

MONBULK URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK – POST-CONSULTATION AND CONSIDERATION

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Ward(s) affected: Chandler, Lyster

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

SUMMARY

The draft Monbulk Urban Design Framework (Monbulk UDF) was previously reported to Council on 13 December 2022. The Framework provides practical design solutions to realise the intent of the design, development, and public realm actions within the Monbulk Structure Plan.

At its meeting on 13 December 2022, Council resolved to place the draft Monbulk UDF on public exhibition between 16 December 2022 and 12 March 2023, in line with the proposed Communications and Engagement Plan. The comprehensive engagement undertaken has resulted in extensive Community feedback, with 448 submissions composed of 2,303 comments, which has been assessed and documented within this report. The relevant feedback has then been utilised to develop a final version of Monbulk UDF.

This report provides Council an overview of the feedback from the Community Consultation and how this is has informed the preparation of the updated version of the Monbulk UDF, which is recommended for formal adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Note the findings from community consultation and the changes shown in Attachment 2 – Marked Up Draft Monbulk Urban Design Framework.***
- 2. Adopt the Monbulk Urban Design Framework generally in accordance with the Attachment 3 - Proposed Final Monbulk Urban Design Framework.***
- 3. Write to submitters to thank them for their engagement and advise them of the outcome of the Council Meeting.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

At its meeting of 28 November 2017 Council

- Adopted the Monbulk Structure Plan
 - Which provided the future land use layout and desired structure of Monbulk. The final Monbulk Urban Design Framework provides design guidance to achieve this.

At its meeting of 13 December 2022 Council resolved:

That Council

1. *Support the Draft Monbulk Urban Design Framework to be placed on public exhibition between 16 December 2022 and 12 March 2023; and*
2. *Note that findings from the community feedback and proposed amendments to the Draft Monbulk Urban Design Framework will be presented at a future Council meeting.*

DISCUSSION

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of community feedback on the exhibition of the draft Monbulk UDF following public exhibition which occurred between December 2022 and March 2023.

The report also explains how the community engagement activities undertaken for the draft Monbulk UDF responded to the Communications and Engagement Plan reported to Council prior to engagement commencing.

Finally, this report presents a finalised version of the Monbulk UDF identifying changes based on analysis of that feedback for Council adoption. Attachment 1 – *Monbulk Urban Design Framework Summary Document* provides an overview of the Framework, describes the purpose and process undertaken, and highlights some of the key issues raised as part of the consultation and engagement process.

Background

Between 2014 and 2017 the Monbulk Community participated in several engagement activities to share their aspirations for the future of Monbulk. This was captured in the development of the *Monbulk Community Plan 2015-2020* and embedded into the more expansive *Monbulk Structure Plan* adopted by Council in 2017.

The Monbulk UDF builds upon the vision and strategic direction of the Monbulk Structure Plan by providing practical design solutions to realise the intent as a suite of deliverable projects and proposed controls to guide private investment in the Monbulk Town Centre. The Monbulk UDF will also assist Council decision making in

the areas of development, infrastructure and programs for Central Monbulk that aligns with community needs.

Monbulk Town Centre has an existing Design and Development Overlay (DDO12 – Town Centres: Healesville, Monbulk, Seville, Warburton, Yarra Glen and Yarra Junction) which contains design requirements to enhance the built form and streetscape characteristics of Monbulk. This includes limiting building height to no more than three storeys, protecting views from the Main Street to the surrounding hills and avoiding development that has blank walls and a big box structure amongst other specific design provisions.

The Monbulk UDF will assist in further improving built form outcomes and inform a future Design and Development Overlay which specifically applies to Monbulk, to be undertaken through a subsequent Planning Scheme Amendment, to ensure that future built form respects, and enhances the character of Monbulk. Any proposed controls will work within the existing height limits already in the Planning Scheme, and will not increase heights.

The implementation of the Monbulk UDF is underpinned by the town centre being considered as three separate (yet integrated) geographic areas that have their own similar characteristics, referred to as precincts.

These three precincts are:

1. Main Road – essentially all land that has frontage to Main Road between Monbulk Road and Moxhams Road (excluding the Monbulk Living & Learning Centre and Monbulk Primary School);
2. Moores Road – the original soccer reserve and adjoining public land and open space areas (including the Monbulk Bowling, Netball and Tennis Clubs) along Moores and Mount Pleasant Road; and
3. Monbulk Civic – the cluster of community land uses anchored by the Monbulk Living & Learning Centre, Monbulk Primary School and Monbulk Recreation Reserve.

