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## AGENDA

Ordinary Council Meeting to be held at  
Council Chamber,  
Darebin Civic Centre,  
350 High Street Preston  
on Monday 3 February 2020 at 6.00 pm.

Public question time will  
commence shortly after 6.00 pm.





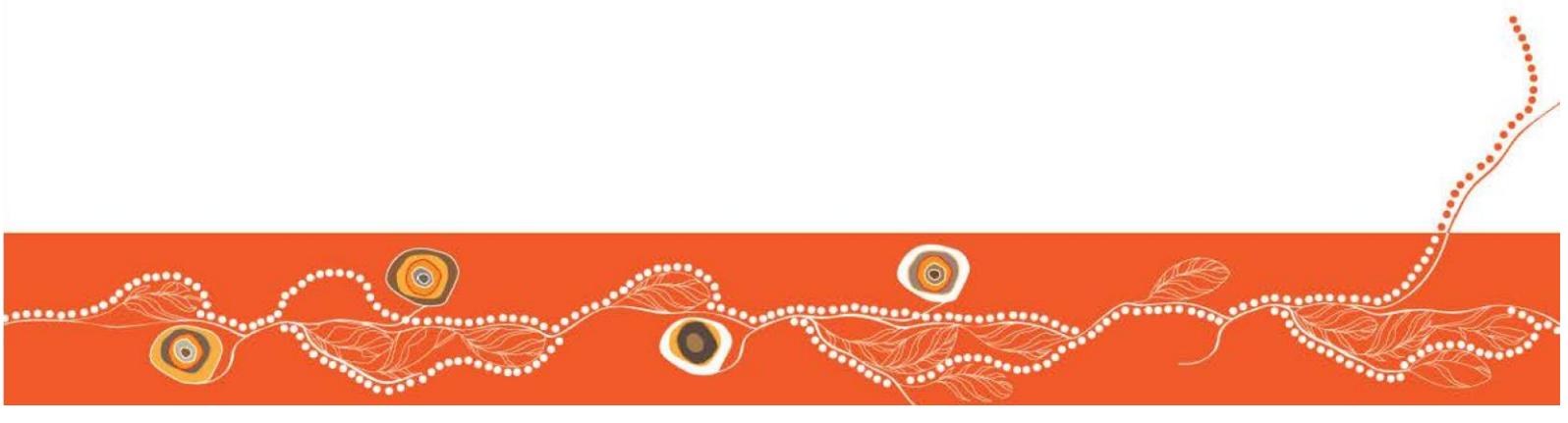
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES IN DAREBIN**

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. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

### Correction to the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on the 16 December 2020

The Notice of Motion Item 10.1 Local Government Bill presented to the Ordinary Council Meeting on the 16 December 2019 contained a small anomaly. This Notice of Motion addressed the issue of multi member wards and removal of the capacity for councils to have multi members wards in favour of single-member wards.

The Notice of Motion contained 8 parts which all addressed Council's concern with the proposal to remove of the capacity for councils to have multi-members wards contained the Local Government Bill presented to Parliament on 14 November 2019.

The anomaly was in point 5 of the presented Notice of Motion, which stated:

*'That Council.....*

5. *Notes the widespread sector opposition to the **multi-member** wards including from the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA).'*

This incorrect reference to **multi-member** wards rather than **single-member** wards is inconsistent with the intent and balance of the Notice of Motion and was clearly an anomaly.

Officers have acted on the adopted resolution through its correspondence to the Minister for Local Government and subsequent advocacy based on its opposition to single-member wards.

To correct this anomaly it is appropriate that the matter be corrected in the minutes of this meeting.

**Recommendation**

**That** the Minutes of Ordinary Council Meeting on Council held on 16 December 2019 as amended above be confirmed as a correct record of the business transacted.

## 5. QUESTION AND SUBMISSION TIME

Members of the public can lodge questions for Council to answer or make a Comment or Submission prior to a specific item listed on the Agenda of an Ordinary Council meeting.

### **QUESTIONS**

Members of the public can ask up to two (2) questions at an Ordinary Council meeting.

Questions submitted online will be responded to in the first instance. If you are not present at the meeting, the Chairperson will read the question and provide a response. The Chairperson may then take questions from members in the gallery.

Any question not answered at the meeting will be taken on notice and a written response will be provided to the person asking the question.

In accordance with the Darebin Governance Local Law, the Chairperson may disallow a question if it:

- is defamatory, indecent, abusive, offensive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or substance; or
- deals with a subject matter already answered; or
- is aimed at embarrassing a Councillor or an officer.

If you are unable to submit your question prior to the Ordinary Council meeting, the Chairperson may take questions from the floor.

### **SUBMISSIONS OR COMMENTS**

Members of the public may make a comment or 2 minute submission on a matter listed on the Agenda prior to the item being debated.

A person who is unable to stay at the meeting until the Agenda item is heard, may make their comment or submission during Question Time.

### **HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION OR MAKE A COMMENT OR SUBMISSION**

Members of the public who wish to ask a question, or make a comment or submission to an agenda item, at an Ordinary Council meeting are encouraged to do so in one of the following ways:

- (a) online at [darebin.vic.gov.au/questionsandsubmissions](http://darebin.vic.gov.au/questionsandsubmissions) by 3pm on the day of the meeting; or
- (b) by email to [Q&S@darebin.vic.gov.au](mailto:Q&S@darebin.vic.gov.au); by 3pm on the day of the meeting; or
- (c) in person at the Preston Customer Service Centre, 274 Gower Street, Preston; or
- (d) by mail to PO Box 91, Preston 3072; or
- (e) with a Council officer prior to a Council meeting.

Council meetings can be viewed at the Watch Council and Planning Committee meetings page.

Agenda's will be available for viewing on Council's website at the 'Meeting Agendas and Minutes' page by 5pm, up to 6 days prior to the date of the meeting. Copies are also available at Customer Service centres and libraries.

**6. PETITIONS**

**7. URGENT BUSINESS**

## 8. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

### 8.1 PROPOSED SALE OF DISCONTINUED ROAD REAR 75 TO 81 MALPAS STREET AND 182 TO 188 WOOD STREET, PRESTON

**Author:** Property Officer

**Reviewed By:** Chief Executive Officer

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, Council received enquiries from an adjacent owner of the 3.66-metre-wide former road adjoining the rear of 75–81 Malpas Street and 182–188 Wood Street, Preston, who was seeking to purchase the land abutting their property, being part of the unsold land from a previously discontinued road.

The land is known as Lots 7, 8, 9 and 10 on Title Plan 023774X (**Appendix B**), shown hatched on site plan in **Appendix A** and in orange in the aerial view in **Appendix C**.

Consultation with abutting property owners confirmed the feasibility of the proposed sale, with the property owners of 184 Wood Street, 186 Wood Street and 2/188 Wood Street, Preston respectively indicating their interest by signing in-principle agreements to purchase the land from the discontinued roads at market value, as well as meeting all reasonable costs associated with the statutory process.

It is therefore recommended that Council commences the statutory process to sell the land from this former road and to take title of any unsold land.

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

- (1) Commences the statutory procedures under Section 189 of the *Local Government Act 1989* ('the Act') to:
  - a) Sell the land from the discontinued road adjoining the rear of 184 Wood Street, 186 Wood Street and 2/188 Wood Street, Preston shown as Lots 8, 9 and 10 on Title Plan 023774X in **Appendix B**, to the owners of 184 Wood Street, 186 Wood Street and 2/188 Wood Street, Preston, respectively
  - b) Take title to the land shown as Lot 7 on Title Plan 023774X in **Appendix B** in accordance with Council Policy.
- (2) Gives public notice under Sections 189, 82A and 223 of the Act of the proposed sale in the appropriate newspapers and on Council's website, and in such notice, state that Council proposes to:
  - a) Sell the land from the former roads to the owners of 184 Wood Street, 186 Wood Street and 2/188 Wood Street, Preston, respectively by private treaty
  - b) Transfer to itself any land that remains unsold.

## BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

In 2018, Council received an enquiry from an adjoining property owner at 79 Malpas Street, Preston looking to purchase the land from the former road at the rear of their property. Investigations revealed that on 16 September 2002, Council resolved to discontinue the road bound by Malpas Street, McColl Street and Wood Street, Preston and to sell the land by private treaty in accordance with Council policy. However, not all parcels of land were sold at that time, with the unsold parcels of land continuing to vest with Council. The discontinuance was published in the Victorian Government Gazette on 3 October 2002, shown in **Appendix D**.

