



# **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON**

**MONDAY, 18 MAY 2009**

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RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THURSDAY 21 MAY 2009

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**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF  
DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL HELD AT DAREBIN CIVIC CENTRE,  
350 HIGH ST, PRESTON ON MONDAY 21 MAY 2009**

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**THE MEETING OPENED AT 7.04 P.M.**

**1. PRESENT**

*Councillors*

Cr. Diana Asmar (Mayor)  
Cr. Stanley Chiang  
Cr. Vince Fontana  
Cr. Gaetano Greco  
Cr. Nick Katsis  
Cr. Tim Laurence  
Cr. Ben Morgan  
Cr. Trent McCarthy  
Cr. Steven Tsitas

*Council Officers*

Michael Ulbrick – Chief Executive Officer  
Kevin Breen – General Manager City Development  
Bruce Dobson – General Manager Corporate Services  
Geoff Glynn – General Manager Community Assets and Leisure  
Jeff Saker – General Manager City Services  
Libby Hynes – General Manager Environment and Amenities  
Jan Black – General Manager Communities and Culture  
Ray McQuillen – Manager Customer and Civic Services  
Nerina Di Lorenzo – Manager Asset Strategy  
Ron Downes – Council Business Coordinator

**2. APOLOGIES**

Nil.

**3. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Cr. Katsis disclosed conflicts of interest in Report No. 7.6 (Preston Civic Precinct Redevelopment) – see page 32.

**4. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. V. Fontana  
**SECONDED:** Cr. T. Laurence

**THAT** the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 4 May 2009 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

**CARRIED**

## **5. REPORTS BY MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS**

### **MINUTE NO. 171**

#### **5.1 REPORT OF CR. TIM LAURENCE**

Cr. Laurence reported on his attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Briefing meetings relating to the draft 2009/2010 Council Budget.

#### **5.2 REPORT OF CR. VINCE FONTANA**

Cr. Fontana reported on his attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Northern Business Achievement Awards breakfast at Rydges Bell City Hotel.
- Preston Business Advisory Committee meeting.
- Audit Committee meeting.

#### **5.3 REPORT OF CR. NICK KATSI**

Cr. Katsis reported on his attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Discussions with local residents on various issues.
- Briefing meetings relating to the draft 2009/2010 Council Budget.
- Function for Greek Councillors at Moreland Council.

#### **5.4 REPORT OF CR. STANLEY CHIANG**

Cr. Chiang reported on his attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Announcement by the Hon. Martin Ferguson MP of Federal funding for the Lancaster Gate Community Centre in Bundoora.
- Opening of the *Arte Moris: Contemporary Art from East Timor* exhibition at Bundoora Homestead.
- Function celebrating the 111<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Peking University in China.

#### **5.5 REPORT OF CR. TRENT MCCARTHY**

Cr. McCarthy reported on his attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Meeting with Merri Stationeers Committee.
- Meeting with Refugee Community Leaders.
- Campaign event on the steps of Parliament House to press for the introduction of container deposit legislation in Victoria.
- Discussions with residents on environmental issues.

## 5.6 REPORT OF CR. GAETANO GRECO

Cr. Greco reported on his attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council meeting.
- Visit to Linh-son Buddhist Temple, Radford Road, Reservoir.
- Discussion with a Reservoir resident regarding the general upkeep of commercial waste removal bins in the area.

## 5.7 REPORT OF CR. BEN MORGAN

Cr. Morgan reported on his attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Discussion with a local resident regarding a right of way (road) issue.
- Briefing meetings relating to the draft 2009/2010 Council Budget.

## 5.8 REPORT OF THE MAYOR, CR. DIANA ASMAR

The Mayor, Cr. Asmar, reported on her attendance at the following functions/activities:

- Opening of *Arte Moris: Contemporary Art from East Timor* exhibition at Bundoora Homestead.
- Darebin Volunteers Expo at Preston City Hall.
- Meeting with Multiple Sclerosis researcher Professor Claude Bernard.
- Meetings with various residents and local community groups.
- Briefing meetings relating to the draft 2009/2010 Council Budget.

## 6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

### MINUTE NO. 172

The Mayor, Cr. Asmar, invited questions from members of the public gallery.

The following questions were submitted:

- Michael McAuliffe of Reservoir asked a question about provision in the draft 2009/2010 Council Budget for lights for the Keon Park Stars Junior Football Club. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar.
- Craig Walters of Preston asked a question about the timeframe for actioning open space proposals in the East Preston area. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar, who indicated that a reply would be provided in writing.
- Lori-Anne Sharp of Preston asked a question about provision in the draft 2009/2010 Council Budget for improvements to the reserve in Highview Road Preston. The question was responded to by the Manager Asset Strategy, Nerina Di Lorenzo, who indicated that a reply would be provided in writing.

- Kerrin McGuinness of Reservoir asked a question about enclosing the rubbish bin area at Donath Reserve. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar, who indicated that a reply would be provided in writing.
- Chantelle Guinelly of Reservoir asked a question about car parking around Donath Reserve. The question was responded to by the General Manager Community Assets and Leisure, Geoff Glynn and the Mayor, Cr. Asmar, who indicated that a reply would be provided in writing.
- Sarah Guinelly of Reservoir asked a question about improvements to the outside public toilets at Donath Reserve. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar, who indicated that a reply would be provided in writing.
- Liz Poole of Northcote asked a question about Council's policy position in relation to wood smoke pollution in the City. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar. It was indicated that the matter would be raised for discussion under 'General Business' later in the meeting.
- Chantelle Guinelly asked a question about responses to an email she had sent to Council, and a question she had asked at the last Council meeting on 4 May 2009 about funding provided by Council for roads in Northcote since the City of Darebin was created. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar and the General Manager Community Assets and Leisure, Geoff Glynn.
- John Nugent of Epping asked a question about provision in the draft 2009/2010 Council Budget for works at John Cain Memorial Park and funding contribution by Football Federation Australia. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar and the General Manager Community Assets and Leisure, Geoff Glynn.
- John Nugent of Epping asked a question about written responses to questions raised at the last Council meeting regarding Council funding for roads and John Cain Memorial Park. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar.
- Chantelle Guinelly of Reservoir asked a question about the manner in which questions are received and responded to at the Council meeting. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar.
- John Nugent asked a question about provision in the draft 2009/2010 budget for John Cain Memorial Park. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar.
- John Nugent of Epping asked a question about funding provision by Council for lights for the Keon Park Stars Junior Football Club having regard for the Sports in the North policy. The question was responded to by the Mayor, Cr. Asmar, who indicated that a reply would be provided in writing. It was further indicated that the matter would be raised for discussion under 'General Business' later in the meeting.

After Public Question Time had concluded, one further question was submitted in writing.



**7. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS****7.1 FINANCIAL REPORT – 10 MONTHS ENDED 30 APRIL 2009****MINUTE NO. 173****AUTHOR:** Group Coordinator Accounting, Payroll and Purchasing –  
Michael O’Riordan**MANAGER:** General Manager Corporate Services – Bruce Dobson**BUDGET****IMPLICATIONS:** Year to date operating surplus of \$19.7 million and capital works expenditure of \$19.0 million. Forecast full year operating surplus of \$5.7 million and capital works expenditure of \$29.1 million.**SUMMARY:**

A comprehensive financial review has been undertaken for the ten months ended 30 April 2009 to assess the financial performance of Council year-to-date (YTD) and the forecast financial position as at 30 June 2009. The outcome of the review indicates that Council has achieved a YTD operating surplus of \$19.7 million and capital works expenditure of \$19.0 million. The forecast actual results for the year ending 30 June 2009 are an operating surplus of \$5.7 million and capital works expenditure of \$29.1 million. All material variations have been explained in the report.

**CONSULTATION:**

Managers and Coordinators.

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
---------------------------

**MOVED:** Cr. V. Fontana  
**SECONDED:** Cr. G. Greco

**THAT** the contents of the “Financial Report for the ten months ended 30 April 2009” included as **Appendix A** to this report be received and the year-to-date and full-year forecast actual and budget operating and capital results be noted.

**CARRIED**

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**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

Under the Local Government Act 1989, at least every three months the Chief Executive Officer is required to present to the Council a statement comparing the budgeted with the actual revenues and expenses for the financial year to date. In complying with the Act, the attached report (see **Appendix A**) compares the actual and budgeted operating revenues and expenses and the actual and budgeted capital revenues and expenses for the ten months ended 30 April 2009. It also compares the actual and budgeted movements in the Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement for that period.

In addition, a detailed review of the estimated financial results for the year ending 30 June 2009 has been performed in conjunction with Council's budgeting process. The outcomes of this review are included within the report as the forecast financial results.

**CORE ISSUES***Operating Performance*

The Operating Performance for the ten months ended 30 April 2009 is an operating surplus before capital revenue and other items of \$15.5 million, which is \$4.4 million ahead of budget. The main items contributing to this favorable variance are user fees, operating and capital grants, other revenue, employee benefits, depreciation and other expenses. These have been partially off set by an unfavorable variance in materials and services expenses. After capital and other items, the operating surplus is \$19.7 million, which is \$6.1 million ahead of budget. The forecast Operating Performance for the year ending 30 June 2009 is an operating surplus of \$5.7 million, which is \$2.9 million more than budget.

*Capital Performance*

The Capital Performance for the ten months ended 30 April 2009 shows that a total of \$19.0 million has been expended on the capital works program, which is \$4.0 million behind the budget. The variance is due mainly to timing differences on the purchase of plant and equipment, roads projects, open space and building works projects. The forecast total to be expended on capital works for the year ending 30 June 2009 is \$29.1 million, which is \$0.8 million less than budget. A total of \$3.1 million is forecast to be carried forward into the 2009/2010 year for capital works expected to be incomplete as at 30 June 2009.

*Financial Position*

The Financial Position as at 30 April 2009 shows a cash balance of \$20.7 million which is \$8.2 million ahead of budget. The variance is due mainly to timing differences in the receipt of rates, user fees, payments to suppliers and employees, government receipts, GST amounts and payments for property, plant and equipment. The net current asset position is \$24.6 million which is \$11.0 million more than budget. The variance is due mainly to the higher cash and trade receivables and lower trade payables position compared with budget. The net asset position is \$805.3 million, which is \$6.6 million ahead of budget. The forecast Financial Position as at 30 June 2009 shows a cash position of \$19.8 million and net current assets of \$5.4 million.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS***Environmental Sustainability*

Nil.

*Social Inclusion and Diversity*

Nil.

*Other*

Nil.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Financial Report for the ten months ended 30 April 2009 shows that Council's YTD operating result is a surplus of \$19.7 million and \$19.0 million has been expended on capital works. The forecast actual results for year ending 30 June 2009 are an operating surplus of \$5.7 million and capital works expenditure of \$29.1 million.

**FUTURE ACTIONS**

A further financial report will be presented to Council for the 11 months ending 31 May 2009.

**7.2 DELEGATION OF POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

MINUTE NO. 174

**AUTHOR:** Manager Customer and Civic Services – Ray McQuillen**MANAGER:** General Manager Corporate Services – Bruce Dobson**BUDGET****IMPLICATIONS:** Nil**SUMMARY:**

The Local Government Act 1989 requires that all delegations made by the Council to Special Committees and to members of Council staff are required to be reviewed within 12 months of each general election.

This report provides an overview of the delegations framework at Darebin, the scope and progress of the statutory review of delegations and presents for Council approval a revised *Instrument of Delegation* to delegate Council powers, duties and functions to the Chief Executive Officer.

The *Instrument of Delegation* has been revised in accordance with section 98(6) of the Local Government Act 1989.

**This matter was considered at the Council meeting on 4 May 2009. The Council deferred consideration to enable further consultation with Councillors. The matter has been discussed further with Councillors and is now submitted to Council for formal consideration.**

**CONSULTATION:**

Councillors  
Executive Management Team  
Chief Executive Officer  
Maddocks, Lawyers  
Other Councils

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** in the exercise of the powers conferred by section 98(1) of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) and the other legislation referred to in the attached *Instrument of Delegation*, Darebin City Council (Council) resolves that:

- (1) There be delegated to the person holding the position, acting in or performing the duties of Chief Executive Officer the powers, duties and functions set out in the *Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer* attached as **Appendix A** to this report, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument.
- (2) The Instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the Instrument.
- (3) On the coming into force of the Instrument the previous delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, dated 21 November 2005, is revoked.

- (4) The duties and functions set out in the Instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.
- (5) It is noted that the Instrument includes a power of delegation to members of Council staff, in accordance with section 98(3) of the Act.

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
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**MOVED:** Cr. T. Laurence

**SECONDED:** Cr. N. Katsis

**THAT:**

- (1) Sub-clause 1.1 of the proposed Instrument of Delegation attached as **Appendix A** to this report be amended by deleting the words 'awarding a contract exceeding the value of \$500,000' and substituting the words 'awarding a contract for the purchase of goods and services exceeding the value of \$150,000 or awarding a contract for the carrying out of works exceeding the value of \$200,000'.
- (2) In the exercise of the powers conferred by section 98(1) of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) and the other legislation referred to in the revised Instrument of Delegation, Darebin City Council (Council) resolves that:
  - a) There be delegated to the person holding the position, acting in or performing the duties of Chief Executive Officer the powers, duties and functions set out in the Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer attached as **Appendix A** to this report but revised in accordance with Resolution (1) above, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument.
  - b) The Instrument comes into force immediately the common seal of Council is affixed to the Instrument.
  - c) On the coming into force of the Instrument the previous delegation to the Chief Executive Officer, dated 21 November 2005, is revoked.
  - d) The duties and functions set out in the Instrument must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.
  - e) It is noted that the Instrument includes a power of delegation to members of Council staff, in accordance with section 98(3) of the Act.
- (3) The Instrument of Delegation be reviewed again in 12 months time.

**CARRIED**

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**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

Under section 98(6) of the Local Government Act 1989, all delegations made by the Council to Special Committees and to members of Council staff are required to be reviewed within 12 months of each general election.

In the Darebin framework of delegations, the review needs to include:

- Delegations to Special Committees
- Delegations to the Chief Executive Officer
- Delegations direct to other members of Council staff under the provisions of certain Acts and Regulations which do not expressly authorise sub-delegation.