The Monbulk UDF was presented to Council in draft form at its meeting on 13 December 2022, and the associated report includes a detailed description of the document structure.

Council authorised at this meeting to undertake public exhibition of the draft Monbulk UDF in line with the proposed Communications and Engagement Plan. The consultation period was undertaken over 14 weeks between 16 December 2022 and 26 March 2023, with the more intensive activities occurring in February and March. This was originally extended by two weeks at the 13 December Council meeting then extended a further two weeks during consultation in response to community confusion stemming from misinformation being circulated by other parties.

A total of 448 submissions were received which included 2,303 unique comments and points of feedback from the community. All comments have been reviewed and where relevant have been considered in the recommended changes to the Monbulk UDF.

Key Dates

- December 2014: Monbulk Community Plan 2015-2020 finalised.
- November 2017: Monbulk Structure Plan adopted by Council.
- January 2022 – October 2022: Monbulk UDF drafted.
- December 2022: Draft Monbulk UDF supported by Council for public exhibition.
- December 2022 – March 2023: Public exhibition of draft Monbulk UDF
- April 2023 – June 2023: Review of public submissions and comments to the draft Monbulk UDF.
- July 2023 - September 2023: Update of draft Monbulk UDF incorporating relevant community feedback.

Public Exhibition - Overview

The objectives of the public exhibition (as reported to Council on 13 December 2022) were to:

- To inform the Monbulk Community about the development of the Monbulk UDF.
- To educate stakeholders and the Monbulk Community on what an Urban Design Framework is and why it is needed for the area.
- To explain how previous community consultation (the Monbulk Community Plan and Monbulk Structure Plan) has influenced the Monbulk UDF.
- To involve as many stakeholders as possible in the engagement activities, and
- To seek feedback which will be used to inform the final version of the Monbulk UDF.

An extensive program of engagement with the broader Monbulk community was undertaken between December 2022 and March 2023 to achieve the above objectives. This includes:

- Mailout – 1,942 letters were mailed out to property owners in the Monbulk area to inform the community about engagement.
- Five drop-in sessions at the Monbulk Living & Learning Centre – attended by more than 300 people.
- Targeted Engagement – with business property owners/tenants with over 30 people.
- A Shaping Yarra Ranges Webpage for the Monbulk UDF – that had 7,846 unique visitors, and 3,517 downloads of the documents and associated information.

- A project overview video – that was promoted on the Shaping Yarra Ranges website and Council’s social media channels.
- A feedback survey of the project – that resulted in 411 contributions (386 online and 25 hard copy).
- A one-hour online webinar presenting the Monbulk UDF - that has been viewed over 30 times.
- Public Display – of 10 A1 size display panels of the project continuously at the Monbulk Living & Learning Centre, and
- Project information flyers – placed throughout Monbulk shopfronts and community noticeboards notifying the drop-in session and webinar times.

Additionally, the Monbulk UDF:

- Was profiled in the local paper news three times – between December 2022 and April 2023.
- Had a glossary of key terms produced – included as Section 7 of the Monbulk UDF document.
- Was workshopped with key community members – at the MADCOW (Monbulk and District Community Opportunities Working group) meeting on 27 February 2023.
- Had summary Monbulk UDF documents prepared – for interested community members to take home – available at Drop-In sessions and from the Monbulk Living & Learning Centre, and
- Had an addendum to the Monbulk UDF prepared – to focus discussion on four potential redevelopment options for the former Monbulk Soccer Pitch on Moores Road.

The above consultation resulted in 2303 comments for the Monbulk UDF.

Community Feedback - Summary

Of the 2303 comments received as part of the public exhibition of the Monbulk UDF:

- 591 comments relate to Precinct 1 (Main Road)
- 675 comments relate to Precinct 2 (Moores Road)
- 557 comments relate to Precinct 3 (Monbulk Civic), and
- The remaining 637 comments related to all precincts or the project in general.

