress)

Timing		Late October 2025
Type (IAP2)	Inform, Consult	
Objectives	Council consideration on 28 October 2025 of the findings of research undertaken and the subsequent draft Master Plan developed for community consultation.	
Actions	Assuming the draft Master Plan is supported by Council for community consultation: • Inform the community of the process undertaken to understand the impact of the 2015 resolution to sell the land and the feasibility study undertaken to determine current relevancy and options moving forward. (Access to Council Report).	

Phase Eight: *Community engagement – Draft Master Plan*

Timing		November – December 2025
Type (IAP2)	Inform, Consult, Involve	
Objectives	Seek community feedback to the Draft Master Plan, including concept design proposed for the site (subject to Council determination).	
Actions	• Mail out to local residents • Pop-up sessions on site, shopping centre • Workshop at local schools (TBC) • Advisory group information sessions • Presentations to local cultural groups (TBC).	

Phase Nine: *Engagement report*

Timing	Early February 2026
Type (IAP2)	Inform
Objectives	• Report back to the community what we heard during consultation. • Provide next steps.
Actions	• Update the Shaping Yarra Ranges page with the Engagement Summary and next steps.

Phase Ten: *Master Plan refinement for adoption*

Timing	February - June 2026
Type (IAP2)	Inform
Objectives	• Refine the draft Master Plan • Council consideration of the final draft Master Plan for adoption. • Report back to the community with the final Master Plan for McDermott Avenue Reserve.
Actions	• Update the Shaping Yarra Ranges page and Council website with the final Master Plan.

Council Engagement Commitment

How Council will engage

Deciding the level of engagement

Yarra Ranges Council's community engagement is based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement, illustrated in the table below. This spectrum identifies and defines five levels of engagement and details our promise to the community for each level of engagement.

Levels of engagement may be different for separate phases of a project and for different stakeholders based on interest, influence and impact.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Community Engagement Goal				
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision making in the hands of the public
Council's promise				
We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to, and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions	We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decisions	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide
Tools for each engagement level may include, but are not limited to:				
Social media, Council website, Media, Newsletters, Emails, SMS,	'Shaping Yarra Ranges', Surveys, Submissions, Roadshow popups,	Focus groups, Workshops, Advisory Committees	Community panels, Stakeholder meetings	Ballots, Delegated decision

*adapted from the IAP2 Spectrum. Copyright © International Association for Public Participation. Please visit www.iap2.org for more information.

AUDIT & RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE BIENNIAL REPORT

Report Author: Coordinator Risk & Infringements for David Ashmore, Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: All

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 that Council's Audit and Risk Management Committee (Committee) prepare a biennial report that describes its activities and achievements over the last 6 months.

This report is the biennial report of the Committee for the six-month period ending 30 June 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Yarra Ranges Audit and Risk Management Committee Biennial Report for the six-month period ending 30 June 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

A biennial report was previously provided to the Council Meeting on 11 February 2025.

DISCUSSION

This report provides Council with an update and progress against the Committee's Annual Work Plan, which complies with its requirements under the Committee Charter.

Specifically, the Committee assists Council and Council officers by providing advice relating to:

- Compliance management.

- Risk management and fraud prevention.
- Oversight of the internal audit activity, external audit, and other providers of assurance.
- Financial and performance statements.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND MEETINGS

Membership of the Committee during the reporting period has been as follows:

- Mr Stephen Schinck - Independent Member (ceased 30 June 2025).
- Mr David Ashmore - Independent Member (appointed Chair 24 June 2025).
- Ms Katie Baldwin - Independent Member.
- Mr Jonathan Kyvelidis – Independent Member (appointed 13 May 2025).
- Cr Fiona McAllister - Councillor Member.
- Cr Jim Child (Mayor) - Councillor Member.

The Committee has met twice in this reporting period on 17 February 2025 and 2 June 2025, with no member apologies for these meetings.

Council Officers

The Committee has been supported by Council officers who have attended all meetings during the reporting period.

External Service Providers

Both the Internal Audit team (HLB Mann Judd) and the External Audit team as agent of the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) (Crowe Australia) have attended meetings as required during the reporting period, with Crowe Australia an apology for the February 2025 meeting.

BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

Key activities and reviews undertaken by the Committee during the reporting period include.

- Review of Quarterly Financial Reports and Internal Audit Charter.
- Consideration of CEO and Councillors updates.
- Development of the Strategic and Annual Internal Audit Plan.
- Reviewed scopes, activities and recommendations associated with internal audits.
- Considered updates on the organisation's risk management approach and including Cyber Security maturity program.
- Considered updates on Information Technology, Financial management and Health & Safety reporting.
- Considered updates on the External Audit.

- Considered the draft Councillor Internal Resolutions Procedure.
- Endorsement and monitoring of the Committee Annual Work Plan.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

There are no financial implications identified because of this report.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the Council Plan specifically Council's Commitment to Excellence which underpins all Council's Strategic Objectives. The oversight mechanism provided by the Committee serves to provide confidence in Council's practices and supports Council's commitment to good governance, excellence and public transparency.

RELEVANT LAW

It is a requirement of the Act that Council establish a committee, appoint Independent Committee Members, adopt, and maintain a Committee Charter and provide a bi-annual report to Council.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Implications

There are no foreseeable environmental impacts arising from this report.

Social Implications

The oversight mechanism provided by the Committee serves to provide confidence in Council's practices and supports Council's commitment to good governance, public transparency, and accountability to the community.

Economic Implications

The Committee assists Council by providing advice and guidance on the adequacy of initiatives including financial statements and performance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable to this report.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Independent Committee members provide insights and advice gathered from their vast experiences, as well as from sitting on Advisory and Audit and Risk Committees for other Councils and Government agencies.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The establishment of the Committee, the appointment of Independent Committee members and the adoption of the Charter enables Council to meet its obligations under the Act and provides oversight and monitoring that Council has appropriate mechanisms in place to manage its risk.

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.

CONCLUSION

The Committee's overall assessment is that Council is continuing to manage its responsibilities regarding risk, financial control and compliance well. The Committee is satisfied that it has fully discharged its responsibilities as set out in its Charter.

The Committee would like to recognise the substantial contribution over nine years made by recently departed Committee Chair Stephen Schinck.

David Ashmore
Chair, Audit and Risk Management Committee

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

Nil

COUNCILLOR EXPENDITURE POLICY - REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES FOR CR MARRIOTT

Report Author: Executive Officer Governance Risk & Compliance

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Ward(s) affected: Streeton;

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 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 \$1,101.85 incurred by Cr Marriott during the period 1 April 2025 through to 30 May 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses of \$1,101.85 incurred by Cr Marriott during the period 1 April 2025 through to 30 May 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Yarra Ranges Councillor Expenditure Policy was adopted by Council on 24 June 2025.

BACKGROUND

Section 40 of the Act covers the reimbursement of expenses of Councillors and members of a delegated committee. 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.

The following information is required to support any request for reimbursement:

- 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 may be required to provide a statutory declaration.
- The appropriate claim form, fully completed.
- Documentation outlining the nature of the event and breakdown of costs if the claim relates to travel or a conference, seminar or training session.

Claims for reimbursement will not be considered until all the necessary documentation is provided. Once submitted, claims are then forwarded to the Director Corporate Services for authorisation.

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

The claim made by Cr Marriott 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.

With the exception of the three-month submission requirement, Officers have determined that the travel claim for reimbursement relates to Cr Marriott 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 the expenses claimed by Cr Marriott can be met from within the current approved budget.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

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

RELEVANT LAW

The *Local Government Act 2020* (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. Provision is made within the Policy for Council to consider the reimbursement of expenses incurred more than three months prior to the claim being submitted. The validity of the claim has been confirmed by Officers.

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

HISTORICAL PARKING INFRINGEMENTS PURSUANT TO SECTION 87(4) OF THE ROAD SAFETY ACT 1986

Report Author: Manager Community Wellbeing

Responsible Officer: Director Communities

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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 which is open to the public.

SUMMARY

Pursuant to the *Road Safety Act 1986* ('the Act'), Council can resolve to alter the penalty unit amount for eleven parking offences. Following a review, and subsequent detection of overcharging motorists for these eleven parking offences, Merri-Bek Council announced it would be commencing a refund scheme for motorists to apply for partial refunds, being the difference between the amount charged by Merri-Bek and the base infringement amount, set by the Act without a resolution of Council, pursuant to section 87(4) of the Act.

Council Officers then conducted a thorough and fulsome investigation into Yarra Ranges' historical infringement practices. It became apparent that while there was a resolution of Council in 2001, there has been no subsequent resolution made, despite Council raising the penalty amount pursuant to section 84(4) of the Act and indexing that penalty amount yearly. This report presents recommended steps to rectify the matter.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to

- 1. Establish a refund scheme for those parking infringements specified as Items 1 to 11 in Column 1 of Schedule 6 of the Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019, in line with Attachment 1.**
- 2. Authorise the Director, Communities to establish the refund scheme.**
- 3. In accordance with Section 87(4) of the Road Safety Act 1986, resolves to fix at 0.5 penalty units the penalty for those parking infringements specified as Items 1 to 11 in Column 1 of Schedule 6 of the Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019 effective immediately until otherwise resolved.**

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At the ordinary Council meeting held on 16 January 2001, a recommendation was put to Council that the statutory penalty amount be increased from \$20 to \$40.

The following resolution was then passed:

“That Council in accordance with provisions of Section 87(4) of the *Road Safety Act 1986* (the Act) fix a penalty amount of \$40 for parking infringements in contravention of the Regulations as set out under the Act in respect to parking infringements occurring within the municipal boundary of the Yarra Ranges Shire Council. Further that the revised penalty level becomes effective February 1, 2001, for the tabled offences.”

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Legislative Context

The Road Safety Act 1986, section 87 (3) & (4) states:

(3) The penalty prescribed for the purposes of this section for any parking infringement, other than a penalty for a parking infringement referred to in subsection (3A) or a penalty fixed by any municipal council or relevant public authority pursuant to subsection (4), is the amount prescribed by the regulations in respect of infringements of the kind in question.

(4) Despite subsection (3)—

(a) a municipal council may, by resolution; or

(b) a relevant public authority may, with the approval of the Minister—

fix a penalty for a parking infringement in contravention of a regulation under this Act, that is a regulation in respect of which regulations under this Act prescribe a penalty, if the penalty to be fixed is not more than 0.5 penalty unit and is not more than the penalty prescribed by the regulations

The relevant offences are –

- Parking for a period longer than indicated
- Parked failing to pay & obey instructions on sign
- Stopping contrary to a No Parking sign
- Stopping on a bicycle parking area
- Stopping on a motor bike parking area

- Parking contrary to requirements of parking area
- Parking not at an angle of 45 degrees
- Parking not at an angle of 90 degrees
- Parking not completely within a parking bay
- Parking a long vehicle exceeding the minimum number of bays
- Parking a wide vehicle exceeding the minimum number of bays

Until 2004, Victoria had a set penalty unit of \$100, which was not indexed.

Since 2004, the Treasurer has indexed the penalty unit, which in 2025 is now \$197.57.

The Act in 2001 stated:

Despite sub-section (3), a municipal council may by resolution fix a penalty of an amount not greater than \$50 for a parking infringement in contravention of a regulation under this Act in respect of which regulations under this Act prescribe a penalty of an amount not greater than the penalty to be fixed, and the penalty so fixed is the penalty prescribed for the purposes of this section in respect of such a parking infringement occurring within the municipal district of that municipal council.

It is clear that Council, by way of resolution as outlined in the section above, intended to set the penalty unit amount at \$40, which was in line with the Act at the time.

With respect to the validity of the 2001 resolution, given that it was a decision of Council passed by an absolute majority of Councillors present at a properly constituted Council meeting, the resolution continues to have force and effect.

However, all subsequent increases to the penalty amounts by annual indexation or otherwise are invalid because those amendments have not been supported by a Council resolution.

It is considered that a reference within an infringement notice to an incorrect infringement penalty constitutes an administrative error and therefore does not necessarily invalidate the notice nor does it undermine the illegality of the identified offending.

Options considered

Officers have not considered any other options.

Recommended option and justification

Given the clear overcharging of motorists who have been issued an infringement for these 11 offences since 2005, Officers consider refunding the overcharged amount the principled and correct option.

A refund scheme should be established, open for a period of twelve months.

Motorists would need to provide either an infringement number, or vehicle registration and proof of ownership at the time of the infringement being issued, in addition to their name and address.

This would allow officers to verify that the refund is being returned to the correct person.

Council should also set the penalty amounts for all 11 offences to 0.5, the maximum penalty amount allowed by the Act.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Since 2004, Council has issued 37,814 of these infringements, with a total value of \$2,619,380.00, the vast majority being for 'parking for a period longer than indicated'

The attached table (Attachment 1) has been prepared which shows, for each financial year, the incorrect penalty amount, the amount which was overcharged, the volume of infringements and the total dollar value to be refunded.

The total pool of available refunds amounts to \$1,119,932.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

Not applicable

RELEVANT LAW

- *Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Road Safety (General) Regulations 2019*
- *Infringements Act 2006*

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

This is an unexpected and unbudgeted expense which will ultimately impact the adopted 2025/26 and 26/27 budgets.

Social Implications

Given this is a significant administrative error of Council, there may be a period of lower trust in Council overall.

Environmental Implications

Not applicable

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Officers have spoken to other Councils, as well as sought legal advice with respect to the legal implications.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Clearly, the reputational risk for Council is significant. However, given this is a self-initiated audit of historical practices, the risk may be decreased.

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. Infringements Issued by Date Range

Attachment 1:

Date range infringement was issued	Penalty Amount	Amount to be repaid	Volume	\$ Value
1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006	\$50	\$10	845	\$8,450
1 July 2006 – 30 June 2007	\$50	\$10	631	\$6,310
1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008	\$55	\$15	1310	\$19,650
1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009	\$57	\$17	1074	\$18,258
1 July 2009 – 30 June 2010	\$58	\$18	1670	\$30,060
1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011	\$60	\$20	1729	\$34,580
1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012	\$61	\$21	2639	\$55,419
1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013	\$70	\$30	3682	\$110,460
1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014	\$72	\$32	3867	\$123,744
1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015	\$74	\$34	3857	\$131,138
1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016	\$76	\$36	3820	\$137,520
1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017	\$78	\$38	2398	\$91,124
1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018	\$79	\$39	1456	\$56,784
1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019	\$81	\$41	512	\$20,992
1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020	\$83	\$43	793	\$34,099
1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021	\$91	\$51	41	\$2,091
1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022	\$91	\$51	53	\$2,703
1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023	\$92	\$52	229	\$11,908
1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024	\$96	\$56	1603	\$89,768
1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025	\$99	\$59	2286	\$134,874
Total			34495	\$1,119,932

KEY LIFE STAGES FOR ENDORSEMENT

Report Author: Executive Officer Social Infrastructure Planning

Responsible Officer: Director Communities

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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 presents the Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029. The Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029 is a supporting strategy to the Council Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy illustrates Council's focus for the whole community's wellbeing. This strategy is supported by a number of other strategic documents (Disability Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy, Environment Strategy, Creative Communities Strategy, and the Key Life Stages Plan) that define Council's role in assisting sections of the community or our culture that require targeted support.

The Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029 (The Plan) recognises and addresses the unique opportunities and challenges that appear during some of the more vulnerable ages experienced over a person's lifetime. The Plan outlines how Council will target activities to best support our community's health and wellbeing through a whole-of-life approach. The Plan also acknowledges that support occurs within sectors where funded services and programs are designed for specific age ranges.

This plan replaces five standalone strategies (Early Years Strategic Action Plan 2019-2021, Middle Years Strategic Action Plan 2017-2021, Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023, Youth Plan 2021-2023 & the Child and Youth Strategic Plan 2014-2024) with an integrated approach also better considers the co-dependency of life stages and the need to consider that in service provision.

As a third-tier strategic plan, the Key Life Stages Plan is more operational focussing on: communicating service intent; clarifying specific advocacy topics; and supporting integrated planning in the support service network across the municipality.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At the Council Meeting on 24 October 2023 Council resolved to transition out of being a provider of Meals, Transport and Social Support Group by 30 June 2024.

Part of this motion included the following item for Council to: Consider a proposed model for how Council will support Healthy Ageing at a future Council meeting. The Healthy & Active Ageing Plan portion of the Key Life Stages is the proposed model.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Key Life Stages refers to the phases in life that are associated with significant developmental changes and transitions. These stages include notable development or change in an individual's physical, cognitive, emotional and social experiences.

Council is moving from standalone age-focussed strategies to a Key Life Stages Plan that will better integrate and align Council's Early Years, Middle Years, Youth and Healthy Ageing Plans.

It will replace the five previous strategies that focussed on the critical ages in a lifespan:

- Early Years Strategic Action Plan 2019-2021
- Middle Years Strategic Action Plan 2017-2021
- Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023
- Youth Plan 2021-2023
- Child and Youth Strategic Plan 2014-2024.

Through integrating this strategic planning, services can more inclusively, pre-emptively and consistently address the needs of people, across their key life stages and those who support them.

As a supporting strategy to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Key Life Stages Plan will support the vision of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Key Life Stages Plan's purpose is to outline our commitment to designing age specific supports, create greater clarity on Council's focus areas to enable better

partnerships with other age specific services and establish a strong advocacy platform for government funding applications.

There are many players supporting strong progress through individuals' life journeys. The Plan articulates the various roles Council plays in the each of the Age Cohort Action Plans.

Development of the Key Life Stages Plan

Research undertaken for the Plan's development involved a review of previous strategies and a scan across the relevant sectors. Each action plan also references guiding international, national and state strategies that shape their respective strategic contexts. Combining this research with local data ensured both a localised response and consideration of grant opportunities that may become available.

The research and local data provided an indication of key priority areas, that were then tested with community through a series of targeted engagement sessions through the initial consultation phase. This community engagement informed the development of three themes. The strategic actions within the Key Life Stages Plan, which support relevant age cohorts, are built around these themes which are:

1. **Connection:** Strong connections enhance community resilience. We strengthen community by linking people and supports (services, infrastructure, community networks) with each other.
2. **Places:** We plan and advocate for places that include buildings, parks, playspaces, community spaces and natural environment, all of which have a role in supporting communities to thrive and connect.
3. **Inclusion:** Embracing and valuing the diverse experiences, cultures, and abilities of all community members enriches our collective strength. We lead, partner and advocate for a community that is inclusive, welcoming, accessible, and celebrates everyone.

Options considered

Initially there was consideration of developing another suite of standalone strategies, but the benefit of integrated planning was clearly a stronger approach.

The consolidated draft Plan is offered for Councillor consideration, which has been developed utilising the significant whole-of-community engagement activities that were undertaken for the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy along with targeted discussions on the Key Life Stages Plan.

Recommended option and justification

The recommended option is to support the endorsement of the draft Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029.

The draft Plan has been informed by:

- Health and Wellbeing Data Profile of Yarra Ranges Council

- Gender Impact Assessments
- Other Council engagement projects – Middle Years Conversation, Youth Summit, Youth Survey, Youth Advisory Group meetings, Yarra Junction Place Plan Peer Led Youth Engagement, Young People and Emergency Management in Yarra Ranges, and Upper Yarra Partnerships Listen to Learn.
- Human Services Needs Analysis
- Initial phases of community engagement undertaken as part of the Council Plan, Disability Action Plan, and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Second Phase of Health and Wellbeing Strategy Community engagement
- Initial Phase of Key Life Stages Plan Community engagement
- Second Phase of Key Life Stages Plan Community engagement

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

No additional costs, outside of existing budget have been identified to implement the Key Life Stages Plan throughout its lifespan (2025-2029).

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan: This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan: Healthy Connected Communities. This objective focuses on fostering communities that are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive and socially connected with quality services accessible to everyone.

Key Life Stages specifically looks to provide a replacement for the following expired plans:

- Early Years Strategic Action Plan 2019-2021
- Middle Years Strategic Action Plan 2017-2021
- Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023
- Youth Plan 2021-2023
- Child and Youth Strategic Plan 2014-2024

RELEVANT LAW

Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) were undertaken for each of the cohort action plans (Healthy and Active Ageing, Youth and Early and Middle Years) in the Key Life Stages Plan, as required under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

There are no economic impacts for this recommendation.

Social Implications

The social impact in moving to a Key Life Stages approach, aims to improve integration across services, which results in better support for people and families as they transition across life stages and service needs.

Environmental Implications

There are no environmental impacts for this recommendation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As a supporting strategy, the initial draft Key Life Stages Plan was developed using current, broadscale consultation undertaken for first and second tier strategies. This was supplemented with targeted engagement processes to understand the opportunities and pressures faced by specific age cohorts.

This approach recognises the potential engagement fatigue within the Yarra Ranges community given the multiple extensive consultation taking place and is in line with our engagement approaches for strategic work at this hierarchical level.

The current draft Key Life Stages Plan was refined using three sources of feedback:

- Councillors' feedback on the initial draft version
- Relevant comments received through the second phase of engagement associated with the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Feedback from those groups involved in the second phase of targeted consultation with the draft Key Life Stages Plan.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The key life stages approach is a new methodology at Yarra Ranges Council. The draft Plan has had input from the Corporate Leadership Team and project progress has been reported regularly to the Integrated Planning Project Control Group.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The primary risk to Council associated with the Key Life Stages Plan involves reputation and stakeholder relationships. Council's appetite for reputation and stakeholder relationship risk is low to medium.

The consultation for this Plan was assessed as having the potential for minor impacts to reputation and stakeholder relationships (e.g. community concerns voiced locally) with an unlikely possibility of that occurring. This assessment results in a low-risk rating.

The scoping for this project established the financial parameters for any action plans being developed. This ensured that there were no unexpected costs associated with implementing the 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. Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029



Yarra Ranges Council

Key Life Stages

Plan 2025–2029

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Acknowledgement of Country



Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation peoples 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.

1.0 Introducing the Key Life Stages Plan

The Key Life Stages Plan demonstrates our commitment to the age-specific supports that Council delivers. By creating alignment between these supports we can better address gaps in the system, understand changing priorities and needs between generations, and foster intergenerational connection.

The Key Life Stages Plan is one of a number of plans that support Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a legislated document that focuses on the health and wellbeing of the overall community. However, due to the additional support, heightened vulnerability, and developmental changes associated with some age cohorts, the Key Life Stages Plan was developed to focus specifically on those critical periods.

Throughout our lives, experiences we have and decisions we make have an impact on our health and wellbeing now and in the future. These experiences include physical, cognitive, emotional and contextual changes, the foundations of which begin during our childhood. These changes continue into adolescence and young adulthood and are influenced by the decisions we begin to make about our lives. As we grow older these decisions, as well as experiences we have, shape our ageing journey.

This Plan combines four age specific plans into one. It's simpler, clearer and shows how our services work across the key transitional life stages.

Our life trajectories are also influenced by our individual gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability and other factors, and how these present in our community. These factors can intersect, further defining our experiences. And as we move through each life stage, these experiences may look and feel different depending on what age we are.

The Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029 adopts an integrated approach that inclusively captures and addresses the needs of people at key life stages where heightened vulnerability or developmental needs are experienced, namely children, young people and the ageing population. The expiration of Council's Early and Middle Years Strategic Action Plans, Youth Plan, Child and Youth Strategy, and Healthy and Active Ageing Plan created an opportunity to develop a new, consolidated strategy.

There is consistent and compelling evidence that a life-course approach, which consider the influence of different stages of ageing as a continuum, is the best way to support health and wellbeing. An integrated Key Life Stages Plan allows us to clearly identify Council's role in the delivery of age-specific services, and to advocate for better funding. It also makes Council's strategic priorities more visible to the community.

Although the Key Life Stages Plan places emphasis on certain age cohorts, it is still inclusive of all ages. The Plan supports parents and caregivers, who provide care to those in the key life stages. Its underpinning frameworks also recognise that all life stages are interrelated, that proactive measures need to be taken from a young age to support healthy ageing, and that the needs of people of all ages need to be supported to foster intergenerational connection.

The Key Life Stages Plan recognises the important and complex roles that carers play. A carer is someone who provides support to a family member, friend, partner, neighbour or anyone in the community.

A carer can be any age and provide support in many different ways. The support they provide is not through formal care services arranged by volunteer carers or paid carers.

Carers play an important role in creating and strengthening a supportive community.

The Key Life Stages approach helps to strengthen the bridge between our community's own strengths and the supporting roles of government, enabling our community to thrive at an individual and collective level.

Below are the expected benefits of a Key Life Stages approach:

Impact to Council and Industry

Greater collaboration between Council's service functions, and with other organisations.

Strengthen alignment between services and address gaps.

Opportunities to respond appropriately to social trends and projections.

Promote a greater understanding of changing priorities, needs and challenges among children, young people and the ageing population.

Clear alignment with the Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Impact to community

Greater opportunities to foster intergenerational connection that resultingly strengthen community.

Residents supported through key transitional periods in their life.

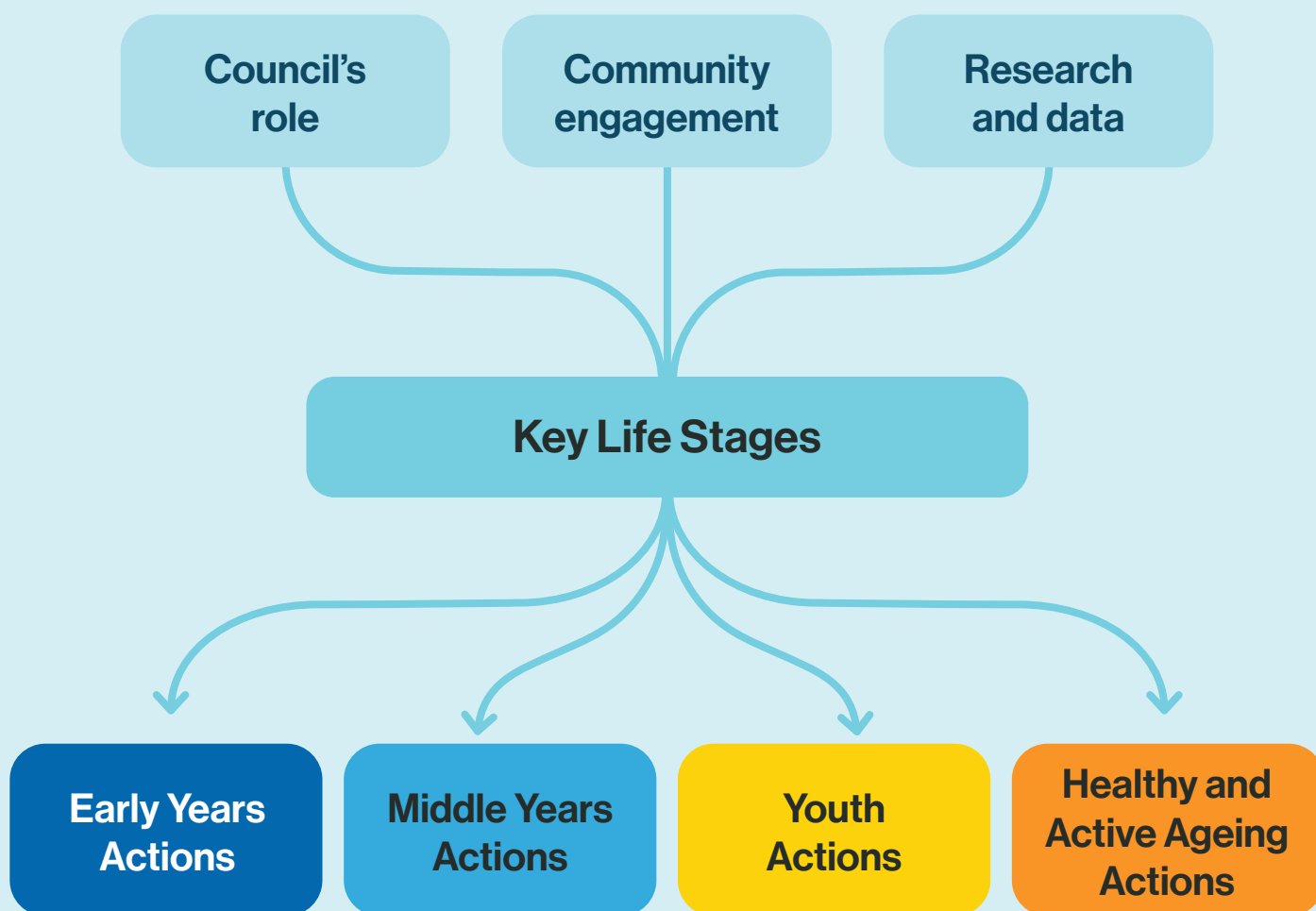
Positive health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

Address population inequalities.

Community is informed on individual steps they can take to strengthen resilience across the key stages of their lives.

2.0 The Key Life Stages Plan

The Key Life Stages Plan 2025-2029 brings together the collective aspirations of our community, local data primarily from the 2021 Census, and the state, national and international policy contexts, to identify themes and actions for our key age cohorts:



Community Engagement

The Key Life Stages Plan is informed by the extensive broad community consultation undertaken by the next Yarra Ranges Council Plan, Disability Action Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. We also referred to other engagement conducted by Council with our key age cohorts over the last 3 years.

To supplement the whole-of-community engagement, targeted engagement activities were undertaken from June 2024 to March 2025 to ensure representation from our key age cohorts and relevant stakeholders: the ageing population, young people, families and children, carers, and service providers. The methods we used to engage with community and have conversations included:

- Focus groups
- Reference and advisory groups
- Project page on Shaping Yarra Ranges
- Interviews

Our Themes

By engaging with research and data, consulting with community, and considering our role as a Council, we developed three themes to guide the Key Life Stages Plan and considered how these themes function across and within generations.

Each of our action plans address the below themes in the context of each key life stage.

Connection

Strong connections enhance community resilience. We strengthen community by linking people and supports (services, infrastructure, community networks) with each other.

Places

We plan and advocate for safe and accessible places that include buildings, parks, playspaces, community spaces and natural environment, all of which have a role in supporting communities to thrive and connect.

Inclusion

Embracing and valuing the diverse experiences, cultures, and abilities of all community members enriches our collective strength. We lead, partner and advocate for a community that is inclusive, welcoming, accessible, and celebrates everyone.



2.1 Our Approach

The Key Life Stages Plan supports Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029, which is a legislated strategy that focuses on the health and wellbeing of our entire community.

Certain aspects of our community require additional support to achieve good health and wellbeing, as such the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is supported by other Council strategies and plans. The Key Life Stages Plan is one of these supporting plans, alongside the Disability Action Plan 2024-2028, Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2026, Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032, Housing Strategy 2024, Integrated Transport Strategy 2020-2040, Environment Strategy 2015-2025 and Creative Communities Strategy 2018.

2.2 Context

The Key Life Stages adopts a life-course approach which recognises that:

- All stages of our lives are intertwined and connected to the lives of those born in the same period, and that of past and future generations of our families.
- Health and wellbeing is dependent on interacting risk and protective factors that appear throughout our lives.
- It is important to take action early, appropriately and together to ensure a healthy life course.

We consider health and wellbeing across the lifespan. The foundations set in our childhood which mature during our adolescent and young adult years are relied on as we get older. For example, social development occurring in childhood sets the foundation for social skills that mature during adolescent and young adult years, that can support our social connection as we age and mitigate isolation and loneliness.

Why these life stages?

The Key Life Stages that this plan focuses on are childhood, youth and older age. Note that there is an overlap in the age ranges of children and young people, this is because those aged 12 to 14 share experiences and developmental traits of both of these cohorts. The significance of these life stages is based on the following:

Early Years Children (0-8 years)

Physical, cognitive, emotional and social development during childhood form the foundation for future health and wellbeing, and can be helped or hindered by socioeconomic factors.

Middle Years Children (8-14 years)

Physical, social and emotional development occurs alongside abstract thinking, problem-solving and developing independence. This life stage is also associated with change – as they transition out of secondary school and experience shifts in relationship dynamics.

Young People (12-25 years)

In addition to development continuing from childhood, youth is a period of identity formation and is a life stage that is sensitive to the effects of stress on mental health. It is also a time when key life choices are made that can impact an individual's future trajectory.

Adults (26-49 years)

Although this Plan does not place emphasis on this cohort, we support them as parents and caregivers of those in the key cohorts. Adults in this cohort are the focus of other key strategic documents including Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Recreation and Open Spaces Strategy, Creative Communities Strategy and Economic Development Strategy.

Ageing Population (50+ years)*

Ageing is an ongoing process that begins much earlier than we realise, though the more pronounced physical changes start to appear at the age of around 50 years. Healthy and active ageing is best supported by preparing early and setting up the physical, social, financial and other supports we need to support our ageing journey.

** 50+ years is the ageing population's cohort in alignment with other government policy and aged care program eligibility. It also recognises the ageing well approach which emphasises acting early and taking proactive measures for healthier and longer lives.*

Council's age-specific services and support

Council supports the entire Yarra Ranges community, however there are services, programs, and partnerships delivered through Council that centre on the specific needs of certain age cohorts. These sit within the Family, Children and Youth teams and the Healthy and Active Ageing team. The Key Life Stages Plan will provide direction to all aspects of Council, however it will be a key strategic document for these teams, other providers in the municipality, and government partners whose work focuses specifically on these key life stages.

Are we missing anyone?

Cohorts aged from 26 to 49 years are not explicitly centred in the Key Life Stages Plan, however they are not left behind. The key life stages were identified based on age-based needs and Council's age-specific programs currently delivered as part of its core business. However, in adopting a life-course approach, and looking to support intergenerational connection and healthy and active ageing, this Plan is relevant to everyone at every stage of life.

The Yarra Ranges Health & Wellbeing Strategy advocates for adults to have equal opportunities to contribute to their community through strong employment and access to both formal and informal learning. It also aims to ensure adults enjoy formal and substantive equality, access safe and culturally appropriate services, and feel secure in their neighbourhoods and homes.

