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MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 28 April 2026

Released to the public on 1 May 2026

**LIVE STREAMING OF THE COUNCIL MEETING WAS MADE AVAILABLE ON
COUNCIL'S WEBSITE.**



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 future leaders.

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

These are the Minutes for the Council Meeting. For assistance with any of the items in the minutes, please telephone 8470 8888.

Arabic

هذه هي محاضر اجتماع المجلس. للحصول على المساعدة في أي من البنود في المحاضر، يرجى الاتصال بالهاتف 8470 8888.

Chinese

这些是市议会会议纪要。如需协助了解任何纪要项目，请致电8470 8888。

Greek

Αυτά είναι τα Πρακτικά της συνεδρίασης του Δημοτικού Συμβουλίου. Για βοήθεια με οποιαδήποτε θέματα στα πρακτικά, παρακαλείσθε να καλέσετε το 8470 8888.

Hindi

ये काउंसिल की बैठक का सारांश है। सारांश के किसी भी आइटम में सहायता के लिए, कृपया 8470 8888 पर टेलीफोन करें।

Italian

Questo è il verbale della riunione del Comune. Per assistenza con qualsiasi punto del verbale, si prega di chiamare il numero 8470 8888.

Macedonian

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

Nepali

यी परिषद्को बैठकका माइन्युटहरू हुन्। माइन्युटका कुनै पनि वस्तुसम्बन्धी सहायताका लागि कृपया 8470 8888 मा कल गर्नुहोस्।

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਸਾਰਾਂਸ਼ ਹੈ। ਸੰਖੇਪ ਸਾਰਾਂਸ਼ ਵਿਚਲੀਆਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਆਈਟਮਾਂ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 8470 8888 ਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Somali

Kuwaani waa qodobadii lagaga wada hadlay Fadhiga Golaha. Caawimada mid kasta oo ka mid ah qodobada laga wada hadlay, fadlan la xiriir 8470 8888.

Spanish

Estas son las Actas de la Reunión del Concejo. Para recibir ayuda acerca de algún tema de las actas, llame al teléfono 8470 8888.

Urdu

یہ کاؤنسل کی میٹنگ کی روداد کے نقاط ہیں۔ روداد کے کسی بھی حصے کے بارے میں مدد کے لیے براہ مہربانی 8470 8888 پر فون کریں۔

Vietnamese

Đây là những Biên bản Hội đồng Thành phố. Muốn có người trợ giúp mình về bất kỳ mục nào trong biên bản họp, xin quý vị gọi điện thoại số 8470 8888.

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MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL ON TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2026

THE MEETING OPENED AT 6.05PM

The Chairperson, Mayor Dimitriadis advised that the meeting was being streamed live and that audio and video would be made available on Council's website.

1. OPENING OF MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis (Mayor)
Cr. Matt Arturi (Deputy Mayor)
Cr. Connie Boglis OAM
Cr. Ruth Jelley
Cr. Julie O'Brien
Cr. Kristine Olaris OAM
Cr. Alexandra Sangster
Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos
Cr. Angela Villella

Council Officers

Anne Howard - Chief Executive Officer
Caroline Buisson - General Manager Customer and Corporate
Nina Cullen - General Manager Community
Enna Giampiccolo - Executive Manager, Governance, Risk, Communications & Engage
Rachel Ollivier - General Manager Infrastructure, Operations and Finance
Vanessa Petrie - General Manager City Sustainability and Strategy
Jody Brodribb - Coordinator Governance Services

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Chairperson, Mayor Dimitriadis, opened the meeting with the following statement:

I would like to start by acknowledging the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, the Traditional Owners of this land. I recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture and pay my respects to Elders past, present and future leaders.

3. APOLOGIES

Nil

4. DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Cr. Matt Arturi declared an 'interest' in Item 13.1 Change of Workcover Insurer as he works for a law firm that handles Workcover claims. He does not undertake any work that is related to Darebin.

Cr. Angela Villella disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she has a commercial food premises registered in Darebin and pays registration fees.

Cr. Kristine Olaris disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she is a member of Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre.

Cr. Alexandra Sangster disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she is a member of Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre.

Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos disclosed a conflict of interest in the Urgent Business Item Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected budget items as a project in the proposed capital works budget is in the vicinity of his residence.

Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.12 Your Street Your Say Group A Projects and Grant Funding Information as a YSYS Group A project is in the vicinity of his residence.

Cr. Connie Boglis disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she is a member of Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre.

Cr. Connie Boglis disclosed a conflict of interest in the Urgent Business Item Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected budget items as a project in the capital works budget is in the vicinity of her residence.

5. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-048

MOVED: Cr. C Boglis OAM
SECONDED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 24 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record of business transacted.

CARRIED

<u>For</u>	<u>Abstained</u>
Cr. Emily Dimitriadis (Mayor)	Cr. Julie O'Brien
Cr. Matt Arturi (Deputy Mayor)	
Cr. Connie Boglis OAM	
Cr. Ruth Jelley	
Cr. Kristine Olaris OAM	
Cr. Alexandra Sangster	
Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos	
Cr. Angela Villella	

6. COUNCIL'S OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chairperson, Mayor Dimitriadis made the following statement:

Council has an occupational health and safety responsibility to ensure anyone attending tonight's meeting, feels safe both physical and emotionally.

It's great to see everyone here this evening. I would like to remind everyone in attendance to be respectful of each other, and as outlined in our Governance Rules, please note the following:

- *Silence must be preserved by the gallery at all times during a Meeting (other than by a person in the gallery who is invited to address the Meeting).*
- *A Councillor or any other person who addresses a Meeting must do so in a courteous and respectful manner and must take direction from the Chairperson whenever called on to do so.*
- *Anyone attending a Meeting must not utter any offensive, indecent, insulting, or objectionable words, including words that are racist, sexist or homophobic, or interject or gesticulate offensively in the Council Chamber.*
- *If anyone engages in conduct that is improper or disorderly, the Chairperson may direct that person to cease their conduct and the person must comply with that direction*

7. QUESTION AND SUBMISSION TIME

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at an Ordinary Council meeting must register to do so by submitting their questions before 12 noon on the day of the meeting.

Questions that are not lodged by 12 noon on the day of the Council Meeting will not be accepted, and no questions will be taken from the floor the night of the Meeting.

Responses were provided to the following questions as submitted for Public Question Time.

- **Karen Bayly**
 1. Council's Breathing Space Strategy targets 30 sqm of open space per person, yet Central Preston has 6.7 sqm projected to fall to 4.6 sqm with growth. Where is the funded plan to deliver parks at the scale required—new parks, expansions, and acquisition of surplus state land within HP Zwar Park and Margaret Walker Reserve?
 2. Preston City Oval is the only major central open space. Given Council policy requires active and passive recreation, contemplation, climate resilience and biodiversity, and that in 2023 facilities were removed and 26 mature trees felled, what is the plan to reinstate passive recreation, and when will the 70 replacement trees be planted?
 3. Council policy also requires inclusive youth facilities, yet a \$2m upgrade prioritises cricket and football—sports 89% of residents do not play. What provision is being made for non-sport teens, and will meaningful youth engagement be funded to address the gap between strategy and delivery in this high-growth area?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

We received similar questions from Oliver O'Brien & Francis Tenaza.

1. One of the ongoing challenges ahead of council is setting priorities within its constrained funding. You can see this discussed further in the draft budget report which is on the agenda of tonight's meeting. Council is currently updating the Open Space Strategy. This work started in 2025 and will continue in 2027. For now, while the new Open Space Strategy and amendment work is underway, the draft budget provides the four-year outlook of Council's current plans for delivery of Open Space projects.
2. You've raised this question with us via a letter to the CEO. Thank you for meeting with us recently to share more about what you are seeking. In general Council replaces trees at end of life and for many years has increased the number of trees across Darebin. In this location it's not clear that we've done this and I am currently looking at this matter in more detail. I aim to respond further by the end of this week.
3. I understand from our meeting that your question is about the provision of space for passive recreation which meets the needs of youth and, in particular, around Prestin City Oval. Spaces for youth to gather for passive recreation (and not participate in active recreation) are important and serves a broad sector of the community. The work underway to update the Open Space Strategy will identify the need for any additional provision and be used to guide capital works planning in the longer term. In the meantime, the four year capital works budget provides an outlook of what's planned.

- **Oliver O'Brien**

1. Given that approximately 4,100 sqm at HP Zwar Park (part of 30A Jessie Street) has long functioned as Council-maintained open space and is now available for purchase, what is Council's plan to secure this land for ongoing public use?
2. With the Victorian Government offering a 45–50% discount under its Landholding Policy, will Council commit to purchasing this land to prevent a net loss of open space in a high-growth area?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. This is a State Government owned site. Under the Small Sites Program (initiative under the Housing Statement), Development Victoria has a process underway to seek developers for housing. Council doesn't have particular plans for this site and we encourage you to contact Development Victoria, who have control over this site.
2. The state government controls this site and has a process in progress to seek developers to build housing on it. Given this, we're not anticipating an upcoming decision for Council.

- **Jon King**

1. How does Council reconcile its decision not to acquire the HP Zwar Park state government land given Darebin's Council Plan commits to protecting and expanding open green space for the community, particularly in a suburb as densely populated as Preston?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. Council hasn't made a decision about this. Council has not found a record of having been offered the land from the State government via a first right of refusal process and given this, Council hasn't considered this matter.

- **Francis Tenazas**

1. If developments are made, will it be for mixed use or just residential? Utilising the area for strategic retail space such as bakeries/cafes would be ideal
2. What assurances can be made that access from the playground to the oval will be preserved and hopefully Improved?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. This is a State Government project. For details please take a look at the Development Victoria website.
2. Council expects to have an opportunity provide feedback about the town planning aspects of any future development. Access between the open spaces is regarded as good urban design and certainly something that we would seek in any feedback we provide the State Government. This is a State Government project and we encourage you to also provide any feedback directly to them.

- **Carolyn Lunt**

1. Given Council seems to currently have an appetite for seeking a change of land use for some areas of open space with a view to sale, or is reneging on past commitments to acquire open space, can an explanation be provided around how these one-off initiatives, motivated it seems purely by a financial imperative, accord with Darebin's Open Space Strategy and its Implementation Plan?
2. Given opportunities to expand Darebin's open space inventory will have implication for the next century at least, what consideration is given to this very long-term horizon when open space is assessed and could it be that today's open space decision-makers might be leaving this city in a very hot place?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. When it is considering individual sites, council considers the directions in the open space strategy as well as the analysis of how well the current open spaces and facilities match needs across the open space network. Council considers the balance of needs and resources across the City when making site specific decisions.
2. Thanks Carolyn, we've taken your question as a comment.

- **Prue Dilena**

1. Why haven't you made it free for a reasonable amount of rubbish to be taken to the resource recycling centre while bins are not being emptied?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. Normal kerbside collections are taking place at the moment. During the recent industrial action, we asked residents with missed bins to bring their bins in and put them out at the next collection. Council's Resource Recovery Centre is not designed to accept household waste from kerbside bins and does not have the capacity to manage these volumes, so it was not considered a viable option. Instead, Council focused on restoring regular collections promptly and minimising ongoing disruption for residents.

- **Ninette & Arthur Markulis**

1. What action is available to me (as a ratepayer) if I wish to purchase (either part of or in full) a right of way with the adjoining owner and this same neighbour not answering my request for consent, but is trying to obtain the entire Right of Way under Adverse Possession?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. I would encourage you to consider if you need separate advice or legal advice about this. Council cannot provide you advice about your specific circumstances. What we can do is let you know about actions available via council relating to this matter. I understand that Council's Property Services team has corresponded with you on this matter previously. I will ask for them to follow up again this week to see if there's anything else we can clarify about Council's processes. Council has an established policy governing the sale of rights of way, with further information available on Council's website Purchasing Council property City of Darebin. Council does not support claims of adverse possession; however, where an application has been lodged, the outcome is ultimately determined by Land Use Victoria.

- **Meiyan Lin**

1. At the last Council meeting on the 24 March 2026, Council was asked if it expected the elderly, women, disabled and children to use the toilets in an unlit park at night. Council advised it did not have this expectation. Could Council advise what exactly is their expectation for the elderly, women, disabled and children?
2. Will Council put lighting through Donath West so that all residents can use these facilities in a safer environment at night?