Given the extensive level of feedback provided, the commentary has been categorised into 20 key themes based on frequency, with a selection of key issues/suggestions highlighted below, noting more comments were included in the overall feedback and have been outlined in Attachment 4:

1. Building Form & Height – the potential future height of buildings, the amount of potential development and the potential amenity impacts from new development.
2. Open Space Needs – ideas for open space activities, and the location of open space areas.
3. Transport Network – concerns around proposed traffic thoroughfares, ideas on ways to improve traffic safety and requests for additional projects.
4. Tennis/Netball Club – the commentary relates to future location of the Monbulk Tennis Club and Monbulk Netball Club.
5. Village Green – the support of the proposal, concerns around adjacent development, and ideas for how to use the space.
6. Car Parking – an oversupply of car parking, an undersupply of car parking and suggestions for new car parking areas.
7. Accessibility – improved access throughout Monbulk, provision of cycling infrastructure and universal access consideration.
8. Village Character – all the commentary related to the particular ‘village/hilly/country’ feeling of Monbulk.
9. Public Realm – streetscape upgrades, treatment of the roundabouts and other design ideas.
10. Aged Care Needs – the opportunity and desire to age in place, the provision of a retirement village and/or aged care facility, and the design of the housing needed for the elderly.
11. Affordable Housing – potential social issues associated with affordable housing, availability of housing to Monbulk residents, lack of suitable diverse housing options for different life stages, and the provision of too much housing.
12. Pedestrian Crossings – the number of proposed pedestrian crossings, and impact of pedestrian crossings on traffic movements.
13. Private Amenity – the concerns relate to impact on day to day living from proposed Monbulk UDF projects.
14. Emergency Management – the potential increase in bushfire risk, and design for a place of refuge.
15. Environment – strengthening environmental outcomes, and loss of existing vegetation.
16. Sale of Public Land – the commentary is mostly concerned with the perception too much public land is being sold.
17. Population – all the commentary relates to concern that the Monbulk UDF is encouraging a large growth in population.

18. Funding – the concerns relate to cost of undertaking the proposed projects within the Monbulk UDF, and external funding sources.
19. Devaluation – all commentary was concerned with the perceived loss in value of private property, and
20. Off Subject Feedback – commentary not relevant to the ideas and/or intent of the Monbulk UDF, as outlined in page 27 of Attachment 5.

A review of the comments including breakdown per theme and precinct is included as Attachment 4 of this report – *Monbulk Urban Design Framework Final Community Engagement Report*.

Key Community Issues and Responses

The following section outlines the key issues/suggestions raised by theme, key statements underpinning the issues, and responses to the issue from officers that have resulted in a proposed change to the Monbulk UDF.

Where there are any applicable proposed changes to the Monbulk UDF these have been identified below and included in Attachment 2 – *Marked Up Draft Monbulk Urban Design Framework*.

A detailed analysis of all the key issues raised under each theme is included as Attachment 5 of this report – *Monbulk Urban Design Framework Key Issues Feedback Report*.

1. Open Space Needs

There are four changes proposed for the Monbulk UDF based on feedback on this theme, as follows:

- a) *Remove proposed St Georges Forecourt Redevelopment proposal from Monbulk UDF*
A local aged care and supported accommodation solution will be explored separately by the church and MADCOW.
- b) *Remove bouldering wall proposal from Monbulk UDF.*
It is still proposed that future consideration of options for this space consider use by children after school and activation when sporting activity is not occurring, however the bouldering concept was just one of many options. This will be undertaken as part of a future masterplanning exercise for the Monbulk Recreation Reserve.
- c) *Introduce a new Key Place Project that details provision of car parking adjacent to the Monbulk Skate Park.*
This area was identified as inefficient and created some risky interactions between vehicles and people crossing the reserve driveway.
- d) *Locate new pump track adjacent to McAllister Road.*
This suggestion from community had strong merit and would bring life and amenity to a currently underutilised part of the reserve. The topography supports an engaging pump experience.

2. Transport Network

There are six changes proposed for the Monbulk UDF based on Transport feedback.