In addition to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Council has numerous strategies focused on adults, such as the Recreation and Open Spaces Strategy, Creative Communities Strategy, and Economic Development Strategy.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy, along with the Key Life Stages Plan, guides the development, implementation, and reporting of these plans, ensuring the needs of residents at every life stage are considered.

Transitions in adulthood are also reflected in other life course outcomes within this Plan. For instance, early years outcomes support adults transitioning into caregiving of children, while outcomes for older adults provide necessary support for those transitioning into caregiving of older children.



2.3 Structure of the Plan

The Key Life Stages Plan is a document that adopts a holistic approach to supporting Yarra Ranges' residents through their more critical life stages, and acknowledges that support during these periods has the greatest benefit for individuals, families and the community.

This Plan provides an overarching structure to the four individual Action Plans (section 3.0) that support the key age cohorts:

This structure allows us to implement a holistic and inclusive approach to targeted service delivery that supports the key life stages, through a consistent vision, set of principles, and guiding frameworks, whilst recognising that the work we do to support each key life stage will be different.

Key Life Stages Framework

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graph TD; A[Key Life Stages Framework] --- B[Early Years Action Plan (0-8 years)]; A --- C[Middle Years Action Plan (8-14 years)]; A --- D[Youth Action Plan (12-25 years)]; A --- E[Healthy and Active Ageing Action Plan (50+ years)];
```

**Early Years Action Plan
(0-8 years)**

**Middle Years Action Plan
(8-14 years)**

**Youth Action Plan
(12-25 years)**

**Healthy and Active
Ageing Action Plan
(50+ years)**

2.4 Vision

The Key Life Stages Plan supports the Yarra Ranges' Health and Wellbeing Strategy's vision which is:

Yarra Ranges has a safe, inclusive and connected community where people can access the services and information they need to be healthy and well at every stage of life.

”



2.5 Principles

The Key Life Stages Plan's principles are also aligned with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

They helped guide our approach to defining our actions and Council's role, particularly where there are additional vulnerabilities experienced in an age range:

Evidence informed	Using research and data to guide decisions and actions, ensuring that approaches are based on the best available information.
Gender Equity	Gender equity ensures the fair treatment of individuals of all genders by addressing their unique needs and experiences. It focuses on eliminating disparities to provide equal access to opportunities, resources, and rights, fostering safer, healthier, and more connected communities.
Intersectionality	Individual characteristics such as Aboriginality, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and cultural upbringing can shape the experiences, perspectives, needs, and challenges of individuals. The intersectional nature of a person's circumstance can result in compounding layers of barrier and discrimination, or power and privilege
Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing	Valuing and incorporating the knowledge, traditions, and practices of Indigenous peoples, recognising their unique perspectives on health, community, and the environment.
Social Determinants of Health	Factors like housing, income, education, and environment that affect people's health and well-being, showing that health is influenced by more than just medical care.
Human Rights and Health Equity	Ensuring that everyone has the right to health and access to necessary resources, striving for fair treatment and equal opportunities in health care for all people.

The Key Life Stages Plan is also underpinned by an additional set of principles that speak to our approach to supporting more effective services being offered to our community by Council and other providers:

Community voice	Including the voices of community in decision making.
Universal inclusion	Achieving equity in service and support access requires targeted measures to reach those who are at high risk of experiencing vulnerabilities
Community Partnerships	Celebrate our community's strengths and experiences, supporting civic and social participation.

2.6 Guiding frameworks and approaches



Place-based approach

The consideration of each region's unique strengths, opportunities and circumstances and work with local communities to address local priorities.



Community Led Approach

Focusing on the diverse strengths that exist within communities, rather than needs or problems, and building on those by identifying and supporting community-led solutions.



Lifecourse framework

Our life stages are intertwined with each other, with our families' and the broader society's. Risk and protective factors which appear at certain points in the lifespan can impact other life stages, therefore taking action early, appropriately and together is essential to supporting a healthy life course.



Child Safe Standards

11 mandatory standards released by the Victorian Government for organisations dealing with children to ensure they are safe and protected from abuse by creating a culture of child safety and implementing policies, procedures and practices that prevent and respond to abuse.



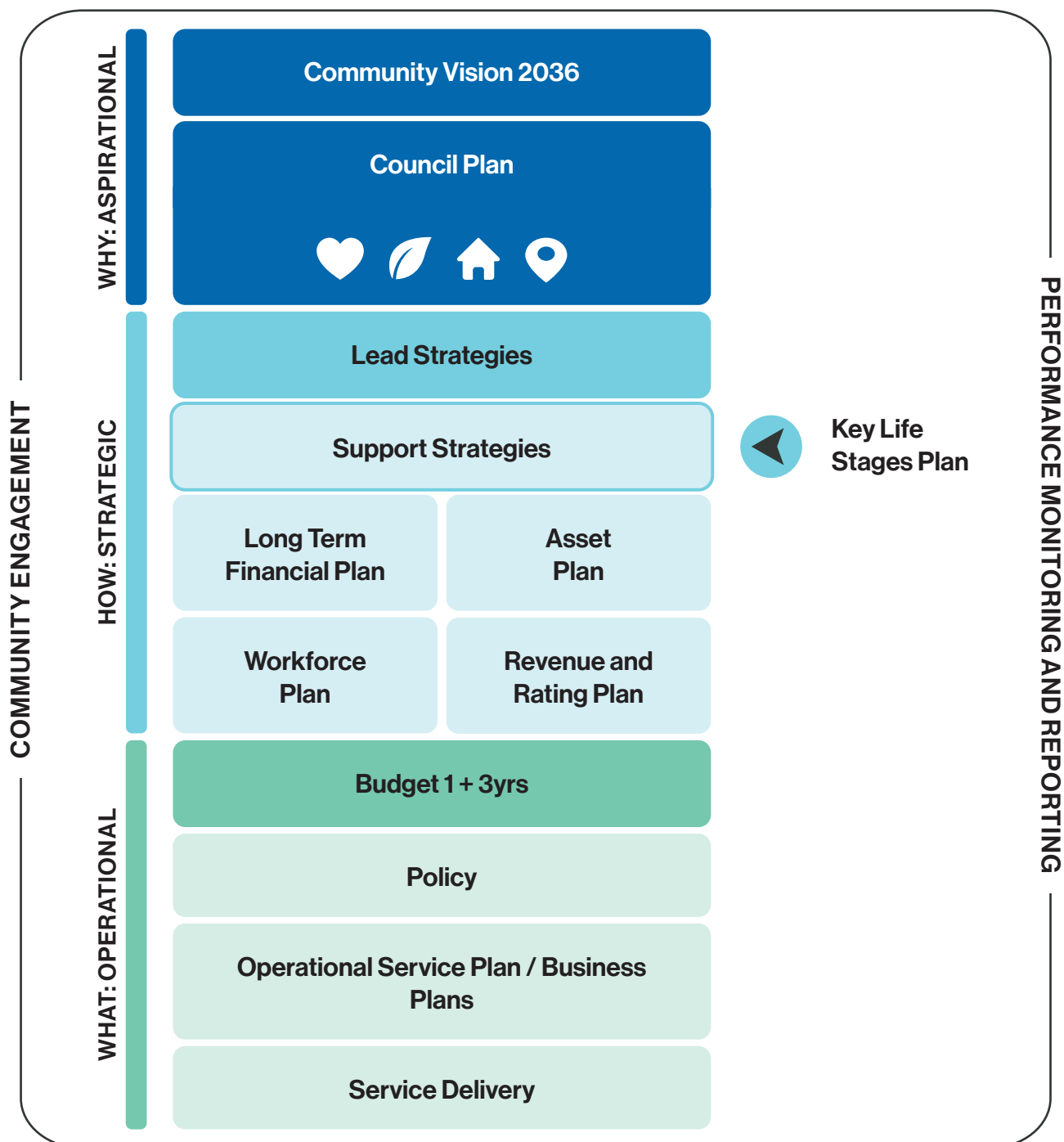
Age friendly and child friendly communities

Inclusive and intergenerational communities that consider the age-specific needs of the ageing population, young people and children in planning and policy work. They are supported through appropriate design, programs, resources and supports. This involves recognising shared and different generational requirements and navigating the diverse uses of space.

2.7 Strategic Context

The Key Life Stages Plan supports the Health and Wellbeing Strategy by focusing on how the health and wellbeing of the key life stages are supported within and by our community.

The Key Life Stages Plan is also informed by the community consultation undertaken as part of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Council Plan and Disability Action Plan.



3.0 Age Cohort Action Plan



3.1 Yarra Ranges Early and Middle Years Children

Yarra Ranges Council is committed to promoting and ensuring the health and wellbeing of children who live in the Yarra Ranges.

This Early and Middle Years Plan recognises the significance of a child's early and middle years, the importance of optimising opportunities for children's growth, learning and development as well as addressing diversity and inclusion, vulnerability and safety to better achieve lifelong wellbeing.

Children thrive when supported by a broad network that extends beyond parents and immediate caregivers. Council works in partnership with services across the municipality to support greater connectivity between them and help make them easier to navigate.

Schools, services, and community, make up an essential network of support for children and families. This collective approach not only promotes children's wellbeing but also helps ensure that caregivers are not left to carry the full responsibility alone, reflecting the age-old notion that ***“it takes a village to raise a child.”***

You'll notice that in some parts of this cohort action plan, the early and middle years are discussed separately, and in other parts they are combined. This is because of the way that the various data sources related to these age groups has been collected and how guiding policies are structured, which makes consistency in separating these cohorts challenging.

Though they share similarities, these equally important life stages are different from each other, in both their experiences and the support they need. This justifies separate actions plans for each of them.

Introduction to the Early Years (0 to 8 years)

Remarkable developments take place in the early years of a child's life but especially in the first five years. A child's brain develops more and faster than any other time in their life. It is during these early years that the very foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout the whole of life, are laid down. When a child receives the right support at the right time, strong foundations are laid for healthy development. The early years are a critical stage of brain development. Science shows that life is a story for which the beginning sets the tone. That makes the early years of childhood a time of great opportunity, but also great risk. The quality of a child's early experiences makes a critical difference as their brains develop, providing either strong or weak foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life.

Essential supports for children in the early years include:

- **Relationships:** Positive, healthy, respectful and ongoing relationships that are stable and nurturing and to build emotional security and social skills
- **Education and Care:** Access to quality early childhood education and childcare with well-trained educators and stimulating learning environments, to foster cognitive and language development.
- **Services:** Access to health and wellbeing services including nutrition, healthcare, mental health, and other supports.
- **Supported Families:** Supporting parents and carers with their mental health, financial stability and caregiving skills.
- **Environments:** Safe, stable, nurturing and stimulating environments that support physical and emotional wellbeing.
- **Early intervention:** Identifying and addressing developmental and social challenges early.



Introduction to the Middle Years (8 to 14 years)

In 2017 Yarra Ranges Council developed its first ever Middle Years Strategic Action Plan, recognising the middle years of childhood (8–14 year-olds) as a critical period when children are experiencing significant physical, emotional and social development.

The middle years are typically viewed as a “between” stage and quieter time in development. However, this timeframe is a critical development and transition period when protective barriers can be developed and risk taking can emerge.

It is a key time for children developing independence by exploring peer relationships and making autonomous decisions. Children in the middle years begin to think more abstractly, problem-solve and use logical reasoning. These changes in thinking can be empowering as well as challenging to navigate.

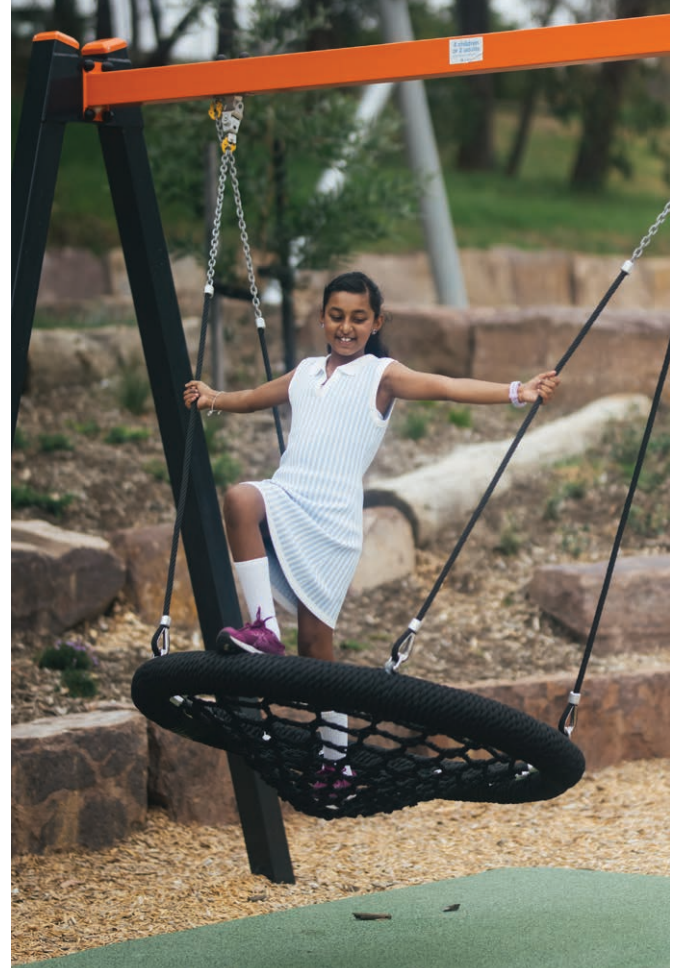
The middle years offers a ‘window’ and opportunity for early intervention and prevention to build protective factors as children transition to adolescence.

Transitioning into secondary school during this time also brings with it an extreme shift in a child’s learning environment, their engagement with peers, teachers and families. This transformative phase is a critical time for focusing on opportunities for prevention and mental health promotion.

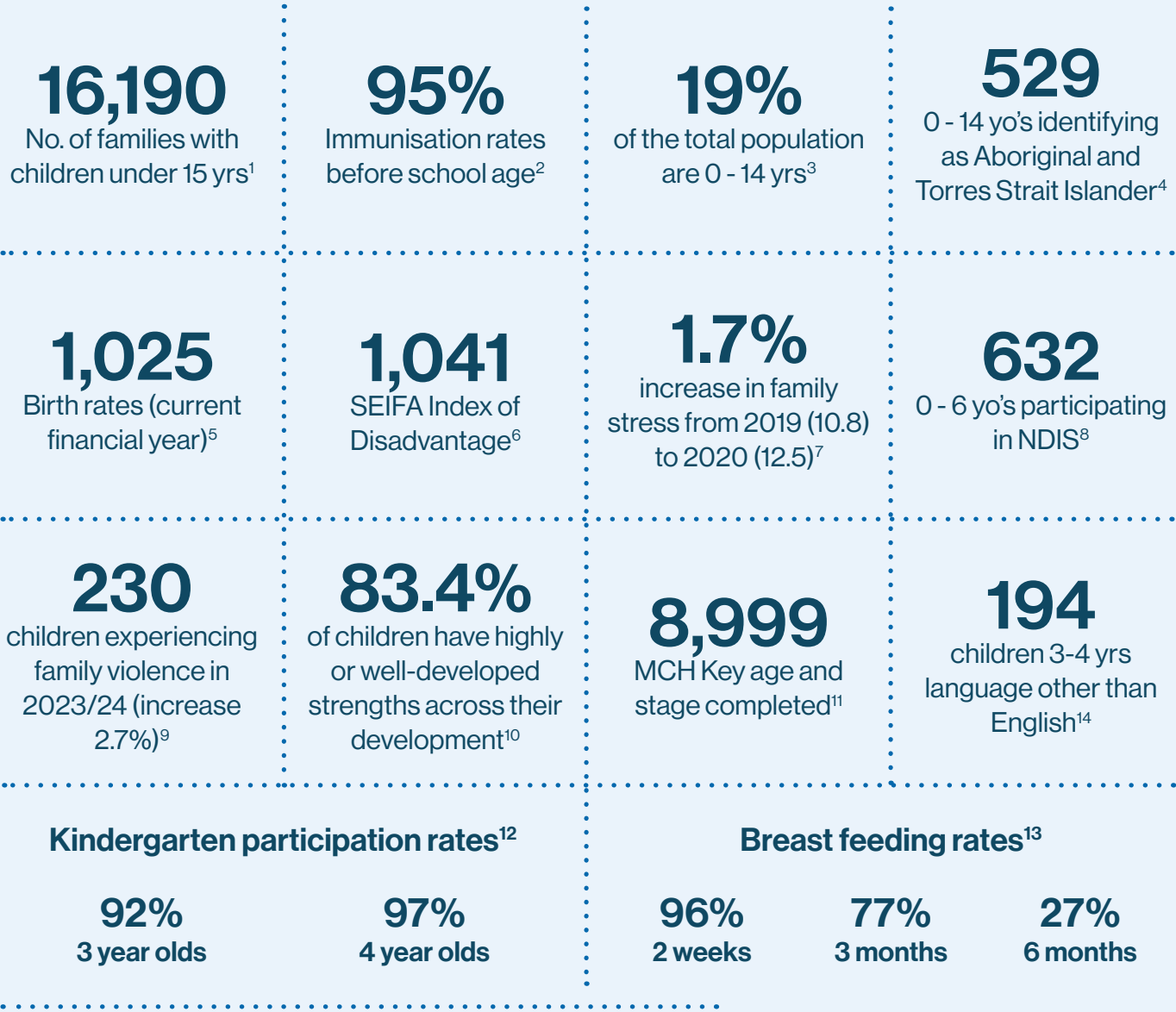
Children in the middle years can be supported by:

- **Participation:** Listening to children in the middle years and providing opportunities to actively participate and be involved in the community.
- **Relationships:** The importance of safe and trustworthy relationships through friendships, family and broader community.
- **Environments:** Home, school and the broader community are supportive environments that enhance wellbeing for children in the middle years.

Services and governments must prioritise early intervention, Middle Years specific policy and frameworks, and collaborate with each other to best support children in the middle years.



Yarra Ranges Snapshot



No. of families with children under 15yrs¹⁵

Age	0-4yrs	4-9yrs	10-14yrs
No. of children	9,298	9,765	9,963

Early and Middle Years Children Community Engagement

We have listened to the voices of children and families through the Middle Years Conversation project (2023) and the 'Listen to Learn' consultation that was undertaken by the Upper Yarra Partnerships (August 2024 to March 2025). The Middle Years Conversation project engaged with 182 middle years students aged 8-12 from across 8 primary schools in the Upper Yarra and Valley areas. The purpose was to gather the perspectives of middle years children with a focus on their wellbeing. Students were supported to utilise these insights to co-design and implement their own wellbeing projects at their school. The aim of the Listen to Learn project was for professionals to listen, and learn from, families and carers of young children aged 6 years and under. The project looked to understand experiences and insights of what helps children have the social and emotional wellbeing they need to thrive. Listen to Learn engaged 187 community members.

We also listened to key service organisations that support children and families through a sector consultation in February 2025.

What we heard from services

- **Nature and Climate:** Natural spaces are an asset of Yarra Ranges and families need to be encouraged to make use of them. Services and families need capacity building to prepare, respond and adapt to climate emergencies.
- **Infrastructure:** Safe and accessible infrastructure, such as transport, roads, lighting and footpaths, support better integration of children and families with their environment, community, health and education opportunities. There are limited spaces in Yarra Ranges designed to cater for children in the middle years.
- **Service awareness and access:** Service accessibility is an issue for families, with time and cost being significant barriers, and families in non-urban regions being highly disconnected. Services, programs and events need to be promoted through more targeted approaches.
- **Service alignment:** Services need to collaborate, share data and resources, understand each other's roles, and develop cohesive advocacy priorities.
- **Role-modelling:** Parent/ caregiver support to role model social connection and emotional development to their children is important.
- **Children's voice:** Children have unique perspectives and can offer valuable insights on their own lives and that of the community. Meaningfully engaging with them requires creative and inclusive approaches to reach those who are scarcely heard from. However, there are perceived challenges around engaging them, such as consent, lack of time and expertise.

What we heard from children

Supporting positive mental health:

Connection with peers, physical activity and time spent in nature support children's positive mental health and wellbeing.

More fun things to do
in the area after school

Going up bush with
my friends

More fun playgrounds
that kids help create

More community
markets and festivals

Children and young people's voices:

Children and young people have a range of experiences, thoughts, ideas and perspectives that can enrich decision making processes. They need to be recognised as well-placed to suggest solutions about issues that impact them and be engaged with meaningfully.

What we heard from families

Connection to services and community:

Enablers of connection include supportive and empathetic service providers, community connections, and accessible information about services. Families also benefit from early intervention programs and community activities that foster social connection.

I first reached out to a sports coach, they were concerned and referred me to go to a GP. In reflection I can see how important the role of coaches can be

Low-income area impacts the struggle. You have to pay to travel anywhere if you can even afford the service

Joy didn't necessarily come from a learning outcome academically or because of an achievement or event. Joy came from sharing an experience together and connecting.

Support network is vital for children to shine. It would be a confusing world for them if they don't have the support network around them.

Social and emotional wellbeing:

Children's social development is supported through connection to family and the broader community. The involvement of parents, caregivers, grandparents, extended family, and community supports plays a crucial role in improving children's social and emotional wellbeing.

Families' voices:

Families want to have a voice in how services are designed and how decisions that affect them are made. They want to be actively involved in the decision-making process to ensure that services meet theirs and their children's needs.

It's important for us to be involved in decisions that affect our family, ensuring the support is tailored to our needs.

Getting the kids out and about is great because they get the zoomies! It is beneficial for reducing screen time, and it supports both my mental health and theirs.

Community spaces like parks are great for meeting other families. You immediately have an unspoken bond with other parents making conversations easier.

Places and spaces:

Place plays a significant role in supporting families' connection, belonging and wellbeing. Nature and shared spaces in the community can create opportunities to connect and enhance sense of belonging. Spaces need to be suitable for families to use, and existing spaces need to be better utilised.

Policy Context

All levels of government have a role to play in supporting children in the early and middle years. The following are the core policies that guide the work undertaken by Council and its partners in this space. *Note that there is a gap in guiding policies that specifically focus on children in the middle years. This cohort is instead supported through both early years and youth policies.*

Federal Government

National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032: a national policy framework committed to a country free of gender-based violence where women and children are safe and can live free from fear and violence in all settings. The Plan recognises that violence against women and children can be addressed at a local level through adequate services and infrastructure that are culturally safe, removing barriers to safety and improving access, and place-based models of services.

National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020–2030: outlines the national approach to improving children and young people's health outcomes and aims to ensure that all children and young people are healthy, safe and thriving, and have opportunities to fulfill their potential.

National Early Years Strategy 2024–2034: sets the national direction to nurture young children for a bright future and ensure they thrive in their early years, with connection to community being a key focus.

Victorian Government

Our promise, Your future: Victoria's Youth strategy 2022–2027: outlines the Victorian Government's next steps to improve young people's outcomes, with a focus on working with young people and relevant community sectors to do so.

Victorian Early Childhood Reform Plan: outlines the Victorian Government's vision for the early years and intends to deliver systemic change, creating a higher quality and more equitable and inclusive early childhood system, and helping families get their children ready for kindergarten, school and their lives. The Best Start, Best Life reforms are an element of this Reform Plan.

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF): identifies guidelines and resources to support all professionals who work with children aged 0 to 8 years. It focuses on working together with children and families to achieve 5 learning and development outcomes: identity, community, wellbeing, learning and communication.

Victorian Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change: sets out a long-term vision for addressing the significant impact that family violence has on the Victorian community, in particular women and children.

Child Safe Standards: 11 mandatory standards released by the Victorian Government for organisations dealing with children to ensure they are safe and protected from abuse by creating a culture of child safety and implementing policies, procedures and practices that prevent and respond to abuse.

Our Themes

The three themes of Connection, Places and Inclusion run across all the Key Life Stages. Below is the definition of how these three themes are applicable to the early and middle years.

Connection

Strengthen community connection by linking children, families, and services with each other to build resilience.

- Connection supports optimal health and wellbeing
- Social connection and development of emotional regulation for children
- Isolation - geographic, social, financial, cultural
- Fragmented service system

Places

Support families by planning future infrastructure, planning for environmental impacts, and providing accessible and safe services.

- Best Start Best Life Reform infrastructure assessment
- Natural environment is an asset for optimal health and wellbeing
- Increasing climate emergencies and the need to prepare for this.

Inclusion

Empower children and families and meaningfully engage with them by listening and responding to their unique perspective and voice. Collaborate with partners for coordinated and cohesive advocacy around inclusion.

- Children and families are valued and included
- Support coordinated advocacy across service sector
- Better outcomes and service engagement

Our Action Plans

There are many parties involved in supporting early and middle years children. The following Action Plan sets out Yarra Ranges Council's focus and role for this age cohort from 2025-2029.

Early Years Action Plan

1.0 CONNECTION		
Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Families are healthy and informed connecting with services as needed.	1.1 Provide support for families to access universal services and initiatives which improve health and well-being of families and children.	Advocate Educator Partner Planner Provider
	1.2 Plan and prepare for increases in workforce demands, infrastructure impacts and service support in response to the Best Start Best Life early years reform.	Advocate Planner Provider
Services connected to services - Services are knowledgeable of the available support options.	1.3 Build and maintain strategic partnerships to improve wellbeing outcomes for children and families using a place-based approach.	Partner
	1.4 Plan and deliver initiatives that increase knowledge, community engagement, social networks and supports for families with other providers.	Educator Partner Provider
	1.5 Develop opportunities to strengthen community to connect with and support each other.	Educator Partner Provider
Families with Families - Families have opportunities to develop strong connections with each other.	1.6 Provide community connection and development opportunities for targeted communities and cohorts.	Educator Provider
Children with Children - Children are socially connected and together are active participants in their community.	1.7 Promote and deliver local activities and programs that support age-appropriate social connection and inclusion opportunities.	Partner Provider

2.0 PLACES

Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Our natural environment is an asset and protective factor for positive health and wellbeing.	2.1 Provide opportunities for families and children to explore and engage with our local natural environments	Advocate Partner Provider
	2.2 Ensure adequate, accessible and inclusive community infrastructure that promotes engagement with Council's Family and Children's services	Advocate Partner Planner Provider
Community infrastructure that is family friendly, welcoming, inclusive and accessible.	2.3 Promote child safe and culturally safe environments in Council facilities.	Educator Provider
	2.4 Provide support for families to prepare for the increase in weather emergencies to ensure they are connected, safe and informed.	Educator Planner
	2.5 Ensure that children are supported throughout and post emergency events.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider
Families are informed and empowered to plan for weather related emergencies.		

3.0 INCLUSION

Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
All children and their families are safe and can participate in and influence planning and service delivery.	3.1 Capture the voice of children and families so they can influence planning and service delivery across Council services and services in the municipality.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider
	3.2 Services collaborate to share knowledge of community trends and needs to better support service planning and responses, and ensure gender equity, culturally safety and inclusivity.	Educator Partner
	3.3 Work with key stakeholders to identify advocacy priorities and planning to help children and families access supports and services they need to thrive.	Advocate Partner Planner Provider

Middle Years Action Plan

1.0 CONNECTION		
Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Children, families and services are well connected and informed to support positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Yarra Ranges children in their middle years.	1.1 Increase participation and social connection of middle years' children within their local community. This will focus on promoting health and wellbeing through physical activity, connection with nature and creative activities.	Advocate Educator Partner Planner
	1.2 Design, deliver and evaluate Early and Middle Years' place-based partnerships including the Upper Yarra Partnership	Planner Partner
	1.3 Increase communication and the promotion of available supports for middle years children and their families.	Educator Partner
	1.4 Work with families to build knowledge and capacity to best support children in the middle years.	Educator Partner
	1.5 Work with schools to identify middle years connections, wellbeing supports and opportunities.	Planner Partner

2.0 PLACES

Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Children in their middle years are active participants in the planning of programs and places designed to support them.	2.1 Facilitate relationships between local community-based organisations and providers, and children in their middle years.	Educator Partner Provider
	2.2 Develop clear processes for children in the middle years to be actively and meaningfully engaged in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation across all areas of Council's business.	Planner Provider
	2.3 Work with Council departments to engage middle years children into initiatives that support emergency preparedness and resilience.	Partner Planner
	2.4 Ensure that Community infrastructure is family friendly, inclusive and accessible.	Advocate Educator Partner Planner Provider

3.0 INCLUSION

Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Yarra Ranges' children in their middle years have a strong profile and support platform from which to be heard, included and valued.	3.1 Develop a Yarra Ranges Middle Years Profile that identifies current supports and opportunities, to inform and guide a Middle Years advocacy platform.	Advocate Educator Planner
	3.2 Support coordination and advocacy efforts that improve access and early intervention with local mental health supports and services.	Advocate Partner
	3.3 Increase data, accountability, evaluation and learning to inform planning and delivery across all our work.	Educator Partner Planner
	3.4 Ensure Council's Middle Years programs and engagements are gender equitable, culturally safe and inclusive.	Educator Provider
	3.5 Develop a model to increase the civic participation of middle years children.	Educator Partner Planner

3.2 Young People

Introduction

For the purposes of this strategy young people will be defined as 12 to 25 years of age.

Yarra Ranges Council is deeply committed to supporting inclusion and ensuring young people are active participants in their community. Council recognises intersectional vulnerabilities and is committed to working towards equitable access, especially in our geographically diverse setting, where opportunities might not be as readily available. Council creates opportunities by actively working with young people, their schools, communities, and community organisations to ensure young people are valued and are supported to reach their potential.

The way that we support young people's connections is different to how we support that of children in the early and middle years. One key reason for this shift in approach is because children under 12 years of age are typically more dependent on families and carers. Council's children's services and supports are designed to recognise these relationships. We do recognise the importance of young people's networks, as seen in our community development role supporting parents/ carers' capacity building. However, our focus in this space is about empowering the individual as they navigate a stage of independence and autonomy.

Council also works in partnership with service providers in the municipality, to build greater connectivity between services and improve their accessibility for young people to use.

Our Young People

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a time of significant growth and self-discovery. Yarra Ranges' young people are embracing their individuality, aspirations, and the role they want to play in shaping their community; from the local all the way to global community.

Whilst many young people are passionate about public policy and eager to engage with issues that shape their communities and futures, there is a growing dissatisfaction with traditional institutions, such as government bodies or formal political structures.

In Yarra Ranges, young people have expressed their focus on:

- Accessing mental health and other services.
- The need for schools to do more to empower young people and build their capacity on disability/ accessibility, LGBTQIA+, bullying and emergency management.
- Improving access to transport.
- Creating safe and inclusive spaces and services.
- Creating youth focused spaces.
- Developing more opportunities to engage / participate e.g. intergenerational connection etc.



Yarra Ranges Snapshot

18,344

of residents are 15-24 years,
12% of population¹⁶

325

15-24 yo's identify as Aboriginal
and/or Torres Strait Islander⁴

16%

of 15-19yo's not engaged
in work and/or education,
compared to 13% across
Greater Melbourne¹⁷

15%

of young people attend higher
education, compared to 28%
across Greater Melbourne¹⁸

10%

of young people attend
vocational education,
compared to 5% across
Greater Melbourne²¹

11%

of 20-24yo's had left school
before Year 11 completion,
slightly higher than the 7.8%
state average²²

12%

of 15-19 were unemployed
in the Outer East, which is
average compared to Greater
Melbourne²³

**Mental and behavioural
conditions** were the 2nd
highest reason for hospital
admission among young
people¹⁹

13%

of 15-24yo's have a diagnosed
mental health condition,
compared to 10% across
Greater Melbourne²⁰

17.4%

of Indigenous young people
are carers compared to 12%
of total young people in Yarra
Ranges²⁴

7%

of young people are
responsible for housing costs²⁷

16%

of the population receiving
Rent Assistance payments
were young people²⁸

Limited to no access to public transport²³

**Limited to no access to essential and
recreational facilities and services²⁶**

Youth Community Engagement

Young people in Yarra Ranges are highly resilient - actively shaping technological advancements, the job market, and evolving industries.

Over half of the young people in Council's recent Youth Survey (2023) believe Yarra Ranges has good job opportunities for them. They reported the benefits of being able to access local sporting opportunities, facilities and infrastructure, youth events, activities, programs, and education and awareness programs.

Young people also recognise the natural beauty of Yarra Ranges and the relative access they have to enjoy time in nature.

Through, our Youth Survey, the 2025 Youth Summit and consultation for the 2024-2028 Disability Action Plan and the 2025-2029 Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we have been talking to young people about their priorities and concerns.

We also consulted with youth service providers who deliver significant services across the municipality. They spoke about a need to focus on:

- **Connection between services and building their capacity:** Services needing to collaborate to build a stronger and more cohesive voice on sector and community issues.
- **Young people's connection to services:** Young people needing a platform where they can learn about and easily link in with services that are available.
- **Service accessibility:** The availability and accessibility of services across all of Yarra Ranges needs improvement, with an emphasis on a "no wrong door" approach.
- **Safe spaces for young people:** Young people need safe spaces to connect with each other and access support.
- **Youth voice:** Young people of all backgrounds and lived experiences need to be and feel represented and have accessible and safe opportunities to advocate for themselves.

What we heard from youth engagement

Access to Mental Health Services:

Ensuring young people have timely and affordable access to mental health support can be life changing. This could include counselling, crisis helplines, or community programs designed to promote emotional well-being. Young people have told us they have not been able to access mental health services, regardless of the service being at a cost or not cost.

Youth Hub:

A centralized space for young people was a much-needed resource, offering everything from job readiness programs to social connections and even mentoring opportunities. The Youth Hub resource is no longer available, and young people have expressed that they want it reinstated. It was a space where they felt safe, supported, and able to engage meaningfully.

More environmental education

Environmental Concerns:

Empowering young people to participate in environmental initiatives, from sustainability workshops to local conservation projects, can have a lasting impact both on them and the planet.

More places for youth to express themselves and their interests

Reliable Transport:

Affordable and accessible public transport helps young people stay connected to education, work, and social opportunities. Young people have told us that outside of the urban areas they have little or no access to reliable public transport.

It's hard to get experience for jobs

Youth Voice in Decision-Making:

Involving young people in discussions on issues that directly affect them ensures that their perspectives are valued and incorporated into decisions.

The effects of lack of transportation is compounded for young people who are equity-denied

More youth centres near schools

More community funding for towards sports and clubs

Safe Spaces for Young People:

These are essential for creating environments where young people can gather, learn, and grow without fear or judgment.

Policy context

All levels of government have a role in supporting our young people. The following are the core policies that guide the work undertaken by Council and its partners in this space.

Federal Government

