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## AGENDA

Special Council Meeting to be held  
on Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 6.00pm

### **This Special Council Meeting will be held virtually**

This measure is in accordance with the COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measure) Bill 2020, passed by the Victorian Government to allow Council meetings to be held by electronic means.

The meeting will be available for the public to watch through livestreaming via Council's website [www.darebin.vic.gov.au](http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au). The Council Chambers at 350 High Street, Preston will remain closed during this time.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN DAREBIN**

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land we now call Darebin and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council pays respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Darebin.

Council recognises, and pays tribute to, the diverse culture, resilience and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the right to self-determination in the spirit of mutual understanding and respect.



### English

This is the Agenda for the Council Meeting. For assistance with any of the agenda items, please telephone 8470 8888.

### Arabic

هذا هو جدول اعمال اجتماع المجلس. للحصول على المساعدة في أي من بنود جدول الاعمال، يرجى الاتصال بالهاتف 8888 8470.

### Chinese

这是市议会会议议程。如需协助了解任何议项，请致电8470 8888。

### Greek

Αυτή είναι η Ημερήσια Διάταξη για τη συνεδρίαση του Δημοτικού Συμβουλίου. Για βοήθεια με οποιαδήποτε θέματα της ημερήσιας διάταξης, παρακαλείστε να καλέσετε το 8470 8888.

### Hindi

यह काउंसिल की बैठक के लिए एजेंडा है। एजेंडा के किसी भी आइटम में सहायता के लिए, कृपया 8470 8888 पर टेलीफोन करें।

### Italian

Questo è l'ordine del giorno della riunione del Comune. Per assistenza con qualsiasi punto all'ordine del giorno, si prega di chiamare il numero 8470 8888.

### Macedonian

Ова е Дневниот ред за состанокот на Општинскиот одбор. За помош во врска со која и да било точка од дневниот ред, ве молиме телефонирајте на 8470 8888.

### Nepali

यो परिषद्को बैठकको एजेन्डा हो। एजेन्डाका कुनै पनि वस्तुसम्बन्धी सहायताका लागि कृपया 8470 8888 मा कल गर्नुहोस्।

### Punjabi

ਇਹ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਏਜੰਡਾ ਹੈ। ਏਜੰਡੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਆਈਟਮਾਂ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 8470 8888 ਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

### Somali

Kani waa Ajandaha Kulanka Golaha. Caawimada mid kasta oo ka mid ah qodobada laga wada hadlay, fadlan la xiriir 8470 8888.

### Spanish

Este es el Orden del día de la Reunión del Concejo. Para recibir ayuda acerca de algún tema del orden del día, llame al teléfono 8470 8888.

### Urdu

یہ کاؤنسل کی میٹنگ کا ایجنڈا ہے۔ ایجنڈے کے کسی بھی حصے کے بارے میں مدد کے لیے براہ مہربانی 8470 8888 پر فون کریں۔

### Vietnamese

Đây là Chương trình Nghị sự phiên họp Hội đồng Thành phố. Muốn có người trợ giúp mình về bất kỳ mục nào trong chương trình nghị sự, xin quý vị gọi điện thoại số 8470 8888.

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# Agenda

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## **1. MEMBERSHIP**

Cr. Susan Rennie (Mayor) (Chairperson)

Cr. Susanne Newton (Deputy Mayor)

Cr. Steph Amir

Cr. Gaetano Greco

Cr. Tim Laurence

Cr. Kim Le Cerf

Cr. Trent McCarthy

Cr. Lina Messina

Cr. Julie Williams

## **2. APOLOGIES**

## **3. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

## 4. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

### 5.1 ADOPTION OF ANNUAL BUDGET 2020-21, STRATEGIC RESOURCE PLAN 2020-2024 AND TEN YEAR CAPITAL WORK PLAN

**Author:** Manager Finance

**Reviewed By:** General Manager Governance and Engagement

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Annual Budget is an essential planning and resource tool produced each year. The development of a considered budget is vital to the ongoing operational and financial viability of Council. The annual budget sets out the expected income and expenditure of both operational, strategic and capital activities for the coming year and also incorporates Council's rating strategies.

The annual budget is a transparent account of Council's operations in line with good governance. The budget documentation forms part of a comprehensive public accountability process and reporting that includes:

- The Council Plan
- The Strategic Resource Plan
- The Annual Budget
- Internal and External Audit; and
- The Annual Report

The Annual Budget 2020-21 contains the information specified in the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act) and all details required by the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014 (the Regulations).

Like the rest of Australia, and the world, the Darebin community is facing an unprecedented challenge in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. In a context where Council's own finances are projected to be significantly impacted and the future is uncertain, many of Council's services and programs have been adapted to ensure that we can be agile and meet the emerging and new needs of our community.

The onset of the pandemic has meant that the process of the preparation of the budget this year has been particularly challenging. Whilst work in previous years has meant that Council entered this unprecedented period in a sound financial position, ongoing closures of Council's various facilities, changes to services and programs has and will continue to affect the financial position through significantly reduced revenue and increased expenses. The variation in timing of cashflow also needs to be tightly managed so that payments can be processed as and when they fall due.

It is increasingly evident that the financial impacts will be ongoing, difficult to predict and changing as the effect of the pandemic is more clearly defined and analysed at both a global and local level. Towards this, the 2020/21 budget seeks to balance Council's deep commitment to the wellbeing of our community at this time with the need to ensure Council's ability to serve their needs into the future.