- a) *Remove use of Haig Avenue as a traffic thoroughfare.*
Efficient and safe vehicle movement can be achieved through alternate measures including one-way flows towards David Hill Road (see below).
- b) *Bitumen seal the perimeter road of the Monbulk Recreation Reserve and provide one way traffic movement from Moores Road to David Hill Road.*
This will enable queuing within a less congested part of the reserve and alleviate the intensity of convergence at Moores Rd. Sealing will enable formalising car spaces to improve efficiency and facilitate the perimeter pedestrian track more easily.
- c) *Remove proposed bus bays for the primary school.*
The Primary School and clubs have confirmed these bus bays are not needed which frees up the main driveway area.
- d) *Include a sketch showing a modified 'T' intersection for the Main Road and Emerald-Monbulk Road intersection and include a footnote detailing further investigation of this intersection with the Department of Transport.*
There were extensive conversations about the difficulty of this roundabout and the safety of pedestrians trying to cross at any of the three roads. A different intersection configuration may address this but requires more detailed investigations with DTP.
- e) *Include a sketch showing a slip lane at the Main Road and Monbulk Road intersection.*
This is not a critical part of the Monbulk UDF and has been shown now as indicative only given the complexity of vehicle movements in this area.
- f) *Include provision for a slip lane on Main Road to facilitate right hand traffic movements into the Woolworths carpark.*
This is a valuable addition to the Monbulk UDF which will assist in orderly movement in and out of Woolworths carpark while also reducing queuing and congestion in this area.

3. Tennis / Netball Courts

There were several comments received on the theme around 'Tennis / Netball Courts' and four changes are proposed as a result.

- a) *Remove proposed housing from Monbulk Netball and Tennis Club sites.*
The concept was endorsed through the earlier Monbulk Structure Plan. however little detail was provided in the Structure Plan as to how this concept could be delivered. The Monbulk UDF sought to establish a design outcome that would achieve strong amenity and diversity outcomes, and at the higher level could be achieved. The timescale for this remains a longer-term proposal due to further work needing to be undertaken regarding the supply of housing in Monbulk and long-term viability of the sports clubs. As such this issue does not require resolution at this stage in the Monbulk UDF, it will be shown dashed and noted for future consideration.

- b) *Include a sketch option and footnote outlining future review of Monbulk Netball and Tennis Clubs sites for housing suitability.*
As above.
- c) *Highlight in the footnote that the provision of like for like facilities should be considered as part of the review.*
As above.
- d) *Highlight as a sketch the potential relocation of the tennis courts to the Monbulk Recreation Reserve.*

There is adequate space to accommodate the functional requirements of the tennis users within the existing Recreation Reserve. This would be the first step to achieve the above housing outcomes, and hence has been indicated as a future option in the Recreation Reserve.

4. Village Green

There was much discussion around the 'Village Green' which as a theme was strongly supported as a repurposing of the existing soccer pitch. Feedback primarily focused on the inclusion or extent of housing. The exhibited concept had already taken on board earlier community feedback and reduced the footprint, however there were also alternate views that strongly supported the new diverse and accessible housing outcomes.

It was clear from the feedback submitted that residents overall were happy for a level of housing to be provided adjacent to the Village Green (Options A, B & C in the Monbulk UDF Addendum). However, there was less clarity from the community regarding the amount of housing to be delivered. The amount of housing to be provided and what it could look like will be refined further with the community as part of the upcoming masterplanning phase of the Village Green.

Hence for the purpose of the Monbulk UDF, the main western housing has been retained, and the housing adjacent the bowls club pokies has been shown as dashed which enables future investigation as need arises. This area will not be embellished in the masterplanning of the Village Green and will remain basic grassed area.

5. Car Parking

This was a less dominant theme however comments still informed four changes as follows:

- a) *Identify car parking locations for permeable grid pavement treatment.*
Better stormwater management and protection of water quality entering waterways emerged as a theme, with this measure enabling stronger response.
- b) *Bitumen seals the perimeter road of the Monbulk Recreation Reserve and provide formalised spaces around the inner edge.*
This was discussed above and enables more efficient parking configurations and reduced footprint.
- c) *Introduce a new Key Place Project that details provision of car parking adjacent to the Monbulk Skate Park.*

This was discussed above and facilitates improved safety and amenity around the entrance.

- d) *Provide 90-degree angle car parking along the southern edge of the Monbulk Bowling Club laneway.*

This will support local use of the Village Green and possible market activity as well as visitor parking for housing developments and bowls club users.