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032: a national policy framework committed to a country free of gender-based violence where women and children are safe and can live free from fear and violence in all settings. The Plan recognises that violence against women and children can be addressed at a local level through adequate services and infrastructure that is culturally safe, removing barriers to safety and improving access, and place-based models of services.

National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People: outlines the national approach to improving children and young people's health outcomes, and aims to ensure that all children and young people are healthy, safe and thriving, and have opportunities to fulfill their potential.

Victorian Government

Our promise, Your future: Victoria's Youth Strategy 2022–2027: outlines the Victorian Government's next steps to improve young people's outcomes, with a focus on working with young people and relevant community sectors to do so.

YACVIC Code of Ethical Practice for the Victorian Youth Sector: consists of 8 youth work principles and 10 youth work practice responsibilities, and explains issues around duty of care and legal obligations, and how to challenge unethical behaviour.

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-27: sets the direction for improving public health and wellbeing in Victoria and provides a framework for coordinated action to ensure everyone in Victoria has the opportunity for optimal health and wellbeing, so they can fully participate in their community, in education and employment.

Victorian Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change: sets out a long-term vision for addressing the significant impact that family violence has on the Victorian community, in particular women and children.

Our Themes

The three themes of **Connection, Places and Inclusion** run across all the **Key Life Stages**. Below is the definition of how these three themes are applicable to the priorities of our young people.

Connection

Connection is about building strong relationships between young people, services, and the community they live in.

Accessible pathways to support services helps to strengthen networks and capacity to navigate the complexity of transitioning into adulthood.

Events, activities, and opportunities for youth participation in decision-making enhances connections to peers, communities and services.

Safe spaces offer environments where young people can connect and engage authentically, and build meaningful relationships, contributing to their emotional wellbeing.

Service capacity building and collaboration enables a more unified and coordinated voice on key issues impacting the youth sector, young people and their communities.

Places

Places focus on creating and enhancing functional spaces for young people.

Centralised hubs and safe spaces for young people are integral in providing secure environments where young people can thrive, gather, and grow.

Service accessibility across Yarra Ranges ensures everyone can access support regardless of their location, promoting greater inclusion.

Environmental concerns relate to the preservation and improvement of spaces that hold significance for young people, allowing them to contribute actively to the sustainability and quality of their surroundings.

Inclusion

Inclusion centres on equitable access and representation for all young people.

Service availability and accessibility across the region ensures that barriers to support are minimized, following a “no wrong door” approach.

Amplifying youth voices ensures that individuals of all backgrounds and lived experiences feel represented and have safe avenues to advocate for themselves.

Service collaboration promotes inclusivity, ensuring diverse voices are incorporated when addressing community needs.

Safe spaces further reinforce inclusion by offering environments where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and valued.

Our Action Plan

There are many parties involved in supporting our young people. The following Action Plan set out Yarra Ranges Council's focus and role for this age cohort from 2025-2029.

1.0 CONNECTION		
Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Young people in Yarra Ranges are active members of their community and are involved in decision making processes which impact them and their communities.	1.1 Improve accessibility of entry points to Council services—both online and in-person—to ensure young people and their families/carers can easily access the help they need.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider
	1.2 Establish and maintain safe Council environments—both online and in-person—where young people feel welcome to gather, express themselves, and build peer and community connections.	Educator Partner Provider
	1.3 Coordinate collaborative platforms and networks that enhance service coordination and amplify a collective voice on issues affecting young people.	Advocate Educator Partner
2.0 PLACES		
Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Young people have equitable access to safe, inclusive, and functional services and programs across the Yarra Ranges that support their wellbeing, connection, and development.	2.1 Empower young people to shape the design, development, and purpose of their community, ensuring youth voices are meaningfully embedded in decisions about the places they use and value most.	Advocate Partner Planner Provider
	2.2 Create opportunities for young people to lead and participate in the care, maintenance, and sustainability of shared spaces.	Advocate Partner Provider
	2.3 Strengthen the capacity of sector professionals in the municipality through targeted training, networks, and strategic partnerships such as Youth Service Providers Network, School Wellbeing Network and others.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider

3.0 INCLUSION

Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
All young people have equitable access to support, representation, and opportunities to participate in all aspects of their community.	3.1 Advocate with young people for localised services, programs and places that empower and support their independence, wellbeing and social connections.	Advocate Educator Partner
	3.2 Embed gender equitable and culturally safe pathways for young people from diverse backgrounds to actively participate in shaping policies, programs, and community initiatives—ensuring their voices are genuinely heard and reflected in decisions.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider
	3.3 Work with community partners to co-design and maintain spaces that are inclusive, identity-affirming, and trauma-informed—where all young people feel respected, represented, and safe to express themselves.	Advocate Partner Planner Provider
	3.4 Advocate for continuous improvement and development of local service systems and places, to address identified gaps such as access to reliable transport, mental health supports and spaces for connection.	Advocate Partner Planner Provider
	3.5 Deliver leadership training and support to young people so they have more leadership opportunities and can participate in decision-making processes.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider
	3.6 Embed the voice of young people in program design, event planning, and local decision-making processes to empower active participation.	Advocate Educator Planner Provider

3.3 Healthy and Active Ageing

Introduction

Australians can now expect to enjoy longer and healthier lives than any previous generation because of improvements in health care, living conditions, and various economic and lifestyle factors. These factors are also influenced by the experiences we had and decisions we made as young people, and the foundations laid for us during our childhood.

Most older adults in the Yarra Ranges Municipality live independently at home and actively contribute to the community, civic society, businesses, families, and workplaces. Their lived-experiences, skills, and wisdom are valuable assets to our society. Although ageing brings changes, it does not necessarily lead to mental and physical decline or dependency.

There are many factors that impact how we age, including gender, culture, health, disability, social and economic, with some of us experiencing ageing better than others. Our attitudes to ageing impact our physical and mental health and wellbeing. Our human rights and values do not and should not diminish as we get older.

Yarra Ranges Council's Healthy and Active Ageing Plan:

- acknowledges the aspirations, challenges, and remarkable diversity of ageing in its community;
- establishes a progressive vision to challenge existing norms; and,
- facilitates the contributions of our community and numerous partners.

Age-friendly 'lens'

In 2016, Yarra Ranges Council became a signatory to the Victorian State Government's '*Age Friendly Victoria Declaration*,' demonstrating our commitment to delivering age-friendly initiatives.

To strengthen this commitment, we will continue to apply an 'age-friendly lens' to all Council business, services, and programs to support our ageing population. This approach involves considering the diverse needs and abilities of people of all ages in our service design and delivery.

Ageing Populations

Living longer, ageing well

A rapidly ageing population means it's more important than ever to focus on increasing health span — years spent in good health — in addition to lifespan.

For the first time in history, most people can expect to live longer than any other generation. The nature of ageing, along with our expectations, has evolved. We aspire to remain engaged and informed, continue learning and creating, actively enjoy life, and participate in society with a voice that is heard.

Intergenerational longevity studies have identified commonalities in communities experiencing exceptional longevity and quality of life that continue to live their later years in their community. Amongst other factors is a sense of purpose - belonging and connection with family, friends and community - is clearly a significant factor in the health and wellbeing of these remarkable centenarians.

Whilst some of these communities have evolved with significant government involvement, others have achieved this longevity and connection with minimal government presence.

Regardless these communities provide us with valuable lessons to learn about supporting older people to be healthy, happy and resilient.

Living longer, ageing 'not so' well

Health indicators globally and nationally suggest that older people are not necessarily ageing healthier than previous generations of the same age.

The consequence of longevity for health, health systems, their workforces and budgets will be profound. Population growth will impact labour supply, economic output, infrastructure requirements, and government budget.

As Victoria's population gets older, planning for healthy ageing is a growing public health and wellbeing challenge. The proportion of life spent in 'good health' is decreasing, as the prevalence of chronic conditions is increasing.

With nearly one in two Victorians having one or more chronic diseases, treatments are continuing to increase in cost – there is an economic and social value of investing in public health prevention.

Valuing Diversity

Our places

The diverse experiences of older residents in Yarra Ranges vary significantly based on their living environments.

This Plan acknowledges that some people living in Yarra Ranges may not have access to the aged care support and services they may need in the long term.

Therefore, empowering our ageing population with information on local supports and services is critical. This enables individuals to plan and make informed choices about their future, ensuring they can age in places that support their changing needs.

Our people

Today, diversity is increasingly normalised and celebrated but for many older people this may not have been their experience due to historical policies and systemic barriers, societal attitudes, culture and stigma.

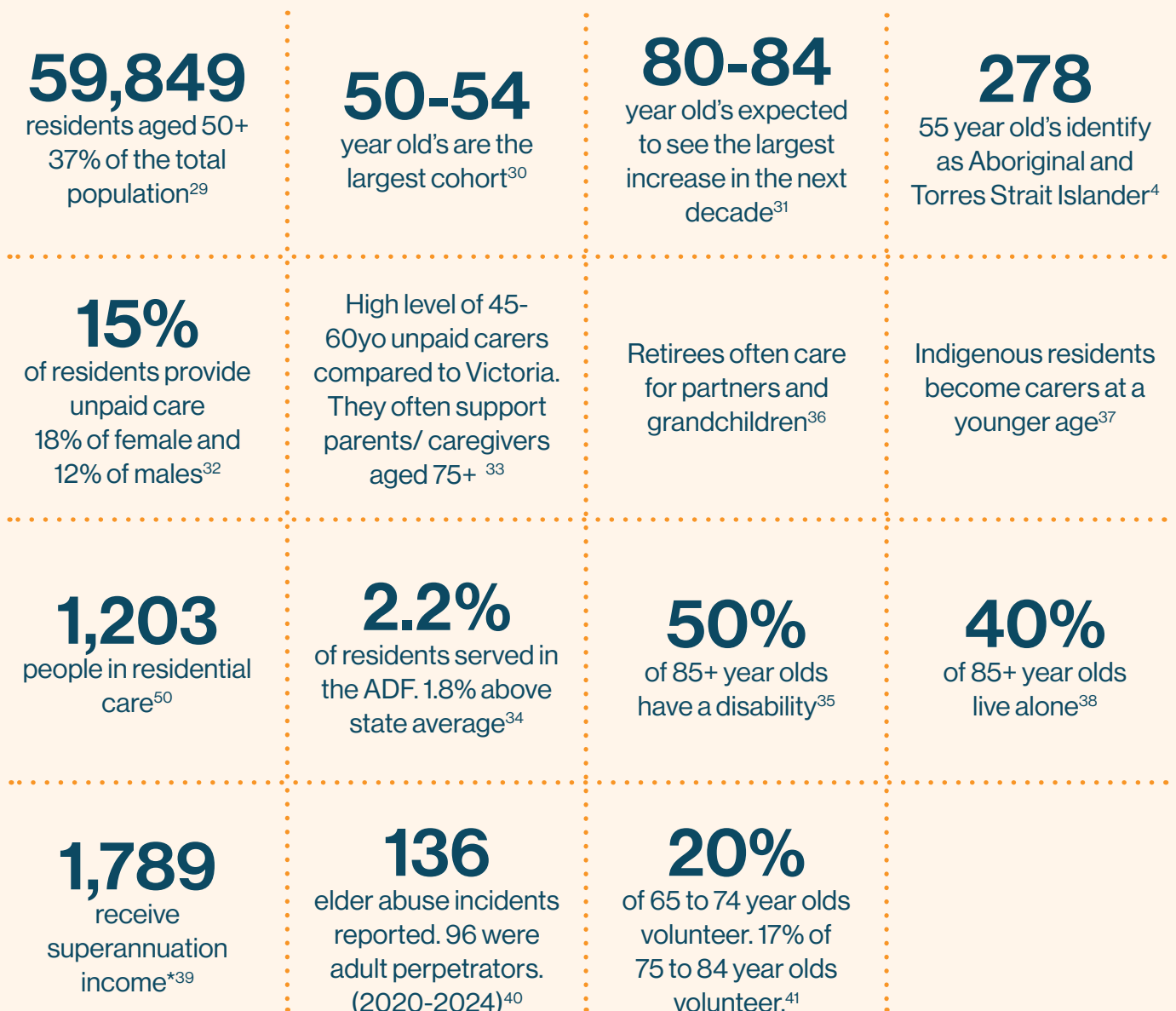
Older individuals have varied experiences of ageing, and those in specific groups are more susceptible to the challenges and barriers this may bring.

We recognise that to support our diverse population this Plan needs to be respectful and inclusive of all people —no matter their background, life experience or care needs. We acknowledge the common reasons why some people cannot access the support they need to age well and consider how we can collectively remove these barriers.



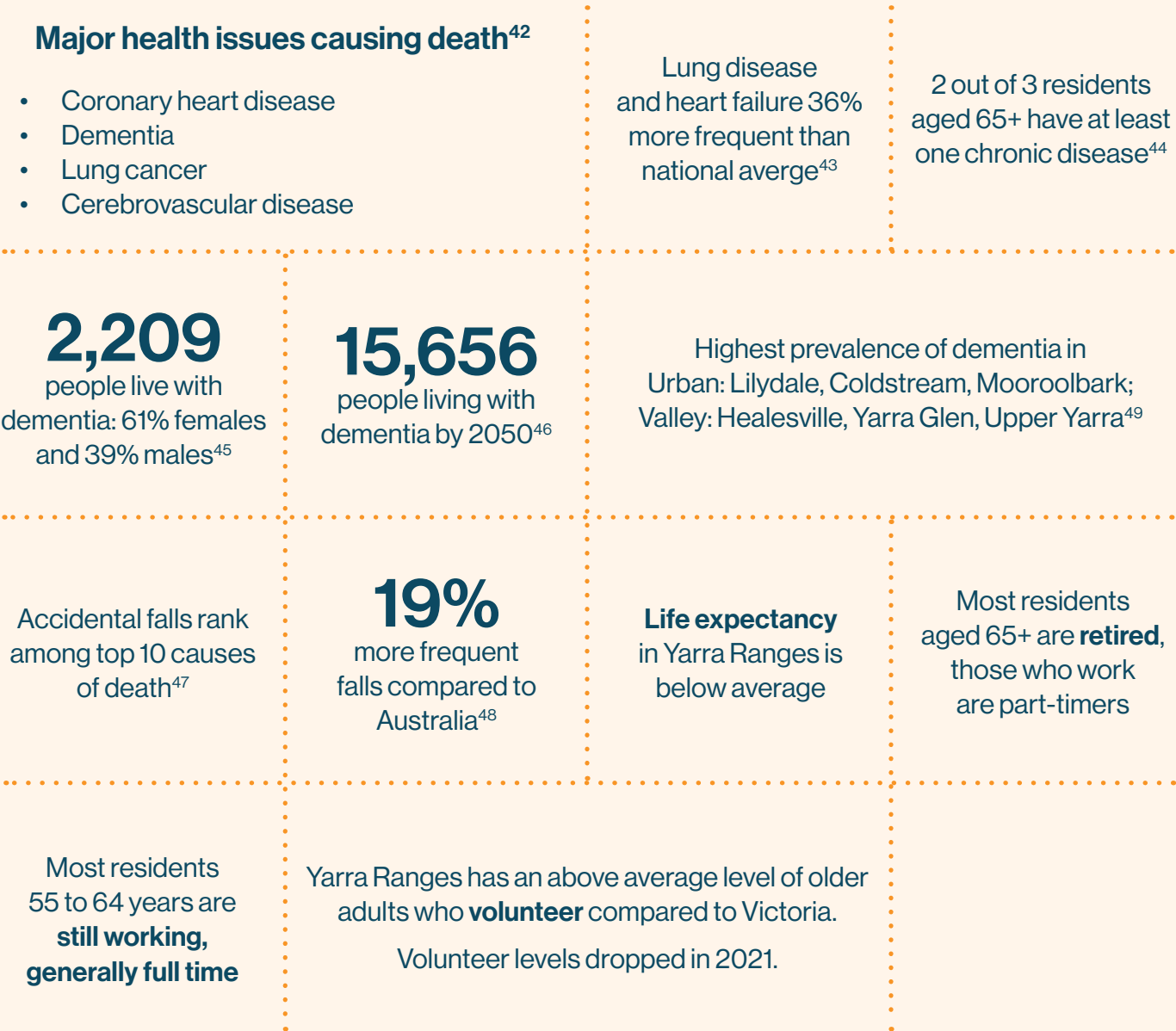
Yarra Ranges Snapshot

Yarra Ranges' population is older than the Melbourne Metro and Victorian averages and is ageing at a faster rate. **By 2044 there will be 69,474 older adults** aged 50+ years living in the Yarra Ranges, representing 38% of the total population. This cohort begins at 50 years in alignment with other government policy and aged care programs, and in recognition of the importance of acting early and being proactive for healthier and longer lives.



**There is limited local data representing the level of super income older residents in Yarra Ranges receive, however our understanding is that many older retirees lack sufficient super income due to a variety of reasons including outliving savings, system complexity, and that mandatory contributions began only in 1992.*

Health in Yarra Ranges:



Ageing Population Community Engagement

This Plan is informed by the voices of thousands of older people and their carer/s in the many community consultations that have occurred at a national, state level and importantly from our local community. We have heard from our local community through various engagements conducted with older residents and/or their carers, including through targeted focus groups conducted recently and consultation undertaken by our previous Healthy and Active Ageing Plan 2019-2023. We have also listened to local feedback and insights provided through engagement processes of other Council strategies and from our Positive Ageing Reference Group (PARG).

Targeted focus groups

Through June to July 2024, 15 engagement sessions were run across the municipality. Consultation was sought through advisory groups, neighbourhood house program attendees, other community groups, and Council staff. Four sessions were also run across Yarra Ranges, in order to ensure geographic representation in engagement.

Our community told us:

The fundamentals that are important for them to age well are being supported in their physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing, being connected to family and friends, and having a say in decisions that affect them.

Older people reflect the diversity of the Yarra Ranges communities and have told us about how their lives can be different. While they are connected because of their age, older people have different needs, aspirations, interests, and lived experiences.

During our consultations, four consistent themes emerged:

Connection: People want to be connected to their communities and the people and services that matter to them as they age.

Friends helping each other out and pop-in. Not making appointments

Inclusion: People want to be recognised and celebrated for the significant contribution they make to our economy and our society as they age.

When you have a disability and you get older, people's attitudes change.

Resilience: People want to adapt to changing circumstances, navigate challenges and recover from setbacks with a strong sense of self confidence and achievement.

Change culture of 'age is just a number' – it's not. Things change when you age – needs to be less fear around what that means.

Places: Older people want accessible outdoor spaces and built environments to age well in their local community.

Safe and accessible and well-maintained walking paths.

Policy context

All levels of government have a role in supporting our communities to age well. The following are the core policies and frameworks that guide the work undertaken by Council and its partners in this space.

International

World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-friendly Framework: is designed to create environments that support healthy and active aging. It focuses on eight interconnected domains that address various aspects of urban life to enhance the well-being and participation of older adults: social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participant and employment, communication and information, community support and health services, transportation, housing, and outdoor spaces and buildings.

McKinsey Health Institute Healthy Ageing Framework: longitudinal studies of communities where people have exceptionally long, and healthy lives, the framework recognises the relevance and interdependencies of physical, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions of individuals and the communities they live in. Wellbeing and 'optimal' health are the focus, not just the absence of disease. It is anchored around 'functional' capacity as health is only relevant to the extent it enables people to live meaningful lives. Communities are inclusive and have a strong focus on intergenerational relationships.

Federal Government

The Australian Government is responsible for some important areas that affect ageing well including, primary health care, income support, taxation and superannuation, workplace relations and protection from age discrimination.

Aged care services and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are the most significant areas of responsibility for the Australian Government for people with care needs. Services are provided to people in their homes, in the community and in residential aged care facilities.

Key policy and reports:

- Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety Report (2021)
- Australian Government Intergeneration Report (2023)

Victorian Government

The State is responsible for providing access to mainstream government services and facilities, like public spaces, public transport, healthcare, social housing and justice. They also provide concessions for older Victorians and provide services relating to recreation, sport, cultural and arts sectors.

The Victorian State Government is responsible for the Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (aged 0 to 64 years) with the aim of supporting people with a disability and their carers to live as independently as possible.

Key policy and reports:

- Ageing Well in Victoria 2022-2026
- Commissioner's report Ageing well in a changing world (2020)

Our Themes

The three themes of Connection, Places and Inclusion run across all the Key Life Stages. Below is the definition of how these three themes are applicable to the priorities supporting Healthy and Active Ageing in our communities.

Connection

We aim to enhance community resilience by fostering strong local connections and support networks to create inclusive and supportive environments for people to age well.

- Physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits
- Independence to age well and maintain autonomy
- Adaptability to life changes

Places

Our age-friendly facilities and civic spaces empower all community members to thrive and live fulfilling lives.

- Safe and inclusive spaces
- Environment, natural spaces and enhanced resilience
- Connectivity options ensures accessibility
- Ageing in place
- Emergency preparedness

Inclusion

We value diversity and strive for a welcoming, accessible community, breaking down systemic barriers to inclusion for people to age well.

- Voice and opportunities to participate in the community
- Access to information
- Respect, feeling appreciated and valued
- Culture of inclusion

Our Action Plan

There are many parties involved in supporting our communities to age well. The following Action Plan set out Yarra Ranges Council's focus and role for this age cohort from 2025-2029.

1.0 CONNECTION		
Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
People have access to affordable and safe opportunities to remain active, happy and healthy as they age.	1.1 Enable older residents to come together to be physically active and support good mental health and wellbeing. We will do this by encouraging healthy lifestyles and promoting services and supports to maintain physical and mental well-being.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider
People are actively engaged, participating and contributing to their communities and doing things they enjoy as they age.	1.2 Promote and support opportunities for people to participate in accessible, inclusive, and affordable social, recreational, lifelong learning, and cultural pursuits. We will do this by utilising local talents, spaces, and volunteer networks.	Educator Partner Provider
People are supported to remain independent and have access to the services and supports they need to age well.	1.3 Advocate for and collaborate with appropriate community support and health services to be available to assist an ageing population, acknowledging the vital role of carers. We will do this by fostering collaborations between local health and community organisations and peer support networks.	Advocate Partner Provider
People can adapt to life changes and access necessary information and services to age well.	1.4 Build the capacity of older people during times of life transition to navigate their changing world and to support them making informed decisions about their lives. We will do this by offering community-based workshops, peer support networks, and clear and accessible relevant information.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider

2.0 PLACES

Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
Our places, spaces and buildings are safe, inclusive, easy to navigate and encourage regular use by people of all ages and abilities.	2.1 Ensure our open spaces, community facilities, and outdoor infrastructure are safe, inclusive, and easy to navigate, supporting older residents' connections to their local community. We will do this by involving older residents in the planning and design processes.	Planner Provider
People have access to open spaces and natural environments and are supported to be adaptable and resilient in the face of a changing climate.	2.2 Ensure that our ageing community has access to open spaces and natural environments and provide support to help them be adaptable and resilient in the face of climate change. We will do this by promoting information and community-led initiatives.	Educator Partner Planner Provider
Our townships offer a variety of connectivity options to ensure accessibility as people age.	2.3 Encourage opportunities for innovative and cost-effective community and other transport options. We will do this by leveraging local resources and partnerships to improve mobility for older residents.	Advocate Partner Planner Provider
People are supported to age in place in affordable, secure and accessible housing that is close to transport, shops and community services.	2.4 Support residents to remain independent as they age through encouraging appropriate housing choices and modifications, sustainable living adaptation, and access to services and supports. We will do this by connecting them with local resources and expertise.	Advocate Educator Planner
Older people can access emergency planning information to make informed choices	2.5 Ensure older residents can access emergency planning information to make informed choices. We will do this by providing clear, accessible information and community training sessions.	Educator Partner
People are free from violence and elder abuse and feel respected and valued.	2.6 Raise awareness and support activities that will prevent elder abuse and enhance safety for older residents through community education and advocacy programs.	Advocate Educator Partner Provider

3.0 INCLUSION

Desired Outcome	Priority Objective	Council's Role
People have a voice and contribute to the shaping of initiatives across the community as they age.	3.1 Ensure meaningful engagement and relationships occur with older residents on issues that affect them. We will do this by actively involving them in decision-making processes.	Advocate Planner Provider
People can easily access information and advice they need to age well, stay informed and connect with the community.	3.2 Council provides timely, trusted, and relevant information that is easy to access and understand and connects residents to what they are looking for. We will do this by utilising various communication channels and community networks.	Educator Partner Provider
People feel appreciated and have increased visibility as valued and contributing citizens as they age.	3.3 Increase community awareness of ageism and the need for respectful inclusion. We will do this through education campaigns and community dialogues.	Educator Partner Planner
People's diverse needs, experiences and backgrounds are recognised and celebrated through promotion of a culture of inclusion, respect, safety and social cohesion as they age.	3.4 Ensure connections are inclusive, and all older residents are able to participate. We will do that by promoting equity and accessibility, including gender equity and cultural safety, in all community services.	Partner Planner Provider
People have a range of employment, continual learning, and volunteering opportunities as they age.	3.5 Increase opportunities for engagement in a diverse range of employment, continual learning, and volunteering activities. We will do that by tapping into the skills and experiences of older residents and creating inclusive opportunities.	Educator Partner Provider

4.0 Implementing this strategy

Council will seek to work across its various functions to undertake the following key activities, which will enable the Plan's themes to be achieved.

Council will:

- Be active in monitoring and influencing outcomes for the key life stages.
- Coordinate partnerships with stakeholders to collectively plan and enable service awareness and accessibility for the key life stages.
- Listen to and co-design with the community to test solutions to identified issues.
- Coordinate or undertake activity that addresses/prevents priority health issues, and strengthens community capacity.
- Collaborate internally to take a whole-of-council approach to ensure Yarra Ranges is suitable for all ages and supportive of intergenerational connection.

Further details on implementation can be found in the separate action plans for each key life stage.



5.0 Monitoring and Reporting

Council will monitor the Key Life Stages Plan as well as the actions that sit within the cohort action plans.

Governance of this Plan's evaluation will be managed by a Key Life Stages Steering Committee, comprised of stakeholders of each key life stage who represent teams in Council, service organisations and community. The monitoring process will involve tracking and measuring the progress of the Key Life Stages Plan, which will be reported on annually.

Council will monitor the impact of the Key Life Stages Plan using sector and service user feedback, indicators of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and in-depth evaluation of key actions within each cohort plan.

Evaluation of the Key Life Stages Plan will determine:

The extent to which the Plan has addressed the health and wellbeing of our community throughout their life course.



Measurement

Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy's indicators

The level of success in addressing service gaps and creating alignment and cohesion among services and supports.



Measurement

Sector focused feedback mechanism

The degree of improvement in the three themes, particularly in the context of intergenerational connection and age and child friendly communities.



Measurement

Service user feedback

Following each annual evaluation, the Key Life Stages Plan will be reviewed and changes will be implemented based on the review.

6.0 About Yarra Ranges

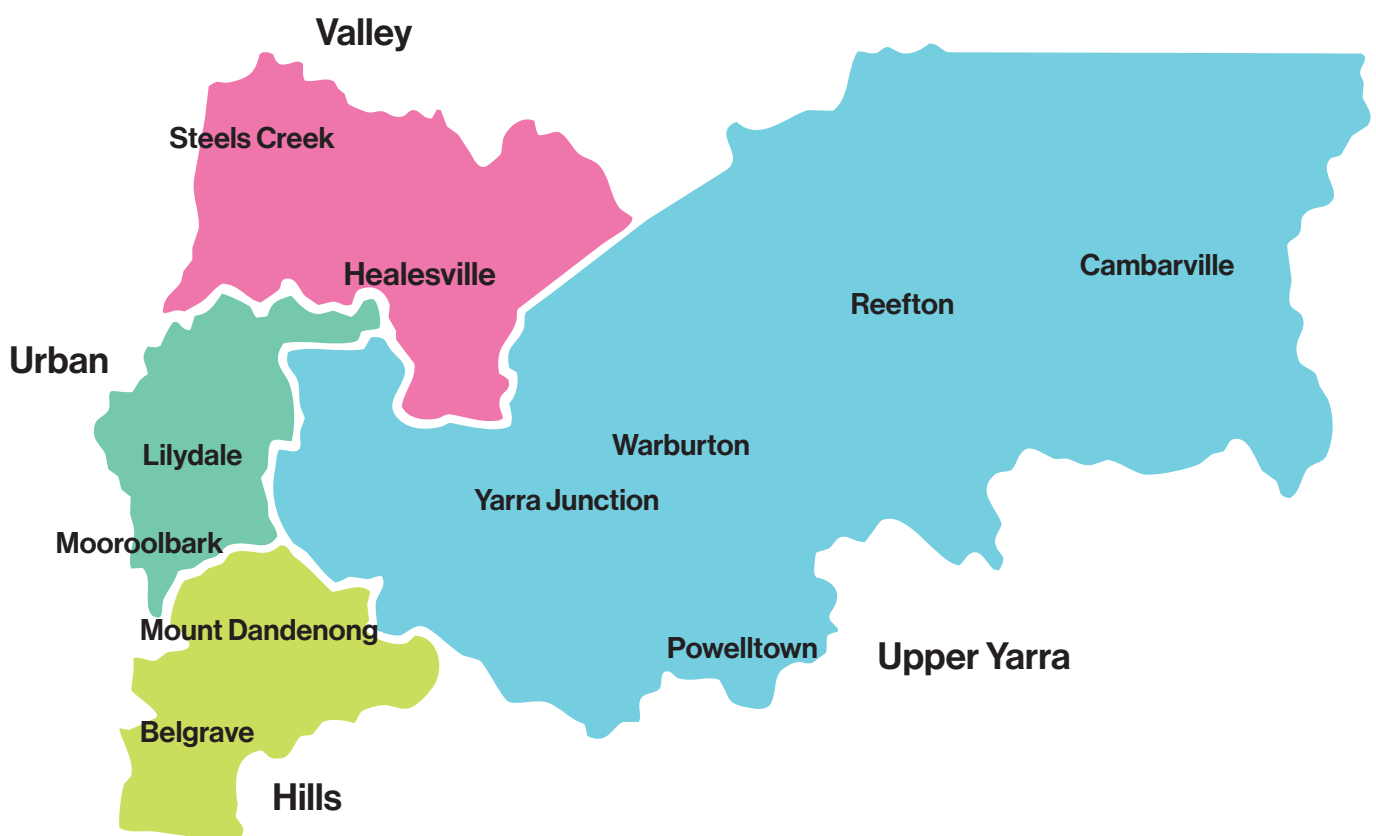
Yarra Ranges is made up of diverse places and communities with distinct geographies and identities.

There are 55 suburbs and townships across the almost 2,500 square kms² of the municipality. The urban areas of Yarra Ranges are on the fringe of Melbourne whilst the central and eastern parts are more rural.

Council uses four planning areas that reflect our distinct places: The Hills, Urban, Valley and Upper Yarra areas. The urban area which is 3% of the land mass of the municipality, is home to 52% of the population.

Rural land is used for agriculture, horticulture, tourism and viticulture. Significant forests and State parks edge the municipality.

As at June 2024, the estimated resident population of Yarra Ranges is 160,134.



7.0 Council's Roles



Provider

Responsible for delivery of services, programs, infrastructure and support to individuals and groups.



Educator

Share information, raise awareness, develop knowledge and skills to empower individuals and groups.



Partner

Build relationships and partnerships with others to enable things to happen and work towards common goals.



Advocate

Raise awareness and promote the interests of local communities to other decision makers e.g. state and federal government.



Planner

Use evidence, including community views to plan for current and future community needs and priorities.



Regulator

Regulating activities through local laws and legislation.

8.0 Glossary

Term	Definition
AEDC:	Australian Early Development Census
Ageing population:	Increasing proportion of adults aged 50+ years, in which they represent a larger proportion of the total population.
Ageing well and Healthy and active ageing:	Both terms describe quality of life and wellbeing for people as they age, commonly referring to actions taken by and/or on behalf of individuals to achieve health and wellbeing.
Ageism:	The stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination directed towards others or oneself according to age.
Best Start, Best Life reform:	A Victorian Government initiative focused on transforming early childhood education and care in Victoria to provide children with high-quality education and support families.
Capacity building:	Developing or strengthening skills, knowledge and resources to achieve specific goals.
Carers and caregivers:	A person who provides regular care and assistance to another person such as a family member, friend or neighbour, not including formal care services arranged by volunteer carers or paid carers.
Childcare:	Care away from a child's home, typically for children aged 5 and under, but also available to school aged children in outside of school hours. Examples include day cares and outside of school hours care.
Cohort:	A group of people who share a common age range.
Critical stage/ period:	A specific period in the life span associated with significant physical, cognitive, emotional and/or social changes.
Cultural safety:	Feeling respected, affirmed and able to express their cultural identity without fear of judgement or discrimination.
Early childhood education:	Educational practices and programs for children in their early years (0 to 8), that supports the foundations of their learning and development.

Term	Definition
Early intervention:	Providing support as early as possible, typically to support development and well-being and prevent further challenges and maximise potential.
Early years:	Children aged between 0 to 8 years.
Health and Wellbeing Strategy:	Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP) that guide's Council's work to support optimal health and wellbeing in Yarra Ranges. It is prepared every 4 years as required under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.
Hills:	Sub-region comprising Upwey, Belgrave, Monbulk, Olinda and surrounds.
Identity affirming:	Acknowledging, respecting and celebrating a person's unique identities and experiences.
Integrated strategy:	A strategy that is made up of multiple strategic areas, collated together for better alignment and cohesion between those areas.
Intergenerational connection/ communities:	Supporting relationships and interactions between individuals from different generations (children, young people, adults and older adults) to foster mutual understanding, respect and learning, and community harmony.
Intersectionality:	The inter-related nature of social identities such as age, race, class, gender, sexuality, disability etc. and how the overlapping of these can expose people to overlapping forms of discrimination and vulnerability.
LGBTQIA+:	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual.
MCH:	Maternal and Child Health
Middle years:	Children and young people aged between 8 to 14 years.
Monitoring and evaluation:	A process of collecting and analysing data to assess progress and outcomes and identify areas for improvement.
NDIS:	National Disability Insurance Scheme
Protective barriers:	Factors that can mitigate harmful effects and promote good health and wellbeing.

Term	Definition
Rent Assistance Payments:	Financial Support provided by Services Australia to eligible individuals who are renting a property and receiving a Centrelink payment.
SEIFA:	Socio-economic Indexes for Areas
Service organisations:	A provider of services to the community.
Social development:	Refining the ability to interact with others, form relationships, and navigate social situations.
Systemic barriers:	Structures that create and/or perpetuate in-equity.
Trauma-informed:	Safe and supportive environments that are considerate of the impacts of trauma and work to avoid re-traumatisation and promote recovery.
Universal services:	Services designed to be accessible to everyone.
Upper Yarra:	Sub-region comprising Woori Yallock, Warburton and surrounds.
Urban:	Sub-region comprising Chirnside Park, Lilydale, Mooroolbark and surrounds.
Valley:	Sub-region comprising Healesville, Yarra Glen, Yarra Junction, Warburton and surrounds.
Young people:	Children and adults aged between 12 to 25 years

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DRAFT COUNCIL ORDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 25(2) AND 26(2) OF THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994

Report Author: Manager Community Wellbeing

Responsible Officer: Director Communities

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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 Domestic Animals Act 1994 (“the Act”) provides Council the power to make orders to control both dogs and cats in public places.

Council Orders made under Section 10A(1), Section 25(2), and Section 26(2) the Domestic Animals Act 1994 are in doubt that they may not be legally enforceable due to publishing errors.

There are no significant changes proposed for a new Council Orders. The Council Orders are proposed to be remade to:

- a) Accurately reflect prior Council decisions for the compulsory desexing of cats;
- b) Accurately reflect prior Council decisions for usage of public land for on and off leash dog exercise;
- c) Accurately reflect prior Council decisions where domestic animals are prohibited throughout Yarra Ranges;
- d) Support compliance and enforcement of Council’s legislated responsibility under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*; and
- e) Correctly publish a Council Orders as a valid instrument for legal enforcement.

The draft Council Orders and complete maps are presented in this report.

RECOMMENDATION***That Council***

- 1) *Endorse the draft Council Order regarding Section 10A(1) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.***
- 2) *Endorse the draft Council Order regarding Section 25(2) and 26(2) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, and Area Maps.***