Response From General Manager City Sustainability & Strategy

1. Council recognises how important access to public toilets is for the community, particularly for older people, families, people with disability and others who rely on them when out in public. Public toilets support dignity, inclusion and participation in community life. However, councils must plan toilet provision carefully, as it is not possible to locate facilities in every park or public space. Decisions are based on factors such as usage, accessibility, safety, maintenance and available resources, with toilets prioritised in higher-use locations like activity centres and major parks. Council continues to regularly review community need and usage as part of its ongoing planning.

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

2. In the long term, council aims to increase lighting in this park, however there are no current plans for more lighting to be installed at Donath West. There is currently some lighting in the park - 6 park lights along northern and eastern ends of Donath West and 3 of 8 grounds have sports ground lights and there is limited external lights in other areas.

- **Warwick Blackmur**

1. Further to my question about the number of whole homes in Darebin that are available for short-stay rental at the meeting on March 24, Council's response stated that 0.5% of properties in Darebin are available on one short-term accommodation provider. The provider you named is just one of four short-term accommodation providers. What is the figure if you include the other three?
2. In a period of historically low rental availability and given that a 3% vacancy rate is generally accepted as being the neutral vacancy rate, what impact would adding 0.5% of properties to the rental market have on rental affordability in Darebin?
3. With all due respect, your response to one of my questions on March 24 did not come within cooeee of actually answering it. I ask again. If a local law could be drafted to the effect, would Council be open to considering the imposition a 60 day cap per annum on whole of home (unhosted) short stay rentals such as that in force in Byron Shire?

Response From General Manager City Sustainability & Strategy

1. We have not calculated the percentage of Darebin properties listed on other short-term rental platforms. I understand that Air BnB is the largest short-term rental platform in Australia.
2. Council has not undertaken this analysis. 0.5% of all Darebin residential dwellings represents around 370 dwellings.
3. We are aware that some Councils in tourism areas have a provision in their Local Laws. It's not possible for me to answer this question, because the content of a future Local Law would be determined through a review, including community engagement, and then subject to Council consideration and adoption.

- **Matthew Zammit**

1. In July I asked Council for an aggregate figure representing the total legal fees, disbursements, settlements and arbitrated awards paid in the last financial year. I was advised that "for transparency" Darebin customers would be able to refer to this figure "once finalised" in the annual report. Which page of the report can we find this on?
2. In July I also asked Council when Darebin customers would be made aware of the locations for e-scooter parking associated with the current Uber/Lime trial. I was advised that consultation with nearby businesses and residents was expected to occur in September. Did this consultation occur, and if so - when and how?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. Total legal spend for FY2024-25 is listed in the Annual Report under Note 4.9 "Other Expenses" in Page 203. The spend for FY 2024-25 was \$948K.

Response From General Manager City Sustainability & Strategy

2. The shared micromobility trial was deferred to February this year. Officers undertook consultation with businesses within activity centres in late January. This consultation included a visit from Council officers and was about proposed marked parking locations near their shops. Regarding virtual parking in residential areas, a map with all parking areas was published on the Darebin website in February. The majority of virtual parking locations have since been updated in response to community feedback and user behaviour.

- **John Nugent**

1. Mayor Could you please advise why another battery was placed in Wingrove Ave Alphington which is around the corner from pitcher reserve where the original battery was placed?
2. Mayor, I refer to newspaper article dated 15/4/26 (the local paper) stating a joint \$1.8 million investment from Darebin Council, the A.F.L, state and federal government. Mayor – Could you please advise what was Darebin's contribution?
3. Mayor, could you please advise why this Council granted another \$15,000 to the Darebin Falcons?

Response From General Manager City Sustainability & Strategy

1. In both cases, Council was approached seeking a site to lease in Alphington to locate a battery by a third party. Batteries support transitioning the electricity grid to 100% renewable electricity. If we received a request from another third party in a different location of Darebin, we would consider that request.

Response From General Manager Community

2. Council's contribution to the two Preston City Oval lighting and gender-inclusive changeroom upgrade projects is \$539,000 excl GST. Council is grateful to the A.F.L, State, and Federal Governments for their support with funding of \$1.15 million between them to support these two projects, currently estimated to cost \$1.689M excl GST.
3. Council allocated \$15K to the Darebin Falcons VFLW interim support fund to address a short-term funding gap with their 2026 VFLW program. The Darebin Falcons have a long-term sustainability plan in place to support women and girls participation through their talent pathway programs, from AusKick through to VFLW. Increasing gender-inclusive sporting participation is a key desired outcome of Council's Our Darebin Plan.

- **Damian Howard**

1. Does the Council provide any grants, financial assistance, in kind support, venue hire, or ground access to sporting clubs or leagues that receive sponsorship, grants, or other funding derived from EGM/poker machine revenue?
2. Under the Local Government Act and Darebin's Code of Conduct (Section 19), in the past three years have any councillors or council staff declared a general or indirect conflict of interest relating to Australian Rules football clubs on funding, grants, tenders or ground access?

Response From General Manager Community

1. Council has become aware of a small number of sporting organisations who receive some form of Council support, whether that be ground allocations, in kind support, or other, and who may be receiving funding from sources not supported by Council's EGM policy position. When Council becomes aware of these circumstances, it reminds clubs of Council's Minimising Harm from Poker Machines: Darebin Electronic Gaming Machines Policy and works with them to align their arrangements with Council's policy.

Response From Executive Manager Governance, Risk & Communication

2. The Register of Conflicts of Interest declared by Councillors and Council Staff is published on Council's website. There do not appear to have been any conflicts declared at Council meetings by either Councillors or Council staff in relation to Australian Rules football clubs on funding, grants, tenders or ground access.

- **Lynton Martin**

1. How many complaints have Council received regarding e-bike use on and around the Edwardes Lake Athletics Track?
2. What has been the total cost of track repairs to the track surface (due to damage caused by bikes) at Edwardes Lake Athletics Track since the track resurface in 2020.

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. We can't readily break down our complaints data at that level. We understand that the issue with e-bike use has been improving and that both removing access to power and installing signage are helping with this. We will continue to monitor this.
2. Council does not have data about the cost of repairs that were a specific result of e-bike damage. The total cost of all repairs to the surface undertaken by external contractors since 2020 resurfacing was \$25K.

- **Laura Fazio**

1. If it is ongoing view of Council that the State Government owned land parcels at Clements Reserve should be gifted to Council, can you please explain how gifting might be permitted under the State Government's Landholding Policy and Guidelines document (October 2025)?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. While the policy is set by the State Government, we understand that under the Victorian Government Land Transactions Policy, surplus Crown or State-owned land can be transferred to a council for a public or community purpose, with or without payment. Any such transactions are structured as a transfer or private treaty sale, not a "gift".

EXTENSION OF PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)**SECONDED:** Cr. C Boglis OAM

That the Council meeting continue after 6.38pm for 30 minutes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- **Serena O'Meley**

1. State Government policy requires a current Valuer-General valuation before Ministerial approval for a reduced sale price. The last valuation for land within Clements Reserve was in 2019. What are the governance implications of Councillors being asked to vote on this agenda item without current price information?
2. Council failed to buy land in Clements Reserve when first available and failed to act on its 2018 resolution to acquire it. Does Darebin Council accept this inaction has weakened the community's position, and will it order an independent review of how the matter was mishandled?
3. If Council says that the land in Clements Reserve should remain open space, was any risk assessment done before the March 2026 meeting on the chance it could be sold after Darebin failed to exercise its First Right of Refusal and reversed earlier commitments to buy it?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. Council did update the valuation for Clements reserve in March 2026. Very minor variations in the land value were noted and this informed the Council decision.
2. I will clarify one aspect of the question – that is that Council acted on the 2018 resolution and others subsequently made relating to this matter. Council was progressively working through implementation - although I note that the requirements to remediate this site meant that the timeframe was extended well beyond the initial estimates. More recently, Council has reconsidered this matter and made a new decision, in line with normal governance processes. There are no plans for a review of the matter.
3. Yes risks were assessed and are discussed in the Report to Council's meeting on 24 March 2026. The Agenda papers can be found on council's website – refer to item 9.8, page 236.

FOLLOW UP QUESTION

Were negotiations entered into with the state government for a diminished sale with ministerial approval because at the moment the data that was given to the Councillors to make this decision appears to be at full market value?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

We will take that question on notice.

- **Carmel Davies**

1. Re gifting land to Council, has Council thought about the precedent this might set if other councils decided to use the same route to acquire land and how that might impact the State Government's land disposal program?
2. At the previous Council meeting a resolution was adopted that on the one hand Council should no longer acquire land parcels at Clements reserve and on the other hand said the land should remain as open space. Can Council please explain how this contradiction can be reconciled?
3. What will the legacy of this Council be in relation to open space? With the planned activity Centres and apartments mushrooming on every block, keeping our present open space, valuing it highly and if possible expanding it - (which is a priority for our community, particularly in the neglected wards north of bell where many parks are dust bowls in summer)- is surely a Council priority. If it's not, will legacy going to be one of managerialism, which ignored community needs and wishes?

Response From General Manager Infrastructure, Operations & Finance

1. The Victorian Government's Land Transaction Policy allows for land to be transferred to Councils at below market value – subject to justification and approval by Minister, Governor in Council and the Cabinet. In terms of your question about how Council's request might impact the State Government's land disposal program –it would be best directed to the State Government as Council doesn't have a role in managing their program or associated policies.
2. Council already owns a portion of the site and will continue to advocate for the State Government owned parts of Clements Reserve to remain as open space – which is their current zoning and has been the case for many years. While ownership is one mechanism to secure land use, it is not the only one. The State Government has many areas of open space.
3. Thanks Carmel - We've taken your question as a comment.

- **Glenn Cisar**

1. Given Darebin Council's \$10.5 million operating deficit this year, and the cost of living pressures on ratepayer households - how does Council justify sending 3 councillors to the Australian Local Government Association General Assembly. It's understandable for the Mayor to attend, but what return on investment is anticipated by sending 2 extra councillors - both in terms of the dollar value and, given the climate emergency, the carbon value of all the extra flights?
2. What rough dollar figure is budgeted to cost to send all members of Darebin Council's contingent to the 2026 ALGA General Assembly?
3. Last financial year, Darebin Council paid the highest WorkCover premium (per workforce capital) of any local government in Victoria. What is budgeted for this year's WorkCover premium?

Response From Executive Manager Governance, Risk & Communication

1. ALGA is an important event on the national local government calendar, which brings together leaders across the country. The event is an opportunity to network, collaborate and advocate as a sector, and as individual councils. The event is a platform for pushing for sector reform and to maximise funding from other levels of government, on issues faced by the sector – which is especially important in times of financial constraint.
2. The final costs have not yet been finalised, however the expenditure is expected to be around \$13,500.

Response From General Manager Customer & Corporate

3. It's understandable that WorkCover premiums raise concern, but they need to be considered in context. Premiums are strongly influenced by the types of services a council delivers, which varies from council to council. Darebin Council takes workplace safety very seriously. We have a clear program of working place to improve occupational health and safety, focused on prevention, early intervention and supporting staff to return to work safely, with the aim of reducing injuries and WorkCover costs over time. The actual WorkCover premium for this year is \$4.8 million.

- **David Taylor**

1. The December 2024 Council resolution outlined nine points with “*each to be reported upon.*” Can it please be explained why points: (b) that part relating to the extent of achievement of purpose; (c); (d) that part relating to community representative expertise as it relates to the purpose of the advisory committee; (f); (g); and (h); that is, six of the nine points have not been reported upon in full despite this unanimous resolution from Council?
2. In setting proposed Terms of Reference for Advisory Committees, as outlined in the five appendices at Appendix A to Item 9.4, can an explanation be provided as to why there is now no clearly defined statement of purpose for each advisory committee, especially when the December 2024 Council resolution emphasised the importance of review according to stated purpose and is this because some of the proposed Advisory Committees are so unwieldy that a more precise definition of purpose has been too difficult?
3. At Item 9.4, it is indicated that up to ten current advisory committees may have alignment with one of the proposed five advisory committees. At the other end of the scale, the Vibrant Places and Economy proposed advisory committee only has alignment with one – and that appears tenuous. Does this not offer evidence that shoe-horning 15 former advisory committees into the five Council Plan pillars offers a far from neat fit and is indeed a fraught exercise, as evidenced by an arithmetic outcome of zero when 15 is divided into 5?

Response From General Manager City Sustainability & Strategy

1. All of the points (a) to (i) of the resolution were addressed through several activities including a Councillor briefing workshop and associated papers in July 2025, and subsequent briefings; surveying of all committee members; a workshop with committee convenors and the Councillor/member event in April 2026.