A key feature of the 2020/21 Budget is the inclusion of funding for Council's Covid-19 Community and Local Business Resilience and Recovery Package. This package is the biggest response to COVID-19 of any Victorian local government apart from the City of Melbourne. At this time the package for 20/21 has a direct value of \$11.3m and includes:

- Rate relief – a hardship policy that allows ratepayers to postpone payments until 2021 with no penalty interest charges or need to complete an application
- Funding for emergency food relief for people who are the most vulnerable in the community, coordinated by Council through Darebin's emergency relief agencies
- Almost \$1m of additional, specialised business grants
- Support for the arts and culture sector

In addition to this direct cost, many Council staff have also been redirected to focus on COVID-19 response work supporting those most vulnerable. This includes the establishment of a dedicated COVID-19 Recovery Team comprising community and economic development specialists working together to provide a "one stop shop" service for the community.

Other key features of the 2020/21 budget include:

- Delivery of high quality services and programs for the community
- Ongoing focus and commitment to Council's long term financial sustainability
- No borrowings
- No changes to current service levels (increased in some areas to respond to the pandemic)
- An overall average rate increase of 2.0% in line with the rate cap set by the Victorian State government

Sustainability and Biodiversity initiatives include:

- Implementation of the Local Government Power Purchase Agreement for renewable energy
- Implementation of a carbon management plan on Council buildings to reduce Council's greenhouse and carbon emissions
- Ongoing support for Climate Emergency Darebin and the Darebin Nature Trust
- Implementation of the Safe and Sustainable Travel Program which seeks to activate new cycling and walking infrastructure and move towards safe and sustainable travel
- Implementation of Darebin's Climate Emergency Plan to focus on community mobilisation and advocacy work
- Significant tree planting across the city to improve canopy cover

Social inclusion and community initiatives include:

- Financial support for Merri Outreach Support Service - Darebin Assertive Community Outreach Program Brokerage aimed at supporting homelessness in Darebin
- Implementation of Council's Towards Equality City Council's Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Framework 2019-2029 - ensuring we welcome and include everyone in our community, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds, older people, young people, families, Aboriginal members of our community, people of all abilities, gender considerations and those from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds

- Implementation of year two of Aged Friendly Darebin – which aims to ensure the full participation of older people in community life and promote healthy and active ageing
- Aboriginal cultural inclusion guided by Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Corporation and in partnership with Darebin's Aboriginal Advisory Committee as well as inclusion of other culturally diverse groups
- Maximising affordable access to remove financial barriers to participation, increase employment and business opportunities for Darebin residents and local businesses
- Upgrading three Maternal and Child Health sites so they are more welcoming to our diverse community and encourage greater access and engagement
- Implementation of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy with associated action plans
- Implementation of the Social and Sustainable Procurement Policy
- Implementation of the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020, Community Employment Plan and Council's Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- The renewal and replacement of technical and operational equipment at Arts Venues & Hubs
- Stage 2 works to reinvigorate the Darebin Arts Centre

Public infrastructure initiatives include:

- Commencement of the construction of a new multi-purpose stadium (MSS) at John Cain Memorial Reserve to provide more sports opportunities for women and girls
- Completion of the schematic design and commencement of the detailed design of the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre
- Building upgrades and maintenance at Reservoir Leisure Centre
- The redevelopment of the KP Hardiman synthetic hockey pitch
- The commencement of the redevelopment of BT Connor pavillion
- A broad program of improvements and new works in our parks, open spaces, and playgrounds across the municipality
- Ongoing investment to ensure our critical assets and infrastructure are maintained including roads, drainage and footpaths

Strategy and planning initiatives include;

- Continued advocacy on key design and construction management issues surrounding the removal of four level crossing in Preston
- Commencement of an expansive campaign of community engagement to develop a draft 50 Year vision for the city called 'Future Darebin'
- Development and implementation of a new Design Excellence program in 2020-21 that aims to significantly improve the quality of future private developments across the City
- Improving safety in public spaces including through the delivery of lighting improvements in Main Drive Bundoora and safety-focused public improvements in response to the Gender Equality Map findings
- Complete scoping reports on local blackspot locations and advocate for funding to improve the safety of the local road network in Darebin



<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That Council:**

- (1) Having considered all submissions received and having complied with the requirements of sections 127 and 129 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, adopts the Annual Budget 2020–21 (attached as **Appendix A**)
- (2) Adopts the Strategic Resource Plan 2020–2024 (**Appendix B**) as its Strategic Resource Plan for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2024 including updates to reflect any consequential changes to the Annual Budget 2020–21
- (3) Adjusts the Council Plan 2017–2021 by replacing the existing Strategic Resource Plan with the Strategic Resource Plan 2020–2024 (**Appendix B**)
- (4) In accordance with sections 158 and 161 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, declares the Rates and Annual Service Charges for the 2020–21 rating year commencing 1 July 2020 and ending 30 June 2021 as detailed in the Annual Budget 2020–21
- (5) In accordance with section 169 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, declares a rebate in relation to rates of \$150 to each owner of rateable land who is an 'eligible recipient' within the meaning of the *State Concessions Act 2004* to assist the proper development of the municipal district as detailed in the Annual Budget 2020–21 and is being granted because Council considers that it provides a benefit to the Darebin community in that it provides some relief on rates to elderly and other eligible residents in addition to the State Government rates concession and is consistent with principles of fairness and equity
- (6) Notes the summary of the submissions received, prepared on behalf of the Hearing of Submissions Committee (attached as **Appendix C**)
- (7) Advises all submitters that Council has considered their submissions relating to the Draft Annual Budget 2020–21 and that the submitters be advised of the outcome of the consideration as it relates to their specific submission, and they be thanked for their contributions
- (8) Amends the Annual Budget 2020–21 to allocate funds from realised savings (\$400,000) in the 2019-20 capital works program to the COVID-19 Community and Economic Development Program
- (9) Notes the update on the COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package
- (10) Adopts the Ten-Year Capital Works Plan and receive an update every 6 months with the next update at the mid-year year budget review (**Appendix D**)
- (11) Gives public notice of the adoption of the Annual Budget 20120-21 in accordance with section 130(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*
- (12) Notes that a copy of the adopted Annual Budget 2020–21 will be provided to the Minister for Local Government in accordance with section 130(4) of the *Local Government Act 1989*