A Council is a legal entity which “consists of its Councillors who are democratically elected in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989”. Because it is not a ‘natural person’ the Council can only act (make decisions) in two ways – by resolution at a Council meeting or through others acting on its behalf (by delegation).

There are basically two forms of delegation:

- Delegation to a Special Committee
- Delegation to a member of the Council staff.

Councils have a raft of powers, duties and functions under the Local Government Act, Planning and Environment Act, Subdivisions Act, Building Act, Road Management Act, Health Act, Domestic Animals Act, Emergency Management Act and many (approximately 70) more. Most powers, duties and functions are therefore performed by members of Council staff with formal powers delegated by the Council.

**CORE ISSUES****Delegation framework at Darebin**

Darebin Council has established a framework of formal *Instruments of Delegation* to facilitate delegation of powers, duties and functions to the appropriate level of the Organisation. A ‘delegate’ must act in accordance with Council policies and any conditions, limitations and guidelines fixed including reporting requirements.

The framework of delegations at Darebin City Council is:

1. Delegations from Council to its Special Committees.
2. Delegations from Council to members of Council staff.
  - a. A broad delegation of powers from the Council to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) including the power to sub-delegate to members of Council staff.
  - b. Delegation of (statutory) powers from the Council direct to other members of Council staff (where sub-delegation is not specifically authorised).

3. Delegation of powers from the Chief Executive Officer to members of Council staff.
  - a. Delegation of powers, duties and functions of the office of Chief Executive Officer to members of Council staff.
  - b. Sub-delegation of Council powers to members of Council staff.
4. Delegations from Council (as Preston Cemetery Trust) to Council (Cemetery) staff.

The framework and format of the *Instruments of Delegation* at Darebin is based on a model developed for Victorian councils by Maddocks, Lawyers.

A register of all these *Instruments of Delegation* is maintained by the Council and is available for inspection by the public.

### **Scope and progress of statutory review of delegations**

The review of delegations required under the Local Government Act 1989 has three components:

- Review of delegations from Council to Special Committees
- Review of delegations from Council to the Chief Executive Officer
- Review of 'statutory' delegations from Council direct to members of Council staff.

Progress on the review of these and other delegations is outlined in the following paragraphs.

#### Delegation to Special Committees (see 1. above)

Delegations from Council to Special Committees are formally reviewed by the Council when the Committees are appointed or re-appointed each year.

Delegations to the Planning Committee, Hearing of Submissions Committee, Bundoora Homestead Board of Management and Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council have all been reviewed and approved by the Council since the 2008 general election.

#### Council delegation to CEO (see 2a. above)

The delegation from the Council to the Chief Executive Officer is the focus of this report. The scope of the proposed delegation and the conditions/limitations which apply are detailed below.

#### Council delegation to Council staff (see 2b. above)

A review and update of delegations from Council direct to other members of Council staff is about to commence.

The package of delegations will be submitted to Council for formal consideration later in 2009 when the review is completed.

#### CEO delegation to Council staff (see 3. above)

Delegations from the Chief Executive Officer to members of Council staff will be reviewed once the delegation to the Chief Executive Officer is approved by the Council.

Preston Cemetery Trust delegation to Council (Cemetery) staff (see 4. above)

Delegations from Council (as Preston Cemetery Trust) to Council (Cemetery) staff were last reviewed in February 2008 and are not proposed to be reviewed again in this exercise.

***Instrument of Delegation to Chief Executive Officer***

The current *Instrument of Delegation* to the Chief Executive Officer was approved by Council resolution on 21 November 2005. A copy is attached as **Appendix B** to this report.

The *Instrument of Delegation* has been revised in accordance with section 98(6) of the Local Government Act 1989. The format and substance of the *Instrument* is based on the Maddocks model delegations used by the majority of Victorian Councils.

The proposed new *Instrument of Delegation* to the Chief Executive Officer is attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

The *Instrument* authorises the Chief Executive Officer to determine issues, take action and do acts or things arising out of, or connected with, any duty imposed, or function or power conferred on Council by or under any Act.

There are a number of restrictions and conditions specified in the *Instrument*:

- The Chief Executive Officer is not authorised to take action on the matters (borrowings, rates and charges, expenditure outside approved budget etc.) specifically exempted under the Local Government Act 1989.
- The Chief Executive Officer is not authorised to take action on key strategic and governance issues (local laws, budgets and Council plan, appointment of Council representatives etc.) specified in the *Instrument of Delegation*.
- The Chief Executive Officer is not authorised to award a contract exceeding the value of \$500,000.
- The Chief Executive Officer is not to determine any issue or take an action which:
  - Council has previously designated as an issue, action, act or thing which must be the subject of a resolution of Council.
  - Would be likely to be inconsistent with a policy or strategy adopted by the Council.
- The Chief Executive Officer is not to determine any issue, action or thing which involves major policy or strategic matters which will have an impact on the operation of Council.

The proposed *Instrument of Delegation* reflects the current practice at Darebin.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**Environmental sustainability**

Nil.

**Social inclusion and diversity**

Nil.



**Other**

The delegation of Council powers to the Chief Executive Officer and other members of Council staff is a long established practice facilitated and regulated by the Local Government Act to enable day to day operational decisions to be made. Delegated authority is part of the good governance framework outlined in the *Governing Darebin 2008* policy statement. The proposed *Instrument of Delegation* is based on the model developed by Maddocks, Lawyers and used by a majority of Victorian councils.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil.

**FUTURE ACTIONS**

- The signed copy of the *Instrument of Delegation to the Chief Executive Officer* to be included in the Register of Delegations available for inspection by the public.
- Other *Instruments of Delegation* will be presented to Council for consideration later in 2009 as outlined in this report

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Proposed *Instrument of Delegation* to the Chief Executive Officer May 2009 – **Appendix A**
- Current *Instrument of Delegation* to the Chief Executive Officer November 2005 – **Appendix B**
- Delegations and Authorisations Service – Maddocks, Lawyers

**7.3 REVIEW OF ALLOWANCES FOR MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS****MINUTE NO. 175****AUTHOR:** Manager Customer and Civic Services – Ray McQuillen**MANAGER:** General Manager Corporate Services – Bruce Dobson**BUDGET****IMPLICATIONS:** The proposed allowances have been allowed for in the 2009/2010 Proposed Budget**SUMMARY:**

Section 74 of the Local Government Act 1989 provides for each Council to review and determine Mayoral and Councillor allowances within seven months after each general election. The allowances fixed become payable for the next four financial years but are subject to annual review by the Minister for Local Government.

The current range of allowances for the office of Mayor and Councillor took effect from 1 December 2008. The three-level structure for allowances is based on Council population and total revenue. Darebin City Council is a Category 3 Council in the structure, and allowances up to \$24,200 for Councillors and up to \$77,300 for the Mayor apply. In addition an amount the equivalent of the *superannuation guarantee contribution* (currently 9%) applies.

This report recommends that Council gives formal notice of its intention to set the Mayoral allowance at \$77,300 and Councillor allowances at \$24,200 plus an amount equivalent to the *superannuation guarantee contribution* (currently 9%) for the four-year term of office of the Council.

**CONSULTATION:**

Executive Management Team

Local Government, Victoria

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION****MOVED:** Cr. V. Fontana**SECONDED:** Cr. B. Morgan**THAT:**

- (1) Public Notice be given, in accordance with sections 74 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989, of Council's intention to:
  - Set the Mayoral allowance at \$77,300 plus an amount equivalent to the *superannuation guarantee contribution* (currently 9%) for the 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 financial years.

- Set Councillor allowances at \$24,200 plus an amount equivalent to the *superannuation guarantee contribution* (currently 9%) for the 2009/2010, 2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 financial years.
- (2) Council note that the allowances set by the Council will be subject to any variations or adjustments made by the Minister for Local Government during the four-year period.
- (3) Any person who makes a written submission in relation to the proposed allowances and requests to be heard in support of the written submission, be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee at a meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Darebin Civic Centre, 350 High Street Preston at 7.00 pm on Thursday 25 June 2009.

**CARRIED**

## REPORT

### BACKGROUND

Section 74 of the Local Government Act 1989 provides for each Council to review and determine Mayoral and Councillor allowances within seven months after each general election and the allowances fixed become payable for the next four financial years, subject to any variations or adjustments made by the Minister for Local Government.

In May 2007, the Minister for Local Government appointed a Local Government Panel to review the remuneration of Mayors and Councillors in Victoria. The Panel reviewed allowances, expenses, support and resources for Councillors and submitted its report to the Minister in January 2008.

The Minister subsequently released the Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources in April 2008. The policy statement retained a three-tier structure of allowances based on Council population and revenue. A range of allowances was specified for each category of Council and the allowances were adjusted based on movements in the remuneration of executives within the meaning of the Public Administration Act 2004 since the previous review in 2000. In addition an amount the equivalent of the *superannuation guarantee contribution* (currently 9%) was introduced. The Government policy statement provided for an annual review of allowances by the Minister for Local Government.

The Local Government Act 1989 was subsequently amended to implement the new framework of allowances and the Minister specified transitional allowances to apply for each category of Council from 1 December 2009.

Under the transitional arrangements, the allowances payable for Darebin Councillors are:

- Councillors - \$24,200 plus superannuation guarantee contribution
- Mayor – \$77,300 plus superannuation guarantee contribution.

Council is now required to review and determine the allowances for the next four years, subject to any variations or adjustments made by the Minister for Local Government. The review is to include a public consultation process under section 223 of the Local Government Act 1989.

## CORE ISSUES

### Determining the Allowance

#### Framework

As a Category 3 Council, Darebin City Council is to determine allowances within the following ranges:

Councillor	\$10,100 to \$24,200 per annum	(current allowance \$24,200 per annum)
Mayor	up to \$77,300 per annum	(current allowance \$77,300 per annum)

The allowances fixed will apply for the four-year term of the Council. The allowances can be varied if the Minister for Local Government changes the range of allowances that apply to the City of Darebin and the Council undertakes a further review and public consultation process. The Council is also required to apply any adjustments determined by the Minister having regard to movements in the remuneration of executives within the meaning of the Public Administration Act 2004.

#### Guidelines

The Local Government (Councillor Remuneration Review) Panel maintained the previous three-category model based on Council population and revenue. Population size has been regarded as a reasonable indicator of the representational workload involved in a Councillor's role, and total revenue as an indicator of the size and complexity of the governance role.

The Panel proposed that the range of allowances within each category be discontinued and a set figure apply to each category of Councils. The Government however considered there was a need to retain a range to allow Councils the flexibility and discretion to determine allowances in consultation with their communities.

As a result there are no revised guidelines for establishing the level of allowances within the range.

When the three-tier structure of allowances was established back in 2000 the range of allowances was intended to allow Councils to determine rates taking into account factors that create complexity for the Council and the impact those factors have on the role and function of the Mayor and Councillors. Factors highlighted at the time were social factors, regional roles, and the governance expectations of the Mayor and Councillors.

### Darebin complexity indicators

#### Community

The community of the City of Darebin is very diverse. It includes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of more than 1,100, the largest proportion in all metropolitan municipalities. One in four residents was born in a non-English speaking country and over one-third of residents speak a language other than English at home. The non-Christian religious community has doubled in recent years. One in five residents is over 60 years of age and almost one in five residents has a disability. Unemployment rates are higher than the metropolitan average and one in four Darebin households earns less than \$500 per week.

The diversity challenge affects every program and service delivered by the Council. Council services need to meet the varied needs of the community, and at the same time ensure that the standard of service is not diminished due to the difficulties involved in tailoring services to specific recipients.

Special needs groups within the community require careful attention in service planning as they are often heavily reliant on Council services. Tailoring services to meet special needs and ensuring that all services are inclusive and accessible, is critical to effective service delivery.

### Environment and Infrastructure

Bordered by the Darebin and Merri Creeks, the City of Darebin contains a diverse range of open spaces, ranging from small, local parks up to major regional parklands such as the All Nations Park in Northcote and Bundoora Park in Bundoora. Added to this are environmentally sensitive areas such as the Central Creek Grasslands, the wildlife reserve at La Trobe University and the Leamington Street Wetlands.

In addition, the City of Darebin owns, controls, manages or maintains an extensive range of physical assets. These include over 600kms of roads, 2,000kms of drains, 300 buildings, 450 hectares of parkland and over 45,000 street trees. The increasing urban densities throughout the City are placing an increased burden on city infrastructure.

Roads in Darebin carry significant numbers of vehicle movements, and increasingly carry the burden of traffic that is travelling through the municipality. A number of major roads cut through Darebin, and form part of a road network servicing the rapidly growing northern corridor of Melbourne.

Council has developed a comprehensive Transport Strategy and is a recognised leader in transport planning and travel behaviour change programs.

The City of Darebin has become a leader in promotion and facilitation of sustainable community behaviour and in integrating environmental strategies into its own operations. Council strategies include the overarching environmental policy, Darebin Climate Change Action Plan, Waste Minimisation Strategy, Sustainable Water Use Plan, Litter Strategy and an Environmental Purchasing Code.

### Governance and Representation

The City of Darebin, with several distinct communities and encompassing two previous metropolitan Councils, has an active and demanding electorate. Councillors are well exposed to local community scrutiny of their activities and decision-making and with three large wards Councillors have a significant and onerous representation role.

The Darebin community has significant expectations on the office of Mayor resulting in extensive time commitments in attending community functions in addition to the advocacy, policy development and regular decision-making forums.

Darebin Council (Mayor and Councillors) have in place a broadly based consultation and decision-making program with fortnightly Council meetings and Planning Committee meetings, and a host of specific purpose community forums and ceremonial events. Council has seven Standing Committees and more than twenty-five Community Committees advising Council on policy matters, projects and management of Council facilities. Councillors represent the Council on a range of statewide, metropolitan, regional and local committees and organizations.

### Regional Factors

Darebin plays a significant role in the Northern region of Melbourne. The Northland regional shopping and homemaker centre is a major attraction within and beyond the region and, of course, places trading pressure on other commercial centres in Preston, Thornbury, Northcote, Fairfield and

Reservoir. There are many Government regional centres, training, education and health facilities including La Trobe University, Northern Melbourne Institute of Technology and the PANCH Health Service.