6. Accessibility

There were a few comments received on the theme around 'Accessibility' however early engagement with Access and Inclusion and Positive Ageing groups meant many of the solutions in the draft Monbulk UDF were on track already. Hence only one change is proposed based on this feedback:

- a) *Remove dedicated bicycle lane option from Nugent Street and upgrade street to become cycling priority.*

Local residents identified the width limitations of the road carriageway along Nugent Street which makes the initial concept difficult to safely achieve.

The alternate Cycling Priority approach uses traffic calming and signage to improve awareness of cyclists and usability of this lower volume corridor as a cycle connection shared with vehicles.

7. Village Character

Much of the commentary provided on this subject related to the concerns that the Monbulk UDF was going to radically alter the 'village vibe' and 'hilly character' of the Monbulk Township.

The comments submitted were mainly misunderstandings underpinned from misinformation being circulated in the community during the consultation, including concerns about 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, COVID lockdowns, transition away from gas in residential developments, and installation of cameras at intersections, all of which are Victorian Government matters. This misinformation was contrary to Council officers explaining the existing controls and measures to protect character.

Once these misunderstandings were filtered, there was only one change needed, which was to update imagery to communicate the proposed controls and outcomes more effectively. This idea to update the imagery had been suggested by a few community members in discussions.

8. Public Realm

There was a strong desire to see the local floriculture more visible within the centre, and this was suggested as an option at the Main Street roundabout, which has now been updated in the Monbulk UDF.

9. Aged Care Needs

There was support for the need for local provision of Aged Care services however the inclusion of a possible site at St George's Church was premature and requires their own internal investigations which could be protracted. Hence this has been deleted from the plans, and separate discussions are continuing with MADCOW.

10. Affordable Housing

There was an interesting tension in community between strong desire amongst young people and older members who expressed a strong need for accessible and small footprint dwellings near the main street and within the community, while others were resistant to these housing outcomes especially those shown in the Monbulk UDF. Other submissions wanted to see dual occupancy and secondary dwelling options for properties further away from the Main Street which, at the time, was contrary to State policy and Council's Housing Strategy principles. In recent months the Victorian Government have announced substantial policy changes on these topics which may now make some of these options more achievable in Monbulk.

The concepts included in the draft Monbulk UDF were moderate and appropriate to the context, however some sites are likely to be a longer-term proposition. An analysis of the growth and demand for housing in Monbulk as it evolves over the coming years will likely determine if there is the need for more supply. Hence these sites have been shown dashed and annotated for future exploration. There was a lack of understanding of Council's limitations in controlling affordability and some concern expressed at the prospect of Social or Community Housing developments based on misgivings on social impacts and perceived threat of antisocial behaviour.

11. Pedestrian Crossings

There were some helpful suggestions on the crossings with four updates proposed as follows:

- a) *Remove proposed raised crossings at Monbulk Road and Main Road Roundabout – excluding Jordan Road.*

The volume and movement of vehicles creates sightline risks, and the low catchment of possible pedestrians indicated this roundabout could be refined to just the one primary crossing.

- b) *Make provision for one raised pedestrian crossing on Moores Road.*

This consolidated approach would still achieve improved outcomes for pedestrians.

- c) *Make provision for one raised pedestrian crossing on Main Road (south of the Baynes Park Road Roundabout).*

This would be part of an overall intersection investigation.

- d) *Propose addition of three speed humps along Nugent Street.*

This will assist with traffic calming and improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

12. Private Amenity

A landscape buffer in the Recreation Reserve of eight metres (8m) offset from the property boundary with 36 Haig Avenue has been added to the Monbulk UDF to support improved amenity for local residents.

Community feedback on proposed places

Community was asked which projects they would like to see prioritised for delivery first. Of the ten proposed places within the Monbulk UDF, community support was strongest for the following projects:

Village Green Redevelopment (Precinct 2) –

Creation of large passive open space area activated by a mix of uses including housing, retail, playground, and amphitheatre – with forty-nine percent (49%) of respondents supporting prioritisation of this project.

Monbulk & Main Road Intersection Activation (Precinct 1) –

Main gateway entrance into Monbulk Township with 16 car parks and slip lane created – with forty-three percent (43%) of respondents supporting progression of this project as a priority.

Monbulk Recreation (southeast) Revitalisation (Precinct 3) –

Extension of the open space area to the southeast. Activated with a mix of uses including pump track, bouldering wall, outdoor gym and half basketball court – with thirty-five percent (35%) of respondents supporting progression of this project as a priority.