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**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION****Preparation of the Annual Budget 2020–21**

The current unprecedented environment of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in numerous, significant and compelling challenges that are having a substantial impact on the economic and social health and wellbeing of our community. Council's own economic circumstances

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have also been dramatically impacted and this is expected to continue for at least the medium term. In response to this, Council has had to demonstrate an immediate and agile approach to supporting its community whilst maintaining sound, prudent financial management of Council's resources and ongoing delivery services and the Council Plan 2017 – 2021.

In order to respond strategically and operationally to these challenges the original draft budget was completely reviewed and redrafted to reflect the inclusion of Councils multimillion-dollar COVID-19 community recovery package and many other response measures and impacts as well as to reflect the significant revenue losses which are expected. Developed in collaboration with Councillors over the past six months, the budget preparation has been thorough and comprehensive and has been focused on delivering the services our community needs whilst also being mindful of costs.

The operational and financial impact of COVID-19 has resulted in the budget projecting a surplus of \$3.7 million for 2020-21. There will be a significant reduction in revenue (\$18 million) which includes statutory fees and fines, user fees and developer contribution amounts. Once adjustments have been made for the Public Open Space contributions of \$4.9 million which must be spent in accordance with the Subdivision Act 1988 and one-off capital grants for specific capital works, Councils underlying deficit for 2020-21 will be \$1.3 million.

### **Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package (Package)**

As noted previously, Councils response to the COVID-19 pandemic is significant and includes a \$11.3 million Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package which is being funded through the reallocation of Council resources in line with following budget assumptions. This Package was adopted by Council on 27 March 2020 and the quantum is second only to the City of Melbourne.

The Package is in response to the immediate and ongoing impact of COVID-19. The package continues to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing of Darebin residents, in particular vulnerable community members and those already experiencing disadvantage, and to provide immediate and ongoing support to our local businesses who are continuing to experience devastating levels of disruption and uncertainty.

The Package builds upon existing social and health networks to strengthen the ongoing reliance and capacity within the community and enhance the capacity of organisations already working with vulnerable community members.

It has also provided and will continue to provide a significant business support program to complement existing services and agencies such as Federal and State Government economic stimulus packages. Below are some highlights from the package to date:

**Hardship Policy** extended to all rate payers – residential and business – ability to defer rates until 30 June 2021 (received over 2,400 calls since start of March)

**Redeployment of staff** to support community resilience and recovery programs and projects.

**Waiver of fees and charges for** Sporting Clubs, Arts Venues and Community Hubs until December 2020.

***Emergency Food Boost (\$150K)***

- Facilitated and assisted the distribution of grocery vouchers, food parcels and over 1000 frozen meals per week– focusing on International Students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and people who have found themselves vulnerable or experiencing family violence
- Supported the Emergency Food Relief network with 150 grocery vouchers, 600 food parcels and 1,000 frozen meals per week (distributed by local ER agencies) and over 12,000 meals over the last three months
- Funding support for local organisations including DIVRS, Charcoal Lane, Bridge Darebin & Reservoir Neighbourhood House

***Funding support to Inner North Community Foundation to facilitate local outcomes and community grants (\$50K)******Secondment of staff to other agencies***

- Inner North Community Foundation
- Northern Community Church
- Emergency relief agencies

***Launched a suite of artist led creative initiatives which families and children can participate in while at home in isolation (\$25K)******Community Navigation and Community Connect Service***

- Taking over 500 calls in the first 2 months, referrals to support services and offering social support and actively ensuring vulnerable residents are connected to support services within their community

***Small Business support***

- Provided a dedicated business support line which has received over 1,000 calls since March and permit facilitation services
- Refunded or waiver of business-related fees and registrations
- Supported community run childcare centres and kindergartens including provision of PPE
- Distributed \$535K worth of Business Grants to 156 projects in 2019-20 with more grants planned for 2020-21 (approximately \$400K for the second round of grants)
- Provided access to our Employment Assistance Program including free counselling sessions (\$12k)
- Developed a Business Webinar Series (\$20k)
- Mentoring sessions (\$8K), Business memberships to industry associations (\$5K) and development of a Customer Loyalty Program (\$11K) to be released in 2020-21

Phases for Response;

The Package considers the response that will be needed in three phases:

1. Phase One – an immediate targeted response to the current crisis and support to those who need it most
2. Phase Two – strengthening communities and businesses to build recovery and stabilize
3. Phase Three – actions to create long term sustainable change for the benefit of community wellbeing and resilience

Principles;

The response has been designed according to the following principles:

- Equity: Focus on those most in need taking account of emerging vulnerabilities
- Giving those affected – both individuals and businesses – a strong voice throughout in how we respond
- Being clear about our role – filling in the gaps between what Federal and State Government and local agencies are better placed to deliver
- Coordinating efforts and providing backbone support between partners, across sectors and across all levels of government
- Being agile to rapidly changing circumstances
- Being the voice for our community and businesses through advocacy as well as direct action

**2020-21 Budget assumptions:**

- Capacity to deliver a \$11.3M Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package
- \$34.2M Capital Works Program
- No borrowings
- No budget revenue in User Fees from closed services till January 2021
- Reduced revenue from statutory fees and fines by \$8.3M
- No reduction in Operating Grant revenue
- Significant delays in cash receipts from rates instalments (rates deferred to 30 June 2021. Council is only one of three Councils to provide this support state-wide)
- No Interest charged on deferred rate and sundry debtors to 30 June 2021
- 2% Rate Cap increase (over 75% of Councils state-wide are applying the rate cap of 2%)
- No change to the Special Rate Charge
- No employees are stood down due to COVID-19
- No reduction in service levels

The budget has been prepared in line with the priorities outlined in key strategic documents including the Council Plan and the Strategic Resource Plan.

The Annual Budget 2020–21 is provided at **Appendix A**.

### **Strategic Resource Plan/Financial Strategy**

The budget has been developed in the context of the Strategic Resource Plan. The Strategic Resource Plan (SRP) is a four-year plan of the financial and human resources Council requires to implement the actions and deliver the objectives set out in the Council Plan 2017–21.

In pursuit of its objectives, the SRP embodies the following objectives for Council over the next four years, including:

- Ensuring that Council's financial resources are directed to achieving the desired outcomes, strategies and initiatives articulated in the Council Plan
- Maintenance of the scope and standard of ongoing services provided to the Darebin community
- 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
- Maintaining a viable and sustainable cash position, ensuring Council remains financially sustainable in the long term and in line with Victorian Auditor General (VAGO) key financial risk ratio's
- Ensuring critical renewal is funded annually over the timeframe of the SRP
- Ensuring careful use of reserves to fund projects and programs that are consistent with the purpose envisaged when the reserve appropriation was originally made
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The Strategic Resource Plan 2020–24 is provided at **Appendix B**.

### **Public Release**

Following Council's adoption of the draft budget on 13 May 2020, the draft budget was put on public exhibition which provided a 28-day period for submissions to be lodged. Any person had the right to make a submission (or ask a question) under section 223 of the Act in regard to the draft Annual Budget 2020–21.

The Submission period closed on Monday 15 June 2020 at 5:00pm with eighty-five (85) submissions received including five (5) petitions. A meeting of the Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee was held via Cisco Webex at 6.00pm on Thursday 25 June 2020, to hear those submitters who wish to be heard in support of their submissions. Twenty-one (21) submitters spoke to their submissions.

Following the consideration of the submissions received, Council is now required to formally adopt the final budget for 2020–21.

### **Budget Adoption**

The Act prescribes that Council must adopt its final budget by 30 June each year however due to COVID-19, the Minister for Local Government granted an extension to 31 August 2020.

**Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 13 May 2020, Council resolved:

**That Council:**

- (1) *Adopts the draft Annual Budget 2020–21 and the draft Strategic Resource Plan 2020–24 for the purposes of Section 127 of the Local Government Act 1989*
- (2) *Notes that the draft budget includes running the Solar Saver Program including the Special Charge stream focused on supporting low income households to a value of \$1 million (ex GST). The draft budget also includes the Solar Saver Bulk Buy stream which would be offered to both the broader community and all households and businesses currently on the Solar Saver Program waiting list to support them to install solar PV*
- (3) *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to give public notice in accordance with sections 129 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 of Council's intention to adopt, at a Special Council meeting proposed to be held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 15 July 2020, the Annual Budget 2020–21 (**Appendix A**) and the Strategic Resource Plan 2020–24 (**Appendix B**) presented to that meeting*
- (4) *Gives public notice in accordance with sections 169 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1989 of Council's intention to grant, at a Special Council meeting proposed to be held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 15 July 2020, a rate rebate to pensioners in the 2020–21 year in the amount of \$150 to each owner of rateable land who is an 'eligible recipient' within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004*
- (5) *Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the draft Annual Budget 2020–21 or in relation to the granting of a rate rebate to pensioners, and requests to be heard in support of their written submission, will be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee at a meeting to be held at 6.00pm on Thursday 25 June 2020*
- (6) *Notes that the draft Annual Budget 2020–21 supports the commencement in 2019-20 of the Darebin City Council COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package which includes the Community and Economic Development Program and the Business Grants Program*
- (7) *Notes that the proposed revenue raised from the 2% rate increase as set by the Victorian Government's Fair Go Rates System in 2020-21 is forecast to be \$3.62 million and resolves to hypothecate this revenue in full for use as part of the \$11.3 million COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience Recovery Package*
- (8) *Notes that in addition to \$11.3 million COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience Recovery Package, should Council's current Working for Victoria submission be successful, this will result in approximately 240 additional staff employed to respond to the impact of COVID-19 in addition to supporting the delivery of Council's recovery package*
- (9) *Notes that the estimated in-kind contribution for the Working for Victoria program is \$50,000. This will include management and coordination of staff, OH&S, quality assurance, communication and reporting requirements associated with the program*
- (10) *Notes the 2020-21 Annual Budget Report to be tabled at the Special Council Meeting on 15 July 2020 will include an update on the adjusted total financial commitment of the COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience Recovery Package. This will also include Council's in-kind contribution*
- (11) *Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to undertake any and all administrative procedures necessary to enable Council to carry out its functions under section 223 of the Act*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

### Consultation and Communications

The budget has been developed in collaboration with Councillors over several months and through discussions with community and local businesses.