Industry is still an important component of the regional economy although manufacturing has declined over recent decades.

Parks and recreational facilities of a regional significance include Darebin and Merri Creeks, Edwardes Park Lake, Bundoora Park and All Nations Park.

#### Advocacy and representation

In addition to the direct service delivery issues and impacts described in the previous paragraphs, the City of Darebin faces a number of challenges which affect the health and well-being of its residents. These broader issues are often outside the control and resource capacity of the Council and therefore require a “whole of community” approach incorporating research and policy development, broad collaboration and advocacy on behalf of the Darebin community.

Community health and safety, environment and amenity, traffic and transport, economic development and social issues currently/recently being addressed by the Council include:

- Regional meals kitchen
- Neighbourhood renewal program
- Student housing
- Alcohol related issues
- Women’s policy and gender equity
- Rental housing market issues
- Heavy vehicles on local roads
- Victorian transport plan and freight strategy
- Tram route corridor improvement proposals
- Adaption strategy – climate change and peak oil
- Federal childcare infrastructure fund.

#### **Conclusion**

It is considered that Darebin City Council, with the diverse and complex service, social and advocacy issues outlined in this report, warrants the maximum allowance available to Category 3 Councils within the policy framework adopted by the Victorian Government.

There are twenty-two Category 3 Councils and research has indicated that all have fixed, or propose to fix, Councillor and Mayoral allowances at the maximum within the range.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The environmental issues and challenges referred to in the report have an impact on the advocacy and community leadership roles of the Mayor and Councillors.

**Social Inclusion and Diversity**

The social inclusion and diversity issues and challenges referred to in the report have an impact on the advocacy and community leadership roles of the Mayor and Councillors.

**Other**

As outlined in the report, the determination of Mayoral and Councillor allowances is a statutory requirement for the Council.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Apart from the introduction of a superannuation guarantee contribution of 9%, the new framework of allowances for Mayors and Councillors simply restores the real value of the allowances previously established in 2000. The allowances proposed in this report have been in effect since December 2008 and maintain the status quo for Darebin Councillors.

The proposed allowances have been included in the 2009/2010 Proposed Budget.

**FUTURE ACTIONS**

Under the policy framework Council is required to advertise the proposed allowances in the major newspapers circulating in the municipality and to demonstrate that it has taken the response into account in confirming or varying the proposed allowances.

As in previous years, the consultation process will be run in conjunction with the Budget process.

The next steps are to give public notice of the proposed allowances in The Age and Preston / Northcote Leader newspapers and then consider any submissions received.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Local Government (Councillor Remuneration Review) Panel Report – January 2008.

Victorian Government ‘Recognition and Support’ Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources – April 2008

City of Darebin Council minutes 10 December 2008

City of Darebin Council minutes 30 May 2005

**7.4 2009/2010 PROPOSED BUDGET****MINUTE NO. 176****AUTHOR:** General Manager Corporate Services – Bruce Dobson**MANAGER:** Chief Executive Officer – Michael Ulbrick**BUDGET****IMPLICATIONS:** Proposed budget for the 2009/2010 year**SUMMARY:**

The Council must prepare a Budget for each financial year. The Budget is to contain the information specified in the *Local Government Act 1989* (“the Act”) and all details required by the *Local Government (Finance and Reporting) Regulations 2004* (“the Regulations”). As soon as practicable after the Council has prepared a Budget it must give Public Notice. Any person has the right to make a submission under section 223 of the Act on any proposal contained in the Budget.

Following the completion of the statutory obligations including consideration of submissions, Council may adopt the Budget.

This report presents the 2009/2010 Proposed Budget and recommends that public notice be given in accordance with the Act.

**CONSULTATION:**

Councillors  
Chief Executive Officer  
General Managers  
Managers and Coordinators

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. V. Fontana  
**SECONDED:** Cr. T. Laurence

**THAT:**

- (1) Public Notice be given in accordance with sections 129 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* of Council’s intention to adopt, at a Special Meeting of Council proposed to be held at 7.00pm on Monday 29 June 2009, the proposed 2009/2010 Budget (**Appendix A**) presented to this meeting.
- (2) Public Notice be given in accordance with sections 169 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* of Council’s intention to grant, at a Special Meeting of Council proposed to be held at 7.00pm on Monday 29 June 2009, a rate rebate to pensioners in the 2009/2010 year in the amount of \$50 to each owner of rateable land who is an ‘eligible recipient’ within the meaning of the *State Concessions Act 2004*.



- (3) Any person who makes a written submission in relation to the proposed 2009/2010 Budget or in relation to the granting of a rate rebate to pensioners and requests to be heard in support of the written submission, be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee at a meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Darebin Civic Centre, 350 High Street Preston at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 June 2009.

**CARRIED**

## REPORT

### BACKGROUND

The Council must prepare a Budget for each financial year. The Council must ensure that the Budget contains the information specified in the *Local Government Act 1989* ("the Act") and all details required by the *Local Government (Finance and Reporting) Regulations 2004* ("the Regulations"). As soon as practicable after the Council has prepared a Budget it must give Public Notice. Any person has the right to make a submission under section 223 of the Act on any proposal contained in the Budget. Following the completion of the statutory obligations, Council may adopt the Budget.

### CORE ISSUES

#### Strategic Resource Plan

A Strategic Resource Plan has been prepared for the years 2009/2010 to 2012/2013 to assist Council in adopting a budget within a longer term financial framework. The key objective of the Strategic Resource Plan is financial sustainability in the medium to long term, whilst still achieving the Council's strategic objectives as specified in the Council Plan. Council's commitment to fairness and equity underpins its objectives and the preparation of the budget. The 2009/2010 budget reflects the first year of the Strategic Resource Plan.

#### Rates and pensioner rebate

It is proposed that rates on property assessments be increased by 5.0% for the 2009/2010 year, and that a Council-funded rate rebate of \$50 be introduced to residential pensioner ratepayers in addition to the State Government pensioner rates concession. The pensioner rate rebate is to assist in the proper development of the municipal district, in accordance with section 169 of the Act.

The net rate increase after taking into account the pensioner rebate is 4.2%. Total rates and charges raised will be \$78.07 million, including supplementary rates on new developments and the service charge for the optional green waste service. The level of rates raised allows Council to maintain service levels, introduce a number of new initiatives and deliver a significant capital works program.

#### Key budget influences

There have been a number of significant factors impacting on the 2009/2010 budget. The global financial and economic crisis has impacted on Council income in a range of areas, most notably through an expected reduction in investment income of \$0.52 million. Other key influences include the continuing impact of the drought on Council's operations, rising costs of utilities, and expected increases in waste disposal costs in future years.

Operating result

The expected operating result for the 2009/2010 year is a surplus of \$1.32 million, which is a decrease of \$4.37 million from 2008/2009. The underlying result, which excludes the impact of capital grants and one-off items, is a surplus of \$0.03 million in 2009/2010. The projected operating result for the 2008/2009 year is a surplus of \$5.69 million and the projected underlying result is a surplus of \$0.27 million.

Provision of services

The net cost of services delivered to the community for the 2009/2010 year is expected to be \$60.55 million which is an increase of \$3.41 million or 6.0% over 2008/2009. The increase is impacted by \$0.56 of operating grants received in 2008/2009 in advance of the 2009/2010 year. For the 2009/2010 year, service levels have been maintained and a number of new activities and initiatives are proposed. The projected net cost for the 2008/2009 year is \$57.13 million.

Cash and investments

Cash and investments is expected to decrease by \$2.58 million during the 2009/2010 year to \$17.19 million as at 30 June 2010. This is due mainly to \$3.13 million of incomplete capital works carried forward from the 2008/2009 year. The reduction in cash and investments is consistent with Council's Strategic Resource Plan. Cash and investments is projected to be \$19.77 million at 30 June 2009.

Capital works

The capital works program for the 2009/2010 year is expected to be \$28.02 million of which \$3.13 million relates to projects which will be carried forward from the 2008/2009 year. The carried forward component is fully funded from the 2008/2009 budget. The capital expenditure program has been set and prioritised based on a rigorous process of consultation that has enabled Council to assess needs and develop sound business cases for each project. Capital works is projected to be \$29.09 million for the 2008/2009 year.

The capital works program for 2009/2010 includes:

- \$9.9 million on roads and drains including reconstructions, maintenance, footpaths, laneways and traffic management projects
- \$4.0 million on open space projects including playground equipment upgrades, playing surface upgrades, street trees, bike paths, streetscapes and parks
- \$6.8 million on buildings including the Lancaster Gate community centre, Clifton Street childcare centre, Reservoir Leisure Centre and major maintenance works
- \$6.9 million on plant and equipment including information technology, library materials and the scheduled replacement of Council plant and equipment
- \$0.5 million on feasibility studies and key strategies to explore future capital works opportunities.

### Net assets and working capital

Net assets (net worth) will increase by \$1.32 million to \$792.62 million and working capital (net current assets) will reduce by \$3.39 million to \$2.05 million as at 30 June 2010. The budget provides that Council will maintain a positive working capital ratio, an accepted measure of the ability to meet short term payment obligations to suppliers and employees. After excluding the effects of long service leave, working capital will be a positive \$7.35 million at 30 June 2010. Total net worth is forecast to be \$791.29 million as at 30 June 2009.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The 2009/2010 Proposed Budget has been prepared to give financial effect in the coming year to the objectives set out in the proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 and Strategic Resource Plan.

### **Environmental sustainability**

The 2009/2010 Proposed Budget continues Council's funding of environmental operations in a range of areas including waste collection and recycling services, street cleaning, litter collection, park and sporting field maintenance and improvements in the context of drought, water-saving and energy efficiency measures.

Funding has also been included to enhance Council's active work with the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make it easier for the community to introduce energy saving measures in their homes and businesses.

### **Social inclusion and diversity**

The proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 contains a number of policy directions specifically designed to reflect Council's commitment to social inclusion and diversity, and the proposed Budget has been prepared in this context. Social inclusion, fairness and equity have been key principles in Council determining how to raise income and allocate expenditure to fund the many services it delivers and infrastructure it maintains and upgrades. The introduction of a \$50 rate rebate to Darebin's 12,000 eligible pensioner ratepayers is one example within the budget of Council's commitment to these principles.

### **Other**

The proposed budget is prepared in the context of key principles in the proposed Strategic Resource Plan 2009-2013 that underpin Council's long term financial planning. These principles are:

- Maintenance of the scope and standard of ongoing services provided to the Darebin community and a flexibility to address changing community needs with innovative services and facilities.
- A focus on renewing community assets such as roads, footpaths, open space and buildings to ensure they are maintained at an appropriate standard to meet required service levels.
- Generation of sufficient ongoing income to fund Council services and capital works commitments over the longer term.
- Holding of sufficient cash and other assets in order to meet Council's payment obligations to suppliers and employees.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All matters raised in this report which have a financial implication have been reflected in the 2009/2010 Proposed Budget.

**FUTURE ACTIONS**

Two community information sessions will be held in the Darebin Council Chamber, 350 High Street Preston at 7.00pm on Tuesday 2 June and at 2.00pm on Thursday 4 June 2009 to explain the content of the proposed Budget and the overall context in which the Budget is framed.

The closing date for submissions in relation to the Budget is Thursday 18 June 2009. The Hearing of Submissions Committee will meet at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 June 2009 in the Darebin Council Chamber, 350 High Street Preston to hear any submitters who, in their written submission, requested to be heard in support of their submission in relation to the Budget.

The proposed Budget will be considered for adoption by Council at a Special Meeting of the Council at 7.00pm on 29 June 2009 in the Darebin Council Chamber, 350 High Street Preston after considering any written submissions received and verbal presentations heard by the Hearing of Submissions Committee.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- 2009/2010 Proposed Budget (**Appendix A**)
- Proposed Council Plan 2009-2013
- Proposed Strategic Resource Plan 2009-2013

**7.5 PROPOSED COUNCIL PLAN 2009-2013****MINUTE NO. 177****AUTHOR: Manager Business Improvement – Rhys Thomas****MANAGER: General Manager Corporate Services – Bruce Dobson****BUDGET****IMPLICATIONS: Printing costs of approximately \$10,000****SUMMARY:**

The Council is required by the Local Government Act 1989 ('the Act') to prepare a Council Plan by 30 June 2009. The Act requires that the Plan contain the strategic objectives of Council, strategies for achieving those objectives and indicators to monitor the achievement of those objectives. Further, the Council Plan is required to include a Strategic Resource Plan containing, among other things, a series of standard financial statements.

Following the development of a Council Plan, Councils are required to publish a public notice of the right to make a submission in relation to the adoption of a Council Plan, and of the right to appear at (or be represented at) a meeting in support of that submission.

This report presents the proposed City of Darebin Council Plan 2009-2013 and recommends that public notice be given in accordance with the Act.

**CONSULTATION:**

This proposed Council Plan has been developed following the *Dear Councillor* consultation program, which consisted of a number of elements designed to engage different parts of the Darebin community in the process. The process received a wide response from the Darebin community, with over 250 people providing a response of some kind. The consultation process is described in more detail in the body of this report.

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION****MOVED: Cr. G. Greco****SECONDED: Cr. N. Katsis****THAT:**

- (1) Public Notice be given in accordance with sections 125 and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* of Council's intention to adopt at a Special Meeting of Council at 7.00pm on Monday 29 June 2009, the proposed *Council Plan 2009-2013 (Appendix A)* and the proposed *Strategic Resource Plan 2009-2013 (Appendix B)* as its Council Plan for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2013.

- (2) Any person who makes a written submission in relation to the proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 including the Strategic Resource Plan 2009-2013 and requests to be heard in support of the written submission, be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee at a meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Darebin Civic Centre 350 High Street Preston at 7.00pm on Thursday 25 June 2009.