- 3) *Note that the Orders will be published in the Government Gazette and a local newspaper, as required by the Domestic Animals Act 1994***
- 4) *Establishes a refund scheme for those infringements previously specified under sections 25(2) and 26(2) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994***
- 5) *Accept applications for refunds for a period of 12 months, effective from 28 October 2025.***
- 6) *Authorises the Director Communities to establish the refund scheme.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- Council meeting 28 November 2017: Amendment to Council Order 1/2013, Park Map Updates
- Council meeting 26 April 2017: Amendment to Council Order 1/2013, Kimberly Reserve
- Council meeting 14 October 2014: Amendment to Council Order 1/2013, Park Map Updates
- Council meeting 11 March 2014: Initial adoption of Council Order 1/2013 under Section 25(2) and 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- Council meeting 9 June 2009: Resolved motion for Council Order pursuant to Section 10A(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*

DISCUSSION***Purpose and Background***

During development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan and People and Dogs in Parks Plan, Council identified three separate Council Orders, for which Council officers were unable to find evidence of advertising in a local newspaper, or were gazetted without requisite details, as per the requirements of the Act:

- Section 10A(1) was neither gazetted nor published in newspapers for public advertisement

- Sections 25(2) and 26(2) were gazetted however not published in newspapers for public advertisement

Section 10A(1) of the Act states:

10A Council may refuse to register dogs and cats unless desexed

(1) A Council may resolve that it will not, after a specified future date, register or renew the registration of a dog or cat unless the dog or cat –

(a) is desexed: or

(b) is exempted under this Act from any requirement to be desexed.

Section 25(2) of the Act states:

25 Cats found at Large

(2) A Council may, by resolution, make an order under this section.

Section 26 (2) of the Act states:

(2) A Council may by resolution make an order under this section which may do all or any of the following—

(a) prohibit the presence of dogs and cats in any public place of the municipal district of the Council;

(b) impose all or any of the following conditions on the presence of dogs or cats in any public place of the municipal district of the Council—

(i) conditions as to the means of restraint of dogs or cats;

(ii) conditions as to the times at which the presence of dogs or cats is or is not permitted;

(iii) any other conditions that are specified in the order.

Council Officers sought legal advice regarding the operation of the 2013 Council order pursuant to sections 25 and 26 of the Act which was identified as being gazetted without sufficient detail during development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan and the People and Dogs in Parks Plan. While the order was gazetted, the lack of detail in the gazetted notice may form the basis of a legal challenge. Further, officers cannot find evidence that the Orders were published in a local paper, as required by the Act.

With respect to orders made pursuant to Section 10A of the Act, Council Officers were unable to find evidence of a gazetted notice, nor a notice published in a local newspaper.

The purpose of this report is to present a Draft Council Order Pertaining to Section 10A(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Attachment 1); a Draft Council Order

pertaining to Section 25(2) and 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Attachment 2), and updated area maps (Attachment 3) for endorsement.

The purpose of the Orders are to:

- a) impose conditions on the registration of cats in the municipal district; and
- b) prohibit the presence of dogs and cats in designated public places under certain conditions within the municipal district; and
- c) impose conditions on the presence of dogs in any public place of the municipal district; and
- d) impose conditions on the presence of cats at large or not securely confined to the owner's premises.

The purpose of remaking the Council Orders is primarily to ensure that how Yarra Ranges registers cats in the municipality, and how Yarra Ranges off leash and prohibited areas are published correctly according to legislative requirements. This ensures that the Orders are and continue to be operable and enforceable while withstanding any legal scrutiny. The scope of remaking of these orders does not include reviewing the conditions imposed or individual areas. As a result, proposed changes are solely administrative and will have no impact on the community or how parks and bushlands are currently used or advertised.

Put simply, members of the public will see no change in the process of cat registration, or the operation of existing parks, whether designated on leash or off leash pursuant to the Act.

In remaking the Council Order pertaining to Section 10A(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Attachment 1), the administrative updates are as follows:

- Update of Council Order template and dates
- Inclusion of revocation and commencement statements
- Update of name of the Act

In remaking the Council Order pertaining to Section 25(2) and 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Attachment 2), the administrative updates are as follows:

- Update of Council Order template and dates
- Inclusion of revocation and commencement statements
- Consolidation of all maps of off leash or prohibited areas as previously determined by Council resolution
- Update of note referring to visual map availability to correct a spelling error
- Clearer language about the land exempted from this Order to account for changes in Government Departments

Council Officers are embarking on a significant review of dog parks in Yarra Ranges which will result in the development of a People and Dogs in Parks Plan.

Once this plan is adopted by Council, this order will need to be remade and published in the Government Gazette and newspaper as required by the Act.

Infringements

There is no dispute the Orders have been made by Council, and as such, officers have been issuing infringements in line with offences which have stemmed from those orders.

Since 2013 there have been 769 cat curfew and 21 dogs off-leash in parks infringements issues, with a value of \$61,580.

Since receiving legal advice, there has been a pause on issuing infringements. It is also apparent that there has been a concerted effort to educate residents before issuing infringement, given the relative low number of infringements issued for these types of offences.

Given the Orders were either not gazetted, or no evidence exists that notices were not placed in newspapers, Council should give consideration to refunding these infringements through a refund scheme.

Options considered

Remake the Orders

Council can remake the current Orders to be confident of a valid instrument capable of enforcement. As this is purely administrative with no practical or observable changes for residents, no community consultation is required.

Other options would continue to expose Council to legal challenge and reputational damage and are therefore not being considered.

Infringements

It is recommended that a refund scheme be established, open for a period of 12 months.

Animal owners would be required to provide either an infringement number or animal identification numbers (e.g. microchip or pet registration tag) at the time of the infringement being issued, in addition to their name and address.

Consideration was given to not embarking on a refund scheme and simply correcting the error and recommencing actively enforcing these offences, however the reputational and legal risk is considered too great.

Recommended option and justification

Council should remake new Orders, removing any doubt of a valid instrument to enforce. By remaking the order with only administrative updates and revocation of prior orders, Council can be confident in a valid instrument capable of enforcement. This will ensure that Council has accurately followed good governance procedures. By remaking the orders with no significant changes, there is no requirement to undertake community engagement in this instance and public display meets legislative requirements.

Remaking the Council Orders addresses the identified risks while providing benefits to both Council and the community.

Further, refunding those infringements issued in error shows Council are transparent, honest and committed to good governance.

Benefits:

- Council will be confident that it has followed good governance procedures and has valid instruments which is capable of enforcement by Authorised Officers.
- Council will have new Orders which can be confidently amended following future Council decisions.
- Community can feel confident in Council's ability to take action and enforce both cat and dog non-compliant related matters.

Risks:

- A clear reputational risk is apparent. There is a need for community to feel confident that the Council practices good governance and meets legislative requirements. It is clear in this case that while well intended, steps were missed which has prompted the recommended action.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The initial costs to remake a Council Order are as follows:

- The cost to publish notices is \$91.30 per page or \$6.50 per column cm including GST for advertisement of the Council Order in the Government Gazette
- The cost to publish a Council Order in the newspaper is \$8,000 per page. Legal advice has been sought to clarify the extent to which the Order must be published.
- At a maximum, there is a cost of \$38,534 in refunds outlined in the table below, noting it is not likely all of these may be claimed. There is also a cost of the administration of this program, which will be absorbed as BAU.

Date range infringement was issued	Cat at Large or Not Securely Confined (Volume)	Breach Council Order Dogs/Cats Public Place (Volume)	\$ Value
1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014	-	2	\$288
1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015	86	2	\$6,660
1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016	120	6	\$10,032
1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017	114	1	\$9,047
1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018	15	2	\$1,507
1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019	18	-	\$1,458
1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020	22	-	\$1,826
1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021	39	-	\$3,237
1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022	29	-	\$2,639
1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023	20	-	\$1,840
TOTAL	463	13	\$38,534

The ongoing costs of a Council Order are nil.

The ongoing costs of amendments to a Council order are the same as above per amendment, plus the following:

- \$3,200 for legal advice on the proposed Council Order.

Notes:

The table provided reflects the most accurate historical data. Officers have removed paid and withdrawn infringements, following an exhaustive internal review.

Costs are indicative and are subject to price fluctuations. Where map-only amendments occur, it is unlikely that legal advice will be required.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

- Connected and Healthy Communities
 - On and off leash dog exercising promotes actively using spaces throughout Yarra Ranges
- Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places
 - On and off leash dog exercise parks are planned for through open space planning aiming to activate community spaces while protecting the environment.
- Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment
 - Prohibited areas support the maintenance of the health and biodiversity of the natural environment in the Yarra Ranges
- Vibrant Economy, Agriculture and Tourism
 - Dog exercise areas connected to recreational trails may boost tourism to townships in Yarra Ranges

This order directly relates to the following strategies, policies, and management plans:

- Domestic Animal Management Plan
- People and Dogs in Parks Plan (In development)
- Recreation and Open Space Strategy
- Festivals and Events Policy (In development)
- Place Plans and Township Design Frameworks
- Environmental Strategy
- Flora and Fauna Management Plan
- Green Wedge Management Plan

RELEVANT LAW

Yarra Ranges Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2020

Domestic Animals Act 1994

- Section 10A (1) outlines Council's ability to refuse to register dogs and cats unless desexed.
- Sections 25(2) and 26(2) outline Council's ability to make this order by resolution.
- Sections 25(3) and 26(3) outline the Council requirement to publish the Council Order in the Government Gazette once endorsed.

Economic Implications

As proposed updates are solely administrative, no economic implications are expected for Yarra Ranges.

Social Implications

As proposed updates are solely administrative, no social implications are expected for Yarra Ranges.

Environmental Implications

As proposed updates are solely administrative, no environmental implications are expected for Yarra Ranges.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is not required in re-making these Council Orders (Attachment 1, Attachment 2) as there are no significant changes resulting in a noticeable change to the community, and any engagement would not be meaningful or influential according to the Yarra Ranges Engagement Policy 2024-2028.

The order will be publicly displayed on Council's 'Public Notices' webpage prior to resolution with a mechanism for public reply.

The orders will be advertised after Council adoption as per the requirements in the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Safer Communities has sought legal advice and reviewed other Municipalities' Council Orders to determine the need to re-make these Council Orders for currency. No further collaborations with Councils, Governments or statutory bodies is required.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk: The current Council Orders are not enforceable.

Mitigation: This Council Order seeks to rectify discrepancies between the Council resolutions and the Gazette Published current orders. By remaking the Council

Orders, adequate informing the public, and adequately publishing the new Orders in the Government Gazette, Council can be confident in its ability to enforce these Orders.

Risk: Any infringement issued under the Current Orders may be challenged for their legality.

Mitigation: By remaking the Orders with administrative only changes, we can be confident that any future enforcement action is valid. Council Officers have been directed to educate community and issue warnings instead of infringement. Safer Communities undertaking an investigation and refund process for any challenged infringements under this Act helps mitigate risk.

Risk: Public display may renew interest and debate regarding Council Management of dogs and cats in Yarra Ranges.

Mitigation: By being transparent about what is and is not in scope for this review and new Orders, referring to previous decisions made by Council, Council can reduce the reputation risk.

Risk: Council Orders have been inconsistently gazetted.

Mitigation: Gazetting of Cat Curfew, Dogs off-leash and desexing at the same time present a single reference point for Council and ensure that those impacted or engaged on these linked Orders are made aware at a single point in time.

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 Council Order s10A of *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
2. Draft Council Order s25 and s26 of *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
3. Maps of Prescribed Off-Leash and Prohibited Areas

ORDER TBC/2025
of
YARRA RANGES COUNCIL
Section 10A(1) Domestic Animals Act 1994

This Order is made under Section 10A(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*

The Yarra Ranges Council has resolved to make an Order to not register a cat for the first time unless the cat is desexed.

1. Revocation

1.1 On Day Month 2025, all previous orders made by Council in accordance with section 10A(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* are revoked.

2. Commencement

2.1 The order in accordance with section 10A(1) commences on Day Month 2025.

3. Cat Registration

3.1 Council will not register a cat for the registration period commencing 10 April 2010, or for any subsequent registration period, for the first time unless:

- a) the cat is desexed; or
- b) is exempt from desexing under the provisions of the Act.

This Order is sealed by Council in accordance with its resolution on Day Month 2025 adopting ORDER No. TBC/2025.

The Common Seal of the Yarra Ranges Shire Council was hereunto affixed on Day Month 2025 in the presence of: Tammi Rose

Chief Executive Officer

Yarra Ranges Council

Previous Orders:

ORDER TBC/2025
of
YARRA RANGES COUNCIL
Section 25(2) and Section 26(2) *Domestic Animals Act 1994*

This Order is made under Section 25(2) and 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*

The Yarra Ranges Council has resolved to make an Order to do the following:

- a) Prohibit the presence of dogs and cats in designated public places under certain conditions within the municipal district; and
- b) Impose conditions on the presence of dogs in any public place of the municipal district; and
- c) Impose conditions on the presence of cats at large or not securely confined to the owner's premises.

Meaning of words in this Order

Effective Control: the owner of any dog has the dog on a leash or has the dog under voice command, can see what the dog is doing and can demonstrate that the dog will return promptly on command.

Leash: a long narrow piece of leather, strap, chain or cord, not exceeding 1.5m in length, that is fastened to a collar on a dog's neck or is attached by harness or halter in order to control the dog.

Owner: has the same meaning as in the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Public Place: has the same meaning as in Section 3 of the *Summary Offences Act 1966*.

1. Revocation

1.1 On Day Month 2025, all previous orders made by Council in accordance with section 25(2) and 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* are revoked.

2. Commencement

2.1 The order in accordance with section 25(2) commences on Day Month 2025.

2.2 The order in accordance with section 26(2) commences on Day Month 2025.

3. Dogs exercised 'On Leash'

- 3.1 The owner of any dog must keep the dog held or secured on a leash when the dog is in any public place or Council reserve not designated as an off-leash area.
- 3.2 The owner of any dog must keep the dog held or secured on a leash when the dog is in any public place or Council reserve not designated as an off-leash area and must not allow the dog to worry, threaten, rush or attack another person or animal.

4. Dogs exercised 'Off-Leash'

A dog may be exercised off a leash in a designated 'off-leash' area, as prescribed in Schedule A under the following conditions:

- 4.1 the owner carries a leash to be able to promptly place the dog on a leash if that becomes necessary;
- 4.2 the owner remains in effective control of the dog;
- 4.3 the owner does not allow the dog to worry, threaten, rush or attack another person or animal; and
- 4.4 The owner obeys all rules displayed on signs to do with an off-leash area.

5. Areas where Dogs and Cats are Prohibited

- 5.1 Dogs and cats are prohibited at all times in areas prescribed in Schedule A; and
- 5.2 Dogs and cats are prohibited at all times:
 - a) on all ovals/sports fields except with the agreement of a Committee of Management for the purposes of dog obedience training;
 - b) within 20 metres of all fixed playground equipment;
 - c) within 20 meters of all fixed fitness equipment;
 - d) within 20 metres of permanent BBQ or picnic area; and
 - e) on designated beach areas.

6. Cat Confinement

- 6.1 All owners of cats must keep their cat/s securely confined to the owner's property and not allow their cat/s to wander at large outside the owner's premises anywhere within the municipal district at any time.

7. Exemptions:

This order is not applicable to public lands not owned or managed by Council.

This Order is sealed by Council in accordance with its resolution on Day Month 2025 adopting ORDER No. TBC/2025.

The Common Seal of the Yarra Ranges Shire Council was hereunto affixed on Day Month 2025 in the presence of: Tammi Rose

Chief Executive Officer

Yarra Ranges Council

Previous Orders:

14 G1 7 January 1999 Victoria Government Gazette

G1 1 15 March 2001 Victoria Government Gazette

G 13 Thursday 27 March 2014 Victoria Government Gazette

G 5 Thursday 5 February 2015 Victoria Government Gazette

Schedule A: Prescribed Off-Leash and Prohibited Areas

RESERVE NAME	SUBURB	STREET ADDRESS	POSTCODE	DESIGNATION
Belgrave Lake Park	Belgrave	Park Avenue	3160	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Mount Morton Reserve	Belgrave South	Chaundy Road	3160	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Kimberly Reserve	Chirnside Park	Kimberley Drive	3116	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Margaret Lewis Reserve	Coldstream	Cnr Ingrams Road and Maroondah Highway	3770	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Coronation Park	Healesville	River Street	3777	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Don Road Sporting Complex	Healesville	Don Road	3777	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Johns Hill Lookout Reserve	Kallista	Ridge Road	3791	Off-Leash: Entire Reserve
Kalorama Memorial Reserve	Kalorama	Cnr Mt Dandenong Tourist Road and Grange Road	3766	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Cherlynne Crescent Easement	Kilsyth	Cherylne Crescent	3137	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Elizabeth Bridge Reserve	Kilsyth	Durham Road	3137	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Lilydale Lake (Inclusive of Bellbird Park)	Lilydale	Swansea Road	3140	Prohibited: Part of Reserve Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Old Pound Reserve	Lilydale	Quarry Road	3140	Prohibited: Part of Reserve
Mineshaft Road Reserve	Macclesfield	Mineshaft Road	3782	Prohibited: Entire Reserve
Butterfield Wildlife Reserve	Monbulk	Butterfield Road	3793	Prohibited: Part of Reserve
Wards Reserve	Monbulk	Wards Road	3793	Prohibited: Part of Reserve
Ken Leversha Reserve	Montrose	Ruby Road	3765	Prohibited: Part of Reserve
Richards Reserve	Montrose	Copeland Drive	3765	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Mooroolbark Retarding Basin	Mooroolbark	Balcombe Avenue	3138	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Hull Road Drainage Reserve	Mooroolbark	Cnr Hull Road and Cardigan Road	3138	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Montrose Brickworks Flora Reserve	Mooroolbark	Cambridge Road	3138	Prohibited: Entire Reserve
Pembroke Retarding Basin	Mooroolbark	Cambridge Road	3138	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Summerhill Park Drive Reserve	Mooroolbark	Summerhill Drive	3138	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve

RESERVE NAME	SUBURB	STREET ADDRESS	POSTCODE	DESIGNATION
Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Trail	Mt Evelyn	Westhill Drive	3796	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Quinn Reserve	Mt Evelyn	Quinn Crescent	3796	<i>Prohibited: Entire Reserve</i>
Minak Reserve	Selby	Wombalana Road	3159	<i>Prohibited: Part of Reserve</i> Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Hickman Place Reserve	Seville	Hickman Drive	3139	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Seville Recreation Reserve	Seville	Seville-Monbulk Road	3139	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Wandin East Recreation Reserve	Wandin East	Cnr Old Baker and Monbulk-Seville Road	3139	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Wesburn Park Reserve	Wesburn	Warburton Highway	3799	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve
Yarra Glen Recreation Reserve (Yarra Glen Showgrounds)	Yarra Glen	Melba Highway	3775	Off-Leash: Part of Reserve

Note: Maps showing the locations and their particulars referred to in Schedule A are publicly available at the Yarra Ranges Council Offices, 15 Anderson St, Lilydale, at any Community Link and Council's Website.













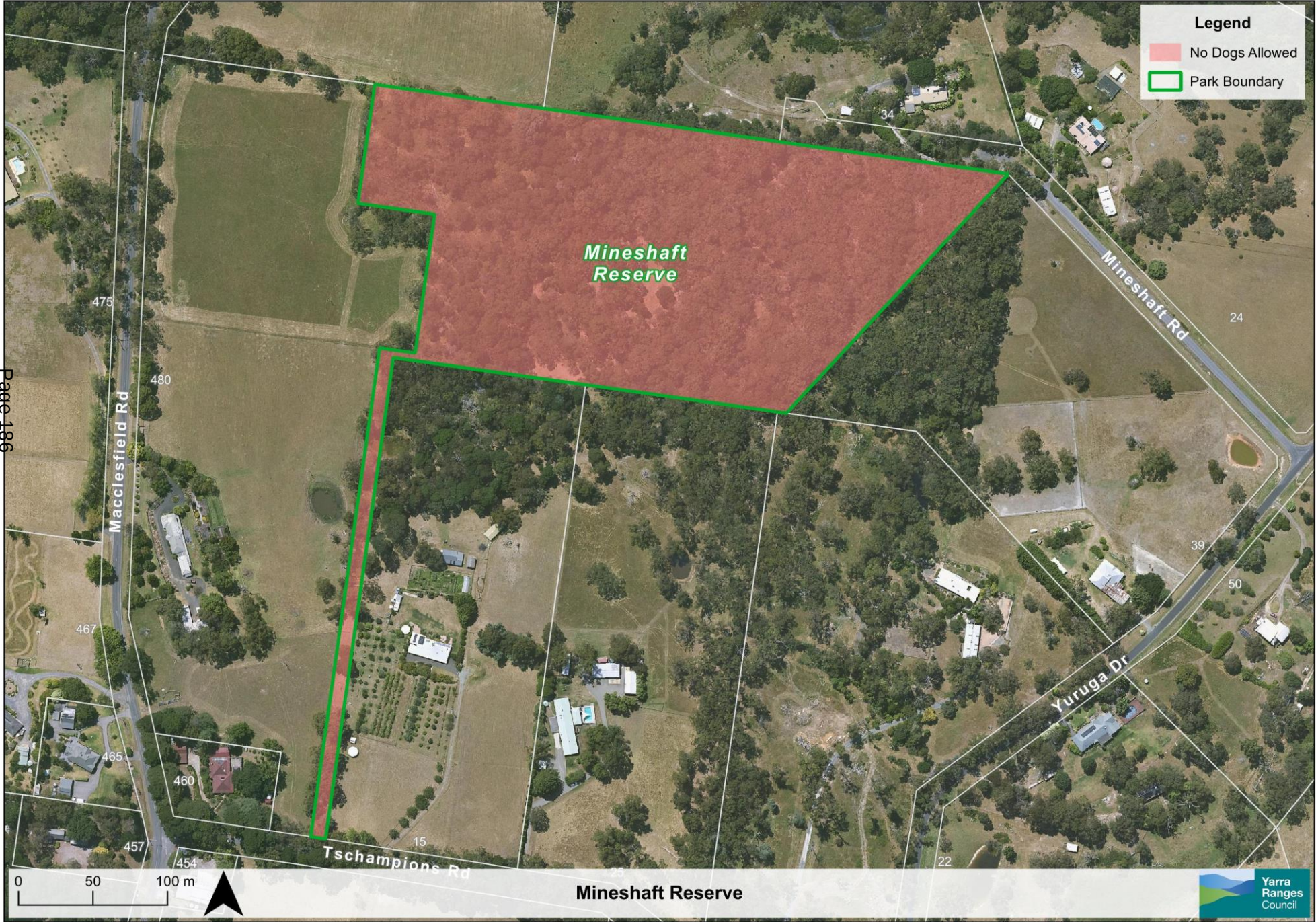


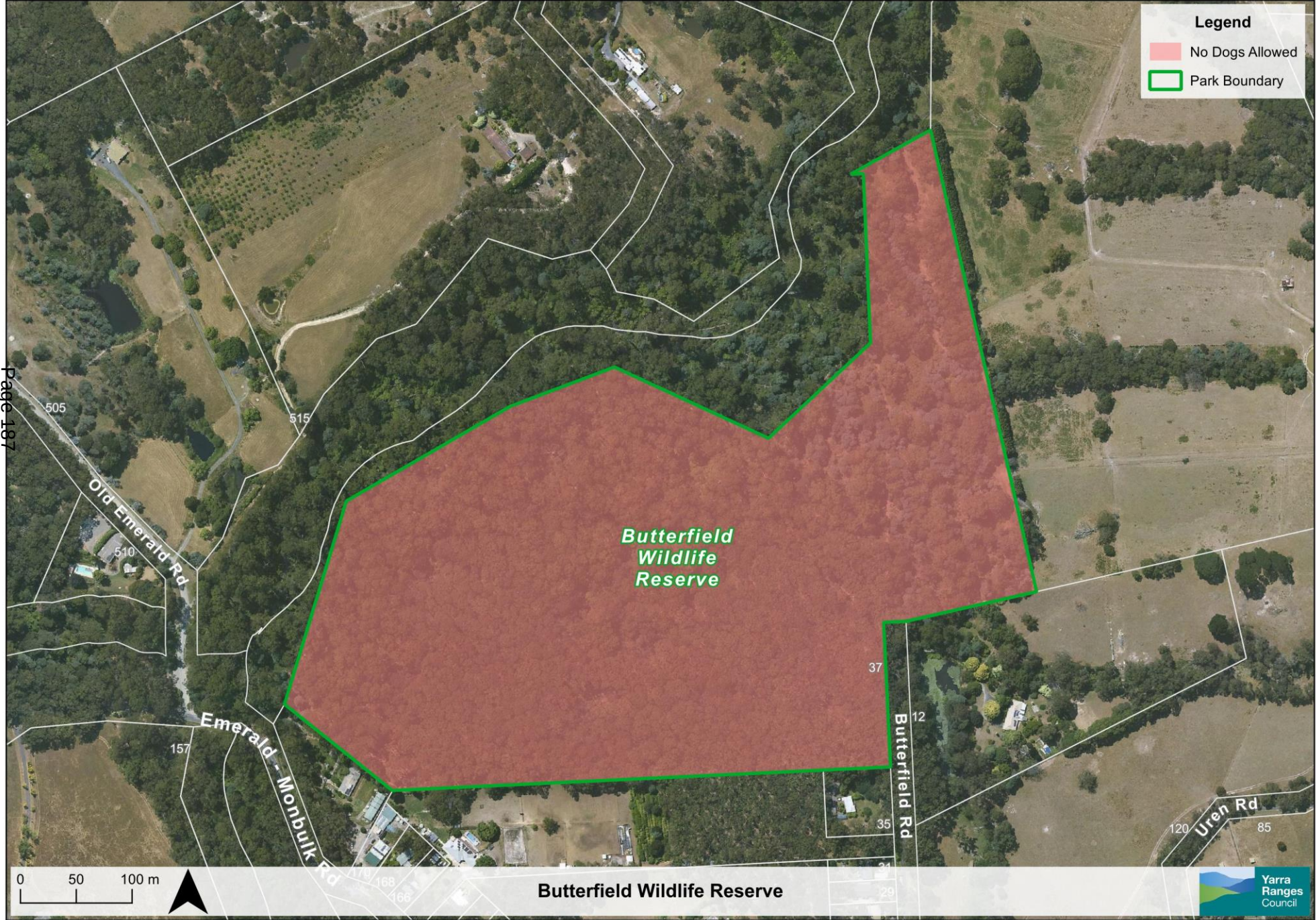


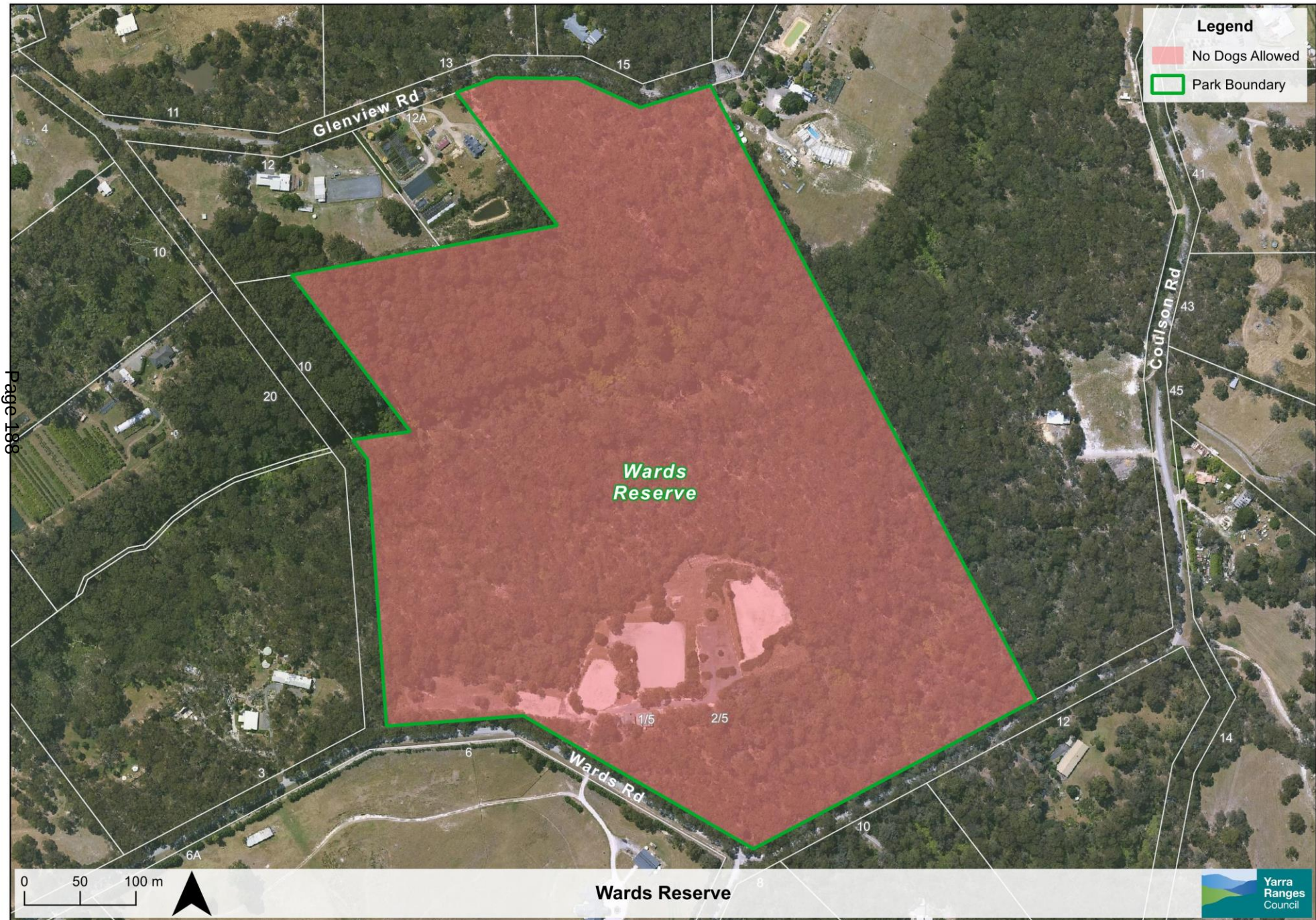










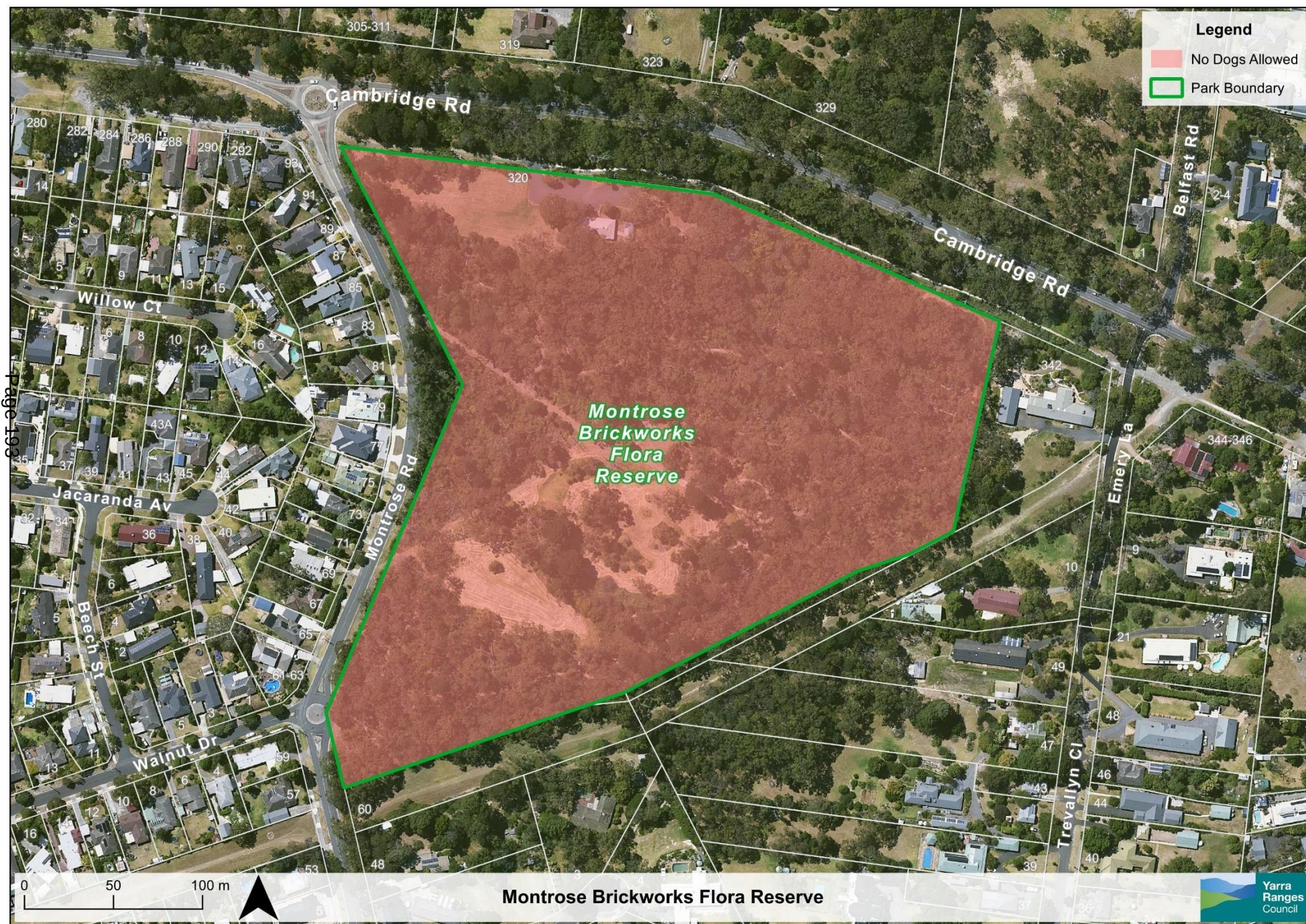










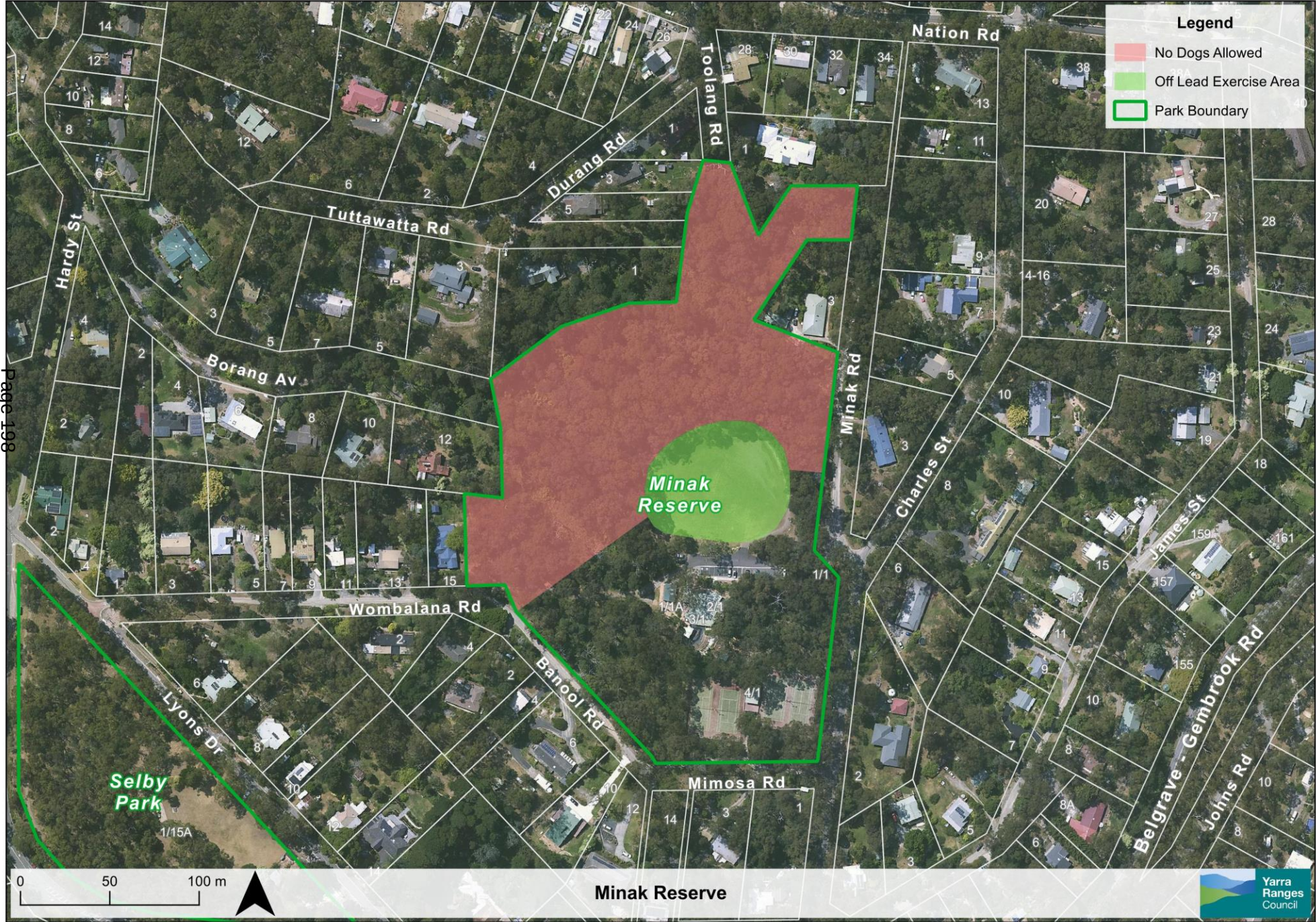








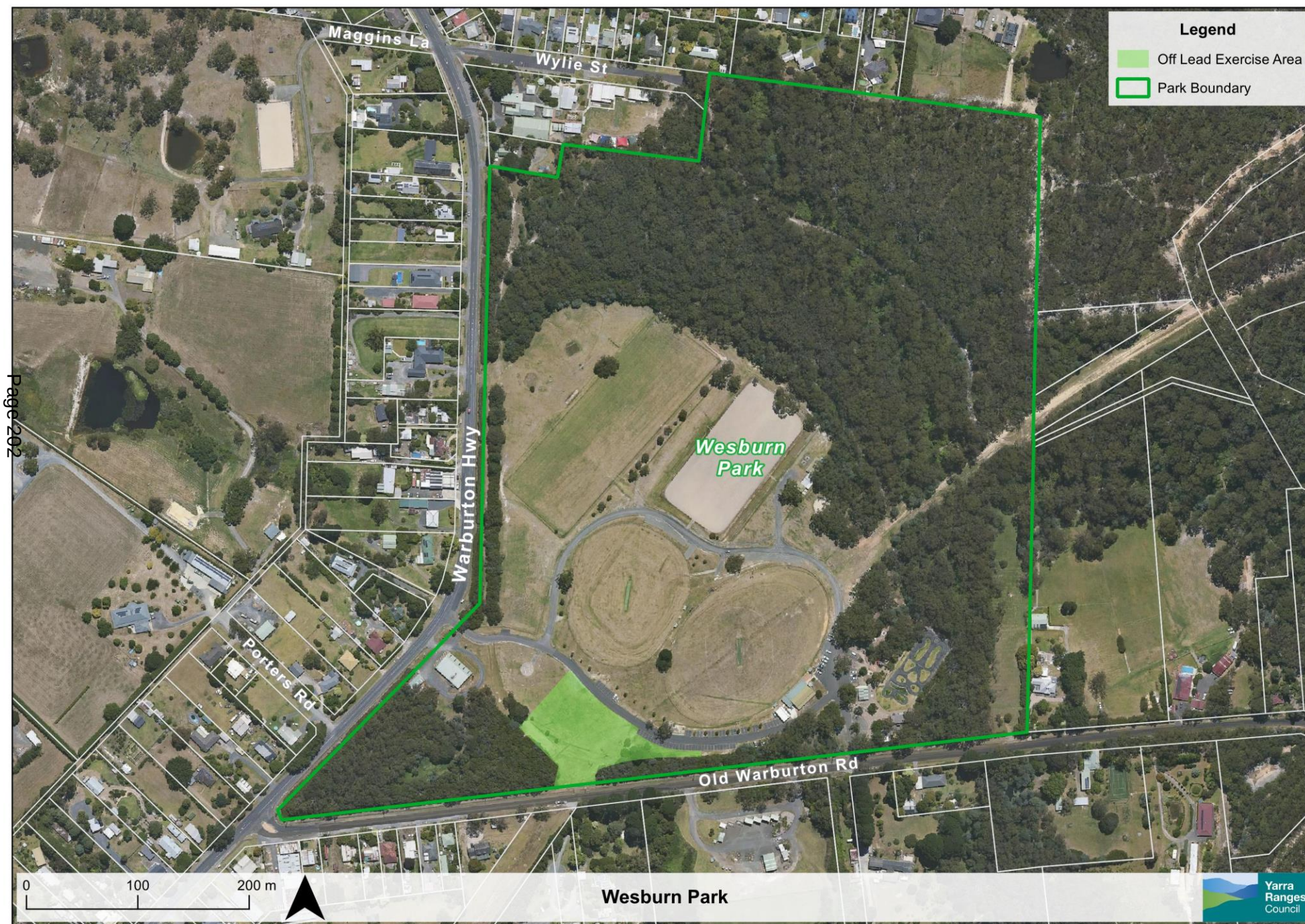














2026 ANNUAL GRANT PROGRAM

Report Author: Executive Officer Partnerships & Community Building
 Responsible Officer: Director Communities
 Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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

Council's Annual Grants Program (the Program) supports not-for-profit community groups, including heritage and arts groups and artists, to deliver community-led initiatives that foster connected, vibrant and resilient communities and strengthen culture and the arts.

The Program criteria align with Council's strategic objectives, ensuring funded projects contribute meaningfully to broader community goals, enabling projects that promote social cohesion, enhance liveability, strengthen a sense of place through art and cultural projects, and build community resilience to be supported.

The program is delivered across three funding streams:

- Community Development
- Arts and Heritage
- Festivals and Events

All funding streams encourage an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach, leveraging the skills, strengths, knowledge, and creativity of local communities. The 2026 Annual Grant Round will support project delivery in 2026.

Two independent assessment panels (Community Development and Creative Communities) assessed the applications. The panels' funding recommendations are outlined in this report. The total recommended funding allocation of \$574,535.15 falls within the endorsed 2025-26 Council budget for Community Grants. The panels' recommendations include a slight reallocation of funds across the three streams. This is part of the collaborative panel process.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes

- 1) *The recommendations of the independent community assessment panels to award 2026 Annual Grants funding as follows*
 - a) *Arts & Heritage: 15 projects.*
 - b) *Community Development: 40 projects.*
 - c) *Festivals and Events: 20 projects.*
- 2) *Acknowledge the contribution of panel members and their commitment of time and expertise in evaluating applications and shaping their funding recommendations.*

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council endorsed the 2026 Annual Grants Guidelines, selection criteria and assessment panels on 13 May 2025.

In 2024 Council endorsed an increase in funds for the *Annual Grants* from \$500,000 to \$575,000 as follows:

- (a) \$150,000 Festivals and Events
- (b) \$150,000 Arts and Heritage
- (c) \$275,000 Community Development.

Council endorsed its Grant Policy in May 2020, establishing high-level guidance for its grant-making activities.

DISCUSSION

Section 9(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states: “*priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations*”.

Council’s Grant Programs invest in projects that strengthen community connections and foster a sense of belonging, laying the groundwork for a more resilient and inclusive future.

Purpose and Background

This report outlines the recommendations of the two independent 2026 Annual Grants program panels, for noting by Council.

The Program invited initiatives that promote wellbeing, foster social connection, celebrate local culture, foster creative practice, and strengthen community resilience. It comprised three funding streams, each aligned with Council's strategic priorities.

- **Arts and Heritage:** Encourages storytelling, creative expression, and cultural identity
- **Festivals and Events:** Supports community-led celebrations that enhance local culture and liveability
- **Community Development:** Builds social connection, equity, and capacity through asset-based approaches

The Community Development and Creative Communities assessment panels convened separately in August to deliberate and reach consensus on projects to receive funding.

The successful projects will enable community groups and creatives to deliver inclusive, skill-building initiatives that foster volunteerism, strengthen local networks, and support meaningful community engagement. These activities are designed to reflect diverse voices and cultures, promote participation, and contribute to resilient, connected and creative communities.

Options considered

The scope of the 2026 Annual Grants Program, including the criteria, budget, and assessment processes, was formally endorsed by Council in May.

A rigorous assessment process was undertaken, comprising of:

- eligibility checks by the grants team and staff reflections by officers;
- individual assessments by panel members; and
- a deliberation day for each panel to reach consensus on funding decisions.

The panel assessment method is robust and consistent with the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) recommendations for transparency and accountability in local government grant making processes.

The two independent assessment panels have allocated funds to a diverse range of projects that align with Council's program criteria and strategic priorities.

The Panels commended the high standard of this year's applications, highlighting the significant volunteer contributions and strong community engagement across the Yarra Ranges.

Recommended option and justification

The funding allocations of the two assessment panels, as outlined in Attachment 1, 2 and 3, are submitted for Council noting.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The 2026 Annual Grants budget was \$575,000 with a summary of the applications received, and funds requested, detailed in Table 1 below.

Funding Requests (Table 1)

Funding Stream	Number of Applications	Funds Requested
Community Development	48	\$419,020.33
Arts and Heritage	27	\$251,433.00
Festivals and Events	25	\$265,469.65
Total	100	\$935,922.98

The total funding pool for the 2026 Annual Grants is \$575,000. In 2026, demand across all funding streams remained strong.

The assessment panels demonstrated a significant commitment to the grant process, undertaking thorough individual evaluations (scoring) followed by a day of collaborative group deliberations. Their collective expertise, time, and thoughtful consideration ensured a balanced and rigorous review of applications, reflecting a deep dedication to supporting community-led initiatives through fair and transparent funding decisions.

The Panel funding recommendations are outlined below.

Funding Awarded by Stream

Funding Stream	Projects Awarded	Amount Applicants Requested per Stream	Amount Panel Recommended
Arts/Heritage	15	\$141,233.00	\$ 130,233.00
Community Development	40	\$351,020.99	\$255,275.00
Festivals/ Events	20	\$212,469.65	\$189,027.15
Total	75	\$704,723.64	\$574,535.15

The Community Panels generally supported projects at the requested level; however, following a thorough assessment of scope and budget, partial funding was recommended for some projects. The Panels were confident these projects remained viable with reduced funding support and for some a revised project scope will be agreed during the development of funding agreements, to ensure success.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The Annual Grants program supports Council's strategic objective to build Healthy Connected Communities, as outlined in the Council Plan.

It also advances Council's Creative Communities Strategy across its three focus areas: People & Experience, Production and Industry, and Place and Environment.

In addition, the Program contributes to broader objectives within a range of Council strategies, plans, and policies outlined below.

<i>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</i>	<i>Healthy and Active Ageing Plan</i>
<i>Creative Communities Strategy</i>	<i>Liveable Climate Plan</i>
<i>Equity Access and Inclusion Strategy</i>	<i>Environment Strategy</i>
<i>Child and Youth Strategy</i>	<i>Reconciliation Action Plan</i>
<i>Municipal Recovery Plan</i>	<i>Recreation, Open Space Strategy</i>

RELEVANT LAW

Council's grant programs are primarily guided by the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, with no additional legislative provisions directly governing their operation.

Child Safe Standards form a key part of Council's commitment to child safety and wellbeing. Compliance with these standards is a requirement for grant recipients where direct or incidental contact with children may occur. Support is available to assist community organisations in understanding and meeting these obligations.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Section 9(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 2020* states:

"The economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted".

The Annual Grant program includes criteria for applications that support sustainability.

Economic Implications

Festivals and events continue to deliver economic benefits across the municipality, including increased visitation, local spending, and employment opportunities for artists, performers, craft persons and vendors.

A range of events (20) from across the Yarra Ranges funded in this round, represent a diverse mix of long-standing events, vibrant street fairs, music festivals, youth-focused creative initiatives, neighbourhood events and community picnics.

Grant applicants are encouraged to prioritise the local procurement of goods and services, in alignment with Council's Grants Policy and its commitment to strengthening local economies and supporting regional businesses.

Social Implications

The Program supports Council's objective of fostering healthy and connected communities. It aligns with the Health and Wellbeing Plan by promoting mental health through social connection and community-led initiatives.

The Program supports social wellbeing by enabling communities to lead initiatives that reflect local strengths, address emerging needs, and foster inclusive participation.

Funded activities include connection groups for mothers and seniors, youth engagement programs, career pathway initiatives, wellness and recreation activities, intergenerational projects, support for solo parents, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, community gardening, and resilience-building efforts led by emergency groups. These initiatives promote leadership, skill development, and stronger local networks.

The Festivals and Events stream also aligns closely with community development objectives and delivers social outcomes. Festivals and events promote social connection and belonging, celebrate local identity, and are driven by the contributions of volunteers, community groups, businesses, and performers.

Grant criteria encourage inclusive participation across age groups, cultures, abilities, and locations within the Yarra Ranges. While implementation varies, this remains a key focus area.

Environmental Implications