Investigations also revealed that the parts of the land appear to have been incorporated within the properties at 182 and 186 Wood Street for many years, while the remaining land is unoccupied and landlocked. The owner at 79 Malpas Street subsequently withdrew their interest in the land and the owners of the adjoining properties at 75, 77 and 81 Malpas Street and 182 Wood Street, Preston have not objected nor expressed any interest in the land.

### Previous Council Resolution

This matter is not the subject of a previous Council resolution.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

### Consultation with adjoining property owners

All immediate adjoining property owners, both occupiers and non-occupiers were consulted on 23 July 2019 and 18 October 2019 regarding the proposal and no objections were received.

While the owner of 79 Malpas Street withdrew their interest in purchasing land, the property owners of 184 Wood Street, 186 Wood Street and 2/188 Wood Street, Preston have confirmed an interest in acquiring the land, known as Lots 8, 9 and 10 respectively, at current market value, as well as meeting all of the reasonable costs associated with selling the land in accordance with current policy.

### Consultation with Service Authorities and Council Departments

Easements in favour of both Council and Yarra Valley Water were saved over the land at the time of the discontinuance in 2002.

### Consultation with the community

The statutory procedures require Council to give public notice of its intention to sell the land known as Lots 8, 9 and 10 on Title Plan 023774X and to take title to Lot 7, and invite submissions from affected parties or any person/s. All abutting property owners will be advised of the proposal in writing and informed of their right to make a submission. Submitters may request to be heard by Council prior to a decision being made to proceed or otherwise with the proposal. Following this, a report will be presented to Council for a decision on whether to sell the land, part of the land or not to sell the land.

## Communications

- All immediate adjoining property owners, both occupiers and non-occupiers were consulted in writing on 23 July 2019 and 18 October 2019, as part of initial investigations in considering the proposals and no objections were received. The dimensions and proposed allocation of the land is shown in the Title Plans provided in **Appendix B**.

- Although the owner of 79 Malpas Street subsequently withdrew their interest in purchasing land, the property owners of 184 Wood Street, 186 Wood Street and 2/188 Wood Street, Preston have all agreed to purchase the land adjoining their respective properties at current market value, as well as meeting all reasonable costs associated with the transfer of land.

## **ANALYSIS**

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

Goal 6 - A well governed Council

Property Asset Management Strategy

Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

There are no factors in this report that impact upon environmental sustainability.

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

There are no factors in this report that impact upon equity, inclusion and wellbeing.

### **Cultural Considerations**

There are no factors in this report that impact upon cultural considerations.

### **Economic Development Considerations**

There are no factors in this report that impact upon economic development considerations

### **Climate Emergency**

There are no factors in this report that impact upon climate change

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

At the commencement of negotiations with each of the property owners, the Council's Valuer placed a market value of \$440.00 per square metre (including GST) on the land. Lots 8, 9 and 10, with a combined area of 168m<sup>2</sup>, are intended to be sold to the property owners of 184 Wood Street, 186 Wood Street and 2/188 Wood Street, Preston respectively for the total amount of \$73,920.00 (including GST).

Costs associated with the statutory procedures and sale of the former roads will be recovered from the purchasers, should the sales proceed. The land from the former roads, once sold, will also attract Council rates.

### **Legal and Risk Implications**

Risks associated are covered under the analysis of each option.

## DISCUSSION

Council's property portfolio must meet current service needs while providing the flexibility to meet future requirements. Roads, reserves, revenge strips, hiatus and other pieces of land of unusual shape and limited usefulness that are less than 200m<sup>2</sup> in area (collectively referred to as minor Council property assets) were originally set aside in early plans of subdivision for a particular purpose, such as access or drainage. In many cases, these parcels of land are still required for that purpose and need to remain open and available to the public.

In situations where a minor Council property asset is no longer reasonably required for that purpose or other strategic purposes, it may be considered surplus and suitable for sale.

## OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

### Option 1 – Abandon the Proposal or Do Nothing

Council could resolve to abandon the proposal, take no action or may make no resolution on the matter. This option would mean the status quo would remain with the adjoining property owners continuing to occupy the land.

Council may be perceived as knowingly encouraging and enabling property owners to continue to occupy other reserves, roads or rights-of-way within Darebin to the detriment of the community (whether financially or as a benefiting right).

Council may, at some time in the future, resolve to commence the process to sell the land.

### Option 2 – Commence the Statutory Procedures (Recommended)

Council could resolve to commence the statutory procedures to potentially sell the land. This would extend the consultation to the wider community and enable all affected property owners to have a formal opportunity to make a submission. This option would assist Council in obtaining further insight into the overall consensus of surrounding property owners and the community in relation to the sale. It would also enable Council to make an informed assessment of the proposed sale of the land from the former roads.

Benefits of commencing the statutory process, depending on Council's decision on the proposed sale, could result in receipt of revenue from the sale of land that is no longer required for its original purpose.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### Details

- Commence statutory process
- Report back to Council on outcome of statutory process

### Communication

- Council departments
- Community
- Macquarie Local Government Lawyers
- Owners of adjoining properties
- Statutory authorities

## Timeline

It is expected that a report on the outcome of the statutory process would be presented to Council for consideration in April 2020.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Local Government Act 1989*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- Sale of Minor Council Property Assets Policy

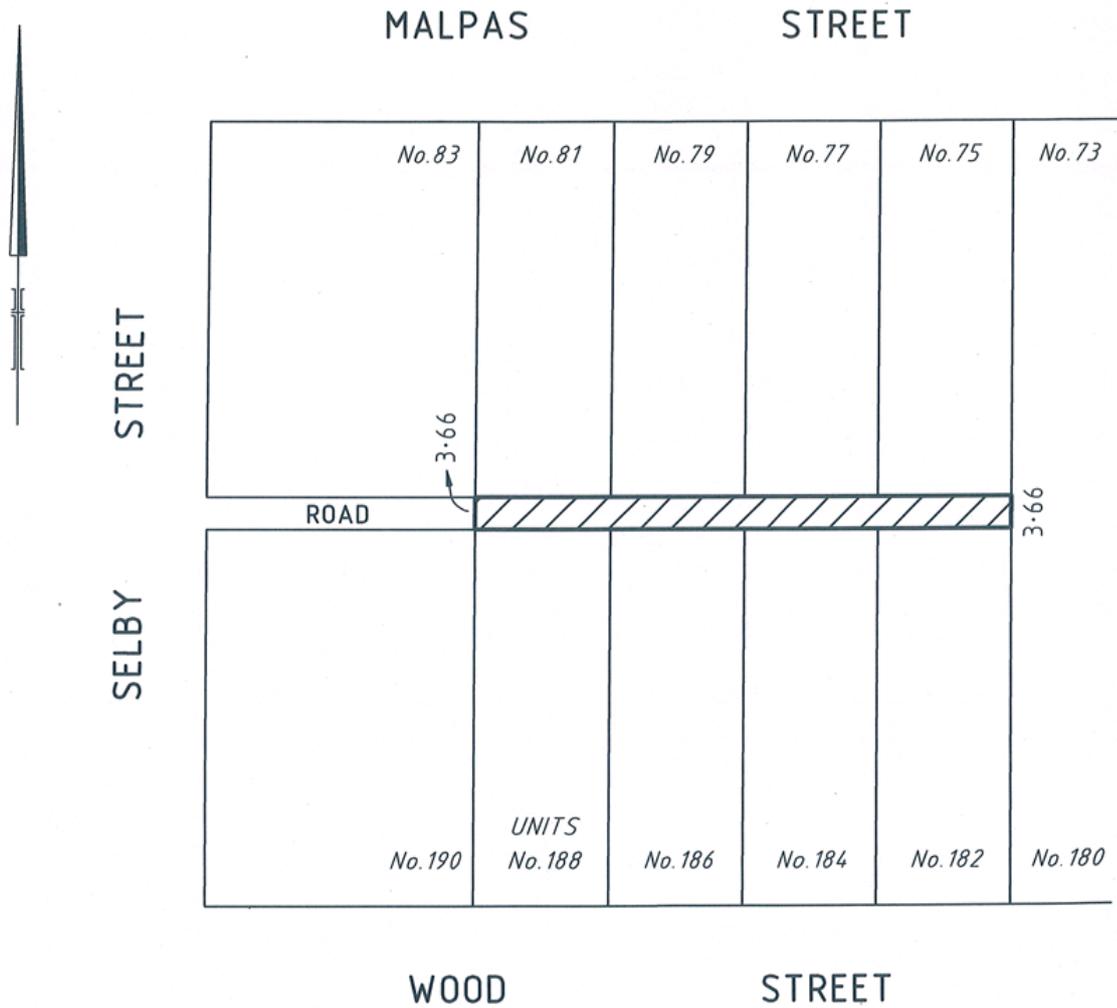
## Attachments

- Site Plan - rear 75-81 Malpas Street and 182-188 Wood Street, Preston (**Appendix A**)  
[↓](#)
- Title Plan 023774X - rear 75-81 Malpas Street and 182-188 Wood Street, Preston (**Appendix B**) [↓](#)
- Aerial View - rear 75-81 Malpas Street and 182-188 Wood Street, Preston (**Appendix C**) [↓](#)
- Victorian Government Gazette road rear of Malpas Street and Wood Street, Preston (**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.