2. The proposed model would establish one advisory committee for each of the first five pillars of the Council Plan, which was developed with extensive community participation, and sets out Council's priorities for its term. The new model is designed so that each advisory committee would support Council to successfully deliver the actions and achieve the goals relating to the Council Plan pillar it is aligned to.
3. The rationale to establish five new advisory committees is to support Council to achieve its priorities as outlined in the Council Plan. Vibrant Places and Economy is the fifth pillar in the Council Plan and a Council strategic priority. It includes planning for housing growth to meet the needs of our diverse community; managing Darebin's transport network to increase safety, accessibility and sustainability; supporting social and economic revitalisation; delivering events, festivals and arts that connect with local communities; and enhancing and maintaining public spaces and infrastructure.

PROCEDURAL MOTION – 6.52PM

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr. V Tsalkos

SECONDED: Cr. A Villella

That Council adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 6.52pm.

The meeting resumed at 7.01pm.

SUBMISSIONS

NIL

8. PETITIONS

8.1 TABLING OF PETITION – TRAFFIC CALMING FEATURE ON CLOUGH PARADE, RESERVOIR

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-049

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)**SECONDED:** Cr. A Villella**That** the petition:

"We, the undersigned residents respectfully request the installation of a traffic calming feature on the eastern end of Clough Parade between Gertz Avenue and Darebin Boulevard, such as speed humps/cushions, chicanes, or a kerb extension with a rain garden (which, given the Darebin Creek at the end of the road, may fit with Council's/Melbourne Water's stormwater planning).

We recognise this road may not be typically regarded as high priority for Council works due to the rate of vehicular thoroughfare, however, we feel there are now conditions warranting it to be considered in future financial years' budget.

These conditions are:

- 1. The changing demographic of the street, with five young children from three families having moved in within the last three years increasing risk of a traffic incident.*
- 2. The long, gradual slope of the road causes some cars to overcompensate with power and accelerate up the hill beyond what is safe for the conditions.*
- 3. Some cars accelerate down the hill in a hooning manner to experience fast acceleration due to the slope.*
- 4. Illegal motorbike activity exiting Darebin Creek trail and using the straight road to accelerate.*
- 5. The long straight nature of the road enticing speeding drivers."*

The key area in question is highlighted below:



be tabled and referred to the Chief Executive Officer for response.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8.2

TABLING OF PETITION – FIX LEGS LANE

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-050

MOVED: Cr. K Olaris OAM**SECONDED:** Cr. R Jelley**That** the petition:

“We, the undersigned, request that Darebin City Council upgrade Legs Lane in the 2026/27 Council Budget to ensure it is properly sealed, drained, and made suitable for children, families with prams, wheelchair users, older residents, mobility impaired residents, and other residents at all times of the year.

Summary of issue

Legs Lane is a small laneway that runs between Leamington Street and Barton Street in Reservoir. It is a popular walking route to and from Reservoir Primary School for hundreds of trips each day. It is also used by many other residents going to and from the Reservoir shops, the train station, and the library.

Despite heavy foot traffic, Legs Lane has been neglected by the Council and remains a muddy dirt path that fills with water in winter. It regularly features weeds like blackberries that have been known to scratch kids and has become a hotspot for rubbish dumping due to its neglected condition.

It is difficult or impassable for smaller kids on scooters and bikes, as well as wheelchair users and parents with prams, depending on the weather and the depth of water and mud.

Despite this, it is promoted as part of the Victorian Government's Octopus Schools Program, which aims to encourage active travel options for school families.

The Reservoir Primary School community has raised this issue with Darebin Council, but there has been no progress in securing a commitment to complete this important active transport route in a busy part of our suburb and community.

Reservoir kids - and the whole community - deserve better. We believe it is smart and equitable investment to prioritise works to seal Legs Lane and maintain it in equal condition to other popular non-car thoroughfares throughout the rest of Darebin.”

be tabled and referred to the Chief Executive Officer for response.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**PROCEDURAL MOTION – CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS AND ADMISSION
OF URGENT BUSINESS**

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

SECONDED: Cr. A Sangster

That Council:

- (1) Change the order of business to move agenda Item 11.3 to be considered immediately after Agenda Item 8 Petitions.
- (2) Consider the matter of “Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent Three Financial Years – Endorsement of Selected Budget Items” be admitted to the agenda as Urgent Business and that this item be considered immediately before agenda Item 9.1.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

11.3 PRESTON BULLANTS USE OF PRESTON CITY OVAL

Take notice that at the Council Meeting to be held on 28 April 2026, it is my intention to move:

That Council:

- (1) Notes that the former Preston Football Club was established over 143 years ago at Preston City Oval (PCO) as its home ground, and that Preston Junior Football Club came into existence in 1903.*
 - (2) Notes that during the recent Expression of Interest (EOI) process for the use of PCO for the 2026 Winter Season, the Preston Bullants Junior Football Club (PBJFC) and Preston Bullants Amateur Football Club (PBAFC) sought a co-tenancy agreement that recognised the fixture priorities of the Darebin Falcons VFLW and the Northern Knights.*
 - (3) Requests that officers review the current allocation and identify opportunities to increase access for local clubs, including the Preston Bullants Amateur Football Club, while maintaining commitments to existing tenants.*
-

Rationale:

Preston City Oval has been a longstanding home of local football. The Preston Bullants Junior Football Club (PBJFC) and Preston Bullants Amateur Football Club (PBAFC) provide a complete pathway from Auskick to senior level.

There remains a strong and direct link between the junior and senior clubs, with approximately 80% of PBAFC players having progressed through PBJFC. This reflects a well-established local development pathway grounded in community participation.

In 2026, the clubs collectively support 522 players across 20 teams, with approximately 75% of participants residing within Darebin. This represents a significant level of local engagement in community sport and an ongoing demand for access to quality facilities.

Through the recent Expression of Interest (EOI) process, the clubs sought a co-tenancy arrangement that acknowledged and worked around the existing commitments of the Darebin Falcons VFLW and Northern Knights. The outcome, however, has resulted in limited access to Preston City Oval for these community-based clubs, constraining their ability to accommodate fixtures and fully utilise their player base.

This motion does not seek to direct operational decisions but highlights the importance of a coordinated and transparent approach to shared facility use. In a context of competing demands, there is value in ensuring that allocation frameworks appropriately recognise both regional-level tenants and the scale of local community participation.

Improving access, where feasible, would better align the use of Preston City Oval with its role as a community asset and support the sustainability of a well-established local football pathway.

Notice Received: 9 April 2026

Notice Given to Councillors 9 April 2026

Date of Meeting: 28 April 2026

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-051

MOVED: Cr. C Boglis OAM
SECONDED: Cr. A Sangster

That Council:

- (1) Notes that the former Preston Football Club was established over 143 years ago at Preston City Oval (PCO) as its home ground, and that Preston Junior Football Club came into existence in 1903.
- (2) Notes that during the recent Expression of Interest (EOI) process for the use of PCO for the 2026 Winter Season, the Preston Bullants Junior Football Club (PBJFC) and Preston Bullants Amateur Football Club (PBAFC) sought a co-tenancy agreement that recognised the fixture priorities of the Darebin Falcons VFLW and the Northern Knights.
- (3) Requests that officers review the current allocation and identify opportunities to increase access for local clubs, including the Preston Bullants Amateur Football Club, while maintaining commitments to existing tenants.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

12. URGENT BUSINESS**12.1 DRAFT 2026-27 BUDGET AND SUBSEQUENT THREE FINANCIAL YEARS - ENDORSEMENT OF SELECTED BUDGET ITEMS**

Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos disclosed a conflict of interest in Urgent Business Item 12.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected budget items a projects in the proposed capital works budget is in the vicinity of his residence and left the meeting at 7.23pm.

Cr. Connie Boglis disclosed a conflict of interest in Urgent Business Item 12.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected budget items as a project in the capital works budget is in the vicinity of her residence and left the meeting at 7.23pm.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to enable Councillors to manage conflicts of interest, this report recommends Council endorse selected budget items to proceed to community consultation as part of the draft budget as follows:

Capital works projects

- a) Roads Renewal Program: Haig Street, Reservoir (Birdwood to Crispe; reference number 357)
- b) Roads Program relating to Blackspot: Gilbert Road Black Length – Edwardes to Union Street (reference number 420)

The full draft budget documents are outlined in item 9.2 of this Council Agenda, along with proposed community consultation approach.

The budget documents outline Council's priorities for the year ahead. This budget focuses on supporting service continuity for the many people in our community who rely on Council every day. It also invests in the upkeep of the essential assets and infrastructure that underpin daily life in Darebin including our parks, roads, drains, buildings and trees.

Council Resolution**MINUTE NO. 26-052**

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

SECONDED: Cr. R Jelley

That Council endorses the following capital works projects (which forms part of the Agenda Item 9.2 attachments (Appendix C)) to proceed to community consultation:

- (1) Roads Renewal Program: Haig Street, Reservoir (Birdwood to Crispe; reference number 357)
- (2) Roads Program relating to Blackspot: Gilbert Road Black Length – Edwardes to Union Street (reference number 420).

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

BACKGROUND / KEY INFORMATION

The *Local Government Act 2020*, Section 94(1) requires a Council to prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent 3 financial years.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires that the budget give effect to the Council Plan.

The Budget 2026-27 must include the following:

- Financial statements in the form and containing the information required by the regulations.
- A general description of the services and initiatives to be funded in the budget.
- Major initiatives identified by the Council as priorities in the Council Plan, to be undertaken during each financial year.
- For services to be funded in the budget, the prescribed indicators and measures of service performance that are required to be reported against by this Act.
- The total amount that the Council intends to raise by rates and charges.
- A statement as to whether the rates will be raised by the application of a uniform rate or a differential rate.
- A description of any fixed component of the rates, if applicable.
- If the Council proposes to declare a uniform rate, the matters specified in section 160 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
- If the Council proposes to declare a differential rate for any land, the matters specified in section 161(2) of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
- Any other information prescribed by the regulations.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to prepare and adopt a budget for each financial year and the subsequent three financial years, thereby establishing a four-year budget, covering the periods 2026/2027, 2027/2028, 2028/2029 and 2029/2030.

The *Local Government Act 2020* prescribes that Council must adopt its final budget by 30 June each year. This requirement has the effect of requiring Council to review and update its budget annually with a four-year horizon. This is a prudent way to plan for the medium term, and ensure that emerging risks and opportunities are factored in.

Previous Council Resolution

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

ALIGNMENT TO 2041 DAREBIN COMMUNITY VISION

Pillar 4: Collaborative, Transparent and Responsible

ALIGNMENT TO OUR DAREBIN PLAN 2025-29

Strategic Direction 6: Decision Making, Community Engagement and Transparency - A City that is well-managed, transparent and trusted by its community and partners, with clear and respectful communication that builds confidence in Council's decisions

DISCUSSION

It is recommended that Council endorse the draft budget for the purposes of community consultation, including the selected fees and charges which are the particular subject of this report. This will enable community feedback to be sought and considered by Council as part of finalising its budget.

Item 9.2 of this agenda outlines the draft budget documents in full, as well as assessments against key financial sustainability indicators, discussion of risks, and community consultation approach proposed.

CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (2020) PRINCIPLES

Financial Management

Council's legislated obligations are articulated through the Financial Management Principles in the *Local Government Act 2020*. These principles require the prudent monitoring and management of financial risks, giving regards to economic circumstances.

The following are the Financial Management principles of the *Local Government Act 2020* –

- revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans;
- financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances;
- financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community;
- accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.

For the purposes of the financial management principles, **financial risk** includes any risk relating to the following:

- the financial viability of the Council;
- the management of current and future liabilities of the Council;
- the beneficial enterprises of the Council

The main risk noted in the draft budget under the "Key Budget Influences section" is cost pressures and the implementation of financial adjustment targets which will require ongoing monitoring and review within the 4 year period. These risks have been considered in the recommendation to endorse this draft budget.

Community Engagement

Council undertook extensive community engagement to develop its current Council Plan and considered this in setting the direction in its Council Plan. The budget has been developed to support implementation of this plan and in this way its development is informed by significant community engagement.

Upon endorsement by Council of the draft documents listed in this report, they will be made available to the community for consultation from 30 April 2026 to 20 May 2026.

A Hearing of Submissions Committee meeting is scheduled for 9 June 2026. A report to Council incorporating community feedback will be presented by 30 June 2026 at which time Council will consider finalising and adopting the Budget for 2026/2027 and the subsequent three years.

