

## WARBURTON PAID PARKING PILOT FEES PROPOSAL

---

Report Author: Manager – Strategy & Transformation  
Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure  
Ward(s) affected: (O'Shannasy Ward);

---

*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

With visitor numbers in the Yarra Ranges expected to double, effective parking management is essential to support accessibility and local businesses. The Warburton Paid Parking Pilot aims to ease congestion and improve parking availability in high-demand areas by introducing a targeted, location-specific fee system.

#### **Yarra Ranges residents and eligible Warburton traders (including non-residents) will be exempt from paying parking fees.**

Following extensive research, engagement with local businesses, and benchmarking against other Victorian municipalities, Council proposes a variable fee structure that balances affordability with effective parking management. Paid parking will apply only during peak times (weekends and public holidays, 9 am–5 pm) at key locations, including Thomas Avenue, Warburton Highway, Water World, and Station Street. Fees range from \$3.50 to \$6.00 per hour (excluding the providers' transaction costs) with the first hour free along Warburton Highway to encourage customer turnover and support local businesses. A digital permit system will allow Yarra Ranges residents and traders to park for free. Additionally, a \$99 penalty under Road Rule 207(2) will apply for failure to pay parking fees or comply with signage.

Noting that the primary objective of the pilot is to improve traffic and parking safety and amenity, the financial impact of the pilot remains uncertain, given fees apply only to non-residents, making revenue projections variable. However, initial estimates suggest that the cost of implementing paid parking infrastructure and technology should be recovered within two years. The performance of the pilot will be reviewed after 12 months to assess its viability as a long-term solution.

More information on the paid parking pilot, including Frequently Asked Questions, is available on the Council's website. Please refer to: [Paid Parking in Warburton Yarra Ranges Council](#)

## RECOMMENDATION

### *That Council*

1. ***Approves location-specific fees (excluding the provider's transaction costs) for parking during Warburton Paid Parking Trial:***
  - ***Thomas Ave \$3.50 an hour***
  - ***Water World \$6.00 an hour***
  - ***Station St \$3.50 an hour***
  - ***Warburton highway first hour for free, second hour \$6.00***
2. ***Notes the introduction of a new penalty under Road Rule 207 (2) set at \$99 for individuals who fail to comply with parking payment requirements.***

## RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Approval of Paid Parking Trial in Warburton. Council meeting 14/05/2024.

## DISCUSSION

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

The Yarra Ranges region is one of Victoria's most visited destinations, with annual visitor numbers expected to double from 4.5 million to over 9 million in the next decade. While this growth is vital for the local economy, it also creates significant challenges for our infrastructure, particularly in high-visitation areas like Warburton.

Parking congestion has become a persistent issue, with key areas such as Thomas Avenue, Warburton Highway, and Water World often operating at full capacity during weekends and holidays, making it difficult to find a space, increasing traffic congestion, and impacting local businesses.

To address these challenges, Council has explored a range of solutions, including updated parking restrictions and improved enforcement using new technology. While these measures have made progress, they alone cannot address traffic congestion and parking management. The introduction of paid parking trial is an essential next step to better manage parking demand and improve traffic flow in Warburton.

Paid parking has been carefully designed to achieve several objectives:

- Improved traffic and commuter's experience
- Support the local economy
- Reinvest in the local community

### ***Designing the Fee Structure***

To ensure the trialled paid parking system in Warburton is fair and effective, Council undertook extensive research of common paid parking practices, completed benchmarking as well as consultation with local businesses:

- **Community Engagement:** In August 2024, Council consulted with impacted local businesses regarding the parking fee structure along Warburton Highway and trader parking areas. Following this engagement, Council committed to reserving 20 unrestricted free parking spaces exclusively for trader permit holders. To further support business activity and encourage customer turnover, all parking spaces along Warburton Highway will provide the first hour of parking free. This initiative aims to improve parking availability near shopfronts while attracting more customers to the area.
- **Benchmarking:** Council reviewed paid parking systems in other Victorian municipalities, where fees range from \$1.50 to \$7.00 per hour. These systems often use variable pricing to balance demand and affordability, particularly in tourist areas. Lessons learned emphasised the need for fair, location-specific fees that encourage turnover without deterring visitors.
- **Traffic and Parking Data:** Occupancy rates in key Warburton parking areas, such as Thomas Avenue, consistently reach over 85% during weekends and public holidays highlighting the need for paid parking to improve turnover and availability. However, with such significant visitor numbers, it is crucial to carefully balance parking fees to manage demand effectively without deterring visitors or impacting the local economy.

To provide a fit-for-purpose solution, paid parking fees will be trialled only when they are needed – on weekends and public holidays from 9am to 5pm and only in the busiest locations.