	<b>TITLE PLAN</b>		<b>EDITION</b>	<b>TPO23774X</b>
<b>LOCATION OF LAND</b> PARISH JIKA JIKA TOWNSHIP - SECTION - CROWN ALLOTMENT - CROWN PORTION 146 (PART) LAST PLAN REFERENCE LP2995 DEPTH LIMITATION DOES NOT APPLY TITLE REFERENCE VOL.2376 FOL.087 MGA CO-ORDINATES E 325 310 (APPROX. CENTRE OF LAND IN PLAN) N 5 821 810      ZONE 55			<b>WARNING</b> THIS PLAN REPRESENTS AN EXPECTED DIVISION OF LAND. ANY ONE LOT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN CREATED. CHECK THE LOT/PLAN INDEX FOR CURRENT INFORMATION.  <b>NOTATIONS</b> LOT 3 HAS BEEN OMITTED FROM THIS PLAN.  THIS PLAN IS NOT BASED ON SURVEY	
<b>EASEMENT INFORMATION</b>				
<b>LEGEND</b> E- ENCUMBERING EASEMENT OR CONDITION IN CROWN GRANT IN THE NATURE OF AN EASEMENT OR OTHER ENCUMBRANCE A- APPURTENANT EASEMENT R- ENCUMBERING EASEMENT (ROAD)				
<b>EASEMENT REFERENCE</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>WIDTH (METRES)</b>	<b>ORIGIN</b>	<b>LAND BENEFITED/IN FAVOUR OF</b>
ALL THE LAND IN THIS PLAN	AS PROVIDED FOR IN SEC.207C LGA 1989	3-66	SEC.207C LGA 1989	YARRA VALLEY WATER LTD.
LOT 2	DRAINAGE	3-66	AC308426K	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL
LOT 1	DRAINAGE	3-66	AC354820U	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL
LOT 6	DRAINAGE	3-66	AD294585A	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL
LOT 5	DRAINAGE	3-66	AG356843L	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL
LOT 4	DRAINAGE	3-66	AM495739A	DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

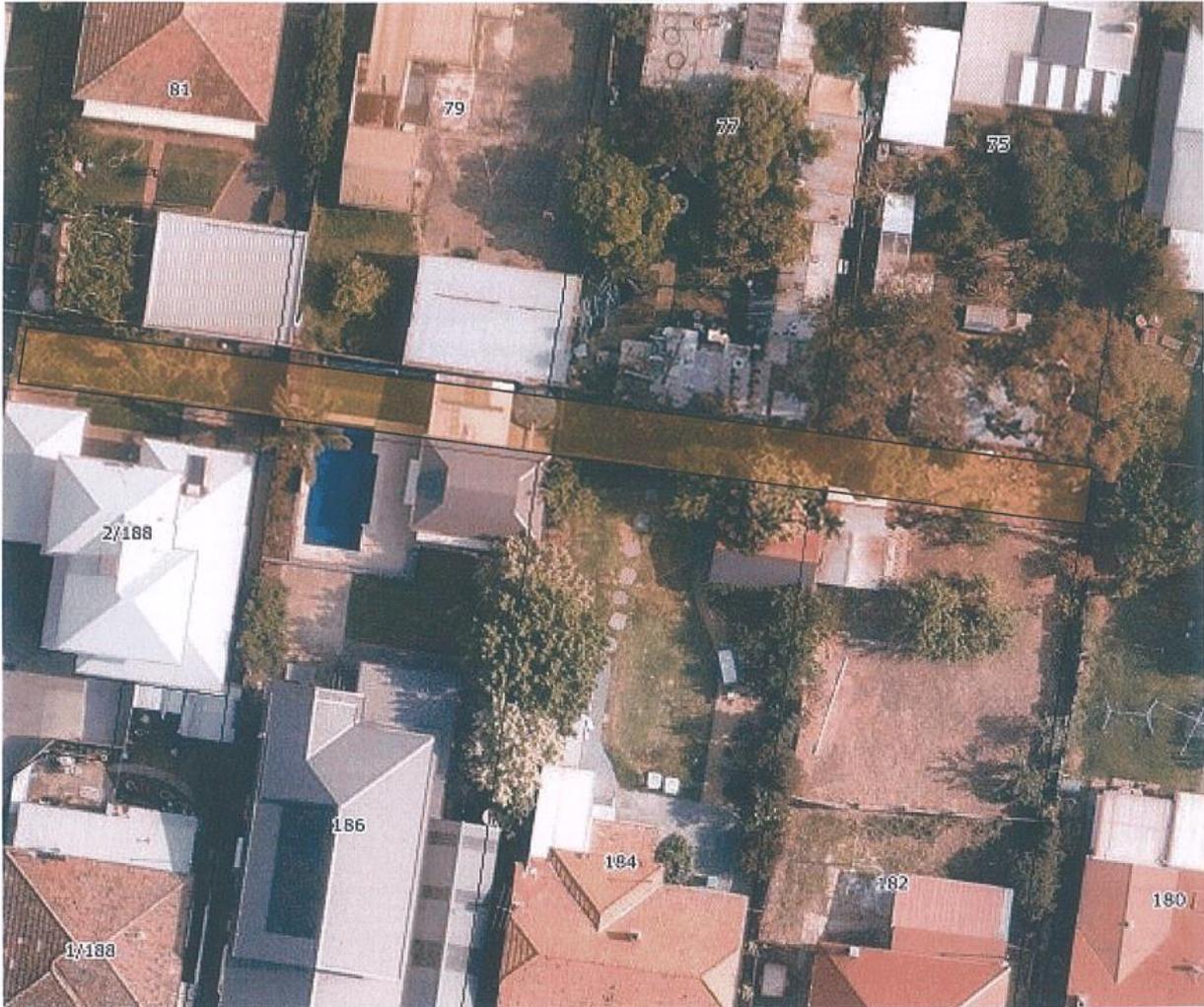
  

**MALPAS STREET**

**WOOD STREET**

SCALE 1:750	LENGTHS ARE IN METRES	LICENSED SURVEYOR ANDREW CLINTON SMITH	FILE NO : LGD
<b>BARKER MONAHAN</b> A DIVISION OF TERRAIN CONSULTING GROUP PTY LTD SURVEYORS, DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS 581 GILBERT ROAD, PRESTON 3072 P.O. BOX 2546 REGENT WEST 3072 TELEPHONE 9478 6133 FAX 9478 5189 EMAIL: survey@barkermonahan.com.au		SIGNATURE .....	DEALING CODE : LGA
		DATE / /	SHEET 1 OF 1 SHEET
		VERSION 02	ORIGINAL SHEET SIZE A3
REF. 19333	COMPUTER FILE: 19333TPv02.DWG	DATE: 08/08/2019	

MALPAS STREET



WOOD STREET

*Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure that the information in this product is current and accurate, the City of Darebin does not accept responsibility or liability whatsoever for the content, or for any errors or omissions contained therein. © City of Darebin*

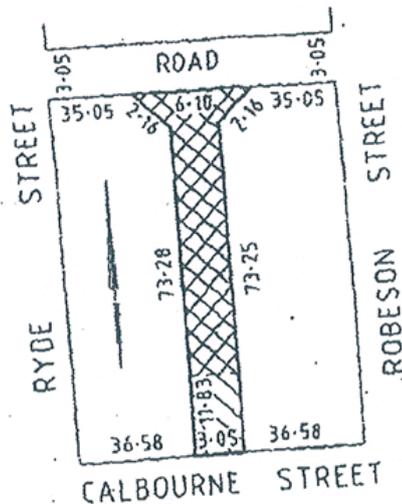
Victoria Government Gazette

G 40 3 October 2002 2685

**DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL**  
Road Discontinuance

Pursuant to section 206 and schedule 10, clause 3 of the Local Government Act 1989, the Darebin City Council at its ordinary meeting held on 16 September 2002, formed the opinion that the road at the rear of 13 to 21 Robeson Street and 2 to 10 Ryde Street, Preston, and shown hatched and cross-hatched on the plan below, is not reasonably required as a road for public use; and resolved to discontinue the road and to sell the land from the road by private treaty to the abutting property owners.