Main Road Streetscape Revitalisation (Precinct 1) –

Improved access from parallel car parking to pedestrian path with inclusion of DDA compliant ramps – with thirty-three percent of respondents supporting progression of this project as a priority.

Off-subject feedback

Many submissions were provided that were not related to the specific ideas within and/or intent of the Monbulk UDF. Whilst important, they are beyond the scope of the Monbulk UDF to resolve. These include provision of rubbish bins and toilet blocks or land outside of the Monbulk UDF boundary or concerns with existing planning scheme policy and provisions. Where appropriate these comments have been forwarded to relevant Council departments for further consideration.

Unfortunately, in addition to the above, some of the comments received were inappropriate with not relevant to the Monbulk UDF discussion. Some of these items include (but are not limited to): personal interests of Council Officer's involved in the project, personal insults/threats or included items/statements with little or no description.

All feedback on the draft Monbulk UDF has been taken into consideration, however it should be noted that the vast amount of feedback provided did not suggest specific changes to the Monbulk UDF.

Unique Consultation challenges

The stakeholder engagement encountered a distinct challenge whereby misinformation about 20-minute neighbourhoods and smart cities were disseminated throughout the community, bringing in various unrelated topics to the Monbulk UDF engagement. The drop-in sessions occasionally experienced high attendance from individuals influenced by the lead group's social media promotion of the sessions. This led to disruptions in one session and caused some confusion among local participants. Typically, this confusion was resolved through straightforward conversations with Council officers, guided discussions on the UDF, and the availability of a plain-language glossary. Much of these occurrences have been documented in connection with a related Supreme Court Hearing, and the detailed findings are accessible on the Supreme Court website.

Options considered

The following options have been considered:

1. Adopt the Monbulk UDF with no changes as exhibited.

The community consultation process has highlighted several changes that should be considered for incorporation into the Monbulk UDF. The framework could be adopted as exhibited with some of the suggestions held in abeyance until the master planning of key projects is undertaken in the future. This would not be recommended as the feedback from community was insightful and valuable and, in many ways, improves the outcomes of the Monbulk UDF. Council values meaningful engagement which includes due consideration and response to feedback received.

2. Adopt the Monbulk UDF with proposed changes.

The incorporation of key changes to the Monbulk UDF as well as identifying how other issues can be resolved later, would enable the progression of the project with a level of support from the community. Many of the issues that cannot be resolved at the framework level will act as the starting point to drive detailed design responses at the master planning stage. Further project-specific consultation will provide opportunity to work collaboratively to reach mutually beneficial outcomes for the community and Council.

3. Abandon the Monbulk UDF.

This option would see the cohesiveness and context provided in the decision making of Monbulk UDF lost. It would not result in an immediate resolution to the existing problems/issues within the township. It will result in the continuation of 'status quo' where projects will be continued to be delivered in Monbulk in an ad-hoc manner without any strategic justification for their purpose. This will continue to result in inefficiencies, lost opportunities, and lack of integration with the context and rest of centre. It would also cause reputational damage and undermine future community engagement. This is not recommended.

Recommended option and justification

Option 2 is recommended, to proceed with the Monbulk UDF incorporating suggested changes as outlined in this report. This will enable the progression of the project with an honouring of the community's input and meaningful response to community concerns and ideas. This will help to inform Council decision making to improve development outcomes, and develop a pipeline of agreed projects, with the context of the community's voice.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

As reported to Council on 13 December 2022, no capital funding (Council funding) is committed to any projects proposed within the Monbulk UDF. Any future funding streams required to establish new buildings, public realm projects, streetscape projects, or undertake upgrades of an existing building/place/infrastructure including design, architectural, surveyor and permit costs; site preparation costs; project management costs; construction costs; and other associated costs will rely on future funding streams including, but not limited to, Council's capital works funding, State and Federal grants and other alternate funding sources.

A detailed breakdown of each project, their probable cost based on November 2022 value, and source of funding was presented to Council and made available in Section 6 of the Monbulk UDF. The probable cost has been updated to accommodate projects that have been removed, altered, or added to the Monbulk UDF. However, timing and delivery of these projects will impact upon the total value of the project - in some cases increasing their cost, and others decreasing their cost. Current cost escalations indicate there would need to be updated estimates carried out closer to delivery of each project.