Applicants are encouraged to incorporate environmentally sustainable practices into their projects. Suggestions include waste reduction, promotion of sustainable living, and educational elements such as FOGO displays. These guidelines are supportive rather than prescriptive.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To support community engagement and build grant-seeking capacity, Council delivered grant information sessions and offered complementary skill-building workshops to develop ideas, refine project plans, develop cultural awareness and

build knowledge in grant writing. Networking opportunities embedded in the design of these opportunities helped to foster collaboration and strengthen connections across community groups and initiatives.

Applications were received from across the four regions of the municipality, reflecting broad geographic engagement. A comprehensive promotion strategy supported this reach, including social media, Council newsletters, website and roadside banners in key locations.

Council's Grants Team maintains ongoing dialogue with community groups and individuals seeking support with the application process or testing their project idea. Officers across Council contribute contextual reflections as an additional resource for panel deliberations, though they do not provide recommendations.

Acknowledging the Panel Contributions

Following noting at the Council meeting of 28 October 2025, formal funding notifications will be provided in November 2025.

A celebration and networking event is scheduled to occur in December 2025, with the Mayor and Councillors invited. The event will showcase selected 2025 projects and acknowledge the 2026 grant recipients. The event deliberately focuses on networking and peer connection between grant recipients. The celebration event has traditionally been a vibrant gathering where community groups enjoy connecting with each other, Councillors and hearing about the successful projects.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Grants team works in close collaboration with the Cultural Development Team to deliver the Annual Grants Program. Officers from across Council - including Community Development, Health and Wellbeing, Environment and Healthy & Active Ageing also play a key role. They engage with applicants and offer guidance and support through the process.

Feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the success and sustainability of Council's grant programs. Each round includes a review process informed by input from applicants, assessment panel members, and Council officers.

This feedback helps refine program design, strengthen strategic alignment, and enhance delivery outcomes. By actively incorporating lessons learned and stakeholder insights, the program remains responsive to community needs and ensures transparent, equitable, and effective grant-making practices.

Refinements speak to the Program's core purpose: to support and enable community-led projects that respond to local priorities.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks managed through the grant making process include:

Risk	Mitigation
Conflicts of interest	- Panel members declare conflicts of interest (COI) before conducting assessments to ensure transparency. - Those with a COI do not assess the application and leave the room during the face-to-face deliberations.
Confidentiality	- Panel members are required to maintain confidentiality of recommendations until the Council meeting noting the successful projects. - A confidentiality agreement is signed by all panel members.
Funding ask exceeds funding budget	- Manage communications transparently and conversations with applicants. - Provide clear feedback and offer to assist unsuccessful applicants to succeed in future (standard practice). - Ensure partially funded groups understand they can revise the scope of their project if needed to reflect the funding awarded.
Disappointed unsuccessful applicants	- Unsuccessful applicants are offered constructive feedback and supported by Officers to refine and further develop their project concepts. Where appropriate, applicants may be referred to Council's monthly grants program for seed funding to test and trial their ideas. - Skill Building workshops can assist with building grant seeking success.

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*.

Panel members with a conflict with any applications declare the conflict and do not assess. There were conflicts for some panel members and the process outlined above was followed.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Arts and Heritage Stream
2. Festivals and Events Stream
3. Community Development Stream

2026 ANNUAL GRANTS PROGRAM - ARTS & HERITAGE FUNDING STREAM

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Fleur Dean	BENEATH NOW	BENEATH NOW boldly and poetically frames local stories that our lives are built on, told by our older generation who lived them. Within the frame of Steve Curry's 3-storey venue built entirely from materials found across the Yarra Ranges - and/or The Memo down the road - the older artists will respond to this familiar architecture, replete with shared history. A smorgasbord of lesser-heard lived account, presented in unexpected ways, audience will promenade gently between them, listening with the generosity our elders deserve - receiving their 'just desserts' where all storytellers convene in the final scene, imbibing a Wurundjeri dream.	\$10,000.00
Yarra Valley Singers	Collaborate Too!	This project will grow and evolve music collaboration opportunities for multiple choirs, musicians and their leaders across the Yarra Ranges. Through our 2025 project 'Collaborate!' we have piloted an approach to collaborative rehearsals, music development and workshops, which has already already provided great outcomes including increased social connection and wellbeing, volunteer participation supporting sustainability of groups in the Yarra Ranges, paid artist opportunities, and capacity building. We are planning collaborative rehearsals and music development, 4 workshops, 2 performances and supporting 'gama-dji', a project to create/perform Woi Wurrung songs.	\$10,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Warburton Valley Market	Music and Art at Warburton Valley Market	The Warburton Valley Market is held monthly behind the Warburton Arts Centre. This project will enhance the market by providing live music and art experiences, creating a vibrant platform for local musicians and artists to perform, sell their work, and deliver hands-on workshops. It supports artist income, strengthens community connection, and enriches the experience for visitors and locals alike—contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of the Warburton Valley.	\$7,000.00
Ms Amanda Pickett	Cloud Time	Cloud Time is a collaboration between Healesville artists Mandy Pickett and Amanda Ruck, part of the YRC Exhibition and Creative Pathways Program. Inspired by movement and nature, the project features paintings, projections, performance art, and multimedia installations. Funding will support live public performances, interactive art experiences, and a gallery installation that deepens community engagement.	\$5,000.00
Body Place Project - Gretel Taylor	Confluence - A place-responsive art and performance residency at Coranderrk	BodyPlaceProject will curate a three-day artist residency at the culturally significant Coranderrk property invites 10 local artists (selected via open EOI) to camp at the confluence of the Birrarung and Coranderrk Creek. Through workshops led by First Nations and other artists, participants will explore place-responsive, embodied, and ecological practices. This immersive experience will shape future public performances and artworks along the upper Birrarung in 2027.	\$10,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Lucy Beach	An Artist Garden	An Artist's Garden Planned for Blacksmiths Way, Belgrave, as part of the 2026 Belgrave Lantern Parade, this 3D illuminated installation brings together artists Lucy Beach, Nikki Wellington, and award-winning Lisa Voski with local students and residents. Featuring vibrant sculptures and lanterns made from recycled materials, it celebrates creativity, sustainability, and collaboration. The luminous "garden" transforms the space while fostering intergenerational skill-building and community connection.	\$10,000.00
Save the Dandenongs League Inc	Archiving Save the Dandenongs League papers	Save the Dandenongs League Archival Project With a proud 70-year legacy, SDL seeks to engage an archivist to assess and preserve 15–20 tubs of historic documents, now housed in YRC's Monbulk Hub. Materials include the personal papers of long-serving President Cr Betty Marsden and potentially those of founder May Moon. This project will safeguard the group's rich heritage in environment and community advocacy.	\$9,803.00
Selby Community House Inc	"Selby: The Heart of the Hills" – A Historical Book Project	Selby: The Heart of the Hills Selby Community House will produce a beautifully crafted book capturing Selby's history, people, and places through local stories and photos. Contributions will come from residents, organisations, and Wurundjeri community members, with a local writer and designer commissioned. Launching at SelbyFest 2026, the book will be printed in a small batch, with pre-orders funding future runs—ensuring fair pay, contained costs, and financial sustainability.	\$10,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Clare James	THE PLACE FOR LOST FEELINGS	Artist Clare James and Healesville Living and Learning Centre (HLLC) present a free 4-day ephemeral public art event—both communal and deeply personal. A lush indoor installation of flowers, branches, and plants will surround a secular altar of water and sand, where participants may place lit candles in quiet reflection. On departure, guests can choose a chat with a counsellor, a hug, or a cup of tea—honouring human nature and connection.	\$10,000.00
Mr Roderick Price	Yarra Ranges Sound Ecology Project	This community-driven project captures the soundscapes of 55 Yarra Ranges townships through hands-on audio workshops. Participants contribute recordings and stories to a shared online archive, culminating in a live electroacoustic performance celebrating the region's cultural and natural heritage.	\$10,000.00
Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation	Coranderrk Records	Coranderrk Archival Preservation Project – Phase One Hundreds of historic records lie untouched in the former Superintendent's Cottage at Coranderrk. We seek funding to engage a professional archivist to assess, prioritise, and preserve this culturally significant collection. Tasks include identifying material types and sensitivities, cataloguing based on significance and condition, and training volunteers to support ongoing work and digitisation—laying the foundation for future public access.	\$10,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Mikhaela Ebony Bourke	Community Podcast	In partnership with 3MDR, this 10-episode podcast will explore the power of community in the Yarra Ranges—showcasing how the Dandenong Ranges leads by example. Through stories from individuals, businesses, schools, and community groups, each episode will highlight why community matters, how we strengthen it, and the people making a real difference.	\$9,724.00
Dalys Mithen	gama-dji / emerge from sleeping	gama-dji / emerge from sleeping Led by Dalys Mithen, Mandy Nicholson, and Gulsen Ozer, this collaborative music project will create a series of short part songs (rounds) in Woi Wurrung and English, sharing the names of animals, places, and people from Wurundjeri Country. Taught to community choirs across the Yarra Ranges, these songs foster language revival, cultural learning, and shared connection through singing.	\$10,000.00
Dandenong Ranges Orchestra	for “DRO Concert Series 2026 – Supporting The Works Of Our Creative Community”.	As part of its 2026 season, the Dandenong Ranges Orchestra will launch a dynamic program to boost community participation in orchestral music. Highlights include:- provide mentoring by engaging professional/skilled amateurs to lead each section, assist players to learn their parts by utilising an innovative electronic device (EWI), provide an avenue for aspiring composers to have their works played by live musicians, regularly perform new works by Australian composers particularly those from the Yarra Ranges, provide training for aspiring conductors through a conductors mentoring program.	\$3,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Upwey Community Group	Upwey Archies 2026	Upwey Archies '26 Inspired by the Archibald Prize, this portrait exhibition—organised by Upwey Community Group with Burrinja—features community-made works displayed in local shopfronts. Open to all ages, abilities, and skill levels, it awards prizes across Open and Youth categories, including Community Favourite. Each artist includes a personal note about their chosen subject, adding depth and connection to the portraits.	\$5,706.00
TOTAL			\$130,233.00

2026 ANNUAL GRANTS PROGRAM - FESTIVALS & EVENTS FUNDING STREAM

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Lilydale Township Action Group LTAG	Lilydale Melba Festival & Street Fair	Lilydale Identity & Street Fair Initiative Lilydale Township Action Group Inc will strengthen Lilydale’s identity through heritage celebration and community collaboration—supporting local businesses, cultural groups, and First Nations peoples. Paired with LTAG’s Street Fair, the event will feature entertainment, market stalls, and educational displays, aiming to revitalise Lilydale and promote it as a vibrant destination.	\$10,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Melbourne Gun Club	2026 World Championships Fosse Universelle - UT Opening & Closing Ceremony	Melbourne Gun Club will host the World Championships for Clay Target Shooting and would like to showcase an amazing Opening Ceremony to welcome athletes from all over the world where we will acknowledge our indigenous heritage and all of the things the amazing Yarra Valley has to offer.	\$5,150.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Selby Community House Inc	SelbyFest	SelbyFest is a free festival in the scenic Minak Reserve, Dandenong Ranges, celebrating environment, culture, and inclusivity. With live music, art, workshops, buskers, and stalls showcasing local artists, food, and businesses, it's a vibrant day for all. Highlights include the Indigenous Bush Food Garden and Wombalana Wild Garden Playground, creating a welcoming space for all ages, cultures, and abilities.	\$15,000.00
Mountain District Radio Inc (3MDR)	3MDR 2026 Events	In 2026, 3MDR will host two live studio gigs and broadcast four key community events: our Sri Lankan program's music showcase, Belgrave Survival Day, and the Anzac Day dawn service. The much-loved vinyl fair returns, attracting music fans across the hills. We'll also deliver two professional development seminars to support local musicians with expert insights into gigs, festivals, and airplay.	\$8,500.00
Healesville Toastmasters	Healesville Zine and Comic Festival	The Healesville Zine and Comic Festival celebrates the art of storytelling with zines and comics. A two-day celebration of storytelling at the Memo, featuring zine and comic workshops, speeches, open mic poetry, Toastmasters demos, D&D, and a vibrant zine fair. Leading up, Healesville Sanctuary hosts Wild Zine workshops where visitors create nature-inspired zines to trade at the fair. Supported by Toastmasters D73, Yarra Valley FM, Healesville Sanctuary, Your Library & Sticky Institute.	\$14,863.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Warburton Primary School	Night of Lights Lantern Festival and Bush dance	For the first time, Warburton and Millwarra Primary Schools will co-host two inclusive community events. The Lantern Festival features a student lantern parade, bush dance, dinner, and live music. Millwarra's Market Day at East Warburton will showcase local stalls and school spirit. Both events aim to bring families and the wider community together in celebration.	\$5,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Kilsyth Community Action Group	Kilsyth Festival	Kilsyth Village Fair — Community Celebration at Elizabeth Bridge Reserve Kilsyth Community Action Group will host a relaxed outdoor festival at Elizabeth Bridge Reserve, featuring live performances, activity zones, and stalls from local artists, businesses, and groups. Designed to foster community spirit, the event aims to engage more families, youth, and local traders.	\$15,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Healesville Festival Inc	Healesville Festival	Following glowing community feedback, this two-day festival builds on the 2025 format with multicultural performances, First Nations artists, workshops, and family-friendly fun. Day One activates local venues with music and cultural acts; Day Two, “Family Fun Day,” brings free activities, roaming performers, and local food to a Yarra Ranges Council outdoor space. The event celebrates diversity, strengthens connections, and supports Healesville’s growing identity as a cultural destination.	\$15,000.00
Connecting Community Festival	Connecting Community Festival	A vibrant two-day celebration kicks off with Friday night's Writers & Rhythm concert at the Uniting Church, featuring a Melbourne guest artist. Saturday brings family fun at Healesville Library, creative workshops and performances at The Memo—including poetry, belly dancing, zine-making, and more—plus a street parade and community showcases. The evening wraps up with a Rotary/U3A Community Ball and an Outdoor Youth Concert spotlighting emerging local talent.	\$15,000.00
Ranges Academy of Performing Arts Inc.	Lantern and Light International Children's Film Festival (LLICFF) 2026	The LLICFF is a major international children’s festival, focused on essential short films made by young people. Alongside regional young filmmakers, the LLICFF hosts stories from many cultures and varying ways of life. This intercultural adventure encourages empathy and understanding, with films made through the eyes of young people themselves.	\$9,410.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Healesville Connect	Healesville Connect Twilight Picnic Encore	This inclusive community picnic offers all-age entertainment with Wurundjeri Welcome and Smoking Ceremony, old-fashioned races, live music, and bush dancing. Guided park explorations, a petting zoo, and activities with Healesville Sanctuary volunteers celebrate local nature and culture. Thanks to YRC sponsorship, the event features a free BBQ, fresh fruit, and sweet treats — no cost, just connection.	\$6,957.00
Cire Services	Celebrate Yarra Ranges!	Cire Community Hubs is hosting a free two-day October event in Yarra Junction brings together over 3,000 people for art, cultural performances, workshops, and interactive experiences. Backed by 20+ local partners and students, the festival celebrates diversity, fosters collaboration, and showcases Yarra Ranges as a thriving cultural hub.	\$15,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Dandenong Ranges Literary Festival	Dandenong Ranges Literary Festival	Dandenong Ranges Literary Festival — Celebrating Storytelling in Belgrave. Planned for October 2026, this weekend festival will highlight the region’s literary heritage through talks, readings, spoken word, workshops, and industry showcases. Designed to engage writers, readers, creatives, and professionals of all ages, the event builds on insights from the inaugural 2025 festival.	\$10,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Yarra Junction Community Group	Yarra Junction Community Carols 2026	A Festive Gathering for All Yarra Junction Community Group invites everyone to a joyful, inclusive evening of music, performances, and singalongs. Featuring local schools, artists, choirs, and supported by community groups—with Santa arriving on a CFA fire truck, our postmaster in costume, and a Rotary-run sausage sizzle—this celebration brings the spirit of togetherness to life.	\$5,000.00
Yarra Valley Arts Council t/a Yarra Valley Arts	Yarra Valley Open Studios 2026	This Spring, Yarra Valley and Upper Yarra artists welcome visitors into their home studios for a hands-on glimpse into their creative process. An exhibition at The Memo Gallery highlights featured works, while guided tours offer deeper engagement. Guests can meet artists, experience works-in-progress, and purchase art directly—immersing themselves in the region’s rich artistic spirit.	\$15,000.00
Yarra Ranges Film Society	Warburton Film Festival 2026	Held the weekend after the King’s Birthday in June, the 2026 festival features eight film sessions over three days, plus a Saturday night dinner. Showcasing recent feature films from diverse genres and countries, each session includes an SUYS competition entry, with a dedicated awards presentation. We are excited that 2026 will be our 41st year of operation.	\$5,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Yarra Ranges Film Society	Healesville Mini-Film Festival 2026	Healesville Mini-Film Festival — This one-day community film event showcases three themed movies—linked by trilogy, director, or region—and features a guest speaker to spark discussion and broaden genre appreciation. A catered afternoon tea with themed cuisine rounds out the experience.	\$4,197.15
Olinda Community Pool Association (OCPA)	Sights and Sounds of Summer Season	Sights and Sounds of Summer is a vibrant seasonal series designed to bring people together in a safe, fun, and inclusive space. Highlights include a bold headline act in January 2026—such as feminist water ballet team The Clams—plus movie afternoons with water inflatables and games, and up to eight live music sessions featuring local artists from Jan to Mar. A festive “welcome back” movie in December 2026 kicks off the 2026/27 season with energy and connection.	\$7,950.00
Greater Eastern Malayalee's Melbourne INC	"Festive Harmony: Indian Christmas & New Year Extravaganza in Yarra Ranges"	Our project, "Festive Harmony: Indian Christmas & New Year Extravaganza in Yarra Ranges," is a vibrant community celebration blending Indian and South Indian traditions with holiday festivities. Held at Kilsyth Memorial Hall, this inclusive celebration blends Indian and South Indian traditions with holiday cheer through music, dance, and a festive buffet. Bringing together 200–250 people from diverse backgrounds, it fosters connection, cultural pride, and community spirit, while offering opportunities for volunteering and skill-building.	\$2,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Recommended Funding
Celebrate Mooroolbark Inc	The Yarra Valley Wool & Handicrafts Show	This annual event celebrates fibre arts, handmade crafts, and local creativity with artisan stalls, workshops, a fashion parade, and demos. Drawing crowds from across Victoria, it fosters social connection, supports small businesses, and encourages wellbeing through hands-on activities. With support from groups like the CWA—famous for their Devonshire Tea—and craft guilds, the show is donation-based, inclusive, and proudly community-driven.	\$5,000.00
TOTAL			\$189,027.15

2026 GRANTS PROGRAM - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDING STREAM

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Eco Warriors Australia	Binak Habitat Pods - Temporary Homes for Wildlife	The group is seeking funding to deliver five workshops with students from five primary schools, in partnership with Wurundjeri Narrap Rangers and a Traditional Owner representative from ERA. Students will learn traditional weaving techniques using aquatic species to build Binak habitat pods. These culturally informed workshops will promote Indigenous knowledge and provide refuge for small wildlife in degraded creek and wetland areas at Spadonis Reserve, Yering.	\$9,975.00
Each	Rural Rainbows social group for Yarra Ranges LGBTQIA+ young people and allies	Rural Rainbows delivers three peer-led support groups for LGBTQIA+ youth (ages 12–25), providing safe, inclusive spaces that foster connection, wellbeing, and confidence. Hosting 4–5 sessions monthly—with activities like games, movies, art, guest workshops, and event access—the program is co-designed by LGBTQIA+ Peer Leaders and EACH staff, celebrating diversity and inclusion. Created in response to local need, it reduces isolation and stigma while empowering young people to engage with and shape their communities through authentic representation.	\$6,000.00
Mooroolbark Community Garden	Growing Hope, Harvesting Health	Mooroolbark Community Garden is enhancing community connections through inclusive food-growing activities and workshops that support socially isolated individuals. Featuring raised beds, fruit trees, a fenced early learning centre, compost hub, and accessible spaces, the garden promotes food security, environmental education, and a strong sense of belonging—creating a sustainable, welcoming space for all.	\$5,810.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Yarra Valley ECOSS	ECOSS Crops for Community Program	ECOSS Crops for Community is a free, inclusive gardening and food relief program where volunteers of all abilities grow organic produce for local initiatives like Koha Café and Oonah Indigenous Tuckerbag. Through weekly hands-on gardening, participants build skills, improve wellbeing, and support food security across the Yarra Valley. The program fosters community connections and aims to create a sustainable model of empowerment through growing and sharing food.	\$10,000.00
Upper Yarra Secondary College	Indigenous@UYSC Art Project	As the Marrung Lead and Secondary Teacher at Upper Yarra Secondary College, I hope to support our Indigenous students to complete a design that represents our schools Acknowledgement of Country that we have written together. This design would be presented on the water tank in the year 7 area, as the students were inspired to paint a water tank after working on the Water Tank Project and finishing the beautiful Graham Patterson design at Gladysdale. Although after talking to YR Council members, I think the community would benefit more if the Gym which is parallel to Riversdale Road were painted.	\$7,500.00
The Parents Hub (formerly Blair Gowrie House Playgroup)	Reset & Reconnect	Rest & Reconnect is a year-long wellbeing initiative by The Parents Hub in Mooroolbark, supporting solo parents, carers, and disconnected mothers. Through community meals, wellness events, Pilates sessions, and market mornings, it fosters connection, health, and resilience. Backed by strong partnerships and aligned with Council wellbeing goals, the project builds on The Parents Hub's trusted local presence.	\$5,550.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Melba Support Services	Art therapy pilot in Lilydale for people with disability.	Melba Support Services and CATA will run a 20-week art therapy pilot in Lilydale for people with disability. Weekly sessions use visual art, movement, drama, and music to foster wellbeing and explore identity. A final exhibition at Anderson Street Church will showcase participants' creative journeys.	\$10,000.00
Monbulk and District Community Opportunities Working Group	Monbulk Intergenerational Project	The Monbulk Intergenerational Project, a partnership between MADCOW and Monbulk College, connects Year 11 Vocational Major students with residents of Sylvan Glades Retirement Village. Designed to tackle social isolation and mental health challenges across generations, the program offers students real-world experience in community planning while providing seniors meaningful engagement, mutual learning, and reduced loneliness—all to strengthen community ties in Monbulk.	\$5,000.00
Repower The Dandenongs	Repower Festival 2026	Plan and deliver Repower Festival 2026—a family-friendly event celebrating a sustainable future. The day features food, activities, and conversations with local vendors on renewables, batteries, electrification, and resilience. An EV Expo will be held in the car park.	\$5,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Women's Health East	Warburton/Redwood Playgroup	Warburton/Redwood Playgroup is a place-based program supporting socially isolated mothers of preschoolers in the Upper Yarra Region. Held at ADRA Community Care Centre, sessions combine play and connection with structured workshops to promote wellbeing. Community leaders will receive support to help sustain the project beyond funding.	\$6,000.00
Seville Community House	Wellness Ways: A Holistic Health Program for Adults	Seville Community House presents Wellness Ways—a term-based health program for adults in the Yarra Ranges. Featuring low-cost or free taster sessions in movement, nutrition, mindfulness, and creative expression, it's delivered with local health partners to support wellbeing and connect participants to ongoing care.	\$5,500.00
Warburton Bowls Club	2026 Arts & Community Series	Warburton Bowls Club will host the 2026 Arts and Community Series—two evening events showcasing local artists, creators, and producers. Designed to foster connection beyond work-family circles, the series celebrates community and encourages resident-led participation.	\$5,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Combined Probus Club of Olinda Inc	Empowering our future selves	Part 1: Weekly Pilates led by a qualified physiotherapist from Form & Practice, Olinda improves flexibility, balance, strength, and social cohesion. Part 2: Enhancing our website to attract new members and support ongoing intellectual and social engagement. Part 3: Offering free one-year memberships to new members of Olinda Probus to encourage growth and inclusion.	\$3,200.00
Access Health and Community	Belgrave Play and Connect	AccessHC, Belgravia Leisure, and Belgrave Tennis Club present Belgrave Play and Connect—a community initiative offering free and low-cost recreational activities across Belgrave and the Yarra Ranges. Highlights include Borthwick Park events, social sports, family fun, a digital activity booklet, and Belgrave Pool programs. Permanent features like a student-designed scavenger hunt and a sports library for free equipment hire will encourage ongoing participation and playful connection.	\$7,000.00
Little Yarra CFA	Ready Together – Little Yarra CFA Community Awareness Project	Little Yarra CFA is increasing awareness and fire preparedness through events at Gladysdale Primary School, Powelltown Market, and our Gladysdale Fire Station. These interactive sessions educate families about our brigade's role and promote safety, connection, and inclusion across the community.	\$1,600.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Anchor Community Care	Lilydale Youth Foyer - Life and Living Skills Program	The Life and Living Skills program, run year-round by Lilydale Youth Foyer, empowers young people with practical knowledge and confidence. Through youth-led activities across six focus areas, participants strengthen housing readiness, education and career pathways, social skills, resilience, health and safety awareness, and financial capability—key foundations for thriving adulthood.	\$10,000.00
Selby Community House Inc	Selby Youth Group 2026	Hangout Haven, run by Selby Community House, supports Yarra Ranges Tweens and Teens through weekly meetups, outdoor adventures, environmental learning, and workshops. It fosters connection, personal growth, and a safe, inclusive space to ease the transition from primary to secondary school.	\$8,000.00
Kalorama Collective Inc	Kalorama 2026 Picnic and Xmas Movie Night	In November and December 2026, The Kalorama Collective will host free community events—the Kalorama Picnic and Xmas Movie Night—to support Kalorama, Mt Dandenong, and surrounding Yarra Ranges areas, including those still impacted by the 2021 storm. Featuring local music, small business promotion, and collaboration with community groups, these events foster connection, resilience, and emergency preparedness.	\$6,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Healesville Arthritis Self Help Peer Support Group (HASH)	AGEING LIKE A FINE WINE	HASH, in partnership with Healesville Probus, Seniors Clubs, and local groups, presents Ageing like a Fine Wine—an ongoing wellbeing program supporting seniors in Healesville and surrounds. Through talks, outings, and tours, the initiative promotes healthy eating, physical activity, mental stimulation, sleep, and joy. With support from the local Comic and Zine Festival, it fosters emotional wellbeing and social connection.	\$5,000.00
Healesville Community Emergency Group	Preparing our community for natural disasters	Healesville Community Emergency Group, with support from local partners, will run year-round events to educate residents on preparing for natural disasters. Through guest talks, small-group property visits, and resources like brochures, the initiative empowers the community to protect themselves and build resilience.	\$5,100.00
Foothills Community Care Inc.	Mum's Connection Space Arts Connection Project	As part of the growing Mum's Connection Space program, we'll run a fortnightly art group for women and children, offering a safe, trauma-informed environment for creativity, confidence-building, and connection. Led by skilled facilitators, the arts-based sessions promote wellbeing, self-expression, and positive parent-child relationships, addressing rising demand for supportive activities for vulnerable families.	\$10,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Yarra Junction Community Group	Good Neighbour Month	Yarra Junction Community Group presents Good Neighbour Month—a celebration of kindness and connection across Yarra Junction and surrounds. Activities include poetry and song writing contests, student art and stories, a graffiti wall, and zine-making for teens. The month concludes with an inclusive community meal, supported by Relationships Australia, to reduce isolation and strengthen local bonds.	\$7,000.00
Lilydale Community House Inc	Cook, Chat, Eat and Repeat	The program includes two weekly activities: Soup & Stories, where participants cook, share, and connect over fresh soup, and Cooking for One, which teaches individuals to prepare healthy solo meals they can recreate at home. Excess food from both programs is distributed to those in need through food relief.	\$5,000.00
Tecoma Uniting (TUC)	Voices From The Edge (VFTE)	The Voices From The Edge subcommittee of Tecoma Uniting Church will co-design a community arts event in August 2026, celebrating and amplifying voices from marginalised groups including First Nations, Queer, Disability, and Refugee communities. Featuring spoken word, music, conversations, and art, the event fosters connection, understanding, and allyship.	\$6,450.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Koha Community Cafe Inc	Monday Morsels	Monday Morsels, initiated by volunteer Nina, offers nutritious breakfasts using surplus produce from Koha's Free Food Pantry in an inclusive community setting. The gatherings promote budget-friendly cooking and social connection. With support from Monday Morning participants, the project aims to grow and become self-sustaining through donations and initial funding.	\$6,740.00
Mountain Men Inc	Mountain Men group activities	This grant seeks to fund our regular, ongoing suite of programs that are delivered all year-round. It also allows for some administration costs (such as website hosting, Post Office box rental, etc.).	\$6,000.00