**CARRIED**

## REPORT

### BACKGROUND

Section 125 of the Local Government Act 1989 ('the Act') requires that the Darebin City Council prepare and approve a Council Plan by 30 June 2009. The Act prescribes a number of matters that must be included in the plan, and provides a right for interested parties to make a submission to Council ahead of its adoption. The relevant part of the Act is:

#### *125 Council Plan*

- (1) *A Council must prepare and approve a Council Plan within the period of 6 months after each general election or by the next 30 June, whichever is later.*
- (2) *A Council Plan must include—*
- (a) the strategic objectives of the Council;*
  - (b) strategies for achieving the objectives for at least the next 4 years;*
  - (c) strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of the objectives;*
  - (d) a Strategic Resource Plan containing the matters specified in section 126;*
  - (e) any other matters which are prescribed by the regulations.*
- (3) *A person has a right to make a submission under section 223 on the proposed Council Plan.*
- ...
- (9) *A person has a right to make a submission under section 223 on a proposed adjustment to a Council Plan which relates to a matter specified under subsection (2)(a), (2)(b) or (2)(c).*

With that in mind, the City of Darebin launched the *Dear Councillor* consultation program in early 2009, and began an extensive process to develop a new Council Plan that would remain relevant for Council's four year term of office.

Further, the Act describes in more detail the matter to be included in a Strategic Resource Plan, which forms a part of the Council Plan. The relevant part of the Act is:

#### *126 Strategic Resource Plan*

- (1) *The Strategic Resource Plan is a resource plan of the resources required to achieve the strategic objectives.*
- (2) *The Strategic Resource Plan must include in respect of at least the next 4 financial years—*
- (a) the standard statements describing the required financial resources in the form and containing the information required by the regulations;*

*(b) statements describing the required nonfinancial resources, including human resources.*

*(3) A Council must—*

*(a) review the Strategic Resource Plan during the preparation of the Council Plan; and*

*(b) adopt the Strategic Resource Plan not later than 30 June each year.*

Councillors and officers of the City of Darebin began discussions regarding the principles to underpin the development of a new Strategic Resource Plan in February 2009, and have been working closely together since that date to prepare a plan that gives effect to these principles, and reflects the policy objectives outlined in the proposed Council Plan.

## CORE ISSUES

Following a workshop for Darebin's Councillors and Executive Management Team in February 2009, Council began the *Dear Councillor* consultation program. The program was designed to engage the Darebin community in the development of the Council Plan and to add to Council's already detailed understanding of the issues and challenges facing the municipality.

The *Dear Councillor* consultation program included:

- Publication of an explanatory article and a copy of the *Dear Councillor* postcard in the February 2009 edition of *Darebin News*.
- An information display and feedback mechanism at the Darebin Community and Kite Festival on Sunday 1 March 2009 at Edwardes Lake Park in Reservoir.
- Distribution of a *Dear Councillor* postcard (in multiple languages) to provide a open ended feedback opportunity.
- Establishment of a multilingual information website and on-line survey at [www.darebin.vic.gov.au/dearcouncillor](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/dearcouncillor).
- A series of focus groups with members of the community, designed to elicit a range of opinion about challenges and potential solutions.
- A number of presentations to, and discussions with, stakeholders and reference groups.
- A series of staff workshops and one-on-one discussions to examine the specifics of implementing the Council's strategic objectives.
- A mail-out of information to over 200 community groups within the municipality.

The attached proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 (**Appendix A**) builds on the results of the consultation program and includes:

- Introductory information
- A promise by Council for 2009-2013
- An explanation of Council's promise
- Six goals (referred to in the Act as strategic objectives and required by section 125(2)(a))
- Explanations of each of the goals
- A series of strategies for the achievement of each of the goals (required by section 125(2)(b))
- A series of strategic indicators relating to each of the goals (required by section 125(2)(c))

The attached proposed Strategic Resource Plan 2009-2013 (**Appendix B**) has been developed through a rigorous process and builds on detailed long term financial planning undertaken over many years. Preparation of the new Strategic Resource Plan commenced at a workshop for Darebin's Councillors and Executive Management Team in February 2009 and a key early step was the development of a number of clear principles to underpin the plan. The plan is designed to provide the necessary resources to deliver the policy and other objectives articulated in the Council plan, within the parameters defined by these principles. The process included:

- Detailed discussions with Council officers with budget responsibilities regarding projected service or demand changes with potential implications for income or expenditure.
- Comprehensive financial modelling by the Financial Services Branch regarding future changes in financial parameters including changes in assets and liabilities.
- Ongoing briefings with the Executive Management Team.
- Close involvement and feedback from Councillors.

The attached proposed Strategic Resource Plan (required by section 125(2)(d) (**Appendix B**) has been prepared for a four year period to guide the setting of future budgets including the 2009/2010 Annual Budget. It includes the following:

- Background information
- The key objectives of the plan
- How the plan was developed
- An assessment of Council's current financial position
- The key underlying assumptions
- The plan outcomes
- Standard Statements describing the required financial resources
- Statements including the required non-financial resources.

When adopted, these two documents together will form the City of Darebin Council Plan as required by section 125 of the Act.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 is a statement of Council's policy direction across all areas of operation. As such, it has potentially significant and far reaching impacts on all areas of Council policy. This report provides some guidance to assist the reader to focus on those areas of greatest impact.

### **Environmental sustainability**

The proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 contains a number of policy directions specifically designed to reflect Council's commitment to environmental sustainability. Most notably, the document contains a goal titled 'Environmental Sustainability', which is underpinned by seven strategies and five strategic indicators.



**Social inclusion and diversity**

The proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 contains a number of policy directions specifically designed to reflect Council's commitment to social inclusion and diversity. Council's articulated Promise contains a commitment to 'strive in all that we do to achieve fairness' and later to 'respect and reflect our diverse community'. This promise is explained in more detail, and Council commits to 'consider the social impacts of all its decisions, and to use the delivery of programs and services to address the potential imbalance between members of our community' and to ensure that 'our diversity response is at the core of our governance and decision-making practices'.

More specifically, under the heading 'Community Wellbeing', the document outlines a number of strategies designed to ensure both the equitable distribution of services, as well as a more targeted approach aimed at redressing imbalance, where present, in the Darebin community. Further elements are addressed under the headings 'Leadership and Engagement', 'Liveability and Regeneration', 'Celebration and Participation' and 'Prudence and Prosperity'.

**Other**

The proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 is a statement of Council's policy direction across all areas of operation. Following its adoption, it will influence the development of all future Council policy, and will inform Council's decision-making on an ongoing basis.

The proposed Strategic Resource Plan 2009-2013 outlines four principles used to underpin Council's long term financial planning. These principles are:

- Maintenance of the scope and standard of ongoing services provided to the Darebin community and a flexibility to address changing community needs with innovative services and facilities.
- A focus on renewing community assets such as roads, footpaths, open space and buildings to ensure they are maintained at an appropriate standard to meet required service levels.
- Generation of sufficient ongoing income to fund Council services and capital works commitments over the longer term.
- Holding of sufficient cash and other assets in order to meet Council's payment obligations to suppliers and employees.

Each of these principles are measured by specific financial indicators.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The estimated cost for the production of the plan for distribution to all staff and the provision of suitable quantities made available to the public is \$10,000. Provision for this amount has been included as part of the 2009/2010 Business Improvement Branch's draft operational budget.

**FUTURE ACTIONS**

The closing date for submissions in relation to the Council Plan is Thursday 18 June 2009. The Hearing of Submissions Committee will hear any submitter who requests to be heard in support of their written submission in relation to the Council Plan on 25 June 2009. The proposed Council Plan will be considered for adoption by Council at a Special Meeting on 29 June 2009 after considering any written submissions received and verbal presentations heard by the Hearing of Submissions Committee.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Proposed Council Plan 2009-2013 (**Appendix A**)
- Proposed Strategic Resource Plan 2009-2013 (**Appendix B**)

*Cr. Katsis disclosed conflicts of interest in the following item classifying both types of interest as an indirect interest, one by indirect interest by close association and describing the nature of the interest as that his uncle owns property in the area, and the other as an indirect financial interest and describing the nature of the interest as that he has a commercial interest within the area. He left the meeting prior to the matter being considered – 8.18pm.*

## **7.6 PRESTON CIVIC PRECINCT REDEVELOPMENT**

### **MINUTE NO. 178**

**AUTHOR:** Manager Major Projects – Nick Mazzarella

**MANAGER:** General Manager City Development – Kevin Breen

#### **BUDGET**

**IMPLICATIONS:** At least \$100,000 in the 2009/2010 Capital Program to review the current concept plan and to explore further State and Federal funding opportunities.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The redevelopment of the Preston Civic Precinct is a significant initiative in the Preston Central Principal Activity Centre and one that aimed to better utilise Council land for a range of important community, civic, Council and commercial uses.

This report provides an overview of the outcome of the recent State Government Budget and suggests a way forward for the project.

#### **CONSULTATION:**

Community and key stakeholders through the *Preston Vision 2000*, the *Preston Central Structure Plan* (2004-06) and the *Preston Civic Precinct Master Plan* in 2007.

Internal staff and Councillors.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

- (1) Council terminate the current procurement process for the Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment and advise the Respondents to the *Request for Qualifications* accordingly.
- (2) Council review the Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment project and receive a further report by 31 August 2009.
- (3) Council explore and apply for alternative funding opportunities with the State and Federal Governments for critical components such as the Intercultural Centre and Community Hub.

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. V. Fontana

**SECONDED:** Cr. S. Chiang

**THAT:**

- (1) Council terminate the current procurement process for the Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment and advise the Respondents to the Request for Qualifications accordingly.
- (2) Council review the Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment project and receive a further report by 31 August 2009.
- (3) Council explore and apply for alternative funding opportunities with the State and Federal Governments for critical components such as the Intercultural Centre and Community Hub.
- (4) Officers provide an urgent briefing for Councillors on the future direction of the Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment project.

**CARRIED**

**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

Funding was not allocated in the recent State Government Budget to enable the Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment to proceed as planned. A significant component of the \$16 million funding requested from State Government was to develop the Intercultural Centre and Community Hub to cater for Darebin's culturally and linguistically diverse community.

Senior representatives from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) have indicated their continued support for Council to apply for funding grants for key initiatives within the Preston Central Principal Activity Centre and the redevelopment of the Preston Civic Precinct (eg. the Intercultural Centre and Community Hub).

**CORE ISSUES****Other Funding Opportunities**

There are several State and Federal Government grant programs that would be relevant to various elements of the Civic Precinct redevelopment. Although it is difficult to quantify the exact amount or likelihood of these grants, it is expected that up to several million dollars could be secured from existing funding programs (eg. Community Support Fund) for elements such as the Intercultural Centre and Community Hub and public realm improvements. There are also current Federal funding programs, including the economic stimulus packages that could attract several million dollars. However, funding at the level available still leaves the public component of the project well short of the funds needed in the current development scheme.

**Procurement Process**

Considering the much reduced funding possibilities, it is highly unlikely that the current concept plan and the procurement process can generate viable proposals from the private sector. As such, it is recommended that the current procurement process should now be terminated in accordance with the adopted Probity Plan for the project. It is important to note that the work to date has provided Council with significant information and intellectual property that could be readily enabled to restart a procurement process for a reviewed project in a short period of time.

**Intercultural Centre and Community Hub**

This critical part of the project cannot now proceed as planned and key stakeholders and project partners for the Intercultural Centre and Community Hub have been notified.

It is recommended that the alternative option be pursued for the provision of an interim facility. A likely scenario that would require some capital funding would be to make better use of the Preston Court House as the Intercultural Centre, despite the limitations of the existing building.

In addition, Council can use the interim period to continue to develop a working model of the Intercultural Centre and a sustainable governance framework.

**Future options**

The considerable effort invested in the project to date can be used to review the current concept plan and consider a new plan to attract future funding partnerships with all levels of government and the private sector. Extensive “due diligence” work on such issues as land contamination, infrastructure capacities (and limitations), ESD principles and urban design (through the C68 Amendment) all contribute to Council’s ability to consider another scheme for implementation at an appropriate time and staging.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There were no funds allocated for the Preston Civic Precinct in the State Budget brought down on 5 May 2009 and the current concept plan is not viable as it stands at this stage.

The bulk of the work done to date will serve us well for a future development that will reinforce Preston as a dynamic activity centre in Melbourne’s inner north.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS****Environmental Sustainability**

The Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment project identified environmental initiatives and aimed to create a ‘green precinct’. A review of the concept will further identify environmental sustainability measures.

**Social Inclusion and Diversity**

A critical component of the Preston Civic Precinct redevelopment is the Intercultural Centre and Community Hub. A review of the concept will consider an interim operation of this centre as well explore funding opportunities for the bigger vision. Also, affordable housing was identified to be included in the overall development and this also cannot be delivered at this point in time.

**Other**

Previous Council reports on this project considered relevant policy implications.

**FUTURE ACTIONS**

- Terminate the procurement process and advise the Respondents to the Request for Qualifications.
- Review the current concept plan for the Preston Civic Precinct to identify alternative possibilities for delivery of key elements and funding opportunities.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Council confidential minutes of 6 April 2009

*Cr. Katsis returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this item – 8.22pm.*

**7.7 ROLLING FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLANNING UNIT  
WORKPLAN (2009-2014)****MINUTE NO. 179****AUTHOR: Coordinator Strategic Planning – Mei Lee****MANAGER: General Manager City Development – Kevin Breen****BUDGET****IMPLICATIONS: Within budget****SUMMARY:**

This report presents to Council the rolling Five Year Strategic Work Plan (2009-2014) for the Strategic Planning Unit. The work plan takes into consideration the current work achievements and undertakings, current government policy environment, including shifts in State Government planning agenda; and the resources available to achieve the work plan commitments.

In addition to some projects that are still in progress and are likely to be completed in 2009, the following is a list of pressing new work for the next financial year which will be commenced in 2009/2010:

- Residential Strategy, New Residential Zones, policies on various housing stock for different stakeholders, planning scheme amendments
- Economic and Industrial Land Use Review
- Darebin Planning Scheme Review.

Looking ahead, with the preparation of the rolling Five Year Strategic Work Plan (2009-2014), it is prudent to consider the policy trends and agenda set by the State Government, such as *Melbourne 2030*, *Melbourne@5Million* and *Better Decisions Faster*. Some of the State Government current initiatives that will directly impact on Darebin for the next year and beyond include:

- *Better Decisions Faster* that looks into reforming planning systems
- Continued Structure Planning work on Activity Centres
- Introduction of the Activity Centre Zones, initially in Preston Central and the appointment of Development Assessment Committee
- Introduction of new Residential Zones
- Introduction of new retail policy
- Investigation of housing capacity and yield within Activity Centres and along public transport corridors
- Intensifying development along public transport corridors
- Reviewing the *Planning and Environment Act, 1987*.