The section of road shown cross-hatched is to be sold subject to the right, power or interest held by Yarra Valley Water Limited, in the road in connection with any sewers, drains or pipes, under the control of that authority in or near the road.



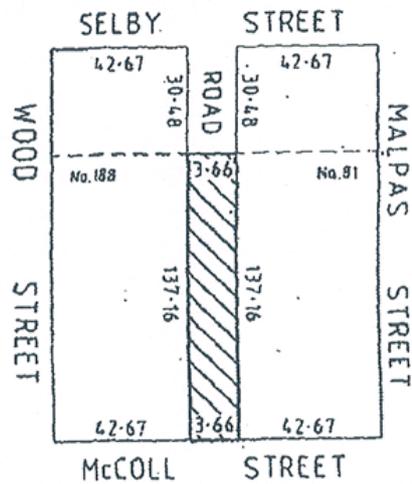
PHILLIP SHANAHAN  
Chief Executive Officer

**DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL**  
Road Discontinuance

Pursuant to section 206 and schedule 10, clause 3 of the Local Government Act 1989, the Darebin City Council at its ordinary meeting held on 16 September 2002, formed the opinion that the road at the rear of 65 to 81 Malpas

Street and 172 to 188 Wood Street, Preston, and shown by hatching on the plan below, is not reasonably required as a road for public use and resolved to discontinue the road and to sell the land from the road by private treaty to the abutting property owners.

The road is to be sold subject to the right, power or interest held by Yarra Valley Water Limited, in the road in connection with any sewers, drains or pipes, under the control of that authority in or near the road.



PHILLIP SHANAHAN  
Chief Executive Officer



ALPINE SHIRE

LOCAL LAW No. 2  
MUNICIPAL PLACES  
AMENDMENT

Notice is hereby given that at a meeting of the Alpine Shire Council on 1 October 2002, Council proposed to amend Local Law No. 2 - Municipal Places.

The purpose of the amendment is to extend the time when alcohol consumption is restricted

## 8.2 SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO HOMELESSNESS IN VICTORIA

**Author:** Coordinator Community Development and Wellbeing

**Reviewed By:** Chief Executive Officer

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (Legislative Council) have been tasked to undertake an inquiry into homelessness in Victoria. This report recommends that Council endorse a formal submission to the Inquiry.

The proposed submission includes responses to the Legislative Council's terms of reference and makes recommendations on the policies and practices that are lacking in Victoria and indeed across Australia. It provides examples from Council's experience in responding to homelessness and securing affordable housing outcomes.

#### Recommendation

**That** Council endorses the submission attached in **Appendix A** to be made to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into homelessness in Victoria.

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### BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistical definition states that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives, they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- Is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- Has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- Does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

While the ABS definition is used across Australia, the change in definition of homelessness and the counting methodology has resulted in an under estimation of people living in precarious circumstances. This does not include a broader understanding of homelessness, such as:

- **Primary homelessness:** experienced by people without conventional accommodation (e.g. sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings).
- **Secondary homelessness:** experienced by people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another (e.g. emergency accommodation, youth refuges, couch surfing).
- **Tertiary homelessness:** as experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards (e.g. boarding housing and caravan parks).

The 2016 ABS census noted 972 people in Darebin experiencing homelessness. However due to the nature of homelessness, this figure is estimated to be closer to 1500 on any given night, which is made up of:

- 972 counted in the ABS census
- 200 young people 'couch surfing' (those who drift in and out of rough sleeping)
- 180 – 300 people living in rooming houses (Tenants Union Victoria, 2018)
- 80 people sleeping rough in 20 sites around Darebin where people are sleeping in tents, in cars or sheltered on the street or in 'squats' (Launch Housing Assertive Homelessness Outreach Program, 2018).

Family violence is the single biggest cause of homelessness in Victoria and Australia. In the recent 2016 Census, 42% of Victorians said they are homeless due to family violence and 39% are homeless due to financial hardship or housing crisis.

Local government does not have the primary responsibility to respond to the issue of homelessness itself, however increasingly it plays a vital role in advocating to state and federal government and working alongside the service system and stakeholders locally to address this complex issue.

At its meeting on 11 June 2019 Council endorsed that Council:

- (1) Notes the feedback from local homelessness and emergency relief agencies.
- (2) Considers allocating an additional \$157,500 in the 2019–20 budget to pilot an assertive outreach program in Darebin for a two-year period.
- (3) Pending the outcome of 2019–20 budget process, undertakes an expression of interest process to appoint a homelessness service provider to deliver the assertive outreach program for a two-year pilot program, with the service to commence in the second quarter of 2019–20.
- (4) Pilots a shower access program at Reservoir Leisure Centre and Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre for people experiencing homelessness for a six-month period, in partnership with the Darebin homelessness and emergency relief sector.
- (5) Participates in a homelessness StreetCount in 2020 to identify the number and needs of rough sleepers in Darebin to inform future work.

Council's submission to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into homelessness in Victoria forms part of its ongoing advocacy and efforts to respond to homelessness and rough sleeping.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

### **Consultation**

Consultation has taken place with relevant departments across Council:

- City Futures: Principal Strategic Planner
- Equity and Wellbeing: Community Development Officer

Consultation with community and stakeholders:

- Darebin Women's Advisory Committee
- North East Melbourne Area homelessness agencies

The proposed submission takes into consideration consultation undertaken between December 2018 and May 2019 with homelessness and emergency relief stakeholders in Darebin, in the development of Council's responses to homelessness that were endorsed at Council on 11 June 2019.

## **ANALYSIS**

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

Goal 2 - Opportunities to live well

Goal 5 - Involving our diverse community

- **Darebin Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21**, Goal 3: Improve the emotional and social wellbeing of all Darebin people

### **Environmental Sustainability Considerations**

#### **Climate Emergency**

Whilst this submission does not aim to address climate emergency directly, it is understood that rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness will continue to be impacted significantly by climate emergency than other cohorts of the community.

The submission notes that extreme weather and climate emergency mean that people sleeping in the public realm are increasingly exposed to extreme heat and a range of health and wellbeing impacts associated to this.

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

Access to safe and secure housing is a key consideration for equity and inclusion. Council's approach to responding to homelessness acknowledges that disadvantage and family violence are key drivers of homelessness.

Only 1.9 per cent of rental housing is affordable to those on Centrelink payments and across Victoria, there are more than 80,000 people waiting for social housing. The submission notes the fundamental need for more affordable housing and public housing across Darebin and Victoria.

### **Cultural Considerations**

There are no cultural considerations pertaining to this submission or report.

### **Economic Development Considerations**

There are no economic development considerations pertaining to this submission or report.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no financial or resource implications pertaining to this submission or report. Work to address homelessness is undertaken within existing allocated budget, include Officer resourcing and initiative such as assertive outreach support program and shower access program.

**Legal and Risk Implications**

There are no legal or risk implications pertaining to this report.

**DISCUSSION****Summary of submission**

The submission has been drafted in response to the Legislative Council's It is required to consider and report on the state of homelessness in Victoria under three terms of reference:

1. Provide an independent analysis of the changing scale and nature of homelessness across Victoria
2. Investigate the many social, economic and policy factors that impact on homelessness; and
3. Identify policies and practices from all levels of government that have a bearing on delivering services to the homeless.