Other Principles for consideration

Overarching Governance Principles and Supporting Principles

(g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;

Public Transparency Principles

(b) Council information must be publicly available unless (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest;

Strategic Planning Principles

(a) an integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted;

Service Performance Principles

(b) services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended;

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Environmental Sustainability Considerations (including Climate Emergency)

The budget documents are designed to provide resources to:

- implement the draft Our Darebin Plan which sets out Council's strategic directions and key initiatives in regard to environmental sustainability.
- deliver services through many of which Council has integrated environmental sustainability considerations and practices including climate mitigation and resilience work.
- fulfill Council's duties and functions relating to environmental sustainability including under the Planning and Environment Act, the Water Act, the Local Government Act, the Environment Protection Act and the Building Act amongst others.

Equity, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Human Rights Considerations:

The budget documents are designed to provide resources to:

- implement the draft Our Darebin Plan which sets out Council's strategic directions and key initiatives in regard to Equity, Inclusion, Wellbeing and Human Rights.
- deliver services through many of which Council has integrated equity and inclusion considerations.
- fulfill Council's duties and functions relating to various equity and human rights considerations in legislation.

Economic Development and Cultural Considerations

The budget documents are designed to provide resources to implement the draft Our Darebin Plan which sets out Council's strategic directions and key initiatives in regard to economic development and cultural considerations.

This draft budget proposes to continue a concession for general rates for all properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a 'registered agency', relating to the provision of affordable housing, in accordance with s169 (1d) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, and the exemption from general rates for properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria for charitable purposes, excluding those used for affordable housing.

Operational Impacts

The budget is intended to fund all of Council's operations and implementation of the Council Plan. Recent price increases, well beyond revenue increases, mean that Council's budget does not fund as many operational activities as it used to.

Legal and Risk Implications

The 2026/2027 draft Budget presented for endorsement complies with the Local Government Act, 2020 and has been prepared in the context of minimising and mitigating the risks associated with Council's delivery of services and infrastructure to the community.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

- 28 April 2026 – Report to Council for endorsement on the Draft 2026/2027 Budget and the subsequent three financial years & associated documents
- 30 April – 20 May 2026 - Community Consultation period
- 9 June 2026 – Council Briefing to consider budget submissions and final budget documents
- 9 June 2026 Hearing of Submissions
- 23 June 2026 – Council briefing to consider budget submissions and final budget documents
- 30 June 2026: Following the adoption of the 2026/2027 Budget and the subsequent three financial years and associated documents, the following actions are required:
 - Advise those community members who indicated they would like to receive formal feedback over their budget submission/feedback of Council's decision in relation to the relevant documents and the reasons for the decision.
 - Give public notice of adoption of the 2026/2027 Budget (and subsequent three financial years) and associated documents.
 - Make a copy of the 2026/2027 Budget and the subsequent three financial years and associated documents for the public at Customer Service Centres, other Council facilities and on Council's website.
 - Submit a copy of the 2026/2027 Budget and the subsequent three financial years and associated documents to the Minister for Local Government.
 - Generate the annual rate notices for 2026/2027.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Community Vision 2041
- Our Darebin Plan 2025-2029
- Financial Plan 2025/2026 – 2034/2035
- Asset Plan 2025/2026 – 2034/2035
- Budget 2025/2026 (incorporating the 4-year financial outlook)
- Revenue and Rating Plan 2025/2026 – 2028/2029
- Rates Financial Hardship Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Toward Equality Framework
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government Act 1989*

Attachments

Nil

DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires members of Council staff and persons engaged under contract to provide advice to Council to disclose any conflicts of 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

Crs Tsalkos and Boglis returned to the meeting at 7.25pm

9. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

9.1 DRAFT 2026-27 BUDGET AND SUBSEQUENT THREE FINANCIAL YEARS - ENDORSEMENT OF SELECTED FEES & CHARGES

Cr. Angela Villella disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she has a commercial food premises registered in Darebin and pays registration fees and left the meeting at 7.27pm.

Cr. Kristine Olaris disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she is a member of Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre and left the meeting at 7.27pm.

Cr. Alexandra Sangster disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she is a member of Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre and left the meeting at 7.27pm.

Cr. Connie Boglis disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.1 Draft 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent three financial years - Endorsement of selected Fees & Charges as she is a member of Northcote Aquatic & Recreation Centre and left the meeting at 7.27pm.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to enable Councillors to manage conflicts of interest, this report recommends Council endorse selected fees and charges to proceed to community consultation as part of the draft budget as follows:

- a) Environmental Health user fees relating to Food Act Assessment (reference number 01469) and Food Act Registration (reference numbers 01475, 01476, 01477, 01478, 01479)
- b) Northcote Aquatic & Rec Centre Memberships (reference numbers 02387 to 02527, 02395))

The full draft budget documents are outlined in item 9.2 of this Council Agenda, along with proposed community consultation approach.

The budget documents outline Council's priorities for the year ahead. This budget focuses on supporting service continuity for the many people in our community who rely on Council every day. It also invests in the upkeep of the essential assets and infrastructure that underpin daily life in Darebin including our parks, roads, drains, buildings and trees.

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-053

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

SECONDED: Cr. V Tsalkos

That Council:

- 1) Endorses the following fees & charges (which forms part of the Agenda Item 9.2 attachments (appendix D) to proceed to community consultation:

- a) Environmental Health user fees relating to Food Act Assessment (reference number 01469) and Food Act Registration (reference numbers 01475, 01476, 01477, 01478, 01479)
- b) Northcote Aquatic & Rec Centre Memberships (reference numbers 02387 to 02527, 02395)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Crs Vilella, Olaris, Sangster and Boglis returned to the chamber at 7.29pm.

9.2

DRAFT 2026-27 BUDGET AND SUBSEQUENT THREE FINANCIAL YEARS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report recommends that the Council endorse the 2026-27 draft budget documents to proceed to community consultation. The draft budget documents are:

- Draft 2026-27 budget and subsequent three financial years, **(Appendix A)** & associated documents:
 - Draft 2026-27 Fees & Charges Schedule, **(Appendix B)**
 - Draft 2026-27 to 2029-30 (4 year) Capital Works Program, **(Appendix C)**; and
 - Draft 2026-27 Operating Projects, **(Appendix D)**

The budget documents outline Council's priorities for the year ahead. The budget focusses on supporting service continuity for Darebin community who rely on Council every day. The budget also supports investment in the upkeep of the essential assets and infrastructure that underpin daily life in Darebin including parks, roads, drains, buildings and trees.

To achieve these things, Council will increase its total budgeted rate revenue in line with the Fair Go Rates System which is limited by a cap of 2.75% for 2026-27. This rate cap, set by the Victorian Government, continues to be lower than recent and projected inflation rates in recognition of the financial challenges faced by the community.

Like most businesses and homes across the community, Council is facing significant financial challenges. Costs have grown at a greater rate than Council's revenue, and so the budget does not go as far as once planned. In response to this, Council has been prudent and reduced the overall allocations to both the Capital Works Program and our Operating Projects, resulting in the deferral of some projects to future years. These decisions reflect a clear prioritisation of immediate community needs, alongside a commitment to review what is most important for the years ahead.

The draft budget also includes ambitious financial sustainability targets of \$4 million in year one, increasing to reach a cumulative change of \$16 million by year four. This requires Council to work with the community to explore how the highest priority services and assets can be sustained for future generations. Council will also explore different ways to fund community services and infrastructure in the future as part of Council's financial sustainability efforts.

For 2026-27, the operating deficit is \$10.52 million, with similar deficits projected over the following three years. This is largely influenced by Council's planned investment in business transformation largely through technology. This investment is able to be achieved by drawing on Council's cash accumulated in previous years. As the cash has been earned and accumulated in previous years, whereas the expenditure is in 2026-27 and the following years, this distorts the operating results in 2026-27 and subsequent years.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Endorses the **draft** 2026-27 Budget Documents to proceed to community consultation:

- i. the 2026-27 Budget (and subsequent 3-financial years) (**Appendix A**)
 - ii. 2026-27 Fees & Charges Schedule, (**Appendix B**)
 - iii. 2026-27 to 2029-30 (4 year) Capital Works Program, (**Appendix C**); and
 - iv. 2026-27 Operating Projects, (**Appendix D**)
- (2) Authorises the CEO to amend the draft 2026-27 Budget (and subsequent 3-financial years) and associated documents to reflect any amendments resolved by Council in the draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan being considered separately on 28 April 2026.
- (3) Calls for a Special Council meeting to be held on Tuesday 30 June at 6pm in the Council Chamber to consider the following matters:
- a. Adoption of the 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent Three Financial Years and Associated Documents; and
 - b. Adoption of Our Darebin Annual Action Plan 2026-27.
- (4) Gives notice in accordance with section 169 of the Local Government Act 1989 of Council's intention to grant, at a Special Council meeting on 30 June 2026:
- a. A concession for residential properties with a Capital Improved Value (CIV) value at \$500,000 or less by the Valuer General of Victoria that equates to 100% of the public waste rate. This concession will automatically be applied to the principal place of residence for ratepayers and will not require an application.
 - b. A concession for residential properties with a CIV value at \$500,000 or less by the Valuer General of Victoria that caps the kerbside waste collection service fee to a maximum amount of \$50 for eligible Pensioner & \$75 for Non-Pensioner residential properties. This concession will automatically be applied to the principal place of residence for ratepayers and will not require an application.
 - c. A Council Pensioner Concession of \$250 for pensioners who are holders of an eligible Centrelink or Veteran Affairs Pension Concession Card or a Veteran Affairs Gold Card which stipulates TPI or War Widow for the Kerbside Waste Collection Service Charge. This concession will be provided by direct provision (without application where information is known) for the Kerbside Collection Service Charge on their principal place of residence only.
 - d. A Council Pensioner Rebate of \$250 for pensioners who are holders of a Centrelink or Veteran Affairs Pension Concession Card or a Veteran Affairs Gold Card which stipulates TPI or War Widow and who are not eligible for the Pensioner Concession for the Kerbside Waste Collection Service Charge, for the principal place of residence. Ongoing eligibility is maintained, unless rejected by Centrelink or the Department of Veteran Affairs during the annual verification procedure. Upon confirmation of an eligible pensioner concession status, the pensioner concessions deducted from the rate account before payment is required by the ratepayer.
 - e. A concession of 100% (\$0) for general rates for all properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a 'registered agency', relating to the provision of affordable housing, in accordance with s169 (1d) of the Local Government Act 1989, Council's 'Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' and 'Toward Equality Framework'

- (5) Gives notice in accordance with section 162 of the Local Government Act 1989 of Council's intention to declare, at a Special Council meeting on 30 June 2026:
- a. A service rate for Public Waste Services in the 2026-27 year levied in accordance with the criteria in the Revenue and Rating Plan.
 - b. A service charge for Kerbside Collection Services in the 2026-27 year in accordance with the criteria in the Revenue and Rating Plan.
- (6) Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the following proposed documents, rates, charges or rebates may request to be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee on 9 June 2026:
- a. draft 2026-27 Budget and subsequent three financial years and associated documents
 - b. declaration of the public waste service rate;
 - c. declaration of the service charge for kerbside collection services;
 - d. granting of the three concessions aligned to equity principles to support waste cost recovery charges;
 - e. granting of a Council Pensioner Rebate within general rates, aligned to equity principles, for pensioners who are not eligible for the Kerbside Waste Collection Charge Pensioner Concession;
 - f. granting of a 100% concession for general rates for all properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a 'registered agency', relating to the provision of affordable housing.