The proposed work plan for the next five years has been reviewed to include some of the follow up work at the local level that would inevitably fall on Councils. The strategic management of the workload ensures that Council is favourably positioned to be well informed in its decision making and to take advantage of any State Government funding for projects that benefit the community should such funding become available. Darebin has benefitted from being involved in a number of government funded projects to date and the continued work in the future proposes to strategically place Council in the current leadership role.

**CONSULTATION:**

Not Applicable

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** Council receives the report and endorses the Rolling Five Year Strategic Planning Unit Work Plan, 2009-2014.

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. G. Greco  
**SECONDED:** Cr. T. McCarthy

**THAT** consideration of the matter be deferred to enable Councillors to be fully briefed on the matter.

**CARRIED**

**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

A Five Year Strategic Planning Business Case for the Strategic Planning Unit was adopted in November 2005. The Business Case provided a rolling Five Year Strategic Planning Work Plan which was last reviewed by Council in March 2007.

The purpose of this report is to enable Council:

- To identify the completion, commencement and work in progress of projects identified in the previous work plan
- Update and review the 2008/2009 annual work plan commitments
- To consider the 2009 Five Year Strategic Planning Work Plan (2009-2014) taking into consideration the current work achievements and undertakings; the policy changes, including shifts in State Government planning agenda; and the resources available to achieve the work plan commitments.



The Five Year Strategic Planning Work Plan has the following objectives:

- Provides Council with a robust policy framework to anticipate local and regional land use development trends, influences and challenges over a 5 year period, including the implementation of State Government policy initiatives, such as *Melbourne 2030* and the subsequent *Melbourne@5Million* and *Better Decisions Faster*.
- Provides Council with a sound policy platform to manage population, housing, employment, transport, environmental and development opportunities and challenges; and
- Anticipates and enables Council to plan its specialist skill base and expertise to realize its full potential.

## CORE ISSUES

### Review of the Strategic Planning Work Program 2007/2008

The following projects have been identified in the earlier work plans and a progress report on current work is provided. Implications for the following year's annual plan and beyond are also identified. The proposed work program for the rolling Five Year Work Plan (2009-2014) arises from Table 1 below. (Projects that have been completed since 2006 and have no further implications for work in further work plans are not included).

Table1: Progress Reports on Projects identified in 2007/2008 Strategic Planning Work Plan

<b>Projects identified in 2007/08 Strategic Planning Work Plan</b>	<b>Progress Report</b>	<b>Implications for next 5 year work plan</b>
<b>Heritage</b> on a municipal wide basis, including: Natural, Aboriginal, Cultural & Social heritage and the associated preparation of heritage overlays as part of the planning scheme amendment to implement findings	Context was appointed to undertake the Heritage Study over a 3 year period that commenced in March 2007. The Thematic History and a municipal wide survey have been completed.	Complete: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Heritage (2009/10)</li> <li>• Potential of Aboriginal Heritage (2009/10)</li> <li>• Cultural/Social Heritage (2009/10)</li> <li>• Preparation of Heritage Overlays and Planning Scheme Amendment</li> </ul>
<b>Activity Centres / Key Transport Spine Planning</b>	<b>Progress Report</b>	<b>Implications for next 5 year work plan</b>
1. <b>Preston Central</b> (Principal Activity Centre)	Planning Scheme Changes (Amendments C67 and C68) undertaken to implement the Preston Central Structure Plan, adopted in September 2006.	New work to flesh out the State Government initiative for the Preston Central including the introduction of the Activity Centre Zone.
2. <b>Northcote</b> (Major Activity Centre)	Planning Scheme Changes (Amendment C81) undertaken to implement the Northcote Activity Centre Structure Plan adopted in April 2007.	Panel hearing yet to be set for June/July 2009 and proceed to complete the amendment process.
3. <b>Bell Street</b> (Transport Spine)	The Bell Street Strategy was adopted in April 2007. Amendment C87 was proposed to implement the study and proceeds to a Panel hearing on 11 May	Proceed to complete the amendment process (2009-2010).

	2009.	
4. <b>Reservoir</b> (Major Activity Centre)	The study process to prepare a Structure Plan commenced in March 2009. Stage 1 of the study, Identification of Issues is being undertaken presently.	Complete the Study for adoption in 2010/11.  An amendment to the Planning Scheme will follow after Council adoption of the Structure Plan. (2010 - 2012).
5. <b>Small Centre Urban Design Frameworks</b>	The Study of Miller-on-Gilbert and Fairfield commenced in September 2007 and following consultation is now completed. Preparation of a planning scheme amendment to implement the Study is due to commence.	Undertake planning scheme amendment in 2009/2010.
6. <b>St Georges Road</b> (Tramway Corridor)	The Study conducted by the Department of Planning and Community Development.	Follow up work on State Government's policy shift to increased focus on higher densities along public transport corridors.
7. <b>Northland</b> (Principal Activity Centre)	The study process to prepare a Structure Plan commenced in March 2009. Stage 1 of the study, Identification of Issues is being undertaken presently.	Completion of the Study for adoption in 2010/11.  An amendment to the Planning Scheme will follow after Council adoption of the Structure Plan. (2010 - 2012).
8. <b>South Preston/Junction</b>	The study process culminated in the Junction Plan Integrated Development Plan which now forms part of the Darebin Planning Scheme.	No further implications, except for a review, if required at the end of the 5 year work plan.
9. <b>Plenty Road/ Summerhill</b> (Tramway Corridor)	This Study was commenced ahead of the Work Plan schedule (scheduled for 2010/11) because of the commencement of the Tram Route 86 project and the availability of funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development who has partnered in the study. The land use study will be used as a model for studying other similar tramway corridors.	Completion of the Study for adoption by Council in 2009/10. It is envisaged that an amendment to the Planning Scheme will follow after the Council adoption of the Study. The amendment process is likely to be over 2010-2012.
<b>Strategic Land Use Projects</b>	<b>Progress Report</b>	<b>Implications for next 5 year work plan</b>
<b>Review of Neighbourhood Character</b>	Study and the Planning Scheme amendment have been achieved and completed.	Undertake a Residential Strategy Study that would look at the whole of municipality needs for housing stock for all the different stakeholders (2009-2011) This study would take on board also the State Government's initiative on

		<p>New Residential Zones (2009-2011).</p> <p>This new work is necessary to respond to the proposed statewide initiative of the State Government to introduce the Substantial Change, Incremental Change and Minimal Change Zones to replace the Residential 1, 2 and 3 Zones. How and when the new zones will be implemented is not yet known.</p>
<b>Review of Industrial Land Use Study</b>	The focus for this study has changed slightly to encompass all land used for employment purposes and will not be restricted to a review of just land zoned industrial.	<p>Economic and Industrial Land Use Review (2009/2010)</p> <p>Review of Industrial and Business Zones and a planning scheme amendment will be undertaken following over 2010-2011.</p>
<b>Review of Development Contributions Plan</b>	The review of the Development Contributions Plan Overlay under the Darebin Planning Scheme needs to be completed as part of the review of the Darebin Planning Scheme.	Undertake in 2009/10.
<b>Policy Development</b>	<b>Progress Report</b>	<b>Implications for next 5 year work plan</b>
<b>Housing policies: Shop top, Aged, Student, Accessible</b>	Housing policies will be incorporated into the broader review of the Integrated Housing Strategy and the MSS.	Commence 2010/11 as part of the Residential Strategy Study assessment and findings.
<b>Public Art Policy</b>		Commence 2010/11
<b>Research</b>	<b>Progress Report</b>	<b>Implications for next 5 year work plan</b>
Small Area Projections	Small Area population projections are completed to inform strategic planning studies.	Ongoing
New Residents Survey	Survey of residents living in medium and higher density housing on the High Street spine has been completed	Ongoing
Household Survey	2008 Household Survey completed Long Term Residents Survey completed.	On going
Standard Service Provision	Provision of demographic and census data (on going)	On going
<b>Planning Scheme Administration</b>	<b>Progress Reports</b>	<b>Implications for next 5 year work plan</b>
<b>Planning Scheme Amendments</b>	About 16 planning scheme amendments were processed and about half the number was approved during	Ongoing

	2007-2008 and the rest are still in progress.	
<b>Process improvements for monitoring scheme</b>	Housekeeping amendments are prepared as part of the improvements for monitoring the scheme.	Ongoing
<b>3 year review</b>	A review of the Darebin Planning Scheme is proposed to commence this financial year to coincide with the completion of the new Council Plan.	Undertake over 2009/2010.

### 2009-2010 Annual Workplan

Projects proposed for the coming financial year will include those that are currently being undertaken and those that are still relevant and identified in the previous Five Year Plan for commencement. In addition to the identified work in progress that has been reported on in the table above, the following is a list of new work for the next financial year which will be commenced in 2009/2010:

- Residential Strategy and New Residential Zones
- Economic and Industrial Land Use Review
- Darebin Planning Scheme Review.

The following new major planning scheme amendments are anticipated:

- New Residential Zones
- Heritage Overlays
- Affordable Housing proposals on VicTrack owned land.

### Looking Ahead: 2009-2014 Five Year Strategic Work plan.

The new format Planning Scheme is a policy based document that must be supported by a body of strategic work. The local policy framework must be consistent with regional and State Government policies. As such, the strategic planning work undertaken by Council is consistent with State Government policy. In looking ahead at the Five Year Strategic Work Plan, it would be prudent to consider the policy trends and agenda set by State Government.

*Melbourne 2030* sets the overarching strategic policy direction for how Melbourne would grow in the next 20 years and will continue to drive the strategic planning work for the unit. In recent times, *Melbourne@5Million* has revised the projected population increases, bringing forward the housing agenda by about 10 years for the metropolitan area. The Government has, therefore, recently initiated some policy initiatives to accelerate approvals for higher density housing. Some of the State Government current initiatives that will directly impact on Darebin for the next year and beyond include:

- *Better Decisions Faster* that looks into reforming and improving the planning system
- Continued Structure Planning work on Activity Centres
- Introduction of the Activity Centre Zones, initially in Preston Central and the appointment of Development Assessment Committee
- Introduction of new Residential Zones
- Introduction of new retail policy

- Investigation of housing capacity and yields within Activity Centres and along public transports corridors
- Intensifying development along public transport corridors
- Reviewing the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

It is prudent that in preparing a five year work plan for the strategic planning work that Council considers the planning agenda that is being driven by the State Government. The proposed Workplan for the next five years has been reviewed to include some of the follow up work at the local level that would inevitably fall on Councils. The strategic management of the workload as reflected in the Workplan will ensure that Council is favourably positioned to be well informed in its decision making and to take advantage of any State Government funding for projects that benefit the community should such funding become available. Darebin has benefitted from being involved in a number of government funded projects to date and the continued work in the future proposes to strategically place Council in the current leadership role.

The proposed 2009/2014 Workplan proposed for endorsement as a guide for future work is indicated in the table below:

Table 2: Five Year Strategic Planning Work Plan (2009/2014)

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
<b>Heritage Study</b>					
New areas	•				
Previously assessed areas	•				
Individual requests	•				
Cultural/social heritage	•	•			
Places of potential Aboriginal heritage	•	•			
Natural Heritage	•	•			
Heritage Overlay Preparation for Planning Scheme Amendment	•	•	•		
<b>Activity Centre / Key Transport spine planning</b>					
Preston Central	•	•			
Northcote	•	•			
Bell Street	•	•	•		
Reservoir	•	•	•		
Small Centre Urban Design Frameworks	•	•	•		
St Georges Road	•	•	•		
Northland	•	•	•		
South Preston / Junction (Review)					•
Plenty Road / Summerhill	•	•	•		
Housing Capacity in Activity Centres / Public Transport Corridors	•	•	•		
Activity Centre Zones	•	•	•		
<b>Strategic Land Use Projects**</b>					
Residential Strategy	•	•			
New Residential Zones	•	•	•		
Review of Economic and Industrial Land Use	•	•			
Review of Development Contributions Plan	•	•			
<b>Policy development</b>					
Housing policies on Shop top, Aged, Student, Accessible, Affordable.	•	•	•		
Public Art policy		•	•		
Existing policies requiring translation into the Planning Scheme	•	•	•	•	•
<b>Research</b>					
Household Survey	•	•	•	•	•
New Residents survey	•	•	•	•	•
Census	•	•	•	•	•
Standard service provision	•	•	•	•	•

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
<b>Planning scheme administration</b>					
Planning Scheme amendments (housekeeping, Council initiated to implement strategic studies or external parties' requests)	•	•	•	•	•
Process improvements for monitoring scheme	•	•	•	•	•
4 year Planning Scheme / MSS review	•	•			

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### Environmental Sustainability

All work programs undertaken in the Workplan will consider issues of environmental sustainability such as, energy use and greenhouse emissions; adaption to climate change and peak oil; water use (potable and other); water quality; waste; biodiversity; air quality; and environmental contamination.

### Social Inclusion and Diversity

All work programs will also include consideration of social inclusion and diversity issues, such as marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and communities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees, people with little or no English, isolated and elderly people, people with disabilities, homeless people, and people living in poverty. Policy recommendations will be assessed against the human rights charter checklist and implementation should be considered in the context of Council's commitments to respect, community diversity and wellbeing.

### Other

The work undertaken will be consistent with the *Council Plan*, relevant legislative requirements and State Government policies such as, *Melbourne 2030* and [Melbourne@5Million](#).

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Within budget.

## FUTURE ACTIONS

Continue to implement current workplans.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

Darebin City Council Strategic Planning Unit, 2005, Strategic Planning Business Case.

Item 7.6, Council Agenda, 5 March 2007, Review of The Five Year Strategic Planning Work Plan (2006 - 2010).



**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** Council note implications and requirements of bringing forward the application of a heritage overlay to Nos. 39, 41, 55, 57 and 58 Woolton Avenue Thornbury.