Belgrave Food Garden	Growing Belgrave: A Hub for Food, Learning & Connection	The Belgrave Food Garden aims to continue with its activities including regular working bees, workshops and educational talks, and a very popular organic growing course. The activities conducted support local microbusinesses, build skills within the community's population and promote a resilient, connected community.	\$3,850.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Belgrave Tecoma Township Group	Youth Way Project	BTTG would like to conduct Youth Way Project, an art and community improvement project supporting youth in Belgrave and Tecoma. The project will include covering a lane way wall with attractive artwork, reflecting the creativity and talent of the township. Our intention is to have this space filled with designs developed and delivered by the young people of the area, individuals who may have limited opportunity for public exposure of their talents elsewhere in collaboration with local artists mentorship.	\$7,600.00
Benwerren	Benwerren School Holiday Programs 2026	Benwerren's School Holiday Program welcomes families with young children who have attended during times of crisis, offering craft and adventure for kids, pampering for mums, and shared family activities. Run by volunteers and incorporating local experiences, the program strengthens bonds and creates lasting memories.	\$6,000.00
Big Little Buddies Inc.	Younger & Older making Music and Memories: Intergenerational Music Program (Chirnside Views)	We're launching a 40-week intergenerational music program at Chirnside Views Aged Care in 2026, connecting aged care residents, pre-schoolers, and caregivers. Developed using Griffith University's evidence-based practices, the weekly sessions foster community connection, reduce isolation, and promote physical, mental, and social wellbeing for vulnerable groups.	\$7,500.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Dandenong Ranges Music Council	Music for All	Grounded in equity, inclusion, and respect, this pilot project offers free group instrumental tuition and instrument loans to children experiencing disadvantage, disability, or special needs. Participants can learn flute, clarinet, saxophone, or trombone in small classes. The grant will fund teacher fees and instrument repairs from the DRMC library. Running from March to December, the program will feature mid-year and end-of-year concerts, with the goal of establishing a permanent tuition initiative.	\$5,000.00
Mountain Gate Opportunity Shop Inc	Tecoma Op Shop Inclusive Volunteering Support Project	Tecoma Op Shop will launch the Inclusive Volunteering Support Program to empower individuals facing disability, mental health challenges, or social isolation. A Volunteer Inclusion Coordinator will lead tailored training and mentoring, providing practical and emotional support. The initiative fosters inclusion, confidence, and community connection through meaningful volunteer opportunities.	\$5,000.00
Mooroolbark Soccer Club	All Nations Women and Girls Football Tournament showing casing VPSC vs All Abilities team game	Mooroolbark Soccer Club, in partnership with Victoria Police Soccer Club, will host the second All Nations football tournament—a 16-team event promoting female participation and inclusion in sport across the Yarra Ranges. Featuring competitive matches and an inclusive exhibition game, the project removes barriers like cost, travel, and prior experience to foster wellbeing and community connection. This funding supports the expanded event, building on the inaugural 8-team tournament, which will be self-funded and evaluated.	\$6,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
HICCI	HICCI Connections	HICCI Connects addresses community connection—a priority in Council’s Health and Wellbeing Plan—by updating service brochures, reprinting the Emergency Contacts guide, continuing free weekly meals, delivering mandatory first aid training for volunteer drivers, and hosting a Volunteer Recognition Celebration.	\$7,400.00
The Scout Association of Australia, Victorian Branch - Montrose Scout Group	Montrose Shock Station: Community Lifesaving Project	Montrose Scout Group, with Community First Responders Australia, will deliver Montrose Shock Station—a safety initiative featuring a public defibrillator registered with Ambulance Victoria and inclusive CPR/defib training. Trained locals will join the GoodSAM app as a Cardiac Arrest Response Team, boosting emergency readiness and empowering the Montrose community to act confidently in critical moments.	\$10,000.00
Friends of Kalorama Park	Nature Connection - Kalorama Park	The objective is to continue to facilitate bridging connections between locals and with their environment, to increase people's wellbeing as well as rehabilitate the environment. We conduct a fun run, families can attend a wildlife and bushcraft education day, locals come to a classical music and mindfulness day in the park.	\$5,000.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Japara Neighbourhood House	LinkedUp Sport and Recreation Participation	LinkedUp Sports & Recreation Skills Program supports women aged 25–55 in Yarra Ranges—particularly Kilsyth, Montrose, Mooroolbark, Lilydale, and Mount Evelyn—through inclusive “have-a-go” sessions and club-hosted social gatherings. By tackling barriers like low confidence, childcare, and isolation, the program creates accessible entry points into sport. LinkedUp connects women with local clubs, services, and networks to close the participation gap and build community resilience, aligned with the Yarra Ranges Wellbeing Strategy.	\$9,000.00
Upwey Mens' Shed Inc.	UMS Membership Recruitment & Participation Program	The program offers general interest activities—such as excursions, exercise physiology sessions, and first aid training—to foster community engagement and support participants' physical and mental wellbeing. By encouraging involvement in local activities, it aims to advance mental health and reduce social isolation. Training will be supported by visual aids including whiteboards, flip charts, and IT equipment.	\$5,000.00
Millgrove Residents Action Group	Events & Information VMS Trailer	The aim of the project is to purchase a new Variable Messaging Sign (VMS) and trailer which will support timely information to the public about MRAG's Millgrove community events, such as the community garden, markets, open day, etc and provide vital safety information in the event of a disaster, such as the activation of the Community Resilience Recovery Hub and location.	\$1,500.00

Applicant	Project Title	Brief Project Description	Total Recommended
Discovery Community Care Inc	Seed to Harvest	Seed to Harvest will expand Discovery Community Care's garden into a vibrant community hub. The project focuses on improving the space, engaging youth and people with disability, and piloting a plant-growing initiative to support local op-shops. All produce will be used in DCC's meals and food relief programs, with income reinvested to amplify impact.	\$8,000.00
TOTAL			\$255,275.00

NEW FUNDING TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES

Report Author: Executive Officer Partnerships & Community Building

Responsible Officer: Director Communities

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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

Council's 2025-26 budget includes \$150,000 for new community grant-making. A best value approach has informed the use of this new funding. The new funding model responds to community needs, relieves pressure on two existing funding programs, and pilots an innovative funding model designed to strengthen local communities. The report also presents a revised and distinct funding model to support healthy active ageing.

Council has a generous suite of grant programs including monthly, annual, and multi-year grant programs that support community-led initiatives in community development, arts, culture, and heritage and festivals/events. It also provides Neighbourhood House funding that supports 12 community-managed grass roots services that promote connection, learning, and inclusion. The current Healthy Active Ageing funding provides support to nine senior citizens groups and six Universities of the Third Age groups (U3As).

This report presents an exciting new program of funding and a revised Healthy Active Ageing grant program, the latter utilising funds already earmarked for that purpose, post the recent aged care reforms.

The new programs will:

- increase investment in Monthly Grants to meet rising demand
- provide additional funding for Neighbourhood Houses in response to growing financial pressures
- pilot an innovative community pitch program to strengthen community-led action and foster local innovation; and
- provide a program of funding promoting healthy active ageing, while also creating additional capacity for strategic grant making.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes

- 1) ***The allocation of funding to strengthen communities through the \$150,000 of new grant money in the 2025-26 budget for the following programs:***
 - a) ***Additional Neighbourhood House funding (\$4,000 per House) totalling \$48,000 in year one.***
 - b) ***An increase to the Monthly Grants budget of \$20,000 per year to help meet increasing demand.***
 - c) ***An allocation of \$82,000 to pilot a community focused funding initiative consisting of:***
 - i. ***\$70,000 for a Community Pitch project.***
 - ii. ***\$12,000 for officer support to deliver the pitch project.***
- 2) ***The allocation of revised Healthy Active Ageing grant program for Senior Citizens Groups, U3As and strategic grants that includes:***
 - a) ***Senior Citizens Clubs funding pool of \$45,000.***
 - b) ***U3A \$32,000 (an increase to the existing program of \$10,000).***
- 3) ***Healthy Active Ageing strategic project funding of \$25,000 per year.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

The 2025 Annual Grants Initiation Report (14 May 2024) highlighted increasing pressure on both Monthly and Multi-year grants. Council endorsed the following key recommendations:

- Establish a dedicated emergency relief stream within the 2027 Multi-Year Partnership Program, with a funding ceiling of \$45,000 per year for larger agencies demonstrating significant need.
- Plan for an \$80,000 increase (subject to review in 2026) to the total funding pool for the 2027 Multi-Year Program (formerly called Partnerships), to acknowledge and respond to rising cost pressures faced by community organisations and to create capacity for assessment panels to recommend high-quality, iconic festivals for inclusion in the Multi-Year Program, enabling them to receive repeat annual funding.

Council also approved increased funding and an increased ceiling for the Monthly Grants Program early in 2024 (from \$1,000 to \$1,500). In 2025 Council approved the consolidation of Monthly Grant funding streams, for improved efficiency and accessibility to the Monthly Grants.

DISCUSSION

The *Local Government Act 2020* states “*priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations*”. The approaches in this report are designed to:

- Strengthen community capacity, resilience and foster interdependence and collaboration;
- Enable healthy active ageing and lifelong learning;
- Deliver social support and connection through Neighbourhood Houses; and
- Enable more connected, inspired, and resilient communities.

This reflects Council's strategic intent to deliver long-term value and inclusive outcomes for current and future residents.

Purpose and Background

The distribution of the new funding and the revised healthy active ageing grants are intended to maximise community benefit and support community led initiatives.

There are clear community needs and opportunities that can be leveraged through piloting an innovative approach to funding community-led projects and there is an opportunity to address some clear pressure points for two existing grant programs. As a pilot program it is important that the process is progressively evaluated and adapted to ensure communities are getting the maximum value of participation.

A revised model of funding will support healthy, active ageing and provide increased governance and certainty to those activities.

Options considered

Following a review of local community trends, sector feedback, and input from key services, various funding options for the new budget of \$150,000 were explored. After examining options to strengthen communities, expanding the existing Annual and Capital Development grants was ruled out. This does not leverage the opportunity to pilot innovative, community-led approaches or address some important funding pressures in two existing Council funding streams.

The options considered before arriving at the way forward are outlined in Table One below.

Options - \$150,000 new grant funding

Options	Funding Allocation	Benefits to Communities
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Options	Funding Allocation	Benefits to Communities
Option One	\$48,000 increase to the Neighbourhood Houses (\$4,000 per house) \$20,000 Monthly Grants budget increase. \$82,000 Community Pitch Project	Responds to rising service delivery costs and recent sector advocacy about the serious impact of fixed and limited budgets. Focuses on immediate funding pressures in this high-demand program. Pilots a new funding model allocating \$70,000 annually to support community outcomes (\$35,000 per area in two regions per year) and \$12,000 for coordination and operational costs.
Option Two	\$48,000: Neighbourhood Houses \$24,000: Monthly Grants \$50,000: Minor Works Fund \$28,000: Community Pitch Program	Provides the same benefits for Neighbourhood Houses and Monthly Grants as Option One. Introduce a new Minor Works Capital Fund to support community-managed facilities and address an identified gap. Key risks include planning and permit requirements, as well as no available resource to manage this type of program. Pilot a small-scale Community Pitch Program linked to Changemakers Leadership Program.
Option Three	Increase Multi-year funding Allocate all the new funds to the four-year grant program.	This program was oversubscribed last round (2022-23). One way to manage expectations is to increase funds available. Does not provide for innovation or respond to the immediate needs identified in Option One.

TABLE ONE

Option Healthy Active Ageing funding

Previous reports to Council noted that ongoing grants to older adults are needed to support social connection and volunteering. \$80,000 per financial year is available following the exit from direct service delivery.

Program Area	Budget	Description
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Program Area	Budget	Description
Senior Citizens	\$45,000 per year to Senior Citizens grants	Extend and improve accountability and access to the current Senior Citizens Club. • Funding up to \$5,000 per club • Available only to centres/clubs currently supported by Council • Transitions to a triannual funding model to improve accountability, and governance • Creates a platform to support emerging groups and evolving models of community connection
Strategic Grants	\$25,000 per year to strategic partner grants	Creates a funding opportunity for more strategic work to help build an age friendly Yarra Ranges: • New grant stream - \$25,000 annual budget; and • Empowers initiatives reflecting local needs: ◦ Support local projects that promote inclusive, intergenerational engagement; reduce ageism, and inspire healthy, active ageing.
U3A funding	\$32,000 per year for U3As (\$22,000 from existing grant budget for U3As and an additional \$10,000)	Provides three-year funding certainty to the U3As reducing the admin burden for them. • Funding to 6 groups to support their provision of lifelong learning across the municipality. • Increases equity of support to these volunteer run, high value organisations.

TABLE TWO

Recommended option and justification

New funding \$150,000

Option One will deliver the following benefits as described above:

\$48,000 Neighbourhood House Partnership Program (\$4000 per house);

\$20,000 Monthly Grants budget increase; and

\$82,000 Community Pitch Project pilot.

Healthy Active Ageing – revised program

The revised Healthy Active Ageing Grants Program outlined in Table Two above, uses existing budget allocations to strengthen accountability and access within the existing Seniors and U3A programs, while also enabling more strategic initiatives to be funded that support an age-friendly Yarra Ranges. It solidifies the role of Council as a facilitator of community led initiatives supporting healthy ageing in the Yarra Ranges community.

The new approach will:

- provide support to Seniors groups, reduce the administrative burden of annual funding, and add certainty through a three-year funding term;
- new funding opportunities for more strategic projects to promote health active ageing; and
- enable an increase in funding to the U3A stream.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The allocation of the new budget of \$150,000 and the \$80,000 revised healthy, active ageing grant program is summarised below.

Program/Service	Description
Neighbourhood Houses	\$48,000, delivers a \$4000 increase to each House
Monthly Grants	\$20,000, helps meet increasing demand
Community Pitch Project	\$82,000 made up of: • \$70,000 community pitch funding • \$12,000 for an officer to manage program logistics, supported by Community Development Officers.
Healthy Active Ageing Grants	\$80,000 per financial year is available following Council's exit from direct service delivery: • \$45,000 to Senior Citizens, \$10,000 to U3As*, \$25,000 to strategic grants.
*U3As	A total of \$32,000 available for U3A grants. • \$22,000 of existing funding continues • \$10,000 of \$80,000 Healthy Active Ageing budget

TABLE THREE

The resourcing and administration of the increase to Monthly Grants and Neighbourhood Houses can be achieved through Council's existing grant officers.

More detailed design of the Community Pitch program will commence. The program will take a continuous learning approach and require some additional officer time to deliver.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

No regional, state or national plans or policies are applicable to the recommendation in this report.

This report contributes to the Health Connected Communities strategic objective in the Council Plan. Grants enable Council to partner with communities to design and deliver responses to the following strategic plans:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy - increase social connection, promote gender equity, foster creativity and connection to plan - which increase mental wellbeing.
- Creative Communities Strategy - supporting arts, heritage, cultural development and festivals/events, creative industries and promoting mental wellbeing, belonging and connection.
- Environment and Liveable Climate Plans - skills development, engaging with nature, environmental projects, building resilience for future natural disasters.
- Disability Action Plan - promoting more inclusive communities, equity of participation.
- Reconciliation Action Plan - strengthening connection to culture and Country.
- Key Life Stages Plan (early, middle, young people and older residents) - social connection, responding to local needs, harnessing creativity across life stages.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

Outcomes from monthly grants and Community Pitch Program may generate modest economic benefits from direct sales and increased local economy activity and through longer-term benefits from skill development, volunteering and employment. Council's monthly, annual and multi-year grants support artists and thus the creative industries with the economic benefits they bring to the area. As the community pitch program will be a collaborative process, such outcomes cannot be predicted yet.

Social Implications

The proposed initiatives are expected to deliver strong social outcomes by fostering inclusion, connection and community-led action.

Environmental Implications

Outcomes from monthly grants and Community Pitch Program may generate proposals with environmental benefits, such as nature-based community projects, sustainability education and local climate resilience initiatives.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable at this stage. The proposal is grounded in extensive community conversations and insights from Council officers.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Pitch represents an innovation in the way Council awards funding to communities and pilots a new approach. Desktop research into pitch-based funding approaches included a discussion with the Shire of Onkaparinga (SA). It is expected this will lead to much learning, feedback and adjusting the program and great community outcomes. A continuous improvement approach will include participants informing adjustments and changes.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Key risks are outlined in Table Four.

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Program failure due to under-resourcing	Ensure adequate officer time and operational budget allocated, particularly for the Community Pitch Program.
Perceived inequity or competition between townships or regions	Transparent communication, equitable design, and clear criteria for funding.
Growing pressure on Monthly Grants	Monitor demand trends, adjust funding levels where possible, and communicate clearly about assessment outcomes.

TABLE FOUR

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

ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW 2025

Report Author: Manager Infrastructure Services
 Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure
 Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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 presents the results of the community engagement for the draft Road Management Plan 2025 pursuant to Section 54(5) of the Road Management Act 2004.

Eight submissions were received during the consultation period, reflecting the following key themes:

- Footpaths and Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Unsealed Roads: Maintenance, Potholes, and Dust Suppression
- Road Sealing and Affordability
- Contractor Performance and Repair Quality
- Car Park and Crossover Maintenance
- Department of Transport Planning infrastructure (formerly VicRoads)

(DTP are roads outside council responsibilities)

Only 2 submissions related specifically to the Road Management Plan (RMP) service standards. These are defect repair timeframes on unsealed roads (i.e. potholes) and frequency of night-time inspections. The proposed service standards in the draft RMP are considered to be appropriate to manage risk related to these two areas.

Therefore, no changes have been made to the Road Management Plan 2025 following the review.

The final draft Road Management Plan is presented in this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Note that the review of the Road Management Plan (RMP) has been completed in accordance with the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016.**
- 2. Note the public submissions, feedback and Officer responses.**
- 3. Endorse the Road Management Plan 2025, pursuant to the Road Management Act 2004, Section 54(6) and Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 (Regulation 11).**

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- Council Meeting 26 August 2025 – Council endorsed the commencement of Community Engagement for the Draft Road Management Plan 2025.
- Council Meeting 23 November 2021 – Council endorsed the Road Management Plan 2021.
- Council Meeting 23 January 2018 – Council endorsed the Road Management Plan 2017.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Yarra Ranges is serviced by an extensive network of sealed and unsealed roads and associated infrastructure. The vast size of the municipality, along with increasing intensity and severity of storm events and community expectations poses challenges in inspection and repair of defects within effective timeframes.

The *Road Management Act 2004* was introduced with a primary objective “... to establish a coordinated management system that will promote safe and efficient road networks...”

The Road Management Act 2004 requires a road authority to conduct a review of its Road Management Plan at prescribed intervals. A review of the Road Management Plan 2021 has been completed in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004 and Road Management (General) Regulations 2016.

A Road Management Plan is an essential document to communicate how Yarra Ranges Council will effectively discharge its responsibilities for asset management and risks associated with road asset inspection, maintenance and repair. Council also provides a register of public roads within the municipality, as required by the Act. This register lists every road within the municipality that Yarra Ranges Council is responsible for maintaining and is available on Council’s website.

The consultation process is a key step in obtaining community feedback and ensuring there is a voice for those who wish to contribute thoughts and opinions to the RMP. This is evident in the legislated Gazette process and also the extensive staff-led consultation opportunities to connect with the community.

Options considered

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Insurance Road Management Plan Template 2025 provides a structured and legally defensible framework to support Victorian councils in meeting their obligations under the Road Management Act 2004. The template is designed to reduce liability exposure by promoting clear, consistent, and reasonable standards for the inspection, maintenance, and repair of municipal road assets.

Separate benchmarks are provided for metropolitan and regional councils to reflect differing operational contexts and risk. The Metro (Urban) template is designed for councils with higher population density, traffic volumes, and resources, requiring more frequent inspections and faster response times. The Rural template accommodates larger geographic areas, lower traffic volumes, and limited resources, allowing for more flexible standards while still maintaining legal defensibility.

Recommended option and justification

The review and update of the Road Management Plan 2025 and advent of the MAV development of a standardised template has highlighted opportunities to improve a key risk management document to ensure it provides greater transparency to the community, clarity to staff to implement, and more efficient and responsive delivery of a high priority service.

A revision of the Road Management Plan 2021 is based on outcomes of an internal audit of the existing Plan that was deemed to be an adequate and appropriate road management framework and the MAV Rural Template that aims to align Council's Road management practices with sector benchmarks and legal standards has now been completed incorporating the findings and recommendations of the review.

A review of financial data and insurance claims indicates that a moderate increase in service levels would be the most cost-effective path to minimise financial risk while improving safety.

It is recommended that Council support review process for the Draft Road Management Plan 2025 pursuant to the requirements of the *Road Management Act* and associated Regulations, leading to consideration for adoption by Council of an amended Road Management Plan.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The Draft Road Management Plan 2025 will deliver relevant services within Council's existing budget allocations process. The proposed Levels of Service (inspection and maintenance) have been based on what Council is able to achieve within existing

budgetary constraints and priorities. A slight increase in operational budget will be requested during the budget process to cover the increase to service recommended in the updated Road Management Plan 2025.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The Road Management Plan responds to the requirements of the Road Management Act 2004 and conveys Council's commitment to the community in relation to the inspection, repair and maintenance of road and road related infrastructure.

RELEVANT LAW

In addition to the *Road Management Act 2004*, the Plan also considers the following Acts, regulations and codes of practice:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Ministerial Codes of Practice*
- *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016,*
- *Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015*
- *Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Wrongs Act 1958*

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The economic impacts of the Road Management Plan relate most strongly to consequences of improving safety and reducing insurance claims, and setting minimum levels of service for the inspection, maintenance and repair of the roads Council is responsible for.

Tourism growth in the Yarra Ranges continues to place increasing pressure on local road infrastructure, particularly in high-traffic scenic and recreational areas. To ensure safe and reliable access for both visitors and residents, Council will strengthen its road asset management approach by identifying tourism-intensive routes, applying minimum service standards to these priority township corridors, and engaging proactively to forecast seasonal demand and align maintenance schedules accordingly. This targeted strategy will support economic development while preserving road quality and safety.

Social Implications

The increases to service outlined within the Draft Road Management Plan 2025 has a focus on community safety. The objective of the Road Management Plan is to support the delivery of a safe and efficient road network.

Environmental Implications

Climate change is accelerating road degradation through increased rainfall and extreme heat. The Road Management Plan (RMP) addresses this challenge by prioritising proactive inspections and timely maintenance to prevent costly rehabilitation.

To enhance road resilience and safety, Council will continue to strengthen road asset management by integrating asset condition assessments and defect reporting into inspection regimes and investing in predictive maintenance strategies to reduce long-term costs and improve service levels.

The RMP also acknowledges exceptional circumstances - such as floods, fires, and storms that may necessitate suspension or adjustment of inspection and maintenance schedules.

Implications for the RMP:

- Embed proactive planning for climate-related damage into asset management strategies.
- Expand the use of predictive maintenance and condition-based inspections to improve safety and cost-efficiency.

Integrate climate resilience measures such as improved drainage and surface treatments—especially for unsealed roads.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the formal Gazette Process, a notification of proposed amendments to the Road Management Plan was published and 28 days allowed to comment as detailed in The Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 (Regulation 10). The Draft Road Management Plan review consultation process includes:

- The publication of a notice to review and amend in the Victorian Government Gazette August 2025,
- Advertised in the weekly publication of the Star Mail online and in six printed editions,
- Printed copies of the Draft Road Management Plan were made available at all Community Link locations,
- A Council staff member was available on the following dates/times for in person discussion:

Monbulk - Tuesday 2nd September 9:30am to 1:30pm

Healesville – Tuesday 9th September 10:00am to 2:00pm
 Upwey – Monday 15th September 9:30am to 1:30pm
 Yarra Junction – Tuesday 16th September 10:00am to 2:00pm

- A Shaping Yarra Ranges page was established to provide further information and enable collection of public submissions, and
- A notice was published on the Council Facebook page on 27 August 2025 and closed 24 September 2025, which was viewed 24,834 times.

What we heard:

A total of eight submission was received. Seven submissions were made via the Shaping Yarra Ranges page, and one submission was emailed direct to Council Officers.

The level feedback on a legislative document such as the Road Management Plan is typically low due to minimal opportunity for feedback to influence direct change to the documents. However, service request and procedural matters will be referred to the appropriate operational process.

The RMP shaping page had 593 visitors and downloaded a total of 219 times.

Only two of which related to the Road Management Plan (refer Attachment 2)

A summary of overall themes associated with the feedback are as follows:

Footpaths and Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Requests for new footpaths in Ayres Rd, Kia Ora Ave (Upwey), and Glenfern Valley Bushlands.
- Concerns about poor walkability, especially in Ferny Creek.

Response: Footpath requests in Ayres Rd, Kia Ora Ave, and Glenfern Valley Bushlands have been logged for investigation. Ferny Creek's walkability concerns are acknowledged and will inform future planning.

Unsealed Roads: Maintenance, Potholes, and Dust Suppression - RMP related

- Frustration with pothole repairs overlapping grading schedules.
- Positive feedback on inspections and emergency response.
- Concerns about dust suppressant consistency and effectiveness.

Response: Pothole repair timing concerns are noted; inspections occur within 10 days and repairs are programmed accordingly. Positive feedback on emergency response is appreciated. Dust suppressant product trials have led to improved consistency, with Masterdust selected for 2025.

Road Sealing and Affordability

- Support for sealing but concerns about cost and red tape.
- Suggestions to align sealing with grading, allow resident contributions, and explore subsidies for high-use roads.

Response: Suggestions to streamline sealing processes and reduce costs are noted. Coordination with grading schedules and resident contributions will be considered in future planning.

Contractor Performance and Repair Quality

- Cold mix asphalt used for temporary pothole repairs deteriorates quickly.
- Need for improved contractor quality control and accountability.
- Poor grading near drains causes water runoff blockages.

Response: Cold mix asphalt is used for urgent repairs; permanent repairs are scheduled when resources allow. Contractor performance is monitored under service contracts, and recent grading improvements will inform future contract requirements.

Inspection Frequencies and Nighttime Safety – RMP related

- Adoption of MAV Rural Template praised for recognising rural-urban differences.
- Concerns raised over 4-year nighttime inspection cycle and safety risks.

Response: Night inspections follow MAV standards and legal advice. Reactive inspections address emerging issues, and visibility concerns are reported to SP AusNet or addressed through maintenance. The Inspection of streetlights is to be investigated as a separate service provider infrastructure matter.

Speed Limits

- A general request to restore or raise speed limits to reduce fatigue and travel time.

Response: Request to review speed limits noted; specific locations are needed to investigate further.

Car Park and Crossover Maintenance

- Specific request for repairs to the Upwey Shops car park entrance.

Response: Inspection requests have been logged for the Upwey Shops car park entrance and crossover.

Department of Transport Planning infrastructure (formerly VicRoads)

- Complaints raised about Maroondah and Melba Highways (Department of Transport roads).

Response: Concerns about Maroondah and Melba Highways have been referred to the Department of Transport for action.