The complete submission is attached in **Appendix A** and can be summarised with the following:

- The nature and scale of homelessness is changing across Victoria. There are groups experiencing higher rates of homelessness, notably young people and women over 55 years
- The lack of investment and commitment from state and federal government by way of strategic state and national frameworks and strategy to address homelessness
- Opportunities to make systemic changes to planning controls and introduce affordable housing mandates
- Current policies exist that exacerbate homelessness in Victoria
- The lack of affordable housing available to Victorians
- The substandard and unsafe emergency accommodation, often the only option for people experiencing homelessness
- Maintenance of public housing stock and new housing stock has been neglected
- Opportunities to take a big picture view of homelessness across Victoria and the systems to respond and prevent.

**OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION****Option A - recommended**

That Council endorse the submission attached in **Appendix A** to be made to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into homelessness in Victoria.

**Option B**

That Council chooses to adopt the recommendation detailed in this report with minor changes to the submission.

**Option C**

Council may choose to not endorse the submission

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### Details

Should Council endorse the recommendation of this report a submission to the inquiry into homelessness in Victoria will be made to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee.

### Communication

A letter from the City of Darebin Mayor will accompany the submission to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee.

### Timeline

- February 2020: Submission to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

### Attachments

- Submission to Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into homelessness in Victoria. ([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.



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# Submission to the Victorian Legislative Council - Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

January 2020

## **Darebin City Council submission Legislative Council inquiry into homelessness in Victoria**

### **Introduction**

Darebin City Council (Council) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (Legislative Council) inquiry into homelessness in Victoria.

Council is pleased to see the Legislative Council tasked to make an inquiry into the state of homelessness across Victoria. Council is committed to addressing health inequalities and disadvantage across Darebin, more recently this has included direct responses to the growing local visibility of homelessness and the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers. Notably, in the past five years there has been a significant and visible increase in homelessness and rough sleeping across the municipality. The nature and scale of homelessness in Darebin is detailed in the attached submission.

Local councils across Victoria are increasingly responding to local homelessness issues, in part due to the unmet demand across inner and outer Melbourne for emergency accommodation and short and long-term affordable housing. Currently this work is taking place in an ad-hoc approach without a state or national approach to homelessness and housing affordability.

It is noted that there has been an extraordinary commitment from the Victoria Government into a number of homelessness and affordable housing programs over the past five-years and Council is encouraged to see this level of funding allocated. However it is detailed throughout this submission that a big picture view of responding to homelessness is timely in Victoria and across Australia.

This submission therefore advocates strongly for state and federal governments to increase strategic and coordinated commitments and investments in housing and homelessness responses. In summary Council's submission makes the following recommendations:

1. Invest in targeted homelessness prevention programs and support services for groups at heightened risk of homelessness, notably young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people living with a disability and women over 55.
2. Advocate to the Federal Government for the development of a National Housing Strategy that aligns projects and dialogue between local, state and federal governments.
3. Introduce mandatory controls for affordable housing in the planning scheme and meaningfully engage with council's in determining and implementing the planning mechanisms for affordable housing for 10 percent inclusionary zoning and up to 28 percent in Darebin.
4. Increase the supply of public housing and commit to the delivery of 3,000 public housing dwellings every year for the next 10 years.
5. State government commitments and funding increased significantly to maintain current public housing stock.
6. Advocate to the Federal Government to increase Commonwealth Rent Assistance.
7. Commit to extending Victoria's out-of-home care age policy to extend the leaving care age from 18 until 21 years, in line with the Home Stretch campaign beyond the five-year trial
8. Advocate to Federal Government and provide a government response to emergency accommodation in Victoria, as identified in Crisis in Crisis advocacy
9. Reinstate extreme weather brokerage funds for homelessness access points across Victoria

10. Review Victorian homelessness sector funding to adequately meet the demand of intake assessment planning, case management and emergency accommodation

Council is encouraged by the Legislative Council's inquiry into homelessness in Victoria and would welcome further consultation relating to this submission or the inquiry more broadly.

**Response to Legislative Council Terms of Reference 1: *Provide an independent analysis of the changing scale and nature of homelessness across Victoria***

The 2016 ABS census<sup>1</sup> noted 972 people in Darebin experiencing homelessness. However due to the nature of homelessness, this figure is estimated to be closer to 1500 on any given night, which is made of:

- 972 counted in the ABS census
- 200 young people 'couch surfing' (those who drift in and out of rough sleeping)
- 180 – 300 people living in rooming houses<sup>2</sup>
- 80 people sleeping rough in 20 sites<sup>3</sup> around Darebin where people are sleeping in tents, in cars or sheltered on the street or in 'squats'.

Within the municipality, there are no 'clusters' of homeless people in Darebin, however there has been an increase in the number of people 'sleeping rough' in the last four years. There is also an unknown number of women (and children) living in emergency accommodation such as refuges, and short stay hotels rooms to escape family violence.

Research shows a high rate of homelessness in capital city central business districts and adjacent areas, however 'moderate to high' rates of homelessness are also dispersed across the metropolitan areas in middle to outer suburbs<sup>4</sup>.

These figures and the nature of homelessness in Darebin are similar to those across Victoria. Data collected by the 2016 Census and Council to Homeless Persons<sup>5</sup> and local homelessness agencies (anecdotal) identify a number of notable changes in the past five years in the nature and scale of homelessness:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are significantly overrepresented, with 4% of people experiencing homelessness, despite making up less than 1% of the Victorian population
- 42% of Victorians are homeless due to family violence and 39% are homeless due to financial hardship or housing crisis
- Youth homelessness is increasing, of the number of Victorian's counted as homeless in the 2016 Census, 39% were under the age of 25
- Women over 55 years are the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness in Australia
- There is an unknown number of women (and children) living in emergency accommodation such as refuges, and short stay hotels rooms to escape family violence

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, Estimating Homelessness cat no. 2049.0, 2016

<sup>2</sup> Tenants Victoria, Rooming House Project, 2018

<sup>3</sup> Launch Housing Assertive Homelessness Outreach Program, 2018

<sup>4</sup> AHURI, The Changing geography of homelessness: a spatial analysis from 2001 to 2016, 2019

<sup>5</sup> Council to Homeless Persons, Homelessness in Victoria, 2018

- Anecdotally, local homelessness services have noted an increase in complex mental health among their clients and the impact this has on providing suitable homelessness services and supports.
- Increase in the number of community concerns about the welfare of rough sleepers have been made to Council, this includes the complex mental health and wellbeing needs of rough sleepers.

The above data is not intended to be comprehensive, but to give a snapshot of the recent change in nature, levels and complexity of homelessness locally in Darebin and across Victoria. Currently, there are challenges in accessing comprehensive and timely data about rough sleepers. For example, in the North East Melbourne Area, data is collected by local homelessness access points and agencies, however there is not a consistent outreach or data collection method across services to count actual numbers. As such, Council will be participating in a homelessness StreetCount in 2020 to better understand the nature, scale and needs of rough sleeping across Darebin. It is acknowledged that whilst the Census collects data on rough sleeping and homelessness, the instrument of collection is a barrier to a significant cohort of people experiencing homelessness on census night.

**Response to Legislative Council Terms of Reference 2: *Investigate the many social, economic and policy factors that impact on homelessness***

People experiencing homelessness and the term rough sleeping is used throughout this submission, however it is acknowledged that homelessness represent enormous diversity across age, culture – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures – ethnicity, race, socioeconomic and (im)migration status, geographic location, sexuality, dis/ability, and religion. Furthermore, it is noted that these factors can contribute to people experiencing additional barriers to accessing safe and secure housing or homelessness supports.

As noted in response to TOR 1 of this submission, there are a number of key social factors and social determinants of homelessness that have an impact on individuals. Homelessness can be thought about as affecting only mature men (and they are indeed among the most affected), in terms of rough sleeping. However this misses a big part of the picture as statistics reveal a significant number of people affected by homelessness are women experiencing violence, including women from CALD backgrounds, as well as older women living in sole households. Young people who identify as LGBTIQ, particularly trans and gender diverse young people, and young people transitioning from out-of-home care (including young Aboriginal people) are also at increased risk of experiencing homelessness.

People experiencing homelessness not only experience personal and economic hardship they also frequently face discrimination and exclusion because of their housing status. This can also be noted for the discrimination faced by people in public and social housing or accessing emergency relief such as food and material aid.