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. T. McCarthy  
**SECONDED:** Cr. T. Laurence

**THAT** consideration of the matter be deferred until the next meeting of Council.

**CARRIED**

**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

On 20 April 2009 Council considered a progress report on the *Darebin Heritage Study 2007* which is currently being prepared through the Strategic Planning Unit. In doing so it resolved:

*“That:*

- (1) Council note current progress on the Darebin Heritage Study.*
- (2) Officers prepare a report for the next Council meeting on the implications and requirements of bringing forward the Heritage Overlay to Woolton Avenue Thornbury.”*

This report is in response to that resolution.

**At its meeting on 4 May 2009, Council resolved that consideration of this report be deferred until this meeting of Council.**

**Woolton Avenue Precinct: assessment, description and explanation**

Section (4)(1)(d) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) contains the objective to *conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value.*

To achieve this objective, Councils as responsible and planning authorities for their planning schemes, undertake periodic heritage studies to understand, identify and conserve such places.

In the officer report of 20 April 2009 (**Appendix A**) Council was updated about the methodology for and progress of the *Darebin Heritage Study 2007* (the *Study*) currently being undertaken by Context consultants Pty Ltd.

In line with conventional heritage practice, Stage 1 of the *Study* involved preparation of a Thematic Environmental History (TEH) for the municipality. The Australian Heritage Commission’s (AHC)



Historic Themes were used to provide a framework for understanding the historical development of the municipality.

In this regard, a TEH is quite different to a local history which uses a narrative rather than thematic approach.

Using the framework to understand how Darebin developed in the TEH, preliminary observations and the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) assessment criteria (**Appendix B**), the second stage of the Study identifies previously unrecognised individual places and precincts of local, regional or state significance in the “*City of Darebin Heritage Study Volume 3 – key findings and recommendations Draft Stage 2 Report August 2008*” (the *Stage 2 Report*).”

The initial *Stage 2 Report* was delivered in August 2008. It provides a ‘citation’ or explanation about each place or precinct identified including its history and a ‘*statement of significance*’ which outlines what, why and how the place or precinct is significant.

Heritage practice seeks to conserve identified places by understanding why a place is significant and therefore how to minimise adverse impacts on that significance. The citation, and in particular its *statement of significance*, is a critical tool to both understand and respond to proposed re-development of a heritage place.

Each place is assessed on a site-by-site basis, and what is considered an appropriate development or design response varies depending on the nature of the place in question and its significance.

Nos. 39, 41, 55, 57 and 58 Woolton Avenue were identified in the *Stage 2 Report* as forming a precinct of local heritage significance for the reasons:

*“...It is an early twentieth century residential precinct comprising groups of houses on both sides of Woolton Avenue, between the Melbourne to Whittlesea Railway Line and St George’s Road, Apart from Woolton at No. 58 the houses were built in the first decades of the twentieth century and are mainly substantial detailed double-fronted villas setback from their street boundaries behind mature gardens.*

*the houses at No. 54 and No.60 are [also] of individual significance and have separate citations....*

*The Woolton Avenue Precinct in Thornbury is of local historic and architectural significance to Darebin city...*

*Historically, the Woolton Avenue Precinct in Thornbury is significant as a representative example of an early twentieth century residential subdivision, which provides evidence of an important early phase in suburban development in Thornbury as the economic recovery in the first decades of the twentieth century. (AHC criteria A.4, D.2)*

*The houses at 55 and 57 are architecturally significant as fine examples of Victorian transitional-style villas in a garden setting, and have typical features of this style. The significance of these houses is enhanced by relatively high degree of external integrity. (AHC criterion D.2)”*

The full heritage citation as contained in the *Stage 2 Report* forms **Appendix C**.

### **Interim vs Permanent Heritage Controls**

Re-development of places of recognised local significance is managed through the Darebin Planning Scheme which is administered by Council under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act). Development of places of State significance (ie. included on the Victorian Heritage Register), such as the Preston Tramway Workshops (VHR2031) is determined by the Heritage Council of Victoria under the *Heritage Act 1995*.

All places of local or State significance are identified in the planning scheme through the schedule to the Heritage Overlay (HO).

When a new comprehensive heritage study is completed, there is usually a need to prepare a major amendment to the planning scheme to apply the schedule to the HO to numerous new areas and sites.

For reasons of scale and complexity, heritage amendments can be problematic and resource intensive.

For this reason, the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) have offered Councils the option of seeking interim controls by way of a Ministerial amendments to protect both site-specific and numerous places where:

- There is an immediate threat to a specific place ie. through a building demolition application; or
- The public exhibition of the amendment to introduce the permanent controls to a large number of properties will be exhibited upon introduction of the interim controls.

As outlined in the officer report of 20 April 2009 (**Appendix A**), Council's practice has been to check all building permit applications for demolition against the findings of the *Stage 2 Report*. Where there is a match, these are referred to the Consultants undertaking the *Study* for further comment.

Since the completion of the *Stage 2 Report*, Darebin has made several requests for interim controls, due to the immediate threat provided by building permit applications for demolition including:

- Queen Street Dairy;
- 418 Murray Road; and (more recently)
- The Northcote Bowl.

A Ministerial amendment is not subject to the usual public notification process. However DPCD makes approval of interim controls conditional upon the timely exhibition of amendments to introduce permanent controls. This ensures that controls are scrutinised in a separate but parallel amendment process while safeguarding newly identified heritage places during this process.

The present transitional situation will be remedied once permanent controls are introduced for the places identified in the *Stage 2 Report* through a major amendment to the Darebin Planning Scheme.

## CORE ISSUES

### Time-frames

Two factors are important when evaluating whether or not to request interim controls for an individual place or precinct as well as the likely way that DPDC will consider such a request:

1. The immediacy of any threat to the place; and
2. The timing of the exhibition any major heritage-based planning scheme amendment, where interim controls will be introduced.

### 55 Woolton Avenue

As noted in the report of 20 April (**Appendix A**), a Planning Permit Application (D723/2007) to construct a two (2) storey apartment building containing 12 apartments at 55 Woolton Avenue Thornbury is due to be presented to an upcoming Planning Committee meeting. It is the subject of six (6) objections and development in accordance with the planning permit application would necessitate demolition of the existing dwelling.

As there is currently no HO on the site, a building (rather than planning) permit is needed for demolition of the dwelling.

At present, the dwelling at 55 Woolton Avenue Thornbury is still in existence and no building permit application for demolition has been received.

Council's planners have been cross-checking any new or current planning applications against the findings of the *Stage 2 Report*. In the event that there is a match, the matter is referred to Context Consultants for comment. The planning application for 55 Woolton Avenue was therefore referred to Context Consultants.

Context Consultants responded with advice that the dwelling is of *Contributory* significance (see **Appendix A** for discussion about what this means) and that its loss would have a greater impact than would be the case in a larger precinct. This advice also recognised that it may be difficult for Council to protect it due to timing of the lodgement of the planning application and of the release of the *Stage 2 Report* and lack of support from the applicant for the dwelling's retention.

### **Approaches**

The HO is not a 'preservation order' per se: it ensures that heritage values are examined in the statutory planning process. Specifically it requires the following considerations:

*The significance of a heritage place and whether the proposal will adversely affect the natural and cultural significance of the place.*

*Any applicable heritage study; and any applicable conservation policy*

It is still possible to apply to apply for a permit to demolish a heritage place listed in the planning scheme or the State Heritage Register. Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) have highlighted this in decisions that have both supported and opposed such applications.

55 Woolton Avenue is not considered individually significant and any interim controls would need to be applied to the whole precinct (ie. Nos. 39, 41, 55, 57 and 58).

Regardless of whether interim controls are brought forward in this case or not, due to timing, permanent controls would ultimately be introduced for the precinct through the greater heritage amendment. This is not planned to take place until the second half of 2009.

In the absence of cooperation from the owner, Council can seek a Ministerial Amendment to introduce interim controls for the precinct now and in doing so advise DPCD that permanent controls will be applied through the imminent permanent amendment.

An alternative would be to wait until the interim controls for the site are introduced during exhibition of the greater heritage amendment in the second half of the year which may result in the demolition of 55 Woolton Avenue, in the absence of controls and in line with the proposed redevelopment of the site.

The potential cost and benefits from each of these approaches merits examination.

*Implications of bringing forward Interim controls specifically for the Woolton Ave Precinct*

This approach would ensure that heritage considerations are taken into account in the consideration of the current planning application.

This would necessitate redeployment of resources within the Council's Strategic Planning Unit from other work such as preparation of the major heritage amendment to the ministerial amendment request. This may inadvertently delay exhibition of the larger amendment, and in doing so necessitate further interim requests.

In bringing forward site-specific Interim controls, the staff time required would be in the order of 3 – 4 days to prepare all of the amendment documentation and statutory documentation. Furthermore, based on the experience of the application of Interim controls for the Queen Street and Murray Road sites, the expenditure required would involve the following:

- Request to Minister for Authorisation to prepare Amendment, Exhibition and Notification costs and Ministerial Approval and Adoption of Amendment: \$5,000 (approx.)
- Additional Consultant's work, including the provision of expert evidence to a Panel: \$8,000 (approx.)
- The employment and organisation of an Independent Planning Panel: \$5,000 (approx.)

The total expenditure required to pursue and implement the interim heritage controls is in the order of \$18,000.

It should be noted that the retention of *Significant* heritage places is generally considered to be more important than the retention of heritage places which are *Contributory* to a precinct (refer to **Appendix A** for a discussion of these terms). It is considered unlikely that the Minister would grant interim heritage controls for a *Contributory* building within a precinct and there are no known examples of this occurring for a site within the City of Darebin.

*Implications of relying on Interim controls as part of the greater heritage amendment*

Interim controls for all of the heritage places identified in the Stage 2 Report can be applied when the complete Planning Scheme Heritage Amendment is requested. However, as the HO does not currently apply, then it is not certain that the heritage significance of the place can be considered in the current planning permit application.

Council could refuse the application based on the heritage value of the place, but not based on any statutory controls, and argue that the Heritage Study is a seriously entertained document.

Such a decision would be highly contestable and it is likely that an application for review would be lodged at VCAT. Timing of any hearing would be critical:

- If the interim controls for the greater heritage amendment were in place prior to the hearing then the heritage values would be considered by VCAT as they have been by Council;
- If the interim controls were not in place, then VCAT could disregard the heritage values.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environmental Sustainability**

This matter does not have any current significant implications for environmental sustainability however this matter will be discussed further during the preparation of the planning scheme amendment to implement the *Stage 2 Report* findings and associated Council reports.

### **Social Inclusion and Diversity**

This matter does not have any current implications for social inclusion and diversity. However tangible cultural heritage is an important part of expression of this and can assist to provide a sense of place to a community or communities. This matter will be discussed further during the preparation of the planning scheme amendment to implement the *Stage 2 Report* findings and associated Council reports.

### **Other**

This report is consistent with the following commitments contained in the current *Council Plan*:

#### *A sustainable city:*

35. *We will maintain high standards of urban amenity in our community through the design and management of public spaces and streetscapes*
37. *We will address demand for changes to Darebin's neighbourhoods through place management projects and strategic planning policies underpinned by sound research and community consultation*
38. *We will protect Darebin's urban amenity in sensitive neighbourhoods through heritage controls, urban character studies and planning and building controls*

#### *A vibrant city:*

44. *We will celebrate Darebin's artistic and cultural vitality through a program of public arts, festivals and events and with the provision of a range of performance, gallery and workshop spaces*
46. *We will celebrate the contribution that Darebin's diversity brings to our neighbourhoods, and seek to nurture new and emerging communities as part of our city's diverse mix*
50. *We will acknowledge the role of local businesses in Darebin's communities and work with them to foster economic prosperity, local employment and active retail, commercial and industrial precincts*

It is also consistent with the strategies contained in *Element 4: Heritage, Culture and Arts* of the *Darebin Municipal Strategic Statement* including:

- *Identify and assess Darebin's cultural and natural heritage values and places of significance.*
- *Encourage and initiate further studies and research into additional aspects of Darebin's history and heritage.*
- *Protect cultural sites that have an identified significance and consult with the traditional landowners (Wurundjeri-willem) and peak indigenous bodies.*
- *Assess development proposals within heritage areas in terms of their sympathy with the character of the area and their likely impact upon integrity and composition of the area.*
- *Ensure that the City's cultural heritage is protected through the planning system, and that nearby development does not compromise the significance of places and areas.*
- *Ensure that redevelopment of heritage buildings and areas is visually compatible with existing forms, and generates a strong and positive contribution to the heritage area through innovative design.*
- *Promote new development that makes a positive contribution to the heritage place or area.*

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A Planning Scheme amendment to implement interim Heritage Overlay controls would result in the expenditure of an additional \$18 000 (approximately).

## FUTURE ACTIONS

### Major Planning Scheme Amendment

Council is required to seek authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare a major planning scheme amendment to implement the recommendations of the *Stage 2 Report*.

It is anticipated a detailed report on the *Stage 2 Report* findings and the proposed planning scheme amendment would be reported to Council later this year.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *"City of Darebin Heritage Study Volume 3 – key findings and recommendations Draft Stage 2 Report* Context Pty Ltd, August 2008
- *City of Darebin Heritage Study Stage 2 Citations – Context Pty Ltd, August 2008*
- *The Heritage Overlay: Guidelines for Assessing Planning Permit Applications* (2007) prepared by the Heritage Council

### Appendices:

**Appendix A** Officer Report to Council of 20 April 2009: Darebin Heritage Study Update

**Appendix B** Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) Assessment Criteria

**Appendix C** Heritage Citation for Woolton Avenue Precinct from the *Darebin Heritage Study Draft Stage 2 Report*

**7.9 DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY 2009****MINUTE NO. 181**

**AUTHOR:** Coordinator Community Access, Health and Safety - Tennille Temizyuz

**MANAGER:** Manager Family, Youth and Community Support - Dean Griggs

**BUDGET**

**IMPLICATIONS:** As outlined in report

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the new Disability Access and Inclusion Policy, 2009. The policy has been revised to provide the framework for the new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2009-2013 which is currently being developed and will be presented to Council in September 2009.

**CONSULTATION:**

Darebin Disability Advisory Committee  
Disability Strategy Management Team  
Various officers and work areas across Council

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. G. Greco

**SECONDED:** Cr. T. McCarthy

**THAT** Council:

- (1) Endorse the revised *Disability Access and Inclusion Policy 2009* attached as **Appendix A** to this report.
- (2) Adopt, as part of this revised policy, AS1428.2 as minimum requirement for all new Council capital works projects and design processes, and for all existing building refurbishments when reasonable and practical.