Summary:

Only two submissions directly addressed the service standards outlined in the Draft Road Management Plan—specifically, the defect repair timeframes for potholes on unsealed roads and the frequency of nighttime inspections.

After careful consideration, the proposed service levels were deemed appropriate to manage risk and maintain safety in these areas. As a result, no changes have been made to the draft Road Management Plan 2025, which has now been finalised following the review process.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Internal consultation from the audit of the Road Management Plan and benchmarking of other Council Road Management Plans was referenced for the review. A legal review of the Draft Road Management Plan was completed by Special Counsel, at Russell Kennedy. The review did not identify any legal concerns.

RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk-based approach has been utilised to assess the possible impacts of changes to levels of inspection and maintenance regimes as part of the review and subsequent revision of the Road Management 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. Draft Road Management Plan 2025
2. Draft Road Management Plan Feedback Log



ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

VERSION 6 - 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra Ranges Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri and other Kulin Nation 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.



DRAFT

Governance

Responsible Service / Department:	Built Environment and Infrastructure
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Endorsed CEO or ELT member or department manager to make and approve document editorial amendments:	
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Stakeholder review and engagement:	
Relevant Legislation:	
Associated Strategic Direction #:	
Associated instruments:	
Supersedes:	Version 5, 23/11/2021

Review history 2004 to 2025

Name	Content Manager File Reference	Date	Date of Edits
Version 1		2004	Adopted by Council resolution
Version 2		2009	Adopted by Council resolution
Version 3		2014	Adopted by Council resolution 9 December 2014
Version 5		2018	Adopted by Council resolution 23 January 2018
Version 5	6885646	2021	Adopted by Council resolution 23 November 2021
Version 6			

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Definitions

Arterial Road	Refers to freeways, highways and declared main roads, which are managed by the Victorian Government, through Head Transport for Victoria (as the co-ordinating road authority).
Co-ordinating road authority	The organisation which has the responsibility to co-ordinate works. Generally, if the road is a freeway or arterial road, this will be Head Transport for Victoria. Generally, if the road is a municipal road, this will be Council.
Council	Refers to the Yarra Ranges Council
Demarcation agreement	An agreement between Council and another organisation that defines areas of responsibility for boundary roads.
Motor vehicle	Refers to a vehicle that is propelled by an in-built motor and is intended to be used on a roadway. This does not include a motorised wheelchair or mobility scooter which is incapable of travelling at a speed greater than 10 km/h and is solely used for the conveyance of an injured or disabled person.
Municipal road(s)	Road for which the municipal council is the co-ordinating road authority. The Road Management Act 2004 imposes specific duties on the municipal council with respect to the inspection, repair and maintenance of these roads and associated road-related infrastructure.
Non-road infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure in, on, under or over a road, which is not road infrastructure. This includes (but is not limited to) such items as gas pipes, water and sewerage pipes, cables, electricity poles and cables, tram wires, rail infrastructure, bus shelters, public telephones, mail boxes, roadside furniture and fences erected by utilities, or providers of public transport.
Other roads	Include roads in state forests and reserves, and roads on private property. Municipal councils are not responsible for the inspection, repair or maintenance of these roads.
Pathway	Where located in road reserve treated as a general or high use footpath. Where located outside the road reserve treated as a trail under Paths and Trails Plan.
Plan	Refers to this Road Management Plan.
Public Road	As defined by the Road Management Act 2004 and includes a freeway, an arterial road, a municipal road declared under section 14(1) of the Act and a road in respect of which Council has made a decision that it is reasonably required for general public use and is included on the Register of Public Roads.
Road	Has the same meaning as in the Road Management Act 2004, being inclusive of any public highway, any ancillary area and any land declared to be a road under section 11 of that Act or forming part of a public highway or ancillary area.

Road infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure which forms part of a roadway, pathway or shoulder, which includes structures and materials.
Road-related infrastructure	Refers to infrastructure installed or constructed by the relevant road authority to either facilitate the operation or use of the roadway or pathway, or support or protect the roadway or pathway.
Road Reserve	Refers to the area of land that is within the boundaries of a road. Example: any nature strip, forest, bushland, grassland or landscaped area within the road reserve would be roadside.
Roadside	Refers to any land that is within the boundaries of the road (other than shoulders) which is not a roadway or pathway. This includes land on which any vehicle crossing or pathway, which connects from a roadway or pathway on a road to other land, has been constructed. Example: any nature strip, forest, bushland, grassland or landscaped area within the road reserve would be roadside.
Roadway	Refers to the area of a public road that is open to, or used by, the public, and has been developed by a road authority for the driving or riding of motor vehicles. This does not include a driveway providing access to a public road, or other road, from adjoining land.
Shoulder	Refers to the cleared area, whether constructed or not, that adjoins a roadway to provide clearance between the roadway and roadside. This does not refer to any area that is not in the road reserve.

Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Plan

Section 50 of the Road Management Act 2004 sets the following objectives for a municipal road management plan:

- 1) To establish a system for our road management functions, which is based on policy, operational objectives and available resources.
- 2) To set a performance standard for our road management functions.

Although termed a 'plan' in the Road Management Act 2004, it is functionally an operational protocol, describing the systems and rules used to make decisions and meet objectives within our available resources. The plan forms part of Council's larger Asset Management Framework related to maintenance and operations.

This Plan is the Road Management Plan for the purposes of s.39 of the Road Management Act 2004.

1.2 Legislation guiding this Plan

In addition to the Road Management Act 2004, this Plan also has regard to the following legislation, regulation and codes of practice:

- Local Government Act 2020
- Ministerial Codes of Practice under the Road Management Act 2004
- Road Management (General) Regulations 2016
- Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015
- Road Safety Act 1986
- Wrongs Act 1958.

1.3 What is covered in this Plan?

The Plan is divided into six sections:

1. Introduction.
2. Rights and Responsibilities – Legislation and local laws relevant to road management.
3. Road Management Systems - How we classify roads, streets and footpaths – known as our asset hierarchy – and the plans and processes we use to maintain roads and road-related infrastructure.
4. Register of Public Roads – What it contains, how to access and the process for making changes.
5. Technical References.
6. Attachments:
 - a. Attachment 1, Road Hierarchy – Urban Roads
 - b. Attachment 2, Road Hierarchy – Rural Roads
 - c. Attachment 3, Pathway Hierarchy
 - d. Attachment 4, Inspection Requirements
 - e. Attachment 5, Inspection Frequencies
 - f. Attachment 6, Defect Intervention Levels and Repair Timeframes

1.4 Updating the Plan

This Plan must be updated within a set period following a Council election. Outside of this cycle, changes may be required from time to time.

The following process will be used to manage these changes:

- If material changes are made to standards and specifications, a report will be presented to Council, along with a brief explanation as to why such changes are necessary. The review process must follow the steps as set out in the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 Part 3 – Road Management Plans.

These changes will be made in accordance with the processes prescribed by the Road Management Act 2004. To assist with version control, these changes must be numbered as follows:

- by whole numbers – for example, from Version 1.00 to 2.00;- or.
- by decimals – for example, from Version 1.00 to 1.01.

1.5 Exceptional Circumstances

Council will endeavour to meet its described tasks under this Plan.

However, there may be situations or circumstances that affect Council's business activities to the extent that it cannot deliver on the service levels of the Plan. These include but are not limited to: natural disasters, such as fires, floods, or storms, or a prolonged labour or resource shortage, due to a need to commit or redeploy Council staff and/or equipment elsewhere or due to the effects of pandemic and or government intervention.

1.5.1 Suspension of the Plan

In the event that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Council has considered the impact of such an event on the limited financial resources of Council and its other conflicting priorities, and determined that the Plan cannot be met, then pursuant to Section 83 of the Wrongs Act 1958, the CEO will write to Council's Officer in charge of the Plan and inform them that some, or all, of the timeframes and responses in Council's Plan are to be suspended.

1.5.2 Reinstatement of the Plan

Once the scope of the event/s have been determined, and the resources committed to the event response have been identified, then there will be an ongoing consultation between Council's CEO and Council's Officer responsible for the Plan, to determine which parts of Council's Plan are to be reactivated and when.

1.5.3 Communication and documentation around Plan suspension

Council will provide information/statements to residents about the suspension or reduction of the services under its Plan, including:

- How the work that will be done has been prioritised; and
- The period for which it is likely to be affected.

This information will be provided by the Council on its website where this Plan is located and other media as appropriate.

Where Council has suspended, in part or whole, the operation of this Plan, associated documents, concerning such suspension (for example communications, meeting minutes, schedules) will be recorded and stored.

1.5.4 Inspections and repairs during suspension

The suspension of this Plan will not necessarily mean that all inspections and repairs halt. However, it may mean that only certain categories of inspections and repairs are undertaken. These will be based on a risk assessment and resources available to the Council, taking into account the resources needed to address the impact of the trigger event. For example, some reactive inspections may take place and repair (temporary or permanent) of roads/footpaths which pose a high risk may be undertaken, depending on the resources available to Council and the accessibility of each asset.

1.6 Responsibility for the Plan

The Council Officer responsible for administering and implementing is the Director Built Environment and Infrastructure or a person acting in the role, or a renamed version of that role.

Rights and Responsibilities

2.1 Public Roads

Public roads are defined in the Road Management Act 2004 as including:

- a freeway
- an arterial road
- a road declared under section 204(1) of the Local Government Act 1989
- a municipal road declared under section 14(1) of the Road Management Act 2004
- a road in respect of which Council has made a decision that it is reasonably required for general public use and is included on the Register of Public Roads.

2.2 Key stakeholders

Key stakeholders impacted by this Plan include:

- the general community (for recreation, sport, leisure and business)
- residents and businesses adjoining the road network
- pedestrians
- vehicle users with motorised vehicles, such as trucks, buses, commercial vehicles, cars and motorcycles
- users of smaller, lightweight vehicles, such as pedal-powered bicycles, motorised buggies, wheelchairs, prams and so on
- tourists and visitors to the area
- emergency agencies (Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority, Ambulance Victoria, State Emergency Services)
- the military (in times of conflict and emergency)
- traffic and transportation managers
- managers of the road network asset
- construction and maintenance personnel, who build and maintain asset components
- utility agencies using the road reserve for infrastructure (water, sewerage, gas, electricity, telecommunications)
- state and federal governments, who periodically provide funding for roads.

2.3 Coordinating & Responsible Road Authority

Section 35 of the Road Management Act 2004 provides that a road authority has power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of its functions under the Act.

Section 36 of the Road Management Act 2004 outlines which road authority is the coordinating road authority, namely:

If the road is a municipal road, the municipal council of the municipal district in which the road or part of the road is situated.

However, there are instances where several authorities are responsible for parts of the road within the road reserve. Section 37 of the Road Management Act 2004 identifies who is the responsible road authority in particular circumstances.

2.4 General Functions of a Road Authority

The general functions of a road authority are described within Section 34 of the Road Management Act 2004.

2.5 Rights of the Road User

The rights of public road users, which are legally enforceable, are set out in Sections 8 to 10 of the Road Management Act 2004.

2.6 Obligations of Road Users

2.6.1 General Usage

The common law requires that a road user must take reasonable care for their own safety (see *Ghantous v Hawkesbury City Council*)

The *Road Safety Act 1986* sets out obligations on road users, including section 17A which requires that a person who drives a motor vehicle on, or uses, a highway must drive in a safe manner have regard for all relevant factors, including without limiting their generality, the following:

- (a) physical characteristics of the road
- (b) prevailing weather conditions
- (c) level of visibility
- (d) the condition of any vehicle the person is driving or riding on the highway
- (e) prevailing traffic conditions
- (f) the relevant road laws and advisory signs
- (g) the physical and mental condition of the driver or road user.

Section 17A of the *Road Safety Act 1986* also requires that a road user must take reasonable care:

- (a) to avoid any conduct that may endanger the safety or welfare of other road users.
- (b) to avoid any conduct that may damage road infrastructure and non-road infrastructure on the road reserve.
- (c) to avoid conduct that may harm the environment of the road reserve.

2.6.2 Incident Claims

If a person proposes to make a claim in relation to a public road or infrastructure for which Council is the responsible road authority, that person should contact Council. Where warranted (which will be on most occasions) Council will investigate and report the claim for insurance purposes.

Section 110 of the Road Management Act 2004 provides Council is not liable for property damages where the value of the damage is equal to or less than the adopted Threshold Amount.

In cases where the claim relates to assets Council does not own or is not responsible for in or on the road reserve, the person intending to make the claim must be advised and that person may choose to make such claim to the relevant person or authority.

2.6.3 Permits for work within a road reserve

In cases where an individual or organisation proposes to carry out works within the road reserve that may impede public access, or interfere with road infrastructure, they must apply for a 'works within road reserve' permit. There are some exemptions, as noted in the Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015.

Local laws also require property owners to apply for a vehicle crossing permit if they plan to build a driveway.

In both cases, a fee applies to cover the costs of the administration and inspection of the work.

2.6.4 Obligation of others

There are several assets within the road reserve that Council does not have an obligation to inspect and/or maintain. These include:

- **Non-road infrastructure** – This includes (but is not limited to) such items as gas pipes, water and sewerage pipes, cables, electricity poles and cables, tram wires, rail infrastructure, bus shelters, public telephones, mail boxes, roadside furniture and fences erected by utilities, or providers of public transport.
- **Vehicle driveways** – This includes the crossover (and footpaths), together with associated drainage, pipeline and culverts located between the carriageway and the property boundary. This is the responsibility of the adjoining property owner.
- **Single property stormwater drains** – for drains constructed within the reserve that carry water from a single property to an outlet in the kerb, or other drain.
- **Utilities** – including, but not limited to; telecommunication, power, water, gas and rail authority assets.
- **Roadside** – as per Section 107 of the Road Management Act, Council has no *"statutory duty or a common law duty to perform road management functions in respect of a public highway which is not a public road or to maintain, inspect or repair the roadside"*, described as *"any land that is within the boundaries of the road (other than shoulders) which is not a roadway or pathway"*. This includes landscaped tree plots within the footpath/pathway where the surface of the tree plot is not constructed with the intention of providing a trafficable pedestrian surface.



Figure 1. Responsibilities within the road reserve

On sealed roads the Council is responsible for the maintenance of:

- Footpath
- Kerb & channel
- Road surface
- Councils' drainage assets (excluding private property stormwater pipes within the road reserve)
- Guard rails, speed humps, signage, line marking and vegetation.

The property owner/occupier is responsible for:

- Construction, repair, replacement and maintenance of crossover
- Drainage (including pipes) under or within the crossover area
- Culverts
- Maintenance of naturestrip
- Private property stormwater pipes within road reserve to the point of discharge.
- Construction and maintenance of any footpaths to match existing footpaths.

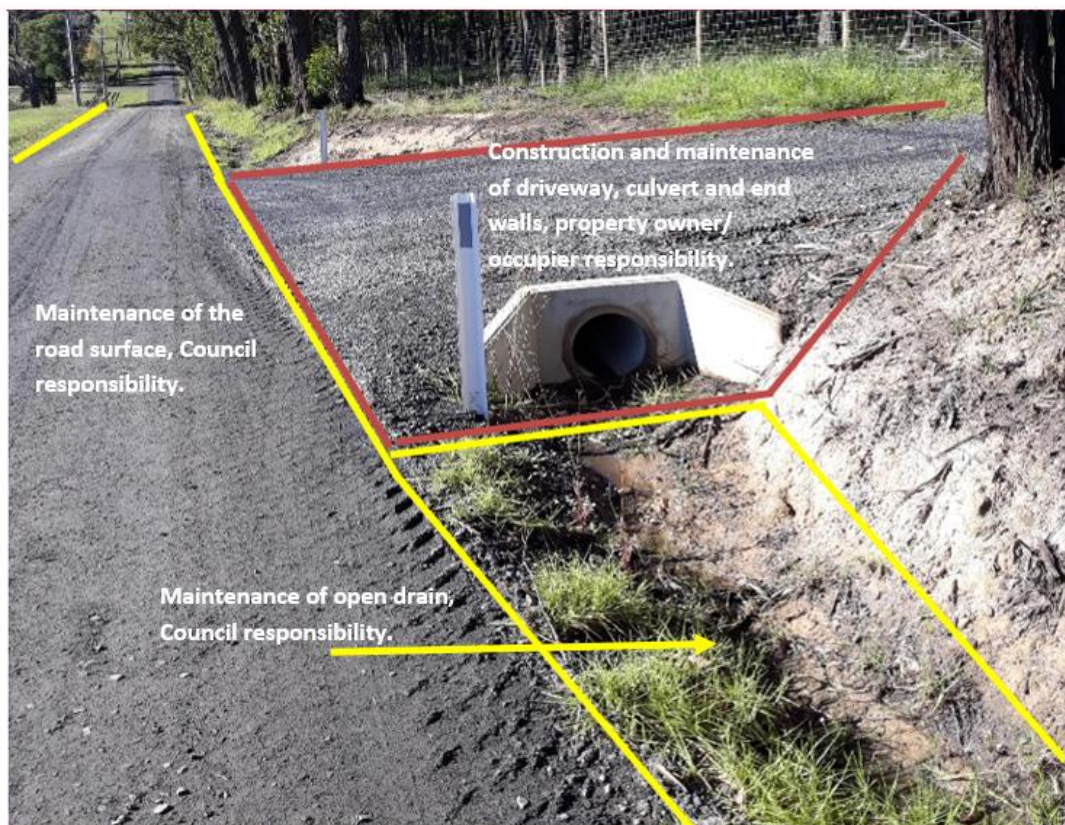


Figure 3. Operational Responsibility on unsealed roads

On unsealed roads the Council is responsible for the maintenance of:

- Road surface
- Open drain and other Council drainage assets (excluding private property stormwater pipes within the road reserve)
- Guard rails, speed humps, signage, line marking and vegetation.

The property owner/occupier is responsible for:

- Construction, repair, replacement and maintenance of driveway crossover from the edge of the road to the property boundary including the culvert pipe, culverts and end walls
- Construction and maintenance of any footpaths to match adjacent footpath

Where Council becomes aware of a hazard created by the defective condition of assets / infrastructure owned by another party, Council may at its absolute discretion:

- If located within assets / infrastructure for which Council is responsible (e.g. footpaths, road surfaces, etc.), or otherwise presents an immediate and significant risk to members of the public, undertake temporary measures to reduce the risk to members of the public until such time as the respective owner can implement permanent repairs (subject also to Council's available resources),
- Report in writing (e.g. email or letter) the presence of the hazard to the responsible party and request that repairs be implemented within a reasonable timeframe.

- Where repairs are not completed by the responsible party within the timeframe specified, Council may, subject to requirements, complete necessary repairs and invoice the responsible party for the costs.

However, where another party has a duty in relation to the asset / infrastructure, and Council has a discretionary power to take remedial action in relation to that matter, only that other party with the duty is liable in a subsequent proceeding, in accordance with s.104 of the Road Management Act 2004.

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Road Management Systems

3.1 Background and Process

Road asset management involves managing both physical assets, and uses and operation that have the potential to impact their condition. It applies to all road assets, including:

- the road – pavement and surface, as well as footpaths, kerb and channel
- structures – bridges, culverts and traffic management devices
- road infrastructure – traffic signals and on-road electrical assets.

The aim of our road management system is to deliver a safe and efficient road network and meet community needs to the best of our ability, within available resources.

To create a road asset management system that would best meet our needs when inspecting, maintaining and repairing public roads, we used the following nationally recognised asset management frameworks:

- International Infrastructure Management Manual (IIMM) 2015, IPWEA
- IPWEA National Asset Management Systems (NAMS+)
- Other references, as listed in Technical References.

The system is designed to set the direction for our asset management activities. It is also linked to the annual business planning cycle.

3.2 Asset Hierarchies – Municipal Road Network

Roads and footpaths within the municipal road network are classified according to a hierarchy that takes into account how they are used, who uses them and how often. The hierarchy classification is used to determine the levels of service required, prioritise works programs and determine defect intervention responses.

The three levels in the hierarchy are:

1. Urban road & street network

Urban roads and streets are located in built up areas predominantly used for residential, commercial and industrial purposes.

This is further divided into two sub-categories:

- Category 1: Local Access, less than 1,000 vehicles per day
- Category 2: Collector

See Attachment 1 for more information

2. Rural road network

Rural roads and streets are those that are not urban roads and streets as defined in Section 1 above.

This is further divided into two sub-categories:

- Category 1: Local Access, less than 1,000 vehicles per day
- Category 2: Collector

See Attachment 2 for more information

3. Pathway network

This is divided into two sub-categories, as follows:

Footpaths

- Category 1: General Use Areas
- Category 2: High Use Areas

Trodden paths and non-constructed paths are not Council assets and are not subject to the Road Management Plan.

Shared and Bicycle Pathways

Shared and Bicycle pathways are not subject to the Road Management Plan, unless located on a road reserve. These are managed in accordance with Council's Paths and Trails Strategy.

3.3 Our Road Network

More information about the Council's Road network is shown in the tables below.

Table 3.1 – Road length by hierarchy – date last updated: 5/05/2025

Hierarchy	Length (km)	% of Network
Category 1: Local Rural	745.5	42.5
Category 1: Local Urban	503.5	28.7
Category 2: Collector Rural	388.6	22.1
Category 2: Collector Urban	115.3	6.6
Local Boundary Road	0.3	0.0
Local Not Applicable	1.7	0.1
Local Road Reserve	0.4	0.0
Total	1755.3	100.0

Table 3.2 – Road Length by Surface Type – date last updated: 5/05/2025

Surface Type	Length (km)	% of Network
Sealed	1061.1	60.4
Unsealed	694.2	39.6
Without road pavement	0.0	0
Total	1755.3	100.0

3.4 Maintenance Management System

3.4.1 Maintenance Management

Council has responsibilities to road users and the community to maintain public roads to a reasonably safe and suitable standard, within our available funds and resources. By developing long-term maintenance programs for our assets, we are better able to plan how we do this.

The following maintenance requirements shape our annual program and budget:

Routine maintenance standards

Standards vary across the network depending on the asset type and relevant risk factors, such as traffic volumes and composition, operating speeds, the susceptibility of assets to deterioration and the cost effectiveness of repairs. Competing priorities for funding are also relevant.

Defect intervention levels have been established using the *VicRoads Standard Specification Section 750* and adapting it to local conditions.

The standards will be reviewed periodically to make sure they are adequate (see section 1.4).

Repair and maintenance works

Works must be completed within a specified time, depending on the severity and location of the defect. Response times are determined using local knowledge and experience and past performance as a guide.

Response times are monitored and will be periodically reviewed (see section 1.4).

Temporary mitigation measures

These are temporary works designed to reduce the risk of an incident, until such time as repair or maintenance works can be completed.

Response times and safety measures – for example warning signs, flashing lights, and safety barriers – are determined by reference to the risk to safety, road type and traffic volume.

Emergency works

Works that result from emergency incidents and must be undertaken immediately, for the safety of road users and the public.

Emergency works might include traffic incident management, responses to fires, floods, storms and spillages, and any assistance required under the Victorian State Emergency Response Plan and Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

3.4.2 Asset Management Plans

Our asset management plans guide the development of long-term asset renewal programs, helping us to plan and finance asset renewal and replacement.

3.4.3 Maintenance Surveys and inspections

A three-tier regime is used to inspect our road network assets. It covers safety issues, incidents, defects and condition inspections.

1. Reactive inspections (Request for Service or RFS)

These inspections are conducted in response to requests from the community. The inspection is carried out by both Council generally and Contractors and assessed according to the Hazard intervention levels, contained within Attachment 6.

2. Proactive Inspections

Regular timetabled inspections that are scheduled depending on traffic flow, the types of defects likely to impact the asset and the perceived risks of these defects.

3. Condition Inspections

These inspections identify structural integrity issues which, if untreated, are likely to adversely affect the network overall. These issues may impact short-term serviceability, as well as the ability of the asset to perform for the duration of its intended life span.

Condition inspections are carried out on a three yearly schedule for roads and footpath assets.

3.4.4 Maintenance responsiveness and performance targets

The following information is recorded when Council receives a Request for Service (RFS) from the community:

- Date request received
- Name of person making the RFS
- Details of request, including location and nature of reported hazard/defect (including any specific measurements provided) and copies of any photographs provided, etc.
- The personnel / department to which the request has been assigned for action
- Date by which the request must be actioned (based on the target response times specified in Attachment 6); and
- After completion the date when the RFS was actioned and/or completed (this typically involves someone carrying out an RFS inspection, as described in section 3.4.3, followed by any necessary repair works).

By recording this information, Council can monitor compliance against target response times – that is, the time it takes from receiving an RFS to carrying out an inspection and ultimately completing necessary works.

An RFS will be inspected and assessed in accordance with timeframes specified in Attachment 6. Following are some possible outcomes from an RFS:

- If a defect identified exceeds a *Description / Intervention Levels* specified in Attachment 6, a work order will be created with a date for completion of works in line with respective specified repair timeframes.
- If repairs are significant – for example, rehabilitation works are required – temporary mitigation measures may be undertaken to reduce the risk posed by the hazard/defect until the complete works can be undertaken, this also subject to available resources.
- If the defect is assessed as below the *Description / Intervention Level* specified in Attachment 6, it will be recorded (including assessment level) and remedial action, such as a pre-emptive grind of a footpath joint, may or may not be conducted.

In all cases, the action taken must be recorded against the original RFS.

Target response times and intervention times are based on 'normal' conditions. The same level of service would not apply in cases where the Plan has been suspended, under Section 1.5.

3.5 Asset Levels of Service

Five elements are taken into account when determining appropriate levels of service for the road network. These are:

- Community expectations;
- Technical standards;
- Organisational capacity;
- Performance measures and targets;
- Safety of road and footpath users.

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Register of Public Roads

Council maintains a register of public roads – called the Register of Public Roads – with the details of all public roads for which we are responsible. Ancillary areas such as carparks and wayside stops are not listed on the Road Register.

The Register of Public Roads is available on Council's website. A hard copy can be inspected at our Customer Service Centres, listed below, on request.

Location	Address	Phone number
Civic Centre	15 Anderson Street, Lilydale	1300 368 333
Monbulk Living and Learning Centre	21 Main Road, Monbulk	9756 7677
Upwey Community Link	40 Main Street, Upwey	9752 6054
Healesville Community Link	110 River Street, Healesville	5965 3501
Upper Yarra Family Centre	2444 Warburton Highway, Yarra Junction	5965 3501

The Road Management Plan can also be viewed in PDF format on Council's website:
www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

4.1 Maintenance Demarcation (Boundary) Agreements

Where there are boundary agreements between us and other road authorities or private organisations, the list of roads affected, and agreements, are listed in the Municipal Road Register.

Council has agreements with the following municipal road authorities:

- Maroondah
- Nillumbik
- Cardinia
- Casey
- Knox
- Manningham

The affected roads are:

BOUNDARY ROADS – CARDINIA AND YARRA RANGES		
Road	Section	Distance (m)
Duffys Road	Start seal to road end	872 Approximately
Wellington Road	Cardinia Creek Road to Aura vale Road	2,262
Aura Vale Road	Wellington Road to Old Menzies Creek Road Surface unsealed Selby Aura Road to Magpie Road	444
Old Menzies Creek Road	Aura Vale Road to Selby Aura Road	
Selby Aura Road	Old Menzies Creek Road to Aura Vale Road	
Magpie Road	Aura Vale Road to end	
Kallista-Emerald Road	Menzies Creek to Emerald-Monbulk Road	
Emerald-Monbulk Road	Kallista-Emerald Road to Stewart Road	190 Approximately
Stewart Road	Emerald-Monbulk Road to Paton Road	
Paton Road	Stewart Road to Avonsleigh-Macclesfield-Woori Yallock Road	
Avonsleigh-Macclesfield-Woori Yallock Road	Paton Road to Cherry Road	
Cherry Road	Avonsleigh-Macclesfield-Woori Yallock Road to road forming Southern boundary Allotment 32	
Merritts Road	Kennedy Road to Merritts Road	

BOUNDARY ROADS – CASEY AND YARRA RANGES		
Road	Section	Distance (m)
Horsewood Road	Logan Park Road to Belgrave Hallam Road	
Belgrave Hallam Road	Horsewood Road to Narre North Nursery boundary	
Boundary Road	First bend to Berwick Road	
	Berwick Road to sharp bend	

BOUNDARY ROADS – KNOX AND YARRA RANGES		
Road	Section	Distance (m)
Pavitt Lane	Liverpool Road to Sheffield Road	775 Approximately
Old Bayswater-Sassafras Road	Fire Access Road	600 Approximately
Basin-Olinda Road	From Boundary to Ferndale Road Surface unsealed	400
Ferndale Road	Basin Olinda Road to bend	1100 Approximately
Mystic Road	Natural Resources – Closed Off	
Himalaya Road	Natural Resources – Fire Access Road?	
The Boulevard	Natural Resources – Fire Access Road?	
Victoria Street	George Street to Grandview Crescent	360 Approximately
Fern Road	New Road to Victoria Street	260 Approximately
New Road	Fern Road to Glenfern Road	740 Approximately
Glenfern Road	New Road to Lysterfield Road	1108 Approximately
Lysterfield Road	Glenfern Road to Wellington Road	4175 Approximately

BOUNDARY ROADS – KNOX AND YARRA RANGES		
Road	Section	Distance (m)
Wellington Road	Lysterfield Road to Powells Road	393 Approximately
Powells Road	Wellington Road to end	350 Approximately
School Road	Natural Resources – Fire Access Road	
Burwood Highway (Monbulk Road)	Mt. Dandenong Tourist Road to Ferny Creek Avenue	210 Approximately
	Ferny Creek Avenue to UFTG postcode boundary	980 Approximately
Royal Street	From UFTG postcode boundary to Old Belgrave Road	330 Approximately
Old Belgrave Road	Royal Street to Wynette Avenue	129 Approximately
Wynette Avenue	Old Belgrave Road to George Street	430 Approximately
George Street	Wynette Avenue to end of mountable kerb	166 Approximately
	From end of mountable kerb to Victoria Street	254 Approximately

BOUNDARY ROADS – MANNINGHAM AND YARRA RANGES		
Road	Section	Distance (m)
Brushy Park Road, Wonga Park	From Holloway Road to Homestead Road Sealed Road	2840
Homestead Road, Wonga Park	From intersection Homestead Road and Brushy Park Road Sealed Road	745
Lower Homestead Road, Wonga Park	From Reserve Road to Yarra River Sealed Road	585
	Unsealed Road	2152 (Gravel formation)

BOUNDARY ROADS – MAROONDAH AND YARRA RANGES		
Road	Section	Distance (m)
Liverpool Road	Pavitt Lane to Tereddan Drive Sealed Road	1430
	Tereddan Drive to Multi-Lanes Canterbury Road Sealed Road	1435
Canterbury Road	Liverpool Road to Colchester Road Sealed Road	1170
Colchester Road	North of Canterbury Road Sealed Road	130
	Byron Road to Lena Grove Sealed Road	304
	Lena Grove to Divided Carriageway Mt. Dandenong Road Fully Constructed Residential	1348
	Mt. Dandenong Road to Shop Car Park Fully Constructed Residential	42
	Shop Car Park to Byron Road Fully Constructed Residential	385
Glen Dhu Road	Bend to Mt. Dandenong Road Fully Constructed Residential	420
Ervin Road	Marion Avenue to End Fully Constructed Residential	47
	South of Boundary to Boundary End Fully Constructed Residential	154
Marion Avenue	Hull Road to Ervin Road (Boundary Centre of Road) Fully Constructed Residential	495
Hull Road	Marion Avenue to Lincoln Road Sealed Road	196