Motion

MOVED: Cr. R Jelley
SECONDED: Cr. A Sangster

That Council:

(1) - (6) as per Officer Recommendation

(7) Requests a briefing on the following matters no later than May 2026, with a view to inform the final budget adoption:

- a) Options to extend the Energy Support Program, including for the remainder of Council Plan 2025-29**
- b) Options for the following transport enhancements:**
 - i. costings for additional visual & tactile indicators for road renewal/resurfacing works on roads with either a bike lane or strategic cycling corridors, for all road renewal projects listed in the draft 2026-27 capital works budget**
 - ii. costings on options to increase bicycle parking infrastructure in activity centres, including pole-mounted bicycle hoops**
 - iii. advice on the current state of on-road line markings for bicycle lanes and shared lane markings, and options for enhancements.**

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND CARRIED AND BECAME THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION AS FOLLOWS:

Council Resolution**MINUTE NO. 26-054**

MOVED: Cr. R Jelley
SECONDED: Cr. A Sangster

That Council:

- (1) Endorses the **draft** 2026-27 Budget Documents to proceed to community consultation:
 - i. the 2026-27 Budget (and subsequent 3-financial years) (**Appendix A**)
 - ii. 2026-27 Fees & Charges Schedule, (**Appendix B**)
 - iii. 2026-27 to 2029-30 (4 year) Capital Works Program, (**Appendix C**); and
 - iv. 2026-27 Operating Projects, (**Appendix D**)
- (2) Authorises the CEO to amend the draft 2026-27 Budget (and subsequent 3-financial years) and associated documents to reflect any amendments resolved by Council in the draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan being considered separately on 28 April 2026.
- (3) Calls for a Special Council meeting to be held on Tuesday 30 June at 6pm in the Council Chamber to consider the following matters:
 - a. Adoption of the 2026-27 Budget and Subsequent Three Financial Years and Associated Documents; and
 - b. Adoption of Our Darebin Annual Action Plan 2026-27.
- (4) Gives notice in accordance with section 169 of the Local Government Act 1989 of Council's intention to grant, at a Special Council meeting on 30 June 2026:
 - a. A concession for residential properties with a Capital Improved Value (CIV) value at \$500,000 or less by the Valuer General of Victoria that equates to 100% of the public waste rate. This concession will automatically be applied to the principal place of residence for ratepayers and will not require an application.
 - b. A concession for residential properties with a CIV value at \$500,000 or less by the Valuer General of Victoria that caps the kerbside waste collection service fee to a maximum amount of \$50 for eligible Pensioner & \$75 for Non-Pensioner residential properties. This concession will automatically be applied to the principal place of residence for ratepayers and will not require an application.
 - c. A Council Pensioner Concession of \$250 for pensioners who are holders of an eligible Centrelink or Veteran Affairs Pension Concession Card or a Veteran Affairs Gold Card which stipulates TPI or War Widow for the Kerbside Waste Collection Service Charge. This concession will be provided by direct provision (without application where information is known) for the Kerbside Collection Service Charge on their principal place of residence only.
 - d. A Council Pensioner Rebate of \$250 for pensioners who are holders of a Centrelink or Veteran Affairs Pension Concession Card or a Veteran Affairs Gold Card which stipulates TPI or War Widow and who are not eligible for the Pensioner Concession for the Kerbside Waste Collection Service Charge, for the principal place of residence. Ongoing eligibility is maintained, unless rejected by Centrelink or the Department of Veteran Affairs during the annual verification procedure. Upon confirmation of an eligible pensioner concession status, the pensioner concessions deducted from the rate account before payment is required by the ratepayer.

- e. A concession of 100% (\$0) for general rates for all properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a 'registered agency', relating to the provision of affordable housing, in accordance with s169 (1d) of the Local Government Act 1989, Council's 'Statement of Commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' and 'Toward Equality Framework'
- (5) Gives notice in accordance with section 162 of the Local Government Act 1989 of Council's intention to declare, at a Special Council meeting on 30 June 2026:
 - a. A service rate for Public Waste Services in the 2026-27 year levied in accordance with the criteria in the Revenue and Rating Plan.
 - b. A service charge for Kerbside Collection Services in the 2026-27 year in accordance with the criteria in the Revenue and Rating Plan.
- (6) Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the following proposed documents, rates, charges or rebates may request to be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee on 9 June 2026:
 - a. draft 2026-27 Budget and subsequent three financial years and associated documents
 - b. declaration of the public waste service rate;
 - c. declaration of the service charge for kerbside collection services;
 - d. granting of the three concessions aligned to equity principles to support waste cost recovery charges;
 - e. granting of a Council Pensioner Rebate within general rates, aligned to equity principles, for pensioners who are not eligible for the Kerbside Waste Collection Charge Pensioner Concession;
 - f. granting of a 100% concession for general rates for all properties owned or managed by Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a 'registered agency', relating to the provision of affordable housing
- (7) Requests a briefing on the following matters no later than May 2026, with a view to inform the final budget adoption:
 - a) Options to extend the Energy Support Program, including for the remainder of Council Plan 2025-29
 - b) Options for the following transport enhancements:
 - i. costings for additional visual & tactile indicators for road renewal/resurfacing works on roads with either a bike lane or strategic cycling corridors, for all road renewal projects listed in the draft 2026-27 capital works budget
 - ii. costings on options to increase bicycle parking infrastructure in activity centres, including pole-mounted bicycle hoops
 - iii. advice on the current state of on-road line markings for bicycle lanes and shared lane markings, and options for enhancements.

CARRIEDFor

Cr. Matt Arturi (Deputy Mayor)
Cr. Connie Boglis OAM
Cr. Ruth Jelley
Cr. Julie O'Brien
Cr. Kristine Olaris OAM
Cr. Alexandra Sangster
Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos

Against

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis (Mayor)
Cr. Angela Villella

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr. V Tsalkos

SECONDED: Cr. J O'Brien

That Council adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting adjourned at 7.52pm.

The meeting resumed at 8.00pm.

9.3

DRAFT 2026-27 OUR DAREBIN ACTION PLAN FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION AND FEEDBACK**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report recommends that Council endorse the draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan (ODAP) to proceed to community exhibition inviting feedback.

Year 2 Initiatives outlined in the Our Darebin Plan 2025-29, adopted by Council on 30 June 2025, have provided the basis for development of the draft 2026-27 ODAP, taking into account Council's current economic and operating environment.

The draft 2026-27 ODAP is deliverable within Council's draft 2026-27 Budget, with individual projects funded from the draft 2026-27 Operating Project Portfolio and draft 2026-27 Capital Works Program.

Council Resolution**MINUTE NO. 26-055**

MOVED: Cr. R Jelley
SECONDED: Cr. A Villella

That Council:

- (1) Endorses the draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan (**Appendix A**) to proceed to public exhibition inviting feedback for 28 days from 30 April 2026 to 20 May 2026.
- (2) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to amend the draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan to reflect any amendments resolved by Council in the draft 2026-27 Budget (including 3-year Financial Outlook) and associated documents being considered by Council on 28 April 2026.
- (3) Notes that any person who makes a written submission in relation to the 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan may request to be heard by Council's Hearing of Submissions Committee on 9 June 2026
- (4) Notes the draft 2026-27 Our Darebin Action Plan will be considered for adoption in June 2026.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.4 PROPOSED COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEES MODEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following Council's December 2025 resolution of "*in-principle support for transitioning towards a model of fewer, more-broadly based advisory committees that more clearly align to Council Plan themes and strategic objectives*", this report proposes a new model of five advisory committees, each aligned to a 2025-29 Council Plan Strategic Directions. A draft Terms of Reference (ToR) that applies consistently to all five proposed advisory committees with a tailored appendix for each committee is attached as **Appendix A**.

The report further outlines work to be progressed following the adoption of the proposed model and Terms of Reference, aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of the advisory committees, as well as the support and safety of all members.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Notes that as per its resolution of 15 December 2025, Council's current fifteen advisory committees will expire on 30 June 2026.
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution of outgoing advisory committee members and thanks them for their time, commitment and input into Council's work and decision-making.
- (3) Adopts a Council Advisory Committees Model strategically aligned to the Darebin Council Plan 2025-29 Strategic Objectives, with establishment from 1 July 2026 of the:
 - a. **Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee** (relating to the Aboriginal Culture and Knowledge Strategic Objective)
 - b. **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** Advisory Committee
 - c. **Health and Wellbeing** Advisory Committee
 - d. **Climate Leadership and Response** Advisory Committee
 - e. **Vibrant Places and Economy** Advisory Committee.
- (4) Adopts the draft Advisory Committee Terms of Reference at **Appendix A**, noting that where relevant the term Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee will replace the term Aboriginal Culture and Knowledge Advisory Committee.
- (5) Notes that the Expression of Interest process to appoint Committee members will start as soon as possible, with Advisory Committee members to be determined at a future Council meeting.
- (6) Notes that the outcomes of an additional review of the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee have been incorporated into the draft Terms of Reference.
- (7) Notes that subject to adoption of a new model and Terms of Reference, further work will follow to ensure:
 - Appropriate acknowledgement of outgoing members' contribution
 - Orderly transition to the new model and consistent and effective operation
 - Accessible and inclusive recruitment processes
 - The safety and inclusion of all advisory committee members
 - Clarity regarding the future role of current (outgoing) advisory committees.

- (8) Supports the establishment by the Chief Executive Officer of time-limited, purpose-specific groups, enabling targeted participation from community members to complement the advisory committee structure.

Motion

MOVED: Cr. A Villella

SECONDED: Cr. K Olaris OAM

That Council:

- (1) Notes that as per its resolution of 15 December 2025, Council's current fifteen advisory committees will expire on 30 June 2026.
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution of outgoing advisory committee members and thanks them for their time, commitment and input into Council's work and decision-making.
- (3) In relation to the Aboriginal Culture and Knowledge strategic objective:
 - a) Establishes the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee to operate in accordance with the relevant clauses of the draft Advisory Committee Terms of Reference at Appendix A, noting that where relevant the term Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee replaces the term Aboriginal Culture and Knowledge Advisory Committee.
 - b) Notes that in relation to the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee; an Expression of Interest process to appoint Committee members will start as soon as possible, in accordance with the Terms of Reference with Advisory Committee members to be determined at a future Council meeting.
- (4) In relation to the establishment of other advisory committees, requests the CEO to bring a report to Council no later than August 2026 which considers the Councillor/advisory committee member sessions held in April 2026 (Appendix B) and makes further recommendation on the structure of advisory committees and other groups such as tasks forces, reference groups and networks.
- (5) The terms of reference of all Advisory Committees will include a requirement that their membership comprise at least 50% women

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND CARRIED AND BECAME THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION AS FOLLOWS:

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-056

MOVED: Cr. A Villella

SECONDED: Cr. K Olaris OAM

That Council:

- (1) Notes that as per its resolution of 15 December 2025, Council's current fifteen advisory committees will expire on 30 June 2026.
- (2) Acknowledges the contribution of outgoing advisory committee members and thanks them for their time, commitment and input into Council's work and decision-making.
- (3) In relation to the Aboriginal Culture and Knowledge strategic objective:
 - a) Establishes the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee to operate in accordance with the relevant clauses of the draft Advisory Committee Terms of Reference at Appendix A, noting that where relevant the term Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee replaces the term Aboriginal Culture and Knowledge Advisory Committee.

- b) Notes that in relation to the Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Committee; an Expression of Interest process to appoint Committee members will start as soon as possible, in accordance with the Terms of Reference with Advisory Committee members to be determined at a future Council meeting.
- (4) In relation to the establishment of other advisory committees, requests the CEO to bring a report to Council no later than August 2026 which considers the Councillor/advisory committee member sessions held in April 2026 (Appendix B) and makes further recommendation on the structure of advisory committees and other groups such as tasks forces, reference groups and networks.
- (5) The terms of reference of all Advisory Committees will include a requirement that their membership comprise at least 50% women

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.5 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the Customer Experience Strategy 2026–30 (the Strategy) to Council and request endorsement of the strategy.

Formal endorsement by Council is sought because it elevates the importance of the strategy within the organisation and to customers. Endorsement also signals the support of the Councillors for the approach to improve the customer experience.

The Strategy provides a clear, whole-of-organisation framework to improve how customers experience Council services, information and interactions across all channels. It recognises that customer experience is shaped by policies, service design, digital access, staff capability and organisational culture.

Endorsement of the Strategy will:

- Establish a consistent and shared approach to customer experience across the organisation
- Support council's commitment to accessible, responsive, and community-focused services; and
- Enable measurable improvements in service quality, customer satisfaction, and community trust

The Strategy will be implemented under the oversight of the Chief Executive Officer, who has responsibility for the effective and efficient management of the day to day operations of the Council. Strategic enablers of improving the customer experience are articulated in the strategy as well as measurement and reporting processes.

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-057

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

SECONDED: Cr. C Boglis OAM

That Council:

- (1) Endorses the Customer Experience Strategy 2026-30, (**Appendix A**) to guide Council's approach to improving customer experience.
- (2) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial changes to the final version of the Strategy that do not materially alter its intent.
- (3) Notes the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy 2026-30 is developed to be undertaken within existing approved budgets or will otherwise be subject to future Council consideration as part of the annual budget review process.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.6 MERRI COMMON AND SURROUNDS OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - PROJECT UPDATE

The Chairperson, Mayor Dimitriadis vacated the Chair to enable her to move a motion in relation to this item.