- Thomas Avenue
- Warburton Highway
- Water World
- Station Street

Multiple payment options will be available during the Warburton parking trial to ensure convenient access for all users. Visitors can choose to pay through the PayStay mobile app, use MetroLite parking meters installed throughout the area, or scan TouchnGo QR codes that link directly to a payment website. Understanding that some community members may face digital barriers, a dedicated phone service will also be available where users can call to start and stop their parking sessions, ensuring the system remains accessible to everyone regardless of their technological comfort level.

This targeted approach ensures that fees address parking issues during peak visitation times without imposing unnecessary costs on users during quieter periods.

**Yarra Ranges residents and eligible Warburton traders (including non-residents) will be exempt from paying parking fees through a free digital permit system.**

### *Options considered*

Getting the balance right between high and low parking fees is key to managing parking effectively. A well-thought-out parking fee structure serves several purposes:

- Encouraging Turnover: Reasonable fees motivate shorter stays, making parking spaces available more frequently and supporting local businesses by increasing customer turnover.
- Managing Demand: Variable pricing based on time and location helps manage demand, discouraging long-term parking in busy areas while attracting drivers to less crowded spaces.
- Supporting Community Infrastructure: Parking fees help distribute the costs of maintaining and improving local facilities more equitably between residents and visitors. This shared approach ensures both visitors and residents contribute to maintaining our community spaces, creating a fair distribution of costs.

In designing the fee structure for the Warburton Paid Parking and Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) trial, Council considered these objectives alongside benchmarking data. Fees in other Victorian municipalities range from \$1.50 to \$7.00 per hour, depending on the location and demand. Several options were evaluated:

1. Higher Parking Fees: Setting fees above the average range was considered but ruled out, as high fees could deter visitors, leading to empty parking spaces, increased congestion in nearby residential areas, and public dissatisfaction.
2. Lower Parking Fees: While more affordable, lower fees risk encouraging longer stays, reducing turnover, and impacting parking availability, particularly during peak times.
3. Location-Specific Fees (Recommended): A tailored fee structure was deemed the best option, with fees adjusted based on demand and community input. This approach balances affordability with effective parking management, ensuring spaces are available when and where they're most needed.

Drawing from lessons learned in other municipalities, Council suggests a variable fee structure for Warburton. By targeting high-demand times and locations, this approach supports local businesses, improves access, and ensures that parking remains a fair and effective resource for everyone.

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

The proposed Location-Specific fee structure reflects a strategic compromise:

- Thomas Avenue and Station Street: \$3.50 per hour to encourage turnover while aligning with the average fee range in benchmarked municipalities.
- Water World Car Park: \$6.00 per hour to manage high demand in this popular location.
- Warburton Highway: Free for the first hour, followed by \$6.00 per hour. This approach supports local businesses by increasing customer turnover at the shopfronts.

It is important to note that depending on the channel of payment Council's technology provider will charge additional fee of 0.12 cents per transaction as well as small % based service fee. These fees will be paid in one transaction but displayed separately on the receipt making it clear what customers are paying for.

With the introduction of paid parking fees, it is essential to implement enforcement mechanisms, including fines, to ensure compliance and effective parking management. Failure to pay the required fee or adhere to signage and instructions—categorised under Road Rule 207(2) as “Fail to pay fee and obey instruction on sign, meter, ticket, or ticket vending machine”— will incur a penalty of \$99.

This fine reflects set 0.5 of a penalty unit for this violation, with penalty units being a standardised measure used to calculate fines for various offences. Under the *Monetary Units Act 2004*, penalty values are reviewed and updated annually on July 1 by the Department of Treasury and Finance. This approach ensures that fines remain consistent and proportional across a range of regulatory breaches.

By linking fines to penalty units, councils can ensure their enforcement measures are transparent, standardised, and in line with broader legislative frameworks.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

Noting that the primary objective of the pilot is to improve traffic and parking safety and amenity, the financial impact of the paid parking pilot will be reviewed as part of its overall evaluation. Since only non-residents are required to pay fees, revenue projections are uncertain due to the unknown ratio between residents and visitors using the parking.

Implementing paid parking requires some investment in technology and infrastructure.

That infrastructure provides traffic flow benefit (for example dynamic signage) and can also be used for paid parking. It is anticipated upfront costs for the infrastructure would be recovered within approximately two years. The pilot will provide valuable data to assess the viability of a long-term paid parking system and inform future decisions on its implementation.

It would also be difficult to estimate number of fines Council will issue to those that will fail to pay for parking. After the trial commences the Project team can review the data and estimate financial impact.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

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

- Integrated Transport Strategy
  - Real time car parking information display.
- Health and Wellbeing Plan
  - Increase active living
- Vibrant economy, Agriculture and tourism
  - Identity, Leadership and Collaboration Taking a unified and collaborative approach that demonstrates leadership in economic development, industry engagement and business responsiveness. Establishing a strong identity that raises national and global brand awareness.
- Protected and enhanced natural environment
  - Our iconic places and their natural character are actively protected.
- High performing organisation
  - Community is at the heart of all we do. Our goal is for our diverse communities to be at the heart of every decision and service we deliver, to ensure we are meeting the needs and hopes of our communities.
  - We excel in thinking smart and good practice. Our goal is to excel in considered thinking, problem solving and decision-making, underpinned by operational practices that guide and support the processes and services we offer our communities now and into the future.
  - No regional, state or national plans and policies are applicable to the recommendation in this report.