The timing of some projects may require significant pre-planning, authority approvals and complex documentation, such as any arterial corridor works and the creation of the Village Green Master Plan. These major development projects would anticipate delivery timeframes potentially beyond 10 years. The remainder of projects, by comparison, are simpler and would be able to be scheduled once funds and resourcing become available.

The final Monbulk UDF provides Council with a thorough evidence-based document to help prioritise and justify the delivery of remaining key capital works projects and forms a strong foundation for advocacy to funding bodies and MPs. The framework will also provide Council with the opportunity to present shovel ready projects as candidates for any external funding grants that might be on offer, including those with short application timeframes.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

The final Monbulk UDF meets the following Strategic Objectives of the Council Plan (2021-25):

- Connected and healthy communities — Communities that are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive, and socially well connected and where quality services are accessible to everyone.

By providing an overarching design framework that connects built form, services, and public realm areas for the Monbulk Town Centre.

- Quality community infrastructure and liveable places — Quality facilities and infrastructure that meet current and future needs. Places are well planned hubs of activity that foster well-being, creativity, and innovation.

By identifying projects needed within Monbulk to help meet demand for infrastructure and facilities from residents and visitors.

The Monbulk UDF also supports Goal 4 of the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is that Yarra Ranges be recognised for its healthy, accessible places to live, work and visit. Additionally, the Monbulk UDF is consistent with the objectives and aims of the following Yarra Ranges Council plans and policies including:

- Monbulk Structure Plan (2017)
- Liveable Climate Plan 2020-2030
- Integrated Transport Strategy 2020-2040, and
- Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT HOUSING STATEMENT

On 20 September 2023, then Premier Daniel Andrews released Victoria’s *Housing Statement: The decade ahead 2024-2042* to address housing supply in Victoria with a target to build 800,000 homes in the next decade on the basis that building more homes will increase affordability.

The statement covers the following areas:

- Good Decisions Made Faster
- Cheaper Housing closer to where you work
- Protecting renters rights
- More Social Housing, and
- A long term housing plan

It also proposes several planning system reforms under each. It should be noted that a number of these will require further planning scheme amendments or legislative change to come into effect.

Of most interest and relevance to the Monbulk UDF are the following items:

- Unlocking new spaces to build across suburbs including government land through rezoning surplus land with a target of 10 per cent of affordable housing at each site.
- Building more homes closer to services, transport and where people work.
- Support institutional investment (investors who build to sell).
- Strengthen design standards.
- Introduce a short stay levy of 7.5 per cent for short stay accommodation to go towards building and maintaining social and affordable housing, and
- Invest in the Affordable Housing Investment Partnership program that provides low interest loans to finance social and affordable housing.

The objectives and recommendations of the Monbulk UDF are closely aligned with these actions and will support investigation of future housing options.

RELEVANT LAW

The Monbulk UDF has been developed in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning & Environment Act 1987*, the Victoria Planning Provisions, and the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme to ensure that any guidelines or proposed outcomes align with the intent of this legislation and policy.

Supreme Court of Victoria (Dickson v Yarra Ranges Council)

Presided over by Justice Melinda Richards, in this proceeding Mr Dickson sought orders prohibiting Council from approving the Monbulk UDF, based on an alleged lack of community engagement, and seeking the Council extend the consultation period by a further 12 months. Mr Dickson sought answers to two additional questions, specifically:

1. Whether the Council's role includes power to develop three-storey accommodation for local areas; and
2. Whether the Council can engage with and adopt United Nations policies.

Accompanied by a 64-page finding that addressed all of Mr Dickson's concerns and fully supported Council's approach, it was concluded by Her Honour in her Judgement handed down on 18 August 2023 that:

- a) Mr Dickson did not have standing to seek the remedies claimed. He did not show that he has a special interest in the subject matter of the proceeding. His interest in the Monbulk UDF and the conduct of Council meetings is no different from that of any member of the public.
- b) The Council is meeting its obligations under the *Local Government Act* and the Charter to engage with the community in relation to the Monbulk UDF.

- c) The additional questions raised by Mr Dickson do not arise and should not be answered.
- d) The proceeding must be dismissed.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

The actions and proposed design solutions within the Monbulk UDF, such as improved accessible streetscapes, outdoor dining opportunities and new commercial/retail sites, foster positive investment for Monbulk by diversifying economic and retail activity supporting business growth, and providing employment opportunities.