Deputy Mayor Arturi assumed the Chair.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Merri Common and Surrounds project and seeks Council direction following correspondence from the State Government which asks Council to take on maintenance responsibility for the improvements at the State Government sites. The correspondence outlines that neither DEECA nor the Department of Transport and Planning intend to fund or assume responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of assets or works Merri Common arising from the completion of the project.

This request would be a departure from the basis on which Council applied for the funding which was that maintenance responsibility would be by each relevant landowner, and since December 2025, that Council would consider undertaking maintenance on a fee-for-service basis on behalf of the State Government.

Council has several options detailed in this report including:

- Seek additional time to allow further clarification and discussion about options
- Agree to maintain at Council's cost
- Seek clarification as to whether the State Government is still open to a fee for service maintenance model which was discussed with Council in December 2025.

Council has progressed all project work within its control, including advancing the Peters Reserve component to detailed design. Delivery of works at Merri Common and Caddayes Corner remains contingent on approvals and guidance from relevant State Government agencies. There are risks and potential costs emerging from the delays arising from various approval processes.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Notes the recent letter from that the State Government that has advised that neither DEECA nor the Department of Transport and Planning are intending to maintain the grant funded improvements on Merri Common and Caddayes Corner and has asked that Council assume maintenance responsibility for these.
- (2) Notes that ongoing delays in are impacting the project delivery timeframe and are resulting in associated financial risks which, if they continue, may affect project scope, deliverables and Council's reputation.
- (3) Provides direction regarding how to progress the Merri Common and Surrounds project.
- (4) Notes that officers will continue to work with relevant Victorian departments and agencies to progress the Merri Common and Surrounds project in line with Council's direction, and will update the *Your Say Darebin* webpage with relevant information to ensure the community remains informed about the project's progress.

Motion

MOVED: Cr. E Dimitriadis (Mayor)
SECONDED: Cr. V Tsalkos

That Council:

- (1) Notes the recent letter from that the State Government that has advised that neither DEECA nor the Department of Transport and Planning are intending to maintain the grant funded improvements on Merri Common and Caddayes Corner and has asked that Council assume maintenance responsibility for these.
- (2) Notes that ongoing delays in are impacting the project delivery timeframe and are resulting in associated financial risks which, if they continue, may affect project scope, deliverables and Council's reputation.
- ~~(3) Provides direction regarding how to progress the Merri Common and Surrounds project.~~
- (4) Notes that officers will continue to work with relevant Victorian departments and agencies to progress the Merri Common and Surrounds project in line with Council's direction, and will update the Your Say Darebin webpage with relevant information to ensure the community remains informed about the project's progress
- (5) **Endorses Option 2b as outlined in the report as its position, with a negotiation deadline of 26-June-2026 to ensure clarity for the 2026-2027 budget, and confirming that in accordance with any agreement struck, Council will not be liable for anything in relation to the subject land, including contamination, beyond basic maintenance of assets for a period of 10 years.**

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND **LOST**

For

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis (Mayor)
Cr. Matt Arturi (Deputy Mayor)
Cr. Kristine Olaris OAM
Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos

Against

Cr. Connie Boglis OAM
Cr. Ruth Jelley
Cr. Julie O'Brien
Cr. Alexandra Sangster
Cr. Angela Villella

Extension of Time

MOVED: Cr. A Villella
SECONDED: Cr. J O'Brien

That the Council meeting continue after 9.05pm for 30 minutes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Motion

MOVED: Cr. J O'Brien
SECONDED: Cr. R Jelley

That Council:

- (1) Notes the recent letter from that the State Government that has advised that neither DEECA nor the Department of Transport and Planning are intending to maintain the grant funded improvements on Merri Common and Caddayes Corner and has asked that Council assume maintenance responsibility for these.

- (2) **Notes that this is contrary to the basis on which the grant was applied for and the expressed understanding of this project.**
- (3) Notes that ongoing delays with relevant State landowners in are impacting the project delivery timeframe and are resulting in associated financial risks which, if they continue, may affect project scope, deliverables and Council's reputation.
- (4) **Seek clarification on whether the State Government is still open to a fee-for-service model for Council to maintain Merri Common, and**
 - a) **if the State Government is open to this, authorises the Chief Executive Officer to proceed in line with Council's resolution of 15 December 2025,**
 - b) **if the State Government is not open to this, seeks clarification from the State Government about the nature of the proposed agreement and the particular maintenance activities and risks they are proposing Council undertake, and notes that this will be Reported to a future Council meeting for decision**
- (5) Notes that officers will continue to work with relevant Victorian departments and agencies to progress the Merri Common and Surrounds project in line with Council's direction, and will update the *Your Say Darebin* webpage with relevant information to ensure the community remains informed about the project's progress.

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND CARRIED AND BECAME THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION AS FOLLOWS:

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-058

MOVED: Cr. J O'Brien
SECONDED: Cr. R Jelley

That Council:

- (1) Notes the recent letter from that the State Government that has advised that neither DEECA nor the Department of Transport and Planning are intending to maintain the grant funded improvements on Merri Common and Caddayes Corner and has asked that Council assume maintenance responsibility for these.
- (2) Notes that this is contrary to the basis on which the grant was applied for and the expressed understanding of this project.
- (3) Notes that ongoing delays with relevant State landowners in are impacting the project delivery timeframe and are resulting in associated financial risks which, if they continue, may affect project scope, deliverables and Council's reputation.
- (4) **Seek clarification on whether the State Government is still open to a fee-for-service model for Council to maintain Merri Common, and**
 - a) **if the State Government is open to this, authorises the Chief Executive Officer to proceed in line with Council's resolution of 15 December 2025,**
 - b) **if the State Government is not open to this, seeks clarification from the State Government about the nature of the proposed agreement and the particular maintenance activities and risks they are proposing Council undertake, and notes that this will be Reported to a future Council meeting for decision**
- (5) Notes that officers will continue to work with relevant Victorian departments and agencies to progress the Merri Common and Surrounds project in line with Council's direction, and will update the *Your Say Darebin* webpage with relevant information to ensure the community remains informed about the project's progress.

CARRIEDFor

Cr. Connie Boglis OAM
Cr. Ruth Jelley
Cr. Julie O'Brien
Cr. Alexandra Sangster
Cr. Angela Villella

Against

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis (Mayor)
Cr. Matt Arturi (Deputy Mayor)
Cr. Kristine Olaris OAM
Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos

PROCEDURAL MOTION

Council Resolution

MOVED: Cr. R Jelley
SECONDED: Cr. A Villella

That Council adjourn the meeting for 5 minutes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting adjourned at 9.16pm.

The meeting resumed at 9.21pm

9.7

HABITAT HUBS AND ADVANCED TREES FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The State Government announced a project to plant 1000 trees in June 2025. The project aim is to increase urban tree canopy, improve biodiversity, and address local climate impacts for the Preston and Reservoir area. The initiative aligns with the State Government's target of achieving 30 per cent urban tree canopy cover and was allocated \$190,000 in State Government funding through its budget.

After exploring other options, the State Government has sought Council's support to implement the project in streets and parks in Preston and Reservoir and has invited Council to submit a funding proposal.

The project aligns with Council's objectives and Council Plan and there are benefits to the Darebin Community. This report outlines a proposed project and seeks Council's endorsement to submit the proposal, as outlined in the attached project plan.

The project originally intended to plant the trees along the Northern Pipe Track. However, underground water infrastructure at the site limited the feasibility of tree planting. Due to these constraints, the State Government started to explore alternative options and discussed options with Council in late 2025. Since then it has sought Council's support as delivery partner for this project and has invited Council to submit a proposal for funding consideration.

The proposed project plan (see **Appendix A**) proposes planting of over 1300 trees and plants comprising of:

- 121 street trees in retail activity centres and surrounding streets.
- 11 habitat hubs in Darebin Parks and Reserves, incorporating 33 advanced trees and 1,265 tube stock shrubs, groundcover, and small trees.

The project value is \$190,000, with planting and establishment fully funded by DEECA. Council would fund maintenance of the trees and plants after the first two years.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Endorses the proposed Project Plan for 'Trees & Habitat Hubs for a Cooler, Green Preston' and notes that the Chief Executive Officer will submit the Proposed Project Plan to DEECA for funding consideration.
- (2) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and execute an agreement with DEECA for the purposes of implementing the project and receiving the funding on behalf of Council.

Amended Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Endorses the proposed Project Plan for 'Trees & Habitat Hubs for a Cooler, Green Preston' and notes that the Chief Executive Officer will submit the Proposed Project Plan to DEECA for funding consideration.
- (2) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, , **adjust the project plan as necessary to incorporate feedback from DEECA** and execute an agreement with DEECA for the purposes of implementing the project and receiving the funding on behalf of Council.

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-059

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)
SECONDED: Cr. A Sangster

That Council:

- (1) Endorses the proposed Project Plan for 'Trees & Habitat Hubs for a Cooler, Green Preston' and notes that the Chief Executive Officer will submit the Proposed Project Plan to DEECA for funding consideration.
- (2) Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, , **adjust the project plan as necessary to incorporate feedback from DEECA** and execute an agreement with DEECA for the purposes of implementing the project and receiving the funding on behalf of Council.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

EXTENSION OF TIME

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-060

MOVED: Cr. V Tsalkos
SECONDED: Cr. A Villella

That the Council meeting continue after 9.35 for 30 minutes.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.8**PROJECT AND INITIATIVE BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year Council delivers capital works projects, operating projects and other initiatives to support community, reform policy, renew and improve a wide range of community assets such as drainage, buildings, roads, footpaths, cycle lanes, parks, and more.

Occasionally, it becomes necessary to revisit initial project budget allocations to ensure projects remain aligned with their intended scope and objectives. In keeping with Council's commitment to transparency and responsible financial stewardship, any recommended adjustments to project budgets are outlined in Table 1 and Table 2 of this document.

To enable Council's consideration of project budget adjustments each month, two 'project accounts' (within the financial system) have been established that have the effect of quarantining returned or unallocated program budget funds – one for Capital Works Program funds and one for unallocated Operating Projects and Special Initiatives funds. A key purpose of quarantining these funds is to enable Council to respond should projects encounter budget challenges or unplanned needs or to consider time critical initiatives that may arise outside of the annual budget cycle.

If Council approves the recommended adjustments, the quarantined funds would be:

- Unallocated Capital Works Program Account: \$76,544
- Unallocated Operating Projects and Special Initiatives Program Account: \$105,000 (unchanged)

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-061**MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)****SECONDED: Cr. V Tsalkos****That Council:**

- (1) Notes the Project Budget updates and approves adjustments for the Capital Works Program as per Table 1 of this report.
- (2) Notes the Project Budget updates for the Operating Projects as per Table 2 of this report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.9 PROPERTY MATTERS - SALE OF MINOR ASSETS - 124E BROADHURST AVENUE RESERVOIR, 62 RENE STREET PRESTON AND 11 CHARLES STREET PRESTON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is seeking Council to authorise the commencement of statutory procedures for the sale of discontinued roads adjoining the following three properties, with estimated sales proceeds of approximately \$59,000.

- 124E Broadhurst Avenue, Reservoir (**shown in Appendix A**),
- 62 Rene Street, Preston (**shown in Appendix B**) and
- 11 Charles Street, Preston (**shown in Appendix C**).

This report recommends that Council endorses the proposed sale of the discontinued roads to the owners of these properties, noting that a further community engagement process will be undertaken by officers and that any objection or submission received by Council will be presented to Council to consider the findings and advise its decision on the sale of the discontinued roads to the adjoining landowners.

If community submissions are received, a further report would be put to a Council meeting for final decision. If no community submissions are received, the matter would be referred to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will formalise the sale of the discontinued roads under delegation.

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-062

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

SECONDED: Cr. A Villella

That Council:

- (1) Commences the statutory procedures under section 114 of the Local Government Act 2020 to sell the land from the discontinued roads adjoining 124E Broadhurst Avenue, Reservoir (**shown in Appendix A**), 62 Rene Street, Preston (**shown in Appendix B**) and 11 Charles Street, Preston (**shown in Appendix C**), to the owners, by private treaty in accordance with Council's Sale of Minor Assets Policy May 2022.
- (2) Gives notice of its intention to sell the land on Council's website and in such notice, states, that Council proposes to sell the land from the former roads to the owners of 124E Broadhurst Avenue, Reservoir, 62 Rene Street, Preston and 11 Charles Street, Preston, by private treaty, in accordance with Council policy.
- (3) Invites written submissions on the proposed sales and deal with any submissions received in line with the principles set out in section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
- (4) Notes that where any submissions are received, a further report will be presented to Council to consider the findings and advise its decision on the sale of the discontinued road to the adjoining landowner.
- (5) Notes that if no submissions are received, a further report will be presented to the Chief Executive Officer, to confirm acceptance of the delegated responsibilities and to complete the statutory procedures for the sale of the land to the owners of 124E Broadhurst Avenue, Reservoir, 62 Rene Street, Preston and 11 Charles Street, Preston and sign all necessary documents for the sale of the land under delegation.