## RELEVANT LAW

Under the *Local Government Act 2020* (Victoria), Council has the authority to implement paid parking and parking enforcement through several key provisions:

### 1. Primary Powers:

- Section 163(2)(d): Councils have explicit power to "manage and control roads and streets and construct works on roads and streets, including footpaths, bridges and traffic control measures"
- Section 163(2)(g): Councils can "manage, improve and develop public places vested in the Council"

### 2. Supporting Framework:

- Section 163(3): Allows councils to "do all things necessary or convenient to be done in connection with the performance of its responsibilities and the exercise of its powers"
- Section 9 provides overarching governance principles that support these initiatives through:
  - Promoting economic, social and environmental sustainability (Section 9c)
  - Ensuring ongoing financial viability of the Council (Section 9g)

While the Act doesn't explicitly mention paid parking, these provisions collectively give Council the legal authority to implement parking management systems, including paid parking and enforcement measures, as part of their responsibility for managing roads and public places within the municipality.

Additional legal framework can be found in several key pieces of legislation:

- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Infringements Act 2006*
- *Victorian Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Monetary Units Act 2004*

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

### *Economic Implications*

The introduction of paid parking may have following economic implications:

- **Parking Turnover:** Paid parking encourages higher turnover of parking spaces, as drivers are incentivised to park for shorter durations to avoid higher fees. This can benefit local businesses by increasing the availability of parking for customers.
- **Revenue Generation:** Paid parking generates revenue that can be directed toward local asset maintenance, projects, and community initiatives.

### ***Social Implications***

The introduction of paid parking may have the following social implications:

- **Affordability:** Paid parking can impact low-income individuals who may have fewer transportation alternatives or less ability to pay for parking. This can raise concerns about equitable access to public spaces and services.
- **Alternative Transportation:** If implemented effectively, paid parking can encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as public transit, cycling, or walking, which can have positive social impacts in terms of increased physical activity and community interaction.

### ***Environmental Implications***

Wayfinding signs can help reduce emissions in a few different ways:

- **Reducing congestion and idling time:** Clear wayfinding signage helps drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians navigate more efficiently to their destinations. This reduces the amount of time vehicles spend idling in traffic or circling.
- **Encouraging walking/biking:** Good wayfinding makes it easier for people to navigate areas on foot or by bicycle rather than driving.
- **Optimising traffic flow:** Effective wayfinding signage can optimize traffic patterns and reduce vehicle emissions.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The project has successfully engaged with affected traders along Warburton Highway and Thomas Ave in August 2024 to identify optimal solutions for accommodating their permits and paid parking charging scheme.

Businesses were offered an opportunity to provide their input in designing the charging models as well as provide their feedback on trader parking areas and permit.

Further community engagement is not expected until the conclusion of the trial. The project team will continue to communicate progress regarding implementation and will assist the local community in Warburton with the permit application process once the systems are configured.



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

Significant benchmarking activities related to LPR, smart technology, and paid parking have been undertaken for this project. The Project team reviewed parking permit policies from over 20 councils and engaged with Mornington Peninsula Shire to identify opportunities and lessons learned during and after their trial. Research with technology providers and tender process has also revealed innovative solutions currently being implemented for selected car parks and enforcement. These include LPR technology, sensors, wayfinding signs and system integration allowing for more process automation and better customer experience.

The project involves representatives from six different Council departments who are actively collaborating to achieve the best outcomes for the community and visitors. We have also engaged with additional departments to seek their guidance and ensure our actions and messaging are aligned. Furthermore, the Project team engaged an external consultant to review the plan and ensure that the proposed solutions and costs are effective and aligned with our desired outcomes.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

Paid parking is one measure, within a suite of measures, to mitigate risks associated with traffic safety and amenity at specific locations.

Introduction of parking fees for visitors is a pilot only and will be evaluated accordingly.

Notwithstanding the limited pilot period and opportunity to evaluate and adjust if considered appropriate, risks associated with a poorly designed fee structure have been mitigated through benchmarking, discussion with traders, and consideration of occupancy data.

The technology being adopted is compliant with privacy legislation.

A comprehensive communications campaign and reminder support for residents has been designed to mitigate risks associated with lack of awareness of the new system. Further information on this can be found here [Paid Parking in Warburton Yarra Ranges Council](#)

## **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**

Nil