Council conducted extensive consultation across the community, creative and business sectors with new initiatives developed in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders who are providing important vital services to those most at risk of disadvantage and health inequalities and local businesses in Darebin. Council has also assessed the development and delivery of each initiative against Council's Towards Equality framework.

Officers have spoken to over 450 businesses directly via the newly created business support line, and through conversations initiated by officers reaching out through their networks. Community and Business sector feedback has directly informed services and programs for 2020-21.

The Council budget consultation was undertaken over the period from 15 May to 15 June 2020. Given the current conditions and social distancing measures, the consultation did not include public-facing elements. The consultation included:

- Providing the budget information process to advisory groups and funded bodies through their Council representatives, noting the opportunity for submissions
- Correspondence with clubs etc
- Social media, including sponsored advertisements with online information and pointers on how to make a budget submission
- Traditional media including newspapers and papers
- Comments to be received on Your Say Darebin
- Councillor media packages

## ANALYSIS

### Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy

Goal 6 - A well governed Council

The Annual Budget 2020–21 has been prepared to give financial effect in the coming year to the objectives set out in the Council Plan 2017–21 and Strategic Resource Plan 2020–24.

### Environmental Sustainability Considerations

The Council Plan 2017–21 contains a number of policy directions specifically designed to reflect Council's commitment to environment sustainability and the Annual Budget 2020–21 has been prepared in this context.

The Annual Budget 2020–21 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.

### Climate Emergency

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The Council Plan 2017–21 contains a number of policy directions specifically designed to reflect Council's commitment to Climate Emergency and the Annual Budget 2020–21 has been prepared in this context and includes the Darebin Climate Emergency mobilisation, implementation of the Local Government Power Purchase Agreement for renewable energy and a carbon management plan for buildings to reduce Council's greenhouse and carbon emissions.

### **Solar Saver Program**

The annual budget 2020-21 proposes the Solar Saver program be funded at \$335,000 in the operating budget and provide upfront funding for installations in the community for up to the value of \$1,000,000 (excluding GST). The \$1,000,000 cost of these installations would be recouped by Council over time with approximately \$350,000 of this to be recouped in the 2020-21 year as contributions from solar technology credits and approximately \$650,000 to be recouped in the ten years from participants from repayments of Special Rates. In 2020-21, cash repayments expected relating to prior years of the program are in the amount of \$580,000.

This scale of program is less than the scale of the program in 2019-20. The program in 2020-21 would prioritise installing solar systems for households that face disadvantage who are unlikely to be able to access the benefits of solar without this program. Business installations would not be included in the program.

It is expected that the program would reach between around 150 households 2020-21, although the final numbers would be confirmed during the 2020-21 year and depend on the size of solar systems needed to meet the needs of participating residents and could reach more or less households.

It is also proposed that Council offer the bulk buy stream of the Solar Saver Program in 2020-21 as this can play a valuable role in supporting households to install solar panels by ensuring that they have confidence in the suppliers and products being offered thanks to Council's work to select them.

Council has an existing contract with a supplier to deliver the solar saver program over 2020-21. If Council endorses this budget for consultation including the solar saver program as proposed, officers will communicate Council's decision and work with the contractor to plan for the program in 2020-21 at the scale indicated in this budget.

Should any change be made to the final budget, the program would be adjusted further to address this. Officers have been progressing implementation of Council's decision to 'switch on' a bulk buy stream of work, however the contractor initially selected has not taken up Council's offer to run the program and as such the stream has not at this time been 'switched on'. This will be the subject of a further report to Council at a later date.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

The Council Plan 2017–21 contains a number of policy directions specifically designed to reflect Council's commitment to social inclusion and diversity, and the Annual Budget 2020–21 has been prepared in this context and includes the implementation of the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020, Council's Community Employment Plan and Aboriginal Employment Strategy.

In addition, Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package is focused on supporting and assisting our community including the disadvantaged and homeless.



## **Cultural Considerations**

The Council Plan 2017–21 contains a number of policy directions specifically designed to reflect Council's commitment to cultural considerations, and the Annual Budget 2020–21 has been prepared in this context and includes the upgrade of three Maternal and Child Health sites so they are more welcoming to our diverse community and encourage greater access and engagement and supports the implementation of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy with associated action plans.

In addition, Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package is focused on supporting and assisting our diverse community.

## **Economic Development Considerations**

Economic development activities proposed for 2020–21 include developing a new place management program of activities to make our local business areas more vibrant, active and successful, assist businesses to increase local employment, including the uptake of Federal and State government funding for employment and skills training opportunities and Improve business performance through of our assistance with digital access and capability, environmental performance, export capability, and attraction of visitors.

In addition, Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package is focused on supporting and assisting our business community through purpose-design programs.

## **Financial and Resource Implications**

All matters raised in this report which have a financial implication have been reflected in the Annual Budget 2020–21.

## **Legal and Risk Implications**

The Annual Budget 2020–21 has been prepared in the context of minimising and mitigating the risks associated with Council's delivery of services and infrastructure to the community.

All contractual obligations are funded in the budget.

## **DISCUSSION**

Council has prepared the annual budget for 2020–21 which is aligned to the objectives of the Council Plan 2017–21. It seeks to maintain services and infrastructure as well as deliver projects and services that are valued by our community and do this within the rate increase mandated by the State Government.