**CARRIED**

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**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

Council developed its first Disability Policy in conjunction with the development of its initial Disability Action Plan in 1997, being one of the first Councils in Victoria to develop a plan to improve access and decrease disadvantage for people with a disability. Council's second Disability Action Plan, 'Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2006 -2009' was adopted in September 2006 and is in its final year of implementation.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Policy outlines Council's commitment to access and inclusion for residents, employees and visitors with a disability and provides the framework for the new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2009-2013. The policy is intended to provide direction and guidelines to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Disability Act 2007, the relevant building standards AS1428 as well as actively seek to remove the barriers that prevent people with a disability from fully participating in community life.

**Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone on the basis of their disability or a disability of any associates of that person. The DDA specifically applies to Local Government in a number of key areas; Access to Premises (section 23), Goods, Services and Facilities (section 24), Harassment in Employment (section 34) and Harassment in relation to Goods and Services (section 39).

**Disability Act 2007**

The more recent Disability Act 2007 places the legal requirement on all Local Government authorities to prepare a Disability Action Plan and report on it as part of the organisation's Annual Report. Darebin has ensured compliance with both of these requirements.

**Australian Standards for Access and Mobility AS1428**

The purpose of AS1428 is to provide building designers and users (architects, property owners, regulators, and the like) with the minimum design requirements for new building work, to enable access for people with a disability.

This standard is part of a series which is comprised of the following:-

- AS1428.1 Part 1: General requirements for access – New Building work
- AS1428.2 Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements – Buildings and Facilities
- AS1428.3 Part 3: Requirements for children and adolescents with physical disabilities
- AS1428.4 Part 4: Tactile ground surface indicators for orientation of people with vision impairment

Under the current Building Code, building surveyors, including Council's, are only required to endorse AS1428.1 and AS1428.4 as a minimum standard which does not include the enhanced standards detailed in AS1428.2



## CORE ISSUES

### Key features of the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy

#### *Policy Statement*

The City of Darebin seeks to improve access and inclusion for people with a disability in everything we do. The City of Darebin is committed to being a leader in the development of policies, projects and initiatives to improve disability practice as well as continually strive for best practice in the integration of disability access planning into the delivery of all Council's programs and services

#### *Principles*

The City of Darebin strongly advocates and supports people with a disability and recognises that people with a disability:

- Have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community
- Have valuable and important ideas and suggestions which can be utilised by the City of Darebin in ensuring better service delivery for all
- Are a large and valuable source of potential employees
- Have an important contribution to make in relation to City of Darebin service, facility and program planning and evaluation
- Are entitled to support and encouragement to ensure inclusion in all aspects of community life particularly in those areas where the City of Darebin has ownership, statutory responsibility and/or influence.

#### *Commitments*

- **Information** is provided to all Darebin residents in formats that are accessible and easy to understand
- **Access building standards AS1428.2** to be incorporated into all new Council capital works projects and design processes as a minimum, and for all existing building refurbishments when reasonable and practical.
- Services, Programs, Activities and Events are **accessible** to all members of the **community**
- People with a disability have a voice in **planning** and **decision making** processes
- Opportunities are provided for people with a disability to provide **leadership** and direction in regards to disability access issues
- **Work experience, skills development and employment opportunities** are developed and supported for people with a disability
- Council staff will **advocate** on behalf of people with a disability regarding issues and policy directions of the State and Commonwealth Government
- Council staff are provided with relevant **access awareness training** and opportunities for awareness raising and professional development.

### *Policy Guidelines*

In order to ensure the implementation of the above principles and commitments, the City of Darebin will ensure that:-

- A Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is developed every 4 years in line with the Council Plan, incorporating a whole-of-Council approach and driven by an internal high level executive team chaired by the organisation's Chief Executive Officer. That the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will detail strategies to address the key commitments outlined above.
- Support is provided to the Darebin Disability Advisory Committee and that ideas and suggestions for access improvements are valued and considered as part of all Councils decision making processes
- Council will continue to adequately support and resource staff across Council which work to improve access and inclusion as well as continue to support capital works improvements to Council owned buildings and facilities.

Council's Community Access, Health and Safety Unit is responsible for the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Policy in collaboration with the Social Inclusion and Diversity Branch. The Policy is relevant to the work of all areas across Council to ensure a whole-of-Council and consistent approach to disability access at Darebin.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Policy has been endorsed by both the Darebin Disability Advisory Committee (DDAC), the key advisory committee to Council on issues pertaining to disability access and inclusion, and the Disability Strategy Management Team (DSMT), an internal committee chaired by the Chief Executive Officer which is for ensuring that disability access planning is incorporated across the whole organisation.

### **Access Building Standards**

The main difference between the new Disability Access and Inclusion Policy and the previous Disability Policy is the inclusion of AS1428.2 as the minimum standard for all new Council capital works projects and design processes, and for all existing building refurbishments, when reasonable and practical. The previous disability policy did not specify a minimum standard for building works. A set of guidelines will be developed to support the organisation in determining instances where AS1428.2 as a minimum may not be considered reasonable and practical.

Differences between AS1428.1 (Part 1) and AS1428.2 (Part 2) include greater circulation spaces, passages, toilet sizes, handrail details and more. The adoption of this standard will increase the space needed for these elements within buildings and may potentially increase the cost of building work. The additional cost will be dependant on the extent and type of work being carried out.

As Part 1 is the minimum requirement of the Building Code of Australia, a Building Surveyor, Council or otherwise can only enforce its requirement and cannot require that Part 2 is used. Therefore the adoption of Part 2 as the design standard for Council would need to be limited to Council owned buildings and cannot be imposed on other building owners.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There may be additional costs associated with the application of AS1428.2 as the minimum standard for all new Council capital works projects, although these costs will be minimised if incorporated into the design process. Any additional costs will be determined by the scope of each individual project.

The application of AS1428.2 to existing building refurbishments will be likely to incur a higher level of additional costs, once again dependent on the scope of each individual project. A set of guidelines will be developed to support the organisation in determining instances where AS1428.2 as a minimum may not be considered reasonable and practical for refurbishments to existing buildings due to significant financial implications.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Environmental Sustainability**

The Disability Access and Inclusion Policy outlines a number of key commitments which may have an impact on the environment in respect to their application. They include the provision of information that is accessible which will result in an increase of paper usage by supplying documents in larger print, and ensuring that Council owned buildings and venues are accessible which may require an increase in building materials to ensure that the requirements of AS1428.2 can be met.

### **Social Inclusion and Diversity**

The Disability Access and Inclusion Policy seeks to decrease disadvantage for people with a disability by increasing access for people with a disability to Council's services, facilities, activities and programs. The policy complies with the Human Rights Charter and is consistent with Council's commitment of respect, community diversity and wellbeing.

### **Other**

The Disability Access and Inclusion Policy provides a framework for the whole organisation and hence has implications in regard to ensuring that other Council policies are consistent with the commitments and guidelines.

## **FUTURE ACTIONS**

- Community consultation process to commence for the development of a new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2009 -2013. The consultation process will seek input from a range of diverse groups including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities and people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.
- A new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2009 -2013 which will be presented to Council for endorsement by end September 2009.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Disability Policy 1997

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2006 -2009

**7.10 POTENTIAL PROJECTS IN DAREBIN WITHIN THE  
EDUCATION AND HOUSING SECTOR****MINUTE NO. 182****AUTHOR: Manager, Social Inclusion and Diversity - John Smith****MANAGER: General Manager Communities and Culture - Jan Black****BUDGET****IMPLICATIONS: Nil.****SUMMARY:**

At its meeting on 4 May 2009, Council requested a report to this meeting on current projects and potential projects within the education and housing sector 'stimulus package' and actions, consultation or planning that Council can take to maximise State and Federal spending in our area over the next 18 months.

This report provides information about impact of the stimulus packages on Darebin.

**CONSULTATION:**

Department of Human Services, Office of Housing  
Department of Education and Early Years Development  
Office of the Hon Martin Ferguson MP, Member for Batman

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
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**MOVED: Cr. T. Laurence****SECONDED: Cr. S. Tsitas****THAT Council:**

- (1) Note the impact of the Federal Nation Building package on Darebin.
- (2) Receive a further detailed report on options to improve affordable housing outcomes and maintain social housing stock in Darebin.
- (3) Receive a further briefing regarding current developments in the education sector in Darebin.

**CARRIED**

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**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

At its meeting on 4 May 2009, Council requested a report to this meeting on current projects and potential projects within the education and housing sector 'stimulus package' and actions, consultation or planning that Council can take to maximise State and Federal spending in our area over the next 18 months.

In response to the Global Financial Crisis federal and state governments in Australia have provided a range of funding to individuals, organisations and institutions in an effort to stimulate economic activity and increase employment while at the same time investing in sectors that will assist in recovery – especially education, community infrastructure and housing.

**Federal Government Funding**Education

The Nation Building Package included \$14.7 billion as part of the *Building the Education Revolution* program. This part of the stimulus package comprises three program areas

*The National School Pride Program* - for small scale infrastructure and refurbishment projects. Round one closed on 24 March 2009 with Darebin schools receiving \$4.4 million (see **Appendix A**). Round two closed on 8 May 2009 and results are not yet public. All funds need to be expended by 20 December 2009 .

*Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* – major building works, mainly libraries, multi-purpose halls and classroom. Round one closed on 10 April 2009 with four Darebin schools receiving just over \$7.8 million (see **Appendix A**). Round two closes on 15 May 2009 and third round will be announced in July 2009.

*Science and Language Centres for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Secondary Schools* – for state-of-the-art science labs and language centres. There is only one round which closes on 31 May 2009. Projects will be assessed on the basis of disadvantage, need and capacity to complete the project by June 2010.

In addition to these three key program areas, the roll out of computer upgrades and provision of notebook computers to schools continues, with a total of eight hundred and fifty two (852) new computers being provided to Darebin schools in the most recent round.

Community Infrastructure

Eight hundred million dollars (\$800 million) has been allocated to the Community Infrastructure Program to fund local government to build and renew local infrastructure such as community centres, town halls, parks and playgrounds, pool and sports facilities.

It is being delivered in two parts - \$250 million divided among all councils, and \$550 million allocated on a competitive basis. Darebin received \$681,000 from the allocated funds, which will be spent on three projects (see **Appendix B**), and successfully bid for funding to develop a Community Centre at Lancaster Gate receiving \$4.9 million and participated in the development of a joint bid with 13 other Councils for funds towards the development of the Regional Kitchen Project. This bid was successful in receiving \$9 million towards the total projected cost of \$29.5 million to develop a shared state-of-the-art kitchen facility designed to produce up to 10,000 meals a day.

### Road and Rail

Just over two billion dollars (\$2.2 billion) has been allocated to both major and local road and rail projects via the 'stimulus package'. A major injection of funds into the Australian Rail Track Corporation accounts for \$1.2 billion of these funds and 14 national road projects for another \$711 million, however \$3 million are available to local governments through the *Black Spot* and *Boom Gates for Rail Crossings* programs. Darebin has been allocated \$545,000 from the *Black Spot* program, which will be spent on three key projects (see **Appendix C**).

### Housing

The Federal Government is presently administering a number of funding programs designed to stimulate the development of affordable housing and improve social housing. All of these meet Nation Building aims as they stimulate the economy, provide employment and invest in essential infrastructure, but not all are actually included in the package.

#### *Nation Building Package*

Funding of \$6 billion has been provided over three and a half years for the construction of new social housing with a further \$400 million over two years for repairs and maintenance to existing public housing dwellings. Approximately \$150 million has been allocated to repairs and maintenance, increasing to \$200 million by the end of June 2009. A further \$200 million will be allocated in 2009/2010. These funds will allow repairs to more than 47,000 dwellings including 10,000 that would otherwise have been unavailable for social housing.

Almost \$40 million has been provided to date for construction of new Social Housing for 159 dwellings. It is expected that over 2,600 new dwellings will be completed by 30 June 2010.

A second stage of Construction will provide a further \$5.3 billion and bring the number of dwellings to be constructed to around 20,000. Funding approvals for Stage Two are expected to be finalised during August.

At the time of writing, it was unclear how much of these funds had been allocated for Social Housing in Darebin.

#### *The National Rental Housing Assistance Scheme.*

The National Rental Housing Affordability Scheme aims to stimulate the supply of up to 50,000 new affordable rental dwellings. Under the Scheme successful applicants will be eligible to receive a National Rental Incentive for each approved dwelling, on the condition that they are rented to eligible low and moderate income households at 20 per cent below market rates.

Funding is used to subsidise property owners to let properties at 80% of market rental. The Scheme is looking for proposals which involve either:

- Large scale projects with a minimum of 100 rental dwellings, or
- Not less than 20 rental dwellings and address especially high rental stress or deliver innovative and affordable rental housing solutions.

Round two was concluded in March 2009 and it is understood that approximately 5,000 applications were received – none from Darebin. It is expected that between 2,500 and 3,000 of these may be approved. Round three will commence in July 2009.

#### *The Housing Affordability Fund*

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This fund provides \$512 million over five years to expedite affordable housing projects by assisting to reduce planning and infrastructure costs for developers. Two rounds have been held – in September 2008 and March 2009. There have been no applications from Darebin. Further rounds are expected in the 2009/2010 financial year.

#### Insulation and Solar Hot Water

The Nation Building package includes a \$4 billion *Energy Efficient Homes* program which aims to install ceiling insulation in up to 2.9 million Australian homes. The *Homeowner Insulation* is capped at \$1,600 in the homes of owner-occupiers and the *Low Emission Assistance Plan for Renters* provides assistance of up to \$1,000 to install insulation in private rental properties. Payment is through tax rebate and the scheme is scheduled to commence in July 2009. An early installation program commenced in February 2009 however, and there have been eight approvals in Darebin.

Up to \$1,600 is also available for people to replace their existing hot water with a solar system. The scheme commenced in February and runs to June 2012. There have been two approvals in Darebin at the time of writing.