- (6) Notes that in the event that submissions are received from other adjoining property owners or interested parties, Council reserves the right to reallocate the manner in which the land is to be sold in accordance with Council's Sale of Minor Assets Policy May 2022.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.10

GOVERNANCE REPORT - APRIL 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Summary of Councillor attendance at Advisory Committee Meetings, Councillor Briefings, and other informal meetings of Councillors (**Appendix A**).
- Activity Reports by Mayor and Councillors.
- Responses to Public Questions taken on notice at the 24 March 2026 Council Meeting (**Appendix B**)
- Status of Petitions tabled during the current Council Term (November 2024 to April 2026) (**Table A**)
- Proposed Governance Rules amendment (**Appendix C**)
- Instrument of Delegation from Council - S6 Delegation (**Appendix F**)
- Property EOI updates
- Closure of Notice of Motion (NoM) 06-2023 regarding the Direction Signage to Country of Origin

Council Resolution**MINUTE NO. 26-063**

MOVED: Cr. R Jelley
SECONDED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

That Council:

- (1) Notes the Governance Report – April 2026.
- (2) Notes the Summary of attendance at Advisory Committees Meetings, Councillor Briefings, and other informal meetings of Councillors at **Appendix A** to this report.
- (3) Notes that the activity reports by Mayors and Councillors submitted prior to the meeting and circulated to Councillors, will be incorporated in the minutes of this meeting.
- (4) Notes the responses provided **at Appendix B** public questions taken on notice at the Council Meeting on 24 March 2026.
- (5) Notes the status of petitions tabled during the current Council term (November 2024 to date) (**Table A**)
- (6) Notes with appreciation the feedback provided by the community in relation to the proposed Governance Rules as they apply to the lodgement times for Submissions, Public Questions and Petitions.
- (7) Approves the proposed Governance Rules attached as **Appendix C** to this report.
- (8) Notes, if adopted, the amended Governance Rules will take effect from 29 April 2026.
- (9) In the exercise of the powers conferred by Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and the other legislation referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation, resolves:
 - (a) To delegate to the members of Council staff holding, acting in or performing the duties of the officers or positions referred to in the '**Instrument of Delegation to members of Council staff (S6)**' (**Appendix F**) the powers, duties and functions set out in that instrument, subject to the conditions and limitations specified in that Instrument.

- (b) To adopt and affix Council's Common Seal to the following Instrument of Delegation provided as an attachment to this report:
 - Instrument of Delegation from Council to members of Council Staff (S6) **(Appendix F)**
- (c) That this instrument comes into force immediately the Common Seal of Council is affixed to each instrument.
- (10) Notes that the Chief Executive Officer, pursuant to Section 47 of the Act may by instrument of delegation, delegate any power, duty or function of Council that has been delegated to the Chief Executive Officer by the Council to (a) a member of Council staff, or (b) the members of a Community Asset Committee, if any.
- (11) Notes that the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council (DECC) has formally withdrawn its application submitted under Tranche 1 of the recent Property Expression of Interest (EOI) process.
- (12) Notes that no applicants elected to proceed to the Request for Proposal (RFP) stage for the property located at 8 Robinson Road, Reservoir under Tranche 2 of the recent Property EOI process.
- (13) Approves the formal closure Notice of Motion (NoM) 06/2023 and return \$5,000 in unspent funds to the Capital Works budget due to the installed Migration Monument delivering the objectives and recognition sought in the original NoM.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS BY MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS – 28 APRIL 2026

REPORT OF CR. EMILY DIMITRIADIS (MAYOR)

Cr. Dimitriadis reported on her attendance at the following functions/activities:

Wednesday, 25 March

- Meeting with WARM Inc
- Darebin Business & Mayor Evening (hosted by Inner North Community Foundation)

Thursday, 26 March

- Meeting with Commissioner for LGBTQIA+ Communities
- Celebration of Lina Hassan's 30 years of service at Your Community Health
- Local Government Mayoral Advisory Panel - Meeting 1, 2026

Friday, 27 March

- Meeting with Colin Brooks MP

Saturday, 28 March

- Hands On Health - Opening of New Home at Northside Wellbeing Hub
- Conversations with Councillors at Taste of Reservoir

Sunday, 29 March

- Greek Day Festival 2026 at Preston Market
- Circus Nexus Open Day
- Sylvester Hive - Easter Family Day Celebration

Monday, 30 March

- Darebin Council Economic Development Event: Sustainability Matters

Tuesday, 31 March

- Councillor Professional Development Session

Wednesday, 1 April

- Meeting with Mayor Nat Abboud of Merri-bek City Council and Cr Boglis
- Molly Hadfield Social Justice Oration 2026

Thursday, 2 April

- Meeting regarding Gaetano Greco Memorial
- Easter at Northcote Golf Course
- Flag Lowering Ceremony

Tuesday, 7 April

- Councillor Briefing Session

Wednesday, 8 April

- Meeting with Northcote Public Golf Course

Friday, 10 April

- Opening of 2026 Commbank Emerging Matildas Championships
- Orthodox Easter with Fronditha Aged Care

Monday, 13 April

- Meeting CEO, Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- Peter Josip Show at Comedy Festival

Tuesday, 14 April

- Meeting with Cr Jelley
- Councillor Briefing Session

Wednesday, 15 April

- Aboriginal Housing Victoria - Ground Breaking Ceremony, 989 High Street Reservoir
- 2026 Commbank Emerging Matildas Championships - U16 Grand Final
- Advisory Committee Councillor/Member session no 1

Thursday, 16 April

- Bridge Darebin AGM
- Advisory Committee Councillor/Member session no. 2

Friday, 17 April

- Queerclash 2026

Saturday, 18 April

- MYG x Football Vic : Cultures Cup 2026
- Community Dinner at Reservoir Neighbourhood House

Sunday, 19 April

- Darebin RSL - ANZAC Day March Ceremony
- Darebin United SC Junior Season Launch 2026
- Parkside JFC Season Kick-off

Monday, 20 April

- National Walk for Truth Cultural Event
- Meeting with Kat Theophanous MP

Tuesday, 21 April

- Coffee with a Cop at Northland
- Councillor Briefing Session

Thursday, 23 April

- Darebin Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum
- Growing Gender Equality through Local Impact Event

Friday, 24 April

- Meeting with Cr O'Brien
- Meeting with J.S. Grey Kindergarten

Sunday, 26 April

- St George Greek Orthodox Church Thornbury, Feast Day & 40-Year Anniversary Celebration

Monday, 27 April

- Meeting CEO, Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Tuesday, 28 April

- Council Meeting

Weekly meetings

- CEO/Mayor Monday Review
- CEO/Mayor Weekly Catch up on Tuesday

REPORT OF CR. MATT ARTURI

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

- 19 to 30 March – Approved Leave
- 24 March - Ordinary Council Meeting
- 7 April – Councillor Briefing
- 10 April – Meeting with The Ceo
- 13 April – Meeting with Mayor and Ceo
- 14 April – Councillor Briefing
- 19 April – Nrisa Baisakhi Celebrations
- 21 April – Councillor Briefing
- 23 April – Growing Gender Equality Through Local Impact
- 27 April – Meeting with Mayor and Ceo

REPORT OF CR. KRISTINE OLARIS

Cr. Olaris reported on her attendance at the following functions/activities:

Tuesday 24 March

- Council Meeting

Thursday 26th March

- Meeting with Mayor and LGBTIQA+ Commissioner
- VLGA Roundtable 2 - Online Consultation for all Councillors
- Gender Equity Community Advisory Committee

Tuesday 31 March

- Councillor professional development

Wednesday 1 April

- Molly Hadfield Social Justice Oration

Tuesday 7 April

- Councillor briefing

Tuesday 14 April

- Growing Gender Equality Through Local Impact planning meetings
- Meeting with Preston Market Manager and Marketing Manager
- Councillor briefing

Monday 20 April

- Darebin National Walk for Truth Cultural Event
- National Walk for Truth – day 2 Walk

Tuesday 21 April

- Councillor briefing

Thursday 23 April

- Growing Gender Equality Through Local Impact Forum

Saturday 25 April

- Pride Brings Us Here Welcome Reception for LGBTIQA+ Women Deliver delegates

Tuesday 28 April

- Ordinary Council Meeting

REPORT OF CR. CONNIE BOGLIS

Cr. Boglis reported on her attendance at the following functions/activities:

- March 26th Chair - Aging well committee
- March 27th Watt Djerring Animal Facility site tour
- March 28th Speech opening HOHA Reservoir and Tate of Reservoir Stall
- March 31st Briefing Council
- April 1st Meeting with resident

- April 1st meeting with Darebin and Merribek Mayor
- April 14th Briefing
- April 15th Online discussion with Darebin Advisory Committees
- April 21st Cr briefing
- April 23rd Speaking and attending Darebin Mental Health Forum
- April 28th Darebin Council Meeting

REPORT OF CR. ANGELA VILLELLA

Cr. Villella did not submit a report.

REPORT OF CR. RUTH JELLEY

Cr. Jelley reported on her attendance at the following functions/activities:

- On approved leave 26-30 March

Council meetings:

- Ordinary Council meeting, 24 March
- Councillor briefings: 7 April, 14 April, 21 April
- Councillor-only meeting, 21 April

Other meetings:

- Meeting with Officers about NARC Adult Swim Squad pricing, 24 March
- Meeting with Mayor Dimitriadis, 14 April
- Advisory Committee presentations to Councillors, 15 & 16 April

Committee meetings as Darebin Council representative

- Metropolitan Transport Forum, 1 April
- Metropolitan Transport Forum Bus Research Briefing, 14 April
- Metropolitan Transport Forum Executive, 17 April

Events attended as Councillor

- Lowering of Palestinian Flag outside Preston Town Hall, 2 April

Professional development

- Councillor professional development session, 31 March
- VLGA Lunch & Learn session: Conflict of Interest, 17 April

Other:

- Various correspondence with residents

REPORT OF CR. JULIE O'BRIEN

Cr. O'Brien did not submit a report.

REPORT OF CR. ALEXANDRA SANGSTER

Cr. Sangster reported on her attendance at the following functions/activities

- Meetings with residents (in person/ phone/ email)
- Attended all briefings and meetings

- Participated in the National Walk for Truth and Treaty at AAL
- Attended Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum

REPORT OF CR. VASILIOS TSALKOS

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

- 19 March – 1 April 2026 – Approved Leave
- 24 March 2026 – Pre Council Meeting Check in
- 24 March 2026 – Council Meeting
- 07 April 2026 – Council Briefing Session
- 14 April 2026 – Meeting with Council Officers on East Reservoir Primary School – School Crossing
- 14 April 2026 – Councillor Briefing Session
- 15 April 2026 – Advisory Committee Councillor Meeting Session no 1
- 16 April 2026 - Advisory Committee Councillor Meeting Session no 2
- 21 April 2026 – Councillor Briefing Session
- 23 April 2026 – Growing Gender Equality through Local Impact
- 25 April 2026 – ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Reservoir RSL
- 26 April 2026 – St George Greek Orthodox Church Thornbury Feast Day & 60 Year anniversary

9.11

**RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING
KINDERGARTEN UNMET DEMAND IN PRESTON WEST
AND EXPANSION OPTIONS AT JS GREY RESERVE
KINDERGARTEN****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report responds to key matters raised in Notice of Motion: 'JS Grey Kindergarten Capacity' (MINUTE NO. 26-017). High level options that could help meet forecast unmet demand in Preston West are presented, as well as options considered to date at JS Grey Reserve Kindergarten (JS Grey) as part of previous expansion investigations.

Officer Recommendation

That Council:

- (1) Advocates to State Government through its scheduled executive meeting with Department of Education (4 May 2026) for:
 - a. A Kindergartens on School Sites (KOSS) project in Preston West, seeking detail on any planning, indicative timelines, and school site investigations undertaken to date;
 - b. Increased grant funding rate per place for projects in built-up urban contexts, particularly JS Grey; and,
 - c. Regulatory change in relation to Bush Kinder provision.
- (2) Requests officers to explore further feasibility work at JS Grey Reserve Kindergarten to reflect the most up-to-date requirements and conditions at the site.