The annual budget 2020-21 is considered to be prudent and responsible and will ensure that Darebin remains in a sustainable financial position.

The budget is community focused, delivering projects and services that are highly valued by residents, businesses and visitors, including, but not limited to:

- Approximately 22,200 immunisations
- Library services to support approximately 626,000 visitors each year and approximately 4 million views on the library web page
- Improvements to accessibility arrangements for people living with a disability

- Approximately 130,000 hours of aged care services and assistance and providing over 25,000 meals
- Planting of 6,000 trees, as well as 3,800 indigenous plants in bushland and parkland
- Upgrades and maintenance works for approximately 8,000 square km of footpaths
- Animal registrations for around 16,000 pets
- Maintenance of more than 60 sporting ovals and fields
- Maintenance of more than 30km of shared bike paths
- Support for the installation of solar systems to residential homes
- Collection of 5,500,000 bins, 10,300 tonnes of green waste and 12,250 tonnes of recycling collected per year
- Streetscape and Place improvements across the city

The Annual Budget 2020-21 seeks to balance the demand for services and infrastructure with affordability and sustainability and has projected a surplus of \$3.7 million for 2020-21. Once adjustments have been made for the Public Open Space contributions of \$4.9 million which must be spent in accordance with the Subdivision Act 1988 and one-off capital grants for specific capital works, Councils underlying deficit for 2020-21 will be \$1.3 million.

With ageing assets and infrastructure, Council must identify and allocate funds needed to meet infrastructure costs (asset renewal) and to provide a sustainable base for Council's operations and services into the future. Council is required to fund new capital works to meet the community's changing needs as well as its asset renewal, maintenance and expansion works program.

The budgeted capital works of \$37.5 million for 2020-21 is funded as follows:

- Depreciation \$24.3 million
- Grants \$2.1 million
- External contributions \$0.3 million
- Prior years' surpluses \$10.8 including
  - Carry over capital works of \$3.2 million
  - Accumulated unallocated surplus \$7.6 million (from prior years' operations)

The Annual Budget 2020-21 presents a financially sound budget that maintains all services from the previous year. The average rate will rise by 2.0% in line with the rate cap set by the State Government. Over 75% of Council's state-wide are applying the 2% rate rise.

The Victorian State Government has introduced a new model budget which includes mandatory sections. The Annual Budget 2020-21 adheres to the model budget.

The Annual Budget 2020-21 has been prepared in the context of the overall objective of Council's Strategic Resource Plan (SRP) which is financial sustainability in the medium to long term, while still providing sufficient resources to achieve the Council Plan strategic objectives. The key objectives which underpin the SRP over the next four years are:

- Maintaining ongoing services provided to the Darebin community and to be flexible in addressing changing community needs with innovative services and facilities
- The timely renewal of community assets and the assets required for ongoing service delivery

- Ongoing underlying surpluses that allow the funding of service delivery, capital works and asset management commitments
- Holding sufficient cash and other assets in order to meet payment obligations to suppliers and employees as they fall due

In preparing the Annual Budget 2020-21 Council has also been mindful of the need to comply with the principles of sound financial management which requires Council to:

- Prudently manage financial risks relating to debt, assets and liabilities
- Provide reasonable stability in the level of rate burden
- Consider the financial effects of Council decisions on future generations
- Provide full, accurate and timely disclosure of financial information

The following additional principles have guided the development of the Annual Budget 2020-21:

- Existing fees and charges are to be increased in line with CPI or market levels
- Grants to be based on confirmed funding levels
- Service levels to be maintained at 2019-20 levels
- Contract labour to be minimised

### **Community Submissions**

Eighty-five (85) submissions, including five (5) petitions, were received by the closing date for submissions including twenty-one (21) submitters who were heard by the Hearing of Submissions Committee on 25 June 2020.

The submissions are outlined in **Appendix C**. Officers have undertaken an assessment of the submissions and have provided a recommendation for Council's consideration.

Officer recommendations to Council are based on projects that are shovel ready, where there is an opportunity to leverage existing programs and projects, consider financial and resourcing implications (i.e. Council's capacity to deliver in 2020-21).

Copies of the submissions were circulated separately to Councillors for consideration.

### **Realised 2019-20 savings**

The delay in the timing of this adoption of the budget this year has meant that the 2019-20 end of financial year invoicing has been finalised. This is unique to 2020.

The results show savings as a result of the completion of some capital work projects in 2019-20 under budget. In total, approximately \$400,000 has not yet been factored into any cash flow modelling or allocated in the 2020-21 budget presented in this report.

Officers recommend that this amount be allocated to the COVID-19 Community and Economic Development Program (for example towards additional food relief or business grants). This change is **not** been included in the Annual Budget 2020-21 documentation attached at **Appendix A** but does form part of the Officers recommendation. The budget will then be adjusted if approved.

It is important to note that Councillors do have the option to allocate this amount to other priorities or to address matters arising from the community budget submissions or a combination of all of these.

### Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024

The Annual Budget 2020-21 year is the first year of the Strategic Resource Plan and accordingly the previously adopted Strategic Resource Plan must be revised.

The Act requires that Councils review and adopt a Strategic Resource Plan not later than 30 June each year each year however due to COVID-19, the Minister for Local Government granted an extension to 31 August 2020. The Strategic Resource Plan outlines the resources required to achieve the strategic objectives articulated in the Council Plan and its format and contents are governed by section 126 of the Act.

The revised Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024 is attached (**Appendix B**) and is consistent with the Annual Budget 2020-21.