Lincoln Road	Newman Road to Hull Road Fully Constructed Residential	303
Newman Road	Lincoln Road to Sherlock Road – Shire Boundary centre of road Fully Constructed Residential	674

BOUNDARY ROADS – MAROONDAH AND YARRA RANGES		
Road	Section	Distance (m)
Maroondah Highway	From Esther Creek to Hughes Park/Yarra Valley Golf Park	400 Approximately

4.2 Roads not listed on the Register

The following types of roads are not listed in Council's Register of Public Roads:

- Roads which are the responsibility of the Victorian state government, statutory authority or a private owner;
- Unused roads for which Council has not accepted responsibility;
- Roads noted on a plan of subdivision, until such time as Council accepts responsibility for these roads;
- Roads which Council have not determined are reasonably required for general public use.

Technical References

- i. AS ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management – Guidelines
- ii. Integrated Asset Management Guidelines for Road Networks (AP-R202) 2002, Austroads Inc.
- iii. International Infrastructure Management Manual (IIMM) 2015, IPWEA
- iv. VicRoads Risk Management Guidelines
- v. VicRoads Standard Specification Section 750 – Routine Maintenance

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Attachment 1: Road Hierarchy – Urban Roads

Category	Description*
Category 1 Local Access	These carry only local traffic. The primary function is to provide access to private properties. Key features typically include: • Short distance travel to higher level roads • Minimum one clear traffic lane (excluding parking) Less than 1,000 vehicles per day
Category 2 • Collector	These carry significant volumes of traffic and provide access, by linking residential, commercial or industrial areas to arterial roads. They also provide links between the various collector roads. Key features typically include: • Cater for, but may restrain, service and heavy vehicles • Minimum two clear traffic lanes (excluding parking)

* Categories follow the Infrastructure Design Manual for residential streets

Attachment 2: Road Hierarchy – Rural Roads

Category	Description*
Category 1 • Local Access	These carry only local traffic. The primary function is to provide access to private properties. Key features typically include: • Short distance travel to higher level roads In the case of an unsealed local access road providing access to a single property, the road will only be maintained to the closest boundary of that property. The balance will be maintained as a limited access track (see below) • Less than 1,000 vehicles per day
Category 2 • Collector	These carry moderate volumes of traffic and provide access, by linking local areas to link and arterial roads. They also provide links between the various collector roads. Key features typically include: • Cater for, but may restrain, service and heavy vehicles • Minimum two clear traffic lanes (excluding parking)

* Categories follow the Infrastructure Design Manual for residential streets

Attachment 3: Pathway Hierarchy

Footpaths

Category	Area	Description*
Category 1	General-use Areas	This category includes all other constructed Council footpaths
Category 2	High-use Areas	The category of 'highest use' that includes all Council footpaths in shopping centres, township precincts and other pedestrian generators eg schools and railway stations.

Shared & Bicycle Pathways

Shared and Bicycle pathways located in the road reserve are treated as pathways.

Shared and bicycle pathways not located in the road reserve are not subject to the Road Management Plan, refer to Council's Paths and Trails Strategy.

Attachment 4: Inspection Requirements

Inspection Type	Purpose	Inspection and Reporting Requirements
Reactive – Request for Service (RFS)	Reactive inspections to confirm the nature of defects/hazards reported and identify those exceeding the intervention levels specified in Attachment 6.	Performed by a Council/Contractor representative with knowledge of Description / Intervention Levels (Attachment 6) and road maintenance techniques. Higher levels of expertise may be called on if appropriate. Reactive inspections conducted on foot, with defects measured and photographed as specified in Councils Road Asset Inspectors Manual. The report must identify specific safety defect, time of first report, time inspected and by whom, later the subsequent action and time of completion must be added to the report.
Proactive Inspection	Undertaken in accord with formal programmed inspection schedule. To determine if road assets comply with the levels of service specified. Record of each asset is to be completed detailing: • Name inspector • Inspection date and • Description of any defects that exceed intervention levels specified in Attachment 6. In addition, details of the inspection will be electronically recorded against the particular asset inspected.	Proactive Inspections of roads are conducted via a slow moving vehicle. Proactive Inspections of all other asset types conducted on foot, with defects measured and photographed as specified in Councils Road Asset Inspectors Manual. Performed by a dedicated Plan inspector.
Night Inspections	Undertaken in accord with formal programmed inspection schedule. To assess the visibility of road signage, cat's eyes and roadside guideposts, and the visibility of line marking at night.	Conducted via a slow moving vehicle with standard driving lights (low beam). Visibility/legibility assessed by eye from distances specified respective to each asset defect type. Performed by a dedicated Plan inspector.

Attachment 5: Inspection Frequencies

Asset Group	Hierarchy Category	Reactive Inspection Timeframe WD = Working Days H = Hours	Proactive Inspection Frequency M = Months	Night Inspections Y = Years
Sealed Roads Unsealed Roads Regulatory, Warning and Hazard Signs	Collector	10 WD	6 M	4 Y
	Local	10 WD	12 M	Not carried out
Footpaths, Kerb & Channel	High Use	5 WD	6 M	
	General	10 WD	3 Y	
	Unsealed, reactive only	10 WD		
Bridges	Level 1 Bridge Inspections	10 WD	12 M	n/a
Emergency Response – All Asset / Categories		24 H	n/a	n/a
* Reported Incidents / Hazards that present an immediate and significant risk to members of the public. Temporary measures (e.g. installing barriers, signage, closing the road/footpath, etc.) will be implemented to reduce the risk to users of the asset until such time as appropriate repairs can be completed.				

* If a Proactive Inspection Frequency elapses on a Weekend or Public Holiday, the actual due date will be the next Working Day.

Attachment 6: Defect Intervention Levels and Repair Timeframes

NOTES:

* If a Repair Timeframe elapses on a Weekend or Public Holiday, the compliance date will be the next Working Day.

** In cases where a defect is not due for repair within 4 weeks, temporary measures, such as installing warning signage, erecting barriers, or painting the defect with a bright contrasting colour, may be implemented at the time of identification.

Sealed Roads

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy	
		WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months	
		Collector	Local
Pothole	Potholes in sealed pavement >70 mm in depth and >300 mm in diameter Potholes located in dedicated/marked bicycle lanes >50 mm depth and >200 mm diameter.	4 W	2 M
Edge break	Edge breaks >300 mm laterally over a 5m or greater length from the nominal seal line or the edge line if it is line marked	4 W	2 M
Edge / shoulder drop	Edge drops onto an unsealed shoulder >100 mm in depth over a 100m or greater length	4 W	2 M
Depressions / deformations	Significant depressions or deformations in the traffic lane of a sealed pavement will be referred to Councils Capital Works Program to be prioritised in relation to available funding.	n/a	n/a
Missing pit lids	Missing Council drainage pit lids	2 WD	2 WD
Damaged pit lids	Damaged Council drainage pit lids (such that they are potentially structurally unsound)	4 W	2 M
Roadside Vegetation – Overhead clearance	See “Vegetation Clearance Code Guidelines – Roads”	n/a	n/a
Roadside Vegetation – Obstructing sightlines	See “Vegetation Clearance Code Guidelines – Roads”	n/a	n/a

Unsealed Roads

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy	
		WD = Working Days	W = Weeks
		M = Months	
		Collector	Local
Pothole	Potholes in unsealed pavement >150 mm in depth and >500 mm in diameter	1 M	2 M
Wheel ruts / scouring	Wheel ruts or scouring on an unsealed road >200 mm in depth	1 M	2 M
Corrugations	Corrugations on an unsealed road will be managed in accordance with Council's Grading Program.		
Roadside Vegetation – Overhead clearance	See “Vegetation Clearance Code Guidelines – Roads”	n/a	n/a
Roadside Vegetation – Obstructing sightlines	See “Vegetation Clearance Code Guidelines – Roads”	n/a	n/a

Traffic Control Devices

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy	
		WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months	
		Collector	Local
Missing / Damaged Signage	Regulatory, warning and hazard signs missing, illegible or damaged making them substantially ineffective	2W	2W
Missing / Damaged Guard Rail or fencing	Guard rail/fence damaged or missing making them substantially ineffective	3 M	3 M
Missing / Damaged Pavement Markings	Pavement markings which are missing or faded making them substantially ineffective	15 M	15 M

Footpaths Reactive Repairs

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy	
		High Use	General
WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months			
Vertical Displacement	Vertical Displacement >30 mm in height	2 W	2 W
Loose segmented pavers	Loose and unstable segmented pavers (i.e. bluestone, bricks, etc.) that move underfoot	2 W	1 M
Cracking	Cracking in footpaths >40 mm wide	2 W	1 M
Undulations	Undulations (depressions / bumps) >75 mm in depth/height under a 1.5m straight edge	4 W	1 M
Dislodged / missing pieces / potholes	Dislodged or missing pieces or potholes >150 mm in length/width and >30 mm in depth	2 W	1 M
Missing pit lids	Missing Council drainage pit lids	1 WD	1 WD
Damaged pit lids	Damaged Council drainage pit lids (such that they are potentially structurally unsound)	2 W	1 M
Vegetation overhead clearance	Vegetation intruding into the footpath envelope: See “Vegetation Clearance Code Guidelines – Roads”	n/a	n/a
Dislodged / missing tactile indicator	Damaged or missing	6 W	3 M

The times set out in the table above relate to reactive repairs.

* Pram crossings / ramps providing transition between road and footpath levels are treated as part of the footpath for the purposes of the application of description / intervention levels.

Footpaths Proactive Repairs

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy	
		High Use	General
WD = Working Days W = Weeks M = Months			
Vertical Displacement	Vertical Displacement >30 mm in height	4 W	1 M
Loose segmented pavers	Loose and unstable segmented pavers (i.e. bluestone, bricks, etc.) that move underfoot	4 W	2 M
Cracking	Cracking in footpaths >40 mm wide	4 W	2 M
Undulations	Undulations (depressions / bumps) >75 mm in depth/height under a 1.5m straight edge	6 W	2 M
Dislodged / missing pieces / potholes	Dislodged or missing pieces or potholes >150 mm in length/width and >30 mm in depth	4 W	2 M
Missing pit lids	Missing Council drainage pit lids	1 WD	1 WD
Damaged pit lids	Damaged Council drainage pit lids (such that they are potentially structurally unsound)	4 W	2 M
Vegetation overhead clearance	Vegetation intruding into the footpath envelope: See “Vegetation Clearance Code Guidelines – Roads”		
Dislodged / missing tactile indicator	Damaged or missing	6 W	3 M

The times set out above relate to proactive repairs. Inspections shall be undertaken annually for each asset but divided into 4 cycles across the Council

* Pram crossings / ramps providing transition between road and footpath levels are treated as part of the footpath for the purposes of the application of description / intervention levels.

Kerb and Channel

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy		
		Footpath Abutting Kerb	High Use	General
Vertical Displacement	Vertical displacement – uplift where the channel meets the road pavement >50 mm		6 M	12 M
Horizontal Displacement	Horizontal displacement of the kerb from the footpath >80 mm		6 M	12 M

Bridges and Culverts

Defect type	Description / Intervention Level	Repair timeframes by hierarchy	
		WD = Working Days	W = Weeks
		M = Months	
		Cat 2	Cat 1
Bridge & Major Culvert defects	Visible damage likely to pose an immediate and significant risk to members of the public	2 M	3 M

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Community consultation feedback

The **Draft Road Management Plan 2025** was open for community consultation from the 27th August to the 24th September 2025.

The following methods for feedback were available:

- In-person at community links – Monbulk / Lilydale/ Yarra Junction/Healesville and Upwey
- Via email @ mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au
- Via telephone 1300 368 333
- Via the Shaping Page
- Comments were made via social media and responded to on the various platforms.

The following table provides a summary of feedback received and response to address the feedback.

ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: Ayres Rd and footpath works Not applicable to RMP Shaping Page	Please also pave the road going to Ayres road, there are potholes and the gravel goes to the garage, a lot of people also walk that no through road since it has a nice view of the sunset at the end of the cul de sac, a foot path may also be needed especially when they are walking the dog and stroller	Ayres Road is a sealed road, the surrounding roads such as Marna Rd & Smith Street off Ayres Road are sealed. The statement 'please pave the road going to Ayres Rd' is not enough information to investigate location. It is noted that paving of an unsealed road would be addressed under the Special Rate and Charge Scheme policy and processes, more information is available on Council's website. An assessment of missing footpath links across the municipality has recently been completed by the Traffic and Transport team. Council considers footpath construction upgrades as part of future budget planning, in alignment with adopted policy and prioritisation frameworks.

ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: Unsealed road repair timeframes Unsealed road intervention timeframes page 35 of RMP Shaping Page Page 308	Looking at the timelines for repairs on unsealed roads, it is basically implying that no repairs will be done as the timelines are of such a length (e.g. 2 months) that the next scheduled grading would take place by the time the repair would have to occur. Potholes normally take at least a month to reoccur after the road has been graded; by the time a resident has got annoyed enough to report the issue the next scheduled grading would be within two months. It seems that residents are expected to just put up with potholes. Why even imply that potholes will be repaired?	Unsealed roads are graded at varying frequencies, 3,4 or 6 times per annum. Based on this, the timeframe between a pothole request being lodged and the repair timeframe vs a grader attendance will vary immensely. When a request is lodged for a pothole repair, this is inspected within 10 working days and repairs are programmed. Collector roads are 1 month timeframe and local roads are 2 months. Considering that some roads may only be graded every 4 months, targeted pothole repairs remain a worthwhile and necessary part of maintaining road safety and usability between grading cycles. It is also important to note that drivers are expected to drive to the conditions, particularly on unsealed roads, which are more susceptible to weather and traffic impacts.
ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: Maintenance of Department of Transport responsibility roads Not applicable to RMP Shaping Page	My concern is that Roads which Council are responsible for upkeep & repairs such as Maroondah hwy between Dorset rd and Lilydale are needing repair from rain damage and wear and tear from the large amount of traffic users are remaining damaged and uneven surfaces need to be repaired as soon as possible. Your draft states repair at a reasonable time frame is nit specific enough you need to give a indication of time frame e.g. within 2 weeks to 4 weeks. The above example of this stretch if Maroondah Hwy has been uneven and dangerous and top layer if road gone in certain spots. Also the road from Yarra Glen to Yea has also dangerous worn deteriorated rds. My suggestion in your draft which I haven't seen mentioned is the dodgy repairs you have organised over the last year. The dpot repair of hopes. These holes are patched with tar and I have seen your	The two roads mentioned in this submission are the responsibility of Department of Transport DTP (formerly VicRoads) – Maroondah Hwy and Melba Hwy. We have referred your comments on to DTP via email. Service requests received by Council for roads that are the responsibility of Department of Transport (formerly VicRoads) are forwarded for action. For roads that Council is the Responsible Authority pothole repairs may be carried out using temporary or permanent methods depending on urgency and available resources.

contractors shovelling warm tar and stamping down with their work boot. A few weeks later the said hole repairs have sunk and become dangerous again to road users especially motorbikes. Please have these dodgy repairers be made to repair a wide section of road repair which will not sink in a few weeks. Not seeing anything in your draft policy which holds your repairers to be responsible to come back and do a proper repair of holes in bitumen. I feel you are wasting ratepayers rate money by allowing this breach in quality road repairing.

The contractors you are now using do a dodgy job knowing they will be called back in a few months to redo/ patch their faulty jobs. Wasting more money.

Cold mix asphalt is often used for immediate repairs as it is readily available and can be applied quickly.

Permanent repairs involve cutting out the damaged section and replacing it with hot mix asphalt. This material must be sourced from an asphalt plant, and the process requires traffic management due to the longer time crews need to work on the road surface. As a result, these repairs take longer to organise and schedule.

Temporary repairs are often used to maintain safety while permanent works are being arranged.

Contract supervision and quality monitoring are essential to ensuring repairs are effective and long-lasting. Compliance with the Road Management Plan (RMP) is a requirement within Council's service contracts, and contractor performance is regularly reviewed to ensure standards are met.

ITEM IN DRAFT & Source

Feedback

Management Comments

Topic: Footpaths/ Walking paths

Not applicable to RMP

Shaping Page

I think this is necessary, but I think we need more money in improving street walkability in Ferny creek, as a resident of Ferny creek I feel that our suburb has been overlooked in road improvements, especially in factors like walkability, so I do think some roads need repairs, I think that there is bigger worries on the topic of roads.

Where rural roads have no formal constructed footpaths, intervention levels are focused on hazards and defects that affect the road shoulders and edges, rather than pedestrian paths. Any reported hazards will be inspected and actioned in relation to safety, condition and functionality (usage considerations). The RMP does not state a different standard solely for pedestrians on rural roads without footpaths.

The primary function of the rural road is to serve vehicular traffic and maybe used by pedestrians where no alternative is available.

		An assessment of missing footpath links across the municipality has recently been completed by the Traffic and Transport team, and Ferny Creek has been identified as one of the areas with gaps in pedestrian infrastructure. While specific locations within Ferny Creek have not been included in the current program, Council will consider these upgrades as part of future budget planning, in alignment with adopted policy and prioritisation frameworks. Council remains committed to improving accessibility and safety across all communities and appreciates the input provided to help guide future investment.
ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: Dust suppressant and sealing roads Not applicable to RMP Shaping Page	I welcome the updates in the Draft Road Management Plan 2025, particularly the clearer inspection standards and stronger emergency response protocols. These are positive steps for residents living on unsealed roads. However, I'd like to raise two important issues that directly affect those of us on unsealed roads: 1. Dust Suppression Dust is a major problem in summer. I have previously paid for Council's dust suppression program. While the original product used was effective, in the second year a different product was applied and it was far less effective, making the program poor value for money. Although Council has since returned to the original product, the process undermined community confidence and resulted in wasted time and money. I would like to see: • A commitment to use only proven, effective dust suppression products. • Greater accountability and consistency in how dust suppression programs are delivered.	The feedback on the updates to the Plan including inspections and emergency responses is appreciated. <u>Dust suppressant:</u> It is acknowledged that the dust suppressant trial product used in 2023 did not perform as effectively as hoped. This product was trialled on a single year's program and its limitations were communicated to residents at the time. In 2024, Council trialled a different product called <i>Masterdust</i>, which demonstrated strong performance. <i>Masterdust</i> is a Magnesium Chloride Brine - a natural by-product from the solar salt production process, sourced from Adelaide Salt Manufacturers. The product has been enhanced with additives to ensure it is non-corrosive, as confirmed by testing. Based on its effectiveness, this product will be used again in 2025. While not all trials yield the desired outcomes, trialling innovative products is an important part of ensuring

2. Road Sealing Affordability

I support Council's use of special charge schemes for sealing roads, but the costs remain very high and there is significant red tape. This makes it difficult for many residents to realistically pursue sealing. I believe sealing could be made more affordable if:

- Projects were coordinated with the existing grading schedule to reduce duplication of effort and costs.
- The process was streamlined with less administrative overhead.
- Residents were given the opportunity to contribute more directly, whether through labour, local contractors, or materials, to lower project costs.
- Council explored ways to subsidise or co-fund sealing in high-impact areas (for example, heavily used or steep roads).

Sealing even short sections of unsealed roads would reduce long-term maintenance costs, improve liveability, and significantly cut down on dust issues.

In summary: I ask Council to ensure dust suppression programs are consistent and effective, and to review how sealing projects can be made more affordable and efficient—potentially by linking them with grading schedules and enabling greater resident involvement

ratepayer funds are used effectively. These trials help Council stay up to date with available technologies and ensure value for money.

Road Sealing and Grading Coordination:

Comments regarding the sealing of roads are noted and will be passed on to the team that administer the Special Rate and Charge Scheme process and design the sealing of roads.

The suggestion to coordinate the grading schedule to assist in the preparation of roads to be sealed is noted and we advise that this process is undertaken whenever possible to support the sealing process.

ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: New footpath request and maintenance of car park. Not applicable to RMP Shaping Page	Please look at adding footpath on Kia Ora Avenue Upwey as it is a well used pedestrian road for high school students and others accessing Upwey Main Street but has no footpaths. Also consider adding a path from Morris Road to the Glenfern Valley Bushlands to encourage more people to access the bushlands by foot. Also the entrance to the car park behind Upwey Shops needs fixing as the asphalt and crossover are breaking up and dangerous.	An assessment of missing footpath links across the municipality has recently been completed by the Traffic and Transport team. A request has been raised for a new footpath investigation for Kia Ora Avenue, reference number #RM167867 and Glenfern Road between Morris Road and Glenfern Valley Bushlands reference #RM167870 A further request has also been raised for the crossover and asphalt to be inspected behind the Upwey shops reference #RM167871

ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: Speed limit increase. Not applicable to RMP Shaping Page	Restore or increase previously reduced speed limits as this will reduce journey times and reduce driver fatigue.	Speed limits are usually reduced to improve safety for road users. As there is no mention of road names or locations we cannot investigate this comment. Please contact Council to lodge an investigation request if you would like a response on 1300 368 333 or mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: Nighttime Inspection Applicable to RMP Email Submission	Congratulations on the use of the MAV Rural Template. It is very pleasing to see YRC has finally acknowledged that there are significant differences between the rural and urban areas of the shire and this difference needs to be given higher priority in decision making. It is hoped that this thinking will flow on beyond this document. Reference – Inspection Frequencies, Attachment 5, Night Inspections This is something that is long overdue and should include the reporting to Ausnet of defective street lighting. However, a 4 year frequency, you must be joking, how many lives could be lost between night inspections of warning signs and road markings, invisible in the dark. We saw the evidence of significant damage in River St. Healesville a few years ago, when a painted white line deteriorated very quickly and was virtually invisible in the dark, indicating the installation of a concrete and stone protrusion into the trafficable surface, significantly narrowing the roadway. A much more realistic inspection time frame must be made, or this is just a tick the box exercise and achieves nothing.	The night time inspection frequency of every 4 years is consistent with the MAV Insurance Road Management Plan Template (2024), which sets out reasonable standards based on benchmarking across Victorian councils and legal advice. The four-year cycle for collector roads is considered appropriate and defensible under the Road Management Act 2004, balancing safety, risk, and available resources. Night inspections are designed to identify visibility issues, including faded line markings and defective signage. Any issues found - such as faulty street lighting - are reported to SP AusNet Services or addressed through maintenance programs. Council Officer will follow up directly with SP Ausnet Services with respect to lighting inspections separate to the RMP process. In addition to scheduled inspections, the RMP includes reactive inspections triggered by community reports or internal observations, ensuring timely responses to emerging hazards. We also encourage the community to report any observed hazards so they can be rectified as soon as possible.

ITEM IN DRAFT & Source	Feedback	Management Comments
Topic: Unsealed Road Maintenance - Service Improvements and Road Maintenance Not applicable to RMP Email Submission Page 309	Reference - Fig 3 Operational Responsibility on unsealed roads This illustration showing the Council responsibility for the road surface and the roadside open drain. This photo is a perfect example showing the buildup of rock and grass on the narrow area between the road surface and the drain, preventing water runoff from the road surface entering the drain, leading to the rapid deterioration of the road surface. This has been an ongoing problem for many years due to a lack of adequate supervision by Council of the quality of work carried out by the contractors. Having said that, we hasten to point out that a significant improvement has been evident over the past 12 months, due to the oversight of the Infrastructure Services Team. The current grading operations have addressed this issue by ensuring that this barrier is removed during the grading process, leading to a much safer and longer lasting surface, during and after rain. We recommend that this issue be included in the grading contracts as it is a safety issue and therefore falls within the responsibility of the Council under the RMP.	Service improvements noted in recent grading operations are appreciated and will be considered in ongoing service planning. Contract supervision and quality monitoring remain critical to ensuring long-term road performance. Compliance with the Road Management Plan (RMP) is a core requirement of Council's service contracts. Inclusion of this requirement in grading contracts will be considered, given its relevance to safety and alignment with Council's responsibilities under the RMP.

11. COUNCILLOR MOTIONS

In accordance with Chapter 3 Division 4 of the Governance Rules developed by Council in accordance with section 60 of the Local Government Act 2020.

There were no Councillor motions received prior to the Agenda being printed.

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

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

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. 25 September 2025 - Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee
2. 7 October 2025 - Forum Briefing
3. 16 October 2025 - Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee

Informal meeting of Councillors

Public Record



Meeting Name:	Health & Wellbeing Advisory Committee	
Date:	Start Time: 5:30pm	Finish Time: 7:00pm
Venue:	YRC Civic Centre Lilydale, GF 25/GF 26 Karawun & Bourdeet	
Attendees:	Councillors: Cr Gareth Ward Other attendees: Ellise Rickard, Mark Doubleday, Karen Pomeranz, Jo Hun. CEO/Directors: NA Officers: Rachael Giddens (YRC), Anna O'Brien (YRC), Beth Wallis (YRC), Joerg Werdin (YRC)	
Apologies	Cr Jim Child (Sub-delegate), Shannon Maynard (YRC), Erika Atwill (YRC), Belinda Gillam Derry, Jol Scobie, Willow Swaneveld, Mel Jeffery, Kham Lian, Lindsey Smith, Heide Renner	
Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest:	None	
Matter/s Discussed:	1.1	Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2029 Final Draft – Update post community consultation and governance processes explained for Council Meeting. Discussion around communication of the Strategy post adoption and preferred methods.
	1.2	Integrated Water Management Plan – Discussion around advocacy, water literacy/community education and incentivising water management.
	1.3	Other Business – Congratulations Jol who is participating in Council's Community Changemakers Program. Jol to reflect back to the committee insights and opportunities at November meeting.
	1.4	
	1.5	
	1.6	
Completed By:	Rachael Giddens, Executive Officer Health & Wellbeing	

Informal Meetings of Councillors Public Record (Forum)



Submitted on	8 October 2025, 1:48PM
Receipt number	13
Related form version	5

Meeting details

Meeting name	Council Forum
Date	07/10/2025
Start time	5.30pm
Finish time	8.56pm
Venue	Civic Centre, 15 Anderson Street, Lilydale

Attendees

Councillors	Cr Jim Child, Cr Mitch Mazzarella, Cr Gareth Ward, Cr Fiona McAllister, Cr Tim Heenan, Cr Peter McIlwain, Cr Jeff Marriott, Cr Len Cox
CEO / Directors	Tammi Rose (CEO) Kath McClusky Hjalmar Philipp Leanne Hurst Vincenzo Lombardi Amea Cooper
Officers	Gina Walter (Governance Officer), Beck Stevens, Ben Waterhouse, Pip Smith, Kirsten Vernon, Stuart Wilson, Mel Villani, Alison Fowler, Katie Douglas, Gavin Crawford, Kieran Hogan, Angelique Miller, Lynn O'Donnell, Nathan Islip, Elissa Merriweather, Kim O'Connor, Cindy Dunbar, Nick Cherrie, Jessica Thomas and Alanna Ford

Externals

Blair Mather and Alex Dempsey (Boral Quarries Montrose)

Apologies

Cr Higgins

Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest

Cr Mazzarella and Cr Cox noted a perceived conflict of interest relating to item 3.1 – YR 2025/110 - 2450-2452 Warburton Highway, Yarra Junction - Planning Application.

Cr Mazzarella also noted a perceived conflict of interest relating to item 9.1 – Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council October 2025 - Voting Directions.

Matters Discussed

1	Acknowledgement of Country
2	Declaration of Interest
3	Action and Agreement Record – 16 September 2025
4	Boral Montrose Quarry Expansion – Update (Externals)
5	YR 2025/110 - 2450-2452 Warburton Highway, Yarra Junction - Planning Application
6	Review of the Public Agenda for Council's Meeting on 14 October 2025
7	McDermott Avenue Reserve Master Plan
8	Stormwater Management Plan Annual Update
9	Draft Road Management Plan Review Community Feedback
10	Managing Extreme Weather Events - Line of Credit
11	Draft 2024 – 2025 Yarra Ranges Annual Report, Performance Report, Financial Statements
12	Advocacy Annual Update and Forward Priorities
13	Mayor & CEO Update & General Business
14	Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council October 2025 - Voting Directions
15	2026 Annual Grants Panel Recommendations
16	CT7817 Provision of Cleaning Services to Buildings, Public Conveniences and BBQs

17	Rosella Road Offset Site
Completed by	Gina Walter

Informal Meeting of Councillors

Public Record



Meeting Name:	Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee	
Date:	16 October 2025	Start Time: 5.30pm Finish Time: 7.30pm
Venue:	Conference Room A, 15 Anderson Street Lilydale	
Attendees:	Councillors: Cr Peter McIlwain, Cr Jeff Marriott Other attendees: Peter Martin (member), Madeline Anne Brenker (member), Robin Oakley (member), Oliver McLeod (member), Maxine Harrison (member), Brenda Dobia (member), Jared Wake (member), Emily Russo (member), Jennifer Lyndon (member), Manager: Corinne Bowen Officers: Jessica Harrison, Suzanne Burville, Sarah Bond, Joerg Werdin, Kaylene Johnson, Graham Brew, Rachael Giddens	
Apologies	Jackson Ellis (member), Rowan Barr (member), Ann-Maree Graham (member),	
Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest:	None	
Matter/s Discussed:	1.1	Environment Strategy Evaluation Report and Outcomes
	1.2	Hard waste review
	1.3	Health and Wellbeing Strategy
	1.4	Yarra Glen Rec Reserve Melbourne Water Proposal
Completed By:	Suzanne Burville	

Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest: Include Type: **General conflict of interest** or **Material conflict of interest** (for definitions of 'general conflict of interest' and 'material conflict of interest' see the Conflict of Interest section on The Zoo). State the **nature** of the interest (i.e. a brief description of the interest and conflict).

After reading, please delete this box

This form MUST be completed by the attending Council Officer & saved as
YYYY-MM-DD Informal meeting of Councillors Record - <Meeting Subject>

Click the following link to email the attachment to [GOVERNANCE](#)

Assembly of Councillors

Public Record



IMMEDIATELY for inclusion in the Council Agenda.
After reading, please delete this box

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 11 November 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.