Family violence is the single biggest cause of homelessness in Victoria and Australia. In Victoria, there has been significant investment in responding to family violence, following the Royal Commission into Family Violence handed down its findings in 2015, yet none of the 227 recommendations has contributed to increase investment in the homelessness service system to meet the demand of women and children escaping family violence. Gender inequality and violence against women continues to make women, especially women over 55 at risk of homelessness, who are noted as the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness in Australia.

Aboriginal women are overrepresented in both homelessness and family violence. Recent research found that Indigenous women who have experienced family violence are at greater risk of losing children due to lack appropriate, safe and affordable accommodation and housing. This research also highlighted the ongoing systemic discrimination faced by first nations, and in this case, Aboriginal women<sup>6</sup>.

Responses to homelessness therefore must reflect the diverse needs of those experiencing it and ensure that services and programs are nuanced and individualised.

#### *Housing Affordability*

The scale of need for affordable housing in Darebin, and across Melbourne, is significant. There are increasing numbers of persons sleeping rough on the streets, parents are sleeping in cars with their children and renters in the community are facing a lifetime of insecure and unaffordable housing, including high levels of housing stress and inability to enter home ownership. The links between housing and health are well understood. Internationally, it has been shown that providing housing first to the most vulnerable members of our community may generate cost offsets for other services, such as frequent use of emergency medical and psychiatric services, prevent long and unproductive stays in other forms of homelessness services and lessen rates of contact with the criminal justice system.

There has been a structural affordability problem for the past 50 years across Australia. Australian dwelling prices have grown much faster than incomes, with average prices increasing from around 2-3 times average incomes in the early 1990s, to around 5 times more recently. Furthermore, supply has failed to keep pace with demand. Concessions and tax exemptions have increased demand, and incentives for housing supply have been limited<sup>7,8</sup>. Rapid migration and population growth has further increased demand for housing. The problem is felt most acutely in larger cities, particularly Sydney and Melbourne. Across Victoria, there are more than 80,000 people waiting for social housing, including 25,000 children on this waitlist<sup>9</sup>. The increased price of housing means renting for low and very low income earners is becoming increasingly difficult – currently only 1.9% of total rental properties are affordable for those on Centrelink benefits.

#### *Lack of Social and Affordable Housing*

The demand for social housing in Darebin reflects the need for affordable rental and ownership properties. In 2016, it was estimated that 6,275 very low and low income households in Darebin required Social Housing, representing over 10% of all households<sup>10</sup>. There is a Social Housing shortfall in Victoria of 102,800 dwellings, with the Victorian Homelessness Council setting a target of 3,000 social and public dwellings to be built every year for the next 10 years in Victoria. Unfortunately, these homes are not being built at the rate needed, with the Victorian Government committing to building 1000 social housing dwellings in the next 3 years - a significant shortfall of the 3,000 per year required to keep up with demand. Demand for affordable housing is growing, and far exceeding supply, resulting in higher rates of homelessness across the State.

<sup>6</sup> Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 2019, The missing link—housing and Indigenous domestic and family violence: [https://www.ahuri.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0023/45239/PES-320-The-missing-link-housing-and-Indigenous-domestic-and-family-violence.pdf](https://www.ahuri.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/45239/PES-320-The-missing-link-housing-and-Indigenous-domestic-and-family-violence.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> AHURI (2018), [Executive Summary: The income tax treatment of housing assets: an assessment of the proposed reform arrangements](#). Inquiry into the pathways to housing tax reform, March 2018.

<sup>8</sup> The Australia Institute (2015), [Top Gears: how negative gearing and the capital gains tax discount benefit the top 10 per cent and drive up house prices](#). April 2015.

<sup>9</sup> The Guardian (2019), [Victoria criticised for \\$2b prison spend while neglecting social housing](#)

<sup>10</sup> Assuming all homeless persons (972 persons), 50 per cent of low income households in rental stress (paying more than 30% of income on rent) and all households residing in Social Housing require a Social Housing response. 'City of Darebin Social Housing Supply Requirements (unmet need and forecast demand), Mortgage Stress Assessment and Affordability Gap Assessment', Affordable Development Outcomes. August 2018.

Over the past several decades, both State and Federal Government have failed to adequately fund both new public housing and the maintenance of existing public housing. Substantial, ongoing investment, in the order of billions of dollars per year, is needed to address the shortfall in social housing.

#### *Insufficient financial support for renters*

In the last 20 years, the proportion of people in home ownership and social housing has fallen, leaving more people in the private rental market, including those on very low incomes. The number of low-income households in rental stress has doubled, and more than 600,000 households in Australia are in rental stress (spending more than 30% of their income on rent). Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) improves affordability and is the clearest path to lowering rental stress<sup>11</sup>. Maximum CRA payment rates have however fallen behind average rents over the past two decades, resulting in more and more individuals and families experiencing rental stress over time. ACOSS advocates for an increase in CRA, and call on 'an absolute minimum' of 30%, or around \$20 per week, as a first step and pending a review of CRA and what is needed<sup>12</sup>.

#### *Policy factors that impact on homelessness*

While the Victorian Government made some changes to the planning system - including a specific definition of 'affordable housing' under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – to increase the supply of affordable housing, these shifts in policy and objectives are minor and have not been effective in meeting the need for affordable housing in Victoria. There is a lack of institutional investment in Australia's rental and social housing market in part because of the lack of tax concessions and low investment returns. Superannuation funds in Australia have invested in the housing market in Europe and the US, but to a very limited extent in Australia. Furthermore, there have been reductions in capital and operational funding of public and community housing across Victoria, and no increase to funding at a national level.

At a State level, the current voluntary contributions framework has resulted in no additional affordable dwellings being built in Darebin and is not effective in meeting the need for affordable housing in Victoria. The inclusion of affordable housing as part of new developments is not mandatory. Council cannot enforce this as a requirement in new developments, with the value and quantum of affordable housing contributions being currently open for debate in Council and applicants negotiations.

"Inclusionary zoning" would be one important step towards ensuring affordable housing is actually being built. The term describes mandatory contributions to affordable housing. It refers to approaches where a portion of dwellings within a development (for example, 20 per cent) are required to be affordable. Such approaches have been implemented successfully in other jurisdictions, most notably the United Kingdom, but also in other States and Territories in Australia<sup>13</sup>. A key part of this success is that the requirements are applied consistently across all development. This provides a 'level playing field' and ensures that affordable housing is considered by all developers in determining site feasibility.

At its meeting on 2 December 2019, Council moved to write to the Minister for Planning and Housing to request that the State Government introduce mandatory controls for affordable housing in the planning scheme and meaningfully engage with council's in determining and

<sup>11</sup> Productivity Commission, [Vulnerable Private Renters: Evidence and Options](#), 2019

<sup>12</sup> ACOSS, 2019: [https://www.acoss.org.au/media\\_release/productivity-commission-highlights-need-to-increase-rent-assistance-and-invest-in-social-housing/](https://www.acoss.org.au/media_release/productivity-commission-highlights-need-to-increase-rent-assistance-and-invest-in-social-housing/)

<sup>13</sup> Australian Housing and Urban Research Unit, Planning mechanisms to deliver affordable homes, 2018: [https://www.ahuri.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0021/17274/PES-006-Planning-mechanisms-to-deliver-affordable-homes.pdf](https://www.ahuri.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/17274/PES-006-Planning-mechanisms-to-deliver-affordable-homes.pdf)

implementing the planning mechanisms for affordable housing for 10 percent inclusionary zoning and up to 28 percent in Darebin.

A national strategic framework is another necessary step to coordinate the investment and effort required to address the severe shortfall of social and affordable housing across Australia. Homelessness and affordable housing advocates, peak bodies, representative bodies, research organisations and Councils have called on the Federal Government to commit to a National Housing Strategy that aligns projects and dialogue between local, state and federal governments. A National Housing Strategy must take a holistic approach to improving the housing crisis, and give consideration to financial levers, policy reforms and changes to the planning system in a cohesive and collaborative way.

A National Housing Strategy and further changes to the Victorian Planning Scheme would go some way in supporting the active work Council is already undertaking in this sector, and have a positive impact on reducing homelessness overall. Council has long advocated for more affordable housing in Darebin recognition and recognise that housing is inextricably linked to social justice, health and wellbeing. Council urges minimum levels of affordability for new developments, is engaging in the redevelopment of Townhall Avenue as social housing and is funding an assertive outreach program targeting people experiencing homelessness in Darebin (outlined further in the case studies below). These initiatives go some way to addressing the housing and homelessness crisis, however, require State and Federal support to have a broader impact.