In respect of the next four financial years the Strategic Resource Plan contains:

- The financial statements describing the required financial resources and information required by the Local Government (Finance and Planning) Regulations 2014
- Statements describing the required non-financial resources, including human resources

The Strategic Resource Plan assists Council in adopting a budget within a longer term prudent 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.

The Strategic Resource Plan has been updated through a rigorous process, using the current financial position as a base and factoring in assumptions regarding future increases in income and expenditure for each program and service provided by Council.

The table below provides a summary of the key financial objectives which underpin the Strategic Resource Plan and the outcomes of the Strategic Resource Plan in response to each of these objectives.

Strategic Resource Plan objective	Strategic Resource Plan outcomes
Maintain the scope and standard of ongoing services provided to the Darebin community and be flexible to address changing community needs with innovative services and facilities.	Allowance for continuity of services included within the annual budgets throughout the plan period.
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.	Increase in the amount of capital expenditure allocated to asset renewal projects in Council's capital works program, expressed as a percentage of the amount required to maintain the assets, as measured by depreciation.

Strategic Resource Plan objective	Strategic Resource Plan outcomes
Ensure that Council delivers ongoing underlying surpluses that allow the funding of ongoing service delivery to the community, the timely renewal of community assets and the assets required for ongoing service delivery, and new community assets.	Achieve an underlying operating surplus throughout the term of the SRP. The underlying surplus is measured after adjusting for capital grants that are not necessarily ongoing funding sources and timing differences on grants for provision of services.
Ensure Council holds sufficient cash and other assets in order to meet payment obligations to suppliers and employees as they fall due.	Achieve a working capital ratio of at least 1.1: 1 throughout the plan.

It is recommended Council replace the existing the Strategic Resource Plan with the attached Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024 (**Appendix B**).

The Strategy Resource Plan supports and is consistent with the Council strategic and policy objectives contained in the 2017-2021 Council Plan.

Should there be any change to the City of Darebin Council Plan 2017-2021 then the Strategic Resource Plan may also require amendment to reflect the resource consequences.

### Ten Year Capital Works Plan

The core purpose of the 10-year Capital Works Plan (**Appendix D**) is to support longer term integrated planning for delivery of infrastructure to meet the needs of the community as it grows and changes over time. It will better enable us to prioritise capital works projects across Council, prepare us better for budget cycles and better inform and align with longer term financial planning.

As our community grows and changes, the 10-year Capital Works Plan will evolve and change as well. This is a dynamic, ever-changing plan that is designed to be agile and responsive to our changing community needs year after year. The 10-year Capital Works Plan is guided by:

- Capital Works Principles (Council resolution October 2019)
- Borrowing Strategy (Council resolution October 2019)

The 10-year Capital Works Plan:

- Explains our approach to infrastructure planning and delivery;
- Describes council's role in planning, developing and maintaining infrastructure;
- Provides an overview of the infrastructure council currently has and what service facilities will be required, by planning category, in the short, medium and long term;
- Guides decision-making on future infrastructure projects, funding requirements, advocacy efforts and partnership opportunities;
- Is aligned with the council plan and informs the four-year strategic resource plan and long-term financial plan

- Is aligned with the asset management strategy and different asset classes through the asset management plan

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Adopt the Annual Budget 2020-21 as attached (**Appendix A**) with the amendments recommended by officers as detailed in this report's recommendation and the revised Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024

### **This is the recommended option**

2. Adopt the Budget 2020-21 as attached (**Appendix A**) with amendments other than those detailed in this report's recommendation and the revised Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### Details

Following adoption of the Annual Budget 2020-21, the following actions are required:

- Advise the submitters of Council's decision in relation to the Annual Budget 2020-21 and the reasons for the decision
- Give public notice of adoption of the Annual Budget 2020-21
- Make a copy of the Annual Budget 2020-21 available for the public at Customer Service Centres, other Council facilities and on Council's website
- Submit a copy of the Annual Budget 2020-21 to the Minister for Local Government
- Generate the rate notices for 2020-21

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Council Plan 2017-2021

### Attachments

- Annual Budget 2020-21 (**Appendix A**)
- Strategic Resource Plan 2020-2024 (**Appendix B**)
- 2020-21 Budget Community Submissions (**Appendix C**)
- Ten Year Capital Works Plan 2020-21 to 2029-30 (**Appendix D**)

## DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

**5.2 COUNCIL PLAN ACTION PLAN 2020–21****Author:** Coordinator Planning and Reporting**Reviewed By:** General Manager Governance and Engagement

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council is required by the *Local Government Act 1989* ('the Act') to prepare a Council Plan that contains the strategic objectives of Council, strategies for achieving those objectives and indicators to monitor the achievement of the objectives.

Each year, Council adopts an annual Council Plan Action Plan that sets out in more detail how the objectives of the Council Plan will be achieved during the forthcoming year of the plan.

The draft Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 (refer **Appendix A**) addresses the fourth year of the Council Plan 2017–21 and clearly articulates Council's priorities and initiatives towards achieving its Vision of 'Greener, Bolder, More Connected City'.

As the 2020/21 budget reflects, many Council services and programs have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Council Plan Action Plan also highlights a number of the key activities occurring as part of Council's COVID-19 Community and Local Business Resilience and Recovery Package. This support package has a total direct value of \$11.3m.