Motion

MOVED: Cr. C Boglis OAM
SECONDED: Cr. V Tsalkos

That Council:

- (1) Advocates to State Government through its scheduled executive meeting with Department of Education (4 May 2026) for:
 - a. A Kindergartens on School Sites (KOSS) project in Preston West, seeking detail on any planning, indicative timelines, and school site investigations undertaken to date;
 - b. Increased grant funding rate per place for projects in built-up urban contexts, particularly JS Grey; and,
 - c. Regulatory change in relation to Bush Kinder provision.
- ~~(2) Requests officers to explore further feasibility work at JS Grey Reserve Kindergarten to reflect the most up-to-date requirements and conditions at the site~~
- (2) **Allocates \$100K from the 2025-26 capital project budget (reference number 408, named "New Kindergarten Design Project) to a new project to:**
 - a. **Undertake planning, high level design and feasibility assessment at JS Grey Kindergarten, including:**

- i. **Assessment of current and projected demand for kindergarten places**
 - ii. **Exploration of possible expansion, reconfiguration, or redevelopment options based on any changed conditions or new site information since earlier feasibility studies**
 - iii. **Compliance with contemporary early learning and accessibility standards**
- (3) **Notes that while this project will be initiated in 2025-26, it is expected to be substantially completed in 2026-27. The project budget would be carried forward to enable this.**

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND CARRIED AND BECAME THE COUNCIL RESOLUTION AS FOLLOWS:

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-064

MOVED: Cr. C Boglis OAM
SECONDED: Cr. V Tsalkos

That Council:

- a) **Advocates to State Government through its scheduled executive meeting with Department of Education (4 May 2026) for:**
 - a. **A Kindergartens on School Sites (KOSS) project in Preston West, seeking detail on any planning, indicative timelines, and school site investigations undertaken to date;**
 - b. **Increased grant funding rate per place for projects in built-up urban contexts, particularly JS Grey; and,**
 - c. **Regulatory change in relation to Bush Kinder provision.**
- b) **Allocates \$100K from the 2025-26 capital project budget (reference number 408, named "New Kindergarten Design Project) to a new project to:**
 - a. **Undertake planning, high level design and feasibility assessment at JS Grey Kindergarten, including:**
 - i. **Assessment of current and projected demand for kindergarten places**
 - ii. **Exploration of possible expansion, reconfiguration, or redevelopment options based on any changed conditions or new site information since earlier feasibility studies**
 - iii. **Compliance with contemporary early learning and accessibility standards**
- c) **Notes that while this project will be initiated in 2025-26, it is expected to be substantially completed in 2026-27. The project budget would be carried forward to enable this.**

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.12

**YOUR STREET YOUR SAY GROUP A PROJECTS AND
GRANT FUNDING INFORMATION**

Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos disclosed a conflict of interest in Item 9.12 Your Street Your Say Group A Projects and Grant Funding Information as a YSYS Group A project is in the vicinity of his residence and left the meeting at 9.40pm.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to a 24 February 2026 resolution of Council that seeks information about Your Street Your Say Group A (YSYS Group A) projects, the status of funding applications and how projects will be included in the upcoming budget.

In 2022, Council endorsed the YSYS Group A concept plans for design and delivery. Since then, out of the 24 projects endorsed for delivery, 7 projects have been completed. There have been 10 other projects started, with one of those under active consideration by TAC for funding through the *Safer Local Roads and Streets* program.

Council Resolution

MINUTE NO. 26-065

MOVED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)
SECONDED: Cr. C Boglis OAM

That Council notes the Your Street, Your Say Group A project update information set out in this report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Cr Tsalkos returned to the meeting at 9.42pm.

10. ITEMS TO BE TABLED

Nil

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

11.1 ESTABLISHING A STANDALONE HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN

Take notice that at the Council Meeting to be held on 28 April 2026, it is my intention to move:

That Council:

1. *Notes that:*
 - a. *Council is required under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) to undertake municipal public health and wellbeing planning.*
 - b. *Council currently integrates health and wellbeing within its Darebin Council Action Plan.*
 - c. *Emerging data at state and national levels indicates rising concerns regarding loneliness, social isolation, mental health and the need for early intervention approaches.*
 2. *Recognises that:*
 - a. *Health and wellbeing underpin all Council functions and strategic priorities.*
 - b. *Prevention and early intervention require clear planning, measurable outcomes and transparent resourcing.*
 - c. *Structural consistency across Council's strategic framework strengthens accountability and governance clarity.*
 3. *Seeks a report from Officers in June 2026 that costs the work, options and timing involved to:*
 - a. *Develop and adopt a standalone Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, aligned with but distinct from the Council Plan.*
 - b. *Include in that plan a clear prevention and early intervention framework addressing social connection, mental health and wellbeing, and emerging community health needs.*
 - c. *Ensure that the plan incorporates research, lived experience insights and input from Council's Committees and relevant forums.*
-

Rationale:

Darebin has never adopted a standalone Health and Wellbeing Plan. For many years, health and wellbeing has been embedded within broader Council planning documents. While this meets legislative requirements under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, it does not provide the structural clarity or visibility afforded to other major Council priorities that operate under dedicated strategic plans. Health and wellbeing underpin every function of local government. Prevention and early intervention require clear goals, measurable outcomes and transparent resourcing. When health is absorbed within the Council Plan alone, focus can be diluted and accountability becomes less defined.

State and national data show rising concerns about loneliness, social isolation, mental health pressures and increasing food insecurity linked to cost-of-living impacts. These challenges are interconnected and affect community participation, resilience and long-term health outcomes.

Local government plays a critical role in addressing the social determinants of health through community infrastructure, services, partnerships and social connection initiatives. A standalone plan would provide governance consistency, strengthen accountability and clearly articulate a prevention and early intervention framework for Darebin.

For too long, health and wellbeing has been embedded rather than elevated. It is time to give it the strategic standing it requires.

Notice Received: 4 March 2026

Notice Given to Councillors 4 March 2026

Date of Meeting: 28 April 2026

With leave of the Chair, Cr Boglis moved her motion with the amendments:

Motion

That Council:

(1) Notes that:

- a. Council is required under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) to undertake municipal public health and wellbeing planning.
- b. Council currently integrates health and wellbeing within its Darebin Council Action Plan.
- c. Emerging data at state and national levels indicates rising concerns regarding loneliness, social isolation, mental health and the need for early intervention approaches.

~~2. Recognises that:~~

- ~~a. Health and wellbeing underpin all Council functions and strategic priorities.~~
- ~~b. Prevention and early intervention require clear planning, measurable outcomes and transparent resourcing.~~
- ~~c. Structural consistency across Council's strategic framework strengthens accountability and governance clarity.~~

(2) Seeks a briefing from officers in May 2026 that reports on the inaugural Darebin Mental Health Forum.

(3) Seeks a report from Officers in June 2026 that costs **at a high level** the work, options and timing involved **in to:**

- a) Developing and adopting a standalone Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, aligned with but distinct from the Council Plan.
- b. ~~Include in that plan a clear prevention and early intervention framework addressing social connection, mental health and wellbeing, and emerging community health needs.~~
- c. ~~Ensure that the plan incorporates research, lived experience insights and input from Council's Committees and relevant forums.~~
- b) Implementation of ideas heard from participants at council's inaugural Mental Health Forum in April 2026, being:
 - i. **facilitation of regular community consultation and stakeholder engagement, particularly with local service providers**

- ii. strengthening of council's facilitation role in service connection and navigation
- iii. developing a clear, actionable framework focused on prevention and early intervention

Council Resolution**MINUTE NO. 26-066**

MOVED: Cr. C Boglis OAM
SECONDED: Cr. A Villella

That Council:

- (1) Notes that:
 - a) Council is required under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic) to undertake municipal public health and wellbeing planning.
 - b) Council currently integrates health and wellbeing within its Darebin Council Action Plan.
 - c) Emerging data at state and national levels indicates rising concerns regarding loneliness, social isolation, mental health and the need for early intervention approaches.
- (2) Seeks a briefing from officers in May 2026 that reports on the inaugural Darebin Mental Health Forum.
- (3) Seeks a report from Officers in June 2026 that costs at a high level the work, options and timing involved in:
 - a) Developing and adopting a standalone Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, aligned with but distinct from the Council Plan.
 - b) Implementation of ideas heard from participants at council's inaugural mental health and wellbeing forum in April 2026, being:
 - i. facilitation of regular community consultation and stakeholder engagement, particularly with local service providers.
 - ii. strengthening of council's facilitation role in service connection and navigation.
 - iii. developing a clear, actionable framework focused on prevention and early intervention.

CARRIED**For**

Cr. Connie Boglis OAM
Cr. Ruth Jelley
Cr. Julie O'Brien
Cr. Alexandra Sangster
Cr. Angela Villella

Against

Cr. Emily Dimitriadis (Mayor)
Cr. Matt Arturi (Deputy Mayor)
Cr. Kristine Olaris OAM
Cr. Vasilios Tsalkos

11.2

POTENTIAL FOR REZONING AND SALE OF PART OF THE COUNCIL OWNED SITE

Take notice that at the Council Meeting to be held on 28 April 2026, it is my intention to move:

That Council:

- (1) Calls for a report about the potential for rezoning and sale of part of the Council owned site at 32B Broadhurst Ave (the part adjacent to 32A Broadhurst Ave and which is currently fenced and not accessible to community), noting that this site is currently zoned for use as public park and recreation but has not been used for this purpose for a long time and nor is it in a location where there is a need for additional parkland or for other community services.*
- (2) Requests that the report to Council covers:*
 - a. Any State Government legislative requirements Council must follow when considering rezoning and sale of land*
 - b. Process, costs, and next steps and estimated timelines for Council to formally consider rezoning and sale, including community consultation steps*
 - c. A preliminary valuation of the site.*

Rationale:

The site is currently fenced and inaccessible to the community, meaning it does not contribute to public use or amenity. Although it is formally zoned for public park and recreation, it has not been used for this purpose for many years.

The site is not located in an area identified as having a shortage of public open space or community facilities. Existing parks and services in the surrounding area are considered sufficient to meet current and projected community needs. As such, retaining the site under its current zoning does not provide a clear public benefit and with the potential sale will give council a once off income to better deliver for the community.

Notice Received: 2 April 2026

Notice Given to Councillors 2 April 2026

Date of Meeting: 28 April 2026

Council Resolution**MINUTE NO. 26-067**

MOVED: Cr. V Tsalkos

SECONDED: Cr. M Arturi (Deputy Mayor)

That Council:

- (1) Calls for a report about the potential for rezoning and sale of part of the Council owned site at 32B Broadhurst Ave (the part adjacent to 32A Broadhurst Ave and which is currently fenced and not accessible to community), noting that this site is currently zoned for use as public park and recreation but has not been used for this purpose for a long time and nor is it in a location where there is a need for additional parkland or for other community services.*

(2) Requests that the report to Council covers:

- a. Any State Government legislative requirements Council must follow when considering rezoning and sale of land
- b. Process, costs, and next steps and estimated timelines for Council to formally consider rezoning and sale, including community consultation steps
- c. A preliminary valuation of the site.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

12. URGENT BUSINESS

Refer to page 19 for Urgent Business item 12.1.

13. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL

CLOSE OF MEETING

Recommendation

MOVED: Cr. V Tsalkos

SECONDED: Cr. R Jelley

That in accordance with section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*, the meeting be closed to members of the public to consider the following items on the basis that these matters are confidential for the following reasons :

13.1 Change of WorkCover Insurer

This item is confidential because it is Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released, pursuant to Section 3(1) (a) of the Act.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Pursuant to section 1.3.1(7) of the Governance Rules, the meeting was extended by 15 minutes as the Chairperson reasonably believed that the remaining business would take less than 15 minutes to transact.

The meeting was closed to the members of the public at 10.04pm.

The Council considered and resolved on Report Item 13.1 which had been circulated to Councillors with the Council Agenda Paper.

RE-OPENING OF MEETING

Recommendation

MOVED: Cr. R Jelley

SECONDED: Cr. A Villella

That the meeting be re-opened to the members of the public.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting was re-opened to the members of the public at 10.07pm.

14. CLOSE OF MEETING

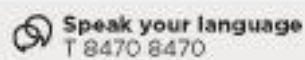
The meeting closed at 10.07pm.

CITY OF DAREBIN

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If you are deaf, or have
a hearing or speech
impairment, contact
us through the
National Relay Service.



العربية	Italiano	Soomalii
繁體中文	Македонски	Español
Ελληνικά	नेपाली	اردو
हिंदी	ਪੰਜਾਬੀ	Tiếng Việt