At a state government level, Victoria's out-of-home care age policy and leaving care age of 18 is problematic and puts young people at risk of homelessness as soon as they turn 18. There is evidence that for young people exiting the out-of-home care program at 18 years old, 35% are homeless in the first year of leaving care; 46% of boys are involved in the juvenile justice system; and 29% are unemployed<sup>14</sup>. These statistics are appalling and identify the immediate need to extend the out-of-home-care leaving aged to be extended from 18 to 21 years old. This should be accompanied with housing pathways for the final three-years of the program.

It is heartening to see the Victorian Government undertake a five-year pilot with 250 young people, with an extended leaving age of 21, in line with the Home Stretch campaign. However it is apparent that this policy should be extended to all young Victorian's in the Out-of-Home Care program.

#### **Affordable Housing examples in Darebin**

Council has been exploring how its own assets can be used for affordable housing to ensure that Darebin is an inclusive, diverse and affordable place to live. While selling public land is a common approach for councils wishing to develop Affordable Housing on council-owned sites, Darebin have chosen to initiate projects based on a lease model which would ensure the land is kept in public hands into the future. Two projects are currently underway – Kids Under Cover and the Town Hall Avenue project.

##### *Kids Under Cover*

Council is working on a lease for a currently vacant Council-owned site at 1 Spring Street, Preston, for a pilot project aimed at preventing youth homelessness. The three-year pilot program will be led by Kids Under Cover, a not for profit organisation dedicated to preventing youth homelessness by providing a unique combination of studio accommodation in family backyards and education scholarships. Kids Under Cover work with Government, community and philanthropic organisations to progress their work.

<sup>14</sup> Home Stretch, CREATE foundation survey, 2010

Through the Victorian State Government Accommodation for the Homeless Program, Kids Under Cover were successful in obtaining funding for the pilot program called 'Village 21', and approached Darebin to partner in the project. Council agreed to provide Kids Under Cover with Council-owned land at 1 Spring Street to establish the village through a peppercorn lease arrangement.

The pilot project aims to house six young people who are leaving the formal Out of Home Care system and are at risk of experiencing long term homelessness. This project speaks to Council's commitment to supporting young people and ensuring Darebin is an inclusive and affordable place to live. The project is expected to commence in 2020.

#### *Townhall Avenue*

Council has begun a tender process for a lease arrangement for an affordable housing project on Council-owned land. In 2016, Council endorsed the *Darebin Social and Affordable Housing Program on Council Owned Land – Pilot Project*, which identified three sites to further explore the possibility to facilitate affordable housing. One of these sites, 52-60 Town Hall Avenue (currently a Council-owned car park) will be the site for Council's first affordable housing project through a leasing model. After statutory and community engagement processes, Council determined to lease the land to a tenant, being a registered housing association or other charitable organisation capable of delivering and managing affordable housing on the site. Following extensive community consultation and consideration of all 309 submissions received, Council decided to proceed with leasing the land at 52-60 Townhall Avenue, Preston for affordable housing.

To trial innovative affordable housing models, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (LMCF) has made a grant of \$1 million available and can help facilitate access to a \$2 million low interest loan for an affordable housing provider (should the tenant's proposal meet the LMCF's criteria). A process is currently underway to select a registered housing association to build and manage affordable housing at the site.

***Recommendation 1:*** Invest in targeted homelessness prevention programs and support services for groups at heightened risk of homelessness, notably young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people living with a disability and women over 55.

***Recommendation 2:*** Advocate to the Federal Government for the development of a National Housing Strategy that aligns projects and dialogue between local, state and federal governments.

***Recommendation 3:*** Introduce mandatory controls for affordable housing in the planning scheme and meaningfully engage with council's in determining and implementing the planning mechanisms for affordable housing for 10 percent inclusionary zoning and up to 28 percent in Darebin.

***Recommendation 4:*** Increase the supply of public housing and commit to the delivery of 3,000 public housing dwellings every year for the next 10 years.

***Recommendation 5:*** Commit to and adequately fund the maintenance of existing public housing stock.

***Recommendation 6:*** Advocate to the Federal Government to increase Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

***Recommendation 7:*** Commit to extending Victoria's out-of-home care age policy to extend the leaving care age from 18 until 21 years, in line with the Home Stretch campaign beyond the five-year trial

**Response to Legislative Council Terms of Reference 3: *Identify policies and practices from all levels of government that have a bearing on delivering services to the homeless***

In response to TOR 2, this submission notes the vital need for state and commonwealth shared responsibility and investment in all forms of housing, including rental, social, community and public housing. In addition to this, to respond to the significant increase in homelessness in Victoria and Australia, it also needs adequate investment in homelessness services and emergency accommodation.

*Adequate funding for homelessness services*

The current Victorian Government has made unprecedented investments in homelessness and housing, but what is still missing is a comprehensive approach to the homelessness system. In Victoria, there has been little to no extra funding provided to homelessness intake and assessment since the commencement of the opening doors framework in the mid-2000s. Yet over the same 10-year period, the Census data shows there to be an 43% increase in homelessness in Victoria. Whilst there are other necessary funding types that have been introduced, such as the *Housing Establishment Fund (HEF)*, funded by the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), they do not provide resources for the initial access points that all people experiencing homelessness enter through.

HEF has unintentionally created blockages in access points, as intake and assessment points are now also required to manage private rental brokerage without enough additional workers to do so. If there was a rollout of HEF across Victoria that was accompanied with workers to implement and support services to follow the person accessing rental, this would be beneficial to both the system and the person. Currently, the jump between a refuge or access point to private rental is too big. People accessing this funding also often require support to manage the transition and the complexities in their lives.

The example of HEF provides insight into the complexity of responding to homelessness, especially at the first point of entry and the time required to respond to the complex needs of people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping. Furthermore, it notes the need for different options of housing at different times in peoples lives, which is accompanied with support that follows the person.

In 2017, Victoria launched its Extreme Weather Policy and initiative which included brokerage funds available to access points for rough sleepers in extreme weather periods. Sometime during 2019, these funds were cancelled without explanation or evaluation of the benefit. Feedback from NEMA services noted these funds to be invaluable and provided an identified pool of funds for rough sleepers, who are a incredibly vulnerable cohort of people experiencing homelessness during extreme weather. Reinstatement of these resources through the extreme weather policy are vital to ensure the wellbeing of rough sleepers in an environment of increasing extreme weather events/periods, however ultimately if the system were to be adequately funded to meet the demand of homelessness, as stand alone program of funds would not be required.

*Government response to crisis accommodation*

It is apparent that a government response to crisis accommodation is desperately needed in Victoria. In 2018, led by the Northern and Western Homelessness Networks in response to

consumer feedback launched their report *A Crisis in Crisis* which highlights the crisis in crisis accommodation in Melbourne's north and west. This report highlights the appalling conditions that people are required to live in while they wait for more secure accommodation to become available, if at all. The report identified that:

*"The Homelessness Service System is experiencing an increased demand for emergency accommodation as a result of increasing rates of homelessness, which is inextricably linked to Melbourne's housing crisis, particularly to the severe and growing lack of affordable housing. This has led to an increase in the number of people presenting to the Specialist Homelessness Service System for assistance, but also an increase in the length of time people are requiring financial support to pay for emergency accommodation, due to a lack of longer-term accommodation options. There is also a corresponding reduction in available options, with many low-cost rooming houses, caravan parks and hotels having closed over the past few years. The result is that some of the worst private accommodation providers continue to flourish in an environment of high demand and low competition"<sup>15</sup>.*

The report is accompanied by a campaign to boycott unsafe, substandard crisis accommodation, such as hotels and rooming houses that put rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness in extreme danger. As a sector it was committed that they will no longer be prepared to refer people to substandard crisis accommodation, nor are we willing to participate in continuing to harm vulnerable people seeking our assistance.

It is an important commitment from the sector to boycott these unsafe and substandard condition of accommodation, but there should be a response from government to manage and respond to the vital need for crisis accommodation as one part of a housing supply continuum.