Social Implications

The actions and proposed design solutions for public realm areas and integration of social infrastructure, such as the area around the Monbulk Living and Learning Centre improves the accessibility of the services provided, thus fostering better community connections and overall improved community health outcomes.

Environmental Implications

The Monbulk UDF has taken into consideration the high quality natural and landscape features of the Monbulk area into the development of actions and proposed design solutions, including significant views and vistas, drainage and water runoff, and vegetation types.

Complementing these features has been the introduction of sustainable transport and technology opportunities within the Monbulk Township. The Monbulk UDF supports active transport and zero emissions transport options and promotes increased tree canopy cover.

It strengthens residential development opportunities within a walkable catchment of the town centre and increases microclimate outcomes through improved landscape treatments.

Water Sensitive Urban Design solutions will enhance stormwater quality and waterway health.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Prior to the document being taken to the community for their review, the initial draft of the Monbulk UDF relied mostly on previous engagement undertaken for the Monbulk Community Plan in 2014 and Monbulk Structure Plan in 2017, and meetings with key stakeholders throughout 2022.

The final Monbulk UDF has been prepared based on the feedback received during the extensive program of community consultation carried out between 16 December 2022 and 26 March 2023 as part of the formal public exhibition of the document.

The engagement was carried out in accordance with the activities adopted by Council on the 13 December 2022, and as detailed above in *Public Exhibition Overview* section.

It should be noted that some activities were unable to be fulfilled or had to be rescheduled/modified due to anti-social behaviour experienced by Councillors and Council Staff at various times throughout the consultation period, and associated risk assessments.

This issue and further details of this consultation are provided in the *Monbulk Urban Design Framework Final Community Engagement Report* (Attachment 4), *Monbulk Urban Design Framework Key Issues Report* (Attachment 5), and in the Background section of this report.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The development of the final Monbulk UDF has relied on a mix of previous engagement undertaken for the Monbulk Community Plan and Monbulk Structure Plan and updated following more recent extensive community consultation.

State Government agencies/departments were invited to provide comment on the Monbulk UDF including:

- Melbourne Water
- Department of Transport & Planning
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry & Regions
- Yarra Valley Water
- Country Fire Authority
- Heritage Council Victoria
- SP Ausnet, and
- the Wurundjeri Land Council.

The CFA, and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) all provided submissions. A meeting was also held with the 20 Minute Neighbourhoods team at DTP, but no written submission was provided. All agency submissions were reviewed with most simply noting the Monbulk UDF and providing support for the strategic work, recommending that they be reengaged when more detailed planning work is undertaken.

AusNet, Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Environment) (now Department Energy, Environment and Climate Action), Department Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Planning) (now Department of Transport and Planning), Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (now Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions), Department of Transport (now Department of Transport and

Planning), Melbourne Water and Yarra Valley Water were sent letters on two occasions but did not provide a submission.

The final Monbulk UDF has also been guided internally by a Project Working Group which included input from the following units: Statutory Planning; Strategic Planning; Place Recovery; Community Development; Economic Development; Infrastructure Development; Transport Engineering; Recreation and Leisure; Indigenous Development; Gender Equity; Disability Inclusion; Waste Management; Emergency Management; and Communications and Engagement.

The project team also met with Council's Indigenous Advisory Committee, Disability Advisory Committee, Positive Ageing Reference Group and Youth Advisory Group.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The final Monbulk UDF provides the necessary evidence-based context to decision making by identifying key capital works projects for upgrade or construction. The Monbulk UDF's holistic approach will assist in informing a wide range of Council service delivery areas of the specific opportunities and challenges to consider in the Monbulk area and maximise Council's response to the Community's expectations.

Failure to deliver the Monbulk UDF will result in Council's expenditure of capital works projects being undertaken in an ad hoc manner, which does not consider the net benefit of both Council's resources and the community's expectations.

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. Monbulk Urban Design Framework Summary Document
2. Marked Up Draft Monbulk Urban Design Framework
3. Proposed Final Monbulk Urban Design Framework
4. Monbulk Urban Design Framework Final Community Engagement Report
5. Monbulk Urban Design Framework Key Issues Feedback Report