It is important to note that whilst these additional measures have been recognised in the Council Plan Action Plan, this is not a comprehensive list of all of the Council activities occurring which are aimed at supporting the community in light of the pandemic. In a context where Council's own finances have been significantly impacted by COVID-19, many Council services and programs have been significantly adapted in new and innovative ways to ensure that we can be agile and continue to meet the needs of our community. Many Council staff have been redirected to our work supporting those most vulnerable and a dedicated recovery team comprising community and economic development specialists from across the organisation has also been established.

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That** Council adopts the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21

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**BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION**

Council is required by the *Local Government Act 1989* to prepare a Council Plan that contains the strategic objectives of Council, strategies for achieving those objectives and indicators to monitor the achievement of the objectives. (Note, the 1989 Act remains in effect with regard to the Council Plan until 24 October 2020, at which time the relevant sections of the new *Local Government Act 2020* will be proclaimed). Each year, Council adopts an annual Council Plan Action Plan that sets out in more detail how the objectives of the Council Plan 2017–21 will be achieved during the forthcoming year of the plan.

The draft Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 outlines actions to meet our challenges, to involve the community in decision making and to build a thriving, resilient and equitable city while addressing critical issues of climate change, population growth and growing inequality.

### **Previous Council Resolution**

At its meeting held on 22 June 2017, Council resolved:

*'That Council:*

*4) Notes an Action Plan will be developed with Council annually over the four year Council Plan period to ensure all objectives are met by 2021.'*

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

### **Consultation**

The Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 reflects the outcomes of consultation and engagement with Councillors, members of the community and staff that has occurred as part of the 2020–21 Budget process. It has also been informed by substantial feedback received via various recent community engagement processes including relating to:

- Ruthven Reserve
- Mayer Park Master Plan
- Future Preston
- Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre re-development
- Graffiti Management Strategy
- Darebin Waste Strategy
- Streets for People
- Preston Market
- Community Engagement Strategy

### **Communications**

The Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 will be promoted on Council's website and through social media. Internally, the document will be promoted on the intranet and via staff newsletters.

Quarterly reporting to Council and the community against the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 will ensure that it remains a highly visible document throughout the year.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Alignment to Council Plan / Council policy**

Goal 6 - A well governed Council

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

Goal one of the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 has considerable focus on environmental issues.



### **Climate Emergency**

Actions from the Climate Emergency Plan are incorporated into the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Considerations**

Goal Five of the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 focuses on equity and inclusion considerations. Wellbeing considerations are more dispersed through the document.

A number of actions in the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 are drawn from Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package which specifically targets the challenges of the community, particularly regarding equity and wellbeing, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Cultural Considerations**

The Creative Culture team was consulted as part of the preparation for this document. In addition to providing an innovative and diverse range of festivals, events and other creative activities, many of the actions listed in this report focus on designing COVID-19 safe artistic experiences that support artists to return to presenting work in Darebin.

### **Economic Development Considerations**

Goal Four of the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 has considerable focus on Economic Development considerations. A number of actions in the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 are from Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package which specifically targets the challenges of Darebin businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

The Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 is directly linked to and resourced by the proposed Annual Budget 2020–21.

### **Legal and Risk Implications**

Not applicable.

### **Operational Impacts**

By regularly monitoring progress through the Quarterly Action Plan Progress Reports, the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 will play a key role in driving the performance and priorities of the organisation over the coming financial year.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 represents the final year of the Council Plan 2017–21. The Action Plan has been developed with the Council Plan objectives and long-term targets in mind.

It is noted that items in the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 associated with Council's COVID-19 Community and Business Resilience and Recovery Package, and other items with a COVID-19 recovery focus, are marked with a symbol/icon.

The Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 includes 16 ‘Big Actions’ among more than 200 total actions. There are approximately 30 COVID-19 recovery related actions.

Key highlights include:

- A package of COVID-19 Recovery Grants across business, community sporting groups and creative industries
- Implementation of the Electronic Gaming Machine Policy and Action Plan
- Providing a safe environment for school children walking and cycling to school
- Implementation of the project to develop new social housing on a Council car park at Townhall Avenue
- Increasing the number of library events in community languages
- Creation of COVID-19 safe platforms and artistic experiences that support artists and audiences to return to presenting work in Darebin
- Increasing the number of community gardens at Bundoora Park Farm
- Design and construction of play spaces at Ruthven Reserve, Penders Park (stage 2), CH Sullivan Reserve, and Vale Reserve
- Completion of the outdoor courts at the Multi-Sports Stadium
- Implementation of the Age Friendly Darebin Review year two actions
- Increasing tree plantings and canopy in parks, streets and median strips to achieve coverage in line with Council’s Urban Forest Strategy
- Launching the Solar Saver Bulk Buy to support at least 200 households and small businesses to access solar with reputable suppliers and products

## **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

The options for Council are to:

- Adopt the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 as presented
- Adopt the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 with amendments
- Do not adopt the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 (not recommended)

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **Details**

Progress of the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 will be reported to Council on a quarterly basis throughout the coming financial year as part of the Council Plan Action Plan Progress Report.

### **Communication**

The Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 will be promoted on Council’s website and through social media.

### **Timeline**

Progress against the Council Plan Action Plan 2020–21 will be reported quarterly to Council during the 2020-21 financial year.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- City of Darebin Council Plan 2017–21
- City of Darebin Annual Budget 2020–21
- City of Darebin Strategic Resource Plan 2020–24

**Attachments**

- Council Plan Action Plan 2020-21 (**Appendix A**)

**DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any direct or indirect interest in a matter to which the advice relates.

The Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL**


**6. CLOSE OF MEETING**

**CITY OF  
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