#### **Responding to homelessness examples in Darebin**

In June 2019, Council committed to increase its investment and responses to homelessness locally, following consultation with local homelessness and emergency relief agencies to better understand the current status of homelessness and service system gaps in Darebin. Council explored its role in increasing its prevention and early intervention efforts and contributing funds to respond to homelessness.. It was acknowledged that locally there were gaps programs and services to respond to the varied needs of rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness more broadly. There are three projects underway – establishing Darebin Assertive Outreach Support Program, Community Shower Access Program and participating in a Darebin homelessness StreetCount.

##### *Darebin Assertive Outreach Support Program*

Council has funded Merri Outreach Support Services (MOSS) to establish and deliver a two-year assertive outreach program across Darebin. The program will see two outreach workers engage with rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness and facilitate improved access to support services and housing. MOSS was appointed through a public tender process and commenced the new outreach program in January 2020.

The program will facilitate improved access to support services and housing for people experiencing homelessness in the City of Darebin and provide early intervention activities to support people who are newly homeless to exit homelessness. It will be a service that responds to the diverse needs of rough sleepers and people experiencing homelessness,

<sup>15</sup> North & West Homelessness Networks, *A Crisis in Crisis*, 2018

including Aboriginal people, refugee and asylum seekers, women experiencing family violence, people with a disability and take a trauma-informed approach to supporting these population groups.

The two-year program is a pilot and the first to be funded in Darebin to provide outreach to rough sleepers. Therefore, the program is being evaluated and implemented with an outcomes framework.

#### *Community Shower Access Program*

The Community Shower Access Program (CSAP) will be undertaken as a six-month pilot at Reservoir Leisure Centre (RLC) and Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre (NARC) beginning December 2019. The program aims to provide a dignified and respectful response to people experiencing homelessness who experience barriers to bathing and showering, recognising that bodily hygiene is critical to the maintenance of good physical and mental health. Facilitating access to shower and locker facilities also upholds peoples' right to privacy and dignified treatment, as well as protection from discrimination.

The program will provide access for people experiencing homelessness to each Centre's shower, locker and aquatic areas free of charge. The program has been designed to be safe and inclusive and respond to the diverse needs of rough sleepers. Participants are referred to and assessed for program suitability by a local homelessness service (IAP and case management) to ensure that the program suits the needs of the person accessing homelessness support services.

#### *StreetCount*

Council is currently preparing to participate in a homelessness StreetCount in 2020 to better understand the nature, scale and needs of rough sleeping across Darebin. It is acknowledged that whilst the Census collects data on rough sleeping and homelessness, the instrument of collection is a barrier to a significant cohort of people experiencing homelessness on census night.

Council is working with local homelessness providers to deliver the StreetCount which has not been done in Darebin before. The data collected from the count will contribute to better understanding the nature and scale of rough sleeping across Darebin and inform future programs and initiatives.

***Recommendation 8:*** Advocate to commonwealth and provide a government response to emergency accommodation in Victoria, as identified in Crisis in Crisis advocacy.

***Recommendation 9:*** Reinstate extreme weather brokerage funds for homelessness access points across Victoria.

***Recommendation 10:*** Review Victorian homelessness sector funding to adequately meet the demand of intake assessment planning, case management and emergency accommodation.

**9. CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO PETITIONS, NOTICES OF MOTION AND GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil

**10. NOTICES OF MOTION****10.1 LOGGING IN MELBOURNE'S WATER CATCHMENTS****Councillor:** Trent MCCARTHY**NoM No.:** 452

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*Please take notice that at the next ordinary meeting of Council to be held on Monday, 3 February 2020, it is my intention to move:*

**That Council:**

- (1) *Notes that we are in a State of Climate Emergency that requires urgent action to mitigate the risks of the catastrophic fires we have seen across Australia from September 2019 to January 2020.*
- (2) *Notes that logged forests in the regeneration stage are more likely to burn at higher severity.*
- (3) *Notes that if a catastrophic fire burnt out the remainder of Melbourne's water supply catchments it could severely compromise water quantity, quality and cost for 5 million Melburnians.*
- (4) *Notes that the close proximity of the water catchments to Melbourne means that residents could be put at further risk of cardiac and respiratory illnesses due to smoke from fires.*
- (5) *Writes to the Premier, calling for:*
  - a) *An immediate end to logging in Melbourne's water supply catchments with a view to mitigating these risks;*
  - b) *A moratorium on all other native forest logging until the biodiversity impacts of this season's catastrophic fires have been assessed;*
  - c) *The transition of displaced forest workers into alternative jobs such as emergency services and fire management.*
- (6) *Forwards a copy of this resolution to all local Upper and Lower House MPs, all councils in the Melbourne metropolitan area, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association.*

**Notice Received:** 21 January 2020**Notice Given to Councillors** 3 February 2020**Date of Meeting:** 3 February 2020**Attachments**

Nil

**11. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Nil

## 12. RECORDS OF ASSEMBLIES OF COUNCILLORS

### 12.1 ASSEMBLIES OF COUNCILLORS HELD

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An Assembly of Councillors is defined in section 3 of the *Local Government Act 1989* to include Advisory Committees of Council if at least one Councillor is present or, a planned or scheduled meeting attended by at least half of the Councillors and one Council Officer that considers matters intended or likely to be the subject of a Council decision.

Written records of Assemblies of Councillors must be kept and include the names of all Councillors and members of Council staff attending, the matters considered, any conflict of interest disclosures made by a Councillor attending, and whether a Councillor who has disclosed a conflict of interest leaves the assembly.

Pursuant to section 80A (2) of the Act, these records must be, as soon as practicable, reported at an ordinary meeting of the Council and incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

An Assembly of Councillors record was kept for:

- Darebin Disability Advisory Committee – 2 December 2019

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That** the record of the Assembly of Councillors held on 2 December 2019 and attached as **Appendix A** to this report, be noted and incorporated in the minutes of this meeting.

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil

### Attachments

- Assembly of Councillors - 3 February 2020 (**Appendix A**) [↓](#)



## ASSEMBLY OF COUNCILLORS PUBLIC RECORD

<b>ASSEMBLY DETAILS:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	Darebin Disability Advisory Committee
	<b>Date:</b>	Monday 2 December 2019
	<b>Location:</b>	Function Room, Darebin Civic Centre
<b>PRESENT:</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	Cr. Julie Williams, Cr. Susanne Newton
	<b>Council Staff:</b>	Shadi Hanna, Katherine Kiley, Ania Sieracka, Jade Myconos
	<b>Other:</b>	Darebin Disability Advisory Committee members – community representatives
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>		Community representatives, service providers

The Assembly commenced at 11.06 am

MATTERS CONSIDERED		DISCLOSURES AND COMMENTS
1	Present and apologies	No disclosures were made.
2	Matters arising from previous minutes / drop off zone items	No disclosures were made.
3	Round table check in	No disclosures were made.
4	Level Crossing Removal Project	No disclosures were made.
5	Review of 2019 and planning for 2020	No disclosures were made.
6	General Business	No disclosures were made.
7	Meeting feedback	No disclosures were made.

The Assembly concluded at 13.00 pm

<b>RECORD COMPLETED BY:</b>	<b>Officer Name:</b>	Katherine Kiley
	<b>Officer Title:</b>	Senior Team Leader Access and Inclusion Team

### 13. REPORTS BY MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That** Council note the Reports by Mayor and Councillors.

**14. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL**

The Chief Executive Officer, pursuant to section 77(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1989* (the Act), has designated the following items to be confidential:

**14.1 EO/RFP update - Affordable Housing at 52-60 Townhall Avenue, Preston**

This item is designated confidential because it relates to contractual and proposed development matters under Section 89(2) (d) (e) of the Act.

**CLOSE OF MEETING**

<b>Recommendation</b>
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**That** in accordance with section 89(2) (d) (e) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council resolves to close the meeting to members of the public to consider the items designated confidential by the Chief Executive Officer.

**RE-OPENING OF MEETING**

<b>Recommendation</b>
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That the meeting be re-opened to the members of the public.

**15. CLOSE OF MEETING**

**CITY OF  
DAREBIN**

274 Gower Street, Preston  
PO Box 91, Preston, Vic 3072  
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 **National Relay Service**  
[relayservice.gov.au](http://relayservice.gov.au)

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a hearing or speech  
impairment, contact  
us through the  
National Relay Service.

 **Speak your language**  
**T** 8470 8470

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