#### Small Business Tax Breaks

The package assists businesses with a turnover of \$2 million or less to claim under a temporary tax break an additional 30 per cent tax deduction for eligible assets costing \$1,000 or more acquired from 13 December 2008 to 30 June 2009, and installed by 30 June 2010. The extent of the impact of this in Darebin is unclear at this stage.

#### Individual Bonus Payments

By far the greatest proportion of the Nation Building Funds has been provided to individuals through direct bonus payments. Eligibility criteria were established as

- \$900 payment for people on incomes up to and including \$80,000
- \$600 payment for people on incomes between \$80,001 and \$90,000
- \$250 payment for people on incomes between \$90,001 and \$100,000.

In addition, families with school aged children received a payment of \$950 per family to help with school costs, and students and job seekers also received \$950. While it is impossible to know exactly what the number of payments have been in Darebin, using 2006 ABS data on income however, it is possible to estimate that the total individual payments to Darebin residents was in the order of \$93 million, over 90% of which would have gone to people earning less than \$80,000 a year.

### **State Government Funding**

#### Education

The recent State Budget included \$1.7 billion worth of announcements around a range of programs under the banner of Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century School System. Programs include:

- \$13.6 million for an additional 4000 kindergarten places
- \$15.6 million to improve take up of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools.
- \$57.7 million for 200 maths and science coaches in schools

- Over a billion dollars the Victorian Schools Plan has allocated \$1.9 billion to renovate, rebuild or extend 500 schools by 2011. A further \$402 million was allocated to the program in the recent State budget under ten programs.

### Housing

The State Government has provided \$312 million under a Victorian Housing Affordability Fund. Just over \$10 million of this was allocated to Darebin for the Mary Street Preston Affordable Housing Project. All these funds have now been expended and there is no indication that a new fund will be established.

## CORE ISSUES

### **Impact of the packages on Darebin to date**

- The total impact of the Nation Building Package on Darebin is in excess of \$17 million. An additional \$10 million has been provided by the State Government through the Housing Affordability Fund.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Funding in Darebin</b>
National School Pride Program	\$4 million
Primary Schools for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	\$7.8 million
Community Infrastructure	\$5.58 million
Black Spot Funding	\$545,000
Housing Affordability Fund (State)	\$10 million

- These do not take into account funds provided through tax breaks for small business, solar hot water and insulation rebates, improvements in social housing or funds provided to individuals through bonus payments. Taken in total, the impact of the Nation Building Package on Darebin is likely to be in excess of \$120 million.

### **Planning in progress**

- Further rounds of a number of programs are soon to be announced. Discussion is taking place with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, in particular with regard to the next round of the National School Pride Program, the Primary Schools for the 21st Century and the first round of the Science and Language Centres funding. These discussions will also include advocacy around use of the State government funds released in the recent budget, including funding for additional Kindergarten places and the roll out of the Victorian Schools Plan.
- Darebin is one of six Councils that have been participating in the Local Action on Affordable Housing (LAAH) Project. As a part of that project, a Housing Affordability Action Plan under development will be provided to Council early in the new financial year. The intention is to use this document as a draft for discussion with the community with the aim of informing the review of the Integrated Housing Strategy. A main aim of the Plan is to improve uptake of Federal and State Government assistance to increase affordable housing in Darebin. Engagement with developers, community housing providers and state and federal funders is essential to this end.
- Darebin will actively advocate for and publicise the solar hot water and insulation rebates available as part of the package. In addition, an application is being explored to consider the development of an application to the *Federal Jobs Fund* program to take advantage of the rebate and provide local employment.



- Officers are currently coordinating the development of a number of applications to the *Federal Jobs Fund*. The Jobs Fund is a discretionary grants program which commences on 1 July 2009 and completes on 30 June 2011. Funding will be in the form of one-off grants to support the delivery of innovative social or infrastructure projects which create jobs and employment opportunities in communities affected by the economic downturn, while also delivering positive environmental, heritage and social outcomes. Projects will focus on directly generating jobs for people in communities with high unemployment, a rise in unemployment or vulnerability. The creation of new bike paths and the development of the Northcote Police Station into an Arts Incubator are the currently preferred projects for Darebin.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### Environmental Sustainability

The Nation Building Package supports a range of initiatives that support sustainable environmental outcomes, particularly in relation to more sustainable housing. Darebin will advocate for increased investment in this area.

### Social Inclusion and Diversity

The Nation Building Package presents a unique opportunity for Darebin to invest in much needed community infrastructure. The package is designed to ensure that employment levels are maintained as much as possible and that skills are retained and developed during the period of the Global Financial Crisis. The direction of the package is in line with Councils commitment to a socially inclusive community.

### Other

Nil.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Nation Building Package has provided \$5.58 million through the Community Infrastructure fund to Darebin.

## **FUTURE ACTIONS**

- Council will receive a full briefing on issues related to education and education funding in Darebin on 25 May 2009.
- A draft Affordable Housing Action Plan will be provided to Council early in the new financial year.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Nil.

**7.11**

**MARKER FOR THE STOLEN GENERATIONS IN THE CIVIC SQUARE AT THE NORTHCOTE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTE NO. 183**

**AUTHOR:**                **Manager, Social Inclusion and Diversity - John Smith**

**MANAGER:**            **General Manager Communities and Culture - Jan Black**

**BUDGET**

**IMPLICATIONS:**    **\$10,000 within budget**

**SUMMARY:**

This report provides updated information about progress to develop a concept for an installation that recognises the Stolen Generations at Northcote Town Hall Civic Square.

**CONSULTATION:**

Stolen Generations Victoria  
The Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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**THAT** Council note progress towards the development of marker of recognition for the Stolen Generations at Northcote Town Hall Civic Square.

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
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**MOVED:**                **Cr. G. Greco**

**SECONDED:**        **Cr. S. Chiang**

**THAT** Council:

- (1) Notes progress towards the development of the marker of recognition for the Stolen Generations at Northcote Town Hall Civic Square.
- (2) Looks forward to being informed of the proposed final wording and form of the structure of the marker of recognition before final adoption.

**CARRIED**

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**REPORT****BACKGROUND**

Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council (DATSICC) resolved in February 2008 that Council should undertake actions to establish a permanent marker for the Stolen Generations in the Civic Square at Northcote Town Hall. Councillors were briefed on the matter at that time and agreed with DATSICC that consultation with members of the Stolen Generations would be the key consideration in the development of a proposal for an appropriate marker.

Council officers attended a meeting of agencies to discuss the future of Sorry Day and the impact of the National Apology on Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week 2008. Members of the Stolen Generations in attendance at the meeting foreshadowed a broader meeting of members of the Stolen Generations.

In consultation with Stolen Generations Victoria (SGV), Council officers agreed to convey the idea via a letter to a meeting which was held on 2 April 2008. It was anticipated that feedback would follow however due to the increased activity of the National Apology which took place on 13 February 2008 Stolen Generations Victoria were not able to progress the matter until April this year.

The Apology has become a defining moment in Australian history. For individuals and communities affected by the Stolen Generations, the apology acknowledged their heartache and trauma and symbolised that a process of national healing has begun. The first anniversary of the apology was celebrated by Darebin City Council through its support for the Koorie Night Market on 13 February 2009, delivered in partnership with Stolen Generations Victoria. Council has taken several steps towards defining a process for establishing a marker at the Northcote Town Hall to both remember and honour those affected by the Stolen Generations.

The key principle of involvement of members of the Stolen Generations has remained at the heart of our approach to the matter.

Further discussions with Stolen Generations Victoria members occurred at their monthly support group meeting in April 2009. The permanent marker concept was presented to the 10 members of the Stolen Generations at the meeting. Stolen Generations members were keen to be engaged in the process of developing the concept further. Some creative ideas were generated about the design and possible project roll-out including:

- Utilisation of the community arts processes (focus group etc) to develop the concept through the Stolen Generations Victoria (SGV) support group meetings
- Bronze plaque on a boulder which should be from Merri Creek
- Bronze boy and girl to symbolise children being taken
- Reconciliation theme (eg. black and white hands)
- Apology on behalf of the Darebin community
- The design be done by an SGV member and skills development assistance
- Have a website (eg. SGV website) engraved on the plaque so people can find more information
- Process to gather peoples' stories and launch the plaque with an exhibition and artwork on display.

SGV staff suggested including a call out for interested members via the monthly update inviting support group members to come together to discuss ideas.

Discussions have also been held with Northcote Town Hall staff regarding the location of the marker and with the Arts and Culture team at Council regarding permits and usual Council processes with community arts projects.

## CORE ISSUES

- From the outset of the project in 2008, a sum of \$5,000 was allocated from the (now) Social Inclusion and Diversity (Aboriginal Affairs) budget to establish the marker. Recent discussions with Stolen Generations Victoria have indicated preferences for a project that is likely to exceed this budget.
- The May 2009 meeting of the Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Council (DATSICC) allocated a further \$5,000 to the project pending further design development and discussion with Stolen Generations.
- It is likely that a full design and development project may exceed the \$10,000 allocation. Agreement will need to be reached with Stolen Generations Victoria to source additional funds should they be required.
- The delayed development of the project means that a plaque will not be in place at Northcote Town Hall Civic Square by this Sorry Day – 26 May 2009. However, this report to Council can be used to facilitate a media launch of a project, depending on whether agreement on a basic process can be reached with Stolen Generations Victoria.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### Environmental Sustainability

Nil.

### Social Inclusion and Diversity

Recognition of the Stolen Generations is vitally important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Not only does such recognition respect the pain and suffering of families and provide context for many of the social issues faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it also acknowledges the many years of struggle by Aboriginal activists on this issue.

### Other

Nil.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$10,000 is available for the project in the Council Budget.

**FUTURE ACTIONS**

- Discussions will continue with Stolen Generations Victoria in order to progress development of the concept.
- If agreement can be reached on a general concept, a joint media release will be arranged to coincide with Sorry Day – 26 May 2009.
- Council and DATSICC will be provided with further briefings as the project progresses.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

DATSICC Minutes – May 2009

**8. URGENT BUSINESS**

Nil.

**9. GENERAL BUSINESS****9.1 PARKING – DONATH RESERVE****MINUTE NO. 184**

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
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**MOVED:** Cr. S. Chiang  
**SECONDED:** Cr. T. Laurence

**THAT** Council officers investigate and report to Council on the feasibility of angle parking being provided along Harmer Street Reservoir adjacent to Donath Reserve (Keon Park Stars Junior Football Club).

**CARRIED****9.2 CLEAN AIR STRATEGY****MINUTE NO. 185**

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
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**MOVED:** Cr. T. McCarthy  
**SECONDED:** Cr. T. Laurence

**THAT** officers report to Council within two months on a new clean air strategy for Darebin, including community education and regulatory activities to reduce industrial fumes, wood-smoke pollution, cigarette smoke in public places and other airborne pollutants.

The report should also identify what strategies can be included in the next Municipal Public Health Plan to achieve clean air improvements in Darebin.

**CARRIED**

**9.3 NUCLEAR FREE ZONE****MINUTE NO. 186****COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. T. McCarthy  
**SECONDED:** Cr. G. Greco

**THAT** officers prepare a report exploring the establishment of the Darebin municipality as a Nuclear Free Zone. The term 'Nuclear Free Zone' would indicate that Council is opposed to:

- Nuclear weapons;
- Uranium mining;
- Nuclear power; and
- The storage and transportation of nuclear waste.

Council would be not opposed to the responsible use, transportation, storage or disposal of radioactive substances for bio-medical and limited technological purposes, as it believes that the benefits to the users out-weigh the risk to the community at large.

Officers should also recommend a communication strategy to local State and Federal members, as well as State and Federal Energy and Environment Ministers as well as a strategy for public consultation on this issue.

**CARRIED****9.4 RUTHVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL****MINUTE NO. 187****COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED:** Cr. T. Laurence  
**SECONDED:** Cr. S. Tsitas

**THAT**, noting Council's long standing past policies and investment in Ruthven Primary school as a shared community open space, Council resolves to lobby to retain the passive and active open space function on Ruthven Primary School.

Furthermore that Council seek an urgent meeting with the Minister of Education's office in relation to the potential loss of joint open space at Ruthven Primary School.

That officers prepare material for the Minister's office that gives:

- The background of this joint community use of the Ruthven school grounds with the local community for both passive and active recreation.
- Detail on how retention of this open space fits within Council's open space policies and fills a critical gap in the local park network.
- A snapshot of how this open space is needed for long term changing needs of this pocket of Darebin.
- A summary of the past and potential school closures in Merrilands Estate and the subsequent loss of open space.

That officers forward copies for the above information to the State member for Thomastown, all Northern Metropolitan Region MPs, the Federal member for Batman, the Principals of Merrilands, Lakeside, Ruthven and St Joseph the Worker Schools and relevant regional education managers.

**CARRIED**

**9.5 LIGHTING PROJECT – KEON PARK STARS JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB**

**MINUTE NO. 188**

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

**MOVED: Cr. T. Laurence**

**SECONDED: Cr. S. Chiang**

**THAT** in line with previous Council support for Keon Park All Stars Junior Football Club's lights project in past years, Council resolves in principle to apply to the State Government for the funding of lights at Keon Park All Stars at Donath Reserve in Keon Park in the coming round of 2009 state grants.

That officers report back to Council in 4 weeks with an outline of a funding submission for SRV sports grants later this year. The report back to Council should detail:

- Darebin Council's long standing support for the Keon Park Stars Junior Football Club's lights project.
- The high levels of socio-economic disadvantage in the area.
- The importance of anchoring under 19 games to secure a strong pathway for all junior teams and the viability of the Keon Park club.
- The critical danger of kids losing access to Australian Rules football in this corner of Darebin without this project.
- The initial cost estimate as supplied by the Club.
- Details of capital works funding to Keon Park Stars Junior Football Club over the past 10 years.

**CARRIED**



9.6

**RELOCATION OF TRAM STOP – PLENTY ROAD PRESTON**

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION</b>
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**MOVED:** Cr. N. Katsis  
**SECONDED:** Cr. V. Fontana

**THAT** Council Officers discuss with relevant authorities the feasibility and possibility of relocating the current tram stop located at the Tram Depot situated on Plenty Road Preston. A report back to Council within two months should address alternative positioning, cost and other logistical requirements.

**CARRIED**

**10. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL**

Nil.

**11. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.45pm